THE CHRIST EXPERIMENT
EXPERIMENT NO. 2 - ABANDONING OLD WINE AND NEW KOOL-AID

In **Experiment No. 1**, we laid the foundation for these Experiments. We showed that Christianity, as it is practiced today, and as it has been practiced over many centuries, is not the religion Jesus practiced. It has been badly tainted with the will and intentions of men who had agendas different from that of Jesus. Rather than spreading the good news that Jesus brought, Christianity as a whole carries a negative outlook of the future and generally holds on to the idea that God is vengeful and vindictive and will be bringing ruin to 21st century civilization. They have lost the original teachings of Jesus that reveal God as a loving and merciful Father who is interested in our betterment, our survival, and our eternal destiny. This Experiment will examine the roadblocks, as we see them, that prevent Christianity from being the beacon of light it was intended to be.

BACKGROUND AND OBSERVATION

We believe there are two reasons why Christianity is so misled and confused about God and Jesus. The first reason is that they cling to the teachings of the Old Testament that Jesus referred to as "old wine." Although Jesus was born and raised as a Jew, he frequently resisted the teachings of the rabbis and their traditions. On one occasion, Jesus was asked why he did not fast and pray like the Pharisees. Here was part of his answer:

> No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved." – ***Matthew 9:16-17*** (*Today's New International Version*)

He was telling them that what he brought would not fit into the old Jewish ways and if one attempted to combine the two, it will ruin both the old and the new. This is what occurs when Christians mix the old wine of the Jewish system of things with the new wine of Jesus. Both are ruined.

For example, the God that Jesus described appears to be very different from the God the Hebrews described in the Old Testament. If you try to fit Jesus' loving and merciful God into the old Hebrew descriptions of vengeful and jealous God, the love of the Father is lost, and the God of the Hebrews appears very childish. But if we accept Jesus' teachings as a new and true revelation, we can look back at the Hebrew descriptions, not as wrong, but as partial and incomplete. (***1 Corinthians 13:9-13***) We can know the true God as Jesus revealed Him, and still have respect for the Hebrew writings and their attempt to explain God to the best of their limited ability.

What is needed within Christianity is to let go of the old understandings under the Mosaic Law and not try to combine them with Jesus' teachings. The Jewish religious system has become obsolete (***Hebrews 8:13***), has been brought to an end (***Romans 10:4***), and has been canceled and taken away. (***Colossians 2:14***) Christians must set the "old wine" aside and give Jesus and his teachings their undivided attention. They must start with a blank page and fresh eyes, untainted with the old stories. We believe if that can be accomplished, the veil that currently blinds them will be done away with, and they will live up to their names as being "Christ-like," the free children of God. (***2 Corinthians 3:13-18***)

The other reason why Christianity is so confused is because many Christians are following erroneous ideas of men without questioning or critically examining them. In the United States, such people are referred to as "**Kool-Aid drinkers**," reminiscent of the tragic death of nearly a thousand followers of the charismatic religious leader, Jim Jones, in 1978. But long before Jim Jones, and continuing long after him, many other men set themselves up as theocracies and religious authorities, spokesmen for God, even the actual second coming of Christ Jesus!

Such charismatic leaders believe they have some special channel to God that allows them to interpret Bible prophecies. Instead of presenting their interpretations as only their view or as speculation or possibilities that could be wrong, such men assert them as if they were the very word of God Himself, and they impress their listeners to accept their interpretations without question on threat of excommunication and loss of God's favor.

All of their interpretations identify themselves and their followers as the only ones with God's favor, and all others as destined for destruction. It is this type of "kool-aid" that leads people to do strange things, including condemning those that do not believe as they believe, isolating themselves from family and friends, and even extreme actions designed to 'bring on' destruction and make their perverted visions come true.

We should not be surprised at these developments. Jesus taught that after he leaves, many false teachers would arise making grand claims of having God's backing. Many people would be misled into thinking Christ is exclusively with one group or another. (***Matthew 24:23-27***) But Jesus said he would not be in one particular place, he would be everywhere – "wherever two or more are gathered in his name." (***Matthew 18:20***)

Christians need to: (1) stop drinking the 'old wine' by simply setting aside the Old Testament stories as having completed their purpose, as Paul wrote:

> Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian. – ***Galatians 3:23-25*** (*Today's New International Version*)

And they need to: (2) stop drinking the 'new kool-aid' and carefully, critically, and

honestly examine the things they are being taught in light of the plain teachings of Jesus, along with all known facts. If they would do these two things, they would not be so confused about what is required of them, they would not fall prey to false teachers, and they would not be so divided. If Christians would stop following men and gather together in Jesus name alone, based on his teachings alone, Christianity would finally find Christ.

THE HYPOTHESIS AND PREDICTION

Based on the above, we wonder what would happen if Christians do these two things: (1) set the Old Testament stories aside and focus on the teachings of Jesus; and (2) critically and honestly challenge the teachings of their religious leaders in light of Jesus' plain teachings and all known facts. We hypothesize that all who do these two things will finally have their spiritual eyes opened and find their way to the true Christ. And accordingly, they will find unity of faith with all other Christians who do the same, no matter their sectarian affiliation. We predict that it would minimize and possibly bring an end to numerous sects and division in the Christian world and lay the foundation for Christianity to be the beacon of light and bearer of truth it was intended to be so that the good news can be spread to the distant parts of the earth.

THE EXPERIMENT

In light of the above, we ask our readers to share their thoughts about the above Observation and Hypothesis by responding to questions such as:

1. Do you agree with our observations? If not, where did we get it wrong?
2. Do you think setting aside the Old Testament and focusing on Jesus' teachings is the right thing to do?
3. Do you think every Christian should engage in an honest critical examination of their own beliefs and their own religion's teachings?
4. What teaching(s), in particular, do you think Christians need to critically examine?
5. If Jesus is 'the way, the truth, and the life,' do you think one can gain salvation without the intervention of priests, bishops and so-called 'reverent' men?
6. If Jesus is 'the way, the truth, and the life,' do you think one can gain salvation without knowing the interpretations of Bible prophecies?
7. If Jesus is 'the way, the truth, and the life,' do you think one can gain salvation by focusing on Jesus' teachings alone?
8. If you agree with our hypothesis, what do you think must be done to get the ball rolling?