

## Bob Dylan Finds God

Nothing guarantees more scorn in rock 'n' roll circles than a man who gets religion. I mean, we pay these guys to visit hell and bring us back color slides and here they go slipping off to heaven. It's a severe breach of contract.

Bob Dylan's newfound faith shouldn't come as too much of a surprise, though. In 1965 he claimed, "I just don't have any religion or philosophy," and then went on to plug the "I Ching". In his 1966 Playboy interview he's asked by Nat Hentoff: "You told an interviewer last year, 'I've done everything I ever wanted to do.' If that's true, what do you have to look forward to?" "Salvation," replied Dylan, "just plain salvation."

Perhaps the most interesting interview in the light of recent events is one he gave to the American TV Guide in 1976. The interviewer asked him about his 1971 visit to Israel and subsequent interest in Judaism. "I'm interested in what and who a Jew is," said Dylan. "I'm interested in the fact that Jews are Semites, like Babylonians, Hittites, Arabs, Syrians, and Ethiopians. But a Jew is different because a lot of people hate Jews. There's something going on there that's hard to explain."

He was then asked how he imagined God. "I can see God in a daisy. I can see God at night in the wind and rain. I see Creation just about everywhere. The highest form of song is prayer. King David's, Solomon's, the wailing of a coyote, the rumble of the earth. It must be wonderful to be God. There's so much going on out there that you can't get to it all. It would take longer than forever."

During the 1976 Rolling Thunder Revue, Dylan found himself working alongside three musicians who were later to become born-again Christians; T-Bone Burnett on bass, Steve Soles rhythm, and David Mansfield violin. Soles and Mansfield accompanied Dylan on the 1978 European tour and Soles in particular had spent a lot of time arguing religion with his boss. In retrospect he and Burnett don't feel that they had much effect on the man although it's hard to believe that their words went wasted. The only thing that Soles can recall registering with him was his constantly saying that: "You can't place your faith in man. I kept telling him that I was so glad that I didn't have to place my faith in man any longer."

The turning point for Dylan came when the girl he'd been living with became a committed Christian. She promptly moved out on him as she'd attained a new set of values. The depth of this commitment caused him to set about investigating for himself. She is now immortalized as the Precious Angel who was "the one to show me I was blinded, to show me I was gone".

His first stop was a Bible study led by Hal Lindsey, an American Christian author whose book 'The Later Great Planet Earth' came out in 1970 and has remained a bestseller. Lindsey's particular concern, the final events in the history of the world as prophesized by the Book of Revelation, obviously captured Dylan's imagination and he would have been intrigued by Lindsey's emphasis on biblical prophecies concerning the role of Israel and the Jewish people in the days before the return of Christ to earth.

Basically Lindsey, in common with many Christian eschatologists of the past 350 years, sees the restoration of the Land of Israel to the Jewish people as the beginning of the end; an end which sees Jews acknowledging Jesus Christ as the Messiah, a holocaust in the Middle East involving Russia, China, the Arab nations and the Common Market countries, and the literal return of Christ.

Close friends like Soles and Burnett all remark on the difference in Dylan's attitude since the conversion. "He's excited by the fact that he feels he's been rescued," said one. Others commented on the love and warmth that he's now projecting. One of his 1st worries has been to decide his relationship with his past songs. Initially he felt he could no longer sing many of the songs from his past, but a musician friend of his, a fellow Jewish Christian who has become something of a spiritual confidant to him, advised him to carry on performing them as they were a valid part of his pilgrimage.

Dylan's conversion is as much as anything an indication of two movements that have been gaining ground in the United States. The first is amongst musicians, with Dan Peek (America), Ritchie Furay (Poco), Roger McGuinn (Byrds), Al Perkins (Manassas), BJ Thomas, Barry McGuire and Leon Patillo (Santana) becoming Christians in recent years. The second is the rise of Messianic Judaism – Jews who believe that acceptance of Jesus Christ as the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament merely completes their Jewishness rather than negates it.

Robert Zimmerman, aka Bob Dylan, was born in Duluth Minnesota May 23, 1942 into a Jewish home. He eventually shocked the music world in 1978 when he came out as a believer in Jesus of Nazareth as his personal Messiah (Christ). It was a double whammy, not only was he an open Christian but the most famous Jew in the World declared that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah.

The Beatles and Jimi Hendrix had said that Dylan was the most important song writer of their time. Dylan's song 'Like a Rolling Stone' was voted the best rock song ever. Whether you like his music or not, an objective person must admit that Dylan, has had a profound effect on modern culture. Numerous books and articles have been written about him. He along with his friend George Harrison of the Beatles talked often about the purpose of Life and they both concluded that until you find out who you are, why you are here and where you are going after you die, you haven't answered the most important questions of Life.

Dylan was not endorsing so-called organized religion but a personal, eternal relationship with the Creator God (Elohim) Genesis 1:1, thru His Son Yeshua/Jesus Proverbs 30:4 & John 1:1-4. Every one of us has fallen far short of Gods perfect standard of perfection towards Him and others. He offers us all forgiveness if we truly repent of our failings and shortcomings toward Him and put our trust in what His Son Jesus did by dying freely for our sins on the Roman torture stake, better known as the cross.

Two thieves were also being crucified by Him. Luke 23:39. One of the criminals who were hanging there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!"<sup>40</sup> But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same judgment of condemnation?"<sup>41</sup> "And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our bad deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong."<sup>42</sup> And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom!"<sup>43</sup> And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with me in Paradise."

Jesus forgave him for his sins that deserved death at that time. Do you want forgiveness for your sins? Jesus is ready to forgive you and welcome you into His Kingdom, but you do need to ask. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

Bob Dylan found peace with God; have you?

Shalom

Chris Heeb