“My Prof Says Jesus Never Intended to Form a New Church”

I am a Christian and I attend a public college. One of my professors told our class that Jesus was a Jew who never intended (desired) to form a new Church (apart from the Jewish synagogue). Is this true? What does it mean for Gentiles like me? I have always been taught that because Jesus came and died and was resurrected all people who accept Him can enter into the kingdom? I believe God exists and I believe Jesus Christ truly was the Son of God, but I want to be able to justify my beliefs.

I’m glad you’re thinking about these things and not just letting them slip by or, even worse, simply accepting your professor’s claims as truth just because he is a professor. I’m curious to know what subject the professor teaches.

It’s obviously true that Jesus was Jewish. God formed the Jewish race through Abraham to be the people through whom He would send the Messiah, and Jesus was in the line of David, the great Jewish king.

Did Jesus intend to form a new church? Yes, but not as something totally new. It was to be, rather, the fulfillment of all that had gone before, sort of like a bulb coming to full flower. That it was linked with the past is seen in Matt. 5: 17,18 where Jesus said the Law had to be fulfilled, and in other passages in the Gospels which refer to the event of the coming of Christ as fulfilling some aspect of Old Testament teaching (8:17; 12:17ff; Mark 14:49; Luke 21:22ff), and in Heb. 1 where we read of the revelation of God to man, previously through the prophets, but now through the Son: one God revealing more of His plans by a different means. That it

was new was indicated clearly by Jesus when He spoke of the Jews trying to put "old wine in new wineskins" (Matt. 9:17). In Mark 1: 27 we read where the Jews realized He brought "new teaching with authority." What was new was the fulfillment of the Law in Jesus and the revelation of salvation through faith in Him. The Law had been like a tutor teaching people about God and about our own sin and need for forgiveness. It was intended to prepare people for Christ (Gal. 3:24).

We Gentiles were always in God's mind for salvation through Christ (Matt. 12:18; cf. Isaiah 42:1). When Philip and Andrew brought a couple of Greeks to see Jesus, He said, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." Now the word was reaching the Gentiles, too. In Romans 9:30 through chap. 10, Paul talks about the Gospel reaching Gentiles as well as Jews.

My guess is that your professor would respond to this by arguing that the New Testament was written a long time after Christ, and that its message was constructed by people who wanted to make a new religion with Jesus as its founder. The case I have presented can only be argued from Scripture, for God's plan is made known through revelation; it cannot be reasoned to philosophically (although once known it can be understood, perhaps, a little more thoroughly and clearly by reasoning). So if the professor denies the validity of the New Testament as the revealed Word of God, another argument must be made for that.

Here are links for a few articles on our Web site that will provide some help with that issue:

- *Are the Biblical Documents Reliable?*
- *Authority of the Bible*
- *The Christian Canon*

Thanks again for writing. I hope this helps.

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