



Study of Religions – Christianity (Part 2) – Sects in Christianity

دیگر مذاہب کا موازنہ – عیسائیت (حصہ دوم) --- عیسائی فرقے

Earliest Christian sects –

Nazarenes or Ebionites



Jesus



Ebionites

Period: Year 30 AD – 400 AD

Origin: Ebionites: Meaning “The Poor”. Real community of Jesus ^{as}

Beliefs:

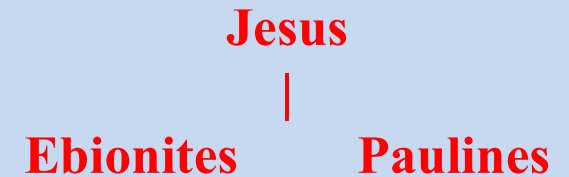
- They were the early Jews who believed in Jesus ^{as}.
- Were the main sect, but slowly reduced over time
- Did not believe that Jesus ^{as} was god.
- Followed the Law of Moses: Torah
- Rejected the Trinity
- Rejected Jesus’ ^{as} death and resurrection
- Rejected the apostle Paul and his teachings.
- They loved James, the brother of Jesus ^{as} who was the 1st Khaliah



Early Christian sects - Paulines

Period: Year 35 AD – Present.

Origin: Paulines: Followers of Paul. Paul of Tarsus (originally Saul) was a Jewish Pharisee who converted to Christianity after a dramatic vision of Jesus^{as} on the road to Damascus. This vision was never verified.



Beliefs:

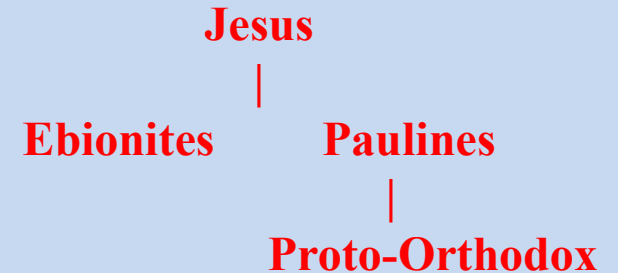
- Mainly founded by Paul
- Consisted mainly of Mainly Gentile (non-Jewish) Christians: i.e. Greeks
- They did not follow the Law of Moses
- Believed that the only way to be saved was by believing in the death and resurrection of Jesus^{as}.
- Opposed the Ebionites/Original followers of Jesus^{as}.
- Originally believed Jesus^{as} was a divine being, not God Himself
- Paul's teachings laid the foundation of mainstream Christian doctrine. While there were other interpretations of Jesus'^{as} message (like Jewish Christians and Gnostics), Paul's version became dominant, especially after the 4th century when Christianity became the Roman Empire's official religion.



Early Christian sects – Proto-Orthodox

Period: 2nd – 4th Century.

Origin: In the later centuries, Proto-Orthodoxy absorbed, systematized, and built upon Pauline theology and sought to harmonize **all apostolic teachings** (Peter, Paul, John, etc.)



Beliefs:

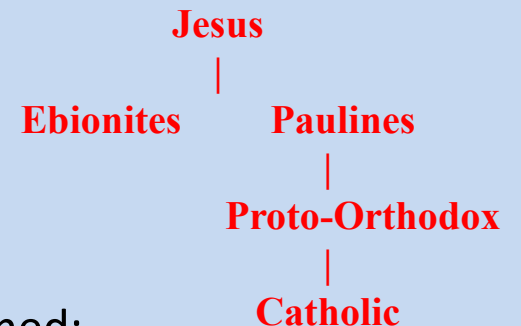
- Proto-Orthodox means **Orthodox before it was officially Orthodox**.
- Teachings were traced back to the **apostles**, especially Peter, Paul, John, and James.
- Proto-Orthodox Christians **won the theological debates** and shaped **Christian creeds, doctrines, and the Bible itself**.
- They believed Jesus ^{as} was **both fully God and fully man**—a central doctrine later formalized at the **Council of Nicaea (325 CE)**.
- Gentile Christians and followers of Paul
- They labeled groups like **Gnostics, Docetists, and Ebionites** as heretical.



Early Christian sects – Catholics

Period: Year 400 AD - Present

Origin: Over a period of first few centuries, It evolved out of what we now call **Proto-Orthodox Christianity** and eventually became known as the **Roman Catholic Church**.



Beliefs:

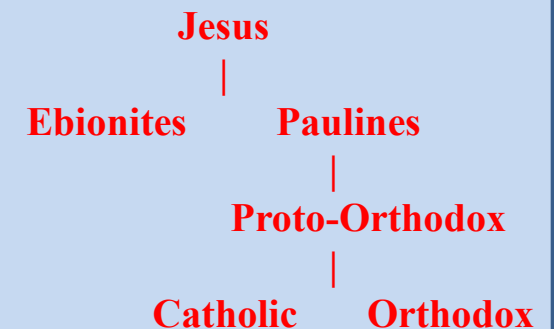
- After the 4th century, the main Christian beliefs were confirmed:
- Jesus^{as} was 100% God and the Trinity was established
- Authority is Bible and Sacred Tradition from earlier Popes
- The **Catholic Church** is the **one true Church**, founded by Jesus^{as} and passed on to the apostles, especially **Peter**, the first Pope
- Largest Christian sect, around 1.3 Billion Christians
- Follow a tradition of Popes who are elected
- Head Quarters is in the Vatican
- Catholic Bible has 7 extra books in the Old Testament
- Believe in Purgatory: is a temporary condition for the purification of souls who, although destined for Heaven, are not fully detached from sin and thus cannot enter Heaven immediately.
- Often pray through the Virgin Mary and through the saints
- Priests must be celibate (someone who does not marry)



Early Christian sects – Orthodox

Period: Year 1054 – Present

Origin: Orthodox Christianity refers to the Eastern Orthodox Church, which officially formed after the Great Schism of 1054 CE, when the church split into: Roman Catholic (West) and Eastern Orthodox (East)



Beliefs:

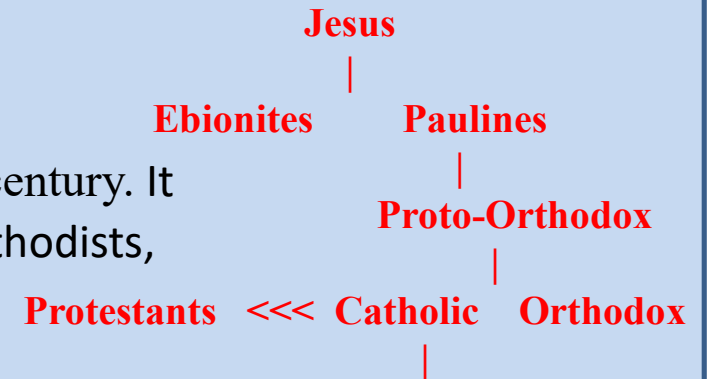
- Trinity i.e. belief in God, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each person of the Trinity is **fully God**, and all three share one divine essence.
- Both Bible and Traditions (teachings passed down from the apostles, councils, Church Fathers, liturgy, etc.) are sacred.
- They believe the Church has preserved the **true faith and worship** of the early Christian community
- Has around 230 millions followers. Most are in Russia and eastern Europe
- Jesus^{as} was 100% God and believe in the Trinity
- Reject the authority of the Catholic Pope
- Bishop and Monks must be celibate. Parish Priests if already married can continue the marriage. After being ordained, they can not marry or get remarried.
- Believe in Purgatory



Early Christian sects – Protestant

Period: Year 1517 – Present

Origin: Broke away from the Catholic Church in the 16th century. It includes many denominations like Lutherans, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Evangelicals, and more.



Beliefs:

- Main founder was Martin Luther who was against the Popes.
- Only accept the Bible to be true and source of guidance
- Reject the Traditions of the Popes
- Salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ^{as} alone, not through good works or church rituals.
- Jesus Christ^{as} is the **only mediator** between God and humanity. No need for priests, saints, or Mary as intercessors
- Reject purgatory
- Do not pray through Mary or the Saints
- Church of England is Protestant church

Jesus' ^{as} Travel to East (India)



Background:

- There were twelve tribes of Israelites.
- These tribes settled in the Canaan (Middle East of today)
- Ten of these tribes in north formed Kingdom of Israel and two tribes in south formed Kingdom of Judah.
- In 732 BC, Assyrian King invaded the Northern Kingdom and defeated the ten tribes. It is believed that these tribes who became the lost tribes (sheep) traveled to East towards Iraq, Afghanistan, India, and even China.

Claim of Promised Messiah ^{as}

- Promised Messiah ^{as} proved, using religious scriptures, evidence from medical literature and historical records, that Jesus ^{as} survived the crucifixion.
- After surviving the crucifixion he travelled to East in search of the lost tribes.
- He travelled through Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and finally reached Kashmir India.



Other Evidence in support of Promised Messiah ^{as} claims.



Historical Evidence

- Many researchers had found several Christian communities in the areas around Herat (Afghanistan) who date back to the time when Jesus ^{as} had travelled through those places.
- Many historians including Abu Suleman Daud bin Abul Fazal Muhammad traces the ancestry of the Afghans to the Israelites.
- More recently western scholarship , for example, George Moore in his famous work, *Lost Tribes*, published in 1861, gave a profound insight into the origins of the Afghan roots.
- *Tahrik-i-Kashmir*, written in 1420AD by Mullah Nadri. In this text, a figure known as ‘Yus Asaf’ is mentioned. There are several similarities of this character with those of Jesus ^{as}.
- In above book, it is mentioned that the Temple of Solomon which can be seen today in Kashmir, had an inscription which stated; ‘In these times Yuz Asaf proclaimed his prophethood.’ On another stone, another inscription mentioned in Mullah Nadri’s work, states that: ‘Yus Asaf was Yusu, Prophet of the Children of Israel.’
- Critics of the Jesus ^{as} in India thesis often claim the story was a necessary invention by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) to allow him to make the claim of being the Second Coming of Jesus ^{as}.
- But there is a simple refutation to this argument, which is the fact that scholars and researchers, without any adherence or belief in the religious claims of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), have come to the same conclusion.



References ..

And We made the son of Mary and his mother a Sign, and gave them refuge on an elevated land of green valleys and springs of running water.

Background:

- <https://files.alislam.cloud/pdf/Jesus-in-India.pdf>
- <https://www.reviewofreligions.org/30009/jesusas-journeys-east-tracing-the-travel/>
- <https://www.reviewofreligions.org/6115/tracing-the-post-crucifixion-footsteps-of-jesus-christas/>
- <https://www.reviewofreligions.org/30018/sowing-the-seed-jesus-in-india/>