



RISE ON FIRE MINISTRIES

The Forgotten Story of the Early Church – PART 1

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SOURCES ARE LISTED IN *ITALIC*

Introduction

Story of at school and kid said: The Jews crucified Jesus and have always denied Him.

- Christians grow up being taught that Jewish people are responsible for the **crucified Messiah**
- Jewish people grow up being taught the Christian Messiah teaches that the **Torah is abolished**
 - Both of these is the **desecration** of what the party **values most**
 - Both these statements are **irresponsible to leave as unexplained as that**. And left unexplained, is a **lie**

But where did these lies come from?

- The **history** of the early church & **relationship** between Judaism & Christianity is **complex, yet important** to understand
- It includes a **gradual seperation** between Jew and Christian
- The Root of the Issue: Pride
 - **No party is innocent** for causing the separation

In The First Century:

- A Jewish Rabbi, starts **teaching truth (1)** and **walking in the Spirit (2)**
 - Jesus (Yeshua) did **not come to start a new religion**

Mat 5:17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish **the Law or the Prophets**; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

Mat 5:18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

Mat 5:19 Therefore **whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments** and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

- He **cherished the law & prophets**
- Anyone teaching against it (**even 'Christians'**), will be called least in the Kingdom

"Christians"?

- Christ = Anointed One
 - Christian = Follower of the Anointed One
- Jesus + All the first followers & leaders were **Jewish following the anointed one**
 - Early Christianity was therefore: **Jewish Christianity ("Jewish Believers Following The Anointed One)**
 - A Jewish sect known as "**The Way**"
 - Acts 24:14 (Paul): But this I confess to you, that **according to the Way**, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the **Law and written in the Prophets**

To the Jew First, But for all Creation:

Paul:

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, **to the Jew first** and also to the Greek.

Yeshua:

- **Jesus Heals Gentile, not without stating the importance of the Jews:**

Mar 7:26 Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

Mar 7:27 And he said to her, “**Let the children (the Jews) be fed first**, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to **the dogs. (Gentiles)**”

Mar 7:28 But she answered him, “Yes, Lord; yet **even the dogs** under the table eat the children's crumbs.”

Mar 7:29 And he said to her, “For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter.”

Disciples:

- **Great Commission first unto Jews:**

Mat 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, **“Go nowhere among the Gentiles** and enter no town of the Samaritans,

Mat 10:6 but go **rather** to the lost sheep of the **house of Israel**.

Mat 10:7 And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’

Mat 10:8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay.

Therefore:

- Yeshua's coming was a **continuation of God's relationship with Israel** (whom Judah is part of)
- Christianity was in essence a sect within first century Judaism called "The Way"
- **Yeshua's New Covenant** was the **fulfillment of God's Promises to Abraham**
 - Physical line of seed (Native-born Israel)
 - Spiritual line of seed (Gentile Believers)
 - Similar to **MIXED MULTITUDE** at Mt. Sinai

The Look of the Early Church

In Spirit

Irenaeus, Against Heresies (180 AD)

“Wherefore, also, those who are in truth His disciples, receiving grace from Him, **do in His name perform [miracles]**, so as to promote the welfare of other men, according to the gift which each one has received from Him. For some do certainly and **truly drive out devils**, so that those who have thus been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe [in Christ], and join themselves to the Church. Others have **foreknowledge of things to come**: they see **visions**, and utter **prophetic expressions**. Others still, **heal the sick** by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover, as I have said, the **dead even have been raised up**, and **remained among us for many years**. And what shall I more say?"

- *Irenaeus, Against Heresies II 32.4*

THE HISTORY OF THE SEPARATION

The separation was slowly but surely with various factors, we will explore them:

Distinctly Persecuted & Oppressed:

- Christians and Jews were **distinct communities in how they were persecuted**:
 - 2nd to 4th Century:
 - Romans persecuted Christians, not Jews
 - Romans persecuted Jews, not Christians
- **E.g. Persecution of Jewish people in 123-138AD - did not desire association (Bar Kokhba revolt)**

Following the battle of Bethar, wherein 580,000 Jews perished in the war and many more died of hunger and disease ...the Romans plowed Jerusalem with a yoke of oxen. Jews were sold

into slavery and many were transported to Egypt. Judean settlements were not rebuilt. Jerusalem was turned into a pagan city called Aelia Capitolina and the Jews were forbidden to live there. They were permitted to enter only on the 9th of Av to mourn their losses in the revolt. Hadrian changed the country's name from Judea to Syria Palestina.

In the years following the revolt, Hadrian discriminated against all Judeo-Christian sects, but the worst persecution was directed against religious Jews. He made anti-religious decrees forbidding Torah study, Sabbath observance, Jewish courts, meeting in synagogues and other ritual practices."

Sources:

Encyclopedia Judaica. "Bar Kokhba". Keter Publishing House, Jerusalem.

H.H. Ben Sasson, Editor. A History of the Jewish People. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1969.

History Until 1880: Israel Pocket Library. Keter Publishing House Ltd., Jerusalem, 1973.

The Jewish Encyclopedia. "Bar Kokba and Bar Kokba War." Funk and Wagnalls Co. London, 1902.

Kantor, Morris. The Jewish Time Line Encyclopedia. Jason Aronson Inc., New Jersey, 1989.

- Those identified as Jews **through practice** received greater persecution
 - Ultimately, **Jewish Christians were barred** from Jerusalem along with the other Jews.
 - Christians now **separating themselves more** from Jewish appearances **were allowed to stay**, causing further separation.
- Jewish people following "Bar Kokhba" (The Messiah), **was persecuting Messianic Jews** who did not.

-Davidson, Linda (2002). Pilgrimage: From the Ganges to Graceland: an Encyclopedia, Volume 1. ABC-CLIO. p. 279

E.g. The Fiscus Judaicus ("Jewish Temple Tax") (70's AD)

- the fiscus Judaicus played an important role in the parting of the ways. The fiscus judaicus was **a tax imposed on the Jews of the Roman Empire by the Emperor Vespasian in the early 70s C.E**
- formerly the Jews had sent a **half sheqel (two drachmas) annually to the Temple of Jerusalem (Matt 17:24)**, now, after the **destruction** of that temple, they were required to send that same amount **to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus** in Rome, which had been badly damaged by fire and was in need of repair and restoration.

- Imposed upon:
 - Orthodox Judaism
 - **Jewish Christians (ethnic Jews who concealed their Jewish origins).**
 - **Gentile Christians** (who lived a **Jewish life** without publicly acknowledging the fact) and
- Therefore, under Domitian **the Romans regarded both gentile Christianity and Jewish Christianity as forms of Judaism**; hence both gentile Christians and Jewish Christians were liable to the tax.
- "The *fiscus Iudaicus* was originally imposed on Jews. At the time **neither the Romans nor the Early Christians considered Christianity to be a separate religion from Judaism**. If anything they would have considered themselves as a **sect within Judaism**, which historians refer to as Jewish Christianity.[12] However, whether that was the intention or not, it did not take long for **Christians to petition the Emperor to distinguish** the Christians for the purpose of the payment of the *fiscus Iudaicus*. As the tax only applied to practising Jews, if they could be recognised **as a separate religion**, they would escape the impost."

-Bourgel, Jonathan, "The Jewish Christians and the Jewish tax ", in: From One Identity to Another: The Mother Church of Jerusalem Between the Two Jewish Revolts Against Rome (66-135/6 EC).)

- The only way to be considered a "**separate religion**" would be to abandon any instructions that have an more obvious "**appearance of Judaism**."
 - **The Sabbath**
 - **The Biblical Feast Days ("feasts of the jews")**
 - **Diet**
 - **Dress: Tzitzit's**
 - **Meeting in the Synagogue (Learning Torah is now hindered)**

THE REFORM: REDEFINING RELIGIONS

- The essential part of the reform was to **redefine Judaism as a religion**; in the words of a Roman historian of the early third century CE, only those "Jews who **continued to observe their ancestral customs**" would be liable to the tax. Christianity was now seen by the Romans as **not-Judaism**; the *fiscus Iudaicus* applied to neither gentile Christians nor Jewish Christians.

-Marius Heemstra, The Fiscus Iudaicus and the Parting of the Ways (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

- = Avoiding biblical commandments due to **persecution** or **special taxes** is not Godly

The Separation From Christianity and Judaism + Why Jewish People Struggle to Believe: Anti-Semitism (and anti-Christianity from rabbi's)

- The gospel brought pagans into faith
 - They were **uneducated** on the **preserved Torah** by Jewish people
- Rom 3:1 Then **what advantage has the Jew?** Or what is the value of circumcision?
 Rom 3:2 **Much in every way.** To begin with, **the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God.**
- **Fear of heresies & persecution** from **unbelieving** Jews
 - **Risk of heresies** from those who **abandon the study** under **knowledgeable Messianic Jewish mentors.**
 - Leaders and **learned in Torah** were typically Jews
 - **Many Jewish people** became **believers**, but later **even more Gentiles**
 - Through centuries, teachers with **gentile backgrounds with less knowledge of the Torah were raised**, pulling the church away from its Jewish roots
 - E.g. **The Epistle of Barnabas** (130 AD) argues that '**Christians properly understand the Hebrew scriptures, especially the laws of the Torah, while "they" (the Jews) do not**'
 -(2:7; 3:6; 8:7; 10:12).
 - Demonstrate a **closed-off nature** towards **all** Jewish understandings

The Meeting Places

Weekly home meetings: The place of **worship & personal fellowship**

- **Outlawed** by Constantine around 300 AD
 - One of the reasons **for my growth** in Messiah
- Synagogue:** The central **place of study** for Jew & Gentile
- No Personal Bibles: To get the word, one must **go to the synagogue** to listen
 - E.g. **John Chrysostom (344-407 A.D.)** – **One of the "greatest" of church fathers; known as "The Golden Mouthed."** A missionary preacher famous for his sermons and addresses.

The synagogue is **worse than a brothel**...it is the den of scoundrels and the repair of wild beasts...the temple of demons devoted to idolatrous cults...the refuge of brigands and dabauchees, and the cavern of devils. It is a criminal assembly of Jews...a place of meeting for

the assassins of Christ... a house worse than a drinking shop...a den of thieves, a house of ill fame, a dwelling of iniquity, the refuge of devils, a gulf and a abyss of perdition."..."I would say the same things about their souls... As for me, **I hate the synagogue**...I hate the Jews for the same reason.

- *"The Roots of Christian Anti-Semitism" by Malcolm Hay*

- This **hatred for the synagogue** certainly produced an **ignorance of the scriptures** (1) locked within its walls and (2) locked in the minds of learned Jews
- Note that this was written **hundreds of years** after the Messiah

First Century

Act 15:19 "Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the **Gentiles who turn to God,**

Act 15:20 but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood.

Acts 15:21 For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for **he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues."**

Jesus said the same to disciples:

Mat 23:2 "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on **Moses' seat,**

Mat 23:3 so **do and observe whatever they tell you,** but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice."

THEOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF SEPERATIONS

Marcion (85 - 160 AD) - "The God of Jesus vs. the God of Israel"

- Marcionite Christianity - **late second century**
- **Number of adherents** probably approximated or **even outnumbered the proto-orthodox** in some places.
- Evidence of its **survival** as late as the **eighth century C.E.**

-By Tyson, *"Anti-Judaism in Marcion and His Opponents"*

Wine and wineskins... (Mark 2:22)

Marcion understood these sayings as declarations by Jesus that what he revealed was new and, hence, **incompatible with what had gone before.** The good he equated with the new; the bad with the old. It was apparently **these contentions that led the Christian leaders in Rome to break off relations with Marcion and his followers.**

Looking down on the Torah

Marcion's **critique of the Hebrew Bible,** thus, was not directed to its authority but to its morality. He saw in these writings, especially in Torah, **something that fell beneath the**

teachings of Jesus and Paul, and the contrasts were so extreme that, although he accepted the divine origin of the Hebrew Bible, he **concluded that the God who inspired these Scriptures was not the God revealed in Jesus Christ.**

The Two-Edged Victory

In brief, the victory of proto-orthodox Christianity over the Marcionites was a **two-edged sword**. On the one hand, it (1) **secured the retention of the Hebrew Scriptures** for Christian study. On the other, it (2) **opened the way to an increasingly virulent form of anti-Judaism.**

- Because **some** of the arguments used by church fathers like Tertullian and Justin Martyr were **anti-Jewish & anti-OT**:
 - (1) The **OT belongs to Christians**, not Jews;
 - (2) For many OT texts, **literal interpretation**, as used by Jews and Marcionites, is **inappropriate** and **misleading**;
 - (3) Figurative interpretation uncovers the **true meaning** of the OT texts and reveals its underlying unity with the NT.

- Some OT commandments **need not be obeyed**, only **symbolically understood** (e.g. **Unleavened Bread**, Justin Martyr)
 - Symbolic interpretations can have great meaning, but **should not stop us from obeying** the literal physical instructions that **help teach these meanings**
 - **This ideology of Justin is still rampant** in Christianity today.
 - E.g. The **sabbath is every day**
 - **The biblical feasts were merely symbolic & fulfilled**
 - OR EVEN: Jesus died for my sins, so **I do not literally need to do anything about that** (repent)

- Marcion is not around anymore, but we cannot ignore **some of his ideas still are.**
 - Separation of old vs new testament:
 - Old testament 'God of the Jews' should **not be obeyed literally**, only **interpreted symbolically**
 - E.g. Within Christianity, the **Torah is a strange thing**:

Hos 8:12 Were I to write for him my laws by the ten thousands, they would be **regarded as a strange thing.**

- Many churches admit the Torah is **inspired**, but consider it an **irrelevant revelation**
 - **Sometimes not studied**

- **Irony**: Justin Martyr **softened** to some of Marcion's very ideas he said to be fighting against
 - While Justin believed the "OT belonged to Christians", they threw some of the **literal instructions out**

- Feast days
- Sabbath day (4th commandment)
- Unclean food

Why? - Anti Semitism

Hatred towards Jews for "crucifying the Messiah"

- Jews were **not united**, the **leaders decided** it
 - The mainstream were influenced by **lies of leaders about Messiah**
- Are the **sins of the Jews unique**?

Rom 3:9 What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, **both Jews and Greeks, are under sin,**

Rom 3:10 as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one;

Rom 3:11 no one understands; no one seeks for God.

Rom 3:12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

- **We all** crucified Christ
 - By their own admission, because these instructions especially were ones within which the Jewish people found **identity/appearance**:
 - There was a push to **separate from anything** with a **Jewish appearance**
 - THE JEWS keep the JEWISH festivals
 - THE JEWS keep the JEWISH sabbath
 - THE JEWS keep the JEWISH diet

Church Father's Writings

E.g. Justin Martyr - *Dialogue with Trypho (Between 138A.D. and 161 A.D.)*

...your Sabbath days, and in a word, all you festivals, if we were not aware of the reason why they were imposed upon you, namely, **because of your sins and the hardness of heart.**

...given to you as a **distinguishing mark**, to set you off from other nations and from us Christians. The **purpose of this was that you and only you might suffer the afflictions** that are now justly yours. And that your land may be desolate, and your cities burned with fire; and that strangers may eat your fruit in your presence, and not one of you may go up to Jerusalem.' For you are not recognised among the rest of men by any other mark than your fleshly circumcision... Accordingly, these things have happened to you in fairness and justice, for you **have slain the Just One**

"because of your sins and the hardness of heart."

- **The sabbath:** for mankind to rest
- **The feasts:** annual repentance, celebration of God's work

- But commandments were given to **12 tribes + a mixed multitude (Exodus 12:38)**

The Inclusion of the Gentiles: Contrary to Jewish Thought

- While Christians looked down upon Jews for "crucifying the Messiah"
 - Jewish people **considered gentiles unclean:**

Acts 10:28 And he said to them, "You yourselves know how **unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation**, but God has shown me that I should **not call any person common or unclean.**

- Christianity started **painting the picture of a sinning Messiah**
 - **A bacon eating Messiah?**

Lev 20:25 You shall therefore separate the clean beast from the unclean, and the unclean bird from the clean. You shall not make yourselves detestable by beast or by bird or by anything with which the ground crawls, which I have set apart for you to hold unclean.

- Strips him of his **commandment-keeping nature**

A Jewish Jesus: The Appearance of Jesus Shifts:

The formation of the Christ figure void of His true Jewish background

- The **hatred for things with a "jewish appearance"** stretched into even the idea that Jesus would need to look Jewish.
 - **He was made to look in the image of:**
 - A western **white** Jesus
 - Abolishing the **sabbath** for Sunday
 - Keeping **Christmas** instead of Tabernacles
- This further **alienated his identity from the Jewish people** as the Jewish Messiah who came **for the Jew first (Rom 1:16).**
 - While the race of Jesus **does not matter** in that **He came for ALL** races...
 - It is important that he is **Jewish according to prophecy**

2Sa 7:12-13 (TO DAVID): When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, **I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.**

He shall build a house for my name, and **I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.**

- If He is not Jewish, the Jewish people **will not see Him**

Paul: DO NOT BOAST AGAINST THE JEWS

- Rom 11:18 **do not be arrogant toward the branches (Jews).** If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you.