

“UNIQUENESS OF CHRIST” TESTIMONY

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I was brought up in a traditional Jewish family in Brooklyn, New York. We observed the dietary laws, rested on the Sabbath, and celebrated all Jewish holidays. Most importantly, we held steadfastly to the belief that we were born Jews and we would die Jews. We understood that, at best, we were only tolerated by the non-Jewish world.

I can still remember my first exposure to Christianity. I was told by one of my Christian playmates, “I learned in church that you killed Jesus!” Even though I pleaded with her that I would not kill anybody, let alone this Jesus person, she remained unconvinced. Later, when I experienced Christianity in art, literature, and film, Jesus’ appearance seemed unbelievable—looking variously Scandinavian, Asian, or African but seldom like a Middle Eastern Jew!

I agreed with Christians that Jesus was a real person—maybe even a prophet—but not *God!* Jews believe in one, true God. How could Christians say that God is one and at the same time three?

Christians said Jesus is the son of God, sort of a “God, junior” it seemed to me. As a Jew I had been taught that one should not make images of deity and one should not worship anyone other than the almighty. So I saw their worship of Jesus as idolatrous. Certainly, I was *not* going to violate any of the Ten Commandments and consider worshiping this “gentile God!”

Saved? I needed to be saved? Saved by who and from what? Jesus could save me? But I was Jewish. Why did I need Jesus? I reasoned that, as Jews, we *were* the chosen people. We were *automatically* related to God! No, being Jewish and believing in Jesus would be like being a carnivorous vegetarian!

Then one day I met a stranger on a street corner in New York City who shattered my misconceptions about the person of Christ. He was the first person to really communicate the gospel to me. He told about a Jesus who was not the king of the Norwegians, but the king of Israel—not Jehovah Junior but very God of very God. He told me that Jesus was not one of *many* paths to God but the *only* way, the *only one* who could forgive my sin—the sin of all mankind!

I reacted in the customary Jewish fashion: “That’s a very narrow-minded point of view,” I said.

He agreed with me and added, “But it is true!” And something in me knew that I couldn’t just dismiss Jesus.

I was invited to attend a church service and I went. Christians began praying for me from that night on, and my defenses started crumbling. I didn’t want it to be true that Jesus was the Messiah. I would have been happy to find out that I could find salvation by following the Jewish religion. I would have preferred to believe that my sins were forgiven each year on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. I would *much* rather have believed that my relatives who had died without accepting Christ were in heaven instead of experiencing an eternity apart from God.

But truth isn’t always convenient or comfortable. I realized that to deny the truth would be senseless. Jesus *did* die for my sins and he *did* rise from the dead. I, a Jew,

embraced Jesus, the king of the Jews, as my Lord and Savior and, so, became a completed Jew, in the tradition of Peter, Paul, and Priscilla!