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THESIS IN NEW TESTAMENT

THE LAW IN A MICROCHIP IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

by

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*This work is dedicated with deep affection and heartfelt
gratitude to my wife Matalena Vili Tu'ua'ua-to
and son Titi-Elpis Vili Tu'ua'ua-to*

and

*also to the Congregational Christian Church
of Samoa*

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ABSTRACT

This paper, is an attempt to explain Jesus Christ as the integrator¹ of the Law, in the light of one of Matthew's prominent theme, "Jesus is the Fulfilment of the Torah." This presentation is focussed on the relevancy of the Law in our everyday life, against the notion that, it (Law) is no longer applicable in our time. As a matter of fact, Law does not guarantee salvation. Nevertheless, it still plays a vital role in leading us into God's salvation. Matthew presents Jesus as the fulfiler of the Mosaic Law; the one who incorporates the Law in Himself. In this sense, Jesus could be understood as a Microchip that integrates and synthesizes² all the precepts of the Law to be part of the whole. And if we totally believe in Christ, we will be able to obey and keep every commandments of the Law. Hence Law is still applicable.

¹ The Law is a norm of discrete precepts. Through Jesus Christ, all these precepts are combined and encapsulated into one entity.

² To synthesize is to produce a perfect harmony in the life of any Christian. Just like a musical chord when different notes are combined and played at the same time.

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THE LAW IN A MICROCHIP IN THE GOSPEL OF MATHEW

CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

In the attempts to define Jesus Christ into a more contemporary form, I think that this analogy, Jesus is the MICROCHIP, is important and relevant, in trying to understand the relationship between Jesus and the Law.

Very little attention is paid to the Law, which is the integral part of the covenant and the revelation at mount Sinai, through which God established that intimate relationship with the sinful human being. Many people find it very difficult to remember and obey all the commandments of the Law. They claim that as long as Christ is in the believer's heart, there is no more need to keep the law, and to follow its precepts. In other words, in order to live a good moral life, and be in a rightful relationship with God, people can do away with the Law, but to believe and have faith in Christ. Others claim that the law is full of negative statements, *i.e. DON'T do this or that...*: Such people claim that the Law offers no freedom at all to the individual.

In some of his writings, Paul seems to have a negative attitude towards the Law of Moses. Such attitude is evident in statements such as - "*For Christ is the end of the law...*" (Rom 10:4). This could mean a total abolition of the law. Paul also refers to the Torah as a norm, which was given only for a period of time until Christ came, then it

started to ceased to function (Gal 3:19-25). The outcome of such insights and attitudes is the notion that, the law is no longer relevant to people in achieving righteousness before God. However, Jesus is the gateway to righteousness and salvation.

This paper will focus on Matthew 5:17-20, and the role played by Jesus as presented in the Gospel of Matthew. Emphasis will be directed to prove the fact that Jesus Christ is the one and the only way for all christian believers who enables us to keep and obey each and every commandment of the Law; and that Jesus also sustains and maintains the Law in its continuity with the past. For Matthew, Jesus is the fulfillment of both the law and the Old Testament; and he incorporates every precepts of the Mosaic law in himself.

I do hope that the use of the 'microchip analogy' would not in any way undermine nor minimize the Lordship and the divinity of Jesus Christ.

The microchip is the most recent but very efficient finding and development in the field of electronics and technology. It is a vitally important component found in almost every sophisticated electronic equipment and appliance today. The microchip has touched and influenced every aspect of life; and has changed tremendously both the way we live, and the way we think about life. In other words, the microchip has helped a lot in making communication much easier.

The microchip is a complex integrated circuit (IC) that contains up to thousand or even to million circuit elements or components that make up any electronic equipment or

appliance. Before the era of the microchip, the field of electronics was full of huge and bulky equipments, made up of discrete components, and conventional electric circuit of many parts. However, with the invention of the microchip, all the minute components are housed within a single chip.

The microchip has a great diversity of functions that help the different aspect and activities of life. For example, the microchip makes people get to know each other; gives us an update information of what is happening on the other side of the world; and it saves life.¹ One of its primary functions is to act as a processor to perform all calculations and every operation of a personal computer. It is a memory device that can store all information and data to be used in every application in the field of electronics. It plays a very crucial role in the post-modern trend towards globalization² and it has helped a lot in bringing the world very close to us. The function and attitude of the microchip is clearly presented by Michael Malone who writes, "the microchip is moving closer and closer to the center of our lives."³

The task ahead is overwhelmingly huge; but I do hope that the selected chapters would somehow help to describe and to explain more fully the essence and meaning of this topic. I also hope they may all contribute to set the scene of this presentation.

¹ Internet, 2000 Malone in his book *Digital Day* writes of the new firefighter helmet equipped with a small digital video screen which allow firefighter to see through smoke to search and save peoples life – just by the insertion of a microchip. See the Article by Bev Walton Porter on Website address www.compunotes.com/learn/digitalday.htm, 2000, p. 2

² A concrete example of one of these attempts for a global village is the INTERNET.

³ Internet, *Digital Day* p. 1

Chapter two is *'the Law in the Old Testament time.'* It aims to explain the Law within its original context, as the basis of the covenant relationship between God and Israel.

This chapter is comprised of an exegesis of the Ten Commandments; a look at the Deuteronomist's structure of the Law; and also the Law in other Old Testament literatures.

Chapter three is *'the law in the New Testament time.'* Special emphasis is placed on how the Law was handled within the Jewish communities, their exclusive attitudes and interpretations of the Torah; and how these attitudes had shaped Matthew's Jewish Christian community. Attention will also be focused on Matthew's intention and presentation of his Gospel.

Chapter four is entitled *'Jesus is the Microchip as presented by Matthew.'* It will include an exegesis of Matt 5:17-20 (main text) and Matt 22:37-40(supporting text), hoping they may assist in conveying, expressing and explaining my topic more meaningfully.

In the conclusion, all the arguments will be summed up. The significance and meaning of the analogy "Jesus is the Microchip" is highlighted. Of course the Law is good and useful; but Jesus far supercedes the law. The law is made up of various bits and pieces that need to be obeyed and abided with all due respect. Jesus on the other hand sums up and fulfills the law. If one accepts and receives Jesus in his or her heart; then surely he or she will fulfill the demands of the Law.

CHAPTER - 2

ISRAEL AND THE LAW IN THE OLD TESTAMENT TIME

Righteousness sustains Man-God relationship

The Law as the official standard of righteousness sustains human relationship to God. Christians today were represented by Israel as the people of God in the Old Testament time. Prior to the time in which the Israelites saw themselves as a nation, God had shown His mercy and grace upon forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who are called the patriarchs. They are the ancestors of the twelve tribes that composed the nation known as Israel. God revealed himself to them in a personal relationship.

This was primarily expressed in the promise made to the patriarchs. Their descendants will become a great nation, and will be given a land promised for them. Due to the migration of the whole family of Jacob, the Israelites eventually found themselves enslaved in Egypt. God in His mercy continued to reveal His love by delivering them from bondage, affirming his relationship with them (covenant), and showing them the way they must live (law) in their everyday life. In this sense, the Law must be obeyed in order that this relationship be maintained.

1. The Place of the Decalogue in the Torah

The Decalogue holds a special place in the lives of the Israelites, because it represented God's unconditional love and grace promised through the patriarchs, leading up to the

exiles. The Decalogue is an authentic archive of God's love shown upon Israel. This implies that the Ten Commandments stand at the center of the Mosaic Law or the Torah as a whole. Before examining the place of the Decalogue, we shall first of all look at the concept of 'covenant.'

The Covenant and the Law are inseparable components of God's relationship with Israel. The giving of the law is always associated with the covenant making. The concept of "Covenant" or "*berit*" in Hebrew can mean both "covenant" as between deity and man, and "treaty" as between two humans (Genesis 14:13).¹ After the exodus, the event at mount Sinai is seen as the climax of the whole story that marked a new era in the history of Israel. They were called to enter into close relationship with God. God established the covenant with the people as basically narrated in Exodus 19-24. "He will be Israel's God, and they will be His people." Such statement has become the central aspect of the covenant relationship that he previously made with the patriarchs. According to Boadt, covenant was originally meant a "shackle."² In this sense, God binds himself with the people of Israel. This implies a very high hope that Israel is to maintain the covenant and that they should walk accordingly as God wills. "The covenant is the original form of social and religious experiences and conviction, the religious awe and gratitude of the Hebrews of Moses' time with religious obligations which preserved the peace within the

¹ Cyrus H. Gordon, & Gary A. Rendsburg, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, Norton and Company, New York; 1997. p.164

² Laurence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament - An Introduction*, Paulist, New York; 1984, p.174.

group."³ Along with the Mosaic covenant, the law was given to shape the living of God's people, not only their moral behavior but especially their religious lives.

The basis of the covenant was an early form of the Ten Commandments or Decalogue in which Yahweh makes known his will for His people.⁴ The giving of the Ten Commandments indicates that God demands righteousness out of His people. "If you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be treasured possessions out of all the peoples"(Ex 19:5). "Righteousness is justice within the context of a covenant relationship. When a person fulfills the obligation of a relationship, that person is said to be righteous."⁵ In this sense, fulfilling all obligation of a relationship is perfectly obeying and keeping all the Ten Commandments.

It is most commonly believed that the Decalogue is the only foundational expression of the moral and ethical values of the life of the people of Israel. "Whereas other laws and cultic details depend on individual circumstances, the proclamations in the Decalogue are directed to all Israelites regardless of circumstances."⁶ The Ten Commandments are guidelines for the people of Israel in their daily life, so that they may be able to walk righteously before their God.

³ George Arthur Buttrick (ed), *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (vol 1), Abingdon Press, Nashville; 1986, p.719

⁴ F. F. Bruce, *Israel and the Nations -The history of Israel from Exodus to the Fall of the 2nd Temple*, Inter Varsity Press, England; 1997, p.3

⁵ Geoffrey W. Bromiley (ed), *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (vol 4), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids; 1988, p.193

⁶ Gordon & Rendsburg, *Bible*, p.154

They were given to Moses on Mt Sinai as a means for granting the Israelites a high degree of sensitivity to sin. "God has come only to test you and to put the fear of him upon you so that you do not sin" (Ex 20:20). This is the divine intention of God for His people. It is a hope for them not to commit sin. So the Ten Commandments become the focal point of the entire Law. This position of the Decalogue could be affirmed by studying each commandment.

1.1. The Ten Commandments in a Twofold Structure - Exodus 20: 2-17

Primarily in the Ten Commandments, is the preface (20:2), "*I am the Lord Your God.*" This introduces the origin and source of the law. Yahweh revealed Himself through his direct address to the people. It emphasizes that the demands of the Decalogue have their source and sanction in divine will and not in human wisdom.⁷ So it is a must that Israel should honor the Ten Commandments. The preface makes very clear the relationship already established between Yahweh and Israel. The use of אנכי יהוה "I am Yahweh" (a self confessional phrase) reminded Israel who Yahweh really was, and אלך "Your God" reminded them of who they are and where they belong.

⁷ Nahum M Sarna, *Exodus* - The JPS Torah Commentary The Traditional Hebrew Text with new JPS Translation, Jewish Publication Society, New York; 1991, p.109

i) The relationship between humanity and God.

Verse 3 *"You shall have no other God before me..."*

"The first of the Ten Commandments is basis to the nine that follow it and to the relationship the Decalogue is designed to insure."⁸ The command emphasizes the sovereignty and the unity of God. The prohibition from having many gods (polytheism) and the sin of bringing other gods together with Yahweh (syncretism) affirms the requirement that Israel has to maintain that personal relationship with Yahweh, their only God.

Verses 4-6 *"You shall not make yourself an idol ..."*

"The revolutionary Israelite concept of God entails His being wholly separate from the world of His creation and wholly other than what the human can conceive."⁹ Human being then will never be able to construct or shape or even picture in imaginations, an image of Yahweh. Moreover, Yahweh is a spiritual God, and the making of graven images leads to the reduction of God to earthly things. Creating images of God will void the relationship between Israel and Yahweh. There is also a need for purity in the worship of Israel. It also emphasizes the unity in the relationship between God and Israel. The Israelites are urged to remember and have faith in God at all time.

⁸ John I. Durham, *Exodus*, (WBC vol 3), Word Books, Texas; 1987, pg.284

⁹ Sarna, *Exodus*, (JPS) p.110.

Verse 7 *"You shall not make wrongful the name of the Lord..."*

A clear description of this command is found in Lev 19:12. The law requires sincerity during worship. Because Yahweh is "Holy," this command emphasizes reverence and holiness. Action of the tongue in this sense is not guaranteed as a genuine means of worshipping God. It is rather the attitude of the heart, which is the only way of showing a high degree of devotion to God. "In general term, this commandment prohibits a lack of seriousness about Yahweh's presence, in Israel demonstrated through a pointless, misleading or even false use of His name."¹⁰

Verses 8-11 *"Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy..."*

It was created for humanitarian reason. People have to honor the Sabbath (rest in Hebrew) in which Yahweh Himself had ceased working after six days. Though worship is not mentioned, this is the very opportunity by which people can pay respect to the resting day of Yahweh through hymns and prayers to God, hence keeping it holy. "People are not to live as if all time were their own, to do with as they please."¹¹ There is a time to sit down and pause for a day and think of God's work. A day the Israelites must always remember. Sabbath was a pre-Mosaic institution, and Yahweh made it one of the components of the covenant with His people. Remembering it, can be a sign of respect to God and creation.

¹⁰ Durham, *Exodus*, p.288.

¹¹ Terrence E. Fretheim, *Exodus* (Interpretation – A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching) John Knox, Louisville; 1991, p. 229

ii) The relationship within humanity

Verse 12 "*Honor your Father and Mother...*"

This command marks a transition from human-God to inter-human relationship, "...a transition from the first to the second group of divine declaration..."¹² Durham clarifies that the first four commandments set forth the principles guiding Israel's relationship to Yahweh, and the last six set forth the principles guiding Israel's relationship with the covenant community, and more broadly with the human family. The second, third and fourth commandments are extensions of the first, and the first four commandments are the foundations of the final six.¹³

The commandment emphasizes that caring for the neighbor is so crucial starting from within the circle of the family. The parent-child relationship determines how the community should care for each other. This stresses the responsibility of the offspring to care for their parents. Parents are the closest representatives of God. Honoring the father and the mother is honoring God, and simultaneously, respecting and care for the neighbor. More importantly, the fifth commandment is the only one in which hope is offered.

Verse 13 "*You shall not Kill*"

Life is a God-given gift for human being. There is no other source of life other than the Creator Himself. It was given by God, and only God in his own will and authority will

¹² Sarna, *Exodus*, (JPS) p. 113

¹³ Durham, *Exodus*, (WPC) p. 290

take it away. Life is precious and sacred. This law embodies the universal principle of the sacredness of human personality and relationship to God.¹⁴ Capital punishment and killing in a war (self defense), a result of accidents are being excluded and they were not considered as murder among the Hebrews.¹⁵ The term **רצח** is never used in such a way. Murder or killing someone is breaking away from the relationship with God, and at the same time, ruins the relationship with the neighbor.

Verse 14 "You shall not commit adultery" *against your neighbor.*

The value of marriage, and the relationship between a husband and a wife is as great as the value of human life. "God's order of priority, the sanctity of human life is followed by the importance of marriage."¹⁶ This command refers to both men and women as subject (Lev. 18:20, 20:10). The root **זנא** can be referred to as the "great sin."¹⁷ It is also used as a metaphor to refer to idolatry,¹⁸ and it indicates that breaking this commandment is squarely in line with the sin of creating an image of God. It harms the individual, the family, the society and the community as a whole. This commandment requires purity in sex life of both a married man and a married woman, and probably even before marriage.

¹⁴ Henlee H. Barnett, *Introducing Christian Ethics*, Broadman Press, Nashville, 1961, p. 23

¹⁵ Barnett, *Christian Ethics*, p. 23

¹⁶ D A Carson, R T France, J A Motyer, & G J Wenham (Eds), *New Bible Commentary* (21st Century Edition), Intervarsity Press, Leicester, 1994, p. 106

¹⁷ Durham, *Exodus* (WBC), p. 292

¹⁸ William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1988, p. 224

Verse 15 *"You shall not steal."*

This is another important requirement in the Hebrew community. They must respect other people's property and should care for them. It indicates how important the relationship between each individual within the community (inter-human relationship). This commandment implies direct theft and stealing regardless of the method used. The term גנב is also referred to human stealing or kidnapping as in Ex. 21:16 and Deut 24:7.

Verse 16 *"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."*

This is an obligation for the Israelites to be honest to each other. As found in the book of Deuteronomy, there is a penalty for the one who bear false witness. "If a witness is a false witness, ... then you shall do to the false witness, as the false witness has meant to do to the other" (Deut 19:18&19). So this commandment is an integral part of the personal relationship between each member of the Israelite community. It recognizes a concern beyond that of individuals to the well-being of a community so dependent on the trustworthiness of its members.¹⁹

Verse 17 *"You shall not covet."*

The verb רָצָה according to Durham means, desire, yearn for, covet, lust after someone or something, specifically for one's own use of gratification.²⁰ And concerning the question whether the verb may also suggest action as well as desire (as the other nine

¹⁹ Fretheim, *Exodus*, Interpretation, p. 237

²⁰ Duham, *Exodus* (WBC), p. 297

commandments appear to command specific action).²¹ The meaning of the verb that is implied in Exodus can be "desire and try to acquire." The command implies that before any action has been taken, desire for one's property is already a sin.

1.2. Decalogue in the Deuteronomy Account

Common in the Decalogue, is the theme of "relationship." The relationship between the Israelites themselves will determine their relationship with their God. And to maintain this relationship, they are to live righteously before Yahweh as He wills. The Israelites are therefore required to fully and perfectly obey the Ten Commandments. The Israelites themselves replied to Moses that everything that the Lord had said, they will obey.

(Ex19:8)

any is a product of the post-exilic period. However these suggestions do not

eliminate the Decalogue from its position at the center of the entire Law. The book has

The Decalogue covers the whole area of human conduct in the Hebrew community, from their worship life to the everyday living. It is the way of life for each individual to deal with each other and especially their dealings with their God. So the Ten Commandments in this sense becomes the center of the whole law. Other scholars had suggested that the entire law is only an extension of the Decalogue. "Some Jewish sages also taught that the Ten Commandments contain implicitly all the teachings of the Torah."²² It was intended for the Hebrew community and it is now become the basis and a fundamental element of human behavior. Pink, quoted by Reisinger states that, "...this revelation of God at Sinai which was to serve for all coming ages, as the ground expression of His holiness and the

²¹ Durham, *Exodus*, (WBC), p. 297

²² Jonathan Z. Smith (Ed), *The Harper Collins Dictionary of Religion*, Harper Collins, San Francisco, 1995, p.1064

summation of man's duty...²³ These observations imply that the Decalogue maintains its position at the heart of the Israelite Law, even in the Old Testament teachings.

1.2. Decalogue in the Deuteronomy Account

The Decalogue is also found in the book of Deuteronomy (5:6-21). In fact this is later material. There are arguments concerning the emphasis of the book and the date in which it was written which are based on the account that a 'Book of the Law' was discovered in the temple during king Josiah's reign (II Kg 22:8). This led to a conclusion that the book belongs to the author 'D' or the Deuteronomist. It is also suggested that the book of Deuteronomy is a product of the post-exilic period. However these suggestions do not eliminate the Decalogue from its position at the center of the entire Law. The book has been placed at the beginning of the Deuteronomistic history, to introduce the emphasis of the whole story (Deut. to II Kings)

The book of Deuteronomy, contains the words spoken by Moses on the other side of river Jordan, as they were about to enter Canaan (Deut 1:1). It is the expounding of the law, the Decalogue and its extension. Millar quotes the work of Kaufman in which he structures chapters 12-26 as follows. This structure according to Millar corresponds to the 'Ten Commandments' in Deuteronomy 5.

²³ Ernest C. Resigner, *Whatever Happened to the Ten Commandments?*, The Banner of Truth Trust, Pennsylvania; 1999. p.2

- i&ii. Right Worship (12:1-28),
- iii. False Oath (13:1-14:27),
- iv. Sabbath (15:1-18;16:1-17)
- v. Authority (16:18-20;17:2-20;18:1-22),
- vi. Homicide (19:1-13,20;21:1- 9,22-23;22:8)
- vii. Adultery and illicit mixtures (22:9-11;22:13-23:1;23:3-15,18-19)
- viii. Theft and poverty violations (23:20-26;24:7)
- ix. Fair treatments of Fellows (24:8-25:4)
- x. Coveting neighbor's wife and property (25:5-12;25:13-16)²⁴

The above framework is structured according to the layout of the Ten Commandments. It determines the centrality of the Decalogue in the Pentateuch. Despite the criticisms of this theme, Millar agrees with Kaufman's reading.²⁵ Millar concludes his exegesis of these chapters with three distinctive theological perspectives for worship, land and human relationships. "They stand as one people before one God in one land. They must do everything in their power to maintain justice and right relationships, and to guard equality and equity, so that the relationship for which they have been set apart can be enjoyed in its fullness."²⁶ The Ten Commandments plays a crucial role in maintaining the relationship between God and his people, and also showing Israel how to love their God.

²⁴ J. Gary Millar, *Now Choose Life*, Theology and Ethics in Deuteronomy, Apollos, Leicester, 1998, p. 107

²⁵ In Kaufman's holistic reading and George Braulik's more redaction study, for Millar, their combined arguments concerning a decalogue pattern are powerful, Millar, *Now choose Life*, p. 108

²⁶ Millar, *Now choose Life*, p. 146

Zimmerli in trying to outline his Old Testament Theology, states that "the requirement to love God was linked with the requirement to fear Him.....in the Old Testament, 'fear of God' often becomes synonymous with obedience to the commandments of Yahweh."²⁷

2. Law in Other Old Testament Literature

2.1. Prophets

Prophets are the bearers of God's Word for his people so that they may keep and obey the Law. As spokesmen for God to the covenant community, they advise kings and exhort the nation to obey the laws of God and to live in accordance with his will.²⁸ We find that the prophetic literature, echoes the deuteronomic principle, or the idea of retribution. The infidelity of the people to God's covenant and law given through Moses has always led to disaster and destruction. Prophets repeatedly recalled the day which Yahweh had brought them from Egypt (Amos 2:10;3:1;9:7), referring to the whole event in which the Law was given. God spoke through Jeremiah concerning a new covenant with his people, both Israel and Judah. And this one will be written in their hearts unlike the previous one (Jer. 31:31-34). There is an understanding that these promises are fulfilled by Jesus through his teachings, and ministry as emphasized by Matthew.

²⁷ Walther Zimmerli, "Life Before God," in *The Flowering of Old Testament Theology*, Eisenbrauns, Indiana; 1992, pp 207-208

²⁸ Charles M. Laymond (Ed), *The Interpreter's One Volume Commentary*, Abingdon, Nashville; 1991, p. 1097

2.2. Wisdom Literature

Apart from Sirach, one of the characteristics of the Wisdom Literature is the absence of the elements of the exodus and the Sinai covenant. Hence Law is not mentioned. As said earlier, the Decalogue is the foundational element that expresses the moral and ethical value of life. "The approach of wisdom to morality is much broader than that of the Torah."²⁹ This implies that wisdom goes beyond the limits of the Law, and it covers the areas which the Law does not reach. And this could be one of the many reasons why the Law has been omitted from wisdom literature.

The omission of the Law from this section of the bible does not take away its vitality and importance in the activities of Israel's life before God. Through the Law Israel came to know and understand her God. It was relevant in the past and throughout history and still is, in the present.

3. People's Attitudes towards the Law

We have learned that, never at any time were the Israelites keep their promises they previously made before God, that everything Yahweh said, they will obey. From generation to generation, the nation continued to break the covenant relationship they had with their God. The kings and the leaders have contributed to this problem. The doctrine of retribution the way they should live. If they obey they will prosper and sin will lead to suffering.

²⁹ Ronald E. Murphy, "Wisdom in the Old Testament", in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (vol. 6), Doubleday, New York; 1992. p.925

3.1. The inability of human being to obey all commandments.

"No mere man, since the fall, is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them, in thought, word, and deed."³⁰ Many of the Old Testament heroes who were thought of to be righteous people seemed to be having perfect relationship with Yahweh, and yet they fell to sin. David for instance, was a righteous servant of God, who is continuously praised in the books of I&II Kings. He walked in the ways of Yahweh. He kept the statutes and commandments of the Lord, and did only that which is right in His eyes, and his heart was wholly true to God (I Kgs 9:4; 11:33, 38; 14:8; 15:3). However he was never perfect in keeping the commandments of the Law. He broke the seventh commandment and even the sixth in a way. So no matter however much a person's degree of devotion to God is, there are weaknesses which human being is prone to.

3.2. The solution to remedy the failure

Is there a solution to remedy this failure, and to meet the requirement that, every single component of the Decalogue has to be kept? The answer lies nowhere else other than our own selves. I think that God's hope and purpose through the Law, is for human not to sin. I do believe that humanity can perfectly obey the law and keep all of it's commandments. However, God in his mercy, had given us the freedom to choose between good and evil, and that is where the problem lies. Being dominated by the desire to do the opposite of what God requires of us, it would be easy for us to break God's

³⁰ Thomas Watson, *The Ten Commandments*, The Banner of Truth Trust, Pennsylvania; 1999. p.184

Law. However, God provides another way in which we can obey all commandments. In this sense, the Law and its precepts are incorporated in a divine entity. We will deal with more of that in the later chapters.

1. The Law within the Jewish communities and religious sects

It seems that during the first century CE, Jews were so desperate in seeking to maintain their identity as the people of God, having the Law as the center of their life and existence. In the New Testament period, "the study and practice of the Torah became the focal point of Jewishness."¹ The Torah determined their identity as a people, rooted back to the Israelite community of the Exodus. However, it seems that the Jews themselves had different interpretations of the Law. Besides the Written Torah, they formulated an Oral Tradition. A "tradition began, that eventually resulted in the great written collections that in the Christian era were called the Mishnah, Gemara, and the Talmud."² These collections are set of commentaries which contain the midrashic tradition (Midrash). Within this tradition, there was a Halakic midrash "which attempted to apply the law by analogy and by a combination of texts to those exceptional cases for which there was no special enactment in the Mosaic Law."³ This is how they handled their oral tradition. The Jews required a clear and understandable interpretation of the Torah. And according to Kaiser and Silver, "these important groups helped to

¹ Nicholas T. Wright, *The New Testament and The People of God* - Vol. 1, SPCK, London, p. 238.

² Walter C. Kaiser & Moisés Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics (The Search for Meaning)*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1994, p. 215.

³ Midrash from Deuter (ו'קד) means 'study' or 'writing' it also means 'exegesis'.

⁴ Kaiser & Silva, *Hermeneutics*, p. 217.

CHAPTER – 3

THE LAW IN THE NEW TESTAMENT TIME

1. The Law within the Jewish communities and religious sects.

It seems that during the first century CE, Jews were so desperate in seeking to maintain their identity as the people of God, having the Law as the center of their life and existence. In the New Testament period, "the study and practice of the Torah became the focal point of Jewishness."¹ The Torah determined their identity as a people, rooted back to the Israelite community of the Exodus. However, it seems that the Jews themselves had different interpretations of the Law. Besides the Written Torah, they formulated an Oral Tradition. A "tradition began, that eventually resulted in the great written collections that in the christian era were called the Mishnah, Gemara, and the Talmud."² These collections are set of commentaries which contain the midrashic³ tradition (Mishnah). Within this tradition, there was a Halakic midrash "which attempted to apply the law by analogy and by a combination of texts to those exceptional cases for which there was no special enactment in the Mosaic Law."⁴ This is how they handled their oral tradition. The Jews required a clear and understandable interpretation of the Torah. And according to Kaiser and Silver, "three important groups helped to

¹ Nicholas T. Wright, *The New Testament and The People of God* – Vol. 1, SPCK, London, p. 228

² Walter C Kaiser & Moises Silver, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics (The Search for Meaning)*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1994, p. 213

³ Midrash from Hebrew (מדרש) means 'study' or 'writing' it also means 'exegesis'

⁴ Kaiser & Silver, *Hermeneutics*, p. 212

formulate different aspects of Jewish interpretation: the rabbis, the Qumran sect of the Dead Sea Scroll and the Jews of the Diaspora."⁵

From the religious perspective, we shall briefly look at Judaism, out of which Christianity arose. We have learned about the dispersion of the Jewish people which began from the Babylonian exile, and continued on to the New Testament era. This had led to the two widely known Jewish religious communities, the Palestine Judaism (those who called Palestine home) and the Diaspora Judaism (Jews of the dispersion). However, the Torah though of different emphasis due to the religious division, became the common element of their lives. As Johnson points out, "the Jews in every nation and every generation shared the symbols provided by the Torah, whatever their differences were. And these became the focus both of the unity and the diversity among them in the New Testament period."⁶

Historically, the upsurge of Hellenization, the Maccabean crisis, and many other major events especially within the inter-testamental period, contributed very much in hastening the trends and divisions within the first century Judaism. These went along with the high degree of piousness of the Jews to their religious convictions and traditions, and their devotion to the Torah. All these conditions resulted in the formation of various religious sects within the Jews themselves. Most commonly known, are the Pharisees, the Saducees, and the Essenes. Josephus described these sects as philosophical school.⁷

⁵ Walter C Kaiser & Moises Silver, *Hermeneutics*, p. 213

⁶ Luke Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament (An Interpretation)*, SCM, London; 1986, p. 42

⁷ See *Works of Josephus (Jewish War II.8.2)*, p. 476

Although they are conservative in their attitudes towards the Torah, they were different in applications.

2. The Law in different directions

The differences that sprung up in the interpretation of the Jewish faith and their practice of the Law can be clearly illustrated by three sectarian groups: the Saducees, the Pharisees, and the Essenes. Despite the common conservative attitude of these sectarians towards the Torah, their emphases and interpretations had distinguished them from one another. This in turn brought the law into different environments, and was applied accordingly within the worlds of their own communities. It was their peculiar mode of interpretations that determined their lives and thought, hence distinguished them from each other. In this section, attention will be focused only on two groups – the Essenes and the Pharisees

2.1. The Essenes

The Essene movement, was identified with the Qumran community. This sectarian group is not mentioned in the New Testament. However they had much influence in the period leading up to the New Testament time. This group emphasized purity and holiness and they wanted to separate themselves from the rest of the world. According to Johnson, "they took the logic of separatism so seriously that they went to the desert to 'prepare the way of the Lord' by a life completely devoted to the observance of the Torah."⁸

⁸ Johnson, *The Writings...* p. 61

Josephus supports such view saying "their piety to the law, and devotion to their ancestral traditions led them to hold Moses, their legislator in reverence second only to God."⁹

BC to 70 CE. This group was also known as the 'separatists'. Their Hebrew origin was

It was because of their concern for purity, that they thought of themselves to be true representatives of Israel, and heir of Judaism. Buchanan stated that they were very concerned with the writings of the past including the Torah. They emphasized pentateuchal rules on cleanness and uncleanness – (Israel had to be sanctified for war (Josh 3:5; 7:13-15), and they are to be pure and holy (Jer 6:4). In Exodus 19:10-15, men of Israel had to stay away from the woman and to wash their garment before the Lord appeared at the giving of the Ten Commandments.¹⁰ They had applied these precepts of the Torah to suit with their situation of living. They read the law as if it was spoken straight to them. And it was their mode of interpretation that greatly affected their behaviour. In seeking for purity and cleanness, they have separated themselves from the impure. "The community was there in the desert as a purified remnant of the people, a realization of what God wanted Israel to be."¹¹

understood basically from the standpoint of obedience to the Law. So the Law is the

It is quite clear that these people had selfishly put themselves within the confines of a small circle. Their mode of interpretation defeats the purpose of God's hope for the whole world through the Law, to consider and love the neighbour as thyself.

⁹ Josephus, (JW II. 8. 9), p. 477

¹⁰ See the article by G. W. Buchanan "Essenes" : Bromiley (ED), *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Vol. 3), Eerdmans, Michican; 1986, p. 150

¹¹ Johnson, *The Writings...* p. 61

2.2. The Pharisees

The major division of pharisaic movement, was quite very strong in the period from 63 BC to 70 CE. This group was also known as the 'separatists.' Their Hebrew origin פָּרֻשִׁים means, "to separate or spread out." It seems that the situation of the time and their confrontation with the regime of the Roman government, affected their agenda. Their intentions were not in line with the political systems of the Roman government at that time. "They were not motivated by political or economic ambitions, but by their understanding of the Torah and their belief that the destiny of the Jew, was religious rather than political."¹² In this way, they separated themselves from the rest of the people and they enthusiastically tried to live by the Mosaic Law and its oral interpretation. Filson mentioned that, "with the pharisees, Herod had no real rapport with them"¹³ They opposed the kings.

"The pharisees look upon the Torah of Moses as a definitive revelation of God's will."¹⁴ Their piety was centered in the Torah. "Even their hopes for the Age to come were understood basically from the standpoint of obedience to the Law."¹⁵ So the Law in the point of view of the pharisees, was God's greatest gift to Israel, and through Israel to all people. Despite the high degree of piety to the written Law, The pharisees seem to value the oral tradition much higher. According to Filson "in their view, this tradition was

¹² Howard C Kcc, Franklin W Young, Karlfried Froehlich, (eds) *Understanding the New Testament*, (2nd d), Prentice Hall, New Jersey; 1957, p.41

¹³ Floyd V. Filson, *A New Testament History*, SCM, London; 1983. p.26

¹⁴ Kcc, Young, Froehlich, *Understanding*, p.39

¹⁵ Kcc, Young, Froehlich, *Understanding*, p.40

given when the Law was given to Moses, and it had been handed down faithfully from the fathers, so it was authoritative as the written law."¹⁶

Because they greatly supported and sponsored the formulated oral tradition, and had interested so much in the halakic interpretation of the Torah, they in turn moved away from the real intention of the Mosaic Law. Hill in his commentary on Matthew, states that, "the Qumran community characterized them as 'expounders of the Law,' they sought those interpretations which were the easiest for themselves, and offered them ways of circumventing or evading the full rigour of its provision"¹⁷ So the Pharisees had somehow tried to undermine the real intention of the Mosaic Law because of their own interest to adjust to the contemporary situation of their own lives, and they demanded the people to follow and keep it the way they wanted. As Johnson mentioned, "their view of the Torah was strict and demanding. To be part of the people, to take the yoke of the kingdom on oneself, was to take on the yoke of the Torah"¹⁸ Like the Essenes, they were concerned with purity, and they favour the idea of separation.

The characteristics of life in the first century Judaism and especially the pharisaic tradition, had greatly affected the community in which Matthew's Gospel was directed. "In the background of Matthew's polemic against the scribes and pharisees are the Jewish and christian communities in Matthew's day."¹⁹

¹⁶ Filson, *History*, pp.50-51

¹⁷ David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, (NCBC), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids; 1996. p.68

¹⁸ Johnson, *The Writings...* p.53

3. Background of Matthew's Gospel

3.1. Matthew's Jewish Christian Community - Sitz im Leben

It is generally agreed by most New Testament scholars, that the original readers of Matthew's Gospel were the Jewish Christians. There are many internal evidences that point to the Jewishness of the Gospel. Some of the key evidences include the stress on the fulfillment of the Old Testament, the emphasis on Jesus' loyalty to the Law (5:17-20), Jesus' command to the disciples to preach not in the Gentile region but rather the lost sheep of the house of Israel (10:5-6), and the Great Commission (28:18-20). These emphases also determine the message of the evangelist.

As most New Testament scholars suggest, Matthew's Gospel is dated between 80 and 90 CE.²⁰ According to Wright, this was the period of reconstruction in Judaism (70 CE to 135 CE).²¹ This could be the great impact of the Jewish war. This time was seen and regarded to have a great significance in the development of early christianity. It is most likely that Matthew's community was very much influenced by the current trends of Judaism at the time. Hagner states that "Jewish Christians have always found themselves in difficult situation, not least in first century. When the Jews became Christians they were forced to cope, on the one hand, with their non-Christian Jewish brothers and sisters, from whom they have separated themselves; and on the other hand, with a large gentile community among whom they now exist as a minority, but as members of the family

¹⁹ Anthony J Saldarini, "Pharisees", in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Doubleday, New York; 1992. p.296

²⁰ John P. Meier, "Matthew", in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Doubleday, New York; 1992. p.624
Udo Schnelle, *The History and Theology of the New Testament Writings*, SCM, London; 1998. p.222

²¹ Wright, *People of God*, pp.161-166

nonetheless.²² Jewish-Christians were in the midst of uncertainty because of the two forces. Christianity started to break away from Judaism at this time. Kilpatrick claims that "the Gospel came into being in an essentially Jewish Christian community, where the building up of a church life in independence of contemporary Judaism was in progress."²³ The situation of the Christian community was not easy because of the great influence of the Jewish religion.

As mentioned earlier, the Law was so central in the Jewish community. It was interpreted and perhaps practiced as required by Judaism. Harrington writes that "with the destruction of the temple in 70 CE, and the loss of Jewish political control in the land of Israel, the Torah became even more significant than ever before."²⁴ Matthew's readers, affected by Judaism, and despite being converted into Christianity, were still having the Jewish notion and attitude towards the Mosaic Law, as something limited to the Jews themselves. And thus making them think of Jesus to be an abrogator²⁵ of the Law. The Jewish religious leaders (pharisees) of the time, had helped so much in increasing the hardships faced by the Jewish Christian community. They are the major opponents of Jesus in the whole Gospel.

²² Donald A Hagner, *Matthew 1-13* (WBC), Word Books, Texas, 1993, p.lxix

²³ Hill, *Matthew* (NCBC), p.40

²⁴ Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, (Sacra Pagina vol. 1) Liturgical Press, Minnesota; 1991, p.317

²⁵ The Jews thought that Jesus' replaces the Law.

3.2. Emphases of Matthew's Gospel

In the framework of the evangelist's presentation, the Law is one of the most prominent issues in the Gospel. The critical situation of Matthew's Jewish Christians, their position between their Jewish brothers and sisters and on the other hand their gentile Christian friends, and also their exclusive attitude to Law, had given shape to the emphases of the evangelist's account. Because of the negative attitude of the Jews to the teachings of Jesus about the Law, Matthew presented a Gospel to confirm its validity and fulfilment in Jesus. The uncertainties and confusions in the community probably prompted the evangelist to present such a message. As Hagner writes, "the Gospel was written to confirm Jewish believers in the truth of Christianity as the fulfilment of the promises to Israel, which entails the argument that Jesus is the Messiah, that he was loyal to the Law, and that he came to the Jews."²⁶ Matthew presents Jesus' interpretation of the Law as the correct moral and true ethical values for Christian living. Hill maintains that "Matthew's purpose is to provide a church with a distinctly Jewish Christian ethos a work from which to teach and preach, which declares that Jesus is the Messiah and Son of Man and supremely Lord of the church, in relation to whom, as the fulfilment of the purpose of Judaism."²⁷

Throughout the whole Gospel, the pharisees are the major opponents of Jesus. The polemic against the scribes and pharisees in chapter 23, is quite remarkable. This determines something of their interpretations of the Law. This in turn implies that Matthew's purpose was not only to defend his Christian friends against the religious

²⁶ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, p.lxx

²⁷ Hill, *Matthew*, p.43

leaders of the Jews and their false application of the Law, but also to confirm that the Law is being brought into a new dimension and integrated in Jesus Christ from whom the true interpretation of it comes. Saldarini mentions that, "some argue that Matthew's view of Jewish leaders, especially the prominence given to the pharisees, reflects the polemical confrontation between Matthean community and the post -70 C E Jewish community which was dominated by the pharisees-become-rabbis."²⁸

It is evident that Matthew was writing against the current Jewish interpretation of the Law at the time. As mentioned earlier, the oral tradition and their midrashic interpretation was formulated in order to understand more about the Mosaic Law. The pharisees had supported the oral law. It is clear that Matthew has a negative view towards these traditions especially the halakic midrash. For Matthew, it is Jesus only who has the true midrash of the Mosaic Law. Matthew makes a synthesis in his presentation of Jesus' teaching. Jesus' interpretations and teachings, bring a new dimension and are inclusive of every single commandment of the Mosaic Law. According to Hagner, "the evangelist is reaching in both direction to stress the continuity with Moses and the Torah, and at the same time, to affirm the radical newness of the Gospel."²⁹ It appears that the evangelist was prompted to focus on the validity of the Law and its genuine interpretation and modification by Jesus, because of the way it was

²⁸ Saldarini, *Pharisees*, 1992, p. 296

²⁹ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13* (WBC), p. lxxi

handled during his time. Matthew pictures Jesus as the man who stands at the middle of the Torah, and that he incorporates the entire Mosaic Law in himself

JESUS IS THE MICROCHIP AS PRESENTED BY MATTHEW

The microchip is not an elimination of the diversity of circuit elements and components in the area of electronics. It puts them together, and gives them their maximum quality of operation. And today, microchips are not only designed to house all these components, but are also programmed to store all information, and to perform every task that keeps the electronic appliances work in their utmost usages and worth.

Many christians had been talking about the irrelevancy of the Law in the present days. This is because Jesus is in his place. However, Matthew in his Gospel stresses the persistence and a new dimension of the Law, by presenting Jesus neither a nullifier nor the one who replaces it. The evangelist also portrays Jesus as the new Moses, who accomplishes the old Mosaic tradition (Law) and brings it into perfection. This is clearly seen in Matthew 5:17-20. It is placing the Law in a microchip.

In God's salvation for the whole world, there is a requirement for people not to do. This requirement indeed demands a full state of obedience to the commandments of the Law. And we are called to be perfect Law keepers, and to obey each and every single element of the Law in its fullness. How do we attain and perform this call?

CHAPTER - 4

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The function and meaning of Jesus as the microchip who integrate the Law could be clearly seen through: (1) The exegesis of Matthew 5:17-20 & 22:37-40, (2) The basic requirements of the Law (perfection and righteousness). (3) The significance of the analogy.

1. Exegesis

1. 1. Matthew 5:17-20

Many scholars have suggested that 5:17-20 is the final part of the introduction to the Sermon on the Mount, in which Matthew puts together the teachings of Jesus concerning the Law. It introduces Jesus' ethical teachings for the moral code of Matthew's community, and the true value of the Mosaic Law. It highlights the main theme 'Fulfillment of the Law.' The passage also echoes that Jesus, maintains and puts together all the commands of the Law.

Verse-17

- *Do not think that I have come to abolish the law... I have come not to abolish, but to fulfill.* This can be the key verse of the pericope and even the whole sermon. Udo Schnelle quotes G. Strecker that Matthew 5 verse 17 is the theme and central element of the sermon.¹ The impression is that, this is an argument towards those who may have thought of an abolition of the Law. Matthew presents Jesus, defending his loyalty to the Torah against those who had pointed him out to be an anti-nomian.

¹ Udo Schnelle, *The History and Theology of the New Testament Writings*, SCM, London, 1998, p. 237

The repetition of the word - καταλυσαι - 'to abolish,' clearly emphasizes an affirmation, that the Law is not going to be annulled. It is still in continuity with the past.

Πληρῶσαι : Infinitive of πληρω - 'to make full' Many New Testament scholars take *πληρῶσαι* as the key term of this passage.² Note that the Aorist indicates that the fulfilment of the Law was done once, and only by Jesus. According to Hill, *πληρῶσαι* means "to confirm, to validate, to bring to actuality by doing, to set forth in its true meaning hence to complete."³ 'Complete' here has a sense of an incomplete Law because of human actions. For Matthew, Jesus fulfills it through his complete obedience towards each and every precept during his earthly life. Others state that to fulfill means to establish, tracing back to its Aramaic origin *mv.q....*⁴ In this sense, Jesus is the proof of this Law. He confirms it, hence, putting all commandments together. Many scholars seem to be focusing on the same conclusion, that Jesus accomplishes the Law universally and absolutely, and 'to cause God's will to be obeyed as it should be.

From this discussion, Jesus can then be seen as the one who combines the whole of the Law within himself, so that every precept could be kept. And in that way Jesus integrates the whole humanity by reaching out beyond the confines of the Jewish people so that each one must fully become a member of the family of Christ.

² Some of these scholars include, M. Eugene Boring, *The Gospel of Matthew* (The New Interpreter's Bible), Abingdon, Nashville; 1995. p.186

³ Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p.117

⁴ Hagner, *Matthew*, p.105

Verse 18

Many believed that because v.18 is parallel to Luke 16:17, therefore it came from source Q. And commentators had found difficulties attributing it to Jesus. Obvious in this verse, is its eschatological sense as many scholars had seen it. According to Harrington, "The passing away of heaven and earth is another way of describing the coming of God's kingdom in its fullness."⁵ Others stated that this is a declaration expressed in prophetic form as an affirmation of 5:17.

יֹטָא - jot, In its Hebrew origin, this is the tenth letter of the alphabet, the smallest of them all. כֶּרֶאִיא - a point, apex, it could also be referred to the little dots that distinguishes one Hebrew letter from each other. Jesus' point here is, not even the tiniest and the minutest single element of the Law shall perish, but all is integrated in himself. "Untill all is accomplished" There is an implication that Jesus is referring to his presence on earth. The prophecy has been fulfilled (i.e. his coming). The Law also has now being incorporated in him without a single letter passed away.

Verse 19

Verse 19 is thought of to be traditional. One indication of this is that an antecedent is missing from the word *τουτου* as it should be, in the Greek grammar. Matthew here may have then used an earlier tradition.⁶ Hill states that it raises the question whether the

⁵ Daniel J Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, (Sacra Pagina Series vol. 1), Liturgical Press, Minnesota; 1991, p.81

⁶ Stephenson H. Brooks, *Matthew's Community* (The Evidence of his Special Saying Material), JSNT 16 JSOT, England; 1987, p.28

commandments referred to are those of the Law, or those of Jesus which follow.⁷

However, the commandments that follow are only modifications and new meanings of the old ones. So *τούτων* is referred to those already existed in the Law given to Moses.

Jesus, a divine entity, the Messiah, and that is Jesus himself.

This verse has in view those who have thought of the abolition and have done additional interpretation of the Law. This could be referred to the scribes and pharisees who are the major opponents of Jesus, with their halakic interpretation (oral tradition) of the written Torah. It strongly confirms the continuance of the old Law and its fulfillment in Christ.

enclosed within the double command to Love God and the neighbor.

Verse 20

Scholars state that this verse appears to be entirely Matthew's own composition. This can be true in the sense that Matthew presents Jesus as the fulfilment of the Law, in whom all would achieve true righteousness, in opposition to the oral Torah created by the scribes and Pharisees, who were the Jewish religious leadership of his own days. They were the ones who had seriously affected Matthew's community.

as the fulfilment of the Law. According to Hill, "The reference to the Law and

Here, it speaks of the quality of obedience to the Law. That is righteousness when every commandment of the Law is being obeyed to the full. In this way, anyone's

righteousness would reach beyond and beat that demanded by the scribes and pharisees.

And if this righteousness is achieved, the relationship with God and with others will be sustained as required by the Law. The Law then has not been erased but maintained in its continuity with the past.

*8 Hastings, *Matthew*, p. 315*

*9 Douglas Hill, *Matthew: Interpretation - A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, John Knox*

⁷ Hill, *Matthew* (NCBC), p. 118

Verses 17-20 clearly affirm the fulfilment of the Law by Jesus. Fulfilment in the sense, that Jesus synthesizes every commandment of the Law and puts them together to be part of the whole thing. All precepts are integrated and have been brought together into a new form; a divine entity, the Microchip, and that is Jesus himself.

1.2. Matthew 22:37-40

In support of this view (Law in a Microchip), Matthew 22:37-40 expresses clearly how the entire Law has been encapsulated into a single but divine entity. The entire Law is enclosed within the double command to Love God and the neighbor.

In this passage, scholars suggested that Matthew has turned Mark's friendly discussion between Jesus and the earnest scribe (Mark 12:28-34) into a confrontation with the pharisees.⁸ This again echoes Matthew's attitude towards the religious leaders of Judaism of his time. It is an attack on the pharisees with their charge against Jesus as the one who abolishes the Law. Matthew here seems to be proving his presentation of Jesus as the fulfilment of the Law. According to Hare, "The references to the Law and prophets in 5:17 and 22:40 bracket Jesus' ministry to Israel as the God-authorized end-time teacher."⁹ This is not to suggest that Jesus is the first one to bring the two commandments together as a summary of human obligation. The evangelist quotes and puts together Deut 6:5 and Lev 19:18 to prove his point.

⁸ Harrington, *Matthew*, p. 315

⁹ Douglas Hare, *Matthew*, (Interpretation - A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching), John Knox, Louisville; 1993. p.258

The double commandment to love God and to love the neighbour summarizes the whole Law. This is a synthesis of the entire Torah and even the whole of the Old Testament. As previously mentioned in Chapter Two, the whole Law is just an extension of the Ten Commandments. And it is obvious that the first three commandments are directly related to God, as the rest point to duties and responsibilities concerning the neighbour. "For Matthew, the essence of the Law, is the commandment of love in its two-fold direction, towards God and towards neighbor – and this becomes the principle for the interpretation of the whole."¹⁰

The commandments of the Law are tied together by 'love.' Keeping track of all the precepts of the Law is in fact performing the act of love for God and for the neighbour. Therefore, "in focusing on the two halves of the Ten Commandments, it offers a foundation for peoples' living; and by summing up that duty as *love*, it goes beyond the specific requirements of the law to the God-like attitude which must underlie them."¹¹ Humanity is required to love. The two commandments to love compliment each other. To love God is to love the neighbour and to love the neighbour is to love God.

Hare states that, "it is important to remember that the primary component of biblical love is not affection but commitment."¹² It is man's duty and requirement to act out love. Full commitment to act out love for God, and for the neighbour is of course obeying every precepts of the Law. Love here then is the integrative element that binds every single precepts of the Law. Harrington writes that, "Matthew saw the love-

¹⁰ Hill, *Matthew*, p.68.

¹¹ Carson, France, Motyer, and Wehnam, *New Bible Commentary*, p. 933

commandment as giving meaning and direction to the whole Torah"¹³ In other words the Law is an extension and a commentary of the command to love.

The use of the verb κρεμαται in verse 40, which means 'to hang' or 'suspend' is equivalent to the Hebrew root חלל which is in its Pual form חלל has the sense of enveloping.¹⁴ This in turn gives an impression that the combination of the two love commandments envelope the whole Torah. For Matthew, it was Jesus who brings the Law under the umbrella of the commandments to love; not only through his teachings, but also his entire life especially his works and deeds. As mentioned earlier, the double commandment to love summarizes the whole Law. That is how the Law came to be incorporated in Jesus. He has all these characteristics of love for God and for others. Hence the Law is integrated in him.

2. Basic Requirements of the Law

One of the basic functions of the microchip is that it is programmed to integrate and store every required data and information, for the perfect and maximum operation of any equipment. Jesus in the same manner, not only integrates all commandments of the Law, but he also synthesizes them with all the requirements of the Law, such as righteousness and perfection. He himself is the microchip that brings this synthesis into effect.

2.1. Righteousness

Primarily, the Law is of course a demand to do righteousness before God. Matthew 5:6 and 6:33 imply righteousness as both a demand by God and a gift from God. According to Childs' canonical approach, the concept of righteousness is closely related to

¹² Hare, *Exodus*, p.260

¹³ Harrington, *Matthew*, p.316

¹⁴ Holladay, *Lexicon*, p.390

Matthew's whole Christology. Jesus fulfils all righteousness.¹⁵ That is understood by his identification with the poor and sinful (the commandment to love the neighbour). Childs also states that, "Matthew conceives of the demands for righteousness not as a bigger and better pharisaism, but in a new and radical quality of behaviour, which in its obedience to the will of God partakes of an eschatological reality."¹⁶

We have been talking about righteousness as a primary requirement of the christian lifestyle. We also know that God is righteous. However three questions are being raised.

- 1) What is the righteousness of humanity?
- 2) Is there any righteousness through obeying the Law?
- 3) How could righteousness be achieved?

There is quite a wide range of meanings. Basically in the Old Testament, צדק is godliness (2 Sam 22:21-25), a behavior which God expects from man (Gen 15:6)¹⁷ In the New Testament, the noun δικαιοσύνη "in its broad sense is the state of him/her who is such as he/she ought to be, it is the condition acceptable to God; and that is integrity and purity of life, uprightness, correctness in thinking, feeling and acting."¹⁸ Matt 6:33 implies a parallel to the Old Testament meanings. The phrase πληρῶσαι πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην in Matt 3:15 is translated as - 'to perform completely whatever is right.'

¹⁵ Brevard Childs, *The New Testament as a Canon*, (An Introduction), Trinity International, Pennsylvania; 1994, pp.76

¹⁶ Childs, *Canon*, pp.76-77

¹⁷ Holladay, *Lexicon*. p.301

¹⁸ Joseph Henry. Thayer (ed) *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Zondervan, Michigan; 1981, p.149

As previously discussed, obeying the Law certainly sustains the relationship with God and with others. In Deut 6:25, Israel are reminded to obey all the commandments of God's Law in order to achieve righteousness. Full obedience to the Law in fact fulfills a high quality of behavior and a perfect mode of ethics. That is a response to the will of God, and it certainly guarantees a person to be righteous. The antitheses in Matt 5:21-48 show how the evangelist understands the fulfilling of the Law by Jesus. This means that Jesus' teachings and new interpretation of the Law portrays a claim to set forth the original intention of God's Law; that is – a Godly life in humanity.

There is a great possibility that man can perfectly obey, in order to achieve righteousness, and be granted entrance into the kingdom of God as He wills. "The coming of the kingdom is a quality of action made possible by Christ, having demonstrated the way of righteousness."¹⁹ Jesus only had shown humanity that it is possible for man to do it, by performing and following what He did.

2.2. Perfection

The six antitheses in 5:21-47 do not represent a nullification of the Law. The evangelist here presents Jesus' true and new teachings and interpretations of the Mosaic Law. Matthew puts together six examples to contrast Jesus teachings with the accepted understanding of the Old Testament Law. This understanding was most probably current within the Jewish community towards which Matthew directs his Gospel. Stott writes that, Matthew presents Jesus as a king.²⁰ He is the king with authority to reinterpret and

¹⁹ Childs, *Canon...* p.77

²⁰ The prominence of the royal title (Son of David) in Matthew compared to other evangelists. John Stott,

modify the Law, so that it will be acceptable to the people. According to Harrington, "Matthew's task was to show that Jesus (and his followers), far from being an enemy of the Torah, fulfilled it in his teaching and action, and thus gave to it the appropriate interpretation for the changed situation of Judaism."²¹ Jesus knows what is best for his people and that he gives the proper order of life.

The antitheses are all summed up by verse 48. The word τελειος describes "the one who reaches the proper height of virtue and integrity; it means perfection."²² Perfection is the goal and standard of the better righteousness as presented by Matthew. This is the primary objective of the Law as portrayed by Matthew. It is a requirement for human behaviour to reach into perfection. And to reach these conditions and ethical demands, the law must be kept and be obeyed in its fullness. Perfection then in this sense is fulfilment of all the ethical demands as presented in this part of the Jesus' sermon on the mount; which is full obedience to the commandments of the Law. Perfection also is illustrated by Matthew in 19:16-22. Verse 21 does not mean that it is a must for everyone to sell their possessions, and give money to all the poor. Hill states that "the selling of possessions is a special requirement in circumstances where possession form a stumbling block to discipleship."²³ The emphasis here could be lying upon the relationship with the neighbour. In order to maintain the bond, Jesus here shows him the way that leads to perfection. As mentioned previously, to love the neighbour as the self is to love God and

Men With a Message - An Introduction to the New Testament and its Writers, Evangelical Literature Trust, England; 1996

²¹ Harrington, *Matthew*, p.91

²² Thayer (ed) *Greek-English*, p.618

²³ Hill, *Matthew*, p.283

to love God is to love the neighbour. Love binds all the commandments of the law. Genuine love for God and for others, as a matter of fact, is a true characteristic of a perfect law keeper.

Matthew presents Jesus, a man of all time, who had demonstrated the perfection of God. He was perfect in keeping the Law, perfect in love, and He is righteous. Jesus showed God's will through his unlimited love for others, by his identification with the poor and sinners. This is a call for God's people to love the neighbours including the enemies. Jesus extends the love of God by reaching beyond the confines of the Jews, so that all will be one in Christ. "Because of his authority as King and Son of God, the Law is reshaped and re-angled, so that instead of emphasizing the difference between Israel and Gentile nations, it is now seen to encourage love for the enemy and a breaking down of barriers between Jews and Gentiles."²⁴ Every characteristic of the framework of Israel's history from the Old Testament to the New Testament, shape the salvation history of the whole world. This salvation history was culminated and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Matthew presents Jesus as Christ who has opened the locked doors and the exclusive attitudes of the Jews towards salvation, to be extended to their neighbours. God hopes to save humanity, this means that there is God's expectation for the entire world to achieve an absolute moral and spiritual behaviour. At this point God sent his son. He is the only one who could integrate all the christian believers, influence their lives and maintains unity. He is the microchip that brings the whole world closer, to formulate a global community of christians, and perfected only by Himself.

3. Significance of the Microchip Analogy

The commandments of the Law are the foundational elements of our moral and ethical conduct. And it is already been discussed, that the Law has been integrated in Christ. This is made clear by the summary made by Jesus in the love commandments (Matt 22:37-40). Jesus in this sense incorporates in himself every characteristic that is required for anyone to enter into His kingdom. How then could a christian be able to fulfill all these ethical demands?

Jesus has made it possible for us to follow and obey every commandments of God's Law as it was primarily intended. And the only way in which we could possibly be able to fulfil them is by allowing Christ to operate within our hearts. Paul in Gal 2:8 use the word ἐνεργησεν to clarify how the risen Christ has influenced his life. 'Ενεργησα from the root ἐνεργεω, means to be 'operative' or 'to effect.' The word also has a sense of energizing. Jesus operated within the heart of the apostle and kept him committed to the Gospel of Christ. This in turn moved him to advance his mission towards gentile region, as an attempt to integrate them all in Christ.

Like the microchip that operates in the heart of any electronic equipment, and in the heart of the technological world nowadays, Jesus is the Microchip that can keep us in operation in the most accepted and efficient christian life style. No one has been able to keep and obey every commandments of the Law in its fullness. It is also not easy to remember and keep them one by one, because of our proneness to sin. Humanity always fail to do so,

²⁴ John Stott, *Men with a Message*, p.39

because it is beyond our capacity. We are liable to fall, and are subjected to our weaknesses. However, I still believe that it is possible for people to avoid sin. All the qualities of the christian behaviour are found in Jesus, in the commandments of the Law, in love, righteousness, etc... So if we allow Christ to dwell and operate as a microchip in our hearts, we will be able to obey God's Law perfectly to ignore our weaknesses, to love and be recognized as righteous people. Hence in this way, we display the Christ-like manner in the activities of our christian life. Jesus is the remedy of human failure to remain sinless because of our limitations.

It has been a common problem in the ministry that church ministers continue to break commandments of the Law. Why has this happened so often, and yet as ministers of the church, they had already completed four years of theological training? The answer lies within themselves. But I also think that this is the result, when Jesus is missing from our hearts, as we try to obey and follow the Law of God. Of course we can say that Jesus Christ is in the centre and core of our faith. However the common problem does not indicate a faith that is centered in Jesus. The problem is probably the impact of going the longer way; trying to obey the Law without a full commitment and high degree of devotion to Jesus Christ.

Theologically, the Law portrays God's will and love for His people. Jesus Christ is the personification of that love of God and will through the Law. Law then plays a crucial role in leading christians into God's salvation, when it is perfectly obeyed. And to become perfectly obey, it is Christ only who could make it possible. Russell Pregeant

produced a thesis that "Matthew's soteriology is based on Torah; while it is Jesus who brings salvation, by interpreting the Law, it is finally the Law itself that it is the efficient means of salvation..."²⁵ So the Law and its commandments in this sense, become the integral part of our entrance into salvation.

²⁵ Mogens Muller, "The Theological Interpretation of the Figure of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew - Some Principal Features in Matthean Christology" *New Testament Studies* 45/2 (1999) p.162

CONCLUSION

In the beginning of this paper, we see that the Decalogue is the basic and fundamental element of Israel's life. The wide range of commandments and precepts of the Law in every aspect, is summed up by the Decalogue. Hence the Decalogue holds a special position within the Law, and even the entire Torah. It stands at the centre.

The Law was intended and given to the people of Israel in the Old Testament, in order that they may walk righteously before their God by obeying the Law, and by showing love for God and one another. Should Israel managed to fulfill this requirement of the Law, they were to be saved before God. In this sense, the Law becomes the integral part of human behaviour, in maintaining the correct relationship with God and with others.

The validity and significance of the Law has been extended into the New Testament period; and despite the differences of interpretations, the Law was still centered in the mind of the Jewish people. This significance sustained and continued on until the present age of christianity. This is to say that we cannot do away with the Law. It is a norm that determines the people's response of obedience before God.

Of course, it is not easy to keep each and every commandments of the Law, because human is prone to sin. That was the problem in the Old Testament period. Nevertheless, God provides another way in which every commandment and every precept of the Law will possibly and perfectly be obeyed. And for this reason, the Law can be a part of our search for God's salvation. However, it is Jesus who makes it possible for us to be on the

right track through obeying this Law. The Law then cannot stand on it's own. It can only be kept in its fullness through faith in Jesus Christ.

Matthew presents Jesus as the fulfilment of the Law. He incorporates all the components of the Law. It means that Jesus has all the credentials and qualities of a perfect being. This resembles the function of the microchip. Jesus, as the Microchip had shown all the dimensions of the Law, and all righteousness, perfected by his Love for God and for the whole world. This was demonstrated in his earthly ministry, and culminated in his death and victorious resurrection. He becomes as of great significance in our lives. In other words, Jesus is the only one who is able to move us to live righteously before God. Therefore this Microchip should be inserted in the heart of every christian. Once we totally devote ourselves to Jesus and believe in Him, allowing Him to dwell in our hearts to energize and operate us, we will be able to keep and to obey the Law in full.

Jesus revealed God's love through his fulfilment of the Law. He also shows that it is possible for us to do likewise, in order that we may be free from sin, and remain righteous before God. We have to hold Jesus firmly, so that we may not forget nor loose any of God's commandments. How do we do that? It is only through faith.

The analogy of Jesus as the Microchip in our life, can have great significance in our calling to serve the Lord. This Chip will certainly enable us to operate in the maximum qualities and experiences of life that are required for God's ministry. In other words, we

are required to be perfect law keepers. For the law is the integral part of maintaining that intimate relationship with God, and with our neighbours.

Jesus as the Microchip integrates all the precepts of the Law, and makes it easier for humanity to follow. Furthermore, he is also a Microchip of the post-modern church in the trends towards ecumenism. Jesus brings the great diversity of christian denominations and integrates them into a Global Community of christians with one faith and one belief. This in turn brings every christians from every corner of the world to get to know each other and communicate with each other through the common confession, that Jesus Christ is Lord, who had died and rose again from the dead.

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