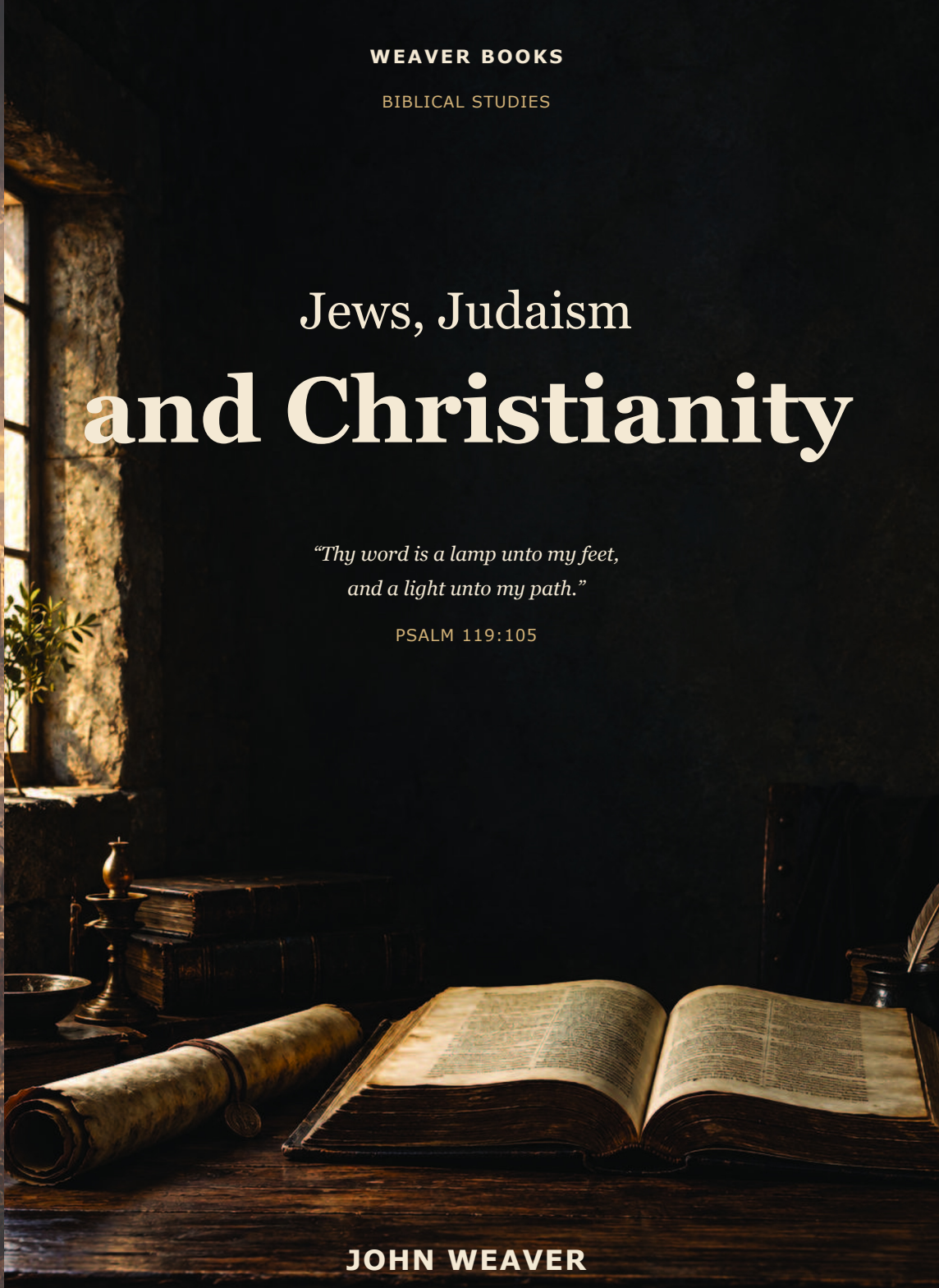
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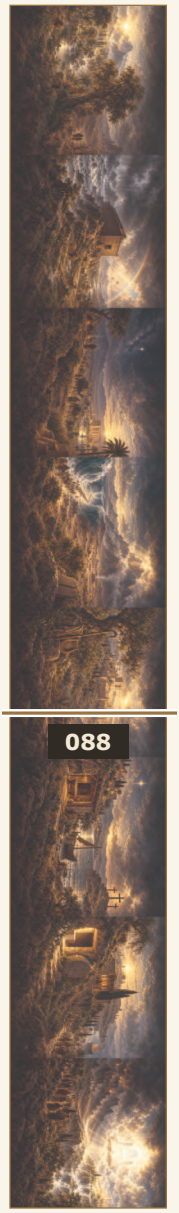
"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

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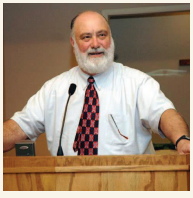
For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

ROMANS 10:12

John Weaver examines the use of religious terms in biblical context and the relationship between law, grace, and faith in Christ. These sermons distinguish questions of religious teaching from ethnic identity and consider how interpretation shapes Christian belief. The volume presents the author's theological arguments for careful examination against the text of Scripture.

"There is absolutely no one who will ever be saved apart from the person and work of Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ alone."

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CHAPTER 1

Jews, Judaism And Christianity

Part One of Five

Introduction and Purpose of the Series

“And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews.”

Is Jesus Christ the King of the Jews? If so, how and why is He their King? Moreover, have you ever considered the word “Jews” in Scripture? When did it first appear in Scripture, and what is meant by the term?

In our day and time, most people ignorantly and unbiblically refer to all Israelites as Jews. It is improper as well as unbiblical to refer to all Israelites as Jews. Why is it important to know the difference? Who was it that harassed and persecuted and ultimately crucified the Lord Jesus Christ? Who also harassed and persecuted the

disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ? Who were the enemies of Christ, and who were the enemies of the apostles in the New Testament?

Here is a little teaser for the next study in this series: Were any of the apostles of our Lord Jews? Just stop and think about that.

Why am I asking these questions? I am going to give you my purpose and answer it negatively and positively. My purpose in bringing these five messages, entitled "Jews, Judaism, and Christianity," is not to create strife or animosity. I am not asking these questions to harass, condemn, or stir up fleshly hatred. I do not intend to create division or separation between any believers at all. Many will see and understand the truth I am going to share with you from Scripture, and some will not.

It is not my intention to separate brethren. However, if they separate over truth, truth is still truth. I cannot control that. I will be sharing many things with you from Scripture. First and foremost, my purpose in asking and endeavoring to answer these questions is to clarify terms, avoid confusion, and correct misunderstanding.

Second, it is my purpose to instruct in hermeneutical principles—that is, the art and science of interpreting the Bible. Third, it is my purpose to identify the enemies of Jesus Christ and the enemies of His people. We are going to find that we are basically facing the same enemies today. Fourth, it is my purpose to convey a biblical understanding, in order that we may see that the issues in the days of Jesus Christ are the same issues that exist in our day and time.

The Edomite and Khazar Issues

Circumstances may have changed, but the issues have not changed. The issues are basically still the same. It is not my intention in this brief series to deal with the Edomites. The Edomites occupied the land south of Judah. If you look down at Beersheba, at the bottom of the map, you see the word "Idumaea." "Idumaea," or "Idumaean" when referring to an inhabitant, refers to Edom or to Esau.

Genesis 36:1 says, "Now these are the generations of Esau, who is Edom. Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan." The passage then recounts his wives and children. Verse 6 says, "And Esau took

his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance, which he had got in the land of Canaan; and went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob." In other words, he left Canaan and went south. Verse 7 explains, "For their riches were more than that they might dwell together; and the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them because of their cattle. Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir." Esau is Edom. "And these are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in mount Seir." Thus, Esau was the father of the Edomites.

There are Edomite Jews. This is why I am not necessarily dealing with this issue. The Herods in the New Testament were an Edomite family that ruled Israel, especially the southern kingdom of Judah, during the earthly ministry of our Lord and during the time of the first Christian church.

The Jewish ruling council was the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was under the authority of Herod, and Herod was under the authority of the Roman Emperor, or the Roman Empire. The Herods came to power in 47 B.C. There was more than one Herod in the New Testament. When Julius Caesar appointed Antipater, the son of the Edomite governor of Edom, to be governor of Judea, Herod was one of Antipater's two sons.

In 40 B.C., the Parthians, whom we now know as the Iranians, attacked the border of the eastern fringe of the Roman Empire and conquered Judea. Herod escaped to Rome. When the Romans discovered what had happened, they pronounced Herod king of the Jews and sent him back to reconquer Judea, which he did in 37 B.C. The Herods then held power in this land for many years. We normally think of Herod the Great, but there were other Herods and other rulers, like Archelaus, in the same family.

It is not my intention to deal with the Edomites, although they are certainly connected here as well. Neither is it my purpose to deal with what I am going to call the Khazar issue, though I will give you an overview of it and explain it. If you want to study it further, I will tell you where you should read and what you should study.

In the 8th century, the ruler of Khazaria embraced Judaism—actually, Talmudic Judaism—and ordered all his people to embrace Judaism as well. Many of the modern-day Jews have no Semitic blood in them whatsoever. Many, in fact most, of the Jews today are not the physical descendants of Abraham; they are Khazars. They come totally not even from that area, but also from Turkey and Mongolia.

For further reading, Arthur Koestler, who was Jewish, wrote a book entitled The Thirteenth Tribe. There were only twelve tribes, but he called it the thirteenth tribe because the Khazars embraced Talmudic Judaism. Most of those now are in control, even in this day and time.

The first article is titled “DNA research sheds light on the ancestry of the Ashkenazi Jews,” dated October 8, 2013, from the University of Huddersfield. Its summary states: “Many of the maternal ancestors of modern Ashkenazi Jews were European converts, according to new research. Analysis of DNA samples has shown that on the female line, the Ashkenazim are descended not from the Near East, but from Southern and Western Europe.”

For further information, Texe Marrs’s book, DNA Science and the Jewish Bloodline, quotes two Jewish scholars. It states, “The undeniable evidence of this has become clear with the advent of DNA research.” In 2001, Dr. Ariella Oppenheim and her team at Tel Aviv University released a study finding that the Jews were mainly Khazars from Khazaria, a Caucasus country now called Kazakhstan, Georgia, and other names. The Khazarians converted from pagan religion to Talmudic Judaism after the eighth century, but racially remained Khazars, whose origin was mainly Turkish and Mongolian. “Thus, when you see a Jew today, you're actually encountering a Khazar who practices Judaism. The Khazar has no Israelite blood.”

In late 2012, Dr. Eran Elhaik of the McKusick-Nathans Institute of Genetic Medicine at Johns Hopkins Medical University published research in the Journal of Biology and Evolution. It was considered by geneticists worldwide to be definitive, peer-approved research. This study confirmed Dr. Oppenheim’s findings and went further: “There are no blood or family connections among the Jews,”

reported Dr. Elhaik, himself a Jew. “The various groups of Jews in the world today do not share a common genetic origin.”

“Their genome is largely Khazar,” he added. “Whatever Israelite blood the Khazar Jews have, it is minuscule.” Thus, these two Jewish scholars say that modern-day Ashkenazi Jews are not descendants of Abraham, have no Semitic blood in them, and that their DNA proves they are Khazarians of Mongolian and Turkish origin.

Biblical Definition of 'Jew'

The point is that even in the time of Christ, there were individuals who claimed to be Jews who were not, and our Lord condemned them. Revelation 2:9 says, “I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.” Revelation 3:9 says, “Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.” Our Lord is saying that some claim to be Jews and are not, just as plenty claim to be Christians and are not, obviously.

It is ignorance, as well as being unbiblical, to refer to all Israelites as Jews. Listen carefully. The original Judahites were Israelites, but not all Israelites were Judahites. I am going to show you that from the Bible. In fact, some who lived in Judea did not necessarily, at all times, claim to be Judeans, and the reason must be understood from the Bible.

In Romans 11:1, the Apostle Paul said concerning himself, “I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.” Note what Paul claimed: he was an Israelite, the seed of Abraham, and of the tribe of Benjamin. Benjamin had his inheritance in Judea along with the tribe of Judah. Thus, Paul could have said that he was an Israelite, a Benjamite, and a Judahite, but he did not. He was maintaining his tribal identity. He was saying, “I am a Benjamite and I am an Israelite.”

Paul was maintaining the fact that he was a descendant of Abraham, an Israelite, and a Benjamite. He was sticking in this

particular case with his tribal identity. Did Paul ever claim to be a Judean? The answer is yes, but the context must be understood. In 1 Corinthians 9, beginning with verse 19, we must examine that claim carefully.

The apostle says, “For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” So he said, “to the Jews, I became as a Jew.”

When the Apostle Paul’s life was in danger, he used the fact that his tribe was an inheritor in Judea to his own benefit. There was certainly nothing wrong with what he was doing. This is seen in Acts 21, beginning with verse 37.

The Jews had caught Paul and were trying to kill him, and the chief captain, Lysias, came down and rescued him. He took Paul back to the castle, intending to beat him and find out some information. As Paul was being led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, “May I speak unto thee?” The captain was surprised that Paul could speak Greek. He asked, “Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?” Paul answered, “I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.”

Notice that Paul said, “I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia.” Cilicia is not even in Palestine. It is not in the land of Israel; it is in Asia Minor. When permission had been given, Paul stood on the stairs, beckoned with his hand to the people, and, when there was a great silence, spoke unto them in the Hebrew tongue: “Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.” When they heard him speaking in the Hebrew tongue, they kept the more silence. He continued, “I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city

at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day."

Obviously, Paul could say that he was a Judahite because his tribe had its inheritance in Judea, but he himself was born in Tarsus, in Cilicia, which was in Asia Minor. Asia Minor is not on the map today. It would be up here and come out like this; it would actually correspond to modern-day Turkey.

The tribe of Judah had the land in Judea, as did the tribe of Benjamin. The Simeonites were also in Judea. Joshua 19:1 says, "the second lot came forth to Simeon, even for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families: and their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah." Verse 9 adds: "Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon: for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them: therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them." Thus, in the southern kingdom, there were three tribes that had their inheritance in the southern land: Benjamin, Judah, and Simeon.

The boundary between the southern kingdom and the northern kingdom ran above Emmaus. Everything in the southern kingdom belonged to Benjamin, Judah, or Simeon. The Simeonites could also claim to be Judeans in the sense that they had their inheritance there. Usually, however, they did not say that they were Jews or Judeans. They were Simeonites. That is why Paul in Romans 11 said that he was a Benjamite. It was true that the Benjamites had their inheritance in Judea, but he still maintained his tribal identity.

You will encounter two words, one in Hebrew and one in Greek. The Hebrew word translated "Jew" in our Bible is "Yehudi," which means a Judahite or a descendant of Judah. A Judahite is someone who lives in Judah or someone who is a descendant of Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. That is where the twelve tribes came from. This is how the word is used in the Bible; there is one additional way to consider before we close.

When you read the word "Jew" in the Bible, it usually means one of several things: a person or persons from the tribe of Judah; the

kingdom of Judah; the land of Judah or Judea, meaning the southern land; or someone from the nation or house of Judah. Thus, the word "Jew" usually refers to anyone belonging to the tribe, the land, the nation, or the house of Judah. All of these could be called Judahites. It could mean someone from the land of Judea, someone from the tribe of Judah, someone from the southern nation, or someone from the house of Judah.

The word is also used to refer to the religion of the Jews. I will show you that in the Bible. In the New Testament, the Greek word is "Ioudaios," and literally it means Judean. In simple terms, Judean means someone from the country or land, and hence someone from the nation, country, land, or tribe of Judah. The word therefore has to do with the country, the land, the nation, or the tribe of Judah.

The first time the word "Jews" is used in the Bible is 2 Kings 16:6. Abraham was not a Jew; Abraham was a Chaldean, from Chaldea. In hermeneutics, the art or science of Bible interpretation, there is a principle known as the law of first mention. The law of first mention simply means that the very first time a word is used in the Bible, that is usually the way the word will be used throughout the entire Bible, unless the context indicates otherwise. Usually, therefore, the word is used that way throughout the Bible, with only a few exceptions.

Notice 2 Kings 16:6: "At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day." This is the very first time the word "Jew" is used in the Bible. The context, in 2 Kings 16:1–9, tells us that there was a war between Judah, Israel, and Syria, and that the war was over Elath. Elath was a port on the Red Sea that had formerly belonged to Edom. This seaport was captured by David and held by Judah until the time of Joram, when Edom revolted against him. It was recaptured by Amaziah because his son Azariah rebuilt it. See 2 Kings 14:21–22.

Judaism vs. Christianity

2 Kings 14:21 says, "And all the people of Judah took Azariah, which was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. He built Elath, and restored it to Judah." So he had restored it. Now there is a war, and the Syrians recapture Elath.

What do they do? The Bible says they drove the Jews from Elath. Now, when the Syrians drove the Jews from Elath, whom were they driving away? It was the people in the southern kingdom. It was the Judahites.

David was king in the southern kingdom. He was king over all Israel, but he was king over the southern kingdom for a while. Then he was made king over all Israel, seven years first over the southern kingdom, and then thirty-three years over the northern kingdom. Now, watch this. It would be understandable that the Benjamites and Simeonites would help the Judahites, would it not? Because they were all there in the southern kingdom. You would also have to remember that any king over the southern kingdom would also be king of the Judahites, Simeonites, and Benjamites, and would therefore control the entire army, which consisted of all these people.

When the Bible says they drove the Jews out of Elath, it means this: from down there, where that seaport was, they drove all these people back up into Judea. That is all. The first time the word is mentioned in the Bible, it refers to people living in the southern kingdom.

John Gill, a Baptist pastor and Baptist historian, said, "They were called Jews, but from the time the ten tribes were carried captive and not before." The ten tribes were carried away captive in 722 B.C.; therefore, he said these southern people were not called Jews until after the ten northern tribes had been carried away into captivity.

Today, when you use the word "Jew," it does not denote a relationship to a land, a tribe, or a country. But it is now used primarily to refer to someone who holds the religion of Judaism. By the way, it is used this way in the Bible. A Jew could be someone of the tribe of Judah, someone from Judea—from that land, country, or southern nation—or someone who had embraced Judaism.

In Acts 26, the Apostle Paul is defending himself and speaking to Agrippa. Beginning with verse 2, he says, "I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews." Now isn't

that interesting? Paul is not claiming to be a Jew here. Remember, he was a Benjamite.

He was born in Judea, but I'm going to explain this by the time I get to number five. He says, "The Jews are accusing me." So it is someone separate than the Apostle Paul. Then, in verse 3, he says, "Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently." He continues, "My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews." Paul is speaking of the manner of life he had from his youth, among his own nation at Jerusalem, and those Jews knew him.

"Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee." Notice that he said, "after the most straitest sect of our religion"—that is, Judaism—"I lived a Pharisee." So Judaism and Pharisaism are synonymous; they are one and the same thing. Paul said that if these Jews who were accusing him would testify truthfully, they could tell Agrippa that, when he was raised, he was raised in the straitest sect of Judaism, in their religion. He was a Pharisee.

In Galatians 1, Paul says it again, but this time it is even plainer. He writes, "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." So this whole southern kingdom was known as the Jewish nation, or the Judahite nation.

Before going any further, it is important to note that the Jews' religion is not only antagonistic to Christianity; it is in opposition to Christianity. What did Paul do when he was serving the Jews' religion? "I persecuted the church of God and wasted it." Judaism and Christianity are opposites.

There is no such animal as a Judeo-Christian religion. It cannot possibly be. We may have a Hebrew Christian, an Israelite Christian, or an Old Testament Christian, but there cannot be a Judeo-Christian, because Judaism and Christianity are in opposition

to each other. Jesus Christ attacked Judaism repeatedly in the New Testament. Read Matthew 5, Matthew 15, Matthew 23, and Mark 7. Over and over, He attacked Judaism and its traditions. When they asked Christ plainly in Matthew 15 and Mark 7, “Why do you transgress the traditions of the elders?” He answered, “Why do you with your traditions make void the word of God or the commandments of God?”

Obviously, there is a conflict. When you understand that there is no such thing as a Judeo-Christian religion, then you understand this, which most people find astonishing when it is said: Jesus Christ was not a Jew.

Jesus Christ Was Not a Jew

Stop and think about that. Jesus Christ did not embrace, advocate, teach, or submit to Judaism. In fact, He was hated and despised by those who held Judaism, and ultimately they crucified Him because He was against it.

In Mark 14:1, the Bible says, "After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death." The leaders in Judaism were seeking to put Him to death. In John 7:30, "Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come." John 10:39 says, "Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand."

Jesus Christ was not a Jew. He was a Judahite. By that I mean He was born into the tribe of Judah. The Bible says He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. But Jesus Christ was not only a Judahite; Jesus Christ was also a Nazarene, and He was also a Galilean. Look at Galilee way up at the top. Below it is Cana, then Nazareth. Did you know that Jesus Christ was conceived—He was implanted, or at least His body was implanted—in the Virgin Mary in Nazareth, in the northern kingdom? He lived in the northern kingdom. He was only born in the southern kingdom.

Look in your Bibles to the book of Luke, chapter 1, and begin reading with verse 26. Luke 1:26 says, "And in the sixth month the

angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women."

The angel Gabriel came to her and told her in verse 31, "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS." So where was Mary? Mary was in Nazareth. Where is Nazareth? Nazareth is in Galilee. Where are Galilee and Nazareth?

They are in the northern kingdom. Luke 2:4 says, “And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.”

“And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.” Notice that even during her pregnancy, she was in Nazareth of Galilee. He went to Judah and Bethlehem to be taxed because he himself was of the lineage of David.

Matthew 2:3-4 says, “When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.” They were under Herod. “And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.” Notice, “my people Israel.”

“Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it

came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."

The wise men were warned of God in a dream not to return to Herod, so they departed into their own country another way. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." Joseph took the child and his mother by night and departed into Egypt, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son."

Now, note something. The wise men came to worship the Lord, but they were not at the nativity scene. Look in your Bibles, verse 9: "When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child"—not a baby, a young child—"was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house"—not a manger—"they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him." There were no wise men at the birth of Christ. They came only after Christ was born and had become a young child, while Mary and Joseph were living somewhere around Bethlehem. God told the wise men not to go to Herod, so they went home another way. Then God appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him to take the young child and Mary into Egypt, because Herod would seek the child's life.

Did you know that Jesus Christ actually lived in Judea less than two years? Stop and think about it: less than two years. Look in Matthew 2, beginning at verse 16: "Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men."

"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." Our Lord lived in Judah less than two years. When Herod died and they came back from Egypt, they did not go into the land of Judah, back to Bethlehem, or back to Jerusalem. "But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: and he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." Galilee and Nazareth are in the northern kingdom. Thus our Lord was in Judah less than two years.

Jesus as King of the Jews and Son of David

Here is the question: How could Jesus Christ be called the King of the Jews when He lived in Judea less than two years? He was a baby. Matthew 2:1-2 says, "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" Isn't that interesting? "For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

Jesus Christ was called the King of the Jews, or the King of the Judahites, because the designation refers to a people in a land or nation, even when our Lord was less than two years of age. Herod then inquires where He is going to be born, and they tell him, "in Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet."

They call Jesus Christ, in verse 2, the King of the Judeans. Remember, if you would, this southern kingdom, this southern nation, is Judea. Jesus Christ is not only King of the Judeans; He is also King of Israel. How could Jesus Christ be called King of the

Judeans if He only lived in Judea less than two years when He was a baby?

You have to understand something. He was born of the tribe of Judah, but there are a lot of people who were born in the tribe of Judah who were not kings. There are a lot of people born in Bethlehem who were not kings. So how could He be called the King of the Jews? Jesus Christ was not called the King of the Jews because He was born in Judea, nor simply because He was born in the tribe of Judah. Certainly He needed to be of the tribe of Judah in one sense of the word, but that was not the reason He was called King of the Jews.

Look back in your Bibles to Matthew 1:1, here at the beginning of the New Testament. It begins very interestingly, for the Bible says, “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” This New Testament is about Jesus Christ who is, listen carefully, the true son of David and the true son of Abraham. Jesus Christ is King of the Jews, or the Judahites, by virtue of the fact that He is the son of David. He is King of Israel by virtue of the fact that He is the true son of David.

Look in your Bibles to the book of Luke, chapter 1. Let us begin reading with verse 31. Here Gabriel is talking to Mary. Luke 1:31: “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest.”

"And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob"—not just the house of Judah, the house of Jacob, all Israel—"for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Notice, "the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." Jesus Christ is the true son of David. Solomon was the type. Jesus Christ is the antitype or the fulfillment of it.

Acts 13:21 says, "And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony,

and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will."

"Of this man's seed"—that's Jesus Christ—"hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus." Jesus Christ is the true Son of David.

Romans 1:1 says, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

So the Bible says He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, but He was declared to be the Son of God with power. Jesus Christ is not only the true son of Abraham. You remember Isaac? "In Isaac shall thy seed be called."

Isaac was the type; Christ is the antitype. Isaac was the picture; Christ is the reality. He is the Son of David. Solomon was the picture; Jesus Christ is the reality—Solomon the type, Jesus Christ the antitype. He is the fulfillment. Jesus Christ is not only the Son of David and the Son of Abraham; He is also the Son of God. Consequently, He is King of everything and everyone. He is not only King of the Jews. He is King of Israel, King of Jacob, King of America, King of Russia, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Look in your Bibles to Psalm 2. In light of the rebellion of all the kings and rulers of this world against Him, notice verse 1: “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.” Then notice: “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.”

“Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.” Yet He says, “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I

shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Jesus Christ is God's King. He is King of everything. Now look in your Bibles to Colossians chapter 1.

We are still talking about Jesus Christ. He is not only the son of David and son of Abraham; He is the Son of God. Colossians 1:15 says, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him"—that is, by Jesus Christ—"were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist"—that is, have their being. Jesus Christ is God. Yes, He is the son of David. Yes, He is the son of Abraham, but Jesus Christ is God.

First Timothy 6:14-16 says that Timothy should keep the commandment "without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall shew"—that is, demonstrate—"who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen." How can Jesus Christ be King of the Jews if He lived in Judea less than two years? Because He is the true son of David, the true son of Abraham, the Son of God, and King of everything.

Applications and Conclusion

Jesus Christ was not a Jew. He was a Judean. He was born of the tribe of Judah, but He was not a Jew in the sense that He did not embrace the religion of Judaism. He did not embrace Pharisaism or the traditions of the Jews. That is why they hated Him, persecuted Him, and crucified Him: He constantly and continually violated their traditions. In Revelation 2 and 3, our Lord said there are some who say they are Jews and are not. Not everyone who professes to be a Jew—that is, from the tribe of Judah or the land of Judea—is necessarily a Jew. The only way they can become a Jew is by embracing Judaism. Sammy Davis, a black entertainer, embraced Judaism and was considered a Jew. He was certainly not [a Jew by

descent]; it could not have possibly been any other way than by religion.

Just because someone claims to be a descendant of Abraham does not make them a descendant of Abraham. I can claim to be a descendant of Abraham, but that does not necessarily make me one. I could claim to be a descendant of Julius Caesar, but that does not make me a descendant of Julius Caesar. So He says there are some who claim and who are not, just like there are plenty in the churches today who claim to be Christians and are not.

When it comes to scriptural truth and theology, we have to do what the Bible commands in 1 Corinthians 2:13: compare spiritual things with spiritual. Or let me say it another way: compare Scripture with Scripture.

Somebody will say, "I've never seen this before in my life." That is probably because you have never studied it before in your life. You have never thought some of these things through. The problem is that we have been taught wrongly most of our lives. Most of us have never studied; we have just assumed that whatever we heard, whatever we were taught as children, and whatever we were taught in our churches was scriptural and right, when it was not.

I have come to the conclusion that old black preacher was right when he said, and I am quoting, "that their Bible showed us shed a whole lot of light on them commentaries." And it does. The Bible sheds a whole lot of light on a lot of things.

So let me put it to you very bluntly: Jesus Christ was not a Jew. He was a Judahite, from the tribe of Judah. He was also a Nazarene and a Galilean, but He was not Jewish. I saw an acquaintance who had a cap on one time, and across that cap was written, "My boss was a Jewish carpenter." I thought to myself, no, He was not Jewish. He was a Judahite, from the tribe of Judah. He was a Nazarene and a Galilean, but He was not Jewish because He did not embrace the religion of Judaism.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we thank You for Your grace and Your mercy and Your help us, Lord, as we go through this study, and teach us, we pray. Open our eyes. Give us, Lord, Thy Word and Thy truth. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Jews, Judaism And Christianity

Part Two of Five

Introduction and Review

This is the second part of a brief series of five messages entitled, "Jews, Judaism, and Christianity." Let us begin reading in Matthew chapter 10, verse 1:

"And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him."

If you have not heard the first message in this series, listen to it so that you may follow this study. I am going to review momentarily today, but this review is not going to take the place of listening to the first message as well.

In the first message, I pointed out that Jesus Christ was indeed the King of the Jews. But He was not King of the Jews simply because He was born in Bethlehem of Judea. Our Lord was conceived in Nazareth, which is in the northern kingdom. He came only to Bethlehem in Judea to be born.

He stayed there less than two years. When His parents took Him to Egypt, He came back and was raised in Nazareth, which is in the northern kingdom and in the area of Galilee at that particular time. So how then could Jesus Christ be called the King of the Jews when He was only in Judea for less than two years?

The answer is that He is the King of the Jews simply because He is the true Son of David. Matthew 1:1 says, “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” He is not only the true Son of David; in the book of Luke, the angel told Mary that He would have the throne of His father, David. He is the true Son of David. Solomon was the type; Christ is the anti-type.

Moreover, Psalm 2, verses 6 and 7, shows that Jesus Christ was ordained King by God His Father: “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.”

"I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." I pointed this out last week, and I want to make it clear again: Jesus Christ was a Judean by birth, but he was not a Jew, because Judaism is a religion. He was born of the tribe of Judah and in the land of Judea, but he was not religiously a Jew.

The Jews were his enemies. They were the ones who hated him, despised him, and crucified him. The reason they did so was because he was against their religion, their Talmudic traditions, and their rituals.

Defining 'Jew' and 'Jewry'

The very first time the word "Jew" occurred was in 2 Kings chapter 16 and verse 6. Abraham was not a Jew; Abraham was a Chaldean. He came out of Chaldea.

The Hebrew word is Yehudi, and it refers to a Judahite or a descendant of Judah. It is used in the Bible to describe a person or persons from the tribe of Judah. It also refers to the kingdom of Judah, the land of Judah or Judea, the nation of Judah, the house of Judah, or anyone belonging to the tribe, land, nation, or house of Judah. These may be called Judahites. The word also refers in the Bible to anyone who is of the religion of the Jews, as I showed you in the last message.

In the New Testament, the Greek word is Ioudaios, and it literally means Judean, in the sense of a country or land, or someone from the nation, country, or tribe of Judea.

There is another word that the Bible uses: "Jewry," spelled J-E-W-R-Y. You will find it not only in the Old Testament but in the New Testament as well. The word "Jewry" indicates someone from Judea—that is, from the land or country of Judea, from the southern kingdom.

If you would turn in your Bibles, holding Matthew chapter 10, but turn to the book of Daniel chapter 5, and then we'll go to the book of Luke. But look in Daniel chapter 5. Notice if you would please verse 13. Daniel 5 and verse 13. In the book of Daniel, chapter 5, verse 13. And I want you to notice what Belshazzar asked Daniel. Daniel 5 and verse 13. Belshazzar the king says this, "Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry?" So notice if you would, "the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry." So Jewry is synonymous with Judah.

In other words, the land of Judea. So anyone from Judea is here referred to as Jewry. And so it's identical. If you would look in your Bibles to the book of Lamentations, I'm sorry, the book of Luke, chapter 23 and verse 5. Luke 23 and verse 5. I suppose sometimes you might could say that the term "Jewry" might be enlarged to refer

to anyone who held the religion of Judaism wherever they were located in the land, but primarily it refers to anyone from Judea. Notice in Luke chapter 23, if you would please, and verse 5, the Bible says this. In fact, look at verse 4.

"Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man. And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry," that is all the southern kingdom, "beginning from Galilee to this place." So he began in Galilee where, of course, he lived. And now he's come down into the southern kingdom, into Judea. And so here the word "Jewry," of course, refers again to the southern kingdom. I suppose by extension, you could say that it would refer to anyone who embraced Judaism in any part of that country, but primarily it refers then to Judah and the southern kingdom.

Now, Strong says this, Augustus Hopkins Strong, who was a Baptist preacher, and Strong's Concordance, that's how it comes together, but he says this, in the narrow sense of the word, the word "Jew" refers to the southern portion of Palestine lying on this side of Jordan, the Dead Sea, to distinguish it from Samaria, Galilee, Berea, and Edomia. In a broader sense, he said it could refer to all Palestine. But it refers primarily, and in the narrow sense, to the southern kingdom as well.

John 7:1 uses the term “Jewry” again. Obviously, in this context, it refers only to Judea, to the southern kingdom. Notice John 7:1: “After these things Jesus walked in Galilee.” If you look at your maps, you will find that Galilee is in the northern kingdom; it is not in the southern kingdom. He said, “After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry,” that is, in the southern kingdom, in Judea, “because the Jews sought to kill him.” The Jews’ feast of tabernacles was at hand, and His brethren therefore said unto Him, “Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.”

His brothers were egging Him on, and verse 5 explains why: “For neither did his brethren believe in him”; none of them were converted at that particular time. Yet verse 1 says that “he would not

walk in Jewry," in Judea, "because the Jews sought to kill him." He was back in the northern kingdom. In verse 3, His brethren said unto Him, "Depart hence, and go into Judea," which would be Jewry, the southern kingdom again. So obviously, the word "Jewry" here refers primarily to the southern kingdom, to the land of Judea.

The Twelve Apostles Listed

Here are my questions for you today, and some of the things that I want to try to answer for you. First of all, can you name the twelve apostles? Secondly, how many of the twelve apostles, if any, were Jews? We normally think of everybody who lived in that land as Jews, but that is certainly not true. What I am going to show you, and what I want you to learn, is that anytime you see the word "Jew" or "Jews" in the Bible, not only must the context determine its usage, but the term literally has to be defined. Just because people went in and out of Judea does not necessarily mean that they were Jews.

Everyone in this room could move to Africa, but that would not necessarily make us Africans. It would not change the color of our skin; we would still be Americans, et cetera. People could come back and forth, and that does not mean that they were actually Judeans.

In Matthew chapter 10, the first four verses give the names of the twelve apostles. Verse 1 says, "And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him."

When you read through the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—you will find these twelve apostles listed many times. On some occasions, they are given different names, but they are one and the same. Peter is called Simon Peter, and sometimes he is called Cephas, which means a stone or a rock. Peter is the same whether he is called Simon Peter or Cephas. Andrew, his brother, is referred to as Andrew in all four Gospels.

Next are James and John, the sons of Zebedee. Our Lord called them, in Mark 3:17, Boanerges, or sons of thunder. They are usually referred to as James and John, but when our Lord called them Boanerges, or sons of thunder, He was referring to James and John.

Then you have Philip and Bartholomew. Philip is referred to as Philip in all four Gospels, and Bartholomew is referred to as Nathanael in the book of John. Bartholomew and Nathanael are one and the same. Why is he called Nathanael in one place and Bartholomew in another? There is an answer.

Thomas is referred to as Thomas in the Bible, except that in John he is called Thomas Didymus, and sometimes simply Didymus. One is the Hebrew name and one is the Greek name; in both Hebrew and Greek, the name means twin. So obviously, Thomas Didymus was a twin. He is called Thomas, Thomas Didymus, or Didymus throughout the Bible. Matthew the publican, or Matthew the tax collector, is referred to as Matthew in all four Gospels.

James, the son of Alphaeus, is the only name used for him in all four Gospels. Thaddeus is also called Jude in the books of Luke and John. Thus, one person goes by two names, Thaddeus and Jude. Actually, you could say three, because he is sometimes referred to as Judas. Judas and Jude would be the same: one person under two names.

Simon the Canaanite is also referred to as Simon the Zealot, so Simon the Canaanite and Simon the Zealot are one and the same. Lastly, Judas Iscariot is referred to simply as Judas Iscariot, except in John 12:2 and John 13:4, where he is also referred to as Simon's son. So Judas Iscariot is referred to as Simon's son.

The question we have to ask today is this: Were any of these apostles Jews? Were any of them Judahites? Were any of them from the tribe of Judah or from the land of Judea?

Jesus Christ came of the tribe of Judah. He was born in the land of Judea, in the southern kingdom. But Jesus Christ was not a Jew in the sense that He embraced Judaism or the Jews' religion. The Apostle Paul said in Galatians that he profited in the Jews' religion above many of his equals. If Jesus Christ was not a Jew in this sense,

then His apostles and disciples would not embrace Judaism either. They would simply be followers of Christ or disciples of Christ.

The truth is that when someone embraced Jesus Christ in the New Testament, he left Judaism behind. Christianity and Judaism are opposites; they are not complementary to each other, but absolutely opposed.

I know that Scripture teaches us in Acts 11:26 that the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch. What, then, are we going to call the Twelve Apostles? The only thing we could call them would be Christians, followers of Christ, or disciples of Christ. They would not be classified as Jews, because there is no middle ground between Judaism and Christianity.

There is no such thing as a Judeo-Christian heritage. That is an oxymoron, a contradiction. We might have an Israelite Christian heritage, a Hebrew Christian heritage, or an Old Testament Christian heritage, but not a Judeo-Christian heritage, because Judaism and Christianity are at opposite poles.

It is important to see what Scripture says concerning the twelve apostles. So, if you look at Matthew chapter 10 again, let us begin in the middle of verse two, because here we are naming them. I will take them one at a time or two at a time, especially if they are brothers or are coupled together.

Galilean Origins of the First Apostles

In the middle of verse two, the first Simon is called Peter, and Andrew is his brother; then James the son of Zebedee and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddeus; Simon the Canaanite; and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

Let us begin with Simon Peter and his brother Andrew, because two brothers obviously would be from the same place. Matthew chapter 4, verse 18, says, “And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers.” If you look at the map, you see that Galilee is far up in the northern kingdom. Here

were men living and working in the northern kingdom. Therefore, when our Lord called Simon Peter and Andrew his brother, they were Galileans.

That is where they lived and worked. Simon Peter and Andrew were not Jews, in that sense of the word; they were Galileans. The next two were brothers, James and John. How about them? Matthew 4:19-22 says, “And he said unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.”

Philip and Nathanael (Bartholomew) Are Galileans

The first four disciples were Galileans. They were fishermen, fishing the sea of Galilee. Peter and Andrew were not Jews; they were Galileans. James and John were not Jews; they were Galileans as well.

The next two in Matthew chapter 10 are Philip and Nathanael. Nathanael also goes by the name Bartholomew. John chapter 1, verse 43, says, “The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee.” And he findeth Philip and saith unto him, “Follow me.”

"Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter." Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter, is in Galilee. That is why I told you they were Galileans. Philip is of the same city in Galilee; therefore, Philip is indeed a Galilean.

What about Nathanael? "Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses, and the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael saith unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip said unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him and said unto him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. Nathanael said unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael

answered and said unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel."

If our Lord found Philip in Galilee, and Philip immediately found Nathanael, where do you think Nathanael was from? Galilee.

John 21:1-2 says, "After these things, Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias." The Sea of Tiberias and the Sea of Galilee are one and the same. "So after these things, Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and on this wise showed himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee and the two other disciples." That seals it. Nathanael was from Galilee, from Cana in Galilee.

That is in the Northern Kingdom. Why is Nathanael sometimes called Bartholomew? None of the people in the New Testament, or Old Testament particularly, had last names? They probably did, but you have to understand that the last names originated not only from fathers, but also from occupations. For instance, Christ referred to Peter as Simon Bar-Jonas. There was a Simon the Sorcerer whose name was called Bar-Jesus. The Hebrew word bar actually means son of. It just so happens Nathanael's father would be like Talmai, so he would be Bar-Talmai or Bar-Tholomew, the son of Talmai. Someone could be referred to as the son of Patrick, or the son of Carly. His first name would be Simon Jonas, Simon Barjona, or Simon the son of Jonah. In that sense, there were last names, but that's how last names basically developed. The same thing occurred with occupations. That's why, like Weaver. Guess what Weavers did in England? They wove.

Now we understand that Nathanael is a Galilean. So far, every apostle has been a Galilean. There has not been one Judean.

Matthew the Publican Was a Galilean

How about Matthew the Publican? Sometimes you might hear me slip up and call Matthew the Republican. I had a pastor friend who had a son by the name of Matthew. He was just a little kid, and he could not say Weaver. He called me John Beaver, John Beaver. So I would call him Matthew the Republican, just teasing him. I got in

the habit of saying that. But it's Matthew the publican, and the publican was a tax collector.

What about Matthew the publican? Look in Matthew chapter 9 and hold Matthew 9, because we're going to look at a lot of scripture right here just to nail this one down. In Matthew 9, the Bible says, "And he," that is Jesus Christ, "entered into a ship and passed over and came into his own country." Or to his own city. In Matthew chapter 8, our Lord is in Gadara, and he cures the maniac of Gadara. This is where he sends all the demons into the swine, and they run violently over the cliff into the sea and drowned. In verse 34 of Matthew 8, "And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts." So he's on the coast; he's near the water.

And so he comes and he crosses Lake Gennesaret. And he comes back, the Bible says in Matthew 9 in verse 1, into his own city. So the question has to be asked, where was his city? Do you know where our Lord lived? Well, now he was born and raised in Nazareth, but he didn't stay in Nazareth. Alright, let me show you. Look in your Bibles to Mark chapter 2. Then we're going back to Matthew 4, so you might as well hold it. Look in Mark chapter 2, and notice if you would please verses 1 and 2. Mark chapter 2, verses 1 and 2.

"And again, he entered into Capernaum after some days, and it was noised that he was in the house," or his house. "And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door, and he preached the word unto them." So he comes into Capernaum, and he was in the house. Look in Matthew chapter 4, beginning there with verse 12. Matthew 4 and verse 12. Now let's read through verse 16. Matthew 4, verse 12.

"Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee." So he's going back into the northern kingdom. "And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt" where? "In Capernaum." That's still in the northern kingdom. Watch. "Which is upon the sea coast in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in

darkness saw a great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." So the Bible says when John got thrown into prison, our Lord departed out of Judea, he went back into Galilee, he came to Nazareth, but leaving Nazareth he dwelt in Capernaum.

Now, I want you to look, if you would please, to Matthew 17 and verse 24. Matthew 17, verse 24. It's interesting, when you read this, the Bible says, in fact, verse 24, "And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter and said, Doth your master pay tribute?" You know the story there. But note where they came to. That is Capernaum. That is where our Lord was living. He lived in Capernaum. Now, go back in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 9 and look at verse 1. Then we're going to skip down just a few verses just so we will not have to read 6 or 7 verses. Watch if you would. Matthew 9 verse 1. "And he entered into a ship and passed over and came into his own city."

Our Lord is healing the palsy. Remember, He is in His own city, Capernaum. In verse 9 we read: “And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.” If our Lord is in the northern kingdom, at His own house in Capernaum, and He walks out and finds Matthew there, where would Matthew live? Capernaum. And Capernaum was in Galilee; hence Matthew the publican was indeed a Galilean. Isn’t that interesting?

James the Less and Thaddaeus (Jude) Were Galileans

There are no Jews so far among the apostles. All of them are Galileans. What about James, the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus? In Matthew 10:3 we read: “Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the Publican;” and then, “James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus.”

John Gill, the Baptist preacher and historian, says that James, the son of Alphaeus, is so called to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee. This is the James who was the brother of our Lord,

Galatians 1:19, and he is called James the Less. So James the Less was the brother of our Lord.

The latter of this pair of apostles is the same person as Jude. Thaddaeus is Jude, or Judas, the writer of the epistle bearing that name, and the brother of James, with whom he is coupled. He was called Lebbeus either from the town of Lebbeus on the coast in Galilee, or, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, from the Hebrew word meaning monarch. Others say the name was given for his prudence or because of his parents' affection toward him. Thus we have James, the son of Alphaeus, known as James the Less and the brother of our Lord; and Thaddaeus, also known as Jude.

If James and Jude were brothers, and they were the half-brothers of our Lord, and if our Lord lived in Nazareth and Galilee, where do you think His brothers would be raised?

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown wrote, "Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus, the same without doubt, is Judas, the brother of James, mentioned in both the list of Luke and Acts." They continued, "This Lebbeus or Thaddaeus is he who John calls in John 14, verse 22, sweetly Judas, not Iscariot. That he was the author of the epistle of Jude and most likely our Lord's brother."

Now, we know that James was an apostle. Galatians 1:19 says, "But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." So we know that James was an apostle, and we know that he was the Lord's brother, do we not? Now, look in the book of Jude and verse 1: "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called."

Notice Jude did not say, "Hey, I'm the brother of Jesus Christ." No. He said, "I'm the servant of Jesus Christ. I'm the brother of James." Isn't that amazing? "I'm the brother of James." James happens to be the brother of Christ, but Jude identifies himself as the brother of James. "I am a servant of Jesus Christ." What a good illustration of biblical humility. Jude could have identified himself by his family relationship to the Lord, but instead he identified himself as a servant of Jesus Christ and as the brother of James.

Matthew 13:54 says, “And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas, or Jude, and his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?”

"And they were offended in him." But note that James and Jude are both listed. Acts 1:13 says, "And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James." Acts 15:27 says, "We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth." Verse 32 adds, "And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words and confirmed them." I am just wondering if this is indeed the same Judas who would be our Lord's brother.

Luke 6:13-16 gives the list of the twelve apostles: "And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles; Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, who would be Nathanael, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which was the traitor." I am still trying to tie all this together for you, showing that James and Jude, or Thaddaeus, or Lebbeus, are all one and the same. Obviously, James and Jude would be Galileans because that is where the family was raised.

Simon the Canaanite Was a Galilean

So far, every apostle has been a Galilean. Simon the Canaanite is also referred to as Simon the Zealot; that is, he was known for his zeal. The term Canaanite is an Aramaic term for zealot. Before he met our Lord and, in all probability, before he was converted, he was some type of voluntary ecclesiastical police who went around trying to make sure that the law was enforced. There were also some zealots

who fought against the Roman Empire and did not like the Roman Empire at all. It could also be that Simon is called Simon the Canaanite because he could have been from Cana in Galilee. In either case, he would have been a Galilean.

The Galileans were distinguished from the Judeans by their accent or speech. You remember in the book of Judges, where there was a war and some of one tribe were trying to cross the river. The others said, "You have to say Shibboleth before I let you across." They could not say it. They would say Sibboleth, and that was how they knew they were the ones they were supposed to kill. They could not pronounce Shibboleth.

There were differences in accents. We tend to think that everybody had to speak alike because they spoke Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic. No, it is just like in America. Everybody has a different accent. I never will forget that I was preaching in New Orleans, Louisiana, where we met one family—two brothers and a sister—and, so help me, each one of those three children had a different accent. I could not believe it, but they did.

Years ago, I had to land in Boston, Massachusetts, and change planes. Eastern Airlines was still in existence. I walked up to a man who looked like a Royal Canadian Mounted Police, but he was a Boston state trooper. He had leather down to the chest, a chin strap on his hat, and his sidearm there. I asked, "Could you please tell me how to get to Eastern Airlines?" He answered me, and I stood there dumbfounded. Finally I said, "Pardon?" He answered again. I said, "Thank you," walked off, and to this day I have yet to understand a word that he said, though he was speaking English. That Boston brogue was so thick I could not understand it.

I have a good friend from New Hampshire, and I have spoken to another man recently from New Hampshire. They talk about the "haht"—not the heart, the "haht." Everything is totally, absolutely different. It is the same way in the Bible. The people in the northern kingdom did not talk like the people in the southern kingdom. There was a difference in their speech. Look in your Bibles to Matthew 26, and notice verse 73. You remember how Peter is denying our Lord.

He denied Him three times before the cock crew. Matthew 26:73 says, “And after a while came unto him they that stood by and said to Peter, Surely thou art one of them, for thy speech betrayeth thee.” Here is what they said: “You don't talk like we do. You're different. Your speech is betraying you.”

Mark 14:70 says, “And he denied it again. And a little after that, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto.” They said, “You can't fool us. We know you're a Galilean. We know you're one of those disciples of Jesus Christ, because your speech agrees to their speech. You sound like them. You are one of them.”

By the way, all the Yankees think that we Southerners have deep and bad accents. We also think that they have deep and bad accents, but that's OK.

So far we've found that all of our Lord's disciples have been Galileans. There's one that is left: Judas Iscariot. Judas Iscariot was the betrayer of our Lord. He sold our Lord for 30 pieces of silver. Judas Iscariot was not a Galilean. He was a Jew. He was a Judean. Simon's son, Judas Iscariot—His name tells you the place where He was born and the location of His residence.

Judas Iscariot: The Only Judean Apostle

Kerioth was the city that He was from. If you have your map with you, and you look at that map, you will find that Kerioth was a village located about 10 miles south of Hebron toward the land of Edom. So it is in the land of Judea. Joshua 15:20 says, “This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families.” So we have here the children of Judah and their inheritance. Thus Judas Iscariot was of the tribe of Judah and lived in his inheritance.

Verse 21 lists “the uttermost cities of the tribe of the children of Judah toward the coast of Edom southward,” including “Kabzeel, and Eder, and Jagur, and Kinah, and Dimonah, and Adadah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Ithnan, Ziph, and Telem, and Bealoth, and Hazor, Hadattah, and Kerioth, and Hezron, which is Hazor.” So Kerioth belonged to the tribe of Judah.

The Apostles Identified as Galileans After the Ascension

It was in the land of Judea. So the only apostle that was a Jew, or a Judean, was the one who betrayed Him.

In Acts chapter 1, verses 1 and 2, we read: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen." Notice that phrase: "He had given commandments unto the apostles whom He had chosen."

Our Lord was about to be received up into heaven. In verse 8, He tells His disciples, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." When he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

Remember, he was speaking to his apostles. "You men, you Jews"—is that what he said? No. "You men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven?" All of the apostles were Galileans, except Judas. At this point, Judas had hanged himself; he was no longer there.

In Acts chapter 2 is the day of Pentecost, when the power of God fell. Three thousand people were converted on this one day. Verse 6 says, "Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language." They were all amazed and marvelled, saying, "Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" What were the apostles? They were Galileans. The only Jew was the one who betrayed Christ.

Conclusion: Only the Betrayer Was a Jew

Since Judas was a Judean—the only apostle who was a Judean—and he was the one who betrayed Christ, John 1:11 should have new meaning: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." His own not only did not receive Him; His own betrayed Him.

How many of our Lord's disciples were Jews? Only one, and that was the one who betrayed Jesus Christ. We must always learn to define the word "Jew" and allow the context to interpret it. Words have meanings. As I pointed out in the first message, you could be a Judean either by being born of the tribe of Judah or by living in the land of Judea. Benjamin and Simeon also had their inheritance in Judea, along with Judah. Literally, only the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Simeon could be true Judeans, because they alone lived in the southern kingdom.

In 2 Kings 16:6, when the Assyrians drave out the Jews from Elath, they were driving out the men of the southern kingdom who had occupied that fort. It is interesting that, before I end this short series, I will show how even the disciples looked at our Lord and said, "No, you're not," because the Jews sought to kill Him.

What are they saying? "We're not that bunch. We're not of them." And they were not, because they were Galileans.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for Your Word, Your truth, Your grace and mercy. Lord, teach us, we pray, and build us up in the most holy faith. Help us, Lord, to discern Your Word. May Your name be honored and glorified through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

Jews, Judaism And Christianity

Part Three of Five

SCRIPTURE READING - Galatians 2:1-16 (KJV)

Introduction and Scripture Reading

Let's open our Bibles then to the book of Galatians chapter 2. Galatians chapter 2. And for those who are visiting with us today, this is the third message in a five-part series. And although I will take time to review momentarily the first two, I think you'll be able to follow along quite easily. The title of this brief series is Jews, Judaism and Christianity. So look in Galatians chapter two, and we're going to be reading the first 16 verses, Galatians two and verse one.

Then 14 years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas and took Titus with me also, I went up by revelation and communicated to them that gospel, which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them that were of reputation, lest by any means I should run or had run in vain. But neither Titus,

> who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. And that because of false brethren, unawares brought in, who came in privately to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage. To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.
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> But of these who seem to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, make it no matter to me, God accepteth no man's person. For they who seem to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me." He's talking about the leaders there of the Church of Jerusalem. But, contrarywise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter. For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles.

And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the heathen and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor, the same which I also was for to do. But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles. But when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews assembled likewise with him, insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, if thou being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, not as do the Jews. Why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews. We who are Jews by nature and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. Even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law, for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Review of Previous Messages: Jesus as Judean, Not a Jew

I want to review the first two messages. I pointed out that Jesus Christ in the New Testament is called the king of the Jews, and he is indeed the king of the Judahites, not simply because he was born in Bethlehem of Judea or because he was of the tribe of Judah, but the Bible also tells us that he was the true son of David. Matthew 1:1 says, "The beginning of the generations of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." When the angel Gabriel spoke to Mary in Luke chapter one, he said, quoting God the Father, "I will give him the throne of his father David." So Jesus Christ is the true son of David and the true son of Abraham. Also, in Psalm 2 verses 6 and 7, God specifically ordained Jesus Christ to be king: "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree the Lord has said unto me, Thou art my son. This day have I begotten thee." So I pointed out that Jesus Christ is a Judean by birth.

But he was not a Jew, because Judaism is a religion. Jesus Christ was conceived in Nazareth, in the northern kingdom. Joseph and Mary came down into the southern kingdom to be taxed, and he was born in Bethlehem of Judea. He lived in Judea less than two years, for Herod murdered all the children two years and under when Christ had fled into Egypt with Joseph and Mary. When they came back from Egypt, God told them to return. Finding that Archelaus ruled in the room of Herod, they moved up to Nazareth, because the scripture says he shall be called a Nazarene. So Jesus Christ was only a Judean by birth. He was conceived and raised in the northern kingdom. He was of the tribe of Judah, but not of the Jewish religion. The Jews hated him, despised him, and crucified him because he was against their religion and their Talmudic rituals and traditions.

Biblical Usage of 'Jew' and the Apostles' Identity

Now let me remind you how the word Jew is used in the Old and New Testaments. The first time the word Jew occurred in the Bible was 2 Kings chapter 16 and verse 6, referring to those in the southern kingdom. The Hebrew word is Yehudi, literally meaning a Judahite or a descendant of Judah. It describes a person or persons

from the tribe of Judah, the kingdom of Judah, the land of Judah or Judea, the nation of Judah or the house of Judah. Anyone belonging to the tribe, land, nation, or house of Judah could be called a Judahite, or in slang, a Jew. It also refers to the religion of the Jews, for the Apostle Paul said he profited in the Jews' religion above many of his equals. In the New Testament, the Greek word is Ioudaios, literally meaning someone of the tribe of Judah or from the nation, country, or land of Judea. Based upon the Hebrew and Greek words, there is certainly a limitation to that term. So I just showed you and tried to prove from scripture how our Lord was a Judean, but he was not a Jew.

And we'll go a little further with that. I pointed out that none of the apostles of our Lord were Jews except one, and that was Judas Iscariot. The name Iscariot tells us where he is from: Kerioth, in the southern kingdom, below Hebron, toward Edom. So obviously, you only had one who was a Jew or Judean or Judahite. And of course, I showed you from Joshua chapter 19 how Kerioth was the possession of the tribe of Judah. So, obviously then, these others were Galileans.

Let me point out to you in Acts 1, verses 1 and 2, Luke wrote, "The former treatise have I written unto thee, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus both began to do and to teach, until the day that he was taken up. After that, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments to the apostles whom he had chosen." So, I emphasize the apostles whom he had chosen. And when you get to verse 11, when Jesus Christ is ascending up into heaven, the angel says, "You men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? The same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as you've seen him go into heaven." So he talks about those apostles as being Galileans.

Now, you will remember last week we went through each apostle one at the time or two at the time, and showed you in the New Testament where they were from, and they were all from the Northern Kingdom, with the exception of Judah. When you get to Acts 1 in verse 13, all 11 of the apostles are named, and they were in the upper room. When you get to Acts chapter 2, the day of Pentecost, and they were out preaching, the Bible said, "And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, are not all

these which speak Galileans." And I pointed out last week how that there was a difference in the accent between the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom because you remember when Peter went in, they said, "Surely you're one of them for your speech betrayeth you." And then again, they said, "Your speech agreeth to them."

Now, let me just point something out. I want you to hold Galatians 2. But I want you to turn in your Bibles and look at John chapter 11 in verse 8. I want you to see that not only Christ, but even the apostles distinguished themselves from the Jews. It's interesting when you look and I'm not going to go through all the scriptures on this, but this occurs several times. But look in John 11 and let's begin there with verse 7. John 11 verse 7.

The Bible said, then after that, saith he to his disciples, that is, Jesus is speaking to them, and he saith unto them, let us go into Judea again. Remember now, Judea is a southern kingdom. His disciples, those apostles, said unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again. You notice what they said: the Jews of late sought to stone thee. In other words, We're not Jews, you're not Jew, per se, but they're the ones who sought to stone thee. Before I finish, I'm going to show you another way that the term Jews is used in the New Testament, mainly in the fifth message, but just pointing out here that they are distinguishing themselves from the Jews.

Now let's go back to Galatians chapter 2. I pointed out how Peter was indeed a Galilean, Peter and John his brother. But notice in John chapter 2, the Apostle Paul is speaking, and he says in verse 14, speaking to Peter: But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the men of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? Well, now wait a minute. Paul is here calling Peter a Jew.

The Judaizers and the Council at Jerusalem

Now we know that Scripture does not contradict itself. So if you have an interpretation of Scripture that contradicts other plain passages of Scripture, the Scripture is not wrong, your interpretation is

wrong. Obviously you have to allow the context to interpret everything.

Now let me tell you that in Galatians chapter 2, the beginning of this chapter deals with what you and I would call the Council at Jerusalem. Paul went to that council, and I will show you why a little bit later, but I want you to look at the first five verses in Galatians 2 again. Then 14 years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas and took Titus with me also. I went up by revelation, that is God directed him to go, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them that were of reputation, that is, to James and Peter and John particularly, who were the leaders there. He said, I communicated to them privately, which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run or had run in vain. In other words, I'm making sure they understand before I have a general discussion.

But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: and that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. Paul is saying that at the Jerusalem council no attempt was made to compel him to submit to Jewish rites or customs, nor even to make Titus circumcised. This proves, first, that they had absolutely no jurisdiction over Paul, and second, that they did not intend to impose any rites or rituals upon Gentile converts. In Galatians and elsewhere, Paul is fighting against the Judaizers. Who were the Judaizers? You may know the Herodians, Pharisees, and Sadducees, but who were the Judaizers? Let me answer in two ways. Number one, the Judaizers were the men who followed Paul around and caused him the most heartache and grief because they attempted to seduce and mislead his converts.

Secondly, the Judaizers were men who professed faith in Jesus Christ; however, they taught that if you really wanted to be saved, then you had to be circumcised and keep the law as well. So what they did was this: they mixed works with grace. Actually, what they were teaching was a synergism, a mixing of these two, saying that

salvation is not of God alone. Salvation is partly of God and partly of man. So they actually turned salvation into a work salvation.

Now, if you will hold Galatians 2, but look in your Bibles to Acts chapter 15. In Acts chapter 15 and verse 5, we do not know who the leaders were in the Judaizer movement, but we do know that some of them were Pharisees. So if you will look in Acts chapter 15 and verse 5, the Word of God says this: "But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed." So these were professing Christians. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying that it was needful to circumcise them and to command them to keep the law of Moses. So these Judaizers then were saying, "You've got to be circumcised. You've got to do these rites and these rituals and these traditions." Now, they were called Judaizers for lack of a more official term.

Let me put it like this: they wanted to make Jews out of Gentile Christians. When you read the book of Galatians, the heretics in Galatia were Judaizers. They were individuals who professed to believe but at the same time they wanted a strict observance to certain Jewish rites and rituals. So let's go back and let me show you how the Apostle Paul is fighting them all through the book of Galatians very quickly. Notice Galatians chapter 5 and begin there with verse 1. Galatians 5 verse 1. Look what he says: "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Now watch. Here's freedom versus bondage. He says, "Behold, I, Paul, say to you that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing."

Now let me just stop there. He is not saying if you're circumcised, you're lost. Nor is he against circumcision; circumcision was given to Abraham by God. That's not what he's saying. You've got to consider it in the context. He said, "But behold, I, Paul, say unto you that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised that he is debtor to the whole law." He is saying you can't pick and choose what parts of the law you're going to obey. If you are going to say you need to obey this part of the law, then you have to obey every part of the law.

Now look in verse four. He goes on to say, "Christ has become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law, you're

fallen from grace." I've heard this verse used so many times to try to teach that someone could lose their salvation. That has nothing to do with salvation. What the Apostle Paul is saying is, look, there are two realms: the realm of grace, salvation by grace, and the realm of the law, salvation by law. If you are going to try to be saved by keeping the law, you have left, you have fallen from the realm of grace, and now you're in the realm of works. It's just that simple. So he's not teaching that people fall from grace and lose their salvation. He just says, there's only two ways that you can be saved, quote unquote, according to these Judaizers: one is by grace, the other by works. Obviously, you cannot be saved by works. But if you leave the realm of grace, you are falling into the realm of works. So the apostle is condemning these Judaizers.

So if you look in Galatians chapter six, verse 12, he says, "As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised, only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law, but desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh." In other words, we've got these converts, we've got these followers. Then he says, "But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, or a new creation. So let me put it to you like this. Here's what the Judaizers wanted: all who professed faith in Christ to attach themselves to ethnic Israel and live as they did. This question of keeping certain rites and rituals, even circumcision, was dealt with at the Council of Jerusalem.

If you would hold Galatians 2 and go back to Acts chapter 15, look first at verses 1 and 2. And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved. So it's a salvation requirement according to these Judaizers. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain other of them should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. Let me put that in good South Georgia language: they had a

knockdown drag out. Paul jumped all over them, Barnabas jumped all over them, and so they said, we need to settle this. We need to go to the apostles and elders who are at Jerusalem. So obviously, that is where they went. This is where this great council was held in order to determine this issue.

Now skip down to verse 19. James is speaking, and he says this. Wherefore, my sentence is that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned to God, but that we write unto them that they abstain from pollution of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him being read in the synagogue every Sabbath day. Then pleased it the apostles and elders with the whole church that send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely Judas, surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief among the brethren. And they wrote letters by them after this manner. The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren, which are the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia.

For as much as we've heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying you must be circumcised and keep the law, to whom we gave no such commandment: it seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

Now notice, when you look back at verse 2 of Acts chapter 15, Paul and Barnabas did not entertain these people at all. In other words, they jumped all over them very quickly. When they came to the council at Jerusalem, they also took care of them very quickly. Now look back in your Bibles to Galatians chapter 2, verses 3 and 5. Here is what Paul is saying took place at the council of Jerusalem. In Galatians 2 verse 3, he said, "But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised." And that because

of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage. And he says again, "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." So Paul said, we simply did not give them any room at all.

Peter's Vision and the Inclusion of Gentiles

Now look back in Acts chapter 15. Listen carefully. Here is the point that is clarified at the Council of Jerusalem: the observance of Jewish rites was not necessary to salvation in any way whatsoever. Now please remember, in Galatians chapter 2, when Peter was come to Antioch, the Apostle Paul jumped all over him and dressed him down for his actions. Peter knew better. Not only was Peter at the council of Jerusalem, Peter actually spoke there. So look in Acts 15 and verse 7: "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by"

My mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God which knoweth the hearts bare them witness giving them the Holy Ghost even as he did unto us and put no difference between us and them purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear. But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved even as they. Peter is speaking. He says all these rites and rituals and customs and traditions—not God's moral law, but the ceremonial law and all that went with it—our fathers were not able to bear, and neither are we. Look at verse 7 again. When there had been much disputing, Peter rose up and said, Men and brethren, you know how that a good while ago God made choice among us that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe. How did God make choice among the apostles for the Gentiles to hear and believe? Look in Acts chapter 10, beginning at verse 9. This is the story of Cornelius, who lived in Caesarea. He was a centurion, a Roman soldier over a hundred men. God is preparing Peter to go into the household of Cornelius. On the morrow, as they went on their

journey and drew nigh to the city, Peter went up into the housetop to pray about the sixth hour, which would be noon.

And he became very hungry and would have eaten. But while they made ready, he fell into a trance and saw heaven open and a certain vessel descending unto him as it had been a great sheet knitted at the four corners and let down to the earth. Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth and wild beasts and creeping things and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter, kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord, for I've never eaten anything that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice, and the vessel was received up again into heaven. Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision should mean, behold, the men sent from Cornelius had made inquiry of Simon's house and stood before the gate, and called and asked whether Simon, who was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting, for I have sent them. So God is saying, here you go, Peter. Peter is being sent now to the house of Cornelius, a Roman soldier, a centurion. Look what is said when he gets into Cornelius's house. Skip down to verse 28. And he said unto them, You know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come into one of another nation. But God has showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Now, let me clarify the word Jew in verse 28. He says, you know how that it is unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come into one of another nation. The word Jew here would refer to anyone from the Jewish nation or anyone that holds a Jewish religion.

Notice, there were more individuals who went with Peter than just Peter himself. Let's get back up to verse 23. Then called he them in, that is those men that Cornelius sent, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with him, and certain brethren, whoever they were, from Joppa accompanied him. Here was the tradition. Here was the rule. Here was the ritual. If you were a Jew, if you were from the Jewish nation, if you held the Jewish religion, you did not go into the house of someone who was not a Jew. The Jews referred to the Samaritans as dogs. The 10 northern tribes had been taken in

captivity into Assyria. The king of Assyria sent all kind of heathen back into the land and populated it. And those few Israelites who were left up there intermarried. And the southern kingdom, the Jews had no dealings with them, they referred to them as dogs. Do you remember reading there in John chapter four, the woman at the well? Our Lord asked her for a drink of water, and she said, How is it that thou, being a Jew or Judean, asketh water of me, a woman of Samaria? For the Judeans have no dealings with the Samaritans.

In other words, they don't even talk to us. I want you to see something interesting. Look in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 15. This may surprise you, but it's just showing you the mentality that basically had to be dealt with, and our Lord dealt with it here very beautifully. Notice in Matthew chapter 15, beginning with verse 21. Then Jesus went and departed into the coast of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coast. Notice it's a woman of Canaan. She's not a Hebrew. She came out of the same coast and cried to him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David. My daughter is grievously vexed with the devil. But he answered her not a word, wouldn't even speak to her. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us. She's creating problems, get rid of her. But he answered and said, I'm not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, it is not me to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs. What did our Lord call the woman?

He called her a dog. And she said, Truth, Lord, you want to call me a dog? I'll accept that. That's no problem. Truth, Lord. Yet the dogs or the puppies eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. Our Lord was testing her, and he called her a dog, because that's what they all were called—anyone who was not of the Jewish religion back at that particular time. In fact, that's what they still call anyone today who's not of the Jewish religion. The term in the Hebrew is goyim, and we're counted not even as human. We're subhuman. We're simply dogs. So for the gospel, then, to be sent to other people and into other nations, the mentality of

calling everyone a dog or common or unclean had to be dealt with. And God dealt with it primarily, to begin with, with Peter.

Peter knew the truth because he was the one God used initially. While the law of God did forbid intermarriage with the heathen, and forbade contracts and covenants with the heathen, the law did not forbid civility, compassion, and kindness. Turn to Leviticus chapter 19, verse 34. While God did demand separation from the other nations, He did not demand that you be unkind, uncivil, or uncompassionate. Leviticus 19, verse 33: "And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God." So what did God say? The law required separation but also commanded love for the stranger.

Some stranger come to live with you, that is in your city? God says, you're not to vex him. You're to love him as yourself. Because you were strangers yourself. You know what it's like to be a stranger. Deuteronomy chapter 10 and verse 19: Love you therefore the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. So God commends us to love the stranger. Deuteronomy 23 and verse 7: Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite. Now wait a minute. Do you remember Jacob and Esau? Esau is the father of Edom. The Edomites came from Esau. Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite. And the word abhor is a strong word for hate, for he is thy brother. Thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian, because thou wast a stranger in his land. Well, so God said, you don't marry them, and you may not necessarily have contracts and covenants with them. But on the other hand, he said, you still are to be kind and gracious and compassionate and loving. Listen carefully because I'm going to be dealing with Galatians chapter 2. I want you to see that Peter not only violated the law, he betrayed the gospel of Jesus Christ. He betrayed the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Consequently, when he came to Antioch, Paul confronted him to his face and dealt with him and exposed his evilness and his wickedness and condemned him for his actions. Because his actions were effectively denying the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul's Rebuke of Peter at Antioch

Look in verse 11: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." Peter gave into an irrational fear that caused him to act unbiblically. James, the leader of the church at Jerusalem, was the Lord's brother. However, we are not told that James actually sent this delegation that came. He may have, but he may not. They just came down from Jerusalem, maybe from James, but that does not mean James necessarily sent them. Obviously, the original believers were Jews. It takes time to see the implications and the applications of truth. Take someone who has been raised in Judaism all of their lives and let him get saved by the grace of God and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now he is going to have to deal with all those rituals and all those traditions, all those ceremonies that he has been taught were his salvation. Take somebody that has been raised in the Roman Catholic Church. You have been taught all your life, you have to go to the priest for confession, you have to do this, you have to do penance, you have to do that.

And once you get out of that, and it takes a while, it doesn't matter. Everybody by nature is an Arminian. And once you see the doctrines of grace, it takes a while to filter everything in your mind and work out the proper applications. So it was the same thing here in the New Testament. I'm not excusing Peter, but I'm going to show you. Look in your Bibles, Acts chapter 21. I'm going to show you how zealous these individuals were for their rituals and their traditions. We're not talking now about God's moral law. We're talking about ceremonial rituals. Notice in Acts chapter 21, beginning there with verse 18. In fact, read verse 17. And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following, Paul went in with us unto James and the elders. And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they had heard it, they glorified the Lord and said unto him, Watch, thou seest, brother, how many thousands of the Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law. And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses.

Saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. The customs. What is it therefore? The multitude must needs come together, for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say unto thee. We have four men which have a vow on them. Take them and purify thyself with them and be at charges with them. They may shave their heads and all they may and that all may know. of these things whereof thou art, they were informed concerning thee are nothing, but that thou thyself also walkest orderly and keepest the law.

They're not talking necessarily about the Gentiles. They're talking about people who were supposedly Jews. And they said, now, Paul, we've heard that you've been telling them not to be circumcised and not to keep the rituals. Not that Paul had said that. They just simply heard that. Of course, it would be appropriate for him to say that because none of those things say nor do they help say.

All these Jews that are zealous for all these rituals, they're going to hear that you're come and we want them to know that you are really not like what they hear. So we've got some in that have a vow on them. So we want you to go through this little ritual and be at charges for them and shave your head.

So, here are the Judaizers.

I am not saying that James was a Judaizer, nor that the believers in Jerusalem were Judaizers. If Calvin wants to keep all the little rituals, traditions, and ceremonies he pleases and trust in Jesus Christ totally and completely, that's fine. That's him. But if he comes and says, all of you have to do like I'm doing, and you must keep my rituals, customs, and traditions or else you are not saved, that's a total horse of a different color. These people at Jerusalem, along with James, were zealous for all their traditions, which is fine if they want to be zealous for those traditions. Sooner or later they're gonna fall by the wayside anyhow, but for some to go to the extent that they're going to say, unless you do this, you're not saved, well, that's what that Council of Jerusalem was all about. Peter was there. He spoke there. Again, I'm pointing out, this is not concerning the moral law. This is concerning ceremonies and rituals. Look back in your Bibles to Galatians chapter two, because here's what I really wanted to deal with. I had to give you all this background just to deal with it.

Look at Galatians two, verse 11. He said, but when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face because he was to be blamed.

For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles. In other words, he was eating with those who were not Jewish. But when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision, those who were Jews. And the other Jews, whoever they were there, dissembled likewise with him, insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

Peter, you have played the hypocrite. You have caused others to play the hypocrite. The Greek word literally is hypocrisy. The other Jews hypocritized also. That is, they dissembled or they played the hypocrite with him. And even Barnabas played the hypocrite. Before some came from James, Peter was happy and glad to eat with the Gentiles, those who were non-Jewish, but who were believers. But when those came from James, he separated himself. The Bible says in Proverbs 29, verse 25, the fear of man bringeth a snare. And in this instance, Peter feared men rather than God.

We are not told exactly what happened. We're not told that these Jews from Jerusalem demanded that Peter separate himself, or that they had a debate or dispute. We're not even told that Peter just silently said, well, maybe I better separate myself. Whatever happened, he did separate himself. He feared the effect their opposition, he feared their reproaches, he feared their report that they would make to those at Jerusalem, and he feared possibly that there might be an uproar by the Jews at Antioch who happen to reside there. I don't know what all his fears were, but I do know that he played the hypocrite. He did not act in accord with the gospel. But when I saw that they walk not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, please understand this. There is a principle here. The gospel is at stake. There is a gospel issue involved. He said, but when I saw that they walk not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, if thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles and not as do the Jews, Why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Peter as a 'Jew' by Action, Not by Birth

Was Peter a Galilean or a Jew? Scripture does not contradict scripture. Paul, in verse 14, looks at Peter and knows he's a Galilean. He said, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? Peter was acting like a Jew. He was not a Jew. But he was becoming a religious Jew in the sense that now he's going to keep their rituals and their ceremony and their traditions. He was a Galilean, but by his actions, he was becoming Jewish. In verse 14, being a Jew, the Greek word is huparcho, which means to make a beginning, to come forth, and to be there. So Paul is saying, Peter, you're making a good beginning at becoming a Jew. How? By observing their little traditions and their rituals and their ceremonies. Judaism is a religion. Has anybody ever heard of Sammy Davis, Jr., the black entertainer? Before he died, he became a Jew. Did that turn him from black to white? Of course not. You don't change ethnicities. You don't change races. What did he do? He embraced the tenets. He embraced the rituals. He embraced the traditions of Judaism.

Turn to the little book of Esther in the Old Testament. Everybody knows the story of Esther, or at least I hope you do. Esther chapter 8, right after Nehemiah and before Job. You remember how Haman has been hanged on his own gallows. Mordecai has gotten to be the prime minister, so to speak. Ahasuerus was king, and this takes place in Persia. Look in Esther chapter 8 and verse 17: "And in every province and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day, and many of the people of the land became Jews, for fear that the Jews fell upon them." Did those Persians then become Hebrews or did they become something else? No. How did they become Jews? They just simply embraced Judaism. That's all there was to it. They went to the rituals and the traditions of the Jews. So when you look back in Galatians chapter 2, what the Apostle Paul is saying is, Peter, you're making good headway at becoming a religious Jew. That is one that observes the rites and the traditions and the rituals of the Jews. Because you're separating yourself now. And by the way, Peter was the one to whom God showed that you don't call any man common or unclean.

Justification by Faith Alone vs. Works of the Law

He was denying a principle. Look in verse 15. The Apostle Paul says, "We who are Jews by nature and not sinners of the Gentiles." Is Paul claiming that the Judeans by nature were not sinners? Of course not. A Jew by nature would be someone born in the southern kingdom or a tribe of Judah. Paul could claim to be a Jew. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, and Judah, Benjamin, and Simeon had their inheritance in the southern kingdom. Moreover, Paul said he was raised in the strictest sect of our religion, a Pharisee of the Pharisees at the feet of Gamaliel. He could claim that because that is exactly how he was raised.

Why is he saying "we who are Jews by nature are not sinners of the Gentiles"? Obviously the Jews were sinners. In Romans Chapter 2, Paul condemns all the Jews. In Romans Chapter 3, he condemns all the Gentiles. He ends up saying there's none righteous, no not one, there's none that do good, there's none that understand it.

They're all going out of the way. They're all become unprofitable. That's not what he's saying. What is he saying? Look in Romans chapter 9, verse 3. For I could wish myself were a curse from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh. Now watch who are Israelites, not who are Jews, but who are Israelites to whom pertaineth the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the law and the service of God and the promises. Whose are the fathers, and of whom is concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all. God bless forever. Amen. What tribe did Christ come from? Judah. Where was he born? In Judea. Our Lord told the woman at the well in John chapter 4, the Samaritan woman, salvation is of the Jews or salvation is of the Judah.

We know, she said, that Messiah cometh. And when he comes, he's going to straighten all this out. And our Lord said, I, that speaketh unto thee, am he. Salvation was standing right in front of her. So this is what Paul is talking about in this particular verse. Yes, salvation is coming through the tribe of Judah. Go back to Galatians chapter two. Peter is acting contrary to the law and to a gospel principle. He's pretending that it matters about these little rituals and ceremonies. And so he says in verse 16, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ,

even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the work of the law. For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. No one, absolutely no one can be saved by the law. You can't separate yourself enough from sinners. You can't obey ritual enough, or regulation enough, or rule enough, or custom enough, or tradition enough. No! Salvation is not by the law. Look in verse 21. Galatians 3 or 2 in verse 21. I do not frustrate the grace of God, for if righteousness were come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. Wow. So Paul looks at Peter and says, you're wrong. You are dead wrong. Instead of being a Galilean Christian, you're becoming a Galilean Jew.

You want everybody to keep these little rituals, traditions, and customs that the Jews in Jerusalem are keeping. Why did you pay for these Gentiles before these came from James? But after they arrived, you separated yourself and pretended everybody had to observe these rituals just like the Jews. Was that rebuke well-deserved? Yes, because the heart of the gospel was at stake. Look in Galatians three, beginning with verse 10. Paul says: For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. You want to keep a little of the ceremony of law? You better keep it all. If you want to keep the ceremonial law, you better keep the moral law. You want to keep the moral law? You better keep it all. He says in verse 10, For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

Application: Judaism and Christianity Are Opposites

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us, for it is written, curse is everyone that hangeth on a tree. Paul is not doing away with God's moral law. He is here talking about using the law as a means of justification. You can only be justified in one of two ways: by faith alone in the finished work of Jesus Christ, or by works, by keeping the law, if you could keep that law

personally, perfectly, and perpetually, which no man can. So actually, there's only one way to be justified. But when people deny justification by faith alone, the only thing left for them is the law. That's why Paul said, whosoever seeketh to be justified by the law, he's fallen from grace. Here is what John Calvin had to say on Galatians chapter two. The state of the case is here laid down. For the sake of the Jews, Peter had withdrawn himself from the Gentiles in order to drive them from the communion of the church unless they would relinquish the liberty of the gospel and submit to the yoke of the law. If Paul had been silent here, his whole doctrine fell. All the edification obtained by his ministry was ruined. It was therefore necessary that he should rise manfully and fight with courage.

This shows how cautiously we ought to guard against giving way to the opinions of men, lest an immoderate desire to please or an undue dread of giving offense turn us aside from the right path. If this might happen to Peter, how much more easily may it happen to us if we're not duly careful? Have you ever heard of an immoderate desire to please? Have you ever heard of an undue dread of giving offense? Have you ever heard of political correctness? Yes. Paul says, Peter, you've compromised the gospel, and I'm rebuking you. The point I want you to see today is this. In fact, a couple of them. The first one is this, that Judaism and Christianity are indeed opposites. They are not compatible. Judaism teaches salvation by works, and Christianity teaches salvation by grace. And then I want you to think about this. How many Baptist churches have become good little Jewish synagogues? Because instead of holding everyone accountable to the word of God and the law of God, they add this rule, this regulation, this custom and this tradition. And you're considered a good Christian if you do certain things according to the church's rituals and customs instead of what the word of God really clearly teaches. Stop and think about this.

I've been preaching over 50 years. I have known churches where men attended who were liars, dishonest in business, adulterers, yet went to church Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, tithed, visited, and the church overlooked all their wickedness because they kept the little rules, regulations, and traditions. We have to obey the word of God. That is our standard and nothing else.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to thee this day. We thank you for your love, grace, mercy. Teach us, we pray, build us up in the most holy faith and give us grace to serve thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear, in thy name we pray, amen.

CHAPTER 4

Jews, Judaism And Christianity

Part Four of Five

Introduction and Review of the Series

This is the fourth message in the five-part series entitled “Jews, Judaism and Christianity.” We are going to read only verse 22, believe it or not, and we will come back to that verse before we finish today. Open your Bibles to John, chapter 4. Our Lord is speaking to the Samaritan woman: “You worship, you know not what. We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.”

In the last three weeks, we have gone over a large amount of Scripture, and we are not through yet. I have pointed out several important truths concerning Christ and His apostles. We need to remember how the word “Jew,” “Jews,” or “Judahite” is used in Scripture. If we understand the usage of the word, we will not be confused when we read through Scripture.

I pointed out in the first message how Jesus Christ was not a Jew. He was a Judahite. He was from the tribe of Judah, and He was actually born in the land of Judea, but He was conceived in the northern kingdom in Nazareth, and that is exactly where He grew up.

He is indeed the King of the Jews, but He is not King of the Jews simply because He lived a few years in Judea. He is King of the Jews because He is the true Son of David. Matthew 1:1 says, “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” In Luke chapter 1, our Lord said that God was going to give unto Him the throne of His father David. In Psalm 2, God said that He had set His King upon His holy hill of Zion.

Jesus Christ is not simply King of the Jews. He is King of Israel, everyone and everything, because He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Let us remember how the word “Jew” or “Jews” is used.

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word is "Yehudi," and it literally means a Judahite, a descendant of Judah, or someone from the land of Judah. Thus, it is usually used to describe a person or persons from the tribe of Judah, the kingdom of Judah, the land of Judah or Judea, the nation of Judah, or the house of Judah. It refers to anyone belonging to the tribe or to the land in any way whatsoever.

In the New Testament, the Greek word is "Ioudaios," which simply means a Judahite or someone from the land of Judea. Based upon the Hebrew and Greek words for Jews, we understand that there are limitations to that word. We also understand that the word is used to refer to a Jewish religion as well, which I will point out again momentarily. In the second message, we pointed out that none of the apostles were Jews, or Judahites, with the exception of Judas Iscariot.

He was from Kiriath, which is below Hebron, pointing down toward Edom. He was from the southern kingdom. All the rest of the apostles were Galileans, from the northern kingdom. In fact, in Acts chapter 2, they ask, "Are not all these Galileans which we hear speaking in our own tongues the wonderful words of God?"

When we looked in Galatians chapter 2, we saw how the apostle Paul admonished Peter and confronted him to his face, accusing Peter of becoming a Jew. How could that be if Peter was a Galilean? He was becoming a Jew by his unbiblical, erroneous conduct and action. He was separating himself from others when this group came from James from Jerusalem and acting like a Jew in the sense of observing rituals, customs, traditions, and things like this.

Judaism as a Religion, Not a Race

Judaism is a religion; it is not a race. For instance, as I pointed out last week, the black entertainer Sammy Davis Jr. became a Jew. He certainly did not change races. He was still black, but he embraced Judaism.

In Esther 8:17, which I read last week, we read, "And in every province and every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them." The land there, of course, is talking about Persia and all the other areas that Ahasuerus controlled; he even controlled India. Obviously, they did not change races. They did not change ethnicity. They simply embraced Judaism.

Paul himself spoke of the Jews' religion a number of times. The clearest passage is Galatians 1:13-14. He said, "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it." That shows the opposition between Judaism and Christianity. He went on to say, "And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."

Much of Judaism deals with customs and traditions as well. Our Lord attacked the traditions of Judaism in Matthew 15, in Mark 7, and in other passages. When they came to our Lord and asked Him, "Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders?" He said in Matthew 15:6, "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." In other words, they were violating God's law with their tradition. They had much to do with tradition.

Now think about this: customs, traditions, religion, rites, and rituals are necessary to control a populace. When you stop and think, it is that which unifies the people. What does? Their religion, their rites, their rituals, their customs, and their traditions.

The Ruling Elite: Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians

It is that which unifies the people and cements the authority and the control over the traditions and the customs and the religion. All you have to do is witness the Roman Catholic Church. Who is it that has control over all the rituals, all the ceremonies? It would be the priests, the cardinals, and ultimately the pope as well. So, you have to understand that those who are in power and in authority have a vested interest in maintaining that authority and that power.

If you understand that, you will see it more clearly in John 11. Notice who came together and what they said: "Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? For this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." So they were going to lose their power. Notice then that the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council. The chief priests—the priesthood—was usually made up of Sadducees.

The Pharisees had joined there with the Sadducees; there was the Sanhedrin. Acts 5:17 says, "Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation." So the high priesthood happened to be that of Sadducees, and therefore the Sadducees had control of the temple because that was the priesthood. The Pharisees were the fundamentalists of the day. They had control of the people.

So the ranking elite among both parties made up the ruling council, or the ruling class. They were the ones who called the shots.

There was another group mentioned in the New Testament: the Herodians. The Herodians were supporters of the policies and government of the Herodian family. They were more political than religious, but they were made up of both Pharisees and Sadducees.

This group of Herodians was genuinely friendly to Herod the Great and to his dynasty. I want to give you two quotes.

Kenan Cook describes the Herodians as “that party among the Jews who were supporters of the Herodian family as the last hope of retaining for the Jews a fragment of national government, as distinguished from absolute dependence upon Rome as a province of the empire.” These Herodians, made up of Jews, clung to Herod and his dynasty, hoping to retain a vestige of national identity.

Easton’s Bible Dictionary defines the Herodians as “A Jewish political party who sympathized with the Herodian rulers in their general policy of government and in the social customs which they introduced from Rome. They were at one with the Sadducees in holding the duty of submission to Rome and of supporting the Herods on the throne.” The Sadducees generally agreed with submission to Rome, but they also joined with the Herodians to preserve that last vestige of power rather than become simply a province of the Roman Empire.

The Sadducees, Pharisees, and Herodians tried to entrap and crucify Jesus Christ. Whatever their group, they all persecuted Him and sought His death. Each party wanted Jesus Christ out of the way. The Sadducee, Pharisee, and Herodian parties all wanted power, control, and rule; each had its power elite and sought to maintain its authority. Each was a Jewish party, and each was against Christ.

God Never Addresses the People as 'Jews'

Now it is important to note several truths regarding Scripture. God does not specifically address the inhabitants of the land as the Jews. Never will you find God addressing the inhabitants of the land as Jews. Usually, when the apostles speak of the Jews, they do so in derogatory terms or in terms designating them as opposed to the gospel. They do not even address the people as the Jews. Let us begin at the beginning and examine this from the Bible.

I hope you understand that there is an entire book in the New Testament called the book of Hebrews. There is never a book of the Jews. In fact, the word “Jew” or “Jews” is never mentioned in the

book of Hebrews. I want to show you how God addresses the people. Hold John, for we will come back there before we end, but look at Matthew 1:21. We are going to look at many Scriptures today. The angel is talking to Joseph: “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” He is not saving the Jews, but “his people from their sins.” He speaks about “his people.”

Look in Matthew 2:4. Here Herod had convened the elders and scribes to find out where Christ was to be born. “When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.” It is interesting that so far God refers to the people as “the people,” “his people,” “the people of Israel,” or “Israel.”

Look in Matthew chapter 4, beginning at verse 14. Here is another prophecy concerning Jesus Christ: “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.” Notice “the people.” Turn to Luke chapter 1 and notice verses 16 and 17. It is interesting that God never refers to the people simply as “the Jews.” He does not.

God told Zacharias what would happen in the life of John the Baptist: “And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” Thus, verse 16 speaks of “many of the children of Israel,” while verse 17 speaks of making “a people ready for the Lord.” In Luke 1:54, Mary says, “He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy.” Then, in verse 68, Zacharias says, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath

visited and redeemed his people." And look if you would please in verse 76. Now we're talking about John the Baptist again. "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins." Over and over God just simply refers to the people of the land either as "his people" or "Israel" or "the children of Israel." Turning your Bibles to Luke 20 and look at verse 1. Luke 20:1. "And it came to pass, that on one of those days"—and by the way, I've often said, and I've said to myself, I've threatened to do this a number of times. I just haven't done it. I'm gonna preach a message and I'm just going to entitle it, "One of Those Days." Our Lord had them too. Watch that. "And it came to pass, that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon him with the elders."

Note, if you would, "it came to pass on one of those days as he taught" who? Not the Jews. He taught "the people." If you would turn over in your Bible to Acts chapter 9. Acts chapter 9. God has saved Saul of Tarsus, turned him into the mighty Apostle Paul. He's now speaking to Ananias. And he's telling Ananias to go and lay his hands upon the eyes of the Apostle Paul that he might receive his sight. And look what he says concerning Paul. Acts chapter 9 verse 15. "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." Never has he mentioned the Jews. If you would look in Acts chapter 26. Acts 26 and notice if you would beginning there with verse 15. Acts 26:15. The Apostle Paul is here giving his testimony to Festus and look what he says. Acts 26:15, "And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I

Christ told Paul, “Have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are

sanctified by faith that is in me." That is interesting. He said, "Delivering thee from the people."

You remember Matthew 16 and also Luke 9:18. The Bible says this concerning Christ: "And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?" He did not ask, "Who do the Jews say that I am?" He asked, "Who do the people say that I am?"

I could multiply scriptures, but I think you are beginning to see a principle. God always refers to His people as simply "His people," or "Israel," or "the Israel of God." He does not refer to them as "the Jews." Interestingly enough, even the Jews—and I am using this term to classify a ruling elite—they always referred to the people over whom they had control as "the people." They did not even refer to the people as Jews.

Matthew 26:3-5 says, "Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people." Not among the Jews, but among the people.

Mark 11:18 says, "And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine." All the people, not all the Jews. All the people. And these were the Lord's enemies. Mark 12:12 says, "And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had

Having spoken the parable against them, they left Him and went their way. In Luke 20:6, Jesus asked, "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?" The religious leaders reasoned among themselves, "If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not? But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet." It is interesting that they never said, "All the Jews will stone us." They always said, "All the people will stone us." Luke 22:2 says, "And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people." God never addressed His people as "the Jews."

Even the Jews who had control never addressed the people as fellow Jews. They referred to them basically as “the people.”

Apostles Never Address Hearers as 'Jews'

Thirdly, it is important to note that none of the apostles ever began their sermons, dissertations, counsels, warnings, or writings with these words: “Hey, you Jews.” Never. You must remember that here is all of Israel: the southern kingdom and the northern kingdom. It was only the southern kingdom that were known as Jews, or Judahites. The northern kingdom was known as Israel. It is true that you could have some Judahites who were Israelites, but not all Israelites were Judahites; they did not live in the southern kingdom.

Now let me show you how some of the apostles did. First of all, concerning Jesus Christ, look at Luke 6:17. Then we will look at some of the apostles. “And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judaea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to

Luke says, “and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of the Jews”—is it that who lived in Jerusalem and Judea? But he did not say that. He says, “a great multitude of people out of all Judaea and Jerusalem,” and then, “from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon.” Tyre and Sidon, of course, was in the northern kingdom, while Jerusalem and Judea would be the southern kingdom. Our Lord simply says, “the people came out of Judea and out of Jerusalem.” So why did He not say “Jews”? He could have, but He certainly did not.

Consider the preaching of the apostles and how they always addressed their hearers. In Acts 2:22, the Apostle Peter says, “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.” Where was Peter preaching when he said this? It was the day of Pentecost, and he was in Jerusalem. He did not say, “You men of Judah and Jerusalem,” or, “Hey, you Jews.” He said, “You men of Israel, hear these words.”

Acts 2:36 says, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” In Acts 3:12, “And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?” He keeps saying, “Ye men of Israel.”

Acts 4:8 says, “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel.” Not, “Ye rulers of the Jews,” but, “Ye rulers of the people.” In Acts 4:10 he says, “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.” Again, “to all the people of Israel.”

As you turn to Romans 10:1, let me ask you: Do you remember which tribe the Apostle Paul was from?

Romans 10:1 says, “Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.” He did not say, “my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Jews,” or “the Judeans.” He said, “for Israel.” Why? Because there is more to Israel than the southern kingdom. Romans 10:19 asks, “But I say, Did not Israel know?” Not the Jews, but “Did not Israel know?” First Moses saith, “I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.” Then, in verse 21: “But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.”

Read through the New Testament carefully and you will discover how each apostle addressed his hearers. Not one of them ever began a sermon or an address with “to the Jews.” Not one.

Christianity and Judaism Are Opposites

It is true that many of the first believers, many of the first Christians, were from Jerusalem and from the land of Judea. But there is a reason the apostles never addressed their hearers as “to the Jews.” One reason is found in Matthew 15:24, where our Lord said, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Not to the

Jews, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Israel consisted of more than the southern kingdom. Obviously, they did not simply say, “Hey, you Jews,” because they understood that God's people were more than the southern kingdom.

There is another reason: they recognized that Christianity and Judaism were opposites. It is impossible to be Jewish and to be a Christian. You will either be one or the other. It may be possible to be a Hebrew Christian or an Israelite Christian, but not a Jewish Christian, because Judaism is a religion and Christianity is a religion, and they are absolutely opposite.

Years ago, when I first started preaching—over fifty years ago—I was in college, and in our church was a man by the name of Dr. Edgar Wolfram. As you can tell, that would be a Jewish name. Dr. Edgar Wolfram had five earned doctorates.

One of them was in physics. He spoke a number of different languages—I tend to think the number was eleven, though I’m not sure—and was a very, very brilliant man. Dr. Wolfram was a member of Boulevard Baptist Church, but he had been raised in Judaism. He left Judaism and converted to Christianity. Still wanting to reach the Jewish people, he established a mission named Beth Sar Shalom, “the House of the Prince of Peace.” I preached there a number of times.

In this little mission, he had a room and a little bathroom in the back, where he basically lived, as well as a little kitchen. There was also a little foyer with couches and chairs where people could go, sit and talk, and drink coffee if they wanted to. Then there was a room, probably a little larger than this room, where the gospel was preached.

There was no menorah there. There were no Jewish symbols there. There was nothing except a place to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

If you ever heard Dr. Wolfram's story, it is a tremendous testimony. Wolfram, as brilliant as he was, was born and raised in Germany. When Hitler was in power, he tried to force Wolfram to work for him, since Wolfram was a physicist, and Wolfram refused. So, to punish him and make him change his mind, he had Edgar

suspended in a cage in a dungeon. Edgar was cramped; he could not stand up, and he could not sit down. The cage was purposely small to cramp him. The only light and air he had came through a little small window far above his head.

Interestingly, while some of the Nazis were tearing up Bibles and other books and burning them, the wind picked up one sliver of paper, blew it through that little window, and landed it in his cage. He was able to take two fingers and pick up that one little piece of paper. When he got it up to his eyes, it was the passage Isaiah 53, and he read it over and over and over. God used that and converted him.

The story I told was this: I met a lady whom Alice and I knew all of our lives. Her husband was Jewish. She was not originally that, but she converted to Judaism since her husband was Jewish. I met her on the street and was going to try to witness to her. I said, “Let me tell you about Dr. Edgar Wolfram, a converted Jew.”

It looked like I'd slapped her. She said, "Let me tell you something. There's no such thing as a converted Jew. You're either Jewish or you're Christian. There's no in-between. There are no Jewish Christians." She was right—dead right. I learned that very quickly because she straightened me out.

But I want you to understand something. Even in the New Testament, the apostles knew the difference. Look in John chapter 1, beginning at verse 19: "And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?"

The 'Jews' as Opponents of Christ and the Apostles

Now, I want you to think about this. Here's a new way this word "Jews" is used. It is not new to the Bible; it is used over and over in the Bible, which I am going to show you next week. But he says, "This is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem."

Were not those priests and Levites Jewish? You would think so. Who has the authority to send priests and Levites out? I guess only the high priest, right? Now watch this: "And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask

him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet?"—from Deuteronomy 18. He answered, "I am not." Then said they unto him, "Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?"

And he said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees."

Now wait a minute. They which were sent were of the Pharisees. Go back up to verse 19: "This is the record," he says, "of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites." Wow.

We remember in Acts chapter 5 that it was the Sadducees who had control of the temple. But you have to remember, the Pharisees and the Sadducees made up the Sanhedrin. They made up the council.

Now, here is the thing that got my attention: “And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?” Was John the Baptist a Jew or Judahite?

Look in your Bible to Luke chapter 1, beginning in verse 5: “There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.” If Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was a Levite, and his mother was of the order of Aaron, which was a Levite, what tribe do you think John would have been from? Levi. The Levites had no inheritance in the land; they were scattered throughout all Israel. Where was John the Baptist raised? Where did he live?

Luke 1:36 says, “And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.” Then, “And Mary arose in those days.”

Remember, she was in Nazareth in the northern kingdom. “And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.” So where did John, Zacharias, and Elisabeth live? In Judah. John would have been a Judahite by virtue of the fact that he lived in Judea, right?

But the Jews did not count him as you. The Jews sent and said, “Who are you?” If John lived in Judah and would have been a Judahite, who were these people demanding to know who he was? Why would they challenge John? Those who were sent were of the Pharisees. The Sadducees also had control of the high priesthood.

Remember now, these are the Jews. They are demanding of John, “Who is he?” Watch what John says in Matthew 3:7: “But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.”

“And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” What did he call them? “You generation of vipers,” you bunch of snakes. He is talking to the Jews. Do you understand? I am going to show you more next week who these Jews were, but it was the Jews who always tried to kill Christ, to kill the Apostle Paul, and all the other apostles.

For instance, in Acts 23, they are trying to tear the Apostle Paul apart. We are talking about the ruling council, the Sanhedrin, the Sadducees and the Pharisees. Acts 23:15 says, “Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.”

Here is the Jewish council saying, “We are going to pretend that we really want some more answers from Paul, and when the chief captain sends him, we have got 40 men who have bound themselves with an oath that they are going to murder the Apostle Paul.”

Look at Acts 25:1-3: “Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem. Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him, And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.” Now who is it?

The high priest and the chief of the Jews wanted to kill the apostle Paul. Look in Acts 26, where the apostle Paul is giving his defense. In verse 21 he says, “For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.” Now wait a minute. The Jews caught him. It was not that the people caught him. You have to remember that Paul was a Benjamite, and the Benjamites had their inheritance in the southern kingdom. But now Paul says, “I’m not one of them. It’s the Jews and they are trying to kill me.”

Well, who are these Jews? Look at John 7:1. I gave you this verse once before, but I want you to see it again: “After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.” Wait a minute. The Jews sought to kill Him. Now how could Jesus Christ be a Jew if the Jews were trying to kill Him? Obviously, He is not a Jew. That is why they were trying to kill Him. He may have been from the tribe of Judah. He may have been born in Judea, but He was not a religious Jew.

Now here is my question: What did Christ think of these Jews? What was His attitude? Look at Matthew chapter 12. Before reading verse 34, go down to verse 24: “But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.” Now you know who He was talking to. And our Lord says, “O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Just like John the Baptist, He called them a bunch of vipers.

Now look in your Bibles to Matthew 23 and verse 33, and then go back to verse 13. I am going to show you what Christ thought of these Jews. Our Lord says to the Jews, “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” Who was He talking to? Go back to verse 13. He was speaking to the Jews.

SCRIPTURE READING - Matthew 23:13-30 (KJV)

But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful

> outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.
>
> Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

"Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

Do you think that Jesus Christ is speaking complimentary to these people? Of course not! Vipers, serpents, whited sepulchres, rotten on the inside, blind guides, fools. He did not think too highly of them. Who were these people, and why is Christ condemning them so? You have to understand this: there were indeed some godly Judahites and Judeans. We are told that Aquila and Priscilla were believing Judahites. The Bible tells us in Acts chapter 18, verses 1–3, "After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla." Of course, he abode with them because they were tentmakers. Paul was a tentmaker. There was also Apollos, another godly Jew; Acts 18:24 tells us that he was a mighty orator and mighty in the scripture, and he convinced many that Jesus Christ was indeed the Messiah.

Salvation Is of the Judahites (Jesus Christ)

The point is this: there were godly believers from Judah and Jerusalem. There is no two ways about that. But these godly believers are always distinguished from the Jews. These Jews whom our Lord is condemning to hell, whom John the Baptist is calling a bunch of vipers, were the ones who caused all the trouble and heartache to Christ and His apostles in the New Testament. Listen carefully: they are the same group today who are causing the same problems in our world. They are the elite. They are the clique. They are the powerful. It has not changed.

Our Lord told His disciples in Acts 1:8, before He ascended into Heaven, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea,”

and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The Gospel began in Jerusalem and Judea, but thankfully it did not end there. The gospel is not the gospel of the Jews. The gospel is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of His people. I do not care who you are, whether you are a Jew, a Judahite, or a Judean. There is absolutely no one who will ever be saved apart from the person and work of Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ alone.

Our Lord said it plainly in John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Christ is the only way. I began this message with John 4:22, where Jesus looked at that Samaritan woman and said, "Salvation is of the Jews." What did He mean? He said salvation is of the Judahites. Was He a Judahite? Yes. Was He from the tribe of Judah? Yes. "Salvation is of the Judahites." Here I am: I am salvation. I am the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and I have brought salvation.

All of the covenants of the fathers were confirmed and ratified in Jesus Christ. Romans 15:8 says, "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." Jesus Christ confirmed them all, fulfilled them all, ratified them all, and worked them out.

Here is John Calvin's comment on John 4:22: "By these words he means that they have the superiority in this respect, that God had made with them a covenant of eternal salvation. Some restrict this to Christ who was descended from the Judahites, and indeed since all the promises of God were confirmed and ratified in him, there is no salvation but in him." And that is true.

In 2 Corinthians 1, the Scripture teaches concerning Christ. Paul says, “For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.”

What did Christ do? He confirmed and ratified all the promises of God, and everything in Christ Jesus is yea and amen. The Apostle Paul also says in Ephesians 1 that God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Jesus Christ is Lord. Jesus Christ is God. The Bible distinguishes between the Jews and those who believed the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Father, we ask that you help us today. Teach us and build us up in the most holy faith. Give us your grace and mercy. Help us, deliver us, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

CHAPTER 5

Jews, Judaism And Christianity

Part Five of Five

Introduction and Review

This is the fifth and final installment of the brief series on Jews, Judaism, and Christianity. In John chapter 8, verse 30, we read: "And as he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

We have covered a great deal of ground in the last four messages, and there remains much to cover today. In the first message, I pointed out that Jesus Christ was a Judean in the sense that He was from the tribe of Judah. More correctly, He was a Judahite and not a Jew, because Judaism is a religion. Our Lord was born in the land of Judea but stayed there less than two years. He was conceived in Nazareth and raised and lived in Nazareth, which is the northern

kingdom, not the southern kingdom. He was indeed of the tribe of Judah, but He was not a Jew. He was a Judahite.

In the second message, I pointed out that all of the apostles, with the exception of Judas, were Galileans. Judas was the only one from the land of Judea. He was from Kerioth, south of Hebron toward Edom. In Acts chapter 2, the people asked, “Are not all these Galilaeans, which speak we every man in our own tongue?”

In the third message, I showed that the Judaizers were individuals who tried to mix law and grace. They said it was all right to believe in Jesus, but that anyone who really wanted to be saved had to be circumcised and keep the tradition of the elders. I also showed how a believer, even a non-Jew, can act like a Jew. That is why Paul confronted Peter in Galatians chapter 2. To become a Jew is to fulfill the traditions, ceremonies, and customs. Paul confronted Peter because the issue of the gospel was at stake. In the fourth message, I showed you how God addressed His people.

Neither God nor any of the disciples ever began their messages by saying, "Hey, you Jews." Obviously, our Lord talked about the people or Israel. And then when the apostles preached, they referred to them either as the people or "men and brethren of Israel, let me speak to you," et cetera. So obviously, they did not refer to them as Jews. You have to remember that only the southern kingdom were the people referred to as Jews.

We saw that in 2 Kings chapter 16 and verse 6. There were, you could say it like this, there were Judahites that were Israelites, but not all Israelites were Judahites because many of the Israelites lived in other places in the land as well. There's also a distinction in the Bible between the people and the Jews. Let me just point it out like this: The Jews, the group that I'm talking about right now, basically became a law unto themselves and they changed the worship of God. They even changed the ordinances of God, and they basically became a law unto themselves. So they took the ceremonies of God and perverted them. For instance, let me show you. Look in your Bibles, if you would, to the book of John chapter 2, and then we're going to the book of Exodus and then to the book of Leviticus. John chapter 2, and notice if you would please verse 13. John 2 and verse 13.

Here's a very interesting passage, and I'll show you others that have similar wordings.

The Jews' Feasts vs. the Lord's Feasts

But in John 2 and verse 13, the Bible says, "And the Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." Whoa, wait a minute. Did you just hear that? "And the Jews' Passover was at hand." So my question is really, when did the Passover become the Jews' Passover? If you would look in your Bibles to the book of Exodus chapter 12. Exodus chapter 12. Exodus 12, and let's begin reading there in verse 11. Exodus 12 verse 11, notice what the scripture says, and God says, "And thus shall you eat it with your loins girded and your shoes on your feet and your staff in your hand, and you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover." Hmm. Skip down, if you would, to verse 27. Exodus 12 verse 27, he says again, "Thus you shall say, It is a sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head in worship." Note, "You shall say, It is the Lord's Passover." If you look in Leviticus 23 and verse 5, Leviticus 23 in verse 5, in this passage we're told, Leviticus 23 verse 5, "In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's Passover." So somehow

the Passover left the Lord and became the Jews' Passover. In other words, they manipulated the ordinance. If you look in your Bibles to John chapter 5 and verse 1, I'll give you another illustration. John 5 and verse 1. Notice if you would, we'll then go to John 7, but look in John 5 and verse 1. "After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." Note, "After this there was a feast of the Jews." Now look in John 7, if you would, and verse 2. John 7 in verse 2. The Bible says, "Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand." So how did all of these feasts become the feasts of the Jews? Well, if you'd look in your Bibles to the book of Hosea chapter 12 and verse 9. Hosea 12 in verse 9. Look what God said. Hosea 12 verse 9, "And I that am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast."

"I the Lord thy God will make thee to dwell in tabernacles." In other words, the feast of tabernacles was a feast of the Lord. It was that which he ordained. In the book of Zechariah, which is right before the book of Malachi, the book of Zechariah chapter 14 and verse 16, watch it. The book of Zechariah chapter 14 and verse 16: "And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."

So all of these feasts were God's feasts. He ordained them. He is the one that instituted them. He is the one that said how they were to be observed.

Now I want you to turn to Matthew chapter 15, and I hope now that you can begin to understand what our Lord is saying to these Jews. Now I want you to look in Matthew chapter 15, beginning there with verse 1. Matthew 15 verse 1. Note if you would who came. Matthew 15 verse 1: "Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?"

"For they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your traditions? For God commanded, saying, Honor thy father and thy mother, and he that curseth father and mother, let him die the death. But you say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have you made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."

Now watch carefully: "Ye hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people draw nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." So we see that these feasts and these ceremonies that belong to the Lord now became the feasts and the ceremonies of the Jews.

The Jews as a Ruling Elite

You have to ask, how did the changes occur? I want to answer that by pointing out a new way that the word "Jews" is used in Scripture. I hinted at it last week. I even said it, but I'm going to show it to you with a multiplicity of verses today. Usually, when we talk about the Jews, we're talking about someone either from the tribe of Judah, someone from the land of Judea, someone from the southern kingdom, or someone who has embraced Judaism, which is the Jews' religion according to Paul in Galatians chapter 1. But I also want to point out that sometimes the word "Jews" is used in the New Testament to indicate what you and I would call a ruling elite, or a power-hungry, power-mad cartel. These were differentiated from the people who lived in the land.

For instance, let's begin with John chapter 1 and verse 19. I read this passage last week, but I'm going to use it as a springboard and begin to show you other passages. The Bible says, "And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?"

Notice how this phrase is used: "When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him." I pointed out from Luke chapter 1 that John himself was a Judean; that is, he lived in the foothills of Judah. Certainly he was of the tribe of Levi. His father was a Levite, and his mother was a Levite. But they lived in Judah because his father served at the temple. Since John would have been a Judean in the sense that he lived there, isn't it strange? It says, "This is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites." Did every Judean have the power and the authority to send priests and Levites to question someone?

Scriptural Evidence for the Cartel

The answer is no. The only one who had the power and authority to send priests and Levites would have been the high priest, or the ruling class or ruling clique at that particular time. There was a clique in the priesthood, just like there was a clique among the Pharisees and a clique in the Sanhedrin. You are talking about nepotism; you are talking about a clique. Look in your Bibles at Acts chapter 4, verse 6: "And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and

John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem." Here was this whole power clique coming together, and they were asking the apostles, "By what authority and by what power and by what name have you done this?"

Note here that Annas, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander were gathered together, along with "as many as were of the kindred of the high priest." Everybody in this little clique came together. This was not merely a general gathering of priests; it included the high priest's kindred and the ruling power surrounding him.

Now turn back to John chapter 2. Our Lord cleansed the temple, throwing over the money changers' tables and driving them out of the temple. Look at verse 18: "Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I'll raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body." "When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them, and they believed the scriptures and the word which Jesus had said."

Go back to verse 18. After he had overthrown the money changers' tables in the temple and those who sold doves, "Then the Jews said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us?" You would have to ask yourself this question: Which Jews? And why were they asking for a sign?

In 1 Corinthians 1 and verse 22, the Bible says, "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom." Did all the Jews require a sign? Did all Greeks seek after wisdom? No. Not all Jews required a sign.

It was just the ruling elite, the power cartel. Not all Greeks sought after wisdom; it was the philosophers, the elite in the Greek lands, but not necessarily every Greek. In Matthew 12, beginning at verse 38, you will find who required a sign:

“Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and

said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonas."

Remember that, as I told you in the last message, the Sadducees, Pharisees, and Herodians all worked together to get rid of Christ. They were the ruling clique.

There was a group even among these individuals. When our Lord healed a lame man by the pool of Bethesda, in John chapter 5, the Bible says, "The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day."

Remember the setting. Go back to verse 1: "After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches." Jesus was in Jerusalem, which was in Judea, where everybody would be Judeans, or Jews. Yet the Bible says, "The man departed and told it to the Jews."

Who did he tell? Did he tell every Judean? The answer is no. Watch verse 16: "Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day." Did every Judean seek to persecute Christ and slay Him? No. The Bible says the common people heard Him gladly. They were not trying to kill Him. It was the powers that be that were trying to kill Him and trying to slay Him. It is just that simple.

Verse 18 makes it even plainer: "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he had not only broken the sabbath"—that was their interpretation of it—"but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." Here was a group in control, possessing power and authority, trying to execute, to kill, to murder Christ, and later the apostles as well.

Turn to John chapter 9. There our Lord healed a man who had been blind from birth. Never before had this been done. After our Lord healed him, the Bible says, "They brought him to the Pharisees, him that aforetime was blind." Remember, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians were all in it together. It was the Sabbath day when

Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. “Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight.”

“He said unto them, He put clay upon my eyes, and I washed and do see. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes?”

“He said, He is a prophet. But the Jews”—note this term, “but the Jews.” Go back to verse 13: “They brought him to the Pharisees.” They brought him to the Pharisees, and now they are called the Jews. Verse 18 says, “But the Jews did not believe concerning him that he had been born blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son whom you say was born blind?”

“How then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind. But by what means he now seeth, we know not. Or who hath opened his eyes, we know not. He is of age, ask him, he shall speak for himself. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews. For the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age, ask him.”

They brought him to the Pharisees, yet the Pharisees are called the Jews. The Jews had agreed that anyone confessing Christ should be put out of the synagogue. Who had the power and authority to excommunicate someone? Did every Jew have that power and authority?

And the answer is no. The ruler of the synagogue, whoever was in the clique, would have that power and authority, but not just every individual. So here again, the term “Jews” is used interchangeably with Pharisees. Sometimes it is used interchangeably with Sadducees, chief priests, elders, or scribes. But it is talking about a power elite, a cartel.

Christ is before Pilate. “Then came Jesus forth wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, and Pilate said unto them, Behold the

man!" Now watch: "When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him." Who is crying out? The chief priests and the officers. They cry out, "Crucify him, crucify him." Pilate said to them, "Take ye him and crucify him, for I find no fault in him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

Pilate is talking to the chief priests and the officers, and he says, "Take him and crucify him, for I find no fault in him." The Jews answered. Who are the Jews? They are the same ones in verse 6, the chief priests and the officers. You see how that is being used? So "the Jews" here does not refer to every Judean. It does not refer to every Judahite. It is referring to this one little power group that wants our Lord crucified and dead and out of the way. Clearly, it is a group. The context demands that "the Jews" in verse 7 be equated with the chief priests and the officers in verse 6, because they are the ones speaking.

In John 20:19 we read: "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst and said to them, Peace be unto you." Were the disciples afraid of every Judean? Of course not. They preached to them and witnessed to them. Why, then, were they afraid of "the Jews"? Who had the authority and power to bind them, imprison them, and put them to death? It was that little power-mad ruling elite. They were afraid of these individuals referred to as "the Jews."

Who were the ruling elite who had in their mind that they were going to stamp out Christ and Christianity? These were the ones who were always grieved with the preaching and teaching of the apostles. Acts 4 identifies them: "And as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." "And they laid hands on them and put them in hold until the next day, for it is now eventide."

You see the group that they were afraid of. It was these people who had the power to arrest them. Verse 23 says, "And being let go, they went to their own company and reported all that the chief

priests and the elders had said unto them." So this is the group that was persecuting and constantly harassing them.

Acts chapter 5 shows the same power-mad cartel: "Then the high priest rose up and all they which were with him, which is the sect of the Sadducees, and were filled with indignation and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison." It could be Pharisee, Sadducee, or Herodian; there was a clique in every one of them. When the disciples were in that room for fear of the Jews, it was not every Judahite or Judean. It was this little group that had the authority to imprison them.

SCRIPTURE READING - Acts 13:41-50 (KJV)

In Acts 13:41, Paul says, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. Now, when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews or the Judeans and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. I have no problem here with verse 42 and verse 43 referring just to the Judahites or whoever was in that synagogue. It could have either been from the tribe of Judah or they could have been living in the land of Judea.

But in verse 44: "And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. But

> the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts."
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> When you look at the word "the Jews" in verse 45 and the word "the Jews" in verse 50, you've got a different group.

Who is it that has influence over the honorable women and the chief men of the city, enough influence to raise up persecution against the apostles? It is not the ordinary, everyday, run-of-the-mill Judean. It has to be someone with influence and power. Remember that in Mark 12:37 the Bible says, “The common people heard him gladly.” It was not the common people who were upset with Him, nor the common people who were upset with the apostles. It was those who were in power. Every time you find trouble being stirred up, it is always the Pharisees or the Sadducees, or the Herodians, or a mixture of them.

That is the same exact situation that we have today. I do not care what group you have. I do not care how conservative it is, how constitutional it is, or how Christian it is. Inevitably, invariably, there is always going to be an infiltrator. There will be a plant. There will be a mole. Someone is going to seek to stir up trouble and even violence. Inevitably, he works for the government. The same thing has happened; times have not changed. At least the principles by which the wicked work have not changed. We have the same thing going on today that went on in Bible times.

It is important to see that the term “the Jews” is often used to refer to a ruling or controlling elite and does not necessarily refer to all Judeans all the time or every time you read it in the Bible. In Acts 23:12, certain of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. More than forty had made this conspiracy. These Judeans came to the chief priests and elders and said, “We have bound ourselves under a great curse that we will eat nothing till we have slain Paul.” By the way, I guess they starved to death because they never killed him, but they bound themselves under a

More than forty men had bound themselves under a great curse that they would eat nothing till they had slain Paul. “Now therefore

ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you tomorrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him."

When Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went into the castle and told Paul. Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him and said, "Bring this young man to the chief captain, for he hath a certain thing to tell him." So he took him and brought him to the chief captain and said, "Paul the prisoner called me unto him and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee." The chief captain took him by the hand, went with him aside privately, and asked him, "What is that thou hast to tell me?"

He said, "The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul tomorrow into the council, as though they would inquire something more perfectly of him. But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him. And now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee."

The chief captain then let the young man depart and charged him, "See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me." Note that this is the council—the Sadducees and Pharisees, this ruling elite—and now it is referred to in verse 20 as "the Jews." Here is this ruling elite.

Now, you have to ask yourself this question: To whom, then, does the word "Jews" refer? Obviously, it does not refer to every Judean or every Judahite. It simply refers to this ruling elite, this cartel.

Look in Acts 24:1: "And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul." Who came down? Ananias the high priest, the elders, and their attorney. Now skip down to verse 27: "But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound." Really? Which Jews? Go back to verse 1: "And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders." There are the

Jews for whom he is doing the favor. He is leaving the apostle Paul bound. It is not every Judahite or every Judean; it is this ruling elite in Acts chapter 24.

Now look in Acts chapter 25, verses 1 and 2: "Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem. Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him." Note the high priest and the chief of the Jews. Verse 7 says, "And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove." These are the ones who came down from Jerusalem and lodged these complaints against the apostle Paul. Then Paul said, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing." Note: "the law of the Jews."

Paul was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, a Pharisee of the Pharisees. He knew what they believed, and he knew their customs and traditions. So he says, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor yet against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing."

Acts 25:9 says, "But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure"—which Jews? Go back to verse 2: "the high priest and the chief of the Jews"—those who were the ruling power elite. Acts 25:14-15 says, "And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix: about whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him."

Verse 17 continues: "Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth. Against whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed: but had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive."

Here are the Jews—the ones always causing the problem. In Acts 26:2, Paul says, "I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews." Who was accusing the apostle Paul? The chief priests, scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees. Verse 3 says, "Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently." Paul said he was accused of the Jews. Was every Judean accusing him? No.

Paul's Identification of the Persecuting Jews

If you go back to Acts 24 and Acts 25, it is the chief priests and the elders who have come down and are laying these grievous complaints against the apostle Paul. I want to show you from the Bible the group that the apostle Paul is talking about—the group that fought against Jesus Christ, fought against the apostles, and is still fighting against Christ and the preaching of the Word of God.

Look in your Bibles to 1 Thessalonians chapter 2, beginning with verse 14: “For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews.”

Now, what have we read? He is talking about these Judeans who believed. They left Judaism and came to Christ. There are now churches in Judea which are in Christ Jesus. “For ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews.”

What is the apostle saying? Here are some Jews who have persecuted Judean Christians. Notice that he is not calling the Judean Christians Jews; he is calling someone else Jews. Who is he calling the Jews? The latter part of verse 14 says: “For ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.”

The apostle says, I will tell you who the Jews are. They are the ones who murdered the Lord Jesus, murdered their own prophets, persecuted us, pleased not God, and were contrary to all men. They forbade us to preach and speak to the Gentiles so that they might be saved. They were always filling up their sins, and wrath was coming upon them to the absolute uttermost.

Warnings Against the Circumcision Party

So it is not all the Judeans that he is talking about here. He is talking about this ruling clique that had the power to have Christ crucified, to persecute the apostles, to imprison them, to kill their own prophets. They forbid the preaching of the Word of God. By the way, I hope you know that you cannot go as a missionary to Israel today and open a church and preach there. You cannot proselytize. You cannot witness in the land of Israel today.

Look in your Bibles to Titus, chapter 1, verses 10 and 11. The apostle Paul says, "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."

He says, "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision." So he is talking about the Jews. Then he says, "whose mouths must be stopped." Now, here is my question: Is he talking about every Judean? Is he talking about every Judahite? And the answer is no. He is saying that these individuals whose mouths must be stopped subvert whole houses. They teach things which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake. And you are going to see, before I close, they not only subvert whole houses, they subvert whole communities and societies and states, even nations.

Now look in Philippians, chapter 3, beginning with verse 1. I am pointing out how Paul singles out this class that he calls the Jews: "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ

Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Paul says, "Beware of dogs." He is not talking about the four-legged kind.

He's talking about the two-legged kind: "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision," or the circumcision. So he's calling a certain group of Jews dogs and evil workers. If you interpret this passage to refer to every individual who is circumcised, then you would have to say that we have to beware of all Christians and beware of ourselves, because verse 3 says, "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." There is a certain concision, or certain circumcision, that he's warning people about, calling them dogs and evil workers. Obviously, it is not every Judean or every Judahite, anyone who just happens to be circumcised, because he says that we as Christians are the true circumcision.

Modern Parallel: A Controlling Elite

The entire point that I've been trying to make is this: when individuals came to Jesus Christ, they left Judaism, embraced Christianity, and became followers of Jesus Christ. In the New Testament, many people were converted to Jesus Christ: 3,000 on the day of Pentecost, and a few days later, 5,000 added. But as you read through the New Testament, very few of the rulers were ever converted. You could name Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews who came to Jesus by night. You could probably name Crispus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. But how many more can you name in Scripture? Very few.

It was that power elite, that little cartel that had the power, who said in John 11:47-48, "We've got to do something about this man. Because if we don't, everybody's going to believe on him. And the Romans are going to come and take away both our place and our nation. We won't have anybody to rule over. We won't have any power. We won't have any authority."

This is exactly where we are today. I have heard and read, and you have heard and read, "The Jews rule the world." Not every Jew rules the world. Not every Judean rules the world. But who has control of Hollywood? Who has control of television? Who has control of the news media?

In the New Testament, there was a cartel, an evil group whom Paul called dogs and evil workers, who were after Jesus Christ, trying to have him killed, who were after the apostles, who were after anyone who stood for anything that was right. As it was then, so it is now. It is a war between Christ and Satan. It was a war that was prophesied back in Genesis 3 and verse 15, which is known as the Protevangelium, the first promise of the Messiah.

The Bible says that the serpent was going to bruise Christ's heel, but Christ was going to bruise his head. In other words, there are going to be some problems with Satan, but ultimately he is going to be defeated and destroyed. A bruise on the heel is not nearly as deadly as a bruise on the head. But it is the same group and the same battle.

What many people may not understand is that there are many Jews who are against Zionism. Zionism is not necessarily Judaism. If you go on the internet and type in "Jews against Zionism," you would be amazed at all the information available. One statement says, "Contrary to the propaganda put out by Israel supporters, Israel is not supported by the majority of the world's Jewish people. Ariel Sharon does not speak for all Jewish people, and being anti-Israel is not anti-Semitic." This statement was made when Sharon was still in power, although Netanyahu is the one today. Notice that it is put out by Jews.

Jack Bernstein, obviously Jewish, said, "Judaism is a religion, but Zionism is a political movement started mainly by East European Ashkenazi Jews who for centuries have been the main force behind communism and socialism. The ultimate goal of the Zionists is one world government under the control of the Zionist and the Zionist-oriented German Jewish international bankers." What is he saying? There is a cartel, an evil cartel, trying to control the entire world.

Dr. Henry Makow, M-A-K-O-W, a Jewish author, comments on a book entitled The Devil and the Jews, written by Rabbi Joshua Trachtenberg, who died in 1959. Makow says that he is dealing with something very clearly, and that some things in the quotation are things many Christians do not even see. He writes: "Illuminati, Kabbalah Jews, and their Masonic henchmen don't want Jews or

others to understand the hidden subversive occult character of the collective Jewish enterprise. They don't want Jews to understand that anti-Semitism throughout the ages was not irrational. This realization would empower Gentiles and allow the lesser brethren"—meaning Jews—"to escape their roles as dupes, scapegoats, human shields, and human sacrifices for their demented leadership. Kabbalah Jews believe that they define God's will."

In other words, God comes into the world through them. Otherwise, He is formless and unknowable.

“The Kabbalistic conspiracy is on the cusp of success. God has been banished from public life.” Let me stop there. What I am about to say is not a quote. It is not merely prayer and Bible reading being removed from public schools. I do not have any sympathy for public schools anyhow. I am simply saying that you cannot even bring a Bible into a workplace today. You cannot even wear Christian jewelry because it is offensive. This is exactly what he is saying: God has been banished from public life. He says that this little cartel of Jews is doing it.

“Illuminati Jews control the mass media and can deceive and degrade the masses. Entertainment is an orgy of pornography, obscenity, propaganda, violence, and Satanism.” He is nailing it. “Illuminati Jews and Masons behind feminism are responsible for the debauchery of Western women. They are behind the promotion of homosexuality designed to destroy marriage and the family. They are at the forefront of sexual liberation, pornography, and abortion. The mass media is obsessed with sex. It has a fawning fetish for fertile females, and even children are not safe.

“The stock market is a giant casino with millions trading daily. Christianity has been Judaized.” This is a Jewish man saying this. “Christianity has been Judaized, concerned with social change and the Satanist agenda rather than spiritual development and salvation. Christian Zionists are pledged to the Zionist rogue state. The Illuminati are destabilizing the third world, using charities to empower females to reject marriage. Donors are invited to become an agent of change, which is a code for New World Order.

"They want girls to be educated, in other words, indoctrinated, as in the West. In general, they are feminizing the world, making women and their concerns central." Trachtenberg was a Reformed rabbi for thirty years. His portrait gazes down on his personal library, housed at Temple Emeth in Tennec, New Jersey.

"He is one of the decent Jews like myself who have been used as a Trojan horse for the Illuminati under the aegis of communism, socialism, liberalism, feminism, Zionism, neoconservatism, and gay rights." His last sentence is: "We're all Jews now. Godless, deceived, degraded, unused. But at least we know where we stand and can act accordingly."

What did he mean when he said, "We're all Jews now"? He means that, just as that little power cartel in the New Testament used and controlled all the people, we have this same cartel today. It does not matter what religion, ethnicity, or group you belong to or come from: you are still being used, abused, subverted, and enslaved, led as a lamb to the slaughter. That is what he means.

Freedom in Christ Alone

I find it interesting that he says Christianity has been Judaized, concerned with social change, the Satanist agenda, rather than spiritual development and salvation. How can someone who is unconverted have such insight? Consider the passage in John chapter 8: "As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Jesus said to those Jews—or those Judeans—who believed on him, "If ye continue in my word, here it is, then are ye truly my disciples." In other words, the evidence that you have ever been genuinely converted is that you continue in his word. And he said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Only Jesus Christ can make us free. Only his word can make us free. If you do not want to be used, abused, or enslaved, if you do not want to be led as a lamb to the slaughter, then you need to know Jesus Christ. You need to know his word and his law, and you need

to bring your life into conformity to it. Jesus Christ is freedom. Jesus Christ is truth, and there is no freedom and no truth outside of Jesus Christ. Let me put it bluntly: Outside of Jesus Christ and his word, everything else is a lie. Everything else is a lie. If you want to get your theology from CNN and Dan Rather, have at it, but you have to understand that truth is only found in Jesus Christ. He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

So obviously, when you see the word “Jews” in the Bible, you need to look at the context. You need to determine whether he is talking about someone from the tribe of Judah, someone from the southern kingdom, someone who

Whether he happens to live in Judea, embraces the Jews' religion, or belongs to this power elite, this cartel trying to run everything and everybody, I want to be free. Therefore, I will obey Christ and bring my life into conformity with his words.

Amen. Let's pray.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for your grace, mercy, goodness, and kindness. Thank you for truth. Help us live for thee. Help us be holy, godly, and obedient. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

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