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Overview

We need to read the Old Testament as ancient Near Eastern meditation literature. Before the printing press people primarily heard rather than read texts and memorized them for meditation. The Bible uses intentionally sparse and strategic language with repeated words meant to link different passages together, requiring readers to slow down and ask questions rather than skim through narratives.

Anti-Semitism in the early church can be traced to tensions during Jewish rebellions in 70 and 135 CE when Christians refused to participate, leading to a separation from Hebrew roots and adoption of Greek interpretative frameworks.

It is important to have humility in biblical interpretation. Denominational differences often stem from rigid rule-making rather than open discussion

Summary

Hebrew Bible Meditation Structure

Chuck explained the structure and connections within the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), highlighting how Jesus referenced prophets like Abel and Zechariah. He discussed how ancient readers primarily heard and memorized texts rather than reading silently, describing the Bible as ancient Near Eastern meditation literature. Chuck emphasized the intentional sparsity of detail in the Old Testament, which encourages readers to connect themes and words across different texts through memorization and meditation.

Biblical Ambiguity and Prophetic Themes

Chuck discussed the sophisticated and intentional ambiguity in the Bible, particularly in how it presents characters' actions without clear moral judgments. He explained the Jewish tradition of ongoing conversation and debate, contrasted with modern tendencies toward divisiveness in churches. Chuck also explored the prophetic themes in the Old Testament that point to Jesus, including the "seed of the woman" in Genesis and the suffering servant in Isaiah, which are echoed in Revelation. He emphasized the importance of slowing down and engaging deeply with biblical texts, especially genealogies, rather than skimming over them. Phil mentioned his personal study on Revelation, highlighting the symbolic meaning of numbers like seven.

Biblical Law and Torah Interpretation

Chuck discussed the interpretation of biblical law, emphasizing that the word "law" in the Bible is often better understood as "Torah," which means instruction and guidance rather than a legalistic set of rules. He explained that both the Old and New Testaments contain elements of grace and law, challenging the binary view that the Old Testament is about law and the New Testament about grace. Chuck encouraged readers to approach the Bible with curiosity, asking questions about the text and its meanings, and to read it slowly and thoughtfully.

Bible Interpretation: Cultural and Theological Context

Chuck explains the challenges of interpreting the Bible, emphasizing the need to understand its cultural and linguistic context, as well as recognizing it as a theological text rather than solely a historical one. He highlights the Bible's sophistication as literature and notes that readers are often not trained to approach it in this way. Chuck also discusses the concept of the Bible being a product of human hands guided by God, acknowledging the complexity of its creation.

Hebrew and Greek Language Insights

Chuck discussed the complexity of Hebrew and Greek languages, particularly how words can have multiple meanings that depend on context. He explained that the Old Testament's narrative is about identifying the "seed of the woman," and highlighted the diversity among Pharisees, noting that not all

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were legalistic. Chuck also emphasized the concept of the Israelites as the chosen people and the importance of understanding the Torah as instruction rather than law. He concluded by addressing misconceptions about Jewish sacrifices, explaining that the Hebrew word "korvano" means to draw near, suggesting a deeper spiritual significance rather than mere compliance with rules.

Hebrew Bible Sacrifice and Repentance

Chuck discussed the concept of offerings and sacrifices in the Hebrew Bible, emphasizing that the ultimate goal is to draw nearer to God. He explained that forgiveness in the Jewish framework is achieved through repentance, prayer, and charity, rather than sacrifices. Chuck also addressed how Jews adapted to life without the temple by focusing on these elements. Phil asked about the number of sacrifices required, and Chuck clarified that it depended on the number of people bringing offerings, with various animals being sacrificed based on availability.

Altars and Love in Cultures

Chuck discussed the historical and religious significance of altars and the concept of love in different cultures, emphasizing the Hebrew word "ahav" and its multifaceted dimensions. He explained that the synagogue served as a community gathering place, unlike the modern concept of religion, which developed later to accommodate different beliefs. Phil mentioned a church sign that needed to be imperfect to reflect the church's message for imperfect people.

Early Christian Anti-Semitism Development

Chuck explained the historical development of anti-Semitism in early Christianity, tracing it to the separation between Jewish and Christian communities following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD. He described how the Greek-speaking Christian community, which had little understanding of Hebrew, increasingly distanced itself from Jewish culture, culminating in a "to hell with the Jews" attitude during a rebellion in 160 AD. Chuck noted that this separation persisted until the Reformation, when interest in Hebrew roots was renewed, and modern archaeology has helped better understand the Near East culture.

Exploring Hebrew Roots and History

Chuck discussed the importance of understanding Hebrew roots and the Old Testament, emphasizing the need to delve deeper into the historical and cultural context of biblical texts. He shared his personal interest in exploring church history and mentioned having a book available in PDF form on the website that covers church history from a high-level perspective. The group agreed to discuss these topics further, with Chuck encouraging them to consider the ambiguity in biblical interpretations and the value of open dialogue, similar to the Jewish practice of discussing scriptures together before sharing a meal.

Church Humility and Communion Practices

The group discussed the challenges of maintaining humility in a church setting where members are expected to uphold the truth, acknowledging that they may not have complete knowledge. They explored how their understanding of religious practices, such as communion, has evolved over time, becoming more nuanced and less black-and-white. The conversation also touched on a specific incident where a pastor and his wife, unable to attend church due to health issues, shared communion at home, leading to criticism from another member who questioned the legitimacy of their practice. The discussion concluded with reflections on how rules and traditions can sometimes lead to division and conflict within the church.

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Just to do a refresher, because lesson one was such a long time ago. We talked about the difference between scrolls and the codex, and how the Hebrew Bible was laid out a little differently than our Protestant Bibles. And so... so we went through that stuff there. And so we went through the issues about how that worked out.

Then I showed you this picture here.



The Bible Project referred to this as the seams of the Bible, where you take the major sections of the Tanakh and lay them out in the order with the Torah, the Prophets and then the Writings, you can see how they connect things together in different ways. You can take the verses at the end of the Torah and see how they match up to the end of the prophets, and you can take some verses at the beginning of Prophets and tie them to the beginning of the Writings. And there's other stuff that ties together as well.

When Jesus was chastising some of the Pharisees for killing all the prophets, and he gave out two names: Abel and Zechariah. Abel was considered to be a prophet in their eyes (That is similar to the way that we look at the books which we call history, but the Hebrew Bible calls the Prophets). And Zechariah, if you laid out the order of the Tanakh, Chronicles is the last book, so he is the last prophet that is killed.

Now we're going to address the Bible in a little different way. We're used to having the Bible as a nice text written out for us. But before the printing press, people didn't have access to written documents. Most people heard the text rather than read the text. And it was very common for people to read out loud, and particularly to groups. In fact, around AD 400, Augustine wrote in his book *Confessions* that he saw one of the church fathers by the name of Ambrose, reading silently to himself. He made notice of it because that was such an unusual thing. People did not read silently to themselves as they do now.

So people mostly heard the Bible. They didn't have a lot of written materials available to them like the Bible, the Concordances, and everything else. So how do people learn it? They heard it, memorized it, and meditated on it. So one of the ways to characterize the Old Testament, is as ancient Near East, Meditation literature. By memorizing things, people knew where things were in particular texts they would have that encyclopedia of stuff in their heads. So when they heard something in one text, they could say remember something like that somewhere else, and they would tie the pieces together. They would use that to help make sense of things.

The way that the Old Testament is laid. it doesn't give lots of detail like our modern-day literature. It's very intentionally sparse. The only details you see are meant to be there for a particular reason. So if you see a particular word cropping up in one place and you know, somewhere else where that same word is used. There's a chance that those two texts are meant to be linked together. So by using sparse language very intentionally and very strategically, you can have things like this, where you're hearing one word, and you remember where that word is used somewhere else, you can think about those two things together. And so, again, you know, memorize it, and you meditate on it, and then you can start putting those pieces together.

In our day and age, we can take a concordance and link things together without having to memorize everything. But back then, they didn't have that kind of an option. In this way the Bible this way is unique literature. There's nothing else like it. It's so carefully put together and strategically put together. There's nothing else that comes close to what that Tanakh has been doing. On the face it seems simple. With our

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modern-day reading habits, we see these texts, this narrative without a lot of detail, so we tend to just sort of slide through it and read it quickly ...next sentence, next sentence... we don't pause anywhere long enough to realize what's going on. In fact, there is something deep that could be going on there, and it's very sophisticated, much more sophisticated than we are usually trained to read.

There are places where the Bible is intentionally ambiguous. For instance, when you have various characters doing things, and there are no comments about whether their actions are good or bad. Their actions are just sort of laid out there and we're supposed to try to think about that and say, "Hmm... is what they're doing good, or is it what they're doing bad? Is it something else?" We're supposed to think about it. And sometimes, there is no certainty about it, and that's intentional.

One of the interesting things about Jewish culture is the way they approach the scripture. They have a text called the Talmud, which is writings from people they call the sages, this was before they were called rabbis. One sage would write one thing and the guy would agree with some things and disagree with others, and the next guy would come along and agree and disagree, and they keep on going along like that. Initially, these commentaries were passed down orally, and finally they put it together in writing.

But the idea of being a Jewish person, especially a Jewish man, is that you get together, you continue the conversation. And a lot of things are ... this could be one way or the other and you have a conversation about it. That's something we're not used to in our modern-day world. We're used to disagreeing and saying, I'm right, you're wrong, so you're the heretic, instead of saying, you know, there is room for disagreement. And so we end up with churches splitting for not great reasons.

There are good reasons for churches to be different from each other, because people are different, and there are different cultures, and so those congregations, can be different. But when you split up over you're disagreements and you have bad things to say about the other person, that's not a good reason, but that's the state of our world right now.

Here an example about something where you just follow something through the Bible. We begin in Genesis, where we see this scene with Adam and Eve and a serpent. Yahweh enters the picture and gives this prophecy to them: you probably remember this about the serpent biting the heel, and the serpent being stepped on, right? So the seed of the woman was going to be stepping on this serpent. And so as the biblical text goes on you can read the Bible like a drama. Here comes one person and then another person. Could it be this person? Could it be that person? And you just sort of follow that along. And that's part of the reasons where you see the genealogies in there. We're tracing these people all the way through and asking whose line is the seed of the woman going to come from? Is it going to be from here? Is it going to be from there? It's intentional, giving out clues that make you where is this person, the seed of woman going to come from? Of course, we know that ultimately ended up being Jesus. But the whole Old Testament is sort of leading up to that point.

That gives us interesting things like this quote from Isaiah where he connected this offspring to a suffering servant, which we now know is Jesus. And then in Revelation, we see a vision about a woman and her offspring and then the Dragon - and all that imagery is supposed to think about back in Genesis. So even in the New Testament, which is written in Greek, but it was written by people who were trained in Hebrew, were continuing that tradition. We see all this prophetic kind of stuff in Revelation that points back to the Old Testament.

Jen Wilkin has a study on Revelation. And she goes through all the stuff, and she points out that every time you see a 7, you underline it, because the number 7 has particular meanings. It can really get pretty intense when you do studies like that in detail/ The point is we're not supposed to read by skimming through things, because that is so easy for us to do. Because the Tanach does not have a lot of detail we sort of skim through that. But we're supposed to slow down and read it carefully and interact with it. We are tempted to skim through the genealogy and all that stuff because we look at some of those names, and we don't know where they come from. But if we had memorized all the other scripture, then we could look at that name and say, oh, I remember that person and that person, and that person. But if we are not

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familiar with the names when we read the genealogy we skip through it because we don't know what they mean.

But there all sorts of clues in there, including in this particular quote from Psalm 1, where "we meditate on His law day and night." We read the word *law* here. I'm going to say more about this later, but because of the way that the Church broke away from Jewish heritage and particularly because of the way the Protestant Church broke away from the Catholic Church, we tend to have this binary conception of: there's the Old Testament and it's about law, and a New Testament is about grace! In fact the law and grace are in both places. You go all the way back to Genesis and Adam and Eve turning away from God, and He shows them grace. They clothed themselves with fig leaves but God made them clothes made out of leather. God could destroy them right then but he didn't do that. Instead he puts them out of the garden, because the Tree of Life is in the garden where they could get eternal life, and he didn't want his people to be eternally separated from him. So it's an act of grace that they got put out of the garden.

Then we get to the New Testament, and we see the law there? In the Old Testament, we were told not to kill someone, because but then Jesus comes along and says, if you hate someone it's just as like you killed them. So it's sort of like, Jesus just made the law a lot heavier.

WE have to break away from that. Whenever we see the word law, typically, the word being translated is, Torah. That's what we talked a little bit about in our first lesson. Torah, which means instruction. You go through these stories, and poetry and stuff like that, and it's all instructive stuff for us. It's how to live. It's not meant to be this one legalistic kind of thing, where, we're told do this and don't do that. That's not what it's meant to be. We have to be careful whenever we run into the word *law* because most of the time, the word being used there is Torah. And even with Jesus, he was probably talking in Aramaic, but it was translated into Greek and then we see it translated into English, he's probably using word *Torah*. We have to just try to get rid of this binary image that we have.

So our task is to read the words, meditating on them, ask questions. Why use this word here? Why is it put this way here? If I see this something happen one place and I saw it happening in another place and I recognize a parallel circumstance, but there's one detail that's a little different, why is that? What's the meaning of that? So, read slowly, pause, ask questions.

One of the things that is difficult for us to do. is that we are reading this as modern-day Western people, while the Bible, the Old Testament in particular, was written in a different culture, in a different language, and we don't understand the context that they had when they were reading this stuff or hearing it. Because it's different than the way it is right now. That's part of what some of our translations try to do - they try to cover that ground a little bit. To get additional help we'll go get a Bible dictionary or some others things to try to make sense out of what was the culture like.

The Bible's more than history and rules, but this is a way that we Protestants are trained to read the Old Testament. We look at the book of Joshua and say, that's history. But, the Jewish culture said, no, that's a prophetic book. We look at the same words, and we look at them differently. This is not meant to be just a recounting of things. It's supposed to be a theological text. And think about this now. Isn't the Bible supposed to be more a theological text than a history text? And so, we really need to start thinking about it in those terms.

Just like any history book doesn't tell us everything, each history book is usually laid out showing that this happened, and this happened, this happened, and we pick out some particular set of facts to lay out a particular story. The Bible's written out there in the same kind of fashion, but the message that it is trying to say is a theological message. Not just an historical one, but a theological message. And so the history is serving the theology, if it will.

Another aspect is that the Bible is literature. We are usually not trained to read the Bible as literature. In fact, we have a bad name for this, because literature is fiction, and so if we say that the Bible's a literary text, we think that we're saying that the Bible is fiction. But the Bible's not fiction, it's fact. And so in the modern church we tend to turn away from seeing the Bible as literature. But the Bible is really a work of

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remarkable literature. It's a lot more sophisticated than we usually regard it. And we're going to be looking at some of that sophistication in the coming weeks.

This aspect is something I learned later on in my life, and now I think that I should have taken those courses back in college or something. I'm not trained literature. I don't have that background, and so it's a little hard to try to absorb this literary thinking, understanding all the literary techniques that are being used.

The Bible is not written just by human hands, it's human hands being guided by God. God somehow is able to use Most humans and the language that they had and was able to work through their limited knowledge and their limited language that the human authors had and was able to use that partnership. to create this thing we call the Bible.

Here's a little Greek there for you, theopneustos. Theos refers to God, and neustos refers to a spirit or breath. And it's the same as the Hebrew word, the same word is used for spirit and for breath and for wind. An interesting thing is, because Hebrew actually is a fairly simple language, it doesn't have as much complexity as a Greek language. And so we often see words being used that have multiple meanings and we just to be aware of the context. And then you have to be prepared to say, "Well, maybe both of those contexts are meant to be used here."

We have to be prepared to think that when the Hebrew writers were using these particular words, that they meant to use the word one way or maybe both ways. We have to be prepared to deal with that. Which deals with some of the ambiguity that we run into the Bible. And if we keep thinking about this word used here and meditating on that, and may not be a whole 100% sure here, when I run into that word later on, and I put both texts together, maybe then I can make more sense out of it.

There's this passage out of 2 Peter, which basically says, "*We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*" And so, God somehow is able to use that partnership to have his word get passed down to us.

And now for some more high-level stuff here, we're going to talk about the Jewish context of things and how we tend to misunderstand them. The way that we usually are trained to read is that we see Jesus chewing out the Pharisees, and we think, that they're all the same way. They're all legalistic. We have to be careful about that, making a caricature out of the Pharisees and expanding that to all Jews. Just because Jesus talked to a few people that way, that doesn't mean everybody was that way. In fact, some Pharisees, follow the school of Gamaliel and others the school of Hillel. So in Jesus' day, different people were following different rabbis who had different conceptions about how Scripture should be handled.

There were different schools of thought about how to interpret the Bible. Jacob, who renamed Israel, which means *wrestles with God*. Which is a really appropriate for what we should be doing. We should be all wrestling with God. There's all stuff we don't understand. There's all stuff we will disagree with God about, and we should take that to Him. We should be wrestling with Him.

The Israelites saw themselves as, and we see this term, the chosen people. So the conception they had of themselves was that they were the chosen people of God, and the reason that they had things like the commandments, is because they were friends of God, and friends expect more of each other. It's sort of like it's modern-day Good Samaritan story. Say that there is child who rides his bike in a neighborhood and hits a patch of sand, takes a severe stumble, and he's on the ground trying to catch his breath. And if you had a stranger didn't know him while going by, but didn't stop. Well, what do you expect? If you saw one of the neighbors going by who knew him and they didn't stop, we might think, "should they?" Now, if his own mother drove by and didn't do anything, what would you expect? So it's like, it's this... we have

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higher expectations of people that are closer to us. So the Jews have these commandments because they're friends of God!

Here's another thing that we should try to understand a little better. It's the difference between the way we perceive law and grace, because that's how we usually think about things in the Christian world. We think that the Jews, they had to be legalistic because they had all these laws and they had to follow them or else. But then, we should think about, it's not *law* but *Torah*., Torah can be used in some different ways. Sometimes it's referred to the five books of Moses. Sometimes it's referred to as a teaching or an instruction. or a tradition (because traditions can also be instructive) and it can even be like a parent's instruction to a child. So, the Torah could mean instruction in different ways in different settings.

Another thing that we tend to have a real misconception about is the sacrifices the Jews had to do ... all these sacrifices in order to please God. And if they didn't do that, then they were in trouble. Well, we have to, again, go back into culture, look at the way the actual words that were being used, And saying, What did they think when they were doing this stuff?

The Hebrew word for offerings or sacrifices is *Qorbanot* and the root word for that means to draw near. And so, when I am bring an offering or a sacrifice, my intent is to draw nearer to God. I'm not doing this saying in order to cleanse myself, necessarily. I am doing this thing to draw nearer to God. That's my ultimate goal, to draw near. So when we see offering or sacrifice back in the Hebrew Bible, it's *Qorbanot*, drawing. When we think about when we bring our offerings to God ... Why are we doing that? As an obligation? Jesus says, I don't want that, unless you give it with a generous heart, I don't want it, you know? Don't bother if it's not from a generous heart, you know? You're missing the point. Sometimes we talk about how God's given stuff to us and we're just giving a portion back to show that we understand it's from God. But let's go a step a little deeper now. Why are we doing that? Because, ultimately, we hope to draw nearer to God. That's the kind of framework that we can be thinking about sacrifice and offerings. Even when we bring our offerings, whether it's time or talent or whatever, it is because our ultimate goal is to be nearer to God.

Here's something else that we tend to misunderstand. In the Jewish framework, forgiveness was given not through the sacrifice. Forgiveness was given through repentance, prayer, and charity. Isn't this what we're really trying to do? You know, we can bring our sacrifice to God and not be repentant. How do we get right with God? Repentance. We get forgiveness through repentance.

We come to the point now where the Jewish temple has long been gone and they can no longer bring sacrifices to the temple. So how can they be a good Jew without the temple, without doing all the sacrifices? That's something that they had to figure out. And so they said, well, you know, let's go back to this thing here. Even without the animal sacrifices, what we need to do to get forgiveness from God is we repent, and pray and do works of charity - because that's living out our faith. This is a James thing! Right? We know we have faith by our works. Well, that concept was back in the Old Testament.

At least some of them did. As a group, they are like Christians as a group. They're all over the place, in how they think about things. There are legalistic Christians just as much as you get legalistic Jews. So they are all over the place, just like we are. They're not all in this caricature that we usually have and that we're given as in the Christian world.

Regarding the number of sacrifices that were brought to the temple. It was not a case of one person bringing a certain number of sacrifices for some particular sin. There were lots of sacrifices because there were lots of people bringing their individual sacrifices. Some brought birds, some brought oxen, etc. There is no biblical instruction that specifies multiple sacrifices for a single sin. But one thing we may ponder, is that if we were sitting there watching people bring sacrifice after sacrifice ... Animal after animal... being bled out and put into the flames all day long. What a bloody scene that is. And if we think that this is because of our sins. We usually don't think of our sins that bad. But if we sat and watched this stream of sacrifices it might give us a grasp of how bad our sins are. The altars back then had to have ditches around them to draw the blood away.

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Meanwhile we – and the Jews have this verse from Micah, “He has shown you, oh man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To do justly, the law of mercy and walk humbly with your God.” They had that verse, too. You know? Maybe give them a little credit for knowing that?

And then, I put this in here because we can sometimes get a little high on a horse ourselves, you know? They may be hypocrites, but what are Christians usually accused of these days? Being hypocrites. We all are. We all have a hard time getting it all right.

When we think about the word for love, particularly the word *agape*, we usually think about that as the highest form of love. It's God's form of love. Actually, as it turns out, we make a little bit too much of a distinction between use the word of agape and phileo, but that's what we usually think of, agape, that's God's form of love, it's the way He loves us.

They have a similar word in Hebrew, ahav. Ahav has a lot of dimensions to it. It can refer to the way I love my neighbor, I am the man of the household and this is how I take care of my family and show my love to them, how I take care of my neighbor and show love to them. It is how I am responsible to them. And it even refers to the sexual love. shown between man and wife … and everything in between. It has all those dimensions to it.

You've heard the words, “love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.” How about saying, ahav Yahweh you're God, with all those dimensions to it. Think about that now. So, that's the word that's used back in that Hebrew passage there, Ahav Yahweh your God. Something to meditate on!

Now when we read about synagogues in the Bible, or the word for church, they both come from the Hebrew or Greek words for *assembly*. But similar to our modern usage synagogue can also refer to a community building. It's a building for the entire community whether you're Jewish or not.

Regarding the word *religion*. They didn't have any such concept of that back then, because you just did things with your community. You had certain practices you did with your community. As far as idea that there was a possibility that someone had a different set of beliefs than somebody else. That was not something they had a word for. You just did things with your community. And so that allowed for the possibility, whether you're Jewish or non-Jewish, you're getting together and you're a community building.

So, the concept of religion where one person had a set of beliefs that was actually different and distinct from somebody else didn't get generated until after the church got developed and there were Christians and non-Christians all in the synagogue, people are really starting to contend with different ideas. That's when we start to develop thinking that leads us to a word where we can we'll call it religion, as not something you just do, but something you believe.

In this next section we're going to go through a little bit of history here to explain how we got to such a difference between Jewish thoughts and Greek thoughts in the early church. There was anti-Semitism developed really quickly? This is one of the things that confused me for a long, long time. Jesus was Jewish, the Apostles were Jewish? How come there was anti-Semitism? How did that happen? And I didn't understand this for a long time. How did that get into church?

So, here's a little history lesson for that. you go back to the time of Jesus, okay, now we had You know, again, the Christian and non-Christian Jews, you know, all together in their synagogues. They're all sort of doing things together, life together as a community, right? But they had different Jewish groups early on, we can see them in the Bible. Some people were zealots. They were the people that said, “you know what we need to do to solve our problem?” Well, they forgot to read their scripture. “We need to get rid of the government!”

You know? So, where did I read that before? Maybe the book of Judges?

So there were zealots there who wanted to get rid of Roman government. And now the Christians recognize that the problem is not the government. The problem is us. And so, some of you might be familiar with the fact that there was this rebellion in around year 70. And the temple got pretty much

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destroyed then? That was the Zealots rebelling against the Romans. The rebellion began around the year 66, so this took a little while to build up this way before the Romans came in. In the meantime the Christians are there saying, "Wait a minute, that's not our problem. We're not going to participate in this. Let's head up the road to Antioch and hang out there for a little bit while this stuff is going on." And so, you start to see a development of tension now between the Jews, in particular the Zealots, And the Christians start to develop them.

Now, you go a few decades later, about the year 160, And at this point, the church, and you can see in Acts, has more and more Gentiles coming into the church. So certainly 100 years after Jesus we have way more Gentiles than Jews in the church. The other development we have is back a couple hundred years BC, the Hebrew Bible got translated into Greek. And so, we have a lot of Gentiles without a Hebrew background and their text now is this Greek text, and the Jews are a minority. So the Gentiles are starting to get disconnected from the Hebrew roots. And so this other rebellion occurs. And worse than the previous time, we see these other Messiah-like people start showing up in history. And this time it's "son of the star," Bar Kokhba! Of course, the Christians are saying, wait a minute, we gotta have nothing to do with that. So again, they don't participate. And so the rebellion goes on and eventually gets put down. But now there's this real hostility that starts to generate.

And it happens at the same time where the Jews are trying to figure out how to do life post-temple. And this is where they really started to develop what we call the rabbi culture. Before we had people that were called rabbis in general, like Jesus himself was called, like, a rabbi or teacher. But now we had our official Rabbi culture developing, where they got trained in a particular way.

So these rabbis are generating of a post-temple Jewish culture. And the Gentile Christian culture is now starting emerge. So by the time you get to the second rebellion we have the Jewish culture with its rabbi development and the Christians who have this Greek text who understand that the problem's not the government. Sad to say, but the Christian viewpoint turned into something like ... they might not have literally said it this way, but in fact, they might have well said ... to hell with the Jews.

And so, we start to see the development of anti-Semitism right at that point there. Even though Paul told the Christians in his writings, don't cut off the root. But they cut it off. Okay? So now we have Christians there who are understanding things in a Greek context, and they don't understand anymore the Hebrew context. They sort of push that away. And it was a very rare for a long time for any significant number of Christians to understand Hebrew at all.

Jerome was around year 400 translated the Latin Bible. So he knew his Hebrew, but very few people did. And it wasn't until after the Reformation where the church finally started to get much more highly interested in understanding Hebrew roots again. So that's part of how the church theology developed the way that it did. And that's why we are here now, where we're starting to understand the Near East culture in a more in-depth than we used to because there's a lot of archaeology and stuff that's been going on.

So we're starting to understand things now that we didn't understand well for a large part of history, because we just abandoned our Hebrew roots. So that's what this little section here is about, trying harder to understand our Hebrew roots, understanding the Old Testament the way it was written for the people it was written for, We have to dig a little bit harder to try to figure out what it really meant in the day that it was written.

The historical narrative of the Bible's doesn't cover past John and the island of Patmos. What we are talking about here, about different communities coming and going together and spreading out is another part of the whole story. We can see pieces of it starting to emerge during the Gospels and in Acts, where we have the different group of Jews there, and some of the tension starting to build. But we're missing what happened after Jerusalem got broken down and then there's a lot of other church history to follow for another couple thousand years.