

New Testament History, Literature, and Theology

Session 3: Jewish Sects and Institutions

Dr. Ted Hildebrandt

A. Persian to Greek Rule [00:00-5:12]

Welcome this afternoon to the next set of videos on our background to the New Testament. Last time we kind of drew a historical scenario with the historical background of the New Testament. We started out with the Persians and Cyrus the Great who was kind of a messianic figure, an “anointed one” from the Old Testament. We moved on in the Persian Empire to Darius who was the great organizer of the Persian Empire and then Darius was the one under whom the second temple was built. This second temple will take us down into the time of Jesus, Jesus will come into the second temple which was remodeled and expanded tremendously by Herod the Great. The Persians kept going out and conquered Egypt, Turkey and Mesopotamia. They had a huge empire, all the way over to the Indus River. Then they started fighting with the Greeks. Over a period of years this went on over with the Greeks.

Then Alexander the Great came up, taking over the army of his father, Philip of Macedon, and riding that army into Turkey, defeating the Persians and then down into Egypt, all the way over to Mesopotamia and again all the way over to the Indus River, Afghanistan, Iran; and basically conquering the whole world in about ten or twelve years. Alexander then died early, in his 32nd, or 33rd year. His child was too young to take over, so his four generals took over. Basically, Antigonus got the Mesopotamia area over into Syria and Ptolemy got the south and Egypt. Ptolemy then got Israel. The Ptolemy's in Egypt, Ptolemy I, II, III, IV, V... to whatever, there are about twenty or thirty of these Ptolemy's in a row. For about a hundred years, from about 300 to 200 B.C. the Ptolemy's were tolerant and they ruled Israel and actually the greatest achievement for them was that they translated the Hebrew Old Testament, in Hebrew and Aramaic into Greek and that was called the Septuagint, the LXX. Now we have a Greek Bible that the world could read now as a result of the tolerant Ptolemy's.

At about 200, about 198 B.C., the Syrians, basically the Syrians moved down and took Israel, and this is when Antiochus Epiphanies and First Maccabees takes place. There are tremendous cultural wars where the Syrians are trying to force the Jews to comply with Hellenism. They force them into eat pork, no circumcision, burning scriptures, and defiling the Temple. So basically the five Maccabees boys rise up and they fight against the Syrians and purify the temple. Finally, there was an agreement made between the Syrians and Israel. That tension between Syria and Israel has gone on for thousands of years.

Then what happens basically is Simon, one of the five Maccabees, (Judas was the fighter, Jonathan was the diplomat) sets up the high priesthood and sets up what's called the "Hasmonean Line." The Hasmonean Dynasty comes down to John Hurcanus where the Pharisees are introduced and then down to Alexander Jannaeus, and Salome Alexander.

The Hasmoneans start fighting amongst themselves and that's when Rome steps into the picture. Rome says, 'we want taxes and you guys can't be fighting,' and so Rome steps in. Pompey goes into the Holy of Holies and Herod is placed on the throne as king of the Jews about 37 B.C. Herod didn't get along with Cleopatra and Antony, especially Cleopatra. Herod ends up killing his wife, Mariamne, who was a Hasmonean, who was in the line of Simon of the Maccabees. Herod marries in, but then he kills her, as well as his own sons. So what we've got now is something new. Herod dies at about 4 B.C. and so Jesus was actually born about 5 B.C. We know Herod died, I think there was a lunar eclipse or something that they can identify exactly when Herod died, which does not make it 0 B.C. We said that the A.D./B.C. system was designed by a guy in about 625 A.D.; and when he figured out the time from 625 A.D. back to the time of Jesus, he missed the birth of Christ by about four or five years. This isn't bad after going back about 600 years without modern tools. Now we know, through eclipses and other things that Herod died about 4 or 5 B.C. and Christ was born probably about 5 B.C.

B. The Tetrarchs [5:12-7:22]

Now after Herod dies we have what are called the tetrarchs. These tetrarchs take over and they appear in the New Testament. And so you can see the top guy, we have Archelaus. Archelaus got the biggest piece of the pie. He got Judea, which is basically the tribal area of Judah which is west of the Dead Sea, below Jerusalem, he got Idumea, the old Edomite area which is basically to the south of Israel, and over to the south, south east side of the Dead Sea where the Edomites used to live. And he also got Samaria. So he got not only Judea, but Judea and Samaria; so he got the biggest piece of the pie, kind of a double portion if you will. Later on in his life, about 6 A.D. he is exiled to Gaul by the Romans and so Archelaus disappears fairly early. Herod Antipas is going to be the Herod Antipas up in Galilee that Jesus and John the Baptist will run into. Herod Antipas gets Galilee and Perea up more towards the north. It is Herod Antipas that kills John the Baptist. John the Baptist said of Herod that he was not supposed to marry his brother, Philip's, wife. Herodias' daughter danced before Herod and he said, 'I'll give you half of my kingdom or whatever you want,' and she says, 'I want John the Baptist's head on a tray' and lo and behold John the Baptist was beheaded by Herod Antipas; and so he's a pretty bad fellow. Herod Philip is the other brother and he was the former husband of Herodias, and he is the Golan Heights east of the Sea of Galilee. So we basically get these three people, they call them tetrarchs, I've never been able to figure out, tetra – tetra means four, how come there's only three brothers? It appears, or some people think Archelaus got the double portion, so basically there is four areas and Archelaus got two of those areas, Judea and Samaria. So that's kind of how it breaks down after Herod the Great into these four tetrarchs and these different areas and Israel is divided up in that way.

C. Jewish Tradition—The Pharisees [7:23-9:43]

From there, what I'd like to do is shift the dialogue away from history to more sociological, societal, cultural kinds of things, dealing particularly with the Jewish literature of the time and the Jewish sects of that time. Now you've got to be careful how you say 'Jewish sects' but this is the "sects" spelled s-e-c-t-s. The first one I'd like to

look at is the Pharisees. Where did the Pharisees come from and what's going on there? So let's look at the history with the Pharisees. These guys largely came to be and are first recognized in the time of John Hurcanus about 104 – 110 B.C. So about 110 B.C. you get the Pharisees. Remember the Pharisees were rejected by John Hurcanus and he crucified hundreds of these Pharisees. So there's going to be this tension between the Pharisees and Sadducees going all the way back to 100 B.C.

The Pharisees then, largely, agreed with the oral tradition. That's going to be, when you say the word 'tradition' everybody thinks of Fiddler on the Roof, but actually the Pharisees were big into tradition, the oral tradition that was passed down. When Moses went up on Mount Sinai, Moses got the law from God and Moses wrote down the Pentateuch from God and the Ten Commandments God wrote. But when Moses was up on the mountain he also received all this oral communication from God and for basically forty days and forty nights he heard a lot from God. So then this oral tradition, allegedly had been passed down, passed down to the Pharisees. They accepted the oral tradition and that was a big part of their religion. There were two types of oral traditions. One was expository and the other was logically deductive. I'd like to walk through some of this and talk some about the various aspects and types of literature that came out of this period and a little later actually; that is, the Jewish literature of this time period.

D. Jewish Literature: Midrash—halakhah and haggadah [9:43-11:28]

I'd like to start off then with the expository. We'll talk about the expository that exposit Scripture, then we'll talk about the logical deductions, the theological deductions that were made off of the scriptural expositions. The first one is the Midrash. The Midrash comes about 200 A.D. It is expository on Scripture, in other words, it's almost like a commentary on Scripture, it exposit Scripture; you get a scriptural text and then it is expounded in the Midrash about 200 A.D. There are two types of ways that the Midrash exposit; one is called the *halakhah*, the *halakhah* is more legally oriented so it is more like what lawyers would do, like the text says this and these are the logical implications of this. Your donkey falls into a hole, are you allowed to pull it out on the Sabbath? And

so that's the *halakhah*, the legal section there.

The *haggadah* is composed largely of stories. The *haggadah* is stories that the rabbis would tell, so these are going to be more didactic, more in story form where the *halakhah* is going to be more legal like the scribes. The detailed people would work off the *halakhah* and the rabbis telling stories would be the *haggadah*. So those two types of literature are found in the Midrash.

E. Targums [11:28-13:25]

Now after the Midrash, another aspect of close text work among Jews is called the Targums. The Targums are actually Aramaic translations of the Hebrew. So basically you had Hebrew, most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew but the Jewish people at the time of Jesus spoke Aramaic. Even Jesus would speak Aramaic many times. "Talitha kum," he would say and other sayings that would indicate that Jesus and people at the time knew Aramaic. Jesus probably also knew Greek and probably also knew Hebrew. He was probably bilingual at least, probably tri- or quad-lingual. Whenever you have cultures where there's a melting pot various things going on people learn multiple languages at a time. But Jesus, his native tongue was probably Aramaic, and he was also probably well aware of Greek just because he was from Galilee, Galilee of the Gentiles. Most of them spoke Greek. So basically then, the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Aramaic because Aramaic was the language of the people. They picked up Aramaic when they went to Babylon in 586 B.C. with Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Ezekiel. During the time when they were in Babylon they picked up Aramaic. So basically the text of Scripture was translated over into Aramaic. Those are called Targums. We have the Targum of Onkelos and various other Targums. These Targums would be read as the Old Testament written in Aramaic. So we have the Midrash, which is basically the commentary on Scripture, the legal aspects, the story aspects and we've got the Targums. The Targums are Aramaic translations of Scripture, similar to the Septuagint which was a Greek translation of the Old Testament.

F. Mishna, Tosefta, and the Talmud [13:26-16:11]

Other Jewish traditions, there's a logical section. The logical section focuses on a document that's about that thick called the Mishnah. The Mishnah is basically the oral tradition at Sinai that was passed down and reflects the beliefs around or before 200 A.D. So it's after the time of the fall of the Temple, in 70 A.D. The Mishnah picks up and we hear the stories, the arguing back and forth between the rabbis and things of the Mishnah. It represents the oral tradition that was passed down. Some of these legends may go back before 70 A.D. It's very hard to know the time of Jesus. So the Mishnah is a major piece of oral tradition down from the time of Jesus or after the time of the fall of the Temple in 70 A.D., down to about 200 A.D. when it was written down.

The Tosefta is basically a little bit after the Mishnah; the Tosefta has comments on the Mishnah. So you have the Mishnah, the original document, 200 A.D. describing traditions back to the time of the fall of the Temple possibly, and the Tosefta presents comments on the Mishnah.

Then this is the big one: the Talmud. There are two types of Talmud: the Babylonian Talmud comes from around 400 A.D. and the Jerusalem Talmud from about 600 A.D. These are less relevant to the New Testament studies but if you're studying anything about Judaism you should know about the Talmud. The Talmud on a shelf is about this big. Each volume in it is about a couple thousand pages; it's huge. The Talmud is largely then an elaboration on the Mishnah; so the Talmud takes the oral traditions and elaborates on them. One was done in Babylon one was done in Jerusalem, it is located in these places and identified with them. They're both huge. The Babylonian Talmud is 400 A.D. and the Jerusalem Talmud is 600 A.D. it is an elaboration on the Mishnah. So the Mishnah is probably the most appropriate for us as Christians in trying to get into the first century and what was going on there after the fall of the Temple, that's when the church is growing. This is the literature that plays the background for understanding a lot of Judaism.

G. The Apocrypha and Canon [16:11-18:28]

There are extra-biblical sources. Some of these extra-biblical sources we've talked about in this class. You've actually had to read 1 Maccabees. The Maccabees were around 165 B.C., so this is actually before the time of Christ. You've got the Wisdom of Ben Sirach, which reminds people quite a bit of the book of Proverbs. There is also the Wisdom of Solomon. These are not accepted by the Jews; the Jews, while they recorded these books and they read these books yet do not accept the Apocrypha as being the Word of God. Actually we accept our Old Testament canon from the Jews; the Jews don't accept the Apocrypha, neither do we. So that's basically where our Old Testament canon comes from, the Jewish people. They basically have the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. The Law would be the Pentateuch. The Prophets would start with Joshua and go up through Samuel and Kings as part of the former prophets and then the latter prophets would be our Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve, which would be in one book – the twelve minor prophets. The Writings would be Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job, those types of books. So you have the Law, the Prophets, (the former prophets, the latter prophets) and then the Writings. Those were the three sections of the Jewish canon. They did not accept the Apocrypha. Although it was about their history, they did not accept it as the Word of God. They are interesting and good books. Actually in the 16th century, at the council of Trent, was the first time the Apocrypha was actually approved by a church council. Before that they were not approved by the church. The council at Trent was the first time. So there is a big debate. The Catholic folks accept the Apocrypha, we as Protestants do not accept it. It is interesting reading, but not accepted as the Word of God. Even the book of 1st Maccabees says there are no prophets around and without prophets you can't have Scripture. But the Jews largely give us the Old Testament canon and they don't accept the Apocrypha as canonical.

H. Pseudepigrapha: Gospels of ..., Acts of..., Apocalypses of [18:28-22:45]

Now here are some interesting books. These are called the Pseudepigrapha. The Pseudepigrapha is fascinating. They break into three different sections. First of all it's Pseudepigrapha, so it's "pseudo," "pseudo" means false. "Epigrapha" means "writings."

So “Pseudepigrapha” these are the false writings. Nobody accepts them as canonical. There were books in the early church age that were running around then and we break them down into these three categories. There is “the Gospel of...” About four or five years ago, at Easter time, they broke the Gospel of Judas on us. It was just, as always with these cultural wars that we have in America, right around Easter time, when we celebrate the resurrection of Christ they’ll come out with this Gospel of Judas which is supposed to challenge Christianity. I thought it was going to be a big challenge but the truth is when I picked up the book and read just the first page or so of the book, it’s obviously a Gnostic document. The Gnostics were in the second century from 100 to 200 A.D. and not in the first century that much at all. So It’s obviously something that was written way later; at least a hundred years after the time of Christ and had very little relevance. But the Gospel of Judas is a big one, the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, you can see how they say these, ‘gospels of...’ and then they name an apostle. So you can see the connection in the early church between these sacred writings. These were false writings and they were trying to gain status by attaching a name of an apostle. So you have the Gospel of Thomas which is a fairly interesting read. You can read about Jesus when he was twelve years old and the things he did with his friends and turned them into various things. Those will be found in some of the gospels here; the Gospel of Peter, Gospel of Thomas, Philip.

Another category of books is these “Apocalypses of” The Apocalypse of John, that’s the book of Revelation, that’s in our Bible. But during this time period there were books of apocalypses. Apocalypses tell you about the end of the world how things are going to end as the world blows up. Even in our culture we have a movie called “Apocalypse Now” and how an asteroid is coming to hit the world and destroy the world portraying the end of the world. The apocalypse is of that nature; so you have the Apocalypse of Peter, the Apocalypse of Paul and the Apocalypse of Thomas. So you have these various apocalypses and so the Apocalypse of John is not the only one. It was a genre of literature from that time period. John uses that type of literature to express the book of Revelation. But there are others here as well, again nobody accepts these as

being the Word of God but they're interesting. We've got the documents, actually I've got in my office two books about an inch and a half thick each, that have all these New Testament documents that come from this period but aren't considered part of scripture.

So you have the 'Gospels of Judas, Thomas' and the 'Apocalypses of Peter, Paul and Thomas,' and then you have the 'Acts of' and in our case, in the New Testament, we've got the Acts of the Apostles, the book of Acts, written by Luke, written about the early church and Paul's three missionary journeys, captivity and then going to Rome. Here we've got the Acts of Peter, the Acts of Andrew, the Acts of Paul, the Acts of John and the Acts of Thomas. So it looks like Thomas makes it into all these genres; but the Acts of Thomas, the Acts of John tell you some of these background stories. They're fascinating books, we've got them, they've been translated into English. To be honest, they are not that helpful for New Testament studies they just give you a flavor for the culture and what types of ideas were being discussed then. Usually most of these are after the time of Christ, some of them are one hundred, two hundred years afterwards. So some of them are relevant, some of them are not that relevant.

I. Rabbinic Ways of Thought: Mat. 23:24-25 [22:45-28:06]

Here's some examples of some of the rabbinic ways of thinking about things. In Matthew chapter 23, verses 25 and 26, let me just read this to you; it says, "woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" (and you remember Matthew 23 is Jesus' great condemnation of the Pharisees,) "woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you cleanse the outside of the cup and the plate, but the inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. First cleanse the inside of the cup and plate that the outside may be clean." And so you have this argument between the inside of the cup and the outside of the cup. And Jesus is saying you take all this time to clean the outside of the cup but the inside is all full of coffee grounds or whatever. There is all this bad stuff in there. Jesus says you need to clean the inside of the cup, the inside of the cup needs to be cleaner than the outside. And so this is inside / outside thing, the cup debate. It's pretty interesting that what you have is some of the early rabbis arguing over the same thing. So Shammai

basically argues that the outer part is clean even when the inner part is unclean; the outer part of the cup can be considered clean so you don't defile yourself when you touch it because the outer part of the cup is clean. If the inside is unclean, it doesn't matter just so long as the outer part is clean. That was the position of Shammai; Shammai was one of the great rabbis. Basically there's four great rabbis of the early period – Hillel is one, Shammai is another, Gamaliel--does anyone remember Gamaliel? Paul studied under Gamaliel. Actually in the book of Acts Gamaliel speaks up almost on the behalf of Christians saying this may be from God and we need to check this out; and then rabbi Akiba. And so the four great rabbis, Shammai, Hillel, Gamaliel and Akiba. Shammai said the outside of the cup is important if it is clean, the inside doesn't make that much difference. Hillel, on the other hand, took the opposite position, and said, no the inside of the cup matters; the inside of the cup is what matters and the outside is always unclean, what matters is the inside of the cup. So as it turns out that what Jesus said about the inside of the cup being important and needing to be cleaned is very similar to what Hillel said. So you get this connection between Jesus and Hillel, it's just interesting, the connections between the two.

Let me put the Lord's Prayer up here; many of the things in the Lord's Prayer and the phraseology, "Our father, which art in heaven," and that kind of thing, much of that phraseology is found in the rabbis.

Down to Matthew 7 verse 4, "you hypocrite! First cast the beam out of your own eye then you will see clearly to take the mote (cast the splinter) out of your brother's eye." Jesus says, "don't take the speck out of your brother's eye when you've got a beam in your own." It's very interesting that Rabbi Tarfon says this, "I wonder if anyone in this generation knows how to accept reproof, if anyone says to him, 'take the splinter from between your eyes,' he replies, 'take the beam from between your own eyes.'" And so Rabbi Tarfon is saying something, not exactly the same thing that Jesus is saying, but it's interesting parallel phraseology. The difference between the speck in the eye and the beam in the eye parallels with what Jesus had said.

The other thing too, Jesus taught in parables. You're going to find that parables did not really occur much in the Pseudepigrapha or in the Dead Sea Scrolls. But in the rabbis, parables were prolific. In the Midrash you have these parables; Jesus teaches in parables, the parable of the seeds, some fell on the wayside, some fell on the good ground, some fell on the thorny ground. There is the parable of the seeds and weeds, the master planted good crops some enemy came and planted bad with that and he said let it grow until the harvest. So you get Jesus and the parables; the parable of the Good Samaritan, etc. The rabbis also taught in parables. Basically, what I'm trying to say here is Jesus is Jewish. He teaches and as a matter of fact, when people come up to Jesus oftentimes they call Him "Rabbi." Jesus is Jewish, he teaches in parables, he uses the images, the phraseology of the Jewish people of his day. So Jesus is Jewish and I'm just trying to make these connections with some of the literature and styles of presentations of his way that he uses this.

J. Jewish Sects: Pharisees [28:06-30:14]

Now continuing with our Jewish sects applying it to the New Testament, with the Pharisees, you've got Paul or Saul. Who was the first king of Israel? – The first king of Israel was Saul, King Saul was from, guess what tribe? He was also from the tribe of Benjamin. So Saul, who turns to Paul, was also from the tribe of Benjamin, probably named after King Saul. Then he gets a new name, Paul. Paul studied under Gamaliel; Gamaliel was a very famous Jewish rabbi at the time. Even to this day Jewish folks will know who Gamaliel is, as far as Hillel, Shammai, Akibah and Gamaliel. Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night, John chapter 3 and he addresses Jesus and Jesus teaches him. Nicodemus also, is a Pharisee. And Paul said in Philippians 3:6 that he [Paul] was a Pharisee of the Pharisees, and so Paul gives a little bit of his background in Judaism and he said he excelled in Judaism more than everybody. Paul was very intense, obviously. So the Pharisees, this is a good point to know when you read in the New Testament, 'woe unto you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites!' whenever you say someone is pharisaic it's a slam usually meaning that someone is legalistic and myopic in the way they think about

religion. They're pharisaic. Our heads are wired wrong when we hear the word "Pharisee." Back in those times the Pharisees were respected. The Pharisees were respected back then as religious leaders. So you've kind of got to make that shift. The Pharisees were not usually wealthy, they were usually poor traveling teachers and preachers.

K. Sadducees [30:14-32:28]

In contrast, the Sadducees were not respected and these people were wealthy. There's a big contrast between the Pharisees who were poor but more religious and therefore more respected by the common folk. The common folk respected the Pharisees, whereas, the Sadducees were wealthy. We want just to contrast their outlook and life we talked about this before. The Pharisees, when Hellenism came in from Alexander and his four generals down in the Maccabean time, as Greek culture came in the Pharisees held their traditions and they held them more tightly; the people respected them because they were Jewish to the core and they held on to their Jewishness. They separated themselves from the Hellenistic Greek culture and the secularism that was happening there. In contrast to that, the Sadducees greeted the Greeks with open arms. The Sadducees assimilated. The Sadducees were much more into assimilation, while the Pharisees held back and doubled down onto their tradition. What happens is, basically the Sadducees come from the upper class, and they assimilated into Greek culture so they rose economically and commercially. Also, the Sadducees captured the high priesthood. So when we get into the New Testament, we're going to see Caiaphas the high priest; this Caiaphas fellow is going to be a Sadducee and the Jewish Council, many of them will be of the Sadducees, the upper crust, the elite, the high class people. However, they are unpopular with the masses because they have the wealth and the power and they've assimilated into Hellenistic culture. Many of the people down below who are still religious and still honor Judaism did not appreciate the Sadducees.

L. Sadducees' beliefs: No tradition, resurrection or angels [32:28- 35:43]

There were three things the Sadducees did not believe in. The first one actually is the oral tradition. The Sadducees did not accept the oral tradition. The oral tradition was very important to the Pharisees; and the things like the Mishnah were very important to the Pharisees. The Mishnah, of course, would not be written for another couple hundred years. The idea of the oral tradition being passed down was a center for the Pharisees theological; whereas the Sadducees rejected the oral tradition.

The Sadducees also did not believe in a physical resurrection. In some sense, they adopted more Greek ways of thinking. In Greek thinking, there is more of a dualism where basically you have the spiritual and you have the physical, and in Greek culture, the physical is down-played and the spiritual is put up higher. Basically you have this dualism between the physical and the spiritual. For the Greeks the spiritual is commended and the physical is demoted or denigrated. So you don't want to have a resurrection body because the body is bad because the body is physical. You want it to be spiritual. Kind of like Plato and the cave, if you remember, you know where there are these universal forms. So the Sadducees did not hold to the resurrection.

They did not hold to the angels, they didn't hold that there were spiritual beings. They did not hold that there were angels as well so there's no resurrection or angels. What's ironic is if you get into it with Jesus, in Matthew 22, Matthew 23, the Sadducees, who say there's no resurrection, come to Jesus and say, now what do you do with this problem? The problem is, a woman has a husband, she has no children and the husband dies. Well, what's required in the ancient, the levirate marriage from the book of Ruth and other places in the Old Testament legal texts, the brother must marry the woman, so the brother marries her, and he dies also. He has another brother, finally all seven brothers are married to the woman and then she dies also; "in the resurrection therefore, whose wife shall she be?" The Sadducees are putting this conundrum to Jesus to basically push him to say "Jesus, there is no resurrection; this proves there cannot be a resurrection." Jesus then, brilliantly, you can see the irony here, responds to the Sadducees, "you don't know the scriptures or the power of God." And Jesus says, "in the resurrection they will be like the angels." Now do you get the irony here? The

Sadducees don't believe in the angels either; and Jesus then refutes them by saying that "in the resurrection they'll be like the angels, who are neither married nor given in marriage." So that when you go to the other world, there is no marriage. You will be like the angels. So He uses their flaw in one area to refute them in the other, and you can see it. So he gets out of the problem there with the Sadducees. So that's the Sadducees. Remember the big conflict back there with John Hyrcanus where he crucified the Pharisees and there were big tensions between the two.

M. Essenes [35:43- 36:56]

Now the next group we want to look at just briefly is the Essenes. The Essenes, or, I was just down to New York to an exhibit about the Dead Sea Scrolls where they called them the [Yahad], the "one," the "group," that kind of thing, "the community." The community would be a way to say it. The Essenes was a group, basically – the Pharisees, when the Hellenists came in, held on to their traditions, the Sadducees said, "we will assimilate with you, the Greeks," the Essenes said, "the Pharisees are even to 'liberal' for them." The Pharisees accepted the Hasmonean rulers in the high priesthood, and the Essene community said, "no, no the high priesthood has to be run by the Zadok priests, Zadokian priest that goes all the way back to the time of David." So the Essene community basically pulled out of Jerusalem and said that the whole worship in Jerusalem was corrupt, both the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and we cannot accept either one of those. They left and went down by the Dead Sea in the desert and had a community down there. The place was called Qumran which is where the DSS were found, the Dead Sea Scrolls.

N. Dead Sea Scrolls [36:56-39:41]

The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in about 1948, by a Bedouin boy who was out playing in the caves in the Dead Sea area; he threw a rock into a cave and heard a clink instead of a clunk, he said, "something's in there," so he goes in there and pulls out what turn out to be the Dead Sea Scrolls. So you've got caves down there and if you ever see

the Dead Sea Scrolls they'll describe it as 1Q, 2Q, 3Q, 4Q; "4Q" would mean "cave 4 at Qumran" --so that's how they do it. They tell you what cave it's in, cave 6 or cave 11 Q -- which is Qumran, and then Habakkuk or Psalms or something like that. So the Essenes produced the Dead Sea Scrolls.

What they did down there then, there was a shift. They did not want the Hasmonean priesthood, the Hasmonean priesthood went back to the Maccabees. They did not accept that, they wanted the Zadok Priesthood. And so basically this Temple was split in their beliefs, they took "Torah" over "Temple." They pulled out of the Temple and went down there and copied the scriptures; they copied the Torah.

So then these Scriptures were put into jars, these jars were put into caves and in 1948 this Bedouin boy finds the Dead Sea Scrolls. It is probably one of the largest finds in the 20th century. It jumped our knowledge of Hebrew back about a thousand years. Our knowledge of Hebrew, our best manuscripts were around 800 to 1000 A.D. and then basically with the Dead Sea Scrolls we jump back to before 100 A.D. or so; almost a thousand year jump. It just shows how well the manuscripts had been preserved in that thousand years. They were scribes. Some people say that the Essene community was monastic. They've done some excavations in the graveyard, the graveyard will tell you who really lived there. It turns out there were some women down there, I don't know a lot about the details of that, but there is a big argument over it. They were supposed to be monastic but then they find these women in the graves so something must have been going on with these scribes down there with the Dead Sea Scrolls. We are grateful to these people. They had a lot of baptismals and places to wash, and a lot of concern about cleanliness. So that's the Essenes and they were so strict that they even rejected the Pharisees. We're very grateful to them because they preserved so much of the Scripture.

O. Zealots [39:41- 40:36]

Now, another group would be the Zealots. We mentioned before that probably Paul was considered a Zealot; a Pharisaic with Zealot tendencies as Dr. Dave Matthewson would say. The Zealots wanted the kingdom of God to come as a political

military thing. So when Rome came in and was dominating during the time of Jesus the Zealots wanted to overthrow the Roman government. They wanted to get Rome out of Israel so Israel could rule and the kingdom could come. They wanted it done militarily and very physically. So these guys were called Zealots. In some senses, they were like a 1st century terrorist group, because when you stick a Roman and kill a Roman, that's good. They would tend to violence. So this was a political and military thing with the Zealots as far as their opposition to Rome that was dominating.

P. Samaritans [40:36-46:51]

The Samaritans are an interesting group. Where did the Samaritans come from? How do the Samaritans interface with the New Testament? Two of the most famous passages everybody knows are the parable of the Good Samaritan. The guy is beat up going down from Jerusalem. A Levite passes by on the other side, the other person passes by. Finally, there's a Good Samaritan who has compassion and takes care of the guy; the Good Samaritan. Again that would be a real clash because the Jews hated the Samaritans and the Samaritans hated the Jews. Where did the Samaritans come from? Well, first of all, 721 or 2 B.C., the Assyrians came down and defeated Samaria in the north. So basically the Northern kingdom under Saul, David, and Solomon, you remember under them the kingdom was united. After Solomon, after his idolatry and his wives, the kingdom split, north and south, Jeroboam and Rehoboam; the 'boam' brothers and the kingdom split in about 931 B.C. What happened then was the Northern Kingdom went after the golden calves for several hundred years. Then the Northern Kingdom existed from 931 down to 722 B.C. I guess that's a couple hundred years. The Assyrians came in about 721 B.C. and took out Samaria. They hauled off all the intelligentsia, all the rich people; all the people of status were taken away by the Assyrians and all the land was left. The Northern Kingdom was hauled off and scattered all over the world. By the way, the diaspora are the Jews scattered all over the world after 722 B.C. The Jews are still scattered to this day from the 721 B.C. to the present. Although many of them have gone back to Israel now, actually, there are more Jews in New York City than in the

country of Israel. So the Jews were scattered all over the world by the Assyrians who were incredibly cruel and the poor people were left in the land. The Assyrians took all the classy people out of the Northern Kingdom and they also brought people from other areas and mixed them and had them intermarry with the poor Jews. So these poor Jews had to intermarry with the Gentiles and so the Samaritans were considered half-breeds because of this intermarriage. The Assyrians brought in these other groups and there was intermarrying between these Gentile groups and the Northern Kingdom. They were considered half-breeds. The Samaritans built a temple on top of Mount Gerizim; Mount Gerizim was where the blessings and cursing from the time of Joshua. Shechem is in the valley and Mount Ebal in the north and Mount Gerizim in the south, are both big beautiful mountains. The Samaritans built a temple up on the top of Mount Gerizim while the Jewish Temple is down in Jerusalem. So now you've got this conflict between the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim and the Jerusalem temple on Mount Zion. There is this conflict between religion, not only between half-breeds and full-breeds of Jewish ethnicity but then the conflict of temples. At 110 B.C. or thereabouts John Hyrcanus torches and burns down the Samaritan's temple. So the Samaritans, they had their temple burned by the Jews. So the Samaritans have real problems with the Jews and their domination coming up and destroying their temple. I've been up on Mount Gerizim; there are about 400 Samaritans today that live on top of Mount Gerizim. They don't accept the whole Old Testament, they only accept the Pentateuch. As a result, by the way, if you go up there around Easter, it's a very dangerous place to go now because of the things that are going on in Israel. The Samaritans celebrate the Passover. They actually kill the lamb, the Passover lamb, and you can go up and see the place, that is, I don't know, as big as this room and they've got these things that spread the lamb and they cut the throat of the lamb and take the blood of the lamb and do the Passover service just like the Passover service in Exodus chapter 12. So the Samaritans do that to this day. The problem has been there are over 400 of these guys and they've intermarried, intermarried, and intermarried and what happens when you intermarry, intermarry...and your cousin and your second cousin. Some of that stuff has taken a great toll. When we

went up there the high priest of the Samaritans came out to greet us. The high priest came out in all his royal robes and all his dignity followed by his people and he came out to greet us and welcomed us up on Mount Gerizim. We then proceeded to climb up on top of the temple. We got on the temple. There's a platform where the temple was until a little later when they ran us out of there. There are some beautiful pictures from the top of Mount Gerizim looking down into Shechem and Ebal. The Samaritans are up on Mount Gerizim, till this day; there are almost 400 of them up there. The Samaritan Pentateuch is pretty famous till this day.

So Jesus will do the Parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus will also talk to the Samaritan woman at the well in the book of John, chapter 4. He will talk to the woman at the well and this woman will go back to Shechem and talk to her people, the Samaritans. So Jesus went through Samaria and talked to them. But there will be this tension between the Jews and the Samaritans. The Jews view the Samaritans as half-breeds and as really despicable, the lowest of the low. The Samaritans hate the guts of the Jews because the Jews dominated them and destroyed their temple. So a "tale of two temples." John Hyrcanus, as we said, destroyed the Samaritan temple about 110 B.C.

Q. Diaspora and Synagogues [46:51-48:57]

This is a word I used before, it's called the "diaspora." The diaspora are the Jews scattered around the world, and they're still scattered till this day. But this diaspora, this scattering of the Jews, has led to some things that are really important in terms of New Testament studies. What happens is in early Judaism and the time of Jesus you have the temple and everything basically is focused around the temple. You had the high priesthood, and the priests and the scribes and the Temple was the focus. But after 70 A.D. the Romans completely destroy the Temple and totally take it down, totally knocked it down. Rock upon rock it was taken down; the Temple is absolutely destroyed 70 A.D. Then what happens is the diaspora, Jews were scattered all over the world, since 721 B.C. when the Assyrians scattered them and then again when the Babylonians came in and took Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, Ezekiel and others away. The Jews built

these synagogues. And the synagogues where they were scattered, if they had ten males then they could form these synagogues. The synagogue structure is in place to this day, on the North Shore of Boston here. There are synagogues all over the place. So the diaspora is a scattering of Jews. Now what will happen, and why that's important for the New Testament? Paul will go from synagogue to synagogue. When Paul comes into a new city, the first place he goes is to the synagogue. Paul will go into the synagogue, he'll preach in the synagogue, many people will receive the gospel. He'll come back the second day. They'll invite him back. He'll preach again, and as he preaches again there's more and more opposition and finally--this is just stereotyping it-- then he comes a third time, and by the time he comes a third time the Jewish folks are on to him and they basically drag him out and stone him, or beat him up. So they throw him out of the synagogue and Paul is kicked out. This happens repeatedly, especially in the first missionary journey as we'll see in the book of Acts.

R. Institutions of Judaism: Sanhedrin [48:57- 53:09]

Now I want to switch again, away from the various Jewish sects, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes and the Zealots and the Diaspora (the diaspora is not really a sect, it's just a scattering of the Jews); what I'd like to talk about now are the institutions of Judaism and just walk through some of those. These institutions that come up in the New Testament and they're going to play a role, Jesus is going to run into these as well.

The first institution I'd like to talk about is the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin is a Jewish judicial structure. It's run by the high priest. So you've got Caiaphas, the high priest in the time of Jesus that's going to condemn Jesus. The Sanhedrin is run by the high priest, so the Sadducees dominated this. The Sadducees were the wealthy ones, the ones that actively assimilated into Hellenism. They run the Sanhedrin along with the scribes. When you say scribe, it's not like they're copying Scripture all the time. They are the legal people. When you have a question about the law you go to the scribes. They're the technicians, the analysts maybe that are a better way to say it. They know the law, so when you've got a problem, you go to the scribes and the scribes will give you

the technical detail of what the text says. The elders would be the older people. They would put elders in there with the high priests. The high priests, the scribes and the elders would be the Sanhedrin. It was a judicial body. Do you remember Moses was doing all the work of the judicial system. This is back in Numbers 11 and Moses asks God for some help and so God takes the spirit off Moses and puts it on the 70. Those 70 people then do judgment in Israel and they adjudicate court cases, render judicial decisions and if they have any trouble with that than Moses gets the case but those 70 people help him. So the Sanhedrin is built on that kind of a model. After 70 A.D. it's disbanded; after 70 A.D. the Sanhedrin is disbanded and as we said it was largely run by the Sadducees.

Now what could the Sanhedrin do? Under Rome the Sanhedrin had certain powers. They had the power of arrest and trial. They could arrest someone, and they could try someone, and that gave them power. They did not have the right of capital punishment. In other words, the Sanhedrin, while they could arrest and try people, they could not put anyone to death without permission from Rome. This becomes a problem then because in the time of Christ, the Sanhedrin tries him. Jesus goes before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin and what do they want to do, "you've heard his blasphemy, he deserves death," and so they all scream, "crucify him, crucify him!" But the Sanhedrin can't crucify, they can't kill him until they get Roman approval that's why they take him to Pontius Pilate. Pontius Pilate gets in because the Sanhedrin cannot do capital punishment; they have to have the permission of Rome. So they take Jesus over to see Pontius Pilate and Pontius Pilate interviews Jesus and Pilate's wife says, "be careful about this guy, I've had a dream about him." Then Pilate washes his hands. Pilate also sets up that thing with Barabbas, do you remember? It was right at the feast so he tries to free one of the prisoners Pilate says, "do you want us to free Barabbas or Jesus, which one do you want?" because he knew it was out of spite that they opposed Jesus. The people cry out, "we want Barabbas freed" and Jesus goes away to be crucified. Pilate washes his hands. So that's the Sanhedrin and the role they play as kind of a judicial body, a Supreme Court, if you will.

S. Institutions of Judaism: Synagogue [53:09-55:33]

We've talked about the synagogue and its background. Largely the synagogue was a product of not having access to the temple. The Jews being scattered all over the world, whatever city they were in, if they had ten adult males basically they would form a synagogue. So there are synagogues all over the ancient world and even to the present. Basically, you had to have ten heads of households. There are four functions of a synagogue.

The synagogue's first function was as a school, not first function in terms of importance, but the synagogue functioned as a school. Wherever the Jewish people have gone, they emphasize education. The Jewish people teach their people how to read because they want them to read the scriptures which they view as the Word of God. So schools are very important and the Jewish people have always been a very, very educated group of people. That education, it will come out of the synagogue and the synagogues are scattered all over.

Worship, the synagogue was a place of worship. People would come to the synagogue to worship God. It was also a Jewish kind of court system in some ways, making smaller decisions that could be made within the Jewish community with the permission of the government within the different rules of the local areas. It was largely a Jewish court system.

And then social: what do you need in a certain sense a church or a synagogue for marrying and burying. Is that when you can see a lot about a culture, in the process of marrying and burying? A lot of cultural rituals will come up when a couple gets married. I think you can remember Fiddler on the Roof and the marriages there. Then burying people again, they have to be buried in a way that's consistent with the culture of Judaism among the diaspora, among the scattered Jews. So these are the four functions and so the synagogue. Paul as he traveled on his first, second and third missionary journeys will continually come into these synagogues. In Corinth, even one of the synagogue leaders will become a Christian. So the synagogue played a really important role for the spread

of Christianity. Christianity was actually considered part of Judaism originally. So that's the synagogue.

T. Worship in the Synagogue [55:33-59:33]

Now I just want to run through the worship service just to contrast it to our modern day our church service. Basically the Jewish worship service, the synagogue service, first they'll say the Shema. The Shema is Deuteronomy 6:4 following, "Hear O Israel, Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one." One of the most famous verses, every Jew I swear knows this verse. It's the John 3:16 for Judaism. "Shema" means "Hear" or "Listen." "Hear O Israel, Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one." That is the affirmation of monotheism; the Jewish people are going to be scattered in a Roman Empire that is full of polytheism. They say there is one God and Yahweh is his name. And "though shalt love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind."

And so the Shema is recited then there is prayer; then Scripture. When you come into a church service, what is the most important, where is the focus of the church service? Oftentimes in a church service the focus is on the sermon, the exposition of Scripture and the sermon, the sermon takes 20-30 minutes or longer. In Jewish circles the sermon is a minor part the major focus is on the reading of Scripture. So they will read extensive and long portions of Scripture, the whole book of Esther is read at the feast of Purim. So they'll read large portions of Scripture and read through the Torah so people go over and over the Torah over their lifetime. So the reading of scripture is a really important part of the synagogue service. Then they'll have a short homily, a sermon. And lastly, they'll have a priestly blessing. You know, "the Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face to shine upon you, be gracious unto you and give you peace," that kind of thing, Numbers 6:24 and following, the priestly blessing. So the rabbi will do a blessing.

So this is a synagogue and by the way you can go to synagogues on the North Shore and you'll see the importance placed on Scripture. We've been there, Dr. Wilson takes groups of Gordon College students there. I remember one time we went and the

students who went to the synagogue went through the whole ceremony. I don't know whether it was a bar mitzvah. Do you guys know about bar mitzvahs and bat mitzvahs? Well, the bar mitzvah, when a child is about 12 years old and they want to welcome a young boy or girl into the adult community, they'll do what's called a bar mitzvah, ("bar" means "son of" and "bat" means "daughter of") and they'll basically welcome them into the adult community. We were in the synagogue/church service and after the service. Dr. Wilson allowed the students to ask questions of the rabbi, and so the rabbi comes down and the students are asking questions and peppering him with questions. Then students took off and they went over to eat food. Students, you know how it is; non-Gordon food and you just go for it. So I stayed with Dr. Wilson and it was really interesting, when the rabbi came down, the rabbi started asking Dr. Wilson questions about the Talmud. It was really funny because the students had all asked the rabbi the questions and the rabbi came down and asked Dr. Wilson, "what do you think about this from the Talmud?" Dr. Wilson went off and they had this conversation with the rabbi asking Dr. Wilson what he thought. So Dr. Wilson is one of those great people at Gordon College, a classic and totally understanding much about Judaism. Actually the Jewish folks themselves consider him *mishpahah* which means "family." I've never heard another Christian being considered *mishpahah*, so Dr. Wilson. There are the synagogue structures even on the North Shore of Boston here.

U. Jewish Authors from the Period: Josephus and Philo [59:33-62:01]

So we've talked about the Sanhedrin and the synagogue. Two institutions, one's a court, one's like a church in some ways. Now a couple of names a far as Jewish background: Josephus. Josephus goes from about 37 A.D. to about 100 A.D. So Josephus is living when Paul is doing his missionary journeys, when the gospels are being written, and then John, writes the Apocalypse about 95-97 A.D. John and Josephus die about the same time around 100 A.D. Josephus was a Jewish historian. Now he wrote with the Romans. There's some compromise there but Josephus was a Jewish historian and he's using Greek historiographical methodology but he's writing a history

of what is going in that period. So it's very interesting to read the stories from Josephus, a Jewish historian from that time period, when the gospels are being written, when the Epistles of Paul are being written and Christianity is beginning to launch out. The writer Josephus, is a very famous guy. He writes the "Antiquities of the Jews" and things like that.

Philo is another one. Philo is from about 20 B.C. to about 50 A.D. so Philo is probably what, 15-16 years old when Jesus is born. He actually lives, (Jesus died prematurely, obviously, probably in his early 30's) Philo will live 20 years beyond when Jesus dies; he'll live through the Acts of the Apostles and on into the first missionary journey of the Apostle Paul, till 50 A.D. He's an Alexandrian Jew. Now as an Alexandrian Jew, is he going to be very much into Greek culture? He's going to be very much assimilated into Greek culture and Greek ways of thinking. But he's going to be from exactly the time when Jesus lived. This guy named Philo, messed around with Greek philosophy and the mixing of Greek philosophy with Judaism and so Philo will be a writer. Philo and Josephus were two major Jewish writers from the first century. It's good just to be aware of these people a little bit and who they were. They wrote quite a bit of literature.

V. Christianity Breaking Away from Judaism [62:01-63:31]

Now later, after Christianity broke away from Judaism, because originally Christianity was thought to be a sect of Judaism, you had the Pharisees and Sadducees and you had the Nazarenes. These guys were Christians. They were actually part of Judaism and they were kind of under the umbrella of Judaism within the Roman Empire. Eventually Christianity will pull out from under that Jewish umbrella and when they do that the Christians get into more trouble with the Roman Empire. The LXX and the Septuagint was viewed by later Judaism as a second golden calf, largely because the Christians started using the Septuagint and because the Christians started using it to prove the Messiah was Jesus. Then the Jews said, "uh, we don't want the Septuagint," and so basically it was a product of Hellenism and the Christians took over the Septuagint so the

Jews basically rejected the Septuagint at that point. Some of the greatest Septuagint scholars in the world today are Jewish folks, Immanuel Tov and some others. But there was a shift. Early on the Septuagint was very helpful for spreading the Gospel but also it was very helpful even for the Jewish people. After the Christians adapted it there was a shift in thought away from the Septuagint and the Jews despised it because of what the Christians had done with it.

W. Conclusion [63:31-64:52]

Okay, well that end our discussion of the literature, and the sects and the various backgrounds of Judaism and the Jewish culture that the New Testament is going to be situated in. What I'd like to do next and I'll take a break at this point is discuss the Bible as the Word of God and we'll go through the process of inspiration, the process of canonization, how books were accepted and how those books were transmitted. How they were copied, copied and copied and talk a little bit about translations and how the New Testament comes from Greek into English. I'd like to discuss next inspiration, canonization, then scribal transmission and copying, down to translations and our modern translations. I'd like to cover that next. So thank you for your attention.

Transcribed by Ashley Holm
Edited by Jen Straka
Rough edited by Ted Hildebrandt