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Comparing Christian and Jewish Religious Beliefs Concerning Responsibilities on Earth

It is not surprising that Judaism and Christianity have much in common since their roots are the same. In fact, Christianity sprang from Judaism. The roots stem from biblical accounts of the creation of the earth, which includes the idea that God created the heavens and the earth in six days, resting on the seventh, hence, the seven-day week. Shared biblical accounts also include the beginning of mankind, with God creating Adam and Eve and placing them in the Garden of Eden. Most importantly, both religions view God as the one and only God, regardless of what name to which He is referred. In effect, both religions believe in the Old Testament, although the Jews do not refer to it as the Old Testament, since there is no Old or New Testament in their religion. Where the two religions separate is their belief concerning who Jesus was and what his purpose on earth was.

First, the Jewish religion accepts the first five books of the Old Testament as the written Torah which was provided to Moses by God. These books tell of how God created the world, destroyed it, and then recreated it. God also instructed Adam and Eve to populate the world through procreation, that is, through having children. The popular story of Adam and Eve tells of Eve succumbing to Satan's temptation to bite the forbidden fruit of knowledge and the subsequent expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. Part of Eve's punishment was the experience of pain during childbirth. Overall, though, is the theme of God's power and

authority over all (Towner 34). Mankind learns that it must obey God's commandments at all times in all things in order to enjoy eternal life in heaven.

Although Judaism and Christianity differ on their view of salvation as it pertains to Torah for Judaism and the New Testament for Christianity, their view of creation and man's responsibility for that creation are in agreement with each other. For example, both religions believe that God created the earth and its resources for man to look after. Man uses those resources for survival; resources include every creature on earth, as well as other resources such as water, land, and vegetation. For man to continue in survival, he must maintain all sources as opposed to wasting or squandering them. For example, he cannot destroy the tropical rainforests if he wishes to avoid global warming and subsequent effects. He cannot kill off a certain species if he wishes to have meat or be able to grow crops. The world is ecologically balanced. Even one insect species can throw off that balance, affecting a food source, which in turn, affects another food source. That is why God made the law, beginning with Adam, that man was to be the protector of earth and everything on it (Nelson 513). Unfortunately, with man's advancements in the knowledge of the sciences and industry, he has continuously broken God's law. He has cut down trees in the rainforest and polluted the air. He has hunted various animals to extinction, with a number of them in danger of future extinction. In addition, he has constantly ignored signs of danger, such as in rising temperatures associated with global warming. However, a number of organizations, including those that are religiously-based, are working hard to stop and perhaps even reverse the man-made damage already done. One such organization is the Saint Kateri Catholic Church's conservation center. This conservation center's overall purpose is to fulfill God's instruction's to mankind to take care of the earth through working on sustainability of resources, protection of the environment, and understanding of and respect for ecology.

Just like Christians, followers of Judaism feel that mankind has not fulfilled its responsibility to God. They also blame advances in industry and science on man not taking care of the natural resources afforded on earth. For example, industries have polluted water systems with waste products and polluted the air with dirty vapor. It has extracted certain minerals and natural fuel sources from the earth, such as oil, causing changes that result in earthquakes, for example. It has over-hunted certain species for profit to the point of extinction, affecting the earth's ecological balance. Those of the Jewish faith express concerns on whether the idea of the universe needs to be redefined or whether man will end life on earth through unwise practices (Samuelson 137). However, Judaism follows the principle that man has a responsibility to protect the earth, as God commanded.

In conclusion, it is widely accepted among religious scholars that Christianity sprang from Judaism, resulting in the two religions sharing the same beliefs about the creation of the heavens and earth and the beginning of mankind. They also share the common belief in one God, and that God has control and power over everything. Finally, both religions accept that man has responsibility for the well-being of earth, including all life, landmass, and vegetation.

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