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The Mustard Seed Story

A BC to AD Course
By Timothy Ministries

Glossary

Age of the Spirit, The

This is one way to designate the intervening age overlooked by many in the first century who anticipated an imminent Age of Messiah. The Age of the Spirit was predicted by the prophet Joel, and is equivalent to Joel's "last days" (see Acts 2.17). It is commonly but less accurately called "the Church Age."

Alchemist

A quasi-scientist of the middle ages whose highest goal was to discover the **philosopher's stone** (which see below).

Anabaptist

A branch of Christians of the reformation period who practiced only the "baptism of believers," even if it involved a "second baptism" (hence the name Anabaptists, meaning "re-baptizers") subsequent to infant baptism.

Anathema, Anathematize

Anathema is a Grk noun that has come to mean a curse, or something to be loathed, denounced and banned, an abomination. Anathema also takes on a verbal or adjectival sense to mean accursed. The verb, anathematize, means to pronounce an anathema upon something, i.e., to curse or execrate something or someone.

Antinomianism

The belief that there are no laws ultimately binding upon individual behavior. Some Gnostic sects were antinomian and engaged in sexual immorality as permissible in their religion.

Antipope

A person claiming to be or elected pope in opposition to the one chosen by church law, as during a schism.

Apocalypse

Lit. an unveiling, that is, a revealing of a person or thing in its true character. Synonymous to revelation, and an alternate title for the book of Revelation. Because of its association with the "end of the world," apocalypse is sometimes used to denote a radical destruction or purge.

Arianism

The doctrines of Arius, denying that Jesus was of the same substance as God and holding instead that he was only the highest of created beings.

Arminianism

Of or relating to the theology of Jacobus Arminius and his followers, who believed that predestination was conditioned by God's foreknowledge of human free choices.

Ascetic

A person who renounces material comforts and leads a life of austere self-discipline, especially as an act of religious devotion.

Asceticism

A life-style of austerity for the sake of religious devotion. Cf. Monasticism.

Auto-da-fé

The public pronouncement of sentence or burning at the stake of a heretic condemned by the Inquisition.

Baptism

Generally in the NT a ritual immersion performed as testimony to repentance. NT baptismal practice emerged naturally from Jewish customs of ritual immersion to signify a spiritual or ceremonial change of status. Christian baptism adds commitment to "Jesus as Lord" to the other meanings inherent in previous Jewish immersions.

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Basilica

A type of building used extensively in the Roman empire, for religious and state purposes. When Christianity became legal in the empire, church buildings followed the basilica floor plan which encouraged a hierarchical form of worship.

Bull

An official document issued by the pope and sealed with a bulla.

Calvinism

Calvinism refers to the religious influence of Calvin whose doctrines emphasized the sovereignty of God and His irresistible grace.

Canon

An ecclesiastical law or code of laws established by a church council. Also, an official list of the books accepted as Holy Scripture.

Catacombs

Underground corridors stretching for miles under the city of Rome. The catacombs may have been created when the marble was first quarried to build the city. In the early Christian centuries, the underground labyrinths served as places for secret worship by persecuted Christians. The catacombs are an important archaeological source for early Christian customs.

Catholic

Universally accepted.

Cessationist

In theology, a cessationist is one who believes that all, or some combination of, miracles and spiritual gifts ceased with the death of the apostles or shortly thereafter.

Covenant Theology

See *Federalism, Federal Theology*.

Chalice

A cup for the consecrated wine of the Eucharist.

Chivalry

The medieval system of knightly conduct. A Christianized, military code of life. See page E-55.

Christian

A name, first extensively adopted by the surrounding populace in Antioch (Acts 11.26), for followers of *The Way*, i.e., believers in Jesus as the Christ (Messiah). The term was subsequently adopted by Christ-followers as a self-designation. Today it designates anyone willing to identify themselves as a believer in Jesus Christ, irrespective of their religious practice and experience.

Church

The meaning of the word *Church* has now been shaped by 2,000 years of use and abuse. In the NT, it translates the word *Ekklesia*, a term for the redeemed body of Christ. Now to many it simply designates a building or the weekly ritual that occurs in the sacred building. In *The Mustard Seed Story* I will sometimes use the term to designate the *Ekklesia*, but will use it more generally to designate the visible body and organization of *Christians* in history. As such, *Church* will sometimes designate the whole of those individuals and organizations who identify themselves as Christians whether or not they are true followers of *The Way*.

Confession

In a different category from the confession



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of sin, there was in earliest Christianity the “good confession” of Jesus’ lordship (Rom 10.9). Jesus in effect made this “good confession” before Pontius Pilate when he answered the question, “Are you the king of the Jews?” (Mat 27.11), and Paul commended Timothy for making the “good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (1Ti 6.12-13). The NT reveals no set occasion for making this kind of confession, though the time of public baptism would constitute a natural opportunity. While a baptizee may have verbalized his or her confession at the time of the ordinance, the baptism itself was a public declaration of one’s belief in the lordship of Jesus. Confession of Christ would have continued as a part of the Christian’s lifestyle of witness, but soon became particularly associated with martyrdom. In view of their confessions, both verbal and in the act of laying down their lives, the early martyrs became known as “confessors.”

Jews, while never developing creeds as the Church did, also died with a confession on their lips when martyred. Judaism had the brief confessions of Deu 26.5-9; 6.20-25, but particularly made use of the Shema of Deu 6.4-5.

Constantine

Flavius Valerius Constantinus, known as Constantine the Great. The first Roman emperor to profess Christianity. Constantine brought an end to the persecution of Christians in the empire, but by his policies launched a synthesis of Christianity with paganism and of church with state.

Consubstantiation

A Eucharistic doctrine that holds that the substance of Christ’s body and blood is conjoined with the substance of the bread and wine in the Eucharist.

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Cosmogony

A theory or model of the origin and development of the earth and the physical universe.

Creed

From Latin *credo* (I believe, as in John 9.38). The noun *creed* does not appear in the Bible, nor does the Bible contain any real creeds as such. Rather, in response to the rise of heresies, the simple confessions and summarized teachings of the early Christians evolved into creeds which were “concise, formal, and authorized” statements of Christian doctrine. Today “creed” has become synonymous with denominational “statements of faith” which are generally presented as a series of doctrinal propositions arranged topically and with supporting Scripture citations.

As a generally non-proselytizing religion after AD 135, Judaism did not develop creeds, but see under Confessions.

Crusades, The

Military campaigns by European knights attempting to wrest the Holy Land from Muslim occupiers.

Deism

An emasculated form of Christianity of English origin and popular at the time of America’s founding. Deism proposed a Creator who expects us to live morally but does not involve Himself in human affairs.

Dark Ages, The

A period of social decline in European history, roughly from the time of the collapse of the Roman Empire until the beginning of the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation (circa AD 450 - 1450). Loosely synonymous with *The Middle Ages*.

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Decretal

A decree, especially a papal letter giving a decision on a point or question of canon law.

Diet

A formal general assembly of the princes or estates of the Holy Roman Empire.

Diocese

The district or churches under the jurisdiction of a bishop; a bishopric.

Ecclesiastical

Pertaining to the church or church government.

Ekklesia (in English, Ecclesia)

The Greek word translated in the Bible as *assembly, congregation* or *church*. In *The Mustard Seed Story*, I use this term to designate what Paul called the body of Christ (Eph 1.22-23), namely, the body of all true believers, reconciled to God through the redemption in Christ's blood (Acts 20.28). Contrary to **Dispensational** theories, the **Ekklesia** began in Eden with the redemption of Adam and Eve. Cf. **Church**.

Eschatology, Eschatological

The Grk word *eschaton* means last. Eschatology, therefore, is properly the study of "last things," referring to what the Bible reveals about the end of this age, i.e., the climax of history when Christ returns and restores all things (Act 3.21). The adjective, eschatological, describes something as having to do with events that will occur in and around the time of Christ's return. Eschatological events include the resurrection, judgment, restoration, etc.

Ex Cathedra

The Latin word *cathedra* refers to the throne-

like seat of a bishop. *Ex cathedra*, meaning, "from the chair," refers to pronouncements by the Pope considered infallible.

Evangelical, Evangelicalism

I use the term *Evangelicalism* to designate the transdenominational and multiethnic non-Roman Catholic movement that emphasizes the divine authority of Scripture, proclamation of the gospel and the need of all to experience personal salvation through new birth and faith in Christ. An Evangelical is an adherent to this movement. While historic Protestant denominations would once have been part of Evangelicalism as I've defined it, some Protestant churches have become non-Evangelical in practice as they have adopted a more liberal and critical view of the Bible's inspiration. Evangelicalism has also been inclined historically to exclude non-Reformed or non-Calvinistic adherents from its associations, but has not succeeded in doing so in the unbridled theological milieu of the last century. In recent times, attempts have been made to narrow the definition of the term *Evangelical* by insisting that Evangelicals must believe in certain specific dogmas like the imputation of "the righteousness of Christ."

Fall of Rome, The

The dissolution of the Roman Empire that began with the sack of Rome by Alaric the Goth in AD 410.

Fathers (Early Church Fathers)

In theological discussion, "the Fathers" or "early Church Fathers" refers to those non-canonical Christian writers who were esteemed as witnesses, teachers and apologists in the early centuries of Christianity. Though the Fathers can be sorted into different categories according to their geographical area of influence, or language of writing,



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or particular theological burdens, they are most often categorized chronologically as the Apostolic, Ante-Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. The combined time periods of these Fathers stretches from about AD 100 to about AD 600.

Federal

In theology, and especially in what is known as Federal Theology, this adjective refers to the covenantal aspect of something. When theologians speak of Christ as our “federal head,” they refer to Him as our covenantal representative, i.e., our legal “point man,” in all mediation before God’s throne.

Federalism, Federal Theology

Also called covenant theology, federalism is a theological system that emerged in large part from the work of Johannes Cocceius, although John Calvin, J. H. Bullinger (1504-1575), Caspar Olevianus (1536-1587), and others are thought of as Reformation-era forerunners of the theology. Federalism teaches that God entered into a covenant (Latin *foedus*) with Adam, and made Adam the covenantal representative (federal head) of all his posterity. Therefore, when Adam sinned, God held both him and those he represented as guilty. According to this system, the solution for humanity is to attach themselves to a new federal head, i.e., Jesus Christ “the second Adam,” by faith. The Westminster Confession (completed in 1646) codified principles of federalism which then gained important standing in the theology of Scotland and New England.

Feudalism

A social system based on the ownership of land. See page E-54.

Forensic

This adjective describes something as having to do with discussion, debate or declaration in a public forum. A verdict or other declaration in a courtroom would therefore be a forensic pronouncement, and such a courtroom pronouncement relates closely to our use of the word forensic in theology. In theological discussion, forensic means that the thing in view has to do with a judicial declaration.

Gnosticism

A mystical religion that developed contemporaneously with early Christianity and rabbinical Judaism. The hybrid, Christian Gnosticism, took various forms. Some Gnostic groups were ascetic and some antinomian, but all taught salvation by knowledge of the divinity within us.

Gyrovague

A medieval monk who wandered about, taking advantage of people’s generosity toward religious men. When a community would weary of such a monk’s lack of productivity, the gyrovague would simply journey to the next community. By extension, gyrovague becomes a metaphor for a religious person without accountability.

Hajj

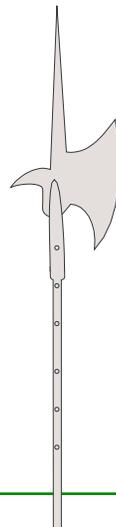
The pilgrimage to Mecca incumbent upon all Muslims.

Halberd

An axe-like weapon mounted on a pike.

Hebraic

This adjective describes something as having to do with the culture and worldview of the Jewish people. The culture of Jesus and the apostles was Hebraic, and thus also is the cultural background of the New Testament.



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Houris

Gorgeous nymphs promised to Muslim men upon their arrival in Paradise.

Icon

Historically, an image or pictorial representation of a Christian saint.

Impute, Imputation

To impute simply means to credit something to someone. What is credited can be something already possessed. E.g., a professor might say to a student, “You have an A on your final, so I’m crediting (imputing) that to you in my grade book.” In this kind of usage, imputation is simply a recognition or acknowledgement of what someone already has. However, what is credited in imputation can also be something not antecedently possessed. E.g., a relative running the Ferris Wheel at the carnival might say to his two cousins, “I’m crediting you with two tickets (I’m imputing two tickets to you); go ahead and climb on the ride.” In this usage, imputation means that someone is being credited with what they don’t really have; a person in authority is acting as though they do have it, possibly at a cost to himself.

Indulgence

A form of credit purported to pay for sins and enable a sinner to escape punishments in purgatory.

Inquisition

A religious court that tried people for heresy.

Islam

The Arabic word meaning submission, and the name of the religion founded by Muhammad.

Iustitia

The Latin word in romans 1.17; 3.21,22, translated righteousness in our English versions (dī-kĕ-ō-'sē-nē in Greek). Luther agonized over this term, thinking it meant punitive justice.

Jihad

The Islamic principle of Holy War. The word means struggle and can refer to an inward moral struggle, but historically has always been expressed in armed conflict against the perceived enemies of Muslims.

Merit

The Bible never speaks in terms of “merit.” (The NASB only uses the word merit one time to translate *righteousness* in Dan 9.18.) Theologically, the word merit refers to a quality or virtue in man that obligates God to bless the creature who possesses it. At the close of the **Middle Ages**, the Reformers vigorously denounced the theology of merit while the Roman Catholic scholars continued to refine their doctrine of merit as the foundation for their dogmas of penance and purgatory, the doctrines that in turn provided the basis for the lucrative sale of indulgences. Ironically, while the **Reformers** renounced the idea that man can have or accrue merit by his own effort, they unconsciously retained the medieval ideas that justification is by merit, and that merit is transferable (as in the Roman Catholic idea of vicarious penance and in the sale of *indulgences*).

Middle Ages, The

See **Dark Ages, The**.

Monasticism

A way of life involving some combination of celibacy, communal living and worship, pov-



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erty, silence and contemplation. Engaged in particularly by members of the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions, monasticism has too often been seen as a way of escape from the world and its corrupting influences.

Moravians

The Protestant reform movement in Bohemia and Moravia that, by its evangelistic efforts, began the era of modern missions in the 1700's.

Muhammad

The prophet and founder of Islam, who recited the lines ultimately collated into the Qur'an.

Muslim

An adherent of the religion of Islam.

Mystery Religions

Syncretistic cults of the Hellenistic period that proliferated in the Mediterranean world thanks to the influx of Eastern religious elements in the wake of Alexander the Great's opening of international borders. These cults offered a better afterlife to initiates who earned access to the secret doctrines of the cult. Among the most important mystery religions were those of Dionysus (Bacchus), Isis, Serapis, Cybele and Mithras.

Neoplatonism

Building on the foundation of Platonism this later system of philosophy taught that everything emanates from the transcendent One and is destined to return to the One through a process of purification. The emphasis on ascetic practices in the Medieval Church can be traced to the influence of Neoplatonism. Cf. *Platonism*.

Orante

An early Christian symbol of filial piety.

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Orthodox

Adhering to the accepted or traditional and established faith, especially in religion.

Paradigm

An example that serves as a pattern (or standard model) for doing something.

Paten

A plate, usually of gold or silver, that is used to hold the host during the celebration of the Eucharist.

Pelagianism

The teaching, attributed to the British monk Pelagius (c. 354-415), that the human volition survived the fall (of man into sin) and that it is therefore possible for humans to merit salvation by their own effort without the need of divine grace. In his writings, Augustine vigorously opposed the teachings of Pelagius.

Philosopher's Stone

The substance sought by medieval alchemists, and believed to have the power of converting baser metals to gold.

Pilgrimage

A journey to a shrine or holy place in the hopes of receiving some blessing.

Platonism

The philosophy derived from Plato (and Socrates) emphasizing that the things of our experience are imperfect copies of transcendent ideas or "forms." These forms can only be truly contemplated after the soul is released from the body in death. Platonism had a profound impact upon Catholic Christianity. Cf. *Neoplatonism*.

Pornocracy

A period in the 10th century when the papacy was marked by extreme immorality.

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Priesthood of the Believer

The Reformation principle that every believer has direct access to God through Jesus Christ, and does not need to have his or her salvation mediated by another ecclesiastical authority.

Protestant

Pertaining to the Western Christian church whose faith and practice are founded on the principles of the Protestant Reformation, especially in the acceptance of the Bible as the sole source of doctrinal authority, in justification by faith alone, and in the universal priesthood of all the believers.

Purgatory

A place of torment, believed in by Roman Catholics and others, where people are purged of the guilt of their sins after death, before proceeding to heaven.

Reformation, Reformers

The Reformation was the massive break from Roman Catholicism in the 16th century by individuals and groups who had hoped to improve the Catholic church from within, but who were forced to form other fellowships, which became the Lutheran, Presbyterian, etc.. In retrospect, we refer to those intrepid challengers of the religious status quo as Reformers.

Reformed Theology, Reformed Tradition

Historical and current Reformed theology derived primarily from the teachings of John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli, and is related to but distinct from Lutheran theology. Reformed theology itself divides into distinct streams of religious tradition (e.g., into

Dutch Reformed or Scottish Presbyterian churches), but all share a high view of God's sovereignty and prioritize the glory of God in their theological reflection. In addition, A. T. B. McGowan tells us that "any understanding of justification that fails to maintain a forensic notion of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ cannot claim to be Reformed."

Relic

An object of religious veneration, especially a piece of the body or a personal item of a saint, reputed to have miraculous virtue.

Reliquary

A special place, usually in or near a church altar, for storing a relic.

Replacement Theology

A theology teaching that the Church (spiritual Israel) has replaced national Israel and has inherited *all* of God's promises (even if they must be spiritualized), and inferring that God is through with Israel as a nation.

Righteousness Of Christ

This phrase does not appear in Scripture (though see 2Pe 1.1). Nevertheless, Reformers and present Evangelicals use the phrase "righteousness of Christ" to refer to the cumulative total of all Christ's righteous deeds which He accomplished during His earthly life. In Evangelical teaching, God imputes the righteousness of Christ to us, which means that God chooses to think of us as having done all that Christ did, i.e., as having lived an ethically perfect life (though we haven't).

Romanization

This verb refers to the making of something Roman or Roman Catholic in character. The



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Romanization of the Church accelerated after the second Jewish-Roman war of AD 135, as Christianity became almost completely separated from its Jewish roots. It is important to realize that, since Roman culture was greatly influenced by the Greek, Romanization involves injecting a great deal of Greek perspective into the individual, institution or idea being *Romanized*.

Sacrament, Sacramentalism

Generally a sacrament is simply a sacred practice of the Church, like baptism. Historically, however, various religious streams have imbued sacraments with mystical power such that a person is believed not to be fully saved or sanctified without participation in the sacraments. Sacramentalism is a sometimes pejorative term referring to those churches or religious organizations that make the sacraments the all important essence of Christianity or the requisite means of salvation. In an attempt to move away from sacramentalism, some Christian denominations reduce the sacred practices of the Church to two, baptism and the Lord's supper (communion), and prefer to call these two rites ordinances.

Scala Sancta

Latin for Holy Staircase. Stairs in the Vatican reputed to have once been part of Pontius Pilate's palace, and therefore sacred since Jesus would have walked upon them.

Scholasticism

The medieval synthesis of Greek philosophy with the teachings of the Bible and of the church fathers.

Scourge of God, The

A title given to Attila the Hun, meaning that God had raised him up to chasten compromised Christendom.

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Schism

A division over secondary issues within a group holding major beliefs in common.

Scholastics, Scholasticism

Scholasticism is (very generally speaking) the theology and philosophy, and the method of philosophical and theological reflection, of the medieval schools that flourished from the 11th to the 14th centuries. Scholastics were the teachers and practitioners of Scholasticism, of whom Anselm of Canterbury was the first and Thomas Aquinas the greatest.

See

The official seat, center of authority, jurisdiction, or office of a bishop.

Simony

The sale of profitable religious offices or jurisdictions.

Socinians

Socinians, named after Lelio Sozzini (1525-1562), were anti-Trinitarian forerunners of modern Unitarians.

Sola Fide

Latin for only faith. The Reformation principle that justification is only by faith, not by man's meritorious works or observances.

Sola Gratia

Latin for only grace. The Reformation principle that salvation is only by God's grace, and cannot be purchased by money nor meritorious works and observances.

Sola Scriptura

Latin for "only Scripture." The Reformation principle that the canonical Scriptures alone are the supreme earthly authority for Christian faith and practice, standing above the authority of the papacy and church tradition.

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Summum Bonum

A latin phrase meaning “Supreme Good.” It refers to that which is of ultimate value, and from which all other good flows.

Supersessionism

A pejorative term describing the belief that NT Christianity is the fulfillment of and supersedes Judaism. While Christ does fulfill much in both law and prophecy, supersessionists tend to define NT Christianity by their own traditions and often embrace a **Replacement Theology**.

Synod

A council or an assembly of church officials or churches; an ecclesiastical council.

Theocracy

A form of government in which God is the avowed ruler.

The Way

A phrase found in the DSS designating something like “the way of righteousness” (1QS 9.18-21; cf. Pro 8.20; 12.28; Mat 21.32; 2Pe 2.21). The Apostolic writers speak of “the way of God,” “the way of the Lord,” and “the way of truth” (Acts 18.25-26; 2Pe 2.2) to designate the proper doctrine and practice for Christ-followers, as contrasted, for example, with “the way of Balaam” (2Pe 2.15). In their cultural milieu, it became natural for followers of Jesus to designate themselves as belonging to the Way (Acts 9.2; especially since Jesus had called Himself the Way, John 14.6), and to refer to their faith and practice as the Way [of righteousness? of truth?] (Acts 19.9,23). Indeed, it seems that followers of Jesus were called followers of the Way before they were called **Christians**.

Transubstantiation

A doctrine holding that the bread and wine become the actual Body and Blood of Christ, except for the surface appearance.

Tridentine

Of or relating to an ecumenical council held by the Roman Catholic Church in Trent, Italy, from 1545 to 1563.

Vulgate

Short for vulgata editio/versio (common edition or version), the Vulgate was the Latin translation of the Bible completed by Jerome (c. AD 347-420) which became the official Bible for the Roman Catholic Church. The Vulgate remained the official Roman-rite Bible for the Catholic Church, going through various editions, until it was replaced by the Nova Vulgata in 1979.

Westminster Confession and Catechisms

The Westminster Confession is an extensive Reformed doctrinal statement completed in England in 1646. It was intended for the Church of England, but was adopted primarily by British and American Presbyterian denominations. The (Larger and Shorter) Westminster Catechisms arrange the theological propositions of the Confession into question-and-answer format for doctrinal teaching.