

Christianity was originally a form of Judaism. All of its first members were Jews who proclaimed that Jesus was their *Messiah* (Hebrew) or their *Christ* (Greek; in English, "*Anointed One*"), which meant that they were declaring that He was the **King of Israel** or **King of the Jews** ("*Israel*" was the kingdom of 12 tribes; "*Judah*" was one of the 12 tribes; Judah is all that is left of the 12, so nowadays "Jew" and "Israelite" have become synonymous).

Within a century or so, Christianity became predominantly **Gentile** (*non-Jewish*) for two reasons. First, the followers of Jesus decided that converts need not become Jewish in order to follow the Christ, the King of the Jews (**Acts 15**). Second, **the Romans destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD**, thereby destroying with it the center of Jewish Christianity.

Except for scholars, the vast majority of believers have long lost the original, **Jewish** meaning of "Christ." We tend to make up our own definition of it based upon later dogmatic developments: "Christ"--to us Gentile *Christians*--means **Jesus** and *only* Jesus. Jesus is **God**. Jesus is **Healer**. Jesus is **Lord**. Jesus is **Savior**. Jesus is **Love**. Jesus is the **Way, the Truth and the Light**. Therefore, we (understandably) conclude that "Christ" means "God and Savior." This confusion between "Christ" and "Jesus" does not make very much practical difference in the ordinary spiritual life of the Church; the prayers of the Mass always mean "Jesus" when they say "Christ." **Trouble begins when we try to understand the original meaning of the sacred Scriptures.**

To understand what Shakespeare wrote, we need to understand the vocabulary of *his* day. **To understand the meaning originally intended by the human authors of the Scriptures, we need to understand their vocabulary and their culture.** Taking a modern meaning of a word and inserting it into an ancient text often produces nonsense. In the following excerpt, the author tells about a proposed peace conference between Union and Confederate leaders in the Civil War; note how using a contemporary definition of terms destroys the original meaning of the nineteenth-century text:

Grant and Lee could meet for an exchange of views, as could others, not excluding a number of their wives; Mrs. Grant and Mrs. Longstreet, for example, **intimates** before the war, could visit back and forth across the lines, along with their husbands, so that "while General Lee and General Grant were arranging for better feeling between the armies, they could be aided by **intercourse** between the ladies and officers until terms honorable to both sides could be found." (Shelby Foote, *The Civil War*, volume 3, 809)

In the Jewish Scriptures (**TNK = Hebrew canon; Septuagint = LXX = Greek canon**), Messiah/Christ meant "the **man anointed to be the King** of Israel/King of the Jews." It **never** meant "God" and only indirectly suggested "savior"--the job of the King was to defeat enemies and make the nation safe for its citizens (Ps 2, Ps 89). The general population of the Jews **never** expected their King to **save the whole world from sin and death**; his job was to save *them* from the hands of their military and political enemies.

The Christian doctrine that the Jewish Scriptures foretell worldwide salvation from sin and death is based on the resurrection of Jesus and the descent of the Holy Spirit (Christian **Pentecost**--Acts 2). Only after accepting the fact that Jesus is risen from the dead can His death be seen as victory rather than defeat, and only then can one re-read the Jewish scriptures and--by a **radical reinterpretation** of them--recognize that they "prove" that the Messiah "first had to suffer before entering into His glory" (Lk 24:26-27).

Jewish Interpretation of <i>Their</i> Sacred Library	Christian Interpretation of the Jewish Library
The Sacred Scriptures (TNK / LXX) are from the <i>only</i> covenant (testament).	The Jewish Scriptures are part of the Old Covenant (Old Testament). Jesus has created a New Covenant with new Scriptures (New Testament).
The Messiah was supposed to be a human like David.	Jesus is both human and divine .
The Messiah was supposed to defeat human enemies . The Romans killed Jesus--He lost.	Jesus, our King, has defeated sin and death . Jesus rose from the dead--He won.
The Messiah was supposed to restore the Kingdom of Israel (Kingdom of David) on earth.	The Messiah rules a Kingdom not of this world . Anyone who wants to join the Kingdom is welcome.
The Messiah was supposed to marry, have children, and die, just like David and Solomon and the other Messiahs.	After His death and resurrection, Jesus lives forever. He causes God's children to be " born again " in Baptism.
All the prophecies can be given non-Christian meanings.	All the prophecies are ultimately about Jesus , the Christ.
God is unitarian --one person in one being.	God is Trinitarian --three persons in one being.
No human could ever be God. <i>Note well: Christians do NOT think that Jesus was a human who became God but that God, the Son, became human.</i>	Christians worship Jesus as <i>God incarnate</i> (Jn 1:1-18)--God has chosen to <i>become human</i> so that humans may become divine.