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**PAUL'S GOSPEL IN AN
INTERCULTURAL CONTEXT**

**Jew and Gentile
in the Letter to the Romans**



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Christianity and Judaism: Continuity and Discontinuity

The relationship between Christianity and Judaism is a vast theme. Some of the most significant developments affecting the relationship have originated from historical events such as the Jewish-Roman war and the eventual destruction of Jerusalem; the Holocaust is a more recent example. In this study we shall confine ourselves to theological issues in three key topics: covenant, Paul's conversion-call, and the use of the title 'Israel'. The aim is to demonstrate that continuity as well as discontinuity between Christianity and Judaism is basic to the New Testament understanding of all three.

1. *New Covenant or Renewed Covenant?*

The ambiguity concerning the understanding of 'covenant' in the New Testament is illustrated by the variation both in the meaning and in the frequency of the term. Of the thirty-three occurrences, eight are in the undisputed letters of Paul, seventeen are in Hebrews, with four occurrences in Luke/Acts, and one each in Mark, Matthew, Ephesians, and Revelation.

Paul first uses the adjective new (*kaine*) in connection with covenant (*diathēke*) in the reference in 1 Corinthians 11:25 to the institution of the Lord's Supper. Mark simply refers to 'my blood of the covenant' (14:24). In the earliest and best manuscripts of Matthew and Mark, 'new' is not included. Luke 22:17-20 includes two traditions - a shorter one that does not mention 'covenant' at all, and a longer one that mentions 'the new covenant'. The sole reference to 'the old covenant' is found in 2 Corinthians 3:14 where Paul speaks of reading the old covenant. It is probable that behind the references to 'new covenant' in the New Testament is the passage in Jeremiah 31:34 where the prophet says, 'Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah'. The significant feature of this covenant, which will distinguish it from that made at the Exodus, is that the Lord will put his law within them: 'I will write it upon their hearts'. If Jesus did actually use the phrase 'new covenant', probably he had this prophecy in mind.

'Covenant' in Hebrews

This epistle cites the Jeremiah passage in full (from the Septuagint) in Hebrews 8:8-12. The author has more than one meaning for the word

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('diathēke'); he can use it as meaning a 'testament', associated with the death of the testator (9:16f). Hebrews offers a clear contrast between the old and the new, but, unlike Paul or Jeremiah, its author finds the essence of the two 'diathēkai' in the cultic aspect. This approach is doubtless to be understood in light of the purpose and the audience for which the document was originally written. The interpretation of Hebrews will differ depending on whether the author is seen as contrasting Christian faith with Judaism or with some Jewish-Gnostic heresy.

In his recent *Introduction to the New Testament*, H. Koester suggests that the author of Hebrews, addressing the whole Christian church, enters into a critical theological controversy with Gnosticism in refuting the Gnostic understanding of both the redeemer and the process of salvation by means of a Christological and ecclesiological interpretation of Scripture. (1) In his commentary on Hebrews, Robert Jewett notes the close parallels between Colossians and Hebrews; the key argument in both is that Christ has overcome the elemental forces of the universe. He takes up the proposal of Charles P. Anderson that the lost Laodicean letter, written probably by Epaphras, is in fact the Epistle to the Hebrews (cf Col 4:16). (2)

The fact that the most recent scholarship considers the purpose of Hebrews as being essentially to oppose a Jewish-Gnostic type of heresy means that we must be extremely careful not to read this letter simply as a stark contrast between Judaism ('the old') and Christianity ('the new') as symbolised by two distinct covenants. Koester in fact warns that parts of Hebrews may be completely misunderstood if the letter is interpreted as a criticism of the Jewish cult. He states: 'To be sure, the material and temporal limitations of the sacrificial cult are pointed out (9:9-10), but the actual point of the argument as a whole is to prove that the heavenly reality of the path that the redeemer took led through his death; only for that reason does the new covenant stand (9:15-17). The author does not argue against Judaism, but against the gnostic denial of the salvatory significance of Jesus' death'. (3)

The Particularity of the Pauline Epistles

To interpret Paul's letters as abstract and timeless theological treatises, as if they had originated in a historical vacuum, is entirely to misunderstand them. It is clear that the major and undisputed letters are addressed to individual churches about specific problems encountered at a particular period in their history. The genius of Paul is that he was able to write coherent and consistent theology while translating it into the contingent particularities of each local church.

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Thus the theology of the cross, Paul's unique apocalyptic interpretation of the death and resurrection of Jesus, constitutes the dogmatic centre and core of his gospel. (4) But this is continuously reinterpreted and restated to relate to differing local problems. To understand Paul aright is not merely to take note of what he has written but to interpret his written words in the context out of which they arise and to which they are addressed. Thus in acknowledging Paul to be a consistent theologian, we will insist on distinguishing him from the systematic theologian. Often the failure to interpret Paul historically as well as theologically has resulted in gross exaggeration of Paul's views, especially on the theme of Judaism.

'Covenant' in Paul
Paul, as we have already noted, refers to 'the new covenant' in 1 Corinthians 11:25. In 2 Corinthians 3:6 he also refers to apostles being qualified 'to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit'. There is a reference to two covenants in Galatians, but the references in Romans - 'to them belong... the covenants' (9:4) and 'this will be my covenant with them' (11:27) - present a more positive understanding of God's covenantal relationship with Israel. The problem with most of these references is that very often they are incidental or secondary to the main theme in hand. Nowhere do we have as a central theme in any of Paul's letters a stark contrast between Christianity and Judaism in terms of old and new covenant. Paul does not think so much in terms of static abrogation - of the replacement of one covenant by another - but rather, in terms of dynamic transformation. Thus Christ is the 'telos' or goal, of the law rather than its termination (Rom 10:4). (5) It would seem unwarranted therefore to make the allegorical reference to two covenants in Galatians the basis for an important New Testament doctrine. In any case Paul does not use the terms 'old' and 'new' here. This is doubtless because both covenants are in fact traced back to the figure of Abraham. Again the reference in 1 Corinthians 11:25, though ambiguous, has no immediate contrast with Judaism in its context.

The unique reference to 'the old covenant' in 2 Corinthians 3:14 is more problematical. But the actual theme is a contrast between forms of ministry which itself originates from a reference to the Corinthians as Paul's letter of recommendation, 'a letter from Christ... written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts' (2 Cor 3:3). This contrast reminds us of a basic contrast

that Paul sometimes uses, between the 'outward' and 'inward' Jew (Rom 2:28f), and between the spirit and the letter (Rom 7:6).

Part of the problem of 2 Corinthians is that we are unclear as to the identity of Paul's opponents. Both Ernest Käsemann (6) and Dieter Georgi (7) hold that Paul may have a polemical intention in this passage, which may be directed against Jewish or Jewish-Christian opponents. C K Barrett considers that these opponents regarded themselves as preeminent Christian apostles. They carried letters of authority from Jerusalem but they refused to recognise Paul's apostolic status. They also accommodated themselves to the Hellenistic or gnosticising criteria employed by the Gentile Christians in Corinth. (8)

Moreover, there is a real possibility that Paul is here making use of his opponents' slogans and reversing their opinion that spirit and letter are directly linked in the interpretation of the Old Testament. Perhaps this is one reason why Paul takes up a pre-Pauline midrash on Exodus 34:30. (9) For a clear understanding of 2 Corinthians 3-4, we require a more precise knowledge of the beliefs of Paul's opponents and also of the first century midrashic understanding of Exodus 34. Only then can we base important doctrines upon it. In any case we cannot agree with Käsemann's conclusion in his essay 'The Spirit and the Letter', that 'the phenomenon of the true Jew is eschatologically realised in the Christian who has freed himself from Judaism'. (10)

Käsemann does warn against any absolute identification of the Old Testament as letter or any simplistic depreciation of the law simply because it was written down. He points out that behind the reference to 'written... with the Spirit... on tablets of human hearts' lies an assertion of the fulfilment of Jeremiah 31:33, and that Paul has in mind here both the reference to stone tablets and the contrast of Ezekiel 11:9 and 36:26 where Israel's stony heart is to be replaced by a heart of flesh. The implication is that the new covenant of which Jeremiah speaks has become a reality. Käsemann, however, sees here two contrasting covenants so that Paul has to decide between the old and the new covenants, instead of seeing both as a historical continuity in the light of the concept of the renewed covenant'. (11)

Despite the fact that, in his recent book *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, E P Sanders deplores the implicit anti-Judaism in much German Pauline scholarship earlier in this century, he himself concludes that Paul's religion is far removed from the covenantal nomism that essentially constituted Palestinian Judaism. He concludes that the idea of the covenant was not a central one for Paul, for whom 'participation in Christ', a way of salvation that by definition excludes all others, was basic. (12) Sanders goes on to argue

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that Paul in fact explicitly denies that the Jewish covenant can be effective for salvation.' In an essay on 'Paul and Covenantal Nomism', Morna Hooker points out that Sanders is correct only if by 'Jewish covenant' he means the covenant on Mount Sinai, which Paul regards as an interim measure until the promises are fulfilled. While allowing that it may be pure chance that Paul never described God's promises to Abraham as a 'covenant', Hooker suggests that this may be because Paul prefers to speak of it in terms of promise, and to use the term 'covenant' for what happens in Christ. (13) God's promises to Abraham relate to the future and it is only in Christ that the promised blessing becomes effective.

W D Davies has drawn attention to the fact that the word 'new' can be used both of Jeremiah's new covenant and also of the new moon. He writes: 'The ministry of the old covenant, and by implication the old covenant itself, had its glory (2 Cor 3:7). Moreover, just as the new covenant conceived by Jeremiah, Jubilees and the sectarians at Qumran did not unambiguously envisage a radical break with the Sinaitic covenant but a re-interpretation, so Paul's new covenant. Thus Jer 31:33 does not look forward to a new law but to 'my law', God's sure law, being given and comprehended in a new way. The adjective 'ἡδασαῖ' in Jer 31:33, translated 'kainē' by Paul, can be applied to the new moon, which is simply the old moon in a new light. The new covenant of Paul, as of Jeremiah, finally offers re-interpretation of the old'. (14)

This conclusion concerning the meaning of covenant in Paul should not be regarded as confusing Judaism and Christianity. We are not advocating any theory of two covenants - whether it is one in absolute contrast to the other, as Käsemann suggests, or two covenants for two distinct peoples, as some modern scholars propose. Rather, the object of our study has been to emphasise that there is real continuity between Judaism and Christianity.

If we minimise the differences between these, we fail to account adequately for the origin of Christianity, though we do thereby acknowledge God's revelation of himself in Judaism. Alternatively, if we exaggerate the element of discontinuity, we can then stress the uniqueness of the Christian revelation at the expense of calling into question the faithfulness of God. For if one covenant can fail, so too can another; moreover, if Christianity claims to be an absolutely new revelation of God, how then do we see ourselves in relation to Islam, or to any subsequent religion appearing on the stage of history?

Käsemann claims that whereas Abraham is, for Paul, a prototype of the Christ, Moses is the antitype. (15) If we accept this designation, it would

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appear that in relation to Moses and Sinai, Paul would speak of a new covenant. But if Abraham is a true prototype, then surely we must speak in terms of a renewed covenant, in terms of fulfilment and affirmation, rather than purely in terms of stark contrast.

2. Paul's Conversion-Call

W D Davies has long insisted that a proper understanding of Paul's attitude to the law is attained only in the light of his understanding of Jesus as Messiah. (16) Whatever else is in dispute concerning Paul's Damascus experience, one thing is clear: it involved a messianic or Christological content. Krister Stendahl argues that a proper interpretation of Romans 7 shows that Paul, as a loyal Jew, had experienced no struggle or guilt feelings that would have led him, through dissatisfaction with the law, to turn to Christ. Paul's concern, as distinct from that of Luther, was not 'How can I find a gracious God?' Neither did he suffer from an introspective conscience. Instead of speaking of Paul's conversion, Stendahl prefers to regard him as someone who did not abandon his Jewishness for a new religion but, rather, as a Jew who was given a new vocation in service of the Gentiles. (17)

R P Martin agrees that Paul as a Jew was probably not consumed with guilt and inner conflicts. But Martin takes issue with Stendahl because Stendahl fails to note that the intermediate term between Paul the persecutor and Paul the apostle is Christ himself. 'The central link acting as a hinge to connect the old and the new for Paul, was a revelation of Christ in his glory as the image of God.' It is the Christological dimension of Paul's conversion, strangely missing from Stendahl's exposition, which for Martin turns out to be the indispensable factor in explaining it. (18) We believe that Martin is correct in this emphasis and that Paul's attitude to the law is more intelligible in the light of it. Paul's reassessment of the law resulted from the revelation of Jesus Christ. As Davies notes, 'To isolate the criticism of the Law from the total messianic situation, as Paul conceived it, is both to exaggerate and emasculate it. The criticism of the Law was derivative, a consequence of the ultimate place Paul ascribed to Jesus as Messiah'. (19)

E P Sanders has recently drawn attention to the fact that, since the Reformation, there has been a tendency to read back the struggles of the sixteenth century into Paul's experience and theology. He deplores the tendency to caricature Judaism as a 'religion of works'. We agree with him and with W D Davies that the precedence of grace over law in Israelite religion persisted, despite some neglect, in Judaism. (20) In deference to

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Sanders it should be acknowledged that the boasting that Paul opposes is perhaps better understood as the making of claims rather than as the achievement of good works. This making of claims consisted in regarding the mere possession of the law as a badge of election. But for Paul the recognition of Jesus as Messiah, and its corollary - the admission of Gentiles as Gentiles - means that such a view of the law is precluded.

Yet even the assertion that Jesus is Messiah was not for Paul tantamount to a rejection of Judaism, or the founding of an entirely new religion but, rather, expressing the profound conviction that the final expression and intent of Judaism had been born. For this reason we believe that it is inadequate to speak only in terms of Paul's conversion - as if he were moving from one religion to another; and likewise only in terms of his call - as if he were continuing in an unaltered faith. The conversion-call combination emphasises both continuity and change.

3. Paul and Israel

a) Paul and the Israel of God (Gal 6:16)

Peter Richardson has maintained that the designation of the church as 'the new Israel' did not occur until the time of Justin. It was only by AD 160 that the church was identified with the 'Israel of God'.⁽²¹⁾ His thesis has yet to be disproved. Though there may be signs in the New Testament of an implicit adaptation and application of titles and roles that point already in the direction of this identification, there is not so much explicit evidence as one might expect. Thus in Hebrews, even though the concept of Christians as the 'Israel of God' underlies much in the letter, this is never actually explicitly expressed.

We need to distinguish clearly between those features that point to Gentile Christians as elect or as now being included within the people of God, and those that might tend toward the idea of the displacement of Israel by the Christian church. Galatians 6:16 might possibly qualify as an explicit identification of the church with 'the Israel of God'. The Revised Standard Version renders it: 'Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God'. This might be taken to mean that the latter phrase is simply in apposition to the former and that Paul's benediction is applied to all those Christians, who, like him, regard circumcision as unessential. This would also mean that Paul, already at this period in history, identifies the Christian church as 'the Israel of God' in opposition to the historical people Israel. This interpretation is unlikely for several reasons.

Although Paul does distinguish between Abraham's two sons - one is born 'according to the flesh' and the other 'through promise' (Gal 4:22f) -

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his main aim is not to show a contrast between the Israel of God and fleshly Israel (*Israel kata sarka*). He writes to discourage Gentile Christians from accepting circumcision and (possibly) the bondage of keeping the whole law. Paul asserts that Jesus became accursed so that 'in Christ Jesus' the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles (3:14). But there is no suggestion that the inclusion of Gentiles necessarily involves the exclusion of Jews. Moreover, since apart from Galatians 6:16 there is no other evidence until AD 160 for the explicit identification of the church as 'the true Israel', this isolated instance would be hard to explain by itself. Why was it that no one in the next hundred years used this verse to identify the church as 'the new Israel' if it was accepted that Paul had in fact already done so?

It is better to take Peter Richardson's translation as indicating the proper sense in which this verse should be understood: 'May God give peace to all who will walk according to this criterion, and mercy also to his faithful people Israel'.⁽²²⁾ Thus Paul's benediction also includes the faithful in Israel, although this group is not coextensive with 'all Israel'. The New English Bible translation offers a similar understanding: 'whoever they are who take this principle for their guide, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the whole Israel of God'. Our approach to Galatians 6:16 has naturally been coloured by the meaning of 'Israel' in Romans 9-11 and it is to this that we must now turn.

(b) Paul and Israel in Romans 9-11: Paul Opposes Anti-Judaism within the Christian Community

In the interests of clarity and brevity, we shall set out in note form the main emphases of these chapters.

a) What Paul acknowledges:

- 1 The continuing rejection of the Gospel by the majority of Jews (9:30-10:3).
- 2 The influx of a large number of believing Gentiles (9:30).
- 3 The reason for Israel's failure - an unenlightened zeal 10:2. Christ, or possibly the law itself,⁽²³⁾ has become a stumbling stone to the Jews (9:33).

b) What Paul affirms:

- 1 His deep personal concern for his fellow Jews (9:1-3; 10:1).
- 2 The abiding election privileges of the Jews - 'they are Israelites... to them belong the sonship', etc (9:4-5).

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- 3 The freedom of God in election - it depends only upon God's mercy (9:15); God is free to admit Gentiles and to retain Jews within his purpose as he wills.
 - 4 No one, and especially not the Jews, is beyond the reach of the gospel call (10:12).
 - 5 God has the power to graft in again those now disobedient (11:23).
 - 6 The unbelieving Jews, though now 'enemies of God as regards the Gospel', are still beloved by Him for the sake of the patriarchs (11:28).
 - 7 The gifts and call of God are irrevocable (11:29).
- c) What Paul denies:
- 1 That the word, ie promises of God, has failed: there is a remnant chosen by grace although not all descended from Israel belong to Israel (9:6).
 - 2 That God is arbitrary or unjust: He is both free and compassionate (9:15).
 - 3 That God has rejected His own people: Paul and the remnant prove this not so (11:1-5).
 - 4 That God has destined Israel to ultimate rejection: God over-ruled their unbelief for the good of the Gentiles and Israel remains central in God's plan (11:11-16).
- d) What Paul warns against:
- 1 Gentile Christians must not boast over unbelieving Jews (11:17).
 - 2 Gentile Christians must not forget that it is the (Jewish) root that supports them; branches of themselves are not a tree - they *share* the richness of the olive tree (11:17).
 - 3 Gentile Christians must not become proud or presumptuous but must stand in faith and awe (11:20)
 - 4 Gentile Christians must not presume to know the mind of the Lord; they are not to become 'wise in their own conceits', since Israel's hardening is only partial and temporary (11:25f).
- e) What Paul hopes for:
- 1 That the success of his ministry among Gentiles will lead to some Jews being saved (11:14).
 - 2 That the eventual outcome of the Gentile mission will be that the Jews will be provoked to obedience, so that 'all Israel will be saved' (11:11, 25f).
 - 3 That Gentile Christians, Jewish Christians, and Jews will realise that they are inseparably linked through God's saving purpose for the world (11:28-32).

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From this review we can see that Paul opposed the proud Gentile Christians by refusing to allow any absolute separation between the church and Israel. (24) This is not surprising because it is unlikely that the church existed as a completely separate entity before AD 70. Gentile Christianity can never be complete by itself: Paul describes it as a branch dependent on the Jewish Christian root. By this he hoped to prevent the dissociation of Gentile Christians from their Jewish roots, and possibly also from Jerusalem to which he was about to set out with the collection; this collection was intended to help bind together the two wings of the church.

It is likely that Paul wanted the Roman Gentile Christians to see both the ministry of Christ and his own ministry as examples for them to follow. In Romans 15:8 Paul states that Christ has become (*gegenēsthai*) a servant (*diakonos*) to the Jewish people. J Koenig suggests that the natural and proper meaning of this perfect-tense verb is that Christ has become, and still is, a servant or minister to the Jewish people, namely, that Paul has the ongoing post-resurrection effect of Christ's servanthood in mind and is not merely thinking of his life and death. (25) The Gentile Christians may have concluded wrongly that Paul's Gentile mission signified that he had given up hope for Israel. Koenig argues that Paul is really still aiming to influence Israel by making them jealous (11:1-1f). This means that both Paul's ministry and that of Jesus may be described as having Jews and Gentiles in view; cf 15:8 where Christ is described as a minister of the circumcision to confirm the promises to Jews, and that Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. If Paul and Jesus desired the salvation of both Jew and Gentile, then it would follow that the Roman Christians should not see their salvation as separate from the destiny of Israel. The solidarity of both Jew and Gentile in salvation is what Paul intends to stress. This emphasis is relevant to our contemporary scene and it is to this that we must now turn.

4. *The Relationship between Christians and Jews Today*

We have found from our study of covenant, Paul's conversion-call, and the title 'Israel' in the New Testament that there is evidence of both continuity and discontinuity between Christianity and Judaism. We have suggested that in the past there has sometimes existed a tendency among New Testament scholars to depreciate Judaism. Although we do not wish to promote an exaggerated reaction in the contrary direction, we believe that it is now time for a balanced but positive appreciation of Christianity's continuing debt to Judaism, and for an end to all implicit anti-Judaism within Christianity.

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This will not mean that Christians will cease to witness to Jews. Witness and dialogue are demanded not because Jews are either similar to Christians or differ radically from them but because it is the Christian's duty to witness to all persons simply because this is of the essence of being in Christ. Any serious-minded Christian will seek to know and understand those with whom we are in dialogue - but especially our Jewish neighbours with whom we have a special bond in a shared history and scripture. In this we disagree with Stendahl's view that it dawned on Paul that the Jesus movement is to be 'a Gentile movement - God being allowed to establish Israel in his own time and place'. Stendahl finds it significant that Paul omits the name of Jesus Christ from the whole section of Romans 10:17-11:36. (26) We think Stendahl makes too much of this argument from silence. Paul *does* speak of seeking to save some of the Jews through his Gentile mission (11:14). The reference to 'the deliverer' in 11:26 can legitimately be taken to refer to Christ. Also the form of argument of 11:12-24 can most naturally be located within the normal scope of Pauline eschatology, that is, the 'how much more' is based on the surpassing grace of Christ's redemptive work. Even the concluding doxology is implicitly Christological. (27)

We oppose any view of Christianity and Judaism that proposes a theory of purely separate development. If we have read Paul aright, he has stressed the continuity of divine revelation and the resulting need for solidarity even when, because of disobedience on *either* side, there may be wide differences between Christians and Jews. The problem of leaving 'the salvation of all Israel' until the final consummation of human history is that this view suggests that in the meantime Jews and Christians can lead a separate existence.

We agree with Thomas Torrance that the relation of the Christian church and its mission to Israel must be quite unlike that to any other people or religion. But we are unhappy when he claims that 'the Gospel can hardly be brought to Israel, for it derives from Israel... Jews cannot be treated by Christians as unbelievers but only as brother believers with whom they are privileged to share a common faith in God and the same promises of salvation'. (28) Torrance stresses so much the commonality of our heritage - the continuity between Christianity and Judaism - that he has omitted the element of discontinuity and so slurs the genuine distinction that actually exists between them. Because of the element of discontinuity between Christianity and Judaism, there will inevitably be some tension between them. But it is part of genuine Christian witness to ensure that there is no more tension than our theological differences demand. Above all

demand. Above all we shall witness remembering with sadness those shameful events of Christian history in relation to Jews from which none of us can entirely exculpate ourselves.

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NOTES

- 1 H Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 2 vols; vol 2, *History and Literature of Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), pp 274f.
- 2 R Jewett, *Letter to Pilgrims* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1981), pp 5-8.
- 3 Op cit pp 274f.
- 4 Cf J C Beker, *Paul the Apostle* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), pp 178f, 208.
- 5 See Paul Meyer's criticism of Käsemann's inconsistency in not keeping to his own 'dialectical' interpretation of Paul: 'Rom 10:4 and the End of the Law', in *The Divine Helmsman*, ed J L Crenshaw and S Sandmel (New York: Ktav, 1980) pp 59f.
- 6 Cf Käsemann, 'The Spirit and the Letter', in *Perspectives on Paul* (London: SCM, 1971), p151.
- 7 Georgi, *Die Gegner des Paulus im 2 Korintherbrief* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1964), pp 252f.
- 8 *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: SPCK, 1973), pp 28f.
- 9 Cf Georgi, *Die Gegner des Paulus*, pp 268-72.
- 10 Op cit p146.
- 11 Op cit p154.
- 12 *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (London: SCM, 1977); see especially pp 511-15, 543f and, more recently, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).
- 13 'Paul and Covenantal Nomism', in *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C K Barrett*, ed M D Hooker and S G Wilson (London: SPCK, 1982), pp 47-56.
- 14 W D Davies, 'Paul and the People of Israel', *New Testament Studies* 24 (1978): 11.
- 15 Cf 'Paul and Israel', in *New Testament Questions of Today* (London: SCM, 1969), p185.
- 16 Cf W D Davies, 'Paul and the Law', in *Paul and Paulinism*, ed Hooker and Wilson, pp 7f.
- 17 *Paul among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), pp 4f, 132.
- 18 Martin, *Reconciliation: A Study of Paul's Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), pp 26f.
- 19 Davies, 'Paul and the Law', p7.
- 20 Op cit p5.

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- 21 *Israel and the Apostolic Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1969).
- 22 Op cit p84.
- 23 Cf Paul Meyer, 'Rom 10:4' pp 64f.
- 24 Cf Chapter 4, 'The Freedom and the Faithfulness of God in Relation to Israel'.
- 25 'The Jewishness of the Gospel', *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 19 (1982): 66.
- 26 Op cit p4.
- 27 On this, see W S Campbell, 'Salvation for Jews and Gentiles: K Stendahl and Paul's Letter to the Romans', in *Studia Biblica* III (1978), *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, Supplement Series 3 (Sheffield, 1980), pp 65-72
- 28 *The Witness of the Jews to God*, ed David W Torrance (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1982), Appendix 2a, pp 139-40.

Chapter 7

Paul's Missionary Practice and Policy in Romans

Paul was the doyen of missionary theologians in the early days of the church. Not only did he spend his life in urgent compulsive evangelisation but he also wrote and argued for a theology of Gentile mission that necessitated a revised understanding of the church's outreach and development.

Romans has traditionally and, in our opinion, wrongly been regarded as a summary of Paul's theology. This designation would have more substance were the letter regarded as a summary of Paul's theology of mission which in fact can be seen to occupy a substantial part of the letter when chapters 9-11 are included in the discussion. (1)

1 *The Contextual Nature of Paul's Statements in his Letters*

It has become increasingly clear to New Testament scholars in recent years that Paul did not set out to develop in his letters a systematic theology. We can no longer therefore legitimately use his statements as if they were abstract and timeless theology. E P Sanders concluded from his study of Paul and the law that though 'a priori' one would expect Paul to have had a clear position on the law, in fact because Paul's statements depend on the question asked or the problem posed, he does appear to have said different things on differing occasions. This may be because Paul did not abstract his statements about the law from the context in which they were made, nor did he consider them in their relationship to one another apart from the questions they were intended to answer. (2) There is general agreement, however, that although Paul's statements on any topic are contingent upon the circumstances he addresses, nevertheless coherence as well as contingency is the hallmark of his thought. (3) The relevance of this for our immediate enquiry is that we must interpret Paul's statements about mission in Romans in the light of the context out of which the letter originated and to which it was addressed.

Although we cannot discuss in any detail here the reason why Paul wrote the letter to the Romans, one thing is clear. There is some factor whether in Paul's situation, or, as seems more probable in our opinion, in the situation of the Roman Christians which necessitated a consideration of the Jewish people and their response to the Gospel. This explains the unique discussion of Israel in chapters 9-11 of the letter. (4) A curious but related factor is that no one would guess from Paul's statements concerning his