

Revised Christian History

Constantine had a great influence in the shaping of the Christianity both in its beliefs and structure. We covered the impact he made through the Council of Nicea in the last Bible Bite. He made at least six outstanding changes which were noted in the last Bible Bite with the exception of # 1. Constantine changed the following:

1. **The place of the Resurrection of Christ.**
2. **The time of the Resurrection of Christ.**
3. **The time of the birth of Christ.**
4. **The Scriptural method of becoming a Christian.**
5. **The day of Worship from Sabbath to Sunday**
6. **The relationship of Christianity to the state.**
7. **The headquarters of Christianity from Jerusalem to Constantinople and/or Rome.**

1) Constantine knew from experience that the great power of the Christian message came from the preaching of the Resurrection of Christ. For 300 years, the Christians were accustomed to visit the empty tomb on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, and they came back home filled with zeal for their Risen Lord. They also saw the total ruins of the Temple in exact fulfillment of the words of Jesus. This made them invincible to all the threats and arguments of the pagans. Constantine set about to change this:

In the year 326, Constantine sent his mother Helena to Jerusalem to discover the spot that he had foreseen as the place of Jesus' Resurrection. This was the site of the temple of Venus on the western side of Jerusalem. He ordered the temple torn down and a church constructed on the site. It is called the Church of the "Holy" Sepulchre to this day. Christian historian Eusebius verified that the "Holy" Sepulchre was built on the site of the Temple of Venus.

But we can also verify that the tomb was not in the city of Jerusalem where it is now located by looking at the account in the Gospels. **John 20:40-41** states: ⁴⁰ *So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.* ⁴¹ *Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.* The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is located within the city of Jerusalem. This is the WRONG location because Jesus was buried outside the city walls where Calvary and the Mount of Olives is located. Yet, all Christian tours today go to the tomb in The Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

2) Christians remembered the Lord's Resurrection every Sabbath or Lord's Day. In addition there was the big yearly week long celebration of the Resurrection held 14 days after the first new moon following the spring equinox. It always coincided with the yearly Jewish Passover. In 325, Constantine presided over the Council of Nicea which changed the time of the Lord's Resurrection to the first Sunday (or Lord's Day) following the spring equinox.

3) The time of the birth of Christ coincided with the Feast of Tabernacles which according to the Jewish calendar occurs sometime between the last two weeks of Sept. and the first two weeks of Oct. The reckoning for the birth date is calculated on a number of incidents in the Bible. The proof details are too lengthy to present in this Bible Bite, but rest assured it did not occur on December 25. It is thought that date was picked to replace a pagan holiday held in the winter solstice. Also, they wanted to have a feast for the Christians that would downplay the Jewish feast of Hanukah which takes place in December. Ironically, Hanukah is not one of the Holy Feasts declared by God in His Word.

4) A person prior to Constantine made a profession of faith in Yeshua Messiah (Jesus) followed by baptism by immersion. Constantine made the people "*Christians*" by "*fiat*" of the state.

5) He originally made Sunday the day of rest for all the people. The Christians adopted this as their day of worship although many had already done so by tradition based upon their interpretation of the New Testament. Later the Catholic Church made it official.

6) This had the biggest impact on the church. It established the church as a mini government entity with a hierarchy of authority. Like any hierarchy, it assumes authority over men and therefore leads to the individual being subservient to their leaders. All types of excesses including ungodly behavior becomes common place which leads to eventual damnation for violating the commandments and teachings contained in God's Word.

7) **The headquarters of Christianity from Jerusalem to Constantinople and/or Rome.** Jerusalem is where Jesus will reign. Throughout the Old Testament, God made it very clear that Jerusalem is His city. Constantine was a Roman who eventually ruled from his city, Constantinople. He had appointed bishops in various places, chief of which was Rome. After Constantine's death, Rome ascended to a position over

all Christianity through the Bishops of Rome and ultimately an Office of the Pope who became "*The Vicar of Christ on Earth*"; also who was declared to be infallible when he ruled on matters of faith and morals.

The thing that we have to be careful about is the extent that we let ANYTHING or ANYONE impact us beyond what God has intended. He wants us to have freedom in Christ, not to be in bondage to man or systems. God gave to Moses a system of rule for us here on earth. However, Moses prophesied the men of Israel would reject it and ask for a king like other nations had. God allowed it. Here is the account: ¹⁴"When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, and you possess it and live in it, and you say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me,' ¹⁵ you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses, one from among your countrymen you shall set as king over yourselves; you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your countryman....Read the rest of **Deuteronomy 17**.

The end result was that the kings did not do as God instructed them to do. Of course, men followed their leaders. It is axiomatic that men want their freedom to a point that they reject God's Lordship in their lives. They seem to want a leader to blame thing on so they can secretly claim they are not ultimately responsible for their actions. If a notion gets to that point, there is destruction for **all**, as happened so many times to the nation of Israel. As was the case with Israel, there was total destruction. Let's look at their history after the destruction of Jerusalem and Masada.

Paul tried to get the early churches to understand that the unity of Jews and Gentiles was evidence of Messiah's transformative power. In **Ephesians 3:4-6**, he states that the "*Mystery of Messiah*" is revealed by the Spirit of God uniting Jews and Gentiles in the Body of Messiah-but the positive attitudes he worked so hard to promote, particularly in **Romans 9-11**, were subverted. A new awareness of the mystery has revived with the rise of Messianic Jewish communities around the globe—but it's still hidden from many Christians who have no knowledge of the significant growing Messianic community, particularly in Israel today.

To summarize, it was not historically inevitable for Jewish believers in Yeshua to disappear from the ranks of the larger body of Messiah. There may well have been a large gap between Jewish and Gentile cultures—and between the Jewish and Gentile followers of Yeshua. But one single exclusion from the Jewish community did not determine the fate of the Jewish followers of Messiah. Nor did it justify the negative

attitudes towards the Jewish people which appeared in successive Church councils. But as those Christian attitudes were ingrained over the centuries, the very idea of a Jew believing in Jesus became as peculiar to Gentile Christians—who worshiped the Jewish Messiah—as it was to Jews.

It is this inhospitable climate that destroyed the relations between the church and synagogue—and devastated the relations between Jewish and Gentile followers of Yeshua, even as the church literally outlawed any continuing spiritual contact of Jews and Christians. They were forbidden to share worship on the Jewish Sabbath and definitely not at Passover (Councils of Antioch, 341 CE and Laodicea, 434 CE.) Finally, these councils declared as heretical the remnants of the Messianic Jewish congregations in North Africa, often called Ebionites, which included the last remaining members of Yeshua's own family.

Christian theology even preached the false "*Replacement Theology*" which held that since Jews killed Christ, all the blessings and covenant promises of God with Israel are now given to the Christians. Once the church reached this conclusion, they attacked Jews with a vengeance. They killed them at random. Eventually, the church killed anyone who did not believe like they did. Of course, they made sure that there were "*blessings*" transferred to them which they took by rape, pillaging, or other brutal methods. The history of religion is filled with blood whether Jew or Gentile, all done in the name of whatever god is followed. That is why it is crucial to have a personal relationship with God as Lord and Savior lest we become a follower of humanity's god of the moment.

We are now at that time of prophetic fulfillment. The false prophet(s) and pseudo christs are on the scene. We have a religious system that will be universal and again kill all who do not believe as they dictate. We also have a religion of Muslims who vow to kill anyone who does not believe as they do. Two opposing religions who are vowing to kill all unbelievers. Then there are two more powerful countries, China and Russia whose goals are to dominate the World.

One last point, there is the one World Government that was prophesied in Daniel 2. Their goal is to have a sustainable ecology which they define as consisting of a maximum civilization in the world of 500,000,000 people. World population is now around 7,500,000,000. These numbers are billions. How do you think they propose to reach their goal in a short period of time?

Come quickly, Lord Jesus! **Shalom**