

TURNING THE TABLES ON IDOL FEASTS: PAUL'S USE OF EXODUS 32:6 IN 1 CORINTHIANS 10:7

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the course of exploring the use of the OT in the NT, attention quickly turns to 1 Cor 10:1–13. Not only do pregnant phrases such as “baptized into Moses” (10:2), “spiritual food” (10:3), and “the Rock was Christ” (10:4) engender lively debate, but the characterization of the Pentateuch’s narratives as τύποι (“types”; 10:6) and τυπικῶς (“typological”; 10:11)¹ for his Corinthian hearers also add to the intrigue of the passage. Richard Hays poses the provocative question of whether Paul’s imaginative construal of these OT traditions accords with their original literary context: “If Israel’s story is a metaphor for Christian experience, has Paul so usurped the meaning and claims of the precursor story that he has in effect annihilated it, deprived it of a right to independent existence?”² The debate over whether the NT uses the OT in a contextual manner thus continues unabated among evangelical scholars.³

Past treatments of Paul’s reuse of the wilderness traditions in 1 Cor 10:1–13 have understandably focused on Paul’s preceding and subsequent polemics against food sacrificed to idols (1 Cor 8:4–13; 10:14–22).⁴ By doing so, however, less attention has been devoted to the only explicit OT citation found in this passage: “As it is written [ἡ γέγραπται], ‘The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play’” (1 Cor 10:7b; cf. Exod 32:6b). Socio-rhetorical approaches to 1 Corinthians, for example, have tended to overlook the literary context of the OT passages used by Paul in 1 Cor 10:1–13 in favor of analyzing his historical situatedness or his use of Greco-Roman rhetoric.⁵

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¹ These preliminary definitions for τύποι and τυπικῶς will be refined later.

² Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) 95.

³ Witness the spirited exchange among Walter Kaiser Jr., Darrell L. Bock, and Peter Enns in the volume edited by Kenneth Berding and Jonathan Lunde, *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008).

⁴ E.g. Derek Newton, *Deity and Diet: The Dilemma of Sacrificial Food at Corinth* (JSNTSup 169; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); Peter D. Gooch, *Dangerous Food: 1 Corinthians 8–10 in its Context* (Studies in Christianity and Judaism 5; Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1993); Wendell Lee Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth: The Pauline Argument in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10* (SBLDS 68; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985).

⁵ Khiok-Khng Yeo summarizes the view of many socio-rhetorical commentators concerning Paul’s putatively non-contextual use of the OT: “Paul often chooses appropriate renderings of texts, creates

Even among those who acknowledge that the OT context of Paul's quotation from the golden calf narrative is significant, the specific function of Exod 32:6b in Paul's argument has often remained opaque. The difficulty of understanding Paul's logic has led to numerous proposals that Paul borrowed uncritically from the exegetical methods of Second Temple Judaism.⁶ In perhaps the most influential example of this view, Wayne Meeks argues that the first part of the quotation, "they sat down to eat and drink," is a midrashic summary of the earlier verses, "they ate the spiritual food and drank the spiritual drink" (10:3–4).⁷ In turn, Meeks argues that the second part of the quotation, "and rose up to play," summarizes the five sins of craving, idolatry, immorality, testing Christ, and grumbling that are listed in 1 Cor 10:6–10.⁸ The fact that Paul's quotation would have been recognized by his audience as coming from the idolatry narrative of Exodus 32 only reinforced its appropriateness for the situation at Corinth.

It is telling, however, that Meeks offers his proposal of midrashic exegesis by way of concession since no convincing account of contextual exegesis for 1 Cor 10:1–22 has been forthcoming.⁹ Thus if a credible case for Paul's contextual exegesis of the OT in this passage could be made, it would no longer be necessary to resort to the broad category of midrash as "a convenient cover for a multitude of [Paul's] exegetical sins."¹⁰ The distinctiveness of Paul's thought

ad hoc interpretations, recontextualizes the texts, and expresses them for his contemporary audience" (*Rhetorical Interaction in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10: A Formal Analysis with Preliminary Suggestions for a Chinese, Cross-Cultural Hermeneutic* [Leiden: Brill, 1995] 169).

⁶ Commentators have variously argued that Paul engages in an "extended allegorical commentary" (Christopher D. Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* [New York: T & T Clark, 2004] 85), "aggadic pesher" (Yeo, *Interaction* 3), or midrash on Numbers 11 (Gary D. Collier, "That we might not crave evil: The Structure and Argument of 1 Cor. 10:1–13," *JSNT* 55 [1994] 55–75).

⁷ Wayne A. Meeks, "'And Rose Up to Play: Midrash and Paraenesis in 1 Corinthians 10:1–22,'" *JSNT* 16 (1982) 64–78. Raymond F. Collins proposes similarly that Paul's quotation of Exod 32:6b in 1 Cor 10:7 functions as a midrashic framework for the whole paragraph: "Its first part with reference to eating and drinking sums up the narrative account and points to the eating and drinking of the Corinthians (vv. 2–4). Its second part with reference to child's play sums up the kind of immorality that devolves from idolatry, the kind of evil the Corinthians are urged to shun" (*First Corinthians* [SacPag 7; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999] 367).

⁸ Meeks argues that rabbinic literature associates קניף with all these different sins ("Play" 69–71). While it is one thing to note that the rabbis speculated about the different nuances of קניף, it is an entirely different matter for Meeks to assert that Paul's use of קניף simultaneously carries all of its various connotations. This is a case of the lexical fallacy of "illegitimate totality transfer" (on which see James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961] 218).

⁹ Meeks explains the need for his article by noting the lack of scholarly consensus on 1 Cor 10:1–22 ("Play" 64). Similarly, Stanley's view that Paul's quotation of Exod 32:6 is "somewhat ambiguous" (*Arguing* 87) leads him to conclude that the apostle appeals here to authority rather than logic: "[W]hat appears to be an innocent discussion of a biblical story turns out to be a carefully crafted attempt to wield power over the minds and wills of the Corinthians" (emphasis added; *Arguing* 88).

¹⁰ Hays, *Echoes* 13. This is Hays's facetious description of NT scholarship's tendency to use "midrash" as a catch-all term to characterize Paul's exegesis of the OT when it seems unpredictable or at odds with the original literary context. On the same page Hays also notes, "One frequently finds Christian commentators explaining away their embarrassment over some piece of fanciful Pauline exegesis by noting solemnly that this is midrash, as though the wholesome Hebrew label could render Paul's arbitrariness kosher."

within the Second Temple period suggests that an appeal to midrash should occur only when the interpreter has not succeeded in understanding the logic of Paul's citations from the OT.

This article proposes that Paul's use of Exod 32:6 in 1 Cor 10:7 and the logical flow of 1 Cor 10:1–13 are best understood against the literary context of covenant making, breaking, and renewal in Exodus 19–34. The inclusion of the larger OT narrative in this analysis potentially imparts coherence to 1 Corinthians 8–11, a section of the epistle often considered a *non sequitur* argument.¹¹ Following an overview of 1 Corinthians 8–11, I will undertake an exegetical study of Exod 32:6 in its broad and immediate context. I will then analyze how Exod 32:6b functions as an ironic metalepsis for antithetical forms of covenant feasting, both in Exodus 19–34 and Paul's citation of this verse in 1 Cor 10:7.¹²

II. AN OVERVIEW OF 1 CORINTHIANS 8–11

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians to a church that he founded and knew well from his eighteen months of ministry there (Acts 18:11). Timothy, Silas, Prisca, and Aquila had also ministered there alongside him (Acts 18:1–5). Despite this promising start, Paul flatly declares to the Corinthians that he “could not speak as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ” (3:1). Their spiritual immaturity was evidenced by their “fleshly” (3:3) and “arrogant” (4:6, 18) treatment of one another. They were characterized by factions representing their favorite spiritual teachers (1:10–17; 3:5–23), faulty criteria for evaluating church leaders using “persuasive words of wisdom” (1:18–2:5), contentious lawsuits among believers (6:1–8), and bickering over the Lord's Supper (11:17–34). Paul's extensive instructions regarding sexuality and marriage (6:12–7:40), idol feasts (8:1–11:1), and proper gender roles (11:2–15) also indicate that many of the Corinthians retained undesirable elements from their pagan past. The problems in the church were severe enough that Paul sent Timothy ahead of him to Corinth (4:17) and planned to visit them again soon (4:19–21; 11:34).

The OT quotation in 1 Cor 10:7 occurs within the unit of 1 Corinthians 8–11, the second of Paul's four “now concerning” sections (8:1; cf. 7:1; 12:1; 16:1). Each instance of the “now concerning” formula ostensibly introduces Paul's answer to a list of questions that the Corinthians had submitted to Paul. Though 1 Corinthians 8–11 is enclosed within two instances of the “now concerning” formula, two redaction-critical objections have often been raised

¹¹ Following J. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910), scholars have reconstructed as many as four letters to the Corinthians as well as multiple redactions within 1 Corinthians 9 alone.

¹² Hays thus describes the literary trope of metalepsis: “When a literary echo links the text in which it occurs to an earlier text, the figurative effect of the echo can lie in the unstated or suppressed (transumed) points of resonance between the two texts” (*Echoes* 20). Speaking later of Paul's use of the OT in Romans, Hays helpfully observes how familiarity with the literary context of the OT citations creates a literary echo chamber for the reader: “[T]he reader, signaled by the echoes, is required to grasp together old text and new” (*Echoes* 38).

against the coherence of these chapters. First, Paul allegedly contradicts himself by adopting both strict (10:1–22) and lenient (8:1–13; 10:23–30) attitudes toward participation in idol feasts.¹³ Second, chapter 9 is taken to be an excursus that has little relation to Paul's main argument.¹⁴ While a comprehensive treatment of the unity of chapters 8–11 falls outside the scope of this study,¹⁵ it is notable that those who posit such disunity have often overlooked the unifying role played by covenant motifs in Paul's Corinthian correspondence.¹⁶ Likewise, it is hardly coincidental that the making, breaking, and renewal of Yahweh's covenant occupy center stage in the OT context of Exod 32:6b. Thus it is first necessary to explore the degree to which Exod 32:6b encapsulates the covenant themes of Exodus 32–34, as well as mirroring the broader concerns of Exodus 19–34.

III. THE BROAD AND IMMEDIATE CONTEXTS OF EXODUS 32:6B

Like 1 Corinthians 8–11, the narrative of covenant breaking and renewal in Exodus 32–34 has been the subject of heated debate concerning its literary coherence. Redaction critics have spliced Exodus 32 into multiple traditions due to the double punishments meted out by Moses (32:19–20; cf. 32:25–29), repetition in Moses' intercession on behalf of the people (32:11–14; cf. 32:30–33), and the rapid shifts in Moses' moods (32:11–13; cf. 32:18–20) and God's

¹³ Thus scholars argue for multiple editors or sources in these chapters. A recent survey of partition and redaction proposals for 1 Cor 8:1–11:1 can be found in Yeo, *Interaction* 75–83. However, the difficulties are mitigated by the likelihood that Paul is addressing two multiple audiences or scenarios in chapters 8 and 10. For a defense of the view that Paul is dealing separately with public idol feasts (8:4–13) and private meals in homes (10:23–30), see William F. Orr and James A. Walther, *I Corinthians* (AB 32; New York: Doubleday, 1976) 120–22; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NICGT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 610–12; Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 363; and Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox, 1997) 134–35. Alternatively, David R. Hall has argued that Paul is speaking generally of idolatrous feasting and engages in a deliberative strategy to appeal simultaneously to all groups within his audience (*The Unity of the Corinthian Correspondence* [JSNTSup 251; New York: T & T Clark, 2003] 46–50). Derek Newton notes that religious pluralism in Corinth makes it likely that incompatible views on idol food were found among the Corinthians themselves (*Deity* 382–99).

¹⁴ E.g. John C. Hurd, *The Origin of I Corinthians* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983) 43–46; Joost Smit Sibinga, "The Composition of 1 Cor. 9 and its Context," *NovT* 40 (1998) 136–63.

¹⁵ Recent proposals arguing for the thematic and narrative unity of 1 Corinthians 8–11 have often taken a rhetorical-critical approach, e.g., Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991); Hall, *Unity*; J. Smit, "Do Not Be Idolaters': Paul's Rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 10:1–22," *NovT* 39 (1997) 40–53.

¹⁶ William L. Lane convincingly demonstrates that the theme of covenant reconciliation is the key to understanding Paul's argument in 2 Cor 6:14–7:1, another passage on pagan feasting whose logic and unity have been questioned ("Covenant: The Key to Paul's Conflict with Corinth," *TynBul* 33 [1982] 3–29). He notes in passing that 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 represents an outworking of covenant ideas that were first introduced in 1 Corinthians 10 ("Covenant" 23). The implications of this observation will be explored below. Cf. also the more detailed argument for the dependence of 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 on 1 Corinthians 8–11 by Gordon D. Fee, "II Corinthians VI.14–VII.1 and Food Sacrificed to Idols," *NTS* 23 (1977) 140–61.

verdicts (32:14; cf. 32:35).¹⁷ On the other hand, scholars who take a synchronic and literary approach have offered a unified reading of the narrative,¹⁸ though some would still argue that the passage was a composite work.¹⁹ In any case, Paul would have possessed the final form of Exodus 32–34,²⁰ a section that is notable for its emphasis on covenant themes.²¹

1. *The broad OT context of Exodus 32:6b.* The literary placement of Exodus 32–34 within the broader context of Exodus 19–34 is fraught with covenant implications. The narrative of Moses' sublime stay on Mt. Sinai (chaps. 25–31) contrasts powerfully to the drunken orgy on the ground (chap. 32), for at the same time that Moses receives the pattern for true worship of the invisible God, the people engage in idolatrous worship with a deity of their own making. These actions violate the prohibitions on idolatry mentioned in the "book of the covenant" (Exod 23:13, 24, 32–33; cf. 20:3–4). It is also striking that the last mention of the people before Exodus 32 occurs in the joyous events of covenant ratification in Exodus 24, when the people repeatedly promise to obey the covenant (24:3, 7; cf. 19:8) and the elders dine with God face-to-face (24:9–11). But as symbolized later by Moses' shattering of the stone tablets (32:19), the euphoric obedience of Exodus 24 is dashed by the desecrating acts of Exodus 32.

In the aftermath of their idolatry, God initially declines to journey further with the people toward the land of promise (33:1–3). The divinely given instructions to build the tabernacle (Exodus 25–31) are also suspended,²² for the tabernacle's usefulness was predicated upon the maintenance of a covenant relationship between God and the people. Moses intercedes for the nation, however, and God deigns to dwell among his people again (33:12–17). Once the tablets are replaced and the covenant is renewed (34:1–28), God resumes issuing his directives for the tabernacle (35:1–40:33) so that his presence can dwell afresh in Israel's midst (40:34–38).

Several characteristics of the narrative context in Exodus 32–34 frame Israel's rebellious actions in terms of covenant disobedience. First, the threat that apostasy poses to Israel's covenant relationship is made explicit when Moses asks Yahweh to "remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants

¹⁷ E.g. Immanuel Lewy, "Story of the Golden Calf Reanalysed," *VT* 9 (1959) 318–22; J. P. Hyatt, *Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971) 301–4.

¹⁸ E.g. Herbert C. Brichto, "The Worship of the Golden Calf: A Literary Analysis of a Fable on Idolatry," *HUCA* 54 (1983) 1–44; R. W. L. Moberly, *At the Mountain of God: Story and Theology in Exodus 32–34* (JSOTSup 22; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1983). Both scholars offer plausible reasons for seeing narrative doublets as evidence of literary artistry rather than a redactor's hand.

¹⁹ E.g. John I. Durham, *Exodus* (WBC 3; Waco, TX: Word, 1987) 418; Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974) 562–64.

²⁰ Hays refers to this as the "availability" criterion for discerning the use of the OT in the NT (*Echoes* 29–30). Since the canonical form of the OT books existed already in NT times, the debate over the compositional history of Exodus is irrelevant for the present discussion.

²¹ Douglas K. Stuart notes that covenant is the overarching motif of Exodus 32–34 (*Exodus* [NAC 3; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005] 659–60).

²² Childs (*Exodus* 567) notes the abruptness with which God breaks off his instructions to Moses regarding the tabernacle (32:7).

to whom you swore" (32:13). This language recalls Exodus's first mention of the Abrahamic covenant when Yahweh began to deliver Israel from Egypt: "God heard their groaning, and he remembered his *covenant* with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (2:24).²³

Second, Moses condemns Israel's sin in covenantal terms of marriage and adultery when he repeatedly calls their idolatry a *גְּדֹלָהּ גְּדֹלָהּ* ("great sin"; Exod 32:21, 30, 31). In other passages, the phrase "great sin" refers to physical adultery (Gen 20:19) or spiritual adultery (i.e. idolatry; cf. 2 Kgs 17:21). "Great sin" is also a formula that refers to adultery in Egyptian and Ugaritic marriage contracts.²⁴ Against their ancient Near Eastern backdrop, this cluster of "great sin" references in Exodus 32 suggests that Israel's sin is portrayed more as a covenant transgression than as a cultic violation.²⁵

Third, the endangered state of Israel's covenant relationship with God is artfully captured by the wordplay between *גוי* ("nation") and *עם* ("people") in Moses' intercession: "See that this *nation* [*גוי*] is your *people* [*עם*]!" (Exod 33:13b). When the two terms are juxtaposed in non-poetic contexts (i.e. not occurring as synonymous parallels), *עם* is a personal term denoting membership in a covenant community, whereas *גוי* is an impersonal term that refers to political or territorial grouping.²⁶ Thus after the golden calf incident, Moses begs God to restore Israel's status from a pagan *גוי* back to a chosen *עם*.

These features of the narrative indicate that the making, breaking, and restoration of Israel's covenants with Yahweh are the dominant ideas of Exodus 32–34. These themes, which may constitute the theological crux of the OT,²⁷ reflect the timeless mystery of "how it can be that the covenant relationship continues in spite of perennial sinfulness."²⁸ The next section will explore how Exod 32:6b embodies these theological tensions in microcosm.

2. *The immediate OT context of Exodus 32:6b.* A closer examination of Exod 32:6b will demonstrate the crucial place of this verse within the

²³ Cf. Lev 26:42–45. Ronald E. Clements notes that the use of *זָכַר* ("to remember") in Exod 2:24 presupposes a previous covenant to which appeal is being made ("זָכַר," *TDOT* 4:70).

²⁴ Jacob J. Rabinowitz, "The 'Great Sin' in Egyptian Marriage Contracts," *JNES* 18 (1959) 73; William L. Moran, "The Scandal of the 'Great Sin' at Ugarit," *JNES* 18 (1959) 280–81.

²⁵ Terence E. Fretheim (*Exodus* [IBC; Louisville: John Knox, 1991] 284–85) notes that, though Israel is newly married to her covenant God, she has already gone astray, committed adultery, and engaged in *de facto* divorce.

²⁶ A. R. Hulst, "גוי/עם," *TLOT* 2:898.

²⁷ The theological significance of the events in Exodus 32–34 is reinforced by plentiful echoes in later biblical literature. On the positive side, God declares his gracious nature in response to Israel's sin: "Yahweh, Yahweh El, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and truth" (Exod 34:6b; cf. Num 14:18; Ps 86:15; Ps 103:8; Ps 145:8; Joel 2:13; Neh 9:17). See the incisive discussion of Exod 34:6–7 and its intertextual echoes in the OT by Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997) 215–28.

On the negative side, the idolatry with the golden calf becomes the paradigmatic sin in the wilderness (Deut 9:16; Ps 106:19; Acts 7:41), especially through the formula, "the sin of Jeroboam, son of Nebat" (1 Kgs 13:34). This phrase becomes a standard way to link the idolatrous behavior of the northern kingdom's rulers with the Exodus 32 incident (1 Kgs 14:16; 15:30, 34; 16:2, 19; 26, 31; 21:22; 22:52; 2 Kgs 3:3; 10:29, 31; 13:2, 6; 11; 14:24; 15:9, 18, 24, 28; 17:21, 22; 23:15).

²⁸ Donald E. Gowan, *Theology in Exodus* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994) 218.

paragraph of Exod 32:1–6.²⁹ When Moses is slow in descending the mountain,³⁰ the people react by gathering threateningly against Aaron.³¹ The people's ingratitude is manifest on two counts. First, they reject Yahweh by demanding of Aaron, "Make us gods who will go before us," an ironic reversal upon Yahweh's promise that he would send his angel "before you" (23:20). The people's request that Aaron "make" (הַעֲשֶׂה) such a deity is in direct violation of the Decalogue's prohibition that "you shall not make [הַעֲשֶׂה] idols" (20:4). Second, they disrespect Moses: "As for this man Moses, we do not know what has become of him" (32:1). Such scorn toward Moses derives from willful forgetfulness rather than ignorance regarding his dealings with the people, for they are still able to identify Moses as "the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt" (32:1c).³²

Aaron responds to the people's coercion with a proposal of his own. He commands the people to take off and bring their gold rings to him (32:2),³³ a request with which the people eagerly comply (32:3).³⁴ Aaron takes their jewelry and fashions it into a molten calf (32:4a). Brevard Childs notes that the extensive description of Aaron's involvement emphasizes his guilt, thereby undermining his disavowal of responsibility later (32:22–24).³⁵

The people embrace Aaron's handiwork and proclaim, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt" (32:4b). In an ironic fulfillment of his commission to speak for Moses (4:14–17), Aaron continues to exert his leadership by building an altar and announcing, "Tomorrow is a

²⁹ BHS closes the paragraph of Exod 32:1–6 with a פ. Even scholars who espouse source-critical reconstructions of Exodus 32–34 concede that Exod 32:1–6 is a discrete, intact unit, e.g., S. R. Driver, *The Book of Exodus* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1911) 347–48; Hyatt, *Exodus* 300–301.

³⁰ Some interpreters detect a connotation of "shame" in Moses' action to בַּשֵּׁשׁ ("delay") in coming down the mountain. This interpretation assumes a parsing of בַּשֵּׁשׁ as a Polel stem from BDB's רוּשׁ I "to be ashamed" (e.g. Durham, *Exodus* 416; Driver, *Exodus* 349). Thus Durham proposes a nuance of "frightened impatience" in the people's actions, thereby transferring some of the blame from the people to Moses for his delay. However, following the more recent treatment of comparative Semitic evidence by HALOT, the discovery of a distinct Ugaritic cognate form, "to delay," suggests a parsing of בַּשֵּׁשׁ under a different רוּשׁ Semitic root than "to be ashamed." Thus the narrative still places responsibility upon the people for their idolatry.

³¹ The construction "gather against" (קָהַל עַל; Exod 32:1; cf. Num 16:3, 42; 20:2) denotes a menacing encounter. See the discussion by George W. Coats, *Rebellion in the Wilderness: The Murmuring Motif in the Wilderness Traditions of the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968) 24–25, 188.

³² At first glance, this attribution of the exodus deliverance to Moses seems like the people's focus may have already turned from Yahweh. However, Yahweh also refers to Moses as the one who "brought up from the land of Egypt" (32:7). Both Moses and Yahweh can be the subjects of this formula.

³³ The reference here to נְזָמִים ("rings") recalls the actions of Jacob's family in discarding their pagan נְזָמִים (Gen 35:4) before God allowed them to return to Bethel. Israel's possession of similar jewelry suggests that the process of apostasy had already begun.

³⁴ Aaron's words are a nearly verbatim match with the narrator's description of the people's response. It is striking, however, that the verb stem of פָּרַק shifts from Aaron's command (פָּרְקוּ; 32:2; "Take off!"; Qal imperative) to the people's response (פָּרְקוּ; 32:3; "then they ripped off"; Hithpael waw-consecutive imperfect). The nearly exact repetition, coupled with an amplification of the imperative through the intensive verb stem, highlights both Aaron's complicity as well as the people's enthusiasm.

³⁵ Childs, *Exodus* 565.

feast to Yahweh" (32:5).³⁶ The next morning, the people make offerings to the calf with alacrity,³⁷ sitting down for a cultic meal, and rising up to "revel sexually" (32:6).³⁸ The frenetic nature of this feast with the golden calf is vividly captured by a barrage of verbal forms.³⁹

In light of the narrative flow in Exod 32:1–6, which elements of Exod 32:6b led Paul to choose this verse for citation from the larger narrative? Specifically, how might Exod 32:6b conjure up the broader covenant context of Exodus 19–34? At this juncture in the narrative, it is notable that the debauchery of the people stands at its most unchecked until Yahweh intervenes (32:7–10) and Moses intercedes (32:11–14). Exodus 32:6b thus represents the pivotal narrative moment at which idolatry is at its peak but observance of Yahweh's covenant is at its nadir; Israel's future as God's covenant people now hangs in the balance.

Similarly, the wording of covenant desecration in Exod 32:6b resonates with three features of the covenant ratification meal from Exodus 24, but now transposed into a minor key in order to plumb the depths of Israel's present depravity. First, the people arise to offer עלות ("burnt offerings") and שלמים ("peace offerings"), terms that last occurred in the description of Israel's joyful sacrifices to Yahweh (24:5). Yahweh was the recipient of the people's offerings in Exodus 24, but the golden calf has now become the recipient in Exodus 32. Second, it is noteworthy that the only other reference in Exodus to the phrase "eating and drinking" occurs in the covenant ratification meal (24:11). The God who provided Israel with food and drink in the wilderness, and with whom the leaders were just worshiping and dining in Exodus 24, has now been rejected using these very same ritual actions.⁴⁰ Third and finally, the antithetical parallelism of the two clauses, "they sat down to eat and drink" and "they rose up to play," herald a grotesque reversal of the ideal narrative ending found in Exodus 24. The opposite physical actions יָשַׁב ("to sit down") and קָם ("to rise") frame the antithetical parallelism between the outrageous actions that

³⁶ The proclamation of a "feast to Yahweh" ironically echoes the three sacred feasts that were appointed previously by God (24:14–17). Earlier in Exodus, the "feast to Yahweh" also refers to Israel's anticipated celebration once God delivers the nation from bondage in Egypt (10:9; 12:14; 13:6).

³⁷ The people "rose early" (שָׁמַר), a verb that signals purposefulness in getting up early to perform a task (e.g. Gen 19:27; 22:3; Exod 8:20; 2 Sam 15:2).

³⁸ "Revel sexually" renders a Piel form of צָחַק, which likely functions as a euphemism for lewd activity (Athalya Brenner, "On the Semantic Field of Humour, Laughter, and the Comic in the Old Testament," in *On Humour and the Comic in the Hebrew Bible* [ed. A. Brenner and Y. T. Radday; Sheffield: Almond, 1990] 46–52; see also Leslie C. Allen, "צָחַק," *NIDOTTE* 3:797). צָחַק carries a sexual connotation in other passages (cf. Gen 26:8; 39:14, 17). The licentious nature of the proceedings is also reinforced by the presence of imbibing (32:6), dancing (32:19), and "breaking loose" (Qal passive of 32:25; פָּרַע) in a cultic feast. Since the bull was a common ANE fertility symbol and cultic feasts often included sexual overtones, the use of צָחַק is especially fitting. See J. Gerald Janzen, "The Character of the Calf and its Cult in Exodus 32," *CBQ* 52 (1990) 597–607.

³⁹ Nine out of the twelve Hebrew words in Exod 32:6 are verbal forms. This unusually high concentration of verbs emphasizes the decisiveness and passion of the people's actions. Compare the similar phenomenon at the climactic moment of David's slaying of Goliath (1 Sam 17:49–54).

⁴⁰ In ritual contexts, "eating and drinking" refers to a covenant ratification meal (Gen 26:30; 31:46, 54; Exod 24:11; Josh 9:14ff). The expression "eating and drinking" may even be a technical formula for covenant making (G. Gerleman, "אָכַל," *TLOT* 1:107). In the presence of other gods, "eating" functions as a prelude to idolatrous worship (Num 25:2).

follow: Covenant ratification (“eating and drinking”) should have been followed by covenant commitment (“we will be obedient!”), as in Exodus 24, but instead leads to uncontrolled perversion in Exodus 32 (“to revel sexually”).

In light of these ironic echoes between intertexts, Durham is correct to observe, “The celebration of an obligating relationship in Exodus 24 becomes in Exodus 32 an orgy of the desertion of responsibility.”⁴¹ The poignancy of this metalepsis is encapsulated by Exod 32:6b, which is precisely the verse cited by Paul in 1 Cor 10:7.

IV. PAUL'S USE OF EXODUS 32:6B IN 1 CORINTHIANS 10:7

Having traced the covenantal threads through Exodus 32–34, we may now observe that Paul weaves a similar theological tapestry in 1 Cor 10:1–13 as well as his broader treatment of idol feasts in 1 Cor 8:1–11:11.⁴² Possibly in response to a Corinthian maxim, “we all have knowledge” (8:1a), Paul retorts that “knowledge puffs up, but love builds up” (8:1b; cf. 12:31b–13:13). Their misplaced confidence in their “knowledge” has made the Corinthians careless with regard to idol feasts. Such self-deception has resulted in a stumbling block to weaker believers (8:7–13), sacrificing to the cup of demons (10:20), and inciting God to jealousy (10:21). In contrast to his own willingness to restrict his apostolic freedom for the sake of the gospel (9:1–23), Paul fears that the smug Corinthians share none of his vigilance against being “disqualified” (9:27). Thus Paul warns them that the sins of the wilderness generation are being replicated in their midst (10:1–13). In turn, Paul's warnings in 1 Cor 10:1–13 then serve as the grounds for his next command, “Therefore . . . flee idolatry” (10:14) and his subsequent exposition of the Lord's Supper (10:15–22).

1. *Exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 10:1–13.* The paragraph of 1 Cor 10:1–13 has a two-part structure. Paul first enumerates the example of “our fathers” (10:1–5), and then applies their example to the Corinthians (10:6–13). He begins with the standard formula $\text{Ὁὐ θέλω γὰρ ἄγνοεῖν}$ (“For I do not want you to be ignorant”; 10:1). Elsewhere Paul uses this phrase to introduce a point of emphasis or controversial topic (cf. Rom 1:13; 11:25; 1 Cor 12:1; 1 Thess 4:13). In the case of 1 Cor 10:1–13, the inclusion of γὰρ in 1 Cor 10:1 (cf. Rom 1:13) introduces this paragraph as Paul's grounds for the immediately preceding exhortation to run hard in pursuit of the eschatological prize

⁴¹ Durham, *Exodus* 422.

⁴² It is not necessary here to enter into a discussion of Paul's use of the MT vis-à-vis the LXX. Two observations are sufficient: (1) Exod 32:6b LXX is a literal rendering of a Hebrew *Vorlage* which is identical to MT's reading; and (2) Paul cites Exod 32:6b LXX exactly in 1 Cor 10:7. See the text-critical discussion by Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, “1 Corinthians,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007) 725.

(9:24–27).⁴³ The Corinthians may claim that “we all have knowledge” (8:1), but Paul responds that the Corinthians are actually “ignorant” (10:1).⁴⁴

To combat their complacency, Paul recalls a series of OT episodes concerning the special blessings enjoyed by “our fathers”⁴⁵ (10:1) that nonetheless did not lead to their salvation (10:5). Paul uses a fivefold refrain of “all” to emphasize that the entire nation enjoyed God’s benefits in the wilderness: being led and protected by the cloud (10:1), being baptized into Moses in the cloud and the sea (10:2),⁴⁶ deliverance from Egypt through the Sea of Reeds (10:1–2), and sustenance in the wilderness (10:3–4a) from Christ, the divine Rock who followed them (10:4b–5).⁴⁷ In spite of “all” having received these

⁴³ Contra Stanley (*Arguing* 84–85), who acknowledges the usual connective function of the γὰρ but then asserts that Paul’s change in tone indicates that 10:1–13 is discontinuous with the preceding section. Jerry L. Sumney makes a convincing case for the integral place of 1 Cor 9:24–27 in linking Paul’s arguments in chapters 9 and 10 (“The Place of 1 Corinthians 9:24–27 in Paul’s Argument,” *JBL* 119 [2000] 329–33). Paul’s transition in 9:24–27 simultaneously accomplishes three items on his agenda: (1) he provides a personal example of willingly giving up Christian freedom; (2) he addresses apostolic charges against him; and (3) he prepares the impending contrast between his own dedication and the Corinthians’ apathy (10:1–13). See the discussion of Paul’s multi-pronged rhetorical strategy by Alex T. Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth: Jewish Background and Pauline Legacy* (JSNTSup 176; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 142; and Mitchell, *Rhetoric* 244.

⁴⁴ Paul’s use of ἀγνοεῖν (“to be ignorant”) appears to be a sarcastic response to those claiming to possess γνῶσις (“knowledge”; 8:1–2). Many commentators suggest that Paul’s statement, “we all have knowledge,” may be Paul’s quotation of a Corinthian maxim (e.g. Barrett, *Corinthians* 189). While many have noted Paul wordplay on “knowledge” in the Corinthian correspondence, it has gone unnoticed that this wordplay in 1 Cor 8:1–11:1 may derive from the OT context of the golden calf narrative. In Exodus 32–34, γινῶ (‘‘to know’’) also functions as a *Leitwort* of ironic reversal that pits God’s knowledge against human ignorance. The people do not “know” where Moses has gone (32:1), Moses repeatedly begs to “know” God’s plans for the nation (33:12–16), and finally God responds with His gracious knowledge toward Moses, “you have found favor in my sight and I have known [γινῶ] you by name” (33:17). God’s favorable response to Moses is striking in light of Paul’s statement: “If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know” (8:2). However, the lexical correspondence between LXX and NT is not exact (i.e. οἶδα is more common than γινώσκω in Exodus 32–34 LXX).

⁴⁵ Paul’s reference to “our fathers” is standard OT terminology for living together in generational continuity under Yahweh’s covenants. See the discussion by Christopher J. H. Wright, “אב,” *NIDOTTE* 1:219–222. Similarly, an appeal to the ancestors often functions in the NT as a rhetorical device to apply the failures of Israel’s ancestors to the contemporary audience (e.g. Matt 23:29–36; John 8:12–58; Acts 7:44–51).

⁴⁶ Thiselton notes that the phrase “baptized into Moses” highlights the initiatory role played by the people’s decision to follow Moses and the redemptive role played by the deliverance from Egypt (*Corinthians* 724–25). In this manner, the OT saints are pictured as having received benefits analogous to those of Christian believers, who follow Christ and are baptized into him. See also Paul D. Gardner, *The Gifts of God and the Authentication of a Christian: An Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 8–11:1* (Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1994) 126; Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 219. Thus the “baptism” language is much more than an echo of the Christian sacraments.

⁴⁷ Opinions abound concerning the background of Paul’s account of Christ as the Rock in the wilderness. Many commentators hold that Paul appropriates the Jewish legend concerning the rock which provided water for Israel in the desert, e.g., Peter Enns, *Exodus* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000) 25; idem, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker) 149–51; Leonard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 218–19. Others suggest that Paul’s wisdom Christology (e.g. 1 Cor 1:30; 8:6; cf. Wisdom 11) has been applied here to the preexistent

gifts, Paul lowers the rhetorical hammer by asserting that God was displeased with the exodus generation so that the vast majority of them were “strewn about in the wilderness” (10:5).⁴⁸ Among the innumerable generation that had left Egypt, only Joshua and Caleb were allowed to enter the land of promise (Num 14:29–30). Though space precludes a full commentary on each of the “all” clauses, it is striking that Paul has phrased each clause with Christian terminology to highlight the essential continuity between the exodus generation and the Corinthian church.

Paul's purpose (εἰς τό; 10:6) in reciting these well-known events (10:1–4) was to contemporize their significance as “formative models [τύποι]” (10:6).⁴⁹ The warning against being “cravers of evil things” (10:6) is then expanded upon with a coordinate series of four prohibitions (10:7–10). Other than a few modifications in the first prohibition, each of the prohibitions follows a pattern: μηδὲ + specific prohibition (e.g. “do not be idolaters”) + “as some of them” + God's judgment upon the sin (e.g. “destroyed by serpents”; 10:9).⁵⁰ The Corinthians were commanded not to be “idolaters” (10:7; cf. Exod 32:1–6), nor “commit sexual immorality” (10:8; cf. Num 25:1–18), nor “test Christ” (10:9; cf. Num 21:5–9),⁵¹ nor “grumble” (10:10; cf. Num 16:41; 17:5, etc.). Paul ascribes significance to these OT narratives that is both typological (τυπικῶς; 10:11a) and pedagogical (“written for our instruction”; 10:11b). The convergence of the typological and pedagogical qualities of the OT narratives demands an attitude of eschatological urgency from the Corinthian Christians, the ones “upon whom the ends of ages have come” (10:11c). After illustrating the ease with which God's people can slip into sin, Paul provides a final warning for the Corinthians, especially the apathetic individual “who thinks he

Christ who was present with Israel in the wilderness, e.g., Witherington, *Conflict* 218–19. Still others propose that the extrabiblical legend triggered Paul's own figurative adaptation of the legend from Psalms and Isaiah, e.g., E. E. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1957) 66–70.

However, it seems likely that the primary reference is to the Rock imagery of Deuteronomy 32 rather than the Jewish midrash of Paul's time. Hays (*Echoes* 93–94) notes Paul's numerous references to Deuteronomy 32, such as “they sacrificed to demons” (1 Cor 10:20; cf. Deut 32:17) and “shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy?” (1 Cor 10:22; Deut 32:21). In that same chapter, God is repeatedly called the “Rock” (Deut 32:4, 15, 18, 30, 31). Thus Paul seems to identify Christ as the divine “Rock” of Deuteronomy 32. Even if he does refer to the Jewish legend, Paul has apparently co-opted it for his own purpose of constructing a typology of Israel and the church.

⁴⁸ Keener rightly notes the “rhetorical advantage of surprise” (*1–2 Corinthians* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005] 85) in Paul's sudden shift from the blessings of the “fathers” (10:1–4) to their unceremonious deaths in the wilderness (10:5).

⁴⁹ This translation of τύποι as “formative models” follows Thiselton, *Corinthians* 719. Most English translations translate τύποι as “examples” (NASB) or “warnings” (RSV), which fails to do justice to the eschatological dimension of Paul's argument. Paul certainly has a parenetic interest, but this interest is grounded in the real threat of God's judgment for sin. The urgency of responding to God is heightened all the more by the eschatological moment in which the Corinthians now find themselves.

⁵⁰ The first prohibition formula in 1 Cor 10:7 differs somewhat from the others. The clause still begins with a μηδὲ + prohibition (“do not be idolaters”) + “as one of them.” In place of the consequence, however, 1 Cor 10:7 cites Exod 32:6b, the quote in question for this article.

⁵¹ Χριστόν (P⁴⁶ D F Ψ) is a more difficult and thus more probable reading than κυρίον (K B C P). See Bruce M. Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994) 494.

stands” (10:12). The Corinthian believers unknowingly stand on the precipice of apostasy through having failed to resist temptation. However, God will prove faithful to deliver them from temptation if they will only rely upon Him (10:13).

2. *The literary function of Exodus 32:6b in 1 Corinthians 10:7.* Before proceeding to assess Paul’s hermeneutical approach toward the OT, it is necessary to analyze briefly how the quotation from Exod 32:6b functions within the larger argument of 1 Cor 10:1–13. In a paragraph that is densely packed with OT allusions, why does Paul present only one direct quotation from the OT? How might the inclusion of this quotation somehow heighten Paul’s rhetoric against idol feasts? Even more intriguingly, could this solitary OT quotation create the same metalepsis as it did in Exodus 19–34, and thus constitute the linchpin of Paul’s argument? The answers to these questions are of crucial importance for understanding Paul’s rationale for citing one OT passage but not another.

As noted earlier, many NT scholars propose that Paul selected Exod 32:6b for its cultic language which could easily be transferred to the situation at Corinth. Paul picked a text with cultic terminology (“eat and drink”) rather than a direct condemnation of idolatry in order to demonstrate the links either between idolatry and immorality,⁵² or between cultic feasting and idolatry.⁵³ In addition, Paul putatively argues that feasting in the presence of the idol is often akin to idolatry itself, much like the OT narrative in Exod 32:1–6.⁵⁴

While these common approaches render Paul’s quotations intelligible for his Corinthian audience, they fail to offer the most comprehensive account of Paul’s use of the OT context: How could the nexus between the two passages transcend the superficial similarities between these idol feasts? Earlier, it was demonstrated that Exod 32:6b encapsulates an ironic metalepsis for covenant making and breaking through a feast of disobedience (cf. Exod 24:11), rather than the mere observance of a cultic feast. Could this same trope from Exodus 19–34 continue into Paul’s use of the OT text? If so, then what “thick description”⁵⁵ of Paul’s quotation strategy might be offered when the covenant motifs of Exodus 19–34 are traced through 1 Corinthians 8–11?

As William Lane proposes in his study of 2 Cor 6:14–7:1, the ideas of covenant breaking and restoration also supply the theological underpinnings of Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 10.⁵⁶ Paul’s argument against idol feasts in 1 Corinthians 8–11 stands in the tradition of the OT’s hortatory recit-

⁵² E.g. Witherington, *Conflict* 221; Keener, *1–2 Corinthians* 86.

⁵³ E.g. Gooch, *Food* 55; Willis, *Meat* 148.

⁵⁴ E.g. David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003) 461; Fee, *Corinthians* 454.

⁵⁵ For the distinction between “thin” and “thick” descriptions, see Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There A Meaning In This Text?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998) 284–86. For an example of a “thin description” for 1 Cor 10:7 that only partakes the most basic elements of the OT context, see Gardner, *Gifts* 150. While Gardner’s “thin description” rightly notes that Exod 32:6 and 1 Cor 10:7 deal with idol feasts and their associated orgiastic elements, his emphasis upon the Corinthian rather than the OT literary context is unable to detect the softer echoes from Exodus 19–34 in 1 Corinthians 8–11.

⁵⁶ See n. 16 above.

als of apostasy in Exodus 32, most notably Deuteronomy 9–10 and Psalm 106.⁵⁷ Both of these theological meditations on Exodus 32 exhort the audience to reflect carefully upon the consequences of breaking Yahweh's covenant through the golden calf incident (Deut 9:12–17; Ps 106:19–20), in addition to recalling Israel's testing of God in matters of food and drink (Deut 9:22–23; Ps 106:14, 32). Only the intercession of Moses at those times was able to save the people (Deut 9:25–29; Ps 106:23) and renew the Israelite covenant (Deut 10:1–5).⁵⁸ Such theologized retellings of covenant breaking and Moses' intercession in Exodus 32–34 continued beyond Deuteronomy 9–10 and Psalm 106 into the Second Temple period.⁵⁹

Paul adopts a similarly Mosaic persona in confronting the Corinthian believers, a rhetorical strategy that he continues in 2 Corinthians.⁶⁰ Much like Moses did not eat or drink during his intercession for Israel (Deut 9:9, 18), Paul now emphasizes his willingness to abstain from his Christian freedoms (1 Cor 9:15–18), quite in contrast to his audience's laxness in partaking of idol feasts (1 Cor 8:7–12; 10:21–22). In addition, Paul's opening declaration that it was "our fathers" (10:1; cf. Ps 106:6–7) who sinned at Sinai and subsequently perished in the wilderness is a rhetorical device that transports his audience to the foot of Sinai as eyewitnesses of Israel's apostasy. Such a collapsing of generational and geographical horizons, thereby joining an audience with their ancestors, is a key feature of Deuteronomy's commentary on Exodus 32–34.⁶¹ The danger for Paul's audience, then, is that of repeating the sins of their ancestors and thereby breaking God's covenant with them. In contrast, covenant faithfulness begins with remembrance of these "formative models" (1 Cor 10:6, 11). Moses similarly emphasizes the importance of remembering the golden calf incident (Deut 9:7).⁶²

Besides Paul's assuming of a Mosaic persona and his citation of Exod 32:6b in 1 Cor 10:7, the rhetoric throughout 1 Corinthians 8–11 is replete with other OT covenant terminology, as in the modified *Shema* (8:5–6),⁶³ "cup

⁵⁷ See the discussion of Paul's conception of idolatry and interpretation of Psalm 106 by Michael Li-Tak Shen, *Canaan to Corinth: Paul's Doctrine of God and the Issue of Food Offered to Idols in 1 Corinthians 8:1–11:1* (Studies in Biblical Literature 83; New York: Peter Lang, 2010) 65–66.

⁵⁸ The motifs of deliverance, forgiveness, and covenant renewal are notably absent from Psalm 106, a post-exilic psalm of corporate lament and confession.

⁵⁹ Pekka Lindqvist, *Sin at Sinai: Early Judaism Encounters Exodus 32* (Studies in Rewritten Bible 2; Turku, Finland: Åbo Akademi University, 2008).

⁶⁰ Though Scott J. Hafemann (*Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel: The Letter/Spirit Contrast and the Argument from Scripture in 2 Corinthians 3* [WUNT 81; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1995]) limits his exploration of Paul's Mosaic persona to 2 Corinthians 3, his arguments for the centrality of Exodus 32–34 in Paul's rhetorical strategy toward the Corinthian church are equally relevant to the use of Exod 32:6 in 1 Cor 10:7.

⁶¹ See the treatment of Deuteronomy's references to the ancestors in my book, *The Rhetoric of Remembrance: An Examination of the "Fathers" in Deuteronomy* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, forthcoming).

⁶² Deuteronomy is shot through with calls to remembrance, as noted by Edward P. Blair, "An Appeal to Remembrance: The Memory Motif in Deuteronomy," *Int* 15 (1961) 41–47.

⁶³ N. T. Wright calls this verse Paul's rhetorical strategy of "christological monotheism" ("Monotheism, Christology, and Ethics: 1 Corinthians 8," in *The Climax of the Covenant* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991] 120–36). By placing Jesus at the center of the *Shema*, Paul links monotheism with a covenantal context of love and concern for other members of the Christian community. See also

of blessing” (10:16),⁶⁴ and “new covenant in my blood” (11:25). Among these phrases, “new covenant in my blood” is especially intriguing for two reasons. First, Paul attributes this saying directly to Jesus. Second and more germane to this study, Jesus’ words through Paul provide a key for understanding the contrast between cultic feasts in Exodus 24 and 32 which Paul draws in 1 Corinthians 8–11, the fourth of his “now concerning” (cf. 8:1; 12:1) sections. It is surely significant that this fourth section deals with two festal meals, viz., idol feasts and the Lord’s Supper.

Past scholarly studies of Jesus’ words in 1 Cor 11:25 have focused on the words “new covenant.” This phrase has rightly been tied to prophetic oracles announcing the coming days of the “new covenant” (e.g. Jer 31:31; Ezek 37:26). But for Jesus’ saying as a whole, commentators have often missed that a genitival relationship between “blood” (τὸ αἷμα) and “covenant” (τῆς διαθήκης) only occurs in the LXX at Exod 24:8 and Zech 9:11.⁶⁵ Paul’s references to both Exodus 24 (cf. 1 Cor 11:25) and Exodus 32 (cf. 1 Cor 10:7) indicate that the contrast between antithetical forms of covenant feasting is the centerpiece of his argument. Like the exodus generation, the Corinthians’ celebration of the idol feast represents their moment of maximal self-deception, and not even the choicest “spiritual food” and “spiritual drink” (10:3–4) can offer any protection against God’s judgment.

Since the contrast between covenant feasts in Exodus 24 and 32 comes to the fore in 1 Corinthians 8–11, it is probable that the metalepsis of antithetical covenant feasts in Exod 32:6b has flowed into Paul’s citation of this verse in 1 Cor 10:7. The Corinthians have fallen like their ancestors did in distorting a festal meal, which should have sealed covenant obedience, into a license for sin. Such antinomian attitudes toward festal meals were evidenced by the Corinthians’ nonchalance toward both idol feasts (e.g. 1 Cor 8:1–3) as well as the Lord’s Supper (e.g. 1 Cor 11:27–31). Thus Paul implores his hearers to reenact the righteous covenant meal of Exodus 24 rather than the unrighteous covenant meal of Exodus 32. Unlike those who were “laid low in the wilderness” (1 Cor 10:5), however, the Corinthians still have the opportunity to repent and thereby avoid fulfilling the typological correspondence between themselves and a condemned generation of Israelites.⁶⁶ Paul’s purpose in recalling these OT τύποι is precisely that history need *not* repeat itself.⁶⁷

the more extensive discussion of Paul’s use of the *Shema* in 1 Cor 8:1–6 by Erik Waaler, *The Shema and the First Commandment in First Corinthians: An Intertextual Approach to Paul’s Re-reading of Deuteronomy* (WUNT 253; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

⁶⁴ Thiselton (*Corinthians* 755–60) discusses the covenantal implications of the phrase “cup of blessing.”

⁶⁵ The exceptions are Keener, *1–2 Corinthians* 86; and Garland, *1 Corinthians* 547. However, neither commentator explores the way in which Paul may be weaving the covenant threads all the way through his argument in 1 Corinthians 8–11.

⁶⁶ Thus Paul can command the Corinthians to “flee idolatry” (10:14), a meaningful command to which a positive response can still be given. As Fee notes, “[T]here seems to be a typological sense to *Israel* and its ‘sacraments,’ but an analogical sense to the *events* used as warning examples. As typology the passage breaks down precisely at the point of warning” (*Corinthians* 452, emphasis original).

⁶⁷ My position on 1 Corinthians 10’s references to τύποι thus departs from Leonhard Goppelt (*Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,

V. CONCLUSION

In light of this analysis, I propose that Paul's citation of 1 Cor 10:7 may be properly considered a case of the NT's contextual exegesis of the OT. Past attempts to understand Paul's argument, as in Meeks' article, have tended to focus on the fascinating statements of 1 Cor 10:1–6. Such approaches have typically resulted in the conclusion that Paul engages in midrashic exegesis of the OT. However, the clarity and cleverness of Paul's argument in 1 Cor 10:1–13, and especially 1 Cor 10:7, emerge when the literary context of covenant making and breaking in Exodus 19–34 is taken fully into account. The typological correspondences between Israel and the Corinthians indicate that both generations felt no compunction for feasting unrighteously while pretending to live under God's covenant. Thus this study concludes that Paul's metaleptic quote of Exod 32:6 levels a subtle, yet devastating and well-crafted argument against the carnality of the Corinthians. Rather than attributing to Paul an *ad hoc* exegetical approach,⁶⁸ it would be more appropriate to recognize how masterful is Paul's contextual use of Exod 32:6 in 1 Cor 10:7.⁶⁹

1982]; idem, "τύπος," *TDNT* 8:251–252) and Richard M. Davidson (*Typology in Scripture: A study of hermeneutical typos structures* [Andrews University Seminary Studies Doctoral Dissertation Series 2; Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981]). Goppelt and Davidson both come close to saying that God's judgment upon the Corinthians is a foregone conclusion. For example, Goppelt asserts that the threat of God's judgment is part of the "future events [that] are represented in redemptive history. By his dealings with the first people of God, the forefathers (1 Cor 10:1), God reveals to the people of God who are living at 'the fulfillment of the ages' what they may expect from him" (*Typos*, 146). Goppelt's view stems from his equivocation of the sense of τύπος in 1 Cor 10:6 with that of Rom 5:14, where the Adam-Christ typology is treated as a fulfilled reality.

Davidson similarly proposes that τύποι ἡμῶν (1 Cor 10:6) should be translated as the subjective genitive, "types of us," rather than the genitive of reference, "types for us" (*Typology* 252–54). He unnecessarily follows G. Martelet's notion of a *devoir-être* ("must-needs-be"), which holds that the OT typological event implies that the NT antitypological event *must* occur (*Typology* 259). Davidson later backtracks from his near-deterministic position by calling this passage a "paraenetic warning to the Corinthians" (*Typology* 267). Fee observes that "his [Davidson's] desire to see a 'must-needs-be' relationship between the type and antitype has led him to some overstatements, as well as to an overemphasis on type over against parenthesis that seems to move far beyond Paul's own concern" (*Corinthians* 452, n. 11).

An "already/not-yet" eschatological framework may be helpful to lend nuance to Goppelt and Davidson's presentation of typology. God's blessings of the Corinthians belong to the "already" horizon, whereas God's looming judgment for their idolatry belongs to the "not-yet" horizon. B. J. Oropeza notes that the Corinthians stand in a "state of liminality" which is predicated upon the "not-yet" nature of the judgment ("Apostasy in the Wilderness: Paul's Message to the Corinthians in a State of Eschatological Liminality," *JSNT* 75 [1999] 69–86).

⁶⁸ Cf. n. 5 above.

⁶⁹ I would like to thank Dr. Greg Beale, my colleague David Lang, and the anonymous reviewer for their feedback on earlier versions of this study.