

Life Group Notes 24th January 2016

(2) The Jewish Jesus

1. In which ways have you recently witnessed God's kingdom come?
2. Do you feel that we have created a Jesus in our own image in western evangelical Christianity? What might he look like? In which way does he differ from the Jesus in the gospels?
3. Read Mark 12:14-17. The coin would have had the words "Tiberius Caesar, Divine Augustus" on the front and "Pontifex Maximum" (Latin for Chief Priest) on the back which gives us a clue as to how the Emperor was viewed/viewed himself. Why was it therefore so dangerous for Jesus to proclaim his message of the kingdom? Why would Herod Antipas and the chief priests have been infuriated over Jesus proclaiming another kingdom and why?
4. Why is a revolution which isn't violent so revolutionary and ground-breaking?
5. Steve told (again!) a story about an American pastor who stated in an interview on British TV that the teachings of Jesus are personal and have nothing to do with politics or foreign policy. Do you believe that that pastor was wrong and why?
6. Rudyard Kipling wrote a little poem which says:

*I keep six honest serving men
They taught me all I knew
Their names are WHAT and WHY and WHEN
And HOW and WHERE and WHO.*

Do you think it is important for Christians to ask these questions of biblical passages, or do you think we should just "dive in" and hope that God might 'inspire' us or guide us?

7. It was very difficult for first century Jews, who believed that their God, Yahweh, had created the earth and remained in charge of it, whilst they themselves were subject to over 600 years of foreign occupation (Babylonians; Medo-Persians; Greeks; Romans). What solutions were offered by the (i) Zealots (ii) Herodians (iii) Essenes (iv) Pharisees?
8. In which way was the message of God's kingdom counter-cultural to what others taught?