

Christianity

Two thousand years is a very long time allowing for much change in politics and religion among nations.

Judaism is by far the oldest of the three religions of the western world. It began with Abraham 4000 years ago when circumcision became the symbol of Monotheism. All Hebrew descendants of Abraham were circumcised and worshipped only the God of Abraham.

Abraham's descendants are Ishmalites, Edomites and Israelites. 500 Years after circumcision and Monotheism¹ began in Abraham, Moses gave to the Nation of Israel Divine Laws to govern a Theocratic Kingdom in the land of Canaan. These laws related only to the Israelites and those with them in the Kingdom.

This made Israelites a very unique and peculiar people because no other people had laws given by their Gods and no others, not even of the circumcision had spoken face to face with the God of Abraham and had a written contract with him. This covenant called for a Sabbath of rest on the seventh day as a sign of recognizing the one God who made all things. Israel had circumcision in common with all Hebrews but the Sabbath separated them as God's special people for a special work of God on earth.

Israel the Nation was made up of twelve tribes from the sons of Jacob. There was several hundred years of conflict and civil war after the conquest under Joshua. Then the Kingdom of David united all the tribes under one throne in Jerusalem.

David was of the tribe of Judah the fourth son of Jacob. God made a Covenant with David that all of the Kings of Israel would henceforth come from his family. This meant a dynasty in the house of David which divided forty years later and resulted in two Kingdoms. One with a capital in Samaria and the other Capital remained in Jerusalem. Samaria fell to the Assyrians in 721 B.C. and Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 586 B.C.

The fall of Jerusalem meant the end of the Davidic Dynasty and the end of worship through the Priesthood.

This is the origin of the Religion which today is called Judaism and from which came the Religion today which we call Christianity.

Monotheism had begun with Abraham and was given to Israel in Laws and Statutes for a Kingdom in Canaan where worship was centered in a Priesthood.

The Tribe of Judah had maintained this Kingdom and this religion in Jerusalem until the Babylonians removed King Zedekiah from the throne of David and killed his sons ending the Dynasty of King David. They also ended the Priesthood and Temple worship in Jerusalem by destroying the Temple and taking its contents to Babylon.

When the remnant from this tribe returned from Babylon seventy years later they began to be called Jews and this is how the Religion which began with Moses came to be known today as Judaism. This returning remnant of Jews sought to restore Priesthood worship in Jerusalem, but were suspected of also seeking the restoration of David's throne which resulted in great opposition from the Kings of that time.

Alexander invaded Judea about 330 B.C. bringing in the Greek culture called Hellenism then Augustus Caesar became the Roman Emperor in 27 B.C. and made Judea a province of Rome ruled by a Tetrarch that He chose from the Hasmonean Dynasty.

This is the situation of the times from which comes the Religion today that we call Christianity.

Christ is the Greek word for the Hebrew word Messiah which interpreted means anointed.

God had anointed Moses, Judges, Prophets, Priest and Kings as His servants to the Israelites. Now the Jews were in tribute to the Romans even though they lived in Judea and worshipped at Jerusalem, the Capital of the old fallen Kingdom of Judah.

God had promised that the House of David would be raised up by a son of David, anointed by God to be King over all Israel (both houses.) This is how Jesus came to be called The King of the Jews.

In the days of Herod the Tetrarch of Judea the Temple had been restored to greatness and the Priesthood was again carrying out the Religious Worship given to Israel by Moses, but there was no Son of David anointed by God on David's Throne.

This remnant had revived the Messianic hope among the Jews for a King to reign and restore the fallen Kingdom.

Religion and the Priesthood were already restored by those ruling on Moses seat with laws and statutes of worship but they needed a King to rule on David's Throne with divine authority for the Commonwealth of Israel.

¹ The doctrine or belief that there is but one God.

Herod was anointed by Rome who occupied the land with soldiers, procurators and tax collectors. The Jews longed for one anointed by God, a Messiah, being interpreted the Christ.

This fervent expectation of a Christ produced many Christian claims by would be Kings of the Jewish Nation.

Many in those days claimed to be the Christ and had many Disciples, but this is not the origin of Christianity. All of these Christs and their Christian followers were killed and scattered and no Christian heritage survived their death.

Their success as a Christ was due to the increased Messianic fervor of the Jewish remnant which occupied the seat of Moses with access to the archives of Moses and the Prophets.

There manuscripts were studied carefully for insight concerning the Christ. Where, how and when would the Christ come?

There was one Theudas with about four hundred disciples and another Judas of Galilee in the days of taxing, which had many followers but all these Christ perished and their disciples dispersed.

We see many Christs with many Christian followers but none survived until the Disciples of Jesus continued to follow Him after His death.

This is the origin of Christianity and the Christian Religion. It began when the followers of Jesus were dispersed after His death and returned to believe again that He was the Christ and that God had now anointed Him King. His throne was at the right hand of God in Heaven and they were supposed to go to both houses and announce this Good News.

Many years later this Christian Gospel spread among the Gentile (the uncircumcised) with the teaching that Christ was also the Savior of the world.

These Gentile Disciples began to be called Christ followers or Christians instead of Messiah followers which limited the Christ to Israel. This is the Origin of Christian and Christianity and Christmas and Church of Christ or the use of the word Christ in everything 2000 years later.

This Christian hope is what the first Christmas was all about. The birth of Jesus was on this wise.

About the time of the taxation some wise men from Babylon stopped in Jerusalem to inquire about the birth of the Christ. Herod asked the Moses lawyers where the Christ was to be born and was told it was in the city of David which was Bethlehem of Judea. Herod instructed the men to find the child King and return to him and let

him know where the Christ was, so that he might worship Him.

Herod believed in the Christ of the Jews and feared he would lose his throne to Him; therefore when the men did not return he ordered the death of all the Jewish children in that area born according to the time of his interview with the men.

Jesus was taken to Egypt to live until Herod died then returned to grow up in Nazareth of Galilee. This is how He became known as Jesus of Nazareth, a Galilean and a Nazarene.

About thirty years after the First Christmas a cousin of Jesus named John the son of a Priest came up out of the wilderness of Judea claiming that the time of Christ is at hand.

Many thought that he like Judas and Theudas was claiming the divine anointing, but he denied such a claim and said that he was a forerunner announcing the coming of the Christ.

John claimed to be a voice crying in the wilderness. This meant that he spoke to Israelites who had been dispersed and scattered into the wilderness of humanity.

None of the others with Messianic claims had any witness except themselves. Jesus not only had a man sent from God and a Priestly family but He claimed another witness greater than John in the archives of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms.

Every Messiah before and after Jesus had only his own testimony to give in recruiting disciples to follow them and they all were far more successful than Jesus who had the witness of John, a man very popular among the people as well as the voice of God spoken by the Prophets.

Jesus appealed to John to authenticate His Messianic claim but he also appealed to all the Jewish Prophets who had spoken of a coming Christ.

The popularity of John passed on to Jesus when John identified Him as the Christ of God.

The leaders wanted some sign to authenticate His Messianic claim. They had too much bad experience with false Christ and realized how serious such claims could be.

Jesus said that His life and works were in compliance with what the Word of God predicted about the Christ, that the very Scriptures which spoke of the Christ were being fulfilled before them and they are blind to it.

The Prophets had predicted that the Christ would do miracles among the people when He came. These were

to be signs of proof to the people that God had sent Him. Much like those of Moses time when God sent him to the people in Egypt.

These miracles however became the object of attention and accounted for Jesus popularity rather than His Messianic Mission.

When the miracles ceased and Jesus was arrested even His chosen Disciples abandoned Him.

Everyone now considered Jesus to be just another Christ making a false claim to the Throne of David.

Jesus was tried by Jewish authorities and handed over to the Romans to be put to death. This was a first among those seeking David's Throng.

No Christ had ever been brought before the Jewish Rulers for evaluation. There was a wait and see policy for all of those with Messianic ambitions.

They all ran afoul with the Romans, not the Jews. Jesus is the only Christ to be handed over to the Romans by the Jews. All others had become a threat to the Romans, not the Jews.

Jesus is also a unique Christ in that He spoke of His death to His followers, warning them to keep faith in spite of it.

He assured them that He would return and continue with them after three days of death. He explained that His death was necessary for what He came to do. Therefore when the time came he passively submitted to it, but His Disciples did not.

They never understood why the Christ had to die until the door was opened to Gentiles to believe in a Jewish King.

Forty days after His Resurrection He ascended to His Throne at the right hand of God leaving His Disciples in charge of all Kingdom activity on earth.

This activity was directed by God Himself. The same Holy Ghost that had sired Jesus and directed His life was now in charge of the Kingdom of the Son of David just as it had been in the Kingdom of Moses and Joshua and David.

This Kingdom was not to stop at earthly borders like the old Kingdom from Dan to Beersheba. Neither would there be a conquest of land and Kings and Kingdoms because this is a Spiritual Kingdom in the hearts of people.

The Kingdom was offered first to those of the Jewish Religion but being spiritual in the heart it may be given to anyone of any religion, race or gender. Since it is not in the flesh but in the Spirit it matters not whether

the host of this Kingdom be male or female, Jew or Greek, bound or free.

The prospective territory for conquest and residence of this Kingdom is not limited to Judaism and Judea. It may spread into the uttermost parts of the earth.

So from Faith to Faith, heart to heart, Jesus has been conquering Kings and Kingdoms bringing peace to troubled hearts. This is how He obtained the title Prince of Peace.

The peace which Jesus sought to bring was Peace with God which would be on earth in the hearts of men when it came.

Had the Kingdom of the Christ been of this present world like that of all other Kings then Jesus and His followers would have used the sword to establish the Christian Kingdom.

Jesus taught that His Kingdom was spiritual and therefore in the Spirit of man, Pilate did not know what that meant when Jesus explained it to him, but he did understand that Jesus being The Christ was no threat to his reign.

If Herod had known that The Christ was to establish a spiritual Kingdom in the hearts of men, he would not have feared the loss of his own.

The Kingdoms of this world have Kings and Thrones which will remain after The Prince of Peace establishes His Kingdom and ascends to reign on His Throne. Some believe and teach that Herod was justified in his fear of the Prince because The Christ was intending to restore the earthly Kingdom of David until unbelief cut the people off. While Pilate really had nothing to fear because The Christ was now being cut off and a Spiritual Kingdom would result.

I believe that we see the same objective for The Christ at His birth as we do at His Death and Resurrection.

Unbelief can only frustrate the work of God in some mutual activity such as a covenant or an inheritance which must be received as a gift. It cannot effect the unilateral work of God such as keeping a promise or in redemption.

The fullness of time had come when the Prince was born and God set forth a Passover Lamb to redeem all men from the death of their first birth.

It was Spiritual from the beginning and remains Spiritual today. The Prince of Peace has earned His title by bringing peace with God to the hearts of men. The King of Glory has been crowned with Glory at God's right hand.

The Jewish Connection

Everyone has a different understanding of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity.

Christianity today has its origins in the claim of Jesus of Nazareth to be The Christ of God and what this means among Christians is so different that they divide themselves into different Faiths and Denominations.

The Christian Religion has divided into conflicting Religions seeking political power and causing many wars.

While Christianity was still rooted in Judaism by circumcision using only the Hebrew Bible for doctrine it remained non political with Religious unity in all matters of the Faith. By the fourth century Christianity is becoming political and doctrine is being determined by the manuscripts of the Apostles. The Christian Faith has long been removed from Judaism and circumcision with divisions abounding in matters of Faith.

The Emperor calls for creeds to define the Christian faith and for Canons of manuscripts to give Christianity its own Bible.

This union of politics and religions under Emperor Constantine would redefine Christianity altogether.

The Religion which began as a spiritual institution in the heart will become an earthly institution in the land.

The Church which had been subjected to religious persecution when it was a sect among circumcision and subjected to political persecution when it left circumcision will now have both political and religious power to become the persecutors.

The Fourth Century began with the Church under great persecution from the Roman State and ended with the Church as persecutors in union with the Roman State.

The Church will be divided along with the political divisions of East and West. There will be a Western Latin Church in Rome and the Eastern Greek Church of Constantinople bringing the Church into conflict and war with each other.

This will be the manifestations of the Christian faith for a thousand years with no resemblance at all to its original charter.

When we compare Judaism and Christianity we can see their similarities but we can also see the contrast.

Both are a Religion with a Spiritual reign but Judaism began with a political rule as well as being a Religion. Only Judaism has political laws and statutes.

Both are sponsored by the God of Abraham if we believe Moses and Jesus who both claimed to be sent and anointed by him. But only Moses contended with the Kings of this world in setting up the Jewish Kingdom while Jesus only contended with the Gods of this world (Religious Rulers) in setting up the Christian Kingdom.

Judaism had earthly borders, but Christianity may spread to the ends of the earth. We have charities like *Doctors without borders* which means that they minister healing in every land.

Judaism stopped at the borders of the Davidic Kingdom but Christianity continues spiritual healing in life wherever it goes as it covers the earth like the waters cover the sea.

Judaism is both political and spiritual with earthly borders for the reign of both while Christianity is only spiritual therefore its borders are spiritual only.

Judaism is limited to Judea the land of David's Kingdom, to one nation, tribe, tongue, blood, etc. while Christianity relates to life (not land) and all nations and peoples.

This is how The Christ established Christianity in Judaism and how it spread to the world, but it was completely redefined in the Fourth Century when the religion which was solely spiritual began to merge with the state and take on a political agenda. The Church which had been people will now become a Steeple. The Church which had been instituted by King Jesus will become an institution by the Emperor and a religion for all of his subjects.

The fact that the Christian Kingdom was spiritual only without any political power like that of Judaism is the cause of all the misunderstanding about the Christian faith.

There was to be peace in Jesus Kingdom but the Kingdom is in the heart. There would be warfare but the weapon would not be carnal like those of King David. There would be a Temple but not in Jerusalem made with men's hands, rather a dwelling place for God's Spirit in the heart, a habitation for God made out of living (spiritual) stones.

There would be the Law of God, but written on the heart, not tablets of stone as in Judaism.

There would be a Covenant with God, but sealed and sprinkled by the blood of Jesus not bulls and goats.

There would be redemption for all Christians out of Adam, not out of Egypt as in Judaism.

All Christians would be heirs of (eternal) life not heirs to land as in Judaism.

There would be children in The Christ Kingdom but they would be called the Children of God not the Children of Israel.

The Christ would provide manna from Heaven as did Moses but to eat meant to life forever.

The Christ would provide water but to drink would satisfy and never thirst again.

There would be healing by the Christ, the Great Physician for any and all diseases and infirmities. The blind would receive their sight. The deaf would hear, the dumb would speak, the lame would walk and the dead would live again.

Christians are followers of a Christ that had been dead. Christians also had been dead in Adam as well as deaf, dumb, lame and blind. Now in Christ the last Adam Christians are alive and healed of all these diseases.

If a Jew possessed all of the blessings of God promised to the chosen people, He still would not have the blessings of God possessed by every Christian.

Judaism is the religion and faith of the children of Israel who received a Kingdom from God that was of this present world.

Christianity is the religion and faith of the Children of God who receive a Kingdom that is not of this world. Israel had a Covenant with God sealed with animal blood. Christians have a Covenant with God sealed with the Blood of Jesus the Christ.

Israel had a promise in Abraham through Jacob. Christians have a promise in Abraham through Jesus.

The Christian promise was made to Abraham the Gentile before circumcision, while the Jewish promise was made to Abraham in circumcision.

All that a Jew has in his covenant of circumcision is not to be compared with what a Christian has in the promise of God to the uncircumcised.

Christianity is not the extension of Judaism, but neither is it a branch off of Judaism.

Jesus was the Messiah of Judaism but he also is the Christ of Christianity. In Judaism He was an anointed Prophet - in Christianity an anointed King.

Between Judaism and Christianity there is Death and Resurrection. The death of Messiah, the Resurrection of Christ. A metamorphosis, a transformation.

Judaism is to Christianity what seed is to fruit. A branch out of the Stem of Jesse planted as a root to bring

forth a new vine. A corn of wheat falling into the ground to die in order to bring forth much fruit.

No other Messiah spoke of death proceeding His reign. But Jesus also spoke of his followers as passing from death to life.

Death ended the life of Jesus anointed to be a Prophet to His people. The Resurrection began the Eternal Life of Jesus anointed to be King forever in His Kingdom.

Christianity begins with the Resurrection and Coronation of Jesus as King, likewise Christians have the same origin as they pass from death to life.

The Jewish Bible speaks of Messiah as suffering and also as reigning. This was a paradox with different explanations from those exercised in Christology. How can this be? Will there be two Messiahs? This was a mystery to everyone until revealed by Peter at Pentecost.

No one expected the Messiah to suffer, much less die. This is why the Disciples lost hope when He began to suffer and dispersed when He died.

There were texts in the Jewish Bible which spoke of Messiah as a suffering servant and texts which spoke of Messiah as a reigning King. If this was understood to mean that He would suffer rejection and persecution before His Coronation it still did not mean death. No one could factor in death to the Messiah without having another Messiah to reign but Peter cleared up the Messianic mystery by explaining that this same Jesus that died is risen to reign.

Herein lies the relationship of Judaism and Christianity. The Christ was an anointed Prophet to His own Jewish people and an anointed King over His Christian Kingdom.

Christianity has its origin in the Resurrection of the Christ not in Christmas or His birth.

The Adam Connection

There was another mystery in Christianity relating to how does a Christ mean anything to those outside of Judaism. Paul cleared up this Christian mystery much like Peter did with the Messianic mystery that no one understood. Both mysteries relate to the death of Jesus and the new life in Resurrection.

According to Paul there were two Adams (not two Messiahs) with Jesus being the second and the last. The second Adam had the original divinity of human life as given by God to the first.

This life was to be given as a ransom (to pay the wage) equivalent to the life lost by Adam in the Garden. Death passed upon Adam when he lost divine human life and then passed upon his offspring in procreation, leaving all men dead in Adam. Their offspring are called mortals.

Divine life is found again in humanity when God (the Holy Ghost) has a Son for the very purpose of saving mortals from their mortality.

Just as all die that are born of Adam so shall all live that are born of the Last Adam.

Jesus was more than a Prophet, more than a Priest and more than a King. Jesus was to be the Savior of the world by tasting the death which Adam brought into the world.

As God's Lamb dying for the sin which brought death and mortality into mankind, Jesus is a Passover Lamb for those in Adam not for those in Egypt.

As a Kinsman Redeemer Jesus restores life to the dead, not land to the dead as with Boaz to Ruth. Neither is His redemption price Gold and Silver but His life.

The Mystery of the Cross is vicarious death which is necessary to pay the wage with a ransom. A life for a life. When Christ is planted in death He will be raised in Glory bringing (much fruit) many Sons of God with Him.

Paul says that his credentials in the Jewish religion of circumcision did not make him a Christian; rather Resurrection and Regeneration, which is God's gift to all who believe.

This is how Christianity left its Jewish roots in the Messianic Faith and went out into all the world as the Christian Faith.

Connecting the Christ to the death of all in the Garden will of course make Him relevant to all mankind and connecting Christians to resurrection will give them life before death. In Christianity there is no Jew nor Gentile only Christians. And there is but one Father and one Faith and one Christ, etc.

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