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The History of Religion and The Evolution of the Christian God

Joseph B. Lumpkin

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It is impossible to discuss the history of the Christian God without going back to a time before the Jewish people were named, or assembled. Through the ages, humans have believed in a god, or gods, but what drove mankind to create or express the idea of god? Whether sun, moon, or idols of wood, stone, or metal, humans all over the world invented or expressed their own ideas of god. Mankind was attempting to answer eternal questions of how and why the world worked as it did. They felt helpless and sought a way to explain and influence the elements and the events in life. They could then appeal to their gods in hopes of hedging the outcome of a life out of their control. Sacrifice was done to appease the gods and curry favor. When that did not work grander sacrifices were given. Gods of protection soon became gods of murder as the sacrifices were elevated from animal to human, and then to child sacrifice by fire. As society evolved and the needs of mankind changed, so did their gods. Even the gods of the Jews (Yahweh and El) were gods of war and destruction, as the Jews were a warlike people at that time and needed a god of war to go with them into battle. Their evolution into a single, compassionate deity took centuries and reflected changes within the world. Beginning in the Axial Age (800 - 600 B.C.E.) and ending around 200 B.C.E. the entire world awakened spiritually, turning from outward and cruel religions to an inward, spiritual, and mystical journey. We will examine the path between the old gods of war and sacrifice and the mystical and personal religions of today. We will explore the Axial Age and why it occurred. We will attempt to predict the next phase in the spiritual evolution for mankind. We will closely examine the evolution of God, the Christian religion, and doctrines that followed.

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