

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

Judaism 101 with Dr. Michael Brown

(January 24, 2020)

Frank:

The Savior of the world came out of the tribe of Judah. The Savior of the world is Jewish and many Christians, and other people, don't really know much about Judaism. What were the major sects of Judaism in the first century? Once the temple was destroyed in 70AD, how did Judaism change? What are the current sects of Judaism and how do they differ from one another? What were the main, or what are the main Jewish views of the Messiah? What do Jewish scholars today think about the evidence for the resurrection? And by the way, if Jesus is the Messiah, that the Old Testament promises, why didn't he bring in world peace? And what are some of the questions you can ask a Jewish person to get them to consider that Jesus is the true Messiah?

There's probably nobody better on the planet to talk about this than my friend, Dr. Michael Brown. Dr. Brown, as you know, has been on the show several times, but he has his own program every day called, Line of Fire. And you can go to askdrbrown.org to learn more about that and more about him. He writes a column almost every day that you can find it stream.org. Stream.org. He's written several amazing books. We've had many of those books highlighted here on the show. And he is just an amazing man, who came out of Judaism, and is a Messianic Jew today. He has his PhD in Semitic Languages from New York University. So, it's always a pleasure to have Mike on Mike. How are you?

Dr. Brown:

Doing great, Frank. It's always great to be on with you.

Frank:

Now let's talk Judaism 101. Let's kind of do a rapid-fire thing here. I've got like almost 20 questions I want to ask you, Mike, and I know our audience is going to want to hear the answers to many of these questions. So, let's just jump right in. Let's start right in the first century, Jesus' time. We see all these major sects of Judaism; we have Pharisees, Sadducees,

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Essenes, Zealots, maybe some others. Who generally, you know, in a kind of a summary way, who were these different sects? What did they believe?

Dr. Brown:

Right. They had certain things in common, and then there was great diversity among them. So, if Christians think today of Roman Catholics, and Greek Orthodox, and Protestant evangelical, and other groups, they realize, okay, there, there are certain things that you would say are in common, but then a lot of diversity between them. So, the Pharisees would claim that, when God gave Moses the law of Mount Sinai, that God also gave him the Oral Law. So, he gave him the written law and the Oral Law, which is the interpretation and expansion of the written law. And in their mind, without those traditions, you cannot understand scripture. In their mind, they go all the way back to the time of Moses. But from what we can tell, they probably grew as a movement, maybe 150 years or so before the time of Jesus, perhaps, out of the time of the Maccabees, and the revolts like that. Again, they would say they go all the way back.

But for the Pharisees, this was the key, that they had traditions in their mind that went back to Moses. And they also were not temple based. They develop the idea of the synagogue. And this goes back a few hundred years before the time of Jesus, with the idea that every Jew should live at the purity level, say that a priest would live. And it called on the Jewish community as a whole to exist in this particular way. We know in the New Testament that Jesus has a lot of conflicts with them. Is that because he was close to that sect himself, as Paul was, so it's more of an inner family struggle? Or that he had tremendous conflict with them. Either way, at that time, they did speak of the traditions of the fathers. But over time that became developed as the Oral Law going back to Moses. And the Pharisees, then over a period of time when the temple was destroyed, they were equipped to continue on pretty easily, because they were synagogue based. They were based in different communities. And then this is ultimately what developed into what we know as rabbinic, or traditional Judaism today.

As for the Sadducees, again, it's hard to trace the origins of these various groups. But we know that there are disputes that reflect their own particular views a hundred plus years before the time of Jesus. We have documents from the Dead Sea Scrolls that seemed to reflect some of these battles. They were the opposite in their views. They simply believed in the written law. They believed in the five books of Moses as ultimate authority. So, the other writings did not

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have the same level of inspiration. They didn't believe in the spiritual realm the same way, in the afterlife the same way. And they pretty much were destroyed as a group the destruction of the temple. They were more aristocratic. They had the high priesthood and much of the Sanhedrin was Sadducean. And because they were temple based, with the destruction of the temple, that was pretty much the end of them. Some groups claim that they can be traced back to them today, but that is very much fringe within Judaism.

As for the Essenes, again, can't trace their origins initially, but we know that Josephus and Philo speak about these three groups primarily; about the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. They may have been entirely male. There's some evidence that there are other groups that were not. But we know for example, Qumran, the dead Sea scrolls, which most take to be an Essene community, that seemed to be celibate males, from what we can tell. They had basically withdrawn because of the impurity of the Judaism of the people, that that was their perception of the temple. They had withdrawn more into more monastic life. And we know much of their teaching through dead sea scrolls. And interestingly, some of the concepts there; the battle between the sons of light and the sons of darkness, or the kingdom of God versus kingdom of Satan. You have more similar concepts there then you do have in other parts of Judaism.

As for the Zealots, they were more of a politically based group. So, their whole thing was patriotism and the overthrow of Rome. They would have been the ones that were involved in the revolts against Rome, the war in 66 - 70AD that resulted in the destruction of the temple. And then the subsequent revolt under Bar Kokhba, from 132 to 135, that resulted in scattering of Jewish people out of Jerusalem. So, I know we're going to rapid fire on the rest, but this is a little bit a little bit longer answer here.

Frank:

No, that's great. Now and I've always heard this, that the Pharisees believed in the resurrection. The Sadducees did not. That's why they were sad, you see. That's the easy way to remember that. Anyway. But why do you think the Pharisees did believe in the bodily resurrection and the Sadducees didn't? I mean, did the Sadducees think something like Daniel 12? Did they interpret it a different way? Why was there a difference there? Do you know?

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Dr. Brown:

So, the major verse, you have a few verses in the Old Testament that explicitly speak of resurrection, the most decisive being Daniel 12:2. But if your primary Canon is the Torah, and you do not see the rest of the books as carrying the same level of inspiration, or the same weight, or look at them as scripture, then you're not looking at that. So, within the Torah, can you make a definitive case for resurrection? That's why Jesus quotes from the Torah in rebutting them, and saying, when God says, I'm the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, when he tells that to Moses, that [unintelligible] He is the God of the living, not of the dead. So, that would have been a brilliant insight from the Lord to rebut them. But to quote from Daniel, there's something else [unintelligible] for that.

Frank:

Okay, so they didn't take Daniel as being authoritative, like they took the Torah, the first five books.

Dr. Brown:

Exactly. So, within Judaism, the five books of Moses are considered to be the highest level, so that you have the concept that God dictated. An ultra-Orthodox Jew would believe that God dictated the five books of Moses to Moses, but they would look at the entire Old Testament, the entire Hebrew Bible, as authoritative. As God's words. The Sadducees did not.

Frank:

So, I know we just got about 40 seconds before the break here, Mike, but...So, let's say you're living in exile, and you're with Daniel. Are they considering say, the writings of Isaiah, and say the other prophets? Are they authoritative to say someone like Daniel in, you know, in the 500s BC?

Dr. Brown:

Yeah, absolutely. Totally authoritative. We know that Daniel quotes from Jeremiah. In the ninth chapter of Daniel, he's looking at the book of Jeremiah as authoritative. Absolutely. Whatever scriptures they had access to, that we have today, from what we can tell those were being considered authoritative in their day.

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Frank:

That's the great Dr. Michael Brown. We're talking about Judaism. Judaism 101. We're going from 10,000 feet to look down at Judaism and seeing what it's all about. And there's no better person than Dr. Michael Brown to do it. His website is askdrbrown.org. I'm Frank Turek. This show is, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. And we're going to be back in just a couple of minutes so don't go anywhere.

Frank:

If you're low on the FM dial looking for National Public Radio go no further. We're actually going to tell you the truth here. That's our intent anyway. You're listening to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with Frank Turek, on the American Family Radio Network. My guest is Dr. Michael Brown. askdrbrown.org is one of his websites. You can go there, and you can ask him. You can get answers to a lot of questions on that website. Let me just put it that way. And Dr. Brown is an expert in Judaism. In fact, he's written a couple of commentaries. I know Mike, you've written a commentary on Jeremiah, and also Job. Isn't that correct?

Dr. Brown:

Yes, and hopefully one on Isaiah is next. And then of course, I wrote the five-volume series, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus*. And then another book, *60 Questions Christians Ask About Jewish Beliefs and Practices*. And then, *The Real Kosher Jesus*. Then, *Our Hands are Stained with Blood*, about anti-Semitism in church history. So, it's been a subject of great focus. Obviously, when I came to faith, that was the very first thing. Well, we're Jews. We don't believe this. So, I've been in dialogue in debate with the rabbinic community for the last 48 years.

Frank:

Wow. Well, it is a great pleasure to have you on to talk about Judaism 101, because we all need to be better educated on the faith from which Christianity came. Let me ask you this. I know you mentioned that the Pharisees had started synagogues prior to, obviously 70 AD. Jesus visited several of them. But once the temple was destroyed in 70 AD how did Judaism change?

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Dr. Brown:

Right. Well, what happened was, you no longer had the one place you could go to. You no longer had the high priests functioning. You no longer had the sacrificial system, and all of that. So, now things had to be lived out more on a daily level among the people where they were. So, on the one hand, the laws and being Torah based, law based, that continued. In other words, that you will be sanctified by keeping the commandments. That you will bring the holy into the mundane world around you by living by God's commandments day and night. But now, more and more rituals developed to take the place. You're not at the temple. You have sacrifices being offered different times of the day. Well, instead of that, you'll pray. And then Daniel was looked at as a model for that; praying three times daily. In fact, to a rabbinic Jew, he was praying three times daily, because he already had the oral traditions they had. But obviously, the reverse is true. So, a traditional Jew, now traditions develop where you pray; where your words would take the place of sacrifices; where your repentance, which was always considered to be of primary importance, that that would take the place of sacrifice; and that every Jew now would be expected to live at a certain level of devotion.

So, it became, in that sense, more communal in the different cities where Jews were scattered around the world. Obviously, instead of going to Jerusalem, you'd have a tremendous emphasis on keeping the feasts. But more and more rituals were developed to fill things out. The fundamental beliefs would have been the same. But whereas there was once a tremendous emphasis on temple blood sacrifice, now there would be a greater emphasis say, on communal prayer in different cities and locations.

Frank:

So, now there are even some Christians who are trying to say we ought to obey all the laws of the Old Testament. I always ask them, but how can we do that if the temple does not exist? I mean, if you're going to take the letter of the law of the Old Testament, you have to go to temple, don't you?

Dr. Brown:

Yeah, well, you would say that a tremendous amount of what you're required to do, you cannot do without a standing temple, without a functioning priesthood, and without Jewish sovereignty. You simply can't carry out many of the commandments. So, a traditional Jew looks

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at this as a loss. That this is a shame that we can't do these things. But then they look at other biblical texts, like Hosea 14, they would see a mandate for offering prayer instead of animal sacrifices. Some of the text says, that they would find that. They would find throughout the prophets the tremendous emphasis on repentance and seek to live that out. But yes, from the Christian perspective, to not recognize that God is doing something radically new in Jesus. That the moral requirements of the law are now lived out with the help of the Spirit in us today. For a Christian today to say, we're supposed to keep the law of Moses, or all Christians are required to keep the Sinai Covenant, is it decided step backwards, and it's certainly contrary to what the New Testament teaches.

Frank:

Yeah. It teaches in Hebrews 8:13, I think it is, that the Old Covenant is obsolete. And yet, we have people today, who are claiming to be Christians, who are saying we have to obey all the Old Testament laws. And I always ask them, How could you? It's impossible. Even if you had the moral capacity to do so, there's no temple. There's no way of even doing that. Let me ask you also, Dr. Brown, the current sects of Judaism. So, let's fast forward to the present now. We talked about what they were like in the first century. What are the different denominations, or sects of Judaism, the major ones today?

Dr. Brown:

Right. So, the three major ones are Orthodox, conservative, and reformed. The Orthodox would look to the Pharisees and say we're continuing with the traditions that have been passed on from generation to generation. And those would be the most religious, the most observant. And then you have the ultra-orthodox. Those would be the ones that you would see, the men in the black coats, with the long beards, and things like that. They would be the closest to what has been going on for centuries now. And they would be the most devoted to studying the further traditions, Talmud, and things like that.

The reform broke away a little over 200 years ago, as Jews were able to come out of the ghetto situation in which they lived in Europe. And they became more part of the larger community. You could say as there is more worldliness and things like that. They wanted to be much more like the rest of the world. And they felt that some of the emphasis on being the chosen people,

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or praying for the rebuilding of a physical temple, and the restoration of animal sacrifices, that that was somewhat primitive.

So, they cast off a lot of the traditions and said, we want to emphasize the prophetic side of things; God's heart for the poor, and the needy, and things like that. And they threw out many of the traditions. And that, in America, is the largest single group today. This is liberal Judaism. Your average reformed Jew does not go to synagogue every week. Your average reformed Jew does not keep the dietary laws. Does not believe in the inspiration of Scripture the way we would. They would be somewhat equivalent to maybe, like a liberal Presbyterian, that doesn't even believe in the resurrection of Jesus, and isn't sure that the Bible is God's word. That would be where they are.

The conservative movement was launched a little over 100 years ago, in response to reform. They agreed with reformed Jews, that we could not look at scripture the way we used to. That modern critical scholarship of the religious documents indicated that we had to change some of our views, but it wanted to conserve the traditions. So, it was kind of in the middle initially, between orthodox and reform. It's the second biggest group in America today. But over the years, it's gotten much closer to reform. More liberal. So, for example, reform was the first to ordain female rabbis, then reform was the first ordained homosexual rabbis. And then conservative is kind of following on its heels.

So, that's the Judaism of most Americans. It is liberal. It is not really devout. It was what I was raised in, which meant that I went to synagogue on the high holy days, that I learned enough Hebrew to be bar mitzvahed, but I didn't even know what the words meant that I was reading. That's what I was raised in. So, those are more modern innovations. If you want to trace things in a way that would go more in terms of the spirit of the Pharisees and things like that, that would be rabbinic Judaism, traditional Judaism, orthodox Judaism. And then, in its most right-wing groups, you have the Hasidic Jews, which are one of the larger growing groups. In Israel, ultra-orthodox make up about 15% of the population.

Frank:

So, how do they vote if they're here in America. Politically, where are they? Because I realize it seems anyway that when you look at exit polls, most people identify as Jewish would vote

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Democrat, is the reason for that, because they're basically liberal when it comes to their views of God or what, why is that?

Dr. Brown:

Yeah, there are two major reasons. So, the very orthodox, in recent elections, have been leaning Republican much, much more. So, closer to evangelicals in that regard. But the Democrats, the liberal Jews, overwhelmingly vote Democrat. Almost as high as African Americans. Very close. Maybe 80 something percent. So, there are a few reasons. One is they are very liberal. The way they read the Bible, if they read it, is very much the way, like I said, a liberal Presbyterian, or liberal Catholic would read it. So, in their mind, they're taking the cause, the prophetic cause of justice. They're standing up for the immigrants. And they're standing up for the right of a woman to abort. And they're standing up for equal rights for gays. And they think that that's the right position. And it's because they're not looking at scripture as authoritative in the way that we would.

They also have a fear of any type of fundamentalism. They look at church history, they see the way they've been persecuted by, in their mind, religious Christians over the centuries, and they have this fear of a fundamentalism. So, they see that much more on the Republican side. The emphasis on making America Christian country makes the Jews think, well, where do I fit in that scheme? So, that's another reason for it over the years.

Frank:

Now, I saw something recently, Mike. It was up at MetLife Stadium, where the New York Giants play football. There was a group of Jewish folks that got together, they filled the stadium, and they were celebrating the fact that they had completed a text that wasn't the Old Testament. What was it and why is this text authoritative to them?

Dr. Brown:

Yeah, it's called Siyum Hashas, which is the completion of the shahs, which stands for the six orders. The six orders of the Mishnah. And then the Talmud. The Talmud consists of 2,711 pages of incredibly dense and difficult text, and then many, many thousands, many thousands of additional commentaries on the text. And if you can study one page a day, which is a breakneck pace, it's almost possible. When you're studying it at the Shiva level, or in the

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rabbinical advanced levels where you're studying 10, 12, 14, 16 hours a day. You can be going through one page for days. Digging in and digging in. Or for months, just go through a few pages. So, it takes seven and a half years, if you do this one page a day. It's called a Daf. That's a Talmudic page. So, this was the completion of a cycle that has been going on...somewhere in the early 1900s someone came up with this, so hundreds of thousands of Jews around the world participated in this process. And that's what they were celebrating 90-100 thousand Jews at MetLife.

So, what is the Talmud? The Talmud is compiled around 500-600 AD over a period of centuries. It is an ongoing legal discussion about various texts. The mission is first composed about 220 AD. And this is fundamental compilation of laws, which we'll expand on the other side of the break.

Frank:

We're talking to the great Dr. Michael Brown. You can see he's the right guy to talk to when it comes to Judaism 101. He can go a lot deeper than 101. This is sounding like 401 now, which is great. We need this. Don't go anywhere, except to Dr. Brown's website, askdrbrown.org. We're back in just two minutes. I'm Frank Turek.

So, what again is the difference between the Talmud and the Mishnah, and why do people today think they are authoritative text? We're going to get right back to Dr. Michael Brown in just a minute. Before we do, I want to mention I'm going to be, this Sunday at Mosaic Church in Highland, Illinois in the morning. And then at night, we're going to do more, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist and Q&A. The next night, Monday night, in Fort Wayne, Indiana. I'll be at Central Ministries. Then the following night in Fort Wayne, that'll be Tuesday, I'll be at Purdue University. Purdue Fort Wayne. And then the next night, Wednesday night, in Columbus, Ohio at the great Ohio State University, with my friend Eric Chabot, who's the Ratio Christi Director there. So, you're going to want to check all that out. If you're anywhere in the area I'd love to see you. Near St. Louis, that's where Highland, Illinois is, or in Fort Wayne, for those two events. Monday night and Tuesday night. And then the next night in Columbus, Ohio, Lord willing, with Ohio State University. Go to crossexamined.org. That's crossexamined with a D on the end of it .org. Hit events and you'll see those there.

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Let me go back to my friend, Dr. Michael Brown. Mike, just before the break you were talking about authoritative texts that Jewish people today follow other than the, what we would call the Old Testament. They're the Talmud and the Mishnah. Can you pick it up right there and tell us the difference between those two again?

Dr. Brown:

Yes, sir. So, you go back to the idea in Pharisaical Judaism, which becomes Rabbinical Judaism, then traditional Judaism, that God gave Moses a written law and an oral law. And according to the concept, the oral law was passed on orally, from generation to generation to generation to generation. And we see this concept reflected in the New Testament with "the traditions of the fathers", [unintelligible] or the traditions of the elders. So, by 200 years after the time of Jesus, as these traditions have now certainly been developing for at least a few centuries under the Pharisees, and now their successors, the rabbinic Jews. So, you had to write the traditions down. There was just too much material.

If you read the mission, you see very little reference to scripture. It's just this rabbi says this, this rabbi says this. And then here's the discussion. And then we do this, we do this. It's just presupposing that all of this exists in their various categories, say for, you know, laws concerning damages, or laws concerning marriage and divorce, or laws concerning agriculture and things like that. So, these are now put in writing in these six different orders of what is called the Mishnah, which is written in Hebrew and composed about 220 AD.

What happens next, in the subsequent centuries, is there's discussion about these laws and traditions that's going on. Different rabbinic communities. You have them in Babylon. You have them in the land of Israel, which is now called Palestine. And you have debates, and now this one reads it, no, well, we have a tradition that says this. Well, how does that tie in with Scripture? So, now this discussion has to tie things back in with the Bible. Well, you know, I heard an interesting story that explains this goal. No. Well, actually I heard a story with this other rabbi. And now you can tie in discussions from Frank Turek, in the 21st century, talking to Charles Spurgeon in the 1800s, talking to Augustin. It's just, but it's all tied in. It's weaved together in a very complex legal form. And this full document of the Mishnah, plus this discussion, is called the Talmud. This additional discussion is called the Gomorrah. So, it is the Mishnah, plus the Gomorrah, which equals the Talmud.

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It is massively difficult. It's primarily composed in a very concise Aramaic in a very unusual dialect that developed. And you ultimately have two Talmuds. The shorter one, which is not as widely studied, called the Jerusalem Talmud, which was composed between 400-500. And then the Babylonian Talmud, which is the larger one, which is studied with such devotion to this day. And that is really the center of Judaism. So, even though Rabbinic Judaism says the Bible is the Word of God, the Bible is the highest authority, and everything flows out of the five books of Moses, the Torah. For a traditional Jew, Talmud is front and center. This is what is going to be mastered and studied for life. And then out of that, because the Talmud does not come to a lot of clear conclusions on things, out of that develop the subsequent law codes. So, Maimonides law codes in the 12th century, or subsequent law code of Rabbi Yosef Karo in the 16th century. This is how the tradition continues to develop.

And then after that, further questions come up. To this day, well, how does this apply? But what about this? What about with this new technology? And then these things are written down. So, there is what is called Yamaya Talmud, the Sea of the Talmud, because the traditions continue to develop in an ongoing way. And if you just think of, say, reading the Bible, you put a Bible in a room. And that's what Christians are dealing with, especially Protestants, Evangelicals, that's what they're dealing with. Well now fill that room with thousands of other texts. That's what a traditional Jew is dealing with. And, as one historian, James Parks put it, that Catholicism is no more the religion of the New Testament than Judaism is the religion of the Old Testament. That's important to remember. A Catholic would say, that we have the authoritative traditions that have been passed on and developed through the church. Judaism says, we have the authoritative traditions that have been passed on and developed by the rabbis.

Frank:

Now why, Dr. Brown...we're listening to Dr. Michael Brown. My name is Frank Turek and we're just doing a, kind of an overview, of Judaism today. Why do they think, or from what Old Testament text would this originate, Dr. Brown, that they would actually think that there are oral traditions that could continually add to an authoritative way, the life of a Jewish believer?

Dr. Brown:

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So, on the one hand, there's the negative argument that you need additional texts. In other words, there's a death penalty for observing the Sabbath, if you work on the Sabbath. But nowhere is work defined. So, their understanding would be well, God gave that to Moses, that was passed on. There are other things that you're told to do, you know, build a booth, you know, for Tabernacles. Well, what are the dimensions of the booth? And what materials do you use? So, you know, things like that. Some major, some minor. They would say many laws we don't have the explanations of how to keep, so there must have been additional traditions.

But then they would point to Deuteronomy, the 17th chapter. And there it would say that you go to the Levitical priests, or to the judge, when you have a dispute. And whatever they tell you, that's what you do. You don't turn from the right or to the left. And whoever won't listen to them will be severely punished. So, that is, in their mind the authority to make these decisions, that you're going to have these ongoing questions, and that you go to the community leaders and the community leaders tell you what to do. And whatever they say, that's what you have to do, because they are the appointed judges.

So, if you ask an American today, well, you know, you live based on the Constitution. You live based on the constitution and thousands of laws. You know, if you go to plant a tree in your yard, now you may not be able to do that based on county law, you have endless decisions and you have a Supreme Court. So, that's the way Judaism functions as a religion. Because it is a law-based religion. They look at passages just like Deuteronomy chapter 30, that it's near you, it's in your heart and in your mouth, that you should do it. So, in your mouth, that's the Oral Law that's been passed down through the generations. So, those are some of the arguments that you used, but a major one is well, without these traditions, we don't know how to live out the laws, so they must have been there from the start.

Frank:

But it seems like with all those traditions, it would be impossible to even know the law, much less live it. So, how do traditional views, or traditional Jews, view the law? Is it a burden or a blessing to them?

Dr. Brown:

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To them, it's a wonderful blessing. Now certainly, you would have a traditional Jew that is burdened and is burnt out by religion. Of course, it's going to happen. But in their mind, God privileged the Jewish people by giving them the gift of the Torah. That they were singled out for special divine treatment and love through this gift. That's why a traditional Jew, when he gets up in the morning, first thing he does is he thanks God that he wasn't born a woman, a Gentile, or a slave. It's not because he considers himself superior. But a slave is under someone else's orders. They don't have the power to keep the whole law. A Gentile is not required to. And a woman is exempt from certain laws because of life cycle and things that she wouldn't be able to do at certain times. So, only a male Jew, a free male Jew, is required to keep all the law, which is considered to be the ultimate blessing. Read Psalm 119. The continual praise for God's Torah. That's how a traditional Jew sees it.

Frank:

Now, what are their views today of the Messiah? They're still waiting, obviously, but they're obviously, like yourself, you're a Messianic Jewish believer. But what are the main views of Jews today, who are not Messianic Jews, when it comes to the Messiah?

Dr. Brown:

Alright, if you are a liberal Jew, a reformed Jew, you don't believe in a personal Messiah. You basically believe in a messianic era, through human self-improvement. Again, just a liberal kind of view. And you don't really believe in an afterlife either. So, this is very much separated from traditional Jews of the Messiah. The traditional views. Traditional Jews pray daily, with expectation for the coming of the Messiah. They do not believe will come in the clouds of heaven. They believe he could be alive among us today. They believe that he will be a human being, but a supernaturally gifted human being.

So, they don't believe that he will be divine. They will believe that he himself will be a religious Jew. That he will be a teacher that brings all the Jewish people into obedience to God's commands. That he will fight the wars of the Lord. That he will re-gather the exiles. That he will rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. And if you see a religious Jew of great influence, and he begins to do some of these things, so, he's bringing more and more Jews back into tradition, then you wonder, could he be the Messiah? Then when he does the next thing, and the next thing, and the next thing, then you say, certainly he is the Messiah. And then the goal of the Messiah

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would be to bring the whole world into the worship of the God of Israel. That Isaiah 2 would be fulfilled, that all the nations would come streaming to Jerusalem to learn the teaching of the Lord, that the whole world would be God fearing, and that would be the time of peace and things like that.

So, many of the things that Christians expect Jesus to do with his second coming, in terms of destroying the wicked, in terms of re-gathering the exiles, or in terms of establishing God's kingdom on the earth, that's a similar expectation, except it would be very much Israel Jewish centered, and Torah centered. So, now there will be a rebuilt temple. Now the sacrificial system will be restored. There are some traditional Jews who are trying now to rebuild a temple saying that this is helping hasten the redemption. But the normal traditional view is that the Messiah has to come and do this.

There's also a Jewish view, that in every generation, there's a potential Messiah. And that if the Jewish people are worthy, he will be revealed. So, that's why he could potentially come at any moment, because he could be here already. And if the generation is worthy of Him, then he'll be revealed as Messiah. There's even a concept that would involve some type of reincarnation where the Messiah was born when the temple was destroyed in 70 AD. So, the soul of the Messiah has been present in a different Jew and every generation. That would be more of a mystical belief, but that's held too by many Jews today.

Frank:

What did Jews believe about the resurrection? The evidence for the resurrection today? Why didn't the Messiah bring in world peace? And what are some questions you can ask a Jewish person to get them to consider Jesus as the Messiah? They're questions we're going to get to with Dr. Michael Brown, my guest today.

You're listening to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with Frank Turek. Our website, crossexamined.org. And we're back in just two minutes. See you then.

Welcome back to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with Frank Turek and the American Family Radio Network. My guest today, Dr. Michael Brown. As you can see, he knows Judaism very well. He came out of Judaism as a young man, and has studied it, and has written

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on it, and is the go-to guy, in my mind, for questions that we that we have today on Judaism. And go to his website, askdrbrown.org.

Mike, I know before the break you were talking a little bit about the volumes that you've written. I have them on my shelf and refer to them quite frequently with regard to the objections that Jewish folks have to saying that Jesus is the Messiah. One of the objections is, if Jesus is the Messiah, why don't we have world peace? What would you say to that?

Dr. Brown:

Yeah. would say that the work of the Messiah, according to the Hebrew Bible, is in two phases. In the first phase, he had to come and die and rise from the dead, before the Second Temple was destroyed. And then the message will go throughout the entire world, rejected initially by the people of Israel, but then going the Gentile world. And ultimately, when Israel does recognize him as the Messiah, he will return and establish peace on earth. So, I would argue that, based on the Hebrew Bible, there are two phases to his work. Judaism is looking for the second phase without the first phase, but without the first phase there can be no second phase.

Frank:

Now, Jews obviously are monotheists. But there is a bit of a plurality in the Old Testament in certain areas. For example, I think it's Judges 6. You kind of have two Yahwehs in Judges 6. And of course, it appears that Jesus appears in a pre-incarnate state, particularly like say, in Isaiah 6, and maybe some other areas. Maybe with Joshua. Speak to that a little bit, Mike. They're believers in monotheism, but do they recognize plurality in the Godhead?

Dr. Brown:

They would not define it as plurality. To them, to say that there are two powers, or that they're different dimensions, [unintelligible] in any way within the Godhead would be idolatrous. For them it is, especially as Judaism has developed a very strict monotheism, on the one hand, that says one god, one God only. I'm going to explain these other passages more with manifestations of angels and things like that. However, within Judaism, and mystical Judaism, you have the Sefirot. These are various emanations of God; 10 different aspects of his person that do bring out a certain plurality. And you could argue that second temple Judaism in the time of Jesus recognized more of this. It had more exalted angelology. It had an angel,

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Metatron, who was so high and lofty that he could represent Yahweh and things like that. Or that there was even a concept of the Messiah where he was more divine. But this would be one of the biggest issues that Judaism has with Christianity; the idea of a trinity, or God's triunity, or God becoming a man, or a man becoming God. To a traditional Jew, that would be an idolatrous belief.

So, in my volumes, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus*, I really argue for God's complex unity. In fact, if folks go to my website, askdrbrown.org, and sign up to get my emails, they'll get a free eBook, *Seven Secrets of the Real Messiah*. And one of these seven secrets, I deal with God being complex, and his unity, as part of this, how can the invisible God be seen. So, if they go to askdrbrown.org, and just sign up for emails, then they'll get that minibook, which will kind of introduce them to some of these other subjects.

Frank:

When you say complex, I know there's a lot of listeners going, I thought God was simple, He doesn't have parts. So, how in a sense, is God's nature simple, but yet he still has a plurality to it with regard to the Trinity? Have you done much writing or thinking about that topic?

Dr. Brown:

Oh, yeah, absolutely. It's a major part of Volume Two of, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus*. I get into it, and real kosher Jesus, from which we took those seven secrets of the real Messiah for the eBook. I speak of God as complex, and as unity, as a way to try to reach Jewish people. Because if you say plural, or plurality, or triunity, or anything like that, then to them you're not saying monotheism. So, how can God be visible and invisible? How can God be transcendent and imminent? How can God, look we have the New Testament telling us no one has seen God, right. John 1. First Timothy 6. And yet God is seen. So, that's why I say he's complex in his unity. So, saying he's simple approaching it from one aspect of Christian theology. Saying he's complex in his unity is my way of trying to explain how he is three and yet one. How there is no separation within the Godhead, yet there is distinction of persons within the Godhead. To me that is complex, and yet ultimately, one.

Frank:

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Yeah, we believe God's nature is simple, yet his nature manifests itself in ways that appear to be complex, as you would say. Like, for example, I always think of a light going through a prism. You see light coming through the prism on one end, and it comes out in all different colors on the other. We're kind of on that side of the prism, where all the different colors are coming out. So, we see his attributes, we see His love, His justice, His knowledge. All the attributes we can see separately, but it's still one being on the other side. That may be one way of looking at it. But let me go back to some of these questions I have on Judaism, if we can, Mike. And that is, what did Jewish scholars think about the evidence for the resurrection. Did they deal with it at all?

Dr. Brown:

Your average Jewish scholar's not thinking about it, any more than your average Christian scholar is thinking about the life of Buddha or the claims of Mohammed. Those who engage in the discussion, the most radical of them is the Orthodox Jewish scholar, Pinchas Lapide, deceased some years back. He wrote a book on the resurrection of Jesus claiming that it really happened. But that did not mandate Jews believing in Him as the Messiah. That's the most extreme view. Otherwise, there'd be questions about what we even know about Jesus. How much ancient writings even tell us? They would look in a more skeptical way of aspects of his historicity.

Frank:

Especially they were written by Jewish believers in Yahweh, so why would they invent it? Do any scholars deal with that question? These are Jewish writings in the first century.

Dr. Brown:

For a religious Jew, there'd be no possibility of his resurrection. They would look in Matthew's Gospel where it says, you know, the Jews had this account, you know, the body being stolen. And they'd say, look, there are all different explanations. There is Schoenfeld's arguments, the Swoon Theory, that Jesus didn't really die. That he appeared that he died. He just swooned and then when he came back, he just revived. It wasn't a resurrection. But there's one Jewish now, who's written a massive book, trying to debunk every argument about the resurrection.

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Dr. Gary Habermas, probably our number one authority on this, has interacted some of it. Looks like it's gonna be a multiple series on it. But it would try systematically to deny that there's any concrete evidence. And, by the way, I have a book coming out beginning of March called, *Resurrection: Investigating a Rabbi From Brooklyn, a Preacher From Galilee, and an Event That Changed the World*. And in the book, I talk about this ultra-orthodox Rabbi in Brooklyn. Many of his followers thought he was the Messiah. When he died, they thought he would rise. Of course, he didn't. They say, he is the Messiah. He's with us spiritually. So, I contrast that with the New Testament mentality of disappointment. You know, the criterion of embarrassment, that you know so well. It was like, you know, there looks like a bunch of [unintelligible] he died. And when he rises, they're shocked. So, if we can show that those accounts are real, it really does give credence to the resurrection accounts.

Dr. Brown:

Yeah, they come at it from different angles, that there's belief in the resurrection that was present at that point. And they applied it here, that some even claim that there are some Jewish traditions that the Messiah would die and resurrect, but that's very disputed, based on just a couple of obscure texts.

Frank:

But they wouldn't deny that Matthew was a Jewish believer in Yahweh and he's right in the text.

Dr. Brown:

Oh no, they fully understand. Look, there's a Jewish annotated New Testament that came out a few years back. Amy-Jill Levine, and other Jewish scholars, put it together. They're doing Jewish commentary on it, fully recognizing that this was initially a Jewish sect. Fully recognizing that in its origin, this was this was another Jewish sect that was part of the Jewish community in the first century. It must be read and understood as that. Some say that Paul is one of our best witnesses for first century Jewish belief, because of the sources there. Yeah. So, there's more and more recognition of the importance of incorporating the New Testament in the study of early Judaism.

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Frank:

Well, we just got a couple minutes left, Mike, and I just want to ask you some questions that our listeners could ask their Jewish friends, to at least get them to consider Jesus as the Messiah. Is there anything they can ask them?

Dr. Brown:

Yeah, first, recognize that your average Jewish friend is not religious, doesn't know the Bible well, may not even believe in God. So, you may want to start with them like you do with everyone else, just about God. And you believe in God and things like that. Then you want to deal with moral issues. You know, what do you think of the 10 commandments, and things like that? Maybe that'll carry a little bit more weight, even for a non-religious Jew. So, you want to show them their moral need? Do you think that the law is from God, or you believe in some of the commandments? Try to show them that. But then explain to them the need for redemption. Emphasize no temple.

Dr. Brown:

So, once you ask those kind of questions, you could say, you know, have you ever looked at the Messianic prophecies? Most of them, it's what prophecies? What are you talking about? But prophecies are very intriguing to people. You mean, this was really laid out in advance? And if you could get them to read Isaiah 53, whatever Bible they have access to. You know, just do a translation. Read this. Who does this sound like? It is extraordinary how, no, I don't want to read from the New Testament. No, that's the Old Testament. Well, somebody changed it. No, you get your own Bible. Look at that and then try to open them up. You see that it says we would reject him? You see it says that he died in our place? So, just like the animal sacrifice took our place that he died in our place.

Dr. Brown:

So, you want to first get them God conscious, sin conscious, and then from there, savior redeemer conscious. And then from there, if you can say, hey, why don't you read Matthew? Or, this is written by a Jew about the Jewish Messiah. Or, did you know Paul was a Jew? Or you know, Jesus' actual name was Yeshua, and his mother's name was Miriam. Were you aware of these things? And try to open their eyes up so that they realize, okay, I'm not...because a Jew, even a non-religious Jew, most still feel it's important to be Jewish. And we do have certain

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traditions. And our ancestors died rather than deny these things. So, preserving Judaism, for many Jews, is important. Say hey, you're not coming outside of being a Jew. You're doing the best thing that you could do.

Frank:

Mike, thanks so much. Wonderful.

Dr. Brown:

My joy.

Frank:

That's Dr. Michael Brown. Askdrbrown.org. Go to his website, askdrbrown.org. I'm Frank Turek. Don't forget, I'm in Illinois Sunday; Fort Wayne, Indiana on Monday and Tuesday; and Ohio State on Wednesday. Hope to see you there. God bless.

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