

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

THE BIRTH OF CHRISTIANITY

RLJ-1297

JOHN S. TORELL

JULY 3, 2011

PART 1: THE JEWISH MINDSET

It is clear to me that the majority of Christians living today have no knowledge of how Christianity began. Jesus did not start his ministry in a vacuum; on the contrary, He was raised as an Old Testament Jew. **Luke 2:21-24**

He was so well educated in the Old Testament that he was able to discuss it with the theological leaders in Jerusalem at the age of twelve. **Luke 2:39-49**

Jesus lived his earthly life under the First Covenant. **Genesis 12:1-3; 22:15-18**

ONLY JEWS COULD BE SAVED

When Jesus started his ministry, the general teaching of the rabbis was that only Jews could be saved since Gentiles did not have souls. This teaching is found in the Talmud, which is called the “traditions of the elders” in the New Testament.

Except for a few instances, Jesus ministered exclusively to the Jewish people. **Matthew 10:5-8; 15:21-28**

PERSONAL SALVATION WAS NOT TAUGHT IN JUDAISM

Jewish people living at the time of Jesus were not concerned with personal salvation. Salvation to them was of the nation as a whole, which was taken care of by the sacrifices in the temple by the high priest and his fellow priests. Very few Christians know this and there are many instances when they cannot understand passages in the New Testament. Ignorant Christians do more damage to the cause of Christ than people who are not saved.

Jesus startled his Jewish audience when He told them that in order to be saved they had to have more righteousness than the Pharisees. **Matthew 5:20**

Jesus destroyed the theology of Nicodemus when He told him he must be born again. This was a concept that was absolutely foreign to Judaism at the time of Christ and still is today for the Jewish people. **John 3:1-17**

The doctrine of Judaism and Roman Catholicism is similar in that a Jew is saved by being circumcised, observing the rituals and being part of the nation of Jews. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that salvation is of the church through infant water baptism, confirmation, taking communion, going to confession, giving money to the church, attending mass and having last rites before dying. If any of these rituals have not been properly done, a Catholic can always work things out in Purgatory. The fact that none of these things are found in the Bible doesn't matter since Roman Catholicism teaches that the “tradition of the church” supersedes the Bible. Likewise, the Jews in general rely more on the Talmud and the Kabballah than the Old Testament. **Mark 7:1-15**



THE MINDSET OF THE APOSTLES

The mindset of the apostles was still Jewish even after they had been with Jesus for some three and a half years.

1. They believed that only Jews could be saved.
2. They believed that Jesus was the Messiah and that He was going to come back in their lifetime and set up a Messianic Jewish kingdom on the earth.
3. They had no intention of preaching the Gospel to Gentiles.
4. All the apostles were interested in when Jesus was going to come back and what the signs would be. **Matthew 24:1-3; Acts 1:4-8**
5. The apostles had no intention of setting up a church organization; instead, they planned on staying in Jerusalem and waiting for Jesus to come back. **Acts 2:41-47**

TROUBLE CAME TO THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM

Friction developed between widows of Jews from Jerusalem and the widows of Jews from other nations as the church continued to grow in Jerusalem. The apostles dealt with the issue but had no plans to leave Jerusalem. **Acts 6:1-7**

It took persecution of the worst kind to drive out the believers in Christ from Jerusalem and have them to resettle in cities outside Judea. But their Talmudic mindset still prevailed as they only preached to Jews in the places where they settled. **Acts 8:1-4**

BREAKING OUT OF JUDAISM

Deacon Philip ended up in the city of Samaria and started to preach to the people there. The Samaritan people were a mix of Jews and Gentiles and the Talmud forbade any contact with them. However, the people responded to the Gospel and were saved. **Acts 8:5-13**

Peter and John were sent to check things out when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that people in Samaria had been saved. **verses 14-17**

The apostles then accepted that half-Jews could be saved and they preached in Samaritan villages on their way back to Jerusalem. **verse 25**

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

DO YOU HAVE AN EAR TO HEAR WITH?