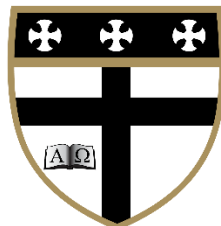


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A HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

**“The Ecclesiastical Polity of Ancient Israel, the Patriarchal Family
and the Jewish Courts: A Prologue to the New Testament”¹**

by

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¹ Roderick O. Ford, *The Apostolate Papers* (unpublished research papers, 2015 to 2022).
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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Juridical Analysis of Mosaic Law and New Testament.....	3
Conclusion.....	15

“I am a Jew, and Jesus is my Rabbi!”

-- Messianic Judaism

² Roderick O. Ford, *The Apostolate Papers* (unpublished research papers, 2015 to 2022).
www.roderickford.org.

Introduction

This note concludes that Christ himself adopted the political and social structure of the ancient Hebrews: the twelve tribes; the seventy elders; the temple; the synagogues; and the patriarchal family structure.

As such, various Old Testament laws (i.e., the “moral laws” [and all judicial laws that implement the “moral laws”]) are part and parcel of the New Testament Church.³ In ancient Israel, those moral and judicial laws were implemented in the “rabbinical” courts. However, in modern-day North America and Europe, there is often a conflict between the Judea-Christian moral laws [or judicial laws] and the local secular court systems.

What would Christ have us Christians to do?⁴

This paper is designed to remind Christians that the Christian religion is a branch of Judaism, which conceptualizes itself as a political nation as well as religion, whereby religion is the foundation of its constitution, law, and legal system.

It was the duty of the Early Church to set proper boundaries on a number of issues. First, to what extent must the Early Church carbon-copy Jewish practices and traditions, and to what extent must it completely discard them?

That debate did not stop or become irrelevant in the first century, but rather it continues to the very day.

One of the pressing crises now confronting the church is that of traditional marriage and human sexuality. This paper is largely a reflection of that crisis and offers some suggestions as to how both Christians and Jews might address this crisis.

³ Here, I have adopted John Calvin’s division of the Law of Moses into three categories: moral laws, judicial laws, and ceremonial laws. According to Calvin, the ceremonial laws were abrogated entirely and replaced by the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper; most of the judicial laws were also abrogated with the exception of those judicial laws that implement the moral laws; but all of the moral laws are eternal and remain valid.

⁴ The Apostle Paul made his recommendations, to wit: 1 Corinthians 6: 1-11.

Juridical Analysis of Mosaic Law and New Testament

Now the doctrine of Church and State separation, which has become a standard part of American First Amendment jurisprudence,⁵ is simply a division of powers between clergyman and civil magistrates,⁶ both of whom are subordinated to God.⁷ Therefore, in a Christian sense, Jesus Christ is king even over

⁵ See, e.g., Jerold S. Auerbach, *Rabbis and Lawyers: From Torah to Constitution* (New Orleans, LA: Quid Pro Quo Books, 1990, 2010), pp. 11-12 (“Despite the conventional wisdom, which celebrates the ratification of the First Amendment as assurance of the strict separation between religion and the state, this is largely a retrospective projection of modern secular values. No matter how fervently the ‘wall of separation’ principle (briefly enunciated, and narrowly applied, by Jefferson more than a decade later) is intoned, the United States remained a Christian republic.... Similarly Jefferson conceded that only the national government lacked authority to prescribe due forms of religious exercise or enforce religious discipline.... The First Amendment did nothing to moderate ‘evangelical civic piety,’ the blending of Protestantism and republicanism that sustained ‘the long spell of Christendom’ in the United States. The amendment did not repudiate the principle of a Christian state; rather, it provided an alternative means toward securing it.”)

⁶ The Protestant Reformer Martin Luther (1483- 1546), Master of Arts and Doctor of Sacred Theology, for instance, set forth exactly what I have felt, thought, and believed, since my days as a law student, regarding the “divine and sacred” nature of law practice, and regarding the plain fact that lawyers trained in the Western legal tradition have historically been regarded as “secular ministers or secular priests,” to wit:

Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate (1520)(stating, “the temporal authorities are baptized with the same baptism and have the same faith and Gospel as we, we must grant that they are priests and bishops, and count their office one which has a proper and a useful place in the Christian community.”)

Temporal Authority: To What Extent it should be Obeyed (1523)(stating, “[h]ere you inquire further, whether constables, hangmen, jurists, lawyers, and others of similar function can also be Christians and in a state of salvation. Answer: If the governing authority and its sword are a divine service, as was proved above, then everything that is essential for the authority's bearing of the sword must also be divine service.”)

⁷ In American constitutional law, the Declaration of Independence, which speaks explicitly of “Nature’s God,” “a Supreme Judge of the world” and “the protection of divine Providence,” irrevocably incorporates civil religion into the constitutional jurisprudence of the United States. This same “God” is represented in the various Oaths of office for various public officials, including that of Attorneys and Judges in the several states of the United States. See, e.g., Algernon Sidney Crapsey’s *Religion and Politics* (New York, N.Y.: Thomas Whittaker, 1905), p. 256 (“The only survival of the bond of union which once united these two institutions [i.e., Church and State] is the formal acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God which is expressed in the oath of office that the state requires of its officers as they

democracies, democratic-republican civil polities, or republican-structured empires.⁸ The civil polities influenced by Luther, Calvin, and the Protestant Reformation assumed that God was “king.”⁹ See, e.g., Daniel J. Eleazar, “Deuteronomy as Israel’s Ancient Constitution: Some Preliminary Reflection,” *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, thus describing the Hebrew foundations of Puritan colonial New England, Reformed-Protestant Europe, and American-Revolutionary constitutionalism, as follows:

Deuteronomy had a similar impact on the Christian world. Whenever Christian theologians, political philosophers or reformers sought biblical sources for political ideas, they turned to Deuteronomy as a major Scriptural source. The use of Deuteronomy reached its apogee during the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when the founders of the new Swiss, Huguenot, Rhineland, Dutch, Puritan, and Scottish commonwealths rested their polities on Deuteronomic foundations. The culmination of this trend came at the time of the American revolutionary polemical literature between 1765 and 1805. As Donald Lutz has pointed out, Deuteronomy was cited more frequently than all citations of European political philosophers combined, a major source for the myriad political sermons of the period.

In a word, the constitution of the United States of America appears to have been founded upon the same Hebrew constitution that established in the Torah (i.e., the Five Books of Moses).¹⁰

enter their duties. This oath of office is a solemn religious act, giving divine sanction to the functions of the legal officer.”)

⁸ Matthew 28: 18-20 (“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”)

⁹ See, e.g., Algernon Sidney Crapsey, *Religion and Politics* (New York, N.Y.: Thomas Whittaker, 1905), p. 244 (“It was the stern conviction of the Puritan that not King George, but God, was the rightful sovereign in America....”)

¹⁰ Daniel J. Eleazar, “Deuteronomy as Israel’s Ancient Constitution: Some Preliminary Reflection,” *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, supra. See, also, Loraine Boettner, “Calvinism in America” [reprinted in Kenneth Talbot and Gary Crampton’s *Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism and Arminianism: A Theological Primer* (Lakeland, FL.: Whitefield Media Publishing, 1990), pp. 127 – 128, stating:

If this is true, then we may look to the Book of Numbers for some guidance as to how Christ intended to establish his kingdom and government: namely, (1) **“congregation of Isreal”** was not a “synagogue,” “temple,” “tabernacle,” or “church,” but rather it constituted the *entire civil polity or body politic* of ancient Israel; with (2) the family unit being the most basic sub-unit, according to the “house of their fathers”¹¹ (“the number of their names, every male by their polls”);¹² and (2) divided into twelve tribes, with each tribe headed by a leader or prince.¹³

Numbers 1: 2 (Patriarchal Head)

“Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, **by the house of their fathers**, with the number of their names, every male by their polls....”

Numbers 1: 4-16 (Princes of the 12 Tribes)

When we come to study the influence of Calvinism as a political force in the history of the United States we come to one of the brightest pages of all Calvinistic history. Calvinism came to America in the Mayflower.... John Endicott, the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony; John Winthrop, the second governor of that Colony; Thomas Hooker, the founder of Connecticut; John Davenport, the founder of the Rhode Island Colony; and Roger Williams, the founder of the Rhode Island Colony, were all Calvinist. William Penn was a disciple of the Huguenots. It is estimated that of the 3,000,000 Americans at the time of the American Revolution, 900,000 were of Scotch or Scotch-Irish origin, 600,000 were Puritan English, and 400,000 were German or Dutch Reformed. In addition to this the Episcopalians had a Calvinistic confession in their Thirty-nine Articles; and many French Huguenots also had come to this western world. Thus we see that about two-thirds of the colonial population had been trained in the school of Calvin. Never in the world’s history had a nation been founded by such people as these. Furthermore these people came to America not primarily for commercial gain or advantage, but because of deep religious convictions.... Let is be especially remembered that the Puritans, who formed the great bulk of the settlers in New England, brought with them a Calvinistic Protestantism.... [I]n New England Calvinism remained the ruling theology throughout the entire Colonial period.... History is eloquent in declaring that American democracy was born of Christianity and that the Christianity was Calvinism. The great Revolutionary conflict with which resulted in the formation of the American nation, was carried out mainly by Calvinists, many of whom had been trained in the rigidly Presbyterian College at Princeton, and this nation is their gift to all liberty loving people.

¹¹ Numbers 1: 2

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Numbers 1: 16 (“These were the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands Israel.)

4 And with you there shall be a man of every tribe; **every one head of the house of his fathers.**

5 And these are the names of the men that shall stand with you: of the **tribe of Reuben**; Elizur the son of Shedeur.

6 Of **Simeon**; Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

7 Of **Judah**; Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

8 Of **Issachar**; Nethaneel the son of Zuar.

9 Of **Zebulun**; Eliab the son of Helon.

10 Of the children of **Joseph**: of Ephraim; Elishama the son of Ammihud: of Manasseh; Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

11 Of **Benjamin**; Abidan the son of Gideoni.

12 Of **Dan**; Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

13 Of **Asher**; Pagiel the son of Ocran.

14 Of **Gad**; Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

15 Of **Naphtali**; Ahira the son of Enan.

16 These were the renowned of the congregation, **princes of the tribes of their fathers**, heads of thousands in Israel.

Ancient Hebrew law and current Jewish law (halacha) suggest that the ancient Hebrew/ Jewish family was patriarchal:

THE FAMILY UNIT

The Israelite family as reflected in all genealogical and narrative sources is patriarchal. Attempts have been made to find traces of matriarchy and fratriarchy in the earliest stages of Israel's history, but none of the arguments is convincing (see below).

The family was aptly termed *bet av* ("house of a father"; e.g., Gen. 24:38; 46:31). To found a family was "to build a house" (Deut. 25:10). The *bayit* ("house") was a subdivision of the *mishpaḥah* ("clan, family [in the larger sense]," Josh. 7:14). The criterion for membership in a family (in the wider sense) was blood relationship, legal ties (e.g., marriage), or geographical proximity. The genealogies of I Chronicles sometimes speak of the clan leader as the "father" of a town, or towns, in his district (e.g., I Chron. 2:51, 52). A common livelihood or profession was probably a major factor in

family and clan solidarity. Besides those families who engaged primarily in agriculture (conducted on their own lands), there were others who practiced some specific trade (e.g., they were linen workers, I Chron. 4:21, or potters, I Chron. 4:23). The sacerdotal functions of the Levites and the sons of Aaron are the most striking case in point.¹⁴

Ancient Israel was also early organized politically by a federated system of judges, consisting of a Great Synagogue or Sanhedrin, with lesser courts.

In the Hebrew Bible, Moses and the Israelites were commanded by God to establish courts of judges. They were also commanded to establish a "supreme court" located at the central sanctuary (after arriving in the Land of Israel), to handle cases too difficult for local courts.

When Moses declared that the task of leading the people was too difficult for him, God had him appoint 70 elders (*zekenim*) to share the burden of leadership with him. According to the Mishnah, these 70 elders plus Moses himself are the source for the 71 judges of the "Great Sanhedrin." These elders are described as "the elders of the people and its officers," according to a midrash, they were the same officers who were beaten in Egyptian slavery for failing to meet Pharaoh's quota of bricks, and after the Exodus were rewarded with membership on the first Sanhedrin.

The 23 judges of the "Lesser Sanhedrin" are derived from the following exegesis: it must be possible for a "community" to vote for both conviction and exoneration (Numbers 35:24–5). The minimum size of a "community" is 10 men, thus 10 vs 10. One more is required to achieve a majority (11 vs. 10), but a simple majority cannot convict (Exodus 23:2), and so an additional judge is required (12 vs. 10). Finally, a court should have an odd number of judges to prevent deadlocks; thus 23 rather than 22....

[Below the "Lesser Sandhedrin" was a system of local courts consisting of 3 judges—known as the Beth Din—which handled various matters of lesser or local concern.¹⁵ Furthermore, we may rightfully surmise that the Beth Din often took place in local assemblies called "public synagogues."] ¹⁶

¹⁴ "Family," *Jewish Virtual Library* <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/family>.

¹⁵ See, e.g., Rabbi Dr. Samuel Hirshberg, *Jurisprudence Among the Ancient Jews*, 11 Marq. L. Rev. 25 (1926). Available at: <https://scholarship.law.marquette.edu/mulr/vol11/iss1/3>

¹⁶ "Jesus in the Synagogue," *Biblical Archeological Society* <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/magazine/jesus-in-the-synagogue/>, stating:

As the local town hall and place of Jewish law, public synagogues also served other civic functions, especially that of a court of law and justice. The Gospels and Acts mention this on a number of occasions (Mark 13:9; Matthew 23:34; Luke 12:11-12; Acts 22:19). Likewise, the Old Greek version of the apocryphal Book of Susanna locates Susanna's trial in a synagogue (28), and the apocryphal Book of Sirach describes a woman charged with adultery being brought before the

A Synhedrion is mentioned 22 times in the Greek New Testament, including in the Gospels in relation to the trial of Jesus, and in the Acts of the Apostles, which mentions a "Great Synhedrion" in chapter 5 where rabbi Gamaliel appeared, and also in chapter 7 in relation to the stoning death of Saint Stephen. This body is described as a court led by the High Priest or leading priests, as well as the "elders" and/or Pharisees.¹⁷

When Kings David and Solomon reigned over the united kingdom of ancient Israel, they both preserved and reigned over this very political system—i.e., a limited monarchy with twelve princes¹⁸ reigning over ancient Israel, subdivided into patriarchal family units.¹⁹

Though the kingdom was divided—i.e., the Kingdom of Judah and the Kingdom of Israel—this basic system lasted until Assyrian captivity of northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC and the Babylonia captivity of the southern kingdom of Judah in 597 BC.

Jesus of Nazareth, as king of Israel,²⁰ “ordained twelve,”²¹ “to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils....”²²

I do not here mean to insult American Evangelicals or the American separation of church and state, but I do not believe that when Christ instituted his kingdom that he wanted his disciples to give up political science and constitutional

local assembly for punishment (23:24). Similar hints at the judicial function of synagogues appear in the Mishnah as well (Makkot 3:12; Shevu'ot 4:10).

Given that synagogues were designed for listening and discussion, the descriptions that appear in the New Testament (e.g., Mark 6:2; Luke 4:22-30; Acts 6:8-12) and in Philo's writings (e.g., Hypothetica 7.13; On the Life of Moses 2.215) related to the reading, interpretation, and discussion of Torah within the synagogue make good sense. Because some synagogues were local public assemblies akin to town halls, the deliberations and decisions on issues that took place in synagogue settings could impact the town as a whole. Thus, these discussions could have high stakes.

¹⁷ “Sanhedrin,” Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanhedrin>.

¹⁸ See 1 Chronicles 27: 16-22.

¹⁹ See, generally, 1 and 2 Chronicles.

²⁰ John 1:49 (“... thou art the King of Israel.”).

²¹ Mark 3: 13-19.

²² Mark 3: 14-15.

law, as implemented in the Five Books of Moses, and as the Calvin at Geneva or as the Puritans of colonial New England tried to conceptualize and establish.

Notably, the Apostle James refers the organic structure of Christ’s followers as “the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad.”²³ This is “spiritual Israel” found in all nations. Hence, in spiritual symbolism and in practical structure, the church of Jesus Christ was patterned after twelve tribes of ancient Israel.

This we find clearly affirmed in the Book of Revelation, which state:

And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Christ’s basic governmental structure upon the earth is the “churches,”²⁴ for he says in the Book of Revelation: “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches.”²⁵

In Reformed-Protestant theology, those “churches” must be seen to be the counterparts of that system of “synagogues,” “assemblies,” and “local courts” that were prevalent among the Jews during the time of Christ.

Here we find in 1 Corinthians the Apostle Paul advising the Early Church to *hold court*—much like their Jewish counterparts—in order to resolve disputes among themselves:

Apostle Paul’s Beth Din for the Early Church

²³ James 1: 1 (“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greetings.”)

²⁴ Revelation 1: 11 (“I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches....”)

²⁵ Revelation 22:16.

1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?

2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

3 Know ye not that **we shall judge angels**? how much more things that pertain to this life?

4 **If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life**, set them **to judge** who are least esteemed in the church.

5 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?

6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that **before the unbelievers**.

7 Now therefore there is utterly **a fault among you**, because **ye go to law one with another**. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?

8 Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.²⁶

Like Moses did in Exodus, Chapter 18, the Apostle Paul here establishes a system of local courts or judges, within the church—and these courts would handle all manner of disputes between the Christians, just as today’s Jewish beit dins handle similar matters amongst Jews.

Interestingly, in the same epistle, and in the very next chapter, the Apostle Paul discusses marriage and the duties between husband and wife, fornication, and advice to the unwedded men and women. Of the most critically important matters

²⁶ 1 Corinthians 6: 1-11.

which Christians must be family law, family relations, children, divorce, adoptions, etc.

Originally, the Roman Catholic Church's and (later) the Church of England's ecclesiastical courts served as "Christian" both dins throughout Europe, England, and Great Britain. In North America, the ecclesiastical law of the family was incorporated into the common law of the several states within the United States—so, presumably, we may surmise that the American civil courts were ostensibly "Christian."

For instance, the decisions of the Church of England's ecclesiastical courts, which had jurisdiction over and adjudicated family law matters, were incorporated into American common law and statutory law regulating the family relation. The cases of *Short v. Stotts*, 58 Ind. 29; *Wightman v. Wightman*, 4 Johns Ch. 343; and *Crump v. Morgan*, 3 Ired. Eq. 91, represent the prevailing state jurisprudence which held generally that the opinions from England's ecclesiastical courts constituted a part of the English common law which also had been incorporated into American common law. Thus, quoting the following holding in *Crump v. Morgan*, to wit:

It is said that these are the adjudications of ecclesiastical courts and are founded not in the common law, but in the canon and civil laws, and therefore not entitled to respect here. But it is an entire mistake to say "that the canon and civil laws, as administered in the ecclesiastical courts of England, are not part of the common law. Blackstone, following Lord HALE, classes them among the unwritten laws of England, and as parts of the common law which by custom are adopted and used in peculiar jurisdictions. They were brought herd by our ancestors as parts of the common law and have been adopted and used here in all cases to which they were applicable, and whenever there has been a tribunal exercising a jurisdiction to call for their use. They govern testamentary cases and matrimonial cases. Probate and re probate of will stand upon the same grounds here as in England, unless so far as statutes may have altered it.²⁷

However, what has happened since the 1950s is a growing hyper-secularization of the secular civil law, such that theological values and sacred law traditions of the

²⁷ "The Adoption of the Common Law by the American Colonies," *The American Register* (September 1882), p. 564.

https://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=3029&context=penn_law_review

several denominational and non-denominational Christian churches are not being well-served or well represented within the secular court systems of the United States, thus bringing us full circle back to the problems asserted on the Apostle Paul's injunction in his epistle to the Corinthians.²⁸ Non-believers have now become predominant in the secular civil court system of the United States; and even if through chance or happenstance a Christian judge is assigned to a family law matter, the substantive laws of the several states have become largely un-Christian. Hence, the inevitable conclusion today is that the Christians must establish their own courts—especially their own family law courts—much similar in structure to the present-day Jewish beit dins.²⁹

The basic structure of gender relations, marriage, and family relations must be placed within the jurisdiction of these new church courts. And within those church courts must be the customary laws of the Early Church (i.e., the New Testament Church) as we find in both the Apostles Peter and Paul, who counseled the same “patriarchal” structure for the “Christian” family as contained in the Torah's prescriptions for the “Jewish” family, namely:

1 Peter 3: 1-7

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

²⁸ 1 Corinthians 6: 1-11.

²⁹ <https://bethdin.org/>

7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Ephesians 5: 22- 33

22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Colossians 3: 18- 20

18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

1 Corinthians 11:3

3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

1 Timothy 2:9-15

9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

For the Black Church and the African American family, this new “church-court jurisdiction” may very well be the only meaningful way to re-establish stable families within African American communities,³⁰ because, the influence of such courts would naturally carry over into the general value system of the general African American population and enhance every aspect of their lives.³¹

CONCLUSION

This paper concludes that Jesus of Nazareth was a “Rabbi” within the meaning and customs of ancient Judea’s egalitarian institutions of the synagogue system—including independent prayer or study groups (e.g., minyans) led by teachers of Jewish law (i.e., rabbis),³² as well as local courts called *beth dins*, which enforced Jewish law and custom.

This entire system was organized around a patriarchal family structure.

Since the Early Church depicted in the New Testament grew out of this egalitarian Jewish system, the Protestant and Reformed churches postulated that Christian churches should likewise have a fundamental democratic and egalitarian structure, based upon a patriarch family.³³

³⁰ See, e.g., Roderick Ford, “Towards a Federal Common Law of the Black Family” [Letter to the U.S. Senate].

<https://nebula.wsimg.com/6556416efc56e7ff32e8b6808b6c595f?AccessKeyId=CFD051C099636C9F5827&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>

³¹ Ibid.

³² See, e.g., St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 238-239, regarding Israel and the Jews, stating:

This same nation, too, was afterwards dispersed through the nations, in order to testify to the scriptures in which eternal salvation in Christ had been declared. For not only the prophecies which are contained in words, nor only the precepts for the right conduct of life, which teach morals and piety, and are contained in the sacred writings—not only these, but also the rites, priesthood, tabernacle or temple, altars, sacrifices, ceremonies, and whatever else belongs to that service which is due to God, and which in Greek is properly called *hatpeia*—all these signified and fore-announced those things which we who believe in Jesus Christ unto eternal life believe to have been fulfilled, or behold in process of fulfillment, or confidently believe shall yet be fulfilled.

³³ Ibid.

The ancient Christians did not, however, foresee the rise of big capitalism in Europe and the United States; how it would decimate both the family and the delicate “church-state” balance which the 18th-century Enlightenment had devised in order to guarantee the maximal amount of freedom, without giving up orthodox religion and its value systems. The first overthrow was that to the African tribal system and the Black family; the second overthrow was of the Christian family value system of white persons generally.

That delicate balance being decimated, just as African American entered into their freedom during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, only the Jewish immigrants from central and eastern Europe seemed to point the nation back towards its Judea-Christian roots.

The Black Church of the United States being gifted with the Spirit but unlettered in the Sacred Law, is still learning; the White Church of the United States being rich and invested became apostate before the altars of gold, so that today a new model of Christianity is desperately needed to lead all American Churches to safety.

Today, both the Blacks and the Jews could help white Christians with salvation of the nations—through focusing on re-establishing healthy patriarchal families, by means of a Judea-Christian beit dins (i.e., local religious family courts). Amen.

THE END

