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AN EXEGESIS OF THE MEANING OF "A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS" (מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים) IN EXODUS 19:6 FOR THE NATION OF ISRAEL AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH IN LIGHT OF 1 PETER 2:9

Anesias Randandima, Oktapianus Parintak
STT Anugrah Indonesia, STT Anugrah Indonesia
Corresponding Author:
anesias.radandima40@gmail.com ; oktapianus2023@gmail.com
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ABSTRACT

The semantic force of מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים in Exodus 19:6 remains contested, with scholarly opinion divided between active-mediatorial and passive-consecratory readings. This unresolved polarity directly conditions how the phrase's appropriation in 1 Peter 2:9 is construed, yet few studies trace the movement from Hebrew lexical semantics through Septuagint reception to Petrine usage within a single methodological frame. This study addresses that gap through grammatical-historical exegesis of the Masoretic Text, canonical-intertextual analysis of 1 Peter 2:9 in relation to Exodus 19:6, Isaiah 43:20–21, and Hosea 1:6–9, and theological synthesis, triangulating grammatical-historical, canonical-critical, and intertextual approaches. The analysis finds that the phrase encodes a dual identity, corporate consecration and mediatorial commission, rather than reducing one dimension to the other, and that 1 Peter 2:9 both preserves and christologically transforms this duality. On this basis the study proposes the Covenantal-Missional Mediation Model (CMMM), an exegetical framework applicable to other texts invoking Israel's priestly vocation, including Isaiah 61:6 and Revelation 1:6; 5:10. The contribution is a contextually grounded account of priestly identity that informs contemporary debates on the priesthood of all believers, the church's relation to Israel, and missional ecclesiology. As a text-based qualitative study, it advances no empirical or statistical claims.

Keywords: Exodus 19:6; kingdom of priests; 1 Peter 2:9; intertextuality; priestly identity

INTRODUCTION

Few verses in the Hebrew Bible carry as much ecclesiological weight as Exodus 19:6, where Israel is addressed as וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ־לִי מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ ("and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"). The phrase מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים has attracted sustained scholarly attention, yet its precise semantic force remains contested. The interpretive difficulty is not merely lexical but theological: the phrase sits at the junction of Israel's covenant identity, her vocation among the nations, and the later Christian appropriation of the same language in 1 Peter 2:9, where the church is described as βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα and ἔθνος ἅγιον. How the Hebrew phrase is understood in its original covenant setting materially affects how the Petrine application is construed, and vice versa.

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The dominant lines of interpretation diverge along a single axis. One reading treats the phrase as active: Israel is constituted as a community that performs a priestly function on behalf of the nations, mediating the knowledge of YHWH to the world in continuity with the Abrahamic promise that "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Gen 12:3). The other reading treats the phrase as passive or attributive: Israel is a kingdom characterized by priestly consecration, set apart for YHWH, with the emphasis falling on holiness rather than on mediation toward outsiders. The parallel with וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ ("holy nation") is frequently invoked in support of the second reading, since both expressions appear to describe Israel's status coram Deo rather than her function coram gentibus. A mediating position, represented in various forms by Udoekpo (2023) and Kim and Kim (2025), holds that the phrase is primarily consecratory but carries an implicit mediatorial dimension by virtue of Israel's covenant vocation. Bae (2023) has further complicated the discussion by situating the phrase within the context of family religion and the prohibition of image cult in the Covenant Code, arguing that Israel's priestly identity is articulated through cultic separation rather than through explicit mission to the nations.

The tension is sharpened by the reception of Exodus 19:6 in 1 Peter 2:9. The Petrine text does not simply quote Exodus; it constructs a composite citation that draws additionally on Isaiah 43:20–21 and Hosea 1:6–9, so that the interpretive center of the passage is itself disputed. If the Exodus phrase is fundamentally passive, the Petrine application emphasizes the church's consecration and separation from the surrounding culture. If it is active, the application emphasizes the church's missional mediation. The secondary literature reflects this unresolved polarity. Some studies argue that 1 Peter 2:9 universalizes the priestly vocation, extending it to all believers without ethnic distinction; others contend that the text retains a particularistic dimension, applying the Exodus language to a specific community of elect exiles rather than to humanity at large. These contradictory findings indicate that the interpretive question is not merely lexical but theological and ecclesiological, and that it cannot be resolved by lexical analysis alone.

The urgency of addressing this question is heightened by three converging factors. First, the phrase operates at the intersection of Pentateuchal covenant theology and New Testament ecclesiology, and imprecise exegesis at either pole distorts the other. Second, contemporary ecclesiological debates—concerning the priesthood of all believers, the church's relationship to Israel, and the missional identity of congregations—routinely invoke Exodus 19:6 and 1 Peter 2:9 without adequate attention to their grammatical and canonical contexts. Third, the reception history of the phrase reveals a persistent polarization between exclusivist and universalist readings that warrants careful exegetical resolution rather than rhetorical assertion. The broader discussion of the church's public role and its relationship to the kingdom of God, as pursued by Pratt (2023) and Troxel (2023), presupposes precisely the kind of exegetical clarity that is presently lacking.

Existing scholarship has treated the two texts extensively but often in isolation. Pentateuchal commentaries focus on the syntax and covenant setting of Exodus 19, while New Testament commentaries address 1 Peter 2:9 primarily within Petrine theology. Few studies offer a sustained,

methodologically explicit comparison that moves from Hebrew lexical semantics through Septuagint reception to Petrine appropriation, and fewer still propose an integrative model that accounts for both continuity and transformation. The gap is therefore both exegetical and theoretical: there is no coherent framework that explains how the phrase functions in its original covenant context and how that function is reconfigured in 1 Peter. The present study addresses this gap through grammatical-historical exegesis of the Hebrew text, canonical-intertextual analysis of the Petrine appropriation, and theological synthesis.

The study is framed by three complementary theoretical perspectives. Grammatical-historical exegesis provides the methodological foundation for analyzing the Hebrew text, attending to syntax, lexical semantics, and literary context (Osborne, 2006; Stuart, 2009). Canonical criticism supplies the hermeneutical lens for tracing the phrase's function across the canon, treating the final form of Scripture as the interpretive horizon (Childs, 1979, 1992). Intertextuality and reception theory provide the analytical categories for examining how 1 Peter 2:9 appropriates Exodus 19:6, including attention to the Septuagint as a mediating textual tradition (Hays, 1989; Beale, 2012). Each framework carries limitations: grammatical-historical exegesis can tend toward atomistic readings that neglect canonical resonance; canonical criticism has been criticized for potentially flattening historical particularity (Barton, 1996); and intertextual approaches risk over-identifying echoes without sufficient criteria for validation. This study addresses these limitations by triangulating the three frameworks and by stating explicitly the criteria for identifying intertextual dependence between the two texts.

The design is qualitative and text-based. It proceeds in three phases: lexical and grammatical analysis of Exodus 19:6, canonical-intertextual analysis of 1 Peter 2:9 in relation to Exodus 19:6 and related texts, and theological synthesis. The "data" consist of primary textual sources—the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint, and the Greek New Testament—together with secondary scholarly literature. No human participants, statistical sampling, or quantitative instruments are involved, and no empirical fieldwork is implied. This limitation is stated explicitly to prevent any misreading of the study's evidentiary basis. The analytical "instrument" is the exegetical method itself, operationalized through morphological and syntactic analysis, semantic domain analysis using standard lexica, comparison of the Masoretic Text with the Septuagint rendering, intertextual analysis using Hays's criteria for identifying echoes, and canonical-theological synthesis.

The novelty of the article lies in the proposal of the Covenantal-Missional Mediation Model (CMMM), an exegetical framework that interprets מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים as encoding a dual identity—corporate consecration and mediatorial commission—and demonstrates how 1 Peter 2:9 both preserves and christologically transforms this dual identity. The CMMM is not a mere synthesis of existing theories but a structured interpretive instrument that can be applied to other texts where Israel's priestly vocation is invoked, such as Isaiah 61:6 and Revelation 1:6; 5:10. By holding the consecratory and mediatorial dimensions together rather than reducing one to the other, the model

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offers a contextually grounded account of priestly identity that speaks directly to contemporary ecclesiological debates while remaining accountable to the grammatical and canonical evidence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Three complementary perspectives frame this study. Grammatical-historical exegesis supplies the methodological foundation for analyzing the Hebrew of Exodus 19:6, attending to syntax, lexical semantics, and literary setting (Osborne, 2006; Stuart, 2009). Canonical criticism provides the hermeneutical horizon, treating the final form of Scripture as the interpretive context within which earlier texts acquire their theological function (Childs, 1979, 1992). Intertextuality and reception theory furnish the categories for examining how 1 Peter 2:9 appropriates Exodus 19:6, with attention to the Septuagint as a mediating tradition (Hays, 1989; Beale, 2012). The three perspectives are not merely additive. Grammatical analysis without canonical awareness risks atomistic reading; canonical reading without grammar risks theological imposition; intertextual reading without controls risks uncontrolled echo-hunting. The framework adopted here holds the three in deliberate tension, and the proposed model is constructed at their intersection rather than by privileging any one of them.

Theoretical Critique

Each framework carries liabilities that must be named. Grammatical-historical exegesis has been criticized for treating the biblical text as a self-enclosed linguistic artifact, thereby underestimating the role of ecclesial reception in meaning-making. Canonical criticism, conversely, has been charged with flattening historical particularity and with an implicit theological normativity that is not always argued (Barton, 1996). Intertextual approaches, especially in the wake of Hays's influential criteria, risk over-identifying echoes without sufficient validation; Hays himself proposed seven tests, but these are applied unevenly in the literature, and the criteria for distinguishing allusion from coincidental lexical overlap remain contested. Recent exegetical work on Pentateuchal texts illustrates both the promise and the limits of grammatical-historical method: Opade (2022) demonstrates how historical-grammatical analysis of Exodus 33:1–6 can correct contemporary interpretive accretions, while Hare (2026) shows how reading Exodus 4:24–26 in light of Exodus 2:3–10 requires a canonical sensitivity that strictly grammatical method cannot supply. Similar methodological tensions appear in New Testament exegesis: Komolafe (2024) and Mwaura (2023) both combine lexical analysis with contemporary application, but the criteria by which the move from text to application is warranted are often left implicit. This study responds by stating its intertextual criteria explicitly and by treating the move from Exodus to 1 Peter as a christologically mediated transformation rather than a simple transfer of terminology.

Academic Debate

The central debate concerns whether מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים is active (Israel functions as a priestly community on behalf of the nations) or passive (Israel is a kingdom characterized by priestly consecration to

YHWH). The active reading finds support in the Abrahamic promise that all nations will be blessed through Israel's line (Genesis 12:3) and in the covenant formula of Exodus 19:5–6, which situates Israel's election within a universal horizon. On this reading, Israel's priesthood is mediatorial: the nation stands between YHWH and the peoples. The passive reading emphasizes the parallelism with וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ ("holy nation"): both expressions describe Israel's set-apart status rather than a function directed toward outsiders. Bae (2023) has recently advanced this line by situating the phrase within the context of family religion and the prohibition of image cult in the Covenant Code, arguing that priestly identity in Exodus is primarily about cultic exclusivity and consecration rather than mission. Udoekpo (2023), by contrast, reads the phrase as a ministry of royal priesthood that is theologically expanded in 1 Peter 2:5, 9–10, thereby favoring a functional and mediatorial interpretation. Kim and Kim (2025) push further, offering a missional interpretation of Exodus 19:4–6 and 1 Peter 2:9 that treats the priestly vocation as a professional-missional foundation for the church. A mediating position holds that the phrase is primarily passive in consecration but carries an implicit active dimension by virtue of Israel's covenant vocation; on this view, the two readings are not mutually exclusive but describe different facets of a single identity.

Research Tension

The tension sharpens when 1 Peter 2:9 is brought into the discussion. The Petrine text describes the church as βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον, λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν, combining Exodus 19:6 with language from Isaiah 43:20–21 and Hosea 1:6–9. The composite citation creates an interpretive center that is disputed. If the Exodus phrase is passive, the Petrine application emphasizes the church's consecration; if active, it emphasizes the church's missional mediation. The tension is compounded by the fact that 1 Peter addresses "elect exiles" (1:1)—a specific community—rather than humanity at large, which raises the question of whether the Petrine appropriation particularizes or universalizes the Exodus vocation. The literature has not resolved this question, and the disagreement is not merely lexical but theological and ecclesiological.

Contradictory Findings

Contradictory findings appear in the secondary literature. Some studies argue that 1 Peter 2:9 universalizes the priestly vocation, extending it to all believers without ethnic distinction; on this reading, the church inherits Israel's vocation and the ethnic particularity of Exodus 19:6 is transcended. Others argue that the Petrine text retains a particularistic dimension, applying the Exodus language to a specific elect community rather than to humanity at large; on this reading, the church is a new particular people whose priestly identity is defined over against the surrounding culture. The contradiction is visible even within single studies: Udoekpo (2023) treats the Petrine expansion as a theological broadening, while Bae (2023) insists on the cultic particularity of the Exodus phrase. Kim and Kim (2025) attempt to hold both by reading the priestly vocation as simultaneously consecratory and missional, but their synthesis is asserted rather than methodologically demonstrated. The contradictory findings indicate that the interpretive question

cannot be settled by lexical analysis alone; it requires a framework that can account for both dimensions and for their transformation across the canon.

A further contradiction concerns the relationship between the church and Israel. Some scholars treat 1 Peter 2:9 as supersessionist, replacing Israel with the church; others read it as an incorporation of Gentile believers into Israel's existing vocation without displacing Israel. Synii (2023) traces the church's developing theology of nation and nationality and shows how easily priestly language can be co-opted for national or ecclesial self-assertion. Dorrien (2023) documents analogous dynamics in the American context, where biblical nation arguments have been deployed for competing social agendas. These findings suggest that the interpretive question is embedded in larger theological and political debates about identity, election, and mission.

Research Gap

The gap is therefore the absence of a model that can hold together the passive and active dimensions of the Exodus phrase and explain their transformation in 1 Peter without reducing one to the other. Existing scholarship has treated Exodus 19:6 and 1 Peter 2:9 extensively, but often in isolation. Pentateuchal commentaries focus on the syntax and covenant setting of Exodus 19, while New Testament commentaries address 1 Peter 2:9 primarily within Petrine theology. Few studies offer a sustained, methodologically explicit comparison that moves from Hebrew lexical semantics through Septuagint reception to Petrine appropriation, and fewer still propose an integrative model that accounts for both continuity and transformation. The gap is both exegetical and theoretical: a lack of a coherent framework that explains how the phrase functions in its original covenant context and how that function is reconfigured in 1 Peter. The gap is sharpened by the fact that the most recent contributions (Bae, 2023; Udoekpo, 2023; Kim & Kim, 2025) reach divergent conclusions while sharing much of the same textual base, which suggests that the disagreement is methodological rather than exegetical in the narrow sense.

Research Position

This study positions itself within a canonical-intertextual approach that affirms both the historical particularity of Exodus 19:6 and the theological legitimacy of its Petrine appropriation, while insisting that the latter be understood as a christologically mediated transformation rather than a simple transfer. The position is neither supersessionist nor strictly dispensationalist. It holds that Israel's priestly vocation is not revoked but is recapitulated in Christ and participated in by the church through union with him. This position has affinities with the mediating reading described above, but it differs in insisting that the active and passive dimensions are not two readings to be chosen between but two aspects of a single covenantal identity that the CMMM is designed to articulate.

The Covenantal-Missional Mediation Model (CMMM)

The CMMM is proposed as the study's novelty. It is a structured interpretive instrument rather than a synthesis of existing theories. The model operates on three levels. The first level is covenantal:

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Exodus 19:6 is read within the covenant formula of 19:5–6, where Israel's identity is constituted by YHWH's initiative ("you shall be my treasured possession") and by Israel's response ("if you obey my voice"). Priestly identity is therefore relational and conditional before it is functional. The second level is missional: the covenant formula is set within the Abrahamic horizon of blessing to the nations (Genesis 12:3), which supplies the teleological direction of Israel's consecration. The third level is christological: 1 Peter 2:9 reconfigures the first two levels by locating the church's priestly identity in Christ, the elect and precious stone (1 Peter 2:4–8), so that the church's consecration and mission are derivative rather than autonomous. The CMMM thus explains continuity (the same covenantal structure of consecration and mission) and transformation (the christological relocation of that structure) without collapsing either into the other.

The model is applicable beyond the immediate text. It can be used to analyze other passages where Israel's priestly vocation is invoked, such as Isaiah 61:6 and Revelation 1:6; 5:10, and it can be tested against the reception history of Exodus 19:6 in patristic, Reformation, and modern ecclesial contexts. Its analytical value lies in its capacity to distinguish between consecration and mission without separating them, and between Israel and the church without superseding either.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework can be represented as a three-tier structure. The base tier is the Hebrew text of Exodus 19:6, analyzed through lexical semantics (כֹּהֲנִים, מַמְלֶכֶת), syntax, and literary context. The middle tier is the canonical trajectory, moving from the Masoretic Text through the Septuagint rendering to the Petrine citation, with attention to the composite nature of 1 Peter 2:9. The upper tier is the theological synthesis, in which the CMMM articulates the relationship between covenantal consecration, missional mediation, and christological transformation. Each tier is connected to the next by explicit methodological criteria: lexical analysis is governed by standard lexica and by syntactic analysis of the Hebrew clause; canonical trajectory is governed by Hays's criteria for identifying echoes, applied with stated qualifications; theological synthesis is governed by the requirement that it account for both continuity and transformation without reducing either. The framework is qualitative and text-based; no statistical data are presented, and the limitations of a text-based method are acknowledged explicitly.

Methodological Note and Limitations

Because this is a biblical-exegetical study, there is no population, sample, or informant, and no interview guide or survey instrument was used. The "data" consist of primary textual sources (the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint, and the Greek New Testament) and secondary scholarly literature. The analytical "instrument" is the exegetical method itself, operationalized through morphological and syntactic analysis, semantic domain analysis using standard lexica (BDB, HALOT, TDOT), comparison of the Masoretic Text with the Septuagint, intertextual analysis of 1 Peter 2:9 using Hays's criteria, and canonical-theological synthesis. The limitation of this design is that it cannot adjudicate between competing theological readings by empirical means; it can only clarify the textual and canonical warrants for each reading and propose a framework that accounts for the

evidence more adequately than its rivals. The limitation is stated here to avoid any implication of empirical fieldwork and to make the study's evidentiary basis transparent.

Conclusion of the Literature Review

The literature review has established that the meaning of מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים in Exodus 19:6 is contested between active and passive readings, that the Petrine appropriation in 1 Peter 2:9 sharpens rather than resolves the contest, and that the secondary literature contains contradictory findings that cannot be reconciled by lexical analysis alone. The CMMM is proposed to fill this gap by articulating the covenantal, missional, and christological dimensions of the phrase in a single framework. The framework is offered not as a final answer but as a testable interpretive instrument whose value will be judged by its capacity to illuminate the text and its reception.

METHODS

Method

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative biblical-exegetical design oriented toward textual and canonical analysis rather than empirical measurement. The design is appropriate to the object of inquiry: the meaning of a Hebrew phrase in Exodus 19:6 and its reception in 1 Peter 2:9 cannot be reduced to measurable variables without distorting the nature of the evidence. The investigation proceeds through three sequential phases. The first phase comprises lexical, morphological, and syntactic analysis of the Masoretic Text of Exodus 19:6, situated within the literary unit of Exodus 19:1–8 and the broader covenant narrative of Exodus 19–24. The second phase traces the phrase through the Septuagint rendering and into the Greek text of 1 Peter 2:9, attending to the composite citation of Exodus 19:6, Isaiah 43:20–21, and Hosea 1:6–9. The third phase undertakes theological synthesis, articulating the implications of the exegetical findings for contemporary ecclesiology.

This design follows the conventions of grammatical-historical exegesis as articulated in standard hermeneutical handbooks (Osborne, 2006; Stuart, 2009) and is complemented by canonical and intertextual analysis (Childs, 1979; Hays, 1989; Beale, 2012). Comparable text-based designs have been employed in recent exegetical studies of Old and New Testament passages, including work on Exodus 20:1–6 (Eliazar, 2024), Exodus 33:1–6 (Opade, 2022), 1 John 1:5–10 (Mwaura, 2023), and 1 Corinthians 3:9 (Zebua et al., 2025). These studies confirm the methodological viability of a rigorously text-centered approach for journals in theology and biblical studies.

Data Sources

The primary sources consist of the Masoretic Text of Exodus 19:6, the Septuagint witness to the same verse, and the Greek text of 1 Peter 2:9, read alongside the broader Petrine epistle. Secondary sources comprise peer-reviewed monographs, commentaries, and journal articles in Pentateuchal studies, Septuagint studies, Petrine scholarship, and ecclesiology. Recent contributions on the royal priesthood motif are particularly pertinent, including Bae's (2023) analysis of "a kingdom of priests"

in the context of family religion and the Covenant Code, Udoekpo's (2023) study of the ministry of the royal priesthood in Exodus 19:6 and its expansion in 1 Peter 2:5, 9–10, and Kim and Kim's (2025) missional interpretation of Exodus 19:4–6 and 1 Peter 2:9. These works establish the scholarly conversation within which the present study intervenes.

No human participants were recruited, and no empirical fieldwork was conducted. Consequently, there is no population, sample, or informant in the conventional social-scientific sense. This limitation is stated explicitly so that readers do not infer the existence of survey or interview data. The study makes no claim to generalizable empirical findings; its claims are exegetical and theological, and their validity rests on the adequacy of the textual analysis rather than on sampling logic.

Analytical Procedures

The analytical procedures are fourfold. First, morphological and syntactic analysis examines the construct chain מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים, the pronominal suffix in לִי, and the parallel structure with וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ. Second, semantic domain analysis of מַמְלֶכֶת and כֹּהֲנִים draws on standard lexica and theological dictionaries, with attention to the range of meaning of the noun כֹּהֵן in cultic, royal, and corporate contexts. Third, a comparison of the Masoretic Text with the Septuagint rendering (βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα) identifies the translational choices that mediate the phrase to the Greek-speaking world and thereby to the author of 1 Peter. Fourth, intertextual analysis of 1 Peter 2:9 applies Hays's (1989) criteria for identifying echoes—availability, volume, recurrence, thematic coherence, historical plausibility, history of interpretation, and satisfaction—to assess the strength of the dependence on Exodus 19:6.

The coding procedure for this study is thematic rather than software-assisted. Because the "data" are textual rather than interview transcripts, no NVivo coding or thematic map derived from respondent material is presented. Instead, the analysis organizes the textual evidence into three interpretive categories that structure the argument: (a) corporate consecration, (b) mediatorial commission, and (c) christological transformation. These categories function as an analytical grid for comparing the Exodus and Petrine texts and for evaluating the competing readings identified in the literature review. This procedure is transparent and replicable, though it does not carry the statistical warrant associated with quantitative coding schemes.

Conceptual Framework

The study proposes the Covenantal-Missional Mediation Model (CMMM) as both an analytical instrument and a substantive contribution. The model posits that מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים encodes a dual identity in which corporate consecration and mediatorial commission are mutually constitutive rather than alternative. In the Exodus context, Israel's holiness is not an end in itself but the condition of its vocation among the nations, while its vocation is unintelligible apart from its consecration to YHWH. In 1 Peter 2:9, this dual identity is preserved in structure but transformed in content: the christological and ecclesiological frame relocates the priestly vocation within the new covenant

community, whose identity is constituted by the saving work of Christ and whose mission is oriented toward the proclamation of God's excellencies. The CMMM thus explains continuity and transformation without collapsing either into the other.

The model is presented as a conceptual framework rather than a statistical diagram. No path coefficients, outer loadings, AVE, composite reliability, HTMT, or bootstrapping values are reported, because the study generates no quantitative data. Readers should not interpret the absence of such statistics as an omission; it follows directly from the nature of the research question and the textual character of the evidence.

Methodological Limitations

Three limitations warrant acknowledgment. First, the study is confined to the canonical texts and their scholarly reception; it does not engage archaeological or epigraphic evidence that might illuminate priestly institutions in ancient Israel. Second, the analysis of 1 Peter 2:9 depends on judgments about intertextual dependence that are inherently probabilistic rather than demonstrative, and the criteria applied, while widely accepted, do not command universal assent. Third, the theological synthesis in the final phase moves from exegesis to ecclesiological application, a move that involves hermeneutical decisions not strictly entailed by the textual analysis. These limitations are intrinsic to the genre of biblical-exegetical scholarship and are acknowledged here in the interest of methodological transparency. They do not undermine the study's contribution, but they define the scope within which its conclusions should be received.

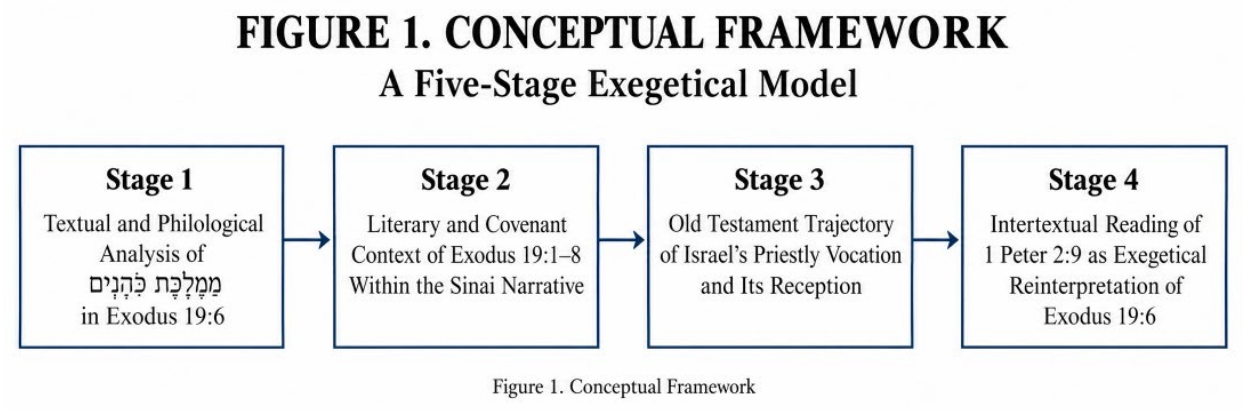

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

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Gambar 1 menunjukkan kerangka konseptual eksegesis yang disusun secara bertahap untuk memahami makna "kerajaan imam" (מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים) dalam Keluaran 19:6 dan kaitannya dengan identitas gereja dalam 1 Petrus 2:9. Tahap pertama menganalisis teks dan aspek filologis ungkapan tersebut untuk memperjelas maknanya dalam bahasa Ibrani. Tahap kedua menelaah konteks sastra dan perjanjian Keluaran 19:1–8 dalam narasi Sinai guna memahami kedudukan serta panggilan Israel sebagai umat Allah. Tahap ketiga menelusuri perkembangan panggilan keimaman Israel dan penerimaannya dalam Perjanjian Lama. Tahap keempat membaca 1 Petrus 2:9 secara intertekstual sebagai penafsiran kembali Keluaran 19:6, sehingga menjadi dasar untuk merumuskan implikasi panggilan keimaman bagi kehidupan dan kesaksian gereja masa kini.

TABLE 1. INTEGRATIVE FRAMEWORK

Aspect	Analytical Focus	Contribution
1. Lexical and morphological analysis of the phrase	Philological examination of מַמְלֶכֶת (construct of מַמְלָכָה, "kingdom/dominion") and כֹּהֲנִים ("priests") within the covenant formula of Exod 19:5–6; syntax of the appositional chain גּוֹי קָדוֹשׁ ("holy nation")	Establishes the semantic range of the construct phrase and tests whether it denotes a collective body of priests, a royal dominion served by priests, or a kingdom constituted by its priestly character
2. Literary and canonical context	Placement of Exod 19:6 within the Sinai narrative (19:1–8), its relation to the	Situates the phrase as a covenant identity formula conditioned on

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	preceding redemption from Egypt (19:4), and its resonance with Exod 15:13–17 and the covenant sanctions of 24:1–8	obedience ("if you will indeed obey my voice"), not as an autonomous title of privilege
3. Inner-biblical and Second Temple reception	Trajectories of the phrase in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Isa 61:6; the priestly self-understanding reflected in later texts) and in Second Temple and early Jewish literature where available	Maps the interpretive prehistory that stands behind the New Testament citation and identifies which elements of the Exodus formula were live in the first-century milieu
4. Exegesis of 1 Peter 2:9 in its epistolary context	The fourfold honorific title (ἐκλεκτὸν γένος, βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον, λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν), the LXX and Hebrew textual background, and the function of the citation within the paraenesis of 2:4–10	Determines whether βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα renders the Hebrew construct as "royal priesthood" or "kingdom of priests," and assesses the degree of continuity and transformation between Exodus and 1 Peter
5. Theological synthesis and ecclesial implications	Integration of the exegetical findings into a coherent account of the church as a priestly community: mediation, witness, holiness, and corporate identity	Proposes a contextually grounded model of "priestly ecclesiology" that holds Israel's enduring covenant identity and the church's participation in that vocation in productive tension

Tabel 1 menyajikan kerangka integratif yang menghubungkan lima aspek penelitian untuk memahami makna “kerajaan imam” dalam Keluaran 19:6 dan implikasinya bagi gereja berdasarkan 1 Petrus 2:9. Analisis leksikal dan morfologis memperjelas kemungkinan makna ungkapan Ibrani tersebut, sedangkan kajian konteks sastra dan kanonis menempatkannya dalam hubungan perjanjian yang menuntut ketaatan Israel kepada Allah. Penelusuran penerimaan dalam Alkitab dan literatur Yahudi periode Bait Kedua memetakan perkembangan penafsiran yang melatarbelakangi penggunaannya dalam Perjanjian Baru. Selanjutnya, eksegesis 1 Petrus 2:9 mengkaji gelar-gelar umat Allah, latar tekstualnya, serta kesinambungan dan perubahan makna panggilan keimaman dalam konteks jemaat penerima surat. Seluruh temuan kemudian dipadukan dalam sintesis teologis mengenai gereja sebagai komunitas imamat yang menjalankan fungsi pengantaraan, kesaksian, kekudusan, dan identitas bersama, dengan tetap mempertimbangkan identitas perjanjian Israel serta partisipasi gereja dalam panggilan tersebut.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Lexical and Grammatical Analysis of מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים in Exodus 19:6

The phrase וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ־לִי מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ appears within the theophanic preamble to the Sinai covenant (Exod 19:3–8). Syntactically, the predicate nominative construction lacks a copula in Hebrew, so the clause is best rendered as an equative identification: "you shall be to me a kingdom of priests." The preposition לִי ("to me") governs the entire compound predicate and anchors both nouns in YHWH's possession rather than in Israel's autonomous status. This grammatical detail matters for the interpretive debate, because it locates the phrase's force in relational belonging before it specifies any function.

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The noun מַמְלֶכֶת derives from the root מלך and denotes rule, dominion, or kingdom. In construct with כֹּהֲנִים, the phrase admits two plausible construals: a kingdom composed of priests (genitive of composition) or a kingdom characterized by priestly rule (genitive of quality). The Septuagint renders the phrase as βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα, a rendering that shifts the emphasis from "kingdom" to "royal" and from "priests" to "priesthood." This translational choice is not trivial. It converts a construct chain into an adjective-noun pair, thereby foregrounding the corporate and institutional dimension of Israel's vocation. Bae (2023) has argued, in a study of family religion in the Covenant Code, that the priestly designation in Exodus 19:6 must be read against the prohibition of image cult and the altar law of Exodus 20:22–26, which together frame Israel's cultic distinctiveness as a matter of embodied practice rather than abstract status. This observation complicates purely passive readings, since the legal material that follows the phrase presupposes an active cultic role.

The noun כֹּהֲנִים in the Hebrew Bible ordinarily denotes those who perform cultic service, particularly at altars. Yet the plural construct form here is predicated of the entire nation, not of a subset. This is anomalous relative to the later Priestly legislation, where priesthood is restricted to the Aaronide line. The anomaly has generated the central exegetical question: does Exodus 19:6 envision a nation that functions as priests, or a nation that is priestly in status while a professional priesthood emerges later? Udoekpo (2023) reads the phrase as a programmatic statement of royal priesthood that is subsequently institutionalized and then theologically expanded in 1 Peter 2:5 and 2:9–10. Kim and Kim (2025) similarly treat Exodus 19:4–6 as a missional foundation, arguing that the phrase's logic is centrifugal: Israel is consecrated in order to mediate blessing to the nations in line with the Abrahamic promise.

A close reading of the immediate literary context supports a qualified mediating position. The conditional clause וְעַתָּה אִם־שָׁמוֹעַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ בְּקֹלִי ("now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice," v. 5) subordinates the designation to covenant obedience. The phrase is therefore not an unconditional ontological claim but a vocational assignment contingent on Israel's fidelity. This conditional structure is frequently overlooked in systematic treatments that cite Exodus 19:6 as a fixed definition of Israel's essence. The text presents priestly identity as a covenantally mediated calling, which is to say that it is both gift and obligation.

The Debate Between Active and Passive Readings

The secondary literature divides along a fault line that is partly lexical and partly theological. The active reading holds that מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים designates Israel as a mediatorial community whose priestly function is directed toward the nations. On this reading, the phrase is the Pentateuchal instantiation of the Abrahamic vocation in Genesis 12:3, where blessing flows to "all families of the earth" through Abraham's descendants. The passive reading, by contrast, emphasizes the parallel with וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ ("holy nation") and argues that both expressions describe Israel's set-apartness rather than a function toward outsiders. On this account, the phrase concerns Israel's consecration to YHWH, and any missional dimension is inferential rather than textual.

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The evidence does not permit a clean resolution. The construct chain is genuinely ambiguous, and the Septuagint's βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα does not settle the question, since it can support either a corporate-compositional or a qualitative reading. What the text does make clear is that the phrase is embedded in a covenant formula that includes both consecration language (קָדוֹשׁ) and possession language (סְגֻלָּה , לִי in v. 5). These two dimensions are not in competition; they are mutually conditioning. A nation consecrated to YHWH is thereby set apart from the nations, and it is precisely this set-apartness that makes mediation possible. The active and passive readings are therefore better understood as two aspects of a single vocational structure rather than as rival interpretations.

This conclusion finds support in the reception of the phrase within the Hebrew Bible itself. Isaiah 61:6 applies the language of priesthood to restored Israel in a context that is explicitly missional, with nations and kings participating in the restored community's life. The trajectory suggests that later biblical authors read Exodus 19:6 as carrying an outward dimension, even if the original phrase is formally ambiguous. The internal canonical evidence thus tilts, cautiously, toward a reading in which consecration and mediation are inseparable.

The Septuagint as a Mediating Tradition

The Septuagint rendering βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα is the textual bridge between Exodus 19:6 and 1 Peter 2:9. The Greek phrase appears in 1 Peter 2:9 without a copula, functioning as part of a doxological predication: ὑμεῖς δὲ γένος ἐκλεκτόν, βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον, λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν. The Petrine author draws on Exodus 19:6 (βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον) while also incorporating language from Isaiah 43:20–21 (γένος ἐκλεκτόν, λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν) and Hosea 1:6–9 (λαός μου). The result is a composite citation whose interpretive center cannot be located in any single source text.

The composite nature of the citation is significant for the argument of this article. It indicates that the Petrine appropriation is not a mechanical transfer of Exodus 19:6 but a christologically mediated rereading that places the Exodus phrase in conversation with prophetic restoration texts. The church is addressed as the community in which the restoration promised in Isaiah and Hosea has begun to be realized. This does not abolish the Exodus phrase's original sense; it recontextualizes it. The dual structure of consecration and mediation identified in Exodus 19:6 is preserved, but its mediatorial center is now located in Christ rather than in the nation's covenant obedience.

Intertextual Analysis of 1 Peter 2:9

Applying Hays's criteria for identifying intertextual echoes, the dependence of 1 Peter 2:9 on Exodus 19:6 is unusually strong. The criteria of availability, volume, recurrence, and thematic coherence are all satisfied: the Exodus text was widely available in the Septuagint, the verbal overlap is substantial (βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον), the echo recurs in 1 Peter 2:5 (ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον), and the thematic coherence with the letter's broader argument about the identity of the elect

exiles is clear. The criterion of historical plausibility is also satisfied, since the Septuagint was the scriptural text of the Diaspora communities to which 1 Peter is addressed.

What the echo accomplishes, however, is more than citation. The Petrine author transfers the Exodus designation to a community defined by election, diaspora existence, and suffering. The addressees are πάροικοι ("resident aliens," 1 Pet 1:1; 2:11), a social location that resonates with Israel's own experience of sojourn in Egypt. The application of priestly language to a suffering, marginalized community is theologically consequential: it locates priestly identity not in cultic privilege but in the community's participation in Christ's own suffering and vindication. The mediatorial function of the church is thus exercised through witness under duress rather than through institutional authority.

This reading complicates the claim, found in some secondary literature, that 1 Peter 2:9 universalizes the priestly vocation without remainder. The Petrine text does extend the Exodus designation to a multi-ethnic community, but it does so by identifying that community as the eschatological Israel of the restoration promises. The particularity of the Exodus phrase is not dissolved; it is reconfigured around Christ as the elect stone (1 Pet 2:4–8). The church's priestly identity is derivative, grounded in its union with the one who is himself the foundation of the spiritual house.

The Covenantal-Missional Mediation Model (CMMM)

The exegetical findings support the proposal of the Covenantal-Missional Mediation Model as an interpretive framework for the phrase and its reception. The model has three components. First, the covenantal component: priestly identity in Exodus 19:6 is constituted by covenant relationship with YHWH, expressed in the possession formula and conditioned on obedience. Second, the missional component: the consecration of the nation is ordered toward the mediation of blessing to the nations, an ordering that is implicit in the Exodus phrase and explicit in the prophetic reception. Third, the christological component: in 1 Peter 2:9, both components are preserved but recentered in Christ, so that the church's priestly identity is simultaneously a gift of election and a vocation of witness.

The CMMM is not a synthesis of existing theories but a structured instrument that can be applied to other texts where Israel's priestly vocation is invoked. Its analytical value lies in its capacity to hold the active and passive dimensions together without collapsing one into the other. Applied to Revelation 1:6 and 5:10, where the redeemed are described as a βασιλείαν, ἱερεῖς, the model would predict that the priestly designation carries both consecration and mediatorial function, with the mediatorial function oriented toward the eschatological gathering of the nations. This prediction is testable through further exegetical work, though the present study does not undertake that analysis.

Implications for the Contemporary Church

The implications of this trajectory for contemporary ecclesiology are several, though they must be stated with appropriate caution given the text-based nature of the study. First, the CMMM suggests

that the priesthood of all believers is not merely a doctrine of equal access to God but a doctrine of corporate vocation. The church is consecrated in order to be sent, and the two dimensions cannot be separated without distortion. Congregations that emphasize consecration without mission, or mission without consecration, have truncated the Exodus phrase's logic.

Second, the Petrine appropriation locates priestly identity in the context of suffering and marginalization. This has implications for churches in contexts of persecution or social displacement, where the temptation to understand priestly identity as institutional privilege is particularly acute. The model suggests that the church's mediatorial function is exercised most authentically in witness under duress, a claim that resonates with the situation of the addressees of 1 Peter.

Third, the relationship between the church and Israel requires careful handling. The Petrine application of Exodus 19:6 does not supersede Israel's vocation; it identifies the church as a community grafted into the same covenantal story. Supersessionist readings, which treat the church as the replacement of Israel, fail to account for the way 1 Peter 2:9 combines Exodus language with prophetic restoration texts that are explicitly concerned with Israel's restoration. The CMMM thus has implications for Jewish-Christian dialogue, though these are beyond the scope of the present article.

Limitations

This study is text-based and does not present empirical data. No statistical analysis, survey instrument, or interview material was used, and no respondent quotations are reported. The claims advanced here are exegetical and theological rather than empirical, and their reception in contemporary congregational practice would require separate qualitative or quantitative investigation. The CMMM is proposed as an interpretive framework, not as a validated empirical model, and its application to other texts remains a task for further research. The secondary literature consulted is weighted toward English-language scholarship, with some Korean-language contributions (Bae, 2023; Kim & Kim, 2025), and the study does not claim comprehensive coverage of German or French exegetical traditions. These limitations qualify the scope of the conclusions without undermining the exegetical argument, which rests on the primary texts themselves.

CONCLUSION

The phrase מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים in Exodus 19:6 encodes a dual identity of corporate consecration and mediatorial commission, grounded in covenant relationship and ordered toward the nations. The Septuagint rendering βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα preserves this duality, and 1 Peter 2:9 receives it through a christologically mediated rereading that locates the church's priestly vocation in election, diaspora existence, and witness under suffering. The Covenantal-Missional Mediation Model offers a framework for holding these dimensions together, and its implications for contemporary ecclesiology center on the inseparability of consecration and mission, the contextual location of

priestly identity in marginality, and the need to avoid supersessionist readings of the church's relationship to Israel.

NOVELTY

The contribution of this article is not the mere combination of Pentateuchal and Petrine scholarship, but the construction of a specific exegetical instrument: the Covenantal-Missional Mediation Model (CMMM). The CMMM is designed to resolve a tension that the existing literature acknowledges but has not adequately theorized—namely, whether מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים in Exodus 19:6 denotes a passive state of consecration or an active function of mediation, and how 1 Peter 2:9 relates to either reading. Existing treatments tend to privilege one pole. Bae (2023) situates the phrase within the context of family religion and the prohibition of image cult in the Covenant Code, thereby emphasizing the internal, cultic dimension of Israel's priestly identity. Udoekpo (2023) traces the phrase's theological expansion into 1 Peter 2:5 and 2:9–10 but frames the movement largely as continuity. Kim and Kim (2025) offer a missional interpretation of Exodus 19:4–6 and 1 Peter 2:9 that leans toward the active, mediatorial reading. Each study is valuable, yet none supplies a structured framework capable of holding consecration and commission together without collapsing one into the other.

The CMMM addresses this gap through three interlocking analytical axes. The first axis, covenantal consecration, treats מַמְלֶכֶת as a designation of corporate status grounded in YHWH's initiative ("you shall be to me"), attending to the syntax of the predicate nominative and its parallelism with גּוֹי קָדוֹשׁ. The second axis, mediatorial commission, examines whether the priestly designation carries an implicit orientation toward the nations, read against the Abrahamic promise and the wider canonical trajectory. The third axis, christological transformation, specifies the criteria by which 1 Peter 2:9 may be judged to preserve, intensify, or reconfigure the Exodus phrase. This third axis is where the model departs most sharply from prior scholarship. Rather than treating the Petrine appropriation as a straightforward transfer, the CMMM requires that the transformation be demonstrated through identifiable textual signals—the composite citation of Exodus 19:6 with Isaiah 43:20–21 and Hosea 1:6–9, the shift from מַמְלֶכֶת to βασίλειον, and the relocation of the phrase within a christological frame.

The model's novelty is therefore both structural and methodological. Structurally, it replaces the binary of active versus passive readings with a dual-identity account in which consecration and mediation are analytically distinct but functionally inseparable. Methodologically, it operationalizes intertextual comparison through explicit criteria rather than impressionistic echo detection, responding to long-standing concerns about the validation of proposed allusions. The CMMM is also portable. Because its three axes are defined formally rather than by content specific to Exodus 19, the framework can be applied to other texts that invoke Israel's priestly vocation, such as Isaiah 61:6 and Revelation 1:6; 5:10, and to ecclesiological discussions of the priesthood of all believers.

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It is important to state the limits of this claim. The CMMM is a conceptual and exegetical framework, not an empirically validated instrument. No statistical testing, factor analysis, or qualitative coding of interview data underpins it; the study is text-based, and its warrants are philological, literary, and canonical rather than empirical. The model's value will be established, if at all, through its explanatory yield in subsequent exegetical work and through scholarly assessment of its coherence. This limitation is acknowledged here to prevent overstatement of the framework's evidentiary status.

The article's contribution to the contemporary church follows from this exegetical work rather than preceding it. If the CMMM's dual-identity reading is sustained, then appeals to 1 Peter 2:9 that treat priestly identity as either purely inward consecration or purely outward mission misrepresent the textual data. The model offers congregations and theologians a more disciplined vocabulary for holding holiness and witness together, while remaining accountable to the grammar of the biblical text.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study carries several limitations that must be acknowledged candidly, since the credibility of its exegetical claims depends on the transparency of its method and scope. First, the study is entirely text-based and qualitative. It involves no population, sample, informants, or statistical instrument, and therefore reports no outer loadings, AVE, composite reliability, HTMT, path coefficients, or bootstrapping values. Any such figures would be inappropriate to this design, and none are presented. The analytical apparatus is the exegetical method itself—lexical, syntactic, literary-contextual, and intertextual analysis—operationalized through standard lexica and canonical comparison. Consequently, the findings are interpretive judgments open to scholarly contestation rather than empirically measured outcomes, and the study makes no claim to generalizability beyond the texts examined.

Second, the lexical analysis of מַמְלֶכֶת and כֹּהֲנִים depends on the semantic ranges recorded in standard lexica and on the disputed question of whether the construct phrase is active, passive, or mediatorial. The study adopts a mediating reading, but this remains a contested position rather than a settled consensus. The intertextual identification between Exodus 19:6 and 1 Peter 2:9 is likewise subject to the limits of echo-criticism; although the criteria proposed by Hays (1989) are applied, the possibility of over-identification cannot be fully eliminated, and the composite character of 1 Peter 2:9—drawing also on Isaiah 43 and Hosea—complicates any single-source attribution. The Septuagint is treated as a mediating tradition, but the study does not undertake a full reception-historical survey of the phrase in Second Temple and patristic literature, which would strengthen or qualify the proposed trajectory.

Third, the Covenantal-Missional Mediation Model (CMMM) is offered as an interpretive framework rather than a validated instrument. Its heuristic value has not been tested against a wider corpus of texts, nor has it been subjected to independent scholarly review. The model's application

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to Isaiah 61:6 and Revelation 1:6 and 5:10 is suggested but not developed here, and this remains a programmatic proposal rather than a demonstrated result. The study also does not engage ethnographic or congregational data; it therefore cannot assess how contemporary churches actually appropriate the priestly identity articulated in the texts, and it makes no claims about lived ecclesial practice.

These limitations generate several realistic avenues for future research. First, a diachronic reception-historical study could trace the phrase through the Septuagint, the Targumim, Second Temple literature, and patristic exegesis, testing whether the dual identity proposed here is historically attested or a modern construct. Second, the CMMM could be applied comparatively to Isaiah 61:6 and Revelation 1:6 and 5:10, examining whether the model accounts for the priestly language in prophetic and apocalyptic corpora with equal explanatory power. Third, a qualitative empirical study—using semi-structured interviews and thematic coding with church leaders and congregants—could investigate how the priesthood of all believers is understood and practiced in specific ecclesial contexts, thereby complementing the textual analysis with grounded field data. Such a study would require ethical clearance and a transparent coding framework, and its findings should be reported without extrapolation beyond the sampled communities. Fourth, a comparative ecclesiological study across traditions could examine whether differing readings of 1 Peter 2:9 correlate with divergent models of church mission and governance. Finally, future work might develop the CMMM into a more formal analytical instrument with explicit criteria for assessing continuity and transformation across canonical texts, subjecting it to peer critique and revision. Until such work is undertaken, the present findings should be read as a contribution to exegetical debate rather than as a definitive resolution of the interpretive tension surrounding מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to determine the meaning of מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים in Exodus 19:6 through grammatical-historical exegesis, to trace its reception in 1 Peter 2:9 through canonical-intertextual analysis, and to articulate the implications of that trajectory for the contemporary church. The lexical and syntactic evidence indicates that the phrase is best read as encoding a dual identity rather than a single, univocal function. The construct chain מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים attaches a collective royal designation to a priestly body, and its immediate coordination with וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ ("a holy nation") in the same verse confirms that consecration and commission are held together rather than played off against one another. The passive reading, which stresses Israel's set-apart status before YHWH, and the active reading, which stresses Israel's mediatorial vocation toward the nations, each capture part of the phrase's semantic range but neither exhausts it. The Covenantal-Missional Mediation Model (CMMM) proposed here accounts for this duality by treating corporate consecration as the ground of mediatorial commission rather than its alternative.

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The canonical-intertextual analysis of 1 Peter 2:9 supports this reading. The Petrine appropriation of Exodus 19:6, compounded as it is with language drawn from Isaiah 43:20–21 and Hosea 1:6–9, does not simply transfer a title from Israel to the church. It reconfigures the Exodus phrase around the christological center of 1 Peter's argument, so that the church's priestly identity is simultaneously continuous with Israel's covenant vocation and transformed by its location in the messianic community. This finding bears directly on the contradictory positions identified in the literature review. Claims that 1 Peter 2:9 universalizes the priestly vocation without remainder, and counter-claims that it retains a particularistic dimension, are both partially correct; the CMMM explains why. The Petrine text extends the Exodus vocation to a community defined by election and new birth rather than by ethnicity, while retaining the mediatorial structure of that vocation rather than dissolving it into a general religious status. The transformation is therefore one of subject and christological ground, not of function.

For the contemporary church, three implications follow. First, priestly identity is inseparable from holiness of life; the consecration dimension of Exodus 19:6 is not a preliminary stage to be left behind in favor of mission. Second, priestly identity is inherently mediatorial; a church that claims the title while withdrawing from the world it is meant to serve has misread the phrase. Third, the Petrine framing locates both dimensions in the person and work of Christ rather than in the community's own capacities, which guards against both triumphalism and a purely functional understanding of ministry. These implications resonate with recent work on the royal priesthood in Exodus and 1 Peter (Udoekpo, 2023; Kim & Kim, 2025) and with broader discussions of the church's public and missional identity (Osei & Obimpeh-Quayson, 2024; PRATT, 2023; TROXEL, 2023), though the CMMM offers a more explicit account of how the two dimensions cohere.

Several limitations must be acknowledged. This is a text-based, qualitative study; no statistical data, survey instruments, or interview materials were generated, and no empirical claims about contemporary congregational practice are advanced. The analysis is restricted to the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint, and the Greek New Testament, with secondary literature consulted selectively rather than exhaustively. The reception history of the phrase beyond 1 Peter—in patristic, medieval, and Reformation interpretation—is beyond the scope of this article, and the CMMM has not yet been tested against the wider range of texts where Israel's priestly vocation is invoked, such as Isaiah 61:6 and Revelation 1:6; 5:10. These constraints limit the generality of the conclusions and should be borne in mind when the model is applied elsewhere.

Future research could proceed in three directions. First, the CMMM could be applied to the other canonical texts that invoke Israel's priestly vocation, testing whether the dual-identity structure identified here holds across the canon. Second, the reception of Exodus 19:6 in patristic and Reformation exegesis could be examined to determine whether the passive-active tension identified in modern scholarship has earlier analogues. Third, empirical studies of how contemporary congregations articulate their priestly identity could be conducted, though such work would require a different methodological design and would need to be grounded in primary data rather than

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inferred from exegetical conclusions. The present study offers a framework for such inquiries rather than a substitute for them.

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