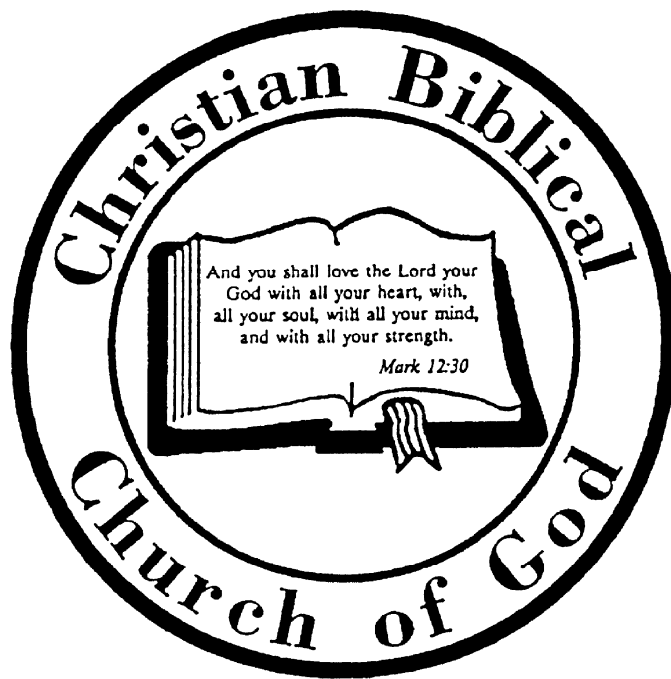


Scripturalism vs. Judaism



Transcript Book

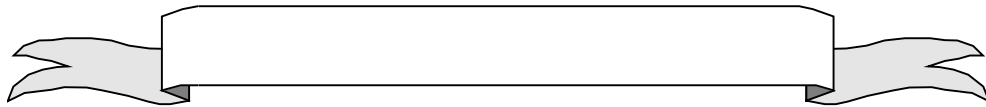
By Fred R. Coulter

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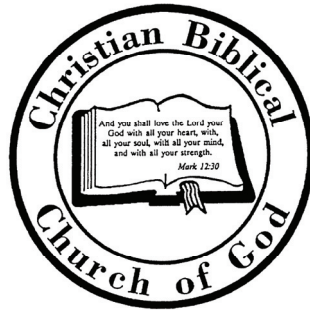
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Scripturalism vs Judaism

Series of 22 sermons by Fred R. Coulter



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Scripturalism vs Judaism

Foreword

Scripturalism vs. Judaism is a unique combination of 22 messages given by Fred R. Coulter that reveal the differences. We live in a world that feels like a maze of ideas and concepts. In seeking to get back to the basics of truth, one will find many counterfeits created by Satan with the sole purpose of diverting people away from the true teachings of God. These messages explain clearly the pure teachings of God in His Word.

Jews tell the world that Judaism is the practice of the Old Testament, which it is not, and the world believes it. The truth is, Judaism is the religion of the Jews. They do not practice what is in the Old Testament but instead, they practice their own traditions.

“Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching *for* doctrine the commandments of men.’ For leaving the commandment of God, you hold fast the tradition of men, *such as* the washing of pots and cups; and you practice many other things like *this*” (Mark 7:6-8). Also, Jesus said: “Did not Moses give you the law, and not one of you is practicing the law?...” (John 7:19).

Protestantism and Catholicism accept what the Jews tell them. This is why they reject the Old Testament. However, Scripturalism vs. Judaism reveals the truth concerning the Jews manmade religion and the truth of God that the scriptures of the Old Testament and the New Testament are the Words of God.

We need to seek the truth; we need to remember that Jesus gave His life for the truth of God; we need to be zealous for the truth of God, seeking it and departing from the teachings of men—not being like the wicked who are not valiant for the truth of God (Jer. 9:13). These messages, give us the truth to know how to live our lives in a way that is pleasing to God the Father and Jesus Christ.

*A special thanks goes to Bonnie Orswell, Laila Patterson and Nancy Spaller for transcribing the messages.

Scripturalism vs Judaism I

Scripturalists vs Traditions

Fred R. Coulter—June 12, 1993

We're going to start a series which will be a combination of surveying and intensive study in the Word of God, and we're going to ask: What is happening in the Church today in relationship to what happened in the Church in the first century?

Here is a principle that's very important for us to understand, Ecc. 1:9. One of the reasons that we're going to do this is so that we can understand what is happening today. Why is Christianity—all forms of it—being assaulted everywhere by the same forces that what to destroy Christianity? Are those the same forces that sought to destroy and pervert Christianity in the first century? *We're going to see, yes, that it is!* It's based upon this:

Ecclesiastes 1:9: "That which **has been is that which shall be**; and that which has been done *is* that which shall be done; and *there is* nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing *of* which it may be said, 'See, this *is* new'? It has already been in days of old, which were before us. *There is* no memory of former *things*, neither shall there be any remembrance of *things* that are to come by those who shall come afterwards" (vs 9-11). That's the whole basis for what is happening today.

Let's go to Revelation 2 & 3 because we need to pickup our understanding with this and we need to understand the enemy against Christianity is the same.

- Is Jesus Christ 'the same yesterday, today and forever'? *Yes!*
- Is there anything 'new under the sun' with Jesus Christ? *No, there is not as far as Christ is concerned!*
- Are the enemies of God the same? *Yes!*

There's a particular enemy of the people of God that unfortunately have put themselves into this society in such a stranglehold position that everyone is virtually afraid to say one word against it. Unfortunately, they have put themselves into a position where they are trying to remake and redo and destroy Christianity into what *they think* is the proper 'religion' of *theirs!*

In Revelation 2:9 we find that two of the church eras—Smyrna and Philadelphia—that there is a confrontation with a specific group of people called "...the synagogue of Satan." The word 'synagogue' is used rather than 'church.' Synagogue has special meaning of a *coming together*. Synagogue is also a *place of worship*. So, we are dealing with those who worship Satan *openly*; and, of course, there are varying degrees of this—*varying*

degrees! Then we come to the Church at Philadelphia and, again, we find concerning the 'synagogue of Satan,' which ties us right in toward the end of the church age. It will show what we should be doing.

Revelation 3:8: "I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, and no one has the power to shut it because you have a little strength, and have kept My Word, and have not denied My name.... [We're dealing with people on the one hand who really keep the Word of God vs the world] (which is): ...Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who proclaim themselves to be Jews and are not, but do lie—behold, **I will cause them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.** Because you have kept the word of My patience... [which is the opposite of getting rid of *sound doctrine*, which is the opposite of changing things to fit the world] ...I also will keep you from the time of temptation, which *is* about to come upon the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth" (vs 8-10).

We have the phenomena of the run-in again of the *synagogue of Satan* right at the end of time. I'm going to read to you certain things of what they are saying today, certain things of the way that the Jews look at things. I will call it *Judaism* lest someone think I'm an anti-Semite. They never stop and ask: Why are the Jews anti-Christian? No one has asked that!

- Why should they be allowed to take prayer out of public schools?
- Why should they be allowed to destroy the name of Jesus Christ?
- Why should they be allowed to control all of the media and control everything that goes in it?

—and that we cannot point out the fact of what is being done!

Let's go to Luke, the fourth chapter, and let's see something that is true. A lot of these things, since it is a mystery that is being done, since a lot of it is being done in the inner circles of the higher echelons, we cannot find that they hang a label on themselves saying 'we are the synagogue of Satan.' You can't find that, so you have identify them by their fruits. Let's see one aspect of the 'temptation' of Jesus Christ by Satan the devil.

Luke 4:5: "Then the devil led Him up into a high mountain *and* showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And

the devil said to Him, 'I will give You all this authority, and the glory of them *all*; for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I desire. Therefore, **if...** [Here's the qualification to receive the rulership of the world]: ...**You will worship me in my presence, all things shall be Yours.**' (vs 5-7).

Have you ever wondered why the rich just get more 'filthy rich'? The rich powerful of this world are those who have met this qualification that Satan has set down, that they worship him—various forms of it. Some, I believe, in the highest echelons of the 'synagogue of Satan' knowingly and openly worship Satan. There are those who worship various forms of other gods and angels, so called, and demons.

I want to call you attention to a book. In this whole series I'm going to mention books that I recommend that you read, because it's very important for *you* to do the reading. One of the best books to read is *En Route to Global Occupation*, which is explaining the whole bases of the one-world rulership that we are seeing coming on the scene today—which is actively coming in a form that we didn't think would come. Who would ever think 40 years ago that the United Nations would begin having the power that it does today? I mean, you think about that!

- I want you to *tie in where Satan said*, 'if you will worship me all of this will be Yours.'
- I want you to *tie in Rev. 17 & 18* in relationship to the great Babylonian system that will be coming.
- I want you to think of the whole *one-world system* that is developing.
- I want you think of the *mark of the beast* that is going to come—and it's going to be very, very effective.

I want you put that all together when I'm reading Rev. 12 and to realize that there is an active, ongoing enemy who wants to destroy us *any way he can!*

- by subversion **without**: through immorality, drugs, whatever
- from subversion **within**: to the changing of doctrine, carrying off of church leaders in vanity and stupidity to get them to spend their money on things they ought not do. I don't limit that to just one or two church leaders you may or may not know.

It has happened in every 'Christian' church and with determination and forethought to make it happen on the part of Satan the devil and also on the part of the synagogue of Satan.

I want you to also consider, as we're going

through this, the conformity to the world that the world wants you to have, and understand that that has not come from God. That's why this is going to be a broad general thing that we are going to do, and a very detailed study—a combination of both—so that we can see that *true Christianity* and the *true Church of God* was never—NEVER—based upon Judaism!

We need to understand that thoroughly, because the whole move in the world today is to say that Christianity was just a sect of Judaism, so therefore, 'we need to go back *to* Judaism.' Do we not see that in the Church of God today? How many little Churches of God today:

- have gone to sacred names?
- have gone to a 15th Passover?
- have gone to circumcision?
- have gone to the rules and regulations of the Jews?

We need to understand that in this religious battle to bring Judaism to the fore again—I need to bring your attention to a sermon that I gave: *The Jewish Messiah and the Noahide Laws and Antichrist: Who? Where?*

We need to, in bringing up about antichrist, ask a very simple question: Are we going to allow the antichrist to muzzle what we preach? *They're doing it already!* Part of it is that you can't say anything against homosexuals. There's a man in Colorado, Pete Peters—pastor of a 'Christian' church, Sunday keeping albeit—just to demonstrate the vehemence against Christ, put out a booklet entitled *Homosexuals Deserve the Death Penalty, So Says the Bible*. Well, needless to say, when the whole establishment and the 'gay'—so called; it's really *sad and death*—community, you know what happened. He was also one of the ones who was actively involved and helping get passed in Colorado, the law which says that homosexuals cannot have special rights. So, what they did, they came down and issued him a subpoena and arrested him and said, 'You must register as a political action committee, which means that now you must open all your books so 'we will know who all your donors are.' And he refused to do that.

Well then, 'you're going to have to pay a penalty of so-much per day until you sign this political action disclosure' thing. He said, 'We are a church and I'm standing on the freedom of speech and I'm standing on the freedom of religion.' Well, when he was gone on a trip after the penalty accumulated several thousand dollars—and they had been watching this little church building—they decided that they were going to go down and confiscate the whole building and everything in it. They went down, closed off—by order of the court

and the sheriff—that church and went in and seized all of the assets of that church, froze the money in their bank account and put yellow tape around it: No Trespassing, Property of the State of Colorado.

So, they came back, cut off the ribbons and walked into the little church, prayed to God and said, ‘God, help us in this, we know this is Your battle.’ We can learn a good lesson from that! That anyone who is *for* Christ is not against Him, even though they don’t keep the Sabbath, etc. Well, to make a long story short, it got very embarrassing, because now the public was now on Pastor Peter’s side. What happened was, they stood their ground and the sheriff would be out there with the big, bully men out front, a lot more mild than the ATF fiasco they had down in Waco, TX, or the Weaver case they had up in Idaho, but believe me these are just signs of things to come. ***Satan is the enemy and he uses the government to come after us!*** We need to understand that.

What we’re going to talk about here has great ramifications for today, as well as we will see why the Church went through just absolute vehement hatred when it began. We’re not dealing with people that will just lick their wounds and go away. We are dealing with hatred over an historical sense to seek out, subvert and destroy in any way that can be done.

I’ve heard a couple of sermons that Pete Peters gave, so I know what I’m talking about. I’ve read some of the things that he put out, so I know the whole story. I can’t give the whole story here, but needless to say, they finally won out, and they won out on the day that they had the church and all of its equipment up for auction to pay for the fine. Twenty thousand people turned out for that auction and there was not one bid for any of the property to pay for the fine. They said, ‘Pastor Peters, you just sign this release.’ He said, ‘I’m not signing anything!’ So, the state totally embarrassed, bid for the property for the amount of the fine and consigned it back to the church. That shows you what can happen!

I want us to think about this verse: Revelation 12:9: “And the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, who is **deceiving the whole world**... [It is going to be something else!] ...he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. And I heard a great voice in heaven say, ‘Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ because the accuser of our brethren has been cast down, who accuses them day and night before our God’” (vs 9-10).

- Do you know why you need grace all the time? *There’s one of the reasons, right there!*

- Is Satan after us? *Yes, he is!*
- Are there times when he’s more active to come after people than at other times? *Yes, there are!*

And we’re coming into the forefront of the time when it will be again.

Verse 11: “‘But they overcame him through the blood of the Lamb, and through the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death. Therefore, rejoice you heavens and those who dwell in them. Woe to those who inhabit the earth and the sea! For the Devil has come down to you, having great wrath... [this is a time just in the future] ...*because* he knows that he has *only* a short time.’ And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who had brought forth the man *child*” (vs 11-13). We’re down into the time just before the beginning of the Great Tribulation right there.

We are just a little ahead of this time as far as the persecution against the Church, but it is going to come! And it’s going to come from the sources that control the government. Let me also recommend this book, *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*—a secret document which was somehow made public—which lays out the Zionist’s 100-year plan going back to about 1874-75, somewhere right in there—and their plan to take over the world.

I want to warn you that the Jews deny that they wrote this. If you do something that’s real evil you always deny that you do it—right? It apparently lays out the step-by-step plan to take over all governments of the world by having a dead economy to take over all the media of the world, by controlling all access to radio—of course, they didn’t know at that time it would be radio—and all the printed word. They now control all the movies, all television and all of the big media sources in the world! You need to read that! It’s going to be gruesome and hair-raising, because we’re living in the time of the fulfillment of almost every one of those things that was written over a hundred years ago. Plus, I have a Jewish atlas that openly admits that Zionism wrote the protocols.

We do not, brethren, really fully comprehend the impact that Jesus Christ had on Judaism! Nor do we understand that they would wait centuries to execute their wrath! We don’t think like that. *This is not to condemn every Jew that lives*—I want you to know that—but this to condemn those who are, and to warn you of those of the synagogue of Satan. There are probably just as many good innocent Jews in the world who have their businesses, who go about their lives in a lawful, legal, proper and good way, just as well as there are many, many other people. In fact, we were listening

to some music that was from the sound track of the movie *The Last of the Mohicans*—wonderful music written by a Jew—Terrific! Marvelous!

Please understand that this is not an anti-Semitic thing. But I want you to also understand that if we don't know who our enemies are, and we don't understand what is happening to us, how can we possibly know what's going on? How can we possibly understand what is happening in the world to every single form of Christianity?

If you think I'm a bigot, then okay, say I'm a bigot. But then, you on the other hand, be fair and you go out and you look at what's happening in the world and you honestly trace it all down to its source. You're going to be surprised!

I want to read to you from a book: *Judaism and the Vatican*. I would dare say that hardly anyone has really studied honestly anything about Judaism. I also am going to mention *The Code of Jewish Law*. You cannot understand Judaism unless you know *The Code of Jewish Law*. There's no way you can! Nor can you properly understand the book of Romans, and that's what's the matter with the Protestants. They don't know about Judaism.

The biggest problem in the world for a Jew is Jesus Christ. I don't care if he's an atheist, I don't care if he's an Orthodox, reformed, or a conservative. The biggest reason that it's the biggest problem for them is because Jesus Christ did exist and Jesus Christ did come and the biggest lie that has ever been believed were the lies, the whole bundle of things put out by the Jews that Jesus did not come, that He was the 'bastard son' of an illegitimate marriage, that He did not die and that His disciples stole the body away, which is believed unto this day!

I draw your attention to the movie *Jesus Christ, Superstar*, which was written and produced by a Jew—a denigration of Jesus Christ, Who supposedly married Mary Magdalene. The way they try and do away with Jesus Christ is to denigrate Him everywhere that they can to destroy His name, to impugn any Christian religion anywhere. I want you to understand that Jews do not believe that anyone but Jews should keep the Sabbath and the Holy Days. You need to understand that! If you come and keep them with a Jew, that's okay.

from the book: *Judaism and the Vatican*, p 127—Portrait of a Jew:

I've written elsewhere that as adolescents and later as young men we refuse to take seriously the persistence of nations. We lived in enthusiastic expectation of a new age such as the world has never known before, signs of which we thought we could already detect. The death, which

had certainly begun, of religions, families and nations.

Why is the new age coming in at a time when they're saying the family is destroyed, nations ought to give up their sovereignty. That's the whole new age that is coming.

We had nothing but anger, scorn and irony for the diehards of history who clung to their residues.

That is clung to the residue of Christianity.

Do Christians realize what the name of Jesus, their God, can mean for a Jew? For a Christian, even an atheist, it evokes or has at least evoked at some time, a Being infinitely good who offers Himself as the 'good.' Who desires, at least, to carry on the torch of all bygone philosophies and all morals.

For the Christian who is still a believer, Jesus epitomizes and fulfills the better part of himself. The Christian who has ceased to believe no longer takes the ideals seriously. He may even resent it, even accuse the priest of incompetency or even of deception, but though he denounces it, as an illusion...

That is the fantasies of Christianity.

...he generally leaves no doubt as to the grandeur and beauty of that illusion. To the Jew who still believes and professes his own religion, Christianity is the greatest theological and metaphysical usurpation in history. It is a spiritual scandal of subversion and blasphemy.

That's how they view Christianity. To this day, even Messianic Jews are not allowed to live in Israel. They are expelled by order of the court.

To all Jews, even if they are atheists, the name of Jesus is a symbol of a threat of that great threat that has hung over their heads for centuries and which may, at any moment, burst forth in catastrophes of which we know neither the cause nor the prevention.

I might mention here that the Jews do not recognize any single problem that they have had in the way of lying, cheating, stealing, robbery, subversion and all of these things, because they are done to further their cause, so therefore, they are perfectly all right to do. That's why it's important that you understand that in the Talmud it says it's all right to kill a Gentile. It's all right to lie to a Gentile. It's all right to steal from a Gentile. It is all right to destroy his nation, to destroy his family and all of that. You won't find that in *The Code of Jewish Law*, but you will find some very important things to understand about Judaism.

So, we are dealing with an implacable enemy of God. I want you to understand that. If you think that is anti-Semitism, then what you need to do is don't take the emotional reaction that most people have been programmed into doing since WWII—that is you don't dare say anything against the Jews. Why don't you just take the situation to honestly look into it and see if it is true or not?

That name is part of the accusation of Serd and Frensie that is so effectively cruel that it makes social life barely livable. That name has in fact, come to be one of the signs, one of the names, of the immense apparatus that surrounds the Jew, condemns him and excludes him. I hope my Christian friends will forgive me. That they may better understand, let me say to the Jews, their god—in a way the devil—if they say the devil is a symbol, in essence, of all evil on the earth; iniquitous, an all powerful, incomprehensible and bent on crushing helpless human beings.

That's what we're dealing with, with the Jewish mentality. In another place in this book, I want to read what they have tried to do down through the centuries to *cleanse* Christianity. Here is an ad that is *Biblical Review* magazine, vol. 10, #1, February 1993. I want you to see how they view Christianity today, ongoing, in their own writing and their own advertisement:

From *Biblical Review*, Feb., 1993 by Richard K. Finn—Holocaust is a Pathological Act of Secularization—from the American Inter-Faith Institute:

Is the Christian Gospel any longer moral credible?

Why do we have all these undermining of Christian belief and everything in such an ongoing way.

In the post-'shoah' world...

'Shoah' is the event of the Holocaust, and there are great disputations over how many Jews actually died in the Holocaust. Someone asked me about that one time and I said that there very well may have been six-million Jews who were killed. I don't mind them having a memorial to those who died. But I will not set foot in it until they also acknowledge the tens of millions that were killed by the Soviets and the Ukrainians who were starved to death, the hundreds of (who knows how many) millions killed by the Communist Chinese.

Those and the other things that were done when they acknowledge that then fine and I'll set foot in it. But otherwise it becomes a propaganda vehicle to put a guilt trip on all people. That's exactly what it's for, so that you don't dare raise your voice against anything that is done by the Jews.

In the post-'shoah' world, many Christian spokespersons have expressed a readiness to rethink Christian teachings to avoid Christian super-sessionism.

Which means that Christianity superseded Judaism.

When a critic from within the Christian community raises a moral question concerning concrete Christian teachings—that is christological teaching—he or she is usually dismissed as a radical who is undermining the faith. It is as if the critic were on trial. But is it not rather that the entire Christian message is what's on trial? If such dismissals are to be accepted where is there any hope for the kind of Christian change that may help prevent future holocausts.

What is the change that they're wanting? *They're wanting Christians to admit that the Jews didn't kill Christ!* And that the Christian 'religion' is responsible for all the persecution against the Jews.

quote from Rabbi Eliezer Berkowitz:

Christianity's New Testament has been the most dangerous anti-Semitic tract in history. It's hatred charged diatribe against the Pharisees and the Jews have poisoned the minds and hearts of millions and millions of Christians for almost two millennia now. No matter what the deeper theological meaning of the hate passages against the Jews might be in the history of the Jewish people, the New Testament lent its inspiring support to opposition persecution and mass murder of an intensity and duration that were unparalleled in the entire history of man's degradation. Without Christianity's New Testament, Hitler's *Mein Kampf* could never have been written.

Jewish thinking today!

from *Biblical Archeology*, February 1993—Paul and Judaism: Five Puzzles:

It goes through to show, reportedly, Christianity is only a branch out of Judaism. What we're going to do in this study is to show that true Christianity never had a part of what is real Judaism. But, in fact, the Christianity *of the world* did come out of Judaism.

If conversion means changing religions, i.e. moving from one religion to another, then Paul was not a convert.

This is what is going on in so-called Christian theological circles today.

This is because Judaism and Christianity were not yet viewed as separate religions

in the 50s of the first century when Paul wrote his letters...

We're going to see what happened in the 50s and why the New Testament was written within a period—except the books of John and Revelation—of about 12 years. Most people don't realize that. The whole New Testament was written—with the exception of perhaps Jude and the Gospel of John, 1st, 2nd, 3rd John and Revelation—within a period of about 12 years, from 50_{A.D.} to about 63_{A.D.}—12-14 years. We're going to understand the great and immense miracle that it is that we have the New Testament.

When Paul wrote his letters, people still looked on Christians as a particular kind of a Jew. Paul never disavowed his Judaism.

That's not the way I read the New Testament.

Paul tries to help Gentile Christians locate themselves in God's people with reference to Jewish Christians and other Jews. The problems that encounters are for the most part Gentile Christian problems.

Not so! Has there been a revision of history? Is the history of the United States trying to be revised today? *Yes!* Well, there's a revision of Christian history going on.

Christianity, of course, had its roots in Judaism. The Messiah lived and died on this earth as an observant Jew!

He was a Jew, but was He a Pharisaical observing Jew?

Moreover, Gentiles familiar with Judaism and Jewish ways, as an associate member of the synagogues, God fearing.

There are currently some people today who use to be members of the main affiliation we were members of, who have since left and set up their own 'religion,' who openly say and advocate that Jesus Christ was a practicing, ordained, orthodox, Pharisaical rabbi. Have the infiltrations of Judaism had an impact upon Christianity? *Yes, indeed!* Their goals are to seek out and pervert or to wholly paganize or to destroy. That, brethren, is the doctrine of Baalim.

- You pervert them through immorality!
- You pervert them through false doctrine!
- You bring them back into the bondage of Judaism!

One of the three!

I give this background, reading this book, and the book: *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* by Alfred Edersheim. I know it's tough reading, but you read it. It is tough reading! You may be able to hack only a couple of pages a day.

But in there contains everything that shows the roots of Judaism and worldly Christianity.

(go to the next track)

You have to know what you're looking for. And I would have to say that we could not come to this understanding wholly until after we had gone through the things that we did concerning what I wrote in the book *The Christian Passover*, and come the knowledge of the Passover and rejected, i.e. the 15th Passover.

The things that we have covered, we have known for a long time in different degrees. So, when we cover them, we're going to see how new things are going to open up to our understanding. We can start out with the New Covenant or what the Christian Covenant is, then we will go back and see how God prepared for the coming of the New Covenant.

Matthew 9:16: "Now no one sews a new piece of cloth onto an old garment; for that which is put in to fill up *the hole* takes away from the garment, and a worse tear develops.... [This is just a parable showing that God did not build Christianity on the foundation of Judaism.] ...Neither do they put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wineskins will burst, and the wine will spill out, and the wineskins will be destroyed; but they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved together" (vs 16-17). The New Covenant is *new!* It is built upon the foundation of the promise of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the laws of Moses and so forth.

Let's see where Jesus built the foundation of Christianity. It's not built upon the traditions of Judaism—you can be guaranteed that!

Luke 24:25—Jesus was talking to those two who were walking on the way to Emmaus where He went in and had dinner with them: "Then He said to them, 'O foolish and slow of heart to believe... [He's talking to those disciples that He taught!] ...in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory?' And beginning with Moses, and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures" (vs 25-27).

Verse 44: And He said to them, 'These *are* the words that I spoke to you when I was yet with you, that all *the* things which were written concerning Me in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled.' Then **He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures**" (vs 44-45).

I want to make it a clear, distinct new definition: Scripturalism means that *you base all of what you believe and practice on the Scriptures of*

God. Was Jesus a Scripturalist? *Yes! Absolutely!* Now we are going to see that Scripturalism is based upon Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms. God always, in every circumstance, in every part of the history of what we call the Old Testament, had the Scripturalists—*those who followed the Scriptures!*

Ezra was the main one that we're going to focus in on coming down toward Judaism. When Ezra got back he had the power and he re-wrote (copied) and canonized all the Old Testament. He wrote 1st and 2nd Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. Plus he edited and re-wrote all of the Old Testament in the Hebrew block lettering, which by the way, originated in Babylon.

Anyone who says that sacred names is anti-Babylonianism, do not have the faintest clue as to what they're talking about. *A language is not pagan; a 'religion' is pagan*—always remember that! When Ezra came back he setup what is called *the Great Synagogue* or *the Great Assembly*. He determined that the only way he could keep the knowledge of God for the Jews was to have copies of the Scriptures written—copied and sent to every synagogue everywhere. That's what the *Great Synagogue* did. They had there the ones that are called the 'Sophrim' and the 'Sophrim' were those who counted all the letters on every page of the scrolls. The 'Sophrim' later became the scribes. Pharisaism never came into being until about 350-400 years after Ezra. What Ezra did was setup a system based on the Bible to structure the synagogues and the temple to follow the Word of God. *Ezra was a Scripturalist!*

He also laid out so that the Jews would be forced to read the Bible. He set out a three-year cycle of reading of the Law and the prophets and the Psalms called the triennial cycle of reading. Ezra instituted the instructions to preserve the knowledge of the Scriptures, the reading of the Scriptures and the obedience of the Scriptures. When Ezra died, the great synagogue continued for about another 100 years. After Ezra died, a lot of traditions began to be added to the Law, called 'oral traditions' and some of them written, which were designed to make people keep the Law of God.

What happened was that all of these traditions began to *replace* the commandment-keeping of the Laws of God and to develop *their own* interpretation of them, just like we have with Catholicism today and some Protestantism today.

When it came down to the time of Jesus Christ, this made the separation most difficult and most traumatic, because everything that is called Judaism is defined this way:

- Judaism includes what is called the Torah, so they say it is Jewish.

The Torah is the first five books of the Bible.

- Judaism includes the Prophets, so, they say they are Jewish.
- Judaism includes the Psalms, so they say it is Jewish.
- Judaism includes all of the traditional oral things added to the Law.

So, when they speak of 'tradition' and Judaism, they are speaking of the whole package, which they call *the Law of Moses—and it's not!* These 'traditions' became so interfering with the commandment-keeping with the commandments of God, that in Mark 7 we find some of the strongest denunciation that has been given of those 'traditions.' Someone will surely raise the question: What about the 'good' traditions. Well, the only 'good' traditions that there would be, were those traditions defining how and when to read the Scriptures. That would be about it. The only 'good' traditions would be those that include how the priests would dress. Those are other instructions. Those did not interfere with the keeping of the commandments of God.

Mark 7:1: "Then the Pharisees... [we'll learn about the Pharisees] ...and some of the scribes..." Those are the descendants of the 'Sophrim.' The scribes were actually those who wrote the Law, copied the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. There were actually the 'legalists' and they are called 'lawyers' in other places, who would make decisions based upon the Laws of God.

"...from Jerusalem came together to Him. And when they saw some of His disciples eating with defiled hands (that is, unwashed *hands*), they found fault. For the Pharisees and all the Jews, holding fast to the tradition of the elders, do not eat unless they wash their hands thoroughly. Even *when coming* from the market, they do not eat unless they *first* wash themselves. And there are many other things that they have received to observe, *such as the washing of cups and pots and brass utensils and tables*" (vs 1-4).

We will see when we get to the *Code of Jewish Law* of categorizing people and categorizing animals and categorizing foods, of categorizing everything that there is under the sun! This was the hedge they built around the Law, supposedly to help people keep the Law. What it did, it kept them from understanding the Law.

Notice the affect that Jesus said it had, v 5: "For this reason, the Pharisees and the scribes questioned Him, *saying*, 'Why don't Your disciples walk according to the **tradition of the elders**... [the *law of the fathers*, as Paul called it in a later place.] ...but eat bread with unwashed hands?' And He answered *and* said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites... [Scripturalists] ...as it is written, "This people

honors Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching *for* doctrine the commandments of men.” For leaving the commandment of God, you hold fast **the tradition of men**, *such as* the washing of pots and cups; and you practice many other things like *this*.’ Then He said to them, ‘Full well do you reject the commandment of God, so that you may observe **your own tradition**’” (vs 5-9).

Then He gives an example, v 10: “For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘The one who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.’ But you say, ‘If a man shall say to *his* father or mother, ‘Whatever benefit you might receive from me *is* corban’ (that is, *set aside as a gift to God*)... [set aside for the temple or religious purpose] ...he is not obligated to help his parents.’ And you excuse him from doing anything for his father or his mother, nullifying the authority of the Word of God **by your tradition** which you have passed down; and **you practice many traditions such as this**.’” (vs 10-13).

The problem that we find in the battle in the New Testament is the difficulties between Judaism, with all that they claim it is, and Scripturalism, which is what Christianity is built upon.

- They can claim the Law is Jewish, but it’s not! *It’s is God’s!*
- They can claim the Prophets are Jewish, but they are not! *They are from God!*
- They can claim the Psalms are Jewish, but they are not! *They are from God!*

Inspired of God! God did not intend the Bible to be kept in a corner and hedged about with ‘traditions’ so that the only way to God is through a ‘tradition.’

In order to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus Christ, God *always* had those Scripturalists who kept the commandments of God—*always!* Let’s get a little background here. When we come to some of the more heated confrontations with the Pharisees I will bring you some of that.

Malachi 2 is a prophecy about the priests, and some of the priesthood was purified sufficiently, keeping the commandments of God sufficiently so that there would be a foundation on which to begin Christianity. In the meantime, he had to give this so that there would be those who would be corrected by this purging, which is given here in Malachi 2 & 3.

Malachi 2:1: “‘And now, O priests, this commandment is for you. If you will not hear, and if you will not lay *it* to heart to give glory to My name,’ says the LORD of hosts...” (vs 1-2). They were the ones who would teach God’s way—right? Most of the scribes and the Sophrim were Levites or priests. Ezra was a Levite, a priest of the house of Aaron, who was also called a ‘scribe.’

“...‘then I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yea, I have indeed cursed them *already* because you do not lay *it* to heart”’ (v 2). What did they do? When it came down to the time of the Pharisees, the Pharisees started their own traditions, separate, apart from.

Verse 3: “‘Behold, I will rebuke your seed; and I will spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your appointed feasts. And one shall carry you away with it. And you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you, so that My covenant might be with Levi,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘My covenant with him was *one* of life and peace, and I gave them to him *for* fear; that he might fear Me, and he was in awe before My name. The Law of Truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips. He walked with Me in peace and uprightness, and turned away many from iniquity”’ (vs 3-6). There it is, *Scripturalism*, right there—following the laws and commandments of God.

Verse 7: “‘For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and *the people* should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. But you have departed out of the way; you have caused many to stumble at the Law. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘Therefore I have also made you contemptible and base before all the people, just as you have not kept My ways but have been partial in the Law”’ (vs 7-9). Haven’t we seen what affect that had—being partial in the Law.

Verse 10: “‘Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously, each man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers? Judah has dealt treacherously... [God even speaks against the Jews. What do you know, God is an anti-Semite.] ...and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem, for Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the LORD which He loves, and *has* married the daughter of a foreign god. The LORD will cut off from the tents of Jacob the man who does this—the one who calls and the one who answers—and him who offers an offering to the LORD of hosts. And this *is* a second *thing* you have done, covering the altar of the LORD *with* tears, weeping and groaning, so that He does not regard the offering and no longer receives it *with* delight from your hand” (vs 10-13). Isn’t that exactly a profound description of Judaism today? Weeping, crying and gnashing and claiming to do the Word of God, all the while being punished by God for the things that they have done.

Verse 14: “‘Yet you say, ‘Why?’ Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously—yet she *is* your companion and your covenant wife.” When the priests and the ministers

get into divorcing and remarrying, that really creates a lot of problems for everyone.

Verse 15: “And did He not make *you* one? Yet the vestige of the Spirit *is in* him. And why one? **That He might seek a Godly seed....**” God is saying that this all part of the thing that went on when Ezra forced them to put away their foreign wives. God was trying to protect the seed down to Jesus Christ. Ezra succeeded in accomplishing that.

“...Therefore, guard your spirit, and do not act treacherously *against* the wife of your youth” (v 15). I remember talking to a man who all of a sudden figured that after 35 years of marriage that he could re-interpret the Law of God and put her away. No man can do that!

Verse 16: “The LORD, the God of Israel, says, ‘I hate divorce—and the covering of violence with one’s garment,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘Therefore guard your spirit, and do not act treacherously.’ You have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet you say, ‘In what way have we wearied Him?’ When you say, ‘Every evildoer *is* good in the eyes of the LORD, and He delights in them;’ or, ‘Where *is* the God of judgment?’” (vs 16-17). That’s a prophecy of what they did with their ‘traditions’ in rejecting the commandments of God.

Now let’s come to Malachi 3 and we’ll see a couple of things that are very interesting. This is a prophecy of the coming of Christ and a prophecy of the one who would be John the Baptist. Then we will look at John the Baptist as an introduction to Christ.

Malachi 3:1: “Behold, I will send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, Whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in Whom you delight. Behold, He comes,” says the LORD of hosts.”

We also have the prophecy of the one crying in the wilderness (Isa. 40) which John the Baptist says he was. Then it comes even into the second coming of Christ—who shall abide the day of His coming?

Verse 5: “And I will come near to you for judgment. And I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against those who swear falsely, and against those who extort from the hired laborer’s wages—and *against* those who turn away the widow, the orphan, and the stranger because they did not fear Me,” says the LORD of hosts.”

Verse 3: “And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. And He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in

righteousness.” That’s a prophecy of the coming of John the Baptist and his father and mother. Let’s see something very interesting and very profound concerning John the Baptist and his father and mother.

In this study, we are going to be mainly Scripturalists. God has always had a remnant who will be faithful to His Word. Let’s see how Luke wrote this that it shows exactly the division that happened between the forces of Judaism and Christ and Christianity, beginning with John the Baptist. There’s a reason for the things that were done.

Note the name Theophilus (Luke 1:3)—*lover of God*. There were those who feel that the Theophilus was the name of one of the priests to whom Luke wrote. Very possible, but I can’t say for sure, so don’t say I said. I just said there are ‘some who think.’

Luke 1:5 “There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest of *the* course of Abijah, Zacharias by name...” What he’s showing here very clearly is that they were following the Scriptures. Abijah was one of the courses set up by Samuel and David, which you will find listed in 2-Samuel and in 1-Chronicles. Those are part of the ‘good traditions’ that were given on priestly instructions on how to wait on their course and when to come and so forth. That’s what he’s saying here.

“...and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elizabeth” (v 5). Why would he include “...the daughters of Aaron...”? *To show that they were Scripturalists! Why? Because a priest should not marry anyone other than a daughter of a priest of the house of Aaron!*

Verse 6: “Now, they were both righteous before God...”—observing all the ‘traditions’ of the elders. I deliberately misread it so that you would get the contrast; so that you will understand that Zacharias and Elizabeth—though they were Levites of the house of Aaron and of the priesthood; she was not a priestess, but was his wife—were Scripturalists and they were following the commandments of God. That’s a very important thing to understand.

When we come way down into this study to the time of Acts 15 and the problems with the Pharisees, which was 52 A.D., you’re going to see that the divorce was complete, and the troubles for the Church really started. False Christianity sprung out of the result of that conference, which excluded and cut off the Pharisees. That’s why I’m going through and making it very clear the distinction of Judaism—what they believe it is—and Scripturalism as to what God shows it is.

Verse 6: “Now, they were both **righteous before God**, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord.”

Blameless! Nothing whatsoever to do with the ‘traditions’ of Judaism. That’s a distinction that’s very clear; a distinction that is made.

You know the story that Zacharias went in at the time of the offering of incense and an angel of God came to him—Gabriel—and said, ‘your prayers have been answered. You’re going to have a son.’ Zacharias said, ‘We’re old, how is this going to be?’ He was struck dumb because he didn’t believe what the angel had told him. He went home and his wife conceived and they had a son; he was born and his name was called *John*. You can read all of the prophecy that was given at the birth of John the Baptist.

Verse 80—here’s an obscure little verse which a lot of people do not think is important, but it’s just as important as the rest of it. “And the little child grew and was strengthened in spirit; and he was in the wilderness until *the* day of his appearing to Israel.” Why is this significant? *He wasn’t corrupted! He wasn’t a Pharisee!* Furthermore, even greater than that, *he was never trained as a priest!* He was kept in the desert until the day of ‘his showing.’

Now, to make it even more ridged and stringent, he was a *Nazarite* from birth! He never had his hair cut; never drank any wine; never even ate any raisins! Was this a sudden departure from the past? Was this not something that was new and a clean break? *Absolutely!* Not only from the ‘traditions’ but also from the priesthood! But, God used a Levite, a priest of the house of Aaron, to announce the coming of the Messiah! That becomes very important. Right at the very beginning of the writings in Luke, he is a Scripturalist, and he is showing that what God was doing was bringing in the New Covenant, which was separate even from the priesthood. I don’t think many people have thought of it that way, or looked at it that way. But this becomes very, very important!

Let’s see about the ministry of John the Baptist. We are going to see that John the Baptist was an independent, hard-minded, flint-headed, tongue-lashing preacher for Christ! He spared no words! The reason that he was kept aside and away from everyone was so that he would be independent. He did not give deference to anybody, except his dad and Christ. What did Jesus say of John the Baptist? He said, ***‘I say, and I tell you, that there is not born of woman any man greater than John the Baptist!’***

Let’s read of his ministry, Matthew 3:1: “Now, in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, ‘Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.’ For this is he who was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet... [Scripturalist—correct? *Yes!* Scripturalist!] ...saying, ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness,

“Prepare the way of *the* Lord, make straight His paths.” Now, John himself wore a garment of camel’s hair, and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey” (vs 1-4).

He must have been a fierce looking person! He probably had hair all scrunched up in the back hanging down to his ankles, or wrapped up with a turban on top of his head, and a huge, long beard. And probably piercing, deep-set, fiery eyes! He ate locust and wild honey. I think that means the real thing, the real locust—juicy and dried. As it were his words were bitter and sweet—weren’t they? What we need to do is see that God inspired these Scriptures for us that *they live in our mind* with understanding.

Verse 5: “Then went out to him *those from* Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the country around the Jordan.” Remember, the whole pregnancy and birth of John the Baptist was talked about everywhere! I mean, they didn’t have *The Star* and the *Enquirer* like we have today. They didn’t have their supermarkets where they went in and said, ‘Elizabeth, Woman 72-year-old Conceive!’ Has a son and all the relatives wanted to call him Zacharias after his father and he couldn’t talk for nine months. The first word he said, ‘His name is John.’ Everybody knew this!

Let’s understand how small the geographical area was. As Paul said, this wasn’t done in a corner. What we’re going to see when we are done with this study, that this was so widely known, the whole thing of Jesus Christ, and it was so miraculous and widespread that nearly the whole nation of Judea believed one form or another of a kind of Christianity—whether they were converted or not. Here’s John the Baptist. You can imagine, here are all of these scribes and Pharisees and so forth coming out there.

Verse 6: “And were being baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. But after seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism... [notice how well he received them; it wasn’t ‘oh, my father, rabbi...’]: ...he said to them, ***‘You brood of vipers...’*** (vs 6-7)—the offspring of snakes! I don’t know if you’ve ever seen a Palestinian viper, but they are awesome creatures! They will put the fear of God in you, believe me! They have heads that are about 8-inches across and their heads are about the size of a half-pound box of chocolates in a heart-shaped container. Their bodies are as big around as a softball plus; about like one of those spongy balls that the little kids play with. Their bodies are about 4-feet long, thick and fat all the way down to the tail. The tail comes down to a teeny, little point and about 6-inches.

When he says, “...You brood [generation] of vipers...” (v 7). This is an epitaph, this is so bad! John the Baptist, with this statement in modern

parlance, an anti-Semite! So, the whole term ‘anti-Semite’ I want you to completely be SC—Scripturally correct vs PC—politically correct. If you’ve swallowed the propaganda of anti-Semitism today, you are P.C.—*politically correct*. But if you want to be on God’s side—he’s not going to be on *your* side, you have to be on God’s side—you must be SC—*Scripturally correct!*—naming sin for what it is.

So, here is John the Baptist’s wonderful cordial reception of the great and powerful religious figures of his day. It wasn’t some effeminate-speaking guy in a loincloth standing in a puddle alongside a dried up Jordan River, as the movies picture him today. Now you know why they picture him that way, because they hate John the Baptist to this day. He called them a “...brood of vipers, who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, produce fruits worthy of repentance” (vs 7-8). The whole lesson of everything that God did in the Old Testament and New Testament was how is your heart?

Verse 9: “And do not think to say within yourselves... [Who does this guy think he is? *We have the lineage! He is insulting us!*] ...‘We have Abraham for our father’... [Right at the very first, John the Baptist said, ‘It’s not *who* you are that counts, it is what is your attitude toward God that counts.’ It is not your position that you have that is important, nor the money that you possess, nor the fact that you are recipients of the promise of Abraham] ...for I tell you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.”

This was the first baptism, there was no Jewish tradition for baptism. In your study you will see that there were ritual bathings that were akin to baptism. The Essenes bathed fully immersed. Not for this purpose, so this was the first baptism as such. There were other things that you could call baptism in as much as the Greek word ‘baptizo’ means *to submerge in water*. But this is the first baptism unto repentance!

Verse 10: “But already the axe is striking at the roots of the trees; therefore, every tree that is not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.... [What a reception! I mean, what a welcome! He’s telling them to clean up their act or they’re going to be cut down and burned!] ...I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but the one Who *is* coming after me is mightier than I, of Whom I am not fit to carry His sandals; He shall baptize you with *the* Holy Spirit, and with fire; whose winnowing shovel *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and will gather His wheat into the granary; but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire” (vs 11-12). That’s also quoted in Scripture.

John the Baptist was a Scripturalist! Why did they all come out to his baptism? *They were expecting the Messiah!*

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Ecclesiastes 1:9-11
- 2) Revelation 2:9
- 3) Revelation 3:8-10
- 4) Luke 4:5-7
- 5) Revelation 12:9-13
- 6) Matthew 9:16-17
- 7) Luke 24:25-27, 44-45
- 8) Mark 7:1-13
- 9) Malachi 2:1-17
- 10) Malachi 3:1, 5, 3
- 11) Luke 1:5-6, 80
- 12) Matthew 3:1-12

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 17; 18
- Isaiah 40
- Luke 1:3
- 2 Samuel
- 1 Chronicles
- Acts 15

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Scripturalism vs Judaism II

Faith and Scripturalism

Fred R. Coulter—June 19, 1993

At the time of the New Testament God made a distinct and clear break with Judaism and with the temple. What we're going to do is look at how some of the Jews look at things today and also we're going to analyze some of their errors and the claims that they have. Then we're going to go back and survey down through time up through Ezra and Nehemiah and see exactly what it was that we can say are the *faithful* or the *Scripturalists*, because there was a time when those that had no Scripture, but they were able to talk to God—the One Who became Jesus Christ—and He talked to them. They were called *faithful*, but you could still say they were *Scripturalists*, as we will see later in the case of Abraham, because Jesus Christ was the walking, living Word of God.

I want to cover some *fundamental errors* of Judaism and the presumptions of their thoughts.

1. They worship the law

The Jews do not worship God. Some people may get all angry at me concerning that. We will have to say that all the Messianic Jews worship God, because they believe in Jesus Christ, not counting their errors one way or the other. But the only way to God, the only way to worship God is through Jesus Christ. So their first fundamental error is that they *worship the law*! They worship the law this way:

2. They have hedged in what they call *The Torah*.

The Torah in the minds of the Jews is not what we think of—the first five books of the Bible, which is also called the Pentateuch. With all of their traditions they have 'hedged in' the law. They have falsely claimed that the Scriptures of God are *their* tradition—which is not true. As a result, they do not keep the Laws of God, they keep *their own traditions*. They do have an outline of the Laws of God, but they keep *their own traditions* in place of the Laws of God.

3. They claim to be all 12 tribes of Israel

That is absolutely fundamentally not true. Their claims are very presumptuous, because they are not all 12 tribes.

4. Christianity is claimed to have been built on Judaism.

In a sense that is a true statement inasmuch we will see that in the final analysis that, yes, worldly Christianity did come from Judaism, but ***true Christianity*** never came from Judaism. Just like today, most people today are schooled in the things concerning Protestantism and Catholicism. What

happens when they are called into the Church of God, they must come out of Protestantism and Catholicism. When the Church was beginning, those Jews who were involved in Judaism had to come out of, forsake and give up, Judaism—just like the Apostle Paul.

5. They believe eternal life comes through the Old Covenant.

Eternal life does not come through the Old Covenant, it comes through the New Covenant.

6. Gentiles are always classified as inferior to the Jew.

Many of them are even classified as animals. They are typically called 'goyim' and they are always inferior spiritually, theologically, ritually, and even though they may be proselytized and circumcised, they are always held as second-class citizens. This is why God had to completely separate His Church from Judaism.

Now let me read a couple of news clippings from the *Salinas Californian*. We're going to see the attitude of Rabbi Bruce Kadden, Temple Beth El in Salinas. He talks about a couple of letters written to the Editor of Religion and he answers:

Thomas H. Hester claims that it was not until God began bringing His children/people to the 'promised land' that violence became connected with religious movements. Neither the Bible, which records many previous battles, more historians support this claim. A more serious mistake is placing the responsibility for the crucifixion of Jesus on the established religion. This slander against Judaism is contradicted by virtually all contemporary historians and religious leaders who have placed the responsibility for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ on the Romans.

That is instead of the Jews! We'll see a little later that is contrary to what the Scriptures teach.

Mike Amadore echoes a similar thing in his condemnation of the Pharisees, a first century Jewish group. Many theologians believe that Jesus was a Pharisee.

I'm going to have a sermon showing that Jesus was not a Pharisee, could not have been a Pharisee under any circumstances whatsoever!

Certainly His teachings parallel more closely those of the Pharisees than any other Jewish group of His day.

What he's not telling you is the historical *revisionism* that the Jews did in the 2nd Century A.D., which was called the counter evangelistic movement of the Jews, to try and get Jews back out of the Christian church and back into Judaism. They did it by copying and plagiarizing many of the writings and sayings of Jesus. It is not true that His teachings more closely 'paralleled those of the Pharisees than any Jewish group of His day.' That is a blatantly false statement! Those are just some of the things that we have to look at, that we have to see.

We're going to go back to the book of Genesis and we're going to see that there were the *faithful* and the *Scripturalists*:

- They are the ones who followed God.
- They are the ones who obeyed His voice in the absence of the written word.
- They are the ones who believed Him.
- They are the ones who operated according to the ways of God.

We have the genealogy from the very beginning with Adam and it comes down from Adam to Abel (Gen. 4)—he was accounted as righteous. Then we have Seth and all the way down to Enoch.

Genesis 5:22: "And **Enoch walked with God** three hundred years after he begat Methuselah. And he begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God, and then he *was* not, for God took him" (vs 22-24). And we know that God took him—spared his life—because of the evil circumstances and the environment and the people.

In Genesis 6 we find, again, evil of the world and in the midst of that evil one man—Noah. Genesis 6:8: "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. These *are* the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man and perfect in his generations, for **Noah walked with God**" (vs 8-9). We know that Noah was a *preacher of righteousness*.

I want to show that God *always had those people that followed Him*, in every generation of mankind, as it was in the case of Abraham, but they still followed God.

Genesis 12:1: "And the LORD said to Abram, 'Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house into a land that I will show you. And I will make *of* you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great. And you shall be a blessing. And I will bless those that bless you and curse the one who curses you. And in you shall all families of the earth be blessed.' Then Abram departed..." (vs 1-4). Abraham *obeyed the voice of God!*

When there's the absence of the written word, then God is going to make it absolutely clear what He means by coming to the patriarchs—as He did in the case of all the patriarchs down through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to let them know *His will!* Of course, this blessing here: "...in you shall all families of the earth be blessed" is a direct reference and prophecy of Christ.

Let's come clear down to the time of Isaac, and this is a basic, fundamental verse that you should memorize, which will be very helpful if you are ever confronted concerning the commandments of God, concerning what Abraham did and what he didn't do concerning what motivated him *by faith*—He did whatever God told him to do.

This is where God appeared to Isaac in a dream and He said to him, Genesis 26:2: "And the LORD appeared to him and said, 'Do not go down into Egypt. Live in the land which I shall tell you of. Stay in this land, and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your seed, I will give all these lands; and I will establish the oath which I swore to Abraham your father'" (vs 2-3). In the absence of Scripture, here is the *living Word of God* telling the ones that God is directing what they should and should not do.

Verse 4: "'And I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and will give to your seed all these lands. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, **because Abraham obeyed My voice**... [If you want a good study sometime, go through the whole Bible and read *obeyed My voice*; and about the occasions when angels spoke certain things and what happened to those who did not obey the voice of the angels. They are lesser than God—aren't they?] ...and **kept My charge**... [whatever God told him to do] ...**My commandments, My statutes, and My laws**" (vs 4-5).

We've been schooled in the facts how to counter the arguments of the Protestantism and Catholicism that we don't have to keep the commandments of God, this becomes a very important thing. What were the commandments? What were the statutes? What were the laws? It doesn't tell us here, so how are we going to do it? *Since in Heb. 13 it tells us that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever* and the fact that Jesus Christ was the *living Word of God*; He was *with God*; He *was God*; He is the One Who talked with the patriarchs. Then we have the situation where we have the commandments, statutes and laws that God gave to Abraham had to be substantially identical to those that He later gave to Israel. That would be something for you to think on and study about and so forth. But the long and short of it is that Abraham was *faithful*; Abraham was

what we would call a *Scripturalist*. We're going to see the difference between Jacob and Esau:

Genesis 27:41: "And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him. And Esau said in his heart, 'The days of mourning *for* my father are at hand—then I will kill my brother Jacob.' And these words of her older son Esau were told to Rebekah. And she sent and called her younger son Jacob, and said to him, 'Behold, your brother Esau is going to comfort himself concerning you—*for he is planning* to kill you. And now therefore, my son, obey my voice—arise, and flee to my brother Laban, to Haran, and stay with him a few days until your brother's fury turns away, until your brother's anger turns away from you and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send *for you* and bring you from there. Why should I be bereaved of both of you *in* one day?' And Rebekah said to Isaac, 'I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth'" (vs 41-46).

Esau married all the daughters of the land—the Canaanites, the Hivites, the different ones there, and this was a great weary to her. Esau is held out as one who never obeyed God, who didn't want to follow God's way. Right in the household of Isaac you have a great division—the love of God and the hatred toward God. That is evidenced in Esau, and of Esau God said He 'hated.'

So, Rebecca said, "...If Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, like these of the daughters of the land, what good is *my* life to me?" (v 46).

Genesis 28:1: "Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and commanded him. And he said to him, 'You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father. And take a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.... [Here then is a blessing that is given to Jacob when he left]: ...And may God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, so that you may be a multitude of people. And **may He give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your seed with you**, so that you may inherit the land in which you are a stranger, which God gave to Abraham'" (vs 1-4).

We know that Jacob had a dream He saw in the dream a ladder and saw angels ascending and descending from heaven.

Verse 19: "And he called the name of that place The House of God. But the name of that city *was* Luz at first. Then Jacob made a vow, saying... [I'm going to follow God] ...'Since God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, and I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the LORD be my God. And this stone which I

have set for a pillar shall be God's house. And of all that You shall give me, I will surely give the tenth to You'" (vs 19-22). So, we have the principle of tithing, just in passing, right there.

We will see that Jacob also made his whole household obey God, Genesis 35:1: "And God said to Jacob, 'Arise, go up to Bethel and live there. And make an altar there to God, Who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother.' Then Jacob said to his household, and to all that were with him... [This is as they were leaving the land of Padan Aram] ...'Put away the strange gods among you, and be clean, and change your garments. And let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make an altar there to God, Who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone.' And they gave all the strange gods which *were* in their hands to Jacob, and the earrings in their ears. And Jacob hid them under the oak which *was* by Shechem" (vs 1-4). Jacob was also one who followed God.

We are going to see and emphasize and bring out here in this series that the New Testament Church was *never* built upon Judaism—with all of its traditions and ways of men. That the Church was built upon the promises given to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob and the Law of Moses—as we will see Jesus said many times, 'Have you never read in the Law of Moses' when He was referring to and talking to the Jews who came to confront Him.

I want you to notice what the Apostle Paul wrote. The Apostle Paul was a *Scripturalist*! God *called* the Apostle Paul, who used to be a Pharisee, for the very purpose of making sure that Pharisaism did not come into the Church. Let's talk a little bit about the Apostle Paul. Let's see how he views Pharisaism. This is important for us to know and understand. I want you to realize that the Apostle Paul *was not a Jew by blood*. He was of the religion of Judaism; he was a citizen of the nation of the Jews; but his own particular bloodline was not of the tribe of Judah!

Philippians 3:4: "Though I might also have *reason* to trust in *the* flesh. If any other thinks he has *cause* to trust in *the* flesh, I *have* much more: Circumcised on *the* eighth day; of *the* **race of Israel, from the tribe of Benjamin**... [nor Judah! We are going to see that God did not call any apostles who were bloodline of the tribe of Judah, with this exception perhaps of Judas Iscariot.] ...a Hebrew of Hebrews... [Not a Jew; please understand that! Before Paul was converted, he was in the religion of Judaism.] ...with respect to law, a Pharisee; with respect to zeal, persecuting the Church; with respect to righteousness that *is* in law, blameless. Yet, the things that were gain to me, these things I have counted *as* loss for the sake of Christ. But then truly,

I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count *them* as dung; that I may gain Christ” (vs 4-8).

Brethren, Christianity did not come out of Judaism! We’re going to see in Galatians that the Apostle Paul came out of Judaism. He corrected Peter for the things that he was practicing in the way of Judaism, and Paul reminded Peter of the foundation of Abraham.

Galatians 1:6: “I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel.” We’re going to analyze what was that other gospel when we have fully come through the situation concerning Scripturalism.

Verse 7: “Which *in reality* is not another *gospel*... [any other gospel is not a gospel] ...but there are some who are troubling you and are desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ. But if we, or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!” (vs 7-8). We’re talking about a very serious thing here, brethren. We are going to see in the final analysis what the Apostle Paul is talking about here was he was making sure that Judaism didn’t come into the Church.

Yet, that’s the whole thing that is trying to be done in the Church of God today! To drag it back into Judaism or paganize it and New Age it! You need to realize and understand it.

Verse 9: “As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! Now then, **am I striving to please men, or God?....**” (vs 9-10). That’s the question we need to ask, brethren.

- Do we now seek to persuade men or God?
- What is it that you’re trying to do?
- What is that I’m trying to do?
- What is that God has called us to do?

“...Or am I motivated to please men? For if I am yet pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ” (v 10). Doctrinally speaking, *every minister needs to take heed to that warning—doesn’t he? Yes, indeed!*

Verse 11: “But I certify to you, brethren, that the Gospel that was preached by me is not according to man; because neither did I receive it from man... [it didn’t come out of Judaism] ...nor was I taught *it* by man rather, *it was by the revelation* of Jesus Christ. For you heard of my former conduct when I was in Judaism... [Notice how he separated the Jew’s religion. In the Greek it is ‘Judaism.’ Judaism is the Jews’ religion.] ...how I was excessively persecuting the Church of God and was destroying

it; and I was advancing in Judaism *far* beyond many *of my* contemporaries in my *own* nation, being more abundantly zealous for *the* traditions of my fathers” (vs 11-14). There you have it! God made a break with Judaism. Paul was a *Scripturalist*! Paul did not teach people Pharisaism at all, under any circumstances.

Galatians 3:7: “Because of this, *you should* understand that those who *are* of faith are the *true* sons of Abraham. Now *in* the Scriptures, God, seeing in advance that He would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel beforehand to Abraham, *saying*, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed.’ *It is* for this reason that those who are of faith are being blessed with the believing Abraham” (vs 7-9).

Verse 26: “Because you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many *of you* as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek... [That means there is neither Judaism nor paganism—neither of those things count. There are also Jewish philosophers and pagan philosophers, and the two met and that’s how the Catholic Church came about.] ...there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And **if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise**” (vs 26-29). We’re going to see that is Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Galatians 4:28—concerning Isaac: “Now we, brethren, like Isaac, are *the* children of promise. But as *it was* then, so also *it is* now: he who was born according to *the* flesh... [Esau] ...persecuted him *who was born* according to *the* Spirit” (vs 28-29).

Let’s continue on with this theme of *faith and Scripturalism*. Hebrews 11 is the chapter of the example of the faith that the patriarchs had, and how absolutely important this is for us to understand. If you are going to be Scripturalist, *you are going to have faith*. That’s why the ‘traditions’ of Judaism are so wrong. They have *legalism*, they don’t have *faith*! They worship an idol of the law and tradition, whereas, *we worship God and have faith in Him*! Paul in writing this is explaining exactly the same thing that I am covering here, that is before the Scriptures came there was *faith*.

Hebrews 11:1: “Now faith is *the* substance... [The spiritual substance that comes from God, from His Holy Spirit.] (The Holy Spirit is a substance, a spiritual substance): ...of *things* hoped for, *and the* conviction of things not seen. For by this *kind of faith* the elders obtained a good report” (vs 1-2). In other words, they were faithful to the living Word of God. If there would have been Scriptures in the days of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, they would have been *Scripturalists* because ***they were faithful!***

Verse 3: “By faith we understand that the worlds were created by *the* Word of God, so that the things that are seen were made from *things* that are invisible. **By faith Abel** offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain...” (vs 3-4). Cain and Esau and Edom are all examples of those men who wanted to form *their own religions to force God to do what they demanded!* That’s what the *sin of Cain* was, brethren. That is exactly is what the *sin of Judaism* today is. They do what they do *to force God* to do what they want God to do!

- That is not faith!
- God is not doing it!
- God is not going to do it!

“...by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it, though he died, *he* is yet speaking. **By faith Enoch** was transported so that he would not look upon death, and was not found... [by those seeking his life] ...because God had transported him; for before his departure it was testified of him that **he pleased God**” (vs 4-6).

Let’s focus in on this statement *pleased God*. Is that not the whole purpose of what we are doing, brethren? To please God? Can we please God if we try and please men? Remember what the Apostle Paul said: ***If I seek to please men, I should not yet please God!*** That’s the difference between Scripturalism and Judaism, *or* Scripturalism and Catholicism, *or* Scripturalism and Muslimism—whatever other ‘ism.’ If you are Christ’s you are Abraham’s seed. You have His Spirit and you live by every Word of God, and you conduct your life as a Scripturalist. We’re going to see that’s exactly what God did beginning with John the Baptist and made a clean break and separation *from the religions of men*.

Verse 6: “Now without faith *it is* impossible to please *God*. For it is mandatory *for* the one who comes to God to believe that He exists, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

- The whole emphasis is toward seeking God
- The whole emphasis is on the Word of God
- The whole emphasis is on the faith
 - ✓ which produces action
 - ✓ which produces obedience
 - ✓ which produces love
 - ✓ which produces the descendants of Abraham

—we are all Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise, because of faith!

v 7: “By faith Noah...”

v 8: “By faith Abraham...”

v 9: “By faith he sojourned...”

v 13: “All these died in faith, not having received the promises...”—and neither have we received the promise.

v 17: “By faith Abraham, when he was being tried, offered up Isaac...”

v 20: “By faith Isaac blessed Jacob...”

v 21: “By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph...”

v 22: “By faith Joseph, when he was dying, spoke of the *coming* exodus of the children of Israel...”

v 23: “By faith Moses...”

Moses had to be a *Scripturalist*—didn’t he? Not only was he faithful, he was a *Scripturalist*. Why? *Because he wrote the first five books of the Bible—right? Yes, indeed!*

Verse 24: “By faith Moses, after becoming a great *leader*, refused to be called *the* son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy *the* temporary pleasure of sin; for he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt because he was looking intently to the reward. **By faith he left Egypt**, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he persevered, as *if he were* seeing the *one Who is* invisible. **By faith he kept the Passover...**” (vs 24-28). That’s how we are to keep the faith: ***faithfully keep the Passover in a faithful, loving and obedient attitude toward God!***

v 29: “By faith they passed through the Red Sea...”

v 30: “By faith the walls of Jericho fell...”

v 31: “By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish with those who disobeyed...”

Then he goes on say of all of those, v 32: “Now what more can I say? For time would fail me to relate *the accounts* of Gideon, Barak also, and Samson and Jephthah, David also, and Samuel, and the prophets; who by faith were victorious over kingdoms...” (vs 32-33).

Let’s see how that beginning with Moses, after the writing of what we call the first five books of the Law or the Pentateuch—the Jews call it Torah, which is law, but their view of Torah is that it encompasses everything that they purport to be the Law of Moses, which also includes all of their ‘traditions.’ Let’s notice what God says concerning the Scriptures. Let’s notice what God has done, and we can project this clear out to today, that God has provided His Word in almost every language of the world. That’s absolutely fantastic to understand, brethren. We also need to realize one other thing that is true: in every translation, with the exception of perhaps one or two—but perhaps even in them—the basic knowledge of salvation is contained! God made sure that His Word was given so that those of every language could understand it. It began with the children of Israel.

Deuteronomy 30:11: “For this commandment which I command you today *is* not hidden from you, neither is it far off. It *is* not in heaven *that you should* say, ‘Who shall go up to heaven for us, and bring it to us, so that we may hear it and do it?’ Neither *is* it beyond the sea *that you should* say, ‘Who shall go over the sea for us to bring it to us, so that we may hear it and do it?’ But the Word *is* very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, so that you may do it” (vs 11-14).

What does that mean? *This means that God has written His Word in their language, which is in their mind and heart, so when they read the Scriptures they may hear it and they may do it!* It’s not in a language that they didn’t understand. So, we have the same thing today.

It’s going to come as an amazing and tremendous surprise to a lot of people when God asks them, ‘Why didn’t you obey My Word?’ *What Word, Lord? What do You mean?* ‘Did you have a Bible in your house?’ *Yes!* ‘Was it My fault that you never read it? I sent it to you in your language so you could know it, hear it, read it, obey it, but did you do it? No, you didn’t!’

Verse 15: “Behold, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil, in that I command you this day to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments so that you may live and multiply. And the LORD your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it” (vs 15-16). That’s the same thing that we’re confronted with today in obeying God and doing the things that He wants us to do.

Notice that we have: love God, walk in His ways, keep His commandments, statutes and judgments contained in the book of Moses. That is the foundation—along with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and Jesus Christ, since Jesus is the foundation—of everything that is contained in the Old Testament that pertains to Christ, because He is the One Who gave it and inspired it as the Lord God of the Old Testament.

Verse 17: “But if your heart turn away so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I denounce to you this day that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days on the land where you pass over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, **choose life, so that both you and your seed may live**” (vs 17-19). God lays the responsibility upon each one of us to choose!

The whole purpose of all of this is, v 20: “That you may **love the LORD your God, and** may

obey His voice...”—which is written and recorded for us—isn’t it? *Yes, it is!* Do we have the Words of God—Old Testament and New Testament? *Yes, we do!* Not only do we have it recorded, we don’t have depend just upon the sound of a voice, we have the written and preserved Word of God! In a sense, we are much more accountable than they are—aren’t we? *We have the Word of God!*

“...and may cleave to Him; for **He is your life...** [John 14:6 where Jesus said, ‘I am the Way, the Truth and the Life’—Jesus is our life!] ...and the length of your days, so that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers—to **Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob**—to give it to them” (v 20).

There we have it right there. Scripturalism shows us exactly what it needs to be. We have the time of David, the judges, the kings—go through all the kings; we’ll look at one of the last kings of Judah. You can read about David, all the psalms that he wrote; Samuel and all the things that he wrote and how together they setup the temple worship system and gave it to Solomon so when he built the temple they could set all the priests in their courses and everything. Those extra instructions are part of the ordinances of God on how to obey Him. The Jews call that *their traditions*. NOT SO!

Let’s see that God always, *always*, **always** had a remnant of people that followed Him. I’ll call your attention the incident with Elijah. When he did what he did, he figured he was the ‘only one left.’ But God said that there were a ‘remnant of 7,000 people that had not bowed the knee to Baal. All the way down through history—and this becomes very important for us to understand—**God always had a small remnant that were obedient and were faithful!**

(go to the next track)

I want to emphasize that God always had the Scripturalists. Let’s review one verse concerning the father of John the Baptist^[transcriber’s correction], Zacharias and Elizabeth his wife. Let’s see something here that’s very important.

Luke 1:6: “Now, they were **both righteous** before God, **walking blamelessly** in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord.” Doesn’t say that he walked according to the ‘traditions of the fathers.’ Remember what Paul said? *That before his conversion he was ‘blameless in the traditions of the fathers.’* Here they were “...**righteous** before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord.”

We’re going to see that all the way down through time, God has always had His people somewhere, that sought Him, that obeyed Him, that worshipped Him, that had faith in Him. It’s called in

Isaiah 1:9: “Except the LORD of hosts had left us **a very small remnant...**” Those were the ones who obeyed God!

We will see that God used priests who were faithful, following the commandments of God. In the case of Jeremiah, also the son of a priest, God made a clean break with Jeremiah because Jeremiah didn’t practice anything concerning the priesthood. Just like John the Baptist didn’t practice anything concerning the priesthood. God was making a clean break with the temple and God was making a clean break with Judaism.

Jeremiah 1:1: “The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah... [the high priest who found the book of Law during the days of Josiah] ...of the priests who *were* in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin.” Notice again we have the ‘land of Benjamin’ *not* in the land of Judah. Jeremiah was the son of a priest, which means that he was of the house of Aaron, and even though he was a Levite in that particular sense, he was of the priesthood, which was the higher level of priests of the sons of Aaron rather than just the descendants of Levi. He was very young when he started.

Verse 2: “To whom the Word of the LORD came...” The very Word of God came and Jeremiah had the responsibility and blessing and privilege to write some of the Word of God, which we call the book of Jeremiah.

Verse 2: “To whom the Word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. It also came in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, to the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, to the exiling of Jerusalem in the fifth month. And it came to pass, the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Before I formed you in the belly I knew you; and before you came forth out of the womb I consecrated you, *and* I ordained you a prophet to the nations.’ Then I said, ‘Alas, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak; for I *am* a youth.’” (vs 2-6).

He must have been well below 20 when God called him; maybe even 15-16 somewhere around there. A person didn’t come to age as a citizen in the land until he was 20; so he was less than 20. But God works with those who are following and willing to obey Him, and to be as it were *Scripturalists*. Was Jeremiah a Scripturalist? *Yes!* Read all the way through, he talks about the commandments of God. He wrote the Word of God. He was a Scripturalist in the very real fashion—he helped write the Word of God.

Let’s see some of the preaching that he did. We’ll some of things that he wrote *vs* those who were the false prophets, Jeremiah 23:26: “How long shall *this* be in the heart of the prophets who

prophesy lies...” [vs Scripturalism—correct? *Yes, indeed!*]

Let’s see something very important for us to understand concerning Scripturalism, v 21: “I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But **if** they had stood in My counsel and had caused My people to hear My words...”—even **IF** the false prophets were not sent of God, even **IF** they prophesied—although God didn’t send them—**IF** they would have stood in God’s counsel. In other words, instead of playing prophet; instead of bringing their own ideas, if they would have picked up the Word of God and

“...caused My people to hear My words then they would have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings. *Am* I a God *Who* is near,’ says the LORD, ‘and not a God afar off? Can anyone hide himself in secret places so that I shall not see him?’ says the LORD. ‘Do I not fill the heavens and earth?’ says the LORD. ‘I have heard what the prophets said, who prophesy lies in My name...” (vs 22-25).

They weren’t Scripturalists. God said, that **IF** they would follow His Word, though He didn’t originally send them, He would cause that to prosper and help the people understand how to get themselves out of the predicament, from sinning. You talk about a principle of God that is absolutely fantastic. We need to really understand that, brethren! How much does God lay stress

- on Scripturalism?
- on faith?
- on following God?
- on listening to His Word?

Absolutely plenty!

Verse 26: “How long shall *this* be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies and who are prophets of the deceit of their own heart? They scheme to **cause My people to forget My name** by their dreams...” (vs 26-27). You can take this same principle and you can substitute for the word ‘dreams’—

- cause My people to forget My name by *their traditions*
- cause My people to forget My name by *their dogma*
- cause My people to forget My name by *their religion*

“...which they tell, each one to his neighbor, as their fathers have forgotten My name for Baal. The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream. And **he who has My Word, let him speak My Word faithfully**.... [Scripturalists—correct? *Yes, indeed!*] ...What *is* the chaff to the wheat?” says the LORD. ‘Is not My Word like a fire?’ says the LORD, ‘and

like a hammer *that* breaks the rock in pieces?” (vs 27-29).

God is saying that *if you follow Him, love Him and serve Him* that He will be with you. But if NOT, it's going to be “...like a hammer *that* breaks the rock in pieces” and like the fire coming after the chaff. God didn't send them. God is far more interested in Scripturalism and His Word than anything else.

We'll see about Josiah now, because we're going to find this thread of Scripturalism all the way down through the Bible—and that is so important. Here again, God chose someone young. It said that Jeremiah began in the 13th year of Josiah—correct? This means that Jeremiah began to prophesy when Josiah was approximately 21-years-old. Jeremiah was below 20, but Josiah was just 21. You can go through all the book of the kings and all the book of Chronicles and you will see there was good king/bad king; one that followed David's example/one that didn't; one that obeyed God's Word/one that didn't. It shows the choices.

I want to make something absolutely clear here as we're going along: There are a lot of people in various Churches of God that see the problems, see the difficulties, see the things that are going on and are waiting for God to do something or change it. Believe me, *God is not going to do something to change it, because they are not choosing to do what God has said!* God is going on *their* choices. God is not going to intervene and make them do right. They must *choose* to do right. If you see things going on that are wrong, you must *choose*:

- Are you going to follow God or not?
- Are you going to be like Josiah and do that which is right in the sight of the Lord?
- Did God stop any of the kings from doing evil? *No! He punished them for it, but He didn't stop them!*
- Did God force them to do what was right? *No! God never forces anybody to do what is right!*

You must *choose* to do what is right, and we'll see how here in the case of Josiah, because he's a tremendous example for us.

2-Chronicles 34:1: “Josiah *was* eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and did not turn aside to the right nor to the left” (vs 1-2).

Now let's see what happened with Hilkiah—the father of Jeremiah, v 14: “And when they were bringing out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest...

[the father of Jeremiah] ...found the Book of the Law of the LORD *written* by the hand of Moses.” *Scripture*—correct? *Scripturalism*—correct? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 15: “And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, ‘I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD.’ And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan. And Shaphan carried the book to the king and brought the king word back again, saying, ‘All that was given into the hands of your servants, they are doing. And they have gathered together the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and delivered it into the hands of the overseers and to the hands of the workmen.’ And Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, ‘Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.’ And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass when the king heard the words of the law, **he tore his clothes**” (vs 15-19)—in anguish and repentance! Why? *Because Josiah could see that according to the Scriptures of God they were living contrary to God!*

Things were so bad that the king said, v 21: “Go inquire of the LORD for me and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that has been found, for great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us because our fathers have not kept the Word of the LORD... [They were not Scripturalists—isn't that correct? *Yes, indeed!*] ...to do according to all that is written in **this book**”—the Scriptures of God.

Verse 23: “And she answered them, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel, “Tell the man who sent you to me, thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will bring evil upon this place and upon its people, *even* all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah, Because they have forsaken Me and have burned incense to other gods, so that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands. And My wrath shall be poured out upon this place and shall not be quenched.’ And as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, so shall you say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel *concerning* the words you have heard, “Because your heart *was* tender and you humbled yourself before your God when you heard His words against this place and against its people, and humbled yourself before Me, and tore your clothes and wept before Me, I have even heard *you* also,” says the LORD’”’” (vs 23-27).

Verse 28: “Behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, nor shall your eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place and upon its people. ’ And they brought the king word again. And the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and

Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah, and the people of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people from the great to *the* small. And he read... [The king is the one who did the reading in this case. He is the one who took the scroll, the book of the Law, and he read the Scripture—*Scripturalist*] ...in their ears all the words of the Book of the Covenant that was found in the house of the LORD. And the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the LORD to walk after the LORD and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book. And he caused all who were found in Jerusalem and in Benjamin, and the people of Jerusalem, to stand *to it* according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers” (vs 28-32).

Was Josiah a Scripturalist? *Yes!* God has preserved Scripturalists all the way down through time—*those who are willing to follow God!* We know that after Josiah died, all the plagues and everything came upon them, and they were carried off into captivity to Babylon. During the captivity, God gave certain blessings to Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. I want to cover a very important thing here in Daniel. We are going to see that Daniel was also a *Scripturalist*. He also helped write the Word of God, so he had to be a Scripturalist—right? He had to follow God by faith—right? *Yes, indeed!*

Daniel 9:1: “In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans. In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood by books... [the writings of God] ...the number of the years, which came according to the Word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years” (vs 1-2). Daniel was reading the book of Jeremiah and it dawned on him right then the 70 years of the desolation. This was right toward the end of the 70 years of captivity.

Verse 3: “And I set my face toward the LORD God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes.”

- He turned to God *in faith!*
- He turned to God *in humility!*
- He turned to God *with prayer!*
- He turned to God *with supplication*—which is intense prayer!
- He turned to God *with fasting*—furthermore, with sackcloth and ashes!

Verse 4: “And I prayed to the LORD my God and made my confession, and said, ‘O LORD,

the great and awesome God, keeping the covenant and mercy to those who love Him, and to those who keep His commandments.” Here is the full confession of their transgressions and departing from God’s Word (vs 5-15).

Verse 16: “O LORD, I pray You, according to all Your righteousness, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your Holy mountain. Because of our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people have become a reproach to all those who are around us. And now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary that *is* desolate for the LORD’S sake. O my God, incline Your ear and hear. Open Your eyes and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name. For we do not present our supplications before You on account of our righteousnesses, but because of Your great mercies. O LORD, hear; O LORD, forgive; O LORD, hearken and do. Do not delay, for Your own sake, O my God; for Your city and Your people are called by Your name” (vs 16-19).

And while he was speaking, the angel Gabriel came and gave him the prophecy of the coming Messiah. All the way down through history, we have the situation of those who were Scripturalists. Let’s see when they came out captivity the same thing.

Ezra 7:6: “This Ezra went up from Babylon. And he *was* a ready scribe in the Law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given....” Again, was Ezra a Scripturalist? *Yes!*

We’re going to read a little bit about what Ezra did, v 10: “For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do *it*... [Scripturalist] ...and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.” Let’s see what Ezra did. *He did not come back from Babylonian captivity and teach Judaism!* He was a ready scribe in the Law of the Lord—not *the traditions* of the elders. We need to comprehend that.

A lot of people say that Ezra was the father of Judaism—not *true!* They made, by proclamation after he died, by saying all the things that Ezra gave were the *traditions of the Jews* including the Law of God now becomes the *tradition of the Jews*, therefore, he is the father of Judaism. *It’s not true!*

- Ezra taught the Word of God!
- Ezra taught the commandments of God!
- Ezra did give instructions on how to worship Him in the synagogues!
- Ezra did give instructions on how the Scriptures were to be read, in a cycle called the ‘triennial cycle’

—which were to be read: part of the Law, part of the Prophets, part of the Psalms every Sabbath. But that, brethren, was *instructions on how to keep the Laws of God!*

Nehemiah 8:1: “And all the people gathered themselves as one man into the street before the Water Gate. And they spoke to Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation, both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read from it in the open square in front of the Water Gate from daybreak until noon in front of the men and the women...” (vs 1-3).

Notice that he wasn't reading out of the *Code of Jewish Law*. He wasn't reading *traditions*. Ezra was not a *traditionalist*. Ezra was a Scripturalist!

Let me give you a little summary of what Ezra did and then I'm going to read some accounts from *Everyman's Talmud* by Aaron Cohen. I want to read to you what I wrote:

The Christian Passover book—the summary of what Ezra did:

Here is a summary of Ezra's work, which was a monumental step in the development and preservation of the Old Testament for the Jewish people, and eventually for the world.

“According to Jewish tradition, five great works are ascribed to him:

- 1) the foundation of the ‘Great Synagogue’ [the Great Assembly]

That was to be able to have the men of the Great Synagogue run the nation of Judah according to the words of God, according to the laws of God.

- 2) the settlement of the canon of Scripture, with the threefold division into Law, Prophets, and Hagiographa [the Psalms and other Writings]
- 3) the substitution of the square Chaldean characters for the Hebrew and Samaritan
- 4) the compilation of Chronicles, possibly Esther, with the addition of Nehemiah's history to his own
- 5) the establishment of synagogues

That's what Ezra did. Later that is called *the tradition of the Jews*. Later, the Jews became so involved in trying to hedge in the law—that is the Laws of God with all of their traditions—making myriad of extra laws.

How many have read the Constitution of the United States? How many thousands of volumes of laws are written which have become the law of the

land, *supposedly* based on the Constitution? How many of those laws are actually contrary to the Constitution? You have the same thing with the Law of God and Judaism. They made thousands and thousands of laws and rituals *that God never intended!*

from *Everyman's Talmud* by Aaron Cohen, pg 16:

Foremost among this class of teachers was Ezra who is characterized as the ‘ready scribe’ of the Torah of Moses (Ezra 7:6) i.e. an expert sofer.

A sofer was one who copied the laws of God, the ‘soferim’ is plural for ‘sofer’ which later were called *the scribes*.

It was he who worked out the solution of his predecessors to its practical conclusions. The Talmud...

Now we're going almost a thousand years later. You see the great leap that is made here. What is written in the Talmud is actually the ‘religion’ of the Jews, and it gets down into the fact that those who are in on the inner teachings of the Talmud are Cabalists or the worshippers of Satan.

The Talmud, with justification, compares the work that he did with his people with that which was accomplished by Moses. As the great lawgiver, created out of the nation of released slaves by bringing them the Torah, so did Ezra renew the vitality of a more abundant community both in Babylon and Judea by restoring the Torah as the guide of living.

Which he did; he established the laws of God as the guide of living.

In admiration of his achievement, the rabbis declared “Ezra was worthy that the Torah was given to Israel by his hand were it not that Moses had forestalled him.”

In other words, the Jews and the Talmud, the Mishnah and the other writings of the Jews hold Ezra in higher esteem than Moses. What they're actually saying here is that had Ezra been born first he would have given the law instead of Moses.

When the Torah had been forgotten by Israel, Ezra came up from Babylon and re-established it. The Jew was to be demarcated from his neighbors.

We will see that that's a policy that Ezra setup. He did not setup all kinds of laws that were replacing the Laws of God. He did, however, setup the whole synagogue system. He did, however, understand that the only way that the Jews would be preserved was that they stayed with the Scriptures.

The policy of Ezra has been elsewhere described by the present writer in these terms: Sangweld once said, "History, which is largely a record of the melting of minorities into majorities, records no instance of the survival of a group not segregated in space, or not protected by a burning faith as by a frontier of fire. This lesson of history had evidently been learned by Ezra. He understood that the Jews could not be utterly segregated in space. Not only were the branches of the national tree in Egypt, Babylon and Persia to be taken into consideration, but contact between the Jews and Judea and their neighbors could not be avoided.

If then the Jewish nation was to be preserved, it must be ringed about by a burning faith as a frontier of fire, a most opposite metaphor since the Bible itself speaks of itself as a fiery law. The Jews must have a religion, which would not only continually distinguish him from the heathen, but would likewise be a constant reminder to him that he was a member of the Jewish race and faith. The Jews was to be demarcated from his neighbors not merely by a creed, but by a mode of living. His manner of worship would be different. His home would be different, even the common acts of daily life would be distinguishing features, which would constantly recall his Jewishness.

What they're doing, they're saying that Ezra started all of this, which we will find later in the *Code of Jewish Law*—**but he didn't!** So, this is how everything is blended into what we call the 'religion' of Judaism.

His life and every detail was controlled by Torah, by the written enactments of the Mosaic code, and their development in the corporate life of the people as the altered conditions demanded change.

In other words, now they have a justification for all of the extra laws that they added in for their tradition.

Unless this viewpoint is thoroughly grasped, there can be no possibility of understanding the mentality of the rabbis, the trend of their activities, or the method of Bible exegesis. It is the seed out of which the Talmud grew.

In other words, they relegated the Scriptures of God and the work of Ezra to just being a tiny seed, totally surrounded all of God's way; totally surrounded by what the Jews later did and form what is called the

Talmud. The Talmud is actually the Bible of Judaism.

If we have mentioned it very distinctly in the account of Ezra's work... Starting from this axiom that the Divine will is revealed in the Torah, Ezra taught the daily existence of the Jew must be regulated in every phase of its precepts. Since the Torah had to be the complete guide of living, it must be capable of helpful guidance forever circumstance of human life. A prerequisite to the achievement of this aim was the knowledge of the Torah. Before they could be expected to perform the commandments, the people had to be educated in them.

He, therefore, introduced into Judea the public reading of the Pentateuch in order to make the masses familiar with its contents.

This is the 'triennial cycle' that I mentioned before of reading through the entire Old Testament within three years.

According to tradition, Ezra found the Great Assembly or the Great Synagogue a synod of teachers who received the corpus of doctrine that had been preserved to their day. Adapted it and developed it to suit the new conditions of the their age and then transmitted it to the pioneers of the Talmudic Rabbis.

So, you see how they slide from Scriptures right into the Talmud, right into Pharisaism, right on into the religion of the Jews, which is not Scripturalism.

The chain of authority is thus described: Moses received the Torah on Sinai, handed it down to Joshua, Joshua to the elders, the elders to the prophets, the prophets handed it down to the men of the Great Synagogue. The leading three axioms are attributed to this assembly:

1. Be delivered in judgment
2. Raise up many disciples
3. Make a fence about the Torah.

To make a fence around the Torah was a corollary of the desire to live by its precepts. If a person kept too close to letter he might inadvertently led into transgressing. As a cultivated field had to be hedged about to prevent even innocent trespass, so the sacred domain of the Torah had to be enclosed by many precautionary measures for the purposes of avoiding unintentional encroachments.

Accordingly, the purposes, which actuated the members of the Great Synagogue, created the type of study to show teachers of later generations the conformity of it. Theirs was the sowing of which ultimately produced the extensive harvest of the Talmud. When the Great Synagogue ceased to exist, either toward the middle of the third century or its end, it was followed by another organization known as the Sanhedrin, which took charge of the affairs of Judea.

Here's what they say concerning the Sadducees and the priests:

Modern historical study has come to a different conclusion. The Sanhedrin was a composite body of priests and layman presided over by the high priest. In the deliberations, which took place at its session, a cleavage soon occurred resulting in the formation of two distinct parties. The priests favored the policy of compromise with Hellenistic thought, even at the expense of complete loyalty to the Torah.

That's not exactly correct, because he contradicts himself a little later saying the Sadducees were high bound by the Torah. Now they quote what Josephus says about the development, which the Pharisees brought in:

The Pharisees have delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from their fathers, which are not written in the Law of Moses. And for that reason it is that the Sadducees rejected them. We are to esteem those observances to be obligatory, which are in the written word, but not to observe those which are derived from the traditions of our forefathers. And concerning those things it is that great disputes and differences have arisen among them.

So, the controversy over the validity of the oral law or Torah stimulated its defenders to a fresh study of the Scriptural text. They set out to demonstrate that the oral Torah was an integral part of the written Torah, that they were wrapped in woof of one fabric and developed methods of exegesis previously employed by which traditions rejected by the Sadducees could be shown to be contained in the wording of the Pentateuch. Exhibition of the Torah now entered a new phase and led directly to the creation of the Talmud.

In other words, a nice way of saying they perverted the Scriptures of God.

With the Sadducees, Judaism was a high bound system fixed for all time by the code of the Pentateuch. It was also inseparably bound up with the ritual of the temple. Consequently, when the sanctuary ceased to exist, the Sadducees very soon afterward disappeared. The Pharisaical theory of the oral Torah received remarkable vindication at the time of crisis. It unquestionably kept the religion of the people alive by adapting to new conditions which had arisen.

That's how Judaism was formed. I know that is a very quick summary. I want to bring to you something concerning the Galileans and why God called those who were in Galilee. Mary lived in Nazareth, she was a virgin of the line of David who lived in Nazareth. Could not God have called a virgin who lived in Jerusalem, who was of the line of David? *Yes, He could have, but He didn't! Why? Because we will see that those in Galilee were Scripturalists*, and they rejected the Pharisees, and they rejected the traditions that they had.

from: *Young's Bible Dictionary*: Galilean:

A native or inhabitant of Galilee. The Galileans were generous and impulsive, of simple manners...

Sounds a little bit like Peter—doesn't it? Remember, Jesus did not call any priests. He called those who were not Jews of the house of Judah. He called those who were Benjaminites, who lived in the area of Galilee and who had no connection with the Pharisees or the religion of the Pharisees; very important reason.

...earnest piety...

What does piety mean? *A word that means Godliness!* They had an earnest, unhypocritical piety. They were worshipping God correctly.

...intense nationalism; they were also excitable, passionate and violent. The Talmud accuses them of being quarrelsome...

Why? *Because they quarreled against the traditions of the elders!*

...but admits that they cared more for honor than money.

Judas didn't! He wanted money rather than honor.

Their religious observances were differing in several points from those of Judea. The people of Galilee were especially blamed for neglecting the study of their language.

They didn't write in Aramaic. They did in Greek.

Charged with great errors in grammar and especially with absurd mal-pronunciation, sometimes leading to ridiculous mistakes.

That's why God preserved the Bible or the New Testament in Greek rather than in Aramaic. Greek is much more precise. But that's what they spoke up in Galilee.

Thus there was a general contempt in rabbinic circles for all that was Galilean.

That's why God called them!

The Galileans were easily recognizable by their dialect and tone, as seen by the detection of Peter as one of Christ's disciples. It was a name applied by way of reproach to early Christians.

They were called Galileans as a sign of contempt.

from the *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Religion: Concerning the Galileans—Question of a Jewish Party*

Second century Christians are also mentioned as Galileans among the religious parties of Judaism, along with Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and other more obscure groups.

They had quite a bit to do in formulating the church which was called Christian, but wasn't.

There is rabbinic evidence that in the First Century A.D. customs prevailed in Galilee, which were not current in other parts of Palestine. In Galilee a newly married person could be together the first night. There were differences in regard to the rights of a widow, in regard to the Day of Atonement. In Galilee, no work was done the day before the Passover and the festival may actually been observed a day earlier.

Hence, we have the 14th Passover!

The Pharisees considered Galileans olive oil richly impure. And the Galileans refuse to accept Pharisaical rule.

That is why Christ was raised in Nazareth of Galilee, because there was the remnant of Scripturalists who were there.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Genesis 5:22-24
- 2) Genesis 6:8-9
- 3) Genesis 12:1-4
- 4) Genesis 26:2-5
- 5) Genesis 27:41-46
- 6) Genesis 28:1-4, 19-22
- 7) Genesis 35:1-4

- 8) Philippians 3:4-8
- 9) Galatians 1:6-14
- 10) Galatians 3:7-9, 26-29
- 11) Galatians 4:28-29
- 12) Hebrews 11:1-9, 13, 17, 20-33
- 13) Deuteronomy 30:11-20
- 14) Luke 1:6
- 15) Isaiah 1:9
- 16) Jeremiah 1:1-6
- 17) Jeremiah 23:26, 21-29
- 18) 2 Chronicles 34:1-2, 14-19, 21, 23-32
- 19) Daniel 9:1-4, 16-19
- 20) Ezra 7:6, 10
- 21) Nehemiah 8:1-3

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Genesis 4
- Hebrews 13
- John 14:6
- Daniel 9:5-15

Also referenced:

Article: *The Salinas Californian*

Books:

- *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried and Goldin
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- *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Religion*

Scripturalism vs Judaism III

Jesus was not Judaized

Fred R. Coulter—June 12, 1993

Most of us have either come out of a Protestant church or a Catholic church, so most of the preaching we have heard through all of the years has been geared to refuting Protestant or Catholic doctrine. But when Christ began preaching, there were no Protestants and no Catholics. When we read the New Testament from the point of view of only refuting Protestant or Catholic doctrine, we are missing the whole major point and the whole climate and the attitude and religion of Judaism that existed.

We're going to see that there are quite a few interesting things and different things that have been in the Bible all along, but we have completely overlooked them, almost incredibly overlooked them. Let's just review just a little bit. Let's talk about Scripturalism. There were the faithful who, without the written Word, were able to either talk to God or God talked to them, and they are called *faithful*! In a sense they were Scripturalists inasmuch that if they followed the commandments of God—which He gave verbally—those would be the same as God would give when He later had it written down. So, you have the *faithful and the Scripturalists*!

When we come to Luke 24, this becomes very, very important in understanding the situation concerning the New Testament. Let's also understand that one of the difficulties that was at hand with the Apostolic Church was that they did not have the New Testament as we have it today. As a matter of fact, there was nothing other than maybe sermon notes or whatever that was given by any of the Apostles. There was nothing written down that we could say 'here is a book of the Bible.' There was nothing written down from 30_{A.D.}—when Jesus was crucified (there's a question as to whether it's 30 or 31; 30 seems to be the more correct date; it doesn't change anything because both Passovers were in the middle of the week in 30 and 31_{A.D.})

From 30_{A.D.} until 50_{A.D.} there was nothing written in the form of what we can call New Testament Scripture. This created a lot of problems and difficulties, as we will see as we go through this series. But Jesus started them out in the right way:

Luke 24:44: "...all *the* things which were written concerning Me in the Law of Moses and *in the* Prophets and *in the* Psalms must be fulfilled.' [there we have the threefold division of the Bible] ...Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (vs 44-45). Jesus was a *Scripturalist*—wasn't He? The apostles were *Scripturalists*—weren't they? *Yes, indeed!*

Just as an aside: You have heard quite a bit

about the Septuagint version of the Bible. The Septuagint was a translation of the Old Testament by Jewish scholars in Alexandria. They translated, supposedly, the whole Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek. What is important is that a *sacred name* Bible and New Testament has the so-called *sacred names* transliterated even in the English. So, where it would be 'Lord' in the English, they would translate it 'Yahweh' in relationship to Christ in the New Testament.

Even though the Jews translated the Old Testament, the Septuagint, from Hebrew to Greek, they did not transliterate the names of God. As a matter of fact, the term 'Lord' in the New Testament comes from the Greek 'kurios' which is the same word that the Jews' translators used 270-300 years before the New Testament was ever written. Since they did not, at that point, feel it was absolutely necessary to use sacred names and transliterate them, therefore, it's a good indication that we don't today. There are other proofs that we don't. You can add that one to your arsenal of repudiation of the requirement of *sacred names* for the New Testament.

Let's just review 2-Tim. again. These are very basic for us to understand that we must be Scripturalists. There are a lot of people who come around and try to bring in doctrines that are not from Scripture. It has to be based on the Word of God. What else do you need?

- The Truth of God
- The Scriptural interpretation of the Scriptures

You can't just have the Scriptures alone and say, 'I believe it says...' It then becomes: Who are you? Let's look at a couple statements by Paul and then a couple by Peter.

2-Timothy 3:15: "And that from a child you have known the Holy Writings, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith, which *is* in Christ Jesus. All Scripture... [This includes everything—doesn't it? *Yes, it does!* A reaffirmation of what Jesus taught: 'In the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.'] ...*is* God-breathed... [by *inspiration* or *God spirited*] ...and *is* profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work" (vs 15-17).

Here it shows how it is to be interpreted, 2-Peter 1:20: "Knowing this first... [this is primary;

the Greek is ‘protos’—*primary*] ...that no prophecy of Scripture originated as anyone’s own *private* interpretation.” Which also means no Scripture anywhere is subject to *private interpretation*.

- Who inspired the Scriptures? *God did!*
- Who is going to make them be fulfilled? *God is!*
- Whose interpretation do we need of all the Scriptures? *God’s interpretation!*

Precept upon precept, line upon line—it interprets itself! Here’s the reason, v 21: “Because prophecy was not brought at any time by human will, but the Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by *the* Holy Spirit.”

When we get to the point, we will show that Paul and Peter and John were the ones to finalize the New Testament. It was finalize—except the four writings of John—before the fall of Jerusalem. So, there’s that short window of time from 50_{A.D.} to the fall of Jerusalem, a maximum of 20 years in which the New Testament Scriptures were written. We’re going to see that is mighty, mighty important that it was done and canonized by the apostles because of all the other heresies going along.

Have you wondered what happened to the 5,000 people that ate from the loaves and fishes, and the 4,000 that ate from the loaves and fishes, and saw Jesus and believed, but were not converted? Have you ever wondered about the Jews who when Jesus said ‘you have to eat My flesh and drink My blood’ it says of those who believe Him they ‘turned and followed Him no more’? What did they do?

We’re going to see that this thing of the Pharisees comes down to a real heated political battle between the Church and the Pharisees. I’ll project ahead a little bit, we will see the reason God called Paul—a leading Pharisee—was to ensure that Pharisaism *never* came into the Church of God. He knew every bit of it, so he could ensure that it wouldn’t.

Here’s what Peter said of Paul, 2-Peter 3:15: “And bear in mind that the long-suffering of our Lord *is* salvation, exactly as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has also written to you; as *he* has also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them...” (vs 15-16). Now, we have the epistles. These epistles Peter is talking about are those that Paul sent to Peter—because Peter and Paul were not killed at the same time—at the hand of Mark. Peter then added the book of Mark and 1st and 2nd Peter to the New Testament at that point.

“...concerning these things; in which are some things *that are* difficult to understand, which the ignorant and unstable are twisting *and distorting*, as *they* also *twist and distort* the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction” (v 16). As I’ve

mentioned many times before, he’s equating the Epistles of Paul to Scripture. He says, ‘the other epistles.’

- Have you ever wondered why we have 14 Epistles of Paul? *There’s a reason, a distinct and profound reason!*
- Have you ever wondered why we don’t have the ‘Epistle of Andrew’?
- Was he not an apostle?
- Do you not suppose he wrote some letter somewhere?

Just projecting some questions down the line while we’re looking at some of these basic Scriptures; we have a lot to cover.

They who are “...ignorant and unstable are twisting *and distorting*, as *they* also *twist and distort* the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction” (v 16). That runs full circle right back to what we said. You have to have the Word of God, plus you have to have the interpretation of the Word of God. Then you can be a *true Scripturalist!* That’s what we have to be and that’s what God wants us to be.

Who were the ones who were mainly used of God to write the Scriptures and used as Prophets who helped write the Scriptures? *Moses!* What was Moses?

- Moses was a Levite
- Joshua was of the tribe of Ephraim

He didn’t write any Scripture. He is written about. Who wrote about him? *Samuel!*

- Samuel was a Levite—son of a priest
- David wrote a lot of the Psalms, but he turned them over to the Levites

The Levites added them to the liturgy of the temple service and later added them into the Scriptures.

The Prophets:

- Jeremiah—son of a priest
- Ezekiel—son of a priest
- Daniel—one of the princes of the house David
- Ezra—Levite, a ready scribe and a priest

New Testament—the one who actually did the secretarial work in finalizing the New Testament was

- Mark—a Levite
- Matthew—a Levite
- Paul—a Benjaminite (not a Levite)
- John—we don’t know, probably a Benjaminite

It was finalized, with the exception of what John did, the compiling it together because Paul said, ‘Take Mark and give him the scrolls and bring them to

me.’ All the way through we have the thread of the Levites—don’t we?

- John the Baptist—a Levite

Remember, his parents were faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord, blameless (Luke 1:6). God is showing that here with the beginning of the preaching of John the Baptist there was a distinct change, which God was instituting. Who was He using? *He started out with the authorized people that He appointed—the Levites!* Furthermore, John the Baptist was from the house of Aaron, because his father was a priest, who went in to offer incense and only the house of Aaron can do that.

Luke 1: 80: “And the little child grew and was strengthened in spirit; and he was in the wilderness until *the* day of his appearing to Israel.” He was never trained in any of the rituals of the temple. This is a precursor that God is showing, by using a Levite of the house of Aaron of the priesthood, that He was going to sever the temple and the ritual and everything. He used the authorized person that He put in there—John the Baptist—to do it.

Luke 16:16—this is where the Protestants get off, how that the Protestants accept the Jewish proposition is that all of the Old Testament, commandments and statutes of God, were the *traditions of Judaism*. Therefore, since they were the *traditions of Judaism* we’re not to follow the Laws of God. We’ve been all these years fighting this in our preaching—which it is a true fight today with some of the Protestants—but now we know why they have thrown it out.

Luke 16:16: “The Law and the Prophets *were* until John... [That’s why the Protestants say we don’t have to follow the Law, because they]: *were* until John... [It doesn’t mean that whatsoever! It means that the Law and the Prophets were the *authority* until John; then John started something different *in addition to it*—not doing away with, but in addition to!] ...from that time the Kingdom of God is preached, and everyone zealously strives to enter it.” Then he makes sure that the understood that it wasn’t to abrogate the laws.

Verse 17: “But it is easier *for* heaven and earth to pass away than *for* one tittle of the Law to fail.”

Let’s go to the Gospel of John, the first chapter, and remember when John the Baptist preached, he called them all ‘a generation of vipers.’ But here are some other things we need to understand in relationship to what was done. What we’re going to find out is that God ignored Judaism. Christ was not born in Jerusalem. We’re going to see that the virgin Mary was not from Jerusalem.

When John came preaching in the wilderness, John 1:19: “And this is the testimony of John [the Baptist], when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem...” Where was John? He was clear down at the River Jordan. They had to come to him. There is no account that John the Baptist ever went to Jerusalem. There is no account that he went up and stood at the temple and said to ‘repent.’ They had to come to him.

We’re going to see some very interesting statements here to show that those religious leaders during the time when Jesus first came—in the beginning of His ministry—understood the times. They knew what they were looking for.

They came “...to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ Then he *freely* admitted, and did not deny, but declared, ‘I am not the Christ.’” (vs 19-20). Why would he say that he’s not the Christ, unless they were looking for the Christ? There would be no reason to say it.

Verse 21: “And they asked him, ‘Then who *are you?* Are you Elijah?’ And he said, ‘I am not.’.... [but Jesus said that he was] ...*Then they asked*, ‘Are you the Prophet?’ And he answered, ‘No.’” What does it mean *that Prophet?* Notice the three major important things they asked; they asked profound questions:

1. Are you the Christ? *No!*
2. Are you Elijah? *No!*
3. Are you that Prophet? *No!*

What were they looking for in that Prophet? Today we’re going to see that they knew what they were looking for. Here is one of the prophecies:

Deuteronomy 18:15: “The LORD your God will raise up unto you a Prophet from the midst of you, of your brethren, One like me....” This is quite a statement, because this becomes very profound when we come to Matt. 5, 6, 7. What was Moses?

- Moses was the one who transmitted the Law of God to the people—right?
- He was the one who brought the Laws of God to the people.
- He was one who talked face-to-face with God—right?

He had the veil over him. He talked in the cloud. But nevertheless, he talked directly to God as a man talks to a man.

So, when Moses said that God was going to “...raise up unto you a Prophet... One like me. To Him you shall hearken, according to all that you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God...’” (vs 15-16). This is like talking to me face-to-face with God. That’s the whole purpose of Christ’s coming. He came in the

flesh so that He was here right on earth, not only with mankind and human beings, but he was able to talk with God. When they said, 'Are you that Prophet' they understood it.

Verse 18: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, *One* like you, and will put My words in His mouth. And He shall speak to them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, whatever man will not hearken to My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require *it* of him" (vs 18-19).

So, when they came to John the Baptist and said, 'Are you the Christ?' *No, I'm not!* 'Are you Elijah?' Remember the last part of Malachi it says that 'before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord I'll send Elijah the Prophet.' 'Are you the Prophet?' *No, I'm not!* Those are three leading important questions which shows they knew what to ask. They understood!

Let's see how that even the people *knew*. Here's the feeding of the 5,000, and here's what the people said after they were fed. This shows that they understood the Scriptures at least enough. This shows that if they didn't understand the Scriptures that at least they heard it preached from the synagogue. Remember how often the Scriptures were to be read in the synagogues: *the whole Scripture once every three years!* If they went to synagogue every week, once every three years they would read Deut. 18, and obviously someone would say, 'that's the coming Messiah.' They knew the Messiah was going to come, without a doubt. That's what Christ means, *Messiah*. 'Are you the Messiah?' That's what they asked John the Baptist.

John 6:13: "Then they gathered *them* together, filling twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten. Now, when the men saw the miracle that Jesus had done, they said, '**Of a truth, this is the Prophet Who was to come into the world.**'" (vs 13-14). They *knew* what they were looking for. When they saw what Christ did, they understood.

What they couldn't figure out was if He was the Messiah but didn't come and do His main ministry in Jerusalem. And furthermore, He even preached to the Samaritans. If He preached in Jerusalem do you think they would have accepted Him? *No, because when He went there He was rejected!* In Jerusalem were all the Pharisaical schools and so forth. In the sermon: *What Would It be Like to be in the Church of the Pharisees?* you will think you have been there before. He was to witness to them—which He did—but the reason that He did not go there was because they were so steeped in their *traditions*. We're going to see that that's the whole problem of Judaism vs Scripturalism; and Judaism vs true Christianity—the

traditions of the fathers.

John 7:40—after He was preaching and did all the things that He did. This is at the Feast of Tabernacles. How many of you, when you find out something, you get on the phone and you tell one of the other brothers or sisters in the Church? You do right away! Just think what it was like at the Feast of Tabernacles, all these people standing around seeing the miracles, seeing people being healed, hearing Him preach and all of the priests gnashing their teeth. The beady-eyed priests just hatefully watching Jesus.

John 7:40: "Now after hearing these words, many of the people said, 'This is truly the Prophet.'.... [The one that Moses prophesied about; that's what it's talking about.] ...Others said, 'This is the Christ.' But others said, 'Does the Christ then come out of Galilee? Does not the Scripture say that the Christ comes from the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the town where David was?'" (vs 40-42). In fact that's where Jesus was born, but under very unusual circumstances. They came up there just before the birth, Jesus was born, and they stayed there long enough to go through the ritual purification. They went back to Nazareth and then they had to flee to Egypt and then back. So, yes, He did!

Verse 43: "Therefore, a division arose among the people because of Him. Now, some of them desired to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him. As a result, *when* the officers came... [These are the Jewish soldiers who policed the temple area. These were the officers in charge, like we would say captains and lieutenants.] ...to the chief priests and the Pharisees, they said to them, 'Why did you not bring Him?' The officers answered, 'Never has a man spoken like this man.' Then the Pharisees answered them, 'Are you also being deceived?'" (vs 43-47). 'Look at what we're up against here, folks, with this thing.'

Here's the big putdown; how do you measure things? *By your own self!* Verse 48: "'Has even one of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in Him? But these people who do not know the law are accursed.'.... [that's the way that they believed] ...Then Nicodemus (being one of them, the one who came to Him by night) said to them, 'Does our law judge any man without first hearing from him in person, and knowing what he does?'".... [again, the big putdown] ...They answered and said to him, 'Are you also from Galilee?.... [they hated the Galileans] ...Search and see, for no prophet has *ever* come out of Galilee.' And each one went to his house" (vs 48-53).

- Why Galilee?
- Why the Galileans?

from *Young's Bible Dictionary*:

The Galileans were generous and impulsive, of simple manners, earnest piety...

'Piety' means *Godliness* and 'earnest' means they were sincere vs self-righteousness and hypocrisy. This is sincere Godliness.

...and intense nationalism. They were also excitable, passionate and violent...

You could fit all of those into Peter. He was excitable, passionate and he cutoff the ear of the high priest. He's the one who had the sword. I'm sure he was going for the ear.

The Talmud accuses them of being quarrelsome, but admits that they cared more for honor than money. Their religious observances were simple, differing in several points from those of Judea.

And we're going to see differing in almost every point from those of Judea, which becomes important.

The people of Galilee were specifically blames for neglecting the study of their language.

They didn't study Hebrew or Aramaic. They spoke Greek. Matthew who was a tax collector and a Levite—how's that for a profession?—had to speak Greek as he was collecting taxes for the Greek-speaking rulers.

Especially with absurd mal-pronunciations, sometimes leading to ridiculous mistakes. Thus there was general contempt in rabbinical circles for all that was in Galilee.

Did we just not read that? Shall a Prophet arise out of Galilee?

The Galileans were easily recognizable by their dialect and tone, as seen by the detection of Peter as one of Christ's disciples. The name was applied by way of reproach to early Christians.

from: *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*:

In Galilee there is rabbinical evidence that in the First Century A.D. customs prevailed in Galilee, which were not current in other parts of Palestine. For example, in Galilee a newly married pair were permitted to be alone on their wedding night. There was differences in the rights of widows and with regard to the Day of Atonement. In Galilee no work was done the day before Passover. And the festival may actually been observed a day earlier.

So there we have they were 14th-keeping Passover people in Galilee. What were the main ones in Jerusalem? *The 15th-keeping!* There is a division right there. You can see one of the reasons why Jesus was brought up in that area.

The Pharisees considered Galilee's olive oil richly impure and the Galileans refused to accept Pharisaical rule.

Not only in meats, but in other things, as we will see. It makes some comparisons between the Pharisees and the Essenes:

The variations in customs might be accounts for by them being unlettered conservative arrogance.

What was it said of Peter when he was brought before the Sanhedrin? *You're an unlearned man!* What was it said about Jesus? *He was not taught in any of our schools!* {see sermon: *Jesus was not a Pharisee*}

On the other hand, some of the Galileans suggest a more conservative Pharisaical school of Shemi in contrast to the School of Hillel, whose rulings became dominate. That's only in the sense where they followed the Scriptures. There is no evidence that Jesus adhered to a Galilean religious part.

As late as the time of the Maccabees—167 B.C.—the Jewish element was small in Galilee.

So, we don't have a lot of Jews in Galilee at that time. That's another reason. Where there are not great numbers of Jews, you don't have the religious schools and you don't have the religious parties.

And it was recorded further when Simon's expedition was reduced still further when there was a war as recorded in First Maccabees 5. The region was not governed by Jews any time after 734 B.C. until 80 B.C, when Alexander Jannes subdued this Gentile region and attempted to Judaize the population.

What I want to emphasize here is that they were not Judaized with the Pharisaical religion. That becomes important.

They were also called Galilee of the Gentiles.

Let's read a prophecy of Christ's ministry in Galilee. We are going to see that the greater portion of Jesus' ministry was in Galilee, *not in Jerusalem!* And there's a reason for it.

Isaiah 9:1: "Yet there *will be* no gloom for her who *was* in anguish, *as in* the former time. He afflicted the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali... [which is part of what is called *Galilee*.]"

...but in the latter time He will glorify the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.... [Here's the prophecy of Jesus' ministry]:The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light... [Isn't that what Jesus said? *I am the Light of the world!*] ...they who dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them the light has shined" (vs 1-2).

Isaiah 60—another prophecy of the same thing; talking about the ministry of Christ. As a matter of fact, when I read this I think of *The Messiah*, because this is one of the oratories in *The Messiah*.

Isaiah 60:1 "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you, for behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness *the* people; but the LORD shall arise upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you. And the Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising" (vs 1-3). That's talking about the first and the second coming of Christ. He was the 'great Light' at that time.

Continuing in this article: The taxes of Herodian Galilee supported an extensive building program under Herod the Great and the Herod Antipas. Impressive public buildings were erected reflecting Hellenist culture, such as vast gymnasiums, theaters, hippodromes as well as entire new cities.

Sounds like today—doesn't it?

The data on the population are fragmentary and intricate, but a reasonable estimate for the first century would find 350 Galileans, including a large slave element and about 100,000 Jews largely Hellenized.

What does 'Hellenized' mean? *The primary language at that time was the universal Greek Koine language*, which was the language that the New Testament was written in. Anyone who comes along with the nonsense that it was all written in Aramaic first, don't have a leg to stand on.

Although Jews spoke Aramaic with some local accent.

The religion worship in this northern Gentile region was related to many popular cults which had spread from around the Mediterranean.

They had their different pagan religions up there also.

Likewise, synagogues were to be found throughout Galilee, not only in towns primarily Jewish like Capernaum, but also in towns primarily Gentile like Sephorus.

Then it talks about the different synagogues. What we get from all of this was that Aryan Galileans were actually renegades as far as Jerusalem was concerned. We're going to talk a little bit about Mary and little bit about why Jesus was born the way that He was born and so forth.

Luke 1:26: "And in the sixth month *of her pregnancy*, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a **city of Galilee**, named Nazareth." Surely there were virgins in Jerusalem, but God did not come to a virgin in Jerusalem. Why? *Probably would be so steeped in Pharisaism and tradition that it would be impossible to keep Christ from that influence!* So, Christ had to be raised in a Scripturalist environment, and that God the Father was the One Who taught Him.

Verse 27: "To a virgin betrothed [engaged] to a man whose name *was* Joseph... [Generally there was a one-year engagement period. I'm sure that this was true in this case. It also had to be a legal and a lawful betrothal—correct?] ...of *the* lineage of David; and the name of the virgin *was* Mary." In Greek and in Spanish it is *Maria*. In Hebrews it is 'Miriam.' Miriam was the name of the sister of Moses.

Verse 28: "And after coming to her, the angel said, 'Hail, you who are highly favored! The Lord *is* with you; blessed *are* you among women.' But when she saw *him*, she was *greatly* perplexed at his message, and was considering what kind of salutation this might be" (vs 28-29).

Of course, if just appeared in the middle of the room. Today we're used to watching television where we have all of this nonsense going on and people are beaming here and there from on galaxy to another, so in our mind we don't think anything of this. What if you're a 21-year-old virgin, young woman, and there you are in your house and you're betrothed to Joseph and obviously nothing is going on—no hanky-panky and all this sort of thing—and all of a sudden here is this man—who is an angel and appears as a man—and says, 'Highly favored are you, of the Lord.' You would kind of look up and say, 'I wonder what this is going on.'

Verse 30: "Then the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, because you have found grace with God; and behold, you shall conceive in *your* womb and give birth to a son; and you shall call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called *the* Son of *the* Highest; and *the* Lord God shall give Him the throne of David, His forefather" (vs 30-32).

(go to the next track)

Verse 33: "And He shall reign over the house of Jacob into the ages, and of His kingdom there shall be no end.' But Mary said to the angel, 'How shall this be, since I have not had sexual

relations with a man?” (vs 33-34). She knew where children came from. They were not dumb, ignorant people who knew nothing about anything, as most people like to portray them. When we get into modern times, you will understand why almost every movie concerning Jesus is just absolute ‘pittsville.’

Verse 35: “And the angel answered *and* said to her, ‘*The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you; and for this reason, the Holy One being begotten in you shall be called the Son of God.*’ The actual Greek there is ‘*gennomenon*’ which means *that which is being conceived*—present tense active indicative participle, *right at that present time*.

Verse 36: “Now behold, Elizabeth your kinswoman... [a cousin—a family affair] ...has also conceived a son in her old age...”

Let’s see some of the circumstances of how Mary and Joseph got to Bethlehem. They were forced to go there. Luke 2:1: “Now it happened in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. (This registration first occurred when Cyrenius was governor of Syria). Then all went to be registered, each **to his own city**” (vs 1-3)—to the city where he was born. *Joseph was born in Bethlehem*. Mary was of the line of David and also Joseph was of the line of David. The line of David through Mary’s account is handled in Luke 3 where it should read ‘the son-in-law’ God worked it out so that at the very last minute—no hanging around for anyone to figure out the prophecy.

Verse 4: “And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of *the city of Nazareth*, into Judea, to *the city of David* which is called Bethlehem, because he was from *the house and lineage of David*, to register himself along with Mary, who was betrothed to him as wife... [Once they are espoused, they are called ‘husband and wife’ until the espousal is over. That is why we are also called the ‘espoused wife of Christ’ as far as the Church is concerned.] ...*and* was great with child” (vs 4-5). She had to ride a camel or a donkey all the way from Nazareth to Bethlehem. The travel they had in those days must have been at least five days. Being pregnant she couldn’t ride very long, so she would have to ride a couple of hours and they would have to stop and take a break. Maybe she’d walk a little bit and then ride a little more. Finally, get there in about five days.

Not like today, we can get in the car and it can be 110° outside and turn on the air-conditioning and whiz down the highway and go a hundred miles to church and think nothing of it, and not have any expenditure and work. We do less work driving a car to go a hundred miles than we would to walk a half-mile. We just sit there. But this was a long trip.

Verse 6: “And it came to pass *that* during the *time* they were there, the days were fulfilled for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her son, the firstborn, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn” (vs 6-7). All of these things happened to Jesus so that no person can say, ‘Lord, You don’t know: You don’t know what it’s like to be homeless. You don’t know what it’s like to be born in a barn. You don’t know what it’s like to be beaten up and kicked and crucified. You don’t know what it’s like to be shot.’ Believe me, the nails in His hands were worse than some gunshot wounds. He went through every depravation!

Now we have the account of the shepherds, v 8: “Now *there* were shepherds in the same country, who were dwelling in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night.”—which could not be done in the winter. Then the announcement came.

After all of these things that happened, after the shepherds came and found them there, v 19: “But Mary stored up all these sayings, pondering *them* in her heart.” She wasn’t told all the facts as things were going along. She was told she was going to have a son, be supernaturally conceived. She didn’t know He was going to be born in Bethlehem. God knew it was. He took them up there and He was born. Here come the shepherds and said, ‘Angels talked to us and said the Savior is born.’ So, she kept all of these things in her heart.

Verse 20: “And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all *the* things that they had heard and seen, as it was said to them. Now, when eight days were fulfilled for circumcising the little child, His name was called Jesus, which *He* was named by the angel before He was conceived in the womb” (vs 20-21). Then they brought the offering and so forth and went on down to Nazareth.

Verse 39: “Now when they had completed all things according to the Law of *the Lord*... [not the *traditions of the fathers*; distinct understanding we need to remember] (they did it): ...according to the Law of *the Lord*... [*Scripturalism!*] ...they returned to Galilee, to their *own city*, Nazareth. And the little child grew and became strong in spirit, being filled with wisdom; and *the* grace of God was upon Him. Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years *old*, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the Feast” (vs 30-42).

I’ll call your attention Matt. 2 that when the wise men came they went to Herod and said, ‘Where’s the One Who is born King of the Jews?’ Herod said, ‘I don’t know about it. I haven’t had any children. What do you mean *who’s the king of the Jews?*’ Well, *we saw the star in the east and we*

followed it here. That star obviously had to be an angel. So, Herod said, 'Let's get all the priests over here and find out.' They said, 'Where is the Messiah to be born?' *Bethlehem!* So Herod said, 'You go to Bethlehem and you let us know, come back and tell us.' Apparently Joseph and Mary had already left Bethlehem, and the wise men went on down to Nazareth, because they followed the star where the angel was. After that all they had to do is head out north and go on back to from where they came in the east country.

Notice that Jesus chose all of those of the area of Galilee to be His apostles. Why? *Because in that area they were Scripturalists* in the main. That doesn't mean that there weren't those who followed traditions, but *tradition* there was of very low esteem and very low value. Jesus called fishermen—unlearned, uneducated, unschooled, non-Pharisaical, non-Sadducaical, non-Essenes. Ordinary people! Why? *Because Christ had to train them in the right way*, rather than have to go and unlearn all like the Apostle Paul did. The Apostle Paul had to be nearly beaten to pulp to get all of that out of him, and all the things that he went through to know that Pharisaism was wrong.

So, Jesus called Peter, Andrew, and He said to them, 'follow Me and I'll make you fishers of men.' They followed Him. They found the two brothers—James and John with their father Zebedee—right there on the Sea of Galilee mending their nets. Immediately they left the ship and their father and followed Jesus.

Notice where Jesus began His preaching, Matthew 4:23: "And Jesus went throughout all Galilee... [this is *the Light* that was prophesied in Zebulon and Naphtali] ...teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and every bodily ailment among the people." It didn't take very long for this information to get out—did it?

Verse 24: "Then His fame went out into all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were sick, oppressed by various diseases and torments, and possessed by demons, and lunatics, and paralytics; and He healed them. And great multitudes followed Him **from Galilee**, and Decapolis... [across the Jordan River] ... and Jerusalem... [How far did they have to go to find Jesus? *A long way!* A three to five day journey. He didn't go to Jerusalem right away.] ...and Judea, and beyond the Jordan" (vs 24-25).

Let's see the parallel account, and let's see what happened when Jesus went into the synagogue. We will see their reaction, even to the Scriptures. This is not to say that even though those in Galilee had an earnest piety, followed the Scriptures in the main, that they would necessarily agree with Jesus. But His fame went out everywhere.

Luke 4:14: "Then Jesus returned... [from the temptation of Satan the devil] ...in the power of the Spirit to Galilee; and word about Him went out into the entire country around. And He taught in their synagogues, *and* was glorified by all. And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and according to His custom, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day and stood up to read" (vs 14-16). This is following the instructions that Ezra gave on the reading of the Scriptures in the synagogue.

Verse 17: "And there was given Him *the* book of the prophet Isaiah; and when He had unrolled the scroll, He found the place where it was written, '*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me...* [This is why they were angry at Him; He was standing there telling them that these things were fulfilled that day in their ears.] ...for this reason, He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to *the* poor; He has sent Me to heal those who are brokenhearted, to proclaim pardon to *the* captives and recovery of sight to *the* blind, to send forth in deliverance those who have been crushed, to proclaim *the* acceptable year of *the* Lord.' And after rolling up the scroll *and* delivering it to the attendant, He sat down; and the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on Him. Then He began to say to them, '**Today, this Scripture is being fulfilled in your ears**'" (vs 17-21).

This is quite a statement—isn't it? That is really quite a statement! Especially when you compare this with Isa. 61 where He read this Scripture. This is the reason why the Jews did not accept Jesus as their Messiah when they should have, because they expected Jesus to rise up as a military man to defeat the Romans, to save them from the Romans and that *they* would make Him the king—according to *their* terms.

Isaiah 61:1: "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me because the LORD has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to preach the acceptable year of the LORD... [and that's where He stopped] (and here's what the Jews expected Him to continue to do): ...and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn" (vs 1-2)—to destroy the enemy. God sent them into captivity by having the Romans occupy the land and rule it—*because of their sins*. So, there would be no vengeance until they repented of their sins.

Now, let's come back to Luke 4:20: "And after rolling up the scroll *and* delivering it to the attendant, He sat down; and the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on Him. Then He began to say to them, 'Today, this Scripture is being fulfilled in your ears.' And all bore witness to Him and were amazed at the words of grace that were coming out

of His mouth; and they said, 'Is not this the son of Joseph?' And He said to them, 'Surely, you will say this parable to Me: "Physician, heal Yourself! Whatever we have heard being done in Capernaum, do also here in Your *own* country.'" But He said, 'Truly I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his *own* country. For in truth...' (vs 20-25).

Here's why they got angry at Him. Here's what really set them on end. Remember when the centurion came to Jesus and said to Jesus, 'My daughter is dying, but You just give the word and I know that You can heal her.' He said, 'I have not found such great faith in all Israel.' And this is what set them on end here in this case, too.

"...I say to you, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up for three years and six months, and there was great famine upon all the land; and Elijah was not sent to any of them, but only to a widow in Sarepta, a city of Sidonia.... [a Gentile! So, they got all mad!] ...There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them were cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.'" (vs 25-27).

Of all who was healed *the hated general who conquered Israel* and took them off into captivity. God healed him. Naaman had his little problem, because he came to Elijah and said, 'What are you going to do for me?' *Well, you know, go bathe in the Jordan seven times.* 'Why should I do that, we have better rivers in Syria than we do at the Jordan.' So, Naaman the general's servant said, 'Look, is it any great thing that he asks you to go dip yourself seven times in the Jordan? I know we have these rivers up here, but go do it.' He did it and he was cleaned—cleansed of his leprosy. This is a great insult. Does this not also tie in to Jerusalem, in a sense that he began His ministry in Galilee and He's doing the same thing to Jerusalem that Elijah and Elisha did to the people of Israel in not going to their own people? In these cases going to the Gentiles. So, you see the irony in this.

Verse 28: "Now all in the synagogue... [Because Jesus as much as said, 'Since you don't believe Me there aren't going to be any miracles done here.' So, they got all mad! Then He added insult by saying about the two Gentiles there.] ...who heard these things were filled with indignation. And they rose up *and* cast Him out of the city, and led Him to the edge of the mountain on which their city was built, in order to throw Him down headlong; but He passed *safely* through their midst *and* departed" (vs 28-30). He just ducked out of the way and no one knew where He was. I don't know if He blinded them like the angels did to the Sodomites when they came to get the two angels there in Lot's day or not.

Verse 31: "Then He went down to

Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath Days. And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with **authority**" (vs 31-32). We're going to see that's going to be so vitally important when we get into Matt. 5-7.

We have understood Matt. 5-7 about 80% in the past. But when we get done with this I hope we understand it a little more closely—say to 95%. I don't think there's any time where we're going to come to a point that we say we know everything we ought to know about everything. Only God does!

- This shows you why Galilee was chosen.
- This shows you the background as to the seeds to rejection of Pharisaism were sown beginning with John the Baptist and all the way down through the ministry of Christ.

This is going to be important for us to understand the background as to what happened in the book of Acts.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Luke 24:44-45
- 2) 2 Timothy 3:15-17
- 3) 2 Peter 1:20-21
- 4) 2 Peter 3:15-16
- 5) Luke 1:80
- 6) Luke 16:16-17
- 7) John 1:19-21
- 8) Deuteronomy 18:15-16, 18-19
- 9) John 6:13-14
- 10) John 7:40-53
- 11) Isaiah 9:1-2
- 12) Isaiah 60:1-3
- 13) Luke 1:26-36
- 14) Luke 2:1-8, 19-21, 39-42
- 15) Matthew 4:23-25
- 16) Luke 4:14-21
- 17) Isaiah 61:1-2
- 18) Luke 4:20-32

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Luke 1:6
- Matthew 5-7
- Malachi
- Luke 3
- Matthew 2

Also referenced:

Books:

- *Young's Dictionary of the Bible*
- *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*

Sermons:

- *What Would It Be Like to be in the Church of the Pharisees?*
- *Jesus was not a Pharisee*

Scripturalism vs Judaism IV

Why Jesus Never Was a Pharisee

The reason that I chose the title *Scripturalism vs Judaism* is so that everyone will know that I'm not against Jews as people. To illustrate that I need to give you this example: The account goes something like this:

Belinda Davis—who attends our congregation—knows a mutual counselor in the Workman's Rehabilitation Compensation Program—which in California, by the way, is a tremendous mess—but nevertheless she was commenting on how many counselors there are in this profession that are Jewish. She has a co-worker, or at least a co-worker once removed, who is the daughter of two Jewish parents, and she was born in Israel. In the conversation that Belinda had with her, she announced that she was Muslim and married to a Pakistani. You talk about a mixed up world.

When Belinda asked her how that happened, she said that one day in Israel she was standing outside the synagogue on a cold, windy and dusty day, with the wind blowing like crazy, and all the men were inside the synagogue and all the women were outside the synagogue, because they couldn't go *in* the synagogue. She said 'phooey with Judaism' so to speak. So, she does not want to be called a Jew because, even though she's a genetic Jew, she is not a *practicing Judaizer* or she doesn't practice *Judaism*. She wants to be called an Israeli who is of the Muslim faith. Just a little aside: This book *The Origins of Christianity and Judaism* also takes credit for Mohammedism.

The reason that I call this *Scripturalism vs Judaism* is that I do not want anyone who is a Jew or who knows a Jew personally to think that I am hostile or against them. Just like a person could not help it if one of their relatives happened to be a mass-murderer. That does not condemn you because you're a relative of that person, unless you were out there helping to commit the murders—or whatever the case may be.

God has called us *out of the world, we are to come out of the world!* In coming out of the world, even John the Baptist told those Jews of his time, 'Do not say that we are Abraham's seed.' The long and the short of it is it doesn't matter who you were before God called you, or what you were before God called you. Even Job had to realize and understand that all of the good things he did he had to repent of. Why? *Because the good that we do in the world is not the good that comes from God!*

Let's get into this one today: *Why Jesus Never Was a Pharisee*. As I mentioned, everyone

sends me everything. I've got one here, and this is a man that I knew years ago, Keith Hutt. He puts out a little magazine called *The Truth of the Matter*. Here is another one that was sent to me earlier, *Yeshua was an Orthodox Jew*.

Remember when we went through the series *The Covenants* where it was proclaimed the Jesus was Jewish. Jesus lived in a Jewish home. Jesus grew up in a Pharisaical synagogue. Everything that Jesus did was Jewish through and through—thoroughly. Part of that leads to this:

Here's an article from *The Truth of the Matter*:

Most people today when they read this Scripture... [Matt. 23:1-3] ...fail to realize the full impact of what was written. Yeshua was actually preaching to His disciples and He said that He wanted them to obey the religious instructions and laws, which the Pharisees taught. Just because there were some Pharisees who abused their positions as leaders, does not mean that the Pharisees as a sect were wrong in their teachings. Nor does it dismiss that Yeshua clearly said to observe and do whatever they say.

I'll just mention here that if you have a *New American Standard Version* of the Bible, it says, 'they have seated themselves down in Moses seat.' We'll cover that when we get to it.

Yeshua was not giving a bad piece of advice here when He said to follow the Pharisees' teachings.

But if you will look at it carefully, the scribes come first, don't they—'scribes and Pharisees.'

He was giving the conditions that each person must meet in order to keep His words and be His disciples.

How can you be His disciples if you follow the Pharisees?

Neither were the Pharisees unrighteous people. They were, as Yeshua said, the one's who sat in Moses seat. They had the right teachings on the Law of Moses, and were Biblically correct in their religious beliefs, practices and teachings. In fact, even Yeshua—or Jesus—Himself was a Pharisee.

Now you know what I'm getting into, brethren. Because, when you understand the background of all the things, this is going to really make a lot of sense to you. Anyone who says that

Jesus was not a Pharisee in any way, the articles call you an anti-Semite. Is that not the same thing that happens today? *Yes!*

Just to project forward a little bit in the book that Carl Franklin just researched, he found out the origin of anti-Semitism. What do you suppose the origin of anti-Semitism is? *The Christian church rejecting the teachings of the Pharisees* way back when! So, they scream bloody murder when anyone raises an eyebrow.

What people have done down through time is misunderstood and though Yeshua did not like the Pharisees or their religion. This attitude, however, is merely another form of anti-Semitism, people who go around putting down the Pharisees and hide behind Yeshua. Those who do it are only doing so because they hate Jews.

Not so! What did Jesus say when He was on the cross: *Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!*

You see that Yeshua was perfectly in unity with them. The Orthodox of today even still call themselves Hasidim as did the Pharisees just before the Maccabees. So to say that Yeshua was a Pharisee is the same thing that He was a Hasidic Jew or an Orthodox Jew. He lived an Orthodox Jewish life. He commanded His disciples to live an Orthodox Jewish life. That command still holds for us today. The fact that Yeshua, Paul and the other apostles attended synagogue services shows that they were Pharisee or Orthodox.

This brings us to the development of Orthodox Judaism. As time went on, the Pharisees became known as Orthodox Jews. Orthodox Judaism was the only sect of Judaism until more recent centuries when the reform and the conservative Judaism came about.

That is blatant total ignorance historically.

The apostles were those who had the full truth of Yahweh in their day, but even they did not cease to call themselves Pharisees.

Paul did say, 'I'm a Pharisee' (Acts 23). But he totally renounced it in Philipp. 3. The reason he said 'I'm a Pharisee' was to divide the delegation, which came from Jerusalem to try and get him killed when he came before the king. He wasn't saying that he was a 'practicing' Pharisee. The article ends with these words:

The apostles were orthodox, Messianic Jews and likewise, Yeshua's true

followers still must be today Orthodox Messianic Jews. If you're not an Orthodox Messianic Jew—one of them, part of their group—you are not a true follower of Jesus Christ.

Here's another article (from *The Truth of the Matter*):

Likewise, Yeshua was a Pharisee and when He saw the Pharisees not living up to what He taught, He came down on them the hardest. He did this because they were His brethren. He felt closer to them, and even loved them more than any other people.

Are we not special?

Also, they had the Truth and Yeshua understood that the Pharisees who were sinning knew better than to do what they were doing against Yahweh's law. People cannot see this. What people have done down through time is misunderstood and thought that Yeshua did not like the Pharisees or their religion. This attitude however is merely another form of anti-Semitism. People who go around putting down the Pharisees hide behind Yeshua to do it and are only doing it because they hate the Jews.

I've got all kinds of stuff. I'm way over prepared for these sermons. I'll leave a lot of the reading up to you.

Who was Jesus really? I'm going to make a statement here, and I don't want anyone to be offended. ***Jesus was not a religious Jew, practicing Judaism!*** He was of the tribe of Judah, the house of David. That, we will see, will be a distinct difference.

We're going to show today that Jesus Christ ***is not, could not have been, never would have been a Pharisee!*** Jesus never joined any of their religious parties. Jesus was never taught by them. That's why He chose Mary. Where? *Nazareth!* Where? *In Galilee!* We're going to understand some of these Scriptures a little bit more clearly as we go through today.

John 3:31: "He Who comes from above is above all. The one who is of the earth is earthy, and speaks of the earth. He Who comes from heaven is above all; and what He has seen and heard, this is *what* He testifies; but no one receives His testimony. The one who has received His testimony **has set his seal that God is true...** [and you might put 'All men are liars!'] ...for He Whom God has sent speaks the words of God..." (vs 31-34). I challenge anyone who believes that Jesus was a Pharisee. You show me one place in the Bible where He ever gave a

command that the Pharisees gave and said we're to follow what they commanded us to do.

Verse 34: "For He Whom God has sent speaks the words of God... [Did the Pharisees speak the words of God? *No! They added all their own traditions on top of it and isolated it!*] ...and God gives not the Spirit by measure *unto Him*. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. The one who believes in the Son has everlasting life; but the one who does not obey the Son shall not see life, for the wrath of God remains on him" (vs 34-36).

John 8:23: "And He [Jesus] said to them, 'You are from beneath... [Who is speaking to? *The religionists! The Pharisees! The Sadducees! The scribes! The whole bunch!*] ...I am from above.... [never had a part with them] ...You are of this world; **I am not of this world**. That is why I said to you that you shall die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I AM, you shall die in your sins" (vs 23-24). One of the things that many of the churches today are proclaiming is that the Jews can have salvation through *their* law. Did you know that? That's what the Jews have always held. That's what they've always claimed, but **that is not true!**

John 7:15—this is when Jesus went up in the temple and taught: "And the Jews were amazed, saying, 'How does this man know letters, having never been schooled?'.... [One thing I've understood in all the research that I've done is that all the Pharisaical schools were in Jerusalem. That's where they were.] (So, when it says): ...having never been schooled [learned]'"

He didn't learn at their hands. If Jesus was a Pharisee, surely He had to have been taught by Pharisees—correct? Then He would have been accepted by them. We're going to see that Satan offered that to Him. We're going to look at a Scripture that we've looked at I don't know how many times. When we look at it this time, we're going to really understand the full import of what it means.

Verse 16: "Jesus answered them and said, 'My doctrine is not Mine, but His Who sent Me.... [So therefore, God the Father was a Pharisee—huh? Is that right?] ...If anyone desires to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it is from God, or *whether* I speak from My own self. The one who speaks of himself is seeking his own glory; but He Who seeks the glory of Him Who sent Him is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. **Did not Moses give you the Law, and not one of you is practicing the Law?....**'" Who is He talking to? *Pharisees, scribes, Sadducees*—the people who were there!

John 5—You know the account. There was a man who was impotent for 38 years. Jesus healed

him and told him to pick up his bedroll and walk. He picked it up and walked and was carrying it on the Sabbath Day and the Jews accused Him of commanding the man to break the Sabbath.

John 5:16: "And for this cause, the Jews persecuted Jesus and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on a Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, 'My Father is working until now, and I work.'" (vs 16-17).

Let's put that in modern day terminology in relationship to the Pharisees. Did you know that an Orthodox Jew will not light a stove. He will not turn on an electric light. If you go to the so-called 'Holy Land' today you will come into an elevator and you will see a Jew standing there waiting. They will ask you to push the button for the floor to which they want to go, because they carry the 'not work' to the total extreme. If they ran the universe, instead of God, every Sabbath they would shut the sun down. You would turn it off because the sun is still working—isn't it? Energy is still going—isn't it? *Yes, it is!*

- Is God, on the Sabbath Day, working to uphold the universe? *Yes!*
- Is it lawful and legal for God to work on the Sabbath to uphold the universe? *Yes!*
- Is it the kind of work that we would do? *No! We don't have that capacity!*
- Is it not a greater thing to heal a man on the Sabbath Day?
- Is that not a work?

This is what He's talking about; the kind of work to heal and to restore! So, it blew their minds!

Verse 18: "So then, on account of this *saying*, the Jews sought all the more to kill Him... [I'll tell you today, brethren, this is the same *craw* that is stuck in Judaism's throat to this day! **Because He was the Son of God!**]...not only because He had loosed the Sabbath... [according to *their* traditions. He didn't break the Sabbath! He didn't sin once!] ...but also **because He had called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.**" The Jews cannot fathom that to this day.

Verse 19: "Therefore, Jesus answered and said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, the Son has no power to do anything of Himself, but only what He sees the Father do....'" It's interesting, because this is a present tense participle verb in the Greek which means *whatsoever He is seeing the Father doing, that is what He is doing likewise*. He saw the Father. The Father taught Him. It's interesting that these things are in the book of John—isn't it? *Yes, it is!*

John 8:27: "*But* they did not know that He was speaking to them of the Father.... [If they knew

the Father before then, why didn't they understand it?] ...Then Jesus said to them, 'When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you yourselves shall know that I AM, and *that* I do nothing of Myself. But **as the Father taught Me**, these things I speak'" (vs 27-28).

Let's go to something very, very important concerning Jesus never having been a Pharisee. We're going to see after we're done here that Satan tried to get Him to be one. One of Jesus' temptations was only a temptation of the kind that we have understood and also of a kind of temptation that we have not understood.

Verse 40: "'But now you seek to kill Me, a man who has spoken the Truth to you... [that's generally what gets you in trouble] ...which I have heard from God... [He heard this from God the Father] ...Abraham did not do this. You are doing the works of your father.' Then they said to Him, 'We have not been born of fornication.... [The same thing they teach today, absolutely, without a doubt!] ...We have one Father, *and that is* God.' Therefore, Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love Me...'" (vs 40-42)—which means that *if* Jesus were a Pharisee He could not love God!

John 5:36: "But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works that the Father gave Me to complete, the *very* works that I am doing, themselves bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. And the Father Himself, Who sent Me, has borne witness of Me. You have neither heard His voice nor seen His form at any time. And **you do not have His Word dwelling in you**, for you do not believe Him Whom He has sent. You search the Scriptures, for in them you think that you have eternal life; and they are the ones that testify of Me. But you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life. I do not receive glory from men; but I have known you, that **you do not have the love of God in yourselves**" (vs 36-42).

Those are pretty strong words, brethren! Those are powerful words. And I tell you, for anyone in Judaism, it sets them right on edge! I'll state it here right now—and I don't care if it offends anybody—***Judaism is a 'religion of denial' of the fact of the existence of Christ!*** They are fighting us today to destroy us any way they can, and I will prove that if you have the patience to bear with me through all of this series! If you don't, then you have to ask: Are you intellectually honest? Jesus said, 'I gave the Truth to you. I didn't come of Myself, but He sent Me.'

John 8:43: "Why don't you understand My speech? Because you cannot *bear* to hear My words.... [Why can you not hear?] ...**You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you desire to practice....**" (vs 43-44). What is the

origin of Judaism? *A perversion of the Truth of God by Satan the devil!* The inner-sanctum of Judaism is cabalism where they worship of the devil! Those are strong words, and some people are going to get madder than chickens thrown into the water. But just like chickens thrown into the water, they're cackling and running and screaming so much they don't have time to think.

"...He was a murderer from *the* beginning, and has not stood in the Truth because there is no Truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he is speaking from his own *self*; for he is a liar, and the father of it" (v 44). So therefore, if Jesus became a Pharisee He would have to become a liar. If He were taught in Pharisaical schools, He would have been taught Pharisaical lies. Do you understand why He was kept up north? Do you understand why He only visited Jerusalem and did not live in Jerusalem?

Verse 45: "And because I speak the Truth, you do not believe Me.... [Same thing today, exactly!] ...Which *one* of you can convict Me of sin? But if I speak *the* Truth, why don't you believe Me? The one who is of God hears the words of God. For this reason you do not hear, because you are not of God" (vs 45-46).

(go to the next track)

Verse 47: "The one who is of God hears the words of God. For this reason **you do not hear, because you are not of God.**"

Again, since we read this about the Orthodox Pharisee and the so-called sacred names, I'll just give a little summary:

1. The only pure sacred language that could ever have been, if you want to argue about sacred languages, is the one that God gave to Adam and Eve when He created it in their minds—right? You would have to say that would be the only one—correct? No one knows what that language was.
2. At the Tower of Babel God created all languages—didn't He?

So therefore, all languages are sacred languages—aren't they? Have to be because God created them!—if you want to use that reasoning. That's why when God calls people of different nations and different languages He does not require them to use Hebrew names, and He reduced it to the simplest forms of 'Our Father'—because He is our Father—and Jesus Christ—the Son of God. The reason He did that was to make sure that Pharisaism did not take over the Church.

Was Jesus a Jew in the sense that He was a *practicing 'religious' Jew*. Jesus sure enough was of the tribe of Judah, who we know later of the

descendants of Judah became to be called Jews. But Jesus was strictly pronounced—prophesied about—in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament called *the Son of God; the Son of man; the Son of David*. That becomes important because the house of David, in a special covenant and blessing with God and from God, that the rest of the Jews did not have—correct? *Yes, indeed!* It was prophesied that out of the stem of Jesse—who was the father of David... (Isa. 1).

Matthew 12:22: “Then was brought to Him one who was possessed by a demon, blind and dumb; and He healed him, so that the one *who had been* blind and dumb both spoke and saw. And the multitudes were all amazed, and said, ‘**Is this the Son of David?**’.... [They knew *who and where* the Messiah was to come from—correct? *Yes, indeed!*] ...But when the Pharisees... [Did Jesus agree with them or they with Him? *No!*] ...heard *this*, they said, ‘**This man does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, prince of the demons**’” (vs 22-24). Brethren, if Jesus were a Pharisee He would have had to been a follower of the devil. Did He, at any time, follow the devil? *NO!* Did Satan offer it to him? *Yes!*

Matthew 21—this is when He was coming into Jerusalem. This is what angered—oh, this upset and put on edge—the Pharisees, the scribes and Sadducees on edge! Matthew 21:9: “And the multitudes, those who were going before and those who were following behind, were shouting, saying, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!.... [a well-known fact; it had to be publicly known fact] ...Blessed is He Who comes in *the* name of *the* Lord. Hosanna in the highest!’ Now, when He entered Jerusalem, the entire city was moved, saying, ‘Who is this?’ And the multitudes said, ‘This is Jesus the prophet, the one Who *is* from Nazareth of Galilee’” (vs 9-11). When you’re in Jerusalem, I tell you it’s like going down South and singing *Yankee Doodle Dandy* and asking them to *take down the Confederate flag!*

Verse 15: “But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children shouting in the temple and saying, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David,’ they were indignant, and said to Him, ‘Do You hear what they are saying?’ Then Jesus said to them, ‘Yes! Have you never read, “Out of *the* mouths of little children and infants You have perfected praise?”’” (vs 15-16). The Son of David!

Now He really gets them. This galls them to no end! Notice who He was talking to, Matthew 22:41: “While the Pharisees were assembled together, Jesus questioned them, saying, ‘What do you think concerning the Christ? Whose son is He?’ They said to Him, ‘*The Son of David.*’.... [They all knew—didn’t they? *Yes, they did!*] ...He said to

them...” (vs 41-43). He’s going to throw them a curveball. This is like a rookie coming up against one of the greatest pitchers in the world; his first at bat in the major leagues and he gets struck-out looking at him.

“...‘How then does David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, “The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet’”? Therefore, if David calls Him Lord, how is He his Son?’ And no one was able to answer Him a word, neither dared anyone from that day to question Him anymore” (vs 43-46). If He was a Pharisee should He not have revealed that to them so that they would know?

Now I’m going to read to you from part of this booklet called *David’s Greater Son* by Howard Rand (destinypublishers.com):

(pg 10): It would be well here to perhaps qualify the distinctions which should always be made in the use of terms. Judah, as already pointed out, was one of the twelve sons of Jacob. In this use of term, it merely designates a man whose name was Judah. Later the families and descendants of each of the twelve sons of Jacob bore the name of that son as a tribal distinction. So, the posterity of Judah became known as the tribe of Judah; that is the family or clan of Judah.

David’s father’s house was one of the families of this tribe. In selecting David to be anointed king, God chose a family out of the tribe of Judah to be separated from the clan of Judah and became the royal house, which was to furnish rulers for his people. The remaining families of the tribe of Judah became known as the house of Judah.

You’ve got the house of Israel, the house of Judah, and the house of David.

Thus we see that the tribe of Judah was divided into two houses, the house of David and the house of Judah. Three houses therefore emerged as a result of the selection, separation and organization of the descendants of Jacob. The ten-tribe northern kingdom, the house of Israel, consisted of ten tribes, each named after a son a Jacob. Levi, the priestly tribe, remained separate from all of these houses for men of this tribe were scattered about all Israel, officiated in their priestly and Levitical capacity among all tribes.

As will be shown later, Benjamin, one of the tribes of the house of Israel, was loaned to the house of David and along with the house of Judah, remained loyal to

the throne of David when the rest of the house of Israel revolted, setting up a government of their own in Samaria. This occurred at the time of the division of the kingdoms: the northern kingdom, the house of Israel; and the southern kingdom, the house of Judah in the year 970_{B.C.}

At the end of the 70-year captivity of the Babylonian captivity, a remnant of the house of Judah returned to Palestine with the tribe of Benjamin and some of the royal descendants of David as well as a few of the tribe of Levi. This group constituted the nation of the Jews, even though all were not Jews—by racial house of Judah line... [that is the sons of Judah].... The Benjaminites were a separate tribe in Israel and therefore not Jews. The royal seed were of the house of David and, therefore, not Jews. The priests were of the tribe of Levi and, therefore, not Jews.

After the return from Babylon, certain ones of the house of Judah and some of the priests inner-married with the inhabitants of the land.

It covers the religion of the Samaritans. Then it goes into discussing some of the results of the inner-marriage there. Some of the things I agree with, some of the things I don't agree with and so forth. But just to show that we're not the only ones that understand that.

Let's look at something very important. In this booklet he brings out something, which I think is pretty important. We're going to compare the genealogy of Christ in relationship to Christ, in relationship to Mary, in relationship to Joseph.

Matthew 1:17: "So then, all the generations from Abraham to David *were* fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the carrying away to Babylon to the Christ, fourteen generations." We will do a little bit of straightening out of one little section in Matt. 1 concerning the lineage of Mary.

Luke 3:23—this is the lineage of Joseph going all the way back: "And Jesus Himself began *to be* about thirty years *old*, being, as was supposed, *the* son of Joseph, *the son-in-law* of Eli." You will notice in the *King James* the 'son of' in the Greek, so in the in English is in italics. It means that **Joseph was of Eli [Heli]**. Then it goes all the way down through all the generations (vs 24-30) until:

Verse 31—the last part: "...*the son of* Nathan, *the son of* David." So, **Joseph was of the house of David**. We know that Joseph was not Jesus' father, because Jesus was conceived of the

Holy Spirit. The father of Joseph was Eli [Heli].

Now we come back to the genealogy leading up to Jesus, Matthew 1:15: "And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob; and **Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary...**" (vs 15-16).

How could the father of Joseph be Jacob when it says that he was Eli [Heli] (Luke 3:23)? Verse 16 says "and Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary."

What we have here is, if we have it this way then we only have 13 generations down to Christ. Now let's do a little counting. This is the only way we know. If Joseph was actually the son of Eli, he could not be the son of Jacob. So, we have a strange twist of fate or fact that **the father of Mary was also the same name as the one she married, being Joseph.**

Matthew 1:11: "And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren at *the time* of the carrying away to Babylon." Jechonias is already counted once. You cannot count Jechonias twice.

Verse 12: and after the captivity in Babylon, Jechonias... [already counted] ...begat ⁽¹⁾Salathiel; and Salathiel begat ⁽²⁾Zorobabel; and Zorobabel begat ⁽³⁾Abiud; and Abiud begat ⁽⁴⁾Eliakim; and Eliakim begat ⁽⁵⁾Azor; and Azor begat ⁽⁶⁾Sadoc; and Sadoc begat ⁽⁷⁾Achim; and Achim begat ⁽⁸⁾Eliud; and Eliud begat ⁽⁹⁾Eleazar; and Eleazar begat ⁽¹⁰⁾Matthan; and Matthan begat ⁽¹¹⁾Jacob; and Jacob begat ⁽¹²⁾**Joseph the husband of Mary...** (vs 12-16).. You cannot have two fathers for Joseph—you can only have one and his name was Eli. So it should be the father of Mary. {the names may be spelled differently with different translations}

If we say it's the husband of Mary instead of the father, then we have Jesus as #13 instead of #14. So, it should be that Joseph was the father of Mary, so Mary is #13 and Jesus is #14 of the house of David.

Mr. Rand brought this out in this booklet *David's Greater Son*, which I think is quite valid when we understand it that way. He was of the house of David.

All things have to balance out. The key there is in this particular section of Matt. 1 is if you count Jacob, the father of Joseph—then you have two fathers for Joseph. If you count him as the husband, rather than the father, then you only have thirteen generations. It is the term for *man*—'aner'—can mean either one.

Matthew 4:1—this is right after he was baptized: "Then Jesus was led up into the wilderness by the Spirit in order to be tempted by the devil." I saw a picture of this area of the wilderness and it's

really amazing. They have stones, which look like loaves of bread; all over, they just cover the ground—it's amazing! When the devil says to make these into bread, there it is all right out there.

Verse 2: "And when He had fasted *for* forty days and forty nights, afterwards He was famished. And when the tempter came to Him, he said, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.' But He answered *and* said, 'It is written... [Jesus was a *Scripturalist*! He was the Word, the living Word of God; He believed in the Scriptures. He inspired the Scriptures.] ...'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of *the* mouth of God'" (vs 2-4). *Scripturalism*! This is the whole theme of the whole book of Matthew. We're going to find that that's what it is.

Verse 5: "Then the devil took Him to the Holy city and set Him upon the edge of the temple, and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, cast Yourself down; for it is written, "He shall give His angels charge concerning You, and they shall bear You up in *their* hands, lest You strike Your foot against a stone'" (vs 5-6). What else could have happened here? Where were they? *At the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem*—correct? What does it say about the Lord coming to His temple? What is the prophecy?

Satan the devil was offering to not only fulfill that Scripture, but if he would have cast Himself down and landed on His feet, what do you think Satan would have proclaimed? *He would have proclaimed Him as the Messiah* and could have fulfilled:

Malachi 3:1: "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And **the Lord, Whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple**, even the Messenger of the covenant..." This was not just a temptation whether He would obey God or Satan. It was a temptation whether He would be the *true* Messiah or become the *false messiah*. Just think what Satan could have done if Jesus would have obeyed him.

What else did He say? And don't you think that all the scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees would have come around and said 'this is the Messiah'? *Yes, they would have!* He would have been the Messiah on Satan's terms. He would have then been part of the followers of Satan, of whom He said the scribes and Pharisees were. Then He would have testified on His own instead of God, and He would have been a false messiah. That's what the temptation was about. It never really dawned on me until I put the Scriptures together this way, going to John 8 and coming here and seeing that, yes, He was there at the temple. It would fulfill that Scripture that

'He suddenly came to His temple.' The priests would have said, 'Look at this, He just appeared out of nowhere.'

Matthew 4:7: "Jesus said to him, 'Again, it is written, "You shall not tempt *the* Lord your God.'" After that, the devil took Him to an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and said to Him, 'All these things will I give You, if You will fall down and worship me.'" (vs 7-9). We find in Luke 4 where He says, 'It is given to me and I give it whomsoever I will.'

One thing we've not understood, brethren, that Judaism was working on a universal type religion to take over the world at the time that Jesus came. We didn't know that, but we now have it in this book that was published in 1990—I don't have it, Carl has to send it to me.

- Jesus was offered the world
- He was offered *false* Messiahship!
- He was offered a *false* kingdom!

All of these things! If you worship Satan you become his son. *You are of your father the devil!* We need to understand how profound and serious this stuff was.

Verse 10: "Then Jesus said to him, 'Be gone, Satan! For it is written... [This is quoting what man shall do; that He's quote to Himself, because Satan will never worship God]: ...'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him alone shall you serve.'" Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and ministered to Him" (vs 10-11). Then Jesus shows His disciples and future apostles out of Galilee. I'll state again, the only apostle that was chosen out of Judea was Judas Iscariot. I'll read you some connection there with the priesthood. That's why he was able to get into the high priest and betray Jesus.

Verse 23: And Jesus went throughout all Galilee... [deliberately avoiding Jerusalem and Judea] ...teaching in their synagogues... [they probably had the greatest number of Scripturalists. That's not to say they didn't have the Pharisees there' they had some, I'm sure.] ...and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and every bodily ailment among the people. Then His fame went out into all Syria... [up into the north] ...and they brought to Him all who were sick, oppressed by various diseases and torments, and possessed by demons, and lunatics, and paralytics; and He healed them" (vs 23-24).

Again, something totally separate and different that He was doing. Why do you suppose the Pharisees said that He was 'doing this by Beelzebub'? *Because they couldn't do it!* Rather than admit that this came from God, so they could repent and follow Him, you deny it with a lie! That's

why He said they were on the verge of committing the unpardonable sin.

Verse 25: “And great multitudes followed Him from Galilee, and Decapolis... [on the east side of the Sea of Galilee from Jerusalem.] ...and Jerusalem, and Judea, and beyond the Jordan.” This presented a problem to the Pharisees. If there’s any one thing that the Jews have always done, always do and still do to this day, they use the politics of the nation that they reside in. You don’t do anything unless it’s done by their politics. We’ll see that Paul ran smack into the middle of that.

Matthew 5 becomes very important because Jesus is bringing out the most important thing concerning Scripturalism. This is why Matthew wrote it this way. Let’s understand something about Matthew. Matthew was a Levite—not practicing, by the way. He wasn’t at the temple, he was a—IRS agent—tax collector! Which means that he didn’t speak Aramaic or Hebrew to write it, because everything he had to do was done in Greek, because he had to report everything in Greek. That’s why the book of Matthew was written in Greek. In writing this, he is determining and establishing the teachings of Jesus of Scripturalism, plus the very meaning and spirit of everything that the Scriptures stood for.

Matthew 5:17: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.... [do not mean *do away with*] ...For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled” (vs 17-18).

Why did He have to say this? *Because the Jews considered their traditions of greater value than the Laws of God!* He was about to do away with all of their traditions and all of their teachings. But He wanted to make it absolutely clear He was not going to do away with the Laws of God.

Verse 19: “Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments [of God] and shall teach men so, shall be called **least** in the Kingdom of Heaven... [in the Greek *less than nothing*; if you’re less than nothing then you don’t exist, because even a zero is a number] ...but whoever shall practice and teach *them*, this one shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. For **I say to you**, unless your righteousness shall **exceed the righteousness** of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way *that* you shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven” (vs 19-20).

Did Jesus practice Pharisaism? *Absolutely not!* He wouldn’t make it into the Kingdom of God. How could He ever preach it? *Couldn’t!* He said this for two reasons:

1. He’s going to do away with all of the their

teachings and He’s going to strip back those traditions from the Law!

2. He’s going to show what the Law really means!

Next time I’m going to read from the *Code of Jewish Law* some of the things that are absolutely ridiculous! What kind of righteousness is God giving us through Christ? *The righteousness of Christ!* Does that exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees? *Yes, indeed!*

Now let’s see how that is applied, because it has to be from the heart. Let’s go John 14 because I want to cover something that is most fundamental to Christianity. This is one we will come to time and time again and will help us to understand more and more of what God wants us to do.

John 14:15: “If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments.” The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was *keep the Law!* Today, a lot of Churches of God say *keep the Law and you have the love of God!* NO! Brethren, NO! Love does not issue from law! ***Law issues from love!*** That is profound.

We will see the kind of loving attitude we are to have, which then will keep the Laws of God in the way that they were intended to keep them. Notice how every one of these things strikes a nail into the coffin of Pharisaism; strikes a nail into the coffin of Judaism.

Matthew 5:1: “But seeing the multitudes, He went up into the mountain; and when He sat down, His disciples came to Him. And He opened His mouth *and* taught them... [later the crowds came up and they were amazed at what He was teaching] ...saying, “Blessed are the **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven” (vs 1-3). One who doesn’t have an exalted and uplifted spirit. It doesn’t mean a whimpering nincompoop either, on the other hand. It just means the person does not have an exaggerated opinion of himself—*poor in spirit*. That also means that all riches come from God. It also means that you understand that all spirituality comes from God and not yourself.

Verse 4: “Blessed are **those who mourn**, for they shall be comforted.” I’ll tell you one thing, that with *true Christianity* there is a considerable amount of mourning that you go through in your whole life’s experience. Not only for the sins you see going on, but also through the things that you go through because of your life in following God. There are going to be some things that you’re going to mourn about.

Verse 5: “Blessed are **the meek**, for they shall inherit the earth.... [Here’s the whole basis of the teachings of Christ.] ...Blessed are **those who hunger and thirst after righteousness**, for they shall be filled.”

Compare that with v 20: “For I say to you, unless your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way *that* you shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.” You have to hunger and thirst after righteousness, which is God’s way *vs* the way of the scribes and Pharisees.

Verse 7: “Blessed *are* **the merciful**, for they shall find mercy.... [If there’s anything a Pharisee is not, that is merciful!] ...Blessed *are* **the pure in heart**... [That takes quite a bit—doesn’t it? {Psa. 51}. They have no doublespeak; they’re not double-minded; they are not living a life of sin, etc.] ...for they shall see God” (vs 7-8). This is fantastic, brethren, what He’s saying here. What did He tell the Jews? *No man has seen God at any time! or heard His voice!* He’s telling His disciples that if they’re *pure in heart* they’re going to see God!

Verse 9: “Blessed *are* **the peacemakers**, for they shall be called *the* sons of God.” The greatest peace you make is the peace between you and God and helping other people to make peace, and themselves and God, because the ‘carnal mind is an enemy of God; not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be!’

Verse 10: “Blessed *are* those **who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness**, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you **when they shall reproach you, and shall persecute you, and shall falsely say every wicked thing against you, for My sake**” (vs 10-11). If you haven’t experienced that, *you will! It’ll happen! And when it does don’t give up and be discouraged!*

Verse 12: “Rejoice and be filled with joy, for great *is* your reward in heaven; for in this same manner they persecuted the prophets who *were* before you.” That’s something! When you really sit down and go through this and understand this, you’re going to see that Jesus is picking out Scriptures, which He inspired before, and now He’s bringing it all together in the true and proper understanding of the righteousness of God.

So, if you want to have a little extra Bible study in this, then you get out your ‘handy-dandy’ concordance and look up these things during the week and you will see that, yes, everyone of these things are somewhere—mostly in the Psalms.

Verse 13: “You are the salt of the earth... [There are some very interesting things about salt. Salt is needed, many times unseen. As it is with Christians, sometimes we’re unseen. Sometimes we are seen like a big hunk of salt sticking out someplace, but nevertheless we’re the ‘salt of the earth.’] ...but if the salt has become tasteless, with

what shall it be salted?.... [In other words, what’s the use of what God is doing, unless there are those who truly love Him and will follow Him?] ...For it no longer has any strength, but *is* to be thrown out and to be trampled upon by men.”

Verse 14: “You are the light of the world....” Here’s another aspect of it. We are to be the ‘light of the world.’ What did Jesus say about those who were serving two masters? *If the light that is in you be darkness, how great is the darkness!* We can’t weld Judaism to *true Christianity*.

“...A city that is set on a mountain cannot be hid. Neither do they light a lamp and put it under a bushel-basket, but on the lampstand; and it shines for all who *are* in the house. In the same way also, you are to let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works, and may glorify your Father Who *is* in heaven” (vs 14-16).

Our lives are to be that kind of outward thing that is commendable by other people; one who is blameless and so forth. Sometimes that will get you in trouble, because people will want you to lie, cheat and steal and do things like that. So, your light may become a blazing thing, indeed!

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) John 3:31-36
- 2) John 8:23-24
- 3) John 7:15-19
- 4) John 5:16-19
- 5) John 8: 27-28, 40-42
- 6) John 5:36-42
- 7) John 8:43-47
- 8) Matthew 12:22-24
- 9) Matthew 21:9-11, 15-16
- 10) Matthew 22:41-46
- 11) Matthew 1:17
- 12) Luke 3:23, 31
- 13) Matthew 1:15-16
- 14) Matthew 1:11-16
- 15) Matthew 4:1-6
- 16) Malachi 3:1
- 17) Matthew 4:7-11, 23-25
- 18) Matthew 5:17-20
- 19) John 14:16
- 20) Matthew 5:1-6, 20, 7-16

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 23
- Philippians 3
- Isaiah 1
- Luke 3:24-30
- Psalm 51
- Luke 4

Also referenced:

- Book: *A Portable God: Origin of Christianity and Judaism* by Rebecca Moore
- Magazine: *Truth of the Matter*
- Sermon: *The Covenants*
- Booklet: *David's Greater Son* by Howard Rand (destinypublishers.com)
- Book: *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried & Goldin

Scripturalism vs Judaism V

True Christianity has No Foundation in Judaism

In this particular sermon I'm going to be reading, just about the entire time, excerpts from various books that we have researched for this particular project—in particular, I'm going to be reading from *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* by Alfred Edershiem and *Jerusalem in the Times of Jesus* by Joachim Jeremias

Hopefully, if we have some time at the end I will read some of the Sabbath laws of Judaism from the *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried and Goldin. Just to let you know: some of the books that we are studying. I mentioned a couple of them, but I want to mention them again so that you will realize that a lot of the things that we are covering have been published within the last ten years; some of them going back to 1990. Carl Franklin has been in the forefront of finding these books for us.

Let me give you a little background on how we came to the knowledge of these books. When I finished writing the book *The Christian Passover*, it became very obvious that we covered everything up to the time of Jesus Christ. The question remained:

- What happened from the time of Jesus Christ through the destruction of the temple and on into the death of John, and then on into the second century?
- How did we get Judaism, as we have it today on the one hand, and the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church as we have it on the other hand?
- How could two such divergent things take place?

Because of that, we didn't realize what was going on that was taking place within the last 20 years and some books that were published which covers the very area that we need. However, when I was reading and studying *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* by Edershiem there were certain clues that I picked up on that we needed to look into and find out what was the historical background, and were there any books that could cover it, those in particular centered around Judaism and Hellenism and Egypt—in particular Alexandria and Judaism.

Also, we're covering the area that was Palestinian Judaism, which we will see is commonly called 'Eastern Judaism,' while Alexandria Judaism and Hellenistic Judaism is called 'Western Judaism.' However, we need to understand that all during that time, Hebrew was not—nor was Aramaic—the predominate language used in the Holy Land and in the area of the Roman Empire. It was Greek! We have a book here that documents the Bar Kochva

Period in the cave leaflets Greek Papyri. This was published in 1989, which shows absolutely conclusively that Koine Greek was used as the common language, or what is called the lingua-franca or the language of the people.

In addition to that, Carl Franklin has the blessing of living close to the James White Library at Andrew's University and he was able to get many good books that give us the time period of what we are looking for. Twenty years ago we wouldn't have been able to cover it. What we're really doing in this, we are coming to understand how the Church came to be Catholic and the Jews came to be totally Pharisaical and the Eastern Judaism as we know it today.

Books for reference:

- *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, by Aryeh Kasher—a Jewish publication.
- *Christianity and Judaism—Two Covenants* by Yehezkel Kaufmann.
- written by a Jew: *Kabbalah and It's Symbolism* by Gershom G. Scholem—giving us the understanding of Judaism.

There are two branches of Judaism: Hellenistic Judaism and Babylonian Judaism, the Western and the Eastern forms of Judaism.

- *Gnosticism, Judaism and Egyptian Christianity (Studies in Antiquity & Christianity)* by Birger A. Pearson. That's going to be a very eye-opening book and we'll get to it in subsequent sermons and reading.
- studies of Antiquity and Christianity entitled *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity* by Birger A. Pearson.
- *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* by John G. Gager.
- *The Jewish Historical Atlas*, which then gives us many, many things concerning a summary of the history of Judaism all the way down to the present day.

We're going to be very thorough in what we're doing. We're going to cover everything in the way that it needs to be covered, and we're going to find out that it's absolutely essential for us to realize that true **Christianity never had any foundational beginnings with Judaism**. It is apparent in the Scriptures that the separation began immediately beginning with John the Baptist. All the teachings that we are learning in the New Testament are in a situation where that those who come into the Church

who are in Judaism must come out of Judaism. They must strip away all the traditionalism that they have. As a matter of fact, that's why Jesus, in bringing out very clearly that He wasn't setting aside any of the Law or any of the Prophets, but He was certainly setting aside all of the *traditionalism* of the Jews.

Let me begin reading from: *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. Many people have read it. It has been a classic down through the time-period. It was first published in September 1883. Then there are subsequent 2nd and 3rd editions. In here are some very important things, and we're going to see some very interesting statements that he makes. I'll read through some certain, select sections I have highlighted which will be important for our study. I want this to be thorough and on-going. I realize that there are a lot of you who cannot get this book. It's well over 1300 pages; it's really quite a work! But he gives us certain clues here and we're going to see in particularly an admission that he makes, which in some ways is a little disturbing, but in other ways is very revealing.

from: *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* by Alfred Edersheim
(christianbookshelf.org/edersheim/the_life_and_times_of_jesus_the_messiah/)

Preface (from 1st edition):

It is indeed most true that Christ spoke not only to the Jews, to Palestine and to that time, but of which history has given the evidence to all men to all times. We shall perceive that their form is wholly of the times that are caste Jewish, while by the sight of this similarity of the form, there is not only essential differences, but absolute contrariety of substance and spirit.... [between Judaism and Scripturalism] ...Jesus spoke as truly a Jew to the Jews, but He spoke not as they spoke. No, not as their highest and best teachers would have spoken. This contrariety of spirit with manifest similarity of form is in my mind one of the strongest evidences of the claims of Jesus, since it raises the all important question: From whence [where] the teacher of Nazareth?

In describing the traditionalism of the time of Christ, I must have said what I fear most unwittingly on my part wound the feelings of some who still cling, if not to have faith of, yet, to what now represents the ancient synagogue.

In other words, he is politely saying, In a round about way, some of these things are going to hurt some of those who believe in *traditionalism*.

Yet, it is not this disclaimer of traditionalism, which not only explains the

rejection of Jesus, but it is the sole logical reason of the synagogue; also, its condemnation.

We have a situation here where it shows that Judaism is really between a rock and a hard place with Jesus Christ and the facts of the New Testament and traditionalism.

The New Testament prophecies are not made to point to facts, but facts to point back to prophecies. The New Testament presents a fulfillment of all the prophecies rather than of prophecies, and individual predictions serve as fingerpost to the great outstanding facts which mark where the roads met and parted.

That is where Christianity and Judaism met and parted.

It leads up to this conclusion, that Jesus Christ was a likened to fundamental direction of His teaching and His work and its details antithetic to the synagogue... [going in totally opposite directions] ...in its doctrine, practice and expectancies.

In the 2nd & 3rd editions of this book he says in reference to elements, which weren't well received, regarding anti-Semitism:

Although I'm well convinced that a careful and impartial reader would not arrive at any such conclusion... [of anti-Semitism on his part] ...yet, it was suggested that a perverse ingenuity might have abused certain statements and quotations, for what in modern parlance or term anti-Semitic purposes.

He said that there wasn't any thought on his part of doing that. However, we are going to see a statement here that he's also very protective of the modern Pharisaical Judaism, which he also must protect himself from, and that he deliberately does not give us certain things.

In this next statement, he admits that he's holding back some of the information because it would cause too much difficulty for the people who would then openly see what Judaism really was about, and much of that we now have in these other books, which I mentioned, which is that we're going to see in fact Hellenistic Judaism out of Alexandria was the basis for what we know as the Catholic Church.

In truth, it has been my aim to present not one or another isolated statement or aspect of rabbinism, but its general teaching and tendency. In doing so, I, however, purposely left aside certain passages which while they most fully brought out the sad and strange extravagances to

which rabbinism would go, would have involved the unnecessary quotation of what is not only very painful in itself, but might have furnished an occasion to the enemies of Israel.

What he's saying, he did not translate certain portions of the Talmud to bring out some of the true feelings that the Jews have toward other religions.

...the Old Testament... [which is monotheistic] ...the strictest isolation was necessary... [of the Jews and their worship in the ancient world] ...in order to preserve the religion of the Old Testament from that mixture of foreign elements which would speedily have proved fatal to its existence....

...civilization would necessarily influence them to render the continuance of their separation of a great importance as before. In this respect, even traditionalism had its mission and its use as a hedge around the law to render its infringement or modification impossible.

What actually happened was it destroyed the Truth of the laws and commandments of God by all of the *traditions* that they had.

Then he gives a little of the history of the Maccabees; a little background concerning Hebrew and Greek. He gives background concerning the preeminence of the Babylonians. Let's read just a little bit here concerning the eastern and the western branches of the Jews. Edersheim tells the difference between the eastern Jews of the Diaspora and the western Jews being the Hellenists.

But the difference between the Grecians and the Hebrews was far deeper than merely of language, and extended to the whole direction of thought. There were mental influences at work in the Greek world from which, in the nature of things, it was impossible even for Jews to withdraw themselves, and which, indeed, were as necessary for the fulfillment of their mission as their isolation from heathenism, and their connection with Jerusalem.

At the same time it was only natural that the Hellenists, placed as they were in the midst of such hostile elements, should intensely wish to be Jews, equal to their Eastern brethren. On the other hand, Pharisaism, in its pride of legal purity and of the possession of traditional lore, with all that it involved, made no secret of its contempt for the Hellenists, and openly declared the Grecian far inferior to the

Babylonian dispersion. That such feelings, and the suspicions which they engendered, had struck deep into the popular mind, appears from the fact, that even in the Apostolic Church, and that in her earliest days, disputes could break out between the Hellenists and the Hebrews, arising from suspicion of unkind and unfair dealings grounded on these sectional prejudices.

We need to understand that he is also siding with the eastern Pharisaical Judaism, which survives down to this day as Judaism, and that he upholds Babylonian schools as being better, and he also lays at the feet of the Hellenists certain difficulties and problems that the Jews had.

Let's continue in understanding about Jewish writings and how they affect everything that they do, and then we will understand also what their writings do, how their traditions came about and what affect it had. In addition to the different commentaries and the things that they did after Ezra, concerning the commentaries and Scriptures:

From the outset, Jewish theology divided into two branches: the Halakhah and the Haggadah. The former (from halakhah, to go) was, so to speak, the Rule of the Spiritual Road, and, when fixed, had even greater authority than the Scriptures of the Old Testament...

It is very key to remember and understand in this whole thing concerning Scripturalism and Judaism, is that they held that *their traditions* were of greater importance than the Scriptures. That's why when Jesus came and said 'Don't think I'm going to destroy the Law or the Prophets,' He was showing that he was going to strip away all of this 'Halakhah' and the 'Haggadah' away from the Scriptures of God.

...and, when fixed, had even greater authority than the Scriptures of the Old Testament, since it explained and applied them. On the other hand, the Haggadah (from nagad, to tell) was only the personal saying of the teacher, more or less valuable according to his learning and popularity, or the authorities, which he could quote in his support.

Now, remember when Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount, that He spoke with authority and not as the scribes, because the scribes always use to quote someone else as their authority.

Unlike the Halakhah, the Haggadah had no absolute authority, either as to doctrine practice, or exegesis. But all the greater would be its popular influence, and all the

more dangerous the doctrinal license which it allowed.

What he's saying is that this kind of teaching allowed the *traditions* to take over and supersede the Scriptures.

In fact, strange as it may sound, almost all doctrinal teachings of the Synagogue is to be derived from the Haggadah.

Which means that *the sayings of the teacher* rather than out of Scripture. He's admitting in a very round about way that Judaism does not follow Scripture.

...and this is also characteristic of Jewish traditionalism. But, alike in Halakhah and Haggadah, Palestine was under the deepest obligation to Babylonia....

...even they had to acknowledge that, when the Law had fallen into oblivion, it was restored by Ezra of Babylon; when it was a second time forgotten, Hillel the Babylonian came and recovered it; and when yet a third time it fell into oblivion, Rabbi Chija came from Babylon and gave it back once more.

What he's doing is he's showing how what we know as eastern Pharisaism and what is commonly known as Judaism today came about with the influence from Babylon. So, it is indeed one of the 'daughter's of Babylon.'

For it is one of those strangely significant, almost symbolical, facts in history, that after the destruction of Jerusalem the spiritual supremacy of Palestine passed to Babylonia, and that Rabbinical Judaism, under the stress of political adversity, voluntarily transferred itself to the seats of Israel's ancient dispersion, as if to ratify by its own act what the judgment of God had formerly executed.

Chapter 2: Edershiem explains western Judaism:

When we turn from the Jewish dispersion in the East to that in the West, we seem to breathe quite a different atmosphere. Despite their intense nationalism, all unconsciously to themselves, their mental characteristics and tendencies were in the opposite direction from those of their brethren.... [those in the East] ...With those of the East rested the future of Judaism; with them of the West, in a sense, that of the world. The one represented old Israel, stretching forth its hands to where the dawn of a new day was about to break. These Jews of the West are known by the term Hellenists—from

Illenzein, to conform to the language and manners of the Greeks.

Whatever their religious and social isolation, it was, in the nature of thing, impossible that the Jewish communities in the West should remain unaffected by Grecian culture and modes of thought; just as, on the other hand, the Greek world, despite popular hatred and the contempt of the higher classes, could not wholly withdraw itself from Jewish influences. Witness here the many converts to Judaism among the Gentiles; witness also the evident preparedness of the lands of this dispersion for the new doctrine [Christianity] which was to come from Judea.

Many causes contributed to render the Jews of the West accessible to Greek influences. They had not a long local history to look back upon, nor did they form a compact body, like their brethren in the East. They were craftsmen, traders, merchants, settled for a time here or there—units might combine into communities, but could not form one people. Then their position was not favorable to the sway of traditionalism. Their occupations, the very reasons for their being in a strange land, were purely secular. That lofty absorption of thought and life in the study of the Law, written and oral, which characterized the East, was to the, something in the dim distance, sacred, like the soil and the institutions of Palestine, but unattainable.

In Palestine or Babylonia numberless influences from his earliest years, all that he saw and heard, the very force of circumstances, would tend to make an earnest Jew a disciple of the Rabbis; in the West it would lead him to Hellenize. It was, so to speak, in the air; and he could no more shut his mind against Greek thought than he could withdraw his body from atmospheric influences. That restless, searching, subtle Greek intellect would penetrate everywhere, and flash its light into the innermost recesses of his home and Synagogue.

These were the Hellenistic Jews and the Hellenistic Jews then were the basis for the New Testament church and also the basis from which the Catholic Church was derived.

Such undoubtedly was the case. And yet, when the Jew stepped out of the narrow circle which he had drawn around him... [that is in the confines of the synagogue]

...he was confronted on every side by Grecianism. It was in the forum, in the market, in the counting house, in the street; in all that he saw, and in all to whom he spoke. It was refined; it was elegant; it was profound; it was supremely attractive. He might resist, but he could not push it aside. Even in resisting, he had already yielded to it. For, once open the door to the questions which it brought, if it were only to expel, or repel them, he must give up that principle of simple authority on which traditionalism as a system rested.

Hellenic criticism could not so be silenced, nor its searching light be extinguished by the breath of a Rabbi. If he attempted this, the truth would not only be worsted before its enemies, but suffer detriment in his own eyes. He must meet argument with argument, and that not only for those who were without, but in order to be himself quite sure of what he believed. He must be able to hold it, not only in controversy with others, where pride might bid him stand fast, but in that much more serious contest within, where a man meets the old adversary alone in the secret arena of his own mind, and has to sustain that terrible hand-to-hand fight, in which he is uncheered by outward help.

In other words, he is saying very clearly that Hellenism and the Hellenistic world just penetrated deeply into the whole Jewish community and individual mind. The Hellenists, as a result of all of this, would seek to conciliate the truths of Divine revelation with those others, which he thought he recognized in Hellenism. In other words, those things which he saw in other pagan religions and philosophies he's sought to reconcile with the Old Testament.

On the other hand, there was the intellectual view of the Scriptures—their philosophical understanding, the application to them of the results of Grecian thought and criticism

And this is what was particularly Hellenistic.

What was Jewish, Palestinian, individual, concrete in the Scriptures, was only the outside—true in itself, but not the truth. There were depths beneath.

Then he talks about the stripping away of all of these things to see that there are deeper truths in the Bible.

But this deep symbolism was Pythagorean; this pre-existence of ideas which were the types of all outward actuality, was Platonism!

What he's saying here is that the Jewish Hellenistic philosophy—which they developed themselves in western Judaism—was actually based upon the philosophies of Plato. We can't possibly understand the references to philosophies of Paul unless we understand the philosophical Judaism of Hellenistic Jews. Then he talks about the philosophies of the Greeks and some of the truths that they had. Even Paul agrees to some of the things there and God revealed it to them as he says in Rom. 1: 'these grains of truth'—which the philosophers were able to have—'broken rays of light.'

Broken rays in them, but the focus of truth in the Scriptures. Yet these were rays, and could only have come from the Sun. All truth was of God; hence theirs must have been of that origin. Then were the sages of the heathen also in a sense God-taught - and God-teaching, or inspiration, was rather a question of degree than of kind!

So, what happened in this, the Scriptures of the Old Testament became very Hellenized and very Grecianized from the point of view that the Greek philosophy was now intervening and insomuch so that we have the Greek Old Testament. This was a very powerful thing which was happening.

One step only remained; and that, as we imagine, if not the easiest, yet, as we reflect upon it, that which in practice would be most readily taken. It was simply to advance towards Grecianism; frankly to recognize truth in the results of Greek thought.

Then he explains quite a bit how this affected the Jews.

There was the mighty spell which Greek philosophy exercised on all kindred minds, and the special adaptation of the Jewish intellect to such subtle, if not deep, thinking. And, in general, and more powerful than the rest, because penetrating everywhere, was the charm of Greek literature, with its brilliancy; of Greek civilization and culture, with their polish and attractiveness; and of what, in one word, we may call the time-spirit, that tyrannous...

Tyrannus is the personification of the oppressiveness of the whole Greek thought, Greek civilization, Greek literature, Greek language. It's just like someone who was a tyrant—that's why it's called 'Tyrannus.'

...who rules all in their thinking, speaking, doing, whether they list or not. Why, his sway extended even to Palestine itself, and was felt in the innermost circle of the most exclusive Rabbinism.

Then he talks about how that even Gamaliel II, a great Jewish patriarch—and that's the one whom Paul had learned as he mentions in the book of Acts—also studied Greek philosophy, spoke Greek. That's why it's an impossibility to say that Paul originally wrote everything in Aramaic, which some people like to say that it is so. But it isn't! It's very obvious from the historical facts that we are covering.

The Edersheim talks about the influence of Greek literature, even on those in Palestine; even working it's way into what is called the 'Mishnah' and referred preeminently if not exclusively to the religious or semi-religious Jewish Hellenistic literature. So, Jews were writing in Hellenistic Greek, outside even the apocrypha. We need to understand that most of what are called the pseudepigrapha writings—that is those apocrypha writings that are contained in the Greek Old Testament or the Septuagint—were written in Greek.

But its occurrence proves, at any rate, that the Hellenists were credited with the study of Greek literature, and that through them, if not more directly, the Palestinians had become acquainted with it.

In fact, the truth is that Palestine was totally Hellenized. Then he continues talking about this Hellenization of Palestine.

Its importance, not only to the Hellenists but to the world at large, can scarcely be over-estimated. First and foremost, we have here the Greek translation of the Old Testament, venerable not only as the oldest, but as that which at the time of Jesus held the place of our Authorized Version, and as such is so often, although freely, quoted, in the New Testament.

In other words, he's saying that the Septuagint was quoted in the New Testament.

Nor need we wonder that it should have been the people's Bible, not merely among the Hellenists, but in Galilee, and even in Judea.... But most, if not all - at least in towns—would understand the Greek version; it might be quoted in intercourse with Hellenist brethren or with the Gentiles; and, what was perhaps equally, if not more important, it was the most readily procurable.

So, he's just saying that the Greek version of the Old Testament—which by the way was probably far more pure in its reliability in its translation than any Septuagint that we have today. I just call your attention, if you don't know anything about the Septuagint, please read the preface in the introduction to it and you will see that the version

that we have today has been corrupted substantially so great portions of it are not reliable for dogmatic doctrine.

Then he shows how that the Greek Old Testament was reproduced with hundreds of slaves who were engaged in copying what one dictated.

The result was not only the publication of as large editions as in our days, but their production at only about double the cost of what are now known as cheap or people's editions. Probably it would be safe to compute, that as much matter as would cover sixteen pages of small print might, in such cases, be sold at the rate of about sixpence, and in that ratio. Accordingly, manuscripts in Greek or Latin, although often incorrect, must have been easily attainable, and this would have considerable influence on making the Greek version of the Old Testament the people's Bible.

The Greek version... [the Old Testament] ... like the Targum of the Palestinians, originated, no doubt, in the first place, in a felt national want on the part of the Hellenists, who as a body were ignorant of Hebrew. Hence we find notices of very early Greek versions of at least parts of the Pentateuch. But this, of course, could not suffice. On the other hand, there existed, as we may suppose, a natural curiosity on the part of students, especially in Alexandria, which had so large a Jewish population, to know the sacred books on which the religion and history of Israel were founded.

This is then giving the background as to why the Septuagint originated and the need for it. Basically, it would be like today if everyone in America was speaking English and the only Bible they had available to them was in German, naturally it would be translated into English so we could understand it. In the same way, since Greek was so widely understood and read by everyone, the Old Testament was translated into Greek. Then we have the addition of the apocrypha books that were also written in Greek.

He talks a little bit about Alexandria, and we'll cover considerably more about Alexandria, because that is the key in understanding all of the difficulties and problems that we have in the foundation of the Catholic Church.

In such manner then the LXX [Septuagint] version became really the people's Bible to that large Jewish world through which Christianity was afterward to address itself

to mankind. It was part of the case, that this translation should be regarded by the Hellenists... [Hellenistic Jews] ...as inspired like the original. Otherwise, it would have been impossible to make the final appeal to very words of Greek, still less, to find in them the mystical and allegorical meaning.

Only that we must not regard their use of inspiration—except as applying to Moses, and even there only partially—as identical with ours. To their minds inspiration differed quantitatively, not qualitatively, from what the rapt soul might at anytime experience, so that even heathen philosophers might ultimately be regarded as at times inspired.

What is really being said here is this gives them license to go into the philosophies of the Greeks to understand some of the things that they considered inspired Truth that the pagan philosophers had. This then is the whole background which leads up to much of the apocryphal or pseudepigraphica writings. And also as we will see later, leads much into the Jewish Gnosticism which caused so much problem with the New Testament Church.

At any rate, we know that the Greek Scriptures were authoritatively acknowledged in Palestine, and that the ordinary daily prayers might be said in Greek. The LXX [Septuagint] deserved this distinction from its general faithfulness—at least, in regard to the Pentateuch—and from its preservation of ancient doctrine.

The Septuagint was translated in a about 270_{B.C.} So, we see that this influence was over a long period of time and when we put it in perspective of today's historical setting, we're looking at 300 years. Just take it back to 1693 as far as we are concerned with the beginning of what is called Hellenism.

Chapter 3: The translation of the Old Testament into Greek may be regarded as the starting-point of Hellenism. It rendered possible the hope that what in its original form had been confined to the few, might become accessible to the world at large.

Then Edershiem talks about apocryphal literature that was always, for the most part, written in Greek. All of it was written in Greek with the exception of 1-Maccabees, Judas and part of Baruch. But everything else was written in Greek and it was a product of Hellenizing Jews. One of the things that it did beyond some of these apocryphal writings was to go beyond and show what the next object was.

But the next object was to show that the deeper and purer thinking of heathenism in its highest philosophy supported—nay, in some respects, was identical with—the fundamental teaching of the Old Testament. This, of course, was apologetic of the Old Testament, but it also prepared the way for a reconciliation with Greek philosophy.

Then he shows exactly how many of these things came through the so-called apocryphal writings of the fourth book of Maccabees, the so-called book of wisdom, which was considered the revelation of God—written in Greek—but it was given to a Jew who wrote, supposedly. Then it shows how they blended together plutonic or the philosophy of Plato with the other things of the Stoics.

But the brilliancy of Plato's speculations would charm, while the stern self-abnegation of Stoicism would prove almost equally attractive. The one would show why they believed, the other why they lived, as they did. Thus the theology of the Old Testament would find a rational basis in the ontology of Plato, and its ethics in the moral philosophy of the Stoics.

What we have today is that coming right on down through even the Babylonians into what is called Pharisaism today; this very Stoical kind of beat the flesh type of religion.

Then Edershiem goes into quite a lengthy discussion of the pseudepigraphica literature, showing how all the philosophies of the pagans were the blended into the thinking of the Hellenistic Jews, which then all came to be brought together as a complete system in the work of Philo. Philo is really quite a noted Jewish philosopher who lived on into the time of Jesus Christ. Many of his things are very important for us to understand in realizing all of the problems and difficulties associated with Alexandria in Judaism or Hellenistic Judaism.

Philo was the one who brought all of this together, and he was the one to bring together the heathen philosophy and the faith of the Jews and to make it all one! Then he was the one who went back and allegorized with the interpretation the things concerning the Bible, and according to Hellenized Grecianism what it meant. He gives quite a long dissertation of everything of the Jewish thought of Philo and how that worked into all of the teaching that actually caused Western Judaism to be wholly and absolutely separate and different from the Babylonian Eastern Judaism.

Philo had no successor. In him Hellenism had completed its cycle. Its message and

its mission were ended. Henceforth it needed, like Apollos, its great representative in the Christian Church, two things: the baptism of John to the knowledge of sin and need, and to have the way of God more perfectly expounded. On the other hand, Eastern Judaism had entered with Hillel on a new stage. This direction led farther and farther away from that which the New Testament had taken in following up and unfolding the spiritual elements of the Old. That development was incapable of transformation or renovation. It must go on to its final completion, and be either true, or else be swept away and destroyed.

So, he's showing the great conflict that there was. There was Western Judaism with Hellenism—with the Septuagint version of the Bible, had great influence into Palestine, into Jerusalem, into the inner circles of rabbinism.

(go to the next track)

Chapter 5: Edershiem gives a history and a background of Alexandria and the Jewish communities and the capital of Egypt in Alexandria and the capital of the Roman Empire in Rome, which then were the central things for Jewish Hellenism. It's also important for us to understand the great community that was there in Alexandria. They had a great synagogue/cathedral and it says of this that they had an eldership of a Sanhedrin of Alexandria on the model of the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.

It is a strange, almost inexplicable fact, that the Egyptian Jews had actually built a schismatic Temple.

So, there was a temple in Egypt that the Jews had their own priesthood that they officiated at.

During the terrible Syrian persecutions in Palestine Onias, the son of the murdered High-Priest Onias III., had sought safety in Egypt. Ptolemy Philometor not only received him kindly, but gave a disused heathen temple in the town of Leontopolis for a Jewish sanctuary. Here a new Aaronic priesthood ministered, their support being derived from the revenues of the district around. The new Temple, however, resembled not that of Jerusalem either in outward appearance nor in all its internal fittings. At first the Egyptian Jews were very proud of their new sanctuary, and professed to see in it the fulfillment of the prediction, that five cities in the land of Egypt should speak the language of Canaan, of which one was to be called Ir-ha-Heres, which the LXX [Septuagint]. (in

their original form, or by some later emendation) altered into the city of righteousness. This temple continued from about 160 B.C. to shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem.

This has a great bearing on what happened to the New Testament Church, because here was a renegade priesthood. Here was one where they declared that they were fulfilling Scripture. And also of the Scripture in Isaiah which says, 'out of Egypt shall My Son come.' This Onias wanted to fulfill that. When we understand that this occurred just right after the desecration of the temple in Jerusalem; it really is profound! They didn't offer animal sacrifices there, but they offered incense and wine and meal offerings on a daily basis. We will see that this was actually a foundational beginning of what is known in the Catholic Church today as *the Eucharist*—or the substitute for what we call *the Passover*.

This temple continued from about 160 B.C. to shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem. It could scarcely be called a rival to that on Mount Moriah, since the Egyptian Jews also owned that of Jerusalem as their central sanctuary, to which they made pilgrimages and brought their contributions, while the priests at Leontopolis, before marrying, always consulted the official archives in Jerusalem to ascertain the purity of descent of their intended wives.

The Palestinians designated it contemptuously as the house of Chonyi (Onias), and declared the priesthood of Leontopolis incapable of serving in Jerusalem, although on a par with those who were disqualified only by some bodily defect. Offerings brought in Leontopolis were considered null, unless in the case of vows to which the name of this Temple had been expressly attached. This qualified condemnation seems, however, strangely mild, except on the supposition that the statements we have quoted only date from a time when both Temples had long passed away.

Nor were such feelings unreasonable. The Egyptian Jews had spread on all sides—southward to Abyssinia and Ethiopia, and westward to, and beyond, the province of Cyrene.

What he's showing here is the whole tremendous affect of what this temple in Egypt had on Hellenizing Judaism and also on the setup of the synagogues, the way that the high priest at Leontopolis was regarded by the Jews in Egypt.

Also they had some important things happening with the temple at Jerusalem, because much of the money that came to support it came from Egypt. So, they couldn't renounce and denounce the temple at Leontopolis completely, because they were getting money for the temple at Jerusalem from the Jews in Egypt.

The Temple at Jerusalem bore evidence of the wealth and munificence of this Jewish millionaire.... [Antonia] ...The gold and silver with which the nine massive gates were covered, which led into the Temple, were the gift of the great Alexandrian banker.

Here we have set up a Judaism which was based on Greek philosophy combined with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, with the temple at Leontopolis, with its own Jewish priesthood—which did not necessarily follow the things that they did at the temple in Jerusalem. This was really quite an event. This is something that Eastern Judaism does not like to tell us; and of which all of these books of Gnosticism are based upon what happened there, and how was it that we came to have the Catholic Church as we have it today.

We need to cover a couple of other things concerning the Jewish community in another very important city called Antioch. As you know, Antioch was a place where we had the greatest number of Gentile converts. As a matter of fact, that is the first place that it is noted that Christians were called *Christians*.

Just to project a little ahead of some of the things that we're going to cover down the road while we're covering Edershiem. I want to get into what he says here concerning Antioch and concerning the Jews at Antioch and some of the things which may tie in to the problems that the Christian Church had from the circumcision party within the Church and those who supposedly came down from Jerusalem and we find the confrontation between Paul and Peter in Gal. 2. But I want to cover just a little bit here concerning Antioch, which was the capital of Assyria.

Chapter 6: The connection between Jerusalem and Antioch was very close. All that occurred in that city was eagerly watched in the Jewish capital. The spread of Christianity there must have excited deep concern. Careful as the Talmud is not to afford unwelcome information, which might have led to further mischief...

That's a nice way of saying of showing the problems that Christianity was causing Judaism.

...we know that three of the principal Rabbis went thither... [to Antioch] ...on a

mission—we can scarcely doubt for the purpose of arresting the progress of Christianity.

We may find a connection here between rabbinism and trying to bring circumcision and ritualism upon the Church through that form of Pharisaism. This probably very deeply affected Peter, because that was no small, little problem that was involved in Gal. 2. I wanted to mention that here because that follows right along in some of the things I'm reading out of Edershiem. I realize that some of this is pretty heavy reading and it's written in a very awkward form, so some of the reading is very difficult even for me.

Again, we find at a later period a record of religious controversy in Antioch between Rabbis and Christians. Yet the Jews of Antioch were strictly Hellenistic, and on one occasion a great Rabbi was unable to find among them a copy of even the Book of Esther in Hebrew...

This shows the things that they had. There was also a large synagogue there. We have some really difficult problems to deal with in understanding what was happening in the early New Testament Church.

- What was happening within Judaism?
- Why was it that Jesus stayed mostly in Galilee and did not come to Jerusalem but to visit it?
- Why do we have all of this influence of the Greeks, the Greek Old Testament, the whole thing concerning the New Testament Church?
- Why was this great controversy?
- Why is that Pharisaism today basically formed out of the remnants of Eastern Judaism do not tell us very much, little if anything, concerning Western Judaism and all the affects that it had?

These are some of the questions that we are going to cover.

As we have seen previously, when Ezra came back out of Babylon and canonized the Scriptures, set up the synagogue system and set up the reading of the Scriptures in the synagogue, and with the various instructions for that, which later became to be known as *tradition*. Those were essentially good rules on how to keep people involved in the Scriptures.

However, because of the apostatizing Jews and because of getting more and more into heathenism—especially getting more and more into Grecianism as it were—and actually beginning to lose track of their Jewishness—even Greek-speaking Jews had to take a firm stand against all of

the idolatry, against all of the Grecianism, against all the heathenism that came about. So, now we have the beginning of all of the *traditions* then which separated the Jews from the Gentiles. Here's part of what Edershiem says about this:

Chapter 7: his abhorrence of all connected with idolatry, and the contempt entertained for all that was non-Jewish, will in great measure explain the code of legislation intended to keep the Jew and Gentile apart.

To begin with, every Gentile child, so soon as born, was to be regarded as unclean.

This is the basis for a lot of the clean and unclean laws that have nothing to do with clean and unclean meats, or health and sanitary things as concerned in the Old Testament. This had a great bearing on trying to bring the New Testament Church out of Judaism. Notice this attitude that as soon as it was born it was regarded as *unclean*.

Those who actually worshipped mountains, hills, bushes—in short, gross idolaters—should be cut down with the sword.

We are going to see tremendous and gross discrimination that the Jews had against anyone and anything which was not accepted by them and their most stringent rules and regulations. This is something to say that they should be *cut down with the sword*. However, with the Jews living in the area:

It was impossible to exterminate heathenism, Rabbinic legislation kept certain definite objects in view, which may be thus summarized: To prevent Jews from being inadvertently led into idolatry; to avoid all participation in idolatry; not to do anything which might aid the heathen in their worship; and, beyond all this, not to give pleasure, nor even help, to heathens. The latter involved a most dangerous principle, capable of almost indefinite application by fanaticism. Even the Mishnah goes so far as to forbid aid to a mother in the hour of her need, or nourishment to her babe, in order not to bring up a child for idolatry! But this is not all.

Heathens were, indeed, not to be precipitated into danger, but yet not to be delivered from it. Indeed, an isolated teacher ventures even upon this statement: The best among the Gentiles, kill; the best among serpents, crush its head. Still more terrible was the fanaticism which directed,

that heretics, traitors, and those who had left the Jewish faith should be thrown into actual danger, and, if they were in it, all means for their escape removed. No intercourse of any kind was to be had with such—not even to invoke their medical aid in case of danger to life, since it was deemed, that he who had to do with heretics was imminent peril of becoming one himself, and that, if a heretic returned to the true faith, he should die at once—partly, probably, to expiate his guilt, and partly from fear of relapse.

Terrible as all this sounds, it was probably not worse than the fanaticism displayed in what are called more enlightened times. Impartial history must chronicle it, however painful, to show the circumstances in which teaching so far different was propounded by Christ.

In other words, what Jesus taught was so different it was diametrically opposite of what Judaism was preaching. I just want to bring out something here very clearly: Notice the attitude here that was taken toward all people in the New Testament Church; had to bring the Church out of this kind of thinking. Remember when Peter told Cornelius, 'You know that it is an unlawful thing for a man who is a Jew to come unto one of who is a Gentile, or to have company with him, or to eat with him.'

Yes, *these things did affect the Church!* This is what the Church came out of! So, for people to say that Christianity was built on Judaism is an absolute and total error. It *came out of* Judaism. It came out of this behavior. *It came out of these circumstances.*

Edershiem, in this chapter, talks about many of the different things that the Jews did to avoid, to segregate, to discriminate, to alienate, to completely separate themselves from even the presence, the look, the sound, the smell, the company of Jews with Gentiles.

In truth, the bitter hatred which the Jew bore to the Gentile can only be explained from the estimate entertained of his character.

That is what the Jew thought of the Gentile.

The most vile, and even unnatural, crimes were imputed to them. It was not safe to leave cattle in their charge, to allow their women to nurse infants, or their physicians to attend the sick, nor to walk in their company, without taking precautions against sudden and unprovoked attacks. They should, so far as possible, be altogether avoided, except in cases of

necessity or for the sake of business. They and theirs were defiled; their houses unclean, as containing idols or things dedicated to them; their feasts, their joyous occasions, their very contact, was polluted by idolatry; and there was no security, if a heathen were left alone in a room, that he might not, in wantonness or by carelessness, defile the wine or meat on the table, or the oil and wheat in the store.

Under such circumstances, therefore, everything must be regarded as having been rendered unclean. Three days before a heathen festival (according to some, also three days after) every business transaction with them was prohibited, for fear of giving either help or pleasure. Jews were to avoid passing through a city where there was an idolatrous feast—nay, they were not even to sit down within the shadow of a tree dedicated to idol-worship. Its wood was polluted; if used in baking, the bread was unclean; if a shuttle had been made of it, not only was all cloth woven on it forbidden, but if such had been inadvertently mixed with other pieces of cloth, or a garment made from it placed with other garments, the whole became unclean.

Jewish workmen were not to assist in building basilicas, nor stadia, nor places where judicial sentences were pronounced by the heathen. Of course, it was not lawful to let [lease] houses or fields, nor to sell cattle to them. Milk drawn by a heathen, if a Jew had not been present to watch it, bread and oil prepared by them, were unlawful. Their wine was wholly interdicted—the mere touch of a heathen polluted a whole cask; nay, even to put one's nose to heathen wine was strictly prohibited!

Painful as these details are, they might be multiplied. And yet the bigotry of these Rabbis was, perhaps, not worse than that of other sectaries.... [Other sectarian groups] ...It was a painful logical necessity of their system, against which their heart, no doubt, often rebelled; and, it must be truthfully added, it was in measure accounted for by the terrible history of Israel [the Jews].

When we get into some of the *Code of Jewish Law* you're going to see that what he brought out here is really very mild. There are thousands and thousands and thousands of laws and they're mind-boggling.

During the time leading up to the time of Antiochus Epiphanies, which Edershiem calls

...the period of severe domestic troubles, beginning with the persecutions under the Seleucidaë, which marked the mortal struggle between Judaism and Grecianism, the Great Assembly had disappeared from the scene. The Sopherim had ceased to be a party in power. They had become the Zeqenim, Elders, whose task was purely ecclesiastical—the preservation of their religion, such as the dogmatic labors of their predecessors had made it. Yet another period opened with the advent of the Maccabees. These had been raised into power by the enthusiasm of the Chasidim, or pious ones,' who formed the nationalist party in the land, and who had gathered around the liberators of their faith and country.

But the later bearing of the Maccabees had alienated the nationalists. Henceforth they sink out of view, or, rather, the extreme section of them merged in the extreme section of the Pharisees, till fresh national calamities awakened a new nationalist party. Instead of the Chasidim, we see now two religious parties within the Synagogue—the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

We'll have quite a bit more to say about the Pharisees and the Sadducees, because the Pharisees conformed those who wanted to be priest-like but were not priests. The Sadducees were, in fact, of the high priest family. However, many of the high priests were very Hellenized, so you've got this almost incongruous setup. The only thing they would recognize would be just the Scriptures.

The Pharisees, on the other hand, wanted to try and take over and dictate all of the powers and rituals that the Sadducees would do, because they considered Sadducees unfit. This struggle went back and forth, and finally in about 5 or 6_{B.C.} most of the Pharisees were killed. When we come down to the time of Jesus Christ, the Pharisees had gained some of their power back, but we will see when we read in Jeremias that they didn't have the power which they now ascribe to themselves, and in particular Josephus claimed to have had over the Sadducees was really not true and did not exist. This has a great bearing on how we count Pentecost.

Then Edershiem gives a little history leading up to what is called the Sanhedrin. This is what he says of the Sanhedrin:

The power of the Sanhedrin would, of course, vary with political circumstances, being at times almost absolute, as in the reign of the Pharisaic devotee-Queen, Alexandra, while at others it was shorn of all but ecclesiastical authority.

Then Edershiem shows clearly that the Sanhedrin was in full-force at the time of Jesus.

After this brief outline of the origin and development of an institution which exerted such decisive influence on the future of Israel, it seems necessary similarly to trace the growth of the traditions of the Elders, so as to understand what, alas! so effectually, opposed the new doctrine of the Kingdom. The first place must here be assigned to those legal determinations, which traditionalism declared absolutely binding on all—not only of equal, but even greater obligation than Scripture itself. And this not illogically, since tradition was equally of Divine origin with Holy Scripture, and authoritatively explained its meaning; supplemented it...

There we have how they looked upon their traditions. Then it brings out again concerning the Halakhah and concerning the Halakhoth.

These Halakhoth were either simply the laws laid down in Scripture; or else derived from, or traced to it by some ingenious and artificial method of exegesis; or added to it, by way of amplification and for safety's sake; or, finally, legalized customs. They provided for every possible and impossible case, entered into every detail of private, family, and public life; and with iron logic, unbending rigor, and most minute analysis pursued and dominated man, turn whither he might, laying on him a yoke which was truly unbearable.

In describing the historical growth of the Halakhah, we may dismiss in a few sentences the legends of Jewish tradition about patriarchal times. They assure us, that there was an Academy and a Rabbinic tribunal of Shem... [one of the sons of Noah] ...and they speak of traditions delivered by that Patriarch to Jacob; of diligent attendance by the latter on the Rabbinic College; of a tractate (in 400 sections) on idolatry by Abraham, and of his observance of the whole traditional law...

You go back to Genesis 26:5 and you will see that it doesn't define any of the commandments, laws or statutes that Abraham obeyed. And yet, the traditionalists go back and claim that it was everything that they had now come up with some many hundreds of years after Abraham. Here is how they talk about some of these things here:

...of the introduction of the three daily times of prayer, successively by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; of the three benedictions in the customary grace at meat, as propounded by Moses, Joshua, and David and Solomon; of the Mosaic introduction of the practice of reading lessons from the law on Sabbaths, New Moons, and Feast Days, and even on the Mondays and Thursdays... [which were the Pharisaic fast days] ...and of that, by the same authority, of preaching on the three great festivals about those feasts.

Further, they ascribe to Moses the arrangement of the priesthood into eight courses (that into sixteen to Samuel, and that into twenty-four to David), as also, the duration of the time for marriage festivities, and for mourning. But evidently these are vague statements, with the object of tracing traditionalism and its observances to primeval times, even as legend had it, that Adam was born circumcised, and later writers that he had kept all the ordinances.

But other principles apply to the traditions, from Moses downwards. According to the Jewish view, God had given Moses on Mount Sinai alike the oral and the written Law...

Most of what the traditionalism of Judaism is about is the so-called *oral law*, which then was supposed to have been passed down so that what they have today is authentically what God gave Moses on Mt. Sinai with the written law.

...that is, the Law with all its interpretations and applications. From Exodus 20:1, it was inferred, that God had communicated to Moses the Bible, the Mishnah, and Talmud, and the Haggadah, even to that which scholars would in latest times propound.

In answer to the somewhat natural objection, why the Bible alone had been written, it was said that Moses had proposed to write down all the teaching entrusted to him, but the Almighty had refused, on account of the future subjection of Israel to the nations, who would take from them the written Law. Then the unwritten traditions would remain to separate between Israel and the Gentiles. Popular exegesis found this indicated even in the language of prophecy.

Well, there's no such thing in the Bible that shows any of that.

But traditionalism went further, and placed the oral actually above the written Law. The expression, After the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel, was explained as meaning, that God's covenant was founded on the spoken, in opposition to the written words. If the written was thus placed below the oral Law, we can scarcely wonder that the reading of the Hagiographa was actually prohibited to the people on the Sabbath...

The Holy writings are those called the Psalms.

...from fear that it might divert attention from the learned discourses of the Rabbis. The study of them on that day was only allowed for the purpose of learned investigation and discussions.

Then it talks about how the Law divided into three sections as it were:

The first of these comprises both such ordinances as are found in the Bible itself, and the so-called Halakhoth of Moses from Sinai—that is, such laws and usages as prevailed from time immemorial, and which, according to the Jewish view, had been orally delivered to, but not written down by Moses.... [you've got those extra things] ...For these, therefore, no proof was to be sought in Scripture...

In other words, if they proclaimed it an oral law; if it was a Halakhoth then you didn't need any proof. All you needed to say was that it was the oral law.

—at most support, or confirmatory allusion (Asmakhtu). Nor were these open to discussion. The second class formed the oral law [the Scriptures], or the traditional teaching in the stricter sense. To this class belonged all that was supposed to be implied in, or that could be deduced from, the Law of Moses. The latter contained, indeed, in substance or germ, everything; but it had not been brought out, till circumstances successfully evolved what from the first had been provided in principle.

For this class of ordinances reference to, and proof from, Scripture was required. Not so for the third class of ordinances, which were the hedge drawn by the Rabbis around the Law, to prevent any breach of the Law or customs, to ensure their exact observance, or to meet peculiar circumstances and dangers. These ordinances constituted the sayings of the Scribes or of the Rabbis.

This body of traditional ordinances forms the subject of the Mishnah, or second,

repeated law. We have here to place on one side the Law of Moses as recorded in the Pentateuch, as standing by itself. All else—even the teaching of the Prophets... [or the Holy Writings, Psalms] ...and of the Hagiographa, as well as the oral traditions—bore the general name of Qabbalah—that which has been received.

After explaining somewhat about the Talmud, the Babylonian Talmud and the Mishnah, then Edershiem makes this summary statement:

It is sadly characteristic, that, practically, the main body of Jewish dogmatic and moral theology is really only Haggadah, and hence of no absolute authority.

What he's really saying is that all of the traditions—which are the interpretations of various rabbis—have absolutely no authority whatsoever. Then he talks a little bit about the Halakhah, which are those things supposedly based on Scripture.

The Halakhah indicated with the most minute and painful punctiliousness every legal ordinance as to outward observances, and it explained every bearing of the Law of Moses.

What he is showing here is that even the laws and commandments of God were taken and just literally torn apart by all of this traditionalism, so that by time we come down to the time of Jesus, you've got very little left concerning Scriptures and the Laws of God, and therefore, we see and understand why Jesus chose those people who were from Galilee who were not infected with this hideous *Pharisaism* and *traditionalism* which was just based upon the opinions of people, rabbis, and so-called legal scholars who just laid these heavy burdens to be born upon the people as they gave their pronouncements.

Let's just finish a little bit more with Edershiem and then we'll be done with the summary of the things that he brought out. Also, this will help us in understanding some of the things that Joachim Jeremias writes. Edershiem says this of the New Testament compared to the rabbinical traditions, which he calls contrariety:

Rabbinism started with demand of outward obedience and righteousness, and pointed to sonship as its goal; the Gospel started with the free gift of forgiveness through faith and of sonship, and pointed to obedience and righteousness as its goal.

In truth, Rabbinism, as such, had no system of theology; only what ideas, conjectures, or fancies the Haggadah yielded concerning God, Angels, demons, man, his future destiny and present position, and Israel, with its past history

and coming glory. Accordingly, by the side of what is noble and pure, what a terrible mass of utter incongruities, of conflicting statements and too often debasing superstitions, the outcome of ignorance and narrow nationalism; of legendary coloring of Biblical narratives and scenes, profane, coarse, and degrading to them; the Almighty Himself and His Angels taking part in the conversations of Rabbis, and the discussions of Academies; nay, forming a kind of heavenly Sanhedrin, which occasionally requires the aid of an earthly Rabbi.

The miraculous merges into the ridiculous, and even the revolting. Miraculous cures, miraculous supplies, miraculous help, all for the glory of great Rabbis, who by a look or word can kill, and restore to life. At their bidding the eyes of a rival fall out, and are again inserted. Nay, such was the veneration due to Rabbis, that R. Joshua used to kiss the stone on which R. Eliezer had sat and lectured, saying: This stone is like Mount Sinai, and he who sat on it like the Ark.

Modern ingenuity has, indeed, striven to suggest deeper symbolical meaning for such stories. It should own the terrible contrast existing side by side: Hebrewism and Judaism, the Old Testament and traditionalism; and it should recognize its deeper cause in the absence of that element of spiritual and inner life which Christ has brought. Thus as between the two—the old and the new—it may be fearlessly asserted that as regards their substance and spirit, there is not a difference, but a total divergence, of fundamental principle between Rabbinism and the New Testament, so that comparison between them is not possible. Here there is absolute contrariety.

That's why I've said emphatically and dogmatically that *true Christianity*—Christian Christianity—never had anything to do with rabbinism; never had anything to do with Judaism. Therefore, when people come along and try and take Christianity back and put it back into the 'old wineskin' of traditionalism, it is not going to result in salvation.

The painful fact just referred to is only too clearly illustrated by the relation in which traditionalism places itself to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, even though it acknowledges their inspiration and authority. The Talmud has it, that he who busies himself with Scripture only

(i.e. without either the Mishnah or Gemara) has merit, and yet no merit.

Even the comparative paucity of references to the Bible in the Mishnah is significant. Israel had made void the Law by its traditions. Under a load of outward ordinances and observances its spirit had been crushed. The religion as well as the grand hope of the Old Testament had become externalized. And so alike Heathenism and Judaism—for it was no longer the pure religion of the Old Testament—each following its own direction, had reached its goal. All was prepared and waiting.

Waiting for Christ to come and bring the Gospel of the New Testament. So, Edersheim does a pretty good job in what he brings out here, but I tell you it's really tough reading, and that's why very few people have read it. If you want to take the time, you have the time, get the book, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. There are many, many good things in it. There are some things which are most difficult, there are other things which are really not quite as factual as they ought to be. But it's well worthwhile to get, to read and to understand.

This will help you understand the great severity of how Judaism looked upon Jesus and the apostles and attempting to kill them and destroy everything they do. Sending out false apostles, false epistles, letters and all of these sorts of things, which we will cover later. Now you know why there existed such hostility between the Jewish religious leaders and Jesus Christ, and also the apostles and why later they did everything they could to destroy Christianity, to destroy the apostles. That's why God had to totally reject them and destroy Jerusalem and cast them out completely.

You know that ***the big problem is that the same attitudes of the Jews are there to this very day!***

References: Books:

- *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* by Alfred Edersheim

Note: entire book can be found at:

(christianbookshelf.org/edersheim/the_life_and_times_of_jesus_the_messiah/)

- *Jerusalem in the Times of Jesus* by Joachim Jeremias
- *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried and Goldin
- *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* by Aryeh Kasher
- *Christianity and Judaism—Two Covenants* by Yehezkel Kaufmann
- *Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* by Gershom G. Scholem

- *Gnosticism, Judaism and Egyptian Christianity (Studies in Antiquity & Christianity)* by Birger A. Pearson
- *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity* by Birger A. Pearson
- *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* by John G. Gager
- *The Jewish Historical Atlas*

Scripturalism vs Judaism VI

What it Would be like to be in the Church of the Pharisees

I'm going to read excerpts from *Jerusalem in the Times of Jesus* by Joachim Jeremias. Let me just make a qualifying statement before I get into it: Nearly all of the sources that I have been reading are written by Jews. Please understand that *none of these things* are hateful and anti-Semitic sayings by someone who is a rabid Jew-hater. Please understand that that is not so! As a matter of fact, as we saw when we read some of the references from Edershiem that he held back a lot of the most difficult things that the Jews believed about other people.

Please just realize that I'm trying to *relate* the historical background, the time and the context in which Christ came; the time and the context in which the New Testament was written; the time and the context of the apostles and the Apostle Paul, and all the difficulties that they had.

As I have mentioned previously, and I'll just go ahead and review here: During the days of Jesus and the apostles there were not any Protestants, there were not any Catholics. We are dealing strictly with the fundamental issue of Scripturalism vs Judaism and we are going to see today how much further corrupted that the Jews were at the time of Jesus, and also into the two parties of the Sadducees and the Pharisees and the scribes. In the book by Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Times of Jesus*, he also gives us a good insight into the scribes. For all of those who claim that Jesus was a Pharisee, you would have to say that He would have had to go along with all their lies, all of their twistings, all of their teachings and everything.

It's very evident that Jesus never was a Pharisee, He never agreed with the Pharisees. There may be have been some Pharisees who agreed in part with Jesus, but as a whole Jesus strongly denounced them! Remember, He told His disciples to *beware* of the leaven of the Sadducees and the Pharisees—that is of *their* doctrines, of *their* teachings! Yet, some today just want to take us backward, throw us into Pharisaism, throw us into Judaism and all of this sort of thing.

- That is not what Christ wants!
- That is not coming to the fullness of the knowledge of the spiritual Truth of God.
- That is not growing in grace and knowledge.

That is going backward into the *religion of the external rituals* performed by the Pharisees and into a Pharisaical religion, which is hideous indeed!

We're talking about the priestly aristocracy, which is the ruling priestly caste:

***Jerusalem in the Times of Jesus* by Joachim Jeremias:**

To return to our list of the last high priest, Onias II was the last legitimate high priest in the rightful Zadokite succession according to the reliable interpretation of the book of Daniel. He was replaced at the command of Antiochus IV in 175 B.C. by his brother Jesus (he had adopted the name Jason) who had promised the king in return a considerable sum of money in the introduction of Greek customs into Jerusalem; and this in spite of this fact, that according to the Law, Onias II had a lifelong right to his office, and that his son, also called Onias III was next in succession (2-Maccabees 4:7-22).

The disruption of the high priestly succession began with the illegitimate appointment OF Jason as high priest in 175 BC., for the fact that Jason too had high priestly blood in his veins did not, in the people's sense of right, alter the illegality of his assumed rank.

However, Jason did not enjoy for long his wrongfully acquired title. After three years of office, Antiochus IV deposed him in 172 and replaced him with a non-Zadokite—an unheard of outrage to the religious feelings of the people—one Menelaus from priestly clan of Bilga, who had promised the king an ever higher fee. Since the people rightly saw in Onias II, still living, the rightful high priest, Menelaus had him treacherously murdered at the end of 172 or early in 171 B.C.

Onias, enraged at the murder of his father, and now the rightful successor to the high priestly title, resorted to force and succeeded in taking Jerusalem by a surprise attack, apart from the fortress where Menelaus had taken refuge. But Onias could not hold out against Antiochus IV, who recaptured Jerusalem in 169, and Onias III had to flee, while Menelaus was reinstated in office. In this desperate situation Onias III turned to Egypt, where the Jewish community venerated him as the legitimate high priest, and obtained permission from

Ptolemy VI Philometer (181-145) and his consort Cleopatra to build the temple at Leontopolis.

I mentioned Leontopolis before, and we're going to come back to the Jewish temple at Leontopolis, because this is going to be a really important factor in coming to understand whence came Catholicism.

The fact that Onias III resolved to build a temple in a heathen land, and moreover found priests, Levites, a community and the very considerable resources necessary to pursue his plan, and finally that this rival temple in a heathen land existed for 243 years, until its destruction by the Romans in AD 73, all would be completely incomprehensible if we did not know how ingrained in the Jewish race was the awareness that Onias III, as the son of the last rightful Zadokite high priest, Onias II, was the legitimate heir to the high priesthood.

The legitimacy of the high priest, and the fact that the Temple of Jerusalem was desecrated by the Syrians, allayed all misgivings... [which those Egypt may have had] ...which must have arisen over the unhallowed place where the new temple was built. In the meantime the storm of religious persecution broke over Israel (167 to 164), with the Maccabean revolt, and in December 164 the desecrated Temple at Jerusalem was reconsecrated.

There were some there at the temple at Leontopolis in Egypt where you have the rightful heir as the high priest. You have Levites, functions and ceremonies going on. You have the whole Jewish community, including all those of Alexandria who welcomed him, who worshiped there, who looked upon this as a rightful and legitimate succession because of what was done to the priesthood even though the priesthood was in Jerusalem and the temple in Jerusalem was reconsecrated.

Josephus gives the impression that the Maccabees did not impugn the position of Menelaus as high priest. This tolerance is not easy to explain, but may be due to an infinite respect for the authority of the high priest as such. It may also be due to the feeling that Onias III, the legitimate heir, had forfeited his claims by setting up a rival temple in Egypt...

But there's no reason to believe that Onias III felt that he had given up his claim.

...as also to the fact that the Maccabees were by no means as yet the undisputed

masters of the situation: in 163, for example, they had to endure the appointment of a high priest by the Syrian king. Some such factor may underlie Josephus' account of the peaceful relations that ensued between the Maccabees and Menelaus.

However, it is not certain that the Maccabees did tolerate the collaborator Menelaus as high priest, especially as 1-Maccabees 4:42 reads: "So he (Judas) chose priests of blameless conversation, such as had pleasure in the law." The most we could say is that Menelaus was nominally high priest until 162. It is certain that in the year 162 the ten-year-old Antiochus V Eupator, at the instigation of his guardian, the general Lysias, had Menelaus put to death in order to gain favor with the Jews.

The priest Jacim (Alcimus), who had by this time (162) been made high priest by the Syrians, was certainly not in the direct line of succession to the last lawful high priest Onias II, but he was at least a Zadokite. The fact that now, after Menelaus, there was again a man with Zadokite ancestry as high priest was enough to revive the hopes of the people, and the Hasidim (Pharisees) deserted the Maccabees and joined him. However, they were bitterly disappointed in the man on whom they had set their hopes, and moreover his term of office soon ended with his death in May 159.

The situation in Jerusalem had now become very confused as a result of the arbitrary interference by the Syrian kings in the high priestly succession, and of the fact that the legitimate successor, Onias III had gone to Egypt. This confusion is shown most clearly from Josephus' report that from 159-152 the highest priestly office in Judaism remained vacant.

Which then obviously gave more credence to the one in Leontopolis with Onias III.

For seven years this state of affairs continued, with Jewry lacking a religious leader, until autumn 152, when at the Feast of Tabernacles Jonathan the Hasmonean, then ruler of the Jews, assumed the high priestly vestment. Until then [it] had been merely a family of priests within the priestly clan of Jojarib, one of the daily courses of which there were four to nine in each priestly clan (weekly course). The Hasmoneans earned

their right to the high priestly title, which the Syrians offered them, by their services to the people in preserving them from danger of religious extinction by the Syrian persecutions. Also of influence was the fact that the Oniads, lawful successors to the high priesthood, were serving in the temple of Onias at Leontopolis, which was not recognized in Jerusalem.

There we have some very interesting things concerning the temple at Leontopolis.

Now, talking about the succession of the priests and down to the time of Jesus:

For 115 years, until the conquest of Jerusalem by Herod the Great and C. Sosius the Roman governor of Syria in July 37 B.D., the Hasmoneans were high priest in unbroken succession, and provided eight high priests during this time. Then they were exterminated by Herod, for the Idumean upstart right saw in them the principal threat to his rule. In 35 B.C. there was just one more Hasmonean high priest, the seventeen-year-old Aristobulus, appointed by his brother-in-law Herod. As he walked to the altar, at the Feast of Tabernacles in 35 B.C., the people acclaimed him tumultuously, even with tears.

That was reason enough for Herod to have the young man drowned immediately after the festival, in a pool near Jericho. Aristobulus was the last high priest of his family. Herod wallowed in blood. He put to death even the distant relatives of the Hasmonean line, so that no single male Hasmonean was left alive to be considered as ruler and consequently as high priest.

A third epoch began with the sack of Jerusalem in 37^{B.C.}, with the abolition of the lifelong nature of the high priestly office together with the principle of succession. With two exceptions, Herod nominated "insignificant persons who were merely of priestly descent" to the high priesthood, the exceptions being Ananel the Babylonian and Aristobulus the Hasmonean mentioned above. He deposed the high priests and appointed others at will.

This anomalous state of affairs continued until the destruction of the Temple in A.D.70, and in this way no less than twenty-eight high priests filled the highest priestly office during the 106 years from 37 B.C. to 70 A.D., of whom twenty-five were of ordinary priestly families. This

number should be compared with the eight Hasmonean high priests who held office in the longer period of 115 years.

Now here is the incongruous state of affairs that this produced:

There were in the First Century A.D. two groups of priestly families, one legitimate, one illegitimate. The legitimate group comprised simply and solely the Zadokites serving in the Temple of Onias at Leontopolis and the families descended from this ruling line. The illegitimate were the priestly families from the midst of whom one or more members had been raised to the highest spiritual dignity by variable winds of chance and politics since 37^{B.C.}, since the Hasmoneans, who formed a group between these two and had held the high priesthood for more than a century, though descended from an ordinary priestly family, were finally exterminated. This is indeed the picture which the sources give us.

This also shows us why we have such a situation that the priesthood over there in Leontopolis was so widely accepted by the Alexandrian and the Egyptian Jews.

Now we're going to find out some more intrigue that happened in the high priestly line, so we can understand how these different things were functioning. Jeremiah tells us of a high priest who came from Babylon who was of the Zadokites, too, and he lived in Babylonia.

It produced Ananel, whom Herod appointed first high priest after the sack of Jerusalem in 37 B.C. Thus Herod, too, as would the zealots later, played a role of guardian of tradition, when he appointed a descendant of the legitimate Zadokite family as high priest in place of the Hasmonean "usurper," even though he prudently chose a man of no importance.

Hence it follows from what has been said that in the first centuries before and after Christ there were priestly families descended from the lawful Zadokite line, and that the first and the last high priest to hold office between 37 B.C. and AD 70 were of Zadokite descent. It is very enlightening to see that the Zadokite family, though politically obscure, stood in the popular view high above the influential but illegitimate high priestly families. In the east, ancestry has always counted more than power, in fact it is regarded as

divinely ordained, and this is something we shall have to establish again and again.

Of those families in between the first and the last, which were from the Zadokite line or descent, he has this to say:

All the other twenty-five high priests belonged to ordinary priestly families. These families, so suddenly raised to the nobility, who came partly from abroad, partly from the provinces, quickly formed a new and powerful, if illegitimate, hierarchy. There were essentially four families in this hierarchy, each of which strove to keep the highest priestly office to itself for as long as possible. Of the twenty-five illegitimate high priests of the Herodian-Roman epoch no fewer than twenty-two belonged to these four families: eight from the family of Boethus...

Boethus will become very important because their descendants are called Boethains, of the Sadduccaic party. They were the ones who were in charge of the temple at the time of Jesus, and they were the ones who counted Pentecost correctly, choosing the regular Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread as the beginning point, and then counting from the morrow after the regular Sabbath. Hence, we come to a Sunday Pentecost on the 50th day, even though they may have been illegitimate because of their lack of proper descent, they correctly understood how to count Pentecost. Nevertheless, they fulfilled the high priest office.

...eight were of the family of Boethus, eight of Hannas, three of Phiabi and three of Kamith. It can be assumed that the three remaining high priests had some connection with these families.

Originally, the most powerful of the four families was that of Boethus. This family came from Alexandria....

Very important— isn't it? Boethus came from Alexandria, yet, we are told that the Septuagint—which was translated in Alexandria—held to the Pharisaic counting of Pentecost. Somewhere there's an incongruity about this whole situation, because it isn't so! We'll have to answer that question later on.

Its first representative was the high priest Simon, the father-in-law of Herod. This family managed in time to come, to produce seven further members for the high priesthood, and its powerful influence can be seen, too, in the name "Boethuseans" by which a section of the Sadducees, and probably even the whole party, was known.

In the following period, the family of Boethus was overtaken by the house of the high priest Annas whose five sons, along with his son-in-law Caiaphas and his grandson Mattias (AD 65), held the premier rank.

We need to keep this in mind when we come down to the time of Jesus, because Annas and Caiaphas and Jonathan were the ones who were involved in the confrontation with Jesus, with the early confrontation of the apostles we find in the first couple of chapters of the book of Acts.

Now let's go to what is called *the lay nobility* or *the Sadducean party*. In order to understand about the Pharisees, we need to understand somewhat about the Sadducees.

The still prevalent view that the Sadducees were a clerical party recruited, partly if not exclusively, from higher circles in the priesthood, thus stands in need of correction. It is certainly true that the later Hasmoneans and the families of the illegitimate high priestly aristocracy, in contrast with the majority of priest, were for the most part of Sadducean opinions.

Thus the high priest and prince of the Jews John Hyrcanus (134-104 B.C.) who at the beginning of his reign favored the Pharisees, went over in the end to the Sadduceans, thus Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 B.C.) high priest and king, also the high priest Simon, son of Boethus, the high priest Joseph, surnamed Caiaphas (AD 18-37) and Ananus the younger, son of Ananus (A.D. 62), and finally the two Sadducean high priests of rabbinic tradition whose names are not mentioned, but one of who we must identify as Ishmael... [son of Phiabi II].

The chief priests were generally Sadducees. Even at the time of Agrippa their court seems to have given judgment according to the severe Sadducean law. It is true moreover, that these high ranking priests took leadership among the Sadducees.

As we find that the book of Acts shows that the Sadducees, as supporters of the high priests (Acts 5:17)

A group of the Sadducees, perhaps even the whole group, were called Boethuseans after the high priest son of Boethus. But all of this does not in any way prove that the Sadducees consisted exclusively or even predominately of priests. Indeed, this possibility is precluded by the absence of any such affirmation in Josephus' presentation of the Sadducees and also by

the distinction drawn in Acts between the priests of the Sadducees opinion and the Sadducees themselves.

I would have to say because Josephus does not confirm it; does not give us any real historical credence because Josephus being a Pharisee certainly wanted to minimize any influence that he would give credit to the Sadducees for.

We see then that the Sadducean party was made up of chief priests and elders: the priestly and the lay nobility. Thus the patrician family stood in the same relationship as the priestly nobility as the Pharisees to the scribes.

In other words, the Pharisees were lesser than the scribes.

In both cases the laity formed the mass of supporters: the religious men and the Sadducean clergy, the Pharisaical theologian were the leaders.

All of those combined were all the leaders.

The Sadducees formed a tightly closed circle and this observation is particularly helpful in understanding the awareness of tradition among the patrician families. These facts emerged from the information of the number of Pharisee supporters was small. And Josephus says they possessed their own tradition based on the exegesis of the Scripture which members must follow in their conduct of life. The exclusive character of the Sadducean group is shown even more clearly by the fact that Josephus classifies them with the Pharisees and the Essenes.

The Sadducean theology is equally instructive in understanding the lay nobility's position as guardian of tradition. They held strictly to the literal interpretation of the Torah. In particular to the precepts of the cultists... [that is of the ritual at the temple] ...and the priesthood, and thus found themselves in direct opposition to the Pharisees and their oral law, which declared that the rules of purity for priests were binding on the pious laity, too.

Which is absolutely not true. The whole premise of the Pharisees is based on a false premise. They say that everyone in the whole society had to follow the rules and regulations of purity and cleanness that was obligatory upon the priests. Absolutely not so!

Saying of the Sadducees, he continues:

In addition, they had their own penal code. We have much evidence of its extreme severity. We have already met a Sadducean tribunal of chief priests and we are reminded in several places of sentences passed according to Sadducean laws. This makes the existence of Sadducean scribes quite definite.

So, when we get to the term of scribes, we're talking about Sadducees, we're talking about some Pharisees, and we're talking about scribes who were lawyers of the Law.

Indeed, we cannot really contest it since the sources make particular mention of Sadducean scribes. It shows again that the patrician families of the Sadducees formed a tightly closed group with an elaborate tradition of theology in doctrine. They kept strictly to the exact text of the Scriptures, which shows the conservative character of these circles.

Thanks to their ties with the powerful priestly nobility, the rich patrician families were a very influential factor in the life of the nation, especially under the Hasmonians up to the beginning of Queen Alexandria's reign was politically powerful and the political power was in their hands. Together with the leading priests, they made up the Sanhedrin and consequently they together with the sovereign... [the one who was the ruler] ...possessed judiciary power and authority to govern.

The decline in their power dates from the time of Alexandria. Under her, the Pharisees gained a foothold in the Sanhedrin and the mass of people rallied more and more to them. The Sadducees were involved in hostilities with Herod the Great, in particular during the long pontificate of the high priest Simon (22-5 B.C.) who was the son of Boethus. After whom they are called Boethusians.

It seems to have given them an opportunity of strengthening themselves internally, but this could not deflect the tide of change. The decline in political importance of the high priest during the first half of the century A.D. was the cause of the decline of the lay nobility, and the Pharisees relying on their large number of supporters among the people saw their power in the Sanhedrin become stronger and stronger.

Once more chance seemed to have decreed that the nobility should lead the people. In

A.D. 66, when the uprising against Rome began, the young nobles took into their hands the people's destiny, but it was only a matter of months, for by A.D. 67 zealots had taken command. The decline in the state marked the decline of the lay nobility and the Sadducean influence which had grown from the union of priestly and lay nobility. The new and powerful ruling class of scribes had everywhere taken over the ancient class of priestly and lay nobility founded on the privileges of birth.

Jeremias says that in the time of Jesus the clergy—that is the Levites and the priests—numbered between 18 and 24,000. This is important for us to understand so when come to the Pharisees we realize that there were only 6,000 Pharisees and they were not all concentrated in the area of Jerusalem.

I'm going to cover a little bit more about the function of the priests and the Levites and give us just a little understanding on how they worked at the temple, to give us background leading up to the scribes and the Pharisees. The duties of the priests were divided into 24 weeks with 24 courses and each of the courses would serve two weeks plus the festival time.

In each of the twenty-four weeks, and in addition at the three annual pilgrim festivals, one of the weekly courses of priests went up to Jerusalem to officiate from one Sabbath to the next. Each course consisted of average of 300 priests and 400 Levites, and it was accompanied by a group of lay representatives from its district.

The keys of the temple and the 93 vessels were ceremonially handed over to the course going off duty. In this way the weekly course of Abia traveled from the hill country of Judea to the temple in the last years of the reign of Herod. On the day when his daily course was on duty, the priest Zacharias had been chosen for the privilege of offering the incense, probably at the evening offering, and it was then that he had the vision in the Holy Place.

That is Zacharias, John the Baptist's father.

The cultic functions...

Whenever you hear the word *cultic* it doesn't necessarily mean something evil. Cultic merely means the operation of the elaborate rituals that they went through, the required sacrifices, the required incense, the required washings—all of this sort of thing.

...of the priests were then confined to two weeks in the year and the three pilgrim

festivals. The priests lived at their homes for ten or eleven months, according to whether the distance from Jerusalem and the distance to and from five times took up more or less time. Only very occasionally did they exercise any priestly function at home, such as declaring a leper clean after healing before he went up to Jerusalem to obtain a final declaration of cleanness after offering the prescribed sacrifice. The ties and other special taxes were the priest's income, but these were by no means sufficient to keep them in idleness throughout the year.

In many places priests assist in the local courts of justice...

We need to understand this when we come to the scribes. This will help us understand Matthew 23 when we get there.

...probably in an honorary capacity. Sometimes they were called there out of respect for their priestly status. Sometimes if they were trained as scribes...

Scribes become very important in what we are going to cover in relationship to the number of scribes vs the number of Pharisees. We're going to see that there were probably 4 or 5 times as many scribes as there were Pharisees.

...because of their learning, and sometimes to satisfy Biblical precepts—for example in cases of assessment of votive offerings which Biblical precepts said must be done by a priest—it was usually the duty of a priest to sit at the court, because of the precept in Lev. 27:12, and to defend the interest of the temple which claimed the equivalent of anything vowed to God. There were, as Philo states, priests living in the country well versed in Scriptural learning, who were entrusted during the synagogue worship with the reading and expounding of Scriptures. But it is understandable that there were others who were not educated men.

What we're having here is some clues for us to how it was possible that the area of Galilee, during the days of Jesus, was able to be more Scripturalists than traditional. If you had some of the priests there who were officiating in the congregations of the synagogues—which was very likely possible—then they would be there to expound the Scriptures. You would have the whole force of the Pharisees put down at a much lower level. We could liken it today in relationship to the way some people view the structures of churches,

that the Pharisees were actually an independent association of men who had very little official authority, and derived most of their power from the righteous acts and traditions that they accomplished.

We find that the Pharisees had no official duties at the temple, unless perhaps one of the priests or one of the Levites belonged to the Pharisaic party. There were probably not very many who belonged to the Pharisaic party. There were some as we know, such as Gamaliel. However, we find that they did not recapture their power until sometime in the late 50s beginning the early 60s and it was not until 66_{A.D.} that they actually began taking over the whole temple process. We need to keep that in mind, especially in reference to those who try to make us believe that Jesus was in fact an Orthodox Pharisee.

We have another confirmation of this, as we continue:

There were profound contrasts between the great majority of priests and the senior priests who belonged generally to the priestly aristocracy. It's not surprising then that the mass of priests together with the young hotheads of the aristocracy, but in opposition to the leading members of the priesthood, threw their lot with the people at the outbreak of the anti-Roman rebellion on A.D. 66.

We're going to see this date—A.D. 66—come up time and time again in relationship to the rise of the Pharisees and the takeover of their power at the temple during that particular time.

Now we're going to cover a little bit concerning the Levites and concerning what they were doing.

The Levites, descendants of the priests of the high places deposed by the Deuteronomy law formed an inferior clergy. In theory, they passed for descendants of Levite, one of the 12 patriarchs of Israel. Their relationship with the priesthood was conceived of in the following manner: The priests were descendants of one prominent Levite Aaron so they formed a privilege class within the descendants of Levi. While the legitimate high priests are descendants of one prominent Aaronite Zadok formed a privilege class within the priesthood. Thus the Levites stood lower in rank to the priests as 'claris minora,' and as such took no part in offering the sacrifice. They were entrusted solely with the performing of the temple music, carrying out inferior duties.

On particular fact is characteristic of their standing. Like the laity, they were forbidden on pain of death to have access to the temple building and to the altar. The Levites numbered about 10,000.

So, we have 24,000 priests, 10,000 Levites. If we begin comparing this with the 6,000 Pharisees—and yet, we still don't have a number for the scribes—we get a proper perspective of the power of the Pharisees, and they were not nearly as powerful as they record that they were. We'll see why they were able to record that they had more power at a later date.

The singers and musicians formed the upper straight among the Levites. The temple servants—the rest of them—had to discharge all the humbler duties which resulted from the function and maintenance of the temple, especially those connected with the cultists.

That is all of the cleanup work due to the offerings and the sacrifices and things like this, with the exception of the area around where the altar was. The priests had their own men to do that, because the priests alone could be in that area.

Finally, the Levites formed the police force of the temple.

That has a great bearing to do when Jesus was arrested.

If we remember that the Sanhedrin usually held their sessions in the temple area, we can have little doubt that the band sent by this authority to arrest Jesus consisted of these Levitical priests of the temple, reinforced by servants of the high priest and, according to John, by Roman soldiers.

This gives us a little more insight as to the situation with the Levites.

We have very little evidence on the training of Levites. The Levite Joseph Barnabas, the leading member of the primitive Christian Church, a prophet, teacher and missionary, was an outstanding man in the intellectual sphere and well versed in Scripture.

This is Barnabas who was ordained an apostle the same time as Paul was.

Since he was from Cyprus, his father seems to have been one of the Levites who never served in Jerusalem, and as such served as being no way compulsory. We know of several Levites who were scribes.

We're going to see that that's probably the way that they made a good deal of their income, by being scribes. They were well versed in the Scriptures. They could or could not work at the temple. Many of them did. There were 10,000 Levites, so we have a total of 34,000 Levites and priests that functioned at the temple during the time of Jesus vs the so-called 6,000 that were the Pharisees.

So, just in sheer numbers we can get a little better understanding of how the Pharisees did not have as much power as they claim, especially when we realize that the Pharisees were the only ones who survived the destruction of the temple in 70_{A.D.} and their intense hatred for the priesthood, the Sadducees. When they survived and were able to then become custodians of the Scriptures, they look back and enhance their power by giving themselves with a historical revisionist review, such as Josephus did, of their power. Then they made themselves look far more important than they actually were.

Now, he concludes the section on the Levites this way:

On the whole, the evidence about the Levites is extraordinarily meager, but it's sufficient to enable us to form a general picture of the social position of this lower part of the clergy.

Now, let's get into the section on the scribes and we will realize that there were a good many of the Levites and the priests—who were also scribes—so it's no wonder that Jesus nearly in every case always put the scribes before the Pharisees, because they were, in fact, far more important.

Together with the old ruling class of the hereditary nobility of priests and laity, there grew up in the last centuries _{B.C.} a new upper class, that of the scribes. At the time with which we are dealing, the First Century _{A.D.} until the destruction of the temple, the struggle for supremacy between the ancient ruling class and the new reached its peak. And the balance began to be tipped by degree in favor of the new class [the scribes]. How is this possible? Which circles did this new ruling class recruit its members? Upon what did their power and prestige rest that they could dare to compete with the hierarchy of the hereditary nobility of such long standing?

Such are the questions that now arise. To find the answers for them, we must first examine the company of scribes in Jerusalem. When we look at the origin of these scribes a very picture emerges. In

Jerusalem before A.D. 70 we can prove the existence of a large number of priests who were scribes. Besides these members of the priestly aristocracy ordinary priests also wore the robe of a scribe. Among the scribes who lived in Jerusalem before the destruction of the temple, we also find members of the lower order of clergy, that is Levites. The Levite Barnabas, prophet and teacher of the early Christian community. Among the scribes in Jerusalem along side men of ancient families such as Paul we find even men who not appear of Israelite descent. In the course of our investigation we'll show what that means.

The famous teachers of the middle First Century B.C. who were said to have descended from proselytes. It was knowledge alone that gave power to the scribes. Anyone who wished to join company with the scribes by ordination had to pursue a regular course of study for several years. The young Israelite desirous of dedicating his life to such scholarship began his education as a pupil. The student was in personal contact with his teacher and listened to his instructions, and when he had learned to master all the traditional material and the hallic method to the point of being competent to take personal decisions on religious legislation and penal justice he was a non-ordained scholar. It was only when he obtained the canonical age of ordination fix surely too late at forty that he could by ordination be received into the company of scribes as a member with full rights an ordained scholar.

Henceforth, he was authorized to make his own decisions on matters of religious legislation and of ritual to act as judge in criminal proceedings and to pass judgment in civil cases either as a member of the court or as a individual. He had the right to be called "rabbi"; for it is certain that this title was already used for scribes by the time of Jesus. However, other men who had not gone through the regular course of education for ordination were also called "rabbi." Jesus of Nazareth is an example.

(go to the next track)

This is because the title at the beginning of the First Century A.D. was undergoing a transition from it's former status as a general title of honor to one reserved exclusively for scribes. At all events a

man who had not completed a rabbinical education was known as *nepaOrjKws* and had no right to the privileges of an ordained teacher. Only ordained teachers transmitted and created the tradition derived from the Torah, which according to Pharisaical teachings—which the masses of the people respected—was regarded as equal and indeed above the Torah. Their decision to have the power to bind and loose for all the Jews of the entire world.

That's why they place themselves in such a high, lofty position, because they felt as though in having this knowledge that they were the ones who could pass judgment, who could control, who could rule and all of this sort of thing. This is how the scribes began to have more and more power.

Apart from the chief priests of the patrician families, the scribe was the only person could enter the Supreme Court, that is the Sanhedrin. The Pharisaic party in the Sanhedrin was composed entirely of scribes.

In other words the few Pharisees who were on the Sanhedrin had to first be scribes.

This Sanhedrin, we reflect, was not merely a court of government, but primarily one of justice. Now the knowledge of Scriptural exegesis was the determining factor in judicial decisions. When a community was faced with a choice between a layman and scribe for nomination to the office of elder to a community, or of the ruler of the synagogue, or of judge, it invariably preferred the scribe. This means that a large number of important posts hitherto held by priests and laymen of high rank had in the First Century A.D. passed entirely or predominately into the hands of the scribes.

Again, we want to see the power and authority that they had vs the Pharisees.

However, the decisive reason for their dominate influence over the people has not yet been stated. The determining factor was not that the scribes were the guardians of tradition in the dominate role of religious legislation, and because of this could occupy key positions in society, but rather the fact far too little recognized that they were the guardians of the secret knowledge of an esoteric... [an inner knowledge of] ...tradition.

In other words, what they were saying is that God alone gave this inner esoteric traditional knowledge

and was passed down orally from teacher to student and they never did tell the people what this was. Therefore, it gave them this aura of secret knowledge and secret power over the people.

Esoteric teaching in the strict sense thus had as its object, as a great deal of other evidence confirms, the strictest and deepest secrets of the Divine Being. Probably the Holy name endowed with magical virtues was part of this, and the secrets and the marvels of creation. Only in private between teacher and his most intimate pupil were there discussions on theosophy, cosmogony as they had been transmitted in the first chapters of Ezekiel and Genesis. They spoke very softly and during the discussion of the most sacred vision of the chariot they went so far as to cover their heads as a sign of deep reverence before the secret of the Divine Being.

As we will see, this then developed into Gnostic teachings. Inner knowledge, inner secret knowledge that God had given them above and beyond what they could read in the books. We get a little understanding as to how they looked at these esoteric teachings from what is called the fourth book of Esdras.

The fourth book of Esdras ends with the order given to Pseudo-Esdras to publish the twenty-four books that had been written down by him, the twenty-four canonical writings of the Old Testament, that the worthy and unworthy may read it.

So, the Scriptures were available for everyone to read, however, the command continues in the text and it says:

...keep the last seventy books... that you may deliver them only to such as be wise among the people, for in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom and the stream of knowledge. This refers to the esoteric or the apocalyptic... [revealed revelational writings] ...to which the majority of men were denied access. They were inspired... [supposedly] ...like the books of Canon surpassed these... [the books of Canon] ...in value and sanctity.

Here the Jews were taking this inner knowledge, raising it to a level above that authority of the Scriptures.

The apocalyptic writings of late Judaism thus contain the esoteric knowledge of the scribes, and knowing this fact we can immediately perceive the extent of such

teachings and the value that was set upon them. The esoteric teachings were not isolated theological writings, but great theological systems, great doctrinal instructions, whose content was attributed to Divine inspiration.

We are now in a position to define boundaries in rabbinic tradition between matters esoteric and exoteric.

Esoteric is inner secret knowledge. *Exoteric* is the knowledge they gave to the people to explain certain things that only the people could be allowed to be given or understand.

So, we have the same exact thing today! The closest we come to this type of knowledge is modern Masonry and Knights of Columbus and other secret organizations where they have *esoteric* knowledge. So is the Catholic Church. It is filled with *esoteric* knowledge. So are the rabbis and the rabbinical teachings that are today.

The *esoteric* knowledge then is that knowledge, which when you get down and analyze it, will be revealed to be not inspired of God, but that overall cosmic system of Satan, which gets into Gnosticism, philosophy and the religions of this world, which Rev. 17 says comes from 'Babylon the Great.'

All the teachings of the apocalyptic, or the supposedly revealed literature, of the pseudo-apocryphal writings... [the apocryphal writings not canonized in the Bible] ...foreign to Talmudic tradition or occurring there only in isolation belongs to the esoteric tradition. Such, for example, is the teaching on the savior Bar-Nasa... [son of man] ...a fact of considerable importance in understanding the message of Jesus.

When Jesus said He was the Son of man to those religious leaders, you need to understand that perhaps one of the very reasons that they were so against Jesus was because as he went through—as we read in the Gospels—calling Himself the Son of man, the Son of God, knowing exactly what they taught, He would hit certain key nerves which exposed the satanic origin of these so-called apocalyptic pseudepigraphical writings which were inspired not of God, but of Satan. Perhaps this will give us a little greater understanding why Jesus said that they were of their father the devil.

It is the knowledge of the esoteric character of apocalyptic that above all enables us to understand rightly the organic connection between apocalyptic and Talmudic literature. Statements such

as Boset's that apocalyptic literature contained the religion of the people and the Talmudic, the theology of the scribes, turns truth upside down.

What Jeremias is really revealing is that much of the inner teachings that they had were actually teachings of Satan the devil. However, he can't come right out and say it in so many words. Here's a mouthful to understand, so I'll try and make it clearer for you as we go along.

Certain esoteric teaching of an exegetical... [a systematic study of Scripture] ...and juridical order ... [laws or judgments set down] ...was added to the theosophical... [which is the philosophy of God] ...cosmological... [the study of spiritual things in the world; i.e. demonism and angelism] ...and apocalyptic, inspired revealed knowledge of esoteric teachings.

That's really a mouthful, and Paul was showing in his writings that Christ had overcome the principalities and the powers of this world being the demonic forces that rule it, and here Jeremias is saying that this was the *inner secret knowledge* that the scribes and the rabbis held.

Some was kept secret because of its holiness. This is particularly true of the reasons of the Torah...

The 'reasons of the Torah' probably were the reasons why the Jews had the law the way that they had, which they changed with their *traditions*.

...i.e. the reason which led God to establish particular legal prescriptions. God is made known by the silence in Scriptures concerning these reasons of Torah...

This is almost an incongruous statement. How could God make known by 'silence in Scriptures'? But that's the way that they reason. As he said, it turns Truth upside down.

...that it is His will to leave the mass of people in ignorance by reasons why He had established these particular legal requirements.

That's why Jesus preached everything to destroy their traditions, to destroy what they were supposedly exercising over the people, and to show that it was really the Truth of God, to show that it was really the Scriptures that counted. That's why Jesus said, 'Have you never read...' Maybe we understand a little bit more about these things so that we can understand what was happening during the days of Jesus.

We have just spoken of the esoteric teachings of the scribes in the narrowest sense...

We're just getting a part of the tip of an iceberg 'in the very narrowest sense.'

...which might not be divulged to unauthorized people. We must not forget, however, a still more important fact, that the period we are studying, the whole oral tradition, particularly the Halakah was an esoteric... [inner knowledge only to the initiants] ...doctrine to the extent that, although taught in places of instruction in synagogues, it could not be propagated by the written words since it was the secret of God and could only be transmitted orally from teacher to pupil, because it was forbidden to mingle Scripture with tradition.

Why do you suppose that was forbidden? *Because anyone who could read the Scriptures would see the utter folly and futility of all of these traditions!* That's why they didn't like it to be well-known as to what was taught.

It was not until the Second Century A.D. that in order to counter New Testament canon the Jews produced a parallel compliment to the Old Testament by writing down the oral Torah, which would make it assessable to all. In this way, most of the doctrine was stripped of its character of esoteric tradition.

I might mention that we are led to believe this, but it is not so, because no one can lay their hands on the things in the kabala. However, every once in a while something of the kabala does get out and we have some of that, which we will cover at a later date.

Suffice it to say, most of this inner knowledge is still secret inner knowledge that the rabbis keep to themselves. And the reason that they keep it to themselves is because they better dare not be known that they are serving Satan the devil. Otherwise, their particular lot in the world would even be far worse affected than it is today. When we get into the formation of the Catholic Church through the Gnostic system of the Alexandrian Jews and the Hellenists, and how that formed many of the things that led to the beginning of the Catholic Church, we are going to be absolutely stunned! It is really amazing the information that is coming out now that gives us a greater understanding of those things, which until the last ten years was just not even available. In some cases not even the last three years; one publication (book) we have was published in 1990.

Section on the scribes: It is only when we have realized the esoteric character of the teaching of the scribes, not only in the narrowest sense, but as concerning the whole of the oral tradition, even with respect to the text of the Old Testament, that we shall be able to understand the social position of the scribes.

From a social point of view they were, as possessors of Divine esoteric... [inner secret hidden knowledge] ...the immediate heirs and successors of the prophets.

That's how they stood their ground.

In the time of Jesus then Jerusalem was the Citadel of theological and judicial knowledge of Judaism.

This gives us the very reason why Jesus did not live and work, nor was born in Jerusalem. Here is the whole center.

It was the Citadel of the theological and judicial knowledge of Judaism. To be sure at this time the Babylonian schools were important, but from them came the Bene Batria, who until the time Hillel were the leading scribes in Jerusalem and to whom Hillel himself owned his grounding in scribal lore. But as important as the Babylonian schools were, they could not vie with those of Jerusalem. It is said that Hillel alone gathered eighty pupils around him. They learned from their master in daily life, as well as in the lecture room.

Their master's actions even his gestures were closely watched and they drew from them guidance on ritual questions. Their decisions and the teaching of the master was propagated beyond the borders of the land. The pupils cherished them as a precious treasure and transmitted them by the chain of tradition.

The reason I bring this out is because under Hillel and Gamaliel—especially Gamaliel—that's where Paul got his teachings. That's why God called him to ensure that none of the Pharisaic and scribal knowledge of this satanical origin would enter into the Church when it began.

We understand therefore, that the scribes were venerated like the prophets of old, with unbounded respect and reverential awe as the bearers and teachers of sacred esoteric... [inner secret] ...knowledge. Their words had sovereign authority. The Pharisaic community especially gave their scribes unconditional obedience. And the

Pharisaic scribes were by far the most numerous.

And we might add: in relationship to the number of Pharisees.

If the teachings of most of the Sadducean scribes disappeared from tradition, the main reason is that the Sadducean role ended with the fall of Jerusalem.... [They were all killed at the temple.] ...And the tradition handed down to us fixed by the written word from the second century came exclusively from their enemies the Pharisees.

Therefore, that's why in the writings of Josephus and all of the rabbis today, they downgrade anything that was done by the Sadducees because they were the enemies. That pretty well takes care of the section on the scribes.

Let's go to the section on the Pharisees, and we're going to find that this is very interesting indeed. We will notice how Jeremiah puts them in the order of the hierarchy within the society during the time of Jesus. We have the high priest, the priests, the Levites, the scribes and the Pharisees. The Pharisees are on the lower rung of the ladder. That is the reason that many of them survived, because they were not all in Jerusalem at the fall of Jerusalem.

Let's get a little history here concerning the Pharisees and a little understanding as to what went on, why it went on, how it went on, who the Pharisees were and what it would be like to be in the church of the Pharisees:

Sociologically speaking, there is no question of including the Pharisees among the upper classes. Their name means "the separate ones, the holy ones, the true community of Israel."

You see immediately the conflict this presents with the New Testament Church. When the New Testament Church starts, they are the *saints, the true Israel, the Holy ones of God!* That's, in fact, what the word *saint* means. We will see that a lot of the conflict that was inherent between the New Testament Church and the Pharisees was based upon the fact of who and what the Pharisees were, and said that they were and what they did.

As we shall they were for the most part men of the people with no scribal education. But they were so closely linked with the scribes that it's difficult to separate them. The more so since the scribes rise to power marked the rise of the Pharisees also.

If in the following pages we are to study the composition of the Jerusalem

Pharisaical community and to describe their position within the framework of society, we must never lose sight of the fact that they formed a closed community.... [or closed communities] ...Thus, the Pharisees were by no means simple men living by the religious precepts laid down by Pharisaic scribes, especially the precepts on tithes and purity. They were members of religious associations pursuing these ends. The first appearance of the Pharisees and the Second Century B. C. shows them already an organized group. The first mention of them is in the two books of Maccabees, and they are called "the company of Hasidims"—that is they were the synagogue of the Holy ones.

They were mighty men of Israel, even all such were voluntarily devoted to the law. The Essenes also originated in the Second Century B.C. and whatever foreign influence that might have affected their beginnings, they were an origin very close to the Pharisees, as witness their strict rules of purity and the efforts toward separateness. It is possible therefore, to draw from the strict life of the Essene community inferences about the communal character of the Pharisees.

As we read some of these things concerning the Pharisaic community, and the requirements of it, a lot of you are going to be revisiting some of the things you experienced in your former church experience within the Church of God. It's going to be uncanny and, in some cases, almost unreal the similarities of what you're going to find.

As a matter of fact, as of the date that I'm doing this—July 8, 1993—there is currently a relatively new split off of the Church of God that is going to be the Church of God of the Pharisees, because they're going to have a lot of rules, a lot of regulations. They're going to claim a lot of physical things such as closeness to the one who was the 'apostle' of God, such as teaching many students who are now ministers, such as having labored with the Church and having been put down and held back; one who brought many rules and regulations and physical requirements and punctilious things to the Church of God that actually made void *grace*; actually made people afraid to *love*—that is to love God and to put that as the first and foremost thing.

So, when we get into some of these things concerning the Pharisees, I want you to understand what happens when the Church of God relies solely on law and tries to derive the love of God from law-keeping rather than to derive law-keeping from the love of God.

We must take into account the customs of life and the traditions of the holy communities, in particular their faithful observance of fixed times of prayer, which was universally praised. We must compare this with the fact that in the First Century A.D. the observance of fixed hours of prayer was recognized as a distinctive sign of a Pharisee. All this leads inevitably to the conclusion that in all probability the Holy community of Jerusalem was a Pharisaic community in the Holy City of the First Century A.D.

Moreover, we must remember that the Pharisees themselves attached the greatest importance to works of super-rogation and good works.

Super-rogation is works that were done very punctiliously; works that were very fastidious; works that were done in the open; excessive letter of the law, heavy handed obedience to their rules—that's super-rogation.

What is more the accomplishments of the works of super-rogation was an integral part of the very essence of Pharisaism and its idea of meritorious behavior.

You need to understand that in the New Testament when Paul talks about works of law, this is what he is talking about. He is not necessarily talking about keeping the commandments of God. In most cases he is not, but he's referring to this super-rogation of merits that made people better before God, because of what they did, and that is called *justification by works*. Whereas, the true New Testament teaching is that you have *justification by faith and grace*.

The Pharisaic communities of Jerusalem, several of which are known as we have seen, had strict rules of admission, which again shows their character of a closed society. Before admission there was a period of probation of one month or one year, during the course of which the postulate had to prove his ability to follow the ritual laws. Once this period was over, the candidate committed himself to observe the rules of the community.

In the earlier period, which is the only time to concern us here, this pledge was taken before a member who was a scribe. The new member of the community bound himself to observe the Pharisaical laws of purity and ties. Hence forward, the Pharisee was a member of an association. These associations had their leaders. As pointed out, they had a chief Pharisee. These last, it seemed, were linked to a common meal, particularly on a Friday

evening at the beginning of the Sabbath. They had their own internal code of rules and could agree, among other things, on the expulsion of a member. We shall do well not to overestimate the number of the members of these Pharisees.

Then he shows that even Josephus—who was a Pharisee—put their number at 6,000, which by the way, after reading these things, I would have to conclude is probably ballooned a little bit more out of proportion than it actually was. Then he talks about how Matthew and Luke very often lumped together the scribes and the Pharisees.

Matthew in the discourse of Jesus, and Luke in the narrative parts of his Gospels frequently used this expression: *scribes and Pharisees*.

Then he gives some of the condemnation of the scribes, which are:

They are reproached for:

- a) imposing very strict religious laws on other people while avoiding them themselves.
- b) building the tombs of the prophets while ready to condemn to death men sent by God.
- c) keeping their learning secret, and so cutting off the people's access to the Kingdom of God, while making no use of them themselves of their own knowledge.
- d) Inordinate pride in dress and salutation, and in order of seating, particularly with regard to the synagogues.

These reproaches have a general bearing on their scribal education and in the resulting privileges in social life. Jesus' reproaches of the Pharisees are summarized as follows, and they are of an entirely different kind. They are accused of:

- a) hypocrisy in caring out the laws of purity while remaining impure inwardly
- b) hypocrisy in paying tithes on green and dried vegetables not required by the law, while neglecting the religious and moral obligations of the law

We can see that these reproaches have absolutely nothing to do with the theological education. They're leveled at men who have led their lives according to the demands of the religious laws of the Pharisaic scribes.

Then he gives a review of the condemnation in Matt. 23. We'll get to that in due course in our series.

In the same way, the first two chapters in the Sermon on the Mount contain a discourse against the scribes and one against the Pharisees.

We'll get to that to show the difference and show why He said that 'your righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.' The whole reality is that your righteousness must be motivated *from within* by the Spirit of God, with Christ in you, with the love of God.

These verses are no longer directed against doctrinal tradition but against men who in everyday life made a great show of super-rogation of alms giving, prayer and fasting, etc. We must therefore, make a distinction between scribes and Pharisees and reject completely the idea that the Pharisees were the same as the scribes. The only point that is true is that the leaders and the influential members of the Pharisaic community were scribes.

Then he gives some names of the outstanding Pharisees who were scribes.

The sum total of these names is, as we see, not very great. Truth to tell, we know only a small number of names of Scribes who belong to a Pharisaic community. Actually their numbers was much greater.

Well he's just guessing that they were because he himself was a descendant from the Pharisees. So, we'll have to leave that to an open question. However, when you read Jeremias very carefully, there's a lot of doublespeak. What I mean is, there are times that he says there were a lot of Pharisees, and other times he says no, really, don't exaggerate it, as he does in this particular statement, as we read on.

In cases like this, we may, without hesitation, presume that the scribe who is defending Pharisaic opinions himself belongs to a Pharisaic community. But we must not underestimate the number of teachers who did not belong to a Pharisaic community. In all cases this number... [that is those who did not belong to the Pharisaic community] ...is considerably higher than the Talmudic tradition would have it. The tradition is derived from purely a Pharisaic point of view.

There again, this is part of his doublespeak, to let those who know and understand be able to pick out the things that the Pharisees were not quite as important as they really made themselves out to be. Now, here's a very revealing statement:

In short the Pharisaic communities were most comprised of petty commoners, men of the people with no scribal education,

earnestly themselves sacrificing, but all to often they were not free from uncharitableness and pride with regard to the masses...

That is the uneducated people, the people without the law.

...who did not observe the demands of the religious laws as they did, and in contrast to whom the Pharisees considered themselves to be the *true* Israel.

Again, I want to emphasize that this sets up a great conflict with the New Testament Church, which was taught to be the actual true Israel.

Another thing which is kind of incongruous is that we have a lot more information on the Essene communities than we do on the Pharisaic communities. However, we can draw a lot of things from the Essene communities which we're going to go ahead and cover now, which then absolutely applied to the Pharisaic communities.

We see first of all that we are dealing with a tightly closed group. A list of members was made in which was kept the sequence of priests, Levites, Israelites and proselytes, which was also valid for assemblies. Precise rules governed admission to the community. Only those whose days were completed could be included among them that are mastered as it were those who qualified.

As it appears, this fixed the minimum age of entry at 20 years and expressly states 20 years as the limit. First of all, there was a preliminary examination by the supervising scribe...

Now, some of you when you were baptized, let's think about some of the things that were asked of you before you were allowed to be baptized:

...of which much later had the sole right of accepting candidates and to whom the postulant must present himself. The supervisor then made known to him the strict legal maximums of the community. The candidate took the oath of entry and then was put on the list of members. Next, according to the manual of disciples, there was a period of two years probation. Serious transgressions were punished by temporary or permanent expulsion. See also the rules of punishment in the manual.

These details are mainly in agreement with the result of our earlier examination of the Pharisaic communities. This becomes particularly clear when we remember that the synagogue in contrast to these two movements knew nothing of expulsion.

And I might add, with the exception where the Pharisees had an upper hand in the synagogue, they would have the rules of expulsion.

As for the administration, there was at the head of each camp, community or association a supervisor who had to be between 30 and 50-years-old. He was a scribe who could inform on the exact meaning of the law. Transgressions had to be reported to him.

In other words, transgressions by members of the community had to be reported to him.

He alone had the right to admit a candidate to the community. He examined and classified the new recruits. Moreover, he was the spiritual father of the community.

Does that bring back some memories? *It ought to!* In that sense he had the right to bind or loose or to put heavy burdens upon the followers, etc. Does that show some things that you were use to in the past? Then he gives a little history about how the Pharisaic communities and the scribal leaders gained their power in the First Century B.C.

After the death of Alexandra, the Pharisee's power diminished under Aristobolus (67-63 B.C.).

That's when a lot of the Pharisees were killed. Then the Pharisees came back to power a little bit and had access to the court in Jerusalem and to Herod and he favored them. Then there was a conflict between Herod and the Pharisees.

Only in 6 B.C., two years before his death, did Herod, as a result of court intrigues, break with the Pharisees.

Again, they were put down in political power. Again there were a good number of them killed. So, at the beginning of the ministry of Jesus Christ they had regained some of their power. But from the time of the death of Christ on until A.D. 66 at the beginning of the revolt against Rome, that's when they gained in power. Let's pick up a little bit more here in covering that history.

In the following Era until the beginning of the revolt against Rome in A.D. 66, the influence of the Pharisees on the political life of the Jewish people was limited. To be sure, they were still on the supreme council, but it was the priestly and lay aristocracy, the Sadduceans who had the determining role.

Again, we find these historical things coming up time and time again, that it was the Sadducees who had control of the temple. It was the Sadducees who had control and determination and pronouncement of the Holy Days—not the Pharisees.

However, the Pharisees could always make their voice heard on the Sanhedrin during sessions and had close relations with Herod Antipas patriarch of Galilee. Yet, we do know that the Pharisee Saul was commissioned with the active persecution of Christians. Generally speaking, however, the Pharisees' influence on politics and the administration of justice in Palestine before A.D. 66 must not be exaggerated. Their only real importance during this time was in the realm of religion and here they, not the Sadducees, were supreme.

Of course now, here's some of the doublespeak that he has, trying to say that the Pharisees ordered the Sadducees to do certain things. But remember, that was not until the Roman revolt in 66_{A.D.} Then he explains a little bit about the religious beliefs of the Pharisees.

Whereas, the Torah... [the laws of God] ...laid down rules of purity and rules on food for the officiating priests alone, the Pharisaic group made these rules a general practice in everyday life of not only the priests, but in the life of the whole people. In this way they meant to build up the Holy community of Israel, the true Israel, for this is the meaning of the word "Pharisee." The Sadducean group, on the other hand, was conservative and it was held that the priestly laws were limited to priests and the cultists' conformity with the text of the Scripture.

This conflict between Pharisees and Sadducees sprang from this opposition. It dominated the profound religious revolution of Judaism between the Maccabean wars and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

And it says of the Pharisees:

They voluntarily submitted themselves to priestly rules and thus prepared the way for a universal priesthood.

We're going to see that this becomes important as we get into the study of the Gospels a little later.

The people as a whole were not disconcerted by this situation, in spite of some very angry outbursts against this new ruling class, and the evidence of an intense desire to throw off the yoke of a contempt based upon religious superiority.

To this desire, we may trace partly at least the motive to follow Jesus among those who travailed and were heavy laden were the publicans and sinners. But as a whole

the people looked to the Pharisees and their involuntary commitment to works of super-rogation as models of piety... [that is supposedly Godliness] ...and as the embodiment of the ideal life which the Scribes, these men of Divine secret knowledge, had set before them.

It was an act of unparalleled risk which Jesus performed when, from the full power of His consciousness of sovereignty, He openly and fearlessly called these men to repentance and this act brought Him to the cross.

So, we can say absolutely conclusively and dogmatically that ***Jesus Christ was not a Pharisee; never a Pharisee; never belonged to any of their organizations.*** And as matter of fact, the communities of the Pharisees are an absolute effrontery to God. That's why there was this tremendous conflict that went on between the Jews and the Christians—or as we have entitled it: *Scripturalism vs Judaism!*

The main important thing that Jesus was doing was ***separating the Truth of the Laws of God from the lies and the demonic and satanic superstition of all of the extra laws and rigorous and religious requirements that the scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees had added to the Laws of God.***

Now you will understand why Jesus said that ***'unless your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of God!'***

References: Book: *Jerusalem in the Times of Jesus*
by Joachim Jeremias

Scripturalism vs Judaism VII

Jesus Fulfilled—Completed—the Law

This week I'm going to stick with the Scriptures. We needed the historical background and also to know what the Jews wrote about themselves and their own religion (referring to #s 5 & 6 in this series). By coming to Matthew the fifth chapter we're going to cover some things on what it means and what Christ said concerning the Scriptures in relationship to the scribes and Pharisees and so forth. I still didn't completely get around to describing what a church of the Pharisees would be like other than in #6 I read what a community of the Pharisees would be like.

1. they had their own leader who had absolute control
2. everyone had to submit to the leader and follow his rules
3. any transgressions of their laws had to be reported to the leader, and everyone had to be confronted with them so they could repent
4. they were closed communities; you couldn't get into them unless you were initiated in them
5. in order to be initiated into them, you had to have a period of probation and study to make sure that you were acceptable

I think in just mentioning some of these things, some of the past experiences that people have had with the Church of God were really in the Church of the Pharisees. Of course, many of the things were run much like it with their laws and so forth.

I did not get a chance to read anything concerning the *Code of Jewish Law*, but I will try to do that separately.

I'm going to be read in my Interlinear so it may make it little difficult with the *Faithful Version* or the *King James*, but nevertheless you will be able to follow along and get the gist of it. We'll analyze and emphasize each one of these verses; here are the teachings of Jesus in what is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount, which begins with the beatitudes (Matt. 5:1-16).

Matthew 5:17: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For **truly** [verily] **I say to you...** [What is the Bible called? *The Word of Truth!* Jesus said that He would send the *Spirit of Truth!* He said His Words are *Truth!* He is *the Way, the Life and the Truth!* All the way through here when He says): ...truly I say to you... [there's a reason why He says it that way that we'll see a little later on] ...until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from

the Law **until everything has been fulfilled** [come to pass]." (vs 17-18). It is 'fulfill' in the sense that it takes place, but it's not fulfill in the sense of the same Greek word.

Verse 19: "Therefore, whoever... [here is a very profound section] ...shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven... [It's interesting, the word 'least' means *non-existent*. It's one of those words that is less than zero.] ...but whoever shall practice and teach *them*, this one shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. For **I say to you**, unless your righteousness shall exceed... [shall abound above and beyond] ...*the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way [no case] *that* you shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (vs 19-20).

Let's analyze each one of these verses. There's a whole lot more in here than perhaps we've understood.

Verse 17—very interesting statement. First of all, it says:

"Do not think ..." [think not]—which means *don't even let it enter into your mind!*

"...that I have come to abolish the Law..."—and I'll just add right here, *neither did Paul!*

"...or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill."—the Greek word 'pleroo'—which means *to fulfill, make full, to bring to completion, or to bring to its highest and fullest standard*. It can mean all of those. In fact, that's what Jesus did with the Law and with the Prophets. This is a prophecy that He would complete the Word of God. The Word of God was not complete in its written form until Jesus inspired it to be written—right? *Yes!* What did He tell the disciples?

John 14:26: "But *when* the Comforter... [the Holy Spirit] ...*comes, even* the Holy Spirit, which the Father will send in My name, that one shall teach you all things, and shall **bring to your remembrance** everything that I have told you."

When we come to the last of the book of John, let's see what John says concerning everything that Jesus did. Every time you read this, you wonder what it was that Jesus did.

John 21:25: "But there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I do not suppose that even the world itself could contain the books that would be written. Amen." You think of all the books that we have in the world today; that's really something! They were

eyewitnesses of all of these things. What we have written here is what God wanted us to have in completing the Law and the Prophets. That's what He wanted us to have.

Let's see what the Apostle Paul wrote, how he knew that part of his job was to complete or help finish writing the Word of God.

Colossians 1:24: "Now, I am rejoicing in my sufferings for you, and I am filling up in my flesh that which is behind of the tribulations of Christ... [in his own flesh, Paul was saying] ...for the sake of His body, which is the Church; of which I became a servant [minister], according to the administration of God that *was* given to me for you *in order* to complete the Word of God" (vs 24-25). I think the *King James* says to 'fulfill the Word of God.' *To complete* is 'pleroma' or pleroo—the same word that Jesus used for "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets... I came to 'pleroo' fulfill."

Paul says here that 'God called me, put me through all of this suffering for the sake of the Church and he became a servant according to the administration that God gave him towards them "...to complete the Word of God." And of course, it's amazing that Paul wrote 14 epistles, which are part of the New Testament more than any other writer.

"...to complete the Word of God... [or fulfill the Word of God] ...*even* the mystery that has been hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been revealed to His saints" (vs 25-26). How are you going to complete the Word of God unless you write it out so that everyone will have that everything that God wants you to have? What we call the Old Testament was not complete. There were many things missing from the Old Testament. And there was not given the Holy Spirit to everyone in general under the Old Covenant for them to understand or to obey.

So, to complete "...this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory; whom we preach, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, so that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (vs 27-28). That's the whole purpose of the New Testament; the whole purpose of all of the Word of God. He said that He would *complete the Word of God*.

Colossians 2:9: "For in Him [Christ] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead [Deity] bodily." Christ is the fullness of Deity. In other words, Christ is God as God *is* God. When you understand it in the context, he's warning against philosophy (v 8) that philosophy had it that you cannot attain the fullness of Deity—according to the philosophical religions—

unless you go through the various stages of which there are nine. Even the latest one, Lord Maitreya, the big head. Years ago, he was the 'the messiah coming to end all starvation' and all this sort of thing. Remember that was in the paper.

Benjamin Crème is the spokesman for Lord Maitreya, who is supposed to be one of the messiahs to save the world. He is schooled in the ninth level of philosophy of the Tibetan religion; so therefore, he is higher than Christ, because Christ only got to eight.

Paul was confronted with the same thing with philosophy there. He is saying, after he gave the warning, v 8: "Be on guard [against] so that no one takes you captive... [prey; hunt down as an animal to victimize you] ...through philosophy and vain [empty] deceit, according to the traditions of men..."

You watch some of these television programs and how many of them are based upon eastern mystical philosophies or thought control. All of that comes from the religion of philosophies, of which Paul says, 'Watch out, because that's pretty powerful stuff!' Don't be deceived by it.

"...according to the elements of the world... [the elemental demonic spirits of the world behind it] ...and not according to Christ. For in Him... [Now you understand what this statement means] ...**dwells all the fullness** of the Godhead bodily" (vs 8-9). Fullness here is the noun form of 'pleroo' which is 'pleroma'—in other words, Christ is the complete perfection of God—'pleroma.'

Verse 10: "And **you are complete in Him...**"—you likewise do not need philosophy.

Now let's go to 2-Peter, the first chapter. When I was translating 2-Peter 1, I came across some very, very interesting things. Paul knew that he was to finish writing up to a certain point. We also know by chronology that he passed this on to Peter through Mark. Then from Peter it went to John, but here in 2-Peter when you read the *King James* you really don't quite get it.

2-Peter 1:15 (KJV): "Moreover, I will endeavor that you may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance." What does that mean? How are they going to have them in remembrance? Remember, Jesus said that He was going to '*fulfill the Law and the Prophets*.' Believe me, the fulfillment of the Law is right here in the New Testament.

The fulfillment of the prophecies is contained not only in the New Testament in Matt. 24, Mark 13, Luke 17 & 21; also, you have in 2-Peter 3 part of it and all the book of Revelation. Does not the book of Revelation complete the

prophecy? *Yes!* Do not all the commands of Christ and the apostles complete the Law? *Yes!* There's a whole lot more to Matt. 5:17 than we've given credit for.

When Peter says that I want you to have these things in remembrance, notice v 16: "For we did not follow cleverly concocted myths *as our authority*, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His magnificent glory; because He received glory and honor from God *the Father* when *the voice* came to Him from the Majestic Glory, 'This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I am well pleased.' And this *is the* voice from heaven that we heard when we were with Him on the Holy mountain" (vs 16-18). Peter mentions this also in 1-Peter 5. So, that had a profound effect on them.

Remember what happened when they went up on the mount. There was Jesus transfigured before them and there appeared the likeness of Elijah and Moses. They said, 'Let us make three tabernacles here, it's good for us to be here.' Then they all kind of fell into a heavy sleep and all of a sudden it all cleared up and they looked and they only saw Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus said, 'Tell the vision to no man until the Son of man be raised again.' As they were going down they were scratching their heads; they didn't understand what He was saying. This had a profound effect on them.

Verse 19: "We also possess the confirmed prophetic Word to which you do well to pay attention, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and *the morning star* arises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture originated as anyone's own *private* interpretation; because prophecy was not brought at any time by human will, but the Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by *the Holy Spirit*" (vs 19-21).

In doing some research on this, I found out that the Greek word for 'remembrance' means a *memorial*. Remember when Jesus castigated the scribes and Pharisees and said, 'Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, you make the tombs of the Prophets and you were the ones who killed them.' The 'tombs' are the *remembrance written*; put their names on it.

Let's go back to v 13—here's the motivation as to why he's saying it: "For I consider it my duty, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by causing *you* to remember *these things*; knowing that shortly the putting off of my tabernacle *will come*, even as our Lord Jesus Christ has signified to me. But I will make every effort *that*, after my departure, you may always **have a written remembrance** of these things *in order* to practice *them* for yourselves,

for we did not follow cleverly concocted myths *as our authority...*" (vs 13-16). Is that not going back to philosophies, tales of religion? *Yes, it is!*

"...when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His magnificent glory; because He received glory and honor from God *the Father* when *the voice* came to Him from the Majestic Glory, 'This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I am well pleased.' And this *is the* voice from heaven that we heard when we were with Him on the Holy mountain. We also **possess the confirmed prophetic Word...**" (vs 16-19). The meaning is just a little bit different than the King James gives. What is the *confirmed prophetic Word*? *The teachings of Christ!* That's what it is! The coming of Christ, the teachings of Christ, *confirmed by Him*.

"...to which you do well to pay attention, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and *the morning star* arises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture originated as **anyone's own private interpretation**; because prophecy..." (vs 19-21).

This is not talking about just prophesying things in the future. This is talking about *inspired writings!* That's what it's talking about. So, it includes the *whole Bible!* How did Christ 'complete the Word'? The Law and the Prophets? *He inspired the apostles to write them! He inspired them to be put in the order that they are!* So, He's not only talking about just the Old Testament, because we're going to see that the word 'old time' is not old time. It is *anytime!*

Verse 21: "Because prophecy was not brought at anytime... [That includes New Testament and Old Testament; not just of old time, because he was saying 'we have a more sure Word of prophecy'—right? What did they have? What kind of inspired teaching did they have? *They had the Son of God Who taught them!* Was He not *more sure?* *Yes, indeed!*] ...by human will, but the Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by *the Holy Spirit*."

Did they write these things down? *Yes, they did!* So, Peter is talking about *completing* the Word of God. When Jesus said that He was going 'fulfill' or *finish* the Law and the Prophets, He was referring to **all** of what He would inspire to be preserved in the New Testament.

This is why this warning is at the end of Revelation and not at the end of Matthew or Mark or Luke or John. Nor is it at the end of the Prophets. It's not at the end of Malachi. It's not at the end of the Psalms. It is not at the end of the first five books of the Law. Although, he says in the first five books of the Law, 'You shall add to or take away from. You shall not go to the right hand or the left hand.'

He does say that.

Revelation 22:18 (KJV): “For I testify unto every man...” The Greek is *for I jointly testify...*—with whom? *God the Father and Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit!* It is a joint testimony. This is just not a certification from John of what he is saying. He is writing the certification because he was the one to write it.

(FV): “For I jointly testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book...”—which means that you’re going to hear them by reading. Let’s see what is said concerning the book of Revelation.

Revelation 1:3: “Blessed is **the one who reads...** [the Greek is conveying the present tense participle, *the one who is reading*] ...and those who hear the words of this prophecy...” You read and you hear. When we come back to a lot of the things that Jesus said, ‘You have heard it said of old times...’ He’s not merely saying that you only heard it by the hearing of the ear, but you heard it because it was read from the Word of God.

When it talks about this, it’s talking about in the sense that you hear it and that you read it and it comes from what was written. “...and who keep the things *that are* written therein; for the time *is* at hand” (v 3).

If you want to, you can go through the whole book of Revelation and go through and write down the first commandment on the top of a page. Next page second commandment, third commandment, etc. all the way down through and then outline all the verses in the book of Revelation that conform to the Ten Commandments of God, and I think you’re going to be amazed! Absolutely amazed!

That’s why in Revelation 22:18 it says: “For I jointly testify to everyone... [because this is the finality of the New Testament] ...who hears the words of the prophecy of this book, *that* if anyone adds to these things, God shall add to him the plagues that are written in this book.” Are there other plagues that are written in other parts of the Bible? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 19: “And if anyone takes away from the words of *the* book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from *the* book of Life, and from the Holy City, and from the things that are written in this book.” Then we have two Amen verses to conclude it.

Wherever you have a double ‘Amen’ what does that picture? Do you know of any place else where there are double Amens? Go through the book of Psalms, there are five books in the Psalms, each one ending with ‘Amen, Amen.’ When you have an ‘Amen, Amen,’ that means *completion*. So, He has

two Amen verses here.

Verse 20: “He Who testifies these things says, ‘Surely, I am coming quickly.’ **Amen.** Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. **Amen.**” (vs 20-21). Isn’t it interesting that it ends with *grace*?

Psalms 41:13: “Blessed is the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. **Amen and Amen!**” If you’ve got a commentary that goes into the Psalms at all and studies them, you will see that it tells you that where you have double Amen it ends that portion of it. There are four other places. That signifies a *completion*.

When Jesus said that He prophesied that He came to ‘fulfill’ the Law and the Prophets’ (Matt. 5:17) He was actually prophesying that He was going to complete it. He begins with the most fundamental laws of all in Matt. 5, 6 & 7.

Matthew 5:17: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill [complete].” He came to fulfill by finishing giving the Law. He didn’t write it Himself. He had His disciples write it—didn’t He? Why did He have the authority to do that? *Because He was God in flesh!* God is Lawgiver! There’s only one Lawgiver—God! When He says that He’s going to do this, those Jews who were listening to Him were really awestruck by what He said and did. No man talked like He talked! Who is a man to come and say ‘***I am going to complete the Law and the Prophets?***’ The first presumption you would think is ‘do You think You’re greater than Moses?’ *Yes, He was!*

Let’s notice how profound that was, Matthew 7:28: “Now it came to pass *that* when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching... [‘didache’—*doctrine*] ...for He taught them **as one Who had authority**, and not as the scribes” (vs 28-29). Why? *Because the scribes knew better than to say, ‘I’m going to finish the Law. I’m going to write the Law!’*

What is all that a scribe can do? *Transcribe what was said! Authorized to copy the Scriptures!* He had to copy them exactly the way that they were written. What else could a scribe do? It says Jesus spoke in authority and not as the scribes.’ The scribes could only interpret the Law; they could not make law. When Jesus came and said, ‘I’m going to finish or complete or fulfill the Law,’ that is a very powerful statement, and should not be taken lightly at all.

Matthew 5:18: “For **truly I say to you...**” Why is that profound? *Because the scribes could not say, ‘I say to you...’* They would have to say, ‘*The Scripture says.*’ Let’s go through and count the number of times He says, ‘Verily, I say to you...’

Matthew 5:

- 1) v 18: "For truly I say to you..."
- 2) v 20: "For I say to you..."
- 3) v 22: "But I say to you..."
- 4) v 22: "*you have heard it said and "...But I say to you..."*" (these are implied)
- 5) v 26: "Truly I say to you..."
- 6) v 28: "But I say to you..."
- 7) v 32: "But I say to you..."
- 8) v 34: "But I say to you..."
- 9) v 39: "But I say to you..."
- 10) v 44: "But I say to you..."

Matthew 6:

- 11) v 2: "...Truly I say to you..."
- 12) v 5: "...Truly I say to you..."
- 13) v 9: "Therefore, you are to..."
- 14) v 16: "...Truly I say to you..."
- 15) v 25: "Because of this I say to you..."
- 16) v 29: "But I say to you..."

Matthew 5:18: "For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled."

I want to make something very clear here: We need to sort of restructure our terminology just a little bit. Even those God destroyed the temple—which is *abolish*—and with it the Levitical priesthood and all of the ritual that went along with it, we need to view it in the sense that the sacrifice of Christ being the perfect sacrifice and fulfilling all of the physical ritual that was at the temple. When something that is done physically is fulfilled by something greater spiritually, you are not just doing away, you are superseding with something greater. Which means that because the animal sacrifices were 'done away' inasmuch as they were abolished and set aside, that does not mean that there does not need to be a sacrifice. We need a sacrifice that is greater—Christ.

(go to the next track)

Is commandment-breaking still very important with God? *Yes, it is!* What is commandment-breaking called? *Sin! Transgression! Iniquity!* In varying degrees, whatever it is. He came to the smallest degree—didn't He? If you say even the 'least' or the smallest, the one you would count as nothing—or less than nothing—I'm telling you:

Verse 19: "Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven..." Very important: ***You don't teach men to break commandments of God***, not even the least of them. If God is going to replace it with something greater, God is the One Who is going to do it. God is the One Who caused the temple to be destroyed.

God is the One Who terminated the Levitical priesthood. No man did! The Jews wouldn't destroy their temple—would they? *No!* But God used the Romans to do it.

Someone asked the question: Is the western wall—the Wailing Wall; the only place the Jews can go to on the temple mount—part of the temple of God? *I said, yes, it was.* What about the prophecy where Jesus said that there won't be 'one stone upon another left standing that you see' when He was talking to His disciples concerning the temple, when He was giving the prophecy there in Matt. 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. Will it again be destroyed? *Yes, and it's going to be absolutely scraped to nothing to fulfill that prophecy!* If they thought there was hatred toward them back then, just wait until everything is done when we go after Jerusalem again this time. It's going to be vehemence like we have never understood before.

When we went through the chart (for the Revelation Series) I didn't find anything where the 10th of Ab fit or the Feast of Purim. But the question was could it be that the final destruction of the temple is going to be on the 9th and 10th of Ab? I looked at the chart and thought that could really fit in there. It's very possible that it could happen again on the 9th and 10th of Ab, which would be the third time that it happened. Three is completion.

God absolutely abhors the breaking of His commandments and teaching men to do so, "...but whoever shall **practice**... [something you habitually do] ...and teach *them*, this one shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven" (v 19). Let's think about what it's going to mean to be called "...great in the Kingdom of Heaven." I can't quite answer that question, but let's look at it this way:

What did Jesus say of John the Baptist? *'Of those who were born of woman, there is none greater than John the Baptist! And he who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven shall be greater than he.'* So, He doesn't quite tell us, but that sort of opens the mind of all the possibilities that it could be. I mean, that's quite a profound statement—isn't it? So, He says here, the one who teaches the least.

What was the argument of the disciples as they were getting ready for the Passover, and also as they were sitting at the Passover dinner? What was the argument? Who's going to be the greatest? People are always arguing over that! Don't argue over that! There's no argument; Christ is going to take care of it! That takes away a lot of the vanity and stupidity we've gone through in the past—right? *Yes, indeed!*

He wants us to understand very clearly concerning Judaism. Judaism considered itself, with all of its tradition and all of its written law the

perfection of the greatest of God's laws. They claim that all the laws that they made were really not legislating new laws, but what they were doing was expanding on the Laws of God. So, I'm going to do one sermon and I'm going to read selected things out of the *Code of Jewish Law*—some good, some bad, some funny, some down right disgusting!

Jesus says, v 20: "For I say to you, unless your righteousness shall exceed... [abound above and beyond] ...*the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way *that* you shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." When you go back, and especially when I read what they had for their laws, it's going to almost blow your mind how righteous these people considered themselves!

What happened was, the Pharisees being a community of religious separatists said that all of the laws of cleanness—which applied to the priesthood—apply to everyone! Everyone has to practice those laws relating to the priests. Therefore, we will tell you how to do it. This one I always recall: Upon rising in the morning the first thing you do is wash your hands immediately before you do anything else, and you are to have by your bed a pitcher of water poured out the night before—covered so no spirits could get into it—and you are immediately upon rising to wash your hands. The way you do it is you take the pitcher of water in your left hand and you pour it over your right hand and then you take the pitcher in your right hand and pour it over your left hand and alternately do that three times.

This is before you can make any run to anyplace, because it's a sin, unless it's an emergency. Upon rising out of bed you must wash your hands this way and do it vigorously. You cannot even go to the bathroom and touch anything else on your body, because when you are sleeping evil spirits descend upon you and they reside in your fingertips in the morning, and you must wash them off. After you hear that, it sounds like it will be easy to have better righteousness than they. But that's just one of them. The book *Code of Jewish Law* has thousands of those laws!

When Jesus says that your righteousness has to be greater, better, super-abound above and beyond the scribes and Pharisees, what does this first begin with? What does Jesus teach the first way your righteousness goes above and beyond the scribes and Pharisees? *It first begins with attitude!* That's why I did that sermon, *Love and the New Covenant*, because you can have a legal, lawful relationship, but not have love.

Do you have a legal, lawful relationship with the city, the county, the state, the U.S. government? *Yes, you do!* You're obeying the laws. You're a citizen. You have certain obligations to you; you

have certain obligations to them—most of which you don't care for because they come in the form of taxes and do this and that and not the other thing. Though you have a perfectly legal relationship with the governments:

- Do you love them? *No!*
- Why? *Because their attitude coming down to you is one of taking, robbery, lying, cheating and stealing!*
- Did not Jesus say that the scribes and Pharisees were hypocrites? *Yes!*
- Why were they hypocrites? *Because they only had the outward adornment of what they were doing, but they were like sepulchers within; full of dead men's bones within!*

When we start seeing what Jesus said here on how we are to keep the laws, He's making the Law complete by saying the Law does not stand in the letter alone, but the Law stands because of the attitude required to do it properly. That's how your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.

Verse 21: "You have heard that it was said to those *in ancient times*... [Also written! When you have something that is said, He's also talking about something that was written.] ...'You shall not commit murder; but whoever commits murder shall be subject to judgment.' But I say to you..." (vs 21-22). He's talking greater than just the Law—right? He's saying I'm saying to you! You've heard this in the past. Was this a Law of God? *Yes, still is!* You shall do no murder! Which is the 6th commandment—right? *Yes, indeed!* He's getting right into the Laws of God.

- Why is this important?
- Who gave the Laws of God? *God did!*
- Who spoke them? *He did!*

It was so powerful that the people said, after the Ten Commandments, to Moses, 'Moses! We're going to die if we hear anymore. **You** speak to God and you tell us and we'll do what you say.'

Verse 22: "But I say to you, everyone who is angry with his brother **without cause**... [It doesn't say you can't be angry at him if he does something wrong] ...shall be subject to judgment. Now *you have heard it said*, 'Whoever shall say to his brother, "Raca," shall be subject to *the judgment* of the council [the Sanhedrin].'.... [Sanhedrin was a human judgment—right?] ...**But I say to you**, whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be subject to the fire of Gehenna." Is Gehenna fire much more powerful than the Sanhedrin? All the Sanhedrin can do is take your life—correct? But Jesus said not to be afraid of 'those who can take your life.' Be afraid of the One Who can destroy both body and soul in

Gehenna. Is He not hitting right at the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees? *We'll see that He is!*

Verse 23: “For this reason, if you bring your gift to the altar...” The altar symbolized coming into the very presence of God—right? Bringing something upon which you would offer, the smoke would ascend right up to God as a sweet smelling savor, either as a peace offering or a thank offering, or a sin offering, or a votive offering—whatever it would be. That’s why He says ‘at the altar.’

“...and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go *your* way; first be reconciled with your brother, and **then** come and offer your gift.” (vs 23-24). Isn’t that something? He starts all of His teaching concerning the individual application of the Law and the Prophets, that you’ve got to have the right attitude first, and you’d better make peace with your brother.

Why would He say that? *Because later on you’re going to see that if you don’t have peace with your brother, you don’t have peace with God!* What did James say?

This, brethren, I will tell you—and you know and I know from experience—that **this is the hardest thing in the world to do**—isn’t it? *Yes!* That’s why He starts there. The hardest thing in the world to do is *to be at peace with your brother if you’ve had a dispute*. The hardest thing in the world to do is *to hold your tongue*. I know! I’ve stepped on it! Other people have stepped on it! It’s been out there doing its dirty work. Thankfully, God is not there with a big sword to hack it off every time our tongue runs amuck! That wouldn’t solve the problem God wants to change from the inside that controls the tongue.

James 3:8: “But the tongue no human being is able to tame... [Which means that the only way you’re ever going to succeed is to keep working at and with the Spirit of God get it tamed. That means conquered, under control, not wild, but domesticated.] ...*it is an unrestrainable evil, full of death-dealing poison.*” That’s what it means in the Greek. I mean, this is sharp! When I’m saying this I’m putting daggers in you and me at the same time.

Here’s the irony of it, v 9: “With it we bless God *the* Father, and with it we ourselves... [The Greek middle verb, which means *you—your own self*—he says **we**. Is James including himself in it? *Yes!* The very brother of the Lord was admitting the hardest problem in the world.] ...curse people who are made in *the* likeness of God.” It becomes a great pain to restrain some things, so we have to modify that by asking:

- Did Jesus have perfect control of His tongue? *Yes!*

- Did Jesus get angry at times? *Yes! He even healed in anger!*
- Did He speak very sharply at times? *Yes!*
- Did He also condemn, very roundly, at times? *Yes!*

But He never cursed—did He? *No!* There’s the difference.

“...and with it we ourselves curse people who are made in *the* likeness of God. From the same mouth comes out blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so!” (vs 9-10). That’s where Jesus starts. It’s an ongoing lesson all of your life. I think in this situation all of us are going to be at varying levels of accomplishment in it. Sometimes it will vary greatly, depending on whether you have a temper, or whether you are impetuous, whether you are impulsive, whether you like to speak, or whatever it may be. He’s dealing with that and saying that ‘before you do anything for God or me in keeping the laws which I’m making complete, get everything squared around with your brother and yourself.’

Otherwise, all of your ‘religion’ is worthless! That’s what He’s saying. As I said before, I’m pointing to myself. If this feels like it’s reaching down and grabbing your gut, it is me, too. I have a lot of things that I need to go back and work on and rehash and redo and get taken care of. But I am trying, and I hope you are.

Jesus gives a little sound advice on how to keep yourself out of great, long and protracted disputes. Matthew 5:25: “Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are in the way with him; lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officer, and you be cast into prison.” Once you’re in the jug, it’s pretty tough!

There’s a woman that shot the child molester that molested her son. He was a known child molester—many repeated cases—God would sanction that killing. You go back in the Old Testament. If someone did something worthy of death to some of your family, you could go get them! I just hope that the jury says ‘not guilty.’ That man, when the kid came into testify against him, smiled at the boy and then smirked at the mom with the distinct implication in what he was doing in those behaviors, was ‘I’m going to be out in a couple of years and I’m going to do it again.’ That’s why things are so screwy and upside down in the world today. People are not following even the letter of God’s Laws. I hope she gets off.

Verse 26: “Truly I say to you... [If you’ve taken it that far] ...there is no way that you shall come out of there until you have paid the *very* last coin.”

But if you get yourself in a situation that

you're going to be fighting and fighting these things, sometimes they try to even agree with your adversary. Here's another example: Leona Helmsley. She was really made out to be a bad person. She wasn't! They paid \$5-million in taxes that year and she owed a couple hundred thousand. They paid something like \$20-million over the years and she owed a million. She was willing to pay it but they wouldn't take it. There are times when you get into situations with your adversary when even your adversary is not going to listen. The Federal government wanted to make an example out of a rich person for not paying their taxes. And guess for what purpose? So, that when this tax bill came down on the rich, you'd better pay!

Verse 27: "You have heard that it was said to those *in ancient times*, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you, everyone who looks upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (vs 27-28). Where does all adultery and rape and child molestation and perversion begin in the first place? Again, He's saying to get your mind and your attitude straightened out. What do you need to do that? *You need the Spirit of God!* Does that not make the Law of God complete? He's saying, 'In old time you've heard it said that you shall not commit adultery.' But everyone would say, 'That can't keep me from thinking.'

So, Christ is saying that *the thought* is what leads to the sin and the thought itself—the initializing of the sin—is sin! That's why it says when temptation comes we are to be casting down thoughts and vain imaginations and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (1-Cor. 10). Is this not the obedience of Christ? *Yes!* These are the words of Christ—yes? *Absolutely!*

Now He shows how hard you're to work on this, v 29: "So then, if your right eye shall cause you to offend, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is better for you that one of your members should perish than *that* your whole body be cast into Gehenna." What is Gehenna? *The Lake of Fire!* What is the Lake of Fire? *The second death!* He's putting this on a level of prime importance—right? No longer is it that these things are going to result in going to court or going before the Sanhedrin. But it's going to be going before God and the ultimate punishment is the second death—that's what He's saying here.

Verse 30: "And if your right hand shall cause you to offend, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is better for you that one of your members should perish than *that* your whole body be cast into Gehenna." It is literally true, I suppose—it could be literally true—if you don't overcome lusting, taking out your eyes won't help, because you can still see

in the eye of your mind—correct? Cutting off your hands because you may be stealing—as some of the more radical Arab countries do; they can always tell a thief because one hand is missing; if habitual he no longer has any hands, but he can still lust and plan for others to steal—can't he? So, you can cut off both legs, both arms, cut off the ears and plug them up so you can't hear, pull out your eyes, take out your tongue and lie in bed with a breathing apparatus and still lust.

The reason He brings this out is to show that you have got to overcome *from within!* You can't overcome from *without*. You can only overcome and change from *within!*

Verse 31: "It was also said *in ancient times*... [He didn't say who said it; He didn't say it was the ancients that said it] ...'Whoever shall divorce his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement.'" They could do that. A man could say, 'I don't like you' and write it out and 'divorce you and release you as my wife.' She could take that out and go get married again. But Jesus called it a wicked and an adulterous generation.

Verse 32: "But I say to you... [this is pretty powerful legislation here] ...whoever shall divorce his wife, except for the cause of sexual immorality..."—'pornea'—any kind of sexual behavior that breaks the bond of one flesh being husband and wife. Today there are many different avenues and varieties of sin, sexual sins, which are cause for divorce. But the only one who can make the decision is the offended party.

The offended party must say, 'I am going to put you away.' That looses the marriage right there! If the offended party says, 'No, I don't want to put you away, but I want you to change, repent and reform.' If they repent, change and reform and everything is fine from there on, then it's a binding marriage. You can't come along later and say, 'I've changed my mind.'

You think on this: All of what I've said up to this point of what should be the converted mind's approach to keeping the commandments and laws of God, there are some people who have actually said, 'I don't like my wife or husband,' and actually go out and commit adultery so then the other person can have grounds to put them away. Or I like someone else in this other over here rather than my husband or wife, so what I'm going to do is I'm going to make myself so miserable that I'm going to be declared a non-believer.

And the ministers, brethren, have done this. I did not realize, but in the so-called largest Church of God organization, 55-58% of all the members have been divorced and remarried within the Church to church members! I never knew that situation existed.

I mean, it's unreal! People have done things just as vicious as what I've said. There have even been cases where there was a problem in the marriage and they went to counsel with the minister and the minister told the husband, 'you're not to say a word.' He didn't say word and he listened all that the wife said declared that he was not converted and the marriage was not binding, so therefore, she could leave and marry this other guy.

You see what happens? These are living words! Who would have ever thought that we look back on our years in the Church and that thing would be within the Church of God? Violating exactly what Jesus said with impunity. There are a lot of people who are going to have to pay for that, because there are a lot of people who are involved in it. Especially when you look back and see where it says, 'Oh My people, those that lead you have led you astray!'

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 5:17-20, 17
- 2) John 14:26
- 3) John 21:25
- 4) Colossians 1:24-28
- 5) Colossians 2:9, 8-10
- 6) 2 Peter 1:15-21, 13-21
- 7) Revelation 22:18
- 8) Revelation 1:3
- 9) Revelation 22:18-21
- 10) Psalm 41:13
- 11) Matthew 5:17
- 12) Matthew 7:28-29
- 13) Matthew 5:18-24
- 14) James 3:8-10
- 15) Matthew 5:25-32

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 5:1-16, 24
- Mark 13
- Luke 17; 21
- 2 Peter 3
- 1 Peter 5
- 2 Corinthians 10

Also referenced:

Sermons:

- *What It Means to be Complete in Christ*
- *Love and the New Covenant*

Sermon Series: *Revelation*

Book: *Code of Jewish Law* by Solomon Ganzfried and Hyman Goldin

Scripturalism vs Judaism VIII

The Spiritual Message

Let's understand something that every minister needs to do. One of the things I try and focus on is we need to preach the Word of God. Someone recently wrote me a letter and said that they've listened to so many ministers, and all they do is just preach themselves or their version or their view of the Scriptures, rather than getting into the Bible and letting the Bible interpret the Bible and preach Christ. The truth of the matter is that:

- no man can save you except Christ
- no organization can save you
- no other person can stand in your place account for you
- it doesn't matter what a person's personal opinion is

In the long-run if we don't believe what God says then none of it counts.

Let's bring out a couple of other Scriptures in the way of review that Christ would magnify the Law; that Christ would complete it; that He would make it Holy; that He would fill it to the full; that He would bring the fullest meaning and ramification of the laws and commandments of God. I'm going to bring out some prophecies to show that what I brought in #7 (this series) was actually prophesied before it occurred.

Let's come to Isaiah 42:21: "The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness sake... [Jesus was totally perfect; His righteousness was the absolute perfection of righteousness in the flesh.] ...He will magnify the Law and make *it* glorious."

Isaiah 8:16—tell and prophesy that the Word of God would be finished by the disciples: "Bind up the testimony... [that's what we have with the New Testament or the Covenant] ..seal the Law among My disciples." That means to finish or complete the Law.

When you stop and think of all that we have in the New Testament and all that was said and all that was done and all that Christ preached, I wonder what those sermons were really like? Even John said that if everything were written that Jesus had done, the world could not contain the books that would be written. It really makes you wonder about some of these sermons.

The sermons I would really especially like to have heard would have been those sermons 40 days after the resurrection, when He really opened the disciples' minds to understand the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Christ. But that would also have to concern everything about not

only what He was and did, but what He was going to do. Here's the prophesy of it. v 16: "Bind up the testimony, seal the Law among My disciples." There's the prophecy that the New Testament would be completed by the disciples.

Let's take a look at another Scripture which we have looked at and talked about, which we have based quite a few sermons on—how to understand the Bible. I think this will give us a little better understanding:

Isaiah 28:9: "Whom shall He teach knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine? *Those* who are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts... [In other words, you're not to be a babe living on the milk of the Word. This is saying the way you're going to understand knowledge is to *grow up spiritually*.] (here's how it's done): ...for precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little; for with stammering lips and foreign tongue He will speak to this people" (vs 9-11).

I've mentioned in the past that I felt that this had to do with the New Testament would be preserved in Greek instead of Hebrew. I still think that is true. However, I think there's another meaning greater and beyond this, and that is that with the other tongue—or language—it's not just another language to write it in, because most of the Jews understood Greek during the time of Jesus, and the New Testament was written in Greek. So, you can't say that it was just the physical language alone. But I think what it is is the *spiritual* message that was given, which they couldn't understand.

Verse 12: "To whom He said, 'This *is* the rest He gives to the weary'... [which then is salvation for the soul; this is hope; this is helping you come to the knowledge of the salvation of God; to have rest from sin] ...and 'This *is* the refreshing'... [the refreshing from the presence of the Lord; the power of God's Holy Spirit; the ability of the New Testament to uplift and to give hope and to give understanding and to give love—all of that is contained in it.] ...yet, **they were not willing to hear**. So then, the Word of the LORD was to them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken and snared and taken" (vs 12-13).

- What happened when that occurred?
- What did they do?
- Did they repent?

or

- Did they setup something that was actually against the New Testament

—which is part of the whole substance of this series *Scripturalism vs Judaism*.

Here's a prophecy of what they did, v 14: "Therefore, hear the Word of the LORD, you scornful men who rule this people in Jerusalem." Let's put this in the time and setting of Jesus Christ and His preachings. Let's put this in the time and setting of His ministry.

Verse 15: "Because you have said, 'We have made a covenant with death, and we have made an agreement with the grave...' When you think about where Jesus said that 'you are of your father the devil'—are you not in covenant with hell and with death? Jesus said, 'You won't come to Me that you may have life.' There's an awful lot in these Scriptures if we really think about what's going on in the New Testament.

"...when the overwhelming rod shall pass through, it shall not come to us; for we have made lies our refuge, and we have hidden ourselves under falsehood." I think I hold in my hand the fulfillment of that: *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* and we've made lies our refuge.

Now let's go to John 6 and let's see something about this different language that Jesus was going to speak to them in, which was a language that they could hear. What is the saying? *In hearing they won't hear; in perceiving they won't understand! Why? Because Jesus didn't tell them what they wanted to hear!* Later on we'll come back to this when get further into the series, but I want to cover part of it here.

John 6:41: "Then the Jews were complaining against Him, because He said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.'.... [They didn't understand that—did they? *No, they didn't!*] (Look at their answer): ...And they were saying, 'Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? Why then does He say, "I came down from heaven"?' (vs 41-42).

Verse 43: "For this reason, Jesus answered them and said, 'Do not be complaining among one another. No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught by God." Therefore, everyone who has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes to Me. No one has seen the Father except He Who is from God; He has seen the Father. Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate manna in the desert, but they died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven so that anyone may

eat of it and not die. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is even My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world'" (vs 43-51).

They didn't understand this, v 52: "Because of this, the Jews were arguing with one another, saying, 'How is He able to give us *His* flesh to eat?'.... [then Jesus really laid it on them]: ...Therefore, Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood... [that's even worse! The Bible says that you're not to drink blood, so this really got them] ...you do not have life in yourselves. The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up in the last day; for My flesh is truly food, and My blood is truly drink. The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood is dwelling in Me, and I in him. As the living Father has sent Me, and I live by the Father; so also the one who eats Me shall live by Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers ate manna, and died. The one who eats this bread shall live forever.' These things He said in *the* synagogue as He was teaching in Capernaum" (vs 52-59).

Just imagine this in the setting of the synagogue; all these Jews out there in Capernaum. They knew Joseph, Mary, the brothers of Jesus—James, Joseph, Simon and Jude—and His sisters; so, He had a full-fledged family.

Verse 60: "Therefore, after hearing *these* words, many of His disciples... [What is a disciple? *One who is a learner; a follower!* Here were those who were following Jesus. They were there in the synagogue when Jesus was preaching. These are pretty tough words] ...said, 'This is a hard saying. Who is able to hear *it*?' When you say 'hear it' that means *to hear with comprehension*.

Verse 61: "But Jesus, knowing that His disciples were complaining about this, said to them, 'Does this offend you?.... [It did! What happened to those disciples that turned and didn't follow Him anymore? They surely didn't die—did they? *Of course not!*] (so He says that if this offends you, 'I'm going to lay a harder one on you): ...What if you shall see the Son of man ascending up where He was before?' (vs 61-62).

Just these few Scriptures that we've read, what does that do to the doctrine that Jesus was not God before He became human? That He was not in heaven before He came to the earth? *Totally destroys it—right?* "...ascending up where He was before?" I submit to you that Mary did not give birth to Him in heaven! Verse 63: "It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you, **they are spirit and they are life.**" That, brethren, is

the other language, the other tongue that Jesus was speaking to them in, that they wouldn't understand! **The spiritual language!** Is that true today? Are there people who can't understand even in English? Plain English? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 64—now He says right to them: “‘But there are some of you who do not believe.’ For Jesus knew from *the* beginning who were the ones... [plural, not just Judas] ...that did not believe, and who would betray Him. And He said, ‘For this reason, I have said to you, no one can come to Me unless it has been given to him from My Father’” (vs 64-65). That might be something really good to think on for everyone—members, ministers altogether—in our relationship to our calling of God in the Church.

- It is God the Father Who has called us!
- It is God the Father Who has opened our mind through the power of the Holy Spirit through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ!
- It is Jesus Christ Who died for us!

The whole thing, the whole stake, the whole New Covenant, brethren, is

- so much greater than religiosity
- so much greater than who attends where
- so much greater than money
- so much greater than offerings
- so much greater than any organizational things that people go through
- so much greater than a minister preaching himself—*his version*

It comes from God the Father! We need to *think*; that **the greatest Being in the universe has done this for us!** God the Father is the One Who has done it! Maybe that will help us to understand why all of these other things—just like Jesus said: ‘the flesh profits nothing!’

Now let's take this one step further; let's go to 1-Cor. 13 and see how all of this is to be put together. This is going to help us in our understanding and perspective—as we go through in *Scripturalism vs Judaism*—as to why we are doing this. We're doing this to understand the Bible. We're not doing this to condemn anyone. We're not doing this to judge anyone. But we are doing it to avoid the enemy: Satan the devil and all those who work for him, regardless of who they are, where they may be. We're doing this so we can love God more and love God with a greater appreciation and love God with a greater spirit.

1-Corinthians 12:31, Paul says: “But earnestly desire the more *edifying* gifts; and yet I show you a way far surpassing *all these*.” I want you to think about what I'm going to talk about here in relationship to what Jesus said, ‘The flesh profits nothing! It is the Spirit that quickens or gives life!’

1-Corinthians 13:1: “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. If I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, **I am nothing**” (vs 1-2). Those are some pretty powerful statements.

If I could go over here to a mountain and have all the television crews there and command that mountain or sycamore tree to be cast into the sea:

- Do you realize that a following that anyone could have who could do that?
- Do you realize how many people would come flocking?
- Do you realize how many people would follow you if you were considered the smartest man or woman in the world?
- Having all knowledge?
- Do you realize what following people would have, or could have, if they could actually speak in the languages of an angel?

I don't know what an angel language is like. I couldn't tell you. But it would seem to me that that would be more sacred than what we speak—right? Think about that for a minute.

Verse 3: “And if I give away all my goods, and if I deliver up my body that I may be burned, but do not have love, **I have gained nothing**.” That's why Solomon wrote: ‘**Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!**’ After listening to all these preachers every week, the only thing I can say is, ‘God help us all that we don't all get carried away in our own vanity.’

I'm going to remind all of us who are ministers and teachers that James says, ‘Don't everyone desire to be a teacher. Know you not that you will receive the greater judgment?’ The sterner judgment! The more stringent judgment! I think all of us who are ministers and do teach, we need to really keep that in mind.

Revelation 2:4 in talking about the Church at Ephesus. I just want to mention one thing here: “Nevertheless, I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.” If a minister who is teaching various people, wherever they may be—or whatever part of God's flock has been committed into his hands to teach and serve—if he loses his love for God, what do you think the people are going to do? ***They're going to lose their love for God!***

John 6:64: “‘But there are some of you who do not believe.’ For Jesus knew from *the* beginning who were the ones that did not believe, and who would betray Him.” What does it say about the

Word of God? *The Word of God is:*

- Quick—living!
- Sharper than any two-edged sword!
- Divides asunder even the spirit and the soul!
- Discerner and thoughts and intents of the heart!

We may be able to deceive ourselves at whatever level we deceive ourselves, but *God knows!*

(go to the next track)

God knows! God is going to do an absolutely phenomenal thing! Everyone is going to have to be judged standing before the throne of God. When I'm there and you're there, I want Christ to be the Advocate. I might mention one other thing, too. The whole process of conversion is a process of understanding how great sin is even the least little bit of sin.

Remember when Isaiah was given the vision where he saw God. All the Holiness of God he saw the seraphim saying 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty' and he saw the vision of God and said, 'Oh, I'm undone. I'm a man of unclean lips!' That's so true in the process of conversion.

Isaiah confronted it instantly! He felt overwhelmed! What God is doing for us now is taking us step-by-step rather than doing it instantly. Therefore, in our growing and our overcoming, we gradually see how evil we are in relationship to God. We gradually comprehend how 'a little leaven leavens the whole lump.' The further down in life we go toward the end—whether that is the return of Christ or our lives individually—the greater the sinner we're going to see ourselves being, though we are actually sinning less. I know that I'm not talking in an ethereal thing, but the reality of human nature.

Brethren, that is a tremendous blessing that God does that gradually. Isn't that something? To give us all the time to repent? To give us all the space to see our own foolishness? To give us all the time to see that the flesh doesn't profit, but it is the 'spirit that gives life'?

Verse 66: "From that *time*, many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him. Therefore, Jesus said to the twelve, 'Are you also desiring to go away?' Then Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; And we have believed and have known that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" (vs 66-69). That was a bold statement—wasn't it?

Verse 70: "Jesus answered them, 'Did I not choose you twelve, and one of you is a devil?'" He knew whom He selected in Judas Iscariot. So much for our own righteousness; so much for our own

thoughts and what we believe.

Let's see what Jesus did to complete, to magnify, to expand—to make the laws, the commandments—the whole thing of God so much greater, so much better, so much more applicable in everything that there is.

Matthew 5:33: "Again, you have heard that it was said to those *in ancient times*, "You shall not forswear yourself, but you shall perform your oaths to the Lord." But **I say to you...** [notice that in each case it's a higher standard; it's an absolutely higher standard than what you find in the Old Testament.] ...do not swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet; nor by Jerusalem, because it is *the* city of the great King.'" (vs 33-35).

And yet, it is said that if you want your prayers really heard, you fax them to the Jerusalem fax and they'll run out and stuff them in the western Wailing Wall. Those things are kind of hilarious in light of what Jesus said. Let's just take this to an extreme: What if you had a most important prayer, and right in the middle of faxing it, the fax broke? And the people at the other end of the line in Jerusalem who get the faxes could not get the prayer and run out to the western wall and stuff it into the western wall in-between the cracks.

I think they have to clean them out every once in a while. I mean, pretty soon you'd get so much paper in there, because they do. Everyone who wants a prayer heard, it doesn't matter Jew or Gentile, you get it and you stick it in the crack of the wall. How is that wall and that stone that is there going to be able to answer your prayer? As someone said, 'Rickalless!'

God wants it this way, v 36: "Neither shall you swear by your head, because you do not have the power to make one hair white or black. But let your word be *good*, your "Yes" *be* yes and your "No" *be* no; for anything that *is* added to these is from the evil one" (vs 36-37). Why did He say that? It means let your yes be truly *yes*, and your no be truly *no*. Anything more that comes of that it comes of evil. In other words, people do it with a duopolistic thought. They do it with the whole process of wanting to mislead people either with their yes or their no.

It's just like some of these elections. In order to get something passed that you want, you would think that you would have to vote *yes*, but a lot of these slick politicians work it the other way and they have you vote no to get *yes*. As you come out of the voting booth, you're cross-eyed. Was it *yes*, or was it *no*? Was no *yes*, or yes *no*? Did I vote *no* or did vote *yes*?

Verse 38: “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth’... [Go back and read that section there. It was not to gouge out eyes or teeth or to lop off a hand or leg. It was to *pay* for the loss.] ...**but I say to you**, do not resist evil... [In other words, don’t get involved in fighting evil for evil and heaping evil upon evil. That’s what He means.] ...rather, *if* anyone shall strike you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also” (vs 38-39). It’s not like the Catholics say, ‘When he’s done with the other, punch him in the belly.’ Just hope you don’t get into a situation that is that way.

What if you were arrested for being a Christian and here now is your opportunity? Maybe God is going to judge you on your last act. Could you, under the force of being beaten and bludgeoned, do like Jesus said and say, ‘Father, forgive them for they no not what they do.’

Verse 40: “And *if* anyone shall sue you before the law and take your garment, give him *your* coat also.” The best thing to do is not let get involved in being sued at law if you can avoid it.

Verse 41: And *if* anyone shall compel you to go one mile, go with him two.” That was with the mail route and the soldiers at the Roman time. Nevertheless, the principle is there.

Verse 42: “Give to the one who asks of you; and do not turn away from the one who wishes to borrow from you. You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy’” (vs 42-43). There are some psalms where David said, ‘I hate them with a perfect hatred.’ We are to hate the works of iniquity—aren’t we? *Yes, we are!*

Why does He say, 44: “**But I say to you**, love your enemies...”—which is hard to do. I would say, brethren, in the flesh that’s the hardest thing in the world to do. Why did He say that? *Because of what Christ did!* God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. He gave Him while we were still enemies of God—right? We are to see God’s love even toward His enemies in Christ dying for us while we were still enemies.

Also, there’s another lesson: How easy it is that when you’re in a spirit of hatred to create more enemies out of those who were not enemies previously. Just think on that for a while. Let’s look at this way: Let’s reduce it down to the next level of hate, and that is *anger!* Isn’t it easy just to be angry at everything and everyone, even those who don’t deserve your anger, because they didn’t do anything? *Yes, it is!* I’ve done that! You’ve done that! As James said: How is that we can bless God and curse someone else? It all ties in together. The reason is that *we’ve got to use the Spirit of God to really understand the love of God.* God does not

want His Church built upon carnal love—of loving only those who love you; and carnal hatred—hating everything else that there is besides just those that you know.

“...bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (v 44). And the next time something comes up where this is part of the thing you may have to do, think about it this way: maybe this is a trial that God has allowed to come upon you. What if you go to God and say, ‘God, I want to have more love.’ *God says, ‘All right, I’ll answer that prayer.’* What happens? *Your enemies rise up against you!* Those that do you harm come after you! Those that hate you, spitefully use and persecute you! You go to God and say, ‘God, I wanted to grow in love.’ If He would answer you, He would probably say, ‘Well, what do think I have sent, so that you can grow in love?’ Why?

Verse 45: “So that you yourselves may be *the* children of your Father Who *is* in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *on the* good, and sends rain on *the* just and *on the* unjust.” Don’t get high and mighty and hoity-toity! God takes care of the whole world.

If you live on anger and hatred then pretty soon it gets into bitterness and bitterness leads into the shriveling of the soul and that lead eventually into rejecting God. It could start out on a fairly decent cause. Someone’s sin! Have we seen that? *Yes!* Have we seen people get offended at other people’s sins? *Yes!* Have we seen them get so mad and angry and bitter that they turn away from God? *Yes!* Let’s hope that they come to themselves and repent and that God hasn’t given up on them. It does! It just sours everything that you do!

Verse 46: “For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*? And if you salute your brethren only, what have you done *that is* extraordinary? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*?” (vs 46-47). Yet, have we not had a whole church organization founded upon the opposite principle of this? You hate everyone that is not in the organization and a good many that are in it.

On the other hand, you need to be careful because He says later on, ‘Cast not your pearls before swine.’ On the other hand, there are certain people that the greatest extent of love that you can give to them is say, ‘God, I pray for them and I pray that I don’t fall into their clutches or into their hands.’ That’s praying for them, and that is a loving attitude. You’re not saying, ‘God, destroy them, they’re my enemies.’ If they’re an enemy of God, trust God, He’ll take care of them.

- Cannot God fight His enemies?

- Does not God have the power to fight His enemies?
- Is not God not going to fight His enemies?
- *Yes, He is! Let Him do that!*

Verse 48: “Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect.” That’s the whole goal! In other words, you go back all the way back, to where it says ‘I say to you, except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of God.’ And He ends up that whole section by saying, ‘Not only must it exceed it, you must strive to “...be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect.”’

How can that be? The Jews thought that they would be perfect by doing this. Draw a small square and label that small square the Word of God—the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. The Jews thought that in order to get perfection, what we must do is create another law, so you draw another box around that and make the space in between quite wide. These are the *traditions* of the Jews. These are the *laws of the Jews*. These represent *their righteousness*. Then you draw another square around that and you have in that the *community of Israel*. It doesn’t matter how it’s defined—one tribe, 12 tribes or 2 tribes—because it all gets down to the self-centeredness of one.

Now you can see how hard it is to find God in the middle of this whole thing. What Jesus is doing, He’s stripping away all of this; He’s pointing them to the reality in the completion of the laws and commandments of God; He’s pointing them to God the Father and saying that you must become as ‘perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect.’ The rest of the New Testament shows that the only way that can be done is through the sacrifice of Christ and the Holy Spirit of God.

Now we’re coming into an entirely different section in Matthew 6. This is going to show us that right at the beginning of the preachings of Jesus, He was separating the laws and commandments of God and Christianity—which He was bringing the New Covenant—from Judaism. And also raising the level of understanding of the laws and commandments of God as contained in the Old Covenant ***to a higher level of expectation and fulfillment and completion and requirement of obedience***. You have all of those going on here at this time.

Matthew 6:1: “Beware... [watch out] ...*that* you do not bestow your alms... [religious works] ...in the sight of men in order to be seen by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father Who *is* in heaven.” You may have a lot of people coming around saying what a ‘good guy’ you are; what a ‘good woman’ you are; what a wonderful ‘person’

you are; but unless God says at the resurrection ‘well done good and faithful servant’ what good is the accolade that someone else gives you? It might make you feel good in the long run, and that’s the Achilles’ heel to every person—*isn’t it!*

Every person wants to be thought well of—don’t they? Every person wants to be loved, to be respected, to be accepted—don’t they? One way or the other! Some people live their lives *to be seen* of people, because they do better when they’re seen of people. I mean, just witness baseball: we have one infamous star, so-called, of the Oakland Athletics—Ricky Henderson. He does better when people are watching him. He gets a lot of money. People come up and tell him what a good guy he is. As a matter of fact, if people don’t tell him what a good guy he is, he sulks! Gets nasty! Mean! As a matter of fact, gets downright lazy and won’t play and won’t hustle. Now he’s transferred off to the Toronto Blue Jays and he has his reward!

Think of that in relationship to your spirituality. Here Jesus is drawing an absolute swath, sword-cut, separation right through the practices of Judaism, or Catholicism wherever it applies, because He talks about the heathen also.

Verse 2: “Therefore, when you give *your* alms, do not sound the trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets...” This reminds me of Robert Shuller, the tinkling ‘crystal cathedral’ and they get everybody ‘oh, how good we are. How good, how wonderful, how nice, how great! All you wonderful people! One of these days there’s going to be an earthquake and the ‘crystal cathedral’ is going to come a shattering end. Don’t “...do as the hypocrites...” —‘hupokrites’—which means *sanctimonious pretenders*. I tell you, ‘religion’ is filled with *sanctimonious pretenders!*

“...so that they may have glory from men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward.... [Ain’t gonna getting anything later on!] ...But *when* you give your alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing” (vs 2-3). In other words, you’re not to do it with a predetermined effect that people are going to say ‘what a good guy you are.’ *or* ‘what a wonderful woman you are. My, that was sweet and nice.’ ***NO!*** You’re not to plan it so that people will see it.

Verse 4: “So that your alms may be in secret... [Whatever you want to do, you go and ask God to help you do what you want to do, and you don’t tell anybody what you’re doing. You just do it!] ...and your Father Who sees in secret shall Himself reward you openly.” God is going to take care of you.

Verse 5: “And when you pray, you shall not

be as the hypocrites... [Did Jesus, from the start, call the scribes and Pharisees 'hypocrites'? *Yes, He did!*] ...for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, in order *that* they may be seen by men...."

If you want a little extra Bible study, study the prayers of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament. The longest one is John 17, which is actually the Lord's Prayer. Every other prayer is a short prayer or just a reference to Jesus blessing the food. The prayer that He prayed when Lazarus was resurrected out of the tomb, He said, 'Father, I thank You that you always hear Me.' Then He shouted to Lazarus to come forth.

"...Truly I say to you, they have their reward" (v 5). That's their reward. They were seen! 'Oh, that was a lovely prayer.' When Gary Shepherd and the first astronauts came back to the earth. They showed it on television and here was the chaplain of the Navy and he got up there and said, 'Let us pray.' Took out his prayer all written up, laid it on the pulpit and bowed his head and read the prayer. *God wants it from the heart!* God doesn't care if you stutter. God doesn't care if you use the wrong word, He knows what you mean.

Verse 6: "But you, when you pray, enter into a private room... ['closet' (KJV)—I literally did that when I started learning of that. I just about got asphyxiated in the closet, between the clothes and the smelly shoes and closing the closet door. You try that for an hour. It means a *quiet private place*. I took it literally and it about overwhelmed me. It took me a while to figure that out.] ...and after shutting the door, pray to your Father Who *is* in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret shall reward you openly." God will take care of you.

Verse 7: "And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*; for they think that by multiplying their words they shall be heard." So much for the rosary. I remember when I was first beginning to understand this, I was turning the dial on the radio and I got the rosary hour, which is 15-minute program—"Hail Mary, mother of God, blessed by the fruit of your womb, Jesus, Amen" (repeated over and over). If you're a good Catholic and you do 250 and you've done your laps around the beads, you're in good shape.

A prayer from the heart, when you really mean it, is what God wants. Look at those poor Tibetans with their prayer wheels and their incense and their prayer flags and all the things that they do.

Jesus said, v 8: "Now then, do not be like them; for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him." I even had one person come up and say, if that's so, why does God have us pray? Talk about nit picking! God wants to know:

- Do you love Him?
- Are you going to be thankful?
- Are you going to pray for the right things?

Maybe you don't get the things you need because you're praying for the things that you don't need. *God knows!* He wants us to pray, and here's how He wants us to pray:

Verse 9: "Therefore, you are to pray after this manner: "Our Father Who *is* in heaven, hallowed [Holy] be Your name." We're not to start out with ourselves, we're to start out with God. We start out with the Father because He's called us. We start out with God because He's the One Who is going to save us. He's in heaven. His name is Holy. And you can go right through this whole thing and you can almost outline the Ten Commandments from some of the things that are said here—right? *Sure you could!*

Verse 10: "Your kingdom come... [It's very interesting in the Greek—*Let Your kingdom come*. In other words, we're not going to God and demanding that it come.] ...Your will be done on earth, as *it is* in heaven; give us this day our **daily bread**" (vs 10-11). The Greek is *the needed*. Not like the farmer who got the blessing and said, 'What am I going to do with all this. I'm going to give myself ease. I'm going to give myself soul. I'm going to sit back and enjoy it. I'll build greater barns, bigger buildings and store it all up.' And God says, 'Fool, your soul is required of you this night.'

Verse 12: "And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." That's the hardest one to do—isn't it? That's why it ties right back here to 'love your enemies.' Hardest thing to do is forgive your enemy—isn't it? I know it is! What you want to do when you're asking forgiveness for them, you almost always bite your tongue—don't you? Your human nature says *I don't want to!* God's Spirit says, *you need to!* All right, I will ^{grudgingly}—well, you're making progress. But that's part of our prayers being answered.

Verse 13: "And lead us not into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one. For Yours is the Kingdom... [there's no other kingdom] ...and the power... [there is no other power] ...and the glory... [there's no other glory] ...forever. Amen." We don't want the glory of men. We don't want the glory of things. **We want the glory of God!** What is it that God is going to give us? *That God will fill us with His glory!* The things that God has for us is so absolutely fantastic, it's amazing!

Verse 14: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father **will also forgive you.**" Do you need forgiveness? *Yes, you do!* Do I need forgiveness? *Yes, I do!* I need it today, I'll need it tomorrow, I needed it yesterday. Sometimes you'll

have weeks like this past week I had and you come up to sunset on the sabbath and you sort of just stumble in exhausted and say, 'Oh, God, thank You for the Sabbath.' You sort of made it over the finish line for another week. Then on the Sabbath you get refreshed, uplifted, up-built and strengthened so you can charge out tomorrow and start doing what you need to do and hopefully you'll make it to the next Sabbath. Sometimes there are weeks like that.

'I want to show you how important this is,' Christ is saying, 'that you forgive one another so that God will forgive you, v 15: "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."'

Tie that right in here with vs 43-44 about loving your enemies and forgiveness. Maybe, if you've been praying for something and you haven't gotten the answer, or the answer that you expect—and many times the answer that we expect is not the one that God is going to give—what we need to do is go back and ask: 'Have I forgiven those who have trespassed against me.' I'll tell you the hardest one to do is husband/wife; parents/children; children/parents, and in-laws/out-laws. That's why God is a family because we have to learn in the family—don't we?

That's a tremendous key: Have you forgiven? Do you want God to forgive you? *Yes, indeed!* What if there are some people who look upon you as an enemy, maybe even some of your former friends. Now because you're following God you're considered an enemy. Was Jesus viewed as an enemy because He was following God? *Yes!* Jesus didn't come and become the Messiah *that they wanted* Him to be. They wanted Him to come in to validate Judaism, to validate *their* 'religion,' to validate that *they* were right, to validate that they could come to Him and that He would be their hero and He would raise up an army and get rid of the Romans. Since He didn't do that, He became their enemy. The One Who came to save them, they killed and fought against Him.

That's why all this teaching is here in Matt. 5, 6 & 7. When we get through chapter seven we're going to do some rapid surveying through the book of Matthew instead of in detail, because I thought chapters 5-7 was so fundamental and important for Christian living and understanding I thought going through it in a rather detailed way. This is a key, important thing. You can't go to God and say:

- God, bless me; *curse him.*
- God, help me; *make him stumble*
- God, love me; *hate him*
- God, forgive me; *don't forgive him*

He can't do it! It won't work!

Verse 16: "And when you fast, do not be as the hypocrites, dejected in countenance; for they disfigure their faces in order that they may appear to men to fast. Truly I say to you, they have their reward." Just to show you how these things are taken to an extreme.

Judaism feels this way: Since we are to tremble before God's Word, that there those who go before the Wailing Wall today, when they recite the Word of God make themselves shake all over because we are to tremble at the Word of God. When the fast they dishevel their hair, throw sackcloth on themselves, ashes on themselves. Christ said, 'I don't want anyone knowing that you are fasting. If you're going to fast with someone, together over a joint project, that's okay. If we fast as a church, that's fine. But He says He doesn't want it to be a pain, because you're fasting to God not to be seen of men.

Verse 17: "But *when* you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to men to fast, but to your Father Who *is* in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret shall reward you openly" (vs 17-18). That's the whole key to it; *you do it to God!*

What good is it if they know you're fasting? *Not a bit of good!* What is that we do when we fast, when we come to God, that it's more of a problem or we do it to compel God to do what we want? *NO!* No man is going to compel God to do anything. Some do that to try and compel God to things for them, but God isn't going to do that.

Fasting is to humble ourselves as we do on Atonement, so that we go before God to show our way, our will, our thoughts, our strength, our abilities really, in the final analysis, *don't count.* Seeking God's will, His way and not our own; God wants us to do it in that humble attitude: 'Is this the fast that I have chosen, that you have your strife for your own things, to make your voice heard on high?' *NO!* We fast because we come to God and admit that we don't have the way, the thought, the ability, the means to accomplish what needs to be done. Furthermore, we can't give ourselves life at all under any circumstances, and we're admitting it to God. That's the whole purpose in it.

Verse 19: "Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth, where moth and rust spoil, and where thieves break through and steal." That today are the national banks of every country. That's what they are, "...thieves break through and steal." Raise the taxes. 'We're going only get the rich.'

Verse 20: "But store up treasures for yourselves in heaven, where neither moth nor rust spoils, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your

heart be also” (vs 20-21). If you set your heart on the Kingdom of God, you set your heart on God, you set your heart on Christ. {Matt. 22:37-41—this is why we’re to love God.} That’s a great treasure— isn’t it? Isn’t that the greatest treasure? What is the greatest of all? *Love! Yes, indeed!* That is the treasure!

How many times have we had this twisted and turned and maligned to say, ‘Brethren, heaven is on earth, send it to the Church.’ I’m being a little facetious, but it needs to be a little facetious so that we can understand the contrast. We can say, ‘Verily, they have their reward’—right? Those who gave and those who received, because unless you are preaching the love of God and it’s from your heart—because we’re to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and being. That’s what it’s talking about here.

Verse 22: “The light of the body is the eye. Therefore, if your eye be sound... [single minded, single purposed, focused toward God] ...your whole body shall be *full of light*.”

I might just mention, you look at some of those politicians on TV, look into their eyes; you’re going to see some pretty evil eyes. Let’s have our light single, brethren, toward God.

Verse 23: “But if your eye be evil, your whole body shall be *full of darkness*. Therefore, if the light that *is* in you be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!” You can tie in several things here:

- Who is an angel of light?
- Who is the prince of darkness?
- *Satan!*

Let’s look at this another way: Let’s look at the body as the Church. If the whole Church were single toward Christ and God the Father, then it will have great light. But if the whole Church allow evil into the body, will it not get full of darkness? *Yes, indeed!* “...Therefore, if the light that *is* in you be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!”

Then you’re confronted with a problem: If you do not have singleness of mind toward God, then you’re confronted with a problem:

Verse 24: “**No one is able to serve two masters...** [In the Greek it’s *impossible!* No man has the *power*—the ‘*dunamis*’—to serve two masters, You always end up with problems when you have two bosses.] ...for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to *the* one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

That’s why it is so difficult to try and mix in the things of the world, the doctrines of the world and bring them into the Church and say that this is of God, because it isn’t!

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Isaiah 42:21
- 2) Isaiah 8:16
- 3) Isaiah 28:9-15
- 4) John 6:41-66
- 5) 1 Corinthians 12:31
- 6) 1 Corinthians 13:1-3
- 7) Revelation 2:4
- 8) John 6:64, 66-70
- 9) Matthew 5:33-48
- 10) Matthew 6:1-24

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 17
- Matthew 6:43-44; 22:37-41

Also reference: Book:

The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion
translated by Victor Marsden (biblebelievers.org)

Scripturalism vs Judaism IX

Basic Ingredients of Christian Living

We want to finish all the way through and hopefully get past Matt. 7. I've spent quite a bit of time in Matt. 5-7, because those are very important foundational and profound chapters, which show that what Jesus was doing and starting was not an extension of Judaism, but was an extension of the Word of God from the Old Testament and carrying on into the New Testament.

We'll just do a little review, and let's think about these statements in particular since today we find in so many corners—and even in Churches of God—that the very Godship of Christ and the Family of God is coming under assault. Let's think about some of these things that Christ is saying and let's look at it from the perspective of the magnitude of this.

Matthew 5:17 **“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets...** [That's quite a statement in itself—isn't it? That is really a statement! Who gave the Law? *God did!* Yahweh Who became Jesus Christ gave the Law—didn't He?] (It's a very high level statement to say): ...Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets...” Can anyone destroy what God has given in the first place? *No! You can't destroy what God has made in the first place!* You might rearrange it a little bit, but you're not going to change the spiritual substance of what God does.

Then He makes this statement: “...I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill” (v 17). That is *to complete, magnify, finish, to fill to the full!* Would any other human being dare to say that? Think about that statement for minute. That's quite a statement, that you say as a person, ‘I have come *to fulfill and finish and complete* the Law of God! There's one Lawgiver—which is God—so He's the only One Who can do it.

Then you go back and look at what He was doing; you look at all of the healings; the preaching that He was doing; everything that was involved in the ministry of Christ. We are talking about an absolute event of a gigantic scale.

Verse 18: “For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away...” Think about it, here's someone who is saying ‘until heaven and earth pass’—indicating that He has the power and control over the heaven and the earth. We're not talking about an ordinary individual. We're not just talking about someone who was selected as the Son of God, born of the virgin Mary who was really just a human being. Did any of the prophets of old talk like this? *No, they didn't!*

Let's look at what God Himself said

concerning His way, concerning His Law. We need to understand why they viewed Jesus as One speaking with authority. Whose authority was He speaking with? *The authority of God!* Not just a human being sent by God, but as God in the flesh! That has a tremendous authority to it, because not only did He say, ‘You have said it heard in old time, but **I** say to you...’

Deuteronomy 12:32: “Whatsoever thing that I command you, be careful to do it. You shall not add to it, nor take away from it.” Yet, Jesus did an awful lot of adding—didn't He? *Yes, He did! A powerful amount of adding!* So much so that He took the very Word of God and said, ‘You've heard that it's been said, **but I'm telling you...**’

We're going to see that when he was speaking with authority here, He was giving the very words of God. If God were there to talk to these people, this is what He would say—and God was there talking to them in the person of Jesus Christ!

Matthew 5:18: “For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled. Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whoever shall practice and teach *them*, this one shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven” (vs 18-19).

Let's see what this is telling us about Jesus when we put together the rest of the Scriptures. Brethren, I thought that we had so memorized the Gospel of John 1:1-3, 14 and that everyone in the Church of God would know that hands down, memorized, understand it, never turn away from it, never go back on it: ***In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and nothing came into being that He did not make. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.*** Yet, there is a big movement to go back on that in the Church of God today. That's unreal to me, but it's happening. We're going to see a lot of unreal things happening in the world around us.

Hebrews 1:2 talks about Jesus Christ; His power; Who He is: “Whom He has appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds... [the ages] ...Who, being *the* brightness of *His* glory and *the* exact image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His own power... [When Jesus was talking about ‘until heaven and earth pass’ He had the power to make it stay or to make it pass. That's what He was really conveying there.] ...when

He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at *the* right hand of the Majesty on high” (vs 2-3).

In every one of these things that He’s going through in Matt. 5-7 you’re going to find that these are the basic ingredients of Christian living. These are going to be the basic things that are going to be the trials in your life. These are going to be the temptations that come along, which are going to cause the problems.

Matthew 6:24: “No one is able to serve two masters...” No one has the capacity or the ability to serve two masters; we’re just not made that way. Isn’t this the test that comes along, always? Are you going to choose God? *or* Are you going to choose the physical things?

After all, we read in v 8: “...your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him.” It’s amazing the immediacy of the physical things that we need can become very paramount, number one in our mind and our heart if we don’t truly love God. Then we end up serving two masters.

Matthew 6:24: “...for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to *the* one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

The things I’ve gone through have gotten me down many times; down to that point! How are you going to learn to trust God unless you get down to your last? Think about it for a minute. Just like Satan said to God concerning Job: God said, ‘Look at My servant Job, perfect and an upright man.’ Satan says, ‘Ha! He doesn’t do this for nothing! You have hedged him about. You have covered him. You have blessed him. Take it away from him and he will curse you to Your face.’ What did God say? ‘All right, I’ll put him your power, but you can’t take his life.’ You know the rest of the story.

Then Christ says He gives us a tremendous example. I tell you what, the next time you get down and you get discouraged and you’re down to your last penny—I’ve been there—and you don’t know from where the next one is coming from, then you drive to the store to spend what little you have left and you see someone standing there with a sign, ‘I will work for gas and food.’ I know that some of them are phonies—I know that! But there are some who are really sincere in it. Everyone who goes to the store, when they get to the point that they are down to their last, they’re just doing the same thing that everyone else is doing, they’re trying to get enough to live a little longer. It’s kind of a rat-race, this world that Satan has set up—right?

God says, ‘I’m going to give you a little lesson, and the lesson is: *If you’re down and discouraged, go bird-watching!* That’s what it is!

Verse 25: “Because of this I say to you, do not be anxious about your life *as to* what you shall eat and what you shall drink; nor about your body *as to* what you shall wear. Is not life more than food, and the body *more* than clothing?” *Yes, it is!* God will take care of you.

Verse 26: “Observe the birds of heaven: they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor do they gather into granaries; and your heavenly Father feeds them...” Think on that for a minute! The greatest Being in the universe provides for the birds in such a fantastic and powerful way. We don’t even think about it. So, Jesus says: *go bird watching!* Think about what God does for them. What is the pinnacle of His creation? Birds? *No! Human beings! We are!*

“...Are you not much better than they? But who among you, by taking careful thought, is able to add one cubit to his stature?” (vs 26-27). In other words, He’s talking about your own mind-power. You don’t have much mind-power compared to God! Think about that for a minute. Jesus is comparing that something that would be simple for God to do—as an impossible task for us to do—and yet, we fret about what God can do and provide for us.

Verse 28: “And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe the lilies of the field, how they grow: they do not labor, nor do they spin; but I say to you, not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these” (vs 28-29). He had the greatest kingdom in the world; was the smartest man on earth; had more gold and silver than any other king that there was; was so rich and the people in Jerusalem so rich that it was said that silver was counted as gravel in the streets. I cannot fathom that kind of wealth myself. My brain just does not allow me to do it. But that’s what Jesus said.

Verse 30: “Now if God so arrays the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven, *shall* He not much rather clothe you, O *you* of little faith?” We can draw an awful lot of parallels here between physical clothing and spiritual clothing. Spiritual clothing is the *righteousness of the saints*—isn’t it? *Yes, indeed!* God is going to clothe you. He’s going to provide for you physically. He will provide for you spiritually. God the Father has called you and given you His Spirit and loves you, so therefore, we have no doubt that God will take care of you.

- You may have to suffer—*Christ did!*
- Did God take care of Him? *Yes, He did!*
- You may have difficult times.
- Did Christ have difficult times? *Yes, He did!*
- We all have difficult times.

That’s why He says that when you are going through

a trial, **'Rejoice!'** If not while going through it, at least afterwards!

Verse 31: "Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we be clothed?'" For the nations... [all the nations of the world] ...seek after all these things. And **your heavenly Father knows** that you have need of all these things" (vs 31-32). After all, did not God create everything that there is? *Yes, He did!*

This past week I had a couple of really severe trials. When you have them, sometimes the only thing you can do is go to God and say, 'God, I don't know! I do not know what to do! I do not know how to handle this!' Every time I try to handle it it's just been bad news. Ever had that? I just ask God to help me understand what I need to do. He inspired me what to do, and it was just exactly what was needed. Lot's of times when we get to the point that we don't know what to do, ***that's exactly where God wants us!*** Why? *Because then we're trust Him!*

As human beings we like to worry—you've heard of the 'worry wart.' That's true! We do! We fret and stew and then add a little envy, add a little jealousy, add a little depravation, add a little communism—it's not fair—all those different things! Remember the Canaanite woman who had the demon possessed daughter and she came after Christ and the disciples. Just picture one of these Middle Eastern women with her shawl and her loud voice coming after Jesus, saying, 'Lord, my daughter is vexed with a demon, come and heal her.' He answered not a word, just kept walking along. The disciples finally said, 'Can't You hear this woman?' She finally caught up to Him and said, 'Lord, my daughter is at home sick, vexed with a demon.' He said, 'It's not proper to give the children's food to dogs.'

You talk about being put in a terrible situation by the very One Who was God in the flesh telling you that it's not proper to give 'the children's food to the dogs.' That's a pretty insulting statement, just on the surface, if you're a sensitive human being. But what did she say? *'Lord, but even the dogs eat the crumbs from the children's table!'* That moved Jesus and He said, 'Woman, go home, your daughter is healed.'

Has God ever put you in such a tough situation as that and you got that kind of answer? And you had enough trust and faith in God to say, 'Yea, Lord, I know I'm the worst crumb in the world, but at least the dung beetles eat.' Think about it, this is really something!

And the whole reason for all of this is that we, v 33: "But *as for you*, **seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness...** [the very

righteousness of God given to you. That's the whole purpose in everything that there is.] ...and all these things shall be added to you." When they are, we ought not gloat and think it's some greatness on our part, that we have whatever we have *or* that whatever we don't have, we don't have. A lot of people like to blame God because they have it or don't have it. What happens to so many people when they have it? *They're empty, miserable and hollow!*

Verse 34: "Therefore, **do not be anxious about tomorrow**; for tomorrow shall take care of the *things* of itself. Sufficient for the day *is* the evil of that *day*." In other words, don't complicate the day by making a problem out of something that is not a problem to God.

We've got enough trouble overcoming, not only human nature and the world and Satan. The pressure is getting more and more every day; it's just absolutely unreal what is happening in the society and the pressures that are being brought upon people. As we go through life, especially now going forward we're going to have to trust more and more in God for everything. There are going to be people who will lose their jobs. There are going to be people who will lose their homes. If we have an economic collapse come, we're all going to be together in the same boat.

- Can God see us through that? *Yes, indeed!*
- Is that not going to be the test of the *mark of the beast*? *Yes, it is!*

Think about not being able to buy or sell! Just think about that! Those are going to be some pretty tough circumstances. Is not the temptation going to be powerful? Are we not moving closer to the time when we can see that that is a reality? I mean, we've got all kinds of proposals for identification cards now. Yes, indeed! These words that Christ gave back then are living today.

Matthew 7:1: "Do not condemn *others*, so that you yourself will not be condemned... [judging unto condemnation] ...for with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you mete out, it shall be measured again to you" (vs 1-2). You think about that the next time you're going through a trial and 'you know' what the other person is thinking.

Have you ever done that? Have you ever gotten into a situation that you just get so worked up and the problem is so difficult for you to handle and you *think* you know every reason why that this is, especially if there is someone else involved—husband/wife, employer or whatever it may be. You *know* exactly why these things are being done and you are being offended and it is not fair and is not right. Have you ever had it come around that everything you thought was totally wrong? There

might be some times when you're right about what you think, but the biggest thing that happens here with this kind of judging is that *you judge that you know* what the other person is thinking. And *no one knows* what the other person is really thinking!

As it says in Rom. 2 that 'you who teach others, do you not teach yourself?' This past week I had to look this square in the face, because I was making judgments about thoughts of other people that I did not hold correct. Lots of times what you see on the outward appearance from someone has nothing to do with what's really going on in their mind. It may be something entirely different. And *you may think* that what you see is the result of *what you think* they're thinking, but *what if* they are not thinking *what you think* they are thinking. That's why this is a 'judgment unto condemnation.' Isn't that always true? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 3: "Now why do you look at the sliver that *is* in your brother's eye, but you do not perceive the beam in your *own* eye?" And the greatest justification in the world for holding your anger and judging the thoughts of other people, and judging their heart and mind is that *you are right!* Isn't that true? *Yes!* You look at some small, little thing and you blow it all out of proportion, and

- you *know* you are right
- you *know* you have been offended
- you *know* that you have been hurt
- you *know* that you want the other person to work it out and straighten it out

But it's all going to come home to the thing that Christ did not wait for the world to repent before He said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'

Maybe God is waiting for you and for me to make the first effort to try and get the problem squared around, rather than let it go to the hardness of heart. I submit, brethren, that's why in the Church of God there are so many divorces that have taken place—because of that very thing.

God wants us to run our relationships this way: ***That we love God, and then we love each other as Christ loves us!*** That solves an awful lot of problems. A lot of this thing of marriage counseling; I was talking to someone about that and they said the way to solve the marriage problems is that you get the husband over here and get the wife over there and now husband you list seven things you want your wife to change, and wife, you list seven things you want your husband to change. That sounds 'fair'—but is it right? How about letting whatever change needs to be motivated to come because you love God

and love each other. That's what needs to be.

Whatever your circumstances or situation is, in coming into a situation of judging and judging each other, how many times have you and I been wrong? Let's put it the other way around, since we can understand it a little better: How many times have people been wrong about you? That you know of? *A lot of times!* Do you not suppose that you could be wrong about people the other way as many times? That's why he has this here. This gets down to the nitty-gritty—doesn't it? This gets down into the dagger in the stomach time.

Verse 3: "Now why do you look at the sliver that *is* in your brother's eye, but you do not perceive the beam in your *own* eye? Or how will you say to your brother, 'Allow *me* to remove the sliver from your eye'; and behold, the beam *is* in your *own* eye? *You* hypocrite, first cast out the beam from your *own* eye, and then you shall see clearly to remove the sliver from your brother's eye" (vs 3-5). In other words, go to God *first!* Ask God's solution *first!* Ask Him to help you—*He will!*

Verse 6: "Do not give that which *is* Holy to the dogs, nor cast your pearls before the swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn around and tear you in pieces." So many times this happens. You try and be nice to someone and they turn around and just chew you alive. Ever heard that statement: 'They'll chew you alive!?' Some of them get so nasty they spit you out again. That's all part of being 'wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove.'

Verse 7: "Ask, and it shall be given to you...." Now He comes full circle around. He starts out with

- no one can serve two masters
- seek first the Kingdom of God and God will take care of you
- don't judge others, in particular: comparing yourself with other and judging them and exalt yourself by finding fault with them

Then He says here, v 7: "**Ask**, and it shall be given to you... [ask and keep on asking] ...**Seek**, and you shall find. **Knock**, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you who, if his son shall ask *for bread*, will give him a stone?" (vs 7-9).

It's really kind of a contrast in extreme. He's showing how kind, how loving, how understanding our Father is and then compare that with our own that, no, I wouldn't be giving stones for bread, or:

Verse 10: "And if he shall ask *for* a fish,

will give him a serpent? Therefore, if you, being evil..." (vs 10-11).

- compared to God Who is totally good
- compared to God Who knows what to do and how to do it
- compared to God Who is willing to give
- compared to God Who gives to the birds; Who provides for every animal

Are we not the pinnacle of His creation? *Yes, we are!*

Verse 11: Therefore, if you, being evil, know *how* to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father Who *is* in heaven give good things to those who ask Him?" How much more? ***God will do it! God will provide!***

- Has God ever failed you? *No! God has never failed you!*
- Has He let you go through trials? *Yes!*
- Have you had some difficulties? *Yes!*
- Has God ever failed you? *No! He hasn't!*
- After you've gone through what you've gone through, have you learned from it? *Yes, indeed!*
- Which is more valuable: *the thing?*

or

- the *spiritual character* that you learn from going through the trial?
- Which is going to last into eternity? *The spiritual character! The love of God!*

That's why all those things are there!

Verse 12: "Therefore, everything that you would have men do to you, so also do to them; **for this is the Law and the Prophets.**" Notice that He ends this here in the same way He starts out in Matt. 5:17—do not think that I have come to destroy the Law and the Prophets. Then He amplifies on all of that: "...for this is the Law and the Prophets." Not only was He just expanding the meaning, He was giving the whole purpose of the Law and the Prophets.

Go back and look at all the depravations that Israel suffered, and God said that He did it for their good. How much time did God give Israel? How many repentances did God accept of Israel? *Hundreds and hundreds of years!* How quick is God ready to forgive? *Remember David! Remember Ahab!* He even remembered *Jeroboam*—dedicated to evil! And the prophet went up and said, 'Oh, Jeroboam'—cursed the altar and Jeroboam reached out his hand to take hold of the Prophet and his arm shriveled up. Here's a man Jeroboam dedicated to evil, changing the whole system politically and religiously in northern Israel to the whole Babylonian system with the two calves out of Egypt and the whole thing. He's taking the priesthood and

he's up there on the altar and offering and offering, and he virtually tells God's prophet to get out of here and don't come and say these words. His hand shrivels up and he says, 'pray to God that my hand be not shriveled'—and it was restored as whole.

- How loving is God?
- How patient is God?
- How kind is God?
- How willing is God?

That's the whole Law and the Prophets! That's the whole reason for it. Also, He was summing up the whole meaning of it.

Now we come into a whole different section, the rest of Matt. 7. {see sermons and booklet *Judge Righteous Judgment*} Jesus said in John 7:24 that we are 'judge righteous judgment.' That means we are to judge things the way that God would want us to judge things, not just by appearance.

Verse 13: "Enter in through the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way... [the Greek for *broad* is the word we have for 'plateau'—means *high and flat*.] ...that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it." I tell you, the more time goes by and the more I see what people are doing to the Bible and to the doctrines of God *with in the Church of God* it sure is true.

Verse 14: "For narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way that leads to life, and few are those who find it." That's something! You ponder that! I think I'll again reiterate this statement. People are interested in 'religion' and not in the Truth.

The pope comes down here to Mexico and every time he lands it's a rainstorm. When he landed in Denver it was thundering and lightening and a rainstorm. And almost every time I read where the pope lands someplace, it's a rainstorm. I wonder if God is trying to tell him something. He visits in Mexico before coming to the United States and he goes out to the Yucatan Peninsula where the Mayan civilization was, and he praises that; what a glorious civilization that that was, and now we have a chance to all come together.

Brethren, the Mayan civilization was one of the most hideous on the face of the earth: cannibalism, human sacrifice, demonism, Satan worship. He comes down there to tell these people what they want to hear. 'That's okay, you go ahead and you keep your native god, but by all means, come to our good ole Catholic Church.' And little does he know that they've already hoodwinked the Catholics, because they go to the Catholic Church, especially in the Andes. Do you know what they do? *They still have all of their Andes' gods that they worship on the side!* When they come to the Catholic Church, though it's supposed to be a saint

day for a particular saint, the native Indians have one of their own gods that they are honoring and just renamed him. *Broad is the way!*

There is the Parliament of the World's Religions meeting in Chicago in August (1993). Remember what we said, that there's going to be a new one-world religion that's going to come. Brethren, it is going to come! We are going to be on the outs! I will read you a report...

(go to the next track)

...on the official government watch on cults. Did you know that they had a watch on cults? There's a network that advises the government on cults. Guess what the profile of a cult is? You would think it would be someone who worships Satan, someone who is a witch, someone who believes in demons. *NO!* A cult is someone who

- believes in the Bible
- trusts in Christ
- keeps the Sabbath
- looking for His return

Now maybe you understand why God is scattering the Church in many different little groups. When I read that report, it's going to be shocking.

Verse 15: "But beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, for within *they* are ravening wolves." It says in Isa. 8:19-20 that if they speak not according to this Word, there's no light in them.' If they don't preach Christ and they don't constantly point you to Christ, watch out! Some of them may be 'half-breeds.' Not only are they ravening wolves, but they may be kind of tempered down a little bit with a little experience of how to deal with people.

Verse 16: "You shall know them by their fruits. They do not gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, do they?" You have to look at the overall picture, and that overall picture is not that you are held someplace because of a governmental or organizational structure. That's one of the first claims of a false prophet. Who was the first false prophet to claim that? Who was the first false prophet to say 'follow the organization'? Who was the first false prophet to say, 'follow my organization and not God'? I will tell you what God says: *none other than Satan the devil!*

The old trick is that 'God called me into this government structure.' If you look upon the government of the Church *as God*, then you do, indeed, have an idol before you! And you, indeed, have fallen into the path of following a false prophet—subtle though it may be, as well intentioned as it may be—that's what happens.

Verse 17: "In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a corrupt tree produces evil

fruit. A good tree cannot produce evil fruit, nor can a corrupt tree produce good fruit. Every tree *that is* not producing good fruit is cut down and is cast into the fire" (vs 17-19). God is going to take care of it one way or the other.

If there are any who are out there wondering 'which way should I go' let me tell you, the only way you better go is **God's way!** The only One you ought to follow is *God the Father and Jesus Christ*, and don't follow any minister who is going to tell you anything other than that—period! The only foundation is Jesus Christ, *not any man!*

Verse 20: "Therefore, you shall assuredly know them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but the one who is doing the will of My Father Who *is* in heaven" (vs 20-21). What is the will of the Father Who is in heaven? *What Jesus just got done saying in Matt. 5-7—that's the Father's will!*

- The Father loves you!
- The Father cares for you!
- The Father will provide for you!

Are you willing to do His will, which includes the 'least' commandment?

Verse 22. Many... [the majority] ...will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?' And then I will confess to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work **lawlessness**'" (vs 22-23)—'anomos'—against law, against commandments.

Last week I had tapes. This week I've got literature. One of them sent to me—and I'm thankful they sent it to me—someone said that 'nowhere in the New Testament is there a command to keep the Sabbath Day. And furthermore, the Church began on Pentecost, which was a Sunday, and Jesus was resurrected on a Sunday. Therefore, we keep the Lord's day.'

- Was Pentecost kept on Sunday *before* the giving of the Holy Spirit? *Yes!*
- Did that change the Sabbath? *No!*
- What day was the Law given on? *Pentecost!*
- The Law contained what? *The Sabbath commandment*—didn't it?

That is no argument at all whatsoever! I couldn't believe it! It was unreal! I'm amazed that we just cycle through these things and we go along and BAM! we're brought right back to square one again. We're going to be brought back to square one again on which day is the Sabbath—you wait and

see! I couldn't get over that reasoning.

The fact that the commandments were given by God on the Day of Pentecost—which included the Sabbath commandment—therefore, means that the Sabbath should be kept and the Sabbath is not attached to, nor does it take away from, the Day of Pentecost. They're two separate operations and you can't compare one with the other to fight against the Word of God to annul the Sabbath commandment.

One man said that since that is so 'it certainly weakens the argument for the Sabbath.' I thought to myself: Have you never read Heb. 4, which says: 'There remains for the people of God the keeping of the Sabbath'? Have you never read where Jesus said He was 'the Lord of the Sabbath'? I mean, we crossed that the first time we opened the Bible, almost—right? So, this man is going to walk up and say, 'Lord, I did lots of good things,' and Christ is going to say, 'I never knew you. You were against My Sabbath!' *Yeah but, Lord, we're so good, we kept the Lord's day. 'Which day?' The Lord's day, the day You were resurrected on. 'I was resurrected at the end of the Sabbath.' Oh, the day that You were accepted of God the Father by the Wave Sheaf Offering; that's the greatest day. 'That is separate and apart from the weekly Sabbath.'*

We're going to see why, v 29: "For He taught them as one Who had authority, and not as the scribes." The scribes could *quote* Scripture. Christ *made* Scripture! Greater authority—right? Not only that, He is saying that these words that He gave have to do with your eternal salvation. These are not just nice platitudes.

Verse 24. Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and **practices** them... ['poieo'—this is a present tense participle, which is *the one who is hearing My sayings*, and that is with understanding. How many times does the New Testament say, 'He who has an ear, let him hear'?] ...I will compare him to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock." We've had a lot of lessons on floods this year—haven't we? A lot of rain—haven't we? It's really something when you see those flood waters and all of a sudden it comes rushing in.

I never will forget: Here's a family farm home that had been in family for 75 years and they had other floods that came up, but not like this one. The water came through and it was a two-story house. Picture a two-story house with the water up to the windows on the second story. It just moved that whole house, smashed it up and it crumpled up like just so much paper—gone! Though it looks safe, it may not be. You've got to build upon the Rock, and that Rock is Christ! (Psa. 18; 1-Cor. 10:4).

Verse 25: "And the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that

house; but it did not fall, for it was founded upon the rock." Brethren, if you truly love God, and truly follow what He's saying, and truly founded on that Rock, ***you will not be moved!*** There is nothing that is going to move you!

- Christ is with you
- God's Spirit is there with you
- God wants you in His kingdom
- God Himself loves you

Why would anyone want to build on anything else? Stop and think about what people do.

Verse 26: "And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not practice them shall be compared to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand; and the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it." Now it came to pass *that* when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching" (vs 26-28). Just aghast as it were!

Here's a Man Who came and said, 'I'm completing the Law of God; I am the fulfilling the Law of God, and I'm showing you the straight way and the narrow way, and your trust in God is to be such that you're not even to worry about what you eat, what you drink, what you wear, where you live. Furthermore, don't compare yourself to others and judge others. You do what I say!' Then He likened it *unto salvation!* No wonder they were astonished at His doctrine. This is powerful, brethren! This is something!

That's why they said, v 29: "For He taught them as one Who had authority, and not as the scribes." He did! the Authority is the Son of God "...and not as the scribes."

This whole section in Matt. 5-7 is really a basic and profound fundamental foundation of all Christianity—*true Christianity!* There are people who go along and they like to have all the nice platitudes that come from the New Testament. They like all the nice words, but they don't like the harsh words of Christ—which tells you

- you better *hear*
- you better *obey*
- you better *believe*
- you better *love*
- you better *follow God*

Let's see the separation of *true* Christianity from Judaism. I'm going to focus more on this now in the way of a survey than anything else. You know for sure that none of the scribes, Pharisees and priests were casting out demons and healing the sick.

Matthew 8:18: "But when Jesus saw great multitudes around Him, He commanded *His*

disciples to depart to the other side. And a certain scribe came to *Him* and said, ‘Master... [A scribe was one of the religious leaders; this probably was not a Pharisee, but a scribe undoubtedly was one who know all of the traditions of Judaism. If Christianity came out of Judaism, then Jesus would not have responded this way.] ...I will follow You wherever You may go’” (vs 18-19). That’s willing attitude— isn’t it? It’s quite something, here’s a volunteer! “...I will follow You wherever You may go.”

Verse 20: “Then Jesus said to him, ‘Foxes have holes... [That’s not much of a dwelling place— is it? Dig a hole in the ground and that’s your home. Reminds me of these wild dogs on the Serengeti, they have their little burrows that they go in.] ...and birds of heaven *have* nests; but the Son of man has no place to lay His head.’” Wonder how that scribe felt? Here’s a religious, sensitive scribe. He came to the One Who many of them thought He was the Messiah. He was enthusiastic enough—wasn’t he? *Yes, he was!* ‘I’ll follow You wherever You go.’ But what did Jesus say? *Beware of the leaven of the scribes and Pharisees!* In another place, *the Pharisees and the Sadducees!* Christ was not going to have someone coming along, bring all the baggage of Judaism to clutter up what He was teaching, so He said to the man, ‘If you follow me it’s going to be tough.’

Verse 21: “And another of His disciples said to Him... [Here’s one of those, remember we’ve asked: Wonder what happened to those disciples who turned and followed Him no more?] (Here’s a disciple, mind you): ...‘Lord, allow me first to go and bury my father.’” That is a notable thing to do. It was his own father. Not a cousin, not an uncle, not an aunt—it’s your own father.

Verse 22: “But Jesus said to him, ‘Follow Me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.’” The dead, brethren, God has consigned the whole world to death. Think about that! That’s a pretty strong statement, but He has! Do all die? *Yes, they do!* No one has been able to overcome it—have they? Let “...the dead bury their own dead.” Imagine that! Jesus again made a very tough statement. He’s saying to this disciple, ‘all your relatives are dead people, let them bury the dead.’

Both of these statements were not kind; they were not understanding; they were not sensitive. If, in the work place today, this kind of answer were given, in order for Christ to have continued employment, he would have to go through ‘sensitivity training.’ What Jesus was doing was really showing that it is the *straight way*, it is the *narrow way*, it is the *way of God*. If you’re going to follow God, circumstances do not count and relatives do not count. That’s a pretty tough saying.

You compare that with the religions of the world. Once a Catholic always a Catholic: ‘my mother was, my father was, I will be’—whatever the saying goes.

Matthew 9:1: “And after going into the ship, He passed over and came to His own city. And behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a stretcher. Then Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, ‘Be of good courage, child; your sins have been forgiven you.’” (vs 1-2). Notice what the scribes and Pharisees did:

- They judged—didn’t they?
- They had the beam in their own eyes—didn’t they?
- Were they concerned that a paralytic was healed?

or

- Were they concerned with their own power and authority?
- Who were they concerned about?

Verse 3: “And immediately some of the scribes said within themselves... [Jesus had to tell them this at some time]: ...‘This *man* blasphemes.’ But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts... [Jesus can perceive the thoughts; we can’t.] ...said, ‘Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? For which is easier to say, ‘Your sins have been forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise and walk’? But *I speak these words so that you may understand that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins.*’ Then He said to the paralytic, ‘Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house’” (vs 3-6). This did not set well with the scribes and Pharisees. Immediately, right at first, they’re after Him—right? How could it possibly be said that Jesus was an Orthodox Pharisaic rabbi? But that’s what’s taught today in many places.

Verse 7: “And he arose and went away to his house. Now when the multitudes saw *it*, they were amazed and glorified God, Who had given such authority to men.... [after He called His disciples] ...And passing from there, Jesus saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office, and said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ And he arose *and* followed Him” (vs 7-9). A Levi—an IRS agent—wrote the book of Matthew, *converted!*

Verse 10: “Then it came to pass, when Jesus sat down *to eat* in the house that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples.” Think about this for a minute. Where did Jesus have His meal? What do the scribes and Pharisees do in their meals? *They wash their hands vigorously!* Remember, they attacked the disciples: ‘Why don’t Your disciples wash their hands?’ (Mark 7).

Verse 11: “And after seeing *this*, the Pharisees said to His disciples... [they were complaining about Jesus] ...‘Why does your Master

eat with tax collectors and sinners?” The Pharisee was one who separated himself from people, separated himself from what *he thought* were sinners, lived in a *closed* community. Jesus was not a Pharisee! He wasn’t living in a closed community. He was not avoiding the pariahs of the Pharisees. He was welcoming them! Obviously, He wasn’t sinning with them. Obviously, He wasn’t taking bribes from the tax collectors. But He surely was avoiding the Pharisees—right?

Verse 12: “But when Jesus heard *it*, He said to them, ‘Those who are strong do not have need of a physician, but those who are sick. Now go and **learn what this means**... [He’s giving a lesson to the scribes and Pharisees] ...“I desire mercy and not sacrifice.” For I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners to repentance.” (vs 12-13). The righteous were those who *thought* they were righteous—“unless your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no wise enter the Kingdom of God.” He was really creating a stir!

Verse 14: “Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, ‘Why do we... [here’s the comparison]: ...and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?’” If Jesus were a Pharisee, how would His conduct be? What was one of the requirements of being a Pharisee?

- a Pharisee was to separate himself from the people
- a Pharisee was to not keep company with sinners
- a Pharisee had a religious regimen
- a Pharisee followed the traditions of the elders

What was the question that the disciples of John asked? ‘Why don’t your disciples fast?’ *We and the Pharisees fast!* Notice when the Pharisee said as he was praying to himself, judging others, condemning others.

He prayed, Luke 18:11: “...‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unrighteous, adulterers—or even as this tax collector. I fast twice in the week...” (vs 11-12). So, if Jesus were a Pharisee He would be fasting twice in the week—right? Furthermore, what would a Pharisee have to do? Remember what we learned about the Pharisaic community? *You had a leader of the Pharisaic community to whom the disciples of the Pharisees would come and they would have to submit to the rules and regulations of the Pharisaic community and the Pharisaic leader!* Then Jesus would be placing Himself not under God’s authority, but under human authority. As we go through this, you’re going to see how ridiculous it is to claim that Jesus was a Pharisee. Then He gives the example of

the new wineskin, the new piece of cloth and so forth.

Matthew 9:32: “And as they were leaving, behold, they brought to Him a dumb man, possessed by a demon; and when the demon had been cast out, the *one who had been dumb* spoke. And the multitudes wondered, saying, ‘**Never** has the like been seen in Israel.’ But the Pharisees said... [‘He’s one of us.’ ***He didn’t say that!***] ...‘By the prince of the demons He casts out demons.’” (vs 32-34). Immediately there was this great gulf between Christ and the Pharisees and continued all the way along.

Matthew 10:1: “And when He had called His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every kind of sickness.”

Verse 16: “Behold, I am sending you forth as sheep in *the* midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men... [which men?] ...for they will deliver you up to councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues” (vs 16-17)—*the scribes, Pharisees, and chief priests*—right? Judaism sat in the seat of Judaism and rejected Jesus! How can you say the teachings of Jesus came out of Judaism? *Cannot be!*

Verse 34: “Do not think that I have come to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.” This is so true! Think of all of those Jewish households in the time of Jesus. Guess what the topic of conversation was; and, of course, as you know, arguments and disputations are well known among the Jews. Can you imagine some of those households? *I believe! I don’t believe! Oh, he’s going against the scribes and Pharisees!*

Jesus said, v 34: “Do not think that I have come to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s enemies *shall be those of his own household*” (vs 34-36). And to this day, over the name of Jesus, that is true! But especially then! How important is Jesus?

Verse 37: “The one who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and the one who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And the one who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. The one who has found his life shall lose it; and the one who has lost his life for My sake shall find it” (vs 37-39). Those are pretty stout words! Those, brethren, are pretty stout words! No compromise at all! Complete separation from the religions of this world, the way of the world, the people of the world. God calls them to repentance. God offers mercy—He wants mercy and not sacrifice.

I'll try and do some reading in the *Code of Jewish Law* and when I do some of the reading there, we will ask: Did Jesus ever teach any of the commandments of the Pharisees? If He were a Pharisee He surely would have—wouldn't He? *Yes, indeed!* But we will see that He didn't!

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 5:17-18
- 2) Deuteronomy 12:32
- 3) Matthew 5:18-19
- 4) Hebrews 1:2-3
- 5) Matthew 6:24, 8, 24-34
- 6) Matthew 7:1-23, 29, 24-29
- 7) Matthew 8:18-22
- 8) Matthew 9:1-14
- 9) Luke 18:11
- 10) Matthew 9:32-34
- 11) Matthew 10:1, 16-17, 34-39

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 John 1:1-3, 14
- Romans 2
- Isaiah 8:19-20
- Hebrews 4
- Psalm 18
- 1 Corinthians 10:4
- Mark 7

Also referenced:

- Sermon Series & Booklet: *Judge Righteous Judgment*
- Book: *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried & Goldin

Scripturalism vs Judaism X

Matthew 9-12

So many people do not realize that the New Testament Church was never a part of Judaism. Some people even claim that Jesus was an Orthodox Pharisaic rabbi, and nothing could be further from the truth. Jesus said of the religious leaders and the Pharisees: *you are of this world, I am not of this world!* Right from the very beginning with John the Baptist and the conception and birth of Jesus Christ, then the ministry of John the Baptist and on into the ministry of Jesus Christ, there was a complete separation from the established 'religious system' of Judaism, and there was a separation from the 'temple system.'

It's most significantly borne out in the book of Matthew, because Matthew was a Levite. Matthew understood the separation that was taking place. We progressed so far up to Matt. 9. I am using my *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* by George Ricker Berry. It's the same Greek text that the *King James Version*, with its archaic English makes it very difficult sometimes to follow. {note: *The Holy Bible in its Original Order* is used for Scriptures in this transcription.}

Matthew 9:1: "And after going into the ship, He passed over and came to His own city. And behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a stretcher. Then Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, 'Be of good courage, child; your sins have been forgiven you.'" (vs 1-2).

Remember the great contrast that we saw when went through the Sermon on the Mount—Matt. 5-7—how that Jesus spoke with authority. Here now we are going to see that Jesus, in forgiving sin, was actually showing that He was God in the flesh!

Verse 3: "And immediately some of the scribes said within themselves, 'This *man* blasphemes.'" Remember that the scribes were a combination of priests, Sadducees and Pharisees. You could have a priest who was neither a Sadducee nor a Pharisee who was a scribe. You could have a Pharisee who was also a scribe. And you could have a Sadducee who was also a scribe. A scribe was someone who was legally accepted by the community to look into the Word of God and make civil judgments. That's what they did. They also taught in a 'religious' capacity, too. So, they said. "...within themselves, 'This *man* blasphemes.'"

Verse 4: "But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, said, 'Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?'" That's quite an interesting statement—isn't it? Let's look at the situation. Here's a man who is a

paraplegic who was healed, whom Jesus said 'your sins are forgiven.' What his sins were we do not know. Now you have the 'religious' leaders on the other hand—that Jesus avoided, that He rejected, that He did not follow—and here is this power struggle going on in the view of the Pharisees, because here was a man doing something without their authority. And furthermore, He was going to the point of *forgiving sins!* Jesus said that all of what you're thinking here is 'evil'—because you're not looking at the whole picture.

Verse 5: "For which is easier to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? But ***I speak these words so that you may understand that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins.***'...." (vs 5-6). Remember what Jesus said just before He ascended into heaven? *All authority in heaven and in earth is given unto Me!* Here He had authority and when He said *authority*, they knew that authority came from God. This is really creating this division and schism even more so with the authorities of Judaism.

"...Then He said to the paralytic, 'Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.' And he arose and went away to his house. Now when the multitudes saw *it*, they were amazed and glorified God, Who had given such authority to men" (vs 6-8). So, *they knew* that that authority had come from God!

Remember when Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, what did he say? *Teacher, we know that you are a man sent from God, because no one can do the things that You do unless God be with him!*

Now let's go to the parallel account and we're going to see the rest of the thought that was not recorded in Matt. 9 that the scribes and Pharisees were included in Mark 2:1: "And after *some* days, He again entered into Capernaum, and it was reported that He was in *the* house. And immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer any room, not even at the door; and He preached the Word to them. Then they came to Him, bringing a paraplegic borne by four *men*. And since they were not able to come near to Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was; and after breaking *it* open, they let down the stretcher on which the paraplegic was lying" (vs 1-4). Let him right down in the middle of everyone. Quite a thing! Just try and picture this in your mind what is going on.

Verse 5: "Now when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paraplegic, 'Child, your sins have been forgiven you.' But some of the scribes were

sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, ‘Why does this *man* speak such blasphemies? Who has the power to forgive sins, except one, *and that is God?*’” (vs 5-6). That’s quite a message there—isn’t it? They *knew* that *only God* could forgive sin. We’re talking about a whole situation here that what Jesus did

- with His miracles
- with the healings
- with His teaching

that they had a witness that they were without excuse!

Jesus also healed someone who was born blind from birth. We won’t go through the whole account, but what we’re going to do is that we’re going to see the reaction and we’re going to see what Jesus said to them, John 9:40: “And those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things; and they said to Him, ‘Are we also blind?’.... [Because Jesus said that he healed him so that ‘those who could not see, *could see*; and those who could see, *would not see*.’] (They asked): ...‘Are we also blind?’ Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now you say, ‘We see.’ **Therefore, your sin remains**” (vs 40-41).

All of these confrontations that we see throughout the entire Gospels—between Jesus and the scribes, the Pharisees, the priests and so forth—are all there for a purpose for us *to know and to understand* that *true Christianity* did not come out of Judaism! Absolutely had no part whatsoever to do with it at all!

Let’s see some more instances, and we will see in the book of Matthew time and time again that Matthew brings out all of these confrontations. He shows the things that happen between Jesus and the Pharisees and Sadducees and the scribes.

Matthew 9:9: “And passing from there, Jesus saw a man named Matthew... [the one who wrote the book of Matthew]...sitting at the tax office, and said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ And he arose *and* followed Him. Then it came to pass, when Jesus sat down *to eat* in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples” (vs 9-10). This is not what the ‘religionists’ thought. If Jesus were a Pharisee, He would *never* have associated with those who are called *sinners*. A Pharisee is one who *separates himself*, one who withdraws from the society, a monistic type of living. That’s why they had their long beards and their phylacteries, and they had all of their religious ropes.

Verse 11: “And after seeing *this*, the Pharisees said to His disciples, ‘Why does your Master eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ But

when Jesus heard *it*, He said to them, ‘Those who are strong do not have need of a physician, but those who are sick. Now go and learn what this means: “**I desire mercy and not sacrifice.**”....’” (vs 11-13). I tell you, there’s so much there for us to learn:

- God desires *mercy*!
- He desires *repentance*!
- He desires forgiveness!
- ***Not sacrifice!***

What good does it do to have all of these religious works on the outside, *but you don’t change the heart*? What good does it do for you to be religious—and here are these people who need your help—and *you do nothing for them*?

That’s what Jesus was saying here. You go learn this after you leave here, ‘I want you to learn this.’ God says, “...“I desire mercy and not sacrifice.” For I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners to repentance” (v 13). That’s the whole message. One of these days I’m going to give a sermon on repentance and show

- how God *leads* a person to repentance
- that God is One Who is desirous that we repent
- God is quick
- God is anxious
- God is willing
- God is ready to forgive sin

The whole operation of Judaism is this—the reason that He said this:

Judaism took the laws and commandments of God, and the Prophets and the Writings—draw a circle and look at the center and put around it layers and layers and layers of their own laws and works to where you could never get to the heart and core of the Word of God to understand about mercy and repentance, because there’s plenty of that in the Old Testament as well. Then what Judaism did, Judaism said that all of this around here you have got to do, which is of greater value than the core—the Word of God. I actually have some quotes where they say that their traditions are of a higher and greater value than Torah, the laws and commandments of God.

So, when Jesus said this, He was stripping away all of their traditions. We’ll see a little later how Christ absolutely rejected all of their traditions, all of their works, all of their sacrificial ‘religious’ things that they did, all of the fasting and depravation that they did, all of the separation from people that they did—all of those were *works of sacrifice* which they did to gain merit with God!

They viewed life this way: A person has an accounting ledger in heaven above, and God has your name on this accounting ledger. On one side

are all your *sins*, and on the other side are all your *good works*—your religious works: all of your sacrifices, dos and don'ts and everything that you follow. For those of you have read the *Code of Jewish Law* just think of some of those laws that are there.

If you had more good works than you did sins, then God would give you eternal life. That's why the Apostle Paul said that *it's not of works lest any man should boast!* That's why Christians are saved by *grace* not by their own merit. We need to look at it from another point of view: How can a human being just in the flesh possibly do enough *good works* to inherit eternal life? How can he possibly do that?

Let's see another part of the attitude here, Matthew 19:16—this is another parable, another account: “Now at that time, one came to Him *and* said, ‘Good Master, what good *thing* shall I do, that I may have eternal life?’ And He said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good except one—God....’” (vs 16-17). Having taken upon Himself the *law of sin and death* and human flesh, Jesus could not inherently be called ‘good.’ So, He didn't even let someone come up and say, ‘Good Master.’

“...But if you desire to enter into life, keep the commandments.’ Then he said to Him, ‘Which?’ And Jesus said, ‘You shall not commit murder; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother; and, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ The young man said to Him, ‘I have kept all these things from my youth. What do I yet lack?’ Jesus said to him, ‘If you desire to be perfect, go *and* sell your property, and give to *the* poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come *and* follow Me.’ But after hearing this word, the young man went away grieving, because he had many possessions.” (vs 17-22).

Here was a young man and he came up and said, ‘What good work?’ So, Jesus said, ‘The commandments.’ *Oh, I've done all of that!* To show him that ‘good works’—regardless of how profound they may be—won't do it. Jesus said, ‘I want you to go sell everything that you have and give it to the poor, and you come and follow Me.’

Jesus was saying in the whole thing: all the good works that you can do—even to giving everything that you have to the poor—*unless you follow Christ is going to do no good!* The disciples said, ‘How is anyone ever going to enter into the Kingdom of God if a rich man can scarcely enter in?’

- He's not going to enter in because he's rich!
- He's not going to enter in because of what he can do!

- He's not going to enter in because he's politically acceptable!
- He's not going to enter in because he can buy his way and favor!

The only way he's going to do it is *give up himself and his things in complete repentance and serve God*. That's what Jesus was saying. That's all a part of this, ‘I do not want sacrifice; I want mercy.’

Let's go back to Matthew 9:14: “Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, ‘Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?’ And Jesus said to them, ‘Are the children of the bride-chamber able to mourn while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and **then they shall fast**’” (vs 14-15). Again, the ‘religious works’ and the Pharisees fasted every Monday and every Thursday. Remember the Pharisee said, ‘I'm not like other men and I fast twice in a week’—that's what it's referring to. Then he talks about you can't take and put the new way on the old and so forth.

Verse 32: “And as they were leaving, behold, they brought to Him a dumb man, possessed by a demon; and when the demon had been cast out, the *one who had been* dumb spoke. And the multitudes wondered, saying, ‘Never has the like been seen in Israel.’ **But the Pharisees said**, ‘By the prince of the demons He casts out demons’” (vs 32-34). If Jesus were of Judaism, and if Jesus was a Pharisee, they would all march up and say this is ‘our man, He's one of us, come and follow us.’ *NO!* They accused Him of doing it by the power of Satan the devil. We'll see that He had another encounter of that later on. That's what they thought of Jesus.

Do you think that Jesus would be part of that system that accused Him of being of the devil? *Of course not!* We see that when He sent out His 12 disciples that He gave them authority over unclean spirits so as to cast them out and to heal every sickness and disease. They went out and they cast them out and so forth.

Matthew 10:16: “Behold, I am sending you forth as sheep in *the* midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. **But beware of men...** [Which men? *The religious authorities!*] ...for they will deliver you up to councils... [To have judgments. When you had a Sanhedrin or a council, you had a scribe, a Pharisee and the committee there to judge you.] ...and they will scourge you in their synagogues... [nice, friendly place to go] ...and you shall also be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a witness to them and to the Gentiles [nations]. Now when they deliver you up, do not be anxious *about* how or what you should speak; for in that hour it shall be given to

you what you shall speak. **For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you**" (vs 16-20).

Let's think about this for a minute. You are brought before some very hostile people. We're beginning to see that there are hostile times ahead of us:

- if you've ever seen the true thing that happened at Waco
- if you've seen the true thing that happen in Idaho with the Weaver family up there
- if you have see the true things that happened with Pastor Peters and his group in Colorado
- if you would understand that there are now, even in the United States—the land of 'religious freedom' that:
 - ✓ we have a government that is hostile toward Christianity
 - ✓ we have a government that considers that *if you follow Christ, if you keep the Sabbath, if you keep the Holy Days, if you look to God for healing*
 - you belong to a cult
 - you deserve to be investigated
 - you deserve to be invaded
 - you deserve to be arrested and killed

—and they already have that in order. The ATF is the 'Gestapo' of the satanist government that is in charge of America right now. That's why God has scattered the Church. But the time is coming that we're going to be brought up before them and we are going to have to let them know the very message from God.

- How are you going to do that if you don't know the Bible?
- How are you going to do that if you don't believe?
- How are you going to do that if you are not convicted *to the very sole of your being* that God is God and Christ is Christ and that His way is true and right?

Everything in this world is under sin and under Satan the devil! The dividing line is coming! Just like Jesus said it would. When that time comes it has be what the Father *in you* inspires you to speak.

- That means you have to *know* Christ!
- That means you have to *know* the Father!
- That means you have to *know* His Word!
- That means you have to *know* His laws!

All of that is implied here! And it's even going to get worse. Have you ever been victimized by this?

Verse 21: "Then brother will deliver up brother to death... [That happened during the first

century as the Church was beginning to form. That has happened down through time, that even *physical* brother and so-called *spiritual* brother will deliver someone to death.] ...and *the* father, the child; and children will rise up against *their* parents and *have* them put to death."

I tell you, that's exactly what's happening in the WCG right now; the new generation is coming along and they are kicking out all the old, and they are kicking out those who know the Truth, because they want to bring in the error. It's happened right in families. It's going to get so bad, and they will put you to death!

They shot Mrs. Weaver right through the head while she was holding her baby! They literally gassed and killed all of those children at Waco when they were down in the bunkers where they could be 'safe.' They knew where they were! They killed them! They gassed them! They burned them! Janet Reno and Bill Clinton and the FBI and the ATF are all trying to cover this up! But there's enough truth that got out so that we can *hear*, we can *fear*, we can *prepare* and we can *know*!

- We've got to rely on God!
- Now is the time that we *draw close to God!*
- Now is the time that we ask for God's Spirit to *lead us, guide us, help us!*

We can't say, 'God, I'm so good You've got to save me and take me to a place of safety.' We don't know what God may ask us to do. After all, His Son Jesus Christ was persecuted, chased, arrested, beaten, scourged and crucified—wasn't He? *Yes!* Are we not also going to be partakers of the same in some cases? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 22: ". And you shall be hated by all for My name's sake..." The name Jesus Christ is the most hated name under the sun! If you don't believe it, you just watch your television. Look at your news. Look at what is going on in this society. Every decent, moral thing of God and Jesus Christ is being stricken from the record! Stricken from the hearts and minds of people as much as possible! The doctrine of Baalim is that if they sell their soul to sin, God has got to punish them. Those evil people who are doing this are doing it because they hate Jesus, and they think that if they come after the followers of Jesus Christ that they will get rid of this evil scourge. That's how they view it.

"...but the one who endures to *the* end... [Jesus is showing that this going to come all the way down to the end—doesn't He?] ...that one shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, escape into another; for truly I say to you, in no way shall you have completed *witnessing* to the cities of Israel until the Son of man has come" (vs 22-23).

Here's a whole extended commission; a whole extended set of circumstances from Christ's time down until our time. The things are set in motion now; the laws are on the books now. All of these 'hate laws' are not designed to make people have better hearts. All of these 'hate laws' are designed to come against people who believe in Christ and preach against sin.

Then He goes on to say, to make sure we all understand, v 24: "A disciple is not above his teacher... [Who is the teacher? *Jesus Christ!* If it happened to the teacher, it's going to happen to those that follow Him.] ...nor a servant above his master. It is sufficient for the disciple that he become as his teacher..." (vs 24-25). There are many ways you can apply this:

- in learning
- in understanding
- in example
- in living
- in following His footsteps

Jesus said to us that we should 'take up our cross and follow Him'—didn't He? *Yes, He did!*

"...and the servant as his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub... [prince of demons] ...how much more *shall they call* those of his household? Therefore, do not fear them because there is nothing covered that shall not be uncovered, and *nothing* hidden that shall not be known" (vs 25-26). That's why we're going through Scripturalism vs Judaism, because you need to know! I need to know! So that we can understand that the forces of motivate all of this come directly from the abyss of Satan the devil to destroy and to kill those true Christians.

Verse 27: "What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops. Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, but do not have power to destroy the life; rather, fear Him Who has the power to destroy both life and body in Gehenna" (vs 27-28). There it is, brethren! This is a pretty tough chapter.

It's a mistake to think that Christianity is only goodness and sweetness and lovey-doveyness, ala Robert Shuller of the Crystal Cathedral. It isn't that at all. We're moving into times that are going to be most difficult. Our prayer is that God spare us as much as possible, but if God does not spare us, then we need to be ready to take a stand. We need to be ready to take that stand and be fit so the Spirit of God will inspire us to do what we need to do.

He says, don't worry about it, v 29: "Are not two sparrows sold for a coin? And *yet* not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father

taking account of it." And aren't you worth much more than the sparrows? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 32: "Now then, whoever shall confess Me before men, that one will I also confess before My Father Who *is* in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, that one will I also deny before My Father, Who *is* in heaven" (vs 32-33). You need to think about that for a minute! Let's think about some of the doctrinal challenges that are coming in the Church of God. We just need to be right up front and say if plain and clear: ***If you accept the trinity, you deny God the Father and Jesus Christ!***

- What's going to happen to your salvation?
- What is going to happen to your works?

Remember, all of this started with a 'little leaven and leavens the whole lump'! That's just something to think on. Pass it on to your friends and those that know you if they will hear you. But maybe they're of chapter ten that even your brother is going to kick you out.

Verse 34: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." ***The spiritual sword of Truth!***

Hebrews 4—this is the sword that Jesus brought; this is the sword that eventually leads to some of the other difficulties that cause people to take up a real sword and come after you. Hebrews 4:12: "For **the Word of God is living...**" It came from God; from His heart, mind, soul and being. Every time you speak the Truth, you don't have to have any particular insight other than just the Truth of God. You don't have to be a prophet, just preach the Truth and you'll end up being a prophet.

"...and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, *and* of both *the* joints and *the* marrow, and *is* able to discern *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart" (v 12). So, when Jesus said that He came to 'bring a sword and not peace' He means that

- when you *live* by every Word of God
- when you *preach* the Word of God
- when you *convict* with the Word of God
- when you *proclaim* with the Word of God
- when you *witness and testify* with the Truth of Jesus Christ

It's going to cut asunder right to the very heart and core of the evil ones. It's going to cause a lot of problems. That's a pretty powerful thing to think of also in our lives.

- Do we think with this that we can play games, religious games, with Jesus Christ?
- Do you think we can play tic-tac-toe with

doctrine?

- Decide which ones we want and don't want?

I say, brethren, *NO!* Absolutely it won't happen! We can fool ourselves a lot of the time. We can fool other people part of the time. And as Abraham Lincoln said, 'You can fool some of the people part of the time, part of the people all of the time, but you can't fool all the people all the time.' Well, the truth is, ***you can never fool God at any time!***

(go to the next track)

That's why Jesus Christ didn't play around with 'religion.' Too many people like to play 'religion.' They like to appropriate the name of Jesus Christ, because after all, that's popular. Nowadays it's not as popular as it was, so everyone likes to appropriate a type of New Age 'religion.' That's what a lot of this now is degenerating down into, the New Age 'religion.'

Let's come back here to Matthew 10:35: "For I have come to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's enemies *shall be those of his own household*. The one who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and the one who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (vs 35-37).

This makes a lot of people very angry. They are 'religious hobbyists.' They want to put other people and other things and institutions and organizations and doctrines ahead of Christ. Then come along and attach the name of Christ to it and say this is 'Christian.' No so!

Verse 38: "And the one who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. The one who has found his life shall lose it; and the one who has lost his life for My sake shall find it" (vs 38-39). That's the whole long and short of what Jesus was teaching and of how true Christianity is really going to function. Not only was that true in the days of Jesus, in the literally homes of the Jewish community there—between those who would follow Christ and those who would not—but all the way down through history, sooner or later, this is going to happen and this is going to apply.

Matthew 11:13: "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John." A lot of people misunderstand this verse. It doesn't do away with the Law and the Prophets, but the Law and the Prophets were the sole authority from God until John the Baptist. When John the Baptist came there was *new authority* from God—the authority of *repentance*, looking forward to Jesus Christ, and when Christ came, the preaching of the Kingdom of God and the Word of the Kingdom, the Message of

the Kingdom and the revealing of God's plan.

Much to the chagrin of those who believe in only the Old Testament, and those who believe in only the Old Testament and reject the New Testament don't understand the Old Testament. The Old Testament—the Law and the Prophets—cannot be understood without the New. The New Testament *interprets* the Old Testament. The New Testament *reveals* the Father. The New Testament *reveals* the Son of God. The Old Testament does not. And in the Old Testament God did not make all of the prophecies clear and easy to understand. That's why Jesus—after He was resurrected and teaching the disciples—had to open their minds to the Law, the Prophets and the Writings so that they could understand about Him.

Verse 25—a very important thing; a very tremendous thing for us to understand: "At that time Jesus answered and said, 'I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and have revealed them to babes.'" The 'religious' leaders were the 'wise, the prudent, the intelligent, the leaders' but were they willing to accept Jesus Christ? *Not at all!* As a matter of fact, very few indeed ever accepted Jesus Christ.

Verse 26: "Yes, Father, for it was well pleasing in Your sight *to do this*. All things were delivered to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; neither does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son personally chooses to reveal *Him*" (vs 26-27). Very key Scripture in the New Testament. You cannot *understand* God without the New Testament. You cannot *know* the Father without the New Testament. God the Father did not reveal Himself in the Old Testament—period! The closest you can come to understanding that there was more than one God in the God Family is the name Elohim—which means more than one referring to God.

- Psa. 110 where it is quote that 'the Lord said to my Lord'
- Dan. 7 where the Son of man came to the 'Ancient of Days.'

Those are the only places in the Old Testament that even give a remote hint that there is God the Father. Jesus is saying that 'I'm not going to reveal the Father to anyone that I chose not to reveal it.' In so many words, that's what He said here. Jesus is going to reveal it to whom He will. So, if you've had it revealed to you, that's a tremendous thing, brethren, and that's a tremendous responsibility and blessing.

Verse 28: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are *overly* burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest

for your souls. For My yoke *is* easy, and My burden is light” (vs 28-30). That is so true.

When you really take it all to God, as this old hymn is—*Take it All to the Lord in Prayer*—then your burdens become lighter, and His way is easier. You don’t have all the ritual to go through. You don’t have all the difficulties to go through.

- How would you be able to live today without the blessing, help and Spirit of God?
- Would you be able to bear your burdens?
- Would you be able to face the situations in your life without God?
- What if you didn’t know God?
- What if you didn’t know His plan?
- What if you didn’t know Jesus Christ?
- How then would you be able to handle your problems?
- What if, in the loss of everything that you had, you didn’t know God or Christ?

That would be an unbearable burden—wouldn’t it? *Yes, indeed!* So, Jesus says, “...My burden is light.”

- Take it to Him, *He will help you!*
- Cry out to Him, *He will hear you!*
- Pour your heart out before God, *He will answer you!*

Let’s see some of the burden that the Pharisees did, and let’s look at another statement that Jesus said to show this great division between true Christianity and Judaism.

Matthew 12:1: “At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath day; and His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck the heads of grain and to eat *them*. But after seeing *this*, the Pharisees said to Him, ‘Behold, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on *the Sabbath*.’” (vs 1-2).

According to them, if you have a bushel of apples and the bushel spills over, you can’t put them back in the bushel basket because that’s ‘laboring.’ If they’re spread too far, then that’s ‘harvesting.’ But you can eat them one at a time. So, when they’re looking at this, there was no harvesting; they were just plucking some of the ears and eating them.

Verse 3: “But He said to them, ‘Have you not read what David did when he himself and those with him were hungry?’” It’s very interesting, when you study the life of David and you really realize how that God was with him, how he was called ‘a prophet of God’ and when he came to the priests, the priest gave David the showbread, because he was hungry. You go back and read the account how Doeg the Edomite killed Abiathar and the priests, and Abiathar did escape and he is the one who gave

David the showbread.

They’re not getting all the facts involved as to what happened. Besides, the showbread, without the proper temple thing, is no different than any other regular bread. If it’s the showbread then it’s not lawful for someone to eat it who is not a priest. But, is it unlawful for David, who was a prophet, to eat it? They didn’t answer that question, so He brought it up here.

Verse 4: “How he went into the house of God and he ate the loaves of showbread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but for the priests only? Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbaths the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? But I say to you, **there is one here Who is greater than the temple.**” (vs 4-6).

Think of that for a minute! The temple was where God put His presence. The temple was where God said that you were to come to be sanctified, where you were to have the Day of Atonement every year, where the priests would go into the Holy of Holies. The temple was the place where you were to come for the Holy Day seasons, pay your vows, offer your sacrifices. The presence of God was at the temple. When Jesus said, ‘I’m telling you that there is a greater than the temple standing here’—that’s a tremendous statement to those Pharisees. You think of that! That’s a tremendous statement!

It would be like if you came before a whole congregation of Catholic cardinals and said that there is ‘greater than the pope in St. Peter’s Basilica standing here.’ They would all rise up and kill the man. That’s what they did to Christ—right?

Verse 7: “Now if you had known what this *means*, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath Day” (vs 7-8). This is a little bit different than it is in Mark 2. He was telling them very clearly that

- *He* was the Lord of the Sabbath
- *He* was greater than the temple
- *He* was greater than the Sabbath-keeping at the temple
- ✓ offering of the sacrifices
- ✓ what the disciples were doing on the Sabbath Day was not profaning the Sabbath because **a greater than the temple** was there with them!

Mark 2:27—He makes even more emphatic, and this is a very basic Scripture: “And He said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, *and* not man for the Sabbath; therefore, **the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath**’” (vs 27-28).

The reason there is not a whole lot in the

New Testament concerning the observance of the Sabbath is because that was such a natural, ordinary part of Christianity that it was never questioned. ***The Holy Days and Sabbath were never a problem in the early New Testament Church at all!*** They recognized that

- Christ was the Lord of the Sabbath
- Christ was the Lord of the Holy Days
- Christ was the Son of God

—and what He taught was far more profound than what they had!

Let's come back to Matthew 12:9: "And after leaving there, He went into **their** synagogue. And, behold, a man was there who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbaths?' so that they might accuse Him.... [they were setting Him up to accuse Him] ...But He said to them, 'What man is there among you who, if he has one sheep that falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift *it out*? And how much better is a man than a sheep? So then, **it is lawful to do good on the Sabbaths.**' And He said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' And he stretched it out, and it was restored *as* sound as the other" (vs 9-13).

It records in Mark 3 that they sought then 'a council' to kill Christ. If He were a Pharisee or Sadducee, or of Judaism, they would not have sought to do so. But this is a separation from Pharisaism. This is a separation from Sadduceism. This is a separation from Judaism. That's why it's so painful! That's why it's so hateful! That's why it is so profound! That's why, to this day, the Jews hate Jesus Christ.

Verse 14: "Then the Pharisees went out of *the synagogue* and held a council against Him to *discuss* how they might destroy Him.... [So, after Jesus left they said, 'This guy, we've got to get Him; look what He's doing here.'] ...But when Jesus knew of it, He withdrew from there; and great multitudes followed Him, and He healed all of them" (vs 14-15).

Now, after He did all the healing, v 23: "And the multitudes were all amazed, and said, 'Is this the Son of David?'" They *knew* the Messiah was to come of the seed of David—correct? *Yes, indeed!* There's quite a bit in the New Testament about David and Christ and even the Church is referred to as the tabernacle of David being raised up again.

Verse 24: "But when the Pharisees heard *this...*" They couldn't let it be known that this was the son of David; they could not stand it that the Messiah was there; they could not stand it that they were neglected, cutoff, not recognized, they were avoided, their authority was shoved aside, ignored by Christ. He went and did things they couldn't do.

He went out and healed the sick, raised the dead and He brought comfort to those who were suffering. The Pharisees couldn't stand it.

"...they said, 'This *man* does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, prince of the demons.' But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then shall his kingdom stand?'" (vs 24-26).

The long and short of it is sooner or later it won't stand! That's why we see in the whole world today with the coming of this great one-world government and society—Babylon the Great—is all coming together in a united effort. It's going to unite and fight Christ. That's why Christ has to come and destroy it.

Verse 27: "And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons... [because a 'greater than the temple' was here; a greater than John the Baptist was here; a greater than Solomon was here—all referring to Christ] ...by whom do your sons cast *them* out? On account of this, they shall be your judges." They weren't doing it by Beelzebub; they weren't doing it by the power of Satan. They were doing it by the name of God!

Verse 28: "But if I by *the* Spirit of God cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you.... [In other words, the power of the Kingdom of God is here!] ...Or how is anyone able to enter into the house of a strong *man* and plunder his goods, if he does not first bind the strong man? And then he will plunder his house" (vs 28-29).

This is kind of a little play on words here. In this particular case, the 'strong man' is Satan. The One Who is coming in to plunder is Christ, because Christ was the sole invader in the kingdom of Satan. That's exactly what Christ was doing. Of those who were following Satan, didn't Jesus say to the 'religious' leaders that 'you are of your father the devil.' They were saying, because they knew the power of Satan—and they didn't understand the power of God—that He's doing this by Beelzebub. So, Jesus is saying, 'If I do this by the Spirit of God, what are your sons then doing it by?' Just like one coming in to spoil the house of a 'strong man,' it's going to bind them.

Verse 30: "**The one who is not with Me is against Me...** [Those are pretty strong words. Like they say at the OK Corral, 'them are fightin' words, partner!'] That's what it was!] ...and the one who does not gather with Me scatters. Because of this, I say to you, every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men except the blasphemy against the *Holy Spirit*; *that* shall not be forgiven to men" (vs 30-31). Why? *Because the Holy Spirit comes from*

God the Father directly! What you are doing if you are blaspheming against the Holy Spirit—which comes from God the Father—you are directly accusing God the Father of evil, ***Who can never be accused of evil! Who never does anything that is not right, good and true!***

You are going against the greatest Being in the universe, so therefore, whether you are converted or unconverted, if you blaspheme the Holy Spirit ***there is no forgiveness!*** These religious leaders—let's think about it for a minute:

- Did they have the Word of God? *Yes!*
- Were they custodians of the Word of God *Yes!*
- Were they the ones who understood where the Messiah would come from? *Yes!*

Remember what they did when they held the council when the wise men came? They said, 'Where will the Messiah be born?' *They said in Bethlehem!*

- Did they see all of the works that Jesus was doing? *Yes!*
- Did they admit that He was a Teacher sent from God? *Yes!*

Now here, when they were seeing Jesus personally cast out demons and heal the sick with the very Spirit of God, they had the gall and the blaspheme to say the *He* was doing it 'by Beelzebub, prince of the demons!' That's pretty powerful stuff! So, ***He warned them*** with pretty powerful stuff!

Verse 31: "Because of this, I say to you, every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men except the blasphemy against the *Holy Spirit*; *that* shall not be forgiven to men. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, **it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in the coming age**" (vs 31-32).

That which comes directly from God the Father, through the power of His Spirit, when you accuse God the Father of doing the work of the devil, you are committing the blaspheme which is unpardonable!

He tells them very clearly, v 33: "Either make the tree good and the fruit good... [They were on the verge of committing the unpardonable sin; so then He gives them a way out so they could recover themselves]; or make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt; for a tree is known by its fruit. Offspring of vipers..." (vs 33-34). He said that to them many, many times.

- How could Jesus be considered a Pharisee?
- How could Jesus be considered of participating in extending Judaism when

He called them a 'generation of vipers'?

- When He said 'you are of your father the devil'?

Let's put it around the other way:

- If Jesus were a Pharisee, if Jesus were part of Judaism, Jesus would be serving the devil and not God!
- He would not have been the Son of God/the Son of man, but He would have been the son of the serpent!

Sometimes it's good to take these things and look at it from the other side.

Verse 34: "Offspring of vipers, how are you able to speak good things, being evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings out good things; and the wicked man out of the wicked treasure brings out wicked things. But I say to you, ***for every idle word that men may speak, they shall be held accountable in the day of judgment***" (vs 34-36).

We need to think and understand that! We need to really fully let those words sink in! Everyone is going to come before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. God the Father has given all judgment to the Son, because the Son experienced human life. The Son experienced what it was like to overcome the *law of sin and death!* The Son of man experienced living on this earth, so therefore, God the Father has given judgment into His hands.

Notice what He says: "***...for every idle word that men may speak, they shall be held accountable in the day of judgment***" (v 36). Are we responsible for what we do and say? *Of course!* You consider that all the actions and behavior that people do; consider your own, because you're going to have to give an account; I'm going to have give an account.

The way that you can have this taken care of and blotted out is

- through *real repentance*
- through really *turning your life over to God*
- through *loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and being!*

Remember what Jesus said: *the one who confesses Me before men, I will confess before the Father!*

- The One Who is going to stand there for you in the judgment day *is Jesus Christ!*
- The One Whose life is going to pay for your sins *is Jesus Christ!*
- The One Who is going to cover all of the 'idle words' that you have ever spoken *is Jesus Christ!*

When the accounting comes for you and me, the name that is going to be is *forgiven in the name of Christ!* What going to happen to those who don't?

Verse 37: "For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned. Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, 'Master, we desire to see a sign from You'" (vs 37-38). 'Since You put us down so badly, show us a sign that we can believe in You.' If Jesus would have shown them a sign, who would He have obeyed? God the Father? **OR** Those evil scribes and Pharisees? Did Jesus ever obey the command of any man? *No!* If He would have obeyed the command of a man, He would have rejected God the Father!

Verse 39: "And He answered *and* said to them, 'A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. For just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, in like manner the Son of man shall be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights'" (vs 39-40). When it says three days and three nights, that means three *whole* days and three *whole* nights without a dispute.

Verse 41—now He begins really laying it on: "*The men of Nineveh shall stand up...*" Were not the men of Nineveh the Assyrians? *Yes, indeed!* Were not those the ones who were evil? *Yes, indeed!* Were not those the ones who later came and conquered and took away the ten tribes of Israel? *Absolutely!* So, He's taking this example and He's putting it before them for a very powerful reason.

Verse 41: "*The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here.*" Isn't that something? He's literally telling them that those Gentiles that you hate, those men that you count as the off scouring and animals of the earth are going to rise up in the judgment with you and condemn you, because *you are more evil than they.*

To a Jew—who is the 'chosen one'; to a rabbi, to a scribe, to a Pharisee—who are righteous in their own eyes and who alone command God—this was just like taking a whole dump-truck of hot coals and pouring it right on them.

Verse 42: "*The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here.*" He's really letting them know! How can anyone be 'greater than Solomon'? He was the richest man on earth, the wisest man on earth. God appeared to Him twice and

he set up the whole kingdom of the tribes of Israel—didn't he? He built the temple—didn't he? *Yes, he did!* Jesus is saying, **a greater than Solomon is here!**

He prophesies their fate. They asked for a 'sign.' He said, 'You're a wicked and an adulterous generation.' So, He says this is what's going to happen to you. Brethren, that's what's going to happen to this nation, too, because we're right on the way of doing it.

Verse 43: "But when the unclean spirit has departed from a man, it goes through dry places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, 'I will return to my house, from which I came out.'..." (vs 43-44). Jesus was talking to them in that generation and those people. He is literally telling them that they have been following demonic, unclean spirits. Christ came to bring repentance that they might come out of it. During the time that Christ was there:

- there was a releasing of the demons
- there was casting out of the demons
- there was healing of the sick and raising the dead

Now then, after that has happened, the demons will say, 'I'm going back to my house where I was.'

"...And after coming, it finds it unoccupied... [Not having the Holy Spirit of God. Not receiving Jesus Christ. Not believing the apostles and their word.] ...swept and set in order.... [No defense at all!] ...Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. **Likewise...** [*hosautos*—*exactly*] ...**shall it also be with this wicked generation.**" (vs 44-45).

- Is that not what happened to that generation?
- Did they not say, 'Let His blood be upon us and our children'?
- Did they not suffer the destruction of their city and their nation?
- Were they not given over to Satan the devil even more?
- How can anyone possibly say that Christianity—the true teachings of Jesus Christ—came out of Judaism?
- *Never happen!*
- *Was never that way!*

The term 'Judeo-Christian' religion does not apply to *true Christianity!* As we will see, Judeo-Christian religion applies to Judaism that became Catholicism. And Jesus had nothing to do with that!

Verse 46: "But while He was still speaking to the multitudes, behold, *His* mother and His brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak

with Him.” Here’s another thing which looks very offensive on the surface, but Jesus had to prove that He alone would follow God the Father; that He alone would obey God the Father; that He alone would do the work that He was sent to do.

Verse 47: “Then one said to Him, ‘Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.’ But He answered *and* said to him, ‘Who is My mother? And who are My brothers?’” (vs 47-48). If you took that literally toward His mother and brothers, you would think that was a slap in the face. But it wasn’t, indeed! It was not!

Verse 49: “And stretching out His hand to His disciples, He said, ‘Behold, My mother and My brothers. For whoever shall do the will of My Father, Who is in heaven, that one is My brother and sister and mother.’” (vs 49-50).

So, you see the great contrast between Jesus Christ and Judaism. ***Jesus Christ always went by God the Father and the Word of God. Brethren, your calling comes from Jesus Christ and no man!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 9:1-8
- 2) Mark 2:1-6
- 3) John 9:40-41
- 4) Matthew 9:9-13
- 5) Matthew 19:16-22
- 6) Matthew 9:14-15, 32-34
- 7) Matthew 10:16-29, 32-34
- 8) Hebrews 4:12
- 9) Matthew 10:35-39
- 10) Matthew 11:13, 25-30
- 11) Matthew 12:1-8
- 12) Mark 2:27-28
- 13) Matthew 12:9-15, 23-50

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 5-7
- Psalm 110
- Daniel 7
- Mark 3

Also referenced: Books:

Interlinear Greek-English New Testament by George Ricker Berry
Code of Jewish Law by Ganzfried & Goldin

Scripturalism vs Judaism XI

The Temple to be Built

This one will be just a little bit different from what we've covered before, the temple rendition is in *A Harmony of the Gospels*, taken directly from the official model in Jerusalem. There is a depiction and outline of the Dome of the Rock and where they can put the temple of God, supposedly, right next to the Mosque of Omar, so they don't have to destroy it.

As I've mentioned, you can be guaranteed that there would be absolutely no agreement between the Jews and the Arabs unless there was a consideration for them building the temple. If you will look at the aerial view with the temple superimposed upon it, I was amazed when I saw that outline done this way, because someone recently sent me from their archives something they've had for years and years, which was the original research that Leroy Neff of Worldwide Church of God did for his doctorate or masters thesis way back in the 1950s. It showed his conception of the temple as depicted by the information out of the Bible.

I appreciate everyone sending me different things, because this keeps me up on events that are taking place, having different brethren out there being the eyes and ears for the news, to listen and watch. While we were at the Feast of Tabernacles it came over CNN once, and Marvin is checking on it because he knows the people at the Temple Institute in Jerusalem. The word came out that they were ready to start building the temple and part of the agreements that the Jews and the Arabs signed contained an agreement that they could build the temple. A week ago King Hussein came out that his vision of Jerusalem was where all three of the world's great faiths—meaning, Christianity (i.e. Catholicism and Greek Orthodox, Judaism and Islam) could 'all worship in Jerusalem together in harmony.'

When I look at this outline of where they're going to build the temple and remember and article I read from *Biblical Archeology* where they discovered that really the Dome of the Rock did not sit on the exact location where the temple was, but was a little bit off—as most things that Arabs have generally are. Someone will decidedly get mad at me, but God is not going to let them have that particular section, because it's in prophecy that there's going to be the temple built.

Turn to Revelation 11 and look this diagram again as to where this temple is proposed to be built in relationship to the Dome of the Rock. Revelation 11: 1: "Then *the angel* gave me a measuring rod like a staff, saying, 'Arise and measure the temple of

God, and the altar, and those who worship in it. But leave out the court that *is* within the temple *area*, and do not measure it because it has been given *up* to the Gentiles; and they shall trample upon the Holy City *for* forty-two months'" (vs 1-2).

Look at this diagram or the plot plan where they plan to put the temple. Notice that they are leaving off that area where the Dome of the Rock is. Part of the proposal is that they also extend the wall to the right a little bit further, considerably further, so that they will be able to have room to put the temple on it.

Jesus gave the prophecy in Luke 21:5: "And while some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and consecrated gifts, He said, '*As for* these things that you now see, *the days will come in which there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.*'" (vs 5-6). When you look what is there, there is what is called the Western Wailing Wall—that's where you can send your faxed prayers; you can have them squeezed in-between the stones that are there. That is a stone upon a stone—isn't it? This tells us that the prophecy hasn't been fulfilled where every stone is going to be taken down scraped away.

Matthew 24—showing that they are going to have animal sacrifices again; there will be a Holy Place again; and it's going to be made desolate by the *abomination of desolation*. Notice the time setting of this and how it fits in:

Matthew 24:12: "And because lawlessness shall be multiplied, the love of many shall grow cold." That is sure happening today. I mean, it is almost unreal the things that are taking place and the cruelty that is happening to people. It affects us, brethren, because we are not able to do the things the way that we would like to do—especially in relationship to other people that we don't know.

Verse 14: "And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the world for a witness to all nations; and then shall the end come." We haven't reached that point. We can ultimately say that, yes, we know the two witnesses are going to preach the Gospel. Yes, we understand that, they definitely are, and it's going to be powerful. But I don't think this has any relationship to that. I think that with all the scattering of the churches and many hundreds of Churches of God that there are.

We had quite a nice little presentation given to us by Alan Ruth who gave a little history of some of the split-offs from WCG and there are about 40 of them. By time you count all the Churches of God

everywhere in the world, I think we need to visualize this: God giving His Holy Spirit of conviction and testimony and evangelism, that wherever those churches are, there's going to be a tremendous witness of the Kingdom of God given, and that's going to happen before the end comes. So, what is said here is greater than what we have ever imagined. We know that with our former church experience, it wasn't complete, even though it was said that it was.

Verse 15: "Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the Holy place'..." There has got to be a Holy place, and the Holy place is in reference to the temple.

Luke 21: ties in with what we read in v 1: "...Jesus departed from the temple; and His disciples came to *Him* to point out the buildings of the temple. But Jesus said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, there shall not be left here even a stone upon a stone that shall not be thrown down'" (vs 1-2).

If there's a 'Holy Place' there's got to be the temple rebuilt. Here's this statement again, this is one of these things inserted. In the New Testament, every time you get to some place that's a little hard to take, or that's a little complicated, you have either 'he who has an ear let him hear' or in this case: "... (the one who reads, let him understand)" (v 15). Jesus didn't say these words; Matthew wrote it in there.

How close are they to building the temple? What do the Jews themselves say? I want you to understand something, that what we're going to do in this series, we are not going to go to any of the enemy's of the Jews to find out what they say about the Jews. We're going to go to what the Jews say themselves about themselves.

Here's a very interesting interview and this is taken out of a magazine *Endtime*. The name of the article is: Exclusive Interview: Rabbi Chaim Richman of the Temple Institute. You want to know who's going to build a temple? When they're going to build it? *Ask them at the Temple Institute!* Don't you think those would be the one's to ask? *Yes, indeed!* Let me read some of the things here concerning the temple. You are going to be amazed:

Exclusive Interview: Rabbi Chaim Richman of the Temple Institute:

Q: How long has the Institute been in existence?

A: Five years

Q: What is the main purpose, why all of this was conceived?

A: The main purpose of the Institute is to

educate the general public as much as possible as to the importance and the central role that the Holy Temple occupies in life—both in the Jewish people and of all mankind.

I want you to pay particular attention to their evangelistic efforts. I brought out several years ago about the Noahide laws and about the Jewish messiah. Keep some of those things in mind if you can remember some of it.

Q: So, in other words, you have a goal of building the temple?

A: Yes, we want to be occupied with a commitment of building the temple as much as possible in our time. The goal of building the temple is not our goal; it is the goal of the Jewish people. It is one of the central themes of the Jewish religion which God commanded the Jewish people.

I want you to understand when they say 'Jewish' they take to themselves everything concerning Israel and Jacob.

The goal of the institute is to try and be as serious about that as possible and to do as much about it as possible. Maybe we can hasten the time by raising the awareness and consciousness of people as to its importance.

Q: What are you specifically doing to do that now?

A: The major focal point of the Institute is a permanent exhibition where we are creating vessels, which are legal for use in the temple, according to the complex requirements of Jewish law. There are approximately 93 vessels that are described in the sources in Judaism, in the Talmud and oral tradition, which were used in the temple. We are now reconstructing these vessels in an exact fashion so they can actually be used immediately in the temple. These are made according to all the requirements, including the sources of material. If it's gold, *it's gold*. If it's copper, *it's copper*. If it's silver, *it's silver*. Etc. So, it's really the first time that any of these things can be seen since the destruction of the second temple almost 2,000 years ago.

You can go into the Temple Institute in Jerusalem and they will show you these things. Marv took some pictures of it and when they discovered he was taking it on the video, they told him to turn off his camera. So, he did, but they were able to see some of the things.

This is considered in Jewish law to be the first stage of building the temple itself. That is one area of endeavors.

They, in their own mind, are already building the temple, because they are making these things.

In addition to the restoration of the vessels, we have an ongoing scientific and research related projects geared toward the awareness of the temple.

I'll guarantee you that's for soliciting money, as well as religious things.

We're also training young men for service in the temple and we are involved in various educational projects, which include the production of books, films and other audio visual material. In general, we conduct a campaign to do as much as possible in every area to bring forward the time when the circumstances will present themselves wherein the temple will be able to be built.

It is no accident that all of these things: the peace agreement, the things that are taking place in Egypt, the projects that they are doing. I've got here a news clipping sent to me of the combined Jewish and Arab projects that they are going to have, that they are going to do in the way of banking and making money. It is going to be fantastic, so I don't think we have fully understood what it means when it says, 'peace and prosperity' because I don't think we understand how far God is going to let this go, or how great it may become.

Then he makes a comment that we are seeing all of these things in this time that are unfolding before our very eyes.

Q: It's interesting that for the first time in 3,000 years Arabs and Israelis are talking, wrestling with the problems of the final status of Israel. Of course, what the outcome of these talks will be we don't know at this point. What is the feeling of you who work at the Temple Institute as to where the temple must be located?

A: The temple goes on the Temple Mount, as you are aware. The Temple Mount as it stands today is the largest manmade plateau in the world, the equivalent of about 24 standard football fields. The sanctified Temple Mount in second temple times was a much smaller area, about 500 cubits by 500 cubits, which is less than one-fifth of the present day area.

There are number of opinions in Jewish laws and academic circles about establishing the exact spot of the temple.

They are arguing more or less about the same 300 feet or so; some say a little bit more north, some say a little bit more south. The major trend in rabbinical circles is to believe that the spot of the Holy of Holies is that which is presently covered by the Dome of the Rock.

That's what they would like to do. They would like to get rid of the Dome of the Rock, but I'll guarantee you they can't get rid of the Dome of the Rock to build their temple, because the Arabs won't let them do it. The Arabs will let them build their temple alongside of it, and that's what's going to happen to fulfill the prophecy.

In that article it said that they

...designed a temple which would be elevated over the Western Wall Plaza. This would allow for leaving the Dome of the rock in place.

Q: Have you heard anything like it?

A: No, I haven't! It doesn't jive with the sources of Judaism, because there is only one place in the world for the temple to be. That is extremely exacting to the inch and nothing can change that; not subject to negotiation.

You mentioned the peace process and the fact that the Arabs and the Jews are sitting together for the first time in 3,000 years. That doesn't excite me very much, excepting that I see in it the hand of God. It certainly has interesting ramifications but as far as we are concerned, the status of Jerusalem is irrevocable and not up for negotiation, nor is the entire land of Israel. Either we believe God or we don't. And either we believe in the destiny of the Jewish people or we don't.

The Jewish people... [not Jesus Christ] ...are responsible for bringing about the ultimate redemption of mankind.

Now you know why all these things that we have read about in the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, all the things in the world are taking place now because they are busy fulfilling their own prophecies. They are going to 'save the world.' We need to understand that! The Jewish people feel that it is their destiny to *save the world*. And they feel that it is their destiny to bring *their* 'religion' to the whole world.

Then there's a question about the red heifer. We've heard different things concerning the red heifer, which then is to be burned wholly for an offering to sanctify unto cleanness.

Q: There's been a lot of talk about the red heifer, could you tell me why the red heifer is so important from the Jewish and Biblical perspective?

A: This touches on one of the most complicated areas of Bible law. That is the area of ritual impurity. There are a variety of types of purity and impurity in the world today, to which our humanity has been exposed. The best way I can describe the ritual impurity used to describe a spiritual imbalance. It's not a question of someone being dirty, it's a question of there being a lack of spiritual level.

There are various types of impurity in the world, and some of these are not as serious and can be circumvented in various ways. The most severe type of ritual impurity is that which exists in the world today. There is only one cure for it.

In other words they're saying the cure for the sins of the world can only be done through the ashes of the red heifer.

There's only one antidote and that is the process of purification through the ashes of the red heifer. This is the greatest mystery in Judaism. The ashes of the red heifer is the only thing that can be used to purify those who have come in contact with death. The impurity, the spiritual imbalance caused by exposure to death, is so serious that it prevents the building of the temple. It is only the impurity that can prevent temple service and the only thing, which is missing in our ability to use the vessels immediately in the temple. So therefore, the red heifer is the missing link in the entire process of the preparation of the temple.

Q: There's been a statement made that the ashes from the last red heifer that was offered has to be rediscovered. Is that true? or Could you start afresh and offer a red heifer now using those ashes for purification?

A: The second is correct. The first statement that you made is not correct. There are a lot of people who believe, erroneously, that it is necessary to obtain the original ashes of the red heifer in order to re-institute the process of ritual purity. While it would be advantageous if we had those ashes, it is not a prerequisite in Jewish law at all. On the contrary, if we had red heifers, which fit the requirements today, we would be able to begin the process all over again now.

Q: The last thing I'd like to talk to you about is Messiah. From your perspective, when Messiah comes, how will you know he is the Messiah?

A: This is a very important question and one of the major differences between Judaism and Christian theology. Many people ask me why we rejected Jesus. That is a completely erroneous question. In our minds it's not an issue of rejecting Him. To us, He didn't qualify.

Because He didn't set up the kingdom; that it was alleged He was born of fornication. Because it was alleged He was conceived in a menstrual period and on and on.

To us, He didn't qualify. In order to reject someone they had to have been a possibility.

He wasn't a possibility because like everything else in the realm of Judaism, it's not a question of feeling, it's a question of law.

The Messiah is a person Who has a certain task to fulfill. Those tasks are clearly spelled out. The kingdom to be restored to Israel.

Do you remember a Scripture that disciples said, 'Will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?'

The temple to be rebuilt, the ingathering of the exiles, the complete obliteration of the evil from the world.

I want you to think about the *mark of the beast*, and I want you to think about what is going on in Haiti today. How are they going to bring Haiti to its knees? *Because they can't buy or sell*—isn't that correct? Complete embargo! How do you think that they are going to enforce the obliteration of their concept of evil in the world? *Mark of the beast!*

- What is the greatest evil in the mind of Judaism in the world?
- What is the greatest evil in the mind of Judaism today, which must be obliterated?
- *Christianity!*

Remember those things we've read from the mouths of Jews and their own writings. Christianity is the most satanic and diabolical thing that has ever been foisted on the world, the greatest evil to have ever taken place. When he says here that the complete obliteration of evil from the world, you know what they're talking about, because you've read the rest of their writings. This man who wrote this does not understand what he's talking about.

These are not things that Jesus did. So, when a person comes who is, yes, a descendant of David,

but also completely human, a regular human being Who is the greatest political leader who has ever lived, the greatest teacher who has ever lived, who has the power single-handedly to turn humanity back to its original spiritual values—i.e. Judaism—and to reconnect every person to Divine purpose, that person will be the messiah.

Interview from someone at the Temple Institute, brethren, I want you to know very clearly, that the battle between Judaism and Scripturalism has just begun.

Now, let's get into the Scriptures in the book of Matthew, and one of the goals I have, brethren, that I want to do—I don't know how long it will take—and that is for all the brethren who are in contact with me to have let them through the entire study of the whole New Testament. When we have finished this series *Scripturalism vs Judaism* we will have surveyed all of the book of Matthew and many parts of the book of Acts, that we're a long way toward the goal of doing that.

Matthew 13 has all the parables and let's come to the very last part, and what I want you to do—as we're going through the confrontations between Jesus and the scribes and the Pharisees and the priest—is see the same the attitude that I just read to you from Rabbi Richman concerning the Messiah that they have to today was exactly the same attitude that they had toward Jesus at that time.

Now its much more highly refined, because they've had 2,000 years to work on their explanation. But now, when you take the statement that it is the Jewish people's mission to bring redemption to the world. I mean, we're talking about some pretty heavy stuff. If you think the international Zionist bankers have done a number on us, wait until they get done with that.

Notice the attitude toward Jesus even in the synagogue where He went every Sabbath, which we've pretty well determined was probably was as much of a Scriptural-centered synagogue as you could possibly have:

Matthew 13:53: "And it came to pass *that* when Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from there. And after coming into His *own* country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were amazed and said, 'From where did this *man* receive this wisdom and *these* works of power? Is this not the carpenter's son? *Is* not His mother called Mary, and His brothers James and Joses and Simon and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us?.... [That does away with Jesus not having any brothers or sisters. That does away with the perpetual virginity of Mary, etc., etc. (ties in with the parallel account in the book of Mark)] ...From where then did this *man* receive all these things?' And **they were offended in Him**" (vs 53-57). Isn't that

something? It's true to this day that Christ—the Rock—is a Stumbling Stone and a Rock of Offense!

"...Then Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor, except in his *own* country and in his *own* house.' And He did not do many works of power there **because of their unbelief**' (vs 57-58). Really quite a statement—isn't it?

When you stop and think: What would it take to prove to someone that Jesus was the Christ? Think of all the things that He did. To see it, you would think that 'seeing is believing'—wouldn't you? But they didn't! Human nature and Satan is there to blind even the most obvious things. That's why they're going to be in such rage when Christ comes back to this earth and they see that Sea of Glass hanging right over Jerusalem and all the battles have taken place and then the three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of Satan, the false prophet and the beast to go to gather all nations together to battle. They are going to be so blinded and so adamant! And you talk about signs that have taken place:

- you've gone through the seven seals
- you've gone through the seven trumpet plagues
- you've gone through six of the seven last plagues

Still, they're willing to fight! Some people won't be convinced of anything.

Here it even affected Christ! Think of that in relationship to our relationship with Christ. That's why Jesus said, 'If you *pray and believe* all things are possible!' That's why in our prayers we must have *belief*! When we don't have belief, we just have to say, 'God, I don't know.' I think that is my most frequent prayer now, brethren, I tell you! 'God, I don't know!'

After He fed the 5,000, which was quite a miraculous thing! Can you imagine what would happen if they had television crews out there? Could you imagine? You could almost be guaranteed that there would be John Chancellor there giving his commentary: 'Well, we saw this but we really don't know what kind of thing that this was.'

Matthew 14:22: "And immediately Jesus compelled His disciples to enter the ship and go before Him to the other side, while He dismissed the multitude. And after dismissing the multitude, He went up into the mountain apart to pray; and when evening came, He was there alone. But the ship was now in *the* middle of the sea [Sea of Galilee], being tossed by the waves, because the wind was contrary" (vs 22-24). Here's Satan good opportunity to go ahead and destroy all of the disciples—right? Jesus is up on the mountain alone, so Satan comes down—the prince of the power of the air—stirs up a big

storm and here are all of the disciples out there rowing away, but they can't get anywhere.

Verse 25: "Now in *the* fourth watch of the night... [3 o'clock in the morning until 6] ...Jesus went to them, **walking on the sea**. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled and said, 'It is an apparition!'.... [that's what it means in the Greek—'phantasma'—from which we get the word *fantastic* and *fantasia*, that it's an illusion.] ...And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'Be of good courage; *it* is I... ['ego eimi' which is the double I AM.] ...Do not be afraid.' Then Peter answered Him *and* said, 'Lord, if it is You, bid me to come to You upon the waters.' And He said, 'Come.' And after climbing down from the ship, Peter walked upon the waters to go to Jesus" (vs 25-29).

That took quite a bit of faith, took quite a bit of gumption, took quite a bit of impetuosity and all of the good and the bad that Peter had. There he is walking on the water to go to Jesus.

Verse 30: "But when he saw *how* strong the wind *was*, he became afraid; and *as he* was beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, 'Lord, save me!'" There are many things you can get from this: If you don't keep your eyes on Christ you're going to sink. You can go back to some of the Psalms that talk about 'my sins have come over me like the miry water and I'm about ready to drown' and so forth. Many different things you can put with it. But the main key here is that you *must trust and you must believe!*

Verse 31: "And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, 'O *you* of little faith, why did you doubt?'" Had good reason to doubt from a human, physical point of view. First of all, it was his first experience of walking on water—right? *Yes!* Never done it before, never seen anyone do it before. And it was in the middle of a storm. You might have said that this is slick as can be if it were calm, because he could have gone right out to Him. But here it is in a storm, and Jesus said, "...O *you* of little faith..." That means just a teeny, little, itty-bitty micron of faith.

You know what Jesus said concerning the 'grain of a mustard seed.' I carry in my briefcase at all times a little packet of mustard seed. I'm holding it now in my hands. A mustard seed is about the size of a wide ballpoint pen ball—really small. Jesus said that if you have 'faith as the grain of a mustard seed' you shall ask what you will and a 'it shall be done for you.' You talk about a lesson in faith, we've got a lot to learn here as we're going along—right?

Apparently, Peter didn't even have that here at this point. That tells us then, brethren, how much we have to do to grow in grace and knowledge and

faith and understanding—it's a whole lifetime project. I would have to say that this Rabbi Richman has got a lot of faith in what he's going to do—right? *Yes!* Should we not have much more faith than that, because ours is not an empty faith just based upon tradition? *Ours is a living faith based on the Spirit of God!*

Verse 32: "Now when they went into the ship, the wind ceased." They came onboard the ship, and just picture this: a huge, gigantic wind just like it happened before where Jesus commanded the wind and the water to stop and it became like a sea of glass. Here Peter and Jesus get into the ship and immediately the wind ceased.

Verse 33: "And those in the ship came and worshiped Him, saying, 'You are truly the Son of God.' And after passing over *the sea*, they came to the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent to all the country around; and they brought to Him all those who were sick" (vs 33-35).

(go to the next track)

Verse 36: "And *they* besought Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment; and as many as touched *it* were healed." It wasn't because of the border of the garment, it was ***because of faith!*** *It was because that God determined to do it!*

On the official clothes that it is said in the Bible for a true Israelite to wear, it was bordered with blue thread all along the bottom. That was the border of the garment—Hebrew 'taitzit.' There are actually some ministers who have that and they send it out to people so they can touch it. That has nothing to do with what was done here, because it was the *power of God that did it!*

Now we're going to get into a very interesting section here, Matthew 15:1: "Then the scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem came to Jesus... [This, brethren, is an official visit from the official people from Jerusalem. This would be like saying we haven't investigators from Washington, D.C. down here.] ...saying... [they had a specific purpose; they wanted to know why He was doing away with Judaism.] ...'Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?.... [Which we read they hold in higher esteem than God—right? *Yes!* To them that's a might important question.] ...For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread'" (vs 1-2). Ohhhhhh! What a terrible sin!

Verse 3: "But He answered *and* said to them... [Notice that Jesus answered with a question again; His answer is profound!] ...'Why do you also transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? For God commanded, saying, "Honor your father and your mother"; and, "The one who speaks evil of father or mother, let

him die the death.” But **you say**, “Whoever shall say to father or mother, ‘Whatever benefit you might receive from me *is being given as a gift to the temple*,’ he is not at all *obligated to honor his father or his mother*.” And you have made void the commandment of God **for the sake of your tradition**” (vs 3-6). That’s a pretty hefty answer, and I don’t think He spoke it meely-mouthed.

Verse 7: “‘Hypocrites!.... [In the Greek that means *sanctimonious pretenders*!] ...Isaiah has prophesied well concerning you, saying, **“This people draw near to Me with their mouths, and with their lips they honor Me; but their hearts are far away from Me....** [God wants your heart! That’s the whole key of David, a man after God’s heart.] ...But they worship Me in vain... [with no purpose; that is empty; waste; useless] ...**teaching for doctrine the commandments of men**”’” (vs 7-9). Replacing them! How many times have we read that Jesus said, ‘Have you never read...’? *Many times!*

Verse 10: “And after calling the multitude to Him, He said to them, ‘Hear, and understand.... [I want you to listen to this and comprehend this]: ...That which goes into the mouth does not defile the man; but that which comes out of his mouth, this defiles the man”’ (vs 10-11). Why? *Because it comes from the heart!* ‘Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks’—correct? *Yes!*

Let’s compare this with what we read in Matt. 12; let’s see what’s going to happen with everything that comes out of the mouth; and tie this in with what it says there in Rom. 14, that everyone shall come before the judgment seat of God and ‘give an account of himself.’ Therefore, brethren, that’s why we have to have that account covered with the blood of Christ and the life of Christ, because we cannot qualify to become the sons of God by anything that we do ourselves on our own.

- We can’t give ourselves eternal life.
- We can’t make ourselves righteous.
- We can’t even clean up our own hearts.
- *Only God can!*

But He says this, He wants you to know, Matthew 12:35: “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings out good things; and the wicked man out of the wicked treasure brings out wicked things. But I say to you, for **every idle word** that men **may** speak... [That’s a broad general statement; it’s a ‘what if.’] ...they shall be held accountable in *the* day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned” (vs 35-37). When Jesus really brings this out—what they were doing with their traditions and everything there—that was pretty heavy stuff!

This created a furor among the disciples,

because they were wondering: How are we going to get along with this?

Matthew 15:12: “Then His disciples came to Him and said, ‘Do You realize that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?’” Jesus didn’t run out and give ‘spin control’ on this. He didn’t run out and say, ‘Oh, I’m sorry I offended you wicked little evil people here. I’m sorry that your feelings were bent out of shape.’

Verse 13: “But He answered *and* said, ‘Every plant that My heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up. Leave them alone. They are blind leaders of *the* blind. And if *the* blind lead *the* blind, both shall fall into the pit”’ (vs 13-14). Peter didn’t understand that! He didn’t comprehend that!

This is something! And isn’t this so true and God applies this every single time. Not only to those people but even to us. How many times when we come off as the great big know-it-all of everything in the world, what happens? *We crash! We fall in the ditch—right? Yes!* What happened when we said—the big corporate church we were in—‘we are the only church on the face of the earth’? *Big ditch straight ahead—right? Crash! Smash!* What happened when we said: ‘Christ is returning in 1975’? *Giant ditching ahead! Crash! Smash!* Didn’t happen! And when those ‘blind leaders of the blind’ were told that wasn’t so—what happened? *They were offended—right? Yes!*

But the day of reckoning came as the ditch came closer and closer until they came to 1972 and, VOILA! no one fled away! No one went to Petra; 747s didn’t get there! The camels weren’t ready at the other end of the line! So, when we say ‘we see’ and we don’t say, ‘by the grace of God He has allowed us to see’ we’re in trouble! It’s hard for people to understand.

Here’s the section showing about the man who was born blind. You talk about a dumb question. Have you ever asked a dumb question? I’ve asked a lot of dumb questions! Here’s one here about the disciples:

John 9:1: “Now *as Jesus was* passing by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’” (vs 1-2). How can a baby sin in the womb to make itself blind? That’s a dumb question! But they didn’t know he was born blind, they just saw it so they asked a dumb question.

Verse 3: “Jesus answered, ‘Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; rather, *this blindness came* so that the works of God might be manifested in him.”’ Created for the purpose of this miracle! That’s something—isn’t it? If it would have

happened to one of us, I wonder how we would have taken it. If it would have been our parents, I wonder how they would have coped with it. But God did it for this miracle!

Verse 4: “I must work the works of Him Who sent Me while it is still day. When *the* night comes, no one is able to work. As long as I am in the world, I am *the* Light of the world” (vs 4-5). You know the whole story,

Verse 6: “After saying these things, He spat on *the* ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to the eyes of the blind man. And He said to him, ‘Go *and* wash in the pool of Siloam’ (which is, by interpretation, ‘Sent’). Then he went and washed, and came *from there* seeing: (vs 6-7).

He didn’t know Who had done it, because he was blind. His parents didn’t know how this took place. The Pharisees were enraged because he could see. They wanted this man in the synagogue denounce Jesus. He said, ‘Could it be that a man do a miracle like this as a sinner? You ought to know better than that.’ They got mad and excommunicated him.

Let’s see the whole result of this, v 39: “And Jesus said, ‘For judgment I have come into this world so that those who do not see might see...’”

- Did not God blind all Israel? *Yes, He did!*
- Did not God blind everyone in the world? *Yes, He did!*
- For what miracle? *So that when God calls them to conversion they can see!*

“...and those who [claim that they] see might become blind.’ And those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things; and they said to Him, ‘Are we also blind?’.... [They were getting the point. These were some of the more intelligent Pharisees, but they weren’t willing to admit they were wrong at this particular point.] ...Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now you say, ‘We see.’.... [We have the way. A big ditch coming—right?] ...Therefore, your sin remains’” (vs 39-41).

That’s why all of this with the temple, God is going to show that with this—*everything*—that man cannot save himself! And the big ditch is coming! So, they were offended. I tell you, every plant that the heavenly Father doesn’t plant is going to be rooted up and Christ says to let them alone

Matthew 15:13: “But He answered *and* said, ‘Every plant that My heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up. Leave them alone. They are blind leaders of *the* blind. And if *the* blind lead *the* blind, both shall fall into the pit.’ Then Peter answered *and* said to Him, ‘Explain this parable to us.’ But Jesus said to him, ‘Are you also still without

understanding? Do you not perceive that everything that enters the mouth goes into the **belly**... [the Greek word there is ‘*koilia*’—clear into your digestive track] ...and is expelled into *the sewer*?’” (vs 13-17)—which is the waste matter from eating food and is cast forth.

Verse 18: ““But the things that go forth from the mouth come out of the heart, and these defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnessing *and* blasphemies. These are the things that defile the man; **but** to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man”” (vs 18-20).

We won’t go through every verse, but I want to cover a couple of other things in relationship to it, which clears it up just a little bit better than the account in Matt. 15.

Mark 7:9: “Then He said to them, ‘Full well do you reject the commandment of God, so that you may observe your *own* tradition.’”

Verse 13: ““Nullifying the authority of the Word of God by your tradition which you have passed down; and you practice many *traditions* such as this.’ And after calling all the multitude to *Him*, He said to them, ‘Hear Me, all of you, and understand. **There is nothing that enters into a man from outside which is able to defile him...**” (vs 13-15).

We are not talking about whether to eat or not eat unclean meats whatsoever. All of those who handle the Word deceitfully come to this point and say, ‘Therefore, because nothing you eat that goes into your body is going to defile you.’ Believe me, the scribes and Pharisees and other Jews, if Jesus and the disciples were out there having a feast on a hog, they would have let them know. ***It has nothing whatsoever to do with clean or unclean meats! This has to do with what defiled you spiritually before God!*** To eat with dirty hands does not make you spiritually unclean before God! You may eat a little dirt.

- Have you ever eaten a carrot that wasn’t completely washed? *Yes!*
- Have you ever eaten a baked potato that wasn’t completely cleaned? *Yes!*
- Are you dead? *No!*
- Are you defiled spiritually? *No!*

Has nothing to do with it. But you get mad at your husband or wife and curse out your kids and your neighbors, that defiles you spiritually before God because it comes from within *out*. He’s saying that none of these physical things can defile you.

““...but the things that come out from *within* him, those are the things which defile a man. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear”” (vs 15-16). I

tell you, there it is again! I think we're finding every place in the New Testament where it says that.

Verse 17: "Now when He went into a house away from the multitude, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. And He said to them, 'Are you likewise without understanding? Don't you perceive that anything that enters into a man from outside is not able to defile him? For it does not enter into his heart... [That's what we need to be careful of: what we put into our heart and mind.] ...but into the belly, and *then* passes out into the sewer, purging all food.' And He said, 'That which springs forth from *within* a man, that defiles the man. For from within, out of the hearts of men, go forth evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickednesses, guile, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; **all these evils go forth from within, and these defile a man**'" (vs 17-23).

That's really quite something—isn't it? This is in direct opposition to the Pharisees. What he's literally saying is this: ***All of the traditions which you do, which are against the Word of God, cause you to sin, and in no way take care of the evil that's in the heart!***

Matthew 15:22—we'll just summarize the next section of the Canaanite woman from Sidon where she came and was bothering the disciples and saying, "...Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is grievously possessed by a demon." He didn't even turn His head to look at her and He walked straight ahead. The disciples finally came and said, 'Lord, don't you hear her, she's bothering us'? He turned around and the woman came up and worshipped Him saying, 'Lord, help me.'

Verse 26: But He answered *and* said, 'It is not proper to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.' And she said... [Here's a wise answer and this is put here to show that many, many times those who were not the Jews, those who were not Israelites, understood more than the Jews. This is really an indictment against the Pharisees—isn't it?] ...'Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table.'" (vs 26-27). What an answer! How could Christ turn that down?

Verse 28: "Then Jesus answered *and* said to her, 'O woman, **great is your faith!**....'" What did He say to Peter, 'Oh, you of little faith!' This must have really stabbed Peter in the heart, because he was right there with it. He just got done walking on the water and Christ had to rescue him and Jesus said, 'You've got little faith, Oh, you, of little faith.' So, here comes this Gentile woman—as the Jews would look at it—screaming and yelling after Him, chasing Him down, hounding Him, bugging Him. Finally, He turns around and He gives the woman an

answer: 'It's not proper to give the children's food to the dogs.'

And she gave the right answer: "...'Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table.' "Then Jesus answered *and* said to her, 'O woman, **great is your faith!**.... [Powerful statement!] ...As you have desired, so be it to you.' And her daughter was healed from that hour" (vs 27-28). Then we have the feeding of the 5,000 and the bringing up of the baskets.

Matthew 16:1: "Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came to Him, tempting Him... [here's official committee again] ...and asking Him to show them a sign from heaven. But He answered *and* said to them, 'When evening has come, you say, "*It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.*" And in the morning, *you say*, "Today *it will* storm, for the sky is red and lowering." Hypocrites!...."' (vs 1-3). He didn't receive them very well—did He? If He would have been a Pharisee, just think of it: Would Jesus have answered them that way? *Of course not!*

"...You know *how* to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot *discern* the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet.' Then He left them and went away. Now when His disciples came to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. And Jesus said to them, 'Watch out, and be on guard against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees'" (vs 3-6). Now, that was a tough one to figure out. They couldn't figure this out.

Verse 7: "Then they reasoned among themselves, saying, '*It is* because we did not take bread.' But when Jesus knew *this*, He said to them, 'O *you* of little faith... [right after saying to the Canaanite woman, 'Great is your faith!'] ...why are you reasoning among yourselves that *it is* because you did not bring bread? Do you still not understand? *Do you* not remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets you took *up*? Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets you took *up*? How is it that you do not understand that I was not speaking of bread *when I told* you to **beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees?**' Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, **but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees**" (vs 7-12). Pretty profound!

Now, let's cover one thing, which I'll expound more next time, but I'll give you a chance to think on this. Did Jesus contradict Himself? He said in the one case, 'Beware of the teaching and doctrines of the Sadducees and Pharisees. Then He said in another place:

Matthew 23:1: "Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying, 'The scribes

and the Pharisees have sat down on Moses' seat *as judges*; therefore, every judgment that they tell you to observe, observe and do. But do not do according to their works; for they say and do not'" (vs 1-3). Why did He in one place warn them of the teachings and doctrines of the Sadducees and Pharisees and then in the other place say that the scribes and Pharisees sit in the seat of Moses?

We'll go into this a little bit more next time, but I'll just tell you this: In the one case it is the doctrine—the spiritual teachings. In the other case, to sit in the seat of Moses means that they came to the synagogue court to get a dispute settled according to the Word of God. Matt. 23:1 has

- absolutely nothing to do with doctrine
- absolutely nothing to do with establishing the Day of Pentecost
- nothing to do with establishing the calendar
- ***It has to do with a judgment of dispute!***

If this had to do with the spiritual discernment of the Sadducees and Pharisees, what would we have to do in order to do everything that they said? *We would have to reject Jesus Christ, because they did—right? Yes!* Some people completely misunderstand this, so I'll go into a little more detail next time.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Revelation 11:1-2
- 2) Luke 21:5-6
- 3) Matthew 24:12, 14-15, 1-2
- 4) Matthew 13:53-58
- 5) Matthew 14:22-36
- 6) Matthew 15:1-11
- 7) Matthew 12:35-37
- 8) Matthew 15:12-14
- 9) John 9:1-7, 39-41
- 10) Matthew 15:13-20
- 11) Mark 7:9, 13-23
- 12) Matthew 15:22, 26-28
- 13) Matthew 16:1-12
- 14) Matthew 23:1-3

Scriptures referenced, not quoted: Romans 14

Also referenced:

Magazines

- *Biblical Archeology*
- *Endtime*

Book: *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* by Victor Marsden

Scripturalism vs Judaism XII

The Seat of Moses

Let's review a couple of things that we need to understand. We just finished the section where it talked about 'full well you reject the commandment of God that you may keep *your own tradition*.' Those of you who have read the *Code of Jewish Law* or read through parts of it, you wholly understand what that means. I don't think that some people have had the book available to them, and there are scores of ministers that have never even heard that the book exists, so they don't have any idea of what it means for those *traditions*.

Let's go back and review just a little bit because I said I would bring something and explain what is 'the seat of Moses.' Before we do that, let's go back to Matthew 16 and review something that we need to be careful of. There was one part of it that was essential for me to bring out last time, which I didn't, which also has to do with some of the leaven.

I want to try and bring us on up through the survey of the book of Matthew and maybe we can resurrect the sermon that I did: *Who Was in Charge of the Temple?*—which I did to combat the very thing that we're going to talk about: What is the seat of Moses? There's a man who says that we are to obey what the scribes and Pharisees tell us, so therefore, we should keep a 15th Passover and we should keep the Day of Pentecost on 6th of Sivan. You will probably run across that or someone who believes that or would profess it or tell you about it. I want you to be well armed with it. We will essentially see that it was the priests and the Sadducees^[transcriber's correction] who were in charge of the temple—not the Pharisees. The Pharisees were out in the country.

Matthew 16:6: "And Jesus said to them, 'Watch out... [beware, because it's a snare and a trap] ...and be on guard against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.'" They had their reasons for it.

Verse 11: "How is it that you do not understand that I was not speaking of bread *when I told* you to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees?" Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine... [teachings: 'didache'] ...of the Pharisees and Sadducees." (vs 11-12).

Now let's go the account in Mark 8:14, and we're going to see something really interesting: "But they had forgotten to take bread; and they did not have *any* with them, except one loaf in the ship. Then He charged them, saying, 'Watch out!....

[Beware!] ...Be on guard against the leaven of the Pharisees and the **leaven of Herod**'" (vs 14-15). Very interesting! Very seldom this is brought up. Why does He say to beware of the "...leaven of Herod"? Herod was the king! There was the Herodian party. Is this not Jesus telling us to beware—don't get entrapped—in the leaven of politics? That certainly is a trap—isn't it? The leaven of it is unreal!

How many politicians have to compromise what they believe just so they can please other politicians? *Have to do it all the time!* I could not be a politician. I'm not the kind that I can speak out of both sides of my mouth and please everyone and still live with myself. I can't do it! I would be a bad politician. I would be a maverick. I've been accused of that before. If I got elected I might last once, and I would soon be fire-branded within three months as being totally uncooperative, totally unreasonable, totally uncompromising, because that's what would happen. I've gone to enough of these city council meetings, I've watched them on TV and it's unreal! I've even accused—in my own way, saying to myself—the city council left its brains in its feet and it has a bad case of athlete's foot, because there is virtually nothing that they can do that is right.

We have to beware of the "...leaven of Herod." Let's contrast that with what Jesus said concerning the Pharisees that 'sit in Moses' seat.' Let's go to Matthew 19, because most of the teachings in chapters 16-18 have to do with personal instructions to the disciples; personal revelation by God the Father that Jesus Christ was the Messiah; the transfiguration on the Mt. of Transfiguration, and so forth.

Matthew 19:3—this has to do with divorce and remarriage. We need to see how the Pharisees handled the situation with Christ and what they did. "Then the Pharisees came to Him and tempted Him, saying to Him, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?'"

Brethren, in some Churches of God today, you can divorce and remarry within the Church. You can cause the problem, create it... As a matter of fact, I talked to someone whose friend just had his wife leave him because the minister was not willing to sit down and counsel them on how to save their marriage, but he gave the wife church money so she could fly home to her mother and file for divorce. The minister claimed that he could tell from her conversation—now follow this carefully—that he wasn't converted. The minister never talked to him. You've got a lot of problems there. The minister is

1. Sitting in the *seat of God* to determine a person's heart, mind and attitude whether they're converted or not.
2. Assisting in breaking up a marriage which God probably has found without a doubt.
3. He's not bringing peace and making peace to help them to recover themselves to God.

Rather, he's assisting in *divorcing for every cause*. I'm talking about Church of God today!

- If a person is angry, you can divorce them.
- If a person is declared hard-hearted, you can divorce them.
- How many here have never had an argument with their husband or wife? *No hands raised, and I'm not raising mine.*

I'll guarantee that any married couple in their lifetime, somewhere along the line is going to come—especially in today's world—to some dispute which then makes them wonder about the marriage they are in. Just like you have to work at loving God, you have to work at developing and creating love in your marriage; something you need to work at. And the ministry of God is the last place in the world that people need assistance to help them get out of their marriage, so they can run off and divorce. Then, after two years, if it's a legal divorce, then hey, you can get a legal divorce anywhere—right? You can go to Nevada and you can get a legal divorce. Just sit down and fill it out and in thirty days your divorce is legal.

Anyone who's had a legal divorce can marry and come back into the Church. In some cases, there are brethren of God sitting in the same congregation with the husband over here on one side of the aisle and his wife and her new husband and kids on the other side of the aisle. I mean, that's unreal! They say, 'We are God's Church!' Believe me, Sodom and Gomorrah is going to visit them. It's going to happen! The snare and the trap is going to come! Just like with the Lutherans here in this article that someone gave me today. It's almost obscene! Everything under the sun is perfectly legal to do.

The Pharisees came because the Jews at that time had it that, yes, if a man didn't like the way his wife looked, he could put her away. I tell you what, there are times when husbands and wives, when you wake up in the morning you wonder about this. You go look in the mirror and look at yourself and you wonder about yourself, too. It happens!

"... 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?' But He answered them, saying... [I really love the answers that Jesus gives, because He goes to the Scriptures every time—doesn't He?] ... **'Have you not read...'**" (vs 3-4). He's talking about that they don't read their Bibles. Why do people get in trouble concerning God and His Word

when they have it and are supposed to know it? *Because they don't read and study it!* Just like Jesus said to Satan, 'Behold, it is written!' Here He says: "...have you not read..." I mean, the second chapter in the book of Genesis^[transcriber's correction], how long does it take to go from chapter one to the end of chapter two? *Not very long*—right?

"... **'Have you not** read that He Who made *them* from *the* beginning made them male and female, and said, **'For this cause...** [on account of the creation that God made; that's what the account is, or the cause—because God made it; *on account of God's creation*] ...shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh'?" (vs 4-5).

Let's give an example of a tricky question because they didn't understand their Bible. Exodus 20:8—Ten Commandments; let's go to the fourth one concerning the Sabbath: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it Holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall not do any work, **you, nor your son, nor your daughter; your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your livestock, nor the stranger within your gates;** for *in* six days the LORD made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it" (vs 8-11).

Then someone came and asked, 'Well, it doesn't say *your wife*, is it all right for your wife to work on the Sabbath?' The way you answer that question is the same way Jesus answered this one:

Matthew 19:4: "... **'Have you not** read that He Who made *them* from *the* beginning made them male and female." When it talks about a man in the Bible, it is also talking about his wife, because they are *one flesh*! How could he have sons and daughters if he didn't have a wife? *Right there in context of the fourth of commandment!* When Jesus said, "...Have you not read..." He means *read with comprehension!* When all else fails, read the book; that's what Jesus is saying here" **"...Have you not read..." for the very fact of the creation of God!**

Here's a little something of scientific information that we'll throw in here: Why can only a man—in the person of Jesus Christ, Who was a man—be the perfect sacrifice to cover the sins of all men and women? *vs* Why could not a woman be a perfect sacrifice to cover the sins for all mankind? *Because Eve was created from the rib of Adam!* That's true, that's one of the first Biblical reasons.

Let's look at another scientific thing that has been proven: A woman carries the chromosome for sex that is called X—that's how they determine it, and XX in chromosomal makeup of a person

designates, by creation—through the combination of chromosomes from father and mother—equals a female. A male has a chromosome that is called Y and his chromosomal makeup of 23 from father and 23 from mother gives him the chromosomal makeup of XY. But the man is the one who determines the sex of the children that are born, because he passes on both X and Y in his contribution of seed in creating children. Therefore, the man is the one who then pro-generates the woman as well as the man.

Therefore, within Jesus Christ—because He was created in the fashion of a man—He carried within His genes both—as all men do—the chromosomes for male and female, and hence, that sacrifice of a male covers for male and female. I don't want to put any woman down or feel slighted, please don't, but that's just a fact that I think is born out.

Verse 5: "...For this cause... [on account of that God made them male and female] ...shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh." You could solve all the problems of illicit children; of AIDS, gonorrhea, syphilis and 44 other venereal diseases add infinitum that are out there IF this were followed, and if the commandment 'thou shall not commit adultery' was followed.

But *no*, the world says, 'We don't like those laws, so the way we'll get along, we'll do away with the law.' Now they have to suffer with a penalty because they do away with the law because they don't like it.

Verse 6: "So then, they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate." That's clear! And at the creation, when God made Adam and Eve, they did not have *the law of sin and death* in them at that particular time, until such time that they sinned at a later date.

Verse 7: "They said to Him, 'Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?'" That is not a correct question, because God is the One Who commanded Moses to write what He commanded concerning divorce. Moses didn't say, 'God, it seems to me like it's a good idea, and You know that I've been dealing with all these hard-hearted people; why don't we give them a little leeway here and why don't we just let them have a lot of divorce?'

Verse 8: "He said to them, 'Because of your hardheartedness, Moses allowed you to divorce your wives... [but God was the One Who gave the permission] ...but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever shall divorce his wife, except *it be* for **sexual immorality**...' (vs 8-9). The Greek is 'pornea'—sexual immorality of any kind:

adultery, homosexuality, transvestitism, all the perverseness that we know is in the society today. Especially so when you consider how easy it is to come down with some of these diseases and everything else like that. But if it's not for that reason—that is an exception clause—and that's not a huge, giant window to stretch it out into anything you want.

"...and shall marry another, is committing adultery..." (v 9). What did Christ say of that generation? *An evil and an adulterous generation!* There are a lot of people living in adultery who are married and should not be married, because they did not have Biblical grounds for divorcing. Some people today even have a marriage contract that at ten years we'll dissolve this if you want to. Guess what's going to be on your mind every time a problem comes? *Only got to wait nine more years! or two more years! or whatever!*

"...and the one who marries her who has been divorced is committing adultery.' His disciples said to Him, 'If that is the case of a man with a wife, it is better not to marry.'" (vs 9-10). Here they were willing to say, 'Hey, that's kind of tough!' It is! The truth is that premarital sex—if you read it in the Old Testament—is very much more stringent. As a matter of fact, the church we used to belong to did it just the opposite. They said that the only grounds for divorce were if there was pre-marital sex because they took the English word 'fornication' to mean only sex before marriage. They said you could put them away for that, even if it's discovered 20 years later. They didn't seek to consult the Bible, which says that if a man and a woman lie together and they're not married, they are to marry and they **cannot** divorce!

Don't you think that's going to stop a lot of hanky-panky? If you really knew that the law of the land were such that if you play around you're bound for life! That is God's way of stopping promiscuity, because a lot of people will think twice if they are thinking about a little bit of hanky-panky and it comes to their mind that 'I may have to live with this person the rest of my life, *no!*' So, the disciples didn't know. They said, 'Man, this is tough.'

Verse 11: "But He said to them, 'Not everyone can receive this word, but *only those* to whom it has been given. For there are eunuchs who were born that way from *their* mother's womb...' (vs 11-12). There's nothing you can do about that.

"...and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men..." (v 12). They used to do that quite regularly in the Catholic Church so they could have the boy's perpetual soprano choir forever. Nice wonderful, Christian thing—huh? They used to do it quite regular back then. They had these harems and the way to protect the harem is that they had a

eunuch in charge of it—he would have no desire for women and they took care of them. That’s what He’s referring to.

“...and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven...” (v 12). Which then would be some of the prophets, which then would be John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul, and whomever would fall under the same circumstances. But that doesn’t mean, as the Catholics say, that now because you’re going to be a priest you cannot marry. The Apostle Paul said that ‘it’s better to marry than burn.’ Hence, because the Catholics have their stupid policy, the priests won’t marry, they have child molestation, homosexuality, adultery and all this sort of thing that is widespread and well known.

That’s why He says, “...The one who is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*” (v 12).

I’m going to go through this rather rapidly—some of these sections here—and I want us to notice how when Jesus comes to Jerusalem that the Pharisees were not in charge of the temple: It was the priests and the Sadducees who were in charge of the temple. They were the ones who determined the calendar. They are the ones who set the day of Pentecost. The high priesthood had the party of the Sadducees. We’re going to see that it’s the high priest and the elders and then in the book of Acts it was the Sadducees—the high priests’ political parties—were the ones who were in control of the temple.

It is known, without a doubt, by everyone who knows anything about counting Pentecost, that the Sadducean way of counting Pentecost is the way that we count it today, beginning with the regular Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. You go seven weeks, seven Sabbaths, plus one day—which is the 50th day—and it is always on a Sunday. You have to count, because the numbered day of the month will be different.

Matthew 20:17: “And while they were going up to Jerusalem, Jesus took the twelve disciples aside in the way and said to them, ‘Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem... [He wanted to warn them ahead of time] ...and the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and scribes...’” (vs 17-18). Scribes in the main were Levites who were not priests, but were Levites who were the leaders of the various synagogues. As we read in *Jerusalem in the Times of Jesus* by Joachim Jeremias that they were what we call the magistrate judges, which gives you a clue as to what Moses’ seat was.

“...and they shall condemn Him to death; and they shall deliver Him up to the Gentiles...to mock *Him*, and to scourge *Him*, and to crucify *Him*; but He shall rise again the third day.” (vs 18-19).

Matthew 21:12: “And Jesus went into the temple of God and cast out all those who were buying and selling in the temple; and He overthrew the tables of the money exchangers, and the seats of those who were selling doves. Then He said to them, ‘It is written, “My house shall be called a house of prayer”; but you have made it a den of thieves.’ And *the blind and the lame* came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children shouting in the temple... [crying praise; speaking aloud; not weeping with tears] ...and saying, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David,’ **they were indignant**” (vs 12-15).

Now, after 2000 years to refine their excuses for rejecting Jesus Christ, as we read saying, ‘He didn’t qualify, He wasn’t the One.’ The only thing you can say to that rabbi is: *Have you never read?*

Verse 16. and said to Him, ‘Do You hear what they are saying?’ Then Jesus said to them, ‘Yes! **Have you never read...** [quotes back to them Scripture]: ...“Out of *the* mouths of little children and infants You have perfected praise?”’ And leaving them, He went out of the city to Bethany and spent the night there” (vs 16-17).

Verse 23: “Now when He entered the temple *and* was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people... [the chief priests were the ones in charge of the temple] ...came up to Him, saying, ‘By what authority do You do these things? And who gave You this authority?’” He was right there at the very seat of the authority of Judaism. He was right there at the temple of God where God said that He would put His name. He was right there where nothing could be done unless it was authorized by God or written in the Bible. We need to understand the tremendous confrontation that was going on here.

Verse 24: “And Jesus answered *and* said to them, ‘I will also ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things.’” And I pray, ‘God, please give me wisdom like this.’ I need this! Sometimes I say things I should not say. We can all pray that prayer.

Verse 25: ““The baptism of John, where did it come from? From heaven, or from men?” Then they reasoned among themselves, saying... [a little huddling over in a corner] ...‘If we say, “From heaven,” He will say to us, “Why then did you not believe him?” But if we say, “From men,”... [Beware the leaven of Herod—politics!] ...we fear the multitude; for everyone holds John as a prophet.’ And they answered Jesus *and* said, ‘We do not know.’.... [They did know! But they said they didn’t know.] ...He said to them also, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. But what do

you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first one and said, “Son, go work in my vineyard today.” And he answered *and* said, “I will not”; but afterwards he repented *and* went. Then he came to the second *son and* said the same thing. And he answered *and* said, “Sir, I will *go*”; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of the father?” They said to Him... [Oh, we can answer that, that’s a simple question.] ...‘The first *one*.’.... [You entrap them in their own words—right?] ...Jesus said to them, ‘I tell you truly, the tax collectors and the harlots are going into the Kingdom of God before you’” (vs 25-31). They didn’t escape the correction—did they?

Verse 32: “For John came to you in *the* way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and *the* harlots believed him. Yet you, after seeing *this*, did not afterwards repent and believe him.” That’s a stinging rebuke! Then He gave the parable. He asked them, ‘What do you think the master of the vineyard will do?’ They said, ‘He will horribly destroy them.’

Verse 42. Jesus said to them, ‘**Have you never read in the Scriptures...** [May we remember that statement when we have to answer.] ...“*The Stone that the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner. This was from the Lord, and it is wonderful in our eyes*”?’ Because of this... [He let them know] ...I say to you, the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and it shall be given to a nation *that* produces the fruits of it’” (vs 42-43). Brethren, that is us! (Gal. 5:22—fruits of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, temperance, goodness, gentleness and meekness—against such there is no law! Just like Jesus said, ‘If you love Me, keep My commandments.’ Keep the commandments in the right way, and that is the message of the Kingdom of God.

Verse 45: “Now, after hearing His parables, the chief priests and the Pharisees **knew** that He was speaking about them. And they sought to arrest Him, but they were afraid of the multitudes, because they held Him as a prophet” (vs 45-46).

Again, we have an encounter with the Pharisees in Jerusalem in the temple area, Matthew 22:15: “Then the Pharisees...” After He went through and gave them another parable about the wedding feast and said, ‘many are called, but few are chosen.’ This is really quite an indictment against them. Remember the parable of the wedding feast? It’s all ready, invite those who have had the invitation—the Pharisees, Sadducees, the priests—which is God’s Word. But they refused!

So, He said to His servants, ‘Go out in the highways, the byways, in the hedgerows and bring whoever...’ Which was a way of saying that God is going to go to all nations of the world and invite

them to the wedding feast. One came and he wasn’t dressed for the wedding. The master of the wedding feast came up and said, ‘How is that you’re not dressed for the wedding.’ The moral of the story is that if you don’t do what God says, you’re going to be taken out, and there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Verse 15: “Then the Pharisees went and took counsel *as to* how they might entrap Him in *His* speech. And they sent their disciples *along* with the Herodians to Him, saying, ‘Master, we know that You are true, and *that* You teach the way of God in truth, and *that* You are not concerned about *pleasing* anyone; for You do not respect *the* persons of men. Therefore, tell us, what do You think? Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?’ But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said, ‘Why do you tempt Me, *you* hypocrites? Show Me the tribute coin.’ And they brought to Him a silver coin. And He said to them, ‘Whose image and inscription *is on* this?’ They said to Him, ‘Caesar’s.’ And He said to them, ‘Render then the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God’” (vs 15-21). What do you say against that?

- He didn’t say, ‘Don’t pay taxes.’
- He didn’t say, ‘Pay taxes.’
- He said: “...Render then the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God.”

Now then, in relationship to tithing and financing and giving and everything like this—that is the command! However you figure what you’re going to do, after Caesar has taken his part, then you figure what you’re going to do for God out of that. That is not an increase to you, it is an increase to Caesar. You never see it! I hate the way that they do it. That’s why they want to get rid of all entrepreneurs. Did you know that? So that you will have to have a check so they can automatically deduct it out from your payroll.

Verse 23: “On that same day, *the* Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection...” The resurrection was not fully taught in the five books of Moses and they allegedly only went by the five books of Moses rather than all the Old Testament. So, they gave the parable about the woman and the seven husbands.

“...came to Him and questioned Him, saying, ‘Master, Moses said, “If anyone dies without having children, his brother shall marry his wife and shall raise up seed to his brother.”’” (vs 23-24).

Verse 30: “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but they are as *the* angels of God in heaven.” That doesn’t mean that people will be angels; it just is in that aspect that they will not have sex to procreate and reproduce.

Some of this stuff is so good, you just can’t keep from laughing sometimes.

Verse 34: “But after the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they came together *before Him*. And one of them, a doctor of the law, questioned *Him*...” (vs 34-35). Who is a doctor of the law? *This must have been of the rank of Gamaliel!* A doctor of the law was one of the main teachers of one of the rabbinic schools in Jerusalem. So, this was an important fellow.

“...tempting Him, and saying, ‘Master, which commandment *is the* great commandment in the Law?’” (vs 35-36). Here’s the lesson we need to learn, brethren. This is where I’m going to really keep focusing on preaching, because they can’t get me for politicizing. If you preach the love of God you can’t be caught for politicizing. *No leaven of Herod!* They recognized Him as the ‘Teacher.’ “...Master, which commandment *is the* great commandment in the Law?”

Verse 37: And Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is *the* first and greatest commandment” (vs 37-38). This is what is called the ‘sheema’—which the Jews are supposed to recite day and night; morning and evening.

(go to the next track)

But the reciting of it doesn’t mean that you *understand* it—isn’t that correct? It doesn’t mean that you *live* it. Knowing that it is there doesn’t mean that you *practice* it.

Verse 39: “And *the* second one *is* like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (vs 39-40). What He’s telling us here is that all law and all commandments come out of love. How can you create a law that is right and good unless it’s motivated from the basis of love. If you don’t you’re going to end up just like carnal-minded people who make laws to penalize their enemies, but are good for themselves.

God being a God of love *did not do that*. He gave His laws, His commandments, His statutes and His judgments. Psalms 119—if you want to know the truth about God’s laws and commandments read that whole Psalm. ‘I love Your law; I love Your statutes, I love Your judgments. All Your commandments are true. All Your commandments are righteousness.’ It’s a real exaltation of the Law. That came because God is love! That’s why all of them came and they are subordinate to and hang from the commandment of loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and being.

Verse 41: “While the Pharisees were assembled together, Jesus questioned them, saying, ‘What do you think concerning the Christ? Whose

son is He?’ They said to Him, ‘*The Son of David*.’ He said to them, ‘How then does David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, “The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet’”? Therefore, if David calls Him Lord, how is He his Son?’ And no one was able to answer Him a word, neither dared anyone from that day to question Him anymore” (vs 41-46).

Matthew 23:1: “Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying, ‘The scribes and the Pharisees have **sat down on Moses’ seat as judges**” (vs 1-2). One place He says, ‘Beware of the scribes and Pharisees and their doctrines and their teachings, which is called ‘leaven.’ Why then does He say here:

Verse 3: “Therefore, every judgment that they tell you to observe, **observe and do**. But do not do according to their works; for they say and do not.” What does this mean? Is this a contradiction? Let’s understand that He was not telling His disciples, nor the apostles, that they were to follow everything that the scribes and Pharisees told them to do. They’re hypocrites, because we have the most scathing and denunciation of any people on the face of the earth ever given and recorded right here in Matt. 23.

What was the last thing that Jesus told them before He ascended into heaven? *Go into all the world and preach the Gospel unto every creature, making disciples of the nations and baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit!* They went and preached Christ—didn’t they? *Yes, they did!* What happened when they had a confrontation with the chief priests and everything?

They were arrested and so forth and the angel of the Lord let them out at night. They were a sect of the Sadducees. (Acts 5:17-19). They came in the morning for judgment and they said, ‘Go bring in the prisoners,’ and they went and they weren’t there. As they were coming back they saw the disciples standing there preaching and teaching. They came in and they said:

Acts 5:23: “‘We indeed found the prison locked with all security, and the keepers standing outside in front of the doors; but after opening *them*, we did not find anyone inside.’ And when they heard these words, both the *high* priest and the captain of the temple, and the chief priests also, were utterly perplexed as to what this could lead to. But a certain one came *and* reported to them, saying, ‘Behold, the men whom you put in the prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people’” (vs 23-25). Just the thing they didn’t want the disciples to do—right?

Verse 26: “Then the captain went with the officers *and* brought them without violence... [they didn’t dare lay a heavy hand on them] ...so that they

might not be stoned; for they feared the people.” We’re dealing with some people with conviction. They didn’t like what was going on, pick up some stones and go after them.

Verse 27: “And they brought them in *and* set *them* before the Sanhedrin.... [This is the top *seat of Moses*—is it not? *Have to be*—right?] (notice what they told them to do and let’s see if the apostles followed them—*no*, the rejected it): ...And the high priest asked them, saying, ‘Did we not order you by a *direct* command... [they were beaten with stripes, remember, and finally let go] ...not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, with *the* purpose of bringing this man’s blood upon us.’ But Peter and the apostles answered *and* said...” (vs 27-29). Oh, we’re so sorry that you’re offended, we realize that you sit in Moses’ seat and behold we shall do all that you ask.’ So therefore, the Gospel was never preached, the Bible was never written and you were never called and you’re not here and it’s all an illusion. **NO!**

Verse 29: “But Peter and the apostles answered *and* said, ‘**We are obligated to obey God rather than men**.... [So, they didn’t do everything that the *seat of Moses* told them to do—did they? *No!*] ...‘The God of our fathers raised up Jesus Whom you killed by hanging *Him* on a tree. Him has God exalted by His right hand *to be* a Prince and Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel. And we are His witnesses of these things, as *is* also the Holy Spirit, **which God has given to those who obey Him**.’.... [Obvious intention!] ...Now, when they heard *this*, they were cut *to the heart* and took counsel to put them to death. But a certain man stood up, a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin, Gamaliel... [the one by whom Paul was taught] ...by name, a teacher of the law *who was* honored by all the people, *and* commanded *that* the apostles be put out for a short while” (vs 29-34). Then rehearsed some things.

Verse 39: “‘But if it be from God, you do not have the power to overthrow it. *Take heed*, lest you be found to be fighting even against God.’ And they were persuaded by him; and they called in the apostles *and*, after beating *them*, commanded *them* not to speak in the name of Jesus; and they released them. Then they departed from *the* presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing *that* they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And every day, in the temple and in the houses, they did not cease teaching and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ” (vs 39-42)

- Did they follow the commands of the scribes and the Pharisees sitting in Moses’ seat? *No!*
- What does this mean?
- *Either there’s a contradiction in*

Scripture, or Jesus Christ told us to follow Judaism!

Let’s go back and look at it again. Then let’s ask: What is the *seat of Moses*?

Matthew 23:1: “Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying, ‘The scribes and the Pharisees have sat down on Moses’ seat *as judges*; therefore, every judgment that they tell you to observe, observe and do. But do not do according to their works; for they say and do not.’” (vs 1-3).

Let’s go back and see the origin of Moses’ seat, and we’re going to see that he was telling them to follow the legal decisions they set forth when there was a dispute, having nothing to do with doctrine. Those legal decisions were to be based upon the Law of God! You can read in Jeremias’ book that the scribes and the Pharisees were what you would call the local magistrate or a local judge in a town. They had the same kind of thing we have today. If you have a dispute you go up to the next level. If that doesn’t solve it, you go to the next level and finally you come to the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem as it was in Jesus’ day.

Let’s see how all of this started and this is the *seat of Moses*—it is a **judgment seat to settle disputes**. It had nothing to do with calculating the calendar. It had nothing to do with the proclamation of the Holy Days. That’s not under question here. This is after Moses and the children of Israel came back and they stopped by to see Jethro—Moses’ father-in-law.

Exodus 18:1: “When Jethro, the priest of Midian...” Midian was one of the sons of Abraham, so we’re four or five generations removed from Abraham. Abraham taught his sons—even the ones who were of Keturah, of which Midian was—the religion that he had. It was perfectly all right at that time for the patriarch or the leader of the family—grown great, however the case may be—to offer the sacrifice unto God.

So, when we come over here and we find that Moses told Jethro everything, v 10: “And Jethro said, ‘Blessed *be* the LORD Who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, and Who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD *is* greater than all gods, for in this matter they dealt arrogantly against them.’ Then Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God.... [It was to God. It was legal. It was lawful. It was proper.] ...And Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses’ father-in-law before God” (vs 10-12).

This was perfectly fine. Later on when the whole sacrificial system was set up with the tabernacle and later the temple, they were only to

sacrifice in the place where God said. With the patriarchs that died out like with Jethro, the whole patriarchal sacrificial system became invalid. It was superseded by God giving the laws to Israel.

Verse 13: “And on the next day it came to pass that Moses sat to judge the people....” There is the *seat of Moses*; that’s where you get the phrase. In every synagogue there was the *seat of Moses*, which the scribe or the Pharisee or the rabbi in charge of that synagogue would come and sit down and listen to the dispute and make a decision based on the Word of God. That’s what they were to hear, observe and do.

Let’s notice how this came about, “...And the people stood by Moses from the morning to the evening. And when Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, ‘What *is* this thing which you do for the people? Why do you sit alone by yourself, and all the people stand by you from morning to evening?’ And Moses said to his father-in-law, ‘Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a matter, they come to me. And **I judge between one and another, and I make known the statutes of God and His laws.**’” (vs 13-16).

Did they know them before they were given in Exo. 20-23? *Yes!* What God did was to speak them again. How could He make known the statutes and laws of God if they didn’t know them? Sometimes we haven’t even asked the most simple, basic question.

Verse 17: “And Moses’ father-in-law said to him, ‘The thing that you do *is* not good. You will surely wear away, both you and this people that *are* with you, for this thing *is* too burdensome for you. You are not able to perform it alone. Harken now to my voice. I will give you counsel, and God will be with you. You be for the people toward God that you may bring the causes to God. And you shall teach them ordinances and laws, and shall make them know the way in which they must walk, and the work that they must do. And you shall choose out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness. And place them over the people to be leaders of thousands, and leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, and leaders of tens. And **let them judge for the people at all times....**’” (vs 17-22). That’s how the judgment seat or the *seat of Moses* got started.

“...And it shall be, every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they shall judge....” (v 22). That’s what Jesus was saying to them there; these were the small matters that had to be judged by the scribes and Pharisees. Had nothing to do with doctrine. Had nothing to do with teaching Christ. It had to do with their disputes.

“...And make it easier for yourself, and they shall bear *the burden* with you. If you will do this thing, and God command you *so...* [even Jethro said, ‘If God approves it—which He did.] ...then you shall be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace.’ And Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel and made them heads over the people, as leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, and leaders of tens. And they judged *for* the people at all times. The hard causes they brought to Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves” (vs 22-26).

That, brethren, is the *seat of Moses*! What did judges do? *Same thing we do today!* Today are we not under a system of judges? *Yes, we are!* Where do all of the hard cases go? *To the Supreme Court!* The Supreme Court declares *the law of the land* and they enforce it!

Exodus 21:22: “...And he shall pay as the judges *determine*.” That’s the *seat of Moses*!

Let’s see what Moses did to tell them what to do when they came into the land. Moses is rehearsing what he did:

Deuteronomy 1:15: “And I took the heads of your tribes, wise and experienced men, and made them leaders over you, leaders over thousands, and leaders over hundreds, and leaders over fifties, and leaders over tens, and officers among your tribes. And I commanded your judges at that time saying, ‘Hear *the causes* between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother, and the stranger with him. You shall not respect persons in judgment. You shall hear the small as well as the great.... [the important as well as the unimportant people, the way people look at importance] ...You shall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment *is* God’s. And the cause that is too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it.’ And I commanded you at that time all the things which you should do” (vs 15-18).

Let’s see how this was carried forward right in the law. Here again is part of the law and what to do and how to do it:

Deuteronomy 17:8: “If a matter *is* too hard for you in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, *being* matters of strife within your gates... [Do we have some nasty things come along every once in a while? *Yes!*] ...then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God shall choose. And you shall come to the priests, the Levites... [What were most of the priests? *Scribes!* What were some of the priests? *Pharisees, who sit in Moses’ seat!*] ...and to the judge that shall be in those days, and ask. And they shall declare to you

the sentence of judgment. And you shall do according to the sentence which they declare to you from that place which the LORD shall choose....” (vs 8-10).

Notice this is almost identical to what Jesus said, “...And **you shall be careful to do according to all that they tell you**.... [Isn’t that what Jesus said, ‘Whatever they bid you to do, do.’] ... According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach you and according to the judgment which they shall tell you, you shall do. You shall not turn aside from the sentence which they shall show you, to the right hand or the left. And the man that acts presumptuously and will not hearken to the priest who stands to minister there before the LORD your God, or to the judge, even that man shall die. And you shall put away the evil from Israel. And all the people shall hear and fear, and do no more presumptuously” (vs 10-13).

This also helps to answer the question as to why the New Testament Church began at the temple. It had to show the authority of God! This is why they did not follow the scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees in all of the things that they commanded them, contrary to what Jesus taught them, and to show them that this was a part of Israel and Judah all the way down through.

I need to call your attention to what the Apostle Paul was doing before he was converted, when he was Saul. What did he do? *He went to the chief priest!* What did he get? *He got arrest warrants—called letters—listing the people who should be arrested and brought back to Jerusalem!* He had the authority of the high priest—didn’t he? Which then was a judgment—wasn’t it? *Yes! God took care of that!*

2-Chronicles 19:5—talking about what Jehoshaphat did, and he was called a righteous king: “And he set judges in the land, in all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city. And he said to the judges, ‘Take heed what you do, for you do not judge for man, but for the LORD who *is* with you when you render judgment. And now therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you. Be careful and act wisely, for *there is* no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of a bribe.’” (vs 5-7).

In other words, go straight to the Word of God and make your judgments from there. If it’s from the Word of God and they’re sitting in the *seat of Moses* they were to obey that. So, he did that.

Verse 8: “And Jehoshaphat set some of the Levites and *of* the priests and of the chief of the fathers of Israel in Jerusalem for the judgment of the LORD, and to settle disputes among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.... [the Sanhedrin] ...And he charged

them, saying, ‘Now you shall act in the fear of the LORD, faithfully, and with a perfect heart. And whatever cause shall come to you from your brethren that dwell in their cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and ordinances, you shall even warn them so that they do not sin against the LORD, and wrath come upon you and your brethren. Do this and you shall not sin. And behold, Amariah the chief priest *is* over you in all matters of the LORD. And Zebadiah the son of Ishmael is the ruler of the house of Judah for all the king’s matters. Also the Levites *shall be* officers before you. Take courage and act, and the LORD shall be with the good’” (vs 8-11).

That command needs to come out of Washington, D.C., today. That’s what the *seat of Moses* is! That ought to prove conclusively from the book of Matthew, without a doubt, that:

- (A) Jesus Christ was never a Pharisee
- (B) Jesus Christ did not teach the things of Judaism
- (C) Jesus Christ always did the things which pleased the Father and followed Him

When we come to the seat of Moses in Matt. 23, it is *only for the judgments of dispute* and have nothing to do with the teachings or doctrines concerning what Christ taught. If we truly followed everything that the rabbinical Pharisees of today would say, we would have to reject Jesus Christ because they do, and that’s what they tell everyone to do.

We will go through Matt. 23 so we can see and understand even more clearly that Jesus would have nothing to do with this; Jesus would have nothing to do with the Pharisees. The whole point of this series is to show that right from the beginning God the Father—beginning with John the Baptist—was divorcing itself from Judaism, because Judaism had so corrupted God’s way by all their additions, their traditions, by every little law that they made to make themselves more righteous.

Let’s go back and see something in John 5 concerning the understanding and attitude of the Jews and the Pharisees. This is necessary for us to understand so that we will realize that the true religion of Moses—

- *if* they were truly following the Scriptures as God intended
- *if* they were truly observing the Laws of Moses as they should be

which, when they were sitting in judgment as magistrates on the *seat of Moses*—in whatever synagogue, wherever the judgment was held—when they followed the Scriptures that has to be what Jesus meant. We will see in just a minute He said, ‘Don’t do after their works, for they say do not.’ In other words, they *say* the Word of God, but they don’t do it themselves.

After Jesus gets done talking about John the Baptist; he was a bright and burning light, and after He made it clear that He was doing nothing on His own but what the Father did and what He saw Him do, that's what the Son did likewise.

John 5:36: "But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works that the Father gave Me to complete, the *very* works that I am doing, themselves bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. And the Father Himself, Who sent Me, has borne witness of Me. **You have neither heard His voice nor seen His form at any time**" (vs 36-37). Very important to understand, that the Pharisees and the Jewish religious leaders **did not have God!** They had a *form of Godliness*, they honored Him with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him as Jesus said.

Verse 38: "And you do not have His Word dwelling in you..." Think of that for a minute. They didn't have the Word of God abiding in them. Yes, they had their traditions. Yes, they were doing their thing in the name of God, but which was actually serving Satan the devil, who is a liar. That's what Jesus said in John 8.

Verse 38: "And you do not have His Word dwelling in you, for you do not believe Him Whom He has sent.... [Here it is again, every time Jesus answered back to them, He says, 'Have you never read...'] ...You search the Scriptures, for in them **you think** that you have eternal life... [*eternal life was not intended to be given through the Old Covenant, nor can eternal life be given through Judaism*] ...and they are the ones that testify of Me. But you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life. I do not receive glory from men" (vs 38-41).

If Jesus were a Pharisee—of the religion of men, which serves Satan the devil—He would have denied God the Father. He would have sinned because He believed those lies. He would not have received the honor from the Father, He would have received honor from them. They would have heaped plenty of honors upon Jesus if He were of them—wouldn't they? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 42 is profound: "But I have known you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves." What is the love of God? *'This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments and His commandments are not grievous!* You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, with all your being, and the second is like unto it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself, and **on these two hang all the Law and the Prophets.**

- They didn't love God; *they served Satan the devil!*

- They didn't keep His Word; *they kept theirs!*

For Jesus to say, "...you do not have the love of God in yourselves." That is a profound statement!

It is true that the Jews recite what they call the 'sheema'—which is what I just recited to you about loving God. You can recite it, but

- *if* you don't live it
- *if* you don't believe it
- *if* you don't make it part of your life

what good does it do? *No more than what Jesus said:* "This people honors me with their lips and with their mouth, but their heart is far from Me."

Verse 43: "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; *but* if another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How are you able to believe, you who receive glory from one another, and do not seek the glory that *comes* from the only God?" (vs 43-44). Again, a very profound statement! Same thing with us: What honor is it that we are looking for? That which comes from men? **or** That which comes from God? I think that every minister needs to ask himself:

- Does he love God?
- Is he going to serve Him in spite of the circumstances in which he may find himself?
- Is he only seeking power and honor from men?

or

- Is he seeking that honor of service and love toward God and the brethren?

Verse 45—this is another key, absolutely profound Scripture: "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is *one* who accuses you, *even* Moses... [which then means *all the writings of Moses*] ...in whom you have hope.... [they claimed they trusted in Moses] ...But if you believed Moses, you would have believed Me; for he wrote about Me. And if you do not believe his writings, how shall you believe My words?" (vs 45-47).

These Scriptures ought to show very clearly that Jesus had nothing whatsoever to do with Judaism. The Church, as it started, had nothing whatsoever to do with Judaism. But it was—beginning with John the Baptist—a repudiation of Judaism, a repudiation of their way, and the bringing in of the way from God the Father through Jesus Christ.

For people today to fall into the trap that we've got to go back to Judaism is absolutely incredibly wrong! For people to follow the propaganda that Christianity came out of Judaism is a blatant, absolute lie! **True Christianity never came**

out of Judaism! True Christianity came through Jesus Christ and the Word of God! Judaism and Catholicism are brothers, but not *true* Christianity.

Let's understand something very clearly: If Jesus were a Pharisee and followed their teachings and was Judaized through and through, Matt. 23 would also be a condemnation of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 23:1: "Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying, 'The scribes and the Pharisees have sat down on Moses' seat *as judges*'" (vs 1-2)—and magistrates, because they exercise the civil law. Today the Church does not exercise the civil law. If you took it to the extreme then you would have to reject Jesus Christ.

Verse 3: "Therefore, every judgment that they tell you to observe, observe and do. But do not do according to their works; for they say and do not." In other words, when they make a judgment, they quote what should be out of the Scriptures and then they turn around and:

Verse 4: "For they bind heavy burdens and hard to bear, and lay *them* on the shoulders of men; but they will not move them with *one* of their own fingers. And they do all their works to be seen by men. They make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments; and they love the first place at the suppers, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, "Rabbi, Rabbi." But you... [Jesus is speaking to the disciples] ...are not to be called Rabbi; for one is your Master, the Christ, and all of you are brethren" (vs 4-8).

You need to understand—and a lot of the ministers need to really take this heart. You can take the word *mister*, *mister*—which is a shortened word for *master*—and you're still doing the same thing.

Verse 9: "Also, do not call *anyone* on the earth your Father... [This is in a religious sense; has nothing to do with your own father. It is to put a man in the place of God and call the man 'father'] ...for one is your Father, Who *is* in heaven." That's why the whole thing with the Catholic Church and 'father' and 'padre' and 'Peter' and all this sort of thing is just so much absolute satanism. It's incredible!

Verse 10: "Neither be called Master... [that covers everything of Hindus and Buddhists where they have gurus, and a guru is a master—one from whom you learn the things that they are teaching] ...**for one is your Master, the Christ.**" Who should we look to? What should be preached? What should be taught? *Christ!*

Verse 11: "But the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever will exalt himself shall be humbled... [So much for high offices!

Ministers brag and say, 'I held high offices.' Look out! The bottom rung is coming!] ...and whoever will humble himself shall be exalted" (vs 11-12).

Verse 13—notice these profound woes: "But **woe** to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!.... [If Jesus would have followed or taught their things or been a part of them, He would have been a hypocrite!] ...For you devour widows' houses, and as a pretext you offer prayers of great length.... [Show me one long prayer that Jesus did publicly. *You can't!*] ...Because of this, you shall receive *the* greater judgment. **Woe** to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the Kingdom of Heaven before men; for neither do you yourselves enter, nor do you allow those who are entering to enter. **Woe** to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel the sea and the land to make one proselyte, and when he has become one, you make him twofold more a son of Gehenna than yourselves. **Woe** to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever shall swear by the temple, it is not binding; but whoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is obligated *to fulfill* his oath.' *You* fools ['anoetos'—*idiots!*] and blind! For which is greater, the gold, or the temple which sanctifies the gold? And *you* say, 'Whoever shall swear by the altar, it is not binding; but whoever shall swear by the gift that *is* upon it, he is obligated *to fulfill* his oath.' *You* fools and blind!...." (vs 13-19).

What did Jesus say about the blind guides that lead the blind? *They're both going to fall into the ditch!*

"...For which is greater, the gift, or the altar which sanctifies the gift? Therefore, the one who swears by the altar swears by it, and by all things that *are* upon it. And the one who swears by the temple swears by it, and by Him Who dwells in it. And the one who swears by heaven swears by the throne of God, and by Him Who sits upon it" (vs 19-22). That's a pretty scathing denunciation— isn't it?

Verse 23: "**Woe** to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, but you have abandoned the more important *matters* of the law—judgment... [proper judgment] and mercy and faith.... [Jesus said, 'I know you. You have not the love of God in you.'] ...These *you* were obligated to do, and not to leave the others undone. Blind guides, who filter out a gnat, but swallow a camel! **Woe** to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but within you are full of extortion and excess. Blind Pharisees! First cleanse the inside of the cup and the dish, so that the outside may also become clean. **Woe** to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful *on the* outside, but within are full of the bones of the dead,

and of all uncleanness” (vs 23-27)—of putrefying and stench-filled corpses.

Verse 32: “And *as for* you, you are filling up the measure of your fathers. *You* serpents, *you* offspring of vipers, how shall you escape the judgment of Gehenna? Because of this, behold, I send to you prophets and wise *men* and scribes; and *some* of them you shall kill and crucify, and *some* of them you shall scourge in your synagogues, and *some of them* you shall persecute from city to city; so that upon you may come all *the* righteous blood poured out upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous, unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Truly I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *you* who kill the prophets and stone those who have been sent to you, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her brood under *her* wings, but you refused! Behold, your house is left to you desolate. For I say to you, you shall not see Me at all from this time forward, until you shall say, ‘Blessed *is* He Who comes in *the* name of *the* Lord’” (vs 32-39).

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 16:6, 11-12
- 2) Mark 8:14-15
- 3) Matthew 19:3-5
- 4) Exodus 20:8-11
- 5) Matthew 19:4-12
- 6) Matthew 20:17-19
- 7) Matthew 21:12-17, 23-32, 42-43, 45-46
- 8) Matthew 22:15-21, 23-24, 30, 34-46
- 9) Matthew 23:1-3
- 10) Acts 5:23-34, 39-42
- 11) Matthew 23:1-3
- 12) Exodus 18:1, 10-26
- 13) Exodus 21:22
- 14) Deuteronomy 1:15-18
- 15) Deuteronomy 17:8-13
- 16) 2 Chronicles 19:5-11
- 17) John 5:36-47
- 18) Matthew 23:1-27, 32-39

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 17-18
- Galatians 5:22
- Psalm 119
- Acts 5:18-19
- Exodus 20-23
- John 8

Also referenced:

Books:

- *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried & Goldin
- *Jerusalem in the Times of Jesus* by Joachim Jeremias

Sermon: *Who Was in Charge of the Temple?*

Scripturalism vs Judaism XIII

Who was in Charge of the Temple?

Who was in charge of the temple in Jerusalem during the days of Jesus? Why should this be an important question? *The reason is because there are some people saying that we should follow the way that the Pharisees had done;* we should follow the Pharisaical practice today of keeping the Day of Pentecost on the same day that the Pharisees say we should keep in on. There has been a controversy raging about this for a long, long time. There's even one man who has written an article saying that we are to follow the Pharisees because they were conservative. The Sadducees were liberal. Yet, we showed in this series that that was not so; that Christ put them both in the same category.

Let's go back to Matthew 16 and let's see what Jesus said concerning the scribes and the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the chief priests. Then we'll ask the question and do a survey in the book of Matthew: Who was in charge of the temple? During the days of Jesus there is absolutely no question at all that whatever the decree was from the temple in Jerusalem, those were the days that were to be kept, including all of the Holy Days, including Pentecost. That becomes a very, very important key thing for us to understand.

Matthew 16:1: "Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came to Him, tempting Him and asking Him to show them a sign from heaven. But He answered *and* said to them, 'When evening has come, you say, "*It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.*" And in the morning, *you say, "Today it will storm, for the sky is red and lowering."* **Hypocrites!....**" (vs 1-3). I want to focus in on that word, because we're going to see this later when we come to Matt. 23.

"...You know *how* to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot *discern* the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet.' Then He left them and went away. Now when His disciples came to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. And Jesus said to them, 'Watch out, and be on guard against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.' Then they reasoned among themselves, saying, '*It is because we did not take bread*'" (vs 3-7).

Verse 8: "But when Jesus knew *this*, He said to them, 'O *you* of little faith, why are you reasoning among yourselves that *it is* because you did not bring bread? Do you still not understand? *Do you* not remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets you took *up*? Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets

you took *up*? How is it that you do not understand that I was not speaking of bread *when I told* you to **beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees?**' Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, **but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees**" (vs 8-12).

Yet, we find a conflict in the Scriptures. We need to analyze and answer this question, because He's calling them hypocrites and we're told to beware of their teachings. What if they have a teaching that's contrary to what's in the Bible? Is that leaven? Is that something we should follow? *or* Should not follow? And in relationship to Pentecost this becomes a very important question. It comes down to another situation. We need to ask: Who was in control of the temple? *They are the ones who set the Holy Days!* Did the Pharisees control the temple? That's really what it gets down to, because we are admonished by some that because of Matt. 23 that we should follow the teachings of the Pharisees.

If you carry that to its extreme, then we should reject Christ. Think on that! If the Pharisees were so righteous and so good, why did Jesus condemn them?

Matthew 23:1: "Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying, 'The scribes and the Pharisees have sat down on Moses' seat *as judges*; therefore, every judgment that they tell you to observe, observe and do. But do not do according to their works; **for they say and do not**'" (vs 1-3). This is a very interesting Scripture for us to analyze and look at and to understand. On the surface it does appear that we're to follow what the Pharisees say. But then you look at it closely and it says the scribes who are put before the Pharisees, and sit in Moses' seat.

And it's also very interesting when you understand that the Pharisees were of the tribe of Benjamin, the tribe of Judah; very few were of the tribe of Levi, because they were the priests. If you go back and study the history of the Pharisees, which the Pharisees were in the main *lay* preachers who taught the people from God's Word in the synagogues.

I want you to go ahead and study Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. All I'm going to do today is a survey so we can see how all of these things come together. You will find that the Pharisees have their power, their authority, more in the synagogues, and very little at the temple. The truth of the matter is, in v 2 it says the scribes and Pharisees 'sit in the seat of Moses'—it actually means and is translated in the

New American Version of the Bible, that the ‘scribes and Pharisees have seated themselves in Moses’ seat.’ They usurped it! They took it! They placed themselves down in Moses’ seat.

That brings in a very difficult thing saying that we ought to follow them because they sit in Moses’ seat. *NO! We’re to follow Christ!* They sat themselves down in Moses’ seat, but notice what Jesus said, v 3: “Therefore, every judgment that they tell you to observe, observe and do....”

When we go to Matthew 15, Mark 7—where He condemns all of their traditions—what is the only thing that would be obligatory for people to follow, that would be when they read from the book of Moses. God’s Truth is *truth*! That doesn’t change anything! That is right and good! But the Pharisees were placed subordinate to the scribes, so you can’t say that we are to follow the Pharisees only.

Let’s understand something in the Word of God. It has been written [in an article] by a man who says we ought to keep Pentecost on the sixth of Sivan. I’ve gone through a series showing very clearly how the Pharisees counted. But at the time of Jesus Christ were they following the way that the Pharisees did it, or were they following the way that the Sadducees did the counting for Pentecost?

As we have seen and gone through the calendar carefully, there are times when the Pharisaical way of counting is correct in approximately three out of ten years, because of the way that the Holy Days would fall. I’m not going to go into a long dissertation on how to count Pentecost here, but I want to focus in on *who was in charge at the temple*, because those in charge at the temple were the ones who established and set the calendar, set the Holy Days, which everyone had to follow—Pharisees, scribes and Sadducees all alike.

Philippians 3:4: “Though I might also have *reason to trust in the flesh*.... [He’s talking about what he was before he was converted.] ...If any other thinks he has *cause to trust in the flesh*, I have much more: Circumcised on *the eighth day*; of the race of Israel, from *the tribe of Benjamin*...” (vs 4-5). Paul was not a Levite; he was not a priest. He was a Pharisee. He was a *lay* teacher, as it were. He was a *lay* rabbi as it were. They knew how that he was zealous for the traditions of Judaism, above all of his contemporaries. (Gal. 1).

I want to emphasize that as long as the temple stood, only the priests could decide and set the calendar and the Holy Days—period! That’s why we need to find out who was in charge. Was it the Pharisees? *or* Was it the priests and the Sadducees? Once we understand that, then we know exactly how to properly count and figure the proper day for the observing of Pentecost.

“...a Hebrew of Hebrews; with respect to law, a Pharisee” (v 5). We are told by this writer that saying he was ‘touching the law, a Pharisee’ therefore, he was perfect.

Notice what it say here, v 6: “With respect to zeal, persecuting the Church; with respect to righteousness that *is* in law, blameless.” Notice the creative leap that takes place in this thinking: Since Paul was a Pharisee, and he was blameless, therefore, he kept the proper Pentecost. Since the Pharisees today say that the proper Pentecost is the sixth of Sivan, therefore, Paul always kept the sixth of Sivan. That’s not what it’s talking about here at all whatsoever. Concerning the law, “...with respect to righteousness that *is* in law, blameless.” That means that he offered the sacrifices; that means he did the washing and the oblations, and as far as the rules of the traditions of the Pharisees, he was blameless. It has nothing to do with when and who set Pentecost. It doesn’t mean that the Pharisees set Pentecost.

You can read in the Septuagint that it does say ‘on the first day after the Holy Day.’ That’s when the Pharisees count. But as I pointed out, the transmission of the Septuagint today, to us, is so much different than what it may have been when it was originally written, that we cannot depend upon it today as the inspired Word of God.

Do you think we can depend upon the *Living Bible* for true doctrine today? *No!* No more than we can depend on the Septuagint today, because of all the things that has happened to it from the time that it was originally written down to this day. If you say and believe that the Septuagint was the inspired Word of God, then you must accept all the Apocrypha, you must except all of those extra writings as also inspired. But the Jewish community rejected those. The ones who were really in charge of preserving the Scriptures rejected those. So, you have to go back and examine every principle, and then go back into the Bible to find out what is so. This doesn’t say one way or the other which day that Paul kept Pentecost on—does it?

He doesn’t say concerning Pentecost that they kept it the way the Pharisees say. When you understand that about one-third of the time that the Pharisaic reckoning of it is correct, because it follows exactly the instructions that are in the Old Testament then you realize that this kind of reasoning is on pretty shaky ground.

Verse 7: “Yet, the things that were gain to me, these things I have counted *as* loss for the sake of Christ. But then truly, I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count *them* as dung; that I may gain

Christ and may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is derived* from law, but that *righteousness* which *is by the* faith of Christ—the righteousness of God *that is* based on faith” (vs 7-9). That’s what Paul wanted to have, so likewise, so should we.

Let’s go back and we’ll do a survey; we’ll just use the book of Matthew. I want you to also take your own study and go through Mark, Luke and John. Where were the Pharisees? What influence did they have? I’ll answer most of that right now so you can use that as a target to go by.

In Jerusalem we are going to see at the temple and the capital city the Pharisees had very little influence at all. As you get further and further from Jerusalem out into the countryside where there were more and more synagogues, you find that the Pharisees had greater and greater power and authority.

Matthew 2:2—this is when the wise men came and they wanted to know: “Saying, ‘Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east, and have come to worship Him.’ But when Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And after gathering together...” (vs 2-4)—the scribes and the Pharisees—NO! it doesn’t say that, does it? Notice:

- who he gathered
- who was in charge
- who are the principle people in charge in Jerusalem at the time that Jesus was born:

Verse 4: “And after gathering together all the **chief priests**... [not the lesser ones, but *chief priests*]: ...**and scribes** of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be born. Then they said to him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written by the prophet’” (vs 4-5)—and they answered correctly out of the Scriptures.

Matt. 2 establishes for us that in Jerusalem and at the temple *the chief priests and the scribes were in charge*. They were the ones who were looked to as authorities concerning Scriptural questions.

Matthew 3—here we have the Baptism of John. Where was John baptizing. He wasn’t baptizing in Jerusalem? *He was baptizing in the River Jordan!* I want you to get a map and look at the River Jordan. You’re going to see that that’s a substantial way away from Jerusalem.

Matthew 3:7: “But after seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism... [The Pharisees and the Sadducees did come down from Jerusalem to John the Baptist, but they were fewer in number at that particular place, because

they would have come down from Jerusalem. They were sent down (John 1) so they could find out what John the Baptist was doing.

Here we have the Pharisees and the Sadducees come to the baptism, and “...he said to them, ‘*You brood of vipers...*’” (v 7). Do we want to follow vipers? Do we want to follow those who are anti-Christ? Think about it! You really need to ask the question, because people are so anxious; that people want to have teachers who teach them things because they have ‘itching ears’ (2-Tim. 4). They want to hear something new, so this comes out as *new doctrine! new Truth!* But it’s not; it’s as old as the scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees and all of their arguing. Then He warned them.

Let’s see concerning the scribes and the Pharisees and what Jesus did. In Matthew 9 we’re in the area of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus entered into a ship (v 1); He healed a man (v 2). Verse 3: “And immediately some of the scribes said within themselves, ‘This *man* blasphemes.’... [so, we have scribes there.] ...But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, said, ‘Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? For which is easier to say, “*Your sins have been forgiven you,*” or to say, “*Arise and walk*”? But *I speak these words so* that you may understand that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins.’ Then He said to the paralytic, “*Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.*” And he arose and went away to his house. Now when the multitudes saw *it*, they were amazed and glorified God, Who had given such authority to men” (vs 3-8).

Verse 10: “Then it came to pass, when Jesus sat down *to eat* in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And after seeing *this*, the Pharisees...” (vs 10-11).

Let’s understand something about Pharisees: the name means *separatist*. They separated themselves from everyone else so that they would appear righteous! Their successors today are the super-orthodox Jewish leaders of Judaism who wear the funny hats, have the long curls and the beards, and have *their traditions!* They separate themselves from the people. This is what the Pharisees did. That’s why they picked on Jesus and:

“...said to His disciples, ‘Why does your Master eat with tax collectors and sinners?’” (v 11). This was in the area of Galilee; this was not in the area of Judea.

Verse 14: “Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, ‘Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?’” They were comparing with the Pharisees; again, in that area.

Verse 34: “But the Pharisees said, ‘By the prince of the demons He casts out demons.’ Then

Jesus went around to all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom..." (vs 34-35).

Matthew 12:1: "At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath day; and His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck the heads of grain and to eat *them*." Again, we're still in the area of Capernaum, the area of Galilee, a long way from Jerusalem.

Verse 2: "But after seeing *this*, **the Pharisees** said to Him, 'Behold, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on *the Sabbath*.'" Then you know the rest of the story, what Jesus told them: *Have you never read...* It's interesting

Verse 3: "But He said to them, 'Have you not read what David did when he himself and those with him were hungry? How he went into the house of God and he ate the loaves of showbread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but for the priests only?'" (vs 3-4). You see what Jesus was really showing and teaching here?

Verse 9: "And after leaving there, He went into their synagogue. And, behold, a man was there who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbaths?' so that they might accuse Him. But He said to them, 'What man is there among you who, if he has one sheep that falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift *it out*? And how much better is a man than a sheep? So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbaths.' And He said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' And he stretched it out, and it was restored *as sound as the other*. Then the Pharisees went out *of the synagogue* and held a council against Him *to discuss* how they might destroy Him" (vs 9-14).

Here again we're still in that geographical area of Galilee. They wanted to destroy Him.

Verse 22: Then was brought to Him one who was possessed by a demon, blind and dumb; and He healed him, so that the one *who had been* blind and dumb both spoke and saw. And the multitudes were all amazed, and said, 'Is this the Son of David?' But when the Pharisees heard *this*, they said, 'This *man* does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, prince of the demons.'" (vs 22-24). Then He told them how they were in danger of committing the unpardonable sin.

Verse 34: "Offspring of vipers, how are you able to speak good things, being evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." Are we to follow those whom Jesus called, and John called, hypocrites, generations of vipers—snakes in the grass as it were—and 'you are of your father the devil' (John 8). That's why Jesus said they seated themselves, usurped the authority and seated

themselves in Moses' seat. When they read the Scriptures, you're to follow the Scriptures, but don't do their works.

Matthew 15:1: "Then the scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying." There were some schools of Pharisees in Jerusalem; as a matter of fact, there were two schools there—Hillel and Shammai—and they had two opposites in teachings: one believed one way and one believed the other way, but the way it's presented to us today is that the teachings of Judaism have always been in uniformity down through history. But that is absolutely not the case.

Verse 2: "'Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of **the elders**? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.' But He answered *and* said to them, 'Why do you also transgress the commandment of God for the sake of **your tradition**?''" (vs 2-3). There's the answer back. The oldest and best tradition of the Pharisees means nothing compared to the commandments of God.

Verse 4: "'For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'The one who speaks evil of father or mother, let him die the death.' But you say, 'Whoever shall say to father or mother, 'Whatever benefit you might receive from me *is being given as a gift to the temple*, he is not at all *obligated* to honor his father or his mother.' And you have made void the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition. Hypocrites!'" (vs 4-7). Do a little study, go through your own Bible and see how many times Jesus called them 'hypocrites'; see how many times He called them 'generation of vipers'; see how many times He called them 'servants of the Devil.'

Matthew 16:1: "Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came to Him, tempting Him and asking Him to show them a sign..." We read that already, going through and showing the whole thing there with the scribes and the Pharisees.

Now we're going to see how it begins shifting over the other way, Matthew 19:1: "And it came to pass *that* when Jesus had finished these sayings, He departed from Galilee and came to the borders of Judea beyond the Jordan.... [beyond the West Bank today] ...And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there. Then the Pharisees came to Him and tempted Him, saying to Him, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?' But He answered them, saying, '**Have you not read...**'" (vs 1-4).

John 5:38—Again, Jesus was challenged by them and He said: "And you do not have His Word dwelling in you..." That's quite a statement—isn't it? They didn't have the Word of God abiding in them. They had *their* traditions! They had *their* ways! They read the Word of God! But that's a

hypocritical stance— isn't it? *That's exactly what Jesus said they were!*

“...for you do not believe Him Whom He has sent. You search the Scriptures, for in them you think that you have eternal life; and they are the ones that testify of Me. But you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life. I do not receive glory from men; but I have known you, that **you do not have the love of God in yourselves.**” (vs 38-42). You think about that! That's really a strong statement!

You know what the love of God involves: keeping the commandments of God, loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and being. We are dealing with people who were ‘religious’; but *they weren't following God!*

Matthew 19:4—they came tempting Him: “But He answered them, saying, ‘Have you not read...’” You don't have the love of God in you; you don't have the Word of God in you.

Matthew 20:17—this is when He comes to Jerusalem; now we see where it begins to change from Pharisees to priests: “And while they were going up to Jerusalem, Jesus took the twelve disciples aside in the way and said to them, ‘Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man **shall be betrayed to the chief priests...**’” (vs 17-18). There were priests, but who were the *chief* priests? Why were they *chief* priests?

Example: You have a police force, but you have a Chief of Police, and then you have the lesser ones coming down to just policemen. Who sets the policies and gives the commands? *The Chief of Police!* Likewise, when we come to Jerusalem we're going to find that it is the *chief priests*, the *scribes* and the *elders*. The chief priests were of the Sadducean party. There were Sadducees who were not priests, but all of the *chief priests* were Sadducees.

Verse 18: “...the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death; and they shall deliver Him up to the Gentiles to mock *Him*, and to scourge *Him*, and to crucify *Him*; but He shall rise again the third day.” (vs 18-19).

I want you to read through all the incidents, because I just want to highlight the main important parts in this survey.

After He was healing, Matthew 21:14: “And *the blind and the lame* came to Him in the temple... [We're right at the temple; this becomes very important. Now we begin to see who has the power, or who's in charge at the temple.] ...and He healed them. But when **the chief priests and the scribes** saw the wonderful things that He did, and the

children shouting in the temple and saying, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David,’ they were indignant” (vs 14-15).

Verse 23: “Now when He entered the temple *and* was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to Him, saying, ‘By what authority do You do these things? And who gave You this authority?’”

Let's think about this! Let's analyze this a little bit more. Who came to Him? *Not the Pharisees! But the chief priests and the elders of the people!* In other words, the ones who were *in charge!* The elders of the people were the ones who were governing the civil aspect of the government. The chief priests were the ones who were in charge of the temple, governing all of the things to do with the temple and temple worship, the days to be observed, the things to be done on those days.

Why would they be concerned about the ‘authority’ that Jesus had? *They were the ones who were the authorities, so they wanted to know:* “By what authority...” did He do this, because it wasn't by *their* authority.

Verse 24: “And Jesus answered *and* said to them, ‘I will also ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, where did it come from? From heaven, or from men?’ Then they reasoned among themselves, saying, ‘If we say, “From heaven,” He will say to us, “Why then did you not believe him?” But if we say, “From men,” we fear the multitude; for everyone holds John as a prophet.’” (vs 24-26). That shows you how much confidence you can have in politicians. You can apply the same thing today. These politicians today, they speak out of four sides of their mouth, not just two sides, but four sides of their mouth.

Verse 27: “And they answered Jesus *and* said, ‘We do not know.’ He said to them also, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.’” In the temple area, the Pharisees are there, but they do not have any authority. The Pharisees were included in some of their councils, but they were in a minority position.

Verse 45: “Now after hearing His parables, the chief priests and the Pharisees knew that He was speaking about them. And they sought to arrest Him, but they were afraid of the multitudes, because they held Him as a prophet” (vs 45-46).

After Jesus went forth and gave a parable concerning them, Matthew 22:15: “Then the Pharisees went and took counsel *as to* how they might entrap Him in *His* speech.... [They were going to entrap Jesus!] ...And they sent their disciples *along* with the Herodians... [those of the party of Herod] ...to Him, saying, ‘Master, we know

that You are true, and *that* You teach the way of God in truth, and *that* You are not concerned about *pleasing* anyone; for You do not respect *the* persons of men. Therefore, tell us, what do You think? Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said, 'Why do you tempt Me, *you* hypocrites? Show Me the tribute coin.' And they brought to Him a silver coin. And He said to them, 'Whose image and inscription *is on* this?' They said to Him, 'Caesar's.' And He said to them, 'Render then the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God'" (vs 15-21).

Verse 23: "On that same day, *the Sadducees*, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and questioned Him." Concerning the Sadducees, because the Pharisees believed in a resurrection, we're told that they are more righteous than the Sadducees. The Sadducees didn't believe in a resurrection. Well, the Sadducees, in order to not have to follow all of the things that the Pharisees did, their object was—because we are in charge of the temple—we will only follow the first five books of Moses, which in the first five books of Moses it does not teach a resurrection. In that point they may have been right, technically speaking.

Verse 34: "But after the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they came together *before Him*. And one of them, a doctor of the law, questioned *Him*, tempting Him, and saying, 'Master, which commandment *is the* great commandment in the Law?'" (vs 34-36). Here they were all trying to trip Jesus up. But we see that it was the priests and the elders and the scribes; the Pharisees were a very little part of it, though they wanted to do Jesus in.

We'll bypass all of Matt. 23—you can read that how they condemned Him for everything that they did. They weren't following the things of God at all. I want to remind you to study Mark, Luke and John. When you come to the book of John that there is no differentiation between the Pharisees, as much as we find in some of the others. But it is just in the caption, *the Jews! The Jews came* to Him. There is some reference to the Pharisees, but most of the other references then are to the Jews and the priests.

Matthew 26:3: "Then the chief priests and the scribes and the **elders of the people**..." I want you to watch that very carefully, because this is going to be the thing where the authority lies all the way through the events leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ: His arrest, His trial and all the way through it we do not see any of the Pharisees involved on the inner council of the power circle of the chief priests and the elders and the scribes. That becomes a very key, important point, because that shows that the Pharisees had no power, no authority to establish anything at the temple.

Verse 3: "Then the chief priests and the scribes and the **elders of the people** assembled together in the court of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas... [The place of the high priest was right there on the temple grounds] ...and *they* took counsel together for the purpose of seizing Jesus by treachery, and killing *Him*. But they said, 'Not during the Feast, so that there will not be a riot among the people'" (vs 3-5).

Verse 14: "Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests." It wasn't the Pharisees. The Pharisees had no authority to do anything, when you come right down to it. When you read and study the history of it, the Pharisees did not even get control of the temple area until about 66_{A.D.}, just before it's fall.

(go to the next track)

The priests, the Levites, the elders were the ones who had control of the temple. They were the ones who had the authority; they were the ones who established the days according to the calendar, according to the calculation for counting to Pentecost, because *they were in charge!* And it really didn't matter what the Pharisees thought. The writings of the Pharisees 200 years after Jesus in the Talmud or the Gemara or in any of the Mishnas that the Jews have cannot be trusted at all to be trustworthy.

Even *Josephus* cannot be trusted, because the greatest event—the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh—has been totally ignored by them. Jesus said that they were '...of their father the Devil, and he lies...' That's exactly what the Jews have done in their histories. They have lied to make it look as though Jesus never came, because they rejected Him.

All of the chief priests and the scribes and the Sadducees at the temple area were destroyed when the temple was destroyed in 70_{A.D.} So, you have no one of the priests that survived. You have no one of the Sadducees that survived to refute any of the things that the surviving Pharisees wrote centuries later.

"...Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests, *and* said, 'What are you willing to give me, and I will deliver Him up to you?' And they offered him thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought an opportunity to betray Him" (vs 14-16).

Verse 47: "And while He was yet speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, suddenly appeared, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from **the chief priests and elders** of the people." He was given authority by them. They were the ones who were in charge.

Verse 57: "But those who had arrested Jesus

led *Him* away to **Caiaphas the high priest**, where **the scribes and the elders** were assembled.” You find all the way through this that the Pharisees had little or no authority at all for little affect of things done at the temple. Their way of counting Pentecost—unless it fell automatically the way that the priests and the Sadducees counted Pentecost, was not accepted. It was just by coincidence that it happened that way. As we saw, three out of ten years it happens that way.

Verse 59: “Now the **chief priests and the elders** and the whole Sanhedrin sought false evidence against Jesus, so that they might put Him to death.”

Verse 62: “And the **high priest** rose up *and* said to Him, ‘Have You no answer for what these are testifying against You?’ But Jesus was silent. And the high priest answered *and* said to Him, ‘I adjure You by the living God that You tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God.’ Jesus said to him, ‘You have said *it*. Moreover, I say to you, in the future you shall see the Son of man sitting at *the* right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.’ Then the high priest ripped his *own* garments, saying, ‘He has blasphemed! Why do we need any more witnesses? Behold, you have just now heard His blasphemy. What do you think?’ They answered *and* said, ‘He is deserving of death!’” (vs 62-66).

Who put Jesus to death? *The chief priests, the scribes and the elders!* Not the Pharisees. Nowhere in any of these councils do we find that the Pharisees were sitting there in the council, which tells us—it doesn’t mean they are less guilty of the blood of Jesus Christ—they had no authority at the temple. They had no authority to carry out these laws.

Matthew 27:1: “Now when morning came, all **the chief priests and the elders of the people** took counsel against Jesus, so that they might put Him to death.... [There you have it!] ...And after binding Him, they led *Him* away and delivered Him up to Pontius Pilate, the governor. Now when Judas, who had betrayed Him...” (vs 1-3).

Verse 6: “But the chief priests took the pieces of silver *and* said, ‘It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is *the* price of blood.’ And after taking counsel, they bought a potter’s field with the *pieces of silver*, for a burial ground for strangers. Therefore, that field is called The Field of Blood to this day” (vs 6-8).

When He is brought before Pilate, we find in v 12: “And when He was accused by the chief priests and the elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, ‘Don’t You hear how many things they testify against You?’” (vs 12-13). Again, it was the chief priests and the elders. You see how

absolutely overwhelming the evidence is concerning who was in charge of the temple.

We will do our survey in the rest of Matt. 27 and then on into the book of Acts and see what the Jewish authorities now tell us exactly what it was on the day when the Sadducees had counted Pentecost.

Verse 20: “But the **chief priests and the elders** persuaded the multitudes to demand Barabbas, and to destroy Jesus.” It was the chief priests and the elders again! That’s why it’s emphasized here. Whenever you get a doctrinal paper saying, ‘Oh, brethren, I have some brand new truth that you need to examine and we need to do this, that or the other thing’—don’t believe it! Check it out in the Bible to make sure whether that is true or not.

After Jesus was already crucified, dead and in the tomb, then we find the Pharisees coming around and wanting to help cover the bases themselves. Verse 62: “Now on the next day, which followed the preparation *day*, the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate.”

The Pharisees came in after the fact. They didn’t have the authority, but they probably came to the chief priest and said, ‘Look, what are we going to do out here in the synagogues, because we have to go out in the countryside where all the synagogues are. We need you to help cover the base for us.’ So they got together and worked out their little treachery there.

Now let’s go to Acts 2:1: “And when the day *of Pentecost*, the fiftieth day, was being fulfilled... [In the Greek it means *during the accomplishing of the 50th day*. That’s what Pentecost means—50th. The verb form is *to count 50*. The noun form is 50th.] ...they were all with one accord in the same place.” You know what happened then, the giving of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 3—You know how Peter and John healed the man who lying there at the Gate Beautiful. He looked to them for alms and Peter looked upon him and said, ‘silver and gold I have none to give you, but in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth arise and walk.’ And he arose and walked and everyone was all excited. Then Peter preached how they have to *repent*.

Acts 4:1: “Now as they were speaking to the people, the priests and *the* captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being dismayed because they were teaching the people, and preaching through Jesus the resurrection from *the* dead. And they arrested them and put *them* in *the* hold [prison] until the morning; for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the message believed, and the number of men was about five thousand. Now it came to pass in the morning

that their rulers and elders and scribes were assembled together in Jerusalem, and Annas, the high priest, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and as many as were of *the* high priest's lineage" (vs 1-6).

Again, who do we find? *The priests, the rulers, the elders, and, as we will see, the Sadducees!* They were the ones who were at the temple and controlled it. This becomes important, because in Acts 2 we have the Day of Pentecost, which then in the context will inherently tell us which day this Pentecost was kept on, so that we might know which is the proper day for keeping Pentecost. We cannot believe what the Pharisees have said who are now the rabbis of today, their successors.

Then we know what Peter did. He gave them a sermon and said that you can't be saved by any other than the name of Jesus Christ. They were let go, they came back and prayed with all of the disciples. Acts 5—great miracles were done. The disciples were doing all of these teachings; there were multitudes going after the disciples, following Jesus Christ right there at the temple. They had to stop this thing at the temple. Right in the heart and core of the center of Judea; the heart and core and center of Judaism. Right there at the temple with all of the sacrifices and everything that was going on this was flourishing. Miracles were being done. People were being healed. Tremendous things were happening because they were believing in Jesus.

Acts 5:17: "Then the high priest rose up, and all those with him, being of *the sect of the Sadducees*; and they were filled with anger. And they laid their hands on the apostles and put them in *the* public hold. But during the night an angel of *the* Lord *came and* opened the doors of the prison; and after bringing them out, he said, 'Go and stand in the temple, *and* speak to the people all the words of this life.' And after hearing *that*, they entered into the temple at dawn and taught. Now when the high priest and those with him came, they called together the Sanhedrin... [the senate; a greater council including the priests, the elders, the scribes, the Sadducees and, as we will see by this council, some Pharisees. One very important Pharisee who was called Gamaliel, the teacher of Paul.] ...and all the elderhood of the sons of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison..." (vs 17-22).

Verse 25. "But a certain one came *and* reported to them, saying, 'Behold, the men whom you put in the prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.'

Verse 27: "And they brought them in *and* set *them* before the Sanhedrin. And the **high priest** asked them... [not the Pharisee, but the high priest]

...saying, 'Did we not order you by a *direct* command not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, with *the* purpose of bringing this man's blood upon us.' But Peter and the apostles answered *and* said, 'We are obligated to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus Whom you killed by hanging *Him* on a tree. Him has God exalted by His right hand *to be* a Prince and Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel'" (vs 27-31).

Here's the whole council of all of the important people in Judea and Galilee gathered there for this council of what to do about the teaching of Jesus and the apostles and what they were doing. Truly, they did turn the world upside down.

Verse 32. "'And we are His witnesses of these things, as *is* also the Holy Spirit, which God has given to those who obey Him.' Now when they heard *this*, they were cut *to the heart* and took counsel to put them to death. But a certain man stood up, a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin... [One! It doesn't say that the Pharisees gathered to give counsel.] ...Gamaliel by name, a teacher of the law *who was* honored by all the people, *and* commanded *that* the apostles be put out for a short while. And he said to them, 'Men, Israelites, give careful thought to what you are about to do concerning these men.'" (vs 32-35).

Verse 38. "'And now I say to you, withdraw from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be from men, it will be overthrown; but if it be from God, you do not have the power to overthrow it. *Take heed*, lest you be found to be fighting even against God'" (vs 38-39). Then they had a little peace and rest for a while.

Acts 6:7: "And the Word of God spread, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem was multiplied exceedingly, and a great multitude of the priests were obedient to the faith." Now there were really inroads going on. Then Stephen was preaching. He was arrested, taken before the council. He preached to them. The whole council rose up and went out and stoned Stephen, gnashed their teeth on him and were totally and absolutely angry at him for what he did in convicting them.

Acts 7:58: "And cast *him* out of the city *and* stoned *him*. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man called Saul.... [who was later called *Paul* as we know] ...And they stoned Stephen, who called upon *God*, saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' And he fell to his knees *and* cried with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not lay this sin to their charge.' And after he had said this, he died" (vs 58-60).

Acts 8:1: "Now Saul had consented to killing

him. And that day a great persecution arose against the Church that *was* in Jerusalem; and all *the believers* were scattered throughout the countries of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.” They really put the heat on them!

Saul was persecuting the Church; he was a Pharisee, but who did he have to go to, to receive his authority to do the things that he did? Acts 9:1 is very revealing: “Now Saul, still breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, **went to the high priest.**” Saul did not go to the council of the Pharisees; he did not go to the council of the rabbis; he went to the high priest who was a Sadducee, because the high priest was the one who was in charge and had authority.

Verse 2: “Asking him *for letters to take* to the synagogues at Damascus... [so he could take that authoritative letter from the high priest]: ...so that if he found any who were of that way... [men or women] ...he might bring *them* bound, both men and women, to Jerusalem.” You know the rest of the story, what happened to the Apostle Paul.

Let’s come to the sum of the matter that we have just covered: The *chief priests, the elders and the scribes* who were the ones in charge at the temple. They established and controlled the things concerning the way the temple worship was handled and, in particular, the way of counting Pentecost.

Now I want to read to you some quotes from the Jewish encyclopedia, *The Encyclopedia Judaica*:

The Sadducees and later the Karaites understood the term Sabbath as we find in Lev. 23 “from the morrow after the Sabbath”... [which then in Hebrew is pronounce ‘m mchrth ha shbth’] ...to be the regular weekly Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

That’s the way that the priests and the Sadducees counted Pentecost. That is the way that Pentecost was counted the year that Jesus was crucified. That is the way that Pentecost was counted all the way down until the near destruction of the temple in 70_{A.D.} *Josephus* gives the account that in about 66_{A.D.} the Pharisees began to be greater in number and the councils than were the chief priests and the scribes. Of course, at that time then, it’s way past the time to establish doctrine for the Church today.

The Sadducees and later the Karaites understood the term Sabbath in these verses... [Lev. 23] ...literally hence from then ‘shavoo’ot’ always falls on a Sunday.

The *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* says:

The Torah provides that the seven weeks up to ‘shavoo’ot’... [or Pentecost] ...be

counted from the morrow after the rest day.

That rest day is ‘ha Shabbat’ which is the Sabbath. It is not the high day nor the first day, but the Sabbath.

The Sabbath of the Passover Festival. The interpretation of this Passover became one of the outstanding points at issue between the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

But we just saw that as long as the temple stood, the Pharisees did not have that much impact or input as to what really was going on.

According to the Pharisaic point of view, supported by the Septuagint and later universally accepted in the Talmud, the Sabbath in question was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread... [or the first day of Passover] ...hence Pentecost would always fall fifty days later on the sixth of Sivan. The Sadducees however, and later the Karaites, supported by the Samaritans, took the word to mean literally after the beginning of the Passover festival and thus Pentecost would always fall on a Sunday and might vary in the numbered date of the month from the seventh to the thirteenth of Sivan. The Sadduccaical way of reckoning Pentecost is referred to the old Biblical view.

Because they went by what was in Lev. 23.

They [Sadducees] contended that the seven weeks from the first barley sheaf offering to Pentecost should, according to Lev. 23:15-16, be counted from the day after the Sabbath and consequently, Pentecost should always be celebrated on the first day of the week. Which is what we do today.

The *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* says the same thing:

It is clear that the power and privilege invested interests played a much larger part in the life of the Sadducees than in the other section of the nation. In one way or another they held control of the temple and, unless in the last few years of its existence the services...

This would include the day determining the wave sheaf offering to count to Pentecost, thereby determining Pentecost.

...were conducted in accordance with their views. So closely were they associated with the temple... [that is the Sadducees and the priests] ...that after its destruction in 70_{A.D.} the Sadducees as a group or party are no more heard of.

Therefore, we have no authentic writings to establish in a counterview to the Pharisaic way what the Sadducees did other than what we have recorded here. We go to the words of the Bible, we go to the New Testament to find the recorded history that was given to us by those who wrote the New Testament to show us who was in charge at the temple.

This proves beyond any shadow of doubt that once you have established that those in charge of the temple—the priests and the Sadducees—were the ones who were in control. Then however Pentecost was counted by them is how Pentecost should be counted by us. It depends not on their righteousness. It depends not upon their sins. But it depends on what the Bible says, and that's what we have done.

So, we should count Pentecost in the way that we understand it now and should continue to do so. Let's not let anyone come around and give us some Judaizing to turn you away from the words and the clear Scriptures of God.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 16:1-12
- 2) Matthew 23:1-3
- 3) Philippians 3:4-9
- 4) Matthew 2:2-5
- 5) Matthew 3:7
- 6) Matthew 9:3-8, 10-11, 14, 34-35
- 7) Matthew 12:1-3, 9-14, 22-24, 34
- 8) Matthew 15:1-7
- 9) Matthew 16:1
- 10) Matthew 19:1-4
- 11) John 5:38-42
- 12) Matthew 19:4
- 13) Matthew 20:17-19
- 14) Matthew 21:14-15, 23-27, 45-46
- 15) Matthew 22:15-21, 23, 34-36
- 16) Matthew 26:3-5, 14-16, 47, 57, 59, 62-66
- 17) Matthew 27:1-3, 6-8, 12-13, 20, 62
- 18) Acts 2:1
- 19) Acts 4:1-6
- 20) Acts 5:17-22, 25, 27-35, 38-39
- 21) Acts 6:7
- 22) Acts 7:58-60
- 23) Acts 8:1
- 24) Acts 9:1-2

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Mark 7
- Galatians 1
- John 1
- 2 Timothy 4
- Matthew 9:1-2

- John 8
- Acts 3

Also referenced: Books:

- *Josephus*
- *The Encyclopedia Judaica*
- *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*

Scripturalism vs Judaism XIV

[This sermon to be added at a later date]

Scripturalism vs Judaism XV

The Separation of the Church from Judaism

Let's go to Psalm 110_[corrected] first, and then we will get to the book of Acts and show why God did what He did. This is important. The way this question came about was —see sermon series *Who Was Jesus?*— I made a mistake; but I didn't make a mistake.

Psalm 110:1: "The LORD said unto my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies as Your footstool.'" In *Who Was Jesus?* #5, I said that Yahweh said to my Yahweh, and that was incorrect, so I went back and changed it to what it should be on *Who Was Jesus?* #6: 'Yahweh said to my Adonai.'

I got a letter from someone that was so detailed that I couldn't answer it and I sent it to Carl and he's up to 21 pages on it. That's how some of these things come about. But he, in going through and studying this out, found an appendix study on it in Bullinger's *Companion Bible*, which sent him off to Andrews University Library to get a little more information. It was this: In the Masoretic text of the Old Testament, which is the official Jewish text, around the turn of the century when Bullinger's was produced, they listed everywhere they changed the word Yahweh to Adonai, and this was one of them. So, this is going to prove to be very, very interesting.

What they did they made the notation of the change in the margin, and most of the translators never bother about the margin. The difference between Yahweh and Adonai is the matter of placing some vowel pointings. Furthermore, Carl is going back and studying every place where they changed it to Adonai and guess what? *They remove the name of Christ*—that is correct. How would they do it in the Old Testament? *Get rid of all references where Yahweh talks with Yahweh, or to the One Who became Christ!*

Carl also came across something else that was very profound! Let's go to Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, O Israel. Our one God is *the* LORD, *the* LORD." What is 'one'? We never think about it, but this is so simple but so profound! What is 'one' grammatically speaking? *An adjective!* It is not a noun. If you have a number that is noun, it is what they call a cardinal number. This is an orderable number because this is an adjective. Why is that important? *Because it doesn't limit God to being one person!* Husband and wife shall be *one*, an adjective—right? An adjective describing a condition. So, the Lord our God is one, Elohim, being two people. That's the slight of hand that took place, by calling an adjective a noun.

That's why that it probably came out of the Septuagint that way, because in Greek you can have the noun come after the verb, because of the way that you spell it. It's very unusual, but this opens up all of the knowledge that we need to unlock what was really in the Old Testament concerning God and Christ, concerning the references to the Father in the Old Testament; to show absolutely and clearly that Elohim means more than one. There are times when *Yahweh refers to Yahweh*.

Here's where Jesus quoted the Scripture Psa. 110:1, and we know that Peter quoted it and we know the other apostles quote this over and over again. Matthew 22:41: "While the Pharisees were assembled together, Jesus questioned them, saying, 'What do you think concerning the Christ? Whose son is He?' They said to Him, '*The Son of David.*' He said to them, 'How then does David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, "The LORD said to my Lord... [In this case in the Greek it is 'Kurios, kurios'—that's the way it's translated in the Old Testament; *Lord* in the Greek is 'Kurios'—which is equivalent to Yahweh/Yahweh, which also shows that David, in the spirit, called Him *Lord*. Was there any other lord over David besides God? *No!*] (When David says: ..."The LORD said to my Lord..." (vs 41-44) and he's in the spirit, he's very clearly referring to a revelation of God the Father—correct? *Absolutely!*

Verse 44: "The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet'?" Therefore, if David calls Him Lord, how is He his Son? And no one was able to answer Him a word, neither dared anyone from that day to question Him anymore" (vs 44-46). That will give you something to think on!

Let's go to the book of Acts and we're going to see what God did in establishing the Church and continuing the severance and the separation from Judaism. Also, Carl's doing some research that it's very probable that the reason Luke wrote Luke and Acts because there were already some people thinking that Jesus was born on Dec. 25. Like Solomon said, 'There's nothing new under the sun'; it's all recycled.

Acts 1:1: "The first account I indeed have written, O Theophilus... [Theophilus means *lover of God*; it's possible that he could have been one of the priests. The priests in many cases took the name *Theophilus*. This would make sense if it were written to one of the priests or Levites.] ...concerning all things that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after giving command by *the* Holy Spirit to the apostles whom He

had chosen; to whom also, by many infallible proofs, He presented Himself alive after He had suffered, being seen by them for **forty days**, and speaking the things concerning the Kingdom of God” (vs 1-3).

Since Luke is writing this, this becomes important and I’m going to bring you the technical reasons as to why when we have the Passover Day falling on the regular weekly Sabbath that the Wave Sheaf Offering should be waved on the first Holy Day, which is ‘the morrow after the Sabbath.’ There’s a reason for it, and there’s a reason why the Jews have become discombobulated over it.

Luke 24:1 “Now, on the first *day* of the weeks...”—‘day’ is not there in the Greek, that’s why it’s in the italic; ‘day’ is implied. We know that they rested the Sabbath:

Luke 23:56: “And they returned *to the city*, and prepared spices and ointments, and **then rested on the Sabbath** according to the commandment.”

Guess what else is going to be taken under wing? *Friday crucifixion! Day and a half in the grave!* Again, nothing new under the sun; it’s just recycled! We nickname ourselves the *No Hassle, Recycled Church of God*, and we’re going to have to nickname them the Re-hassled Old Babylonian Church of God, if they keep going the way that they’re going.

In Luke 24:1 they have “...the first *day* of the weeks... [it’s okay to put that word *day* in there for clarification because that is true] ...they came to the tomb at early dawn, bringing *the* spices that they had prepared; and certain *others came* with them.”

Verse 13: “And behold, **on the same day**, two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, which was about sixty furlongs from Jerusalem.”

John 20—we have the same day and we also have something in the way of counting. You can literally see that the disciples in recording this were, in a way, counting toward Pentecost. John 20: 19: “Afterwards, as evening was drawing near that day, **the first day of the weeks**, and the doors were shut where the disciples had assembled for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ‘Peace *be* to you.’”

Verse 26: “Now after eight days, His disciples again were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus came after the doors were shut, and stood in the midst and said, ‘Peace *be* to you.’” So, those who are ‘born again’ now if they don’t like the hatpin test, we’ll just let them try the wall and door test.

When we come to the Acts 1:3 what Luke is doing, he is carrying on this counting. “...being seen by them for forty days, and speaking the things

concerning the Kingdom of God. And while *they* were assembled with *Him*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem...” (vs 3-4).

Why is that important? *The Holy Spirit, Pentecost!* There’s another major, major reason, which is really more profound, which underlies the whole thing: *the Comforter will come!* That’s true. Where did God say He would put His name? *In Jerusalem!* Do you think that there would have been any recognition of what God was doing had he done this not in Jerusalem? In other words, if God would have raised His Church up in say, what we would call modern Spain and sent them over to Jerusalem and they would come in and say, ‘the Lord has said’? Would they have ever been received? *No way!* It’s very important what takes place on this Day of Pentecost. I want to emphasize it here because this is important in the difference between Scripturalism and Judaism and the Church vs Judaism, as we get into the book of Acts.

“...but to ‘await the promise of the Father, which,’ *He said*, ‘you have heard of Me. For John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with *the* Holy Spirit after not many days.’ So then, when they were assembled together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You restore the kingdom to Israel at this time?’ And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know *the* times or *the* seasons, which the Father has placed in His own **authority**; but you yourselves shall receive **power**...—the first *authority* comes from the Greek ‘exousia’; the second word power comes from [‘dunamis’—which means *power* or *energy*] ...when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto *the* ends of the earth’” (vs 4-9).

Verse 10: “And after saying these things, *as* they were looking at *Him*, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Now while they were gazing intently up into heaven as He was going up, two men in white apparel suddenly stood by them, who also said, ‘You men of Galilee, why do you stand *here* looking up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, Who was taken up from you into heaven, shall come in exactly the same manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.’ Then they returned to Jerusalem...” (vs 10-12). Then they selected the one to replace Judas Iscariot (v 26)

Acts 2—What are the problems with Pentecost?

1. Counting of it—where to begin counting

What does that leave us? What, in counting differently, do we end up with in counting Pentecost?

2. End up on the wrong day

There are actually three different days

- 6th of Sivan—which may be anywhere from a Wednesday to a Monday
- Monday—which the Church of God Eternal and several others believe, because they believe that Pentecost was actually the 51st day.
- The correct counting

One is correct and two are wrong. Part of the solution is found here, which you can't understand in the English, so I'll explain it to you in the Greek.

Acts 2:1 (KJV): "And when the day of Pentecost was **fully come**, they were all with one accord in one place." Some people read that 'fully come' as meaning that the 50th day was already come and gone. That's a twisting of the Scriptures. That's why it's important to understand the Greek. I'll get just a little technical here so you can understand it. 'Fully come' is translated from the term, which in the English is *the accomplishing of*. It actually means that *in the accomplishing of the day, the 50th*. That's a literal translation of the Greek. So, we've had:

- first of the week
- same day
- 8 days
- 40 days
- during the accomplishing of the day, the 50th

You see how they were counting. Therefore, right in the New Testament we have the counting beginning with 'the morrow after the weekly Sabbath'; counting 50 days, and you end up on a Sunday.

Something else that is most important: *the accomplishing of*, that's what *fully comes* means. This is a very unusual structure in the Greek, because it is what is called an articular infinitive. This becomes very important because an articular infinitive is the overarching statement, which everything else flows beneath that. Everything that is in Acts 2 is done on the 50th day. Not the 51st, not the 49th, but the 50th day.

During the accomplishing of the 50th day "...they were all with one accord in the same place. And suddenly *there* came from heaven a sound like *the* rushing of a powerful wind, and filled the whole house where they were sitting" (vs 2-3). Why is this important? The *house* actually means the section of the temple that they were holding their meeting in, because they had different sections within the temple in which they could do that.

- Why is that important?
- Why on the 50th day?
- What also happened on the 50th day a long time ago, about 1,480 years before that?
- What happened on the Day of Pentecost?

- *God came on Mt. Sinai and brought the Ten Commandments!*

What we have here is a sign from God; it came from heaven from God, and it was a supernatural thing that took place. Why is it important that it was a supernatural thing? *To fulfill the prophecies and also so that no one could say that these men took this to themselves!*

It's very important that it has to come from God. Why? *Because God chose Jerusalem where to place His name!* It's very important that it was done at the temple. Why? *Because that's where the authority of the Law came from!* Was that not where the Sanhedrin was? Was that not where the decisions were made? *Yes, absolutely!* It's very important that God did it this way, and it's very profound in the way that the things happen. We'll get into the whole story of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues, but it was so profound that that day 3,000 were baptized.

They spoke right in the temple and lambasted all the sins and everything that the Jews had not been doing, and preached the name of Christ Who ascended into heaven, and David was not ascended into heaven, He was both dead and buried, because some people were probably expecting that it would be David who was raised from the dead rather than Christ.

Now let's come to Acts 3. We're not told how much of a time-period is between chapter two and chapter three, but again God begins to do something in a powerful way to show His authority, spiritually, with the apostles. Again, this is the beginning of the separation from the temple service. Not only do we have removal of the teachings from Judaism, but we have a separation now from the temple. What was to be the temple for Christ? *The Church!* How were we to worship Christ and the Father? *In Spirit and in Truth!* Not in Jerusalem or Samaria. So, this becomes very important.

Here's what happened, Acts 3:1: "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, *which was* the ninth hour; and a certain man who was lame from his mother's womb was being carried, whom they placed daily at the temple door which is called Beautiful, to beg alms from those who were going into the temple" (vs 1-2). We're not told how long this man was there. We're not told how desperate his condition was other than the fact that he couldn't walk. He had to be carried, obviously on a stretcher, every day. Right at the temple! That becomes most important! At the Gate Beautiful!

Who went through the Gate Beautiful? *All of those to go in to worship!* When you go through the Gate Beautiful you have the Court of the Women and beyond that you have the Court of the Men, and

beyond that you have the Altar of Burnt Offerings, and beyond that you have the way into the Holy Place. What is God telling us with this? *A very important message!*

- None of the priests could heal!
- None of the Levites could heal!
- None of them had the power to do what really was necessary for the man!

Yes, they gave alms; they did bring him to the Gate—that is true, without a doubt! But now the reason that God chose this time and this healing at this particular time is to show that God was going to do something that He had never done before. To also verify the fact of Jesus' ministry and healing, and the fact of what the apostles did with their healings. Go back to Matt. 10 and the 70 that went out and so forth. Let's read a little more from that perspective. This was a matter of a deformity from birth.

Verse 3: "When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. But Peter and John, intently observing him, said, 'Look on us.' And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, 'Silver and gold I do not have; but what I do have, this I give to you. **In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean, rise up and walk**'" (vs 3-6). Very profound miracle! Right there in the eyes of everyone! Right there in front of all of the priests and all of the Levites and all of the people, and being the ninth hour was a time when the people would come to the temple when the incense offering was offered. That's when they would come to pray.

Luke also records an event that took place about the same time, which was also a miraculous event. This has to do with the father of John the Baptist, Zacharias. Luke 1:8: "And it came to pass *that* in fulfilling his priestly service before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priestly service, it fell to him by lot to burn incense when he entered into the temple of the Lord. And all the multitude of the people outside were praying at the hour of the *burning of* incense.... [this is the hour of prayer, the ninth hour] ...Then an angel of *the* Lord appeared to him..." (vs 8-10). And you know the rest of it.

Again, God chooses a very profound time, the ninth hour when there would be the most people there. This was witnessed by how many thousands of people? Of course, those who would come to the temple on a regular basis and would come with their daily prayers at that time, they would see this man all the time. They knew that he had this from birth.

Acts 3:6: "...*'In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean, rise up and walk.'*" He did not say *in the name of Yahweh; Elohim; the priesthood!* These were men who were not of the priesthood, not of the

line of Levi, not of the line of Aaron.

Verse 7: "Then taking him by the right hand, he raised *him* up; and immediately his feet and ankle bones were strengthened. And leaping up, he stood and walked; and he entered into the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. Now, all the people saw him walking and praising God. And they recognized him, that he was the one who had been sitting at the temple gate *called* Beautiful, asking for alms; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened to him. And as the lame *man* who had been healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch *that is* called Solomon's, *for* they were greatly amazed" (vs 7-11).

Here God was establishing right at the temple *His Spiritual Authority!* He was showing by it none of the physical things that were being done at the temple were able to heal this man, had no effect upon this man, but now *God* was intervening spiritually!

Verse 12: "And when Peter saw *it*, he answered to the people, 'Men, Israelites, why are you wondering at this? And why are you looking upon us so intently as if by *our* own power or Godliness *we* have made him to walk?'" No inherent power within themselves. Notice also with the power of the Holy Spirit comes humility.

Verse 13: "'The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Son Jesus, Whom you delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate... [he's talking to the people; probably some of those were there when they said, 'Crucify Him! Crucify Him!'] ...after he had judged to release *Him*. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and requested that a man *who was* a murderer be granted to you; and you killed the Author of life Whom God has raised from *the* dead, whereof we are witnesses. And through faith in His name, this *man* whom you see and know was made strong in His name; and the faith that *is* through Him gave this complete soundness to him in the presence of you all'" (vs 13-16).

Verse 19: "Therefore, repent and be converted..." Message of repentance! If there's any one thing that the priests did not want—and is this not true of many ministers even today? They don't like to let people know that they're just as human as anybody else and they have sins to repent of—right? *Yes!* So, we know what happened.

Let's see how the plot thickens here, Acts 4:1: "Now as they were speaking to the people, the priests and *the* captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being dismayed because they were teaching the people, and preaching through Jesus the resurrection from *the*

dead. And they arrested them and put *them* in the hold until the morning; for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the message believed, and the number of men was about five thousand. Now it came to pass in the morning *that* their rulers and elders and scribes..." (vs 1-6). Who was the message to first, right away? Did God have a message to the Levites? *Yes!* To the priests? *Yes!* To the Sadducees? *Yes!* He wanted them to know!

Verse 6: "And Annas, the high priest, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander..." These are the ones who denied Christ! These were the very ones who said *execute Him!* These were the ones who were in agreement with Judas and gave him the 30 pieces of silver to deny Christ, to turn Him in. What a witness! This separation is coming mighty, mighty powerfully.

They were all gathered at Jerusalem, v 7: "And after placing them in the midst..." It was like a courtroom with the Sanhedrin all around. All of the chief priests, all of the chief Sadducees, all of the important people having to do with the temple were there. This was the Sanhedrin. They were gathered together.

"...they inquired, 'By what power or in what name did you do this?'" (v 7). The answer is a little bit different than what Jesus gave the priests when they came and said, 'By what authority do You do these things.' Remember Jesus' answer? 'Okay, you answer Me one question and I will tell you. The baptism of John, was it of men or from God?' They reasoned saying, 'If we say from man, then we know that the people will be against us, because they believe he was from God. And if we tell Jesus it was from God, He will say: why didn't you believe Him?' Now they're confronted with something entirely different.

Verse 8: "Then Peter, filled with *the* Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders of Israel, if we are examined this day as to a good work *done to the* infirm man, by what *power* he has been cured, be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean, Whom you crucified... [Looked them right in the eyes and said, 'whom *you* crucified!'] ...but Whom God has raised from *the* dead..." (vs 8-11).

What did they do about it? *They lied*—didn't they? They knew He was dead—didn't they? How do you know they knew He was dead? *Some people say that He really wasn't dead!* But how do you know that the religious rulers knew He was dead at the time of the crucifixion? *Very simple, they paid the guards money to say that the disciples carried off His body!* If you have a body to carry off, you know He's dead—correct? *Yes!* They knew He was dead. They knew they had crucified Him. God isn't going

to let them get away without a witness. This is a power witness to them.

"...by Him this *man* stands before you whole" (v 11). So, he was standing in the midst of them, too. How about that? They went out and got Peter and John and the man who was impotent and there they are all standing in the middle with all of these glaring, hard eyes looking down upon them.

Verse 11: "This is the Stone that was set at naught by you, the builders, which has become the Head of *the* corner. And **there is no salvation in any other**... [What he's saying very clearly, not only the name, but there is no salvation any other way. There's no salvation in Judaism. There is no salvation in the ritual. There is no salvation in the sacrifice. It is only through Christ.] ...for neither is there another name under heaven which has been given among men, by which we **must** be saved" (vs 11-12). The word *must* in the Greek is 'dei'—which means that it's obligatory to be saved.

Verse 13: "Now, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlettered and uninstructed men, they were amazed..." That's quite a statement in itself. **Not learned** means they were not educated in the Pharisaic way; means they didn't go to any of the religious schools in Jerusalem. **Ignorant** means they did not have the refinement that would have expected from educated people. That's why Christ chose fishermen. When you have a situation that you don't have a lot to unlearn you're in better shape. That's what we're dealing with. They didn't have a lot to unlearn in the way of religious nonsense and laws of Judaism.

"...and they took note of them, that they had been with Jesus. Yet, seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they said nothing to oppose *them*.... [they could say nothing against it] ...But after commanding them to go outside the Sanhedrin... [a closed-door session] ...they conferred with one another, saying, 'What shall we do to these men? For a remarkable miracle has indeed come to pass through them *and is* manifest to all those living in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*.'" (vs 13-16). What did they say of Jesus when He was healing? *You heal by the power of Beelzebub!* Here they were at the temple of God, right at the Gate Beautiful, using the name of Jesus Christ. They couldn't say that they did it in the name of Beelzebub—correct? Very important point! Now they were stuck! They said, 'We can't deny it. They would love to deny it, but they can't.

Verse 17: "But that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them with a *severe* threat not to speak any more to anyone in this name.' And after summoning them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But

Peter and John answered *and* said to them, ‘Whether it is right before God to listen to you rather than to God, you judge!’ (vs 17-19). Understand how powerful that statement is. Who was he talking to? *All the powerful religious leaders who spoke in the name of God*—correct? Who judged in the name of God—correct? *Yes!* Now, Peter is saying that you who are the judges, judge this:

“...‘Whether it is right before God to listen to you rather than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak what we have seen and heard.’ And after further threatening them, they let them go, finding no means by which they might punish them, because of the people, for all were glorifying God on account of what had been done, because the man on whom this miraculous healing had been performed was over forty years *old*’ (vs 19-22).

Let’s say he was put there at age 20, minimum. He was there every day for 20 years! He was older than Christ—was he not? Christ died at 33-1/2—correct? He was born 6-1/2-7 years before Jesus. He must have been there 20 years at the temple, because they took him there daily. I imagine they would take some of the more pitiful cases to be there. I imagine he was a pitiful case. I don’t know exactly what was wrong, whether he was deformed or whether he just couldn’t walk. Let’s just say he was there some 20 years.

Verse 31: “And when they had prayed, the place in which they were assembled was shaken; and they were all filled with *the* Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness.” That’s what we need to do, brethren. The time is going to come when we will preach to the world and we need to preach with boldness and with power and with the name of Jesus Christ.

One of the prayers I would like you to pray is that God would give us the understanding of the Message that He wants preached and how He wants it preached and the way He wants it preached so that we do not become a clone of every other media-religious circle that is on television or radio. It must be one of not only conviction, but it must be one also of love and hope and it must be one of denunciation of sin, but not destroying verbally unto death—if you know what I mean. That’s one of the things that I’ve been praying about, and I appreciate your prayers on that, too.

Verse 32: “And the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul... [May, with God’s Spirit, we all come to that same thing again.] (v 33): ...And with great power the apostles testified of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and **great grace was upon them all.**”

They were still staying there after Pentecost. That’s why they sold the things that they had and

they were all together and so forth. That’s why they did it. It wasn’t communism. They weren’t instigating a new economic reform. It just is that with the Holy Spirit of God the things that were being done, they were still there after Pentecost and staying over instead of going home.

(go to the next track)

The first part of Acts 5 is a good lesson on ‘let your *yes* be *yes*, and your *no* be *no*.’ All of those who are compromising doctrine and the teachings of God consider your baptism—your *yes* to God when you said ‘yes, Lord, I’m yours.’ When you start compromising doctrine and you’re going back on God, read this; and this had to do with just physical things:

Here becomes a tremendous dividing point with Judaism and the Church. Think of this. Put yourself over here on one said as a chief priest, the high priest, the Levites, Sadducees, the officials and you for 1400 years—you and the ones before you—

- were the recipients of God’s way,
- of God’s authority
- you had the final word concerning Scripture
- you had the final word concerning life and death of people
- you made the determination of the Word of God

Now we have on the other hand God doing something new and not using these people that God used before. God starting something new at the temple with power, with miracles, with absolutely incredible things that are going on.

Acts 5:12: “And many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles...” It doesn’t tell us what they were. I imagine there were healings. I imagine there were lunatics that were brought back to a sound mind. Imagine they were casting out demons. I don’t know what else were some of the signs that they worked among the people.

“...and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch; and none of the others dared to join them... [the rest of what? *Sadducees, Pharisees, priests*—they didn’t dare join themselves to the apostles.] ...but the people magnified them” (vs 12-13). Let’s also put yourself in this position: What if you had a deformed child, or a blind child, or a deaf child, or a terribly ill mother or father and you brought them to the apostles and they were healed? What would you do when you got back home? *They didn’t need telephones, believe me!* They didn’t sit down and watch the nightly news; they *were* the nightly news! They told everyone! All of Jerusalem is in an uproar! All the political and religious power of the priests and the Levites was going down the

tubes!

Let's put this in some perspective if we can. How do you think the Democrats would be if every one of the polls with this coming election showed that every Democrat was being voted out? That all the policies were being put down. That the Federal Reserve was being abolished. That the Income Tax was being relinquished and the people wouldn't be taxed. That all of these socialists who were running this government with a heavy hand were being abolished? Now we can get a little perspective as to what was happening in Jerusalem with these miracles, and there wasn't a thing they could do legally. This was something!

Verse 14: "And believers were added all the more to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women... [This was a big thing!] ...insomuch *that the people were* bringing out the sick into the streets and putting *them* on beds and stretchers, so that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them" (vs 14-15). Was that a greater work than Jesus did? *Yes, it was!* What did Jesus say?

That was fulfilled and was going to be fulfilled again. I think, brethren, it's going to be fulfilled when we get all of the vanity and stupidity out of our religion and when we quit playing church and we quit playing judge and jury over everyone and start yielding ourselves to God with all our heart, mind, being and soul.

John 14:10: "Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I speak to you, I do not speak from My own self; but the Father Himself, Who dwells in Me, does the works."

Brethren, when it comes time that God wants more miracles done, and He wants it preached, it's going to have to be the Father and Christ *in us* doing the works—correct? And it's going to have to be to preach the Gospel, not for merit badges that we heal people or whatever it may be. God is the One Who has the power. When He's ready, we need to be willing.

Verse 11: "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe Me because of the works themselves. Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me shall also do the works that I do; and greater works than these shall he do because I am going to the Father" (vs 11-12). A fulfillment of that is in Acts 5. Were these not greater works than Jesus'? *Absolutely!* The very shadow of Peter passing down the street!

Acts 5:16: "And a multitude from the cities round about also came together to Jerusalem..." If they can do that for Aunt So and So or Uncle So and So, sister/brother So and So, they can do it for me

and my children. Here they were coming. Just picture some of these riots that they show on television in Jerusalem. Instead of having riots where they are trying to kill someone or wave a flag or are political, here they are all struggling with their sick, bringing the cots, carrying them on their backs, walking along—whatever they can do—all flooding into Jerusalem.

Here are all the beady-eyed Sadducees and Pharisees and high priests watching all of this going on. Where are they going? *They're not going to the Temple at the hour of incense!* They're coming to the temple area at Solomon's Porch and lying in the streets there—thousands of them! multitudes!

"...bringing sick ones and those beset by unclean spirits; *and they were all healed*" (v 16). In one of my offices that I have to go to, right in front of the office they have this special school for those who are the mentally and physically handicapped and I thought about that the other day when I walked by. Man, oh man! What a fantastic thing it would be! Can you imagine the heartache, the mental strain, the emotional difficulties that not only the parents, but these children have gone through? What a thing it would be, brethren! God is going to do it one of these days. I tell you, the Church of God better get itself in order so it can do it, because God is going to do it!

Verse 17: "Then the high priest rose up, and all those with him, being of *the* sect of the Sadducees; *and* they... [came, repented and were baptized—NO!] ...**were filled with anger**. And they laid their hands on the apostles and put them in *the* public hold. But during the night an angel of *the* Lord *came and* opened the doors of the prison; and after bringing them out, he said, 'Go and stand in the temple, *and* speak to the people **all the words of this life**.'" (vs 17-20). It didn't say *of this religion!* What we are doing, brethren, is a *way of life!*

Verse 21: "And after hearing *that*, they entered into the temple at dawn and taught. Now when the high priest and those with him came, they called together the Sanhedrin and all the elderhood of the sons of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison; and when they returned, they reported, saying, 'We indeed found the prison locked with all security, and the keepers standing outside in front of the doors; but after opening *them*, we did not find anyone inside.'" (vs 21-23). That's something! That's startling! No holds! No broken doors! No escape hatches! An angel came and let them out!

Verse 24: "And when they heard these words, both the *high* priest and the captain of the temple, and the chief priests also, were utterly perplexed as to what this could lead to." They had to

say, 'We've got to stop this!' So, they were willing to kill the disciples.

Verse 25: "But a certain one came *and* reported to them, saying, 'Behold, the men whom you put in the prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.' Then the captain went with the officers *and* brought them without violence, so that they might not be stoned; for they feared the people" (vs 25-26). You can tell they were losing religious power, political power, standing. God was literally turning Jerusalem upside down! If we can understand this great separation that took place, that's what's happening.

Verse 27: "And they brought them in *and* set *them* before the Sanhedrin.... [The second time—right? Don't know how soon it was from the other event, but the second time!] ...And the high priest asked them, saying, 'Did we not order you by a *direct* command not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, with *the* purpose of bringing this man's blood upon us'" (vs 27-28).

What is the overriding thing of Judaism today? *It's to get all Christians to say that the Jews were not responsible for killing Jesus—right? Yes! Same thing! It's been a campaign going on for 1,900 years.*

Verse 29: "But Peter and the apostles answered *and* said, 'We are obligated to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus Whom you killed *by* hanging *Him* on a tree. Him has God exalted by His right hand *to be* a Prince and Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel. And we are His witnesses of these things, as *is* also the Holy Spirit, which God has given to those who obey Him'" (vs 29-32). Very clearly saying to them: 'you don't obey God.'

Verse 33: "Now when they heard *this*, they were **cut to the heart** and took counsel to put them to death." This was no mean little thing they were going through. Brethren, the separation of the Church from Judaism was a bloody thing.

Verse 34: "But a certain man stood up, a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin, Gamaliel by name... [that the one who taught Paul] ...a teacher of the law *who* was honored by all the people, *and* commanded *that* the apostles be put out for a short while." Then he gave an example and the long and short of it is:

Verse 39: "But if it be from God, you do not have the power to overthrow it. *Take heed*, lest you be found to be fighting even against God.' And they were persuaded by him; and they called in the apostles *and*, after beating *them*, commanded *them* not to speak in the name of Jesus; and they released them. Then they departed from *the* presence of the

Sanhedrin, rejoicing *that* they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And every day, in the temple and in the houses, they did not cease teaching and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ" (vs 39-42). That was something! Now things really started going.

Acts 6:1: "Now, in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied..." Now they needed to get a little organization, so they appointed deacons to serve on the tables.

Verse 9: "Then certain arose among those of the synagogue who were called Libertines, and of the Cyrenians and Alexandrians..."—from the area of Alexandria. Note that because the area of Alexandria becomes very important. Who is the most notable Alexandrian Jew that we have knowledge of today? *The philosopher Philo!*

I'll just whet your appetite just a bit: Carl Franklin has done some research where he shows conclusively that Simon Magus and Philo met in Rome. That will become very important.

They had Stephen brought to the council, v 11: "Then they suborned men, who said, 'We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and *against* God.'" Here's the first anti-Semitism movement—right? *Yes!* We don't want you saying anything against the Jews. We don't want you saying anything against the temple. We don't want you saying anything against Moses.

Verse 12: "And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes; and they came and seized him, and brought *him* into the Sanhedrin. Then they set up false witnesses, who said, 'This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this Holy place and the law; for we heard him saying that this Jesus, the Nazarean, will destroy this place, and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.' And all those who sat in the Sanhedrin, looking intently at him, saw his face as *the* face of an angel" (vs 12-15).

- Here comes one of the most powerful witnesses that God gave.
- Here is the real point and the separation of Judaism that really drove the spike right into their hearts.

The witness of Stephen!

What a mighty, mighty witness it was! Of course, he began with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and Israel and Egypt and coming out of Egypt; all the way down till we come to Jesus Christ.

Acts 7:47: "But Solomon built Him a house. However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made by hands, as the prophet says... [quoting Isa. 66:1-2]: ...'The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth

is a footstool for My feet. What house will you build for Me, says *the* Lord, or what *is the* place of My rest? Have not My hands made all these things?" O stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did*, so also *do* you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, of Whom you have become the betrayers and murderers; who received the law by *the* disposition of angels, but have not kept *it*" (vs 47-53).

Verse 54: "And when they heard these things, they were cut to their hearts, and they gnashed their teeth at him.... [They just sat there and were grinding their teeth together while they were listening to him speak.] ...But he, being filled with *the* Holy Spirit, looked intently into heaven *and* saw *the* glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, 'Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right *hand* of God.'" (vs 54-56).

Do you know what this did? Do you know what a powerful statement that was to the Jews, the priests, the Sanhedrin? What a fantastic thing this was, that a man would dare say that he could see God and the Son of man standing at His right hand? There's another place which refers to this and this is why they got so angry, this why they got so mad and filled with vehemence. This is the thing that really just took the axe to separating between Judaism and the Church. They knew this is what Stephen was saying when he said this:

Daniel 7:9: "I watched until thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days sat, Whose raiment *was* white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne *was* like flames of fire, and its wheels *like* burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court sat and the books were opened. Then I was looking because of the voice of the boastful words which the horn spoke. I watched until the beast was slain, and his body was destroyed and given to the burning flame" (vs 9-11).

Verse 13: "I saw visions in the night and, behold, One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And dominion and glory was given to Him, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve Him. His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (vs 13-14).

So, when Stephen said, 'I see that; I see God; I see the Son of man at His right hand' notice what

they did, Acts 7:57: "Then they cried out with a loud voice, *and* stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord, and cast *him* out of the city *and* stoned *him*. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man called Saul. And they stoned Stephen, who called upon *God*, saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' And he fell to his knees *and* cried with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not lay this sin to their charge.' And after he had said this, he died" (vs 57-60).

Notice his love and loyalty to God to the very last! He knelt down and was praying for those who were stoning him! That's something!

Next time we'll see that the separation between Judaism and the Church was even greater. Why? *Because the one who was their chief SS officer—Saul—was called of God and became known by Judaism as the 'greatest traitor to Judaism in the history of Judaism!'* Their favorite saying concerning Jesus and Paul is this: ***Jesus we understand, Paul we will never forgive!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 110:1
- 2) Deuteronomy 6:4
- 3) Matthew 22:41-46
- 4) Acts 1:1-3
- 5) Luke 24:1
- 6) Luke 23:56
- 7) Luke 24:1, 13
- 8) John 20:19, 26
- 9) Acts 1:3-12
- 10) Acts 2:1-3
- 11) Acts 3:1-6
- 12) Luke 1:8-10
- 13) Acts 3:6-16, 19
- 14) Acts 4:1-22, 31-33
- 15) Acts 5:12-15
- 16) John 14:10-12
- 17) Acts 5:16-34, 39-42
- 18) Acts 6:1, 9, 11-15
- 19) Acts 7:47-56
- 20) Daniel 7:9-11, 13-14
- 21) Acts 7:57-60

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 1:26
- Matthew 10
- Isaiah 66:1-2

Also referenced: Sermon Series: *Who Was Jesus?*

Scripturalism vs Judaism XVI

From Saul to the Apostle Paul

I have a book that I would like to recommend to everyone, *A Harmony in the Life of St. Paul* by Frank J. Goodwin. It's really quite good, however, I'm disappointed in it in relationship to this series *Scripturalism vs Judaism* because it doesn't tackle it at all. It's really quite amazing. I want to do just a little bit of review and lay a little groundwork for something we'll tackle a little later down the road.

Remember we started out, beginning with John the Baptist, that God was separating Christianity through Jesus Christ from the establishment of the priests, from Judaism, from Pharisaism, from Esseneism, from Sadduceeism, and was bringing the true teachings from the Bible. The Church is called *the new Israel*. That's the way they viewed it when the Church began. We saw the confrontation that Jesus always had with the religious leaders of His day. Some of them are quite humorous, and some of them are kind of feisty, and some of them are quite profound. We know that it ended up in His crucifixion.

Let's review just a little bit concerning Peter. I think it's interesting that it is contained here in the book of Luke. We need to remember that Luke wrote for the Apostle Paul, and was the companion of the Apostle Paul.

Carl Franklin is doing all the research and his findings are so good. When we get his stuff it is literally going to blow the lid right off all of this false Christianity stuff. When we talk over the phone, we've said it's been there all the time. We are discovering nothing new, brethren, because there's nothing new under the sun; it's just that in Worldwide they have been so busy playing the politics of religion—who is in charge, who is in control, and are you in submission—that they have completely put people with good minds who can research—driven them away or put such a clamp on them that they couldn't come to the Truth.

We're finding some things about the name of God—Yahweh and Elohim—and also about the priests and Levites and what they were doing. The priests and Levites were so pagan it's incredible, and yet, they wrote in the name of Yahweh and Elohim.

This is going to be so profound that it's going take a lot of understanding for people to grasp. We need to grasp it from this point of view: We know that God created Adam, and we know that God created Eve—correct? *Yes!*

Genesis 2:22: "Then the LORD God made the rib (which He had taken out of the man) into a

woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. *She* shall be called Woman because *she* was taken out of Man.' For this reason shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife—and **they shall become one flesh**" (vs 22-24). The whole point I want to make here is this: "...**and they shall become one flesh.**" In relationship to God, it has been cleverly twisted around that God is one person. Elohim means *more than one!*

Genesis 1:26: "And God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness..."

Genesis 3:22: "And the LORD God said, 'Behold, the man has become **like one of Us...**' Not like Me!"

Where it says 'the Lord our God is one Lord,' *one* is in the same kind of category in reference to Yahweh/Elohim is one is the same thing as husband and wife are *one*. It describes a *condition*, not counting a body. This is going to be profound what is going to be done. Carl has traced every place where they have changed the name 'Yahweh' to 'Adonai'; and Adonai, according to Alexander Hislop's *Two Babylons* was one of the gods of Babylon. They did worship *one* god. This is going to be something, brethren! Why can you only have one God or three God's—Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three Gods—but you can't have two, when the Bible clearly teaches two?—correct? *Yes!* This is going to be something!

Just like going through this series there are so many things that we just miss, and so many of the teachers and brethren have missed, because they are so concerned with the *politics of religion* and playing church that they don't study the Word of God. I want to present just a couple of things here today in the way of summary before we get into the Apostle Paul's life, because we have to ask—which has never really been satisfactorily answered:

- Why does the New Testament end up with 14 epistles from the Apostle Paul?
- Why does the book of Acts start out showing all the apostles and mainly Peter, and then all of a sudden shifts gears to bring us the account of the Apostle Paul, who was called Saul?
- Why? *The answer is buried right here in the New Testament!*

I want to do a little background on this, because what I want to do in this sermon is show the leadership that Peter had. We'll just survey a couple of places and little bit in the book of Acts. We need

to understand what was going on, because the apostles understood what Christ was teaching to a much greater degree than we realize. They understood that they were going to rule with Him in the Kingdom of God. They understood that there was going to be quite a bit they were doing.

Luke 22:21: “Behold, even *now* the hand of him who is betraying Me *is* with Me at the table; and the Son of man indeed goes, according as it has been appointed, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!” Then they began to question this among themselves, which of them it might be who was about to do this” (vs 21-23). Isn’t that something! They didn’t even know who it was. Did Judas do a good number on all of them? *Yes!*

To read that statement you miss the point. The point is that *no one suspected Judas*. Have we experienced things where there have been Judas’ among us and we didn’t know? *Yes!* They didn’t know which of them would do it.

Verse 24: “And there was also an argument among them...” That means there was a debate. This, brethren, is at the Passover that they took. Right here at the table, here’s this debate. We know what was going on a day or two before that, because the mother of James and John came to Jesus and said, ‘Oh, Lord, I’m asking one little favor.’ He said, ‘What’s that?’ *That my sons, one may sit at your right hand and one at your left hand.* He said, ‘Woman you don’t know what you’re asking; that’s for the Father to give.’ Let’s understand what’s going on here. They *knew* that there were going to be things given to them that they were going to do.

“...even this: which of them should be considered *the greatest*” (v 24). Who should be accounted the greatest? So, they had this big strife going on like little kids out there: Who’s the strongest? Who’s the toughest? Who’s the fastest?

Verse 25: “And He said to them, ‘The kings of the nations lord over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors.’” We don’t have to expound that very much. We know that. I’ve expounded that quite a bit in *Lord, What Should I Do?* that the reason Jesus was showing on the Passover night that this kind of thing was not going to be allowed in His Church, because it leads to the disaster that we see unfolding before our faces right now.

Verse 26: “But *it shall* not be this way among you; rather, let the one who is greatest among you be as the younger, and the one who is leading as the one who is serving. For who *is* greater, the one who is sitting *at the table*, or the one who is serving? *Is not the one who sits at the table?* But I am among you as one who is serving” (vs 26-27). That’s quite a statement when you understand what God gave up to

become a human being so that we could have our sins forgiven, that we could be brought into the fellowship with God the Father. That’s profound!

Verse 28: “Now you are the ones who have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint to you, as My Father has appointed to Me, a kingdom; so that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and may sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’ Then the Lord said, ‘**Simon, Simon, listen well. Satan has demanded to have you...**’” (vs 28-31). This is quite a statement! Not said of the other apostles. Satan knew what he wanted.

“...to sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and when you are converted, strengthen your brethren.’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, I am ready to go with You both to prison and to death.’” (vs 31-33). He had quite a bit of human leadership. This is really quite a statement! It shows some vulnerability here, which we could see in some other places concerning Peter. It shows that he was going to be a leader. It also shows that he was willing to dedicate his life, but it also shows that he didn’t know what he had to be dedicated to and the way that he ought to have been. Christ was going to teach him a lesson:

Verse 34: “But He said, ‘I tell you, Peter, *the cock* shall in no wise crow today before you have denied knowing Me three times.’” Luke is the only one who records the account that when the cock crowed the last time and he denied Christ, that Jesus looked him right in the eye! Of course, it says that Peter went out and bitterly repented.

This shows that there is a weakness that Satan was going to get a hold of later. We won’t fully understand that until we come to Gal. 2. Let’s see how then he led the brethren, beginning right with the first chapter of the book of Acts. He did strengthen the brethren! He did lead them, He and John together. We’ll just survey certain places where it shows that Peter undoubtedly was leading. It’s very important for us to realize this.

Acts 1:13: “And after entering *Jerusalem*, they went up into the upper chamber, where both Peter and James were staying; and John and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James, *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot; and Jude, *the brother* of James.” Here it lists all eleven of the apostles after Judas had fell, and then they were to select the one who would replace Judas.

Verse 14: “All these were steadfastly continuing with one accord in prayer and supplications, *together with the women*, including Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.... [the brothers of Christ] ...And in those days, Peter

stood up in *the* midst of the disciples (now *the* number of names together was about a hundred and twenty) *and* said” (vs 14-15). Here Peter was taking a leadership position. This is not to go through and show the primacy of Peter. If you attempt to show the primacy of Peter, you must also show the fall of Peter. When we get to Gal. 2, we’re going to see that that fall was tremendous, and it created great problems for the Church. We’re going to look at his leadership at the beginning.

Acts 2:14: “Then Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke out to them...” Peter was the one who was doing the speaking, the preaching.

Verse 37: “Now after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart; and they said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?’ Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized each one of you...’” (vs 37-38). We see Peter being the leading spokesman all the way through.

Acts 3:1: “Now Peter and John...” We see at first Peter being the spokesman. John was helping him all the way through—wasn’t he?

Verse 4: “But Peter and John, intently observing him, said, ‘Look on us.’”

Verse 6: “...In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean, rise up and walk.”

Verse 12: “And when Peter saw *it*, he answered to the people, ‘Men, Israelites, why are you wondering at this?...’”

Acts 4:8: “Then Peter, filled with *the* Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel.’”

Verse 13: “Now, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlettered and uninstructed men, they were amazed...”

That’s the way they view all of the ministers of God, because they didn’t go to their universities. When the leaders of the Church of God go to the universities of this world to find out how they understand God and bring it back into the Church, it’s truly the leaven of the scribes and Pharisees! It’s not what God wants; He wants us to be motivated by His Spirit.

Verse 19: “But Peter and John answered *and* said to them...” So, Peter and John were both talking. Mostly Peter, but what I want to focus in on is how God blessed him with works of miracles above all the other apostles. This becomes important for us to understand because of the shift that is going to take place when we get a little bit later into this sermon from Peter and John to Paul and Barnabas and later to Paul.

Acts 5:3—when they were bringing in the money and laying it at the apostles’ feet. This is the story of Ananias and Sapphira: “But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why did Satan fill your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back *part* of the price of the estate?’”

Verse 5: “And when Ananias heard these words, he fell down and expired...”

Verse 4: “...‘You have not lied to men, but to God.’”

Verse 8: “And Peter said to her, ‘Tell me if you sold the estate for so much?’ And she said, ‘Yes, for so much.’ Then Peter said to her, ‘Why *is it* that you agreed together to tempt the Spirit of *the* Lord? Behold, the feet of those who buried your husband *are* at the door, and they shall carry you out.’ And she immediately fell down at his feet and expired. And the young men came in and found her dead; and they carried *her* out *and* buried *her* by her husband. Then great fear came upon the whole Church, and upon all who heard these things” (vs 8-11). I guess so!

Verse 12: “And many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch; and none of the others dared to join them, but the people magnified them; and believers were added all the more to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women)” (vs 12-14). In one place it says there were 5,000.

Stop and think for a minute. How many Pharisees were there during the days of Jesus? *Josephus says there were 6,000!* They really did not have the kind of power that the Jews today indicate that they did. How many priests and Levites were there? *20,000!* So, we look at 26-30-thousand priests, Levites, Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes. Here comes the Church of God getting thousands and thousands! This created problems!

Verse 15: “Insomuch *that the people were* bringing out the sick into the streets and putting *them* on beds and stretchers, so that at least **the shadow of Peter**... [not the apostles, but Peter; God was doing something through Peter] ...passing by might overshadow some of them. And a multitude from the cities round about also came together to Jerusalem, bringing sick ones and those beset by unclean spirits; *and* they were all healed” (vs 15-16).

Verse 18: “And they laid their hands on the apostles... [Peter and John] ...and put them in *the* public hold.”

Verse 29: “But Peter and the apostles answered...” It specifically singles out what Peter said. This is quite something!

Acts 6—we have the selecting of the first deacons.

Why is it that God says that ‘vengeance is Mine, I will repay’? Because sometimes God’s vengeance, and sometimes God’s way of doing something is entirely different from our way. We will see when we get into Acts 9 and why this is so.

Acts 8:1—after the stoning of Stephen: “Now Saul had consented to killing him. And that day a great persecution arose against the Church that *was* in Jerusalem; and all *the believers* were scattered throughout the countries of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.” They had to really get out of town!

Verse 2: “And devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. But Saul was **ravaging** the Church... [the Greek word here means *like a wild boar* that goes in and tears and roots everything out! Have you ever seen what a wild boar can do? *They can just tear things apart!* That’s what it means.] **...going from house to house...**” (vs 2-3).

Saul was the ‘SS’ Heinrich Himmler storm trooper for the high priest; that’s what he was going into the houses, banging on the doors, finding out who was following *the way!* The only way that Saul could cart any of them off was that ***they didn’t deny that they were following Chris***, which then puts a great question mark for us. ***If they come banging on our door, what are we going to say?*** It would be easy to deny it so you wouldn’t get carted off, but then what’s going to happen later? ***Just think about that!***

“...entering in and dragging *out* men and women, *and* delivering *them* up to prison.” (v 3). I want us to think about something concerning Judaism today. I want us to think about what is happening to every form of Christianity. I want us to think about why do we always have the Holocaust stuffed in our face when we *did* not do it? Why not do it in Germany instead of here?

I got a call from a man who read the report in *The Ambassador Report* and it was really quite a compliment. He was the one who wrote an article in *Christianity Today* concerning what’s happening Worldwide Church of God. I talked to him a little bit and sure enough he was a Jew. He had to tell me his genetic and his genital status. I thought about that later—I’m not going to say anything in the letter I write back to him—but I filed this away in the back of mind: How many people do you know that on a phone call with a stranger they let you know their genetic and their genital status? How would it be if I picked the phone up and I said, ‘Oh, guess what, I’m a Jew and I’m circumcised’? *So what!* I don’t have blacks pick up the phone and call me and say ‘I’m black and I’m a Gentile and uncircumcised—hooray

for me!’ I don’t have Chinese calling up and saying, ‘I’m Chinese, yellow and uncircumcised—hooray for me!’

Why is that every Jew has got to tell us their genetic and genital status. It blew my mind! I think I can tell you why: They want to identify wherever we are, because they are going to perpetrate the holocaust upon us! They plan to do to Christians what was done to them. That’s why! And the next time any Jew does that to me, I’m going to land on them with all fours, and I’m going to say: When you run a movie produced by Spielberg and show us what Marx and Engle and Lenin and Cesky and Schiff and Khun and Loeb have done to this world with Communism and have killed ten times more than the Jews that were—if there were actually six million killed—then come and tell me your genetic and your genital status and I will be happy to receive you. Until then, stuff it in your ear! I don’t want hear a word about it, because that doesn’t mean anything to Christ.

Christ told those Jews through John the Baptist that said ‘we be Abraham’s seed’ *Don’t come and say you’re Abraham’s seed, because God can raise up children of these stones to Abraham; you have no status before God!*

It just irritated me to no end. I thought about that. You know how you do when something like that happens, you run hot and cold, but a total stranger has to tell me that over the phone, just blew my mind. What we’re reading here, brethren, is going to happen to us, and the ones who are going to be the leaders in doing it are going to be the very ones who think that they have suffered because of the holocaust and they’re going to come with glee and enter into the houses and drag us out and kill us. It’s going to happen!

Verse 4: “Therefore, those who were scattered passed through *everywhere*, preaching the Word of the Gospel.... [So, if you can get out of the house, go!] ...Then Philip went down to a city of Samaria *and* proclaimed Christ to them” (vs 4-5) and so forth. You know the whole story concerning Simon Magus. Let’s understand something concerning Simon Magus: As I brought out in *The Christian Passover* book, the original ones at the temple in Samaria were really renegade Levites of the sons of Levi who set up the priesthood there.

Simon Magus was the one who was at the temple there. So, it was a mixture of Gentilism and Leviticalism and so forth. Carl Franklin is finding that the Essenes were Levites. The Essenes went to a solar calendar. We’re finding all kinds of things—he is—that you won’t believe when we get it out. Yes, Simon Magus was one of the authors of heresy. Yes, the followers of Simon Magus did create a lot of problems with the Church. Yes, true! But there were others who

did, which we'll cover in this series. What did they do when they found out that Simon was baptized:

Verse 14: "Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them; who, after coming down to *Samaria*, prayed for them, that they might receive *the* Holy Spirit; for as yet it had not fallen upon any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid *their* hands on them, and they received *the* Holy Spirit" (vs 14-17).

Peter was the one who really lambastes Simon Magus—right? He tells him, 'You're not going to by the gift of God with money; you're in an attitude of gall and bitterness. You pray that none of these things come upon you.' Simon said, 'Oh, you pray for me that they don't.' Then we have the rest of Acts 8 showing about what they did.

Acts 9:1—Here we have the vengeance of God against Judaism beginning. "Now Saul, still breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest... [You've always got to do it legally—right? *Yes!* So, Paul went to the high priest to do it legally.] ...asking him *for* letters *to take* to the synagogues at Damascus... [When you are in the synagogue and you got a letter from the high priest, everybody stood at attention and did what the high priest ordered.] ...so that if he found any who were of that way, he might bring *them* bound, both men and women, to Jerusalem" (vs 1-2).

God had other plans for Saul. What greater revenge against Judaism than to have the leading rabbi to be converted? Think on that! This is pretty powerful stuff! We have the account of his conversion:

Verse 3: "But it came to pass while he was journeying, as he drew near to Damascus, that suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him. And after falling to the ground, he heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?' And he said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting....'" (vs 3-5). You talk about a first hand message, directly from Christ! What the Apostle Paul did, when he was later the Apostle Paul, to separate Judaism from Christianity was so profound, and it had to be that it was separated.

To guarantee that there would not be Pharisaism and Judaism in the Church, what did God do? *He chose the leading Pharisee, the leading rabbi, the most zealot against the Church and converted him;* and then sent him to preach the grace and the love of God. Did Paul understand grace? *You bet he did!* He knew that he was one of the greatest recipients of the grace of God! That's not the way

we would judge it. If each one of us had to judge Saul, we would say to line him up and execute him—right? *Yes!* But God had greater plans. What more frustrating thing to do to Judaism and the Pharisees could you possibly devise than to convert the leading antagonist, the leading rabbi and the most zealous in Judaism? That's something!

Knocked him right off his horse or donkey, or off his feet—whatever! God took care of him! God has a way of doing things.

Verse 6: "Then, trembling and astonished, he said, 'Lord, what will You have me to do?'...." You know the 'jig is up' when you're caught in the hand of Christ.

(go to the next track)

"...And the Lord *said* to him, 'Get up and go into the city, and you shall be told what you must do.' Now the men who were traveling with him stood speechless; *for* they indeed heard the voice, but they saw no one. Then Saul arose from the ground; but when he opened his eyes, he saw no one.... [he was made blind] ...And they led him by the hand and brought *him* to Damascus. But *for* three days he was not *able* to see, and he did not eat or drink" (vs 6-9).

- I wonder what he prayed during that time?
- I wonder what he thought of during that time?
- I wonder what Christ put into his mind that brought him to complete repentance?

You think about that!

Verse 10: "Now there was in Damascus a certain disciple named Ananias. And the Lord said to him in a vision, 'Ananias.' And he said, 'Behold, I *am here*, Lord.'.... [This has got to come straight from God, because this could be a trap otherwise. Everyone knew the reputation of Saul. Even Ananias did.] ...And the Lord *said* to him, 'Arise *and* go into the street which is called Straight... [Pretty interesting street—isn't it? 'Straight is the way and narrow is the gate that leads to life' (Matt. 7) and inquire in *the* house of Judas for *one* named Saul from Tarsus; for behold, he is praying]" (vs 10-11). I imagine so! I don't imagine that he slept very much those three days and three nights. I imagine that not only was his mouth dry, but his tear-ducts were like sand grates by the time he finished.

Verse 12: "'And he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming and putting *his* hands on him, so that he may receive sight.' Then Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many *people* about this man, how many evil things he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And *even* in this place he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.' But the Lord said to him, 'Go,

for this *man* is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before *the* Gentiles, and kings, and *the* children of Israel; for I will show him what great things... [the Greek there is 'megaleios'] ...he must suffer for My name" (vs 12-16).

Isaiah 55—Let's see if this Scripture is not fulfilled in the life of the Apostle Paul, the one who was called *Saul the Destroyer*! I imagine Saul when he was praying and fasting the three days and nights that he couldn't see, he was reciting Isaiah 55:6: "Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (vs 6-7). I imagine that Saul was praying that prayer over and over again.

Verse 8: "For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways,' says the LORD.... [You could sure apply that to the Apostle Paul—can't you? *Yes, you can!*] ...'For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For *as* the rain comes down, and the snow from the heavens, and does not return there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, and gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater'" (vs 8-10).

- Think about that in relationship to conversion!
- Think about that in relationship to Christ, Who is the bread!
- Think about that in relationship to the parable of the sower; of the seed going out!
- Think about that in relationship to Christ—all of it!

Verse 11: "So shall My Word be which goes out of My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall certainly do what I sent it to do." That's what God did with Saul, who became the Apostle Paul. *Quite a thing!*

We know one thing for sure, *Paul never forgot!* When he wrote about *grace*, and he wrote about *forgiveness*, **he never forgot that he was the enemy of God at one time!** He said, 'I persecuted the Church. I did it in ignorance, but I am not fit to be called an apostle!'

Acts 9:15: "But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for this *man* is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before *the* Gentiles, and kings, and *the* children of Israel; for I will show him what great things he must suffer for My name.' Then Ananias went away and came into the house; and after laying *his* hands on him, he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord has sent me, *even* Jesus, Who appeared to you on the

road in which you came, so that you might receive sight and be filled with *the* Holy Spirit.' And it was as *if* scales immediately fell from his eyes, and he instantly received sight; and he arose *and* was baptized. And after eating food, he was strengthened. Then Saul was with the disciples in Damascus *for* a number of days. And in the synagogues he immediately began to proclaim Christ, that He is the Son of God" (vs 15-20). You talk about a 180° conversion! That was it!

Verse 21: "And all who heard *him* were amazed and said, 'Is not this the man who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and who came here for this *purpose*, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?' But Saul increased *even* more in power, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this is the Christ" (vs 21-22). Total turnaround! Absolute turnaround!

Let's come to Galatians, the first chapter. Now we're getting into some of the things concerning the division of Christianity and Judaism. The reason that God called Saul to be the Apostle Paul, and let him to have been the total enemy against Christ before his conversion was to serve a purpose, that the Church be not entangled in Judaism. That's the whole purpose. God collected the #1 leading hateful, persecuting rabbi and knocked off his horse on his 'keester' and converted him, and it stuck! We're going to see that there are some tremendous things here in Galatians. We're also going to see how this ties in with Acts 9.

Galatians 1:1: "Paul, *an* apostle, not *sent* from men nor *made* by man, but by Jesus Christ and God *the* Father... [he knew that—isn't that right? *Yes!* It wasn't through Peter. It wasn't through James. It wasn't through John, Bartholomew or any of the others. *It was by Christ!* Christ knocked him off his horse!] ...Who raised Him from *the* dead; and all the brethren who are with me, to the Churches of Galatia" (vs 1-2).

What does this also reveal? *That before writing this epistle of Galatians, the Apostle Paul conferred with all the brethren at Antioch!* We're going to see why this was written from Antioch.

Verse 3: "Grace and peace *be* to you from God *the* Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins, in order that He might deliver us from the present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father; to Whom *be* the glory into the ages of eternity. Amen." (vs 3-5).

The Apostle Paul had to have a tremendous conviction of God's Spirit as well as an uncompromising, apolitical mind. That becomes very important, because we're going to see that Peter—because of politics—almost destroyed the Church of God. We have to get all the facts together

before we come to that, but we will see that. This is why he's most emphatic here.

Verse 6: "I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which *in reality* is not another *gospel*; but there are some who are troubling you and are **desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ**" (vs 6-7). Brethren, we better be ready to stand for the Gospel of Christ, because there be many that pervert it. There be many that twist it and turn it and malign it.

It's like this letter I read to you before the sermon: 'I've been in the church about eight years and they're destroying the Truth so fast, I don't even know where to find it anymore. Can you help me?' Well, that why the book *Lord, What Should I Do?* Pervert the Gospel: that means to twist it, to turn it, to use the name of Christ but bring in something else.

Verse 8: "But if we... [including all the apostles; there's a reason for saying *we*] ...or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!"

That is strong, strong language. Please understand, brethren, **this is the Gospel according to Christ**, not according to a version of man. I'm so tired of hearing people uphold men who have perverted the Gospel, or changed the Gospel, or misdirected the Gospel and say that they're going to follow that man. I'm here to tell you that unless you follow Christ, you're going to be in difficulties and problems. That's what Paul is saying here very clearly.

I want us to understand the severity of what Paul did. Remember all the miracles that Peter accomplished. As we're going to see, this becomes much more profound when we do a little bit more on Peter, and see that God first sent Peter to the Gentiles—correct? *Yes!* There's a reason why that is brought out in the book of Acts. It's very important.

Galatians 2:11: "But when Peter came to Antioch, I withstood him to *his* face..." This was so serious that it could not be done in private. I don't know of any problem, yet, that I've confronted with a minister that needs to be held out in public. There may be some, but not to this extent. This was so profound that God saw fit to preserve it in the Scriptures. This potentially had such far-reaching ramifications that it had to be preserved.

To let you know something, Peter received the epistles from Paul and put his two epistles with it where he commended Paul—'brother Paul'—remember that? Peter did not edit Gal. 2 and passed it on to John. Do you think that if I would send a letter to Pasadena, or to Tyler, TX, or wherever, and

excortiate some minister publicly for his stance, that he would include it in his next mailing? Let alone preserve it in Scripture? *Of course not!*

"...because **he was to be condemned**; for before certain *ones* came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles.... [This was Peter's Achilles' heel. He played politics.] ...However, when they came, he drew back and separated himself *from the Gentiles*, being afraid of those of *the* circumcision party. And the rest of *the* Jews joined him in *this* hypocritical act, insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy" (vs 11-13).

Galatians 1:8: "But if we... [he's including the apostles; Peter, Barnabas or any minister of God] ...or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! Now then, am I striving to please men, or God? Or am I motivated to please men? **For if I am yet pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ**" (vs 8-10).

And may every one of the brethren understand that, and may in particular every minister understand that. ***If you seek to please men, you are committing idolatry, because you are putting men in place of God!*** Think on that! That's how serious this thing with Scripturalism and Judaism really is. There are many lessons that come out to every one of us. The main one here is that if you aim to please men you are playing politics. Have we not seen what happened to the Church of God because of politics time and time again! *Yes, indeed!*

If you please men, you just count that you are not a servant of God. That means when it comes to preaching the true Gospel of Christ, upholding the love of God, the grace of God and substitute the religious works of men and that's what Judaism was trying to do.

Verse 11: "But I certify to you, brethren, that the Gospel that was preached by me is not according to man; because neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught *it by man*; rather, *it was by the* revelation of Jesus Christ" (vs 11-12).

That's why Saul was chosen—the leading rabbi, the most powerful one in Judaism—to convert him. It had to be taught directly to Paul. Why did it have to be preached directly to him? *So that he could understand that Judaism had no standing in the Church of God!* Just like those who are called into the Church of God today are called out of Catholicism and out of Protestantism, so the Christians then were called out of Judaism. He had to be taught by revelation of Jesus Christ. We will see that was for three years in the Arabian Desert.

Verse 13: “For you heard of my former conduct when I was in Judaism... [In the Greek it really mean *in Judaism*. And some of the more modern translations will have it that way. He never forgot it!] ...how I was excessively persecuting the Church of God and was destroying it; and I was advancing in Judaism *far* beyond many of my contemporaries in my *own* nation, being more abundantly zealous for *the* traditions of my fathers” (vs 13-14). Very important! None of those God-rejecting traditions were going to be carried into the Church of God!

Verse 15: “But when it pleased God, Who selected me from my mother’s womb, and called *me* by His grace, to reveal His own Son in me, in order that I might preach Him as the Gospel among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those *who* were apostles before me; but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years...” (vs 15-18). This is showing he was out there for three years, taught of Christ, by vision, by dream, by revelation.

How profound was this revelation and these visions and dreams by which Christ personally taught Paul? This is far different than the one man who claimed that he had a revelation given to him by God directly, when all he did was go to a library in Portland. Granted, he learned some things there, that’s true. Granted, God used him, but he certainly didn’t run off to a desert someplace, and he certainly didn’t have Christ talk to him directly. So, there is no parallel here; please understand! Do we seek to please men? *or* God? These things must be said. Not hatefully! Not spitefully! But, in fact and in truth, with forceful forthrightness that we don’t get caught up in idolizing a human being.

2-Corinthians 12:1: “Indeed, it is not expedient for me to boast. But I will come to visions and revelations of *the* Lord. I know a man in Christ *who*, fourteen years ago, was caught up to *the* third heaven. (Whether *this man* was in *the* body, I do not know; or out of the body, I do not know—God knows). Now, I know such a man (whether *taken up* in *the* body, or out of the body, I do not know—God knows), *and* that he was caught up to Paradise [third heaven]...” (vs 1-4).

That’s profound teaching; and it was so real, it was so vivid that he said he couldn’t tell whether he ‘was in the body or out of the body’ when this took place. It had a profound and lasting effect on him.

Verse 3: “Now, I know such a man (whether *taken up* in *the* body, or out of the body, I do not know—God knows), *and* that he was caught up to Paradise, and heard unutterable sayings, which a man is not permitted to speak” (vs 3-4). He heard a

lot of things that he was told not even to write or speak about again. That’s overwhelming!

Any of us who get all lifted up in our great vanity and we start putting our thumbs on our suspenders and lifting ourselves up by our bootstraps and saying how great we are, we’d better read this, because we haven’t even gotten to the sand that’s kicked outside the sandbox, let alone even crawled over the edge of the sandbox to get in—right? *Right!*

Verse 5: “I will boast of such a one as this; but of myself I personally will not boast, except concerning my weaknesses.” He learned to understand about his infirmities and sufferings and the great things that he suffered. Brethren, I’m here to submit to you that the Gospel of Jesus Christ could not have been written and preserved for us unless it was done by the Apostle Paul through the things that he suffered. That’s why we have 14 epistles by Paul and not 14 by Peter. That might be fighting words with some people. Give me a chance!

Verse 6: “But even if I choose to boast, I shall not be a fool; for I will speak the Truth. However, I will forbear, lest anyone think of me above what he sees me *to be*, or what he hears from me.” If he told what he knew, just think what people would say. ‘We know this man; he was in the third heaven and talked to God directly. Boy, this is wonderful man, we’ll follow him.’ NO! He didn’t want any of that! They also knew that he didn’t want any of his vanity getting the better of him.

Verse 7: “But in order that I might not be exalted by the abundance of the revelations, *there* was given to me a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me, so that I might not be exalted.” That may be an eye condition; a health condition. He had that personal suffering going on. I think when you go through this, we all need to look at our own difficulties and our own suffering that we are going through and ask God to help us understand the things we’re going through, so that we can come to the attitude that the Apostle Paul had.

Verse 8: “I besought the Lord three times for this, that it might depart from me; but He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you; for My power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore, most gladly will I boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may dwell in me. For this reason, I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong. I have become a fool *in this* boasting. You have forced me *to do so*, when I ought to have been commended by you. For in no way was I inferior to those highly exalted [chief] *so-called* apostles—even if I am nothing” (vs 8-11).

And ‘chief’ doesn’t mean Peter, that means a super high degree of *false apostles* of 2-Cor. 11.

That's really something! The Apostle Paul wrote some powerful things. He said here that it was by revelation in the Arabian Desert and neither did he go up to Jerusalem.

Let's come back to Galatians 1:18: "Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Peter, and I remained with him fifteen days. But I did not see *any* of the other apostles, except James the brother of the Lord. (Now the things that I am writing to you, behold, before God, I am not lying)" (vs 18-20). There were some profound things happening in the Church.

I think out of deference to Paul writing Galatians that Luke did not contain that three-year period here in Acts 9, leaving it to Paul to write about.

Acts 9:23: "Now when many days were fulfilled... [That has reference to the three years that he was in the Arabian Desert and the dreams and revelations.] ...the Jews consulted together to kill him. But their plot was made known to Saul. And they were watching the gates both day and night, in order that they might kill him. Then the disciples took him by night *and* let *him* down by the wall, lowering *him* in a basket" (vs 23-25). Talk about fleeing from city to city, this is something! This is the Christian elevator: rope and basket.

Verse 26: "And when Saul came to Jerusalem, he attempted to join himself to the disciples; but all were afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. Then Barnabas took him *and* brought *him* to the apostles, and related to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus. And he was with them, coming in and going out in Jerusalem, and speaking boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then he spoke and disputed with the Greeks... [Hellenists Jews] ...but they attempted to kill him" (vs 26-29).

You know he was teaching immediately that all these works and all these rituals and all these things would not bring you salvation.

Verse 30: "And when the brethren learned of *it*, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus." Saul's impact on the Church was so profound that even after three years he couldn't go back and teach in Jerusalem; they were ready to kill him.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Genesis 2:22-24
- 2) Genesis 1:26
- 3) Genesis 3:22
- 4) Luke 22:21-34
- 5) Acts 1:13-15
- 6) Acts 2:14, 37-38
- 7) Acts 3:1, 4, 6, 12
- 8) Acts 4:8, 13, 19
- 9) Acts 5:3, 5, 4, 8-16, 18, 29
- 10) Acts 8:1-5, 14-17
- 11) Acts 9:1-16
- 12) Isaiah 55:6-11
- 13) Acts 9:15-22
- 14) Galatians 1:1-8
- 15) Galatians 2:11-13
- 16) Galatians 1:8-18
- 17) 2 Corinthians 12:1-11
- 18) Galatians 1:18-20
- 19) Acts 9:23-30

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 6
- Matthew 7
- 2 Corinthians 11

Also referenced:

Books:

- *A Harmony in the Life of St. Paul* by Frank J. Goodwin
- *Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop
- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Lord, What Should I Do?* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Josephus*

Magazines:

- *Ambassador Report*
- *Christianity Today*

Scripturalism vs Judaism XVII

The Acts of the Apostles

There's an awful lot that is going to be happening in which Judaism is going to impact the Churches of God in a very particular way. There was a meeting over the so-called Christmas vacation where it was sponsored by one of the evangelical spin-offs of the Church of God down in Wagner, Oklahoma, which turned out to be a sacred names, a calendar thing and also how to have the Passover like the Jewish Seder. It's going to impact the Church a great deal.

We need to understand that from the very, very beginning when John the Baptist came and started his ministry, that there was a separation and division of Judaism that began at that time, because Judaism is not and was not the religion of Moses.

Let's do just a little review, however, in time order, you will not understand the four-year gap necessarily, because from #16-17 you won't realize there has been four years in-between.

Let's see the prophecy concerning John the Baptist. Let's understand something very important concerning John the Baptist, because this will help us lead up to the time of the beginning of the Church. John the Baptist was a son of a priest. That means that John the Baptist would have been a priest at the temple had he went ahead with his life without God intervening. We also know that when God does something very special in the world He particularly chooses that person in a particular way. Let's go back and think of Abraham. He called Abraham—correct? Isaac was the *son of promise* and God not only chose him, but actually created him with an impossible miracle with Abraham and Sarah.

Then when we come down through time we have Moses. He was chosen for a particular purpose from the very time that he was born. We come down to the time of Jeremiah. God said that He 'formed him' for this particular purpose. Then we come to the time of John the Baptist and God formed him for this particular purpose; for his mission that he was to do. He was to prepare the way for Jesus Christ. He was to 'prepare the way for the Lord.' In this case again, John the Baptist's mother was old.

Luke 1:57: "Now, Elizabeth's time was fulfilled that she should give birth, and she bore a son. And her neighbors and kinfolk heard that *the* Lord had magnified His mercy toward her, and they rejoiced with her.... [I imagine that they were all there to witness the event.] ...And it came to pass on the eighth day *that* they came to circumcise the little child; and they were calling him Zacharias, after the name of his father. Then his mother answered *and*

said, 'No! But he shall be named John'" (vs 57-60). God also names the individuals for what they are.

Verse 61: "And they said to her, '*There* is no one among your kinfolk who is called by this name.' Then they made signs to his father *as to* what he desired him to be named. And after signaling for a writing tablet, he wrote, saying, 'John is his name.' And they were all amazed. Then his mouth was immediately opened..." (vs 61-64). Here John the Baptist's father was dumb and couldn't speak all during the time that Elizabeth was pregnant, because he didn't believe God when God said, 'You will have a son.'

Now, the son is born, circumcised, Zacharias' mouth is opened, "...and his tongue *was loosed*; and he spoke, praising God. And fear came upon all those who dwelt around them..." (vs 64-65). That's why God had many witnesses. There's also something we need to understand about how God does things that are very important. He has many, many witnesses. It's not done in a corner.

"...and in the entire hill country of Judea, all these things were being talked about. And all who heard *these things* laid *them* up in their hearts, saying, 'What then will this little child be?' And *the* hand of *the* Lord was with him. And Zacharias his father was filled with *the* Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying, 'Blessed be *the* Lord, the God of Israel, because He has visited and has worked redemption for His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; exactly as He spoke by *the* mouth of His Holy prophets since the world began; salvation from our enemies and from *the* hand of all those who hate us; to fulfill *the promise of* mercy *made* to our fathers, and to remember His Holy covenant, *the* oath that He swore to Abraham our father..." (vs 65-73).

In *The Christian Passover* book we see how much the Passover is related to the covenants with Abraham, and how many times in the New Testament it goes back to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob over and over again. There's a reason for that.

"...to grant us *that*, being saved from *the* hand of our enemies, we might serve Him without fear, *walking* in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our lives. And you, little child, shall be called *the* prophet of *the* Highest..." (vs 73-76). Jesus said that there was 'no man greater than John the Baptist'—prophet of the Highest! That's quite a calling.

"...for you shall go before *the* face of *the* Lord, to prepare His ways; to give *the* knowledge of

salvation to His people by *the* remission of their sins, through *the* deep inner compassions of our God; in which *the* dayspring from on high has visited us, to shine upon those who are sitting in darkness and in *the* shadow of death, to direct our feet into *the* way of peace.’ And the little child grew and was strengthened in spirit; and he was in the wilderness until *the* day of his appearing to Israel” (vs 76-80).

Currently there are a lot of people who believe that John the Baptist went to the Essene community where the Cumron caves are. I do not think so. I believe this: Since he was specially chosen by God, I feel that he was specially taught by God, just as Jesus was. He was prepared by studying the Scriptures. God also had to give him whatever he needed in way of visions and understanding to know what he was going to do. He was in the desert. It doesn’t say he was in the Cumron community. It doesn’t say he was with the Essenes. The more that they find out about the Essenes, the more that they understand that they had a Gospel of hate. If you weren’t with them you were an enemy.

Of course, the whole Gospel of Christ is one of repentance, forgiveness, mercy and kindness—not one of hatred. This is why there had to be a separation from Judaism and the Gospel of Christ. Let’s go back to Matt. 3 and let’s see how this separation began right from the beginning of the preaching of John the Baptist with his ministry of repentance to believe on the one who should follow after him.

We’ll see later that John the Baptist was Elijah, there’s going to be, I believe, another Elijah at the end-time that’s going to come in the same way that John the Baptist did. I personally feel that he is going to be the one who is going to minister to the children of Israel—those in the Near East—who come to repentance as a result of the two witnesses: the high priest and the governor of Judea. Also, I think the two witnesses are going to do quite a bit in helping and inspiring the Churches of God, because I think God is going to pour out His Spirit upon the churches at that time in a way that He hasn’t since the time of the beginning of the Church.

Matthew 3:1: “Now, in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, ‘Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.’ For this is he who was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying, ‘*The voice of one crying in the wilderness, “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths.”*’” (vs 1-3). He had to know his mission; he had to know what he was doing. He had to know that he was preparing the way for Christ.

Let’s see where this prophecy was given. We will see that not everything was fulfilled. What John the Baptist did was prepare the way for Christ,

which was a partial fulfillment of Isa. 40. But when we read it, we’re going to see there’s a whole lot more that has to be fulfilled in Isaiah before it is complete.

Isaiah 40:1: “‘Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people,’ says your God. ‘Speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned...’” (vs 1-2). When you read the last verse of Matt. 23, when Jesus wept over Jerusalem and He knew that it was going to be destroyed, and He said, ‘I shall not speak to you again until you say blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’ And the warfare for Judah has been anything but completed. Look at Jerusalem right now. It’s a constant warfare!

- Threat from without!
- Terrorists from within!
- Jew against Jew!
- Palestinian against Arab!
- Jordanians against the Palestinians!
- Iranians against all of them!

It’s just sitting there as a big tinderbox, and whenever they get peace—temporarily over in Jerusalem—it’s going to be so tenuous it’s going to be most difficult indeed!

“...her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received of the LORD’S hand double for all her sins.’ A voice is calling out in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’” (vs 2-3). That’s what John the Baptist did, right there.

Matthew 3:3: “...‘*The voice of one crying in the wilderness, “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths.”*’ Notice why this has to have end-time setting:

Isaiah 40:4: “‘Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked places shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.’.... [but it’s going to] ...A voice says, ‘Cry!’.... [this also tells us of the direct teaching of John the Baptist] ...And he said, ‘What shall I cry? “All flesh *is* grass, and all the beauty of it *is* as the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades because the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people *are* grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the Word of our God shall stand forever”’” (vs 4-8). I’m sure that’s part of John the Baptist’s message in preaching repentance.

Verse 9: “Go up for yourself on the high mountain; O you that brings good tidings to Zion. Lift up your voice with strength, O you who tell good tidings to Jerusalem; lift up, do not be afraid. Say to the cities of Judah, ‘Behold your God!’” That

had to be Christ coming the first time. It has an application also the second time.

Verse 10: “Behold, the Lord GOD will come with a strong *hand*, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward *is* with Him, and His work before Him.... [then it talks about the Church]: ...He shall feed His flock like a shepherd...” (vs 10-11).

You can see how some of these prophecies are intertwined between the first coming and the second coming, and I believe in this case, between John the Baptist who was Elijah at that time and who is going to be the coming John the Baptist who will be an Elijah at the end.

Matthew 3:4: “Now, John himself wore a garment of camel’s hair, and a leather belt around his waist...” He was a Nazarite from birth. He drank no wine; ate no grapes; nothing from the fruit of the vine at all—period! He had this long hair, and I imagine he was a real tough looking person. Everyone knew this was a strange event that was taking place with this man out there doing that.

“...and his food was locusts and wild honey” (v 4). Regular locust you just pluck them out and their nice and crispy. They are clean to eat. That doesn’t mean that’s all he ate. I’m sure that was a major portion of what he ate.

Verse 5: “Then went out to him *those from* Jerusalem, and all Judea...” Remember all of these prophecies and all of the notoriety with his birth. Now they’re going out to see him in his ministry.

“...and all the country around the Jordan, and were being baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. But after seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them...” (vs 5-7). Hooray! I’m glad you’re here; I’ve always wanted to baptize a priest. *No!* The separation began immediately! God wanted it to be known that Judaism was not going to be the foundation upon which the Gospel would be built.

What is the foundation to be built upon? *Christ!* {see sermon series: *Who was Jesus?*} Many people say Jesus was a Jew; Jesus was a Pharisee; all of His disciples were Pharisees, let’s go back to Pharisaic Judaism. When you start going back to Pharisaic Judaism you actually end up denying Christ because they do not believe that Christ was God before He became a human being in the flesh. They don’t tell you that right away.

“...‘*You* brood of vipers... [There was no love lost there—right?] ...who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, produce fruits worthy of repentance...’” (vs 7-8). That’s what God wants: *repentance!* What he’s saying is that it doesn’t matter if you’re a Pharisee or a Sadducee or a scribe or whatever, you have to repent!

Verse 9: “‘And do not think to say within yourselves, “We have Abraham *for our father*”...’” Now when the promise of Abraham comes to the world through Christ, it goes to all nations. God had a purpose with Israel down to the time of Christ, but when Christ died He extinguished the Old Covenant so that now the Word of God could go to the whole world. We’re going to see the conflict that this had with Judaism. Not only did preaching the Gospel conflict right there with Judaism with the disciples of Christ, but when it started going to different peoples and nations it created a monstrous conflict with Judaism, but also within the Church. Don’t rely on your bloodline.

Verse 9: “‘And do not think to say within yourselves, “We have Abraham *for our father*”... [Just put in there John 8 and read that.] ...for I tell you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. But already the axe is striking at the roots of the trees; therefore, every tree that is not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into *the fire*’” (vs 9-10). What did Jesus say about trees? *You shall know them by their fruits!* Does a fig tree bring forth thistles? *No!* Do thistles bring forth grapes? *No!* It’s going to be cut down and cast into the fire.

Verse 11: “‘I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but the one Who *is* coming after me is mightier than I, of Whom I am not fit to carry His sandals; He shall baptize you with *the* Holy Spirit, and with fire.’” That is referring to the Lake of Fire. So, this whole thing of Pentecostals saying the baptism of fire is no more than a demonic, satanic counterfeit of evil gibberish, saying it is baptism by fire. I guess there’s a famous saying, ‘Have you been baptized by fire?’ *NO!* You don’t want to be baptized by fire! Whenever I read that I think of this molten lava running down off Mt. Kilo Wah over there in Hawaii and that is a lake of fire. It turns you into ashes just instantly.

Verse 12: “‘Whose winnowing shovel *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor... [What happens when you do that?] ...and will gather His wheat into the granary; but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire.’” No man is going to put it out! Put in your notes: Matt. 13—the sower sowing the wheat; the harvest and all the parables there.

Verse 13: “Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, ‘I have need to be baptized by You, and You come to me?’ Then Jesus answered and said to him, ‘You must permit *it* at this time; for in this manner it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he permitted Him *to be baptized*. And after He was baptized, Jesus came up immediately out of the water...” (vs 13-16). This

shows that it was deep water for a complete emersion.

“...and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him. And lo, a voice from heaven said, ‘This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I have *great* delight’” (vs 16-17). John had that sign, knowing that this was the Son of God; knowing that this was the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29)—so John *knew* who Christ was without a doubt!

Let’s understand that John had second thoughts about that because some of the prophecies concerning Christ were that He would save them from their enemies. But he wasn’t raising up an army; he wasn’t doing some of the things that it says there of the prophecy, which I’m sure he read about himself and the coming of Christ. So, John was put into prison.

Matthew 11:1: “And it came to pass *that*, when Jesus had finished commanding His twelve disciples, He left there to teach and to preach in their cities. Now John, having heard in prison *of* the works of Christ, sent two of his disciples, saying to Him, ‘Are You the one Who is coming, or are we to look for another?’” (vs 1-3). This also tells us that God will accomplish things in ways where sometimes it doesn’t look like He’s doing what He said He would do. In particular at that time, because He was not doing everything that all the prophecies said that the Messiah would do. So, John had questions.

Verse 4: “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Go and report to John what you hear and see: *The* blind receive sight, and *the* lame walk; *the* lepers are cleansed, and *the* deaf hear; *the* dead are raised, and *the* poor are evangelized. And blessed is everyone who shall not be offended in Me’” (vs 4-6). That was the only answer He gave.

Verse 7: “And as they were leaving, Jesus said to the multitudes concerning John, ‘What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by *the* wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold, those who wear soft *clothing* are in kings’ houses. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and *one* more excellent than a prophet. For this is *he* of whom it is written, “Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who shall prepare Your way before You.”’” (vs 7-10). Again, He quoted just that one verse, the same verse that John the Baptist quoted.

Verse 11: “Truly I say to you, there has not arisen among *those* born of women *anyone* greater than John the Baptist. But the one who *is* least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he. For from the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of

Heaven is taken with a *great* struggle, and *the* zealous *ones* lay hold on it. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John’” (vs 11-13). And this is the stickler that most people don’t understand. Protestants read this and say, ‘Well, after John then, no law; no commandments; just love and feel good and everything is fine.’ NO! It doesn’t mean that!

Luke 16:14: “Now the Pharisees who were also covetous, heard all these things; and they ridiculed Him. And He said to them, ‘You are those who justify themselves before men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination before God. The Law and the Prophets *were* until John; from that time the Kingdom of God is preached, and everyone zealously strives to enter it. But **it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail**’” (vs 14-17).

He’s not doing away with the Law whatsoever. What He is saying here, very clearly, is that the standard of preaching until John the Baptist could be no higher than the Law and the Prophets; there was nothing greater than that. There was no greater word than the Law and the Prophets. Now John the Baptist comes and what is he doing? *He’s preaching the Kingdom of Heaven, repentance, and believing on the One Who was to come: Jesus!* Now there is a higher standard from which these things are preached. These are now preached with a higher standard of Christ, with the spiritual application, spiritual meaning.

- It *requires conversion*, not just circumcision
- It *requires complete dedication*

—not just being a citizen of Israel. The standard is a whole lot higher. Then He emphasizes that the law is not done away! Is not the Kingdom of God a higher standard than just the Law? *Yes, it is!* It requires total dedication!

Let’s see some things concerning what God was going to do as we get over to the time of the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel on the Day of Pentecost. Why did God start the Church at the temple on the Day of Pentecost?

1. The Law at Mt. Sinai was given on Pentecost!
 2. The Holy Spirit was given at the temple on Pentecost!
- Why the temple?
 - Why did not God choose Galilee?
 - Why not, as the Mormons say, that Jesus came over and visited the Indians and the Mayan peninsula during His ministry and now the Gospel is preached from the Mayan Empire?
 - Why should it begin at the temple?

- Why should it be in Jerusalem?

Let's understand that God, in fulfilling His prophecies, also followed through on the authority that He gave—did He not? Who was in charge of things concerning the religion to Israel? *The priests!* That's why John the Baptist was a son of a priest, so that it would come through the priesthood. That's very important to realize. God didn't start it over here completely like just having a group of people in the Ozarks and now they finally have their own religion. *No!* He started through John the Baptist who was a son of a priest and whose father worked at the temple and whose angel Gabriel came from God to speak to Zacharias and tell him that he would have a son. All of these things were done at the temple.

Here's the reason: We find at the dedication of the temple God put His presence there, His visible presence in the temple. You don't see God, but at this point He made it visible for everyone to see that God put His presence in the temple.

2-Chronicles 5:11: "And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the Holy *place* (for all the priests present were sanctified, and did not wait by course), and the Levitical singers—all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, *being* clothed in white linen, and having cymbals and with harps and lyres—stood at the east end of the altar, and with them a hundred and twenty priests sounding with silver trumpets... [this was really quite a tremendous noise that was going on there] ...it came to pass, as the trumpeters and the singers *were* as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up *their* voice with the silver trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, *saying*, 'For He is good, for His steadfast love *endures* forever,' that the house was filled with a cloud, *even* the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God!" (vs 11-14).

That shows that the presence of God was right there in the temple. God showing that He had chosen Jerusalem; He had chosen the temple; He approved of it and put His presence in it. Then Solomon gave this prayer:

2-Chronicles 6:1: "Then Solomon said, 'The LORD has said that He would dwell in the thick darkness. Now I have built a house for You to live in, and a place for Your dwelling forever.' And the king turned around and blessed the whole congregation of Israel. And all the congregation of Israel stood. And he said, 'Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel Who has with His hands fulfilled that which He spoke with His mouth to my father David,

saying, "From the day that I brought My people out of the land of Egypt I have not chosen any city among all the tribes of Israel to build a house in, so that My name might be there. Nor have I chosen any man to be a ruler over My people Israel. But now I have chosen Jerusalem, so that My name might be there, and now I have chosen David to be over My people Israel."'" (vs 1-6).

We're also going to see when we come to Acts 2 that Peter mentions David on the Day of Pentecost. The links/connections are very important to show that this is coming from the true God.

Verse 7: "And it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. But the LORD said to David my father, 'Because it was in your heart to build a house for My name, you did well in that it was in your heart. But you shall not build the house. Now your son, who shall come forth out of your loins, shall build the house for My name.' And the LORD has performed His word that He has spoken, for I have risen up in place of David my father and am set on the throne of Israel as the LORD promised, and I have built the house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. And I have *caused* the ark *to be* placed in it, in which *is* the covenant of the LORD which He made with the children of Israel' (vs 7-11).

We will see why Christ told them what to do, and why He told them to do it. Let's understand the things that took place at the time leading up to the crucifixion. Great miracles were performed; Lazarus was raised from the death, which was a great and a fantastic notoriety. It was known everywhere. So much so that the priests said that when 'we kill Christ, we're going to kill Lazarus, too.' Christ was finally arrested, crucified, all the events that took place with that: the darkness, the earthquake, the graves opening up and those who, after Christ had risen from the death, came back alive and appeared to many in the city. There was this great tremendous thing that had taken place.

- the whole community was in great confusion
- the tomb was empty
- they could not produce the body
- the apostles were accused of taking His body and hiding it someplace

Even today, the Japanese say that their religion is based on Jesus because He came to Japan and died at 112-years-old, and that's how the Shinto religion began. So much for fairytales.

All of these things had taken place. The soldiers were paid a great sum of money to say that the body was taken, but no one could answer the question: Where was the body? He was raised from

the dead. The disciples saw Him for 40 days and 40 nights and He did tremendous miracles during that time. But the first time they really saw Him was here, and I want to follow this on, because this ties right into the very first chapter of the book of Acts:

Luke 24:35: “Then they related the things that had happened *to them* on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of the bread. Now, as they were telling these things, Jesus Himself stood in their midst and said to them, ‘Peace *be* to you.’” (vs 35-36). Here’s a good way to get very inspired. You can imagine that none of the apostles ever forgot these things.

Verse 37: “But they were terrified and filled with fear, thinking *that* they beheld a spirit [a demon]. Then He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled? And why do doubts come up in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I. Touch Me and see *for yourselves*; for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see Me having.’” (vs 37-39). A demon cannot manifest itself to appear to have flesh and bones. That’s what it means there.

Verse 40: “And after saying this, He showed them *His* hands and *His* feet. But while they were still disbelieving and wondering for joy, He said to them, ‘Do you have anything here to eat?’ Then they gave Him part of a broiled fish and a *piece* of honeycomb. And He took these *and* ate in their presence. And He said to them, ‘These *are* the words that I spoke to you when I was yet with you, that all *the* things which were written concerning Me in the Law of Moses... [Again, it goes back to the Word of God. What God does always follows the same trail: fulfills His Word, brings it to the conclusion that God wants.] ...and *in the* Prophets and *in the* Psalms must be fulfilled.’ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” (vs 40-45).

This is vitally important to understand, brethren. This is where people get wrapped up in Judaism. They begin knocking the New Testament and throwing it away because they say that the only way you can understand the Scriptures is to understand the Old Testament. Well, that’s exactly backward! The New Testament opens the Old Testament. Christ’s Spirit gives understanding of the Old Testament. Just like He did to His disciples here: He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. That’s why the New Testament becomes key and important when we go back and examine the things in the Old Testament.

Verse 46: “And said to them, ‘According as it is written, it was necessary [obligatory] for the Christ to suffer, and to rise from *the* dead the third day. And in His name, repentance and remission of sins should be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem’” (vs 46-47). Why? *Because*

- that’s where God put His name
- that’s where His Spirit was
- that’s where the temple was

It had to begin at Jerusalem!

Verse 48: “For you are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you; but remain in the city of Jerusalem until you have been clothed with power from on high.” (vs 48-49). Then He rose and went up into heaven.

Acts 1—you will see how this then begins the rest of the story. We will begin to see how that the preaching of the Gospel with the disciples and Judaism was in constant conflict. It had to start in Jerusalem, because if it started in any other country, the religious leaders could have said, ‘Look, this is from the gods of the Assyrians, or from the gods of India, or Mayan.’ It had to start in Jerusalem! There’s really quite a bit in here for us. You really get the feeling of it as you read, this is really quite exciting stuff.

Acts 1:1: “The first account I indeed have written, O Theophilus... [lover of God] ...concerning all things that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after giving command by *the* Holy Spirit to the apostles whom He had chosen; to whom also, by many infallible proofs, He presented Himself alive after He had suffered, being seen by them for forty days, and speaking the things concerning the Kingdom of God” (vs 1-3). He was not only seen of just the apostles, but we’re going to see that He was seen of 500 of the disciples.

(go to the next track)

1-Corinthians 15:1: “Now I am declaring to you, brethren, the *same* Gospel that I proclaimed to you, which you also received, *and* in which you are now standing; by which you are also being saved... [present tense] ...if you are holding fast *the* words that I proclaimed to you; otherwise you have believed in vain. For in the first place, I delivered to you what I also had received: that Christ died for our sins, **according to the Scriptures**; and that He was buried; and that He was raised the third day, **according to the Scriptures**” (vs 1-4)—must be New Testament Scripture.

When you talk about Jonah in the Old Testament—three days and three nights—there is no prophecy anywhere in Old Testament Scripture that says that Christ will be raised the third day. This has to be a reference to New Testament Scripture, which means the Gospel was already written and they had it there to read.

Verse 5: And that He appeared to Cephas, *and* then to the twelve.... [Don’t we have that in the Gospels? Isn’t that Scripture? *Yes!*] ...Then He

appeared to over five hundred brethren at one time... [there were many witnesses] ...of whom the greater part are alive until now, but some have fallen sleep. Next He appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all He appeared to me also, as one who was born of a miscarriage" (vs 5-8). So, Christ manifested Himself to them for *40 days*; time of trial. It makes you wonder what were many of the infallible proofs that He showed them. I think one of them was walking through walls. Who could do that? The wounds in the hands and the feet. Those we know, but what were the other many infallible proofs? *I don't know!*

Acts 1:4: "And while *they* were assembled with *Him*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem... [the emphasis is on Jerusalem for the starting of the preaching of the Gospel] ...but to 'await the promise of the Father, which,' *He said*, 'you have heard of Me. For John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with *the* Holy Spirit after not many days.' So then, when they were assembled together, they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will You restore the kingdom to Israel at this time?'" (vs 4-6). Why would they ask that question? *Because every prophecy concerning the Messiah was to restore the Kingdom! And His answer? Don't worry, kids, it's 2,000 years down the road! NO! He didn't say that!*

Verse 7: "And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know *the* times or *the* seasons, which the Father has placed in His own authority... [God the Father is going to do it. They really didn't have too much of a clue until the book of Revelation was given. That's when they first began to understand, and not until then.] ...but you yourselves shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto *the* ends of the earth'" (vs 7-8).

Obviously, that would be way beyond their lifetime. The truth is, we only have one lifetime, so we better be zealous in this lifetime, because we don't know when the end will be.

Verse 9: "And after saying these things, *as* they were looking at *Him*, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Now while they were gazing intently up into heaven..." (vs 9-10). That would be a sight to see—wouldn't it? They didn't have such things as airplanes or helicopters or such things like we have today. To be standing there talking to Jesus and all of a sudden, 'Goodbye' and up He goes! They're standing there looking.

"...as He was going up, two men in white apparel suddenly stood by them, who also said, 'You men of Galilee, why do you stand *here* looking up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, Who was taken up from you into heaven, shall come in exactly the same manner as

you have seen Him go into heaven.' Then they returned to Jerusalem from *the mountain* called Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem, being *about* the distance of a Sabbath's journey" (vs 10-12).

We're going to notice several things here as we go along, and I want to emphasize a couple of these, because there have been some mistaken conclusions that have been drawn by some people promoting women preaching.

Verse 13: "And after entering *Jerusalem*, they went up into the upper chamber, where both Peter and James were staying; and John and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James, *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot; and Jude, *the brother* of James." There were eleven apostles at this time; Judas had fallen. Let's understand something else that is important, which I can bring in at this point:

Go back and study the calling of all of the 12 apostles, 11 of them were from Galilee. They were basically Benjaminites. They spoke Greek; they wrote Greek; and as far as the religious establishment was concerned, they were unlearned and ignorant men, meaning they never went to any of the Pharisee schools, Sadducee schools, Essene schools. Christ called those who were basically secular men, removed from any of the religion of that time, to separate Judaism from the Gospel. That's why He did it.

Verse 14: "**All** these... [I want to emphasize 'all' because some try and make this include all the 120 that were there.] ...were steadfastly continuing with one accord in prayer and supplications, *together* with *the* women... [the *all* refers to the apostles; the *all* does not refer to the women] ...including Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers. And in those days, Peter stood up in *the* midst of the ..." (vs 14-15) and so forth. Then they chose Mathias. It shows how they did that, selecting him by lot.

Verse 22: "'Beginning from the baptism of John until the day in which He was taken up from us, one of these shall become a witness with us of His resurrection.' [they had to select two who had been with them from the baptism of John all the way through] ...Then they put forth two: Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus; and Matthias" (vs 22-23).

Verse 26: "Then they cast their lots; and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles." Now they had 12.

Who were to be the witnesses. *The 12 apostles!* We saw in v 14: "All these..." and named them (v 13); the eleven. Now the 'all' would include the new one, the 12. That's important.

Acts 2:1: "And when the day of *Pentecost*,

the fiftieth day, was being fulfilled, they were **all** with one accord in the same place.” Which *all* were to preach? Were the women to preach? Were they to speak in tongues? Were all the 120 disciples to be witnesses in the same way that the apostles were? Why call the 12 apostles? ‘*All*’ refers to the 12 apostles, with Mathis added in to take the place of Judas!

Verse 2: “And suddenly *there* came from heaven... [I want you to see the parallel between 2-Chron. 5 and the Holy Spirit coming in the form of a cloud to fill the temple *and* the Holy Spirit coming to fill them with the Holy Spirit to preach.] ...a sound like *the* rushing of a powerful wind, and filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them divided tongues as of fire, and sat upon each one of them” (vs 2-3). This is not literally fire, but just appeared as fire. God was manifesting it in a way so that it would also be a witness to the rest of the disciples that these 12 receive the Holy Spirit in a particular and special way.

Verse 4: “And they were **all**... [the apostles] ...filled with *the* Holy Spirit; and they began to speak with other languages, as the Spirit gave them *the words* to proclaim.” It had to be the apostles doing the speaking. Were there more than just the 12 there at that time? *It doesn’t say, but if ‘all’ refers to the 12, there could be the 12 there without any reference to the rest of those who may have been in company with them!* It doesn’t mention the 120 here, so the *all* definitely refers to the 12 apostles. We can conclude that if the rest of the 120 were there, that they Holy Spirit came upon the apostles the visible way only. They were the ones who were to do the preaching.

Verse 5: “Now *there* were many Jews who were sojourning in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven”—because all the events leading up to it. I’m sure that God inspired many to come just for this Pentecost wanting to know what happened, hearing that Jesus was raised from the dead. They made a special effort to come.

Verse 6: “And when word of this went out, the multitude came together and were confounded, because each one heard them... [referring to the 12 apostles] ...speaking in his own language. And they were all amazed, and marveled, saying to one another, ‘Behold, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it *that* we hear each one in our own language in which we were born?’.... [Then it lists all the nations where the Jews were scattered]: ...Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and those who inhabit Mesopotamia, and Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia” (vs 6-9)—all of the major countries around the Middle East and the Mediterranean.

How long was the appearance of the flame?

I don’t know! I think it would be not too long. It would be during the time that they were gathered together in that one room. Then when they went out to preach, I think they were all amazed because they heard them speaking in their own language, not that they saw the appearance of a flame on their head. Later they even ridiculed saying, ‘What does this mean, are they drunk?’ I would say that others did not see the Holy Spirit in the form of flame upon them.

Verse 11: “...we hear them speaking in our own languages the great things of God.’ And they were all amazed and greatly perplexed, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’ But others were mocking *and* saying, ‘They are full of new wine’” (vs 11-12). I would have to assume by that statement that the other people could not have seen the Holy Spirit in the form of a flame of fire sitting upon their heads. Otherwise, they may have had a different attitude.

Then Peter gets up and really starts speaking. I won’t go through the whole thing except to say that he really gave a tremendous sermon about how that Jesus was delivered up by those who were in charge. God raised Him from the dead. He talks about David (v 25).

“...concerning the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day” (v 29). He talks about how Jesus was raised up, and v 32: “...whereof we all are witnesses.” Peter then

- preached repentance
- receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit
- save yourselves from this untoward generation

Three thousand were baptized in that same day, and the Church really started off with a tremendous and fantastic boost. Then they all stayed at Jerusalem after Pentecost. How long after Pentecost? *I don’t know!* But they stayed there for a great deal of time. By some accounts, as we are going along, I think they stayed there hoping Christ would return if they were in Jerusalem, because that’s where Christ was to return.

Then we have the confrontation with Judaism beginning in Acts 3. This is a witness and a testimony to the priests, Judaism—the whole thing. We’re going to see how this builds and builds between here at this point and when Stephen is killed. It comes to a crescendo at the death of Stephen. Three thousand were baptized, but there were probably 40-50 thousand there; this was quite a witness. When it started, it wasn’t done in a corner. It was done publicly, right out in the open before thousands and thousands of people.

Acts 3:1—we have a healing here that takes

place: “Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, *which was* the ninth hour [3 pm]; and a certain man who was lame from his mother’s womb was being carried, whom they placed daily at the temple door which is called Beautiful, to beg alms from those who were going into the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. But Peter and John, intently observing him, said, ‘Look on us.’ And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, ‘Silver and gold I do not have; but what I do have, this I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean, rise up and walk.’” (vs 1-6).

Notice again, a public thing! This is what you would say is notorious; it’s right out in the open, there can be no doubt about it. This was one who was born lame and there can be no question about the fact that he was the man, because they put him there every day.

{Discussion about the time when the Holy Spirit was given that if there were women there with them, they certainly would have received the Holy Spirit, but not for witnessing and preaching. It was the apostles that received that. God certainly would not withhold the Holy Spirit from the women. After all that’s the whole purpose of the Day of Pentecost so they would receive the Holy Spirit. We find no account of women preaching.}

There can’t be any question about this miracle that was done, and we see quite a few things take place here as a result of it.

Verse 7: “Then taking him by the right hand, he raised *him* up; and immediately his feet and anklebones were strengthened. And leaping up, he stood and walked; and he entered into the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. Now all the people saw him walking and praising God” (vs 7-9). This was really quite a situation that took place.

Peter used this as an opportunity to preach Christ; preach repentance, v 16: “And through faith in His name, this *man* whom you see and know was made strong in His name; and the faith that *is* through Him gave this complete soundness to him in the presence of you all.”

Now comes the confrontation; here it begins, Acts 4:1: “Now as they were speaking to the people, the priests and *the* captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being dismayed because they were teaching the people, and preaching through Jesus the resurrection from *the* dead” (vs 1-2). Why would they be especially grieved? *Because:*

- they paid 30 pieces of silver that He might be betrayed

- they paid lots of money to the guards to have them say that the disciples stole the body
- they didn’t want to have anymore of this continue on

—and now it’s completely backfiring in their face and it’s coming up against them in such a way that it’s going to be really quite a thing here.

Verse 3: “And they arrested them and put *them* in the hold [jail] until the morning; for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the message believed, and the number of men was about five thousand” (vs 3-4). We’re seeing a mass exodus from the ‘religion’ of Judaism to that of Christ. They’re losing people by the thousands. The whole city was in a great uproar. This confrontation was really amazing!

Verse 5: “Now it came to pass in the morning *that* their rulers and elders and scribes were assembled together in Jerusalem... [brought them before the Sanhedrin] ...and Annas, the high priest, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander... [those who sentence Christ to death] ...and as many as were of *the* high priest’s lineage. And after placing them in the midst [middle], they inquired, ‘By what power or in what name did you do this?’” (vs 5-7). Here is a witness, directly, to the rulers who crucified Him. This is a powerful witness.

Verse 8: “Then Peter, filled with *the* Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel, if we are examined this day as to a good work *done to the* infirm man, by what *power* he has been cured, be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean, Whom you crucified, *but* Whom God has raised from *the* dead, by Him this *man* stands before you whole.... [quite a testimony; and it is Jesus Christ; and these were Galileans and they were speaking in Greek] ...This is the Stone that was **set at naught** by you, the builders... [you rejected] ...which has become the Head of *the* corner. And there is no salvation in any other, for neither is there another name under heaven which has been given among men, by which we must be saved” (vs 8-12). This ties right in with John 14:6—‘I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.’ No other way! He is the One!

Verse 13: “Now, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlettered and uninstructed men... [never having gone to any of their schools; no degrees in their hands] ...they were amazed; and they took note of them, that they had been with Jesus. Yet, seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they said nothing to oppose *them*” (vs 13-14). They could say nothing against them. What are you going to say?

Verse 15: “But after commanding them to go

outside the Sanhedrin... ['Ok, out of the chamber, we want to discuss this.'] ...they conferred with one another, saying, 'What shall we do to these men? For a remarkable miracle has indeed come to pass through them *and is* manifest to all those living in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*.... [Can't bribe the guards; can't buy your way out of this one; this is public, notorious, known everywhere.] ...But that it may spread no further among the people... [They were the ones who also had the authority to command.] ...let us warn them with a *severe* threat not to speak any more to anyone in this name.' And after summoning them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered *and* said to them, 'Whether it is right before God to listen to you rather than to God, you judge.'" (vs 15-19).

This is really getting at the heart and core the of the problem of Judaism. They figured that their word was greater than the Word of God. Here is the challenge:

"...you judge. For we cannot but speak what we have seen and heard.' And after further threatening them... [That was really quite a raucous setting. Have you ever seen on television at the Knesset and they have their arguments and so forth, just picture that's what was going on right here, it's just like that.] ...they let them go, finding no means by which they might punish them, because of the people... [all the political consequences] ...for all were glorifying God on account of what had been done, because the man on whom this miraculous healing had been performed was over forty years *old*" (vs 19-22). So, they let them go, and they came back and thanked God, praised God, filled with joy and determination and they were praying, and then God added more of His Holy Spirit to them, to accomplish and to do more.

Verse 31: "And when they had prayed, the place in which they were assembled was shaken; and they were all filled with *the* Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness." Brethren, that's what we need to ask God to help to come back to again, the same thing today.

- we don't need to have a gospel of apologetics
- we don't need to have a gospel of psychology
- we don't need to have a gospel on all the social things that are going on

—but to preach "...the Word of God with boldness. And the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul..." (vs 31-32). This must have been where there were a good number of the brethren. We know that there were at least 8,000 by that time, and probably many more. This is getting to be a big deal!

Verse 33: "And with great power the apostles testified of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all." Then they pooled all of their resources together and it gives the account of it here, how they were all living in a community section there in Jerusalem. I would say that's what they were doing. It shows about Barnabus who was a Levite. He came and laid his money at the apostle's feet. We have the account of Ananias and Sapphira. We're going to see how this thing builds even more and more.

Acts 5:12: "And many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch; and none of the others dared to join them, but the people magnified them)" (vs 12-13). They were afraid; I guess between the miracles that were done and the threats of the religious leaders, it created some problems.

Verse 14: "And believers were added all the more to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women), insomuch *that the people were* bringing out the sick into the streets and putting *them* on beds and stretchers, so that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. And a multitude from the cities round about also came together to Jerusalem, bringing sick ones and those beset by unclean spirits; *and* they were **all healed**" (vs 14-16).

It's almost like if you were Bill Clinton and you were at the Democratic National Convention and here were all of the delegates signing up for the Republican Party. That's about the closest analogy that I can draw.

Verse 17: "Then the high priest rose up, and all those with him, being of *the* sect of the Sadducees; *and* they were filled with anger.... [they were losing their power] ...And they laid their hands on the apostles and put them in *the* public hold [prison]. But during the night an angel of *the* Lord *came and* opened the doors of the prison; and after bringing them out, he said, 'Go and stand in the temple, *and* speak to the people all the words of this life.' And after hearing *that*, they entered into the temple at dawn and taught. Now, when the high priest and those with him came, they called together the Sanhedrin..." (vs 17-21). Here's a great huge meeting going on.

"...and all the elderhood of the sons of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison; and when they returned, they reported, saying, 'We indeed found the prison locked with all security, and the keepers standing outside in front of the doors; but after opening *them*, we did not find anyone inside.' And when they heard these words, both the *high* priest and the captain of the temple,

and the chief priests also, were utterly perplexed as to what this could lead to. But a certain one came *and* reported to them, saying, 'Behold, the men whom you put in the prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.' Then the captain went with the officers *and* brought them without violence, so that they might not be stoned; for they feared the people" (vs 21-26). This is really a confrontation going on here, it's something!

Verse 27: "And they brought them in *and* set *them* before the Sanhedrin. And the high priest asked them, saying, 'Did we not order you by a *direct* command not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, with *the* purpose of bringing this man's blood upon us.'" They were really enraged at this point.

Verse 29: "But Peter and the apostles answered *and* said, 'We are obligated to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus Whom you killed *by* hanging *Him* on a tree. Him has God exalted by His right hand *to be* a Prince and Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel. And we are His witnesses of these things, as *is* also the Holy Spirit, which God has given to those who obey Him.' Now when they heard *this*, they were cut *to the heart*... [there's the fight, right there] ...and took counsel to put them to death... [but God intervened]: ...But a certain man stood up, a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin, Gamaliel by name, a teacher of the law *who was* honored by all the people, *and* commanded *that* the apostles be put out for a short while" (vs 29-34). Then Peter rehearsed several things about some of the rebellions that came along.

Verse 38—Gamaliel said: "And now I say to you, withdraw from these men... [let them alone] ...and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be from men, it will be overthrown; but **if it be from God, you do not have the power to overthrow it. Take heed**, lest you be found to be fighting even against God.' And they were persuaded by him; and they called in the apostles *and*, after beating *them*... [they couldn't just let them go, they had to beat them] ...commanded *them* not to speak in the name of Jesus; and they released them. Then they departed from *the* presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing *that* they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And every day, in the temple and in the houses, they did not cease teaching and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ" (vs 28-42). So, all it did was just cause it to grow and multiply even more.

We'll see how the confrontation grows even more next time.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Luke 1:57-80
- 2) Matthew 3:1-3
- 3) Isaiah 40:1-3
- 4) Matthew 3:3
- 5) Isaiah 40:4-11
- 6) Matthew 3:4-17
- 7) Matthew 11:1-13
- 8) Luke 16:14-17
- 9) 2 Chronicles 5:11-14
- 10) 2 Chronicles 6:1-11
- 11) Luke 24:35-49
- 12) Acts 1:1-3
- 13) 1 Corinthians 15:1-8
- 14) Acts 1:4-15, 22-23, 26, 14
- 15) Acts 2:1-9, 11-12, 29, 32
- 16) Acts 3:1-9, 16
- 17) Acts 4:1-22, 31-33
- 18) Acts 5:12-34, 39-42

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 23:39
- John 8
- Matthew 13
- John 1:29
- Acts 2:25
- John 14:6

Also referenced:

Book: *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter

Sermon Series: *Who Was Jesus?*

Scripturalism vs Judaism XVIII

Martyrdom of Stephen and the Calling of Paul

In Acts 5 we saw that that was really quite an episode. I really enjoy going through and trying to mentally picture what it was to be released out of jail by an angel and the guards not even know it; the guards standing right there and can't even see anything. I don't know if the angel opened the door and they all walked through and went out. Then the next morning that they sent the guards down to get them out of the jail and they're already out there preaching.

This account where this happened was really something. They brought them before the whole Sanhedrin. Let's just review a little bit of Acts 5:27—just picture the whole Sanhedrin all in their uniforms and imagine that they have their beards. They're the ones with the power, who are important, and tell everyone what to do, and here are these renegades from Galilee:

Acts 5:27: "And they brought them in *and* set *them* before the Sanhedrin. And the high priest asked them, saying, 'Did we not order you by a *direct* command not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, with *the* purpose of bringing this man's blood upon us.'" (vs 27-28). They already brought it upon them. Sometimes God does things just the opposite.

We had quite a discussion earlier speaking of suffering. Let's look at how the apostles accepted what they went through here, v 29: "But Peter and the apostles answered *and* said, '**We are obligated to obey God rather than men.**'" That, brethren, is the key; *under all circumstances obey God rather than men*. Men will come along and try, in the name of God, to have you do something that God says don't do. That's what they're trying to do here. They're trying to come and say, 'We're telling you don't do this,' and the apostles are saying, 'Look, God told us to.' This also is a proof that Christ was God, because He's the One Who said to go—didn't He?

Verse 30: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus Whom you killed *by* hanging *Him* on a tree.... [They couldn't get away from it because that's what they did.] ...Him has God exalted by His right hand *to be* a Prince and Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel. And **we are His witnesses of these things, as is also the Holy Spirit, which God has given to those who obey Him**" (vs 30-32). Very key verse! You cannot receive the Holy Spirit of God unless you obey Him—it's an impossibility! It doesn't matter how sincere you are in whatever 'religion' you may be.

By the way, there's a great controversy now

over religion, because of the sermonette on *God Hates Religion*. Well, the truth is, religion is never used in connection with the true worship of God. Religion, when you find it in the Bible in the book of James, has to do with doing good works of physical things for people. Nowhere does it ever say *the Christian religion*. We are called Christians, as we'll see in Acts 11, but God's way is a *way of life*; it's not a 'religion.' When you take God's way and make a 'religion' out of it, God even hates that, because He didn't intend it to be. {see sermon series *God Hates Religion*} Yes, God *hates* 'religion.'

Someone wrote about his grandmother who was a good Catholic and her 'religion.' Well, that makes no difference, I'm sorry about that. She was sincere, that's true. She may have been dedicated, that's true. But she was 'religious' and that was not of God, and her time is not yet. Her time will be in the second resurrection.

God gives His Holy Spirit "...to those who obey Him.' Now when they heard *this*, they were cut *to the heart*..." (vs 32-33). Why? *Because they didn't have the Holy Spirit, they weren't obeying God!* Doesn't that always happen when you're confronted with a bunch of carnal people and something spiritual occurs or happens? *Yes!*

"...and took counsel to put them to death.... [Typical! If you can't get rid of the problem, kill them!] ...But a certain man stood up a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin, Gamaliel by name, a teacher of the law *who was* honored by all the people, *and* commanded *that* the apostles be put out for a short while. And he said to them, 'Men, Israelites, give careful thought to what you are about to do concerning these men'" (vs 33-35). I'm sure that God inspired that.

Verse 36: "For before these days *there* rose up Theudas, proclaiming that he himself was somebody, to whom a number of men were joined, about four hundred..." People are always a sucker—aren't they? Here's someone who rose up. I don't know what he said. He may have said that he was the Messiah. He may have said that he was going to lead people into the Kingdom of God. Who knows!

Do you know that they have more false prophets and more false Elijahs and more false King Davids in Judaism than any other religion on earth? And the funniest thing that I ever read was that in Jerusalem they have this special psychological department for dimwitted self-appointed prophets that come over there and say they are Ezekiel, Jeremiah, David, and Elijah. He had this one man

who said that he was Elijah, and he was dealing with him and so forth, and a couple of days later another man came along and said that he was Elijah. So, he thought he'd work it out really good. He invited them both to dinner and said, 'Elijah, I would like you to meet Elijah.' Here they have someone rise and there were 400^[transcriber's correction] men joined—a cause. People love a cause—don't they? *Yes, they do!*

“...but he was put to death, and all those who had been persuaded by him were dispersed and came to nothing. After this one, in the days of the registration, Judas the Galilean rose up and drew away many people after him; but he perished...” (vs 35-36). May this be a lesson to all of those who want to be the so-called sovereignists and not pay any taxes and rebel against the government. What's going to happen to them? *Right here!* It's one thing to die for God; it is another thing to die for a cause that *you claim* is God's cause, but isn't God's cause.

For example: A lot of people today under the sovereignist movement say, 'We need to get back to the Constitution once delivered.' Well, the truth is, the Constitution once delivered is a carnal, worldly government of this world. Though it has many more principles from the Bible in it than any other Constitution on earth, does not mean that it is what is going to be in the Kingdom of God when Christ returns. All you're doing is returning back to the starting point to where we now have all the end-result corruption of it. Nothing has changed! That's important to understand.

“...and all who had been persuaded by him were scattered. And now I say to you, withdraw from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be from men, it will be overthrown...” (vs 37-38). We also need to understand that whenever someone goes out to do what is 'a work of God': 'I'm going to do this work for God, therefore, I'm going to go out and start this and do this and do the other thing, because I'm doing this work for God.' Maybe God never sent you!

One of the first things I learned, after the fiasco with Biblical is that I'm not going to run out and say this is the work of God and run down the road and say, 'Oh, by the way, God, You've got to bless it because this is Your work.' NO! No one's going to do a work for God because they are so good. God is going to do His work and He's going to take whomever He wants to do whatever He wants, and when that is evident, then it will be evident because of God's Spirit, following God's Word—all of that! So, if anyone is going to go out there and do a work for God, then if it's not of God, *it's going to come to nothing!*

Verse 39: “But if it be from God, you do

not have the power to overthrow it....” At least Gamaliel still had some sense here—didn't he? *Yes, he did!* In other words, what God is truly going to do, it cannot be overthrown. If it appears that it's being overthrown—which just viewing the Church of God in what it's going through—people could say that the work is being overthrown. NO! God is correcting it and changing it, because it wasn't what He wanted. That's what we need to view has been happening.

“...Take heed, lest you be found to be fighting even against God.’ And they were persuaded by him; and they called in the apostles and, after beating them...” (vs 39-40). They were probably beaten with rods. Remember the big furor about the United States citizen in Malaysia because he was caught with a little bit of marijuana, that they were going to punish him with 40 stripes of the rod and there was a great uproar and a great to-do, that's cruel and unusual punishment and so forth. It think he got off with seven lashes and they let him go. Just think, these angry men, having rods in the hands to beat you on the back. That's going to hurt and be very painful, and it's going to be bloody, a terrible mess.

“...commanded them not to speak in the name of Jesus; and they released them. Then they departed from the presence of the Sanhedrin... [notice their attitude; they weren't complaining, they weren't whining, they weren't accusing God. They were]: ...rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for His name” (vs 40-41).

Today people don't want stress. They don't want pain. They want a deliverer from every little thing that comes along, which is setting up the whole one-world government and one-world thing—isn't it? Right here we need to take a little bit different look at some of the things that we suffer through and ask God to give us understanding as to why we're suffering through these things. If we truly suffer for the name of Christ, then we should rejoice in it.

That is a very different frame of mind to come to, and obviously that has to be a converted frame of mind. But when they right there could look back and understand that this was within the first year after the crucifixion; that was still vividly in their mind and they remembered what Christ had suffered through, and they understood what He had suffered. They were rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for His name. What did they do? *The priests had said they were to do just did the opposite!*

Verse 42: “And every day, in the temple and in the houses... [this thing was like a raging fire] ...they did not cease teaching and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Acts 6:1: “Now, in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied...” When we come to the Apostle James and the Apostle Paul, James said to Paul, ‘Look, see the thousands that are zealous for the Law, that believe.’ The only problem is, they were really not converted. But at this point they multiplied. Then there was a controversy. Then they selected the deacons and so forth.

Verse 9: “Then certain arose among those of the synagogue who were called Libertines, and of the Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia; *and* they were disputing with Stephen.” These were all those who followed Judaism out of Alexandria, Egypt. These were the ones who were of the Essenes, the Therapute and so forth.

Verse 10: “But they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke. Then they suborned men... [in other words, they had liars] ...who said, ‘We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and *against* God.’ And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes; and they came and seized him, and brought *him* into the Sanhedrin. Then they set up false witnesses, who said, ‘This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this Holy place and the Law...’” (vs 10-13).

The Law was now going to change from physical to spiritual; the application of it was going to be entirely different. Judaism was now going to be separated. He was also showing that God was going to destroy the temple, which he was going to do.

Verse 14: “For we heard him saying that this Jesus, the Nazarean, will destroy this place, and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.” As we’re going to see, circumcision was one of the most cantankerous, hard-hearted, absolutely politically high-bound problems within the Church. If you think we’ve had problems with sacred names and 14th/15th Passover, boy! the thing they had with circumcision was just unreal! Later we will see that there was in the Church what is called a ‘Circumcision Party.’ We’ll see what happened to them. It was amazing!

Verse 15: “And all those who sat in the Sanhedrin, looking intently at him, saw his face as *the* face of an angel.” I don’t know what happened there. Does that mean that his face was glowing? You read about some of the faces of the angels, like in the book of Revelation, their faces shine like the sun. I don’t think it was quite like that, but at least it was something that was most unusual. Here comes one of the last great witnesses to Judaism. I think this was the last chance for the official Judaism to repent.

See sermon: *Three Miracles of Jesus*. These three miracles of Jesus prove to Judaism, beyond a shadow of doubt, that Jesus was the Messiah. That was:

1. raising the dead

Especially in the person of Lazarus who had been dead for 4 days; the specific reason for that, specific timing—just before His crucifixion—so that it would be known.

2. healing a leper—He healed many lepers

3. healing the man born blind

Even the Talmud says that the three miracles that the Messiah would do, that we would know that He was the Messiah. Granted, the Talmud was written later, but that was oral tradition going clear back into the days of Jesus. Now then, you compound all of that with the miracles and healings that Jesus did, and you really got a stack of evidence. It’s really something!

So, they rejected this. They rejected the preaching. They rejected the apostles. They beat them. They tried to stop them from preaching in the name of Christ. They couldn’t do it and now here comes the final witness with Stephen.

Acts 7:1: “And the high priest said, ‘Now then, are these things so?’” He gives a whole account beginning with Abraham. Isn’t that interesting? I think we need to understand how far back we need to go with things with the Church, because it does begin with Abraham. If anyone says that the roots of Judeo Christianity are buried in Judaism, you know that’s a lie.

Galatians 3 is very important and profound. I explain this in *The Christian Passover* book, that God gave to Abraham the promise of physical seed and the promise of spiritual seed. This promise of spiritual seed we find here:

Galatians 3:26: “Because you are all sons of God **through faith** in Christ Jesus....” Today it’s true. Paul said to them that ‘after you’ve begun in the spirit, are you going to be perfected in the flesh?’ by carnal means? A lot of things that come along have to do over carnal, little picky things that are nothing! Are you going to be perfected in that? *NO!* But, by “...faith in Christ Jesus.”

Verse 27: “For as many *of you* as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek... [not going to go along racial lines; not going to go along national lines] ...there is neither bond nor free... [doesn’t matter whether you’re rich or poor] ...there is neither male nor female... [God is giving salvation equally to women as to men, whereas under the Old Covenant, men were circumcised] ...for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if **you are Christ’s, then you are**

Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (vs 27-29). That's where it goes back to; it goes back to Abraham, and that's what's important to remember in all of these things.

Isaiah 66:1—this section is a direct prophecy ready to be fulfilled in the days of the apostles. This is what Stephen was preaching: "Thus says the LORD, 'The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where, then, *is* the house that you build for Me? And where *is* the place of My rest? For all these things My hand has made, and these things came to be,' says the LORD. 'But to this one I will look, to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word'" (vs 1-2).

If you're going to be 'religious' and set up your own way and reject God, then He says, v 3: "He who kills an ox... [That's what the priests were doing at the temple—right? *Yes!*] ...*is as if* he killed a man... [that would fly in the face of the high priest] ...he who sacrifices a lamb *is as if* he broke a dog's neck; he who offers a grain offering *is as if* he offered swine's blood; he who burns incense *is as if* he blessed an idol.... [Who does that? Who did that? *The priests!* Back in Acts 7 this is what Stephen is bringing out] ...Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions..." (vs 3-4).

We're seeing the enactment of the choosing of the delusions of the priest and so forth with this final witness of Stephen. That's why I may read about some of the accounts from *Josephus* of the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D.; and it was awful! It's gruesome! It's terrible! Cannibalism and just killing one another, Jew after Jew and person after person!

"...and I will bring their fears upon them... [They didn't want to lose their temple. They didn't want to lose their position.] ...because when I called, no one answered... [That what happened. Jesus came and He called, but they didn't answer—correct?] ...when I spoke, they did not hear... [We're going to see that when Stephen gave this they didn't hear.] ...But they did evil before My eyes and chose *that* in which I did not delight" (v 4).

Acts 7:44—Stephen is talking about the temple: "The tabernacle of the testimony was among our fathers in the wilderness, as He Who spoke to Moses had commanded, to make it according to the pattern which he had seen; which also our fathers, who received it by succession, brought in with Joshua, when they took possession of *the land from* the nations... [taking over the 'promised land'] ...whom God drove out before *the* face our fathers, until the days of David; who found grace before God, and sought to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob; but Solomon built Him a house. However, the

Most High does not dwell in temples made by hands, as the prophet says... [We just read that, Isa. 66)] ..."The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* a footstool for My feet. What house will you build for Me, says *the* Lord, or what *is the* place of My rest? Have not My hands made all these things?" (vs 44-50).

Notice what he does. Here is Stephen talking to all of the important people in Judaism, v 51: "O stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did*, so also *do* you.... [and they all fell on their knees and repented—NO!] ...Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, of Whom **you have become the betrayers and murderers**" (vs 51-52). You talk about God inspiring a witness! This was prophesied that it would happen, and it's going to happen again.

Matthew 10:16: "Behold, I am sending you forth as sheep in *the* midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to councils... [didn't we just see that's what they did; they turned Stephen in] ...and they will scourge you in their synagogues... [They beat the apostles right in front of the council—didn't they? *Yes!*] ...and you shall also be brought before governors and kings for My sake... [that's what the Sanhedrin was] ...for a witness to them and to the Gentiles. Now when they deliver you up, do not be anxious *about* how or what you should speak; for in that hour it shall be given to you what you shall speak. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you" (vs 16-20). That's exactly what it was with Stephen (Acts 7). This was a mighty, profound and very, very moving thing that he was brought up before this council.

Even though Luke wrote this, could this be the memory of Paul who was Saul? *I would say, yes*, because he was undoubtedly there with him. Remember, he was climbing within Judaism. He was about #2 or 3 going right up the scale in Judaism.

Acts 7:53: "'Who received the law by *the* disposition of angels, but have not kept *it*.'" All the time professing to keep the laws of God, Judaism does not. They keep *their own!* They keep *their tradition!* They hide it behind the word called *torah*. Torah, which means law, incorporates everything that they have read, and all oral tradition combined, and in the middle of it is the Bible so buried under it that they never get to it.

Verse 54: "And when they heard these things, they were cut to their hearts, and they gnashed their teeth at him." I thought when I first read that that actually bit him. I don't think so. I think they were sitting there gnashing upon their

teeth as they were listening to him speak. It's what you would call today *body language*; the clinched jaw; they could hardly stand it.

Verse 55: "But he, being filled with *the* Holy Spirit, looked intently into heaven *and* saw *the* glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." That was quite a vision—wasn't it? Quite an inspiration just at the last minute before they were going to get him and kill him.

- Was God involved in this? *Yes!*
- Was Christ involved in this? *Yes!*

Christ was standing. Normally, He's sitting at the right hand of God. Here He was standing, looking down to see what was going to take place.

Verse 56: "And he said, 'Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right *hand* of God.'" *That did it!* That angered them so much! That was like throwing gasoline on a raging fire!

Verse 57: "Then they cried out with a loud voice, *and* stopped their ears... [No more! We don't want to hear this!] ...and rushed upon him with one accord." Just a mass going up and getting him.

It wasn't against Stephen, it was their hatred of God! Sitting there, supposedly carrying out the will of God and the office of God and they hated God and they turned their backs on God. Again, we can go back to that which we gave in the book of Malachi. ***God rejected them because they rejected Him!***

Verse 58: "And cast *him* out of the city *and* stoned *him*. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man called Saul." They were so involved in this, they took off their jackets and grabbed the stones—as many as they could—and were throwing and stoning. I imagine that he was just covered with a heap of stones. When you're hit with stones, that's very, very painful. He died a very excruciating death!

Verse 59: "And they stoned Stephen, who called upon *God*, saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' And he fell to his knees *and* cried with a loud voice... [You talk about a converted attitude, this is something!] ...'Lord, do not lay this sin to their charge.'.... [all this great grand and glorious witnessing that so-called evangelists want to do, let's see if this will happen when it comes to them. Quite a thing!] ...And after he had said this, he died" (vs 59-60). The thing that's important with this is that ***God answered that prayer immediately!*** We don't realize it, but He did! Now maybe we can understand some of the motivation of Paul, because he was standing there:

- He saw it!

- He heard it!
- He participated in it!
- He agreed with it!
- He wanted more!

Acts 8:1: "Now Saul had consented to killing him. And that day a great persecution arose against the Church that *was* in Jerusalem... [they wanted to get rid of all it.] ...and all *the believers* were scattered throughout the countries of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. But **Saul was ravaging the Church...**" (vs 1-3)—to root up just like a wild boar goes out into the forest and just roots everything up with the big tusks that he has and just tears it apart.

"...going from house to house, entering in... [going from house to house to house; this is nothing more than Nazism and Communism—right? *Same thing, looking for them!*] ...and dragging *out* men and women, *and* delivering *them* up to prison. Therefore, those who were scattered passed through *everywhere*, preaching the Word of the Gospel" (vs 3-4). Instead of running and hiding in a corner, they ran out and preached even louder. God was going to now begin to open things in such a way that we haven't understood.

Then we have the first encounter here with Simon Magus, which is one of the first counterfeits to come along. We have to understand that religion in Samaria was also based on Judaism, because the temple that was built by Sanballat was staffed with a renegade priests which left during the days of Nehemiah. They went up there and established their own temple made just like the one in Jerusalem. They had Levites for their priests and everything.

Later on many of the Gentiles embraced this Judaism-type religion that they had in Samaria and it developed into this with Simon Magus. Let's see what Jesus said about this to the woman at the well:

John 4:17: "The woman answered and said, 'I do not have a husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You have spoken well in saying, "I do not have a husband"; for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband. This you have spoken truly'" (vs 17-18). How is He going to know? Does God, even in the flesh, know? *Yes!*

Verse 19: "The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.... [astute observation] ...Our fathers worshiped in this mountain... [that's where the temple was and that's where Simon Magus was, at the temple] ...but you say that the place where it is obligatory to worship is in Jerusalem'" (vs 19-20). Yes, go to the true temple of God in Jerusalem, and it was the true temple of

God. Corrupt as it was, it was still the true temple of God until He removed it.

Verse 21: “Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you shall neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship the Father. You do not know what you worship....’” (vs 21-22). We’re going to see what they were worshipping: demons, men. As a matter of fact, we could unequivocally say that as far as the counterfeit religion of this world is concerned, Simon Magus was truly the first pope. He was pope before he had anything to do with Christianity. Most people don’t understand that.

“...We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.... [out of Judea] ...But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth; for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner. God *is* Spirit... [not *a* spirit] ...and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and in Truth” (vs 22-24).

That was the encounter that Jesus had with the woman at the well, and that gives us an idea now of who Simon Magus was.

Let’s come back here to Acts 8 and see that this brand of Judaism—which by the way was also connected with Alexandria, Egypt—had a close connection between the temple in Samaria with the Jews there and the Jews in Alexandria. Both of them were renegade Jews run out of Judea.

Acts 8:5: “Then Philip went down to a city of Samaria *and* proclaimed Christ to them; and the multitudes listened intently with one accord to the things spoken by Philip when they heard and saw the signs that he did, for unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many of those who had *them*; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed” (vs 5-7).

God was doing a special miracle as a special witness to the city of Samaria. Why would He do that?

Verse 8: And there was great joy in that city. But *there was* a certain man named Simon... [an individual particular man] ...who had from earlier times been practicing sorcery... [witchcraft to bewitch the people. What do you do with sorcery and witchcraft? There are demons around, so he was dealing with demonism, probably very, very high demons.] ...in the city and astounding the nation of Samaria, proclaiming himself to be some great one” (vs 8-9). Some great important religious figure.

Verse 10: “To him they had all given heed... [everyone obeyed him because he had pope-like powers] ...from the least to the greatest... [even the highest level of government there in Samaria]

...saying, ‘This man is the great power of God.’” This was quite a confrontation that came on here!

Verse 11: “Now, they were giving heed to him because *he* had for a long time...” Going back into the ministry of Christ. So, when Christ told the woman at the well, ‘You don’t know what you’re worshipping’—they were worshipping Simon Magus, demons, they had all the idols there in their temple and so forth. It was a true statement.

“...bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip, who was preaching the Gospel—the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ—they were baptized, both men and women” (vs 11-12). Simon’s reaction was a little different than the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin said to get rid of the problem and kill them. Simon said, ‘I like this; let me have a part of this.’ He probably came feigning up to Philip and says, ‘I want to be baptized.’ And, of course, Philip wanting to do the will of God, baptized him.

Verse 13: “Then Simon himself also believed...” This is the wrong kind of belief, but he was baptized. Have we seen that there have been people who have been baptized who really didn’t believe? *Yes!* What happens? *When they’re in the Church, years later, things happen that you wonder how on earth did that happen!* Because they had the wrong kind of belief to begin with.

“...and after being baptized, he steadfastly continued with Philip...” (v 13). Politically near, let’s get close to this; proximity of power is the way the infiltrators always do—right? We can see all of this here. You’d be surprised how much intrigue the Bible really has in it. These are some classic accounts.

(go to the next track)

We can look back and we can see where there were high-powered people that came in, got close to the proximity of power, feigned that they believed, even baptized—maybe in a bathtub in Hong Kong. *Yes!*

“...and as he beheld *the* signs and great works of power *that were* being done, he was amazed. Now, when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God...” (vs 13-14). This is a crisis! Someone came back and said, ‘You won’t believe what happened! Simon Magus was baptized!’ It would be like if someone today said, ‘Guess what, I went to Rome and baptized the pope.’

“...they sent Peter and John to them who, after coming down *to Samaria*, prayed for them, that they might receive *the* Holy Spirit... [that is all those who were baptized] ...for as yet it had not fallen upon any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid *their* hands on them, and they received *the* Holy Spirit.

Now when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, he offered them money” (vs 14-18). This is where you have the account that is known as ‘Simony’—that is buying of a religious office.

Why couldn’t Philip lay hands on for the receipt of the Holy Spirit? I would say he could, with no question, but I think that God inspired not to do it, because this was a crisis of major proportion. This was real major threat to reaching out with the Gospel out beyond the confines of Judea. I think God inspired him not to do it. Also, they were probably made aware of it, too, with the message coming back.

Verse 19: “Saying, ‘Give this authority to me also... [He wanted power/authority; he wanted to buy a religious office. Again, God hates religion! Why? *You’ve got it right here!* It all degenerates into this hierarchical type of thing that oppresses people.

“...so that on whomever I lay hands, he may receive *the* Holy Spirit.’ But Peter said to him, ‘May your money be destroyed with you because you thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money’” (vs 19-20). Very important! The gift of God comes with repentance.

What did Peter say on the Day of Pentecost? *Repent and be baptized and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit!* That’s how it comes. Not with might! Not with money! Not because of who you are or what you are or what you’ve done!

Verse 21: “You have neither part nor lot in this matter...” That means *in the apostleship*. He was trying to buy an apostleship! They drew lots to chose Mathis to replace the fallen Judas.

Acts 1:22: “Beginning from the baptism of John until the day in which He was taken up from us, one of these shall become a witness with us of His resurrection.’ Then they put forth two... [select out someone who had been with them all along] ...Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus; and Matthias. And they prayed, saying, ‘You, Lord, *the* Knower of the hearts of all, show which one of these two You have personally chosen to receive the part... [Greek: ‘meros’] ...of this ministry and apostleship... [that’s what he’s talking about here *you have no part in this matter*] ...from which Judas *in* transgressing fell, to go to his own place.’ Then they cast their lots; and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles” (vs 22-26).

He was appointed with the eleven apostles. When he says in Acts 5:21: “You have neither part nor lot... [What Simon trying to do is set himself up to be an apostle; buy an apostleship.] ...in this matter, for **your heart is not right before God.**”

Again, it doesn’t matter who you are, what you are, how rich you are, how poor you are, how old you are, how young you are, how strong you are, how weak you are, male or female, Jew or Greek, free or bond, however you want to put it—IF your heart is not right with God then it really doesn’t count. That’s why it’s so important.

Verse 22: “Repent, therefore, of this your wickedness, and beseech God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.” It’s so bad he’s saying IF it’s possible to be forgiven.

Verse 23: “For I perceive *that* you are in *the* gall of bitterness and *the* bondage of unrighteousness.” We could do a whole sermon on that. That means bound up in idolatry and bound up in hatefulness to God. Here he is running this demon ministry over here, which is ‘gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity.’ That’s quite a description— isn’t it? *Yes!*

Verse 24: “But Simon answered *and* said, ‘You beseech the Lord on my behalf... [No, Simon, you’ve got to do it yourself!] ...so that **none of those things which you have spoken may come upon me.**’” So, he probably said more than just the words here. We’re just getting a summary. I imagine Peter just gave him everything that there was.

Verse 25: “So then, after they had earnestly testified and preached the Word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem; *and* they preached the Gospel *in* many villages of the Samaritans *as they went.*” And then an angel led Philip to the Eunuch and so forth.

This is all important to understand how that God’s way is Scripturalism and that Judaism is separate from the Word of God. *Judaism is a pagan religion cloaked in the guise of being the Word of God!* It is not! A lot of people have accused me of being an anti-Semite. I am not anti-Semitic. I am as Christ is, anti-Judaism! As well as Christ is anti-Catholicism, as well as 98% of Protestantism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Shintoism and any other religion of the world, because Christ said that ‘I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.’

The reason that the Jews spew out anti-Semitism against anyone who would say anything against them is because they feel they are above the reproach. They feel that anything they do or say is lawful and legal because they are the chosen people. If you don’t believe that then what you have to do is read parts of the Talmud and you’ll find out. It will be quite an education for you.

That’s why Christianity did not come out of Judaism! It was entirely separate and God had to sever it. Now then, God does something marvelous here, beginning with Acts 9, with Saul. Here is the

coup de gras against Judaism. Here is there highest Gestapo officer out doing his nastiest work! Saul! Saul means *destroyer*!

Acts 9:1: “Now Saul, still breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, asking him *for* letters *to take* to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who were of that way, he might bring *them* bound, both men and women, to Jerusalem” (vs 1-2).

They were determined to get rid of this—right? Here is the most zealous one! Here is one here who out really doing Satan’s work. Can God call someone just like that? *Yes!* Right in the midst of the most heinous Satanic activity possible: killing those in the Church! God doesn’t think like we do. We wouldn’t think of calling someone like that. But God did, and for a purpose!

Let’s understand something about Saul. There are two Sauls in the Bible that are noteworthy. One is King Saul from the tribe of Benjamin who was a failure and rebelled against God. He was replaced with King David, a man after God’s heart.

The other Saul is the Saul right here of Acts 9 who was the enemy of God, hater and destroyer of the faith, whom God called and healed the breach caused by Saul the Benjaminite who was the king. Saul here also was of the tribe of Benjamin. Very profound when you see both sides of that coin.

Breach: In other words, Saul rebelling against God, now God is calling Saul who was rebelling against God and converting him and changing him to now working for God. That’s what I mean. Instead of going against God, now he’s going for God. One was redeemed, the other was not.

The reason I say this is because King Saul when he first started out knew God! Then he left God and rebelled (1-Sam. 15)—where he was told to go and he didn’t do the will of God. He said that ‘to not obey is the sin of witchcraft and rebellion.’

Here is someone who started out for God and sinned and rebelled and was rejected. Now with Saul, the Benjaminite who becomes the Apostle Paul, starts out as an enemy of God not knowing God—not really to begin with—then is called to *know* God. That’s what I mean.

Someone brought up that Rachel, the mother of Benjamin, died when he was born. Today, just in the world, they could have done a partial-birth abortion and saved her life and we would not have the Apostle Paul. It’s amazing!

All right, back here to Acts 9:3: “But it came to pass while he was journeying, as he drew near to Damascus, that suddenly a light from heaven shined

round about him. And after falling to the ground... [That’s startling—Isn’t it? Apparently he was going along on his horse or donkey and fell to the earth.] ...he heard a voice say to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?’ And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting. *It is* hard for you to kick against *the* pricks.’” (vs 3-5).

In other words, just like these long thorns that they have on some of the bushes in the Middle East and they become very sharp. That’s what he’s talking about. If you kick against those, you’re through! He’s saying to Saul, ‘Look, you’re not going to succeed in this. Do it all you want, but you’re not going to succeed; now I’ve called you.’

Notice his change; notice how quickly he changed; this is amazing, v 6: “Then, trembling and astonished, he said, ‘Lord, what will You have me to do?’.... [Instead of saying, ‘Well, I’ve been on an important mission here to kill all of Your followers. NO!'] ...And the Lord *said* to him, ‘Get up and go into the city, and you shall be told what you must do.’ Now the men who were traveling with him stood speechless; *for* they indeed heard the voice, but they saw no one” (vs 6-7). They didn’t even see the light. Only Saul saw the light. Apparently they just saw him fall off his horse.

Verse 8: “Then Saul arose from the ground; but when he opened his eyes, he saw no one. And they led him by the hand and brought *him* to Damascus.” That’s going to give him a lot to think about—Isn’t it? All of a sudden you have an encounter with Christ Himself. I don’t know if Christ came down and knocked him off the horse or whatever it may be; or an angel did it and Christ spoke to him. But now he’s blind; he’s being led by the hand, whereas, before he was up and about and strong and threatening all of this sort of thing.

Verse 9: “But *for* three days he was not *able* to see, and he did not eat or drink.... [He was fasting, seeking the will of God. You can be guaranteed that’s what he was doing here.] ...Now there was in Damascus a certain disciple named Ananias. And the Lord said to him in a vision, ‘Ananias.’ And he said, ‘Behold, I *am here*, Lord.’ And the Lord *said* to him, ‘Arise *and* go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in *the* house of Judas for *one* named Saul from Tarsus; for behold, he is praying... [that’s what he was doing, I imagine for most of the three days and three nights] ...and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming and putting *his* hands on him, so that he may receive sight’” (vs 9-12). God was communicating with Saul immediately—wasn’t He? Answering the prayers immediately! Giving him answers!

Verse 13: “Then Ananias answered, ‘Lord, I have heard from many *people* about this man, how

many evil things he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And *even* in this place he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.' But the Lord said to him, 'Go... [Just go and do what I say; sometimes we don't need to know the reason why, as long as we know it's from God.] ...for this *man* is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before *the* Gentiles... [which is *Jesus Christ* written in Greek] ...and kings, and *the* children of Israel; for I will show him what great things he must suffer for My name.' Then Ananias went away and came into the house; and after laying *his* hands on him, he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord has sent me, *even* Jesus, Who appeared to you on the road in which you came, so that you might receive sight and be filled with *the* Holy Spirit'" (vs 13-17).

Someone asked me if this was when Paul was ordained. I suppose that he had hands laid on him when he was chosen, so I would say that at that time, yes.

Verse 18: "And it was as *if* scales immediately fell from his eyes, and he instantly received sight; and he arose *and* was baptized. And after eating food, he was strengthened. Then Saul was with the disciples in Damascus *for* a number of days. And in the synagogues he immediately began to proclaim Christ, that He is the Son of God" (vs 18-20).

This was an astounding thing. Here is Heimlich Himmler of Judaism of that time coming with arrest warrants, with bonds and chains, with ropes to take them all off and bring them down to be killed or executed or thrown in prison, and now he's standing up there saying that Jesus is the Christ. You talk about a total turnaround! Boy! That is something! That's why the Apostle Paul, I think, was so profound in what he wrote. I imagine that the thing that really solidified in his mind was that three days of fasting and prayer when he was seeking the will of God and trying to know what was happening to his life.

Verse 21: "And all who heard *him* were amazed... [I guess so! I mean, if you heard that Saul was at the synagogue, you might not want to even go. You might figure that some of his lieutenants are there with arrest warrants to get you.] ...and said, 'Is not this the man who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and who came here for this *purpose*, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?' But Saul increased *even* more in power, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, **proving** that this is the Christ" (vs 21-22). He knew the Word of God! He could turn here and there in the Scriptures and prove it. He had to be some kind of real preacher to do that. We're going see that almost every synagogue that he went into there was a riot. I mean, he had a tumultuous life. He had a life filled with pain, sorrow and agony, as well

as joy, love, hope and all of this. He had quite a life and resulted in 14 epistles in the New Testament, and actually was the one whom God used to formulate the Truth of the Gospel in doctrinal form. No one else did that, just the Apostle Paul.

In the book of Galatians Paul recounts this. Notice how he held to this without wavering. That's what's so important, because we are going to learn that the Apostle Peter was temporarily a victim of Judaism. He was the apostle to the circumcision and the circumcision political party got to him.

Galatians 1:6: "I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which *in reality* is not another *gospel*..." (vs 6-7). There is one and only one Gospel—not any other gospel. Some can call it the gospel, but it's really not. If you have a counterfeit \$100 bill, do you have \$100? *No!* You've got a counterfeit \$100 bill. If you have a counterfeit gospel, do you have the Gospel? *No! There's only one!*

"...but there are some who are troubling you and are desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ.... [Change it a little bit. Notice how fervently, just as fervently as he was against the Church, he was for God.] ...But if we, or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!" (vs 7-8).

The reason I'm going through this is because it's very important to understand, the separation between Scripturalism vs Judaism, or the Gospel vs Judaism, because he defines it here in the next few verses.

Verse 9: "As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! Now then, am I striving to please men, or God? Or am I motivated to please men?..." (vs 9-10).

That's where the Church always gets in trouble. Always, when you seek to please men, especially those in the world! Didn't it happen? What did they want to do? We had the two fine colleges and what happened? We wanted to be accredited! So, we run out to the world and say, 'Oh, we want to be accredited.' *That's fine! We have standards of accreditation.* And the big hang-up was the 'trinity.' They told them right at the get-go, if you believe in the trinity, 'we will not accredit you as is.' What happened? *Change God! Change belief in God! Change all of the other doctrines, and now the colleges are no more!* Can there be any greater punishment? Granted, there were some things that were not good that came out of the colleges that is true. But there were many things that were very good that came out from it.

This was back in the 70s when they first approached and Herbert Armstrong said, 'NO way! We're not going for the trinity. We don't need to be accredited.' He didn't say 'trinity' but he said 'If they won't take us as we are, we don't need the world.' Well, if they would have stuck by that it would have been a different story! What happened? *They waited until he died!* What happened? *Two years after they started, they started adopting the trinity!* How did they start it? *I remember very clearly, I heard the tape by Mike Snider, a radio program, he was asked: How do you view the Godhead? Well, we have the Father and the Son, and we believe that the Holy Spirit is Divine!* As soon as I heard that, I said that they're going for the trinity. First step! I came back and told someone that they're going for the trinity. *No!* Yes, they are! *No!* Yes, they are! *No!* Did they? *Yes!* That's why the Apostle Paul was so fervent in this.

"...For if I am yet pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ" (v 10). Important lesson. All ministers and teachers, important lesson! You have to please God! Do the things that are pleasing in His sight, by yielding to Him! Not that you're going to do and go out do something that is so great and mighty that now God is pleased with you, because you've gone above and beyond. You can't do anything greater for God than what Christ has already done. If you love Him, believe Him and follow in faith then you're going to be pleasing to God.

Verse 11: "But I certify to you, brethren, that the Gospel that was preached by me is not according to man; because neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught *it by man*; rather, *it was by the revelation of Jesus Christ*. For you heard of my **former conduct when I was in Judaism**, how I was excessively persecuting the Church of God and was destroying it" (vs 11-13)—wasted it and profited it; meaning he was climbing the ladder of the hierarchy of Judaism.

Verse 14: "And I was advancing in Judaism *far* beyond many *of my* contemporaries in my *own* nation, being more abundantly zealous for *the* traditions of my fathers.... [That's why it's so important that we do not follow Judaism. He made it clear right here!] ...But when it pleased God, Who selected me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by His grace, to reveal His own Son in me, in order that I might preach Him as the Gospel among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those *who were* apostles before me; but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus" (vs 14-17).

When he went away, he had to be let down in a basket out of the city wall so he could escape by night. Immediately, his life was fraught with all

kinds of problems. He was in Arabia and apparently for three years. What did Christ teach him? *I do not know!* But he was taught by revelation. I do not know if Christ manifested Himself in a way that Paul could see Him, or what it may be. But he was taught by revelation.

Verse 18: "Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Peter, and I remained with him fifteen days.... [I imagine that was a shock to Peter—wasn't it? 'Hello, I'm Saul!' Where have you been? 'Well, it's a long story, I need 15 days to tell you.'] ...But I did not see *any* of the other apostles, except James the brother of the Lord. (Now the things that I am writing to you, behold, before God, I am not lying). Then I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. But I was unknown by face to the Churches in Judea which *are* in Christ; they only heard, 'The one who once persecuted us is now preaching the Gospel—the faith which he once destroyed.' And they glorified God in me" (vs 18-24).

So, there's the calling of the Apostle Paul. He being a formerly high-ranking official in Judaism now became the one to do the final separation between Scripturalism and Judaism.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Acts 5:28-42
- 2) Acts 6:1, 9-15
- 3) Acts 7:1
- 4) Galatians 3:26-29
- 5) Isaiah 66:1-4
- 6) Acts 7:44-52
- 7) Matthew 10:16-20
- 8) Acts 7:53-60
- 9) Acts 8:1-4
- 10) John 4
- 11) Acts 5:8-21
- 12) Acts 1:22-26
- 13) Acts 5:21-25
- 14) Acts 9:1-22
- 15) Galatians 1:6-24

Scriptures referenced, not quoted: 1 Samuel 15

Also referenced:

Sermon: *Three Miracles of Jesus*

Sermon Series: *God Hates Religion*

Books:

- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Josephus*

Scripturalism vs Judaism XIX

Ministry of Paul

Beginning, as we have learned, with John the Baptist, God was separating the Church from Judaism. When we come to Acts 9, we find that God called Saul who was later to become Paul. Saul was one of the leading, if perhaps not the third leading Pharisee in Judaism in Jerusalem. The calling of Saul to become the Apostle Paul was really a tremendous thing to happen.

It literally turned the whole Jewish world upside down. So much so that even to this day the Jews will say, 'Christianity we understand, Jesus we understand, but Paul we will never forgive.' You will see why as we go through and look at some of the things that happened to Paul as we continue on with this series.

Acts 9: 22: "But Saul increased *even* more in power, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, **proving that this is the Christ.**" The one who is destroying Christianity, hauling them off to jail—to be beaten, scourged and tried—was now proving that this was the very Christ. You talk about a flip-flop; you talk about a total change.

Verse 23: "Now, when many days were fulfilled, the Jews consulted together to kill him." Interesting! How many times did the Jews go about to solve their problems by killing someone? How many times did they seek to kill Jesus? *Many, many times!*

Verse 24: "But their plot was made known to Saul. And they were watching the gates both day and night, in order that they might kill him. Then the disciples took him by night *and* let *him* down by the wall, lowering *him* in a basket. And when Saul came to Jerusalem, he attempted to join himself to the disciples; but all were afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple" (vs 24-28). I would imagine that would be hard to believe; very hard to believe. This is why Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, even though he did go into the synagogues to start his ministry wherever he went.

Verse 27: "Then Barnabas took him *and* brought *him* to the apostles, and related to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus. And he was with them, coming in and going out in Jerusalem, and speaking boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then he spoke and disputed with the Greeks, but they attempted to kill him" (vs 27-29). Paul was about as popular as Christ at this particular time.

Verse 30: "And when the brethren learned of *it*, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him

away to Tarsus.... [that's where he was born and grew up] ...Then the Churches throughout the whole of Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace indeed. *And* they increased, being edified and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit" (vs 30-31). Then there's a notable miracle that happened here the rest of Acts 9.

Let's understand something about Judaism: In its strictest practice would not allow a Jew to even be in the same room with a Gentile. Would not allow them to eat with Gentiles, fellowship with Gentiles. Gentiles were 'goyeem'—meaning that's a kind word for *cattle*. What Peter was about to embark upon here in Acts 10 was a very profound thing and caused great distress among the Jews. Still at that time, even Jews in the Church, had contemplated a national salvation by Christ's return. They did not understand that Christ was going to send them into the whole world and deal with men and women, but in particularly men uncircumcised. This, when you understand the covenant with Israel and the circumcision covenant, was a profound and mammoth change, which was another reason why Christ died.

When you change a covenant then you must die. So, in order for the New Covenant to be enacted and God to then deal with all people, He had to come and die to change those covenants and fulfill the other part of the covenants that He gave to Abraham. Of course, that was the hardest thing for the Jews to comprehend and understand.

Let's pick it up here with the account concerning Cornelius, and let's see what happened. This reminds me an awful lot of some things that we always need to keep in mind: Just like with Elijah: He said, 'Oh, Lord, just me.' And God said, 'Now, Elijah, there, there, quit feeling sorry for yourself, blow your nose, dry your eyes and put your sandals on and go do what I told you, because I have 7,000 that haven't bowed the knee to Baal. Elijah didn't know a single one of them! Likewise here with the account of Cornelius, this let's us know that God may be doing a whole lot of other things with a whole lot of other people that you and I don't know anything about. Maybe God will bring us into contact with them in the future; maybe He won't—we don't know. But if He does, we need to be prepared.

Peter had no clue about what was going to happen, so God had to intervene with a Divine miracle on both parts: with Cornelius and with Peter. That's what this is all about, Acts 10:1: "Now *there* was in Caesarea a certain man named Cornelius, a

centurion of a band that is called *the Italian band*, a devout man who also feared God with all his house, both in giving many alms to the people and in beseeching God continually *in prayer*. He clearly saw in a vision, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming to him and saying to him, 'Cornelius.' But as he fixed his eyes on him, he became afraid *and* said, 'What is it, Lord?' And he said to him, 'Your prayers and your alms have gone up for a memorial before God'" (vs 1-4).

What is this telling us? *Anyone who truly, with a true heart, prays to God, God will hear!* In this case *unto salvation*, in other cases of people not called to salvation, God will still hear and answer their prayers according to their faith for that particular thing. That's why prayers are answered for people who are not necessarily called to salvation, and to have a prayer answered in that way doesn't mean it's a salvational thing. It just that they prayed to God sincerely. Maybe God will deal with them later, you never know.

I remember one time when we were living down on a farm and I must have been about 9-years-old at that time. We had horses and cows, and I had to milk the cows every morning before I went to school, and milk them every night when I got back; separate the milk, gather the eggs, feed the chickens and we had a couple of hogs from time-to-time and we had some horses—King and Duke. We used the horses to plow and we had 20 acres and we raised our own hay. We had all the equipment that went with it, and part of the equipment was that we had these hay rakes—these big long things with the big wheels on them and the rakes come down and look like giant teeth coming down. You go through and you rake up the hay and hit a lever and the teeth come up and it leaves a nice windrow of hay.

One of the neighbors asked my dad if he could hire me to do his hay, to put it in windrows. We harnessed up the horse and put it on the hay rake and went tooling on down the road about a quarter of a mile—one of those old hard country dirt roads. Part of it was an area where the cedar trees came up real high and it was almost like going through a dark tunnel. Just beyond that area then was where the field was. So, I was down there raking the hay and the horse got spooked! Here I am, the horse takes off running like crazy. When they're spooked, there's nothing you can do. They just get going, and here I am on this rake, just fearful for my life.

It bolts out of the field, goes up the road, it's in this place where the cedar trees are with the overlapping and in the tunnel there, and I'm thinking to myself *how am I going to get off here; what am I going to do?* This horse was just snorting and going down the road as fast as it can be. You just have this little seat that you're sitting on. It came to my mind,

because I was taking gym classes, to get behind the seat, drop down and do some tumbles when you hit the ground. That's what I did. I dropped down, the horse went chasing on up the road and I did my tumbles and everything was fine.

When I got done I said, 'Thank you, Lord.' Well, God spared me! I was very thankful for it. The horse goes charging up the way and part of the tongue of the rake breaks off, it knocks over a fence post, my mother is running down to the road and sees this laying there. 'Oh, Fred's dead!' The horse went charging on about another half-mile, ran out to the main highway, and then ran into a telephone pole and that's where it stopped.

I can say that that was an answer to prayer at that time. God was not dealing with me on a salvational level at 9-years-old. I'm very happy that God intervened for me at that particular time. You can look out and see people that you know that God has answered prayers for them, maybe not for a salvational situation, but for whatever. Maybe God will deal with them later, who knows! Maybe in answering that prayer now, maybe later something else will happen. You don't know what God is going to do.

Here this is a profound account. Why? Where was the place they were to pray? *Jerusalem!* Where was the Gentile to be when he prayed? *In the court of the Gentiles*—a second-class citizen. Now you get the whole picture of what's happening here; this is profound.

Verse 5: "'And now send men to Joppa, and call for Simon who is surnamed Peter. He is lodging with a certain Simon, a tanner, whose house is by *the sea*. He shall tell you what you must do.' And when the angel who had spoken to him departed, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who continually waited on him; and after relating everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. And on the next day, about the sixth hour as these were journeying and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray. And he became very hungry and desired to eat. But while they were preparing *the meal*, a trance fell upon him" (vs 5-10). God had to supernaturally intervene to tell Peter this message.

This is not a message to eat unclean foods! This is where many people turn to justify eating unclean foods, but they don't eat many of the things that are listed here. This is a special vision for a particular purpose.

Verse 11: "And he saw the heaven opened; and a certain vessel descended upon him, like a great sheet, bound by *the four corners* and let down upon the earth; in which were all the four-footed beasts of the earth, including the wild beasts, and the creeping

things and the birds of heaven. Then a voice came to him, *saying*, 'Arise, Peter, kill and eat.' But Peter said, 'In no way, Lord; for I have never eaten anything *that is common or unclean*'" (vs 11-14).

Do you know the difference between something 'common' and something 'unclean' in the terminology of Judaism? ***Unclean*** has to do with the unclean foods as listed in Deut. 14 and Lev. 11. ***Common*** has to do with clean foods that a Gentile has handled. In other words, if you have a chicken that is raised by a Jew, killed by a Jew, cooked by a Jew, eaten by a Jew, that is ***clean***. But if you have a chicken that is raised by a Gentile, killed by a Gentile, cooked by a Gentile, eaten by a Jew, that is ***common***. They also have it with bread and other foods, and so forth.

Another law that the Jews have concerning *common* is this; has to do with bread: If it's under the supervision of a Jew, over a Jew, it is *clean*. If it is a Gentile under the supervision of a Jew it is edible by the Jew for non-religious purposes because it's *common*, because a Gentile handled it. So, this division was just wide and vast. Now God is going to destroy it. This is what this chapter is all about.

Verse 15: "And a voice *came* again the second time to him, *saying*, 'What God has cleansed, you are not to call common.' Now, this took place three times, and the vessel was taken up again into heaven. And as Peter was questioning within himself..." (vs 15-17). He didn't run down and say 'Hooray! Thrown on the pork! Let's have pork loin tonight, I just got a new vision from God.' No! Pigs have their place, trust me, we wouldn't have the garbage problem if we used them properly. We could get rid of all of these toxins very simply, just feed them to the hogs. Oh no, we can't do that, we've got to fill the mountains with garbage.

"...Peter was questioning within himself what the vision that he saw might mean, the men who were sent from Cornelius, having inquired for the house of Simon, immediately stood at the porch; and they called out, asking if Simon who *was* surnamed Peter was lodging there. Then, as Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, 'Behold, three men are seeking you... [the sheet was let down three times, now here come three Gentiles standing without] ...Now arise *and* go down, and go forth with them, doubting nothing, because I have sent them.' And Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius *and* said, 'Look, I am the one you are seeking. For what purpose have you come?' And they said, 'Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous man and one who fears God, and who has a good report by the whole nation of the Jews, was Divinely instructed by a Holy angel to send for you *to come* to his house, and to listen to words from you.' Then he called them in to lodge

there...." (vs 17-23).

I would have to say that they probably lodged them out somewhere away from where the Jews were. But they nevertheless lodged them.

"...And on the next day Peter went with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him And on the next day, they came to Caesarea. Now Cornelius was expecting them *and* had called together his kinsmen and *his* intimate friends. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him *and* fell at *his* feet, worshiping *him*. But Peter..." (vs 23-26) being the first pope, Peter said, 'I am happy you recognized my office; kiss my ring and my feet.' ***NO!*** If Peter was the first pope, here's the first opportunity. ***No***, didn't happen that way!

"...raised him up, saying, 'Stand up, for I myself am also a man.' And as he was talking with him, he went in and found many gathered together. And he said to them, '***You know that it is unlawful for a man who is a Jew to associate with or come near to anyone of another race. But God has shown me that no man should be called common or unclean.***'" (vs 26-28). ***That is the purpose of the vision!*** There is the explanation of it.

One who is a Jew, unlawful. By whose law? Which Scripture? *It doesn't say that!* The Scriptures say that you are to have ***one law*** for the stranger and yourself—correct? ***Yes!*** This is a law of Judaism; the laws of separation. This is the middle wall or partition that Christ was now breaking down that divided Jew and Gentile. This is a profound thing that was occurring. That's why it's recorded in the Scriptures.

Verse 29: "'For this reason, I also came without objection when I was sent for. I ask therefore, for what purpose did you send for me?' And Cornelius said, 'Four days ago I was fasting until this hour, and *at* the ninth hour I was praying in my house; and suddenly a man stood before me in bright apparel, and said, "Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. Now then, send to Joppa and call for Simon who is surnamed Peter; he is lodging by *the* sea in *the* house of Simon, a tanner. When he comes, he will speak to you." Therefore, I sent for you at once; and you did well to come. So then, we are all present before God to hear all things that have been commanded you by God'" (vs 29-33).

What a reception! Completely unheard of opportunity—correct? And very startling for Peter. Later we're going to see Peter's hypocrisy cost him dearly (Gal 2). Peter should have known better. He was the very first one used of God to breakdown the barrier, the middle wall or partition between Jew and Gentile.

Verse 34: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth *and*

said, ‘Of a truth I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons.’” Very important!

- it’s not who you are
- it’s not what you are
- it’s not what you think you are
- it’s not what other people think you are
- ***it is what is your heart before God that’s important***

God is no respecter of persons! Yet, how many things were run in the Church by respecting persons? How many of those things then subsequently backfired? *Many of them!* Why? *Because if you respect persons—i.e. politics—then you are going against the will of God!* And it’s going to backfire!

This is what Paul was teaching, Romans 2:3: “Now, do you think yourself, O man, whoever is judging those who commit such things, and you are practicing them *yourself*, that you shall escape the judgment of God?” That’s what happens with respect of persons. Did we not hear that the qualifications of a minister applies to everyone but this one person. Did that backfire? *Yes, big time, over and over again!*

Verse 4: “Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance? But you, according to your own hardness and unrepentant heart, are storing up wrath for yourself against *the* day of wrath and revelation of God’s righteous judgment, Who will render to each one according to his own works: On the one hand, to those who with patient endurance in good works are seeking glory and honor and immortality—eternal life; on the other hand, to those who are contentious and who disobey the Truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish—upon every soul of man who works out evil, both of *the* Jew first, and of *the* Greek; but glory and honor and peace to everyone who works good, both to *the* Jew first, and to *the* Greek... [this is what God was beginning to open up through Peter] ...**because there is no respect of persons with God**” (vs 4-11).

Let’s see what had to happen. There are three distinct miracles that took place.

1. the angel being sent to Cornelius
2. the vision to Peter to send him to Cornelius
3. the giving of the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles

Three distinct miracles to show how God wanted the Gospel preached.

Acts 10:34: “Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said, ‘Of a truth I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons, but in **every nation...**’” (vs 34-35). This is a Divine prophecy, because they weren’t

in every nation yet, were they? *No!* They were just in Galilee, Samaria and Judea, which was basically all of those who were familiar with Judaism.

“...the one who fears Him and works righteousness is acceptable to Him. The word that He sent to the children of Israel, preaching the Gospel of peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all), you have knowledge of; which declaration came throughout the whole of Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism that John proclaimed, *concerning* Jesus, Who was from Nazareth: how God anointed Him with *the* Holy Spirit and with power, *and* He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all *the* things that He did, both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed Him by hanging *Him* on a tree. *But* God raised Him up the third day, and showed Him openly” (vs 35-40). This is a summary of the sermon. I imagine that this took several hours to go through and explain.

Verse 41: “Not to all the people, but to witnesses who had been chosen before by God, to *those of* us who did eat and drink with Him after He had risen from *the* dead. And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to fully testify that it is He Who has been appointed by God *to be* Judge of *the* living and *the* dead. To Him all the prophets bear witness, *that* everyone who believes in Him receives remission of sins through His name” (vs 41-43).

Here’s the miracle, v 44: “While Peter was still speaking these words, **the Holy Spirit came upon all those who were listening** to the message.” Why did it have to be done this way? *Because in this Divine miracle, which was an exception, God was showing that He was going to give the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles the same way that He gave it to the apostles on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem!* The same way! That’s why!

Verse 45: “And the believers from the circumcision were astonished... [because they figured that all Gentiles would always remain second class *church* citizens. But not so! God says, ‘Not so!’ So, they were astonished!] ...as many as had come with Peter, that upon the Gentiles also the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out; for they heard them speak in *other* languages and magnify God....” (vs 45-46).

Can you imagine hearing some Italians speak in Hebrew or Aramaic? Then they knew it was exactly the same; had to be!

“...Then Peter responded *by saying*, ‘Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have also received the Holy Spirit as we *did*?’ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they besought him to

remain *for a number of days*" (vs 46-48). He stayed there probably teaching and preaching and everything. Quite a thing! This had to be done this particular way to convince the apostles that God was now going to deal with the Gentiles in the same way that He had dealt with them.

Notice the political uproar it caused when Peter came back to Jerusalem, Acts 11:1: "Now the apostles and the brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the Word of God." This went like wildfire. Probably some of those with Peter went on back and told them in Jerusalem: 'Guess what happened? We were right there! We heard them! We saw it!'

Verse 2: "And when Peter went up to Jerusalem... [after he stayed there certain days] ...those of *the* circumcision disputed with him... [good ole Pharisaic attitude] ...saying, '**You** went in to men who were uncircumcised and did eat with them'" (vs 2-3). You can almost hear it. You can just hear the words and the sounds the accusatory '**YOU** did this, didn't you, Peter?'

Verse 4: "But Peter related *the event* from the beginning and expounded *everything* in order to them..." I want you to pay attention to this: They who were of the circumcision. It's important for us to understand that from this time forward there was a Circumcision Party that was in Jerusalem within the Church, as well as Pharisees not within the Church. We're going to see that this whole thing built up a head of steam until we come to Acts 15. So, there was a Circumcision Party. There was that division within the Church. I imagine that they went back and they read the Scriptures.

What did it say concerning the Passover? All males had to be circumcised before they could take the Passover. Now we're dealing with a whole other situation that not only was God dealing with uncircumcised Gentiles on an equal basis with the Jews, but that they did not have to be circumcised to take the Passover. You talk about a heated debate within the Church! That really set everything on fire!

We look back at the early New Testament Church and it was not all hugs and kisses and roses without thorns. It created a great difficulty. Then Peter told the whole story.

Verse 15: "'And when I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came upon them, even as *it also came* upon us in *the* beginning. Then I remembered the Word of *the* Lord, how He had said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with *the* Holy Spirit.' Therefore, if God also gave them the same gift that *was given* to us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I *to dissent*? Do I have the power to forbid God?' And after hearing these things, they were silent; and they glorified

God, saying, 'Then to the Gentiles also has God indeed granted repentance unto life'" (vs 15-18). That was quite an episode here, and this was what you might call one of these earthshaking events that changed the history of the Church to the way that God wanted it to be, from the way that the Circumcision Party desired it to be.

Today we have a movement down in the Florida area and they're going around preaching sacred names and also saying that all the men must be circumcised, and everyone needs to be re-baptized in the name of Yahweh. That is going back to paganized Judaism coming within the Church. This is why it's important that we are well grounded and understand what God did, and understand the importance of this. That true Christianity is **removed from** Judaism; did not grow out of Judaism, but **removed** from it! So therefore, it's very important that we understand what Judaism is and what it stands for and what it does. God is interested in the heart, the converted heart. That is important.

Now, let's see what else happened here. I think this is going to be something we can look to. Here's what you would call some perfect evangelism.

Verse 19: "Now, those who had been scattered by the persecution that arose concerning Stephen... [which was several years before this] ...went through Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews only." Even the disciples going out were just finding the Jews only. But God didn't want it retained just to the Jews. He wanted it to go to all people.

Verse 20: "But certain men among them who were Cypriots and Cyrenians came to Antioch and spoke to the Greeks, preaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. And *the* hand of *the* Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord" (vs 20-21). Now we've got a lot of Greeks coming into this. The Greek's view of circumcision was complete repulsion! Now they're presented with a problem. What is going to happen here? How are they going to solve this?

Verse 22: "Now the report concerning them was heard in the ears of the Church that *was* in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced... [he saw the conversion, the Spirit, the grace of God] ...and he exhorted *them* all to cleave to the Lord **with purpose of heart**" (vs 22-23). That's really quite a profound statement there. Brethren, if there's any one thing we need today and that is *purpose of heart and to cleave unto the Lord!*

Verse 24—talking of Barnabas: "He was a good man, and was filled with *the* Holy Spirit and with faith. And a large multitude was added to the

Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to seek Saul; and after finding him..." (vs 24-26). Saul then after he was called, converted and trained by Christ for three and half years in the Arabian Desert, went back to Tarsus and just was sort of put on hold until the time came that God was ready.

Here's the beginning of Paul's ministry. He then could come in with the Spirit of God, with the knowledge of God and having been a Pharisee of the strictest sect of the Pharisees. No little mean Pharisee. Not just a run of the mill Pharisee. Now with the teachings of Christ he could show the *true converted understanding* of the Scriptures and what God wanted for the Gentiles.

"...he brought him to Antioch. And it came to pass *that for* a whole year they assembled together with the Church and taught a great multitude. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians" (v 26). And a Christian is one who follows Christ. Then there was a prophecy of the dearth; a prophecy of the drought and Barnabas and Saul took the offering up to Jerusalem to the saints up there.

Acts 12—the martyrdom of James; the imprisonment of Peter. This is the second time with the imprisonment of Peter and then an angel came and let him out at night. That's old routine to Peter. The next time he would get in jail he would say, 'Well, wonder when the angel is coming?' Here he got out again. Then it shows about the death of Herod.

Acts 13—this is where Saul is ordained as an apostle. He was not an apostle immediately. He was told that he was going to be a teacher, but not that he was an apostle. Acts 13:1: "Now, there were certain prophets and teachers in the Church that was at Antioch, including Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch), and Saul. And as they were ministering and fasting to the Lord, the Holy Spirit said, 'Separate both Barnabas and Saul to Me for the work to which I have called them.' And when they had fasted and prayed, they laid hands on them *and sent them out*" (vs 1-3). So there is an ordination.

Then we have quite an encounter here with Saul and Barnabas with a sorcerer called Elymas. This becomes profound. This tells us an awful lot about Judaism. Let's understand that what is going on here is very similar to what we had back in Acts 8. Was not Simon a Sorcerer who bewitched the people? *Yes!* Was he not a Gentile? *Yes, he was!* Now we find here a Jew who has the same kind of religious practice.

(go to the next track)

Verse 4: "So then, after being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from

there they sailed away to Cyprus. And when they came to Salamis, they preached the Word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they also had John *as* an assistant. And when they had gone through the island as far as Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name *was* Bar-Jesus" (vs 4-6). What does 'Bar' mean? *The son of!* Jesus was a very common name then, so I would not want to say that he was going around saying that he was the son of Jesus Who was the Christ. The similarity cannot help but be kind of striking.

Verse 7: "He was with the proconsul Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man, who called Barnabas and Saul to *him*, desiring to hear the Word of God.... [He was like other people searching, trying and find the Truth.] ...But Elymas the sorcerer (for so was his name interpreted) withstood them, seeking to turn away the proconsul from the faith" (vs 7-8). Here's a direct confrontation now with paganized Judaism with one of the leading false prophets: Elymas a sorcerer. This tells you an awful lot about the mystic Judaism, and it is sorcery; and it is illuminism.

Verse 9: "But Saul, who *was* also called Paul, being filled with *the* Holy Spirit, fixed his eyes on him, *and* said, 'O full of all guile and all craftiness, *you* son of the devil *and* enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to pervert the straight ways of *the* Lord?'" (vs 9-10).

Let's understand something: There are the children of God and there are the children of the devil. The children of the devil are those who openly communicate with Satan the devil, who fulfill, carryout and do his will, and there are those people in the world who do that. Notice Paul's confrontation directly with them, which is telling us that one day we will be confronted with it, too—won't we? I think a lot of the things we're seeing going on in the Church is all periphery of some of the things that have happened because of that very thing.

1-John 3:4: "Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness. And you know that He appeared in order that He might take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Everyone who dwells in Him does not *practice* sin; anyone who *practices* sin has not seen Him, nor has known Him. Little children, **do not allow anyone to deceive you...** [What are we talking about here in Acts 13? *Deception! Perversion!* Correct? And it's what he's talking about here in 1-John 3] ...the one who practices righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. The one who practices sin is of the devil because the devil has been sinning from *the* beginning. For this purpose the Son of God appeared that He might destroy the works of the devil. Everyone who has been begotten by God does not practice sin because His [the Father's] **seed** of

begettal [sperma] is dwelling within him, and he is not able to *practice* sin because he has been begotten by God” (vs 4-9).

You may sin, but God’s Spirit will convict you so that you will repent. But you can’t *practice* sin! You may even go a long time in a certain sin, but sooner or later God’s Spirit is going to convict you! You can’t practice it and live in it!

Verse 10: “By this *standard* are manifest... [revealed and known] ...the **children of God** and the **children of the devil**. Everyone who does **not practice** righteousness is not of God, and neither is the one who does not love his brother.” So, there it is, the *children of God* and the *children of the devil*! This is important for us to realize that there are *children of the devil*, and they will come in and cause problems in the Church.

Matthew 13:36—this is the parable of the wheat and the tares: “And after dismissing the multitude, Jesus went into the house. Then His disciples came to Him, saying, ‘Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.’ And He answered *and* said to them, ‘The one Who sows the good seed is the Son of man; and the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the **children of the Kingdom**; but the tares are the **children of the wicked one** [the devil]’” (vs 36-38).

There will be times when there will be these confrontations and difficulties that will come along. That’s why we need to know the Word of God. That’s why we need to be armed with the Spirit of God. I don’t know if we’ll ever have to do like Saul—who’s now called Paul. Let’s read that again. He lambasted Elymas in no uncertain terms. Paul could do it because he used to be a Pharisee and he knew and understood what all of this was about.

Acts 13:9: “But Saul, who *was* also *called* Paul, being filled with *the* Holy Spirit, fixed his eyes on him [Elymas]... [He was not a coward; no politics here] ...*and* said, ‘O full of all guile and all craftiness, *you* son of the devil *and* enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to pervert the straight ways of *the* Lord? And now behold, *the* hand of the Lord *is* upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a season.’ And immediately a mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking someone to lead *him* by the hand. And after seeing what had happened, the proconsul believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord. Then Paul and his company sailed away from Paphos *and* came to Perga of Pamphylia; but John departed from them *and* returned to Jerusalem” (vs 9-13).

This caused a little problem later on between Paul and Barnabas. I guess John was not the kind to travel around and get himself all tired and worked up. Paul was a worker! I mean, Paul would wear anybody out. There are some people who just work,

and you can’t deprive them of that work. But if someone else is around who is not of that same sort of work intensity, they’ll wear you out! Paul was one of those, so John left. Later on that caused friction. We’ll see that in Acts 15 between Paul and Barnabas.

Here we’re going to have a confrontation again, and this has to do with how Paul came and preached, v 14: “Now after passing through from Perga, they came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day *and* sat down.... [this is their very first time into the synagogue] ...And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets...” (vs 14-15).

You have to understand this: in every synagogue they had a regular reading schedule; every Sabbath of every year they were to read the same thing through a 3-year period—go through all the laws and all the prophets called the ‘triennial cycle.’ It was very much like the Catholic missal. That lays out for the whole year in advance every word of every sermon that every priest is to give in every diocese and parish throughout the world. So it was with the Jews. ***Whereas with the Church of God, God depends upon the Word of God and the teaching and His inspiration so that we learn the things in season,*** rather than have it set out every jot and tittle that needs to be. That’s why they become dead.

You go into a Catholic Church and the most exciting thing is hmmmmmm, and they are dead! Go into a synagogue and it’s the same way. The only thing they don’t do in a synagogue is that they don’t have crosses, crucifixes and statues of Mary, nor do they bow down on their knees—they are dead! They get up there and read what they are supposed to read and punctilious read it and that is it. Now, when they have someone new come in, as in this particular case, then they invite them to speak:

“...the rulers of the synagogue said to them, ‘Men, brethren, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, speak.’.... [they didn’t know what they were asking for] ...Then Paul stood up and, after beckoning with his hand, said, ‘Men, Israelites, and those who fear God [Gentiles], listen *to me*. The God of this people Israel chose our fathers...” (vs 15-17).

Notice where he starts: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—I think we’ll be astonished how much is in the New Testament and bypasses all of Judaism; that’s the whole intent of everything that Paul wrote. He goes back and says ‘Yes, if you’re circumcised that’s okay *if* you keep the Law. But if you don’t keep the Law that’s the same as being uncircumcised. Once you understand that, then you understand why this whole series—Scripturalism vs Judaism—God intended to bypass all of Judaism

because Judaism is an unmitigated, demonic, evil religion—period!

People are going to say that I'm anti-Semitic. I am not! There are Jews who are against this kind of religion themselves, and to this day are fighting, even in Israel. I'm not against Jewish people. But God labels their religion that way. Was not Elymas demonic? A sorcerer? *Yes, he was!* At this particular time I'm sure that the synagogues were not laden that much with that kind of thing, yet. But today it is very, very much that way. That's why it's important that we understand about Judaism.

Paul stood up and he was saying, v 17: "The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and exalted the people when they were sojourning in the land of Egypt, and with a high arm brought them out of it.... [He's telling the whole story of Passover and Unleavened Bread—correct? *Yes!*] ...And for a period of about forty years, He put up with their manners in the desert" (vs 17-18). What a summary! He did! God suffered! That's what it means right there.

Verse 19: "And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, He gave their land to them by lot. And after these things, He gave *them* judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul, son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And after removing him, He raised up David to be their king; to whom He also gave testimony, saying, 'I have found David, the son of Jesse, **a man after My own heart, who will perform all My will**'" (vs 19-22).

I want you to notice the progression of what he's speaking here. God chose the fathers, brought the people out and put up with all the sins in the wilderness, gave them judges, then gave them Saul and now here is David, who is a man to 'fulfill all My will, a man after My own heart, who shall fulfill all My will.' What is Paul trying to tell the Jews there in the synagogue? Are you going to be a man after God's heart and fulfill the will of God? That's what he's trying to prepare them for. Notice the reception that he gets"

Verse 23: "Of this man's seed has God according to His promise raised up to Israel a Savior Jesus, after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.... [That's where we started this series *Scripturalism vs Judaism*.] ...And as John was fulfilling his course, he said, 'Whom do you suppose that I am? I am not He; but behold, *there is one* Who comes after me, of Whom I am not worthy to loose the sandals of His feet.'" (vs 23-25). Let's see the full account of this, because we're going to understand that the Jews and the religious leaders of

that time understood the times and the seasons, and they understood that there was the Christ Who was coming. There was going to be Elijah; there was going to be 'the Prophet'; there was going to be 'the Christ.' But 'the Prophet' and 'the Christ' are two names for the same One being Jesus Christ.

John 1:19: "And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem... [Why would they send priests and Levites? *Because those were the religious leaders who were supposed to understand the Word of God* who were going down to check up whether this was a fulfillment of the Word of God or not. John is out here doing all this baptism.] ...to ask him, 'Who are you?'" You don't do anything that affects Judaism unless they understand who you are.

Verse 20: "Then he *freely* admitted, and did not deny, but declared, 'I am not the Christ.'.... [Why would he tell them that he's not the Christ if they were not looking for the Christ?] ...And they asked him, 'Then who *are you*? Are you Elijah?'" (vs 20-21). What does this tell us? *They knew that Elijah was coming before the Christ*—correct? (Mal. 3-4).

So, they understood that. Remember when Jesus was born and the wise men came to Herod, they brought the chief priests and everyone in there and they said, 'What does the Scripture say? Where was He to be born? *He was to be born in Bethlehem!* Where were the three wise men going? *To Bethlehem!* So, they knew! Likewise here, they knew when it came time for Christ's ministry.

"...And he said, 'I am not.' *Then they asked, 'Are you the Prophet?'* And he answered, 'No.'" (v 21). They were looking for the One that Moses spoke about: 'that Prophet.'

Deuteronomy 18:15—here's what Moses told them: "The LORD your God will raise up unto you a Prophet from the midst of you, of your brethren, One like me. To Him you shall hearken, according to all that you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, so that I do not die.' And the LORD said to me, 'They have spoken well what they have spoken'" (vs 15-17).

Here's God's long-term answer. They didn't want God at the mountain. They didn't want His fire and brimstone, hail and voice coming from the mountain, so God said, 'I'm going to send them 'the Prophet' being the Christ. So, if they won't 'listen to Me in the mountain, maybe they will listen to a man.' That's why Christ came as a man.

Verse 18: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, *One* like you, and will

put My words in His mouth.... [Isn't that what Jesus said, 'I speak nothing of My own, but what I hear the Father say, that's what I speak. I do nothing of My own, but what I see the Father do, that I do.' There it is right there.] ...And He shall speak to them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, whatever man will not hearken to My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require *it* of him. But the prophet who shall presume to speak a word in My name which I have not commanded him to speak or who shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die'" (vs 18-20).

Showing the people coming along, as Jesus said that the first thing to watch for is *false prophets*. This is also a prophecy of that there would be false prophets coming along using the name of Christ and trying to preach words, which were not the words of Christ. That's who they were looking for. They *knew*!

John 1:22: "Therefore, they said to him, 'Who are you? What do you say about yourself so that we may give an answer to those who sent us?'" They had to come back and give an official report. This is like an investigative committee from Congress coming out to San Francisco to find out what's going on out here in San Francisco. These came down from Jerusalem to find out what was going on down at the Jordan River so they could come back and give an investigative report to the priests and the Levites.

Verse 23: "He said, 'I *am* a voice crying in the wilderness... [Isa. 40] ...'Make straight the way of *the* Lord,'" as Isaiah the prophet said.' Now those who had been sent belonged to *the sect* of the Pharisees, and they asked him, saying to him, 'Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?'" (vs 23-25). Notice all these detailed questions. When you have detailed questions like that, you know that they *knew* something. So they did, they understood something. They didn't understand the Truth.

Verse 26: "John answered them, saying, 'I baptize with water, but there is one *Who* stands among you Whom you do not know. He it is Who comes after me, *but* Who has precedence over me; of Whom I am not worthy to loose the thong of His sandal.' These things took place in Bethabara across the Jordan, where John was baptizing" (vs 26-28). So, you see what Paul has done. He

- started out with the fathers
- went through the time of the Exodus
- went through the time of the judges
- went through the time of the kings—namely David
- then he came down to John the Baptist

Now let's see where else he's going with this:

Acts 13:26: "Men, brethren, sons of *the* race of Abraham... [notice what he's appealing to] ...and those among you who fear God, to you the message of this salvation was sent; for those who were dwelling in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor the voices of the prophets who are read every Sabbath, have themselves fulfilled *them* in condemning *Him*" (vs 26-27).

That's quite a thing—isn't it? Sometimes you can ask: How can people not know when they've got the words right in their hand? *Well, here the words were read every Sabbath Day! It's amazing*—isn't it? It is amazing! There's something about human nature and choice that if people don't want to hear, they won't hear. Then there comes a point that what happens is that God blinds their heart and stops their ears so they won't hear. It's kind of joint operation like it was with God and Pharaoh. Pharaoh hardened his heart *and God hardened his heart*. It's the same way here. If people will not listen; if they will not hear; what good does it do to read every Sabbath Day that the Sabbath is the Sabbath and then go out and break it? *Doesn't do any good!*

Verse 28: "And though no one found any cause *worthy* of death, they begged Pilate to execute Him. And when they had carried out all things that were written concerning Him, they took *Him* down from the tree *and* put *Him* in a tomb; but God raised Him from *the* dead. *And* He appeared for many days to those who had come up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. And we are announcing the Gospel to you—the promise made to the fathers—that God has fulfilled this to us, their children, having raised up Jesus; as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'You are My Son; today have I begotten you.' *And to confirm* that He raised Him from *the* dead..." (vs 28-34).

Now then, He goes from being raised from the dead: "...no more to return to corruption, He spoke in this manner: 'I will give You the faithful mercies of David.' Accordingly, he also says in another *place*, You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.'" (vs 34-35). He's tying an awful lot of this together—isn't he? This is really quite a sermon! It really shows how thorough Paul was in his preaching.

Verse 36: "For David, after ministering to his own generation by the counsel of God, died, and was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption. But the one Whom God raised up did not see corruption.... [Now he's ready for the coup de tat; now come the swords] ...Therefore, be it known to you, men *and* brethren... [I imagine that they were all kind of astonished sitting out there in the synagogue. They probably never heard anything like

this.] ...that through this man *the* remission of sins is preached to you. And in Him everyone who believes is justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses” (vs 36-39).

That’s another whole deep, in-depth topic. Sufficient to say that all of the sacrificial routine that God gave to Moses for the children of Israel only justified them to the temple, not to God in heaven above. This is astonishing! Whenever you say anything that appears to be against the Law of Moses, you are in *deep trouble* with the Jews. That’s why he went: *the fathers, the fathers, the fathers*. Now then, he comes to Moses and puts Moses in a subordinate position, which is where it should be.

Verse 40: “Take heed, therefore, lest that which is spoken in the Prophets come upon you: ‘Behold, you despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work that you will in no way believe, *even* if one declares it to you’” (vs 40-41). There are just some people you can say things to directly. How is it some people never get the point? Well, some people can be told directly—they can read it, they can hear it—but never get it. That’s something! He’s telling them! He’s warning them here!

Verse 42: “And when the Jews had gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles entreated *him* that these words might be spoken to them on the next Sabbath.” Here’s a very important proof, section of Scripture, showing that the Gentiles kept the Sabbath. Here would have been a perfect opportunity for Paul to say, ‘Listen, you Gentiles, God has abolished the Sabbath, ya’ll come tomorrow, because Sunday is for you Gentiles.’ NO! Even the Gentiles knew better.

Verse 43: “Now after the synagogue had been dismissed, many of the Jews and the proselytes who worshiped *there* followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.”

Let’s stop here for a minute. This is very profound! ***The grace of God and Sabbath-keeping go together!*** There it is right here. Next Sabbath continue in the grace of God, so therefore, the grace of God and Sabbath-keeping go together hand-in-hand, ***not as the Protestants say:*** ‘grace and Sunday; Sabbath and bondage.’ Not so! They go together!

Imagine what happened the next week; look at the response the next Sabbath. Everyone was telling everybody. This was a gigantic uproar, which started out as a nice sweet little visit in a synagogue.

Verse 44: “And on the coming Sabbath, almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the Word of God.” What happens when the Jews see that they’re losing control? And this happens over and over again! You see it in today’s world.

Verse 45: “But when they saw the multitude, the Jews were filled with envy...”—because:

- they didn’t have the multitude
- they couldn’t control the multitude
- they couldn’t manipulate the multitude
- they couldn’t make them become followers of Judaism.

That’s what they were angry about.

“...and they spoke against the things proclaimed by Paul, *and* were contradicting and blaspheming. But Paul and Barnabas spoke boldly, saying... [They really told them! Paul didn’t back down to anybody!]: ...‘It was necessary for the Word of God to be spoken to you first; but since you reject it and do not judge yourselves worthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles’” (vs 45-46).

This was the worst insult you can give any Jew, to say that ‘we are rejecting you for the ‘goyeem’—could be nothing worse! If you want to understand what this is equivalent to today, think of this way: The whole world imposes upon Jews in Israel today the solution of Yasser Arafat for peace in the Middle East. Can you imagine the reaction? There would be an uproar, a tumult, riots, hatefulness, blaspheme—right? *Yes!* So, when Paul said that ‘we turn to the Gentiles’ let’s see what they did because of that:

Verse 47: “‘For so the Lord has enjoined *upon* us: ‘I have set You [Christ] for a light of *the* Gentiles that You should be for salvation unto *the* uttermost parts of the earth.’” And when the Gentiles heard *this*, they rejoiced; and they glorified the Word of the Lord, and believed, as many as were appointed to eternal life. And the Word of the Lord was carried throughout the entire country.... [notice what happened to the Jews and Judaism]: ...But the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the principal men of the city, and raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their borders” (vs 47-50).

Got them up, took them out, threw them out of the city. I mean, this is really quite a momentous event that took place. We can put it in terminology today, this is something! This tells us how we ought to preach. That’s why I believe that when there’s going to be any public preaching later on, it’s going to be short and sweet and to the point and over with. God is not going to put up with a nice social little things.

Do you have stress in the workplace? *Yes, everybody’s got stress in the workplace!* So what! That has nothing to do with Christianity. Christianity is:

- Do you *love* God?
- Do you *believe* God?
- Do you *believe* His Word?
- Do you *believe* Jesus Christ?

- Leviticus 11
- Galatians 2
- Acts 15; 12; 8
- Malachi 3; 4
- Isaiah 40

And just as Paul told them what they were doing was wrong, so the religions of the world have to know what they are doing *is wrong!* They have to know in no uncertain terms.

Verse 51: “And after shaking the dust off their feet against them, they came to Iconium. Then the disciples were filled with joy and *with the Holy Spirit*” (vs 51-52). We could put another verse in there if we wanted to: And the Jews were grumbling and griping and envious and set against the disciples. That what they were!

Let me just cover one thing here. The world and the religions of the world are going to have to know that

- they have *annulled* the judgment of God
- they have *judged* the Word of God
- they have *condemned* God

—so that they can keep their own righteousness. They need to be told in those words and in those terms. I can tell you one thing, when that is said in public, we’d better all have a way of escape somewhere.

Wasn’t Paul telling them that they were fulfilling the Words of the Scriptures about them? *Yes!* He was saying ‘You are fulfilling the words of condemnation against yourself because you won’t believe.’ The Scriptures are correct in two instances:

1. If you *believe—salvation!*
2. If you *don’t—condemnation!*

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Acts 9:22-31
- 2) Acts 10:1-34
- 3) Romans 2:3-11
- 4) Acts 10:34-48
- 5) Acts 11:1-14, 15-26
- 6) Acts 13:1-10
- 7) 1 John 3:4-10
- 8) Matthew 13:36-38
- 9) Acts 13:9-25
- 10) John 1:19-21
- 11) Deuteronomy 18:15-20
- 12) John 1:22-28
- 13) Acts 13:26-52

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Deuteronomy 14

Scripturalism vs Judaism XX

[This sermon to be added at a later date]

Scripturalism vs Judaism XXI

Circumcision of the Heart

One of the important reasons why all of this is in the Scriptures concerning Judaism is to let us know that not only are we going to have the problems of paganism coming into the Church, but very few people realize the vitriolics that Judaism has toward Christianity.

We have been propagandized since WWII to accept no word against the Jews at all whatsoever, because that is anti-Semitism. Yet, at the same time, the Jews can tear down, destroy and go after Christianity. And their version of Christianity, by the way, is Catholicism. That's what they view as Christianity. They don't even recognize the Church of God as it exists as the way it is today. One of the biggest problems that we have in the Church of God today is bringing in the practices of Judaism into the Church to where they even have it today that they are using so-called sacred names—that's another whole issue—to where they even require circumcision of men who come into the Church because we're going to cover part of that today in Acts 15. That was a big problem back then.

We are going to also realize that many of the traditions that the Jews have—such as the Seder with the meal, all of those things—are not and never were part of true Christianity. This is why God first started by causing John the Baptist to be conceived; he was the son of priest so God used the son of priest to do it, because it couldn't be any other authority. Immediately, in *Scripturalism vs Judaism #1*, in Matt. 3 there was an immediate separation from Judaism and the way of God, where He told the scribes and Pharisees they were 'hypocrites, a generation of vipers' and they needed to repent and bring forth 'fruit, meat for repentance.'

Write for the Judah Pack—showing all the encroachments and the inroads that Judaism is trying to make within the Church. I've a got tape where one man explains how to keep the Passover Seder as a Christian. You can't keep the Passover Seder and call it Christian. You have follow what Jesus said: foot-washing, bread and wine; that's what Jesus taught us. They are bringing back *traditions of Judaism* into the Church under the guise that Judaism was the true religion of Moses. But Judaism is a 'religion' and Moses' way was not *a religion*. Yes, there was form and ceremony, that is true, but what Judaism did was make 'religion' out of what they were doing.

We also saw in Mark 7:1: "Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes from Jerusalem came together to Him." So, they had these official *watch squads* coming around watching Jesus all the

time. They came all the way down from Jerusalem.

Verse 2: "And when they saw some of His disciples eating with defiled hands (that is, unwashed *hands*)... [very few people realize that washing the hands actually came from Egypt—see *The Christian Passover* book] ...they found fault. For the Pharisees and all the Jews, holding fast to the tradition of the elders, do not eat unless they wash their hands thoroughly.... [vigorously with the fist. The tradition of the elders is Judaism, and today it is all codified in what is called *Code of Jewish Law*] ...Even *when coming* from the market, they do not eat unless they *first* wash themselves. And there are many other things that they have received to observe, *such as the* washing of cups and pots and brass utensils and tables" (vs 1-4). This is a 'religion.'

Verse 5: "For this reason, the Pharisees and the scribes questioned Him, *saying*, 'Why don't Your disciples walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?'.... [He answered them with Scripture]: ...And He answered *and* said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites...'" (vs 5-6).

Judaism is a hypocritical 'religion.' Judaism is also a very anti-everyone else 'religion.' If you think anti-Semitism is bad, Judaism against the rest of the world is horrible to behold. All the rest of the people are animals. The Jews have the right to use and abuse and do anything. They can cheat, lie, steal and go to the temple on the Day of Atonement and have the 'kol nidre' pledge that they take on the Day of Atonement, which frees them from all obligations to Gentiles so they can, without conscience, lie, steal and rob. If you're hearing this for the first time and you don't believe me, well then you need to do some studying.

One of the first places to begin, if you have a computer, search *Jews for Judaism*. You will find the absolute hatred they have for Jesus Christ. Then get online and look up *Jesus Seminar* and see how they are excoriating and taking out all of the miracles of Jesus Christ, all of the book of John, all of the true teachings of Jesus Christ. The one who is the head of it is Julius Funk—a Jew. That's just an extension of Judaism. All that Judaism is trying to do today is to water-down and take away true Christianity and the Word of God so that they will look good. This is what happens when people come into power—when your enemy comes into power—they change the written history.

If you want a good example of that, read *Josephus*. Josephus was a Pharisee. He was actually

a priest of one of the orders there. He wrote the history of the Jews for the Romans. In it he mentions nothing about Christ. Now, someone put something in a little later—it's very well known that that was added in. He wrote nothing about the Church, nothing about the Apostle Paul, nothing about the Churches, wherever they were. He was commissioned to write the history. What do you do? *You never mention your enemy!* He preserved nothing concerning the Essenes, because they were considered the enemy, although they were Jews. He preserved nothing concerning the Sadducees; just a little bit where the Sadducees and the Pharisees had their fights and were killing one another.

Whenever you read these things, you have to be very careful. That's why you have to come back to the Bible for the pure Word of God to understand what was going on.

Jesus answered with Scripture, "...as it is written, 'This people honors Me with their lips...'" (v 6). They pay lip-service to God! This is what we have today: 98% of the people believe in God; 29% of them attend a church; then you weed out all of those who attend churches because of various reasons and then you get down to the very few who truly believe God and believe His Word.

"...but their hearts are far away from Me.... [Where are their hearts? *On themselves, their politics, their own religion and what they are doing!*] ...But in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men." (vs 6-7). Worship here is *exterior* worship. If your heart is far from God, you're not going to worship Him with your heart—are you? *You're going to have an outside show and ceremony*—aren't you? That's what they had.

Verse 8: "For leaving the commandment of God, you hold fast the tradition of men, *such as* the washing of pots and cups; and you practice many other things like *this*.' Then He said to them, 'Full well do you reject the commandment of God, so that you may observe your *own* tradition'" (vs 8-9). Then He goes on from there.

This is what we need to understand that the battle that was going on with the New Testament Church. We also need to understand the same thing we have experienced. We have said, 'You can get the people out of Worldwide, but you can't get Worldwide out of the people.' You can get the Pharisees out of the Pharisaic synagogue, but you can't get Pharisaism out of the Pharisees. That's exactly what has happened here.

Also the thing concerning circumcision was really quite a situation, because it was commanded to be forever. We also have some prophecies of *circumcision of the heart*—we'll look at those. But

we also need to understand something here that's very important when we come to it. That is when a Pharisee says 'the Law of Moses' he means *everything that the Pharisees believe in*, plus what's in the Bible. The Bible is surrounded by all of these laws and traditions, so it's very hard to get into the Bible.

As you will notice in the *Code of Jewish Law* they will read a Scripture and then create a whole field of their own understanding of it. When we read this, let's please understand their version of the Law of Moses and how we view the Law of Moses are two entirely different things. What do we view the Law of Moses as? *First five books of the Bible!* They view the Law of Moses as the first five books of the Bible, *all of their* 'targems'—*teachings*—and then the Talmud surrounding that, *and have* 'kabolism' surrounding that. It's like a layer on an onion. You have 'kabolism'; Talmudism; the Mishnah and then their commentaries. All of those things are considered the Law of Moses. If we understand that and come through here, then it's going to help us understand Acts 15 a little more, which was a defining point within the Church.

Acts 15:1: "Now, certain men who had come down from Judea..." We need to understand that by the time Acts 15 comes around, you have a Circumcision Party in Jerusalem. We'll see how James got snookered by the Circumcision Party and Paul went along with it in the political decision and the whole thing backfired. It's like when Worldwide was in its heyday. Someone would come from Pasadena. Very important! So, they came from Judea.

"...were teaching the brethren... [they had the problem of many teachers, too] ...*saying*, 'Unless you are circumcised after the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved'" (v 1). The English does not really convey the Greek meaning here in its truest sense. The English does not convey the same strongness of the Greek, meaning *impossible*. 'Cannot' implies in English that you cannot do this, but *there may be another way*. In the Greek it means *it's impossible any other way*. There's a difference. The Greek here comes from the verb 'dunamao'—which then is *power*. You could actually translate this: 'unless you are circumcised after the custom of Moses, you have no power to be saved' *or* 'it is impossible to be saved.' Meaning that there was *no other way* except by circumcision. So, this is a pretty stout doctrine; pretty strong language.

Verse 2: "Therefore, after a great deal of strife and arguing... [Remember when Paul went into the synagogues we saw many times that he created small riots. Later the Jews would stir up the whole town against him.] ...with them by Paul and Barnabas... [they were arguing back and forth right in church] ...the *brethren* appointed Paul and

Barnabas, and certain others from among them, to go up to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem about this question. So then, after being sent on their way by the Church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, *where* they reported the conversion of the Gentiles. And they caused great joy to all the brethren. And when they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the Church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all the things that God had done with them. But there stood up certain of those who believed, who were of the sect of the Pharisees..." (vs 2-5)—which believed.

From this point forward you do not find any Pharisees active in the Church. This I believe created a division with the Pharisees from whence we get the Nazarenes. The Nazarenes were those who kept all the customs of the Jews who still believed in Jesus.

"...saying, 'It is obligatory... [the Greek is 'dei'] ...to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the Law of Moses'" (v 5). Jesus corrected them on the Law of Moses. He said, 'None of you keep the Law of Moses.' Let's make sure that we understand. One of the most effective ways to get rid of the Word of God is to *bury it in an avalanche of tradition*, or *bury it under an avalanche of human teachings*—which is all then buried under the avalanche of wrong interpretation to begin with; then you create your doctrines from there. This is very important because their view of keeping the Law of Moses was not Jesus' view of keeping the Law of Moses. Jesus' view of the Law of Moses is the same as ours—the first five books of the Bible.

John 7:14: "But then, about the middle of the Feast, Jesus went up into the temple and was teaching. And the Jews were amazed, saying, 'How does this man know letters, having never been schooled?'" (vs 14-15). This is a key verse to understand and keep in mind, because when we went through and did the series on *Who Was Jesus?* we went through things where publications came out and were saying that Jesus was a Pharisee, Jesus was taught by the Pharisees, Jesus was taught all the tradition of the Jews.

NO! He was not! He was taught of His Father! Jesus was not just an ordinary Jew. He was the Son of God! Do you think that the Father would have the lying hypocritical Pharisees teaching Jesus? *Spare me! No!* When He was 12-years-old He went up into the temple and taught them. Just the opposite way around. That's why it's important when you're studying anything that you do it thoroughly, that you really get all of the facts. If you come up with something that's a little contradictory or a little difficult to understand, just set it aside and come back at it later. You don't have to prove everything this instant. You can come back and do it later.

Verse 16: "Jesus answered them and said, 'My doctrine [teaching] is not Mine, but His Who sent Me. If anyone desires to do His will... [the will of the Father] ...he shall know of the doctrine, whether it is from God, or *whether* I speak from My own self'" (vs 16-17). That's exactly what we need to do with everything that comes down the pike. Is it the will of God? And if you do it, you will know that it's from God. You won't have to doubt.

Verse 18: "'The one who speaks of himself is seeking his own glory...'" This is where many of the self-appointed teachers are today. They have enough Bible knowledge that they're dangerous and cause people to fall and stumble.

One man recently said that if you 'pray and God doesn't answer your prayer the first time, you pray the second time, and if He doesn't answer your prayer the second time, His answer is *no*.' That's ridiculous! What about Luke 18 where the widow woman kept coming and coming and coming, and Jesus used that as a parable to say that 'when you pray keep on praying; when you ask, keep on asking and God will hear and answer.' But that's just out of the figment of his own imagination, and he's seeking his own glory. That's the way it is with so many of these teachers. I'm just coming across them all the time. I tell you, it's going to be amazing, as Jesus asked if He will 'find faith on the earth' when the Son of man returns.

"...but He [Jesus] Who seeks the glory of Him Who [God the Father] sent Him [Jesus] is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. Did not Moses give you the Law, and not one of you is practicing the Law?... [No, they didn't keep the Law of Moses. Their version of keeping it was their *traditions*, their *interpretation*.] ...Why do you seek to kill Me?" The people answered and said, 'You have a demon....'" (vs 18-20). Isn't that always the way. They never examine the evidence, but they come back with an accusation. Strictly political! You can almost count on it.

The CNN program *Crossfire* is built on this—accusation to accusation! I've watched it enough to know that you never come to the truth of anything on that. It's not their desire to come to the truth, but just to create a furor and an argument. Some people like contemptuous arguments. They accused Him and said, 'You have a demon.'

"...Who is seeking to kill You?' [Almost every Pharisee that was walking up and down the street would want to kill Him.] ...Jesus answered and said to them, 'I did one work, and you were all amazed. Now then, Moses gave you circumcision—not that it was from Moses, but from the fathers—and on *the* Sabbath you circumcise a man. If a man receives circumcision on *the* Sabbath, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry

with Me because I made a man entirely whole on *the Sabbath*? Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (vs 20-24). {see booklet/sermons on *Judge Righteous Judgment*} that spills over into studying the Bible, because too many false doctrines come because people do not have righteous judgment and they do not exercise the *14 Rules of Bible Study* on how to come to understand the Scriptures.

A lot of people now who are coming in contact with us, I don't think they realize they have a good two years minimum of study just to make up, to catch up. I talked to one man who has been in the Church 40 years and he received Care Package #s 1-2 and the Romans Series and he's overwhelmed! I said, 'That's just the start!' Too many people have done like the scribes and Pharisees, sitting back and played church and played their religion, and believed every propaganda that came down the line, and now they are disarmed. It's going to take them a good two years!

There are quite a few seniors. I talked to one man the other day and he said, 'My wife and I are retired and we have nothing else to do. We get up and we go through two or three sermons everyday, and we have learned more in the last year than we have in 25 years in the Church. Well, that's good, that's fine, because God is trying to perfect you. That's what God wants!

We get into all of these different controversies here. They did not keep the Law of Moses as Christ viewed the Law of Moses. Let's come back here to Acts 15 and let's read that again.

Acts 15:5: "But there stood up certain of those who believed, who were of the sect of the Pharisees... [notice that there were no apostles involved in this; there were no elders involved in this] ...saying, 'It is obligatory to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the Law of Moses.' Then the apostles and the elders gathered together to see about this matter" (vs 5-6). Who is missing? Who is excluded from this meeting? *The Pharisees!* They are excluded from this meeting. I don't know if it was voluntary or whether it was by invitation to not come.

Verse 6: "And after much discussion had taken place, Peter stood up and said to them, 'Men, brethren, you know that from *the* early days... [we covered this in Acts 10; how God gave the Holy Spirit to those who were uncircumcised.] ...God made *the* choice among us *that* by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the Word of the Gospel, and believe. And God, **Who knows the heart**... [*the heart-knowing God*, because this is the what God is concerned with. God is not concerned with the outward ritual and form. **God is concerned with the heart!**] ...bore witness to them *by* giving them the

Holy Spirit, even as *He did* to us, and made no difference between us and them, *and* has purified their hearts through the faith" (vs 6-9). That's what God wants done. How many times has it been said, concerning changing the heart?

Verse 10: "'Now therefore, why do you tempt God by putting a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able **to bear**?... [Here the Greek is not 'dunamis' but it is 'ischuo'—*strength to bear it*.] ...But by the grace of *the* Lord Jesus Christ we believe we shall be saved in the same manner as they also'" (vs 10-11).

Let's look at the heart here for just a minute and why it's so very important. **God looks to the heart and judges the heart!** Let me just refresh your memory. Remember when Simon Magus was baptized (Acts 8) and Peter and John came down to lay hands on all of those who had been baptized to receive the Holy Spirit. They came to Simon Magus and what did Peter say to him? *Your heart is not right with God; repent therefore, of this evil if perhaps God may forgive the thoughts of your heart. So, God is more concerned with the heart than with the exterior!*

Isaiah 57:15: "For thus says the high and lofty One Who inhabits eternity; Whose name is Holy; 'I dwell in the high and Holy place, even with the one who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.'" You can tie that in together with what Jesus said about loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and being. And how that all the laws and commandments hang on the commandment of loving God and loving your neighbor. We need to keep all of those things in mind as we go through this.

Here's a prophecy of the Gentiles coming into the Church, Isaiah 65:1 "'I revealed Myself to those who asked not for Me; I am found by those who did not seek Me. I said, 'Behold Me, behold Me,' to a nation not called by My name.... [referring to the Gentiles] ...I have spread out My hands all the day to a rebellious people... [Israel] ...who walk in the way that is not good, *even* after their own thoughts; a people who without ceasing provoke Me to My face; who sacrifice in gardens, and burn incense upon the bricks; *a people* who sit among the graves, and spend the night in the tombs, who eat swine's flesh, and broth of vile *things* in their vessels; who say, 'Keep to yourself, do not come near me; for I am Holier than you.'.... [That's the attitude of Judaism.] ...These *are* a smoke in My nostrils, a fire that burns all the day.' Behold, *it is* written before Me; I will not be silent, except I will repay; yea, I will repay into their bosom your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together,' says the LORD, '*they* that burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed Me upon the hills. And I will measure

their former work into their bosom.” (vs 1-7). That’s what God did, and He rooted them out.

Let’s see how the heart is the most important thing. You can have the outward form and ceremony, but that’s not of God. Isaiah 66:1: “Thus says the LORD, ‘The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where, then, *is* the house that you build for Me? And where *is* the place of My rest? For all these things My hand has made, and these things came to be,’ says the LORD. ‘But to this one I will look, to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word’” (vs 1-2). That’s compared to the one who is not.

Verse 3: “‘He who kills an ox *is as if* he killed a man; he who sacrifices a lamb *is as if* he broke a dog’s neck; he who offers a grain offering *is as if* he offered swine’s blood; he who burns incense *is as if* he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and I will bring their fears upon them because when I called, no one answered; when I spoke, they did not hear. But they did evil before My eyes and chose *that* in which I did not delight’” (vs 3-4). That is really the story of Judaism from the time of Christ until the destruction of the temple.

- Did not God choose their fears? *Yes!*
- Did He not destroy the temple? *Yes!*
- Did He not destroy everything about the whole society of Judaism? *Yes!*

He scattered them into the world because they rejected Christ and they did not heed the call when He called.

Mark 12 is the section here where it is ‘love the Lord your God with all your heart.’ We’re going to go on beyond to show the rest of the story here. Mark 12:32: “Then the scribe said to Him, ‘Right, Master. You have spoken according to truth that God is one, and there is not another besides Him; and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *one’s* neighbor as oneself, is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices’” (vs 32-33). Some did understand it. So, he answered correctly. God is concerned with the heart.

Let’s answer the question concerning circumcision. We’re going to see that circumcision is still required, but not in the flesh, but a higher standard of circumcision: the *circumcision of the heart!* Let’s go to the Scripture where circumcision was given. I’m sure they stood up and they read from the Scripture, read it aloud and argued back and forth, but there are some other Scriptures that they need to consider, too.

Genesis 17—this sure enough was made with Abraham. And remember what Jesus said,

‘Circumcision was not of Moses but of the fathers’—correct? *It began with Abraham*; then Isaac and Jacob and all the way down.

Genesis 17:9: “And God said to Abraham, ‘And you shall keep My covenant, you and your seed after you in their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your seed after you. Every male child among you shall be circumcised’” (vs 9-10). There it is; you turn to that Scripture and you say, ‘yes, they’ve got to be circumcised. The Pharisees have to be right.’ If you just use that alone and not consider the heart... That’s why it’s very important that you get all the Scriptures.

Verse 11: “‘And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin. And it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. And a son of eight days shall be circumcised among you, every male child in your generations; he that is born in the house, or bought with silver of any foreigner who *is* not of your seed. He that is born in your house, and he that is bought with your silver, must be circumcised.... [Kind of sounds like what the Pharisees were quoting—right?] ...And My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised male child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people—*for* he has broken My covenant’” (vs 11-14). You can build a powerful case if you just do that—right? But that’s not all that’s considered there.

Is it wrong to have your children circumcised? *No!* But that doesn’t save them. What happened here is that the Pharisees transferred that from the physical covenant over into the spiritual covenant saying that you have to circumcise the flesh. That’s what they did. They did not understand the New Covenant. Let’s see a prophecy of the kind of circumcision that God wanted. Again, it has to do with the heart.

Deuteronomy 10:12: “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways... [God was not creating a religion through Moses] ...and to love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep the commandments of the LORD, and His statutes which I command you today for your good?” (vs 12-13). This sounds an awful lot like John 14: *if you love Me, keep My commandments.*

Verse 14: “Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens *belong* to the LORD your God, the earth also, with all that is in it. Only the LORD had a delight in your fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them, you above all people, as *it is* today. Therefore, **circumcise the foreskin of your heart...**” (vs 14-16).

So, the circumcision in the flesh was only a physical type of a greater circumcision, which is the *circumcision of the heart*. That is more difficult, because that requires the Spirit of God and conversion. Anybody can be circumcised in the flesh. All their missing is some skin. That does not affect the mind; that does not convert the heart. That's why God gave the Holy Spirit to Cornelius and those uncircumcised Gentiles before baptism, because I don't believe Peter would have understood it any other way. So, God intervened to show it.

"...and be no longer stiff-necked, for the LORD your God *is* God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, the mighty and awesome God Who does not respect persons nor take a bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and widow, and loves the stranger in giving him food and clothing. Therefore love the stranger... [This is coming even into a prophecy of the Church of loving all of those in the Church whether Jew or Gentile.] ...for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall fear the LORD your God. You shall serve Him, and you shall hold fast to Him, and swear by His name. He *is* your praise, and He *is* your God, Who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen. Your fathers went down into Egypt with seventy persons. And now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of the heavens for multitude" (vs 16-22).

Here's the other part of the circumcision. There are two parts of the circumcision of the heart to take place:

1. you circumcise your heart
2. God circumcises your heart

(go to the next track)

Deuteronomy 30:6: "And **the LORD your God will circumcise your heart...**" Under what conditions?

Verse 1: "And it shall be **when all these things** have come on you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and when you shall call *them* to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, and **shall return to the LORD your God and shall obey His voice...** [What are we talking about? *We're talking about repentance*—aren't we? *Yes, we are!* That's why it is repent and be baptized. It's not baptize and then repent.] ...according to all that I command you today, you and your children, **with all your heart and with all your soul**, then the LORD your God will turn *away* your captivity. And He will have compassion on you, and will return and gather you from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you" (vs 1-3). The fulfillment of this will be Rev. 7, the 144, 000 and the great innumerable multitude! They're going to repent in captivity.

Verse 4: "If you are driven out into the

outermost *parts* of the heavens... [sounds like a little space-travel there—doesn't it? Are there bodies up there? *There are some up there!*] ...the LORD your God will gather you from there, and He will bring you from there. And the LORD your God will bring you into the land, which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. And He will do you good and multiply you above your fathers. And **the LORD your God will circumcise your heart...**" (vs 4-6). This is in the Millennium—isn't it? But when God calls us—and we'll look at the process of what happens there with *circumcision of the heart*, which is very important because we're dealing with the *heart-knowing* God.

"...and the heart of your seed, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live. And the LORD your God will put all these curses upon your enemies, and upon those that hate you, who persecuted you. And you shall return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all His commandments which I command you today" (vs 6-8). And the rest of it goes on into the Millennial setting. Quite a thing!

Let's come to the book of Romans, the second chapter. As we studied this as we did in the series on the book of Romans, these were very profound words that Paul wrote. He really, I am sure, created a lot of enemies as well as friends.

This is very instructive, Romans 2:17 "Behold, you are called a Jew, and you yourself rest in the law, and boast in God... [which they did; they gave lip-service to God: 'They honor Me with their lips'] ...and know *His* will, and approve of the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Law; and are persuaded *that* you yourself are a guide of *the* blind, a light for those in darkness, an instructor of *the* foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of the knowledge and of the Truth *contained* in the law" (vs 17-20). They had all of that! That's true, they did have that, but:

Verse 21: "You, then, who are teaching another, do you not teach yourself also? You who preach, 'Do not steal,' are you stealing?... [that's why they were called *hypocrites* all the way through] ...You who say, 'Do not commit adultery,' are you committing adultery? You who abhor idols, are you committing sacrilege? You who boast in law, are you dishonoring God through your transgression of the Law? For through you the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, exactly as it is written. For on the one hand, circumcision profits if you are observing *the* Law; on the other hand, if you are a transgressor of *the* Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision" (vs 21-25). Has no spiritual standing whatsoever!

Verse 26: "Therefore, if the uncircumcised is keeping the requirements of the Law... [from the

heart] ...shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision?... [Yes, because he has the greater circumcision of the heart!] ...And shall not the uncircumcised, who by nature... [in the flesh] ...is fulfilling the Law, judge you, who, with the letter and circumcision... [in the flesh] ...are a transgressor of the law?" (vs 26-27). Those are real fighting words to anyone who is a Jew or in Judaism. To say that Gentile is going to judge you! Furthermore, an uncircumcised Gentile is going to judge you!

Now then, he comes to the whole spiritual matter of it here, v 28: "For he is not a Jew who is *one* outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is external in the flesh; rather, he is a Jew who is *one* inwardly, and **circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit** and not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God" (vs 28-29). Now you know why they had that big controversy in Acts 15.

Colossians 2:6: "Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be walking in Him; being rooted and built up in Him... [Notice where the emphasis is: *Christ!*] ...and being confirmed in the faith, exactly as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. Be on guard so that no one takes you captive through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the traditions of men... [whether they be Jewish traditions, pagan traditions, whatever] ...according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power in Whom you have also been circumcised with the circumcision not made by hands... [**Circumcision of the heart!**] ...in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (vs 6-11).

How is this circumcision of Christ accomplished? *The circumcision of Christ now includes the other half of the population!* Circumcision of the flesh only includes the male population. Circumcision of the heart now includes male and female. Here's how it's accomplished:

Verse 12: "Having been **buried with Him in baptism...**" When you repent of your sins and are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit, your mind has been circumcised; or your heart has been circumcised, because you receive the Holy Spirit of God! That is the *circumcision of the heart*, and then you can really love God and serve Him in Truth, in love, in dedication—not just an outward form of ceremony or ritual. It's completely different.

"...by which you have also been raised with Him through the inner working of God, Who raised Him from the dead. For you, who were *once* dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh... [Here Paul is saying that they can be circumcised in

heart, or uncircumcised in the flesh. Very clear!] ...He has *now* made alive with Him, having forgiven all your trespasses" (vs 12-13). That is circumcision of the heart.

When they were talking about circumcision and obeying the Law of Moses, that meant that they were to keep all the traditions of the elders, which then became a yolk that Peter said, 'Neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.' That yolk of Judaism God removed through Christ. That's why we should not bring in Judaism into the Church.

There's one man—Dean Weelock—who goes around teaching people how to have a Seder, which is completely contrary to the Word of God; teaching people many of the traditions of the Jews, and in some places it's just going like wildfire. I mean, it is unreal! Even many of the professing Christian churches of the world are bringing Judaism into what they do. Pentecostals are getting into *praise dancing*. That's another one that he teaches. That's just another form of Pentecostalism, that's all. That's what all of that means.

Acts 15:11: "But **by the grace** of the Lord Jesus Christ we believe we shall be saved..." That is so important to understand about grace {see sermon series on *Grace*.} Very important to understand that! Let's understand that *grace is a gift of God; grace comes from God!*

Whereas, all of these other things—circumcision of the flesh—are done physically. Doing physical ritual is something that you do physically. That's why you can't be saved by your works. **You must be saved by grace!** Then when you are saved by grace, then you can do the good works of God. We'll see all of that here:

Ephesians 2:4: "But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us." Brethren, I don't think we comprehend the love of God the way that we ought to. I just hope we can grow in that more and more, not only toward God and each other, but to really, really understand how much God loves us, and what He did, what fantastic thing that He did, especially in giving us all of His Word! I'm struck more and more how the Word of God is so absolutely profound and just marvelous for us to have. What a great gift of that.

Just consider: How would you like to live in a country, way off someplace up in the hills in some God-forbidden, demon-infested country and not have the Word of God and know nothing? I tell you, try Tibet! How's that? Look at that Tibetan religion. They sit there and hum and babble and bang symbols and blow whistles and toot on horns. They write out prayers and put them on prayer wheels. One of the righteous things that they do is go along and have a whole series of prayer wheels along the sidewalks and streets. Along the side of the streets

they have these spinning wheels with prayers written on them. You go along and you run your hand along it and every time you run your hand along it a prayer wafts off into heaven.

There's no heart in those things! It's all mechanical! For God to call us out and give us His Word and give us His Spirit and offer us eternal life is a magnificent and a marvelous thing!

Verse 5: "Even when we were dead in *our* trespasses, has made *us* alive together with Christ. (*For* you have been saved by grace.).... [God began dealing with us when we were sinners.] ...And He has raised *us* up together and has caused *us* to sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus... [We're not there yet, but God speaks of things as though they are, because they're going to happen.] ...so that in **the ages that are coming** He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For **by grace you have been saved through faith**... [You must believe with the heart! That's why God is called *the heart-knowing God*!] ...and this *especially* is not of your own selves; **it is the gift of God**... [gift and grace are almost synonymous words] ...not of works..." (vs 5-9)—which circumcision in the flesh is; that's why circumcision of the heart is not a work.

- God the Father *calls* you
- God the Father *leads* you to repentance through His grace
- God the Father *grants* you repentance so then you are baptized and buried in the watery grave
- God the Father then *gives* you the Holy Spirit with the laying on of hands

That's all by grace; that's all the work of God. Up to that point you've done nothing! You've just come to the conclusion of your sins and God led you to repentance. That is a greater thing than anything else you can do in your life. But it's still not a work of your own. You can't walk up and say to God, 'I repented, I was baptized.' That's required! Same way with the Sabbath! You can't go to God and say, 'I've kept the Sabbath all my life.' *That's required!*

"...so that no one may boast. For **we are His workmanship**..." (vs 9-10). Understand what God is doing through the process of conversion. He is molding you! You are *His* workmanship! That's what's so important and why you need to understand about the grace of God. God is doing something

- *in* you
- *for* you
- *to* you
- *through* you

—so you can become a son or daughter of God.

That's why God hates religion {see sermon series: *Why God Hates Religion*}, because religion sets up all of these artificial things. Even in the Church of God these things are set up. God is preparing a people. I don't know exactly how it's going to be done, but God is preparing a people, because even in the Christian-professing churches, they're sick and tired of hierarchy, they're sick and tired of all the outward form and ceremony. God has to be preparing the way for something. That's why it's important for us to understand that God doesn't want that kind of hierarchy. If God can't have your heart, what good are you to God? Even though you're perfect like Job!

I'll say it again, when I first read the book of Job, right after I was converted, I really thought God was wrong! That's how much lacking in understanding I was. I really thought God was wrong. I look at my life and see all my sins and mistakes and foolishness, and here's Job, perfect and upright. But he wasn't circumcised in the heart.

"...created in Christ Jesus unto *the good works*... [Of love, joy, peace, temperance, faith and longsuffering—all of that—of keeping the Sabbath, obeying His voice, keeping His commandments—those are the good works of God.] ...that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them." (vs 9-10). Showing a *way of life*! That's why it's important that we understand that by grace we are saved.

So, you see there's a whole lot more having to do with Acts 15, a fulcrum chapter in the whole history of the Church. From that time on the history of the Church changed radically. That's why it follows along with Paul's ministry.

Acts 15:12: "Then all the multitude kept silence and heard Barnabas and Paul relate what signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. And after they were silent, James answered *and* said, 'Men, brethren, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first visited *the* Gentiles to take out a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, as it is written, "After these things, I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David which has fallen..."' (vs 12-16).

{See sermons: *Tabernacle of David* #s 1-2} That's showing that David had a close relationship with God, a personal relationship with God. That's why it's referred to, because the whole Church is built around that relationship between you and God. The Church exists for no other reason. When we come together, we come together because we have the Spirit of God. We come together to worship God and learn of His way.

“...and its ruins I will build again, and will

set it up; so that the residue of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called, says *the* Lord, Who does all these things.”.... [God is putting His name upon the Gentiles] ...Known to God are all His works from the beginning of the world. Therefore, my judgment is *that* we do not trouble those of the Gentiles who have turned to God; but *that* we write to them to abstain from pollutions of idols... [Is that not in the *true* Law of Moses? *Yes, it is!*] ...and *from* sexual immorality, and *from* what has been strangled and *from* blood.” (vs 16-20).

Let's look at this. We know that you're not to drink the blood, because in the blood is the life thereof. It was to be poured out onto the ground. One of the things that the Gentiles would do is drink the blood. I saw an excerpt of *Red Dawn* and those teenaged kids were out there and had their weapons out and finally shot an elk. One of them said, 'My dad performed this every time he killed an elk. He would cut it's throat and drink the blood.' So, all of them drank the blood. There were rituals that the Gentiles had in their countries where they would drink the blood. You've got blood pudding in England and Germany and all of that. That is also contained in the Law of Moses—isn't it?

What he's saying here in this is He's comparing the true keeping of the Law of Moses with the false interpretations of the Pharisees. Things that have been strangled should be bled properly. There would be two forms of eating blood: drink it raw or eat it cooked. If you strangle it then all the blood remains in the meat and then they would eat it.

Verse 21: “For from *the* generations of old, **Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him in the synagogues, being read every Sabbath Day.**” What is this telling us? *You have the right interpretation of Moses*—don't we? In the synagogue they would read the Scriptures. Outside the synagogue it would be the Mishnah, the Talmud, the Kabala. What are we talking about here 'every Sabbath'? *People acquainted with Sabbath-keeping!* Then you would have to have people acquainted with Holy Day-keeping. When someone turns to the verse which says, 'and command them to keep the Law of Moses' and James says, 'My sentence is that we trouble them not.' People will say 'we don't have to do anything of the Law of Moses and we don't have to keep the Sabbath and Holy Days.' They don't understand what they're reading! They have come to the Scriptures with a pre-conceived notion and they're drawing out of it what they desire. Here he's talking about reading the Scriptures—isn't he?

- Where are they being read? *In the synagogue!*
- When was the synagogue open for worship? Sunday morning? *NO! The*

Sabbath!

- Where did they keep the Holy Days? *In the synagogue!*
- When they went up to Jerusalem—correct?

This does not in any way do away with any of the laws of Moses.

I'll just give you a little guidance here for Bible study with this: Go back through the book of Leviticus and study all of the laws that are there: the clean and the unclean laws. We know that we're not to eat the unclean meats. 1-Tim. 4 makes that very clear. So does Acts 10 when you really understand it. You apply the spiritual principle of the circumcision of heart to every one of these laws.

Let's just take the law of childbirth: for a woman it was 40 days for her purification. You can take the ritual of that law today and you can see why women ruin their health and the lives of their children by going back to work a week after childbirth. They need that time with the baby. The baby needs the time with the mother. Why it's double for the girls, I don't know. I don't think it's a discriminatory thing that God has against them. I think it was for the purpose that perhaps maybe the young little girl needs the extra time with her mother, more than the young little boy.

You take the law that they had when they were out in the wilderness. If you relieve yourself, you dig a hole and you cover it; that's sanitary. That would still be something that we would do today. As a matter of fact, our whole sewer system is setup on that—isn't it? That you get rid of it out of your house and send it off and purify it? *Yes!*

How about for those who have been sick? If you have temperature, something like that, or if you have a sickness, it says that after you're well you hold back seven days. That's true. Sometimes you can come along with the flu and you pretty well feel over it, but you still have coughing and hacking and so forth, and you can still spread it.

You can take the spirit of any one of those laws. Same way when they have a cut. If you have a cut and there's an issue, then you wait until it's scabbed over and it's healed. All of those are good laws. You go back and you take any of the physical laws and you can derive something good out of all of them, that in principle we can follow today. That's why Jesus said, 'Think not that I've come to destroy the Law or the Prophets, I have come to fulfill. Verily, I say to you not one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law until *all* is fulfilled!' Part of what was fulfilled, which is now being continuously fulfilled today, is the *circumcision of the heart*. That is going to be fulfilled in the Millennium (Deut. 30). So, when Jesus says that 'all be fulfilled' please understand

that means going clear to the end of Rev. 22 when everything is done. That's what it means.

Verse 22: "Then it pleased the apostles and the elders, together with the whole Church, to send chosen men from among them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *and they chose* leading men from among the brethren: Judas, *who was* surnamed Barsabas, and Silas.... [that's an interesting thing, there are to be *leading men* among them brethren] ...*And they wrote letters* by their hand, as follows: 'The apostles and the elders and the brethren, to those brethren *who are of the* Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia... [notice there are no Pharisees] ...Greetings! Inasmuch as we have heard that certain *ones* among us who went *to you* have troubled your souls with words, saying, "*You are obligated* to be circumcised and to keep the law" (to whom we gave no such command)'" (vs 22-24). These are renegade preachers, like we're coming across today.

Verse 25: "'It seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send to you chosen men with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have dedicated their lives to *proclaim* the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, we have sent Judas and Silas... [to confirm what they were doing] ...who shall themselves also tell *you* by word of *mouth* the same things *that we have written*. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us, to lay no further burden upon you than these necessary things: To abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality; if you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.' Therefore, after being dispatched, they went to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle. And after reading *it*, they rejoiced at the consolation" (vs 25-31).

I imagine all the men out there were wondering if they were going to have to be circumcised, so they rejoiced greatly. I'm sure that this is summary of the epistle; I'm sure it wasn't just that. I'm sure that this is a summary of it, that there was more to it.

Verse 32: "Then Judas and Silas, who were themselves also prophets... [inspired speakers] ...exhorted the brethren with many words, and established *them*.... [I'm sure they covered some of the same Scriptures we just covered. I could not see how they would not do otherwise.] ...And after they had been *there* for a time, they were let go in peace from the brethren to the apostles; but it seemed good to Silas to remain there. Now, Paul and Barnabas were staying in Antioch with many others, teaching and preaching the Gospel—the Word of the Lord. And after certain days, Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let us go back to see how our brethren are doing in

every city where we have preached the Word of the Lord.' And Barnabas was determined to take with *them* John *who was* called Mark; but Paul did not think *it* good to take him *because* he had departed from them at Pamphylia, and did not go with them to the work" (vs 32-38).

Later Mark became profitable. Needless to say, this is how God separated Barnabas and Paul and they both continued to do their work. They had a great heated argument over it and Paul went his way, Barnabas went his way.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Mark 7:1-9
- 2) Acts 15:1-5
- 3) John 7:14-24
- 4) Acts 15:5-11
- 5) Isaiah 57:15
- 6) Isaiah 65:1-7
- 7) Isaiah 66:1-4
- 8) Mark 12:32-33
- 9) Genesis 17:9-14
- 10) Deuteronomy 10:12-22
- 11) Deuteronomy 30:6, 1-8
- 12) Romans 2:17-29
- 13) Colossians 2:6-13
- 14) Acts 15:11
- 15) Ephesians 2:4-10
- 16) Acts 15:12-38

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 3
- Luke 18
- Acts 10; 8
- John 14
- Revelation 7
- Leviticus
- 1 Timothy 4
- Revelation 22

Also referenced:

Miscellaneous Material: *Judah Pack*

Books:

- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried & Goldin
- *Josephus*

Sermon Series:

- *Who Was Jesus?*
- *Romans*
- *Grace*
- *Why God Hates Religion*
- *Tabernacle of David* #s 1-2

Sermon Series/Booklet: *Judge Righteous Judgment*

Articles: *14 Rules of Bible Study*

Scripturalism vs Judaism XXII

Paul Turns the World Upside Down

Whenever you're dealing with issues, you can always tell whether a person wants the truth by sticking with the issues or whether they want their own way. How do you determine that? How can you know? If they want to know the truth, then when they hear the truth and see the truth and know the truth they will understand it as the truth. It may be a little complicated in some cases, and it may be difficult for them to understand the truth, but nevertheless, they will recognize truth is truth. If they don't want it, what they always do is say, 'yeah but...'

For example: We all ought to keep the commandments of God—'yeah but we're all sinners; who's ever kept it perfect' or if they're talking about a person then they impugn the person, they ridicule the person. Like it's been said of me, 'Oh, I know him...' and they haven't seen me for 25 years. Do you suppose that even if your impression were right, there could be some change. That's how you know.

If they want the truth then they'll recognize it. This is the problem we're dealing with when we're talking about Scripturalism vs Judaism. Since WWII we've also been programmed that if you say anything against the Jews you're an anti-Semite, which is not true. If we talk about the faults that they have, especially in their antagonisms toward Christianity, then we are not being anti-Semitic.

I'm just going to survey certain key Scriptures. The whole thing has to get down to this: ***You're either Christ's or you're not!*** That's it! Granted, when they came teaching and preaching the Gospel, we're going to see that it really turned the Jews on end. Why? *They were losing power!* What happens when you lose power? What do you see today in the political realm when the Democrats think they're losing power? *They always attack the Republicans*—don't they? They don't go to the issue.

Take this thing on campaign financing. They've got the huge 116-page memo that they can't get Janet Reno to release because she knows that everybody is cooked if they release it. So, they say, 'Well, Republicans do...' There's one thing between snitching a piece of candy and driving off with the whole truck. So, you always get attacked! We'll see that as we go through here.

First of all, we just want to summarize something here. Paul then had Timothy recommended to him. Timothy's father was a Greek and what he had to do, even after the decree that

circumcision was not required, he did this because of the Jews.

Acts 16:3: "*And Paul desired to take him with him; but because of the Jews in those places, he took him and circumcised him, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. And as they passed through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep...*" (vs 3-4). It kind of seems like a bifurcated purpose here. First of all, you have the decree in your hand that you don't need to be circumcised for the rest of the Gentiles, and then you take Timothy and have him circumcised. But that's just the strangeness of the world and the tension that was between the Christians and the Jews.

Then he went on over to Philippi and he baptized Lydia, and that started the Church at Philippi. He also had persecutions from the Jews, was thrown in prison.

Verse 25—this time the Gentiles came along and did their dirty work: "But about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; and suddenly there was a great earthquake... [Just picture this in your mind: God intervening, heard them at midnight, 'why don't you shut up.'] ...so *great* that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors opened, and the bonds of all were loosed" (vs 25-26). Clink! Off came the handcuffs and all the chains.

Verse 27: "When the jailer awoke from his sleep and saw the doors of the prison open, he drew a sword and was about to kill himself, supposing *that* the prisoners had escaped." It would cost him his head if they found out that all the prisoners had left.

Verse 28: "But Paul called out with a loud voice, saying, 'Do not harm yourself; for we are all here.' And after asking for lights, he rushed in and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And when he had brought them out, he said, 'Sirs, what must I do, that I may be saved?' [You talk about instant conviction for salvation!] ...Then they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, you and your household.' And he took them in that hour of the night, and washed *their* wounds; and he and all his *household* were immediately baptized. Then he brought them into his house *and* laid out a table *for them*; and he rejoiced with all *his* household, who had believed in God. Now when day came, the captains sent the sergeants, saying, 'Let those men go'" (vs 28-35).

Acts 17—Paul goes into the synagogue.

They were to go to the Jews first, because God promised that the message would go to the Jews first. Paul always did that. That doesn't mean that he kept Sunday when he didn't go to the synagogue on the Sabbath, as we already saw in Acts 13.

Acts 17:1: "And after journeying through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where *there* was a synagogue of the Jews. And as was the custom with Paul, he went in to them and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, expounding and demonstrating that it was necessary for Christ to suffer and to rise from *the* dead, and *testifying*, 'This Jesus, Whom I am proclaiming to you, is **the Christ**.' Now, some of them were convinced, and joined themselves to Paul and Silas, including a great multitude of devout Greeks, and of the chief women not a few. But the unbelieving Jews became envious and took to *them* certain evil men of the baser sort; and when they had gathered a huge crowd, they set the city in an uproar..." (vs 1-5). What do you do politically when you don't get your way? *You have a march! A riot!* That's what they were doing.

"...and they assaulted the house of Jason, looking for *Paul and Silas*, to bring them out to the people. And when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and certain brethren before the city magistrates, crying out, 'Those who have set the whole world in confusion have come here also'" (vs 5-6). Here they are turning the world upside down. I tell you what, when you look at the *Code of Jewish Law* and see all of their laws, and Paul comes along and says, 'By grace are you saved through faith, believe in Christ'—that is turning all of their customs and traditions upside down! He gives them no power base.

Verse 7: "'Whom Jason has received; and these all do *what* is contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying *that* there is another king, Jesus.'.... [They twist and turn the words—don't they? Try and make it appear that it's a civil uprising.] ...And they caused *great* agitation among the people and the city magistrates, who heard these things. But after taking security from Jason and the rest, they let them go" (vs 7-9). That is they found out what was being said wasn't true, so they let them go.

Verse 10: "Then the brethren immediately sent away by night to Berea... [They had to escape at night. I mean, we lead rather dull lives—don't we? *Compared to them!*] ...both Paul and Silas, who, when they arrived, went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, *for* they received the Word with all readiness of mind *and* examined the Scriptures daily *to see* if these things were so" (vs 10-11). This is the only synagogue that Paul did not have a riot in. They received it. Granted, there were other Jews who

came along and were in Thessalonica and did them in, but here they were receptive.

Verse 12: "As a result, a great number of them believed, including not a few of the honorable Greek women and men. But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the Word of God in Berea also... [they weren't content enough to just leave them alone in Berea; they were probably figuring that that synagogue in Berea got subverted by Paul, 'we better go down and rescue them.'] ...they came there to stir up the multitude. Then the brethren immediately sent Paul away, as *if* he were going to the sea; but both Silas and Timothy remained there" (vs 12-14).

So, they brought them down to Athens. I imagine Athens was quite an experience. I have never traveled to Europe, but I imagine Europe is much the same. I see the pictures of Rome especially. They have statues and idols everywhere! Not being overseas, I don't know what it's like to live in a land where there's an idol on every corner that you turn. But here is what it was in Athens, idols everywhere!

Verse 16: "But while Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he saw *that* the city *was* wholly given to idolatry..." Bowing down before this, that and the other thing. Like at St. Peter's Basilica today, the foot of the so-called St. Peter, so many people have kissed it they have worn down the big toe over the years. Can you imagine that? The slobber of a million people reduced his toe. What would happen if someone would come with an acid mouth and the foot falls off? It makes you wonder! The Vatican is filled with idols! Everything is an idol! Every single thing has some sort of mystic significance to it, and that's what they had in Athens.

Verse 17: "Because of this, he reasoned earnestly in the synagogue with the Jews and those who worshiped *there*, and daily in the marketplace with those who met with *him*. Then some philosophers..." (vs 17-18). Philosophers were the religious leaders of the pagan religion. That's why when you come into the thing concerning the trinity it always goes back to philosophy because that's where it came from—the philosophy of Greek, the philosophy of Babylon.

"...of the Epicureans and the Stoics..." (v 18). The Epicureans were those who said, 'Let's eat, drink and make merry for that's why we were made.' The Stoics said no, 'let's be more like the Pharisees, let's discipline the flesh, let's beat the flesh, let's deprive ourselves, let's be more like someone who is in a monastery.'

"...[they] encountered him. And some *of them* said, 'What will this babbler have to say?' And

some *said*, ‘He seems to be a preacher of foreign gods,’ because he was preaching to them the Gospel of Jesus and the resurrection.... [They wanted to know this. They didn’t have a television set, so they wanted to find out so they took him person to person.] ...And they took him and brought *him* to Mars Hill, saying, ‘May we know what this new teaching *is* that is spoken by you?’.... [The ‘ariocarpus’ was where they had their open debates.] ...For you are bringing certain strange things to our ears. So then, we desire to know what these things mean.’ (Now all *the* Athenians and the strangers sojourning *among them* spent their leisure in nothing other than to tell and to hear something new.)” (vs 18-21).

I don’t know how they made their living, I don’t have a clue, but here all they did was talk all day long; come and go and ‘Argyroupolis’ was the center for it. I know that in Los Angeles they have a town square and they have a little place down there and anybody can get up and preach anything they want to. You get some of the strangest things that are taught. They also have it in London: Piccadilly Square. They’ve got all the little places where different ones can get up and speak. This is what it’s talking about here.

Verse 22: “Then Paul stood in *the* center of Mars Hill... [Right next to the temple of Mars. I don’t imagine that the temple to Diana or Athena was too far away.] ...and said, ‘Men, Athenians, I perceive *that* in all things you are very reverent to deities... [demonized; sounds like the world today. He didn’t waste any words—did he?] ...For *as* I was passing through and observing the objects of your veneration, I also found an altar on which was inscribed, “To an unknown God”....’” (vs 22-23). He took advantage of it. He had to begin someplace. He couldn’t start off and say, ‘You’re Gentiles, you’re cutoff and I’m a Jew and I’m the greatest thing there ever was’ and all this sort of thing. That wouldn’t go!

“...So then, He Whom you worship in ignorance *is* the one *that* I proclaim to you. He *is* the God Who made the world and all things that *are* in it. Being *the* Lord of heaven and earth, He does not dwell in temples made by hands...” (vs 23-24)—pointing to all the temples they had there. Can you imagine what a statement that was? What he’s literally saying is that there is ‘no god in any one of these temples here. You’re all demonized!’ What a statement!

Verse 25: “Nor is He served by the hands of men, as *though* He needs anything, *for* He gives to all life and breath and all things. And He made of one blood all the nations of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth, having determined beforehand *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their

dwelling; in order that they might seek the Lord, if perhaps they might feel after Him and **might find Him; though truly, He is not far from each one of us**” (vs 25-27). That’s a key statement—isn’t it? In most of these religions God has gone way off someplace.

Verse 28: “**“For in Him we live and move and have our being;** as some of the poets among you also have said, “For we are His offspring.” Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we should not think that the Godhead *is* like that which *is made* of gold, or silver, or stone—a graven thing of art *devised by the* imagination of man”” (vs 28-29).

Later on in Acts 19 He destroyed the economy of Ephesus, because the economy of Ephesus was wholly given over to making idols, statues, crucifixes, lucky charms and rosaries. All pagan religions have rosaries. Did you know that the Hindu religion has rosaries, Islamic religion has rosaries and the Japanese religion Shintoism has rosaries? It’s amazing how similar they all are when you really put them together. That’s something! This tells us that in the New Testament **no** religious art, religious statues, idols, engravings, crosses, crucifixes, etc.

Verse 30: ““For *although* God has indeed overlooked the times of this ignorance, He now commands all men everywhere to repent... [then he lays it on them]: ...because He has set a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man Whom He has appointed, having given proof to all *by* raising Him from *the* dead”” (vs 30-31).

Let me just state this: ***All the religions of the world are religions of the dead!*** You go to any Catholic Church and what do you have? *Tombs right within the church! Graveyards right next to it!* You go to the Vatican and all the popes are buried someplace within the Vatican. It’s all built on dead men’s bones! That’s why being raised from the dead is a phenomenal thing!

Verse 32: “And after hearing *about the* resurrection of *the* dead, some mocked; but some said, ‘We will hear you again concerning this *matter.*’ And so Paul went out from among them. But certain ones *who* believed joined themselves to him, among whom also *were* Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them” (vs 32-34). Out of all of Athens, what did he have? *Just a few! Just a very few!*

Don’t think it’s very strange that we’re just a few. When it gets right down to really loving the Truth and loving God and doing the things that God wants, everything gets narrowed down to the few.

Acts 18:1: “Now after these things, Paul departed from Athens *and* came to Corinth; and

there he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with Priscilla his wife (because Claudius had ordered all the Jews out of Rome). *And* he came to their *house*. And because he was of the same trade, he dwelt with them and worked; for they were tent makers by trade. And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded *both* Jews and Greeks” (vs 1-4). He was there every Sabbath!

Verse 5: “Now, when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was stirred in his spirit... [When he came he felt fortified. ‘I’ve been here in the synagogue and I’ve been sort of easily stepping into it with the Jews’] ...*and* was earnestly testifying to the Jews *that* Jesus *was* the Christ.” Whenever that happens notice the reaction:

Verse 6: “But when they set themselves in opposition and were blaspheming... [They had a knock-down drag-out in the synagogue. You go through and analyze every time he went into the synagogue it ended up being, in most cases, a knock-down, drag-out. This one here is really quite ironic.] ...*Paul* shook *his* garments *and* said to them, ‘Your blood *be* upon your own heads....’” Sounds a little bit like Ezek. 3. That’s a tough task. I would hate go into a hard-shelled Baptist church every Sunday and preach to tell them to come back next Sabbath. Or I would hate to go into the synagogue of the Jews and preach Christ. I mean, think of it! Nevertheless, he was doing what God said here; when he went into the synagogues he was doing this:

Ezekiel 3:17: “Son of man, I have made you a watchman to the house of Israel. Therefore hear the word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me.... [that’s what Paul was doing, speaking the words of Christ] ...When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die’; and you do not give him warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked one shall die in his iniquity; but I will require his blood at your hand. Yet if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul” (vs 17-19). That’s what Paul just did in Acts 17. He preached Christ; He warned them; they didn’t want it so he delivered his soul.

Verse 20: “And when the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die. Because you have not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness, which he has done, shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the righteous so that the righteous does not sin, and if he does not sin, he shall surely live because he is warned; also you have delivered your soul” (vs 20-21). You can

just take Ezek. 3 and look at how in all the Epistles of Paul you have all of those factors combined:

- He *warns the wicked* whether they will change or not
- He *warns the righteous* to not sin

So Paul here is doing the same thing.

Acts 18:6: “‘From this time forward I will go to the Gentiles.’ And after departing from there, he went into *the* house of a certain one named Justus, who worshiped God, whose house adjoined the synagogue.... [I think this is ironic! He didn’t go across town, he went next door.] ...But Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with his whole house; and many of the Corinthians who heard believed and were baptized” (vs 6-8). He split the synagogue right down the middle. They were meeting right next door at Justus’ house.

Verse 9: “And the Lord said to Paul in a vision in *the* night, ‘Do not be afraid; but speak, and do not be silent, for I am with you; and no one shall set upon you to mistreat you because I have many people in this city’” (vs 9-10). Right there in that city God was dealing with a lot of people and Paul didn’t know that God had already been laying the groundwork for Paul coming there.

It makes you wonder that a lot of the things that we have been doing here if God is laying the groundwork for something. I don’t know. He may or may not be. I’m not going to say that He is. I’m not going to say that He isn’t. I think we all need to be ready just in case He is. There are a lot of things we don’t know anything about.

Verse 11: “And he remained *there* for a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them.” Notice that he stayed in Corinth 18 months preaching every Sabbath in Justus’ house next to the synagogue. You talk about a tough set of circumstances, that’s really something! This really got to them!

Verse 12: “Now when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews rose up against Paul with one accord and led him to the judgment seat.” If you can’t handle the truth, then you get politics on your side. Sound familiar? You use the political and the judicial system to get your dirty work done. This sounds like many organizations we know of today: AMA, federal government, Sierra Club—all of those things—same type of thing that went on here.

Verse 13: “Saying, ‘This *man* is persuading men to worship God contrary to the law.’ And when Paul was about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, ‘Now then, if it were a matter of some injustice, or wicked criminality, O Jews, according to reason, I should put up with you; but on the other hand, if it be a question about a message and names

and a law of your own, you see *to it* yourselves; for I have no desire to be a judge of these things.’.... [at least it was a righteous judge] ...And he drove them from the judgment seat. Then all the Greeks laid hold on Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, *and* beat *him* before the judgment seat.... [God had a way doing it, because the chief ruler Sosthenes was the one who was carrying it out.] ...But none of these things mattered to Gallio. And after Paul had remained *there* many days...” (vs 13-18). Then Paul went over to Ephesus.

Verse 21: “But took leave of them, saying, ‘I must by all means keep the Feast that is coming at Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing.’ And he sailed from Ephesus. And after landing at Caesarea, he went up *to Jerusalem* and visited the Church; *then* he went down to Antioch. And when he had stayed *there* some time, he left *and* went through the country of the Galatians and the Phrygians in order, establishing all the disciples” (vs 21-23).

(short break in audio)

Let’s see what happened here in Ephesus. This is very important because Ephesus then is referred to in the book of Revelation, chapter two, as the very first church along the mail route with the seven churches.

Acts 19:1: “Now it came to pass *that* while Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the upper parts *and* came to Ephesus; and when he found certain disciples... [A disciple is a learner—we are all disciples of Christ. We’re all learners of Christ.] ...he said to them, ‘Did you receive *the* Holy Spirit after you believed?’....” (vs 1-2). This is a very important section of Scripture, because this gives us the precedent that if a person needs to be baptized again, or re-baptized because they don’t have the Holy Spirit, then it should be done.

“...And they said to him, ‘We have not even heard that *there* is a Holy Spirit.’ Then he said to them, ‘Unto what, then, were you baptized?’ And they said, ‘Unto the baptism of John.’ And Paul said, ‘John truly baptized *with* a baptism unto repentance, saying to the people that they should believe in Him Who was coming after him—that is, in Jesus, the Christ.’ And after hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus” (vs 2-5).

How many times were they baptized? *Twice!* If you’ve been baptized in the Baptist Church then you need to be baptized again. Even if you were baptized in the Church of God, perhaps there’s a situation where the minister may not have really been a minister indeed, and there have been cases of that where a person needed to be re-baptized. I remember the first time I was confronted with that, someone said, ‘We were baptized in the Church of

God Seventh Day and we don’t think we have God’s Holy Spirit.’ They had never heard of the Holy Spirit being a begettal in your mind.

Whenever that occurs, I don’t like to say, ‘Oh good, let’s go re-baptize.’ No, that’s not what to do. What to do is this: Everyone who has that question in their mind should go ahead and fast and pray about it and ask God to reveal whether the Holy Spirit is *in* you or *with* you. It’s a very important thing to understand.

John 14—Christ is saying something here that’s very important. While the disciples were with Christ, none of them were begotten with the Spirit *internally*. But they had the Holy Spirit *with* them. When the Holy Spirit is *with* a person, it will lead them to want to know about God. They will feel something different than has happened in their life up to that particular point. God’s Spirit is dealing with the individual to call that individual. If they choose to repent and then are subsequently baptized, then the Holy Spirit will be begotten in their mind.

John 14:16: “And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter that it may be with you throughout the age ... [see sermon series: *Holy Spirit*—it goes through showing that in the Greek this should not have been called ‘he’ in any instance, but it should be called ‘it’—because the definite article is neuter, ‘ta pneuma’] ...*Even* the Spirit of the Truth, which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it... [Why cannot the world receive the Spirit of God? *Because they are not seeking God! God is not calling them!* That’s why!] ...but you know it because it dwells with you, and shall be **within** [‘en’] you....” (vs 16-18).

Back in Acts 19:2—Paul asked them whether they had the Holy Spirit: “...And they said to him, ‘We have not even heard that *there* is a Holy Spirit.’” Let’s also understand that in the time sequence between the time that Christ was here and the Church was started, we are dealing with some 19 years, maybe 20 years altogether. These people were just following the way of the baptism of John.

“...they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Now when Paul laid *his* hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with *other* languages and prophesied” (vs 5-6). That didn’t happen with every baptism, but this happened for a particular reason so that Paul would know that God wanted him there for a long time.

Verse 7: “And all the men were about twelve. Then he entered into the synagogue *and* spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading... [arguing, with some knock-down drag-outs] ...the things concerning the Kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and refused to

believe, speaking evil of the way before the multitude, he departed from them *and* separated the disciples; *and* he disputed *these things* daily in the school of a certain Tyrannus. And this took place for two years..." (vs 7-10).

There was a lot friction here in Ephesus; Ephesus became a real spiritual and literal warfare place, because Paul was turning the world upside down from Ephesus. Remember, Ephesus was the chief worship place of the goddess Diana.

Notice the impact here: "...so that all those who inhabited Asia heard the message of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. And God worked special works of power by the hands of Paul, so that even when handkerchiefs or cloths were brought from his body *to* those who were sick, the diseases departed from them and the wicked spirits went out from them" (vs 10-12). This is where we get the precedence of the anointed cloths.

Now then, you always have some competition come along and this is one of the ones I really like. You could do this up in a movie, v 13: "Then certain vagabond Jews... [Gypsy Jews] ...exorcists... [they dealt in demonology] ...took it upon themselves to pronounce over those who had wicked spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, 'We adjure you *by* Jesus, whom Paul proclaims.' Now, there were certain *men*, seven sons of a Jew named Sceva, a high priest, who were doing this. But the wicked spirit answered *and* said, 'Jesus I know, and Paul I have knowledge of; but you, who are you?' And the man in whom was the wicked spirit attacked them, overpowered them and prevailed against them, so that they escaped out of that house naked and wounded" (vs 13-16). You're dealing with violent spirits!

Verse 17: "Now this became known to everyone inhabiting Ephesus..." They had something better than a local newspaper. They had word of mouth and it went like wildfire and it went everywhere. They didn't have President Clinton to talk about, they had Paul to talk about. So, it went everywhere. Can you imagine what the people thought when they saw these guys running naked and wounded and bleeding down the street? 'Did you see that? What happened there?' It was known everywhere.

"...both Jews and Greeks; and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.... [right at the seat of Diana] ...Then many of those who believed came *forward* to confess and declare their deeds.... [now we're going to have an economic depression because of conversion] ...And many of those who practiced the occult arts... [little statues of Diana; probably rosary type beads] ...brought their books... [all the teachings contained in that] ...*and* burned *them* before all; and they calculated the cost of them and

found *it to be* fifty thousand pieces of silver. And so the Word of the Lord spread and prevailed mightily" (vs 17-20). This was really quite a thing going on. *If God is going to do anything like that in the future, we'd better all be prepared.*

Verse 21: "Now, when all these things had taken place, Paul determined in *his* spirit *that* when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, he must go to Jerusalem, saying, 'After going there, I must also see Rome.' And when he had sent to Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, he remained in Asia *for* a time. And at that time it came to pass *that there was* no small tumult about the way. For *there was* a certain *man* named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver temples for Diana, *which* brought the artificers no small gain" (vs 21-24).

They were all being unemployed! Talk about downsizing! They were getting rid of all of the idols, being downsized, no question about it.

Verse 25: "After gathering together the workmen *who worked* in such things, he said, 'Men, you know that from this *craft* we gain our wealth.'" Just think of this: If there was all of a sudden in Rome, at the Vatican, a destruction of all the idols and Madonnas and rosaries, don't you think they'd have conference like this in the Vatican? *You know they would!*

(go to the next track)

Verse 26: "'And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded a great multitude to turn away, saying that they are not gods which are made by hands. Now not only is our business in danger of coming into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana, whom all Asia and the world worship, is in danger of being regarded as nothing, and her majesty also is about to be destroyed.' And after hearing *this*, they were filled with rage; *and* they cried out, saying, 'Great is Diana of *the* Ephesians!'" (vs 26-28).

In Greek that has a rhythmic saying that is something! You can just hear the whole group chanting it! Just get the cadence and the whole group going, like everyone out in front of St. Peter's Basilica. They're all rhythmically going thorough and giving this great salute to Diana—here it's 'Artemis'; Diana is an English derivation of it.

Verse 29: "And the whole city was filled with confusion; and they seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians *and* fellow travelers of Paul, *and* rushed with one accord to the theater. Now Paul was determined to go in to the people, *but* the disciples prevented him...." (vs 29-31). The disciples didn't all him to do it. He was going to go and say, 'I'm going to speak' and they said 'you better not.' So,

he didn't!

"...And some of the chiefs of Asia, who also were his friends, sent to him, urging *him* not to venture into the theater. Now, some were crying out one thing and some another; for the assembly was confused, and the majority of *them* did not know for what reason they had come together. Then they selected Alexander from among the multitude, the Jews pushing him forward; and Alexander made a sign with his hand, wishing to make a defense to the people. But when they recognized that he was a Jew, there was a unified shout from all for about *the space of* two hours *as* they cried out, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!'" (vs 31-34). For two hours just ranting and raving!

Verse 35: "Now, after the recorder had calmed the multitude, he said, 'Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the inhabitants of the city of Ephesus are keepers of the temple of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* that fell down from Jupiter? Since these things are undeniable, it is imperative that you be calm and do nothing recklessly'" (vs 35-36). They went ahead and they settled the thing and Paul escaped.

Acts 20:1: "When the tumult was over, Paul called the disciples to *him* and embraced *them*; then he left to go into Macedonia." He went over in there. Then we have a whole section here concerning how he came back and talked to the elders at Ephesus and warned them of the things that were going to take place, because he knew at that time, as he was on his way to Jerusalem, that the whole Church would literally be torn asunder. We find this warning to the elders beginning in:

Verse 28: "**Take heed therefore to yourselves...**" That's the first thing any minister and teacher needs to do:

- don't get exalted
- don't get the big head
- don't overlord the brethren
- watch out for yourselves
- don't get carried away with doctrine
- stick with the Truth

All of those things are implied.

"...and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, **to feed the Church of God**, which He purchased with His own blood" (v 30). That's why all the brethren that any minister or teacher teaches, he is a steward of those brethren, because they're all the property of God. **You all belong to God!** That's very important to understand. As a steward then one is going to be a faithful steward is going to help all of those that God has purchased with the blood of Christ become the best that they can be through the power of the Holy

Spirit. That's the whole work of the ministry. This is what Paul is saying here.

Verse 29: "'For I know this: that after my departure grievous wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will rise up speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves'" (v 29-30). Sounds like what is happening today.

Verse 31: "'Watch, therefore, remembering that *for* three years I ceased not to admonish each one night and day with tears. And now I commit you, brethren, to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothing. Rather, you yourselves know that these hands did minister to my needs and to those who were with me. *In* all things, I have showed you that you are obligated to so labor to support those who are weak, remembering the words that the Lord Jesus Himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" And after saying these things, he knelt with them all *and* prayed. Then there was much weeping by everyone; and they embraced Paul *and* fervently kissed him, being distressed most of all by his saying that they would not see his face any more. Then they accompanied him to the ship" (vs 31-38).

Then he was on his way to Jerusalem. Acts 21 becomes a very important part of this Scripturalism vs Judaism. What do we have in Jerusalem? *Where the New Testament Church began*—correct?

- we have the temple
- we have James
- we have thousands and thousands of those who believed

And, of course, they were all still zealous of the Law. What we are going to do is see that now Paul succumbs to a political solution that backfired. God knew it would backfire and Paul barely escaped with his life. Let's see what it is, because he is confronted with the Circumcision Party. Paul was warned all the way through that when he stopped he would have trouble in Jerusalem.

Acts 21:17: "Now, when we arrived in Jerusalem, the brethren gladly received us. And on the following *day*, Paul went with us to *see* James; and all the elders *were* assembled" (vs 17-18). This you might say is the Jewish Sanhedrin of the Christian Church in Jerusalem. They had it all structured much like the Sanhedrin of the Jews before them. Of course, when you have that, you have politics.

Verse 19: "And after greeting them, he reported one by one the things that God had worked

among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard *this*, they glorified the Lord. Then they said to him, ‘Brother, you see how many thousands of Jews there are who believe and they are all zealous of the law of rituals’” (vs 19-20).

Getting into numbers. Are all of them converted? *No!* The book of Hebrews proves it, because they were ready to go back to the animal sacrifices, because certain of the promises that Jesus gave did not happen in the time sequence that *they thought* would happen. So, they were giving up on Christ and being zealous for the law. We have thousands here.

What happens when you start counting? What happened when David numbered Israel? *Joab gave him the advice:* ‘David, why are you numbering the children of Israel? It doesn’t matter how many we have, because God is going to deliver the victory—isn’t He?’ But David persisted on it: 70,000 children of Israel lost their lives because of David’s sin. We have here “...thousands of Jews there are who believe and they are all zealous of the law of rituals.”

Verse 21: “‘But they have been informed that you are teaching all *the* Jews who are among the Gentiles to apostatize from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, nor to walk in the customs.’” Part of this is true. You don’t have to keep the *traditions* of the Jews. But in Jerusalem they could never get away from it, even though they believed in Christ. This presented a problem. This is the Circumcision Party that Paul talks about later: *those of the circumcision* who still look down on all the Gentiles. What is it there for? What is it going to do?

Verse 22—here is a political solution: “‘What then is going to happen? A multitude is going to assemble... [It’s ordained or obligatory that they’re going to come together for one meeting or another.] ...for they will hear that you have come. Therefore, do this that we tell you: there are four men with us who have a vow on themselves’” (vs 22-23).

Paul made a bad decision here. I’m sure God let it be to prove a point. He could have said, ‘Look, this temple is going to be destroyed. All the rituals that are done here at the temple are of no effect whatsoever:

- they do not change the heart
- they do not bring about conversion

Though these people are zealous of it, they need to realize that God is going to destroy it! But he didn’t do that. What happened?

Verse 24: “‘Take these and be purified with them, and pay their expenses... [by the sacrifices

that they were going to have and purify yourself according to the ritual of the temple] ...so that they may shave *their* heads; and everyone will know that what they have been informed about you is nothing, and that you yourself also are walking orderly *and* keeping the law of rituals.’” They’re asking him to be two-faced in this: one way to the Gentiles and another way to the Jews.

Verse 25: “‘But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we wrote *to them* after deciding *that* they do not have to observe any such thing, except to keep themselves from things that are offered to idols, and *from* blood, and *from* what is strangled, and *from* sexual immorality.’ Then Paul took the men, *and* on the next day he was purified with them *and* went into the temple, signifying the fulfillment of the days of purification, until each of them had offered *his* offering. But when the seven days were about to be completed, the Jews from Asia, who had seen him in the temple...” (vs 25-27).

The ones in Asia, what did they always do with Paul? They were after him, chasing him down. When he went into the synagogue and had the arguments and split the synagogue. Then they sent people out to stir up the Gentiles. One place they stoned him. So, when they saw Paul in their home territory up at the temple, great trouble was at hand.

“...[They] stirred up all the multitude; and they laid *their* hands on him...” (v 27). ‘Come on now, let’s get him! Now’s our chance!’ Lesson #1: ***a political solution always backfires!*** God rescued him because He wanted them to have a witness.

Verse 28: “[They were] crying out, ‘Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place; and furthermore, he has also brought Greeks into the temple, and has defiled this Holy place.’ For they had previously seen Trophimus, the Ephesian, in the city with him, *and* they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. And the whole city was stirred up, and the people ran together; and they took hold of Paul *and* drew him outside the temple... [Hooray! Now we can get our mob rule!’] ...and the doors were immediately shut. But as they were attempting to kill him... [they meant it; they’re finally going to get him; they had Christ, now they’re going to get him] ...a report came to the chief captain of the band that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. *And* he immediately took soldiers and centurions with *him and* ran down to them. And when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul” (vs 28-32). They were beating him unmercifully, probably pulling at his beard and pulling his clothes.

Verse 33: “Then the chief captain came up *and* laid hold of him, and commanded that he be bound with two chains; and he inquired who he

might be, and what he had been doing. But some in the multitude were crying one thing, and some another. When he was not able to determine the facts because of the uproar, he commanded him to be brought into the fortress.... [where the prison was] ...Now, when he came upon the stairs, it happened *that* he was being carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the multitude” (vs 33-35). The soldiers just picked him up and carried him off; this was really a mob scene. This tells you in this:

- you have the Jews who didn't know anything about Christ knowing this
- you had the Jews who were those who supposedly believed

You've got a whole mixture here. They thought that what he was teaching the Gentiles that this was really the end of the earth. Can you imagine teaching non-circumcision? Can you imagine saying that God is going to destroy this temple? Why, this is where we worship! How could God do that? You must not be of God! You must be of Satan the devil! You can almost write the script.

Verse 36: “For the multitude of people followed, shouting, ‘Away with him!’.... [That’s what they said of Jesus—didn’t they? Same thing!] ...And when he was about to be brought into the fortress, Paul said to the chief captain, ‘Is it permissible for me to say something to you?’ And he said, ‘Do you know Greek? Are not you the Egyptian who previously caused confusion and led into the desert four thousand men who were murderers?’ But Paul said, ‘I am a man *who is* indeed a Jew, a citizen of Cilicia from Tarsus, which is no insignificant city. I beseech you, allow me to speak to the people.’ And after receiving permission from him, Paul stood on the stairs *and* motioned with his hand to the people; and when there was great silence, he spoke to *them* in the Hebrew language, saying” (vs 36-40). This is quite a thing. Everything was quiet, until he gets to one point:

Acts 22:1: “Men, brethren and fathers, hear now my defense to you.’ And when they heard him speak to them in the Hebrew language, they kept the more silent; and he said, ‘I am a man *who is* indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel... [one of the very leading teachers in Jerusalem] ...having been instructed according to *the* exactness of the law of our fathers, being a zealot for God, even as you all are this day; *and* I persecuted this way unto death, binding and delivering up to prisons both men and women, As also the high priest and all the elderhood bear witness to me; from whom I received letters to the brethren, *and* went to Damascus to bring bound to Jerusalem those who were there also, in order that they might be punished’” (vs 1-5). I don’t know what they did to punish him, but I imagine they were

beaten, scourge, some were put to death. The Inquisition did not begin with the Catholics, the Inquisition began with the Jews.

Verse 6: “Now it happened *that* while I was journeying, as I was drawing near to Damascus about midday, a great light from heaven suddenly shined around me. And I fell to the ground; and I heard a voice say to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?’ And I answered, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said to me, ‘I am Jesus the Nazarean, Whom you are persecuting.’ Now those who were with me indeed saw the light, and were alarmed; but they did not hear the voice of the one Who spoke to me. Then I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Stand up *and* go into Damascus, and there all the things that have been appointed for you to do shall be told to you.’ And since I could not see because of the brilliance of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, *and* I came to Damascus. And a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, who had a good report by all the Jews dwelling *there*, came to me; and he stood *and* said to me, ‘Brother Saul, look up.’ And I looked up at him at that time. And he said, ‘The God of our fathers has personally chosen you to know His will, and to see the Just One, and to hear *the* voice of His mouth; for you shall be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now why do you delay? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord’” (vs 6-16).

Verse 17: “And it came to pass *that* when I returned to Jerusalem, and I was praying in the temple, I entered into a trance; and I saw Him saying to me, ‘Hurry, and get out of Jerusalem with *all* speed, because they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.’ And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves are aware that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue those who believe in You. And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was being poured out, I myself was also standing by and consenting to putting him to death, and was holding the garments of those who killed him.’ But He said to me, ‘Go, for I am sending you afar off to the Gentiles.’” And they listened until they *heard* him say this; then they lifted up their voices, saying...” (vs 17-22).

As soon as he came to the Gentiles, mentioned the Gentiles, everything changed. Judaism would accept no Gentile under any circumstances—period—*unless* they were circumcised; *unless* they became a proselyte, *unless* they were a second-class citizen—which is contrary to what God wants. God wants us all brethren in Christ, circumcised in heart and mind having the Spirit of God. Here’s what happened when he got to the point of saying *Gentiles*.

“...‘Away with such a one from the *face of*

the earth, for he is not fit to live!’.... [he barely saved his life] ...And as they were shouting and casting off *their* garments and throwing dust into the air... [this was a real riot; tremendous riot] ...the chief captain commanded that he be brought into the fortress and ordered that he be examined by scourging, so that he might know for what cause they were crying out against him in this way” (vs 22-24). So, the long and short of it is that he found out that Paul was a Roman citizen, a free man, and he said, ‘Look, we’ve got to get you out of here.’ He got out there by night and went on down to Caesarea and was put in prison there.

The Jews still wanted him, Acts 24:1: “Then after five days, the high priest Ananias came down with the elders and a certain orator *named* Tertullus, who made a presentation to the governor against Paul.” The long and short of it is they came down there, Paul saw that he had to defend himself, and in the whole situation—chapters 24-26—he talked to King Agrippa, he said to Paul, ‘You almost convince me to be a Christian.’ Paul escaped with this life, he appealed to Caesar and that’s how he got to Rome. He got to Rome as a prisoner.

Then he was pretty much all done with things concerning Jerusalem, and when he came to Rome, Acts 28:16: “And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the commander of the camp; but Paul was allowed to remain by himself with the soldier who kept him.” This is when he did a lot of his writing. This is when he wrote Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians.

Verse 17: “Now, it came to pass *that* after three days, Paul called together those who were chief among the Jews. And when they had come together, he said to them, ‘Men *and* brethren, although I have done nothing against the people or the customs of our fathers, I was delivered into the hands of the Romans *as* a prisoner from Jerusalem.’ After examining me, they desired to let *me* go because there was not one cause of death in me. But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar...” (vs 17-19). He used the law legally to save his neck.

“...—not as though I had anything to charge against my nation. For this cause then, I have called for you, in order that I might see you and speak to you; because *it is* for the hope of Israel that I have this chain around *me*.’ Then they said to him, ‘We have neither received letters concerning you from Judea, nor have any of the brethren [Jews] who have arrived reported anything or spoken evil of you. But we would like to hear from you *and to know* what you think, because we are indeed very aware that this sect is everywhere spoken against.’ And when they appointed a day *for him to speak*, many came into his lodging to *hear* him; *and* he expounded to

them from morning until evening, fully testifying of the Kingdom of God and persuading them *of* the things concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and *from* the prophets. And some were truly convinced of the things that were spoken, but some did not believe” (vs 19-24).

“And they departed in disagreement with one another after Paul had spoken *these* words: ‘Well did the Holy Spirit speak by Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, saying, “Go to this people and say, ‘In hearing you shall hear, and in no way understand; and *in* seeing you shall see, but in no way perceive. For the heart of this people has grown fat, and their ears are dull of hearing, and they have closed their eyes; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them.’” Be it known to you, that the salvation of God has, therefore, been sent to the Gentiles; and they will hear.’” (vs 25-28). That’s a mighty challenging statement to them.

Verse 29: “And after he said these things, the Jews went away with much debate among themselves. And Paul remained two whole years in his own hired house, welcoming all who came to him, proclaiming the Kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, no man forbidding *him*” (vs 29-31).

It sounds like it’s cut right off in the middle of something—doesn’t it? Apparently it is. There is no ‘Amen’ at the end of the book of Acts—none whatsoever. I don’t know all of the meaning or implications of that. Some have said that there’s going to be more added to it later on. I don’t know if there’s going to be a future book of Acts or not, and if there is, what all of it would contain. We’ll just leave it at that.

What we are dealing with is the perversion of the Gospel by intermixing Judaism with it. This particular Judaism that we have not only came from Jerusalem, but we now know also came from the Essenes from which we get today the Dead Sea Scrolls. We also now know that they had a calendar that was contrary to the true solar/lunar calendar that we have. Those of the Essenes over there where there are caves and the remnant of it, were basically sun-worshippers. *Their* sabbath was actually in the middle of the week on a Wednesday, strange as that may seem.

There was this intermixture of Judaism with the true Gospel, which Paul addresses very directly in Galatians 1:6: “I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which *in reality* is not another *gospel*...” (vs 6-7). In other words, there’s only one *true Gospel* and any other gospel is a fake one. If you take and add

something to it that shouldn't be, it's not the Gospel of Christ.

"...but there are some who are troubling you and are desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ. But if we, or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!.... [Cut off from God; these are not very kind ecumenical words—are they? Think on that!] ...As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! Now then, am I striving to please men, or God?...." (vs 7-10). If he would have remembered that when he went to Jerusalem, maybe the story would have been different. He had a lapse and slip by going and doing something political to please men. He learned his lesson.

"...Or am I motivated to please men? For if I am yet pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ. But I certify to you, brethren, that the Gospel that was preached by me is not according to man; because neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught *it by man*; rather, *it was* by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you heard of my former conduct when I was in Judaism, how I was excessively persecuting the Church of God and was destroying it" (vs 10-13).

Then we have the whole story leading up to where he came up to Jerusalem. Titus went with him and he wasn't compelled to be circumcised. He told them what he was doing. He wasn't going to give space unto any of them for anything. He wasn't coming up to play politics. He was received of them and given the right hand of fellowship.

Galatians 2—here's the whole vital point. Here was Peter's great mistake. What happened at this point we are not sure, but we can only guess what happened. It is known in history that those Jews who kept the customs of the Jews and Pharisees—who later became called Nazarenes and the Ebonites—before the destruction of the temple they moved over to Pella.

As we covered in Acts 15, remember the Pharisees were the ones causing the problem and we hear nothing of the Pharisees from that time on. I think there were two events that led to the loss of nearly all the Jewish congregations.

1. Acts 15 when they decided it was clear from the Word of God that they did not have to have physical circumcision
2. Galatians 2 when Peter and Barnabas did what they did here in dissimulating, separating and following the custom of Judaism.

Galatians 2:11: "But when Peter came to Antioch, I withstood him to *his* face... [no politics

this time] ...because he was to be condemned; for before certain *ones* came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles...." (vs 11-12). Remember, Peter was the apostle to the circumcision; he got caught up in the politics of the Circumcision Party in this case, and got himself in great trouble. I believe [speculation] that he lost a good number of the churches that were the Jewish churches. I'll show you why I believe that.

"...However, when they came, he drew back and separated himself *from the Gentiles*, being afraid of those of *the* circumcision party. And the rest of *the* Jews joined him in *this* hypocritical act, insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy ['hupokrites'].... [he was playing politics and being a hypocrite] ...But when I saw that they did not walk uprightly according to the Truth of the Gospel, I said to Peter in the presence of them all, 'If you, being a Jew, are living like the Gentiles, and not according to Judaism, why do you compel the Gentiles to Judaize?'" (vs 12-14). In other words, separate yourself from the Jews. Physical separation had nothing to do with spiritual conversion.

Verse 15: "'We who are Jews by nature—and not sinners of *the* Gentiles—knowing that a man is not justified by works of law... [see sermon series: *Justification by Faith*—we go through the Greek Interlinear and cover all of this.] ...but through *the* faith of Jesus Christ, we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order that we might be justified by *the* faith of Christ...' (vs 15-16). As a matter of fact, it made it worse. These were brethren in Christ that God has called. What do we have? *Hypocrisy! I am better than you! We are the chosen people!*

"...and not by works of law; because by works of law shall no flesh be justified...." (v 16). Why? *Because a work of law is not the sacrifice of Christ!*—period! You're justified by the sacrifice of Christ. All of these dos and don'ts of Judaism cause division. That's why we have this series: Scripturalism vs Judaism.

Verse 17: "Now then, if we are seeking to be justified in Christ, *and* we ourselves are found to be sinners, *is* Christ then *the* minister of sin? MAY IT NEVER BE! For if I build again those things that I destroyed, I am making myself a transgressor" (vs 17-18). Paul was a leading Pharisee—wasn't he? If he went back to Pharisaism he would make himself a transgressor.

Verse 19: "For I, through law, died to law, in order that I may live to God." These are the laws of dos and don'ts of Judaism, not the laws and commandments of God. This is where Protestantism gets so wrong!

Verse 20: "I have been crucified with Christ,

yet I live. *Indeed*, it is no longer I; but Christ lives in me. For *the life* that I am now living in *the flesh*, I live by faith—that *very faith* of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness *is* through *works of law*, then Christ died in vain” (vs 20-21).

If it be circumcision, if it be any of the other things of Judaism it all ties in there together. Let me show you why I think that Peter lost a good deal of the churches, which were Jewish churches. If Peter lost a good number of those churches, what was he going to do? *First of all, he had to repent*—didn’t he? Could he still be an apostle? *Sure! He just made a mistake! A big one, though.*

1-Peter 1:1: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to *the* elect strangers... [not Jews] ...scattered in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.” These were some of the areas that Paul taught in. This is a letter going out to areas where Paul had already taught. Why is this not to the Jews at large? *Most of the Jewish congregations went with Judaism!* That is my supposition.

1-Peter 5:5—we’ll see, I think, a repentant Peter: “In the same manner, *you* younger men be subject to *the* older men; and all *of you* be subject to one another, being clothed with humility because God sets Himself against *the* proud, but He gives grace to *the* humble. Be humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God so that He may exalt you in *due* time; casting all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you. Be sober! Be vigilant! For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour” (vs 5-8).

Was Satan after Peter? *Yes!* ‘Get you behind Me, Satan’ when Christ talked to Peter (Matt. 16:23^[transcriber’s correction]). ‘Satan has demanded to have you, but I’ve prayed that your faith would not fail’ (Luke 22:31-32^[transcriber’s correction]). He almost got him with this Judaism and the Circumcision Party from Jerusalem.

I think he’s talking about his own experience here, v 9: “Whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing *that* the same afflictions are being fulfilled among your brethren who *are* in *the* world. Now, may the God of all grace, Who has called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after *you* have suffered a little while... [which Peter did; that happened] ...Himself perfect you, establish, strengthen, *and* settle *you*: (vs 9-10). I think that’s an indication of his repentance and reacceptance by God.

2-Peter 3:15—again, I think this shows a repentant Peter and accepting of Paul: “And bear in mind that the long-suffering of our Lord *is* salvation, exactly as our beloved brother Paul... [I don’t think he felt too good after he was corrected by Paul in

front of everybody. Paul had died by the time Peter was writing this, so he learned his lesson.] ...according to the wisdom given to him, has also written to you; as *he has* also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them concerning these things; in which are some things *that are* difficult to understand, which the ignorant and unstable are twisting *and* *distorting*, as *they* also *twist and distort* the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. Therefore, beloved, since you know this in advance, be on guard against *such practices*, lest you be led astray with the error of the lawless ones, *and* you fall from your own steadfastness” (vs 15-17). I think, again, he was falling upon his own experience.

Verse 18: “Rather, **be growing in *the* grace and *the* knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* glory both now and into *the* day of eternity.** Amen.”

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Acts 16-3-4, 25-35
- 2) Acts 17:1-14, 16-34
- 3) Acts 18:1-6
- 4) Ezekiel 3:17-21
- 5) Acts 18:6-18, 21-33
- 6) Acts 19:1-5
- 7) John 14:16-18
- 8) Acts 19:2, 5-36
- 9) Acts 20: 1, 28-38
- 10) Acts 21:17-40
- 11) Acts 22:1-24
- 12) Acts 24:1
- 13) Acts 28:16-31
- 14) Galatians 1:6-13
- 15) Galatians 2:11-21
- 16) 1 Peter 1:1
- 17) 2 Peter 5:5-10
- 18) 2 Peter 3:15-18

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 13
- Acts 24-26
- Acts 15
- Matthew 16:23
- Luke 22:31-32

Also referenced:

Sermon Series:

- *Holy Spirit*
- *Justification by Faith*

Books:

- ✓ *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried & Goldin
- ✓ *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* by George Ricker Berry

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