Title: The discontinuation and the continuation of the Sinaitic covenant: a study from Daniel 9:24-27

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Abstract:

Theological diversity on the concept of the Sinaitic covenant is a problem in Old Testament (OT) studies. Some scholars hold that there is a discontinuation of this covenant, while others maintain a contrary view. Consequently, more study is necessary to resolve the issue.

The purpose of this study was to offer a possible solution to the tension between the idea of the discontinuation and continuation of the Sinaitic covenant. Based on an analytical study and theological understanding of the covenant in Daniel 9, especially verses 24-27, a possible solution was offered.

The covenant in the book of Daniel is significant to OT study. This study reveals that the covenant between God and his chosen people, Israel, was prominent in Israelite thought. The study supports the idea that the covenant between God and Israel was one of the basic teachings of OT prophets. Moreover, the covenant between God and Israel was still to be kept, despite the fact that the curses of a broken covenant required the annulment of the covenant.

Some indications from Hebrew words and the theological understanding of the words in Dan 9:24-27, convey both the idea of discontinuation and continuation of the Sinaitic covenant.
Hebrew words, such hīgbîr (confirm, make strong), reveal the idea of the continuation of the covenant; while other words, such hātak (cut off), are associated with the idea of discontinuation of the covenant. Israel had chosen to abrogate the covenant, and thus, the Sinaitic covenant was discontinued to Israel as a nation. However, the purpose for which the covenant was made would be achieved in a wider context, the covenant between God and mankind.

The salvation of mankind, which is the purpose of all God’s covenants, will never be annulled. Dan 9:27 reveals that the messiah confirms God’s covenant to the rabbîm (many). Through the death (kārat, “cutting off”) of the Messiah, a covenant relationship between God and mankind is available to all peoples and to all nations. This salvation is given to everyone who accepts and remains faithful to the covenant relationship with God. This study, thus harmonizes the two viewpoints on the discontinuation and continuation of the Sinaitic covenant.