

Early Christian Wisdom: Active Faith
An Investigation of Pauline Wisdom, Righteousness,
Faith and Its Subsequent Reception

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A Watkins Senior Honors Thesis

Early Christian Wisdom: Active Faith

"Nos, non habitu sapientiam sed mente praeferimus non eloquimur magna sed vivimus . . ."

"As for us, the wisdom we display lies not in outward dress, but in the mind; we do not preach great things, but we live them."

(Minucius Felix, Octavius ...VIII,5)

Christianity emerged during one of the most confusing periods of history. The whole known world was mixing. Ideologies, philosophies, religions, and mysteries blended in such a way as to make definitive statements about them impossible. Aristotle and Alexanders' dreams of oikumene were finally being realized, the world was becoming unified, but not quite as they had wanted.

The historian of this period has a lot of work to do. It was a very confused and truly fascinating period of history. Because of this, an effort to trace the development of ideas, doctrines, and philosophies from and through various cultures becomes a nightmare. It would be necessary to investigate the whole cultural milieu: the impact of eastern mysticism, various stages of Greek philosophy, the various branches even within Judaism and their influences, in order to thoroughly study any one of the myriad of subjects of this period. I have not done that. I want to understand this period and so have begun the long process to do that. This paper is a pilot. I hope to establish the ground work, present the problem, and begin the long arduous task of uncovering layer after layer of understanding. I have restated many well known things but I also have contributed some, at least I hope, new ideas.

Purpose:

- 1) To investigate Pauline righteousness, faith, wisdom especially with respect to the variance between Greek and Hebrew views of reality (Dynamic/Static) taking in to consideration Paul's Rabbinic background.
- 2) To investigate the reaction of the Greek world to Paul and the churches counter-reaction.

Mechanics: the various sections included

- 1) Greek and Hebrew Reality

I will start with a short but concise comparison of the Greek and Hebrew views of reality. The Greek and Hebrew cultures in no way can be considered as monolithic. Both cultures evolved both by internal innovation and external cross-pollination and therefore cannot be definitively defined. People, cultures and languages must always be viewed by scholars as organic, ever changing. An attempt to understand anyone in definite terms would preclude any chance to really understand them.

A culture's evolution however, will be guided by its language because a language contains implicit Theological/Philosophical connotations. Those connotations will then dictate the direction of the evolution of Theological/Philosophical understanding. eg. *Εἶδον*, *Εἶδα* woideo, originally meaning "I see," came to mean "I know." Thus the word will always bear that relationship and convey the idea that knowledge is connected with quantifiable objectivity.

2) Pauline faith, righteousness, wisdom

This is the longest section because I felt that it was the most misunderstood and thus needed more verification. Also an understanding of Paul is foundational in order to understand Primitive Christianity and its' subsequent development.

3) Righteousness, works and faith in James;

A comparison of James and Paul

This section investigates the common Jewish Christian position on faith, righteousness, and works.

4) The development of faith, righteousness, works in the early Patristic period

This is very brief and intended to be a pilot, more introducing the problem than actually solving it. I have set out a couple ideas for critical scrutiny.

Greek and Hebrew Reality

In order to understand the framework in which Christianity was fostered we must investigate Hebrew thought. What were the underlying views of reality that formed the theology and ethics of the Hebrew people and with them formed the fabric of Christianity? How much or how little did these views influence Christianity? Christianity emerged in the thick of the Hellenization process that was changing the whole world. To what extent was Christianity a product of the Greek world and to what extent the product of the Hebrew world? In order to even begin to address this we need to understand how the two cultures thought, at least in a very broad sense. Once we understand to what extent Christianity was influenced by either at the very beginning, we need to understand how that message was understood by a completely Greek audience, i.e. how would a person weaned on Neo-Platonism receive a message rooted in the Hebrew mindset? To begin to deal with these issues we need to set out as clearly as possible the understandings of each culture, at least to the extent that we can make a statement about them as a unified culture.

There is a fundamental difference between Greek and Hebrew views of reality. The Greek saw reality as static, characterized by immutability; the Hebrew saw reality as dynamic, characterized by continued creation. Consequently each of the peoples have variant contexts in their search for understanding. The one is an attempt to find order, primarily an intellectual process. The other is an attempt to participate in the creative Power of God, primarily a response of the heart and will. Thus "wisdom," means different things to each. Two books have been extremely useful here: Hebrew Thought Compared with

Greek by Thorleif Boman and A Study of Hebrew Thought by Claude Tresmontant. In this section I will briefly discuss the nature of reality: dynamic vs. static.

Dynamic and Static Views of Reality

If Israelite thinking is to be characterized, it is obvious first to call it dynamic, vigorous, passionate, and sometimes quite explosive in kind; correspondingly Greek thinking is static, peaceful, moderate, and harmonious in kind (Boman p. 27).

Linguistic evidence for the Hebrew Dynamic reality; The dynamic nature of Hebrew verbs of inaction

From first appearance this seems impossible. How is it possible for inactive verbs to be active in nature? This will not seem quite so contradictory if we remember that rarely do words have one isolated meaning. Anyone that works with more than one language knows the difficulty in translation. Words have more than one nuance. The roots of words sometimes mean something apparently contradictory from the word derived from them. In Hebrew most all verbs reflect a primary dynamic meaning at least in their most basic meaning. This reveals the dynamic nature of Hebrew thinking in general (Boman p. 28).

Here are a few examples:

qum arise and stand; or sometimes stand
natsabh 1) take one's stand; 2) stand
amadh 1) alight somewhere; 2) stand
shakhan 1) stretch oneself out, alight for awhile, encamp; 2) dwell

These examples show that motion and standing are not opposites as they are for us, but are so close to each other that they form a unity. Standing is seen as the result of rising or placing (Boman p. 29).

Boman's analysis of Hebrew verbs that express standing, sitting, lying, etc., teaches us that motionless and fixed being does not exist

for the Hebrews. Only 'being' which stands in inner relation with something active and moving is a reality to them. This could also be expressed: only motion has reality (Boman p. 31).

Many other examples could be given to demonstrate that Hebrew thought is essentially dynamic. Verbs of quality, rather than being simply statements of static being such as, "He is angry" can also be construed as verbs of becoming, "He is in the process of anger," or, "He is becoming angry." The Hebrew verbs of condition or quality do not designate a fixed state but rather one that is flux (Boman p. 33). Nothing can be said to be in a constant fixed state. "The distinction between becoming and being, which is so meaningful for us and even more so for the Greeks, appears to be irrelevant to the Hebrews or to have been experienced by them as a unity (Boman p. 33). In order to appreciate this point (or possibly even to understand it) we would have to investigate more examples than is possible for a paper of this magnitude. Suffice it to say that Hebrew verbs in their most fundamental meaning are dynamic by nature reflecting the underlying dynamic character of all of Hebrew thought. This dynamic character is vital in shaping Hebrew understanding of reality, theology, ethics -- every aspect of life. Later you will see how important this is in understanding the Christian writers especially Paul.

Static Being in the Greeks

It is not difficult to establish that the Greeks (with the one exception of Heraclitus)¹ considered reality to be immutable. The Eleatic school was diametrically opposed to the Hebrew kind of reality, whereas Hebrew thought considered action and change to be the base of

reality, the Eleatics proclaimed that only that which is immutable is real; all becoming and passing away is mere appearance (Boman p. 51) "We did not see correctly after all, and . . . we get no true apprehension of things we believe to be many. For if appearances were real they would not change," Melissus Fragment 8. "What is real is eternal and . . . cannot perish . . . nor undergo change." Melissus Fragment 7A. Plato, although admitting the existence of the observable world, viewed it only as a shadow of full reality, the immutable reality of the forms.

Creation: Source of Hebrew Dynamic Reality

If we bear in mind that a central element in Hebrew thinking is creation then it will follow logically that a universe brought into existence by a creative God would continue to be characterized by that initial creative act. The Hebrew energetically asserted the goodness of creation. The physical world, full of constant change, was good because it was created by God and reflected the nature of God in that it continued to create. Each plant and creature continued to re-create its kind. To the Hebrew "the multitude of beings is the result of an eminently positive act, a creation, an excellent creation. Indeed the creator Himself at every step in the genesis of the many, sees that all this is "very good." Fertility is a blessing, to multiply is to be blessed, for God orders: "Increase, multiply and cover the earth." And the great number of creatures, innumerable as sand and stars, reveal the power and the inexhaustible fruitfulness of the Creator." (Tresmontant p. 5-6) The dynamic character for the Hebrew people is a direct reflection of Gods continued creation which is occurring all around them

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and even in them. Creation is the heart and soul of the Hebrew world view. The Hebrew notion of species regeneration must not be thought of in the same terms as Aristotelian mechanical replication of species. The one proceeds from a continued creation resulting in totally unique beings -- it is a process of constant creation the other is a refabrication of a self-perpetuating machine, a mechanistic remaking.

The Greek, convinced of the immutability of reality, saw multiplicity as a breaking, a fracturing of being and thus a lessening. If reality was immutable, any time something multiplied itself it broke itself into ever smaller pieces and in so doing withdrew even further from reality. The Greek "spontaneously linked the multiplicity of living beings to a disintegration, a pulverization of the One. The multitude of living beings represented only something negative, something like a catastrophe." (Tresmontant p. 5) "From the Platonist and the Neo-Platonist point of view, any move from the one to the many, any generation, is essentially a degradation and a fall." (Tresmontant p. 8)

In Platonism the soul can transcend the body and participate in the realm of the forms, in the realm of the incorruptable. The body, however, is grounded to the world of ever continuing degradation and fall thus a body/soul dichotomy was established. For Plato, the body enslaved the soul to the sensible.

So long as we keep to the body and our soul is contaminated with this imperfection, there is no chance of our ever attaining satisfactorily to our object, which we assert to be truth. In the first place, the body provides us with innumerable distractions in the pursuit of our necessary sustenance, and any diseases which attack us hinder our quest for reality. Besides, the body fills us with loves and desires and fears and all sorts of fancies and a great deal of

nonsense, with the result that we literally never get an opportunity to think at all about anything. Phaedo 66 b,c.

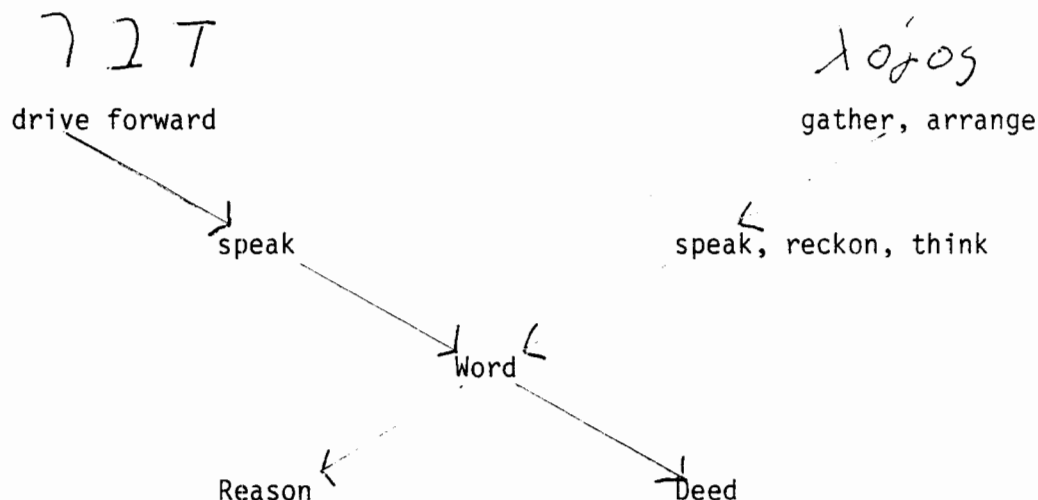
The body held the soul to the foreign and shadowy land of half truths. This body/soul dichotomy in Greek thinking was to play an important role in the reception of Christianity into the Greek world. For the Hebrew who held that all matter is good, in that it is part of the creation, the body was not something that separated the man from reality but in fact was part of the unity that comprised his being. The essence of mans being is the growth and change that the man can see in his own self (body, mind, spirit).

The Greek mind sought to understand, to bring chaos into order. From the Grecian dark ages following the Trojan wars the Greek sought order. This is most notable at first among the artisans. Very complex geometric patterns were the most common artistic motif as the Greeks sought out order and control, then, the struggles of men and monsters were depicted with the men winning out again showing the victory of order over chaos. Even in the Golden age of Greece we see the epitome of the search for order with the sculpture Doryphoros by Polykleites where the entire sculpture was constructed by the application of the Fibbonacian ratio. Starting with only the last digit of the small finger the sculpture proceeded to apply the Fibbonacian ration to construct the whole body.² Greek society from politics to art to philosophy seemed to revolve around the search for order. The need to order his universe took the Greeks to the position where mathematics could be understood to explain all reality.³ The Pythagoreans and indeed even the Platonic school emphasized this. Truly the universe could be understood to be static. It is no wonder then that 'logos'

began to assume such an important role to the point where it expresses the mental function that is the highest according to Greek understanding, because logos came to mean -- the essential meaning, the underlying message, reason. Logos, word, came from lego (λογω) to speak, but basic meaning of the root (λεγω) leg is to gather into order, or to arrange. The meaning of the root should give us understanding into the three principle meanings -- to speak, reckon, think (Boman p. 67). Each of these three meanings involve an ordering of pertinent information, an orderly gathering, a careful arrangement.

Dabhar, Hebrew for word, also assumed an extremely important function. It came from dibber meaning simply speak, but the basic meaning is 'to be behind and drive forward', hence 'to let the words follow one another', or even better 'to drive forward that which is behind'; the verb thus portrays somehow the function of speaking. Dabhar means not only 'word' but also deed: Abrahams servant recounted to Isaac all the 'words' that he had done (Genesis 24:66) (Boman p. 65). Dabhar probably came to mean deed because a true word was seen to be, of necessity, followed by action. A word was connected to its fulfillment. If it wasn't, it was seen to be an empty word, a non-word. So a true word had result in action.

"These two words teach us what the two peoples considered primary and essential in mental life: on the one side the dynamic, masterful, energetic -- on the other side the ordered, moderate, thought-out, calculated, meaningful, rational . . . "Word" is, so to speak, the point of intersection between two intirely different ways of conceiving of the highest mental life, a fact that can be pointed out be the following diagram:" (Boman p. 68)



Another way of understanding these two words is to view them in the context of each peoples search for understanding. For the Greek, understanding was gained through careful organization of the known facts and from them reasoning toward the principle that lay behind it all. Understanding was essentially a process of intellection, discovering the order, the meaning -- it was an intellectual process.

For the Hebrew understanding involved a participation in the dabhar of God, it was less a principle of intellectual discovery as it was a principle of participation with the Holy, the Divine and a subsequent alignment of the will. Tresmontant describes it very well:

Understanding is action, the act of intellection of subsistent truth. Hebrew, a concrete language, never speaks of understanding except in such a context of truth's fruition. It names understanding only when it is in action, an understanding of its proper object.

Understanding is a dialogue, an existential relation of two liberties, that of God and that of man, an exchange in which God gives man understanding to know the "secrets of the King." Understanding is a circulation from I to Thou. Aside from this flow there is no understanding. Understanding is this movement with two points of departure, each source being liberty. God's is called grace. (Tresmontant p. 125)

Hebrew does not have any word that corresponds to nous (*νοῦς*), that center which responds to logos. Instead Hebrew uses leb, heart (Tresmontant p. 125), that center that responds to dabhar. In this then we get our clearest picture of the two cultures. The one is eager for intellectual understanding and an understanding of underlying order, of reason. The other is eager to respond to its creator in action, in a response directed by the heart, to whom understanding means action, response.

In sum, the Greek world considered immutable being to be the essential nature of reality, because of this they sought to be freed from the corruption of the physical world. They sought order and structure as is evidenced by the full ramifications of the word logos. Understanding was a process of reason proceeding from an arrangement of what was known to seek to understand that which was not known.

The Hebrew world considered God and the subsequent manifestation of his character -- namely creation, to be the root of the nature of reality. For them this meant a dynamic lifestyle, in response to God's efficacious, creative dabhar. The physical world was very good and there was no dichotomy between body and soul because it was created as a unified whole. Through change and regeneration they continued to take part in creation. Understanding was a reaction to the Dabhar of God, it was a response of the heart and will, a dialogue between them and God.

Notes

1. Heraclitus, alone of all Greek philosophers was an advocate of the significance of change. 'Everything changes; war is the father of all things; and a man cannot step into the same stream twice.' (Plato Cratylus, p 402) Perhaps this peculiarity in the philosophy of Heraclitus can be traced to an indirect or unconscious Oriental influence. (He did come from Asia Minor (Ephesus) after all.) (Boman p. 52) It is of course imminently possible that it was a unique idea.

2. Beginning with the tip bone of the little finger, take its length as the base of a square. Having constructed the square, draw its diagonal, then rotate the diagonal on its base point, bringing its top down to the base line. This new line will be 1.4142 the size of the old one, and will be the length of the next bone. Each new length will always be 1.4142 the size of each older one. The successive parts are as follows:

little finger top to 2nd bone
 2nd bone to 3rd bone
 all little finger to palm (to wrist)
 wrist to elbow
 elbow to shoulder, which is also shoulder to top of head
 shoulder to top of head, when squared and diagonal taken, is distance from top of head to nepples. This squared equals top of head to midriff. This squared yields top of head to base of penis, then top of head to kneecaps, then top of head to soles of feet.
 (Tobin, R. "The Canon of Poly Kleitos" American Journal of Archaeology 79.4 (October, 1979).

3. Whatever can be grasped by the mind must be characterized by number; for it is impossible to grasp anything by the mind, or to recognize it without number (Philolaus, Fr. 4)

PAUL: HEBREW OF HEBREWS

If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. Phillipians 3:4-6.

Theologians have problems with Paul. "Who is this man? How can he assert so much that seems to depart from the O.T. and even the historical Jesus?" One hears many answers but most say that Paul, a genius, had a fertile creative imagination which expanded the historical Jesus into gargantuan proportions and, drawing on his Greek background, synthesized a Greek view of reality, a Hebrew view of reality, the life of Jesus, and his own creative mind to produce a theology quite separate from the historical Jesus. Many proclaim Paul's message to be essentially Greek -- fundamentally different from the real message that Jesus tried to proclaim. Paul then becomes an obstructor of the real message rather than an illuminator.

I maintain that Paul was, in fact, "Hebrew of Hebrews" and proceeded from a Rabbinic point of view in the development of his theology. For some reason theologians rarely stress Paul's Rabbinic background when they treat him (one notable exception is Davies in Paul and Rabbinic Judaism). Surely that background had a profound impact on him. We must remember this in all of our dealings with Paul for it permeates his theology. I will attempt to show that Paul was primarily a logician in the development of his theology, taking that which was revealed to him on the Damascus road and that which was delivered to him by the apostles concerning Jesus' life and teaching, and extrapolating the logical implications of these facts concerning Jesus from his Rabbinic training.

The Development of Paul's Theology

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. 1 Corinthians 15:3-8.

That which Paul had received he also passed on as of first importance, namely the kerygma, the kernel of the gospel. This is the center of his gospel, the core from which his theology emanates. It is to be noticed that he had received it¹ -- he had not invented it. The kerygma (that which he received) is split into four phrases each beginning with the word "that" (ὅτι *hoti* in Greek) which signifies the beginning of a particular element. "That Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture." This first element of the kerygma is of special importance to us. It sets up Paul's theology of salvation by faith in the crucified and risen Christ and shows that the redemptive purpose of Christ is not an invention of Paul's but rather is part of the basic confession of faith of the early church (Paul writes that it was given to him -- it was a part of the basic tradition), this is further substantiated by the words of Jesus Himself (no doubt part of what Paul had received) when Jesus says in Mark (the earliest of the Gospels), "The Son of Man came . . . to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45) These words, in the context of the time implied an atonement for sin (Bruce p. 89). Thus the heart of Paul's theology, the propitiation of man's sins through the death of Jesus, is not Paul's invention but rather part of Jesus' own understanding of his death.

Another important feature of the kerygma is that it focuses on the actions of Jesus and not his teachings. This is important in understanding Paul's theology. The person, as much as the sayings, define the message. "The teaching and the character of Jesus are inextricably bound together, and we may be sure that it was the actualization of the teaching in the life of Jesus that impressed Paul." (Davies p. 148) The content of Paul's theology focuses on Christ in two ways: 1) Christ, the Power of God to redeem man from his sin, 2) Christ, the Power of God to transform man into his image (Davies p. 147). These two are inextricably connected, forming a unified whole.

1) Christ, the Power of God to Redeem Man from Sin

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us. Gal. 3:13

Jesus the Christ became the effector of redemption through the ransom of his life via the cross. This was an act of God and not any of man's doing (Romans 3:21-26). It was an extension of the character of YHWH who had always acted on human history. Once again his creative power was manifest, this time in the propitiary sacrifice of Jesus the Christ as an atonement for the sins of man "to those who believe" 1 Cor. 1:21 In so doing God recreated man making him a "new creature." Therefore if any man is in Christ, his is a new creature, the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come." 2 Cor. 5:17 The method of entering in is by faith, believing. The second way that Paul focuses on Christ will begin to define what "faith" or belief meant for him. (Cross)

2) Christ, the Power of God to Transform Man into His Image

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. Phil. 2:5.

Jesus himself is the ethical lesson not just his teaching, he is the model of the holy, righteous life. Paul stresses that we are to

model Jesus; we are exhorted to live a life of agape by way of the example Christ. Every Christian is pledged to an attempted ethical conformity to Christ. The imitation of Christ (μιμητας του Χριστου mimetes tou Christou) 1 Cor. 11:1 stands at the heart of Paul's ethics. To be a Christian is to relive the life of Jesus, to die and rise with him and stand under his moral imperative (Davies p. 148). This understanding of the Christian ethics also elucidates the Pauline concept of faith. To have faith is to be moved by Jesus, to be so influenced by his life that ones own life is brought under subjection by him. (See Rom. 6 but esp. Rom. 6:17) "But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness." Rom. 6:17,18. It should be easy to see that Paul presents Jesus as the standard by which man should align his life. Christ Jesus becomes the New Torah for Paul. The standard by which man is to "live, move, and have our being." (Acts 17:28/Col. 1:15-23). We must always remember that Paul was trained in Rabbinic Judaism. This training left its mark. Any Rabbi asserted the pre-eminence of the Torah in establishing man's ethic--the Torah was to^{be} imitated. How is it that Paul presents Jesus as the new Torah?

Christ Jesus -- The New Torah

Davies, in his book Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, illustrates Jesus as the New Torah very well:

It is true that at no point in the Pauline Epistles is the recognition of Jesus as a New Torah made explicit in so many words. This fact, however, is clearly implied in the famous passage in which Paul contrasts the Christian ministry with that of the Old Covenant in 2 Corinthians. Here Paul, a minister of Christ, assumes "that he himself is no less a distinguished person than Moses", for whereas the glory which shone in Moses' face because he

had been entrusted with the Torah of Israel was a fading glory, the Christian minister had received a glory that was not fading because he had looked into the face of Jesus Christ and found there a new knowledge. Paul and the other Christian ministers had found the Light which had come into being at creation, in the face of Jesus. The significance of this is only fully realized when it is recalled that in Rabbinic Judaism the Torah was associated with light, and as Knox has written of this passage: "The original light created by God in the beginning had been equated not with the Torah, the mere reflection of the light which had been vouchsafed to Moses, but with the true knowledge of God revealed in the person of Jesus who...was Himself that primal light..." The object of the argument was to prove that Jesus, not the Torah, was the true revelation of the divine glory and the divine light. This probably means that Jesus was a New Torah. (p. 148-149 Davies)

By Torah Judaism meant "all that God has made known of his nature, character, and purpose of what he would have man be and do." (Moore, g.f. Judaism vol. 1. Oxford, 1927-30 p. 263.) Taking this into consideration and the fact that Paul saw Jesus as the New Torah it should be easy to see that Paul ascribed everything once ascribed to the Torah in Rabbinic thought to Jesus, the new Torah. Thus we see the doctrine of Christ extended logically by Paul to entail everything once entailed by the Torah. Jesus, Himself, in toto was a full revelation of God and His will for man. (p. 149 Davies)

Christ the Wisdom of God

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross.

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation - if you continue in you

faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant. Colossians 1:15-23.

In the preceding section I attempted to show how Paul saw Jesus as the new Torah and thus as the source of man's ethical injunctions. This also meant that Jesus, as the Torah, was God's full revelation and will for man. How then does Jesus become everything attributed to him in the passage above? How does Paul derive Christ's pre-cosmic origin and his part as creator? From first reading this appears to be highly inventive and to not have much to do with the historic person, Jesus of Galilee. A couple of observations can help add verity to Paul's statement. According to Paul the law cannot save (Rom. 3:20) but he was not original in saying that. This was a commonly held position in Rabbinic Judaism. "In the Law is a divine gift to Israel but it cannot redeem the sinner." 4 Ezra 9:36, "To a race doomed to sin the promises of the law are a mockery." 4 Ezra 7:116-31. As we saw earlier Jesus himself saw his death as having the power of redemption. Perhaps this sheds light on his cryptic saying "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." Matt.5:17 Jesus fulfilled the Law by accomplishing that which it could not do, namely redeem man from sin. In this he recreated man "You are new creatures...all things have become new" 2 Cor.5:17 In that Jesus had the power of creation, Paul ascribed to him the character of Wisdom which, according to the Old Testament, was that by which God created." Judaism had ascribed to the figure of Wisdom a pre-cosmic origin and a part in the creation of the world. It becomes probable therefore that Paul has here pictured Christ on the image of Wisdom."

(Davies p. 151) Davies goes on to convincingly illustrate the connection between Jesus and the Rabbinic use of Wisdom in describing creation. (Davies 152 ff.) Therefore because of the power of redemption/recreation that Jesus claims, Paul draws a parallel between Jesus and Wisdom. Wisdom is nothing less than the character of God at work in creation, thus Paul ascribes to Jesus the full character of God. (We also must bear in mind Jesus' own allusions and tacit agreement to this. Note especially Mk2:1-12, Jn20:28-29)

Rabbinic Judaism understood Wisdom's function in creation in two ways: 1) As creative in the cosmos, 2) as creative in man in recreation/regeneration. (Davies p. 152) Therefore, Jesus, understood as the Wisdom of God, would have been (and would continue being) active in the creation of the cosmos (see Col. 1:15-17 above); and active in the regeneration of mankind. (see Col. 1:18-23 above) In this redemptive power Jesus not only equals the Torah but becomes an extension, a fulfillment of it. If through Him man can be forgiven and made righteous when the Torah was unable -- then surely he fulfills every aspect of the Torah. By fulfilling the Torah and in his role as creator, Jesus manifests the very nature of God.

The significance of all this with regard to this paper is twofold: 1) Paul derives the bulk of his theology from a logical interpolation of the kerygma drawing on his Rabbinic training and not so much from either the Greek world or his own creative imagination. 2) We begin to see the nature of wisdom in Paul not so much as static (something to be understood) but as something dynamic, active, making an impact on the cosmos and on all of mankind as is exemplified by his portrayal of Christ as the Wisdom of God. Surely we begin to see Paul in light of

his Rabbinic training and his concept of wisdom/faith as being dynamic in nature. Faith for Paul, is that element that desires to be in conformity with Christ and in so doing enters into his creative regeneration/redemption.

Paul's treatment of justification has been a hotly debated topic from its first voicing. He says "for we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law." Rom.3:28 From first glance one might wonder "It looks too easy!" "All I have to do is believe!" In fact that is exactly how it was received by many of Paul's first churches. Paul's letter to Corinth was an attempt to correct such a misunderstanding. Hopefully though, by now, the reader should be able to realize that there is a lot more to those words than first is understood. Contained in Paul's formula are two theologically loaded words, ΠΙΣΤΙΣ Pistis (faith--belief) ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥΣΙΑ (δικαιοσύνη) (to be justified).

Faith: Belief But Also Response

Assuming that Paul was, in fact, influenced by his Rabbinic training -- let us look at the Hebrew meaning of faith and how it compares with the Greek.

There really isn't a suitable definition for אָמֵן (aman)³ (the Hebrew equivalent of pistis) so I'll give an example to illustrate it from 1 Kings 1:32-37. King David ordered Benaiah to take Solomon to Zadok the Priest and Nathan the Prophet in order for them to anoint him king. Benaiah, who had wanted Solomon to become King, was overjoyed when he heard this and answered (אָמֵן) amen. This means he understood, accepted, cherished the command and was willing to commit himself to its fulfillment. (Kittle p. 182 vol. VI) This is to say

that not only does the hearer understand and accept the message but also the hearer responds to the message in a subjective sense--he takes delight in the message and subjects his total person in knowledge, will, and conduct to it. (The use of amen at the end of liturgical formulae or prayers signifies a subjection of the total person to the prayer uttered).

The Hebrew root (אמן) aman comes to be translated (πίστις) pistis in the Septuagint. Whereas pistis conveys more of a sense of intellectual agreement, aman conveys more of a sense of a response, an alignment of the will, a hearty obedience; more a sense of trust. (Dodd p. 70) This difference between the two is further demonstrated by the fact that (ἀλήθεια) aletheia -- truth replaces aman in the septuagint as well as pistis. Thus the result was that the intellectual, mystical sense of "truth" replaces the original sense of faithfulness. For example Psalm 119:90 "Thy faithfulness lasts from age to age" becomes (ἐξ ἀρχῆς καὶ ἄρτις ἀλήθειά σου) "Thy truth lasts from age to age," a declaration of the eternity of truth. Not the faithfulness but the truth in God becomes the supremely worshiped thing, and the pursuit of truth becomes the characteristic activity of the religious man. (Dodd p. 74-75). The fact that aman was replaced by both pistis and aletheia is no accident. The two are closely connected...pistis in its most simple Greek meaning is something like trust, faith, belief, confidence. Each definition conveys a static state of being. The believer trusts or intellectually buys. "Truth" is the object of pistis--it is something that can be trusted -- intellectually bought.⁴

How then does Paul see faith? Faith is primarily the acceptance of

the Kerygma both in (ὁμολογία) homologia confession and in (ὑπακούω) hupakoe obedience. (Kittle 219) The believer must not only intellectually believe and assert in his confession but also must be obedient in his response to that confession. Faith is the manner of life of the man who is crucified with Christ, who can no longer live as an I, who lives in Christ (Gal. 2:19f.). (Kittle p. 220) "Faith is act in the supreme sense." (Kittle p. 220) It is act because it is an obedience to Christ. Let us investigate Rom. 6:17, 18 once again. "But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness." The Romans were set free from the task master of sin by their wholehearted obedience to that teaching which had been entrusted to them (the kerygma). It should be noticed how closely this wholehearted obedience matches the description and definition of aman. Please refer again to the example of Benaiah. From this we begin to see that Paul uses pistis more in the sense of aman (trust) than of (belief).⁵ Not only does the obedience free them from sin but it makes them slaves to righteousness, the servants -- those acting on righteousness. The Romans were not just delivered from sin, they were delivered to righteousness. Both describe Pauline Justification.

Righteousness: Uprightness but also Mercy

There is a problem in trying to define righteousness for Paul. If one were to simply use the Greek definition (δικαιοσύνη) dikaiosune, one would fall short of the full Biblical conotation. Dikaiosune can be understood as trustworthiness, uprightness, innocence, it must be understood in a judicial sense. To understand Paul we must consider

what righteousness meant in a Hebrew sense. (צדק) Sadaq can be understood by the way that it was translated in the Septuagint. It was translated by two different words; dikaiosune and (ἐλεημοσύνη) elaeosune. The first of which has already been defined the second of which means mercy or kindness. This polarization impoverishes the word since it contains both meanings and more. Sadaq is also the virtual equivalent of (ישׁוּעָה) yeshiva in 2 Isaiah. Thus can also mean deliverance, salvation. (p46 C.H. Dodd The Bible of the Greeks.)

Another meaning implicit in the word is a loyalty to a relationship. "Sadaq is out and out a term denoting relationship." (Von Rad, Israel's Historical Traditions, p. 371, also see essay #6 The Christian Verdict)

So how should we understand it? The best translation obviously must be fluid, defined by the context, but should contain all of these elements: trustworthiness, uprightness, mercy, deliverance, and loyalty in relationships. This shows the complexity in trying to define it for Paul. Dodd (p. 57) contends that Paul, due to his Rabbinic training, has the Hebrew sense of it in mind as much as the Greek. A major difference between the two is that the Greek denotes a state of being, a static sense, whereas the Hebrew denotes an active sense or at least a propensity to act (with mercy or deliverance). To be righteous in the Greek sense is much different than to be righteous in the Hebrew sense. For the Hebrew Paul, being made righteous meant being transformed into a person, who by his very righteousness/justification in fact did the works of the law. This is difficult to say in English because both "righteousness" and "justification" convey a sense of not being guilty, a static sense while Paul in all probability meant an active state--a state that could not even allow the possibility of a "carnal Christian"

i.e. a person who is justified and yet still continuing to sin. Paul emphasizes the active meaning of righteousness by his continual references to living a lifestyle in imitation of Jesus, the new Torah, whole-heartedly obeying the "Law of Christ," agape love. Historically theologians have understood Paul in the Greek sense (being themselves a product of the Greek world) and thus have been misunderstanding Paul. This mistake continues to the present day.

Religious Devotion: A Lifestyle of Agape

Religious devotion (actually a very misleading idea) has two opposed theological understandings. The Hebrew word (חסד) hesed is most often translated by (ὁσιος) hosios in the septuagint which conveys a notion of devotion, piety, or obedience to the sacramental/moral/religious code. Hesed, however, also contains the aspect of pity or kindness. "In the best Hebrew thought the character of God and of the religious man is marked by hesed, the most outstanding ingredient in which is kindness or mercy." (C. H. Dodd p. 63) In the post-exilic period the "religious" began calling themselves (חסידים) hesidim and came to practice more and more a form of piety consisting of a strict devotion to the Law. Thus they began to concentrate on following the whole Law without regard to mercy or kindness. Thus the concept of religious devotion lost its close connection with mercy. The Greek translation of hesed, hosios, implied even more blantly a religious devotion in the sense of piety or obedience to a religious code and is not of importance in the New Testament (Dodd p. 64) showing that the N.T. abandoned the notion of piety in religious devotion. It is interesting to note however that one of the most important theological words in the N.T. is agape, the meaning of which comes close to the

original meaning of hesed -- and thus once again mercy regained its place as central to religious devotion.

The Pauline doctrine of Justification is the development of the preaching of salvation by Jesus: "Blessed are the poor." Mt.5:3; "I am not come to call the righteous but sinners." Mt. 9:12. God is the God of the poor and needy, of the despairing and of them that have no merit. Nobody is so far from God as the self-righteous person. (p. 369 Jerimias) So, Paul, in saying that man can be redeemed only by faith apart from works is saying that man is redeemed only by God's mercy and not by anything that he could do. God's mercy is the precondition to man's regeneration in which man learns how to live out righteousness -- to learn mercy -- to imitate Christ, ceasing to be egocentric either in his lack of concern about righteousness or in his self-righteousness, Man in faith imitates Christ and becomes extracentrical.

God's mercy...his hesed, or sadaq, his unmerited mercy is at the core of Paul or even Jesus' own doctrine of Justification. God's nature as merciful and creative brings about the unmerited recreation of man. The incarnation, crucifixion and subsequent resurrection become the clearest example of God's hesed: both merciful and creative.

The Pauline doctrine of Justification in sum

God, because of the aman of his character, i.e. his unchanging verity and faithfulness to himself, and because of his hesed, i.e. his great mercy and pity, enacted in his Wisdom the one act which would provide a substitution for man's sin, the cross of Christ. This gift was extended to all mankind--the acceptance and desiring of it being the only issues. (The acceptance of the cross obviously implies an awareness of need.) The man then accepting and desiring (aman) the

message of the cross is then considered justified in Christ and can begin to grow into the image of Christ. God can continue his process of creation in him causing Sadaq, hesed, and aman to grow to maturity in him. This whole process is completed by the creative power of God as the individual continues in an attitude of aman -- true active faith and trust. This is the (*ἡ δυνάμις τοῦ Θεοῦ*) *dunamis theou*, the power of God.

This is best seen in context however. Paul's letter to the Corinthians is wonderful for this purpose because the dichotomy of Greek "faith" and Hebrew "faith" is cut most clearly.

God's Wisdom vs Man's Wisdom: The Epistle to the Corinthians

Jesus the Galilean was Jewish. He spoke Aramaic,⁶ used Jewish analogies, thought Jewish thoughts, and preached a Jewish religion. Peter said to him, "You are the Christ" -- i.e. the Messiah -- the pinnacle of Jewish hope. When he ascended he commissioned his disciples to take his message (fundamentally Jewish) to all the world (fundamentally non-Jewish.) How could the disciples take a message rooted deeply in Jewish tradition and world-view into a culture almost diametrically opposed to it? How could they translate the message in such a way that it might be understood without changing its meaning?

Paul took a message calling for a response of humility and self-abnegation to a society whose view of individual self-worth was based on individual accomplishment and self-exaltation. He presented a message of a dynamic reality to a people whose very language and culture proclaimed a static reality.

The ancient city of Corinth was destroyed by the Romans in 146 B.C. due to its part in the Greek revolt against Roman domination. The city was known for its great wealth which was a product of its location on

two seas and thus a crucial trade route. The city, possibly due to its wealth also became the "totius Graeciae lumen" the play of all Greece (Cicero Pro lege Manil. 5), that is a city known for its lasciviousness. In fact the city was so noted for being licentious that the verb (Κορινθιαζεισθαί) corinthiazesthai came to be commonly used as "to fornicate." (I.C.C. pp Xi ff)

Julius Caesar founded it again in 44 B.C. It quickly began to flourish and in 27 B.C. became the Governor's seat of the Province of Achaea. The city was still new in Paul's day and had not yet built up a powerful ruling class since all the old families and aristocracy had been destroyed. A newly created city, with a mixed population of Italians, Greeks, Orientals and adventurers from all parts, without any aristocracy or old families, was likely to be democratic and impatient of control (p. XV ICC) Certainly this independent attitude is evident in the formation of the Corinthian church with regard to their acceptance of Paul's authority and also with regard to their liberty in synthesizing the Gospel with their own preconceptions of reality.

Paul entered into Corinth speaking only the gospel, refusing to embellish it lest he "empty the cross of its power" 1Cor. 1:17 The "word of the cross" that he preached was no doubt the story of man's redemption by faith in the cross of Christ (ICC p. 17) Since Paul stayed in Corinth for 18 months (ICC p. XIV), we can be assured that he taught much, extending into the more finely detailed elements of his doctrine such as we might see in Romans. We must always bear in mind how his hearers must have understood him. No doubt the content of his preaching remained intact, concerning Jesus and His power to justify and regenerate, but they naturally would begin to draw on their own

preconceptions synthesizing them with the gospel. This no doubt is where the problem began. Paul left and Appollos came, a man (*λογικός*) Logios, eloquent in speech after the manner of his Alexandrian school, and likely interpreting scripture in the same manner as the Alexandrian school. (Bruce 256) The Alexandrians approached scripture as an allegory. Each story, although not necessarily historical, taught a very important principle. The school also mixed a great deal of Neo-Platonism into their theology which lead to its wide acceptance in the Greek world (P. 420 F. F. Bruce) During Appollos' time Christianity had made its entree in Alexandria (Bruce 256) but the kernels of Gnosticism were present in the city as well. Appollos then came preaching in the style of the allegorical method in Alexandria, complete with its seeds of Gnostic thought and Greek snycretistic elements. The people in Corinth would have readily been able to understand Appollos's preaching, since it contained so many Greek elements, or at least attitudes with which they were familiar. The people of Corinth began to divide over whom they would align with -- Paul's striaght, but seemingly absurd (to the Greek mind) gospel, or Appollos' more understandable rendition. Perhaps the one group, who had heard Paul present the Gospel and heard him expound the new freedom gained through Christ, began to apply their own Greek understanding to what Paul had already preached. This then was augmented by Apollos' style. The people were self-assured of their intellectual superiority (8:1,7,10,11, etc.) The city was filled with the current Hellenistic ideas of the nature of reality. One of those ideas was a sort of "proto-gnosticism (P.15 Conzelman) or "insipient Gnosticism" as Bruce calls it (P. 261) This "insipient Gnosticism found its roots in many places but perhaps the most easily

traceable is in the Greek body/soul dualism.

In the Greek world there was a very marked dualism between (σάρξ) sarks flesh and (ψυχή) psuche soul. This dualism portrayed sarks as being vastly inferior if not evil; whereas psuche was vastly superior if not eternal. The soul was the thinking willful part of man. Its salvation lay in its separation from the corruptable body. This dualism was foundational to Gnostic thinking and strangely enough provided the base for Corinthian libertinism.

The Corinthian "insipient Gnostic" position was libertinistic and iscentious but was not based on moral indifference. Rather, their iscentious behavior was an affirmation that the soul had already been freed from the body and thus what the body did no longer mattered for the soul was free. This principle of freedom rested on "knowledge" (γνῶσις) gnosis regarding salvation and this gnosis derives from the experience of the spirit. (Conzelman p. 14) The experience of the spirit then provided the "knowledge" that allowed the soul to be freed from the flesh. Having been freed, the soul could no longer be tainted by further actions of the flesh. The libertine attitudes merely showed to what extent the soul was freed from the body. "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his fathers wife. And you are proud! (1 Cor. 5:1-2) Paul's opponents (according to Lutgert p. 14 Conzelman) are hyper-Paulinists (those who go past Paul's doctrine of salvation by faith and grace), pneumatics, Gnostics. The Corinthians took Paul's preaching concerning "freedom" and expanded it. Suddenly the Jewish message of salvation and regeneration by active faith (aman) in the creative wisdom and mercy (hesed) of God became a sort of

salvatory knowledge by which one was freed from the body. Understanding faith in this way they naturally made the body/soul dichotomy even sharper. Being freed from sin the kingdom had arrived, the sin of the body had no more effect over the soul. No longer did the actions of the body entrap the soul but rather they illustrated the power of the knowledge of Christ.

All of this arose, not because of heretics moving in and corrupting the flock, but out of the natural mutation of the "word of the cross" when placed in a foreign environment. (see Bruce p. 259) One modern error is to always look for some outside influence to explain historical/intellectual development. One can say that everything (outside of revelation) is molded by the effects of the time. The effects of local Mystery religions, popular oriental religions/mysteries, Neo-Platonism, Alexandrian Allegorization etc. all had their impact. The Corinthian syncretism can be seen as a natural occurrence. The Corinthians understood Paul's message in light of their cultural background. Just as Paul derived the bulk of his theology from a logical interpolation of the kerygma based on his Rabbinic training, so the Corinthians would naturally derive a new theology from a logical interpolation of Paul's message based on their own Hellenistic views of reality.

Paul wrote his letters to the Corinthian Church to correct this "Hellenization" of the message of the cross.

When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 1 Cor. 1:1-2

The core of Paul's message was Jesus Christ and Him crucified or as 1 Cor. 1:18 says "the word of the cross." He says he did not come with

eloquence or words of superior wisdom but with the word of the cross "lest the word of the cross be emptied of its power." 1 Cor 1:17 The issue here is the nature of value or true wisdom; God's wisdom/power vs the wisdom of the world. Is wisdom a mystical knowledge by which one can win redemption for himself, thus exorcizing his soul from the body, i.e. de-"sarksing" the soul, or is it evidenced in the simplicity, humility, agape, and redemptive power of the cross of Christ.

Paul's preaching must be simple, not embellishing the cross lest the embellishment detract from the cross. "For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those of us who are being saved it is the power of God." V. 18 The word of the cross is the power of God, but it is foolishness according to the wisdom of the world. Understanding this is crucial to understanding Paul's concept of wisdom/faith.

The Word of the Cross/The Power of God

There are two ways to understand (λογός του σταυρού) (-Logos tou staurov) the word of the cross. This again relates to Paul's background in Rabbinic Judaism. It is highly possible that Paul, by using Logos was drawing on both the Greek conotation of logos, and on the Hebrew sense of (דָבָר) dabar. The Greek conotation of logos is the underlying intent, the structure, the essential meaning, the message. The logos tou staurov (word of the cross) then becomes the content, the essential meaning, the message of the cross. Paul uses the cross as the example of humility and agape (Phil 2) so in 1 Cor. 1:18 the word of the cross would mean something like the underlying content/meaning of the ultimate example of humility, sacrifice, and agape. The intent of this example of humility etc. would be as a model for man to follow in establishing

his own lifestyle. The word of the cross was more than this for Paul however. The cross is not only the example but also the Power. Via the cross, Christ Jesus "became for us wisdom from God - that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption,"(1 Corinthians 1:30) our sadaq/hesed. Taking this into consideration "word" takes on a larger conotation than the standard Greek meaning. It assumes a Hebrew meaning. It is possible that Paul had in mind the philosophical/theological conotation of the Hebrew word for word dabar, the efficacious, creative word of God. If this is true the word of the cross would be God at work on man (again the creative wisdom of God) and not man struggling to somehow become like God. The efficacious word of God (responsible for creation) was able not only to bring salvation of the soul but it was also able to change the behavior of the people. The element of the cross being the model of the true ethic (the example of agape/hesed) and the element of the cross being the efficacious creative act of God are both involved.

The word of the cross is foolishness, however, to those who are perishing. One must believe in it for it to be efficacious. For Paul pistis transcended simple intellectual agreement and lodged itself in the will. Pistis was affected by aman and becomes for Paul an active belief, an attitude, an adherence. Belief is reflected in action because action is a reflection of true attitude and desire. For those who believed -- that is, trusted in the cross of Christ, the word of the cross became the power of God to redeem and to sanctify.

To those who not only intellectually believed the message of the cross but also cherished and committed themselves to the dabar of the cross, Jesus Christ became the power of God (i.e. the wisdom of God) to

first make righteous (sadaq) and then to cause that righteousness to grow to its full maturity in mercy (hesed) and agape; i.e. the dabar of the cross enabled the one believing cherishing/committing (aman) to be re-created by the wisdom of God, Jesus Christ and then allow him to be conformed to the image of Christ (mimetes tou christou) in his lifestyle. This was the true wisdom of God but it was foolishness to the wise man of the world.

For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know Him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand miraculous signs and the Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles." (1 Cor. 1:21-23)

In this section Paul contrasts true wisdom with false wisdom. Even though false wisdom may seem to be more logical it misses on the true nature of reality. For the Greek, as we've seen in the section Greek vs Hebrew thought, the physical was tainted. To achieve salvation one would need to shed oneself of the body. The message of God becoming flesh, in light of this, was saying that the ultimate Good -- the most untainted being (perfection itself) would become tainted and imperfect and that somehow because of this, man (being very tainted), could become untainted. This was clearly foolish.

So the message of God becoming flesh was foolish to the Greek who had for so long trusted in the knowledge that the flesh was evil. For the Greek mind, the need for the crucifixion of the incarnated God did not at all mesh with an already understood reality. (see also p. 22 I.C.C.)

The Jews trusted in the observable acts of God -- acts which when discussed, could be graded as God's acts or not based on their own understanding of the nature of God. Thus they trusted in their ability

to understand God. The Messiah had to come in glory, not with a little band of motley followers and preaching "turn your other cheek," and especially not one who was powerless to protect himself against crucifixion -- crucifixion! How could the Messiah be crucified? Unthinkable! To the Jew the cross was a sufficient and decisive refutation that Jesus was the Christ.

So the crucifixion of Jesus the Christ was an aberation to the Jews -- prisoners of their trust in their traditional understanding of the ways of God; and to the Greeks prisoners of their trust in their understanding of reality. The error of the wisdom of the world is that it is man-centered and boastful. It is man saying "I understand, I know the truth," It is man's trust in himself. This is antithetical to the wisdom of God which is humble, and demands that man trust God not himself. Man's trust in himself, his own perception of reality is really just an erection of another idol in place of God. The word of the cross demands that man trust and cherish God's logos, dabar and not his own. That is, it demands that man humble himself and look to God. It entails a turning from our own pride, our own wisdom, and and adherence to Gods. It implies an application of the model of the cross humility and self-sacrifice in love.

Paul continues to expand this theme. The wisdom that man thinks he has is not wisdom at all, it is foolish and shown to be by its inability to judge something that is truely wise -- the power of God/the Cross of Christ. Man's wisdom is a prideful denial of God's plan.

"The men of the spirit at Corinth set much store by wisdom and knowledge, reckoning these qualities by current secular standards, whereas in the Gospel of Christ crucified, God had turned these

standards upside down and made them look foolish." (Bruce p. 261) Paul writes "For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (1 Cor. 1:18) In this (*μωρία*) moria foolishness is contrasted, not with "God's wisdom" or "true wisdom" but with God's Power (Barrett p. 20). The "wisdom" (that of the world) is powerless to help those people clinging to it, they are in fact perishing. It is that very thing which appears foolish (when judged by the standard criteria of what is wise) that is the source of salvation - the power of God for life. This destruction of accepted wisdom is not new with Paul but really starts with Jesus. "You have heard that it has been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on one cheek, turn to him the other." (Matt 5:38,39) Jesus goes on to attack most of the accepted traditions of that culture upsetting the commonly accepted form of wisdom.

Paul goes on to quote the O.T. from Is. 29:14 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside (1 Cor.1:19) The prophet, referring to the failure of worldly statesmanship in Judea in face of the judgment of the Assyrian invasion, states a principle that Paul seizes and applies. (ICC p. 19) "Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" (1 Cor. 1:20)

Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified; A stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. 1 Cor. 1: 22-23.

There is a correspondence between (*σημεία*) semeia (signs)/(σκάνδαλα) skandalon (stumbling blocks) for the Jews and (*σοφία*) sophia

(wisdom)/(μωρῆς) moria (foolishness) for the Greek. Looking back to v. 21, we see that the proclamation of the "crucified" has this effect (i.e. skandalon and moria) because it is "offense" and "foolishness." The message of the cross is not a propagating of a new Weltanschauung (world view -- view of reality) but the destruction of every attempt to regard a Weltanschauung as the way of salvation. Knowledge or accepted understanding has little or nothing to do with salvation. (Conzelman p. 47)

The word of the cross stands in oppositon not only to the wisdom of the Greeks but also to the "wisdom" of the Jews. The error of both is their trust in their own system. The Greeks wisdom although seemingly more explanative of observable phenomona is unable to see past the illusion of their own observation. By insisting on a static reality they effectively isolated themselves from the dynamic nature of God and thus from the dynamic nature of faith/wisdom. The nature of the Gospel is inseparable from the dynamic/creative application of it. This very point has been overlooked or misunderstood throughout the history of the church because the church accepted the Greek view of a static reality up to this day.

This is probably true because the church was fostered in a culture permeated by the Greek mind-set. With each successive Father of the church this error⁷ was extended until now it is understood as the norm -- the true meaning of the Gospel. The greatest error though remains a boastful dogmatization of ones own understanding of reality. Paul writes

But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things - and the things that are not - to nullify the things that are, so that

no man may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God - that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord." 1 Cor. 1:27-31.

Summary

Paul preached a Jewish religion. It centered around the creative *sadaq* and *aman*, of God that was expressed in his *hesed*. The greatest case of this *hesed* was an historic occurrence, an act by an active God -- the Cross of Jesus the Christ. Through an active faith (*aman*) in the Word (*dabar/logos*) of the cross man could be made righteous, not simply a static state of not being guilty, but an active state characterized by mercy ... or *agape*, the most suitable Greek word to express the complex Hebrew sense of *aman*, *hesed*, *sadaq*.⁸ Paul illustrates the failure of the world's systems and wisdom (*Weltanschauung*) because of their misplaced trust in their own understanding. For the Greek the error lay in their understanding of reality as being static, rendering them unable to understand an active God and an active faith. The error of the Jew was in their trust in their understanding of God which had been codified in a wrong understanding of his essential nature. They had awaited a victorious Messiah who would deal out repunitive judgment to those who were deserving, and would not accept a Messiah who came "meek, and humble and mounted on the colt of an ass" Matt. 21:5/Zech 9:9. Paul derived his Gospel from an interpolation of the basic kerygma with his Rabbinic training. For him, Jesus the Christ became the Torah in all of its various manifestations, Jesus the Christ also became the Wisdom of God by which God performs his creation both in the cosmos and in the re-creation of man, i.e. man's regeneration. Paul's theology is very dynamic, reflecting the tenor of the prophets. The Corinthians (and the bulk of the Gentile church) misunderstood the Hebrew/dynamic base of

Paul's theology interpolated the Gospel with their own world view and arrived at a theology mid-point between dynamic faith and salvatory knowledge. This same tension is felt today in the struggle to maintain correct doctrine and still live out a lifestyle of faith.

Wisdom then, for Paul, is first of all God's deed in the opening up of salvation to whosoever will, then, for man it is the accepting/ cherishing commitment to that deed (one should quickly see that wisdom for man is nothing other than faith--aman), then, last of all, wisdom is the creative regeneration of the will and attitude of man in faith/ hope/and love -- but especially love, the signature of the creative eternal God.

Notes

1. (Probably from Peter & James (Gal. 1:18f)
2. The 4 phrases do not exhaust what Paul claims to have received by tradition -- the tradition included an account of the words and actions of the historical Jesus and some guidelines and principles of Christian conduct - but they have special importance as an outline of early Christian preaching (p. 86 Bruce).
3. I chose not to reproduce the correct form of the root each time and thus have simply left it in root form. To produce the exact form each time is too bulky and counterproductive.
4. See E. R. Dodd's Pagan + Xn in an Age of Anxiety for good treatment of the Greek idea of Pistis, a pejorative concept since Socrates: believing without good grounds, no understanding - believing on word of another.
5. C. H. Dodd in The Bible and the Greeks fleshes this out much more pp 42-75.

6. 1) There is a debate currently in the scholarly community concerning whether Greek or Aramaic was used by Jesus as his commonly spoken language. (see C. H. Dodd The Bible and the Greeks p. 12, favoring Aramaic. See works by L. McGaughey or R. Funk favoring Greek.) I personally have used Aramaic as the principal language although Greek no doubt was used extensively, e.g. Jesus's dialogue with foreigners.
7. By "error" I mean a fundamental misunderstanding of Paul's active/dynamic view of God and faith. It should not be construed that the culture's view of reality is necessarily in error, and thus God was in error by allowing His truth to spread among the wrong culture.
8. The pre-biblical Greeks rarely used agape or any of its family. Liddel writes "It is indeed striking that the substantive agape is almost completely lacking in pre-biblical Greek." p. 37 When it was used its meaning was uncertain and varied; often it is simply used for stylistic variations with (*φιλέω*) phileo; with Plotinus it conveyed a condescending sense. If a certain sense were to be attributed to it, it would be the following: a love which makes distinctions, choosing and keeping to its object; a free and decisive act. C. H. Dodd, History of the Gospel, p. 66 determined by its subject; relating for the most part in a love of God; a giving of active love on the others behalf.
- The sense of agape though rare in the Greek world was prevalent in the Hebraic world. It can be seen quickly that the whole thrust of the O.T. is God's distinctive love for Israel, but also his active love for all men (Jonah & Niniveh). Paul quickly uses agape to

characterize that attitude that should be in every Christian an attitude modeled by Jesus and in his willingness to be crucified for those who hated him -- in fact agape probably reflects ($\tau \rho \alpha \nu$) hesed - that attribute by which God acts in mercy for mankind. Agape is in a sense the outworking of applied wisdom. See also Anders Nygren Agape and Eros.

Faith and Wisdom in James

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. (James 2:14-18)

For James¹ an adherence to a "faith" that does not result in "works" (good deeds) is empty and worthless. "Can such a faith save him?" v. 14 The answer is obviously "No!" Faith must be accompanied by works in order to be shown to be true and not just an empty claim. True faith, for James, is evidenced by the presence of works. Verse 18 demonstrates what James is trying to say regarding faith. The contrast in v. 18b is not between "your faith" and "my faith", but between "your (faith) without works" and my "works". James is contesting the total sophistic separation of faith and works. (Dibelius p. 155) James emphasises this point by the use of chiastic structure:

your faith	X	apart from works
from my works	X	faith
ἐν ἰσχύϊ σου	X	χωρὶς τῆς πίστεως
ἐκ τῆς πίστεως σου	X	ἐν ἰσχύϊ σου

"James treats the interlocutor as if he had said, "The one has faith, the other has works." "Quite wrong," replies James, "for works cannot be inferred from faith, but faith can be inferred from works."

(Dibelius p. 156) James seems to be saying then that faith must result in works or it is not faith at all. This is understandable if we remember the full meaning of aman. It also is concurrent with what Paul said regarding faith.

Quite often Paul and James have been set at odds with one another. The one is said to preach "Justification by faith", the other

"Justification by works."

Λογὴ ζόμεθα γὰρ ἐκκαλούμεθα πίστει ἀρῶντων χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου.

"For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law." (Romans 3:28)

ὁρᾶτε ὅτι ἐργων ἐκκαλοῦνται ἀρῶντος καὶ οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως νόμου.

"You see that a person is justified by what he does not by faith alone." (James 2:24)

At first reading this seems very contradictory but upon a closer reading we will begin to understand what is meant by the use of various terms. A commonly made mistake in biblical interpretation is to assume that terms mean the same thing for each writer, this is plainly not the case. Another problem is the audience to whom the various epistles were written and what need they were trying to fill (please see Chart #2).

Paul was writing to new or non-Christians. In so doing he was trying to communicate 1.) That the nature of sin was so terrible that it is impossible to attempt to save oneself -- man was incapable of fulfilling the requirement of the law. "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." (Romans 3:20) 2.) "Paul's lofty repudiation of "works" has nothing but the name in common with the attitude of those who shelter their deficiencies of conduct under the excuse of faith. Paul's contrast was a novel one, viz. between the works of an old and abandoned system and the faith of a newly adopted one. His teaching was

really intended to convey a doctrine of forgiveness." (Ropes p. 205) This affirmation of forgiveness was important to those people who felt they were so terrible that they could not possibly be forgiven. This was especially important to new and non-Christians.

James, on the other hand, was writing to old Christians in Jerusalem, and quite often, a dead orthodoxy. (Jer. 370) As such they needed to hear a different message. They knew they were forgiven, and at times took that forgiveness for granted. They hid their moral deficiencies behind an intellectual faith. Because of this James felt he had to make them aware that faith cannot be separated from works, as Paul himself had to do with the "insipient gnostic" Christians of Corinth.

In each case, Paul writing to new and non-Christians, James writing to old, lukewarm Christians, each emphasized that which was necessary to be heard. On the one hand a justification that is a gift of God -- that is apart from man's efforts to make himself righteous, and thus convincing the hearers that yes, God has forgiven them. On the other hand a justification by faith that is characterized by an outworking of works, communicating to a dead orthodoxy that faith, by its nature is active and full of works.

Paul himself defines faith in an active sense as well, as we've seen in his letter to Corinth. Jeremias writes "Paul's initial justification imposes an obligation i.e. it is a twofold justification, the initial justification marks the beginning of a movement towards the (τέλος) telos -- maturity. Paul writes of this often (see 1 Cor. 2:6, Col. 1:28, 4:12 and many others). Especially, "work out your salvation

with fear and trembling." Phil. 2:12 Paul promotes two separate aspects of justification: 1.) the initial forgiveness of God, a justification of faith, 2.) a justification by faith that works out by love, i.e. a faith (aman) realized in life by love, culminating in telos -- maturity.

A sharp distinction lies in their perspective use or definition of various terms. Pistis for James reflects more accurately the original meaning of the word -- it means an intellectual acceptance of the truth but not necessarily action. For Paul pistis reflects a more Hebrew understanding in that it contains an expectation of a resultant change in lifestyle, a move toward agape. (also see Jer. p. 370) Erga, works, for James are the deeds of the "royal law" the perfect law of liberty (agape in Paul), for Paul erga means the keeping of the commandment of the law. Dikousthai for James presupposes the existence of an already established righteousness and refers more to the maintenance of it, Paul, however, concentrates on the initial act of God in bestowing righteousness and then in the perfecting of it through a lifestyle of live. What all this says is that Paul and James are in agreement over the basics of the faith. True faith, the kind that results in salvation, is characterized by a lifestyle in obedience to the royal law, the perfect law of liberty, agape. Justification then is perfected in the maturation of the one having faith as he is moved by his faith into the fulfillment of the nature of faith.

James continues to sing the praises of active faith by his definition of true religion and wisdom. "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." (James 1:27)

True religion is characterized by action, the type of action that reflects God's own character, to give to those in need who are unable to return the favor. This is a mirror of O.T. righteousness (Is. 58:6-10), it is an example of the O.T. concept of hesed. This is the very thing Paul meant in his exposition of agape (1 Cor. 13).

James characterizes wisdom in the same way:

"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. (James 3:13-17)

This passage answers the initial question (Who is wise and understanding among you?) and thus defines wisdom and understanding. According to v. 13b one can tell who is a wise man by two qualities. First a wise man will be living a good life, one in keeping with wisdom. Second, that life will be characterized by humility, the result of wisdom. (Dibelius p. 209) Please notice that the emphasis is not on the intellectual acumen of the wise man, but on the type of life and character he has. James attacks the notion that "disputes could be carried on in the name of and for the sake of wisdom." (Dibelius p. 208) This is to say that the pursuit of better and better defined understanding is not only meaningless unless lived out, but beside the point. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. "The fear of the Lord" translates into an understanding of who the Lord is, and being moved by that to obedience.

The Wisdom that comes from above is pure, undefiled -- free from

any of the faults of false wisdom such as envy or ambition (Ropes p. 249) The rest of the list describing wisdom in verse 17 can be split into the same two categories that were evident in verse 13; a good life and humility. This can be seen as a unity however. The man who is wise understands who he is -- that, in fact, he is worthy of death. Only by Gods grace is he able to live righteously, this knowledge precludes boasting. The result is humility and out of humility he is enabled to give more freely, not seeing himself above anyone else. "He has told you, O man what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

James insists that faith, wisdom, religiousity all be viewed actively, as the living out of the O.T. concepts of hesed, that is, a living out of the mercy, kindness and justice of God. Far from being opposed to Paul he stands in complete agreement with him concerning the nature of true faith. If one were to compare James' definitions of faith, wisdom, and religion with Pauline fruit of the spirit, maturity, and agape one would find almost a one to one correspondence of characteristics. (see 1 Cor. 13, Gal. 5:22)

- 1.) It is not positive that the epistle of James is actually written by James -- but it appears likely. If that is the case James probably is the leader of the church in Jerusalem and also the Lord's brother. (see Debelius p.11)

Figure #2

<u>Faith</u>	<u>James</u>	<u>Paul</u>
	[static] meaning more intellectual agreement [static] (Paul calls this notion "false wisdom"--powerless) (see 1 Cor. 1)	Pistis but more accurately Aman, an attitude that yields "works" [dynamic] [dynamic] (James calls this wisdom from above, true religion)
	<u>Works</u> of the Royal Law characterized by wisdom from above and true religion (Paul defines this as agape (hesed) True wisdom has power to transform)	of the dead Law -sacramental service no hesed/agape involved (James defines this as false wisdom i.e. not pure, not gentle, not motivated by hesed)
	<u>Justification</u> (assuming an initial justification) -by works - i.e. true wisdom, true religion <u>the result of true faith</u> (This is exactly Paul's 2nd aspect of Justification -- Sanctification "work out" your salvation with fear and trembling)	by faith i.e. active faith <u>that results in hesed/deeds</u> Found in two Parts in Paul: A) initial justification by trust in God's hesed alone B) Concurrent with but dependent on A is a movement toward maturity (telos)
	<u>Audience</u> 1) A Dead Orthodoxy or Christians tainted with gnostic influences	1) A New Church - or even non-Christians

The Development of Faith, Righteousness, Works
in the Early Patristic Period

Our understanding of how people understood faith/wisdom/righteousness in the patristic period is illuminated if we bear in mind that the Greek world was permeated with a static world view and the incoming dynamic view would be refitted into an understandable form. Philosophical/Theological understandings are not simply restatements of the original word but rather are the product of the perceived meaning. They are situationally produced by current emphasis (and thus counter emphasis), problems, needs, and understandings. One such major situation that greatly affected the development of Christianity was the use of Gnosticism. Its affect was felt first in a direct sense in the Hellenization of the Gospel, and then in reaction, as many Christian writers wrote specifically to refute it. Thus the emphasis was, (in a sense) anti-Gnostic -- or even anti-static. This short section is a quick investigation into Patristic interpretation of Paul, considering the static/dynamic split.

As Paul's message to the Corinthians was understood in light of their cultural framework, so each culture understood the same message differently. Take this story as an example.

Don Richardson, a missionary to New Guinea, tells about a tribe of cannibals in his book Peace Child. The Sawi people lived in the lower swamp-land of New Guinea. They were a people with a very interesting cultural ethic. They esteemed treachery as being evidence of craftiness. The people revered the traitor. The highest form of treachery, and thus the most honorable, was to win the trust of someone, befriend them, and then kill and eat them. Obviously this culture would not readily receive the message of the Gospel.

Richardson recounts how, after he had told them the gospel story, the people identified most closely to Judas Iscariot. Richardson obviously was taken back. How would these people be able to hear and accept a gospel that they inherently disagreed with?

The people were constantly at war with neighboring tribes. In one such war peace was accomplished when the chieftan of one tribe gave one of his sons to the other tribe. As long as that son lived there would be peace between the two tribes. Richardson finally saw the key to communicate the gospel to the Sawi. He explained the gospel using the peace child to exemplify the role of Jesus. God and mankind were at war so God gave his son to men -- men tried to ruin the peace by killing the child (Jesus) but God raised him from the dead never to die again. Thus securing forever the peace between himself and mankind. This translation of the Gospel into the language of the Sawi people proved to be the key and the people slowly began to become Christian.

One wonders, however, what sort of Christianity would have emerged had the Sawi not received continued teaching and correction regarding the full nature of the Gospel. Surely they would have begun to add from their cultural concept of "peace child" to their understanding of Christ and from their understanding of peace to their relationship with God. Being culturally bound they would be influenced by their culture in the development of their theology.

This same phenomenon occurred in the first century. Paul took the message of the Gospel into cultures vastly different from the culture of its' spawning. The section about Corinth should be enough to illustrate this well.

The world into which Christianity emerged was a hodge-podge of different cultures, religions and philosophies. The Hellenization that Alexander had hoped would occur by the establishment of Greek colonies throughout the known world had an amazing impact but now the Roman empire faced the backwash of that, as countless oriental influences and mysteries came sweeping over a religiously bored and dissatisfied people, promising new and exciting mysteries and answers to the nature of reality and the purpose of life. To these mysteries and new ideas the Roman, trained in Greek thinking, began to apply the philosophies of Plato, the Pythagoreans and every other Greek philosopher. The result was a confusing mixture of oriental mysticism and Greek reason. (see Franz Cumont p. 196-197).

Philo of Alexandria promoted a Jewish/Platonic way of thinking that probably dated back to the development of the Septuagint. This view still held to the law and yet viewed scripture as mostly allegorical. The school developed by Philo was foundational to the later Christian schools of Apollos and later of Clement of Alexandria and would prove important in the later development of Christianity through the Apostolic age when the church struggled to find an orthodoxy -- a correct way to understand their belief. This struggle was essentially a struggle to determine what faith and righteousness meant.

Another way of thinking developed in this period, perhaps less of a movement or a school and more of a natural blending of oriental dualism (especially Zoroastrianism) Greek Body/Soul dichotomy, and Platonic forms, which took the form of folk or pop philosophy/religion on the one hand and on the other developed into the complex systems of the like of Valentinus or Cerinthus, namely the Gnostics. This name is

somewhat misleading in that it is used to label a widely diverse group of people that proclaimed the primacy of knowledge (generally spiritual) in the determination of righteousness. The two camps became polarized more and more even during the time of Paul (the church in Corinth testifies to that) and especially following him. 1&2 Peter, 1&2 John, James, and the first 3 chapters in the Revelation of John, all appear to come out with strong statement against a faith without subsequent works, each refers to false teachers.¹ The controversy, ultimately centered over the body/soul dichotomy. For if the body was tainted then the spirit of Christ could not have come in the body of Jesus (the Gnostics held that in fact Christ only seemed to be flesh but in actuality was not) (p. 35 Bainton). "This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world." (1 John 4:2,3) The body/soul dichotomy also meant that righteousness had nothing to do with the body (since it was inferior and, in fact evil to developed Gnosticism) (p. 35 Bainton). It did not matter what the body did, salvation came as a result of the intercourse between mans spirit and the spirit of Christ. The spirit of Christ taught man the knowledge necessary for salvation "salvatory knowledge," so salvation occurred when man had salvatory knowledge and had nothing to do with lifestyle. "We can be sure we know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John 2:3,4) The body/soul dichotomy ultimately led

to the viewing of all matter as evil (p. 35 Bainton) and thus the creator of matter would have necessarily been evil. Thus YHWH was viewed in the more detailed Gnostic systems (Valentinus in particular) as the evil god, the great Demiurge responsible for the creation of matter (p. 35 Bainton) which was evil because it entrapped the spark of the truly divine, the soul, and continued to break that original soul into smaller and smaller bits as the process of repopulation continued, thus continuing to degrade it.

The confusion of the first few centuries was immense for the various churches established by Paul and the various apostles. What were they to believe? Gnosticism grew and became more influential. The churches felt embattled. How could they continue to maintain the correct understanding of faith i.e. active faith as outlined by Paul and most of all by Jesus? (Sermon on the Mount!) They began to appeal to the writings that came from the Apostolic age. Even if the authorship of a particular book was in question (the Gospel of John and 2 Peter among others) if it had the stamp of apostolic authority and could be used to combat Gnosticism it was used. Thus the canon was developed in response to the threat of heresies but particularly Gnosticism. The attack against Gnosticism emphasized active faith, an adherence to a morality exemplified in the Law and de-emphasized the Pauline notion of salvation by faith/grace alone. This tendency began very soon after Paul had preached salvation by faith due to the response of the insipient-Gnostic element that heard it. Paul himself, in 1 Corinthians began to try and correct the misunderstanding, after him a plethora of writers followed suit each becoming more and more insistent on active

faith. What began to happen was a slow misunderstanding of Pauline faith. Surely James did not quite understand Paul's message of faith (as seizing the redemptive work of Jesus and the example of his life at the same time and presenting it to God and saying: "I believe that Christ gave himself for me." Thus saying that God is the one who redeems, not because of our action but because of our trust in him emphasized by our propensity to imitate him in a life of hesed).

James stood as a modification, a warning, a counteremphasis to Paul and in so doing begins a drift back toward the legalism implicit (Laeuchli p. 100) in a life defined by adherence to law and away from Pauline justification that sounded like Gnosticism. This becomes more and more evident as the Gnostic threat became more insidious and the church reacted more strongly. [John the Revelator warns the church in Sardis (Rev. 3:1,2) "I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, and you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which are about to die; for I have not found you deeds complete in the sight of my God."

In II Clement righteousness is used to mean "righteous acts", which man must fulfill in order to receive the rewards of heaven (11:7); hence we must "practice righteousness in order to be saved in the end.: (19:3) ✓ The same understanding of righteousness can be seen in Hermas and the Didache. It is clear that these three authors have not understood Pauline righteousness. (Laeuchli p. 99) "in II Clement and the Didache Pauline righteousness is no longer understood at all." (Laeuchli p. 101)

We also see this carried to an extreme in the martyrdom movement [emphasized by Tertullian who says: "Who . . . does not wish to suffer,

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that he may purchase for himself the whole grace of God, that he may win full pardon from God by paying his own blood for it." (Tert.L, 15) ✓
Certainly much had been lost.

This emphasis on the actions of the individual person in securing salvation began as a reaction against the Gnostic attitude of "Salvatory knowledge", but went too far. The church over-corrected itself and in a way resumed the Law movement of Judaism, only with slightly different laws. Pauline righteousness was forgotten for the most part.

"Nihil prodest verbis praeferre virtutem et factis destruere veritatem."

"It profits nothing to show forth virtue of words and destroy the truth in deeds." (Cyprian, 20, line 13-14)

Note

- 1). James 2:14,18,19
- 2 Peter 1-3
- 1 John 2:4,18-19,22 4:2,3
- 2 John 1:7
- Jude 5-19
- Revelations 2:6,14,15,20-23

Postscript

John said "In the beginning was the logos, and the logos was with God and the logos was God. All things came into being through Him; and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being." John 1:1,3. If we take into consideration John's semitic (Jewish) background it is not too difficult to see that by logos John could be implying the meanings of dabhar along with the meanings of logos (See also Durranl Bowman p. 693 on this passage) in which case John's logos would mean the efficacious creative power of God that was the underlying structure to everything created. This is to say that everything that exist has as its underlying base the creative, dynamic nature of God. If we understand John's "being" as the dynamic "being" or "becoming" or possibly "effecting" of the Hebrew hayah (Bowman p. 39) then everything that exists exists in a dynamic state. Gods' creative word is still reverberating and causing creation to still create -- whether it is the pulsing energy of an atom or a quasar, the newborn lamb that for the first time bleats out for its mother, or the joining of sperm with egg to begin the amazing process of self assertion.

"The bio-chemical molecules that living man assimilates are quite anonymous. "This skin" and "this eye" are not such or such a molecule of carbon or water but this very self, this should that I am, that has assimilated them and informs them from within." (Tres. p. 106)

Reality is the expression of the nature of God, his dabhar was uttered as a direct act. And reality is its result but a result that is still being formed. The nature of Gods creation is that it contains within it the power for continued creation.

In a practical sense we still must deal with reality as being

material, made out of stuff. This is, after all, a chair that I am sitting on. But we must not be seduced into thinking that it is the true, complete nature of reality, rather a sort of functional view of reality. Modern science is seduced into thinking that in understanding function or even structure they understand the thing itself. The 'whys' and 'hows' are answered only on a broad scale. The whole scientific community from the Greeks till now have thought that reality was static, when indeed, if we believe the new physics, it is dynamic. But yet it is static, at least in a general sense. This chair will be essentially the same for the next fifty odd years. I am confident that tomorrow the same sun will rise. Same but different, changed -- Perhaps reality needs to be defined in terms of pairs, opposite but yet complimentary views: Greek/Hebrew, Static/Dynamic, Reason/Revelation, Science/Art, Objective/Subjective, Soul/Body, Left Brain/Right Brain, Yin/Yang, Thumos/Phrenes, Male/Female. The list really could go on, each culture making its' addition, but this is enough to tell us that reality is a sort of dynamic tension. Any attempt to define it too closely will miss that which by definition is beyond definition and must be experienced.

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