THE MEANING AND RELEVANCE
OF SOME JEWISH CUSTOMS TO CHRISTIANITY
ACCORDING TO THE PAULINE CORPUS

By

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All the Bible texts are from The Revised Standard Version, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1952
DECLARATION OF CANDIDATE

I hereby declare that this script submitted for the Magister in Biblical Studies in the New Testament degree to the Rand Afrikaans University is my own unaided work.

No part of this script has previously been submitted to, or is to be submitted to any other University for a degree, save to the one in which I am now a candidate.

TANKISO LETSELI LETSELI
SUMMARY

Christianity was not born in a vacuum, but it completely owes its historical genesis on or from Jewish religion. The Apostolic, Primitive church was initially composed of Jewish believers who had seen in and understood Jesus of Nazareth as the anticipated Messiah predicted by the Old Testament prophets and writers. The current and lamentable truth is, Jewish Religion and Christianity are now two different and separate religions. Jesus Christ, His disciples, and Paul remained Jews as far as the Jewish culture is concerned.

It is difficult to separate the sacred and secular in the Jewish economy because Jewish culture and religion are intertwined. In this culture, ploughing is as sacred as worshipping. The only apparent shift in his (Paul) paradigm was in interpreting and explaining the Old Testament prophecies and ceremonial system in the light of the Jesus Christ event at the Cross. His evaluation of that "event" and the Person of Jesus of Nazareth became the point of conflict with Judaisers and Judaism that would set a stage for separation between Christianity and Jewish Religion. The Christian Church exists in the post-Cross era. This Church is faced with, among other issues and tasks, challenges of sifting and demarcating between God's injunctions and Jewish Customs.
It would appear that most of what is or has been labelled "Jewish customs" or "traditions" are actually God's injunctions or divine principles because they were in fact initiated by Him and handed over to the Jews so as to regulate their day-to-day and religious life, and also to be shared with other peoples.

This script attempts to respond to the challenge that confronts the contemporary Christian Church, and also to raise some questions that may not be adequately answered in this work, but are intended to and aimed at stimulating further debate and research. This work looks at selected customs in Jewish religion and day-to-day life.

As mentioned earlier, Jews have a unique outlook or worldview. There is no separation between the sacred and secular. They attach significant meaning to their day of worship (the Sabbath) because it goes beyond refraining from work - to an experience of eternity, harmony, peace and joy that are encased in the Sabbath day.

Jews anticipated their salvation in the advent of the predicted Messiah through their ceremonial laws. Those ceremonial laws, including daily sacrifices, were a means and mode of dealing with guilt, sin and transgression of the Moral Law. The Yom Kippur or Day of Atonement became the climax of those daily sacrifices. It was seen and understood as the actual judgement that came once a year, but
symbolising eschatological judgement and cleansing of sins which accumulated in the Tabernacle throughout the year.

God's promises, stated in Abrahamic Covenant, were symbolised by a ritual of circumcision. In Paul's time that ritual was wrongly used as a condition and prerequisite to salvation and inclusion in the Jewish nation and religion. In an effort to reach a mutual understanding, the Jerusalem Council opted for a unity-in-diversity solution. Gentiles were freed from performing circumcision, but the Jews kept that sacrament. Circumcision did not symbolise Baptism and that it was not replaced by it. The Passover was a forerunner of the Eucharist because both of them remind the believing Jews and Gentiles that Jesus Christ is the Saviour.

Jewish Ethics was informed by the Torah. Male and female were not treated equally especially in the Jewish circles, but Paul pointed out that "in Jesus Christ" there are no barriers based on gender, race and nationality. We are all one and salvation is one for both male and female. Jews did not accept Gentiles, but Paul contended that salvation came to the Jews first, and later to the Gentiles. This sequence of the gospel does not in any way devalue the position of Gentiles "in Jesus Christ." The basis of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles is Jesus Christ.
Paul saw in Jesus Christ the expected Messiah. He built and developed his theology on the basis of Christology (the Person) and Eschatology (new life). Paul accepted Christianity, but he remained a Jew in terms of his culture. He explained the position of the Law in relation to sin, salvation, righteousness, and grace. He viewed "the Way," not as a new movement that was separate from Jewish religion, but as the very Christ-centred Judaism.

John the Baptist and Jesus Christ performed one mode of baptism. People were dipped into the water as a symbol of death and burial of old life, and resurrection with Jesus Christ. According to Paul, John the Baptist and Jesus Christ baptism is preceded by conscious hearing and believing in Him for our salvation, repenting and confessing our sins, and participating in the experience of new life in Jesus Christ. The next step is to become part of the Body of Jesus Christ. These steps leading to baptism raise crucial questions to the practice of infant baptism.

Jesus Christ instituted the Eucharist on the day he partook of the Passover feast with His disciples. Paul received this ceremony from Jesus Christ and enlarged it by introducing issues of equality and fellowship at the Lord's Table. When Jesus Christ instituted the Eucharist, He also instructed His disciples to perform and participate in a "heart-cleansing" ceremony, namely, feet washing. It is
imperative for the Christian Church to restudy the ceremony of the Eucharist in its entirety and follow in the steps of Jesus Christ.

According to Paul, the Law of God is holy and good. Paul's concern was the abuse of the Law, not the Law itself. Those who are already in a saving relationship with Jesus Christ keep the Law. The Sabbath is part of the Law. According to Jesus Christ, the Sabbath was made for mankind (not only for the Jews) so that mankind can benefit from observing it. The meaning of the act of observing the Sabbath day goes beyond the actual refraining from manual work - to experiencing eternity, happiness, joy and peace that is provided by Jesus Christ.

It behoves the Christian Church today to restudy what has been labelled "Jewish Customs," especially instructions which were given by God Himself as discussed in this work, and also those that were mentioned but not addressed. Jewish customs ought to be studied from the Light emanating from the Cross.
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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

1.1 Motivation

This work does not in anyway purport to be turning the tables against what have been the landmarks of Judaism and Christianity. The reader will appreciate the fact that this work invites conscientious researchers and readers to revisit issues that will be raised because truth is progressive, and almost all of us do not have the absolute truth, but are growing in and towards the truth. Truth is multifacet, and we may be viewing the truth from one aspect, and our perspective may hinder us from seeing other aspects of the whole truth.

The purpose of this work is to attempt to search for the meaning and relevance of some Jewish customs to contemporary Christianity in the framework of Pauline Corpus. This search will be limited to Paul's era. The word "customs" will be used to refer to and be restricted to those Jewish customs, which had religious connotations. Some of those customs will only be mentioned, but those that are deemed crucial and pertinent for Christianity will be given full attention. The word, "customs," will also be used interchangeably with the word "paradosis" or "tradition".
The challenge or question that is facing the contemporary Christian Church is that of rejecting what is commonly known as "Jewish Customs," which in most cases are actually God's own immutable injunctions. This work will attempt to help demarcate between God's instructions and or from Jewish Customs. Some may rightly argue that these and other problems have been so far adequately addressed, and that solutions have been established.

New Testament theologians or scholars have delved with these issues, but most of their work has been concentrated on describing and evaluating the Jewish customs in relation to the New Testament teachings. Some have concentrated on comparing and identifying points of conflict between Judaism and Christianity, but the issue of relevance has not been adequately addressed.

For example, Sanders and Roland, to mention a few, have engaged in an extensive study on Judaism and Christianity, and have adequately explained and traced the beginning of Christianity in relation to Judaism or Jewish religion, but the issue of relevance has not been exhausted. Their work has helped in throwing more light in understanding Judaism and Christianity. This work will not in anyway bring solutions, but more of probing in order to attract more attention and research in this area. This work will be confined to those selected
and accentuated Jewish customs of which some were central points of controversy between Paul and Jews during Paul's era.

This project is motivated by the problem of divergent religious thought and praxis among different Christian persuasions, despite the fact that each Christian persuasion relies upon the same point of reference, that is, the Scriptures (Old and New Testaments). It seems that there is an intense challenge among various Christian Churches in determining and demarcating between what is termed "Jewish Customs" and the divine tenets or the "Thus saith the Lord".

The reality that confronts the Christian Church head-on is that, as far as the Scriptures are concerned, there is a distance between what was said and understood then, and what we hear and understand now and here. What was said and understood then may be different from what is understood now and here. The truth is absolute, but its revelation is dynamic depending on our ability to fathom and decipher it. This stands to reason that there are enough frontiers in the Scriptures to explore and discover. There are more challenges and opportunities to research for other facets and aspects of the truth from the Scriptures for the sole reason of coming closer to understanding the truth and informing our praxis.
1.2 Methodology

This work will attempt to employ the services of a comparative literary method, exegesis and theological reflection for the purpose of evaluating some of these Jewish customs. Pauline corpus owes most of its origin to the Old Testament Scriptures. Paul developed most of his themes from the foundation of the Old Testament Scriptures (Rom. 15: 4; 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17), and Jesus Christ Himself gave credence to the Old Testament Scriptures by appealing to them for issues pertaining to soteriology (Lk. 10: 25-27, Jn. 5: 39).

The Old and New Testament Scriptures will serve as the primary sources of this work, and other extra biblical literary material germane to the subject will be employed as secondary source. This work will attempt to compare arguments proposed by various scholars on the topic at issue or other aspects of this work, with the sole aim of arriving at what might be considered reasonable and biblical understanding of the truth.

During the time of Paul there were different groups of Jews with different languages - those that lived in Palestine, and those who lived in areas or countries outside of Palestine known as Jews of dispersion or Diaspora. Among the Jews who lived in Palestine there were several groups with different viewpoints. Those were, for example, Sadducees, Scribes, Pharisees, Zealots and Essences. In discussing the religion and ethics of Jews, Roland (1985: 9) cautions that one specific group of
Jews in a specific location "should not be regarded as typifying 'normative Judaism.'"

This would mean that while Jewish peoples read the content of their religion, the Old Testament Scripture, but the application varied from one location to another. The Jewish Scriptures (Torah, Prophets and Writings) served as and remained the rallying and central point of Jewish life and thought among all Jewish peoples in different locations.

1.3 Structure

The second chapter centers on the Jewish life and religion within Paul's era. The chapter looks at the Jewish view of secular and sacred, the significant periodic festivals, the Jewish day of worship, the Jewish Messianic prophecies, ways of dealing with transgression and sin, means and ways of restoring a severed relationship with God, and what can be termed Jewish sacraments.

The role of Torah, together with other Old Testament Scriptures, in shaping human relations, Jewish ethics, and their day-to-day life will form part of this discussion. Some of Jewish customs or traditions will only be mentioned but not discussed, but those that are deemed crucial and relevant for contemporary Christianity and to this work will be discussed together with their setting.
The third chapter examines Paul's evaluation of and reflection on Jewish customs and religious thought in relation to the Jesus Christ's event at the Cross. The question that may be decisive in this chapter is: "Did Paul defect or switch religions (from Judaism to Christianity) when he evaluated the Jesus of Nazareth?" This chapter also deals with Paul's reflection on sin, salvation, the Law, selected sacraments that were instituted by Jesus Christ, male-female relations, and the position of Jews and Gentiles in relation to Jesus Christ's event at the Cross.

The fourth and last chapter focuses on those selected Jewish customs to ascertain if they are pertinent to contemporary Christianity. Those selected customs include the Jewish view of the secular and sacred, the Law and salvation, the Sabbath, circumcision, male-female relations, and Jew-Gentile position "in Christ." This chapter is more of a synthesis of chapters two and three. This chapter will also invite attention to other aspects of Baptism and Eucharist. The fourth chapter will also serve as conclusion of this work.
CHAPTER 2

THE JEWISH RELIGIOUS THOUGHT AND ETHICS DURING THE PAULINE ERA.

2.1 Introduction: The Secular and Sacred in Jewish Economy

It is difficult to draw a line between secular and religious life of Jewish people. This difficulty is caused by the fact that a Jewish person was born and caught up in a religious milieu. From birth to death, Jewish life revolved around religious activities. We can safely presume that, among the Jewish peoples, there was no distinction between the secular and sacred.

Life was viewed in a wholistic fashion. What a Jewish person did inside the temple (for the Jews in Palestine) or synagogue (for the Jews of dispersion) was as sacred as that which occurred in every sphere of day-to-day life. Martens (1981:188) hit the nail on the head in describing the Wisdom literature's view of secular and sacred existence. He said:

"But for whatever the reasons for this kind of divided thinking, the Old Testament calls for a reassessment and a realignment. The assertion, particularly of wisdom literature, is that work and pleasure, toil and sex, and emotions of anger or impatience as well as of love are all included in the realm of faith. It will not do to disparage these areas as 'non-spiritual' or to isolate them as though they were outside God's reach. God is not to be put at
arm's length in everyday work arena. He is not uninterested in business or sex. Indeed, he cannot be excluded from any area of life. Wisdom literature asserts that this - worldly pursuits are totally within the Yahweh compass. The division of life into things secular and things sacred is a convenience, no doubt, but if propounded as a Christian view, is a distortion of biblical teaching,"

On one hand Martens confined his view of looking at human existence in a wholistic fashion to the Wisdom literature only. Sandmel (1978:192, 198), on the other hand, pointed out that the Torah, too, addressed issues like "inheritance, acquisition of property, torts, and distinctions between theft and burglary and between manslaughter and murder." He continued to make an interesting observation that "the Rabbinic literature, too, deals with the entire range of human existence," and that "the home was not only the place of living; it was preeminently the place where the Torah was practiced."

Socially, the Torah gave Israel a "sense of distinctiveness an distinguished Israel from the surrounding nations," (Dunn 1988: 117). The view of demarcating between the sacred and secular is foreign to Jewish religion. This view originated from Greek philosophy of dualism where "spirit" and "matter" were sharply differentiated, and life was perceived as a dichotomy (Ladd 1974: 457; Martens 1981:188). In summary, the Jewish people experienced their religion in day-to-day work and routine of life in the same way as they experienced it in the temple or in the synagogue.
2.2 Jewish Religion

In his polemic against his Jewish accusers, Paul gives us a glimpse of how a Jewish child grew. He says: “I am a Jew, born at Tarsus in Celiacia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being for God as you all are this day,” (Acts 22:3). In keeping with the Old Testament Jewish tradition correlating with the bringing up of a child, Paul’s parents would have circumcised him on the eighth day after birth (Gen. 17:10ff; Lev. 12:3), and the same is true with Jesus (Luke 2:21).

His parents drilled and trained him in order for him to learn to memorise, know and understand Torah in his pre-teenage years (Deut. 6:4-8; 11:19, 20). And at some point in his early years, “his parents made sure of an orthodox upbringing for him by arranging for him to spend his formative years in Jerusalem,” (Bruce 1977:43). The Torah, the very content of Jewish religion, was at the heart of Jewish religion (Barret 1994:33).

Roland (1998:5) maintains that “Torah itself inspires hope and offers a pattern of existence...’ and that it ‘promises land flowing with milk and honey,’ Deut. 8:7, from which God would clear out all the foreign nations, Deut. 7:22.” Paul’s interpretation of Torah based on his post-Damascus encounter with Jesus Christ, and in understanding Jesus of Nazareth as the anticipated Messiah, constituted a threat to Judaism.
2.2.1 The Sabbath

The Jewish week was punctuated by or with the weekly Sabbath days (Ex. 20:8-11). The Sabbath day had a dual meaning and purpose, namely, for rest from six days of physical work, and for proclaiming their belief in Creator-God through recognising its holiness (Fishman, 1969: 54).

The Sabbath, for the Jews, pointed to or symbolised God as their Emancipator and Redeemer from Egyptian bondage, and "...a perpetual covenant..." (Exodus 31:16). It focused on their belief that it was God who sanctified them (Exodus 31:12; Eze. 20:12). Moses, in the Decalogue, recorded that the benefits of the Sabbath day were shared with ones' household, and also extended to visitors, servants and cattle (Exodus 20:10).

In fact, Moses recorded that God himself kept the Sabbath after completing all that he created (Gen. 2:2). God "rested," "blessed" and "hallowed" the Sabbath (Gen. 2:3). Heschel (1951:14, 10) viewed the Sabbath not only as a day of recovering from depleted strength from weeklong toil, but as "... a climax of living." He went further to focus to a significant issue pertaining to the Sabbath. He viewed "Judaism as a religion of time aiming at the sanctification of time," and that during the week mankind exist under "the tyranny of things of space," but on the seventh day (Sabbath), mankind "become attuned to holiness in time."
The observance of the Sabbath became one of the points of intense conflict between the Jews and Jesus Christ. The Jews concentrated on the letter of the law - particularly on refraining from any activities which they perceived to be desecrating the Sabbath, and also instituted more laws to govern the observance of Sabbath day in addition to those which God had already given through Moses.

Jesus introduced another dimension of Sabbath observance - that of doing well on that day (Matt. 12:12), and showing mercy to mankind (Matt. 12:7). In describing the healing ministry of Jesus Christ and His mission "to proclaim release to the captives," (Luke 4:18), Jewett (quoted by Bacchiocchi 1985:63) said:

"We have in Jesus' healings on the Sabbath, not only acts of love, compassion, and mercy, but true 'Sabbatical Acts,' acts which show that the Messianic Sabbath, the fulfillment of the Sabbath rest of the Old Testament, has broken into our world. Therefore, the Sabbath, of all days, is the most appropriate for healing."

The Sabbath observance did not end at the death of Jesus Christ, and the primitive, early church did not have that understanding. The members of the apostolic church kept the Sabbath. Paul and his colleagues visited with the believers at the synagogue on Sabbath day, and Paul was offered the book of the law and the prophets to read and explain it (Acts 13:13, 14).
After the worship ceremony, the believers were enriched and invited Paul and Barnabas to return the following Sabbath so as to continue reading and interpreting the law and prophets to them (Acts 13:42, 44). In another instance, Paul visited women who, on the Sabbath day, had gathered to worship by the river (Acts 16:3). Luke mentions that Sabbath observance was Paul's custom (Acts 17:2). Paul argued with the Jews and Greeks on the Sabbath day in the synagogue (Acts 18:4). There is no evidence or any indication in the Old Testament prophecies and in the life of the apostolic church pointing towards the shift from Sabbath to the first day of the week (Sunday) observance. We have no proof or substantial evidence in the Old and New Testaments that God or Jesus Christ had a plan to amend or alter some laws in the Decalogue.

We should not ignore the fact that there are three texts (Rom. 14:5; Gal. 4:10; Col. 2:14-16) in the writings of Paul which are used to support the argument which states that Paul rejected the Sabbath day. It would appear that Paul in his letters to the Galatians and Colossians did not oppose the observance of the Sabbath, "but rather the perverted use of cultic observations that are designed to promote salvation as a human achievement rather than as a divine gift of grace."

And that "in the crucial passage of Colossians 2:16, Paul's warning is not against the validity of observing festivals as such but against the authority of false teachers to legislate on the manner of their observance," (Bacchiocchi [1985] 1990: 123).
If Paul in Rom. 14: 3-6 had promoted the shift from Sabbath observance to Sunday observance, he would have invited endless disputes and resistance from Sabbath observers. Paul respected the observance of the Sabbath day. In chapter 14 of the letter to the Roman Church, Paul devoted about twenty-one verses dietary issues, and only two to "days."

This suggests that the church in Rome had no problem with Sabbath observance. It is possible that the issue of the "days" was linked to the superstitious beliefs that permeated the Roman world. It was commonly believed that "certain days were more favourable than others for undertaking some specific projects," and that is why "Fathers frequently rebuked Christians for adopting such superstitious mentality," (Bacchiocchi 1977: 254).

There were other Sabbath days in Jewish religion as reflected in the Old Testament text, which were observed from time to time. Bacchiocchi's (1977) book, Sabbath: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity, gives comprehensive and extensive study on the issue of the Sabbath, its permanence and principle of practice in the New Testament. This author begins by examining the messianic typologies of the Sabbath in the Old Testament and their fulfillment in Christ's redemptive ministry. His investigation established that the change of the Sabbath to Sunday occurred not in the
primitive church of Jerusalem, but approximately one century after the death of Christ in the Church of Rome, as a result of interplay of several factors.

According to Riensefeld (1970:124), there is "nothing which indicates that the first weekday in the life of the early church was a 'holy day' on an analogy with the Sabbath in the life of the Jewish people." Some, in the quest to substitute the Sabbath for the first day of the week, have attempted to give the Sabbath a typological interpretation. The Sabbath pre-dates the Jewish nation. The Sabbath was introduced to mankind after creation long before a Jewish nation came into existence (Gen. 2: 1-3).

It is an anomaly to term the Sabbath "the Jewish Sabbath." It is not the property of the Jews, but was given to mankind or every human being in the universe. Jesus Christ attested to this truth thus: "And he said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath; so the Son of man is lord even of the Sabbath,'" (Mark 2: 27-28).

2.2.2 Three Remarkable Periodic Jewish Commemorations

Jewish religion was vibrant with periodic feasts. Bruce (1969:132) mentioned "three great pilgrimage-festivals" which had "agricultural significance," but later they carried "historical significance." Those were, namely, the Feast of Passover -
commemorating Hebrews' departure from Egypt — on which the views of salvation in Judaism were based (Deut. 16:1-8); the Feast of Pentecost - commemorating the giving of the Law at Sinai (Lev. 23:15-22); and the Feast of Tabernacles - commemorating their wanderings in the wilderness (Deut. 16:13-17; John. 7:2).

The daily activities of Jewish people were aimed at the preparation for these feasts. They worked hard in order to realise agricultural yields and multiplied livestock because they were used during those great feasts. They were utilised both as sin or thanks sacrifices and as tithe. Their economic life was closely knit with their religious life. Ploughing and worshipping were not separated. Life was not compartmentalised. Life and religion were intertwined together.

2.2.3 Yom Kippur

Once a year Yom Kippur or the Atonement Day was observed on the "tenth day of this seventh month" (Lev. 23:27). The Day of Atonement was to the Jews a combination of soteriology (because it represented the cleansing and forgiveness of the Jews from their sins, transgressions and iniquities) and eschatology (because it anticipated the final judgement at the end of time). Hasel (1989:107) described that day as "the grand climax of the ritual year of ancient Israel, which involves the cleansing/ purification of the sanctuary/temple."
This annual ritual was observed in two phases. The first phase was intended to cleanse the High Priest and his fellow priests, and a bull would be sacrificed (Lev. 16:11-14). The second phase dealt with the collective guilt of the people, and a goat would be sacrificed (Lev. 16:15-19). The last phase of the atonement involved the transferring of the sins of the people to the live goat. This live goat, known as "the scapegoat," would then be sent to the wilderness (Lev. 16:20-28).

The high priest would confess "all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins, and shall put them upon the head of the goat, and send him away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness," (Lev. 16:21).

Paul understood Jesus Christ to be the sacrificial lamb and also as the High Priest, and he also developed the theology of atonement as the work of Christ. Paul saw in Jesus Christ's death the work of God in reconciling mankind to Himself (2 Cor. 5:17). Jesus Christ according to Paul accomplished "salvation," "reconciliation," and "redemption" (Rom. 1:16; Rom. 12:18; Eph. 1:7; Rom. 3:24).

Buchanan (1990: 236) is of the opinion that the Jewish doctrine of salvation was expressed in legal and financial metaphors, and that these expressions were understood in a national sense. He claimed that there was no salvation by faith apart from either law or treasury of merits. He further concluded that there were
three requirements, namely, “atonement offering,” “reconciliation among believers,” and “forgiveness by God.”

The writer of this work is not aware of any evidence to support Buchanan’s claims that God instituted a merit-based salvation for Jews, and later altered it to suit the New Testament church. The crucial question is: "If God instituted a merit-based-salvation or righteousness, why did Jesus die at the Cross?" The sacrificial or ceremonial system pointed and anticipated the death of Jesus Christ, rather than a new system of salvation. When Jesus Christ died at the cross, the type (sacrificial lamb) met its antitype (the Lamb of God [John 1: 29]).

It would appear that both in the New and Old Testaments, righteousness or salvation was always based on faith on what God has done and promised. In fact, faith in the Old Testament preceded obedience. Abraham believed God’s promises hence "it was reckoned to him as righteous," (Rom. 4: 3). Righteous acts by God’s people were performed within a faith-relationship with God.

Scholars have not at least reached a mutual understanding and agreement in defining the concept of atonement. There are three major theories of atonement, which attempt to shed light as to the reasons for Christ’s death.: Those are ransom, satisfaction and moral influence, and they have been thoroughly discussed in the book Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types
of the idea of Atonement, written by Aulen Gustaf (1969). Recent scholarship has pointed out weaknesses to those theories (Rice 1985: 174).

The important point is that each of those atonement theories does not exhaust the theme of atonement by itself. Each theory explains and expands one aspect of Jesus Christ's sanctuary ministry. The atonement theme is a multi-facet study. It is an issue of this and that, but not this and this only. The theme and message of the book of Hebrews point to the fact that the daily sacrificial ministry was consummated at the cross, but the intercessory ministry of Jesus Christ on behalf of or for His people is still going on.

The atonement is in process in the sense that the High Priest (Jesus Christ) has commenced the ministry of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary of the confessed sins as it was in the Jewish economy. When the High Priest completes his ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, that in itself will constitute the eschatological return of Jesus Christ to rule and subdue all elements under his kingdom and rule (Phil. 2:9-11).

In short, the Jews observed the atonement with solemnity because it was viewed as tantamount to eschatological judgement day. Paul linked the death of the sacrificial lambs to the death of Jesus Christ at the Cross. The atonement points to the final process of God's reconciliation of mankind to Himself in Jesus Christ,
and that Jesus Christ is the Lamb and also the High Priest ministering in the last phase of the redemption of man.

### 2.2.4 Messianic Prophesies

Jewish religion had as the basis of its hope, the advent of the Messiah to liberate the Jews politically from the heavy hand of the Romans and also to provide them with the long hoped for salvation. The Hebrew word “Messiah” in the Old Testament and its Greek equivalent, “Christ,” means “anointed.” The word “anointed” was used for the Hebrew kings of Israel (1 Sam. 15:17; 2 Sam. 12:7).

The act of anointing was not only limited to royalty, but it was also used on priests and prophets as an emblem that they were set apart for a divine purpose (1 Kings 19:16; Isa. 61:1). In describing the messianic hope of the Jewish peoples, Rice mentioned that

> “In the last couple of centuries before Jesus lived, the expectation developed among the Jewish people that a special leader would arise, an anointed one, or messiah, who would restore the fortunes of Israel. With his leadership, Israel would gain her independence and the prophetic promises of nation greatness would be fulfilled. In short, the messiah would inaugurate the kingdom of God,” (1985:146).

This Jewish anticipation of the Messiah can be traced back to the historical Old Testament records, particularly from the Davidic lineage (2 Sam. 7:11-16). The
poetical literature or messianic psalms addressed and went "beyond the immediate Israelite experience," (Martens 1981:135). The prophetic material anticipated a king that will dwell among the Jews and rule with justice and righteousness (Is. 7:14; 11:2; Micah 5:1-2).

In the prophetic writings the expected Messiah "came to be connected with the future Great Judgement, so that Elijah became the forerunner of both the Messiah and also the Great Judgement," (Sandmel, 1978: 204). The term "messiah" did not dominate the intertestamental literary material (Ladd, 1974: 137). The Gospels echoed the Jewish immediate groaning under the oppressive rule of the Romans, and that heightened their faith in Old Testament messianic predictions and the anticipation of the messiah.

When Jesus of Nazareth declared to them in the synagogue that he was the subject of the prophetic-messianic passage from the prophet Isaiah, the Jewish leaders, together with their followers, rejected him and attempted to kill him (Isa. 61:1-2; Luke 4:16-30). This incident marked the first conflict between Jesus and the Jewish peoples, which would be intensified by vicious contacts and reaching its zenith when they nailed at the Cross-of-Calvary. Paul saw in Jesus of Nazareth the expected Messiah and this formed the basis of his understanding of other Old Testament prophecies and doctrines.
2.2.5 Sin, Law and Salvation

The Old Testament Scriptures have informed the New Testament ideas on Sin, Law and Righteous. It would seem that almost all religious persuasions have each its own way of dealing with the problem of evil, iniquity and transgression or sin. The Jewish peoples were not immune to those practices. The new day, among the Jewish peoples, was ushered in through a sacrificial offering in the morning, and also was consummated by an evening sacrifice.

It would appear that God did not leave His will at the mercy of His people's discretion. The Pentateuch, together with other books of the Old Testament, was perceived and understood as the revealed will of God, and it also outlined acts that would be defined as deviation from God's revealed will. The essence of God's will was based on love for God and love for fellow neighbour (Lev. 19:18; Deut. 6:5; Matt. 19:26, 27).

The Book of Leviticus defined and described all sins, transgression, guilt that necessitated for a sacrifice, and all modes and means of worship acceptable to God. The daily sacrifices were a type of or looking forward to their fulfillment in the advent of the Messiah who would deal with the problem of evil or sin in his sacrificial death once and for all.
These sacrificial offerings were a means of dealing with the problem of sin and guilt in the lives of Jewish people in an anticipatory manner, and also as a way of receiving righteousness by faith on the expected Messiah. The Yom Kippur served as a means of cleansing the sanctuary of the sins that accumulated throughout the year.

2.2.5.1 Salvation in the Jewish Economy

The meaning of Salvation in the Old Testament was the same as in the New Testament. Luke in Acts 4 verse 12 puts an accent on Jesus Christ as the only basis for our salvation. Redemption is through Jesus Christ alone, and anything that we use for salvation, which is not Jesus Christ, is false salvation. If the Law could save, the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ would have been unnecessary.

Abraham was saved by faith in God, and that was "reckoned to him as righteousness," (Rom. 4: 3). David admitted that God's salvation and righteousness are imputed apart from works (Rom. 4: 6). Jesus Christ Himself attested to the truth that "no one comes to the Father, but me," (John 14: 6). "No man," including the Jews, will be/is saved by works.
Paul mentioned that the inclusion into Abrahamic seed is preceded by "if you are in Christ," (Gal. 3: 28). Jews were given a way of salvation in the Old Testament. The prophet Zechariah points to the "fountain" from "the house of David" which has been given to mankind for the purpose of purging sin and uncleanness. (Zech. 13: 1). That fountain is the blood of Jesus Christ. There are allusions in the book of Zechariah of the death of Jesus Christ (Zech. 12: 10). Jews are and were saved by grace just like anyone in the New Testament.

According to Hull (1971: 36), "The Old Testament is far from being unfamiliar with the thought of God as Saviour; indeed, it asserts that God alone can save. It was from his saving acts, rather than his works in creation, that God was first and chiefly known." This stands to reason that salvation by works was/is a perversion of Jewish religion. There is no evidence or indication in the Old Testament that will support the view that God instituted a merit-based salvation although some scholars are of the opinion that there was a "rabbinic soteriology," that was "based on works-righteousness," (Quarles 1996: 185).

The sacrificial systems anticipated and pointed to Jesus Christ or Messiah as the Saviour and Redeemer. In line with the Jewish soteriology, Brueggemann (1997: 174) points out that Jews understood God's salvific acts in terms of moving "from here to there," and "you went out." He goes further to expound that Jewish peoples understood salvation in the framework of "geographical exit and
departure.” God was seen as the Deliverer and Redeemer from the Egyptian bondage (Exod. 6: 6; 13: 3; 12: 41; 15: 13; 14: 4; Deut. 16: 3, 6; Ps. 106: 10). God raised deliverers to rescue Israel from her captives and harassers. These deliverers or saviours imprinted and intensified the expectation of the Messiah in the minds of the Israelites.

2.2.5.2 The Law in the Jewish Economy

God gave the Law to the Jews. The Law was not given to be the property of the Jews, and God did not relinquish His ownership of the Law to the Jews. The Jews were appointed to be depositories and missionaries of God's Law. Jews understood two kinds of Laws, namely, the Moral Law or Decalogues, and the Ceremonial Laws or ritual system. First and foremost, we need to differentiate between and contrast these types of laws as suggested below (Bible Readings, 1982: 288):

1. The Moral Law is called “the royal law” (Jas. 2:8); The Ceremonial Laws are termed “the law of commandments and ordinances” (Eph. 2: 15).
2. The Moral Law came from the mouth of God (Deut. 4: 12, 13); the mouth of Moses spoke The Ceremonial Laws (Lev. 1: 1-3).
3. The Moral Law was written by the finger of God on the two tables of stones (Ex. 31: 18); The Ceremonial Laws were written by Moses in a book (2 Chron. 35: 12).

4. The Moral Law was placed in the Ark (Ex. 40: 20; 1 Kings. 8: 9; Heb. 9: 4); Moses placed the book containing the ceremonial laws "by the side of the Ark of the Covenant" (Deut. 31: 24-26).

5. The Moral Law is perfect (Ps. 19: 7); The ceremonial laws "made nothing perfect," (Heb. 7: 18).

6. The Moral Law was "established for ever and ever" Ps. 111: 7, 8; The ceremonial laws were nailed at the cross (Col. 2: 14).

7. The Moral Law was not done away with by Jesus Christ (Matt. 5: 17); The ceremonial laws were nullified by Jesus Christ (Eph. 2: 15).

8. The Moral Law gives knowledge of sin (Rom. 3: 20; 7: 7); the ceremonial laws were instituted in consequence of sin (Lev. 3-7).

In summary, the Moral Law is timeless and holy. It is actually the constitution of God's government, and the very transcript of His character. The Moral Law pointed out sin, condemned the sinner, pointed to Jesus Christ as the remedy for sin, but did not provide salvation for a sinner. The Moral Law was never intended for salvation, but for describing what sin is and where to find salvation. The Moral Law was never aimed at serving as a prescription for sin, but a description of sin and sins.
The ceremonial laws were intended to deal with the problem of sin in an anticipatory fashion, and to point to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The ceremonial laws were fulfilled at the cross when Jesus Christ became the Lamb of John 1:29. Salvation by the Moral Law is a perversion of the Jewish Religion. It was a shift that occurred because of a departure from God's will. We have no proof that God allowed obedience to the Law as a way of purging sins of the people.

2.2.5.3 Sin in the Jewish Economy

Judaism owes the origin of its ideas of sin to the fall account recorded in the third chapter of the book of Genesis. Adam and Eve's disobedience stemmed from "a willful departure from God's express intentions for human life," (Rice, 1985: 124). This departure constituted sin, and this became the source of the original sin. Sin gave birth to death. This mankind's fall can be linked to man yielding to Satan's temptation.

Sin ruptured God's relationship with man and relationship between Adam and Eve (Gen. 3: 10-13). Adam and Eve demonstrated their estrangement to God by hiding themselves, and sin led to some of its fruits - that of blaming each other for committing sin. The transgression of God's revealed instruction resulted to alienation and estrangement between God and mankind.
Mankind's disobedience did not only lead to sin, but to rebellion against God, and this rebellion would permeate the entire history of mankind, in particularly that of Israel, on this earth. The issue at stake at the fall of Adam and Eve was that they chose to believe the deception of Satan as recorded in Gen. 3: 4, and by so doing, they deliberately disbelieved what God had said earlier to them in Gen. 2: 17.

The solution to the problem of sin seemed to have been in place long before mankind fell into sin (Rev. 13:8). It was only manifested after the fall of man (Gen. 3: 15). God demonstrated to Adam and Eve the magnitude of their sin by making a sacrifice. That sacrifice served as a forerunner of the Jewish ritual system as received and taught by Moses in the Pentateuch, and the account of the death of Jesus Christ. When God had completed His first lesson on how to deal with the problem of sin, He “made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins, and clothed them” after they had lost their innocence (Gen. 3: 21).

This was the rise of the concept of covering one's moral nakedness caused by sin. The sanctuary services provided the ministry of covering one's sins through the death of the lamb that represented “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,” (John 1: 29). In short, sin started at the Garden of Eden when man chose to disbelieve the revealed will of God.
2.2.6 Jewish Sacraments

Judaism had two customs that can be called sacraments, namely, circumcision, known also as the Covenant of Abraham, (Gen. 17:9-14), and Passover or Pesach, meaning the 'passing over.' The context of this word is the 'passing over' of the houses of Israelites by the angel of death while the first-born of the Egyptians were killed, (Ex. 12). God instituted both of these sacraments, and both had an element of shedding of blood.

2.2.6.1 Circumcision

Jewish practice of circumcision can be traced back to God's covenant with Abraham (Gen. 17). Evidence points toward the fact that Abraham and his descendants did not originate this practice because it was already in existence among Africans, Asians, Australians, and among Egyptian priests (Berkhof, 1949: 620). This practice became a sacrament to Abraham and his descendants because of its divine initiative.

God's covenant had two obligations for both parties (God and Abraham). God had pledged Himself to be the God of Abraham and his family, (Gen. 17: 7), and to give them the land of Canaan for their everlasting inheritance (Gen. 17: 8). As a token or sign of that covenant, God instructed Abraham to perform a ritual of circumcision to himself and to every male on the eighth day after birth.
This practice was important to Jewish religion to the extent that "even if it falls on the Sabbath and Yom Kippur," it had to be performed or "postponed only on medical advice," (Fisherman, 1958: 114).

Abraham had to keep his part of God's covenant by way of circumcising himself, together with all the males in his household (Gen. 17:9-12). Sarah also had a role in the covenant - that of becoming a mother of nations and kings (Gen. 17:15). It appears that Abraham's circumcision was linked to Sarah's procreation. It is interesting to note that God chose to circumcise the flesh of Abraham's foreskin.

This move from God's side is very significant and embedded with profound meaning. God did not instruct Abraham to cut a piece of his finger, or a piece of his ear, or even shave his head, but the flesh of his foreskin. Apart from the revealed purpose of circumcision ritual, one would not be far from the truth to conclude that God chose to set apart a male reproductive organ, and inflicted pain on it as a constant reminder of God's ownership, a sign of Abrahamic Covenant, and man's accountability in sexuality matters.

It could be that God was trying to solve or curb the contemporary and future sexual immorality. God was attempting to remind a male person that his male sexual organ has been set aside for a holy purpose. A conscientious reader will accept the fact that almost all adultery, fornication, abortion, sexual abuse in all
their forms result, to a larger extend, from a misuse of a male reproductive organ.

There was an unfortunate paradigm shift among the Jewish people during the Pauline era as to the meaning of this ritual. Circumcision had become or was becoming a means for salvation among other Jews (Acts 15:1). This perversion and shift had negative implications to women because they did not and could not participate in that ritual because they do not have a foreskin. Salvation would thus become a male privilege in the exclusion of women.

Peter, in an attempt to salvage or separate salvation from the ritual of circumcision, responded by affirming that for both Jews and Gentiles salvation was based on God's grace, and that circumcision was an unbearable burden even to the Jews themselves, and to their fathers (Acts 15:10, 11). The Council of Jerusalem resolved that debate, and wrote a letter to Antioch for the purpose of distancing itself from any view and anyone who would promote that salvation was based on circumcision ritual, (Acts 15:24).

The issue of circumcision became one of the unfortunate occasions for a rift between Judaism and Christianity. The Jerusalem Council met to resolve the issue of circumcision, which had threatened to distort the view of salvation.
Fifteen years after the Jerusalem Council had taken its stance in relation to circumcision, there was a campaign by some Jewish hard-liners to have Titus circumcised, but their attempts were vehemently contested by Paul in the light of the resolutions of the Jerusalem Council (Gal. 2:3-6). In another instance, Paul was accused of teaching Jews to forsake Moses, not to adhere to Jewish customs, and to refrain from circumcising their children. Paul was almost killed by the Jews from Asia on the basis of those allegations (Acts 21:21, 27, 28).

It seems that the Jerusalem Council took a stand, but its position could not be fully accepted among some Jewish circles. It is also interesting to note that the Jewish understanding of circumcision had influenced even their language. In describing Paul’s and Peter’s missionary turf or target groups, the terms employed were “uncircumcised” (for Gentiles) referring to Paul’s, and “circumcised” (for Jews) denoting Peter’s (Gal. 2:7, 8). This gives us a glimpse of how the issue of circumcision in relation to salvation had become thoroughly entrenched in the minds of the Jews. Circumcision had not only become a means of achieving salvation, but a practice to separate Jews from non-Jews.

In its quest to arrive at a mutual agreement on the issue of circumcision, the Jerusalem Council resolved to adopt the unity-in-diversity approach. This approach was not quite popular among some Jewish people. The original purpose of circumcision was not restored, and the Gentiles were exempted from the practice of circumcision. The solution to the problem had some intense
implications. One could ask, What became of God’s covenant with Abraham, Sarah and his descendants in the light of the resolutions of Jerusalem Council?

Did the Jerusalem Council constitute a paradigm shift from a covenant that God had made with Abraham and his descendants? Did God approve of this paradigm shift? Did God himself revisit and adapt his position in order for it to be congruent with the resolutions of the Jerusalem Council? These questions and others beg for attention.

Another crucial question is: Was circumcision a Jewish custom or God’s divine institution? If the latter is true, and then the next question cannot be avoided - In their quest to arrive at a win-win situation, did the Jerusalem Council do justice to this sacrament of circumcision that was instituted by God?

One cannot avoid the fact that the Scriptures are silent as far as God’s response to the Jerusalem Council’s reinterpretation of Abraham’s covenant is concerned. God’s silence may not mean condoning or disapproval, but one needs to tread softly when dealing with such issues. Issues pertaining to the attributes of God in general and in particular the immutability of God’s promises and purpose should inform whatever theological or religious solution or conclusion we arrive at.
Cullmann ([1956] 1964: 57) is one of the proponents of the view which purports that baptism and circumcision have the same meaning, and that baptism fulfilled and repealed Jewish circumcision. This writer mentions that Jewish circumcision symbolises a reception in the Old Covenant, and Christian baptism as a reception into the New Covenant. Cullmann uses this approach in order to build and justify the practice of infant baptism.

The Scriptures do not give any indication that there is a link between circumcision and baptism. Circumcision, on one hand, was exclusively practiced by males, and on the other hand, baptism transcends gender - and that the elements of hearing the gospel, believing, repenting, precede baptism according to the Scriptures. On the basis of this evaluation, Cullmann’s argument is not convincing.

While it is true that both baptism and circumcision are sacraments, but they do not substitute or repeal each other. Both circumcision and baptism have a differing meaning, purpose and practice. The Jews have a history of being displaced by the Assyrians because of their disobedience to God. They were captured and enslaved by the Babylonians and through God’s grace they were liberated. They, themselves, rejected the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah according to the Old Testament prophetic literature and they crucified him.
They crowned their disobedience and rebellion by stoning Steven. Based on these Biblical accounts, one would attempt to make sense out of God’s silence in relation to the Jerusalem Council’s resolutions. One could conclude that God allowed the exemption of Gentiles from participating in the sacrament of circumcision in order to unshackle salvation of Jewish inferences, and also to address its adverse implications on women who were already groaning under the Jewish discriminatory rules. Circumcision cannot be linked to baptism because circumcision is based on birth and gender, but baptism is based on faith in God’s redemptive event and history.

2.2.6.2 Passover

The Passover (passing over) or Hebrew equivalent, Pesach, a holiday instituted by God and celebrated by the Jews in the latter part of March and the first of April, to commemorate their exodus from Egypt. One could say that the Passover marked the beginning of the Hebrew nation, and also marked the beginning of Jesus Christ’s teaching ministry in the Temple at the age of twelve. On the day prior to the Israelites’ exodus from Egypt, God instructed them through Moses to slay a lamb or a kid “without blemish,” and sprinkle its blood “on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses.”
The flesh was to be roasted and be eaten "with unleavened bread and bitter herbs" (Exodus 12:5, 7, 8). The Israelites were instructed to celebrate this event throughout their generations as a "Memorial Day" (Exodus 12:1, 2, 14). The Jewish parents were expected to narrate the story of their great providential deliverance to their children. Their answers to children's inquiring minds were to be "It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he slew the Egyptians but spared our houses" (12:27).

The first-born of both man and beast were to be the Lord's, to be released by ransom, for the purpose of remembering and accepting that when the first-borns in Egypt were slain, those of Israel were graciously preserved. This practice, too, was to be repeated to their children from one generation to another (Exodus 13:1, 11-16; Num. 18:15, 16). A Jewish boy who had just turned twelve was accorded a privilege of making his first pilgrimage to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover feast. When Jesus Christ had turned twelve, he journeyed with his parents to Jerusalem to participate in this festivity.

Jesus Christ, so to say, explained and defended his doctrinal propositions for three days at the age of twelve, and the teachers and others in the temple were baffled by his wisdom, understanding and questions (Luke 2:46, 47). The significance of the Passover celebration goes beyond the
deliverance of the Israelites. This celebration points to the deliverance of all sinners from sin through Christ as the ransom.

The Apostle Paul, looking at the Passover celebration from post-cross stance, says, "For Christ our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7). In an attempt to give a new meaning based on the atonement effected at the Cross of Jesus Christ, Davies (quoted from Bacchiocchi 1977: 75) maintains that this text should not be understood in a literal fashion, and that it does not necessarily points to a specific Passover day, but to "a dispensation."

The Bishop of Sardis, Melito, defined Passover in his sermon thus: "What is the Passover? Indeed its name is derived from that event - 'to celebrate the Passover' (tou paschein) - is derived from 'to suffer' (tou pathein). Therefore, learn who the sufferer is and who is who suffers along with the sufferer" (Ibid. p. 84).

Irenaeus echoed the same or similar sentiments pertaining to the Passover and its significance in the light of Calvary. He said: "Of the day of His passion, too, he [Moses] was not ignorant, but foretold Him, after a figurative manner, by the name given to the Passover; and that very festival, which had been proclaimed
such a long time previously by Moses, did our Lord suffer, thus fulfilling the Passover" (Ibid.).

It is clear that Jesus Christ is the antitype that was symbolised by the type - paschal lamb. Paul refers to Jesus Christ as the paschal or Passover lamb. This obviously means that the Passover lamb was a type of "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). This sacrifice is not repeatable according to the writer of Hebrews. He says, "And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgement, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him" (Heb. 9:27, 28).

Most contemporary Jewish people do not see in Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah who was anticipated by the Old Testament prophets. This position has some implications. The proponents of this view are still commemorating the Passover because they are still waiting for the Messiah to come. It is interesting to note that long after the death, resurrection, ascension of Jesus Christ, and even after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit during the Pentecost day, the Passover was still being observed (Acts 14:2).
In fact, the primitive church continued to observe the Passover, and it was celebrated at the same time as the Jewish Passover, and according to Epiphanius (quoted from Bacchiocchi, 1977: 81) that practice continued until A. D. 135. Jesus Christ inaugurated the Eucharist or Lord’s Supper during the Passover Celebration and explained its significance to the disciples in order for them to repeat the tradition (Matt. 26:26-29). Paul received and passed on this tradition (1 Cor. 11:23).

The Passover points to an era from the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery, to the deliverance of Spiritual Israel from the slavery of sin (from Egypt to the Crucifixion). The Eucharist points to the death of Jesus Christ until his parousia (I Cor. 11:26).

In conclusion, when Jesus Christ was hanging on the Cross or lying on the alter of sin-offering like a paschal lamb which typified Him, He “cried with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit” (Matt. 27:50). At that moment, there was no need for the lamb to die because the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” had already died.

Ellen G. White (1898: 756, 757), one of the prolific writers on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, gives a dramatic description of what might have happened at the same time when Jesus Christ died. She says,
"When the loud cry, 'It is finished,' came from the lips of Christ, the priests were officiating in the temple. It was the hour of the evening sacrifice. The lamb representing Christ had been brought to be slain. Clothed in his significant and beautiful dress, the priest stood with lifted knife, as did Abraham when he was about to slay his son... The priest is about to slay the victim; but the knife drops from nerveless hand, and the lamb escapes. Type has met antitype in the death of God's Son. The great sacrifice has been made... There is now an end to all sacrifices and offerings of sin."

The primitive church continued with the Eucharist as instituted by Jesus Christ, and passed it on by the Apostles who witnessed its inauguration, and by Paul who received it from the Lord, himself. The preaching of the primitive, apostolic church was vibrant with the theme of resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:22; 2:31, 32; 17:16-18; 23:6-9; 24:14-16).

2.3 Jewish Ethics

The word ethics comes from the Greek word ethos, and ethos means a habit or custom. A Greek word for law is nomos, and the meaning of this word is an accepted custom (Barclay, 1971:14). The Old Testament Torah regulated Jewish every day conduct. The Torah regulated anything from respect to parents and other people (Ex. 20:12), salaries or wages for employees (Lev. 19:15; Deut. 24:14, 15; Mal. 3:5), protection for the widows and orphans (Deut. 1:17; 10:18 16:19; Lev. 19:15), love for their neighbour, care for animals, and to taking care of birds (Ex. 23:4, 5; Deut. 21:1-9; 22:1-4, 6, 7).
There was care for the poor and strangers (Lev. 19:9, 10; 23:22; Deut. 24:20, 21), justice for everyone (Ex. 21:15; Deut. 21:18-21), the care for the physically handicapped (Deut. 28:18; Lev. 19:14), freedom for the newly wedded couple (Deut. 20:5-7; Lev. 24:5), godliness and righteousness (Ex. 19:6), and faithfulness in business contracts (Lev. 19:35, 36; Deut. 35:13-16; Prov. 16:11; Eze. 45:10-12; Amos 8:4-6; Micah 6:10, 11).

Fishman (1958: 125) recorded an incident in which Hillel was confronted by a question from an unbeliever who wished to embrace Judaism on condition that he was taught Torah while he stood on one foot. Hillel responded thus: "What is hateful to yourself do not do to your fellowman. This is the whole of the Torah, the rest is its commentary. Go and study it." Hillel viewed the Torah in conjunction with human relations and lifestyle.

The messianic promises and expectations encased in the Torah, and in the entire Old Testament text, contributed in shaping the Jewish ethical life. The Old Testament prophets' message and burden were that people should return to God and govern themselves according to the principles advocated by the Torah in order for them to participate in God's covenant and promises. The blessings and curses were based on the way they related to the Torah. Their obedience and faithfulness to God and His Law were conditions for God's continued blessings
and protection. This obedience occurred in the context of a faith-relationship with God.

John the Baptist, echoing the prophetic message of Isaiah, preached preparation through repentance and baptism, and the recipients of the message were entreated to alter their lifestyle and align it with the message as reflected through the Old Testament text (Luke 3: 3, 10-14). While it is true that the Jews had a sacred text to inform their ethical life, and that they had memorised this text, it is also true that they had not assimilated the spirit of the Law. This is portrayed in their human relations.

For instance, women, children, poverty-stricken, slaves, physically sick and handicap, and Gentiles became victims of the Jewish uncaring attitude and their distorted theology. Women and children were seen as part of men's assets. Poor people and cripples were seen as people who had caused their own condition, and therefore, deserving misery and God's displeasure.

They were actually reaping what they had sown. This is attested to by the incident where the disciples reduced the condition of a man born blind into a theological discussion. Their concern was not the plight of a blind man, but they desired answers to their religious questions. They had already taken a position that sin had been committed, but their predicament was, "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind" (John 9:2).
They sought to apportion blame for the sin that led to blindness. Jesus Christ chose to ignore their question, and stimulated them to pay more attention to God's saving works (John 9:4).

John recorded an account where a woman was caught in the act of committing adultery. In this anecdote, the accomplice to this sin was not arraigned. This behaviour of the Pharisees and Scribes reflected their attitude in relation to women (John 8:7). Children, too, received a raw deal from Jesus Christ's disciples. Jesus Christ had to firmly rebuke his disciples for barring children from receiving blessings through the laying of hands (Matt. 19:14, 15). The reign of the Holy Spirit beginning from Pentecost provided the primitive church with a motivation for their ethics.

The account of Ananias and Sapphira shows that the Holy Spirit was already residing in and presiding on the affairs of the apostolic, primitive church, and served as the motivation for their ethics. They both died because they had lied to the Holy Spirit by telling lies (Acts 5:3). In summary, Jewish Religion did not leave anything to chance. The ethos and essence of Jewish religion found their expression and meaning in day-to-day living and in human relations. The Scriptures informed their ethics. The primitive church built its theological ethics on the Jewish background, and also on the reign of the Holy Spirit.
2.4 Male and Female in Jewish Economy

The Jewish view of male and female was informed by the creation account (Gen. 1-3). In spite of the vast and depth of information derived from the writings of Moses, the position of women among the Jews was inferior and of subordination to that of man. Josephus, a Jewish historian, lived during the emergence of Christian era. In describing the position of Jewish women, Josephus wrote: “The woman, says the Law, is in all things inferior to the man. Let her accordingly be submissive, not for her humiliation, but that she may be directed; for the authority has been given by God to the man” (quoted by Moltmann, 1981:174).

Thomson (quoted by Wight, [1953] 1980:105), in describing the social position of women in relation to that of men, said:

“Oriental women are never regarded or treated as equals by the men. They never eat with men, but the husband and brothers are first served, and the wife, mother, and sisters wait and take what is left; in a walk the women never go arm in arm with the men, but follow at a respectful distance; the women is, as a rule, kept closely confined, and watched with jealousy; when she goes out she is closely veiled from head to foot.”

In a parable of the prodigal son everyone else is mentioned, but nothing is mentioned about the presence or the whereabouts of the prodigal son’s mother when his father gave him a welcoming party (Luke15: 11-32). One of the interesting observations is that a Jewish quorum for worship in public worship
was ten, and women did not constitute that number, but males (Moore 1927:131).

This idea of not including women in the quorum of worship can also be likened to a practice of not including women and children in statistics taken during the feeding of the five thousand men (Matt. 15:32-39). Although the position of the Jewish women was inferior in the eyes of their Jewish husbands, Thomson (quoted by Wight [1953] 1980:106) points out that Jewish women's position was superior to that of Arab women. He said:

"The position of women among them (Arabs' women) was far higher than with the Arabs, and the character of Hebrew women must have been, on the whole, such as to command and sustain this higher position. The Arabs can show no list of pious and illustrious ladies like those who adorn the history of the Hebrews. No Bedouin mother ever taught, or could teach, such 'prophecy' as King Lemuel learned from his; nor could the picture of 'virtuous woman,' given in the last chapter of Proverbs, have been copied by an Arab. The conception by him of such a character was a moral impossibility".

According to Swindler (1976:167), the status of women in other societies was better than that of the then contemporary Judaism, but it gradually improved. Jewish treatment of women was influenced by the writings of their rabbis. For example, a second century B.C. Rabbi Ben Johanan (quoted by Moore 1927:269), summarised his position on women thus: "One who prolongs conversation with a woman does himself harm, and wastes the time he should be putting on the study of the Law, and in the end will occupy a place in hell."
It would seem that Jewish men viewed conversation with women as immoral because it placed one in hell at the end of time.

We glean that “rules of propriety forbade a man to be alone with a woman, to look at a married, or even to give her a greeting. It was disgraceful for a scholar to speak with a woman in the street,” (Jeremias 1969:360). This thinking makes one understand why the disciples were surprised and disturbed to find Jesus Christ in a prolonged conversation with a Samaritan women at the well (John. 4:27).

Seneca, writing during the Hellenistic period, maintained that “men are born to rule, women to obey,” and that “women are morally inferior to men” (quoted by Schrage 1982 :223). The women did not only receive a humiliating treatment from the Hellenistic males, but also from the Rabbinic authorities. They viewed a woman as “a constant moral danger” (quoted by Scott 1966:224). It is interesting to note that the basis for discriminating women was not just based on gender, but on moral grounds. It would appear that the Jewish evaluation of women was sequential to the fact that sin was introduced to mankind through the women folk according to Genesis 3, hence the view that men should rather spend time studying Torah instead of conversing with women.
One cannot help but listen to the undertones from the Jewish position which seem to be saying that salvation comes from Torah, but judgement results from one's interaction with a woman. One of the surprising Jewish practice was that women were not encouraged to study the Torah - as a result most women were to a larger extend not educated (Norskov 1993:88).

One could conclude that the Jewish position on women was based, among other reasons, on the sequence of creation. Man was created first, and then God made a woman from man's rib (Gen. 2:21-23). Paul also contends and affirms that man was created first, but he does not accord value to the sequence of creation. Moses attests that man and woman become one flesh in marriage (Gen. 2:24). In describing this oneness of the flesh, an Old Testament scholar, Otto Piper (1941:25, 28) pointed out that this oneness

"embraces the natural lives of the two persons in their entirety. It is strange that two persons of separate wills and individualities should succeed in achieving real unity. ... Flesh, in the biblical sense, denotes not only the body but one's whole existence in this world; and the attainment of oneness of the flesh, therefore, creates a mutual dependence and reciprocity in all areas of life. One is ready to sacrifice his life for the other person, one feels that life is valueless apart from him, and one wants to be and to act like him. Without previous examination one is able to share his views."
God created man and woman to be different from each other. These differences do not constitute gender value. Brunner (1947:359) rightly mentioned that the "distinctive qualities" are "purely functional difference, not a difference in value, it is not a scale of values." Jesus Christ's ministry was inclusive. Luke recorded that women had a role in Jesus Christ's ministry.

They were part of his audience that heard his words, and followed him (Luke 11:27; 23:27). Jesus Christ had close relations with women who benefited from his ministry. For example, Mary and Martha, and in particular Mary washed his feet and anointed him (Matt. 26:6-13; John 11:5, 20-33; 12:1-8). Jesus Christ's illustrations and parables were inclusive. Luke recorded the parable of a woman who lost her coin (Luke 15:8-10). Matthew gave us an account of the parable of the ten virgins (Matt. 25:1-13). Luke cited Jesus Christ's parable that originated in the kitchen. The parable of the leavened bread (Luke 13:18-21).

Women gained from Jesus Christ's healing ministry. He healed Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31), Jairus' daughter was raised from the dead (Mark 5:35-43), healed a woman who suffered from the flow of blood (Mark 5:24-34). It is interesting to notice that a woman was among the two people who were healed on Sabbath (Luke 13:10-16; 14:2-6). The Gospels attest to the fact that women sacrificially supported Jesus Christ during his ministry (Luke 8:1-3), and women were the first witnesses of His resurrection. The women were the first people to
be commissioned by an angel in the tomb to preach and testify of Jesus Christ's resurrection while men were in hiding and doubting (Matt. 28:1-8).

Luke alluded to the attitude of the disciples towards the testimony of women. The disciples concluded that the story of Jesus Christ's resurrection as related by women was "idle tale, and they did not believe them" (Luke 24:11). The disciples could not accept the fact of Jesus Christ's resurrection simply because it was reported and proclaimed by women.

Once more their customs and traditions pertaining to the treatment of women blinded their eyes, and this hampered them from fathoming the prophecies which Jesus Christ himself iterated before his death. The treatment and attention that Jesus Christ displayed towards women would become a base from which Paul and other apostles would build their theology on gender issues for the primitive, apostolic church.

Long before Pentecost, but after the death of Jesus Christ, women were being included in the affairs of the emerging church. They were among the disciples waiting for the pouring of the Holy Spirit in the upper room (Acts 1:14). Women contribution to the course of Jesus Christ began to be taken seriously. This is evident in the mentioning of Thabitha, Phoebe, to mention a few, in the history of the primitive church who contributed both through their work and instruction.
In conclusion, it is clear that the position of women, as briefly stated, in both Jewish and Hellenistic worlds was less than desirable. Jesus' ministry and the attention he demonstrated towards women brought about a radical change, and paved a way through which the apostolic, primitive church would use in building its theology and ethics. While it is true that Paul did not escape the practices of his time, it is also true that his new understanding of Christ and soteriology helped in shaping his new understanding of women. Pauline position will be dealt with in the next chapter.

2.5 Jews and Gentiles

The term "Gentile" came from the Hebrew word *goy*, which meant a "nation," and earlier was applied to both the Hebrew and to other nations. The plural *goyim*, especially with article *ha-goyim*, meant the nations of the world that were not Hebrew. The Latin versions of the Bible translated *goyim* as *gents* (singular: *genes*), or gentile. In Modern usage Gentile applies to a single individual. In post-biblical Hebrew, *goy* came to mean an individual who is a non-Jew rather than a "nation" (Britannica [1911] 1993:185).

Jesus focused his ministry primarily on the Jews and Judaism. The account of a Syrophoenician woman in which Jesus Christ refused to let his presence and identity be known among the non-Jew territories attested to this fact (Mark 7:
24-30). Jesus Christ, in an attempt first to give Jews a chance to hear the message and repent before proceeding to the non-Jews, uttered a statement that was best understood among the Jewish circles. He said, "Let the children first be fed, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs" (Mark 7:27).

The parable of a publican and Jew summarised the attitudes of the Jews towards the Gentiles (Luke 18:9-14). Jews viewed Gentiles as a people "created by God to be fuel for the fires of hell... It was even forbidden to give a Gentile mother help in her hour of direst need, because to do so would only have been to bring another Gentile into the world" (Barclay 1958:4, 10).

Jesus Christ gainfully employed a parable of Good Samaritan as one of the desperate attempts to confront the hostility Jews harboured against the non-Jews. In that parable Jesus challenged the Jews to be kind to their neighbours, including the Gentiles (Luke 10:25-37).

The relationship that Jesus Christ displayed with non-Jews became one of the sources of conflict between him and the Jews. Jews perceived the non-Jews as sinners, and anyone who associated with them would not escape Jewish disapproval. The Primitive Church was not immune to Jewish attitude against
the Gentiles. The Jewish hatred against Gentiles again reared its ugly head when the church was making gains through the gospel.

Luke records an incident in which the Greek speaking widows were overlooked and neglected during the daily food distribution, and this issue was dealt with by way of appointing seven spirit-filled men to administer the food distribution (Acts 6:1-3). Nicolas, a Gentile, was among the seven men who were elected and ordained to serve the needs of the widows (Acts 6:5).

It is possible that the inclusion of Nicolas was an attempt to reprimand prejudice among the Jews, and also to affirm and encourage the Gentile converts that they, too, had a share in the body of Christ. This prejudice against non-Jews was not only manifested among the membership of the Primitive Church, but its leadership was guilt of the same attitude.

Peter's prejudice had to be confronted and rebuked by God through a vision (Acts 18: 9-23). The essence of Peter's vision from God was that God abhors racial discrimination and bigotry, but accepts everyone regardless of nationality (Acts: 10: 34, 35). As a sign that God affirmed his message to Peter, the Holy Spirit descended upon the Gentiles while Peter was preaching, and they began speaking in tongues (Acts 10: 35, 36).
The word reached the Jews in Jerusalem concerning the occurrences of that day, and Peter had to deal with a harsh criticism from Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 11: 1-3). Peter had to give his side of the story, and testified to his colleagues and fellow Jews that he had no control over what transpired in Ceasarea, and that he could not have stood in the way of the Lord (Acts 11: 4-17). The Jews who received Peter’s report understood and praised God for granting Gentiles repentance (Acts 11:18).

One would imagine that Peter’s report to the brethren in Jerusalem should have given a fatal blow to Jewish prejudice against the non-Jews, and also to remind them of the accepting attitude of Jesus Christ, but Jerusalem Council would prove that that was not the case.

Peter would, on the basis of his direct encounter with God in Ceasarea, be instrumental in bringing about a solution during the Jerusalem Council. Peter was beginning to see Gentiles through the eyes of God. When the comfortable nest of the Primitive Church was shaken by persecutions, disciples were forced to escape and scatter the gospel wherever they were, including Antioch, a Gentile city (Acts 11: 19-25). The seeds of the gospel were planted and yielded fruits, and a church was planted in Antioch. Luke records that it was in Antioch that the term “Christians” was first used to refer to disciples, and Paul, the missionary
to the Gentiles, was invited by Barnabas and he remained in Antioch for the whole year teaching and entrenching Christians into the truth. (Acts 11:26).

The conflict pertaining to the status of the Gentiles in relation to faith, promises and God’s grace precipitated a discussion that led Paul to develop and contribute to Christian Theology. It appears that there were no conflicts between Gentiles and Jews in Antioch, but the same was not true in Jerusalem, the stronghold of Judaism. Paul argued that Gentiles, too, are sons of Abraham and justified by faith (Gal. 3:8). In his correspondence to the Ephesians Church, Paul echoes this view that Gentiles have an equal share in God’s inheritance and that they are fellow members of the body (Eph. 3:6).

In his Epistle to the Romans, Paul develops his soteriology motif - the relationship between the law and grace, and he goes further to show that salvation and judgement will be meted to both Jews and Gentiles (Rom. 1:16, 17; 2:9). He points to the sequence of salvation path, which has already been unveiled by Jesus Christ, that salvation has been disclosed first to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles (Rom. 1:16). When the Jews refused to accept that Jesus of Nazareth was the expected Messiah, and also rejected the terms and means of salvation, salvation was then made available to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:11). This does not mean that if Jewish people had adhered to God’s instructions,
Gentiles would not have been given a chance to hear and accept the gospel of Jesus Christ and also to share in God’s promises.

The sequence of salvation started with the Jews because of the fact that God afforded them the privilege of revelation and knowledge of God’s salvific purpose. The Jewish people were to be God’s mouthpiece in the world. Paul describes this phenomenon in agricultural terms. He sees the Gentiles as branches which have been “cut from a wild olive tree,” and then “grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree” (Rom. 11:24).

The Gentiles did not only partake of salvation, but they were endowed and empowered with the spiritual gifts for the sole purpose of participating in witnessing and sharing Christ (Acts 10: 44-46). In a nutshell, Gentiles have equal claim to God’s salvation and grace, and the fact that Jews were given prior access to God’s promises does not in any way devalue the position of Gentiles in relation to salvation and to that of the Jews.

We have tried to make it clear in this chapter that Jews had a wholistic view of life. What a Jew did outside of the temple was as sacred as that which occurred outside of the temple. We have seen that the Torah played a major role in both civic and religious life of a Jew, but it was not intended to be used as a means of salvation or achieving righteousness. The Torah informed the Jewish Ethics and
regulated human relations and business deals. In the next chapter we shall proceed with Paul's view of Jewish Religion in the light of Jesus Christ event at the Cross.
CHAPTER 3

PAUL’S THEOLOGY IN RELATION TO JEWISH RELIGIOUS THOUGHT.

3.1 Introduction: Paul-Jesus Encounter

Many scholars agree that the Paul’s Jewish and Hellenistic framework, his Damascus encounter with Jesus Christ, his evaluation of Jesus of Nazareth, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, helped in shaping his worldview and theology. The first question, which is also the crux of the matter, is: “Where and how did it all begin in Paul’s life?” And “What was his point of reference?” There are several and diverse answers to these questions, and their proponents strongly support their positions.

For example, some scholars point to Paul’s emphasis on new being in Christ. Some maintain that his justification by faith motif is an organising principle. Some espouse the view that a point of his shift resulted from his new framework (his soteriology). Some maintain that his theology is “essentially anthropology,” because it addresses “authentic ways of being human” (Ziesler, 1983:28).

Paul’s point of departure, as far as his theology is concerned, and according to his writings, is his encounter with Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8). Prior to this event, there is little or no evidence to support any paradigm shift on Paul’s side as far as his Jewish religion and theology are
concerned. In his pre-Paul-Christ encounter, Paul demonstrated a misguided zeal that found its expression in his harsh dealings with Christians, particularly Jews who had accepted Jesus Christ as their Messiah.

The Damascus road experience is significant to the development of Paul's theology. Paul keeps on coming back to this encounter. In fact Paul's life reached its zenith in the "Damascus Road event," (Ralston 1990:198). The Damascus' experience is Paul's frame of reference. One writer (quoted by Brunot 1959:27) concisely summarised this Paul-Jesus-encounter thus:

"He was taken possession of once and for all. It was a ravishment that snatched a man away from a form of life it wiped out. And that man would always be coming back to this inexhaustible moment and would measure against it the other experiences, present and future, in which this moment, meditated or rediscovered in contemplation would in one way or another open a door in the absolute."

One cannot be naïve so as to ignore views presented in an attempt to explain the Damascus encounter. For example Martin (1978: 44, 45) discusses three views which are aimed at explaining Paul-Jesus encounter. One view, which is popular among preachers, which is based on psychology of religion purports that Paul might have had an emotional conflict prior to the encounter, and that he found a release after the encounter.
The second view, the rationalistic approach, maintains that Paul might have suffered an epileptic attack. The last group argue for ecstasy. These views are but speculations. Martin, after evaluating all these views, rightly concludes that it is safer to interpret that encounter theologically and christologically.

The second question that cannot be ignored is, "What happened to Paul after his encounter with Jesus Christ?" There are two answers to this question. One answer suggests that Paul was converted (Ladd, [1974] 1991:408; Davies, [1955] 1967:327). The answer which is opposed to the first maintains that Paul's experience "ought not to be called a conversion but a commissioning" or "a call" or he was "called, not converted" (Ziesler, 1983:2; Schoeps, 1959:54; Segal, 1990:5).

Dibelius (1953:47) strongly supports the former position (that Paul was not converted, but called), but he also accommodates the latter view. His accent is on the view that Paul was not converted, but he hastens to mention that the only acts in which Paul had to be converted from were in persecuting Christians in the name of the Lord, and in giving his approval to the stoning of Steven.

Dibelius seems to be saying that the sin of persecuting Christians in the Lord and Paul's endorsement of the stoning of Steven in his zeal to protect Judaism cannot be equated to that of worshipping false gods. His argument is on the degree of sins and misleading.
In this case, it is safe to allow the Scriptures to speak for themselves. Lukan account states that Ananias ministered healing to Paul through the laying of hands and Paul was “filled with the Holy Spirit,” and “was baptised” (Acts 9:12, 17, and 18).

These texts reflect both positions. Paul was baptised because the prerequisites of baptism, according to the theme and message of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, are faith (believing in what has been accomplished by Jesus Christ for us), conversion, and repentance (Matt. 3:2, 11; 28:19, 20). The baptism of Paul was different from that of Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ was baptised, not because he repented from any sin that he committed, but “to fulfil all righteousness” (Matt. 3:15).

Jesus Christ, in requesting John the Baptist to baptise him, was in essence identifying himself with humanity; but not necessarily accepting or confessing any guilt of sin from his life. Paul was baptised, commissioned, and the Holy Spirit sealed his call. Scholars do injustice to the Scriptures when they emphasise one position at the expense of the other.

The Scriptures mentioned that Paul was both converted and commissioned. It cannot be a question of either or, but both. It cannot be a question of choosing where one wants to put his emphasis, but a matter of approaching the Scriptures with a childlike faith, and listening and accepting the message thereof.
For example, Isaiah saw a vision, was cleansed, and then he was commissioned (Isaiah 6:1-9). It is clear from Isaiah's experience that conversion precedes commission. Cleansing precedes mission. The same is true with Paul.

### 3.2 Paul's Christianity and Jewishness

The followers of Jesus Christ, including Paul, were for the first time named Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:26). The crucial question is Did Paul renounce his Jewish roots after his encounter with Jesus Christ? Did he convert from Judaism to Christianity? Did he switch religions?

#### 3.2.1 Paul's Jewishness

Paul himself makes a profound statement about his links with Judaism and with Jesus Christ. He says that he is a Hebrew, an Israelite and an offspring of Abraham. He declares that he is not only a true Jew, but he is also a servant of Jesus Christ, too. (2 Cor. 11:22,23). Paul claims that he is a Jew by birth (descendent of Abraham), a Hebrew (possibly referring to his language), and an Israelite (a Jew because of racial connection). Barclay (1958:11) rightly described Paul as a "proudly, stubbornly, unalterably a Jew."
Paul introduced and presented himself to his audience during his trial in Jerusalem as a Jew, a Pharisee, and spoke to them in Hebrew language (Acts 21:39; 22:2, 3; 23:1, 6). In his correspondence to the Roman Church in which he argued for the position that God did not reject Israel completely, Paul pointed out that he was not just a Jew or an Israelite, but he came from the lineage of Benjamin (Rom. 11:1). His connection with Abraham are not just spiritual or a matter of faith connection, but he maintains that he is a descendant of Abraham by flesh (Rom. 4:1).

He accepts Isaac as his literal “forefather” (Rom. 9:9, 10). Paul’s epistle to the Philippians gives us a true and comprehensive Paul’s position in relation to his Jewishness. He says (Phil. 3:4-6),

“Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If any other man thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law a Pharisee, as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law blameless.”

Barclay (1958:15) rightly describes Paul’s connection with Judaism thus: “If ever there was a Jew who was steeped in Judaism, that Jew was Paul.” Both Ladd (1974: 408) and Davies (1955: 324), in discussing the Damascus road phenomenon, are of the opinion that Paul defected from Judaism and joined a new religious movement.
Paul's personal testimony, particularly in areas where he introduces himself to his audience, and also Lukan account reflected in the book of Acts, disprove the claims of Ladd and Davies. Their view can only be considered to be closer to the truth if it is limited to the setting and context of salvation by works - of which it is not the case.

In his correspondence to the Corinthian believers, Paul employed Jewish language and festivals in describing the duration of his visit in Ephesus. He said that he "will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost," (1 Cor. 16:8). Paul's theology was entirely depended on and originated from the Old Testament Scriptures (Rom. 15:4; 4:22-24; 1 Cor. 9:8-10). Paul cites several texts from the Old Testament directly and by inference to support most of his motifs.

For example, his thesis of justification or righteous by faith is taken from the Old Testament prophet, Habakkuk (Hab. 2:4). Paul had an unwavering loyalty to the Torah (Acts 22:3). In fact, he gave credence to the truth that the Torah is not abrogated, but established in his writings, and that it is still authoritative for Christians (Rom. 3: 31; 1 Cor. 9:9; 14: 34). He believed what was written in the Law and the prophets (Acts 24:14). He never committed any offence against the customs of the Jews (Acts 25:8; 28:17). Paul had made a Nazarite vows, and he also shaved his head according to Jewish ritual laws, (Acts 18:18; Num.6: 18). He circumcised Timothy simply because Timothy's mother was a
Jew and his father was a Greek (Acts 16:1-3). The reason for the circumcision of Timothy was not for salvation purposes because Timothy was already a Christian when Paul circumcised him. Paul circumcised Timothy simply “to remove an obstacle to his missionary work” (Larson 1985:431). Paul needed to remain a Jew even after his conversion because he had a duty to win Jews for Christ, and also to win the non-Jew (1 Cor. 9:19, 20).

In a nutshell, Paul remained a Jew after his conversion, and never condemned nor abandoned his Jewish roots. He interpreted his Judaism in the light shining from the Cross-of-Jesus Christ, and his evaluation of Jesus of Nazareth. Paul was baptised because he repented from the sin of persecuting the Jewish Christians and from his merit-based salvation.

Paul did not convert from Judaism to Christianity (or from one religion to another), but his understanding of the revealed truth grew through the illumination from the Cross-of-Jesus Christ. One could say that Paul accepted the interpretation of the Gospel from the light of the cross of Jesus Christ, but he retained his Jewish culture. He did not cease to be a Jew, but he simply expressed the intent of "Moses and the prophets," and "interpreted the Law differently from his Jewish brethren," (Dunn 1985: 423; Bernadette 1990: 72, 73).
Campbell (1989: 466) summarises Paul's Jewishness thus: "A Jew is a potential Christian; more appropriately, however, we should claim that he (Paul) defines the true Christian as a true Jew... He (Paul) defines Christianity in terms of Judaism."

3.2.2 Paul's Christianity

Christianity was not born out of a vacuum. It derived its existence from its mother, Judaism. Today we may have to accept that Judaism and Christianity are different (Harvey 1995: 463). One of the prolific writers, Sandmel (1978: 305), hit the nail on the head in his evaluation of the origins of Christianity in reference to Judaism. He said: "Christianity perpetuated some central aspects of Judaism unchanged; it altered some of what it inherited; it rejected large portion of its legacy; it created its own materials and embellished these creations."

One could safely and rightly say that Judaism is the seed-plot of almost all Pauline motifs, and that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ became the frame of reference through which one can understand the significance and meaning of Old Testament prophecies and their fulfilment. Paul agrees that he is the follower of "the Way," and that he worships the God of his fathers (the
Jews), and believing everything written in the prophets, and being a staunch believer of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 24:14, 15).

Notice that Paul does not see a dichotomy between “the Way” (Christianity) and the writing of the prophets (Judaism). He does not view “the Way” as another movement that is separate from Judaism. Larsson (1985:432) enlarges this argument thus: “In the Christ-event, in the death and resurrection of Jesus, he (Paul) sees the very essence of the Law and the prophets revealed and fulfilled.” Larsson goes further to contend that “with this view the Lukan Paul Christianises the Jewish Law.”

The Holy Spirit, which filled Paul after Ananias laid his hands on him, became instrumental in helping Paul to discern the person and redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Paul addressed Jesus Christ as “Lord” (1 Cor. 8:5, 6; 12:3; Phil. 2:11); sometimes he called him “Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1; 1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 8:9). The primitive church had accepted Jesus of Nazareth not only as Christ, but as Lord (Acts 15:11; 2 Pet. 1:16). Paul personally testified of the presence of the Holy Spirit in himself because “no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit,” (1 Cor. 12:3).

Paul, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and his strong leaning on the Old Testament, would develop his theology and interpretation of redemption, law, sin, and new life through the person of Jesus Christ. Paul would see in the
death and resurrection of Jesus Christ a means for propitiation (Rom. 3:24, 25),
redemption (Eph. 1:7), reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18, 19); justification (Rom. 3:24),
sanctification (1 Cor. 1:30) and glorification (2 Thess. 2:14). These salvific
blessings would be conveyed by the gospel and be received through faith in
Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16, 17). Manson (quoted by Martin, 1978: 96) pointedly
and accurately described Paul's Christianity as

“A radical change from a self-centred to a Christ-centred life; a
complete submission to Jesus Christ in which he becomes a disciple
of the Master and a servant of the Lord; and ... his entrance into
the kingdom of God on earth into that apostolic service which is the
task of the Christian community.”

3.3 Sin, Law and Righteousness

Paul developed, explained, and separated the concepts of sin, law and
righteousness. It would appear that Romans, 3: 21 served as the starting point
of Paul's theology of righteousness. Paul declared in this citation that “the
righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law
and the prophets bear witness to it.” Paul argued that righteousness of God
comes to believers as a gift apart from, separate from and independent of their
contribution.
It would appear that Paul's quest was to challenge and undo the error of making salvation or God's righteousness a reward for meritorious services and actions. Paul begins his theology by separating and defining law, sin and righteousness. According to Paul, "sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned," (Rom. 5:15). Paul seems to be pointing to Adam as the source of sin that affected mankind, and that sin resulted to death.

Sin does not only result to death, but to general moral depravity and wickedness, and these evoke God's wrath and displeasure (Rom. 2:18, 26-31). Sin is rebelling against revealed will of God. Sin dwells in man through the flesh. Paul uses a warfare or military language to describe what a person earns after sinning. He said, "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord," (Rom. 6:23). It was a common practice to reward the services of Roman soldiers with a wage. This simply points to the fact that sin rewards its adherents with death.

In his article Weima (1990: 219-235) disputed the work of H. Raisanen in which Raisanen contended that the Pauline writings are inconsistent and self-contradictory especially in his (Paul) treatment of the Law and sin. Weima argued that Paul's views advanced in cluster of texts are far from inconsistent and self-contradictory, but those passages of Scriptures could be best
understood as expressing one of three interrelated functions, namely, "cognitive — the Law reveals a person's true sinful condition (Rom. 3:20; 7:7; Gal. 3:19), converting — the Law transforms sin into more clearly defined and serious acts of transgression (Rom. 5:13; 4:15), and causative — the Law provokes or stimulates sin (Rom. 7:5, 8-11; 5:20; 1 Cor. 15:56)."

Paul did not discredit the Law, but viewed it as holy, (Rom. 7: 12). Cranfield hits the nail on the head when he says "Paul rejects only the Law's misuse for justification by works. The Law as divine guidance stands, in the church as of old. All Paul's negative remarks about it (the Law) are in connection with justification and only with that," (quoted by Ziesler [1983] 1991: 111). Paul discourages the practice of obeying the Law as a means of earning and achieving salvation because "obedience is a natural expression of the Christian life" in a the context saving relationship with Christ (Westeholm 1984: 230).

It would be naïve to ignore the sentiments expressed by other writers on Paul's teaching on the Law. Some are of the opinion that Paul's teaching on the Law is "inconsistent and illogical," (Snodgrass 1988: 95). Some feel that it is "contradictory," (Raisanen 1986: 62-73). Whatever the case, we need to mention that Paul's teaching on the Law is far from being incoherent.
Raabe (1996:178) maintains that Christians have been delivered from the Law. The Law teaches them God's holy will in which they find joy. The Law accuses Christians as sinners, and the Christians fulfil the Law through the Holy Spirit (who makes the indwelling of Jesus Christ possible).

After his exegesis of two passages of Scriptures from the epistle to the Roman, Schreiner (1993:154) concludes thus: "Paul points out both in Rom 9:32-33 and 10:6-8 that the way to salvation does not lie in doing the law, it is obtained by believing in Christ." This writer continues to say "Christ has provided all that is necessary for salvation, and thus salvation is by believing the gospel which Paul preached."

Paul declares that "the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law (Rom. 3: 21). Campbell (1973: 33) makes a striking point when he says, "God's righteousness is in contrast with both our unrighteousness and our righteousness." He goes further to say that "It is also the opposite of our goodness. Even our goodness are not to God's level of righteousness." There is difference between the word righteousness and justification. The word justification has to do with "restoration to a relationship," and righteousness has to do with "the life of the redeemed, including their moral renewal," (Ziesler [1983] 1991: 101).
In summary, Paul contends that the Law is Holy and good. The Law (not the Ceremonial law) reveals sin and describes what sin is, but does not generate remedy for sin. Jesus Christ saves us through his death and resurrection from the condemnation of the Law through imparting God's righteousness by the Holy Spirit. Righteousness of Jesus Christ is a gift of grace independent and apart from our contribution. Paul did not condemn the Law, but the abuse of the Law for the purposes of salvation.

3.4 Sacraments

There is a mutual agreement among most of the New Testament scholars that there are two significant ordinances in the New Testament, namely, the Baptism and Eucharist and both of them are “unbloody” (Berkhof, 1939: 620). We also need to recognise that there are other suggested sacraments by different theologians. We shall confine this work to two sacraments because Jesus Christ instituted them. These two sacraments will each be briefly discussed separately in the next section.
3.4.1 Baptism

There are three passages each reporting on baptism in the New Testament. Those are the account of John the Baptist, Jesus Christ and his disciples, and that in which Jesus Christ commanded his disciples to officiate in. There is an assertion that prior to New Testament baptism accounts, Jews practised proselyte baptism for the admission of the Gentiles who wished to embrace Judaism (Rowley, 1963: 211). The evidence of this practice cannot be convincingly substantiated. There is also an indication that the Egyptians, Persians, and the Hindus practised the initiatory baptism (Guthrie, 1981: 717; Berkhof, 1939: 622).

In the light of accessible data, John the Baptist could not have originated the rite of baptism. It would appear that John's baptism might go back to the Old Testament ritual of cleansing of priests or to the prophets' use of water imagery for moral cleansing (Isa. 12:16ff; Jer. 4:14; Eze. 36:25; Zec. 13:1).

Jesus Christ, in an attempt to respond to the priests and elders who had challenged his authority, gave us the impression that John the Baptist's baptism came from God Himself (Matt. 21: 25-27; John 1: 33). John's baptism was focused on "repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Mark.1: 4; Luke 3:3).
There are some allusions of baptism in the Old Testament. There is a combination of water and spirit in Isaiah 44:3 that may be linked to John the Baptist's prophecy of the baptism of Jesus in Matt. 3:11. John's baptism carried ethical obligation, and the recipients of his message were expected to govern themselves according to the bidding of the message (Luke 3:10-14).

We need to point out that Bultmann (1963: 145), in his attempt to reconstruct what might have happened, rejects Lukan account because he is of the opinion that words were put on John's mouth, and that soldiers could not have gone to hear John preach. It is safer to allow the text to speak than to read into it or even speculate on what was said and not said. John's baptism was not a mere Jewish ritual. He challenged the Pharisees and Sadducees to demonstrate the fruits of repentance (Matt. 3:7). Jesus Christ requested John to baptise Him in order to identify himself with mankind, and also to endorse and affirm John's baptism.

Jesus Christ aligned himself with the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins as advocated by John the Baptist. In fact, he is the one who instructed John the Baptist to baptise (John 1:33). The only variation in Jesus Christ's baptism was fire and spirit (Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16). The water and spirit baptism would become significant in the life of the primitive church. Jesus Christ discussed new birth and baptism of water and spirit with Nicodimus.
Jesus Christ mentioned that baptism of water and spirit are the prerequisite for entering the kingdom of God (John 3: 5). This text (John 3: 5) has been used to justify infant baptism in Catholic tradition (Ferguson, 1979: 45, 46). The motivation for this practice is that baptism is for cleansing of sin, and that John 3: 5 hinders any un-baptised person from heaven. This view is also based on the doctrine of the original sin. One of the motivating factors for infant baptism was the high mortality rate among children soon after birth.

Some maintain that Jesus blessed children and they employ that event as a premise and motivation for infant baptism. Some argue for infant baptism from 1 Cor. 7:14 where Paul, in his discussion about marriage and celibacy, said that a woman must not divorce his unbelieving husband because the unbelieving husband is consecrated through his wife, and her children are made holy.

The context of 1 Cor. 7: 14 is not infant baptism, but marriage and ascetic life. If one forces the idea of infant baptism in 1 Cor. 7:14, that would be tantamount to a mere speculation and forcing the text to say what it was not intended to say. Some scholars use Col. 2: 11, 12 to justify infant baptism. They see baptism as a carry-over from circumcision, and since male children were circumcised on the eighth day, so children should be baptised at infancy.
Wright (1987: 18), in an attempt to refute that argument, raises this question:
"If baptism is a carry-over of circumcision, what do we do with the female children who could not be circumcised?"

One can safely and rightly add that baptism has to do with repentance, conversion, faith, obedience and justification. Can those terms be applied to infants? Most of scholars are of the view that there is no proof of infant baptism from the New Testament (Wright 1987: 3). Circumcision was a sign for national alliance, but baptism can be experienced voluntarily, consciously by a mature person who has heard, believed and ready to obey the gospel through saving faith in Christ.

Berkhof (1939: 632) agrees that there is no Scriptural basis and support for infant baptism and that there is no “example of infant baptism in the New Testament;” but he immediately turns to say “this does not necessarily make infant baptism un-Biblical.” There is an apparent contradiction of terms in his statement. Once more, it is safer to pay attention to what the Scriptures say than to conjecture, speculate and make the Scriptures talk when they are actually silent.

Jesus Christ commissioned his disciples to baptise in the names of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19, 20).
It would appear that Matthean "Triune Formula" baptism was intended to suggest and substantiate the existence of the doctrine of Trinity in the Scriptures (Schweizer, 1973: 531; Albright & Mann, 1971: 363). This Triune Baptism is not found in Lukan account of the life of the primitive church. It should be mentioned that the baptism mentioned above was baptism by immersion or dipping in the water.

We need not ignore Dr. Carson who, in his book *Baptism in its Mode and Subjects*, argued that the Greek word *baptizo* has two meanings, "to dip," and its secondary meaning "to dye" (quoted from Berkhof, 1939: 629). Dr. Carson's position is that we need to stick to the primary meaning — "to dip" as a mode for baptism. Other scholars advocate for any form of baptism. It should be pointed out that Jesus Christ or Paul did not modify the manner of baptism. The mode of baptism may be informed by the meaning that Paul attached to it.

Paul connects baptism to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In fact, he views baptism as signifying the death and burial with Jesus Christ (Rom. 6: 1-4). If "to dip" signifies the "burial," then it stands to reason that any other mode would not constitute burial. Sprinkling would not constitute burial. Once we modify the symbol or type, we have no choice but to reinterpret or modify the antitype, which is symbolised by the type.
For example, if we were to substitute the lamb (signifying Jesus Christ) with a pig, the object (Jesus Christ) symbolised by the pig may have to be reinterpreted or lose its redemptive meaning. The meaning may be distorted. It is safer to align ourselves to and practice baptism according to John the Baptist's mode, that of submersion, because we have no proof of any deviation from the Scriptures.

The primitive church baptised in the name of Jesus Christ (Rom. 6: 3; 1 Cor. 1: 12-14; Gal. 3:27). Paul followed the tradition of baptism handed over to him by the Lord, as it was the case with the Eucharist. The converts during the primitive church's life were baptised (1 Cor. 1:13ff). Paul disclaimed to have performed the ceremony, but he emphasised its importance (1 Cor. 1: 14-16). Paul views baptism as the means of initiation into the body of Christ, and the rite was not limited to any class of people (1 Cor. 12: 13). Paul understood baptism as the act of putting on Jesus Christ (Gal. 3: 27; Rom. 13: 14)

The act of baptism presupposes that the preaching of the gospel which result to obedience and saving faith (Rom. 1: 16, 17; 10: 9, 19) has taken place prior to baptism, and baptism is simply the symbol of burying the old man or life of sin. Therefore, baptism does not save, but it points to repentance, conversion, cleansing and death to self and those have already taken place in Christ long before the rite of baptism.
In conclusion, the idea of baptism was not a Jewish innovation. Jesus Christ endorsed the baptism of John the Baptist, and magnified it in the light of the cross. John the Baptist and Jesus Christ practised baptism by immersion. There is no proof in the New Testament of any modification as to the mode of baptism. There is no indication pointing to the practise of infant baptism by the primitive, apostolic church, nor any clue that Jesus Christ might have instituted it. There are divergent views on the mode or method of baptism, but is safer to stick to or follow the example revealed in the New Testament.

There is no substantial proof that circumcision was replaced by baptism especially on infants. In fact, circumcision on infants was performed on the basis of birth, but baptism is on the basis of saving faith - faith that is preceded by believing in the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul received baptism as given to him by the Lord, and interpreted it on the basis of the death, burial and resurrection Jesus Christ. Baptism, according to Paul, symbolises death to sin and new life in Jesus Christ, but not a carry-over of circumcision. A symbol (baptism) cannot be symbolised by another symbol (circumcision).
3.4.2 The Eucharist

Jesus Christ instituted the Eucharist while observing the Passover prior to night of His crucifixion (Matt. 26: 26-29; Mk. 14: 22-25; Lk. 22: 14-19; 1 Cor. 11: 23-25). We need to mention that the Passover was not the innovation of the Israelites/Jews and Moses, but God Himself instituted it. The same is true with circumcision, law and baptism. The Eucharist was intended to serve four primary purposes. Firstly, it was instituted as a mechanism to remind us of Jesus Christ, particularly, of his sacrificial death.

In the Jewish economy, the leader would narrate the history of passed national events to remind his family of their part in the perpetuity of the celebration. Jesus Christ, as He broke the bread, said, “This is my body,” and described the cup of blessing or wine as “my blood of the covenant,” which was shed for us for pardoning our sins (Matt. 26: 28; Mk. 14:24). The “IS” which appears in the statement by Jesus Christ: “This is my body,” means “represents” or “symbolises” my body (Filson, 1964: 142).

This statement cannot be interpreted to mean that the bread is actually the body of Jesus Christ because “the real presence is disproved by the three senses, sight, touch, and taste” (Strong 1907: 965). This leaves no room to argue for “consubstantial” and “transubstantiation” as pointing to Jesus Christ’s
statement. Whenever we partake of these components of the Eucharist, we intensify the truth that what transpired then affects us now.

Dodd (1938: 83) inaccurately conjectured that the “passion narrative may have accompanied the Lord’s Supper...” Dodd is of the opinion that we should actually relive the agony of Jesus Christ’s death. Dodd’s opinion is far from what Jesus Christ had in mind. The Lord’s Supper is about our victory over sin and death through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, the Eucharist focuses our attention to the future and past. The death of Jesus Christ is commemorated as a contemporary reality, and not just as a narrative fact. The Eucharist has an eschatological focus (Matt. 26: 29; 1 Cor. 11: 26). The Lord’s Supper anticipates the messianic feast which is estimated prominently in Jewish religious thought (Lk. 14: 15). The idea of a messianic banquet permeated Jesus Christ’s parables (Matt. 22: 1-14; Lk. 14: 16-24). It heightens the hope of Christians to share in that experience. It provides Christians with an up-ward look.

Guthrie (1981: 760) disputed the eschatological dimension of the Lord’s Supper. He mentioned that “the ordinance has relevance only to the present age,” and he went further to insist that “When Christ returns there will be no further need for it. His presence will render ‘memorials’ unnecessary.”
Kung (1968: 217), in an attempt to refute Guthrie’s futureless Lord’s Supper, points to the Matthean account [Matt. 26: 29] where there is an indication of the anticipation of an eschatological meal of the Messiah. Once more, speculation is not necessary when the Scriptures are not silent on the issue of the eschatological dimension of the Lord’s Supper.

Thirdly, the Eucharist stimulates in us a recognition of reliance on Jesus Christ here and now. John did not reflect on the Lord’s Supper, but there are some echoes and allusions from his Gospel. He sees Christ as the Bread of life. John (6: 35, 52-57) recorded the words of Jesus Christ:

“I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst... Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me.”

Jesus Christ emphasised our utter dependence on Him. The Lord’s Supper points to the fact that we rely entirely upon Him for our spiritual life. The scene of eating and drinking during the Lord’s Supper reminds us we have a serious and constant connection of dependence with Jesus Christ.
The fourth, which is also the last dimension that is linked to the Eucharist, is *koinonia* or fellowship. The Lord’s Supper promotes sharing and unity at the Lord’s table. Everyone is allowed to participate. This fellowship at the Lord’s table strengthens the bonds of love and unity in the Christian Church. Paul protested when he saw the disunity and divisions during the Lord’s Supper because they were undermining the very purpose of the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11: 33). The body of Christ is violated when some go hungry. Jesus Christ shares His life with the believers, and He expects them to do likewise in dealing with other fellow believers.

Before Jesus Christ served the Lord’s Supper, He washed His disciples’ feet, an assignment that was done by a *doulos* or a servant or slave. He said: “If I then, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you,” (John 13: 14, 15). Jesus Christ instituted an ordinance of feet washing and ordered His disciples to repeat it whenever they celebrated the Eucharist. In the words of White (1898: 650),

“This ordinance (feet washing) is Christ’s appointed preparation for the sacramental service. While pride, variance, and strife for supremacy are cherished, the heart cannot enter into fellowship with Christ. We are not prepared to receive the communion of His body and His blood. Therefore it was that Jesus appointed the memorial of His humiliation to be first observed.”
White seems to be saying that we need heart-cleansing before we sit at the Lord's table, and feet washing symbolises cleansing of all strife, disunity, pride and related sins. The Lord’s table is a place of peace and unity, fighting and bickering with one another defile the ceremony, hence the need for cleansing before partaking from His table. Jesus Christ, Himself, instructed his disciple to practice this ordinance whenever they celebrated the Eucharist.

During the Eucharist, Jesus instructed His disciples to do or practice three important elements of this memorial. Firstly, Jesus Christ instructed them to wash “one another’s feet” prior to partaking from the Eucharist because “If I do not wash you, you have no part in me” (John. 13: 8, 14). He washed their feet in order to set an example for them to follow (John. 13: 14, 15). The meaning of feet washing is transcendent. It symbolises the forgiveness of sins.

It goes beyond the literal act of feet washing to the cleansing of sinful hearts. After Jesus Christ had washed the feet of all His disciples, He interestingly remarked that “You are not all clean,” (John 13: 11). Jesus Christ meant that the literal feet washing might not necessarily mean the cleansing of the heart if a person refuses to repent or make his/her heart available for cleansing. Jesus Christ washed Judas Iscariot’s feet, but his heart remained uncleaned. The cleansing of feet had taken place, but Judas Iscariot refused to have his heart cleansed.
It is interesting to note that this ordinance has not been afforded its rightful place in the Lord’s Supper by most of the Christian Churches despite the fact that Jesus Christ instructed the disciples to practice it.

The Christian Church is selective in obeying the elements of the Eucharist. All other instructions are adhered to except the ordinance of feet washing. There should be consistency and constancy in obedience. Selective obedience to the words of Jesus Christ might have negative implications. It is risky to choose what we prefer to obey and not obey from the words of Jesus Christ. Obedience should be consistent and unconditional.

Secondly, Jesus Christ took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and said: “This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me,” (1 Cor. 11: 24). Most of Christian Churches pay attention to the words of Jesus Christ in this aspect of the ordinance even if it has assumed different modes. He continued to say after he had taken a cup, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me,” (1 Cor. 11: 25).

Some Christian Churches prefer to serve the cup of blessing to a particular group of people in the exclusion of others. The Lord’s Supper has an element of pondering upon the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, and also of anticipating the parousia, (1 Cor. 11: 26).
Paul mentioned that he “received” the Lord’s Supper from the Lord Himself (1 Cor. 11: 23). Other Pauline Epistles are silent on the issue of the Lord’s Supper. The only logical reason for that silence is that they probably did not have the problems that infested the Corinthian Church. The way the discussion on the Lord’s Supper is introduced to the Church of the Corinthians shows that it was intended to be an answer to a question or a solution to a problem.

In spite of the words of Paul where he claimed that he “received” Lord’s Supper from Jesus Christ Himself, MacCoby (1991: 91), among others, disputed the fact that Jesus Christ initiated the Eucharist. He says that “Paul, not Christ, was the originator of the Eucharist; and that the Eucharist itself is not a Jewish, but essentially Hellenistic rite,” and he goes further to say that “the liturgical formula was already present.” MacCoby argues his position from the angle of linguistic considerations.

Schweitzer (1931: 202) fiercely refuted this derivation because in his view, “Paul did not live in a world of Hellenistic conceptions.” Paul himself frowns at proponents of the view that he might have installed rituals gathered and borrowed from the Greek mystery religions. His very first introductory sentence refuted that view.
In conclusion, the apostolic, primitive Church continued in the tradition of the Lord’s Supper, which was instituted by Jesus Christ during the Passover meal the night prior to His crucifixion. The weight of evidence points towards the fact that Jesus Christ, not Paul, was or is the innovator and originator of the Eucharist. Jesus Christ instituted the ordinance of foot washing as a prerequisite to partaking of the Lord’s Supper and as a sign that the participant is Christ’s.

Jesus Christ Himself instructed His disciples to follow the example he had set for them. In the profound words of White (1898: 660) in relation to the Lord’s Supper, we quote:

“To the death of Christ we owe even this earthly life. The bread we eat is the purchase of His broken body. The water we drink is bought by His spilled blood.... The light shining from that Communion Service in the upper chamber makes sacred the provisions for our daily life. The family board becomes as the table of the Lord, and every meal a sacrament.”

3.5 Male and Female in Pauline Corpus

Paul introduced his topic on “male-female relatedness,” in the language of Olsen (1993: 94), through his statement encased in the epistle to the Galatians. Paul stated that “there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus,” (Gal. 3: 27). The immediate context of this text is Paul’s discussion on the doctrine of justification by faith.
Paul was virtually stating the truth that male and female are one and treated equally in the realm of salvation. Man is not treated better or afforded a status superior to that of woman. The conditions of salvation, baptism, faith are the same for both male and female.

Paul, in Gal. 3: 27, argues for the fact of salvific equality which is also Christological between male and female. The Pauline "into Christ" or "in Christ" yield human relatedness (Gal. 3: 25, 28). Man and woman are one in the framework of soteriology. The oneness that Paul promotes in Gal. 3: 27 does not necessarily negate the man's headship or leadership as stated in Eph. 5: 23.

According to Paul, man occupies a leadership role just like Jesus Christ who assumes the headship of the Church. The headship of man does not necessarily mean or imply woman's inferiority. Man's headship carries the responsibility of expressing agape to his woman (John 3: 16; Eph. 5: 21-22, 25-26, and 28-29).

Paul, in his correspondence to the Corinthian Church, entreated his audience to choose virginity for the reasons of both charisma and diakonia (1 Cor. 7: 7, 32-32. Paul confined his view and motivation of celibacy to both spiritual gift and mission or service (Schrage, 1982: 229). Any other motivation would not be Pauline innovation, but will be tantamount to speculation.
It should be noted that Paul was not as naïve as to imply that celibacy should be practised by every disciple or believer. That would not have been consistent with his Body of Christ motif and his theology of spiritual gifts. Paul seems to be affirming singleness as a viable option in the context of spiritual gifts and service.

Schrage (1982: 229) consummates his argument in favour of celibacy thus: “The crucial reason Paul recommends is therefore eschatological and christological, not the disaffection with marriage typical of late antiquity or the hostility to marriage of ascetic dualism.” Pauline Christianity offers respect and honour to single persons. Paul was ahead of his peers and time in his treatment of women as equal, and open to all leadership roles within the church. In fact, his theology is agreeable with a moderate feminism, (Thacker 1996: 86).

3.6 Jews and Gentiles

Paul places the status of both Jews and Greeks on the same level in the framework of salvation (Gal. 3: 27). Paul seems to be saying that “in Christ” race and gender disappear, and all are one. The “in Christ” concept levels off the plain field for everyone. The inclusion into the body of Christ is not premised on race or nationalism. Paul argues that both Jews and Gentiles “are justified by faith,” and that they “have peace with God through Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5: 1).
According to Krieger (1990: 41-47), Jews with apocalyptic views held a belief that Gentiles could be saved by faith, works of Torah, or full inclusion into Israel. Krieger argued that Paul did not subscribe to the second and third options. Paul viewed salvation, not only of Gentiles but also for Jews as depended on faith in Jesus Christ alone.

This stands to reason that for both Jews and Gentiles, faith in Jesus Christ's event becomes the entrance requirement to salvation. Abraham was justified by faith in Jesus Christ apart from and independent from his works of righteousness (Rom. 4: 3). In fact Abraham performed works of righteousness because he was already in the faith-relationship with God. He did not do them in order to be saved, but because he was already in a saving relationship with God. The believing Jews and converted Gentiles share the same promises, because both are sons and daughters of Abraham by faith. In Jesus Christ all barriers crumble.

It is clear in this chapter that Paul did not switch religions, namely, from Judaism to Christianity. Paul remained a Jew and also based his teachings on and provided a different interpretation of "Moses and all the prophets" (Luke 24:27). Paul explained the relationship and meaning of the Law, sin, grace, and righteousness in the light of Jesus Christ event at the Cross. Paul did not reject the Law, but he questioned Jewish perversion of the gospel that maintained that the Law was intended for and a means to earn and achieve salvation.
Paul was indebted to the Old Testament (the Law, the Writings and the Prophets). Paul's contention is that people should not "be Jewish," in order "to belong to the people of God" (Sanders 1985: 276). According to Paul, the Eucharist does not only provide the participants with a privilege of experiencing the meaning of salvation, but it also anticipates the eschatological return of Jesus Christ. It also addresses the issue of fellowship and equality at the foot of the Cross and at the Lord's Table.

We have seen that Baptism into Jesus Christ's body and salvation is based on believing in what Jesus Christ has accomplished for us, and that baptism was not intended to substitute circumcision because each sacrament carried a different meaning and purpose. The issues of status, gender, and nationality disappear "in Jesus Christ."
CHAPTER 4

THE RELEVANCE OF THOSE SELECTED JEWISH CUSTOMS TO CHRISTIANITY.

We have attempted to describe and evaluate the selected Jewish customs and how Paul evaluated them in the light of Jesus Christ event of salvation at the Cross. We have tried to trace the meaning of those selected customs, including Paul's evaluation of them. This chapter looks at those customs that are deemed relevant for contemporary Christianity.

Firstly, we have seen that in Jewish economy and worldview there is no demarcation between the sacred and secular. Ploughing is as sacred as worshipping is. Paul's tent-making skill was as holy as his call to apostolic mission was. It was not only wrong for a Jew to refrain from teaching a child a skill or trade, but it was also perceived as immoral. Teaching a skill was not only aimed at helping a child survive, but it was a religious duty on the side of parents.

Practical day-to-day life and religion were intertwined. Jesus Christ was an expert in carpentry because of the skill passed to him from his father. This valuable worldview which was informed, conditioned by and based on the Torah and the entire Old Testament Scriptures can, if adopted and assimilated into the
Christian Church, help respond to issues of race, gender, caste. There should not be a demarcation between Christianity and day-to-day life. Love should permeate both the religious and secular life.

Secondly, we have seen that God's Law was never intended to be an occasion for us to generate our own salvation through meeting its standards. It is clear that the Scriptures identify two laws, namely, the Moral Law and the Law of Moses or the sacrificial system. It was pointed out that the Moral Law or the Ten Commandments are timeless and the sacrificial laws were nailed at the Cross.

Paul's message is that a legal religion can never lead a person to Jesus Christ because it is loveless (Gal. 5:4). Paul has given us all the functions of the Law. For example, Paul maintains that the Law identifies and reveals sin (Rom. 5:20; 7:7, 13; Gal. 3:22). The Law points the condemned sinner to Jesus Christ for healing or salvation (2 Cor. 3:12-17). According to Ziesler ([1983] 1991: 111) "the Law was not intended for justification, but to provide a pattern of life."

The Law causes sin in the sense that it "draws to the surface latent rebelliousness, and its initial result is to increase overt transgression," (Ibid.). The Law came from God and it is Holy (Rom. 7:12; 9:4) and spiritual (Rom. 7:14).
Paul's protest against Judaism was based and focused on their insistence that salvation could be earned and achieved through meeting the requirements of the Law, (Wyschogrod 1993:453). He had vicious conflicts with those who perverted the Law by using it as a means for earning favour with God.

Paul, in Rom. 3:31, seems to be guarding the doctrine of grace lest the idea intrude that we can be saved by works. With the same breath Paul must also see to it that the doctrine of the Law must also be preserved from the distorted view that in the new life the Christian has nothing to do with the Law.

The Law of God is not a source of love and salvation, but keeping God's commandments expresses our love for Him and reveals His power in our lives (1 John 4:19). One could safely and rightly say that the Christians should lovingly and willingly keep the Law of God not as a way to seek, earn or achieve salvation, but for the reason that we have been saved already by Jesus Christ. In fact, Jesus Christ presides over us through His Law because He is our Lord. He saves us by His grace because He is our Saviour. The Christian Church ought to consider accepting Him both as Lord (Law-Giver) and Saviour (Salvation-Giver).

After Paul had explained the fact that faith is the means of salvation, and that "the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law..." (Rom. 3:21a), he went further to wrap his argument thus: "Do we, then overthrow the
law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law," Rom. 3:31).

Thirdly, we discussed the fourth commandment in the Decalogue which is commonly known as the Jewish Sabbath. From our discussion, it was clear that it is an inaccurate conclusion to make the Sabbath a property of the Jews. Jesus Christ mentioned that He is the “Lord even of the Sabbath,” and that “the Sabbath was made for man,” [not for the Jews only] (Mark 2:27, 28).

The Sabbath is not only about a day, but it carries a deeper and spiritual meaning. The meaning of the Sabbath goes beyond ceasing from manual labour. It can be linked to our salvation. After God had created Adam and Eve, He invited them to rest in His accomplished work. Adam and Eve did not have to work in order to enjoy and appreciate God’s Sabbath. They commenced by resting before they could till and keep the Garden of Eden.

The idea of participating in rest prior to work anticipated the doctrine of "justification by faith," where man rests in the salvific work achieved by Jesus Christ at the cross on behalf of man. Man does not need to work for his salvation because it has been worked for already. Man is invited to benefit in the rest of Jesus Christ. The works of righteousness that are performed by man
after he has participated in Jesus Christ’s rest are those of praising God for having accomplished salvation on our behalf.

After Jesus Christ had accomplished the work of saving man at the cross, He rested in His grave on Sabbath, and on the first day of the week (Sunday) He rose in order to be in His Father’s business.

Friedman (1967: 445) goes beyond the literal meaning of the Sabbath day in his evaluation of the Sabbath. He points out that "the Sabbath is the anticipation, the foretaste, the paradigm of the life in the world to come [Messianic age]." Akiba (quoted by Heschel 1951: 73) echoes the same sentiments when he said: "The Sabbath is an example of the world to come." He goes further to say "The world to come is characterised by the kind of holiness possessed by the Sabbath in this world ... The Sabbath possesses a holiness like that of the world to come."

Heschel (1951:10, 73) explains the Sabbath "as happiness and stillness, as peace and harmony," and he continues to introduce an element of time (eternity): "That the Sabbath and eternity are one - or of the same essence - is an ancient idea." From this thought one would glean that on Sabbath day mankind experiences a foretaste of God’s Time (eternity) in miniature.
When one views the profound meaning of the Sabbath from the suggested perspective, one cannot help but come to an inevitable conclusion that God or Jesus Christ would not have sanctioned any substitute or change of the Sabbath day. In fact, there is no conclusive evidence in the Scriptures pointing towards this change. Once could safely say that a change from Sabbath day to Sunday was effected after the cannon had already been sealed.

Our discussion of the Sabbath helps to through more light on Jesus Christ's statement quoted by Mark: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (2:27). It would seem that Jesus Christ is saying that man ought to benefit from the Sabbath. Paul would not have endorsed the Law, but excluded the Sabbath. This would have provoked resistance from the Jews, and also be in conflict to what James 2:8-11 suggested:

"If you really fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself,' you do well. But if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. For he who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' said also, 'Do not kill.' If you do not commit adultery but do kill, you have become a transgressor of the law."

The Sabbath was made by God, but compromised by man. The benefits of experiencing eternity, peace, Messianic Age, salvation and harmony are still attached to the Sabbath day. It is imperative for the Christian Church to revisit and reclaim the Sabbath day.
Fourthly, Jews had a practice that can be called a sacrament. This practice or ritual commonly known as circumcision was based on Gen. 17: 9-14. From our discussion it became apparent that Sarah had a role to play in the covenant - that of bearing children. The purpose of this Abraham covenant with God was distorted, made a requirement for salvation, and a prerequisite to becoming a Jew especially for those who came from non-Jewish backgrounds.

Paul rightly challenged the importance of circumcision in Judaism because it was regarded and accepted as a requirement for salvation and inclusion into Judaism. Pattee (1995:590) is of the opinion that Paul substituted an attitude (love) for a ritual (circumcision) as the defining mark of someone who has entered the covenant of God.

The Jerusalem Council resolved the issue by allowing the Gentiles to refrain from the ritual of circumcision, but observe other laws. We pointed out that while the resolution of the Jerusalem Council was instrumental in resolving the doctrinal problem between Paul and the Jews, it also denied and deprived Gentiles of the provisions and promises attached to the Covenant of Abraham. We attempted to demonstrate that circumcision served a different purpose to that of baptism. We showed that baptism is by faith, but circumcision is by birth and only limited to male persons.
We also pointed out in our discussion of circumcision that God chose the foreskin instead of a finger or toe or thumb or even cutting a piece of an ear, as "a sign of the covenant between me and you," (Gen. 17:11). Circumcision, as an emblem of a covenant, carried a spiritual meaning. One could say that God chose a male's sexual organ and set it apart for holy use.

It could also carry a social meaning. We suggested that God did not only set a foreskin apart for a holy purpose, but it would seem that God was giving a male person the responsibility of leading and protecting his household according to His Word. God was telling a male person that the act of procreation or sexual intercourse should be handled with care because a male sexual organ has been set aside for holy purpose.

If the Christian Church were to view circumcision from this perspective, a lot of social ills like immorality, adultery, child sexual abuse in all its forms would be reduced or eliminated. We, therefore, challenge readers to make a second glance on circumcision, especially its social dimension.

Fifthly, we discussed the Eucharist as instituted by Jesus Christ and interpreted by Paul. We pointed out that the Eucharist levels the plane so that both the rich and poor, Jews and Gentile, man and woman could sit together and partake at
the Lord’s Table. This promotes equality and fellowship at the foot of the Cross. The aspect of foot washing which is linked to the Eucharist, which also points to the cleansing of the heart or forgiveness of sins does not receive more attention from the Christian Church.

All other aspects of the Eucharist are adhered to, but the foot washing. This work attempts to invite further investigation of the meaning and symbolic objects and activities encased in the Lord’s Supper so that we, as a Christian Church, are consistent with what transpired on that night, and are at least not far from the truth we are searching for.

The seventh point is that which pertains to Baptism. It behoves the Christian Church to revisit the meaning and mode of Baptism (infant baptism in particular). The mode of baptism impacts on its meaning. If baptism is not through dipping or submerging a person under the water as a symbol of burial and death to sin, then the meaning will be affected.

The distorted practice would lead to an understanding that limits Baptism to the acceptance in the Body of Jesus Christ, but not as symbol of being buried with Jesus Christ. It would seem from the words and instruction of Jesus Christ and John the Baptist that saving knowledge that leads to faith in Jesus Christ, confession of sins, repentance and inclusion in Jesus Christ’s Body are the basis
for Baptism. The question or issue that is still begging for answers and open for debate is whether a child or infant is capable of believing and making a conscious choice to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

These questions, suggestions, and many more are but a tip of the iceberg. They actually challenge and burden New Testament Theologians with more and heavier task of revisiting these texts so as to receive and share fresh bread from the Lord’s Table of knowledge. The Truth, as mentioned earlier, is a multi-facet. One’s perception or view of the truth depends upon his/her perspective. It behoves us to keep on moving from one perspective to another so as to have a wider understanding of the truth.


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