

# **The Ba'al Theory of Christianity**

## **Introductory Essays**

### **Introductory Essay 1**

#### **Why We Really Know So Little of The Past**

Since the primary focus of this work is what appears to be a major rite of the Phoenicians, that being child sacrifice, many will assume that the people who performed these acts were barbaric and cruel peoples. However, what we shall see is that this act which creates such horror to the modern mind, were in fact performed by what was seen at the time as the most advanced and civilized peoples. We in the present have little understanding of the mind set of those in the past.

What is also mostly true is that we, in the present, have little understanding of the frame of reference of the writers of the past. Even when we translate (and we are learning to translate better all the time) and actually gain the right words, we will often not really understand the right intention or allusions of the Ancient writers. We naturally interpret words with our own self understandings of events to come; obviously the writers of the time did not have such knowledge. We need to try to put aside our modern morals on terms and issues, such as one of the focuses of this book, child sacrifice and its role in religious development. Our contemporary “understandings” often justify our current views and religious beliefs, but do not necessarily help us understand the views and religious beliefs of the persons who actually wrote the ideas, at the time they wrote them.

- We are therefore prejudiced in our reading of the past and defensive in trying to understand the beliefs of the past.

In addition, we often do not understand the nature of time, and the length of time, involved in the development of concepts, ideas and even events of the past.

- An example of what I am trying to say here is that it appears that most of the “prophesies” of the Old and New Testament were written after the events actually took place. So, for example, if we find in the Old Testament a prophecy stating that the Assyrians would not take Jerusalem, and they did not take the city, we must now understand that the “author” of this prophecy, or the words of the prophet, were recorded after the event, not before the event.

The same is true with the New Testament. For instance, Jesus' description of the “second” temple being destroyed, supposedly given some forty years before the event, appears to be a highly accurate description of the events as they did occur when the Romans destroyed the temple. This is used by many modern Christians to show the power of Jesus to predict the future. However, all non-religious scholars absolutely agree that the earliest the Gospels were written was

some 10 -50 years after the Roman victory. Therefore, as the old saying goes, hind sight is 20-20; having an accurate description of the event as prophesized by Jesus, does not show great foresight, just good descriptive writing.

That event, the destruction of the temple, was so critical to the history of the region's peoples, for both the Jews and the early Christians, that the writers of the time would undoubtedly feel compelled to say something about it. This event was probably seen by the people of the time as a traumatic event on a much greater scale than 9/11 was for us. This might seem like an overstatement but is certainly not for reasons we will discuss. A prediction about this catastrophe would seem not only logical for writers trying to portray Jesus as the son of God, but almost necessary. Its appearance in the Bible is not "proof" or "evidence" of anything, other than the certainty of its importance for the people of the time.

This lack of proof and evidence of our real history is based in part on the realities of politics. In large part our lack of understanding of the past is the result of deliberate policies of rulers and religions to eliminate concepts that challenge their concepts. The destruction of counter narratives has been extensive and greatly clouds our understanding of history.

Sadly, throughout much of human history, freedom of thought has been a rare commodity, and the freedom to dissent even rarer. For at least the last 1500 years, dissent, especially religious dissent was a capital offense. The "religious police" that we hear about in Taliban-dominated Afghanistan, beating and killing those who violate the slightest dictate of their interpretation of Islamic law may seem barbaric to us now but such behavior was the norm throughout Western history. Since the advent of Christian domination it was certainly the rule, rather than the exception.

- Most historians see the modern world as a development of the Western powers, rather than a product of the chaos that resulted from the demise of the Classical world. In relatively modern times, say from 400 AD on, the Christian West was among history's worst in its repression of ideas and demands for religious conformity. For almost 1,000 years, the Christian church did all that it could to prevent the use of any knowledge other than their "Bible". Not being "a believer" was a capital offense and instruments of enforcement were readily used (the Inquisition being the most famous but, by far, not the only of these tools)

There was a conscious effort by the Christian church to dominate thought and information. Once in power (mostly after 400 AD or so) they did everything they could to destroy the knowledge of the past, especially the thought of the Greek and Roman intellectual world, even while some of the elite in the Church still studied and used the classics amongst themselves. For the most part, the Church tried to destroy all scientific evidence that suggested that the origin of the world was anything different than that which appeared in the Bible. The only allowable discussions concerning the origin of the universe and man were limited to such debates as where Noah landed or how the sin of Adam impacted all of us (or how many angels could dance on the head of a pin).

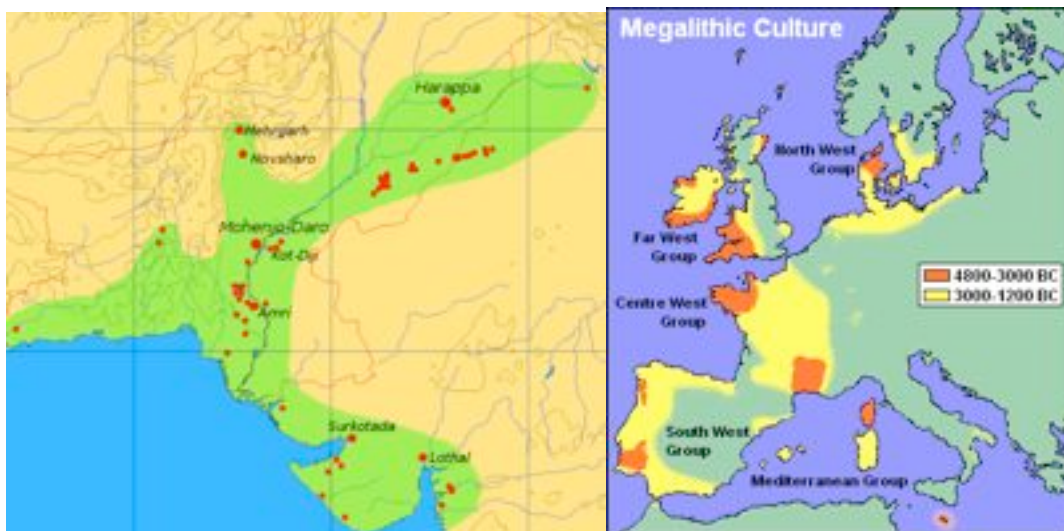
For nearly 1,000 years in the West, all discussions of justice or freedom had to be framed within the narrow confines allowed with the Bible (or at least how the Church allowed the Bible to be discussed). Almost all art had to reflect the themes of the Bible, with a few narrow reflections on some classical writings, and almost all writings had to be approved by the Church. To do otherwise was to toy with death or torture, or at the very least, to forgo payment from a local church or nobleman.

What writings do remain from the pre-Christian past, or should I say, survived the Christian efforts to control them, often make us realize that we are only now starting to “catch up” to the common knowledge of the ancient world. For example, in Herodotus' histories of the Persian-Greek wars, he listed twelve “Ionian” cities that revolted against Persian rule. For many centuries the locations of most of these cities were lost and it wasn't until present times, using modern approaches, that these ancient cities have been “rediscovered”

We can see that we actually have very little understanding of the extent of culture prior to the Christian world, and even how successful these cultures were.

- Starting in the 1850's we have evidence of ancient cities in the Indus River valley, which were actually unearthed in the 1920's (Mohenjodaro and Harappa). No one knew anything about them and they are still relatively unknown by Westerners today. Yet, they were perhaps four times the size of the Sumerian cities of about the same time and with populations of over 40,000, they were more advanced in design and sanitation than anything that would appear in Europe for three thousand years. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indus\\_Valley\\_Civilization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indus_Valley_Civilization)

We still know almost nothing about the peoples of these cities, or their history of beliefs. Also, all across the world is evidence of a major “megalith” culture that seems to have flourished starting about 6500 years ago that we can only guess as to what they knew or believed (Stonehenge, and the Malta structures are the most famous of these remains, but by far not the only ones.) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megalith>



Much of the basis, the knowledge, of what I need to talk about is so limited. Recent findings as well as discoveries that have been around for quite some time are still widely debated within the scholarly as well as the religious communities. I can only try to tell you, the reader, what appears to be “agreement” and “facts.” But much of it is based on so little data; never mind that so much of the interpretation of these facts is clouded by issues of “belief”. The scholars will say they can support their findings, but each year it seems we are finding new things that force a rethinking. Therefore, my task of helping us have a common basis of knowledge is very hard.

So, for example, in response to the question of who wrote the Bible, we can get statements that range from:

- God did, and that is that. “The Bible is the divine word of God.” To,
- Great evaluations that show that the Bible was in transition and developed over 1,000 plus years, and that the “Old Testament” may not have been consolidated much more than 100 years or so prior to the writing of the “New Testament”.

Of course, there are those who will fight vigorously for their views on the origins of the Bible with absolute “belief” in their stance, and there are others who argue emphatically that their research supports this fact or that. What is a poor presenter to do?

The modern American media is filled with “tele-evangelists” mostly supporting the first view. Indeed, even television programs which make an effort to provide an “academic” effort (*Mysteries of the Bible*) tend to be wholly based upon the concept that the Bible is at least mostly true, though perhaps not completely understood.

The culture of America is still dominated by religious theory pretending to be fact. When texts were discovered and translated in the 1920’s and 30’s which gave new insight into the religion of the “Canaanite” or Phoenician peoples, there was little popular discussion of the findings. In part, perhaps because there is extensive evidence from these texts to strongly suggest that much of Hebrew/Jewish religious culture was not uniquely inspired by God, or divine in any way. Rather, the evidence suggests that ideas and practices are “borrowed” or “morphed” (a term I will use a great deal in this book) from the Phoenicians. In these writings found in Phoenicia, we find similar stories that are found in the Bible, also similar rituals and festivals, including one almost completely similar to the Passover ceremonies, and psalms, that are almost word for word the same as ones in the Old Testament. Here we find new possible origins for the Bible, something the “Christian establishment” really did not want distributed too far. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ugarit>

Therefore, the translations of the texts have been slow in coming. They have also been, with the exception of some very good academics, mostly ignored by the public (or at least by the mass media that presents things to the public). So giving reference to them in writing here is once again problematic.

At this little point I need to more fully explain what must seem obvious already; this book, while about religion, is definitely not written from a “religious” or “sacred” point of view. This book is trying to show how religious beliefs, over time (a great deal of time), have actually changed little, and more or less “morphed” into other “manifestations” or “religions.” In fact, many of the concepts of the Ancients are present in the religions of today. As we will see, there are really few examples of “new religions” over the time of history covered in this book. What became new, was something that caused far more conflicts. It is the “clash of civilizations” that led to the appearance of great changes in the religions of the known world at the time. These concepts of “morphing” and “limited changes” will be better explained in other sections of the book.

“Time” needs to also be explained or discussed, or at least how issues of “time” cloud our understanding of the past. We are truly covering a lot of “time,” a very long period of history in this book. And “when” in time, things are said and done, and the sequence in the “time” of certain events is very important to telling this story. However, “time” is greatly misunderstood by the modern reader and thinker.

Let's look at time from the point of view of the “fundamentalist Christians” who until recently, saw the creation as an event taking place some 6,000 years ago (4004 BC) and for the sake of illustration let's give that length of time a distance of a foot. The best estimate science can give us for the beginning of the earth in terms of time is actually some six billion years. The difference, then, between these two estimates is roughly some 19,000 miles, and the distance between the rise of humanoids some 2 miles. Even if we just look at the rise of modern humans, some 100,000 years ago, we still have roughly a 17 times difference in distance between the Christian view of creation, and the scientific view of when the first human Adam developed.. In addition:

- Our views of time, of history, have been greatly distorted by, religion, popular imagery and folk history. In the last hundred years, Hollywood and television, our new myth perpetuation machinery, has greatly added to our popular misconceptions

One of my favorite misrepresentations is in the production of the “*Ten Commandments*,” with Charlton Heston as Moses. The film, for dramatic effect, takes great license with so much of the story. One of the most interesting deviations is where, upon returning to the camp of the Hebrews, Moses finds them worshipping the Golden Calf, and destroys the wrong doers by throwing the newly provided Ten Commandment tablets into the crowd of “sinners” with the effect of a rocket blowing up and splitting the earth.

Nice effect, but in the Exodus 32, it states that Moses broke the tables alright, but with no dramatic impact. He had to send people into the camp to kill the wrong doers, and 3,000 were slaughtered. ... (right after being told “thou shall not kill)

Exodus 32

**19** And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.

**20** And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strowed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it. ...

**26** Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.

**27** And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.

**28** And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.

Not a nice image for the movie goers; but if you ask the average person in the US, how God took revenge for the Golden Calf, if they know anything, chances are it's the movie image that prevails.

This example is only one of thousands included in movies that distort our view of history, Often the distortion becomes the "accepted version." For example, movies have often showed very early Christians using the sign of the cross while it was a "fish" that was the sign of their early faith. Two thousand years ago, it was, indeed, the dawning of a new age ("This is the dawning of the age of Pieces, the age of Pieces ..."). The cross motif was adopted several centuries later. Movies, when searching for pious mood music, often have the early Christians singing hymns written 1,500 years later.

The film industry has also often collapsed time and events to make them fit into the required blockbuster storyboard. In addition, radical changes are made to fit their needs or whims. In two movies of some fame, "*Fall of the Roman Empire*", and its remake, "*Gladiator*", the Roman Emperor Commodus is depicted as ruling for a relatively short time. In reality, he ruled for a period of eighteen years, ruling as a despot, with great slaughter of those who had supported his father, Marcus Aurelius. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commodus>

Why talk here about something so well understood (movies messing with history)? It's just to show, slightly, how distorted peoples' view of history is, in general and how the "forces that be" often change our view of history. In our current world, it is obviously the Christian church that has had, and in some ways continues to have, the strongest negative influence in understanding history. The Church, once in power, made belief in the Bible, and the Bible's history the only legitimate sources for the analysis and discussion of history. This was the stated and enforced political reality for some 1,400 years - a very long time, indeed. To question the Church and its views of history, during this time period, was a capital offense.

Therefore, the stories of the Bible concerning creation, Noah, Abraham, David, etc., all were to be considered “literal facts”. So, throughout this time period, all people in the West were mandated to believe that the world was created some 5,000 years before their time, and that the Flood had occurred, and that all political events, and mass die offs such as the Great Plague, were in fact ,“God’s” doing.

The breaking of this stranglehold on “thought” and “study” has occurred only recently - some 350 years, really a short time period. We have only recently reached the point that “legitimate” studies and writings of history can be completed, and dispersed. It is really only in the past 150 years (an even very shorter time) that legitimate competition on history has been “allowed” and a more “true” history of the world has come to be better understood. The mere fact that almost every child (in the West at least) knows about dinosaurs and the Jurassic era is actually a revolution in freedom of understanding, and a liberation of thought almost unprecedented in the history of the world. The Church can no longer impose its view of the history of the world when competing with Steven Spielberg.

However, the traditionalist Christian view of history is not going away without a fight. With the increase in religion fundamentalism, and with ongoing fight over such issues as “creationism” and other efforts to preserve the stories of the Bible as “fact” the struggle to free “history” from religious influence is on-going, and not nearly a “done deal.” Yes, there are still many who think that Adam and Eve road a dinosaur to church on Sundays.

If history teaches us anything, it is that freedom, especially freedom to think, is an ephemeral thing. I write this effort during one of the rare times in history when people are free to think and explore (at least where I live), and have the access to the documents needed to think and explore. I hope that time will treat this freedom, and my taking advantage of this freedom, kindly.

## Introductory Essay 2

### Obviously, I Am Not “In the Beginning”, But I Do Have A Beginning

I have worked on, and thought about the concepts I am trying to outline in this book, for quite a while. History has always been my great love, and the study of “non-traditional” history has fascinated me, long before it seemed popular with others. For example, in my teens and early twenties, I spent years looking at the likelihood of “pre-Columbian contact” and also loved both the concepts of Immanuel Velikovsky presented in “Worlds in Collision” and “Ages in Chaos.” Not that I accepted Velikovsky’s “absolutism” (that the planet Venus was a comet that came off of Jupiter and almost destroyed Earth) but I loved the challenge he presented to the, then, stagnant field of research.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel\\_Velikovsky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel_Velikovsky).

Even before these “youthful” explorations of history I had known, or rather at least heard about Ba’alim, from attending religion training. There I had heard of the tales of its great evil and that it was hated by God. However, I paid little attention to “what” was so hated, and soon concentrated my personal Biblical readings (what little I did) to Kings and Chronicles (the history), rather than to stories of rituals and of religious concepts per say. Even there in the books I read, I found that the conflict between God and Ba’al seemed to be that the kings of Israel and Judah were following Ba’al more than Yahweh, and the key issue for God was only “I am a jealous God.”

However, the more I changed my way of looking at history the more I was challenged by unexpected issues. For example, in the pre-Columbian contact theory, there were arguments raised that modern historians got their time tables wrong based on a first century misreading of Egyptian dynasties (another theory of Velikovsky)

Based on this exploration I began to consider the question of what it was that was so hateful about Ba'al in the eyes of God, other than just God’s “ego.” I began to see that it was also an issue of “rituals” and “beliefs” that was the main problem for God.

- There is a constant insistence in the Bible (both from God and the prophets) that the people of Israel do not go “whoring” after the foreign gods and that the people of Yahweh do not need to have their children “pass through the fire” in order to please God. These issues seem to be that which separated the practices and rites of the god of the Hebrews/Israelites/Jews and the peoples already in the Promised Land.

Yet, (at least in the Bible story line) for hundreds of years, if not more, the “chosen people” chose not to obey these commands concerning the rituals of other gods. Despite repeated warnings, and political and other disasters, (again based on the Bible stories) the people of Israel and Judea ignored the direct words of God, and the prophets, and did go “whoring” after the foreign gods and



also did, in fact, pass “their children through the fire.” They continued to perform these acts:

- even after the incident at Mt Sinai (where three thousand were murdered for worshipping the Golden Calf, literally moments after being told by God “thou shall not kill”)
- even after the purging of the non-believers though forty years of wandering,
- even after failures in the conquests of Canaan,
- even after defeats from the newly arrived enemies, the Philistines,
- even after the defeat and death of Saul, and the repudiation of David by God,
- even after the separation into the two weakened kingdoms and the death of many kings “who did evil unto the lord” and
- even after the destruction of the Northern kingdom as a punishment from God, and the efforts to reform the Southern kingdom,

According to the Biblical timeline, some 800 years after God spoke to Moses at Mt Sinai, as the Babylonians are besieging Jerusalem, these people were still “passing their children through the fire,” or in other words, offering them up as human sacrifice. I say “these people” because as we shall see, “the Jews” is not quite the right term for them yet. The more correct term at this time is the Judeans.

- It's also important to remind readers that there is little independent evidence to support the Exodus and the Hebrew conquest stories.

With all this in mind, we must ask what was so powerful about these Ba’alist practices that they had such a hold on the hearts and minds of the Israelites and Judeans? What does it tell us, that despite endless warnings and actual destruction, these rituals were maintained?

It occurred to me that the whole story of the relationship between the God of the “Jews” and Ba’al was not being clearly presented by the current “standard” presentation of history which, of course, is much influenced by the Bible. However, back in my younger years, say back in the early 1960’s, there was not much available to really look at the Ba’al religion, in the West that wasn’t extensively biased. It’s not that there hadn’t been much writing from an anti-religious point of view, it was just that the writings were simply not widely available.

The religion of Ba’al kept coming to my attention as I “matured” as a historian and I started to study the “Punic Wars”, (rooting for the losing side) as Ba’al was the chief god of Carthage. I also found the issue coming up as I studied the history of the Greek/Persian conflicts, as Phoenicia was a key “ally” of the Persians. This Greek/Persian conflict will play heavy in this work as it created the clash of cultures that impacted the development of many religions, but more on that later.

- For a somewhat different view of that Greek/Persian conflict and of what was called the Axial Age, see Gore Vidal's *Creation*)

Again, in standard readings on the Punic conflicts, the religion and practices of Carthage was presented by the “winners” and, as the case with most winners, in not too sympathetic a fashion. While I questioned the two presentations (the Bible's and the Roman's) about the religion and the culture of those who worshiped using the rituals of Ba'alism, there was little readily available to provide me with contrary opinions.

Over the years, my thinking and my reading wandered into many areas, (mainly Chinese, Turkic and Mongol history) not often returning to the arena of the great rival of Yahweh. With my growing atheism and my rejection of the concepts of religious in general, there was certainly less to give me cause to directly reconnect to the study of the religion of Ba'al.

- To me, throughout this time, Ba'alism was just one of many alternatives of what appeared to me to be the same type of religion that dominated the “Near Eastern” (obviously a current Western term- sorry for its use) world, and actually seemed a minor replica of the far more important religions of Egypt and Sumer (and its successor states “between the two rivers”.) Ba'alism seemed to me, to be as it was presented in standard history, a minor side event of world history.

However, I was eventually introduced to a more neutral view of the “rituals” of Ba'alism in reading Flaubert's *Salammbô*, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustave\\_Flaubert\\_Salammbô](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustave_Flaubert_Salammbô) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salammb%C3%B4\\_%28novel%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salammb%C3%B4_%28novel%29) . In his story of Carthage's fight for survival after the first Punic War, Flaubert presented the core of Ba'alistic ritual without passion or “modern” morals. He presented the “passing through the fire,” the process of human sacrifice, as a major and important fact of the “high” culture of the “protagonist” of the story ...

- So in his book, Flaubert had the “good guys” burning their children alive, and this act of “sacrifice” was presented as both “needed” and “good.”

To me, it was an insight into what was always presented in my formal and informal study of history, as perhaps the worst of the worse in human activities. God most hated the Ba'alist, the act of human sacrifice – the passing through fire,” and yet here it was seen as something that was perhaps “standard;” and also something that was accepted in the most advanced of cultures for hundreds, if not thousands of years.

This was truly a “novel” concept, and its presentation in the novel was powerful (though perhaps not historically fully accurate). It helped to make something clear to me about my previous “simple” reading of the Bible - this action, this type of sacrifice, was what God was really angry most about - the passing through fire, the offering of burnt children to appease God.

The conflict over this type of sacrifice was perhaps the core conflict in all of the Old Testament and perhaps, as I thought about it more, a key to understanding many of the rituals and acts in not just Judaism, but in the New Testament as well.

- In the Bible, God and the prophets, for hundreds of years rejected the ritual of this Ba'alistic religion, this "passing through fire", and condemned the Jews (again, not the right term yet) for using it. But use it they, the Israelites and Judeans, did. Furthermore, they continued to use it for centuries, right along with their chief rivals and powerful neighbors (the Canaanites/the Phoenicians).
- God made it a capital offense to go "whoring after these gods" and "to pass the children through fire," but throughout the Old Testament, kings, heroes and commoners alike, continued to do so.

What I realized was that for all these many, many years, those who did these offerings of passing the children through the fire, did not see themselves as "doing evil unto the lord" but saw themselves as the "good guys," doing what was needed and right to appease their gods, and meet the needs of their religious view of the world. And even though in the modern mind "correlation is not causation," to the people of the time, it must have seemed that sacrificing their children to their gods was just, and correct, because it was those who sacrificed their children who seem to be most successful.

- In their own time, not looking backwards as we do now, but in their own time, people only needed to look at the great success and wealth of Phoenicia and compare it to the lack of success of Yahwehists to fully occupy the "promised land" or even control two remote, little kingdoms.

In retrospect, we do see how successful the Phoenicians were and (without religious bias) how unsuccessful the "Hebrew" states were. The Phoenicians seemed to "open the West" and control the trade of the Western world, and of so many nations. You might say they were the world trade center of their time. Furthermore, they flourished for what appears to be thousands of years. They planted colonies throughout the "new world" of their time, the Mediterranean Basin, with great success (Carthage only being the most successful of these). Truly, in the eyes of the people of the time, the Gods of the Phoenicians accepted their type of sacrifice (the passing through fire) and in return, blessed and sustained them, providing them with dazzling success in numerous endeavors.

The Hebrews/Israelites/Jews however, achieved little success. The great achievement presented in the Bible (the Davidic Kingdom) if real at all, was an ephemeral event, quickly falling apart after two generations. Most of the time (and this was a long time), the Chosen people were subjected to "evil rulers" and external conflicts, with many more defeats than victories.

- On the face of it, in their own time, the gods of the Phoenicians seemed to have been more successful in protecting and enriching their people than the God of Israel.

Even at the time of the fall of Judea to the Babylonians after a relatively short siege of a few months, the Phoenicians withstood thirteen years of Babylonian efforts to take their major city (Tyre) and after all that time, the Babylonians failed to breach the defenses of the city.

- Which god(s) seemed to protect their people best? The one who rejected human sacrifice or the one that accepted it? To the minds of most of the people at the time “correlation was causation.” At the same time, the people of Yahweh were being led into exile (again), the Ba’alist rituals seemed to work in protecting Phoenicia. To an impartial Ancient, it must have appeared that these rituals were also helping the Phoenician world, expand through Carthage and its other colonies.

As I was beginning to look at these religious conflict issues in this new way, my curiosity wandered to other things (mainly my career in public service and the history of persons with disabilities to name a few things). I did not follow up on the images and concepts presented in *Salammbô*. Even in my studies of history, I was looking at too many other aspects of “war and peace” and less at changes in religion.

- However, the idea that “good guys” could perform” human sacrifice remained with me as a compelling concept.

Two different pieces of comic art, seemingly unconnected to Ba’al, pulled me back to looking at this religion again. The first was Mel Brooks’ “History of the World Part I” with its amazing scene of turning the torture chambers of the Spanish Inquisition [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish\\_Inquisition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_Inquisition) into a musical routine that was a tribute to Esther Williams and Busby Berkley. (In the scene, Brooks has the unbelievably funny line, at least for a historian, of “Torquemada, Torquemada, Oy, you can’t Torquemada anything”). The other work was Leonard Bernstein’s adaptation of “*Candide*” into a musical. He had the equally amazing song in his play of “*Oh what a day for an Auto de Fe*” mocking rituals used in the lead up to the burning of heretics.

These two comic efforts to remind the world of the horrendous repression of human rights (sorry for using a modern term again) and enforced social conformity, led me to explore the use of terror in the Catholic Church (not an easy subject). It also led me to think about why the Church in Spain used the method of burning at the stake in such large numbers (perhaps as high as 30,000 or as low as 3,000) as opposed to just torture and publicly humiliation or other forms of execution. see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auto\\_de\\_fe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auto_de_fe) )

- As you can see from the range of the figures, there is great dispute over the actual numbers killed through the work of the Inquisition. For a view of this conflict see both

<http://www.newscholars.com/papers/Killing,%20Christianity,%20and%20Atheism.pdf> and <http://biblia.com/christianity/spanish.htm>.)

I asked why was this particular form of execution (burning alive) was so favored in this area of the world, when it was far less used in the “East.”

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Execution\\_by\\_burning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Execution_by_burning) While looking at Spain, and its use of burning, the trail of investigation led to other massive efforts of repression in Western history, namely, the Church's imperative of social and religious conformity, and the repression of women through the use of “witchcraft” accusations. Here I found that once again, burning was not only used, but was also the preferred form of capital punishment (with hanging or drowning as the other main options). Once again, the numbers of how many were killed by burning or other means are in dispute. Over a 250 year period (1450-1700 AD) in Western Europe, the low estimate is that some 12,000 women were killed for witchcraft, with the higher estimates reaching up to 100,000 or more, (see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Witchcraft> and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Witch-hunt>).

I began to postulate the idea that the use of this type of killing, this burning of people, was routed deep in the social past of the societies. The two peoples that had used burning as the main means of human sacrifice were the Celts, who peopled all of Western Europe prior to Roman, and later German domination, and the Carthaginians, along with their “parents,” the Phoenicians. Between these two often closely allied cultures Spain was dominated for almost a millennium. Furthermore, the Phoenicians appear to have been in Western Europe long before the Celts arrived, and seem to be the major influence on the culture and religion of the Celts. I wondered if Celtic traditions such as the “wicker man” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wicker\\_man](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wicker_man) was also connected to their ancient and forgotten connection to this religion of the Bible, this most hated of all religions of God.

- So I asked myself if Ba'alism was perhaps the “origin” of the means of execution preferred by the Spanish Church, as a practice which lay deep in forgotten (and repressed) social/cultural history of the Iberian region. Was the Auto de Fe, and the burning of persons to appease an angry God, actually Ba'alism in a new and different form, under the guise of a new religion? I also had to ask if the burning of women for witchcraft actually is closely related to the Ba'al religion, too.

From my previous study of culture, I have come to realize that despite all forms of repression, elements of ancient cultures continue to be manifested in the “new cultures.” For the most part we find that cultures actually “morph” rather than die. Here, in the Auto de Fe, and the witch trials of Europe, I thought, I saw a connection, a “morphing” with a long forgotten religion. With my usual curiosity into the uncommon, I began to look, and found far more than I expected.

- A great deal of what I have found was not, and still is not represented in “standard history” and the effort of this work is to at least ask the key questions that may lead to a changing of “standard history.”

- There appears to be a general failure to make reference to the use of human sacrifice in the study of western tradition by what I refer to as “standard history.”

While Velikovsky appears to be was mostly wrong about his concepts of how Venus was created, he did bring about a look at the idea of “*Worlds in Collision*” which led us to greater understandings about how dinosaurs died, and the actual presence of the “Nemesis comet” <http://muller.lbl.gov/pages/lbl-nem.htm> and <http://www.lbl.gov/Science-Articles/Archive/extinctions-nemesis.html> . So perhaps my efforts will not show that there is that major cultural link between the “passing through the fire” and the Auto de Fe, (Bull fighting in Spain is a vestige of Phoenician or Cretan cultures and perhaps even older than the religion of Ba’al). This may only lead to a greater understanding of what was once considered right and proper and the acts of “good men.” It also may just lead us all to a better understanding of the greatness of the Punic peoples and their major contributions of world culture and history. My theory of the influence of Ba’al on the executions favored in Spain may prove to have some merit, though and perhaps others can more fully explore this relationship. I might hope that this point supports the greater overall theory of this work, which is:

- The Religion of Ba’al was not just a minor duplicate of other Near East religions, but was, and still is, a major influence in the overall development of our current concepts (in the West) of both good and evil.
  - It had great influence on the early actual development of Christianity and its views of salvation, and how Christians envisioned the “devil” and “damnation.”
  - The Ba’alist religion and its beliefs and rituals went far beyond the Inquisition of Spain, influencing how the inhabitants of the New World were viewed by the Spanish, and so much more in modern history.

These books present the premise that this very ancient religion, one that is much older than the beginnings of Judaism and thousands of years older than Christianity did not simply go away ... it morphed into our current religious views.

The term “morph” is the shortened form of met·a·mor·phose which means

- To change into a different form, substance, or state: [convert](#), [mutate](#), [transfigure](#), [transform](#), [translate](#), [transmogrify](#), [transmute](#), [transpose](#), [transubstantiate](#).  
[http://www.uphoenixdegrees.com/index.cfm?key=go\\_bookkeeping\\_base&v=google&a=uop\\_business%2540worldclassstrategy.com&c=accounting&cat=bookkeeping\\_base&mt=Content&ad=502127334&st=bookkeeping%20definition&pmode=business&est=bookkeeping+definition&emt=exact](http://www.uphoenixdegrees.com/index.cfm?key=go_bookkeeping_base&v=google&a=uop_business%2540worldclassstrategy.com&c=accounting&cat=bookkeeping_base&mt=Content&ad=502127334&st=bookkeeping%20definition&pmode=business&est=bookkeeping+definition&emt=exact)

We now, thanks to modern understandings, can track how and why Ba’al morphed. Though invisible to academics for centuries, I believe its influence is still all around us.



## Introductory Essay 3

### The Good, The Bad and The Ba'al

As far as “evil”, the case of the connection to Ba'al is much easier to explain and prove than the case for Ba'al as the good, and it helps to prove the premise that cultures “morph.” For as we will see, the religions of Abraham see the world through the Bible, and in the Bible we see that Ba'al was the chief rival of God.

- In my presentation, we see that this has not changed, since our current view of the chief rival of God, the Devil, is actually still Ba'al. To be more precise, the Christian depiction the Devil is actually a manifestation of Ba'al.

There is historical support for this connection between Ba'al and the Devil, and, although this is a key to understanding the development of the Christian religion, it will not be the major focus of this work. We will need to explore this connection in some detail, however.

- Early [demonologists](#) ... ranked (Ba'al) as the first and principal king in [Hell](#), ruling over the East. According to some authors Baal is a duke, with 66 legions of demons under his command.
- During the English [Puritan](#) period, Baal was either compared to Satan or considered his main lieutenant.. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baal>

The case for showing the connection between Ba'al and the mostly Christian view of salvation and “good” is a bit more difficult and will be the major exploration of these works.

Some of the key points that I will try to show include;

- The issue of human sacrifice, so long ineffectively fought against by the “Jewish” prophets and “reformers” is eventually relatively “addressed” through a new “morphing” process, involved in the “Christ Story”

While there has been a great deal recently written showing how the Christ Story follows the hallmarks of many other “savior” and “death and rising gods.” (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life-death-rebirth\\_deity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life-death-rebirth_deity) ) I think that the Christian story adds something more than these common factors of superficial similarities.

I believe that the critical differences between Christianity and the “death and rising gods” are written in a number of sources as: the “understanding” of the death of Jesus, his crucifixion, his “sacrifice” as completing the process of the “near sacrifice of Isaac”, or the completion of the “needed” death of “the first born” to meet the needs of the true God, denied to God, by the Hebrews, by the non-sacrifice of Isaac..

The other “mystery cults” of these “death and rising gods” seem mostly to focus on the issues of the need to bring about the new “spring” the coming of rain and the growth of the new crops. In short, they're about food, not eternal salvation.



The death and rising gods are also not seen as “human sacrifices” but as tragic events that are rectified through the resurrection of the god.

- The word Ba'al is also translated as the word, “Lord.” The connection of the Christ story to this need to appease the Lord (or Ba'al) for a sacrifice denied (to make up for the original sin?) to Ba'al, (not as the Devil, but as the “true God”) is mostly unseen in the other death and rising gods story lines: they talk of restoring the Earth with the restoring of the god.

This is the basis of Christianity: that through the death of Jesus (God sacrificing his only begotten son) the needs of the “true God” are met and a new contract between man and God is developed. Furthermore, a new prospect of salvation is delivered by the human sacrifice of Jesus, the first born son, and as the eventual surrogate for Isaac the original contract with God and Abraham is completed and the original sin of Adam and Eve erased. These components are not fully found in the other death and rising stories. However, they are found within the rituals of the Phoenicians, and their religious belief system collectively referred to as “Ba'alism.”

- As we will see, according to the Christians, the religion of Ba'al requires human sacrifice for solidification of a “contract” or “covenant” with God. The difference is that with the Christians, this requirement is completed with the death of Jesus and this death eliminates the need for any other sacrifice of its kind.

We also now know that the basic Christ story, with all its main elements has been around from some 6,000 years prior to Christ (or the time attributed to be the time of Christ). As we will see this concept of God having a son, and in time of crisis declaring him king, and then sacrificing him, is connected to the very foundation of the Western Sky Gods of the Greeks, but has its origins in Phoenicia:

- So Cronus, whom the Phoenicians call Israel, being king of the land and having an only-begotten son called Jeoud (for in the Phoenician tongue Jeoud signifies ‘only begotten’), dressed him in royal robes and sacrificed him upon an altar in a time of war, when the country was in great danger from the enemy.” Frazer’s *Golden Bough* , Chapter 26 <http://www.sacred-texts.com/pag/frazer/gb02600.htm>

Also, other religions and customs are associated with Cronus (besides being the father of Zeus),

- Cronus, visiting the ‘inhabitable world’, bequeathed [Attica](#) to his own daughter [Athena](#), and [Egypt](#) to [Thoth](#) the son of [Misor](#) and inventor of writing. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cronus>
- To El/Cronus is attributed the practice of [circumcision](#). <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanchuniathon>

What I will attempt to present in this arena, this “final human sacrifice” is far more complex than the issues of understanding Ba’al as the “Devil.” While much is written on how and why the death of Christ was not a human sacrifice, I will present the premise, that in part,

- At the time and place Christianity began, believers in the power of the practices of Ba'al were apparently quite numerous. The Christ story is told in a fashion that creates a means to present to this population the idea that the need for sacrifice was ended and that with the death of Christ, God wanted no more human sacrificing, but Christ was that human sacrifice needed to appease El, God or Ba'al.

However, the very act of the death of Christ seems to have been presented as the “ultimate” human sacrifice to those who were still believers in the ritual. At the time of Jesus (given he existed at all), in the place he lived, and among the people he lived with, there is strong evidence (at least from what little we have left) to show that many people still believed in this practice, and in the ancient ways of Ba'al.

As stated before, it will be hard for me to show this connection, and it involves a great deal of understanding of world history that most readers will not have. It also requires readers not to be so tied into their own religious beliefs that exploration of options to interpretation is, well ... not an option. I too had to put away my initial views and understandings. I hope all readers will do so. This is the purpose of study, to challenge your views based on new facts and others understanding of these facts.

With an open mind we can look at history, or at least the stories that pass as history, differently. We can see that in re-reading depictions of Abraham and Isaac, the death of King David's first son with Bathsheba, or the reasons for God's damnation of both Israel and Judah, the religion of Ba'al seems to be central to the issues of each of these stories. Then, we can also understand that despite the defeats of Ba'alists by Persians, Greeks, Romans, and once in power, the Maccabee Jews, the religion of Ba'al did not, as we have presented in standard history, die or fade away, but continued to be a dominant player in the world of the time. We need to appreciate the fact that it was a major rival to the new religion of Christianity.

We do have documented proof that some three hundred and fifty years after the destruction of Carthage, and some one hundred and seventy-five years after the accepted date for the crucifixion of Christ, the Roman emperors were looking for a new religious model for the empire. In these efforts to formulate a “universal” religion, the emperors' first choice for a new paradigm was in fact Ba'alism, not Christianity, which, as it turns out, was the fourth option. Some 125 years before Constantine accepted Christianity (and the extent of his conversion is open to debate), other emperors offered to Rome as the new universal salvation god, Ba'al, and openly required the ritual of human sacrifice to Ba'al, daily offering up children of the Senatorial class. <http://www.roman-empire.net/decline/elagabalus.html>

- As Christianity developed, Ba'alism was not a dead issue connected only to stories of the Old Testament. It was an active and strong rival (the chief rival of God again) for the hearts and minds of the Romans. The core ritual, the offering of human sacrifice, needed to be addressed by the Christians of the time, as they struggled to survive in an increasingly hostile Roman world.

The viewing of Christ as “the last human sacrifice needed” was part of the “morphing” offered by the early Christians to explain why the rituals of sacrifice could and should change. But, this rivalry between Ba'alism and early Christianity clearly shows a strong link between the Church and its developing views and Ba'alism.

Documented history shows that human sacrifice was not a long ago forgotten ritual as the Church was developed; human sacrifice in Rome was being practiced by the Emperor and was a major element to one of the first major rivals of the new religion. The ritual needed to be addressed in a politically acceptable means by the newly rising Christian church.

I have thought and read about this Ba'alist influence on Christianity's point of view for years. Such books as “*The Religion of the Occident*” and the “*The Closing of the Western Mind*” helped me with a new understanding of history of Christianity, and religions in general. However, both books seem to miss the Ba'al importance. Hyam Maccoby's, *The Sacred Executioner* is a book that greatly influences this work. However, Maccoby, while seeing the Jesus sacrifice as part of a ritual of human sacrifice, fails to make the major connection between the “sacrifice of Jesus”, and Ba'alism, directly. In the classic concerning religious development and human sacrifice, “*The Golden Bough*” there is a great deal of insight on the process and ritual of sacrifice, but not the connections I am suggesting. Also, most of the new books that question the existence of Jesus added to this new world view. However, they seem to miss the apparent connection between the ancient rival of God, Ba'al and the new Christian views. So, I prepare to present what I see.

Not only do I now see that the adversary of the God of the Old Testament, is still the chief adversary of God today, only under a different name and mythology, I also think that it might be closer to the truth to say that we live under a Ba'al/Christian tradition in the Western world as opposed to Judaic/Christian one. The main rituals and world views of modern day Christians are more closely related to those of Ba'al than those of Judaism, with the key major issue being the view of human sacrifice, and its role in religion.

Please note that the term Ba'al can be used as

- A particular god (the storm god of the Canaanites)
- A title for any god or ruler or noble (the way Lord is used in English)

- Or a reference to the collective religion of the Canaanites ---  
such as Hindu is used to refer to the pantheon of India ...

I will use the term Ba'al or Ba'alism mostly in third manner ... except where specifically pointed out as reference to the storm god.

## Introductory Essay 4

### How to Write and for Whom to Write?

How to write these books is difficult since I need to try and communicate with those of faith, avoiding offense as much as I can, and those of logic, those who are well educated and also those not so well invested in history. There are several ways to present the information to try to reach all interested, including a highly technical journal approach complete with extensive cites and foot notes (often longer than the text). Another is popular history with more narrative and story telling and less documentation. A third method is to tell the events as a “personal journey of exploration” allowing me license to write extensive thoughts without extensive data to support the book.

None of these approaches are completely satisfying to me. While the later two make the work accessible to most people, the information given is often too unsupported. The first option, a journal type article, makes “hard reading” for most persons. (Of course, there is also the approach of “historical fiction” which I also do not like very much either.)

Therefore, I will attempt to take the best parts of these modern ways to telling history and use them where needed to tell this forgotten story of one of the foundations of modern religions. Where possible, I will give websites to give access to immediate support for arguments put forward and to show the origins of my thinking on this effort to understand how forgotten religions impact our modern religions. I will also use traditional citations when needed as well, but I will avoid foot notes. And, I will also just tell “my personal story” and not have to document that too much.

I will have to speak in “generally accepted” terms rather than actual and “more correct” terms that may make things a bit more confusing. My arguments may be difficult enough. For example, when speaking about Alexander the Great, I will refer to him and his army as representing Greece and Greek culture, which might be only partly true but is mostly popularly “believed.” Alexander, of course, was a Macedonian, a kingdom north of what was considered Greece.

- The Greeks themselves, considered the Macedonians as nearly barbaric (not quite as bad as the Scythians, but pretty close). His father, Philip II had subjugated Greece through war (to the great shame of the Greeks), and one of the first acts that Alexander had to do once claiming the throne of his assassinated father was to put down two Greek efforts to overthrow Macedonian hegemony (if not direct rule). While the first revolt was put down mainly by negotiations, the second revolt occurred the very next year. He responded by obliterating Thebes (Greek Thebes not Thebes of Egypt), something the Persians could or did not even do in the invasion of Greece. Alexander then sold almost all survivors of the city’s sack into slavery (335 BC). The rest of Greeks cities were overwhelmed by this example of “shock and awe.” They quickly begged for peace and accepted the

role of “free allies” of Macedonia. (see.  
([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander\\_the\\_Great](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_the_Great) )

While it would be more proper to refer to Alexander and his army as Macedonian and the culture he spread as “Hellenistic” I will use the more “popular terms” “Greek Culture “ on somewhat of an equal basis to “Hellenistic culture” (and, proper historians forgive me.) In addition, I will use the archaic BC and AD as opposed to the more correct, but by no means perfect, BCE (before the common era), and CE (common era). Neither of these terms (BC/AD or BCE/CE) are good, and show little respect to Islamic, Jewish, Chinese, Indian, etc, cultures who have an entirely independent point of reference for judging the “year” of events.” But “dating” events is necessary, and I am writing to a mainly “Western” audience, so I will use the most commonly understood point of reference for dating, (and again, proper historians forgive me).

So ... to all – forgive my transgressions (and those who transgress against me)  
Or, as Ricky Nelson once sang – yes, I get to quote Ricky Nelson, ...

- It’s alright now, I learned my lesson well.  
You can’t please everyone,  
So, you got to please yourself.

So I’m writing this to basically please myself. I hope others can be pleased as well.

## Introductory Essay 5

### Comment on Lack of Information – Fact VS. Myth

My effort, as noted, is not one that is easy, simply because we know so little about our real past ... and what we think we know to be “facts” change frequently as solid research increases and “control of thought” (by religion and culture) dissipates. Even with the new advances in our basic understanding of the past, it is still extremely difficult to write about what we really know so little about.

When we do try to write about religion or more exactly, the religions of peoples in the past, the difficulty is exacerbated by the constant conflict between our current issues of “faith” and “knowledge, and past and current “dogmas” and “fact.” Those who believe in the current modern versions of Christianity or Judaism or Islam, need to maintain a “belief” in history as presented in their holy books. Without the “history, much of their religion tends to fall apart. For example, for many Christian believers “Adam and Eve” and “original sin” are real and therefore must be seen as actual “history”.

- If there was no Adam and Eve and no first rejection of God’s command (by Eve, I.E. the original sin) then there is no need for “salvation”.

This relationship between religion and “history” can be seen in other issues as well, including;

- If there was no Abraham and no Moses, and no contracts between them and God, then there is no foundation for the modern state of Israel.
- And if there was no Jesus, there was no son of God, and there is no foundation for the very existence of Christianity.

There appears to be little to no historical evidence outside of the Bible to support these four events (Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus). Yet, in the West, all four of these personal stories are presented in schools and in religious settings, to some degree or another, as fact.

This teaching, of these people as fact, is very much needed to maintain the very foundations of the modern Western religions. Therefore, we can see that such things as the fight between “creationism” (or “intelligent design”) and evolution, is not simply a fight over “modernism” and “tradition”, it is a fight by the religious to maintain the very foundations of their core beliefs. (Without Adam and Eve, and Original Sin, without Christ, is there a basis for the Christian religion?)

The religious will not go “quiet into that good night.” The forces of the current power (the Christian religion) will fight to maintain a view of history that supports their beliefs and resist new understandings in history that challenge them. Christians are still very powerful in the United States and have great influence on how history is taught and presented in our culture.

Aside from the need of the religious to control history, the time span that needs to be covered makes the task of understanding “history” hard, if not outright impossible. We actually remember (or know) so little. It’s difficult enough to comprehend the 400 years since the settlement of Jamestown (1607) and the incredible development of the North American continent, so how can we be expected to know much about events 4,000 years ago, never mind 40,000 years ago?

- We hardly understand the allusions of people writing during our American Revolution, how can we understand the allusions of peoples writing at the time of the Jewish revolution against the Seleucid Greeks or the first worshipers of a Sky God, rather than the Mother Goddess?

I was at a meeting in Washington DC, working on a project to change the questions used in the US citizenship tests, where a noted “professional historian” stated that he felt that it was better for the new immigrants to the United States to know the “myths of America” as opposed to the real “history.” He felt that the “cultural myths” were the foundations of a society, filled with the good things about the society. He felt that the “actual history” often was made of “real people,” who were all combinations of “good and bad” (like Jefferson and Washington owning slaves). In his view, it was better that the immigrants understood the “intent” of the “founding fathers” or the “outcomes,” rather than the actual history and struggles that led to these outcomes, with all the “human problems” involved.

He wanted the immigrants to become Americans by buying into the “meaning” of America through the “outcomes,” rather than understanding America, through the study of the struggles that got us here. “Outcomes” were projected by the “cultural myths.” He saw in these “cultural myths” stories created as a short hand to explain the key elements of the struggle and the intended meaning of the outcomes.

In some ways, this approach to teaching history is understandable and excusable, and in fact, the way most history has always been taught (the picture of the Twelve Stations of the Cross is a shorthand way of teaching the Christianity and its “outcomes” and about the “folk culture” of Christianity itself). However, the problem arises when the “cultural myths” become accepted, and institutionalized, leaving the real history to be completely, or almost completely, lost. (Also some, like me, argue that the “struggle” and the freedom to have a struggle is the real meaning of America, but that is a different book)

In truth, much of what we think we know as “history” is really “cultural myth” produced and promulgated by the “winning interests” in countless struggles within and between societies. Some of these “cultural myths” grew into “sacred events” confusing matters to even a greater degree. Sometimes, over the course of time, we get very confused on who was real or not. Was there a “real” Romulus, Hercules, Achilles, or even Moses, Jesus, or Paul (or American icons such as Francis Marion, Pretty Boy Floyd, or say ... Zorro)?



- There was recently yet another movie remake of the story of the Battle of the Alamo, which was actually far more accurate than the famous John Wayne version. The movie however “bombed” at the box office, as people did not want to see a Davy Crockett who appeared to be bordering on cowardice and who only acted brave to meet the expectations of others. This was most likely what the real Davy was like, but definitely not the cultural image of the man. The cultural image trumped reality again, and the movie failed.

We need to ask why we currently “believe” in one (or more) of these “cultural myths” and not another? What criteria do we use to justify the acceptance of one of these heroes as “fact” and reject another as “story”, even though there is an equal level of information to prove them both, or, perhaps better said, there is an equal amount of lack of information to actually, one way or the other, not prove them. Are these not issues of the archetype of Jung, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl\\_Jung](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Jung) or the concepts presented by Joseph Campbell [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph\\_Campbell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Campbell) ? Perhaps so, and, therefore too much work to consider all of that here. However, all these confront me in my “in the beginning” to write this work. How do you write in a serious fashion, while going against “beliefs” and “facts” of the current time, and still be taken seriously?

In addition, our lack of information is largely based in the deliberate policies of rulers that led to episodes of destruction of cultures and the local “history.” These types of events have been repeated many times throughout history, and are not the exclusive domain of the Greeks or Romans. These actions of invaders, and the remaking of their world in their image, are one of the key reasons we know so little about the past. Conquering powers destroy much of what was in place when they arrive.

- One prime example of this is that Spanish conquest of the Aztecs, Mayas and Incas. The extensive written (and oral) histories of these peoples were destroyed, their cities made over to the designs of the Spanish, the religions repressed by force, and the peoples enslaved. Of all the written histories of the Mayas (codices) only four escaped destruction and eventually were translated. The few that remain gives us only a glimpse of the greatness of the Maya scientific thinking and their understanding of “time” and the movement of the stars. The Maya, in fact, developed a calendar that is second to none in accuracy. In addition, the few texts that remain show an extensive history of politics and kings. At least these few texts of the Maya remained, despite the effort to destroy them.
- This story of destruction in the Americas (mainly for religious issues) only tangentially connects to the main story line here. So while I’ll return to it later it will only be briefly. For more details on this please see ... [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya\\_script](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_script) and <http://redalyc.uaemex.mx/redalyc/pdf/146/14601901.pdf> -

The Nazi book burnings were also nothing new in world history. We see a prime example of the destruction of “unwanted knowledge” in the obliteration of anything considered heretical by the Catholic Church once it had obtained power in the Roman world. This intolerance inspired frenzied “Christian mobs” to attack the centers of learning of the Classical world (as recently portrayed in the movie *Agora*). For a clear history of this effort please see “*The Closing of the Western Mind*.”

- Only in very recent times have we begun to gain more insight into the diversity of the early Christian churches with the discovery of ancient texts (Dead Sea Scrolls, and others). In addition, several other “gospels” which the Orthodox (both Eastern and what is later the Roman Catholic Orthodox Church) tried to destroy in their entirety.

In reality, these policies of destruction both old and new shape our understanding of history and religion. Our fragmentary overview is based on these policies of repression, since the knowledge of the “Ancients” was lost in the West for almost 1000 years, and only partially recovered today.

We’re all familiar with the concept of the “Renaissance” or how the knowledge of the Ancients, and Classical world re-entered the Western world through contact with the Islamic world, where it had been preserved in both its Greek and Roman original texts, as well as in Arabic translations. However, this “simple” history of revival is mostly not true, and how much we actually got back through the Arabs is greatly over-estimated (when compared to what had been lost forever).

Truthfully, so much was lost and, in fact, can never be recovered. Imagine if we had only four complete plays by Shakespeare, and had only heard of someone named Samuel Johnson or that there was a once a woman writer named Jane Austen. Imagine again, if the works of all other writers for an approximate three hundred year period (from Shakespeare to Austen) were simply gone. That is close to what we have left from the writers of the “classical period” (never mind the lost literature of the Ancients). We have precious few of the plays written over four to five hundred years and which were performed every “season” in Athens or Rome. What we have left are of course, treasured. However, they reflect just a fraction of the acts and opinions of the time.

The rest of the plays were destroyed or simply disappeared. Whether this is all due to the Christians, or perhaps just based on the loss of literacy and the fashion of going to the theater, we can’t be sure. The plays, the science and the medicine, and so much more were all lost and never can be regained. So in actuality, the Arabs preserved very little, not because they did not want to, but because so much was completely destroyed before the coming of the Arab rule.

We generally know of the “Library of Alexandria” where the knowledge of the “Ancients” was collected. We generally do not know that all major cities and towns throughout the Ancient Western World (including communities all the way through India) had libraries and schools and centers where knowledge was openly discussed and debated. The libraries and the debating of ideas were a

major element of Hellenistic culture (and a major source of popular entertainment).

- In the city of Ephesus, in modern Turkey, you can still see the ruins of the library in the core of the ancient city. Clearly written in Latin is an inscription stating that the building was a donation from Julius Caesar.

We also generally know that the Library of Alexandria (Egypt) was burned. There are four major stories on how it was destroyed. The first is that it was an accident and occurred while Caesar was under siege (roughly 47 BC); the second is that Emperor Aurelian sacked the building while suppressing revolts during 270's, another is that the Christians destroyed it during riots in the 391 AD, when they went on rampages trying to destroy anything associated with the old Classical religions; and the fourth is that it was destroyed in the 642 AD by the Arabs who supposedly destroyed all writings other than the Koran. Some say all four events actually happened and the library suffered repeated losses. Others argue that there is only independent confirmation for the Christian attacks in 391, and that it is the most likely source for the major destruction of the classical texts. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Library\\_of\\_Alexandria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Library_of_Alexandria)

However, the repressions of libraries and schools took place everywhere throughout the Roman (and Byzantines) Empire based on the demands of the new power, the Christian Church. The classical world was repressed. The Olympic Games were ended by Imperial Edict, after some 1,200 years of continual uninterrupted events, and that's a long time. After some 900 years of continual discussion and training, the schools of philosophy in Athens (and elsewhere) ended. Then under the later Emperors and the Eastern Empire, the practicing of traditional religious rites became a capital offense.

I have friends, historians who argue that many of the leading church members of the period still loved to read the "classical literature" and made great references to them in some writings, and he argues that there was no great general church repression of the classical world - no organized book burning, per say. However, people and writers I know give different views, believing that there was a strong effort to repress the Classical world. I feel that both views are true. There were some in the Church who maintained a fondness for the past and the writing of the classics, but the main effort of the Church was to present their world, based on the Bible, to the mass of people. (Am I being corrupted in my view by the movie/book "*The Name of the Rose*"?)

However, it seems to be mostly true and mostly agreed to by historians that with the victory of Christianity, all kinds of searching for understanding of the world, of math, science and the "spirit" ended in Europe. A firm belief in the "facts" of the Bible was the only world view allowed, despite some remaining fascination with the writing of the Ancients.

- The loss to human understanding, and history (as well as art, literature, science, medicine, etc) is incomprehensible. It's as if the Taliban ruled the whole world, for hundreds of years and that they did to the West what they did to Afghanistan. This is the closest analogy in the modern world there is

to the coming to power of the Christians in the Roman Empire. (The Nazis and Communists, with all their repression did at least, unlike the Christians, promote scientific research and achievement)

Once in power, starting about 400 AD, under the mandates of the new Universal Church and the new Christian Emperors, all knowledge and world views that were counter to the “Bible” were considered a capital offense. In that later Roman world, and into what became known as the “dark ages,” the pursuit of knowledge, other than efforts to better understand the “Bible,” also became a capital offense.

To be fair, this type of destruction of knowledge is not the domain of the West alone. One of the key examples of this effort to control the present by destroying the knowledge of the past is the “noted” first emperor of China, (most famous for his grave site in Xian with its thousands of clay warriors, and recently, made more recognizable to modern peoples as a character in the new Chinese movie epic “*Hero*”) whose philosophical concept of governance was called “Legalism” (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legalism\\_\(philosophy\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legalism_(philosophy))). Once he obtained complete dominance over the “Warring States” of China, he ordered the burning of all rival schools of thought, notably Confucian and Taoist texts.

To ensure stability, he (the “first emperor”) outlawed [Confucianism](#) and buried many of its scholars alive, banning the possession of (and burning) all books other than those he decreed (See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First\\_Qin\\_Emperor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Qin_Emperor) )

Later again in Chinese history with the T’ang Dynasty’s effort to repress Buddhism similar repressions occurred.

- In 845 the emperor Wu-tsung began a major persecution. According to records, 4,600 Buddhist temples and 40,000 shrines were destroyed, and 260,500 monks and nuns were forced to return to lay life.  
<http://online.sfsu.edu/~rone/Buddhism/Buddhism%20in%20China.htm>

We in the United States have been mostly free of this type of oppression (thanks to the First Amendment and dare I say it ... The ACLU), with the noted exception of the treatment of African Americans during slavery and “Jim Crow.” However, we too have experience times when “thought” was deemed “illegal” and persons repressed and even imprisoned for their ideas. In more recent times, the most noted examples of these repressions are:

- the Syndicalism Movement,
  - *Syndicalisme* is a [French](#) word meaning “[trade unionism](#)”. This milder version of syndicalism was overshadowed by revolutionary [anarcho-syndicalism](#) in the early [20th century](#), which was most powerful in [Spain](#), but also appeared in other parts of the world, as in the U.S.-centered [Industrial Workers of the World](#). The federal and state governments repressed the efforts of the IWW or Wobblies, first for the efforts to organize labor into “One Big Union” and later for the opposition to World War I. Hundreds were jailed

- and scores killed in raids. Some (such as Joe Hill) were executed after “trials”. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syndicalism>
- The Resistance Movement to World War I
    - See “Sedition Act” , A section of the Act allowed the [Postmaster General](#) to declare all letters, circulars, newspapers, pamphlets, and other materials that violated the Act to be unmailable. As a result, about 75 newspapers either lost their mailing privileges or were pressured to print nothing more about World War I between June 1917 and May 1918 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Espionage\\_Act\\_of\\_1917](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Espionage_Act_of_1917) and that 6,000 went to prison during the war based on this act .. see [http://www.socialstudieshelp.com/Lesson\\_73\\_Notes.htm](http://www.socialstudieshelp.com/Lesson_73_Notes.htm)
  - and the Black Lists developed during the McCarthy era
    - In the [film industry](#), over 300 actors, authors and directors were denied work in the U.S. through the unofficial [Hollywood blacklist](#). Blacklists were at work throughout the entertainment industry, in universities and schools at all levels, in the legal profession, and in many other fields.
    - A port security program initiated by the Coast Guard shortly after the start of the [Korean War](#) required a review of every maritime worker who loaded or worked aboard any American ship, regardless of cargo or destination. As with other loyalty-security reviews of McCarthyism, the identities of any accusers and even the nature of any accusations were typically kept secret from the accused. Nearly 3,000 seamen and longshoremen lost their jobs due to this program alone. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McCarthyism>

All things considered though, the US has come out of a century of massive repression (in Nazi Germany, Franco's Spain, Fascist Italy, Stalinist Russia (never mind Czarist Russia) and Maoist China, just to name a few) relatively with just a few bumps and bruises compared to most of the rest of the world. However, with the rise of the Fundamentalist Christian movement in the US, we face new threats to freedom of thought.

- Again, the general history of repression of thought can be (and in fact is) the focus of many books, and I can not go into much more detail here, but just to say again, we know so little about the past due to the direct policy of rulers to repress “non-conformist” thinking, regardless if that thinking had been the “norm” for centuries or not.

For the purpose of this work, we need to think of the destruction of the knowledge of the Ancients and of the Classicalists, as a key stumbling block to our understanding of the past and our ability to understand the meaning of Ancient and Classical peoples in their own words; who ever destroyed the material matters relatively little now. The fact is that it has been destroyed.

However, we need to look at who is attempting to repress knowledge of the Ancients, and Classicalists today. It still appears that the Christian churches, continue to attempt to stranglehold culture in order to maintain themselves in power, by fighting against massive distribution and explanation of what Ancient and Classical texts we are able to find. So often these texts show major contradiction to the world view of these Christian churches.

Fortunately, with the freedoms of speech and the press, cable TV and the internet, it appears that the Church is fighting a relatively losing battle. With the knowledge available to us today we can really have a “religious free” history. However, history has not been kind to “truth and knowledge.”

## Introductory Essay 6

### Comment on Religious Impact on Our Views of Historical Characters - or the Battle of the Super Heroes

As an example of this problem of cultural myths and history, and our current views on them, let's take a look at how we view two "culture heroes" of two different cultures; the famous "Greek" from the Iliad, Achilles, and the famous "Jew" from the Bible, King David. (Both "Greek" and "Jew" are terms neither one of them, if they were real at all, would have associated with themselves.)

- These two heroes were relative contemporaries, from the late Bronze Age. The exploits of Achilles are thought to have occurred somewhere around 1100 -1200 BC and David's story dates to about 1000 BC. So there is a relative common time frame involved.
- Both heroes have great and powerful stories written about them in "ancient" literature that have somehow avoided destruction and made it though all the ages to us.
- Both heroes were recognized by their respective cultures for centuries as idealized, but flawed, leaders.
- Both were studied by the leaders of their peoples, as well as by the "masses" of their cultures, to help to define "right actions," or proper conduct. Their tales generally helped shape the "ethos" of multiple generations of Greeks (and those emulating Greeks) and Jews (and later Christians), respectively.

However, the Iliad was vastly more popular for the first 1200 years of its "shelf life" from about 800 BC to 400 AD, give or take a few hundred years. When Homer lived (if at all) is, again, open to debate. However, it is generally agreed by most current historians that the epic poem on the Trojan War first appeared among the Greeks in its current form, about 750 BC or so. It also appears that the oral tradition of Achilles was much older.

Who wrote the Bible, and when it was written, is also a subject of modern controversies, but it also appears that the stories of David were well known among the "Jewish" tribes and in the two "Jewish" kingdoms. They developed into some written form by about 750 BC. Again, the oral traditions of David go back a bit more. As noted, the Achilles story is two or three hundred years older than the "David stories." That said, the two heroes are still in the same relative time frame, and as such can be considered as "cultural hero rivals".

However, in the first 1200 years or so of their "cultural myth rivalry," Achilles had by far the better "press." Achilles was "universally" known, first in the Greek world, and then, later throughout the Roman/Greek world. The Iliad went with Greek culture (Hellenism) where ever it spread. In many ways, the Iliad was used in the spread of Hellenism in the same way as the Bible was used to spread Christianity. Of course the literature of Hellenism was, by no means, limited to one book. At the time of Caesar, the Iliad was read and studied, and Achilles

held up as either the “ideal,” or as the great Anti-Hero. The Romans tended to favor Hector and the Trojans, since one of the foundation stories of Rome was that it was started by the Trojan survivors of the war. This popular interpretation had it that these hearty Trojans spread out all over the known world from the British Isles, to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Reading and studying the life of Achilles, and his life choices, was “mandatory” for any “cultured” person of the time. At first the popularity of the Achilles story was mostly limited to the Greeks , but after Alexander, in 325 BC or so, Achilles was made “universal.”.

For most of these 1200 years of Achilles dominance, David was more of a “backwater” hero, mostly known and admired in the relatively narrow “world” of the “Jews” (again, loosely using that term). Remember that this time period was, for the most part, one of Jewish defeat, exile and rule by rival cultures. Even within the Jewish community, David’s role was not always considered as a highly valued, or exalted person. In the Jewish writing he is portrayed as a flawed person, the seducer of women, the killer of his own son (perhaps even a killer of more than one son). He was portrayed as a flawed man, who had committed so many evil acts that he was denied the right to build the house of the Lord.. He was so evil that at times God condemned him to death (only to have his infant son die in his place – far more on this event later.) .

As Judaism evolved, especially during and after the Babylonian Exile, the toleration of other religions, such as Ba’alim, was seen as grievous error that eventually caused the destruction of the Jewish kingdoms. However, in the stories about David we see that he was clearly tolerant. Therefore, David’s flaws, among Jews of this time, appear to greatly outweigh his good deeds. So even among the Jews, he was not always given the status of what Achilles was given within the Greek world.

The status of both David and Achilles, however, changed greatly with the rise of Christianity and the subsequent repression of Greek (Hellenistic or “classical”) culture by the new power elite (the Christian Church). Starting roughly about 350 AD, the writings of Homer, as well as almost all other “classical” writers were not only repressed, but soon, by 400 AD, the study of these classical writings was limited to only some of the elite Christian church members. As noted, once in power, the new Christian elite did all they could “to eliminate the competition” of their newly won power, and the Church tried to destroy the vestiges of the “Classical world.” As noted; The “Christian Emperors”, in support of their new “universal religion” closed the schools of philosophy throughout the Roman world, and even ended the (1200 year old) Olympic Games.

- The rise of Christianity was the rise of the “dark ages” in the area of thought and also the “fall of Achilles” from his 1200 year reign as the “cultural ideal.”
- The Christians also had a son of god as their hero, and needed to repress this Greek son of a god.

Since within this new Christian world, the Old Testament was among the few pieces of literature allowed to be read (or disseminated to the illiterate by priests),



the rise of Christianity led also to the elevation of King David to a new, “super hero” status for all under the rule of the Christians.

In the arena of an “action hero”, for this new world of repressed literature, David had almost no competitors, being the “top king” in the only book allowed to relay history. And, since the Muslims used the Old Testament as a foundation for their religion, David became a “cultural hero” in the Muslim world as well.

While David did have some local rivals (King Arthur, or Roland, for example) he was the only “universal” hero in the lands where the Bible (and the Koran) dominated the world view. So for the next 1000 years or so, while the stories of Achilles could not be completely repressed, David became the dominant, officially sanctioned “super hero.”

What a sad world it would have been for DC Comics, and the lovers of DC comics, if Batman was the only super hero around. In some ways this is exactly what happened for David. He was the only “action hero” around, and for young men wanting an action hero, he was the only option that could be read and talked about (without threat of death). His kingdom and its importance became overstated (and that’s an understatement), by the readers of the time. In this respect the kingdom of David is very much like the kingdom of Arthur.

Therefore, for most of the next 1000 years (say 500 to 1500 AD or so,) David far out did Achilles, in their “cultural hero” rivalry.

- The Church demanded belief in the Bible as “literal fact.” Therefore, not “believing” in King David, and the “history of his time” as presented in the Bible, was a “sin” and, actually, for most of the 1000 years (and more), a sin punishable by at least ostracism, “spiritual damnation”, and often, torture and death.

The “Renaissance” and “the Age of Reason” brought Achilles back as a competitor for “number one” cultural icon. Even with these revivals of the studies of classical literature the reading of the Iliad and other writings was only “allowed” by the Church as the study of “myths” and ancient stories. They were never to be considered as actual “history.” The Church resisted anything that questioned the Bible and the Iliad showed a different world than that of the Davidic kingdoms.

- Therefore, as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD, few in the West could question if David was real or not, without dire threat to themselves and their families. The concept of the “historic David” was therefore incorporated as “history” in the West, because it was in the Bible, and the Bible could not be questioned.

Even today, most of the history books used in the schools of these Christian/Muslim areas (and due to the expansion of the Western world through colonialism, modern technology and religious apostatizing), David is presented as an actual historical “being,” while Achilles, if anything, is considered a good story, but a mythical character.

History as taught in the West talks extensively about the kingdoms of David, and Solomon. Modern atlases that show the ancient world, almost always include maps of the Davidic Kingdom based on what is stated in the Bible. Fundamentalist Christians and Jews who support the “Greater Israel” concept base their justification in the Biblical descriptions of the extent of the Davidic kingdom (from the “Euphrates to the Nile”)

Achilles, while revived from the obscurity he “suffered” during the “dark ages,” for most of these 5-700 years (the Renaissance to the present) was relegated to “myth,” if discussed at all. The Iliad was read in literature or “mythology” courses, if read at all.

However, the tale takes a strange twist, as European Imperialism developed. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Achilles stories were read extensively to the “modern young men”, of the middle and upper classes Europe to prepare them for their lives as soldiers. However, he was still seen as a quaint and curious character of the past, by the culture of the time (His story of being the son of a God was stressed as myth, while Jesus being the son of God could still not be questioned). One of these children of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Heinrich Schliemann, did grow into adulthood, believing in these stories to be truth, and eventually his efforts led to the finding of Troy. (See <http://library.thinkquest.org/3011/troy.htm> )

Because of this “enthusiastic amateur” what we know now is that there is actually far more archeological and “contemporary other source documents” to support the existence of Achilles, than David.

- Other than the Bible there is no documented source or major archeological evidence to support the contention that there was a King David, and there is extensive documentation of other cultures of the time that make no mention of a great Jewish Kingdom around 1000 BC.

For facts supporting the existence of Achilles, we have Troy itself, with strong evidence to support the historical event of the sacking of the city in the relative time frame of Homer’s epic poem. We also have found the Mycenaean cities throughout Greece, and have strong evidence of their “wars of expansion”. We have extensive articles of art and weapons from the period, which fill museums around the world, showing that much of what was discussed in the Iliad, in Homer’s stories (type of weapons, type of combat, valued objects, religion etc) is clearly supported by material found through archeological efforts. Also, tombs of the time discovered reflect the culture presented in the stories. While the supposed “death mask” of King Agamemnon and “Clytemnestra’s tomb” are real and are dated to the relative time period of Achilles, we can not really prove that these factual findings are connected to the “historic” people that the tourist industry would like us to believe. However, the Lion’s Gate at Mycenae, and the tombs and the mask exist.

We also have extensive records from other cultures, including the Hittites, of their relationships with Troy, and we have these other cultures’ chronicles which record worry about the Mycenaean Greeks, and their warlike intentions. It is still not completely clear, but it is strongly possible that the famous “Sea People”

which almost took Egypt were in fact part of a renegade Mycenaean Greek group. It is also possible that the Mycenaean Greeks were destroyed by the “Sea People,” as well. [http://www.phoenician.org/sea\\_peoples.htm](http://www.phoenician.org/sea_peoples.htm)

While there is no direct evidence that there was an Achilles, such as a tomb with his name, etc, there is extensive evidence that the events that are written about may have occurred in a very similar fashion to what is represented in the writings. Clearly something happened there, at Troy, during the time period. So while we can not really say Achilles existed, or in fact the Trojan War, as represented in the Iliad, took place, there is enough evidence to say, well, “maybe, and even “possibly.” Considering the evidence, the Achilles character, or someone like him could have existed (stripped of all the legends – half god, protected from harm, except in the heel, etc.). The evidence shows the story fits the times, and the times fit the story, from multiple sources.

- However, we have none of this type of evidence in support of David.

There are no independent sources to show that David was the king of a united Israel, never mind a mighty king ruling over a relatively vast empire from the Nile to the Euphrates. There is no evidence in the well kept and organized Egyptian chronicles to support this Biblical claim. There is nothing in the remains of the Babylonian, Assyrian or Phoenician writings about David or a mighty Jewish kingdom in the time frame presented in the Bible. Herodotus, who wrote in great detail about everything, never mentions David, never mind the Jews (which is interesting in itself).

Perhaps most damning of all, there is simply no archeological evidence at all to support either a mighty kingdom, in the time period, or a great temple built by his famous son, Solomon. There are no stone writings with his name or warning of the coming of the Great Jewish kingdom's army, nor actually artifacts of any kind dated back to the Davidic Kingdom. We do have one find, dated three hundred years after David, in which a king claims to be from the House of David, but that may only mean that David was a cultural icon, not a real king. Again, this is similar to the Kings of England claiming descent from King Arthur.

The artifacts from that time period of about 1000 BC actually show “the holy land” to be a relatively disorganized land dominated by peoples and cultures other than the Jews (or Hebrews or Israelites, as a more proper term for the time). The evidence clearly shows that the “David” portrayed in the Bible did not exist. To put it more generously, the David story cannot, at this time, be proven. There seems to be agreement among serious, “disinterested” historians that if David existed at all, he was a minor leader of a minor group, perhaps even a group of outlaws; a Robin Hood (maybe) rather than a King Richard.

This expansion of the “rule” of the culture hero is nothing new. The Arthur stories start him off as the king of a small Celtic land in Britain. Remember the name England is derived from the Angles invaders who along with the Saxons and Jutes came much later than Arthur. These invaders actually defeat Arthur's “descendants.” It is only in this later time period that the medieval legends of King Arthur ruling over all of Europe grow. So, it appears that the land under the

rule of David expanded as his myth grew. Nothing really new here, except since it was in the Bible, for centuries it was deemed true, and unchallengeable.

Despite the extensive findings in Greece, and the non-findings in Israel, David remains in the minds of most Americans as a real and important person in history, the best king of a united Israel, the killer of Goliath. With all that we know, cultural myths still determine popular belief.

With our limited understanding of time, we can see how fifteen hundred years of “culture myth” is hard to undo. Contemporary Christianity (and Judaism and Islam) is trying to maintain beliefs in an increasingly secular world, where research and evidentiary procedures are trumping many of the foundations of the various creeds. So the demystification of David has not gotten a lot of “air time.” The belief that David was a real historical leader as portrayed in the Bible is still the belief of most people, at least in America. So, myth triumphs over facts again, and cultural heroes are hard to dethrone. When people really think that myths are facts its makes writing about facts of the past so very difficult.



**From the Museum of Antiquities in Ankara showing just a very few items that support the existence of the Ancient cultures mentioned in the Iliad and far older, while none have been found to support the kingdom of David (personal photographs)**

## Introductory Essay 7

### Comment on How the Religion of Culture Heroes Affect History

The David/Achilles comparison is just one example of countless numbers of folk myths that confuse our understanding of world history. Religion since it is often interwoven with myth adds to this confusion. The religious cultures in the “New World” prior to the arrival of the Europeans raise interesting questions which we will not be able to explore in depth. How did these cultures arise? Why are there so many similarities to the cultures of the West, with some wild variations, of some “Western themes?” Was there “Pre Columbian Contact,” and if so by whom, and how often? The reason I raise the issue of Pre-Columbian Contact, which as I noted is a very interesting area of research that I spent ten years exploring, is because this is an area of research that is now in direct conflict between “scientific research” and its findings, and the beliefs of one of the fastest growing religions in the world, Mormonism, or the Church of the Latter Day Saints.

Among the fundamental beliefs of the Mormons is that a major part of the populations of the New World, when “discovered” by Columbus, were the descendants of “Jews” fleeing the “promised land” under the Prophet Lehi around 600 BC, and finding refuge in the near empty “Americas.” There they developed cities and civilizations (and half the people turned into Indians, and went “savage.”) So, the cities that were “discovered” by the Spanish when they arrived in the early 16<sup>th</sup> Century were the products of the “Whites.” According to the Mormon faith, the eventual destroyers of the “city” cultures, some 1200 years into the story, or about 600 AD, were those brown “Indians.”

Oh yes, according to the Mormons, Jesus stopped off in the New World, after the crucifixion and before his ascent into to Heaven, to give the “good news” to these children of Israel too. In addition, as noted

- The Book of Mormon states that there were pre-Columbian peoples that were white, literate, had knowledge of Old World languages, and possessed Old World derived writing systems. (E.g. [1 Nephi 13:23](#) et. seq.) They smelted [metal](#) and made [tools](#) and [weapons](#) of [iron](#), [steel](#), and [brass](#). (E.g. [Ether 7:9](#), [10:23](#)) They owned domesticated [horses](#) and [cattle](#). They possessed [chariots](#). (E.g. [Alma 18:9-12](#)) The people covered the “entire land.”  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archaeology\\_and\\_the\\_Book\\_of\\_Mormon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archaeology_and_the_Book_of_Mormon)
- Several groups of Mormon scholars and apologists, including the [Foundation for Apologetic Information & Research](#) (FAIR) and the [Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies](#) (FARMS), have proposed that the city [Zarahemla](#) is located somewhere within Central America because of the description given in [Alma 22:27](#) as a narrow neck of land bordering the sea on both the west and on the east. This approach, often referred to as the “[Limited Geography Model](#),” argues for a more limited view of the *Book of Mormon*, suggesting that the book is a

history of only a small group of Native Americans in Central America.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_of\\_Mormon#Another\\_Testament\\_of\\_Christ](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Mormon#Another_Testament_of_Christ)

Yet all of the claims of the Mormons are not supported by modern day archeology. This is not to say, in keeping with my general premise that it will not some day be supported, but so far it does not. So, again we have strong beliefs in a religion, where the findings of science and research contradict the beliefs. This Mormon view continues to cause problems in the research of the “New World” since there are now Mormon “experts” who are interpreting findings to support their religion. Meanwhile “science” indicates that the Native American cultures of the New World arose independently with a history dating back much further.

- Our current culture is filled with these conflicts between religion and science. At the heart of these conflicts is the incompatibility between Darwinism (what a term!) or actually, the theory of evolution versus what is now being called “intelligent design” which is basically “creationism” (Scopes still lives).

I can not go into details on these conflicts here. I simply need to move forward (or actually backward) with the understanding that we really do not know much about the past. We tend to base our understanding of the past on contemporary values and prisms, and on our few books from the Ancients that have survived. We just need to remember that much of what we “know” is based not on facts, but on “cultural myths” presented as facts by the “powers that be.”

We have come a long way in just getting away from the concept that the world was created some 6000 years ago (give or take a few years, in spite of various fundamentalists that still cling to this belief.

- The idea that we can now “safely” talk about life some 50,000 years ago is a major break through in itself, and is only something that has happened in the very short time span of some 250 years or so.

As has been so well documented, these persons, these fundamentalists have focused on infiltrating school boards across the country in an attempt to control what can or can not be taught in schools (and their focus is not just issue of “evolution.”)

In the face of all our knowledge of the world, these true believers are still given credence in society. In the face of all evidence, they reject any contradiction or error in the Bible

- **Biblical inerrancy** is the doctrinal position that in its original form, the [Bible](#) is totally without error, and free from all contradiction; “referring to the complete accuracy of Scripture, including the historical and scientific parts”. Inerrancy is distinguished from [Biblical infallibility](#) (or limited inerrancy), which holds that the Bible is inerrant on issues of faith and

practice but not history or science.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical\\_inerrancy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_inerrancy)

Due to the politics of the day, and the ability of these persons who are “true believers” to assert great influence, it is perhaps more difficult to gain a fair hearing for the subject that I write about than in the last one hundred years.

So there are many barriers to writing effectively about this religion-history issue. At a minimum we need to look at 12000 years of history in the area we now call the “Near East” Unlike the history of the United States, the area we need to look at has been conquered, and actually destroyed, many times. The records of these areas are far from complete. In fact, we have almost nothing from the past, compared to what was created.

In addition, the very language we use to describe the past is clouded by the terms of the “winners” For one simple example, the term “pagan” literally, when first used to describe non-Christians, meant “a rural person”, in the derogatory sense ... like a “country bumpkin.” It was meant to promote the Christians as the urban intellectual and the non-Christians as just too dumb to understand the “truth.” Yet it was the Christians who were, for the most part, originally living in the country (Jesus was from the country side, and his followers were fisherman), and it was the classical religions that dominated the cities even late into the end days of the Roman Empire. It was also the Christians who were the anti-intellectuals who worked to close schools of thought and were destroying works of science.

“Spin” is nothing new. Since the “pagans” were incapable of understanding the “divine truth” of Christianity, they were considered to be incapable of reason as well. So no matter how learned in science or medicine or any other skill, if a Roman could not accept the divinity of Jesus as “fact,” he was stupid (a pagan).

- This Christian “logic” was successfully mocked in the first film version of the *“Planet of the Apes”* where the human, Charlton Heston was deemed as ignorant and incapable of thought because he could not quote some of the Ape’s sacred writings.

In reading what remains of the texts of the Ancients and the Classical writers, it is often hard to tell what is a “fact,” and what is “spin.” For example, there is just one, and only one reference, in one and only one work, that declares that Nero blamed the Christians for the fire that destroyed most of Rome in 64 AD. In Tacitus “Annals” it says:

Consequently, to get rid of the report (of blame on him), Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. ... Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tacitus>

Out of this one reference, written in 117 AD, or some fifty years after the event, and during a time when Christians were being singled out for some persecutions comes our historic image of the Christians being “thrown to the lions” based on the fire in Rome. However, none of the contemporaries of Tacitus or historians at the time of the event who wrote about the fire mention this “fact,” that the Christians were blamed; while most do tend to blame Nero for the fire.

The accusation against that Nero used the Christians as the scapegoat is unsupported by facts, and not corroborated by other evidence (or even logic). Despite the lack of support, this one reference has been used by the Christians as “fact” and presented as a truth for many reasons.

- The “fact” that Nero persecuted them, proves that Christians existed in Rome at the time, (which is mainly not supported by other “facts” or other the writings in the Bible)” Based on what we know it is a stretch to assume that the Christians in Rome were important enough to be recognized in any way. The folk history derived from Tacitus suggests that there were throngs of Christians in Rome which is also unsupported by any documents other than the Bible.

The idea that in just one generation after the crucifixion there were “multitudes of Christians” in Rome, was given as “proof” by the Church of the success of people like Paul and Peter. This is good propaganda, used in the next few hundred years, for a group struggling to get recognized and to be seen as important. Actual evidence indicates that if there was a “time of Martyrs” as portrayed by the Church, it was not during the time of the fire, but some 150 years later (early third century). It appears that the early Church itself did not put much credence into the Nero “persecutions”.

However, over time, this one statement in Tacitus has been multiplied so many fold as to become undisputed “truth.” Such is how our concept of history is made. In fact, the whole story of how we see the event is out of whack with history, and provable facts.

- We see or have heard endlessly that “Nero fiddled while Rome burned,” and we accept this image, despite the fact that the “fiddle” was invented 1000 years later.

We can prove that whole image and even the story of Nero blaming the Christians to be false. However, the countless movies, pictures, and stories about Christian persecutions under Nero, and “great multitudes” of Christians being burned, and eaten by lions, all these images present the “popular” knowledge of the time. It matters little that the whole story appears to be false. It is one of the few mental pictures of the past world that most Americans may have in common (cultural myths).

How do we know the story is false? For one thing, at the time of the fire, we can clearly show that there were no “great multitudes” of Christians in Rome (if there were in fact “great multitudes” of Christians anywhere). There is little evidence



that Christians were even called that term in 64 AD. In fact, Tacitus use of the term is the first writings in which the followers of Christ were referred to as “Christians.” <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian>.

Also, when considering the politics of the time, it would have made more sense for Nero to blame the Jews since the Jews were always agitating against Roman rule,. The Great Revolt was just starting in Judea, and the Jews were the leading voices against Nero’s effort to be considered “a living God.” Furthermore, the Jewish may have in fact comprised 10% or more of the whole Empire’s population with surely far greater numbers of Jews in Rome than Christians who in 64 AD could not have had anywhere near those numbers. In some ways, it could be compared to the United States blaming an off shoot of the whirling dervishes for 911, rather than the leadership of militant fundamentalist Islamic movements. There is a connection between the whirling dervishes (who are not into “earthly politics,” so to speak) and the Islamists, but the dervishes offered no threat to the State. As in the time, if the Christian movement was seen as part of the Jewish resistance, it definitely was not involved in “earthly” politics, as were the active Jewish fighters.

But the *Annals* were written nearly fifty years after the crushing of the Jewish Revolt (and at a time of decreased importance of Jews in Roman politics). At the time of Nero Christians were, if anything, little more than a nuisance, however they were beginning to make their presence felt during the time of Tacitus. Therefore, Tacitus appears to be spinning an anti-Christian vent, rather than an anti-Jewish vent, at the actual time of the writing of his Christian Fire story. We can see similar examples of this tactic throughout history. For example, in modern times Hitler blamed the Jews for Germany losing World War I. Blaming them for events in the past gave him the justification to attack them in his present time.

In looking at this statement by Tacitus, the options we are left with include:

- He actually was portraying the events as happened ... Nero blamed the Christians
- He changed the history to meet the issues of his time (blaming the Christians for past issues when the Christians were becoming a problem)
- The statement was an insertion of a later time (as many histories were altered to meet the needs of their current times (Stalinization of history?)
  - The writings of Flavius Josephus were altered in the late 5<sup>th</sup> Century, in an effort to give validation to “the human Christ” since no history written in the time period of Jesus mentioned him at all.

Of the three options, the latter two are the most likely. However, based on the one and one only statement, (which got repeated and repeated in the writings of future generations) Nero's persecution of the Christians has been accepted and actually was taught to generations after generations as “fact”. Joseph Goebbels was not the first to understand the concept of making “truth” out of the constant repetition of a lie.

Our “history” and our understanding of “history” is often based on culture myths and this myth of Christians and Nero is a major center piece associated with the rise of the Christians. With all the “myths” of history accepted as “facts”, this effort of mine, to write about a potential origin of Christian rituals and religious dogma is no easy task. Little is really known or remembered, and what was the “spin” of the time is now “dogma.” Therefore trying to sort out the origins of the past comes right up against cultural “norms” and beliefs (cultural myths) of the present.

- Even what we think we know about history, it turns out is most likely not true.

If we, me as the writer, and you as the reader, are really operating with different understandings of history and terms, communication between us is very difficult. One of my favorite episodes of the TV show, *Star Trek - The Next Generation* had the crew of the Enterprise meeting a race of beings with equal or better technology than the Federation. However, despite the advanced technology and the use of the “Universal Translator” what the new “people” were saying when they spoke could not be understood by the crew of the Enterprise ... the words were translated, but the meaning of the sentences were completely beyond the reach of our “heroes.” The problem faced by crew of the Enterprise was that the “terms” used in the language of the new “competitors” were entirely based on the folk myths and cultural heroes of their planet.

Since the Enterprise crew had no knowledge of the folk heroes and other myths, they could understand the words spoken, but had no understanding of the meaning of the proper nouns and the events to which they referred, and what these events meant to the “people” of this new culture. In explaining the problem one of the crew said it is “like us saying Juliet on the balcony ... We know what we mean by that, since we know the story of Romeo and Juliet; but without that knowledge we would not understand the reference or the allusion intended.”

This different understanding of terms, or a lack of an understanding of the allusions involved when using a proper term, occurs not just between us as a writer and a reader of these books. We are all faced with much the same problem in trying to read the Bible or any of the books of the Ancients or Classicalists. In hindsight, we naturally use our modern concepts and terms, since we really do not know the culture of the time or the intended use of words (especially since we mainly read it in translations of translations, and in rewrite after rewrite.... etc.).

For example, we can not really know if the reference to Isaac with all the events involved in the story was really “code” of the time concerning a child designated to be sacrificed. Yet, all persons “of the time” of the reading or telling of the story may have known instantly that this was the designated child for sacrifice. In the present we simply do not have the understanding or knowledge. In short, we lack context.

- When reading the story of Abraham and Isaac, with our modern views, we often feel anguish over Abraham's choices. The Ancients, from their point of view may have had no such feelings, seeing the event, the sacrifice of the first born, at that time, as normal and expected. Therefore, we moderns interpret the story in a vastly different manner than the Ancients would have at the time the story was being told.
- We see this as a story of God testing Abraham's devotion, and the non-killing of Isaac as a reward for the devotion; while the Ancients saw this as a story of God and Abraham solidifying the great contract between them (guaranteeing the greatness of Abraham's descendants). Isaac's not being killed (or possible being killed and resurrected), was only an added bonus.
  - Later we will see that many Christians see the death of Jesus as actually completing the act that was required, but not completed, in the non-death of Isaac.

In addition, our understanding of the concept of religions in general is jaded and conflicted by our modern views. For example, why was there such a focus on the "next world" by the Christians? This idea of a "heaven" in the way the Christians were portraying it was relatively new to the Western world. We, in the modern Christian world, have been told for generations that this new view of Heaven (and also the new view of Hell) was new divine knowledge and a new truth revealed, and therefore, fact.

However, in order to understand these new concepts of the Christians (for Heaven and Hell- if truly new ideas from the Christians), we actually need to look, not at the "divine" but at the mundane. We need to look at a long series of political crises that had raked the "Middle East" for centuries, and also at an ensuing set of political crises that overcame Rome, as the Christians obtained power.

- It was during this later period of Roman crisis that Christianity created its "mass" appeal, and its "ideology" of the importance of "hereafter." As Christianity obtained the status of state sanction, statements of absolutist approaches concerning the "rites" needed to obtain eternal reward, finally found an audience ready to consider "other world" solutions for the problems they faced.

In understanding this book, we need to think in terms of the people living at the times of the events, and back away from our modern understandings, which as I have suggested, are mainly based on historical folk myth. We need to ask ourselves why, or what was it about Christianity that was appealing to those who did join at the time. Also for the purpose of this book, we need to ask how this appeal was connected to the Phoenicians, and their religion.

We need to look at not just the key attraction of Christianity, which was its simplicity, but also its offer of life, and "success", not in here and now, but in the

ever after. In many ways the whole concept or cornerstone of the religion could be summed up in one of the statements in the New Testament:

### **John 3:16-18**

For God so loved the world, that he gave **his only Son (ton huion ton monogenee)**, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name **of the only Son of God (tou monogenous tou huio tou theou).**”

This is the quote that the “rainbow hair guy” has been waving into the cameras of sporting events in the US for decades. According to Wikipedia, John 3-16-18 has been called the “Bible in a nutshell” because it is considered a summary of some of the most central doctrines of traditional Christianity”

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_3:16](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_3:16) . While Wikipedia offers more than two dozen translations of the quote, the core element of each of the variations remain the same: The belief in Jesus as the Son of God leads to the salvation. This is simplicity at its best.

However, as with all “mystery religions of the rising god” there is a bit more involved. It is here that we start to see the door opening towards the older religion of the Phoenicians. For John goes on to say,

### **John 4:9-10, 14-15**

“In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent **his only Son (ton huion autou ton monogenee)** into the world, **so that we might live through him.** In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us **and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins...** And we have seen and testify **that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.** Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.”

So it is not just the act of God and his love that leads to salvation, it is the fact that Christ died, and through Christ’s death there is the opening for salvation. We find this allusion again in 1 **Cor. 15:3-7:**

- For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins.

Was this concept of the sacrifice of the son the greater ‘good news’? Or was it a revival of a repressed religion of the area that was, for nearly 1500 years (a long time), the dominant religion of the region.

- Was the Christ story the retelling in different form of the story of Ba’al and, therefore a revival of Baalism? (Or at least a central story of the Phoenician culture?)
- Are there other aspects of Ba’al and Ba’alism in the Christian faith and if so, what are they and how are they manifested?

These questions will be the focus of these books.

To truly answer these questions we need to know a great deal about the rise of religion in general, the origins of the “sky gods” and the competitive nature of religions and cultures in the ancient world.

We also need to know the success or failures of the peoples who worshiped certain gods and how the success or failure of these peoples impacted the “success” of these gods with other peoples.

- It is the general premise of this book that political and economic crises had a tremendous impact on the religion of peoples and that changes in religions, across the millennia, are greatly associated with the response to these crises.

Christianity was distinguished by its views on death and salvation, its response to being condemned, and its focus on “other worldliness.” In order to understand how a religion with these particular characteristics eventually gains success, we need to also understand the “crisis” and multiple crises that led to the development of this world view. We need to attempt to understand these stories from the perspective of the people who wrote or said them, not through the layers of folklore that have been added through the centuries.

Above all, we have to put away preconceived notions of what the Ancient world was like and what the religious nature of this time was about (including what ever time frames we have been led to believe about the growth or status of any religion).

Lastly, to appreciate this effort I am putting forth is the need to put away “belief” in general, for a while. This book is not intended to challenge belief in God, or Gods, or any other aspects of religion that are matters of “faith.” I accept the rights of people to believe in whatever they need to as long as it does not call for harm to be done to others. So, I am simply asking for those who believe in the “word of God” in one book or another, to allow me to make this exploration into what “facts” we have and to at least respect my conclusions. For one reason or another, no one has to agree with my conclusions and I welcome arguments based in “fact” not based solely in what the Bible or some other religious book states to be fact, but facts based on research and multiple sources of evidence.

So this effort may appear foolish, since I am asking a great deal of the modern reader. However, fools rush in .... and the best of my friends will always say I’m foolish in so many ways.

## Introductory Essay 8

### More Comments on Use of Such Terms as Ancient and Classical: A Key to Understanding the Past?

Throughout this work I will use the terms “Ancient world”, and “Classical world.” While these terms have various definitions, I will use these terms to represent “world views,” rather than just time elements. There are clashes of great importance to this story that are really clashes between the Ancient world view and the Classical world view, and later Jewish, Christian and to some lesser degree Muslim world views (not to demean the Muslim world view, it is just that in this time line of this work, the Muslim religion was not developed). Therefore, when I use the term “the Ancient world” I am referring to the world of the Semitic and Egyptian peoples of the Near East. I will also include the Persians in this grouping for political issues, but will present the Persian view of religion as a different element apart from Ancient or Classical.

The Classical world refers to the world view and culture developed by the Greek and Roman concepts of society and religion. (Again, not to ignore the Chinese and Indians of Ancient times, its just that they have relatively little impact on the story line presented) I will also use the term Jewish and Christian world view to designate “concepts, not a meaning a time or place. In addition, as we shall see, much of the land mass North Africa and Southern Europe was actually first “civilized” by representative peoples of the Ancient world, primarily the Phoenicians; therefore we really need to look both at “time and space”, as well as “culture” to understand how the divisions of the Ancient and Classical come about.

There is not a clear dividing line for when the Ancient world ended and the Classical world began, or when the Christian world became dominant, etc. The time period of the Ancient world and the Classical world overlap, so we cannot clearly say this is where the Classical world view begins and the Ancient ends (or if in fact it did end). This discussion will become clearer throughout the course of the writing.

- However, in general, for the Ancient world view, I am talking about the religious, political and philosophical views of peoples from the various cultures of the Near East, as well as the pre-Classical Greeks and other peoples who share the religious beliefs that will be outlined in this book. We can trace these beliefs back, in some form of development, several millennia to roughly 10,000 BC. Of course, these “Ancient” views were not completely stagnant, and changed a great deal over this time. However, these peoples maintained a core belief and “universal” understanding that was distinctive

- With the Classical world view, I am talking about the religious, political and philosophic concepts of the Greek and Roman peoples (and peoples who later shared their beliefs). The Classical world lasted, according to standard history, roughly from 750 BC or so to 450 AD (with some vestiges carrying over into the Byzantine Empire).

The situation is complicated greatly throughout these two books in that I see the “Christian world” as in many ways the continuation of the “Ancient world” view, morphed, and dominating most of the political and cultural events of the West until current times. Therefore, I tend to argue that the “Ancient world” view has never ended, and is well represented in its current form in modern Western religions.

Also, I need to quickly review the differences and similarities between what I am calling here the Ancient world view, and the Classical world view,

Much between them is similar:

- They both saw the world as more or less governed by a number of gods, with various degrees of powers, influences and realms.
- They both strongly believed in the influences of the stars, in so far as astrology was important (and perhaps one of the most ancient of all “sciences.” This point will need to be considered in greater detail as an option for the explanation of religious beliefs and rituals.
- They both believed in evil forces, as well as good forces (although it is not until the Persians, do we see belief in a single evil being).
- They both were mainly strong believers in predestination ... the fate of man was determined and could not be undone.

It is with this point, the fate, or perhaps better stated, the role of man, that the Classical world view and the Ancient world view tended to depart from each other. The key difference of the Ancient view and the Classical view was the role of “man” within society.

- In the Ancient world view, the gods were mainly portrayed as animals or part human and part animal. In the Classical world, the gods were mainly human in shape and form (divine, but human in form).
- In the Ancient world, the priest and the temples were dominant players in the society, often controlling vast amounts of the wealth of the land. On the other hand in the Classical world there were priest and temples, but they were less influential and less wealthy. The “governments instituted among men” were the dominant force in society.
- In the Ancient world, the rulers mainly owned everything (land and people) and people were completely subservient to the state; where in the Classical world, property could be owned by individual citizens and people had relative freedom: Although the Classical world accepted slavery, the role of a “free citizen” was added.

- In the Ancient world, the rulers were kings and often considered divine, and people were responsible to the needs of the state. In the Classical world, at least in the developing periods, the state was often ruled by councils and senates. The Classical world featured a more a republican form of government. Even where there were kings, they were limited in power by these government structures and the state was presumed to represent the will of people (either the masses or an oligarchy). The state was seen as being at least somewhat responsible to the needs of the people. Unlike in the world of the Ancients, in the Classical world, social based revolutions, demanding new rights for the citizens, or adding more people to the citizen roles were at least present, if not somewhat frequent.
- The Ancient world looked to the gods as the cause of all things, and in the Classical world, people were allowed, at least in some limited forms, depending on the time and location, to look for answers, beyond the concepts of religion, to issues based in science, logic and even psychology after a form.

This list is mainly one of great generalities, with obvious examples of contradictions to this simplicity. Alexander the Great saw himself as a divine son of Zeus, and Carthage, a representative of the Ancients, was ruled by a senate, to name a few exceptions to this rule. In part, these contradictions come about due to one of the main themes of this book; how and when cultures merge and morph, and the issue of “absorbing and absorber cultures.”

- The successor rulers of Alexander, themselves, while spreading much of the concepts of the Classical world, became more like the rulers of the Ancient world, going so far as to declare themselves divine which is something Alexander was chastised for doing.

There are two pieces of surviving literature from Ancient and Classical times that show us some of the cultural conflicts between changing and merging cultures.

The first is represented in the “Old Testament, in I Samuel Chapter 8, where the people are demanding the protection of a “king” to better fight off the Philistines. Here we see a people choosing to move towards the “Ancient” view of rule, and away from what is considered “tribal” rule. This tribal form of rule, however, also can be seen as more of a precursor of “Classical view” of rule. (Both the Ancient view and the Classical view, grew out of a “tribal view” of the world.) Here, the Hebrews of the time, were still in a “tribal culture” which is one that is very old and existed prior to the advent of the Ancient world view, as presented here. So, the Hebrews here are asking to join the more “modern – Ancient world”, so to speak, when they ask for the king.).

#### I Samuel Chapter 8

**11** And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots.

**12** And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over



fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.

**13** And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.

**14** And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.

**15** And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.

**16** And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work.

**17** He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.

**18** And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day.

**19** Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us;

**20** That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

The second piece is from Plato's Republic,

<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.2.i.html> where, in Book One, Socrates and others are engaged in a discussion on the origins of issues of political power.

One of the people begins by saying

And the different forms of government make laws democratically, aristocratically, tyrannical, with a view to their several interests; and these laws, which are made by them for their own interests, are the justice which they deliver to their subjects, and him who transgresses them they punish as a breaker of the law, and unjust. And that is what I mean when I say that in all states there is the same principle of justice, which is the interest of the government; and as the government must be supposed to have power, the only reasonable conclusion is, that everywhere there is one principle of justice, which is the interest of the stronger.

Then Socrates begins his traditional approach of questioning:

... tell me, Do you admit that it is just of subjects to obey their rulers?

I do.

But are the rulers of states absolutely infallible, or are they sometimes liable to err?

To be sure, he replied, they are liable to err.

Then in making their laws they may sometimes make them rightly, and sometimes not?

True.

When they make them rightly, they make them agreeably to their interest; when they are mistaken, contrary to their interest; you admit that?

Yes.

And the laws which they make must be obeyed by their subjects, --and that is what you call justice?

Doubtless.

Then justice, according to your argument, is not only obedience to the interest of the stronger but the reverse?

What is that you are saying? he asked.

I am only repeating what you are saying, I believe. But let us consider: Have we not admitted that the rulers may be mistaken about their own interest in what they command, and also that to obey them is justice? Has not that been admitted?

Yes.

Then you must also have acknowledged justice not to be for the interest of the stronger, when the rulers unintentionally command things to be done which are to their own injury. For if, as you say, justice is the obedience which the subject renders to their commands, in that case, O wisest of men, is there any escape from the conclusion that the weaker are commanded to do, not what is for the interest, but what is for the injury of the stronger?

Nothing can be clearer, Socrates, said Polemarchus. ...

Yes, Cleitophon, but he also said that justice is the interest of the stronger, and, while admitting both these propositions, he further acknowledged that the stronger may command the weaker who are his subjects to do what is not for his own interest; whence follows that justice is the injury quite as much as the interest of the stronger. .... Yes, I said, my impression was that you did so, when you admitted that the ruler was not infallible but might be sometimes mistaken.

Here we see the changing context for rule from the point of view of the Ancients and the Classical world views. The Ancients saw rule as absolute and with all powers in the hands of the king, thought the designation of the Gods (or at least that is what the leaders told their people). The Classicalist acknowledged different types of rule and that the rulers often operated in ways that were not, in their own, or their peoples' interest (with no mention of God or Gods controlling their actions). Furthermore, they acknowledged that those rulers are not infallible, nor always good.

This is a major difference in a world view; the ancients saw rulers as presenting the will of gods, and the Classicalist saw rulers as men, who as men, could make errors.

- Therefore, please be aware that the Ancient and Classical terms are not interchangeable but are deliberately used for specific purposes throughout this book.

One more area that needs to be expanded upon in this comment on terms: It is clear that the terms used to refer to people and ideas change over time. Also, terms change their meaning over time. For example, what should I call the people who were followers of Yahweh (or at least prior to Christ)? There are multiple terms, and each one is correct at a particular time.

So, at times there were the Hebrews, and then the Israelites, then there were some who were Israelites and some who were Judeans, and eventually they were Jews. This period of name change, at least according to the Biblical time line covers some 1500 years at a minimum (again, a very long time.). There were times of transition where the peoples were Hebrews and Israelites, and there was also a period of joint existence when there were both Israelites and Judeans. What complicates issues more is there soon became subdivisions within the Jews of a certain time period. These subdivisions were not the ones we traditionally think of such as, Pharisees, Zealots, etc. Of particular importance to my theory are the peoples that were remnants of Israelites and Judeans, and were still “on the land” long after the time that traditional history says that they were “eliminated.”

- In each of the cases, during this long time, the culture and the religion of the peoples associated with the each of the names were actually substantially different, and these differences and the conflicts between these differences play an important part of the story.

The terms in modern times are often misused and cause a great deal of confusion among people, especially in the effort I am undertaking. For example,

- God did not promise Canaan to the Jews, but to the Hebrew descendants of Abram (or Abraham)
- The Jews were not slaves unto Pharaoh, the Hebrews were the people who went into Egypt, and the Hebrews/Israelites came out of Egypt.
- David was not the king of the Jews, but the king of Israel and the Israelites

The proper term “Jew”, in referring the “Jewish” religion and the Jewish people, only becomes used among the people themselves and among others sometime in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC, when the “Jews” began to come back from seventy years of captivity in Babylon to the land around the ruins of the temple in Jerusalem.

- The Hebrew name "Yehudi" (plural *Yehudim*) .. originally referred to the people of the southern kingdom, although the term *B'nei Yisrael* (Israelites) was still used for both groups. ... Its first use in the [Bible](#) to refer to the Jewish people as a whole is in the [Book of Esther](#).  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jew>

No wonder Herodotus made no reference to the “Jews” since the term “Jews” was first used some 200 years or so after his death.

Therefore, throughout this work I will refer to the group of the worshipers of Yahweh as the name best used to describe the people in the time frame of which I am speaking. I will also use terms like Hebrew/Israelites, or Israelite/Jews to indicate a transition period.

And as we will see there are problems with the modern use of other terms such as Phoenicians and Canaanites, which are basically the same people. In addition, the term Orthodox Christian has so many variations in meaning that it's becomes very confusing at times. The meaning changes depending on who is accusing another of being a "heretic" and who is claiming the mantle of being "Orthodox." All this and more I will attempt to sort out as we go along, by use of terms that try to show transition periods and differing names for the same peoples or beliefs.

## Introductory Essay 9

### Comments on the American Experience – A Problem in Understanding History

In general, the history that is presented to us, in America, (again not in the advanced classes, but in general education) is that of the linear transition from the Ancient to the Classical to the Christian world, with a final transition in the Age of Modernism.

- Under this standard rubric, the Ancient world supposedly faded into the Classical world some time between 325 BC – 100 AD with the invasion of the Near East under Alexander, and the solidification of Roman power in that area. The Classical world subsequently faded into the Christian world beginning sometime in the mid third century.

However, this concept is again greatly tainted by the Christian and American world view. In both the books, *Religion of the Occident*, and in *The Closing of the Western Mind*, the authors argue that the concepts of liberty and freedom of thought developed by the Classical mind view lost out to the concepts of absolutism and control of the deity over nearly a 1,000 year period.

- Both works state that the Europe of the Post-Roman Empire period (that which is called the Dark Ages, and the early Medieval period) looked like the world of the Ancients (with its absolute rulers, its religious domination, and its use of God as the answer to all events (God wills it). Furthermore, both books show how the Classical world lost out in Europe, to the Ancient's world view.
- The authors of these books would say that the great victories of the Greeks at Marathon and Salamis were revered over the course of some 1000 years with the development of the absolutist Roman rulers, supported by the absolutist Christian church.

Both books generally conclude that the Europe of the 6<sup>th</sup>- 10<sup>th</sup> centuries looked more like Hindu India of say 1000 BC (a major source of the Ancient world view), than any other culture in history.

- While this process of the eventual reverse triumph of the Ancient world view over the Classical view is also a major foundation of this work, we cannot go into the details of these events to the extent needed, and I highly recommend that the readers of this work also read these two stated books as well.
- Throughout world history, today, the vast majority of the world's people view history based on religious "beliefs" and not historical "facts".

In the US, most persons assume that the events of history in the Bible (or other sacred books) are true to some (greater or lesser) degree. Even if we get beyond a rejection of the Eden story and the flood, most people, at least in America,

think, that the Exodus from Egypt took place in some form of other, that “Joshua fit the battle of Jericho,” and that David and Solomon were mighty kings.

Despite mounting evidence that the history listed above is not supported by fact, most people still accept them as “facts” because it was taught to them through religion and also through public schools. Even with the development of non-church based schools, or public education, in the West, much of what was taught in the new school systems had to be accepted and approved by the various churches.

In addition, the concept of the “White Man’s Burden” still prevails in the minds of most Americans today if in somewhat different forms. Americans still believe that it is their role to “Bring Democracy to the world.” Perhaps we should say that the “White Man’s Burden has evolved into the “American burden.” The belief in some form of “manifest destiny” though somewhat dated, still prevails in this country. Most people (or at least most politically active people) in this country still think of the US in the same context as the old Christian view of the “Shining City on the Hill”, or, the only hope for human kind.

Americans tend to see the world as almost predetermined and continual in the process. We tend not to be a cynical people, but one that believe in the notion that “right will prevail”, and events will occur to assure continuation and progress. This concept of predetermination and progress is actually, strangely enough, manifested in the fact that some 40% of Americans think that the second coming of Jesus will occur in their lifetimes, and that the end of the world as we know it will come about as described in the Bible.

Perhaps it’s because so many people in the United States are religious and believers in the eventual triumph of good over evil, (no matter how devastating this triumph, as described in “Revelations” will be for most people) we as a people have a distorted view of world history. We tend to see things as a chain of events always progressing, with perhaps a few bumps along the road, but always progressing towards the enviably positive outcome.

- We as a people tend to gloss over the “bad points in history” and only look at the “good” (which is perhaps a normal process). However, by doing so we miss what really happened in history, and perhaps more importantly, why it really happened. This ignorance of “real history” leaves us without the ability to project how others in the world will react to our actions.

Take for example the Crusades. If Americans know anything about the Crusades, it is that the wonderful Christian knights, driven by divine spirit, were able to gain control of the “Holy Land” back from the Muslim infidels, who had been preventing Christian pilgrims from going to pray at the holy places in the area.

So we gloss over the bad points, which are many. When it comes to the Crusades; we know little of the following points:

- The history of religious intolerance in the West and that the Muslims actually were among the most tolerant of rulers in so far as religion went.
- The Crusaders slaughtered Jews and Eastern Orthodox Christians, and almost everyone they encountered along the way who was not Roman Catholic, and
- When they finally reached Jerusalem, and took the city, they killed almost all of the inhabitants, regardless of age and religions.

Since we look at the history from the European Christian perspective, we think of the Crusades as the foundation for the Renaissance, since the Crusaders learned so much from going East. In doing so, we tend to ignore:

- The devastating impact the Crusades had on the overall history of culture, and especially on the political entity that the Crusades were originally intended to help, the Byzantine Empire (the remnants of the Roman Empire). In addition, the fourth Crusade did what no Muslim army had been able to do, take and sack Constantinople, and to establish for sixty years a Latin Empire in its place.
- The Crusades, by destroying Byzantium, actually helped to unlock the door to Europe, which enabled the Ottoman Turks to occupy the Balkans for close to 500 years, and almost led to the complete conquest of Europe by the Muslim Turks.

Since we don't really know history - what really happened - we can not really understand what others' perspectives are concerning the present. The average American may know that the Crusades failed and see them as a noble effort of noble knights, but they fail to understand that the Muslim's successful resistance to the Crusades over a one hundred and fifty year period continues to play out in current world politics. The Muslims see their history of resistance to the Crusaders as a model for today. It undoubtedly gives Muslims a historical basis for supporting "terror" as a means to resist.

- Osama Bin Laden modeled himself after the founder of the sect known in English as "the Assassins," who during the Crusading period, were able to use "suicide" attacks against leaders of both the Muslim and Christian sides to force political and military confrontations.

In addition, we simply do not get that the people of the region see the Crusades as a precursor to modern day European Imperialism. From this perspective we can see why they view Israel, and the invasion of Iraq as just a continuation of a war that has been raging for over 1600 years.

- We, in America, simply do not understand that the Crusades mostly had little to do with religion. We can't see how it was mainly a pretext for the younger nobility of Europe, who could not gain land in the Europe, to establish their own fiefdoms and kingdoms in new lands away from their older siblings.

In the minds of many of the current residents of the area, events look the same now as they did then. But we don't get this ... because we don't "get history."

A few years ago a movie was released call "*The Kingdom of Heaven*" which portrayed the Crusading period far closer to reality than any other cinematic effort. Although the story line was "Hollywoodized" to include a love story that never took place, the main story line of the Christians losing control of Jerusalem to the Islamic forces was fairly accurate (leaving out the fact that the Christians actually paid a huge ransom to get all the people safely out of Jerusalem). The movie mainly made the Christians, or at least the Christian knights, the bad guys, and, Muslims, under SaLaden, if not the good guys, at least the far more noble guys.

The movie had everything going for it; great action, Orlando Bloom, etc, and it bombed at the box office in the U.S. I would suggest that the failure was due to that fact that the Christians lose, and SaLaden (played by an actor who bore an amazing resemblance to Bin Laden,) enters Jerusalem in triumph, replacing Christian signage with Islamic ones (while showing respect for the Christian imagery). In a time of "war on terror," and with the rise of Christian fundamentalism, this movie never really had a chance in the US.

Almost at the same time another movie came out called "*Passion of the Christ*" created by Mel Gibson. The movie had almost "nothing" going for it, in so far as a film that generally appeals to Americans. It had no super stars, no major action, and the dialogue was spoken in relatively dead languages (Latin and Aramaic), which required subtitles (something most Americans hate). It also has a long scene of torture done in gruesome realism (ok, maybe, it had that going for it). This movie based on a very strict reading of the Bible, on the last day of the life of Christ, despite mixed reviews, and protests for its anti-Semitic bias, broke all kinds of box office records. It almost became a mandatory event for fundamentalist Christians to attend in order to see how "Christ died for our sins." It appears that the more gruesome the death, the more that it seems to appeal to those types of Christians.

Unfortunately, this response to the *Kingdom of Heaven*" and "*Passion of the Christ*" is typical to the Americans response to history in general. We as a people do not want to know much that runs counter to our world view, which is greatly tainted by our own positive experiences, as a people, and our own national views on (the Christian) religion. To greatly generalize this American view is to say;

- The general feeling of the traditional Americans is that it is okay to mainly forget about the past, and to more forward, into the wilderness or into the future, (and with one more line from Bob Dylan) "with God on our side."

However, this world view is primarily an American view, not shared by most peoples of the world. Unlike the history of the United States, most of the rest of the peoples of the world have known chaos and despotism as the norm throughout their history. If there was ever a "rise" of a people or nation, it was



surely followed by a great fall. Throughout history, we see time and again, that which was a rich and stable society wiped away and often expunged from existence.

If there was a recovery in these societies, it could take generations and epochs before the return of stability and growth. Often the return of stability was at the cost of the elimination of freedoms and a great demand for conformity. Other times stability came only because the culture was stimulated by foreign wars. For the history of humanity, in general, until very modern times, the statement of Hobbs that life was “nasty, brutish and short” was mostly, if not nearly completely, true. We can think of exceptions such as the periods of Inca and Maya rule in the Americas, at other times at the height of some Chinese and Indian rulers, for about one hundred years during the Roman Empire (only in some parts of the Roman Empire) and of course now in modern day America.

- For most of the peoples, and history of the world, nothing seemed inevitable except chaos and destruction, and tyranny of one form or another. (Our cynical view of “death and taxes” is something so very mild compared to others experiences.)

The extent of this world wide horror will be explored more as part of the second book of this effort; but;

What is clearly different from American history and that of most of the peoples of the world is that the US to date:

- Has never been destroyed or occupied (except for the Southern states in the Civil War), its peoples have never been sent off into servitude, nor has it experienced the collapse of its ecological systems, its central government. To date, we have never lived through periods of great plagues, with huge die offs, either.

The concept of the “end of the world is near” in America seems more like a punch line of a joke, than the real, often horrific experiences of most peoples of the Ancient and Classical world.

The “end of time” was not only “near”, it came for the Jews losing to the Babylonians, and the Romans (three times), In addition, we can see how the end of the world came for the peoples of the numerous beautiful cities throughout the Roman Empire that were destroyed by waves of German, or Hunnic invaders. The end of the world did come for ½ of the people of the Roman World who died during the plague of Justinian or 1/3 of the population of Europe who died during the Black Death; and on and on to the present day. For the peoples in cities that were exterminated and cultures and peoples that were enslaved and then driven from history, the world did, in fact, end.

- This living with the dread of the end, and an apparent inability to fend off the end, greatly shaped the view of the people under threat, and also the view of those remnants who did survive to build a world all over again.

In these “endings” we lost not only people, and art, but great knowledge of what was known and what had been known. Culture is not always maintained, and as we study history, we find not a direct line of advancement, but a hodgepodge of loops and currents leading all over the place. A great deal of knowledge is gained and then lost again. Therefore, we see periods of time where study and knowledge is fostered and developed, only to see that knowledge lost and forgotten for centuries. Yet, for some unknown reason, safety, and the pursuit of knowledge, in some places, begins again. (With our technology, and the use of the internet, our current upsurge in knowledge is clearly the most wide spread in history.)

To help the reader who is a modern American, who has never tasted these types of historical events of extensive disasters and social collapse, I will, to the extent possible, add allegorical modern events to perhaps give a flavor of what was going on in people’s minds of the time. The use of allegory and parallel events is difficult at best, but I will try to give the reader something, in our history to relate to, as best I can.

It is important, however, for American readers to understand what a great privilege and oddity the history of the United States to date has been in comparison with the history of the world. This is not to say that we don’t have a great deal of our own horrible acts (such as slavery or Indian wars and expulsions), we do. It is unclear how long this privilege will continue, but as long as it does, the American’s perspective of world history is greatly obstructed.

## Introductory Essay 10

### Comments on Cultural Conflicts – Some Times You Win Some Times You Lose, And Some Time You Can't Tell The Difference Between The Two.

Another concept we need to discuss prior to the main storyline is that of cultural conflict over the course of history; we need to introduce the idea of the “absorbing” and “absorber” cultures.

- The “absorbing cultures” tend to be those open and willing to add concepts from other “more advanced” civilizations. Examples of “absorbing” cultures include, but are obviously not limited to the German tribes such as the Vandals that tried to act more Roman than the Romans, the peoples of the Middle East who tried to become Hellenes, with the arrival of the Greeks and Alexander the Great, and also the Turks who upon entering the Middle East during the 7-10<sup>th</sup> Centuries attempted to become model Muslims.
- The “absorber” cultures tend to be the “dominant” culture of their time. Other peoples tend to emulate them the best that they can, and these absorber cultures tend to assimilate, over time, all the invading forces. Egypt and China are two examples of great absorber cultures. The Egyptian culture was developed some 6,000 years ago, the Chinese at least some 5,500 ago. For some 4,500 years, when any nation conquered Egypt, (until the Muslim conquests) the invaders soon copied the Egyptian frame work of religion, culture, and governance. Egypt absorbed the conquerors. The same can be said for China and its invaders; the development of the “fashion” of the Chinese pigtail was not a matter of taste, it was a mandate from a foreign conqueror (the Manchurians) in an effort to make the Chinese completely distinguishable from the Manchu invaders. This was intended to prevent the Manchu peoples from being “absorbed” into Chinese culture. The effort failed.

Most of what we know of as “great cultures” (Greece, Rome, England, etc) became absorber cultures, where people attempted to imitate the great. We should also include Phoenicia as one of these great absorber cultures of history, as many peoples in their times attempted to become Phoenician, in culture. While we have some understanding of the process of the spread of Hellenism, we have only limited knowledge of the history of the spread of the Phoenician culture. It appears that the processes were similar (although the Phoenicians were more likely to pass on the culture through trade than by warfare).

However, all these “great cultures” did not “jump full grown from the head of Zeus,” but started as absorbing cultures, gaining and adapting many ideas from the “preceding great culture.” For example, we now understand that the Romans built on the foundations of the Etruscans, etc. , and it also appears that much of Greek religion and culture was greatly influenced by Phoenicia. In fact, we can trace much of cultural development back through these rising and falling

absorber cultures, to almost a common beginning. To be more precise, there were more likely four separate common beginnings- in China, India, Sumer and Egypt, with Egypt's actually being the least important over the long term.

One of the hallmarks of the absorber cultures is an openness to at least allow for religious change and experimentation. As we have seen in studying the “great cultures” the religion of a “subjected people” becomes at the very least, an object of great curiosity, if not a great deal more to the super powers of the day.

- We can see simple examples of this in the Beatles becoming involved in Indian Mysticism, and how that led others in the West to experiment with this lifestyle.
- Of course, China’s fascination with Buddhism during the 7-9<sup>th</sup> centuries is a far more important example from world history.

Often, the religions of the absorbing cultures have a great long term impact. It is often with the fall of the culture, and the crises that arise from the fall, that greatly alters the religion of the “absorbing peoples”. For example, throughout the history of China we see that with the onset of economic crises, revolts based on new religions almost always ensue.

- Therefore, much of the history of these books will not be linked so much to the rise of the cultures, but to the fall of the cultures, and the role that religions play in explaining the fall, and offering answers for the failure to the people that are affected at the time.

It is at this point, when a cultural void develops. When the absorbing (major) culture is in great decline or has in fact “fallen” and there is no major dominant power around, that religion often can make manifest a “revelation,” creating a new and different interpretation of past events. Religion intercedes, explaining why empires rise and fall, and why peoples are enslaved or liberated. In the face of loss, the conquest, or the fall, life seems unbearable and defeat is all around. It is at such times, then, that religion can offer other views of the meaning of devastation.

Throughout history, security and freedom seem ephemeral at best. Societies used religion to address this loss of security and freedom on at least two levels:

- The first was to organize society, based on religion, to address the loss of security and freedom, and to rally resistance of people to the invading forces and to mandate support for the resistance, (As represented by the Jews against the Greeks and Romans, or the Muslim resistance to the West today.) and;
- The second is to offer people an alternative expectation for existence; an existence free from constant state of fear and tyranny and, eventually, free from the fear of “death.” Religion offered people escape from the feeling of no hope for any difference in the current state of the world in which they lived. It was used to offer hope for a better life “next time around” or “in the next world”, however that next time or next life was defined. In other words, religion provided hope for the hopeless (as

during the time of the Fall of Rome, or during the time of Russian serfdom, or American slavery, etc.).

This highlights the need to look closely at political issues as well as “sacred” ones. This evolution of religion (a nice commingling of ideas) and religious practices varied greatly in different settings based on the political realities and numerous other factors and impacts. Some of these include the invasions of other peoples, the changing needs in a given society, as a result of the invasions and other life and societal altering events.

- These books are not a story of humankind's search for the sacred, but how the profane established our view of the sacred.

One interesting issue, and a good example that serves as a basis for my point of view, is that of the religious views of the Roman state as it evolved from the Republic to the Principate, and finally to the Empire.

- As the state of Rome evolved from that of citizens in debate in the senate, to the eventual establishment of a military dictatorship of the Emperor, the Religion of Rome evolved from a belief in multiple gods arguing with each other (a senate of gods) to a sole god, all knowing and unchallengeable, with his court of angels.

Heaven itself changed. Where once it had looked like the old Senate, it soon resembled the court of the Emperor. As we will see later, the process of developing a One God/One Emperor religion took nearly one hundred and fifty years and included several options other than Christianity.

Therefore, the rise and fall of societies, and how they responded to both the rise and the fall, has greatly impacted religion. How we view this rise (as political or divine, or enviable) is critical to understanding the effort I put forth in these books. And also, we will see that, contrary to logic, often it is the absorbing culture, the losing, defeated or weaker culture that seems to often have the greatest impact on the religion of the times.

The one real power over time that the absorbing culture may have is religion and the use of religion against the power of the dominant, often absorber power. Some clear examples of this involve Christianity

- Christians (the religion of a defeated people) impacting Roman rule and culture
- Christians (the religion of the fallen empire) impacting the German replacement states of the Roman Empire

But there are clearly other examples in which religion is used as the basis for fighting against dominant powers

- The role of Islam in fighting Imperialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (revolts in Sudan and North Africa) and in the current struggles between the West and Islam

- And perhaps we can use the role of religion in fighting racism and Jim Crow in the United States.

Interestingly, the terms of religion, actually became the terms used in political and cultural resistance, simply because they were the only terms available for the people to use.

- This is either because of the terms of repression were developed under a religious context or because other terms had not yet been developed (Marx lived in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, so the terms of resistance developed through Marx are relatively new to world history)

One of the prime examples of this use of religious terms known to the American experience is the use of religious song (spirituals) by African-Americans, both during slavery and Jim Crow, to express hope for the future, and to change the intent or the religion as presented to them, (salvation in the future) to meet their needs (liberation now). When the “battle for freedom” came in the later half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these religious songs cemented the movement together and provided the spirit and courage to the freedom fighters.

## Introductory Essay 11

### Have We Discovered the Precursor of the Crucifix?

We have long known that the “god on the cross” is an ancient motif far older than Christianity. So is this the first known representation of this concept? Is this the first Crucifix?



Pictured above is one of the remarkably well preserved ancient items found at a site named Gobekli Tepe in Turkey near the Syrian border. See <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/multimedia/photos/?c=y&articleID=30706129&page=6>

The possible near unmentionable nature of this object is that what we see here is the first known representation of what has become known as the crucifix, or the sacred veneration of the “god on the cross.” Here are all the elements, the cross shape of the structure and a figure placed upon it seeming to be hanging in possible joy or anger or possibly in pain.

However, this find dates back to some 9800-10,000 years before Christ and is just one of the many dramatic discoveries at the place that archeologists are now calling “the world’s oldest temple.” This “cross” is among many objects referred to as “t’s” by those conducting the investigation of the site, only first uncovered in

2007. All the “t’s” seem to have some form of symbolic representation carved on structures (images, totems, possible pre-writing). They have been laid out in what appears to be great circles similar to a “henge” such as Stonehenge. However, this one object pictured above appears to be the only “true cross” figure at the site, at least revealed to the public as of yet.



Gobekli Tepe viewed from outside of the site.

The finding of Gobekli Tepe and the determining it as a site of worship, and one that was sacred for millennia, is having shock wave effects on our understanding of the past. Historians are saying Gobekli Tepe changes our entire conception of how civilization came about. However, some of the findings must also call into question our entire understanding of modern religions and how they came about as well; particularly this one object found that closely resembles the Catholic symbol of the crucifix.

We clearly have evidence through ancient Persian and Phoenicians and particularly ancient Egyptian religions, tracing a symbol like the crucifix back long before the time of Christ, but now we see the possibility of tracing the sign all the way back to the very foundations of religion, or at least the latest find that currently mark what we think may be the foundation of religion. (or at least now placed through Gobekli Tepe as almost 10,000 years before the traditionally stated time of Christ.)

Now some would immediately say ....

- This just must be coincidental and there can be no relationship between this object and the Christian crucifix. This is not a man upon the cross but



an animal, and clearly a lion. And besides was not the model of the cross as the symbol of Christianity developed based on the Roman execution of Christ in a standard Roman means of killing in the time of Christ; nailed on a cross?

And at first glance, and with limited understanding of the belief systems and capacities of the Ancients, their points could be valid. However, in looking at this object from the possible view of the Ancients, the connection can be made, since after all, to the Ancients the sky was the best the source for a great deal of knowledge and this object could directly be linked to the worship of the sky. (The sky also seems to have been the best form of entertainment around and became the basis for many of their legends, which led to the basis of religion.)

To understand the possible connection between this object and the Christian symbol, we must have an understanding of the concepts of Archaeoastronomy (also spelled archeoastronomy) which according to Wikipedia “is the study of how people in the past “have understood the [phenomena](#) in the sky, how they used phenomena in the sky and what role the sky played in their [cultures](#)” see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archaeoastronomy> Archaeoastronomy projects that the Ancients spent great deal of time concentrating on the heavens and knew a great deal about the movement of the sky, especially in relationships to the rising of the sun in relationship to the stars at the times of the solstices. The most famous location that shows the Ancients studied the skies is the already mentioned Stonehenge in the United Kingdom.

- We have finally come to understand ourselves that Stonehenge is a site designed to measure the year and determine when the solstices will occur. It is now projected by many historians that the occurrence of the solstice was the cornerstone of the religion of the people of the time.

In recent years dozens of smaller and large “circles” have been found across Europe and West Asia, and they too are now also recognized as “hengess” or ancient astrological observatories

The Archaeoastronomy field clearly states that the ancients knew a great deal more about the sky than just the annual calendar, including what we today call the “Great Year” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great\\_Year](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Year) This “year” is what we know as the 26,000 year or so (more precisely some 25,765 year) cycle where the solstices seems to pass through “ages” or “houses of the sky” spending some 2000 year in one “astrological house” and then the next, seemingly to pass in retrograde through the twelve great constellations. The affect as observed on the Earth (or at least the northern part of the Earth) is in fact accurate and real, and the apparent movement does occur, but not based on the “movement of the stars” but based on our different view of the heavens from Earth caused by the slight wobble that in involved in the Earth’s rotation.

The fact that the Ancients did know this cycle is quite amazing. We have written records of the Babylonians division of the sky into eighteen “houses” from some 4,000 years ago, and the tracking of the movement of many events, including the solstice and comets “through the houses”.

- It should be noted that the modern “twelve houses” based on major constellations were all present in the Babylonian construct, its just they added a few more “houses” by dividing some of the constellations a bit more than the more “modern” reading of the sky, first developed by the Greeks. Therefore, within the Babylonian astrology, there was an Aries, and a Taurus and also a Leo, et al.

Archeoastronomy researchers have shown that many of thy Ancients were fully aware of the long drawn out “migration” of the Great Year and were able to establish means even prior to writing of passing the knowledge along to one generation after the next.” The Mayan calendar is perhaps the most famous manifestation of these people’s knowledge of the “Great Year”; but “the year” was clearly observed and felt important by a great many cultures all over the Northern Hemisphere. There are over three hundred known ancient and relatively modern cultures that seemed to been somewhat independently aware of the “Great Year” and this cycle had major influence on their cultural myths and “universal understanding.

- Most of these societies saw the time of transition between “houses” of the solstice as a time of great social and political change, the ending of one age and the beginning of the next. (Thus the dire predictions of the near future based on the Mayan recognition of the end of one age and the beginning of another ... and based on our names for the sky bodies, the ending of the age of Pisces and the beginning of the Aquarian age.)

The supposed time of Christ, was precisely one of those time, as the “month” of Aries (the ram) of the Great Year was ending, and the age of Pisces (the fish) was beginning.

- Here is possible the origin of some of Christ’s titles “the Lamb of God”, and the basis of his “disciples” as the “fisher of men.”

In addition, for the first two hundred plus years of the Christian movement, the symbol of the religion was not the cross, but the fish or Pisces. The switch to the cross only came as the Christians incorporated the symbols and festivals of the rival religions, especially the symbols of many sun god religions, as a means of gaining followers without denouncing existing practices. For example the 25<sup>th</sup> of December had longed been celebrated as the birth day of several key gods, including Mithras and the Sol Invictus (the all conquering sun) and in the mid third century CE, became the day to celebrate the birth of the Christ..

And once in power, the “new” Church seeing giving power to the stars undermined the power of the one and only god (and his son and holy spirit, did all it could to break up astrology and the knowledge of the Ancients in this area; as did Islam in land they conquered. Thus much of our understanding of what the Ancients knew in this area and how it affected their religions was lost to us more moderns.

- It is in this lost understanding that lays the major connection between the Christ figure on the Cross or the Lamb of God on the cross at the ending of the age of Aries, and the lion on the Cross at Gobekli Tepe, for the time of Gobekli Tepe was clearly in the age of the “month” of Leo, who’s symbol is the lion.

If we accept that the Ancients had a great understanding of the transition of the sky”, then it would not be difficult to see that the veneration of the lion at the time of Gobekli Tepe as something possible or even expected; just as the lamb was the object of veneration in its age and the bull in Taurus.

- Archaeoastronomy shows that much of the major religious activities and symbolism in the Ancient world was focused on the sky and in particular events connected to the “Great Year.”

One of the most accepted connection is the prime symbol of one of the great rivals of Christianity; Mithraism. The savior god Mithras is portrayed killing the bull (representing the end of the “Month of Taurus” and the beginning of the “Age of Aries.”) The focus on the bull as the sacred animal during what would have been the age of Taurus is well documented among many cultures of that time, and so was the transition of having the new focus of sacrifice and veneration become the lamb or sheep during the two thousand years leading up to the time of Christ. (As, perhaps represented by the story of the conflict over the golden calf during the Exodus process. In addition the Greek story of Theseus killing the Minotaur may also be related to the ending of the Age of Taurus.)

Mithras is always depicted looking away as he slays the bull. This is thought to represent him looking into the next age (Aries) while ending the previous (Taurus). This seems to place the foundation of Mithraism around 2000 BCE, We can trace him back to that time period through the Indian god Mitra, and in ancient writings of Mesopotamia in 1500 BCE, and legendary struggle with bull fits into the transition period between Taurus and Aries.



It also fits into the great epic poem of the time *Gilgamesh*, in which the hero must confront the “great bull of Heaven.”

In addition, part of the Mithraic liturgy was something so close to Christianity it becomes clear that much was taken from this religion by the Christians besides the birth date of the savior. For the rituals of Mithras included

- “He who will not eat of my body, nor drink of my blood, so that he may be one with me and I with him, shall not be saved.”

Again, Gobekli Tepe, this site of worship, as it is being projected to be, has rocked the world of history. No one thought that such sophisticated art and design as well as symbolic representation possible for the time period (some 2-3,000 years before the rise of agriculture and some 6000 years before the “pyramid age” of Egypt ) These people were still in the hunter-gathers stage of development yet created and maintained Gobekli Tepe for millennia and appear to have had an extensive religious process and surplus enough to supported both an artisan and priestly caste. No historian really thought such a thing possible prior to the rise of agriculture. Yet here it is. (How much more will be found in the 90% of the site not yet excavated?)

This site is just one of dozens of places found in the last decade that has forced us to greatly reconsider our conception of both the rise of civilization and also of religion. Catalhoyuk, a prehistoric settlement 300 miles from Gobekli Tepe was among the first of these great new finds that began to restructure our thinking of the past. When it was first found most archeologist and historians were shocked from the dating the site to about 7000 BCE, and Catalhoyuk was labeled as the “first city.” But now, only a decade or so later Gobekli Tepe is found and we are pushing things back some 3000 years more. In addition archeologists have

found “settlements” in Israel that have been dated back to some 12,000 BCE. But no site found as yet in this new round of discovery is so well preserved as Gobekli Tepe; nor, no other site is filled with such spectacular works of art.

The reason for the preservation is also amazing. It appears that after a few thousand years the site was abandoned, but only after a “proper burial;” the evidence suggests that the people who had used the site (or the latest generation of those using the site), covered up the whole area. This respectful preservation of the centers of worship has provided us with a location untouched by war and looting and in an almost pristine condition; the site looks almost as it did at the time of its use.

- Here again based on the premise of Archeoastronomy we can speculate why the site was abandoned. For after several thousand years of use the site was no longer aligned with the “sky”, and therefore lost its importance. However, since it was sacred for so long, the people buried it well.

With this back ground and with some better understanding of Archeoastronomy, we can again ask the central question of this piece; can one of these “t’s” at Gobekli Tepe really be the initial Crucifix? Since there is no writing and only speculation upon the meaning of all the various finds and symbols, it is difficult to fully say. However, we can lay down the foundation for the speculation by recognition of the knowledge of the ancients of the sky and its “movements” even at this early date; something not considered possible, that is prior to the finding of Gobekli Tepe. If we need to reconsider our concepts, why not look at if the lion on the cross as really a “god on the cross” or if not ... the origins of the “god on the cross” so sacred to so many religions.

And based on what we have know from the past, the speculation about the lion on the cross is far from groundless, for example we know that the symbol of the cross and more particularly the “god on the cross” was not originated by the Christians, and is very ancient.

- According to J.C. Cooper, *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols*, p.45, , “Cross--A universal symbol from the most remote times; it is the cosmic symbol par excellence.”

Through the Sumerian deity Dumuzi, and as he was later known in the Akkadian and Babylonian pantheon as Tammuz, we see the cross as a sacred symbol in some of the most early civilizations. Some very ancient art shows this god portrayed in a fashion that looks more like a late Roman Catholic Bishop, carrying a cross; although the piece is dated back some 3-4000 years before Christ.

## Tammuz / Dumuzi



In addition, the process of worship of this god included the use of water to place a cross on the forehead of the worshiper and festivals similar to Easter.

The resurrection of Tammuz was celebrated in an annual lamentation that involved washing with water and anointing with oil.

Also this ancient religion included a hope for resurrection for all persons not just the god.

'When those who lament, men and women, come up with him to me,' said one Akkadian text, 'may the dead arise and smell the incense.'

And we know the rituals were practiced well into Biblical times for we read in the Old Testament.

The annual lamentation of Tammuz is described by the ancient Hebrews in the Old Testament: 'Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz' (Ezekiel 8:14). <http://www.control-z.com/czp/pgs/descending17.html>

We also know that well before the Jesus story, there were literally some dozen or more gods whose representations have been found in a form completely similar to the image of Christ on the cross, some dating back at least 1500 years before the supposed time of Christ.

Presented here are just four of these ancient images:



Fig. 0



the 3<sup>rd</sup>



- The top left is Ba'al from Carthage, roughly 400 BCE
- The figure on the top right is a very ancient Egyptian image of Horus (at least 1500 BCE)
- First figure on lower left is the Greek God Bacchus from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BCE
- The lower right figure is an Early Greek representation of the Sun (5<sup>th</sup> Century BCE)

Therefore, the whole story of the death of Christ as a new or even actual event and on based on Roman execution can be called into question (and has been for centuries by those in the later Roman world, then in the Age of Reason and now in modern times.) The story has been called by such as Thomas Paine, in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century “as a rehash of ancient myths” as has many classical writers and modern researchers. The only defense that the Christian Churches have given for the similarities to the Christ story and the other stories is that the Devil

had created religions for “man” that would be so similar to the “true” story of Christ, to confuse “man” into not believing in the true savior.

We also know that the symbol of the cross was long considered in the Ancient world the sign for everlasting life, as is the promise of the crucified Jesus. We can trace both the symbols and the promise as far back as written language allows us to do (in Egypt and in Sumer.) and we have the folk myths that go back far greater into the past.

The worship of Horus is far older than Tammuz with the possible date for the origin of worship going back some 7-8000 years.

Horus was called: Resurrected One; 'Iusa', the 'ever-becoming son' of 'P'tah' or 'the Father'; 'the Way, the Truth and the Light'; 'Messiah'; 'Son of Man'; 'Son of God'; 'the Word'; 'the Word made Flesh'; 'Holy Child'; 'God's Anointed Son'; 'Word of Truth'. Horus was called the 'KRST', or the 'Anointed One', long before the title was given to Jesus. ....

Osiris was called Lord of Lords, King of Kings, God of Gods; the Good Shepherd; the Resurrection and the Life; Eternity and Everlastingness; the god who “made men and women to be born again”. <http://www.control-z.com/czp/pgs/descending17.html>

And the key symbol of Horus the Egyptian cross called the Ankh, the symbol of “eternal life” see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ankh>. Speculation about its design include it being based on several different parts of a bull, which would possibly align the creation of the cult to the beginning of the age of Taurus (about 4000 BC).

So we can trace back the cross and the hanging “god on the cross” back several millennia. Now we see at the site being called the first temple, Gobekli Tepe, numerous objects that seem to be the center piece of the structure what the archeologist are calling “t’s” and at least one that clearly looks like an outright cross. And on this cross is the representation of the astrological house in which the solstice of the time would have occurred. We have the right based on these facts to at least speculate that this new find that is challenging the time line of “civilization” should also challenge the origins of our religious symbols of today. .

Without written language or other means of knowing, it is clearly not possible to directly state that the “lion on the Cross” is the precursor of the “lamb of God on the cross” However, based on the long history of use of “gods on the cross,” dating back well before written language, and based on the concepts of Archaeoastronomy, the notion can not simply be written of, either. We need to consider what to some would be obvious and to some only coincidence as not only possible but possibly likely.



However, there is one clear step that could be taken to better determine the possible connection between the “lion on the cross” with the modern crucifix; conduct the research to determine if the openings to the circles at Gobekli Tepe are in fact inline with the solstice in the age of Leo.

This type of exam has been conducted for Stonehenge, and most of the other new henges discovered in recent years, all with positive findings for the alignment for the openings of the sites and the sky in the “age: they were constructed. No such test has been conducted at Gobekli Tepe as of yet. If and when it is done, and the findings do show an alignment with the age of Leo, it can go a long way towards explaining the abandonment of the site, the religion of the time, the knowledge of the people of the time, and if this “lion on the cross” was more of than a coincidence or really the new oldest representation of a “god on the cross” dating back some 10,000 years before Christ.