

Thrift-Store Theology

Crumbling Ruins

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Crumbling Ruins

Roman holiday

Western Christian theology is founded on the crumbling ruins of Greek philosophy. Platonic thought was the bedrock upon which this theology was based and with the onslaught of modern thought is in jeopardy of bringing down the entire of house of Christian belief. Or is it?

When the Roman Empire adopted the Christian religion, as it's State religion it also began to incorporate the thought processes of the Greek culture for which it too looked to for intellectual guidance. And since this thought form was the only one used among the educational elite it soon became deeply associated with how Westerners thought about our faith. But it was mistaken. Jewish thought is not Greek thought and anyone who knows how much the Jews hated Greek culture also knows that Jewish theology has little to do with Greek philosophy. True there are references to monotheism in Greek philosophy but Plato lost his life under the charge of blasphemy when he proposed it. In fact in the only encounter between the two we have recorded in the Bible, Paul addresses the philosophers on Mar's Hill and says they worship the true God only in ignorance, as an afterthought hoping to cover all their bases in addresses the gods. And according to the author of *St. Saul*, Paul has given us the best references to the original theology that Jesus taught since his writings predate the edited versions we are given in the Gospels.

But with the expansion of the teachings of Jesus beyond the Jewish community after Pentecost, thought forms foreign to Jewish theology began to combine with Roman and Greek thought and a new understanding of Jesus and eventually Christianity was developed. And that is natural because we are all affected by our culture including our thought forms. But this also indicates that these are not the only ones that

are "true". In fact, if we really want to get back to the original thought forms we would have to go back to Jewish commentators and dismiss all the Roman and Greek influences that have shaped our religious beliefs for two millennium.

But Jesus ingeniously enclosed his teachings, not in dialectical form, but in story form. This form transcends only one thought form reaching out to all peoples as they encounter the realities of their world learned through experience and sensory perception. Theoretical speculation is never provided in Jesus' words; only the hard lessons each has learned by living. But it is this story form that can provide us with a better understanding of how to believe, and more importantly live, out our salvation. And it provides us with a Segway into other thought forms that can more closely mimic the realities of living.

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