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### Jewish Fidelity to the Law in the New Testament

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**JEWISH FIDELITY TO THE LAW  
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

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**A Thesis Presented to  
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary  
Department of New Testament Theology**

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**In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Divinity**

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**by  
Bernard W. Wittrock**

**May 1944**

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
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## JEWISH FIDELITY TO THE LAW

## IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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JEWISH FIDELITY TO THE LAW

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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## JEWISH FIDELITY TO THE LAW

### IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

#### Introduction

This paper aims to demonstrate Jewish fidelity to the Law in the New Testament. The evidence presented in this paper makes it evident that the Jews clung to their laws, ceremonies, and traditions with great tenacity.

Into this situation enters our Lord Jesus. The consequent clash is obvious. Jesus came with His great teachings of freedom from ceremonial tradition and the greater and deeper spiritual meaning of the Law. This evoked the antagonism of the spiritual leaders of the Jews who fought Jesus at every turn and finally brought about His death on the cross. Furthermore, the great teachings of our Lord regarding the Law were unfolded in the ministry of the apostle Paul. Jewish insistence on the Law is finally evidenced in the work of the Judaizers and those who meant to make Jewish law basic in the teachings of Christianity.

Thus the strands are woven together. The picture of the Jewish attitude to the Law is placed against the back-



ground of the teachings of Christ and St. Paul. Such a comparison reveals what it means to be free, delivered from the Torah, from legalism, and externalism. As the result of such a comparison, the words of Christ acquire a deep meaning, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

By way of introduction to this study, something should be said about the place of the Law in Old Testament times. The general purpose of the Law was to guide God's people in practically every phase of life. But the end of the Law lay beyond mere obedience. It was also to give instruction in the knowledge of God and of man's relation to Him, and to guide the pious in living as the children of God.

The chief term used in the Old Testament for the Law is "Torah." <sup>2</sup> Synonyms used for this term are: (1) "Micwah"-command, a charge laid upon man as the expression of God's will; (2) "Edhah"- witness or testimony, a designation of God's Law as testifying the principles of His dealings with His people; (3) "Mishpatim"-judgments. This term indicates laws of a particular kind. Though forming a part of the Torah by Divine sanction this term originated in decisions of the judges; (4) "Hukkim"- statutes and laws immediately enacted by a lawgiver; (5) "Pikkudhim"- precepts. This

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1. "The Law in the Old Testament," International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, III, 1852.

2. טו ה י נ - From "horah," the hiphil of "yarah." The root meaning is "to throw." The hiphil of the word means "to point out," so "to direct," hence direction. It may mean human direction, as the "law of thy mother" in Proverbs 1,8. Most often it refers to divine Law.



term is found in the Psalms. It means rules or counsels provided to suit the various circumstances in which men may be placed.

However, we conceive of the Law as contained in the Ten Commandments given on two tables to Moses. Throughout the writings of Moses we find the various laws and regulations given to guide the life of the people. In Exodus there is the history of the covenant-making and of what immediately followed it, the provision for the home for covenant worship. In Leviticus we have the rules of that worship. Leviticus 1-7 contains the Law of sacrifice; 8-10 the consecration of the tabernacles and its contents, the consecration of the priests and the inauguration of the newly prescribed system of worship; 11-15 the rules for purification from ritual uncleanness. In Leviticus 16 we have the account of the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement. The Law of Holiness is given in Leviticus 20. This Law underlay both the ceremonial Law and the preceding moral and religious Law as we find it in Exodus and Leviticus.

Numbers 1-6 sets forth the rules as to the representative Levitical ministry and the character of Israel's service to God. Chapters 7-10 narrate the remaining occurrences at Mt. Sinai including the important account of the first commemorative Passover. Chapters 11-36 give groups of Laws generally connected with the events narrated.



Deuteronomy deals largely with morals and religion. Chapter 14, 3-21 gives rules regarding forbidden meats. Chapters 14, 22-29 and 26, 12 give directions regarding tithes. Chapter 16 tells of the observance of the stated feasts of the Passover.

As to the general character and design of the Law we note especially the civil and ceremonial laws. The civil law relates to matters concerning the poor and slaves, punishments, marriage, the Sabbaths, and feasts. In the ceremonial law we have matters pertaining to sacrifice and its divine origin and the Levitical ritual.

There is a definite relationship between these laws and the moral law. The latter is the great underlying principle of all the laws. Even the simplest ceremonial observance is linked with this moral attribute : " Ye shall be holy unto me." The rules for purifications and sacrifices indicated also that they were of an educative character, and that they were outward signs of the homage due to God. Finally, the laws prefigured the coming of that One who was to fulfil the Law in man's stead. The great principles of the moral law are not transitory, but abiding, as Christ Himself taught, though enactments regarding ceremonial and civil matters passed away with the coming of the Messiah.

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1. " The Law in the Old Testament," International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, III, 1855.

2. Exodus 22, 31.

3. T.H. Robertson, The Early Religion of Israel, 458.



A word needs to be said about the relation of the Law to the traditions. The term "traditions" refers in Jewish theology to the oral teachings of the elders, distinguished ancestors, which were revered as much by the Jews as the written Law of the Old Testament itself. These may be divided into three classes :

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- 1) supposed oral laws of Moses, given by him in addition to the written laws ;
- 2) decisions of various judges which became precedents in judicial matters ;
- 3) interpretation of great teachers or rabbis which came to be honored as much as the Old Testament Scriptures.

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1. Later, in the third century, A.D., these laws were made up into the "Talmud," a compendium of Jewish laws, in two parts, the "Mishna," and its commentary, the "Gemara." Originally based on the Pentateuch, however, they contained rabbinical supplements, orally transmitted.



JEWISH FIDELITY TO THE LAW  
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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I. Attitude of the Jewish people to the Law in New Testament times.

A. The Background

The Jewish religion at the time of Jesus was principally a law religion, the Torah religion. The term "torah" refers to a teaching or injunction of any kind.<sup>1</sup> It is either a general principle or a specific injunction, whether in the Pentateuch or some other part of the Old Testament Scripture, or even in uncanonical writings. It was for the Jew the sum total of the contents of revelation without special reference to any particular element in it. Eternal truths about God's love and justice are sometimes found side by side with the laws and their commentaries, and with symbolical observances and worship. The distinctive feature is obedience to the will of God.

Even today Jewish leaders admit that theirs is a law religion. Writes K. Kohler :

True, law is fundamental in Jewish history; Israel accepted the Divine covenant on the basis of the Sinaitic code; the reforms of King Josiah were founded on the Deuteronomic law; and the restoration of the Judean commonwealth was based upon the completed Mosaic code brought from Babylon by Ezra the Scribe. This book of law, with its further development and interpretation, remained the normative factor for Judaism for all time. 2

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1. L. Hinzburg, "Religion of the Jews at the Time of Jesus", Hebrew Union College Annual, vol. 1, (1924), p. 318.

2. K. Kohler, Jewish Theology, p. 355.



God had given the Law to guide the life of His people in preparation for the coming of the Messiah. Devout Jews of the Old Testament painstakingly observed the rite of circumcision, the Sabbath, fasts, distinctions of food, and prayers. The Jewish people especially appreciated their religion at the time of the Exile and clung to the distinctive exercises of their religion. We are told, for instance, that the meetings were held along rivers and canals for the purpose of common prayer.<sup>1</sup> They developed fixed forms and times of prayer and gathered for the public reading of the Law.

However, in course of time the true Jewish religion became corrupt. More and more stress was laid by Jewish leaders on the external requirements of the Law. The great spiritual principles of their religion were lost sight of and it became primarily a matter of outward ceremony. Offenses against the ceremonial Law were regarded more serious than moral transgression. The temple, the priests, the ritual, and forms of private religion replaced the religion of the spirit. In Jewish thinking even God became subject to the Law He had made.<sup>2</sup> Finkelstein writes :

The belief in the truth and purity of the Law was not merely a principle, but was a rigid system of divine discipline which elevated the smallest minutiae of observance into passionate issues calling for the sacrifice of life and limb. Insignificant variations of rite and custom, born of irrelevant differences of life and environment, were given an exaggerated importance comparable to that of court etiquette and legal formality.<sup>3</sup>

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1. R.L. Ottley, The Religion of Israel, p. 108.
  2. John Punnett Peters, The Religion of the Hebrews, p. 351.
  3. L. Finkelstein, The Pharisees, vol. I, p. 8.



Thus the Law assumed a place of central importance in the Jewish system. Particularly since the days of the Maccabean revolt do we find Jewish religious thought almost completely enmeshed in the observance of legal requirements.

Ottley writes :

The Maccabean rising and its issue in the triumph of Judaism mark a fresh point of departure in Jewish religious history. What Antiochus aimed at was nothing less than the abolition of all that was distinctive of Judaism, but he also hoped to encourage the spread of Hellenism within his dominions ..... The great mass of the Jewish people rallied to the side of the Chasidim in their patriotic struggle for Israel's ancestral faith, and when victory finally crowned their efforts, the triumph of the Jewish arms was hailed as that of the religion of the Law. Hellenism could not be altogether banished from the soil of Palestine, but at least its influence could be successfully resisted by a new devotion to the Law, and especially to those ordinances which most definitely implied Israel's separation from the heathen world---the strict observance of the Sabbath, and of the rules of ceremonial purity.

This then was the situation which obtained when our Lord came into this world. The observance of laws, ceremonies, and precepts, such as observing the Sabbath, the rite of circumcision, dietary laws, and reverence for Jerusalem and the temple constituted the religion of Israel.<sup>2</sup> The Jews emphasized the Torah and the traditions of the Law, and attention was drawn away from God and the true spirit.<sup>3</sup>

The Law thus became the dominant factor in the life of the people. The average Jew believed that by fulfilling the

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1. R.L. Ottley, The Religion of Israel, p. 181.
  2. Heinrich Graetz, History of the Jews, p. 169.
  3. Albert Wellman Hitchcock, The Psychology of Jesus, p. 27.



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precepts of the Torah, and observing the traditions he  
lived in consonance with God and mankind. <sup>1</sup>

The scribes declared that the Law was all that man needed for successful living, since it was regarded as a perfect revelation for eternity. The study of the Law became man's highest calling. God Himself sits, so the scribes taught, in a white robe and studies the Torah all day. Such a God, unrelated to men, save by closed decrees, cannot even be named. His true name was regarded as secret and dared not be pronounced by human lips. The words of Weber in Die Lehren des Talmud as quoted by Hitchcock are apropos :  
" To learn the Torah and to fulfil the Torah are the two chief ends of life for the pious Israelite." <sup>2</sup>

The prominent position occupied by the Law as the center of religion, an insistence on its observance, together with its glorification is illustrated also by the way in which it is identified with wisdom. Here is an example from Ben-Sira, XIX, 20 quoted by Oesterley and Robinson : " All wisdom is the fear of the Lord, And all wisdom is the fulfilling of the Law." <sup>3</sup>

In Tobit, a late uncanonical book, the prominence of the Law is also repeatedly emphasized, as well as in Ecclesiasticus, III, 3 where we read : " A flaming sword doth water quench, So doth almsgiving atone for sin." <sup>3</sup>

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1. William W. Brickman, "Education for Eternal Existence; The Philosophy of Jewish Education", Lutheran School Journal, vol. 79, (1943), p.177.

2. Albert Wellman Hitchcock, The Psychology of Jesus, p. 29.

3. W.O.E. Oesterley and T.H. Robinson, Hebrew Religion, pp. 402-403.



The following little prayer, which is said to have been the daily prayer of the Jew, and very likely composed in pre-Christian times, is evidence for the Jewish devotion to the Law:

With everlasting love Thou hast loved the House of Israel, Thy people; Torah commandments, statutes, and judgments Thou hast taught us. Yea, we will rejoice in the words of Thy Torah and Thy commandments forever. And mayest Thou never take away Thy love from us. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who lovest Thy people, Israel. <sup>1</sup>

Beyond this life the Jew looked unto eternity with the hope of immortality. The inculcation of the law religion had led him to believe that by the Law he would obtain that immortality.

Finally, let us turn to Jewish education as one of the clearest evidences for this high regard for law in the life of the people. According to Josephus, the highest aim of the Jew was to educate his children well. <sup>2</sup> The first teacher was the father, and the mother also helped to develop in the young a consciousness of doing what is right according to the Lord's will in the Torah. In this home surrounding the child learned in a practical way the meaning of his religion, even through such daily activities as eating and drinking, as well as through ceremonies on holidays.

The Talmud terms the teachers "the guardians of the city". They take precedence in many situations over the father himself. This veneration of the teacher reflects the great importance which they attach to the Torah in the life and development of the children.

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1. L. Ginzburg, "Religion of the Jews at the Time of Jesus", Hebrew Union College Annual, vol. 1, (1924), p. 320.  
 2. William W. Brickman, "Education for Eternal Existence: The Philosophy of Jewish Education", Lutheran School Journal, vol. 79, (1943), p. 178.



## B. Reflections of the Jewish attitude to the Law in the New Testament.

The Jews in New Testament times exaggerated the purpose and meaning of the Sabbath. We note six instances from the New Testament.

When Jesus and His disciples passed through the grain-<sup>1</sup> fields on a Sabbath day His disciples began to pluck the grains of wheat. The Pharisees attacked them for this act saying that this act was unlawful on the Sabbath. They maintained that this was contrary to an express tradition of their elders. On this point we quote Finkelstein :

The necessity of standardizing the Law had led the Hasidean and Pharisaic scholars to include even plucking fruit under the prohibition against reaping on the Sabbath. This would hardly make sense to the farmer who would, after all, make a distinction between the work of gathering fruit and the pleasure of picking a fig or a date for his enjoyment. Yet, according to the Pharisaic conception of the Law this, too, was prohibited. Only that could be eaten on the Sabbath which was prepared for use when the holy day set in. Since the fruit was still attached to the tree on Sabbath eve, it remained prohibited for the entire day, no matter what happened to it. <sup>2</sup>

We note from this story that the disciples had merely transgressed a man-made rule. More than that, the incident shows that the Jewish spiritual leaders were not so much concerned about the inward godliness but rather about its outward form, and whether or not a man conformed to their traditions. The disciples of Jesus had had little to eat that day, for otherwise they would not have dined on these

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1. Matthew 12, 1-8 ; Mark 2, 23-28 ; Luke 6, 1-5.  
 2. L. Finkelstein, The Pharisees , vol. 1, p. 69.



few grains. They had been more concerned about spiritual food, hearing the words and message of the Savior. It is evident that the Pharisaic religion was not a religion of the heart, but merely one of outward form.

Upon another occasion Jesus entered the synnggog where He met a man with a withered hand.<sup>1</sup> Here the Jews anticipated the action of Jesus and they asked the question : " Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days ? ". The matter of physicians healing on the Sabbath day was much disputed among the Pharisees. They had so exaggerated the Sabbath rest that unless one was in peril of life he dared not make use of medical help. It was past dispute, however, for a prophet to heal, for one who possessed the divine power of restoring to health. This was not regarded as a breaking of the Sabbath. Yet they seized upon this opportunity to attack Jesus, and their purpose was to find fault with Him. If He should declare the act of healing to be unlawful, they would say that He was partial, because He had defended His disciples when they plucked the grains of wheat. If he would declare it to be lawful, they would accuse Him of breaking the Commandment " Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy " . Here again we see that the Jews were not motivated by love of truth, but by an exaggerated devotion to outward form. They had no religion of the heart. Furthermore, they were not guided by sincerity, but by bitter opposition to Jesus and His teachings.

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1. Matthew 12, 9-14 ; Mark 3, 1-6 ; Luke 6, 6-11.



The false Jewish attitude to the Law is again demonstrated in the case of the woman afflicted with an infirmity<sup>1</sup> and healed by Jesus. She could not rise and stand erect. Because Jesus healed her the ruler of the synagog was filled with indignation, reasoning that there were six days in which to work, but that Jesus had done a piece of work on the seventh day. He calls this act of love on the part of Jesus work and regards it as a violation of the Sabbath traditions.

This incident shows how deeply the idea of a mechanical observance of the Sabbath was ingrained in the mind of the average Jewish teacher. The ruler strikes indirectly at Jesus, speaking to the audience, because he fears Christ's ability to defend Himself. Jesus shows in His answer that<sup>2</sup> the Jews were accustomed to release their dumb beasts on the Sabbath day, leading them out to the well, and drawing water for them. This was certainly as much and more work than what He had done. Yet Jesus is condemned for doing this act of love and mercy although they did as much and more for their dumb animals. Again we see that their religion was only a mechanical observance of the Law.

At another time Jesus had gone into the house of one of the chief Pharisees for a meal on the Sabbath day.<sup>3</sup> There was a man there who had the dropsy. Jesus healed him. In this case, however, the lawyers and Pharisees had little to say. They held their peace, but Jesus knew the thoughts and intents of their hearts and He addressed them accordingly. Jesus asked:

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1. Luke 13, 10-17.

2. Paul E. Kretzmann, The Popular Commentary, ( New Testament ), vol. 1, p. 341.

3. Luke 14, 1-6.



" Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day ? ". Without waiting for a reply, Jesus healed the man. Then He pointed out that they would do as much for an ox or an ass of theirs which had fallen into a pit on the Sabbath. They would pull it out straightway. The Pharisees didn't answer Jesus on this point. If they had agreed with Him, they could not have accused Him of a crime.

On another Sabbath day Jesus healed a man sick with the palsy.<sup>1</sup> After He had done this, He told the man to arise and carry his bed. The Jews accosted this man when he did this and told him that it was unlawful to carry one's bed on the Sabbath. Here we note that they didn't object to the fact that the man was healed. This objection hadn't proved very effective. Therefore they found a new avenue of attack,<sup>2</sup> the fact that Jesus had told the man to carry his bed. Here again their law religion came to the fore, and we see how in their minutest implications they had developed the teachings of their Torah. Jesus answered them by showing them that His Father worked and that it was the nature of His Being to work.<sup>3</sup> This, however, aroused them to anger and they now tried to kill Jesus. To such lengths their hypocritical law religion had led them.

We note finally the miracle of the healing of the blind man. The Pharisees objected to this. They said : " This man is not of God, because He keepeth not the Sabbath day." Their doctrine was that those are not sent of God and are

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1. John 5, 10-16.

2. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, Commentary on the Whole Bible, (New Testament), p. 136.

3. Nehemiah 13, 15. According to Nehemiah the outrage against the Sabbath was the working in connection with the selling of victuals. This could not include this man's carrying his bed.

4. John 9, 1-39.



not children of God who do not keep the Sabbath day according to their traditions. Their actions shows how uncharitable they had become by making the rules of their religion more inclusive than God had made them and adding their own fancies to God's appointments. This was the Torah religion<sup>1</sup> of the Jews, the pharisaical Torah religion .

We note in passing the influence which the Sabbath law had on the parents of the blind man. They said nothing of Christ, but left this to their son, because they feared the Jews. When they were questioned about their son and how he had received his sight, the parents referred the matter to their son. The fear of men is always a snare and causes people to deny Christ, His truth, and His ways, and makes people act against their own conscience.

Further evidence for the emphasis on the Law we find in the insistence of the Jews on ceremonies, such as fasting, eating with unwashed hands, the reverence for Jerusalem, and circumcision.

The disciples of John came to Jesus complaining because Jesus' disciples did not fast.<sup>2</sup> Undoubtedly, those disciples were instigated by the Pharisees themselves to ask this question, as is evident from their statement : " We and the Pharisees fast often. "

The Pharisees regarded fasting as very important. Many of them kept two fast-days a week. Accordingly these disciples, under the influence of the Pharisees, were judging one's

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1. Matthew Henry's Commentary, vol. 5, p. 1018.  
 2. Matthew 9, 14-15; Mark 2, 18-20 ; Luke 5, 33-35.



religion by its external manifestations. It seemed to them that they had more religion than Christ's disciples. They measured others by their own standards.

We note, too, their pride and vain-glory. That is the nature of law religions, to boast of outward performance, and to declare to all the world its superiority to other religions. We recall, too, the Pharisee in the temple who boasted of his fasting. He also exemplified the strict Torah religion of the Jews.

The attitude of the Jews is also shown by their laws on eating with defiled hands. The Pharisees and scribes found fault with the disciples because they ate bread with defiled, that is, unwashed hands.<sup>1</sup> They maintained that the disciples of Jesus violated ceremonial tradition. Their tradition was that all should wash their hands before a meal. This was a matter of religion to them into which they interjected their authority and commanded all to do it on pain of excommunication.

Before entering the sanctuary the priest had to bathe his hands and feet.<sup>2</sup> This is called in the Talmud :  
 □<sup>3</sup> 7 2 7 7 □ 7 <sup>3</sup> 7 7 7 7 . The Pharisees declared that the Holy Scriptures defiled the hands so as to forbid the eating of T:rumah.<sup>4</sup> This declaration was used as a weapon

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1. Matthew 15, 1-20 ; Mark 7, 1-23.

2. Exodus 21, 18-21.

3. Solomon Zeitlin, " The Halakah in the Gospels, and its Relation to the Jewish Law at the time of Jesus," Hebrew Union College Annual, vol. 1, (1924), 367-369.

4. The T:rumah was the shewbread on the right hand of the altar of incense, which was lawful for only the priests to eat.



against the Sadducees, who believed in the written Law alone and of whom a large number were priests.

Zeitlin concludes that the motive for declaring hands to be defiled by the Holy Scriptures was to disqualify such priests as handled them from touching the T:rumah, and hence the priest, in case he were a Sadducee, would be prevented from reading the Holy Scriptures. <sup>1</sup> Disregard of this prohibition resulted only in defilement of hands. In other cases, when one, for instance, touched a corpse the whole body shared the contamination. Zeitlin states further :

According to the Torah, mere bathing of the body in water would not have been deemed sufficient to render a person pure, unless the sun had set on him thereafter, and he is called by the Talmud : <sup>1</sup> טָבַח וְיָבֵשׁ. However, it was then decreed that, if he had taken the prescribed bath, he was ipso facto pure, and relieved of the necessity of waiting until sunset. This <sup>2</sup> אֵין צָרִיךְ לְיָבֵשׁ the Talmud ascribes to Ezra in these words : אֵין צָרִיךְ לְיָבֵשׁ אֶת הַיָּדַיִם וְאֶת הַרְגְלָיִם אֶתְּמַלֵּךְ אֶתְּמַלֵּךְ אֶתְּמַלֵּךְ, meaning to say, that it is sufficient for him to undergo T:bilah, and he need not leave the city nor wait until sunset.

The rabbis followed the rule that if they washed their hands well in the morning that sufficed for the day, provided they kept alone. When they were in company, however, they neither ate nor prayed until they had washed their hands. They also insisted on the washing of cups, pots, and brazen vessels, if they suspected that they had been used by polluted persons or by heathen. They included

1. Solomon Zeitlin, "The Halaka in the Gospels, and its Relation to the Law in the time of Jesus," Hebrew Union College Annual, vol. 1, (1924), 367.

2. Ibid. 370.



also the very tables from which they ate. In Moses' Law certain washings were appointed, but they added others, and enforced the observation of these as much as those enjoined by God.

This explains why they Jews found fault with the disciples as men who would not submit to the power of the church, to rites and ceremonies, and were rebellious, factious, and schismatical. They were very fond of their own inventions and impositions. This is an indication of their straight-laced attitude to the law and of their insistence on the keeping of its minutest details.

In their law religion the Jews had a singularly high regard for Jerusalem, their holy city, the proper place of worship. We catch a glimpse of this in the conversation of Jesus with the woman of Samaria. The question there discussed was : " Is Jerusalem or Gerizim of the Samaritans<sup>1</sup> the proper place to worship?" This shows the importance which the Jews attached to the proper place of worship. They claimed that Jerusalem was the only place where people<sup>2</sup> should worship. This is another instance of their externalized religion.

The Jews made much of their laws on circumcision. This rite will be treated more extensively in the section dealing with the Judaizers, but we mention it here to show its part in the general Jewish attitude to the Law.

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1. John 4, 20-26.

2. Paul E. Kretzmann, Popular Commentary, ( New Testament), vol. 1, 429.



Jesus showed His disapproval of their exaggerated stress on circumcision when He said : " Moses therefore gave you<sup>1</sup> circumcision.....and ye on the Sabbath day circumcize a man." The matter of the Sabbath was involved here. Jesus had been accused of breaking the Sabbath by healing, but the Jews thought nothing of it to circumcize on that day.

In the Jerusalem Conference we also note Jewish insistence on circumcision as an external essential in the Christian<sup>2</sup> religion. The Judaizers insisted that Gentiles had to be circumcised if they wished to become Christians.

We also note the Jewish attitude toward marriage and divorce. The Pharisees, at one time, came to Jesus and asked Him : " Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? "<sup>3</sup> In the reply of Jesus we get some idea of the Jewish conception of divorce. Divorce because of fornication was permissible. Unprincipled Jews, however, applied for divorce on any pretense whatsoever. They based their claim on Deut. 24, 1. This, they interpreted to mean<sup>4</sup> that it allowed divorce on any grounds.

Jesus had to tell the Jews that in the creation God had taught the imperishible moral lesson of a life-long union between man and wife which could be terminated only on grounds<sup>5</sup> of adultery. This law was so completely lost sight of

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1. John 7, 22.

2. Acts 16, 3.

3. Matthew 19, 3-12.

4. Matthew Henry's Commentary, vol. 5, 268.

5. Patrick Fairbairn, The Typology of Scripture, vol.1, 255-256.



that the Son of God regarded it important to restate it.

The fact that Moses commanded to give a writing of divorcement in case a man did put away his wife sheds further light on the matter of divorce. Moses did not design this procedure as a command but as an expedient to protect the lives of married people. Therefore Christ goes on to say that Moses did this because of the hardness of their hearts.

This attitude toward divorce is indicative of the Jewish attitude to the Law. The condition of man's heart did not matter but only whether a person obeyed their laws.

The Jewish attitude to the Law is again shown by their attitude toward Gentiles, those who did not subscribe to their laws. Furthermore, anyone who did not conform to their observances, who lived outside their laws and regulations, was regarded an outcast. Our Savior calls attention to this when He says : " Ye say, behold, a gluttonous man,<sup>1</sup> and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinner."

This exclusive and self-righteous attitude on the part of the Jews is shown also in the story of Jesus' visit in the house of Simon, the Pharisee.<sup>2</sup> A woman, who was regarded as a sinner, anointed the feet of Jesus. Her act angered the Pharisee. He argued that anyone who had anything to do with that woman disgraced himself. Instead of helping such people, the Pharisees preferred to have nothing to do with

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1. Luke 7, 34 ; Matt. 11, 19.

2. Luke 7, 36-50.



them and to scorn and despise them.

Again, the Jews condemned Jesus for visiting Zacchaeus.<sup>1</sup> They said, "He is gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner."<sup>2</sup> These narrow-minded censorious Jews thus showed their contempt for anyone whose rules for living were below theirs. Because he repented and restored the goods he had taken, Zacchaeus showed himself in possession of a righteousness far superior to theirs.

Peter points out that it is unlawful for a Jew to keep company with a man of another nation.<sup>3</sup> This reveals the persistent attitude of exclusiveness on the part of the Jews. However, God taught him not to call any man common or unclean. Furthermore, the Jews at Jerusalem took exception to Peter's mingling with the Gentiles. They contended with Peter saying "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them." Because of their loyalty to their laws the Jews could not understand why Peter should associate with Gentiles.

St. Paul states that the Jews persecuted him, forbidding him to speak to the Gentiles.<sup>4</sup> This is another example which shows that the Jews opposed the association of their people with Gentiles.

The Jews believed that man was justified by outward obedience to the Law. The fact that they stressed outward observance of the Law shows that they believed that this

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1. Luke 19, 7.

2. *παρα ἁμαρτωλῶ ἀνδρὶ* - with a sinful man.

3. Acts 10, 28.

4. I Thessalonians 2, 15-16.



obedience would justify a man. The rich young ruler asked Jesus : " What must I do to inherit eternal life ?" <sup>1</sup> In the discussion that followed the young man told Jesus that he had kept all the commandments. <sup>2</sup> He believed that he had outwardly obeyed the Law and that he could be saved by the Law.

This rich young ruler believed that the Law only prohibited the outward acts of sin. He showed that he failed to understand that a man is not justified by the Law, but by an inward change of heart. Thus the attitude to the Law on the part of the Jews results in a failure to understand how a man is justified.

These examples illustrate the attitude of the Jews to the Law in New Testament times. This attitude to the Law had become very prevalent among these people and is especially shown in the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees, the chief promulgators of this doctrine. Their importance compels us to examine their history and teachings. We shall do so in the next chapter.

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1. Matthew 19, 16-26 ; Mark 10, 17-27 ; Luke 18, 18-27.

2. This man comes to Jesus willing to be taught, even as he probably was under his Jewish teachers. The words : Διδάσκαλε Ἰησοῦ signify not a ruling, but a teaching Master.



## II. The attitude of the Pharisees and scribes to the Law.

### A. The Background of the Pharisees and the scribes.

We may conveniently divide the Jews at the time of Jesus into five groups :

- 1) the Priests and Levites. These constituted the religious aristocracy.
- 2) the scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees. They were the religious leaders.
- 3) a large middle class.
- 4) the outcast class. They were the publicans and sinners.
- 5) the slaves.

We are especially interested in those religious leaders, the scribes and Pharisees. These promulgators of the Law constantly came into conflict with Jesus.

The history of the Pharisees goes back to the Assidaeans, who were at first active supporters of Judas Maccabaeus in his struggle for religious freedom.<sup>2</sup> However, a feeling against Judas developed, and when Judas began to deal with Rome many of his followers deserted him. The later Hasmoneans became involved in politics and withdrew from the strict Assidaeans. Eventually, the latter group became known as Pharisees, separatists. Considerable struggle and intrigue developed. Eventually the Herodians superseded the power and authority of the Pharisees.

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1. William Arndt, Life of Christ, introduction.

2. "The Pharisees", International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, vol. 3, 2361



Fowler states :

In the period of the independence of Judah, which had come about under the leadership of Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers, the party of the Hasidim, came to be known as the Pharisees, or as some say, separatists. Their leaders sought with pathetic devotion to carry out the will of God as prescribed in His law. <sup>1</sup>

Thus the Pharisees were the spiritual successors of the "hasidim" who resisted the aggressions of Hellenism. <sup>2</sup> They clung to the Law and its traditions, especially to the ordinances of ceremonial purity. They found most effective support in the scribes. The Pharisees always opposed the power of the reigning enemies of the Jews and the yoke that these enemies placed upon them. They yearned ardently for the time when Israel would be released from its yoke and redeemed from the power of its enemies. They looked forward to political redemption and victory over their enemies.

The Pharisees were regarded as a philosophic and religious sect and not as an active political party. <sup>3</sup> The fact that the Pharisees were very strict distinguished them from the common people who were not so scrupulous. The Pharisees were a closely organized society, all the members of which called one another "habberim", neighbors. Their influence on the people added to their power.

They gave to their peculiarities of doctrine and practice a divine authority. <sup>4</sup> They maintained that their prin-

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1. Henry Thatcher Fowler, The Origin and Growth of the Hebrew Religion, 150.

2. R.L.Ottley, The Religion of Israel, 191.

3. Pharisee means "separatist". It is taken from the Hebrew word פָּרָשׁ, meaning "to separate".

4. Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, History of the Jewish Church, 334.



ciples were part of an oral tradition which had been handed down from Moses to the Great Synagog and thence to themselves. They maintained their hypotheses on the basis of usages, such as the minute regulations for observing the Sabbath and the manner of killing animals for food.

When the account of Pharisaism as found in Rabbinical writings is compared with the sketch given by our Lord, it is evident that there is a great similarity. <sup>2</sup> In Christ's reproofs the selection of the distinctive features of Pharisaism is impressive. In fact, the history of Pharisaism might be indexed by passages from the New Testament. Jesus said that they tithed mint and anise and yet neglected the weightier matters of the Law. This practice of the Pharisees voided the spirit of the Law and resulted in gross hypocrisy and religious boasting.

They debated the question whether in tithing the seed it was also necessary to tithe the stalk. <sup>2</sup> The double fasts of the week, the triple prayers of the day, triple visits to the temple, elaborate strainings of the water and the wine, the constant rinsings and scourings of brazen cups, pots, and tables are all examples of their punctiliousness. Further marks of the Pharisees are : laborious ablutions and bathings of the whole person with carefully tabulated ceremonies and normal gesticulations, not necessarily because of personal

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1. Alfred Edersheim, Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the days of the Christ, 238.
  2. Frederic W. Farrar, The Life and Work of St. Paul, 35.



cleanliness, but to avoid every possible chance of contracting ceremonial uncleanness. The Pharisees avoided the very contact and shadow of fellowbeings, who after all might be better than those who would not touch them with the tassel of a garment's hem.

Further characteristics of the Pharisees are as follows : obstrusive prayers, ostentatious almsgiving,<sup>1</sup> broadened phylacteries, petty ritualism, professorial arrogance, reckless proselytism, greedy avarice, haughty<sup>2</sup> assertion of pre-eminence, and ill concealed hypocrisy.

The Pharisees styled themselves as the "sages" or as the "associates". Tassels on their dress, scrolls and small leather boxes fastened on the forehead, head and neck, inscribed with texts of the Law were the sacramental<sup>3</sup> badges by which they marked themselves. Farrar states :

When we speak of Pharisaism we mean obedience petrified into formalism, religion degraded into ritual, morals cankered by casuistry. We mean the triumph and perpetuity of all the worst and weakest elements in religious party spirit.<sup>4</sup>

In various places the Talmud enumerates seven types of Pharisees. They are : the "bleeding" Pharisee, "mortar" Pharisee, "Shechemite" Pharisee, "timid" Pharisee, "tumbling" Pharisee, "pointed" Pharisee, and the kind overcome with<sup>5</sup> zeal to do everything to fulfil the Law.

1. Matthew 6,5 ; Matthew 6,2 ; Matthew 23, 5; Mark 7, 4-8 ; John 7, 49 ; Matthew 23, 15 ; Luke 20, 47; Luke 18, 11; Matthew 22, 17.

2. The Talmud devotes one whole treatise to hand-washings (yadayim), another to the proper method of killing a fowl (cholin), and another to the stalks of legumes (ozekim).

3. Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, History of the Jewish Church, v.3.

4. Frederic W. Farrar, The Life and Work of St. Paul, 26.

5. Ibid. 36.



Regarding the numerical strength of the Pharisees Arndt points out that in the year 50 A.D. their number was six thousand.<sup>1</sup>

The Pharisees were the popular party, whom the Jewish public followed.<sup>2</sup> Their statements were often regarded by the people as more important than those of kings or priests.<sup>3</sup> They were looked upon as teachers. Although the Pharisees did not dominate the Sanhedrin, yet they exerted a strong influence on that body.

Although the Pharisees were to a great extent self-righteous and hypocritical, yet their party did contain many serious-minded and devoted adherents to the God of Israel.<sup>4</sup>

The Sadducees are also mentioned in the New Testament. They were not so much a sect as a class. The Sadducees were the official leaders of the nation, and many of them were priests. They were satisfied with the Law as it appeared in the written code, without adopting the oral tradition on which the Pharisees laid so much stress. They maintained that in the Mosaic Law a veil was drawn before the future life. Men were not to be influenced by the hope of future reward or the fear of future punishment.

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1. William Arndt, Life of Christ, introduction.

2. Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, History of the Jewish Church, vol. 3, 333.

3. Although the Pharisees were generally popular, yet they were not always popular. In rabbinical writings such expressions occur as "the plague of Pharisaism" and "a silly pietist".

4. Preserved Smith, The Religion of Israel, 346.



The Jews regarded it necessary to interpret and apply their revelation to the needs of the Jewish people and to the world. The priesthood in Israel was supremely important, but the scribes were held in high public esteem. They were the earnest teachers and wise thinkers.

Originally the priest served also as scribe. Ezra was both scribe and priest. However, scribism eventually became an independent business. The scribes became zealous guardians of the Law and in many respects the teachers of the people, over whose spiritual life they bore complete sway.

The process had been completed in the days of the New Testament. The scribes are called in the Scriptures : γραμματεῖς, which means " learned in the Law ". This corresponds to the Hebrew שֹׁרְפֵי דָבָר, which refers to men professionally occupied with the Scriptures. Besides this general designation we meet with the expression : νομικοί, which refers to jurists. They were likewise called : νομιδιδάκκαδοι, teachers of the Law.

The scribes received no remuneration for their juridical work. But it is evident that they were paid for their work as teachers of the Law. Christ's denunciation of the scribes gives evidence for the fact that they did receive

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1. Frank Knight Sanders, History of the Hebrews, 271.
  2. Emil Schuerer, History of the Jewish people in the time of Jesus, 313.
  3. Matthew 22,35; Luke 7, 30; 10,25 ; 11,45-52 ; 14,3.
  4. Luke 5,17; Acts 5, 34.
  5. Mark 12, 40 ; Luke 20, 47; 16, 14; Matthew 23,5; Mark 12, 38; Luke 20, 46.



remuneration for this work.

Up to 70 A.D. the headquarters of the scribes was in Judea. The scribes were also found in Galilee and in the "dispersion". In later times they were present also in Rome. Various sects were represented among them, but a large number of them were Pharisees.<sup>1</sup>

The duty of carrying on a systematic exegesis of the Law fell to the lot of the scribes. Accordingly they were held in high esteem by the people, often being saluted with the title of "rabbi". The common people looked upon them as accepted guardians of the Law, exponents of it, and to some extent administrators of the Law. There was much oral discussion and application among the scribes regarding difficult cases. This oral interpretation and application of the Law led to the formation of the "halachah" ( customary law ) and the "middoth" ( formal rules ) which were laid down for ascertaining it. The "halachah" was especially concerned with the matters of ceremonial observance.

The scribes exercised the teaching office of systematically instructing in the Law. They encouraged a detailed theoretic study of the Law, and an ever-increasing mass of precepts resulted which every zealous Israelite sought to know. The temple and the synagogues were the centers of their activity.

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1. R.L. Ottley, The Religion of Israel , 183.



B. The contentions of the Pharisees and scribes with Jesus.

The Pharisees and scribes often came into conflict with Jesus. Jesus opposed their legalism and hypocrisy and this fact aroused them to anger. After Jesus had thrown the money-changers from the temple, they came to Jesus and asked Him : " By what authority doest Thou these things?" In answering them Jesus showed the scribes and Pharisees to be insincere and hypocritical. He asked them concerning the baptism of John. They failed to answer, because they feared<sup>1</sup> the truth.

Furthermore, the attitude of the Pharisees becomes<sup>2</sup> evident in their question concerning the tribute money. They came " to catch him in his words." They thought that they could destroy the influence of Jesus by overcoming Him in public dispute. They failed in this, for Jesus did not become silent for fear of the truth. Jesus gave a clear answer saying, " Render therefore unto Caesar the things<sup>3</sup> that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

Not so openly did the scribes and Pharisees challenge the authority of Jesus in the healing of the man sick with the palsy. When Jesus granted forgiveness to this man they reasoned, " Why does this man speak blasphemy ? Who can forgive sins but God only? " Knowing their hearts,

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1. Matthew 21,23-27; Mark 11, 27-33; Luke 20,1-8.

2. Matthew 22, 15-22; Mark 12, 13-17 ; Luke 20,20-26.

3. The *κν̄σος* is the poll tax exacted from every individual for his own person, and thus considered by the Jews as a special badge of servitude to the Roman empire. Thus it was the more galling and an object of dispute among the rabbis.



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Jesus proved them to be wrong by healing the man.

The Pharisees consistently showed animosity toward Jesus. In the Sabbath arguments, and the arguments over ceremonies and traditions of the Law the Pharisees spat their venom of hatred against him who came not to destroy but to fulfil. Concerning this Jesus Himself said : " The Son of Man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. " <sup>2</sup> The Pharisees called Jesus a glutton and a wine-bibber, because He ignored their traditions and ceremonies and sought to help the outcasts, the publicans and sinners.

There are also other cases showing the hatred of the scribes and Pharisees toward Jesus. The lawyer asked Jesus concerning the great commandment of the Law for the very purpose of tempting Him. <sup>3</sup> At another time the Pharisees sought a sign from Jesus for the purpose of tempting Him. <sup>4</sup> Again the Pharisees and scribes urged Jesus vehemently and provoked Him. They lay in wait for Him, seeking to catch something out of His mouth, that they might accuse Him. <sup>5</sup>

Jesus said, " The Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves. " <sup>6</sup> These proud and self-righteous people refused the proffered hand of salvation offered in God's only-begotten Son. These scribes and

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1. Mark 2, 10.
  2. Luke 7, 34.
  3. Matthew 22, 35.
  4. Mark 8, 11.
  5. Luke 11, 53-54.
  6. Luke 7, 30.



Pharisees well merited the thundering denunciations that Jesus uttered against them.

In His Sermon on the Mount Jesus made it plain that the scribes and Pharisees were hypocrites. He said ,  
 " Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of heaven."<sup>1</sup> Jesus warned against their hypocrisy when He said that a trumpet should not be sounded<sup>2</sup> in the synagogs and streets when alms are given. This the scribes and Pharisees did in order to be seen of men. Furthermore, Jesus stated that prayers should not be said in order to be seen of men, as the hypocrites did. Of fasting, Jesus said that men should not disfigure their faces in order to be seen, as the hypocrites did.

In this entire sermon Jesus showed that the tradition of the Law is but a matter of the letter and not of the spirit. True love goes deeper than mere obedience to regulations and rules of conduct. The commandments require the complete surrender of the heart unto God.

In the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican Jesus showed that the Pharisees' way of life was wrong.<sup>3</sup> The Pharisee's way of life was one of self-righteousness, pride, and hypocrisy. The publican received forgiveness, but the Pharisee did not. The reason for this may be stated in the form of an axiom : he that exalts himself shall be humbled, every last one: but he that humbles himself shall be exalted.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Matthew 5, 20.

2. Matthew 6, 2.

3. Luke 18, 9-14.

4. Lenski's Commentary, vol. 2, 1043.



Jesus made it plain that the wickedness of the scribes and Pharisees was very great. As mild and gentle as Jesus was, yet in the face of sin He could become very severe. Although they were expositors of the Law, yet one should not follow after their example, for they did not do the things that they demanded of others. Hort points out :

Jesus did not deny their authority. In Matt. 23,2 He says, " the scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat : all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, do and observe! But He adds, " But do not ye after their works, for they say and do not." Jesus taught no rebellion against their precepts as positive rules, but He condemned the spirit of the teaching as contradictory to the Law and the Prophets. 2

Jesus showed that these hypocrites did not exercise themselves in those things which they imposed on others. They would not move a finger to lighten the burden of someone when they saw how it affected him. They were for the outward show of religion but not for the substance of it. The scribes and Pharisees affected pre-eminence and authority and desired titles and places of honor and respect.

Christ spoke seven woes directly against the scribes and Pharisees. Every one of these "woes" is an exclamation like the "blessed" in the Beatitudes. It does not state a wish but a fact. It is not a curse that calls

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1. Matthew 23, 1-36; Mark 12, 38-40 ; Luke 20, 45-47.
  2. Anthony Hort, Judaistic Christianity , 28.



down a calamity, but a calm, true judgment and verdict rendered by a supreme judge himself.

Jesus gives the following reasons for His pronouncements :

1) The scribes and Pharisees shut up the Kingdom of heaven against men, by keeping people from believing in Christ and so from entering the Kingdom.

2) The scribes and Pharisees made righteousness and the form of godliness a cloak and a stalking horse for their covetous practices and desires. They devoured widow's houses and for a pretence made long prayers.

3) On the other hand they were very industrious in perverting men to their faction. They compassed land and sea in order to make one proselyte.

4) By seeking their own worldly gain and honor more than God's glory the scribes and Pharisees made false and unwarranted distinctions, especially in the matter of oaths. They were blind guides.

5) The scribes and Pharisees were strict and precise in the smaller matters of the Law but just as careless and loose in the weightier matters. They were partial, picking and choosing their duty according to their own personal interests.

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1. Six of these judgments, according to Lenski's Commentary (I, 903), have the evidence attached by means of a causal  $\epsilon\tau\iota$  clause which furnishes the full reason for the verdict "woe". In the remaining judgment the varied form of judgment does the same by means of an apposition. The word :  $\sigma\tau\omicron\kappa\rho\iota\tau\acute{\alpha}\iota$  has the sense of show-actor,  $\sigma\tau\omicron$  suggesting the mask under which he hid his true identity on the stage, for the ancient actors appeared with masks.



6) The Pharisees and scribes were more desirous and solicitous to appear pious to men than to approve themselves so to God. Here Jesus uses two similitudes. He compares the Pharisees and scribes to a vessel that is washed clean on the outside but contains dirt within. He also compares them to whited sepulchres..

7) The scribes and Pharisees pretended to honor and revere the memory of the prophets that were dead and gone, but they hated and persecuted those that were with them. This is the worst part of their characters.

The Pharisees and scribes are doomed. They cannot escape the damnation of hell. Of all sinners those who are of the spirit of the scribes and Pharisees are least likely to escape this damnation.

Jesus has been speaking out more plainly than ever before, because matters were coming to a head between Him and His enemies.<sup>1</sup> Here he speaks of the Pharisees as a leaven and identifies this leaven with hypocrisy.<sup>2</sup> The figure of a leaven refers to secret penetrating power. It is in this way that hypocrisy penetrates and vitiates everything in the Pharisees. The disciples are to be on guard against them and to avoid them.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Luke 12, 1 ff.

2. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, Commentary on the Whole Bible, ( New Testament ), 111.

3. Mark 8, 15. At another time, after the Pharisees had tempted Jesus, seeking to catch Him in His words, Jesus warned His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.



The Pharisees had the Law of Moses but did not keep  
 it.<sup>1</sup> They insisted upon outward order, piety, and right  
 moral living but were opposed to the doctrines of Christ.  
 Thus they proved themselves to be insincere in their  
 pretensions. If they had, on the other hand, made an  
 honest effort to fulfil the Law in all its mandates and  
 implications, they would have found themselves to be sinners.  
 If this would have been the case, they would have turned<sup>2</sup>  
 to the Gospel as the only way unto salvation.

If the scribes and Pharisees had truly believed the  
 teachings of Moses, they would have believed in Jesus, for<sup>3</sup>  
 Moses wrote of Him. If they had been truly sincere and  
 earnest, they would have with open arms accepted Jesus as  
 their Messiah and the only Savior from sin.

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1. John 7, 19.
  2. Paul E. Kretzmann, The Popular Commentary, ( New Testament ), vol. 1, 450.
  3. John 5, 45.



### III. The attitude of St. Paul to the Law.

#### A. General Observations.

According to the best estimates Paul was born in the first ten years of our present Christian era, about 3 A.D.<sup>1</sup> The birthplace of Paul was in the city of Tarsus. Paul called himself a " Hebrew of the Hebrews " and the thorough Hebraism of the family occurs in many ways.<sup>2</sup> Paul's father and grandfather were Pharisees and strict observers of the Mosaic Law. Paul was sent probably at the age of thirteen to be trained at the feet of the teacher, Gamaliel.

That Paul was a " Hebraist " in the fullest sense of the term is clear from almost every verse of His epistles. He reckons time by the Hebrew calendar and makes constant allusions to Jewish customs, laws, and festivals. His written expressions are derived from his Jewish family background. Paul was to the very heart a Jew, in culture, in sympathy, in nationality, and in faith.

If a Jewish boy were destined for the position of a rabbi, he entered the school of some great master at the age of thirteen. Paul was enrolled in the school of the famous Rabban Gamaliel, a grandson of Hillel, " a doctor of the Law had in reputation among all people." In the New Testament we have a favorable picture of such men as Nicodemus and Gamaliel, and it was undoubtedly of such

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1. Frederic W. Farrar, The Life and Work of St. Paul, 7 ff.  
2. Acts 22,3.



that Paul thought when he exclaimed before the Sanhedrin,  
 " Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees."<sup>1</sup>

Paul was a Hagadist rather than a Halachist. The Halachists were occupied with endless study of the details of the letter, while the Hagadists deduced from the utterances of the Prophets a spirit which amounted to contempt for Levitical minutiae. They developed the Messianic tradition and furnished a powerful, though often wholly unintentional, assistance to the logic of Christian exegesis.

Between the ages of thirteen and thirty-three Paul lived a Pharisee. Thus he scrupulously observed the Sabbath laws and regulations, the "abhoth" and "toldoth", those primary and derivative rules and regulations, inferences and combinations of inferences from rules and prohibitions, and cases of casuistry and conscience arising out of the infinite variety of circumstances to which these combinations might apply. The Sabbath had been changed from a delight unto the Lord to a mere semblance of accurate observance. However, Paul was not a hypocrite, but rather zealously sought to do all that was commanded.

From Paul's own words it is evident that these years must have been troubled years. He believed in eternity and in the resurrection. The darkness of misery hung over him and the sense of sin oppressed him. Throughout this struggle Paul was ever driven onward to try to fulfil the Law and so to put himself right with God. This led him

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1. Frederic W. Farrar, The Life and Word of St. Paul, 26.



to consent to the death of Stephen and with boundless energy and zeal to set forth on the road to Damascus. His purpose was to persecute the Christians there. However, on that road the struggle ended. Saul of Tarsus, the Pharisee, became Paul, the apostle of the Lord.

So the life of the persecutor flowed in another channel. His will was conscious of another influence and obeyed another law. The once zealous Pharisee said, "What shall I do? Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Thus Paul surrendered himself in the whole man to a new master, to the master whom he had wronged, whose disciples he had persecuted. Leathes states :

He learned to behold in Jesus Christ the revelation of the will of the God of his fathers; he never renounced his allegiance to the God of his fathers; he learned to know Him better, and to see Him more clearly, in and through the person of Jesus Christ. He was the perfect transparent and pellucid medium through which the brightness of the Divine glory streamed upon his believing soul. In seeing Him he saw the Father. <sup>1</sup>

We shall not discuss the subsequent developments in the life of St. Paul, because our purpose is but to show the background of this man of God for a better understanding of his attitude to the Law.

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1. Stanley Leathes, The Witness of Paul to Christ, 57 ff.



B. Paul's attitude in the Judaistic controversy.

At the Jerusalem Conference the matter of applying Judaistic regulations to the Gentiles was taken up, especially the matter of circumcision. A group of Jewish Christians had come into Antioch and demanded obedience to the Law of Moses on the part of the Gentiles and insisted on circumcision.

Eventually it became necessary to refer the matter to a decision of the church at Jerusalem. The Judaizers came to Jerusalem and loudly proclaimed their insistence on the moral necessity of circumcision. However, the leaders of the church soon realized that the attitude of the Judaizers was wrong. If the Christian church would insist on making Gentile Christians into orthodox Jews, the free river of the grace of God would certainly have been shut off.

There were those who wanted to compromise. <sup>1</sup> They did not want to alienate the Judaizers nor did they want to insist on circumcision for the Gentiles. They thought that the matter could be solved by not fraternizing with the Gentiles. This attitude even deluded Peter. However, this would have meant that Gentile converts were to be exhibited as unfit company for the Jewish Christians. This would have been wrong, and Paul denounced this attitude most severely.

Furthermore, the Judaizers insisted that Titus, the co-worker of Paul, should be circumcized. In the case of

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1. Anthony Hort, Judaistic Christianity, 78.



Timothy Paul took into account the Jewish parentage of Timothy. He was therefore circumcized as a Jew and not as a Gentile. The difference in the two cases amounted to this : To circumcize Titus would have been a concession to the false teachings of the Judaizers. On the other hand, Timothy was in almost every sense a Jew, having been brought up in the Hebrew religion. By circumcizing Timothy the one flaw in his position as a Jew would have been corrected.

Luke indicates the act to have arisen out of a special<sup>1</sup> circumstance. Timothy was to go on a missionary journey with Paul. As a missionary his position as a Jew was important. Standing at the side of the Pharisee of Tarsus he would be unable to influence the Jews as a Gentile convert. Preaching as a Jew without circumcision would have scandalized the Jews. By becoming circumcized Timothy would be able to do mission work among them.

Thus the great principle for which Paul fought was<sup>2</sup> the freedom of his converts from the bondage of the Law. It would have been difficult to organize Gentile Christian churches on the basis of the Jewish Law. But beyond this fact Paul had a much greater reason. It was entirely wrong and contrary to the teachings of Christ to insist on Jewish ceremonial tradition and their abrogated laws as essential to Christianity.

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1. Acts 16, 3.

2. Orello Cone, Paul, the Man, the Missionary, and the Teacher, 81.



In this debate the question arose, " If the Law is essential to salvation, what then has been the work of Christ ? " It is evident that if the Law is essential to salvation then Christ's work has been in vain. Man would still be under a Law religion.

Peter pointed out that to lay the burden of the Law on the Gentiles would be tempting God by hindering His clear purposes and will. The Law had proved to be impractical and had been found intolerable both by their fathers and by themselves.<sup>1</sup> For the time being these laws might apply to the Jews, but to the Gentiles they would only prove to be a stumbling-block.

James also spoke on the subject. He proposed to release the Gentiles from all but four restrictions. They were : abstinence from things polluted by being offered to idols, from fornication, from anything strangled, and from blood. James further pointed out that Jehovah is the Father of all men.<sup>2</sup> In the rebuilding of the ruined tabernacle of David he sees the upraising of the church of Christ, an ideal temple to which the Gentiles also shall be joined.

The debate was at an end. The leaders had spoken. It remained to make this decision known throughout the churches. Two men of high repute, Judas Barsabbas and Silas, were to accompany the emissaries from the church of Antioch on their return and to act as pledges for the genuineness of their written communication.

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1. Acts 15, 7-11.  
2. Genesis 9, 4.



C. Paul's attitude as reflected in his epistles.

In his epistle to the Romans Paul especially refers to the moral law. Even as he once had been a zealous so he now burns in his devotion to show the true place of the Law since the Messiah had come. Paul pointed out that the Gentiles had the Law written in their hearts and thus were without excuse. The Jews with the advantage of their written Law had also failed. Paul said, " As many as have sinned without the Law shall also perish without the Law : and as many as have sinned under the Law shall perish under the Law."<sup>1</sup> He further pointed out that Abraham was not justified by the Law but by faith.<sup>2</sup>

St. Paul proclaimed the freedom from the penal claims of the Law. He pointed out, " For the Law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the Law of sin and death."<sup>3</sup> All that the Law could not accomplish had been accomplished through the work of Christ.

However, the moral law was not abrogated. Paul prescribed the commandments as rules of life and showed how true obedience is possible. Paul sees the Law embodied in Christ, Who fulfils the Law not simply as a standard but as a living principle within.

There is a great deal of discussion concerning the Law in Paul's letter to the Galatians. His converts in Galatia

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1. Romans 2, 12.
  2. Romans 4, 3-4.
  3. Romans 8, 2.



were falling an easy prey to the arts of Judaizing missionaries from Palestine. Evidently the Judaizing party at Jerusalem had gone into Paul's own territory, into the bosom of those Gentile churches which he had founded.

The Judaizers had attacked the apostolic authority of Paul as invalid beside that of the Jerusalem apostles. Furthermore, they were preaching to the Gentiles the necessity for circumcision. The Judaizers were unscrupulous. They used falsehood and detraction in order to loosen Paul from his place of affection and respect among his converts. They accused him of the following :

1) a lack of uprightness. They said that Paul observed the Law among the Jews, yet dissuaded the Gentiles.

2) keeping his converts in a subordinate state. They were excluded from the covenant enjoyed by the circumcized alone.

3) flattery. Paul was said to be seeking to make a party for himself.

4) falsely representing his apostleship. They maintained that Paul's doctrine was authoritative only in so far as it agreed with the doctrines of the Twelve. They said that Paul was in opposition to Peter, James, and the other "pillars of the church."

Paul answered his enemies. He showed that the doctrine of the Judaizers destroyed the essence of Christianity and reduced it from its inward and spiritual life to mere

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1. Conybeare and Houson, The Life and Epistles of St. Paul, vol. 2, 133-134.



outward ceremony. He contradicted the falsehoods propagated against him and vindicated his title to the apostolic office as received directly from Christ and exercised independently from the other apostles. Hort remarks :

St. Paul was no heated partisan, intolerant of a lesser good through ill-regulated zeal for a greater. Paul was not speaking to born Jews . The question at issue was whether heathen, having become Christians, were required to become Jews also. To concede this was to make void the grace of God and the faith of man. It was to take all the meaning out of such words as these, "Because ye are sons, God sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father, so that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son: and if a son, then an heir through God. Gal.4,6 ff. <sup>1</sup>

Paul introduced the subject by referring to the episode at Antioch where he had to rebuke Peter for his dissimulation. <sup>2</sup> He showed that it was wrong for those who know that they are justified alone by faith in Christ to insist on obedience to Jewish laws. Evidently thinking of his own zeal as a Pharisee Paul states in the impressive words : " For I through the Law died unto the Law, that I might live unto God." <sup>3</sup>

Paul pointed out that the Law would not give life. The promise of the inheritance was given 430 years before the Law. It was never meant to give life but only added because of transgressions. <sup>4</sup> The Law may drive us toward righteousness but cannot give righteousness. Paul used

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1. Anthony Hort, Judaistic Christianity , 100.
  2. Galatians 2, 13.
  3. Galatians 2, 19.
  4. Galatians 3, 19.



the illustration of the pedagog whose duty it was to take the child to school. So the Law was a schoolmaster to lead man to Christ, where life sustaining strength could be found.<sup>1</sup>

Paul showed that the observances of the Law, although they foreshadowed the coming of the Messiah, were burdensome and placed the Jews under bondage. The whole course of the Jew from the cradle to the grave was marked out for him. Paul used the following expressions : " We were kept in ward under the Law "<sup>2</sup> and " under guardians and stewards until the day appointed of the father."<sup>3</sup>

In a magnificent style the Apostle showed that man is free from the Law. As a Pharisee Paul was very zealous to obey the Law, but now through Christ he has experienced the freedom from that Law. Paul stated, " In the fulness of time God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might received the adoption of sons."<sup>4</sup>

The gospel of the grace of God in Christ shows that the Law is fulfilled and that the ceremonial law is abrogated. All the directions and restrictions given to the Jews as a separate people are abolished. However, the great principles of the moral law are to remain as a guide.<sup>5</sup> Finally Paul warns these Christians against turning back

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1. Galatians 3, 24.
  2. Galatians 3, 23.
  3. Galatians 4, 2.
  4. Galatians 4, 4 ff.
  5. Galatians 4, 9-10.



to the " weak and beggarly elements " and to " observing months and seasons and years. "

In First Corinthians Paul pointed out that he sought to win men to Christ by accomodating himself to their standpoint, saying, " to them that are under the Law, as under the Law. " <sup>1</sup> He used the example of circumcision showing that a man remains before God in that state in which he was called. Paul told the Corinthians to seek no change in this respect. Gentiles were not to be forced to become circumcized..

In Second Corinthians Paul showed that the Law is a legal system, a ministration of death in contrast to the ministration of the spirit. It is evident that there was a Judaizing element present in the Corinthian church. Paul repeatedly vindicated his authority and conduct against traducers who wouldset up against him the authority of the Palestinian apostles. Paul further spoke of the new covenant of the spirit in contrast to the covenant of the letter, of the ministration of righteousness with its abiding glory and the ministration of death with its transitory glory in the face of Moses.

In Ephesians Paul pointed out that Christ had brought about harmony when He " abolished in his flesh the enmity, <sup>2</sup> even the Law of commandments contained in ordinances. " Paul referred especially to the ceremonial enactments.

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1. I Corinthians 9, 20.
  2. Ephesians 2, 15.



In Philippians Paul gives us an autobiographical sketch. There the self-righteous Pharisee reckons himself "blameless" in the eye of the Law but is led to find in Christ the righteousness which is "through faith" <sup>1</sup> instead of his own righteousness which is "of the Law."

In Colossians Paul contrasted the spiritual circumcision with the physical. He wrote of the blotting out through the work of the cross, of the bond written in ordinances, and the consequent deliverance of the believer from the bondage of ceremonial enactments. These were "a shadow of things to come," Christ being the glorious <sup>2</sup> substance.

In First Timothy Paul wrote that "the Law is good, if a man use it lawfully....the Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless." <sup>3</sup> Thus again it is evident that the Law only leads to Christ. It does not give nor sustain life but only leads to life.

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1. Philippians 3, 5.6.9.
  2. Colossians 2, 11-17.
  3. I Timothy 1, 8-9.



#### IV. The relation of our Savior to the Law.

##### A. The Life of Christ

In His life Christ fulfilled the Law in all its parts. According to Jewish law Jesus was circumcized on the eighth day. This fact has a great deal of meaning for the Christian. In this way it becomes evident that Christ was "made under the Law" and shows that He came not to destroy but to fulfil. Farrar states :

Thus it became Him to fulfil all righteousness. Thus early did He suffer pain for our sakes, to teach us the spiritual circumcision- the circumcision of the heart- the circumcision of all our bodily senses. As the east catches at sunset the colors of the west, so Bethlehem is a prelude to Calvary, and even the infant's cradles is tinged with a crimson reflection from the Redeemer's cross. <sup>1</sup>

According to the ritual law of purification Christ was presented in the temple of the Lord, while His mother brought the sacrifice, "a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons," <sup>2</sup> which is pathetic evidence of their poverty.

At the age of twelve years Jesus went up to the Passover in Jerusalem. This was the age when a youthful Jew assumed legal responsibility becoming a "son of the Law." So Jesus participated in the festal observances and showed His interest in the matters concerning the Law by His discussion with the doctors in the temple.

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1. Frederic W. Farrar, The Life of Christ, 9-10.  
2. Luke 2, 22-24.



Jesus always honored the Law. He read it in the synagog. Because of His great respect for His Father's House Jesus drove out those that sold and bought in the temple. He paid the temple-tax<sup>1</sup> exacted from every son<sup>2</sup> of Israel and attended the various feasts. When the time of His departure drew near Jesus took special pains to observe the Passover with His disciples.

Jesus said, " Suffer it to be so now ; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."<sup>3</sup> This was characteristic of His life. Christ certainly obeyed the moral law. His greatest enemies could find no fault with His moral conduct.

In the trial of Jesus various charges were brought against Him, but no witnesses could be found who could give genuine evidence against Jesus. Jesus was not condemned to death because He was found guilty of sin, but because Pilate feared the Jews.

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1. Matthew 8, 4.
  2. Matthew 17, 24-27.
  3. Matthew 3, 15.



## B. The Teachings of Christ.

It is important that we make a clear distinction between the actual Law and the expositions of the Jewish teachers, the traditions of the elders. Jesus did not violate the Law itself but did oppose the misuse of that Law. Hort states :

Christ showed the true purpose and meaning of the Law. But He did show that the old form of the Law had ceased to be binding. He did not disobey its precepts or even the precepts of tradition, or even encourage His disciples to do so, except in so far as obedience would have promoted that Pharisaic misuse of the Law and of tradition alike. He did homage to that right service of the old order.

Fundamentally Christ would teach us that a proper fulfillment of the Law was not a literal retention of it as a code of commandments. The true and deeper fulfillment lies in the right attitude of the heart toward God. <sup>1</sup>

Christ demonstrated in His life and teachings the fulfillment of the Old Testament passage : " Thou hast no pleasure in sacrifices and offerings : in burnt offerings Thou delightest not. The Sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise. " <sup>2</sup> This passage does not run counter to Old Testament teaching but is the essence of God's will as <sup>3</sup> exemplified and demonstrated in the Savior.

The Law was full of commandments that were to be obeyed. In the Prophets there were rebukes of transgressors and warnings of coming doom. There were those who may have thought that Jesus had come to break down the Law and so offer an easier life and less strenuous way of living.

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1. Anthony Hort, Judaistic Christianity, 37.
  2. Psalm 51, 16-17.
  3. T.K.Cheyne, Jewish Religious Life, 255.



Christ made it plain that He had not come to break down the Law but rather to bring it to fulness or completion.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed it would have been terrible for Christ to have set Himself to destroy or undo that which was destined to live as long as heaven and earth. Jesus said,<sup>2</sup>

" Whosoever therefore shall loose one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven : but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. "

Christ further made it plain that our righteousness is to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, not less righteousness, but more. Man is not to heap on more precepts. Rather the Law demands another order of righteousness which penetrates deeper and rises higher.

Jesus gave instances which show that the true righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in the Gospel. That which was said of old was not to be destroyed but to be fulfilled. There was a true and real purpose of God in back of the Law as it had been given to man.

Man is to love his neighbor. That love then becomes more comprehensive when it includes also the enemy. Christ

1. Anthony Hort, Judaistic Christianity, 14-18.

2. λύση probably does not mean "break" but rather "loose" or "relax." Thus it weakens or dissolves the hold which a commandment has on men's consciences and wills. Because of such weakening of conscience Jesus further says, " and teach men so."

3. Matthew 5,19.



further gave the Golden Rule that one should do unto others<sup>1</sup> as he would have them do unto him. Speaking of the Law and the Prophets Jesus showed that the two make up the Divine instrument of teaching and guidance. They are not to be taken separately or one set up against the other. They both rest on common ground. Christ is the one who fulfills them.

Christ's interpretation of the Law is shown in the case of the disciples eating bread with unwashed hands. Jesus pointed out that a man does not become defiled by what enters into him but becomes defiled by that which comes out of him. He did not condemn the washings or differences of meats among the Jews but rather the insistence of the Jews upon them as principles of religion and morality, especially when these commandments were confused with the principles of the Law and the Prophets.<sup>2</sup>

The instructions which Jesus gave to the leper show that Jesus did not oppose the Law for those under it.<sup>3</sup> This man was told to obey the Law and to show His gratitude to God. Christ also told Peter to pay the half shekel levied for temple service, pointing out that to do so might lead to offense.

The outstanding point of the teachings of Christ is that He opposed the tithing of mint, anise, and cummin, when the weightier matters of the Law were left undone, such as judgment, mercy, and faith.

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1. Matthew 7, 1-12.

2. Anthony Hort, Judaistic Christianity, 29.

3. Matthe 8,4 ; Mark 1,44; Luke 5, 14.



Christ was charged with wrong-doing when He ate with publicans and sinners. He answered by quoting the words of Hosea, " I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." <sup>1</sup> Christ would not and could not shrink from ceremonial defilement if such action would keep Him from ministering to the souls of men. Jesus also used this passage when His disciples were accused of violating the Sabbath by plucking the grains of wheat.

The proper understanding of the Law consists in the fact that one must be a true believer in God. From this faith then will flow true works of righteousness.

In His Sermon on the Mount Christ taught what true obedience to the will of God involves. In contrast to the woes pronounced against the scribes and Pharisees Jesus pronounced blessings upon those who follow after righteousness. Jesus here showed that the proper relationship between His teachings and the Law is one of continuance and fulfillment. On the other hand, the new righteousness does not set aside the Law or offer an easier religion, but one that is more exacting. Ceremonies and externals are not so important, but the inmost thoughts of the heart and the motives that guide our lives are important.

Furthermore, Jesus showed that not only is the outward act of killing forbidden, but the murderous thoughts of the

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1. Hosea 6, 6.



heart, hatred, and revenge are included. In this way Christ showed the deeper spiritual meaning of the Law.

The traditional teaching confined adultery and divorce mainly to the outward act. Christ, however, showed that this commandment pertained also to the lustful thought of the heart. Jesus said, " Whosoever looketh at a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already <sup>1</sup> in his heart."

Christ condemned the flippant oaths allowed by the rabbis. He showed that there must be reverence for the Divine Name. Proper speech should be limited to "yes" and "no." No strengthening oath is needed.

Christ condemned revenge and inculcated instead gentleness and forbearance. The spiritually strong life will be forgiving, tolerant, and forbearing toward the neighbor. The old rabbinical teaching, " Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy," was an unwarranted addition. The Old Testament consistently showed that such is not the will of God. Proverbs points out, " If thine <sup>2</sup> enemy be hungry give him bread to eat."

A lawyer asked Jesus, " Who is my neighbor?" Jesus answered by relating the parable of the Good Samaritan. By this He showed that everyone in need is one's neighbor. This is an example of true love.

Jesus also made it plain that worship is not to be done

1. Matthew 5, 28.

2. Proverbs 25, 21.22.



for the sake of being seen of men but is a very close and personal relationship between the child of God and his heavenly Father. The object of alms-giving, of prayer, and of fasting is to express brotherly love.

There is only one treasure worthy of man's search, and this treasure is the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Material blessings must not be set before duty toward God and man. Rather than censure men should seek to help one another.

Finally, Jesus pointed out that His is a narrow way. It is not easy but very exacting requiring the complete surrender of the heart to God. In stressing this point Jesus warned against the false teachers, who would delude men and drive them from the Way of Life to be lost and destroyed in the mire of human laws and regulations.

Jesus continually showed that He did not speak against the Law but against the traditional interpretation of the Law by the elders. Jesus asked the Pharisees : " Why do you also transgress the commandments of God because of your tradition?"<sup>1</sup> Jesus gave as an example of such transgression the Jewish evasion of the Fourth Commandment by their distinction of Korban.

Jesus pointed out to the rich young ruler that he could not be saved by trying to keep the commandments.<sup>2</sup> Rather Jesus told him to take up the cross and follow Him. In this way Jesus shows that man is saved by faith, by the

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1. Matthew 15, 3.  
2. Matthew 19, 16-42.



complete surrender of the heart to God.

A lawyer asked Jesus, " Which is the greatest com-  
<sup>1</sup>  
 mandment of the Law?" Jesus answered by stating the sum-  
 mary of the two tables of the Law. Thus the Law is  
 fulfilled by love, for all of the commandments of the  
 Law hang upon this summary. Jesus showed this by saying,  
 " the whole Law."

Jesus charged the Jews with failure to keep the Law  
 saying, " Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of  
 you doeth the Law ? " <sup>2</sup> The Jews were not fulfilling  
 the true spirit of the Law, for that spirit requires love  
 to be foremost in life.

In the healing of the impotent man on the Sabbath  
 day Jesus showed how one law may conflict with another.  
 Moses had commanded circumcision, and occasionally the time  
 for circumcision would fall on the Sabbath day. Even  
 though the Jews greatly revered this day, yet in order to  
 keep the rite of circumcision they would perform this rite  
 on the Sabbath day. Therefore it was unreasonable to  
 accuse Jesus, because on the Sabbath day He had fulfilled  
 the higher law of doing good and healing the impotent man.

Thus Jesus showed that it was vain to observe a law  
 of mere externals. Merely doing this did not fulfil the  
 Law. What truly matter was that the heart of man be  
 cleansed, and that his actions be motivated by love to  
 God and man.

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1. Matthew 22, 35-39 ; Mark 12, 31.

2. John 7, 19.



## Conclusion

The chief characteristic of Judaism in New Testament times was the Law, careful and exact observance of outward acts and moral precepts. Most Jews believed that this would lead to salvation. Judaism had developed into a religion of law. In fact their Torah has made the Jews unique in the sense that of all religions the Jews are especially legalistic and external.<sup>1</sup>

Judaism has been characterized as a religion that has " become enmeshed in her law, like the silkworm in its cocoon, finally to dry up and perish."<sup>2</sup> Jesus came for the very purpose of saving men from the hopelessness and despair of such a religion. He came to teach men that such a religion was wrong and that hope lay alone in salvation through God's only-begotten Son.

Law is also characteristic of the other great religions of the world. These religions teach codes of ethics and morals. They insist on externals and ceremonies. Such externalism and legalism is common to all the non-Christian religions of the world.

Buddhism teaches salvation by human merit and good works. This religion teaches man that he is saved by not killing, stealing, lying, committing adultery, and by not drinking intoxicating liquor. The externalism of Confucianism is shown in their ancestor worship.<sup>3</sup>

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1. George A. Barton, A History of the Hebrew People, 455.
  2. K. Kohler, Jewish Theology, 355.
  3. Paul E. Kretzmann, The God of the Bible and other "Gods",



If the proper rites are not observed in connection with the death and burial of a parent or relative, the spirit of the departed will not find rest. Hinduism emphasizes good works in salvation. Brahmanism especially emphasizes knowledge and the performance of the ritual as the means of salvation.

Shintoism also offers a code of ethics to its followers. Expiation and liberation from sin is made by a great prayer which will be heard by the gods of heaven and of earth. Thus all sins are done away with by such an outward or magical act. Mohammedanism is a religion assuring man of salvation by good works. By carrying out external principles of this religion a man may gain salvation. Their requirements include : regular repetition of the Mohammedan creed, the duty of prayer five times a day and at three stated intervals, almsgiving, regulations connected with the feast of Ramadan, and the pilgrimage to Mecca which is to be made at least once during the lifetime.

Christianity stands alone against these religions of the world. These heathen religions are religions of law, while Christianity is not, but teaches salvation alone through the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, God's Son. The law religions are external, outward, and ceremonial. Christianity teaches a religion centered and based

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1. Paul E. Kretzmann, The God of the Bible and other "Gods", 131 and 150.



in the heart. God's Holy Spirit must have entered into that heart and worked a living faith. Such a living faith results in good works. The motive for doing good in the law religions is the hope of reward. The motive in the Christian religion is love to God and the fellowman.

What a treasure we have in our religion of the Lord Jesus Christ . We are free and no longer enmeshed in a law, like the silkworm in its cocoon, finally to dry up and perish. From this we are delivered and have the comforting assurance that Christ, God's Son, gave Himself into death for all sin. Because of this atonement sins are forgiven, no matter how great they may be. This great truth then drives the believer to an earnest zeal and desire to carry out the will of God and to give evidence for his faith. God has revealed this truth to man through His Son , Jesus Christ, as the Savior expressly says , " And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. "



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