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When I looked at the ‘main message’ of five major **religions**,^[373] I was very unhappy with the Christian one and decided to rewrite it, partly based on Paul’s reiteration of the ‘good news’.^{1 Cor 15}

God is love, and so God created the universe and created humankind and wants to live with us in a loving relationship. Love involves choice, and choices can go (sometimes very) wrong.

[Unsure about this bit...] Wrong choices can be made in the unseen heavenly realm too, hence the existence of evil, pointing humans in the direction of wrong choices.

But God has a millennia-long plan to improve the lot of humans and to enhance humans’ relationships, with God and with one another. The plan started local and individual, with Abraham, but always with the intent of bringing God’s blessings to the whole world.

The plan involved God trying to lead a people, Israel, through the centuries, through inter-tribal wars, conquering and being conquered. The people followed God’s plans... and then again failed to follow them.

The crux of that plan was God coming to earth: Love risked all; Love become a tiny baby. Jesus spoke about and demonstrated God’s way of relating in love. Jesus faced the worst of human evil, was tortured and killed, but rose to life again, was seen alive by many people, and then returned to his place as the central hidden power of the universe.

This ‘good news’ was heralded by the first followers of Jesus, who showed that all of these events had been predicted in the *Jewish sacred writings*, even foreshadowed within the history of Israel, especially in the central event of their release from bondage in Egypt.

That release had been celebrated for 600 years by Israel (who sadly turned into a **religion**), but Jesus’ first followers suddenly realised that the death and resurrection of Jesus had been prefigured by the blood of the sacrificial lamb at the start of the exodus. (“Didn’t our hearts burn within us as he opened the Scriptures to us?!”)

Remembrance of this new ‘exodus’ became the central illustration of release, redemption, homecoming, salvation. To this day, it causes Jesus’ followers to love and worship God.

In anticipation of the day when Jesus will return and finally and fully restore all things, we do as much restoration work as we can here and now, for anyone and everyone.

How does that sound?

Sadly, we have turned this into a **religion**, with binding rules. Sadly, too, for the best part of my Christian life I have assumed that my (my church’s) interpretation of the Bible was

right: I followed the **Christian religion**. I was a very-well-intentioned Christian Pharisee, the kind that Jesus spent years trying to counter.

Late in the day, I know, but I'm now trying to return to the 'Way of Jesus', relating to one another, learning from one another, being willing to change and adapt my interpretation of the Scriptures in response to our God-given growing understanding of God's creation.

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