

Paul – Evolution of 1st Century Judaism

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Sacred Cows and Scripture

So, you guys know me. I love to kill sacred cows. I'm very selective of which cows I just obliterate, especially if they're keeping us from understanding a deeper level of Scripture. If there's a sacred cow that is shielding and blocking us from understanding an aspect of Yeshua that we need to understand, then yeah, let's just kill that cow. Sometimes sacred cows are hard because we don't want them to go away. They're sacred cows because they've become sacred. The Christmas teaching that I did a year ago—all of that mess about why a lot of teachers teach that Christmas is pagan—is just simply not true. There's no archaeological evidence to back it up. Yes, Christmas is pagan, but it's not from the Near Eastern aspect like we've been taught. The same thing goes with Judaism, or the Judean faith.

A Lifetime in Hebrew Roots

Over the last 12, 13 years growing up in Hebrew roots and Messianic Judaism, we look to Judaism for a lot of things. We look to Judaism for a good foundation of Scripture and good commentaries of Torah, mainly because Judaism has kept the Torah sacred for the last 2,000 years. But sometimes we make the mistake—and I'm not down on Judaism. I love the traditions within Judaism. I tie my tzitzit according to them. I wear a tallit according to them. I even like to keep my head covered because of a Judean commentary that I enjoyed. I'm not dogmatic about it, and I do have hair because a couple of people wrote me online and thought I was bald because I always wear a hat. True story.

When Did Judaism Change?

But something that we do at times is take something within our generation, our point in history, and apply it anachronistically to the first century in the Bible. In other words, we take Judaism today and look at the first century. We see that Judaism existed in the first century at the time of Yeshua in the New Testament, and we somehow believe that they were the one and the same Judaism. And I'm here to tell you, historically, they are not. They are very, very, very different. And that's what we're going to talk about today.

The reason we're talking about this is because this is part four of the Paul series. And I know a lot of you guys have come to me, like, "Matt, you're not talking about all the aspects of Paul—like Galatians. When are you going to talk about Galatians, you know, and Romans, and all these hard verses that I can't get my mind around?" The thing is, in order to understand these verses, we have to understand the culture that Paul was writing to and the culture that Paul was walking into. And in order to understand what kind of message Paul was taking, we have to further understand what kind of environment Yeshua himself was living in and what he was going up against with his ministry. And so that's why today we're going to discuss the evolution of the Judean faith.

The Necessity of History

We have a lot of history here. Sometimes we have boring messages here. This one might be a boring message. I'm just going to give you guys a heads up, okay? A couple of resources that I used were **In the Shadow of the Temple** by Oscar Scazzone. It's a beautifully well-written book. It's an academic book, so it's really just there for history, historical facts, and this guy's commentary on history. We also have Shea Cohen, a Jewish professor from Harvard University. He wrote **From the Maccabees to the Mishnah**, and the development of early rabbinic Judaism really happened around the time of Alexander the Great and when the Greeks were ruling Israel, and the development of the Mishnah and the Oral Law based on that time period.

So what do we always have to look back to if we want to understand the past? We have to look to history, right? Everybody's with me? Don't fall asleep yet. Come on now.

Given at Mount Sinai

So around 1446, do not email me saying no, it was 1410 or 1350 was the year. This is circa. Circa means around. So around 1446 before the common era, before Christ died, the incident at Mount Sinai happened. The Torah was given. The Ten Commandments were given. The instructions on how to build the ark, how to build the tabernacle. This is how you build the

altar. This is how you manipulate the blood onto the altar to cleanse and purify your defilement from my sanctuary because Israel, I'm going to dwell with you, says God. So at Mount Sinai, Ten Commandments were given. All of the Torah compounded after that moment. Okay? And Israel became a nation, and they traveled around in the wilderness, and we know they went into the land of Canaan and they dwelt in the land of Israel, right?

The Kingdom Divided

Well, something happened around 586 B.C., and we're going to go over this in just a minute, but we know that Israel had split around 1000 B.C. And the lower kingdom of Israel was named Judea. You don't have to take up all these notes or absorb everything. It's fine. But I'll repeat the things that I want to stick. Throw mud at a wall and you throw it again and it'll stick more. Everybody repeat with me: Judea. Judea was the southern kingdom of Israel. Awesome. Very good. Most churches don't know that, right? And so the southern kingdom of Judea—their citizens, because they were from Judea, they were known as Jews. Okay? A lot of people think that Jews come from the tribe of Judah. You could technically make that assessment, but that's not necessarily historically accurate. They came from Judea, which the tribe of Judah was in, but also kind of Benjamin and the Levites, right? Southern kingdom.

The Great Exile

Around 586 BC, Babylon came in and kicked the Jews out of Judea. This is called the Great Exile, okay? The Babylonian exile. From this point on—everything before this point where the Babylonians came in and exiled the Jews from Judea is known as the pre-exilic era. Pre-exile. Before the exile, okay? Gosh, this looks boring. It's going to get more boring, but just keep up with me, okay? This is known as the pre-exilic era. Everything after this point is known as the exilic era. This is the time of the exile. So everything after Babylon is known as the time of exile.

Why is it known as the time of exile? The Babylonians kept Israel captive for roughly 70 years, right? But the thing is, when the Jews were still in Babylon, kicked out of their own land, okay, the Persians came over and took out Babylon. And then Ezra was allowed to come back to the land of Israel under Persian control and build a temple. Israel was still in exile, but they had access to their land. They were still governed by Persia.

Exile Without End

Not long after that, in 332 B.C., the Greeks came, led by Alexander the Great, and they took out the Persians. So now Judea, even though they are in their own land and they have a little bit of authority and they have their own temple, they're still technically in exile because they're being governed by the Greeks now, okay? And then, after Alexander the Great dies, Ptolemaic Egypt kind of takes over control of Judea, and that goes all the way to about 200 B.C. when the Seleucids, another aspect of the Greek Empire, come in and they take control over Judea and change everything, and that's when the Maccabean period happened, right? Because they got ticked off at their new oppressors, right? And then the Romans came in and took control over Judea in 63 B.C. Anybody a little confused? That was a lot of information, right? A lot of information. No? Awesome. Awesome.

Here's what I'm trying to say. After Babylon came in and took the Jews out of Judea, Judea remained in exile. They never climbed out of that hole. And that's something that we have to realize if we're talking about the ministry of Yeshua. If we're talking about what did Jesus do? What was he up against? The faith that existed at Mount Sinai was a very practical faith. People knew what they needed to do. They had the temple of God and they ruled with kings and judges.

How the Faith Changed

After Babylon, the Judean faith, which we call Judaism, began to change. Nehemiah and Ezra came, and they did a few reforms to help solidify the faith, because we had just come from Babylon and we're still under the control of the Greeks. We're going to solidify it a little bit. And due to Greek influence, the Judean faith began to evolve even more due to exposure to Hellenization, which we're going to get to in a minute. Until finally the first century—I'm going to make the suggestion that the Judean faith that existed in the first century was absolutely nothing like the Judean faith or the faith of Israel that existed at Mount Sinai. Which, if you've been in the Messianic movement for a while, may change a lot for what Yeshua was doing and the things that he did. The Torah was no longer viewed as something that was fully practical in a lot of different sects in Judaism. Different commandments were kind of, ah, that's not really functional anymore, because the temple had changed in its function due to the Romans and due to the Greeks pushing their agenda and their culture on Israel.

A Timeline of Division

So going back to about 1000 BCE, this is the whole land of Israel. All 12 tribes are in there. Everyone still with me? We're going to get over this hump, okay? Around a thousand BC, the

land split. Remember that southern kingdom I was talking about? The kingdom of Judea is the southern kingdom of Israel right down here. Northern Israel is up here. Around 722, the Assyrians came in and totally exiled all the northern kingdom of Israel. They never returned. And around 586 BC, Babylon came over and kicked all the Jews out of Judea and took them to Babylon.

The Timeline and Place of Daniel

This is where Daniel takes place, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. All this took place in Babylon. Can I push one more timeline on you? I'm going to review this one more time, and then I'll be done with it, okay? Everyone's up with me. All right, 586 B.C., Babylonians came. This is known as the Exilic Era, around 539 to 334 B.C., under the rule of Cyrus, a Persian king. Ezra was allowed to go back and rebuild the temple. Alexander the Great came around 332 BCE, and from this point forward, after Alexander the Great conquered Israel, this point forward is known as the Hellenistic Era, the time of the Hellenes, the time of the Greeks. Okay? So after Alexander the Great, I want you to repeat that for me, just so it solidifies in your mind. After the Greeks came, Israel was in the Hellenistic Era. Everyone say Hellenistic Era. Very good.

From Babylon to Rome

Alexander the Great dies in 323 B.C., and then the Egyptian or the Ptolemaic period begins. One of the generals that was over the lower area of Egypt took over the control of Judea. The Seleucids came with Antiochus of Epiphanes, the Hanukkah story, and they came and took over Israel. And then the Hanukkah event takes place somewhere between 167 to 164, somewhere around there. It began as a religious battle. We'll go through that when we start teaching on Hanukkah, but it was really a political move by the Hasmoneans. After this point, after the Hanukkah battle, the war against the Seleucids, a priestly family arose called the Hasmoneans, and they were a very rich family. After they kicked the Seleucids out of Judea, they were still under the influence and control of the Greeks, but they had a new policy.

The Evolution of the High Priest

How many of you guys realize who was the leader of Israel during the time of David? David. Why? Because he was the king, right? The king was high up. Did the high priest have any real power in Israel at the time of David? No. It wasn't a leadership position. He was the leader of the priests, but he didn't lead the nation or the country, right? He was in charge of the ministry

of the temple. That was it. That changed after Hanukkah, or the Maccabean War, okay? The Hasmoneans stepped up, and they began to take over the high priestly positions, and they also stepped up in the leadership areas, ruling over Israel. A lot of bad things happened when the Hasmoneans were ruling Israel, but regardless, the development of the high priest role began to evolve from that of a servant in Israel to that of a leader in Israel. It's completely outside of the scope of Torah. This is just what happened in Israel. By the time we get to the first century, high priest is looked at as someone who's making big political calls. And of course, we had governors, and we had like King Herod was placed over Israel, and so on and so forth. But the people looked to the high priest as their political leader. That was never supposed to happen, but that was an evolution of society. It happened. Okay? Matt, why is that important? Just something to put in the back of your head when we read Paul. 63 BCE, Pompey came, and he conquered Israel, and then Judea was under Roman control.

The Spread of Hellenization

During the time of Alexander the Great all the way through the first century, Greek culture began to permeate throughout all of the Persian Empire, or the Greek Empire. Have you ever heard of Hellenization? Everyone ever heard of that word, Hellenization? A few people. Hellenization is the historical spread of ancient Greek culture and, to a lesser extent, language, over the foreign peoples conquered by Greece and brought into its sphere of influence, particularly during the Hellenistic period following the campaigns of Alexander the Great. See, the Hellenes or the Greeks had a way that they conquered people. One way to conquer people is to go into a country and just kill everybody. And it's really easy to do that. It requires a lot of resources and then you got a lot of dead folk and it's just not really nice and you don't really accomplish anything because then all these people that you killed can't pay you taxes anymore. And they're not going to be loyal to you because you killed them. So what's a smarter way to conquer people? Well, let's see. I'm going to go into that country, and I'm going to force my politics on them, and I'm going to force my culture on them, and then hopefully I can charge them a tax so I will actually profit off of converting them into my lifestyle of my politics and the things that we do in my country. We'll leave that just with a look. No one ever does that today. This is what the Greeks did. They spread the Greek language. They took Greek philosophy. Guys, Greek philosophy was really cool, okay? It was something that the Judeans had never grasped, never even thought of before in their life. The way that the Greeks looked at faith and religion was outside the scope of anything an ancient Israelite ever thought of. Ancient Israelites looked at the Torah, and it was practical. Okay, don't eat the pig. Right? Okay. God created and gave function to all the universe. Awesome. A testimony of our God. All right. Say

the Shema every day. Cool. I got that. The Greeks came in and applied multiple layers of interpretation through their philosophy, through living, creation, their ideas about God, and even the Torah itself. Let me tell you a little secret. We see a lot of commentaries today of the Torah being applicable in all of these really spiritual ways in our lives, right? That was the reason we have those commentaries today is because Greek philosophy hit Judea. The Judeans never thought of Torah as anything other than a testimony of their God and what was expected of them as the constitution of their kingdom. I'm not saying it's bad. It's history, okay? Everybody with me?

Judean Culture Versus Hellenistic Culture

So let's talk about the Judean culture and the faith versus the Hellenistic culture and faith. You see, the Judeans had just went through Babylonian exile. The Persians, they had kind of survived that even though their faith was shifted just a little bit in their application after Babylon. But they still knew who they were. And the one thing that they wanted to do was preserve the identity of them being Judeans because Babylon wanted to take them out in exile and make them Babylonians. That wasn't going to happen, right? Persians, same thing. Become a Persian. No. Here come the Greeks. Listen, why don't you become Greek? No, I'm a Judean. I'm not going to do that. But remember, Greeks didn't necessarily expect you to take on the identity of a Greek. They expected you to take on their culture. It was a slick strategy, guys. And so let's compare some of the parallels between the Judean faith and the Greek faith when they finally converged, when Alexander the Great came in. Everybody with me? I know I'm just jumping a lot of history. When Alexander the Great came in, right? In the 4th century B.C., Greek culture hit Judea. The Hellene faith was polytheistic. They believed in multiple gods. In fact, when they went to new nations, they had a thing about absorbing gods, right? They would absorb gods into their pantheon. So that way, oh, you believe in this god? Awesome. Well, he can join our pantheon, and then you can be Greek and worship our gods with your god, right? A lot of people think that, if you're familiar with the story of the Maccabees, when Antiochus Epiphanes came and put a statue of Zeus or an altar to Zeus at the temple, a lot of people think that he was trying to force Israelites to worship Zeus. No, he was trying to merge Yahweh and Zeus together. Yahweh is the top of your pantheon where he's our only God. Well, Zeus is the top of ours and they must be one and the same. So let's build an altar to Zeus and we'll fix this right now. Right? That's what the Greeks did. Judean faith was monotheistic. It was a problem for them just to throw their God in the Greek pantheon because they denied all the other gods. Right? Hellene faith distinguished between the world, who they called barbarians, and themselves. We are the Greeks. So we are the righteous culture. We are the civilized culture.

And everyone else is a barbarian. Judean faith had something in common with that. They saw themselves as Judeans, right? They had a bloodline. They had a faith. They had a God. They had ancestors. Everyone else was a Gentile, a non-Judean, right?

Hmm. Both Hellenism and Judaism are supranational cultural systems that transcend birth. It's a quote by Shea Cohen. The comparison ends when Judaism demands converts to deny all ancestral gods and worship the one true God. See, this was the biggest problem between Judean faith and the Greek faith—Greeks really liked the culture of Judea, but not many Greeks necessarily converted. Why? Well, when you convert, you got to do a little snip-snip thing, and that's just, whoo, anti-Greek. We don't do that. Greeks did not want to mutilate the body, as they called it. But also, if you converted to the Judean faith, you were required to deny all of your ancestral gods, right? All of the gods of your father, all of your gods of your families, the spirits of your families, deny any contact with them as well. It was a big deal. So most Greeks that admired the Judean faith. Most scholars believe they became known as God-fearers. Maybe they didn't want to do the full conversion, but they enjoyed sitting in the synagogues and studying the philosophy of Torah, and they had a lot of respect for the Judean deity and so on and so forth. Very interesting. Modern Judaism portrays Hellenism as an antonym for their faith.

A Misunderstood Battle

Anyone ever read some commentaries on the Maccabees and Hanukkah? The whole battle was about kicking out Hellenization from Judea. Guys, historically, that is not true. Hellenization had already hit Judea, and Judea was already Hellenized. There were some in Maccabees. I think we have a quote in Maccabees 1, 11, or 12. It talks about the extreme Hellenizers. So a group of Judeans who were extremely Hellenized were the ones who wanted to blend Judaism with the Greek culture so that there was no distinguishing that.

We Are Already Hellenized

How many of you guys understand that you are Hellenized right now in American culture? I'm trying to make this fit. Because a lot of people think the Judeans, no, they were Judeans, and they didn't mix with the Greek culture. Now, you guys look pretty American West to me, you know? You got some cool-looking boots over here. Ancient Israel didn't wear those, right? Cool sweater right there. Ancient Israel didn't have that, right? Saw someone with some skinny jeans on back here. Same thing. Ancient Israel didn't wear those. Didn't wear jeans. Why do we dress

the way we are? Because we're impacted by the culture around us, right? Why do we drive the cars we drive? Because we're impacted by the culture around us.

You can't say that we are not westernized, no matter how much we dwell on that verse that Paul's talking about: do not conform to the world around you, right? Do not be a part of the world. Reject it and be holy and be set apart. You can't help it because you live here.

At some point, you're going to look like the world. The question is, where is the line? So yeah, I'll wear the same clothes of the world, but maybe I won't listen to the music. Or maybe I'll listen to some music in the world, but I won't date casually or something. I don't know, right? Maybe I'll listen to the music, but I won't watch those movies. Or maybe I'll watch a PG-13 movie, but not a rated R movie. Or maybe I'll watch a rated R movie as long as it doesn't have sex in it. You know what I mean? Where is the line of our interaction with the world?

Judea was faced with the same issue. Everybody was Hellenized, but it was to what degree were they Hellenized? And as history went on and their exposure to Hellenization was prolonged, where did those lines move to? Kind of understand where I'm trying to take you now? Maybe a little bit. I still don't get it. Just hang on.

The Definition of Hellenized Judaism

By mere definition, Judaism within the scope of Greek culture was Hellenized. The historical term is Hellenized Judaism. It's what Judaism was known as after Alexander the Great came. This problem of mixing was not new to Israel, by the way. I don't want people to get all upset and being, what, Israel just failed in every aspect? No, actually, how many of you guys know? Do you guys realize that King Solomon utilized Phoenician aid and Phoenician architects and foreign design for some decor of the temple when he built it? Solomon. [1 Kings 5](#) and 6. Look it up. Phoenician architects and Phoenician egg to build God's temple in Israel.

The majority of Israel began worshiping Hadad, or you know him as Baal, during the time of Elijah after the split. They began intermingling Canaanite myth with Judean myth. Why? Because they lived in the land. It was bound to happen. Luckily, we had a few righteous, one mainly Elijah, a few righteous prophets that stood up in the name of God and were able to be a testimony of where the line was supposed to be, guys. Not supposed to go there.

King Ahaz saw an Assyrian altar in Damascus, right? And instructed the priest to build it for use in place of the brazen altar because he liked the way it looked. That's a cool-looking altar in that pagan temple. Build that over here. This is the history of Israel, guys. Is it good? Is it bad? It's history. Israel used a Canaanite calendar during the time of the building of the temple. God

didn't say a word. I don't know why. Was it wrong? Was it right? I don't know, but we see it in the scriptures.

Degrees of Hellenization

This is where we find the remnants of Israel known as Judea a few centuries before the first century. Here's a quote from Shea Cohen from Maccabees of the Mishnah: "In the second temple period, the integration of Jews in the Hellenistic world manifested itself in three main areas: materials, cultural and material culture, materialistic culture, language, philosophy, which is a way of life." Cities began to be laid out according to Greek architecture. Leaders no longer met at the gate of the city. You know, in the Torah, we always read about meeting at the gate of the city, and the Tanakh, meet at the gate, because that's where leaders in Judean faith are supposed to meet. That changed when the Greeks came. People started to meet in the city square known as the Agora, right? Because that's what the culture was.

Oh, we don't meet at the gate anymore? People shifted with the culture. It's amazing when we let go and we lose focus on God, how devastating and how quickly everything begins to crumble just by us accepting a little bit of the world. A little bit here, a little bit there, a little bit there. And then we have to redefine our entire faith because it doesn't match up with the world. And we have to find a way to fit our faith into the world around us that is against our faith. This is something Israel struggled with from day one. Is it good? Is it bad? It's history. You hear me say that phrase a lot? It's history.

Herod's Grand Vision

King Herod's renovation of the temple, you know, King Herod's temple, Josephus talks about how it was the most magnificent building in all of Judea. More than that, all of the Roman Empire. It was beautiful, right? The sole purpose for him renovating it is because the temple that Ezra built was not King Solomon's temple. It was not a pretty temple. I'm just letting you know. When they came out of exile, Israel came and rebuilt. No, it was not a pretty temple at all. It wasn't attractive.

King Herod said, well, let's look at all this Greek architecture around us. Let's make this sucker look good. Let's make this sucker pop. And so for 40, 46 years, something like that, King Herod invested in the temple, spent tons of money redesigning God's temple to make it look nice. He wanted to do it to expose the beauty in Greek architecture. Josephus remarks that one Galilean city resembled those of Tyre, Sidon, and Beirut, up in, I guess, Phoenicia or Syria.

The Language of the Empire

Greek became the standard language throughout all of Judean-occupied diaspora. We'll go over that term in a minute. Hebrew was virtually unknown in Egyptian Jewry. So we're going to pull up a map here in a second, but I want to try to lay this out for you guys. And I know I'm talking a lot, and I'm showing a lot of facts and everything. Let's just bring it home, okay?

So after Israel was kicked out of their land by the Babylonians, they went to Babylon. And from there, they began to spread across the Persian Empire. A lot of them stayed in Babylon. A lot of them ended up going to Egypt, Alexandria, the beautiful city that Alexander the Great pretty much invested in. So there were huge colonies of Jews in Alexandria, in Babylon, and especially in Rome. Just because Jews had control over Judea and they built a temple did not mean that there still was not an exile going on. Most Judeans, blood Judeans, did not live in Judea in the first century, okay? A very small amount did.

Matt, what does that have to do with anything? Well, if we read the Torah and we think the Torah was kept in the first century just like it was at Mount Sinai, then we make the mistake of thinking that every single Judean went and sacrificed at every single feast day at the temple in the first century at the time of Yeshua, and historically that is incorrect. Most did not, okay?

The Hellenized Philosopher

Philo. Anyone heard of Philo? First century historian. Awesome guy. Huge, huge, huge Hellenized Judean. He loved philosophy. So he was a philosopher and also a historian. He wrote down a lot of different facts. He lived until 55 A.D. So he was a contemporary of Yeshua. We look to his writings to kind of get a feel of the culture that Yeshua himself lived in.

Philo is assumed to have only known memorized Hebrew phrases from the Torah. That's it. So you know how some of us in Hebrew Roots are like, yeah, we love Hebrew, and we only really know a couple of the blessings. That's really the only Hebrew we know. Let's be honest. Philo, the same thing. Highest respected Judean philosopher in history didn't know really a lick of Hebrew. Why? Because Greek was the preferred language. He was from Alexandria, about three to four months travel from Jerusalem.

Almost all inscriptions found throughout the Roman Empire, which is Rome, Asia Minor, and Egypt, were in Greek or Latin, but not Hebrew, save for the occasional word shalom. That was about the only word that diasporic Jews knew how to write in Hebrew. Shalom! Just yeah,

shalom! That's all I know. They'd write everything in Greek and put shalom at the end in Hebrew, right?

Even Prayer Changed Languages

The Greek language had an enormous impact in rabbinic circles. In synagogues located in Caesarea, okay? Caesarea, just north of Judea. We're going to go there on our trip to Israel, by the way. In Caesarea, the Shema was recited in synagogues in Greek, not Hebrew. Let that soak in. No one said Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad in Caesarea. This is... If you go to Israel right now, Caesarea is not a long travel. What is it, like a week from Jerusalem if you travel on foot?

If you drive, you get there in about an hour and a half, two hours, two and a half. In the current land of Israel, no one spoke Hebrew in the synagogues. They sang the Shema in Greek. Rabbinic disciples needed a Greek translation of the Bible that was more faithful to the Hebrew text than the Septuagint that was written much earlier. A legend of a Jewish convert named Aquila translated the Bible anew into Greek under Rabbinic auspices. Hebrew was still the primary language of literacy in Judea, but we see the influence of Greek deeply saturated in the first century Judaism and the Judean culture.

The Greek Mindset Transformed the Judean Faith

Sometimes we talk about the Hebrew mindset versus the Greek mindset in Hebrew roots. First century Hebrew mindset was birthed out of Greek mindset. Quote from Shea Cohen again—Jewish professor out of Harvard: "All the Jews of antiquity were Hellenized to some degree. All shared the material culture of the larger world and all were exposed to Greek language."

But usually the term Hellenization involves more than just pots, pans, and language. It involves a way of life. You see, when Greek philosophy came into being, the Judean faith was magnificently transformed.

Now what I'm about to show you is not good, not bad. It's just history. Everyone can agree with this? It's okay?

Among native Judeans as well as Diaspora. So Diaspora means all the Judeans that did not live in Judea. Judea, I want you to imagine Jerusalem and the outskirts of Jerusalem, essentially. We'll show it on the map. It was not a large part. It was like, what, 15% of modern Israel today?

10%, maybe 20%? So anyone who lived outside of there was in Diaspora. People from Galilee did not live in Judea. They could be seen as Diaspora. They were far from Jerusalem.

Why Jesus Started in Galilee

Isn't it interesting that Yeshua did not start his biblical ministry in the city where the temple was, and that was the center for religious studies and religious cult, Judea? He started it in Galilee, up near the city of Tiberias, the number one Hellenized city in all the Roman Empire, or at least near Judea, right? Huge impact. It was a Gentile intersection of business. Yeshua chose to start his ministry there. Not in Judea, where all of the Pharisees and the Sadducees were. Not in the outskirts of Judea, where the Essenes were. They were really strict. He chose to start his ministry somewhere very peculiar. We'll see why here in a little bit.

Among native Judeans as well as diaspora, there were those who wanted to stay close to the strictness of Torah, ancestral tradition, and identity. Others yearned to eliminate the distinction between Jew and Gentile completely. During the pre-Maccabean era, in 1 Maccabees 1-12, we see Greek sympathizers attempting to make covenants with surrounding Gentiles in order to blend in so that disasters wouldn't fall on them. In other words, we need to stop looking like Judeans or else the Gentiles are going to bully us, right? About 150 years before Yeshua.

Reforming Torah to Fit Greek Culture

In the first century, Philo speaks of Judean extreme allegorists who argued the laws of Torah, Sabbath, kosher, and circumcision were not meant to be observed literally, but allegorically. They too wanted to reform the Torah application as something that would not make them stick out in the greater culture. There were Judeans who wanted to shift the study of Torah to something that was completely non-practical so that they could blend into Greek culture even more.

Judaism of today was not the Judaism of the first century. The Judaism of the first century, the Judean faith, I don't even want to call it Judaism, Judean faith of the first century was extremely broken, guys. There were so many different sects of Judaism. Only the religious dwelt in Judea. No one in Alexandria or Rome argued about halakha. They were Judeans, and they worshipped God, and they kept Torah the best they could. Most Judeans did that.

May the Beauty of Japheth Dwell in the Tents of Shem

For most Judeans, the solution was to create a synthesis between Judaism and Hellenism. The rabbis expressed this beautifully in a comment inspired by [Genesis 9:29](#) in the Talmud. Right? You ready for this? This is Talmudic commentary. "May the beauty of Japheth, this is [Genesis 9:25](#), may the beauty of Japheth dwell in the tents of Shem."

And so what the rabbis say is that Japheth is actually Greeks, Greek culture, and essentially Hellenization, and Shem are Judeans. And so they read it like this: May the beauty of Japheth, which is the Greeks, may the beauty of the Greeks dwell in the tents of the Jews. This was accepted. This idea that first century Judeans fought against Hellenism, historically it's not true. They accepted and embraced Hellenism. Was it right? Was it wrong? I don't know. It was history.

To say that first century Judaism was a product of or borrowed Greek ideas of Hellenism is not quite accurate. Judaism absorbed into Hellenistic culture unconsciously. So before I lose everybody by driving this point home, this is part of the Paul series, right? And so what was Paul walking into?

Something Changed

Next week we're going to discuss a little bit about the works of the law, right? We're going to discuss circumcision. Is circumcision a Torah commandment? Why would Paul tell a bunch of guys not to get circumcised when they wanted to start keeping Torah and following Yeshua? Because at Mount Sinai, that probably wouldn't have been acceptable. It wasn't acceptable, right? Something changed. Not Torah. Torah didn't change, but the culture changed. The perception of Torah changed. The function of Torah had changed by the first century. It had become something that it was never supposed to become.

And this is one of the reasons why Yeshua makes some snubbing comments to the temple a couple times, right? "Tear it down. I'm going to rebuild this sucker in three days with my body. What? What did he just say? It's our Messiah."

The Logos: Divine Reason in Greek Philosophy

In Greek philosophy, the eternal law governing the entire universe—this is Greek philosophy, Greek myth, Greek faith—the eternal law governing the entire universe is divine reason, something they call the logos in Greek philosophy. The mandated task of all humanity is to live a life of conformity to this divine reason, this logos, which is the law of ethics and the law of nature.

This is something the Greeks really elaborated on, this divine reason that sat and preexisted before all of the universe. This was the thing that the universe was created through. The logos in Greek philosophy were the blueprints of creation.

You think Jewish sages rejected this idea? Seems kind of far-fetched, right? They adopted it. But instead of calling it divine reason, they took the Torah and replaced the logos of Greek philosophy with the Torah.

You guys have probably read these commentaries. Not right, not wrong, this is just history. This is how we got these commentaries from the Judeans emphasizing the importance of Torah through Greek philosophy.

You ready? Too much? It's too much. It's a lot, I know.

The Torah as Preexistent Blueprint

So the Talmud, *Evolution of Jewish Commentary*, states that the Torah was among seven things that physically existed prior to creation. We're not talking about the Torah as in the law of God and the mindset of God. Of course that existed, the mindset and the reign of God. No, we're talking about the scroll, the law of Moses. The Torah scroll, the one at the end of Deuteronomy where it says Moses died, existed before the universe.

According to Eliezer ben Yosei, the Galilean: "For 974 generations before creation of the world, the Torah lay in God's bosom." He was holding it. The scroll. God was holding it. And joined the ministering angels in song.

Rabbi Akiva called the Torah the precious instrument by which the world was created. The Zohar, Jewish mysticism, said that God created the world by looking into the Torah as an architect builds a palace by looking at the blueprint. In other words, God couldn't have just thought existence into being. He had to look at the Torah, and that was the blueprint.

Like I said, we're not talking about just the reign of our king. That is the Torah, and yeah, that preexisted. We're talking about the scroll. In the Midrash, [Genesis 1](#), the ideas elaborated, placing the Torah as the architect, the actual architect for creation, because God could not simply have thought of what he wanted to create. He needed a blueprint, so he turned to: What am I going to create? So he turned to the Torah.

I've read these commentaries, I've taught these commentaries before because they're beautiful. They're beautiful in lifting up the weight and the importance of the Torah, but they came from Greek philosophy.

Maimonides and Plato's Theory of Forms

Now do you understand why it's important to understand how much of Greek philosophy permeated through the Judean faith in the first century? When reading over the Midrash, Maimonides, 13th century rabbi, the Ramban, big guy, right? Notice that the Torah is spoken of in the very same way that Plato speaks of the ideas or the theory of forms, if you've ever studied Plato's writings—the intellectual pattern behind the created world.

So Maimonides was reading commentaries in the Torah being preexistent and said, "Hey, Plato writes about his faith." It's amazing because the logos, the idea of this logos within the Judean and the Greek world was so weighty that even John and Peter exploited the idea when describing Yeshua.

The Logos Became Flesh

John 1:1: "In the beginning was the logos, the word. And the logos, the word was with God and the logos was God. And the word became flesh and dwelt among man."

That's why John did that, right? Is it true? Sure it's true. But he used Greek philosophy in order to spearhead the scope and smash the mold of what Mashiach was going to be, or was supposed to be, or what the Judeans were expecting, or what the Greeks had any idea. What are y'all talking about? Listen, guys, the Torah is not only the Logos. Mashiach is, right? But it was birthed through Greek philosophy. That was the effect of Hellenization in the first century.

Why This Is Controversial

Matt, why is this so controversial? Because many Hebrew to Messianic fellowships are based on principles of Judean faith. It's not good, it's not bad. I love the Judean faith. I think the traditions are awesome. But we need to understand that the Judean faith did not exist at Mount Sinai. That is when the pure cult of Yahweh existed. That is when all of Israel came together without influence from any other cultures.

The Restoration and Greek Influence

They came together and they stood up and said, "God, we will serve you without the influence of anyone else." When the restoration of all things comes, guys, we're going to be taken back to a pure and undefiled religion. Someone talks about that in the New Testament.

David Dobb, in his book, **Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric**, demonstrates that Hillel—Hillel the Elder—Hillel's seven rules of interpreting Scripture in the first century B.C. corresponds with popular Greek methods of exegesis and study. Similarly, the tradition of the elders, from which the concept of the Oral Torah, the Talmud and such, you guys familiar with the term the Oral Torah?—later developed has roots in Greek schools of philosophy. These schools had developed a strong sense of tradition, and it became customary to substantiate the doctrine of a school by citing the chain of famous teachers who had transmitted this doctrine all the way from its authoritative beginning. This way of giving authority to a doctrine was later adopted by the rabbis. In other words, Rabbi X said in the name of Rabbi Y, who had the tradition from Rabbi Z. This is a Hellenistic way of substantiating a statement and it is never used in the Bible.

In other words, has anyone ever read some Talmud or Mishnah? You understand when rabbis are talking and they're trying to give a point, and they speak about a tradition in the Torah, and this is how we follow this commandment, what do they say to give it credit? Well, Rabbi in the name of Rabbi so-and-so, in the name of Rabbi Hillel, in the name of Rabbi Shammai—that would have never happened. That's how the Greeks substantiated claims in Greek philosophy. It's not good, it's not bad, but I want people to understand just how much Greek influence had entered into the faith of Yahweh, the faith of our God in the first century. Not good, not bad, but it had changed.

The Nature of Ancestral Faith

Again, the faith of our ancestors before and after Mount Sinai was a very practical faith. It was very direct. It was spiritual, yes, but it was spiritual because it was so direct and practical. We see our God, and this is how we worship our God. After Israel sinned and was sent into exile, the temple of God was destroyed. The Judaism that emerged, the Judean faith that emerged as a result of the Babylonian exile was not the same as that which existed at Mount Sinai. After the Greeks came, the Judean faith began to evolve even more. Not good, not bad, just history. This is facts. And in the first century, we have a faith that didn't know how to keep Torah.

We're going to go over that. So many different sects of Judaism, most Judeans didn't eat pork, and they kind of kept the Sabbath in exile. Even though the temple existed, most Judeans did not engage in temple worship, which was the center of worship in the Torah. Sometimes we'll see historians use the term Hellene Judeans or Hellenistic Jews and Hebraic or Palestinian Judeans—or Hebrew Judeans, right? And what they're talking about is that the Hellenistic Jews were the ones who lived outside of Judea, right? These are terms you should write down; these

are important because you'll see these in Scripture. Hellenistic Jews were Judeans who lived outside of Judea; they did not live in Jerusalem or surrounding Jerusalem. They lived in Galilee and beyond, and most of them spoke Greek.

Greek as the Language of Culture

A lot of people get upset by the idea that the New Testament was written in Greek after studying history. It's not such a far-fetched idea. It really isn't. I know there's some theories about Matthew being written in Hebrew. Cool. That's awesome. Revelation, obviously written in Greek. Acts, obviously written in Greek. All of Paul's letters, no doubt, were written in Greek, in my opinion. People can disagree. That was the culture. That was the main language.

In [Acts 6](#), we see these terms used specifically. In the days when the number of disciples were increasing, the Grecian Jews, okay? In Greek, it says the Hellenes, right? The Hellenistic Jews. Among them complained against who? The Hebraic Jews. So we have Judeans, two different parties of Judeans. Some were Hellenistic, some were living in the land of Judea, right? More strict in the Torah, observant, and so on and so forth. Because their widows were being overlooked in their daily distribution of food.

When we read this, we understand that's the culture, right? Matt, you just spent 30 minutes yakking about all this just to show us one verse. It's important. How about this? [Acts 9](#), 29. You guys remember the very first lesson in Paul the Revolution, right? When we were looking at what Paul's message of Yeshua was, what was he preaching, what was the gospel he was preaching?

Paul's Proclamation of an Alternative Kingdom

Paul was preaching that there is another kingdom other than Rome that you can be a part of. And even though Caesar is known as the son of God, he's known as the savior of the world. And even though he's known as the one who brings peace on earth, there is a greater one named Yeshua of Nazareth, the son of God, the savior of the world, the one who brings peace on earth. And he has the gospel. Paul was countering the Roman Empire, and he was shouting out and evangelizing a kingdom that was not on earth, that was not ruled by Caesar, but that was ruled by Yeshua, and it was the kingdom of God, right?

And so now we see in Acts chapter 9, Paul talked and debated with Grecian Jews, right? This is the Hellenistic Judeans, okay? Now remember, they spoke Greek, and they loved Greek culture, and they were Judeans by identity, and they may have kept a little bit of Torah, but they were

also part of the Roman Empire, right? And they supported it. But they tried to kill him, and when the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off.

Why did the Hellenistic Jews try to kill Paul? Because remember, Paul was denouncing the entire Roman Empire, right? Everything that the Hellenistic Judeans thought of as their culture, as their home base, he was speaking against. That's heresy, Paul. We need to kill them, right?

The Many Faces of Judean Faith

Remember this, because this is scattered throughout Scripture. In Judea, there were many different sects of Judeans. Everybody still with me? We're shifting gears. In Judea, there were many different flavors of Judean faith, and we're going to speak about that. We're going to speak about a few of the sects of Judaism or the Judean faith that Josephus speaks of, along with some that Josephus doesn't even mention that did exist.

The thing about the Judean faith that has always kept it together is that its center of worship, everything about the faith revolved around one thing, and that was the temple of God that existed in Jerusalem. Philo talks about yearning to go to Jerusalem, even though he probably went once in his entire life. Maybe. I think that's debatable. I don't remember. But Philo talks about yearning to go to Jerusalem, his hometown, even though he'd never even been there. He's born in Alexandria.

The Judeans recognize that my home is in Jerusalem. Why? Why? What's so important about that? If we want to have an intimate worship with God, we have to experience His glory, His Shekinah. And where is that located? Well, the Torah tells us it's in the building in Jerusalem, the temple. Everything revolved around the temple.

Even Diaspora Jews, who didn't even go to the temple, recognized that God's glory existed in God's temple. The Pharisees recognized that God's glory existed in the temple. The Sadducees affirmed that very much so to keep their political stance in the priesthood and so on and so forth. The Essenes, we'll talk about them in a minute, this rogue group of ultra-Orthodox priestly class that lived out in the desert, they sent priests offerings to the temple, even though they did not go there and sacrifice for purification. They thought the temple had been defiled because of the priesthood, not the building.

The Exception: The Samaritans

The Samaritans up north, if you've ever studied the Samaritans, it was a crossbreed of Israelites and other surrounding nations that were brought in and intermingled and so on and so forth. But the Samaritans, and on our trip, I'm going to advertise our trip, we're going to Samaria, by the way, and we get to meet the high priest, the current high priest over the Samaritans in Israel. That's currently on our agenda. I'm excited. I've never done that before, so I'm pretty excited.

The Samaritans worshipped at Mount Gerizim, in the West Bank south of the Galilee. They did not view Jerusalem as the place of God's holy place. The place where God had written his name, right? And this had come because of influence of outside cultures and so on and so forth. Everyone knew that they were at least partially Judean blood, and they did believe in Yahweh, the God of our forefathers, and they did believe in the Torah. But the reason why the Samaritans were not considered Judeans is because they did not acknowledge that they needed to go to Jerusalem and worship at the temple.

Guys, that's the only reason why the Samaritans were looked down upon. You say you're us, but you don't worship at the temple? You don't even acknowledge the temple? You don't send your half-shekel tax to the temple? If Samaritans had gone to the temple, they would have been accepted as Judeans, half-breeds or not. Yeah, they're still Judeans, kind of, even though they're Samaritans, whatever. They live in Samaria. It's incredible. It's incredible to think of that.

Mapping the Diaspora

So you guys ready for Sacred Cow? It's not really a Sacred Cow. It's just something that's not really taught much. Ron White over at RootedInTorah.com does a great job illustrating this. He has a lot of teachings on this topic. So you see this big old map? This is some of the Roman Empire. Here's Rome way up here. Everybody see that? Okay. Here's Alexandria in Egypt way down here. Here's Babylon way over here. Everybody see? Little, right? Three major cities. Ephesus, Athens.

Church of Antioch was up here, right? Galilee was actually a little bit closer down, but Galilee is around here somewhere. And then here's Jerusalem. Where was the temple? It didn't change. Jerusalem right there.

According to [Leviticus 4](#) and 16, when you unintentionally sin, what must you do? You must bring a little goat. You must bring a goat for your unintentional sin, and you've got to carry this sucker all the way to Jerusalem, and you've got to slit its throat, and the priest is going to catch the blood, and he's going to manipulate the blood in the corners of the altar, and that's going to

purge your defilement away from the temple, right? That is Torah commandment. That is cult of Yahweh faith. Okay? Cult of Yahweh is a term to use to describe the ancient faith of Yahweh in ancient Israel, and scholars call it the cult of Yahweh, and I just think it sounds awesome, so that's why I say that. If you don't want to call yourself that, it's fine.

The Diaspora Problem

In first century Israel, for some reason, again, anachronically we tend to take what we think first century Judaism was like and we compare it to Torah because obviously they had to be doing the same thing. No. Most Jews lived in Babylon, Rome, and Alexandria. These are three major port cities. In Jerusalem, Judea, this little area, a huge amount of religious Jews lived there, but not the huge population. What is that? Someone come in for a visit? Galilee was about a week's travel to the temple. A week's travel. Ancient Israel, you messed up, flubbed up a little bit. Got to take a goat and you got to walk a long ways. People in Galilee in northern Israel when the tribes went into Canaan did not transgress God much. It was a long trip. You'd have to ask for time off work. Listen, can I get a week off? Can I get two weeks off work? Why? Because I accidentally sinned. So I got to take this goat and I need two weeks off, right? What if you sinned and you lived in Babylon? Four months travel to Jerusalem. Same thing for Alexandria. Antioch was about three weeks, I think. Rome, forget about it. Diaspora Judeans did not go to the temple, maybe once in their life.

[Deuteronomy 16](#) that says that all males of Israel must come to Israel for the three pilgrimage feasts, right? Firstfruits, Shavuot, and Sukkot. You have four months to get from Babylon to Judea and go back and go. You wouldn't have a job. Even at the time of the first century in Galilee, many people did not travel to Jerusalem for all three feasts. Maybe one or two. How many of you guys didn't realize that in the first century? The function of the temple changed. The Torah, in application and function, was shifted due to the culture around them. If you sinned in Galilee, you probably wouldn't go to Jerusalem. Most of the time, depending on your job, especially if you were a slave, which most Judeans were slaves to Romans in the first century. Hey, can I take a month off to go to Jerusalem? Hard enough to get two weeks off to go to Israel and trip once every couple years from work, right? You wouldn't go. The function of the temple had changed. Everything about the temple worship had changed. And it was very prevalent in all of the different sects of Judaism, especially the diaspora.

Sabbath and the Sects

Look at this. So at the time, Yeshua went through the grain fields on the Sabbath, and his disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said unto him, Look, your disciples are doing what is unlawful for the Sabbath. Now, this is unlawful for the Sabbath according to the Pharisees. Sadducees did a little bit different, and Lord knows the Essenes did it really different. All the other Judeans in Diaspora did Sabbath differently than those in Judea. Everyone talks about the Judaism in first century. Which one, right? Everyone thinks that the Judaism today is somehow the Judaism in the past. No, it was not. It evolved from the Pharisees after the temple was destroyed. And the Pharisaic cult before the temple was different than after the temple because it shifted because the temple was gone, right? There's so much that goes into this.

And he asked, haven't you read what David did? See, Yeshua was just giving a quick rebuttal and like putting the spotlight back on others. I love it, right? Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He went into the house of God and his companions ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priest. Or haven't you read in the law that on the Sabbath, the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent? True story. I tell you that one greater than the temple is here. That's the verse that I wanted to share with you. That's the verse that a lot of Messianic Hebrew fellowships skip over because they don't know what to do with it. Because the Torah states the temple is the center of God's glory. And the Torah states that all worship is supposed to go through the temple. And the Torah states that we're supposed to sacrifice at the temple and we're supposed to worship at the temple. And the Torah is true. And it is. But in the first century, people weren't keeping Torah with temple worship.

The Temple's True Problem

The function of the temple had been shifted completely. And we're going to go into how the Judeans actually changed the Torah a little bit or changed the rules of how you can atone for your sin without bringing animals to the temple. What's Yeshua saying? Someone greater than the temple is here. If you had not known what these words mean, I desire mercy, not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the innocent. For son of man is Lord of the Sabbath. That's a whole other message. How about this? Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, Teacher, we want to see an accurate sign from you. Show us a great sign. And he answered, A wicked and adulterous...

See, how many of you guys know that the Torah commands us to repent and then bring sacrifices for purification, right? In other words, it's supposed to start where? Not at the altar,

right? Because of your sin, the altar is defiled, and you've got to go clean the altar up, but it has to start in your heart. What would happen if you forgot about that? What would happen if you just saw the temple being responsible for everything? I just take an animal, slit its throat, I'm good to go. Still in good standing with God. What if that became the social norm? It's okay. You can just come to the temple. What if a set of aristocrats were running the temple and offered a way for you just to send some money in so you wouldn't even have to bring an animal to repent and confess and purify, right? So you could just send some money in for them, right?

And because you were in diaspora, you had Roman coins, and the Torah says that at least for the half-shekel tax and the census, you could only send a half-shekel in. It couldn't be a foreign coin. So now these aristocrats set up bankers to change the money and charge a little bit of interest because of that. What if the entire temple had become corrupt and the function of the temple, according to Torah, had been completely lost? How many of you guys know the Ark of the Covenant was not in the Second Temple? How did they complete the Yom Kippur service without the third altar in the Holiest of Holies? It was awkward because the high priest would go back there with the blood and it'd be an empty room and he has to sprinkle it on the Ark, right? Technically, Yom Kippur is not being completed in the First Century Temple, in the Second Temple. Technically. Just as the old prophets in Jeremiah Chapter 7 ream the people out a little bit.

Yeshua seemed to have thought Israel was misusing offerings in the temple as a substitute for inward repentance and purification. Now we understand why he kind of snubbed the temple a little bit. He was zealous for it. It's my dad's house. What are you doing? Tear this down. I'll rebuild it in three days, speaking of my body. Sometimes we miss the fullness of what Yeshua has done for us in his ministry.

The Coming Destruction

See, how many of you guys know that around 40 years after Yeshua's death, the temple was destroyed? Everybody knew it, especially in the 40s and 50s and 60s. Everyone knew that a rebellion's coming and that the Romans are going to destroy this temple. What are we going to do? Everyone probably at the time of Yeshua knew that it was only a matter of time when this temple, the center of our faith, was going to be bulldozed over. What are we going to do? How are we going to meet with God then?

Well, here's the thing, guys. You're not meeting with God now because you've totally rejected every aspect of the Torah that made the temple functional. You're using it as a way just to go

and carry on with your lives and send some money, flick a coin back to the temple, and then you're forgiven. It's not the temple that needs worked on, guys. Guys, I can restore the temple right now. He could have. Yeshua could have restored the temple. Look, he could have. The Ark's buried. Dig right here. The Ark's here. Restore the Ark. God would come down. Shekinah would shoot out, blast out from the temple. But the problem, guys, wasn't with the temple in the first century. The problem was with the hearts of men. If the temple was restored—the restoration of all things—if the temple on earth was restored to the fullness as it was in the tabernacle, it'd be like plugging in a lamp with no light bulb. The hearts of men can't engage. We've lost everything. We've completely changed the function of the Torah. Therefore, if any of you offer your gift at the altar...

Reconciliation Before the Altar

And remember that your brother has something against you. She was going and saying, listen, if you're in Judea and you're going to take a little animal to the altar, you're going to slit its throat, right? Probably because you have a disagreement from your brother. And you're up there and you remember in your heart, I still got this unforgiveness. What do I do with this? I still got my op with him, Brad. I just blew the throat. No, I can't. If you remember that you have ought with someone in your heart, leave your gift at the altar. He's handed the priest. Can I just tie this up right here? That was annoying. Tie this up right here. I'll be back in a couple days. Leave the gift there at the front of the altar. First go and be reconciled with your brother and then come and offer the gift.

This little animal is not going to do anything with reconciling your relationship with God if you're not going to do anything with reconciling your relationship with your brother. In the first century, that was the problem. The problem was the temple had lost its function to be the final purification after you've already done the groundwork of repentance and purifying your heart and reconciling yourself with your brother and then making yourself—all right, Father, I know I did not love my brother like the Torah says I should, and I know that I'm farther away from you because of it. So I'm reconciling my relationship with my brother. So now I can come to your place of worship, your temple, with this little lamb. He's so cute. And I'm going to sacrifice it, and I'm going to be made right with you to show you that I care about the fullness of your Torah. That's what the temple was all about. That's why I end of Ezekiel. Personally, I think there's going to be another temple on earth in the millennial. That's me. You can disagree.

Destroy This Temple

Then the Jews demanded of him, what miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority? And Yeshua answered them, destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days. And the Judeans replied, it has taken 46 years to build this sucker and you are going to raise it up in three days? But the temple he had spoken of was his body.

Now I'm going to try to suggest something and I'm going to try to take this concept and portray it as scripture seems to build it. So if we know the temple was not being used according to Torah, and we know the priesthood was absolutely corrupt, we're going to go over that in a minute, and we know the Torah and its application had changed in function or completely lost its function, and we know that the temple is going to be destroyed within the next generation—anything. Do you think Yeshua knew the temple was going to be destroyed? Maybe that's a stretch. I don't know. The writer of the book of Hebrews seemed to have a great—this sucker's going down. He knew it. My guess is Yeshua knew it too along with everyone else. Destroy this temple.

The High Priest in Heaven

The book of Hebrews states that Yeshua is the high priest, not of the earthly temple. It says that if he was a priest on earth, he wouldn't be a priest on earth because we already have a priesthood on earth. It's been given to the Levites, the sons of Zadok, and they weren't even over the temple during the first century. Right? Right? The book of Hebrews says that Yeshua was a high priest in a temple not made by hands. It was a temple that was up there with God. It was the heavenly temple, the original that the earthly temple was built upon.

So Yeshua's sitting here saying, listen, the temple now is your bridge to God. It is how you connect to God. It is how you have a relationship with God. It is what connects all Judeans together in a brotherhood worshiping God because the Torah says that through that temple we have access to the glory and the spirit of God. But I'm going to tell you something, guys. Not only have you messed everything up, you've taken away that function of the temple. I'm going to make a way for you, even if there is no temple, to have a relationship with God until the restoration of all things comes again and the temple is rebuilt on earth.

My Body is the Temple

Tear down this temple, and in three days I'll raise it up, and I'm speaking about my body. I'm speaking about me. Even though there's no temple here, I will make a way for you to worship and engage in the glory of your God, no matter where you are, no matter who you are, because

you're going on a journey of exile. The temple's going down, and it's not going to be rebuilt for a very long time. And I'm going to make a way for you to still have access, not even to the earthly temple, but to the greater temple that is in heaven.

Yeshua was not doing away with Torah. Judeans had already done that through the Hellenistic culture they had invented, or they had birthed in. Yeshua was giving an alternative. Yeshua was giving a way for something to come out positively, even though it was a negative circumstance. A lot of people today call that grace.

Understanding the Temple

Anyone ever wonder what that verse means before? My body's the temple. And we always say in Hebrew roots, we're all like, well, that didn't really mean. Yes, it did. According to the book of Hebrews, yes, it did. There was a reason why he looked at the temple and said, yeah, it won't be long now.

For distant diasporan Judeans, pilgrimage to the temple may have been a once-in-a-lifetime thing. If you were a Judean in Rome, you loved to go to the temple once in your life, maybe Passover. Now, a lot of people are probably saying, oh, well, they were breaking Torah if they weren't going for all three pilgrimage feasts. Sure, this is history. This is the way it was. The exile hadn't ended even though there was a temple. The priesthood was corrupt. They weren't the sons of Zadok. High priesthood was a position, not of a servant, but of a king, basically, that was controlled by the Romans.

The Temple Tax and Diaspora Worship

That's why the Essenes never even went to Jerusalem, and they were the most orthodox of them all. This situation called for an alternative or an alteration in Torah application due to the culture and social structure of Judea found, therefore, in them. Here's a quote by Oscar Scrum: All Jews who did not attend temple service nevertheless still did attend it in that they contributed through the temple tax in [Exodus 30.13](#).

Anyone ever read 30.13? It's talking about the census, that every time a boy graduates into manhood at age 20, he has to give silver in the weight of a half shekel to the temple. We have to give payment to the half, to send some money to the temple for the sake of the census. Now, Torah never says this is an annual thing, by the way. We don't know where that came from. In 2 Chronicles, it talks about it being an annual thing, but in Torah, it seems like it was a once-in-a-lifetime thing. It may have evolved into an annual temple tax.

This covered the expenses of the daily offerings, the temid offerings. In other words, once a year, if you lived in Rome or even Galilee, if you weren't going to go to the temple in Alexandria, there would be convoys of some Judeans that would go to Jerusalem. And what you would do is you would say, darn, I can't go to the feast this year, and I know I've been a bad boy or girl, and I've sinned a lot. Darn, how can I engage in temple worship and forgiveness and purification without actually being there? Here is some money to take to the temple.

The Two-Drachma Fish

And [Exodus 30](#), 13 talks about a two-shekel tax that's on the people, and it's for the purpose of atonement, so there we go. And so people would drop the money into these messengers, and these messengers would flock to the temple all year long, and the money was supposed to go towards the daily offerings, the burnt offerings that happen every single day, the temid offerings, right? And so in those offerings that you engaged in financially, you were as if you were there in the temple. Nowhere in Torah does it say that was the function. But that was the accepted function in the first century. That is what most people did. Did Yeshua do that? I don't know.

After Yeshua and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, which is up in Galilee, right? The collectors of the two-dragma tax came to Peter and asked, doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax? So two-drama is the equivalent of the half-shekel, if you will. Why were they collecting these things up in Galilee? Because they were heading to Jerusalem and they were like, hey guys, who's going to send their temple tax in? Who's not going to Jerusalem to pay it themselves? Give it to me. I'll take it. Right?

And Peter was like, yeah, of course he does. Nervously. When Peter came into the house, Yeshua was the first to speak. And he looks at Simon and he says, what do you think? From whom do the kings of the earth collect taxes and duty? From their own sons or from others? And Peter says, from others. Then the sons must be exempt, says Yeshua. Who is this guy? Just bucking all the system.

But, so that we may not offend them—because you would offend them if you were like, I ain't sending no money to the temple, right?—so that you may not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line and take the first fish you catch. Open its mouth and you will find four dragma coin. Right? So it's times two, so it's enough for two people to pay the temple tax. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours. So go out to the pond and steal some money from a

fish and give it to them to take back to Jerusalem. Basically, Yeshua's saying, I don't know why Yeshua was hesitant.

The Temple and the Jewish Sects

Most likely, because I think he went to the feast. It talks about him going to the feast. We don't have a record of Yeshua attending all three feasts a year that he was supposed to go to. My opinion is, of course he did, and he would have paid the temple tax then. But I find that interesting—how many of you guys didn't realize that's what that was? It's for the deist-born Jews who couldn't travel to Judea. You guys learned anything about the evolution of Judaism in the first century? Just a little bit? Just a few things? Okay. We're going to talk about a few sects of Judaism. We're going to run through this real quick. You ready?

So Josephus describes four—he doesn't call them sects, he calls them philosophies of Judaism. These are not all of the major philosophies in Judaism or organizations within Judaism, but these are some of them. The first one you guys know about are called the Pharisees, right? Set apart—one.

The Pharisees: Separation and Purity

You ever heard of Pharisees? They were a choice of life, and the walk of a Pharisee was also a philosophy—that's what Josephus says. He states that there were only about 6,000 Pharisees in Judea. That's not a lot. We always think, reading Scripture, that Pharisees were everywhere. No. Pharisees, guys, were in Judea only. No Pharisees started ministries or lived outside of Judea. Right? We've got that one thing in Matthew when Yeshua is sitting there eating with his disciples and the Pharisees come up and they start arguing about washing their hands. If you read it in the fine print there, it says Pharisees from Jerusalem. They were traveling. And they went up to Galilee and they were like, why aren't you following this ultra-religious halakha? Because we're in Galilee, dude, chill.

Why were the Pharisees so upset about washing hands? The Pharisees saw the temple purity laws to be held by the laity. In other words, clean and unclean laws that were typically held by the priesthood only, right? Or dealing with the temple only. So clean and unclean—all those laws in Torah—the function of clean and unclean are directly tied to temple worship. Just so you guys know. Temple worship. The Pharisees took those clean and unclean laws and said, no, we need to follow these in our everyday life strictly, as if we were the temple. The Pharisees did. Is it good? Bad? I don't know. It's history. Very strict.

When the temple was destroyed, Pharisaism went through a minimal alteration to maintain its existence. They didn't have to do a whole lot. See, the Pharisees took all aspects of the temple and taught that you could implement all the function of the temple in your everyday life and walk and extend the holiness of the temple everywhere you go. Of course, right before the temple was destroyed, Pharisaic philosophy kind of backfired because if I'm the temple and I'm extending the holiness, then the temple is everywhere that I am, so I don't really have a function for the temple anymore, you know? But they didn't think about that. Everything's 20-20, right?

Kosher eating and purity laws were at the top of their list. They even formed societies known as Havarot that existed to enable their members to eat at a completely kosher table, according to their standards, and not lose their purity when eating with outsiders. Wash your hands and make sure you're eating at the table with other people. Peter, he messed up that one time. Paul had to scold him. That's why.

The Pharisees taught that you should only eat at the table with other Pharisees, other people concerned with purity. Wash your hands, make sure everything's kosher, and you're good to go. Yeshua's over here like, dirty hands. To the Pharisees, every Israelite was a priest, and every meal that you ate was a temple meal. It was as if you were offering something to the temple. Their purpose was to extend the sanctity of the temple, not replace it. However, to say the temple is everywhere you are did portray the temple as insignificant abroad, and then it handed down tradition after tradition after tradition.

So when Yeshua was dealing with Pharisees, that was their philosophy for Judaism. Not all Judaism was the same.

The Sadducees: Politics and Priests

Sadducees, the aristocrats, developed from the Hasmonean dynasty. The Maccabees basically went on to become the Sadducees. Most scholars agree. Focused on political philosophy more than religious works. Their job was to basically run the temple and make profit off of it and manage the politics, if you will. The Sadducees were a very small group that existed within the priesthood. The priesthood was roughly 20,000. So the Sadducees—maybe a couple thousand, maybe. No one's really sure. Not a lot. These weren't all over Israel. These were focused in Judea only.

Josephus describes them as not believing in afterlife, eternal reward, fate, complete will, or free choice. In other words, God does not interfere with human life. The exact same protocol and

belief structure of the Epicurean philosophers at the time. I know I butchered that word. These were Greek philosophers at the time. They believed the same thing. This is how Hellenized the Sadducees were.

They saw the purity laws as referring to the temple and its priests and saw no reason for extending them in the daily life of all of Israel—a basic pillar of the Pharisaic approach. This is why the Pharisees and the Sadducees were opposing each other on how to keep Torah and what philosophy of Judaism to follow. It wasn't just one. Mount Sinai, one way, Torah.

The Essenes: Separation in the Desert

The Essenes. Anyone ever heard of the Essenes? I'm going to have to turn the remote off for this one. I learned a lot about the Essenes.

So the Essenes... the main consensus is that the Essenes were, in a roundabout way, the lineage of the true High Priests that existed before the Hasmoneans kind of monopolized the priesthood back in the days of the Maccabees. Didn't get that? No problem. These were people who felt like the temple was overrun with bandits and the priesthood in the temple was completely evil and the temple had been defiled. And you know what? We're not going to deal with it. So we're going to move out to the desert and we're going to pretend like the temple is out there and we're going to live a life of set-apartness and holiness out there. We're going to live in paradise, heaven on earth out there, while all you guys live in the hell that's outside of our community.

They were very communal. They stuck together. They practiced celibacy because, you know, women, Nadah, and such makes you unclean. We don't want that in the camp. No joke, true story. They practiced celibacy. They specifically focused on clean and unclean. They were very, very strict on all manner of halakha.

Most scholars believe the Essenes are the ones who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls in Qumran, and that Qumran was actually a holy community, if you will, that these people gathered together. They viewed themselves as priests and the temple as hijacked by evil ones. They also had a calendar. It was very interesting. And they were really, really strict in arguing about their calendar and their halakha and their ritual purity laws and the way that you should keep Sabbath and the way that you should keep the calendar and the way that you should keep the feast days. And this is how you should pronounce the name, maybe. I don't know. And this is how you should do all these things. This was the Essenes.

Yeshua never once identified with them. He never even addressed them. He didn't want anything to do with them, I would say. If anything, he identified with the Pharisees more than anyone else, but to say he's a Pharisee, I don't think that's quite correct. If he was a Pharisee, he would have started his ministry in Judea, not in Galilee. It's crazy.

The Calculated Calendar

So yeah, they kept like a solar calendar. I think it's on par with the Enoch calendar or whatnot. And Philo states in 2nd Laws, section 140, paragraph 26, that the calendar used in Judea was a calculated calendar in the first century. The reason being, the Sanhedrin—not Pharisees—the Sanhedrin actually built schools of astronomy so they could calculate the new months, the new moons, right? And the reason being is because it took four months to get the news of an upcoming feast day to Babylon. Do I have a map? You guys saw the map. So if they were following a sighted moon, right, it's like, oh, the sighted moon is here. Send the letters to Babylon. And in four months, they'll celebrate Yom Teruah or Rosh Hashanah with us, right? And this was the calendar supposedly that was later released in the 4th century when the Sanhedrin disbanded.

I find it very interesting that Yeshua didn't want to have anything to do with those who thought they were right about every single aspect of Torah. Because why didn't he care about that? Why wasn't Yeshua so focused on proper halakha of Torah?

Still in Exile

Because, guys, in exile, can we have another serious conversation? Can we have a mature conversation about the Torah and being in exile? So right now, we're still in exile. Our king has not returned. There is no temple. There is no priesthood. Okay? In order to fully functionally keep Passover or unleavened bread and Shavuot and Sukkot, right? These are tribute feast days where we take a tribute to Jerusalem and we bring sacrifices to the temple and we see the glory of our God in Sukkot and while you're there, dwell in tents in Jerusalem. Okay? There's no temple. There's no priesthood. We can't fully engage in the feast days today.

What we can do, yeah, we can pop a tent up in the backyard and we can memorialize the feast days. We can engage in the feast days and honor the feast days just like Scripture says to do. And Hebrews talks about their shadow of things to come, the shadow of Yeshua. So when we celebrate the feast days, we're uplifting the identity of Yeshua and who He was and the fulfillment of everything He did.

Fixing Hearts Before Restoration

But guys, we don't have a temple. The temple in the first century was functionless. Why wasn't Yeshua intent on giving proper halakha? Because we have to fix the heart first, guys, before the restoration of all things comes and the temple is rebuilt. Yeah, this is how you keep Sabbath. You guys are really overdoing Sabbath over here. Here is the heart of the matter with Sabbath, right?

Was there something more important than ultimate halakha of Torah in the first century? If there wasn't, why was Messiah not engaged with that? Guys, we find ourselves today in the very same place the first century did. A little bit more in exile because we don't have a temple at all at this point.

Keeping Torah as We Can

But we find ourselves trying to keep the Torah any way that we possibly can, which I encourage and I believe you're supposed to do. We're supposed to uphold it the best we absolutely can because that's what Scripture says we're supposed to do, right? We're supposed to teach it to our children. We're supposed to learn it and study it when we walk on our way, when we go to sleep at night, when we wake. These are the laws that we're supposed to dwell on.

But to what degree do we keep them when we cannot functionally keep all of them? Passover, we can't take a lamb to the temple. Some people try to do that in the backyard. Don't do that. What do we do? We do the best we can.

And at this point, until the restoration of all things, we keep our eye on something important. That was the apple of every believer, and that was the glory of God. That was the kingdom of God, and that was the light of God, which is through Yeshua. That was the whole purpose of everything. So yes, we keep Shabbat the best we can. Keep kosher the best we can. Keep the feast days the absolute best we can. Clean and unclean, sure, we keep those the best we can.

But guys, there's a reason why there are so many different divisions today, because there were so many different divisions in the first century as well. And Yeshua got involved very lightly with all those divisions.

What Different Groups Missed

The main thing that Yeshua focused on? Well, let's check it out. Hold on. What did Yeshua focus on? The zealots. The zealots were a group of nationalists that were more political than

anything else. You can study those. The Diaspora Jews, by the way, were not associated with any of these main groups. The ones outside of Judea? These were just Judeans, right?

Look at this. Nowhere in Diaspora outside of Judea, so Galilee, everywhere, Rome, nowhere in Diaspora literature do we find examples of those detailed discussions of halakha, halakha, halakha, halakha, law, which are so characteristic of rabbinic writings. This alerts us to the fact that the Pharisaic and subsequent development of rabbinic halakha were distinctly a Judean phenomenon. In other words, what I'm saying is in the first century, the only people who argued about how to keep the Torah were the Judeans that lived in Judea. People in Galilee didn't argue tooth and nail about, you're doing this wrong. You're not keeping Sabbath strict enough. That has an enzyme in it. No one did that.

Why did Yeshua start his ministry in Galilee? Maybe it was to actually reach the people that were far from God, not the people that were trying to act like they were close to him.

Yeshua's Different Approach

Yeshua did something that no other group did in Judaism in the first century. He engaged children, he engaged the women, and he engaged the poor. Pharisees talked a lot, but that's not what they did. They were more intent on spreading a dogma, not a relationship with God. Sadducees didn't give a hoot about anyone but themselves. The Essenes were communal, and if you're not in the community, off with you. The Zealots just wanted to kill all the Romans, along with the zakari, regardless. Yeshua was the only one actually focused on—look, those who are far from God need to be brought near.

You guys can fight about how good you can keep Torah or if the purity laws are really supposed to be kept outside the temple. I'm going to work in the hearts of men. That way, when the restoration does happen and the temple is rebuilt and God's glory shines forth from Zion, the light bulbs will be in the lamps when they plug into the wall and the hearts of men will know how to engage God in a pure spirit.

Reaching Those Far From God

When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

On hearing this, Yeshua said to them, "It is not the healthy—I think he was being sarcastic—it's not the healthy that need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but I've

come to call the sinners, those far from God."

Are we doing our part as ministers and ambassadors of Yeshua to reach those that are far from God? Or are we, just like the Pharisees, the Sadducees, or heaven forbid, the Essenes, trying to push our view of dogma and post-exilic Torah observance on other people?

Beyond Dogma

What level should we keep it? You must not be saved. I've been part of those groups. Well, if they don't keep Torah like I do, they're obviously not saved. Morons! Morons!

We're supposed to be using this time right now, awaiting the coming of our King to find those who are far from God. We're supposed to be showing them the ways of God. We're supposed to be showing them the love of God through the Spirit of Messiah. That includes Torah. That does include Torah. But it doesn't include the arguing and the dogmatic debates and the divisions that we add to the Torah.

The Heart of the Law

The heart of the Torah, what did Yeshua say? What's the greatest commandment? Oh Master Yeshua, "To love the Lord your God with all your heart and to love your brother as yourself."

And then in Hebrew, we're always like, well, that means to keep all the commandments too when you do it.

Do you guys realize that Proverbs, right? Who wrote Proverbs? King Solomon, right? And he was the wisest man in the world. He talks about the law being justice and in terms of mercy and in terms of kindness and love. He never once mentioned Sabbath, feast days, kosher. Never once. Not many of the wisdom books do in the Bible. They never go in depth to the halakha of the Torah because, duh, you're supposed to be keeping the Sabbath, but more than that, you're supposed to be an ambassador of God's love on earth.

Justice and Righteousness, Not Rules Alone

See, the problem wasn't that we don't see a whole lot of that. That's why a lot of Christian scholars say, "Oh, Jesus did away with the law of the Torah." He doesn't talk about it a lot. Everyone knew it, but they had stripped the function away from it. And the function has always been under the footstool of God's throne, what is it? What's Isaiah say it is? Justice and mercy. Justice and righteousness. That's the foundation of God's throne. Everything goes out from that.

If your heart is not pure enough to forgive your brother, then guess what? It don't matter how good you keep Sabbath.

The Test That Matters

What's [Matthew 24](#) talk about? Sheep and the goats, right? Because the sheep's gotten to heaven because they kept Sabbath and feast days and kosher the right way, to the right degree. No. Because they understood the foundation of God's law was justice and righteousness: feeding the poor, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting those in prison.

Once you have that as your spear tip of your heart and your spirit, the Sabbath, the feast days, kosher, all of that is going to drop into play. And all of that is going to light up the world because you put the right fuel in the car.

From the Heart Outward

When Yeshua was on the scene, yeah, everyone's keeping Torah. No, they're not. Listen, guys, we've got to start from square one. Even if the temple is restored right now, all of y'all are going to be messed up. Let's start working on something that matters.

That way, when the temple is restored and my Father in heaven chooses to restore all things back to the beginning, he will actually have a bride to walk down the aisle that will be pure with white garments, not defiled in their own ways, in their own faith, in their own religion.

The New Commandment

My children, I will be with you a little longer. You will look for me just as I told the Judeans. So I will tell you now where I'm going, you cannot come. A new command I give to you.

Now this new command is very interesting because it's not a new command at all. It's listed right there in [Leviticus 19](#). Now I could do some Greek teaching talking about the renewed commandment. Regardless of all that, Yeshua is bringing up something and he says, "Listen, I have to bring this up because you've forgotten it. Whether it's brand new or whether it's renewed to you, it's in the Torah of God and I want you to focus on this. What is this commandment? Love one another as I have loved you, so you must love one another."

Signs of True Discipleship

Okay, what if we don't? Well, the thing is, by this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

You can keep Sabbath and you can claim Yeshua as your God or your king. You can keep the feast days. You can keep kosher, but you're not a disciple of Messiah unless the world sees you loving one another.

Now, when we love one another, we can dwell together on Sabbath. We can eat kosher food together. We can join each other in the feast days, and we can do all these things that Scripture tells us to do. But guys, if we don't have that one thing, it don't matter because we're not with Him.

I pray and I encourage and I want to motivate you guys. What would happen this week if you thought of Torah observance as including loving your neighbor?

Because it does in [Leviticus 19.18](#). What would happen is if everywhere you went, you said, "Wow, how has Yeshua loved me? And how can I love that guy over there? How can I love my brother and Messiah more?" And when people see me loving my brother and Messiah, not arguing or fighting or dividing, Will that draw the people that are far from God? Will they see the light of Messiah and want to be drawn close to God's kingdom and God's reign? Yes, His Torah. That's what Torah is. Unless we get this down, Messiah will not return. This generation will die off, and God will seek another generation that actually cares about His kingdom to raise up and restore His kingdom. I'm convinced of this. This is the background that I wanted to offer today before we dive into Paul going to the Gentiles next week and what Paul's ministry was all about.

What Paul Meant by Works of the Law

What did Paul mean by works of the law? Because automatically we're like, "Oh, well, that's Orthodox Judaism, standard to keeping Sabbath. Was it? Or was it something different? What was it to the Judeans? What was the most important thing to Judeans in the first century? It was more than faith historically. It was identity.

So guys, I know this was a long one and I had a lot of information. I read a lot. But I hope if you took 10% of this, it will encourage you when you study the Book of Acts and all of Paul's letters, and even when Messiah's talking. Messiah says some things that a lot of Christian scholars will twist and take out of context to be like, "Look, Jesus did away with the whole Torah. Look, he just focused on grace and love now." Grace and love are part of Torah. First century Judaism did not keep Torah like Israelites did at Mount Sinai. It wasn't necessarily their fault, but the faith

had changed and the function of Torah had been manipulated and a lot of the functions of Torah had been taken away.

Avoiding Anachronism

To think that Judaism of the first century was the same as it is today is anachronic. It's not correct. We're taking something of today that we know and trying to place it 2,000 years ago. Guys, when the temple was destroyed, two sects of Judaism continued to remain: the believers in Yeshua and the Pharisees. They were the only ones who actually practiced carrying out God's kingdom and commandments outside of the physical temple. The Pharisees began to evolve into the rabbis, and Orthodox Judaism today is based on the last 2,000 years of evolution from the Pharisaic sect of Judaism.

Of course, Christianity hasn't been much better. Guys, I hope this was edifying, at least a little bit. I don't want it to be hard. I don't want it to make people mad when I say stuff that's a little controversial just because history talks about it. I want it to be edifying for everyone when they read the scriptures. And I want to teach truth even if it's something uncomfortable to talk about because heaven knows it's much easier to say that Judaism in the first century is the same as it is today. It's not.

The Point of Today's Message

Regardless of all the knowledge that we're talking about, I think the point of today's message was to remember the things that Yeshua actually said and Yeshua actually did. Do people see you as a disciple of Yeshua? Don't sit here and start thinking, "Yeah, I keep Sabbath." Don't do it, guys. That's part of being in the kingdom, yes. But a disciple of Yeshua—what's the one thing that stands out? It's the way that you treat everyone else in this room. It's the way that you treat all other believers of Yeshua. And it's the way that you treat others, the poor, the children, women and men out in the world.

Watch or listen: foundedintruth.com/bible-teachings/paul-evolution-of-1st-century-judaism/

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