

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

**Book Two** Ba'al as Both Savior and Devil



**How the Rivalry Between The Cult Of Yahweh And  
The Worshipers Of Ba'al**

**Helped To Create Christianity ---**

**And Religious Intolerance in the Western World.**

- A Blending of Political and Cultural History with Religious History

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**Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. I. c. 10.—lib. IV.** For Cronus, whom the Phœnicians call Il, and who after his death was deified and instated in the planet which bears his name, when king, had by a nymph of the country called Anobret an only son, who on that account is styled Ieoud, for so the Phœnicians still call an only son: and when great dangers from war beset the land he adorned the altar, and invested this son with the emblems of royalty, and sacrificed him.

**(Ezekiel 16:20,21)** And you took your sons and your daughters whom you bore to me and sacrificed them as food to the idols. Was your prostitution not enough? You slaughtered my children and made them pass through (the fire) to the idols.

**Micah 6:7:** “Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

**Hebrews 10:10-12** “. . . we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ . . . But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God.”

**1 Corinthians 5:7** “. . . For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”

**Sacred Executioner.** Thus a story based on fact, by being interpreted in a way consonant with ancient sacrificial ritual, may actually take the place of that ritual, and function in such a way that it is as if the ritual were being perpetually performed.

The best example of this is the case of Jesus, whose death was interpreted as the sacrifice of a man-god, the placation of an angry father-god and the expiation of otherwise unpardonable sins; the blame for the shocking but necessary sacrifice was borne by a whole nation, the Jews (though crystallized in the individual form of Judas), who were given the role of a collective Sacred Executioner.

Hyam Maccoby, *The Sacred Executioner*  
<http://users.cyberone.com.au/myers/maccoby.html>

## Interlude ---

### The Summary of Book One and Transition to Book Two

We have taken a long and difficult journey in the process of understanding the history of religion in the West from a political point of view. We have attempted to put in to play the political realities of such events as:

The transition from spirit worship to mother goddess worship to the develop of the sky gods

The rise of Phoenicia and its domination in the Mediterranean basin

The relative failures of the people and followers of Yahweh

And the great clash of cultures that came about with the rise of Persia, Greece and Rome and how those clashes changed not just the political world but the religious world as well.

We also attempted to put all of these events in a more appropriate view according to actual history. Therefore, we needed to greatly increase the role of the Canaanite/Phoenicians in both the political events of the day and also the religious events.

I believe that I have successfully shown that the core concept of what became Christianity ... god sacrificed his only begotten son... came directly from the Canaanite/Phoenician tradition, going back thousands of years. And that at the time this Christian concept was developed it was an idea of great disrespect and fear among the Jews. Clearly the origins of this idea were not new or Jewish, they were Ba'alists.

So while both the Romans and the Jews write with much hatred towards the Canaanite/Phoenicians (since they were both key rivals to the Romans and Jews for so long) we have real means of assessing the positive views of these people in their time.

Since they dominated so much for so long, the Canaanite/Phoenicians, (and I should add the Carthaginians) had far more influence on world religious development than the Hebrews/Israelis/Judeans/Jews ever did, until perhaps the Jews took on the role of "refusniks" against the Greeks and then the Romans (as they did in the 20<sup>th</sup> century against Soviet life style). Then the Christians, for defensive purposes, added the Old Testament to their own divine texts and the "Jewish" history became important to all who were becoming or would become Christian.

Here in this Jewish resistance to the "new world order" and new world religions is the origins of the horrors to come, the horrors based in the concepts of religious absolutism. One can argue that it is a small part, but then again it could be the key issue, for in the next book we will see that the world transitions from a flexible view of religion to an absolutist view of religion. The active resisters among the Jews were the first to really promote this concept of religion. Since there was only one god and one way to appease this god, we can see the roots of religious absolutism here. However it was the Christian triumph that propelled this absolutism upon the world.

However, the key issue that was more likely the source for the great impact of religious

absolutism was the decay of Rome from a republic to an absolute dictatorship. The Roman state needed to find a means of justifying this new dictatorship, not just on political grounds but religious as well. We will see how this need of the new absolute dictator-emperors led to the need for a new absolutist religion: One God in Heaven and One Emperor on earth.

We will see how Rome tried several options, including Ba'al before settling on the greatly modified religion of Christ as its model for one god/one emperor. We will also see how the Christian Church, once ascendant, wielded this power based on the new proclamation by the Emperor that this was the one and only one true faith. This concept of one Emperor, one God had unintended consequences.

We will also see that like the Jews who resisted the new religion of the West, the majority of the Romans resisted the imposition of the new Christian-based, absolutist religion. The Romans "pagans" became the active resisters this time, only to be crushed by the Roman state.

The great visions and victories of the Greeks fighting against the tyrannies of the Persian kings were lost as the Roman Emperors ruled in the same manner as the Persian kings. However, the Persians had at least allowed for religious flexibility. The new Roman state did not. The new ally of the State, the Christian Church did not allow for flexibility and attempted to crush all active and even passive resisters to their power.

Book Two will take us through this process of the rise of absolutist religious power and the end of religious flexibility. We reach conclusions that show that this process created the ability of future states to also claim absolute right to demand conformity, with dire consequences for all the peoples of the world.

In Book Two we transition away from the theory on the development of the concepts of Christianity to the impacts of its absolutist world view. However the story of Ba'al does not go away, since it is Ba'al that eventually becomes the model for the absolute evil ... the Devil.

And it is the Jewish fear of the return of punishment for the worship of Ba'al ...the wrath of God ... that becomes the justification for the Church to impose the demand for absolutism on all peoples ...

With the rise of Christian absolutism we see a new manifestation of the dualism of the Persians ... Ba'al the savior as represented by Christ and Ba'al the great evil and most feared ... the Devil.

For sake of continuity ... the chapters in Book Two pick up with the ending of Book One.

## **Book Two – Ba'al as both Savior and Devil**

### **Part V – The Morphing of Ideas – Section I – The Challenge to the New “Old” Order**

#### **Subsection A - Why Christianity Began to Succeed**

There have been great discussions in many venues on why in the late Roman world Christianity succeeded, while the many other contenders for religious leadership at the time failed. The tendency, for so many generations in the past, was to write off the Christian triumph as simply the victory of the “truth”, that is Jesus is God’s Son and God and Jesus are working their wills on the earth and so Christianity triumphed. To those who believe in Christ, and predestination, that answer is enough (and my challenging of that concept as noted has gotten me in a lot of trouble in the past.)

However, history shows this not to be the case, and as we have seen in Part IV Section IV of book one, the victory of Christianity over the course of history was no sure thing. However, here, for the purpose of this book I will give a limited overview of some key elements of the reasons for its success and then relate them to the point about Ba'al, and the religion of Phoenicia.

Briefly, the key elements for the success of Christianity seem to include what were some truly attractive items for the people of the time, including, the fact that early Christians promised:

- A quick resolution to the disorders and miseries of the world, and that God’s son was coming back soon to set the world right;  
  
(Mat 22 15-22, Mark 12-13-17, Luke 20-20-26)
- There was no need to concern yourselves about things that you were really powerless to deal with (slavery, poverty, Roman domination and the cultural wars) since this world was “unimportant (Render unto Caesar’s that which is Caesar’s and to God that which is God’s )
- That all persons, including women and slaves, were eligible for “salvation”, and therefore a far better world awaited them, than the world in which they lived; God’s blessing was no longer limited to free men.
- The means to obtain this “salvation” was quick, easy and not too invasive. There was no need for circumcision (or castration as was practiced in some religions of the time). There was no dire or restrictive dietary laws, no extensive costs (which, of course, would change later), no wild rituals that involved sex and drugs, only belief and baptism, and a few guiding principles such as the ten commandments (not 613), and some guidelines from Paul and the apostles.
- We have noted a number of times that the Jews of that time and the Orthodox Jews of this time need to keep the 613 commandments (An Orthodox Jew who is my friend described Christianity as Judaism Lite, since the Jews have 613 commandments, and all of are equal value and weight, while the Christians have only ten. He also said “We keep our 613 far better then they keep the ten, especially the one about thou shall not

kill.”)

Remember what I am discussing here is early Christianity. Many of the points changed to some degree as the Church grew in power and needed to adapt to meet the cultural needs of the peoples entering the Church (more blending).

But in the beginning ....

The major detrimental issue that got the early Christians in trouble was their refusal to offer public sacrifice to the Emperor (not the other gods, only the Emperor – Jesus was the last sacrifice, so no others were needed and the early Christians were warned by their leaders not to participate in the sacrifices of the non-believers). As far as the Romans were concerned, if the Christians did not want to eat the meat at the sacrifice, that was no problem. However, not sacrificing to the Emperor was a sign of disrespect and potentially, treason.

Most of the actual recorded and verifiable repression of Christians in the first two centuries of the church involved this issue of public sacrifice to the Emperor. It was considered a civic duty by all residents of the Empire to make public sacrifice to the Emperor, and when the Christians refused to do so they were seen, at least at first, not as traitors or any kind of a threat, but actually more as a public nuisance.

- The Romans may have seen this resistance to sacrificing for the emperor in the same way that we Americans today view some people who refuse to say the pledge of allegiance because of the insertion of “under God” into the text.

Most of the Emperors let this non-sacrifice go to some degree, and when pressured many Christians agreed to actually perform the public rite, including the Bishop of Rome, (who later became known as the Pope). This led to the so-called Donatist heresy which ripped apart the Church in North Africa for almost a century (see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donatist> )

- The Donatists saw people who gave in as not the true Christians and would not accept the power of a priest who had sacrificed to the emperor (including the Bishop of Rome).

The actual repressions of Christians were infrequent and regional. In the first 300 years of Christianity in the Roman world until the major efforts of Diocletian, no more than 3,000 persons were ever executed for their religious beliefs, that of being a Christian. This was in fact a very small number of deaths compared to contemporary events involving religion:

- As noted, at least half of this period coincided with the great Jewish revolts in which millions of Jews were enslaved, publicly executed by crucifixion and other means, or became casualties of the war for both political and religious freedom from Rome.
- The world changed dramatically when the Christians got into power. In short order they made not believing in Christianity a capital offense, with hundreds of thousands more dying for religious freedom, this time freedom from an imposed religion - Christianity.

Despite this issue of sacrifice to the emperors, the overall presentation of the Christian world view was simple and attractive.

- The process of the Christian approach was more or less to strike open the supposed

secrets of all the Mystery Cults (the traditional religious means to “salvation” that had dominated the religion of the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans for centuries, if not millennia), and to make the rites public and open to all in a vastly simplified version.

- The ritual eating of bread and drinking of wine was made part of the Christian process. It had been part of so many of the mystery cult rites, but was kept hidden and only open to members of the cult.
- The use of blood and the use of baptism were also extensively elements of the mystery cult rituals.
- The worship of a dying and rising god was core to most of the ancient cults as it was with Christianity, but the worship rites were open to only those who went through an extensive initiation process.

Again, while the early Christians did have these things in common with the cults, they also added elements of the Phoenician religion, not involved in these cults, which focused on the sacrifice of the first born, most beloved son.

In those days, the process of joining the other “cults” was a secret; not so with the Christians. Unlike the mystery cults of the time, the process to join the Christian Church was open to all, the communal meal was open to all, the “gift” of salvation was offered to all. No major changes in food or attire were required, there was no need to cut off your fore skin; nothing at all was needed but “faith in Jesus.” All that was required was “belief.”

- 1) And yet with all this simplicity, and all this promise, Christianity failed to grow much (and only then at a slow rate) during the first 200 years after the date for the crucifixion. It is estimated that somewhere around 225 AD, Christians made up no more than 2% of the Roman world. By comparison, just before the revolts, Jews comprised 10% of the population of the Roman world.

So, if simplicity of message, and openness to all did not win over the masses to the new religion, how did this religion triumph? In addition, how is it that this religion that began as a message of salvation to the poor, and a message of peace and brotherly love, becomes the religion of the rulers with Jesus represented as the “God of Battles?”

As always in this book, the overall answer to these questions is too great, but we can give an overview that might help to give some kind of framework.

## Part V – The Morphing of Ideas -

### Section I – The Challenge to the New “Old” Order

#### Subsection B - When Did This Empire Fall????

The reason for the eventual success of the Christian religion actually lies in yet another cultural crisis. This time the crisis was not localized (to Judea) or to a particular religion (such as the Jews). This crisis was an almost “universal” one brought on by the ending of the “Pax Romana” and the near collapse of the Roman world. The traditional date given for the fall of the Roman Empire in the West is 476 AD. However, the Empire nearly did not make it that far. It actually came apart at the seams and nearly collapsed during what was called the “Crisis of the Third Century” (obviously a name given by modern persons).

However, to begin with, let’s look at how history can be told in many different ways, for example:

- There can be many “cases” for when the Roman Empire actually ended, and just to name a few...
  - 476 With the end of the Emperor in the West
  - 800 With the crowning of Charlemagne as the “Holy Roman Emperor”
  - 1204 With the taking of the Eastern Empire by the Crusaders
  - 1453 With the fall of Constantinople to the Turks
  - 1461 With the fall of Emperor David at Trebizond
  - 1503 With the death of the last man that claimed to be Emperor [Andreas Palaeologos](#);
  - 1804 With Napoleon officially ending the “Holy Roman Empire”

Then there is a date that is not much considered in the West, but which actually has the most “legal standing” in the East:

- With end of the Russian Empire, since the Russians claimed direct inheritance of the title (the third Rome), and “Czar” means Caesar.

So, one can clearly argue that the “Roman Empire” did not end until the great social changes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

But, again, the Empire almost did not make it out of the “third century.” From 235 to 285 AD, there was almost constant civil war in the Roman world, and starting around 250 AD, major invasions of the “barbarians” greatly added to the sense of the “end of days.”

During this period of some fifty years there were no less than twenty-one official emperors with dozens of others who had proclaimed themselves as such. Most were not of “royal blood” but merely successful soldiers, many starting out from very low rank to rise to the head of the Empire. (So, in Rome, anyone can grow up to be Emperor, just like the American mythos that anyone can grow up to be President.) Most of these “Soldier Emperors” were killed by other soldiers, who became the new “Soldier Emperors.” And, during this time, for the first time, an actual “divine” Emperor was killed in battle (Philip the Arab, being the first emperor to have that distinction – The Roman Empire had “black” or at least “brown” Emperors ... so anyone one, not just whites could grow up to be Emperor).



For the first time since the Romans became a worldly power after the defeat of the Punic peoples, whole regions of Empire were sacked, not just by invading “barbarians”, but also by competing Roman emperors. Most of the Eastern section of the Empire broke away under the not so famous now, but famous then, Queen Zenobia of Palmyra. In addition, most of the West moved away from the control of Rome, under the title of the so called “Gallic Empire.”

To those being sacked and raped by either or both “barbarians” and Roman soldiers, the end of the world seemed to be at hand. At least what was clearly at hand was the ending of the myth of Roman invincibility as rulers of the world, and also the end of Pax Romana <http://history.boisestate.edu/westciv/empire/15.shtml> .

For those killed in these conflicts, the end of their world was, in fact, at hand.

The faith in Rome and the “idea” of Rome ended, or almost ended for most of those still living. And since the “Roman” “center did not hold .... truly the second coming is at hand” ... forgive me Mr. Yates for putting this here. If ever a poem written in the future about future times also fit the past, it is the “Second Coming” by Yeats for the third century in the Roman world. [http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_Second\\_Coming](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Second_Coming)

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.  
Surely some revelation is at hand;  
Surely the Second Coming is at hand. ....

While the fifty year period (as organized by future historians) did come to an end, and the Empire did recover, after almost three generations of chaos, the Empire was a much changed place. The leadership had almost completely abandoned the premise of the “Republic” and the Emperor was no longer just “first citizen” but was the unquestioned ruler, more along the lines of the “Eastern Potentates.” In a sense, these changes represent reversals of the victories for freedom at Marathon, and against the second invasion of the Persians. The “kingship” of the Persians, resisted so long by the Greeks and Romans, was now in place in the West.

As with the Eastern models, the Emperors wanted no dissent or questioning of their authority. They demanded “conformity” in all things, including religion. The old Roman approach of relative acceptance of multiculturalism was now gone. This past approach of acceptance, was now seen as a cause for the great revolts of the Jews and the falling away of areas of the Empire during the “Crisis.” The new age of “Romanization” required all people to accept the single Roman way.

When all free males were made “citizens of the Empire” (212 AD) (see <http://www.localhistories.org/rome.html>) it was not really a “gift” but a new requirement that all peoples “act” Roman.

However, the old Roman religion reflected the old Republic where power and authority were distributed among many, and absolutism and dictatorship was very much hated. As the

Emperors moved towards an absolutist state, they looked to create and support a religion that reflected their “New World Order.”

The old Roman religion presented many gods with competing powers, and areas of authority. This religion was similar to the form of government of the Republic (many people sharing power and responsibilities).

Now, the Emperors needed to create a new vision of religion, and also of heaven, that mimicked their goals of undisputed power from one source, the Emperor. Therefore the emperors pushed hard for a new ideal which can be summed up in the slogan “One Emperor, One God.”

However, this effort for a new view of religion to match the desires of the emperors for absolute power did not even actually begin after the time of the “Crisis of the Third Century,” or during the Crisis itself, but prior to it, as Rome “slouched” (sorry Mr. Yeats again) towards the Crisis.

## Part V – The Morphing of Ideas -

### Section I – The Challenge to the New “Old” Order

#### Subsection C The “Crazy Emperors” and the First “One God” Efforts

Actually, this period of the “Third Century” had come on the heels of some very difficult years that are not even considered part of the Crisis by modern writers. We moderns looked upon this period as a time of “crazy emperors” (from 180 AD with the death of Marcus Aurelius, or the last of the five “Good Emperors,” to 235 AD, with the starting of the Crisis). The Roman Senatorial class saw these as “hated” emperors, but these rulers seemed to be much loved by the “street” (the time of bread and circuses). During this time, these Emperors, for a wide range of possible reasons, destroyed (killed) much of the “capable” populations of Rome, perhaps leading to the Crisis of the Third Century and authoritarianism.

Three of these “crazy” emperors” were Commodus, Caracalla and Elagabalus. Commodus (who was wrongly portrayed in the two movies “*The Fall of the Roman Empire*”, and “*Gladiator*”, as ruling for a short time) was the son of Marcus Aurelius, and gave to the Empire twelve years of his megalomania (180-192).

He claimed to be the new Hercules, and the new Romulus, renaming Rome itself, as well as all the months of the year, and so much more, after himself. He also executed hundreds of the Senatorial class as well as thousands of others who “opposed” him (or at least in his mind opposed him).

Caracalla, who despite giving Roman citizenship to all residents of the Empire, is mainly remembered for killing his half brother and co-ruler (Geta) and having up to 20,000 of Geta’s supporters killed just during the first year of his six year rule (211-117).

And then there was Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, known as Elagabalus, (218-222), the teenage Emperor who was often ridiculed by later Roman writers for his great desire to become a woman, and who offered fortunes in gold to anyone who could “insert a vagina” into his body. (These sexual proclivities and desires were at least tolerated by his contemporaries.)

He is actually, however, the first Emperor to impose the concept of “One Emperor, One God” on Rome itself. And the religion he chose, was not Christianity, or even Judaism, but in fact, the religion of one of the all time archenemies of Rome, the religion of Carthage, and the religion of the Phoenicians;

- The religion imposed on Rome by the Emperor was that of Ba’alim.

If we are to believe the Roman accounts, he introduced the rite of sacrificing on a daily basis of noble children to the God. Again, based on the Roman accounts, all Senators were required to participate in the ceremonies of the religion, which they all appeared to do.

Yet this type of “crazy” rule was considered “acceptable” and not part of an overall later crisis. Partly because during these reigns, the borders and the overall mass of the people of the Empire were safe and secure (except for the direct “enemies” of the Emperors, in Rome itself). Therefore, despite the internal “politics” that led to so many deaths, the state seemed secure and the borders safe, (with the bread and circuses provided). For the masses of the

people, the Emperors were capably doing the job of “national security”.

Since this was still a time of transition from the “first citizen” concept to the “absolute ruler” of the post Crisis period, the Emperor had another job as well. That duty can be best summed up by saying the emperors had to maintain the peace of the empire by “protecting, preserving and defending” the diversity of the Empire; revolts could be prevented by allowing for a little diversity.

The limited number of writings that survive from the time, show that the chief criticism of Elagabalus’s actions (imposing Ba’alism), was not the fact that he had religious beliefs different than the “mainstream Romans” but, as Emperor, he was supposed to respect and support the religious diversity of the Empire,

- The writers said that as Emperor, Elagabalus should not try to impose or favor his religion above others.

While the sacrifice of children was seen as odd, and perhaps wrong by these contemporary writers, the rite was not actually questioned as being “illegitimate” (since it too was part of the diverse religions of the Empire that needed to be respected). From the writing of the times, we don’t read any explanations of why noble families did not resist handing over their children for the rituals. It’s not clear whether it was the fear for their own survival or actual acceptance of the religion as valid. Again, if these sacrifices actually did happen is also not clear. But the writers of the time and of the era stated that it did take place, and the ritual was clearly part of the Ba’alist tradition, and the Emperor was demanding not just acceptance of the religion as his, but acceptance of it as the only religion of Rome.

<http://members.aol.com/heliogabby/amazing/ae5.htm>

Elagabalus saw this as an opportunity to set up his god, ... as the chief deity of the [Roman Pantheon](#). Renamed [Deus Sol Invictus](#) or *God the Undefeated Sun*, (this deity) was placed over even [Jupiter](#).

To become the high priest ,, Elagabalus had himself circumcised (more likely in the tradition of El, not of the Jews). [Herodian](#) writes that Elagabalus forced senators to watch while he danced around the altar of (Sol Invictus) to the sound of drums and cymbals and that each summer [solstice](#) became a great festival to (Sol Invictus) popular with the masses because of its widely distributed food.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elagabalus>

The name of this god imported from “Syria” was Baal Emasa, and was accepted not as a “new concept” in the Roman world, but as one which was ancient. It had apparently also been growing in popularity in the Empire for a long time. The result of this cross fertilization created by the Alexandrian conquests and later Roman/Persian wars was that the Jewish and Persian ideas of a single god were becoming more popular in the Greek and Roman world.

However, the Classical mind was less accepting of an “unseen god” and looked to the sky for the “face of god” and saw, the sun.

Then, in the center of this pantheon, which had again become naturalistic, as it was at its origin, was placed the Sun, for he was the supreme lord that governed the movements of all the planets and even the revolutions of the heavens themselves....

From the time of Plato and Aristotle, Greek philosophy regarded the celestial bodies as

animate and divine creatures; Stoicism furnished new arguments in favor of this opinion; while Neo-Pythagorism and Neo-Platonism insisted still more emphatically on the sacred character of the luminary which is the ever-present image of the intelligible God. .... [http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/mom/mom09.htm#page\\_185](http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/mom/mom09.htm#page_185)

And as the very ancient concept of “sun worship” was spreading throughout the “Roman world” the concept also was being molded to fit the needs of the Emperors as they attempted to gain more and more political power.

If heliolatry was in accord with the philosophical doctrines of the day, it was not less in conformity with its political tendencies. We have essayed to show the connection which existed between the worship of the emperors and that of the *Sol Invictus*. When the Cæsars of the third century pretended to be gods descended from heaven to the earth, the justification of their imaginary claims had as its corollary the establishment of a public worship of the divinity from whom they believed themselves the emanations.

Heliogabalus (Elagabalus) had claimed for his Baal of Emesa the supremacy over the entire pagan pantheon. The eccentricities and violence of this unbalanced man resulted in the lamentable wreck of his undertaking; but it answered to the needs of the time and was soon taken up again with better success. [http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/mom/mom09.htm#page\\_185](http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/mom/mom09.htm#page_185)

And we see that Elagabalus’s effort to create a new “state religion” was not a creation of his own, but went back to two preceding Emperors. Elagabalus’s effort actually appears to be part of a policy of his royal family’s effort to create the “Eastern” style of rule. These emperors’ goal, even before the “Crisis of the Third Century”, was to rid themselves of the remains of the Republic (moving from the “Principate” to the “Dominate”).

- During the reign of the emperor [Septimius Severus](#) (193-211), there was no escaping eastern religion. Septimius came into contact with eastern philosophers in Emesa and studied the writings and sermons of Sol Invictus Elagabal .... From now on, the imperial family propagated the cult of Sol Invictus. More and more Syrians came to Rome and occupied high offices. [Caracalla](#) followed his father’s lead by expressing his wish for a single religious faith and cult, universally accepted. In the end, this plan was executed by Heliogabalus. <http://www.livius.org/he-hg/heliogabalus/heliogabalus-religion2.html#Religious2>

However, prior to the Crisis, and despite the slaughter of the Senatorial class, enough belief existed in concept of Rome to prevent this group of emperors from succeeding in their move towards absolutism. Elagabalus’s assassination had more to do with internal family politics and power grabs than with religion. However, with his death, his efforts at “One God, One Emperor” failed and his choice of god was put on the back burner, so to speak. (see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elagabalus>) His successor, Alexander Severus, was willing to maintain the more traditional Roman view towards religion and even seems to be somewhat inclined to support Christianity.

- In religious matters Alexander preserved an open mind. In his private chapel he had busts of [Orpheus](#), [Abraham](#), [Apollonius of Tyana](#), and [Jesus](#). It is said that he was desirous of erecting a temple to the founder of Christianity, but was dissuaded by the pagan priests. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander\\_Severus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Severus)

With Alexander Severus's death the "Crisis" began. However, before we conduct more investigation on the religious aspects related to the "Crisis" we need to do a bit more summarizing.

The cultural merging and morphing between East and West, as we now see, was actually two way. The Hellenization of the world eventually led to the importation of the religions of the repressed areas into the heart of the Empire, and into the Greek and Roman thinking. The Hellenic mind set was perhaps as impacted by the introduction of Eastern ideas as the Ancients were, and a great deal of merging took place in both cultures.

- A linking of the politics of the time and the religions of the time appears to take place. The importation of an Eastern style absolute monarch, a manifestation of God on earth, or the type of rule of the Ancients, replaced the concepts of the "republics" and "democracy" so long favored in the Greek and Roman world.
- These two tendencies, absolutism in governing and absolutism and monotheism in religion are closely connected in historical sequence.

However, for the purpose of our exploration of Ba'alism what is quite remarkable in the importation of the Sol Invictus religion into Rome, is clear evidence to us now that it came hand in hand with the religious principles of Ba'alism. Despite the defeats of Carthage and the Phoenicians, the centuries of challenges from the Greco/Roman cultures, and the attempted repression by the Jewish state, Ba'alism was not only still around, but was at the point, in the third century, of actually winning the "culture wars."

- The practices and rites of Phoenicia had not disappeared, but were actually being supported and promoted by the Roman Imperial family as the "true universal religion."

This shows that the religion of the Phoenicians and the related religion of the "non-Exile Jews" were still major forces during the time of the development of the Church. In fact, since we are talking of a period only some 50-60 years after the crushing of the last of the "Jewish" revolts, the religion of the Phoenician and non-Exile Jews was clearly more influential than the "mainstream" Judaism of the time, which had been crushed by the Romans. What remained of the leadership of the "mainstream" Jews was still trying to deal with the loss of Judea all over again, which took place despite the promise of God to Jeremiah. These Ba'alist groups, now appeared in the guise of a sun god, rather than a storm god. This iteration of the ancient Phoenician religion was far more influential than its Christian contemporaries.

This must have been a great affront to many of the Romans that the Emperor openly worshiped the gods of beaten foes (Carthage and Phoenicia) and was "acting Jewish" (not eating pork and being circumcised) another great foe of the Romans. (Think of it as if George W. Bush converted to Islam) And Elagabalus even arranged for the marriage of the Phoenician god and a chief Roman female goddess.

- As a sign of the union with the Roman religion, Elagabalus gave either [Astarte](#), [Minerva](#), [Urania](#), or some combination of the three, to El-Gabal as a wife.[29] He provoked further outrage when he himself married the [Vestal Virgin Aquilia Severa](#), claiming the marriage would produce "god-like children".  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elagabalus>

Yet again, in those days, it was not that the Emperor had these beliefs, but that he tried to

force them on all Romans. This was a major concern among the intellectuals and others. The Severus family effort to imposed worship of the “Sun God” of Syria, was mostly abandoned among the Senatorial classes after Elagabalus’s assassination, but remained very popular with the military, under the name of the god, “The Unconquered Sun” (*Sol Invictus*).

And now in the first stages of the Crisis, it was the Soldier Emperors who came to power (or came to power for short time, and then fell one way or the other). The situation stabilized to some degree with the Emperor Aurelian, who reigned about fifty years after Elagabalus, and thirty years into the period of political chaos. In this brief window of calm, Aurelian renewed the effort to impose Sol Invictus as the only god of the Empire.

Aurelian strengthened the position of the Sun god, [Sol](#) or Oriens, as the main divinity of the Roman pantheon. His intention was to give to all the peoples of the Empire, civilian or soldiers, easterners or westerners, a single god they could believe in without betraying their own gods. The center of the cult was a new temple, built in 271 in [Campus Agrippae](#) in Rome, with great decorations financed by the spoils of the Palmyrenian Empire.

Aurelian did not persecute other religions. However, during his short rule, he seemed to follow the principle of “one god, one empire”, that was later adopted to a full extent by [Constantine](#). On some coins, he appears with the title *deus et dominus natus* (“God and born ruler”), also later adopted by Diocletian. [Lactantius](#) argued that Aurelian would have outlawed all the other gods if he had had enough time.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aurelian>

This God of Aurelian appears to be much the same god of Elagabalus, the Syrian influenced Sun God.

- Near the Flaminian Way, to the east of the Field of Mars, Aurelian consecrated a colossal edifice to the tutelary god that had granted him victory in Syria. The religion of state that he constituted must not be confounded with Mithraism. Its imposing temple, its ostentatious ceremonies, its quadrennial games, its pontifical clergy, remind us of the great sanctuaries of the Orient and not of the dim caves in which the Mysteries were celebrated.

[http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/mom/mom09.htm#page\\_185](http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/mom/mom09.htm#page_185)

However, the term Sol Invictus eventually came to be a collective one, referring to at least three concepts of the “solar god.”

- The use of the title **Sol Invictus** allowed several [solar deities](#) to be worshipped collectively, including [Elah-Gabal](#), a Syrian sun god (the god of Elagabalus) ; [Sol](#), the patron god of Emperor [Aurelian](#) (AD 270-274); and [Mithras](#), a soldiers’ god of [Persian](#) origin
- The only Eastern cult that was officially tolerated (in the Roman Empire), probably from Aurelian’s reign, and certainly under Constantine, was that of Sol Invictus

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sol\\_Invictus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sol_Invictus)





Fig. 43.

SOL THE SUN-GOD.

Installed by Mithra as the governor of the world. To the right the globe of power. ( *T. et M.* p. 202.)

The death by assassination of Aurelian (275 AD) (see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aurelian> ) ended hope that the “Crisis” was over, and also ended the effort to press for one religion, for the time being. No emperor for the next forty-five years had established enough strength to press for such a dramatic change in Roman culture. Due to the situation, the emperors could not alienate any of the powerful senatorial sectors (who still held mostly to the Roman sense of diversity, and were mostly still devoted to the older Roman religion) or regional peoples, or the army, by pressing for a religious revolution.

However, as the empire became more “militarized” (as a result of the constant civil wars and the new “barbarian” invasions during this century of crisis) the army became more dominant in determining political power, and they were almost wholly followers of Sol Invictus; but not the Sol Invictus of either Elagabalus or Aurelian, but that of their Persian military rivals, Mithras.





Mithraism is one of the more interesting of religions that today is almost completely unknown. Its origins are also unclear, but based on its symbolism it seems closely linked to the idea presented earlier of the “great year” and in this case, it seems that it is linked to the ending of the time of Taurus, and the beginning of the age of Aries. The symbolic representation of Mithras seems clearly linked to the immensely popular study (in both the Ancient and Classical world) of astronomy and its corresponding concept found in astrology

- **Astrology** (from [Greek](#): αστήρ, αστρός (astér, astrós), “star”, and λόγος, λόγου (lógos, lógu), “treatment”, “theory”, “study”: lit. study on the stars) is a group of [systems](#), [traditions](#), and [beliefs](#) in which knowledge of the relative positions of [celestial bodies](#) and related details is held to be useful in understanding, interpreting, and organizing information about personality, human affairs, and other terrestrial matters. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astrology>

The symbols of the god cutting the throat of the bull, and all the symbols around this action are clearly linked to the new God of a new area, the ending of the 2000 year “Age of Taurus”.

- Indeed, the constellations common in the sky from about [4000 BCE](#) to [2000 BCE](#) were [Taurus](#) the Bull, [Canis Minor](#) the Dog, [Hydra](#) the Snake, [Corvus](#) the Raven, and [Scorpio](#) the Scorpion, all of which may be identified in the fresco from [Marino](#), a standard Hellenistic iconography (*illustration, above right*). Further support for this theory is the presence of a lion and a cup in some depictions of the tauroctony: indeed [Leo](#) (a lion) and [Aquarius](#) (“the cup-bearer”) were the constellations seen as the northernmost (summer solstice) and southernmost (winter solstice) positions in the sky during the age of Taurus. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mithraism>

Regardless of its evolution, (mainly being developed under Persian influence) by the time of the Third Century AD, the religion was closely linked to the Sun god concept of Sol Invictus and was rapidly becoming the main religion of the both the Roman and Persian Empires (or at least the main religion of their armies). Mithraism was so popular in the Roman world, that it was the chief rival of the Christian church for nearly two centuries, along with the traditional Roman religion which held strong until the beginning of the fifth century.

- In his 1882 work *The Origins of Christianity* [Ernest Renan](#) stated that “if the growth of Christianity had been arrested by some mortal malady, the world would have been Mithraic. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mithraism>



We can not give a full and complete history of Mithraism, nor of the great internal debates on the religion and its concepts here in this book. What we can say is that the traditional “history” of the great rise of Christianity and the “conversion” of Constantine after his rise to power, is mostly “untrue” and greatly tainted by the modern dominance of Christian writers. However, we need to give more of an overview of both the political and cultural history to help explain some of the events that did occur.

- What we need to know is that the society that came out the Crisis was greatly different than the Roman society at the start of the Crisis.

After the Crisis the Third Century, the Emperor Diocletian succeeded in gaining the type of powers that the other emperors had sought.

Diocletian brought an end to the period popularly known to historians as the “[Crisis of the Third Century](#)” (235–284). He established an [autocratic](#) government and was responsible for laying the groundwork for the second phase of the [Roman Empire](#), which is known variously as the “[Dominate](#)” (as opposed to the [Principate](#) instituted by [Augustus](#)), the “Tetrarchy”, or simply the “Later Roman Empire”.  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diocletian>

Diocletian ruled much like the Persian emperors, rather than a Roman or Greek republican or even as a “first citizen.” The victories of Athens against Persia were seemingly now completely reversed.

In addition, Diocletian, and later Constantine, implemented edicts that basically “froze” society; eliminating any hope for “social advancement” of the “average Roman.”

Also, this Sol Invictus religion was the religion of Diocletian, and he attacked Christianity as being a rival of his primary religious belief; however, once again the pretext for the repression was the Christians’ unwillingness to make public sacrificial offerings to the Emperor.

- On [February 24, 303](#), Diocletian’s first “Edict against the Christians” was published. This ordered the destruction of Christian scriptures and places of worship across the Empire, while prohibiting Christians from assembling for worship. After fires in

Diocletian's palace at [Nicomedia](#) and revolts in Asia Minor, the Emperor took harder measures against Christians, ordering the arrest of all bishops and priests. These were later released if they agreed to sacrifice, which was taken as a sign of [apostasy](#) from Christianity. In spring 304, a further edict ordered everyone to sacrifice.

- According to one estimate, a total of 3,000–3,500 Christians were killed in the persecution, while many others suffered torture or imprisonment.
- This wave of persecution was enforced most strictly in the Empire's eastern provinces, where it lasted in some areas until [313](#). This year saw the issue of the [Edict of Milan](#) by [Constantine I](#) and [Licinius](#). <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diocletian>

Aurelian's Sol Invictus, as well as some elements of Mithras, comprised the religion of Constantine the Great, up to the time of his death and conversion to Christianity (if that in fact really happened). Constantine joined in the efforts of the leadership of the Empire to eliminate the chaos being caused by the religious fighting and persecutions. Among other steps, he issued the Edict of Milan;

The Edict, (313 AD) in the form of a joint letter to be circulated among the governors of the East, declared that the Empire would be neutral with regard to religious worship, officially removing all obstacles to the practice of [Christianity](#) and other religions.

The Edict clearly was aimed at allowing for religious freedom, not as a proclamation of Christian superiority (as it is often presented in Christian-influenced history).

It “declared unequivocally that the co-authors of the regulations wanted no action taken against the non-Christian cults.” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edict\\_of\\_Milan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edict_of_Milan)

Throughout the earlier periods of his reign, Constantine clearly supported and promoted Sol Invictus. He often compared himself in public statements and in coinage to the solar god.



Coin of Constantine, with depiction of the sun god [Sol Invictus](#), holding a [globe](#) and right hand raised. The legend on the reverse reads SOLI INVICTO COMITI, to (Constantine's) “companion, the unconquered Sol”. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantine\\_the\\_Great](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantine_the_Great)

It was only when the peace of the empire was constantly being undone by internal fighting

between the Christian sects that Constantine moved more publicly towards accepting Christianity. He went so far as to call for the first major legal meeting of the Christian leadership to try to sort out the differences in the Church, and to help bring about internal Roman peace. This meeting was held in Nicene in the year 325 AD. Mainly, the effort failed, as the famous Nicene Creed, while developed by the members present, was met with harsh resistance by many Christians and (it) took some seventy-five years of more internal fighting before it was accepted (at least in the West).

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First\\_Council\\_of\\_Nicaea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Council_of_Nicaea)

Although he was not baptized, Constantine at least adopted the persona of a Christian for the meeting. It appears that his motivation was not only to try to bring about peace, but also to make the church subservient to the State:

- The Council of Nicaea was historically significant because it was the first effort to attain [consensus](#) in the church through an [assembly](#) representing all of [Christendom](#). “It was the first occasion for the development of technical [Christology](#).”
- Further, “Constantine in convoking and presiding over the council signaled a measure of imperial control over the church.”

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First\\_Council\\_of\\_Nicaea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Council_of_Nicaea)



What remains of the great church in Nicaea (modern day Iznit in Western Turkey) in which the first great council was held under the guidance of Constantine, and the concept of the Trinity was made “Orthodox” – Personal Photo

Once the effort at consensus failed, Constantine reverted to a far older form of soothing. It appears that he attempted to purchase the Church’s support for his compromise solution (called the Nicene Creed) to their internal debate and to use this form of persuasion in order to convince the Christians to stop causing riots in so many of the Eastern cities. As noted, in this, Constantine’s efforts to bring peace to the Church, he failed. The Church took the money and kept on with the internal fighting. At the very least, however, Constantine was successful in setting a precedent for bribery in the Church.

- As noted there is almost another seventy-five years of internal fights between the supporters and the rejecters of the Nicene Creed, (if to say that debate was ever solved) and there were Emperors who supported the Creed and those who did not. At



times there was an Emperor in the East who did and an Emperor in the West who did not, and vice a versa. In addition, most of the German peoples did not accept the Creed, but were mostly Arian Christians who rejected the creed (with almost the sole exception being the Franks).

The first real “Christian Emperor” who created and enforced edicts against the older religions was not Constantine, or his family, but Theodosius (the Great), and then his incompetent sons Honorius, and Arcadius.

- Theodosius promoted Nicene Trinitarianism within Christianity and Christianity within the empire. In 391 (AD) he declared Christianity as the only legitimate imperial religion, ending state support for the traditional Roman religion.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodosius\\_I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodosius_I)

Later we will talk about this process of the “Christianization” of the Roman State, however, we will now pause for a quick review of important points we have presented in this chapter:

The Severus effort to impose an Eastern religion on the Empire (to help bring about state unity) seem to be have been a “dry run” for the more successful efforts of Constantine, and the Emperor Theodosius, and for exactly the same reasons;

- Whereas Constantine legitimized Christianity as a religion in the 330’s, later, just short of 400 AD, Theodosius imposed it as the State Religion. The goal of these rulers was to strengthen their justification of dictatorial powers through the concepts of “one god, one emperor.”

But most importantly for this work, and for the premise of this book, the Severus efforts, especially those of Elagabalus, shows that the religion of Ba’al was still vital and influential long into the “Christian” era. The use of child sacrifice, and other rituals of Ba’al, including the Latinization of the name of Ba’al as “Balus” by a Roman emperor, shows that the religion was not only a competitor of Christianity, but was clearly more important and popular long into what we can call Christian history, and long into what is now called the fourth century (AD).

Sol Invictus, the religion of the Phoenicians, or at least a modified form of it, clearly was gaining momentum in the key element of the society, the army. The soldiers ran the Empire and Sol Invictus (both as a Phoenician sun god and as Mithras) was the religion of the soldiers. And, the army seems to be the general cause of the “Crisis of the Third Century.”

- Perhaps the link between the chaos brought on by the almost constant changing of emperors at the whim of the army, and the army devotion to the Mithras religion, may have added to the eventual failure of Sol Invictus.

However, as with so many other crises in the past, the people who actually survived the crisis looked for some explanation for the failure of the old order to maintain stability and “freedom from fear.” It appears that Christianity was not just in battle with the “old gods” of Rome (who appeared to be on the decline anyways) but was just one of a wide range of religions in competition for the hearts and minds of people living through a crisis (or better said a series of crises.)

As we have seen throughout history, people in this time period sought relief in religion(s) for the “failure of the state” and the failure of the army to maintain order. They did not turn to

religion out of some desire to constantly create disorder. (With a reference here to the old Mayor Daly of Chicago who during the 1968 Democratic Party convention stated: “The police are not here to create disorder; the police are here to maintain disorder”) In the first and second centuries AD, the Roman world still offered a wide selection of religious approaches, including many new (mainly Eastern) ones. Though based on ancient foundations, many of these religions appeared to be new to the West.

However, it was during this time of fear, this Crisis of the Third Century, that the people (and the rulers) of the Empire really began to “reconsider” their religious view. Many religions began to boom, including as we have seen Sol Invictus and Mithraism, but also multiple forms of Christianity. There were so many that they can not be accounted for here; but among the “Christian groups” there was even a merging of Mithraism and Christianity call Manichaeism (see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manichaeism> ) (The first “Christian” religious choice of St Augustine).

So, while the pre-Crisis emperors were importing Sol Invictus more for political reasons, the Crisis, and the lost of faith in the earthly security that Roman had offered, made people really start to consider the issues of their own personal salvations.

- Well past the Crisis, St. Augustine wrote some of his most important writings during another period of chaos, as his city of Hippo lay under the siege of the Vandals. He wrote about the *City of God*, as his city, and his whole understanding of the world, was collapsing around him. There was no help forthcoming from the Emperor; help had to come from elsewhere. There was no “salvation” in this world (the army coming just in time to save the city). As he waited, he saw salvation coming in the next.

Yet even with all the chaos of the Crazy Emperors, the Crisis of the Third Century, the imposition of the Dictatorship of the new style emperors, the invasion of the Germans and Goths, and the tales of the even greater evil forces pressing towards the empire (the Huns) this 200 year or so period between 190 AD and 395, even with this on-going crisis and the new realization that the Empire was failing to meet the basic need of protection and stability, Christianity did not become the dominant religious player that “history” seems to project to us in our time.

- Even with the coming of the reign of Constantine, Christians were still only about 10% of the Roman population.
- By the beginning of the 300s AD, Christians in the eastern half of the empire had expanded to twenty or more percent of its Greek speaking population. North Africa had become largely Christian, the result of Christian evangelists having learned the Coptic and Berber languages. And Christians had also learned Syrian, Thracian and Celtic. Across the empire, Christians were around ten percent of the population - their number having doubled in about fifty years. <http://www.fsmitha.com/h1/ch23.htm>

What is clear from this all too quick review is that:

- If the pre-Christian Emperors had succeeded in their intentions to make Sol Invictus/Ba'al the religions of the Empire, Christianity would have been completely repressed, (as with all the other religions of the time).

However, without the success, it is also obvious that the worship of Ba'al, or Mithras, by the

name Sol Invictus, by the Roman Emperors was a clear challenge to the small, but growing Christian minority and something that threatened the very existence of the Christian religion itself. It is also true that the “old religion” of the Empire, still remained active and powerful, especially within the elite classes in the West. And our popular image of how Christianity came to power is, well, “popular”, but mostly untrue.

As we examine this period of crisis, we see a world in which the emperors move towards absolutism, and we see a world in which the social structures of centuries are crumbling. Christians are still a small minority that grows during the period of crisis, but still faces challenges on many fronts. To win these challenges, to defeat the competition during this time, there was a clear need by the Christians to adopt and adapt, if not the message of the religion, at least the “bells and whistles” of the religion.

## **Part V – The Morphing of Ideas –**

### **Section I – The Challenge to the New “Old” Order**

#### **Subsection D The Buying and Selling of Christianity**

The Church, during the 2-6<sup>th</sup> centuries AD made changes to meet the popular and political challenges of the other religions. The process was not easy or smooth and it resulted in extensive new fighting over the very aspects of the “vision” of the new Church. The infighting, after some 275 years of initial sparring, became so severe that it escalated into almost the “main event” of the times. As we’ve discussed, this state of affairs eventually led Constantine and other Emperors to intervene. The accusation of heresy became the ultimate “haymaker” in these internal religious fights.

As noted, the Imperial efforts took two roads, trying to find an intellectual solution to the internal debates and the second was to buy off the church. The second option was far easier. Churches were built and supported throughout the Empire (with great amounts of gold used in their construction). The Bishops became virtually salaried employees of the State.

Between the reign of Constantine and the fall of the West, the Church was made, through direct and indirect state policy, vastly wealthy. It became the second most-wealthy entity in the Roman world, other than the state. In doing so, the Roman state bought off all the energy of the Church that had been focused on meeting the needs of the poor, as a means of perhaps ameliorating the great social injustices of the day. The State still encouraged the Church to work with the poor, but only as a means of gaining the support of both.

- At the same time, the Church leadership became wealthy, and as is almost always the case, corrupt and self-interested.

As the “pagan” world was ending, all the lands and wealth of the “pagan temples” and shrines were turned over by the State to the Church (after the pagan structures were destroyed or modified.) In just a few short years, the nature of the Church leadership changed, as did the overall message of the Church.

- For the most part, the Church became a tool of the state (in both East and West) and Christ became an “imperial” cult god (which was treated much like Sol Invictus or Mithras). The Church, however, had still not been widely accepted by the “masses.”

However, the struggle to gain the “love of the masses” began during the rise to power. It is during this timeframe that we mostly see the “solutions,” or the compromises to the masses, become incorporated in the religion. Once in power, and once in the pocket book of the Emperors the message of the church changed more and more from social justice in this world to “give unto Caesar, and a focus on the “next world”.

The “people” resisted the imposition of this new state absolutist religion on them long after current popular history would have us believe.

- Rome was more pagan than Christian up until the 390’s; Gaul, Spain and Northern Italy, in all but the urban areas, were pagan, save Milan which remained half pagan. For a review of this resistance please see



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution\\_of\\_religion\\_in\\_ancient\\_Rome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_religion_in_ancient_Rome)

It appears that Paganism, much like Christianity in its early days, was seen as means of “political resistance” against absolutism. Those who seemed most likely to maintain the old religions were those most concerned about “rights” and resistance to the “imperial emperors.” Therefore, in its last days of Roman history, the appeal of “paganism” was in defiance of the culture of absolutism.

As much as the State tried to impose Christianity from above, there was great resistance from “below.” However, the Church once bought off and in power, at the request of the emperors, began to make changes. They began to “merge” the world of the Pagans and the world of the Christians, to cut down on the cultural conflicts and to allow the “Pagans” to be more accepting of the new “absolutist” religion.

We can see a number of the steps taken by the Church to do just that; to better sell themselves to the “masses.” Some of these came early on, in the pre-power days, others we can see were controversies, but once in power, the Church moved to change the controversy, often in favor of the “older” religion.

On the road to this position of power, one of the first things the Church did to make itself more popular and appealing was to establish separation from the Jewish perspectives. The Jews were still considered a major “Enemy of the State” because of the many, large scale revolts during the early period of the Church’s development. As we have noted, the final break with the Jews came over the second and third revolts against Rome, when the Christians refused to support the wars.

- To separate themselves from the Jews, in the eyes of the non-Jewish populations and to be more acceptable to those non-Jewish peoples, the Church had ended the requirements of circumcision. (According to Justin Martyr, Moses had instituted this rite because he had a cruel heart.) They had also done away with all the food restrictions associated with Judaism.

While the Jews were unpopular with most Romans (but not most subjected peoples of the Roman Empire) other religions were popular and had also to be addressed and appealed to with compromises. To address the “Pagans” and the Sun God worshipers, the Church made some easy concessions that allowed the people to “do what they did, only slightly differently.” A few things the Church did for the followers of Sol Invictus included:

- Making Sunday the Christian day of rest, and
- Having Christ born on December 25<sup>th</sup> the sacred day of the Sol Invictus



<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c0/MithraRelief.jpg>

However, they did not officially do so, until under the pay of the emperors. As noted in a Lutheran website on the history of Paganism;

The earliest extant record of Christ's birth being observed on December 25 is the Chronography in 354 A.D. By the time that Chrysostom was Bishop of Constantinople (398-404), Christ's birth was being observed on Dec. 25 throughout Christendom, though the Church in Armenia observed it on January 6.

(One) theory of how this came about states that the Church of Rome deliberately chose December 25 as the date of Christ's birth to turn people away from a pagan feast that was observed at the same time. Since the time of the Roman emperor Elagabalus (218-222), the god Sol Invictus (he Unconquered Sun god), had been one of the chief deities worshiped by the Romans. When Emperor Aurelian (270-275) came to power, he sought to restore the worship of the Sun god to prominence and make him the chief deity. In the last years of his reign, Sol was hailed as "The Lord of the Roman Empire." ... December 25 was observed as "the birthday of the Sun god" (natales solis invicti). The Church at Rome seems to have chosen this date to counteract this pagan feast of the sun god and turn people instead to the "Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings" (Malachi 4:2; Luke 1:78). Or put another way, Julius chose December 25 so that the Son of God rather than the Sun god would be worshiped.

- Though there is no direct evidence that proves that the Church of Rome deliberately chose December 25 so that Christ's birth would replace "the birthday of the sun," we do have sermons from fathers of the church who soon after this used this line of reasoning. For example, Augustine (354-430) in his sermon 202 and Leo the Great (440-461 -- PL 54 Sources chrtiennes 22) gives this line of reasoning. [http://www.orlutheran.com/html/chrmas\\_pagan4.html](http://www.orlutheran.com/html/chrmas_pagan4.html)

Making such concessions to Pagans, to try and win their support was relatively easy. However, there were other issues, almost at the core of the religion that needed to be addressed, that not only limited the appeal, but actually brought the religion under ridicule. One such issue was:

- "Where was Christ?"

And, the second part of the question included:

- Why had not the savior returned in a prompt fashion to become king of the world and to take out revenge on the unrighteous rulers and evil doers and bring relief to the downtrodden?

The need to respond to this question, to other religions, as well as to their own people, was quite clear when Christ did not come back right away (which is what most of the early Christians thought was about to happen). The belief was that Christ would return within days, then months, then “any time now”.... And as that event, the Second Coming, (or ‘**Parousia**’ (παρουσία), did not occur, the very premise of the Church was at risk.

It appears that the writings of the gospels promise a quick return

- “Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom” ([Matthew 16:28](#), [Mark 9:1](#), [Luke 9:27](#))
- “This generation (γενεά) will not pass away until all these things have taken place” ([Matthew 24:34](#), [Luke 21:32](#))

And also there seemed to be a great expectation from the early church membership of this return. As we see in the writings of Paul:

- Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come.” 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2

He goes on to say in the same letter:

- 3Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for (that day will not come) until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

We see it was a pressing issue also in Second Peter 3:

3First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. 4They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.”

In reply to this issue, Peter offers a “cosmic” response:

8But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. 9The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

And again, Peter is promising that the “meek shall inherit the earth” so to speak:

11 .... what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 12

as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming ... 13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

Despite the early efforts to downplay the idea of the Second Coming:

- “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father” (Matthew 24:36)

As pointed out in a website with the modest name of “All About God”

“This doctrine of the millennial kingdom had already many adherents in the first centuries of the church. Theologians as Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and others believed in the ...(imminent) return of Jesus Christ. ... “

Also Paul stated: in 1 Thessalonians 4:17:

- “Then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds of the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord.”  
<http://www.allaboutgod.com/>

The debates on this issue of the second coming, and when it would occur, were long and hard, and internally destructive to the early Church. The vexing problem of the imminent return of Christ is ignored or downplayed in most histories of the time.

Internal to the overall debate were many “sub-questions”; such as will the resurrection of the dead, as promised with the Second Coming, be physical or only of the “soul.” In this world, at this time, these were critical questions.

- Early Christians looked forward to the return of Jesus as judge of the world, to the resurrection of the dead, and to eternal life in a perfected world... (Christian) apologists defended the resurrection of the dead against pagan philosophers, who considered the soul worthy of perfection but not the body. Origen, however, promoted a Platonic viewpoint and denied the physical resurrection.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early\\_Christianity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_Christianity)

So, while the idea of Christ coming back was there, it was one involving much debate; many followers looked for the “second coming” in their lives. When the event did not occur, for hundreds of years, the Church had to take action to try to limit the damage that was being caused to its popular appeal by this apparent lack of a leading character in the magic act (the prestige). (As noted in a recent movie, *The Prestige*, the key to any good magic act is not making something disappear, but bringing the object back.) And so far, the Church had failed to bring the key element, “the prestige”, back.

However, once in power, the issue became more complicated. Since the return of Jesus would end the world as it existed, it would also end the power of the emperors themselves. This was not quite a popular notion among the emperors, and slowly the Church moved away from the concept of the “imminent” return of Jesus. The Church ended the debate on the timing of the “second coming” by simply declaring the belief in the “imminent” return of Jesus a heresy.

The Roman Catholic Church officially condemned the chiliastic (imminent) theories as erroneous in A.D. 373, some fifty years into the Roman Emperors pay book.

- The Roman Church regards, to this day, all faith in a peaceful millennial reign of Christ as heretical teaching. It maintains that the period of a thousand years mentioned in the book of Revelation must not be understood in a literal sense. This view is called 'A-millennialism.

See <http://users.ncrvnet.nl/tjderuiter/site3/chilias-e.htm>

Another challenge for the Early Church was that it was denounced for exactly what it appeared to be, a new religion without historical foundation. This concept of a "new religion" was much ridiculed by the philosophers of the time. Most of the early church people replied that they were not really new, but were based in the religious history of the Jews (a new covenant with God, replacing the old one).

This claim to be a continuation of the Jews, and therefore an Ancient religion was rejected by one of the early powerful leaders of the Church itself, Marcion of Sinope. He claimed that the God of the Old Testament was not the God of Christ (there was no New Testament, as of yet. Part of the irony of all this is that Marcion is the first to actually try to codify a "New Testament"). He claimed, especially on the heels of the great failure of the Bar Kokhba revolt (and the two other failed Jewish revolts), that the God of the Old Testament was a devil, based in hate and falseness. And that the God of the "New Testament" or the God of Jesus, was the true God of love and forgiveness and salvation. Marcion saw the Jewish God as

- ... inconsistent, jealous, wrathful and genocidal, and that the material world he created is defective, a place of suffering; the god who made such a world is a bungling or malicious [demiurge](#). .... In Marcionite belief, [Christ](#) is not a [Jewish Messiah](#), but a spiritual entity that was sent by the [Monad](#) to reveal the truth about existence, and thus allowing humanity to escape the earthly trap of the demiurge. Marcion called God, the Stranger God, or the Alien God, in some translations, as this deity had not had any previous interactions with the world, and was wholly unknown.  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcionism>

This concept of seeing Christianity as offering a "new God" and a new religion fell right into the ridicules of the intellectual class of the time and was rejected by the newly developing Church. The Church actually rushed to include the Old Testament as the foundation of the Church, in the Christian Bible, in response to Marcion's attacks.

- This battle over whether the God of Jesus was new or not, raged in the Church for hundreds of years with Marcion's beliefs being ruled as "heretical" only in the mid 350's.

This issue caused the Church to run to the Jewish sources for support of the concept of Christianity as an "ancient religion", in order to refute Marcion. This again brought up the unpopular connection to the Jews. So the Church started to look into these "Old Testament" texts more and more, not as the Jews would, but with the purpose of finding "predictions" for the coming of Jesus as the Messiah and also, unfortunately, as real history. The Church reasoning for including the Old Testament was three fold: to try to win over the Jews, to denounce Marcion, and perhaps most importantly, to respond to the attacks of their very

“newness.”

The answers to these issues on “newness,” and many others can be found in the writings of Justin Martyr, in both his “Apologies” and his “conversations” with Jews. (For these and other early Christian writings see <http://www.ccel.org/> . A fuller understanding of all the problems facing the Church in their efforts to obtain “popular positions,” that I can not even outline here, but the writings of Justin Martyr are a good place to start. For example, in his Chapter XXIV of “Apologies” he makes the claim that the Church and Christians are really just like everyone else, just a little different ... and slightly misunderstood.

- “Though we say things similar to what the Greeks say, we only are hated on account of the name of Christ, and though we do no wrong, are put to death as sinners; other men in other places worshipping trees and rivers, and mice and cats and crocodiles, and many irrational animals. ... And this is the sole accusation you bring against us, that we do not reverence the same gods as you do, nor offer to the dead libations and the savior of fat, and crowns for their statues, and sacrifices.”

Although he does go a bit farther in separating “Pagan” from Christian

“And, secondly, because we—who, out of every race of men, used to worship Bacchus the son of Semele, and Apollo the son of Latona (who in their loves with men did such things as it is shameful even to mention), and Proserpine and Venus (who were maddened with love of Adonis, and whose mysteries also you celebrate), or Æsculapius, or some one or other of those who are called gods—have now, through Jesus Christ, learned to despise these, though we be threatened with death for it, and have dedicated ourselves to the unbegotten and impossible

God; of whom we are persuaded that never was he goaded by lust of Antiope, or such other women, or of Ganymede, nor was rescued by that hundred-handed giant whose aid was obtained through Thetis, nor was anxious on this account that her son Achilles should destroy many of the Greeks because of his concubine Briseis.

Those who believe these things we pity and those who invented them we know to be devils.”

In both these and other writings, Justin uses the claim that becomes a dominant opinion stressed throughout early Christian writings, (and while it seems to support the views of Marcion, that the God of the Jews was a devil, Justin claims it does not).

- Justin and others early Christians say that the ancient Greek and Roman (and all the other Gods of the Ancient world) were devils and demons, but not the God of the Old Testament.

So, while on the face of it, this would seem to be attacking the “pagans,” it was actually a more “friendly position” than the Jews took on the Pagan gods; as we have seen before the early Christians did not directly challenge the existence of the other Gods, only the nature of their “holiness,” whereas the Jews denied the existence of all other gods but their God.

And, again, the Christians justified their existence and the common factors based on seeing the Gods of the old beliefs as devils, and said that the devils had fooled man into believing false ways of God and that Christ’s coming was to bring them back to God.



However insulting this may sound to us, in the modern world, it actually was a major selling point that enabled the Christians to appeal to the Pagans;

- This “devil” connection allowed the Christians to offer rituals similar to the Pagans, with only slight modifications (and the Christians were saying ... you almost got it right, but you got it wrong because .... . “the devil made me do it.”

For example in Justin’s conversations with Trypho the Jew,

- For when they tell that Bacchus, son of Jupiter, was begotten by intercourse with Semele, and that he was the discoverer of the vine; and when they relate, that being torn in pieces, AND HAVING DIED, HE ROSE AGAIN, AND ASCENDED TO HEAVEN; and when they introduce wine into his mysteries, do I not perceive that the devil has imitated the prophecy announced by the patriarch Jacob, and recorded by Moses?

This was the justification, the Devil’s influence, through which, the Church over time moved towards the “popular” religions of the day, and to eliminate controversies over the “little things” between them and the “pagans.” By using this basis, the Church could “morph” the existing practices of the old religions into the practices of the new religion by simply saying, “It’s the same format, different meaning. We do it “God’s way” and you did it the ‘Devil’s way’, so you can keep doing it, (slightly differently) and you’re still okay.”

This morphing and “devil” justification worked for many of the issues of the “masses” and their religious needs. However, there were many different views in the Church on how to address the Greek philosophies, and their resistance to Christianity, especially on the issues associated with “goodness” and the “God Head”. The view point of the Church changed over time and circumstance, often based on the emperor in power.

The conflict between the two modes of thought is recorded in scripture, in Paul’s encounters with [Epicurian](#) and [Stoic](#) philosophers in Acts, his diatribe against Greek philosophy in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians and his warning against philosophy in Colossians 2:8

Over time, however, as [Christianity](#) spread throughout the Hellenic world, an increasing number of church leaders were educated in [Greek Philosophy](#), leading to a fusion of the two modes of thought.

One early [Christian](#) writer of the second and early third century, [Clement of Alexandria](#), demonstrated the assimilation of Greek thought in writing: “Philosophy has been given to the Greeks as their own kind of Covenant, their foundation for the philosophy of Christ ... the philosophy of the Greeks ... contains the basic elements of that genuine and perfect knowledge which is higher than human ... even upon those spiritual objects.”

[Augustine of Hippo](#), who ultimately systematized [Christian philosophy](#), wrote in the 4<sup>th</sup> and early fifth century: “But when I read those books of the [Platonists](#) I was taught by them to seek incorporeal truth, so I saw your ‘invisible things, understood by the things that are made’ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hellenic\\_philosophy\\_and\\_Christianity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hellenic_philosophy_and_Christianity)

Despite the potential seen in these quotes, and despite the efforts of so many to “merge” the major ideas of Christianity and Greek philosophy, these big issues of “godhead” that were

raised internally, based on Greek thought, also needed to be addressed by the Church to both avoid ridicule and to gain popularity. What we know as the “great heresies” came about in the struggles to answer the questions raised by the Greek-based philosophies of the day.

The most critical area that the early Christians faced was one of how to address the perhaps most ancient of all traditions, that of “sacrifice.” As noted, the early Christians were in the most trouble and were called “atheist” because they not only rejected human sacrifice (because after Christ no additional human sacrifice was needed), but all forms of sacrifice - animal, vegetable, mineral, etc.

Up to the time of Constantine, through Diocletian, the main cause for efforts to repress the Christians was not in religious concepts, but in their failure to perform sacrifice. They specifically rejected the sacrifice to the cult of the Emperor, which was considered a civic duty by all Romans; most of the early repressions against the Church were over this question of “sacrifice.”

And as we have seen, the Church moved quickly to see the justification for no sacrifice. They held firm to the belief that the “sacrifice of Jesus” was the last needed sacrifice.

The social aspect of the sacrificial process, as we have also seen, was replaced by the “mass” and the “sacred meal.”

The early Christians never quite figured out how to deal with the emperor issues, until of course, the emperors became Christian and “praying” for the Emperor became the newly accepted form of obeisance.

In *Fiddler on the Roof*, there is a line concerning a prayer for the Czar; “May the Lord bless and keep the Czar – far away from us.”

The Church moved quickly to deal with the “mass” public issue and their traditions associated with the animal sacrifice rituals, by declaring the “Mass” the religious sequence of the “new religion” to be in fact, a sacrifice, and a substitute for the traditional (devil inspired) rituals of the past.

The inclusion of bread and wine in the ceremonies were a direct substitute for the “sacred meal” associated with the past rituals of sacrifice.

- So, once again, the Church was saying to the potential converts: “It’s OK to keep doing what you have been doing, only a bit differently; the devil put you on the right track for the wrong reasons, now we will make it right with just a few adjustments.”

However, this solution seemed to only work for the “event” issues, of when and how to worship and when and how to have the big celebrations (Christmas, Easter). Here, we see the easy “morphing” taking place.

- However, the Church had a much harder time in trying to figure out the right way to address the real major “form” question of the period, the “god head;” and the church involved itself in such intense debates and outright fighting, that it almost destroyed itself over this “form” question of the “true nature of Christ” and how Christ fit into the “godhead.”



During the evolution of the Church, there were many answers to this question of what and who Christ was, and what and who God was, ranging from the proposition that Christ was actually fully human but adopted by God at the point of baptism, to the idea that he had no human nature at all and was fully God, and his crucifixion was an illusion (since gods can't really die.) (For a full view of all the heresies and their answers to the questions of the day, please see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian\\_heresy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_heresy) )

- These issues may seem tangential to the general theme of this book, except when we remember the basic justification given by the Church as to why Christ's death was not to be considered a human sacrifice which of course was the explanation that Christ was not human. If there was belief that he was fully or partly human that takes away from the "difference" position of the Church.

The most impacting of these fights, over the nature of Christ, became known as the Arian Heresy; which lasted for almost one hundred years. At times, the "Arian" point of view was actually shared by the "Orthodox" Church as well. The line supported by the emperors became the official line of the Church, and often the Orthodox Church view was considered wrong or simply ignored. Often during the times of the split Empire, one of the emperors favored the Arians (as did many of the German tribes who converted to Christianity as Arian Christians) only to be replaced by an emperor who supported the "Orthodox" views (more appropriately put, at this time, the Nicene Creed view.) Almost all of the "invading Barbarians" were "Arian Christians," not "Pagans".

And while we can not really go into the whole nature or history of the struggles over Arianism, it is important to note that a major part of the Arianian view was that Christ was the begotten son of God, but, begotten before the beginning of time. The Arians saw Christ in some way inferior to God, because of this process of "begotten."

Because most contemporary written material on Arianism was written by its opponents, the nature of Arius' teachings is difficult to define precisely today. The letter of [Auxentius](#), a 4<sup>th</sup> century Arian [bishop of Milan](#), regarding the missionary Ulfilas, gives the clearest picture of Arian beliefs on the nature of the Trinity: God the Father ("unbegotten"), always existing, was separate from the lesser Jesus Christ ("only-begotten"), born before time began and creator of the world. The Father, working through the Son, created the Holy Spirit, who was subservient to the Son as the Son was to the Father. The Father was seen as "the only true God." [1Corinthians 8:5-6](#) was cited as textual proof:

- Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth — as in fact there are many gods and many lords — yet for us there is one God (*theos*), the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord (*kyrios*), Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist."

A letter from Arius to [Eusebius of Nicomedia](#) succinctly states the core beliefs of the Arians:

... [W]e say and believe and have taught, and do teach, that the Son is not unbegotten, nor in any way part of the unbegotten; and that he does not derive his subsistence from any matter; but that by his own will and counsel he has subsisted before time and before ages as perfect God, only begotten and unchangeable, and that before he was begotten, or created, or purposed, or established, he was not. For

he was not unbegotten. (Peters, *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe*, p. 41)  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arianism>

In reading this we hear the strong echoes, if not out right statements, of the religion of the Ancients, being spoken of in “morphed” terms: First there is God the creator, the first generation of Gods, and then the Lord (or Ba’al) who is begotten by God, and as the first begotten, the most beloved, his death, his sacrifice, enables him to become the judge for all human kind. We can clearly see the transition, the Jewish veneer, (mainly there to enable the claim on only one God, (to justify one emperor) and then the rest is not only the mystery cults made public, but the focus of the sacrifice of the only begotten son of El, God, a tale going back some 6,000 years into the history of Phoenicia.

And so slowly over hundreds of years, the Church and the practices of the Church evolved, becoming much closer to the practices of their religious rivals at the time. The Church eventually adopted the superstructure of the Roman religions, and the Roman rites, as well as the rites of Sol Invictus, which became “Christianized” (while still letting the people have their festivals and “sacrifices” through the mass). The religion of resistance to the new Roman world, the religion that sought to gain freedom from the Roman world through focus on the “next world” was so successful in morphing the old concepts of the Ancient world into the Roman world that slowly, the Christian religion became the religion of the status quo.

And while we have looked at some of the issues of how it attempted to morph, we still have not answered the question of how, from roughly 313 AD (Edict of Milan) to about 450 AD, Christianity went from being the religion of about 10% of the Roman population, to supposedly the single allowable religion of the entire Roman Empire. To answer that question we need to look at yet some more history.

## Part V – The Morphing of Ideas - Section I –

### The Challenge to the New “Old” Order

#### Subsection E- Why Christianity Succeeded - Or did it? – Yet another Crisis

We have already seen that the rise of Christianity was neither quick nor smooth. In its first 350 years it had a great deal to work out internally and a great deal to work out with the “general public.” By 325 AD or so, the religion was still not that popular in the European land mass, even though it had become the “cult” religion of most of the Emperors. Nor was it popular in rural areas throughout the Empire (It was most popular in the “Eastern cities.”) Therefore, it had a growing power base, but was not dominant anywhere in the Empire, except maybe in North Africa. Although:

- 2) In 301 AD, [Arsacid Armenia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Armenia) was the first sovereign nation to accept Christianity as a state religion. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Armenia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Armenia)
- 3) Ethiopia was the second state to do so ... It converted to [Christianity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity) in 325 or 328 under [King Ezana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Ezana) and was the first state ever to use the image of the cross on [its coins](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Aksum) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom\\_of\\_Aksum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Aksum)

We have already discussed the Church’s effort to attract people, so now we have to examine the barriers that prevented the “coming over” to the newly presented religion, and as I would project, the newly stated ancient religion, for the bulk of the population.

Once again, records are not all that available so again we need to speculate a great deal. Perhaps one of the key reasons for the slow growth of Christianity was:

- Up until around 300-375 AD or so, there were still too many persons who had not really given up on the idea of “Rome” to completely give in to the “next worldliness” of the Christians (and other religions).
- Also, as we have seen the support of Paganism was a rejection of the absolutism of the emperors.
- There was still a great deal of competition and a variety of “alternative views. Perhaps there were too many people who accepted other versions of how to get to this next world, and other visions of how this next world would look.
- Perhaps it’s just that people find it hard to give up on old values, despite the conditions and the laws.
- In addition, for a long time, many people simply did not think that Christianity made much sense, nor was it “stable”; the basic creed of the Christians appeared to change frequently. The Church was constantly involved in internal fighting over some fine point of the religion.
- To many, it must have seemed that almost all of the Church members were being “damned” by one sect or another.

In fact, during the later Roman Empire period, Christians were killing Christians all the time

over disagreements of the “nature of Christ” or whether God was of three natures or two or one. They were killing each other in an attempt to resolve the “Arianism” dispute (which, as we have said revolved around the question of whether Jesus had been always alive, and with the “Father” at the beginning of time, or if he was newly created by the “Father”). In addition, they were killing each other over the role of women, and if Mary was really born of a virgin... and on and on.

The initial fighting can be seen in the earliest writings of Paul, and can be followed through the entire remaining history of the Roman Empire. Christians were killed by fellow Christians after hurling the term of “heretic” or some other accusation of “wrong thinking” at their internal competitors. These resulted in religious “sectarian” riots. Far more Christians died at the hands of their fellow believers than all the Christians that were killed as a result of Rome’s efforts to make Christians offer public sacrifice.

And what was “correct” at one point of the Church history, would be changed at a later point (Mao and Stalin were, by far, not the first to do this type of “rewriting of history” made famous in George Orwell’s “1984.” )

During the Roman Empire period, while Christianity was making its rise to power, the Church denounced many persons and “movements” that Church leaders determined to be counter to the “right actions” of the Church (and on occasion the Church was denounced and rejected for its’ wrong actions, by more “pure Christians” such as the Donatist of Africa, who split from the Church when even the Pope gave into Roman power and offered sacrifices to the Emperor).

- Excommunications from the Church during Roman times were frequent and many “thinkers” were deemed heretics, and forced into exile or worse.

One of the key reasons we have so little from the past is the Church’s constant efforts to destroy any work that differed from not just their religion, but also from what they became, “Orthodox.” We are now aware that there were dozens of “gospels” but few remain, and only recently have the texts of many been found (hidden away by true believers thousands of years ago, hidden by the “non-Orthodox” in the face of Orthodox repressions).

Once in power, thanks to the support of the absolutist emperors, the “Orthodox” Christians did all they could to “repress heresy” more strongly than they acted to repress Paganism. Hundreds of thousands of Romans (Christians and non-Christians) were killed in religious riots (over the nature of Christ or other such issues) or by official repressions of both “pagans” and “heretics” by the later Roman states (meaning both the Eastern and Western Empires). Soon, through the aid of the emperors, non-belief in Orthodoxy became a capital offense.

Once in power, for most of the Roman Church history, in lands controlled by Christians, it was not safe to be a non-conformist, or non-believer (although the Church did on occasion, later on, make efforts to protect the Jews against the “masses” of Christians out to kill them all, in the name of Christ).

- Yet in this earlier period of Christian development, from say 250 AD on, most people found that it was not safe to be a Christian, not so much due to the occasional Roman repression, but more so due to the constant infighting within the Christian church.
- Also, once the Church was in power, say by 400 AD, most people found that it was

now not safe to be a non-Christian.

And with all this conflict, there would be periods of time where Arian bishops (one of the so called great heresies) were in power in some places, to be replaced by “Orthodox” bishops, and later to be replaced again by an Arian, and then again Orthodox. Each “replacement” would result in “purges” of the followers of the others with great loss of property and life among the Christians.

The persecution of the Christians by fellow Christians over internal debates is highlighted by a letter of one of the great rivals (as we have noted) to the “Orthodox,” the Bishop Arius:

“Some of them say that the Son is an eructation, others that he is a production, others that he is also unbegotten ... These are impieties to which we cannot listen, even though the heretics threaten us with a thousand deaths. We are persecuted, because we say that the Son has a beginning, but that God is without beginning.” -- A letter from Arius to [Eusebius of Nicomedia](#). (Peters, *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe*, p. 41) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arianism>

In this case, the “heretics” referred to by Arius were in fact what we would call the Catholic Church, his great rival. And of course, the Catholics called Arius a heretic and back and forth it went.

- So, what of the poor, every day Christian?
- Based on what some gathering of bishops would determine was “correct” (and the Bishops did change their minds often) an “every day Christian” ran the risk of being on the right side of a controversy one day and the wrong side the next. (“We have always been at war with Eurasia” – as George Orwell would say in 1984).

In fact, the history of Christianity shows a movement violently in opposition to itself, and complete with internal cold and hot wars over its whole history, with major conflicts taking place throughout the time of the “fall of Rome”.

- These internal debates started almost immediately with the conflict between Paul and the “Jerusalem church” over both money and the rites of Judaism (circumcision and eating of pork, and the rest of the 613).

It took a while for the Church to have official sanction to kill, but they soon achieved that power as well.

- It should be noted that Pagans were not the only ones in trouble in the new order; in 385 AD Priscillian becomes the first (Christian) heretic ever sentenced to death under a Christian prince. He was executed for witchcraft, which was a capital offense, but in reality, he made enemies because of his Manichaeian doctrines.  
[http://www.davidmacd.com/catholic/timeline\\_of\\_catholic\\_church.htm](http://www.davidmacd.com/catholic/timeline_of_catholic_church.htm)

In addition, besides this constant internal fighting, the theology of the Church, or what has been called “the good news” or the “divine truth” was not always as attractive as the Church and Christian leaders (even of today) thought.

Meanwhile, within the Empire, with the help of the Roman State, most peoples eventually

became at least nominally Christian. However, within a few hundred years, once free of Rome, many of these people abandoned the religion.

- Within some 250 years after the end of the Empire in the West, North Africa including Egypt, Spain, and most of the Middle East south of Anatolia, were no longer ruled by Christians, and within another 100 years or so most of the people in these areas had abandoned Christianity (and, as can be proven, this was not because of forced conversions to other faiths)

In addition, we can see other areas where Christianity of one form or the other took hold only to be again, abandoned.

- Almost all of the lands along the trade routes (most of what is now called Central Asia and Mongolia) to China had a strong Nestorian Christian presence for more than 400 years, only to be replaced by Islam.
- Christianity was established in China long before the coming of the Portuguese and Spanish in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, but basically died out due to lack of local conversions.

And in later history, we can see that the appeal of Christianity is not always, well, that appealing. In the heyday of European “imperialism” in which large areas of Asia came under “Christian rule,” there were little long term impacts on the religion of the peoples in many of these areas.

- The Christians regained the “holy land” during the Crusades and despite efforts at forced conversion of the conquered peoples, and even in the face of death for not converting. Christianity was still rejected by most of the conquered people (those not killed by the Crusaders).
- Later, England ruled India for 200 years and few Indians converted to the Christian faith.
- For almost two centuries from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> to mid 20<sup>th</sup>, the French, English, American and Russian missionaries were all over China, and very few Chinese converted.

In relatively modern times, Christianity was mainly spread (with almost the sole exception of the Philippines, Viet Nam and Korea) to nearly empty lands, or lands made nearly empty by the arrival of the Christians (the die off in the Americas of the “native populations is estimated to be nearly 90%) or, through severe repression of local peoples, such as in Africa.

- The purpose of this “side trip” into history, is to take a look at a point of view that is not often presented in the West. It is also to give some justification for understanding that the “ideology” or the “creed” of the Church has not been universally accepted once the “masses” heard the “good news.” Therefore, there is little reason to expect that the Roman peoples also accepted the “good news” upon hearing it. In fact, what records remain shows the opposite; most persons rejected Christianity upon first (and after many, many times) hearing the story of Jesus.

However, despite all of these problems of internal fighting, and a religion that seemed to many as “silly” or at best unclear, and at first so counter to the existing order (at least as far as the process of sacrifice goes) it seems that the Christians won the culture wars, and that

Rome became Christian after all. So why did they win? Some of the answers could be found by looking at some simple issues: Here is how the Christians differed from, for example, one of their key rivals, Mithras:

- Perhaps it is that the Christians were better organized (The Mithras religion had no organized priesthood).
- Perhaps it is that that Christians were open to more peoples and classes (The Mithras religion did not allow women or slaves).
- Perhaps it is that the Christians adopted a better environment for worship (The Mithras religion worshiped in caves).

These differences (better organized, allowing for more people, better settings) tended to help the Christian movement. But then again, as we have seen over and over, the real reason for “rethinking” of the Roman religion was not based on these simple things, but in fact lies in yet another crisis that leads to the very elimination of the Western Roman state. This was a long term, slow rolling crisis that covered the time period between 376 AD (the beginning of the Gothic Wars) please see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Adrianople](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Adrianople) and 476 AD to the ending.

It is here, with the “ending of the world,” that we finally see the abandonment of the older religions and the acceptance of Christianity by the remaining bulk of the population. However, as we will see most of the transference came as a result of State pressure, not true love of Christ. The change came as a result of fear and repression, and abandonment of hope, not so much in a belief of a new beginning, or the “good news”.

Also, it was the increasing civil power of the Church (in the West) that made it less safe to be a non-Christian. As the state of Rome collapsed, and the Church took on most civic duties expected of a state, the power of the Church increased along with its ability to demand conformity. The Church could demand conformity in exchange for civil services. As the Church gained civil power, the new post-Roman Empire civil authorities (the German replacement states) needed to gain support from the Church which had become the de facto “civil infrastructure.” The prerequisite for the Church’s support became the new rulers’ acceptance of the Orthodox religion. (Still, this was a slow process, with much resistance of many Arian kings.)

Therefore, political power, and as we will see, the willingness to use that political power seems to be one of the great answers of why Christianity won out. The State bought the Church off, and as the state collapsed, the Church, at least in the West, was all that remained. And for the successor states to gain the support of the remaining superstructure (which was of course the Church itself) the Church demanded that they accept their religion.

This explanation seems simple (based in Marvin Harris’ concepts of cultural materialism) and understandable enough. However, there is quite a bit more. The other major element of what attracted people to the Church, or at least forced the people to the Church, was fear, and the message of fear that the Church presented.

As we will see, this fear seems to represent the times well.

However, first, to understand the fear, and the “success” of the fear, we need to examine the



crisis in the Roman world in more detail.

There are many theories on how the Roman Empire in the West fell (or transformed itself) and we have little evidence to show which theory is more correct than any of the others.

- One of the primary reasons for the sheer number of theories is the notable lack of surviving evidence from the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. For example there are so few records of an economic nature it is difficult to arrive at even a generalization of the economic conditions. Thus, historians must quickly depart from available evidence and comment based on how things ought to have worked, or based on evidence from previous and later periods, on [inductive reasoning](#). As in any field where available evidence is sparse, the historian's ability to imagine the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries will play as important a part in shaping our understanding as the available evidence, and thus be open for endless interpretation. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decline\\_of\\_the\\_Roman\\_Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decline_of_the_Roman_Empire)

(So, I too can do this type of presentation)

However, we may need to look back a bit more for evidence of an increase in the support for Christianity to the Emperor who is given the most credit for ending the Crisis of the Third Century; the Emperor Diocletian.

Once firmly established in power, and once he had created a new state constitution which he believed would end the succession turmoil that had plagued the Empire for most of its history (and was mostly the cause of the Crisis of the Third Century), the Emperor made efforts to fix the economy, which due to the Crisis, had nearly collapsed. Diocletian instituted what has been called the first effort at "state socialism."

- In 301, Diocletian attempted to curb the rampant [inflation](#) with his [Edict on Maximum Prices](#). This edict fixed prices for over a thousand goods, fixed wages, and threatened the [death penalty](#) to merchants who overcharged.

As part of this effort, he declared that all persons would continue in the profession and status of their parent.

- Skilled laborers, local bureaucrats and tenant farmers ([coloni](#)) were made hereditary by law in an effort to stabilize both the tax base and the apparatus for tax collection [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diocletian#Economic\\_reforms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diocletian#Economic_reforms)

He froze people in their station (which was somewhat ironic since Diocletian was the son of a slave). And, through this edict, he robbed people of any hope of advancement in society.

- Despite the American myth of we being the first real land of opportunity (Horatio Alger and all that - see <http://www.horatioalger.com/> ), Rome had been also the land of great chance for advancement (as seen in the life of Diocletian himself, from a son of a slave to Emperor). With Diocletian's ruling much of that hope ended.

And as we noted, Diocletian also instituted the last major repression of Christians during Roman times. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diocletian\\_Persecution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diocletian_Persecution) that continued under his successors (more or less) until Constantine became sole ruler.

The economic policies of Diocletian were much hated by the people of the Empire, and while

greatly feared, it appears that Diocletian was none too well liked either. Therefore, it is possible, that we begin to see the increase in support of Christianity, not just due to the success of Constantine, but because of the hatred of Diocletian. (If he repressed the Christians, perhaps I'll join the Christians, as a process of opposing Diocletian.)

It should be noted here that the original term AD was not the in the year of our lord ... that came about in the 6<sup>th</sup> century , but the term AD or the beginning of counting time in a “new beginning” referred to the end of the Diocletian repressions (After Diocletian) ... and later, about two hundred years after the Christians started tracking time based on the ending of the Diocletian repressions, the Church changed the year and the meaning of the term to AD and determined that the Christian year was now 525 AD rather than about 220 AD.

Also, it is possible that the appeal of Christianity grew with the closing of the possibility of advancement in “this world” mandated by Diocletian.

- If the empire was freezing advancement in this world, perhaps the Christian message of salvation in the “next” made more sense to many, and therefore was more appealing.

However, this appeal to the safety and glory of the “next world” may have grown among the populace, as the Roman State began to fail in its basic responsibility of providing safety to the people. The failure of the Roman state increased, beginning with the Battle of Adrianople in 378, which many historians feel started the “end game” of the Roman Empire in the West.

- The second Battle of Adrianople ([August 9, 378](#)), sometimes known as the Battle of Hadrianopolis, was fought between a [Roman](#) army led by the [Roman Emperor Valens](#) and [Gothic](#) rebels (largely [Thervings](#) as well as [Greutungs](#), non-Gothic [Alans](#), and various local rebels) led by [Fritigern](#). The battle took place near [Adrianople](#) and ended with an overwhelming victory for the [Goths](#).  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Adrianople](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Adrianople)

If ever a battle of the Ancient and Classical worlds had relevance in modern day America, perhaps it is this battle, between economic and political refugees fleeing into the Roman world, seeking nothing more than protection and the possibility of economic safety, and the decaying Roman world filled with xenophobic views of the immigrants.

The Goths, fleeing Hunnic attacks came to the borders of the Roman Empire seeking “political asylum.” Once granted the Goths were exploited and stripped of all wealth in exchange for food (often rotten) until all they had left that was of value to the Romans was their children (goods to the Romans as slaves). Once sold, the Goths out of love of their children and fear of the future revolted and went on a rampage that eventually led to the confrontation of the two armies, and a massive defeat of the Roman forces and the death of the Emperor himself.

- According to the [historian Ammianus Marcellinus](#), a third of the Roman army succeeded in retreating, but the losses were uncountable. Many officers, among them the general Sebastian, were killed in the worst Roman defeat since the [Battle of the Teutoburg Forest](#), nearly four centuries earlier. The battle was a devastating blow for the late Empire. In effect, the core army of the Eastern Empire was destroyed, valuable administrators were killed, and all of the arms factories on the Danube were destroyed

following the battle. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Adrianople](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Adrianople)

This defeat of Rome opened the doors to many peoples from the North and East to enter and eventually to divide up the Empire of the West amongst the newly arriving people. The invasion and the impacts of these invasions are once again, too great to be explained in detail here, but to cite just a few of the events

406: The [Suevi](#), [Alans](#), and [Vandals](#) cross the frozen [Rhine](#) near [Mainz](#), and enter [Gaul](#). This marks the collapse of the Roman frontier in the West.

407: Constantine III leads many of the Roman military units from Britain to [Gaul](#), occupying [Arles](#) (Arelate). This is generally seen as Rome's withdrawal from Britain.

410: [Rome](#) sacked by [Visigoths](#), [St. Augustine](#) writes [The City of God](#)

439: [Vandals](#) conquer [Carthage](#)

451: Huns under [Attila](#) facing the [Romans](#) and the [Visigoths](#) are defeated in the [Battle of Chalons](#). [1]

452: [Pope Leo I](#) allegedly meets personally with Attila the Hun and convinces him not to sack Rome.

455: Vandals sack Rome

476, August 28: Deposition of [Romulus Augustulus](#) by [Odoacer](#): traditional date for the [Fall of Rome](#) in the West.

480: Death of [Julius Nepos](#) in [Dalmatia](#), the last [de jure Western Roman Emperor](#).

481: [Clovis I](#) becomes king of the [Western Franks](#) upon the death of [Childeric I](#)

493: [Theodoric](#) the Ostrogoth ousts Odoacer to become king of Italy.

494: Northern Gaul is united under Frankish King [Clovis I](#), founder of the [Merovingian](#) dynasty. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/5th\\_century](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/5th_century)

(Again let me point out that the success of the Franks is what leads to the survival and success of the Roman Church, since the Franks are among the few German tribes that become Roman Catholic and protectors of the Roman Church.)

Wave after wave of "immigrants" came into the Empire. The State was unable to prevent them from entering, but also unable to prevent them from establishing almost complete independent power bases. In a very short time, not only is Britain completely abandoned, whole sections of Gaul and Spain pass from the control of Rome to the Germans (who still nominally accept the existence of an emperor). North Africa, a major source of food for European Rome is lost to the Vandals. And on top of this chaos, the Huns descend in full force, seemingly concerned with nothing more than destruction and killing.

In a relatively short time, not only is Rome sacked at least twice by Goths and Germans, but most of the major cities in the West are destroyed by the Germans or Huns, including one of the most beautiful of the Ancient world, Aquileia.

- In [452](#), however, it was so utterly destroyed by [Attila's](#) Huns, that it was afterwards hard to recognize its original site. The Roman inhabitants, together with those of smaller towns in the neighborhood, fled to the lagoons, and so laid the foundations of the city of Venice.

For the residents of the Roman world, it must have seemed that the “end of days” were at hand and that the promises of “this world,” this Roman world, were no longer viable. First, they were denied the promise of economic advancement by their own rulers; then they are inundated by Germans and Huns: Death and destruction was all around them and the “state” could do nothing to protect them. Again, to quote Yeats “Sheer anarchy is loose upon the land.”

This conception of the lack of power over this world, may have led to a need for the power of the next world, and the power of the Church to define how to reach that next world was perhaps shown to the Classical mind most when Attila, despite the defeat at Chalons, a year or so earlier, (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Chalons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Chalons) ) was pressing down on Rome, after the destruction of Aquileia.

There was no Roman army or any force at all available to defend not just Rome but all of Italy against the “scourge of God” as Attila was known to the Christians. Attila, like the Babylonians coming upon Jerusalem, was therefore not seen as a free agent, but as a tool of God. However, Attila was stopped from the destruction of Rome by what appeared to be God himself. The Pope, Leo I (the Great) went nearly alone to meet Attila and the great Hunnic leader turned back away from Italy. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope\\_Leo\\_I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Leo_I) The real causes of the retreat could have been the time of year (winter coming on), or that plague had broken out in the camp of Attila (both theories have been put forth for the retreat).

- But, Leo was quick to claim that God, through him, had forced the retreat. When Attila died the next year and the Hunnic threat fell apart in civil war, Leo's claim seemed all the more justified.

It is in this event (Leo meeting Attila) that we see for the first time the ability of the Church of Rome to truly claim to be the “true Church” and take leadership of all of Christianity. Of course, this claim was rejected, despite the events with Attila by all the other key centers of the Church (Constantinople, Alexandria, etc.)

So Leo claimed that Christianity, through him, had saved the Empire (at least for a short time). However, modern historians are still at odds over the role Christianity played in the ending of the Empire of the West: Some theories place much of the blame on the rise of Christianity and others reject that Christianity had much of an impact. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decline\\_of\\_the\\_Roman\\_Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decline_of_the_Roman_Empire)

- One thing that is clear is that during these times of crisis the population of traditional Romans and Roman subjects was declining, and some of this decline can be linked to Christianity.

There are many theories to why this population decline occurred (climate changes, lead in the water supply, stratification of population, too many slaves, not enough free peoples). One of the factors that no doubt added to the reduction in population is the Christian views towards sex and sexual relationships.

- And Christians were, for the most part, very much against sex; and related sex to, in part, original sin. Christians had adoration of “chastity” in women, with many women preserving their “chastity” even in the state of marriage, and also the tendency among males towards abstaining from sex and living in male communal settings or the precursors of monasteries.
- This combination of female and male activities (or lack thereof) could only have added to the growing lack of Romans needed for civil and military activities.

This reduced population, and a reduced number of men available for military forces (due to many Christians opting out of traditional roles such as the army, for lives of prayer) actually led to the massive increase of “barbarians” rushing in to fill the “economic” void created in the Empire, in all forms of activities, but especially in the army.

As a result in both the decline in numbers of men and the diverting of men into religious life, the later battles of the civil wars, and the campaigns of the Romans to repulse the invasions of “barbarians” were actually often battles between two different sets of “barbarians” with only a slight Roman veneer. In the critical battle with Attila in Gaul, it appears that the number of actual Roman soldiers, as opposed to Goths, and even “Roman Huns” involved were less than 6,000 out of possible 30,000 “Roman troops.”

- It was during this time period, of civil war and seemingly endless efforts against barbarians that the army became more and more disassociated from the “people.”
- As the army was mostly Sol Invictus or Mithraic or Arian Christian, in religious outlook, the “people” were less likely to support these religions in a reaction to their hatred of the military, just as their hatred of Diocletian may have attracted them to the Church.

So, it is only here in the last seventy-five years of the Western Empire, from around 400 to 475 AD, with the people “frozen in the status,” with the world (literally) falling to pieces around them, as city after city is sacked, with the army mainly made up of “barbarians” and with little hope for the “country” that we see that the majority of people appear to be turning to “Orthodox” Christianity (at least in a nominal fashion); or should I say those who survived the civil wars, the Germanic and Hunnic invasions and the destruction of cities.

As hope and options for success in “this world” faded, the conception of Christianity and its easy offer of blessings in the “next world” (just belief in Jesus was all that was needed) we are told by historians, took greater hold. And if the teachings of the Church were true, the people of time could reconnect with all their lost loved ones in the next world.

- But despite it all, there continued to be major resistance to “Orthodox Christianity” not just among the Arian Germans and Goths, but in the rural areas, and in what remained of the intellectual classes of the empire, who clung to the traditions of philosophy, if not the religion of the old gods.

So, even when Constantine took steps to promote Christianity and his sons attempted to legally outlaw Paganism and Theodosius actually did so, there was resistance to Christianity. Theodosius also ended the schools of philosophy throughout the empire, as well as the Olympic Games and then used force to repress the non-converted. Despite all this, we can see that even prior to the “endgame crisis period,” resistance to Christianity continued to be strong.

- The story of the repression, as we have noted before can be found at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution\\_of\\_Ancient\\_Roman\\_religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Ancient_Roman_religion) ) and can only be briefly outlined here. All quoted materials in this section, unless otherwise stated, come from this article in Wikipedia.)

The main ideas I want to present here in the next pages, are twofold;

- In this time period we see the use of state terror to create religious conformity, as used later by the Church during the “Inquisition,” actually has its origins here,
- And that the religion foisted upon the people, was a religion that was Christian in veneer only. The Roman Church had evolved into a morphed version of the Ancient religion of the Romans, with a great deal of Persian and Phoenician influences, as we have discussed. For the most part the religion was a modified Baal/Mithraism with a veneer of Jewish and traditional Roman and Greek aspects.

In addition, and as clearly as can be stated, this conversion to Christianity was largely based on fear; fear of the State and their tools; fear of the coming barbarians and the state’s inability to stop the “hordes” and lastly; the fear presented by the Church as the reason for all of this chaos - the fear of the devil.

We have already outlined the impact of the barbarian invasions. Next, we will examine (all too briefly), the fear of the state. After this, we will see how the fear of the Devil plays into this sequence and returns us once again to Ba’al.

Again, much of what we think we know about this time period, what the Christian-based Western education system has told us about this period, is mainly “popular wisdom” and therefore, mostly false.

For example, Constantine the Great was not really the first “Christian Emperor”; he did make the Church equal in status to pagan religions, and perhaps was baptized on his death bed, but he ruled as the leader of a multi-religious state. He did take some limited actions against Pagan religious sites, but mainly he left them alone. However,

- The first emperor to put restrictions on the practice of Paganism was Constantine’s son, [Constantius II](#). Constantius was an unwavering opponent of paganism; he closed all the temples and forbade sacrifices under pain of death. His maxim was: “Cesset superstitio; sacrificiorum aboleatur insania” (Let superstition cease; let the folly of sacrifices be abolished). ...

In the year 357 AD, Constantius II issued edicts which legislated against pagans, supported by state tools, that would in time become the basis of the [Inquisition](#). Yet, his efforts to bring about conformity also, like his father’s, mostly failed. The edicts almost started a religious civil war as the Pagans fought back.

- These edicts could not be rigidly executed due to the strength of Paganism. The violent over reaction of the Christians in the efforts to destroy the pagan temples required the Emperors to pull back somewhat in their efforts. He then instituted new laws protecting the temples and Pagan peoples.

Despite the efforts of most emperors and the Church over the next some 150 plus years,



resistance to Christianity continued. This resistance continued in the face of the repression, barbarian invasions and the collapse of the state.

In fact many Pagans saw the collapse of Rome as a result of the new Christians rulers turning away from “traditional values” and rejecting the “old time religion.” The hope of restoring Rome was still seen by many in the efforts to restore the traditional religion. In the very last days of the Western Empire there were efforts to put a “Pagan” Emperor on the throne in the hope of not only stopping the chaos, but as well to regain the love of the old gods.

Also, we should try to see the on-going resistance to Christianity in the politics of the day. For the next 150 years emperors and pretenders to the throne actually appealed to the Pagans for support with promises of restoration of rights and restraining the Roman Church.

One emperor actually restored Paganism to equal rights and status (The Emperor Julian actually allowed religious freedom and avoided any form of actual compulsion.) However, he died after only an eighteen month reign. Several of the next emperors (Jovian, Valentinian and Valens) continued a modified version of Julian’s efforts, and supported religious freedom and toleration. Therefore, it was not clear if the policies of Constantine actually would ever have led to the “Christian Empire” that most Christian historians tend to present as the impact of Constantine. The actions of many of the emperors were actually attempts to veer away from the absolutism in religion that was to come.

However, with the rise of Gratian <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gratian> and Theodosius and the influence of Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, (the) period of what remained of religious tolerance ended.

- In 382. .... Gratian appropriated the income of the Pagan priests and [Vestal Virgins](#), confiscated the personal possessions of the priestly colleges and ordered the removal of the [Altar of Victory](#). (With this edict) the colleges of Pagan priests ... lost all their privileges and immunities. Gratian declared that all of the Pagan temples and shrines were to be confiscated by the government and that their revenues were to be joined to the property of the royal treasury. ...
- (In the same year) Gratian (also) renounced the title and office of [Pontifex Maximus](#) under the influence of Ambrose, declaring that it was unsuitable for a Christian to hold this office. (Although the Pope holds this title today)

Yet as a result of his laws, Gratian was quickly faced with a revolt from the outraged Pagans who raised a Spaniard named Maximus to the throne, because he was more sympathetic to the Pagan cause. For a time, the Pagans enjoyed religious liberty once again and many distinguished Pagans rose to important offices in the state... (However) in the year 387, Theodosius declared war on Maximus after Maximus had driven Valentinian II out of Italy. Maximus was defeated and executed and the anti-Pagan regulations of Gratian were apparently reinstated by Valentinian II.

So now, some sixty years after Constantine, in the year 392, Theodosius officially began to proscribe the practice of Paganism. ....

- Theodosius issued a comprehensive law that prohibited the performance of any type of Pagan sacrifice or worship, even within the privacy of person’s own home. ... Paganism was now proscribed, a “religio illicita.”



Again, the West resisted these laws, and in 394 ... and a revolt started, and ...

- The battle that ensued became, in essence, a battle for the survival of Paganism. The defeat of (the Pretender Emperor) Eugenius by Theodosius ... led to the final separation of Paganism from the state (and far more aggressive efforts to repress the religion in the West).

Even with the defeat of the pretender, Theodosius met resistance to his religious demands:

- Theodosius visited Rome to attempt to convert the Pagan members of the Senate. Being unsuccessful in this, he withdrew all state funds that had been set aside for the public performance of Pagan rites. .... Many Pagans, sensing how unprofitable it was becoming to not convert to Christianity, simply pretended to convert as an obvious instrument of advancement.

Repression of the State was not isolated to Europe, though. The “East” was more heavily Christian at this point, perhaps because Christianity meshed well into the older religions of the East, and therefore met with less resistance. However, violent actions against Pagans were carried out throughout the Empire. For example

- In 391, in response to a request from the Patriarch Theophilus, Theodosius I gave permission to destroy the Egyptian religious institutions and Christian mobs responded by destroying the [Library of Alexandria](#) (as noted the treasury of knowledge of the Ancient and Classical world), the [Temple of Serapis](#) and other Pagan monuments.
- Legislation was passed in 393 that sought to curb ongoing violence, especially against Jewish synagogues, however with the accession of Cyril, nephew of Theophilus as the Patriarch of Alexandria, new disturbances broke out that culminated in the illegal expulsion of Jews in 414. (The movie *Agora* does a more than adequate job of portraying these events.)

However, with the death of the strong emperor, Theodosius, in 395, the empire again fell into chaos, which the barbarians were quick to take advantage of by invading on an unprecedented scale. Some histories state that more people became Christian in the face of the invaders, however;



The remains of the great library of Ephesus, one of thousands destroyed or abandoned based on Christian repression of the Classical world. This one still has the remains of the inscription of it being donated to the people of Ephesus by Julius Caesar. Personal Photo

- During this disaster, many Christians became less certain of their religion and converted back to the old religion. Pagans, in their turn, became more aggressive and began to blame the Christians for the disasters affecting the empire.

Also, with the death of Theodosius and the new invasions many Pagans, hoping to create a “united front” in the ongoing wars, pleaded for tolerance. However, the new emperors, the sons of Theodosius [Honorius](#) and [Arcadius](#) continued the work of their father creating more anti-Pagan laws. Indeed, they used the power of the State to fight Paganism, almost as much, if not more, than they did to confront and combat the barbarians.

- However, as late as 400 AD laws against Pagans were deliberately not enforced. Even at this late time period, the Pagans, (despite all efforts) still made up half of the Empire’s population.

Though there had been a few years of increased tolerance in the attempt to create this “united front”:

- In the year 408, Honorius enacted a new law which ordered that all statues and altars in the temples were to be removed and that the temple buildings and their income were to be appropriated by the government. ...
- (Also) In the same year, Honorius enacted a law that prohibited anyone who was not Catholic from performing imperial service within the palace.

However, the political crisis accelerated, as in 410 AD, the Gothic leader Alaric took and sacked the city of Rome (mostly to collect past payment to his army that the emperor had refused to pay).

- This catastrophe shocked the entire Roman world. Both Christians and Pagans quickly began to blame each other for something that had hitherto been thought impossible. There was apparently a large amount of Pagan literature circulating at this time that attributed the decline and demise of the Roman Empire to the Christians; Augustine’s [City of God](#) is an answer to the charges of Pagans that the sack of Rome was due to Christianity.

Other than Augustine’s writing, little of this anti-Christian literature has survived, due to Christians who destroyed works they considered to be contrary to their religious beliefs.

In its dying days, the Empire still tried to enforce religious conformity, in a series of laws that seemed to foreshadow the coming of Hitler and the Nuremberg anti-Jewish laws of Germany;.

- In 416, [Honorius](#) and [Theodosius II](#) ordered that Pagans would no longer be admitted to imperial service nor would they be allowed to receive the rank of administrator or judge.
- In 423, Theodosius II .... declared that all Pagans who were caught performing the ancient rites would now have all their goods confiscated and be exiled.

- In 425, Theodosius II ... barred Pagans from pleading a case in court and also disqualified them from serving as soldiers.
- In the year 426, Theodosius issued another edict in which the essence of religious intolerance is proclaimed, making it illegal for Christian [apostates](#) to convert to the old religion.

Despite all the laws, and repression of both Church and State, lasting well over one hundred years, in 438 we see that:

- The Emperor explicitly admits that Pagan sacrifices were still seemingly being openly celebrated in places.
- (A new emperor) Marcian decreed, (and also had to issue a new decree) in the year 451, that those who continued to perform the Pagan rites would suffer the confiscation of their property and be condemned to death.

As with laws of Nazi Germany, as well as the American Fugitive Slave Laws of the 1850's anyone refusing to enforce these laws would also be punished:

- Marcian ... (includes) a fine of fifty pounds of gold ... imposed on any judge or governor, as well as the officials under him, who did not enforce this law.
- Leo I, who succeeded Marcian ... published a new law in 472 which imposed severe penalties for the owner of any property who was aware that Pagan rites were performed on his property.

Yet, resistance, and hope, continued:

- After the deposition of [Avitus](#), who ruled as emperor of the West from 455 to 456, there seems to have been a conspiracy among the Roman nobles to place the Pagan general [Marcellinus](#) on the throne to restore Paganism; but it came to nothing; also
- [Anthemius](#), one of the last Roman emperors of the West who ruled from 467 to 472, seems to have planned a Pagan revival at Rome ... The murder of Anthemius (by [Ricimer](#)) destroyed the hopes of those Pagans who believed that the traditional rites would now be restored.

Shortly thereafter, in 476, the last emperor of Rome was deposed by [Odoacer](#), ..... (And still) ... the Pagans in what remained of the empire, in the East, made one last attempt to revive the Pagan rites.

- In 484, the [Magister Militum per Orientum](#), [Illus](#), revolted against [Zeno](#) (emperor in the East) and raised his own candidate, [Leontius](#), to the throne. Leontius hoped to reopen the temples and restore the ancient ceremonies and because of this many Pagans joined in his revolt against Zeno. Illus and Leontius were compelled, however, to flee to a remote [Isaurian](#) fortress, where Zeno besieged them for four years. Zeno finally captured them in 488 and promptly had them executed.
- As a result of the revolt, Zeno instituted a harsh persecution of Pagan intellectuals .... The failure of their efforts to restore the traditional rites led many Pagans to completely

lose confidence in Rome's future. These men believed that the Roman Empire was now gone and irretrievable.

- The subjugation of the Roman Empire to Christianity became complete when the (Eastern) Emperor Anastasius, who came to the throne in 491, was forced to sign a written declaration of orthodoxy before his coronation.

What we can see from this review is a number of things, including that centuries of religious diversity and toleration was ended with the rise of Christian control.

- Free will and freedom to explore religious options, the hall mark of the Classicalist, came to an end with the triumph of the Church, and it's concept of having "absolute truth."

And, as noted the fights against "paganism" and against heretics took on a familiar look as the Church, which in its early days, had been repressed by the power of the state, now used the power of the state to repress its religious enemies.

- Under the Christian rule, though, there was no holding back, it soon became, convert or die. There was no way out for the Pagans, as the Pagans had offered to the Christians (just make a simple sacrifice, and you can worship the rest as you please). Unknown thousands died or fled the empire (many to Persia) for religious freedom; many took on the veneer of Christianity as a means of survival.

Perhaps we can see some of this Pagan/Christian conflict played out in a conversation presented in Charles Freeman's *Closing of the Western Mind* which took place in 383 between Symmachus the "Pagan" Prefect of the city of Rome, and the Bishop of Milan, Ambrose, in which Symmachus states :

"What does it matter by which wisdom each of us arrives at the truth? It is not possible that more than one road leads to so sublime a mystery?"

Ambrose replied:

"What you are ignorant of, we know from the word of God. And what you try to infer, we have established as truth from the very wisdom of God. (page 230)"

The Christians were so sure of their "truth," that they planned to impose this "truth" on all, and soon a system of state terror and "secret police" was established.

- Anyone who failed to display the required enthusiasm for the Christian God was dealt with severely. Charges were laid by informants. Perjured evidence was presented to, and accepted by, partisan tribunals. Confessions were extracted with the help of torture. Young and old alike were induced to implicate their friends and families. Many were executed. The lucky ones were merely imprisoned or exiled. In some provinces prisoners, exiles and fugitives from Christian intolerance were said to account for more than half of the population. Property was confiscated, and the Church grew rich. ... By the reign of Justinian (527-565) baptism was compulsory for all.
- All pagans, and indeed non-Catholic Christian belief was illegal, and the death

penalty was reintroduced. People were no longer free to chose their faith. Everyone was obliged to espouse Christianity, except sometimes the Jews, whom God was believed to have abandoned. [http://www.heretication.info/\\_pagans.html](http://www.heretication.info/_pagans.html)

And all along this process, there were Pagan martyrs

Christian outbursts led to the burning of pagan libraries (such as at Antioch in 371-372 C.E.) and the execution of philosophers, such as Maxximus of Ephesus, and Simonides, burned alive. Chuvin suggests the murder of the philospher Hypatia by St. Cyril's thugs in 415 C.E. owed as much to local politics as to her paganism; but her paganism increased her vulnerability. <http://www.sdsmt.edu/student-orgs/tfs/reading/freethought/murder.html>

To the Church, the tools of repression, and the execution of non-believers, took on a very different meaning from the deaths of the Christians resisting Roman rules. The new power, the Church, could not allow these people to be killed in the name of their religion, or to appear like those people killed in the name of Christ, the martyrs. The type of death, or at least the meaning of their deaths, had to be different.

- The Church did not want to be seen as creating “saints” for a later new religion, a revised or rejuvenated paganism.

They needed a new way to explain how these pagan peoples were dying not just through a mistaken belief in the old gods. The Church had to give meaning to these deaths that could not be transformed into a positive. The solution was in line with the concepts early in the church, the concept which rose from Persia, to be subsequently transformed by the Christians. The concept was the Devil.

The Church determined that these people were not dying for religious freedom, or in preference for old, good gods, but in fact they were dying in profession of worship of not just demons, but in fact a super demon – the Devil.

- The conclusion reached within the Church was to define these deaths as the deaths of demon worshipers and the death of devil worshipers, but in no way martyrs for the gods of Rome.

Therefore, to the Church, and to the State, the deaths of the Pagans were not the same as the death of the Christians, just one hundred years before, because:

- The death of the Christians was to protect “truth” and not give into the devil and the devil’s ways (above all sacrifice) and those who died went to “heaven” to be with God and Jesus.
- The killing of the Pagans by the Church and State was to protect the people of the truth from the Devil, and his tricks. Those who died went to Hell and were condemned to be with the Devil for all time.

So, as the Roman world fell apart around them, the Church saw this political battle against the barbarians and the religious battles against the Pagans as really only one battle - the battle between the Devil and God. And those who did not support Jesus and God were in fact, openly supporters of the Devil.

This conclusion of the Church should not take us as a surprise. If we look at the early Christians, from a more modern psychological frame work, we could clearly say that they were a paranoid people; they saw themselves surrounded by evil, not just evil people, but active evil spirits.

It is quite clear from looking at the early Christian texts, that for the early Christians, even after individuals converted, which is suppose to mean, after they had become “monotheist,” the gods of the ancient world were still “alive” and all around them.

And as we have seen, the Christians saw these ancient gods were the gods of evil, and demons who offered nothing to the people, except success for their enemies, success for the Greeks and Romans and the ones who had bought into their lives the evil ways of the Greeks and Romans.

- In the beginning of the Church, the evil ones were the destroyers of the temple, and the exterminators of the Jews.

The early Christian writings were clearly calling the Romans the devils (666 = Nero) but this changed and changed greatly as the Roman state moved towards acceptance of this new paradigm offered by the Christians. This trend accelerated as the Emperors began to run the Church, and the Jews continued to reject the Christian’s view that the evolution of Judaism led to the worship of Christ.

- Soon, among the early Christians, the propensity to see Zeus or some other god as the symbol of evil expanded to the image of evil being associated with those who were not accepting of the religion. The evil one became one in the same with the non-believer, and those who rejected the absolutism of the Christians (including “heretic, “Pagan, and Jew”) The image of the Devil was the image of Ba’al.

In fact, the key focus of the Church becomes fear, fear of the devil, and as we will see, fear of the consequence of not fighting the Devil, or fear of abandoning God, or better stated, God abandoning the people.

All the events of the later Roman Empire were seen, not in the light of what we see as logic, but in this light of what the Church saw as truth:

- God’s new kingdom, the Roman Empire, could only survive the onslaught of the barbarians (and as the Babylonians were the agents of God for the Jews, so too were the barbarians) by purging the “City of God” or the Roman Empire, of the sins of the Pagan, along with their support of the Devil.
- Therefore, in the Christian view of the world, based on their view of what had happened to the Hebrews and Israelites, and Judeans, the attachment to the Devil was like the older attachment to Ba’al. We can see that these efforts of the Church to destroy Paganism, and the support of the emperors for this repression, despite the endless resistance of the people to the forced conversions, was based in a fear, that without their success, without the repression of the Devil, that like the Chosen kingdoms of old, this new kingdom would fall too. Rome too would be wiped away, just as God had wiped away the Children of Israel and Judea.
- We see this logic alive today among so many of the Pentecostal church leaders of that

claim that God will abandon the US (as it did Israel and Judah and Rome ... and so on) if we do not live by their understanding of the word of God.

So every barbarian success was seen by the church as a clear sign that greater repression in the culture was imperative, for more effort to combat not the invading peoples, but the “enemy within.” The idea of a “united front,” of working with the Pagans, was seen as a trick of the devil, and a means to sure defeat. The Church saw that the only way to beat the barbarians was to eliminate the Pagans.

The overwhelming motivating force of the State and the Church therefore, was not just simple political power and wealth, but the basic common instinct of survival; a concept of survival based in their reading of the Old Testament, a survival based in fighting God’s oldest enemy, Ba’al or as he was called by this Church, the Devil: And the greater the threat, the greater the reason to use compulsion. For as is written in the Old Testament, by the later prophets and the writings of the “returnees” that God demands obedience of all, and it is the responsibility of all to ensure that all are obedient. Therefore, the survival of all required the conformity of all. And without the conformity of all, God’s wrath would surely be known, again.



## Part V – The Morphing of Ideas –

### Section I – The Challenge to the New “Old” Order

#### Subsection F- The Devil is Everywhere

To understand the premise for our vision of the Devil as Ba'al it is important to recognize that as noted, the early Christians fought for their religion, not by directly challenging the existence of the Ancient gods, but instead claiming that the gods of the Greeks and Romans, and all other peoples, were demons. So the old Greek and Roman gods were real, but evil. (No wonder then, that early on the Christians were not liked too well, and seen by the peoples of the classical world as rude, and a “public nuisance.”) According to the early Christians, the Devil, the chief of evil, was actually one of the many “gods” or many demons, and also as noted, the politics of the time made the choice of which one of the Ancient gods was in fact the chief evil, a delicate decision, indeed. It was important that the choice would not be too offensive to the Roman state.

And since there were so many gods, well, there had to be so many demons, and the Christians saw many, and saw them everywhere.

- In Mark 5 we read that Jesus expelled “legions of demons” from a single individual into a herd of swine. (That there was a herd of swine in a Jewish community seems awfully weird to me.)

#### Mark 5

- 11A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. 12The demons begged Jesus, “Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them.” 13He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

Also in Mark 3, one of the primary duties of the apostles is to “drive out demons.”

- 14 He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach 15and to have authority to drive out demons.

But, again, we need to also understand that the very concept of an overwhelming evil one (the Devil) was not part of the thousands of years old traditions of the West, (nor really of the East) and was relatively new in religion. It may have been a welcome concept with the on-going crisis that confronted the Western world, however. The Christian religion was among the first to make this Evil One so central to the religion: One of the first, but not the first.

As noted also, the one clear place that developed this concept of an overwhelming evil god was Persia, and only within a repressed sect of the general Persian religion, the repressed sect of Zurvanism.

- The Christian concept is most likely clearly linked to the Zoroaster concept of the dueling forces of “good” (Ahura Mazda) and “evil (Angra Mainyu).”  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoroastrianism>

And also directly linked to a repressed splinter group of Zoroastrianism, Zurvanism (see below and see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zurvanism>)

And, as we study this religion we can see strong comparisons to the theology of the emerging Christianity.

- [Zurvanism](#) was a branch of Zoroastrianism that sought to resolve the dilemma of the “twin spirits” of *Yasna* 30.3. (or chapter 30 of the holy text of the religion) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yasna> The resolution ....was to have both Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu as twin sons of the First Principle “Time” ...
- Zurvanism’s principle feature is then the notion that both Ahura Mazda (or also know as (Ohrmuzd) and Angra Mainyu (also know as Ahriman) were twin brothers, with the former being the epitome of good and the latter being the epitome of evil.
- Further, this dichotomy was *by choice*, that is, Angra Mainyu chose to be evil: (Satan as the fallen angel, choosing to rebel against God ???)
  - “It is not that I cannot create anything good, but that I will not.” And to prove this, he created the peacock.
- According to ... (the legends) Zurvan (time) existing alone but desiring offspring who would create “heaven and hell and everything in between.” Zurvan then sacrificed for a thousand years. Towards the end of this period, androgynous Zurvan began to doubt the efficacy of sacrifice (Christian attitude towards sacrifice?) and, in the moment of this doubt Ohrmuzd and Ahriman were conceived: Ohrmuzd for the sacrifice and Ahriman for the doubt.
- Upon realizing that twins were to be born, Zurvan resolved to grant the first-born sovereignty over creation. Ohrmuzd perceived Zurvan’s decision, which He then communicated to His brother. Ahriman then preempted Ohrmuzd by ripping open the womb to emerge first. Reminded of the resolution to grant Ahriman sovereignty, Zurvan conceded, but limited kingship to a period of 9000 years, after which Ohrmuzd would rule for all eternity (the coming battle between good and evil?) See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zurvanism>

This “cult” was present in the Middle East for at least some 1500 years, and perhaps can be clearly called the origin of the Western concept of the Devil. The rise in acceptance of this ultimate evil force can be linked to the rise and spread of this new concept and religious offshoot of the popular Zoroastrianism. It can be argued that Christianity, with its strong beliefs in the Devil, and the struggle of the Devil for the souls of man, is actually an offshoot of this repressed Zoroasteric cult of Zurvanism. So, we can see Christianity as in part a morphed version of Zurvanism, as well as a morphed version of Ba’alim (through a merging of ideas).

We can see that this concept of the Devil, as an all powerful, all encompassing evil power, was actually really quite new in the West; and it was actually not part of Jewish, Roman or Greek traditions, or any of the Ancient Sky God religions.

- The [Hebrew Bible](#) (or Old Testament) does not assign this level of personification to a devil, but rather identifies all good and evil as originating in the will of God

- The biblical word *ha-satan* means *the adversary* or *the obstacle*, or even “the prosecutor” (recognizing that God is viewed as the ultimate [Judge](#)).  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Devil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Devil)

However, the concept of the “Devil” became a major element of Christianity almost from its inception (again showing a marked difference from the Jewish traditions). Prior to Christianity, we can see this concept of the Devil, translated into non-mainstream Jewish writing (primarily in the Essene writings).

From the Qumran documents (Dead Sea Scrolls) comes a possible indication of the development of the idea of a Devil, in the manner in which the sect personified all opposition to their ‘Teacher of Righteousness’ into a single figure. However the adoption of ideas from other religions, particularly from Zoroastrianism may have been a very significant factor. The basic teaching of late Zoroastrianism seems to have been:

- In the beginning there were two equal Gods, under one supreme Deity, eternally at war with each other (let us call them God and Devil). God, who was wholly good, had an attendant company of Angels, the Devil, wholly evil, a horde of Demons. God created the Earth as a battleground for the war, and man to help him in his fight. Man like God was wholly good, and suffered neither disease nor death. The Devil corrupted man, brought disease and death upon him, taught him the ways of evil. <http://www.users.bigpond.com/wyndkelm/Satan.html>

And we can see a new infusion of the concept of the Devil into some of the Jewish leadership.

- The Pharisees, which by the time of Christ were the most significant of the sects, accepted the expansion of Satan into an independent entity that had a substantial measure of control over the affairs of men and governments.  
<http://www.users.bigpond.com/wyndkelm/Satan.html>

Among the Jews however, it was a new idea and not wholly accepted. However, the Christians, contrary to the Jewish concepts, fully accepted the Devil and transferred the Persia stories into their own versions: early Christian writings seem to feature Jesus morphed into the all good and never dying, Ahura Mazda, and the Devil morphed into the all evil Angra Mainyu.

However, the fact that this new concept of the evil one grew during the time of the development of Christianity, and was spread primarily by the Christians, does not actually help to “describe the devil.” In this time when all Gods had “public images” the Christians needed to develop an image of the evil one that could be presented to the world. Also, the Christians needed to have a description of the Devil’s environment, the very image of evil that would scare all those who heard it. And, it appears that this is how Ba’al becomes the “scapegoat” and the role model for the new Christian image of “evil.”

- With the very early Christians, what Evil looked like was not quite as important as many make it out to be, even today, since according to the beliefs of the early Christians, all this evil was about to end, anyways. Salvation (and the 1000 year reign of the Son of God) was about to come about, and very soon. As we have seen, the writings of Paul, and the very early writers of the Church, made it sound like Jesus’

return was imminent and there was a great need to get ready for this return quickly.

- So the choice was simple, Jesus or damnation and you had to make up your mind quick. Their “savior God” was returning very soon, and all that was needed to gain this salvation was to “believe in the Son of God.”

But when this return did not happen, among the many problems that faced the Church was now also added:

- What does the Devil look like? What does Hell look like?

The Church had several possible options for the new face of evil, the new face of the Devil (just as it had several options on the new face of Jesus) among the existing gods of Greece and Rome. However, politics and public opinion did play a role; while the Church did say the old Greek and Roman gods were really demons, it was hard for them to say that included the “big demon.”

The logical choice would have been Zeus or Jupiter, the chief gods of the Greeks and Romans. However, the Church could not go so far as to declare that Zeus or Jupiter was really Satan. It just could not work with the Pagans, or for many of the Christians themselves. There was simply too much cultural history there to challenge the old order to that great of an extent.

- And, also the Church was already claiming that God looked much like (a far less buff) Jupiter, so that image could not also be used for the Devil.

Therefore, the Church needed a new and clear model for the Devil. They had a few new writings, relatively early Christian writings, to help them form an image. *The Book of Revelations* came close to describing both, the Devil and Hell; but *Revelations* was a book in and out of favor with the Church for nearly 700 years before it was finally approved for the New Testament, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_of\\_Revelation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Revelation) , So, as a source for an image of the Devil it may not have been so influential in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Centuries. However in *Revelations* the description of Hell as a fiery lake helped to give the Church some direction in describing Hell,

#### Revelations 9

- 1Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven (again the morning star being Satan) which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him.
- 2He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.

And the fate of those who do not believe in Jesus was this pit.

#### Revelations 14

- 10he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

However, this seems a bit confused since the people are not being tortured in front of Satan, but in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. Guess that was kind of over looked in future development.

But the Devil himself in *Revelations* is defined, or described in a few different ways:

In Revelations 12

- 3Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems.

And also in Revelations 13

- 1And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.
- 2And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority.

But then there was another “beast,”

- 11Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon.

Revelations 20 clearly states that the Devil was the Dragon

- 1Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.
- 2And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;
- 3and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

We see that there were many depictions of what the devil looked like (dragon, lion, lightning) with the image of the dragon or great serpent being the most popular motif of the Devil in the early church. So how did the great evil one come to have the image that it does today, and did the Devil have this image since relatively early in the Church?

- After all, the Pagan world was one of images, of statues and of representation of the gods. So, these questions of how the Christians describe their place for sinners, was important. (If hell was like Las Vegas, many people could have opted out for that ... and the Christian image of Heaven may not have been all that appealing to many, then or now.)

However, in the other early Church writings, Satan is not really fully described, or even explained.

In 2 Peter 5 there is an effort to describe him as a lion:

- 8Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

In Luke 10 the devil is described as Lightning:

- “I saw Satan fall like [lightning](#) from heaven.”

The New Testament citations include actually only a relative few passages where the Devil is described:

- as the devil (from the Greek “*diabolos*” which means “*slanderer*”), the tempter of Jesus (*Matthew 4:1-3, Luke 4:2*)
- the prince of the demons, Beelzebub (*Matthew 12:24, Mark 3:22, Luke 11:15*)
- unclean spirit (*Matthew 12:43*)
- the evil one (*Matthew 13:19 & 1 John 2:13*)
- the author of all evil (*Luke 10:19*)
- a murderer and the father of lies (*John 8:44*)
- the prince of this world (*John 12:31 & 14:30 & 16:11*)
- a demon able to enter into a human body (*John 13:27*)
- god of this world (*2 Corinthians 4:4*)
- Belial (*2 Corinthians 6:15*)
- prince of the powers of the air, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience (*Ephesians 2:2*)
- power of darkness (*Colossians 1:13*)
- an adversary, like a roaring lion who walks about seeking whom he may devour (*1 Peter 5:8*) [http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr\\_sat3.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr_sat3.htm)

As the early writers were still mostly Jewish, the concepts and images still remain mainly Jewish, (adversary, unclean spirit, and Beelzebub) and therefore vague.

The Church also had the older Jewish writings and looked to them as sources and again found little in direct statements (in the Old Testament):

- The Devil as an evil being on a cosmic scale doesn't appear in the Bible until the New Testament. This concept then continued to develop as Christianity itself grew and

developed.

- There is no evidence in [Torah](#), or in the books of the [Prophets](#) and other writings, to suggest that God created one being as the source of [evil](#).
- The Hebrew word used for evil is usually translated as 'calamity', 'disaster' or 'chaos'
- In fact, the [Book of Isaiah](#), Job, [Ecclesiastes](#), and [Deuteronomy](#) all have passages in which God is credited for creating both the good and the evil of this world. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Devil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Devil)

Therefore, having a direct statement concerning the great evil one in the Old Testament is not to be expected, and in fact is not found.

The Hebrews, in Old Testament times, did not have anything like the Devil of Christian theology to blame for evil. If a man did wrong he alone was responsible, not his parentage, or his environment, or his upbringing, or poverty, not any Devil: A hard but honest philosophy. The word demon does not appear in the Old Testament and 'Devil' is used only a few times, and in contexts where it clearly refers to the false Gods of other nations, having no relationship to the Devil of the Gospels.

<http://www.users.bigpond.com/wyndkelm/Satan.html>

But the Church, in its way of reading the Bible, found enough to make its case; such as declaring that the "serpent" in the Adam and Eve story was actually the devil, and also they saw referenced in other texts not included in the Jewish Bible:

- The deuterocanonical [Book of Wisdom](#) says, "But by the envy of the devil, death entered the world, and they who are in his possession, experience it." (Wisdom 2:24) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Devil\\_in\\_Christianity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Devil_in_Christianity)

So, the Church looked to the Old Testament as their source (not just for the predictions of Jesus) and came up initially with a dragon image (St. George and the Dragon comes from this concept) but this concept did not appear to really satisfy the need of the time (after all, the Classical mind wanted human-like images, the dragon or the serpent was not the right image for the time).

So the Church looked away from the *Five Books of Moses* to *Judges* and *Prophets*; this time, the Church was not just interested in showing that the words of the prophets predicted the coming of Christ (with some great literary license, so to speak) but in an effort to explain who was the devil and how he looked. And what they found was Ba'al, the long term ancient rival of God.

And in looking at the limited writings available, we see that there is this connection:

- The notion throughout the New Testament that Satan was the effective ruler of the Earth may have come from an identification of Ba'al with Satan. Baal was the fertility God of the Canaanites and had the subsidiary title 'Prince Lord of the Earth' <http://www.users.bigpond.com/wyndkelm/Satan.html>
- In ancient contexts, there appears to have been little, if any, meaningful distinction



between Beelzebub and the [polytheistic Semitic god](#) named [Ba'al](#). ... Jewish reference to Baal was almost certainly [pejorative](#), and grew to be used among other terms for [Satan](#). The name later appears as the name of a [demon](#) or [devil](#), often interchanged with **Beelzebub**.

- The [demonization](#) of the deity or deification is thought to have been one basis for the personification of Satan as the adversary of the [Abrahamic God](#), though other influences such as the Zoroastrian [Daeva](#) may have contributed.  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beelzebub>

The Church fathers also could see that even in the gospels, there is a “clear” statement of connection:

- In Mark 3 the devil is referred as “Beelzebub” or a Greek rendition of Lord of the Flies (Ba'al of the Flies) and here we see the clear reference not only to Ba'al but the Jewish tradition of “demonizing Ba'al.”

The Christians taking on Ba'al, and adopting aspects of other gods, as the representation of The Devil appears to be nothing really new in culture. Even today we tend to “demonize” the “other” - who ever is our chief adversary.

- In [Christianity](#) writings, the name Beelzebub or Beelzebub may appear as an alternate name for Satan .... As with several religions, the names of any earlier foreign or “pagan” deities often became synonymous with the concept of an adversarial entity.  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beelzebub>

But Ba'al had other advantages as the face of Evil. He was a god that could be traced back almost through their concept of time. He is present in the Old Testament and he is the god of the very Ancient Phoenicians that can be traced back to long before the “Trojan war” and into the very ancient of times of Babylon. Therefore, the argument that Ba'al had been around for what seemed to be forever, fit a need since it was the claim of the Christians that the Devil had been around forever (and was there with Adam and Eve.) Also:

- Ba'al was presented throughout the Old Testament as the true enemy of God and the worship of Ba'al was seen as the cause of God's anger at the Hebrews. Through these writings, this God presented the perfect option for the face of the Devil.

Again, we need to remember clearly here that the justification the Church has given since writings as early as Justin Martyr, is that any similarities between the Christian religion and other religions (the death and rising gods, or the sky god religions, or Mithraism or Sol Invictus or Greek rationalism, were created by the Devil to trick humankind away from the “truth” of Christianity. In fact, it is still the formal position of many Christian churches.

- They, the early Church fathers, said that the Devil knew of the coming of Christ since the beginning of time and that the Devil therefore created all these religions that included elements of the truth, but were not the truth so that when Jesus came to earth, the Devil's actions would confuse people and not let them understand that Jesus was the true Son of God (rather than all the other sons of God that were around including Heracles and so many others).

Baal played this role in the Old Testament as well, clearly leading the people of Israel away

from God, and presenting a false image. Therefore the Ba'al association with deceiving man worked based on this "precedent."

And, now we can connect back to an event already raised, the first great Eastern Rival of the Christians in the Roman World, and that, in fact, was Ba'al. Remember, this was the God of the Emperor Elagabalus, and the rituals of Ba'al were being revived. So, Ba'al was not just a god from the far distant past of the glories of Phoenicia, or the god of the great Roman rival, Carthage. Ba'al was an active challenger for the hearts and minds of the people of the Empire, and around 225 AD he was the preferred god of the Emperor himself.

Therefore the evolving image of Ba'al as Devil was appealing to the Western Roman citizens on many levels

- It did not depict a traditional Greek or Roman god as the great evil one.
- It showed the Devil to be the god of their old hated rivals, the Carthaginians.
- It showed the Devil to be the god of a hated upstart Emperor who was requiring the sacrifice of children in the name of the new universal god.
- And it showed the devil associated with burning and "hell fire" (as stated in Revelations).
- And Baal was the god most hated by the ancient Jewish prophets.

However, there weren't very many references to Ba'al as the image of Evil, in the actual writings in the Prophets. The Church converted what they could find into their own interpretation, including Isaiah 14:

11'Your pomp and the music of your harps  
Have been brought down to Sheol;  
Maggots are spread out as your bed beneath you  
And worms are your covering.'  
12"How you have fallen from heaven,  
O star of the morning, son of the dawn!  
You have been cut down to the earth,  
You who have weakened the nations!

And to justify a "war" between God and the Devil, we find these words that were transformed by the Church to be the declaration of the Good vs. Evil events:

13"But you said in your heart,  
'I will ascend to heaven;  
I will raise my throne above the stars of God,  
And I will sit on the mount of assembly  
In the recesses of the north.  
14'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;  
I will make myself like the Most High.'

But God will win:

15"Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol,

To the recesses of the pit.  
16”Those who see you will gaze at you,  
They will ponder over you, saying,  
‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble,  
Who shook kingdoms,  
17Who made the world like a wilderness  
And overthrew its cities,  
Who did not allow his prisoners to go home?’ ....

While the literal interpretation of this text is a statement against the king of Babylon (a man who shook kingdoms, overthrew cities and would not let prisoners go home) the Church saw this differently; from reading the Prophets the Church found the most likely candidate for the devil:

- The God who was the most hated of all of the foreign gods; the one that the prophets “wailed” most against, the one that led people to false hopes, The “god” that “Hebrew” kings followed despite the warning of the prophets as to the anger of God for such actions, the one that required all forms of sacrifice including “passing the children through fire.”

The Church saw that according to the Old Testament, the role model for the Devil was none other than Ba’al.

Since Christ did not return, and the Roman world fell into one crisis after another, the images of the devil became more important. The Church, then, saw the chaos of Rome as a result of God’s wrath, for the people still loving the Devil. The Church moved more and more toward the Persian view of dualism, with the world being a battle ground between good and evil and since this was being played out in an all too real world setting, it was important to finally fully describe the Devil.

So while the Church could not describe the Roman gods as the Devil, we see that there was no problem in describing the Devil as the image of their chief other “foreign” rival, Sol Invictus, or at least as the model of the first Sol Invictus, that of the Emperor Elagabalus. As we saw, Elagabalus worshiped Ba’al, and was the chief priest of Ba’al offering the children in Rome up for sacrifice.

- So while the Roman gods could be called demons, the Christians could point to an imposed, and later, hated god of a deposed and hated Emperor, as the real chief demon, the real Devil; It worked in both scripture and in politics.

## Part V – The Morphing of Ideas –

### Section II– The End Game, and a New Game

#### Subsection A - More and More Crises

Between the year of 475 and 775 or what are called the Dark Ages of the West, the Western Roman world descended into chaos. Whole areas were depopulated and education and “culture” almost ceased.

- For the formerly Roman area, there was .... in population between 400 AD and 600 AD, .. a one third decline compared to (the time period of )150-400 AD  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early\\_Middle\\_Ages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_Middle_Ages)

The Roman Church was on the verge of collapse; it had lost its major protector (The Roman State) and most of the new German rulers who were Arian, were attempting to force Arian conformity on what remained of the Roman and Greek peoples under their rule.

- \*477 Death of Genseric, King of the Vandals and persecutor of Catholics. His successor, Hunseric, seeks to eliminate Catholicism entirely from Northern Africa. He assembles 466 Catholic bishops and gives them four months to apostatize to Arianism, or else the traditional imperial decrees against heresy (death) would be applied to them. Many trades are closed off to the common people unless they can produce a certificate of Arian conformity.  
[http://www.davidmacd.com/catholic/timeline\\_of\\_catholic\\_church.htm](http://www.davidmacd.com/catholic/timeline_of_catholic_church.htm)

Also, in the midst of this collapse, the Church of the West still fought with the Church of the East, over the nature of Christ and other factors, leading the Western Pope’s excommunication by the Eastern Patriarch (485).

What basically saved the Roman Catholic Church in the West, during this decline, was the conversion of the Franks, supposedly based on an incident similar to the one that led to Constantine the Great’s conversion:

- 496 Clovis, king of the Franks, converts to Catholicism. When his troops appear to be losing against the Alemanni at Strasbourg, he invokes the God of his Catholic wife Clotilda to give him victory. He is baptized by St. Remi, and brings the Franks to the Catholic fold, the first barbarian people to adopt Catholicism.  
[http://www.davidmacd.com/catholic/timeline\\_of\\_catholic\\_church.htm](http://www.davidmacd.com/catholic/timeline_of_catholic_church.htm)

This conversion broke the monopoly of the successor states’ Arian version of Christianity. Prior to this victory, most of the West was ruled by Arians such as the Visigoths (as seen with their Kingdom in 500 AD).



### Ostrogoths Kingdom around 500AD

These Arian rulers were at first quite successful and were, in fact, well regarded by many of the surviving people of Rome and the Roman world; for there was a marked effort by the new German states to maintain the Roman traditions and governmental structures.

However, a long series of wars of re-conquest by the Eastern Empire, under Justinian ensued. Justinian destroyed the German Arian rulers of North Africa (the Vandals), retook part of Iberia (Spain) from the Visigoths and then defeated the Gothic kingdoms in Italy, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justinian\\_I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justinian_I) The eventual success of the Franks over other German rulers enabled the Western (Roman) Church to survive and eventually become the dominant force in the new German successor states.

Once reestablished as the cult worship of the rulers, the Church returned to the practice of forced repression of non-believers. For example,

- In 589, King [Reccared](#) (Recaredo) converted his people to Catholicism. With the Catholicization of the Visigothic kings, the Catholic bishops increased in power, until, at the [Fourth Council of Toledo](#) in 633, they took upon themselves the nobles' right to select a king from among the royal family.
- Visigothic persecution of Jews began after the conversion to Catholicism of the Visigothic king [Reccared](#). In 633 the same [synod](#) of Catholic bishops that usurped the Visigothic nobles' right to confirm the election of a king declared that all Jews must be [baptised](#).. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visigoth>

The period of new Church efforts to force convert and bring about religious conformity marked the real collapse of the “classical” world in the West, and led to the “dark ages.” For example,

- Bad weather, plagues, demographic collapse, decline of schools, education and culture were common features of the Frankish lands in the dark period of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Toulouse#418-508:\\_Visigoth\\_kingdom\\_of\\_Toulouse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Toulouse#418-508:_Visigoth_kingdom_of_Toulouse)

However, even what remained was under constant attack, as there were seemingly endless new peoples coming into the lands that had been depopulated and “de-civilized.” These new peoples were non-Christians, and strongly attached to their religion..

- Justinian's successors [Maurice](#) and [Heraclius](#) had to confront invasions of the [Avar](#), [Bulgar](#) and [Slavic](#) tribes. In 626 Constantinople, by far the largest city of early medieval Europe, withstood a combined siege by Avars and Persians.

Into Italy came the Lombards, and their conquest and establishment of a new kingdom. Their anti-Christian stance almost ended the Catholic Church itself. But, again, as with Attila, Rome was not taken and over a hundred year period most Lombards did convert to the Roman Church.

- When they entered Italy, some Lombards were and remained pagan, while some were [Arian](#) Christians. Hence they did not enjoy good relations with the [Catholic Church](#). Gradually, they adopted Roman titles, names, and traditions, and partially converted to orthodoxy ([7<sup>th</sup> century](#)), not without a long series of religious and ethnic conflicts <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lombards>

So, at least in the West, around 550 or so, the only lands that were firmly Catholic were those controlled by the Franks. And even with the conversion of the Visigoths to Catholic rites, there were constant threats from new peoples who were either “fully pagan” such as the Slavs and Bulgars, or half pagan, half Arian, such as the Lombards.

By around 550, Europe was on the brink of not just economic and cultural collapse, but the Catholic Church, which seemed to have won a victory over thousands of years of religion, looked as if it also would pass away, with the other later Roman traditions.

However, the Roman Church did survive, mainly as a result of politics.

- By the beginning of the [8<sup>th</sup> century](#), these kingdoms had either been conquered by Nicene (Roman Church) neighbors (Ostrogoths, Vandals, Burgundians) or their rulers had accepted Nicene Christianity (Visigoths, Lombards). The [Franks](#) were unique among the Germanic peoples in that they entered the empire as pagans and converted to Nicene Christianity directly. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arianism>

Even with the success of the Franks, and conversion of the Visigoths and Lombards (and the smaller invading groups in Britain), the trials of the Catholic Church, and in fact Christianity in general, were actually just beginning as the dual forces of Islam and then the Viking Pagans would deliver a one-two punch that came very close to ending the Christian religion as a viable force.

Beginning in the 630's through 1000 AD or so, Christianity was under assault and losing almost everywhere. The forces of Islam came out of Arabia to take over half of the Christian land area (Middle East, North Africa) and most of Spain, in less than one hundred years. They also took Sicily and a good portion of Southern Italy as well as the southern coast line of what is now France. Their advance was checked in a single battle in Gaul (France). While that battle was seen by the Franks as a great victory, in the eyes of the Muslims it was a minor defeat and the "emptiness of the land" gave the Muslims little reason to return for conquest. The costs were simply not worth the effort.

- The battle (of Tours or Poitiers, 732) followed twenty years of Umayyad conquests in Europe, beginning with the invasion of the [Visigothic Christian Kingdoms of the Iberian peninsula](#) in [711](#) and progressing into the [Frankish territories of Gaul](#), former provinces of the [Roman Empire](#). Umayyad military campaigns had reached northward into [Aquitaine](#) and [Burgundy](#), including a major battle at [Bordeaux](#) and a raid on [Autun](#). Martel's victory is believed by some historians to have stopped the northward advance of Umayyad forces from the [Iberian peninsula](#), and to have preserved [Christianity](#) in Europe during a period when Muslim rule was overrunning the remains of the old [Roman](#) and [Persian Empires](#). Others have argued that the battle marked only the defeat of a raid in force and was not a watershed event.

However, in the Eastern Empire, the Muslims also came close to taking all of the Roman lands ending only with a major defeat in 717 under the very walls of Constantinople (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine-Arab\\_Wars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine-Arab_Wars) ) and the Byzantines were able to recover much of Anatolia, and hold it for another 300 years.

This is only a political recollection; we don't even include the fact that upwards of a third of the population of Eastern Europe was wiped out by the Plague of Justinian.

- The **Plague of Justinian** (541-542 [AD](#)) was a [pandemic](#) that afflicted the [Eastern Roman Empire \(Byzantine Empire\)](#), including its capital [Constantinople](#). It was one of the greatest plagues in history. The most commonly accepted cause of the pandemic is [bubonic plague](#), which later became notable as a cause or contributing to the [Black Death](#) of the 14th century.
- The number of deaths will always be uncertain. Modern scholars believe that the plague killed up to 5,000 people per day in Constantinople at the peak of the pandemic. It ultimately killed perhaps 40% of the city's inhabitants. The initial plague caused the deaths of up to a quarter of the human population of the eastern



Mediterranean<sup>[10]</sup> New, frequent waves of the plague continued to strike throughout the 6th, 7th and 8th centuries AD, often more localized and less virulent. It is estimated that the Plague of Justinian killed as many as 25 million people across the world.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plague\\_of\\_Justinian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plague_of_Justinian)

For our purposes, we need to understand that this near collapse of Christianity in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries was, as the British would say “a very close run thing.”

The massive deaths through the plagues are followed by military defeats; the combination was nearly “the end of times.”

The first onslaught of Islam almost wiped out the Christian world. Part of the irony of this period is that the Byzantine Christians were in large part, saved by the Pagan Bulgarians, who interceded in the war on the side of the Byzantines, again, for political reasons.

- The Bulgars had no love for the Byzantines, but they were determined that, if Constantinople were to be taken, it should fall into Bulgar rather than Arab hands  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second\\_Arab\\_siege\\_of\\_Constantinople](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Arab_siege_of_Constantinople)



[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/20/Age\\_of\\_Caliphs.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/20/Age_of_Caliphs.png)

The West was completely incapable of providing support to the Eastern Empire. However, a bit later Christians in Western Europe had a minor rebound under Charlemagne, the Frank; but the progress was slow and greatly resisted by the non-Christians, resulting in limited gains over many years:

- The **Saxon Wars** were the campaigns and insurrections of the more than thirty years from 772, when [Charlemagne](#) first entered [Saxony](#) with the intent to conquer, to 804, when the last rebellion of disaffected tribesmen was crushed. In all, eighteen battles were fought in what is now northwestern [Germany](#). They resulted in the incorporation of Saxony into the [Frankish](#) realm and their conversion from [paganism](#) to [Christianity](#).
- Despite repeated setbacks, the Saxons resisted steadfastly, forever returning to raid

Charlemagne's domains as soon as he turned his attention elsewhere. Their main leader, [Widukind](#), was a resilient and resourceful opponent, but eventually was defeated and baptized (in [785](#)). [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saxon\\_Wars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saxon_Wars)

Charlemagne's efforts in Spain were mostly a failure, and his "rear guard" was destroyed as he retreated (who's telling resulted in one of the most noted poems of Western Europe, *The Song of Roland*) see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Song\\_of\\_Roland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Song_of_Roland)

So, while Christianity tried to recover from disunity, invasions, plague and the Islamic threat and in the West unite under the leadership of Charlemagne, shortly after his death there was a new surge of Pagan invasion that yet again, almost ended the Catholic religion. Starting with the Vikings and continuing with the Bulgars, the Magyars and the Avars, these new invaders made the German tribes that ended the Roman rule in the West look almost like gentlemen; almost all of Europe was again nearly leveled by these new invasions.

We generally know of the Viking raids in the West and how they took over parts of France (Normandy) and how the Danish Vikings took half and later all of England, but we know less of the advances in the East. The Pagan Vikings not only took all of what is now European Russia (and basically established the Russian and Kievan states [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rulers\\_of\\_Kievan\\_Rus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rulers_of_Kievan_Rus) ), but they also came closer than even the Muslims did in taking and destroying Constantinople (in a lightning raid in 860) and perhaps ending Christianity in the East. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rus%27-Byzantine\\_War\\_%28860%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rus%27-Byzantine_War_%28860%29) These "Rus", as the rulers of these peoples were called only became Christian around 970 AD, almost two centuries after first terrorizing Christian Europe.

In addition, there were other people who changed the demographics of areas and also changed the religion of Europe away from Christianity, and so many of these peoples came very close to destroying the Western Christian states, as well as Constantinople, and what remained of the Eastern Empire. These included:

- The Avar, who fought wars with Byzantine Empire for close to 300 years, and maintained a state in what is roughly now Hungary and Austria. They never converted to Christianity.
- The Bulgars, who moved into the Balkans around 640, and began a 300 year fight with the Byzantines; in which they took control of most of the European Byzantine territories and almost exterminated the former "Greek" peoples in the area. The Bulgars only became Christian in the 880. This conversion did not, however, stop the wars between the two empires.

Then came the Magyars who put so much fear into Europe, that they are the most likely model for the term "ogre" <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ogre> ) They first came about 900 AD, and again raided almost freely for more than a century.

- The Magyar leader [Árpád](#) is believed to have led the Hungarians into the [Carpathian Basin](#) in 896. In 907, the Magyars destroyed the [Bavarian](#) army at [Bratislava](#), laying [Germany](#), [France](#) and [Italy](#) open to Magyar raids. These raids were fast and devastating. The Magyars defeated [Louis the Child](#)'s Imperial Army near [Augsburg](#) in 910. From 917-925, Magyars raided through [Basle](#), [Alsace](#), [Burgundy](#), [Saxony](#), and [Provence](#). Magyar expansion was checked at the [Battle of Lechfeld](#) in 955.

- Although the battle at Lechfeld stopped the Magyar raids against Western Europe, the raids on the [Balkan Peninsula](#) continued until 970. Hungarian settlement in the area was approved by the [Pope](#) when their leaders accepted [Christianity](#) and [Stephen I the Saint](#) (*Szent István*) was crowned King of Hungary in 1001. The century between the Magyars' arrival from the eastern European plains and the consolidation of the [Kingdom of Hungary](#) in 1001 was dominated by pillaging campaigns across Europe, from Dania ([Denmark](#)) to the [Iberian peninsula](#) ([Spain](#)).

The biggest threat actually was one that only came briefly and then did not return, the Mongols (who stopped the invasion of Europe to settle issues of succession and never returned). Again, the initial Mongol forces found little of interest or value in the devastated Europe.

What this little history is trying to convey was that the “Christian world” was anything but stable and successful. For nearly, 400 years after the ending of the Roman state, it was just barely hanging on and was under constant threat from Pagan and Muslim forces.

In addition, the Western Christians hated the Eastern Church and vice a versa (The final split coming in 1006). In these years of fighting for simple survival, there was no “united front.”

There was some revival of the Church under Charlemagne and the reestablishment of a Western Emperor (800) and the establishment of The Holy Roman Empire but these efforts failed to maintain stability as the successors of Charlemagne fell into internal fighting, and various new invasions occurred.

As noted in the book, *Religion of the Occident*, Western Europe, internally, had degenerated to the point that it most resembled India in the early stages of the development of the Hindu culture, some three thousand years earlier, in which the society was divided into four main groups

- The ruling religious groups dominated by priest
- The military caste
- The peasant caste
- The merchant caste

In addition, like Hindu India, Europe of about 600-1000 AD had its “untouchables” as well, namely, the heretics and the Jews.

As we have seen, in this era the Church gained real political power (as what remained of the State was weak and disorganized) and with that political power came a new campaign of repression and terror. As pointed out in *The Closing of the Western Mind* with the triumph of the Church in the West, and the focus only on the Bible as the source of knowledge, society degenerated into one dominated by superstition (over reason and science), where correlation was considered causation. The controlling view of the Church was that the Devil was present everywhere, and that the Church and absolute loyalty to its dictates was needed to prevent the Devil from dominating the land.

From this period of say, 500 to 1000AD, while the Church was in the general state of retreat, almost all of its success was based not on love of the message of Jesus, but either through forced conversions (such as the Saxons) or from political alliances and gains of the ruling elite

(such as the Visigoths). While the elite could change rites and “beliefs” to fit the moment, it appears that the impact of the religion was relatively limited among the “masses.”

- However, through fear of the rulers, and through the Church taking on almost all civil matters (including marriage, education, and support in times of famine and other crises) peoples throughout Western Europe were at least obligated to take on the veneer of Christianity.

As was clear in the earlier development of the Church, during this time when German tribes and new nations were adopting Roman church rites, the “pagan” cultures and beliefs were “morphed” into the process. Holidays and rituals were adopted to Church acceptance (the Yule log and Halloween just to name a few), and most importantly, more and more, God and Christ, became not Gods of justice, but Gods of battles; Christianity adapted itself to the warrior culture of the Germans, just as it had adapted itself to the needs of Rome. However, there were no real “intellectual classes” in the new German dominated societies, and arguments over the fine points of the religion almost stopped for some 500 years (until the calling of the Lateran Council in 1123).

However, once called, these new councils were not ones that mainly focused on religious issues per say, but on the power of the Church and control of the non-Christian populations.

[First Lateran Council](#), (1123); dealt with one of the pressing issues of the time, the question of the rights of the Roman Catholic Church and those of the [Holy Roman Emperors](#) with respect to the investment of bishops.

[Second Council of the Lateran](#), (1139); mostly repeated [First Council of the Lateran](#). Clerical marriages declared invalid, clerical dress regulated, attacks on clerics punished by [excommunication](#)

[Third Council of the Lateran](#), (1179); limited papal electors to the [cardinals](#) alone, condemned [simony](#), forbade the promotion of anyone to the episcopate before the age of thirty.

[Fourth Council of the Lateran](#), (1215); dealt with [transubstantiation](#), [papal primacy](#), and conduct of clergy. It also stated that [Jews](#) and [Muslims](#) should wear a special dress to enable them to be distinguished from Christians.

[First Council of Lyon](#), (1245); mandated the red hat for cardinals, and a levy for the [Holy Land](#). [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecumenical\\_council](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecumenical_council)

In this period Roman Christianity became the religion of the two primary castes (the priest and the warriors); however during much of this period the masses maintained the veneer of Christianity with a very healthy dose of their traditional pagan beliefs and festivals.

And the religion of the third and fourth castes, the peasants and merchants, at least in Western Europe, included elements of both the Roman influence which in some areas lasted some four to six hundred years, but also retained elements of their previous rulers (Greek and Phoenician) as well as Celtic and other folk traditions. Unlike Eastern and Central Europe which underwent extensive population changes over the hundreds of years after the fall of the Western Empire (Slavs, Magyars, etc), the West maintained much of its Celtic/Roman population base, although greatly reduced in size and influence.

- The first caste (Priests) was mainly from the old Roman elite.
- The second caste (Warriors) was mainly now German or Scandinavian (including Goths, Danes, Vikings, etc).
- The third caste (Peasants), were mainly Roman/Celtics.
- The fourth caste apart from Viking traders, were mainly non-European, but from areas that were at one point, Phoenician dominated (Jews, Moors, and other “Near Easterners”).

And of course, there were (Untouchables), who were the poor Jews.

## Part V – The Morphing of Ideas –

### Section II– The End Game, and a New Game

#### Subsection B A Christian Rebound, - A New Round of Terror

Around 1000, the power of the new Scandinavian rulers in Europe was increasing, and that of the Germans was lessening; and the Scandinavians were mainly pagan or newly converted Roman Catholic. The conquest urge was still moving the Scandinavians on to new efforts (including their first wars with the Muslims) See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Normans> The Church worked to harness the energies of these newly converted peoples with such futile efforts as the “Truce of God” to keep the peace in Western Europe (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace\\_and\\_Truce\\_of\\_God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_and_Truce_of_God) But also the Church saw in these peoples a new source of energy for Christianity. The Church tried to channel the Scandinavians’ urge for war, and urge for new lands by creating a justification for wars (away from Europe); an effort to retake Christian lands from the Muslims.

The Scandinavians, or Normans as they became known in Western Europe (as opposed to the Rus of Eastern Europe) were ready to go on to more fighting, both against Christian States that were not to the Church’s liking and also Non-Christian states.

We are all familiar with 1066 AD and the Battle of Hastings and the Norman conquest of England (a fellow Christian state), and we are also all familiar with the Crusades, which had a great deal of “Scandinavian” leadership; but the precursor to the Crusades, and the foundation for the belief that the Crusades could be successful, was another war of the “Scandinavian” new Christians, the Norman war of Conquest of Sicily. This war (1051-1091) was the first major “re-conquest” by the Christians against the Muslims. Sicily, had been held by the Muslims for nearly 400 years.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norman\\_conquest\\_of\\_southern\\_Italy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norman_conquest_of_southern_Italy) ).

- It should be noted that under Muslim rule, Sicily prospered and was considered one of the best and richest places in Europe. The rulers maintained religious toleration, opened up new lands for farming, reintroduced Roman waterworks and created, as they did in Spain a prosperous and relatively free land. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emirate\\_of\\_Sicily](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emirate_of_Sicily)

The Church utilized the “Norman” spirit for a counter offensive against Islam.

- [Geoffrey Malaterra](#) characterized the Normans as “specially marked by cunning, despising their own inheritance in the hope of winning a greater, eager after both gain and dominion, given to imitation of all kinds, holding a certain mean between lavishness and greediness, that is, perhaps uniting, as they certainly did, these two seemingly opposite qualities.... a race altogether unbridled unless held firmly down by the yoke of justice. They were enduring of toil, hunger, and cold whenever fortune laid it on them, given to hunting and hawking, delighting in the pleasure of horses, and of all the weapons and [garb](#) of war.”

After the successful effort in Sicily, and then eventually in the Holy Land, with the first Crusade (1096), the Normans were instrumental in taking the remains of the Byzantine Empire. (The sacking of Constantinople in 1204 was part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Crusade and a “Latin



Empire” was established there for some 60 years.) The force of the Normans was being felt. And everywhere the Normans went, the Latin Church came as well. Almost all the lands taken by the Normans (excluding England), were mainly Greek Orthodox, not Roman.

- Sicily, mostly inhabited by [Greek Christians](#), was under Arab control at the time of its conquest by the Normans.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norman\\_conquest\\_of\\_southern\\_Italy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norman_conquest_of_southern_Italy)

In these Norman conquests, the Greek Christians were either killed or forced to convert or exiled (although initially in Sicily there was some degree of tolerance) see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Sicily](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Sicily) . The slaughter of Greek Christians (and others) in Jerusalem and Constantinople by the “Crusader” Normans is legendary:

The writings on the fall of Jerusalem during the first Crusade state:

Once the Crusaders had breached the outer walls and entered the city almost every inhabitant of Jerusalem was killed over the course of that afternoon, evening and next morning. Muslims, Jews, and ... Christians were all massacred with indiscriminate violence. Many Muslims sought shelter in the [Al-Aqsa Mosque](#), where, according to one famous account in *Gesta*, “...the slaughter was so great that our men waded in blood up to their ankles...” According to Raymond of Aguilers “men rode in blood up to their knees and bridle reins.” The chronicle of [Ibn al-Qalanisi](#) states the Jewish defenders sought refuge in their synagogue, but the “Franks burned it over their heads”, killing everyone inside. The Crusaders circled the flaming building while singing “Christ, We Adore Thee!” Tancred claimed the [Temple quarter](#) for himself and offered protection to some of the Muslims there, but he could not prevent their deaths at the hands of his fellow crusaders. ...

The [Gesta Francorum](#) states that some people managed to escape the siege unharmed. Its anonymous author wrote,

*“When the pagans had been overcome, our men seized great numbers, both men and women, either killing them or keeping them captive, as they wished.”* Later it is written, “[Our leaders] also ordered all the [Saracen](#) dead to be cast outside because of the great stench, since the whole city was filled with their corpses; and so the living Saracens dragged the dead before the exits of the gates and arranged them in heaps, as if they were houses. No one ever saw or heard of such slaughter of pagan people, for funeral pyres were formed from them like pyramids, and no one knows their number except God alone.” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege\\_of\\_Jerusalem\\_%281099%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_%281099%29)

Of the fall of (Greek Christian) Constantinople it is written:

- The crusaders inflicted a horrible and savage sacking on Constantinople for three days, during which many ancient and medieval Roman and Greek works were either stolen or destroyed. Despite their oaths and the threat of excommunication, the Crusaders ruthlessly and systematically violated the city’s holy sanctuaries, destroying, defiling, or stealing all they could lay hands on; nothing was spared.

Speros Vryonis in Byzantium and Europe gives a vivid account of the sack of Constantinople by the Frankish and Venetian Crusaders of the Fourth Crusade:



- The Latin soldiery subjected the greatest city in Europe to an indescribable sack. For three days they murdered, raped, looted and destroyed on a scale which even the ancient Vandals and Goths would have found unbelievable. Constantinople had become a veritable museum of ancient and Byzantine art, an emporium of such incredible wealth that the Latins were astounded at the riches they found. Though the Venetians had an appreciation for the art which they discovered (they were themselves semi-Byzantines) and saved much of it, the French and others destroyed indiscriminately, halting to refresh themselves with wine, violation of nuns, and murder of Orthodox clerics. The Crusaders vented their hatred for the Greeks most spectacularly in the desecration of the greatest Church in Christendom. They smashed the silver iconostasis, the icons and the holy books of Hagia Sophia, and seated upon the patriarchal throne a whore who sang coarse songs as they drank wine from the Church's holy vessels. The estrangement of East and West, which had proceeded over the centuries, culminated in the horrible massacre that accompanied the conquest of Constantinople. The Greeks were convinced that even the Turks, had they taken the city, would not have been as cruel as the Latin Christians. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4th\\_Crusade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4th_Crusade)

Here was slaughter on a scale that was apparently loved by the Normans, and it appears to have been supported by the Church.

The slaughter was not restricted to Norman conquests; prior to the beginning of the first Crusade, there was a general slaughter of Jews in Western Europe.

- The crusaders moved north through the Rhine valley into well-known Jewish communities such as [Cologne](#), and then southward. Jewish communities were given the option of converting to Christianity or being slaughtered. Most would not convert and, as news of the mass killings spread, many Jewish communities committed mass suicides in horrific scenes. Thousands of Jews were massacred, despite some attempts by local clergy and secular authorities to shelter them. The massacres were justified by the claim that Urban's speech at Clermont promised reward from God for killing non-Christians of any sort, not just Muslims. Although the papacy abhorred and preached against the purging of Muslim and Jewish inhabitants during this and future crusades, there were numerous attacks on Jews following every crusade movement. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st\\_Crusade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st_Crusade)

The crusading effort was not limited to attacking Islamic lands in the Holy Land and Sicily, but included the retaking of Spain, or what is known as the Reconquesta. These new efforts in Spain took on a more explicit religious overtone, than in the previous fighting (where often Christians and Muslims were allied with each other while fighting other Christian Muslim coalitions). With the "Crusading spirit," this type of intercourse ended, and the wars were very religious in nature. The winners were clearly the first and second castes (the Church and the warrior, with the Church even developing its own military orders as well.

- In the [High Middle Ages](#), the fight against the Moors in the Iberian Peninsula became linked to the fight of the whole of [Christendom](#). The Reconquesta was originally a mere war of conquest. It only later underwent a significant shift in meaning toward a religiously justified war of liberation (see the Augustinian concept of a [Just War](#)).
- Later [military orders](#) like the [order of Santiago](#), [Montesa](#), [Order of Calatrava](#) and the

[Knights Templar](#) were founded or called to fight in Iberia. The Popes called the knights of Europe to the [Crusades](#) in the peninsula. After the so called [Disaster of Alarcos](#), [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Alarcos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Alarcos) French, Navarrese, Castilian, Portuguese and Aragonese armies united against the Muslim forces in the massive [battle of Las Navas de Tolosa \(1212\)](#). [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Las\\_Navas\\_de\\_Tolosa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Las_Navas_de_Tolosa) The big territories awarded to military orders and nobles were the origin of the [latifundia](#) in today's [Andalusia](#) and [Extremadura](#), in Spain, and [Alentejo](#), in Portugal. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reconquesta>

And for the next eighty years there was a slow but steady taking of lands by Christian forces, so that by 1300 (or roughly 600 years after the Islamic conquest) almost all of Spain and the Balearic Islands were in Christian hands. What lands that did remain Muslim (the Granada State), for nearly 200 years more, existed as vassals to the Christian overlords.

Now the newly conquered lands were ones filled with non-Christians; and unlike with the Normans successes, there was initially not a general slaughter or exile of non-Roman Catholics in the newly won lands of Iberia.

- With the long process involved (some 800 years between 700 and 1500), the history of what became Spain had resulted in populations switching religions in many cases, only to switch again based on the politics, and rulers, of the time.

So in Spain, the question of just being Christians, Muslims and Jews, was not that simple. The question involved, how long one had been Christian, and if anyone in the family had ever converted back and forth. There were "Christian" families with long histories and issues of religious "purity," and they saw themselves as far better than others.

This issue of how the family responded to Muslim rule became vastly important in Spain (like the old Donatist controversy in Africa in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century). In fact, in Spain, what one's family had done in the past, was critical in determining the "status" of the individuals within the family.

Spain became a very stratified society based on religion, but also upon a given families conduct during a 600 year period. The Spanish developed new terms to describe the families' history; some of the groupings included:

The [Mozarabs](#): Christian in Muslim-held lands (who had held firm in their beliefs). Some of them migrated to the North in times of persecution.

The [Muladi](#): Christians who converted to Islam after the arrival of the Moors.

The [Renegade](#): Christian individuals who embraced Islam and often fought against their former compatriots.

The [Jewish conversos](#): Jews who either voluntarily or compulsorily became Christians. Some of them were [crypto-Jews](#) who kept practicing [Judaism](#)..

The [Mudéjar](#): [Muslims](#) dwelling in land conquered by the Christians, usually peasants. ... Their descendants after 1492 were called [Moriscos](#) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reconquesta>

And converting to Christianity was soon not sufficient, families were examined closely to ensure that the conversions were “complete.

- Eventually when all Jews were forced to leave Spain in 1492 by Ferdinand and Isabella, and Portugal some years later, the long-term Conversos, and the descendants of the Conversos who accepted Christianity at the time of the expulsion became primary targets of the [Spanish](#) and [Portuguese Inquisitions](#).

Eventually, the Moriscos (whose number were far larger than the Jews) also became targets of the Inquisition and were also later expelled from Spain.

With this Crusading success, a far stronger Church, with a far stronger warrior class supporting them, began a much greater push for “uniformity” and the importance of “bloodlines” in Western Christian Europe. While the Church had always called for conformity, with the chaos of Europe and the constant invasions, the Church was not always in a position of power to do as it wanted.

- With the Scandinavian conversions, and the Norman surges, the Church’s power changed, and the push for conformity was renewed.

We see it not only in the first rush of the killing of Jews during the first Crusade, but also in the later expulsion of Jews from almost all of Western Europe. (The Spanish expulsions of 1492 and soon after Portugal, were amongst the last kingdoms to take action.)

A quick review of the anti-Jewish movements in Western Europe shows, once again, a link to Ba’al and the religion of the Phoenicians; attacks on Jews were in those days mainly started with the accusation that Jews were sacrificing children (or the “Hebrew” need to sacrifice children). The idea of the “Blood Libel” was that Jews needed the blood of Christian children to make matzos (the bread of Passover). Charges of Blood Libel were raised over and over. Human sacrifice accusations became central to the attack on the Jews (with some historical irony since as noted, the Jews of the Return from the Babylonian Captivity, or the Judaism of the European Jews, were the ones so set against this practice).

The Blood Libel was not always started by the Church, and the Church did take steps to try to stop the accusations:

### 1235

The Jews of Fulda, Germany were accused of [ritual murder](#). To investigate the [blood libel](#), Emperor Frederick II held a special conference of Jewish converts to Christianity at which the converts were questioned about Jewish ritual practice. Letters inviting prominent individuals to the conference still survive. At the conference, the converts stated unequivocally that Jews do not harm Christian children or require blood for any rituals.

In 1236 the Emperor published these findings and in 1247 [Pope Innocent IV](#), the Emperor’s enemy, also denounced accusations of the [ritual murder](#) of Christian children by Jews. In 1272, the papal repudiation of the [blood libel](#) was repeated by [Pope Gregory X](#), who also ruled that thereafter any such testimony of a Christian against a Jew could not be accepted unless it is confirmed by another Jew. Unfortunately, these proclamations from the highest sources were not effective in altering the beliefs of the Christian majority and the libels continued

While the Church was often concerned with the conformity issues,

- The kings and nobles supported the attacks to either gain the wealth of the Jews or to get out from under their debt to Jews (often using the wealth to combat the power of the Church).
- The masses of people, powerless and disenfranchised, were easily goaded and enraged to attack based mainly on rumors of the Blood libel (and to also loot the property of the Jews).

According to [Walter Laqueur](#),

- “Altogether, there have been about 150 recorded cases of blood label (not to mention thousands of rumors) that resulted in the arrest and killing of Jews throughout history, most of them in the Middle Ages... In almost every case, Jews were murdered, sometimes by a mob, sometimes following torture and a trial  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood\\_libel\\_against\\_Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood_libel_against_Jews)

An abridged vision of these 150 attacks and political actions against Jews include:

[1236](#)

[Crusaders](#) attack Jewish communities of [Anjou](#) and [Poitou](#) and attempt to baptize all the Jews. Those who resisted (est. 3,000) were slaughtered.

[1240](#)

Duke Jean le Roux expels Jews from [Brittany](#).

[1242](#)

[James I of Aragon](#) orders Jews to listen to conversion sermons and to attend churches. Friars are given power to enter synagogues uninvited.

[1244](#)

[Pope Innocent IV](#) orders [Louis IX of France](#) to burn all Talmud copies.

[1250](#)

[Zaragoza](#): death of a choirboy [Saint Dominguito del Val](#) prompts [ritual murder](#) accusation. His sainthood was revoked in the 20<sup>th</sup> century but reportedly a chapel dedicated to him still exists in the [Cathedral of Zaragoza](#).

[1253](#)

[Henry III of England](#) introduces harsh anti-Jewish laws.

[1254](#)

Louis IX expels the Jews from [France](#), their property and synagogues confiscated. Most move to [Germany](#) and further east, however, after a couple of years, some were readmitted back.

1255

Henry III of England sells his rights to the Jews (regarded as royal “chattels”) to his brother Richard for 5,000 marks.

c. 1260

[Thomas Aquinas](#) publishes *Summa Contra Gentiles*, a summary of Christian faith to be presented to those who reject it. The Jews who refuse to convert are regarded as “deliberately defiant” rather than “[invincibly ignorant](#)”.

1264

[Simon de Montfort](#) inspires massacre of Jews in London.

1267

Synod of [Breslau](#) orders Jews to live in a segregated quarter.

1275

King [Edward I of England](#) passes the [Statute of the Jewry](#) forcing Jews over the age of seven to wear an identifying [yellow badge](#), and making usury illegal, in order to seize their assets. Scores of English Jews are arrested, 300 hanged and their property goes to the Crown.

1278

The Edict of [Pope Nicholas III](#) requires compulsory attendance of Jews at conversion sermons.

1282

John Pectin, [Archbishop of Canterbury](#), orders all London synagogues to close and prohibits Jewish physicians from practicing on Christians.

1283

[Philip III of France](#) causes mass migration of Jews by forbidding them to live in the small rural localities.

1285

[Blood libel](#) in [Munich, Germany](#) results in the death of 68 Jews. One hundred eighty more Jews are burned alive at the synagogue.

1287

A mob in Oberwesel, Germany kills 40 Jewish men, women and children after a [ritual murder](#) accusation.

1289

Jews are expelled from [Gascony](#) and [Anjou](#).

[1290](#) July 18

[Edict of Expulsion](#): [Edward I](#) expels all Jews from [England](#), allowing them to take only what they could carry, all the other property became the [Crown's](#).

[1291](#)

[Philip the Fair](#) publishes an ordinance prohibiting the Jews to settle in France.

[1298](#)

During the civil war between [Adolph of Nassau](#) and [Albrecht of Austria](#), German knight [Rindfleisch](#) claims to have received a mission from heaven to exterminate “the accursed race of the Jews”. Under his leadership, the mob goes from town to town destroying Jewish communities and massacring about 100,000 Jews, often by mass burning at stake. Among 146 localities in Franconia, Bavaria and Austria are Röttingen (April 20), Würzburg (July 24), Nuremberg (August 1).

[1305](#)

[Philip IV of France](#) seizes all Jewish property (except the clothes they wear) and expels them from France (approx. 100,000). His successor [Louis X of France](#) allows French Jews to return in [1315](#).

[1320](#)

[Shepherds' Crusade](#) attacks the Jews of 120 localities in southwest [France](#).

[1321](#)

King [Henry II of Castile](#) forces Jews to wear [Yellow badge](#).

[1321](#)

Jews in central [France](#) falsely charged of their supposed collusion with lepers to poison wells. After massacre of est. 5,000 Jews, king [Philip V of France](#) admits they were innocent.

[1322](#)

King [Charles IV](#) expels Jews from [France](#).

[1336](#)

Persecutions against Jews in [Franconia](#) and [Alsace](#) led by lawless German bands, the Armleder.

[1348](#)

European Jews are blamed for the [Black Death](#). Charge laid to the Jews that they poisoned the wells. Massacres spread throughout [Spain](#), [France](#), [Germany](#) and [Austria](#). More than 200 Jewish communities destroyed by violence. Many communities have been expelled and settle down in Poland.

1348

[Basel](#): 600 Jews burned at the stake, 140 children forcibly baptized, the remaining Jews in the city are expelled. The city [synagogue](#) is turned into a church and the Jewish cemetery is destroyed.

1359

[Charles V of France](#) allows Jews to return for a period of 20 years in order to pay ransom for his father [John II of France](#), imprisoned in England. After a few extensions, on Nov 3, [1394](#) his son [Charles VI of France](#) expels all Jews from France.

1386

[Wenceslaus, Holy Roman Emperor](#), expels the Jews from the [Swabian League](#) and [Strasbourg](#) and confiscates their property. On March 18, [1389](#), a Jewish boy is accused of plotting against a priest. The mob slaughters approx. 3,000 of [Prague](#) Jews, destroys the city's synagogue and Jewish cemetery. Wenceslaus insists that the responsibility lay with the Jews for going outside during [Holy Week](#).

[1391](#)

Violence incited by Archdeacon of Ecija Ferrand Martinez, results in over 10,000 murdered Jews. The Jewish quarter in [Barcelona](#) is destroyed. The campaign quickly spreads throughout [Spain](#) (except for [Granada](#)) and destroys Jewish communities in [Valencia](#) and Palma De Majorca.

1411

Oppressive legislation against Jews in [Spain](#) as an outcome of the preaching of the [Dominican](#) friar [Vicente Ferrer](#).

[1413](#)

[Disputation of Tortosa](#), Spain, staged by [the Avignon Pope Benedict XIII](#), is followed by forced mass conversions.

1420

All Jews are expelled from [Lyon](#).

[1421](#)

Persecutions of Jews in [Vienna](#), known as *Wiener Gesera* (Vienna Edict), confiscation of their possessions, and forced conversion of Jewish children. 270 Jews burned at the stake. Expulsion of Jews from [Austria](#).

[1422](#)

[Pope Martin V](#) issues a Bull reminding Christians that [Christianity](#) was derived from [Judaism](#) and warns the friars not to incite against the Jews. The Bull was withdrawn the following year after allegations that the Jews of Rome attained it by [fraud](#).



[1434](#)

Council of Basel, Sessio XIX: Jews are forbidden to obtain academic degrees and to act as agents in the conclusion of contracts between Christians.

[1447](#)

[Casimir IV](#) renews all the rights of Jews of [Poland](#) and makes his charter one of the most liberal in Europe. He revokes it in 1454 at the insistence of Bishop Zbigniew.

[1449](#)

The Statute of Toledo introduces the rule of [purity of blood](#) discriminating [Conversos](#). [Pope Nicholas V](#) condemns it.

[1463](#)

Pope Nicholas V authorizes the establishment of the [Inquisition](#) to investigate heresy among the [Marranos](#).

[1473-1474](#)

Spain: Massacres of [Marranos](#) of [Valladolid](#), [Cordoba](#), [Segovia](#), [Ciudad Real](#).

[Simon of Trent](#) blood libel. Illustration in Hartmann Schedel's Weltchronik, 1493

[1475](#)

A student of the preacher [Giovanni da Capistrano](#), [Franciscan Bernardino de Fletre](#), accuses the Jews in murdering an infant, [Simon](#). The entire community is arrested, 15 leaders are burned at the stake, the rest are expelled. In [1588](#), [Pope Sixtus V](#) confirmed Simon's cultus. Saint Simon was considered a martyr and patron of kidnap and torture victims for almost 500 years. In 1965, [Pope Paul VI](#) declared the episode a fraud, and decanonized Simon's sainthood.

[1481](#)

The [Spanish Inquisition](#) is instituted.

[1490](#)

[Tomás de Torquemada](#) burns 6,000 volumes of Jewish manuscripts in [Salamanca](#).

[1491](#)

The [blood libel](#) in La Guardia, Spain, where the alleged victim [Holy Child of La Guardia](#) became revered as a saint.

[1492](#) Mar. 31

[Ferdinand II](#) and [Isabella](#) issue [General Edict on the Expulsion of the Jews](#) from [Spain](#): approx. 200,000. Some return to the [Land of Israel](#). As many localities and entire countries expel their Jewish citizens (after robbing them), and others deny them entrance, the legend of the *Wandering Jew*, a condemned harbinger of calamity, gains popularity.

[1492](#) Oct. 24

Jews of [Mecklenburg](#), Germany are accused of stabbing a consecrated wafer. 27 Jews are burned, including two women. The spot is still called the *Judenberg*. All the Jews are expelled from the Duchy.

[1493](#) Jan. 12

Expulsion from [Sicily](#): approx. 37,000.

1496

[Forced conversion](#) and expulsion of Jews from [Portugal](#). This included many who fled [Spain](#) four years earlier.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_antisemitism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_antisemitism)

Over time, the attacks and punishments took on some form of ritual themselves. Soon there were five types of punishments “approved” against Jews;

- Distinctive clothing, limits on where they could live or work, loss of property or wealth, expulsion, or burning (at the stake).

These of course were only enforced if the Jews survived the looting, raping and rampaging mobs that often attacked the communities.

To the Jews there was also the “punishment” of forced conversion. To the Christians this was not seen as a punishment at all but as a reward, and the key to “salvation.”

It was not just against the Jews that this new effort at forced conformity was instituted. The Church was still fighting heretics and Pagans, and Christians of the wrong rites. The terror was used “close to home” as well. In Europe, there were at least four major religious wars: During this time there was:

- The Albigensian Crusades (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albigensian\\_Crusade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albigensian_Crusade),
- The so called Northern Crusades against Baltic non-Christian states [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern\\_Crusades](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Crusades)
- The continuation of a nearly 700 year effort to re-conquer Spain from the Muslims <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reconquista> and
- The Thirty Years War which took place during Reformation in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, and was one of the most bloody wars of all time. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirty\\_years\\_war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirty_years_war)

This list does not even include the internal war within France between Protestants and Catholics, or the “religion based” wars in the East as Christian Europe tried to retake the Balkans from the Muslim Turks.

In these wars millions died thinking they died for the right and proper version of Christianity. Others died defending non-Christian beliefs.

Of course, during the rise and domination of the Church in Europe, prior to the Reformation, it was often unclear what the “right form” of Christianity constituted. In fact, there were often times when rival popes would appear, each denouncing the other as the “Anti-pope”, and condemning the followers of their rivals to damnation through excommunication.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Pope>. There were at least forty of these “Anti-Popes” starting around the year 200 AD and going until about 1450 AD. For some 200 of these 1250 years (or roughly 10% of the time) there were rival popes reigning and the “Orthodox” church was split on the simple question of who was the “Rock” and therefore who was the true “Vicar of God.”

- The worst of these periods was when there were in fact three popes all claiming to be the true pope. (1410 -1418); therefore during this period all Christians were being condemned to damnation by at least two popes at the same time.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western\\_Schism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Schism)

Later, for centuries, Christians became so hateful of each other that they would often ally with their religious “enemies” or, at least accept the rule of non-Christians, to avoid rule of the “wrong” Christians. This can be seen in the later politics of the Roman Empire (the use of the Roman state to support either the “Orthodox” or “Arian” view (depending upon the Emperor), and the use of the State to attack such groups as the Nestorian Christians. But this internal fighting continued for centuries later, well past the time of the Western Roman Empire

- When the small Islamic armies first appeared in Egypt and the “Holy Land” they were able to take over the lands because they were greeted as “liberators” by the local Christians, who for decades had been persecuted by the Christian forces of Constantinople over a new dispute dealing with the nature of Christ (one nature or two).

Right until the end of the Byzantine Empire (the 15<sup>th</sup> century AD), the Greek Orthodox populations (perhaps remembering the 4<sup>th</sup> Crusade) were willing to accept Islamic rule rather than that of the Roman Orthodox Christians, or worse yet, converting to the Roman rite, to gain protection.

- When a late Byzantine, John VIII Palaeologus (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_VIII\\_Palaeologus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_VIII_Palaeologus) ) made a “Union Deal” with the Pope, upon his return to Constantinople, he was almost killed by his own people.
- The Emperors appealed to the West for help, but the Pope would only consider sending aid in return for a reunion of the Eastern Orthodox Church with the [See of Rome](#). Church unity was considered, and occasionally accomplished by imperial decree, but the Orthodox citizenry and clergy intensely resented Roman authority and the [Latin Rite](#) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine\\_Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_Empire)

However, what linked the era together, what had always linked the Christian eras together was this fear of the devil, and the fear of God’s wrath, based on non-conformity. All actions against Jews, Heretics, Pagans, Islam and other cultures soon to be encountered, were justified in the belief that they were to prevent God’s wrath and necessary acts in order to defeat the devil. Therefore to please God, killing of evil people was correct, and good. So acts that today we see as barbaric and insane were seen at the time as very much needed and justified; just as those who practice the rituals of Ba’al, of child sacrifice saw their actions

as very much needed and justified.

## Part V – The Morphing of Ideas –

### Section II– The End Game, and a New Game

#### Subsection C - Burning As A Means To An End

This short and by no means complete history of the era from the “fall of Rome” to the final Christian victory in Spain (and a bit beyond) is presented to show us that despite the hundreds of years of State and Church terror (beginning with the laws against Paganism in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, through the internal repressions and Jew killings of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries) the main tactic imposed by the Roman Church was less than wholly successful.

And while the two top castes in society (the Church and the Warrior/Nobles) had fully adopted the religion (with a few noted renegades among the nobles) we still see the great influence of “paganism” among the masses, as well as the presence of a persistent “untouchable” class of Jews. And, if we truly look closely at the Church, we see that this organization and “creed” is really the continuation of the Ancient religions under a new guise. Within the core message (the only begotten Son of God died for our sins) we still see the particular influence of Ba’al and the religion of the Phoenicians.

However, what we now need to do is to look for a more guarded or morphed form of this Phoenician religion, deep within this use of terror, by the Church, to impose a religion on people. Again this guarded manifestation seems to take on two forms: one seen as the problem, and one seen as a solution, one in the accusation, and, one in the punishment:

We can see this Ba’al relationship in what appeared to be the primary issues that seemed to be at play in Western Europe during the roughly 400 year period between the time of the first Crusade to the conquest of Granada in Spain:

The accusation of child sacrifice (or the Blood Libel) –.

In addition, the process of reply to this concept of blood libel was

- Ritualistic Burning of Humans (to please God) – the punishment.
- **Blood libels** are sensationalized allegations that a person or group engages in [human sacrifice](#), often accompanied by the claim that the [blood](#) of victims is used in various [rituals](#) and/or acts of [cannibalism](#). The alleged victims are often [children](#).
- Some of the best documented cases of blood libel focus upon accusations against [Jews](#), but many other groups have been accused throughout history, including [Christians](#), [Cathars](#), [Carthaginians](#), [Knights Templar](#), [Witches](#), Christian [heretics](#), [Roma](#), [Wiccans](#), [Druids](#), [neopagans](#), and [Satanists](#).  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood\\_libel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood_libel)

In addition, the Church presented to the “masses” of the people of the time that the main conflict of their time was the same one that was presented to the “children of Israel” by the prophets of the Old Testament:

- Do you follow the laws of Yahweh (as presented in the form of Jesus, and the new covenant) or

- Do you follow the Devil (or as we have seen, God's long term arch rival, Ba'al)?

We can also see how the Church, during this time period, used other Biblical accusations, apart from devil worship, per say. Charges of "witchcraft" and "sorcery" bolstered the Church's efforts to keep people in line. Non-conformists, or at least enemies of the Church, were constantly being denounced to the noble/warrior castes as witches and sorcerers, in internal power plays.

- Unfortunately we can not go into the details of the use of witchcraft as a political tool within the scope of this book. We bring this topic up in order to point out that one of the most frequently used forms of execution of witches and sorcerers was through burning.

The blood libel, however, so frequently noted in the list of attacks on Jews as the cause for the destruction of the communities, was directly linked to the old conflict between the "Hebrews" and Jews, or better stated, the followers of Ba'al, and the followers of Yahweh during the period of Jewish exile and afterwards during the Maccabean revolts and the rise of Christianity.

- The blood libel was based, by reading of the Bible, on the belief that the Jews, needed to sacrifice humans as part of their religious rituals. (As noted, often the charges in these times were associated with the belief that the Jews needed blood for making the Passover matzo).

But regardless of the reason why the blood was needed, the accusations of the Blood Libel centered on the "sacrifice" of the child as part of the religious culture of the Jews.

This idea of the Blood Libel was most shocking to Jews, since they, in fact, saw that it was the Christians, their current oppressor, who focused on blood (the blood of Jesus) and the sacrifice of a son (God's only begotten son) as needed for salvation. The Jews allowed for none of this in their religion, (And as we have seen the Jews found the idea of human sacrifice as anathema to their religion, as it was an important rite of their most hated rival (Ba'al)).

So, if the act of child sacrifice was decidedly non-Jewish, why were the Jews so open, or should I say liable to such attacks? One simple answer lies with the fact that, because of the influence of the Church, these were very "ignorant" times, and in "ignorant times" what is not well known, or what is different, is greatly suspected and feared. Therefore, since the Jews were not part of the general forced religious community, and stood apart, they were subject to all kinds of speculations and accusations, the Blood Libel being just one of these.

In addition, there are other likely reasons for the attacks on the Jews and why the blood libel fit well into these attacks

- As often stated by the Church and others, the Jews, being the killers of Christ, needed to keep killing innocent Christian children, as they had killed the innocent Jesus.

However, this reason does not completely address the idea of the actual accusation that Jews needed to kill children (other than children tended to be seen as "innocent").

The real issue as based in this book, seems to go back to the belief that the Jews of the past,

as stated in the Bible, actually worshiped Ba'al, or, as the Church had come to define Ba'al, the Jews had actually worshiped the Devil, not really the true God. Since the Jews had not come over to Jesus, and the true God, the Jews still really wished to worship Ba'al, or the Devil. In the Church's interpretation of the Bible that was presented to mainly non-literate peasants, the Jews were associated with the killing of children, the murder of the "most beloved," the passing through the fire.

- Here, in the Blood Libel, the Jews of the time were being associated with the Hebrews of old; who, according to the Bible practiced the human sacrifice of children, and the prophets wailed against this action as the chief cause for the failure of the Jewish relationship with God.

Murdering is one thing (and something that was somewhat common in this age, especially murder of lower castes persons by ruling caste members). However, the crime of Blood Libel was not just a crime of murder; it was an accusation of sacrifice, so hated by the Christians, from the beginning of the religion, but ...

- More so, the Blood Libel was not only sacrifice, but human sacrifice, and as we have seen, according to the Prophets, human sacrifice was the crime that the Jews had committed against God, that had caused him to destroy the Jewish kingdoms, and to basically end the covenant of Abraham.

Therefore, the Christians saw the blood libel rooted in the conflict between the Jewish prophets and the popular worship of Ba'al as presented in the Old Testament. If the Jews still took part in the accused practice, denounced by the prophets, the Jews were putting all of Christianity at risk of God's wrath again (not just the small Jewish kingdoms of old, but all of Christianity).

- According to the prophets in the Old Testament, if the Jews had stopped conducting the sacrifices to Ba'al, God would be blessing them. Instead, the practice continued, and God destroyed the Chosen People.

Therefore, in the mind of those Medieval Christians, the whole of the Christian world was at risk by this secret Jewish practice as presented in the accusations of Blood Libel. As the Church of the time understood the Bible, it was still the collective responsibility of the community to punish those who broke God's laws, and clearly the practicing of child sacrificing for their religious needs, was the best way to bring down the wrath of God. Therefore, any and all actions were needed, and justified, to punish the wrong doers and to show God their love (by killing all those who did not conform).

- Since this sacrifice was so hateful to God, it was only through the conversion of the Jews or death of the Jews, that the society could be safe from God's wrath.

Based on the blood libel attack, for the good of the community of Christians, Jews had to be converted, and rejecting the conversion, the Jews had to be killed or at least expelled.

- As we saw in the listing of blood libel events, the top levels of the Church (or one of the ruling castes) did try to prevent attacks on the Jews. However, the impetus for the attacks often came from the lower clergy or the lower castes whose less sophisticated form of Christianity was more based on issues associated with the ideas of Christ sacrifice and the power of Christ's blood.



In addition, the focus on the blood libel may have also been an example of “Me thinks the Lady doest protests too much” (Hamlet) in the fact that these lower caste Christians, with their pagan religious remnants, may have viewed the blood libel as a reminder of their own attachment to sacrifice (to Ba’al or Oden, or other gods that required sacrifice). By attacking the Jews for human sacrificing they were in fact attempting to purge themselves of their guilt over their recent pagan past. And in the 1200’s or so, the “Nordics” who did represent a substantial group of the ruling class of Europe, still was only a few hundred years at best from human sacrifice as a norm in their culture.

- [Adam von Bremen](#) recorded human sacrifices to [Odin](#) in [11<sup>th</sup> century](#) Sweden, at the [Temple at Uppsala](#), a tradition which is confirmed by [Gesta Danorum](#) and the [Norse sagas](#). According to the [Ynglinga saga](#), king [Domalde](#) was sacrificed there in the hope to bring greater future harvests and the total domination of all future wars. The same saga also relates that Domalde’s descendant king [Aun](#) sacrificed nine of his own sons to Odin in exchange for longer life, until the Swedes stopped him from sacrificing his last son, [Egil](#). [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human\\_sacrifice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_sacrifice)

Unfortunately, we will never know what the true motives and fears of the peasant “masses” of the time were, since they did not write, and their thoughts were not recorded by the elites. So much of what we can say, as with much of this work, is only speculation. However, we can clearly see the link of the blood libel issue to the ancient conflicts between the Phoenicians/Canaanite/Hebrew/Old Jews form of worship and the anti-human sacrifice approaches of the post Exile Jews and of the Christians (since as we saw in *Hebrews*, Jesus was the last sacrifice needed).

The links to the past are not just in the accusation of child sacrifice, however. They also appear in the manner in which the Jews (and heretics) were killed and where that type of execution was carried out. The method of these executions harkens back to the conflicts in the Bible between God and Ba’al and therefore can be seen as possible Phoenician residue.

We really know quite little about the origins of “burning” as a form of capital punishment. We do know that it appears that it was used by the Romans, and adopted by the Christians, once they obtained power. In addition, it soon evolved into the only legal form of punishment for heretics.

- The Roman Emperor [Justinian](#) (r. 527-565) ordered death by fire, [intestacy](#), and confiscation of all possessions by the State to be the punishment for heresy against the Catholic faith in his [Codex Iustiniani](#) (CJ 1.5.), ratifying the decrees of his predecessors, the Emperors [Arcadius](#) and [Flavius Augustus Honorius](#).

However, with the ending of Roman rule in the West, the German successor states did not seem to follow in the harsh treatment of “heretics.” After all, many of them had for a long period of time been heretics (Arians) themselves. The treatment of the heretics reflected the German feelings and past, till the time of and even into the early Crusader period.

In the Acts of the Councils of the eleventh and twelfth centuries which treat the combating of heresy, there is never even a suggestion of capital punishment. Neither did any secular law before 1197 demand the death penalty for heresy. [Church History](#) by John Laux, M.A. published by Tan Books and Publishers, Inc. Rockford, Illinois 61105 <http://jmgainor.homestead.com/files/PU/Inq/pi.htm>

However, the Roman past was not forgotten during this time:

But there were .... Canonists who, basing their opinion on the Roman Law, the study of which was then much in vogue, declared that impenitent heretics may, and even should, be punished by death.

Church History by John Laux, M.A. published by Tan Books and Publishers, Inc. Rockford, Illinois 61105 <http://jmgainor.homestead.com/files/PU/Inq/pi.htm>

Then the change in Church policy came; mainly in response to “religious uprisings”(see below, the [Waldenses](#), ) against the power and positions of the Church, but also in response to the “militant Christianity of the Crusading period” after confiscation and slavery were found to be insufficient to repress heretical ideas.

- Canon 27 of the [Third Lateran Council \(1179\)](#), presided over by Alexander III, includes the following for the treatment of ‘heretics’:

... As long as such people persist in their wickedness, let all who are bound to them by any pact know that they are free from all obligations of loyalty, homage or any obedience. On these and on all the faithful we enjoin, for the remission of sins, that they oppose this scourge with all their might and by arms protect the Christian people against them. Their goods are to be confiscated and princes free to subject them to slavery....

In [1184](#), the [Synod of Verona](#) legislated that burning was to be the official punishment for [heresy](#).

This decree was later reaffirmed by the [Fourth Council of the Lateran](#) in [1215](#), the [Synod of Toulouse](#) in [1229](#), and numerous spiritual and secular leaders up through the [17<sup>th</sup> century](#). [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Execution\\_by\\_burning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Execution_by_burning)

The next move was introducing burnings of heretics as an official duty of the military castes, or the king and nobles.

At the Synod of Verona in 1184, Lucius, in agreement with the Holy Roman emperor Frederick I Barbarossa, decreed the excommunication of heretics and their protectors; after ecclesiastical trial, heretics who refused to recant were transferred to civil authorities for punishment—usually death by burning. Lucius’ synod activated the strict decrees of the third Lateran Council (1179) .

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At first, the target of the Church was not Jews or Muslims, but internal dissenters.

[Waldenses](#) or Waldensians were formally declared heretics by Pope Lucius III in 1184 and by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. In 1211 more than 80 were burned as heretics at Strasbourg, beginning several centuries of persecution. The Waldenses proclaimed the Bible as the sole rule of life and faith....

The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition Copyright © 2000, Columbia University Press, [Waldenses](#) <http://jmgainor.homestead.com/files/PU/Inq/pi.htm>

It should be noted that the Waldenses can be seen not only as a early effort at Protestant reforms, but also an early example of the a revolt of the fourth caste, the merchants, in an

effort to break control of society by the Church and the military (which is also a hall mark of the later Protestant reform efforts) (see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waldensians> )

This effort against the Waldenses, the growing intolerance of the Crusading period, and with later religious uprising against the Church in supposedly Christian lands, led the West into a period of “State Terror” (with the Church, in most cases, claiming to be the State or a counterpart of the State) that is collectively called the “Inquisition.”

The extensive history of the Inquisition, throughout the world, can not be explored in this book to the extent to which is needed. (Please see <http://www.sundayschoolcourses.com/inq/inquisition.htm#Theological%20foundations%20for%20the%20Inquisition> for an on line course on the Inquisition) But we need to return to the relationship between the punishments for the “crime” committed by those “heretics” that came to be the linkage to Ba’alism as promoted in this book.

To begin with, it is clear that the Church justified the establishment of the Inquisition, by turning to the Bible:

- The proponents of the Inquisition (and, amazingly, apologists for the action, since the Inquisition ended in 1834), point to both Biblical and theological sources for its justification. The biblical passages most often quoted by the early Inquisitors were from Mosaic Law, in the Old Testament (which seems odd since the Christians believe that Jesus replaced those laws, with a new covenant).

Deuteronomy 13 “If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you...and he says, “Let us follow other gods”...That prophet or dreamer must be put to death...You must purge the evil from among you.

If your very own brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you, saying, “Let us go and worship other gods”...do not yield to him or listen to him. Show him no pity. Do not spare him or shield him...You must certainly put him to death. Your hand must be the first in putting him to death, and then the hands of all the people. Stone him to death...Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and no one among you will do, such an evil thing again.

If you hear it said about one of the towns the LORD your God is giving you to live in that wicked men have arisen among you and have led the people of their town astray...then you must inquire, probe and investigate it thoroughly. And if it is true and it has been proved that this detestable thing has been done among you, you must certainly put to the sword all who live in that town. Destroy it completely, both its people and its livestock.

Gather all the plunder of the town into the middle of the public square and completely burn the town and all its plunder as a whole burnt offering to the LORD your God. It is to remain a ruin forever, never to be rebuilt.”

In addition, the Bible goes on to say, these acts of destruction will be rewarded by God and the true followers will gain Gods blessing:

Deuteronomy 13:17

- None of those condemned things shall be found in your hands, so that the LORD will turn from his fierce anger; he will show you mercy, have compassion on you, and increase your numbers. <http://www.sundayschoolcourses.com/inq/inqcont.htm>

Other sources from the Bible were given for justification of actions against peoples and individuals, for example, from Exodus 22:18 “Do not allow a sorceress to live.”

The Church also gained support from some of its greatest thinkers of the time for the concept of the Inquisition. Again, for example, St. Thomas Aquinas:

- On the part of the Church, however, there is mercy which looks to the conversion of the wanderer, wherefore she condemns not at once, but “after the first and second admonition,” as the Apostle directs: after that, if he is yet stubborn, the Church no longer hoping for his conversion, looks to the salvation of others, by excommunicating him and separating him from the Church, and furthermore delivers him to the secular tribunal to be exterminated thereby from the world by death... (“Summa Theologica - Vol. 3 - The Second Part Of The Second Part (Part I)” by Thomas Aquinas, p. 150) <http://www.sundayschoolcourses.com/inq/inquisition.htm#Theological%20foundations%20for%20the%20Inquisition>

When looking at the Bible, the Church found that burning alive was of the two forms of execution mentioned in the scripture as legitimate for those who violate religious laws and rituals

- Capital punishment is a penalty prescribed by Biblical law for the commission of offenses that violate ritual prohibitions (such as deliberate desecration of the Sabbath) as well as laws regarding interpersonal relationships (murder, kidnapping, incest). The Biblical text explicitly specifies two forms of execution: stoning (*Exodus* 17:4, 8:22; *Numbers* 14:10) and burning (*Leviticus* 20:14, 21:9). The oral tradition includes two additional means—strangulation and decapitation. <http://www.jlaw.com/Briefs/capital2.html>
- It should be noted that burning was demanded for only two specifically mentioned acts (while other acts were punished by stoning to death).

Leviticus 20: 14 If a man marries both a woman and her mother, it is wicked. Both he and they must be burned in the fire, so that no wickedness will be among you.

Leviticus 21: 9 If a priest’s daughter defiles herself by becoming a prostitute, she disgraces her father; she must be burned in the fire.

However, the Christians’ interpretation of Leviticus and the Jewish interpretation was and is very different

- The Mishna in *Sanhedrin* (52a) also described the procedure for “burning” and stated clearly that it did not involve actual resort to fire or flames. Rather, an extremely hot object (or wick) was inserted into the mouth of the condemned individual so as to cause instantaneous death. Here, too, the objective was to cause death quickly and without mutilation of the body.
- Indeed, the Mishna concludes with a very revealing passage that condemns any court

that would put an accused to death with actual flames (*id.*; emphasis added)  
<http://www.jlaw.com/Briefs/capital2.html>

The Church had one other reason for selection of burning as the method for dealing with heretics; it prevented the person from obtaining salvation at a later time:

- The Church considered the burial of the intact body as a requirement for final resurrection; burning prevented resurrection, and thus was considered appropriate for both physical and spiritual execution. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Execution\\_by\\_burning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Execution_by_burning)

We can, however, surmise that this form of execution was selected because it not only was painful and chilling, but it was associated with what was done in the rites of sacrifice of both animals and humans in the Ancient world. And it appears, that the impulse for the burning did not come initially from the Church, but from the “masses” who appear to have revived the ancient folk culture, of public burning of people to placate angry gods, (or to win Gods’ favor – one of the original purposes of sacrificing) morphed into the new Christian religion.

- During the Middle Ages the burning of heretics was not unusual in the two hundred years leading up to the Inquisition (which officially started in 1227/31 A.D.) Often, the burnings were instigated by secular authorities, or by mob action. One of the first known medieval burnings of heretics was by Robert the Pious, King of France, in 1022 A.D., who ordered unrepentant heretics to the flames. Mob actions in Milan in c. 1028, in Soissons in 1114, and in Cologne in 1143 resulted in the death of heretics at the stake, when angry mobs pulled unrepentant heretics out of ecclesiastical prisons. Thus, the idea of consigning “heretics” to burning at the stake was well ingrained by the time of the start of the Inquisition in 1227/31.  
<http://www.sundayschoolcourses.com/inq/inqcont.htm>

In fact some in the Church also resisted the concept of burning of heretics, but eventually bowed to “public pressure” even as it took up the issue in the later Middle Ages.

- The council in Rome declared that unrepentant heretics should be excommunicated, and turned over to secular authorities for punishment. Punishment was unspecified, but confiscation of property was explicitly allowed. Thus, one of the areas of greatest abuse in the coming Inquisition – the confiscation of property by Church and secular authorities – was officially codified by canon law  
<http://www.sundayschoolcourses.com/inq/inqcont.htm>

Growing efforts against the Church represented a rise in “evil.” The process was “condensed” as whole sections of Europe moved into “heresy” with the initial major contest being in Southern France with the Catharists:

- The Catharist ...believed that [Jesus](#) had been a manifestation of spirit unbounded by the limitations of matter — a sort of divine phantom and not a real human being. They embraced the [Gospel of John](#) as their most sacred text, and completely rejected the [Old Testament](#) — indeed, most of them proclaimed that the God of the [Old Testament](#) was, really, the [devil](#). They proclaimed that there was a higher God — the True God — and Jesus was his messenger. .... The God found in the Old Testament had nothing to do with the God of Love known to Cathars.
- The Old Testament God had created the world as a [prison](#), and demanded from the



“prisoners” fearful obedience and worship. This false god .... tormented and murdered those whom he called all too possessively “his children”. ... The dogma of the [Trinity](#) and the sacrament of the [Eucharist](#), among others, were rejected as abominations. Belief in [metempsychosis](#), or the [transmigration](#) of souls, resulted in the rejection of [hell](#) and [purgatory](#), which were dogmas of the Roman Catholic Faith. For the Cathars, this world was the only [hell](#) - there was nothing worse to fear after death, save perhaps a return visit to this world. (see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathars>)

The Holy War released upon the Cathars was “biblical” in its approach and impact:

- The suppression of the Cathar heresy established new “standards” for ferocity for the Roman Church in dealing with its own flock. Perhaps the most famous example was on July 22, 1209, when the city of Beziers was sacked, with over 20,000 men, women and children killed by crusaders. The event will forever be framed in history by the words of papal legate Arnaud, whom, when asked if Catholics should be spared during the assault, answered “Kill them all, for God knows His own”.
- Wholesale burnings of Cathars were carried out during the Crusade, including 400 burnt after the fall of Lavaur in 1211, and 94 burnt after the fall of Casses in the same year. It was against this backdrop that Pope Gregory IX instituted the Papal Inquisition in 1227/31. <http://www.sundayschoolcourses.com/inq/inqcont.htm>

Once a relapsed or unrepentant heretic was found guilty, they were handed over (or “relaxed”) to the secular authorities for punishment. This was not just a jurisdictional issue.

The Church had a motto - “the Church shrinks from blood” (*ecclesia abhorret a sanguine*). Based on this motto, the Church itself would not *administer* the death sentence. Rather, this was left to local secular authorities.

- The chosen method for administering capital punishment – burning at the stake, was partially chosen because it did not shed blood!

The families of heretics that were burned typically had their property confiscated by the secular authorities. In Spain, descendants of heretics could not serve in public office, couldn’t enter holy orders, and couldn’t become physicians, tutors of the young, or advocates (lawyers). <http://www.sundayschoolcourses.com/inq/inqcont.htm>

The “Act of Faith” or Auto da Fe was held in public, typically in a town square or (in Italy), inside a local church. They were often huge public spectacles. In 1660, an auto-da-fé held in Seville lasted for three days, and was attended by 100,000 people. On June 30, 1680, an auto-da-fé held in Madrid lasted for 14 hours, and had 50,000 spectators. The longest part of the auto-da-fé was the reading of sentences. With often hundreds of convicted heretics, the sentencing could take many hours.

Once the sentences had been read, those sentenced to death were led to the place of burning (*quemadero* in Spanish). Those that repented after being sentenced to death would be offered the courtesy of being garroted to death before being burned. Those that refused to recant (often Cathar *perfecti*, Lutherans and Calvinists in Italy and Spain, etc.) were burned alive.

Those burned at the stake would often have ghoulish company. It was common

practice to sentence the dead to burning. The dead would dutifully be disinterred and placed next to the still living victims. As horrifying as this spectacle might seem, there was a pragmatic reason for charging, sentencing, disinterring, and burning the dead – the goods of their families could be confiscated.

<http://www.sundayschoolcourses.com/inq/inqcont.htm>

In Spain, the target of the Inquisition was initially not heretics per se, but the crypto Jews and crypto Muslims that had chosen to stay in the Christian conquered lands and to officially convert to Christianity. The Jews were called *Marranos* (meaning “swine”), *conversos*, or “New Christians” and the Muslims were called *Moriscos* (see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morisco>) While the Jews were expelled in 1492, the non-converted Muslims lasted until 1502.

The *Moriscos* tried to maintain their traditions, and religion, but were increasingly attacked by the Christian Church. There were even revolts against the new rulers some 60 years after the fall of Granada and it wasn't more than 100 years of trying to adapt and compromise that the Christians expelled all the descendants of the converted or semi-converted Muslims. Between 1609 and 1614 the *Moriscos* were expelled by the Spanish king; the numbers that left is subject to debate but are in the range of about 300,000. However, over the 100 year or so period when the religious toleration agreement between Christians and Muslims was violated, the number of Muslims who left Spain was perhaps ten times that number (or close to 3 million). And it should be noted that the *Moriscos*'s expulsion came more than 100 years after the Jewish expulsion and was at a minimum 3 times greater in number than the Jewish Diaspora from Spain.

The numbers of *Moriscos* brought in front of the Inquisition, over the life of that body was most likely greater than the number of Jewish *conversos*. However, this is not true during the “peak” period of the use of burning. During that period (1480-1500) more than 11,000 persons (of the eventual 35,000) were burned. The target was the converted Jew and the pressure was on these Jews to become real “Christians” and to stop attempting to maintain older traditions

- 1391 Mobs murder up to 50,000 Jews throughout the Spanish kingdom
- 1478 Sixtus IV issues bull authorizing Ferdinand and Isabella to appoint an inquisitorial board
- 1480 Ferdinand and Isabella appoint first two Inquisitors – for district of Seville
- 1481 First auto-da-fé occurs – 6 people burned alive in Seville. 298 were burned by the end of the year. (Durant, Reformation, p. 213)



- 1482 Seven additional Inquisitors named, including Tomas Torquemada
- 1483 Inquisition put under control of government agency named the *Suprema*; Tomas Torquemada appointed Inquisitor General for all of Spain
- March 30, 1492 All unbaptized Jews ejected from Spain – 50,000 accepted conversion, 100,000-200,000 left
- 1502 Edict of Expulsion for Moslems – baptism or exile
- 1519 First Spanish Inquisitors appointed for the American colonies
- 1528 First Act of Faith in the New World (Mexico City)
- 1531 Inquisition established in Portugal
- 1540 First Protestant victim of the Spanish Inquisition, Francisco de San Roman, burned at stake
- Sept. 24, 1559 14 Lutherans burned at the stake in Seville
- 1560 First English subjects brought before the Inquisition
- June 17, 1565 22 Lutherans burned in Toledo – 11 alive
- 1604 Treaty of London forbids subjects of the King of England from being persecuted for matters of conscience within the realm of the King of Spain, provided they did not cause public

scandal

- 1615 Deportation of Muslims completed – estimated at between 300,000 – 3,000,000
- 1660 Auto-da-fé held in Seville – lasted 3 days, attended by 100,000 people
- June 30, 1680 Auto-da-fé held in Madrid – lasted for 14 hours; 50,000 spectators; 51 were relaxed, either in person or effigy
- 1721 96-year old woman, Maria Barbara Carillo burned alive in Madrid**

So, in Spain, in this time of the 15-17<sup>th</sup> Centuries, we have mass public procedures in which the god of the land is placated through ritualistic killings during mass public ceremonies.

- The process includes public burnings of people.

Here we can visualize that this practice, while on a grander scale, and with slightly different “victims” and a slightly different concept, still appears to be almost the same religious ceremonies carried out for the same basic reason as those practiced some 2000-3000 years earlier by a previous “great culture” in the same locations, the Phoenicians.

The Auto de Fe, or at least the public burning of people at the ending of the Auto de Fe process, clearly continues the traditions of the Phoenicians and the Carthaginians who had previously held the lands of the Iberian peninsula. The dominant cultural influence on this ritual process was not the Greeks or Romans who had replaced the Phoenicians and Carthaginians, but these more ancient peoples. As we have discussed, their concept that sacrificing of humans, in time of crisis, was critical to the success of the overall community.

This Auto de Fe process and its end results seem more like a loud shout from the past, instead of a mere echo. Both the folk culture and the return to the process of pleasing God through burning of people in his honor had apparently made a full scale come back on the Iberian peninsula.

The sacrifice to Ba'al and the Auto de Fe ... are they unrelated; or cultural echos of each other? Note that in the painting of Auto de Fe those about to be burned are portrayed as almost children, in size to all the others.



## Part V – The Morphing of Ideas –

### Section II– The End Game, and a New Game

#### Subsection D - The Descent into Hell

The use of state terror for religious conformity seemed to the people (or the Church leadership of the time) as an absolute necessity; as noted, all acts of state terror were instituted based on some kind of necessity. Here, in Europe of this time, the leadership saw the crisis of terror as one of the most important ever, to prevent the wrath of God from returning.

- Again, the need for conformity, this fear of the wrath of God, was greatly based in the same concepts of the Returnee Jews and the Hasimondian kingdom in that God's wrath was only diverted and avoided by all peoples in the area conforming completely to God's laws. Acceptance of divergence of any kind by the collective community could also lead to God's destruction of the people.

However, despite all the measures, it appeared to the people of the time that God's wrath was continuing to fall on them. To see this reasoning, to understand the terror of the Church (meaning this time why the Church was afraid) we actually need to cover the time frame from the 1200's through the 1650's with the ending of the Thirty Years War. During this time, as the world seemed to crumble around the Church, its use of terror increased as the resistance of the people increased in direct proportion, leading only to greater conflicts and more state terror. And still the wrath of God seemed to continue. The horrors of the time seemed unabated, and the "solution" of the time seemed to be kill and torture more, hoping to gain conformity and gain God's blessings.

The Thirty Years War was a manifestation of the resistance to conformity. As literacy developed, and people read the Bible for themselves, many people saw that the conformity presented by the Church was not based on the concepts they found in the Bible. In this era, we find incredible destruction of people, in the name of religion.

- During the war, [Germany](#)'s population was reduced by 30%; in the territory of [Brandenburg](#), the losses had amounted to half, while in some areas an estimated two thirds of the population perished. Germany's male population was reduced by almost half. Population of the [Czech lands](#) declined by a third. The [Swedish](#) armies alone destroyed 2,000 castles, 18,000 villages and 1,500 towns in Germany, the number represented one-third of all German towns.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirty\\_Years\\_war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirty_Years_war)

But the Thirty Years War was only the ending of this period of death, chaos and terror that swept Europe. The bloodshed spread to the newly discovered Americas and soon to Africa as well (through the advent of the modern slave trade). So, once again, to try to understand how it appeared that God's wrath was continuing to be felt, how the Church saw the need to prevent even greater disasters (through agents of God, as the Assyrians and Babylonians were seen as the agents of God, ) we need to have another walkthrough of history from the 14<sup>th</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, just to get a taste of what happened

The transition from the [Medieval Warm Period](#) to the [Little Ice Age](#) (and as a result) the

[Great Famine of 1315-1317](#) kills millions of people in [Europe](#) .

Beginning of the [Ottoman Empire](#), early expansion into the [Balkans](#) (no Christian army is able to stand up to the Ottoman wave of conquest).

[Battle of Kosovo](#) in 1389 between Serbs and Ottoman Turks, [Prince Lazar](#), sultan [Murat I](#) and [Miloš Obilić](#) were killed.

The [Hundred Years' War](#) begins when [Edward III](#) of [England](#) lays claim to the [French](#) throne in [1337](#).

[Black Death](#) kills almost half of the population of Europe. ([1347](#) - [1351](#))

The [heresy](#) of [Lollardy](#) rises in [England](#).

The [Great Schism of the West](#) begins in [1378](#), eventually leading to 3 simultaneous [popes](#).

[Peasants' Revolt](#) in England.

[1420-34: Hussite Wars](#) in [Bohemia](#).

[1429: Joan of Arc](#) ends the [Siege of Orléans](#) and turns the tide of the [Hundred Years' War](#).

[1453: The Fall of Constantinople](#) marks the end of the [Byzantine Empire](#).

[1454-66: After defeating the Teutonic Knights in the Thirteen Years' War](#), Poland annexes [Royal Prussia](#).

[1455-85: Wars of the Roses](#) - English civil war between the House of York and the House of Lancaster.

[1456: The Siege of Belgrade](#) halts the Ottoman's advance into Europe.

[1481: Spanish Inquisition](#) begins.

[1492: Boabdil's](#) surrender of [Granada](#) marks the end of the [Reconquista](#) and [Al-Andalus](#).

[1492: Jews](#) expelled from [Spain](#).

[1492: Christopher Columbus](#) founds Spain's first [New World](#) colony on [Hispaniola](#).

[1494: Spain and Portugal](#) sign the [Treaty of Tordesillas](#) and agree to divide the World outside of Europe between themselves.

[1494-1559: The Italian Wars](#) lead to the downfall of the [Italian city-states](#).

[1497-1499: Vasco da Gama's](#) first voyage from [Europe](#) to [India](#) and back.

[1517: The Protestant Reformation](#) begins when [Martin Luther](#) posts his [95 Theses](#) in [Saxony](#).

[1519-21: Hernán Cortés](#) leads the [Spanish conquest of Mexico](#).

[1520-66](#): The reign of [Suleiman the Magnificent](#) marks the zenith of the [Ottoman Empire](#).

[1521](#): [Belgrade](#) is captured by the Ottoman Empire.

[1524-25](#): [Peasants' War](#) in the [Holy Roman Empire](#).

[1526](#): The Ottomans conquer the [Kingdom of Hungary](#) at the [Battle of Mohács](#).

[1527](#): [Sack of Rome](#) is considered the end of the [Italian Renaissance](#).

[1529](#): The [Siege of Vienna](#) marks the Ottoman Empire's furthest advance into Europe.

[1531-32](#): The [Church of England](#) breaks away from the [Roman Catholic Church](#) and recognizes [King Henry VIII](#) as the head of the Church.

[1534](#): The Ottomans capture [Baghdad](#).

[1550-1551](#): [Valladolid debate](#) concerning the existence of souls in [Amerindians](#)

[1556](#): [Pomponio Algerio](#), radical theologian, is executed by boiling in oil as part of the [Roman inquisition](#).

[1558-83](#): [Livonian War](#) between Poland, Grand Principality of Lithuania, Sweden, Denmark and Russia.

[1561](#): [Guido de Bres](#) draws up the [Belgic Confession](#) of Protestant faith.

[1562-98](#): [French Wars of Religion](#) between [Catholics](#) and [Huguenots](#).

[1562](#): [Massacre of Wassy](#) and [Battle of Dreux](#) in the [French Wars of Religion](#). [1566-1648](#): [Eighty Years' War](#) between Spain and the [Netherlands](#).

[1571](#): [Pope Pius V](#) completes the [Holy League](#) as a united front against the [Ottoman Turks](#).

[1571](#): The [Holy League](#) defeats a force of [Ottoman](#) galleys in the [Battle of Lepanto](#).

[1572](#): [Brielle](#) is taken from [Habsburg Spain](#) by Protestant [Watergeuzen](#) in the [Capture of Brielle](#), in the [Eighty Years' War](#).

[1572](#): [Catherine de' Medici](#) instigates the [St. Bartholomew's Day massacre](#) which takes the lives of Protestant leader [Gaspard de Coligny](#) and thousands of [Huguenots](#). The violence spreads from Paris to other cities and the countryside. [1585-1604](#): The [Anglo-Spanish War](#) is fought on both sides of the Atlantic.

[1588](#): England repulses the [Spanish Armada](#).

[1589](#): Spain repulses the [English Armada](#).

[1598](#): The [Edict of Nantes](#) ended the [French Wars of Religion](#).

[1598-1613](#): Russia descends into anarchy during the [Time of Troubles](#).

[1613](#): The [Time of Troubles](#) in [Russia](#) ends with the establishment of the [House of](#)



[Romanov](#) which rules until [1917](#).

[1614](#): [James I of England](#) dissolves the [Addled Parliament](#) for failing to pass legislation or new taxes.

[1614](#): [Cardinal Richelieu](#) dissolves the [States-General](#), thereby concentrating power in the hands of [Louis XIII](#).

[1618](#): The Bohemian Revolt precipitates the [Thirty Years' War](#) which devastates [Central Europe](#) in the years [1618-48](#). Starting from a dispute over Protestant churches on Catholic land, the Protestant churches are torched or closed, leading to a protest in [Prague](#). <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centuries>

Therefore, this time period seems one of almost uninterrupted crises and near defeats of the Christian Church. During this time, the discovery of the Americas and the conquest of the major cultures brought untold new wealth to the Spanish and Portuguese, and actually provided the resources needed to at least hold the Turks at bay. However, when we look at this time period, we also see:

- Famine killing millions and then;
- The Great (Black) Plague kills somewhere between one third to half of the population, and also
- The Turks (and Islam) over run Southeastern Europe, and then
- The Church splitting in what was called the Reformation.

We also see a major shift away from the existing power structure of the “castes” system as the Church splinters with the schisms and multiple popes. The other castes try to exert power, resulting in the conflicts between nobles for control of both the land and the state; for example, the

- The 100 Years War
- War of the Roses

And the early efforts of the other castes (peasants and merchants) fighting for more power and share of the wealth:

The [heresy](#) of [Lollardy](#) rises in [England](#)

[Peasants' Revolt](#) in England

[1420-34](#): [Hussite Wars](#) in [Bohemia](#)

The peasants' wars in Germany

The Dutch wars against Spain

We see in the north and later in France that these peasant and merchant castes use the issues of religious reform as the rallying cry for their bigger share of the wealth. With the wealth of the Church up for grabs, in these new struggles, the military castes began, in



greater numbers, to side with the other castes (the Northern nobles supporting Reformation); and with their new religion, the Reformed Church as justification. Europe descended into war and chaos yet again (French Religious Wars and Thirty Years War, etc). And with the wars, millions died again.

In both the Catholic and the “Reformed” areas of control, the fear of the wrath of God was great, and both camps responded with increased efforts to “protect” the people from the Devil, and from the wrath of God. These security measures included both organized and spontaneous acts of terror.

Based on the theme of this book we can see that these policies of State sponsored tortures and killings were possibly in response to the utter sense of panic and fear created by the multitudinous famines, the plagues and invasions. Much of the anti-Jewish attacks early in this time period were directly related to the plague with the Jews being accused of poisoning the wells (and causing the deaths).

- A particular kind of massacre is that of scapegoats for major human disasters. The presence of Jews in Christian Europe has always provided an easy explanation for catastrophes like the plague. “Why are people getting sick and dying in mass? Because the Jews are poisoning the water.” Jews everywhere were thus attacked during the Black Death of 1347-1352 that killed around 25,000,000 Europeans. Jews were massacred wholesale. For example, in Mainz, Germany, 6,000 were recorded killed; in Erfurt 3,000 died. “By the end of the plague, few Jews were left in Germany or the Low Countries.” <http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/DBG.CHAP3.HTM>

Our minds today try to understand the concepts behind the internal and external conflicts that led to such destruction and to such events as the Thirty Years War. Actually as I write this book, we stand on the precipice of yet another massive world wide war based mainly on issues of demand for religious conformity, as one group or another perceives the demands of God.

In addition, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> our last few generations have seen far worse in both terms of absolute numbers and in percent of the population killed in wars Centuries, (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_wars\\_and\\_disasters\\_by\\_death\\_toll](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_wars_and_disasters_by_death_toll) for the listing of 20<sup>th</sup> century deaths from wars and genocides.

However, what we need to understand, is that out of this period of war and chaos, and out of this period of the Church’s (both Orthodox and Reformed) on-going efforts at “protecting” the people by means of terror, grew the concepts that formed the foundations of the use of State terror to bring about conformity (for the good of the people) in our modern age. (This is not a new concept I am presenting here, see *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, for the foundation of this idea of how the efforts of Protestants’ to prepare the world for the “second coming” laid much of the foundation for Fascism.)

Out of this approach of the Churches and soon the states came a new form of “hell” that has come to be known as “democide” (please see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democide>) or as defined:

- “The murder of any person or people by a [government](#), including [genocide](#), [politicide](#), and [mass murder](#)”. For example, government-sponsored killings for political reasons

would be considered democide. Democide can also include deaths arising from “intentionally or knowingly reckless and depraved disregard for life.”

This definition is seen as an umbrella term to cover three other types of government actions against its own or other peoples:

- Genocide: among other things, the killing of people by a government because of their indelible group membership (race, ethnicity, religion, language).
- Politicide: the murder of any person or people by a government because of their politics or for political purposes.
- Mass Murder: the indiscriminate killing of any person or people by a government. <http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/DBG.CHAP2.HTM>

Examples of modern Democides include:

- [the Great Purges](#) carried out by [Joseph Stalin](#) in the [Soviet Union](#), the deaths from the [colonial](#) policy in the [Congo Free State](#), and [Mao's Great Leap Forward](#) resulting in a famine which killed millions of people. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democide>

<http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/DBG.TAB3.1.GIF>

The developer of this new concept of the organization of government activities, Professor J. R. Rummel claims that in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (actually into the 1980's when he wrote):

- ... the death toll from democide is far greater than the death toll from war. After studying over 8,000 reports of government caused deaths, Rummel estimates that there have been 262 million victims of democide in the last century. According to his figures, six times as many people have died from the inflictions of people working for governments than have died in battle.
- Rummel also states that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were 15 *megamurderers*—those states killing in cold blood, aside from warfare, 1,000,000 or more men, women, and children. These fifteen megamurderers have wiped out over 151,000,000 people, almost four times the almost 38,500,000 battle-dead for all this century's international and civil wars up to 1987. The most “absolute Power” states, that is the communist U.S.S.R., China and preceding Mao guerrillas, Khmer Rouge Cambodia, Vietnam, and Yugoslavia, as well fascist Germany, account for near 128,000,000 of them, or 84 percent. <http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/DBG.CHAP1.HTM>

He then states that there were also Kilo-murders, (as opposed to the Mega-murders) or those states that have killed innocents by the tens or hundreds of thousands,

- China Warlords (1917-1949), Ataturk's Turkey (1919-1923), the United Kingdom (primarily due to the 1914-1919 food blockade of the Central Powers in and after World War I, and the 1940-45 indiscriminate bombing of German cities), Portugal (1926-1982), and Indonesia (1965-87). Some lesser kilo-murderers were communist Afghanistan, Angola, Albania, Rumania, and Ethiopia, as well as authoritarian Hungary, Burundi, Croatia (1941-44), Czechoslovakia (1945-46), Indonesia, Iraq, Russia, and Uganda. For its indiscriminate bombing of German and Japanese civilians,

the United States must also be added to this list.

These and other kilo-murderers add almost 15,000,000 people killed to the democide for this century.

And the concept of democide, while new, can now be applied to previous events in history. One of the more noted examples offered by this approach is the African Slave trade

- In the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries alone the death toll among African slaves being transported to the New World may have been over 1,500,000, possibly 2,000,000; millions more died in capture and in transit to the Orient or Middle East. And just among those kept in Africa some 4,000,000 may have died. Overall, in five centuries, Europeans, Arabs, Asians, and African slave traders, possibly murdered near 17,000,000 Africans; perhaps even over 65,000,000. <http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/DBG.CHAP3.HTM>

But prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century the “honor” for the mega death of people went to the Mongols who in less than 150 years of domination killed in unbelievable, but validated numbers:

- The Mongol khans and their successors and pretenders possibly slaughtered around 30,000,000 Persian, Arab, Hindu, Russian, Chinese, European, and other men, women, and children. As incredible as this huge estimate seems, that it gives some indication of the sheer human cost of Mongol conquest can be inferred just from Khubilai Khan’s rule over China. According to a Chinese writer, “in gaining and maintaining his throne he slaughtered more than 18,470,000 Chinese.” <http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/DBG.CHAP3.HTM>
- Although not competing in numbers with those massacred in Asia and the Americas, Europeans had their share of such genocidal massacres. An illustrative case is the St. Bartholomew massacre. On August 24<sup>th</sup>, 1572, King Charles IX or his Court unleashed a slaughter of French Calvinists that spread from Paris to the whole country. In this famous St. Bartholomew day massacre a contemporary Protestant estimated that 300,000 were killed; later estimates reduced this to 100,000, then 36,000. <http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/DBG.CHAP3.HTM>

So, clearly we can see that the idea of the state engaging in the wholesaling killing of people is not new per say to this time, nor is it linked exclusively to this period of 14-17 Century Europe. The issues and concepts of approach seem different from the Mongol invasions, although both were based in fear.

The Mongols were an invading force, conquering peoples with vastly greater numbers than themselves. The Mongols killed in great numbers for two reasons:

- To intimidate the next peoples in the line of march not to resist, and
- To eliminate the “surplus populations” that were too numerous to govern.

The Christians in Europe, amongst themselves, killed for fear that without conformity the wrath of God would return. (And yes there were political and economic issues as well, in the ability of the State to seize the wealth of the people accused.)

For example in Spain, the Catholic Monarchs, as they were labeled by the Popes, saw

themselves as leaders in the political fights on so many levels: against the “Moors” and the Turks, against the Heretics at home, in the new areas of the “Reformed Church” and in the newly discovered lands of the Americas.

The rulers of Spain saw that in her role as protector of European Christendom it was necessary to bring about complete religious conformity in all the lands she now governed (which by the 1600’s was extensive) This was needed to “please God.” To allow the “reformed Church” to succeed, in the mind of Spain, would surely bring on the wrath of God. Through the Church, Spain started the process of religious “cleansing” at home, and in all her colonies, and European possessions (including Holland and parts of Germany).

Some of the early efforts included extending the power of the Inquisition. Through this increase and other “organs of the State” the first efforts force converted or expelled the Jews and Muslims, and then later “kept an eye” on the converted to allow no slippage. This process of assuring maintenance of the “true faith” or, terrorizing the converts, became know as the “Auto de Fe” or “act of faith.” Hundreds of thousands of Jews and Muslims and converts were killed, or “cleansed” from their home land, all in the name of “state security,” or as it was then understood the need for religious uniformity.

This internal “cleansing” in Spain, as we have seen, was not new in Europe, Jews had been expelled in many countries, just as heretics and witches had been burned before. However, the scope of the attacks was far larger than seen before (if we rightly include the attacks on the Muslim, and former Muslim populations). Additionally, the use of torture on the converted was new, and extensive. Here was a European democide, based on no other cause but a fear of the consequences resulting from the lack of religious conformity.

- The Spanish Inquisition established in 1480 by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella and that was led from 1483 to 1498 by the Dominican monk de Torquemada may have burned to death as many as 10,220 heretics in total; 125,000 possibly died from torture and privation in prison. A secretary of the inquisition says that no more than 4,000 were burned to death altogether. But in Seville alone this number of heretics may have been so killed. Perhaps a more realistic figure is that of the General Secretary of the Inquisition, who estimated that from 1480 to 1488, 8,800 people were killed by fire, and from 1480 to 1808 the victims may have totaled 31,912. During the most intensive years of the Inquisition about 500 people per year also may have been burned to death in the New World (which could mean as many as 50,000 more persons).  
<http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/DBG.CHAP3.HTM>

However, the Protestants also used tactics of Democide, especially against women.

- The Catholic Church’s attempt to so purge heretics had its counterpart in the Reformation Protestant’s campaign against witches. Witches were believed to have sold their soul to the Devil for magical powers. While the Salem witch trials of Massachusetts in 1692 give the impression that early Americans were particularly prone to this superstition, it was really in Europe, particularly in Germany and France, that the torture and killing of alleged witches was most prevalent. Under Calvin’s government of Geneva in 1545, for example, thirty-four women were recorded burned or quartered for witchcraft. In the late years of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, witch hunts reached their peak. In some German cities historians estimate that as many as 900 “witches” in a year were killed, often after agonizing torture to force out confessions; in some

villages, hardly a women was left alive. In total, throughout Christendom more than 30,000 “witches” may have (been) killed. Taking into account the routine nature of these killings, the final figure may be around 100,000; it might even reach 500,000.  
<http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/DBG.CHAP3.HTM>

Therefore, using this concept of democide, the efforts of the Church look relatively normal in the stream of world cultural history. And put in context of world history, the attacks on non-believers or questionable converts may not match the “mega deaths” of the twentieth century.

However, with the primary question of this book being the search for the connections of this to the religions of Ba’al, we need to come back again to the question of tactics used in the repression.

And as noted:

- Whether of heretics or witches, this was a religiously induced and ritualistic form of government killing. Witches were presumably allied with Satan; heretics presumably had defied or defiled God. Sacrifice is another religion-based form of killing that is government practiced or approved.

<http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/DBG.CHAP3.HTM>

However, we still need to look at the basis for this fear, and the means that were used to dispatch the “agents of the devil.” After all this review, we might be able to hear the echoes, if not see the very face of Ba’al in these practices of the state and the Church to address the worst of their fears, the fear of God’s wrath.

## Part V – The Morphing of Ideas –

### Section II– The End Game, and a New Game

#### Subsection E – A Difficult Journey

Let's look at the roughly 2200 years of history that covers the time of the Judean Exile to Babylon and the Jewish expulsion from Spain and the following years of suppression of the Conversos and the Mariscos. Through all those centuries we see that society moved from:

- Religious diversity to religious intolerance,
- Acceptance of multiple efforts to reach the “divine” to the concept that only one group holds the absolute truth, and
- The transformation of the West from a polytheistic form of religion to one which promotes the concept of a single god (and along that line from democracy to absolutism).

We see a horrible pattern that begins, in some ways, with the Jews as the aggressors and one of the first groups to demand religious conformity within their areas of control (The Greeks under the Seleucid dynasties in Asia being the first (the very power that Jews revolted against)). This pattern includes:

- The dominant power's use of capital punishment for the breaking of the laws of conformity, and
- The dominant power's blaming all the cultural failures on the inability of all members of the group to maintain their conformity,

In many ways we can see that demand for religious conformity, and the use of the powers of “the church” and or “the state” to enforce this conformity is perhaps the root of such civic madness that is seen in our society over history. This demand apparently continues today.

This statement is not intended to say that religious intolerance was not seen before the Jewish efforts at forced conversions, and maintenance of cultural conformity under the Hasimodian rulers. There are countless examples of people being persecuted in Greek culture for disrespecting the gods, and for presenting a world view different than those held by the culture and the state. The trial and execution of Socrates is perhaps the most noted from the “Classical Age.”

However, if we reflect on what we have seen in this work, we find that over this time period of 2200 years, there is a continuing pattern in which the push for religious conformity has not only greatly stifled societies, but has also led to some of the most horrible “crimes” of the millenniums.

Too much of this work has already focused on those gruesome events, but here's brief review of the sequence (and again, some of these are hard to prove, as are the numbers):

- Moses ordering the killing of the worshipers of the Golden Calf (some 3000 slain). If the Bible is correct, hundreds of thousands more are killed as the Hebrew forces take

over Canaan.

- Isaiah ordering the killing of the Ba'al priests (some 7,000 slain).
- The Jewish revolts against Romans and Greeks (from 140 BC through 140 AD) resulting in the deaths of millions of Jews, as well as perhaps another million non-Jews.
- The deaths of Christians at the hands of the Roman state (3000-6000 at the most).
- The death of Pagans and Jews at the Christianized Roman State perhaps as high as 500,000 dead.
- The attacks on the Jews in Europe at the beginning of the Crusades (10,000s of thousand killed (perhaps 100,000 or more).
- The Crusaders' rampages in Holy Land, Byzantine Empire, Sicily, Southern France, Northern Europe (Teutonic Knights etc) and in Spain and Portugal. Millions killed, millions more forced converted or expelled.

This list is only a few of the events running out of Western Europe, prior to the discovery of the Americas and the water routes to Asia; the list would continue in many directions after that point, including the efforts at forced conversion of the Amerindian populations, and the efforts at the destruction of native religions all over the globe. However, in keeping it focused on the West, we next see in our list:

- The religious wars with the Protestant revolutions, where millions died.

There are other events that we cannot touch upon such as the Carlist Wars (1833-1878) in Spain [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlist\\_Wars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlist_Wars) in which one side promoted themselves as the part of,

- "God, Country, and King" and fought for the cause of Spanish tradition ([Legitimism](#) and [Catholicism](#)) against the [liberalism](#), and later the [republicanism](#), of the Spanish governments of the day.

We can also see the efforts at cultural and religious conformity in such famous events as the Armenian deaths .... while debate on the use of the term holocaust continues.

- The forcible deportation and massacring of hundreds of thousands to over 1.5 million [Armenians](#) (took place) during the government of the [Young Turks](#) from [1915](#) to [1917](#) in the [Ottoman Empire](#).
- It is widely acknowledged to have been one of the first modern, systematic [genocides](#), as many Western sources point to the sheer scale of the [death toll](#) as evidence for a systematic, organized plan to eliminate the Armenians.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian\\_holocaust](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_holocaust)

The Balkan wars of the 1990's and the ongoing sectarian conflict in Iraq can be seen as modern continuations of the use of terror to enforce conformity by the State. Ethnic and religious "cleansing" was a term created in modern times to explain the systematic efforts by the state and ruling religious orders to bring about conformity.



The term “ethnic cleansing” has been variously defined... one of these includes the definition of Andrew Bell-Fialkoff:

[E]thnic cleansing [...] defies easy definition. At one end it is virtually indistinguishable from forced emigration and population exchange while at the other it merges with deportation and genocide. At the most general level, however, ethnic cleansing can be understood as the expulsion of an “undesirable” population from a given territory due to religious or ethnic discrimination, political, strategic or ideological considerations, or a combination of these [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic\\_cleansing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_cleansing)

Therefore the efforts of the Hebrews in Canaan, as represented in the Bible, in modern terms can be seen as an early effort at the ethnic cleansing of the Phoenician/Canaanites. The ensuing series conflicts first by the Hellenization process of the Greeks, and later by the small effort of the Jews to resist Hellenization led to subsequent wars with Rome. This series of events precipitated the “One God, One Emperor” efforts of the Roman Empire and as we have discussed, all were in an effort to create a greater sense of unity in the face of increasing onslaughts of enemies. External threats lead to increased efforts by the State to create conformity.

Finally, we have seen the effort at “conformity” as a tool of the Western Church as it attempted to create stability in the face of chaos at the fall of the Roman Empire and the next several centuries. Conformity inspires a sense of duty in the war against the rival forces of Islam, and then is employed in a losing fight against the growing power of the military caste, along with the demands of the merchant and peasant castes.

So, in modern terms, much of the history we have reviewed to gain this better insight into Phoenician impacts on modern society is one of democide and ethnic cleansing, and forced religious conformity. And, although the main teachings of the Jews, Christians and Islam included sharp prohibitions against the concepts of human sacrifice to God, we have seen over the course of history an endless amount of human slaughter in the name of God and in the name of creating a society that is “just in the eyes of God.” Perhaps better stated, what was sought was a society that would not bring back the wrath of God. This is precisely the sort of human sacrifice that is seen as so terrible in the sections of the Bible dealing with the end stages of the Jewish Kingdoms.

This insight as to the horror of religious wars is not new and has been bemoaned by all forms of writers from almost the beginning of writing. What I am hoping to bring to this discussion and long term cultural mourning over these deaths, is the connection to much of this slaughter to the cultural ghosts associated with the old ritual of human (child) sacrifice, and the belief that such sacrifice was something needed by God.

On the face of it, I believe that if we really look closely as to what I have presented in these two books and what has really happened in the past, (as opposed to “Church dominated history”) we see the connection. We see that the most overt elements of the Church and state attacks on its own persons, this democide, has at its roots (in the West) the conflict between Yahweh and Ba’al, over the practice of child sacrifice ... as needed in time of crisis.

First let’s see the parallel nature of the events

In the time of Phoenicia

- the burning of children to Ba'al in time of national crisis, for the purpose of gaining the protection of God to either gain his protection from an event coming, or to regain his protection and make amends for past events.

### In the Middle Ages

- The burning of heretics, Jews (both unconverted and "Converso") and witches to bring about the protection of God (by ridding the community of non-believers) or to protect the community from the forces of evil (Satan) by eliminating the proponents of evil.

Now what were the rituals associated with the events?

### Time of public celebration

- The Ba'alist events were public and filled with wild celebrations.
- The Christian events were public (auto De Fe) and filled with wild celebrations.

Both the events in the Phoenician and Christian worlds focused on repentance of sins and prayer and sacrifice for God's intervention and blessings (the Mass was defined as a sacrifice).

The event (the child sacrifice and the burning of the heretic) focused on salvation of the community, though the burning to death of a person.

- In the Ba'alist event the person was considered an innocent, and an offering of something of great value.
- In the Christians' events the person was considered an offering of great value as well, but it was the sinner destroyed to appease God and destroy the forces of the Devil.

And in both events, the process of execution was relatively the same (burning).

It should also be noted that two of the three main areas in which these burnings took place in the greatest of numbers (Southern France and Eastern Spain) were where the Phoenician influence had been strongest in Ancient Europe. The other area, Southern Germany, is an area of strong Celtic traditions.

While the primary tool of sacrifice was the same, and the primary rituals also appear to be the same and the process of community celebration seemed the same, at root cause we can see a primary element of similarity, burnt human offering to appease God, and to gain God's blessing and support, and to show a great "love of God."

However, here we see a major difference, not so much in practice, but in possibly the intent of the Phoenicians versus the intent of the Christians.

- The Phoenicians' efforts were designed to gain God's blessings by offering the "first born" to God.
- The Christian efforts were to ward off the anger and destruction of God by killing of the non-believers amongst them, or by killing the agents of the devil amongst them.

The Phoenicians saw no evil attached to those killed, nor was there any evil attached to

others in the community as a result of the acts. The Phoenicians were practicing what appeared to be standard duties of peoples to offer the first born of all things and the first of all fruits as a form of “thanksgiving” to the gods for giving them the good things in life and in a hope that the offerings would continue those blessings.

Also, the Phoenicians added sacrifices in times of crisis, to protect the community and to win back the favor of the gods, and to protect them from evil.

The Christians’ killings (of Jews, pagans, heretics, and witches) were seen not as an effort of thanksgiving, but as a means to stave off God’s wrath. They were not offered as a means of thanks, but as a means of prevention, the prevention of the destruction as shown in the Bible of Israel, of Judah, and in history by the destruction of the Second Jewish Commonwealth.

- All of these destructions were seen by the Church as a result of the failure of the people to keep the covenant with God and by living by God’s laws. Therefore, each new crisis (invasion, plague, climate change,) was seen as God’s wrath for failure to maintain conformity and by allowing peoples to live outside of the covenant.

So the Church could and did justify its response to each crisis with attacks on those outside of the covenant, as needed to keep the situation from getting worse. The Church was not always the instigator of the assaults. The official line of the Church at times was against the attacks on some groups, such as Jews. However, the mass uprisings of the peoples against the “non-believers” was often taken over and institutionalized by the Church. By doing so, the Church did limit the impact of the popular efforts and may have lessened the actual numbers killed (as in the Inquisition in Spain), but with the institutionalization, the events, the slaughter, the burnings and tortures were also legitimized by the Church.

We have seen that this need for conformity is closely associated with times of economic and political crises (plagues, invasions, environmental collapse). Each time there was a crisis, we heard the echoes of Ba’alism in the response to those crisis, with the killing of the non-conformist (their non-conformity designating them as a friend of the Devil). Our efforts to “get right with God” by ridding ourselves of those who we see as non-conforming was often greatest during these times of crisis; we see the great killing sprees in history as often based in the communal fear brought on by these crises (in response to the plagues, collapses of the state, etc.).

Since the rise of Christianity, with its interpretation of the Jewish Bible, and as a morphed form of Ba’alism, we see that each crisis seems to merit an increase in the demand for conformity. When they were powerful enough, the Church did not hesitate to ratchet up demands for routing out the non-conformist and, took what it deemed appropriate actions for the greater good. In practice, this often meant taking these non-conformists and “sacrificing them to God.” Eventually, the process became organized and ritualized as in the Spanish Inquisition. This “new “ institution most mirrored the Ba’alism of the region’s past.

First, we see this connection to the religion of Phoenicia in the accusations against the people (the blood libel, the witches’ sacrificing of children). We also see it in the fact that the accusation of those who were different were determined to be in league with the Devil, in some fashion, and the Devil was in fact that god of veneration, the god that the sacrifice went to; Ba’al, morphed into the Christian manifestation.

Lastly, we see in the type of punishment used by the Church on non-conformist, an act that seems similar in performance, (the burning of people) and actually in context too; the Ba'alists rituals of sacrifice were designed to "give unto God that which is God's (the first born) and the rituals of the Church were designed to give unto God what God wanted, the casting out and killing of those who do not honor God, but worship the Devil (Ba'al).

Again, through the long, distant past, and the endless destruction of writings, and the endless slaughter of peoples who saw the world (and the divine) differently than the existing order, and the endless efforts to erase or reshape the past, and the control of history itself by religious forces, what we hear is that echo of Phoenicia.

We can see how in the Christian view, the world has changed little; the main concern is God's wrath. The only way that can be prevented is to cast out the Devil, or those who worship him. To the Christians the world is still just a battle between Yahweh and Ba'al or between God and the Devil; not much has changed since the time of the writing of the Bible.

As I said in the introduction, with so little of the past available for consideration, I can not really prove much of what I project, but only ask for a reasonable consideration of the logic and the concepts offered.

## Part VI – Multiple Endings

### Section I - Spain and Aztecs – Similar Religions? – The “New World” Wars

The voyages of Columbus and the Portuguese can basically be seen as the beginning of the end of the Church’s dominance of thought in the West, (although some strongly argue that it was St. Thomas Aquinas and his ability to merge Greek thought into Christian theology as the beginning of the rebirth of thought). The success of the voyages (and later Magellan) showed that the image of the world held by the Church was not what was presented in the Bible. By proving one concept incorrect, the age of discovery opened the way to the challenging of many of the concepts of the Bible.

- The fourth development that marks the end of the European Middle Ages was the discovery and conquest of overseas territories. Columbus’ accidental discovery of the Americas in 1492 is often cited as the seminal event, but one gets a more accurate picture of the situation if one remembers that within a short period of time, dozens of explorers and adventurers set out to seek their fortunes across the oceans. New technologies, such as compasses, improved ways of rigging sails, telescopes, and more reliable calculations in astronomy, made it possible for European seafarers to cross much larger bodies of water than before. .... While Europeans became fully aware for the first time of how small their old world had been in comparison to the whole globe, they aggressively exported their own culture and thereby ensured that in time their ways would become the ways of the world.

The result of all these social and cultural changes was a widespread feeling of uncertainty among many Europeans. The old stable world of the Middle Ages was gone, and a new permanent order had not yet been established. Old truths had become increasingly doubtful, but new ones had not yet firmly taken hold of people’s minds. <http://faculty.frostburg.edu/phil/forum/Descartes.htm>

Europe had been overwhelmed by the discoveries ... not just the wealth but also by the number of peoples involved and the diversity, the size of the world and all new and better products (all kinds of new foods). So many questions arose out of these voyages, including who were these Indians? They are not mentioned in the Bible; where did they come from?

- The most logical answer developed by the Church (and to the future delight of the Mormons) was that the Indians were in fact the descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. The Church went to great lengths to say that the Bible was correct, completely correct. And they, the Church could find the answer for anything in the Bible. (please see <http://www.bh.org.il/Communities/Archive/TenLostTribes.asp>)

This struggle over who were the “natives” of this new world, and the very “nature” of the Indian (got the name wrong to begin with) was far more important to the people of the time than we can really imagine. Besides the need to keep the Bible from being found in error in any way, there were such basic questions as --- Where they really humans? Did they have souls?

It was a major point of concern, for if the Indian had souls, they needed to be saved; and if they had souls, what rights did they have as people, and if they had rights, the Indians could

not simply be slaughtered or enslaved.

This was no simple problem for the time, and it took a great deal of thinking and discussion to try to resolve these issues.

- With the realization that the Americas represented regions of the Earth with which the Europeans were not aware of earlier, there arose intense speculation over the question of whether the natives of these lands were true humans or not. Together with that went a debate over the (mis)treatment of these natives by the Conquistadores and colonists.
- A substantial party believed that these new found peoples were not truly human. This party speculated that since Christendom was not permitted by God to become aware of their existence and thus bring the [Gospel](#) to them until so late, it was only because they were not human or possessed no souls, so they could not attain salvation. After all, the [New Testament](#) says that the gospel has been preached to all nations; since the gospel had not been preached to the Native Americans, perhaps they didn't count.
- In addition, Christians understood humanity to be divided into three distinct races (Europeans, Asians, and Africans), one for each of the [sons of Noah](#). Native Americans did not fit among these divisions. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sublimis\\_Deus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sublimis_Deus)

The Spanish, who were there on the ground in the New World, for the most part had a different view of the Indians; in the Caribbean basin, the Spanish wanted to and did make slaves of the “natives.”

The debate also came back to an old issue. Why was God so angry with his people? If the Indians were human and had not heard the good news, some speculated that the many crises of the “old world” were caused by the fact that the Christians did not know about the “new world”, and now, by bringing the word of Christ to the New World, God's wrath would be abated.

The debate was officially ended by Paul III who declared that the New World people were full people and entitled to rights and protections and could be converted to Christianity. He went so far as to say that those saying otherwise were acting under control of the Devil (The devil seems to be everywhere).

- **Sublimus Dei** (also seen as **Sublimus Deus** and **Sublimis Deus**) is a [papal bull](#) promulgated by [Pope Paul III](#) on [May 29, 1537](#), which forbids the enslavement of the [indigenous peoples of the Americas](#) (called Indians of the West and the South) and all other people.
- The pope uses in the bull almost the same language as in his letter, *Veritas ipsa* to Cardinal [Juan de Tavera](#), Archbishop of [Toledo](#), sent less than a month earlier on [May 2, 1537](#). Paul III unequivocally declares the [indigenous peoples of the Americas](#) to be rational beings with souls, denouncing any idea to the contrary as directly inspired by the “enemy of the human race” ([satan](#)). He goes on to condemn their reduction to [slavery](#) in the strongest terms, declaring it null and void for as well as for any people known or that could be discovered in the future, entitles their right to liberty and property, and concludes with a call for their evangelization.

The Bull had only marginal impact as the new rulers of the lands exploited the Indians to the



point of near extinction and then replaced them with Black slaves from Africa.

- Also see articles about the fights against Indian enslavement and Bartolome de las Casas and the debates at Valladolid on the fate of the Indians.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bartolom%C3%A9\\_de\\_las\\_Casas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bartolom%C3%A9_de_las_Casas)

While there were squabbles between the homeland and the colonists over the rights of the “Indians” and how or when they could or should be converted, the religious issues in the new world soon took a major turn. Cortez had found the first “high” civilization in the new world, the Aztecs. Apart from the overwhelming gold and silver found on the mainland of the Americas, the Spanish found something completely shocking to them. What Cortez and the other Spanish found in “Mexico,” was a land, that to a Christian, seemed to be a land in the complete control of Satan, a land whose religious processes were dominated by the very thing God has so hated; they found a land where not only sacrifice was continuing, but human sacrifice was of utmost importance.

And the structure of the religion and even the mission of the religion were similar in so many ways to the Catholic faith and structure ....

- The Aztecs, believed that, as a people, they had a divine mission to prevent the fifth destruction of the Earth (*much like the Catholic saw themselves as preserving the people from the wrath of God*). They believed the four previous destructions were caused by the death of the sun, and the way to prevent his new death was by sustaining the sun with human hearts and blood. (*Again, four previous events the ten lost tribes, Babylon, Jerusalem’s destruction by Rome and the end of Christian Rome by the barbarians*)
- Aztec religion heavily emphasized sacrifice and ascetic behavior as the necessary preconditions for approaching the supernatural. Priest were celibate, and were required to live simple, Spartan lives (*as did, at least in theory, the Catholic priest and monks*) They performed constant self-sacrifice in the form of bloodletting as penitence, by passing barbed cords through the tongue and ears. (*The Mass was seen as sacrifice, and also, many Catholics at that this time performed self flagellation as a sign of penitence*)
- The Aztec approach to contact the supernatural was through a complex calendar of great ceremonies, (*As the Catholics did with the saint’s days and feast days*) which were held at their temples and were performed by the priests that acted as intermediaries between the gods and the human beings (*as was the role of the Catholic priests*). In all ceremonies were offerings and sacrifices to gain the gods’ favor and theatrical dramas of myths by masked performers in the form of dances, songs and processions. (*The Mass was actually considered a ceremony of sacrifice by the Catholics*) Each god has his special ceremony, and they had many gods!, so the calendar was full... <http://www.religion-cults.com/Ancient/America/Hispano-American%20.htm>

But in this new world, the sacrifices were not symbolic, the blood was not symbolic and according to some (including Marvin Harris), the eating of the body was not symbolic. Here, with the Aztecs, the “sacrificing” needed to keep the world in order was the actual sacrificing of people, not the symbolic “mass” reconstructing the sacrifice of Christ.



To the Catholic conquistadors, the whole of the Aztec religions was a perversion of the true faith and the similarities to their true faith could only be inspired by the Devil himself. The Catholics were sure they had entered the domain of Satan on earth. The Spanish Catholics that saw this human killing could not believe that what they had fought against for so long, in Europe, was still functioning in all its bloodiness in the New World. (Not that the Catholics saw the burning of heretics as a form of mass sacrifice.)

It was as if the Ba'alist religion of the Old Testament had fled and found root in this distant land ... and because Ba'al had become Satan, the rituals of the Aztecs must have looked to the Catholics so much like the ritual in the Old Testaments, and were seen as the cause of the fall of Israel. It became the mission of the Spanish to fight it, root and branch. The Inquisition was soon a major force in the "New World."

The Spanish made every effort to destroy the religion of the Aztecs, and make the holy places of the Aztecs into Catholic shrines. With the Inquisition, the newly christened were made to stay in line, or face the process of the Auto de Fe.

- To the Church and to rulers of Spain, the newly won unity of Spain, along with the expelling or conversion of the Jews and Moors to appease God must have seemed like minor victories when they were confronted by the human sacrifice on the levels of the Aztecs. Perhaps they wondered if all of the failures of Europe, which were based in Gods wrath, were in fact caused by the on-going practices of the Aztecs.
- The Church had declared that the Indian people had souls, and now these people were part of the Spanish world. Therefore, the Spanish held a collective responsibility to eliminate the practices hated by God from all the Spanish lands. If they did not, again, they would face the wrath of God. As the Bible demanded, they did not allow for religious non-conformity among the people of the new world.

Since the religious conformity of Spain was seen as the element needed for safety and the avoidance of God's wrath, these new lands that were now part of the lands governed by the Kingdoms of Spain and Portugal also had be brought into religious alignment.

- To the Church, the key to the fight for survival of Christendom was not just gaining the New World's land and gold, but maintaining God's grace, or better stated, avoiding God's wrath.

In the eyes of the first Spanish to see the Aztecs, and later the English Puritans when they meet the "Indians" of New England, and so many others Europeans coming across the Atlantic, Satan, (Ba'al), was loose in the New World. For centuries, the efforts by many countries and religious groups (Catholic and Protestant) to save the Indians' souls from Satan and to expel the Devil from the Americas resulted in millions of new dead among the Native American populations. The death toll was in the millions among the Aztecs alone. The estimated rate of population fall in the first fifty years of contact with Europe is from about 25 million to one hundred million, perhaps the greatest "die off " in all of history. (Much of the die off was caused by disease, but much was also the result of enslavement, war, forced conversions and the punishment for not accepting Christianity or reverting to the old religion.)

This concept that all the Americas was governed by Satan (and that the Indians were indeed minions of Satan) continued to be played out throughout the whole history of the Americas.

The Christians of all kinds made it a main priority to “save the souls” of these peoples even if it meant physical, as well as cultural and spiritual, death for those whose “souls” were saved. In the minds of the Spanish and later, other peoples who conquered the Americas, “saving the soul” of the Indians was of great service to the “newly discovered peoples.”

The “gift” of Christian civilization was often accepted (as well as resisted), yet the Indians died in the millions anyway. The view of the Christians was that they had saved the souls and liberated the Indians from Satan, from God’s oldest rival, so the deaths were somewhat lessened by the salvation provided. The Christians saw their action as mandatory and worthwhile to the Indians; we have little in the reaction of the Native people

- Clearly more important to the saving of the individual souls of the Indians, was the necessity for Spain to protect itself from the wrath of God, by addressing and combating Satan, by killing millions to protect themselves from the wrath of God, the wrath of God that demanded not only religious conformity, but the end of the sacrificing of humans.

In the minds of the Spanish and the Pope, and the entire hierarchy of the Church, the Americas presented the same war that they had been fighting almost since the beginning of the Church, the war to protect Christianity, by fighting the devil, and by fighting the religious rituals associated with the Devil (or Ba’al) and ending all sacrifice, other than the Mass, and especially human sacrifice. The efforts to save the souls of the “heathen” continue till today, under the same guise.

- And in the eyes of those in this fight, the antagonists have not changed since the beginning of time. The chief enemy and rival of Yahweh continues to be Ba’al; and, whether through the work of the Phoenicians, or Ba’al himself, the religion of the Ancient World had seemed to have fled to the New World
- Also see <http://wwwuser.gwdg.de/~agruens/aztec/reignat.html>
- <http://www.hyperhistory.net/apwh/essays/comp/cw16catholicaztec31011208.htm> similar religions
- Some history on Aztecs and Catholics <http://www.sxws.com/charis/history-2.htm>  
<http://www.rjames.com/toltec/borgia/index.htm>
- <http://pages.prodigy.com/GBonline/awaztec.html#European.Paper.Manuscripts>

This need for a new religious war, the need to fight the Devil in the “new world”, helped shape the concepts of both religious and cultural superiority that the Europeans brought with them, everywhere. This view of having to fight Satan, the Devil, in every culture that was not Christian, created the justification for the development of Colonialism and eventually the massive European racism that became the hallmark of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This concept of the Christians, that it was only through absolute and total conformity of everyone to the Christian Religion, that the wrath of God can be appeased, leads to its evolution into the demand for the absolute need to conform to the “needs of the state.”

The manifestation of this concept, of absolute truth, and the need for everyone to conform to this absolute truth, can be seen as the base cause of many of the mega murders and dictatorial regimes created in the last century. It can be seen as the basis for Fascism,

Communism, Right Wing Christian politics in the US, Muslim extremism, racism, and on and on. The belief that salvation can only be reached through conformity brings back echoes from the long distant past of the prophets of Yahweh calling out to kill all those who followed Ba'al. It can be seen as the basis of the Hebrew/Israelites/Judean/Jewish in their unsuccessful culture wars with the Phoenicians. Later, the morphed opponents of the Hebrew/Israelites/Judean/Jewish, the Christians, adopted the absolutism of the Hebrew/Israelites/Judean/Jewish and, with the power of the state, established the state terrorist tools for the enforcement of absolutism and "absolute truth."

The new conflict, of the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century, between the West, dominated by the "Christian" US, and the Middle East (dominated by absolutist Muslim concepts) again appear to be nothing new; two cultures with "absolutist views" seeing that they must do what they do to avoid the "wrath of God"; with wars and politics based in "religious justifications." In such a situation understanding the disregard for human life that has evolved out of these absolutist religious concepts, (the mass murdering from the time of the anti-Pagan riots of the Christians to the killing throughout Africa during the last decades, and all the democides in between) is just a repeat of the West's impact on the Americas. The willingness to accept mass murder as a justifiable means to appease God seems to continue. Perhaps the only thing left to say is, "May God help us all."

## Part VI – Multiple Endings

### Section II - From the Auto De Fe to the Ovens in Germany- The Same Justification.

The tone set by the rise of Christianity and the development of the concepts of an absolute religion based in absolute truth has had tremendous rippling effects throughout history. It dominated the history of the West, through the age of exploration, and colonialism. Through the Cold War and into the age of modern imperialism, the concept of absolute right and a “superior religion” has spread throughout the world.

This is not to say that Islam did not “suffer” from this absolutist complex, but their approach in general, in the past, was far different, in that they primarily let individuals come to Allah, mainly through the use of political and economic incentives. Until recently, throughout the Islamic world, minority religions were for the most part, tolerated (as shown by the Coptic Christians in Egypt and the Jews throughout the Muslim world prior to 1947 with the founding of modern Israel). Individuals of minority religions were often allowed to climb to high political positions in Muslim states (as in Spain and in the Ottoman Empire). Moreover, until the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, within Islamic controlled areas non-Muslims were not, for the most part, faced with forced conversion and horrible persecutions. We saw that, during the initial stages in the development of the Islamic Empire, the Arabs were often welcomed as liberators by the Christians who were being persecuted by other Christians. The current shape of the Balkans is also witness to this relative religious tolerance of Islam, where after some 500 years of Ottoman rule, the significant majority of the population of the area continued to be Christian. This is in marked contrast to Spain, where once the Catholics regained the lands, persecutions and expulsions (if not outright slaughters) of non-Catholics began.

- Jews typically had a better status in the Muslim world than in [Christendom](#), where at many times they were welcomed and provided [safe haven](#) during times of persecution of Jews by Christians. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jews#Persecution>

But this tolerance of Islam was not the model used with the spreading of the empires of the Christian world. We have already seen that with the Crusades against all “pagan” areas (Middle East, Sicily, Spain, Northeastern Europe) there were always mass slaughters of the “non-believers” and forced exiles for the survivors. Even those who “accepted the true faith” were never free from potential and real terror as the Catholic Church used the inquisition against Conversos and Moriscos for generations after they had adopted the “true faith.”

This imperative towards religious absolutism changed as the European powers took over lands with populations that were many times larger than themselves. So while there were some efforts to convert the peoples of the East (India, China, Indonesia, Indochina, and of the Russians, Central Asia) the real focus shifted from efforts to convert, to the use of Christianity and the “absolute truth” it claimed, as a means of establishing a sense of “absolute superiority” over the “pagan” peoples. With this sense of superiority (based in understanding the true religion) came the sense of the absolute “right” to conquer and to rule all other peoples.

The “absolute superiority” concept was presented in intellectual terms, and formed the basis for much of modern racism. The argument went;

- We presented them with the truth (Christianity) and these people can not seem to

grasp the truth of it.

- Therefore, they are clearly inferior to us in intellect.
- Therefore, all persons other than us (Christians) must be inferior.
- Therefore, we must bring civilization to these inferior peoples, by force or other wise.
- And therefore, if they are inferior to us, we can dominate them as we must for our own benefit (Social Darwinism).

And of course there was the need to make everyone conform, to keep away God's wrath.

The concept that the "West" was bringing civilization and the "truth" to the East became a new accepted dogma of the new "religion" of imperialism (or White Man's Burden) as put by Rudyard Kipling:

Take up the White Man's burden--  
Send forth the best ye breed--  
Go bind your sons to exile  
To serve your captives' need;  
To wait in heavy harness,  
On fluttered folk and wild--  
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,  
Half-devil and half-child. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White\\_man's\\_burden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_man's_burden)

Of course, there were some who rejected this notion of superiority, and argued against it,

- Thus the African is really helpless against the material gods of the white man, as embodied in the trinity of imperialism, capitalistic exploitation, and militarism....
- To reduce all the varied and picturesque and stimulating episodes in savage life to a dull routine of endless toil for un-comprehended ends, to dislocate social ties and disrupt social institutions; to stifle nascent desires and crush mental development; to graft upon primitive passions the annihilating evils of scientific slavery, and the bestial imaginings of civilized man, unrestrained by convention or law; in fine, to kill the soul in a people-this is a crime which transcends physical murder. E. D. Morel, *The Black Man's Burden* <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1903blackburden.html>

But over the 300 year period of almost total dominance of the West, as stated the new trinity of "imperialism, capitalistic exploitation, and militarism" was promoted under the guise of religious and cultural superiority supported by the concepts of racism and an adoption of a concept much hated in the religious circles, that of evolution and Darwinism to support the concepts of Western superiority; the term "Social Darwinism" was used to support the concept of Western superiority and justify Western wars against other peoples of the world (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_Darwinism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_Darwinism) )

While Darwin himself showed little support for the ideas of "social Darwinism" his name became stuck to the concepts, and the concepts, as we know, became a major foundation for modern racism and fascism.

- Although a simple racial view of social Darwinism was that the white nations had to

civilize the savage colored nations of the world, there were other more complicated ones. Darwin's theories of evolution were used to distinguish differences between the races of man based on genetic branching and natural selection. Genetic branching is the process that occurs in all species, including humans, in which groups of a species become separated from one another, each developing their own genetic characteristics different from other groups. It is because of genetic branching that we today have the human races or human populations.

- Popular at the time was the idea that the Nordic race of [Northern Europe](#) was superior because it evolved in a cold climate, forcing it to develop advanced survival skills that it later applied in modern times by being expansionist and adventurous. Natural selection was also thought to have worked at a faster pace in the frigid north, eliminating the weak and unintelligent more thoroughly than it did in warm climates such as Africa. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_Darwinism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_Darwinism)

Although, as the proponents of the theory claimed:

- It was the White race that deserved to survive from the viewpoint of "survival of the fittest."

They also saw that it was not an absolute:

- But in the modern world, the White race was falling victim to inner politics while the yellow and brown hordes of Asia were building up their strength in preparation to overthrow the White man's domination of the globe. Many believed that it was only a matter of time before the White race and its Western culture were supplanted by "inferior" races and cultures.

This interpretation of a theory, this Social Darwinism, became a backbone of Germany. The fear of losing out to the inferior races became a major organizing tool of the regime. Jews, Slavs, Gypsies, etc ... all the inferior races had to be stopped and destroyed to preserve the true and pure race of the Aryans. (Just like all heretics, Pagans and Jews had to be destroyed to keep away God's wrath and preserve the "true religion.")

The s and others modern absolutists, were just the most recent and most documented of those who used the concepts of racism and superiority. They were hardly the first possessors of absolute truth to justify actions against "inferiors."

We can see it in the lists of actions that we "modern peoples" now see as atrocities, but the peoples (or at least most of the ruling peoples) of the time saw as normal and justified. The list below only touches the matter (and some have been mentioned in this work earlier):

- The Religious Wars of the 16-17<sup>th</sup> Centuries (30 million dead)
- The Modern Slave trade (at least 30 million dead in the during the transit alone) and modern slavery (not officially ended in the Americas until Brazil ended slavery in 1888) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_slavery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_slavery)
- 17<sup>th</sup> Century Slavic pogroms on Jews (several 100.000's die - see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khmelnysky\\_Uprising](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khmelnysky_Uprising)) and during the Russian Revolution 250,000 plus killed <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pogroms>



- Colonial exploitations (Deaths of 10's of millions, most noted in Congo Free State, Indochina and Indonesia)

The treatment and the deaths of these people were often justified in that they were inferior people, their gods inferior (or false), and it is "just" that the superior exploit the inferior (Social Darwinism).

However, for the most part, the ideals of racism included in its ideology that the superiors were protecting themselves from the inferiors (For example, segregation was need to avoid the "mongrelization of the race" as a term used in general terms in the United States by racist up until the 1970's and continues to be used in modern racist groups today (see [http://www.stormfront.org/truth\\_at\\_last/books/A-Study-in-Racial.htm](http://www.stormfront.org/truth_at_last/books/A-Study-in-Racial.htm))

The killing, political exclusion, and economic repression of minorities was justified to protect the pure and "good" race. Just as the killing in Spain by the Inquisition was justified to protect the true faith and the killing of the Ba'alists in Judea was justified to protect the people from the false gods.

While we saw how the Inquisition found justification for burning of "heretics" in the Bible, the modern Christian absolutists found justification for racism in the Bible.

- The civil rights movement was unacceptable to southern fundamentalists for several reasons. First, it promoted a form of racial "mingling" which undermined the God ordained separation of the races and increased the possibility for racial intermarriage, a clear violation of biblical teaching  
[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0NXG/is\\_1\\_34/ai\\_94160906/pg\\_2](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0NXG/is_1_34/ai_94160906/pg_2)

We are presented with a history today in which the s are considered as almost an aberration, rather than as a predictable manifestation of the absolutist concepts promoted by Christianity for centuries. Much of what the Nazis said about minorities (substitutes for heretics and non-believers) and Jews was not really new. Even the concept of a "final solution" of the "Jewish Question" was not original (please see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Jewish\\_Question](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Jewish_Question) ) Russia had, 70 years before Hitler, had their own intentions of becoming "Jew Free," and created the "1/3, 1/3, 1/3 solution."

- The [Chief Procurator](#) of the [Holy Synod](#) and the tsar's mentor, friend, and adviser [Konstantin Pobedonostsev](#) was reported as saying that one-third of Russia's Jews was expected to emigrate, one-third to accept baptism, and one-third to starve  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_Jews\\_in\\_Russia\\_and\\_the\\_Soviet\\_Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Russia_and_the_Soviet_Union) )

The s added, or perhaps more appropriately stated, reintroduced, a concept into the modern world's mass murders, that again, justifies killings in defense against the Devil (Ba'al), thereby preserving the true believers from the wrath of God. Like the Christian absolutists, their mass killings were justified for the "preservation" of the pure people.

- The logic went that the pure people were under attack from the non-pure, the alien, and all of society was in danger from the presence of the non-pure.
- Therefore, it was necessary to expunge the non-pure from society, and then from existence (all in the name of community salvation and protection).



The logic was the same as the Catholic Church, and other Christian Churches, and the Jews of the Returnees of the Exiles; all believed that God's wrath would come upon the whole community for allowing the presence of the non-believer, and the worshiper of Satan, the Devil, or Ba'al.

Conversion was not an option in the Nazi "take" on the need for conformity, since the inferiority was in the blood and nature of the "being" (the take on Social Darwinism). The inferior people simply had to be eliminated (for the protection of the Society – from the wrath of God?)

Therefore, Nazi logic went - to protect the innocent and pure from the the corruption of the impure, the inferior needed to be eliminated. While the Nazis saw themselves as the new religion, and were intending to eliminate Christianity, they needed to use the imagery of Christianity as a transitional tool to that aim (see *From Heaven to Hell: Christianity in the Third Reich and Christian Imagery in Propaganda*

Margaret Claire Kelty, BA (Awarded in 2004) <http://dissertations.bc.edu/ashonors/200423/>

- The German government during the Third Reich was a totalitarian regime, but there was one matter in which the Nazi Party did not have carte blanche, religion, which made it an intrinsic threat to the authority of the State. Many Nazi officials saw Christianity as the inherent and irreconcilable enemy of National Socialism, but they knew they risked losing the support of the German people if they instantly dissolved the Christian Churches. Instead of vehemently attacking the Christian confessions the way they did in Poland, in Germany the National Socialists set up a mirage of support for and acceptance of religious institutions, all while working to undermine the Christian tradition that they considered of greatest detriment and danger to their State.

Kelty points out that the Nazi's even showed Hitler replacing Christ as the intermediary with God :

- In an April 19, 1936 broadcast, Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's Minister of Propaganda, told the German people, "We have a feeling that Germany has been transformed into a great house of God, including all classes, professions and creeds, where the Fuehrer as our mediator stood before the throne of the Almighty." (see page 72)

And in this role we see Hitler portrayed as fighting the modern day face of the Devil, the Jewish Communist, leading the superiors against inferiors in the final battle to save the German people. (He also later tried to attack the existing church by claiming that the Church was protecting Jews.)

- Hitler regularly complained about Christian interference with his plan (saying one time that the Pope was blackmailing him). Nazis propaganda often showed Jews invoking Christian imagery or hiding behind church symbols for protection.  
<http://www.catholicleague.org/pius.php?id=9>

The story of the holocaust is well known and the details can not be given here (Please see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Holocaust](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Holocaust) ) However, it should be made clear that the event was not an apparition, as it is often portrayed in modern culture. The Nazi attack upon the Jews had all the traditional hallmarks of the other assaults in Western European History, including:

- Banning Jews from professions, and society in general
- Requiring the wearing of special clothing
- Limiting where they can live
- Confiscation of wealth
- Expulsion
- Prior to the war, Hitler had long claimed he was willing to let all Jews in leave Germany, but no other country would accept them.
- And mass killings

When millions of new Jews (Polish, Russian, Balkan and Western European Jews) were added to the Nazi state, the Final Solution was decided upon; and in the process we know that the Nazi's instituted means of mass murder that combined the efficiency of the new technological and scientific age, with the deep rooted hatred of the "heretic" and non-conformists so long promoted in the Christian world. While initially the Germans used guns, larger Jewish populations made it clear to them that a better means were needed for killing.

- The s never seemed to deliberately use the process of burning the living, only the dead (as opposed to the standard process of burning of the living, found in much of Church history).

The democide committed by the s in these death camps, against a wide range of peoples, resulted in some 11 millions killed (or almost twice the number of "6 million Jews) in this new, mostly mechanized, approach to killing of "the unclean."

- Taking into account all the victims of persecution, the death toll rises considerably: estimates generally place the total number of victims at nine to 11 million  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Holocaust](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Holocaust)

With this "process" we see the mass murder of people, not as directly related to State and Church conflicts over religion per say, since the s were basically against all religions; the Jews were destroyed by the s not so much for their religion (as in the past) but for their "inferiority as a people." The Nazi view of the Jewish threat was more along the racial mixing and the economic controls that prevented the pure and good Germans from advancing to their rightful place in the world (absolute control).

Therefore, a connection to Ba'al in this Nazi insanity of murder seems remote, other than as a projection of the West's history of mass killings in order to provide "protection" from non-conformity. In this light, the Nazi connection to Ba'al seems to be there, and is actually made manifest by the view of the Christian world, if not the Nazi world view.

- For the term to describe these mass murders, the Christian writers (not initially the Jewish writers) looked at how the s disposed of the dead, and their use of the ovens. They focused not on how the s killed the people, but only how they disposed of the dead, in the death camps. The Christian writers chose the term "holocaust" based on these ovens.

We must understand that the term “Holocaust” was developed by Western Christian writers, while the Jews (who do use the term now) initially chose a quite different term to describe the horrors of democide.

The Jewish term to describe the events of Hitler was initially, “Shoah.” It’s still the preferred term.

- The biblical word **Shoa** (שואה) (also spelled **Shoah** and **Sho’ah**), meaning “calamity,” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Holocaust](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Holocaust)

Holocaust by the origin literal intention of the word means:

- **The Holocaust** (from the Greek *holókauston* from *holos* “completely” and *kaustos* “burnt”), and has been associated “with sacrificial offering to a god”. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Holocaust](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Holocaust)
- Shoah became the standard [Jewish] term for the Holocaust as early as the 1940s. *Shoa* is preferred by many Jews for a number of reasons, including the [theologically](#) offensive nature of the original meaning of “holocaust” i.e a sacrifice to God. In addition, the holocaust term is problematic since the term refers to a sacrifice Jews were required to make by the [Torah](#). [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names\\_of\\_the\\_Holocaust](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names_of_the_Holocaust)
- Some of the [Jewish sacrifices](#) specified by the [Torah](#), the [olah](#) was completely burnt. These, [whole offerings](#), were referred to in [Hebrew](#) as *olah*, a term translated as *holókauston* in the [Septuagint](#). Today, some English [Bible translations](#) render the word as *holocaust*, and others translate it as *burnt offering*. For example, [Exodus](#) 18:12a is translated in the [New American Bible](#) as *Then Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, brought a holocaust and other sacrifices to God*, while it is translated in the [New International Version](#) as *Then Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God*. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holocaust\\_%28sacrifice%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holocaust_%28sacrifice%29)

Therefore, the use of the term “holocaust” in relationship to the events of the s has, to many Jews, some kind of inference that the deaths were in some way justified and in some way based in a ritual requirement on the part of the Jews, to be killed. The use of the term, to many, implies that the Jewish deaths were somehow required, needed, and a high ritual, and was part of God’s requirements.

The Nazis did not use the term of holocaust, they called the killings the “final solution.” The initial Jewish works on the Nazi killings used the “standard terms” for other attacks on Jews (pogroms) such as disaster (Shoah) and also Churban (meaning “destruction”)

- **Churban Europa**, meaning “European Destruction” in Hebrew (as opposed to simply **Churban**, the destruction of the [Second Temple](#)), is also used. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names\\_of\\_the\\_Holocaust](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names_of_the_Holocaust)

But in the West, mainly among the Christian West, the term, “Holocaust” became the accepted term, not only for the deaths under Hitler, but for many other events that happened prior to the s and afterwards.

- The term became increasingly widespread as a synonym for “[genocide](#)” in the last

decades of the [20<sup>th</sup> century](#) to refer to mass murders in the form “X holocaust” (e.g. “Rwandan holocaust”). Examples are [Rwanda](#), the [Ukraine](#) under [Stalin](#), and the actions of the [Khmer Rouge](#) in [Cambodia](#).

- In order to suggest comparison with murders other historical events have also been labeled “Holocausts”, for example the oppression of lower caste groups in India (“[Sudra Holocaust](#)”) or the slave trade (“[African Holocaust](#)”)

But the underpinning of the term, the very meaning of the term is that of a burnt sacrifice to God, and by its use with the Jews, it implies that the Jews were burnt, as a sacrifice to God. No Jews (or at least few Jews) were burnt alive by the Nazis, as opposed to the hundreds of thousands who were killed in fires (at the stake) by Christians throughout the centuries. In the death camps, persons were burnt only after death, from some factor, such as gas chambers, shootings or over work and starvation.

Perhaps the use of the term in the Christian West continues to point out what Christians see as the irony of the event of the extermination of the Jews of Europe.

- The Christians see that, in the Bible, it was the Jews who were destroyed by God for burning their children, and sent into Exile into the unknown (ten lost tribes) or into Babylon (Judea), because they would not end the practice of “passing through the fire,” the worshiping of Ba’al through the burning of their children.

In associating the term “Holocaust” to the murder of the Jews by Hitler, - the Christian West brings up once again the concept of the “blood libel” - that Jews needed to kill a child for its blood as a sacrifice to God - or that the “Hebrews” secretly continued their ancient rituals that were warned against in “*Hebrews*” and in the Prophets.

The word “olah” is a specific sacrifice, the one that is not to be eaten, to be burned completely, and the meat of which is not shared among the community. It is completely consumed for the benefit of God alone (or the flesh of the child sacrificed by worshipers the Ba’al and Hebrew).

- **whole offering** ([Hebrew: olah](#)), also referred to as **burnt offering**, is a type of [Biblical sacrifice](#), specifically an [animal sacrifice](#) in which the entire sacrifice is completely burnt, consumed totally by [fire](#). The term *burnt offering* derives from the [Septuagint](#) translation, itself deriving from the Biblical phrase *an offering made by fire*, which occurs in the description of the offering. This form of sacrifice, in which no meat was leftover for anyone, was seen as the greatest form of sacrificand was the form of sacrifice permitted by [Judaism](#) to be given at the Temple by non-[Jews](#).
- [Biblical scholars](#) regard the [Moloch](#) offering, which involved human immolation, as being related to the *whole offering*. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whole\\_offering](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whole_offering)

The olah is considered the highest form of sacrifice, and with the term Moloch, we come full circle again to Ba’al, to the human sacrifice for Ba’al, the ultimate sacrifice to appease God.

Even in the Christians West’s denouncing of the insanity of the super pogrom of Hitler, they somehow managed to come up with a term that harkens back to the age old hatred of the Jews, and the continuing conflict between the Christians and Jews over the idea of human sacrifice. As such, it perpetuates the mistaken association of the Jews of the post exile to the

pre-exile Hebrews and their use of human sacrifice. The use of the term “Holocaust” actually comes back to the very term associated with the worship of Ba’al (or as we seen, the modern concept of the worship of the Devil.)

Just as the early Christians mistranslated Greek to meet their needs and presented the world with a Christ born of a virgin (when that was not implied in early Jewish and Greek writings of Mary) the Christians managed to mistranslate the Hebrew “Shoa” to again refer to the blood libel concept that there is a relationship between Jews and human sacrifice. Since the Christians base their religion on the concept that their God (or at least one part of their God) was a human sacrifice, perhaps this was intended in some way as a compliment. But to the Jews, this use of “Holocaust” seems to imply a far different meaning.

However, the Christians had also come to a similar conclusion to the Jews of the Exile, that the rituals of Phoenicia were the most hated by God, and that the God of the Phoenicians (Ba’al) was God’s chief rival, therefore the Devil, and the ultimate evil. So perhaps we can look at the use of the term “Holocaust” by the Christian West, in a less negative term. Perhaps we can see that the Christian West was saying that the actions of the Nazis, this “human sacrifice” was in fact like the actions of the Devil and hence, evil incarnate.

In either case, if it was a vague reference to the Blood Libel, or perhaps saying that the mass killings were the work of the Devil. We can see in this study of state democide by the Germans, remnants of the traditions of Phoenicia and Ba’alism as manipulated and hidden by the Christian world.

- We still are seeing the Phoenicians and their religious rituals, used to describe the most evil of events, the Nazi democide, just as was stated by the Prophets of the Old Testament.

Through this connection, we can see the morphing of so many religions, that in the eyes of the Christian West, the world is much the same as it was 3000 years ago, where Yahweh and Ba’al are still the two major Gods in struggle for the hearts of the people, and how and what we “sacrifice” to these gods, and how we sacrifice to the God, is the key to obtaining safety and peace in this world.

We also see with the use of the term “Holocaust” a means of avoidance, almost a means of ignoring what was done, and like all the mass murders of the past and present, they can all be written off in some fashion as connected to God, and the needs of God, and again, as Maccoby stated, the horrible deed is done, and no one is responsible, no one is guilty.

## Part IV – Multiple Endings

### Section III - A Rightful Place for a “righteous” people.

We have traveled through some 12,000 plus years of history in this little effort, and have seen the rise of religion and the shifting from the mother goddess to the Great Sky God; a shifting from the concepts of willingness to accept the views of others, to the total intolerance of the other’s conception of the divine. We have seen the journey taken by people from religions that focused on “sacrifice” of living beings, both animals and humans, to keep the world in balance, and to appease the gods, and, also to solidify contracts. We have also seen religions that rely only on the sacrifice of products (foods) and denounced human sacrifice, and then religions that mimic the acts of sacrifice and denounce those who carry them out in the “real deal.”

We have also witnessed how one religion, the Jews, fought against repression and forced conversions against the greatest empires (Greek and Roman) and lost. Judaism was almost obliterated, but survived, somehow. We also saw how a branch of that religion (or maybe not), refused to fight against religious conformity, was initially persecuted for not offering sacrifices, and then once in power ordered the killing of those who would offer sacrifices, ironically becoming an enforcer of religious conformity.

We have also seen how religion became the tool of power rather than a source of comfort. The mandates of religious and state powers for conformity moved religion from a tool for inquiry in to the nature of the universe, and the meaning of life and existence, (and past existence), to a tool of repression of thought, and above all, a reason to kill millions.

- We have also seen that absolutist religions created the need for belief in the superiority of the believer and the absolute inferiority of the non-believers; as powers used religion to justify almost all of what in modern terms are seen as evil ... racism, repression of thought, and slavery, genocide and democide.

Throughout this journey we have seen that despite it all, beliefs actually have changed very little. Most of the religion of the Ancients and Classical worlds are mainly included in the religions of the modern West.

If an ancient Egyptian were reincarnated today and walked into a modern Catholic church, perhaps 70% or more of what was going on would appear understandable and a variation of their ancient practices (from the Madonna and child to the cross, and preparation for the next world, as well as much of what is now called the Ten Commandments. (These commandments appear in almost the same sequence, but with a negative affirmation in the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*) written centuries prior to the Bible, and the supposed meeting between God and Moses.)

(in the second series, [of the Book] the deceased addresses each of 42 cryptically named gods, in turn, declaring his innocence:

*O Wide-of-stride who comes from On: I have not done evil.*

*O Flame-grasper who comes from Kheraha: I have not robbed.*



*O Long-nosed who comes from Khmun: I have not coveted.*

*O Shadow-eater who comes from the cave: I have not stolen.*

*O Savage-faced who comes from Rosetjau: I have not killed people...*

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian\\_Book\\_of\\_the\\_Dead](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_Book_of_the_Dead)

What might not at first appear recognizable to this returned soul, would be at least familiar and, with some explaining, would fit into their concept of the divine and the afterlife (replacing Osiris with Jesus). What would be new would be the need to renounce not just bad acts, but to renounce Satan, or the Devil.

The message of the modern Christian would also be very understandable to an ancient Phoenician, if also brought back to life, and the message of the Church, (the son of god died for our sins, rose to heaven and sits with his father in judgment of people) would be very familiar. That the son of God was sacrificed for the good of the people in time of crisis, and to seal a new covenant with God as the witness and, God as the partner, would sound very familiar. The Phoenician would perhaps take some time to understand that the actual act, the actual required killing “was no longer needed, through Jesus,” but the morphed nature of the act, the Mass as the sacrifice, would no longer be kept hidden. The person would quickly see the essential element of the religion he/she and their ancestors had practiced for some 6,000 years.

So throughout all of this journey we come to the conclusion that religion does not really change, it morphs, that the characters (Gods, saints, etc) come and go, that the names change (to protect the innocent?) and each version of the same concepts have their moments of popularity, followed by periods of fading and then perhaps, revivals, under a new name, but the main story line of religion, in the West, remains the same.

- We need to appease the gods or God for help and success in this world and for a positive existence in the next world, and we obtain this help through (and here is one of the big changes that has occurred over time) either overt sacrifice and prayer, as was done in the “past” or with symbolic sacrifice (the Mass) and prayer, as is promoted in the Western religions of the present day.

If the big God is too busy maybe some of the lesser gods (or saints) will intervene for us and help us out. And, also, that:

- We must use God to oversee our current activities, through solemn oaths, or by gaining God’s agreements on bargains and treaties.

Without the threat of a power beyond human power, how can any oath or treaty be trusted?

- And lastly that the gods or God will protect and look after our beloved dead and that we will at some point be able to rejoin our parents, spouses, children and others in an existence far better than the ones in which so many die violent deaths through disease, war or outright genocide, often at the hands of those who are supposed to protect us in this world.

Modern religions in the West are composites and retellings of these morphed events and



concepts. And while the contributions of the Greeks, Jews, Zoroastrians, and many others are better acknowledged today, the purpose of this book has been to ask for the acknowledgement of the contributions of the Phoenician peoples;

- That their religion collectively (and again, inaccurately) referred to in this book as Ba'alism, deserves much more consideration and respect as a major force, a major contributor of morphed ideas, around what we now see as good and evil. Our concept of both God and the son of God and also the chief rival of God, Ba'al, is greatly based in the religion of these almost forgotten people.

The goal of this book has been to help us understand that Ba'al is a major source of what we now see as both the Devil, and also the basis for salvation, in that God sacrificed his only begotten son, in time of crisis, as was the traditional concept of the religion of the Phoenicians for thousands of years prior to the rise of Christianity.

We need to eliminate the still existing modern discrimination that exists against the Phoenicians, and their Southern element, known as the Canaanites, fostered upon us by the writings of the Bible. By doing so, we can better understand the origins of our current beliefs and perhaps move further away from the madness imposed upon our culture by this concept of "absolutely correct" religions and the repression this creates in both thought and politics in a modern world.

So, as this book has sought to merge the politics of the times to the religious changes of the time, perhaps its best to end on a paraphrasing of a modern axiom; religion represses thought; absolutist religions repress thought absolutely.

## Part VI - Multiple Endings –

### Section IV A final word on the Devil ...

As we have stated, there is a two track possibility in the premise of this book;

Ba'alism evolved or morphed into Christianity, and

The Christians took Ba'al and made him the devil

On the face of it these ideas may seem contradictory. Yet it is also something that we see in culture from now and then; for example, the Romans killing and then deifying Caesar (the opposite of “the evil that men do lives after them) our love-hate cultural relationship with Napoleon, and how the Russian Communists denounced everything that was of the Czar and then imposed a harsher version of Czarist rule.

However, we can see some of the possible internal efforts to bring these two seemingly different concepts together in some of the writings of the New Testament (besides the concepts presented concerning the *Book of Hebrews*)

A case in point is how we see Mark, Mathew and Luke in which Jews accusing Jesus of being an agent of Ba'al

Mark3: 22

- The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons.”

Again, we should note here that the Jews are using the Ba'alist term as a designation of evil, and that Jesus is representing Ba'al (which may be very true). What is very interesting for the concepts of this book is the way Jesus answers ...

Remember, it appears that the *Book of Hebrews* was written to address the needs of the descendants of “non-exile” Jews, and they still held Ba'al in great esteem, (at least covertly) and the answer of Jesus seems to show some of that esteem for Ba'al

Mark 3:

- 23So Jesus called them and spoke to them in parables: “How can Satan drive out Satan? 24If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

The standard interpretation of this statement is Jesus saying that if Jesus does good, he must be good and not an agent of Satan.

However, Jesus does not state that he is not an agent of Beelzebul (or Ba'al), as he is accused, but clearly leaves the door open for another interpretation. Jesus could be saying, that if he is doing things that are good, and he is an agent of Satan (or Ba'al), then how can Satan (or Ba'al) be bad? Jesus could be interpreted as saying, that if he is an agent of Ba'al, and he does good; then Ba'al must be good.

- Remember Jesus is talking to the agents of the power (the Jewish State) that had only

recently forced converted the Jews of the Galilee to the “Orthodox” form of Judaism, a form not supported by the “non-exile” descendants who lived in the area.

So, his answer to the “oppressor Pharisees” can be seen as a declaration intended not for the hearers (the Pharisees) but for the audience, the people around him in Galilee, and that message could be that Ba’al is not evil or not the Evil One (Satan), but is good, because if Jesus is an agent of Ba’al and he does good, Ba’al can’t be bad, since Jesus is doing good things.

- The house divided could be a reference to forced conversion and the repression of the peoples’ concepts of a “good” Ba’al.

But this meaning would not have been grasped by those from areas out side of this area of Judea, or those who are of a different time and “world view.” Perhaps they can only be understood in the time frame intended as a message to those subjected to forced conversions and the controversies created by the “new Jews,” the returnees.

Nor is it likely that any of us in the modern age, in general, can really understand the references and meanings of people in the past (never mind the intentions of Jesus). We may eventually get a bit better at translations, we may even better recognize the difference in culture and to view their culture with a non-biased view of the future; we may even be able to be more accepting of the fact that our concepts of the past are mostly based on religion and not fact.

Yet we will never really understand the parables of Jesus or the fears of the Jewish prophets or the declarations of the judges of old, not only because the translations are not great, or the understanding of the means and intent is always clouded, or that we have very different life experiences than the people living then and there, but also, deep in our current understanding of the world,

- We still want to hold on to the Christian concept of absolutism, and the belief that there is a God and there is a Devil, and that they are in constant conflict. And that we as individuals have a path to salvation.

It helps many of us deal with the same problems that humans have been asking since at least the “Great Leap Forward” some 50,000 years ago;

- What happens to me and my love ones after this time?
- Why do bad things happen to good people? and
- Why do good things happen to bad people?

With these current beliefs, concepts of absolute belief and devotion to one God (or gods), comes the need to accept, in whole, or in part the “sacred writings” of the “describer” of the particular pathway to salvation, through Jesus, or others. By doing so, in having the need to keep belief in the “sacred writings” we close the door to better understanding of history and the route of travel we call “history.” We are forced to reject new facts to preserve our vision of the divine.

Many in the current culture continue to look at history mainly as a means to justify the sacred

writings. How much energy has been put into the questions of:

- Where is Noah's Ark?
- What caused the ten plagues in Egypt?
- What was the path the Hebrews took during the forty years of wandering?

Despite the energy and time, to date, real science and what we now call archeology, has mostly shown that the sacred writings are not "provable history." Yet still so many cling to the idea that they must be true, since it's in our sacred books, and we need our sacred books to achieve our individual salvation.

In the Christian West, what little history that is presented is often chauvinistic; It's unstated purpose of complying with the Christian or nationalist beliefs of the past. This approach is very problematic on so many levels, especially as we evolve out of the period of Western domination with its overt colonialism and cultural and religious assaults.

One of the major problems in this view of history is the rest of the world's peoples remember history differently, and are now in a position to demand respect for their world views. Without a religious free and non-Western chauvinist view of history and religion (and without the ending of absolutist religious views) the world becomes that kingdom or house that Jesus talks about

- 24If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

The religion and slanted history based on that religious view of the West becomes part of that house, and the different understanding of history (of the long term history of China, India, Persia, and so many others) is the other part of the house.

We simply have a very different conception of the world in these "two houses." The world based on the religion of absolutism is the house divided.

However, it used to be that the house divided was that of the world view of the Christians and the older traditional religions of the West. And then we saw a different approach by the early Christians, an approach of flexibility. The early Christians needed to explain, what was "good" and what was "evil" in an acceptable fashion to the followers of the other religions. They needed to explain to themselves and others, why rituals that were used for thousands of years, rituals used by the "winners" of the political and cultural wars, were no longer valid. The Christians also had to do this explaining of why the rituals were no longer needed, without really insulting those who used them:

- What did "good" look like? What did "evil" look like? And, how do you depict good and evil, without insulting those around you? Those were some of the key questions that the early Christians needed to answer.

When the early Christians were addressing these issues they developed somewhat different writings, or different means of telling the story, for different communities. We understand today that the "four gospels" were written for different groups (Jews, Greeks, intellectuals, and less educated other Gentiles etc.) with different messages in each version targeted for the

particular groups. We also recognize that Paul, unlike the “Jerusalem movement” of early Christians (or that of James the Just, which tried to keep Christianity in the camp of being Jewish) became extremely flexible in his approach to preaching to all the nations of the world. He needed to adjust the “good news” to appeal to the non-Jews; so Paul’s approach included the ending of the need for the requirements for kosher food, and for circumcision, etc therefore allowing the “Gentiles” to become Christians without the more restrictive lifestyle of the Jews. These were all tools to fit into a non-absolute world ... to make Christianity a flexible religion in a time of religious flexibility.

The early Christians also had to address how to explain the old gods of the Ancient and Classical world to people that were mostly still believers (and also to the rationalist and atheist of the time.) To do so, the early Christians first adopted the Jewish god for the potential Jewish converts (although there was a fight about this – one of the first major “heresies” – see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcionism> and also see <http://www.christianorigins.com/marcion.html>

- Marcion taught that the God of the Old Testament was not the God of the New Testament. The God of the Old Testament was the “creating God,” but he was harsh, cruel, and incompetent. Marcion contrasted this creating God with the God of Jesus, who was nothing less than love and grace.

But they actually accepted the existence of all the “older gods” of the Ancient and Classical world, (including Ba’al). They did not say the old gods did not exist, they said that they were in fact real, but demons. After all, the stories of the Greek/Roman gods were filled with misdeeds, including rape and taking sides in war, so they could in fact appear to be as demons. These approaches to the old gods are more signs that in the early days, the religion was trying to find its voice by being flexible.

The Christians did, however, have to be careful in how to explain which of the traditional gods was actual “the Devil”, or the chief demon. They did not want to say that the image of Zeus/Jupiter, so beloved for so long, was actually what the devil looked like.

- (In fact, in the West, the image adopted by Christians of what God did look like was closely related to the image of Zeus/Jupiter, if less “buff” than the Classical gods). They also needed to adopt the image to something understandable to those of the East.



Jesus from 4<sup>th</sup> Cent AD



Apollo, the sun God as Good shepherd, 4<sup>th</sup> Century BC.

<http://www.jesusneverexisted.com/melange.html>

Therefore, the image of the Devil, soon evolved from the image of the old rival of the God of the Jews, that of Ba’al. And the practices and rituals of Ba’al (souls burning eternally)

became the image of the hell controlled by the Devil.

How Jesus came to be depicted in his present form is quite an interesting and relatively unexplored subject. The image of Jesus has taken on many motifs over the centuries, and continues to do so in the Modern age, as Black and Brown Jesus become more accepted. We no longer are subjected to the blond hair blue-eyed Jesus of the European colonial era, and depicted in movies such as the "*Greatest Story Ever Told*" where we have a German actor as Jesus. The early Christians used several images from popular gods (both Roman and Persian) as models for the physical depiction of Jesus. Initially, the images of Jesus were more designed for a Roman view, and he was often depicted as beardless younger man.

The most interesting possible model for Jesus was that of a newly created "god" whose cult worship was promoted by the Emperor Hadrian, during the time when Christianity was first becoming mentioned. This new god was Antinous, the young male lover of the Emperor Hadrian, who when he died in 130 AD at about the age of twenty, was deified by the Emperor.

- After his death, the grief of the emperor knew no bounds, causing the most extravagant respect to be paid to his memory. Cities were founded in his name, medals struck with his effigy, and statues erected to him in all parts of the empire.
- Worship, or at least acknowledgment, of the idealized Antinous was widespread, although mainly outside the city of Rome. As a result, Antinous is one of the best-preserved faces from the ancient world. Many busts, gems and coins represent Antinous as the ideal type of youthful beauty, often with the attributes of some special god. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antinous>

One of the other options for portrayal of Jesus as a god is that of Mithras. One of the earliest known portrayal of Jesus is that of the "Good Shepherd" or as young man.

- The earliest surviving Christian art comes from the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and early 4<sup>th</sup> centuries on the walls of [Christian tombs](#) in the [catacombs](#). ... Here, Jesus is portrayed in two different ways: older, bearded and robed and another as a bare faced youth [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Images\\_of\\_Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Images_of_Jesus)

While mainly portrayed killing a bull, Mithras was often described as the "good shepherd." And so was Apollo, the Sun God of the Greeks. Early Christian imagery seems to have "borrowed" from the existing views of the divine of the time, in order to allow people to be able to relate to the new interpretation being given.

The early Christians had to also create a way to modify and adopt the critical rituals of the popular religions (including Ba'alism) to give them a new meaning and a new way to participate in the salvation offered by the rituals. They did so, by adopting many external elements of the religions of the time (making the birthday of the Sol Invictus the birthday of Christ, making Easter in line with the other sacred days of the other "rising gods, making the sharing of the food of the sacrifice part of the ritual of the communion with god.) The chief ritual of Ba'al, that of human sacrifice, as the central piece of the "new covenant" was represented as needed, but ended, by Christ's sacrifice. Again Christianity showed signs of being a flexible adopting religion.

- This was an awesome task which faced the early Christians, and it took hundreds of years to sort out the key issues, coming up with the right “sales pitch” and often with great internal fighting amongst themselves (all the heresies, etc).

However, once in power, once accepted by the state, this flexibility ended. Now the Church demanded conformity ... after some 350 years of coming up with the right message, it declared no more debate, only conformity, or else. We continue to live with the extensive fallout of this shift to this day. Millions have died in resistance to this inflexibility and the world today is in continuous danger based on this ongoing demand to conformity.

If there is a devil, if there is a great evil, its greatest tool is perhaps the ability to make one group of people believe they know all things, and are able to answer all things, absolutely, through their belief in a god, and only their god. And to commit any act and horror in the name of that god, is justified to bring that god’s message to others. Only horror has come from the belief that any act of repression is right to create conformity.

If this is the case, if absolutism is a tool of the devil, then we need to ask Jesus’ question again

- How can Satan drive out Satan?

And the answer is obvious that it can not be done. And therefore, if there is a devil, if there is Satan, and Satan can not drive out Satan, and the history of Christianity is such that it seems to use the “greatest tool of Satan”, this belief in absolutism, over and over again, our honest non-biased, non-religious based review of the blended political and religious history can lead to a conclusion that Christianity (not just the Roman Church, but all forms of Christianity, is a tool of Satan. Any absolutist religion is so and Christianity over its life has been the most absolutist and most demanding of conformity of any. So this conclusion is the opposite of the message of the early Christians ... that the Devil created religions that looked like Christianity to fool people into rejecting Christianity. The conclusion is that Christianity is the tool of the devil, created to eliminate acceptance of each other and to promote hatred (a chief tool of Satan).

Which of course, is not the conclusion of this book, since from a non-biased, non-religious based review of the blended political and religious history, we write from a perspective that there is no God or gods, and there is no Satan or the Devil, or no great evil one, nor is there the single god named Ba’al or a collection of gods referred to as Ba’al. We write from the perspective that there is no “divine.”

If there is no divine, then we are left with human chaos. And also human tendencies to destruction and the use of religion by humans to enhance this tendency to destruction through both internal rituals of death and external attacks on the “other,” those who are not true believers, or those who follow something other than what is “true.” Over time, in this Christian world, that belief in the “something other” has been collectively referred to as the belief in the Devil.

We now face the “end of days” in a more literal sense than we ever have before, with our new weapons of mass destruction, our ability to undo “evolution” by the mass destruction of species, and our ability to eliminate our safe haven of the earth’s environment by altering the planet’s ability to moderate its climate.



So now our basic religious needs (is there an after life, will I see my loved ones again) seem to be in conflict with our collective “greater good.” Our religious beliefs, our inability to de-link events of now from the concept of “God’s absolute will” and divine texts and our hope for the “after world” has profound impact on how we face each of these coming crises. The ability, or our inability, to purge religion from our concept of history, and also to purge it from our concepts of “what is to come,” will determine if we actually, as a species, survive the future.

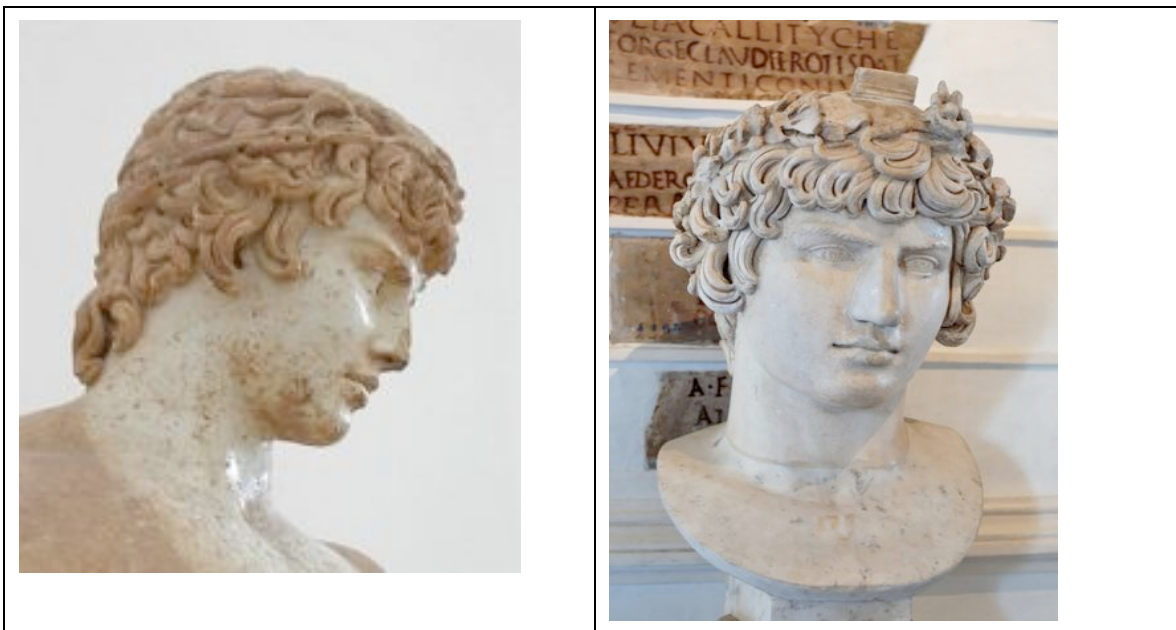
There are far too many Christians who look forward to a nuclear war, as the precursor of the second coming of Jesus (sounds like something the Devil would like).

- There is the famous line from nearly 40 years ago of the U. S. Secretary of Agriculture, James Watt who said, “We don’t need to think about safeguarding the environment much, since Jesus is coming back soon.”

When he said that, Watt had to resign. It is unclear what would happen if a similar statement was made today by a high ranking official.

As we face a more capable world of other views of religion and the divine, we in the United States need to resist a return to absolutist religion. The house divided becomes more divided with our absolutism.

However, the real house that is divided today is not one religious fundamentalism verses another, what is the real divide is that of rationalists and believers. One of the last times the battle was such, the rationalists lost in a major way, and the West was plunged into the Dark ages (and the Devil was seen as the winner). We can only wait to see if the present religious conflict will give us similar results.



One of the other options for portrayal of Jesus is a god we will look at in great detail later, that of Mithras. One of the earliest know portrayal of Jesus is that of the “Good Shepherd” or as young man

- The earliest surviving Christian art comes from the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and early 4<sup>th</sup> centuries on the walls of [Christian tombs](#) in the [catacombs](#). ... Here, Jesus is portrayed in two different ways: older, bearded and robed and another as a bare faced youth [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Images\\_of\\_Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Images_of_Jesus)