

A THEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF MOTIVATION IN OLD TESTAMENT LAW

Greg Chirichigno*

The concept of motivation and its use in the laws of the OT did not attract wide attention until 1953 in an article by B. Gemser,¹ who argued against Eerdmans' thesis that OT ethics did not meddle with the inner thoughts of man.² Gemser took issue with Eerdmans' thesis in another article³ in which he contended that OT ethics produced an internal response of deep reflection:

The motive clauses with their appeal to the common sense and to the conscience of the people disclose the truly democratic character of their laws, just as those of the religious kind testify to the deep religious sense and concentrated theological thinking of their formulations.⁴

It will be my purpose in this paper to continue the study of the use and purpose of motivation in OT law. We will examine the occurrence of motivation in the law codes of Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy, especially with respect to their theological significance. Gemser's inquiry into the reflective nature of law has not been treated thoroughly since the publication of his articles. I believe that the significance of motivation in the law codes has been obscured by the current debate on OT law. It will not be my intention here to attempt to resolve the dilemma, as it seems that the remnants of the documentary theory and the present

*Greg Chirichigno is studying for a master's degree in Old Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.

¹B. Gemser, "The Importance of the Motive Clause in Old Testament Law," *Congress Volume in Memoriam Aage Bentzen* (Leiden: Brill, 1953) 96-115. Modern study of motivation in psychology and sociology is beset by many problems concerning both classification and definition. M. D. Vernon, *Human Motivation* (Cambridge: University Press, 1969) 1-10, confesses that motivated behavior is bewildering in its variety and exceedingly difficult to classify satisfactorily. R. C. Bolles, *Theory of Motivation* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974) 392-393, observes that one defines motivation according to theoretical commitment concerning human behavior. Two approaches are possible according to Bolles: (1) traditional rationalism, stating that all motivated behavior can be traced to conscious purposes (teleology), which Bolles views as an impossible task; (2) mechanism, which traces motivation through the aid of deterministic behavior, either by what is found on the behavioral level (e.g. fear) and then seeking its complement in physiology, or through psychological forces that avoid any teleological explanation. Biblical motivation can then be defined as the methods God uses in his Word to direct the behavior of believers. The study of OT motivation can offer us a teleological explanation of God-directed behavior. We can see how God directs us to action and thereby learn how to direct others to a quality Christian walk. G. Collins' *Man in Motion: The Psychology of Human Motivation* (Wheaton: Creation House, 1973) is such an attempt dealing with the concepts of learning and memory.

²B. D. Eerdmans, "Oorsprongen betekenis van de 'Tien Woorden'," *TT* 6 (1903) 19-35.

³B. Gemser, "The Object of Moral Judgment in the Old Testament," *Congress Volume*, 80.

⁴B. Gemser, "Importance of the Motive Clause," *Congress Volume*, 111.

trend of literary criticism have only confused the matter.⁵ Otto Kaiser remarks that "scholarship in this area (Israelite law), in spite of an extensive literature, has reached few assured results."⁶

Therefore by using the grammatico-historical method when looking at the occurrence of motivation in the law codes I hope to approach the intended meaning and purpose of motivation within law.

I. MOTIVATION: PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

Within the law codes of the OT there occur many examples of motive clauses, as in Exod 20:5; 23:32-33; Lev 17:10-11; 26:1; Deut 12:30-31. As one can see from these examples of motivation concerning worship occurring in the decalogue (Exod 20:1-17; Deut 5:6-21), covenant code (20:22-23:33),⁷ priestly code (Leviticus 1-16), holiness code (Leviticus 17-26) and deuteronomistic code (Deuteronomy 12-26), there is great variety in form and usage. It is because of these reasons that motive clauses have created such interest.⁸ Past discussion concerning motivation has been centered around two categories: motive clauses and parenthetic statements. Gemser chose to refer to motivation strictly within the larger category of motive clauses as did Eichrodt, Payne and Wenham.⁹ Parenthetic statements have

⁵A. Alt, "The Origins of Israelite Law," *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966) 81-132, separates Biblical Law into two categories: (1) casuistic, and (2) apodeictic, which Alt concluded was unique to Israel. Alt's categories have come under much criticism. Cf. the outline by W. Gilmer, *The If-You Form in Israelite Law* (Missoula: Scholars, 1975) 1-26. Yet even with all this discussion form criticism has both damaged the unity of the Pentateuch and made the study of law complex and confusing. More recently, however, much work has been done to show the basic unity of law, particularly in Deuteronomy. For relevant discussions the reader may consult G. J. Wenham and J. G. McConville, "Drafting Techniques in some Deuteronomistic Laws," *VT* 30 (1980) 248-251; C. M. Carmichael, "A Common Element in Five Supposedly Disparate Laws," *VT* 29 (1979) 129-142; G. J. Wenham, *Numbers: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1981) 14-39. A very interesting thesis has been posited by C. M. Carmichael, *Women, Law, and the Genesis Traditions* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1979), who sees that the solution to the often complex order of laws in Deuteronomy arises from a link between law and literature rather than between law and life. Carmichael goes on to show how the Deuteronomist used certain accounts of women in Genesis to draft those laws in Deuteronomy that deal with moral practices concerning women. Such an approach to the laws in Deuteronomy, although certainly not upholding Mosaic authorship, does show how those laws may have been drafted according to the historical traditions of the Israelites. If the historical validity of such "traditions" is held, then the supposed link between law and literature disappears leaving the original link between law and life intact. Carmichael's thesis would then be one possible explanation of the method used by Moses in drafting some of the laws in the Pentateuch.

⁶O. Kaiser, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977) 53.

⁷S. M. Paul, *Studies in the Book of the Covenant in Light of Cuneiform and Biblical Law* (Leiden: Brill, 1970) 27-28, 43-44, deals with only Exod 21:12-22:16, stating that this section deals with the judicial matters while 20:22-21:11 and 22:17-23:33 fall under the categories of prologue and epilogue. Motivation occurs in both the prologue and epilogue, and thus I will not restrict my attention to Paul's study.

⁸It is not my purpose here to explain fully all the grammatical and syntactical characteristics of motive clauses. For a more complete discussion the reader may consult Gemser, "Importance," 96-115; S. Rifat, *Motive Clauses in Hebrew Law: Biblical Forms and Near Eastern Parallels* (Chico: Scholars, 1980); R. Uitti, "The Motive Clause in Old Testament Law" (dissertation, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1973).

⁹G. Wenham, "Grace and Law in the Old Testament" and "Law and the Legal System in the Old Testament," *Law, Morality and the Bible* (ed. B. Kaye and G. Wenham; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1978)

been discussed separately from motive clauses by Rifat, Driver and von Rad.¹⁰ I believe that this distinction is important and deserves some discussion.

Gemser defined motivation simply as "the grammatically subordinate sentences in which the motivation for the commandment is given." Within this broad definition he included these categories: (1) simple explanations—for example, "If there is anyone who curses his father or his mother, he shall surely be put to death; *he has cursed his father or his mother, his bloodguiltiness is upon him*" (Lev 20:9)¹¹; (2) ethical contexts—for example, "When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof, *that you may not bring bloodguiltiness on your house if anyone falls from it*" (Deut 22:8); (3) religious cultic and theological—for example, "And they shall not profane the holy gifts of the sons of Israel which they offer to the LORD, *and so cause them to bear punishment for guilt by eating their holy gifts; for I am the LORD who sanctifies them*" (Lev 22:15-16 [parenetic]); and (4) religious and historical contexts—for example, "When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not go over it again; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow. *And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing*" (Deut 24:21-22 [parenetic]).

As one can see, Gemser included parenetic statements when he discussed motivation.¹² In contrast both Rifat and von Rad noticed that parenetic statements occurred throughout the law codes, especially in Deuteronomy, and attributed them to later redactors. While von Rad did not specifically define parenetic statements Rifat noted that they were both independent—that is, not grammatically tied in with the law (cf. Lev 25:18)—and dependent—that is, grammatically dependent statements stressing the idea that heeding the divine command resulted in well-being (cf. Deut 15:4). While Rifat discusses dependent parenetic statements along with motive clauses, he raises the whole question as to the origin of motivation itself.¹³ Gemser realized that parenetic statements played a big part

3-52; J. B. Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962) 321-322; W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 1. 136-137.

¹⁰S. Rifat, *Motive Clauses*, 66-69; G. von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953) 11-24; S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1909) 34-35.

¹¹In these examples the motive clause follows the prescription and is italicized. All citations are from the NASB.

¹²Gemser, "Importance," 99. Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 1. 197-198, also categorizes motivation similarly: matter of fact (Exod 21:21), ethical appeal (Deut 25:3), and theological interpretations (Lev 17:14). The latter he considered the most important.

¹³Rifat, *Motive Clauses*, 70-71, notes that the study of parenetic statements has been minimal. He limited motive clauses to those statements that answered questions such as "Why is this law thus?", "Why observe this law?", by providing either a justification or an incentive for observing a particular prescription. He defines parenesis as exhortation, advice and hortatory composition, which he attributes to rhetorical development, especially in Deuteronomy (cf. n 16). Many scholars in fact have recognized a great number of parenetic clauses contra N. Lohfink, *Das Hauptgebot* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963) 90-97; R. Merendino, *Das deuteronomische Gesetz* (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1969); G. Seitz, *Redaktionsgeschichtliche Studien zum Deuteronomium* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1971) 101-108. For arguments supporting the antiquity of parenetic statements the reader may consult W. Beyerlin, "Die Parenese im Bundesbuch und ihre Herkunft," *Gottes Wort und Gottes Land* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1965) 11-12; B. Childs, *The Book of Exodus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974) 456.

in motivation, but by assigning them to a minor role in law motivation I believe real harm has been done as to revealing the true characteristics of motivation.

This distinction between parenetic and "pure" motive clauses brings to the surface the neglect to refer to the divine aspect of motivation in general. Both Gemser and Rifat noted that motive clauses occurred throughout the law codes but that their frequency increased from the earlier codes (covenant code) to the later ones (Deuteronomy).¹⁴ What is inferred is the evolutionary aspect of law, reducing both law and motivation to human imagination and purpose.¹⁵ It is important to notice that motive clauses (including parenetic statements) occur in five of the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20.¹⁶ Regarding the theophany Cassuto remarks that it "does not imply the effacement of the boundaries between the Divine and human spheres. On the contrary, the Torah emphasizes again and again that the barrier can by no means be demolished."¹⁷ Thus the

¹⁴Gemser, "Importance," 97-98, notes that the percentage of motive clauses in the decalogue is 33, in the covenant code 17, in the holiness code 65, and in the deuteronomic code 60. Gemser's technique was to count the motivations that occurred within each "paragraph," which he admits is not an easy process. Rifat, "Motive Clauses," does not agree with Gemser's approach and thus calculates his percentages according to the occurrence within each separate prescription. His results were lower than Gemser's: 45 in the decalogue, 16 in the covenant code, 51 in the holiness code, 20 in the priestly code and 50 in Deuteronomy. Both authors agreed that basically the percentage of motivations increased with each subsequent law code, although Rifat questioned whether it was clear that Deuteronomy was actually the latest. In my own research I found that the percentage within each code was a little higher since I counted parenetic statements. I found that out of the ten laws in the decalogue five were motivated, giving a 50 per cent occurrence; 30 for the priestly code; 16 for the covenant code; 80 per cent for the holiness code (although I calculated this according to a much broader "paragraph" than Gemser); and 56 for the deuteronomic code.

¹⁵This interpretation can be found in Alt, "Origins," 84-85. Wenham, *Numbers*, 27-28, examines the prejudice that has prevented much discussion concerning the significance of OT ritual, particularly the sacrificial system. He critiques J. Wellhausen's work, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (1878), noting two presuppositions that run through it. The first is that Freedom and spontaneity are good (early), the second that organization and ritual are bad (late). Such presuppositions have affected evangelicals, who fail to realize the significance of ritual and minimize the importance of form and organization in both religious and secular callings. Concerning the significance of motivation such authors as Cassuto, von Rad, Gemser, Payne, Eichrodt and Uitti attest that motivation is unique to Israel. Rifat, *Motive Clauses*, 153-175, notes that motivation occurs in extra-Biblical law codes. Comparing them with Biblical motivation he concludes that (1) motivation occurs more frequently in Biblical law than in cuneiform law, (2) multiple motivation occurs only in the Bible, (3) no cuneiform law is motivated by an historical situation, (4) the deity is completely silent in cuneiform law, (5) Biblical motivation is religious while cuneiform law is economic, and (6) motivation in Biblical law corresponds to motivation found in wisdom literature and probably was formed under its influence (under redactional influence during the prophets). While motivation in its simplest terms was known apart from Israel, Biblical motivation remains unique in its use and form. Just as the law, which was given at Sinai, was God-interpreted when given, so the same may be said for motivation.

¹⁶In Exodus 20, the first five laws are all motivated. Driver, *Introduction*, 34-35, mentions that it was an old superstition that the commandments in the decalogue were originally without any motivations, because of the differences between the decalogue in Exodus 20 and the one in Deuteronomy 5. He believes that the motivations in Exodus are in their original place. He sees those additions in Deuteronomy as later comments on the text of Exodus. I believe that this is a helpful solution and preserves the integrity of Exodus 20. The difference in motivation in Deuteronomy is best explained in the context of its giving. Thus motivation does not differ between texts because of the degeneration of the text or the work of a redactor who inserted them after the fact.

¹⁷U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967) 229. The result of Rifat's investigation into motivation (cf. n 15) makes it apparent that there is a great difference between what is known about cuneiform law and that which is Biblical. Biblical Law and motivation center on God himself.

decatalogue was a divine law that chose to teach the divine requirements of man, not to associate man and nature with God himself as other Near Eastern religions did. The concept and form of motivation must then be regarded as a product of God and not of man. Motivation does not then become merely a human invention to produce obedience but a divine method seeking to display the full character of God in his requirements for sanctification.

It is important therefore to look briefly at the concept of motivation in terms of the covenant setting of the law. In this light motivation has been defined as follows:

The motive clauses . . . of the religious kind testify to the deep religious sense and concentrated theological teaching of their formulations.¹⁸

They serve to reinforce a point that is often made explicitly in the Old Testament, that the covenant creates a personal relationship between God and Israel.¹⁹

We see in them something which belonged specifically to the Israelite tradition. . . . (Yahweh) wants men who understand His commandments and ordinances, that is, men who assent inwardly as well. The obedience which Yahweh wants is the obedience of men who have come of age.²⁰

The idea of motivation must be grounded in a proper theological context concerning the concept of law in general. Observing the law, as Walter Kaiser points out,

could qualify, hamper, or negate Israel's experience of sanctification and ministry to others; but it hardly could effect her election, salvation, or present and future inheritance of the ancient promise. . . . Eternal life or living in the benefits of the promise was not now conditioned by a new law of obedience.²¹

Thus it is in this light that motivation must be analyzed. Motivation must not only be looked at as divine in origin²² but as instrumental in the process of reflection on the law and its observance in accordance with the covenant and promises of God.

II. MOTIVATION: AN ANALYSIS OF THE LAW CODES

In order to analyze motivations with any degree of certainty, it was necessary to catalog all of the occurrences of motivation in the law codes under examination and then categorize them according to topic and theme. This has never been done so far as I know, and I feel that it has helped immensely in making theological

¹⁸Gemser, "Importance," 111.

¹⁹Wenham, "Grace," 6, 10, explains the character of the law quite well in this illustration: (1) I brought you to myself; (2) obey my covenant; (3) you shall be my possession. It is important to note the sequence: God's choice (1) precedes man's obedience (2), but man's obedience is a prerequisite of knowing the full benefits of election (3).

²⁰Von Rad, *Theology*, 198. It is interesting to note that von Rad concurs with Gemser as to the ability of the law and motivation to produce an inner reflection in man.

²¹W. Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978) 111.

²²D. Patrick, "I and Thou in the Covenant Code," SBLASP (ed. P. J. Achtemeier; Missoula: Scholars, 1978) 71-86, analyzes the address patterns within the code and notes that "I" and "Thou" formulations belong together and stand over and against third-person formulations. Most of the code is personal with the "I" denoting Yahweh and "Thou" Israel. This type of analysis supports the argument that this is a unified declaration of God, although Patrick would hold only to a redactional unity.

statements concerning motivation in general.²³

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Theme</i>
I. Social	I. Holiness
A. Justice	A. Separation to holiness
general	call to sanctification
crimes	atonement
bribery	B. Separation from holiness
vengeance	purging evil
usury	guilt
B. Family Life	cutting off
parents	C. Keeping holy
marriage	keep commandments
sexual laws	fear God
slavery	D. Holiness of God
C. Poor/Orphan/Widow/Alien	his name
general	II. Promise
usury	A. Egypt—deliverance and remembrance
harvest	B. Land—promise and what others have done
D. Political	C. Blessings—general and land
war	III. General
king	A. Ethical
E. Harvest	B. Explanatory
II. Cultic/Religious	
A. Worship	
general	
foreign practices	
festivals	
sabbaths	
B. Offerings	
burnt	
meal	
peace	
guilt	
sin	
C. Priests	
priestly holiness	
inauguration of the tabernacle	
strange fire of Nadab and Abihu	
D. Clean/Unclean	
animals	
leprosy	
eating/flesh	

²³In my research I followed the examples of Gemser, Rifat and Uitti and catalogued all the motivations found within Exod 20:22-23:33 (covenant code), Leviticus 1-16 (priestly code), 17-26 (code of holiness)

Before we turn to an analysis of topic and theme it would be beneficial to discuss motivation as it relates to the decalogue. Much can be learned about motivation when an exhaustive treatment of parallel passages is completed.

The decalogue occurs in Exod 20:1-17 and Deut 5:6-21, and motivation appears in five of the ten laws.²⁴ The content of the laws is the same, but there is diversity when one looks at the motivations used in each version.²⁵ The fourth commandment in Exod 20:8-11 and Deut 5:12-15 is motivated as follows: "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath Day and made it holy" (Exod 20:11). "And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched hand; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to observe the Sabbath Day" (Deut 5:15).

Cassuto remarks that the Sabbath was initiated as a hallowed day in which Israel was to imitate the ways in which the Lord works, that the Lord was not to be identified with any portion of the world or forces of nature.²⁶ It is easy to see that the motivation in Exod 20:11 is what elucidates this theological perception. In Deut 5:15 the motivation shifts from God's creative acts to the deliverance from Egypt.²⁷ The theme concerning the deliverance is particularly evident in Deuteronomy and seems to create reflection on the promises of God and his covenant with Israel. The important aspect of the Sabbath was to disclose the character of God as it did in Exod 20:11, and that the new motivation in Deut 5:15 did not alter this theological teaching. To remind Israel of her deliverance was only to amplify or explain further God's character as being consistent with his creative acts. Just as God created the heavens and earth, he also delivered and thus created Israel as a holy nation separated to himself. Thus in this instance motivation is revealed as flexible in that it speaks to someone in relation to where that person

and Deuteronomy 12-26. I catalogued some 370 motivations, which included both "pure" motivations and parenetic statements (this follows both Gemser and Uitti).

²⁴The decalogue in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 is motivated in the first five laws: Exod 20:2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16. The motivation for the first law is to be found before the law but is not to be considered apart from it (M. Noth, *Exodus* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962] 161-162).

²⁵Driver, *Introduction*, 33-34, comments that there are remarkable differences between the fourth, fifth and tenth commandments in Deuteronomy 5 and attributes them to the author of Deuteronomy. Von Rad, *Theology*, 1, 18, 191, comments that the antiquity of the decalogue in Exodus cannot be proved even when freed from its "secondary additions." The motivations that occur in Exodus are considered later additions, being "ramified elaborations." In reply to form criticism Cassuto, *Exodus*, 235-240, proposed that study of the ethical teachings of the ancient Near East has produced evidence that nothing in the essential content of the decalogue could disprove Mosaic authorship. Wenham, *Numbers*, 19-21, notes that diversity of subject matter proves little about sources. Nor does diversity of style prove multiple authorship. In fact, it has been argued recently that books such as Genesis were composed by the bringing together of large blocks of material that were then joined together: R. Rendtorff, *Das überlieferungsgeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch* (de Gruyter, 1977). Wenham notes that this analysis goes contrary to the documentary theory that sees main sources as long strands, each containing a little bit about each topic.

²⁶Cassuto, *Exodus*, 246.

²⁷Von Rad, *Deuteronomy* (London: SCM, 1966) 58, notes that in Exod 20:8-11 the reason for the Sabbath is thoroughly theological, while in Deut 5:15 the reason is more psychological and explains particularly the beneficial aspect of the Sabbath. He further adds that the accentuation of the "Sabbath to Yahweh" is no longer fully brought out.

stands at that moment in time and in the purposes of God. During the theophany God wanted to reflect his creative acts in the Sabbath, while in Deuteronomy the reflection on Israel's deliverance was suitable for a nation that was about to enter the promised land.²⁸

It is impossible to examine every motivation as thoroughly as I would like to, for that would take too much time and go beyond the scope of a general investigation. When looking at the categories of topics one will notice that motivations appear in a wide spectrum of topics within the law codes. In the area of social prescriptions there is an equal distribution among all the law codes except in the areas of war and kingship, which are found only in Deuteronomy. This is expected considering the position of Deuteronomy in respect to entering the land. In the area of cultic/religious prescriptions there is equal distribution among the prescriptions concerning worship and clean/unclean, while concerning priests and sacrifices the distribution is limited to Leviticus. Motivation is not limited to any particular topic and thus demonstrates its usefulness in all law rather than in one specific area. The distribution of motivation among the law codes would then follow the content of each code. It is important to note that a large portion of motivation occurs within those texts that deal with oppressed people (poor, widow, orphan, alien).²⁹

There are many interesting characteristics present in motivation when they are separated into specific themes. In the area of holiness there are three concepts present: (1) separation to(ward) (see Lev 20:7-8; Deut 14:21; Exod 22:31; Lev 21:15, 23), (2) separation from (see Deut 22:21; Lev 22:22; 20:14), and (3) keeping holy (obeying) (see Lev 25:18; Deut 16:12; Lev 25:17; Deut 17:13, 19). What is interesting to note is that the idea of separation to holiness is found mostly in Leviticus while the motivation to remove evil is found mainly in Deuteronomy and the sexual laws of Leviticus. As to the purpose of Leviticus S. H. Kellogg writes:

The law of Leviticus was intended to effect this preparation of Israel for its world-mission, not only in an external manner, but also in an internal way; namely, by

²⁸S. Paul, *Studies*, 31-32, notes that the covenant code is founded on the historical experience of the deliverance from Egypt. He sees that the prelude (Exod 20:2) is not motivation as such but reveals that God's redemptive intervention into history demands a corresponding action on the part of the redeemed. In both Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 the deliverance from Egypt is a present concept, while the Sabbath in Exod 20:11 is motivated by the acts of God's creation and the Sabbath in Deuteronomy 5 is motivated specifically in terms of deliverance. The motivation in Exod 20:11 produces a "back-to-basics" reflection of God, while Deuteronomy is fully reflecting on deliverance and thus points to the new land. Reflection on God's character fully explained the theophany and the giving of the law, for both expressed order. In Deuteronomy 5 the reflection on deliverance would bring in perspective God's ability and desire to give the land and thus fulfill his promise. Refer to Wenham, "Law and the Legal System," 32, for a good treatment on the motivations in the commandments of the decalogue.

²⁹Both Gilmer, *If-You*, and R. Uitti, *Israel's Underprivileged and Gemser's Motive Clause*, SBLASP (Missoula: Scholars, 1975), note that a major portion of those laws concerning oppressed people are motivated. Uitti notes that motivations serve as an archaizing return to the religion and ideals of the Mosaic age during the reform under Hezekiah and Josiah. Although these motivations occur in casuistic laws, Uitti states that all motivations were done on a literary level. By arguing that motives occur mainly within apodeictic law, Uitti argues for a later date concerning the motivations adjoining these laws. If we accept an early date coinciding with the laws concerning oppressed people, we get a clear picture of the concern on the part of Yahweh to develop a deep reflection and conscience for these people (cf. Exod 23:9).

revealing in and to Israel the *real character of God*, and in particular *His unapproachable Holiness*.³⁰

The motivation of holiness in Leviticus is to accentuate the need for Israel to draw toward God and become holy, while the main idea in Deuteronomy was to remove the evil from among them, thereby keeping them holy. These motivations underscored the idea that in order to remain in the state of holiness Israel must actively seek God and remove the evil that is among them, both internal and external.

Those motivations that concern the keeping of the law are either found as an introduction to a set of prescriptions or as conclusions. For example in Lev 22:31 the motivation of observance concludes the laws concerning priestly holiness, while in 18:30 the motivation concludes the section on sexual laws. The motivations are mostly parenetic and are not connected with any specific laws, but they are legitimate motivations that tie in the concept of observance with resultant blessing—blessing that can be nothing other than the continued presence of the Lord and walking with him in sanctification.

Another concept in observing the law is that of fearing the Lord, similar to those motivations found in the wisdom literature and prophets. The fear of respect and consideration of God's holiness is contrasted with those motivations connected with penalties explaining that the execution of them will evoke fear in the people "so that they will not act presumptuously again." There is both a reflection on the character of God and his holiness and also on the consequences of not heeding God's call for holiness. With the initiation of the covenant, God makes it clear that responsibility must accompany the privilege of being God's holy nation and people (Deut 14:23; 13:10-11).

A final form of motivation is the mentioning of the Lord's name, which occurs exclusively in the holiness code of Leviticus. It occurs in a variety of topics also found in Exodus and Deuteronomy but not motivated in the same fashion. The uniqueness of this points to the special relation Leviticus holds concerning the theme of holiness. The use of this type of motivation would thoroughly tie in the concept of the holiness of God with the holiness of Israel. Holiness can be found only in God and be taught by him exclusively.

While the concept of holiness in motivation basically pointed to the character of God, the concept of promise points to the works of God. Whatever God is in concept is demonstrated in his acts.

The deliverance from Egypt is motivated by characteristic expressions found for example in Deut 13:10; 24:22; Exod 22:21. The giving of the land and what has been done in it by others before them is exemplified in Deut 21:13; Lev 18:28. And blessings are exemplified in Deut 15:4; Lev 25:18; Deut 19:13; 15:18.

Motivations of this type fall basically into two categories: (1) deliverance from and remembrance of Egypt, and (2) the giving of the land and living in it. The use of motivations concerning Egypt is mainly for laws concerned with the oppressed. Fair treatment of the poor, orphan, widow and alien could not be motivated any

³⁰S. H. Kellogg, *The Book of Leviticus* (Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1978) 21. For insightful discussions concerning law and holiness the reader may consult G. J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) 18-29; "The Theology of Unclean Food," *EvQ* 53 (1981) 9-11.

better than by reminding Israel that they were once oppressed and it was God who redeemed them. Their own means could not accomplish it. This would require the people to reflect on what God had done for them and then to want to be like God in their own dealings with people (Exod 22:21; Lev 25:37-38). Those motivations that concern the land occur almost exclusively in Deuteronomy. The only exceptions are found in Leviticus and again concern sexual laws. Such motivations point to future blessings in the land or they remind Israel that the nations in the land before them were spewed out because of their transgressions. The deliverance from Egypt was a completed act and demonstrated God's purpose for Israel, and thus its remembrance created a "conscience" among the people concerning those who were less fortunate. Motivations concerning the land, however, point to a future event and thus are made contingent on observing the law. There is warning that although God is giving them the land, if they do as others have done they too will be spewed out. Entering the land and possessing it was the ultimate blessing. To enter the land and thus reap its blessings would truly show that Israel had matured and thus responded to God's call for holiness. The possession of the land was to be the final expression of "keeping the law." There the full maturity of Israel would be unfolded as a holy nation, a representative of God and thus a witness to the whole world. Therefore the themes of holiness and promise go hand in hand and support each other.

Regarding ethical and explanatory motives, it is sufficient to say that they complement the other types of motivation discussed. Explanatory motives either occur alone or immediately follow a prescription and then are further motivated by another type of motivation (Lev 25:55; 20:9). Ethical motives further display the divine character and the proper response in different situations (Exod 22:27).

III. CONCLUSION

The question as to where Israel listened to what dogmatics understands by law, and what she herself clearly regarded law, is not easy to answer.³¹

Such motivations as "I am the LORD your God who brought you out of Egypt" serve to remind Israel that the law that God has given them is not the means to salvation but a means to God's continued presence in sanctification (see 1 John 2:3-5). The purpose of motivation in a large degree is to clarify the place of law in sanctification (especially dealing with promise and blessing). Motivation did not necessarily protect the letter of the law but rather impressed one with the thought behind the law: Yahweh.

The Pharisee misunderstood or ignored the normal relationship between God and man, under which the Sinaitic law was given, a relationship of grace on the one side and of faith on the other.³²

Motivation reveals the character of God and his plan to make us like him. Motivation points to God's holiness and his demand for it from Israel, and it points to his promises as his redemptive and sanctifying acts for Israel. Law then would no longer be just an external form but truly an inward disposition,³³ a reflection of

³¹Von Rad, *Theology*, 1. 201.

³²W. S. Bruce, *The Ethics of the Old Testament* (Greenwood: Attic, 1960) 183.

³³*Ibid.*, p. 243.

the holiness of God that would signify a renewal of the mind (Rom 12:2). Such an intense reflection upon who God is in character and action—i.e., law—would naturally produce ethical insights. A major problem in dealing with ethics (especially in the OT) is that we all too often look intently on the laws themselves without looking at the context and meaning behind them. Why do we not have an exhaustive catalog of laws in which we could look up our questions? Motivated laws seek not only to show what God's character is but are also the foundation blocks for building on the ethical foundation (law) that God has given us. To a large degree, ethics and law are formulated in the reflective response of our daily walk. God wants us to concentrate on our relationship with him rather than just on the laws themselves. There must be a proper balance between law and faith. The closer we come to know God, the more we are able to make ethical decisions.

This is not to say that we do not need law. On the contrary, we need a foundation to build on. What all this leads to is the practise of wisdom. Recently there has been a trend in scholarship that asserts that law is directly related to wisdom in the OT.³⁴ Perhaps it is valid to assert that wisdom has its roots in religious concepts rather than in secular reasoning. Further research into motivation within the law and wisdom literature will reveal a close relationship between the two.

Reflection on the law proper must produce wisdom in order for law to be useful for everyday living. The binding element between law and wisdom is reflection stimulated by the concept of motivation. It is not unusual, then, that we find hints of the law within Proverbs (cf. Lev 19:35 to Prov 11:1; 20:10, 23; cf. Exod 23:7 to Prov 17:15). Thus any investigation into motivation can only make us more aware of the character of God and how we must reflect on the law he has given us. Ethics become not just a system that we follow but a display of our very relationship to God.

page 313

³⁴M. Weinfeld, "The Origin of Humanism in Deuteronomy," *JBL* 80 (1961) 241-247; *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), argues that the humanitarian laws in Deuteronomy are related to the wisdom of the Near East. He asserts that Deuteronomy was founded in the ancient wisdom of Proverbs, pushing the date of Deuteronomy far beyond the time of Moses. I believe that it is unwise to suggest common authorship to those texts that have common wisdom vocabulary. Paul, *Studies*, 37, notes that the character within the book of the covenant includes three areas: (1) law, (2) priestly handbook, and (3) wisdom literature. Rifat, *Motive Clauses*, 168, notes that in literary genres other than law the only genre where motive clauses appear profusely is wisdom instruction. He suggests that a closer look at this genre is warranted. E. Gerstenberger, "Covenant and Commandment," *JBL* 84 (1965) 38-51; *Wesen und Herkunft des "apodiktischen Rechts"* (WMANT 20; Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1965), states that law and wisdom had a common element of concern for the welfare of the society. He concludes that both genres have their source in the cultic setting of the "family clan." Gerstenberger rightly shifts emphasis away from the professional class as a prime source of wisdom, yet lays too much emphasis on the cultic setting of the "clan." In another direction G. T. Sheppard, "Wisdom and Torah: The Interpretation of Deuteronomy Underlying Sirach 24:23," *Biblical and Near Eastern Studies* (ed. G. Tuttle; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 166; *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct* (BZAW 151; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980) 159-160, investigates the relationship between wisdom and law according to the hermeneutical statement made by Sirach that the Torah can be read as a guide to wisdom. Sheppard notes that a relationship between Torah and wisdom remains unresolved even though later Jewish interpretation chose to sapientialize the Torah rather than to find in wisdom a veiled reference to law. Further study into the significance of law, both in its general and specific sense (Torah), may yet reveal a dynamic relationship that describes law as the basis and origin of wisdom literature. Thus wisdom literature need not be considered an isolated phenomenon in OT theology but can be placed beside God's covenants, which delimit and define man's obedience before God and in concert with his promise.