

Fred`s Thoughts for April 2023

I have often wondered how my Jewish friends perceive Jesus but have never had the guts to ask them. After all Jesus was a Jew. That he was a real person appears to be accepted by both the Jews and Muslims and he is acknowledged to have lived in Palestine just over 2000 years ago. But who and what do they think he was?

Jesus through Jewish eyes

By [Clive Lawton](#) Last updated 2009-06-23

Extract

So it's fairly easy to see Jesus as a Pharisee from the Liberal wing, probably heavily influenced by the Messianic fervour that was current and, apparently deeply impressed by John the Baptist who may have been associated with the Essenes or some other such separatist sect. He was deeply bothered by the Temple excesses of the time, didn't want to get involved in the politics, and wanted the people to be take themselves seriously as being able to bring about God's kingdom on Earth by right living.

But interestingly the author goes on to make the following assertions

But I can't see Jesus as the Messiah we Jews are waiting for. And nor, as the Gospel accounts themselves make clear, could the disciples who knew him once he was executed. After the crucifixion, the disciples did not sit around calmly and reassure each other that all was going according to plan. They were instead understandably devastated. This was not the messianic plan. Nothing in Jewish teaching had suggested the execution of the Messiah. Not one of them was able to come up with the idea that this was all as it should be. It wasn't. They had invested their faith in this man and he was now dead.

It is difficult to relate the view expressed above to some sections of the Jewish faith as they believe that Jesus was merely a Charlatan who used the current (At the time of his existence) confusion between the older teachings surrounding the 1st Temple of Solomon and the newer less strict teachings of the 2nd Temple founded by Herod in an attempt to promote his radical views.

Within the Islam belief there is a more generous understanding of Jesus and his relation to God.

In Islam, Jesus (Isa) is considered to be a messenger of God (Allah) and the Messiah (al-Masih) who was sent to guide the Descendants of Israel (Bani Isra'il) with a new scripture, the Gospel (Injil).

The Quran mentions Jesus by name 25 times—more often than Muhammad—and emphasises that Jesus was a mortal human who, like all other prophets, had been divinely chosen to spread God's message.^[27] Unlike Christian writings, the Quran does not describe Jesus as the son_of_God, but as one of four major human messengers (out of many prophets) sent by God throughout history to guide mankind.^[28] Jesus is said to have lived a life of piety and generosity, and abstained from eating flesh of swine.

*Muslims also believe that Jesus received a Gospel from God, called the Injil. However, Muslims hold that Jesus' original message was lost or altered and that the Christian New Testament does not accurately represent God's original message to mankind.^[29] **Wikipedia***

The main Monotheistic religions all deal with the existence of Jesus. The Christians see him as God made Man, the Jews as a rebellious Pharisee and the Islamic as a special Profit. They all confirm his actual and historically important existence. Their perceptions of his effect on the concept of a single deity are however profoundly different. As a Christian I believe that he is the son of our God through whom we can achieve our birth right. I am Trinitarian in that I believe in the existence of the holy spirit and God the father and the Son. I do not believe he was a prophet as the Muslims believe. He gave us the word of God and shows the way to God in a way that is only possible to the son of God. However, I can accept that my Jewish and Islamic friends hold different views to me about Jesus. But does it mean I have to try and convert them to my belief?

Jesus himself made this statement

14 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God^[a]; believe also in me. ² My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Jesus the Way to the Father

⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know^[b] my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

This is a powerful statement, but does it mean that only those who accept Jesus can go to the Father? Many devout and well-meaning Christians have accepted the words in strict terms that only Christians can be with God. This statement is seen by many non-Christians as arrogant and self-serving. They turn their face away from Christianity because of this arrogance. Such a message though is in conflict with the overall impression conveyed by Jesus that all mankind are Gods chosen people not just the Jews. What therefore does his statement mean? Was it only intended for the disciples?

If there is ever going to be peace on Earth we must be able to live together. We must be able to respect each other, to love our neighbours as ourselves. To deny people the comfort of God is not in our power but is that what Jesus Son of God has done? I have a Faith that God will save all and that God alone can judge us. [Whether they accept Jesus as the Son of God and part of the Holy Trinity or not if they believe in God then they must have the ability to see and be with God in the next life?](#) The entrance to Gods Kingdom is through Jesus irrespective of which path we have taken we will all be lead to the same door. The door is not determined by us but it is determined by God and therefore we must believe that he will welcome all. Is the door Jesus and in death he brings us all back to life irrespective of the path we have taken?

In my search for answers I asked a Friend of mine to look at this and comment. His response is set out below

Thanks Fred, I think you've come to realise as I so often have done: that matters around Jesus Christ are far deeper than perhaps we first envisage! You make some good points, especially that many Jews and Muslims have a high regard for Jesus and there is a huge amount of evidence to demonstrate that He once lived - more so than most well-known Greeks and Romans of the first century and before!

You have a good point too concerning the exclusive claims of some Christians. The stage I'm at is to see that Jesus is the BEST way to come to the Father God and this is what Cornelius in Acts 10 had to get to the point of acceptance

before the Holy Spirit came upon him. The principle running through the Old Testament and New is that no human being is good enough to enter the Kingdom of God unaided. When we recognise this brokenness inside us and the impossibility of living a sin-free life, we come to Jesus and find in Him our salvation and in the Holy Spirit our help and protector. There are many good people in the world who do not believe in Jesus, but that does not mean they can enter the Kingdom without the salvific work of Jesus. I think Jesus comes to people in many different forms, so I would strongly reject the presumption that only Christians reach eternity. The Bible is clear that there will be plenty of surprises! However, I do reject the idea that everyone gets to Heaven: the thing that so many people say at funerals: "He was a good man or she was a good woman" as if that by itself is enough. My motto is "If you are in deep waters, then start swimming": for you that means to continue the exploration!

God bless, David

I would be interested to know what you the reader feels about the questions posed.