

From Synagogue to Sanctuary



Week 1: The Days of Jesus

Week 2: The Days of the Apostles

Week 3: The Days of the Rabbis

INTRODUCTION – Snapshot of Christianity:

Victims of Structure

A WORKING THEORY FOR THIS SERIES:

Judaism had lost its way (this is a given in the Old Testament material). Jesus came to fulfill Israel's calling. Christianity has, in many of the same ways as Judaism, lost its way. We, Jews and Christians alike, need to hear the message of Jesus afresh. Both religions have strayed at various times and in various ways, including the following categories:

- TORAH (addiction to the printed Word as a source of salvation)
- TRADITION (making human teaching equal with God's Word)
- TEMPLE (a special holy place to connect with God)
- TERRITORY (a special holy land as the place for God's "kingdom" on earth)
- TRIBE (a special holy people, set apart from other races)

**1 Peter 2:9
Luke 17:20-21**

Jesus taught that his Kingdom is not a physical THING to be pointed at, but an experience, a state of mind, a disposition of the heart. When our attitudes and actions align with God's heart, there is the kingdom.

Prophecies Of The New Covenant

Jeremiah 31:29-34; Ezekiel 36:26-27

The New Covenant would be different to the Old Covenant in two significant ways: the New Covenant would be internal and inclusive.

The New Covenant In Action – Defining Moments

ACTS 1:1-8; 2:16-21, 39; 3:1, 22-25; 4:1-4; 11-12; 5:17, 33-42; 6:8-7:3; 7:47-8:4; 9:1-11:26; 13:13-52; 15:1-16:3; 17:1-8, 17; 21:15-31; 22:17-21
Also see Paul's letter to the **Galatians**

At first the Messiah movement of Jesus had no intention of separating from Judaism. Christ-followers kept worshipping at the Temple along side other Jews and kept kosher dietary laws. Stephen's sermon emphasized everyone's shared identity through Abraham, rather than exclusive identity through Moses. His de-emphasis on the Temple enraged the Jews and his death marked the tipping point for the great divide. Both Paul and Peter received extra teaching from God regarding the radical nature of the New Covenant. Gentiles flooded into the new Messiah movement when they learned that Jesus offered forgiveness from sin and freedom from the rules and rituals of Torah. Pharisees who believed Jesus was the Messiah fought to preserve the Law as mandatory for Christ-followers, but James and the Jerusalem council gave the final ruling that, although the Torah would always be used as Christian Scripture, the Jewish Law was no longer in effect for Christ-followers. From then on the choice was clear (although challenging for religious people) – living in the New Covenant would mandate stepping out of the Old Covenant.

CONCLUSION – The Last Straw

Malachi 4:5-6; Matthew 11:14-15

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS...

WARMING UP...

1. After briefly reviewing this week's message, share one thing that most challenged, encouraged, or perplexed you.

LOOK TO THE BOOK...

2. Read **Acts 10:1-11:3**. a) What verse or idea stands out to you the most? Why? b) Cornelius loved the God of Israel, but never converted fully to Judaism because of the demands of the Law of Moses. He was one of many Gentiles in that situation in the first-century, called "God fearers", who made up many of the first Christian converts. Talk about people who might be like Cornelius today in that they do love our God and would convert if it wasn't for the many religious rules and traditions we hold up. c) In order to bring Jews and Gentiles together, God could have decided to make it mandatory for Gentiles to keep the law and eat kosher. Why do you think he went the other way, asking Jews to stop eating kosher in order to be one with Gentiles? d) Why do you think God increased his use of supernatural manifestations (Spirit, miracles, healings, visions, angels, etc.) during this season of history? Does that help explain why we might not expect to see the same level of miracles today? e) When the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit they spoke in tongues (probably known human languages, as in chapter 2, since bystanders seem to know what they were saying). Why would God manifest the gift of tongues among the Gentile converts in this instance?
3. In your own words, how would you answer the question "Why did the Jesus movement become separated from Judaism?"

SO WHAT?...

4. Think, meditate, discuss. What are some transferable lessons for the current state of the Christian religion? Pray for the health of the Church worldwide, but especially in North America (we need it!).

Bruxy Cavey @ THE MEETING HOUSE – Sunday, March 25 / April 1, 2007