ASPECTS OF DUAL COVENANT THEOLOGY:

SALVATION

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I. Introduction

A. The Meaning of Dual Covenant Theology

At the outset it is imperative that I define the term "dual covenant theology" as I am using it in what I hopefully project will ultimately emerge as a comprehensive development of a theology of reconciliation. In such a theology Judaism will offer theological space to Christianity, and Christianity to Judaism. Such a theology will recognize that the basic operating doctrine of both Judaism and Christianity is that of covenant. Judaism sees its roots in the covenant with Abraham renewed at Sinai, mediated by Moses, and Christianity sees its roots in these covenants renewed in the eucharist, mediated by Jesus.1 To understand covenant theology from the perspective of dual covenant theology is to entertain the plausibility of a purposeful action on the part of God of having graced His people with parallel tracks on which to attain salvation. In modern terms we might speak of "religious pluralism," and by this we mean the right of believers in diverse faiths to enjoy equal rights in the land of their domicile. This, however, presupposes nothing about the relative merit of these variegated religious expressions. Dual covenant theology makes a formal statement which accords truth and legitimacy to two separate
streams of religious expression flowing from the same ultimate source. Dual covenant theology not only accepts "religious pluralism" as a necessary predicate of democratic society, but as a theological premise that states it is God's will, wrapped in mystery, that there be Christians and Jews each travelling their own track to salvation. This implies that Jews must come to terms with Gamaliel I's statement that if this boulē or ergon, "this counsel or work" preached by the disciples "is of God," to oppose it is to oppose God (Acts 5:38, 39). And it implies that Christians must come to terms with the hidden aspect of Gamaliel's statement: that since Judaism endures despite almost two millenia of subordination and persecution it too must be "of God," a notion taken for granted by Gamaliel and therefore not explicitly stated.

B. The Parameters

My earlier article on the theme of dual covenant theology suggested that there are many aspects of theology that merit inquiry for the purpose of ascertaining whether Judaism and Christianity constitute parallel tracks to God.2 There I indicated that my researches are conducted in the spirit of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy's motto, "Respondeo etsi mutabor" (I respond although I will be changed")3. Such a spirit must be allowed to lead us wherever it will. More recently, David Flusser suggested that we give more attention to Simeon's oracle upon seeing the child Jesus.4 Under the influence of the Holy Spirit Simeon addressed God and said,

“For my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared for all nations, a light as a revelation for the nations, and glory for your people Israel”

(Lk 2:30-32).