

Do we think and act like a Hebrew or a Greek?



Greek Thoughts

Holding a can of Coca-Cola and asking two groups of people to describe it. Looking at the external, majority will say, "Coca-Cola! The catchy white iconic typeface on a shade of red represents Coca-Cola." Even critics would admit there were numerous carbonated drinks on the market, but none can boast such popularity as Coca-Cola. This is Greek thinking.

Hebrew Thoughts

From the Hebrew perspective, more likely to describe what is 'inside.' Their answer would be carbonated caramel (brown) beverage.

THE JEWISH KINGDOM AND CHRIST'S CATHOLIC KINGDOM

DAVIDIC KING

God promised to establish the dynasty of David as an **eternal monarchy** (2 Sam 7:13,16).

QUEEN MOTHER

Second most important person in the Kingdom of Judah. **Her influence flowed from her status as the Mother of the King.**

ROYAL STEWARD

Bears the Keys of the House of David - **what he opens/shut, none shall open/shut** (Is 22:21)



JESUS IS OUR KING

"And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David... **and of his kingdom there will be no end.** (Lk 1:32 - 33)"

THE VIRGIN MARY: QUEEN & MOTHER

Just as her Son is the true Davidic King, she is rightly enthroned on His right hand as the Queen Mother.

ST PETER AND HIS SUCCESSORS

Christ gave the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven to Peter; whatever he binds/loose in earth shall be as it is in heaven (Mt 16:19)

God, the Centre



God is the Centre of Man's Life

In contrast, the Hebrew thought is God-centred and is always monotheistic (relating to or characterized by the belief that there is only one God). The Hebrew thinking focuses on the inner man and not on the outer man. Spirituality itself is expressed in a lively relationship with God and community which is the heart of worship. The human body was appreciated and cared for as a gift from the Lord. It is treated with respect and modesty as the conduit, a channel for the worship of God.

Man, as the Centre of Life

The Greeks saw man as the centre of life. We see this in our modern societies. The Greeks were very interested in outward beauty, hedonism (the pursuit of pleasure), nudity and aesthetic, sexuality. So much like our world today!

What is Success?

How do we view success?

Are we influenced by the Hebrew or Greek thinking? Hebrew thinkers seek after success God's way, putting God first. With a clear understanding that spiritual growth will impact all areas of life. They are interested in living life by God's rules, understanding that this is true success and ask the question, "Have I done the Will of the Father? Have I cleaved to my Beloved?" To the Greek thinkers, worldly success is defined by external values such as high education, beauty, money and fame. They ask the question, "How will this benefit me?"

Who is my hero?

In the world in which we live, we have been enamoured with heroes and now, super heroes. Definition of a hero is: "A person noted for feats of courage or nobility or purpose, especially one who has risked or sacrificed his or her life."

But our modern heroes in our culture have been diminished to someone we look up to mainly for their wealth and/or fame, tantamount to idolising these heroes. Today's heroes typically consist of star athletes, movie celebrities, and musicians. When one of our heroes score a goal or lead his team to the World Cup or win an Academy or Grammy Award, we rejoice and celebrate along with someone we don't even know. Then we are probably looking at life from a Greek mind-set.

If, however, our heroes are the Saints, Martyrs and Jesus Christ, or even someone who is inspiring the community thorough godly lifestyle and action, then we are most likely thinking with a Hebraic mind-set.

Are We Listening?

The English word “listen” means “take notice to a sound.” The Hebrew word for listen - Sh'ma - is very important for Jews. Every day they prayed from Deuteronomy 6:4-6 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart.” It means all that, and much more. The Hebrew word means what Jesus says so often, “Have ears to hear.” Pay full attention, as if your life depended on it. Then immediately work to incorporate it into your life. Adapt every aspect of your thought life, speech, and conduct to what you have heard. Start to memorise it, teach it to the children as you walk through life. Live it out in the world around you.

For Greeks, sight is the most important sense.

For Hebrews, it's hearing.

Greek thinking is about being taught for the sake of knowledge, philosophically speaking.

Hebrew thinking is about values, wisdom, practically living.

Modern day thinking wants to break things down into steps to figure it out.

Hebrew thinking wants to see it all together, to live it out.

Greek thinking divides and dissects everything into categories. Either/or.

Hebrew thinking brings it all together, both/and.

The Greek ideal is an individual winning in competition.

The Hebrew is community conquering through cooperation.

Greek and western thought means you're important because of what belongs to you.

Hebrew thinking says you're important because you belong, in family.

Greek splits up natural and supernatural, divine and profane.

Hebrew says everything is supernatural.

For the Greeks, truth is something you uncover by philosophy and science, bottom up.

For Hebrews, God is truth and you discover him by revelation, top down.

Greek thinking says, “I know it when I understand it.”

Hebrew thinking says, “I know it, because I do it.”



Godly Talk with Godly Acts

To the Hebrew mind you can't have a Godly talk without Godly acts. Bible truths coming out of your lips but not in your life? No. The two are one. When Jesus was asked what's the greatest commandment, he said, "Love God and your neighbour." (Mark 12:30-31; Matthew 22:36-40; Luke 10:27) Indivisible. We divide the two up. But Godly-talk without Godly-acts is outrageous nonsense. This is "lip service" (Matthew 15:8; Isaiah 29:13). The Letter of James injects what someone will always say: "Well I do good works, but I am not a Christian, so that's okay then?" St James would respond, "No! It's never either/or. Stop looking for that! It's both/and. Works and faith. Faith and works. That's all that works!"

"What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill, and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (James 2:14-17). We often come across the classical argument. Someone will say, "Well I don't need to do any 'works' because I'm saved by faith. I became a Christian. I prayed the prayer. I believe in God."

St James might be saying in our contemporary speech says, "Really?! You have knowledge about a concept in your head, you want to call faith something doesn't change how you live? What kind of fake faith is that?! Even demons 'believe' God is real, they 'know' about that. What good does that 'knowing' do?!" (James 2:18-20). Of course, we can never earn salvation by doing enough good deeds. Otherwise Jesus wouldn't have had to come from heaven to save us. That's not James' point. It's not either/or. St James is extremely clear. He's not saying, "You'd better do good works if you want to be saved." He's saying, "If you truly believe, you will show it by what you do." He's not saying, "IF you do good deeds THEN you'll be saved." He's going the other way and saying, "IF you've been saved, THEN you'll do good works." Because faith without works, won't work! It's dead faith (James 2: 26).

The Test of Faith



Can Abraham just stay where he is with his son and say, "Oh Lord, that's an interesting question to ponder. You and I both know I love you more than anything." Can Abraham stay there, and have faith? No. Faith has to put walking boots on, and go up the mountain - with his son. Halfway up Isaac looks at his dad and says, "We have got the wood, and I see you have a big knife there. But where's the sacrifice?" Then Abraham looks at him and says this, "God himself will provide ..." (cf Genesis 22: 8ff). Faith says, "God will provide." Faith knows, before you know. That is faith. When I have no idea what God is up to. There is no blind faith but a leap of faith!

See that? That's what faith is. It's reasonable. So it does something that says "I trust you God!" The God who can raise the dead, can do anything! When we know that God did not spare His own Son but gave him up for us all, we never need to doubt that He loves us. It is this ancient, agrarian-rooted call to see God's wonder all around that we find woven into Jewish spirituality, and it is now an inseparable thread of our own, though we remain Catholic as ever. Understanding the Hebrew mind, we come to know the historical Jesus and begin to appreciate both the Old and New Testament.

This ancient call to see God's wonder all around woven into Jewish spirituality can be an inseparable thread of our own Catholic belief.

Do we think and act like a Hebrew or Greek? Or even as an orthodox Catholic? (if there is such a term). Most likely, our thought processes and behaviour stems from all 3 sources – Hebrew, Greek and Catholic.



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