

# Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees

When we become aware of the Hebrew roots of our faith and realize the law is still in effect, how often do we run to Brother Judah for instruction on how to properly observe Torah? We desire to learn everything we can about how to worship the Heavenly Father as the children of Israel once did. We reason that since the Jews have been entrusted with the oracles of Yahweh, we should go to them to learn how to properly walk out our newly found faith. But, is this a wise path to choose? Should we look to blind guides to lead us in a way that is pleasing to the Almighty? What did our savior say about it?

**Mat 16:5** *And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.*

**Mat 16:6** *Then Yahshua said unto them, Take heed and **beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.***

**Mat 16:7** *And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread.*

The disciples were a little slow to figure out what Yahshua meant when he said beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. So, he told them plainly that the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees was their doctrine.

**Mat 16:11** *How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?*

**Mat 16:12** *Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, **but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.***

So just what was this doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees that Yahshua warned them to avoid?

The disciples remembered that earlier, the scribes and Pharisees had questioned Yahshua as to why his disciples did not wash their hands before eating.

**Mat 15:1** *Then came to Yahshua scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,*

**Mat 15:2** *Why do thy disciples transgress **the tradition of the elders?** for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.*

***Mat 15:3*** *But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of Elohim by your tradition?*

It was their oral traditions that they had placed above the written Torah of Yahweh. The Jews of that time considered the traditions of the elders to be more authoritative than the written word of Yahweh. But Yahshua countered and told them **they were transgressing the commandment of Yahweh by their traditions.**

***Mat 15:4*** *For Elohim commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.*

***Mat 15:5*** *But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;*

***Mat 15:6*** *And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of Elohim of none effect by your tradition.*

Their oral tradition had made the commandment of Yahweh void. The real intent of their oral traditions was to circumvent the commandments of Yahweh.

***Mat 15:7*** *Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying,*

***Mat 15:8*** *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.*

***Mat 15:9*** **But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.**

Did you catch what he said? Yahshua plainly stated that the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadduces **worshipped him in vain**. If they were worshipping him in vain, that means **he does not accept their worship**.

Yahshua called them hypocrites, role players, who went through the motions of honoring Yahweh, but their hearts were not in it and their doctrine was after their own man made traditions. He was quoting what Yahweh had told Isaiah.

***Isa 29:13*** *Wherefore YHWH said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:*

Here Yahweh was speaking to the Jews in Jerusalem whose hearts were far from him, having substituted the traditions of men for the written word of Yahweh. They were men of no understanding. They paid lip service to him by their rituals, but their hearts were far away from him. If this was the condition of the Jews in

Jerusalem at the time of Isaiah, and they were the same in the days of Yahshua, why would we think they have changed in the last 2,000 years? No, they are the same today as they were in the times of Isaiah and Yahshua. They place their oral traditions above the written word of Yahweh to this very day.

**Mar 7:1** *Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.*

**Mar 7:2** *And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault.*

**Mar 7:3** *For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.*

They couldn't understand why Yahshua didn't also hold to the traditions of the elders. This WAS their oral law! They had placed their oral law above the commandments of Yahweh.

Another account of the same event related in the gospel of Mark fills in some more of the conversation with the Scribes and Pharisees as Yahshua quotes the same scripture in Isaiah that we just read.

**Mar 7:5** *Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?*

**Mar 7:6** *He answered and said unto them, Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.*

**Mar 7:7** *Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

**Mar 7:8** *For laying aside the commandment of Elohim, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.*

**Mar 7:9** *And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of Elohim, that ye may keep your own tradition.*

They rejected the commandment of Yahweh in order to keep their own tradition.

This is typical of Judaism in the first century A.D. Their oral traditions had taken precedence over the written word of Yahweh and Yahshua says they worship Him in vain. By laying aside the commandment of Yahweh in favor of their tradition, their attempt to worship Yahweh was meaningless and in vain.

The Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection, came to him with a trick question about a woman, the wife of seven different men, whose she would be in the resurrection. They were doing the same thing as the Pharisees. Pretending to be righteous, they did not really want an answer to the question, but were trying to trap Yahshua in his answers to their questions. This is why he called them hypocrites.

**Mat 22:23** *The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him,*

**Mat 22:24** *Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.*

**Mat 22:25** *Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother:*

**Mat 22:26** *Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh.*

**Mat 22:27** *And last of all the woman died also.*

**Mat 22:28** *Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.*

**Mat 22:29** *Yahshua answered and said unto them, **Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of Elohim.***

They did not know the scriptures. These men were blinded. Yahshua referred to them as blind guides.

**Mat 15:12** *Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?*

**Mat 15:13** *But he answered and said, **Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.***

**Mat 15:14** ***Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.***

This is a double indictment against these scribes and Pharisees. They were not planted by the heavenly Father and will be rooted up. If they were not planted by the heavenly Father, then who planted them? There are only two crops sown spiritually, the wheat and the tares. Let them alone. They will be separated in the harvest at the end of the age.

**Mat 13:30** ***Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.***

And Yahshua also said they were the blind leading the blind.

Do those practicing Judaism believe the truth of Yahweh today? They think they

do, but scripture says otherwise. They are no different than the Catholic or Protestant religions, which are also blinded by claiming the law is no longer in effect. So why would we want to look to blind guides to teach us Torah?

**Luk 11:52** *Woe unto you, lawyers! **for ye have taken away the key of knowledge:** ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.*

**Luk 11:53** *And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things:*

**Luk 11:54** *Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.*

Lawyer simply means “Torah expert”. They had taken away the key of knowledge, which is the Torah and had replaced it with their tradition. And as mentioned earlier, they didn’t really want a truthful answer to their questions, but were trying to trick Yahshua into making a mistake so they could accuse him.

The leaven of the Pharisees is also hypocrisy.

**Luk 12:1** *In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, **Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.***

The Pharisees were pretenders of righteousness. They acted piously in actions that were to be seen as acts of righteousness to all those around them, but in reality, they were as whited sepulchers full of dead men’s bones. They looked righteous on the outside, but were dead within.

**1Co 2:6** *Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:*

**1Co 2:7** *But we speak the wisdom of Elohim in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which Elohim ordained before the world unto our glory:*

**1Co 2:8** *Which none of the princes of this world knew: **for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Master of glory.***

If the Jews had truly understood the Torah, they would have recognized their Messiah and would not have crucified him. Speaking to Pilate,

**Joh 19:7** *The Jews answered him, **We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of Elohim.***

There is no such law in the Torah. There is a law against blasphemy of the name of Yahweh, which is punishable by death, but not for claiming to be the son of

Elohim. This is just another example of how their oral tradition had replaced the Torah.

*“The oral tradition of the Jews is written in volumes called the Talmud which means “study” or “Learning”. It is a set of books consisting of the Mishna and the Gemara. The Mishna is a collection of originally oral laws supplementing scriptural laws. The Gemara is a set of commentaries and elaborations of the Mishna.*

*According to the rabbis who created the Talmud, it originated at Mt Sinai as part of the divine revelation to Moses along with material recorded in the Torah. The oral tradition interpreted the written Torah and adapted its precepts to ever-changing political and social circumstances.”(Ency. Britannica 15<sup>th</sup> ed.)*

The present day Talmud is as long as a set of encyclopedias which was condensed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. under the supervision of Judah ha-Nasi, (The Rabbi), from an even larger volume of chaotic writings containing many contradictions and errors. The contradictions were simply explained away through reinterpretation.

These oral traditions of the Jews caused a dispute between the Pharisees and Sadducees. Seeing that both were blinded and couldn't agree among themselves, why would we look to either for the truth?

The oral law also places a lot of emphasis on rituals and ceremonies which cannot be found in the Torah. If Yahshua didn't impose any of these rituals and ceremonies on his disciples, why should we feel obligated to do them today? Many of these ritualistic ceremonies today can be traced to paganism. Oral traditions, such as the catechism of the Catholic Church and those of apostate Judaism are very much alike.

We know that the oracles of Yahweh were entrusted to the Jews to preserve them. This they did, but this does not mean they necessarily understood them. The fact is, they didn't. They did not then and do not now properly interpret the written word of Yahweh. So why should we look to them to teach us Torah?

The whole point of this article is to question why some think that Rabbinic Jews, who scripture plainly tells us are blinded, can rightly teach us Torah? The very foundation of present day Judaism is the Talmud. Do we want to be drawn away from Torah to fables, liturgy, and oral traditions that Yahshua told us to avoid?

I admit that I too was also carried away by Jewish tradition when I first became aware of the Hebrew roots of my faith. It was hard to separate fact from fiction. If the Jews practiced it, it must be right. Wrong!

For awhile we had a little towel in our bathroom with an inscription which read “

*Blessed are you Yahweh, our king of the universe who has sanctified us by your commandments and has commanded us concerning the washing of hands".* Sounds good, doesn't it? But, there is no such commandment. Washing your hands is a good thing, but you are not sinning if you don't do it. It is the same thing that the Pharisees accused of Yahshua of violating... their oral law, the tradition of the elders.

In conclusion, why should we look to Rabbinic Judaism for truth when they are blinded? They still are blinded today as they still do not recognize Yahshua, their Messiah. They do not properly divide the word of truth, so why would we want to mimic them? I love the Jewish people today, but do not love the ways of Rabbinic Judaism. Not everything they do is wrong, but it is sometimes hard for us initially to separate which is Torah and which is tradition. The need is great for Messianic leaders who can teach us the difference. This is not an indictment of the Jewish people, but of Rabbinic Judaism. This is not about race, but a religion.

Yahshua rightly said "Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees", where they rejected the truth of Torah in favor of their own traditions.

Shouldn't we just obey Yahshua today and also beware of this leaven of the Pharisees he warned us about?

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