

PAULINE SCHOLARSHIP AND JEWISH-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

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One's ability to perceive the truth represents a solemn and sacred responsibility to cooperate in the design of one's Creator, Redeemer, and Glorifier...

How splendid, in this light, is that invitation extended to one always to speak the truth to one's neighbor, and how mighty and dreadful that commandment never to bear false witness against another...

The truth sets us free. It ennobles one who pronounces it openly and without regard for the opinion of others...

One who has the truth is assured of having the light that dispels all darkness and the irresistible power that can transform the world...

**Pope John XXIII
Christmas Message, 1960**

INTRODUCTION

It was Paul that delivered the Christian religion from Judaism [...]. It was he who confidently regarded the Gospel as a new force abolishing the religion of the Law.

—Adolf Harnack, *What is Christianity?*

Whoever encounters Jesus Christ encounters Judaism.

—Roman Catholic German Bishops' Conference, Bonn, 1980

For centuries, Lutheran Theology portrayed Judaism as a legalistic religion of “works-righteousness” that earned salvation by merit. Christianity, in stark contrast to Judaism, was depicted as a religion of grace, love, and forgiveness. However, after the Shoah, biblical scholars began to develop new interpretations of Paul that attempted to address the distortions of earlier views of Judaism which had been influenced by Lutheran theology. In addition, recent scholarly acknowledgement of the Jewishness of Jesus has been viewed as a positive element towards mutual respect and understanding between Christians and Jews. Paul, however, has often been interpreted by Christian readers as the architect of the great schism between Judaism and Christianity. As such, the Jewishness of Paul, living as a Jew within Judaism, has played less of a role in Jewish-Christian dialogue. Traditional Pauline scholarship, which located Judaism against Christianity and placed Christianity as the successor religion to Judaism, demonstrated a fundamental misunderstanding of Paul and his attitude to Judaism and the Torah. Recent or “New Perspective” scholarship on Paul has made progress toward understanding Paul within Judaism, but has been inclined to replace the idea that Jews earn salvation through a merit-based approach with the concept that Judaism is ethnocentric, particularistic, or inadequate in one form or another for Paul.¹ As such, the scholarly views that continue to distort Judaism and locate Paul

¹ James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 117–119.

against Judaism or outside of Judaism do not appear to be able to contribute in a meaningful way to interfaith dialogue, as they continue to provide interpretations that denigrate Jews, Judaism, and the Torah. This thesis will show that Post-New Perspective scholarship—particularly the writing of Paula Fredrikson and Mark D. Nanos—that locates Paul *within* Judaism and not against Judaism—shows great promise in overcoming these obstacles and playing a significant role in advancing Jewish-Christian dialogue. Fredrikson² and Nanos³ are important contemporary Pauline Biblical scholars and leaders of the “Paul within Judaism” movement, which includes a growing number of figures (e.g., Lloyd Gaston,⁴ John Gager,⁵ Pamela Eisenbaum,⁶ Stanley Stowers,⁷ and Daniel Boyarin,⁸ as well as others). The scope of Pauline studies is too broad to adequately treat the perspectives of all these scholars in this thesis; however, both Christian and Jewish scholars are represented in the Paul within Judaism movement, all offering alternative perspectives to the traditional paradigm.

This thesis endeavours to make a contribution to the larger project of mutual understanding within Jewish-Christian dialogue, and in this regard, I will address one issue—that of reading Paul within Judaism as a necessary element for advancing Jewish-Christian dialogue. Nanos has noted that “Christians and Jews work from the same construction of Paul to reach opposite conclusions, and progress on understanding Paul cannot happen until there is a different

² Paula Fredrikson, *Paul: The Pagans’ Apostle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

³ Mark D. Nanos, *Reading Paul Within Judaism: Collected Essays of Mark D. Nanos*, Vol. 1 (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017).

⁴ Lloyd Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2006).

⁵ John Gager, *Reinventing Paul* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁶ Pamela Eisenbaum, *Paul Was not a Christian: The Original Message of a Misunderstood Apostle* (New York: HarperOne, 2009).

⁷ Stanley Kent Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

⁸ Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*. Vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

Paul to work from.”⁹ Nanos notes that Paul has been traditionally understood as turning to faith in non-Jewish terms instead of Jewish terms, and that “the construction of Paul undertaken still depends on the notion that there must have been something wrong with Judaism for Paul to have come to faith in Jesus as Christ, instead of building upon the proposition that this was a result of what was right about Judaism, which could recognize the meaning of such an event for Israel first, but also for the world.”¹⁰ Reinterpreting Paul within Judaism is a change that occurs at the theological level, which is significant in that only at this level can real change be effected in Jewish-Christian dialogue.

In order to show that contemporary Pauline scholarship that locates Paul *within* Judaism is significant for Jewish-Christian dialogue, it is important to understand the traditional, Christian understanding of Paul, and the way that New Perspective scholars sought to understand Paul as a Jew. This thesis will reference representative writings of Pauline scholars—leading proponents of the traditional view of Paul, the New Perspective on Paul, and that of post-New Perspective scholars—to show the relevance of Pauline scholarship to Jewish-Christian dialogue. Although this thesis is not an investigation of the historical Paul, I will draw on my background in theology and interfaith dialogue to outline the views of a number of leading Pauline scholars to uncover theological issues in Pauline scholarship in order to make a case for their relevance to Jewish-Christian dialogue. I will argue that essential to a Christian understanding of Judaism is not to ask why Jews do not believe, but rather to ask what they believe.¹¹ Reframing this question for

⁹ Mark D. Nanos, “A Torah-Observant Paul? What Difference Could it Make for Christian/Jewish Relations Today?” *Christian Scholars Group for Christian/Jewish Relations* (Boston, 2005), Boston-Torah-Obs-Nanos-5-9-05.pdf (marknanos.com), 2.

¹⁰ Nanos, “A Torah-Observant Paul?” 12.

¹¹ Jacob Neusner, *Jews and Christians: The Myth of a Common Tradition* (London: Global Academic, 2001), 1.

any Christian denomination—be they Lutheran, Roman Catholic, or Evangelical—should be a foundational element of Jewish-Christian dialogue going forward.

First-century Palestinian Judaism was very diverse, and to explain Paul’s Judaism, Pauline scholars have looked to Rabbinic Judaism, while acknowledging that “first-century Judaism seems to have been occupied with eschatological issues to a much higher degree than later rabbinic Judaism.”¹² It is generally accepted that the Rabbis who assembled at Yavneh after 70 C.E. were Pharisees with the objective of reconstructing Judaism after the loss and destruction of its sacred centre. The Judaism that developed after Yavneh was one in which sectarianism was discouraged, but in its place a society was created which “tolerated, even encouraged vigorous debate amongst its members,”¹³ ultimately yielding the Mishnah, the first work of Jewish antiquity that attributes conflicting opinions to its members, despite their disagreements. The legacy of the Mishnah and the Gemara, together known as the Talmud, is reflected in the diversity of contemporary Judaism, which encompasses a wide range of Jewish practice—from Orthodox and Conservative, to Reform and Reconstructionist. Despite this diversity, there is a unity in “being Jewish” that reflects a fusion of “the ethnic, the religious, the cultural, and the political, in all its dimensions.”¹⁴

Chapter One offers an overview of the enduring influence of Martin Luther and his law/grace dichotomy on Pauline biblical scholarship. Both primary texts and secondary sources of scholarly literature that relate specifically to the theological understanding of Paul and

¹² Magnus Zetterholm, *Approaches to Paul: A Student’s Guide to Recent Scholarship* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 58.

¹³ Shaye J.D. Cohen, “The Significance of Yavneh: Pharisees, Rabbis, and the End of Jewish Sectarianism,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 55 (1984): 27–53.

¹⁴ Jacob Neusner, “There Has Never Been a Judaeo-Christian Dialogue—But There Can Be One,” *CrossCurrents* 42 (1992): 20.

Judaism have been examined. An understanding of Luther's influence is a necessary prerequisite to discerning how these views about Paul impact Jewish-Christian dialogue today.

The views of the ground-breaking scholarship of theologians that first challenged Luther's views will be surveyed in Chapter Two to show that their role as important figures led the way to a new scholarly understanding of Paul and his relationship to Judaism. The publication in 1977 of E. P. Sanders' landmark study *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* marked the first serious scholarly challenge to the traditional Christian understanding of Judaism, which was influenced by Luther's views. It shattered longstanding scholarly assumptions about Paul, and established the need for a new paradigm for interpreting Paul's letters. Once again, both primary texts and secondary sources of scholarly literature are engaged. Clearly, the work of these scholars laid the foundation for the New Perspective on Paul, and the opportunity for a more meaningful and productive Jewish-Christian dialogue. Although not an exhaustive review of the New Perspective on Pauline scholarly literature, I have tried to accurately represent the views of a few key representatives. The traditional Christian understanding of Judaism as the negative foil to Christianity has in recent years been supplanted by a less overtly negative depiction—not, however, one that has entirely distanced itself from the traditional view. Both the old and new views still understand Paul to have found something lacking in Judaism, and I maintain that these scholarly views do not appear to provide a foundation for productive Jewish-Christian dialogue.¹⁵

In Chapter Three, I engage recent scholarly views of key representatives of Post-New Perspective scholars who locate Paul within Judaism—particularly Jewish scholars Mark D.

¹⁵ E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 197.

Nanos¹⁶ and Paula Fredriksen.¹⁷ These scholars and others are important critics of both traditional scholarly attitudes and the New Perspective on Paul. They offer a fresh view of Paul within Judaism that challenges traditional thinking and provides interpretive paths to overcome anti-Jewish interpretations in New Testament texts—ones in which Judaism is not treated as a negative foil to Christianity, whether it be the law as against the gospel, or privileged ethnocentrism as against universalism. These scholars also remind us of the ethical responsibility of scholarly interpreters, and their impact on both faith communities and society at large.

Mark D. Nanos has suggested that “Paul’s life and letters make more historical sense when interpreted within Judaism, and that, moreover, the implications are promising enough to merit reconsideration by those who might not be otherwise inclined to interpret Paul from a perspective that challenges their own.”¹⁸ I submit that a scholarly understanding of Paul, living as a Jew within late Second Temple Judaism, properly understood, can play a significant role in advancing Jewish-Christian dialogue.

Finally, Chapter Four examines key themes in Jewish scholarship that offer contemporary responses to the stereotypes of Judaism that Christian scholarship has perpetuated. Here I offer an understanding of Judaism and the Torah by Jewish scholars, especially Abraham Joshua Heschel,¹⁹ amongst others to counter the common depictions of Judaism within modern biblical scholarship. My own background as a Jewish student of both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament has made me keenly aware of the importance of developing a clear understanding of the nature of Judaism and its meaning for Jews.

¹⁶ Mark D. Nanos, “A Torah-Observant Paul? What Difference Could it Make for Christian/Jewish Relations Today?” *Christian Scholars Group for Christian/Jewish Relations*, Boston (2005), Boston-Torah-Obs-Nanos-5-9-05.pdf (marknanos.com).

¹⁷ Paula Fredriksen, “Putting Paul in His (Historical) Place: A Response to James Crossley, Margaret Mitchell, and Matthew Novenson,” *Journal of the Jesus Movement in its Jewish Setting* 5 (2018): 89–110.

¹⁸ Nanos, *Reading Paul within Judaism*, xv.

¹⁹ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007).

CHAPTER ONE: CHRISTIAN ANTI-JUDAISM AND THE APOSTLE PAUL

Traditional scholarly interpretations of Paul have almost universally understood him as having abandoned Judaism in favour of Christianity. The usual interpretations typically relied on earlier scholarship which influenced the work of those who followed them. This chapter provides a brief synopsis of the impact Protestant reformer, Martin Luther has had on Pauline scholarship and the Christian understanding of Judaism. The traditional scholarly approach was built on Martin Luther's dictum that to become righteous in the eyes of God, a person could only be justified by *sola fide*, or faith in Christ alone, with the implication that Judaism's good works or righteous adherence to the law was the "wrong way" to God and could not lead to salvation. This theological misrepresentation of Judaism and understanding of Paul has endured for centuries, though it is Lutheran theology that has most directly impacted New Testament scholarship, because of the prominence of German Lutheran biblical scholars.

Krister Stendhal has noted that throughout the long and varied history of Christian theology, Protestant tradition has understood Luther's interpretation of Paul's epistle to the Romans as his doctrine of justification by faith as against the threatening demands of the law. For Luther, this is the key to Pauline thought. Stendhal describes Luther as a man in despair who found the message of God in Paul and, in his words: "the righteous shall live by faith."²⁰ Schramm affirms that Luther's theology, in contrasting law and gospel, places the Jews as a central component of his thought. It was his interpretation of the Old Testament in which his claims about Jews and Judaism are developed. Schramm points out that "Luther's anti-Judaism is predominantly biblically based and biblically driven, and this aspect of his thinking vis-à-vis the Jews has had no small impact on subsequent Lutheran biblical interpretation." He notes that "the

²⁰ Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles, and Other Essays* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1976), 2–12.

explicit focus on Luther and anti-Judaism is warranted for many reasons, but it is stated perhaps most poignantly by Heiko Oberman: ‘The terrible tragedy of the relationship between the Jews and Christians in world history can be studied in concentrated form in this one man’.²¹

A new spirit of ecumenism and inter-faith dialogue generated by the Roman Catholic Church’s Second Vatican Council was evident in the early 1960s with discussion and debate beginning to take place with respect to Jewish-Christian relations. These discussions were initiated primarily by the critical need to re-evaluate the Church’s negative teachings about the Jews in light of the horrific events of the Shoah. Jewish-Christian dialogue was perceived as an opportunity to undertake a fundamental rethinking of the polemical teaching that had perpetuated a widespread attitude of animosity and hatred towards Jews. Christian teaching about Judaism and Jews already draws on the canonical writings of the New Testament and an inaccurate understanding of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. Unfortunately, this negative attitude continues to be taught in many respects in academic settings to this day: “Christian gospel and grace against Jewish ‘legalism’; Christian openness and obedience against Jewish stubbornness and hardness of heart; Christian mission and future fulfillment against Jewish displacement and exile in the diaspora.”²² Even after the Shoah, and well over a decade after the birth of the State of Israel, and with it the restoration of the land of Israel to the Jewish people, highly respected Oxford scholar and Anglican bishop Stephen Neill continues to express the traditional theological view towards the Jews: “Christ, as the end of the law, is the end also of the

²¹ Brooks Schramm, *Martin Luther, The Bible, and the Jewish People: A Reader*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 2–12. Schramm cites Heiko Oberman, *Man between God and the Devil* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

²² Robert E. Willis, “Confessing God after Auschwitz: A Challenge for Christianity,” *CrossCurrents* 28, (1978): 269–287.

history of Israel. In its crudest form this finds expression in the bitter traditional attitude that the Jews rejected Jesus and that therefore God has rejected the Jews.”²³

Theologian A. Roy Eckardt cites Neill’s statements as an example:

In more theological form, it has been maintained that the Church, as the new Israel, is the heir to all the promises made of old to Israel after the flesh. This is now the only true Israel, and there is none other. The survival of the Jews is merely a historical accident, perhaps a warning. Jewry is a sociological phenomenon. But, from the point of view of revelation and of the Word of God, its day is at an end.²⁴

Neill asserts that Paul addresses Christians in terms which “make no sense unless they are in very truth the Israel of God,” and that God’s covenant with Israel has been “fatefully interrupted.” He argues that Paul must have believed that the church has inherited the election of Israel, and that this is clear evidence of “discontinuity” in terms of God’s covenant with Israel.²⁵ The place of Israel is then stripped of any function or positive theological status, and Israel’s “election” becomes a non-functioning election.²⁶ New Testament scholar Terrance L. Donaldson explains that “discontinuity” essentially means “supersession,” which began as a type of early Christian self-definition as a response to Judaism and became a significant part of Christian self-understanding. In this traditional view still held today by many scholars, Israel is seen as an old, failed entity of the past that has been rejected by God and rendered obsolete. Israel as such is replaced by a “new people.”²⁷ Donaldson states that the tradition of the replacement of Judaism by Christianity can be deduced in numerous instances in readings from New Testament

²³ A. Roy Eckardt, *Elder and Younger Brothers: The Encounter of Jews and Christians* (New York: Schocken, 1967), 56–57.

²⁴ Eckardt, *Elder and Younger Brothers*, 57.

²⁵ Eckardt, *Elder and Younger Brothers*, 57.

²⁶ Eckardt, *Elder and Younger Brothers*, 59.

²⁷ Terence L. Donaldson, “Supersessionism in Early Christianity: 2009 CSBS Presidential Address,” Carlton University, <https://paperzz.com/doc/9406966/supersessionism-in-early-christianity-terence-l-donaldso...>

material.²⁸ These views, however, read the gospels and the epistles of Paul as if they were contemporary Christians rather than Jews, in order to reinforce negative stereotypes of Judaism.

In the traditional reading of Paul through most of Western Christian history, Paul is understood as having rejected Judaism as a legalistic religion in which salvation can only be achieved through the accumulation of meritorious acts. It is seen to be exclusivist and elitist, ethnically peculiar, and requiring of its members a plethora of arcane rituals.²⁹ The Christian doctrine of justification by faith alone is focused on one's faith in Christ alone and his atoning sacrifice, and in doing so it addresses the plight of the individual attempting to achieve righteousness before God and absolution from sin. In addition to Romans 10:4, a few other proof texts are traditionally used to support this doctrine. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:21: "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." Christian interpreters traditionally referred to Romans 1:17 as evidence of this understanding: "The one who is righteous will live by faith." This is reiterated in Romans 3:28: "For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law."³⁰ Many Christian commentators, from Martin Luther on, have interpreted Galatians 2:15–16 as confirming Paul's doctrine of justification:

We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, yet we know that a person is justified not by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law."

Galatians 3:10–11 is also read as reinforcing Paul's primary message regarding justification before God by faith alone in Christ Jesus:

²⁸ Donaldson, "Presidential Address," 18–19.

²⁹ Pamela Eisenbaum, "Following in the Footnotes of the Apostle Paul," *Identity and the Politics of Scholarship in the Study of Religion* (2004): 77–97.

³⁰ Biblical quotations throughout this thesis from the NRSV.

For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law.” Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law; for the one who is righteous will live by faith.

New Testament scholar Mark Mattison, furthermore, notes that Paul’s argument that one can only be justified before God through faith in Christ and not works of the law has been widely understood by scholars as:

An indictment by Paul of Jewish legalistic efforts to merit favor before God. As a result, what has been described as a caricature of Judaism was developed by biblical interpreters and ultimately gained widespread acceptance by New Testament scholars as the traditional Protestant understanding of Paul. Judaism came to represent the antithesis of Christianity and was depicted as a religion of legalism—earthly, carnal, and proud. Christianity was depicted as its opposite—heavenly, spiritual, and humble.³¹

This scholarly interpretation of Judaism and Paul has sustained itself for close to two thousand years.

Luther’s anti-Judaism has been explained as simply the attitude of a man of his times. His apparent change from a sympathetic attitude towards Jews early in his career to an unbridled hostility in the final stages of his career has been variously attributed to failing health and frustration with the lack of progress in his appeals to Jews. However, Heiko Oberman has noted that Luther’s theological understanding of Judaism never changed. A change, he notes, “does not necessarily imply a fundamental rethinking and must not be taken as a sign that Luther had shifted his opinion of those Jews who wished to preserve their identity and evade the embrace of the Christian Church.”³² Oberman points out that “the basis of Luther’s anti-Judaism was the conviction that ever since Christ’s appearance on earth, they have had no more future as Jews.”³³

³¹ Mark M. Mattison, “A Summary of the New Perspective on Paul,” *The LAB: The Logos Academic Blog* (2009), <https://academic.logos.com/a-summary-of-the-new-perspective-on-paul>.

³² Heiko Oberman, *The Roots of Anti-Semitism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 45.

³³ Oberman, *The Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 46.

He notes that Luther's goal was always to reclaim the Old Testament from the distortion of rabbinical exegesis. This was the purpose of writing 'On the Jews and their Lies.'"³⁴

Luther's approach to biblical interpretation was to determine "the single proper meaning for each biblical verse," explains Brooks Schramm in his analysis of Luther's exegesis. Schramm notes that "from Luther's perspective, Jewish interpretation of the Old Testament represented an assault on the very foundations of Christianity," as Jewish interpretation was a denial of "the most basic of all Christian theological claims: the messiahship of Jesus." He notes that Luther's conviction was that "the Christ proclaimed in the New Testament is the same Christ promised in numerous passages in the Old Testament, and that this equivalence of the one promised in the Old Testament and the one proclaimed in the New Testament can be proven by the proper interpretation of key Old Testament texts."³⁵ Schramm observes that Luther's primary proof-texts were no different than those used against the Jews by Justin Martyr and Tertullian in the second century. He notes that for Luther, "the Old Testament—properly understood—is a Christian book, and the two volumes of the Christian Bible, therefore, constitute a theological unity. What binds the two volumes of the Christian bible together is the promise of the coming of the Messiah and faith of the Old Testament. For Luther, the faith of the Old Testament and the faith of the New Testament are the same."³⁶

Schramm asserts that "it is critical to note that Luther regarded Romans as the single most important book in the bible," and that it was "the key for how to read the Old Testament properly."³⁷ A number of passages are representative of Luther's attitude to the Jews. When Paul

³⁴ Oberman, *The Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 50.

³⁵ Brooks Schramm, *Martin Luther, The Bible, and the Jewish People: A Reader* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 2012), 12–13.

³⁶ Schramm, *Martin Luther*, 13.

³⁷ Schramm, *Martin Luther*, 53.

states, “You that abhor idols commit sacrilege” (Rom. 2:22), Luther accuses the Jews of committing a sacrilege by “taking the letters and words of scripture and distorting them by giving them a false meaning. Luther states that “in the eyes of the apostle, sacrilege is worse than idolatry, because to invent something erroneous is not so great a sin as to put a false meaning on Scriptures, i.e., to disregard the holy.”³⁸

Luther’s interpretation of Christ as the “end of the law” (Rom. 10:4), and Paul’s reference to the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 30:12 acknowledges that Moses does not mean what Paul is attempting to bring out. Luther explains that Moses has written that “the man that does the righteousness which is the law shall live thereby.”³⁹ The traditional interpretation emphasizes the ready accessibility of the Torah as God’s word that is available to all. However, Luther states that Paul, “in his abundant spiritual insight, brings out the inner significance” of the words of Moses. He notes that it is as if Paul “wanted to give us an impressive proof of the fact that the whole Scripture, if one contemplates it inwardly, deals everywhere with Christ, even though insofar as it is a sign and a shadow, it may outwardly sound different.” Luther explains that Paul states, “Christ is the end of the law because every word in the Bible points to Christ. That this is really so, he proves by showing that this word here, which seems to have nothing whatsoever to do with Christ, nevertheless signifies Christ.”⁴⁰

Luther’s approach to biblical exegesis is also reflected in Galatians. When Paul maintains that seeking righteousness through the law by circumcision removes the advantages of salvation through Christ (Gal. 5:4), Luther asserts that “to obey Moses in one point requires obedience to him in all points. To acknowledge the Law is tantamount to declaring that Christ is not yet come.

³⁸ Wilhelm Puck, ed., *Luther: Lectures on Romans* (Louisville: Westminster, 1961), 57–58.

³⁹ Alter, *The Five Books of Moses*, 1029.

⁴⁰ Puck, *Luther*, 288.

And if Christ is not yet come, then all the Jewish ceremonies and laws concerning meats, places, and times are still in force, and Christ must be awaited as one who is still to come.”⁴¹ Luther concludes by stating that, “If we permit Moses to rule over us in one thing, we must obey him in all things.”⁴²

The same year he wrote the vicious anti-Jewish pamphlet *Of the Jews and Their Lies*, Luther also penned *Vom Schem Hamphoras und vom Geschlecht Christi (Of the Unknowable Name and the Generations of Christ)*,⁴³ which continues his theological assault on the Jews. Translated into English in 1992 by Gerhard Falk, Luther deals with Judaism and the law in detail:

The miserable Jews have not known all their lives what the least law is, let alone what the fulfillment of the law is, and cannot (as long as they are such Jews) ever understand it. Other kinds of folks belong here, such as St. Paul, Romans 3:21: ‘God’s justice is revealed, and witnessed through the law and the prophets, and John I:17: “the law was given through Moses; but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”; Better tell me how it is possible that the scamps (I meant to say the Rabbis) and Sow Jews in their Sow school should understand such great words, when all their lives they did nothing more than to burrow in the Shom Haperes (vultures) with their tusks; I want to say less, for how can a Jew understand what has been said in Matthew 7:12: “What you want people to do to you, do it also to them”; The Jews know as much about this as a sow knows of the Book of Psalms.⁴⁴

Luther continues his tirade against the Jews and their reading of the Old Testament, arguing that the New Testament not only fulfills the “Old Testament,” but that reading the Old Testament without the new will lead to damnation:

From this it is certainly proved that a New Testament was destined to supersede the old one, so that the pride and fame of the Jews is nothing but a crying shame, as they will not accept any testament nor holy scripture to supersede the old one.

⁴¹ Martin Luther, *The Project Gutenberg eBook of Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, trans. Theodore Graebner (Release Date: Dec. 1998, updated Feb. 2013).

⁴² Luther, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, chapter 5, verse 3.

⁴³ Gerhard Falk, *The Jew in Christian Theology: Martin Luther’s Anti-Jewish Von Schem Hamphoras, Previously Unpublished in English, and Other Milestones in Church Doctrine Concerning Judaism* (Jefferson: McFarland, 1992).

⁴⁴ Falk, *The Jew in Christian Theology*, 199–200.

But it won't help them; their Old Testament is against them, damns them with their reputation, because its prophecy is so weak, for the old covenant won't do it, the reign of Moses is finished, and the Messiah will not govern according to it, for the New Testament will do it. That is why Moses relinquishes his office and leaves room for the new prophet. That is why the Jews must accept the New Testament, baptism and our belief or they are lost forever, The Old Testament, Moses himself and all the prophets cannot help them but are opposed to them and relegate them to Hell.⁴⁵

Providing a visual counterpart to the *image of Judaism* that he has constructed, Luther cannot resist describing the *Judensau* “Jewish Sow,” *an actual image of Judaism* which is still displayed to this day on the façade of the Stradtkirche, the church where Martin Luther preached:

Here in Wittenberg, in our parish church, there is a sow carved into the stone under which lie young pigs and Jews who are sucking; behind the sow stands a rabbi who is lifting up the right leg of the sow, raises the behind of the sow, bows down and looks with great effort into the Talmud under the sow, as if he wanted to read and see something most difficult and exceptional; no doubt they gained their Shem Hamphoras from that place.⁴⁶

In the context of Jewish-Christian dialogue, how do we honestly address the image of Judaism and the Jews portrayed by Martin Luther, the seminal figure of the Protestant Reformation and one of the most influential and revered figures in Christian theology?

Rabbinic literature has long been utilized to help understand the meaning of New Testament texts by Christian writers, but even these readings did not help Christians come to terms with the Jewishness of their sacred texts. A prime early example of this is the work of John B. Lightfoot (1602–75), the oft-quoted and influential seventeenth century Christian scholar who taught at Cambridge University and was considered to be one of the foremost Hebrew scholars in Talmudic Studies. According to Stephen Neill, Lightfoot was so well respected that Edward Gibbon said “by constant reading of the rabbis, he became almost a rabbi himself.” Written in Latin, and published in sections from 1658 to 1674, as well as after his death in 1675, Lightfoot's

⁴⁵ Falk, *The Jew in Christian Theology*, 200–201.

⁴⁶ Falk, *The Jew in Christian Theology*, 182–183.

Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae: Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations upon the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark is considered to be one of his major works. Lightfoot was considered to be the first scholar to “systematically and methodically apply Talmudic knowledge to the elucidation of the New Testament text.”⁴⁷ Theologian Stephen Neill notes that “for more than two hundred years Lightfoot was the authority to whom men turned, if they lacked his close acquaintance with the original languages.”⁴⁸ Neill further notes that Lightfoot “brought up so much that was of value” and that “he was successful in laying the foundations for one aspect of the historical and critical study of the Scriptures.”⁴⁹ Of interest is his extremely negative depiction of the Jews, the authors of the works he studied. From the introduction to *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae*, Lightfoot identifies the purpose of his studies, and the benefits that could be obtained by his students at Cambridge University:

I was always persuaded, as of a thing past all doubting, that the New Testament could not but everywhere taste of, and retain, the Jews’ style, idiom, form, and rule of speaking [...] and since this could be found out in no other way than by consulting Talmudic authors, who both speak in the vulgar dialect of the Jews, and also handle and reveal all Jewish matters; being induced by these reasons I applied myself chiefly to the reading of these books [...]. The ill report of these authors, whom who all do so very much speak against, may at first discourage him that sets upon the reading of their books. The Jews themselves stink in Marcellinus; and their writings stink as much almost among all; and they labour under this, I know not what, singular misfortune, that, being not read, they displease; and that they are sufficiently reproached by those that have read them – but undergo much more infamy by those, that have not. The almost unconquerable difficulty of the style, the frightful roughness of the language, and the amazing emptiness and sophistry of the matters handled, do torture, vex, and tire them, that read them [...] so that the reader hath need of patience all along, to enable him to bear both trifling in sense, and roughness in expression.⁵⁰

Lightfoot’s works continued to be published and reprinted for New Testament scholars for years long after his death.

⁴⁷ Stephen Neil, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1961* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 294.

⁴⁸ Neil, *The Interpretation of the New Testament*, 294.

⁴⁹ Neil, *The Interpretation of the New Testament*, 293.

⁵⁰ Neil, *The Interpretation of the New Testament*, 294.

There is general consensus that the attitude to Paul in contemporary New Testament scholarship began with the influential work of Ferdinand Weber (1836–1879). His characterization of Judaism was that legalism was the sum and substance of the Jewish religion, and that salvation must be earned and can only be achieved by a system of compiling more merits (good works) than transgressions.⁵¹ George William Foote (1850–1915), writing in 1921 about pre-Weber Christian Scholarship was one of the first scholars to question this interpretation, stating that legalism “is not a topic of the older polemic; indeed I do not recall a place where it is even mentioned. Concretely, Jewish observances are censured or ridiculed, but ‘legalism’ as a system of religion, not to say as the essence of Judaism, no one seems to have discovered.”⁵² The German biblical scholar Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918) characterized Jewish adherence to the law as having “killed nature through the commandments, with 613 written commandments and 1000 other laws, and they leave no room for conscience. One forgot God and the way to him in the Torah.”⁵³

Weber in particular tried to establish a systematic “Jewish theology” by examining Jewish sources such as the Mishnah and other sources that addressed the diverse and varied applications of God’s commandments in everyday situations. However, Zetterholm notes that “Weber knew in advance that Judaism was the antithesis of Christianity and his studies led him to this conclusion.”⁵⁴ According to Zetterholm, Weber characterized Judaism as “legalistic,” resulting from trying to reconnect, by means of a strict adherence to the precepts of Torah, to an absent, distant God who had rejected the Jews after the golden calf incident (Exod. 32:1–14).

⁵¹ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1996), 221.

⁵² Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, 221.

⁵³ Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, 222.

⁵⁴ Zetterholm, *Approaches to Paul: A Student's Guide to Recent Scholarship* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 64.

Weber developed the idea that a Jew's relationship to God as a means to salvation depended on the performance of good deeds. One could only hope to reach this absent, distant God who was detached from humanity by performing meritorious works through strict adherence to the precepts of the Torah. This understanding of Judaism saw its adherents as trying to please God by acquiring and compiling merits that God would ultimately balance against transgressions. Salvation for a Jew could only be achieved if one's meritorious good works exceeded one's transgressions. According to Weber, this system of Jewish works-righteousness led to a strong emphasis on the importance of the ritual aspects of Judaism which in turn led to self-righteousness and empty law observance with no inner commitment. As a result, Judaism sees one as continually striving throughout life for redemption before God without any assurance that one's meritorious acts have exceeded one's transgressions. With this depiction of ancient Judaism as the standard interpretation amongst New Testament scholars, Weber created a "perfect dark background against which Christianity could shine all the more brilliantly."⁵⁵ This distorted depiction of ancient Judaism was then contrasted by New Testament scholars with Christianity wherein salvation is freely offered by the grace of God and is accessible to everyone through Jesus Christ.

Leading exponents of Luther's views follow Weber's views in concluding that "ritual observances were elaborated in Judaism to the point of absurdity; and legalism could lead to an unhealthy anxiety or to smug self-righteousness."⁵⁶ Rudolph Bultmann exemplifies the traditional view in his *Theology of the New Testament*:

In Judaism God is de-historized by having become a distant God enthroned in heaven; His governance of the world is carried out by angels, and His relation to man is mediated by the book of the Law. And man in Judaism is de-historized by being marked off from the world by ritual and by finding his security within the

⁵⁵ Zetterholm, *Approaches to Paul*, 65.

⁵⁶ William R. Farmer, ed. *Anti-Judaism and the Gospels* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1999), 227.

ritually pure congregation. The Jewish congregation artificially accomplishes its de-secularization by means of its legalism.⁵⁷

Bultmann explains what Old Testament law means for Judaism and the attitude that is demanded by it: “the Law is not that of Goethe’s ‘ever-striving endeavor’—orientation to an ideal—but is obedience, obedience again and again in the concrete case.”⁵⁸ He notes that “Life under the Law” in Judaism was worship and service of God, but that “these regulations went into detail to the point of absurdity.”⁵⁹ He adds that the ritualism that sanctified the life of the community was an entirely negative affair, and that for Jews “to take them seriously meant making life an intolerable burden.”⁶⁰ Bultmann explains that the “the error of Jewish legalism” is that it is “a piety which endeavours to win God’s favour by the toil of minutely fulfilling the law’s stipulations,” with the result that “motivation to ethical conduct is vitiated.” He asserts that the “characteristic thing for Judaism is that the obedience that man owes to God and to His demand for good is understood as a purely formal one; i.e., as an obedience which fulfills the letter of the law, obeying a law simply because it is commanded without asking the reason and the meaning of its demand.” In contrast to Jewish legalism, Bultmann notes that “what counts before God is not simply the substantial, verifiable deed that is done, but how a man is disposed, and what his intent is.”⁶¹ Bultmann notes that with respect to righteousness and God’s acquitting decision, “the Jew takes it for granted that this condition is keeping the Law, and the accomplishing of ‘works’ prescribed by the Law.” In direct contrast to Judaism, Bultmann notes that Paul’s thesis is that, “No human being will be justified (‘rightwised’) in his (God’s) sight by works of the Law.” Bultmann references Romans 10:4: “For Christ is the end of the law, so that there may be

⁵⁷ Rudolph Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Scribner’s, 1955), 25.

⁵⁸ Bultmann, *Theology*, 260.

⁵⁹ Rudolf Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting* (Leipzig: Thames and Hudson, 1956), 65.

⁶⁰ Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity*, 66.

⁶¹ Bultmann, *Theology*, 11–13.

righteousness for everyone who believes.”⁶² He interprets Paul to mean that the righteousness of God has now been manifested by faith alone through Jesus Christ, and not through works of the law.

Several leading biblical scholars and theologians understand their scholarship as part of interfaith dialogue. These scholars and others have begun to address the importance of re-evaluating the negative scholarly interpretations of Judaism as a means of providing a constructive way forward in advancing Jewish-Christian dialogue. Four contemporary scholars—Jules Isaac, Claudia Setzer, Stanley K. Stowers and Pamela Eisenbaum—are cited to demonstrate how significant a role negative scholarly interpretations of Judaism have played in the traditional Christian reading of Paul.

Following the horrors of Auschwitz, and the Christian silence concerning the fate of European Jews during the Shoah, there has been a serious effort on the part of Christians to re-evaluate the negative Christian teaching regarding the Jews and to learn from Jewish sources—both past and present. Jules Isaac, a French Jewish historian, and a pioneer in Jewish-Christian dialogue, is the author of *The Teaching of Contempt: Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism*.⁶³ Isaac, was instrumental in highlighting Jewish concerns related to the teaching of the church and was able to address these concerns at a private meeting at the Vatican in 1960 with Pope John XXIII. His concerns focussed primarily on Christian teaching about the Jews as “Christ-killers” and their culpability for the death of Jesus.⁶⁴ Isaac described the teaching of contempt for Judaism as nothing less than contempt for the truth and “the most formidable and pernicious weapon ever

⁶² Bultmann, *Theology*, 279–280.

⁶³ Jules Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt: Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1969).

⁶⁴ Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt*, 24.

used against Judaism or the Jews.”⁶⁵ Isaac’s concerns were ultimately accepted for inclusion in the ground-breaking promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*⁶⁶ in 1965 by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church. Vatican II and specifically *Nostra Aetate*, *the Declaration of the Church to Non-Christian Religions* affirmed the acceptance of Judaism as a legitimate religious way of life and repudiated the theological tradition that perpetuated the Christian doctrine that the Jews were a cursed people, rejected by God, and guilty of deicide. Significantly, *Nostra Aetate* included specific passages from Paul’s Epistles that acknowledged the continuing covenant between God and the Jewish people (Rom. 9:4), the giving of the law—God’s commandments, the worship of God by the Jewish people, and the promises of God to the Jewish people (Rom. 7:12; 11:29). This important affirmation by the Roman Catholic Church addressed one of Jules Isaac’s primary concerns—that of the teaching of contempt for Judaism by perpetuating theological myths that overreached the bounds of historical and scriptural accuracy.

Scholars have noted that that the hatred for Jews comes in part from the way that the Letters of Paul have been used by New Testament interpreters against the Jews. The earliest example of the charge that the Jews killed Jesus comes from Paul’s Epistle to the Thessalonians 2:14–16. Claudia Setzer, Professor of Religious Studies at Manhattan College in New York argues that nowhere else does Paul attribute the death of Jesus to the Jews. She attributes the ad-hominem anti-Jewish sentiments in these verses—“the Jews, who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets [...] but God’s wrath has overtaken them at last”—as later interpolations that

⁶⁵ Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt*, 34.

⁶⁶ Pope Paul VI, *Nostra Aetate: Declaration on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian Religions*, October 28, 1965.

interpret the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 C.E. as God's punishment inflicted on the Jews for killing Christ. She notes that:

The utterly negative portrayal of the Jews and sense of estrangement in this passage contradict the discussions in Romans 9–11, where there is hope of Israel's ultimate salvation and an appreciation of its role in God's plan. Witness also the contrast between the anguish Paul asserts over Israel's "hardening" in Romans 9:2–3 and the apparent satisfaction at the downfall of the Jews in 1 Thessalonians 2:16.⁶⁷

Most importantly, Setzer notes that the statement that the Jews killed Christ, is for Paul unusual at least, and that nowhere in his Epistles does Paul rehearse the details surrounding Jesus' death. Setzer notes that in 1 Corinthians 2:6–8, Paul "assigns responsibility for Jesus' death to the "rulers of this age," a term that may stand for (a) the Romans, (b) demonic powers, or (c) a combination of religious and political establishment acting as agents of demonic powers. As Paul uses it, the term is determinedly general and includes some human powers but does not single out the Jews."⁶⁸ Setzer further notes that it is highly unlikely that Paul, who sees himself as part of the Jewish people, and takes pride in his pedigree, would indulge in this type of anti-Jewish rhetoric. She states that nowhere else in his letters does Paul repeat these anti-Jewish charges. Thessalonians 2:14-16 is probably a later interpretation and the authentic writings of Paul provide no evidence that he blamed Jews for the crucifixion of Christ.

The understanding of Paul's Judaism as a religion based on "works-righteousness" has endured for centuries, influenced by a seemingly endless list of prominent Christian theologians and scholars that sustained an unrelentingly negative depiction of Jews and Judaism in the Christian imagination. One aspect of this negative depiction will be emphasized in this thesis: what separates the post-conversion Paul in the traditional understanding of Paul is that with his

⁶⁷ Claudia Setzer, *Jewish Responses to Early Christians: History and Polemics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 17.

⁶⁸ Setzer, *Jewish Responses*, 18.

new convictions about Christ, he has left behind the legalistic nature and particularistic laws of Pharisaic Judaism. This contrast between law and gospel and between “works” and faith will have far-reaching consequences for how Christians not only read Paul but how they interpret contemporary Judaism. The importance of understanding the origins and widespread acceptance of negative views about Jews and Judaism is a fundamental component to advancing Jewish-Christian dialogue. The reassessment of these views can only contribute to a more respectful and clearer way forward for Jewish-Christian dialogue.

In conclusion, the traditional understanding of Paul denigrated Judaism and seriously misrepresented what Torah meant to Paul. For centuries, Christian theologians and scholars downplayed or minimized Paul’s positive statements about Judaism and instead emphasized and decontextualized the negative statements to support and justify a particular interpretation. This lamentable caricature of Judaism that was constructed by Christian scholars and theologians and perpetuated for centuries helped to set the stage for the most catastrophic consequences. Fortunately, several biblical scholars began by the 1970s to challenge such caricatures of late Second-Temple Judaism and the apostle. It is to these writers that we now turn.

CHAPTER TWO: THE NEW PERSPECTIVE ON PAUL: A COVENANT OF GRACE

A vast body of literature by New Testament scholars developed over the last fifty years has challenged the traditional way of understanding Paul. While this brief chapter cannot do justice to the depth and breadth of this conversation, it attempts to provide an overview of some of the leading scholars and their contributions. A number of historians and New Testament scholars—including George Foot Moore, Claude Montefiore, James Parkes and W. D. Davies⁶⁹—attempted to challenge the prevailing views that developed about Judaism, but a new scholarly understanding of Judaism and the apostle Paul only began to take hold in earnest with the publication of Krister Stendahl’s influential 1963 essay, “The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West.”⁷⁰ A former Dean of Harvard Divinity School, Lutheran Bishop of Stockholm, as well as author of the influential 1964 treatise *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, Stendahl exposed the depth and extent of centuries of scholarly misunderstanding of Paul and was a forerunner to E. P. Sanders’ 1977 landmark book *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*. This chapter provides an overview of the contributions and limitations of the New Perspective on Paul for Jewish-Christian dialogue.

With an ecumenical breakthrough in view after Vatican II, Stendahl discerned that the time was right for Jewish-Christian dialogue to be a focus of serious academic study, with the intention of advancing this dialogue beyond its current stages.⁷¹ As a starting point for this dialogue, he asked whether there are critical elements at the very centre of Christian theology and tradition that foster a negative attitude to Judaism. He notes that even though there is a

⁶⁹ Mark M. Mattison, “A Summary of the New Perspective on Paul,” <https://academic.logos.com/a-summary-of-the-new-perspective-on-paul>.

⁷⁰ Krister Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1976).

⁷¹ Stendahl, “Judaism and Christianity,” 445.

willingness on both sides “*for* brotherhood and *against* bias and discrimination,” the traditionally accepted theological structure of the New Testament “cannot easily be brought into harmony with a spirit of love and humility on the side of Christians.” Stendahl noted that “the crucial question is whether New Testament sayings should not be defined as having in themselves, and in their very biblical context, that element of bitterness and hateful zeal.”⁷² He believed that although everyone would prefer a New Testament without the antagonism between church and synagogue, as well as other material that he considers offensive and hateful, what needed to be addressed was the supposed divine sanction for hatred against the Jews.

Stendahl recognized that the charge of deicide against the Jewish people is most often thought of as the major stumbling block to be overcome within Jewish-Christian dialogue. He acknowledged and appreciated that the declaration by the Vatican Council went a long way to address this with the corrective declaration embedded in *Nostra Aetate*. This becomes a dominant theme in Stendahl’s understanding of the tremendous difficulties and obstacles to be overcome in Jewish-Christian dialogue. He questions how one can reconcile what Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 2:14–16: “the Jews, who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets [...] but God’s wrath has overtaken them at last,” with what Paul says in Romans 9:1–5: “I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people.” As the previous chapter suggested, Thessalonians 2:14-16 is probably a later interpolation and does not represent the views of the historical Paul.

Stendahl has noted that most discussions within Jewish-Catholic dialogue seem to center around the question of the responsibility and “guilt” of the Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus. For

⁷² Stendahl, “Judaism and Christianity,” 449.

example, in the context of Jewish-Christian dialogue, Vatican II's Proclamation *Nostra Aetate*, Article 4.0 declared John 19:6 to mean "what happened in His (Jesus') passion cannot be charged against all Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today."⁷³ In Stendahl's opinion, this declaration attempts to grapple with the well-established sentiment that the Jews, with their stubborn rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, and their continued aloofness to his message to this day, remain *the primary example* of the enemies of Christ.⁷⁴ Stendahl believes that however well-meaning that declaration is, "*there is still a more subtle and more powerful form of the anti-Jewish element in Christian theology to consider.*"⁷⁵ He is referring of course to the theological model within Christian theology of the contrast between the Law and the Gospel. Stendahl points out that "the Christian theological system is imbued with an understanding of Judaism, which is not that of Paul's, but of the Western tradition, beginning with Augustine, and extending through Martin Luther through to the present day."⁷⁶ In this view of Judaism, it is consistently denigrated as inferior to Christianity, with an erroneous approach to God.

Stendahl notes that when Paul explains that righteousness comes from faith (Rom. 10:6–9), he references Deut. 30:11–14 and establishes the link between the teaching found in the Torah with the redemption of the Gentiles in Christ. He describes Paul's reference to these verses in Deuteronomy as "Paul marvelling in his special calling, the coming of the Gentiles." This passage emphasizes that God's teaching has been clearly disclosed and is available to all:

Surely this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. It is not in heaven that you should say, "Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?" Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?" No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.

⁷³ Pope Paul VI, *Nostra Aetate*.

⁷⁴ Krister Stendahl, "Judaism and Christianity: A Plea for a New Relationship," *CrossCurrents* 17, (1967): 452.

⁷⁵ Stendahl, "Judaism and Christianity," 450, [emphasis added].

⁷⁶ Stendahl, "Judaism and Christianity," 451.

Stendhal asserts that Paul reads these words in Deuteronomy as “righteousness according to the commandments” but also as “a study in the way God works.” Paul sees the point that God is making as “a prefigured and predicted biblical process.”⁷⁷ He states that Paul describes the spirit of these various righteousnesses by connecting the righteousness of the law in Deuteronomy with the righteousness of faith (Rom. 10:6–9):

But righteousness that comes from faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend to heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? “The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Stendhal notes that “playing on midrash and methods of exegesis, Paul proves that the very law he has received as a Jew is the very law that speaks about the way God works, and that has now led to what for Paul is a *fait accompli*—the coming of the Gentile age and the incorporation of the Gentiles. All his quotations circle around that fact, and only in that fact do they have their common denominator.”⁷⁸ Paula Fredriksen points out that Stendhal’s reading of Paul in these texts is that “the truth that Stendhal sees is that the tradition of Christian contempt for Judaism, commonly understood to be taught by the New Testament texts, is challenged and repudiated by those very same texts. Think otherwise, Krister has warned his modern listeners, and you distort the gospel.”⁷⁹

Several contemporary Jewish scholars corroborate Stendhal’s reading. Bernard Levinson notes that this passage (Deut. 30:11–14) asserts the accessibility of Torah by “challenging the assumptions of Near Eastern wisdom schools about the inaccessibility of divine wisdom and the

⁷⁷ Krister Stendahl, *Final Account: Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 34–35.

⁷⁸ Stendhal, *Final Account*, 35.

⁷⁹ Fredriksen and Reinhartz, eds., *Jesus, Judaism*, 6–7.

limits of human knowledge.”⁸⁰ Robert Alter agrees that this text stresses that God’s teaching is available to all, and in doing so, “it rejects the older mythological notion of the secrets or wisdom of the gods. It is the daring hero of the pagan epic who, unlike ordinary men, makes bold to climb the sky or cross the great sea to bring back the hidden treasures of the divine realm—as Gilgamesh crosses the sea in an effort to bring back the secret of immortality.” Alter also notes that this text proclaims the mythological and heroic era is at an end, as “God’s word, inscribed in a book, has become the intimate property of every person.”⁸¹ Paul has demonstrated that the teaching found in the Torah is available to all—by connecting the righteousness of the law with the righteousness of faith, through which the Gentiles find redemption in Christ.

In 1977, Ed Parish Sanders published the book *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, which is considered to have initiated the scholarly re-evaluation of the Apostle Paul, and has, more than any other scholarly work of the twentieth century, contributed to the change in the scholarly view of ancient Judaism.”⁸² Sanders maintains that in this passage in Romans, “we see with increasing clarity that Paul has in mind two forms of righteousness—one the standard Jewish righteousness, the other the new righteousness that comes only by faith in Christ.” He notes that “the righteousness that counts is the gospel that Paul preached, just as in Rom. 1:16–17, the gospel ‘is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith [in Christ],’ and the rejection of Paul’s message is the rejection of the only righteousness that provides salvation.”⁸³ Sanders goes on to confirm God’s abiding covenant with the Jews, and notes that “Jews who sought righteousness by the law were seeking only the sort of righteousness they believed in, a righteousness that is

⁸⁰ Bernard Levinson, “Introduction and Annotations,” *The Jewish Study Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 415.

⁸¹ Alter, *Five Books*, 1029.

⁸² Magnus Zetterholm, *Approaches to Paul: A Student’s Guide to Recent Scholarship* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 100.

⁸³ Sanders, *Paul: The Apostle’s Life*, 682.

attained by obedience to the law: they did not have any interest in using the fulfillment of the law to obtain what Paul saw as the only righteousness that was salvific.”⁸⁴

Sanders argues that Paul’s statement in Rom. 11:25–27 affirms that the salvation of the gentiles leads to the salvation of the Jews:

I want you to understand this mystery: a hardening has come upon a part of Israel, until the full number of the gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “Out of Zion will come the Deliverer: he will banish ungodliness from Jacob. [Isa. 59:20–21a], “And this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins [Isa. 27:9].” (Rom. 11:25–27)

Sanders affirms that the meaning of the verse, “the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable” (Rom. 11:28–29) is that the Jews are still elect, and that they will now receive mercy (Rom. 11:31) because of the Gentile conversion. He notes that the verse, “For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all,” is the conclusion to Romans 9–11: “The conclusion is not that only those who put their faith in Christ will be saved. It is that God will be merciful to all.”⁸⁵ Sanders concludes that “Despite the conditions of covenant number 1 (the election of Israel, which required obedience to God’s commands) and covenant number 2 (the sending of Christ to save those who have faith in him), God can save everyone if he wishes: “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:35). He adds that, “If God decides to save all those whom he created, he can do it, and all one can say is: Amen.”⁸⁶

James D.G. Dunn notes that Paul cites Deut. 30:11–14 to expound “the righteousness from faith,” and suggests that it is “unlikely that Paul intended a completely antithetical juxtaposition of law and faith.”⁸⁷ He asserts that the law depicted in these verses is not

⁸⁴ Sanders, *Paul: The Apostle’s Life*, 684.

⁸⁵ Sanders, *Paul: The Apostle’s Life*, 688.

⁸⁶ Sanders, *Paul: The Apostle’s Life*, 689.

⁸⁷ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 516.

antithetical to faith, and that “properly understood expresses the trust which is fundamental to Israel’s relation with God, from beginning to end—Israel’s righteousness properly understood as God’s righteousness. That is what made it so different from the law understood simply as regulating life within Israel, the righteousness of daily living.”⁸⁸

Stendahl and Sanders are considered to have authored two of the most influential works on Paul and Judaism, and in their wake influenced a new generation of scholars.⁸⁹ Magnus Zetterholm, in his recent book *Approaches to Paul*, writes that “Stendahl’s work has been extremely important for the development of the new view on Paul and has served as an inspiration for many scholars,” later noting that “what has come to characterize the latest research on Paul was already present in the 1960s in Stendahl’s work.”⁹⁰ Stendahl, in addition to helping establish the basis for a reorientation of Christian scholarship about Paul and Judaism, now designated “The New Perspective on Paul,” also demonstrated a strong interest in directing his scholarly reassessment of Paul towards a practical goal—that of changing contemporary Christian beliefs and attitudes towards Jews with the hope of advancing Jewish-Christian dialogue.⁹¹

In his plea for a new relationship between Judaism and Christianity, Stendahl describes the primary issue for Jewish-Christian dialogue as it relates to Paul:

According to the Christian theological model of “Law and the Gospel,” Jewish attitudes and Jewish piety are by example the wrong attitude toward God. The Christian proposition in the teachings of Jesus, Paul, John, and all the rest, is always described in its contrast to Jewish “legalism,” “casuistry,” “particularism,” ideas of “merit” etc. This whole system of thinking, with its image of the Pharisees and of the political Messianism of the Jews, treats Jewish piety as the

⁸⁸ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 517.

⁸⁹ James W. Aageson, “Paul and Judaism: The Apostle in the Context of Recent Interpretation,” *Word and World* 20 (2000): 249–256.

⁹⁰ Magnus Zetterholm, *Approaches to Paul: A Student’s Guide to Recent Scholarship* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 97–100.

⁹¹ Stendahl, “Judaism and Christianity,” 445–458.

black background which makes Christian piety the more shining. In such a state of affairs, it is hard to engender respect for Judaism and the Jews. And the theological system requires the retention of such an understanding of Judaism, whether true or not.⁹²

Stendahl notes that this image of Judaism is not that of Paul's. It is the image of the Western tradition from Luther up to the present. He asserts that the church must accept responsibility for its intentions and teachings, and that it is clear to him that "Christian theology needs a new departure, one that is born out of repentance and humility."⁹³

It was not, however, until the publication of Sanders' *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*⁹⁴ that the notions amongst New Testament scholars about Paul began to change. Sanders' achievement was an exhaustive study of Rabbinic Judaism by a Christian scholar, which overturned centuries of Christian misunderstanding of Second Temple Judaism. Dunn noted that Sanders demonstrated that, far from being a religious system that was "dead, legalistic, and self-righteous,"⁹⁵ the character of Palestinian Judaism was "postulated on the initiative of divine grace." Dunn also acknowledged that as a result of Sanders' work, "nothing less became necessary than a complete reassessment of Paul's relationship with his ancestral religion, not to mention all the considerable consequences which were bound to follow for our contemporary understanding of his theology."⁹⁶ The New Perspective on Paul transformed the received view that Paul abandoned Judaism and converted to Christianity. In essence, Paul's conversion as traditionally understood by Christian scholars, began to be viewed not as a rejection of Judaism, but as a 'calling' to deliver the message of the God of Israel to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ at what Paul perceived to be the dawn of the end times. Perhaps the most significant change to

⁹² Stendahl, "Judaism and Christianity," 450.

⁹³ Stendahl, "Judaism and Christianity," 450.

⁹⁴ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 62.

⁹⁵ Zetterholm, *Approaches to Paul*, 101.

⁹⁶ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul*, 5.

scholarship was that Paul was not just seen as the apostle to the Gentiles, but was also being seen as neither denigrating nor abandoning the Judaism of his era. The scholarly study of Paul's understanding of Judaism, therefore, has a central role to play in Jewish-Christian dialogue.

After centuries of portraying Judaism negatively and understanding Paul as a convert to Christianity, how did *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* have such an impact on New Testament scholarship? Zetterholm credits Sanders' compelling conclusions about Judaism as even more important than his contribution to the understanding of how Paul related to Judaism.⁹⁷ Sanders' attempts to better understand the principles or "patterns of religion" of the religious life of Jews of Paul's era began with a comprehensive analysis of 400 years of rabbinic Tannaitic texts composed in the land of Israel during the period between the Maccabees (200 BCE) and the formation of the Mishnah (200 CE). Sanders found little evidence of the widespread scholarly notion of Jewish petty legalism and works-righteousness in his research of rabbinic literature. Instead, he concluded that the Judaism of Paul's era could be best described as a type of "covenantal nomism" which could be understood as a relationship or "covenant" between God and the Jewish people. This covenant combined the concept of the Jewish people's gracious election by God with their righteous observance of God's commandments. The observance of the laws and commandments within the covenant was accompanied by the provision of God's justice, mercy, and forgiveness through the promise of atonement for one's sins.

Sanders famously described the concept of covenantal nomism as "getting in" and "staying in." "Getting in" refers to the election by God of the Jewish people, and "staying in" refers to the maintenance of this covenantal relationship with God through atonement, healing, and restoration. Scholar James G. Crossley notes that although Sanders' New Perspective on Paul has

⁹⁷ Zetterholm, *Approaches to Paul*, 100.

offered up divergent scholarly interpretations, the concept of covenantal nomism is its most accepted feature. In fact, Crossley notes that in New Testament scholarship, Sanders' influential breakthrough of the scholarly understanding of Judaism and God's relationship to the Jewish people, has extended well beyond the study of Paul's relationship with Judaism to a more positively constructed scholarly appraisal of Judaism. Significantly, this has contributed to placing Jesus as well as Paul within "a more positively constructed Jewish context."⁹⁸ James Dunn, who is credited with coining the term "The New Perspective on Paul," notes that prior to Sanders, the scholarly restatements of Paul's theology had become "so predictable, with a lack of any substantial systematic treatments. With little fresh to be said, there was little call for another book which simply repeated the same old material or shuffled the same old pieces around in search of new patterns."⁹⁹ Dunn notes that this all changed within scholarly circles with *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*. Dunn claims that it was not so much what Sanders said about the character of Palestinian Judaism as a religious system, it was more that "he did it with such effect that nobody who entertained serious aspirations to understand Christian beginnings or Pauline theology could any more ignore the sharp contrast he drew between his restatement of Palestinian Judaism and the traditional reconstructions of Judaism within Christian theology."¹⁰⁰ Dunn concludes that nothing less became necessary than a *complete reassessment* of Paul's relationship to Judaism, his ancestral religion. He asserts that this has reinvigorated the scholarly study of the pivotal role of Paul in Christian theology, which is still unfolding. Dunn likened *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* to a "rude awakening," and noted that Sanders succeeded in

⁹⁸ James G. Crossley, "Other Problems from a British Perspective: 'Jewishness', Jesus, and the New Perspective on Paul," in *Ethnicity, Race, Religion: Identities and Ideologies in Early Jewish and Christian Texts, and in Modern Biblical Interpretations*, eds. Katherine M. Hockey and David G. Horrell (London: T&T Clark, 2018), 130–146.

⁹⁹ James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 5.

¹⁰⁰ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul*, 5–6.

demolishing the traditional scholarly understanding of Judaism developed during the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century.¹⁰¹

The ground-breaking work of Sanders must be noted as the beginning of a reassessment of modern Christian scholarship, in that Sanders convincingly repudiated the charges by New Testament scholars that Judaism was self-serving and arrogant, and marred by petty legalism. Sanders created a sea-change in Christian New Testament scholarship by demonstrating that Judaism enjoyed a commitment and humility before the God who chose and would ultimately redeem Israel.¹⁰² Sanders' contribution provided a strong foundation and a direction forward for scholars and theologians, as his understanding and description of Judaism and how it saw itself and its relationship to God in the first century was presented effectively and served to counter the polemical way that has characterized the way Judaism was depicted by Christianity for over two thousand years. This transformation has so dominated the landscape of Pauline scholarly discussion and debate that it has been compared to a city "devastated by an earthquake, with everyone taking the measure of the changes to come, but no one daring to build again, out of fear of a new shock."¹⁰³ Brendon Byrne notes that Sanders had his predecessors, including Stendahl's classic essay, but—"none managed to bring about the turn around that Sanders achieved."¹⁰⁴ Sanders' book demonstrated that the traditional Christian understanding of Paul and his relationship to Judaism was based on scholarship that inadequately researched Jewish sources and failed to comprehend the nature of Judaism, and he succeeded in repudiating centuries of biblical scholarship which portrayed Judaism as an empty and degenerate religion.

¹⁰¹ James D.G Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 5.

¹⁰² Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 427.

¹⁰³ Neil Elliott, "Taking the Measure of an Earthquake: Comments on the 40th Anniversary Edition of Paul and Palestinian Judaism," *Journal of the Jesus Movement in its Jewish Setting* 5 (2018): 21–31.

¹⁰⁴ Brendan Byrne, "Interpreting Romans Theologically in a Post-'New Perspective' Perspective," *Harvard Theological Review* 94 (2001): 227–241.

The great Jewish sage Rabbi Akiva stated that “the fundamental principle of the Torah is the commandment ‘Love thy neighbour as thyself’” (Lev. 19:18).¹⁰⁵ When Hillel was asked by a Gentile to summarize the Torah in one sentence, he offered a version of this: “What is distasteful to you, don’t do to another person. The rest is commentary; now go study the commentary.”¹⁰⁶ Martin Buber explains the meaning of this commandment as a caution against hurting another person in anger without understanding that we are all connected.¹⁰⁷ Sanders explains that in Judaism the law is not just about the relationship between humans and God. As Leviticus 19:18 shows, the law also governs relations between humans and other humans. Sanders notes that love of God and love of humanity are the two main aspects of the law. He believes that scholars should not mistake Paul’s understanding of Leviticus 19:18 as the “whole law” to mean that ritual commandments are excluded, or that he opposed these laws on the first table of the commandments. Paul’s own summary of the law in Romans 13:8–10 includes his own formulation: “Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.” Sanders concludes that to ancient Jews, both love of the neighbour and love of the stranger was also to be expressed on concrete terms, such as honesty and charity. Rabbinic tradition confirms this with the statement: “Charity and deeds of loving-kindness are equal to all the commandments in the Torah (T. Pe’ah 4.19).”¹⁰⁸ Sanders quotes Philo when he states that “every sabbath in the synagogues the Jewish philosophy was expounded under two heads, duty to God, and duty to other people.” He notes that “love of God and of neighbour were seen as inseparable; so Jews taught one another.”¹⁰⁹ Christians learn that it is Jesus who teaches love of neighbour.

¹⁰⁵ *Sifra, Kedoshim*, 4:12.

¹⁰⁶ *Etz Hayim*, 697.

¹⁰⁷ *Etz Hayim*, 697.

¹⁰⁸ Sanders, *Practice and Belief*, 257–260.

¹⁰⁹ Sanders, *Practice and Belief*, 260.

Sanders recounts Queen Elizabeth II's Christmas message of 1989, in which she urges her listeners to live by the rule "which Jesus Christ taught us, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Sanders notes that few will know that Jesus quoted Leviticus from the Hebrew Bible, and that "whether they know the Jewish background or not, it remains true that they learn it from Jesus."¹¹⁰

One's commitment in Judaism to observing the commandments is no more onerous than observing the laws of government in society. Sanders argues that "the number and complexity of divine commandments within Judaism are not especially remarkable. The obligation to obey was not seen by the Rabbis as imposing a heavy burden on observant Jews." Sanders notes that "the total of international, national, state or provincial, and local laws which govern us all are much more numerous, and if they were all printed, together with some of the juristic arguments about them, they would seem much more bewildering and formidable. The Rabbinic *halacha* is analogous to modern law in that it aimed at providing regulations for all areas of life. It thus presented no particular burden for its adherents, but only the obligation to know and observe laws which is common in human societies."¹¹¹ Sanders also provides a response to the question within Judaism of "What is doing?" He quotes Jewish scholar and theologian Rabbi Adolf Buchler's (1867–1939) view that "doing" refers to doing the positive precepts, those which command any action, but especially deeds of loving kindness. The word "deed" or "doing" means "the practice of religious duties, and frequently the practice of deeds of loving kindness."¹¹² Referencing Jacob Neusner's book *A Life of Yohanan Ben Zakkai* (1-80 C.E.), Sanders notes that the Rabbis accepted the idea that "studying" should lead to "doing." One

¹¹⁰ Paula Fredriksen and Adele Reinhartz, eds., *Jesus, Judaism & Christian anti-Judaism: Reading the New Testament after the Holocaust* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 47.

¹¹¹ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 111.

¹¹² Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 113.

should study in order to do, and study was not to be used as an excuse for neglecting the commandments. Studying, obeying the commandments, and doing acts of loving kindness are the foundation of Judaism.¹¹³ To “study” and to “do” are to obey the commandments, and to be close to God. Both studying and doing the Torah are connected with the feeling of the presence of God. To study the Torah is to be in the presence of the God who gave it, while the observance of the *halachot* inculcates the feeling of the presence of God.¹¹⁴

Sanders notes that in Judaism, every good action reinforces the feeling of God’s presence, that there is intimate contact with God—that He is near. Keeping the commandments and doing good deeds is also not only the direct responsibility of the individual. There is also a community responsibility reflecting the covenant and special relationship of the Jewish people with God. The idea of the covenant of a people with God reflects the value to God of both the community and the individual. The concept of communities and national identities also underline God’s intent that the rights of individuals are a community concern, and social justice should be pursued by nations throughout the world. Isaiah 2:3–4 reads:

And the many peoples shall go and say: “Come, let us go up to the Mount of the Lord, to the House of the God of Jacob that he may instruct us in His ways, and that we may walk in His paths.” For instruction shall come forth from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Thus He will judge among the nations, and arbitrate for the many peoples, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks: Nation shall not take up sword against nation; they shall never again know war.

By this we understand that in Jewish tradition, both the individual and the community have a responsibility before God to adhere to the commandments. The *Jewish Annotated New Testament* explains in these two verses that “instruction” refers to “Torah” and associates it with the “word of the Lord.” “Nations” implies that Non-Israelite nations of the world may accept the

¹¹³ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 219.

¹¹⁴ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 222.

word of the Lord from Jerusalem and still maintain their own identity and worship.¹¹⁵ The Torah was given to Israel as a sign of God's love, and we have a responsibility, both as individuals and as a community to honour that love by responding in kind with dedication and commitment. Our conduct has to encompass more than excessive adherence to specific rituals and restrictions. Individual acts must at all times be recognized as only a part of the overall pattern of our whole commitment and response to God. Performing a ritual and reciting a prayer cannot be a replacement for the readiness to listen with your heart, and to help. Deuteronomy 6:5 reads, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." The Jewish Study Bible explains that, "The paradox of commanding a feeling (as in Leviticus 19:18: "Love your fellow as yourself: I am the Lord.") is resolved with the recognition that covenantal "love" does not refer to internal sentiment or to private emotion, but rather to loyalty of action toward both deity and neighbour."¹¹⁶ The essence of the commandments and the meaning of "love" within Judaism are the love of God and acts of loving kindness towards your neighbour.

While the New Perspective on Paul succeeded in exposing the serious flaws in scholarly research and interpretations that perpetuated a negative and distorted view of Judaism, some problems remain for Jewish-Christian dialogue. A way forward towards a "New Perspective in Jewish-Christian Dialogue" must, in my view, be based on scholarly interpretations of the New Testament that do not misrepresent Judaism. Progress with respect to Paul and Jewish-Christian dialogue can be achieved by incorporating new insights in which scholarly interpretations are firmly grounded *within* a Jewish perspective. This approach goes beyond both the traditional

¹¹⁵ Benjamin D. Sommer, "Isaiah: Introduction and Annotations," in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1199.

¹¹⁶ JSB, 361.

view and the New Perspective on Paul and locates Paul as a Torah observant Jew *within* Judaism as a starting point, much as scholars have now universally accepted Jesus as a Torah observant Jew *within* Judaism. To move in this direction, it is important for New Testament scholars to develop an appreciation of what Judaism is and is not.

Dunn acknowledges Sanders' reading of Paul as covenantal nomism, but still discerns that Paul has a problem with Judaism. Dunn interprets Paul as taking issue with those "works of the law" within Judaism that perpetuate ethnocentric and nationalistic identity markers: circumcision, food laws, and the Sabbath. Dunn's claim replaces the stereotype of Judaism as a "legalistic" religion, with one that is parochial and particularistic. He argues that Paul's contention that "no one is justified by works of the law, but only through faith in Christ" (Gal. 2:16) provides "one of the great defining moments in Paul's theology and indeed in Christian theology."¹¹⁷ Dunn maintains that the "works" Paul had in mind were not those deeds undertaken to achieve righteousness—but those commandments of the law "practiced in order to maintain covenant righteousness, not least by separation from Gentiles."¹¹⁸

Dunn argues that Paul believes that maintaining these identity markers at the time that the promises to the nations are being fulfilled through the coming of Christ challenges the ultimate goal of the covenant. He notes that "the way in which the law, thus understood, came to reinforce the sense of Israel's privilege, marked out this people in its set-apartness to God."¹¹⁹ Dunn avers that "the law's role in defining Israel's holiness to God became also its role in separating Israel from the nations. In this way, the positive sense of 'works of the law,' as equivalent to Paul's talk of the obedience of faith, became the more negative sense which we find in Paul—works of

¹¹⁷ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 359–360.

¹¹⁸ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 360.

¹¹⁹ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 354.

the law as not only maintaining Israel's covenant status, but also protecting Israel's privileged status and restricted prerogative."¹²⁰ Dunn's interpretation and conclusions serve to highlight, in his view, the negative, ethnocentric aspects of Israel's particularism, as against the positive aspects of Pauline universalism.

In working towards mapping a new approach to understanding Paul, new scholarly approaches to difficult passages help to explain the apparent contradictions within Paul's writings and provide a new understanding of Paul which has the potential to become a significant factor in advancing contemporary Jewish-Christian dialogue. Although the scholarly changes to the traditional way of interpreting Paul have been described as ground-breaking (taking the measure of an earthquake), and most scholars have agreed that its impact has shattered the uncritically accepted traditional view of Judaism as a "cold, harsh legalistic religion of works-righteousness in contrast to the loving religion of grace advocated by Paul,"¹²¹ there is still much to be done. Several scholars of the next generation—especially Paula Fredriksen and Mark D. Nanos—have sought to locate Paul more thoroughly *within* Judaism. In the next chapter we turn to their work.

¹²⁰ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 355.

¹²¹ Crossley and Edwards, "Paul and the Faithfulness of God as Postmodern Scholarship," 606.

CHAPTER THREE: THE POST-NEW PERSPECTIVE ON PAUL

In line with a reassessment of Paul's relationship to Judaism, proponents of The New Perspective on Paul have offered new interpretations of Paul. The implications of new scholarship on Paul for Jewish-Christian dialogue are significant as these new interpretations vary considerably from the traditional scholarly understanding of Paul and its negative depiction of Judaism. With a new generation of Pauline scholars, the approach of figures like Sanders, Stendahl, and Dunn was expanded as scholarship delved more deeply into the figure of Paul as a Torah-observant Jew during the late Second Temple period. Two figures are especially significant: Paula Fredriksen and Mark Nanos. Fredriksen and Nanos are considered "Post-New Perspective" or "Paul within Judaism" scholars;¹²² both have been influential in terms of drawing attention to Paul's Judaism—Fredriksen with her book *Paul The Pagans' Apostle*¹²³ and Nanos with a number of scholarly books, most notably *Reading Paul within Judaism*.¹²⁴

Both argue that Paul's letters should be understood in the context within Judaism during the first century. Paula Fredriksen notes that Paul uses the term "Christ"—the Greek translation of the Hebrew *Messiah*, without explaining what he means by it or why he confers it on Jesus. She questions "why a Jew who had been crucified and then raised should be designated *Messiah* by another first-century Jew?" and notes that "Paul would have had difficulty finding anything about a crucified messiah in the Hebrew Scriptures." She notes that Paul states that "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures" (Cor. 15:3), yet the passages that Paul invokes are

¹²² Nanos, Mark D., and Magnus Zetterholm, eds., *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015).

¹²³ Fredriksen, *Pagans' Apostle*.

¹²⁴ Nanos, *Reading Paul within Judaism*.

unclear, and he does not reveal what scriptures support his claim.¹²⁵ The Epistle to the Romans, the longest and last of his letters is considered by most scholars to be at the centre of Paul's theology. Paul saw himself as called by God to fulfill the expectations of the Hebrew prophets and to deliver the message of the good news of God to the Gentiles: "I have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith [...] among all the Gentiles, including yourselves" (Rom. 1:5–6). These letters to early congregations consisting primarily of Gentiles were written by Paul during what he considered to be the apocalyptic period of humankind, or the final days. Paul believed that he was "called" through his revelation of the risen Christ on the road to Damascus to be an apostle and servant to Jesus Christ, and to deliver the message of salvation and "righteousness by faith" to the Gentiles. He explains in his letter to the churches of Galatia: "But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles (Gal. 1:15)." Paul also references other apostles, including his opponents, that have also been "called" to proclaim this message, but in Corinthians 15:10, he describes himself as "working harder than any of them" through the grace of God.

Nanos in particular has taken a keen interest in developing the notion of a Torah-observant Paul within Judaism contra the traditional view, and is very interested in the implications of this approach for Jewish-Christian relations today.¹²⁶ Fredriksen, like Nanos, takes exception not only to the traditional supersessionist view that the church replaces Israel, but also with the lingering antagonism between universal and particular, that often becomes a

¹²⁵ Paula Fredriksen, "From Jesus to Christ: The Contribution of Paul," 78, *From-Jesus-to-Christ.-The-Contribution-of-the-Apostle-Paul.pdf*

¹²⁶ Mark D. Nanos, "A Torah-Observant Paul?: What Difference Could it Make for Christian/Jewish Relations Today?" *Christian Scholars Group for Christian/Jewish Relations*, Boston (2005), *Boston-Torah-Obs-Nanos-5-9-05.pdf* (marknanos.com).

coded form of supersessionism in its own right, a problem to which even the “new perspective on Paul” school was prone. Such views depict Paul as the “champion of universalist (‘spiritual’) Christianity over particularist (‘fleshly’) Judaism—the zealous Pharisee that renounces the Law in coming over to Christ, becoming the preacher of grace and justification by faith against the deadening works-righteousness of his old commitments.” Fredriksen notes that this depiction of Judaism by the church began to marginalize Jews in late Roman society, so much so that they were “villainized routinely in the toxic rhetoric of patristic *Adversos Judaeos* theology.”¹²⁷ Fredriksen asserts that “this view of Paul’s personal rejection of Jewish ancestral custom has proved remarkably enduring, stretching from earliest patristic theologies through to current modern and post-modern ones.” She states that “this approach to Paul hasn’t changed—he is still depicted today in academic publications as anti-Jewish, anti-ritual, and anti-Torah.”¹²⁸ Paul continues to be depicted by scholars as “law-free,” with “the identifying characteristics of his Gentile mission: no to circumcision; no to ‘the works of the law’ (Sabbath, foodways, and especially circumcision); no to Torah; no to Jewish ethnic pride.”¹²⁹ As against these views, both Fredriksen and Nanos argue that Paul was not only Torah-observant and loyal to Judaism, but also believed that non-Jewish followers of Jesus “should be compelled to respect the Torah and adapt a ‘Jewish’ lifestyle.”¹³⁰ Fredriksen states that Paul demanded three things of Christ-following pagans: (1) abandon their “lower” gods to exclusively worship Paul’s God, the God of Israel; (2) maintain their ethnic distinction in these end times wherein God’s Kingdom would be established in Christ; and (3) live ethically in accordance with community behavior described precisely in “the Law.” She notes that Paul’s ideals regarding critical behaviour for Gentiles and

¹²⁷ Fredriksen, *Paul*, 109.

¹²⁸ Fredriksen, *Paul*, 107.

¹²⁹ Fredriksen, *Paul*, 108–109.

¹³⁰ Zetterholm, *Approaches to Paul*, 147–148.

his positive statements about Torah affirm the failing of describing Paul's mission as Law-free.¹³¹

Jewish tradition foretold the inclusion of the nations and non-Jews together with Israel's redemption, once God's kingdom dawned, and Fredriksen has noted that Paul's efforts to convince pagans to abandon their gods and turn to the God of Israel reflect his apocalyptic convictions that drew on the larger inclusive traditions of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology.¹³² She explains that the Jewish apocalyptic texts claim that when Israel's God, the lord of the universe, reveals himself in glory, the nations will "repudiate their gods and worship Israel's god [sic] together with Israel."¹³³ Fredriksen asserts that the Jewish apocalyptic texts do not imply that the destruction of the pagan idols at the end times means that the pagans will convert to Judaism and assume Jewish ancestral practices. On the contrary, she asserts that it is Paul's understanding, that "the nations do *not* convert to Judaism." Instead, the nations "*turn* from the lesser gods whose images they worship and *turn* to the god [sic] of Israel." Fredriksen points to Isaiah 45:22 to highlight Paul's understanding of the God of Israel as the "universal God: "Turn to Me and gain success, All the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is none else."¹³⁴ The Jewish Study Bible commentary interprets this verse as a "universal recognition of the Lord," and one that "relies on the argument from prophesy to show the whole world that the Lord is the true master of history." The nations of the world are invited to share in the benefits that the worship of the true God brings." This commentary is noteworthy in that it recognizes that there is a

¹³¹ Fredriksen, *Paul*, 111–119.

¹³² Paula Fredriksen, "Judaizing the Nations: The Ritual Demands of Paul's Gospel," *New Testament Studies* 56 (2010): 232–252.

¹³³ Fredriksen, "Judaizing," 242.

¹³⁴ Fredriksen, "Judaizing," 242.

mixture of both nationalism and universalism as Israel's example draws other nations to their God as well.¹³⁵

Frederiksen asserts that for Paul, “turning” to Israel’s god is not the same as converting to Judaism. Paul insists that these Gentiles are to live as “eschatological pagans—worshipping only Paul’s god, the god of Israel, and empowered to do so by God’s risen son.” She notes that the terms “turning” and “converting” are not interchangeable in this context, as “the only thing to convert to at mid-first century is Judaism, since a separate ‘Christianity’ does not yet exist. Using ‘convert’ or ‘conversion’ to describe either Paul or his Gentiles implicitly but necessarily posits that Christianity was already something other than Judaism.”¹³⁶ Fredriksen avers that in Jewish apocalyptic tradition, which Paul is following, “the nations join *with* Israel, but they do not *join* Israel. At the end, Israel and the nations together worship Israel’s god.”¹³⁷ Fredriksen explains that for Paul, Israel is “adopted already as God’s son, and has descended from ‘the fathers’—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—according to the flesh. Pagans-in-Christ are also from Abraham’s lineage, since Abraham was the father of many nations, but they descend from Abraham *alone*.”¹³⁸ Fredriksen notes that this “new kinship” between Israel and the Gentiles is a turning, but not a conversion because these Gentiles are adopted not into Israel’s family, but into God’s. She indicates that even though redeemed Israel and pagans drawn to Christ share the same God, they remain unmistakably separate.¹³⁹

Fredriksen also notes that, in spite of the traditional scholarly descriptions of the period as “earliest Christianity,” Christ-following Jews in Paul’s generation saw themselves, in their

¹³⁵ Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Study Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 858–859.

¹³⁶ Paula Fredriksen, “Mandatory Retirement: Ideas in the Study of Christian Origins Whose Time Has Come to Go,” *Studies in Religion* 35 (2006): 231–246.

¹³⁷ Fredriksen, “Judaizing,” 243.

¹³⁸ Fredriksen, “Judaizing,” 243.

¹³⁹ Fredriksen, “Judaizing,” 244.

own generation, as a sect of Judaism. These Christ-following Jews were also convinced that they were living in history's last generation, and as such, both Paul and these Jews continued to worship the Jewish God, referring to the Jewish Scriptures, observing God's laws, and proclaiming the Jewish message that "the god of Israel's anointed son was coming to establish that god's Kingdom." God's Kingdom would contain both Gentiles and Israel, who were defined as "those people set aside by God by his Laws." In Leviticus 20:24, God instructs Moses: "I am the Lord your God who set you apart from all the peoples [...] and you shall set apart the clean from the unclean beast [...] and you shall be Holy to Me, for I the Lord am Holy." Robert Alter interprets this verse as a "cosmic analogy," as in "I set you apart [...] therefore you shall set apart." Israel has been called in righteousness as a light to the nations (Isaiah 42:6), and in this regard, Alter notes that "holiness depends on distinction, upon being set apart and setting things apart. Israel has been set apart by God to be holy, to be different from other nations. Israel in its turn is enjoined to realize its distinctive character by relinquishing the indiscriminate consumption of all living things and setting apart the unclean from the clean."¹⁴⁰ Fredriksen asks then why think that Christ-following Jews would not continue living in accordance with their own ancestral traditions, while awaiting the return of the messiah? Paul's message to the Gentiles was after all primarily about separating them from their pagan gods and bringing them to "worship strictly and only the Jewish god. They were to conform their new religious behaviour precisely to the mandates of Jewish worship—no other gods, no idols. By radically exclusively affiliating to Israel's god, Paul's pagans were to assume that public behavior universally identified, by pagans and Jews alike, as uniquely Jewish."¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: WW Norton, 2008), 634.

¹⁴¹ Fredriksen, *Paul*, 112.

Fredriksen notes that even after Paul was “called,” and throughout his mission as the apostle to the Gentiles, he continued to regard himself as a Jew. Paul asserts that he was “circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee.”¹⁴² The commentary in the *Jewish Annotated New Testament* interprets this passage as meaning that Paul affirms his authority through his Jewish pedigree, and explains that “circumcised on the eighth day” means that he was asserting that he was not circumcised in his maturity as was the case with male proselytes, and that Jewish circumcision mattered to Paul, to Israel and to Israel’s god. Fredriksen notes that:

nowhere in Paul’s letters does he say anything about or against Jews circumcising their own sons. He opposed circumcision for Gentiles, not for Jews. Paul expressed no view on Jewish circumcision, most likely because he assumed one: Jews who honored their ancestral customs circumcised their sons into the covenant on the eighth day. The fact that all of Paul’s extant letters are addressed solely to Gentile assemblies gives us no opportunity to hear him discourse on Jewish practice by Jews.¹⁴³

Paul’s statement that he is “a member of the people Israel” reinforces the fact that he was not grafted into the people Israel; Fredriksen notes that “Paul maintains, and nowhere erases, the distinction between Israel and the nations; nor does he redefine “Israel” so that it means, and *only* means the followers of Christ.” She asserts that “if Israel is to remain Israel—rejoicing with the Gentiles—then why would Israel cease enacting their covenant with the god of their redemption? Paul’s acutely foreshortened timeframe, further, afforded him very little reason to think in terms of a next generation.”¹⁴⁴ This fresh interpretation of Philippians 3:5 provides some insight into reading Paul not as a Christian having rejected Judaism, but as a Jew proclaiming his message to the Gentiles *within* Judaism.

¹⁴² Paula Fredriksen, “From Jesus to Christ: The Contribution of Paul,” in *Jews and Christians Speak of Jesus*, ed., A. Zonnoni (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 77–92.

¹⁴³ Fredriksen, *Paul*, 113.

¹⁴⁴ Fredriksen, *Paul*, 113.

Mark D. Nanos agrees and considers Stendahl's critical observations regarding the failure of Vatican II's *Nostra Aetate* Article 4.0 to address the "*more powerful form of the anti-Jewish element in Christian theology*" as a key element missing in Jewish-Christian dialogue.¹⁴⁵ Nanos argues that Paul is interpreted by most New Perspective on Paul scholars as either not to have understood Judaism, to have misrepresented it, or to have been somewhere in between these two extremes.¹⁴⁶ Moreover,

their portrayal of Judaism has not really evolved from the oppositional portrayal of Judaism in the presentation of cherished Christian values. Rather than caricaturing Jews and Judaism as arrogant, in the sense of seeking to win God's favor by works instead of faith, the caricature of the *New Perspective* advocates tends to move what is "wrong" with Judaism to ethnocentric exclusivism, to an ungracious attitude toward non-Jews, or an unwillingness to share with them their good things from God." Nanos believes that "the promise of a '*new perspective for Christian/ Jewish relations*' has not yet been realized because it has not yet made sense of Paul's turn to faith in Jesus Christ in Jewish instead of *not-Jewish* terms."¹⁴⁷

He notes that the New Perspective construction of Paul still depends on the understanding that "there must have been something wrong with Judaism," and that Paul came to Jesus as the Christ primarily because of a flawed, problematic Judaism. The New Perspective view does not contemplate Paul's "calling" coming about as a result of what was right about Judaism, with the understanding of what this event could mean for both Israel and the world. This understanding of Paul still reflects Stendahl's belief in the persistence of a "*more powerful form of the anti-Jewish element in Christian theology*"¹⁴⁸ and will continue to be a barrier to Jewish-Christian dialogue unless it is addressed. Nanos goes on to argue that even though the traditional scholarly

¹⁴⁵ Mark D. Nanos, "A Torah-Observant Paul? What Difference Could it Make for Christian/Jewish Relations Today?" *Christian Scholars Group for Christian/Jewish Relations* Boston (2005), 11. Boston-Torah-Obs-Nanos-5-9-05.pdf (marknanos.com), [emphasis added].

¹⁴⁶ Nanos, "Torah-Observant Paul," 11.

¹⁴⁷ Nanos, "Torah-Observant Paul," 12.

¹⁴⁸ Stendahl, "Judaism and Christianity," 450, [emphasis added].

perception of Judaism has changed dramatically with the advent of the New Perspective on Paul, “not much has changed in the interpretation of Paul.”¹⁴⁹

Nanos interprets Paul’s relationship to Torah as a Jew (that he claims to be), (Phil. 3:5–6; 2 Cor. 11:22) to be one who can represent the ideals and promises of Torah when seeking to convince both his fellow Jews and Gentiles to turn to Jesus.¹⁵⁰ Paul’s declaration “as to the law, a Pharisee” confirms to the readers of this letter that he was far more expert in the law than his opponents.¹⁵¹ Paul adds that prior to his calling, he was “as to zeal, a persecutor of the church,” and that he is “as to righteousness under the law, blameless.” Fredriksen interprets Paul’s reference to his “zeal” as meaning that he emphasizes his own zeal for ancestral practices to claim the high ground against his opponents. “They think that *they* are zealous for Jewish traditions? Their zeal is nothing compared to Paul’s! The ‘zeal’ Paul trumpets here, in other words, does not speak primarily to his past motivations for ‘persecuting.’ It speaks, rather, to the current challenge of his ‘zealous’ competitors.”¹⁵² The Jewish Annotated New Testament commentary explains “blameless” as Paul’s way of “upstaging his opponents who champion the law instead of faith”—meaning that “the reason Paul is a follower of Jesus cannot be due to any incapacity on his part to fulfill Torah.” In addressing his letters to his Gentile audiences at what he considered to be the end times, Paul was attempting to outline his doctrine, while at the same time responding to problematic issues. Paul himself was in conflict with non-Christian Jews, Jewish-Christians and other Christian leaders regarding the role of Jewish law in God’s plan for the Gentiles in the final days. Although Paul described himself as a “Hebrew born of Hebrews,

¹⁴⁹ Nanos, “Torah-Observant Paul,” 12.

¹⁵⁰ Mark D. Nanos, *Reading Corinthians and Philipppians within Judaism: Collected Essays of Mark D. Nanos*, Vol. 4 (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2017), 53.

¹⁵¹ Michael Cook, “Philippians: Introduction and Annotations,” in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 358.

¹⁵² Fredriksen, *Paul*, 82.

as to the law, a Pharisee,” (Philippians 3:5), he was also a Roman citizen, a Hellenized Jew with a worldly view encompassing Greek philosophy and culture.

Nanos asks that, as much as we are aware of the traditional scholarly construction of Paul, we should also take note of Paul’s positive declarations about Judaism. The traditional understanding of Paul is that as a result of his vision, he left behind his earlier life as a Pharisaic Jew during which time he participated in the persecution of members of early followers of Jesus Christ, and became an ardent follower himself, given over to the mission of Jesus Christ. Nanos argues that Paul leaving behind his life as a Pharisaic Jew should be understood in the context of his beliefs, and especially his declarations: “Torah is ‘spiritual’ (Rom. 7:14), that as a gift of God to Israel, the Mosaic covenant is ‘irrevocable’ (Rom. 11:29), that Christ-believing Jews are to remain ‘in that state,’ i.e., remain Jews and thus Torah-observant (1 Cor. 7:17–24), and that it is ‘keeping the commandments of God’ that matters in the end of the day (1 Cor. 7:19).”¹⁵³

Referring to Galatians 1:13–16, the text wherein Paul references his “earlier life” in Judaism, Nanos notes that this text has been traditionally interpreted as meaning that Paul “formerly lived in Judaism, but that he no longer is identified with Judaism, and does not practice it. He is instead identified with something else and practises it, namely, Christianity, even if not yet so called.” Nanos argues that the text can be translated to read “my former ‘*way of living*’ in Judaism” meaning that in this interpretation, there is no implied change of religion from Judaism to something else, but only a “relative change of some aspect of lifestyle within or among Jewish religious groups, or even to a new *way of living* within a Jewish group. Paul now lives in Judaism (Jewishly) in a new way.”¹⁵⁴ Nanos notes that in this text Paul acknowledges that he *formerly lived within* a Pharisaic group that had a *particular approach* to Judaism, and

¹⁵³ Nanos, “Torah-Observant Paul,” 16.

¹⁵⁴ Nanos, “Torah-Observant Paul,” 16.

that he has now moved away from that particular approach within Judaism—not that he was moving away from Judaism. Paul states that “he no longer seeks approval from his (former) Pharisaic compatriots (the former Judean peers among whom he had sought approval previously) when he says his approval and status is established by God, not human agency or agents (Galatians 1:1, 10–16).¹⁵⁵ Nanos explains that this interpretation can be understood in the same sense as “living as a Christian in a way *different from formerly*, perhaps changing one’s affiliation from Catholic to Lutheran, or vice versa, perhaps becoming more or less observant, more or less progressive or more or less traditional, but still living *within* Christianity.¹⁵⁶ Nanos asserts that there is no unequivocally clear statement by Paul that he “*used to be*” a Jew, or that he “*left*” Judaism, and that there is no reason for interpreters not to believe, given Paul’s many positive statements about Judaism, and the traditions of “my” fathers, that those to whom he wrote knew him still to live within Judaism.¹⁵⁷

As a Hellenized Jew, Paul was familiar with the concept of a universal human essence and humanity encompassing both the body (Flesh) and the Spirit. Paul understood that a bodily concept (the law, circumcision, etc.) could also be expressed allegorically as a spiritual or universal concept. This is also critical to understanding Paul’s mission to the Gentiles as being *within* Judaism. An example of this thinking is to consider literal circumcision—for Jews alone—Israel in the Flesh, and to understand it allegorically as signifying for Gentiles a sign of baptism in the Spirit, or Israel according to the Spirit, in the world. Paul abrogates *the letter of the law* in his message to the Gentiles, while fulfilling *the spirit of the law*. With this dualized concept of the Flesh and the Spirit, Paul can set aside the *letter of the law* (circumcision as a

¹⁵⁵ Nanos, “Torah-Observant Paul,” 17.

¹⁵⁶ Nanos, “Torah-Observant Paul,” 17.

¹⁵⁷ Nanos, “Torah-Observant Paul,” 18.

marker of the covenant, dietary laws, the Sabbath, etc.) as an entrance requirement or a conduit through which to have access to the God of Israel. Though setting aside the letter of the law as a means to establish a right relationship with God, Paul reminds his readers that God's law is a divine instrument and has a value and a purpose, in that it awakens within us that which is acceptable and not acceptable to God. Paul states in his message to the Gentiles that abandoning idolatry and the lesser gods and accepting Jesus Christ is accepting God's grace and righteousness, now made manifest outside of the covenant between God and Israel. The faithfulness of Jesus Christ (and obedience) replicates the faithfulness of Abraham in God and allows all Gentiles to be made righteous by God's grace, through Jesus Christ, in the end times.

Nanos argues that Paul believed that "the time has now begun for reaching the nations with the message of the arrival of the age to come,"¹⁵⁸ and in this regard he champions the teaching of non-Jews that in the end times that they can become full members of Abraham's family apart from proselyte conversion. It is Paul's revelation of Christ that leads him to his change in lifestyle—specifically his vocational call to proclaim Jesus Christ "among the nations," not a call to leave Judaism, or to leave behind the observance of Jewish *halacha*. "It is instead to bring the light to the nations, a fully Jewish aspiration based on the ideals of Torah and in keeping with the prophetic ideology that Israel's special role was to bring the knowledge of her God to all of the nations in the end of days."¹⁵⁹ In the story of Abraham, Paul finds proof that God's terms for renewal are not be obtained by merit. We do not have to prove our worth, as we are already worthy as far as God is concerned. The faithfulness of Abraham in God defined a relationship for the nations of the world, which was based on divine benevolence and mercy, not on keeping the letter of the law. Paul also uses Abraham to bolster his argument of the equality

¹⁵⁸ Nanos, "Torah-Observant Paul," 19.

¹⁵⁹ Nanos, "Torah-Observant Paul," 20.

of Jew and Gentile, in that Abraham was reckoned righteous before God before he was circumcised. Paul concludes that Abraham, through his faithfulness in God becomes the father of all who believe without being circumcised, *as well as* the father of the circumcised: “What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness” (Romans 4:1–3).

Even though significant progress has been made recently by New Testament scholars in understanding Paul as the Jewish apostle to the Gentiles, the traditionally negative depiction of Judaism still informs prominent interpretations of Paul. If recent scholarly interpretations of Paul are to form a meaningful part of advancing Jewish-Christian dialogue, I maintain that this can only happen if Paul is understood, as Jesus has come to be understood, as a Jew living within Judaism. In addition, in terms of advancing Jewish-Christian dialogue, Judaism can no longer be regarded as a negative Christian paradigm. Judaism must be understood and accepted on its own terms. Recent scholarly interpretations that locate Paul within Judaism and not outside of Judaism or against Judaism are critical to the future of Jewish-Christian dialogue.

The parting of the ways between Judaism and Christianity that developed over many centuries led most Christian scholarly interpreters to misjudge and misrepresent Judaism by contrasting it with Christianity, and in the process separated Paul from his Jewish background. Although great strides have been made in moving beyond the traditional Christian scholarly understanding of Paul, and even though the New Perspective on Paul is not as overtly critical of Judaism as the traditional understanding of Paul, the prevailing scholarly interpretations still reflect a lack of understanding of Paul’s Judaism and still exhibit the anti-Jewish element present

in Christian theology. The New Perspective on Paul continues to represent an anti-Jewish element, and as such, cannot provide a persuasive basis for advancing Jewish-Christian dialogue.

Notwithstanding the current focus on exonerating Jews of today in the crucifixion, it is my view that this new approach should be considered as an important element of advancing Jewish-Christian dialogue. This new element would begin to address Stendahl's more subtle concern—that of the “*more powerful form of the anti-Jewish element in Christian theology.*”¹⁶⁰ As a starting point, the most recent post-New Perspective on Paul scholarly interpretations of Paul, led by Fredriksen and Nanos, among others, can become an important element of ongoing Jewish-Christian dialogue. Jewish-Christian dialogue could benefit by beginning to read Paul not as a Christian who is depicted against Judaism or outside of Judaism, but as a Torah-observant Jew of his time, located *within* Judaism, not proclaiming allegiance to a new religion, but preaching “the restoration of Israel and the inclusion of the nations at the end of the ages, in expression of a Jewish hope that was a central tenet of Judaism—and one that still is.”¹⁶¹ I submit that a new *revised* understanding of Paul is required in accordance with this scholarship.

¹⁶⁰ Stendahl, “Judaism and Christianity,” 450 [emphasis added].

¹⁶¹ Nanos, “Torah-Observant Paul,” 14.

CHAPTER FOUR: JEWISH SELF-UNDERSTANDING AND JEWISH-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

Martin Buber famously stated that “early, original Christianity could with greater justification be called original Judaism—for it is much more closely related to Judaism than to what is today called Christianity.” He noted that, “whatever was creative in the beginnings of Christianity, was nothing but Judaism: this revolution of ideas had burst into flames in a Jewish land; it had first stirred in the womb of ancient Jewish communal societies; it had been spread by Jewish men; the people they addressed were the Jewish people, and no other; and what they proclaimed was nothing else than the renewal in Judaism of the religiosity of the deed.”¹⁶² This chapter attempts to provide a Jewish perspective on the nature of several Jewish themes and misconceptions about Judaism as a basis for advancing Jewish-Christian dialogue. While a return to Pauline sources is helpful, it should always be a living conversation, not only with the past, but also with contemporary sources which help to elucidate the themes that have been stumbling blocks to Christian understanding of Judaism.

Torah and Nomos

Abraham Joshua Heschel, in his book *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism* wrote that “the translators of the Septuagint committed a fatal and momentous error when, for lack of a Greek equivalent, they rendered Torah with *nomos*, which means *law*, giving rise to a huge and chronic misconception of Judaism and supplying an effective weapon to those who sought to attack the teachings of Judaism.”¹⁶³ Importantly, Heschel notes that the evidence that the Jews considered Torah as teaching is apparent by the Aramaic translation of Torah, *oraita*, “which can

¹⁶² Martin Buber, *On Judaism* (New York: Schocken, 1967), 45–46.

¹⁶³ Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, 325.

only mean teaching, never law.”¹⁶⁴ Heschel asserts that the mistranslation of Torah and the singular association of Judaism with *law* contributed to the theological understanding that the only authentic expression of Judaism was that of a religion of law and obedience. Heschel writes that “theology, it is claimed, is alien to Judaism; the law, ‘An ox who gores a cow,’ is Jewish theology, for Judaism is law and nothing else.”¹⁶⁵ Those theologians who attacked Judaism claimed that “in Judaism, religious living consists of complying with a law rather than of striving to attain a goal which is the purpose of the law. It is a view that exalts the Torah only because it discloses the law, not because it discloses a way of finding God in life. It claims that obedience is the substance rather than the form of religious existence; that the law is an end, not a way.”¹⁶⁶

Heschel counters the attitude that “Judaism is another word for legalism” with “the Torah contains both law and love.” He asserts that “the rules of observance are law in form and love in substance. Law is what holds the world together; love is what brings the world forward. The law is the means, not the end; the way, not the goal. One of the goals is, ‘Ye shall be holy.’ The Torah is guidance to an end through a law. It is both a vision and a law.”¹⁶⁷ Heschel notes that the system of laws (*halacha*) in the Torah does not form an all-embracing term for Jewish learning and living. “Man is created in the likeness of God and is called upon to re-create the world in the likeness of the vision of God. The Torah is more than a system of laws; only a portion of the Pentateuch deals with law, and only a small part of the bible deals with the law. The prophets, the Psalms, and the midrashim are not part of *halacha* (law). The narrative of the Bible is as holy as its legal portions.”¹⁶⁸ Heschel explains that in Judaism, *halacha* is understood

¹⁶⁴ Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, 325.

¹⁶⁵ Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, 323.

¹⁶⁶ Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, 323.

¹⁶⁷ Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, 323.

¹⁶⁸ Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, 324.

to be observed not for its own sake, but for the sake of God. “The law must not be idolized. It is a part, not all, of the Torah. We live and die for the sake of God rather than for the sake of the law.”¹⁶⁹ Heschel argued that equating Torah with *nomos* served to validate the idea that *halacha* was the only authentic source of Jewish thinking and living.

Through the study of Torah, through prayer, and through the fulfillment of the commandments, a union and awareness of God can be achieved, a mystic union of heaven (the upper world) and earth, (the lower world). For Heschel, Israel’s love and thirst for God, and the union of Heaven with earth is not a reflection of one’s own bliss. “It is subordinated to the redemption of all.” Heschel describes the mystic understanding of Torah as:

A living source of inspiration, as a voice that “calls aloud to men,” and reveals her secrets to those who love her, awakening fresh love in them. The Torah is both literal and symbolic and is the source from which man can draw wisdom and the power of insight into the essence of life. Torah reveals that which is hidden and unknown, and “contains all the deepest and most recondite mysteries; all sublime doctrines both disclosed and undisclosed; all essences both of the higher and the lower grades, of this world and of the world to come are to be found there.”¹⁷⁰

For Heschel, the study of Torah is much more than *law*. It is to know the ways of the Holy One, blessed be he.

Contemporary Jewish biblical scholar Daniel Boyarin agrees with Heschel, and goes even further. In his 2019 book *Judaism: The Genealogy of a Modern Notion*, Boyarin references Martin Buber’s argument that the translators of the Septuagint “invented” Christianity by mistranslating Torah as *nomos*. It was this Greek translation that narrowed the concept of Torah into *law*. Boyarin expands this argument by proposing that it was the mistranslation of Torah in the Septuagint that created and made possible the conditions for the Apostle Paul to be understood as having diametrically opposed and irreconcilable concepts of *law* and *faith*. He

¹⁶⁹ Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, 326.

¹⁷⁰ Jacob Neusner, *Understanding Rabbinic Judaism* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1974), 290–292.

recalls Buber's argument that "without the change of meaning in the Greek, objective sense, the Pauline dualism of law and faith, life from works and life from grace, would miss its most important conceptual presupposition."¹⁷¹ Boyarin posits that, in his own understanding of the issue (as compared with Buber), and regardless of Paul's own understanding, he exonerates the translators of the Septuagint. Boyarin suggests that rather than perpetuating a "Greek narrowing" of Torah, the translators broadened the concept of *nomos* into Torah, which would be understood by its Jewish readers. For Boyarin, the translators (for their Jewish audience) were translating Greek into Hebrew, not Hebrew into Greek.¹⁷²

Boyarin continues his argument of the Jewish utilization of the Greek word *nomos*, using the Jewish historian Josephus as an example. He references an observation of Josephus, who wrote: "though we be deprived of our wealth, of our cities, or of the other advantages we have, our law continues immortal." Boyarin believes that the word that Josephus actually meant to use in this context was not law, but Torah. Josephus used the word law because there was no corresponding Hebrew word for Torah in Greek. Boyarin supports his contention by offering an account of what *nomos/Torah* meant for Josephus. In response to what Josephus considered false accusations against Moses and the laws [*nomos*] he wrote, "For I think it will become clear that we possess laws that are extremely well designed with a view to piety, fellowship with one another, and universal benevolence, as well as justice, endurance in labors and contempt for death." Boyarin believes that the whole description and totality of *nomos* that Josephus provides in his defence of Moses and the laws could not be communicated without the Jewish understanding of the word, and that Josephus is expressing a mode of life that includes God's

¹⁷¹ Daniel Boyarin, *Judaism: The Genealogy of a Modern Notion* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2019), 53.

¹⁷² Boyarin, *Judaism*, 53.

immanence in daily life through both the study of Torah and the practice of its commandments.

To confirm his point, Boyarin provides Josephus's own summary:

Concerning the laws, there was no need for further comment. For they themselves have been seen through their own content, teaching not impiety but the truest piety, exhorting not to misanthropy but to the sharing of possessions, opposing injustice, attending to justice, banishing laziness and extravagance, teaching people to be self-sufficient and hard-working, deterring from wars of self-aggrandizement, but equipping them to be courageous on their behalf, inexorable in punishment, unsophisticated in verbal tricks, but confirmed always by action; for this we offer [as evidence] clearer than documents.¹⁷³

Boyarin concludes his argument that contrary to what biblical scholars believe about Greek Jewish writers reducing the Torah to "law," clearly at least Jewish historian Josephus understood *nomos* to mean something far more all-embracing than previously believed.

Clearly, it is evident that the primary meaning of the root word *yarah* is "teach." The question then becomes, how was the root meaning lost when the derivative noun *Torah* (derived from the three-letter root *yarah*, meaning "teach") was translated into the Greek word *nomos* in the Septuagint? How did *Torah* come to be defined as law, and not teaching?

An example of the Jewish understanding of Torah as teaching is found in the introduction to the recent publication of the *Jewish Study Bible*, which utilizes the Jewish Publication Society's (JPS) TANAKH translation. Psalms 119:97 is singled out as an example of the Jewish love of Torah (teaching), and the dedication of Jews to its study. The verse is translated as follows: "O how I love your teaching. It is my study all day long." The reference to the Hebrew word Torah as *teaching*, and its translation as such are at the core of Jewish understanding of the meaning of Torah. The commentary notes that "the love of Torah is the impetus for the study; the study of Torah is the expression of the love."¹⁷⁴ Another example that expresses the Jewish

¹⁷³ Boyarin, *Judaism*, 57–58.

¹⁷⁴ Berlin and Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Study Bible*, ix.

love of Torah as teaching can be seen in Psalms 1:2, in which the Hebrew word for Torah is translated twice as teaching in the same verse as follows: “Happy is the man who has not followed the counsel of the wicked, or taken the path of sinners, or joined the company of the insolent; rather, the teaching of the Lord is his delight, and he studies that teaching day and night.” The JPS commentary notes that,

Psalm 1:2 features “torah” translated as “teaching” but perhaps understood as Torah (“Teaching”), the five books of Moses, as the guide and nourishment of the righteous man. By placing a reference to Torah at the beginning of the Psalter, the centrality of the Torah, presumably already considered authoritative by the time the Psalter was compiled, is reinforced. The mention of Torah here may also be connected to the fact that the Psalter is divided into five books, and the intent may have been to advocate the study of the Psalter by analogy with the study of the Torah.¹⁷⁵

The commentary on this opening verse goes on to describe reciting “Torah” day and night as a description of the ideal righteous person, first through what he does not do (in verse 1) and then what he does (in verse 2). The reference to studying Torah “day and night” is interpreted as figurative for “always.”¹⁷⁶ Interestingly, the JPS commentary further describes this Psalm as “unusual in its stress on Torah study rather than on observance based on Torah study; it thus approaches the rabbinic ideal of *torah lishmah*, Torah study for its own sake, as an end in itself, though the psalm strongly suggests that Torah study keeps people away from the wicked and the sinners.”¹⁷⁷

Psalms 119:18 is highlighted in the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur High Holidays prayer book Torah Service under the heading *Meditation on the Meaning of Torah*: “Open My Eyes, That I may Perceive the Wonders of Your Teaching.” The Jewish Study Bible comments:

Many earlier critical scholars considered Psalm 119, the longest psalm, to be monotonous and devalued its emphasis on “law.” More recently, the skill of the

¹⁷⁵ JSB, 1269.

¹⁷⁶ JSB, 1269.

¹⁷⁷ JSB, 1269.

poet in composing this tour de force has been appreciated. The psalmist's depiction of "torah" is unique and verges on the mystical. What is most remarkable is that a close relationship to Torah replaces a close relationship with God.¹⁷⁸

The JPS commentary describes Psalm 119 as depicting the *Torah* rather than God as the source of life. *Torah* is viewed as a "lamp to my feet and a light for my path." The Psalm expresses the notion of God as distant, but manifest to Jews through His *Torah*. This view is one which the commentary notes informed later Judaism. Joy rather than fear typifies *Torah* observance.¹⁷⁹ In Psalm 119, the JPS translates *hukim* as laws (Ps 119:30), *mishpateha* as rules (Ps. 119:39) and *mitzvotaha* as commandments (Ps 119:48). *Toratekha* (torah) is translated in Ps. 119:18 as "your teaching"; in Ps. 119:53: "I am seized with rage because of the wicked who forsake your teaching"; and once again in Ps. 119:97: "O how I love your teaching! It is my study all day long." The Jewish Study Bible offers the following additional insight into the use of the word *Torah* in Ps. 119:136: "my eyes shed streams of water because men do not obey Your teaching": "The same image is used about the destruction in 586 BCE (Lamentations 3.48): "My eyes shed streams of water / Over the ruin of my poor people." *Torah* is thus equated with Temple, monarchy, and the land of Israel, all of which were lost in 586."¹⁸⁰ The love of *Torah* is reiterated once again in Ps 118:163: "I hate and abhor falsehood; I love your teaching." The *Jewish Study Bible* commentary notes: "As in verse 118:97, and elsewhere in this Psalm, love of *Torah* replaces love of God.

At the end of the Torah Service in the synagogue, when the Torah scroll is returned to the ark, the congregation sings Proverbs 3:18: "She [the Torah] is a tree of life to those who grasp her, and whoever holds on to her is happy." The *Jewish Study Bible* commentary notes that

¹⁷⁸ JSB, 1402.

¹⁷⁹ JSB, 1403.

¹⁸⁰ JSB, 1409.

The subject of this verse is wisdom, which is understood to be precious beyond price, and is consistently understood in Jewish interpretation to designate Torah. The *tree of life* was a widespread ancient Near Eastern mythological symbol that represented a divine source of well-being. It is seen as a metaphor for a source of life and health, and the Rabbis identified *the tree of life* in this context with Torah.

The contrast and understanding of the meaning of the Hebrew word *Torah* is apparent in comparing the JPS translation of the word *Torah* with The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) translation. The NRSV of the Hebrew Bible translates Ps. 119:18 as follows: “Open my eyes, so that I may behold wonderful things out of your law.” Ps. 119:97 is translated in the NRSV as follows: “Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all day long.” Ps. 119:163 is translated as follows: “I hate and abhor falsehood, but I love your law.” An interesting anomaly in the NRSV translation of *Torah* is revealing, and worthy of comment. As noted earlier, In Proverbs 6:23, the word *Torah* is compared to light, and the Jewish Study Bible, using the JPS translation, typically renders the meaning of *Torah* as teaching, as follows: “For the commandment is a lamp, the teaching (*torah*) is a light, and the way to life is the rebuke that disciplines.” In an unusual departure, even the NRSV which typically translates *Torah* as law, recognizes it as *teaching* when the Hebrew *Torah* is compared to light. The NRSV verse reads as follows: For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching (*torah*) a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life.” The Jewish Study Bible, in its commentary on verse 23 reinforces the comparison: “In the traditional Jewish reading, they are God’s commandments (*mitzvah*), and his teaching (*torah*).”¹⁸¹

In Judaism, the law represents the will of God, and as such, commandments that govern relations between persons, and commandments that set forth obligations to God are equally sacred. Ben Zion Bergman, in an essay on biblical law notes that “biblical law rarely delineates

¹⁸¹ *JSB*, 1449.

rights; rather it encodes obligations. Jewish law in general is primarily duty oriented rather than rights oriented.” He notes that “the law is unified by the authority of the divine lawgiver, and is thus given a religious underpinning—and it is in the nature of religion to impose duties, not to confer rights.”¹⁸² Typical examples from the Decalogue are: You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, and you shall not bear false witness against your neighbour. The law also represented the establishment of God’s will on earth, which meant the establishment of a just society. As a result, many laws mandated by God deal with the poor, the fatherless, the widow, the stranger, and other disadvantaged members of society.¹⁸³ Bergman notes biblical laws also reflect a society that was engaged mainly in agriculture, and that “farmers were forbidden to glean their field but were to leave the gleanings for the poor and the stranger. Farmers also had to leave a corner of each field unharvested, relinquishing its produce to the disadvantaged. A sheaf left by chance in the field as well as olives and grapes ungleaned were also to be left for the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. The sale of land was also regulated because of its importance as a food source for the community as a whole. Bergman notes: “In the sabbatical year, debts were cancelled, and in the jubilee year, agricultural property that had been sold reverted to the seller or his or her heirs. These practices were designed to prevent the accumulation of the source of wealth in the hands of the few to the detriment of the many. Biblical law should not be seen as embodied in a uniform code, as ‘it is neither systematic or monolithic’ and one can find change and development within the Torah itself.”¹⁸⁴ Bergman notes that one should “not make the mistake of equating the biblical codes with the totality of

¹⁸² Ben Zion Bergman, “Civil and Criminal Law,” *Etz Hayim: Torah and Commentary* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 2001), 1423.

¹⁸³ Bergman, “Civil and Criminal Law,” 1423.

¹⁸⁴ Bergman, “Civil and Criminal Law,” 1426.

Jewish law,”¹⁸⁵ as generations of Talmudic scholars, commentators and codifiers have interpreted and illuminated God’s law to bear on all aspects of contemporary life.

Grace and Covenant

Abraham Joshua Heschel describes Judaism as a religion that first and foremost embodies a response to God’s divine command to “acknowledge me, to know me, to love me.” Judaism is a response to the Torah as God delivered it to Israel, and most importantly is “an answer to Him who is asking us to live in a certain way.” The Torah as given to Israel consists of a divine command. Israel’s response is, in its very origin, a consciousness of duty consisting of practicing God’s teaching and laws in response to God’s message. God’s presence at Sinai is a question about behaviour, and the covenant is an answer. In addition to faith and belief, Judaism begins with “a consciousness that something is asked of us.” It embodies the notion of action or conduct that provides the answer to a divine question. “God’s plea is not to obey what he wills but to do what He is.”¹⁸⁶ While Heschel acknowledges that lawgiving is essential to a Jewish concept of revelation, and that this is an important aspect of Judaism’s commitment to God, he flatly rejects and condemns the reduction of Judaism to legalism. Heschel differentiates between the practice of Judaism as characterized by the observance and obedience to commandments or mitzvot, and the divine command to acknowledge God’s will and God’s way. He asserts that:

Jewish piety is an answer to God, expressed in the language of mitzvot (meaning charitable acts), rather than in the language of ceremonies. The Mitzvah rather than the ceremony is our fundamental category. Ceremonies are required by custom and convention; mitzvot are required by Torah. Ceremonies are folkways; mitzvot are ways of God. Ceremonies are expressions of the human mind.

¹⁸⁵ Bergman, “Civil and Criminal Law,” 1427.

¹⁸⁶ Benjamin Sommer, *Revelation & Authority: Sinai in Jewish Scripture and Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 128.

Mitzvot, on the other hand, are expressions or interpretations of the will of God.¹⁸⁷

Heschel regards consistent commitment to the covenant with God as indispensable to authentic Jewish life, but he regards the law as a means rather than an end.

In Jewish tradition the covenant with God and, the receiving of the commandments by Israel at Sinai is seen as faith taking precedence over knowledge, in that the people acknowledged the promise to keep the commandments before hearing them. Exodus 24:7 reads: “Then he took the record of the covenant and read it aloud to the people. And they said, “All that the Lord has spoken “we will faithfully do!” The literal translation of this verse is “all that the Lord has spoken, we shall do and we shall hear.” By this, (instead of saying we shall hear and then we shall do) we infer that Israel trusted God to such an extent that they committed themselves to obeying His commandments even before hearing them. Heschel states that unless we first know how to love, we will never learn how to understand God’s words. Our complete acquiescence to God’s will enables us to discern God’s presence in our deeds. Carrying out the word of the Torah through sacred deeds and actions is the key to attaining faith and spiritual meaning. The way we live our lives, and the deeds we undertake must reflect our essence as being created in the likeness of God. Heschel asks: How should we conduct our lives? He believes that the heart is revealed in deeds, and the impact of our deeds on others cannot be underestimated, in that even a single deed can generate an endless series of consequences. He asks: What is doing? What does it mean to do? What is the relation between the doer and the deed? Heschel responds with “It is in deeds that one becomes aware of what his life really is, of our power to harm and to hurt, to wreck and to ruin; of our ability to derive joy and to bestow it

¹⁸⁷ Sommer, *Revelation and Authority*, 119.

upon others; to relieve and to increase our own and other people's tensions."¹⁸⁸ God asks that we be concerned not only with our own particular deeds, but with all deeds. We live in a world that we did not create. What right do we have to destroy, to exploit and to consume the fruits of the earth? God answers that the earth is the Lord's, and God is in search of humanity. Humanity is responsible for God's deeds, in that God and humanity have a common task and a mutual responsibility. Humanity is not alone. Through the Torah and the commandments, God becomes a partner to our deeds. A sacred deed is an act that both God and humanity have in common. Heschel states that justice and the rights of humanity are the sacred interests of God.¹⁸⁹

The concept of the divine ways of God can be found in Genesis 18:19: "For I have singled him out, that he may instruct his children and his posterity to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is just and right, in order that the Lord may bring about for Abraham what He has promised him." All acts establish the connection and relationship between God and humanity, and sacred acts embody the divine. Humanity, created in the likeness of God, can also act in the likeness of God by "walking in His ways" (Deut. 8:6). The answer to "What is doing?" is not to obey what God wills, but to do what He is. To do what He is, means to represent God by doing his commandments. We do this by imitating His ways of mercy through deeds of loving kindness—to love thy neighbour as thyself. Heschel writes that the commandments are not ideals suspended in eternity. They address every one of us. They are the ways in which God confronts us in particular moments. They are tasks for us to accomplish, here and now. Justice is something that ought to be done and justice is in need of humanity.¹⁹⁰ Religious acts are described by Heschel as experienced as objects of commitments, as answers to the certainty that

¹⁸⁸ Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, 284–285.

¹⁸⁹ Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, 285.

¹⁹⁰ Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, 291–292.

something is asked of us and expected of us. Religious ends are in need of our deeds. Heschel believes that Judaism is concerned above all with the problem of living, and that Jewish law takes deeds very seriously, in the sense that at every moment, there is a unique task to be undertaken. All of life at all moments is the problem and the task.¹⁹¹ Can the needs of social justice be served if we believe that salvation and justification can be obtained by “faith alone without the deeds of the law”? In Judaism, our lives cannot be fulfilled with just good intentions. In Judaism there is a particular relevance to our acts, and meaningful actions must necessarily follow good intentions. Heschel writes that in Judaism “the inner sphere is never isolated from outward activities. Deed and thought are bound into one. All a person thinks and feels enters everything he does, and all he does is involved in everything he thinks and feels.”¹⁹² Religious expression in Judaism is more than an inward, spiritual state of being. It is a response to the covenant with God who has asked that we live our lives with a dedicated commitment to a specific purpose.

In Judaism there is an emphasis on turning abstract ideas and insights into acts, as meaning in life and good deeds are bound together. Through selfless holy acts we become aware of our closeness to God, and his presence in our lives. Heschel states that “the problem of the soul is how to live nobly in an animal environment.”¹⁹³ What is relevant to God is what humanity does. Heschel believes that we cannot rely solely on our reason and our conscience (our inner voice) to guide our behaviour. Our insight will only take us so far, as it is not a guide to the problems of living. He asks that our response should emanate from our traditions (the commandments) which will then become relevant in our lives, to be applied and interpreted.

¹⁹¹ Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, 291–292.

¹⁹² Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, 296.

¹⁹³ Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, 296.

Over and above believing in God, Judaism is about the commitment to do the will of God, as expressed through the commandments. Doing the will of God is Judaism's approach to the covenant and the response to problems one encounters in life.

Heschel references the Spanish rabbi and philosopher Bahya Ibn Paquda, who lived in the first half of the eleventh century and was the author, in Arabic, of what is considered to be the first book of Jewish ethics, *The Guide to the Duties of the Heart*. Bahya was concerned that the Jews of his day were too focused on outward observance of the laws, at the expense of inner moral concepts and ideas. He wanted to bring the ethical teachings of Judaism into a coherent system. Heschel quotes Bahya as observing that good deeds and acts of loving kindness are binding upon us "at all seasons, in all places, every hour, every moment, under all circumstances, as long as we have life and reason."¹⁹⁴ God's covenant with the Jewish people asks not just for the heart, but also for insight and understanding. Deeds and impersonal obedience to the commandments are in and of themselves not enough. In Proverbs 3:18 we read: "She is a tree of life to those who grasp her, and whoever holds on to her is happy." The *Jewish Study Bible* identifies the 'tree of life' in this verse with Torah.¹⁹⁵ Heschel believes that an act of loving kindness is one that affects both the doer and the deed. In Judaism, the act or moral deed can transform the soul, in that the doer assimilates within themselves the holiness of the deeds. Judaism teaches that we are sanctified through sacred deeds and that we become closer to God. In Judaism, social justice is the ultimate expression of the immanence of God. Through active involvement in social justice, a human created in God's image, becomes a partner of God. In carrying out the commandments, we can participate in sacred deeds every moment of every day.

¹⁹⁴ Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, 308.

¹⁹⁵ Michael V. Fox, "Proverbs: Introduction and Annotations," in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 361.

Judaism asks of us not only to help our neighbour, but to love our neighbor, and by actively doing God's will through social justice, we can preserve and sanctify life, and bring the world forward. Judaism's fundamental universalistic teaching is that every human being in the world, both Jew and Gentile, is created in God's image. This is at the very heart of why social justice has been and will continue to be an enduring concern in the lives of Jews.

Universalism and Particularism

In addressing the issue of scholarly interpretations of Paul's letters, Jewish-Christian dialogue needs to come to terms with Christianity's longstanding understanding of Judaism as a tribal or particularistic religion. Terence Donaldson has noted that Christian scholarship has unfairly characterized Judaism as ethnic and particularistic in the most negative sense in contrast to the universalistic and inclusive virtues of Christianity. He challenges this depiction of Judaism and notes that Judaism in the Second Temple period was "in its own ways just as "universalistic" as was Christianity—indeed, in some ways even more so."¹⁹⁶ In terms of understanding Paul's Judaism, Donaldson notes that "within Judaism of this period there certainly was a widespread expectation that Gentiles would turn to God in the end times and thus share in the blessings of the coming age." As such, the inclusion of the Gentiles in Jewish apocalyptic traditions was an "essential part of Israel's expectations and self-understanding."¹⁹⁷ Donaldson affirms that Israel's universal self-understanding required that in the end times the nations would be included in the final establishment of God's Glory.

¹⁹⁶ Terence L. Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE)* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007), 1.

¹⁹⁷ Donaldson, *Judaism and the Gentiles*, 505.

Jewish scholars have noticed another ‘turning’ as well in Genesis 12:3, wherein God blesses “all the clans of the earth” through Abraham. The Jewish Study Bible notes that “what the Lord promises Abram (his name is changed to Abraham only in Genesis 17)—land, numerous offspring, and blessing—constitutes to a large extent a reversal of some of the curses on Adam and Eve. The twin themes of land and progeny inform the rest of the Torah.”¹⁹⁸ Robert Alter observes that “Israeli biblical scholar Moshe Weinfield has noted that after the string of curses that begins with Adam and Eve, human history reaches a turning point with Abraham, as blessings instead of curses are emphatically promised.”¹⁹⁹ Biblical scholar David M. Carr has noted that Genesis 12:3, “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed,” has been “a particularly important passage in Christian tradition.” Paul interpreted this as a blessing of the Gentiles through Abraham (Gal. 3:8). Carr suggests that “the closest analogies to this promise suggest that the alternate translation ‘by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves,’ i.e., they will say ‘May we be like Abraham,’ is probably closer to the meaning of the Hebrew. Like Genesis 48:20, it envisions other nations of the world looking to Abraham’s great blessing and wishing a similar one on themselves.” He also notes that later in the narrative “we see this kind of recognition of Abraham and his heirs special blessing by foreigners like Abimelech, Laban, Potiphar, Joseph’s jailer, Pharaoh and Jethro.”²⁰⁰ Fredriksen notes that Paul’s insistence on “no to native gods,” was not an ethical demand so much as a ritual demand, and that to renounce public sacrifice to idols was specifically a *Judaizing* demand. She affirms that the

¹⁹⁸ *JSB*, 27–29.

¹⁹⁹ Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 50.

²⁰⁰ Michael Coogan, ed., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Fourth Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 28.

defining, uniquely Jewish idea that no god other than the god of Israel could be worshiped came from the first table of the Law.²⁰¹

Rashi (1040–1105), the great medieval biblical commentator on the Tanakh and the Talmud, in his commentary on Leviticus 19:18,²⁰² quotes Rabbi Akiva’s (40–137) famous dictum that “Love your fellow as yourself” is a fundamental principle of the Torah. One wonders why Rashi chose to quote Rabbi Akiva’s dictum and not that of Hillel (110 BCE–10 CE) who famously taught that the entire Torah can be summed up by the statement: “What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor: that is the whole Torah while the rest is commentary; go and learn it.”²⁰³ If Hillel, who lived many years before Rabbi Akiva had already stated that the entire Torah can be summed up by “What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor,” what could Rabbi Akiva possibly be adding with the statement that, “Love your fellow as yourself is a fundamental principle of Torah”? One explanation is that Rabbi Akiva was referring to those mitzvot in the Torah that fall within the realm of ethical responsibilities regarding social relationships. “Love your fellow as yourself” is perhaps the most famous commandment in the Torah. Jewish tradition views this universalistic teaching as the foremost ethical commandment in the Bible relating to all humanity. In the translation of the *Sefer Ha-Mitzvot of Maimonides*, Rabbi Charles Chavel reiterates Rabbi Akiva’s words, adding that, “The rationale of this teaching is variously indicated by the Sages and commentators. All men being created in the image of God, it is incumbent upon us to show the utmost respect and love for one another, and it is most improper that one should humiliate or slight his neighbor.”²⁰⁴ Rabbi Joseph Telushkin,

²⁰¹ Fredriksen, “Judaizing,” 252.

²⁰² *Jerusalem Talmud*, Nedarim 9:4.

²⁰³ *Babylonian Talmud*, Shabbat 31a.

²⁰⁴ Charles B. Chavel, ed., *The Commandments: Sefer Ha-Mitzvot of Maimonides* (New York: Soncino Press, 1967), 221.

writing in his book *A Code of Jewish Ethics* notes that a number of important Rabbinic ordinances relating to our social obligations emanate from this commandment. These include deeds of loving kindness which range from visiting the sick and comforting mourners to cheering the bride and groom at weddings.²⁰⁵ Telushkin writes that,

Loving, compassionate behaviour extends to all humanity, and grows out of the biblical teaching that every human being, both Jew and Gentile, is created in God's image. Genesis 1:27 states: "And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him: male and female he created them."

Further, Telushkin states that the love for others is behind the requirement that Judaism's most basic ritual laws are to be violated when human life is at stake.²⁰⁶

The Hebrew Bible, after the initial thirty-four verses of Genesis depicting creation, significantly shifts its focus away from the natural world to the social world that man creates. Here the concept of humanity created in the image of God extends the understanding of God's free and creative will as something that is possible and even desirable for humans. The characters of the Hebrew Bible, Abraham, Sarah, Hagar Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Leah, Rachel and Moses are depicted as ordinary, concrete individuals struggling with moral issues in human situations, not as mythic gods in monumental battles. By rejecting the ancient practises of idolatry of Egypt and Mesopotamia, and embracing the concept of a loving God, Judaism becomes the first religion to replace idol worship with a new understanding of humanity's relationship with God. Humanity, created in the image of God, now assumes the responsibility for moral and ethical behaviour in social interactions with each other. All human life is now sacred and has value. For the first time, the taking of a human life is seen not only as an offence against humans. It is now viewed as a transgression against God. "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for

²⁰⁵ Joseph Telushkin, *A Code of Jewish Ethics, Volume 2: Love Your Neighbor as Yourself* (New York: Bell Tower, 2006), 1.

²⁰⁶ Telushkin, *A Code of Jewish Ethics*, 2.

in his image did God make man” (Gen. 9:6). The sanctity of human life is now inextricably linked with the creation of *all* humanity in God’s image.

Abraham Joshua Heschel, in his book *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism* describes the Bible as pointing to a way of understanding the world from the point of view of God. It teaches us that God is alive, that he is the Creator and Redeemer, Teacher and Lawgiver, and that the righteousness of God is inseparable from his being.²⁰⁷ Heschel describes the philosophy of Judaism as a philosophy of both ideas and events, with ultimate reality expressed through these ideas in the transcendent events or living acts of God. Revelation is not an act of humanity seeking God, but of God’s search for humanity. This is at the very core of Judaism. Heschel writes that the main event in Israel’s history is God’s search for humanity, not humanity’s quest for God.

This is at the core of all biblical thoughts: God is not a being detached from humanity to be sought after, but a power that seeks, pursues and calls upon humanity. The way to God is a way of God. The religion of Israel originated in the initiative of God rather than in the efforts of man. It was not an invention of man but a creation of God; not a product of civilization, but a realm of its own. Man would not have known Him if He had not approached man. God’s relation to man precedes man’s relation to him.²⁰⁸

Judaism doesn’t speak of the revelation of God, but only of the revelation of God’s way, and his teaching for humanity. In Judaism we learn not just how to sanctify life, but how to feel the need to sanctify life. The acts of humanity either reveal a thought of God or demean it. Heschel writes:

There is a task, a law, and a way: the task is redemption, the law, to do justice, to love mercy, and the way is the secret of being human and holy. Man lives by his faithfulness; his home is in time and his substance is in deeds. A standard so bold: ye shall be holy. A commandment so daring: love thy neighbour as thyself.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976), 16–17.

²⁰⁸ Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, 198.

²⁰⁹ Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, 238–239.

We learn to understand the idea of the equality of humanity, of justice and compassion through God's cry to the world and his reaching out to humanity. There can be no worshipping of God without justice to all humans. Holiness can never be realized by humanity without justice for fellow humans.

It is not enough to just fulfill the commandments. There must be a continuous striving, an ongoing effort to fully examine and understand both the written Torah and the unwritten oral teachings interpreted through the wisdom of the Rabbis. The interpretation of God's word is an undertaking that extends to every new generation, in that the source of authority is not the word, but our understanding. The word is God's word. The interpretation, understanding and reliving of the original text is humanity's responsibility. In Judaism, the Torah is more than a book, and its meaning has never been circumscribed only by books. It is a living voice within the heart, the life of a people, kept alive through constant study and practice, and transmitted from generation to generation.²¹⁰

In Isaiah 51:7–8 we read: “Listen to me, you who care for the right, O people who lay My instruction to heart! Fear not the insults of people and be not dismayed at their jeers; for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, the worm shall eat them up like wool. But my triumph shall endure forever, My salvation through all the ages.” Heschel invites us to extend our understanding of the Torah to allow us to appreciate the divine partnership with God when we deal with life's issues. He asks us to think in terms of God's holiness, justice and compassion when translating Biblical commandments into actions.

²¹⁰ Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, 240.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS: REINVENTING PAUL

Traditional Protestant Christian interpretation of Paul, following Luther, created an enduring caricature of Judaism as a “works-based” and legalistic religion, filled with empty rituals and practices. The “New Perspective” on Paul initiated by Krister Stendahl, James D.G. Dunn and E.P. Sanders afforded an important corrective measure to the way that Judaism had been depicted for centuries by Christian theologians and scholars. Sanders helped to bring to Pauline scholarship a “genuinely new insight”—that the “entire scholarly quest for Paul’s critique of Judaism was and always has been a mistake.”²¹¹ These “New Perspective” scholars came to understand that Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles, recognized that the law was not necessary or required for Gentile believers in addition to faith in Jesus Christ. To reference only a few examples from Romans Paul recognizes that “doers of the law” will be justified (Rom. 2:13), there is a value to circumcision (3:1–2), upholding the law is important (3:31), the law is holy, and the commandment is holy (7:12), to the Israelites belong the giving of the law (9:4), God has not rejected his people (11:1), all Israel will be saved (11:26), the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable (11:29).

Stendahl drew attention to Luther’s interpretation of the Pauline awareness of sin with his reference to Romans 7:19: “I do not do what I want, but the very thing I hate,” noting that ever since “the Pauline awareness of sin has been interpreted in the light of Luther’s struggle with his conscience.”²¹² However, he notes that Paul’s statements about the impossibility of fulfilling the law stand side by side with “I was blameless as to righteousness—of the law, that is” (Phil. 3:6). Stendahl points out that Paul’s references to the impossibility of fulfilling the law is “part of a

²¹¹ Novenson, *Paul, Then and Now*, 186.

²¹² Stendahl, *Paul among the Jews and Gentiles*, 78.

theological and theoretical scriptural argument about the relationship between Jews and Gentiles.”²¹³ He also notes that it is striking that “Paul never urges Jews to find in Christ the answer to the anguish of a plagued conscience.”²¹⁴

Dunn argues that in affirming justification by faith, Paul set it against justification from “works of the law,”²¹⁵ and in the process set in play Luther’s (and all subsequent Protestants’) understanding of the gospel of Christ. Dunn notes that “the negative side of this emphasis was an unfortunate strain of anti-Judaism. Paul’s teaching on justification was seen as a reaction against and in opposition to Judaism. As Luther had rejected a medieval church which offered salvation by merit and good works, the same, it was assumed, was true of Paul in relation to the Judaism of his day.”²¹⁶ Dunn maintains that “Judaism was taken to have been the antithesis to emerging Christianity: for Paul to react as he did, it must have been a degenerate religion, legalistic, making salvation dependant on human effort, and self-satisfied with the results.”²¹⁷ However, while New Perspective scholars no longer interpreted Judaism as a religion based on “works-righteousness,” they stopped short of seeing Judaism within its own right fully—as opposed to a foil for Christianity. In particular, the New Perspective tended to contrast Christian universalism with Jewish particularism.

More recent developments in scholarly interpretation show promise in advancing Jewish-Christian dialogue as they place Paul within Judaism. The “Paul within Judaism” school rejects the idea that Paul found something wrong with Judaism, It depicts him as the apostle to the Gentiles, not “against Judaism” but remaining a Torah-observant Jew “within Judaism.” The

²¹³ Stendhal, *Paul among the Jews and Gentiles*, 80–81.

²¹⁴ Stendhal, *Paul among the Jews and Gentiles*, 81.

²¹⁵ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 354.

²¹⁶ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 336–337.

²¹⁷ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 337.

significance of understanding Paul as living “within Judaism” implies that Paul found nothing wrong with his ancestral religion and that his message was directed towards Gentiles, not Jews. Paul’s understanding of Judaism should no longer be understood as a category of Christian theology. Any understanding of Second Temple Judaism should emanate first and foremost from a study of Jewish texts from that period, not to be treated as an “unknown” to be reconstructed by Pauline scholarship.²¹⁸ Judaism—both ancient and contemporary—can then begin to be acknowledged within Jewish-Christian dialogue for what it is, and on its own terms.

The implications of a new understanding of Paul *within* Judaism can, in my view, be a turning point in the ongoing project of Jewish-Christian dialogue. Scholar Mark D. Nanos suggests that by removing the traditional Christian approach of contrasting positive and spiritual “Christian faith” with the inferior and carnal “Jewish works,” we can begin to think about “faith *and* works, rather than faith *versus* works.”²¹⁹

The implications of this new perspective have opened the doors to a new understanding: Paul did not reject Judaism, nor did he reject the value and importance of the law. In their rereading and reassessment of Paul’s attitude towards the law, many “New Perspective” scholars have concluded that Paul’s criticism of the law was a reflection of his belief that salvation and redemption for Gentiles in the end times come through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul’s fundamental critique of the law for Gentiles is that following the law does not result in being found in Christ. Paula Fredriksen and Mark D. Nanos—both Jewish scholars of the New Testament—have been two key voices in this emergence of the “Paul within Judaism” approach.

Fredriksen, in her book *Paul: The Pagans’ Apostle*, asserts that Paul, in his role as the “Apostle to the Gentiles” addressed an audience that consisted primarily of Gentiles and Pagans.

²¹⁸ Boyarin, *A Radical Jew*, 47.

²¹⁹ Nanos, *Reading Paul Within Judaism*, xii.

Fredriksen notes that “Paul took the “good news” of God’s approaching Kingdom not to fellow Jews, but to a much larger population: Paul preached to Pagans.”²²⁰ He is addressing a primarily Gentile audience, and this must be kept in mind when reading Paul’s letters. In her recent essay “Who was Paul?” Fredriksen asserts that within Paul’s apocalyptic framework in his letters, all of which were directed to pagans in the Jesus movement, Jewish law affects Jews and non-Jews in radically different ways. To Paul, pagans represent those people outside of Israel that will come to know God in the end times, brought into God’s family through Christ. “The nations rejoice *with* Israel. They praise God *with* Israel. The nations join *with* Israel. But they do not *join* Israel.” According to Fredriksen, “this perspective is what accounts for all the negative things that Paul has to say about the law.” Paul’s negative depictions of the law—as a curse, as a form of slavery, making sin worse, bringing death—were only addressed to Gentiles and pagans, not to Jews.²²¹ Fredriksen affirms that “if according to Paul, Israel’s God-granted identity would continue into the Kingdom (sonship, the divine presence in Jerusalem’s temple, the covenants with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the giving of the law, the promises, the forefathers, and the family relationship to and with the messiah), why would we assume that God had suspended it or rejected it, or made it peripheral in the interim?”²²²

Nanos asserts that understanding Paul *within* Judaism as being central to his theology begins with the central and most important prayer of Judaism, the “Shema”: “Hear (*shema*) O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one.” He interprets the Shema to be where particularism (the Lord is our God over us – the children of Israel) and universalism (the Lord is one – over all the creatures of the world) meet in unison. Nanos states that Paul’s argument is that “the God

²²⁰ Fredriksen, *Paul*, 3.

²²¹ Bruce W. Longenecker, ed., *The New Cambridge Companion to St. Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 39.

²²² Longenecker, ed., *Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*, 46.

who righteouses Israel is the same God who now righteouses non-Israelites (the nations) who turn to Israel's God in Jesus Christ as the Lord of all the nations too."²²³ Nanos asks whether it is possible to uphold what we believe to be true without demeaning in any way the different faith convictions or religious systems of others. Can we not embrace the nobility of the choices of others as we wish them to embrace our choices? Nanos notes that scholarly interpreters are "always involved in making choices, in emphasizing certain patterns, ideas, and actions that can be supported by both texts and traditions,"²²⁴ and he cautions scholars that in the task of trying to re-interpret Paul, they should always be aware that they are both responsible and culpable for the choices that they make, and that they should always proceed in ways that promote the mutual respect of others, who are also made in the image of God. It is my hope that a new understanding of Paul's Judaism can begin to reverse the two thousand-year legacy of Christian anti-Judaism, and hopefully contribute to a renewed positive relationship between Christians and Jews.

Fredricksen has asked why is it so difficult to think of Paul not as an anomalous Jew or an exceptional Jew, but just an ancient Jew, a Jew who lived as a Jew, "one whom in the late Second Temple Period expected the end of days in their lifetimes."²²⁵ She notes that "as the ethnicity of some Christ-communities shifted, Paul's intra-Jewish argument became an anti-Jewish argument, and by the mid-second century the *Adversus Judeaos* argument was already taking shape, with Paul as its champion. However, Nanos proposes, based on his reading of Romans, that "it is entirely possible to create a coherent historical reconstruction of Paul as never having abandoned Judaism. Paul lived and died in obedience to the Torah, and his priority was always the restoration of Israel balanced with carrying out Israel's special calling on behalf of all

²²³ Nanos, *Reading Paul Within Judaism*, 108–110.

²²⁴ Nanos, *Reading Paul Within Judaism*, 56.

²²⁵ Paula Fredriksen, "What Does It Mean to See Paul 'within Judaism'?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 141 (2022): 359–380.

humanity. In Nanos's reconstruction of Paul, the traditional contrast with Judaism is completely done away with."²²⁶

In conclusion, one of the major stumbling blocks to constructive Jewish-Christian dialogue has been the way that Judaism is understood by New Testament scholars. This thesis has attempted to provide some insight into key themes within Judaism that are often misinterpreted. Understanding Paul within Judaism has been hampered by centuries of Pauline scholarship that interpreted Judaism as both legalistic and particularistic, and then contrasting it with Christianity, which was conceived of as a moral, universalistic evolution of an inferior religion—Judaism. Asking the question, “what do Jews believe?” as opposed to the question “why do they not believe?” is the first step to mutual respect and understanding in Jewish-Christian dialogue. Martin Buber explains that “religious truth in Judaism is not a maxim but a way, not a thesis but a process. Jewish teaching is not something finished and unequivocal. It is, rather, a process, still uncompleted, of spiritual creativity and response to the unconditional.”²²⁷ Buber further explains that in Judaism, “the attributes of God—justice and love, are to be made effective in one's own life, and in our relationships with others.”²²⁸ The religious element in Judaism does not constitute a narrowing of one's life, but a unity of the spiritual with the worldly, which is one's response to the Divine.²²⁹

²²⁶ Zetterholm, *Approaches to Paul*, 154.

²²⁷ Buber, *On Judaism*, 162.

²²⁸ Buber, *On Judaism*, 207.

²²⁹ Buber, *On Judaism*, 157–158.

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