

#3 Galatians

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Last week we said that Judaism had become, and is, a false religious system. Some may not have appreciated the sound of that. The worst thing we can do, as regards Jews, today, is to have a romantic nostalgic notion that Judaism is something special to God. Jews are; Judaism is not.

Paul wrote his letter to the churches in the Roman province of Galatia, in modern Central Turkey to counter the lies of false teachers who had penetrated, by stealth, into the churches, propagating deadly lies and deception. These weren't the Gnostics who taught that there was special, secret, hidden knowledge which was available only to the few, the adepts. No, the deadly false teachers he was coming against were Jews, more specifically, Jewish Christians, those who taught that for Gentiles to be accepted by God, they must first become Jews, submitting to all of the laws, sacrifices and ceremonies of Judaism, most specifically, that they must first be circumcised.

From the moment that Jesus Christ became the Sacrificial Lamb of God, from the moment He inaugurated the long promised New Covenant, the Old Covenant no longer held any use or purpose. God never abandoned His Covenant People, Israel, but the Old Covenant as a means to Salvation could no longer apply.

People have confused God's Covenant with Abraham, that He would give him a land, a progeny and that he would be a blessing to all the peoples of the Earth, with the Law given to Moses. God's Covenant with Israel, through His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will never be broken or abandoned but the Law of Moses ceased to hold any purpose once Jesus Christ came, bringing the New Covenant which was meant to apply to Jew and Gentile alike as one New, Heavenly people of God.

Since Judaism, as a religion, was tied to the Old Covenant, once it became obsolete, it became, like so many others, a false religious system. Paul wrote that the Law was given as a tutor to lead us to Christ. Once Christ came, the tutor was not only no longer needed, but if that tutor came knocking on your door, claiming that you must admit him to further teach your children after your children had already graduated from University, you would not even invite that tutor in; you would send him away as a liar and a false teacher. Judaism had become a false teacher. Everything it had to offer was no longer needed, required or even wanted by God.

Paul was telling the Galatians that they were not to even open the door to that now false teacher.

But even more so, the Judaism of the first Century had morphed into something that wasn't even recognizable as being related to what God gave Moses on Mt. Sinai. Jesus Christ railed against the Pharisees who were the teachers of the Law, then. Paul, who had been the most accomplished Pharisee of his day, said that all he had learned and studied of Judaism had now become, to him, nothing but dung. If Judaism, in Paul's estimation, had, by the first Century, become dung, how much more so through the next 20 Centuries as it morphed more and more into a worse and worse false religious system.

Last week I wrote, within the greater class time, 4 short paragraphs regarding Judaism and what it has morphed into and away from the Law as it was given through Moses.

What I wrote, then, was too harsh and yet, it was, in essence, still true.

Let's look, briefly, at modern Judaism and its different sects:

Following is from the website: 'gotquestions.org'

Question: "What are the different sects of Judaism?"

Answer: Like most major religions, Judaism worldwide is comprised of several different sects. However, the branches of Judaism active today are not the same as those seen in the Bible, so the ancient and modern eras have to be understood separately. When looking at different sects of Judaism, one should also note that the term *Jewish* can refer to a religious identity, an ethnic identity, or a racial identity. Historically, these have been intertwined to the point of being nearly identical. However, from a religious standpoint, different sects are separated purely on the basis of their theological views.

Sects of Judaism in the Ancient Era

In the Bible, sects of Judaism were divided mostly by their view of a literal afterlife and bodily resurrection, or by whether or not they felt called to take an active or passive role in end-times events. Josephus, an early

Jewish historian of Judea, defined four major sects of Judaism: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Zealots. From a literal standpoint, Christianity began as a “sect” of Judaism, as well. This perspective—Judaic, but accepting of Jesus as Messiah—is known today as Messianic Judaism. There were other, smaller groups with unique beliefs. The four mentioned by Josephus, however, were the major divisions.

Though the term *Pharisee* is often used in a derogatory sense today, the Pharisees in New Testament times were deeply committed to moral behavior and a scholarly approach to the Scriptures. Their stance on morality included a rigid adherence to behavioral aspects of Mosaic Law. However, since some of those biblical laws were vague, the Pharisees developed an “Oral Torah”: a set of traditions that created a buffer zone around the law of Moses, ensuring piety. Pharisees believed in a literal afterlife and the bodily resurrection of the dead. Of the four major sects of Judaism, the Pharisees held the strongest belief in determinism. The later rabbinic interpretation grew out of the Pharisee sect. Jesus not only criticized the Pharisees for their hollow legalism (Matt 23:2–7) but also for distorting the commandments of God by way of their traditions (Mark 7:8–9). The Sadducees differed significantly from Pharisees in their theology. Sadducees did not believe in a literal afterlife or a bodily resurrection. In fact, the Sadducees’ primary interest was politics, which made them useful conduits for Roman authority. They saw the Old Testament law in a less rigid light than the Pharisees, though they were committed, in their own way, to its core concepts. Of the four major sects of Judaism, the Sadducees were by far the most cooperative with the Roman Empire. They tended to be aristocrats and were in control of the high priesthood. Annas and Caiaphas, mentioned in the New Testament (Luke 3:2), were Sadducees.

The Essenes were a monastic group. Unlike the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Zealots, the Essenes felt called to separate from society in preparation for the end of the world. In broad strokes, the Essenes could be considered a doomsday sect. They felt the end times were imminent, and it was their duty to patiently, passively await the apocalypse. The Essenes produced written materials found millennia later, known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. These critically important documents show how carefully and accurately the Old Testament Scriptures had been preserved over the centuries.

On the other side of the apocalyptic coin were the Zealots, by far the smallest of the four groups. Like the Essenes, the Zealots were something of a doomsday sect of Judaism. However, the Zealots believed their actions would directly influence when and how this apocalypse occurred. Specifically, they believed they were called to commit acts of violence against the Roman occupiers and to incite others to revolution. Theologically, Zealots were all but identical to the Pharisees, except for their fanatical, anti-Roman militancy. This view not only brought them into conflict with the Roman-friendly Sadducees, but it accelerated Roman aggression against Jews, culminating in the destruction of the temple.

Sects of Judaism in Transition

The destruction of the temple by Rome in AD 70 began an era of division between the sects of Judaism. Ever since that event, there have been no temple, no priests, and no sacrifices on behalf of the nation of Israel. In a very real sense, **modern Judaism is not—and cannot be—the same as biblical Judaism**. Political and religious changes over the first few centuries AD resulted in one particular interpretation becoming dominant, today known as Rabbinic Judaism.

The Rabbinic school was the result of a consolidation of power within the sects of Judaism following the destruction of the temple and the Bar Kokhba revolt about 60 years later. This school grew out of the Pharisees, and it retained their heavy emphasis on scholars and rabbis. It taught that there was a written Torah as well as an “Oral Torah,” which required a tradition-based teaching authority in order to be properly interpreted. In this way, Rabbinic Judaism proposes something similar to the magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church. The Rabbinic sect produced enormous quantities of literature defining the *halakha*, or interpretations of the Law.

As Rabbinic Judaism grew, Christianity became viewed less as a sect and more as a heresy by mainline Judaism. Christianity and Judaism were already growing apart in their spiritual approach prior to the Bar Kokhba revolt. But when Christ-following Jews refused to proclaim Simon bar Kokhba as Messiah, they were branded as complete heretics by mainline Rabbinic Judaism. From that point on, Christianity and Judaism were seen as completely separate theologies. Another small sect arising during this time was Karaite Judaism, which

accepted only the canonical written books of the Old Testament and rejected the Rabbinic writings and oral traditions. The Rabbinic period lasted until around the end of the 17th century.

Sects of Judaism in the Modern Era

In the early part of the 18th century, Judaism began to fracture as modern approaches to Scripture and society emerged. The resulting sects of Judaism essentially divide modern Jews into three groups: Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform. As always, there are numerous smaller, less influential sects of Judaism, such as Torah Judaism and Reconstructionist Judaism. The overwhelming majority of Jews in the world are Orthodox, though Conservative and Reform are more common in the United States and certain parts of Europe.

Reform Judaism, which emerged in Germany the early 1800s, is by far the most theologically liberal sect. Reform Judaism is primarily an “ethical monotheism,” based on interpretation of traditional practices rather than strict adherence to them. Concepts such as prayers in Hebrew, kosher dietary laws, and the separation of genders during worship are rejected as irrelevant, or even backwards. The Scriptures, according to Reform Judaism, are human developments, subject to our interpretations and fallibilities.

In response to the rise of Reform Judaism, some Jews doubled down on the approach of Rabbinic Judaism, emphasizing traditional rituals, interpretations, and practices. Their core contention is that the Torah, handed down directly to Moses by God, is applicable in all ways and at all times. This group is today referred to as “Orthodox,” a term originally used as a criticism by more liberally minded Jews. Most practicing Jews in the world today, save for in the U.S. and parts of Europe, would be considered Orthodox.

The tension between liberal-leaning Reform and deeply conservative Orthodox resulted in the growth of the third major sect of Judaism, referred to as Conservative. This group is significantly more common in the United States. Conservative Judaism keeps to the laws of the Torah and Talmud, but with certain concessions made to modern cultural preferences. The key interest in Conservative Judaism is the centrality of religion and Jewish religious identity. Conservative Judaism maintains kosher dietary laws and the regular Sabbath but uses both local and Hebrew language for liturgy and does not separate genders during worship. Like Reform, however, Conservative Judaism does not see the Scriptures as inspired or inerrant.

We said that modern Judaism is dependent upon the writings of various Rabbis through the Centuries. The most famous of whom is Moses Maimonides, Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon. He lived from AD 1135 until 1204. Jews would say, 1135 CE, meaning in the 'Common Era.' Jews are joined by many scholars, today in referring to history as: BCE and CE: before Common Era and Common Era. By strange coincidence, their dating system corresponds exactly to our, BC, Before Christ and AD, Anno Domini, 'in the year of our Lord.' This, as much as anything else shows the hypocrisy of modern man in pretending that the One Who is the focal point of all human history did not even exist.

From a Jewish site, <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/what-do-jews-believe-about-jesus>:

Maimonides, in his Mishneh Torah, describes Jesus as the failed messiah foreseen by the prophet Daniel. Rather than redeeming Israel, Maimonides writes, Jesus caused Jews to be killed and exiled, changed the Torah and led the world to worship a false God.

It also raises the question of whether the real meaning of the Torah is too controversial to be taught to the average worshipper and should be restricted to the educated few; in short the question of esotericism... this, then has done to Judaism exactly what Catholicism has done to Christianity which is exactly what the Gnostics taught and which Paul so fervently fought against: knowledge, deep understanding is only for the adept few who are then, the only ones qualified to teach the masses what they are told to believe.

To satisfy the first two commandments, one must believe in a timeless, changeless, immaterial deity who is one in every respect and unlike anything in the created order. A person who fails to recognize such a deity is accorded the status of an idolater no matter how many other commandments she may fulfill or how fervently she may fulfill them. Simply put, **to worship God under a false description is not to worship God at all**. Not only is this true at present, as Maimonides sees it, it has been true since God first spoke to Adam.

Jews have been given a false description of God for Centuries.

From aish.com, a Jewish site: ***Jews do not accept Jesus as the messiah because:***

1. Jesus did not fulfill the messianic prophecies.
2. Jesus did not embody the personal qualifications of the Messiah.
3. Biblical verses "referring" to Jesus are mistranslations.
4. Jewish belief is based on national revelation.

Specifically, the Bible says he will: this Jewish site *says* that the Bible says He will:

- A. Build the Third Temple (Ezekiel 37:26-28).
- B. Gather all Jews back to the Land of Israel (Isaiah 43:5-6).
- C. Usher in an era of world peace, and end all hatred, oppression, suffering and disease. As it says: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall man learn war anymore." (Isaiah 2:4)
- D. Spread universal knowledge of the God of Israel, which will unite humanity as one. As it says: "God will be King over all the world – on that day, God will be One and His Name will be One" (Zechariah 14:9).

As you can see, what Jews are waiting for is the very thing which will cause them to be deceived by, and receive, the Antichrist. But when, at the midpoint of the Tribulation, he enters the Temple and desecrates/desolates it, they will understand that he is not the one they've been waiting for. But, not until 3.5 years later, when the Lord Jesus Christ returns at Armageddon, will their eyes be opened and their national blindness removed, as they will, as one, recognize the Lord Jesus Christ and mourn for Him as one mourns an only son; they will all turn to Him in faith for National Salvation.

Jesus said, 'He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and **he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.**' Luke 10:16 They cannot be worshipping the same God Whom they are rejecting. And: ' But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.' Matt 10:33 Jesus has been denying Jews before His Father in Heaven.

'Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.²³ Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.' 1 John 2:22

'Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also." ' John 8:19

'They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.³ And these things they will do to you **because they have not known the Father nor Me.**' John 16:2

We've been studying Paul's letter to the Galatians. Paul's main thrust throughout this letter is that those who claim that Christians must adhere to Jewish laws and customs were false teachers and actually anathema: made for destruction. Not only is Paul saying it about Judaizers but also about Jews; Modern, unsaved Jews deny the Lord Jesus Christ and they also, per Jesus' Own Words, deny the One True God. They cannot worship and know the One True God while denying His Son Whom He sent, Who is, as well, the One True God. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Word of God. If anyone denies the Lord Jesus Christ, he is also denying the Word of God and apart from the Word of God, no one can know God.

You cannot worship the True God while denying the True God.

The Lord Jesus Christ, and Paul, wanted us to know and understand the Truth. If we believe the lie that Jews are somehow worshipping the True God then there will be, we think, no need to share the Gospel with them. Many believe that we should not evangelize Jews; Jews are offended when we do; we mustn't offend them; that would be unchristian to offend Jews.

Jesus and Paul were very offensive to Jews and have been for 2000 years.

Jesus said, ' You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit... "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you... If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. **He who hates Me hates My Father.**' Jn 15

Appendix: This is where our understanding breaks down: we think, since Israel is God's chosen people, that they are like us; they are not and never have been. When we put our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, He put His Holy Spirit in us and created in us a brand new spirit that is one with Him. He leads us and guides us and puts within us an aversion to sin. Our spirits long to always walk in fellowship with Him. When we sin His Spirit and ours convict us and draw us back to Him.

During this time of the Church, during this Age of Grace, we have been forgiven, at the Cross, for every sin we have ever or will ever commit.

The Jews are not like that at all. God Himself calls them a wicked and wayward people.

“Woe to the rebellious children,” declares the Lord, who execute a plan, but not Mine, and make an alliance, but not of My Spirit, in order to add sin to sin.’ Isa 30:1

I have seen your adulteries and your *lustful* neighings, the lewdness of your harlotry, your abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe to you, O Jerusalem! Will you still not be made clean?” Jer 13:27

“So you shall say to them, ‘This *is* a nation that does not obey the voice of the LORD their God nor receive correction. Truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth. ²⁹ Cut off your hair and cast *it* away, and take up a lamentation on the desolate heights; for the LORD has rejected and forsaken the generation of His wrath.’ ³⁰ For the children of Judah have done evil in My sight,” says the LORD. “They have set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to ^[e]pollute it. ³¹ And they have built the high places of Tophet, which *is* in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into My heart... ‘Then I will cause to cease from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. For the land shall be desolate.’ Jer 7:28, 34

For 1000 years leading up to the coming of Messiah, Israel had become increasingly wicked; they copied and did the things that the Canaanites did and the Canaanites were some of the most wicked people to ever live.

From almost the moment they came out of Egypt, they were practicing evil in God's sight... remember the golden calf in the desert. We are incapable of even imagining the evil things they did. The only reason God never snuffed them out completely is that He had promised good to Abraham and when He does finally restore His people, and not because or according to Judaism but rather, according to faith in their Messiah, it will be to glorify Himself and He will be glorified because of His Grace, His Mercy, His Promises, His Love, His Righteousness, His Holiness, His Wrath and whatever I've forgotten.

The purpose of the Law was never to make anyone righteous; it was to show the Character of God and the sinfulness of all men.

That is why David, a man who was after God's Own Heart, loved the Law; it revealed the Person and Character of God. Judaism never did that; it became Man's attempt to reach God through his own righteousness.

God's Law is good and righteous. Judaism, on the other hand, has become, over these 3500 years, just another Worldly religion.