

## ***The Church of the Messiah Overcomers***

**T**here is a world-wide belief that the three major world religions of Judaism, Christendom and Islam, are vastly different and competitors for converts. But, Biblically speaking, this is not just far from the truth it is a perversion of Biblical teaching. The three religions all accept and teach that they are “divinely revealed” from the same God and same Old Testament teaching. To the Jews God is “*El Elohe*”, “*the Most High*”, the most fundamental expression; to the Christian God is “*Jehovah*”, one of a variety of expressions; and to the Islamist God is “*Allah*”, a linguistic expression of “*El Elohe*”; but all the same Divine Being.

It is the New Testament which introduces elements of distinction. The primary message of Jesus in the Gospels was to reveal the distant God of the old Testament as “*Abba*”, a loving, personal “Father”; the primary message of the Apostle Paul, in his fourteen Epistles, was to reveal the “*mystery of God*” in and through Jesus as “*Head of the Church*”; six centuries later the Prophet Mohammed, claiming both Babylonian Judaism and the previous five centuries of Ecclesiastical Christendom as “*departures from the Faith*” announced himself as a “*Prophet*” superior to Jesus in his “revealed” version of the Old Testament, and founded his version as “*Islam*” meaning

*"submission to the will of God"*. But all three—institutional Judaism, institutional Christendom and institutional Islam—believed in and taught the same *Old Testament* God.

According to the teachings of both Jesus and the Apostle Paul everyone who believed in the sovereignty of God, and lived their lives accordingly, were subjects in *"the kingdom of God"*, and would be rewarded accordingly in the after-life of eternity. But both Jesus and the Apostle Paul taught with the incarnation of Jesus as Son of God on earth came a new revelation from God where not only Jews but also all those who were prepared to accept Jesus as personal *"Saviour"* and were *"born again"* into a personal *"family of God"* would inherit a closer relationship with the Divine as members of a spiritual Body called *"the Church"*, or *"separated ones"*.

Historically, with the creation of institutional Judaism in the fifth century BC, the creation of institutional Christendom in the second century AD, and the creation of institutional Islamism in the seventh century AD, the divinely revealed unity of both *"the kingdom of God"* and the *"family of God"* was buried in humanly derived and divided systems which opened the way to a proliferation of humanly postulated religious derivatives.

In the midst of this heterogeneous kaleidoscope of competing religious organizations it can be stated categorically that there are only three divinely revealed religions of Judaism, Christendom and Islamism claiming obedience to God's stated commands; all others are humanly conceived religious practices without divine authority. The earlier chapters of this book have demonstrated the failures of those three institutional forms of departure from the original purity of divine revelation. All of this might be dismissed as religious ephemerae were it not for the monumental consequences in the rejection of the Biblical divine revelation for humanly devised institutional ecclesiastic systems with the tectonic repercussions reaching beyond time into eternity.

However, the era of European-based Churchoid Christianity is reaching its nadir if not its end with a spiritual convulsion across the world. To the east, west and south of Europe a dynamic new form of institutional Christianity is emerging at a pace that will exceed

the secularized Christianity of Europe which has predominated for almost two thousand years. According to the *World Christian Encyclopaedia* there are approximately two billion Christians at present, with some 560 million in Europe and decreasing, but with Latin America at 480 million, Africa 360 million, and Asia 310 million all increasing. North America has about 260 million professing Christians, with isolated pockets of enthusiastic evangelical believers.

In Africa in the past 50 years the number of Christian converts has risen from about ten million to 360 million, for the first time greatly out-numbering Muslims. In Asia the most dramatic religious developments have been in China and Korea. When the Communists came to power in China in 1949 there were an estimated three million Christians of dubious commitment; in 2005 there are an estimated 100 million passionate converts. In Korea, in 1900 there were only 300,000 Christians, and in 2005 there are around twelve million, or a quarter of the population. Latin America was predominantly Roman Catholic until 1940, with only around one million Protestants; since that time Protestant Christians have increased to about 50 million, or one tenth of the population.

The interesting and exciting fact behind the “*New Christianity*”, or demise of the “*Old Churchoid*” in the West, is not the change from orthodoxy to heterodoxy but the return to spiritual originality. In all of the religious “*New Christianity*” rituals of the “non-Europe” nations there are signs of a return to the original vision of Paul of Tarsus’s “*Church of the Messiah*”, with the emphases on personal relationship with God through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus the Messiah; plus the dynamism of Pentecostal-type “healing”, especially in Latin America and in the “underground house churches” of China, whose members have been officially forbidden access to medical treatment and other social benefits because of their Christian faith. A leading elder in these Chinese “underground churches” has stated that 80 per cent of their converts come from “healing” experience—and that includes a considerable number of Communist officials!

In his remarkable book, *The Heavenly Man*,<sup>17</sup> “Brother Yun”, a

<sup>17</sup>Written with Paul Hattaway, and published by Monarch Books, London, 2003

leading member of the “underground house churches” movement in China, writes:

*“1989 was a very pivotal year for the house churches. We started to unite to reach the churches. On 4<sup>th</sup> June, the Tienanmen Square massacre changed many people’s hearts. It discredited Communism in the eyes of millions of people and was the trigger point for them to seek after spiritual truth.*

*“In 1989 the Holy Spirit’s power exploded all across China in many different ways. Fewer people wanted to join the Communist Party, while many more people wanted to join the Christian church.*

Professor Philip Jenkins, mentioned earlier, is chillingly realistic regarding the accelerating decline of Western Christianity but highly encouraging about what he describes as “sub-Saharan Africa”

*“Today, these eight states have around 200 million Christians, representing roughly half the total population. If we assume that the religious distribution of those populations will remain stable, then, by 2025, that number will have grown to 335 million. However, recent history suggests that these churches will expand by evangelization, so that we could be speaking about closer to 400 million believers in just these leading nations. Even in terms of formal adhesion to Christianity, sub-Saharan Africa will already have displaced Europe as the chief Christian heartland within a mere quarter-century.”<sup>18</sup>*

At the beginning of the twenty-first century both Messianic Jews and Church of the Messiah believers are looking for the imminent return of the Messiah; the former for a King David-like Deliverer, and the latter for Jesus as Lord of Lords. In a 1994 full-page advertisement in the *New York Times*<sup>19</sup>, under the headline, “*The Time of Your Redemption Has Arrived*”, a rabbinical Jewish Lubavitcher sect announced their allegiance to a 92-year-old “*Rebbe King Moshiach*<sup>20</sup>” facing death as their long-proclaimed “*King Messiah of the House of David*” come to provide the world with peace and harmony:

*“The Rebbe writes that theory of ‘Long Live the King’ adds life and vitality to a king. Furthermore, the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni 2;106 explaining Hosea 3:5, ‘They shall seek out . . . David their king’) writes that the Jewish people will be redeemed when they request Moshiach to be*

<sup>18</sup>The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity, p 90

<sup>19</sup>March 23, 1994

<sup>20</sup>“Moshiach” means “Messiah”

*their king. Accordingly let us all join in proclaiming together, 'May the Rebbe King Moshiach Live Forever' for we are told by our sages that the coming of Moshiach will herald an era when all will be blessed with everlasting life".*

But the return of the Jews to Israel in 1948 had nothing to do with God's promises through the Biblical *Prophets*. It had little to do with religion at all, its inspiration coming more from Marx than the Messiah. It even had little to do with Judaism, and more to do with apostate "*assimilation*" into secularism or into other religions. As has been mentioned earlier in this book, its greatest expression was a combination of East European Jewish socialism and West European Jewish capitalism - which produced the Zionism of the twentieth century "*return to Israel*."

Further, Judaism itself is approaching terminal decline. The secularism of Zionist Israel is exceeded by the secularization of Diaspora Israel. Until 1840 almost 90 per cent of Jews were located in Europe and those who emigrated were relieved to be delivered from the pressures and prejudices of "*the Jewish Question*" in Europe. There were an estimated 8.8 million Jews in the Diaspora in 1991; 5.7 million of them in the United States of America—the twentieth century "*land of milk-and-honey*" of the modern Jews!

It was the European "*Enlightenment*" which presented to the Jews, as well as the Christians, the critical choice: *Messiah* or *Mammon*: to follow the Messiah as the Biblical "*Children of Israel*", with all the divine promises of "*enlightening the world*" and the blessings of Jehovah; or to follow the blandishments of Satan and accept what Jesus rejected, namely, earthly power as a secular nation. The Chief Rabbi of Britain, Jonathan Sachs, has written:

*"The Enlightenment presented European Jews with a messianic promise and a demonic reality. The promise was a secular and rational order in which anti-Jewish prejudice would be overcome and Jewish civil disabilities abolished. The reality was that the Jews became like everyone else, the more irrational absolute became the prejudice against them: they were capitalists, they were Communists, they were too provincial and parochial, they were too rootless and cosmopolitan, they kept to themselves,*

*they got everywhere, they were disloyal, they were suspiciously over-loyal. The more assimilated they became, the more anti-Semitism grew.”*<sup>21</sup>

It has been estimated by Jewish experts<sup>22</sup> in the United States that “by 2021 the Diaspora will probably have quietly melted by a million or more bodies and souls.” The rate of assimilation by inter-marriage is steadily increasing with the Jewish partner becoming “Christian by association”, “Christian by conviction”, or “Woody Allen-like secular Jews-by-birth only.” Before 1965, 10 percent of all Jewish marriages were inter-marriages; from 1965-74, 25 percent; from 1974-84, 42 percent; since 1985, more than half. Simultaneously, over the same period the rate at which the Gentile partner in such marriages went over to Judaism was also steadily dropping – from 20 percent to 10 percent. One participant in the study declared: “As the Jews cease being Jews they become *de facto* Christians.”

So world Jewry faces a crisis of identity as well as numbers as they hasten towards their “Day of Jehovah”. Are they Moses Jews, post-Babylon Judaic Jews, post-Roman European neo-orthodox Jews, or post-1948 secular Zionist Jews? Who speaks for Jehovah and the Remnant Israel as they pray, “Next year in Jerusalem”?

Writing in the weekly journal *The Spectator*, Geoffrey Wheatcroft, stated:

*“All faithful Jews believed that the Lord would restore His people to the Promised Land of Israel, but they believed that He would do this in His own good time – which was to say in consequence of the coming of the Messiah. That was itself a profoundly mysterious event which no human being could ever foretell, which no human endeavour could possibly retard or impel, any human anticipation of which was well-nigh blasphemous. One rabbi in 1900 summed up his colleagues’ feelings: ‘Strangers have risen among us who say that the people of Israel should be clothed in secular nationalism, a nation like other nations . . . while the observance of the Torah and the Commandments is a private matter depending on the inclination of each individual. May the Lord rebuke these evil men and may He who chooseth Jerusalem seal their mouths.’”*<sup>23</sup>

A more recent summary was provided by the noted Israeli

<sup>21</sup>From the essay “Judaism and Politics in the Modern World” in the book, *The Desecularization of the World*, published 1999, by Wm B Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA

<sup>22</sup>“Counting the Jews”: Edward Norden: Commentary. p36f, October 1991

<sup>23</sup>“The Jewish Answer?”: *The Spectator*, 14/21 December 2002



journalist/author, Amos Oz, in an article in the *London Times* regarding “*the struggle between Synagogue and State*” in Israel:

*“The Jewish settlers of Gaza and in the West Bank have a dream for the future of Israel. I also have a dream for the future of Israel. But their sweet dream is my nightmare, whereas my dreams look to them as poison.*

*“The settler’ dream is to create a ‘Greater Israel’ with Jewish settlements wall-to-wall. In these settlements only Jews can reside, whereas Palestinians can only come for work, doing the simple, low-paid jobs. In such a state, democracy will have to bow to the rabbis. The Knesset, the government, the Supreme Court, will be allowed to continue to exist, provided that the rabbis approve of their decisions. The settlers believe that once Greater Israel becomes a religious entity and a “Holy Nation”, the Messiah will come and the redemption of the Jewish people will materialize . . .*

*“But we, too, have a dream for Israel, totally different from the settlers’ religious fantasy. We want to live in peace and in freedom, not under the rule of the Messiah, but under our own elected government . . . During these past days in Gaza we have been witnessing what might prove to be the first battle between Synagogue and State in Israel, the first showdown over the nature of the Jewishness of the only Jewish state. Are we first and foremost a religion, or are we first and foremost a nation?”*

But this modern Zionist Israel, too, will pass; either from its own internal contradictions, or external enemies, or both. It has no legitimacy, either in religion or politics. What ancient Israel had to learn, as God’s chosen people, was that their only right to God’s Promised Land did not lie in any formalized religion of their own conception but in their complete obedience to God’s specific commands. God had declared this categorically:

*“Keep all my decrees and laws and follow them, so that the land where I am bringing you to live may not vomit you out. You must not live according to the customs of the nations I am going to drive out before you. Because they did all these things, I abhorred them. But I said to you, ‘You will possess their land; I will give it to you as an inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey. ‘ I am the Lord your God, who has set you apart from the nations . . . You are to be holy to me because I, the Lord. am*

*holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own*"

When the Jews in Israel are living in the same way as their secularist and socialist neighbours, when they ceased worshipping and being holy like Jehovah and began worshipping the pagan gods of money, status and power, when they are more concerned with human rights than divine rights, *they have no legitimate claim on the Promised Land*. God's righteousness demands that the pagan sinners have prior claim to territory because of longer stay, so long as their conduct does not become "abhorrent". Israel's only right to being in the Promised Land of Canaan after deliverance from Egypt was because the nations then occupying it had become abhorrent to God through their worship of Baal and Ashtoreth, and because Israel had entered into a solemn *Covenant* with Jehovah to be "holy as God is holy". Without this conspicuous holiness of character the land belonged to any others God chose to give.

All the prophetic scholars accepted that the last book in the Bible, *Revelation*, is an account of what will happen in the final days of the world's history. The Apostle John was distinctively selected by God for this unfolding *Apocalypse*,—more commonly known as the *Book of Revelation*—with a special recommendation from God that "Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it".

There are four significant divisions in the *Revelation*: (i) *The Messiah and the Church*; (chapters 1-3); (ii) *The Messiah and the World* (chapters 4-11); (iii) *The Messiah and Satan* (chapters 12-21); and (iv) *The Messiah and Eternity* (chapter 22). The first four chapters of *Revelation* are like the beginning of any book, with a "Contents" page and an "Introduction" before the actual events unfold in the subsequent chapters.

In *Revelation*, as in *Daniel*, the Messiah is seen as about to judge the world in five judgments to follow: (i) judgment of Church/Remnant Israel believers; (ii) judgment of Jew/Gentile unbelievers; (iii) judgment of Babylon; (iv) judgment of angels, and (v) judgment of Satan.

Of all the unfolding historical mysteries of God in *Revelation*, the two mystery judgments of the last days of the world—the "Seven



*Churches*“, and *“Babylon the Great”*—are the most difficult to understand. That is because commentators are looking backwards at them historically with knowledge of the existing circumstances; while the mysteries of the last days of *Revelation* are ahead and still to take place. But the divine continuity of God’s purpose is stated explicitly by God himself in his opening words to John: *“Write what you have seen, what is now, and what will take place later”*—in other words, things past, present and future.

All of these things, it is prophesied, will take place *while the Church of the Messiah is still in the world*. When the time comes for God to remove the Church from the earth, it will happen suddenly—*“in the twinkling of an eye”*, as Paul says—caught up to meet the Lord in the air. This event will terminate the history of the Church of the Messiah on earth even more effectively than the history of Israel, or Judah, was terminated by their removal from the Promised Land.

This will take place in the manner described by Paul:

*“According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord for ever”*.

The removal of the Church of the Messiah *overcomers*—NOT institutional Churchoid of Satan members or attendees—takes place in *Revelation* between the end of Chapter 3 and the beginning of Chapter 4. From then on the *“Overcoming”* Church of the Messiah is not seen on earth during the period of Apocalyptic judgments. In the first three chapters of *Revelation* the word *“church”* occurs about twenty times, *but it is never mentioned again until the end of the Apocalypse and beginning of eternity in chapter 22*. From then on the Overcoming Church Bride is with the Messiah in heaven as he takes over authority and judgment, and the *“Marriage Supper of the Lamb”* ushers in the Church of the Messiah’s inheritance of rule in heaven

and on earth won through their overcoming efforts.

This removal of the Church of the Messiah, however, will also usher in the new history of the believing Remnant Jews, as God begins to fulfil His promise to bring them back to the Promised Land, and their central place in His final plans, as inevitably as He scattered them because of their early disobedience. It is not just Western evangelical Christians who believe this; Orthodox Jews in Israel reject the legitimacy of the current Zionist government because they believe it is only when the true Messiah appears in Israel that the true Israel will be evident.

The final judgment of God on the historically rebellious Babylonian Churchoid takes place at the close of the "*last days*" of world history with the final stages of the pouring of the seventh vial of judgment. *Revelation* records, after "*the cities of the nations fell, great Babylon came into remembrance before God*". This image of "*Mystery Babylon the Great*" as the Woman Harlot is provided by God as a recapitulation of the Satanic misdirection of world history as God sees it from His Throne. Just as the "*Church of the Messiah*" is personified as a "*mystery of godliness*" Virgin Bride, reflecting all the divinely required spiritual perfections; so the "*Churchoid of Satan*," the Harlot Mother of all religious prostitution and abominations is portrayed as the "*mystery of iniquity*."

In the beginning of the *Revelations* the Apostle John record the commands of the Lord God to him as: "*Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which take place after this*". At the conclusion of the *Revelation* record, in the final verses of the last chapter, the Apostle John states:

*"I, John, solemnly warn everyone who hears the prophetic words of this book: if anyone adds anything to them, God will add to his punishment the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes anything away from the prophetic words of this book, God will take away from him his share of the fruit of the tree of life and of the Holy City, which are described in this book."*

The prophet Isaiah more than two thousand millennia ago summarized the responsibility of obedience to divinely provided

rights and the consequences of human violations:

*“Do not call conspiracy everything these people call conspiracy; do not fear and do not dread it. The Lord Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread, and he will be a sanctuary . . . To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness.”<sup>24</sup> (my emphasis)*

Jesus began his public ministry in Nazareth with a summary of his gospel, quoted from the prophet Isaiah, to be obeyed and preached by his followers:

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour . . . Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”<sup>25</sup>*

I conclude with Søren Kierkegaard’s prayer in his *“Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing”*<sup>26</sup>:

*“What is all our striving, could it ever encompass a world, but a half-finished work if we do not know You: You are the One, who is one thing and who is all. So may you give to the intellect, wisdom to comprehend that one thing; to the heart, sincerity to receive this understanding; to the will, purity that wills only one thing. In prosperity may You grant perseverance to will one thing; amid distractions, collectedness to will one thing; in suffering, patience to will one thing.”*

Ends

<sup>24</sup>Isaiah ch 8vv12-14, 20-22

<sup>25</sup>Luke 4 vv 18-21

<sup>26</sup>“A Kierkegaard Anthology”, Princeton University Press, USA, 1946