

Church History



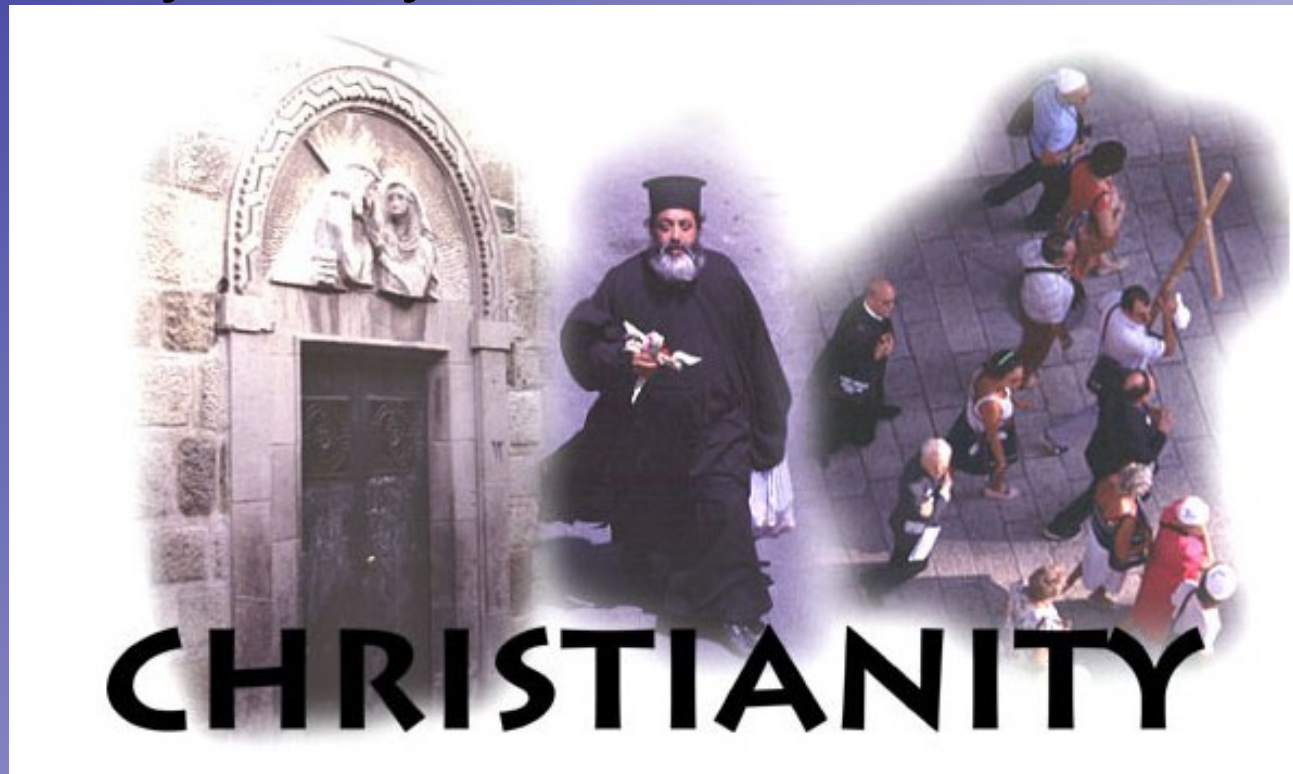
Church History

- *Introduction to Church History*
- *The Ancient Church* AD 1st-3rd centuries
- *The Rise of Christendom* AD 4th-5th centuries
- *The Early Middle Ages* AD 6th-10th centuries
- *The Age of Crusades* AD 11th-13th centuries
- *The Renaissance* AD 14th-15th centuries
- *Conquest and Reformation* AD 16th century
- *The Age of Enlightenment* AD 17th-18th centuries
- *The Age of Revolution* AD 19th century
- *The Modern Age* AD 20th century
- *The Postmodern Age* AD 21st century



The Ancient Church

- Let's begin with the basic story—
 - Once upon a time, there was a Jewish religion called Judaism that had one set of beliefs
 - Then came a Gentile religion called Christianity that broke off from Judaism (and supplanted it)
 - Would you agree with this synopsis of things? Why or why not?



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 - Would you agree with this synopsis of things? Why or why not?
 - Bear in mind that this is the way that most people in the world (including most Jews, up until that last bit) would perceive it



The Ancient Church

- Let's begin with the basic story—
 - Once upon a time, there was a Jewish religion called Judaism ~~that had one set of beliefs~~
 - Actually, Judaism had *multiple* sects within it, even in the first century
 - They all agreed on the basics:
 - There is only one God (YAHWEH)
 - The Jews are His chosen people
 - But they are to be a light that draws in the Gentiles to God as well (see Isaiah, etc.)
 - These believing Gentiles are referred to by the technical term, “God-fearing” (special gold star for the day to anyone who can list specific “God-fearing Gentiles” from Scripture)



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 - They all agreed on the basics:
 - There is only one God (YAHWEH)
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 - The “Tanakh” contains God’s Holy Word
 - “Tanakh” is actually an *acrostic* for the generally accepted sets of books:
 - The Torah—תורה—or the Books of Moses
 - The Nevi'im—נביאים—or the Prophets
 - The Ketuvim—כתובים—or the Writings (Psalms, histories, Proverbs, etc.)
 - Even then, different sects acknowledged different levels of canonicity to different sets of books



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 - The “Tanakh” contains God’s Holy Word
 - He will send His anointed one (*Messiah*) to make things right in the future
 - But who and what he will be, and what he will do, and why he’ll do it were up for debate
 - Beyond that, things start getting complicated



The Ancient Church

- Understanding the sects requires a little more history
 - Remember that in 587 BC, the Babylonians forcibly evicted the Jews from Judea
 - This was called the *Diaspora*—from the Greek word *διασπορά* or “scattering”
 - So they had to learn how to worship God without a Temple
 - This gave rise to the creation of several local assemblies called *synagogues* (from *συναγωγή* or “assembly”) to give people a place to sort of worship, and to read and discuss Scripture
 - And that gave rise for the need for teachers called *rabbis*—from *רב* (rav) or “great”
 - Some rabbis even began writing their own commentary of Scripture, called a *midrash*—from *מדרש* or “study”—to help people understand the writings (the most influential of which was the *Mishnah*)
- So how did all of this create a foundation for the development of the early church?



The Ancient Church

- Understanding the sects requires a little more history
 - So let's look at the groups that evolved:
 - Rabbinic Judaism followed great teachers who sometimes attached themselves to synagogues and sometimes travelled around, creating their own schools
 - They tended to accept the entire Tanakh, plus the midrashes, plus the additional “pseudepigraphal” books of the Septuagint (such as Tobit, Maccabees, etc., that the Catholics now include in their Bibles as the Apocrypha—since their Latin Vulgate Bible was based on the Greek Septuagint), the Mishnah, and even oral traditions



The Ancient Church

- Understanding the sects requires a little more history
 - So let's look at the groups that evolved:
 - Rabbinic Judaism
 - Pharisees—from *φαρισαῖος*, which is just a Hellenized form of the Hebrew word פָּרוּשׁ (*pārûš*) or “set apart”—saw themselves as the teachers of the Law, there to keep the rabbinic teachings in check by codifying and protecting tradition
 - They most influentially collected the various writings into the Hebrew Tanakh that we know now (and that we Protestants use as our “Old Testament”)



The Ancient Church

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 - Rabbinic Judaism
 - Pharisees
 - Essenes—and no one knows exactly where that name comes from—withdrew from a society that they saw as falling apart around them
 - They lived in communes on mountaintops or in caves in the hills and were pacifists (since they saw no reason in fighting needless, temporal wars), but prepared themselves for a final, apocalyptic war between the Light and the Darkness, when YAHWEH Himself would lead them into battle
 - They thus collected as many Scriptures as they could to protect them from destruction and kept them at their commune at Qumran by the Dead Sea



The Ancient Church

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 - Rabbinic Judaism
 - Pharisees
 - Essenes
 - Sadducees—from the word קִדָּשׁ (*śādaq*) or “to be righteous”—saw themselves as essential to the restoration of the Temple, once the Jews returned to Judea
 - They held a priestly, more elite role within society, and only accepted the Torah as Scripture
 - They thus also rejected the concept of an afterlife, since it's not mentioned in the Torah



The Ancient Church

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 - Pharisees
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 - Christians—from *Χριστός*, which is itself simply the Greek word for מָשִׁיחַ (*Mašíah* or “anointed one”)—believed that the promised Messiah of the Tanakh had finally come, and was a carpenter from Nazareth named Jesus—an anglicized version of the Greek name Ἰησοῦς, which was itself a Hellenized version of the Hebrew name יֵשׁוּעַ (*Yēšûā*, or Joshua)
 - They drew followers from each of the other four sects, and also from Gentiles, since they taught a salvation by faith rather than by nationality
 - Their holy Scriptures also included writings by their own early leaders



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 - Rabbinic Judaism
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 - Essenes
 - Sadducees
 - Christians
 - Christianity was *originally* seen as simply another Jewish sect. Why is that?
 - How did early Christianity interact with / relate to the other sects at the time, do you think?



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 - Christianity was *originally* seen as simply another Jewish sect. Why is that?
 - How did early Christianity interact with / relate to the other sects at the time, do you think?
 - Do you see why understanding the birth of the Christian Church requires understanding the nature of Judaism in the first century?

