

Historical Evidence of the Early Christian Church's Very First Split

Following is taken from: "Proceedings of The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities". Copyright 1968. Volume Two. AS 591 I812. v.2. Article by S. Pines, "The Jewish Christians of the Early Centuries of Christianity According to a New Source", pages 237 - 310. [**Quoting Hereafter . . .**]

"The Subject of this lecture is an Arabic manuscript text which is not what it purports to be. Ostensibly, it is a chapter of Moslem anti-Christian polemics which forms a part of a lengthy work first described by Ritter. This work is entitled 'The Establishment of Proofs for the Prophethood of Our Master Mohammed' [footnote specifies written near 995/6 AD] and was written by the well-known tenth century Mu'tazilite author 'Abd al-Jabbar. However, in reality, this Moslem theologian adapted for his own purposes - inserting numerous interpolations - writings reflecting the views and traditions of a Jewish Christian community, of which more hereafter." (Page 237).

"The first section is here translated in full:

(71a) 'After him [footnote 39: that is Christ] his disciples were with the Jews and the Children of Israel in the latter's synagogues and observed the prayers and the feasts of (the Jews) in the same place as the latter [*this places the story prior to 90 through 99 AD, which is before the Jews added the anti-Christian blessing to the "Blessings of Ezra", which was recited every Sabbath to force the Christians to leave the synagogues*]. (However) there was a disagreement between them and the Jews with regard to Christ.

The Romans reigned over them. The Christians (used to) complain to the Romans about the Jews, showed them their own weakness [footnote 41: weakness of the Christians] and appealed to their pity. And the Romans did pity them. This (used) to happen frequently. And the Romans said to the Christians: "Between us and the Jews there is a pact which (obliges us) not to change their religious laws [*Roman law allowed "Legal Religions" to exist in the empire. The Jewish religion was recognized as a legal religion. As long as a man belonged to a legal religion, he was left alone. If a man was cast out of his legal religion, he must either convert to worship one of the Roman gods, or be condemned to slavery, or death. To be a Christian was eventually considered a capital offense, and many Christians were killed for sport in the arenas*]. **But if you would abandon their laws and separate yourselves from them, praying as we do (while facing) the East, eating (the things) we eat, and regarding as permissible that which we consider as such**, we should help you and make you powerful [*the Romans would then recognize them as a legal religion*], and the Jews would find no way (to harm you). On the contrary, you would be more powerful than they."

The Christians answered: "We will do this." (And the Romans) said: "Go, fetch your companions, and bring your Book [*most probably the Hebrew-Text version of Matthew*]." (The Christians) went to their companions, informed them of (what had taken place) between them and the Romans and said to them: "Bring the Gospel, and stand up so that we should go to them." But these (companions) said to them: "**You have done ill. We are not permitted (to let) the Romans pollute the Gospel.** (71b) In giving a favorable answer to the Romans, **you have accordingly departed from the religion**. We are (therefore) no longer permitted to associate with you; on the contrary, we are obliged [*in their Honor /*

Shame society, their own self integrity obligated them to publicly denounce anyone that departed from the group's leadership, beliefs, or conduct, thus, they were obligated to separate themselves from them] to declare that there is nothing in common between us and you;" and they prevented their (taking possession of) the Gospel or gaining access to it. **In consequence a violent quarrel (broke out) between (the two groups)**. Those (mentioned in the first place) went back to the Romans and said to them: "Help us against these companions of ours before (helping us) against the Jews, and take away from them on our behalf our Book." Thereupon (the companions of whom they had spoken) fled the country. And the Romans wrote concerning them to their governors in the district of Mosul and in the Jazirat al-Arab [footnote 45: northern Syria, not Arabia]. Accordingly, a search was made for them; some were caught and burned, others were killed."

Pages 250 - 251.

[End Quote]

- 1-John 2:18-19 "...many anti-Christ's (plural) have left us [left our fellowship]..."
The epistle of John is also talking about a major split. The estimate is that this book was written between 90 and 115 AD, the same time period as the above historical account.

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