

Hey Mae Dean,

Nice talking with you this morning. My best to all! I have been thinking about your discussion with Joan about drinking wine: Joan saying Jesus turned water into wine so it must be alright for her to drink it, and you saying he performed that miracle to prove he was God's son with power of God's Spirit to do such things. What both of you say seems scriptural to me... Please let me explain! Most happily for me, you seem both to be justifying yourselves using your Bible knowledge of Jesus. Based on that, my blessings on you both. As to you judging the actions of each other, or condemning the choices made by the other, I remind you what Jesus taught as reflected in the words of Paul to the Christians in Rome.

Romans 14:1-4 GNB Welcome those who are weak in faith [*using Jesus as our example, I'm guessing he views us all as weak in faith*], but do not argue with them about their personal opinions. (2) Some people's faith allows them to eat anything, but the person who is weak in the faith eats only vegetables. (3) The person who will eat anything is not to despise the one who doesn't; while the one who eats only vegetables is not to pass judgment on the one who will eat anything; for God has accepted that person. (4) Who are you to judge the servants of someone else? It is their own Master who will decide whether they succeed or fail. And they will succeed, because the Lord is able to make them succeed.

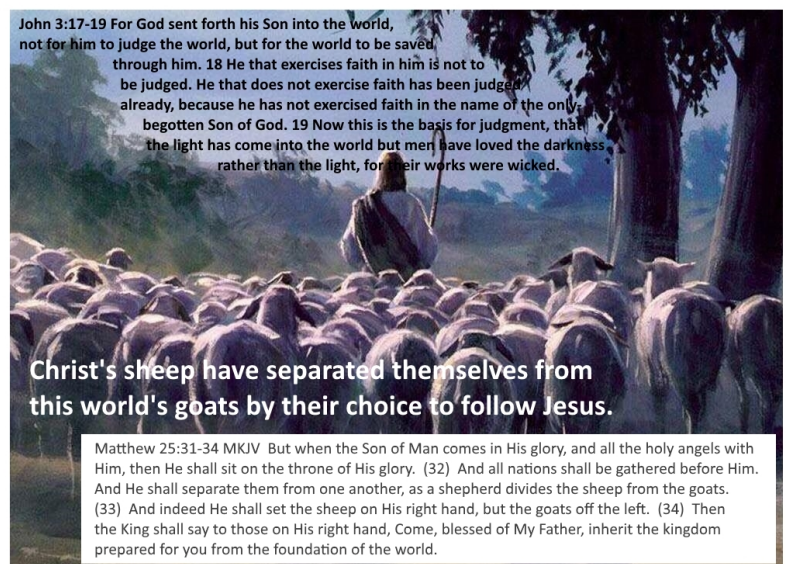
It feels to me like such debates as this might be more religious in nature than Christian. I say very specifically "it feels like to me," because I have no illusions I am your judge. As Paul there said, we all stand or fall to our own master, and none of us are that. Jesus very specifically warned against following other men!^(vi) We must separate ourselves from all Religionists. [*See John 8:31-32 on next to last page.*]

Please allow me to make clear what "I consider" the great difference between being Christian and being religious. It seems we all tend to get the two mixed up. For me, it is a constant battle. Religion is easy to see as bad, on those we personally judge as spiritually lost. On ourselves, however, not so much. I heard a Muslim woman in Gaze say she just lost her son to their religious war, and that she was ready to lose her Grandson. She is probably adored as righteous by her fellow Muslims. All of us who are Jewish or Christian believe we are descendants of Abraham, through his son Isaac and grandson Jacob [*renamed Israel by God (Gen 32:27-28)*]ⁱ and then through Abraham's further descendant Jesus.

Matthew 1:1 GNB This is the list of the ancestors of Jesus Christ, a descendant of David, **who was a descendant of Abraham.**

Galatians 3:26-29 GNB It is through faith that all of you are God's children in union with Christ Jesus. (27) You were baptized into union with Christ [*by putting faith in him*], and now you are clothed, so to speak, with the life of Christ himself. (28) So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free people, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus. (29) **If you belong to Christ, then you are the descendants of Abraham and will receive what God has promised.**

Interesting about Muslims, they also believe they are descendants of Abraham, but through his son Ishmael rather than Isaac. [*See chart on last page showing where religions and their hate come from.*] Of course, thinking we are pleasing to God by being born through anyone except Abraham then Isaac then Israel and then through faith in Christ, is completely contrary to the Bible. So, then, I would consider Muslims as being religious, as opposed to Christian. But, as the Muslim woman quoted above attests, it seems to have little or nothing to do with sincerity. So, what decides who we are; if we are pleasing to God. Well, it's pretty simple really: The actual individual followers of Christ are pleasing God; everyone else isn't.



Jesus's sheep aren't looking around to follow other sheep, they follow, well, Christ!

We are witness to a world full of people who assert their Christianity, but their actions leave me wondering... Catholics and Protestants killed each other until just a few years ago, leaving me wondering if either are really Christians. Most of the other religions are killing or supporting the killing of those of different faiths as well, somewhere. If they are not physically killing each other, they are judging nonmembers unworthy of life and lost to God. Most all people including Muslims can see the Muslim faith is not Christianity. What though, about Catholics and Baptists and Mormons and Amish and Jehovah's Witnesses and all the other Protestants, with each one having a doctrine of faith that defines and judges approval for membership in their sect. Are they real Christians just because they use Jesus's name in "their" doctrine? Doesn't following their sectarian doctrine sound too similar to Muslims following the Quran? So, then, reasonable people are left to wonder: If someone grows up a Catholic or Methodist or other Protestant, being taught from infancy the teachings of their organization are God's teachings, but never actually having followed God's only later day command [*since Jesus appeared*] to actually listen to his Son,

Matthew 17:5 GNB While he was talking, a shining cloud came over them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my own dear Son, with whom I am pleased---listen to him!"

does their doctrine of "asserted Christianity" make them pleasing to God; any more than Muslims? That, my dear friend, is what faith is about, and, our personal faith is what we are all deciding about ourselves.

But, Auntie Mae Dean, the discussion you had with Joan is very important; because it represents each one of you defending "your" faith. And that is how we each show our Creator who we are in heart.

Romans 10:9-10 ESV ...because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **(10) For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.**

God cares about you and Joan, and, He is listening to your defense of your faith as you talk together!

These Bible verses have God's Hebrew name restored. It is יהוה and sounds like YeaVah to English speakers; like "Yea" go team followed by "Vah" as in the first two letters of vault...

Malachi 3:16-4:3 MWT ...At that time those in fear of יהוה spoke with one another. יהוה kept paying attention and listening, so that a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared him and esteemed his name. (17) "They shall be mine, says יהוה of hosts, in the day when I make up my special property (gather my chosen people), and I will protect them just as a man shows compassion for his own son who serves him. (18) Then you will see the distinction between the righteous one and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him. [*See picture above.*]

Malachi 4:1-3 MWT "For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be like stubble for the flames. The day that is coming shall set them all ablaze, says יהוה of hosts, so that I will leave them neither present life nor future hope. (2) But for you who fear my name, the sun [*son*] of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. (3) And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act in justice says יהוה of hosts.

You see how important your discussion with Joan is; God is listening. As Paul directed above in Romans 14:1-4, I think Joan should decide if she should drink wine, as should you, and me for that matter. Then, as God listens to our defense of our decisions, to our own master we stand or fall; as it should be. And very importantly, we should all rejoice each one of us is quoting the Bible in defense of our decisions; as opposed to just going along with the doctrine of some church! [*See John 8:31-32 on next to last page.*] While our job before God "is" sharing what Jesus said, the actual making of Christians [*which defines their decisions about what is right and wrong*] is God's work. יהוה explains how: "He" is looking throughout the earth for each individual inclined toward righteousness.

2 Chronicles 16:9 ESV "For the eyes of the יהוה run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him..."

As He finds them, He directs each righteously inclined person to the teachings of his son. [*See Mat 17:5 above.*] And, according to Christ, no one can actually hear and come to him, unless they are first drawn [*or dragged as one translation expresses it*] to listen to the words of Jesus, dragged there by his Father יהוה's Spirit:

John 6:44 ESV No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

John 6:65 ESV And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."

So, the only real question for each one of us is whether we, us personally as an individual, are actually listening to the words of Christ every day of our lives... If we think we have already heard what he said by our previous reading of the Bible, or that we are safe because we have a membership in some church that grants God's approval, we should probably reevaluate. We must take in *[feed on]* God's Spirit by reading the words of Christ often.

Sadly or gloriously, depending on ~~your point of view~~ your faith, Armageddon is destroying our world! But, God has provided our modern day ark of salvation: Our personal faith in the words of Christ. And so, Armageddon is a good thing for the friends of Christ.ⁱⁱ

Luke 21:25-28 GNB "There will be strange things happening to the sun, the moon, and the stars. **On earth whole countries will be in despair**, afraid of the roar of the sea and the raging tides *[human turmoil among the sea of mankindⁱⁱⁱ]*. (26) **People will faint from fear as they wait for what is coming over the whole earth**, for the powers in space will be driven from their courses. (27) Then the Son of Man will appear *[to those who have faith to see]*, coming in a cloud with great power and glory. (28) **When these things begin to happen, stand up and raise your heads, because your salvation is near."**

Mark 13:19-20 ESV For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be. (20) **And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect *[followers of Christ]*, whom he chose, he shortened the days.**

Revelation 21:1-4 GNB Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth disappeared, and the sea vanished. (2) And I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared and ready, like a bride dressed to meet her husband. (3) I heard a loud voice speaking from the throne: **"Now God's home is with people! He will live with them, and they shall be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God.** (4) He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. The old things have disappeared."

So Mae Dean and Joan, let us ~~all~~ *each* express faith that we are growing "*young*" together... Remember, יהוה is listening! Consider me, along with the Book of Job's prophecy about our hope of growing young with the other followers of Christ, in your nightly prayers Mae Dean... Let's each pray for the Book of Job's promises for our health and vigor to become better than in the days of our youth.

Job 33:21-30 GNB Their bodies waste away to nothing; you can see all their bones; (22) they are about to go to the world of the dead. (23) Perhaps an angel may come to their aid--- one of God's thousands of angels, who remind us of our duty. (24) In mercy the angel will say, "Release them! They are not to go down to the world of the dead. Here is the ransom to set them free." (25) **Their bodies will grow young and strong again;** *[let his flesh become fresher than in youth;]* (26) when they pray, God will answer; they will worship God with joy; God will set things right for them again. (27) Each one will say in public, "I have sinned. I have not done right, but God spared me. (28) **He kept me from going to the world of the dead, and I am still alive.**" (29) God does all this again and again; (30) each one saves a person's life, and gives him the joy of living.

Those marked by God as expressing faith in the words we have bothered to learn, and thus know for certain Jesus actually spoke, are receiving God's spirit from those words of his Christ *[Anointed One]*. As Jesus said:

John 6:63 ISV It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

Christians are being preserved alive by that faith in Christ's words. It is our own personal faith, then, that defines our future.

Matthew 8:13 ISV Then Jesus said to the centurion, **"Go. It will be done for you just as you have believed."** And his servant was healed that very hour.

We just all need, then, to work out our own salvation, which is the expressing of our personal faith **(Philippians 2:12-16)** . . .keep working out YOUR own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for God is the one that, for the sake of [his] good pleasure, is acting within YOU in order for YOU both to will and

to act. ¹⁴ Keep doing all things free from murmurings and arguments, ¹⁵ that YOU may come to be blameless and innocent, children of God without a blemish in among a crooked and twisted generation, among whom YOU are shining as illuminators in the world, ¹⁶ keeping a tight grip on the word of life,. . . while we avoid becoming religious and trying to judge the faith of others.

The trick seems to me, lies in being able to build our own faith and then being able to defend it before others; without also judging they have to agree with everything we say is right. So, ~~we~~ I just need to be listening to Christ ~~for our own selves~~ as I understand I am judging my-own-self by my response to his words. Some part of me wishes I could be more peaceful by just saying all these Protestants and the Catholics are alright... Wouldn't, though, I also have to say the Muslim form of worship is alright? Where would it end? Going along with what is wrong is very definitely not what Jesus taught.^{iv}

This, then, is what I think very simply and clearly distinguishes between Religionists and Christians: Christians try to help others by sharing [*directing them to*] what Jesus Christ said, while letting each person make their own personal decisions about what they think Jesus's teaching means for them personally. Once a person asserts faith in Christ, no Christian has any direction left to give. [*Encouragement, maybe, but not direction.*^(vi)] Religionists, on the other hand, try and develop and adhere to a set of rules, express faith in "their" doctrine of faith and in their organization [*the group selected and isolated by their doctrine*], which doctrine will both control them and give them authority to enforce control over other persons; to conform to their code of conduct. The fact they use Christ's name in trying to support "their" doctrine of faith seems to me to have no more value than Muslims saying they are Abraham's descendants.

John 5:39-44 ISV You examine the Scriptures carefully because you suppose that in them you have eternal life. Yet they testify about me. (40) But you are not willing to come to me to have life. (41) "I do not accept human praise. (42) I know that you do not have the love of God in you. (43) I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me. Yet if another man comes in his own name, you will accept him. (44) How can you believe when you accept each other's praise and do not look for the praise that comes from the only God?

It can be hard to see the bad trees if we are living in the middle of the wrong forest [*Muslims growing up among Muslims or Baptists among Baptists or....*]. Your only safety, the only safety for any of us, lies in immersing ourselves in the words of Christ! [*See John 8:31-32 on next to last page.*]

Matthew 12:33-37 ISV "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree rotten and its fruit rotten. For a tree is known by its fruit.

(34) You children of serpents! How can you say anything good when you are evil?^v For the mouth speaks out of the abundance of the heart. (35) A good person brings good things out of a good treasure, and an evil person brings evil things out of an evil treasure. (36) I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give an account for every thoughtless word they utter. (37) For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

The simple solution: Be certain we are actually listening to the words of Jesus Christ, and building and sharing our faith on what Jesus alone said. And even then, be certain we are judging only ourselves, while we simply share with others what we know Jesus taught. Jesus specifically warned against following other men or trying to assert ourselves as lords over them. (Mat 23:1-15)^{vi} Drink wine or don't, then, we all stand before the one true God יהוה.

Romans 14:10-12 GNB You then, who eat only vegetables---why do you pass judgment on others? And you who eat anything---why do you despise other believers? All of us will stand before God to be judged by him. (11) For the scripture says, "As surely as I am the living God, says יהוה, everyone will kneel before me, and everyone will confess that I am God." (12) Every one of us, then, will have to give an account to God.

If we are successful in our stand before God, it will be because we have each one approached him through our one and only teacher and leader, Jesus Christ...^(vi)

Best forever, Joe

- i **Genesis 32:27-28 Darby** And he said to him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. (28) And he said, Thy name shall not henceforth be called Jacob, but Israel; for thou hast wrestled with God, and with men, and hast prevailed.
- ii **John 15:11-16 LITV** I have spoken these things to you that My joy may abide in you, and your joy may be full. (12) This is My commandment, that you love one another as I loved you. (13) Greater love than this has no one, that anyone should lay down his soul [*his life*] for his friends. (14) You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. (15) I no longer call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his lord does. But I called you friends, because all things which I heard from My Father I made known to you. (16) You have not chosen Me, but I chose you out and planted you, that you should go and should bear fruit, and your fruit remain, that whatever you should ask the Father in My name, He may give you.
- iii **Isaiah 57:20 GNB** But evil people are like the restless sea, whose waves never stop rolling in, bringing filth and muck.
- iv **Matthew 10:32-39 GNB** "Those who declare publicly that they belong to me, I will do the same for them before my Father in heaven. (33) But those who reject me publicly, I will reject before my Father in heaven. (34) "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the world. No, I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. (35) I came to set sons against their fathers, daughters against their mothers, daughters-in-law against their mothers-in-law; (36) your worst enemies will be the members of your own family. (37) "Those who love their father or mother more than me are not fit to be my disciples; those who love their son or daughter more than me are not fit to be my disciples. (38) Those who do not take up their cross and follow in my steps are not fit to be my disciples. (39) Those who try to gain their own life will lose it; but those who lose [*or are willing to give up*] their life for my sake will gain it.
- v **John 8:42-51 GNB** Jesus said to them, "If God really were your Father, you would love me, because I came from God and now I am here. I did not come on my own authority, but he sent me. (43) Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to listen to my message. (44) You are the children of your father, the Devil, and you want to follow your father's desires. From the very beginning he was a murderer and has never been on the side of truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he is only doing what is natural to him, because he is a liar and the father of all lies. (45) But I tell the truth, and that is why you do not believe me. (46) Which one of you can prove that I am guilty of sin? If I tell the truth, then why do you not believe me? (47) He who comes from God listens to God's words. [*See John 6:44 above.*] You, however, are not from God, and that is why you will not listen." (48) They asked Jesus, "Were we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon in you?" (49) "I have no demon," Jesus answered. "I honor my Father, but you dishonor me. (50) I am not seeking honor for myself. But there is one who is seeking it and who judges in my favor. (51) I am telling you the truth: whoever obeys my teaching will never die."
- vi **Matthew 23:1-15 ISV** Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, (2) "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. (3) So do whatever they tell you and follow it, but stop doing what they do, because they don't do what they say. (4) They tie up burdens that are heavy and unbearable and lay them on people's shoulders, but they refuse to lift a finger to remove them. (5) "They do all their actions to be seen by people. They increase the size of their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments. (6) They love to have the places of honor at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, (7) to be greeted in the marketplaces, and to be called 'Rabbi' by people. (8) "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one teacher, and all of you are brothers. (9) And don't call anyone on earth 'Father,' for you have only one Father, the one in heaven. (10) Nor are you to be called 'Teachers,' for you have only one teacher, the Christ! (11) The person who is greatest among you must be your servant. (12) Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. (13) "How terrible it will be for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door to the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You don't go in yourselves, and you don't allow those who are trying to enter to go in. (14) *How terrible it will be for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You devour widows' houses and say long prayers to cover it up. Therefore, you will receive greater condemnation!* (15) "How terrible it will be for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over sea and land to

make a single convert, and when this happens you make him twice as fit for hell as you are.

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Scripture Reference Window

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John 8:31-32 GW

So Jesus said to those Jews who believed in him, **"If you live by what I say [or remain in my teachings], you are truly my disciples. (32) You will know the truth, and *the truth will set you free.*"**



Set free of what? Please note Jesus was speaking to a group of Jews. After hearing Jesus's words, Jews have to abandon the group practicing Judaism and follow Christ as individuals. (Gal 3:10-14) Imagine how it would even more apply to a little Muslim boy or girl, or man or woman, growing from infancy being taught the Islamic faith [*to kill non-Muslims*]. How, though, about a Catholic or Mormon or other Protestant, taught "their" groups beliefs from youth? This correction by Jesus to set themselves free of their previous form of worship applies to every person in every religion; to all except those "individuals" actually and personally following Jesus's teachings. If you feel blessed by being a member of any of those sects given special names by men, if you call yourself anything besides or in addition to "Christian," (Acts 11:26) I fear you do not know Christ at all... It is not named groups of people God is preserving alive. It is individuals with absolute faith in the words of Jesus. (Mat 17:5; Mal 3:16-4:3; Heb 10:38-39)

John 8:31-32 LITV

(31) Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him, **If you continue in My Word**, you are truly My disciples. (32) And you will know the truth, and ***the truth will set you free.***

John 8:31-32 MKJV

(31) Then Jesus said to the Jews who believed on Him, **If you continue in My Word**, you are My disciples indeed. (32) And you shall know the truth, and ***the truth shall make you free.***

John 8:31-32 GNB

So Jesus said to those who believed in him, **"If you obey my teaching**, you are really my disciples; (32) you will know the truth, and ***the truth will set you free.*"**

John 8:31-32 ALT

(31) So Jesus was saying to the Jews having believed [or, trusted] in Him, **"If you remain in My word**, truly you are My disciples. (32) "And you will know the truth, and ***the truth will set you free!*"**

John 8:31-32 CEV

Jesus told the people who had faith in him, **"If you keep on obeying what I have said**, you truly are my disciples. (32) You will know the truth, and ***the truth will set you free.*"**

Please use browser back arrow to return to previous page. | [Home](#)

You will note the reference windows often include more than one translation of the Bible. The reason is to strive to gain the best possible understanding of the original Hebrew and Greek. Since we don't speak those languages, we rely on those who have come before and made the effort to translate those texts into English for us. Considering several translations gives the benefit of the understanding of several translation committees or individuals.

This chart explains how much of the world believe they can trace their religion back to Abraham through a son of his wives Sarah or Hagar.

Muslims hate Jews because of land given Abraham some 4000 years ago by יהיה. Their forefathers were displaced by God's works using Jews to produce the Messiah; who is saviour of "all" mankind. (**Gen 15:17-21; Gen 18:17-19; Ga 3:26-29**) The Jews murdered the Christian Messiah. (**John 19:6; Acts 2:29-36**)

Where Religious Hate Comes From.

Muhammad was a man who asserted he was a prophet. He founded Islam in the 7th century CE in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. He said an angel (Gabriel) gave him the Qur'an as the word of Allah, the only true God. That seems similar to the claims of Joseph Smith, and the book of Mormon he said was given him by the Angel Gabriel. Muhammad said he was a descendant of Ishmael; thus born among the sons of Abraham. All practisers of Islam are Muslims; about 1/4 of the world's population. Muslims believe the Torah and the Psalms and the Gospels are also from prophets, but were corrupted or lost. The Qur'an, according to Muhammad, however, is the last message from Allah and miraculously preserved perfect so no further prophet is needed. The Qur'an says infidels (non-believers) should be killed whenever possible. (Quran 2:191)

Abraham

Bible recorded father of Jews and Christians

Yellow: Important Characters in the lineage from Abraham to Jesus Christ

Christians and Jews Thus trace their Lineage to Abraham through the Bible. All who put faith in Christ are Blessed. (**Galatians 3:26-29**)*

All other religions; [Catholics follow the Pope from 400 AD, Mormons follow The book of Mormon From 1830 AD, Muslims follow the Qur'an from 700 AD, Jehovah's Witnesses follow "faithful slave" from 1850 AD] have teachings that came after the Bible; And, each sects teaching in some way contradicts it.

Abraham's Children By

Hagar

Ishmael

Sarah

Isaac

By Rebecca

Jacob

Renamed Israel By God. Father of Jewish Nation.

Keturah

Zimran
Jokshan
Medan
Midian
Ishbak
Shuah

Essau

*Galatians 3:26 GNB It is through faith that all of **you are God's children** in union with Christ Jesus.

By Leah

Reuben (1)*
Simeon (2)*
Levi (3)

Judah (4)*

Issachar (9)*
Zebulun (10)*
Dinah

By Bilhah

Dan (5)*
Naphtali (6)*

By Tamar

11 Gens 2
David
(Mat 1:17)

28 Gens 2
Jesus Christ

The Jew who Is Father of Christianity

By Zilpah

Gad (7)*
Asher (8)*

By Rachel

Joseph (11)

Benjamin (12)*
By Asenath

Manasseh*
Ephraim*

Judaism morphed into Christianity.
Acts 13:16-41

The Bible's beautiful drama (**1 Cor 4:9**) reflecting mankind's existence over our 6000 years since Adam. All Muslims, Jews, and professed Christians alike, need to be certain it is the actual words of Jesus Christ they have faith in. (**Mat 7:15; Gal 3:26-29**)

The twelve sons of Jacob [Israel] (born 1-12) became the twelve tribes* of the Jewish Nation, well, sort of. Levi became a nation of Priests with no land inheritance. Joseph was promised a double portion so his sons Manasseh and Ephraim became two of the tribes of Israel. Dina was born (11) after Zebulun. Their existence served as a tutor to Christ. (**Gal 3:24**)