

# Examining Our Fences



The image shows the ruins of an ancient structure, likely the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, featuring several tall, fluted columns and stone walls. A dark blue semi-transparent overlay with a subtle pattern of concentric circles and lines is positioned on the right side of the image. The text "The Development of Pharisaic Judaism" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of this overlay. The background is a clear, bright blue sky.

# The Development of Pharisaic Judaism

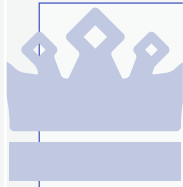
# The Torah Law - God's Commands



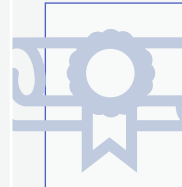
The Jewish Written Law



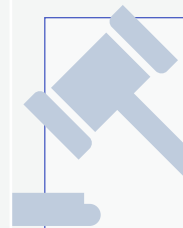
Consists of the five books of the Hebrew Bible



The books given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai



AKA the Chumash, Pentateuch, or Five Books of Moses



Contains 613 laws from God to Moses

# The Sopherim



When the Jews returned from the Babylonian Captivity

- Ezra started a school of Scribes called the School of Sopherim
- Sopherim is Hebrew for scribes

The Goal of the school...

- To explain the Mosaic Law so the people could better understand it

The school ran from about 450 BC to 30 BC

- From Ezra the scribe to Hillel

By the time the school ended

- It had instituted thousands of rules and regulations for the Jewish people
- 



# The Principle of the Sopherim

A Scribe could disagree with another scribe

But they could not contradict what the Torah said

They would debate new laws until a majority voted to accept a new rule

Once agreed, it was binding on all Jews, all over the world

They used a new form of rabbinic logic called "pilpul"

# Word of the Day - Pilpul

Hebrew word that describes the Sopherim's logic

Meaning:

Peppery or sharp

A form of religious analysis used to extrapolate as much information as possible

How to execute:

Take an original statement

Then ask how many new statements one could make from it

# Pilpul Reasoning in Real Life

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Exodus 23:19

<sup>19</sup> "The best of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God. "You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

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Exodus 34:26

<sup>26</sup> The best of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring to the house of the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk."

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Deuteronomy 14:21b

<sup>21</sup> ..."You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

# Pilpul Reasoning in Real Life



**Boiling a kid in its mothers milk was a common Canaanite practice**

This was a “first fruits” offering to Baal



**This law was given to Moses around 1400B.C. by 400B.C. the original intent had been forgotten**



**The scribes would ask themselves:**

How do we never, ever run the risk of consuming meat that has been mixed with its mothers' milk?



**Out of concern of accidentally breaking God’s law a dietary law separating meat and dairy consumption was made**

The consumption of any dairy must be separated by 24 hours from the consumption of a meat product



# The Construction of the Fence

The Sopherim  
built a fence  
around the Torah

- To keep the people from accidentally breaking one of the 613 Laws

The fence  
contained

- New rules & regulations derived from the original 613 Laws

The reason for the  
fence

- If the people could keep the Rabbinic Law, they would avoid breaking the Mosaic law
- Which would then avoid divine judgment



## Example of The Fence

The meat of clean cattle with the milk of clean cattle it is prohibited to cook [one with the other] or to derive benefit [therefrom]

Hullin 8:4



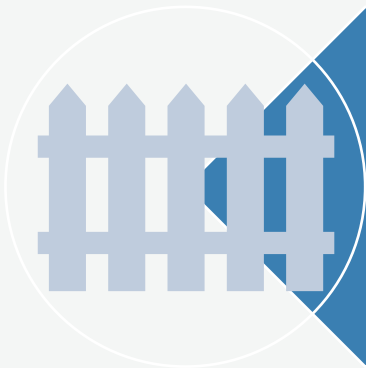


# Rabbinic Schools After the Sopherim



## The Tannaim (30 B.C. – 220 A.D.)

- The Second school of Pharisaic Scribes
- Continued the work of the Sopherim
- Developed the Oral Laws (nothing written down until 300 A.D.)



## The Amoraim (220 A.D. – 500 A.D.)

- The third school of Pharisaic Scribes
- Decided there were even more holes still in the fence

# Three Layers of Fencing



The Mishnah

The writings of the Sopherim & Tannaim  
1500 pages in Hebrew



The Talmud

The written version of the Oral Law



The Gemara

The work of the Amoraim  
Length about the size of the  
Encyclopedia Britannica

# The Pharisaic Expectations

The Pharisees expected that the Messiah would

Submit to the authority of the Mosaic AND  
Rabbinic Law

Help their efforts in building the fence around  
the Torah

HOWEVER

Jesus confirmed the authority of the Mosaic  
Law

AND consistently rejected the Oral Law

This is the key area of contention between Jesus and the Pharisees

# ISAIAH 29:13–14

ISAIAH

Therefore the LORD said:

“Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,

Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work among this people, a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden.”



# The Outward Expressions of the Pharisees

They used the fence to draw near to God with their mouths

- Worshiped and prayed the prayers they were instructed to do
- Executed the religious deeds that they were instructed to
  - The Oral Laws
  - The annual feasts
  - Attending the temple services

They did not...

- Put their hearts into it
- Fear the Lord for the right reason
- Give honor and respect that is due to a Holy God

Rather they feared the Oral Law and traditions of man over the Word of God

# The Result of their Outward Expressions

Their wisdom  
would vanish

The man-made rules would turn in on themselves  
and obscure the clear text of Scripture

A spirit of blindness and  
stupor is sent to the Pharisees

# The Fence of the Today

Religion

- The greatest barrier for many people today

A lot of people think

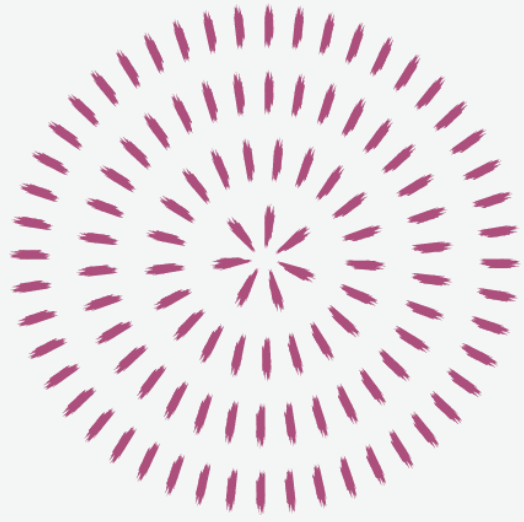
- The essence of Christianity is following rules, Biblical or extrabiblical

Biblical Rules

- Such as the 10 Commandments

Extrabiblical rules  
whether demanded by  
a denomination or not

- No meat on Fridays during lent
- No playing cards or dancing



**It is not a religion that  
saves us, but a  
relationship with Christ**



A close-up, shallow depth-of-field photograph of a computer keyboard. The focus is on a single key with a white 'X' and a vertical bar symbol. The background shows other keys in soft focus. A dark blue, semi-transparent rectangular overlay is positioned on the right side of the image, containing white text.

Examining our Fences

**Do we add to what the  
Word teaches with rules,  
traditions and works?**



For there is one God and one  
Mediator between God and  
men, the Man Christ Jesus

**1 TIMOTHY 2:5**

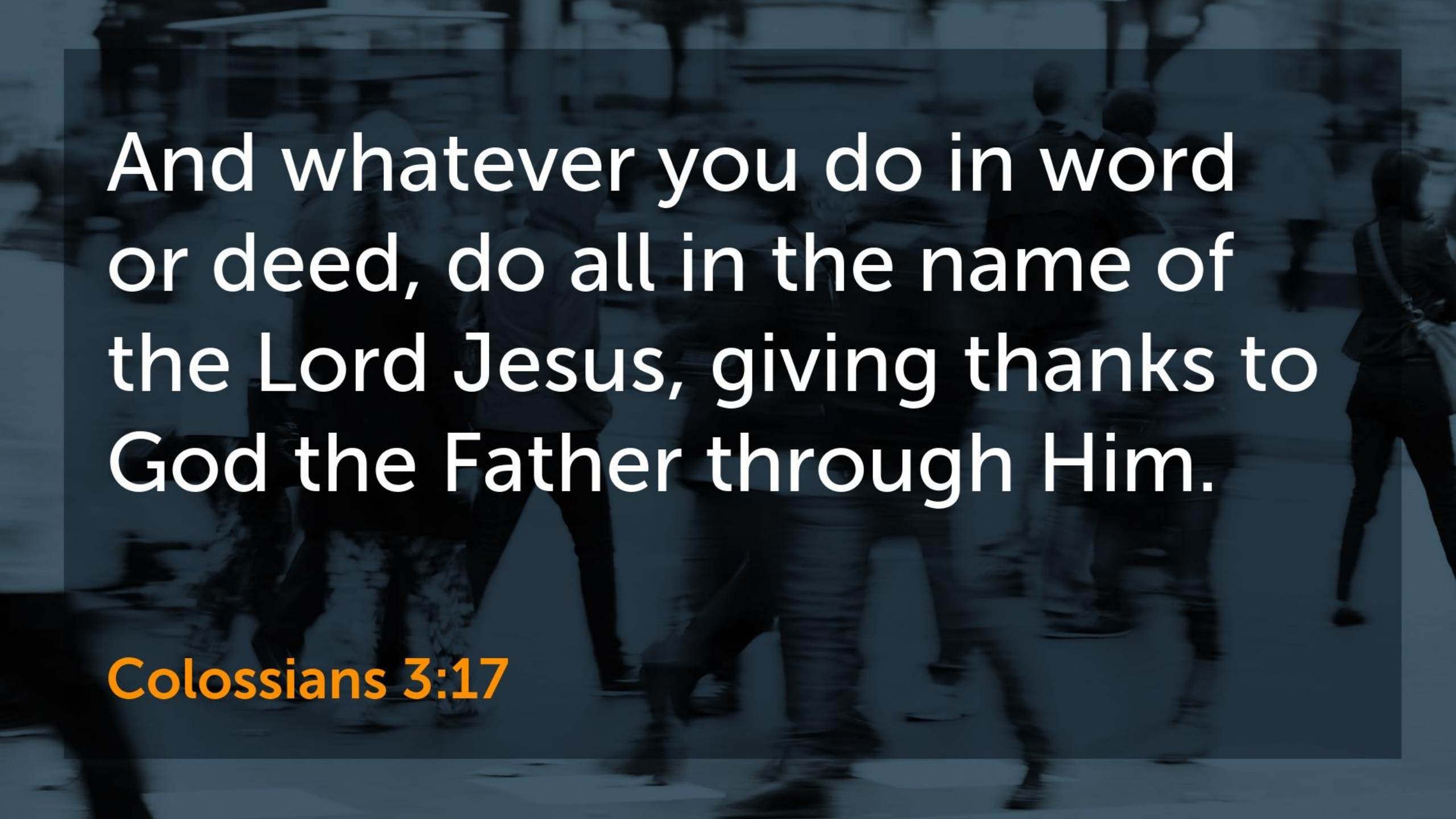




Do we honor the Lord  
with our hearts  
removed?

EXAMINING OUR FENCES





And whatever you do in word  
or deed, do all in the name of  
the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to  
God the Father through Him.

**Colossians 3:17**



# **Do we follow our own version of public reasoning and fence building?**

Examining our Fences

# Pharisaic Judaism

When looking at the development

- A long complicated series of schools
- Their goal was to implement laws
- The idea was to prevent breaking the Torah Laws

Looking at their traditions

- Their hearts left the Lord
- Religious practices became rote

Looking at their laws

- Deviations away from the plain text of Scripture
- The building of fences
- Attempts to keep people from breaking the Tora Laws
- Hindering people from understanding the plain text of the prophecies



# Examining our Fences



Looking into religious traditions we have been taught

- Examine those for inconsistencies with the Bible
- Look for any personal obstacles that may be in the way of your walk with the Lord

Check to see if you add or take away from the plain text of scripture

- Verify the context of a passage before attempting to interpret or apply it

Examine our hearts

- Is it in the right place when we honor the Lord?
- Are there any personal obstacles we need to overcome?

Tare down any personal fences!

