

THE JEWISH ORIGINS OF THE ORDINANCES OF CHRISTIANITY: WORSHIP WITHIN
BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

By

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Liberty University

A THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF WORSHIP STUDIES

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A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfillment
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ABSTRACT

The modern evangelical denominations have worship services that include many forms of worship and functions to bring the worshiper into communion with the living God as a disciple of Christ. These worship forms include the two ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Generations of denominational congregants have participated in these ordinances with little knowledge of the origin of these two rites. This qualitative historical study focuses on the roots of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper formed within Christianity during the early church years. Using research from Christian and Messianic Jewish scholars along with Jewish sources, this study will strive to uncover the foundations of these ordinances within second-temple Judaism and discover how these rites find renewal and purpose in Christianity. This work will help form a foundation for the Church to gain a greater understanding of the Jewish roots of our faith as the study reveals why the Lord's Table contains the elements present in Communion. This work will also reveal the original mode of baptism and practice based on Jewish practice and tradition used during the time of John the Baptist and Jesus. Finally, this research will exhort churches to explore deeper meanings found in the Gospels and Writings of the Apostles surrounding these festival and priestly practices from Judaism as the Body of Christ celebrate their renewal in Christ-centered worship.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Becky, as well as my four supportive children: Rachel, Jacob, Sarah, and Johnathan. The many nights of encouraging me to finish my Doctorate were provided by the five of you when I was tired of working two jobs and attempting to be a decent worship leader, husband, and father. I especially want to thank my wife for her encouraging words, enthusiasm, and long talks to help me through some difficult times. I love you, most ardently, Mrs. Ross. I am thankful for our thirty-one years of marriage together, serving our Lord Jesus, and discipling our children.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Christian tradition and liturgy are a part of all movements and denominations within those devoted to Jesus Christ. The New Testament indicates two ordinances that remain a part of the forms and functions of all Christian worship. These ordinances are Baptism and the Lord's Supper—also known as Communion or the Eucharist. These two rites may take on various modes or forms. Evan Moffic explains, "Churchgoing Christians celebrate Jesus' Passover seder when they take Communion, and many Christian communities specifically recall Jesus' Last Supper on Holy Thursday before Easter."¹ In the case of Baptism, the initiate might be a baby or small child if pedobaptism is practiced; or the new disciple might be a pre-teen, young adult, or senior adult. The mode may be anointing, sprinkling, effusion, or immersion, depending on the beliefs and tradition of the sect or denomination. Gerald Borchert writes, "The worship rite of Baptism has often become something like fire insurance throughout Christianity (both East and West), which cares for one's eternal destiny. I have found the not-too-infrequent phenomenon that some Baptists have been baptized two or more times in Baptist churches (reminiscent of Jewish water rites of lustration or purification)!"² The Lord's Supper may be blessed by a priest and partaken by only those who belong to a church or sect. It may be disbursed by laypeople and open to all who profess their faith in Jesus Christ. The elements may be unleavened bread, a cracker, a wafer, or leavened bread dipped in grape juice or wine.

When one views these two ordinances in the sea of denominations that exist, it seems clear that the only thing that is common is that some form of these two ordinances is practiced in

¹ Evan Moffic, *What Every Christian Needs to Know about Passover: What It Means and Why It Matters* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2014), 145.

² Gerald L. Borchert, *Worship in the New Testament: Divine Mystery and Human Response* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2008), 56.

Christian worship. Regarding the importance of Baptism to Christianity, Borchert states, “The life of faith is a continued worship response that is represented in our baptism and will be culminated in our glorification.”³ Writing about the Lord’s Supper, Borchert indicates, “The church’s worship celebration of the Lord’s Supper is both a covenant reminder of his death and a proclamation of his victory. It is not merely a worship service of remembrance.”⁴ One might ask why there are so many variations in the practice of these rites, or one may ask how these two ordinances were originally implemented and practiced along with the question of where they came from in Christianity. These questions and precursory queries point the reader to the heart of the material in this qualitative historical study that impacts how we worship with the Lord’s Supper and Baptism.

This study begins with the background behind the issues of the origin and original ritual purpose of the Lord’s Supper and Baptism. After providing some background, the issue is stated along with the purpose of this study. The purpose is followed by the presentation of three research questions that are explored in the project; this gives way to outlining the significant place of this study in Christian theology and doxology. The research reveals the importance of these rites in worship as a continuation of Jewish instruction from the Torah as one discovers how these forms of worship remain relevant for worshipers today. The research continues by defining some terms that are used along the way in this material. Finally, the chapter concludes with the list of assumptions made and limitations included in a worship study of this magnitude and scope.

³ Borchert, *Worship in the New Testament*, 75.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

Background

The original purposes and functions of Baptism and the Lord's Supper require some background to arrive at the issues at hand regarding worship practice. Baptism is introduced in the Gospels as the authors introduce their audience to John the Baptist. In Luke's gospel, Jesus comes to John as he baptizes those during his preaching of the message of repentance: "During the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Luke 3:2-3, English Standard Version).⁵

There was a background of Baptism that was familiar to those in the Palestine communities of second-temple Judaism. J. Scott explains this background and the contribution by the early Jewish followers of Jesus: "I would like to suggest, then, that the rites in Judaism and Christianity owe their origin to a common Jewish milieu in which water lustrations became increasingly important for converts and that Judaism's rite of baptism may very well have received a decisive impetus from John the Baptist, Jesus, and the earliest Christians."⁶ Therefore, one discovers that there is a common Jewish setting of water baptism that is formational for Christian worship, according to Scott. This is the introduction to the clue of where Baptism originated. The significance of this origin is what the research questions determinedly unveil shortly. Ithamar Gruenwald indicates, "It is here suggested that Luke's account finds itself aligned with the Jewish practice of Baptism. Baptism, or full immersion in

⁵ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the *English Standard Version Text Edition* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016).

⁶ J. Julius Scott Jr., *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1995), 346.

water, requires no attending person to fulfill any duty before or during the event.”⁷

The other ordinance known as the Lord’s Supper has a background located in the *Moedim* or appointed times of Israel within the festival cycle in the Torah. Marvin Rosenthal writes, “The idea is that the sequence and timing of each of these feasts have been carefully orchestrated by God himself.”⁸ Reading in Luke’s account, one discovers that this Supper is instituted in the heart of a Passover meal that Jesus shares with his disciples just hours before his conviction, torture, and crucifixion at the hands of the Roman government:

Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.” “Where do you want us to prepare for it?” they asked. He replied, “As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there.” They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover (Luke 22:7-13, ESV).

When the Passover meal took place, Jesus took the bread and the cup and blessed them. As he shared these elements with his disciples, he instituted a new meaning in this meal:

When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.” After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you (Luke 22:14-20, ESV).

Jesus uses symbolism in this passage to relate the bread and wine to his body and blood. This gives one some background behind the original feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread, as new

⁷ Ithamar Gruenwald, “The Baptism of Jesus in Light of Jewish Ritual Practice,” *Neotestamentica* 50, no. 2 (2016): 303.

⁸ Kevin Howard and Marvin Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord: God's Prophetic Calendar from Calvary to the Kingdom* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 13.

meaning is established in these observances by Jesus that is still a central part of our worship today. Kevin Howard explains, “Ultimately, Passover foreshadowed the Jewish Messiah as the true Passover Lamb.”⁹

The disciples are unaware at the time of this meal as to the depth of this new meaning, but it is centered in the Jewish Passover traditions. David Stern makes this point as he illustrates the need for the Old Testament to provide context for the interpretation and understanding of the New Testament: “The Messiah’s vicarious atonement is rooted in the Jewish sacrificial system; the Lord’s Supper is rooted in the Jewish Passover traditions; baptism is a Jewish practice; and indeed the entire New Testament is built on the Hebrew Bible, with its prophecies and its promise of a New Covenant, so that the New Testament without the Old is as impossible as the second floor of a house without the first.”¹⁰ With this background information, those issues that need answers are hopefully addressed in the chapters that follow.

Statement of the Problem

There are theological, historical, and biblical precedents that establish Baptism and the Lord’s Supper into the category of ordinances central to worship. These worship ordinances are described in pieces throughout the book of Acts and the Apostle’s writings. Much like Jesus gave a new commandment to his disciples to love one another, so are the ordinances given to remember as well as display covenant fidelity to the Lord Jesus as acts of worship.

Though the Lord’s Supper and Baptism have been a part of Christianity from the beginning, there remain questions surrounding their origins. The term baptism is unique to the

⁹ Howard and Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord*, 62.

¹⁰ David H. Stern, *Messianic Judaism: A Modern Movement with an Ancient Past* (Clarksville: Lederer Books, 2007), 62.

New Testament in its form, but the idea of ritual washings and immersions for sanctification is familiar to the Old Testament Law of Moses. Eric Lakatos describes the different names for Baptism found in Judaism: “Baptism, T’vilah, Immersion, Mikveh; there are so many different names, traditions and rituals, some immerse completely, and others sprinkle. What are the Jewish origins of water immersion, where did it come from and why and how is it practiced today in Christianity, Judaism, and Messianic Judaism?”¹¹

Churches celebrate the Lord’s Supper through elements found in a home Passover meal. The question regarding whether Communion has replaced Passover or renewed it in some way comes into focus. Passover is rooted in remembrance of a great deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt. Communion is rooted in remembrance as well. Garr writes on the experience of deliverance by both Christians and Jews: “Each Jew considers himself to have been personally delivered from Egypt through this Anamnesis, a yearly reenactment of the Passover. When Christians celebrate Communion, they are, in effect, recalling vividly the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus and sharing in that event for themselves as they discern the ‘body and blood’ of Jesus in the bread and wine of Communion.”¹²

Despite centuries of the celebration of the Lord’s Supper and Baptism in Christianity, the problem faced is that the origins of these rites are generally unknown, or at best, it is believed to be a new function in Christian worship that began with Jesus. For this reason, this study focuses on discovering the origins of the Lord’s Supper and Baptism in their original Jewish context as acts of worship. The next section details the purpose of this qualitative study and explores some of the research questions that optimistically clarifies the understanding of the origins of these two

¹¹ Eric David Lakatos, *Baptism: Its Jewish Origins* (Cleveland: Light to the Nations Inc, 2019), 2.

¹² John D. Garr, *Our Lost Legacy: Christianity’s Hebrew Heritage* (Atlanta: Golden Key Press, 2006), 128.

worship practices.

Purpose of the Study

Concerning the Mosaic Covenant, J. Scott writes, “The biblical books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy contain 613 written laws to direct every facet of life of the Hebrews. These laws include injunctions and directives in several broad areas.”¹³ Scott continues by indicating, “Later writers (mostly Christian) divided the Old Testament law into ceremonial (religious ritual), civil, and moral (including the Ten Commandments). Such a division may be helpful in identifying the areas covered by the Old Testament instructions, but it can also be misleading.”¹⁴ Christianity wrestles with the theological extensions of Jewish commandments from the Old Testament Law of Moses and asks the question of whether or not they are continually incumbent on all believers. Additionally, the new commandments and ordinances found within the writings of the Apostles are often misunderstood as new, or simply renewed under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper fall into the category of something born out of Judaism as a part of worship in modernity.

Therefore, the purpose of the study is to explore the Jewish origins of the ordinances of Christianity: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper as acts of worship to be practiced today. Scott writes of Baptism, “To assert that baptism was a condition for acceptance into Judaism; we need evidence in the form of either an explicit command to that effect or a historical record.”¹⁵ Regarding Christ and the Lord’s Supper, he explains, “An annual commemoration of Jesus’s

¹³ J. Julius Scott Jr., *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1995), 65.

¹⁴ Scott, *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*, 66.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 344.

death is not clearly attested as occurring before the 2nd century CE.”¹⁶

Research Questions

The course of this study strives to answer research questions involving the origins of the worship acts of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Other questions concern the potential replacement of Old Testament practices with the ordinance of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are addressed in the research project as well. Along with these three main questions and their answers that will make up the research portion of this study, this research concludes with pragmatic goals that aid the church in understanding the deeper meanings of these two ordinances. The following are the three research questions within this study:

RQ1: In what ways does the Baptism of repentance of John the Baptist differ from the Baptism of new believers in the Messiah in the book of Acts as acts of worship?

RQ2: What is the worship purpose of the Passover meal Jesus shared with his disciples before his death that became the Lord’s Supper?

RQ3: What are the contrasts between Jewish circumcision and the ordinance or rite known as "Believer's Baptism" in terms of New Testament worship?

Hypotheses

H1: The Baptism of repentance of John the Baptist differs from the Baptism of new believers in the Messiah in the book of Acts as acts of worship in terms of the purpose, the participant, and the position of the worshiper in Baptism.

H2: The worship purpose of the Passover meal Jesus shared with his disciples before his death that became the Lord’s Supper was to renew the elements from Jewish tradition and

¹⁶ Michael A. Daise, ““Christ Our Passover” (1 Corinthians 5:6–8): The Death of Jesus and the Quartodeciman Pascha,” *Neotestamentica* 50, no. 2 (2016): 508.

the original meal elements in a new worship paradigm and ordinance.

H3: The contrasts between Jewish circumcision and the ordinance or rite known as "Believer's Baptism" in terms of New Testament worship are covenant faithfulness for all nations under Christ, identity with the Body of Christ symbolically and spiritually, and membership into the commonwealth of Israel as worshipers of Yahweh.

Significance of the Study

First, this study compares the Baptism of John the Baptist with the Baptism of new believers in the book of Acts as worship acts. The first question involves the evolution of Baptism from the gospels to the early disciples after the resurrection. The Baptism of repentance of John the Baptist differs from the Baptism of new believers in the Messiah in the book of Acts as acts of worship in terms of the purpose, the participant, and the position of the worshiper in Baptism.

Erik Lakatos explains that people have many questions about this topic of Baptism, and so many have incorrect ideas about what the Bible says on the topic.¹⁷ Borchert explains the emphasis of Baptism theologically as he writes, "The life of the Spirit or walking in the way of Christ reveals that our baptism represents a valid confession enabling us to give thanks to God who saves us by providing our justification, sanctification, and glorification."¹⁸

The purpose of Baptism by John is a sign of repentance of sin. It is interesting that Jesus let John baptize him as he is without sin. But Jesus explains that it is to fulfill all righteousness. But there is an aspect of Baptism that is renewed after the cross that reflects its Jewish roots.

¹⁷ Lakatos, *Baptism: Its Jewish Origins*, 2.

¹⁸ Borchert, *Worship in the New Testament*, 76.

Jesus commands his disciples in the Great Commission to make disciples and baptize them: “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’” (Matthew 28:18-20, ESV). In this passage, Jesus indicates he has all authority that has been given to him by His Father.

There is a critical importance in Judaism to associate oneself with a great rabbi who has great rabbinic authority. That disciple is a part of that school of thought. This Jewish idea translates itself into the Way moving forward in Acts and the writings of the Apostles. This purpose of the authority of Christ is explored through this project. Francois indicates this authority based on Matthew’s gospel: “The authority of Jesus’ teaching is explicitly mentioned as Matthew concludes the sermon with its Sinai typology with a postscript: ‘[T]he crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority (ἦν γὰρ διδάσκων αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐξουσίαν ἔχων), and not as their teachers of the law’” (Mt 7:28–29).¹⁹

Second, the participants of John’s Baptism included Jewish people only in this worship practice. Jesus came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But through his death on the cross, He made a new and living way for salvation to all nations. Acts 10 and life within the church moving forward included disciples of all nations that were baptized into the Body of Christ. The participants became inclusive of all who trust in Christ. Borchert describes the identifying worship symbol of the members of a new community, much like Galatia was “baptism into Christ.” The idea of a spiritual baptism accompanied being regenerated, and water baptism was

¹⁹ P. Viljoen Francois, “The Superior Authority of Jesus in Matthew to Interpret the Torah,” *In Die Skriflig* 50, no. 2 (2016): 4.

an outward sign of this decision.²⁰ Yet, the Jewish concept of submission to a rabbinic authority remains—that rabbi is Jesus of Nazareth.

Finally, the position of Baptism differs from John to Acts with the birth of the church. John’s Baptism unto repentance prepared the way for the Messiah to bring the gospel message to Israel. Once the Holy Spirit fell at Pentecost, the church was born. Now believers were baptized as a sign of covenant fidelity to the Triune God. The writings of the Apostles bear this out, and this position is verified in this research. Yet, the mode of Baptism was specific and very Jewish, as is drawn out as well in the following chapters.

The second research question opens the investigation and understanding of the elements and the symbolism of the Passover meal as they are used in acts of worship toward the Lamb of God. The worship purpose of the Passover meal Jesus shared with his disciples was to renew the elements from Jewish tradition and the original meal elements in a new worship paradigm and ordinance. The purposes of these Passover elements involve symbolic remembrance and tradition, covenant, and renewed meaning through the New Covenant. Colvin indicates there are layers of meaning within the Last Supper and the Passover meal: “Bread and wine had multiple layers of symbolic meaning for Jesus’ audience. We can distinguish three levels with progressively narrow specificity: (1) general biblical symbolism of bread and wine; (2) meanings arising from the narrower context of Israel’s covenant with YHWH; and (3) meanings dictated by the most specific context of the Passover celebrated in the Upper Room.”²¹

There is the symbolism behind each element in the Passover meal, though the Exodus

²⁰ Gerald L. Borchert, *Worship in the New Testament: Divine Mystery and Human Response* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2008), 93.

²¹ Matthew Colvin, *The Lost Supper: Revisiting Passover and the Origins of the Eucharist* (Lanham: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2019), 71.

passage does not indicate all of these. This is the purpose behind the addition of tradition along with symbolism. Through the centuries, oral traditions, the Mishnah, and rabbinic commentary added more meaning to these elements. By the time of Jesus, these traditions and symbols were well established and practiced by Jews throughout Palestine.²² There is meaning within the covenant between Yahweh and Israel at Sinai and at the establishment of Passover while in Egypt, according to Exodus 12:

“This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day you shall hold a holy assembly, and on the seventh day a holy assembly. No work shall be done on those days. But what everyone needs to eat, that alone may be prepared by you. And you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day, throughout your generations, as a statute forever” (Exodus 12:14-17, ESV).

Though this feast is established here, it becomes a part of the Sinai covenant as an everlasting statute in the Torah as a part of their worship. Kevin Howard explains, “Passover holds great distinction among the religious feasts of the world. Passover is the oldest continuously observed feast in existence today, celebrated for some 3,500 years.”²³ This idea and its tie to the Lord’s Supper are fully developed in this research as well.

Finally, there is a new meaning that is established by Jesus at the Passover meal with his disciples. Colvin elaborates on this meaning of the blood of the covenant: “Henceforward, the blood of the covenant is no longer that of the Passover lamb, but the blood of Jesus. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews makes the same move when he writes of ‘trampling the Son of God

²² Colvin, *The Lost Supper*, 72.

²³ Howard and Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord*, 51.

underfoot and counting the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing” (Heb. 10:29).²⁴ This idea of new covenantal meaning is further developed in this research using evidence from Jewry and early rabbinic thought as well as contextual evidence from the New Testament writings of the Apostles.

The third main area of research explores the meaning behind the rite of Baptism in terms of covenant fidelity in contrast to Jewish circumcision. The third research question moves back to the origins of the ordinance of Baptism and explores the meaning behind this rite in terms of covenant fidelity and an act of worship. The contrasts are covenant faithfulness for all nations under Jesus Christ, identity with the Body of Christ symbolically and spiritually, and membership into the commonwealth of Israel as worshipers of Yahweh.

Where circumcision is required of all Hebrew males, Baptism is a step of covenant faithfulness for male and female, Jew and Gentile, slave and free under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Ratzlaff indicates that in Colossians 2, Baptism replaces circumcision: “In these passages, Paul takes the old covenant sign of circumcision and shows how Christ symbolically fulfilled this concept and links circumcision with Baptism. This is no accident! As circumcision was the entrance sign into the old covenant community for the sons of Israel, so Baptism is the entrance sign into the new covenant community.”²⁵ There is also a symbolic and spiritual element that identifies the Christian with the death of Jesus in Baptism. This concept is also developed further in this research project.

Finally, Baptism identifies the believer in Jesus as one submitted to the Holy One of Israel but does not necessitate one being now made into the physical seed of Israel or replacing

²⁴ Colvin, *The Lost Supper*, 79.

²⁵ Dale Ratzlaff, *Sabbath in Christ: Does the Letter of Colossians Refer to the Sabbath?* (Casa Grande: LAM Publications, 2012), 121.

the nation of Israel as the church. There are certainly physical seeds of Israel who are a part of the Body of Christ, but most of the membership represents the spiritual seed as spiritual sons of Abraham. This avoids the enormous fallacy of supersessionism, better known as replacement theology. Soulen describes the fallacy made by several denominations as follows: “Hence Christ’s advent brings about the obsolescence of carnal Israel and inaugurates the age of the spiritual church. The written law of Moses is replaced by the spiritual law of Christ, circumcision by Baptism, natural descent by faith as criterion of membership in the people of God and so forth. As a result, carnal Israel becomes obsolete.”²⁶ This third subject is deep and would inspire a research inquiry on its own; for this author’s purpose, its relationship to the contrast between circumcision and Baptism is the focus of this last research subject.

The following items indicate the further significance of this study. First, there is the benefit that this study has on the church’s understanding of the origin of Baptism as an ordinance and act of worship. The same is true regarding the church’s understanding of the origin of the Lord’s Supper as a command in worship. It is valuable to know where Christian faith originates, and the Jewish root in which it is established. The caution in this is to add to these ordinances commandments or ritual laws that were not intended. Ratzlaff indicates this regarding the Lord’s Supper: “The new covenant has general principles rather than detailed laws. There is no recipe telling us how to make communion bread, no instruction regarding what kind of plate to use. We are not even told how often to practice it. Rather, the new covenant deals with the heart and central issues in general principles giving us freedom to be guided by the Holy Spirit to find an appropriate recipe, plate, and time.”²⁷ The beauty of symbolism and motif aids in keeping the

²⁶ R. Kendall Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 29.

²⁷ Ratzlaff, *Sabbath in Christ*, 125.

research away from these conclusions, though some will extrapolate meaning to establish Jewish law as the norm for all Christians. This author avoids these pitfalls as much as possible, as Ratzlaff writes, “The new covenant is much, much better than the old.”²⁸

Another significant benefit involves a theological understanding of the economy of God and his plan through salvation history. The understanding of Passover illustrates that God’s economy is one of blood. There is no forgiveness of sin without blood, and Passover to the Levitical cultic practices of Israel through the death of Jesus on the cross brings greater revelation and understanding of God’s plan of salvation throughout history. Also beneficial are the truths of these ordinances as symbols of remembrance—an important key to how the God of Israel establishes a covenant with His people. Rosenthal explains, Passover speaks loudly of the future Lord’s sacrificial death on Calvary as “A motley crew of slaves was redeemed so that they could worship and serve the true and living God. But such a redemption was not without cost. Blood had to be shed to secure their redemption.”²⁹

It is important to recognize Judeo-Christian synergism in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper as coming from Passover. Marmur describes the shared message of Easter and Passover: “By all accounts, many Christians nowadays choose to celebrate the Seder not only in memory of the Last Supper and its hope for final redemption but also as an act of solidarity with their Jewish neighbours. For much of history, Easter and Passover were seen as opposites. For Christians, Passover reflected the obsolescence and irrelevance of Judaism superseded by the religion about Jesus.”³⁰ However, one discovers that there are many elements in common between

²⁸ Ratzlaff, *Sabbath in Christ*, 123.

²⁹ Howard and Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord*, 19.

³⁰ Dow Marmur, “Shared Messages of Easter and Passover,” *Torstar Syndication Services, a Division of Toronto Star Newspapers Limited* (April 2019).

this Passover feast and the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

Finally, this has an application for believers in Christ as they worship and participate in these ordinances today. This is important for the following reasons. First, it is important to help establish biblical intent based on the context and original meaning of these rites. Second, it is important to aid in establishing doctrine as these ordinances, their frequency, and their use have been debated since their inception. Last, the pragmatic side is significant as denominations discuss the mode of Baptism, age, and qualifications of the initiate. Furthermore, discussions take place as to who may take the Lord's Supper, what elements are to be used, and how often should it be taken. These also have been debated for centuries; this research sheds light on what the worship intent of these original participants indicates.

In summary, Baptism and the Lord's supper are undoubtedly tied to the Jewish roots of ritual immersion and the Passover feast, renewing each as the two universal ordinances commanded by Jesus Christ. This is important for the worshiper today to realize that these ordinances are renewed commands of obedience and acts of worship and worship that were rooted in Jewish worship practices. As worshipers gather to celebrate the Lord's Supper, they are worshipping by being obedient to the Lord's command, who himself is the Lamb of God and the Passover Lamb who takes away the sins of the world.

Definition of Terms

Passover: The first feast of the spring that is celebrated by Jewry since the time of the exodus from Egypt. It is the medium through which Jews have remembered the deliverance of the bondage of slavery from Egypt.³¹

³¹ Moffic, *What Every Christian Needs to Know about Passover*, 3.

Seder: This is defined as “order” in Hebrew. A Passover seder is the order of the Passover meal.

Much of this comes from rabbinic teaching and tradition as it is passed from family to family. Elements of the Passover meal are laid out on a seder plate for all to partake from during the seder meal.³²

Haggadah: This term means “the telling.” It is a book that is used to guide the participant through the Passover seder.³³

Matzah: This is the Hebrew term for unleavened bread that is a part of the essential elements of the Passover meal.³⁴ This unleavened bread is what is usually found in the Lord’s Supper.

Afikomen: This represented a small piece of matzah that was broken off and eaten by everyone present at the meal as a reminder of the Passover Lamb.³⁵

Mikveh: This is a ritual bath that represents a spiritual womb, and when a person enters the mikveh and emerges, he is “born anew.” In Christian and Messianic Jewish theology, the Mikveh does not provide atonement for sin. The act of immersion is practiced after the salvation experience.³⁶

T’vilah: A similar term to Mikveh, and it means immersion. It is much like the Greek word *Baptizo*. The idea is a complete immersion underwater as a part of sanctification, ritual washing, or a setting apart.³⁷ Dann says the following regarding ritual immersion: “Ritual

³² Moffic, *What Every Christian Needs to Know about Passover*, 60.

³³ *Ibid.*, 145.

³⁴ Howard and Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord*, 56.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 58.

³⁶ Lakatos, *Baptism: Its Jewish Origins*, 3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

immersion as a purification rite for males is commanded in Torah, but little is known about this practice during the First Temple period. Natural water sources were used, for example Jerusalem's Gihon spring (in the Kidron Valley), but it was inconvenient.

Moreover, what was done when such sources were not available.”³⁸

Torah: Hebrew word that means “instruction,” and is best defined as instruction or teaching. This definition is opposed to the term law. Law is used in the New Testament for the Mosaic Law, but the idea of Torah brings with it an understanding of instruction or teaching.³⁹

Halakhah: This means the “way of walking” for Jewish people as defined by Torah, and later redefined by rabbinic Judaism. Stern explains that for the believer in Jesus, this way of walking is the “Torah of Messiah,” as found in the teachings of Christ and the writings of the Apostles.⁴⁰

Mishnah: Jewish writings that represent the collection of oral laws or oral Torah that is outside, or in addition to the written Mosaic Law. Roy Blizzard explains, “In addition to the written revelation, Moses had also received, according to the rabbis, additional spoken laws. The rabbis designated these as the ‘Oral Law.’ And they considered these to be as inspired and as binding as the Written Law.”⁴¹ Blizzard continues, “For a rabbi in the time of Jesus, the Oral Law included much more than just those laws spoken by God to Moses at Sinai. It included all the traditional readings of Scripture and all the ethical maxims and rulings passed down from former rabbis, even those of his own

³⁸ Moshe Dann, “John of the Wilderness: The Essene Origins of Christianity,” *The Jerusalem Report* (July 2018).

³⁹ Stern, *Messianic Judaism*, 126.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁴¹ Roy B. Blizzard, *Mishnah and the Words of Jesus* (Austin: Bible Scholars, 2013), 2.

generation.”⁴²

Talmud: The commentary on the Torah and Mishnah. It represents the codes and responses of Judaism. There are two versions of the Talmud. One is the compiled version from Jewish scholars in Babylon, known as the Babylonian Talmud. The other one is compiled by Jewish scholars in Israel and is known as the Jerusalem Talmud. The Babylonian Talmud is the focus of Jewish religious education today, and when the word stands alone, it usually refers to the Babylonian Talmud.⁴³

Hallel Psalms: Specified psalms that are read and sung during the Passover meal. Psalm 113 through 118 represents these psalms. It is likely that Jesus sang one of these psalms at the conclusion of the Passover meal with his disciples as they went out from the Passover seder meal.

Assumptions

The following are the maintained assumptions that are to be included in this research proposal. First, there is an assumption that the reader will have a basic understanding of the Old Testament narrative regarding the Passover story and the establishment of this feast from Exodus 12 and Leviticus 23. No detailed understanding is necessary other than the establishment of this as an appointed feast of Israel. Rosenthal indicates, “The eternal God instituted only seven holidays. These seven holidays are called ‘the feasts of the Lord.’”⁴⁴ The next assumption is that the context of the Last Supper is the Jewish Passover. The Last Supper is contextually a seder meal shared with Jewish disciples.

⁴² Blizzard, *Mishnah and the Words of Jesus*, 5.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁴ Howard and Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord*, 19.

There is also an assumption that the audience believes these ordinances are not a continuation or an obligation of Mosaic regulations on the Christian. This point is brought out by Daise regarding Paul's description of Passover to the Corinthians:

Further, if Paul's festal reflection in 1 Cor 5 began a construct of Jesus's death which would later frame the gospel passion narratives, that scenario was rooted in a post-biblical Jewish rewrite of the exodus story. And if such a scenario eventually bred an obligatory Christian calendrical observance tethered to the Jewish Passover (the Quartodeciman Pascha), it ironically affected a ritual which ran against Paul's insistence on collective freedom from Jewish law.⁴⁵

Similarly, the third assumption is that the audience believes that the Lord's Supper was aligned with the Jewish feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread. According to Rosik, the scholarship is not in agreement on this alignment: "The heated debate among theologians on whether the Last Supper was a Passover feast prescribed by the Law or not has not been resolved yet, although the answer to this question is fundamental for the interpretation of the accounts depicting the institution of the Eucharist. According to some, there is no doubt that the Last Supper was a typical Jewish Passover meal. Many others, however, reject such a view."⁴⁶

The fourth assumption turns to Baptism, and the assumption is that the reader understands that Baptism is a part of the Great Commission and represents a faithful and public profession of one's faith in Christ. Also, it is understood as an initial act that does not have frequency or repetitiveness associated with it as an ordinance. This is where the previous definitions will aid the reader in the research, as the waters of Mikveh may be frequent or repetitive.

⁴⁵ Daise, "Christ Our Passover," 524.

⁴⁶ Mariusz Rosik, "When Did Jesus Drink the Fourth Cup of the Passover Meal," *The Biblical Annals* 66, no. 3 (2019): 574.

Limitations

The following are some limitations that are a part of this study. The first limitation is one of the intended audiences. This research will not include Catholic or Eastern Orthodox theology regarding Baptism or Communion. This study is limited to the evangelical protestant views of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Furthermore, this study does not argue the theological place of pedobaptism but will assume a rite of Baptism for those making a profession of faith as a new disciple of Christ at an age where a salvation decision is made.

Part of the research around Passover and the Lord's Supper centers on the overlap of Passover with Easter and some of the controversy behind the background of the Easter name and the potential pagan origins of that name: "Most historians, including Biblical scholars, agree that Easter was originally a pagan festival. According to the New Unger's Bible Dictionary, the word Easter is of Saxon origin, Eastr, the goddess of spring, in whose honour sacrifices were offered about Passover time each year."⁴⁷ The understanding of Easter being from the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic languages is the assumption made by this author based on the word used for "Resurrection Sunday" among Latin-based languages representing a word much closer to Passover than Easter.⁴⁸

The research will not prescribe modes and methods for these ordinances; however, the research will drive the conclusions that indicate what may be construed as prescription more than description. This is not the intent but may be symptomatic of a qualitative research project of this nature. The last limitation comes from this author, who has been immersed in Messianic Jewish

⁴⁷ Godwill A. M. Accra, "Controversy Surrounding Easter and Resurrection of Jesus Christ," *Ghana News Agency (GNA)* (April 2017).

⁴⁸ Stern, *Messianic Judaism*, 244.

congregational life more than life in other denominations or churches. This results in a limitation of understanding in philosophy and methodology of ministry regarding Baptism and the Lord's Supper beyond the Southern Baptist and Messianic Jewish usage of these ordinances. This movement is still young but has much to add to the discussion of these two ordinances. An editor recently visited such a congregation in Dallas and indicated the position of this movement in the evangelical space by writing, "This expanding fellowship of Jewish believers in Jesus is still in its infancy. While promising, an extensive alliance of Messianic Jews and Jewish Christians, represented in part by the Dallas conference, still faces uncertainty."⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Deborah Pardo-Kaplan, "The God of Abraham, Isaac, And... Jesus: A Growing Number of Jewish Christians Are Recovering Their Distinctive Religious Heritage," *ChristianityToday.com* (March 2019).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the worship ordinances of Christian Baptism and the Lord's supper are linked to the Jewish roots of ritual immersion and the festival of Passover, it is imperative to review the scholarly literature that covers this specific area of study. In this chapter, scholarly research considers various aspects of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In particular, this research describes the fundamental worship, music, and global concepts related to the origin and original ritual purpose of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Investigates topics pertaining to this subject that has previously been investigated. The relationship between previous research compared and contrasted with this research is reconnoitered. How others have defined, measured, and identified the key concepts that are also found in this research is reviewed. Finally, historical sources that this research and others called upon in developing explanations for observance and practice of these ordinances within Christian worship are disclosed.

Section I: Literature Review Relating to Baptism

Fundamental Worship, Music, and Global Concepts Related to Baptism

The essential concepts related to the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are both deep and wide from biblical, theological, ecclesiological, historical, and doxological perspectives. Due to this depth of research done by others, this work will focus on the worship, music, and global concepts regarding these two ordinances from mostly biblical and doxological perspectives. These fundamental concepts by their nature will touch on theological concepts, but for the purpose of the focus of worship, those concepts will be in relation to doxological or liturgical practice. The global scope will be limited as well since the goal is to understand and apply the origins of these ordinances to ecclesiological practice in worship today. The concepts of music and how it relates to and is used within these ordinances will gravitate toward the

Lord's Supper ordinance more than the practice of Baptism.

The rites and practice of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are worship practices established in the New Testament church by the first-century apostles. This section will detail Baptism with the Lord's Supper coming later. These were not established in a vacuum but formed out of Jewish worship practices. Fundamental to the worship of Israel is the Levitical practices found within the Torah for Tabernacle sacrifices, offerings, and other ritual observances. The literature found in Jewish writings and in scholarship that sets the stage for an understanding of this worship practice that Christianity called Baptism would be reviewed first.

The fundamental worship concepts behind Baptism find their origins in the Torah or the five books of Moses, where commandments are given concerning ritual washings. The idea of immersion or washing is in the Jewish Scriptures though not with the same idea as presented in the Gospels and Acts. Jewish laws which had been passed down orally to each new generation had much to say about the need for ritual washing, and the most desirable places to do it.⁵⁰ The following is from Tractate Mivaoth in the Babylonian Talmud:

There are six degrees of gatherings of water, each superior to the other. The water of pits... The same rules apply to the water of pits, the water of cisterns, the water of ditches, the water of caverns, the water of rain drippings which have stopped, and mikvehs of less than forty se'ahs: they are all clean during the time of rain; when the rain has stopped those near to a city or to a road are unclean, and those distant remain clean until the majority of people pass [that way]. Superior to such [water] is the water of rain drippings which have not stopped. Superior to such [water] is [the water of] the mikveh containing forty se'ahs, for in it persons may immerse themselves and immerse others. Superior again is [the water of] a fountain whose own water is little but has been increased by a greater quantity of drawn water; it is equivalent to the mikveh inasmuch as it may render clean by standing water, and to an [ordinary] fountain in as much as one may immerse in it whatever the quantity of its contents. Superior again are 'smitten waters' which can render clean even when flowing. Superior again are 'living waters' which serve for the immersion of persons who have a running issue and for the sprinkling

⁵⁰ Golan Broshi, "The Jewish Roots of Baptism," One for Israel, 2020, accessed May 18, 2020., <https://www.oneforisrael.org/bible-based-teaching-from-israel/messianic-perspective/was-baptism-originally-jewish/>.

of lepers, and are valid for the preparation of the water of purification.⁵¹

Ritual washing is commanded in the statutes of the Torah and commanded that the priests be ritually clean to serve the tabernacle:

The Lord said to Moses, “You shall also make a basin of bronze, with its stand of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it, with which Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet. When they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn a food offering to the Lord, they shall wash with water, so that they may not die. They shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they may not die. It shall be a statute forever to them, even to him and to his offspring throughout their generations” (Exodus 30:17-21, ESV).

This describes the washing by the priests, but the concept of ritual bathing in a mikveh came during the period of Solomon’s Temple, according to Dr. Golan Brosh:

Later, when the temple had been built, it was necessary for everyone to be immersed in a mikveh to become ritually clean before entering the temple. There are many ancient *mikva’ot* (plural of *mikveh*) to be seen in Jerusalem, and it is clear to see the two sets of steps for each one – a set of steps going down to the mikveh in an impure (*tamay*) state on one side, and on the other side, steps where the pilgrim will emerge fresh and ritually clean (*tahor*).⁵²

After the 1967 war, archaeologists were able to excavate the upper parts of Jerusalem.

Widespread findings of mikva’ot were discovered in homes as well as on the Temple Mount.⁵³

Later rabbinic writings describe that anyone entering the Temple courts should immerse themselves in a *mikvah* even in the case that they are already ritually clean. Historians explain that people who were not ritually clean were not allowed to enter the Temple courts.⁵⁴ The book of Leviticus specifies many laws about clean and unclean animals, purification laws, cleansing of

⁵¹ B. Mivaoth Mishnah 1-8.

⁵² Broshi, “The Jewish Roots of Baptism.”

⁵³ B. Bavli Yoma 30b.

⁵⁴ Joan E. Taylor, *The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 61.

skin diseases, and others. At the end of this discourse, Moses records, “Thus you shall keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle that is in their midst” (Leviticus 15:31, ESV). The camp of Israel was clean and undefiled before a holy God.

Archeology and history indicate that this idea of ritual cleansing carried forward beyond the Tabernacle to Solomon’s Temple as well as Herod’s Temple. The Levitical priesthood and sons of Aaron were set apart for the worship of Yahweh in service as His representatives to stand between them and the people of Israel. Pilgrims were to come to Israel during the Jewish feasts of *Pesach* (Passover), *Shavuot* (Feast of Weeks or Pentecost), and *Sukkot* (Tabernacles). Some houses were found to house several mikva’ot to provide for households as large as fifty as well as aid these visiting pilgrims. Archaeologists also believe the pools of Siloam and Bethsaida were used for ritual bathing during the high holy days during the Second Temple period.⁵⁵

Immersion in a *mikveh* was very common in the first century during the time of Jesus, and the New Testament describes Baptism occurring not just in rivers but in any available body of water. One account in Acts 8 describes a visiting pilgrim from Ethiopia who becomes a follower of Jesus as he reads from the scroll of Isaiah on his journey home: “Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?’ And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him” (Acts 8:35-38, ESV). There was an understanding in the early community of believers that Baptism had come to

⁵⁵ Broshi, “The Jewish Roots of Baptism.”

signify a decision to accept Jesus as Messiah and Lord.⁵⁶

The Hebrew noun for a ritual bath is *mikveh* and its definition aids in understanding more regarding the Jewish concept of immersion. Brosh states, “The word mikveh shares the same root as the word for hope (*tikvah*), for line (*kav*) and alignment, and the concept of hoping or waiting on God (*kiviti l’Adonai*).⁵⁷ Strong’s defines *mikveh* as linen yarn, hope, gathering together of water, or pool of water.⁵⁸ The prophet Jeremiah uses this word as an idiom according to Brosh in chapter seventeen: “O Lord, the hope of Israel, all who forsake you shall be put to shame; those who turn away from you shall be written in the earth, for they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living water” (Jeremiah 17: 13, ESV). The English phrase “put to shame” literally means “dried up” in Hebrew. Brosh states the following:

This is a word play – the text actually says, “The Lord is the MIKVEH of Israel, and all who forsake him will be ashamed or dried out!” So it makes more sense now that Jeremiah continues to say that when we turn away from this mikveh of water and hope, we will be ashamed, which can also be translated “dried out.” Through this word play, Jeremiah deliberately points us back to the analogy of the man who trusts in God being like a tree beside plenty of water, and the one who leaves God ending up in dry, dusty shame. A “Mikveh” of living water represents the bounty and resources of the new life that we can enjoy in God. Those who put their hope in God, choosing to align their lives with him, will never be dried out, but will always have fresh life in him.⁵⁹

There are some aspects of music that have been tied to these ritual immersions. The Essene community saw water as having salvific powers and was referenced in their community thanksgiving hymns: “And Thou, O my God, has put in my mouth as it were in autumn rain for

⁵⁶ Broshi, “The Jewish Roots of Baptism.”

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ “H4723 - miqveh - Strong's Hebrew Lexicon (ESV).” Blue Letter Bible. Accessed 21 May, 2020. <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H4723&t=ESV>.

⁵⁹ Broshi, “The Jewish Roots of Baptism.”

all [the sons of men] and a spring of living waters which shall not run dry.”⁶⁰ The immersion of John the Baptist satisfied later rabbinic requirements for *tevilah* or full-body immersion in water since an open body of water was the most effective form of immersion for the purpose of purification. John’s Baptism, as described in the New Testament, could be understood within the context of ritual purification alone. Juan Gutierrez writes, “Those ritually impure could become ritually pure through John’s immersion. Others who were living in conformity with purity laws may have regarded this immersion as an extra measure, perhaps like the immersing oneself in the *mikveh* before entering the Temple courts.”⁶¹

There are also psalms and hymns that were used in the discipleship process before a new believer in Jesus was baptized. This discipleship process was developed from the liturgy that scholars believed developed from apostolic teachings. The travel diary kept by a nun named Egeria granted scholars a glimpse into the church in Jerusalem in the late fourth century. The catechumens were disciples preparing for Baptism, and these disciples went through a litany of instructions, teachings, liturgies, and psalms. Before their Baptism on Easter, they would sing throughout various locations during the holy week from Psalms 5, 30, 65, 67, and others in antiphonal style.⁶² Teachings and instructions in the form of catechesis preceded the Baptism and anointing with oil using various Scriptures. Cyril, the Bishop of Jerusalem, believed in a sacramental theology that moved past symbolism into the belief that the catechumens literally gained salvation through these events portrayed in the liturgy.⁶³ The early centuries of

⁶⁰ A. Dupont and Geza Vermes, *The Essene Writings from Qumran* (Oxford: Oxford Press, 1961), 228.

⁶¹ Juan Marcos Bejarano Gutierrez, *Forgotten Origins: The Lost History of Jesus and Early Christianity* (Grand Prairie: Yaron Publishing, 2017), 279.

⁶² Lester Ruth, Carrie Steenwyk, and John D. Witvliet, *Walking Where Jesus Walked: Worship in Fourth-Century Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 80.

⁶³ Ruth, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 133.

Christianity are full of liturgies and teachings that developed around the ordinance of Baptism and turned it into something beyond its original meaning and intent. The scope of this work is more concerned with the origins of Baptism from its original context in Judaism and the first-century church and not the development of the Christian sacrament within Roman Catholicism.

One important document grants us a glimpse into global concepts concerning Baptism after the birth of the church. This document helps gain more of some of the apostolic teaching outside of the writings of Paul, Peter, John, James, and others. That popular document among the early believers is known as the *Didache* and is believed to originate in the late first century or early second century. Clement of Alexandria (second century) is the earliest to mention the *Didache*.⁶⁴ The meaning of this document is described in its long title: *The Teaching of the Lord to the Gentiles by the Twelve Apostles*.⁶⁵

This document is approximately the length of Paul's letter to the Galatians and contains sixteen chapters of teachings to the Gentiles among the early church. Chapter seven is one of the shortest chapters, but contains instructions on how to baptize followers of Jesus:

Concerning immersion, immerse in this way: Having first said all these things, immerse in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit in living water. But if you do not have living water, immerse in other water; and if you cannot immerse in cold water, then immerse in warm water. But if you do not have either in sufficient quantity to immerse, pour water on the head three times in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Prior to the immersion, the one performing the immersion and the one being immersed should fast beforehand, and also any others if they can. Require the one being immersed to fast one or two days prior to the immersion (Chapter 7:1-4, *The Didache*).⁶⁶

This complete chapter flows from immersion to instructions on fasting in chapter eight.

⁶⁴ Toby Janicki, *The Way of Life: The Rediscovered Teachings of the Twelve Jewish Apostles to the Gentiles* (Jerusalem: Vine of David, 2017), 3.

⁶⁵ Janicki, *The Way of Life*, 11.

⁶⁶ Vine of David, *Didache: A New Translation and Messianic Jewish Commentary* (Jerusalem: Vine of David, 2017), 35.

At this point in the *Didache*, Gentile believers in Jesus completed their training in chapters one through six, which is known as the Two Ways. They are now prepared to be initiated into the believing community through Baptism. These instructions represent the earliest legal instructions for immersion outside of the New Testament and are simplistic and pragmatic as opposed to esoteric or theological.⁶⁷ This teaching from the Jewish apostles to the church that was now largely made up of Gentile followers has some similar characteristics as were found in the Babylonian Talmud Tractate Mivaoth. Additionally, the teaching contains prescriptive instructions about the mode and formula of Baptism. It seems that immersion in “living water” is preferred, but effusion (pouring of water over the head) is permissible since the act of obedience seems more critical than the mode.⁶⁸

The global concepts related to the practice of Baptism were birthed from teachings like the *Didache* and are rooted in the Judaism of the Second Temple Period. Janicki explains that the closest Jewish parallel to the Baptism of new Gentile believers in Christ was the Jewish practice of proselyte immersion in *Mayim chayim* (living water). He writes, “While Jewish law required a convert to Judaism to be circumcised and, when the Temple was still standing, to offer a sacrifice, undergoing immersion was the key turning point in the proselyte process. Therefore, proselyte immersion becomes the natural backdrop for the immersion of Gentiles who were entering into the Messianic community.”⁶⁹ Though disunity regarding immersion appears in Corinth, as seen in Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, there is an understanding that this was an important step in discipleship by the early community of Christians.

⁶⁷ Janicki, *The Way of Life*, 259.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 260.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 262.

Previous Research and Investigations Regarding Baptism and Its Origin

The portions of the topic of baptismal origin that have been investigated before are as follows. First, the *Didache* has been studied in detail within the arena of understanding early Christian worship, liturgy, and practice by others, including Toby Janicki, who is referenced in this work. However, the research presented in the following pages differs in the conclusions drawn by Janicki overall in that his goal is to point Gentile Christians to their need for Messianic Jewish Torah observance. That goal is not in line with Paul's purpose and other early apostles as they teach a Christology that is inclusive of all people without the requirements of the Torah. His research is valuable because of his understanding of the dynamics between Gentiles and the Jewish believers in Jesus. Second, there are those that have researched the early Jewish historical writings and biblical texts tying the practice of Believer's Baptism with the ritual washings of Jewish priests, proselytes, and pilgrims since the time of Moses. The research of those like Ithamar Gruenwald, J. Julius Scott, and E.P. Sanders has provided great guidance into Palestinian Judaism and cult practices within various Jewish sects before and during the time of Jesus.

Beyond this research, others have done detailed research on theological beliefs and doxological practices tied to Christian Baptism, including soteriological issues, pedobaptism, and mass conversion practices using baptismal formulas. But what this author believes has been researched less frequently have been some of the covenantal issues regarding Believer's Baptism as its purpose shifts from Israel as a unique people under Yahweh to a global church made up of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues.

The following describes the relationship of this research project on the rite of Baptism to scholarly work done by others in the past. The key relationship can be described by asking how

Jewish our Christian faith is today. This research project depends on those scholars who concentrated on Jewish studies and Messianic history, practice, and theology. Some scholars who the following research leans on for this foundation of research are David Stern, Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Toby Janicki, and Mark Nanos. David Stern is responsible for the Complete Jewish Bible translation as well as the comprehensive text on Messianic Judaism with its beliefs, theology, and practices. The material is valuable for those not familiar with Jewish practice or early Messianic Jewish *Halakhah* (way of walking). Dr. Stern came to faith in Yeshua (Jesus) during the Jesus movement in 1972 and changed from economics to theology. He taught the Fuller Seminary's first course in "Judaism and Christianity" and became deeply involved in the Messianic movement.⁷⁰ His contribution to Jewish and Christian synergy is significant within the topics of identity, history, theology, Torah, and application in the form of *Halakhah*. Where Dr. Stern and the following research disagree is in the application of the Mosaic Law today. Nonetheless, his work is extremely important to understand the history and identity of the fledgling Jewish Christian community in the first century after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum is a tremendous scholar holding degrees in Hebrew and Old Testament studies from Dallas Theological Seminary and New York University. His contribution is in the understanding of the fulfillment of the Hebrew Scriptures as well as the role of rabbinic literature. Of note in this research will be his contribution to the inauguration of Jesus and his life as a Jewish man within the culture and context of Judaism. His work on the life of the Messiah aids in understanding Baptism as well as circumcision as a Jewish ritual.⁷¹ The research and

⁷⁰ Stern, *Messianic Judaism*, 321.

⁷¹ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua: The Life of the Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective, Volume I* (San Antonio: Ariel Ministries, 2016), 512.

resulting conclusions presented here align closely with Dr. Fruchtenbaum's theological perspective regarding ecclesiology and the role of Israel and the global Body of Christ. His brilliant research into the Jewish community surrounding the life and ministry of Jesus aid in this research project.

Toby Janicki has been described briefly in a previous section on the *Didache*. His research and contribution are important to this project because of his research into Jewish and Gentile relations and instructions in worship to the early church communities. He holds a degree in Practical Theology and regularly contributes to the *Messiah Journal*. His theology aligns with those who believe Gentiles should be Torah observant to some degree; this is a theology that differs substantially from the theological conclusions found in this project. Janicki writes, "The *Didache* can help Gentile believers navigate their way through the obligations of discipleship and Torah life while maintaining their unique identity alongside the Jewish people."⁷²

Mark Nanos, along with Magnus Zetterholm, compile a collection of international scholarly works that seek to describe Paul and his role within Judaism. Nanos is a lecturer at the University of Kansas, and Zetterholm is an associate professor in New Testament studies at Lund University. Nanos contributes to my research with his qualification of Paul's position on circumcision. This is critical to an understanding of whether the ordinance of Baptism replaces circumcision in the mind of Paul the Apostle.⁷³ Zetterholm generally contributes to an understanding of Paul within Judaism to combat the centuries of the portrayal of what he calls an anti-Jewish Paul.⁷⁴ This research does not align with all of their conclusions regarding Paul, but

⁷² Janicki, *The Way of Life*, viii.

⁷³ Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm, eds., *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 123.

⁷⁴ Nanos and Zetterholm, *Paul within Judaism*, 42.

their contributions to the Jewish context of Paul are needed as years of Christian anti-Jewish propaganda did distort Paul's origins as a Benjamite and a Pharisee.⁷⁵ These scholars specialize in Messianic, Jewish, and Rabbinic studies to aid in my research. Other scholars from evangelical Christianity, as well as traditional Judaism, are utilized as well in this research, and their contributions are valuable to the understanding of the origin of Christianity's ordinance of Baptism.

How Others Have Defined and Identified Key Concepts Regarding Baptism

The origins of the ordinance of Baptism have been researched by other scholars with some common definitions and key concepts. One of these definitions commonly seen in research material is that of ritual washing. Ritual washing is defined by Jewish scholars as Mikveh and is bathing in a live body of water for a ritual purpose. Leviticus 16 describes this command given to Moses for the purpose of consecrating the sons of Aaron to serve in the priesthood:

And the Lord said to Moses, "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die. For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat. But in this way Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with a bull from the herd for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. He shall put on the holy linen coat and shall have the linen undergarment on his body, and he shall tie the linen sash around his waist, and wear the linen turban; these are the holy garments. He shall bathe his body in water and then put them on" (Leviticus 16:2-4, English Standard Version).

Eric Lakatos explains that during the most sacred day of Yom Kippur, the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies twice and even change his vestments five times. Each time before he would change garments, he was required to immerse himself in a Mikveh.⁷⁶

The key concept Lakatos and other scholars identify in this example of consecration is

⁷⁵ Nanos and Zetterholm, *Paul within Judaism*, 43.

⁷⁶ Lakatos, *Baptism: Its Jewish Origins*, 8.

ritual purification. Prior to New Testament baptism, the Torah gives many examples of what would make a person ritually unclean and then ritually clean. Lakatos writes, “These commandments involve who is permitted to enter the Temple. Today, the Temple does not exist, and these requirements do not pertain to the synagogue.”⁷⁷ Another key concept which some scholars have in common with my research is the idea of conversion. Lakatos writes, “Biblically speaking, all nations and peoples, including Israel, are ‘converted’ through the Mikveh.”⁷⁸

The idea of conversion represents a change of status and often included some form of immersion or ritual cleansing. After the children of Israel were removed from the bondage of slavery in Egypt, they entered a covenant at the foot of Mt. Sinai. They were “converting” to a theocratic rule under the Mosaic covenant, where Israel declared that they would do all that they were commanded by the Lord. The Lord gives instruction regarding the consecration of Israel: “And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever.’ When Moses told the words of the people to the Lord, the Lord said to Moses, ‘Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments and be ready for the third day. For on the third day, the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people’” (Exodus 19:9-11, ESV).

The concept of conversion here in Exodus also includes the concept of covenant—this is another key concept found in other research concerning the Jewish roots of the practice of Baptism. This idea is critical to this research as covenants were always cut with the blood of an animal. This is no different from the establishment of the Mosaic covenant, and the blood of Christ established the New Covenant in his blood. However, the convert had a role to play as

⁷⁷ Lakatos, *Baptism: Its Jewish Origins*, 9.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

well in this conversion process (or change in covenant). Jeffrey Peterson has brought out the significance of this concept of covenantal faithfulness as he relates it to the “Circumcision of Christ.” The context is the significance of Baptism in Colossians within the Restorationist Christians,⁷⁹ but the concept of covenant is valuable to my research as Peterson, Ratzlaff, and other scholars have detailed in their research.

Historical Sources Used in Developing Explanations of the Observance and Practice of Baptism

The following sources have been used by this researcher as well as other scholars in developing the origins of the observance of Baptism in early Christian worship practice. The obvious resource is the Scriptures. Specifically, the first five books of Moses are key to understanding the ritual law behind ritual baths and washings as required of the Levites. Second, are the gospels detailing the Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. Third, are the details of baptisms as seen in Luke’s writings in the book of Acts. Finally, the epistles of Paul and Peter, where Baptism is mentioned, are helpful in understanding how the early church baptized new followers of Jesus Christ. Another historical document used by theologians, historians, and doxologists is the *Didache*. The work of Janicki has been previously mentioned as a good resource for understanding the use of this document by Gentile followers of Christ. Jewish texts such as the Babylonian Talmud containing the Mishnah and the Gemara. These provide insight into rabbinic thinking regarding many topics within the Torah during the period of the Tannaim (rabbis cited in the Mishnah). Other important resources come from historians during this period of history in Palestine.

Two non-Christian Jewish writers from the first century were Hellenistic Jews. One was Flavius Josephus, who was of priestly nobility as his original name was Joseph. He chose to use the Roman form of his name as a student and historian. Josephus was considered by many

⁷⁹ Jeffrey Peterson, “The Circumcision of the Christ”: The Significance of Baptism in Colossians and the Churches of the Restoration,” *Restoration Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (2001): 66.

Jewish non-believers in Jesus to be a traitor to his people. Josephus and a companion surrendered to the Romans after turning on his own military forces to join Rome.⁸⁰ But his writings were preserved by Christians who recognized their contribution toward establishing historical origins of their faith in Jesus. Unfortunately, only four of his writing survive. Scott explains, “His first writing, *The History of Jewish War*, is most important. It focuses on the struggle against the Romans (66-70) in which he played a part (on both sides!). Throughout the work, the writer describes the geography of Palestine (including Jerusalem and its temple) and Jewish history, life, customs, and thought.”⁸¹ The greatest value of Josephus to the study of Christianity and the New Testament is contained in his background information of Jewish life in Roman-occupied Palestine as Jesus makes his appearance on earth.⁸²

The other historical contribution came from Philo Judaeus. He was a member of a prominent family in Alexandria. Philo’s brother, Tiberius Julius Alexander, renounced Judaism and followed a political career, which included his role as the chief of staff to Emperor Titus during the siege and overthrow of Jerusalem.⁸³ Philo remained committed to Judaism, and he held to a deep belief in monotheism and the Jewish Scriptures. Philo has many volumes classified as philosophical, apologetic, historical, and expository. He was entrenched in Greek thought and philosophy as a Hellenistic Jew but was well versed in Jewish thought as he contributed greatly to our study of Intertestamental Jewish history.⁸⁴

One of the greatest archaeological discoveries of the twentieth century contributes to other tremendous sources to the study of early Palestine in the unearthing of the Dead Sea

⁸⁰ Scott, *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*, 36.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 38.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 39.

Scrolls. The discovery of these scrolls in 1947 brought insight into the Qumran community as the various caves provided biblical scrolls, targums, tefillin, and mezuzot all related to Judaism of the Second Temple period. Additionally, apocryphal writings were unearthed as well as pseudepigraphal writings such as Enoch, Jubilees, and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.⁸⁵ Other texts included commentaries on Habakkuk, Nahum, and the Psalms. There are also paraphrases, legal texts, writings for worship, poetry and wisdom texts, and eschatological works.⁸⁶ These writings also provide an understanding of the Qumran community and depth to its link with John the Baptist as a part of this faith community. Much of the New Testament description of John reminds the student of the Qumran texts and its community. VanderKam writes, “John’s Baptism for the purpose of repentance parallels the Qumran teaching about washing in water for cleansing and sanctification (1QS 3.4-5. 9).⁸⁷

Section II : Literature Review Relating to the Lord’s Supper

Fundamental Worship, Music, and Global Concepts Related to the Lord’s Supper

The fundamental worship concepts behind the Lord’s Supper find its roots in the Torah just as Baptism does. The acts of worship in the Lord’s Supper come from the first Jewish feast that God established with the Hebrew children before the Mosaic covenant was established. As the bondage of slavery in Egypt tightens its grip on the children of Israel, Yahweh raises up Moses to be his spokesman. During the ten plagues, Israel is given these instructions from the Lord from Exodus 12. Verses fourteen through seventeen were brought forth earlier in this work

⁸⁵ James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, second ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), vi.

⁸⁶ VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, vii.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 208.

to illustrate the elements of the Passover meal, but in this portion, the purpose of the sacrificial lamb is revealed:

Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you. You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever. And when you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. And when your children say to you, ‘What do you mean by this service?’ you shall say, ‘It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.’” And the people bowed their heads and worshiped. Then the people of Israel went and did so; as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did (Exodus 12:21-28, ESV).

There is worship taking place in each household as they realize that Yahweh has delivered them.

Verse twenty-seven indicates that the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

This is the first Passover Israel held before the Lord, and God continued to reveal himself through Moses and the Torah in a progressive revelation. In Leviticus 23, Moses records all the feasts of Israel. Here we find further detail around this feast:

These are the appointed feasts of the Lord, the holy convocations, which you shall proclaim at the time appointed for them. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight, is the Lord's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work. But you shall present a food offering to the Lord for seven days. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work (Leviticus 23: 4-8, ESV).

This passage contains both Passover as well as the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Israel commemorated with eight days of eating unleavened bread.

Another passage from the Torah detailing Passover is found in Numbers 28 as the various festival offerings are detailed:

On the fourteenth day of the first month is the Lord's Passover, and on the fifteenth day

of this month is a feast. Seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work, but offer a food offering, a burnt offering to the Lord: two bulls from the herd, one ram, and seven male lambs a year old; see that they are without blemish; also their grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil; three tenths of an ephah shall you offer for a bull, and two tenths for a ram; a tenth shall you offer for each of the seven lambs; also one male goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you. You shall offer these besides the burnt offering of the morning, which is for a regular burnt offering. In the same way you shall offer daily, for seven days, the food of a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to the Lord. It shall be offered besides the regular burnt offering and its drink offering. And on the seventh day you shall have a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work. (Numbers 28:16-25, ESV).

This passage shows the corporate worship responsibility of the Levites at the Tabernacle (and eventually the Temple) in addition to the responsibility of each family for the feast of Passover.

The final Torah passage prescribing how Passover is to be observed is found in Deuteronomy chapter sixteen, where the three harvest festivals are described:

Observe the month of Abib and keep the Passover to the Lord your God, for in the month of Abib the Lord your God brought you out of Egypt by night. And you shall offer the Passover sacrifice to the Lord your God, from the flock or the herd, at the place that the Lord will choose, to make his name dwell there. You shall eat no leavened bread with it. Seven days you shall eat it with unleavened bread, the bread of affliction—for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste—that all the days of your life you may remember the day when you came out of the land of Egypt. No leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory for seven days, nor shall any of the flesh that you sacrifice on the evening of the first day remain all night until morning. You may not offer the Passover sacrifice within any of your towns that the Lord your God is giving you, but at the place that the Lord your God will choose, to make his name dwell in it, there you shall offer the Passover sacrifice, in the evening at sunset, at the time you came out of Egypt. And you shall cook it and eat it at the place that the Lord your God will choose. And in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents. For six days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a solemn assembly to the Lord your God. You shall do no work on it (Deuteronomy 16: 1-8, ESV).

As Moses writes this, he gives more detail than the Leviticus account and describes the eating of the unleavened bread as the bread of affliction and as a memorial to recall the deliverance out of Egypt from the bondage of slavery.

The roots of Communion come from the Torah, but the New Testament grants readers a

view into how this feast was celebrated as well as how the Lord's Supper transformed from this spring festival meal. Within Judaism, Passover and Unleavened Bread were back to back festivals. The New Testament records these feasts and shows this tie. Matthew describes these feasts in Matthew 26: "Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?' He said, 'Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'" And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover" (Matthew 26:17-19, ESV). It is here that Matthew records the institution of the Lord's Supper within the Passover meal:

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:26-29, ESV).

This passage shows Jesus inaugurating the Lord's Supper using the elements of the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine from the Passover meal.

After the events of the cross, the death, resurrection, and the ascension of Jesus, the new church develops its ecclesiology and theology, and the readers of Acts and the writings of the Apostles get a sideline view of these developments. Regarding the development of this meal within the gospels and Corinthians, Matthew Colvin writes the following:

The choice of bread and wine as the elements of the ritual was intended by Jesus primarily as a means of self-identification as Israel's Messiah as a disclosure of his purpose to accomplish a new Exodus event by his impending death. This epistle, especially in chapters 10 and 11, is the fullest discussion of the eucharist within the pages of the New Testament. And because of this, it is the foundation upon which most Christian sacramentology has historically been built.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Colvin, *The Lost Supper*, 119.

Colvin develops his theory from biblical and Jewish texts but looks to 1 Corinthians as the foundation of church sacramentology. Colvin explains that this evidence from Paul was mostly indirect because the only reason we can read the apostle's instructions on the Lord's Supper was due to the church at Corinth abusing it.⁸⁹

The following is the main text from 1 Corinthians regarding the Lord's Supper:

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another—if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come (1 Corinthians 11:23-34, English Standard Version).

Here Paul gives instruction on the Lord's Supper after correcting the saints in Corinth regarding their sinful practices, factions, and lack of unity as a church.

The fundamental worship concepts behind the Lord's Supper clearly come from the Passover feast and a renewed in the last meal with Jesus and his disciples. Like baptism, the Lord's Supper is participation in Christ as an act of worship. Colvin makes this point as he describes that this was Paul's intention for the church as they participated in this meal: "Paul consistently speaks of the eucharist as a festal meal, the same sort of thing as the Passover: 'Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast' (1 Cor. 5:7-8). The church's participation in Christ is by participation in the meal. This is something that they must

⁸⁹ Colvin, *The Lost Supper*, 120.

do, and do together, as the people of God.”⁹⁰ Colvin postulates that the Lord’s Supper is a ritual meal as he summarizes, “In short, the eucharist works in the same way as the Passover worked because it is the same sort of thing as the Passover.”⁹¹

Like immersion, there are additional extra-biblical materials regarding Passover and the Lord’s Supper. More of these will be discussed in a later section, but one of the fundamental elements of worship taken from the Lord’s Supper is found in the meaning of the cup of wine Jesus used in this meal. This cup comes from traditions within Judaism based on God’s deliverance of Israel in the Exodus event. The oral Torah, traditions of the Pharisees, and other rabbinic writings have much to say about how Jewish life and customs were carried out and followed. Scholars debate how much of the oral traditions Jesus adhered to, and one could argue that his encounters with the Jewish leadership about laws and traditions of men showed where he stood on such issues. However, there is evidence that Jesus followed more than just the written Torah as a Jewish man. John 10 indicates Jesus appearing at the Temple during the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah): “At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon” (John 10: 22-23, ESV). Though there is no evidence here of the celebration of this feast that is not a part of the written law, by his presence at the colonnade of Solomon, it is clear that Jesus is participating in the Jewish cultural celebration of what this feast represents—the rededication of the Temple after the Maccabean revolt.

Of greater importance to this study is the appearance of the fruit of the vine at the last Passover meal Jesus shared with his disciples before his death. Of note, Exodus 12 indicates the

⁹⁰ Colvin, *The Lost Supper*, 124.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 125.

Passover meal must include lamb, bitter herbs, and unleavened bread. But in the Last Supper, Jesus raises the cup of wine to represent his blood. This cup was a part of the traditional meal as it appeared through the centuries of Jewish tradition and culture. In fact, there were four cups of wine that were drunk at the Passover meal, and these find their origin from a passage in Exodus chapter six: “Say therefore to the people of Israel, ‘I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians’” (Exodus 6:6-7, ESV). These cups stand for the four promises the Lord makes in this passage: The Cups of Sanctification, the Cup of Deliverance, the Cup of Redemption, and the Cup of Praise.⁹²

There are also elements of music tied to the Lord’s Supper because they were a part of Passover. In the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, we find that Jesus and his followers sang at the conclusion of the meal: “And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives” (Matthew 26:30, ESV). The New Testament does not indicate the name or words of this hymn, but scholars indicate that the likely choice was one of the *Hallel* psalms usually sung at a Passover seder. These *Hallel* Psalms were Psalm 113 to Psalm 118, and traditionally, the end of the seder would contain the latter half of the *Hallel*—Psalms 115 to 118.⁹³ Most likely, Jesus and his disciples sang a hymn from Psalm 118, as the second half of this psalm contains prophetic words concerning the Messiah:

The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. Glad songs of salvation are in the tents of the righteous: “The right hand of the Lord does valiantly, the right hand of the Lord exalts, the right hand of the Lord does valiantly!” I shall not die,

⁹²Howard and Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord*, 59.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 60.

but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord. The Lord has disciplined me severely, but he has not given me over to death. Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it. I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Save us, we pray, O Lord! O Lord, we pray, give us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We bless you from the house of the Lord. The Lord is God, and he has made his light to shine upon us. Bind the festal sacrifice with cords, up to the horns of the altar! You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God; I will extol you. Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever! (Psalm 118: 14-19, ESV).

It is likely the Messiah sang these words hours before he fulfilled them on the cross as the head cornerstone that the religious leaders rejected.⁹⁴

Other songs have come out of Jewish tradition in the Passover meal, though the *Hallel* Psalms are the ones most likely used by early followers of Jesus. Most of these songs have links to rabbinic tradition, but some have interesting ties to the hope of Israel in their Messiah. Various forms of a song of Moses have been used in Passover tradition as a celebration of deliverance from the armies of Egypt. This comes from Exodus 15. One song is called *Michamocha*, which is translated “Who is like you?” The reference is Exodus 15: “Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders” (Exodus 15: 11, ESV)? Miriam also sang before the Lord in this passage using some of the words from the song of Moses: “Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing. And Miriam sang to them: ‘Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea’” (Exodus 15: 20-21, ESV).

Another traditional song that became a part of the Passover story was *Ma Nishtanah*, which means “what is different?” The entire phrase of the chorus is “Ma Nishtanah ha leyla ha

⁹⁴ Howard and Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord*, 60.

zeh mi khol ha leylot?” Which asks, “Why is this night different from all [other] nights?” This song and the four questions that are a part of it are often recited by any children involved in the Passover meal. This initial question in the song is followed by four examples of the way the ritual of the Passover meal is different from the typical evening meal and any subsequent rituals. According to Rabbi Evan Moffic, “When the Temple stood, the four questions were said after the meal, and not before. The reason is that the Temple stood, eating the paschal lamb was the central part of the Passover meal, not the telling of the story. The father would begin this ritual questioning by rhetorically asking the core question of what makes this night different from all other nights.”⁹⁵ Moffic explains that the ritual questioning that became these four questions were a way of engaging children in the seder and transitioning from the Passover meal to the story.⁹⁶

After asking why this night is different, the children will recite or sing these four questions: “On all other nights, we eat either leavened bread or matzah; on this night, why only matzah? On all other nights, we eat all kinds of herbs; on this night, why do we especially eat bitter herbs? On all other nights, we do not dip herbs at all; on this night, why do we dip them twice? On all other nights, we eat in an ordinary manner; why tonight do we dine with special ceremony?”⁹⁷ After this song, the father or leader of the seder will explain why these ritual ways of eating are done as he tells the story of Passover.

After this telling of the Passover account, another song is traditionally sung called *Dayenu*, which means “enough for us” or “it would have been enough.” This song reframes the experience of Israel out of Egypt in a positive way. It highlight’s Israel’s gratitude and

⁹⁵ Moffic, *What Every Christian Needs to Know about Passover*, 89.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 154.

recognition of the mercy and generosity of God’s deliverance. The idea of the song is that it would have been enough if God delivered us from Egypt, but the Lord did more than that. He also gave us the Sabbath, and he gave us the Torah.⁹⁸ Messianic versions also include that he gave us the Messiah. After singing *Dayenu*, the seder usually involves singing a song about Elijah called *Eliyahu ha Navi*, which means Elijah, the prophet.

Part of the tradition behind singing about Elijah is because Jewish tradition says he will return before the Messiah comes. A child will open the door to see if Elijah had come to the Passover meal. This is an interesting tradition that has prophetic overtones to it. In the Old Testament, we see Elijah in historical writings before he departs from the earth in a fiery chariot according to 2 Kings 2:11. We do not know where he goes, and he is not heard from again; however, we do hear about him again at the end of the Old Testament in the book of Malachi.⁹⁹ The prophet writes at the end of this book, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction” (Malachi 4:5-6, ESV).

According to Moffic, “The Jewish sages interpreted this verse [5] to mean that Elijah would appear as the precursor to the Messiah, whose presence would usher in the ‘great and terrifying day of the Lord.’ John the Baptist in the New Testament serves that precise role. He announces the coming of the Messiah.”¹⁰⁰ Around the time of the appearance of John the Baptist, Jewish sages created folklore around the figure of Elijah, the prophet. Stories circulated of the

⁹⁸ Moffic, *What Every Christian Needs to Know about Passover*, 160.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 118.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 120.

prophet reappearing on earth to fight injustice and perform miracles. Remarkably, in the song *Eliyahu ha Navi*, the second stanza is translated, “May he soon come to us along with the Messiah, son of David.”¹⁰¹

Global concepts related to the Lord’s Supper come from the Jewish Passover feast, but have practices and variances wide and differing based on the denomination and region. The names of the Lord’s Supper usually include communion, which comes from the Greek idea of fellowship in the word *koinonia*.¹⁰² It is also called the Eucharist, and this term also has roots in the Greek language, as *eucharisto* has the meaning of “thanks” or “thanksgiving” in both Koine and modern Greek.¹⁰³ The Lord’s Supper is often used in Protestant denominations and has its roots in the symbolism, ordinance, and remembrance of what Christ did in his sacrifice. The Greek idea Paul uses in Corinthians contains the concepts of remembrance or memorial and proclamation. This Greek word *anamnesis* keeps with the Old Testament concept of the Hebrew *zikkaron* of remembrance, as this is a major theme of Passover.¹⁰⁴ The global elements of the Lord’s Supper contain both remembrance and proclamation.

The global church also has differences in how the elements are prepared, distributed, and disposed of depending upon church tradition, as there is little in the New Testament about these prescriptions. The high-level function is to worship through remembrance and proclamation, and the frequency is as varied as the preparation and methodologies used in remembering the Lord’s death in this ordinance. This research does not include the church history of the Lord’s Supper but maintains the focus on its origin as it relates to the global concepts. The elements are

¹⁰¹ Moffic, *What Every Christian Needs to Know about Passover*, 121.

¹⁰² Colvin, *The Lost Supper*, 74.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 132.

universally bread and the fruit of the vine, though the form of bread differs, as well as the fruit of the vine being actual wine or grape juice. Leavened bread is even used, but as explained previously, space does not allow for detail on these variances in practice. It is sufficient to know that in the Supper's origins, bread and wine had multiple layers of meaning and symbolism for Jesus's audience. For Colvin, the meanings have three levels that get more granular: "We can distinguish three levels with progressively narrow specificity: (1) general biblical symbolism of bread and wine; (2) meanings arising from the narrower context of Israel's covenant with YHWH; and (3) meanings dictated by the most specific context of the Passover celebrated in the Upper Room."¹⁰⁵

Previous Research and Investigations on the Origin of the Lord's Supper

Extensive research regarding the Lord's Supper has been done by past scholars, but of note in this section are the major research topics of scholars dedicated to the Jewish origins of the festal meal. The portions of the topic of the Lord's Supper's origin that have been investigated before are as follows. First, there is much written about the foundation of the Passover feast behind this ordinance. Many scholars have painted a broad brush on this topic, but there are focused studies that should be noted that have contributed greatly to this study.

First, the work of Marvin Wilson on the Jewish roots of Christian faith has aided the scholarly community in the understanding of the Lord's Supper originating from the Jewish feast of Passover. One of Wilson's work titled *Our Father Abraham* moves the event of Passover to central importance to both Jews and Christians. Wilson believes, "A straightforward reading of the Synoptic Gospels indicates that the Last Supper in the Upper Room in Jerusalem was a traditional Jewish Passover meal commemorating the Exodus. Jesus, however, went beyond the

¹⁰⁵ Colvin, *The Lost Supper*, 71.

commonly held Jewish understanding of this celebration. He indicated to his disciples how this meal depicted his imminent suffering and death.”¹⁰⁶ His contribution to the Mosaic teachings and Old Testament accounts of Passover are valuable to understanding the New Testament Passover practices developed before and after the Temple was destroyed. Wilson also prescribes how Christians can understand their faith more fully by experiencing Passover in a Jewish setting.

Second, the work of Toby Janicki and his commentary on the *Didache* is an important piece of research from the perspective of the early believing community. He sheds light in his research on the differentiation between the Passover meal and what may be categorized as communal meals giving thanks and breaking bread that may not be a part of the Lord’s Supper. Some of this research is controversial, but it is valuable to understanding what the early church practice was regarding the Lord’s Supper. Janicki alludes to the anachronism in the *Didache* blessings as he writes, “Except for the association that we might make with bread and wine, the prayers in chapters 9 and 10 do not mention anything that would connect them with the ceremony that our master Yeshua performed at the Last Supper.”¹⁰⁷

Janicki alludes to another practice by a group called the Quartodecimans. Research done by Oskar Skarsaune, Reidar Hvalvik and Michael Daise regarding the Quartodeciman Passover celebration shed light on eucharistic practices stemming from Passover and Unleavened Bread in 1 Corinthians and Paul’s use of the phrase, “let us observe the festival.” Though the following investigation and its suppositions may disagree with some of the conclusions these scholars make, they raise questions in their research that are critical to understanding not only the origins of the Lord’s Supper and Christian practice but what Paul meant for the Gentile community in

¹⁰⁶ Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 237.

¹⁰⁷ Janicki, *The Way of Life*, 339.

light of the removal of the obligation to Jewish law and his own explanation of freedom in Christ. On this latter issue, Daise concludes the following:

The first known association of Jesus' death with Passover/Unleavened Bread dates some twenty years after the event and may have been prompted merely by the convergence of Paul's pastoral concern with the paschal season. If Paul's festal reflection in 1 Cor 5 began a construct of Jesus's death which would later frame the gospel passion narratives, that scenario was rooted in a post-biblical Jewish rewrite of the exodus story. And if such a scenario eventually bred an obligatory Christian calendrical observance tethered to the Jewish Passover (the Quartodeciman Pascha), it ironically affected a ritual which ran against Paul's insistence on collective freedom from Jewish law.¹⁰⁸

Scores of scholarships have researched the Jewish backgrounds of the New Testament, but one contribution to the research of the Lord's Supper that is valuable to this research has been made by Matthew Colvin in his work, *The Lost Supper*. His background research is refreshing and critical due to his background in Rabbinic and biblical sources. He argues, "The words of Jesus and his actions at the Last supper presupposed an already existing Passover ritual in which the Messiah was represented by a piece of bread: Jesus was not instituting a new symbolism but an existing symbol to speak about himself."¹⁰⁹ My research relates similarly to the work Colvin and Wilson have done, as they seek to show how the symbolism used in the Lord's Supper were existing elements from Judaism. The research in this work shares some similarities with other scholars such as Daise and Ratzlaff due to the following material leaning toward a global understanding of these symbols as that information ties in with the rest of the New Testament message to Gentiles.

It is difficult to find areas of research regarding the Lord's Supper that have not been researched before, but it seems that the arena of Colvin's range of studies comes closest to mine in the sense of potential gaps in previous research. The significance of the Exodus 6 narrative to

¹⁰⁸ Daise, "Christ Our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:6-8)," 524.

¹⁰⁹ Colvin, *The Lost Supper*, xii.

the appearance of the fruit of the vine at the Last Supper is not unique but is much less found in Christian research regarding the Lord's Supper. Jewish literature has much more to say on the "four cups" that made their way into the Passover meal than Christian scholarship does. Though there is less research found on the frequency of the Lord's Supper, Janicki sheds some light on this topic in his work on the *Didache*.

How Others Have Defined and Identified Key Concepts Regarding the Lord's Supper

Other scholars have identified the following key concepts regarding the origins of the Lord's Supper. First, there is the concept of the Passover feast being the backdrop of the Last Supper. This key identification with Passover is not without its controversy, as I alluded to in the previous section. Much scholarship does see alignment with the Passover feast and the events surrounding the last week of the life of Jesus before his sacrificial death as the Lamb of God. This indicates another key concept between the Passover and the Lord's Supper—the identity of Jesus as the Lamb of God. This key concept is critical to my research as I believe it to be the major element of the Passover feast since it disappears for the most part after the destruction of the Temple in most rabbinic Passover seders.

A key definition of further research is that of the exodus. Scholars define Passover in terms of remembrance of the exodus event from Egypt, and they define the Lord's supper in terms of remembrance of the Lamb of God, who removed the bondage of sin from humankind. This 'second exodus' like many other New Testament concepts moves from a localized setting (Israel out of Egypt) to a global setting (God's people in Christ out of sin). This removal of sin is often depicted by unleavened bread, and that is another key concept found in research concerning the Lord's Supper. The bread of affliction is the unleavened bread eaten at Passover and identified as the body of Christ as he was broken and afflicted for Israel and the nations by

his death. Jesus indicates that he is the bread of life, and also tells his followers that they must eat of his body during the difficult teaching found in John chapter six.

Another key definition found in research on the Lord's Supper is the concept of remembrance. Similar to the idea of the exodus as a milestone, the remembrance of what God did to bring Israel out of Egypt is a common theme in Passover and is found throughout the Torah, the Psalms, and the Prophets. Jesus prescribes remembrance as a key concept as well in the Last Supper with his disciples. Scholars look at this concept of remembrance considering the Hebrew meaning (Zikron) and the Greek meaning (anamnesis) behind the Passover feast and the Lord's Table.

Finally, the key concept of blood as atonement is part of Passover and the Lord's Supper. An equally important element is deliverance and redemption by blood as experienced by Israel in Exodus 12 as well as God's ultimate redemption on the cross. Wilson reminds us that just as the exodus brought protection by blood, it also brought deliverance from slavery. He indicates that Passover seders are often joyous, whereas communion is often somber. He writes, "The note of joyful praise and celebration of life in the light of redemption—so much a part of the festival of Passover from Bible times to present—has often become lost through the Church's singular focus on death. The Israelites rejoiced at Passover, because their Liberator had miraculously redeemed them, freeing them from the bondage of Egypt."¹¹⁰ The research of redemption and the cup of redemption that Jesus has yet to share with his followers is a key concept as well in the symbolism of the cup of wine and its meaning in the Passover meal as well as the Lord's Supper.

Historical Sources Used in Developing Explanations of the Observance of the Lord's Supper

Our understanding of Passover during the New Testament era comes from the following

¹¹⁰ Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 252.

historical sources. Like with the sources for baptism, the writings of Josephus are a critical resource for understanding Jewish practice. Pilgrims would ascend to Jerusalem in large numbers with a number close to 200,000 believed to be an accurate figure. Josephus's figure of three million Jews present at Passover in Jerusalem in the first century is believed to be exaggerated.¹¹¹

Another important source used in developing explanations of Passover observance was the Mishnaic tractate Pesahim. One example that aligns with Scripture from the Mishnah is that local Roman authorities would release a prisoner at the time Passover (Mark 15:6-15; cf. Mishnah, Pesahim 9:6).¹¹² Finally, the Old and New Testaments have been a critical resource for the observance of Passover and the Lord's Supper. Exodus 12 indicates the inauguration of this feast, and Matthew 26, along with Mark 15, indicate how Jesus and the disciples celebrated the Passover evening meal.

Other evidence and sources come from Jews on Passover and the early church writers regarding the Lord's Supper. Many Christian eucharistic liturgies have little to say about Passover or Israel. Colvin explains that the early church "de-paschalized" the Lord's Supper.¹¹³ For example, Ephrem of Syria wrote, "Our Lord at the Passover with his disciples; through the bread that he broke, he abolished the unleavened bread."¹¹⁴ Though these sources and their rhetoric skew the New Testament story, it is important to acknowledge such sources as they contribute to the understanding of how the church observed the Lord's Supper. Other sources have been discovered that shed a solid tie between Passover and the Lord's Supper in the early

¹¹¹ Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 243.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Colvin, *The Lost Supper*, 38.

¹¹⁴ J. Edward Walters, ed., *Ephrem the Syrian's Hymns on the Unleavened Bread* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2001), 38.

church. The chief works of a second-century bishop of Sardis named Melito are one example. His *Peri Pascha* was unlike any other writing of its time except for Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*. Melito was a Quartodeciman ("fourteenther," after the 14th day of the month of Nisan) who celebrated Passover alongside the Jews and prayed for the salvation of unbelieving Israel.¹¹⁵

Jewish and Christian debate caused a separation of the ways, and the rhetoric produced by the early church and rabbinic Judaism shed a negative light on the marriage between Passover and the Lord's Supper moving forward. Many of these sources reflect this. However, *Peri Pascha*, *The Didache*, and a few other early sources aid in understanding the Jewish origins of the Lord's Supper. As with baptism, the *Didache* is also a post-New Testament resource that sheds some light on early Christian practices. Though controversial in interpretation, the text of the *Didache* indicates symbolism used in the Christian community regarding elements like bread and eschatological statements like those found in the New Testament.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Colvin, *The Lost Supper*, 61.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 59.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to understanding the research methods used in this thesis to allow a student or reader to follow the course of examination for their own research or benefit. This requires an illustration of the type of analysis performed, as well as the description of the methods and critical resources used to answer my research questions. This chapter briefly introduces and describes the research design approach used before revisiting the research questions that are at the heart of this project. The methods used during the research, along with a prescription of what is considered to be essential resources to use to answer the posed research questions, are also explained.

The nature of this research is one of historical research regarding the origins of the Lord's Supper and baptism. This is not a case study or a research project involving participants and the collection of data. It is also not regurgitations of simple historical accounts, but a means to collect the historical practices of these two ordinances by the early body of Christ to fashion a paradigm for future worship practices based on this information. It is also not an attempt to correct theological misunderstandings of theological concerns among denominations or sects regarding issues such as transubstantiation, consubstantiation, pedobaptism, or baptismal modes.

This research is foremost an attempt to recognize the practices of early Christianity and their origins to move forward worship practices with confidence for today's churches. Most want to understand where we come from as a people and culture; this is no different regarding our beliefs and practices. All will not agree with these conclusions reached, but of paramount concern is the seeker's ability to trust the research and repeat or continue it on their own. John Garr writes, "From the earliest controversy that arose between the Hellenists and the Hebraists in

Acts 6, Christianity has been characterized by internecine strife and fratricidal carnage. The landscape of history is littered with broken bodies and psyches, casualties of this ongoing, multifaceted ‘Christian’ civil warfare.”¹¹⁷ This research avoids the rhetoric and politicizing of these sacred practices of our faith, and moves to plant the truth based on historical research. This author understands that the interpretation is left to the individual believer and student as this research may border on prescriptive thoughts. The spirit of this research is to have confidence in our worship practices concerning baptism and the Lord’s Supper and know their original meaning and contexts.

Design

According to John and David Creswell, “Research approaches are plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to specific methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Informing this decision should be the philosophical assumptions the researcher brings to the study, procedures of inquiry (called research designs), and specific research methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation.”¹¹⁸ The three design approaches commonly used in research are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods.¹¹⁹ The research approach in this project is in the category of the qualitative method. Qualitative researchers in traditional categories may collect data through the examination of documents, behavior observation, or interviewing participants.¹²⁰ The nature of this research is in the realm of historical qualitative research as the data is found in religious, historical,

¹¹⁷ Garr, *Our Lost Legacy*, 187.

¹¹⁸ John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design*, fifth ed. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2018), 3.

¹¹⁹ Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 3.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 181.

theological, and doxological texts, books, articles, and theses. I now turn to the research questions and hypotheses introduced in chapter one, which is at the heart of this historical qualitative thesis.

Questions and Hypotheses

In this section, the three research questions introduced in chapter one are reviewed, and the detail behind the hypotheses is described for the purpose of laying out the strategy for the research methods used in this thesis. The following are three research questions within this study:

RQ1: In what ways does the baptism of repentance of John the Baptist differ from the baptism of new believers in the Messiah in the book of Acts as acts of worship?

RQ2: What is the worship purpose of the Passover meal Jesus shared with his disciples before his death that became the Lord's Supper?

RQ3: What are the contrasts between Jewish circumcision and the ordinance or rite known as "Believer's Baptism" in terms of New Testament worship?

Hypotheses

H1: The baptism of repentance of John the Baptist differs from the baptism of new believers in the Messiah in the book of Acts as acts of worship in terms of the purpose, the participant, and the position of the worshiper in baptism.

H2: The worship purpose of the Passover meal Jesus shared with his disciples before his death that became the Lord's Supper was to renew the elements from Jewish tradition and the original meal elements in a new worship paradigm and ordinance.

H3: The contrasts between Jewish circumcision and the ordinance or rite known as

"Believer's Baptism" in terms of New Testament worship are covenant faithfulness for all nations under Christ, identity with the Body of Christ symbolically and spiritually, and membership into the commonwealth of Israel as worshipers of Yahweh.

The background and significance of this study is the subject of the first chapter; some of those highlights are reiterated here, which provide the direction for the methodology of research used in this project. The first research question strives to examine the differences between the baptism of John and the baptisms that one reads about in the book of Acts and in the teachings of the Apostles. I research the variations in these acts of worship through immersion or baptism to attempt to qualify my hypothesis in terms of the purpose, the participant, and the position of the worshiper. There are similarities between these two types of immersions, but the critical point of the research is to examine the differences between these types of baptisms. Issues regarding the Messiah, baptism, and the Law are included that allow the student to understand why Justin Martyr wrote the following: "Thus it is that we have believed through the baptism of repentance and knowledge of God, which was instituted for the sins of the people of God, as Isaiah testifies, and we recognize the same baptism which he announced, and which alone can purify penitents, is the water of life."¹²¹

The second research question determines to understand the meaning and purpose within a worship context of the Passover meal Jesus shared with his disciples before his death. As we learn, this formed the practice of the Lord's Supper, and this research centers on an investigation to support this author's hypothesis that the Lord's Supper purpose was to renew the elements from traditional Jewish practices and the original meal elements in a new worship model for

¹²¹ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* [Translated by Thomas B. Falls] (Washington D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 1948), 24.

New Covenant believers and disciples of Jesus Christ. The ultimate goal is for New Testament worship practices to align with the purpose of the Messianic fulfillment and promises of the “New Exodus” from sin and death in Jesus. The research assists in understanding what Skarsaune and Hvalvik describe as “the similarities between the Christian Passover and the Jewish *Pascha*.”¹²²

The third research question seeks to contrast Jewish circumcision and the ordinance of baptism in terms of New Testament worship. The research in this study concentrates on answering the contrasts between Jewish circumcision and the ordinance of baptism in terms of New Testament worship. The investigation focuses on covenant faithfulness for all nations under Christ, identity with the Body of Christ symbolically and spiritually, and membership into the commonwealth of Israel as worshipers of the God of Israel. The research aids in understanding what scholars like Ratzlaff believe when he writes, “Circumcision not only served as the entrance sign to the old covenant, Paul shows how it also pointed forward to Christ, yet it does not continue as a sign in the new covenant. Rather, in the new covenant, circumcision is transformed into baptism, which replaces circumcision as the entrance sign of the covenant.”¹²³

Methods

The following are the research methods utilized in this thesis to answer the research questions summarized in the last section. The research methods are from the qualitative family of methods, and these rely on image and text data and have unique steps in the analysis of the

¹²² Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik, eds., *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 525.

¹²³ Ratzlaff, *Sabbath in Christ*, 67.

data.¹²⁴ The data collected is from biblical texts, Jewish religious texts, historical writing, and Christian scholarship. Research data is also obtained from Jewish scholars with the understanding that their expertise is in the Torah and Old Testament studies opposed to a New Testament Christology or Messianic perspective. The research methodology includes inductive and deductive data analysis as patterns are built into organized units of information.¹²⁵ These patterns will develop into the themes and the eventual material and conclusions presented in the next chapters of this thesis.

First, the various documents and data are collected. This data includes historical documentation from early church theologians as well as Jewish scholars and historians. It involves collecting data from the current scholarship on the theology and doxology behind the two ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. This is a qualitative historical research project that involves the parallel process of data collection and the writing of findings during the same time.¹²⁶ Second, the data is examined and sorted through since the volume of historical qualitative research is dense and rich. The available resources must be selected and aggregated into a smaller number of themes to be used throughout the thesis.¹²⁷ These themes shape the data around answering the three research questions in this author's project.

Third, the data that is examined and selected is categorized and coded into various segments.¹²⁸ For example, these segments are divided into the buckets of material needed for

¹²⁴ Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 179.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 179.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 192.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 193.

each research question and further coded as Scripture, historical documents, theological writings, and doxological materials. Fourth, these themes and codes are arrayed to create a conceptual map that shows the flow of concepts and ideas in the fourth chapter of this thesis. This leads to the fifth step of writing the storyline or narrative of each theme that also appears in the fourth chapter of findings in this author's work.¹²⁹

The research methods and processes lead to the vital function of the interpretation in the body of qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba explain, "Interpretation in qualitative research involves several procedures: summarizing the overall findings, comparing the findings to the literature, discussing a personal view of the findings, and stating limitations and future research. In terms of overall findings, the question 'what were the lessons learned?' captures the essence of this idea."¹³⁰ This qualitative research includes the methods of data collection, data analysis, verification, and the reporting of findings that include the author's interpretation of the data.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Creswell and Creswell, 198.

¹³⁰ Y.S. Lincoln and E.G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1985), 97.

¹³¹ Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 208.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction to the Qualitative Research Findings

This chapter disseminates the findings related to the three research questions that are at the heart of this work. The conclusion of the research is in the final chapter, but this portion is dedicated to the qualitative historical information itself. Before delivering the research findings, a brief introduction is necessary to lay out the goal of these results. The goal is to reach the conclusions in the fifth chapter of this thesis based on the findings of scholarship and research shared in chapters two and this fourth chapter. First, some overarching research findings are included regarding the worship paradigm shift that these three research topics all have in common. The findings regarding the differences between the Baptism of John and the baptism of new believers in Jesus are shared next. Then the research results of the worship purpose of the Passover meal that became the Lord's Supper are shared next. Finally, the research conclusions regarding the contrasts between Jewish circumcision rites and the ordinance of Believer's Baptism in terms of New Testament worship are disseminated.

Before laying out the research findings of the three topics at the heart of this thesis, an introduction to the research behind the worship paradigm shift is necessary to lay the proper understanding for the vector of the research findings. The writer of Hebrews shares what is at the heart of this paradigm shift as he writes the following:

Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain." But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the

covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second... In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away (Hebrews 8:1-7, 13, ESV).

The writer is driving the point home that Christ is the focal point of a new and better covenant.

Charles Leiter writes, “God’s saving purpose in Christ is the unifying principle that underlies and ties together all of God’s dealings in human history, including the various covenants He has made at specific times with specific people.”¹³²

The Positions of the Role of Mosaic Law in Christian Life and Worship

The overarching theme of these Christian worship practices and their Jewish origins are found in the idea of covenant promise and fulfillment, according to Leiter and other scholarship. It is the concept of covenant promise and fulfillment that frames the research findings for these ordinances of the Christian faith. During the introduction, it was explained that both baptism and the Lord’s Supper have their foundations in Jewish practices, and both practices are prescribed in the Jewish law known as the Torah. The 613 commandments that make up the Jewish Law stipulate regulations that have been divided into ceremonial, ritual, civil, and moral laws. A brief survey of the four dominant scholarly views of the role of the Mosaic Law is necessary to undergird the findings of the research.

The first view is that most of the Mosaic Law is still in force and binding on the Christian community. This view is what rabbinic Judaism holds, though they have also added many more commandments on top of those found in the Torah. With the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D., the Pharisees had the opportunity to install their religious revolution, which bypassed the Levitical priesthood and exalted the authority of the rabbis. These Jewish leaders claimed authority to determine the schedule of the feasts, which was something that belonged to the

¹³² Charles Leiter, *The Law of Christ* (Hannibal: Granted Ministries Press, 2012), 237.

priests until this time.¹³³ The rabbis censored the interpretation of the Bible and supported an interpretation by methods that would suit their agenda. They also censored prophecy along with the priesthood. Up to this point, biblical Judaism had been based on the Temple and the priests.¹³⁴

Rabbinic voices were heard, and the revolution was led by rabbis like Yochanan Ben-Zakkai and Rabbi Akiba. Akiba supported the Bar-Kokhba revolt in 135 and eliminated any hopes to form a Judaism other than Rabbinic Judaism.¹³⁵ From this point on, Judaism was completely dependent upon the rabbis and their Oral Law. The rabbis conceived this Oral Law as having divine authority to keep themselves as the ultimate source of knowledge, in turn, creating a total dependency on their teachings alone.¹³⁶ The rabbis replaced the importance and authority of the Written Law with their traditions, writings, and Oral Law. Bar and Broshi write, “The Sages carried out their revolutionary vision by addressing three fronts, or pillars of the Jewish world and by reforming them completely: the rabbis replaced with priests, the Temple was replaced with the yeshiva, and the Bible was subordinated to the Oral Law teachings.”¹³⁷

The second view involves the role of the Mosaic Law with those in the Christian Jewish Roots movement and much of the Messianic Jewish movement. This view disregards the authority of Oral Law as positioned by Rabbinic Judaism; however, it does support much of the oral traditions and supports the theology that it is incumbent upon Christians to be “Torah

¹³³ Eitan Bar and Golan Broshi, *Rabbinic Judaism Debunked* (Coppell: One for Israel Ministry, 2019), 18.

¹³⁴ Bar and Broshi, *Rabbinic Judaism Debunked*, 19.

¹³⁵ D. Gruber, *Rabbi Akiba's Messiah: The Origins of Rabbinic Authority* (Tel Aviv: Maoz Israel, 2004), 435.

¹³⁶ Bar and Broshi, *Rabbinic Judaism Debunked*, 21.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 99.

Observant.” This is the view of Toby Janicki, David Stern, and others involved in the Jewish Roots movement and much of Messianic Judaism. This movement recognizes that there is no role of the sacrificial law as found in the Torah; however, the festivals, dietary laws, and other rituals found in the Law of Moses are still binding upon believers. This is not for salvation, as they believe in the sacrificial work of Jesus; instead, it is for holy living and displaying love to Yahweh through obedience to His commandments.

Janicki believes that Torah observance is incumbent upon Gentile believers in Jesus and not only Jewish believers. His research on the *Didache* indicates this position as he writes, “As we shall see, the *Didache* was meant to introduce new Gentile initiates into the world of Jewish monotheism, Torah life, and Judaism—objectives that made the document no longer applicable to fully developed Christianity. Over time it fell into obscurity and oblivion.”¹³⁸ Janicki continues: “The longer title of the document, *The Teachings of the Lord to the Gentiles through the Twelve Apostles*, suggests that this work was understood to have been penned for non-Jewish believers, and in turn, most scholars concur with this opinion.”¹³⁹

The position of Messianic Judaism regarding the role of the Torah in the life of the believer contains a broad spectrum of theological views and opinions. David Stern’s work on Messianic Judaism displays the foundational theology of many Messianic Jews regarding the role of Moses. Stern’s position is clarified as he writes the following regarding the Torah: “Biblical Law, that is Written Law, is what some Messianic Jews and certain groups of Christians believe should be followed; they consider the Oral Law not inspired and not binding. My own view is that the Torah is eternal, and the New Testament has not abrogated it.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Janicki, *The Way of Life*, 8.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

Stern admits there is much confusion about this issue but believes that Messianic Jews should observe the Orthodox Jewish law, but it is not essential. He believes it is desirable for three reasons. First, the biblical portions of the Law were given by God to the Jewish people and never annulled, and it is Elohim's guide for godly behavior and worthy of being followed by Jews who follow Jesus. Second, the Law has kept the Jewish people more than the Jewish people have kept the Law. It has been a means to preserve the people of Israel through the centuries. Third, it is a way for Messianic Jews to identify with their fellow Jews and relate to them since many unbelieving Jews think Jewish followers of Jesus are no longer Jewish.¹⁴¹

The third view involving the role of the Mosaic Law is that the moral portions of the law are still incumbent upon believers in Jesus. However, the ritual, civil, and ceremonial laws are no longer binding on the believers in Christ. Marvin Wilson describes this position:

In the coming of Jesus of Nazareth and through the new covenant set in motion by his death, the ritual and ceremonial aspects of Mosaic Law were no longer technically binding. Yet they could have been of spiritual value for Gentile believers. That is, although they were not mandatory for a right relationship with God, they could have helped the Gentiles to understand their faith properly. But again, it is important that to stress that these laws were not prescriptive or obligatory. Rather, they were but shadows of the better things to come. Thus Christians were now free from the responsibility of Jewish ceremonial ordinances (Acts 15:10; Gal. 4:3; 5:1).¹⁴²

This position is revealed in Acts 15 as the Jerusalem council meets to determine what is required of the numerous Gentile believers in Jesus. The question centered around whether the Gentiles who joined the fledgling church needed to keep the circumcision under the custom of Moses to be saved. Richard Bauckham explains, "Based on James's argument, the so-called apostolic decree, issued by the council, denied that Gentile believers must obey the Torah, with

¹⁴⁰ Stern, *Messianic Judaism*, 139.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 142.

¹⁴² Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 27.

the exception of four specific prohibitions (Acts 15:29) drawn from those the Torah itself requires not only of Israelites but also of Gentiles resident in Israel (Lev 17-18).¹⁴³

The moral portions of the Law of Moses (at least some) were kept by Christians as early Christians were mostly responsible for dividing the Torah into these various categories. The pinnacle of these statutes is known as the Ten Commandments. J. Julius Scott writes, “Later writers (mostly Christian) divided the Old Testament law into ceremonial (religious ritual), civil, and moral (including the Ten Commandments). Such a division may be helpful in identifying the areas covered by the Old Testament instructions, but it can also be misleading. To the Hebrews, the law was one, and all parts were of equal importance.”¹⁴⁴

The fourth view of the role of the Law of Moses is that this Mosaic Law is no longer binding for the Christian believer. Man divided the Law of Moses into categories, as explained by Scott, and the Torah is meant to be a unified code of laws, statutes, and ordinances. Scott continues, “Earlier we noted the unified nature of the law. If one part is set aside, the whole is affected; the breaking of one law makes the offender guilty of breaking all. With this in mind, we must look at the New Testament.”¹⁴⁵

Postell, Bar, and Soref explain that there are functions of the Law, though it has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Scripture has given us the functions of the Law as a tutor, a shadow, a theology, love, wisdom, and a prosecuting attorney.¹⁴⁶ The Law, like a guardian tutor, was added because of the transgressions of Israel to protect them from the consequences of sin and unbelief until the Messiah comes. Now that Jesus has come and made a new covenant, all followers of

¹⁴³ Richard Bauckham, “James and the Gentiles (Acts 15.13-21),” in *History, Literature and Society in the Book of Acts*, ed. B. Witherington III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 164.

¹⁴⁴ Scott Jr., *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*, 65.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 331.

¹⁴⁶ Seth D. Postell, Eitan Bar, and Erez Soref, *Reading Moses Seeing Jesus: How the Torah Fulfills Its Goals in Yeshua* (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2017), 84.

Christ are no longer under the authority of the Law as a tutor.¹⁴⁷ Another role of the Law is as a shadow that helps point one to the Messiah. Postell writes, “The shadows in the Law continue to function as divine Scripture that not only points to the Messiah but also helps us to understand him. Without the Law, we would not understand the importance of sacrifices, the need for an intercessor or redeemer, the presentation of Yeshua as the Passover Lamb, and so on.”¹⁴⁸

The Law also functions as theology. The whole of Scripture is valuable for this purpose, but for the New Testament writers, the Old Testament was the only written Scripture they had. One studies and meditates on the Law to know more about the God who gave it—the God who eventually gave his Son.¹⁴⁹ The heart of all of the Mosaic Law is love as one is to love God and love others. Soref writes, “Thus we see that loving God and people continues at the heart of new covenant behavior and that by loving we fulfill the Law. Yet we also see that our expression of love for God and people is not necessarily the same as it is under the Law.”¹⁵⁰

The Law also functions as wisdom as one can meditate on the stories found in the Torah as well as its laws to gain wisdom and insight for daily living. Finally, the Law has a function of acting as a prosecuting attorney. Postell explains, “The Law serves as a prosecuting attorney that testifies against us on a personal as well as a national level.”¹⁵¹ The Apostle Paul explains this in Romans 3: “Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:19-20, ESV). These four positions of the role of the Law of

¹⁴⁷ Postell, Bar, and Soref, *Reading Moses Seeing Jesus*, 87.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 95.

Moses are foundational to understand the paradigm change presented in this study. Now, the research moves to the heart of the findings underlying the three original research questions.

The Baptism of John and the Baptism of Believers After the Resurrection

The Baptism of John was earlier described as ritual washing in preparation of turning of sin, the old ways, or the changing of one's mindset. It is a Jewish ritual, and it was common long before baptism became a church ordinance.¹⁵² According to Arnold Fruchtenbaum, "The Hebrew word which describes the act of immersion is *tvilah*. These ritual immersions took place in a *mikvah*. Ritual immersions largely had to do with the purification from ceremonial uncleanness. This was the basic meaning of immersion within the Jewish community of the first century."¹⁵³

Such immersions were compulsory for converts to Judaism, and the immersion essential for proselytes had the connotation of identification. The strongest evidence as a requirement for proselytes comes from the Mishnah:

He that mourns his near kindred may, after he has immersed himself, eat the Passover-offering in the evening, but he may not eat of [other] Hallowed Things. Of a man heard of the death of one of his near kindred or caused the bones of his dead to be gathered together, he may, after he has immersed himself eat of Hallowed Things. The School of Shammai say: If a man becomes a proselyte on the day before Passover, he may immerse himself and consume his Passover-offering in the evening, And the School of Hillel say: He that separates himself from his uncircumcision is as one that separates himself from the grave.¹⁵⁴

Scott explains that these passages in the Mishnah refer to debates between rabbis of the first century regarding self-immersion of the proselyte. It is most likely that baptism became a requirement for most of Judaism during the Second Temple period. This may have caused a

¹⁵² Joan E. Taylor, *The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), 58.

¹⁵³ Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua*, 511.

¹⁵⁴ M. Pesahim 8:8.

position in the early Christian movement that was inspired by John the Baptist as well as Jesus. Scott writes, “The origins of Jewish proselyte baptism, then, may have been an entrance requirement of Jewish Christianity. This would certainly be expected of a proselyte. The evidence for a distinct non-repeatable proselyte baptism in Intertestamental Judaism is lacking.”¹⁵⁵

The internal biblical evidence of the baptism of Jesus indicates that it is a baptism to fulfill all righteousness according to Matthew’s gospel: “Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’ But Jesus answered him, ‘Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he consented” (Matthew 3:13-15, ESV).

Fruchtenbaum describes baptism as identification with a person, group, or message. In doing this, he or she disassociates from the old identification. He writes regarding baptism:

Those who were baptized by Yochanan [John] identified themselves with his message and prepared themselves to accept the Messiah. Whomsoever he would point out to be the Messiah, upon Him, they would believe. It should be noted here that Yochanan’s baptism was not the same as believer’s baptism. That is why those who were baptized by Yochanan but had left the country before he could point them to Messiah had to be re-baptized into believer’s baptism by Paul (Acts 19:1-7). In believer’s baptism, one identifies with the death, burial, and resurrection of Yeshua (Rom. 6:3-4).¹⁵⁶

The passage Fruchtenbaum references from Acts is found in chapter nineteen:

And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. And he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They said, “Into John's baptism.” And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.” On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in

¹⁵⁵ Scott Jr., *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*, 346.

¹⁵⁶ Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua*, 513.

tongues and prophesying.⁷ There were about twelve men in all.

The other passage referenced by Fruchtenbaum speaks of the spiritual position believers are a part of when they are in Christ. Paul explains this position, which is symbolized by Believer's Baptism: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4, ESV).

Unique to the baptism discovered in reading the New Testament is the baptism of Jesus. His baptism was neither proselyte baptism, nor was this Believer's Baptism. Fruchtenbaum explains, "It was Yochanan's baptism, a baptism of repentance and the return to God. The Baptizer recognized that Yeshua was the Messiah, and thus there was nothing for which He needed to repent. He would also have no need to come back to God; He is God. So why would Yeshua bother to subject Himself to Yochanan's baptism in light of the fact that he had no need for repentance? Every major event in Yeshua's life carries theological implications."¹⁵⁷

There are six theologically relevant reasons for Jesus' baptism. First, it was to fulfill all righteousness as defined by the standards of the Mosaic Law still in place at this time. Second, his baptism identified with the message of John the Baptist's preaching of the coming kingdom of God. Third, his baptism identified Jesus to Israel and publicly authenticated him verbally and visibly as the Messiah. Fourth, he was baptized to be identified with the believers, or the remnant of Israel following John's message. Fifth, his baptism identified him with sinners, as he took upon himself the likeness of man to be identified with sinners.¹⁵⁸ Paul writes in 2 Corinthians,

¹⁵⁷ Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua*, 514.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21, ESV). Finally, Jesus received a special anointing at his baptism by the Holy Spirit.¹⁵⁹ Luke writes: “As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him” (Acts 10:36-38, ESV).

The findings thus far demonstrate that scholars understand that John’s baptism was a baptism unto repentance and baptism to prepare the community for the Messianic kingdom. Also unique is the baptism of Jesus by John, which served theological purposes, fulfillment purposes, and identification purposes. Now, the focus turns to Believer’s Baptism. As Fruchtenbaum illustrates, this baptism is one of participant identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah of Israel and the nations.¹⁶⁰ The research now explores how Believer’s Baptism also differs in the position of the participant from John’s baptism.

Erik Lakatos describes that all nations and peoples, including Israel, are converted through immersion via the mikveh washing.¹⁶¹ Lakatos writes, “I am using the word ‘conversion’ in a very strict biblical definition referring to the experience of ‘turning from sin’ out of idolatry and polytheism, into an embrace of the one and only monotheistic faith. In this definition, all peoples are ‘converted’ when they repent and turn to Yeshua (Jesus), and therefore, go through the Mikveh.”¹⁶² Lakatos continues to build a case for how the Jewish

¹⁵⁹ Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua*, 515.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 513.

¹⁶¹ Lakatos, *Baptism: Its Jewish Origins*, 9.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 10.

immersion that represents conversion does not tie one to a national or ethnic conversion, as is found in Rabbinic Judaism. Since his context concerns the Jewish origin, he makes this determinative point: “I am not, however, using conversion to describe the Rabbinical Jewish practice of converting non-Jews into Jews. In Messianic Judaism, the practice of Mikveh is not to convert non-Jews into Jews. Going through a Mikveh in a Messianic Jewish service does not make a person Jewish. Messianic Jews do not and should not practice this type of conversion because there is no biblical precedence.”¹⁶³

The analogy Lakatos references is that the Mikvah can be attributed to the crossing of the Red Sea by the children of Israel.¹⁶⁴ The Scripture he references is found in 1 Corinthians: “For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ” (1 Corinthians 10:1-4, ESV). The conversion argument he uses is supported by Paul’s message to the Corinthians as well:

Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches. Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God. Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men. So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God (1 Corinthians 7:17-24).

F. F. Bruce contributes to Pauline thought on the role of Believer’s Baptism as well as the

¹⁶³ Lakatos, *Baptism: Its Jewish Origins*, 10.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

Lord's Supper. Regarding baptism, Bruce indicates a continuation after John the Baptist. Bruce writes, "It might have been expected that, when the first Christians experienced the outpouring of the Spirit from the day of Pentecost onward, they would discontinue water baptism as having been superseded by something better. In fact, they did not: they continued to baptize converts in water 'for the remission of sins' (cf. Acts 2:38), but this baptism was now part of a more comprehensive experience which took character especially from the receiving of the Spirit."¹⁶⁵ Bruce further defines the position of the worshiper or follower of Christ as one having a new depth of meaning. Baptism initiates believers into their state of being "in Christ," according to Bruce's observations of Paul. The historical death and resurrection become a part of the believer's spiritual experience.¹⁶⁶

Bruce further explains Paul's position:

Paul, who had learned so clearly the religious inadequacy of the old circumcision, was not the man to ascribe *ex opere operato* efficacy to another external rite; it was the impartation of the Spirit in response to faith that made the convert a new creation. We must beware of forcing Paul's thought and terminology into the mold of twentieth-century Christian rationalism, but if it be realized that repentance and faith, with baptism in water and reception of the Spirit, followed by first communion, formed one complex experience of Christian initiation, then what is true of the experience as a whole may be predicated of any element in it.¹⁶⁷

Bruce further clarifies his position as he understands Paul by writing, "Christians could no more be immunized by baptism (or the eucharistic meal) against divine judgment on their unfaithfulness than the Israelites during the wilderness wanderings were protected by their 'baptism' in the cloud and in the sea from the consequences of their idolatry and immorality (1

¹⁶⁵ F.F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 280.

¹⁶⁶ Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, 281.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Corinthians 10:1-11).”¹⁶⁸

Bruce understood baptism as the “frontier between their old unregenerate existence and their new life in Christ: it marked their death to the old order and their rising again to the new order so that for the baptized Christian to go on in sin was as preposterous as it would be for an emancipated slave to remain in bondage to his former owner or for a widow to remain subject to the ‘law of her husband’ (Romans 6-7).¹⁶⁹ This viewpoint of freedom from the bondage of sin is what Paul describes in Romans 6 regarding the Christian becoming a slave to righteousness:

What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:15-23, ESV).

Bruce believes that when Paul appeals to the reasoning of baptism, he means that the Spirit’s power enables the Christian to shake off the old bondage regardless of the variance of form it might have taken. He also explains Paul, “Takes it for granted that all believers have been baptized, just as he takes it for granted that they all received the Spirit.”¹⁷⁰ Paul is not belittling baptism when he indicates that God sent him to preach the gospel and not baptize. Instead, he is

¹⁶⁸ Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, 281.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 282.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

insisting that believers understand they are to be followers of Christ and not followers of Paul. Bruce concludes regarding Paul's understanding of the baptismal rite, "While Paul does not say of the baptismal tradition, as he does of the eucharistic tradition, that he received it 'from the Lord,' he probably implies that he did so receive it. What Paul received is indicated, according to Bruce¹⁷¹, in Colossians 2: "In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead" (Colossians 2:11-12, ESV).

The Worship Purpose of the Passover Meal: The Last Supper

The Passover is the first spring feast in Judaism and is celebrated on the 14th day of the Jewish month of Nisan, the first month of the Hebrew calendar, and it corresponds to March or April. As illustrated in previous chapters, this is the holy day in which Jews remember their deliverance from the bondage of slavery in Egypt. The Hebrew word for Passover is Pesach, which means "to pass or jump over."¹⁷² The imagery of the Passover account foreshadows the event of the cross fifteen hundred years later, as Israelites painted the blood of the sacrificial lamb on the door frames of their houses. Klein and Spears write, "In other words, the only doorway (entry point) into salvation is under (or through) the blood. The Israelites had to go through the doorway and under the blood to be spared. Could there be a better picture of salvation?"¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, 282.

¹⁷² John Klein and Adam Spears, *Lost in the Translation: Rediscovering the Hebrew Roots of Our Faith* (Bend: Covenant Research Institute, 2016), 158.

¹⁷³ Klein and Adam Spears, *Lost in the Translation*, 159.

It is this Passover remembrance that disappears from Israel after they are brought into the land of promise, pass through the period of judges, and begin their reign of kings beginning with Saul. After David and Solomon, idolatry and pagan practices were common among both Judah and Israel in the divided kingdoms. It is not until King Josiah that Passover is remembered and kept, according to 2 Chronicles 35 and 2 Kings 23. After finding the Torah in the Temple, the servants read it to Josiah. The resulting actions of the hearing of God's laws meant national reform and repentance for not following God's instruction. One of Josiah's actions was the keeping of Passover for the first time since the days of Samuel the prophet. The Chronicles account of this keeping of Passover and Unleavened Bread is as follows:

Josiah kept a Passover to the LORD in Jerusalem. And they slaughtered the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month. He appointed the priests to their offices and encouraged them in the service of the house of the LORD. And he said to the Levites who taught all Israel and who were holy to the LORD, "Put the holy ark in the house that Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, built. You need not carry it on your shoulders. Now serve the LORD your God and his people Israel. Prepare yourselves according to your fathers' houses by your divisions, as prescribed in the writing of David king of Israel and the document of Solomon his son. And stand in the Holy Place according to the groupings of the fathers' houses of your brothers the lay people, and according to the division of the Levites by fathers' household. And slaughter the Passover lamb, and consecrate yourselves, and prepare for your brothers, to do according to the word of the LORD by Moses." So all the service of the LORD was prepared that day, to keep the Passover and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD, according to the command of King Josiah. And the people of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days. No Passover like it had been kept in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet. None of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as was kept by Josiah, and the priests and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah this Passover was kept (2 Chronicles 35:1-6; 16-19, ESV).

Hezekiah also kept the Passover after restoring temple worship, though it was not kept at the correct appointed time since the priesthood had not yet been consecrated to do so¹⁷⁴:

Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem to keep the Passover to

¹⁷⁴ Howard and Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord*, 51.

the LORD, the God of Israel. For the king and his princes and all the assembly in Jerusalem had taken counsel to keep the Passover in the second month—for they could not keep it at that time because the priests had not consecrated themselves in sufficient number, nor had the people assembled in Jerusalem—and the plan seemed right to the king and all the assembly. So they decreed to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that the people should come and keep the Passover to the LORD, the God of Israel, at Jerusalem, for they had not kept it as often as prescribed (2 Chronicles 30:1-5, ESV).

Finally, one reads that the Jews returning from Babylonian captivity celebrated the Passover after returning to the land of promise and repairing as well as rededicating the Temple¹⁷⁵:

And the people of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the returned exiles, celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy. They offered at the dedication of this house of God 100 bulls, 200 rams, 400 lambs, and as a sin offering for all Israel 12 male goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. And they set the priests in their divisions and the Levites in their divisions, for the service of God at Jerusalem, as it is written in the Book of Moses. On the fourteenth day of the first month, the returned exiles kept the Passover. For the priests and the Levites had purified themselves together; all of them were clean. So they slaughtered the Passover lamb for all the returned exiles, for their fellow priests, and for themselves. It was eaten by the people of Israel who had returned from exile, and also by everyone who had joined them and separated himself from the uncleanness of the peoples of the land to worship the LORD, the God of Israel (Ezra 6:16-21, ESV).

The observance of this holiday was extremely important, and God graciously allowed for an alternative date for those unable to celebrate Passover on the 14th of Nisan due to becoming undefiled by a dead body or those who were away on a distant journey. The children of Israel could observe Passover thirty days later on the fourteenth day of the second month, according to Numbers 9 and 2 Chronicles 30. No other feasts of Israel had this allowance.¹⁷⁶

Passover was extensively celebrated in Judea in the days of Jesus as many came up to Jerusalem for this feast: “Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves” (John 11:55, ESV). This was one

¹⁷⁵ Howard and Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord*, 51.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

of the pilgrim festivals along with *Shavuot* (Pentecost) and *Sukkot* (Tabernacles), in which faithful Jews were required to come to Jerusalem.¹⁷⁷ Though God commanded that Passover be observed as a memorial forever along with the eating of lamb, matzah (unleavened bread), and bitter herbs, there is no recorded account of a Passover meal shared among Jewish followers until the New Testament account of the Last Supper in the upper room. The Lord did not detail the order of the service, only that it should be kept.¹⁷⁸

Howard and Rosenthal describe the origins of the Passover Seder:

Several centuries before Christ, a somewhat traditionalized Passover service began to emerge. This ritual Passover service was called the Seder (pronounced SAY-der) from the Hebrew word meaning “order.” It prescribed the traditional order of the Scripture readings, prayers, symbolic foods, and songs in the Passover service. The basic order of the Passover Seder today remains much as it was 2,000 years ago even though the service continued to be embellished with more songs and traditions up through the Middle Ages.¹⁷⁹

The modern observance has much added from Rabbinic Judaism, and one of the main elements required by God is missing from many Seder meals since the destruction of the Temple. That missing element is lamb.¹⁸⁰

Wilson explains, “A straightforward reading of the Synoptic Gospels indicates that the Last Supper in the Upper Room in Jerusalem was a traditional Jewish Passover meal commemorating the Exodus. Jesus, however, went beyond the commonly held Jewish understanding of this celebration. He indicated to his disciples how this meal depicted his imminent suffering and death.”¹⁸¹ He indicates it is fascinating that the two world religions of

¹⁷⁷ Howard and Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord*, 52.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 54.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 58.

¹⁸¹ Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 237.

Judaism and Christianity revolve around the same mandate to remember the theme of redemption perpetually.¹⁸² The Lord's Supper, Eucharist, or Holy Communion, as it is also known, is one of the crucial New Covenant institutions that highlight the impact of Hebraic thought upon the ekklesia. Wilson writes, "The Lord's Supper was established by Jesus, in the presence of his Jewish disciples, in connection with the Passover meal that symbolically dramatized Israel's release from Egyptian slavery. Without a careful exegetical, theological, and historical study of this event, the rich Hebraic background of the Christian concept of redemption would be lost."¹⁸³

It is enticing to place the Jewish Seder experienced today into the upper room where Jesus shared this Last Supper with his disciples. Though the culture and history of Roman-occupied Judea contained much of the traditions of their Jewish predecessors, it was different than the Rabbinic Jewish Seders of today's Passover.¹⁸⁴ The intertestamental period brought three changes to Passover that made their way to the practices of Second-Temple Judaism in Roman Judea. First, the bitter herbs were eliminated, and more attention was given to the exact time of the slaughtering of the sacrifice. Second, stories of Egyptian punishment and reward weaved its way into the telling of the Passover story. Finally, there was an increase in the distinction between the Passover sacrifice and the feast itself.¹⁸⁵

David Stern explains that some accuse modern Messianic Jews in Judaism of "misusing Jewish sancta." Stern supports the use of traditional Jewish customs as sancta that are Jewish believers' rights to use since they are Jewish themselves. Stern writes, "If we use the found half

¹⁸² Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 237.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 238.

¹⁸⁴ Stern, *Messianic Judaism*, 171.

¹⁸⁵ Scott Jr., *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*, 160.

of the *afikomen* and the third cup of the Passover *Seder* for communion, non-Messianic Jews may object; but we can defend ourselves on the grounds that this is what the Messiah did.”¹⁸⁶

Stern indicates that many scholars believe that the customs were founded by Messianic Jews and helped carve out some of the meanings and symbolism that were absorbed into mainstream Judaism.¹⁸⁷ These symbols are worth mentioning as there remains a strong correlation between some of these symbols and the Lord’s Supper. First, there are four cups used in traditional seders, and these four cups came from antiquity and the passage previously shared from Exodus 6. The key cup is the third cup called the cup of redemption. This was the cup that Jesus chose to be a reminder of His work on the cross.¹⁸⁸

In a modern Seder, the leader uses three pieces of matzah and places them in a linen bag called a *matzah tosh*. There are three compartments in this container, and the leader of the Seder removes the middle piece and breaks it in half. One half is placed back in the bag, and the other half is wrapped in a linen napkin and hidden for the children to find after the Passover meal.¹⁸⁹ After the meal, this hidden piece is brought back and shared with all in the Seder as the *afikomen*. The *afikomen* is a representative piece of unleavened bread and is a Greek word that represents the dessert or “that which comes last.” It is partaken at the place in the Seder just before the cup of redemption. Rabbinic law dictates that a small piece of the *afikomen* be broken off and eaten by all that are present at the Passover meal as a reminder of the Passover lamb.¹⁹⁰

The findings indicate some influence on Rabbinic Judaism from Messianic Judaism or

¹⁸⁶ Stern, *Messianic Judaism*, 171.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Howard and Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord*, 51.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 56.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 58.

Hebrew Christianity. David Stern, a Messianic Jewish scholar, believes this is true along with other scholarship that includes Daniel Boyarin and Israel Yuval, who both come from the non-Messianic world of scholarship. Stern explains his position:

If we point out that the three *matzot* represent Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that the broken middle *matzah* represents Yeshua's body, broken for us, we have theological grounds for what we do. In fact, there is a good chance we have historical grounds; many scholars believe these customs were started by Messianic Jews and invested with the meanings we have noted here, but somehow the customs were absorbed into non-Messianic Judaism and stripped of their Messianic significance.¹⁹¹

These additional symbols and elements are present in many Seders today in Jewish homes that do not believe in the Messiahship of Jesus.

Howard and Rosenthal agree with this conclusion and add that Rabbinic Judaism has tried to explain these Messianic symbols with insertions from the rabbis and sages over the centuries. One of the central debates concerns the use of three matzahs. One rabbinic tradition holds to the belief that they represent three groups of Jewish people. These groups include the priests, the Levites, and Israel at large. Another tradition concludes that these three pieces of unleavened bread represent the patriarchs of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But rabbinic tradition cannot explain why the middle matzah must be broken. Why would the Levites or Isaac be broken and not the other groups, Abraham, or Jacob? The rabbis are silent on this issue.¹⁹²

It seems neither explanation fits the ceremony behind the symbolism of this breaking of the middle piece of matzah. The reality is that the triune God is being symbolized. The argument is solidified because there are three pieces of bread in one whole bag that are in separate compartments. The second piece of bread represents the Messiah. Kevin Howard writes, "The second person of the Godhead, the Son, came to earth as the Messiah. He was broken (died), wrapped, and hidden away (buried), and brought back at the third cup of wine (resurrected the

¹⁹¹ Stern, *Messianic Judaism*, 172.

¹⁹² Howard and Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord*, 60.

third day).”¹⁹³

It seems at first that this assertion made could be considered an attempt to Christianize the Jewish Passover. However, the evidence argues tremendously to the contrary. Howard makes two points to argue in favor of this evidence. First, the *afikomen* was not present at the time of Jesus. Instead, it was a later addition to the Passover Seder. The lamb was the last solid food eaten in the days of Second Temple Judaism. Since Rabbinic tradition maintains that the *afikomen* now represents the lamb, it is perfunctory that everyone partakes of it. Second, there is great debate among the rabbis concerning the meaning of the word *afikomen*. As mentioned previously, it is not a Hebrew word, but a Greek one.¹⁹⁴ Howard explains the technical and grammatical case behind this Greek word: “Amazingly, *afikomen* is the only Greek word in the Passover Seder. Everything else is Hebrew. It is the second aorist form of the Greek verb *ikneomai*. The translation is electrifying. It simply means—*I came*.”¹⁹⁵

The history that brought this element to the Passover Seder is tied directly to the Last Supper that Jesus held with disciples. After the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, the history of the book of Acts demonstrates the power of the Holy Spirit to transform the Jewish pilgrims coming to Jerusalem at Pentecost into the fledgling ekklesia.¹⁹⁶ In Acts 21, Luke writes, “And when they heard it, they glorified God. And they said to him, ‘You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed’” (Acts 21:20, ESV). Another first-century event that set the stage for the change in Passover observance was the destruction of the Temple by the Roman war machine in 70 A.D. Without the Temple, there

¹⁹³ Howard and Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord*, 60.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.

could be no sacrifices, and without sacrifices, there could be no Passover lamb.¹⁹⁷

The direction of worship for the Christian in the Lord's Supper and the Passover was toward the Lamb of God—Jesus Christ. For the Rabbinic Jews, the removal of the priesthood and Temple meant a shift in worship practice to the thoughts and decisions of the rabbis. For the Christian community, the fulfillment of the Passover Lamb was found in Jesus, and this caused a paradigm shift in worship practice at Passover and when the ekklesia came together. Marvin Wilson explains that scholarship differs on whether the Last Supper was a Passover meal. However, the gospel accounts reference preparation of the Passover, which does not need to be understood as the Passover meal. Generally, it refers to the Passover celebration, which lasted a week.¹⁹⁸ The Jews may have also used different methods of determining the time of the start of the Passover week between the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes.¹⁹⁹ Also, John's gospel had a theological leaning toward presenting Jesus as the Passover offering since he was slain during the time the Passover lambs were killed in the Temple.²⁰⁰

Wilson synthesizes this material and concludes the following:

Whatever chronology of the Last Supper one adopts, it seems clear that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper by associating it with the third cup of wine, which came after the Passover meal was eaten (cf. 1 Cor. 11:25). It was known as the "cup of redemption," which rabbinic tradition linked to the third of the fourfold promise in Exodus 6:6-7, "I will redeem you." Jesus associated this cup of wine with his atoning death in saying, "This cup is a new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:20; cf. 1 Cor. 11:25).²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ Howard and Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord*, 62.

¹⁹⁸ Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 245.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Baruch M. Bokser, "Was the Last Supper a Passover Seder?," *Bible Review* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1987): 33.

²⁰¹ Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 245.

A study of the Passover by Christians helps them understand the joyful celebration linked to the Last Supper. For many in Christianity, the Lord's Supper is a somber occasion of self-examination, and many are taken aback by the joy found at a Passover Seder. Wilson indicates that this comparison is not intended to demean the death or atonement of Jesus. It is a note that there should be thankfulness and joy in our redemption in Christ, our Passover.²⁰²

This section concludes with Colvin's understanding of the layers of meaning in the Last Supper that may not be clear within worship and Communion in the church today. First, there is the general symbolism of the bread and the wine in the Scriptures. Colvin writes, "The simplest level of symbolic meaning is certainly at work in Jesus' words at the Last Supper, but it would be a mistake to stop at this point."²⁰³ He explains that the fuller meaning of the bread and wine must be understood within the biblical understanding of Israel as a corporate body as well as the ritual framework within the Passover itself as it aligns with the historical context of the Passion week as brought out in the gospel narratives.²⁰⁴

Second, there is the corporate dimension within the covenant between Israel and Yahweh. Israel, as the people of God, was represented by bread, and the Messiah was symbolized as a hidden piece broken off from this bread of Israel.²⁰⁵ Paul uses the metaphor of Israel as a piece of bread in his first letter to Corinth: "Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the

²⁰² Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 252.

²⁰³ Colvin, *The Lost Supper*, 72.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 73.

unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:6-8, ESV). Within 1 Corinthians 5 and 6, the connection between the sacrifice of Jesus and the obligation to keep the Lord’s Supper free of contamination is supported through the metaphor of the “body” of Christ.²⁰⁶

Another passage Paul uses to represent the people of God as bread is in 1 Corinthians 10: “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Corinthians 10:16-17, ESV). The interesting element here is that Paul relates the bread and the wine to the body and blood of Jesus. There is a sharing in Christ at this communal meal that Paul sees as a sharing in the events of Passover. Colvin writes, “The reason was a shared assumption between Paul and his readers concerning the Messiah, an assumption which is bound up with the word *koinonia*. Since salvation involves Jesus’ death and resurrection, the *koinonia* of 1 Corinthians 10:16-18 is participation in those events.”²⁰⁷ This is the *koinonia* which Paul speaks of in Philippians 3: “That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death” (Philippians 3:10, ESV).

The specific Passover context of the wine is the final layer of meaning Colvin draws out from the Last Supper. Jesus’ understanding of his death and the Kingdom of God formed his use of wine at this stage. Jesus took the symbols of the Passover meal and used them to insert himself into the same story.²⁰⁸ First, the book of Jubilees mentions wine in connection with Passover: “And all Israel was eating the flesh of the paschal lamb, and drinking the wine, and

²⁰⁶ Colvin, *The Lost Supper*, 73.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 78.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 86.

was lauding and blessing and giving thanks to the LORD God of their fathers, and was ready to go forth under the yoke of Egypt, and from evil bondage” (Jubilees 49, trans. B. Bokser).²⁰⁹

The medieval Seder contained four appointed times of consumption of wine, as presented in the Mishnah: “On the eve of Passover, close to [the time of] *minchah* [the grain offering], a person should not eat until it gets dark. Even a poor person in Israel should not eat until he reclines. [Those who serve] should not give him fewer than four cups of wine even if [the funds come] from the charity plate (m. Pesahim, 10:1, trans. Bokser).²¹⁰ The modern usage, as found in the Jewish Haggadah contains four cups served in the course of the Passover Seder that is linked with four particular verbs found in Exodus 6:

Say therefore to the people of Israel, “I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.” (Exodus 6:6-8, ESV).

Finally, Colvin explains that there are meanings from the context of the Upper Room Passover celebration with Jesus and his closest followers. Jesus’ followers came to him mostly from the sects of Judaism that were looking for the redemption of Israel. These were mostly zealots, the Pharisees, and the disciples of John the Baptist. These disciples believed that Israel needed redemption and that Jesus was the Messiah who would redeem them.²¹¹ Colvin uses the work of N.T. Wright, who points to Zechariah to explain the historical situation behind Jesus’ use of the phrase “blood of the covenant” in his Last Supper since the Messiah personally

²⁰⁹ Baruch M. Bokser, *The Origins of the Seder* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 19.

²¹⁰ Bokser, *The Origins of the Seder*, 45.

²¹¹ Colvin, *The Lost Supper*, 90.

enacted the scene in Zechariah 9:9. Wright describes Jesus' selection of the Passover:

With Passover as the context and his repeated clashes with the hostile forces both human and non-human during his public career, there is every reason to suppose that he saw the task as paralleling the liberation of Israel from Egypt. What matters is that the entire Passover context made sense of the entire event that Jesus envisaged as he went up to Jerusalem for that final visit. Passover said, "Freedom—now!" and "Kingdom—now!" This seemed to be exactly what Jesus wanted to convey or, better, what Jesus believed would happen.²¹²

Colvin's concluding thoughts explain that Jesus was doing in the Last Supper what all should expect the Jewish Messiah to do in the last meal with his disciples. Jesus is exactly doing what Jews have done with the Passover food and drink. That is to make these elements tell the past, present, and future story of God and Israel through ritual participation. Colvin describes Jesus' self-understanding of this event:

Jesus' words about the bread and wine are more concerned with using the Passover to speak to his disciples about his own impending death and its significance within Israel's story than they were about explaining the metaphysical relation of the bread and wine to his body and blood. His words over the bread identify himself as Israel's Messiah; his words over the cup are a way of indicating that he will offer himself as a sacrifice a new Passover lamb to accomplish a new Exodus; and this will bring about the coming Kingdom of God. Messiah, new Exodus and coming Kingdom: this is a deeply Jewish set of meanings for these rituals, full of the themes that were on every mind and heart at Passover.²¹³

The Contrasts Between Jewish Circumcision and Believer's Baptism

The last section of this chapter will contrast the Jewish circumcision and the ordinance or rite known as "Believer's Baptism" in terms of New Testament worship. The book of Acts indicates a major paradigm change in Judaism and a revelation of the mystery of the gospel—it is a message of the inclusion of all nations and peoples as promised by the prophet Amos and reiterated by Paul: "Even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the

²¹² N.T. Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2016), 181.

²¹³ Colvin, *The Lost Supper*, 92.

Gentiles? As he says in Hosea: ‘I will call them ‘my people’ who are not my people; and I will call her ‘my loved one’ who is not my loved one,’ and, ‘In the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘children of the living God.’” (Romans 9:24-26, ESV). This created a clash in the early leadership of the ekklesia as contrasts appeared between Israel and the gentile peoples coming to faith. These contrasts center on covenant faithfulness for all nations under Christ, identity with the Body of Christ symbolically and spiritually, and membership into the commonwealth of Israel as worshipers of Yahweh.

The contrast concerning covenant faithfulness finds its origin in the events of Acts. After the apostles experienced gentiles coming to faith, some believed that gentiles had to be circumcised to be saved:

Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.” This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them. Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.” The apostles and elders met to consider this question (Acts 16:1-6, ESV).

The result of this discussion was that the apostles determined that circumcision was not required for salvation and that the gentile followers of Jesus should follow the few laws prescribed by the leadership. This good news was delivered by letter to the church at Antioch. This news was received with joy and gladness.

It is important to recognize that a shift in the model of worship is taking place in the book of Acts as the physical seed of Abraham in the Messiah becomes the spiritual seed of Abraham along with the gentile followers of their Jewish Messiah. This concept was new to these Jewish

men, but the Spirit of God revealed it to them as we see in the pages of the book of Acts. Circumcision brought to mind the picture of covenant faithfulness and conversion to Jewish people. David Stern reinforces this concept as he questions, “Given that no Gentile needs to become Jewish in order to be saved, why would a Gentile Christian want to convert to Judaism?”²¹⁴

Stern calls on the words of the Apostle Paul to aid in this answer:

Nevertheless, each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them, just as God has called them. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches. Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised. Was a man uncircumcised when he was called? He should not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God’s commands is what counts. Each person should remain in the situation they were in when God called them (1 Corinthians 7:17-20, ESV).

He uses Paul’s argument in Galatians as well to answer this question:

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love (Galatians 5:1-6).

Though Paul makes it clear that circumcision has no benefit for righteousness, is there a Scriptural idea or concept that displays this idea of circumcision and covenant faithfulness? And does circumcision replace the rite of Believer’s Baptism? One passage used in favor of this position is found in Colossians chapter 2:

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the

²¹⁴ Stern, *Messianic Judaism*, 176.

working of God, who raised him from the dead. When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins (Colossians 2:9-13, ESV).

In this passage, a new concept of “circumcision of the heart” is revealed by Paul. It is a spiritual cutting away of the flesh at regeneration as one is also made alive in Christ. This passage is used by those in favor of pedobaptism to bolster their case as all Jewish infants were circumcised on the eighth day. They argue that infants should follow the same pattern since circumcision replaced baptism. But that argument is based on a physical “like for like” replacement.

Scott argues against this belief driven by Reformed theology and clarifies the shift in this covenant sign, but it is not “like for like.” He writes, “None can doubt the importance of circumcision in the Jewish mind. Circumcision was commanded by God as the symbol of membership in the covenant community (Gen. 17:10-14) and has been a mark of the Jew ever since.”²¹⁵ But proselytes were also required to go through ritual washings in the form of immersion, which was distinct from circumcision in Jewish law.²¹⁶

One of the best explanations of the place of circumcision in Jewish life and covenant comes from Arnold Fruchtenbaum:

Circumcision was commanded under two of the five Jewish covenants: the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant. However, in each case, the meaning was different. Under the Abrahamic covenant, circumcision was a sign of the covenant and a sign of Jewishness. Under the Mosaic Covenant, circumcision was the means of submitting to the law. Under the Abrahamic Covenant, it was mandatory for Jews only, and those who were permanent residents within a Jewish household. Under the Mosaic Covenant, it was mandatory for both Jews and those Gentiles who wished to become part of the commonwealth of Israel. Because it was the means of submitting to the law, Paul warned the Gentile Galatians that if they submitted to circumcision, it would obligate them to keep the whole law, not just one commandment of the law.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Scott Jr., *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*, 341.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 342.

²¹⁷ Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua*, 414.

This argument explains the covenantal obligations of the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants. But what does that mean considering the New Covenant and the covenantal responsibility of all believers in Christ?

Fruchtenbaum also explains this covenantal responsibility as he writes concerning circumcision today in what may be considered a provocative statement:

When Messiah died, He rendered the Mosaic Covenant and the Mosaic Law inoperative. So today, there is no basis for circumcising either Jews or Gentiles under the Mosaic Law, which was also Paul's point in Galatians. The Abrahamic Covenant on the other hand, is an eternal covenant which makes circumcision still mandatory for the Jews. Jewish believers are still obligated to circumcise their sons on the eighth day. In light of this, how do we explain Paul's actions in Acts 15 and 16? In Acts 15, the apostle would not permit Titus to be circumcised. In the very next chapter, however, he initiates the circumcision of Timothy. Titus was a Gentile; he had no Jewish origins. Timothy, on the other hand, did. His mother was Jewish, and this put him under different covenantal obligations.²¹⁸

This helps clarify Paul's differences in action regarding the circumcision of Jews and non-Jews.

But what does this mean regarding circumcision's relationship to Believer's Baptism?

Fruchtenbaum clarifies this based on the truth of the New Covenant as he clarifies that circumcision is an act of faith by the parents. This argues against infant baptism for the same reason. Fruchtenbaum writes the following regarding the true anti-type to circumcision:

Circumcision shows the faith and obedience of the parents, not the child. If, at the age of eight days, the child had the option, he would probably choose to forego the experience. That is one of several reasons why baptism is not the anti-type to circumcision. Baptism shows the faith and obedience of the one being baptized. There is no passage in the New Testament which teaches that baptism is the anti-type of circumcision. There is an anti-type, but it is not baptism. In Scripture, the anti-type to circumcision of the flesh is circumcision of the heart, not baptism.²¹⁹

This conclusion by Fruchtenbaum helps one understand that covenant faithfulness is recognized for Israel as physical circumcision under the Abrahamic covenant as Jews, and as spiritual

²¹⁸ Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua*, 417.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

circumcision under the New Covenant as both Jews and Gentiles in Christ. Believer's baptism has more to do with identity with the Body of Christ; that is where the findings move to in the following paragraphs.

The contrast illustrated above shows that circumcision of the flesh is for physical identification of Israel. But as many things changed with the New Testament, circumcision did as well. The spiritual principle of circumcision of the heart is brought out by Paul and the writers of the New Testament. Ritual washing was also a part of a conversion or an ascension to the Temple during Jewish holidays requiring the attendance of all males. The New Testament also indicates a spiritual baptism that takes place by the work of regeneration as the believer is baptized into the body of Christ. Yet, the early *ekklesia* continued to immerse new believers, no matter their ethnic background.

The findings and research return to F. F. Bruce regarding this idea of identity with the Body of Christ in baptism. Bruce indicates that Paul gives no ground for supposing that baptism makes no practical difference, or that it seems an optional extra for Christian life. Bruce writes, "He takes it for granted that all believers have been baptized, just as he takes it for granted that they all have received the Spirit. When he thanks God that he baptized none but a handful of his Corinthian converts, saying that Christ did not send him to baptize but to preach the gospel, he is not belittling the importance of baptism."²²⁰ It is Wright who helps solidify the point that Paul expected that all believers would experience baptism much like Israel experienced deliverance through the waters of the Red Sea:

Only when we bring the Exodus-story out from the shadows of mythological background and place it in the full spotlight can we understand where Paul's idea of 'initiation,' of entering the community, comes from. Jews and gentiles, slave and free, and (as in Galatians 3:28) male and female: all alike need to be baptized if they are to belong, to be a part of *Christos*. They are to become people in whom the spirit now dwells: living

²²⁰ Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, 282.

temples. What Paul believed about the people of God, on the basis of what he believed about Jesus, demanded that he teach and practice the rite of baptism; not that Paul, if his Corinthian disclaimer is any indication, seems to have done much baptizing himself.²²¹

Finally, there is the contrast of circumcision with Believer's baptism considering membership into the commonwealth of Israel as worshipers of Yahweh. Earlier, Fruchtenbaum indicated that physical circumcision indicated physical identity with Abraham and the Jewish people.²²² In contrast, baptism represents an identification of all believers, regardless of nationality, with the commonwealth of Israel. This identification is indicated in Paul's letter to the Ephesians:

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord (Ephesians 2:11-21, ESV).

Wright describes this idea of baptism as identification and unity. It is identity with the God of Israel, and unity as a people of God under the Lordship of Jesus as they identify with His death. Wright summarizes, "In the new world that Jesus' followers believed had been launched by his resurrection and the gift of his spirit, baptism retained the meaning it seems already to have had during Jesus' public career—identification with

²²¹ N.T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 1336.

²²² Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua*, 417.

his kingdom movement—and to have deepened its resonance with the exodus on the one hand and with his death on the other.”²²³ The middle wall of partition is removed, and though there is a physical distinction between Jews and Gentiles through circumcision, there is no spiritual distinction as all are baptized into the same spiritual Body of Messiah.²²⁴

²²³ Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1337.

²²⁴ Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua*, 417.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Study

This chapter synthesizes the information presented in the previous chapters of this thesis. This study concerned the importance of the rites of the Lord's Supper and baptism in worship as a continuation of Jewish instruction from the Torah as one discovers how these forms of worship remain relevant for worshipers today. Background information provided in this research provided the history and origin of these two ordinances from Second Temple Judaism. Additionally, the study background provides the usage of these two rites within the New Testament Gospels and writings of the Apostles.

The issues in this research may be summarized as follows. There are theological, historical, and biblical precedents that establish baptism and the Lord's Supper into the category of ordinances central to worship. One discovers that these ordinances were given to remember as well as display covenant fidelity to the Lord Jesus as acts of worship. The issues and questions surround the origins of these rites, though the Lord's Supper and baptism, have been a part of Christianity from the beginning of this movement. Regarding baptism, the study highlights that the term baptism is unique to the New Testament in its form. Still, ritual washings and immersions for sanctification are part of the Old Testament ritual laws and ordinances, as found in the Torah. One learns the various terms such as baptism, *t'vilah*, immersion, and mikveh along with the different traditions and rituals, forms, and modes. These Jewish origins of water immersion lay the foundation of how and why baptism is practiced today in Christianity²²⁵

Regarding the Lord's Supper, churches celebrate the Eucharist through elements found in a Jewish Passover meal. The question regarding whether Communion has replaced Passover or

²²⁵ Lakatos, *Baptism: Its Jewish Origins*, 2.

renewed it in some way is a key focus in this study. One learns that Passover is rooted in remembrance of a great deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt. The study describes Communion as rooted in remembrance as well. Jewish people consider themselves to have been personally delivered from Egypt through the yearly reenactment of the Passover. In the same way, Christians celebrate communion and recall the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus and share in that event as they discern the ‘body and blood’ of Jesus in the bread and wine.²²⁶

The study tackled the problem that the origins of these two rites are generally unknown, or at best, are believed to be new functions in Christian worship that began with Jesus. Therefore, this study focused on discovering the origins of the Lord’s Supper and baptism in their original Jewish context as acts of worship. The heart of this study involved the following three research questions. The first question asks in what ways does the baptism of repentance of John the Baptist differ from the baptism of new believers in the Messiah as acts of worship. The second question examines what the worship purpose is of the Passover meal Jesus shared with his disciples before his death that eventually becomes the Lord’s Supper. Finally, the third question asks what the contrasts are between Jewish circumcision and the ordinance or rite known as "Believer's Baptism" in terms of New Testament worship.

The second chapter reviews the scholarly literature that covers the specific areas of study of the fundamental worship, music, and global concepts related to the origin and original ritual purpose of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. After this body of research is disseminated, the third chapter describes the research methods used to allow a student or reader to follow the course of examination for their research or benefit. Finally, the fourth chapter lays out the research

²²⁶ Garr, *Our Lost Legacy*, 128.

findings related to the three research questions that are at the heart of this work. Included in these findings is an introduction to the positions of the role of the Mosaic Law in Christian life and worship.

The research findings strived to fortify the hypotheses laid out in the first chapter. The first of these is that the baptism of repentance of John the Baptist differs from the baptism of new believers in the Messiah in the book of Acts as acts of worship in terms of the purpose, the participant, and the position of the worshiper in baptism. The purpose is an obedient response to the Gospel message; the participant is a new believer in Jesus who submits to the Lordship of Christ, and the position is a worshiper who has responded to the Lord and has an active believing faith resulting in salvation and baptism into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. The research findings also looked to answer: The worship purpose of the Passover meal Jesus shared with his disciples before his death that became the Lord's Supper was to renew the elements from Jewish tradition and the original meal elements in a new worship paradigm and ordinance. The last section of research in chapter four was directed to the following hypothesis: The contrasts between Jewish circumcision and the ordinance or rite known as "Believer's Baptism" in terms of New Testament worship are covenant faithfulness for all nations under Christ, identity with the Body of Christ symbolically and spiritually, and membership in the commonwealth of Israel.

Summary of Purpose

The purpose of the study was to explore the Jewish origins of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as acts of worship to be practiced in Christianity today. In exploring these origins, it was determined that evidence in the form of a specific command or historical record was first necessary to assert that baptism (immersion) was a condition for acceptance into

Judaism.²²⁷ This initiation into the Messianic community would be shown as carrying over into early Christian practices in similar form and perhaps, a similar function.

Regarding Christ and the Lord's Supper, the research purpose was to understand the expansion from the original Passover meal to the commemoration of Jesus' death in a communal worship remembrance as an annual commemoration of Jesus's death in a Sunday celebration such as Easter is not proved as occurring before the 2nd century.²²⁸ The purpose was also to understand if this Passover celebration in the upper room is part of a reform of the original Passover purpose or a complete repurposing into a spiritual practice within the ekklesia.

Finally, the purpose of the study was to explore the possibility that circumcision as a Jewish rite was replaced by baptism for all believers—Jew and non-Jew. The research examines the New Testament writings regarding this issue. It looks to scholarship to aid in determining this replacement of covenantal sign in the paradigm of early Christian worship practice. This portion of the study relates to the practice of the first area of research—Believer's Baptism.

Summary of Procedure

The following is a summary of the research procedure used in this project, which should allow a student or reader to follow the course of examination for their research or benefit. The third chapter was dedicated to this procedure, and it briefly introduced and described the research design approach used before revisiting the research questions that are at the heart of this project. The methods used during the research, along with a prescription of what are the essential resources used to answer the posed research questions are explained in chapter three.

²²⁷ Scott, *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*, 344.

²²⁸ Daise, "Christ Our Passover," 508.

The procedure used in this project was historical research regarding the origins of the Lord's Supper and baptism. This procedure did not include participants or the collection of data. Instead, the procedure collected the historical practices of these two ordinances from the writings of the early body of Christ to fashion a model for future worship practices. However, this research procedure did not attempt to correct misunderstandings of theological concerns among denominations or sects regarding issues such as transubstantiation, consubstantiation, pedobaptism, or baptismal modes.

The procedures used in this research was foremost an attempt to recognize the practices of early Christianity and their origins to advance the worship practices of today's churches confidently. Most want to understand where we come from as a people and culture; this is no different regarding our beliefs and practices. This research procedure attempted to avoid the politicizing of these sacred practices of the Christian faith; instead, the research procedure moved to plant the truth based on historical research and trusted scholarship.

The procedure used here is part of plans and procedures for research that moves from broad assumptions to specific methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Specific research methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation are part of this procedure.²²⁹ The research approach in this project is in the category of the qualitative method, and researchers in these traditional categories may collect data through the examination of documents, behavior observation, or interviewing participants.²³⁰ The nature of this research is in the realm of historical qualitative research as the data is found in religious, historical, theological, and doxological texts, books, articles, and theses. The procedure used research methods from the

²²⁹ Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 3.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 181.

qualitative family, which rely on image and text data and have unique steps in the analysis of the data.²³¹ The data collected is from biblical texts, Jewish religious texts, historical writing, Christian, and Jewish scholarship. The research procedure includes inductive and deductive data analysis as patterns are built into organized units of information.²³² These patterns developed into the themes and the eventual material and conclusions presented at the end of this chapter.

The following is a summary of the procedural steps. First, the various documents and data are collected, including historical documentation from early church theologians as well as Jewish scholars and historians. Second, the data is examined and sorted through since the volume of historical qualitative research is dense and rich. Third, the data that is examined and selected is categorized and coded into various segments.²³³ Fourth, these themes and codes are arrayed to create a conceptual map that shows the flow of concepts and ideas found in the research findings of this thesis. The fifth step includes writing the storyline or narrative of each theme that also appeared in the fourth chapter of the findings in this study.²³⁴

Summary of Findings and Prior Research

The following is a summary of the investigation's findings related to the three research questions that are at the heart of this work. Before summarizing the research findings of the three questions, the study was devoted to lay the framework for an understanding of the role of Mosaic Law in Christian life and worship practice. Four views were suggested for the role of the laws laid out in the Sinai Covenant, also known as the Mosaic Covenant.

²³¹ Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 179.

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ *Ibid.*, 193.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 198.

The first view is that most of the Mosaic Law is still in force and binding on the Christian community. The second view holds that there is no role of the sacrificial law as found in the Torah; however, the festivals, dietary laws, and other rituals found in the Law of Moses are still binding upon believers. The third view suggests the role of the Mosaic Law is that the moral portions of the law are still incumbent upon believers in Jesus. However, the ritual, civil, and ceremonial laws are no longer binding on the believers in Christ. The fourth and final view of the role of the Law of Moses is that this Mosaic Law is no longer binding for the Christian believer. The Law still exists, but its righteous requirements have been fulfilled in Christ.

After laying this foundation, the findings turn to explore the differences between the baptism of John the Baptist and the baptism of new believers in Christ after the cross and resurrection of Jesus. J. Julius Scott, Joan Taylor, Arnold Fruchtenbaum, and F.F. Bruce are scholars that contribute to these findings. The findings demonstrate that scholars understand that John's baptism was a baptism unto repentance and baptism to prepare the community for the Messianic kingdom. In contrast, Believer's Baptism initiates Christians into their state of being "in Christ," according to Bruce's observations of Paul. The historical death and resurrection become a part of the believer's spiritual experience.²³⁵

The next section of the findings explores the worship purpose of the last Passover meal Jesus shared with his disciples. Scholars contributing to this portion of the study include Howard, Rosenthal, Klein, Spears, Wilson, Stern, Colvin, Bokser, and Wright. The research indicates the direction of worship for the Christian in the Lord's Supper, and the Passover was toward the Lamb of God—Jesus Christ. The research also illustrates that Jesus associated the third cup of wine, known, as the cup of redemption, with the redemptive work that he would participate in as

²³⁵ Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, 281.

the suffering Messiah. Furthermore, the bread motif that ties bread as a symbol of Israel is taken further to symbolize the bread of heaven, and the Messiah who would be broken for the sake of His people and people of the nations who would recognize Jesus as the Messiah.

Besides the general symbolism of the bread and the wine in the Scriptures, there is the corporate dimension within the covenant between Israel and Yahweh, revealed in Passover and carried through the Last Supper.²³⁶ Finally, Colvin explains that there are meanings from the context of the Upper Room Passover celebration with Jesus and his closest followers. Jesus' followers came to him mostly from the sects of Judaism that were looking for the redemption of Israel. Colvin's concluding thoughts explain that Jesus was doing in the Last Supper what all should expect the Jewish Messiah to do in the last meal with his disciples. Jesus is allowing these elements to tell the past, present, and future story of God and Israel through ritual participation.²³⁷

The final section of the research findings details the contrasts between Jewish circumcision and Believer's Baptism. Key scholarship contributions in this area of study come from Stern, Scott, Fruchtenbaum, Bruce, and Wright. Scholars recognize the shift in the model of worship seen in Acts and the Writings of the Apostles. Circumcision recalled the picture of covenant faithfulness and conversion to Jewish people. This resulted in some denominations to see Believer's baptism as a replacement of circumcision. Much scholarship does not see this as a "like for like" replacement.²³⁸

²³⁶ Colvin, *The Last Supper*, 73.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 90.

²³⁸ Scott Jr., *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*, 341.

One of the best explanations of the place of circumcision in Jewish life and covenant comes from Arnold Fruchtenbaum, who explains the covenantal obligations of the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants. Fruchtenbaum clarifies this based on the truth of the New Covenant as he clarifies that circumcision is an act of faith by the parents. This argues against infant baptism for the same reason. This conclusion by Fruchtenbaum helps one understand that covenant faithfulness is recognized for Israel as physical circumcision under the Abrahamic covenant as Jews, and as spiritual circumcision under the New Covenant as both Jews and Gentiles in Christ. Believer's baptism has more to do with identity with the Body of Christ.²³⁹

Limitations

The summary of the limitations found in this research is as follows. The first limitation is that this research does not include Catholic or Eastern Orthodox theology regarding baptism or Communion. This study is limited to the evangelical protestant views of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Furthermore, this study does not argue the theological place of pedobaptism. Still, it will assume a rite of baptism for those making a profession of faith as a new disciple of Christ at an age where a salvation decision is made. Second, the research does not focus on the overlap of Passover with Easter and some of the controversy behind the background of the Easter name and the potential pagan origins of that name.

Third, the research limits the prescription of approved or correct modes and methods for these ordinances; however, the research will drive the conclusions that indicate what may be construed as prescription more than description. The fourth and final limitation is one of an understanding in philosophy and methodology of ministry regarding baptism and the Lord's Supper beyond the Messianic Jewish or Southern Baptist usage of these ordinances. Reformed,

²³⁹ Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua*, 417.

Eastern Orthodox, or Catholic practice and understanding are not a part of this project in detail. The fourth limitation ties into one assumption put forth in chapter one: that the reader understands that baptism is a part of the Great Commission and represents a faithful and public profession of one's faith in Christ. Also, it is understood as an initial act that does not have frequency or repetitiveness associated with it as an ordinance. However, other denominations or sects of Christianity may adhere to this practice.

Recommendations for Future Study

The following are recommendations for future study in this area of theology and doxology. The first recommendation involves the study of the Passover feast and the Feasts of Israel in general. Though a Christian is not under any obligation to keep these feasts, they tell the history of God's work through Israel and foreshadow the person of Jesus Christ. Since the Lord's Supper and its practice came from the Passover Seder, it is beneficial for worship leaders and pastors involved in leading their congregations in worship through Communion, to understand Christ in the Passover.

A few authors, books, and scholars are recommended for reading and aid in further study. First is the work of Kevin Howard and Marvin Rosenthal. Their book, called *The Feasts of the Lord*, is an excellent book for an introduction to the Jewish feasts and their fulfillment in Christ. Another excellent text for research in Jewish studies relating to the New Testament is J. Julius Scott's book, *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*. For a deeper understanding of the Messianic Jewish movement overall, David Stern's *Messianic Judaism* is a solid reference and resource for Jewish-Christian theology and worship practice. Regarding the Last Supper and its historical, theological, and doxological understanding, *The Lost Supper* by Matthew Colvin is a

useful resource in understanding not only Passover but the early writings of the church on the subject of the bread and cup of the Eucharist.

The second recommendation for future study focuses on the ordinance of baptism and its origin. One should concentrate on two important elements in this study. First is the understanding of the Jewish background and laws regarding ritual immersions and conversion immersions. Scott's text mentioned above is an excellent source. Additionally, the work of Skarsaune and Hvalvik aid the student with the use of their work called *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries*. Imperative to this area of study is an understanding of the Writings of the Apostles and their interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures. Charles Leiter explains, "By looking at the New Testament, we have discovered the fullness and meaning in the Old Testament that we could never have discovered by reading the Old Testament text alone. The principle is this: We should always get our final understanding of the Old Testament by studying the way it is interpreted by our Lord and His apostles in the New Testament."²⁴⁰ Authors such as F.F. Bruce and N.T. Wright are scholars with a great understanding of Paul and the New Testament in light of its Jewish context.

Finally, Arnold Fruchtenbaum is a recommended scholar who is a part of the camp of Jewish Christian scholars and teachers. His insight regarding Israel and the ecclesiology is remarkable. Many of his theological works are valuable resources. He has written several commentaries on the writings of the apostles. Still, his multi-volume work called *Yeshua, the Life of the Messiah: From a Messianic Jewish Perspective*, helps one understand New Testament worship as it is renewed from the worship of Israel and Judaism under Messiah Jesus. His

²⁴⁰ Leiter, *The Law of Christ*, 74.

writings also clarify the role of covenant and the role of the Law in Christian discipleship, worship, and life in Christ.

Implications for Practice

This research has the following implications for practice in worship, methodology, and practical application. These implications are divided into worship methodologies and practice for baptism, followed by methodologies and practice for the Lord's Supper. These are prescriptive with the understanding of the limitations summarized earlier in this chapter. These practices are valuable for the worship leader and pastoral staff in planning and implementing the two ordinances commanded in the New Testament into the worship practice of the local church.

The Implications for Believer's Baptism

The first implication is the use of Believer's Baptism in worship. The worship and ritual practices regarding ceremonial washings, baptisms of repentance, and ritual immersion for conversion (proselytes to Judaism) illustrated in this body of research indicate that the process of baptism continued with the giving of the Holy Spirit, and symbolically represented several things. First, it represented their spiritual cleansing through their confession of faith in Christ. Second, their baptism illustrated that they were baptized into the Body of Christ. Third, it represented their spiritual position in Christ as they are buried with Him, raised with Him, and are united with Jesus. Finally, it represents the new disciple's covenant faithfulness to the covenant-keeping God in Christ Jesus. All of these are theological and symbolic representations of the role of baptism as it is renewed from practice in Judaism to practice in Christianity. These implications also have a pragmatic purpose in our ecclesiology and worship.

From a practical perspective, the process of discipleship involves making disciples, baptizing, and teaching. The Great Commission makes this clear: "And Jesus came and said to

them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age’” (Matthew 28:18-20, ESV). Part of this worship process of making disciples involves baptizing new believers. The implication is that this should be a regular part of the worship experience for all churches.

Revisiting the research from earlier chapters, one discovers that Jewish pilgrims would experience the repeated cycle of the pilgrim festivals of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Ritual cleansing was required, and ritual baths became a part of life in and around Jerusalem. Similarly, baptisms should be a part of our church life as it is a sign that we are reaching our neighborhoods, cities, and areas for Christ and discipling those people who are a part of the local body. Therefore, worship should revolve around this ordinance, or this ordinance should become a special time of worship if the building or geography does not make baptism possible.

Returning to the research, one learns of the requirements for water in ritual washings, and we can see an example in Acts where pragmatism wins in this scenario:

Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:35-39, ESV).

This new follower experiences both enthusiasm and the joy of Christ, and the baptisms in the ekklesia should be the same. This is accomplished by including baptisms in the services, preaching on the meaning of baptism, and including songs with lyrics about the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, walking as a new creation, and other themes that reflect baptism.

If a congregation does not have a tank or pool for baptism, then the pastoral leadership

and worship staff can bring the church and worshipers to the water. This may be done at a pool, river, lake, ocean, or other creative location where water gathers. Creative usage of liturgy, Scriptures, and songs may be used in this service. The book of Acts indicates the almost immediate response to salvation is finding water to baptize new believers. The Body of Christ should take this lesson from Judaism and early Christianity and make this an integral part of regular worship when possible.

The Implications for The Lord's Supper

The research describes the origin of the Lord's Supper is found in the final Passover meal Jesus shares with his twelve closest disciples. The elements of this Seder meal are renewed in the New Covenant reality of Christ as he fulfills the Passover by his death on the cross as the Lamb of God. The practical implications for this in worship are as follows. First, the symbolism of the Lord's Supper should become a part of worship as it does in Believer's Baptism. The representation of the bread and fruit of the vine as symbols and types are a part of the material in the previous chapters. For the church and ecclesiological practices, it should be used as Jesus used them—symbols to tell the story of redemption. The following are some practical ways this may be accomplished in worship.

First, the frequency of this communal meal should be determined while leaving room for the Holy Spirit to move on the hearts of the leadership to update this frequency. Passover was and is an annual spring festival, and Jesus tells his disciples what the bread and wine represented, and that they should partake of the elements in remembrance of the Lord. However, it is Paul's words to the Corinthians that indicates this worship meal may be shared more than once a year. Paul writes the following:

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and

said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:23-26, ESV).

There is no mention of Passover, but there is an indication of the Corinthians coming together frequently to celebrate the Lord's Supper.

Whatever the decision is regarding frequency, the time of coming together should not become mundane, and it should be recognized as an act of worship and an opportunity for thankfulness for the finished work of Christ our Passover Lamb. Worship songs should be selected that sing of the work of Christ, the Lamb of God, the body and blood, and other themes that reflect the Lord's Supper. The timing and location of this worship experience should not be an afterthought. It is at the heart of the Seder during the “Cup of Redemption” that Jesus pauses to reveal the new meaning of the Passover. Also, Jesus and his disciples celebrated the end of this meal by singing a hymn of worship. The worship experience of Communion should be participatory and a celebration. The research indicates the Passover Seder of Judaism was not somber or quietly reflective. This leads to the next practical application—holding a Passover Seder to celebrate this ordinance.

The Lord's Supper finds its origin in the Passover meal, and holding a Passover Seder is a great way to celebrate this ordinance with a unique worship experience. The leader of the Seder does not have to be Jewish. However, it is helpful to be familiar with the Hebrew language and be comfortable leading a gathering through the *Haggadah*, which is the storybook and order of service for the Seder. If a Passover Seder seems intimidating, another possible worship experience may be holding a service with a “Christ in the Passover” presentation. Organizations such as Jews of Jesus and Chosen People Ministries have staff dedicated to leading these events for churches. The Passover Seder can also be an opportunity to share the Gospel with Jewish

people in a feast of which they would be familiar. Liturgies, Bible passages, and songs should be directed toward the telling of the story of the redemption of Israel from Egypt, and humanity through the work of Christ.

Thesis Summary

These two ordinances for worship imply that they are to be a part of regular worship as they are renewed from instructions found in the Torah to ordinances commanded by Jesus and taught by the New Testament writers. They represent remembrance and covenant faithfulness; therefore, they are vital for Christianity as acts of worship. They are active ways to display faithfulness to God and show the origin of God's covenant faithfulness to Israel and the church.

This thesis detailed the origins of Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper as ordinances that were not created in a vacuum but were renewed in the Christian faith and fulfilled by Christ in their original purposes within Judaism. In the process of this discovery, the truth of the mystery of the Gospel is clarified through God's Word and purpose. What was that purpose? It was to show faithfulness to Abraham and His covenant with him that all nations would be blessed through him. Baptism and the Lord's Supper were found in the Torah of Moses. Still, they are renewed in Christ, who is the promised Seed bringing fulfillment, completion, and covenant faithfulness to God's chosen people and to the nations that were far off from the promises of God, but who are brought near in Christ. Baptism is an act of worship indicating our position in Christ, and the Lord's supper is a meal taken as an act of worship indicating the remembrance of the work of Christ on our behalf.

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