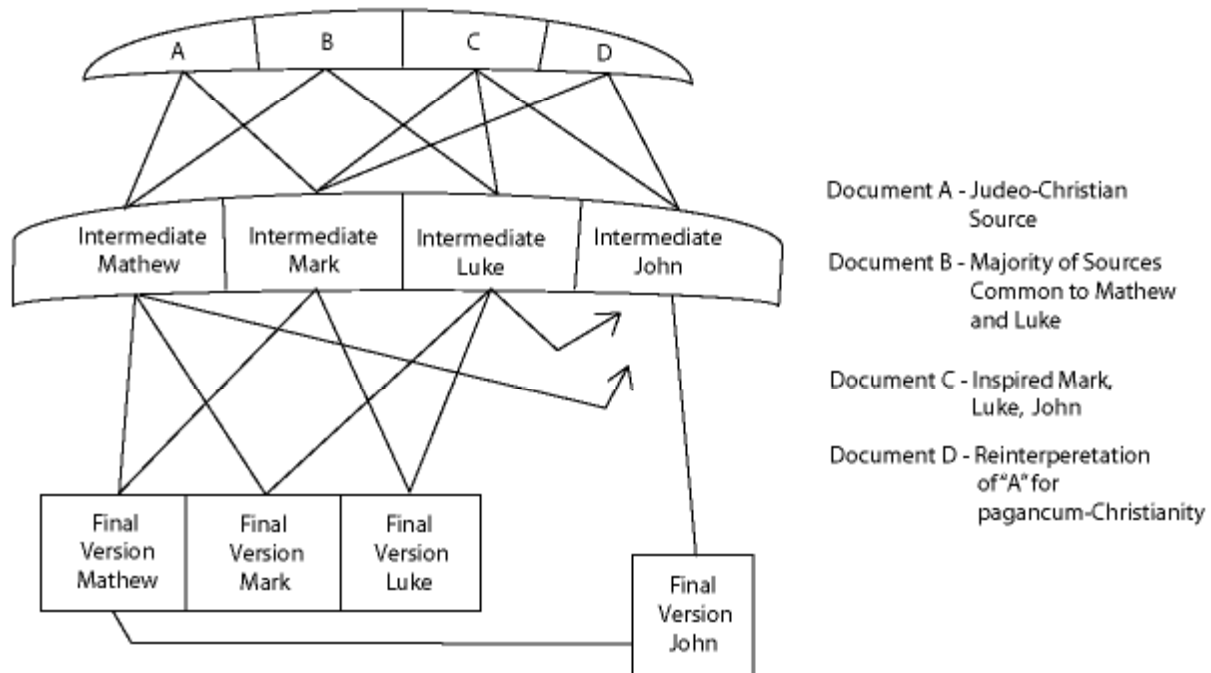


Chapter eight: The Origins of Christianity

Christianity currently claims the most followers of any religion on the planet. It is based on a modified version of the Hebrew Bible's Old Testament and new additions compiled together into the New Testament, creating the Christian Bible. It preaches that there will be no revelation subsequent to Jesus', therefore killing the possibility of the validity of Muhammad's revelation six centuries later. In this manner, it has secluded itself to being the only "true" religion.

The first Christians consisted of a few bands of influenced Jews who had "heretical" ideas regarding Jesus and Judaism. These ideas led those in power to believe that these bands were a social and political threat, and, as a result, they were persecuted by some Jews and Romans. Many of these bands left behind books detailing their stance on Christianity, including Jesus' teachings. These books are commonly confused as being written by the man that they are named after. "The four gospels are not the writings of four men, but the products of different traditions, different churches, that had accumulated many of the same stories of Jesus and his life." (Romer p.190) This is Catholic Church's *accepted* chronology of the four Gospels: Mark appeared in the late 50s or early 60s of the First Century, Matthew and Luke in the 80s, and John in the 90s (John's true date of creation is subject to debate), and Jesus supposedly died around 30 C.E.

Fig 8.1



These Gospels are far from original works. The canonic Gospels (Matthew, Luke and Mark) and the Gospel of John highly influenced each other before they became the final,

solidified versions that we read today (Fig 8.1.) Even more primitive sources of historical information were initially mixed together to form the first, intermediate versions of the Gospels, which themselves were later mixed together to form the final versions. Judging from this, we can conclude that the first Gospels were more distinct than today's, which, even in their compiled state, are still remarkably contradictory when describing so-called historical "facts."

The full history of the more primitive, intermediate Gospels is even less known. "One of the most curious features of New Testament scholarship is the fact that, though learned men have pored over documents for centuries, they have never managed to establish beyond doubt such simple questions as where the Gospels were written, or when they were written, still less, by whom they were written." (Wilson (1) p.48) How can we conclude that the Gospels possess any relevance at all without the answers to such basic questions?

As we have seen, historians believe that the Gospels were written decades after Jesus' death. How accurate can they truly be? There is admittedly (by the Vatican) *no* eyewitness account written in the Gospels. They are *solely* based on the formulation of myths, and these myths were, as we are led to believe, created by the *true* witnesses. This leads one to wonder, if the events described in the Gospels are true, why didn't the *true* witnesses pursue a publication of their own? The Gospels are also admittedly solely based on literary order, rather than historical order: evidence that they are solely based on folklore rather than at least partly on history. The quoting within the Bible is obviously also intentionally doctored by its authors since none of the writers actually heard what Jesus said. Historical study indicates that bits and pieces of His messages, passed on by myths, were just fraudulently labeled as quotes. This, in a nutshell, is the foundation of the relevance of the Christian Bible.

The Evolution of Christianity

Let's go over the history of Christianity, focusing on how events in its evolution have warped it into its current form. In its history, there have been two basic types of Christianity. The first type was *Judeo-Christianity* -- the Jesus-inspired form. Many decades later, *Pauline-Christianity* emerged, founded by Saul (a.k.a. Paul.) Saint Paul (5-67 C.E.) was the Apostle to the Gentiles who either wrote or was involved in the writing of the Biblical books, epistles and letters besides the Gospels. He was born as and lived as a Jew until later in his life, when he was converted to Christianity. His conversation was, however, a partial one, as he retained lots of Judaic superstition and tradition. He also had absolutely *no* association with Jesus (according to the Bible, while Jesus lived -- one must make his/her own judgment on the account of their meeting after Jesus' death), and received only some of His messages, but only through the network of distortion that is folklore. As he believed in a twisted and tainted version of Christianity (more Jewish than "Christian," when used in its original sense), he preached a highly modified version of what Jesus taught: he mixed the Judeo-Christian story with unnecessary Judaic superstitions, traditions and excess glorification (when one takes the time to compare the type of beliefs being taught in the Gospels to the rest of the Christian Bible, this will become obviously clear.) The true messages of Christianity were either lost or buried within Paul's new version of Christianity -- the Pauline-Christianity worshiped today. Judeo-Christianity mostly died off around 400-500 C.E., leaving behind Paul's brand to represent Christianity as a whole; but even this adulterated type of Christianity didn't stay the same over time.

Besides the additions that Paul contributed to the Christian Bible, it is highly possible that his version of Christianity also influenced the Biblical Gospels. “Is it any coincidence that the Gospels were written only after the first missionary, Paul, had evangelized many of the countries of the eastern Mediterranean? Certainly in his letters Paul gives no clue at all that he knew anything of the life and deeds of Jesus other than he was killed and rose from the dead. So were the Gospels created to reinforce his version of Christianity or to counter it?” (Picknett p.238)

To this day, most people still don’t know that the four Gospels in the Bible aren’t the only Gospels ever written. Numerous Gospels exist, but only the ones that filtered through governmental censoring were recognized in today’s Bible. The rest were burned or tossed into the Vatican’s cellar and labeled the “*Apocrypha*.” These books further confuse the story of both early Christianity and Jesus because they all have something different to say about it and Him. This censoring was mostly the result of conflicts with the law, with Pauline-Christianity, and with the personal beliefs of the many translators of the Bible throughout its history.

The first Biblical translation and compilation of the Gospels was the Ecumenical one in 170 C.E. This was about 140 years after the year that Jesus is said to have died, meaning that 140 years of oral tradition (including about 120 years post Paul’s distortions (it is figured that he started his missions around 45 C.E.)) elapsed before a somewhat recognizable form of the Bible was created. Pauline-Christianity had, therefore, evolved by 170 C.E. into a form that was largely different than even *its* original form. Like the Indian tale of the three blind men describing an elephant, who all described completely different animals according to the type of the elephant’s tissue that they had felt -- and like the children’s game “telephone,” where messages are distorted by word-of-mouth -- myths transformed the Christian story via the spreading of ignorance, mysticism, exaggeration through the word-of-mouth, “telephone” game that is the folklore of storytellers.

On top of all of this, those Jews who knew of the prediction of a Messiah to come had already possessed their own individual, biased expectations of “Him” -- what “He” would look like, what “He” would do, “His” capabilities, etc.

“... [T]he Gospel writers who took many of their stories about Jesus’ life from ancient prophecies were further fortified in their method by their belief that Jesus had been the Messiah and *must* therefore have fulfilled the ancient predictions about this appearance on Earth. To them, to have recorded the Messiah’s life in any other way would have been historically incorrect and sacrilegious to boot. Jesus, therefore, must be born a virgin in the town of Bethlehem with a star hanging in the night sky over his stable precisely because the Prophets have told that this is how the Messiah will be born.” (Romer p.177)

In this manner, the Christian story, pre-Ecumenical translation, was already completely twisted and inaccurate, because of the bias of the people, doomed to be largely mythical and without historical certainty.

As this translation wasn’t a true documentary about early Christianity, it had numerous holes in its explanations of events and its so-called messages of Jesus. Fill-ins doctored the storyline to better explain both it and the observations of Jesus’ life that it claimed to possess. This was also done because of the awareness of scriptural errors, pointed out by Christianity’s adversaries, which were quickly “corrected” to avoid further scrutiny.

“Many modern Christians believe that the New Testament was somehow divinely inspired. However, the facts argue against this: it was only in 325 C.E. that the Council of Nicaea met to debate which out of many books would be included in what was to become the New Testament. There is no doubt that the men present at the Council brought to the task their own prejudices and agendas, of which we are still reaping the sorry harvest. Eventually the Council established that only four Gospels would be included in the New Testament and rejected forever over fifty other books with more or less equal claim to be considered authentic.” (Ayerst pp.144-6)

This censoring was ordered by the Holy Emperor Constantine (ruling Rome from 306-27 C.E.), who found it essential to organize Christianity, converting it into a governmentally controlled religion -- the new religion to represent the Roman Empire. The increasing number of Christians in the area and the conflicts, instigated by a city divided (into Jews, Christians, and “pagans”), triggered this change, and Constantine thought that he could manipulate this demand by molding all of the local religions together into something that supported his own interests. This led to the mind-controlling, written version of Christianity that is worshipped today.

The Catholic Church was created to share rule over Rome and its Empire -- the head of all Christianity, which simultaneously arose along with this new, governmentally-controlled brand of Christianity. Catholicism combined religion with Roman civil law, molding *Christianity into an oppressive religion.*

The next major event in Christian history was initiated by the Church’s Pope Urban II (1088-99), who took oppressive Christianity to a new level.

“This pope ... proclaimed a first great crusade against Christians in the West at the Fourth Lateran Council, against the Albigensians (neo-Manichaean Cathars) in the south of France. The cruel Albigensian war, which lasted for twenty years, marked by bestial cruelties on both sides, led to the extermination of whole sections of population and represented a shaming of the cross and a perversion of what is Christian. It is no wonder that around this time, among protest groups of an evangelical character, the notion began to spread that the Pope was the Antichrist and increasingly the question was asked whether the Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount, the man who proclaimed nonviolence and love of one’s enemy, would ever have approached of such a warlike undertaking. Was not the cross of the Nazarene being perverted into its opposite if, instead of inspiring the real bearing of the cross every day by Christians, it legitimated bloody wars waged by crusaders wearing the cross on their garments?” (Küng pp. 91-2)

The Italian Dominican theologian St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) is the next big name in Christianity. Aquinas revolutionized Christianity by integrating previously unaccepted Aristotelean concepts into traditional belief. Aristotelean concepts were long before embraced by the Middle East and Northern Africa, who, for the most part, condoned science and some philosophy; however, the Catholic Church frowned upon this. His merger was introduced in his book Summa Theologiae, where he introduced ideas that revolutionized Christianity, such as that reason + faith = knowledge, rather than solely faith, and that the levels of knowledge are composed of both natural and revealed truths, which compose philosophy and theology. In this manner, he created the more mature, classical formulation of medieval Catholic theology.

Over two centuries later came the English reformer and martyr William Tyndale (1494?-1536.) “Tyndale, a university scholar from Gloucestershire, made the first Protestant translation of the Bible into English, a radical book filled with conscientious footnotes and commentaries and with many Biblical words changed in translation to suit the Protestant congregation.” (Romer p.308) Protestants believe that the Bible should be interpreted by oneself and should benefit one to one’s own needs, while Catholics encourage a rigid interpretation. Essentially, it is a more liberal and, in this case, healthy way to view the Bible, since its messages were initially created to encourage the benefit of the individual by the individual, vs. the formation of a universal treatment for all.

Tyndale’s English translation is mainly based on the Great Bible of King Henry (England 1100-35), which is the primary version of the English Bible. The English Bible was later reformed by King James I of England (1603-25), who utilized Tyndale’s translation. He is famous for severely tampering with the King Henry version, suiting it to his own needs. He burned many of the records that could disprove his version, also destroying many valuable entries that may have changed the world as we know it for the better. Of course, he is just one of the many rulers who have done so, but his ravages to Christianity were epic. The King James Version of the Bible is the one read by the masses today.

A new fad, very popular today, that came about in the beginning of the Twentieth Century is Christian fundamentalism. Fundamentalism is a Protestant-based faith derived solely from the English Bible. It takes an evolutionary step backwards from Protestantism in general in that it treats the Bible as the unadulterated “Word of God”, which even the Vatican openly discredits.

Hopefully any future spin-offs of Christianity will further liberate the religion, unfolding it into a form of bare truth. In the next chapter we will take our investigation of Christianity one step further, unveiling its truths which have been hidden from the masses. What do Christians truly know about what they worship?