

Class 2: The History of Early Israel to 135 C.E. and the Development of Early Christianity

An Inquirer's Class about
Christianity and
The Episcopal Church

Review

- The Northern Kingdom (Israel) fell to the Assyrians in 721 B.C.E.
- The Southern Kingdom (Judah) fell to the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E.



Review - 2

- The Babylonian exile presented theological problems for the exiles. They had to:
 1. Explain why did Yahweh not protect them?
 2. Explain why they were exiled (spared)?
 3. Decide how could they worship away from the Temple and the Holy City?
- As Scotty used to say to Captain Kirk, "Captain! Wha'do we do?"

The Second Temple Period – (A)

- After 50 years in exile, the Israelites were allowed to return. This came about because Babylonia was conquered by King Darius of Persia.
- The Temple and the city of Jerusalem were rebuilt under the guidance of Ezra and Nehemiah, the designated authorities of the Persian empire.

The Second Temple Period – (B)

- The Second Temple was rededicated on Passover, 516 B.C.E.
- Judah remained a vassal of the Persian empire until the rise of the Greeks.
- In 332 B.C.E., Alexander the Great conquered most of the known world, including Judea.

The Second Temple Period – (C)

- A principle concern of the returned exiles was renewing the covenant.
- The second concern was legitimizing genealogical lineages.
- The third concern was purity.
 - Second and third concerns are really all about renewing the covenant and keeping the people Holy before God.

The Hellenistic Period

- Jerusalem was no longer isolated from the outside world. Greek rationalism influenced and the Greek style of governance influenced Jewish thought.
- The apocalyptic literature of the Bible originated during this period (e.g., the second half of the Book of Daniel).
- The first five books of the Bible were translated into Greek (the Septuagint).

The Hasmonean Period - (A)

- After Alexander's death, the Greek empire was divided.
- The Seleucid king and the Ptolemaic kings fought over the territory that contained the former nation of Judah.
- Judah fell into the hands of the Seleucid kings, the most notorious of which was Antiochus Epiphanes IV.

The Hasmonean Period – (B)

- Eventually, a guerrilla war broke out headed by Judah Maccabee.
- The Maccabee's were part of the Hasmonean dynasty, and after a 25 years struggle, they took power and declared Judea free of Seleucid control in 141 B.C.E.
- The Hasmoneans invented a new form of governance in which the role of King and Priest here held by the same individual.

The Hasmonean Period – (C)

- The Sadducees and the Pharisees as religious leaders of the people arose during the Hasmonean period.
- Near the end of the Hasmonean rule (which is near the time of Herod and Jesus), there was dissent among some conservative Judeans about the ruler of Judea being both King and Priest.

The Hasmonean Period – (D)

- The Essenes were among the sects who opposed the power of the Hasmoneans, and they fled into the desert to begin their own communities.
- The Dead Sea scrolls found at Qumran are the scholarship of the Essene community that fled "mainstream" Judean Jewish culture. The Essenes looked for a messiah who would put an end to Hasmonean hegemony and "bad" religious practices.

The Roman Occupation – (A)

- In 63 B.C.E., the Roman general Pompey conquered Judea.
- Octavian took power of Rome, and was declared emperor.
- Octavian changed Roman administration. The old priesthood of Israel was gone, and a new ruling party emerged that many did not even consider Jewish.
- This new ruling party was the Herodians, named for its founder, Herod Antipater, the Idumean.

The Roman Occupation – (B)

- Antipater's son, Herod the Great became the procurator of Judea by action of the Roman senate.
- Herod the Great was the procurator when Jesus was born.
- Herod was a great builder, and the Second Temple was expanded under his rule. The great stones that the disciples refer to when they accompany Jesus to the temple refer to Herod's accomplishment.

First Century Judaism and Jesus' Place in History - A

- Jesus born around 4 C.E. He died around 37 C.E.
- He lived and ministered during the exceedingly turbulent "end times" of the Jewish state.

First Century Judaism and Jesus' Place in History - A

- The first of two Jewish revolts would take place in 69 C.E., and the Temple would be destroyed in 70 C.E.
- The second Jewish revolt, often called the Bar Kochba rebellion, took place in 135 C.E.
- All Jews were banished from Jerusalem at that time. It was only at the end of WWII that the nation of Israel was restored.

First Century Judaism and Jesus' Place in History - C

- From Jesus' time to 70 C.E., Judaism was quite variable in practice.
 - Judaism was a *belief* in the God of Moses (Yahweh), who created the world, and who chose the Jews to be his special people in accordance to their loyalty to him.
 - Judaism was a *practice* of the laws that Moses commanded in God's name. These laws included things like circumcision, holding of the Sabbath, and not eating certain foods.

First Century Judaism and Jesus' Place in History - C

- Judaism had become a "book religion" in which the reading of the Torah as well as the Prophets (*Neviim*) and the Writings (*Ktuvim*)
- Rise of the synagogues. This is quite different from worship that was centralized around the Temple.

First Century Judaism and Jesus' Place in History - D

- Also, pre-exilic Judaism focused on the community whereas the religion of Jesus' time and later focused on the individual.
- After 70 C.E., the rabbinic period began, and an early leader was Rabban Gamaliel.

First Century Judaism and Jesus' Place in History - E

- There were several sects within Judaism
 - Pharisees
 - Sadducees
 - Essenes
 - Zealots
 - Christians

First Century Judaism and Jesus' Place in History - F

- Christians abolished Jewish dietary restrictions and the traditional observance of the Sabbath
- Christians elevated Jesus to a position far higher and more significant than that of any angel or any other intermediary figure in Judaism.

Early Symbols of Christ

SYMBOL	SIGNIFICANCE
ALPHA-OMEGA	eternality of Christ
ANCHOR	faith
BREAD AND WINE	eucharist—death of Christ
CHI-RHO	first two letters of "Christ" in Greek
CROSS	death of Christ
DOVE	Holy Spirit at baptism of Christ
FIRE	Holy Spirit on Day of Pentecost
FISH	initial letters of "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior" in Greek, spelling ICHTHYS; the Greek word for "fish"; feeding of 5000; "fishers of men"
LAMB	Christ's self-sacrifice
SHEPHERD	Christ's care for His people
SHIP	Church (Noah's ark; cf. baptism)
VINE	Christ's union with His people; wine of eucharist



When Jesus Died, How Was God's Presence Felt In The World?

- New Testament refers to the coming of the Spirit, the Advocate.

The Trinity

- The trinity describes the relationships among the three members of the Godhead in a manner consistent with the Bible.
- Central to the doctrine is the question of how God can be one and three.

The Trinity

- Early Christians did not want to lose their Jewish monotheism as they exalted their Savior.
- Heresies emerged as people tried to explain the vastness and power of a God that is both transcendent and immanent, without become tritheists, which is what Jews were quick to accuse them of being.

Orthodox View of the Trinity – (A)

- Councils of 325 and 381 C.E.
 - As early as 33 C.E., the Apostolic fathers taught the full and real divinity of Jesus and accepted and adopted the Trinitarian baptismal formula.
 - Between 100 and 150 C.E., most of the theological discussion was about the person of Jesus. There was theological ambiguity about the trinity.

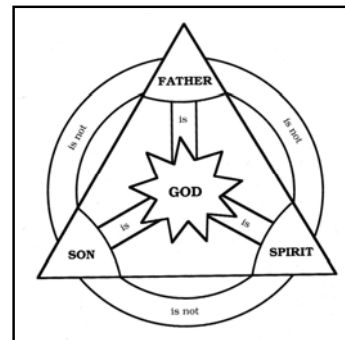
Orthodox View of the Trinity – (B)

- Councils of 325 and 381 C.E.
 - Between 150 and 325 C.E., there was an increase in persecution and heresy. Chief among these was the Arian controversy that denied the deity of Christ.
 - Consequently, Christians had to be more precise about their beliefs about Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Orthodox View of the Trinity – (C)

- Councils of 325 and 381 C.E.
 - The great Christian Apologist Origen said that the Holy Spirit was co-eternal with the Father and the Son.
 - Tertullian, a North African Bishop and Christian apologist spoke of "trinity" and "persons" - three in number, but one in substance.

Ancient Views of the Trinity



Orthodox View of the Trinity – (D)

- In 325 C.E., the Council of Nicea addressed the Arian Heresy.
- The issue was whether Christ was fully God, or whether he was a created and a subordinate being.
- Arius said that only God was eternal. His opponent, Athanasius said that Christ was co-eternal with the Father. There was no sense of subordination. But, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was left undeveloped.

Orthodox View of the Trinity – (E)

- The Council at Constantinople in 381 C.E. addressed the issue of the Holy Spirit.
- In the end, the Council added the statement, "... and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and life-giver, who proceeds from the Father, who is worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son."

Orthodox View of the Trinity – (E)

- In the sixth century the words, "and the son" (the *filioque* clause) were added to the Creed at the Third Council at Toledo.
- The issue of the subordination of the Holy Spirit in the *filioque* clause in the Nicene Creed is a principle source of contention between the Eastern (Greek) and Western (Latin) churches.