

Section Three.
Soteriology and Passover

Chapter eight. **The paschal community and redemption.**

The righteousness that is through faith.

We have seen that Paul's use of the OT is not arbitrary as many have thought. He had a profound respect for the original historical context of the passages that he quoted. In the original setting they almost invariably referred to the exile of Israel in Babylon and her subsequent salvation by Yahweh who brought her back to her inheritance. These texts are skillfully transposed by Paul from the historical experience of Israel and used to describe what the condition of man is and how Yahweh has acted in salvation.

Controlling paradigms.

The precise language Paul used was equally the result of devoted respect. Generally he did not force new meanings onto vocabulary but kept to their original LXX meanings. In this there undoubtedly was a problem for the Gentiles. They had to learn this imbedded theological content as against their own secular/religious meanings. Nevertheless, we have seen in chapter 4 how scholars have assumed that the secular usage was uppermost in Paul's mind and how this has masked the theological richness of his own meaning. Instead of appreciating that Paul used *doulos* as had the LXX, they had assumed that Paul used the term to speak of believers being slaves of Christ. I have shown earlier that instead of Paul viewing himself as a slave, he saw himself as a servant, with all of the dignity that the prophets received as they were called by Yahweh into his service.

The same Hellenistic/Semitic confusion has dominated how other key salvation expressions have been understood. Until relatively recently the term 'righteousness of God' was understood to refer to God's moral perfection and excellence. This was naturally seen to be expressed in his law and those who lived according to its precepts were deemed to be righteous. Without denying that these ideas exist in the expression, it has been appreciated that the term bears a much richer significance, one that is a key for understanding salvation history. Indeed, it is the same meaning that the OT prophets had as they used the term and we will shortly see how this expression is a key to Paul's understanding of salvation.

Two sources, two meanings.

We can possibly understand the differences between the legal meaning, which is essentially Hellenistic, and the covenantal salvation history meaning, which is essentially Semitic, by considering the following example. A judge might be regarded as just or righteous in that he always upholds the law and applies it to those who come before his bench. He can rightly be honoured as the upholder of righteousness. He does not take bribes and he works to ensure that he makes sound and fair judgments. He is a righteous judge. However, what he is in his home might be totally different from what he is in his court. He might be cruel, unloving, sarcastic, jealous and many other things. He might do nothing outside of

his professional life to right wrong doing. In other words, there is a very real question if he really is righteous.

In OT terms this judge could not be called righteous. Being righteous is about being actively involved in overcoming unrighteousness. The king was righteous if he worked for the good of his people and he encouraged them to be loyal to Yahweh. Saul was not righteous because he was not concerned about upholding righteousness but about his own reputation and position. David was righteous because, apart from his tragic episode with Bathsheba, at least for the Biblical writer, he longed and strove for the reign of God among his people. In other words, he wanted truth and justice to characterise the lives of his people.

The nature of righteousness.

God is not only righteous because He prefers good or even because he punishes evil. He is essentially righteous because he comes to the aid of those who are suffering, who have no hope if God does not deliver them. God's righteousness cannot be separated from His saving activity. Thus when Isaiah speaks of God's righteousness being revealed,¹ he means that God is about to act to save His people.

This understanding of the righteousness of God is clearly intrinsic to Paul's meaning. When Paul speaks of God's righteousness he refers to God's saving activity in the death of his Son. When Paul speaks about the righteousness of God appearing, he clearly means the salvation of God brought through the death and resurrection of Jesus.²

Now it must also be recognised that God's righteous activity can equally be about judgement as much as deliverance. God, because He is the God that He is, must judge those who reject his warnings and spurn his mercy. This is what happened to Israel when Babylon conquered her and took her into exile. Cut off from the Temple, exiled in Babylon where her broken relationship was displayed to the nations, she was an object lesson concerning the righteousness of God to the nations. Yahweh had stayed true to the covenant stipulations³ and after many warnings had fulfilled the curses against those who had violated the covenant, even His own people. Only when Yahweh's judgment and righteousness had been carried out could He act to save Israel. Redemption is therefore indivisible from righteousness in the minds of the prophets and consequently in the mind of Paul.⁴ Indeed, redemption is the outworking of God's righteousness, His faithfulness to His covenantal promises, and cannot be understood properly outside of this OT setting.

This is the reason why sacral manumission is utterly inadequate to describe the

¹ Ps. 98:2; Isa. 53:1; 56:1; Rom. 1:17

² "The righteousness of God means the covenant faithfulness shown by God in Christ's atoning sacrifice, through which, by the forgiveness of Israel's sins, he has renewed the covenant which Israel had broken". Bornkamm, "Revelation", 101. Cosgrove "Linguistic" 670 says; "In justifying the ungodly and vindicating those conformed to the image of his crucified Son, God's own righteousness is displayed."

³ Deut 28:15-68; Hays, *Echoes*, 52 says that Rom 3:21 is the climax of the discussion begun in 1:16-17, so also Kuss, *Römer*, 65; Wilson, "Religion", 340; and Reumann, "Righteousness", 438. Thus Paul is dealing with the covenant stipulations being fulfilled in the death of Jesus.

⁴ Ziesler, *Righteousness*, *passim* and Hill, *Words*, 92.

redemption that is in Christ. It not only lacks OT theological foundations, but as we have seen, it fails to adequately explain the language and imagery that is used by Paul.

The redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Romans 3:21-26 has been extensively examined in attempts to find the paradigm used by Paul.⁵ The sacrificial language has been widely assumed to reflect the Day of Atonement⁶ because of the reference to the *'hilasterion'* (propitiation v.25). The term was translated 'propitiation' until challenged by Dodd who claimed that it meant 'expiation'.⁷ This in itself did not require a different setting from the Day of Atonement, merely an adjustment in understanding what was happening through the sacrifices made on that day. However Dodd was accused of not properly interpreting the evidence because he had ignored Biblical texts that did not fit his theory and it was therefore argued that *'hilasterion'* should retain its propitiatory meaning.⁸ One response has been to say that *'hilasterion'* refers to the place of atonement, the lid of the ark of the covenant as used in Hebrews 9:4 and found in different places throughout Ezekiel.⁹ Some however questioned the Day of Atonement setting itself. It has been argued that if this was the model Paul followed, he would have used much more imagery that reflected the festival. In support of this challenge it was pointed out that the public (*proetheto*) display of the sacrifice of Christ (v25) is contrary to the privacy of the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement.¹⁰

The Maccabean model.

Those scholars unhappy with the Day of Atonement model have suggested that the reference to the *'hilasterion'* linked the death of Jesus with the death of the Maccabean martyrs (4 Macc 17:22).¹¹ The Maccabean martyr prayed that his

⁵ Wilckens, *Übersetzt*, 1:199 says that 3:21-26 is the basis of Romans, the rest of the letter is an expansion. Käsemann, *Romans*, 8 says that Rom 3:21-26 is obscure because Paul has not identified the tradition he has used and has interpreted it by additions. Even so, Käsemann says that *apolutrosis* is not a reference to the sacral Manumission of slaves as claimed by Deissmann, Lietzmann, Althaus etc, but is a liturgical expression similar to those used in 1 Cor.1:30, Col 1:14 and Eph 1:7 which emphasise the eschatological event, "the formula points to the mediator of salvation". Knox, "Romans", 431, says that 3:24-26 is one of the most important passages in the letter but that it is not clear what Paul is seeking to say. Dunn, "Understanding", 184 says that there was no clear rationale in Judaism concerning sacrifice.

⁶ Stuhlmacher, *Reconciliation*, 86, supported by Stott, *Romans*, 114f and Moo, *Romans*, 232 says the passage is based on Lev 16 and the fact that the details are not precisely correct is not relevant because the ark was lost in the exile and therefore the ritual had long ceased. Philippi, *Romans*, 1:142 says the Gentiles would not understand *hilasterion* but then goes on to say they would be familiar with it through the LXX.

⁷ Dodd, "Cognates", 325-360, supported by Moule, *Sacrifice*, 46.

⁸ Morris, "Meaning", 33ff, supported by Black, "Romans", 68 and Kidner, "Metaphors", 124. Hill, *Words*, 24, says that Dodd's failure was to omit all discussion of contexts from his study and thereby deprive himself of an important guide to interpretation. Young, "*Hilaskesthai*", 67ff says that Dodd oversimplified the issues and granted to the LXX translators too great a consciousness in supposedly radically modifying the use of (*ex*)*ilaskomai*.

⁹ Schlatter, *Romans*, 98; Moule, (H.C.G) *Romans*, 93; Olshausan, *Romans*, 152 and Black, *Romans*, 69.

¹⁰ Buschel, *TDNT* 3:317. This argument had been anticipated by Manson, "*ilasterion*", 4ff, who claimed that the contrast was intended, but that the ritual was still the same, the Day of Atonement. See also Monte, "Place", 61; Schoeps, *Theology*, 132 and Stuhlmacher, *Reconciliation*, 60 & 100 who see the reference to the *hilasterion* being to the mercy seat, the place where sin was covered. Kirby, *Ephesians* 62 says that there is no direct reference to the Day of Atonement in the NT.

¹¹ Barrett, *Romans*, 1:217-8; Gerhardson, "Sacrificial", 34-36; Morris, *Atonement*, 168 and "Meaning", 42; Wright, *Jesus*, 607. Also see Downing, *Martyrdom*, 242. Contra Page "Servant", p492, who says "it is completely credible that someone possessed with a messianic consciousness would interpret his career, and especially his death, in the light of the songs".

death would be an *'hilasterion* (propitiation) for the nation's sins. The Jewish martyrs found in Isaac's willingness to die the inspiration they needed to be faithful to death. Isaac¹² became the prototype of all martyrs and his willingness to die links into an extensive Rabbinical theological structure of atonement. This rabbinic teaching has been widely utilized in interpreting Paul despite the fact that there is an ongoing controversy as to the dating of the various rabbinic texts¹³ on which the structure is based. However there are scholars who argue that because there is no certainty that the rabbinic material existed before Paul the material should not be used to interpret Paul's thinking.

Now while there is debate over the admissibility of rabbinic evidence concerning an early rabbinic martyrdom theology, most consider that the Maccabean material can stand in its own right, as they hold it to be pre-Pauline. But even this is far from certain. The dating of 4 Maccabees is put by some as late as 70AD.¹⁴ With this uncertainty it is wise not to place too much weight on its statements. But even if it is accepted as early enough to be contemporary with Paul, we do not know if the traditions of the Maccabean martyrs were known in Rome.¹⁵ This leaves some uncertainty as to whether Paul could expect his readers to follow his allusions, if such they were, to the Maccabeans. Despite widespread support by scholars for the Maccabean tradition we have motifs in this passage, which cannot be contained in martyrdom theology. However these terms, righteousness,¹⁶

¹² See 4 Macc 6:29. So Williams, *Death*, 230f; Downing, "Jesus" 292; Dahl, "Atonement" 156; Schoeps, "Sacrifice" 390; Hill *Words* 41-45; Casey "Chronology" 1271; Henton, "Tradition" 122-3 and Ziesler, *Christianity* 94. Procksch, *TDNT* 4 :328-335 says that: "there is a clear distinction between atonement and redemption. They both come together in the martyrdom theology of 4 Macc 6:29." But Procksch failed to explain how this amalgamation happened or to give evidence for its achievement. A definite date for 4 Maccabees cannot be given but it probably originated in Alexandria, so Hill, *Words* 46. Despite this Greek origin Hill still thinks that Paul could have been influenced by it. This is because Hill accepts Bacon's suggestion that the "Memorial Day Address" was composed for and repeated on the occasion of the Feast of Dedication. Hill argues that the work would have been performed in synagogues throughout the Roman world. Such a claim is without any evidence whatever as Hill himself acknowledges. Some suggest that the paradigm goes back further than Maccabees to Isaac himself, the first "martyr" the inspiration of the Maccabean martyrs. However, Buchsel, *TDNT* 3: 322 says that the *Aqedah* is not possible in Rom 3:25 and Carey, "Lamb", 103 says that it is a mystery why Isaac is not used in the NT. Dunn, "Understanding", 132 points out that in Maccabees the sacrifice is not presented to God, as the OT sacrifices were. This, says Dunn, indicates that Rom 3:21 refers to the cultic sacrifice, so also Wright, *Messiah*, 37 and Travis, "Beare", *passim*. Hamerton-Kelly, "Isaac", 98ff has sought to turn the argument around saying that earlier expositors have been wrong to think that the passage referred to the sacrifice being presented to God who was to be propitiated. He claimed that the passage is to do with the concept of the sacrificial curse. In his reasoning, it is man who is being propitiated.

¹³ cf. Chilton, "Issac", 78ff who rejects the Rabbinic material as admissible evidence for interpreting the NT on the grounds that the date of the material cannot be proved to be pre-apostolic. However, Hengel, *Atonement*, 63; Miller, "Targum", 29 ff. and York, "Dating", 49-62 regard the Palestinian Targums earlier than the first century. McNamar, "Review", 67ff claims that the Targums represent substantially the liturgical paraphrase of the NT period and that all who attended the synagogue would identify the language. Carey, "Lamb", 97ff does not doubt the antiquity of the material but says that the NT writers did not use it because it had so many complicated Rabbinical interpretations. These differences between the death of Christ and the *Aqedah* were more than the similarities and therefore would confuse the message they were seeking to give concerning the meaning of the cross. Hanson, *Technique*, 82f says that if there is a type of Christ to be found in the *Aqedah*, then it is to be found in the ram, for it was that which actually died.

¹⁴ so Pate, *Reverse*, 52.

¹⁵ If there was a strong Jewish presence in the Roman church, then it would be reasonable to suppose a knowledge of the Maccabean martyrdom theology. Even so, Paul has not appealed to Israel's martyrs, but Israel's scriptures (v21), so it is to these we should be looking for Paul's paradigm.

¹⁶ For New Exodus origins see Isa. 41:10; 42:6-21; 45:13 & 24; 51:5-8; 59:17. Monte, "Place", 52 says that: "to enter into a discussion on Rom. 3:21-26 is much like entering a minefield around which a full scale exegetical battle is raging." Nevertheless there is a pathway marked out by the vocabulary which Paul uses. Robinson, *Wrestling*, 57 says that righteousness can only be understood in the context of the prophecy of Isaiah. Hill, *Words*, 92 says that: "the word 'righteousness' in Deutero-Isaiah's handling of it has become fundamentally soteriological, close in meaning to 'salvation'...the manifestation of Yahweh's righteousness is his saving activity, Yahweh's righteousness is illustrated and modified". Wright, *Messiah*, 132 also saw righteousness coming from 2nd Isaiah and said that it was not legal fiction but: "synonymous with salvation wrought by God...Romans is a single, coherent argument. Justification and God's righteousness

justification¹⁷ and redemption,¹⁸ all terms found in vs. 21-25, are naturally at home in the New Exodus model. Added to this is Paul's repeated claim that this redemption is borne witness to by the law and the prophets (v 21). It would therefore be more natural to look to those writings to find Paul's model.¹⁹

Excluding possibilities.

There is in fact only one cultic event in which redemption is celebrated, and that is Passover. Passover/Exodus controlled the self-consciousness of Israel's existence. She could not define herself apart from the fact that Yahweh had redeemed her. Indeed, it was the one festival which all Jews and God-fearers²⁰ had detailed knowledge of. Now if Passover/Exodus is at the heart of Israel's self-identification and understanding, and the writers of the NT documents were virtually all Jews, then it should not be surprising to find that this same imagery is at the heart of the eschatological salvation that Israel had been looking forward to. Consideration of this setting has probably been blocked due to the description of the offering as an *'hilasterion*. For most interpreters, there is no propitiatory value in the Passover.²¹ While an atoning content could be supported by appealing to a range of authorities, all that such an exercise would achieve is to illustrate the confusion which exists over the nature of the Passover.²² Even those²³ who see propitiatory value in the Paschal offering, either originally in the Mosaic period or in the NT period, do not see a connection between the Passover and the passage we are considering. There is however evidence which has not been considered hitherto and which is vitally important to our study.

are not only forensic and eschatological, but also- and crucially- covenantal and Christological." Reumann, "Righteousness", 444 says that the righteousness of God is the turning point of Pauline and indeed, of New Testament theology. Reumann op cit. 448 commenting on the significance of the covenantal setting for righteousness says that: "Its immediate pertinence here is to open up horizons possibly far beyond the usual ones seen by commentators in Romans 3, and to reveal what may be involved in the Pauline reinterpretation of the quoted formula". Reumann goes on to say, "God's righteousness, revealed in Christ, far from being limited to the individual in his existence, has world-implications arising out of its apocalyptic horizons." For Righteousness in Isaiah, see Dunn, *Romans*, 1: 165,166 & 327-31.

¹⁷ For New Exodus origins see Isa. 50:8; 53:11.

¹⁸ While 'redemption' is not specifically mentioned it is continually stressed that Yahweh is Israel's redeemer, so Isa. 41:14; 43:1,14; 44:22, 23; 47:4; 54:8; 59:20; 62:12; 63:19, 16.

¹⁹ So Dunn "Understanding" 132 who says: whether or not Paul was consciously alluding to martyr theology he, it is not likely that the primary reference of his metaphor was Christ's death as a cultic sacrifice". Contra Caird, *Theology*, 152 who has avoided defending a specific setting by saying: "Paul piles up metaphors drawn from diverse spheres of human experience-law court, slave-market, temple- without attempting to indicate how they related."

²⁰ For God-fearers in the synagogue see Gager, "Synagogues", 91-99.

²¹ For those who see no propitiation in Passover see chapter 10.

²² Some have not been able to accept that the Passover is a sacrifice at all. Gray, *Sacrifice*, 352 sees this to be as a result of Protestant scholars' concern that the sacrificial element might be introduced into the Eucharist which they see to have replaced the Passover meal. Driver, *Understanding*, 134 claims that there is no firm evidence to show that the Passover lamb's death was atoning in the sense of vicarious substitution. Segal, *Passover* 106 says there is no expiatory significance because such sacrifices were burned, so also Carey, "Lamb", 119 and Daly, *Sacrifice*, 121.

²³ Jeremias, *Eucharistic*, 19 says that the last supper shows that Jesus saw his death as a vicarious sacrifice. He also says p225 that the original Passover was regarded as an atonement. Moulton, "Passover", 684ff says, "The Passover sacrifice is offered in place of the firstborn of men, and is thus essentially a sacrifice of atonement", so also Brownlee, "Motifs", 21. Morris, "Passover" 66 says that in the NT times all sacrifices were regarded as having expiatory power. However he cites no evidence for this claim. Dodd, *Interpretation*, 233 accepted that there might have been an expiatory significance in the original Passover but not in NT times. Others see the significance of the Passover sacrifice being apostrophic, so Vriezen, *Outline*, 37 & 259 who also identified it as expiatory. Snaith, "Sprinkling", 24 claimed that because the blood of the Passover lamb was thrown at the base of the altar (in NT times), it proved that it was neutral blood, it therefore had no vicarious significance. Those who see propitiatory significance include Gray, *Sacrifice*, 366; Steinmueller, "Sacrificial", 567; Schmidt, *Faith* 119-120; Kaufmann, *Religion*, 106-7; Gray, *Sacrifice*, 363; Eichrodt, *Theology*, 2:129. O'Neill, *Romans*, 75 says that *hilasterion* is based on child sacrifice. See Mosca, *Sacrifice*, 1ff who reviews child sacrifice in Israel and the Roman cults and Levenson, *Death, passim*.

Ezekiel and the new covenant.

If Paul is following the theme of the New Exodus, his main source material would have been the law and the prophets (so stated by Paul himself 1:3; 3:21) i.e., the Exodus and the prophetic predictions of a Second Exodus following the exile. A crucial contributor to this expectation was Ezekiel, who, like Isaiah, saw the importance of the raising up of a Davidic prince.²⁴ Ezekiel saw the prince's main function was to build the eschatological temple and to provide sacrifices for the sins of the covenant community. In Ezek. 45:25 the prophet tells how the prince will offer an abundance of sacrifices for the sins of the people. What is significant is that these offerings are not made on the Day of Atonement. Indeed, Ezekiel never mentions the Day of Atonement in the context of the eschatological temple. What he does say is that these sacrifices will be offered during the Passover.²⁵ This is of great importance. If Ezekiel, a priest who had preached against the sins of tampering with the laws of Yahweh,²⁶ seeks to change the sacrificial system so dramatically, he can be doing only one thing. He is emphasising the importance of the Passover for dealing with the sins of the people. To make this point, he does the unthinkable. He alters the law of Moses. Thus, the eschatological Passover is shown will propitiate for the sins of the people. It is also significant that Ezekiel has the Davidic prince making these Paschal atoning sacrifices. This imagery is similar to what the Gospels present, i.e. the dying King making the Paschal sacrifice. This is not limited to the Gospel perspective, for Paul himself has introduced Jesus as the Davidic descendant in 1:3, and, by the use of the cultic expression²⁷ 'the Spirit of holiness' he has indicated that it is he, the Son of David, the Son of God, who achieves his people's redemption through his own death.²⁸ As we have seen there is widespread consensus that Paul draws extensively on the prophecy of Ezekiel. It has been recognised as the source of his ideas of the church being the temple of the living God,²⁹ brought about by the death of the Messiah. To see the Davidic leader making sacrifices for the temple and the people would naturally lead Paul's thinking in the inevitable direction of the cross. It was all part of the testimony of the law and the prophets. Lyonnet has analyzed the influence of Ezekiel on Romans,³⁰ however, he did not extend the comparison to the cultic imagery. Swetnam has compensated for this.³¹ In fact, as we have already noted, the reference to the *'hilasterion* is claimed by

²⁴ Ezek. 34:23-4; 37:24-5 etc. cf. also the mention of the Davidic prince in 44:3; 45:7,22; 46:2,4,8 etc. who is to officiate over the Messianic eschatological sacrifice. For the eschatological nature of Passover in Qumran see Brownlee, "Messianic" 21. Justification for linking Ezekiel with the Eschatological Passover is given by Schneider, "Corporate" 159 who points out that Ezek. 37 is read during the Passover by Rabbis to refer to the final resurrection in the Messianic age. Also Lo "vesta Address" points out that the one clearly cultic passage in Acts (20:28) is based on Ezek. 33:7f, Ch. 34 addresses the shepherds of Israel. Schneider, "Corporate", 156 sees Ezek 37 to be used in 1 Cor. 15 which can also be shown to be Paschal (see chapters 6 and 7). Kraus cited by Henton, "Tradition", 127 sees the background of Rom. 3:21 to be Lev. 16 and Ezek. 43 as the reference to the dedication of the temple. See also Davies, "People", 16 for Paul's use of Ezek. 37.

²⁵ For a fuller discussion of scholarly opinion see chapter 10.

²⁶ Preaching against syncretism is found in Ezk. 20:13-20; 23:30, 37-38.

²⁷ So Käsemann, *Romans, Passim*.

²⁸ Rom. 1:3-4.

²⁹ Fee, *Corinthians*, 147; Fiorenza, "Cultic", 161; Swetnam, "Revelation", 229-30 and McKelvey, *Temple*, 96/104.

³⁰ Lyonnet, *Romains*, 231ff.

³¹ Swetnam, "Sacrifice", 228 who cites Lyonnet, *Vocabulario*, 106-117.

some³² to come from the use of the same word to describe the covering of the ark of the covenant in the eschatological temple of Ezekiel's vision. Even so, this is not as significant as the sacrificial model that clearly links the Day of Atonement with Passover as described above. The temple imagery of Ezekiel certainly had a profound influence on the Qumran community.³³ Interestingly, there is no mention of the Day of Atonement in either the Dead Sea Scrolls³⁴ or in Jubilees.³⁵

Wider recognition.

This linking of the feasts has been previously noted, but the implications for understanding Paul's thinking concerning the sacrificial nature of the death of Jesus has not been appreciated. For example, Dunn³⁶ has noted the introduction of atonement in Ezek. 45 as grounds for seeing an atoning significance in the Passover in NT thought. Howard³⁷ also acknowledges that sin offerings mentioned during the Passover of Ezek. 45:25 lies behind the description of Jesus being the lamb of God spoken by John the Baptist in John 1:29. Howard points out that the midrash on Exodus 12 describes the Passover as an atoning sacrifice. He claims that the link between the two feasts was so widely understood in Second Temple Judaism that the Baptists hearers would have had no difficulty in understanding the statement that the lamb of God takes away the sin of the world. If these scholars are right in making this link between atonement and Passover on the basis of Ezekiel 45, then not only are the readers of the Gospel expected to understand this fifth century BC association but so were the readers of Paul's letters. This means that there must have been a widespread appreciation of the significance Ezekiel statement as a (the?) key to understand the achievements of the death of Christ.

It is not merely the fact that Ezekiel has linked atonement and redemption that is significant, it is the use of the preposition '*uper* (in place of) in the LXX. This is not only repeatedly used in the sacrificial imagery of the Hebrews letter, but throughout the Pauline cultic passages.³⁸ It became the standard expression in the church to describe the substitutionary death of Christ. Such clear dependence, either directly or indirectly, underlines the importance of Ezekiel's modification of cultic arrangements and the use that the early church made of it.

Ezekiel's wider influence.

Ezekiel's influence on the cultic imagery of the wider NT documents has been detected by a number of scholars. The tabernacle imagery used in the letter to the Hebrews is not Platonic, as had earlier been thought, but is based on the

³² Swetnam, "Sacrifice", 228; Krimmer, *Römer*, 112.

³³ Callaway, *History*, 106, 115, 148.

³⁴ Davies, *Damascus*, 130. This is in spite of a considerable interest in Sabbatical legislation.

³⁵ Vanderkan, "Jubilees" 221-236 who explains the absence because the feast did not fit in with the Exodus.

³⁶ Dunn, "Understanding", 132-3. Noted also by Morris, "Meaning", 92..

³⁷ Howard, "Eucharist", 331-2.

³⁸ See Riesenfeld, *TWNT* 8:512. Also Moule, *Idiom*, 64; Driver, "Understanding", 135 and Davies, "Place" 7-8. Cousar, "Paul" 40 who says that '*uper* is the key to Paul's soteriology.

eschatological temple described by Ezekiel.³⁹ If this is so, then it explains how the writer could speak of Christ having obtained eternal redemption⁴⁰ which is no part of Day of Atonement language, but it is of Passover. The writer clearly used imagery that is from the Day of Atonement and merged it with the language of Passover, i.e. redemption. In other words, Hebrews follows the pattern of Ezekiel, pulling the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement into the orbit of Passover celebration. This suggests that this merger was basic to the early church's cultic thinking, for the material is handled, both in Paul and in Hebrews, in such a way that the convergence is taken as understood⁴¹ (Ezekiel's wider influence on the writer to the Hebrews has already been noted).⁴² Indeed a comparison of the themes in both Rom. 3:24-26 and Heb. 9:1-10 has shown them to be the same.⁴³ As noted earlier, some have linked 'hilasterion (propitiation) in 3:25 with its use in Heb. 9:4 to describe the altar where propitiation was made and its use in the LXX of Ezek. 43:14,17 and 20. If they are correct, then it further extends the link with Ezekiel in Romans.

The widespread influence of Ezekiel in the early church is further supported by those scholars who see his prophecy in the description of the eschatological temple in Revelation.⁴⁴ Interestingly, the cultic language of Revelation concentrates exclusively on the Passover.⁴⁵

Ezekiel and Paul's Adamic Christology.

A further link between Ezekiel and Romans is made by those who see Jesus' Adamic Christology to be based on Ezekiel's Son of Man.⁴⁶ Some see Paul's last Adam imagery to be developed from this theme. As Rom. 3:21f is describing a facet of the significance of the death of the last Adam,⁴⁷ then if the Ezekiel/Adamic relationship is valid, it provides further evidence of Ezekiel's shadow over Rom. 3:21ff.⁴⁸ This suggests that the theme continues from the first chapters where the fall of man is very much in view.⁴⁹ Thus, the thrust of the argument is that Christ's death is the act of redemption that rescues man from

³⁹ Ezek. 40ff.

⁴⁰ Heb. 9:12.

⁴¹ Justification for using Hebrews, and as we have seen in chapter 6 using Revelation to interpret Paul, is that these two documents can be shown to be saturated with the New Exodus motif see Oudersleys, "Hebrews". Thus, as argued earlier, the early church and its teachers were drawing on a common hermeneutic.

⁴² McKay, *Argument*, 325ff.

⁴³ Moo, *Romans*, 246. However Moo failed to see the absorption of Day of Atonement into the Passover

⁴⁴ Ladd, *Revelation*, 151, 286-7; Sweet, *Revelation*, 266 & 305; Ford, *Revelation* 324; Wall, *Revelation*, 142 and McKelvey, *Temple*, 172.

⁴⁵ Shepherd, "Paschal", 1ff. See also Fiorenza, "Redemption", 228; Most, *Theology*, 18 and Daly, *Sacrifice*, 300.

⁴⁶ So Carson, "Ambiguities", 97ff. See also Richardson, *Introduction*, 145-6; Schweizer, "Son", 127; Bowker, "Son" 23; Black, "Biblical" 11; Emerton, "Origin, 231; Wifall, "Man", 337-8; Maddox, "Function", 192-3 & "Synoptic", 47, 56 and McKay, "Ezekiel", 4ff.

⁴⁷ See Rom. 5:12ff. Lamberecht, "Use", 516 thinks that the Adam/Christ comparison originated from Paul himself.

⁴⁸ Bultmann, "Hermeneutischer", *passim*, saw the passage to be reflecting Adamic theology, so also Stuhlmacher, "Reconciliation", 104. This suggests that the theme continues from the earlier chapters where the fall of man was very much in view. Thus, the thrust of the argument is that Christ's death is the act of redemption that rescues man from bondage and spiritual exile that the fall has brought about. This will be upheld by the argument in Chap 5 and the way Paul continues to thread Adamic imagery into the plight Man is in and the role that Christ plays as the last Adam. Casey, "Earliest", 273 says that Rom. 3:25 is a midrashic symbolism in the Pauline manner but is more allusive and less developed than in other instances, see also Skehan, "Cultic", 163.

⁴⁹ see Hooker, "Adam", *passim*.

bondage and spiritual exile that the fall has brought the children of Adam into.⁵⁰ This will be upheld by the argument in Chapter 5 and in the way Paul continues to thread Adamic imagery into the plight of man and the role that Christ plays as the last Adam. It is no accident that Neyrey⁵¹ has identified Lukan Christology as being Adamic based; it is a reflection of the influence of his traveling companion. It has been argued that while Son of Man imagery was applicable to the Jewish community, to have used it among the Gentiles it would have appeared nationalistic and exclusively Jewish through the imagery contained in Dan. 7:22. Instead of having Slavic significance for the Gentiles it would have suggested the very opposite. In contrast, the last Adam imagery brought the theological content of the Son of Man into a figure that embraced both Jews and Gentiles. Luke's insistence in using the actual Son of Man sayings, despite that fact that he wrote for the Gentiles, indicates his concern to be faithful to the original sayings of Jesus.

Ezekiel's influence in chapter 5 is seen by some to be in the statement *Peace with God* in 5:1. It is linked with Ezek. 37:26, which says, 'I will make with them a covenant of peace'.⁵² It has also been demonstrated that Ezekiel 37 is present in 1 Cor. 15.⁵³ The argument of Romans 8 relating to the resurrection is a summary of that found in 1 Cor. 15. Indeed, Ezekiel 37, the resurrection of the people of God could well be an important influence on Paul's thinking in Rom. 6:1-4 where he speaks of the resurrection of the church with Christ. It is, of course, well known that Ezek. 37 was read at the Passover celebration. This would add to the naturalness of hearing the Ezekiel promises of atonement in the explanation that Paul gives.

Ezekiel and the 'conversion' of Paul.

Ezekiel's influence on Paul has been detected in Luke's description of his conversion.⁵⁴ It can hardly be thought that Luke would have had a different view on this event from that of Paul himself. Indeed, if Kim⁵⁵ and others are right that the seed of the apostles gospel message is within the very call of Paul, then it could be argued that Ezekiel's influence is even more pervasive than has ever been recognised.

In the light of the above links between the prophet and the letter it would seem reasonable to suggest that Ezekiel has had significant influence on the argument of Romans which Paul's readers are expected to recognise. If this is so, then it is reasonable to suggest that the significance of the Paschal offering of the Davidic king in Ezek. 45:25 would have been appreciated.

The testimony of Jesus.

There is, however, another possible source for interpreting the death of Christ as

⁵⁰ Wright, "Romans", 46.

⁵¹ Neyrey, *Passion*, 167.

⁵² So Dunn, *Romans*, 1:429.

⁵³ so Schneider, "Corporate", 156-9 see also Davies, "People", 16.

⁵⁴ Campbell, "Contribution", 238.

⁵⁵ Kim, *Origin, passim*.

an atonement in the Passover setting and this comes from Jesus himself. It is clear that Jesus regarded his death as an atonement,⁵⁶ and equally clear that the timing of his death was deeply significant both for himself and for the early church.⁵⁷ The Paschal tradition and its reinterpretation did not need to wait for the emergence of a thinker of the caliber of Paul; it was evidently in place well before his conversion, as evidenced in the obvious use he makes of traditional material.⁵⁸ Thus there is no division between Jesus' understanding of the purpose of his death and the explanation found in Paul's letters.⁵⁹

Passover and priesthood.

There is a further link between Passover and *hilasterion*. It is found in the book of Numbers and is a consequence of the Passover. I will leave this passage until it is discussed in chapter 10, for it requires that certain theological concepts are established before we can appreciate the significance of the material. I believe that once the significance of the role of the Levite has been considered it will be seen that there were clear propitiatory elements within the Passover.⁶⁰

Links between atonement and the Passover are further upheld by the reference to the display of God's righteousness (vs. 21-22) and the references to 'justification' (vs. 24,26). These are both motifs of the New Exodus material with its inseparable link with the Passover. Isaiah said that Yahweh's act of redemption would not only justify the Jews as his people, but will justify Yahweh's own character as the covenant-keeping God to the nations of the earth. His righteousness refers to His right acts in being faithful to His promises.

Passover and divine salvation.

As Yahweh had promised to deliver Israel, and asserted that His salvation would come through His servant David, so now the promises have been realised. Now the righteousness of God is universally displayed and his covenant faithfulness is blazed abroad through his redemptive act in the giving up of his own Son to death. Paul never refers to Christ as the *lamb* of God. 1 Cor. 5:8 merely says 'Christ our Passover', not 'Passover lamb' as is so often translated. In Paul, Jesus is always the Son of God. This explains the thorny problem of the designation of Christ as 'the firstborn of all creation' in Colossians 1:15. There, again in the context of the Second Exodus motif (1:12-14), Paul describes Christ not in hierarchical nor in ontological, but soteriological terms.⁶¹ Such reasoning demands an examination of the significance of the status and role of the firstborn in Hebrew

⁵⁶ Lk. 11:20; 1 Cor. 5:8. For the eschatological nature of Passover see Brownlee, "Motifs", 211. Some Jews saw Satan being bound on the night of the Passover, cf. Jubilees 48:15 and T.B.Pes 1096. Jesus' celebration of the Passover suggests that he thought of the sacrifice as an expiation or propitiation, contra Smith *Ideas*, 111. Dunn "Understanding", 132 says that Jesus' understanding comes from Ezek 45. However Dunn does not explore the significance of this important observation.

⁵⁷ Dibelius, *Jesus*, 85 contra Whallon, "Pascha", 127.

⁵⁸ See Ellis, "Traditions", 496; Carr, "Rulers", 26 and Reumann, "Righteousness", 432 as examples of scholars who recognise that Paul was dependent on traditional material.

⁵⁹ Contra Wright, *Victory, passim* and Brondos, "Cross", 18.

⁶⁰ Meyer "Formula" 205 says "A pre-Pauline presentation of Golgotha as the supreme Day of Atonement is absorbed into the Pauline thematic scheme that dominates Romans".

⁶¹ See chapter 11.

thought and cult.⁶²

Passover and the passing over of sin.

The Passover model is further supported by the reference to the *paresin* (the passing over) of sins previously committed (Rom. 3:25). Here there is a clear echo of the passing over⁶³ of the angel of death on the night of the Passover.⁶⁴ God no longer passes over, but has demanded the death of the firstborn son. There is not only an allusion to the Passover in the use of *paresin*, but to the way it is used by Isaiah, who, in a Second Exodus context, speaks of Yahweh keeping back (*paresin*) his anger.⁶⁵

Passover and the daubing of blood.

Another Paschal theme can be detected in the passage in the use of *proetheto* (v25) which speaks of *the public display*.⁶⁶ This is a statement that has caused many scholars to reject the Day of Atonement as the cultic setting of the language. The presentation of the blood by the high priest on the Day of Atonement was in the solitude of the holy of holies. Some have sought to say that the presentation was before the angels.⁶⁷ This, however, is to introduce something foreign to the natural reading of the text, for there is no hint of angelic witness or ministry in the letter.

There is only one sacrifice in the entire OT that was given public display. It was the Paschal victim whose blood was daubed on the lintel and door posts of the homes it protected. It was the blood of this sacrifice that was the foundation of the act of the redemption of the Israelites. It is, I would suggest, the only sacrifice that fits this description given by Paul.⁶⁸

Passover and form criticism.

Further support can be given to the claim that 3:24-25 is based on the Passover by those scholars⁶⁹ who have attempted to identify the form of the text. It is generally

⁶² For further discussion see chapter 10. This ties into the recent Christological studies which have appreciated the functional dimension of the messianic descriptions.

⁶³ Contra Glasson, "Passover", 79-83.

⁶⁴ Vaughan, *Romans*, 75 says that the idea of *paresis* is not unlike that of passing by transgression in Mic. 7.18 where it is made equivalent to pardoning iniquity. Talbert, "Fragment", 288 says that 'passing over' does not fit the context. His comment is evidence of his failure to appreciate the Paschal/ New Exodus motif that dominates the argument.

⁶⁵ Isa. 64:10-12; 63:15 (LXX); 42:14 (LXX) refers to Yahweh holding back, so also Williams, *Death* 26 & 29 who also says (p 24) that *parienai* means leave unpunished. Reumann, "Righteousness", 436 points out that *paresin* is unique in the NT and therefore its meaning can only be decided on by the context. *Paresin* reflects Passover for it is the great act in which God passed over the sins of the people. Talbert, "Fragment", 288 says that the term does not fit the context.

⁶⁶ Büchsel, *TWNT* 3: 320 says that *proetheto*, refers to the apostolic preaching in which Jesus was set before the eyes of man. O'Neill, *Romans*, 76 agrees with this and adds that it refers also to the cross and Eucharist. Stibbs, "Meaning", 21 says it refers to the public nature of Jesus' death. Black, *Romans*, 68 says that *proetheto* is meant to convey either 'ordained' or 'display'. Shedd, *Romans*, 79 says that the middle voice requires that it is translated as 'for God set forth Himself'. Hammerton-Kelly, "Violence", 111, says that *proetheto* refers to the profane display of violent death in which man's anger is propitiated. The middle is common in the sense to display publicly, so Büchsel, *TWNT* 3: 321 note 18 and Taylor, *Romans*, 32. Lenski, *Romans*, 258 says that "*protheto* is undoubtedly a cultic term." Lagrange, *Romains*, 75 comes close to the Paschal significance of *protheto* when he says "Dieu a résolu donc être de Jésus, aux yeux de tous, un", de l'exposer en cette qualité", God has resolved to make Jesus in front of every one an *hilasterion*, and to set him forth as such.

⁶⁷ So Philippi, *Romans*, 141.

⁶⁸ For the argument that Rom. 3:21ff should be linked to the *Aqedah* see Dahl, "Atonement", 155. This identification is discussed further in chapter 10.

⁶⁹ Michel, *Römer*, 106 sees vs. 24-26 to be from either a baptismal or a eucharistic liturgy, as does Käsemann, "Verstandnis", 96-100. Schoeps, *Theology*, 133 sees 3:21 - 4-25 as a parallel with Col. 1:13f which is widely seen as bearing

agreed that the passage reflects a liturgical formula used either as a baptismal or as a Eucharist confession.⁷⁰ Whichever it may be, both themes are strongly linked with the death of Christ and its setting in the context of the Passover.⁷¹

We will deal with the Rabbinic contribution to the question of atonement and Passover later. Here we note that Ex.R xv.12 says: "I mercifully take pity on you by means of the Paschal Blood and the blood of circumcision, and I propitiate your souls."⁷²

Cosmic Salvation.

The claim⁷³ that the passage has an Adamic content also fits the picture that is emerging. The redemption that Paul describes is that which reverses the catastrophic effects of the fall. This is evidence of the unity of the sacrificial language throughout Romans which presupposed Adam's role in bringing man into sin is thrashed out in chapter 5. It is the death of Jesus who is the last Adam that reverses this tragedy. It is a redemption that brings man out of the spiritual bondage in which he has been incarcerated since he broke covenant with Yahweh. It is a salvation that comes through faith⁷⁴ in Christ Jesus. Paul concludes the section by insisting that the law is fulfilled in the redemption that is in Christ. The law and the prophets, i.e. the whole of scripture, had looked forward to this eschatological event of redemption.⁷⁵ It is not a salvation that is for Jews alone, but for all who will have faith in the character and saving work of God. It is available to all who are willing to submit to God's Spirit and have their hearts circumcised so that they can share in the Lord's Pasach.

If we go beyond the passage immediately under consideration, we find further evidence as to the primacy of Paschal language and imagery influencing the understanding of Paul. Some studies⁷⁶ have identified the Passover as formative in the composition of the imagery used in Rom 5:1 ff, while others⁷⁷ have identified

a New Exodus motif. Black, *Romans*, 68 says that 3:25 reflects Maccabean martyrdom while 3:24 reflects Egyptian and Babylonian deliverance (p67). Käsemann, *Romans*, 37 says Paul is quoting from a hymn and links 3:26a with Col. 1:14. Johnson, *Romans*, 1:69-70 sees redemption in 3:24 to "arise from both the Old Testament concept of the redemption of the nation of Israel from slavery in Egypt (Ex 6:6; 15:13) and from the Passover lamb's sacrifice." Jeremias, *Servant*, 48 note 184 gives details of the Passover Haggadah. For unwritten teaching traditions on the significance of the death of Jesus which the apostles assumed the church knew see Stanley, "Under", 506. However Barrett, "Lamb", 217 is adamant that Rom. 3:25 is not Paschal. Stuhlmacher, *Reconciliation*, 96 says of the passage, "What is at issue in Rom. 3:24-26 is not only Christological foundation of the Pauline gospel about justification but also the relationship of the apostle to the Christological tradition he has received and with that also the question of the place of Paul in the history of early Christian proclamation." Stuhlmacher is correct to note (p86) that Paul never criticised his sources, he only used them to expound his theology. This shows that he is at one with the proclamation of his predecessors. Indeed, in the light of the New Exodus motif, it can be clearly seen that Paul is at one with the whole NT presentation of the significance of the redemptive purpose of the death of Christ. See also Reumann, "Righteousness", 442

⁷⁰ Higgins, "Origins", *passim* challenges the Paschal significance of the Eucharist but accepts that there are echoes present.

⁷¹ For further evidence of the Paschal/New Exodus basis for Romans see my forthcoming volume *Paul and the Spirit* and my forthcoming commentary on Romans.

⁷² Cited by Grigsby, "Cross", 66 note 22. See further Str.-B. (IV, 40), and Dalman, *Jesus*, 167.

⁷³ Bultmann, "Hermeneutischer", *passim* and Stuhlmacher, "Reconciliation", 104. Pustet, *Römer*. 88 says of Rom 3:25-26a 'perhaps entire sin history of (Jewish-Christian) community is implied.'

⁷⁴ Or, 'the faithfulness of Jesus Christ', so Campbell, "Romans", 265-85; Williams, "Righteousness", 274; Longenecker, "Obedience", 146 and Schlatter, *Romans*, 94, etc.

⁷⁵ It is no exaggeration to say that the central theme of the Law and the Prophets spoke of exile and redemption, the very themes around which the NT writers build their understanding of Christ and his work.

⁷⁶ Whiteley, "Atonement", 250.

⁷⁷ Davies, *Rabbinic*, 225. See especially the two articles by Warnack, "Heilsgeschehen", 259ff and "Römerbriefs", 274ff, in which Warnack argues that Rom. 6 is based on the Jewish cultus system, the Passover being specifically identified as

the same imagery behind the dying and rising with Christ in Rom 6:1ff.⁷⁸ The following comments on the passage of 3:21-26 shows how naturally the argument flows once the Passover setting has been identified.

3.20 Therefore no-one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. Being righteous before God is not just a matter of being declared innocent, which it certainly includes, as is so often understood. Righteousness is one of the key OT concepts to do with Israel's return from exile. Isaiah said that Israel was declared righteous as a result of her return. The prophet's view of righteousness was not just forgiveness; it also meant that Israel was restored to her inheritance. The prophets saw that the giving of the law was the climax of this process. When Israel received the law at Sinai she was being given the great blessing of her inheritance, which would govern her life in the Promised Land. In reality, rather than the law blessing her, it did the very opposite. It showed Israel how awful her sin was and how far she was from God. Instead of being the guide for her life in the Promised Land, it became the evidence that she was still in bondage, in the kingdom of darkness. Israel, like all other people, was under Sin and the judgment of the law.

3.21 But now a righteousness from god, apart from the law, has been made known to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness that has been secured through the death of Jesus is apart from the law. It cannot slight the law as though it did not matter, because God could never accept any arrangement that was unjust. This righteousness, while apart from the law (in that it is not to do with how the law would normally operate, i.e. by the punishment of the guilty and the requirement of circumcision etc), has to satisfy the justice that the law demands. This is not a scheme that has been devised as a last attempt to solve the problem of sin; it is one 'to which the Law and the Prophets testify'.⁷⁹

3.22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference. This is a different righteousness from that known by the restored exiles. In their case righteousness was based on their own sufferings. They had served the sentence that the law had demanded. The righteousness of God had been displayed in not sparing them suffering and in being faithful to the covenant by delivering them from exile. Yahweh's righteousness that had been demonstrated in keeping to the threatened curses of the covenant when He gave Jerusalem into the hands of the Babylonians when they sacked the city and took its citizens as prisoners. However it was an exile

the source. Nixon, *Exodus* 24 says that Rom. 6:1f reflects the Exodus event so also Knox, *Gentiles*, 91; Cullmann, *Baptism*, 45, 53, 67; Marsh, *Fullness*, 137f. Monte, "Place", 88 says that the expression 'the glory of God' is a circumlocution for God's power or possibly *pneuma*. Both concepts are clearly part of the Exodus event when the power of God was displayed and He accomplished his redemptive purpose by the work of His Spirit. Sahlin, "Exodus", 87 says: "What event, however is to be regarded as the starting point of this new Exodus, and the counterpart of the actual departure from Egypt? The answer can only be the death and resurrection of Christ. This is obvious from Rom. 6:3." Leaney, "1 Peter", 244 sees Rom. 6:1-11 to be based on a Paschal liturgy. and says: "In the New Testament, as we have seen, the new era is brought about by the Exodus of the Lord in Jerusalem (Luke 18:31) inaugurated by a Passover; consummated by Pentecost when those days have 'fully come' (Acts 2) and entered by means of the covenant of baptism."

⁷⁸ . Theiss "Passover" *passim* says "Romans 6:1-23 can be seen as an interpretation of participation in the death of the Lamb in the new Passover inaugurated at Christ's death"

⁷⁹ Not limited to Habb. 2:4 as suggested by Kruse, *Justification*, 190.

that was temporary and even their return was not the final salvation. The great act of salvation, which the prophets had foretold, was to deal with sin in a totally different way. Sin had to be dealt with once and for all. There was to be no more offering for sin. Indeed, this restoration was not to be to an earthly location. It was a restoration to the eternal presence of God himself where no sin could be tolerated and where no evil could gain entrance. To provide a lesser way of salvation would be a denial of God's own holiness. For this righteousness to be accepted, it had to put away sin and cleanse the people of God completely.

'There is no difference'. Paul stresses once again the culpability of both Jews and Gentiles as he has already asserted earlier. This salvation is not for a group that excludes others, either because they are too bad or too good. It includes the Jews, despite the privileges they had previously enjoyed. The term probably used to reflect the conflict that existed between Jews and Gentiles, it stressed the inclusivity of the gospel.

3.23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. The first century Jew reading this statement knew it to be a part of the painful history of his people. Not only did it refer to the fact that the head of the human family had sinned and brought all his offspring into a state of alienation toward God, but it referred to Israel in her exile. Isaiah had said, 'I have created you for my glory'.⁸⁰ Israel's exilic condition was a denial of the glory of God. It was a picture of her shame and sinfulness. Israel could acknowledge the sins of her ancestors, what Paul's contemporaries could not accept was that they were in fact in a state of exile that was far worse than that experienced by their ancestors in either Egypt or Babylon. The Jews who opposed Paul could not accept that they also were part of the kingdom of darkness.⁸¹

3.24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. This final act of justification that God offers is not the result of the community being punished for her own sin, but it is the result of one taking the guilt of man. Paul deliberately says that this is the achievement of Christ Jesus. In putting 'Christ' first in the term 'Christ Jesus' he emphasises that Jesus is the Messiah, the one who had been promised would be sent to deliver his people from their bondage. Because Jesus is the Son of David who the scriptures had repeatedly promised would be raised up, then all that He does is according to the scriptures. Paul states that the church was justified freely by God's grace 'through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus'.⁸² The term justified has New Exodus roots. The Jews had been justified when God delivered them from the control of their oppressors in exile. They had claimed to be the people of God, a claim that seemed ridiculous in the light of the reality of their condition.⁸³ But it was a true claim, and God justified this claim when he delivered them from exile. Paul will later say that Jesus was delivered up for our offences and raised for our

⁸⁰ Isa. 43:7.

⁸¹ Acts 7:51-58.

⁸² While Best, *According*, 42 recognises the link with the Exodus story he also sees echoes of sacrilegious manumission, so also Lehardt, *Romains*, 63 and Maillot, *Romains*, 105.

⁸³ Ps. 80.

justification.⁸⁴ That is, God delivered, justified his people, when he raised up his Son, the promised seed of David from the dead.

This act of redemption is unique to any thing that God had previously achieved for his people. The Egyptian deliverance centered on the death of a sacrifice that substituted for the firstborn on the night of the Passover.⁸⁵ Each Jewish family slew a lamb and smeared its blood on the lintel and door post. When the angel of death came through the land, he saw the blood and passed over the home.⁸⁶ Thus the Jews were redeemed by the blood of the Passover lamb. The deliverance of the Jews from Babylon was an act of redemption⁸⁷ but there was no vicarious sacrifice, the Jewish people themselves were punished for the sins that were the cause of their exile. Israel's deliverance was nevertheless an act of redemption, for Yahweh brought about her release from the bondage through a pagan king. He raised up the Persians who conquered the Babylonians and who allowed the Jews to return. For this reason God said, 'I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead. Since you are precious and honoured in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life'.⁸⁸ The price of Israel's redemption was the overthrow of the Babylonians who the sovereign Lord of history had used to fulfil his threat against his people. But the redemption that has come through Jesus Christ is a totally different redemptive activity. It is one in which the covenant community is justified freely, not as the result of her own suffering, and is one in which redemption is based on the shedding of the blood of Christ Jesus. The first point is important, because this redemption is as a result of the grace of God. We do not get what we deserve. The Jews when sent into exile got fully what they deserved. Once they suffered what God saw was appropriate,⁸⁹ then He delivered/redeemed them. But Paul is not talking about salvation at a temporary level where it was possible to be punished and the past put behind. He is talking about an eternal exile from the presence of God. This is at a totally different exile from anything depicted in Israel's history. This exile in the kingdom of darkness has resulted in man being bound to Satan in covenant, a covenant that binds him in a hopeless and humanly speaking inescapable bondage.⁹⁰ The nature of the exile caused by Adam is of a different dimension and order which requires an act of cosmic redemption. The nature of this exile is of such significance that the offender can not possibly make atonement.

This redemption that Paul writes about is through Christ Jesus. This in itself is not a startling statement for the redemption of the Jews from Egypt was by Moses, and the redemption from Babylon was by a Persian king.⁹¹ To say that this new act of redemption came by Christ is in it self not startling, that is, not until we read the clause that follows it.

⁸⁴ Rom. 4:25

⁸⁵ Wright, *Romans*, 189 notes the Exodus setting of the text but fails to see the sacrifice is the Passover.

⁸⁶ Kline, "Feast", 497-510 says that Yahweh guarded the home from the passing over of Satan.

⁸⁷ Isa. 52:9; 54:5-6; 59:20; 62:12.

⁸⁸ Isa. 43:3-4.

⁸⁹ Isa. 51:17-32.

⁹⁰ See chapter 5.

⁹¹ Isa. 45:1-4.

3.25a God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement through faith in his blood. The redemption achieved by Christ is totally unique. It could not take place without the death of the Son of God. Here the emphasis is on removing man from the condemnation that (S)sin has brought about. Latter, in Romans eight Paul explains the cosmic dimension of this redemption, something that he deals with elsewhere.⁹²

The word 'presented' (*proetheto*) means publicly displayed. Here we have another hint that Paul is describing Jesus as the Passover victim. Of all of the sacrifices that the Levitical law legislated for, there was only one that was displayed for all to see, and that was the Passover. The lambs blood was daubed on the door posts and the lintel while all other sacrifices had their blood offered to God within the temple. The term sacrifice of atonement is '*hilasterion*' and has already been examined. It is this term that was traditionally translated as propitiation, and which I have argued should be retained as it's meaning. It has been largely rejected because the text does not support a Day of Atonement setting, which it was considered to belong to. For the vast majority of scholars there was absolutely no propitiatory value in the blood of the Passover lamb and therefore it has not been given the consideration that it deserves. However, once it has been appreciated that there are very good reasons to say that the early church through the influence of the Ezekiel 45:25 text saw the Passover to be a sacrifice of propitiation, then the natural setting for the passage becomes obvious.

Like the Jews in Egypt on the Passover night had to put their faith in the efficacy of the blood of the Passover lamb, so the blood of Christ, the Christian Passover victim,⁹³ is where the faith of those who are threatened with judgment is placed. The blood of Christ speaks of his death.

3.25b. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he left the sins committed beforehand unpunished. The death of Jesus answers the dilemma as to how God who is holy could apparently deal so lightly with sin. There had been many times in human history when it seemed that God was not acting justly and was ignoring sin.⁹⁴ Paul is saying that this never was the case. God had withheld acting in judgment because He had a plan to rescue man from his condition of exile and judgment. In this saving act God demonstrated that He took sin serious, indeed so serious that because there was no other way to rescue man, He gave his beloved Son up to death. His justice and His love could not be demonstrated any clearer.

Paul says that God had in his forbearance (*pareisin*) left the sins committed beforehand unpunished, *pareisin* means passing over.⁹⁵ Once again we find a distinct echo of the Passover in the passage. On the Passover night the angel of death passed over the homes of the Jewish people leaving them unpunished.⁹⁶ Paul is saying that the reason God has dealt so patiently with sin throughout history was not that He was indifferent but because He had a plan to deal with sin

⁹² c.f. Col. 1:15-19.

⁹³ 1 Cor. 5:8.

⁹⁴ Ps. 73.

⁹⁵ Leenhardt, *Romains*, 63 and AV.

⁹⁶ Ex. 12:27.

that was far beyond what anyone could have dared to imagine. The plan was only possible because of a God of incredible love and mercy. The atonement that is the result of the death of Jesus the Son of God deals with all the sins of His people, past present and future.⁹⁷

3.26 He did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. Paul again returns to the theme of the justice of God. There had been a question over this throughout the ages. Now, through the death of Jesus, this question has been forever settled. Now no one can ever question the commitment of God to justice. He has dealt with sin by the giving up of his beloved Son unto death in making him the Passover victim. He has demonstrated beyond any possible doubt both His love and His justice and in doing so silenced forever any who would question His character.

By giving up Jesus to death God is just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. When God justified Israel she was in exile in Babylon, he rescued her from her exile. In doing this He was justifying her claim to be the covenant people of God. Such a claim made by the Jews to their Babylonian captures would be ridiculed. When God brought Israel back to her inheritance he was justifying the claims that she made, she was shown to be the people of the covenant keeping God to the whole world.

Paul is here saying that God has now justified his people, those who have faith in Jesus. In the light of how the word justified is continually used to speak of deliverance in the context of the return from exile in the OT, it would seem that Paul is saying that God has now delivered his people from the exile that Adam had delivered his offspring to. A new covenant now exists which is the fulfilment of the promise Yahweh made to Abraham that through his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

Supporting Paschal texts.

The gospels.

We know of course how Jesus interpreted his death in the light of the coming Passover. He deliberately took the symbols of the first Exodus and reinterpreted them so that they spoke of the deliverance that he was about to accomplish for his people. In chapter one we noted some of the material that lurks beneath the surface of the gospels that strongly suggest that Jesus saw his death to bring about the New Exodus that the prophets had promised.

There is a further gospel text that we need to consider, and it is Mark 10:45. The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many. It is the word ransom (*lutron*) that has caused much debate as to where the seed of this statement lies. Many have been happy to see the allusion to the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 who gave his life a ransom for many. Hooker, however, has rejected this as the source because the term *lutron* is not found in

⁹⁷ Lagrange says that the passing over of sin is not referring to individual sins but to leaving a regime unpunished. "Mais la question ne se pose pas pour les individus; il s'agit du régime sous lequel vivait l'humanité." Lagrange, *Romains*, 77.

the Greek text of Isa.53. Her observation is significant, even though she does not realise how it points to Jesus interpreting his death as a Paschal offering. She notes⁹⁸ that the only place where one human life is substituted for another human life is in the regulations following the Passover. The Levites, man for man, were to be substituted for the firstborn of Israel who had been spared by the Lord. Because they had been spared, the Lord claimed them as his own. Strictly speaking, that meant a sacrificial offering,⁹⁹ but that would have defeated the purpose of the protection of the blood of the lamb. Instead, the Lord claimed them as living sacrifices, as priests, to serve Him. To allow their families to have them, the Lord arranged for the whole tribe of Levi to become priests in their place. They were the ransom. We will see in chapter 10 that this arrangement has clear symbolic teaching on the nature of atonement. It is sufficient to note here that Jesus uses language taken from the very heart of the Passover/Exodus event to explain the significance of his death. Indeed, the parallel Lucan text places the saying at the heart of the Last Supper with its immediate Paschal celebration. If this is a correct reading of the evidence, then it points to not only Jesus and Paul sharing the same New Exodus paradigm, but also sharing the same model as Jesus when he interpreted the significance of his coming death.

Corinthians.

The Corinthian letters give significant support for Paul's Paschal understanding of the death of Jesus. In 1 Cor. 5:8 Paul speaks of Christ our Passover having been sacrificed. If we are to allow any basic consistency in the apostle's thought, then the second letter ought not to be separated from the first as a means of discerning his thinking about the cultus.¹⁰⁰ In 2 Cor. 5:21 the death of Christ is described in terms that at the very least suggest it is seen as a sin offering.¹⁰¹ This description should not be isolated from the passage in the earlier epistle as if it were a distinctively different strand of tradition, for the 5:21 statement¹⁰² follows on immediately from a statement which is clearly "New Exodus".¹⁰³ If any man be in Christ he is a new creature¹⁰⁴ is a clear echo of the Isaianic promise of a new creation,¹⁰⁵ which was part of the New Exodus promise. Indeed, the earlier part of the chapter, 2 Cor. 5:1ff, deals with the temporal nature of the believer's pilgrimage, a theme which depicts the church as the pilgrim New Exodus community.¹⁰⁶ If there is any doubt about this, then the use Paul makes of the Isaianic servant material in the opening of chapter 6 ought to resolve the

⁹⁸ Hooker, *Servant*, 77, cf. also Lindars, "Re-Enter", 66, Collins, "Origin", 398 and Marshall, "Concept", 156 note 3.

⁹⁹ See Levenson, *Death*, *passim*.

¹⁰⁰ Barrett, *Corinthians*, 128 says that 2 Cor. 5:21 interprets 1 Cor. 5:8. Barrett further says (p129) that acceptance of Jesus as the lamb of God is independent of Christian doctrine and that the idea could have grown out of the belief that the Lord's supper is the new Christian Passover.

¹⁰¹ Contra Furnish, *Corinthians*, 340. Kruse, *Corinthians*, 129 links the judgement on Christ with the acquittal of the believer, something that is fundamental to Rom. 3:24ff. Thus Monte, "Place", 90 is correct to say that Rom. 6:1-11 is closely linked to Rom. 5:1-11 and 2 Cor. 5:14-21.

¹⁰² Martin, *Corinthians*, 156 says the passage is a creedal hymn borrowed by Paul

¹⁰³ Isa. 65:17. See Webb, *Home*, *passim* and Beal, "Reconciliation", *passim*.

¹⁰⁴ 2 Cor. 5:17.

¹⁰⁵ Contra Furnish, *Corinthians*, 340 & 314 who says that the theme is dependent on Apocalyptic Judaism

¹⁰⁶ cf. Käsemann, *Romans*, 41 and Sanders, "Dependence", 39.

difficulty. The emergence of Israel from her shame in exile was the setting of the servant songs and the imagery is now transferred to describe Paul's ministry to a wayward section of the new Israel.

Galatians.

Further support is found for the link between atonement and Passover in Galatians. 1:3 which is overtly New Exodus material, a fact recognised by most commentators. The cultic event, which describes the means of deliverance from God's wrath, is clearly presented in terms of a sin offering which again is fused with the imagery of redemption and is in a New Exodus context. This is made clear in that 3:13 speaks of Christ having redeemed us from the curse of the law. This has been identified as having a New Exodus¹⁰⁷ significance evidenced in the fact that it goes on to link up with 3:24ff which speaks about the communities baptism into Christ. Scott¹⁰⁸ claims that the theme of adoption in this passage is based on Israel's redemption from Egypt when she became the son of God. This is parallel to the description in Rom 6:1-4, 1 Cor 10:2, 13:12 and Ephes 5:25, which we have seen in chapter 7, forms a matrix of New Exodus texts.¹⁰⁹

Ephesians.

The baptism of Ephesians 5:27 is corporate and based on Ezekiel 16. In that passage Yahweh tells of how He chose Israel and redeemed her for His own. He washed her and made her clean through His word in order that she might be His bride. If this is the background of Ephesians 5, then it would be natural to see the sacrifice the bridegroom made in the setting of Passover, for that was the occasion of the original marriage between Yahweh and Israel. As in Romans, there is the by passing of physical circumcision, for the reality has now been established, their hearts have been circumcised.¹¹⁰ We have already noted that circumcision was required to celebrate the Passover. Indeed, in 1:7 the sacrifice has already been described in Paschal terms, for it is redemption through his blood.¹¹¹

Colossians.

Col 1:12-14 speaks in New Exodus language which is saturated with redemptive/Paschal imagery while 1:20 describes the effect of the redemption (1:14) as the reconciliation of all things, which is again atoning imagery. I shall argue in chapters 10-11 that the expression 'the firstborn of all creation' is not an hierarchal or ontological description but that it comes from the Passover where the firstborn was the designated victim bearing the judgment of the family's sin. In this hymn the statement is therefore saying that Christ's death is not only the means of the salvation of his family, but also of the whole of creation, hence he is 'the firstborn of all creation'.

¹⁰⁷ So Keesmaat, *Use, passim*, contra Brondod "Cross" 29.

¹⁰⁸ Scott, "Adoption", 17.

¹⁰⁹ See my forthcoming volume, *Paul and the Spirit*.

¹¹⁰ Eph. 2:11.

¹¹¹ Olshausan, *Galatians*, 134 links Eph. 1:7 with Col. 1:14 but denies any link with Rom. 3:25 as does Schoeps, *Theology*, 133 and Campbell, "Rhetoric", 128.

Passover and NT theological motifs.

Justification.

Recognising that the linguistic and theological evidence all points to Paul developing the fulfilment of the New Exodus promises, a larger perspective for justification emerges. The eighth century prophets spoke of the deliverance of Israel from her exile as her justification. We shall see in chapter 9 that this is the basis of Paul's doctrine of justification, the deliverance of God's people and their being brought into a new covenant relationship with their God. In other words, the Passover/Exodus is part of the imagery of justification for it is both atoning and also brings about the release of the covenant community.

The circumcision of the heart.

There is another link with the Passover that has to be given consideration. In Romans 2 and 4 Paul has dealt with the theme of circumcision. This is a theme which God fearers would have been aware of before Paul's instruction, for Ezekiel 44:7 and 9, a passage dealing with the circumcised heart, was emphasised in the Hellenistic synagogues.¹¹²

One of the promises of the New Covenant was that the hearts, rather than the bodies of the redeemed people, would be circumcised.¹¹³ To celebrate the Passover the individual had to be circumcised.¹¹⁴ This was so whether the person was of Hebraic descent or a proselyte. Despite the insistence on physical circumcision it was stressed that what really mattered was what this was supposed to represent - a circumcised heart. Paul argued this point in both chapter 2 and 4. He states that the outward ritualistic requirement is of no value unless it truly represents what has happened to their hearts. He argued that the outer without the inner is of no value, while the inner without the outer is no problem. These two discussions on circumcision must not be dislocated from their proximity to the description of Christ's death as a Passover offering which we have seen to be the setting of 3:21ff. Only those with circumcised hearts can keep the Christian Passover and benefit from being in the covenant. It can hardly be coincidence that Paul's description of Jesus death as a sacrifice of redemption (and therefore a Paschal offering) is always linked to the need of a circumcised heart.¹¹⁵

The circumcision of Moses.

In Ex 4:21-23 we have the difficult passage in which Moses was attacked by the angel and his life was spared by his wife circumcising their son and throwing the foreskin at the feet of either the angle or of Moses. Gosthuizen¹¹⁶ says that its original location was between the 9th and 10th plague. If this is correct, then it ties the act of circumcision and Passover even closer together. Indeed,

¹¹² Borgen, "Early", 64ff.

¹¹³ Hooker, "Paul", 7. Kasemann, *Romans*, 77 says Judaism would not separate physical circumcision from circumcision of the heart, both were required.

¹¹⁴ cf. Ex.12: 48-9;13:1ff also Josh. 5.

¹¹⁵ Rom. 2: 28; 3:21ff; Gal. 3:13 ; 6:15; Eph. 2:11-18; 1:7; 5:25 and Col. 2:11; 1:13-15.

¹¹⁶ Gosthuizen, "Thoughts", 2. See also Robinson, "Rescue", 449.

Gosthuizen¹¹⁷ goes on to explicitly make this connection; “If for Israel the signs have the intention of leading to the knowledge of Yahweh (Exodus 10:2) then surely the preservation of Moses’ son must point to the preservation of God’s first-born on the night of the Passover, the sign that must finally convince Israel that it is indeed Yahweh who leads them out of Egypt.” Schmidt¹¹⁸ points out the parallels between the occasion of the attack on Moses and the Passover. Both events occur at night,¹¹⁹ the divine being has the intention of killing¹²⁰ and salvation occurs through a blood-rite. Schoeps¹²¹ suggests that; “On account of Ex 4:24-6 circumcision always contains associations of sacramental sacrifice.” This link between circumcision and Passover is made clear by Robinson when he says that: “Moses stands for Israel and is saved because of the smearing of the blood of Gershon¹²² and: Moses as representative of the people as a whole is thus symbolically prepared for the imminent Passover celebration.”¹²³ Thus it could be argued that the circumcision of Moses firstborn was the vicarious circumcision for the nation and that it was only because this representative act had been performed that the nation could celebrate Passover prior to their own circumcision.

The circumcision of Christ.

There may in fact be other undertones related to the rite of circumcision which Paul picks up from the theme of the circumcision of Moses. In Exodus 4:21-23 Moses is called a bridegroom of blood.¹²⁴ This is seen by some to refer to an initiation rite which the male had to undergo before he could marry. If this is so, and is picked up in some way by Paul, then the reference to the circumcision of Christ in Col 2:11 may be interacting with this rite. Christ dies in order to secure for himself a bride,¹²⁵ and in his death his people underwent circumcision. As the OT imagery is the circumcision of the groom, it would suggest, if we are correctly following the threads of Paul’s thinking, that the ‘circumcision’ of the church is the result of the suffering which Christ, the groom, has undergone in the flesh. For an exposition of this see my forthcoming volume *Paul and the Spirit*.

Rabbinic material

The importance of circumcision as a qualification necessary to celebrate the Passover was taken up by the Rabbis. Indeed, circumcision became so important in Rabbinical literature it supplemented the blood of the lamb to achieve the efficacy required to protect the Jews as they sheltered in their homes. It was part of the redemptive blood; “You shall mix the blood of the Passover sacrifice and of

¹¹⁷ op cit. 13.

¹¹⁸ cited by Gosthuizen, op cit 23.

¹¹⁹ Ex. 12:22, 29ff.

¹²⁰ Ex. 12:23.

¹²¹ Schoeps, *Paul*, 111

¹²² op cit. 547

¹²³ op cit. 460. Lehane, “Zipporah”, 49 argues that Gershon, Moses’s firstborn son, is the son of a Gentile and is uncircumcised. He had not entered the covenant: “If Moses will plead for God’s firstborn, if he will represent God at all, then his own firstborn must be an Israelite.”

¹²⁴ Lehane, “Zipporah”, 50 claims that: “Zipporah is speaking to the Lord, not to her son. She refers to God as her father in law because of his covenant with her husband. Under that Covenant the God of Moses is her husbands father. This explains why she uses the plural la-muloth, drawing her husbands covenant into her own profession of faith.”

¹²⁵ Eph. 5:26

circumcision and make of it a sign to put on the houses where you live; and I will see the merit of the blood and will spare you.”¹²⁶

A development of the same theme is found in the targum on the Canticles which was read and commented on at the Passover. “At the time when the glory of Yahweh was manifested in Egypt on the night of the Passover in order to kill the firstborn - he protected the houses where they were, lay in wait by the window, watched in wait by the trellis, and saw the blood of the Passover lamb sacrifice and the blood of circumcision stamped on the doors - He looked down from the height of the heavens and saw the people eating the sacrifice of the feast and he spared them and he did not give power to the destroying angel.”¹²⁷

The use of the Canticles during the Passover might at first seem odd, until it is remembered that the Passover celebrated the original deliverance from Egypt when Yahweh took Israel to be His bride. The targum on Ezekiel 16:6 has the same understanding.¹²⁸

The targum on Leviticus says: “Life is in the blood of the Passover; life is in the blood of circumcision.”¹²⁹ Again Ex Rabba 15:13 (on Ex 12:10) says: I pronounce sentences of death; but I declare unto you how in my mercy I will spare you because of the blood of the Paschal lamb and of the circumcision, and how I shall make atonement for you.¹³⁰ Another targum says: And he desisted from him. There she said, But for the blood of this circumcision, my husband had merited death.”¹³¹ Vermes says that the passage may be safely presumed to be prior to 200 BC. Another Rabbinic text says: “It is written that the first Passover after the Exodus was celebrated by the mixing of the blood of both.”¹³² Again another Rabbinic text has, Because the memorial of the covenant with your fathers is before me, I revealed myself to deliver you, for it is known before me that you are oppressed in your captivity. I said to you: Because of the blood of the circumcision I will take care of you. I said to you again: Because of the blood of Passover I will redeem you.”¹³³ In the account of the attack by the destroyer on Moses when he was on his way to Egypt and Zipporah warded off the danger through circumcising the eldest son, it says: “And she circumcised the foreskin of her son, and brought him before the feet of the destroyer, and said: The husband would have circumcised, but the father-in-law did not permit him; but now, let the blood of this circumcision atone for the fault of this husband. And when the Destroyer had ceased from him, Zipporah gave thanks and said, How lovely is the blood of circumcision which hath saved my husband from the hand of the angel of

¹²⁶ TJ 1 Exod. 12.13 cf. also Exodus Rabbah 12:10 and 12:50 in connection with Ezek. 16, cited in Daly, *Sacrifice*, 191. The thorny problem of the dating of the Rabbinic material is discussed latter in chapter 9. In the Rabbinical Passover tradition the blood of the lamb and blood of circumcision are merged to effect deliverance. For Paul there can be no vicarious significance in the circumcision of the believers heart for there is no shedding of blood. The one whose blood has been shed in circumcision, i.e. the stripping away of the flesh, Col. 2:11.

¹²⁷ Cited by Daly, *Sacrifice*, 192.

¹²⁸ Cited by Daly op cit. 192. For further discussion on circumcision see Mceleney “Conversion”.

¹²⁹ Vermes “Circumcision”, 191, cited by Daly, op cit. 191.

¹³⁰ Cited by Lyonnet and Sabourin, *Sin*, 133.

¹³¹ cited by Vermes, “Baptism”, 311.

¹³² cited by Vermes, “Circumcision”, 191 who goes on to say in note 2, of Ex R.XIX.7. “It is important to remark that the pre-Christian tradition preserved here and in the Targum was interpreted in the sense of an atoning observance of the commandments of circumcision and Passover.”

¹³³ cited by Vermes, “Circumcision”, 191.

death.”¹³⁴ The last citation, whilst not mentioning the Passover directly, has clear links with it, shown in that it was the circumcision of the firstborn that spared the life of Moses.

Circumcision and atonement.

Despite the link of circumcision with Passover, Abraham’s circumcision is said to have taken place on the Day of Atonement, “Abraham was circumcised on the Day of Atonement; year after year God looks upon the covenant blood of the circumcision of our father (Abraham) and creates atonement for our sins-He said because of your blood you shall live.”¹³⁵ This overlap of the Passover and Day of Atonement is noted elsewhere.¹³⁶ Another Rabbinic quote says: “With two bloods were the Israelites delivered from Egypt, with the blood of the Paschal lamb and with the blood of circumcision.”¹³⁷ Vermes says that the blood of circumcision mingled with the Paschal blood showed that there was atonement significance in the Passover.

This connection between the Paschal lamb and circumcision ought not to surprise us when we reflect on the need of Moses’ circumcision as a preparation for the Redemption from Egypt.¹³⁸ Despite these Rabbinical developments, it must be remembered that the OT makes no suggestion that circumcision blood was regarded as sacrificial blood.¹³⁹ Nevertheless, as we have earlier noted,, there is a possibility that Paul linked circumcision with the Passover sacrifice as found in the Old Testament. Where Paul refers to the circumcision of the heart it is always within the immediate context of discussing the death of Christ. We have seen that these references to the sacrificial nature of the death of Jesus see him as the Passover sacrifice.

Priesthood.

There is one final strand of evidence to consider that points to Paul's understanding of the death of Jesus being Paschal. Paul not only sees believers as servants,¹⁴⁰ but he also sees them as priests.¹⁴¹ They share the priestly calling of Jesus and are called to offer worship to God. In Rom 12:1-2 he urges the Romans to offer themselves as living sacrifices and in Rom 15:16 he speaks of his own ministry as being a priestly service. The link of this theme with the Passover is that it was as a consequence of the Passover, where Israel's firstborn were spared, that Yahweh claimed them for Himself as priests.¹⁴² They were exempted from this service by the substitution of the tribe of Levi in their place. This is clearly the model that is the basis of Pauline understanding. The members of the covenant community are called to priestly service for they are those who have been spared

¹³⁴ cited by Schreiner, *Circumcision*, 104.

¹³⁵ Pesiq R 47 (19^{1a-b},18).

¹³⁶ See earlier and chapter 10.

¹³⁷ Cited by Vermes, “Circumcision”, 191 note 2.

¹³⁸ Ex. 4:22-26.

¹³⁹ Daly, *Sacrifice*, 188.

¹⁴⁰ So chapter 3.

¹⁴¹ This is in keeping with other NT authors, so 1 Pt . 2:5 and Rev. 1:6.

¹⁴² Ex. 13:1-16.

as a result of another taking their place in the judgment of the Lord's Passover. We have already noted the link between Mark 10:45 and the Passover. In that arrangement the Levites were substituted to allow those who were spared through the death of the lamb not to have to live in priestly service. Here the suggestion is that having been spared through the eschatological Passover sacrifice, the people of God as a whole are called to, and not excused from, priestly service.

Martyrdom theology.

We have found that there are clear indications that Rom 3:21ff is modeled on the Passover. This is a conclusion that is in conflict with the growing consensus which is shared across the theological spectrum, that both Jesus¹⁴³ and Paul¹⁴⁴ used the martyr model to explain the meaning of the cross.

The reason that the book of Maccabees is considered to be the source of Paul's imagery is because it is thought that there is no other satisfactory way of interpreting '*hilasterion* (propitiation/expiation) exists. Those who adopt this are not convinced that the term is linked to its use in Ezekiel to describe the lid of the Ark of the Covenant because they feel that Paul would not have used an inanimate object to describe the significance of Jesus. Also, the imagery of Rom 3:21ff suggests a public sacrifice rather than the privacy of the conditions of the Day of Atonement. Having rejected the Day of Atonement they are forced to look for another source. It is this text of Maccabees in which they find the martyrs death described as an '*hilasterion*.

But there is a home for '*hilasterion* which is within the canon of scripture. i.e. within the law and the prophets which Paul has specifically identified as the witness to this redemption. As we have seen all of the linguistic and theological indicators of the passage point in one direction, to the Passover. It fits what Paul has said about Jesus death. Its purpose has been witnessed to by the law and the prophets. The reason why Passover has been discounted without any meaningful inquiry is that it has been considered that it is about redemption and not atonement.

If it is true that Paul's understanding of the death of Jesus is that he is the great example of the Jewish martyr, then it means that his death is of no more ultimate significance than the death of any innocent sufferer. The death of Jesus adds to this store of merit in measure beyond what any other man's death could ever do, but he is still adding to something that exists. Not only have the righteous of the OT contributed to the store of merit that Jesus adds to, but under this model all of the sufferings of those who have suffered for their faith in Jesus are also contributing to this store of merit. In other words, martyrdom theology is a surrender of the great evangelical doctrine of the unique substitutionary sufferings of Christ. Without realising what has been surrendered evangelical scholars have abandoned the historical doctrine of the uniqueness of Christ's atoning suffering and have replaced it with a doctrine that has no distinct Christian content. It fails to uphold the uniqueness of the sufferings of Jesus. This outcome is the result of

¹⁴³ Wright, *Jesus* 582, and "Cross" 89.

¹⁴⁴ Wright, "Romans", 45.

embracing pseudopigraphal writings as the key to NT interpretation rather than taking seriously the statement that Paul has made that the redemption that Christ has achieved has been witnessed to by the Law and the Prophets.

Furthermore, a major objection to the claims that this is a true reflection of Paul's understanding is that Paul never speaks about Christ our martyr or Christ our example, but he does say, 'Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us'. This fact is exemplified in that the only link to Maccabean martyr theology is the use of '*hilasterion*' in Rom.3.25. The OT is constantly quoted by the apostle, yet there is not one clear allusion, never mind citation, of the books of the Maccabees. Modern scholarship has pressed this model on to the NT text in a way that can only be described in scholarly terms as irresponsible and has then developed doctrines from the supposed evidence that turns Jesus into a well meaning religious leader who is confused over the purpose of his death and who got it totally wrong as to what it was to achieve.¹⁴⁵ The reason for this misplaced confidence in the Maccabean martyr model is due to the failure to appreciate the significance of the Passover for NT soteriology and because of this a misguided search for a model that includes the term '*hilasterion*' that had something to do with salvation.

These problems do not exist in the model I have proposed. In the Passover there is only one beloved son. There is no confusion between his unique sufferings and those of others, no matter how noble and exemplary their death might have been. The Passover model not only avoids this serious surrender of the uniqueness of Christ's sufferings, but it fits all the grammatical and theological details of the passage, especially that of describing Jesus death as an *hilasterion*.

Conclusion.

We have examined Paul's cultic language and the theological themes associated with it and have concluded that there is only one sacrifice that holds all of these strands together, and that is the Passover. Once again we have found that Paul has not departed from what Jesus taught. He shared the same perspective that Jesus had as to what his death achieved. Indemnification of this model opens the door to understand other aspects of Paul's theology and it is to these that we now turn.

¹⁴⁵ So Wright, *Jesus*, passim, who says that Jesus believed that he was taking unto himself the full anger of Rome and that through this substitutionary death judgment was being taken away from Israel. Obviously judgment did fall on Israel in the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. The only conclusion that can be drawn from such a theory is that Jesus got it totally wrong.