

YESHUA AND THE PHARISEES...

The aim of tonight's study is to clear up some of the confusion on Yeshua and the Pharisees. Many Messianic groups hold fast to pharisaic traditions derived from the "Oral Torah or Talmud" which have lead to **many people denying Messiah and converting to Judaism**, and on the other hand many Messianic or christian places throw all Pharisees in one boat not realizing the different sects and houses of belief that Yeshua was clearly speaking to. On the surface in the Brit Chadasha it seems like Yeshua hated the Pharisees, this is evident in verses like this...

Mat 16:11-12 *How can you possibly think I was talking to you about bread? Guard yourselves from the hametz of the P'rushim (Pharisees) and Tz'dukim (Sadducees)!" Then they understood — they were to guard themselves not from yeast for bread but from the teaching of the P'rushim and Tz'dukim.*

Now someone who is studied on the Pharisees will quickly point out that Yeshua spoke out against certain sects Pharisees, but not others, and then they conclude that "thus Yeshua was a Pharisee of such and such sect". This conclusion is also false, as Yeshua did not uphold all the rulings of the Pharisees, but rather **took their authority and gave it to His Talmidim/Disciples**. ***We should not be Pharisees or Sadducees but rather followers of Yeshua the Messiah!*** Rather what Yeshua was doing was simply when the Pharisees of any sect were correctly in line with scripture, He agreed with them, and the same would apply to the Sadducees (Although in scriptures text we can't find an instance when he agreed with them). Look at it this way... If Yeshua were here on earth today, in the flesh, surely he would say something wise derived from Tanakh, now one of the major schools of thought Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist etc... would later claim that Yeshua when he spoke something wise based out of the Tanakh, was actually quoting one of their religious fathers, which couldn't be farther from the truth! It's more like that religious father was in line with scripture, not Yeshua going back to quote them! The goal of this teaching is to arm you with the correct information, so when Yeshua comes out against "Pharisees" you'll understand which sect and belief he is coming against, also when people come to you and say "Yeshua was a Pharisee from the house of Hillel" you will know where to exactly how they are wrong!

The seat of Moses

Mat 23:1-8 *Then Yeshua addressed the crowds and his talmidim: "The Torah-teachers and the P'rushim," he said, "sit in the seat of Moshe. So whatever they tell you, take care to do it. But don't do what they do, because they talk but don't act! They tie heavy loads onto people's shoulders but won't lift a finger to help carry them. Everything they do is done to be seen by others; for they make their t'fillin broad and their tzitziyot long, they love the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, and they love being greeted deferentially in the marketplaces and being called 'Rabbi.' "But you are not to let yourselves be called 'Rabbi'; because you have one Rabbi, and you are all each other's brothers.*

This verse is widely used by pharisaic sympathizers to justify bringing Pharisee-ism into the body of Messiah, and thus we see much pharisaic practice, prayers and interpretation of scripture in the Messianic movement today! Now to understand this verse in Mathew we need to understand what the "Seat of Moses" really is... The Seat of Moses is a term taken from the days when Moses would sit and judge the people of Israel:

Exo 18:13 *The following day Moshe sat to settle disputes for the people, while the people stood around Moshe from morning till evening.*

In fact in the next verse Yitro, Moses father in law said it wasn't good to do all the Judging by himself, but rather appoint leaders to sit in the "seat of Moses" and judge in matters of between Israelites. This is illustrated again in Deuteronomy...

YESHUA AND THE PHARISEES...

Deut 17:8-13 *"If a case comes before you at your city gate which is too difficult for you to judge, concerning bloodshed, civil suit, personal injury or any other controversial issue; you are to get up, go to the place which YHWH your Elohim will choose, and appear before the cohanim, who are L'vi'im, and the judge in office at the time. Seek their opinion, and they will render a verdict for you. You will then act according to what they have told you there in that place which YHWH will choose; you are to take care to act according to all their instructions. In accordance with the Torah they teach you, you are to carry out the judgment they render, not turning aside to the right or the left from the verdict they declare to you. Anyone presumptuous enough not to pay attention to the cohen appointed there to serve YHWH your Elohim or to the judge - that person must die. Thus you will exterminate such wickedness from Isra'el — all the people will hear about it and be afraid to continue acting presumptuously.*

[Also see the Judgment Seat of Messiah (**2Cor 5:10**), as well as the Judgment Seat of Caesar (**Acts 25:6, 10, 17; 18:12, 16-17**)]

The Scribes, Pharisees and Rabbis, etc., had authority to adjudicate, or to judge legal matters in the bet din, the courts of Israel. They could also act as legislators and enact laws for the community. It's these positions of authority that Yeshua was speaking of for His followers to obey (adjudicative and legislative), not their doctrines. This also lines up with the rest of scripture...

Rom 13:1-2 *Everyone is to obey the governing authorities. For there is no authority that is not from Elohim, and the existing authorities have been placed where they are by Elohim. Therefore, whoever resists the authorities is resisting what Elohim has instituted; and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.*

Rom 13:6 *This is also why you pay taxes; for the authorities are Elohim's public officials, constantly attending to these duties. (Or like Yeshua said "give to Caesar what is Caesars" **Mat 22:21**)*

We are not to say that the judges or legislators had no authority 'to tell us what to do', because we only recognized Yeshua as our authority. In other words, Yeshua was saying we are to keep the laws of the land, just as believers do today in the USA, Poland, Canada, etc... . They keep the laws of their respective countries (that don't hinder their walk with Messiah; **Acts 4:19 -20; 5:27-42**)

So what Yeshua is actually saying in **Mat 23** is that the Pharisees and Scribes had seated themselves in the Seat of Moses (**Mat 23:2**) In other words, Elohim hadn't put them there but they had placed themselves there. This phenomenon is not unusual. It's conceptually seen in the days of Hosea when the prophet says of Israel :

Hos 8:4 *They make kings, but without my authority; they appoint leaders, but without my knowledge. With their silver and gold they make themselves idols, but these can lead only to their own destruction.*

To "seat oneself" as the Pharisees did, was to usurp Elohim's authority. Yeshua was saying that since the Scribes and Pharisees were there; obey them in their judicial rulings (and by extension, their legislative rulings). This is what we would call today, civil authority. If Yeshua's disciples were to adhere to the Halachic rulings of the Pharisees of the day, then why did all the disciples put a council together for their own rulings on Halacha such as in **Acts 15**!? If Yeshua was saying follow the Halacha of the Pharisees, the disciples should have submitted to the Pharisees! Fortunately that's not what Yeshua meant, and that's not what they did! This chapter is speaking strictly about civil judgments not Halacha!

YESHUA AND THE PHARISEES...

The “Oral Law”

Pharisees of Hillel taught/teach something called the “Oral Torah” also known as the “Babylonian Talmud”. The claim is that the “Oral Law” was given on Mt. Sinai to Moses from Elohim, Moses wrote the down the Torah and the rest was passed down orally until it was compiled by Rabbis in the “Babylonian Talmud” in the 4th century under Hillel II. Orthodox Jews today and Pharisees of Yeshua’s day consider these man-made additions to the Law of Moses to be inspired; and when the rabbis speak of Torah Law, they also mean these kinds of man-made rabbinic additions.

The rabbinic literature also states that once Elohim gave Israel the Torah, it was now under the jurisdiction of the rabbis, and Elohim no longer had any say in what the rabbis did with it (*Talmud Tractate Baba Metzia 59b*). They even teach that rabbinical authority is higher than that of Elohim:

“Even if they tell you that right is left or left is right, you must listen to them.” [Sifrei Deuteronomy 154 (11)]

While the we considered the Torah of Moses a delight (as King David did), the apostles found the rabbinical version of “Oral Torah” to be a yoke and a burden, and they called it just that (see **Acts 15:10 & 28**). The existence of an “Oral Law” stemming back to Sinai seems impossible according to Torah...

***Exo 24:3-4** Moshe came and told the people everything **YHWH** had said, including all the rulings. The people answered with one voice: "We will obey every word **YHWH** has spoken." Moshe wrote down all the words of **YHWH**. He rose early in the morning, built an altar at the base of the mountain and set upright twelve large stones to represent the twelve tribes of Isra'el.*

Yeshua quotes the Torah or Tanakh by saying “It is written” then speaks of the “Oral Law” by saying “You have heard it said” examples...

***Mark 1:2** It is written in the prophet Yesha`yahu, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare the way before you." (See **Mal 3:1**)*

***Mark 7:6** Yeshua answered them, "Yesha`yahu was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites — as it is written, 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from me. (See Isa **29:13**)*

***Mark 9:12** "Eliyahu will indeed come first," he answered, "and he will restore everything. Nevertheless, why is it written in the Tanakh that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected? (See **Psa 22**)*

***Luke 10:26** But Yeshua said to him, "What is written in the Torah? How do you read it?" (See **Duet 6:5 & Lev 19:18**)*

***John 6:45** It is written in the Prophets, 'They will all be taught by **YHWH**.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. (See **Isa 54:13**)*

***John 8:17** And even in your Torah it is written that the testimony of two people is valid. (See **Deut 17:6**)*

Now speaking of the oral traditions...

YESHUA AND THE PHARISEES...

Matt 5:38-48 *"You have heard that our fathers were told, 'Eye for eye and tooth for tooth.' (Ketuvot 32b and Bava Kamma 83b) But I tell you not to stand up against someone who does you wrong. On the contrary, if someone hits you on the right cheek, let him hit you on the left cheek too! If someone wants to sue you for your shirt, let him have your coat as well! And if a soldier forces you to carry his pack for one mile, carry it for two! When someone asks you for something, give it to him; when someone wants to borrow something from you, lend it to him. "You have heard that our fathers were told, 'Love your neighbor — and hate your enemy.' (Talmud Tora, c. 7. sect. 13) But I tell you, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! Then you will become children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun shine on good and bad people alike, and he sends rain to the righteous and the unrighteous alike. What reward do you get if you love only those who love you? Why, even tax-collectors do that! And if you are friendly only to your friends, are you doing anything out of the ordinary? Even the Goyim do that! Therefore, be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

Babylonian Talmud Eruvin 21b *"My son! Be careful concerning rabbinical decrees, even more so than the Torah... the Torah contains prohibitions... but anyone who violates a rabbinic decree is worthy of death"*

Col 2:8 *Watch out, so that no one will take you captive by means of philosophy and empty deceit, following human tradition which accords with the elemental spirits of the world but does not accord with the Messiah.*

Houses of the Pharisees

The word Pharisee comes from the Hebrew "פרושים prushim" from "פרוש parush", meaning "separated". After the 70 year exile to Babylon (which was a punishment for disobedience) the Pharisees decided that never again would the people transgress the Torah and be exiled, but rather, they would safe guard the commandments and put fences around them so this would never happen again. So with the best of intentions "Pharisaic Judaism" began. Modern day "Judaism" also stems from this beginning...

So to understand what Yeshua is saying when speaking about the Pharisees in the Brit Chadasha, you have to understand that there are **SEVEN** sects of Pharisees with **TWO** major houses of pharisaic thought, you have the house of **HILLEL** and the house of **SHAMMAI** which disagreed on **312** different points. In fact Yeshua and Paul were both speaking to a large audience with varying beliefs; they spoke to Pharisees of both houses, Sadducees, Essene, all of whom held to different beliefs, hearing Yeshua speak and understanding him would be like Yeshua coming here to the Twin Cities and speaking to all the different Messianic congregations at once, some of his speech would be more for one belief group, and other parts to a different belief system, if thousands of years latter someone reading did not understand which sect of "Messianics" Yeshua was speaking to at that time, some of the message would be lost!

Yeshua's teaching largely followed that of the School of Hillel rather than that of the School of Shammai. For example, Yeshua's famous "golden rule":

Mat 7:12 *Always treat others as you would like them to treat you; that sums up the teaching of the Torah and the Prophets.*

This reads very closely with Hillel's famous statement:

*"What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor that is the whole Torah...
(b.Shabbat 31a)*

YESHUA AND THE PHARISEES...

Despite the fact that Yeshua's teachings largely agreed with that of the Pharisaic School of Hillel, there were occasions where Yeshua's teachings agreed with the School of Shammai against the School of Hillel. An important example of this is the issue of divorce where Yeshua agreed with Shammai against Hillel. Hillel took a more liberal view, permitting divorce in a variety of circumstances (even if the wife spoiled a meal!); Shammai, only in the case of adultery...From the Mishna Gittin 9:10...

9:10 The House of Shammai say, "A man should divorce his wife only because he has found grounds for it in unchastity, "since it is said, Because he has found in her indecency in anything **Deut. 24:**" And the House of Hillel say, "Even if she spoiled his dish, "since it is said, Because he has found in her indecency in anything. R. Aqiba says, "Even if he found someone else prettier than she, "since it is said, And it shall be if she find no favor in his eyes **Duet 24:1.**"

Mat 5:31-32 "It was said, 'Whoever divorces his wife must give her a get.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of fornication, makes her an adulteress; and that anyone who marries a divorcee commits adultery

Yeshua was clearly agreeing with Shammai, and disagreeing with Hillel on the issue of divorce!

Modern Day Judaism is a combination of Shammai and Hillel example... Traditional hand washing that Yeshua came against in **Mat 15:2-6** & **Mark 7:3-13** was a man made tradition invented by the house of Shammai, also the philosophy of not allowing Gentiles into the fold without a rigorous rabbinic conversion came from Shammai, both are now found in today's mainstream Judaism. Hillel's influence is also evident in many areas, one example Judaism's adoption of the "Oral Law/Talmud"

Another claim is that Paul/Sha'ul even after becoming a believer in Messiah was still a Pharisee, look at the verse in context...

Act 23:6-10 *But knowing that one part of the Sanhedrin consisted of Tz'dukim and the other of P'rushim, Sha'ul shouted, "Brothers, I myself am a Parush and the son of P'rushim; and it is concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead that I am being tried!" When he said this, an argument arose between the P'rushim and the Tz'dukim, and the crowd was divided. For the Tz'dukim deny the resurrection and the existence of angels and spirits; whereas the P'rushim acknowledge both. So there was a great uproar, with some of the Torah-teachers who were on the side of the P'rushim standing up and joining in — "We don't find anything wrong with this man; and if a spirit or an angel spoke to him, what of it?" The dispute became so violent that the commander, fearing that Sha'ul would be torn apart by them, ordered the soldiers to go down, take him by force and bring him back into the barracks.*

Paul said this on purpose to divide the Sanhedrin and cause a great stir! And later Paul says he is a follower of "the way" and is also referred to as the leader of the Nazarenes...

Act 24:14 *"But this I do admit to you: I worship the Elohim of our fathers in accordance with the Way (which they call a sect). I continue to believe everything that accords with the Torah and everything written in the Prophets.*

Act 24:5 *"We have found this man a pest. He is an agitator among all the Jews throughout the world and a ringleader of the sect of the Natzratim.*

Yeshua takes the Key, and the Authority!

Recurring in scripture is a "Key" which references the authority of Halacha...

Isa 22:20-22 *And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah: And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.*

So "Do what they say" in **Mat 13** was in reference to civil judgments, we should follow the ruling authorities of the day! Then later in **Mat 23** Yeshua speaks of the Pharisees who at that time put themselves in the position of the Keys of the House of David. **Mat 23:13** is important to understanding Yeshua's attitude to the Halachic authority of the Pharisees. Here Yeshua says...

Mat 23:13 *"But woe to you hypocritical Torah-teachers and P'rushim! For you are shutting the Kingdom of Heaven in people's faces, neither entering yourselves nor allowing those who wish to enter to do so.*

A parallel passage appears in **Luke 11:52**...

Luke 11:52-54 *"Woe to you Torah experts! For you have taken away the key of knowledge! Not only did you yourselves not go in, you also have stopped those who were trying to enter!" As Yeshua left that place, the Torah-teachers and the P'rushim began to oppose him bitterly and to provoke him to express his views on all sorts of subjects, laying traps to catch him in something he might say.*

Now when we look at these two passages together it becomes clear that the "key" in **Luke 11:52** had the potential to open up or shut up the Kingdom of Heaven. This "key" is clearly then "the key of the house of David" in **Isa 22:22**...

And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

The Pharisees usurped the key (authority) thus shutting up the Kingdom. They lost the authority; it was taken from them by Yeshua himself and given to His own Talmidim/Disciples:

Mat 16:18-19 *I also tell you this: you are Kefa, [which means 'Rock,'] and on this rock I will build my Assembly, and the gates of Sh'ol will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you prohibit on earth will be prohibited in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven."*

YESHUA AND THE PHARISEES...

This key is the Halachic authority. Yeshua recognized that the Pharisees held that halachic authority but he also tells us that they had squandered it by rejecting the Kingdom and refusing to use the key to help Messiah open up the Messianic Kingdom.

This is also clear because this "assembly" has the power to "bind" and "loose." These are two Semitic idioms used in rabbinic literature as technical terms referring to Halachic authority. To "bind" means to "forbid" an activity or to "close" it and to "loose" or "open" means to allow or permit an activity. Thus in **Mat 16:18-19 & 18:18** Yeshua gave his students the Halachic authority which we see them using in **Acts 15**.

This lines up with prophecy...

Gen 49:9-10 *Y'hudah is a lion's cub; my son, you stand over the prey. He crouches down and stretches like a lion; like a lioness, who dares to provoke him? The scepter will not pass from Y'hudah, nor the ruler's staff from between his legs, until he comes to whom [obedience] belongs; [or: until Shiloh comes] and it is he whom the peoples will obey.*

Because ultimately Yeshua holds the keys, they are His to give...

Rev 3:6-7 *Those who have ears, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the Assemblies." "To the angel of the Assembly in Philadelphia, write: 'Here is the message of HaKadosh, the True One, the one who has the key of David, who, if he opens something, no one else can shut it, and if he closes something, no one else can open it.*

This is what Paul was talking about in Colossians, Yeshua taking away the Pharisee's keys and their power to condemn...

Col 2:14-15 *He wiped away the bill of charges against us (pharisaic halacha). Because of the regulations, it stood as a testimony against us; but he removed it by nailing it to the execution-stake. Stripping the rulers and authorities of their power, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by means of the stake.*

This also makes a lot of sense in the large scope of things, Judaism claims that the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi were all a part of the "Pharisaic Sanhedrin" and this seems to be true! Also Judaism believes the last prophet was Malachi and that the Ruach (Spirit) now only speaks in "Bat Kol" (Small Whisperings). This period of "Bat Kol" or little or no Ruach (Spirit) is because of rejection of the Messianic Kingdom, consider this...

Rev 19:10 *I fell at his feet to worship him; but he said, "Don't do that! I'm only a fellow-servant with you and your brothers who have the testimony of Yeshua. Worship Elohim! For the testimony of Yeshua is the Spirit of prophecy."*

The Pharisees as a whole rejected Messiah Yeshua (some accepted him in secret ***John 3:1-9 & 19:38***), thus Yeshua took away their Keys/Halachic Authority, this is why they think the last prophet was Malachi, because Yeshua's spirit and authority now rests with His followers and no longer with the Pharisees! That's why they are in a "dry spell" or "Bat Kol"

YESHUA, AND THE PHARISEES...

Amen! We are NOT Pharisees or Sadducees, rather **we are followers of Messiah Yeshua!** Why would we want to inject ourselves with something (Pharisee-ism) that Yeshua himself took authority away from them!? But rather he will draw them, our unbelieving brothers, to Yeshua! (**Zech 12 & Rom 11:25**)

Mat 11:29-30 *Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." ~ Yeshua*

Take upon you the Yoke of the King, not men!

Shabbat Shalom – Written by Jesse Himango, Tabernacle of David Ministries 11-10-11