

Timeline – 1st Century Pillars of Culture

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MAIN VERSES

[Genesis 12:1](#) • [Genesis 15:5](#) • [Genesis 17:5](#) • [Genesis 17:7](#) • [Exodus 2:23](#) • [Joshua 6:1](#) • [Judges 3:7](#) • [Ruth 1:1](#) • [1 Samuel 3:1](#) • [1 Samuel 8:5](#) • [1 Samuel 16:13](#) • [1 Samuel 17:4](#) • [1 Kings 6:1](#) • [1 Kings 12:1](#) • [1 Kings 18:1](#) • [2 Kings 17:24](#) • [Ezekiel 1:1](#) • [2 Chronicles 36:6](#) • [Ezra 1:1](#) • [Ezra 7:9](#) • [Esther 1:1](#) • [Galatians 3:29](#) • [Romans 10:9](#)

So we love to approach things from an academic standpoint. I love spiritual commentaries, I love religious commentaries. But the issue—and it's not really an issue—spiritual and religious commentaries are very applicable, but sometimes they get based on tradition and not historical fact. There's no historical, archaeological, anthropological evidence to back up some of the religious commentaries that we have of Scripture. You guys know what I'm talking about?

So I love to go the academic route. Let's go to school. What are they teaching in departments of archeology at the universities? What are they teaching about anthropology? What evidence do we have? What have we dug up in the ground that tells us that Dagon was not a fish god? He was a deity of vegetation. He had that whole fish thing—that's not Dagon. We know that for a fact now, right? But tradition states Dagon was a fish god, and we get that from a Jewish tradition in the Talmud because Dagon comes from a root that means to fish, right? And they're like, "Oh, it must be a fish deity." But we know from Canaanite inscriptions that it was not. So little things like this help us to have a more accurate vision of the Bible.

Approaching Paul Historically

And that's how I'm starting to approach Paul. You guys who follow Wisdom in Torah—the Talmudian group was with Rico Cortez, Ryan White, Daniel McGirr, Tyler Rosenquist—we're all moving down this path of studying Paul from a historical standpoint, right? Understanding context. How many of you guys know that sometimes when we read Paul, we have no idea what he's talking about? What's the context here? I don't know. Let's get a religious book from someone who probably doesn't know either but has made something up that sounds really good, and so we're going to read that. That's me—I've done that, I know. But it doesn't cover all

the bases of Paul, so we have those leftover things in Paul that we're just like, "Let's turn the page and hope no one asks me about that," right?

I'm not claiming this future study, the series that we're going to start, is going to answer all the questions, but it's certainly going to give you an insight into what Paul was addressing and what state he lived in—the culture, the context. Studying the Roman Empire.

Understanding the Roman Context

You know, we're in Hebrew roots. Hebrew, not Greek. We don't care about the Roman Empire, we don't care about Romans, we don't care about Greek. We don't even want to study the language. And then we wonder why we're lost when we come to Paul, and he's living in the golden age, the peak of Imperial Rome.

And before I'm reading these books, I'm getting really into them and I'm learning stuff. Having to learn about Rome of all places—and Rome is actually pretty cool. I'm impressed. Rome is actually something that's kind of cool. I mean, we've seen Gladiator and stuff, but it was that cool. And there was a lot of corruption, but there was a lot of power. There was a lot of division, but Rome was a very patriotic culture at certain points. During Paul's time period, the golden age—everybody, I am Rome. It was incredible, right?

So when Paul was addressing the Romans, he's trying to hammer in that wall. And so I started thinking, "Geez, we need to study a little bit of this Roman background, but how am I going to sneak in a little bit of Roman culture commentary into a message at a Hebrew Roots Fellowship and get away with it?" And so I decided, you know what? Let's just start back from the basics.

Starting with the Basics: A Biblical Timeline

Let's go over a basic timeline of the Bible. Okay? Let's go over some events of the Bible so we understand where Ruth was. Right? Was Ruth before or after Samuel? Right? David and Goliath—where was he when Samson was fighting? Before or after? You know? Little things like this help us put things into perspective. The Babylonian exile. When did the destruction of the temple happen in the biblical narrative as far as the timeline? These things are important, especially when we see that Greece came—the Greek army kingdom came and overtook Judea and had a heavy influence on the Judeans. And then Rome came in and took power away and overtook Judea.

So does that make sense? Guys, this may be boring—I'm giving you a heads up. But I feel like everyone's going to walk away with something today. Is that okay? Okay.

The Timeline

The timeline now—first things first, you will see my timeline. And it starts about 2,900 BCE all the way up to first century zero, one AD or one CE. And you see this word up here—circa, right? It's not circus. It's circa. And essentially what it indicates is around. Just around. Whenever you see circa, you're reading some books, you see circa 1700 BCE—it means around there, you know, throw a dart at it, it'll hit somewhere around there. That's where we think this event happened.

This message is not about accurate dates. What is this message not about? This message is about a chronological timeline. What events came before other events? So if you disagree with a date that's up here, it's okay. I probably do too, but that's not my focus. All right, everybody understand that? I'm going to get an email. "You said it was 1,024 and it was actually 1,002 circa"—everything's circa in this timeline.

And I'm going to start this timeline with a man by the name of Abram. Really, really cool guy. They named a tank after him. Thank you. He lived around 2000 BCE. Now when I say BCE, do you guys know what BCE is? BCE is before the common era. Okay. The synonymous acronym is BC—before Christ, right? And Before Christ was used as a marking point, and then over time we realized that the marking point of one AD may not have been the birth year of Yeshua, and so universities were like, "Well, let's just say common era and before the common era, right?" They're interchangeable, no big deal. I typically use BCE and CE, but some use BC, which is before Christ, and AD, which is Anno Domini—"you're of our Lord," you're of the Lord.

Abraham's Journey and Covenant

Abraham lived around somewhere between 1700 and 2000 BCE. Abraham lived in a city called Ur. Everybody say Ur. Ur was a Sumerian city that had existed for a while, and he grew up in southern Babylonia, if you will, east of Israel. God called Abraham to move. He moved up to essentially modern-day southern Lebanon, and after his father died—Abram's father died—God called him. He said, "Listen, I know you guys know this. Listen, if you follow me, I will give you a strong lineage. You have a lot of folks in your lineage, right? You have so many people in your lineage that if you look at the stars right now and count them"—sounds like a devastating task—"if you count them, this will be your seed, right? And you will have kings in your lineage and

nations will come from your lineage. Now back then, as we discussed in afterlife, it was kind of important to be remembered. So this is a good thing. Yes. Also, if you follow me"—after Abram started following him—"I'm going to give you all the land that your feet touches." And God also changes Abram's name to Abraham. Okay.

If you look in the timeline, you'll see this little dot here. What is that fairy called in Zelda? You know what I'm talking about? Navi, that's it. You'll see this dot begin to move through the timeline, so if I forget to say a date you can see where we are. I want to show you something. Here's a map. Way over here—I got this off Google Maps, modern-day map. The city of Ur was around here somewhere in southern Iraq. Okay? Abram moved with his dad way up around here, and this is where God spoke to him. And the outline right here is modern-day Israel. The land that was given to Israel was a little bit bigger than this, kind of went around there a little bit. But regardless, I want to show you a map of how far he traveled.

Now, the covenant that God made with Abraham was very, very, very important because what Yahweh did to Abraham—Yahweh did not introduce himself to Abraham as a national deity, right? Shemash or Marduk. He introduced him as a family deity. Listen, your dad's dead. I'm going to be your God. And if you trust me, I will bless you, Abraham, and I will bless your seed. I'm not going to bless your cousins. I'm not going to bless your neighbors. I'm going to bless you as long as you worship me in your house, right?

So what happened? Abraham had sons, so on and so forth, and Yahweh became known as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and made himself known as a national deity when Israel became a nation. That's Sinai, right? Remember that? "I will always bless you as long as you follow me."

So we turn to Genesis chapter 17. "I will continue this everlasting covenant between us generation after generation. It will continue between me and your offspring forever, and I will always be your God and the God of your descendants after you. Yes, I will give all of this land of Canaan to you and to your offspring forever, and I will be their God. You're part of the agreement," God told Abraham. It was important that you obey the terms of the covenant. You and all of your descendants have this continual responsibility. So if you were born into the lineage of Abraham, you definitely were blessed because you had an intimate experience to know God, but you could still break the covenant and walk away from God, right?

I love this because it seems to be very important. If you want to be in covenant with God, you have to be part of Abraham's lineage, right? That's why I'm so thankful for Paul's writings. In Galatians, you know, Romans talks about a spirit of adoption. He's talking about Romans. In

[Galatians 3](#), verse 29—favorite verse: "If you are in Christ, if you are in Messiah, you are Abraham's seed."

Mercy and the Covenant

You get put in. That's mercy. That's grace. That's awesome, right? Extended message another day. That's what Yeshua did, guys. This is awesome. We have access to the covenant that God made with Abraham. Abraham's the man with the covenant, okay? Hammered Abraham. We need to move on.

Abraham had a son named Isaac. Isaac had a son named Jacob. Jacob's name was changed to Israel, which literally means fighting with God. Not fighting against God, but fighting with God like he's on your team. Israel—Jacob—proceeds to have 12 sons and a daughter. Twelve sons are Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulon, Joseph, and Benjamin. Benjamin! Now if he was driving a minivan, can you imagine the stick figures in the back of his car? Right?

These sons—these men of Israel, of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel—would continue to have descendants and their families would continue to get bigger and bigger and bigger, and these families would form tribes under the lineage of Jacob whose name was Israel. These would be known as the 12 tribes of Jacob or Israel. Okay?

Joseph and the Coat of Many Colors

Remember Joseph? Joseph was kind of the runt of the family, but he was the favorite of the father. Dad loved him. Remember last week we were speaking about the significance of garments and how garments had such a huge impact on the culture and society. When you wore your garments, it showed your status of where you were placed in society. And so when Jacob made this coat of many colors for Joseph, it made the other guys a little jealous, right? So you know what happened. They sold him into slavery.

He goes to Egypt. He works as a slave. Then he gets accused of doing something really bad that he didn't do. Then he gets thrown in jail, so on and so forth. Then he answers some dreams for Pharaoh. And long story short, Joseph, through his tribulation, stayed loyal to God in character and in deed. It's important. And he was raised up to be possibly the most powerful man in Egypt right under Pharaoh.

Here we are, around 1889 to 1806. Now remember what happened with Joseph? Remember his brothers? There was a famine, so all of his brothers and his dad came to Egypt and he revealed himself to his brothers and then Pharaoh gave him a nice cushy place in Egypt to live, and their family began to grow in Egypt, right? Until a Pharaoh arose that knew not Joseph.

The Exodus and Egypt as an Incubator

And then the Israelites, all of the tribes, because they were tribes by now after several hundred years, they began to be oppressed in Egypt and they were put into bondage, oppression, slavery. God told Abraham this was going to happen. It would be all right. Egypt became this incubator for all of Israel. But for roughly 430 years, they were in Egypt and they grew. They cried out to God in [Exodus 2:23](#), and then God came in and redeemed them, pulled them out.

We call this event the exodus. Remember what happens after the exodus? They leave Egypt and go into the land of Canaan—no, no—they go back a little bit. They go into the desert. They don't have a clue where they're going. Where is God going to lead us now?

Following God into the Wilderness

We know who God is because we cried out to Him and we saw God's mighty hand to redeem us from our state of oppression. But now we're going to follow God out in the middle of nowhere. We have no idea what our lives are going to be like. We have no idea what tribulations we're fixing to stand before in our lives. We have no idea what's next in our lives. Man, this makes me anxious, stressed out, worrisome. Anyone ever feel like that with life? I'm just saying.

Israel walked around in the wilderness. Now, long story short, they stayed out in the wilderness for about 40 years or so until God finally brought them into the land of Canaan. Okay? Up into their own land. Modern-day Israel, if you will.

The Promised Land and the Twelve Tribes

We know that they crossed over into the Promised Land via Joshua's leadership, and then that first city that they came to conquer was Jericho and Ai. Jericho—the walls came tumbling down. This is about right here on the map, okay? Around 1400 BCE, compared to Abraham. Once they conquered northern Canaan—northern Israel, if you will—the entire land was divided up amongst all 12 tribes, okay? And each tribe had a parcel of land, except for Levi.

In 1140, during the Moabite oppression and so on and so forth, there was a woman by the name of Ruth who came about. This is how close Ruth was to the age of the judges. The story of Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz—the whole book of Ruth—happens around 1140, a few generations later. In 1100, Samuel is born. I don't know if you guys know Samuel lived as a contemporary to Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz. It's right there. The prophet, Samuel.

Israelites were oppressed by the Philistines. And around 1075 is when the whole Samson and Delilah incident happened, about a generation after. They're organized within a generation. Saul becomes a king not long after that. Israel wants a king, right? All the other nations have a king. We need to establish ourselves a king. So Samuel anoints Saul. Saul becomes king.

The United Kingdom

Not long after that, Samuel rebukes Saul for his disobedience to God. Samuel then anoints David at Bethlehem around 1024. See where we're on the timeline? The reason I left this part short and this long is because all the interesting stuff is about to happen.

David kills Goliath around the same time. David reigns over all of Israel about 20 years later. He establishes himself as the king who reigns over all of us. United Kingdom. Solomon is then born not long after that, David's son. Solomon builds the temple in 966. This is important. Around here is when the first temple was built.

Now you remember in the wilderness God instructed Israel to build a tabernacle, this tent. And God keeps talking about, "Listen, the place where I'm going to put my name, the place where I'm going to put my name. This is going to be the place of my permanent residence among the people." We know this as Jerusalem, right? The Temple Mount. This finally happened in 966, where God's glory did not dwell in a tent anymore. It dwelt in a permanent residence, a temple. Big deal. Big deal, right?

The Kingdom Divided

The very next generation, the kingdom was divided. Now you guys have heard me talk about the split of Israel and it's an extremely, extremely significant event that happened in Israel because you had Saul, the first king of Israel, right? And then you had David, the second king of Israel, and then you had Solomon, the third king of Israel, and these kings ruled over all 12 tribes, right? United monarchy is what they call it, okay?

Solomon had a son named Rehoboam and he was a little jerk and the people couldn't handle it. And so the people said, "Listen, you're going to ease up a little bit. You're going to be nice to us and you're going to ease up on the taxes a little bit, right?" A little tea party action. Well, Rehoboam said, "No, I'm not. You know what? I'm going to increase your taxes and I'm going to be harsher on you in punishment."

So 10 out of the 12 tribes of Israel, roughly, split and said "Bah." And they no longer recognized Rehoboam, grandson of David, as their king. They moved up north to a place in northern Israel and appointed themselves another king—Jeroboam—whom God had told them would come. And they began to rebel against God not long after that. Long story short. Big issue.

So Israel was only managed in unity by three kings before it fell apart. That's my point. Three. That's all it took. We're doing pretty good, right? We're doing pretty good. Three.

Elijah, Ahab, and the Northern Kingdom's Apostasy

Kingdoms divided while Rehoboam was ruling around 931. Elijah calls down fire at Mount Carmel while Ahab is ruling. This is 867. Ahab was the seventh ruler of the northern kingdom of Israel. All right. It's my favorite, favorite topic. We talked about this recently. Okay? Still with me? Interesting. Some things fall into place. All right. I love talking about history.

Not long into this, Elijah's taken up to heaven and then Jonah and the whale happens in 760 BCE. Around this time, around 760 BCE, a legend developed about a man named Romulus. He was a Latin man. And it said that him and his twin brother were on a hill and they were suckled by a she-wolf—like Tarzan—and they founded Rome, the city. At this point in history, allegedly through myth and legend, the city of Rome was founded. I'd like to throw that in there.

Moving along around this time, Hosea is born, right? And he starts yakking at the northern tribes. Hosea's whole book is about speaking to the northern Israel. He's yelling at them. He's like, "You guys are horrible," right?

Priests and Altars in the North

So the king of northern Israel didn't want his people to go back to Jerusalem three times a year to keep the feast, right? Like Torah says. It says if they go back there, their hearts might turn back to Rehoboam and his lineage. "I don't want that to happen. So listen, guys, I'm going to make myself a king. You, you, you, you, you're now priests of God. Come on up, put some robes

on. You are now priests of God. And we're going to build an altar, right? Several altars actually in northern Israel.

We're going to go to Tel Dan and they've actually excavated the steps up to their altar. We can stand in the holy place where they worshipped the stupid calf in northern Israel. They built another one. It's eerie to stand in that spot. It's extremely eerie.

And so what Rehoboam ends up doing is he's changing, taking the authority of Israel away from God. Do you know what the most evil thing, the most evil thing that Rehoboam did in the sight of Yahweh was? Maybe there's some child sacrifice, pretty bad, right? Worshiping some other gods they started to bow down to idols, right?

Scripture says that the evil that they did in the sight of Yahweh was making common people priests. In other words, taking people that God did not give authority to make these decisions, to do the things that they were supposed to do, to minister to the people in all of their decisions and give them to the laity—the vilest thing you can do. [Numbers 10](#) talks about this. Verses 1 through 11 talk about all the things the priests can do. They're the only ones that can blow the trumpets for big decisions and such. They're the only ones that can declare the new moons. They're the only ones that can offer sacrifices. They're the only ones that can do these things because they're the notaries. They have the seal.

And Rory Boehm's just like, hey y'all, two front rows. 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2. All right, all twos are priests. Come on. That led to the eventual exile of all the northern tribes, but we'll get to that.

So Hosea has a problem, a beef with northern Israel. He's like, listen guys, you're awful. That whole Gomer thing—remember Hosea and Gomer, right? That was to demonstrate God's relationship with the northern tribes. Horrible. And he keeps warning them. He's like, listen guys, God's going to make you not my people anymore, right? You're not even going to know his Torah. His Torah is going to become a strange thing to you. It's 722 BCE, pretty accurate date. The Assyrian Empire is expanding all over the Near East and they sneak into the land of Canaan, if you will, the land of Israel, and they take the entire northern tribes captive. Ship them out. Right? People from Babylon, Kuthath, Ava, and Sepharvim—Sepharv is another interpretation—are migrated into Samaria. It's in [2 Kings 17:24](#). So in other words, they start taking all the northern tribes out, kicking them out, come on, spreading you all over the nations. We're going to bring Babylonians in, all these other folks from all over the Near East and plant them in Samaria. Kind of a mixture between Israelites and all these other pagan nations. That's how the Samaritans were created.

In the New Testament, right? And even today. I'm excited. We're going to Mount Gerizim on the Israel trip and we're gonna get to meet some Samaritans and we're gonna get to see their Torah scroll. It's a little bit different than the one that we have because it supports their history that they claim and they don't even believe this happened. It's amazing. It's incredible. This is why the people, the Judeans, right—Judeans, southern Israel in the first century—they did not like Samaritans. They considered them nasty, disgusting people, right? Worse than Gentiles almost. It was rough.

The Exile and the Return

So here we are on the timeline here. Still with me? When Rome and Greece were originally founded, they were never designed for increasing imperial strength throughout all of the land. They were city powers. Look at town. Big city. Little kingdom. That's all we want to be. Right? And Rome was originally run by kings. Okay? Originally. What do kings do? Very powerful. Make bad decisions. They're greedy. Keep that in mind.

Ezekiel begins prophesying to Judah. Listen guys, don't mess this up. You saw what happened to Israel. You're doing a lot of evil stuff too. Right? We've got two, two and a half, three tribes left in southern Israel around Jerusalem. Judea. Listen guys, God's going to do the same thing to you that he did to Israel if you don't straighten up. In 588 BCE, Nebuchadnezzar, remember that guy? King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He comes in and begins laying siege to Jerusalem and Judea. He overtakes Jerusalem. He takes all of Judea captive, ships them back to Babylon, puts them in detention.

You ever been in detention at school? That's what happened to Judea. Detention in Babylon and he destroyed God's temple. Heartbreaking incident in the history and the faith of Israel. Okay, first temple, gone. Judah spends over 70 years transitioning in detention in Babylon. This is where Daniel was thrown into the lion's den. Daniel was in Babylon, right? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, remember they wouldn't bow down to the statue of Nebuchadnezzar. Throw him in the fire. There's a fourth man in there. Who is that? It must be one of the sons of the gods.

About 70 years pass and Persia is expanding. Persian empire—you ever seen 300? Remember the Persian empire? The Persian Empire is making this move. It's expanding all over the Near East and it overtakes Babylon. Babylon is now Persia, essentially. It's a vassal of Persia now. Okay? So the Persian king allows Ezra to lead the way back home and he ends the exile. So all

the Jews, if you will, because they're from Judea, get to leave Babylon and go back home. All right?

[Ezra 7](#)—he didn't really declare a calendar, but it's interesting because in [Ezra 7](#) he leaves Babylon on the first day of the first month of the year. That's when he checks out. I'm going on a new year, right? It's a new year. I'm heading back home. Exiles travel back to the land of Judah. And then the second temple begins to be built. Now the second temple, also called Ezra's temple, wasn't really as fancy as the first one that Solomon built. Solomon had a lot of materials. It looked real nice—stuff imported from Lebanon all over the kingdom. Ezra, we just need to get a house. And it wasn't a very pretty place, but we're going to worship our God there. It will be a sanctuary for the glory of our God. Right? That was the thought.

Remember the book of Esther? Esther is a Jew, right? She's from Judea originally, right? Her uncle or husband, or whatever the translation says—Mordecai—was from Judea and they were in exile in Persia. A lot of the Jews did not return from Babylon or Persia, if you will. They were scattered all over Persia and they made livings and they decided to live in exile. This is what happened with Esther. That's why she was in Persia, because of the exile. All right? A few things. Simple stuff, I know, but we just got to get all this straightened out.

When Alexander Conquered the Known World

When the second temple was built around that time is when Rome decided to overthrow their kings. You people are too greedy. We don't want these kings anymore. We don't want these men of great power dictating to us in such a way that it's hard for us to live. So we the people are going to rise up. We the people are going to appoint senators and these senators will be honest men. And if we have a government based on senators making decisions, a republic based on that, then we will be better off, right? Because that's worked out so well for us. So Rome threw out their kings and appointed senators. They became a republic, republicans, if you will, right? That's where the term comes from. They were now a Roman Republic, if you've ever heard of that.

This happened around the time the Second Temple was built. We're about here now. Greece was ever expanding, right? They had northern Greece, which was known as the kingdom of Macedonia. All these territories up here. And Macedonia had a king, and there was a kid by the name of Alexander, and he was a troubled little kid. He had a lot of issues. So many issues, the king was so frustrated because he'd have these tutors come in and try to teach him, and he was just so out of control that finally he brought Aristotle in to train Alexander. And at the age of

16, the king of Macedonia died, and this Alexander was appointed king of Macedonia. This great leader, Alexander the Great.

And he began a war campaign across the Persian Empire. Very successfully, this little kid conquered Persia. I got a map here, I think. This happened around 322. We're going to give it a second to load. It was a big picture. There it is. So I want you to watch this red line. Macedonia. He begins traveling this war wagon across the entire Persian Empire. Way down in Greece, coming back up. Here's Judea right here. Okay, so he took over Judea. The Greek Empire conquered Judea in 322-ish. Look at this. All of Persia, fixing to hit India. Little teenager conquered all of this in his lifetime. See this line? That was what Alexander the Great did in about 16 years of his life. He died at the age of 32. What have you accomplished?

Alexander the Great, when he was on his deathbed, he knew he was dying, right? And he divided his kingdom of the Greek Empire up into four kingdoms, and he gave those kingdoms to his four Greek generals, okay? Now these four Greek generals, part of the Greek Empire, ran these kingdoms successfully for several generations, but then they started fighting, you know, because we never do that with competing peers, if you will. And so they begin fighting and long story short, the Seleucid Empire, who was over mainly the east section of the Greek Empire, came down and entered into Judea.

And the current ruler over the Assyrian aspect of the Greek Empire was named Antiochus Epiphanes. Okay? It's a Greek guy. So, mind you, until this point, Israel—or Judea, sorry, Judea, small section of modern day Israel—Judea had been exposed to Greek culture. Okay? Started building coliseums in the area, you know, toga stuff, you know, just all this stuff. Can you imagine going into an indigenous tribe in the jungle and building a movie theater for them? That's a great example of what happened when Greek culture entered into Judea. Just something so foreign. Whoa! I don't know if I like this, but this is fantastic! Right? The religious leaders in Judea had a big problem with it. No! Colosseum? That ain't in Torah! But they adapted.

That is until Antiochus Epiphanes came in around 170 BCE, where we are right here. Now Antiochus was angry. The battles that he had fought with his peers. And he finally went in here and he said, listen, everybody's just going to be Greek. There is no more of this Israelite faith, Jewish faith, this Yahwistic cult. Yahweh, who is that?

Greek Oppression and Jewish Resistance

No. You're not going to say his name anymore. I'm going to burn all your little scriptures. I'm going to put you to death if you don't eat pork. Right? Guess what? You can't keep the Sabbath anymore either. Start beating people if they're sitting down on Saturday. You're keeping the Sabbath. I'm just sitting here. Get up! Go work on the lawn or something. It was horrible. Horrible oppression by Antiochus of Epiphanes. And this stirred something in Israel. This made Israel angry. I'd be angry, right? Imagine Russia or someone came over here and said, you can't be American anymore. No. I mean, yeah, it'll kill you, but no, you'd have resentment. And this started to grow in Israel. We don't want to interact with this. The Greek influence is infiltrating our nation, our people, our ethnicity even, and people are turning against Yahweh. They're forgetting about our God who gave us this land because of this Greek culture. We got to get this out.

The leaders at this time began formulating a structure of yes and no's. The Greeks are so awful you're not even allowed to walk in their house. How about that? Alright. There were some cults, some sects of, I want to say Judaism, that really hadn't formed yet, that banned their groups—right, little tribes, families—not to even walk into a house if it had Greek architecture built into it. Don't walk in there. That's pagan. Seriously. And so this idea of separating yourself from the Gentiles happened. The Hasmonean family, a great dynasty during this time of Judeans, finally rose up. A family known as the Maccabees within the Hasmonean dynasty rose up and they said, you know what? Let's just kill them. So Maccabees stirred up a militia, if you will, and they attacked the Greek army that was occupying Judea and they won. Long story short, this is traditionally why we celebrate Hanukkah, right? The Maccabees ran in, killed all the army, drove them out over numerous battles, and took back the temple and cleansed it, okay?

The Birth of Pharisaism

But the religious leaders had an agenda and it was a decent agenda. I don't disagree with it. How do we make sure that foreign exposure never impacts our culture again? They weren't used to this. Back in the days of Canaan, I mean, yeah, you had the Canaanites and stuff. Yeah, but we still knew who our God was. And we had that little issue with Baal when the split happened and all that mess. Elijah. People knew what their identity was as a Judean. When the Greeks came in, that began to change. It began to be fuzzy. I want to be a Greek. They looked cool. They did. Pretty cool empire. I'm just saying. So we need to figure out how to be set apart from the Gentiles. And this is where the Pharisaic movement began. Root word for Pharisee means to be set apart. Not in holiness set apart, but from the Gentiles. We don't want to be them.

And so from this point forward, these different sects of teachers and their Talmudim begin to form and I'm gonna follow this guy because he won't walk in the house of a Gentile. He goes a step further—he won't even go into a house, a store. He won't go to that movie theater 'cause it's built by the Greeks, right? And these different rabbis would come and they would argue about what does it mean to be set apart in the right way and how do we do this? And it began to grow.

The Temple, Babylon, and Synagogues

Do you guys realize that back at Babylon, right? I know I'm rewinding, it's important. When the temple was destroyed, this was really the first time after Israel became a nation that they did not have a center for their faith. In other words, everything revolved around the temple. The glory of God was in the temple, right? Clean and unclean has to do with the temple. I know we practice to an extent clean and unclean today, and we're trying to teach our children what holiness is and what set-apartness is, but without the temple, it doesn't matter the same way. I mean, I still practice clean and unclean. We don't eat pig and all that mess, right? Touch dead bodies. Makes you unclean.

But guys, because there's no temple, no priesthood, no ashes of that red cow, you're all unclean. If you've ever been to a hospital, dead bodies in the hospital, worst unclean you can get, you still got it until you're sprinkled with those ashes by a qualified priest. Is that a sacred cow? I'm sorry. I wanted to illustrate. No, don't start eating pig and oysters and all that mess and don't go to the graveyard and start touching graves. Can you believe what some junk churches are doing now? Have you seen that? Grave sucking or something like that. No one's ever—never mind. There's some cult movement where people go and they lay on grave sites and do something. I don't know. Don't go do that.

But all of these things with clean and unclean, every single aspect of the Yahwistic faith was centered around one thing and that was the temple. That's what the Torah's focus was on. And so when the Judeans went to Babylon, guys, they were hurt. What do we do? What do we do? How are we supposed to live without a temple? Well, the elders, the leaders, the prophets that went in—we have a great idea. Let's have fellowship together and try to make a way for all these different aspects of holiness to still be relevant in our lives today. Okay? Let's make all of the aspects that we would worship God in at the temple, let's try to find another way to apply them to our lives. This is where the idea of a synagogue was planted. Synagogues didn't exist before this. Fellowships, if you will, a place of meeting. You needed a synagogue. You had different elements in the synagogue that represent the temple, right? That's why, because they didn't

have a temple. So we're still going to keep our faith alive for the day that comes when we have a temple, we'll have a clue, right?

And that's what started in Babylon, the synagogues, and they continued after Babylon. Did you guys know that originally there were no synagogues in Jerusalem in the first century? Because you got the temple, right? You couldn't make it to the temple. You go to synagogue in Galilee or wherever. Interesting. The things that we learn when we start looking.

Jewish Sects and Foreign Influence

And so at this point in time, you have different sects of Judaism struggling with the idea of conforming to foreign impressions, if you will, or being deluded by Gentile exposure. And so you have many different sects popping up over the next several generations until we get to the first century where we have the Sadducees, very aristocratic group—priests and such. You have the Pharisees, and even among the Pharisees, you have several different groups under there that consider themselves separatists, but even they argue—House of Shammai, House of Hillel, arguing about their different exposures to Gentiles. It was the main issue in the first century. You have the Essenes. That is crazy. They're living out in the desert, and just we're going to be the holiest of the sect, right? And you have this confusion because how do we keep from being impacted by Gentile exposure? And I don't have the answers. I'm just giving you guys the history. Is that okay? Is that cool little kind of a timeline there?

I'm excited to teach about all this. I just got a book called the Maccabees to the Mishnah. And that's really where the oral law started, around the time of the Maccabees. That's where the traditions—we need to do this, this, no, this, this, no, this, this. This is how we need to live more holy, right? To be unlike the Gentiles. Those commandments and traditions kept compounding and so on and so forth until we have the written oral Torah.

Rome's Conquest and Herod's Reign

So we went over that. We're here around 165 BCE, coming up on a really big event guys! In 63 BCE, a general of the Roman Empire, General Pompey, captures Jerusalem for Rome. The Roman Empire is expanding, taking over the Greeks, absorbing a lot of Greek culture, but still maintaining the Roman expansion. From 63 to 40 BCE, the Hasmoneans, the dynasty that's been ruling Judea since the Maccabees, still rule but become a vassal of Rome. They submit themselves and the people and land of Judea to Rome. I will serve you, Rome, if you will protect us or you're gonna kill us, so we submit.

So the Roman Empire is now governing Israel in a very similar manner to how Greece did. Big deal. 40 BCE, Rome appoints Herod king of Judea. Now Herod was an Edomite, okay? And the Edomites lived in southern Israel and after the whole Maccabean thing, the Judeans actually forcefully converted all the Edomites. At least that was the push for it. So that's why King Herod, even though he was an Edomite, he was Jewish, if you will—converted sometime in his family line. So King Herod becomes king of Judea.

The Rise of Gaius Octavius

27 BCE, something big happens. Gaius Octavius. Rome, I'll put this away. I did that whole timeline just to get to this point. You still with me? Is this okay? All right. I know it's a lot of timeline history. The Roman Empire kicked out their kings because they didn't like the centralized rule that the kings had, so they gave the rule over to senators. The only thing with senators is that senators can be bought, and if you buy the senators, then you have a corrupt nation, right? We don't know nothing about that. And the Roman Empire was expanding at such a high rate that it was becoming unstable. What's gonna happen?

We don't know. Some kingdoms are being left out. The people are having their doubts about their pride of being part of the Roman Empire. What's gonna happen? We're expanding. The economy's fluctuating. We have all these corrupt senators. We need a Messiah to come to Rome. We need someone who's going to come up in Rome and bring Rome back and thrust us into the golden age of Rome where being a Roman is the best identity that one can have. And the whole world is going to want to have this identity of being a Roman because we're awesome.

Gaius Augustus was born and after a few fights with a few other generals, he was appointed as the emperor of Rome. Now remember, Rome was an empire. You know what an empire is? Empire is like your CEO of your company—a big corporation. You've got a CEO, and then you have regional directors over different parts of the empire of the company. Right? These different regions—their land, their offices—they're governing them, but they still report to the CEO. Okay? These are kings. Different kingdoms that are in an alliance together and they've agreed to be under the protection and the loyalty and the authority of the company, but you still got that CEO at the top. Gaius Augustus was appointed the emperor—the CEO of the empire—not a king, more than a king—with complete power over all of the Roman empire. They still kept the senators; they didn't toss them out. They got this guy and appointed him as emperor and he was going to rule over the senators. But it didn't take long for him to take the power away from the senators and the people endorsed it.

Caesar Augustus and Rome's Golden Age

He started outfitting the military. He started expanding the Roman kingdom, but with power and authority, right? Not just luck. The people respected him. They called him Augustus Caesar, named after Julius Caesar. The golden age of Rome began around 27 BCE. It was awesome. Everybody was happy. Everybody was excited to be a Roman. So much so that this Gaius Octavius, Augustus Caesar, became deified. They started building statues of him and putting him in the temples of their gods because he's with the gods and he's like them, right? They called him the son of God.

The Imperial Cult

All of this influence, all of this patriotism infiltrating all of Judea. Somewhere around 6 BCE to 1 CE AD, Yeshua was born, our king. Now you understand when you hear stuff like, "Oh, the Jews just wanted a messiah to overthrow the Roman Empire." Have you ever heard that? That's what the Jews were wanting. They were wanting a messiah, a zealot, to overthrow the Roman Empire, and Yeshua didn't destroy the Roman Empire. He actually—we're gonna get into that probably next week. That's because he was born right in the thick of this Roman expansion, this imperial cult that was forming, the worship of the emperor. Incredible. Absolutely incredible. Hold on, let me find it.

Setting the Timeline

We have this progressive timeline, right? 4 CE, King Herod dies—that king, the representative of Judea. And 51 to 65 CE, Paul writes all of his letters. That's where I'm going to stop the timeline. Caught up? Kinda. Lose anybody? Maybe.

Paul begins writing his letters. How many of you know—sacred cow—information you're not supposed to tell fellowships? Right? Guys, our faith is true. Our faith is strong. Our faith is real because our God exists. The only issue with our faith is that man likes to put his fingertips all over it. Our faith has a lot of man messing with it. And that's why I'm so excited that we're studying the ancient Near East so much. I push that so much because this area, this faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—that was the faith of the cult of Yahweh, as it's called in academic sources. Cult of Yahweh. I kind of like that. I love it.

The Faith of Yahweh Before Judaism

Judaism didn't really begin until—some would argue at Babylon. Others argue that the Judaism we have today began elsewhere. How many of you guys know that after the temple was destroyed in 70 AD, the only sect of Judaism that really survived were the Pharisees, right? Because they knew how to operate without a temple. And they became the rabbinic council that we have today. That's where the thought process came. Not bad, not good, not arguing against it, but that's the history of it. The faith of Yahweh existed before Christianity, and the faith in Yahweh—the foundational cornerstone faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—existed before Judaism. Let that soak in.

What would it be like if we had the faith of Abraham and we knew how to apply the faith of Abraham practically in our lives? Judaism and Christianity have a lot of awesome traditions that stem from that thought and thrive. A lot of fingerprints all over it as well, right? How many of you guys know that Paul's letters are the oldest part of the New Testament that we have? Let that soak in. What? Paul's letters. Gospels were written after. We can know a lot. We can find out a lot about Paul. If we read those letters and understand the environment that he was living in, understand what the Roman Empire was doing. Roman Empire was pretty cool, guys. No wonder they make movies about it. Spartacus and stuff.

Building the Foundation

That is what I wanted to start the series on Paul doing—going over a basic timeline so we can put our ducks in a row. Does that make sense? And I hope it was edifying. No real big nuggets of information, nothing cool. What do they call them? Crack teachings. Oh, that was so awesome. But I feel like this is foundational. No, that's a term that's actually used. We use that. Give them some crack. Yeah, I got this new teaching. Timelines are important so we understand where we've been. Timelines are important so we understand what the past looks like. Timelines are important so we understand where we're going. Okay? So guys, I know that maybe that wasn't a life-changing teaching. Maybe that wasn't something that's gonna make you seek the Lord. But it's a foundational message that I feel like a lot of us—I mean, I had to go back and review. I'm like, "Oh, that's where Samson was." We gotta go back and review. We can only hold so much at one time, right?

And so before we start entering into Paul and the issue with Gentiles coming into the Judean faith that he was fighting against and all of their excuses of why this isn't a good idea and no Gentiles need to do this if they're going to come into faith in God, and when Paul keeps talking about the crucifixion—[Romans 10](#) says the biggest thing is that he died and was rose again. That's what you get for salvation. But he just keeps repeating that Christ was crucified, that

Messiah was crucified. He says it all through his letters. And he never mentions and resurrected after that. What was it about the crucifixion that was so important to the mission of Yeshua and so important to Paul's message? Yeah, it's the crucifixion. We'll talk about that next week.

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