

Walking **With Jesus** Ministries

# THINKING GREEK OR HEBREW



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# INTRODUCTION

One of the major causes of the church not truly walking in the ways of Jesus is that we don't truly understand what the ways of Jesus were, and are!

How can you say that, David? Surely we have learned theologians to research and teach, pastors who diligently study and preach the Word, day after day, week after week, year after year. We can have knowledge coming out of our ears from spending time hearing, reading or watching the gospel being expounded in so many different ways.

Yet we continue to miss the point, to misinterpret, to misunderstand, what the walk with Jesus is truly all about. How terrible. How sad. For me, and for you.

How do our misunderstandings arise then?

It is because we come from a Greek rather than a Jewish mindset. And the two are poles apart. In reality, for 2000 years now we have assumed Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Peter, Paul and all, thought in the same way, but with different conclusions, to the many famous Greek philosophers such as Socrates and Plato, those who are responsible for the thought processes underpinning our educational system, and Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, to name but a very few. The Old Testament was translated into Greek in the 3rd century before Jesus, while the New Testament was written in Greek. Unfortunately, much of the intrinsic meaning and understanding of the Jewish culture in which Jesus lived and ministered, was lost in the Greek translation, in the way of thinking of those of us in a Greek thought pattern, dominated world.

Put simply, if we start out on the wrong road, we are most likely to arrive at the wrong destination.

Over the centuries, some people have had truths revealed through revelation

from the Holy Spirit, but generally, these ones have been rejected by the established church, which has preferred to continue in intellectual, religious ways, leading to division and even hatred between believers through different, man-made, interpretations of Scripture. "Jesus *still* weeps!"

In more recent times however, in particular since the re-establishment of the State of Israel, a greater understanding of historical Jewish ways is starting to emerge, being available to those with a desire to seek out truths that have been lost or ignored for the past 2 millennia of the Christian church.

Here, we will look at some of these cultural differences and see how they impact our understanding of what Jesus really was all about. It should be life changing!

We need to learn to understand and think in an Eastern (Hebrew), rather than in our traditional and typical Greek (Western), way. The Gospels, being about the life of Jesus, are written from an Eastern, Jewish perspective while the writings, particularly of Paul, have much more of a Western perspective, as he was writing to a primarily European audience of Gentiles.

Let us begin.....

Acknowledgements: <http://www.followtherabbi.com> and <http://hethathasaneer.com> and <http://www.wildbranch.org>

# WRITING STYLE

## **Greek (Western)**

We think in abstract ideas, using logic, definitions, bullet points etc., to explain our ideas. Prose is our favoured median of writing. We are fact based. For example, let's look at Paul's outline of the qualifications for eldership.

*5 The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. 6 An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. 7 Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. 8 Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. 9 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. (Titus 1:5-9)*

We love doctrine ahead of love itself! We kill each other, formerly literally, now mainly verbally, over it! Doctrine has become more important than Jesus in defining our relationship to other believers!

## **Eastern (Hebrew)**

Hebrew thinkers express truth in a concrete fashion, building word pictures and telling stories. Poetry is their favourite form of expression. Imagery and symbolism are used extensively to explain their ideas. eg. Book of Revelation - written by Jesus through John.

*3 When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" 4 Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large*

*sword. 5 When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. 6 Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!" (Revelation 6:3-6)*

Jesus taught in parables, in word pictures, making spiritual applications out of every day activities. The most famous is the Parable of the Sower.

*3 Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. 9 He who has ears, let him hear." (Matthew 13:3-8)*

And we are all familiar with the beauty and powerful poetry of the Psalms, particularly those of David. What an amazing word picture of God's comfort and love in times of trouble is found in the 23rd Psalm.

*1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.*

*2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,*

*he leads me beside quiet waters,*

*3 he restores my soul.*

*He guides me in paths of righteousness*

*for his name's sake.*

*4 Even though I walk*

*through the valley of the shadow of death,*

*I will fear no evil,*

*for you are with me;*

*your rod and your staff,*

*they comfort me. (Psalm 23:1-4)*

## ***SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY***

1. Jesus is not about theology as such, of which there will always be differences, but relationship with Him and leading a godly life, of us representing Him in the world. He is interested in character, as expressed through the parables, rather than theological knowledge. (Ask the Pharisees!)
2. Be careful not to translate imagery and symbolism literally, looking instead for the spiritual principles that undergird it.
3. Grasp hold of the emotions expressed in the Psalms, Lamentations and other spiritual songs, for the feelings expressed, the problems experienced and overcome, are as applicable now as they were when they were written.
4. Following Jesus is relational and experiential in the Hebrew, not theoretical, philosophical or theological as in the Greek.

# NUMBERS

## Greek (Western)

We view numbers very simply, as a quantity. So 1 means a single measure of what it is referring to. The number 2 is a double measure and 3, a triple measure. Combined together, there would be 6 items or units of measure. It is so straightforward, that it is difficult for us to conceive that numbers could be looked at in any different way.

## Eastern (Hebrew)

While Hebrew thinkers also use numbers to count, their primary understanding and application of numbers is as a quality or symbol. To Westerners it is as if it is a 'secret code' but for the Jews it comes naturally.

Having knowledge of the Eastern, or spiritual, meaning of the various numbers, will help deepen our understanding of Scripture.

**1-----God** *4 There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:4)*

**2-----Witness** *7 Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits. (Mark 6:7)*

**3-----The Godhead** *40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (Matthew 12:40)*

**4-----Earth/Man** *7 When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog*

and Magog—to gather them for battle. (Revelation 20:7-8)

**5-----Atonement or Grace** 4 *They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 They were not given power to kill them, but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man. (Revelation 9:4-5)*

**6-----Fallen man** 14 *Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath." (Luke 13:14)*

**7-----Completion, Perfection, Maturity** *I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues—last, because with them God's wrath is completed. (Revelation 15:1)*

**8-----New Beginnings, Resurrection** 28 *About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. 29 As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. (Luke 8:28-9)*

**9-----Eternal perfection** 26 *"On the fifth day prepare nine bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. (Numbers 29:26)*

**10----Trial and testing** 8 *"Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? 9 And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.'* (Luke 15:8-9)

**12----Divine government** *A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. (Revelation 12:1)*

**40----Trial and testing** 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.  
3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." (Matthew 4:2)

**50----Anointing** 57 "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" 58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" (John 8:57-8)

**144---(12x12) New man in Christ, Ultimate government of God** Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. (Revelation 14:1)

**200---Insufficiency** 20 Achan replied, "It is true! I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. This is what I have done: 21 When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath." (Joshua 7:20-21)

**300---Full deliverance** 14 So the king commanded that this be done. An edict was issued in Susa, and they hanged the ten sons of Haman. 15 The Jews in Susa came together on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar, and they put to death in Susa three hundred men, but they did not lay their hands on the plunder. (Esther 9:14-15)

**50x6=300-Anointed man** 7 The LORD said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the other men go, each to his own place." 8 So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites to their tents but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others. (Judges 7:7-8)

**666---Man setting himself up as God** 18 This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666. (Revelation 13:18)

## ***SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY***

1. The understanding of the meanings placed on numbers helps increase our depth of understanding what God is saying to us in the Scriptures. These verses are but a few examples of this.
2. Witnessing in pairs is the recommended way.
3. Knowing numerical meanings adds understanding to the Book of Revelation, particularly.

# **KINGDOM OF GOD (ETERNAL LIFE)**

## **Greek (Western)**

We view the kingdom of God (eternal life) as being separated from this world, a place to go to when earthly life ends. Hence, particularly amongst Pentecostal Christians, there is an (unbiblical) preoccupation with the (unbiblical) rapture. 'Zap me out of here before the Tribulation Lord!' is a common prayer. Much heated discussion arises in theological circles about whether the rapture will be 'pre', 'mid' or 'post-trib' (tribulation). This even splits churches and denominations, causing division in the body. How sad! Jesus weeps! All because we are bound up by our Greek understanding, through which we separate the natural from the spiritual.

The Rapture Doctrine originated in 1830, the result of a vision experienced by a Scottish lady, Miss Margaret Macdonald, who was ill at the time. It was unknown in the church before then. This 'feel good' idea of people being rescued from end time tribulation was promoted by Rev Edward Irving of the Catholic Apostolic Church before being theologically developed by John Darby, founder of the Plymouth Brethren. It has now spread to become widely accepted in many areas of the church.

Again, the foundation of the rapture is based on the Greek thought premise that eternal life, the kingdom of God, is separate from the natural world and is inherited only upon death.

## **Eastern (Hebrew)**

Hebrew thought however, sees eternal life and God's kingdom as beginning in this life. Eternal life therefore, is a life lived in harmony with God during our present, earthly existence.

24 *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. (John 5:24)*

Eternal life is knowing God and believing in Jesus. Jesus prayed at Gethsemane.....

3 *Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. (John 17:3)*

And Paul to Timothy.....

12 *Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (1 Timothy 6:12)*

For Jesus is eternal life! The eternal life of Jesus lives in us!

20 *We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. (1 John 5:20)*

Our Greek based translations do not convey this present oneness with God adequately. For the Jews, this just comes naturally, for thoughts, beliefs and actions are intertwined as one. We are to become one with Him - now.

17 *But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:17)*

This understanding adds new meaning to the Lord's Prayer, which has been spoken billions of times, but rarely understood.

*10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10)*

God's kingdom is being built on earth - now! What a revelation. Thank you Lord!

### ***SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY***

1. The understanding of this 'kingdom now' principle is the basis of the apostolic/kingdom movement that is arising throughout the world today. Unlike previous movements of God, which have moved out from one place, person or group, the revelation of the kingdom is now being given through the Holy Spirit to people all round the world. It is essentially a personal revelation, for personal conviction is necessary to live the kingdom lifestyle in a generally disbelieving church, and secular, world.

2. We are being called to live and work out our faith in practical ways, to demonstrate the kingdom to others. Indeed, to be His kingdom representatives in the world!

3. To be kingdom, present as well as future, centred.

4. To desire holiness and righteousness, allowing Jesus to change us, in order to become a member of the 'bride of Christ' for whom Jesus is returning.....

*9 Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God." (Revelation 19:9)*

# COMMUNITY v INDIVIDUAL

## Greek (Western)

The Greek focus is on the individual.

Let's face it, in our society, 'I' is the most important letter in the alphabet!  
'What's in it for me?'

In the church too, our focus is on what Jesus will do for us..... Jesus loves you. (true) 'Jesus saves' you. (true) Jesus will make you happy. (not true) Onward to the ultimate 'I'..... Jesus will make you rich! (not true) For our natural mind is focused on 'taking', not giving.

## Eastern (Hebrew)

The Hebrew focus, on the other hand, is on the community in relationship with God.

This is the pattern of the Old Testament, with God choosing to work firstly through the families of the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc).....

*8 The child grew and was weaned, and on the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast. 9 But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, 10 and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac." 11 The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son. 12 But God said to him, "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. 13 I will make the son of the maidservant into a nation also, because he is your offspring." (Genesis 21:8-13)*

We find this difficult to understand and accept, but the interests of the community, of the continuation of the godly line, was put ahead of the interests of the individual. Ironically, the rejected Esau then became the spiritual root of today's Muslim faith!

This sense of community continued through the chequered history of the nation of Israel, where effectively, the King represented the people before God, either for good or for evil.....

*19 Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem two years. His mother's name was Meshullemeth daughter of Haruz; she was from Jotbah. 20 He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done. 21 He walked in all the ways of his father; he worshiped the idols his father had worshiped, and bowed down to them. 22 He forsook the LORD, the God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD..... 26 He was buried in his grave in the garden of Uzza. And Josiah his son succeeded him as king. 1 Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. His mother's name was Jedidah daughter of Adaiah; she was from Bozkath. 2 He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and walked in all the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left. (2 Kings 21:19-22, 26-22:2)*

Moving on to New Testament times, it is easy now to understand the confusion of Nicodemus, a celebrated elder, who naturally thought the spiritual state of the nation was in the ruling council's hands. Then Jesus turned this world on its head by proclaiming that salvation was now a personal choice.....

*Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. 2 He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him." 3 In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." 4 "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" 5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter*

*the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." 9 "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked. 10 "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? 11 I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. 12 I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? 13 No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. 14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. 16 "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. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. (John 3:1-18)*

However, the sense of community was not lost in the early church, where the good of the group as a whole was put ahead of the interests of the individual.....

#### *The Believers Share Their Possessions*

*32 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. 33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. 34 There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales 35 and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need. (Acts 4:32-5)*

Jesus would have approved.

## **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

While salvation is now a personal decision, our ongoing community response is to be one of giving rather than taking.....

*3 To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.” (Mark 12:33)*

2. 'Community' is focused on caring and sharing, of putting other's needs ahead of our own.

3. Religious form is superfluous. It is how we live in our community that truly reflects the genuineness of our salvation.

# ERROR/SIN

## **Greek (Western)**

Greek thought primarily views sin as a wrong belief or incorrect thinking. The mind is blamed for the actions of the will. Excuses abound for sin. Spiritually we emphasize what a person knows about faith. Hence we lift up knowledge about Jesus, such as is gained from theological learning institutions. Degrees, diplomas or other qualifications have become a prerequisite for spiritual appointments.

## **Eastern (Hebrew)**

Hebrews view sin as wrong behaviour. They emphasize what a person does in response to faith.

The parable of the Good Samaritan is the most famous example.

*30 In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' 36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" 37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise." (Luke 10:30-37)*

The reason that Jesus hated the Pharisees so much was their spiritual hypocrisy - which would be pretty acceptable in our day too!

*25 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. 27 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. 28 In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. (Matthew 23:25-8)*

And, of course, thoughts, words and actions not agreeing, cost Ananias and Sapphira their lives! The church was afraid then and should be so now!

#### *Ananias and Sapphira*

*Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. 2 With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. 3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? 4 Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God." 5 When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. 6 Then the young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.*

*7 About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price." 9 Peter said to her, "How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also." 10 At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. 11 Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.*

*(Acts 5:1-11)*

***SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY***

1. Actions speak louder than words. Words and actions must agree.
2. The proof of salvation isn't a verbal statement, prayer or even a written pledge, but a life lived under the control, and in the image, of Jesus.
3. Ministry is a calling, not a profession.
4. Knowledge about Jesus is good, but a life changed by Jesus brings salvation and eternal life.

# EXISTENCE OF GOD

## Greek (Western)

We try to prove the existence of God. How does one prove that God exists? Theologians put forward the following arguments.....

*The arguments generally adduced by theologians in proof of the being of God are:*

*(1.) The a priori argument, which is the testimony afforded by reason.*

*(2.) The a posteriori argument, by which we proceed logically from the facts of experience to causes. These arguments are,*

*(a) The cosmological, by which it is proved that there must be a First Cause of all things, for every effect must have a cause.*

*(b) The teleological, or the argument from design. We see everywhere the operations of an intelligent Cause in nature.*

*(c) The moral argument, called also the anthropological argument, based on the moral consciousness and the history of mankind, which exhibits a moral order and purpose which can only be explained on the supposition of the existence of God. Conscience and human history testify that "verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth."*

*Easton, M. G., M. A. D. D., Easton's Bible Dictionary, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1996.*

Western thought makes us very sceptical of anything but the physical world.

## Eastern (Hebrew)

The Hebrew assumes the existence of God. From Eaton again.....

*The existence of God is taken for granted in the Bible. There is nowhere any argument to prove it. He who disbelieves this truth is spoken of as one devoid of understanding (Ps. 14:1).*

Easton, M. G., M. A. D. D., *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1996.

In Psalm 14:1 it says.....

*1 The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. (Psalm 14:1)*

The attributes of God are summarised in the Old Testament by Moses.....

*5 Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. 6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation." 8 Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped. (Exodus 34:5-8)*

..... and in the New.....

*11 All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!" (Revelation 7:11-12)*

...which confirms that Jesus too is God bestowing on Him similar attributes.....

*11 Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. 12 In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" ((Revelation 5:11-12)*

What a place of privilege the Jews come from! For God has been God for them from time immemorial!

### ***SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY***

1. We need to understand and take confidence from the fact that we are grafted in to the spiritual root of the Jewish experience of 1000's of years of knowing God.

*17 If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, (Romans 11:17)*

2. We can enjoy the benefits of our 'new ancestry'!

*16 If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches. (Romans 11:16)*

3. We must witness to the Jews and encourage them to be re-grafted into the roots they have been removed from, heeding the warning that we can be removed from the holy root again also.

*22 Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. 23 And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24 After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree! (Romans 11:22-4)*

# DESCRIBING GOD

## Greek (Western)

We focus on the being of God.

We like to imagine God as a 'super-sized' human being! We look at the creation of man as being in the physical image of God.....

*26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:26-7)*

Whereas, as Matthew Henry explains, the image is in the spiritual.....

*God's image upon man consists in these three things:-1. In his nature and constitution, not those of his body (for God has not a body), but those of his soul. This honour indeed God has put upon the body of man, that the Word was made flesh, the Son of God was clothed with a body like ours and will shortly clothe ours with a glory like that of his. And this we may safely say, That he by whom God made the worlds, not only the great world, but man the little world, formed the human body, at the first, according to the platform he designed for himself in the fulness of time. But it is the soul, the great soul, of man, that does especially bear God's image. The soul is a spirit, an intelligent immortal spirit, an influencing active spirit, herein resembling God, the Father of Spirits, and the soul of the world.*

*Henry, Matthew, Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers) 1997.*

We seek to define God by the wonders of the physical world about us. Its form, its beauty, and the miraculous for which there is no other explanation. We

rationalize God.

## **Eastern (Hebrew)**

Hebrews focus on relationship with God.

Some bragged about their relationship with God.

*17 Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God; (Romans 2:17)*

What God looks like, or even natural wonders are not the focus of Jewish thought. The Psalms major on relationship with God. As so many were written by King David, it explains why God considered *David son of Jesse a man after my own heart;*

The Psalms are all about relationship, in both good times and bad.....

*7 Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. 8 Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. 9 Lift up your heads, O you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. 10 Who is he, this King of glory? The LORD Almighty— he is the King of glory. Selah (Psalm 24:7-10)*

*28 You are my God, and I will give you thanks; you are my God, and I will exalt you. (Psalm 118:22)*

*7 The LORD reigns forever; he has established his throne for judgment. 8 He will judge the world in righteousness; he will govern the peoples with justice. 9 The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. 10 Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you. 11 Sing praises to the LORD, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done. (Psalm 9:7-11)*

God is a spirit, as we see when He appeared to Elijah.....

*11 The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. 13 When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. (1 Kings 19:11-13a)*

And, in the New Testament too, we are to worship our spirit God in spirit and in truth.....

*23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23-4)*

Selah.

### **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. We need to take our focus off the natural and look to the spiritual.
2. God is not interested in great buildings and religious ceremonies. He is interested in you! He wants to build a deep personal relationship with you. It does not matter whether you are beautiful or ugly, talented or simple, of high position or low; God loves you and wants to know you better, so He can then share more of Himself with you.
3. The end time kingdom church, the bride for whom Jesus is returning is not a new denomination but is being built informally, on the basis of relationship, firstly with God and also with one another.

# FAITH

## **Greek (Western)**

We see faith as being intellectual. We express faith in creeds and doctrine, using support texts to support and prove our beliefs.

This speaks particularly of men, especially those with a theological interest or training, who primarily happen to be the ones in ministry and those of major influence in churches and denominations. Unfortunately creeds and doctrines differ, depending upon the supporting texts used and human interpretation of them. This gives rise to division in the church. These people concentrate on the Epistles, for the foundations of doctrine are found there.

Women, on the other hand, both in the natural and the spiritual, are much more relational. We will see shortly, that this is more akin to the Hebrew approach to faith. This helps explain why 2/3 of the church is women and that they are more ecumenical than men, for they look at things from a different perspective.

While theology, organisation and order have their place, they are currently given too much focus over and above a genuine relationship with Jesus.

## **Eastern (Hebrew)**

Hebrews see faith as relational and personal. They express faith in terms of their relationship with God rather than as a rationalisation.

There are two occasions recorded in the Gospels, interestingly both involving Gentiles, which Jesus used to show the Jews who had lost faith, what faith is all about. These are.....

### *The Faith of the Centurion*

*5 When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. 6 "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering." 7 Jesus said to him, "I will go and heal him." 8 The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." 10 When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. 11 I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." 13 Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that very hour. (Matthew 8:5-13)*

And.....

### *The Faith of the Canaanite Woman*

*21 Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. 22 A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession." 23 Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us." 24 He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." 25 The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. 26 He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs." 27 "Yes, Lord," she said, "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." 28 Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour. (Matthew 15:21-28)*

Faith comes through relationship with Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, not by

observance of the Law (or having 'correct' theology).

*10 All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." 11 Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." 12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." 14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. (Galatians 3:10-14)*

**A TESTIMONY FROM DAVID** My faith has been built upon experiences where I have had to trust the Lord, not upon theological learning. The most memorable one for me, which has carried me through more recent difficult times, was when I went to Africa for 2 months on 50 cents a day! Had I thought about it rationally, I wouldn't have gone! I spent all but \$2 of my \$30 during the first week, then the Lord starting providing. I left Africa 7 weeks later 'cent-less' but having been provided for, for the time I was there. My faith was increased dramatically through this amazing experiential relationship with Jesus!

### ***SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY***

1. We talk about being 'born again', about developing a personal relationship with Jesus, then argue about a pre, mid or post-trib rapture! No wonder so many quickly lose faith! We need a new emphasis on discipleship, a sharing of day to day life experience, to build up personal faith experiences in new believers.

2. The church needs to understand that relationship - with Jesus and each other - is more important than fine points of theology, about which there will always

be disagreement.

3. Individually, we need to spend time with Jesus, being prepared to listen to Him, letting Him change our life, and be prepared to take risks, to step out in faith, as He guides us.

4. To understand that trust, not logic, is the true foundation of faith.

# ULTIMATE TRUTH

## **Greek (Western)**

We view the ultimate in truth as being scientific and rational. We focus on how things are done, both in Scripture and in life. We come to believe in truth as we think things logically through.

In the natural, arguments such as creation versus evolution are hugely important to us. Logic and reason are generally the foundation of our faith.

We also analyse revival. When it occurs we work out what God is doing and proceed do it for Him! The revival dies.

Men are particularly susceptible to the tyranny of logic.

## **Eastern (Hebrew)**

Hebrews see the ultimate in truth as being religious and experiential. When looking at Scripture they focus on what was done and who did it. They come to believe truth as they experience it.

Hence the great interest and importance the Jewish people place on history and inheritance, on genealogy. Matthew, as a Jew understood this and included the genealogy of Jesus in his Epistle, which was primarily targeted to the Jewish people. It was so important that it was the first thing he wrote about.....

*The Genealogy of Jesus*

*1 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham: 2*

*Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, 3 Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, 4 Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, 5 Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife, 7 Solomon the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asa, 8 Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram, Jehoram the father of Uzziah, 9 Uzziah the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, 10 Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, Amon the father of Josiah, 11 and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon. 12 After the exile to Babylon: Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, 13 Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, Abiud the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, 14 Azor the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Akim, Akim the father of Eliud, 15 Eliud the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, 16 and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. (Matthew 1:1-16)*

Jesus quoted the sins and unrighteous deeds of their forefathers in His teachings. For example.....

*45 One of the experts in the law answered him, "Teacher, when you say these things, you insult us also." 46 Jesus replied, "And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them. 47 "Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your forefathers who killed them. 48 So you testify that you approve of what your forefathers did; they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs. 49 Because of this, God in his wisdom said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute.' 50 Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all. (Luke 11:45-51)*

Faith is enhanced by the experience of the great men of yesteryear.....

*17 By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, 18 even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." 19 Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death. 20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future. 21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff. 22 By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones. 23 By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. 24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. (Hebrews 11:17-24)*

And events that occurred in the past.....

*29 By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned. 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for seven days. (Hebrews 11:29-30)*

**A TESTIMONY FROM DAVID** As the people experience truth, so their faith is built up. I remember a time in Nigeria when a lame man got up his bed and walked. I can't understand it logically. But I did experience God's power moving through my hands and into him. It certainly increased my faith in a greater way than any other theological belief I have ever had!

## **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. Just do it! We can spend a lot of time learning about Jesus but real faith is built through experiencing the power of Jesus in our lives.

2. We are not to get so entranced by minor points of theology that we miss the point of truly 'walking with Jesus'.
3. We must let Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, lead and guide us in our daily walk, growing in faith as we experience more of Him in our life.
4. Do not try to outthink God!

# TRUTH OVER TIME

## **Greek (Western)**

Greek thinkers see truth as static and unchanging. With our scientific approach, we believe that, although we may not fully understand all truth, it is out there, just waiting to be discovered.

## **Eastern (Hebrew)**

Hebrew thinkers see truth as unfolding. Truth is revealed layer upon layer, over time.

*3 Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell. (Psalm 43:3)*

*11 Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. (Psalm 86:11)*

A classic example of this difference in thinking is found in the different cultures attitudes towards prophecy. We look at prophecy as having a single fulfilment while in Jewish culture prophecy has ongoing applications through the ages.

The most important failure of Greek, or Western, thought in the area of unfolding truth is in our understanding of the kingdom of God.

Similarly, we view the kingdom as being in one place, which is found in heaven, up in the sky, once we die. What we fail to understand is that this is only one aspect of the truth. For the kingdom of God is multi-dimensional. If it were not so, how could we pray in the 'Lord's Prayer'.....

*10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10b)*

The truth that the Lord is revealing today is that His kingdom is indeed here, on earth, as well as there, in heaven! As Greek thinkers, we have great difficulty in getting our heads around this concept. Also, it is 'inconvenient', for the excuse for living a less than holy life here on the 'devil's earth', suddenly disappears!

The reality is, as disciples, we are in the kingdom, and are to live a kingdom lifestyle from the moment in time we commit ourselves to Jesus.

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2)*

We need to understand that this reality of the kingdom is for us in the here and now.

*The Coming of the Kingdom of God*

*20 Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, 21 nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:20-21)*

It is firstly spiritual.....

*17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, (Romans 14:17)*

but is to become physical in the way we live our lives.....

*Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and live a life of love, just as*

*Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. 3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. 4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. 5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. (Ephesians 5:1-5)*

We are to be the light of the kingdom in the world.....

*14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-17)*

### **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. We are God's kingdom in the world.
2. Is His kingdom light shining out of us?
3. A kingdom lifestyle is required of all true followers of Jesus.

# **BORN AGAIN**

***3 In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." (John 3:3)***

## **Greek (Western)**

Greek thinkers consider the so-called 'Sinners Prayer' as the requirement for non-believers to be 'born again'. Salvation is related primarily to a decision of the mind, requiring minimal evidence of changed behaviour.

This position is justified primarily through Galatians 5:1.....

*It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (Galatians 5:1)*

Unfortunately the verses later in the same passage are ignored.....

*13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. 14 The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 15 If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. (Galatians 5:13-15)*

## **Eastern (Hebrew)**

Hebrew thinkers understand being 'born again' as a complete lifestyle change. This involves a full commitment of mind, emotions and will, which will be reflected in behavioural change and obedience to God's will.

Words have different meanings, or nuances of meaning, in different cultures. Nicodemus, who asked the original question of Jesus as to the requirement for

salvation, made the same mistake we do, in relating being *born again* to a physical experience.

*4 "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" (John 3:4)*

However, the word 'born' in the Hebrew of the time of Jesus was 'yalad', meaning 'bring forth'. So Jesus was not talking about a physical birthing experience, but rather, 'bringing forth a choice of action' by the hearer. The results of the two alternative behavioural decisions are clearly set out in John 3:16-21. It is particularly clear in the Amplified Version.

Firstly, making the behavioural decision to follow Jesus.....

*16For God so greatly loved and dearly prized the world that He [even] gave up His only begotten ([d]unique) Son, so that whoever believes in (trusts in, clings to, relies on) Him shall not perish (come to destruction, be lost) but have eternal (everlasting) life. 17For God did not send the Son into the world in order to judge (to reject, to condemn, to pass sentence on) the world, but that the world might find salvation and be made safe and sound through Him. 18He who believes in Him [who clings to, trusts in, relies on Him] is not judged [he who trusts in Him never comes up for judgment; for him there is no rejection, no condemnation--he incurs no damnation]; but he who does not believe (cleave to, rely on, trust in Him) is judged already [he has already been convicted and has already received his sentence] because he has not believed in and trusted in the name of the only begotten Son of God. [He is condemned for refusing to let his trust rest in Christ's name.] (John 3:16-18 AMP)*

..... or the alternative, not to change our lifestyle.....

*19The [basis of the] judgment (indictment, the test by which men are judged, the ground for the sentence) lies in this: the Light has come into the world, and people have loved the darkness rather than and more than the Light, for their works (deeds) were evil. 20For every wrongdoer hates (loathes, detests) the Light, and will not come*

*out into the Light but shrinks from it, lest his works (his deeds, his activities, his conduct) be exposed and reprov'd. (John 3:19-20 AMP)*

And the result for the true follower of Christ.....

*21 But he who practices truth [who does what is right] comes out into the Light; so that his works may be plainly shown to be what they are--wrought with God [divinely prompted, done with God's help, in dependence upon Him]. (John 3:21 AMP)*

This change in lifestyle is also proclaimed by Paul in Romans. It is through holiness that eternal life is obtained.....

*22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:22-3)*

The 'gift of God' most often refers to the Holy Spirit, and it is through Him that our life is to be transformed. The Bible confirms, in the final chapter of Revelation, the free gift of salvation, resulting in the life changing work of the Holy Spirit, leads to holiness, and the inheritance of eternal life. The words of Jesus, followed by the Spirit and the bride, through John, say.....

*12 "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. 14 "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. 15 Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. 16 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star." 17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of (eternal) life."*

(Revelation 22:12-16)

## **SUMMARY**

The church today views salvation as a **decision** of the mind, but Jesus taught the necessity of a total life **transformation**.

## **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. The church must move from the 'easy Christianity' teaching of the sufficiency of the (unbiblical) 'sinners prayer' to a call for true repentance, resulting in a changed life.
2. Discipleship, to help the new believer deal with the huge upheaval of leaving the old for the transformed new life in Jesus, must truly become a prime role of the church.
3. To witness effectively to Jews and Muslims, our actions and lives must reflect the words we speak.
3. Finally, from a father of the faith.....

*"Christ will be master of the heart, and sin must be mortified. If your life is unholy, then your heart is unchanged, and you are an unsaved person. The Savior will sanctify His people, renew them, give them a hatred of sin, and a love of holiness. The grace that does not make a man better than others is a worthless counterfeit. Christ saves His people, not IN their sins, but FROM their sins. Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." C.H. Spurgeon*

# DOCTRINE

## Greek (Western)

Church membership is based upon agreement with the theological precepts of the particular church. This process started early on in the history of the church with the '*Apostles Creed*' (AD200-900), the '*Nicene Creed*' (AD381), developed under Emperor Constantine, and the '*Athanasian Creed*' (AD500), being early, widely accepted, examples. Today, each denomination (and non-denomination!) has its theological statement upon which the particular grouping or church operates. Theological differences and disputes cause division and distrust between the multitudes of Christian groups. These differences assume greater importance than what should unite, that is, the person of Jesus Christ.

## Eastern (Hebrew)

Synagogue membership required people adhere to a certain way of living. Divergent views abounded, but all those who lived a godly lifestyle were accepted. Until the Middle Ages, there was no overall Jewish doctrinal statement or creed. At that time one was developed by Rambam, in order to counter arguments of Christian apologists. This creed concept however, was foreign to the Judaism of Jesus' time.

When Jesus was asked how His true followers would be identified, he answered....

*15 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16 **By their fruit you will recognize them.** Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus, **by their fruit you will recognize them.***

*(Matthew 7:15-20)*

Furthermore, He proceeded to reinforce His point about behaviour versus mere mental assent.....

*21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" (Matthew 7:21-3)*

Amongst others, the parable of 'The Sheep and the Goats'(disciples v intellectual believers) makes this point forcefully. On Judgment Day.....

*31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. (Matthew 25:31-3)*

Why? .....

*34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'" (Matthew 25:34-6)*

This was followed by an intellectual defence for the Pharisees lack of action.....

*37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger*

*and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' (Matthew 25:37-9)*

To which Jesus replied.....

*40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' 41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' 44 "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' 45 "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' (Matthew 25:40-45)*

Followed by His words of reward and judgment.....

*46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." (Matthew 25:46)*

Indeed, actions speak louder than words!

## **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

Now for something different here! A 'joke', which I trust will challenge you too!

### **What is Your Faith?**

I was walking across a bridge one day, and I saw a man standing on the edge, about to jump off. So I ran over and said, "Stop! Don't do it!"

"Why shouldn't I?" he said.

I said, "Well, there's so much to live for!"

He said, "Like what?"

I said, "Well...are you religious or atheist?"

He said, "Religious."

I said, "Me too! Are you Christian or Buddhist?"

He said, "Christian."

I said, "Me too! Are you Catholic or Protestant?"

He said, "Protestant."

I said, "Me too! Are you Episcopalian or Baptist?"

He said, "Baptist!"

I said, "Wow! Me too! Are you Baptist Church of God or Baptist Church of the Lord?"

He said, "Baptist Church of God!"

I said, "Me too! Are you original Baptist Church of God, or are you Reformed Baptist Church of God?"

He said, "Reformed Baptist Church of God!"

I said, "Me too! Are you Reformed Baptist Church of God, reformation of 1879,

or Reformed Baptist Church of God, reformation of 1915?"

He said, "Reformed Baptist Church of God, reformation of 1915!"

I said, "Die, heretic scum!" and pushed him off.

**Jesus generated 'Deeds', not 'Creeds', are the true measure of faith.**

# JUSTIFICATION/SANCTIFICATION

## Greek (Western)

Justification (Just as if I never sinned) is seen as the key element of Christianity.

Interestingly, most of the references to justification are directed towards Gentiles. For example, it is found in the Old Testament, as prophesied by Isaiah.....

*11 After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. (Isaiah 53:11)*

.....and then in the New.....

*8 The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." (Galatians 3:8)*

We are justified through faith in Jesus.....

*24 So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.  
25 Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. (Galatians 3:24)*

As we have seen previously, this concept of a 'mind decision' appeals greatly to our Greek-trained, ascendancy of thought, patterns. However, justification is to be only the first step in our 'walk with Jesus'.

## **Eastern (Hebrew)**

Sanctification (Put simply, living a holy and righteous life) is regarded as the most important. In the Jewish culture, actions speak louder than words. Hence, living a godly life is their focus.

*3 It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, 5 not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5)*

Sanctification is to go hand in hand with justification.....

*9 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)*

Jesus was holy and righteous.....

*14 You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. (Acts 3:14)*

and we are called to the same walk, as seen in the example of Paul, Silas and Timothy.....

*10 You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. (1 Thessalonians 2:10)*

Again, recognising the holiness and righteousness of Jesus in the final days.....

*2 And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God 3 and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. 4 Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed." (Revelation 15:2-4)*

For the Lord is returning for a sanctified, holy and righteous church.....

*6 Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.*

*7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. 8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) (Revelation 19:6-8)*

Amen.

## **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. Discipleship, following 'conversion', is essential in order to bring a believer into the fullness of faith Jesus requires of us all.
2. Conversion of those of an Eastern persuasion (Jews and Muslims) is dependent upon our actions rather than our words.
3. Jesus is to return for a pure white, sanctified, holy and righteous bride. We can become that church, or else, God will wait for another generation. The choice is yours, the choice is mine. What will our choice be?

# LOGIC v FAITH

## Greek (Western)

We attempt to explain and justify everything according to human understanding. We apply *linear logic* to understanding the Bible. This can be likened to lining up dominos on their edge in a line. Push the first one over and that pushes over the next, and so on down the line. Problems arise where a domino is missing (no knowledge), or is placed outside the line (an apparent contradiction in Scripture).

One example is the apparent contradiction of predestination and freewill.

God's order has been 'predestined'.....

*29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. (Romans 8:29-30)*

....but we have 'freewill', through prayer, to change God's mind.....

*7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. (Matthew 7:7-8)*

Hence we get a division in the church, and church theology, between those who major on predestination (Calvinism) and freewill (Armenianism) and all shades of opinion in between that divide people, and denominations, one from another! For we cannot accept, from our limited human understanding, that both can be, and are, correct!

## Eastern (Hebrew)

Jews acknowledge that God's wisdom and knowledge is infinite, and is sometimes beyond human understanding. Therefore they accept that there can be apparent contradictions in our sight. They apply *block logic*. While all the facts within a given block are coherent, they accept that one block of facts might present paradoxes and apparent contradictions with another block. They accept the almighty understanding of God.....

*33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! (Romans 11:33)*

.....that affirms that man's knowledge is finite, and limited. Solomon acknowledged this.....

*11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. (Ecclesiastes 3:11)*

An interesting example of this is seen in whether God is visible or not. Most Western Christians will automatically say God is invisible, quoting.....

*24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24)*

Yet God appeared to Abraham in the form of 3 men.....

*The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. 2 Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground.....33 When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home. (Genesis 18:1-2,33)*

.... and to Moses and 73 others.....

*9 Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up 10 and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. (Exodus 24:9-10)*

Now John would have been aware of the Old Testament Scriptures when he wrote his Gospel, but he didn't see a need to explain the difference between the scriptures, as we would have needed to do, looking with Western eyes. John knew that God, in His infinite wisdom, understood, even if John, in his human understanding, didn't. It simply wasn't an issue for John, as it is for us.

### **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. We must understand that God is God, is God! He understands all, even where Scripture is not able to be understood by us. This is true, even when Scripture appears to contradict itself - through our limited eyes of understanding. (A premise that is particularly hard for theologians to accept!)
2. Unnecessary divisions have arisen in the church through different interpretations of Scriptures about which we do not have a full understanding. We all need to repent and reconcile!
3. We must base our theology on the whole of Scripture, not just limited selections of our favourite passages that justify our desired conclusion.
4. May we be gracious and humble enough to accept that we do not have all the answers, and be tolerant and understanding to those who hold to differing viewpoints to ours.

# FAITH AND WORKS

## Greek (Western)

Greek thinkers centre on faith. We give pre-eminence to verses such as....

*17 For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."  
(Romans 1:17)*

and.....

*8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)*

As we have mentioned before, our faith is primarily intellectual. If we 'believe' in our minds we are 'saved', that is all that is required of us to inherit eternal life.

## Eastern (Hebrew)

Jewish thinking, down through the millennia, has been focused on faith, shown to be real through works, by living a lifestyle that reflects what they believe intellectually. We tend to skip verse 10 of the passage quoted above from Ephesians, but it is integral to the whole.....

*10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)*

James, ever the practical person, was even more definite when he said.....

*14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can*

*such faith save him? 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. (James 2:14-17)*

He understood the Greek based thinking, arguing.....

*18 But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. 19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. (James 2:18-19)*

and countered with the examples of Abraham.....

*20 You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? 21 Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. 23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. 24 You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone. (James 2:20-24)*

and Rahab.....

*25 In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? 26 As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead. (James 2:25-6)*

Most of the parables of Jesus illustrate both faith and action. Of course, the most famous is the Parable of the Good Samaritan. It concludes.....

*36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the*

*hands of robbers?" 37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise." (Luke 10:36:7)*

The Parable of the Sower makes this point too. We are to 'produce crops', not just intellectually believe.....

*23 But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown." (Matthew 13:23)*

Again, there is to be a change in our character as a result of our conversion, referred to as developing the 'fruit of the Spirit'.....

*22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. (Galatians 5:22-3)*

Yes, our faith is to be reflected in action, resulting in a changed life.

## **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. Conversion needs to be accompanied by discipling of new believers.
2. Works are to be a reflection of the God within us to the outside world. To achieve this, they need to be done in the community, not just within the church environment.
3. Our teaching and beliefs about evangelism need to be changed to emphasise the need for a changed life, rather than just being an intellectual decision.

## **DIVISION WITHIN UNITY**

### **Greek (Western)**

Logically, there can only be one truth, so those who disagree with us are automatically wrong. Divisions within the church result.

In Western, scientific based thought, there can only be one truth. Of course, that is the truth and understanding that we have, built upon the theology in which we believe! Therefore that 'church down the road' that has some different beliefs to us cannot, at best, be as good as ours or, at worst, are regarded as heretics and not part of the kingdom of God. We are intolerant of the views of others for, in our mindset, there can only be one truth - ours!

This is very different to the Eastern way of thinking.

### **Eastern (Hebrew)**

Jewish thinking allows for differences of opinion, without putting aside the greater picture of the good of the nation.

While in Jesus time, and since, there has been plenty of robust discussion and disagreement between groups with differing beliefs about Scripture and life, e.g. the Pharisees and Sadducees, (broadly speaking, conservative and liberal in our terminology), they still regarded each other as being a true part of the kingdom of Israel, for the greater good of the nation was bigger than their differences with each other. Difference was tolerated without causing complete separation.

Paul exhibited this way of thinking when discussing divisions that were arising in the early Roman church.....

*One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. 7 For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. 8 If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. 9 For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. 10 You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. 11 It is written: "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God." (Romans 14:5-11)*

There should be even greater unity in the church than in the world! We are not to follow particular men (or theologies), only God. To the Corinthians he said.....

*Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. 3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? 4 For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men? 5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. (1 Corinthians 3:1-9)*

Jesus too, was strong about this.....

*8 "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. 9 And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. 10 Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ.*

*11 The greatest among you will be your servant. 12 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. (Matthew 23:8-12)*

The ministry role is to bring about unity, not division.....

*11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13)*

May the Lord have mercy upon us as we continue to lift one man above another and pursue policies that divide rather than unite the body of Christ.

### **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. We need to learn that only God has all the answers - and that we are not God!
2. We need to understand and accept that others may have different ideas to us in disputable areas of theology.
3. We need to put the overall good of the body of Christ above the self interest of our own denomination, grouping, (or non-grouping!).
4. We need to take active steps to reconcile with those we have rejected.

# CATHEDRAL v TABERNACLE/TEMPLE

## Greek (Western)

A cathedral is built to be a glimpse of the heaven we are to escape to when we die.

A cathedral was built in such an ornate fashion so as to give attendees a glimpse of what heaven, to which we are to escape to when we die will, in human understanding, be like. This was and is illustrated through the architecture, music, artworks, sculptures, furniture and religious ceremonies, drawing a worldly picture of a perfect heaven, a spiritual nirvana, free of all the suffering and pain we experience here on earth.

While many churches today are not so ornate, the principle remains the same. The church is a temporary refuge where we gather with others of like mind to experience God, before dying or being zapped off this wicked earth in the rapture, to escape this evil world.

This is called a 'dualistic theology', as it teaches the separation of a perfect heaven from an imperfect earth. Verses interpreted to justify this conclusion include.....

*36 Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."*

*(John 18:36)*

and.....

*18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will*



*bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

*(2 Timothy 4:18)*

## **Eastern (Hebrew)**

The Tabernacle/Temple was the dwelling place of God, here upon the earth.

The Jewish perspective however, is entirely different. God was and is to dwell with them, here upon the earth. Their responsibility was to prepare a place for Him to live, as seen in the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon.....

*8 "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. 9 Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.*

*(Exodus 25:8-9)*

God's presence literally filled the Holy Place of the Tabernacle and then the Temple.....

*10 When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the LORD. 11 And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled his temple. (1 Kings 8:10-11)*

The everlasting nature of this, dependent upon the people's obedience, was confirmed by the prophets.....

*26 I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. 27 My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people. 28 Then the nations will know that I the LORD make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever." (Ezekiel 37:26-28)*

Even after the Ark of the Covenant, where the presence of God dwelt between

the 2 cherubim's, had disappeared, Jesus still referred to Herod's, far less grand Temple, as being His Father's house.....

*16 To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" (John 2:16)*

And again, Jesus referred to end times when He said.....

*2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. (John 14:2)*

The analogy was of a Jewish wedding where the husband to be, upon the engagement, went back to his father's house and built a room onto it for his bride to be.

Of course we are to be the bride.....

*For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. (Revelation 19:7b)*

And we are to come down from heaven to live on the earth.....

*2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Revelation 21:2-4)*

The Jewish understanding is that they are to prepare, to help build, the Lord's kingdom upon the earth, now. That is not just an Old Testament concept, but is carried forward into the New, when we are called to pray.....

9 "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

(Matthew 6:9-10)

To finish today we will compare the differences between the Western Cathedral and Eastern Tabernacle/Temple mentalities in their differing understandings of salvation.....

#### 1. THE GOAL OF SALVATION:

*Cathedral Mentality:* To escape this world and go to God's dwelling place in heaven.

*Tabernacle/Temple Mentality:* To prepare a place fit for God's dwelling here, among His people.

#### 2. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN:

*Cathedral Mentality:* Exists in heaven, not upon the earth.

*Tabernacle/Temple Mentality:* Is God's reign among people here upon the earth.

#### 3. THE MESSIAH IS COMING:

*Cathedral Mentality:* In order to take us away from this world.

*Tabernacle/Temple Mentality:* In order to reign over us in this world.

#### 4. MESSAGE:

*Cathedral Mentality:* Get your ticket now or you might miss the train.

*Tabernacle/Temple Mentality:* The kingdom of heaven is coming! Get ready to receive and serve the king.

### **CONCLUSION**

Upon grasping this truth, both our lives and the church will be transformed! For 'walking with Jesus' is not simply a matter of mental acceptance, but requires a lifestyle totally dedicated to fulfilling the will of the Father so that the kingdom

may be prepared for the return of Jesus to rule and reign upon the earth.

Are we willing to pay the price?

# WORSHIP

## AN EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE v A WAY OF LIFE

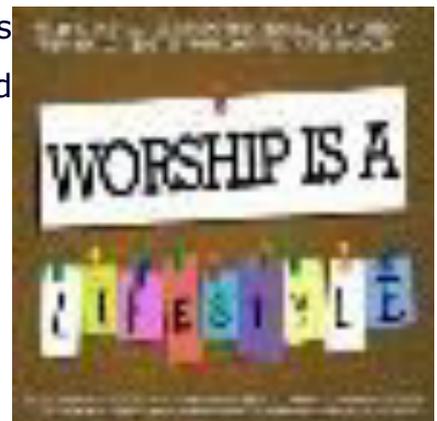
### Greek (Western)

Worship is an experience to be entered into and enjoyed at specific times.

Our approach to worship derives from the Greek concept of *proskuneo*, a specific act of reverence or homage. Many large coliseums were built in which to worship and honour the many different gods of Greece on their various designated celebratory occasions, with music, singing and dancing. People were happy and content after having worshipped.

Does this not sound like our church? We go to special purpose buildings to sing, and perhaps dance, to music provided by the worship team, generally on a Sunday morning. Like the Greeks, it is a special occasion experience, not a general part of our day to day life. Pseudo worship, today too, is found at sports events, where we are generally given to more overt displays of enthusiasm than at church! Again, these are an experience taking us away from the reality of day to day life, for a period of time.

### Eastern (Hebrew)



Worship is a continuous act, being a part of work or service, as well as being practised on special occasions.

In Hebrew culture, worship is considered to be a part of everyday life.

## **Psalm 100**

*A psalm. For giving thanks.*

*1 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.*

*2 Worship the LORD with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs.*

*3 Know that the LORD is God.*

*It is he who made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.*

*4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name.*

*5 For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues through all generations.*

There is no separation of the theological from the practical. Worship is found in looking after your spouse, being at work and while participating in community service.

*12 The LORD will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. 13 The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the LORD your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom. (Deuteronomy 28:12-13)*

Worship is found in the beauty of nature.....

*1 The Mighty One, God, the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to the place where it sets.*

*2 From Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth. (Psalm 50:1-2)*

Worship is seen in our work....

*17 May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us;  
establish the work of our hands for us—  
yes, establish the work of our hands. (Psalm 90:17)*

A practical example of this is found in the *Wife of Noble Character* of Proverbs 31.....

*30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;  
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.  
31 Give her the reward she has earned,  
and let her works bring her praise at the city gate. (Proverbs 31:30-31)*

Observant Jews consider our Western 'worship services' of 1-2 hours a week as serving a part-time God! For we then move back into the secular world until the next week or other worship occasion. While we might get down on bended knees to worship God in the safe environment of our place of worship, we would not dream of doing so at work. For, unlike the Jews, we separate the two, the religious from the secular. I know, for it applies to me too!

## **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. We need to learn to give God thanks in all things, at all times.
2. We need to learn to rely upon God in the secular as well as the spiritual.
3. To do so is the only way we can truly become 'the light of the world' that Jesus desires us to become.

*The Lamp of the Body*

*33 "No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead he puts it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light. 34 Your*

*eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness. 35 See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. 36 Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you.” (Luke 11:33-6)*

# PRAYER

**Greek (Western)** Our prayer is primarily help and request orientated.

In Greek life, prayer was not a consistent everyday event, the gods being called upon when something was wrong or someone had a need. In times of celebration in the great arenas, the gods would be called upon to make the event successful, by leaders praying lengthy and colourful prayers on behalf of the people. The success or failure of the prayer was judged by the results. If fine weather was requested and it rained, the gods were displeased.

Many elements of these early Greek attitudes to prayer remain with us today in our prayer lives. For example, in most services, the minister will pray on behalf of the people. And we will simply agree, by saying 'Amen' (So be it.)

**Eastern (Hebrew)** Hebrew prayer is short, frequent, at set times, and oriented towards thankfulness for what God has done thus building faith for what He will do.

Prayer is regarded as a communal activity even when the people are apart, as they are praying at similar times. Moslems apply a similar principle in their 5 daily prayers facing towards Mecca. It can be communal or individual, but even in the communal, the people pray individually.

This personal communal element is illustrated in the Lord's Prayer which starts not 'my' but 'our', and which is normally said together, more reflecting the Eastern pattern.....

9 *"This, then, is how you should pray:*

*"**Our Father** in heaven, hallowed be your name, (Matthew 6:9)*

Adoration of God is the preamble to most Jewish blessings.....

*"Baruch atah YHVH Elohenu melech haolam"*

or *"Blessed art thou O YHVH OUR Elohiym, King of the Universe ..."*

The result of thankfulness given for past victories and blessings provides the faith to face present battles in life. This was literally so here.....

*When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them, because the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you. (Deuteronomy 20:1)*

Of course, supplication, that is personal requests, have a role in Eastern prayers, but do not assume the place of dominance they do in our own. Most of the Psalms emphasize God's glory and great deeds, even when making requests of Him.....

*19 But you, O LORD, be not far off;*

*O my Strength, come quickly to help me.*

*20 Deliver my life from the sword,*

*my precious life from the power of the dogs.*

*21 Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;*

*save me from the horns of the wild oxen.*

*22 I will declare your name to my brothers;*

*in the congregation I will praise you.*

*23 You who fear the LORD, praise him!*

*All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!*

*Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!*

*24 For he has not despised or disdained*

*the suffering of the afflicted one;*

*he has not hidden his face from him*

*but has listened to his cry for help. (Psalm 22:19-24)*

The major problem, for Jews and Gentiles alike, is we are keener on talking than listening in our prayers. The more disobedient and self-centred we become the less likely we are to listen to what God wants to say to us. For genuine prayer is a two way interaction, us speaking to God, and God speaking to us.....

In the Old Testament.....

*"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. 2 Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. 3 Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David. (Isaiah 55:1-3)*

.....and in the New.....

*3 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. (John 10:3-4)*

May we learn to become as one with our Master and Lord.

### **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. Prayer is a participatory, not a spectator, activity, even when done in groups.
2. Prayer is to be an ongoing regular, and spontaneous, part of our daily lives.
3. Prayer is not a religious exercise, cased in flowery words, but a simple two way conversation between us and God.

4. We need to adore, confess, and give thanks to God, as well as make our requests known to Him.

5. We need to listen to, and obey Him, when He speaks to us.

## LOVE AND HATE

**Greek (Western)** In Greek thought, love and hate are primarily based on emotion.

Generally, love is initiated by feelings or emotion before a commitment is made. Thus we 'fall in love' before making the commitment to get married. (In societies where marriages are arranged, the reverse is the case.) If we then have a negative experience, love can so easily turn into hate, another emotional reaction. In a Christian setting, the evangelist will elicit an emotional response from people before calling them to a commitment to the Lord. Emotional response comes before commitment.

**Eastern (Hebrew)** In Hebrew thought, *ahav* is based on a conscious preference or choice.

Love and hate are not emotional concepts in scriptural thought. With this understanding of love being choice, the Scripture about God loving Jacob and hating Esau can be viewed completely differently.

*An oracle: The word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi.*

### **Jacob Loved, Esau Hated**

*2 "I have loved you," says the LORD. "But you ask, 'How have you loved us?' "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" the LORD says. "Yet I have loved Jacob, 3 but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his mountains into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals." (Malachi 1:1-3)*

The Lord did not 'hate' Esau in an emotional fashion, but rather, he 'chose' Jacob over him.

Similarly, when Jesus said.....

*15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command. (John 14:15)*

If you make a conscious choice to follow me, then you will choose to obey my instructions to you.

Again, when Jesus spoke about mankind loving darkness, He really meant that we make a conscious choice of evil over good.

*19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. (John 3:19)*

The concept of Jesus coming for His bride is now even more interesting. In a traditional Hebrew situation, the father chooses the son's bride. When the vows are made, the bride and groom choose each other. What an amazing analogy! God chooses us for His son Jesus, which we confirm by then choosing to follow Jesus. Take the analogy for the beautiful picture it is, and do not get all confused by arguments of predestination versus freewill. As you can, see both apply here!

So we, the bride then, have chosen to make ourselves ready to receive our groom, Jesus, by living holy and righteous lives.

*7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. 8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)*

*(Revelation 19:7-8)*

Come Jesus, come.

## **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. Jesus requires disciples who have chosen to be fully sold out to Him, not those who have simply made an emotional or mind decision without also living the life of what they supposedly believe.
2. True followers of Jesus are more likely to arise through the example of our actions rather than our words.
3. To reach the Jewish and other Mid-Eastern people particularly, love reflected through action, is essential.

## BLESSINGS AND CURSES

**Greek (Western)** In Greek thought, blessings and curses are related to circumstances.

When something good happens such as a promotion or financial success, a person is blessed. If something bad happens, we consider we are cursed. Adore God more and we will be blessed, on the other hand, ignore him and we will be cursed. Put simply, blessings are when good things happen, curses, when bad things happen.

**Eastern (Hebrew)** In Hebrew thought however, blessings are related to obedience and curses to disobedience.

Good and bad things happen in life, which are totally unrelated to obedience and disobedience. Knowing this, we can better understand the discourse between God, the devil, and Job. God held up Job as an example of one who was willing to suffer for Him, for He knew Job's faith was not dependent upon receiving physical blessings.....

*7 The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it." 8 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." (Job 1:7-8)*

Satan, took the typical Greek thought attitude that Job's faith was only so high because he was materially blessed.....

*9 "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. 10 "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. 11 But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."*

*(Job 1:99-11)*

So God allowed Job to be tested.....

*12 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD. (Job 1:12)*

As we know Job's 3 friends ridiculed him, and Job himself questioned God, but stood firm in his faith. God corrected them.....

*7 After the LORD had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. 8 So now take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and sacrifice a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly. You have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has." 9 So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite did what the LORD told them; and the LORD accepted Job's prayer. (Job 42:7-9)*

As this is the Old Testament, where the kingdom was primarily expressed in the material as opposed to the spiritual of the New Testament, Job was rewarded with material blessings for his obedience.....

*10 After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD made him prosperous again and gave him twice as much as he had before. (Job 42:10)*

We fail to understand, because of our Western way of thinking, that all the promises of God are conditional upon obedience. We all too often take the 'blessings verses' out of context, not looking at the conditions upon which the blessings are based, that precede or follow them. We do not understand that there is a cost to following Jesus.

The classic New Testament example is the Beatitudes, where each of the 9 blessings comes at a cost. For example, if we want mercy, we need to show mercy to others.....

*7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. (Matthew 5:7)*

Jesus concludes this teaching with the statement that we must endure persecution in order to receive the blessings.....

*12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:12)*

Paul too, understood this principle that he participated in the (spiritual New Testament) blessings, only because he was willing to pay the price of obedience.....

*22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. 23 I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. (1 Corinthians 9:20-21)*

This is a profound truth, misunderstood by most believers today.

## **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. The 'Father Christmas' Christianity of 'come to God and all will be well with you' that is so often taught today, is both a dangerous and false doctrine which inevitably ends in disappointment and rejection when it proves not to be true in people's life experience.

2. The primarily spiritual blessings of the New Testament are received by those prepared to pay the price of obedience to the Father's will.

3. Wealth, success and failure, expressed in worldly terms, are normally the result of the circumstances of life, rather than the blessing or cursing of God.
4. The spiritual blessings of God can, and often are, experienced by those in the direst physical and material circumstances.
5. God looks to what we are, rather than how we are or how much we have.

## KNOWING v DOING

**Greek (Western)** The Greek way of thinking is knowledge based, dependent upon the development of logical thought.

In Christian circles too, it is often more important to believe and speak out "the right thing," rather than to live the right way. We are obsessed with creeds, doctrinal statements, Systematic Theologies, orthodoxy vs. heresy, and creating "Evangelical" or "Sabbatarian" or "Trinitarian" theologies.

Prophecy is seen as occurring on a time-line. We need to tick off prophetic events as they happen, in a logical order.

We also are inclined to abandon literal translation of the Scriptures in favour of allegorical explanations.

**Eastern (Hebrew)** Hebrews are concerned with actions, about living a righteous life.

They look to the moral, rather than the intellectual.

They also look to the 'day of the Lord', knowing that He will act in His time, rather than to a specific prophetic timetable.

### A COMPARISON BETWEEN HEBRAIC AND WESTERN THINKING

This table, taken from [www.godward.org](http://www.godward.org) sums up the differences between the two cultures.

WESTERN APPROACH ....HEBRAIC APPROACH

1. Life analysed in precise categories.  
*....Everything blurs into everything else.*
  
2. A split between natural & supernatural  
*....Supernatural affects everything.*
  
3. Linear logic  
*....Contextual or "block" logic*
4. "Rugged Individualism"  
*....Importance of being part of group*
  
5. Equality of persons  
*....Value comes from place in hierarchies*
  
5. Freedom orientation  
*....Security orientation*
  
6. Competition is good  
*....Competition is evil (cooperation is better)*
  
7. Man-centred universe  
*....God/tribe/family-centred universe*
  
8. Worth of person based on money/material possessions/power  
*....Worth derived from family relationships*
  
9. Biological life sacred  
*....Social life supremely important*
  
10. Chance + cause & effect limit what can happen  
*....God causes everything in his universe*

11. Man rules nature through understanding and applying laws of science  
*....God rules everything, so relationship with God determines how things turn out.*

12. Power over others achieved through business, politics and human organizations.

*....Power over others is structured by social patterns ordained by God.*

13. All that exists is the material.

*....The universe is filled with powerful spirit beings*

14. Linear time divided into neat segments. Each event is new.

*....Cyclical or spiralling time. Similar events constantly reoccur.*

15. History is recording facts objectively and chronologically.

*....History is an attempt to preserve significant truths in meaningful or memorable ways, whether or not details are objective facts.*

16. Oriented to the near future

*....Oriented to lessons of history*

17. Change is good = progress

*....Change is bad = destruction of traditions*

18. Universe evolved by chance

*....Universe created by God*

19. Universe dominated and controlled by science and technology

*....God gave man stewardship over his earthly creation, being based on accountability to God.*

20. Material goods = measure of personal achievement

*....Material goods = measure of God's blessing*

21. Blind faith

*....Knowledge-based faith*

22. Time as points on straight line ("at this point in time...")

*....Time determined by content ("In the day that the Lord did...")*

## TO COMPREHEND OR REVERE

**Greek (Western)** The Greeks learn in order to comprehend.

We read the Bible to try to understand more and more about God. We endeavour to develop a 'systematic theology'. We want all our questions answered, all our problems solved, and all contradictions (in our mind) to be resolved. We use the Bible as a textbook, in order to build up a concrete but abstract picture of what an infinite and incomprehensible God is like. We try to reduce God to our own level of understanding.

This trend is intensifying as our levels of human scientific understanding increase in this post-industrial, information age. We are rapidly replacing 'God' with the 'god of science and technology'. We learn in order to use. We want theological answers that can be instantly applied to overcome the problems of life. We try to make the Bible into something it is not, distorting it in the process.

Sadly, we no longer preach the Gospel, cast out demons, heal the sick and make disciples, but rather, we market CD's, books and religious paraphernalia. Preachers are glorified who attract people and money. Books are published, not necessarily for the principles they contain, but because they will appeal to a mass market.

**Eastern (Hebrew)** The Hebrews learn in order to revere.

REVERE: To show devoted deferential honour to: regard as worthy of great honour

SYNONYMS: adore, deify, glorify, worship, reverence, venerate.

Reverence engenders unconditional acceptance rather than analytical understanding.

The Bible teaches, from earliest times, that we are to revere God.....

*4 It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him. (Deuteronomy 13:4)*

An explanation from a Jewish perspective follows.....

*"To the Jewish mind, the understanding of God is not achieved by referring to a Greek way to timeless qualities of Supreme Being, to ideas of goodness and perfection, but rather by sensing the living acts of His concern, to His dynamic attentiveness to man. We speak not of His goodness in general but of His compassion for the individual man in a particular situation"('God in Search of Man' by Abraham Heschel, page 21)*

Faith is not built by ultimate understanding, but through experiencing God's actions in one's life. Jesus taught.....

*36 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" 37 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment." (Matthew 22:36-8)*

And seeing the result of His actions in the lives of others.....

*34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-5)*

This is why we will never truly witness to Jews and Moslems through words only. The Eastern way is to learn from personal experience and the witness of the result of other's personal experience, as reflected through their behaviour.

Experiential love however is not an excuse to justify and accept ungodly behaviour. For reverence and sinful living are mutually exclusive concepts.

This is illustrated in the teachings of Paul, who was regarded as a leader of, what we would call, the fundamentalist 'Nazarene Sect', who preached the 'tough stuff' which scared the governor, Felix, one who thought basically with a Greek mindset!

*5 "We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect..... 25 As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, "That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you." (Acts 24:5,25)*

If we truly revere God we will humble ourselves in order to let God develop the 'fruit of the Spirit' in our lives.....

*22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-5)*

**Understanding is helpful, but application, godly.**

### **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. *Discipleship* (obedience to God) rates higher than *theology* (knowledge of God) every time.
2. Our behaviour is more important to God than our understanding.
3. Worship is not singing spiritual songs to God, but rather, a lifestyle of deep

reverence of God, 24/7.

4. Our church structure needs to reverse the current infatuation with theological degrees and appointed position, to one of seeking for, and honouring, holiness and righteousness in leadership and people alike.

5. Lord, forgive us, for we have sinned.

## THE RESURRECTION 'BODY'

Have you ever wondered why Jesus was resurrected with a physical body? Surely, if the kingdom is purely spiritual, way up there in the sky, a spiritual body would have been better, to show us what our own heavenly body would be like?

**Greek (Western)** In the Greek, the concept of God being interested in both our bodies and spirit is rejected.

We see God being only interested in the spiritual. We spiritualise Biblical prophecy eg. Inventing Replacement Theory, replacing the literal return of the Jews to Israel. (This became an initial, formal reality in 1948!)

We downgrade the physical to being bad; to be shunned or hidden, while the spiritual is elevated to the extreme.

The concept of the Holy Spirit coming to dwell in our physical bodies is a very difficult one for us to accept. (Today my body is wracked with diarrhoea, due to something I ate yesterday! I certainly find it difficult to understand that the Holy Spirit would want to live there! I don't want to today either! Can you see how we think?)

Continuing with the toilet humour, David Pawson relates how that mentions of a Jewish blessing for going to the toilet amuses Christian audiences – because of the Greek mindset that God is not interested in the proper working of our bodily functions, but a Jewish audience would not react because Jews see no separation between physical and spiritual. (Please may I think like a Jew, as today I have spent lots of time in there!)

Earth is bad, heaven is amazing. Lord rapture us (another false teaching in the

escapist way it is taught) there quick!

**Greek minds do not accept revelation; only reason. The Greek mind asks "Why must I do it?"**

**Eastern (Hebrew)** In Hebrew thought, the interrelation of physical and spiritual is regarded as being natural.

Jesus explained it first.....

*20 Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, 21 nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:20-1)*

After the resurrection, the Jewish believers, while surprised to see Jesus, expected and accepted a bodily resurrection, for the kingdom of God is to rule both the spiritual and the natural. How could Jesus rule on earth if He only had a spiritual body? Jesus was seen, touched and ate fish.....

### ***Jesus Appears to the Disciples***

*36 While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 37 They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. 38 He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? 39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." 40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. 41 And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate it in their presence.*

Paul understood the conundrum gentiles have.....

*22 Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength. (1 Corinthians 1:22-5)*

**Hebrew reliance is on God and His Torah. The Hebrew mind asks "What must I do?"**

### **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. We must banish escapist theologies from our theology and teaching.
2. We must choose to live godly lives now, not to wait until we die and go to heaven.
3. We must work out our free salvation through physical actions that cost us our life.

# PREACHING AND TEACHING

**Greek (Western)** Under the Greek mindset, preaching is the primary way of conveying God's Word to people, both saved and unsaved.

The traditional form of preaching that we know today was introduced by the Roman Catholic Church, from the time Constantine accepted Christianity in the 4th century AD. Then, and for more than 1000 years thereafter, the people did not have access to the Scriptures and were reliant upon the Priests of the church to proclaim the Scriptures to them.

However, this Greek/Roman mindset and pattern continued through the Reformation and remains with us today. Our whole Christian setup, from buildings, to preachers, to worship services, is based on the foundation of the sermon.

**Buildings:** Countless billions of dollars have been spent on building structures primarily designed as auditoriums for God's word to be proclaimed from a pulpit up the front.

**Preachers:** The first role of a minister, pastor, or priest, is to prepare and present sermons, to preach to the people in their congregation.

**Worship:** Worship services are nearly always centred round the preaching of the word.

Only this week, a pastor told me that accepted Theological College teaching is that it takes 7 years from the commencement of a pastorate, for the pastor to have had time to influence his congregation's way of thinking through his preaching.

Obviously, looking at churches worldwide, the current, sermon based system, is ineffective in bringing in new believers, and in turning current believers into disciples.

**Eastern (Hebrew)** In traditional Jewish ways, the primary means of bringing spiritual understanding is through interactive teaching.

The specific way of learning was by way of discussion - the asking and answering of questions. Jesus as a 12 year old could read and talk to the senior Rabbis of the day in the Temple.....

*45 When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. (Luke 2:45-7)*

Jesus, as a Rabbi, was primarily a teacher. In the Jewish way of the time He, in particular, taught a small group of 12 disciples, whom He sent out to preach to non-believers.....

*5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. 6 Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. 7 As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.'" (Matthew 10:5-7)*

For both Jesus and Paul there are 5 times as many mentions of them teaching as preaching, at a time when there were relatively few believers.

The best quoted justification of preaching in the New Testament was the night before Paul left Troas.....

*7 On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. (Acts 20:7)*

He spoke for that long as he was leaving, and it had deadly consequences that resulted in a miracle!

*9 Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. 10 Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "He's alive!" (Acts 20:9-10)*

Today, most sleepers are in seats and wake up at the end of the sermon! Been there, done that! LOL!

There is no specialised ministry gift of preaching mentioned in the New Testament.....

*11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13)*

The only 'preacher' identified in the Bible was Noah. He also preached, unsuccessfully, to the unconverted. Paul too, preached to the unconverted, but he taught the believers.

Presently, we seek to place preaching primarily in the domain of the pastor. However, it rightly belongs to the evangelist, and then only when addressing large groups of people. Person to person evangelism though, is generally found to produce more fruitful, long term results today.

Disciples are not created through preaching, but by teaching and mentoring new believers through the challenges of everyday life, in order to build up an

ongoing faith in Jesus.

*19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”  
(Matthew 28:19-20)*

### **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. While preaching is designed to reach the unconverted, teaching is the means to help those already church-ed grow in God.
2. Teaching should be interactive, in order for the participants to receive the full benefit.
3. Mentoring new converts is an essential part of the discipleship process.
4. Obviously, this has huge implications for the current way things are done in the church.

## **EDUCATION (I) v EXPERIENCE (WE)**

**Greek (Western)** In Greek culture, physical conquest was immediately followed by the setting up of educational institutions to train the conquered people in Greek culture and ways.

What we do, after a revelation is given by God, is to set up a new denomination with its own Bible College, to formalise and disseminate the truths that have been revealed.

Here in New Zealand, the pattern of revelation and formalisation has been experienced within all the Pentecostal streams that arose through the various Holy Spirit revelations of the 20th century. Initial revelation, enthusiasm and changed lifestyle of leaders and people, were overtaken by the formality of organisation, position, theological schools, buildings, programmes and growing lukewarmness amongst both leaders and adherents, focusing more on the little that divides than the much that should unite. This is not unique to the Pentecostal Church but simply follows the pattern of denominational church separation since the Reformation.

The focus is on 'I' as an individual, and the 'bigger I' of denominationalism. The emphasis is on transformation, through education, of the mind.

**Eastern (Hebrew)** Converts into Judaism are absorbed into Jewish society and culture, so the they can learn experientially the ways of G d (God).

In early Judaism, converts were absorbed into a tradition and experiential lifestyle, where learning came from absorbing the values and experiences of the forefathers as recorded in the Old Testament, as well as the Rabbi's and leaders of the day. There was a greater tolerance of differing views on many matters. There were 3 or 4 main groups, not the thousands we have today in

Protestantism.

When a Jewish boy became a disciple of a Rabbi, he would copy his Rabbi in everything he did. Literally! In every way! Sit. Stand. Gesture. Walk. Eat.....

Jesus took a group of 'students' (disciples), those not good enough to become disciples of the other Rabbis, and trained them in His ways, living with them, teaching them by word and example, sending them out into the mission field to gain practical experience.

### *Jesus Sends Out the Twelve*

*He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. 2 These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. 5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. 6 Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. 7 As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. 9 Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; 10 take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worth his keep. (Matthew 10:1-10)*

They participated in His miracles.....

*16 Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." 17 "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. 18 "Bring them here to me," he said. 19 And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. 20 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve*

*basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. 21 The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children. (Matthew 14:16-21)*

He answered their questions.....

*25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the evil spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." 26 The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead." 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up. 28 After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" 29 He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer." (Mark 9:25-9)*

They participated in the good times.....

#### *The Transfiguration*

*After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. 3 Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. 4 Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." (Matthew 17:1-4)*

and the bad.....

#### *Gethsemane*

*36 Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." 39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will,*

*but as you will.” 40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter. 41 “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.” (Matthew 26:36-41)*

Discipleship was a group experience, where the group was more important than the individual, it was both word and deed, and it took place in the school of life, not the academic classroom.

### **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. The group, the cause, is more important than any individual within it.
2. Discipleship involves a change in lifestyle, not just academic knowledge.
3. A godly lifestyle change is the measure of a true conversion.
4. True discipleship training requires interactive experience with others more mature in the faith, in order to grow into the image of Jesus.

## GODS v GOD

**Greek (Western)** In Greek culture, there was a multiplicity of gods who, although residing in heavenly places, took on the characteristics of men. No one god was capable of reflecting the great diversity of man.

Gods were seen as acting in the human image, exhibiting human emotions such as love and hate, good and evil, rage and happiness. But no single god was capable of encompassing all of these.

Additionally, the god's behaviour, their morality, changed over time, as determined by the democratic decisions of the majority of the people at the time. There were no godly behavioural absolutes. Therefore the people governed themselves by what they thought to be right at the time.

This process can be seen in action today, both in the world and in the church.

In the world, man has effectively set himself up as the supreme ruler, being guided and developed by the gods of education and science. There are no moral absolutes. Morality is developed to suit the desires of the people of the time and place.

In the church too, we have subtly changed from 'knowing God' to 'knowing about God', through our emphasis on theological education. Christianity has gradually absorbed many of the ideas of the world, from a fetish about prosperity, to a major battleground of today, the place of homosexuality within the church. And many, many, others.

Salvation has become an intellectual pursuit, reflected in structured creeds, rather than a relationship with the person Jesus, the unchanging reflection of God upon the earth.

**Eastern (Hebrew)** In the Hebrew, there is only one, unique God. There is no other like Him. He is the ultimate source of life, and all life begins with Him.

This is reflected in the Old Testament, again.....

*4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-8)*

and again.....

*6 "This is what the LORD says— Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God. 7 Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come— yes, let him foretell what will come. 8 Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one." (Isaiah 44:6-8)*

Again in the New.....

*4 So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. 5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), 6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. (1 Corinthians 8:4-6)*

and again.....

*After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:*

*"Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. 3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. 4 I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. (John 17:1-5)*

In the Western world we view God as evolving and changing in a linear fashion. This is entirely different to the Jewish way, where God is considered in a cyclical way, illustrated in the natural by the repeated phases of the moon. Biblically, this is reflected in the seasonal 'Feasts of the Lord' which are repeated year after year in a continuous, unchanging pattern, as illustrated in Leviticus 23.....

The Sabbath..... The Passover and Unleavened Bread..... Firstfruits..... Feast of Weeks..... Feast of Trumpets..... Day of Atonement..... Feast of Tabernacles

God is the one and only 'I AM', who remains constant and unchanged, from generation to generation.....

*14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" 15 God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation (Exodus 3:14-15)*

May we never forget.

*8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)*

## **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. We are to become one with Jesus through personal relationship with Him.
2. Knowing about Jesus is not a substitute for knowing Jesus.
3. We need to stand firm on Biblical principles, not being swayed by the changing morality of the day of the world.
4. We must make Jesus the lord of our life, and live for Him, irrespective of the cost.

# SPIRITUALITY

**Greek (Western)** To the Western mind, life is dualistic, with a separation between the physical and emotional, and the spiritual.

Spirituality is otherworldly. The emphasis in both teaching and living is to go to heaven where all physical pain and the cares of the world will be left behind. The physical and emotional are regarded as evil, so physical and emotional self-denial is good. Initially, the monastic system grew out of this thinking while today escapism is reflected in the (false) rapture teachings.

Spirituality is considered to be of the mind. Therefore, those who have been trained in theology are considered to be more worthy than those who haven't. This has led to a division between clergy and people, starting with the Roman Catholic Church, and which, formally or informally, still remains today.

We separate the (bad) physical and emotional from the (good) spiritual. So we celebrate the spiritual in church for an hour or two then go back into the world and happily live an unspiritual life.

**Eastern (Hebrew)** In the Eastern way of thinking spirituality is earthly, not otherworldly.

Man was put on earth to look after it.

*27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*  
(Genesis1:27-8)

Mankind was given comprehensive instructions on how to look after earth, from planting crops, to celebration, to work, to rest, to handling money, and how to take care of the poor. For example.....

*12 "Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest and the slave born in your household, and the alien as well, may be refreshed. (Exodus 23:12)*

Appropriate emotionalism was encouraged, along with the physical.....

*4 a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, (Ecclesiastes 3:4)*

That the spiritual is a part of this world, is reflected in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. For example.....

*9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. (1 John 4:9)*

Jesus did not send His disciples to heaven, but into the world, to follow His example.....

*18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. 19 For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. (John 17:18-19)*

Marriage is perhaps considered to be the most spiritual thing one can do. Sex within marriage is regarded as particularly spiritual, just touching the surface of what our union with the Messiah is to be. We are to participate in the glorious marriage with the Lamb of God.....

*7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. 8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)*

*(Revelation 19:7-8)*

When the Scriptures speak of 'the flesh', they are speaking of our worldly nature, our pre-Christ nature. As Paul said.....

*If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. (Philippians 3:4b-6)*

Now, although no longer of the world, in our new nature, we are to remain in the world and to be its light. As Jesus said.....

*14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)*

May we build His kingdom upon the earth.....

*10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10)*

## **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. To accept that the renewed physical and emotional within us is good, is to be celebrated, and not rejected as unspiritual.
  
2. Forget about the escapism of early rapture teaching. We will meet with Jesus in the sky upon His return, coming to His kingdom on earth with Him. (Matthew 24:30-31, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

3. To understand that, (and behave like), we are part of His kingdom now being built upon the earth.

4. To live life to the full, spiritually, physically and emotionally, as worthy witnesses of our Lord Jesus in the here and now.

## WHO DOES IT?

**Greek (Western)** In the Western church the leadership pronounce, while the people, simply receive.

The pastor prepares, preaches and teaches, prayers come from the front (often a mini sermon couched in prayer type language) to which the people are encouraged to agree. Very often too, worship teams dominate praise and worship.

We are a leadership driven church. We pay the pastor to 'do the religious stuff of life' on our behalf! And usually, lot's more beside! Ask any pastor! Or pastor's wife! As people, so busy living life in an increasingly frantic world, we separate the 'spiritual' from our everyday life and delegate our responsibility to paid staff. Then we turn up on Sunday for an hour or so to hear how the pastor has been looking after us during the week! If we are not happy that they have done enough, we move to another church! (OK, maybe a slight exaggeration, but I trust it makes a point!)

**Eastern (Hebrew)** In the Eastern way of thinking, spirituality is an all embracing part of the life of both the individual and the community.

The Jewish (and Muslim) emphasis is on personal prayer in a collective situation. The reason for praying at a number of specified times during the day reminds people to pray often, as an integral part of day to day activities, and to get all the community praying together as one. Prayers are both short and frequent.

This community principle is seen in the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples to pray, which today, we call the Lord's Prayer.

9 *"This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, (Matthew 6:9)*

As you can see, we are taught to pray the plural 'our' rather than the singular 'my', which would be more appropriate in a Western context.

This communal principle is reiterated many times throughout both the Old Testament and the New.

In the Old.....

16 *But you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us; you, O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name. (Isaiah 63:16)*

..... and in the New. Paul, in his introduction to the Roman church, took this communal approach also.....

7 *To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 1:7)*

A further prayer difference in Eastern culture is the time spent in thanksgiving for what the Lord has done for the community, in doing so, encouraging all that His presence will be with them now. For instance, when the army was going out to war.....

*When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them, because the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you. (Deuteronomy 20:1)*

The goodness of God to the community is seen as an encouragement of faith to the individual.

## **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. We must learn that our spiritual and daily lives are one and cannot be divided.
2. We must stop delegating responsibility for our spiritual lives to others, paid or unpaid, professional or otherwise. We are responsible for our own ongoing salvation.
3. Understand that we are a part of a broader community of believers.
4. Learn to pray frequently as part of a community.
5. Learn to put the needs of our family in God above our own.

## HOW MANY "YOU'S" IN YOU?

**Greek (Western)** In Western thought, we separate body and soul, assigning different values and behaviours to each.

The body, essentially, is corrupted by earthly desires and sicknesses. We believe it is unimportant, being left behind when we die - maybe the sooner the better! The 'real us', on the other hand, our mind and our emotions, is what is of real importance and what will go to heaven once life here is finished. Hence we place great store upon what we know about God, studying at Seminaries and Bible Colleges, and about how we feel, how happy we are.

Interestingly, by downplaying the importance of the body, we can very easily justify sin as being unimportant and inconsequential. For only the physical you sins, the 'real' you doesn't!

We quote.....

*12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)*

..... without understanding that the writer is actually referring to the whole person throughout this passage.

To summarise, knowledge about God and experiencing feelings of happiness, are the priorities of our Christian walk.

**Eastern (Hebrew)** In Hebrew (and other Eastern) thought, body, soul and spirit are integrated as one, the state of which is reflected through a person's actions.

As God is holy, so man is to be holy also.....

*3 It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, 5 not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5)*

Man is created in God's image.....

*27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27)*

..... to be holy and righteous, as God is, and as Paul endeavoured to be amongst the people.....

*10 You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. (1 Thessalonians 2:10)*

James was 'hot' on this subject, a theme which permeates his Epistle.....

*14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. (James 2:14-17)*

Upon accepting Jesus, we are to seek to become like Him and do what He would do in the here and now. We need to give ourselves to Him completely, body soul and spirit. We need to seek Him as to how to love our neighbour, how to treat our family, how to live our life. God cares about every part of our life, from the spiritual revelation to the mundaneness of much of everyday life.

As King David said in the well-known Psalm.....

*4 Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths; 5 guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.*

*(Psalm 25:4-5)*

Amen.

### **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. Following Jesus requires all of us, body, soul and spirit.
2. We are to be Jesus to others. How we act determines our true depth of faith.
3. The church needs to overturn its preoccupation with theology and start living like Jesus.

## MALE AND FEMALE

In a way, this is the most difficult subject we have looked at so far, as relational challenges between the sexes affect us all. The saying, 'men are from Mars, women from Venus', while unscriptural, does make the very valid point, that men and women are different!

But this is how God planned it! I will simply attempt to briefly summarise the Western and original Hebrew views.

**Greek (Western)** In Western thought, from early Greek times until the present day, the role of women has vacillated between subservience and sexual equality.

In essence it would be fair to say that in agricultural orientated societies women have been considered inferior to men, but where city living, both in Greek times, and now, became more popular, unisex attitudes have become more prominent. This has resulted, both then and now, in the breakdown of the traditional family unit and the growth of same sex relationships. The state has also assumed a greater role in the bringing up of children. Looking at past civilizations, these family breakdown developments helped bring about former empires eventual downfall, and are likely to do the same to ours.

**Eastern (Hebrew)** In original Hebrew thought, based upon firstly a nomadic, then an agrarian society, the traditional family unit was the basis of society.

From the very beginning, man and woman were made to be 'one flesh', to operate as a team, utilizing differing physical, emotional, and way of thinking giftings to work the land, run the household, procreate, and raise families, to 'inhabit the earth'.....

*But for Adam no suitable helper was found. 21 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. 22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. 23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." 24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. (Genesis 2:20b-24)*

Without each other, a man and women are less than we are created to be. In the original nomadic and agrarian societies, men and women had different but equal roles within the family. The man tended the animals and worked the fields, while the woman tended to the home. The responsibility for bringing up and educating the children was a joint, and hugely important, one. Motherhood was regarded as the most important function in the family unit, and contrary to later erroneous teaching, no God-fearing Hebrew man considered women to be inferior in any way.

Women dressed differently to men and gathered socially, separately to the men. This is illustrated in the wedding at Cana in Galilee. The men were in a room, sitting round celebrating the marriage. Mary, perhaps the chief caterer, was in a separate room with the other women. The unthinkable happened. After several days' celebration, they had run out of wine! Mary asked Jesus to help.

*3 When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." 4 "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." (John 2:3-5)*

We know the rest of the story. Check out the amazing detail and revelation it contains at [A REVELATION OF... THE FIRST MIRACLE OF JESUS'](#) found on the Walking With Jesus Ministries website ([www.wwj.org.nz](http://www.wwj.org.nz))

As the Jews had become more involved with the people around them, they had become influenced by their neighbours' lifestyles. Paul summed this up in his

epistle to the Romans. God had made His ways known.....

*20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. (Romans 1:20)*

but the people were led astray.....

*21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. 24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. 26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. (Romans 1:21-7)*

In New Testament times too, the original principle of a man and woman working together as one to raise a God-fearing family, was illustrated in the Biblical qualifications for eldership.....

*6 An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. (Titus 1:6)*

Today, the pattern continues. God's people are being overtly influenced by the world around us. To be sure, the consequences will be the same as in the past, if we do not mend our ways.

## **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. Marriage for life is God's desired way. While, for many, that is not their situation today, God is able to forgive and give a new start.
2. We need to be diligent to avoid being caught up in modern humanist thinking promoting a wider, increasingly ungodly, range of family lifestyles.
3. Being disciples of Jesus in today's world is becoming increasingly difficult and will inevitably result in persecution, if it has not already.

*But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them. (2 Timothy 3:1-5)*

## EDUCATION METHODS

**Greek (Western)** In Western ways, education is the responsibility of teachers and pupils are streamed according to their abilities.

Our education system has been inherited directly from Greek culture. In Greece, large gymnasiums (from 'gymnos', meaning naked) were built in which to teach the elite. Professional teachers were employed to strip intelligent students of the information they had gathered at home and replace it with instruction on every conceivable subject. Knowledge was the key both to excellence and power.

Children from poor families were dissuaded from studying science or the arts and encouraged to learn a trade from their parents instead.

**Eastern (Hebrew)** In the original Hebrew, before the development of the more modern Rabbinical system, fathers and mothers were responsible for their children's education, imparting knowledge from the creator, including His moral values and judgments.

The Lord is to be the teacher. He taught Moses.....

*10 Moses said to the LORD, "O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue." 11 The LORD said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD? 12 Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say." (Exodus 4:10-12)*

What Moses taught the people, the people were to teach to their children.....

*9 Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them*

*to your children and to their children after them. 10 Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when he said to me, "Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children." (Deuteronomy 4:9-10)*

Before Samson was born his mother asked for him to be taught by God's representative....

*8 Then Manoah prayed to the LORD: "O Lord, I beg you, let the man of God you sent to us come again to teach us how to bring up the boy who is to be born."  
(Judges 13:8)*

Arts and science was taught, but it was all based on scriptural principles. Some knowledge was not included, even if it was the truth. The classic example, which still causes controversy today, is sex education. It was not held to be healthy for children to learn at an early age.

The Law set out the limitations on sexual relations.....

*6 "No one is to approach any close relative to have sexual relations. I am the LORD.....  
(Leviticus 18:6)*

But the mechanisms of bodily function were not taught at an early age. Birth control was facilitated by keeping the women separate from the men!

Unlike today, moral values were also taught. As fathers and mothers had a stake in their children's future, they had the child's entire life in mind in what they taught, and were not simply conduits for the acquisition of knowledge.

## **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. We must understand that our education system teaches knowledge but is limited in other areas.
2. We cannot abdicate the teaching of our children entirely to the system. Moral values need to be taught in the home.
3. We need to control what our children hear, see and read, for not all information is good and helpful in the healthy development of our family.

# PEACE

**Greek (Western)** In Western thought, peace is a state of mind.

If all is going well, there is peace. If there is no war, there is peace. If the kids aren't fighting, there is peace in the home. If there is no crime, the neighbourhood is at peace. And so on.

Peace and quietness go together. A monk goes into a monastery to find peace. Mum sends the kids away to have peace and quiet for a time. Yoga is seen as a way to find peace. Nirvana is peace.

Peace therefore, is related to a lack of friction, often found in a state of quietness.

**Eastern (Hebrew)** In Hebrew thought, 'shalom' or peace, is wholeness or completeness.

In Hebrew thought, peace is not quietness or an absence of trouble, but rather, a oneness with God. Peace is found in the submission of body, soul and spirit to the Creator, the Lord of the universe.

Jesus did not come to bring peace in a worldly sense.....

*34 "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to turn 'a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law— 36 a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'" (Matthew 10:34-6)*

But He did promise peace to us.....

*33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)*

and again.....

*27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:27)*

When Jesus sent out the 72 He told them to look for houses where there was peace. He did not mean quietness but rather, a house where there was a oneness with the Lord, knowing that these people would put them up for the time they were in that place.....

*5 "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' 6 If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. 7 Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. (Luke 10:5-7)*

Paul was able to find peace in the torment of prison and encouraged us to do the same.

*As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:1-6)*

We can therefore experience the true peace of Jesus at all times, when we fully submit our lives to Him.....

*36 You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. (Acts 10:36)*

## **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. True peace is obtained through a submissive relationship to God, not as an emotional experience or state.
2. True peace can be found in the midst of tumult and torment.
3. True peace is a lifestyle, not a feeling.

## DOCTRINE v EXPERIENTIAL TRUTH

**Greek (Western)** In Western thought spiritual advancement is understood to be found in theological qualifications.

Becoming the leader (pastor, minister etc.) of a church today generally requires a theological qualification from an institution approved by the church grouping one is involved with. Correct doctrine, learned through theological study, is seen as the way to get closer to God. Unfortunately though, while knowledge about God can be learned, relationship with God has to be experienced and, in reality, is often hindered through the pride that so often accompanies intellectual achievement.

This Greek inspired development is a major challenge to the church today.

**Eastern (Hebrew)** In Hebrew thought, God has to be experienced through relationship, which then must be reflected in one's life.

Spiritual maturity and growth comes from intimacy with God which results in doing His will in your life, even in seemingly impossible situations. For example, take Elisha and his servant. Elisha had boldness when facing the armies of the king of Aram, while his servant, without Elisha's relationship, was scared stiff! Elisha prayed.....

*16 "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." 17 And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, LORD, so that he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. (2 Kings 6:16-17)*

In the New Testament the same principle applies.....

*13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. 15All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.” (John 16:13-15)*

We must experience and reflect God's love.....

*16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:16-19)*

We must experience and reflect God's faith.....

*22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— 23if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant. (Colossians 1:22-3)*

We must experience and reflect God's truth as found in the Scriptures.....

*14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:14-15)*

Through being obedient to the will of the Father as related to us by the Holy Spirit we will become sons (genderless) of God.....

*13 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, 14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "'Abba," Father." (Romans 8:13-15)*

Amen.

### **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

1. We must change emphasis from theological qualifications to personal relationship with Jesus as the way to spiritual maturity.
2. Discipleship must take precedent over sermons.
3. Leadership must be determined by proven spiritual maturity rather than theological, doctrinal knowledge.
4. We must 'walk the walk', not just 'talk the talk'.

## THE SOURCE OF SIN

**Greek (Western)** In Western thought we believe in a persona called satan (usually capitalized which I have always refused to do) who rules the demons (often regarded as fallen angels) who largely cause us to sin.

This concept of 2 opposing empires of good and evil first arose in Persia but also fits comfortably into the Greek concept of good and evil gods, or gods with good and bad sides to their nature.

The end result of this is that we blame a lot of our sin upon the devil. In other words, we conveniently disclaim responsibility for our actions, saying our actions are of the devil, and so excusing sin in our life.

Our translation of Scripture reflects this understanding. As we have mentioned, the word 'satan' is capitalized and the persona treated as a spiritual being in charge of the horde of demons (perhaps fallen angels) that disrupt our lives. Yet the Hebrew understanding of the word 'satan' is

*an opposing force to the Words of YHVH with all of the following meanings: divide, set at odds with, accuse, slander, reject, deceive, oppose, be adversarial. (hethathasaneer.com/Warfare-2.html)*

Not once in the original Hebrew language is satan identified as having a persona or form, spiritual or physical.

**Eastern (Hebrew)** In Hebrew thought, evil comes from within the individual. It is regarded as personal opposition to the Words of God (at heart, 'selfness' through human 'selfishness').

The force of evil is found in our human self-determination which is in opposition

to the godly foundation of self-denial.

This is beautifully expressed in a practical way by Jesus.....

*23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. (John 14:23-4)*

And again.....

*23 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. (Luke 9:23)*

James put it this way.....

*16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. (James 3:16)*

Paul explained the same principle as.....

*4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:4)*

When I was a boy (some time ago now!) we used to pray the Lord's Prayer in church every Sunday. At that time it was recited out of the King James Version.....

*13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: (Matthew 6:13a)*

In this instance, the literal translation (of much of) the King James expresses the Hebrew view of evil as a force, rather than as a person, as most later translations record it. E.g. NIV - *deliver us from the evil one*

Paul, when explaining his ongoing tendency to sin, does not blame his sin on a person of satan or demons, but on the old selfish nature still lurking within him - but of course, one which he was gradually overcoming with the help of the Holy Spirit.

*14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. 15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. 16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. 17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. 18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. 21 So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.*

*(Romans 7:14-25)*

## **SOME SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY**

I fully understand that the Hebrew view contradicts virtually all our understanding and teaching!

I just ask that we both don't reject out of hand what has been said here but absorb the vital spiritual principle it contains.

**The key element is not the theological argument but the necessity for us to take responsibility for our own lives and the sin in our lives. God is 'selfless'. We are by nature 'selfish'. Replacing our 'selfishness' with**

**God's 'selflessness' is what walking with Jesus is all about. Are we prepared to make the 'self-sacrifice' required?**

# SUMMARY

## 1. AN EXPANATION AND TESTIMONY

We have looked at 33 different ways in which Greek (our Western inheritance) and Hebrew ways of looking at life and faith differ.

'What does it matter?' you may say.

I have come to understand that it matters a lot! For the Lord has poked and prodded me (I have the bruises!) that, if I wish to understand Him more, I need to know more about the culture in which He lived, in order to understand the nuances of what He is saying to me through the Jewish writers of His Word.

The best way I can explain this is from the point of view of learning another language. I speak English as my first language. At school, I studied French. I could learn the words and the grammar, but no matter how much I learned, I could still not speak like a Frenchman. My accent, my lack of understanding of the idioms, the culture, the slang and the nuances of the language, would always hinder me. The only real way to overcome this would be to interact with born French speakers, in order to learn their ways, as well as how to communicate with them verbally. In New Zealand, here at the far end of the earth, this is not possible, without travelling thousands of kilometres to Europe or another French speaking country, so my, already very poor French, died.

This process is seen too, in immigrants to our country, whose first language is not English. No matter how well they speak the language, their culture is different, and mix-ups and misunderstandings inevitably occur. However, the immigrants' children, who attend our schools and grow up in our society and culture, rapidly become 'kiwis'! For they largely think, and speak, like those of us whose families have been here for generations.

When it comes to 'Christianity' and 'church', we have taken an 'Eastern religion' and adapted it to our cultural values, norms, and language. We justify this by saying that the Jews failed God and have been replaced by the 'gentile church'. Hence the term - 'Replacement Theology'.

These writings have not been about the truth, or otherwise, of this way of thinking. You need to read the teachings on our website ([www.wwj.org.nz](http://www.wwj.org.nz)) to gain my understanding of this.

What I have been trying to achieve here is to form a bridge, albeit a tenuous and rickety one, between the Eastern and Western cultural understanding. I have never been to Israel, although I would love to go. Personally I know only a few Jews, and even fewer who have accepted Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

The essential truth the Lord has lain upon my heart and life though, is that a 'whole of life' commitment is necessary in order to become a true follower of Jesus. Over the years, I have become disillusioned with the form of 'easy Christianity', of self-centeredness, of happiness and prosperity that is taught in much of the church today.

When I studied the Bible, even from my Western perspective, I could see that this is not what it says! Jesus made 'disciples' who, all but John, were martyred for their faith! And John was boiled in oil and banished to Patmos, not a pleasant place!

The closest I have come to walking in the steps of the disciples was visiting Goa, where the now convinced Doubting Thomas landed in India. There is a Roman Catholic Church on the site and a real presence of the Holy Spirit over the area. Thomas was martyred on the other side of India, in Chennai. I believe you can visit his grave in a cave there.

In my reading of Scripture we are called to self-sacrifice, to putting Jesus and

others above ourselves. Not the theology that has developed in our Western, Greek based, self-centred culture.

Once I started delving into the Hebraic roots of our faith, the lights of understanding that were dim have started to brighten. I hope they have here for you too.

I will try and summarize what we have been learning and sharing together. May the Lord help me, help us, better understand and apply His Word, His Life, to our own.

## **2. WHOLE OF LIFE - THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP**

The first and foremost principle that I have learned through this study is the need for a 'whole of life' approach to my walk with Jesus.

Jesus meant it when He said.....

*34 "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to turn "a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law— 36 a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.' 37 "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; 38 and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. (Matthew 10:34-8)*

Summarised in the next verse.....

*39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 10:39)*

My friend Asher, in India, was rejected and separated from his Hindu family for

many years, when he gave his life to Jesus.

Over the years, since committing to Jesus, I have endeavoured to take discipleship seriously, having tried, not always successfully, to 'walk the walk', not just 'talk the talk'.

Laying down our life is not easy, as Peter discovered.....

*37 Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." 38 Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times! (John 13:37-8)*

But eventually he did, both spiritually and literally, finally choosing crucifixion, at the Lord's request.....

#### *IX. Peter*

*Among many other saints, the blessed apostle Peter was condemned to death, and crucified, as some do write, at Rome; albeit some others, and not without cause, do doubt thereof. Hegesippus saith that Nero sought matter against Peter to put him to death; which, when the people perceived, they entreated Peter with much ado that he would fly the city. Peter, through their importunity at length persuaded, prepared himself to avoid. But, coming to the gate, he saw the Lord Christ come to meet him, to whom he, worshipping, said, "Lord, whither dost Thou go?" To whom He answered and said, "I am come again to be crucified." By this, Peter, perceiving his suffering to be understood, returned into the city. Jerome saith that he was crucified, his head being down and his feet upward, himself so requiring, because he was (he said) unworthy to be crucified after the same form and manner as the Lord was.*

*(Foxe's Book of Martyrs, by John Foxe, [1848] Chapter 1)*

We too are called to walk in the example of Jesus, at least spiritually, if not literally.....

14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. (John 10:24)

Each and every one of us is called to a life of discipleship, of giving Jesus our all. If we are ever going to impress the Jews (or the Muslims) of the Saviourship of Jesus, we will have to witness with our lives, not just our words.

Muslims, for example, see the Western world as 'Christian', with our church, government, moral behaviour, etc., viewed as all being parts of the one whole-of-life entity. Naturally, they are not impressed with what they see!

Western society takes an opposite viewpoint, with the separation of the various elements of life. This has infiltrated our church thinking, so we promote the mental assent of the 'Sinners Prayer' as being sufficient to obtain salvation.

Looking at Jesus' life and culture, this is patently wrong. Unless our life reflects our verbal commitment, we are not truly Jesus followers. Believing may or may not get us into heaven by the 'skin of our teeth', but it certainly is not the 100% sold out commitment that Jesus requires.

Sets one thinking, doesn't it?

## **2. LEARNING BY EXAMPLE - THE CALL TO CHRIST LIKENESS**

The importance of following in the footsteps of godly ancestors is readily apparent throughout Jewish culture. Hence the importance placed on genealogy. In the Gospel primarily written for the Jews, it is the first thing discussed, indicating its huge importance.....

### ***The Genealogy of Jesus***

*1 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham:2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, 3 Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, 4 Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, 5 Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of King David..... (and so on - Matthew 1:1-17)*

With our different cultural understanding, we tend to skip over these verses, as our ancestry is of far less significance to us.

The importance of the example of those who went before is seen in Hebrews, where the writer, when talking about the key element of faith, quoted the Patriarchs and forefathers as examples of faith in action to be admired, followed and improved upon, through the sacrifice of Jesus for us.....

### **By Faith**

*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. 2 This is what the ancients were commended for. 3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. 4 By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead. 5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. 6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. 7 By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. (and so on - Hebrews 11:1-40)*

Jewish rabbinical training, at the time of Jesus, was based on an extreme form

of this principle. The student of the Rabbi would follow the behaviour of his Rabbi totally. If the Rabbi stood up, walked, and then sat down, so would his student. He would mimic the Rabbi's actions in their entirety. Of course, this was a 'religious behaviour', but the principle of 'following the Rabbi' was entrenched in their culture.

So, who is our Rabbi? Jesus, of course. And where is His behaviour modelled? It is found throughout all the New Testament, but specifically in the 4 Gospels.

Through the history of the church, a greater emphasis has been placed upon the Epistles of Paul and others, for it is primarily upon these that the theology of the church has been built. Our divided church is based upon the development of theological principles that are academic, are of the mind. Hence the importance placed on Seminaries, theological training and degrees, which are presumed to bring people closer to Jesus. Unfortunately, it has resulted in much knowledge about Jesus, but so often, a much reduced relationship with Him. Sad but true.

In the church today, a greater emphasis needs to be placed upon the Gospels, through which we can learn to become more like Jesus. It is a truism that married people eventually get to look like each other. (Sorry Kathy!) For we spend time together, meld our thoughts and ways, to become one, rather than two.

This is what Jesus wants of His Bride too. He wants us to become one with Him. How do we do that? By interacting with Him until we are moulded into His image. By copying His behaviour. By basing our lives on love of God and others, as Jesus did. Theology divides, love unites.

As Paul, the consummate theologian, witnessed.....

*13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

*(1 Corinthians 13:13)*

May it be so in our lives too, as we grow, through marriage to the Lamb, to become more like Him.

Then we can look forward with confidence to this glorious day.....

*The New Jerusalem*

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Revelation 21:1-4)*

#### **4. ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS - THE CALL TO HOLINESS**

Again, I have learned that a huge deterrent to both Jews and Muslims coming to Jesus is us! What an indictment!

Why is this?

For we talk about Jesus but we don't live like Him. It is worth repeating again and again that, if we wish to see Jews and Moslems come to Christ, they first need to see the Christ in us. For, in their cultures, actions speak louder than words.

The Bible primarily refers to **godly living** as **attaining holiness**. While there are other words used, such as righteousness and sanctification, enacting the principles of holiness puts us on the right track.

We are commanded to holy living.....

### *Be Holy*

*13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. 14 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." (1 Peter 1:13-16)*

The following extract is headed '*Rules For Holy Living*' and basically sums up the New testament, indeed the whole Bible.....

*12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 1:13-17)*

The reality is, the Bible is a handbook on Holy Living, setting out its principles and detailing the experiences of people, great and small, as they sought to apply the principles to their daily lives. The Bible is a guide to living our lives, day by day, of walking with Jesus. We can share in the trials, tribulations and victories of the men and women whose real life stories are included.....

### *The Stoning of Stephen*

*54 When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. 55 But*

*Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." 57 At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, 58 dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep. (Acts 7:54-60)*

And we can learn principles to live by given through revelation to the writers by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.....

*10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. (Hebrews 12:10)*

Indeed the Bible is known as the **Holy Scriptures**.....

*2 the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures 3 regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, 4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 1:2-4)*

If we disobey the manual we won't see the Lord!.....

*14 Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14)*

Sadly, we have taken this 'manual of life experience and instruction' and turned it into worthless theoretical theologies upon which no two people can agree, which split and divide, devoid of the power necessary to change lives.

May we get back to basics today.

## 5. IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY - THE CALL TO UNITY

As we have learned together about the cultural differences between East and West, a key difference has been the emphasis upon the individual in the Western world, while in Eastern culture, the greater good of the group, the family, the nation, took precedence over the individual.

Put succinctly, we promote the 'rights' (of the individual), whereas Eastern cultures emphasize 'obligations' (to the community).

It is true that, under the New Covenant, salvation has become a decision of the individual.....

*15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. (Mark 16:15-16)*

.....but it also says that all Israel will be finally also be saved.....

*All Israel Will Be Saved*

*25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. 27 And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins." (Romans 11:25-7)*

This indeed, as it says, is a mystery to us, with our Western mindset. But it will make sense to the Jews, for it is the way God has dealt with them in the past, as prophesied through Isaiah.....

*15 Truly you are a God who hides himself, O God and Savior of Israel. 16 All the makers of idols will be put to shame and disgraced; they will go off into disgrace*

*together. 17 But Israel will be saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation; you will never be put to shame or disgraced, to ages everlasting. (Isaiah 45:15-17)*

Unity is a concept that we, in the West, do not truly understand. For us, unity involves full agreement on every aspect of the area of unity we are considering. For example, take the supporters of a team at a football match. They are united in the support of their team. As are, of course, the supporters of the opposing team!

Unfortunately however, this unity does not exist in the ultimate winning team of all - the 'Jesus Joy Jumpers'! See, we can't even agree on the name - for we don't jump for joy in our church! How unseemly! How sad, actually! For if we put two Christian theologians together, we will likely end up with 3 opinions! Opinions that have divided the church into over 30,000 denominations and groupings! Perhaps a lot more! Sadly, what divides is greater than that which unites.

Jews too, have many differing opinions. Paul knew how to exploit this.....

*6 Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead." 7 When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. 8 (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.) (Acts 23:6-8)*

However, when it comes to the crunch, as is well illustrated in Israel today, if the nation is threatened, the people come together as one.

In the Old Testament, when the people agreed and operated as one, the Lord was with them.....

*10 The couriers went from town to town in Ephraim and Manasseh, as far as Zebulun, but the people scorned and ridiculed them. 11 Nevertheless, some men of Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun humbled themselves and went to Jerusalem. 12 Also in Judah the hand of God was on the people to give them unity of mind to carry out what the king and his officials had ordered, following the word of the LORD. 13 A very large crowd of people assembled in Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month. 14 They removed the altars in Jerusalem and cleared away the incense altars and threw them into the Kidron Valley..... 26 There was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem. 27 The priests and the Levites stood to bless the people, and God heard them, for their prayer reached heaven, his holy dwelling place. (2 Chronicles 30:10-14, 26-27)*

We too are called to unity in Jesus.....

*Jesus Prays for All Believers*

*20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: 23 I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17:20-23)*

I am certain, that next to lost souls, the thing that upsets the Lord most are the divisions amongst His people. His appointed leaders' prime function is to bring unity of faith to His people.....

*11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13)*

May we put aside our differences and learn to love and support each other as we are instructed to do.....

*12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. (Colossians 3:12-14)*

Amen.

## CONCLUSION

We now come to the end of our discussion about the differences between Greek (Western) and Hebrew (Eastern) thinking. I trust it has made you think about some of your 'sacred cows', as it has me. Perhaps we may have sacrificed some upon the altar of ignorance and misunderstanding!

Over the past 20 years or so, the Lord has graciously given me certain inspirations and revelations of His Word. These I have had the privilege of sharing with many of you through 'Tuesday Teachings' and the free downloads available on the website, [www.wwj.org.nz](http://www.wwj.org.nz)

Yet I have always been conscious that teachings, in themselves, can titillate the mind, but do not necessarily lead to changes in behaviour. Hence I have always tried to give accompanying practical applications and look to the Holy Spirit to reveal His will to you.

Over the years, I've wondered why I have done this. Have put it down to being a practical person who believes in 'walking the talk' in life. James rings a bell deep within me.....

*22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.  
(James 1:22)*

However, as we have looked at this East v West thought conundrum, I have had my mind and life challenged as I have seen more clearly what 'walking with Jesus' is truly about. It is my hope and prayer that some of this discussion will have rubbed off onto you too!

James goes on to say.....

*23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25 But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:23-5)*

**In the end, true Christianity is a lifestyle of love and obedience to God's will, not merely an intellectual exercise. It is about relationship, with Jesus and others, not mere academic knowledge.**

Paul sums it up succinctly.....

*Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. (1 Corinthians 8:1b)*

It was true of physical blessings in the Old Testament....

*13 So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today—to love the LORD your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul— 14 then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil. 15 I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied. (Deuteronomy 11:13-15)*

and spiritual blessings in the New.

As decreed by Jesus.....

*28 He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."  
(Luke 11:28)*

and again.....

*23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 He who does not love*

*me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. (John 14:23-4)*

Johns sums it up.....

*3 We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. 4 The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: 6 Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did. (1 John 2:3-6)*

Amen.