

## Review of Part 1 and Where Part 2 Will Take Us

### *A Word about Worldviews (from part 1)*

Simply put a worldview is like a pair of glasses through which one understands reality. Worldviews are powerful because of their inherent assumptive nature. When we work on a worldview we are dealing with the foundational issues that will in turn support everything else. For example, if we believe that the world is flat we will never even consider sending someone to sail “around” the earth. Thus, it is perhaps just as important to have the correct worldview as it is to have the right facts because a skewed worldview will misinterpret or even be blind to the right facts.

It is a massive task to come to the correct worldview. Even once we arrive at it, who is to say that our conclusion is the best one? As we seek to understand a Christian worldview we are immediately made aware of the fact that there is not one Christian worldview. The Amish assert that we are to live without electricity or other modern technologies. The Jehovah’s Witnesses say that unless one joins their organization he cannot be saved. The Baptists maintain that unless one is an orthodox Christian then he is damned to eternal torment at the moment of death. The problem is that there is no consensus among modern Christians what the true worldview is. This is why we have not compared one Christian worldview to another. Instead we have tried to understand the worldview of the earliest disciples of Jesus from a historical perspective.

### *Our Method for This Course (from part 1)*

In part one of this class we began our thinking by working through the major themes of the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament). We familiarized ourselves with early Judaism which included the Genesis account of the creation, the formation of the Abrahamic people, the rise of the Israeli Nation, the promise to David about a royal heir, the role of the prophets, and the demise of the nation at the hands of the Babylonians. Then we looked at Second Temple Judaism which included the rebuilding of the temple and Jerusalem, the resistance to Hellenization, the formation of various sects, the Hasmonean Dynasty, and the beginning of Roman occupation. Thirdly we surveyed the religio-political scene of the first century and compared and contrasted the ministry of John the Baptist with them. Next, once we had tuned our ears to hear the various chords in the Judean world of the 1<sup>st</sup> century we listened carefully to the melody that Jesus made in his preaching, miracles, parables, etc. We listened to Jesus words from the Gospels as if for the first time and saw how he accepted certain aspects of the worldview at the

time and challenged others. It was our goal to understand Jesus as the original twelve understood him. We constructed our worldview by viewing the world through the eyes of a 1<sup>st</sup> century Palestinian Jew who had accepted Jesus' radical message about the kingdom of God. Much time was spent looking through the Gospels in order to understand what Jesus was all about, how he talked, what he did, and most importantly, the reasons behind his words and deeds. Due to a lack in time we did not look at the rest of the New Testament, nor did we incorporate Paul's contribution to Christianity.

### *Our conclusions from part 1*

In part one of this class, we focused on understanding the worldview of the disciples before the resurrection of Jesus. In essence we learned how to think like Jews of the second temple period<sup>1</sup>. In particular we came to learn not only a typical form of Judaism but a very specific, apocalyptic form of Judaism centered on the message and authority of Jesus. The major elements of their worldview were:

## First Century Judaism

1. Genesis theology
2. the land promise
3. the king promise
4. the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
5. the Torah
6. the Temple
7. judgment and restoration,
8. history

## The Kingdom of God

1. Physical, Political Reign of God
2. The Message about the Kingdom as near
3. Two Groups
4. Reversals
5. Grim Outlook for the Disciples in this age
6. Bright Future for the Disciples
7. Wait for God to act

## Jesus as Authority

1. He has "insider information" about reality (and the spiritual world behind it).
2. Jesus has power/authority over sickness, nature, and demons

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<sup>1</sup> Second Temple Judaism is the form of Judaism while the second temple stood. First Temple Judaism ended in 586 bc and the second temple was built in 516 bc. The second temple was destroyed in ad 70. Therefore, Second Temple Judaism was the type of Judaism that flourished between 516 bc and ad 70. This is the kind of Judaism that was in Judea at the time of Jesus. The next stage in Judaism is called rabbinic Judaism which flourished in the diaspora (areas outside of Judea) after the temple was destroyed.

3. Jesus is the Messiah, Son of God, Son of Man
4. Jesus is more than just “the Rabbi” but he is even superior to Moses
5. Jesus is the one who has exclusive access to the Father (cf. Gospel of John)
6. Jesus requires complete loyalty

## Personal Relationship with God

1. Love God with everything (heart, soul, mind, and strength)
2. Trust in God not in five senses (faith)
3. Instruction on Prayer
4. Be genuine in everything
5. God as caring Father
6. Emphasis is not on location but on humility, holiness, faith, and prayer

## We are the True People of God

1. Holiness (live above this age)
2. wholeness among the disciples
3. Love the neighbor as self
4. Love the enemy
5. remnant theology
6. a new way to be the people of God—this is the next stage of Jewish history, to listen to messiah and live his way

### *Where we are headed in part 2*

This worldview is very Jewish and can not even really be considered fully “Christian” though it certainly embraces Jesus as Messiah (remember Peter’s confession in Matthew 16.16). Our next step is to move past the traumatic events leading up to and including the crucifixion of Jesus to the resurrection. This one event, more than any other, drastically affected the earliest followers of Jesus. The resurrection turned the cross on its head and vindicated Jesus’ message and claims. Jesus trained his disciples for the next forty days and commissioned them as witnesses of his resurrection to carry the gospel message from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria to the ends of the earth. Furthermore, Jesus’ ascension and return play a key role in understanding how Christians view the world.

We will take time to study the evangelistic sermons in Acts to understand how the early, post-resurrection Christians shared the news about Jesus. We will start with the day of Pentecost and incorporate the outpouring of the holy spirit into our understanding as the means by which the ascended Jesus is with and in the early Christians. Then we will look at the insight given to Paul about the meaning of the crucifixion as well as the inclusion of the Gentiles. Lastly we will look at how the early Christians lived in an effort to answer the question: “how did their beliefs affect their lives morally?”

## Three Days of Despair

The day that Jesus of Nazareth entered Jerusalem on a donkey with crowds shouting Hosanna and calling out, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord” was a high point for the disciples. The next days were filled with the demonstration in the temple, woes to the Scribes and Pharisees, the answering of difficult questions, and confronting parables. Jesus was confronting the religious leaders of the people head on, publicly, and he was getting away with it. He was outsmarting their maliciously crafted questions and was even telling very pointed parables to reprove his opponents. The disciples must have been in awe of what their master was doing. Then comes the teaching about the end on the Mount of Olives followed by the Last Supper. Next, Jesus and his disciples went up to the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives to pray. Suddenly Judas appeared with the civil authorities and arrested Jesus. What did the disciples do? They fled and all escaped. The next hours were filled with trial after trial in which Jesus was dragged from place to place and accused. Finally, the religious establishment succeeded in boxing Pilate in to deliver Jesus up for crucifixion. This took the disciples completely by surprise even though Jesus had warned them repeatedly that this was going to happen.

### **warning #1, Mark 8:31–32**

31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.

### **warning #2, Luke 9:43–45**

43 And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. But while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing, He said to His disciples, 44 “Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.” 45 But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.

### **warning #3, Luke 18:31–34**

31 Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. 32 “For He will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, 33 and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again.” 34 But the disciples understood none of these things, and the meaning of this statement was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said.

So the disciples quite clearly did not understand that Jesus was going to die. The whole idea of a dying messiah just did not fit with their worldview. This is the power of one’s world view. If something doesn’t fit into a category within it, then the idea is just nonsense. So what went through the disciples’ heads the day Jesus died? One has two options when his messiah gets killed (1) go home or (2) find a new messiah. The disciples were in a state of cognitive dissonance for those three days. Oh, what depths of despair their hearts must have sunk to when they heard the news that

Jesus was dead by report of the women when they came back from Golgotha! One can just imagine the sorts of thoughts that were clashing within them. On the one hand they would be trying to come to terms with the fact that he was dead. "Somehow, we have been deceived...Jesus is not the messiah...he is dead...not only is he dead but he was publicly executed by the state for claiming to be the messiah...he is publicly discredited in the most humiliating way imaginable...and to make everything worse, the Torah says that he is under God's curse because "cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree." But then another whole set of thoughts would rush in: "but he healed the sick...he casted out demon after demon...he was righteous...to think that he was pulling off a great deception is impossible...he was attested by God with miracles...he told the storm to be quiet...he must be the messiah." We can imagine how these two groups of thoughts would wage war in the minds of the disciples. They were confused; at a loss to understand how this could have happened—how Jesus could have been crucified. Perhaps some of them found comfort in denial, not believing that he even really died. Suffice it to say that it was a dark few days between the crucifixion and the resurrection.

But then early Sunday morning...a report came back from the women who had gone to anoint his body...he is not there, he is risen! At first, the idea may have been dismissed as an absurdity from women who had grieved themselves into delusion or else an unkind rouse, a cruel trick, which was completely insensitive. But, bit by bit, person by person came to see the resurrected Jesus. Finally, the last skeptic, Thomas, satisfied himself by seeing Jesus' hands and side. The resurrection changed everything. It said to the disciples that God had in fact vindicated Jesus and his claim to be the messiah. The resurrection meant that God had not cursed Jesus but instead had blessed him. So now the question about Jesus' crucifixion gets framed a little differently. Rather than asking, "why did he die?" they are asking, "why did he have to die?" The majority of the rest of the New Testament is an answer to this question.