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6,000 Years of Christianity

"True Christianity is about six thousand years old"

**Even if our school history is long forgotten, most of us would raise eyebrows at that statement!
Yet it is, in a manner of speaking, quite true**

by James McBride

Jesus Christ, of course, lived and died about two thousand years ago. Didn't he found what we call "Christianity"? Don't we trace our faith back to the first century of our era? Wasn't that faith handed on down to us today?

Surprisingly, the multitude of brands packaged as Christianity at the close of the twentieth century bear little resemblance to the religion of Jesus and Peter and Paul! None of them would recognize it as the religion they daily practiced. Yet today's Christian denominations all claim the Bible, largely, as their religious source. Some take away part of its text, some change it, some add their own writings.

But few believe - and do - what the Bible says!

And what it says is alien to much twentieth century Christianity. Every first century Christian would indeed recognize the modern variety. *But it is the religion they left behind to become Christian!* Indeed they would see in modern Christianity the practices of contemporary mystery religions, especially Mithraism!

The Jewish Messiah

However painful it is to some, Jesus the Messiah was a Jew, of the Israelite tribe of Judah, and he perfectly followed the religion of the Old Testament. So, too, was Peter. And Paul. And while they rejected all the human and pagan additions to Biblical religion added by the Jews, yet they did not abandon the true Biblical faith. Indeed what they taught and lived would have been clearly recognized by Abraham (the "father of the

faithful") who lived long before Moses. And recognized by Moses, David, Daniel and Ezra!

But they would all - from Adam to Paul and to John - be appalled by what today is passed as God's religion "Christianity". The Bible terminology is there, of course. But not the substance. By the time of Jesus the Jews had added to "the faith once delivered". Judaism was no longer the Bible faith. So much so that Jesus and Paul had to deal with it vigorously. Many human-devised traditions had been coupled with imports from pagan religions. But such is the power of false religion (it appeals to our human nature) that not many years passed before the true religion taught by Jesus and the apostles was swamped and all but lost.

Jesus Christ himself fought - and died - for the only religion God ever revealed. He called it "the Law", and said that none of it would become obsolete (Matthew 5:17). It was the same Law - instruction, Torah - which was known to Adam, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Moses. Contrary to what the former Archbishop of York recently said, the Law (and the entire Christian Bible) has as much relevance today as at any time in human history. Perhaps more so.

And each of us - including the Archbishop - will be judged by its standard!

Judgment To Come

A major purpose of the coming of Jesus as Messiah was to reconcile all mankind to God. We need that, because every one of us has walked all over His Law!

6,000 Years of Christianity

The fruit of such a walk is death. And only the death of one who was sinless and whose life was greater than the sum of all mankind could reconcile us to God.

Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled that unique role. He had been an integral part of the God family - but gave up all the glory. He lived as a man and never once transgressed that Law, never sinned - not even in his thoughts. By his death he purchased forgiveness for us who have sinned from birth. Our judgment would otherwise be inevitable.

Without the sacrifice of Jesus Christ we would face eternal death. But his sacrifice is effective only if we first repent. Which means we turn our lives around and live by the ancient Law!

This is not a "gospel of works", for no-one can "buy" salvation - even by perfect law-keeping. We are "saved by grace" - God's limitless love and mercy and favor. But the mark of our conversion is that our lives begin to express God's Torah as fully as we are able.

Do you, with Paul, accept that the Law is "*holy and just and good*" (Romans 7:12)? Do you believe, as Jesus taught, that those who reject the Law and teach men to reject it are regarded as "*the least*" by those in God's Kingdom (Matthew 5:19)? Do you, with David (a man after God's own heart) say "*O how love I Thy law; it is my meditation all the day*" (Psalm 119:97)?

God's Law never changes. For a time a sacrificial system was added which teaches us much about the coming Messiah. Each sacrifice "preached the Gospel"! Once he (Jesus Christ) came those sacrifices were no longer necessary. But the basic Law of God is eternal. Jesus did not change it. Paul did not change it. Godless men changed it.

The religion of Christ, then, is as old as Adam. Follow it! Let's all take earnest heed to the truth of God's Word.

Request the free article:

The Law of Life

(All Scriptures are KJV unless otherwise noted)

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