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THE TRANSMISSION OF BIBLICAL-TEXTUAL TRADITIONS FROM ANCIENT JUDAISM TO THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

Recently, the historical and religious context in which biblical traditions emerged has drawn scholarly attention. The formation and history of biblical traditions show that there have been different contexts in the transmission of the traditions and the text of the Bible. This research attempts to analyse how non-biblical as well as biblical traditions and the text were preserved, copied, edited, annotated, updated, and translated, be they firmly established, archaeologically verified, or literarily attested to. But the question remains: how accurately were the biblical and textual traditions passed to the next generation? The focus of this research is fundamentally to understand the historical and sociological conditions, more so, the institution in which the text of the Hebrew Bible became an authoritative tradition; that is, holy scripture and the canon of Judaism as well as Christianity, and how several components of the New Testament text have been adopted by the church. The research uses historical-critical analysis to investigate the mode of transmitting biblical and textual traditions from the ancient traditional context to the modern world. The finding reveals that biblical and textual traditions emanated from oral tradition as well as written tradition, preserved orally and documented. Also, there has been a transformation in biblical traditions from ancient Judaism due to different contexts to the modern church in Africa. The work states that biblical-textual traditions were circulated in a variety of textual vehicles and were continually reworked in transmission and reinterpretation as people used them. These aspects of the traditions are correctly handled and available, and they also affected how authority was asserted. That means biblical

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traditions, canonicity, and authoritative status developed through contested reception, translation, transmission, and local use rather than uniform procedure. With this, the church can rework its history in line with the God-human history; otherwise, the church misses its earthly purpose of existence.

INTRODUCTION

Biblical traditions are an essential part of Jewish and Christian history; their genesis and development took place within the history of the Jewish people. The biblical tradition created a historical portrait of the people of Israel, a sacred history not only inspired by history but also influential on that history itself. Without the biblical tradition, Israel would probably not have been a unique nation. After the downfall of their political power, the two kingdoms, with their past scribal cultures, would have perished. Instead, the extraordinary happened: Israel survived in the memory of biblical tradition till the present age. The transmission of beliefs, teachings, and practices that have been passed down through generations has shaped the history of Israel. There is a need to differentiate within the biblical tradition itself between an older, pre-biblical or non-biblical state of Israel and a later, biblical model of Israel, which became historical only later. If that differentiation is done, can one find coherence in the formation of biblical traditions?

Biblical traditions encompass customs, practices, and beliefs found within the Bible, which play a vital role in the formation of the Bible, history, authority, and faith. A key aspect of these traditions is the concept of prophecy (Herskowitz 411). But the people who originally received God's Word lived in a vastly different place and time. A huge gap exists between their culture and practices in history and today. Biblical traditions emerged from oral traditions tracing back to early scribal and post-Mosaic periods, with significant development during David's era (Kratz 41). The biblical tradition transforms the historical event of the Jewish people into a sacred history and makes the BCE years a holy date. The biblical tradition paints a completely different portrait that presupposes the religious history of the Jews and only gradually constructs those characteristics that distinguish Israel from all its contemporary peoples throughout the ancient Near East (Kratz 49).

A survey of the development of biblical traditions reveals the formation of biblical literature. Biblical tradition encompasses divinely inspired prophetic foresight and the customs, practices, and beliefs found within the Bible itself, as understood by regional interpretations (Herskowitz 411). It refers to the stories, teachings, and practices found in the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Bible, which have shaped religious and cultural traditions for centuries (Welz 542). Biblical tradition is highlighted as the expansion of doctrines exemplified in the Jerusalem Council's decision to adapt Scripture (Miller 75). The connection between wisdom and radical theology, which can be understood as a

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current expression of cross-cultural wisdom based on human experience, leads to the transformation of traditional ideas. These traditions find shape as generations change. How can one be certain of the consistency of this tradition from the ancient Jewish context to the early Jewish-Christian context, in the Christian era, in church history, and in the church today? Following this trajectory would give an understanding of the nature of biblical traditions and how they relate to human history.

The various forms of biblical traditions require some clarification. Ancient Jewish and early Christian sources spoke of the "law, prophets, and other writings" or "(holy) scriptures." Biblical tradition in the Christian era shows that the Old Testament complements the New Testament (2 Cor. 3:14) and vice versa; it has gained currency for specifying the corpus, whereas biblical traditions in Judaism and contemporary usage among scholars have more frequently employed the Hebrew Bible.

This study uses the historical-critical method to analyse the data. This method explains the origin, context, and meaning of ancient texts as understood in the historical and cultural backgrounds. This method is a branch of textual analysis used to investigate the origins of ancient writings and to uncover the meanings behind the texts as intended to its audience. Considering that this work is on the biblical traditions, sections of human history were sampled and discussed to reveal the transmission from the Jewish to the modern church to see whether the church relies on biblical traditions rather than human traditions. Biblical and historical passages are sampled and studied in order to give clarity on the subject.

But the question remains: does the church rely on biblical or traditions that are adopted in disguise as biblical traditions? This work argues that biblical-textual criticism has effectively played vital roles in the formation of historical analogies that have survived from the Jewish era, the early Christian era, church history, and the current church era. This also reveals the process of transmission and transformation, and how the church perceives tradition in the modern world. One sees why the church today has so heavily relied on tradition rather than biblical teachings. This is where this study helps elaborate the various dimensions that history and biblical criticism explore in search of answers in the human development of history.

BIBLICAL TRADITION IN JUDAISM

The biblical tradition in Judaism is centred on the teachings and customs that are revealed in the Hebrew Bible, which comprises the Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim; these form the foundational pillar of biblical tradition in Judaism. It did not originate in the pre-exilic monarchy but emanated from the scribal activity of later generations. This collective sought to found a new religion, that is, biblical Judaism, on the ruins of Israel's history

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(which ended in 722 and 587 BCE) and in the wake of the Jerusalem temple's destruction (Kratz 51).

Based on certain principles tracing back to the period of 722-587 BCE, this tradition was formed at the time of Jerusalem's Second Temple (520 BCE-70 CE) and was suited to withstand the cultic crisis that came with the Second Temple's destruction and the related cessation of the sacrificial system in 70 CE. The belief in and the significance of the written Hebrew texts, the frameworks of the interpretation that were used to understand those texts, and their practical application in law and ritual formed the essential features of this tradition (Kratz 54). With respect to the conceptualisation of the divine, which in the end determined cultic history, the prophets marked a watershed.

The development of biblical tradition was accomplished in phases, and the end of the northern (722 BCE) and southern (587 BCE) kingdoms of Israel are the two most significant, though not the only caesurae. Parallel to the Israelite scribal culture, which extended from the beginnings of the pre-exilic monarchic period into the post-exilic period of the two provinces, the development of the biblical tradition occurred simultaneously in pre-exilic and post-exilic times. Whereas the prophets broke the first ground at the end of the eighth century BCE and then again in the sixth century, the tradition's other dimensions followed incrementally with narrative, law, cult, psalms, and wisdom (Kratz 62). Given its particular nature, the biblical literature requires a particular presentation. Since the biblical literature can only be dated relatively (based on internal textual and conceptual relations) and not absolutely (in line with historical events), any representation of the material according to individual centuries or phases of Palestine's foreign domination, be it Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Ptolemaic, Seleucid, or Roman, proves insufficient to the task (Kratz 62). Rather, a more fitting disposition of the material follows every sphere of the tradition, describes the transition from Israelite scribal culture to biblical tradition for each of these spheres independently, dates them as precisely as possible, and orients the entire account towards the more obvious internal caesura of Israelite history.

The transitions and transformations into biblical literature followed no set schema and certainly cannot be reduced to some shallow, essential dualism of either chronology (pre-exilic versus post-exilic) or substance (secular versus theological, historical versus fictional, Israelite versus Jewish). Instead, these various transitions into biblical literature corroborate a widely recognised and long-established insight yielded by critical biblical scholarship, namely that the biblical literature in all its numerous dimensions grew in time and place and owes its current form to an extensive process of interpretation and revision. Furthermore, these moments of transformation in particular reveal how the biblical literature does not merely represent or reproduce the reality it concerns or the sources it presupposes and processes; rather, the biblical literature subsequently

construes and interprets reality and tradition, showcasing them in a (theologically) reflected literary form and its core tradition (Kugel 66).

Just as the understanding of biblical literature cannot be restricted to individual ages in the history of Israel, the multifaceted transformations into biblical tradition neither date to a single period nor spring from a single cause. This process did not begin simultaneously in all the various domains of tradition but developed quite differently in chronology and content alike. Biblical tradition in Judaism is deeply rooted in the belief that God revealed Himself to the Jewish people through the Scriptures. This tradition is considered the unwritten code of law given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai, which is essential for the correct practice and interpretation of the Torah. The tradition encompasses various forms, including Masorah (the correct vocalisation, punctuation, spelling, and form of the biblical text), Halakhah (law given to Moses on Sinai), shemu'ah (a report), minhag (custom), and Kabbalah (esoteric and mystical traditions) (Gertz et al. 165). These traditions are integral to Jewish identity and religious life, influencing both personal and communal practices.

Biblical tradition in Judaism encompasses oral and written laws, influencing Jewish legal thought. The rabbinic tradition values oral law, which has shaped Jewish legal thought and cultural literacy. The interaction between oral and written traditions has played a crucial role in understanding biblical texts and their context. Hauser says that Jewish tradition sees the Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim, and Talmud as having different degrees of divine inspiration based on how they were revealed to humans by God. The Torah is considered to have the highest degree of divine inspiration, followed by the Nevi'im and the Ketuvim (66). The Talmud is a compilation of ancient teachings by the Jewish people, containing the oldest authoritative collection and codification of Jewish oral laws (Neusner 1241).

The biblical tradition in Judaism centres on the Hebrew Bible; the three features of this tradition are the Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim. The Torah is known as the law, comprising the five books of Moses, which formed the most sacred part of the Hebrew Bible. It contains the covenant between God and the Israelites, and it also contains the mitzvoth, which are the commandments. The priest-scribe Ezra is credited with bringing the Torah from Babylon to Jerusalem and instituting public readings, a practice that cemented the Torah's central role in Jewish life (Westerholm 1181). Liturgically, the Torah is divided into weekly portions (Parashot) and read publicly in the synagogue over a year-long cycle. This ensures that the community remains constantly engaged with the text. Mitzvot (Commandments), which emanated from the oral tradition, serve as the source for Jewish law, governing everything from dietary habits (Kashrut) to social justice and civil law (Nitzan 256).

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The concept of "oral tradition" is essential to the development of biblical tradition in Judaism; the written text (Torah She-bi-Khtav) is inseparable from the oral Torah (Torah She-ba'al Peh). According to tradition, both were given to Moses at Mount Sinai. The Oral Torah provides the necessary interpretation and detail for the concise laws found in the written Torah. The first major written redaction of the Jewish oral traditions is the Mishnah, compiled around 200 CE. The Talmud is made up of the Mishnah and the Gemara (rabbinic discussions on the Mishnah). It is the central text of Rabbinic Judaism and the primary source of Jewish law (Halakha). The Midrash is a genre of rabbinic literature that uses homiletic and legal methods to interpret the biblical text, filling in narrative gaps and deriving ethical lessons (Westerholm 1182).

The historical development and canonisation of this tradition, the biblical tradition, is accepted and understood in Judaism. The biblical tradition developed over a long period. The texts were written and edited by various authors and schools over several centuries (c. 1000–100 BCE) (Westerholm 1182). Nevi'im (Prophets) talks about the writings of the prophets, which deal with the relationship between Israel and God, ethical behaviour, and historical narrative. The Ketuvim (Writings) are the collection of poetry and wisdom. The prophets preserved the ethical foundation; the "prophetic tradition" emphasises social justice, kindness to the stranger, and the pursuit of a moral society, which remain core values in all branches of Judaism (Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform). Biblical tradition in Judaism is not merely a historical documentation but a living tradition (Wold 34). The decisive moments for the formation of the Hebrew Bible were dramatic, as seen at the end of the Israelite kingdom, first in the prophetic tradition and then in those of narrative and law. By all appearances, the transition of hymns and prayers into the biblical tradition came at the end of the Jerusalem temple's destruction (Kratz 68). This transition appears most clearly in the passages that preserve an older core. Like hymns and prayers, aphoristic sayings and sage didactic tales entered relatively late into the biblical tradition. As in the realm of justice, scholarship often describes a progressive "theologisation" of wisdom, a term actually appropriate for all spheres of tradition, that is, prophets, narrative, justice, sacrificial ritual, cultic lyric, and wisdom (Gertz et al. 125).

Critical analysis for this corpus is, like that of the Psalter, not yet advanced in the differentiation of older sayings from subsequent theological commentary (Wilson 561). In the individual sayings and collections of sayings found in Proverbs 10:1-22:16, ancient wisdom's knowledge and its ideal of status quite clearly converge. As with ancient justice, that is, the collection of mishpatim in Exodus 21–2, these and similar collections of wisdom sayings had already begun to form in the pre-exilic period, probably for the education of scribes in the context of wisdom schools. With the transition into biblical tradition, these collections of sayings received theological glossing. Wisdom is connected with the fear of

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God; proverbs transform the former social conflict of rich and poor into a religious antithesis, which relativises the ideal of ancient wisdom theologically (cf. Prov. 10:16).
Jewish piety, founded on the biblical tradition, is the ideal of ancient wisdom that comes to life. Some extra-canonical books like Ben Sira 24, Wisdom, and Torah are identical; they are revealed in creation and scripture alike. The book of Daniel does not take the easy way out (Kratz et al 405). Proceeding from the didactic narratives of older sapiential tradition (Dan. 1–6), Daniel exemplifies how Jewish wisdom and steadfast piety survived the diaspora. During the Hellenistic period in general and the reign of Antiochus IV in particular, in the middle of the second century BCE, both cultural and religious disruptions and inner-Jewish strife brought with them an abandonment of the narratives' own ideals.

BIBLICAL TRADITIONS IN EARLY JEWISH-CHRISTIAN CONTEXTS

Early Jewish-Christian biblical tradition presents a distinctive narrative and the tradition that informed later Christian literature. These include the gospels and oral traditions about Jesus that emphasise continuity with Israel's scriptures (Pearce 163). The early Gospel collections of Jewish-Christian sayings and narratives circulated and were later cited or reused by patristic and medieval writers (Horst 435). Most of them got their roots from Judaism.
Judaism significantly shaped early Christian traditions. Jesus and his disciples practised Jewish customs, such as attending synagogue and observing Jewish festivals. Many early Christian practices stem from the Old Testament teachings. For instance, baptism echoes Jewish rituals of purification. The Last Supper, shared by Jesus and his disciples, is rooted in Passover traditions. Early Jewish Christians used Hebrew Scriptures to interpret Jesus, often using midrashic techniques and typology. These interpretations make biblical tradition continuous with Israel's story. The tradition portrays Jesus as a typological fulfilment. Early gospel writers and communities narrated Jesus' life as the continuation and climax of Israel's scriptural story, shaping gospel events through Old Testament parallels (Hays 54). The traditions in the early ancient period were transmitted into patristic literature and later Christian reflection, where they were sometimes systematised, contested, or harmonised to serve ecclesial aims. Scholarly work highlights both the artificial shaping by later fathers and the continuities with earlier Jewish-Christian sources. The selective preservation and adaptation of these traditions functioned to define community boundaries, justify the mission to Gentiles, and assert continuity with Israel's scriptures (Hays 67).
Biblical tradition in the early Jewish-Christian context is characterised by the integration of Jewish law and tradition into the early Christian faith. Jewish Christians were the earliest followers of Jesus who identified ethnically and religiously as Jews. They played a crucial role in the early Christian programme, bridging the gap between Judaism and the

emerging Christian faith. Their practices and beliefs were documented in the New Testament and early Christian writings, highlighting the Jewish roots of Christianity (Luomanen 175). The Jewish Christians emerged in the first century AD, following the ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus. They were a vital part of the early church, navigating the complex intersection of Jewish tradition and the growing Christian faith. Their legacy is evident in the New Testament writings and the enduring theological questions they addressed.

The Jewish roots of Christian worship are often overlooked, but they serve as a foundational element in the understanding of early Christian worship. Sacrifice is the most significant yet overlooked Jewish influence on early Christian worship, with the Eucharist being perceived as a sacrificial act pivotal to early Christian identity and worship. Early Jewish Christians were understood to have a tradition that emanated from the Jewish Bible, a sacred writing that formed the foundation for religious teaching, communal identity, and spiritual life. Because Christianity emerged from first-century Judaism, it is obvious that early Christian biblical tradition exhibits continuity with Jewish scribal traditions (Pearce 164). These shared features are evident in the form, structure, and transmission methods of the traditions.

Biblical tradition in early Jewish Christianity used diverse interpretive methods, communal transmission practices, and adaptive scriptural uses to shape Christian identity and authority. Readings included midrashic, pesher, and allegorical approaches that reinterpreted Israel's scriptures. Early Jewish Christians applied multiple techniques to make the Hebrew scriptures speak to new circumstances; these methods circulated as shared traditions within Jewish and Christian communities. Comparison shows overlap and distinct emphases among midrash, pesher, and allegory in early Jewish-Christian contexts.

It is worth saying that the transmission from the Jewish era and the Christian era brought lots of agreements and disagreements that the early church encountered in its early stages. These have helped in the formulation of early Christian ideas and theology, which, to the Jewish mind, were foreign and somewhat considered threatening to the Jewish monotheistic orientation (Tambiyi 1-10; Tambiyi "Should Jesus be worshipped?" 147-166). Despite that, the church survived the transmission and maintained its religious beliefs, which have survived to this generation.

BIBLICAL TRADITION IN THE CHRISTIAN ERA

Early Christianity emerged as a Jewish sect within Judaism. Its earliest followers were Torah-observant Jews who attended the Temple, kept the law, and practised circumcision. They adapted and reinterpreted foundational biblical traditions to proclaim Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah. The early believers in Jesus engaged with

Hebrew Scriptures and Jewish traditions in several core ways. The use of the prophetic fulfilment of Jesus serves as a significant landscape for biblical tradition in the Christian era. The foundational task for early Jewish Christians was interpreting the Hebrew Bible (the Tanakh) in light of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. They viewed figures and events in the Old Testament as foreshadowing (types) of Jesus (e.g., Jesus as the new Moses or the ultimate Paschal lamb). They extracted the Prophets and Psalms for verses that are believed to have predicted Jesus' suffering, resurrection, and the inclusion of Gentiles. The Septuagint was a major Greek textual tradition that shaped Christian readings and facilitated scriptural use across language boundaries (Zetterholm 109).

The reinterpretation of the Law (Torah) proved the initially strict observation of the Mosaic Law, and the early believers debated how the Torah applied in a movement where the Messiah had already arrived. Jesus and the early writers frequently summarised the entire Law by distilling the foundational Hebrew scriptures down to the love of God and the love of neighbour (Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Leviticus 19:18).

Debates arose over whether non-Jews (Gentiles) needed to convert to Judaism (be circumcised and follow dietary laws) to be saved. Leaders like the Apostle Paul argued that faith in Christ, rather than adherence to ritual laws, was the basis of the new covenant. The community's worship and sacraments grew directly out of First-Century Jewish practices. The Last Supper was a Jewish Passover Seder (or Kiddush), where bread and wine were given new symbolic meaning linked to Jesus' body and blood. The baptism tradition evolved from Jewish ritual immersions (such as those practised at Qumran or for ritual purity and proselyte conversion) (Nitzan 256).

Early Christians continued the Jewish tradition of praying the Psalms and observing set hours of prayer. The early Christians followed the apocalyptic traditions, which were deeply influenced by Jewish apocalypticism: the belief that the present evil age was coming to an end and God's kingdom was breaking into the world. They looked to prophetic books like Daniel and Ezekiel to understand the "end times" and the return of the Messiah. This tradition leads to the transition to a distinct religion over time; the influx of Gentile converts and the theological divergence between Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity created a "parting of the ways". This separation solidified after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, leading to Christianity developing its own distinct identity, canons, and institutions. The struggle over identity, according to Paul, obedience to the Torah, specifically circumcision and food laws, is not required of Gentiles.

This viewpoint fits the model spelt out in the biblical tradition that they quote from the Tanakh and insist on the meaning of the life and death of Jesus and the call to believe in Jesus' life and death (Buren 121). The earliest Christians would therefore have seen Christianity not as a new religion but rather as the fulfilment of the essence of the entire

Jewish scriptures, followed by prophetic and poetic books in the Old Testament, which was gradual and complex. The Hebrew canon, also known as the Tanakh, was established. The earliest Christians were not Gentiles, although some were Gentiles later on nationwide, but they were Jews, which means they understood the prophecies in the Hebrew scriptures.

Events from the history of the Jewish people in the Old Testament were interpreted by Christians as foreshadowing events in the life of Jesus, but there is no doubt that early Christians thought it (the Last Supper) was a tradition from the Old Testament. They started to interpret the salvation they believed Jesus had brought. The transmission, interpretation, and application of the Old and New Testaments by the Church take another shape. It encompasses both the sacred written Scriptures and the continuous oral, liturgical, and theological practices passed down since the time of the Apostles. The tradition encompasses several core practices that shape the Christian faith; the Scripture is the written Word of God, which canonically serves as the authoritative basis. Outlining the history of God's covenant, the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, and the formation of the early Church, the scripture has changed the initial tradition from the Jewish context to a new perspective. Apostolic tradition (The Oral and Living Witness) served as a continuation of the ancient tradition (Buren 123).

The ritual traditions of the Church, such as Baptism, the Eucharist (Communion), prayer routines, and liturgical calendars, bring biblical narratives to life and serve as the physical expression of the faith. Formal statements of belief, such as the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed, act as traditional summaries of core biblical truths. They were established to preserve the orthodox understanding of the Trinity and the nature of Jesus.

BIBLICAL TRADITIONS IN CHURCH HISTORY

The transmission, interpretation, and application of the teachings, events, and texts of the Bible across generations are key historical forms in church history. The Church has preserved the Scriptures, debated their meaning, and structured worship and theology around them since ancient times. The concept functions and is viewed differently across various branches of Christianity. Early Church leaders compiled, debated, and canonised the letters and gospels into the official Christian Bible. In the early centuries, oral tradition and foundational confessions were used by the Early Church Fathers to ensure that Scripture was interpreted correctly against prevailing heresies (Stegner 3). This forms a strong basis that redefined biblical authority and the interpretation of the Bible.

Councils, such as those of Nicaea (325 AD) and Chalcedon (451 AD), codified the biblical tradition of Christ's nature into lasting creeds. The Holy Spirit guides the living tradition to interpret the Bible correctly. During the 16th-century Protestant Reformation, reformers rejected many medieval Catholic traditions. They championed the doctrine of Sola

Scriptura (Scripture alone), arguing that the Bible is the only infallible source of authority and all church traditions must be tested against it. The oral tradition was transformed into what is known as "man-made" traditions, creating tension with the written text (Stegner 3).

Church history reveals a continuous debate over what constitutes authentic biblical tradition versus "human tradition". In the Bible, Jesus strongly criticised the Pharisees for elevating human traditions over the commandments of God. Throughout history, theologians have frequently called the church to return to the pure, foundational teachings of the Bible. The church history also suffered from liturgical and practical traditions. Beyond doctrines, biblical tradition heavily influenced the external practices of the Church, including the liturgical calendar (celebrating events like Advent, Easter, and Pentecost).

The administration of the sacraments. The rhythms of daily and weekly worship, such as scripture reading, congregational prayers, and hymns. These traditions have played a crucial role in shaping the history of Christianity (Wold 334). They have been passed down through generations, influencing worship, doctrine, and community life. Traditions have been instrumental in preserving the faith and guiding the early Church in its development. They have also been a source of tension, as they have been adapted and sometimes rejected in the course of the church's history. Despite these challenges, biblical traditions have remained a vital part of the Christian identity, providing continuity and a sense of belonging to the community. Christianity has exhibited a characteristic tension toward tradition from its very beginnings. This tension, which is grounded in its essence, has been continued throughout its entire history. It began with rejecting the pious traditions of piety of the Hebrew Scriptures and synagogue practices. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus set forth his message as a renunciation of the Old Testament tradition of the Law (Welz 336). Yet he created a new tradition, a "new law," that has been carried on in the church.

The doctrinal controversies of the Reformation period give the impression that the tradition of the church has to do primarily, if not exclusively, with ecclesiastical doctrinal tradition. Tradition, however, includes all areas of life of the Christian community and its piety, not just the teachings but also the forms of worship service, bodily gestures of prayer, and the liturgy, oral and written tradition, the characteristic process of transition of the oral into written tradition, a new church tradition of rules for eating and fasting, and other aspects of the Christian life.

The break with the tradition of Judaism was not total. The Scriptures were adopted from Jewish tradition, but their interpretation was based upon the concepts of salvation that emerged from Jesus Christ. The book of Psalms, including its musical form, was taken over in Christian worship as the foundation of the liturgy. The new revelation became tradition

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in the oral transmission of the words (logia) of the Lord and the reports (kerygma) concerning the events of his life that were important for the early church's faith in him: his baptism, the story of his passion, his resurrection, and his ascension. The celebration of the Lord's Supper as anticipation of the heavenly meal with the Messiah, Son of Man in the coming kingdom of God, even to the point of preserving in the liturgy the Aramaic exclamation maranatha ("O Lord, Come") and its Greek parallel erche kyrie ("Come, Lord!") as the supplicant calling for the Parousia (Second Coming), all this became biblical tradition at the course of church history.

The oral transmission of teachings developed in Judaism is important. According to rabbinic doctrine, orally transmitted tradition coexisted on an equal basis with the written Law. Both text and tradition were believed to have been entrusted to Moses on Mount Sinai. The doctrinal contents of the tradition were initially passed on orally and memorized by the students. Because of the possibilities of error in a purely oral transmission, however, the extensive and growing body of tradition was, by necessity, fixed in written form (Iatan 45). The rabbinic tradition of the Pharisees (a Jewish sect that sanctioned the reinterpretation of the Mosaic Law) was established in the Mishna (commentaries) and later in the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmud (compendia of commentaries upon the Torah and tradition) (Rahlfs et al. 445). Tradition is not completely fixed in writing; the learned discussion of tradition, by necessity, continued in constant debate with the Holy Scriptures. The written record of tradition, however, never claimed to be equal to the Holy Scriptures in Judaism. A similar process of written fixation also occurred among the sectarians of the community at Qumran, where its interpretation of the Law was recorded, developed first orally in the tradition (Oegema 188).

In the Christian church, a tradition proceeding from Jesus himself was formed. The oral transmission of the tradition was written down between the end of the 1st and the first half of the 2nd century in the form of various gospels, histories of the Apostles, letters, sermonic literature, and apocalypses. Among Christian Gnostics, the tradition also included what was believed to be secret communications of the risen Christ to his disciples. A new element, however, inhered in the Christian in relation to the Jewish tradition. For Jewish piety, revelation encompassed two forms of divine expression: the Law and the Prophets (Kratz 49). This revelation is considered concluded with the last Prophets, and its actualization further ensues through interpretation (Chester 318).

In the Christian church the tradition is joined not only to the teachings of Jesus and the story of his life as prophet and teacher but also to the central event of the history of salvation, which his life, Passion, death, and Resurrection represent, namely, to the resurrected Christ who is henceforth present as the living Lord of the church and guides and increases it through the Holy Spirit (Wold 344). This led to the literary form of biblical tradition. As the "New Testament," it takes its place next to the Holy Scripture of Judaism,

henceforth reinterpreted as the "Old Testament." Biblical tradition in church history entered into the characteristic Christian tension between spirit and letter. The spirit creates tradition but also breaks tradition as soon as the letter is solidified into an external written form, and thus impedes charismatic life. Throughout church history, the core of tension has been formed by the transmission of the Christ event. On the one hand, the kerygma is the bearer and starting point for biblical tradition; on the other hand, it molds the motivation for ever-new impulses toward charismatic, fresh interpretations and, under certain circumstances, suggests or even enforces the elimination of accumulated traditions.

Decisive in this respect is the self-understanding of the church. According to the self-understanding of the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox churches, the church, as the institution of Jesus Christ, is the bearer of the oral and the written traditions and the creator of the New Testament canon (Kugel 167). The church's selection of canonical writings presupposes a dogmatic distinction between "ecclesiastical" teachings, which, in the opinion of its responsible leaders, are "apostolic". It thereby already presupposes a far-reaching intellectualization of biblical tradition and its identification with "doctrine." The oral tradition thus became formalized in fixed creedal formulas.

Therefore, in the history of the Christian church, a specific, characteristic tension has been evidenced between periods of excessive growth and formalistic hardening of biblical tradition that hindered and overwhelmed the charismatic life of the church and periods of a reduction of tradition that follow new reformation movements. The Reformation of the 16th century broke with the institution of monasticism, the liturgical and sacramental tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, and certain elements of doctrinal tradition. Luther, however, was more conservative in his attitude toward the Roman Catholic Church than were Zwingli and Calvin. The Anabaptists and other Enthusiasts (Schwärmer) went even further, demanding and practicing a revolutionary break with the entire Roman Catholic tradition. The churches that arose from the Reformation, however, soon created their own traditions, which emerged from the confessional writings and doctrines of the reformers.

The rejection of the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church had practical as well as dogmatic effects, for instance, the eating of sausage on fast days in Zürich at the start of Zwingli's reformation, or the provocative marriages of monks and nuns. In the 19th century, a period of progressive political revolutions and anti-Catholic movements such as the Kulturkampf, the Roman Catholic Church sought to safeguard its tradition, threatened on all sides, through an emphatic program of "antimodernism." It endeavored to protect tradition both by law and through theology. The representatives of this development were the popes from Pius IX (1846–78) to Pius XII (1939–58). With Pope John XXIII (1958–63), a dismantling (aggiornamento) of antimodernism and a more critical

attitude toward "tradition" set in; this extended to traditional dogmatic views as well as to the liturgy and church structure. The Second Vatican Council (1962–65) guided this development into moderate channels. On the other hand, an opposite development took place in the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries. In these nations, the remains of the Eastern Orthodox churches, which survived extermination campaigns of the Leninist and Stalinist eras from the 1920s to the 1950s, preserved themselves in a political environment hostile to the church precisely through a retreat to their church tradition and religious functioning in the realm of the liturgy.

From the late 1980s, Orthodox churches experienced greater religious freedom and new growth, as the openly hostile governments in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe dissolved with the fall of communism. In the World Council of Churches, Eastern Orthodoxy in the latter part of the 20th century viewed its task as the bearer of Christian tradition against the predominant social-ethical tendencies of certain Protestant member churches that disregarded or de-emphasised the tradition of the church in a wave of antihistorical sentiment.

This period of the Church revealed that traditions have survived as the bedrock of the Church's doctrinal beliefs, and such have affected the authority of the Bible and the role it has played in the development of the Church. The Church Fathers have fought to maintain biblical traditions despite the ravaging threats from the false teachers and heretics throughout the various centuries. This made the church document its biblical beliefs over the centuries in order to maintain the authority of the Bible and its traditions.

THE MODERN CHURCH AND BIBLICAL-TEXTUAL TRADITIONS

The New Testament addresses tradition differently. Jesus confronted the Pharisees and scribes for elevating human traditions above God's commandments, and the Apostle Paul emphasised the importance of adhering to the teachings handed down by the apostles. Tradition is seen as a means of preserving apostolic teaching and ensuring doctrinal continuity. This understanding has been reflected in many books of the New Testament as the church was charting a route for its development and growth.

Today, the church understands biblical and textual traditions as emerging from early Christian practices and the teachings of the apostles. Initially, these traditions were oral and later recorded in the New Testament. As Christianity spread, diverse cultures influenced how church practices developed. For example, early believers participated in communal meals, sang hymns, and taught scripture. Over centuries, biblical-textual traditions became more structured, including rituals like baptism and communion. Different branches of Christianity have distinct traditions. Some emphasise ritual, while others focus on personal faith. The quest for balance would reflect the journey and

growth of the church throughout history. Modern innovation has brought changes to how biblical and textual traditions are viewed and practised.

With new ideas and technologies, religious leaders are challenged to adjust or maintain their teachings. For instance, many churches now use social media to reach younger audiences. This allows for a broader conversation about faith that includes different viewpoints. The focus on inclusivity pushes many to think critically about long-standing beliefs. The church now understands biblical and textual traditions differently. As societies become more diverse, the church finds new ways to adapt biblical traditions. The church recognises that a one-dimensional approach does not resonate with everyone. Celebrating different cultural practices within a church setting came from the ancient traditions. For example, incorporating music from various cultures is the adaptability that is not biblically enshrined but practiced by the church.

The church considers certain sacraments from the biblical traditions. Sacraments are sacred rites that reflect a believer's journey of faith. They serve as essential moments for spiritual growth and community bonding. Each sacrament has unique significance, such as baptism, which symbolises a person's entry into the faith. In many religious traditions, these practices remind individuals of their commitment to live according to moral principles. They reinforce the importance of community, love, and support, guiding members toward a richer understanding of their spirituality. The Eucharist is a cornerstone of worship for many Christians, especially within the Catholic Church. This rite involves consuming bread and wine, representing the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Through this act, believers feel a deep connection to Christ and the broader faith community. Participating in the Eucharist encourages reflection on the values of forgiveness and unity. It acts as a physical reminder of Christ's sacrifice and invites individuals to embody his teachings in their daily lives.

Churches today grapple with how to maintain biblical traditional practices while facing changes in modern society. Some congregations stick firmly to rituals, believing they are vital for identity and stability. Others feel that adapting to contemporary values can attract a younger audience. To find a middle ground, churches could introduce new programmes that respect classical teachings. Thus leading to traditions that the next generation might not differentiate from biblical and textual traditions, which have been kept over the past centuries.

CONCLUSION

While the church today is filled with a lot of human traditions in the guise of biblical traditions, this work argued that such human traditions cannot be seen and considered as biblical traditions, which are rooted in the Jewish, Judeo-Christian, and modern Christian contexts. One understands that biblical-critical traditions are understood in different

contexts, often with a focus on how these traditions are divinely transmitted and how they affect biblical authority. The role of tradition in the formation of the Bible is also evident in the historical processes, early church practices, and theological foundations that explain why Scripture can not be separated from Tradition. Biblical traditions in Judaism, early Christianity, the Apostolic Fathers, and canon formation affect modern biblical interpretation across different contexts. The biblical traditions across all contexts assimilated hymns and prayers, like the prophetic oracles and the oldest legal propositions, which belong to ancient Israel (Kratz 45). The history of biblical traditions, which took place in the context of Israelite history, cannot be separated from human history. Yet, not everything is literary fiction. From the oldest to the youngest literary layers, historical memory and remnants of authentic tradition rooted in ancient scribal culture entered the biblical tradition. Still, in no place is such material directly accessible. It survives only through a transmission and transformation of biblical tradition that reflected upon and interpreted a vast array of circumstances, experiences, and ancient traditions, all retrospectively and with a specific conception of God. The discussion about biblical traditions developed in human history, mixing historical and biblical facts, and the church must sift between human and biblical traditions. With this, the church can be restored to its God-divinely intended plan, with Jesus as the focal point.

This research postulates that these two are separately understood to reach a different conclusion; the changes in biblical traditions are obvious, and they also occur in human history, as well as in the biblical traditions. Thus, biblical traditions were circulated in a variety of textual vehicles and were continually reworked in translation and reinterpretation as people used them. These aspects of the traditions are correctly handled and available, and they also affected how authority was asserted. Within this understanding, it can be stated that biblical traditions, canonicity, and authoritative status developed through contested reception, translation, transmission, and local use rather than uniform procedure. Understanding such premises helps the church rework its history in line with the God-human history; otherwise, the church misses its earthly purpose of existence.

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