

Judaism under the Cover of Christianity. A Mistaken Movement (Fr. Andreas Agathokleous)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



It is well known that Judaism, like Islam, is a religion of the Law. This means that the believer's salvation depends on the observation of the regulations, ordinances and commandments of the religion. Refusal to observe the Law or deviation from it (wittingly or unwittingly) leads to punishment, which is expressed through a variety of trials and, in the end, Hell.

Christ lived in this environment, too, but overturned the prevailing outlook and brought to the world the glad tidings -the Gospel- that God is love, that He doesn't punish and that we are saved through His Grace. But for this Grace, and therefore our salvation, to be activated, we have to actively desire it. This will be apparent from our repentance, that is our decision to live as God wants us to, 'in accordance with Him'.

'Life in accordance with God', has certain features which distinguish it from 'life in accordance with the world' ('world' here is used in the sense of a sinful or demonic outlook). If the characteristics of this life are external and affect behavior only, without the spirit of the Gospel, then we have a legalistic conception of Christianity,

in other words, a kind of Judaism under the cover of Christianity.



Certainly, observation of the canons of the Church, such as fasting, prayer, Holy Communion, and much else besides is important. But formal observation, without substance, reduces the new Life proclaimed by Christ and His Church throughout the ages to a dry letter, which may offer satisfaction, but not joy and eternal life.

Obviously, formal observance of the canons is very much easier than the experience which comes from humility and love. The first demands discipline, the second an encounter of the heart with Christ, Who is Utter Humility and boundless Love. It's one thing to live with someone with whom you get along and therefore don't clash with, and quite another to be in love with them. A relationship with Christ, love for Him, transcends the canons, as we can see from the lives of the saints, who, because of this love, prayed and strove ascetically beyond their established religious duty.

If we compare people who observe 'whatever the Church says' but have neither humility nor love for the whole world with those who don't observe them, but still are concerned with them, I think that there's hope for the latter. They bring to mind the words of Christ to the Pharisees: 'the publicans and harlots will enter the Kingdom of God before you' (Matth. 21, 31).

Isn't it sad if , as the years go by, we observe the Law scrupulously but we strive mistakenly, unaware of the beauty, the joy and the fullness of the Christian life, with its 'freedom for God's children'.

May we be able to accept that 'we got our life wrong', however much this realization hurts us. May we thereafter desire to change, to seek the father and teacher who knows from experience:

The life of freedom which is the result of struggle

The life of humility, which comes from pain

The life of love, which begins from feeling the love of God.

And when we find him, if he wishes, may he show us the 'path of salvation'.