

St. Paul & The First Christians

Spring - 2018

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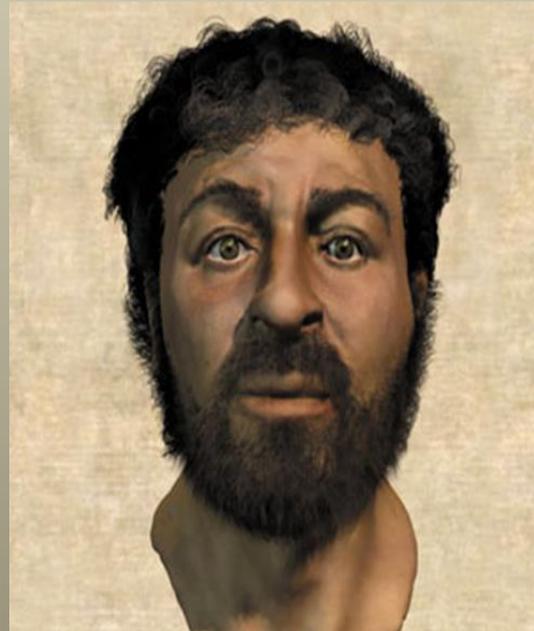
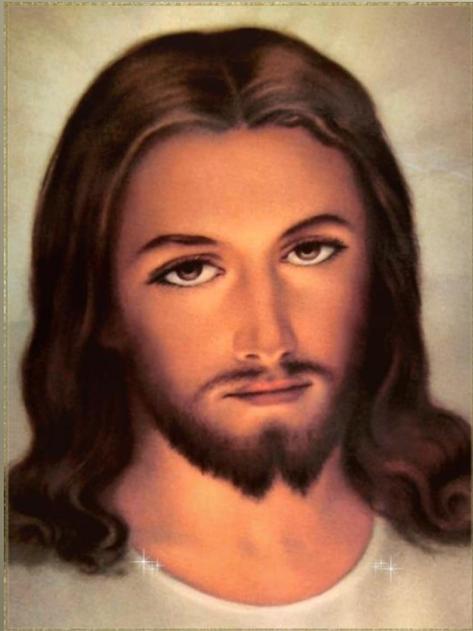
A Remarkable Journey

Christianity is, without a doubt, the most significant religious movement in the history of Western civilization. With **2.2 billion adherents**, it is unmatched in its impact on the politics, economics and culture of the West.

However, Christianity **began as a tiny, apocalyptic sect within Judaism**. Its earliest members were a small group of poorly educated peasants living in a remote corner of the Roman empire who followed an unknown, itinerant teacher who was executed for treason.

Our purpose will be to study Christianity's early years and those first Christians who nurtured the memory of Jesus, and to examine **how the religion of Jesus became a religion about Jesus**.

The Jesus of History



The Synoptic Gospels

- The term synoptic comes from the Greek syn, meaning "together", and optic, meaning "seen".
- The gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are referred to as the Synoptic Gospels because they include many of the same stories, often in the same sequence, and the same wording, indicating a literary interdependence when they are **seen together**.

The Gospel Of Mark

- The Gospel of Mark is our earliest gospel.
- It was written around 65-70 CE.
- The authorship is unknown.
- Mark took oral and perhaps written stories of Jesus and created a narrative.
- Mark's message is to establish Jesus as the messiah sent from God to fulfill the Jewish scriptures.
- Jesus' followers struggle to grasp who he is.
- The “**messianic secret**” describes Jesus' desire to keep his identity secret.

The Gospel Of Matthew

- The Gospel of Matthew was written around 80-85CE.
- The Gospel of Matthew is anonymous.
- Matthew copied/edited much of the Gospel of Mark.
- It contains additional stories from “Q” and “M.”
- He adds several important stories including Jesus’ genealogy, his birth and the Sermon on the Mount.
- Matthews main emphasis is the Jewishness of Jesus, the importance of following Jewish law and the fact that **Jesus is fulfilling Old Testament prophecy.**
- Ironically, Matthew also passionately attacks Jewish leaders.

The Gospel Of Luke

- The Gospel of Luke is believed to have been written after the Gospel of Matthew, around 85-90CE.
- Like Matthew and Mark, Luke is anonymous.
- It is a 2-volume set, with the Acts of the Apostles.
- Luke uses many of the stories found in Mark.
- It contains additional stories from “Q” and “L.”
- Luke presents different birth and genealogy stories.
- Luke presents the only childhood story of Jesus.
- Luke may have been a gentile.
- Luke’s emphasis is on **how salvation moved from Jews to non-Jews**. He portrays Jesus as a prophet.

The Gospel Of John

- The Gospel of John was written around 95 CE.
- Its authorship is unknown.
- Unlike his 1 year ministry in the synoptics, Jesus preaches for nearly 3 years in the Gospel of John.
- The gospel follows a similar plot line but uses different stories.
- It is thought that this gospel was written for Jews who believed Jesus was the messiah, but had been excluded from their local synagogue.
- Unlike the synoptics, Jesus is portrayed as divine, the pre-existent word of God.

Other Sources

- Jewish historian Josephus
- Letter from Roman Governor Pliny the Younger to the Emperor Trajan
- Letter from Roman historian Tacitus
- The Dead Sea Scrolls
- The Nag Hammadi Library

1st Century Palestine

- Illiteracy rates may have been 95%. It was a time of magic, miracles, gods and very early death.
- Jews were just one small part of the rich and varied Roman religious world.
- Jews were under foreign control most of the eight centuries before the birth of Jesus.
- Jews in Jesus day were required to pay taxes to Rome.
- Unlike other conquered people, Jews were not required to be Roman soldiers or worship Roman Gods.

1st Century Palestine

- There developed a Jewish ideology called **apocalypticism**.
- This evil age was controlled by cosmic forces opposed to God, who were gaining in strength.
- God would eventually intervene in the course of history to overthrow the forces of evil.
- God would then raise the dead for judgment, bringing in a new age in which justice would reign.
- The appearance of God's kingdom would happen very soon.
- John the Baptist, Jesus, the Apostles and Paul were apocalyptic.

The Life Of Jesus

- Jesus was born c. 6-4 BCE, near the time of the death of Herod the Great.
- He spent his childhood and early adult years in Nazareth, a Galilean village.
- He was baptized by John the Baptist.
- He called disciples.
- He taught in towns, villages and the countryside of Galilee (apparently not in cities).
- He was known to be a healer and exorcist.
- He preached the coming “Kingdom of God.”
- About the year 30 he went to Jerusalem for Passover.

The Life Of Jesus

- He created a disturbance in the Temple area.
- He had a final meal with the disciples.
- He was arrested and interrogated by Jewish authorities, specifically the high priest.
- He was executed on the orders of the Roman prefect, Pontius Pilate, for claiming to be the “King of the Jews.”
- His disciples abandoned him but were not arrested or executed.
- His disciples saw him (in some sense) after his death.
- As a consequence, they believed that he would return to found the Kingdom of God.
- They formed a community to await his return and sought converts to their faith in Jesus as God's Messiah.

The Family Of Jesus

- **Father:** Joseph, described as a "tekton"; traditionally taken to mean "carpenter", though the Greek term evokes an artisan with wood, iron or stone.
- **Mother:** Mary, was betrothed to Joseph when she conceived Jesus. The betrothal would have taken place when she was in her early teens.
- **Brothers:** James, Joseph (Joses), Judas and Simon.
- **Sisters:** Mentioned but not named.

The Teachings Of Jesus

- Jesus taught about the imminent arrival of the Kingdom of God.
- The Kingdom's arrival would be heralded by a cosmic figure called The Son of Man.
- To prepare for God's judgment, all Jews needed to follow the Torah and repent of their sins.
- Jesus offered an immediate and direct route to God's love and mercy.
- God's judgment would bring about a total reversal of the social order. Those in power (the forces of evil) would be removed, and the oppressed would be exalted. "The first shall be last and the last first." – Mark 10:30

Thy Kingdom Come



What Is the Kingdom of God?

“The time is fulfilled, and **the kingdom of God** is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” - Mark 1.15

- God has allowed human history to run its course with little interference. One day, he will bring history to an end and **govern the world perfectly.**
- The Kingdom is already present, in some sense, in Jesus’ ministry, but is yet to be fully realized.
- As Jesus told John the Baptist, his healings, exorcisms and preaching are proof that he is ushering in the Kingdom of God.

Apocalyptic Sayings Of Jesus

"And in those days, after the affliction, the sun will grow dark and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the sky will be shaken; **and then they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds with great power and glory.** And then he will send forth his angels and he will gather his elect from the four winds, from the end of earth to the end of heaven....**Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away before all these things take place.**"

Mark 13:24-27

The Disaster



Why Was Jesus Crucified?

“Jesus was an eschatological prophet. He thought that God was going to destroy the Temple. Jesus probably thought that in the new age, when the twelve tribes of Israel were again assembled, there would be a new and perfect Temple, built by God himself. That was standard eschatological thinking.”

- E. P. Sanders, The Historical Figure of Jesus

“To have somebody preaching that the Kingdom of God was really on its way, perhaps ... within that very holiday...[is]the equivalent of shouting, "Fire!" in a crowded theater. It would be enough to get somebody in trouble. “ - Paula Fredriksen Professor, Boston University

Where Did The Apostles Go?

Only Luke's gospel places the Apostles in Jerusalem after the Crucifixion. All the others say they went to back to Galilee. It was there that the resurrection appearances took place.

“The conjecture that **the apostles fled to Galilee** after the crucifixion makes sense in that they would have feared for their own lives and wanted to return to familiar territory as quickly as possible.” – Jeffrey Butz, “The Brother of Jesus”

The Resurrection



The Resurrection - Paul

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: **that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures**, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that **he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve**. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, **and last of all he appeared to me** also, as to one abnormally born. – 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

The Resurrection - Mark

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. And entering the tomb, **they saw a young man** sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that **he is going before you to Galilee**. There you will see him, just as he told you.” And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, **and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.**

— Mark 16:1-8

The Resurrection - Matthew

Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, **for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.** His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, **for he has risen, as he said.** Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, **he is going before you to Galilee;** there you will see him. See, I have told you.”

So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. **And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!”** And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.” – Matt 28:1-10

The Resurrection - Luke

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. **And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb**, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, **behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel**. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. **Remember how he told you**, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.”

And they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, **but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them**. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened...

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. **But their eyes were kept from recognizing him**. – Luke 24:1-16

The Resurrection - John

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb... Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth... Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; **for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.** Then the disciples went back to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb,... And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain... They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, **but she did not know that it was Jesus... Supposing him to be the gardener,** she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away...” Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, **‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’**” – John 20:1-18

Characteristics Of A Divine Man

- 1) **Birth:** **Special portents** in dreams and divine oracles announce the birth of a messenger of the gods. Divine parentage.
- 2) **Early Childhood:** The child's special nature is evidenced from birth. Parents arrange for special training. **The child amazes those who witness its deeds.** The child excels in learning and exhibits miraculous power and wisdom.
- 3) **Adult Career:** **Mighty deeds reveal divine providence.** Great wisdom in teachings. Miracles performed. Strength of character while under stress. Unusual phenomena accompany his death or disappearance. – L. Michael White, Scripting Jesus

What Is A Messiah?

A messiah is a savior or liberator of a the Jewish people. In the Hebrew Bible **a messiah is a king or High Priest** traditionally anointed with holy anointing oil. In later Jewish messianic tradition and eschatology, a messiah is a leader anointed by God, and in some cases, a future King of Israel, physically descended from the Davidic line, **who will rule the united tribes of Israel and herald the Messianic Age.**

The Greek translation for 'Messiah' is khristos , **Anglicized as Christ.**

Belief In Jesus As The Messiah

There are reasons to believe that some of Jesus' followers **thought of him as the messiah during his lifetime**, not simply afterward. And there are further reasons for thinking that **Jesus himself said he was the messiah**... This is very surprising, given the fact that as far as we can tell, Jesus did nothing during his life to make anyone think that he was the anointed one.

- Bart Ehrman, How Jesus Became God

The Problem

- Jesus **did not fit any messianic paradigm**, nor did he fulfill any messianic requirement.
- He predicted the end of days, but they did not arrive.
- He promised the liberation of Jews, but God did no such thing.
- He vowed the 12 tribes of Israel would be reconstituted. They were not.
- The first remained first and the last remained last.

The Solution

The early church recognized the dilemma and made a conscious decision to **change those messianic standards.**

“In this way, everything that was said of ancient Israel, and all the promises made to it, were transferred to **the Christians, who claimed that they, and not the Jews, were the ancient people of God.**

This transference...was probably almost as important for the future history of Christianity as **the change which made Jesus the center of a cult offering private salvation,** instead of the prophetic herald of the Kingdom of Heaven at the End of the Age.” – Kirsopp Lake, Landmarks in the History of Early Christianity

When Does Christianity Begin?

While the early church as we know it would not have arisen without the ministry of the historical Jesus...**the ministry of Jesus, taken by itself, did not create the early church.**” – John Meier, *Marginal Jew*, Vol 3.

“Christianity is born, **not as a direct result of Jesus’ teachings**, but as a result of what God is claimed to have done through his death and resurrection.” – Luke Timothy Johnson, *Early Christianity*

The Jesus Movement Begins

9:00 – 14:37



Acts Of The Apostles



Acts Of The Apostles Begins

In the first book, Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. **He presented himself alive** to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and **speaking about the kingdom of God**.

And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem...- Acts 1: 1-4

Pentecost

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. **And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.** And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven...And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?

...But others mocking said, “**They are filled with new wine.**” But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. – Acts 2:1-16

The Church Of Jerusalem

In conformity with Jesus' command not to approach Gentiles, **all potential candidates were Jewish**. They were to continue following the Law of Moses, but must also accept the proclamation that Jesus was the promised messiah whose death, resurrection and return would inaugurate the arrival of God's everlasting Kingdom.

“It is remarkable to note that the concept of the church as an institution intended to continue the mission of Jesus, or the ceremony of baptism as a gateway into the community are completely absent from the Gospels of Mark and Luke, and appear only on three odd occasions in Matthew.” – Geza Vermes, *Christian Beginnings*

Matthias Replaces Judas

And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship **from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.**” And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. —

Acts 1:23-26

Communal Living

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, **and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common.** And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. – Acts 4:32-37

What Happened To Jesus' Family?

Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? – 1Cor 9:5

All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. - Acts 1:14

Then he (Jesus) said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to a his own home. – John 19:27

A Fascinating Reference

“There still survived of the family of the Lord the grandsons of Jude, his brother after the flesh, as he was called...(brought before the Roman Emperor Domitian) They were asked concerning the Christ and his kingdom...and explained that it was neither of the world nor earthly, but heavenly...and it would be at the end of the world, when he would come in glory to judge the living and the dead...At this, Domitian did not condemn them at all, but despised them as simple folk, released them...” - Church historian Eusebius (c. 260 – c. 340) quoting church historian Hegesippus (c. 110- c. 180).

Early Church Leader: James

Despite Church tradition, it is James, the brother of Jesus, not Peter, who was the leader of the Jerusalem church.

“The Acts of the Apostles provides evidence that James was an important figure in the Christian community of Jerusalem. When Peter must flee Jerusalem, he asks that James be informed .

When the Christians of Antioch are concerned over whether Gentile Christians need be circumcised to be saved, it is James who plays a prominent role in the formulation of the Church council's decision. Indeed, after Peter and Paul have made their case, it is James who finally delivers what he calls his "judgment," and afterwards, all accept it. **James, in other words, is shown in charge of the Jerusalem group, which conflicts with later claims of Peter's primacy there.**” – Wikipedia,

Was Peter The First Pope?

And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. "I also say to you that you are Peter, and **upon this rock I will build My church**; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. – Matt. 16:17-19

But when Cephas came to Antioch, **I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned**. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him. – Galatians 2:11-13

Paul



Our Sources: The Letters Of Paul

- **Undisputed:** Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, Philemon
- **Deutero-Pauline Epistles:** Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians
- **Pastoral Epistles:** 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus

Our Sources: Acts Of The Apostles

- Written by the anonymous other of Luke.
- Acts picks up the story of Jesus after his ascension.
- It deals with the spread of Christianity throughout the Mediterranean world, and the evolution of the religion from all Jewish to the inclusion of Gentiles.
- Paul is the hero of Acts.

Historical Problems With Acts

- As E. P. Sanders notes, the biggest historical concern with Acts is that its author and Paul are in fundamental disagreement as to Paul's mission.
- Acts see's Paul first as the apostle to the Jews of the Greek-speaking Diaspora. **Unfortunately, they rejected him.**
- Paul, however, sees himself exclusively as the apostle to the Gentiles. Paul tells us that Peter was the Apostle to the "circumcised."
- "Acts describes Paul differently from how he describes himself, both factually and theologically. Acts seems to differ with Paul's letters on important issues, such as the Law, Paul's own apostleship, and his relation to the Jerusalem Church. **Scholars generally prefer Paul's account over that in Acts.**" – Wikipedia, 6/13/13

Paul's Biography: His Letters

- He calls himself a Hebrew and a zealous Pharisee.
- He persecuted the Jesus movement.
- Around 37 CE, Paul “sees” the risen Jesus. He receives his gospel from Jesus and his call to serve the non-Jewish world.
- He makes three trips to Jerusalem. The first is three years after his apostolic call. He meets Peter and James, but none of the other apostles.
- The second trip is 14 years after his call when he appears before the Jerusalem leadership to explain his gospel and mission to the Gentiles.
- During his third trip he was apparently arrested and sent to Rome under guard.

Paul's Biography: His Letters

- Paul claimed many revelations from Jesus including direct voice communications and an ascent to the highest level of heaven.
- He had a physical disability sent by Satan.
- He claimed to have worked signs and mighty works that confirmed his apostleship.
- He was unmarried during his missionary days.
- He experienced numerous occasions of persecution including beatings, stoning's and a shipwreck.
- He worked as a manual laborer to support himself.
- He was imprisoned, probably in Rome around 60 CE and refers to his possible execution.

Paul's Biography: The Book of Acts

- Paul's Hebrew name was Saul. He was born in Tarsus a city in modern day Turkey.
- He came from a family of Pharisees and had a sister and nephew that lived in Jerusalem.
- He was born a Roman citizen.
- He had some role in the death of Stephen, the first member of the Jesus group to be executed.
- He was sent to Damascus to further persecute the Jesus movement when he has his vision of the risen Jesus.
- He worked as a tentmaker or leather worker.

Paul Persecutes Christians

For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how **I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it**. And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, **so extremely zealous was I** for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order **that I might preach him among the Gentiles**, I did not immediately consult with anyone; **nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me**. - Gal. 1:13-17

The Conversion Of St. Paul



Paul's Conversion: His Letters

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, **and last of all he appeared to me also**, as to one abnormally born. – 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, **I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.**

- Galatians 1:11-16

Paul's Conversion: Book Of Acts

As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. – Acts 9:3-9

Paul's World

1:00 – 4:50



Paul's Mission To The Gentiles



What Did Jesus Say About Gentiles?

These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “**Go nowhere among the Gentiles** and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. — Matthew 10:5

And behold, a Canaanite woman...came out and was crying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.” But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, “Send her away, for she is crying out after us.” He answered, “**I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**” But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” And he answered, “**It is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.**” She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” Then Jesus answered her, “O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.” - Matthew 15:22-28

The Great Commission

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, **but some doubted**. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **Go therefore and make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” – Matt 28:16-20

Converting Gentiles

It's in **Antioch** that a major new development starts to take place in the Christian movement. Because it's there that **we first hear of the expansion of the movement more to gentiles**. Initially when people were attracted to the Jesus movement, they first became Jews. But apparently Paul and some of his close supporters began to think that it was okay to become a member of the Christian movement without having to go through all of those rites of conversion to Judaism. That belief would spark one of the most important controversies of the first generation of the Christian movement. **Do you have to become a Jew in order to be a follower of Jesus as the Messiah?**

The major issues in converting to Judaism for a gentile is that one must, if a male, become circumcised. This leads some to think that it was actually much easier for women, and **it may actually be the simple fact that more women could easily be attracted to Judaism**...we know that later on when we see Paul's churches in the Greek world...there are far more women in them, precisely because it was already a hurdle that was easier to jump. – L. Michael White, Director of the Religious Studies University of Texas

Why Convert Gentiles?

Paul believed he had received a “calling” in the same sense that Hebrew prophets received “callings” as a messenger of the Lord. Paul’s Gospel for the Foreskin participated in **a specific apocalyptic hope of his day** (found in the Book of Isaiah, among others) that the eschatological pilgrimage of uncircumcised Gentiles, who turn from idols to worship the God of Israel, **would portend the Final Judgment.**” – J. Albert Harrill, Paul The Apostle

How Would Gentiles “Hear” Paul’s Message?

They must have reacted as if this is **some sort of strange message** at certain levels. **What does it mean to call someone the Christ or the Messiah?** It must not have been intelligible to a lot of them until some sort of explanation could be given. From other references within Paul[’s writings] we can determine some of the rudiments of his preaching message. **He talks about how they turn from idols to serve a living God** so he brings a message of the one Jewish God as part of his preaching. He’s a Jewish preacher. Secondly, **he talks about the wrath to come, a kind of apocalyptic image of a coming judgment** on all who worship idols and don’t serve that living God, and thirdly **he talks about Jesus the Messiah as the one who will deliver from that wrath**. So in Paul’s view it is the messianic identity of Jesus that is an important new element in this very traditional Jewish message and now there’s one other element. He’s taking it to a non-Jewish audience. He’s preaching to gentiles. – L. Michael White, Director of the Religious Studies, University of Texas

How Would Jews “Hear” Paul’s Message

In the Jesus movement it's clear that a new understanding has come to the fore. In fact it's slightly odd from certain perspectives. One doesn't normally expect that a Messiah should die and yet we have this ironic message in Paul that in fact the Messiah is the one who has been crucified. Now it's true that one could within a standard Jewish tradition think of the Messiah dying. The difference is that even when a Messiah should go through some sort of death or suffering that the event precipitated by that death should be the coming of the new kingdom.... What we find in Paul, and indeed among most of the early Christians, is a slightly ironic twist of fate that the death of the Messiah doesn't immediately inaugurate the new kingdom, and yet that doesn't seem to diminish their sense of apocalyptic expectation. Paul still thinks it's coming soon. He will go through his entire life thinking the kingdom will come soon but the Messiah had already died. – L. Michael White, Director of the Religious Studies University of Texas

Where Did “Christian” Come From?

- The term "Christian" was **first coined in Antioch** probably some ten maybe even fifteen years after the death of Jesus. The first Christians are all Jews...At the time that it was coined **it was probably a slur**. It was probably thrown at these early followers of Jesus as some derogatory designation of them. So when we hear at Antioch that they're called "Christians" we have to think of that in more in the vein of them being called "Messianists" or "Christies." ...**We're not actually sure who coined the term**. Whether it's other Jews who didn't believe in the Messiah or pagans who heard these Jewish groups talking about messianic ideas. – L. Michael White, Director of Religious Studies, University of Texas

Paul's Missionary Activity

After the blow up with Peter at Antioch, Paul left and went to Western Turkey or Asia Minor and Greece. Up until that point Paul has worked predominantly within Diaspora Jewish communities, where he moves out of the Jewish context to deal with gentiles. The dates are hard to decipher...but if we think of the Jerusalem conference in about the year 48 by the year 49 or 50, we know that Paul is up in Northern Greece, Macedonia, in the cities of Phillipi and Thessalonica. By the year 50 he arrives in Corinth...For the next ten years... from 50 to roughly 60, Paul will concentrate all of his efforts in this region of the Aegean basin. That is the region bounded by the Eastern coast of Greece and the Western coast of Turkey and the island in-between. – L. Michael White, Director of Religious Studies, University of Texas

Were There Other Missionaries?

In addition to the Apostles of Jesus, there were other missionaries in Asia Minor and Greece working independently of, and sometimes in conjunction with, Paul. We learn of them in Paul's letters.

- Apollos
- Andronicus and Junia (a couple)
- Prisca and Aquila (a couple)
- Others are referred to but unnamed

Why Did Paul Write Letters?

- 1) Paul's converts were Gentiles (**pagans**) who had little or no understanding about Judaism or Jesus.
- 2) Because Paul could only spend a short time in each town, he would move on before newly converted church members had a complete **grasp of this new theology**.
- 3) When problems arose, the churches **would write Paul with questions** and his letters were his attempt to address those specific issues.
- 4) Another reason for Paul's letter writing was perhaps the most frustrating for him: the arrival of **other Christian missionaries** whose preaching contradicted Paul's.

The Letters: 1 Thessalonians

(ca: 51)

- Thessalonica is located in Greece.
- The recipients were all Gentiles.
- The Thessalonian church was grieving the loss of fellow believers and were being harassed by pagan family members and neighbors.
- Paul tells us he evangelized while working a craft to support himself, rather than through powerful speeches.
- Paul asks his converts to live quietly, depending on no one.

The Letters: 1 Corinthians

(ca: 53/54)

- Corinth is located in Greece.
- An earlier, unknown Pauline letter is referenced.
- The all gentile church seems to be near collapse.
- Conflict has erupted over matters of hierarchy.
- Paul's main goal was to urge his congregation to reconcile their internal discord.

The Letters: Galatians

(ca: 54)

- Galatia is located in modern day Turkey.
- Paul was in conflict with Jerusalem based missionaries and “certain people...from James.” Paul is accused of being a religious fraud and a demonic messenger.
- Paul confronts Peter.
- The situation appears dire as Paul states, “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you...”

The Letters: 2 Corinthians

(ca: 54-56)

- Believed to contain fragments from as many as five different Pauline letters.
- Paul is offended by a Corinthian church member. He is accused of being “crafty” and “deceitful.”
- Paul once again attacks rival missionaries who apparently come from Jerusalem and mock his weakness of body and speech.
- Paul calls them servants of Satan and “super apostles.”
- These are different missionaries than the ones mentioned in Galatians.

The Letters: Philippians

(ca: 56)

- Philippi is located in northern Greece.
- Paul apparently wrote the letter while imprisoned for missionary activities.
- Paul is thanking his church for sending him financial assistance.
- Once again, Paul warns his congregation against the preaching of rival missionaries. “Beware of the dogs...beware of those who mutilate the flesh.”
- May be composed of three letters.

The Letters: Philemon

(ca: 56)

- Philemon was an associate of Paul's.
- Letter written from prison.
- Paul writes that he is sending the slave Onesimus back to his master, Philemon.
- Uncertain whether Paul wants the slave freed.
- The letter points to the evidence of slavery in early Christianity.

The Letters: Romans

(ca: 57)

- Written to a church Paul did not found.
- It is an introduction (and a defense) in advance of Paul's visit to Rome on his way to Spain.
- Paul believed he had accomplished his mission in the eastern Mediterranean, he was now turning towards the west.
- Revisits the theme of the relationship between Jews and Gentiles.
- It represents the clearest view of Paul's beliefs.

Paul's Contentious Gospel

J2C Vol. 1 1:17:25 – 1:22:25



Paul's vs. The Apostles

Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. I went up because of a revelation and set before them...the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, **in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain**. But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. **Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy** out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery— **to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment**... And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those, I say,...added nothing to me. On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised..., and when James and Cephas and John, **the so-called pillars**, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. – Gal. 2:1-9

Paul's vs. Peter

But when Cephas came to Antioch, **I opposed him to his face**, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, **fearing the circumcision party**. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that **even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy**. But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?” – Gal. 2:11-14

Paul's Advice For His Opponents

As historian E. P. Sanders notes, Paul's ongoing concern was that some Christian missionaries and some of the Jerusalem leadership did not agree with his message.

Paul said there were those who preach a contrary or "different gospel" than his own. **Paul hurled a curse against any who disagreed with him and wished that they would physically mutilate themselves.** He warned his followers that if they strayed, they would be severed from Christ.

His opponents were "false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ and were servants of Satan." – 2 Cor. 11:13-15

Paul Suffers for His Faith

“Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more **imprisonments**, with **countless beatings**, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the **forty lashes less one**. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was **stoned**. Three times I was **shipwrecked**; a night and a day I was **adrift at sea**; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, **danger from robbers**, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in **toil and hardship**, through many a sleepless night, in **hunger and thirst**, often without food, in cold and exposure.” — 2 Cor. 11:23-7

Paul's Troubled Churches

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. **For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you,** my brothers. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

– 1Cor. 1:10-13

Paul's Troubled Churches

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, **for a man has his father's wife**. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

– 1 Cor. 5:1-2

Paul's Troubled Churches

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, **but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.** But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, **let him be accursed...**”

- Gal. 1:6-10

Paul's Theology



Paul And The Law

- **Paul's central convictions made it difficult for him to explain the proper role of Jewish law in the life of his converts.** Paul believed that the God of Israel was the one true God, who had redeemed the Israelites from bondage in Egypt, given the Israelites the law, and sent his Son to save the entire world. Although Paul accepted Jewish behavior as correct, he thought that Gentiles did not have to become Jewish in order to participate in salvation...but...If the one true God is the God of Israel, should not one obey all the commandments in the Bible? If “love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18, quoted in Galatians 5:14 and Romans 13:9) is valid, why not the rest of the law? One point is especially difficult. **Paul maintained that the law is part of the world of sin and the flesh, to which the Christian dies. But how could the law, which was given by the good God, be allied with sin and the flesh?** For Paul, everything not immediately useful for salvation is worthless; what is worthless is not on the side of the good; therefore, it is allied with the bad. – Britannica Online

Paul And The Divine Powers

Paul, like other Jews, was a monotheist who believed that the God of Israel was the only true God. **But he also believed that the universe had multiple levels and was filled with spiritual beings.** Paul's universe included regions below the earth (Philippians 2:10); "the third heaven" or "Paradise" (2 Corinthians 12:1–4); and beings he called angels, principalities, rulers, powers, and demons (Romans 8:38; 1 Corinthians 15:24). **He also recognized the leader of the forces of evil, whom he called both "Satan" (1 Corinthians 5:5; 7:5) and "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4).** He declared in 1 Corinthians 8:5 that "there are many gods and many lords" (though he meant "so-called gods"), and in Romans 6–7 **he treated sin as a personified or semipersonified power.** Despite all this, Paul believed, at the right time the God of Israel will send his Son to defeat the powers of darkness (1 Corinthians 15:24–26; Philippians 2:9–11).

Paul's Apocalyptic Message

From J2C 4:56 – 5:36



The Return Of The Lord

In the Gospels, Jesus prophesies **the coming of “the Son of Man,”** who will come on the clouds and whose angels will separate the good from the bad (e.g., Mark 13; Matthew 24). **Paul accepted this view, but he believed, probably along with other followers of Jesus, that the Son of Man was Jesus himself:** Jesus, who had been raised to heaven, would return. This view appears in 1 Thessalonians 4, the oldest surviving piece of Christian literature.

In the end-time vision of 1 Thessalonians 4, **Paul indicates that he thinks that some people will die before the Lord returns** but that many (“we who are alive, who are left”) will not have died. **This belief was difficult for Paul’s pagan converts** to accept, and Paul attempted to overcome their reluctance by emphasizing that the resurrection body would be changed into “spiritual body” (1 Corinthians 15:42–54). A second problem was the delay: Christ did not immediately return, and the idea that believers would have to remain in the ground until he came was troubling. **Paul responded to this by stating that the transformation to a Christ-like spiritual body was already beginning** (2 Corinthians 3:18). – Britannica Online

End Times And The Thessalonians

“**We who are alive**, who are left until the appearance of the Lord, will not proceed those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a command, with the voice of an archangel, and with a trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ will rise first, **then we who are alive...will be snatched up with them in the clouds to greet the Lord in the air.**” - Thess. 4.15-17

The Final Duty of Christ

“The comes the end, when (Christ) delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last to be destroyed is death.” – 1 Cor. 15:24-26

Ritual And Prayer



Charismatic Churches

As with Jesus, Paul and his Gentile converts practiced a charismatic religion. Paul speaks of 9 spiritual gifts intended for the common good.

“To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge...to another faith...to another gifts of healing...to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, **to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.**” — 1 Cor. 12:8-10

Righteoused By Faith

We do not have the English words to accurately translate many of the key Greek phrases in Paul's writings.

Often **mistranslated as "justification by faith,"** being righteoused by faith is Paul's way of describing Gentile's relationship with God.

Paul argues that God required of Gentiles only acceptance of the God of Israel and of Jesus as savior. Gentiles would then be "righteoused by faith."

For Paul, salvation did not come from following the Jewish Law, salvation had come – completely — from the death of the messiah and his resurrection from the dead. If following the law could bring about salvation, Christ would not have had to die. And so the Law is not part of what is required for salvation. **Only faith in the death and resurrection of God's messiah is what matters.** - Bart Ehrman Blog, 5/14

Baptism

- In Judaism, immersion into water was intended to wash away **ritual impurity**.
- John the Baptist administered a more spiritual baptism. John's baptism symbolized the removal of pollution by **sinful conduct**.
- Paul's baptism had a more **mystical meaning**. “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” – Rom. 6:3-4

The Lord's Supper

“For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, he also took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” — 1

Corinthians 14:22-24

Being “In Christ”

Paul uses this phrase 50 times in his genuine letters. It is used nowhere else in the New Testament.

For Paul, Christ was a cosmic figure, no longer the historical Jesus who was “born of a woman.” He speaks of having “faith in Jesus” a few times, but never being “in Jesus,” only of being “in Christ.” Paul says, “From now on, therefore, we regard no one (of our group) according to the flesh, even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him such no longer.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” —

2 Corinthians 5:16-17

Jesus' Atoning Death

Adam was seduced by the devil-serpent with the help of Eve. **This act went on to infect the whole human race with an evil inclination.** St. Augustine referred to it as “original sin.” Thanks to these “wages of sin,” every human deserves punishment.

God, however, sent the sinless Christ to “be made in sin.” His death and resurrection atoned for the transgressions of mankind by punishing “sin in the flesh.” So when Christians believe in the redeeming virtue of Christ, they mystically die to sin and are reborn in a new life. – Geza Vermez, *Christian Beginnings*

Paul Says Jesus Is Not Preexistent

“Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God, which he announced in advance through his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son, who was **descended from the seed of David according to the flesh**, who was appointed Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness **by his resurrection** from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.” – Romans 1:3-4

Paul Says Jesus is Preexistent

“Who, although **he was in the form of God**

Did not regard being equal with God

Something to be grasped after.

But he emptied himself

Taking on the form of a slave,

And **coming in the likeness of humans.**

And being found in appearance as a human

He humbled himself

Becoming obedient unto death – even death

on a cross...” - Philippians 2:6-11

So, Which Is It?

“One sees that it is impossible to derive from Paul’s letters anything approaching one single doctrine of the person of Jesus Christ. It is possible that both the passages just quoted are **pre-Pauline in origin**, in which case they show that he drew on, rather than composed, quite diverse statements, one offering a “**low**” Christology, the other a “**high**” Christology.”

– E.P. Sanders, Paul: A Brief Insight

Did Paul Think Jesus Was God?

To be sure, as others have noted earlier, there is a remarkably close linkage of Jesus and God in Paul's letters. But, at the same time, there is an almost equally emphatic affirmation that there are *two*— God and Jesus— and Jesus is consistently described with reference to God, not replacing God but serving as **the one sent forth by God and acting as God's unique agent of redemption**. That is, we have two figures posited and a clear relationship between them. — Professor Larry Hurtado Blog, 6/14

Jesus & Paul: Similarities

- Both Jesus and Paul were born and raised Jewish, and neither one of them saw himself as departing from the truth of Judaism and the Jewish God. They both understood that **they were proclaiming the “true” form of Judaism.** Neither thought they were starting a “new religion.”
- Both Jesus and Paul proclaimed a Jewish, **apocalyptic message**, believing that the current age was ruled by the forces of evil, but a new age was coming in which God would destroy the forces of evil and bring in a utopian kingdom here on earth.
- Both Jesus and Paul thought that this climactic moment of all human history was soon to come, it was right around the corner, it would be here within their own generation.
- Both Jesus and Paul dismissed what they saw as the Pharisaic concern for the scrupulous observance of the Jewish Law as a way to obtain a right standing before God.
- Both Jesus and Paul taught the ultimate need of faith and saw the love one’s neighbor as the summing up and fulfilling of the law, as the most important thing the followers of God could do.

Jesus & Paul: Differences

- Jesus taught that to escape judgment, a person must **keep the central teachings of the Law** as he himself interpreted them. Paul taught that reliance on the observance of the Law in no sense would bring salvation; to escape the coming judgment a person must, instead, **believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus**.
- Jesus taught that the coming cosmic judge of the earth, **the Son of Man**, someone other than himself, would arrive on the clouds of heaven and would destroy the forces of evil and bring in God's good kingdom. Paul taught that **Jesus himself** was the coming cosmic judge who would destroy the forces of evil and bring in God's kingdom, arriving on the clouds of heaven in a mighty act of judgment.
- Jesus taught that **"faith" involves trusting God**, as a good parent, to bring his future kingdom to his people. Paul taught that **"faith" involves trusting in the past death and resurrection of Jesus**. It wasn't only faith in God but faith in the death and resurrection of Christ.
- For Jesus, his own importance lay in his proclamation of the coming of the end and his correct interpretation of the Law. **For Paul, Jesus' importance had nothing to do with Jesus' own teachings** (which Paul hardly ever quotes) but strictly in his death and resurrection.
- For Jesus, people could begin to experience what life would be like in the future kingdom if they would accept his teachings and begin to implement his understanding of the Jewish law in their lives. For Paul, people could begin to **experience life in the kingdom when they "died with Christ"** by being baptized and thus overcame the power of sin.

Paul's Take On Sex

Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: “**It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.**” But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. **For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.** Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. — 1 Cor. 7:1-6

Paul's Take On Marriage

Paul tells us that he is unmarried. As to his followers marital status, he says, “**I think that in view of the pending crisis, it is well for you to remain as you are.** Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife...The appointed time has grown short: from now on let those who have wives be as though they had none...**For the present form of this world is passing away.** —

1 Cor.7:26-31

Paul's Take On Divorce

To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife. To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever...he should not divorce her. If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever... she should not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. – 1 Cor.7:10-14

Paul's Take On Homosexuality

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the **sexually immoral**, nor **idolaters**, nor **adulterers**, nor men who practice **homosexuality**, nor **thieves**, nor the **greedy**, nor **drunkards**, nor **revilers**, nor **swindlers** will inherit the kingdom of God. — 1 Cor. 6:9-10

Paul's Take On Women

- “For a man ought not to cover his head since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man...Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.” - 1 Corinthians 11:7-8
- “If a woman has long hair, it is her pride. For her hair is given to her for covering.” – 1 Corinthians 11:15
- “But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.” – 1 Corinthians 11:3
- As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them learn it from their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.” – 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

But Did Paul Really Say That?

Numerous scholars agree that the verses in Corinthians 14:34-35 **are not an original part of Paul's letter**. Two reasons are, 1) the verses seem to go against practically everything Paul says pertaining to women's involvement in the church and 2) some of our oldest examples of these verses appear in other parts of Paul's letter, indicating that a later scribe inserted them. — Larry

Hurtado Blog, 9/23/17

Paul's Affliction

And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, **a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan**, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me; but he said to me, **“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”** — 2 Corinthians 12:8-9

Was Paul's Theology Normative?

All who rely on the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law." – Gal. 3:10

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? – James 2:14-16

The Death Of Paul

According to Acts, Paul was **arrested in Caesarea for taking a Gentile into a temple**. He was held there for a few years before being sent to Rome for trial. He was said to be in prison in Rome for at least two years.

The author of Acts ends the story there. Some think that Paul was eventually freed and continued his mission work to Spain. **Church tradition holds that Paul was martyred in Rome**, perhaps around the year 62 CE. Others say that he was martyred with Peter in Rome in 64 CE when the emperor Nero scapegoated Christians for starting a major fire in Rome.

The Death Of James

“And now Caesar, upon hearing the death of Festus, sent Albinus into Judea, as procurator. But the king deprived Joseph of the high priesthood, and bestowed the succession to that dignity on the son of Ananus, who was also himself called Ananus... Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the Sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned.” – Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews

What Happened To The Apostles?

We simply do not have reliable information about what happened to Jesus' disciples after he died. In fact, **we scarcely have any information about them while they were still living.** Acts does mention the death of James and the death of Stephen – the latter was not a disciple and did not have a post-resurrection appearance of Jesus granted to him. - Bart Ehrman Blog, 6/15

Clement of Rome, in his *Letter to the Corinthians* (Chapter 5), written c. 80–98, speaks of Peter's martyrdom in the following terms: "Let us take the noble examples of our own generation. Through jealousy and envy the greatest and most just pillars of the Church were persecuted, and came even unto death... Peter, through unjust envy, endured not one or two but many labours, **and at last, having delivered his testimony, departed unto the place of glory due to him.**"

Evolving Away From Jewish Roots

0:00 – 2:00



How Many Christians Were There?

Modern research casts doubt on the estimate of the early Christian population (small beginnings in the early first century CE to three million in the early fourth century CE). The main issue is that there is no agreed upon number for the Roman population. Determining what percentage of that population was Jewish, let alone Christian, requires “a fairly wild and arbitrary guess.” – Thomas Robinson, Who Were The First Christians?

Christian Persecution

- Christianity was tolerated by Rome for the most part. Persecutions were local.
- The Romans considered early Christians to be Jewish, an ancient and respected religion.
- The first we know of is Nero in 64 C.E.
- Despite church tradition, there is no evidence that Paul or Peter died during this persecution.
- Starting in 250, empire-wide persecution took place by decree of the emperor Decius. The edict was in force for eighteen months

The Roman View Of Christianity

They (the Christians) know one another by secret marks and insignia, and they love one another almost before they know one another. **Everywhere also there is mingled among them a certain religion of lust, and they call one another promiscuously brothers and sisters...**and become incestuous: it is thus that their vain and senseless superstition glories in crimes...and he who explains their ceremonies by **reference to a man punished by extreme suffering for his wickedness, and to the deadly wood of the cross**, appropriates fitting altars for reprobate and wicked men, that they may worship what they deserve. Now the story about the initiation of young novices is as much to be detested as it is well known. An infant covered over with meal, that it may deceive the unwary, is placed before him who is to be stained with their rites: this infant is slain by the young pupil.

Thirstily--O horror!--**they lick up its blood**; eagerly they divide its limbs. By this victim they are pledged together; with this consciousness of wickedness they are covenanted to mutual silence...On a solemn day they assemble at the feast, with all their children, sisters, mothers, people of every sex and of every age. There, after much feasting, when the fellowship has grown warm, **and the fervour of incestuous lust has grown hot with drunkenness...**in the shameless darkness, the connections of abominable lust involve them in the uncertainty of fate. – Fronto, The Octavius

Did Christians Worship In Secret?

“Even in our earliest extant Christian texts (Paul’s letters), there is evidence of the open, **“in your face” presentation of beliefs**, and indication that outsiders could well be present in early church gatherings. The depictions of early preaching given in Acts further support the view that Christians went public quite readily.

What about the fish symbol, or the anchor? Weren’t these hidden means of signifying Christian faith? The latter a covert reference to Jesus’ cross (the cross-bar of the anchor forming a disguised cross). Again, no.

What about the catacombs? Well, **Christians didn’t meet in catacombs for secret purposes, to hide from Roman authorities, but instead to have Christian meals with the Christian dead**, especially martyrs. Catacomb burial wasn’t at all distinctive to Christians, but was practiced more widely in Rome and some other places. There is scant reason to think of early Christianity as “secretive” and “covert”.

– Larry Hurtago Blog, 6/30/14

So, Why Become A Christian?

- There were no formalized statements of Christian belief within the first 100 years after Jesus death.
- What seems to have attracted gentile outsiders was the power of extended family.
- Roman temples expected the sick to pay for their healing.
- Christian communities offered comfort and healing without asking for money.
- Christians could expect to find practical assistance throughout the Roman Empire.
- The Christian God was deemed very powerful.

The Siege of Jerusalem



Destruction of the Second Temple

The Siege of Jerusalem **in the year 70 CE** was the decisive event of the First Jewish-Roman War. The Roman army, led by the future Emperor Titus, with Tiberius Julius Alexander as his second-in-command, besieged and conquered the city of Jerusalem, which had been occupied by its Jewish defenders in 66 CE.

The siege ended with the sacking of the city and the **destruction of its famous Second Temple**. The destruction of both the first and second temples is still mourned annually as the Jewish fast Tisha B'Av. The Arch of Titus, celebrating the Roman sack of Jerusalem and the Temple, still stands in Rome. – Wikipedia 8/22/13

The Parousia Delayed



The Parousia

Parousia [pə'ru:siə]*n*(Christian Religious Writings / Theology) *Christianity* another term for the **Second Coming** [from Greek: presence]

- thefreedictionary.com

What Is The Parousia?

- Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? **This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.**" —Acts 1:9-11
- **The coming of Christ will be instantaneous and worldwide.** "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be." —Matthew 24:27
- **The coming of Christ will be visible to all.** "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." —Matthew 24:30
- **The coming of Christ will be audible.** "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." —Matthew 24:31
- **The resurrection of the righteous will occur.** "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."—1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

The Early Church's Response

Apocalyptic fervor can only be maintained for so long. From our earliest sources, we see that the disciples had to be constantly on the ready for the Parousia, an event that could strike quick as lightning.

The hope for an impending Second Coming stayed alive for over 100 years, until the middle of the second century. By that time, expectations had cooled to such a point that the idea of the Parousia was virtually removed from the Christian community.

A Day Is Like A Thousand Years

Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. **They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised?** Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.” But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water...By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: **With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.** The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. 2 Peter 3: 3-10

Ancient Christian Worship



Early Exaltation Of Jesus

“With regard to the development of all the early Church’s Christology...more happened **in the first 20 years** than in the entire later, centuries long development of dogma.” - Martin Hengel, New Testament Scholar

Reading and Preaching

- First generation preaching likely involved **prophecy and the sharing oral traditions** of Jesus or the reading of Christian letters.
- The oldest reference to a scriptural reading is from **160 by Justin Martyr**: “And on the day called “of the sun,” when all...gather in one place...and **the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read.**”

Song and Dance

“...they were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and **sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god** – Pliny the Younger, 112 CE to the Emperor Trajan

In ancient Christian worship, singing and dancing were a collective possibility, whether performed by a chorus or individuals. **Songs were apparently performed without instrumentation.** For the first Christians, the body itself (voice and movement) is placed at the disposal of the soul and the service of God.

– Andrew McGowan, Ancient Christian Worship

Early Church Leaders

The earliest organization of the Church in Jerusalem was similar to that of **Jewish Synagogues**, but it had a council or college of ordained presbyters or elders.

Christian groups and congregations first organized themselves loosely. In Paul's time, although certain decisions by **Elders and Apostles** were binding, there were no precisely delineated functions yet for bishops, elders and deacons. A Church hierarchy, however, seems to have developed by the late 1st century and early 2nd century.

Early sources are unclear as to when the office of **bishop** first came into being. Eventually the head or "monarchic" bishop came to rule more clearly, and all local churches would eventually follow the example of the other churches and structure themselves after the model of the others with the one bishop in clearer charge.

People of The Book

One of the distinctive features of early Christianity, in all its guises, was its literary character. **Literature served to provide sacred authority of Christian belief and practice**, to defend the religion against its cultured despisers, to unite communities of believers...to instruct how to live, to entertain with accounts of heroes of the faith...With the partial exception of Judaism, **no other religion of the Roman Empire was so rooted in literary texts**. – Bart Ehrman, *Lost Christianities*

The Didache



The Didache

Lost for centuries, a Greek manuscript of the Didache was **rediscovered in 1873**.

The Didache or The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles, is a brief early Christian treatise dated by most scholars to the late first or early 2nd Century.

The first line of this treatise is "*Teaching of the Lord to the Gentiles (or Nations) by the Twelve Apostles*". The text has three main sections dealing with Christian ethics, rituals such as baptism and Eucharist and Church organization.

Believed to be written by a Jewish author, the work was considered by some of the Church Fathers as part of the New Testament, but rejected as spurious or non-canonical by others, eventually not accepted into the New Testament canon.– Wikipedia, 9/4/13

The Eucharist

"Now concerning the Eucharist, give thanks this way. First, **concerning the cup**: We thank thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David Thy servant, which Thou madest known to us through Jesus Thy Servant; to Thee be the glory for ever..

And **concerning the broken bread**: We thank Thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou madest known to us through Jesus Thy Servant; to Thee be the glory for ever. Even as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and was gathered together and became one, so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom; for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever...But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist, unless they have been baptized into the name of the Lord; for concerning **this also the Lord has said, "Give not that which is holy to the dogs."** – Wikipedia, 9/4/13

Baptism

Baptism, which is to be conferred "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" in "living water" (natural flowing water), if it can be had — if not, in cold or even warm water. The baptized and the baptizer, and, if possible, anyone else attending the ritual should fast for one or two days beforehand. If the water is insufficient for immersion, it may be poured three times on the head. – Wikipedia, 9/4/13

Fasting and Prayer

The Didache refers to a disagreement over which two days of the week Christians should fast. The “**hypocrites**” fast on Monday and Thursday, but the Didache members were to fast on Wednesday and Friday.

In addition, the Didache community was commanded to:

“Neither pray ye as the hypocrites, but as the Lord hath commanded in his gospel so pray ye: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name. **Thy kingdom come.** Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debt, as we also forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, **but deliver us from the evil:** for thine is the power, and the glory, for ever.

Thrice a day pray ye in this fashion.” – Didache 8:2-3

On Wandering Prophets

Listen to anyone who comes to teach you such things as these, but if a teacher is led astray and teaches a different doctrine that undermines what you have been told, do not hear him. However if he comes to the increase righteousness and the knowledge of the Lord, receive him as you would the Lord.

You should treat apostles and prophets as the Gospel commands. Receive every apostle that comes to you as you would the Lord. But he must not stay more than one day, or two if necessary: **but if he stays three days, he is a false prophet.** When an apostle leaves you, give him nothing except bread until he finds shelter. If he asks for money, he is a false prophet. – Christian History Institute, 9/4/13

On The End Times

Be careful how you live. Do not let your lamps be quenched, nor your loins ungirdled, but be ready, **for you do not know the hour our Lord will come**...for your whole time as a believer will come to nothing if you are found to be imperfect at the end time.

In the last days the false prophets and corrupters shall multiply...and then the deceiver of the world will appear as a Son of God, performing signs and wonders, and the earth will be delivered into his hands. He will do things more unholy than any since the beginning of the world.

All of humanity shall come to the fire of testing, and many will fall and perish. But all who endure in their faith shall be saved from the Curse. Then the signs of the truth will appear: firstly a rift in the heavens, **then the sound of a trumpet, and thirdly the resurrection of the dead**. But not all will rise, because, as it is said, 'The Lord shall come, and all his saints with him'. Then the world will see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven. – Christian History Institute, 9/4/13

On Jesus

The Jesus of the Didache is essentially the Servant of God, the great eschatological teacher who is expected to reappear soon to gather together...the members of his church to the Kingdom of God.

The ideas of atonement and redemption are nowhere visible in this earliest record of Jewish-Christian life. Nor can one find any hint at the sacrificial character of Jesus death. – Geza Vermes, *Christian Beginnings*

Early Christian Diversity



Diversity As The Norm

- Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity, **Walter Bauer**, 1934.
- For 1,500 years, theologians/historians followed the view of Eusebius that Christianity **had always been a mass of orthodox believers** with occasional offshoots (heresies) started by willful and demon-inspired heretics.
- Bauer looked at our earliest evidence of Christian belief in several key locations of the empire — Syria, Egypt, Asia Minor, Rome – and he showed that in most of these places, the earliest evidence shows that the form of Christianity that was **originally dominant was in fact a form of Christianity that was later declared heretical**.
- Bauer thought of Christianity as originally a widely diverse phenomena, with **different Christian groups in different parts of Christendom**.
- Bauer found that the views later deemed orthodox were located in several places in the Roman empire, but it was principally to be found among the **Christians who resided in Rome**. – Bart Ehrman blog, 7/15

What Is Adoptionist Christology?

“The earliest Christians understood Jesus to have become the Son of God at his **resurrection**. They held that God had exalted Jesus to divine status (**Adoptionist Christology**). By the time of the Gospel of Mark, Jesus became the Son of God at his **baptism** by John. Still later, in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Jesus became the Son of God at his **birth**. Finally, with the Gospel of John, we have Jesus presented as the Son of God **before creation**.”

– Bart Ehrman, How Jesus Became God

Who Were The Ebionites?

A Jewish Christian movement that existed during the early centuries of the Christian Era, we only know of the Ebionites through the writings of their enemies.

Hippolytus mentions them in his work, Refutation of All Heresies. **They regarded Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah while rejecting his divinity**, and insisted on the necessity of following Jewish law and rites . They revered James the Just and rejected Paul of Tarsus as an apostate from the Law.

Their name suggests that they placed a special value on voluntary poverty.

What Is Gnosticism?

Central to many gnostic beliefs is a dualistic view of the universe, in which matter was seen as essentially illusory while spirit is the only true reality. Thus **Christian Gnostics emphasized spiritual knowledge and experience, rather than faith and the sacraments of the church**, as the key to salvation or unity with God. Jesus, whom Gnostics believe came as pure spirit, is set in stark contrast to the Old Testament Creator-God, who as the "Demiurge," the source of the material world, is not the true God.

Another pillar of gnostic belief is that salvation lies in attaining *gnosis*, esoteric knowledge kept secret to all but the initiated. Other ideas, believed by all or some gnostic groups, include: the spiritual (not physical) nature of Jesus'; that Jesus did not possess a physical body. – New World Encyclopedia, 9/4/13

What Is Docetism?

First mentioned in 1 John late in the first century CE, Docetists (from the Greek word *dokeo* meaning “to seem”) maintained that rather than being completely human, **Christ was instead completely divine**, so not human by nature. Docetists believed that Christ was not really a man, but only appeared to be. He was completely God.

Who Were The Marcionites?

Named after Marcion of Sinope at Rome (c 144), Marcionites believed Jesus Christ was the savior sent by God, and Paul of Tarsus was his chief apostle, but they rejected the Hebrew Bible and the God of Israel. Marcionites felt that many of the teachings of Christ are incompatible with the actions of the God of the Old Testament. **Marcionites felt that all other conceptions of the Gospel, and especially any association with the Old Testament religion, was opposed to the truth.**

They further regarded the arguments of Paul regarding law and gospel, wrath and grace, works and faith, flesh and spirit as the essence of religious truth. **He ascribed these aspects and characteristics as two principles, the righteous and wrathful God of the Old Testament, who is at the same time identical with the creator of the world, and a second God of the Gospel, quite unknown before Christ, who is only love and mercy.**

Marcionites held that the God of the Hebrew Bible was inconsistent, jealous, wrathful and genocidal, and that the material world he created was defective, a place of suffering; the God who made such a world is bungling or malicious. - Wikipedia, 9/4/13

Who Were the Theodotians?

Another early adoptionist Gentile group, Theodotians (named after a Roman shoe maker), they maintained that **Jesus was born of a virgin, but that he was completely human**, and not divine, but was later adopted to be the Son of God.

Theodotians asserted that their doctrine was taught by the apostles themselves, and was the standard belief in the church of Rome until the end of the second century CE.

Christianity And Imperial Rome

FJ2C Vol. 4 – 9:50 – 13:57



Summary

- Christianity starts with the belief in **the resurrection of Jesus**.
- Jesus' earliest followers were apocalyptic Jews who returned to Jerusalem, continued practicing Judaism and **waited for the imminent return of Jesus**.
- Christianity may have remained a minor sect of Judaism if not for **St. Paul**.
- **Paul's twin contributions** are his unique understandings of the meaning of the resurrected Christ and the admission of Gentiles into the faith.
- The Churches in Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome and other Christian communities throughout the Mediterranean and Asia Minor continue to **evolve on similar, but sometimes divergent tracks**.
- **The destruction of temple** in 70CE marks a decisive turning point in the Jewish/Jerusalem Church.
- Numerous **variations** of Christianity develop.
- By the turn of the century, **Gentiles make up the vast majority of Christians**. They have few memories of Christianity's Jewish origins.
- **Rome begins to notice**, and punish, those who claim to be Christians.
- Christianity continues to evolve. **Orthodox beliefs** are not yet established.

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