

Christian Mission: Inherently Imperialistic? Authentically Jewish? Am I Called to Do It?



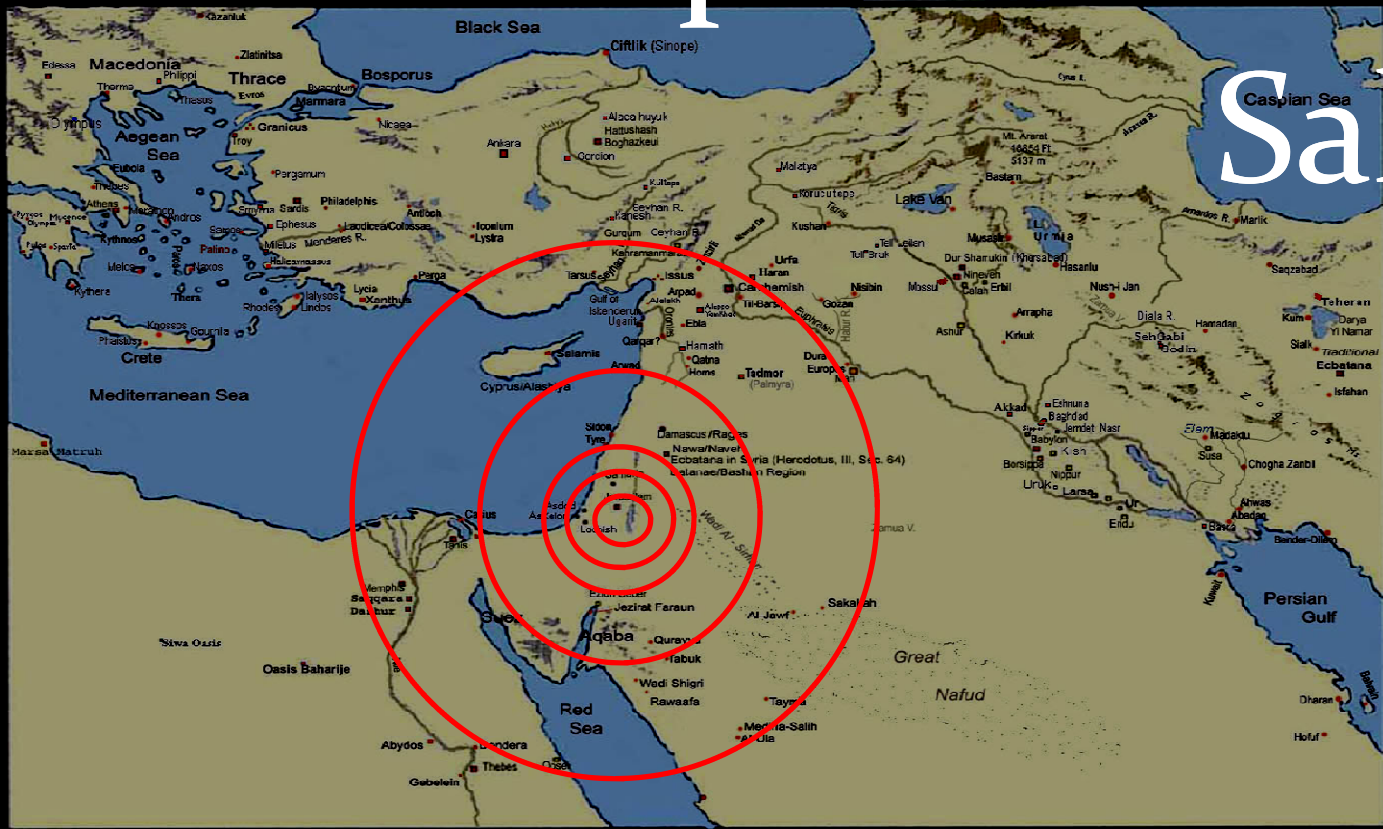
Isaiah 2:1 – 4



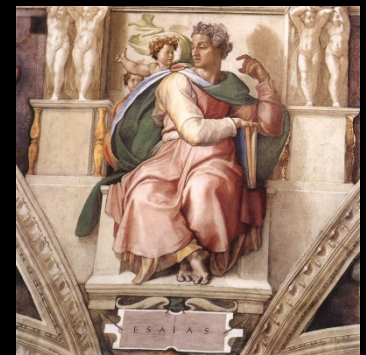
Christian Mission: Questions

1. Inherently Imperialistic?
2. Authentically Jewish?
3. Am I Called to Do It?

The King of Zion & the Epicenter of God's Salvation



The Prophecy of Isaiah



Isaiah 1:22 – 23

^{1:22} How the faithful city has become a harlot,
She who was full of justice!
Righteousness once lodged in her,
But now murderers.

²² Your silver has become dross,
Your drink diluted with water.

²³ Your rulers are rebels
And companions of thieves;
Everyone loves a bribe
And chases after rewards.
They do not defend the orphan,
Nor does the widow's plea come before them.

Isaiah 2:1 – 2d

^{2:1} The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

^{2a} Now it will come about that in the last days

^{2b} The mountain of the house of the LORD

^{2c} Will be established as the chief of the mountains,

^{2d} And will be raised above the hills;



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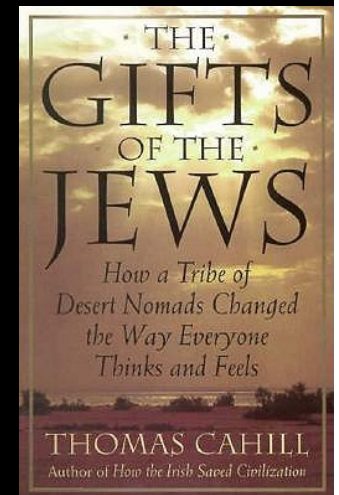
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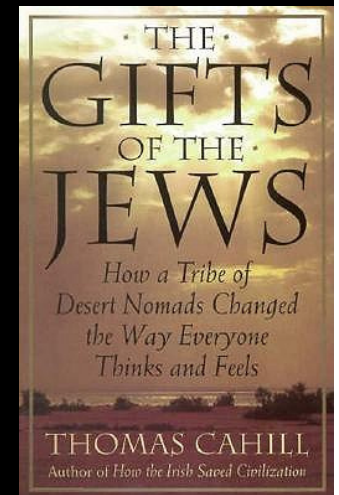
Good God, Happy Ending Story

‘We can read the Bible (as do postmodernists) as a jumble of unrelated texts, given a false and superficial unity by redactors of the exilic period and later. But this is to ignore not only the powerful emotional and spiritual effect that much of the Bible has on readers, even on readers who would rather not be so moved, but also its cumulative impact on whole societies. The Bible’s great moments – the thunderous ‘lekh-lekha’ spoken to Avram, the secret Name of God revealed to cowering Moshe, Miryam’s song on the far shore, God’s Ten Words, David’s Good Shepherd, Isaiah’s Holy Mountain – are hard to brush aside as merely human expressions with no relationship to the deepest meanings of our own individual lives.



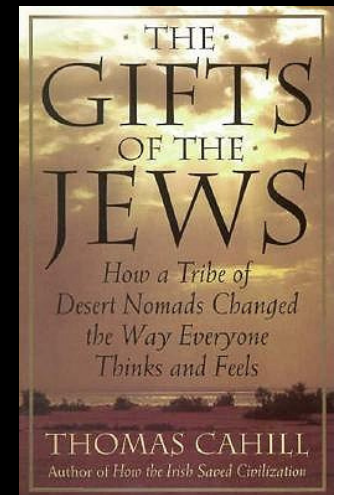
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‘Nor can we imagine the great liberation movements of modern history without reference to the Bible. Without the Bible we would never have known the abolitionist movement, the prison-reform movement, the antiwar movement, the labor movement, the civil rights movement, the movements of indigenous and dispossessed peoples for their human rights, the antiapartheid movement in South Africa, the Solidarity movement in Poland, the free-speech and pro-democracy movements in such Far Eastern countries as South Korea, the Philippines, and even China.



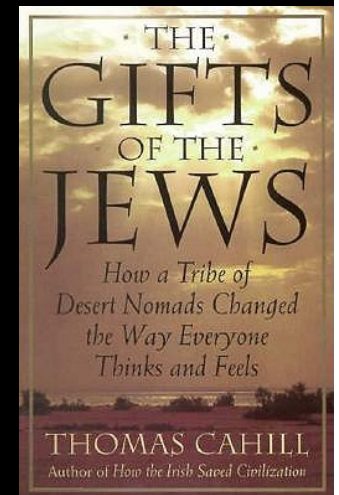
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‘These movements of modern times have all employed the language of the Bible; and it is even impossible to understand their great heroes and heroines – people like Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Mother Jones, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez, Helder Camara, Oscar Romero, Rigoberto Menchu, Corazon Aquino, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Charity Kaluki Ngilu, Harry Wu – without recourse to the Bible.



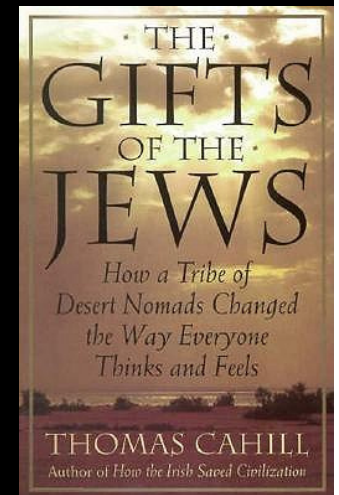
Good God, Happy Ending Story

‘Beyond these movements...are other forces that have shaped our world, such as capitalism, communism, and democracy. Capitalism and communism are both bastard children of the Bible, for both are processive faiths, modeled on biblical faith and demanding of their adherents that they always hold in their hearts a belief in the future and keep before their eyes the vision of a better tomorrow, whether that tomorrow contains a larger gross domestic product or a workers’ paradise. Neither ideology could have risen in the cyclical East, in Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, or Shinto.



Good God, Happy Ending Story

‘But because capitalism and communism are processive faiths without God, each is a form of madness – a fantasy without a guarantee. Democracy, in contrast, grows directly out of the Israelite vision of individuals, subjects of value because they are images of God, each with a unique and personal destiny. There is no way that it could have ever been ‘self-evident that all men are created equal’ without the intervention of the Jews.’ (Thomas Cahill, *The Gifts of the Jews*, p.256 – 7)

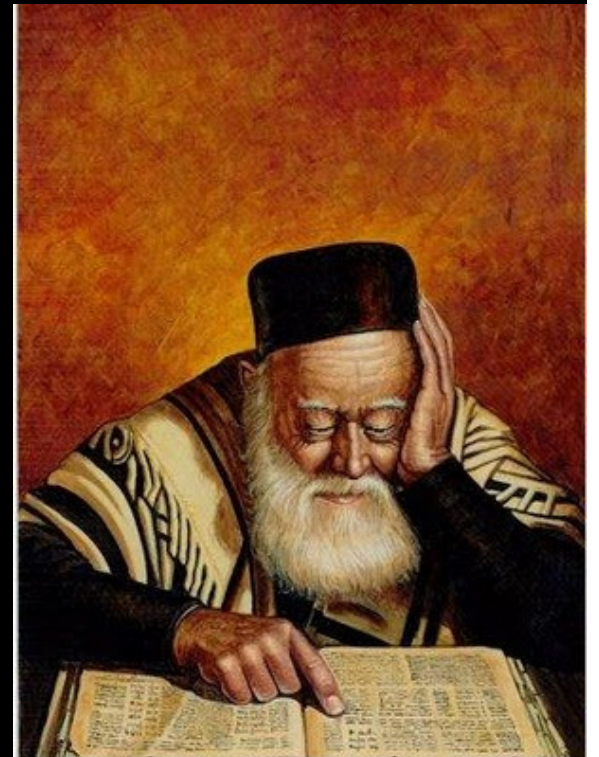


“Ask the Rabbi”

Dear Rabbi,

With the Pope visiting Israel and all the fanfare, it brings to mind a question I've often pondered: Why did Hashem allow Christianity to become such a major religion?

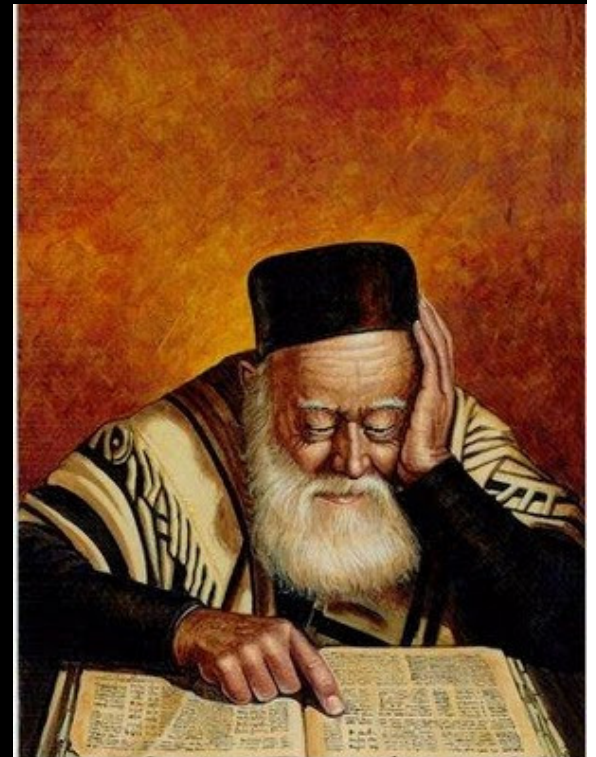
Sincerely,
Karen



“Ask the Rabbi”

Dear Karen,

Jewish ideas such as “brotherhood of humanity,” “love your neighbor,” and “age of peace” are taken for granted today by much of mankind. But when Judaism first introduced these ideas to the world, they were revolutionary. These Jewish concepts have been spread largely by Christianity (and by Islam). Christianity came to a world in which people were slaughtering to Zeus, Apollo, and a host of other idols, and taught some basic ideas of Judaism, albeit in a distorted form.



Isaiah 2:2e – 3e

^{2e} And all the nations will stream to it.

^{3a} And many peoples will come and say,

^{3b} ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,

^{3c} To the house of the God of Jacob;

^{3d} That He may teach us concerning His ways

^{3e} And that we may walk in His paths.’



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Isaiah 2:3f – 4f

^{3f} For the law will go forth from Zion

^{3g} And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

^{4a} And He will judge between the nations,

^{4b} And will render decisions for many peoples;

^{4c} And they will hammer their swords into plowshares

^{4d} And their spears into pruning hooks.

^{4e} Nation will not lift up sword against nation,

^{4f} And never again will they learn war.



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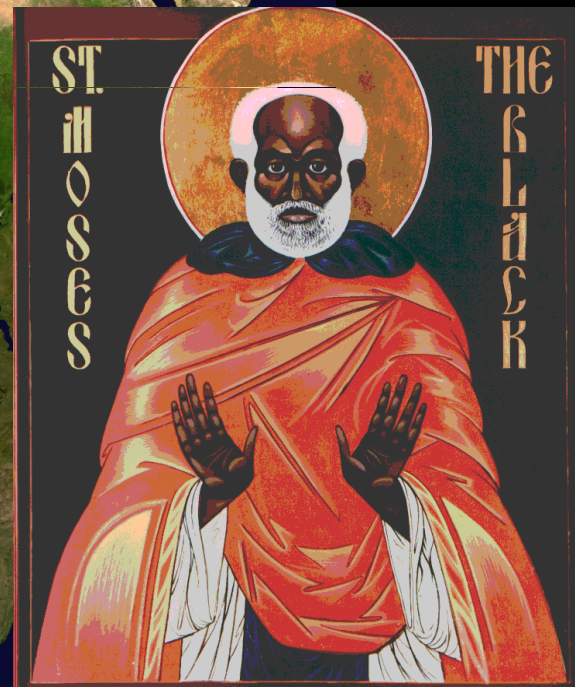
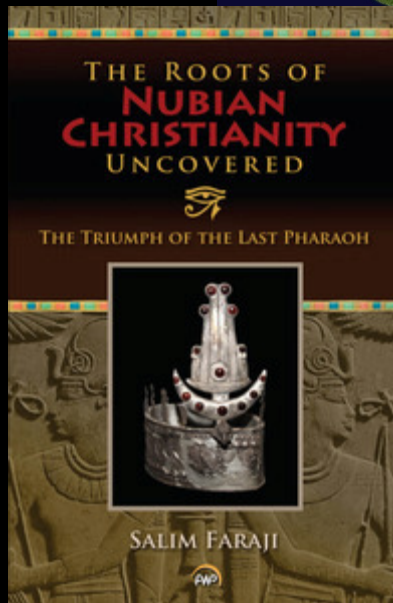
4^f And never again will they learn war.



To the East



To the South



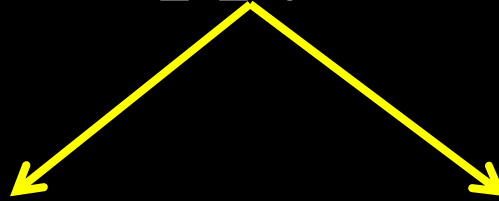
To the North



To the West



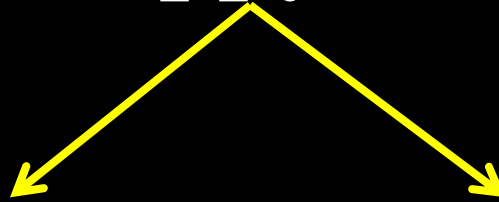
The 1st Question in Life: Good God & Happy Ending, or Not?



No Happy Ending

Happy Ending

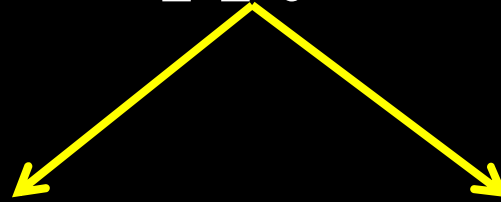
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No Happy Ending
Good = Evil

Happy Ending
Good > Evil

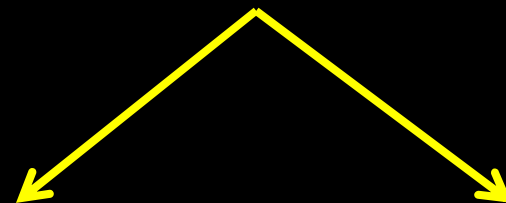
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The 2nd Question in Life: Is the Villain Internal or External?

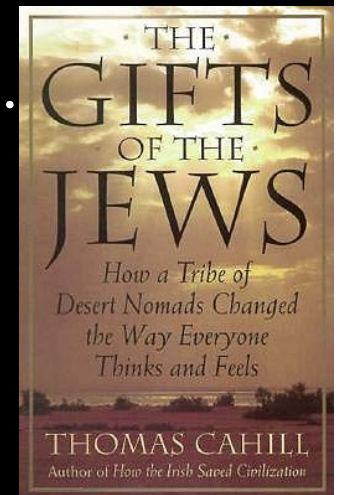


Internal

External

Good God, Happy Ending Story

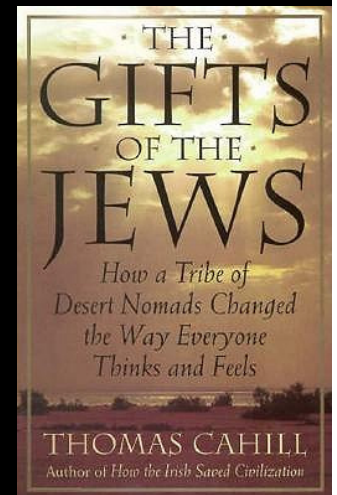
‘In a cyclical world, there are neither beginnings nor ends. But for us, time had a beginning, whether it was the first words of God in the Book of Genesis, when ‘in the beginning God created heaven and earth,’ or the Big Bang of modern science, a concept that would not have been possible without the Jews. Time, which had a beginning, must also have an end. What will it be? In the Torah we learn that God is working his purposes in history and will effect its end, but in the Prophets we learn that our choices will also affect this end, that our inner disposition toward our fellow human beings will make an enormous difference in the way this end appears to us.



Good God, Happy Ending Story

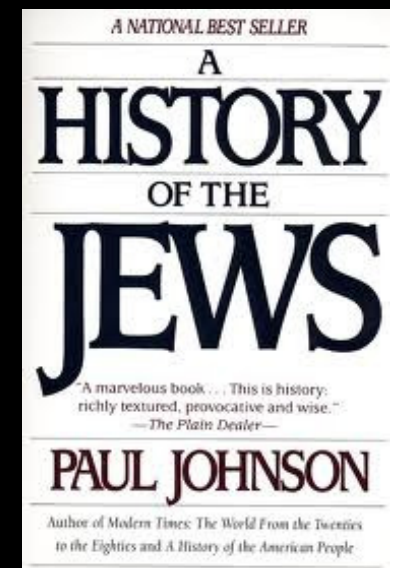
‘Unbelievers may wish to stop for a moment and consider how completely God – this Jewish God of justice and compassion – undergirds all our values and that it is just possible that human effort without this God is doomed to certain failure. Humanity’s most extravagant dreams are articulated by the Jewish prophets. In Isaiah’s vision, true faith is no longer confined to one nation, but ‘all the nations’ stream to the House of YHWH ‘that he may teach us his ways’ and that we may learn to ‘beat [our] swords into plowshares.’ All who share this outrageous dream of universal brotherhood, peace, and justice, who dream the dreams and see the visions of the great prophets, must bring themselves to contemplate the possibility that without God there is no justice.’

(Thomas Cahill, *The Gifts of the Jews*, p.265 – 6)



Good God, Happy Ending Story

‘All the great conceptual discoveries of the intellect seem obvious and inescapable once they have been revealed, but it requires a special genius to formulate them for the first time. The Jews had this gift. To them we owe the idea of equality before the law, both divine and human; of the sanctity of life and the dignity of the human person; of the individual conscience and so of social responsibility; of peace as an abstract ideal and love as the foundation of justice, and many other items which constitute the basic moral furniture of the human mind. Without the Jews it might have been a much emptier place.’ (Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, p.585)



Christian Mission: Questions

1. Inherently Imperialistic? No.
2. Authentically Jewish? Yes.
3. Am I Called to Do It? Yes!