

**A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW:
THE WISDOM OF THE FOOLISHNESS OF GOD
AND
THE STRENGTH OF THE WEAKNESS OF GOD**

by

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A PROPOSAL OF A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW
and
A RESEARCH INQUIRY INTO GREEK AND HEBREW WORLDVIEWS

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Introduction

The present paper combines two class assignments. It begins with a proposal of a Biblical worldview, which majors on one aspect of the Biblical view of worldview itself and certain New Testament principles of worldview transformation. Worldview is a fascinating topic; but for the minister of the Gospel, it cannot be unimportant (or nonexistent!), theoretical, static or simply descriptive. The question is not just to how to recognize and respect a worldview, but how to see it transformed.

The paper continues with a brief survey of the theological debate over the existence of Greek and Hebrew worldview differences, and a missiological analysis of these "two basic ways that humanity...is religious" (Fee 1987, 74).

A Biblical Worldview

Any worldview which pretends to be Biblical must begin with God. Not just any divine being or state of being, but the God Transcendent, Creator of the Universe, Three in One, Spirit, perfect, self-existent.

Because He is Three in One, three Persons in perfect unity, a basis exists for both unity and diversity in the universe. Since both unity and diversity are found in the Being of God, they are found in humanity and indeed all of the rest of Creation. Therefore, Biblical Christianity has the soundest basis possible for both the respect of the individual and the unity of the community.

As Francis Schaeffer has simply but profoundly stated, the God of the Bible is both infinite and personal (1968, 87). He is infinite, therefore omnipresent, infinite in time, omnipotent, and omniscient. He is also Holy, the Just Judge of the universe.

The God Who chose to reveal Himself to and through Israel is also personal. Wilhoit and Dettoni say it this way: five "major structures...characterize the very nature of God Himself and are reflected, though as through a veil, in nature. They are plainly seen in Christ and revealed to us in Scripture. These five values are the building blocks of our rational, social, emotional, moral and spiritual universe" (Wilhoit and Dettoni 1995, 39). These are His wisdom, mercy, truth, righteousness/justice, and love.

God created the universe; it is objectively real, independent of anyone's perceptions, knowable, perfect at the beginning, and deeply marred by the Fall. This story is told in the first three chapters of the Book of Genesis, and further details are given elsewhere in the Bible. A major point of the Creation is that it has a beginning; therefore, as Diogenes Allen points out, the world itself is not and cannot be ultimate. "God, its Maker, who is without beginning or end, is ultimate" (Allen 1985, 1).

But since God is stronger than Satan, holiness is stronger than sin, love than hate, and good than evil, the basic order and beauty of Creation is still perceivable, even after millennia of sin and selfishness. When the possible implications are taken into account, the hand of the Creator can be seen overruling the destructive tendencies of Creation after the Fall. A corollary is that even though fallen, non-Christians can also recognize and discover truth.

The Creation also includes many phenomena that humans cannot see with their five senses, including wavelengths of light and frequencies of sound that are obvious to different animal species, and many gases and electromagnetic manifestations that are crucial to existence.

Another unseen realm is the spirit world, which includes the angels fallen and faithful, the Church awesome as a mighty army with its banners flying, the middle finally included as it should be, human hearts laid bare, the First-Born seated at the right hand of the Ancient of Days, the Risen Lord over all

(see Hengel 1976, 85-7; Job 1.6, 2.1, 38.7; Ephesians 6.12; Colossians 1.16; Hebrews 1.3-6; and the Revelation to John as he was on the island called Patmos).

The summit of Creation is humankind, the only ones to be created in the *imago Dei*, the image and likeness of God, male and female. Humans have the awesome responsibility of eternal accountability for their actions, and their actions cause effects which can be felt far through time and space. God has not abandoned His Creation, and indeed reserves the right to intervene personally whenever necessary. Yet most of Creation runs according to His system of laws; humans can either cooperate in discovering and working with those laws, or try to ignore them and go their own way.

In some mysterious way, humans also have a certain delegated authority even in the spiritual world. "In the Bible humans...are seen as the apex of a complex hierarchy of creation, a great chain of being" (Frymer-Kensky 1987, 236).

God reveals Himself first through the Creation itself (Psalms 8 and 19, Romans 1). In theology this revealing is traditionally called "general revelation", and it refers to the fact that any neutral observer could deduce just from the Creation that God exists, is the Creator, All-Powerful, All-Wise, and extremely benevolent.

But God decided to communicate a second way also, through the Bible. It is Holy Scripture, "God-breathed", or inspired in its writing. It is true concerning all the areas of reality that it addresses, and all the fundamental issues for humanity are treated in it. It is our reference manual for human existence, and contains everything we really need to know. The Bible also contains the record of God's principal dealings with humans up until about 2,000 years ago, especially the story of the people He chose, the Hebrews.

The story of God working with humanity is told in a linear fashion, with a clear beginning and a clear ending. It therefore reflects, fundamentally if not formally, a linear view of time. This view of time is radically different from other views of time found in the surrounding peoples (Hadas 1959, 55).

God is Three in One, and after the Fall the Father sent the Son in order to defeat His Enemy, reclaim all Creation, and especially accomplish the redemption of all the humans who would accept His offer of salvation from their selfishness. To accomplish this mighty Redemption the Son accepted to be incarnated as a Man; then He taught followers who were to tell the Good News to all the rest of the Earth. After that He was crucified, He died, and they buried Him. But he rose from the dead! And went to sit at the right hand of His Father in Heaven.

Those who accept to become new creatures because of His sacrifice are washed from their sins and are made part of the Church, the community of God's people, Hebrews by faith.

When Jesus went back to Heaven, He left the Holy Spirit to the Church, to instruct us in the things we still needed to know. The Holy Spirit also works in the whole world, holding down the selfishness of sin and convicting all humans of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement. But He is also a Person, and is gentle, like a dove, and easily grieved away; so He is sometimes forgotten, ignored, or even quenched.

That the God of All Power can be grieved is hard for humans to fit into our worldview. We can imagine a God Infinite or a god personal, but not a Creator who weeps, nor a King who is a loving Father. Yet the Bible is clear: the God Who is high is also the God Who is nigh.

Biblical Worldview was first given neither through a philosophy or a systematic theology, but through a people (Talmon 1985). This people had a worldview which had been profoundly affected by those of the ethnae surrounding them: the Canaanites, Egyptians, Philistines, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, and many ethnae smaller and less well known. Yet this Biblical view of reality "differs in crucial respects from the views of all the ancient philosophers", and all the peoples round about (Allen 1).

However, because of their contact with other peoples and their propensity to close their ears to the commands of their Creator, the Hebrews continually strayed from the path of righteousness. He clearly taught them to separate themselves from the teachings of these other cultures, using the powerfully concrete image of the leaven (Exodus 12.15ff). They were not to allow any leaven into their houses at the moment of their deliverance from Egypt, and were to remember this radical separation once a year at the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Much of the Old Testament is taken up with the story of their unfolding understanding of God's worldview for them, the loss of that understanding through disobedience, and its recovery during times of revival.

Because they were incapable of returning to Him through their own efforts, the leaven of sin and of the nations having penetrated too deeply, the most radical plan ever conceived was put into place: God sent His Son into the world. His Son Jesus would give Himself in sacrifice, so that the power of sin and of the gods of the nations would be broken, once and for all.

The Most Important Worldview Transformation Project Ever

Robert Coleman, in his unassuming yet profound work *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (1964), has pointed out that the most crucial program of worldview transformation ever undertaken was the training of the disciples of Jesus (although He does not use the term "worldview"). The Master's plan, in effect, was to depart this earth after Calvary, and to leave the responsibility for the advancement of the Kingdom to 120 human followers, especially to twelve eminently fallible men. The future of the planet then depended not only on Jesus's work on the Cross, but on His being able to teach the Twelve everything they needed to know to be able to effectively function as the Apostles of the Church of God.

The way in which He undertook this enterprise is significant. Jesus did not establish a formal school, although that course of action would have been culturally acceptable at the time. Instead, he chose twelve men and called them to follow Him. Then for a period of three years, more or less, they essentially followed Him around as He was accomplishing His ministry.

This view of the crucial importance of the teaching ministry of Jesus is borne out by the fact that Teacher is the New Testament title for Jesus used by far the most (Reed & Prevost 1993, 61, quoting Robert Stein).

From the first, the curriculum involved "learning by doing". Very quickly, Jesus taught them to preach, heal, and cast out demons. He sent them out to have their first ministry experiences without Him after only a year (Mark 6.7-13). Scripture reports that they had great success (v. 13). The question remains, then, why didn't He leave at that point? If they already knew about preaching, healing, and spiritual warfare, why continue on? After all, even at the end of His time on earth, Jesus had not preached to all of Israel, nor healed all the sick, nor cast out all the demons, nor fed all the hungry. He was leaving His disciples to do most of "the work".

A strong case can be made that Jesus stayed on because the Twelve were far from learning all that was necessary. They knew what to do, but their comprehension and integration of the message of the Gospel was at best only superficial. The Gospel had penetrated only a certain distance toward the core

of their worldview. To sum up, they had not yet grasped "the mystery", as Paul called it, that is, that the Gospel is for all (Ephesians 3.1-13): not just for Jewish men, but for women, children, Samaritans, all Gentiles, therefore all nations.

In Jesus's program of discipleship training, it is striking that one activity He is never seen to undertake with the Twelve is a Bible study. Why? For one thing, it is evident from the New Testament evidence that they already knew it. Unfortunately, they "knew" it in the wrong way. False interpretations and theories had so blinded their eyes to the truth that they very nearly missed the One Who is the truth. Most of God's people did, in fact, miss the very event they had been awaiting for centuries.

The problem: their categories were blinding the "eyes of their hearts" (Ephesians 1.18). To say it another way, they desperately needed a radical transformation of worldview. The solution: the most powerful adult education program in history.

How did it work?

Examples of Jesus dealing with the presuppositions of the Twelve are numerous, but one of the most instructive is from Matthew 14-16 and Mark 6-8, the two events of the Feeding of the Multitudes. These parallel passages sum up one of the pivotal moments in the worldview transformation program of Jesus with the Twelve.

The context of these events is the return of the Twelve from their first short-term ministry trip without their Teacher. They are excited to tell Him all about it, but the needy people crowd in and prevent real sharing (this sharing would presumably be crucial to their learning from their experiences, since they would be able to reflect and integrate together—see Luke 10.17-24 for an example of a corrective formative evaluation by Jesus of the disciples' ministry).

So He calls them away to a retreat. However, the crowds follow them, Jesus is moved by compassion, and He ministers publicly for many hours. Impatient by the end of the day, the disciples say, "Lord, send them away!"

Jesus says, "You give them something to eat!" Then He prays, and the miracle happens: as the Twelve distribute the food, it is multiplied for 5,000 people. Every Christian knows this story; but have Christian educators grasped the significance of what Jesus was trying to teach the disciples through these events?

Strangely enough, this miracle happens again, only a few days later. The events are so similar that some commentators have concluded that there was really only one feeding of the multitude. However, Matthew and Mark are clear on the matter: there were two miraculous feedings. How to explain these events being so similar and so close together in time, especially when Jesus did not normally feed multitudes as part of His ministry?

One possibility is that a deeper purpose behind the feedings was pedagogical: Jesus wanted the Twelve to learn something which they had not learned through their ministry success. The text actually says, when they could not grasp who He was as He came walking on the water toward them, "they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened" (Mark 6.52). So, the purpose of the feeding for the Twelve was that they would gain insight; but they didn't. Then Jesus, ever the Master Teacher, did the miracle again (repetition being one of the keys to effective learning).

After the second time, the Pharisees came to dispute with Him. It is at this point that Jesus gives His strong warning against "leaven"; and reading the two Gospel accounts together, He warns against three

types of leaven. Then the disciples, betraying the characteristics of concrete thinkers who have no idea of integration, began arguing among themselves about who should have brought the lunch along (Mark 8.11-16). Jesus gets angry with them, and asks what is the matter with their seeing, hearing, understanding, and memory (vv. 17-18). He gives them a pop quiz, which is still quite concrete (fill in the blanks: vv. 19-20). When they give the right answers, He says "Do you not yet understand?" (v. 21).

And they didn't.

What were they supposed to learn? One interpretation: that compassion for needy multitudes is much more important than their agenda, no matter how spiritual it is (Mark 6.34, 8.2). And that unless they have that compassion, and a revelation of the power and love of the Father, they will always be overwhelmed by the magnitude of the need and the lateness of the hour (Mark 6.35-6, 8.4). They are seeing with different eyes than those of Jesus: they see problems, He sees potential, they see factors, He sees people.

And what is it that so clogs up their seeing, hearing, remembering, and understanding? What is the anti-Kingdom element that so pollutes the perceptions that it hinders the leaders of the Church from ministering effectively to the needy multitudes, even today?

It is the leaven. And the leaven is teaching (Matthew 16.12). As Matthew understood, the "leaven" is the powerful metaphor Jesus uses to communicate the insidious, unseen, effective power of teaching in the lives, hearts and minds of the Twelve. Even the ones who had done the works of God, and seen miracles, were under the power of this foreign teaching. That is why He warned them so powerfully to "Beware the leaven" (Matthew 16.6, Mark 8.15). Leaven, then, especially as it symbolized for the Jews the pernicious influence of Egypt in and on the People of God, is a Biblical image which approximates what many people mean by "worldview".

For the Twelve to be transformed from quarreling, grasping fishermen to servant leaders, true worldview transformation was going to have to take place. In more scriptural terms, they were going to have to be set free from the leaven, the microscopic dust of the teaching that had so pervaded their hearing, seeing, understanding, and memory.

Sitting in the little boat, tired from intensive ministry, fully engaged in placing blame for who didn't do what, the Twelve were no doubt shocked by the vehemence of Jesus's words. He was pushing them out of their comfort zone, forcing them out of the application level of thinking, where they had done well. But He was unhappy that they had not moved on to analysis of the miraculous events; and He was pushing them hard to synthesis and evaluation (as it were). They could never again be comfortable with their assumptions.

Three Types of Leaven

In looking at the two accounts of the two feedings, Matthew and Mark mention a total of three leavens that Jesus warns against. (Of course, each Gospel writer told the story from his perspective; therefore it may be assumed that Jesus spoke about three types, but that each writer only heard two of the three.)

The type of leaven that both Matthew and Mark report to us is the leaven of the Pharisees (Matthew 16.6, Mark 8.15). As Solomon Zeitlin rather scarily points out, "The literature on the Pharisees would make a complete library" (Zeitlin 1990, 485). Therefore, only the briefest sketch of the beliefs of the Pharisees will be given in this paper.

Josephus points out that the Pharisees refused oaths of allegiance to Caesar and to Herod (Antiq. 17.2.4). Luke gives a very good summary of another major point of distinction: "the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge them all" (Acts 23.8). (This difference in the understanding of the supernatural world is, of course, a significant anthropological marker in analyzing differences in worldview.)

Jesus also warned against the leaven of the Sadducees (Matthew 16.6). Sadducees were also conservative nationalists (Hengel 1974, 153), but worked out their nationalism in different ways. They have marked Hellenistic influences in their origins (143). They did not accept the whole law, as a clear Hellenistic influence (301). The richest high-priestly family had married off one of its daughters, Mariamne, to Herod; these aristocratic Sadducean families spoke Greek, according to archeological evidence (Hengel 1989, 14).

Despite all the arguments that Jesus had with the Pharisees, Hengel points out that the fatal collision for Jesus was "his clash with the Sadducean priestly nobility in the Jewish capital" (1989, 43). That leaven was so powerful that in reaction to His messianic claim, it brought Him to His death.

Because the influences of Hellenization were more obvious among the Sadducees, it seems they can be identified with the Greek elements of the prevailing culture. Because the Pharisees were more Hebraizing and tried with all their might to resist the overt Hellenizing tendencies, they can be identified with the Hebrew elements of the culture.

Of course, "Hebrew and Greek" in this context is not solely an ethnic identification: the educated urban Jew was probably much more "Greek" in thought than the isolated rural Greek peasant. The leaven of worldview is not tied exclusively to ethnicity or to land, but rather to the teaching itself, as it effects perception and understanding.

There was also a third leaven that the disciples were warned against, the leaven of Herod (Mark 8.15). While this warning is less clear and therefore more difficult to apply, Herod was the King, with the power of life and death. He could be identified with the strong man over the nation (cf. Matthew 12.29, 14.1-12).

Therefore, one interpretation of these passages is that Jesus was warning the Twelve against all the influences in their culture that were insidiously and powerfully shaping their worldview, without their even realizing it. He could have been saying, in effect, "Though you read the Word of God and though you walk with Me, you are being taught by religious, philosophical and cultural sources to such an extent that you are not grasping the important lessons I am trying to teach you. Beware of this teaching!"

Paul and the Leaven

The Apostle Paul, not surprisingly, also uses the image of leaven to speak to the need for purification. Once he says it to the Galatians (again, not surprisingly), calling the teaching of the circumcision party "old leaven" (5.9).

The other instance is in the first epistle to the Corinthians. In 5.6-8 he also refers to this image to show to what extent their practices and ideas of acceptable Christianity deviate from the teaching of Jesus.

But it is in the first chapter that Paul picks up on the two influences, the two ways of seeing that were common in his world, and that were combined at Corinth into a Molotov cocktail of fleshly confusion. They are Jew and Greek, two ways of perceiving reality that characterized not just Corinth, not just

two ethnae, not just the whole Mediterranean world of the time, but in some ways two basic human idolatries (Fee 75).

The temptations to power and to wisdom are two of the oldest and most dangerous known to humanity. Different personality types and different cultures will be drawn one way or another; and as C.S. Lewis has pointed out, it is easy to condemn those who sin in ways that we are not tempted. But the fact remains that "here there be monsters", as was written on the medieval maps of uncharted oceans; only in this case the monsters are very real, and very close at hand. This Scriptural warning against idolatrous tendencies in worldviews should not be taken lightly.

Héring sums it up well: for the Greeks, "a god ignominiously condemned and executed could not be taken seriously...for the Jews, a crucified Messiah was an insult to their Messianic hopes, which were essentially political...." (Héring 1966, 10-11).

(See Appendix A for an embarrassingly simplistic, schematic and dichotomized summary of the differences.)

Finally, as Lenski and many others have recognized, the text itself precludes any absolutizing of the differences between Jew and Greek; because the main thrust is not that they are totally different, but that they are the same in the essential point that both would deny the Cross. They may differ from each other, but not at all on the decision that matters for all eternity: their rejection of the Gospel (Lenski 1963, 64-5). The crucial matter here is not worldview differences, but the Cross.

The Power of the Leaven

Why does the teaching of culture have such power? Why are even Christians ready to divide nations, denominations, churches and even families over questions of teaching?

One possibility, with tremendous implications for the concept of worldview, is that the teaching in any culture may not be just a human phenomenon, but may also be spiritual.

Fascinatingly enough, social scientists have also noticed the powerful teaching that children receive, and the struggle of many adults to break out of it. Labouvie-Vief, a life-span psychologist quoted by Jack Mezirow, sets out the concept of a two-phase development process, consisting of first "encoding cultural automatisms" in childhood and adolescence, in order to have a preliminary stability in life (Mezirow 1991,155-6). In the second phase, post-adolescent, the individual "reexamines these structures and confronts the cultural-symbolic assumptions behind them". This terminology from the field of life span psychology comes close to the meaning of the epistle to the Galatians.

The third verse of the fourth chapter reads "...while we were children, held in bondage under the elemental things of the world"; the term 'elemental things' is the translation of the Greek *stoichea*, which is also translated 'the powers'. Given the differences in vocabulary and perspective between Labouvie-Vief and the Dutch theologian Hendrik Berkhof (1962), the descriptions of the elemental spiritual realities that impose structures of security on the immature sound almost identical.

The goal of Labouvie-Vief's process is defined as autonomy, and the warning is that "many individuals fail to negotiate this crisis successfully and enter adulthood with rigid and highly defended thought patterns" (156). Since this phrase aptly sums up the Apostle Paul's exhortations to the Galatians (4.9, 21,31) and to the Colossians (2.8, 16-23), it seems that once more, an honest empirical observer comes up with ideas that are clearly Biblical.

In the view of Berkhof, which was later refined and carried on by Walter Wink, these stoichea are the teaching elements of any culture. While Berkhof identifies them with the spirit of the nation, Wink vacillates and at times seems to identify them with the institutions of a culture, at times with spiritual entities behind the institutions (1984). (It was his experiences as a naive liberation theologian in Latin America which forced him back to the New Testament, to try to discover the source of the power of oppression there.)

Be that as it may, we may assume that since Scripture leaves their identity somewhat unclear, who or what they are is relatively unimportant; although in Berkhof's view, Colossians 2.8-15 shows clearly that "philosophies and traditions of men" are not just human but are reins held by spiritual powers. What is far more crucial to grasp is that we as mature Christians should no longer be in thrall to them, we should no longer accept their teaching at face value. That is one of the primary victories of the Cross, and that is why Paul was inspired to put verse 15 of Colossians 2 into that context.

The thrust of the epistle to the Colossians is this: if we do relate more to philosophies and traditions than to Christ, we are by definition immature, because still under tutors; we are not ready to claim our authority and enter into the inheritance planned for us (see Howell 1995). The symptoms are clear: submission to decrees of not tasting or touching, severe treatment of the body, preoccupation with observations of festivals and Sabbaths, jealousy, ambition, disputes, and dissensions. There are others given in the Epistles, but these are the more religious and intellectual symptoms, and ("curiouser and curiouser"), they are the ones least preached against in certain evangelical circles.

This was the battle that the Apostle Paul was fighting over each of the new churches for which he had some responsibility: the battle for them to stop listening to Greek ideas of virtue, wisdom, and spirituality, or to equally false Judaizing ideas of spirituality, or to strange hybrid fusions of the two; and to listen to Christ.

Herein lies the incredible power of those who heard his ringing proclamation as a declaration of victory over the prevailing gods of his day, and the worldviews that they taught: "In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek..." (Romans 10.12, I Corinthians 1.22-4, Galatians 3.28, Colossians 3.11). He proclaimed this message of deliverance to four of the new churches.

The implications for missions, which have been there in the Word for centuries, are tremendous. How many churches have reached New Testament maturity? Could part of the difficulty lie in the underestimation of the power of the leaven, the three-dimensional teaching that goes on in each culture, teaching not just anchored in powerful institutions but transmitted at times with spiritual power?

If the battle for the minds of their followers was the most difficult part of the ministries of both the Apostle Paul and Jesus (see the Gospel of Mark for the clearest account of the hard-headedness of the Disciples), if the definition and meaning of the Gospel itself is bound up in this question, it is possible that the entire New Testament can be read as a history and manual of worldview transformation.

The New Testament begins with a new light coming into the world, which was not comprehended; the light glimmers, then flares up and shines brighter until it seems to be extinguished; then it spreads into all the Mediterranean world. Finally, one of the light-bearers is given a glimpse through the veil, and for a moment sees no longer through a glass darkly. His worldview is transformed as he sees a new heaven, a new earth, and ultimate reality.

That is the vision which all will one day see: all those who subject their worldviews to the slow patient working of the salt, the repeated submission of convictions and perceptions to the purifying effect of the Light.

How Can Worldviews Change?

Jack Mezirow is a recent theorist of adult education who has built a theory of Transformational Learning (see his 1994 article for a brief and relatively digestible summary of the theory). Mezirow is also attractive to Christians, because he describes so well the steps that happen when learning is a powerful experience that transforms a life. For missionaries, his research could open windows onto the process of worldview transformation (although Mezirow does not use the term "worldview" specifically).

Applying Mezirow's steps to the Apostle Peter gives not only an illustration of Mezirow's thinking, but a Biblical check on it. If Mezirow accurately describes how a person's thinking is radically changed, then glimpses of his theory should be visible in the Bible. But if Peter's transformation bore no resemblance whatever to Mezirow's scheme, then Mezirow (and not the Bible), should be put into question. And since Peter was such a key figure in the history of the early Church, the account of the transformation of his thinking is a good place to look.

Peter was challenged many times in his thinking. For example, he had a new revelation of who Jesus was following the teaching which accompanied the miracles of the two feedings of the multitude (Matthew 16.13-20). Peter was the one who said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!" (v. 16).

However, Jesus immediately responds that this revelation was not the result of Peter thinking it through; it had been given directly from Heaven. So Peter was blessed; but was this event a true transformation of perspective, in Mezirow's terms?

Apparently not, since the experience of the Mount of Transformation took place just afterward (Luke 9. 28-36). While Jesus was indeed transformed there, and Peter saw Him, Peter's perspective was still out of line with reality. Peter made a false praxis proposal ("Let's build three tabernacles!"), and was then rebuked from Heaven. Interestingly enough, the Voice out of the cloud said, "... Listen to Him!" Apparently, the Lord was trying to get through to this man, who was to have such authority in the infant Church. Additional key educational interventions include the interchange that Peter had with Jesus during the footwashing at the Last Supper (John 13.3-10), and the betrayal by Peter and Jesus's public restoration of him.

It would seem that the miracle of Pentecost followed by the authoritative preaching by this same Peter, and the subsequent miracles worked by Peter and his angelic deliverance from prison, combine to show a man totally changed and acting in heavenly authority to bring about the advance of the Kingdom of God on earth. In Mezirow's terms, had this man in fact undergone a thorough perspective transformation? Had his worldview been deeply altered and redeemed?

Unfortunately, not completely. Neither Jesus nor Mezirow would punch his ticket. Mezirow defines perspective transformation as "a critique of alienating social forms when one is addressing socio-linguistic codes, which include social norms, language codes, ideologies, philosophies, and theories" (Mezirow 1994, 228), which definition sounds like it could well apply to what a missionary would term a worldview change. The Book of the Acts shows that while Peter had broken through in some areas, his transformation was far from complete.

Peter had indeed undergone a series of incredible learning experiences, and he had indeed grasped many important concepts, including the working of miracles and, most importantly, a deep understanding of the resurrection power of the Risen Lord. But he had still kept his old perspective ("heaven") in two crucial areas: what was the Gospel, and who was it for?

Peter still believed that the Gospel was for the Jews, and that being a Christian meant observance of the Jewish laws. This belief, also held by the other apostles, would if not blown away lead to the stopping of the spread of the Gospel, and the confining of it to one people group and to those who would consent to join in the cultural practices of that group. Therefore Mezirow's paradigm of perspective transformation becomes a lens through which the entire New Testament can be read; and also a way of summing up the goal of Christian maturity itself:

Acts 10: Visions Lead to Seeing

The tenth chapter of the Book of the Acts is given over to a key event in Peter's life. He sees Gentiles, and God's good news for them, in a brand new way.

The events in this chapter fit well into Mezirow's process of critical premise reflection, as summed up in his 1994 article (224ff):

1. "A disorienting dilemma": Peter has a vision, and a voice from heaven tells him (v. 13) to eat the impure animals.
2. "Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame, turning to religion for support": Peter replies, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean" (14)
3. "A critical assessment of assumptions": the voice comes a second time: "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy" (15). Then (good pedagogy here) this happens three times (16), and Peter is "greatly perplexed in mind" (17)
4. "...others have negotiated a similar change": Peter was apparently the first of the disciples to be so directly confronted with the next stage of the Lord's plan; but he discovers that a group of Gentiles has been led along a path that intersects his (17ff).
Peter is still reflecting (see point 3), and then hears the voice of God telling him to
5. "Explore the options for new roles, relationships and actions": he goes down, introduces himself, and finds out about this new relationship (21)
With this assurance, Peter goes straight into
6. "Planning a course of action": welcoming the Gentiles into the house and agreeing to accompany them (23)
He did not go through
7. "Acquiring knowledge and skills": since Jesus had been equipping him for three years and more with everything he needed. So he was immediately ready for
8. "Provisionally trying out a new role": he went into the house of Cornelius, which a devout Jew would normally never have done (24-5). Peter immediately
9. "Renegotiated relationships and negotiated new relationships": Gentiles can be brothers in Christ after all! (28-9). Peter listens to Cornelius, and then
10. "Builds competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships": "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality...." (34ff)
A dynamic confirmation of the perspective transformation comes when the Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles! (44). Peter uses this event as a justification for baptizing these new brethren (47).
This
11. "Reintegration into his life on the basis of conditions dictated by his new perspective" continues on in Jerusalem, as Peter is challenged by those who hold on to the old perspective (Acts 11.2). Peter recounts the whole story, and the entire group of disciples apparently agrees with the new paradigm (18).

Thus Peter's crucial perspective transformation fits remarkably well into Mezirow's eleven phases. Why is there such a good fit?

Since the Bible is true, and truly describes human reality, it is not surprising that Mezirow's steps line up so well with Peter's experience. God made humans, and Mezirow affirms that his phases were "identified through empirical studies" (1994, 224). Since empirical studies are by definition based on sense observation, they will normally do a pretty fair job of reflecting reality. This is a classic example of general revelation lining up in harmony with specific revelation.

Unfortunately for educators, pastors, and anyone else concerned with the leadership of the Church, the disciples did not in fact have a complete perspective transformation in Acts 11. The letters of the Apostle Paul show clearly that he fought this battle during his entire ministry; indeed, it is still being fought today.

More sobering still is the passage in Galatians 2, where Paul recounts that Peter, under intense peer pressure, withdraws from his new perspective and slips back into the old one for a time (11-21). If the Lord Himself, with all the supernatural artillery He used, had so much trouble with Peter; then it is clear that true, lasting worldview transformation is a long, painful process not to be presumed upon or undertaken lightly.

Veteran pastors and missionaries would agree on this point. Human nature is human nature. Worldviews have a powerful grip upon us. But one way to look at the role of the Holy Spirit in our ongoing sanctification is that He is slowly but surely working to change our worldviews at every point where they conflict with His, and at the deepest levels.

"Lord, Heal My Sight!"

"Seeing" is a theme found throughout the New Testament (II Corinthians 4.18). Jesus Christ came to open the eyes of the blind, and clearly, He meant to open not just physical eyes (John 9). We are promised an ultimate perspective transformation:

when He appears,
we shall be like Him,
because we shall see Him
just as He is (I John 3.2)

If we keep looking to Jesus our faith and perseverance is made easier (Hebrews 12.2), weariness falls away (Hebrews 12.3), we accede to His transforming us now (Hebrews 12.14), we will see Him more and more clearly, then not only our sight but our beings will be changed.

The Apostle John, when he had his perspective transformed in the island of Patmos, was told to write down for us what he saw (the Book of the Revelation 1.19). So in a sense, the fulfillment of the Word is in fact the final transformation of perspective. After the Church has been sufficiently prepared, we will see reality as it is; as it was; as it shall ever be.

Not only will all perspectives be transformed, but all persons, all nations, all action will be transformed in the Great Transformation. The first heaven and first earth pass away, the new ones come down, every tear shall be wiped away, there shall no longer be any death, nor mourning, nor crying, nor pain (Revelation 21). The leaves of the Tree shall be for the healing of the nations (Revelation 22.2).

For now we see in a glass darkly,
but then face to face;
now I know in part,

but then I shall know fully
just as I also have been fully known
I Corinthians 13.12

Lord, help me to see!

Can Complex Societies have Worldviews?

The world can be divided into two groups of people: those who divide the world into two groups of people, and those who do not. Dr. Don Carson is one who does not. In a commendable reaction against simplistic overgeneralization, Dr. Carson rejects the idea that in New Testament times there was a Hebrew or Greek worldview that can be easily defined.

In discussions of Hebrew worldview, Dr. Carson feels that the worldview described is often a Biblical ideal which rarely, if ever, existed. He points out that the Hebrews were often syncretistic in many periods of their history. The factor too often neglected is that much of the Old Testament is the record of the Jews resisting the teaching of the Lord, and sliding toward adopting the gods and therefore the worldviews of the nations around them.

He goes on to say that by the time of the intertestamental period, Hellenization was in full swing, the Roman cultural overlay had further complicated life in the Mediterranean basin, and therefore to speak of one Hebrew worldview is to completely underestimate the complexity of the situation. "The world confronting the early Church was a highly pluralistic world" (Carson 1996, 496).

Further, he underlines that the Greeks were far from monolithic in their thinking, and disagreed violently over certain philosophical issues. So, in his opinion to speak of a Greek worldview is equally misleading, if not worse: the diversity of Greek thought, religion and philosophies excludes the possibility of a single worldview.

However, this argument can backfire. While the origins and finer distinctions of the different schools of Greek thought are well beyond the scope of this paper, Martin Hengel, the most thorough historian of Hellenization in Palestine in recent times, underlines that one of the causes of these distinctions may well be Semitic influences! The founders of Stoicism "Zeno of Citium in Cyprus and Chrysippus of Soloi in Cilicia were very probably themselves Semites assimilated to Greek ways" (Hengel 1974, 87). In other words, Greek thought was modified by its contact with other worldviews, new schools of philosophy were introduced by partially-assimilated foreigners, and the intellectual battles continued on. So to say that the situation is complex is certainly true; but the complexity does not deny the fact that two very different ways of seeing reality were in conflict, continuing tension, and occasional accommodation (Hengel 1974, 310).

On the other hand, Hengel states firmly that "we can nowhere talk of a direct, demonstrable Greek influence on the Hebrew literature that we have before Sirach" (Hengel 1974, 110, 153ff). Therefore, for this authority the Greek influence is clear from the middle of the third century B.C., but before that it is not present in Hebrew literature. In any case, there are indeed two different worldviews.

It is clear that in any cosmopolitan society, whether ancient or modern, worldviews clash and mix. The books of Exodus, Joshua, Daniel and Nehemiah, along with many other Bible passages such as the entire New Testament, can be read as textbook examples of worldview confrontation.

Also, in a complex society, not all groups will adopt a new worldview in a uniform manner. Some will consciously resist, some will have cultural distinctives that arm them against the new view, and some will just be too isolated, for one reason or another, to hear and receive the new way of thinking.

For example, it would seem that the Pharisees and Sadducees, while co-existing in Jerusalem, had worldviews that were in some ways very different from each other (Neusner 1990, Preface; Josephus Antiq. 13.10.6; Acts 23.6-10). Samuel Sandmel uses modern examples from Jewish life to illustrate how creeping Hellenization may have advanced at different speeds in first-century Judaism (Sandmel 1969, 17-21).

The ubiquitous Hengel points out that the motivation of later Pharisaism to intensively instruct the whole people in the law was born out of their desire to resist Hellenistic ideas and influence on their culture (Hengel 1974, 79, 313). If this is not a clear case of a clash of two distinct worldviews, then what in the world is it? Indeed, the entire history of Palestine from 200 BC to 200 AD can be read as a minuet of resistance and accommodation to Greco-Roman influences by the Jewish people (see Leaney 1984, 85-6, 174-6).

And if there was no Greek or Hebrew worldview, why did the Apostle Paul use these two categories as organizing principles in the epistles to the Romans, and in the first epistle to the Corinthians? And if there is no such thing as a national American worldview, why is there so much discussion about "modern" and "postmodern"? Surely, if a national worldview cannot exist in a complex society, then trying to analyze these paradigmatic movements must be a pure waste of time.

Modern Worldviews

Obviously, there is a confusion of definitions in this discussion. The example of national worldview that Dr. Carson referred to as valid was that of the Japanese, possibly the most ethnically homogeneous of the modern industrialized nations, with a well-defined and rather monolithic worldview. The presupposition here is that only this kind of culture can have a true worldview, while a mixed society, because of its diversity, cannot.

This limited definition of "worldview" can certainly be useful, but it is not the only definition possible. It seems to date back to a classical anthropological understanding of the term, in which a worldview could only be ascribed to a tribal society, a homogeneous ethnos which had its own discreet culture, land, and language (like Japan). Since that time, anthropology has recognized that any of these four elements can be split off. Worldview is now seen as a system of systems.

Does the USA really not have a worldview? The United States made up a diverse nation from the beginning, with the different colonies being settled by people from different religious backgrounds for different reasons; yet Alexis de Tocqueville, during a relatively short visit a century and a half ago, elucidated elements of the emerging national character so clearly that he is still cited today as one of the best definers of what it means to be American. His perceptions of America still define our worldview, 150 years and many waves of increasingly diverse immigration later.

Any thinking Canadian, Mexican, or European, or practically anyone else in the world, can readily list elements of the U.S. worldview which differ markedly from those of his or her native country. Even journalists recognize them. What used to be called "national stereotypes" are worldview seen through the wrong end of the telescope, according to Redfield (1953, 84ff); they are of course generalizations, and have never applied to every individual within a given population. But whether or not they fit someone's strict definition of "worldview" is immaterial; it is still true that the English person's world is more stratified into social classes than the American's, Germans really do value order and hard work, and the French see reality refracted through rationalist lenses more than anybody else.

For instance, an important component of any worldview is the societal attitude toward law. The following prewar generalizations, while they may have weakened over the past three generations, still

do a good job of summing up four very different European national attitudes toward rules, and therefore a key component of four different worldviews:

- In England, everything is permitted, except that which is forbidden.
- In Germany, everything is forbidden, except that which is permitted.
- In Russia, everything is forbidden, even that which is permitted.
- In France, everything is permitted, even that which is forbidden.

Present-day travelers to these nations will agree that even though the laws themselves might have come and gone over the years, the underlying idea of what a law is and how it should be approached has changed but little in these countries. This deeper-layer approach to the reality of law is one illustration of how a worldview works out, even in complex modern societies.

For the purposes of this paper, then, the definition of "worldview" will be the one proposed by Paul Hiebert: the more or less implicit cognitive, affective and evaluative assumptions that underlie a people's culture, and that support and generate their beliefs and practices. This definition will be operationalized in the following manner: when two groups demonstrate that their basic values, underlying feelings, or ontological and epistemological approaches to reality are fundamentally different, they will be assumed to hold different worldviews.

Theologians Search for Wisdom

The authority for using the above definition even in complex societies is the Word of God. The New Testament in several pivotal passages makes a distinction between Greek and Hebrew approaches to reality.

Grant Osborne agrees that there was a marked difference between Greek and Hebrew worldviews in New Testament times, especially in the religious dimension of worldview. E.A. Judge confirms the differences, adding an emphasis on the urban-rural dichotomy seen in the Gospels as another primary reason for the differences (Judge 1960, 8-10). Jacob Neusner, writing in 1975 from his Jewish perspective, confirms this insight as he underlines the importance of economic, social and educational differences (Neusner 1975, 32-3). Of course, for anthropologists these latter factors are at least as important in worldview differentiation as religion.

But for an entire generation a theological debate has been raging over the question of Greek and Hebrew worldviews. At first glance this debate is puzzling to anyone holding a missiological-anthropological point of view; yet there are valid reasons for the reactions of certain evangelical theologians against absolutizing or dichotomizing Greek and Hebrew worldviews.

The Norwegian theologian Thorlief Boman wrote a landmark book which was translated into English in 1960, *Hebrew Thought Compared With Greek*. In it, Boman drew on German theologians and linguistic analysis to paint sweeping conclusions about the fundamental differences between Greek and Hebrew thinking.

James Barr's refutation came out the following year (Barr 1961). Barr was quite put out with Boman's simplistic linguistic equation of certain words with philosophical ideas (see Osborne 1991, 61 for a brief summary). For example, Boman's characterization of Greek thought as "logical" and Hebrew thought as "psychological" (194ff) strikes the present-day reader as simply ludicrous. Also, the oft-repeated qualification of Hebrew as "dynamic" and Greek as "static", which Boman tries to elucidate from meanings of words and verb tenses, is certainly overdrawn (Boman 1960, 31-69).

However, even Barr wrote that he had no necessary quarrel with the idea that there were differences of Hebrew and Greek thought (Barr 1964, 47-50): his concern was that linguistic analysis and lexical methods not be misused in order to prove it (Barr 1961, 5-6, 13-14; 1969, 163).

The underlying concern of Barr's was a long struggle against Oscar Cullmann and certain tendencies in the biblical theology movement, specifically those who would polarize and section off the Old and New Testaments, Judaism and Christianity (Barr 1968). Barr was commendably speaking out for the essential continuity of traditional Christianity; but his arguments against the two separate worldviews need to be read in the context of this specific theological debate (1969, 170ff; 1980).

Another part of the theological resistance to the idea of clear Greek and Hebrew worldview differences seems to come from the clash between evangelical scholars and the history-of-religions movement. This movement's search for the elements of Christianity in all the religions of the known world, as a result of their presupposition that Christianity is just another human sect, has understandably led some to react against the idea of worldview differences influencing the early Church (Holladay 1977, 15ff). Yet another theological reaction to the idea of a difference between Greek and Hebrew worldviews comes from missiologists resisting those who affirm that cultural divisions are so deep that cross-cultural communication of the Gospel is impossible, and we would do better to recognize the profound truths that are to be found in, say, Oriental religions. This group would insist, and rightly so, on the human commonalities of understanding that underlie all cultural differences (see Crowe's 1993 article for a well-argued example of this perspective; although Crowe admits that "only the most uninstructed of theologians would dispute the need of taking the distinctive character of Hebrew ways into account when interpreting the Bible" (90).

There are therefore at least three good reasons for theologians to break out in a rash whenever Greek and Hebrew worldviews are brought up. The reaction is understandable, and even laudable given the context. But since the New Testament does speak of them as two distinct ways of perceiving reality, Greek and Hebrew thought merit our closest attention and analysis.

Can You See the View?

Although Don Carson rejects the idea that the New Testament categorizations of Jew and Greek in Romans 1 and I Corinthians 1 are worldviews and refers to them as "stylized archetypes", they do in fact match Hiebert's definition of worldviews. In one sense, any worldview which is defined is a "stylized archetype" of the way a people views reality, since a worldview by definition is profound, buried in the deep structure of thought, feeling and value, and often not explicitly voiced even by the people themselves.

Indeed, without extensive cross-cultural experience people have a great deal of difficulty realizing that they have a worldview which is different from other people's, and just how different it is. Although a given worldview will be coherent, it will not be perfectly consistent, and anyone attempting to elucidate it will be obligated to stylize and generalize to a certain extent. And that which is known about Greek and Hebrew worldviews correlates well with existing research categorizations of worldview epistemology in anthropology, such as field dependent-independent, high context-low context, and traditional-modern.

A.I. Hallowell said it very well over 40 years ago: "the fact that the human organism becomes selectively sensitized to certain arrays of stimuli rather than others is almost certainly a function of the individual's membership in one cultural group, rather than another..." (Hallowell 1951, 51). In other words, our perceptions are radically influenced by our worldview. Anthropologists have known this for a long time (see Kearney 1984, 42ff for a good discussion of why and how worldviews deeply

affect perception). Recent empirical research continues to bear out that people of different cultures literally cannot see the same things.

A wonderfully succinct passage in the Gospel of John provides a perfect illustration of this truth: the Father speaks from Heaven, and immediately three groups of people hear three different things: the first group, materialists all, says that "it thundered" (would these be the ones influenced by Greek rational thinking?). The second group, much more spiritual, says "No, an angel spoke to Him" (would these be the Jewish-type thinker, ever eager for a sign? See Acts 23.9). The third group, perhaps composed only of Jesus and John, hears the Voice of God and realizes what He says (John 12. 28-9). This little passage is a clear example of the two main worldviews present in Israel at the time of Jesus, and of the Kingdom worldview that Jesus was trying over and over again to get across to His friends.

As Jesus challenged His disciples at the time of the feeding of the multitudes, "leaven" can completely change perception. Worldview determines not only our values, but literally what we see and what we do not, what we hear and what we do not, what we understand and what we do not. The implications of this truth should perhaps be studied more closely by those who teach Scripture, theology, and the history of the Church.

Worldview and Mouse

In any case, present anthropological practice does allow for and even encourage the exploration of these overarching types of differences in complex societies. For example, sociology and anthropology are converging in studies of European nations which attempt to measure such fundamental variables as task and relationship orientation, individuality and authority, the role of women, initiative and compliance, liberty and equality, hierarchy and order.

Many multinational corporations are vitally interested in these worldview differences, and even the ones who aren't wager hundreds of millions on them. For example, Disney Corporation blithely ignored worldview differences between France and the U.S., leading to bankruptcy and the eventual bailout of the Euro Disney park outside of Paris by a Saudi prince.

Disney knew that their cartoon characters were wildly popular in France, and assumed from that fact that they could run Euro Disney just like Disneyland in Anaheim. The Mouse immediately ran into liberty-equality problems that he was not even aware existed: the issue was not the employee dress code that Disney tried to impose, but it was the worldview difference underlying the idea that an American corporation could impose any type of dress code in France. Values and feelings erupted in a Europe-wide scandal.

Do modern, complex, pluralistic nations have marked worldview differences? Ask Mickey. He's convinced they do...now.

Greek and Hebrew Worldviews

This paper will attempt to show that two distinct worldviews existed in New Testament times, the Greek and Hebrew. That they are two of the most important worldviews for Christians to understand is immediately obvious: in the divine Economy, the Logos was given in these two languages.

Further, the intent of this paper is not to set these two worldviews in opposition, nor to elevate the one and demonize the other. As with any human worldview, there are redemptive elements and fallen elements in each one.

The Princess and the Prostitute

In the sixteenth chapter of the book of Ezekiel, the prophet speaks the burden of the Lord concerning the unfaithfulness of His People. The story is told of the choosing of Israel and her preparation for marriage, and her turning away after other suitors and forsaking the Lord. This graphic, shocking story was intended to communicate to Israel the horror of sin and the desire of the Lord to see her return.

The two images of Princess and Prostitute were used to describe the destiny and the present idolatrous state of the nation. They can also be applied to any other nation; since all share the same God-given destiny, to stand redeemed before the Throne (Revelation 7.9ff); and all have been marked by the Fall, and have prostituted their gifts. Every nation is a fallen princess, a Cinderella who has forgotten her background, her calling and even her name...her very identity.

The fallen princess theme is used throughout the Prophets concerning the Hebrew nation. Hosea is even called to live it out in his marriage, as a striking audio-visual example of God's heart toward Israel. There are many redeemed and redeemable aspects of Hebrew culture: the Lord put them there. There are many fallen elements, also, and the Prophets enumerate them in detail.

The same principle is true of Greek culture. The genius of Greek thought, the power of the Greek myths, the winsome elements of Greek art and civilization, still fascinate people today. Their thirst for Truth, their pursuit of the Good, their glimpses of the Absolute have enthralled the best minds of humanity.

That the Creator chose to send His Son to the Hebrew people in the time of the influence of Hellenization is a testimony that there are powerful redemptive elements in these two cultures. He wanted us to see His plan for Creation through the worldviews inherent in these two cultures. His own Son was born into the dynamic mix of these two cultures, and therefore it can be said that Redemption came to us through them.

Hebrew Positives

"The central point of the Israelite worldview is the existence of a god beyond nature, who organized nature and gave it to people" (Frymer-Kensky 234) in contrast to the current Mesopotamian thought at the time. He is transcendent (Levine 1987, 254).

But not only is He transcendent, He came down to form a nation for Himself. In His holiness, He revealed Himself by His acts (Talmon insists on God's act of deliverance as the central feature of a truly Jewish view of revelation). He also revealed Himself by His Word, and in addition, called His people to be holy (Herford 1928, 17ff). The infinite, holy God desires relationship with His people (Bonsor 1993, 23ff). What is more, the concept of the holy in Hebrew thought was a volatile state of becoming holy (Levine, 241, 246). God's truth in its essence is faithfulness (Stagg 1979, 240ff).

Following along from this point, the doing of God's will was then the epitome of virtue. Virtue could not be separated from God and His revealed will. Jewish theology was not concerned so much with definitions, as was Greek; but with the doing of righteousness (Herford 85ff; see also below, 'Greeks Bearing Gifts' for more on this point).

Jacob Neusner, writing as a Jew not unsympathetic to Christianity, mentions a fascinating hypothesis concerning this point: He believes that the de-emphasis of 'doing' truth is a purely Protestant aberration of traditional Christianity (Catholic and Orthodox), understandable in the light of the abuses in the Church in the High Middle Ages. But he also says that the pendulum has swung too far, and that practice and community have at least as much to do with religion as do individual belief and

conscience. Not only has church practice been radically affected by this part of the Protestant legacy, but it has even strongly influenced academic scholarship in the philosophy of religion (Neusner 1991, 7-9).

The beauty of wisdom in the Hebrew tradition is that it is defined as the fear of the Lord. In other words, Wisdom is inextricably linked with the Source of all truth. In the Hebrew mind, a search for Wisdom divorced from the knowledge of the Holy is inconceivable; it is the epitome of folly.

Walt Kaiser says of the wisdom books, "The fear of the Lord has become the essence of the knowledge and the wisdom of God" (Kaiser 1978, 169ff; see Brueggemann 1989 for a lyrical, joyous exposition of this profound principle). It is hard to imagine a concept of wisdom more fully removed from Greek thought than this. How this truth needs to be recovered by the Church!

Often overlooked is the fact that not only was Jesus Jewish, He was a follower of the Pharisees (Lauterbach 1990, 59). He and His followers were not aristocratic Sadducees, but of the humble people who were educated through the efforts of the Pharisees (Judge 1960, 10). Further, even though He criticized and challenged the Pharisees, "most of His teachings are in full accord with the Pharisees" and His differences are rather differences of interpretation (Zeitlin 489ff).

Also, Paul was "a Pharisee, son of a Pharisee" (Acts 23.6), and also the disciple of a Pharisee (22.3). Thus it can be said, as Marvin Wilson has pointed out in his popular book (1989) and Jacob Neusner affirms from his Jewish academic perspective (Neusner 1991, 1-2), that the early Church was born out of a Jewish womb.

Jewish education has been summed up even recently as teaching the young religious and ethical precepts that lead to goodness of character. In addition, "the education of the children was entrusted to the father" (Bimbaum 1979, 222). The place of the family in the education of the child is a Hebrew truth that needs to be repeated over and over again in this age of parental abdication on the one hand, and state attempts at control of children (a Greek legacy direct from Plato via Hegel and Dewey) on the other (Ward 1996, 51).

The Glory That Was Greek

As many have pointed out, one of the gifts the Greeks gave to the world was the direct expression of abstract ideas (Frymer-Kensky 1987, 231). Hengel, once more, says it so well: "Ancient man did not think analytically or make differentiations within the realm of myth in the way that we do, but combined and accumulated his ideas in a 'multiplicity of approximations'" (Hengel 1976, 56). Thus the many titles applied to Jesus in Scripture.

This difference in thinking explains at once the gift of the Greeks, which now enables us to dissect minuscule differentiations in meaning (but also why many have an incredible difficulty in even imagining what an undifferentiated, global, high-context worldview could be like, feel like, sound like, "see" like).

The Greeks, to their credit, had an incredible desire to search for truth. It was a defining national characteristic. As early as Herodotus it was said, "All Greeks were zealous for every kind of learning" (quoted in Fee, 74-5). The Egyptians thought them childish, since they were always asking "Why?" Their unquenchable thirst for learning has awakened that same desire in generation after generation of young people, for the past three thousand years.

A powerful "Princess" component of Greek culture was their search not just for more human wisdom, but for the Good. In the shining moments of their history, their pursuit of the Ideal was relentless.