

2019 MJAA / IAMCS Rabbi's Conference – "Who Sits in Moses' Seat? – The Myth of the Oral Law"

- I. Is there an Oral Law from Sinai, in addition to the Written Law?
 - A. Moses wrote down all the Words of the LORD
 - (i) Exod 24:3-8
 - (ii) Exod 34:27
 - (iii) Deut 28:58; Deut 30:10
 - (iv) Deut 31:9-13
 - (v) Deut 31:24-26
 - B. Major Problems with an alleged Oral Law
 - (i) Major gaps
 - (ii) Blatant Contradictions – ex. Divorce (Mal 2:16); Upholding v. Voiding the Torah (Ps. 119:26)
 - C. Rabbinic Defenses & Rebuttals
 - (i) "Torot" in plural (Lev 26:46)
 - (ii) "Al Pi" – on the mouth of (Exod 34:27)
 - (iii) Written Torah not understandable without Oral Torah explanations – ex. Kosher Slaughter (Deut 12:21); Shabbat
- II. Rabbinic Claim to Authority apart from any Oral Law – Verses Taken out of Context
 - A. Deut 17:8-9 – Law Courts with Judges and Priests
 - B. Exod 23:2 – Follow the Majority
 - C. Deut 30:11-14 – Torah Not in Heaven
 - (i) Dispute over Kosher Oven – Bab. Talmud, t. Baba Metzia 59a & b
- III. Y'Shua's Response
 - A. Opposed Pharisees on Shabbat, Oaths, Property dedicated to the Temple; Hand Washing; Who's my neighbor; Divorce; etc.

- B. Hand Washing Controversy – Mth 15:1-14 -- Commandments of God v. Traditions of Men
 - C. Beware of the Leaven / Teaching of the Pharisees – Mth 16:6-12
 - D. Keys to Bind and Loose / Forbid and Permit / Make Halachah, given to Peter & Disciples – Mth 16:19
 - E. Authority Removed from Pharisees – Parable of the Vineyard – Mth 21:43-45
- IV. Seat of Moses – Mth 23:1-3 – Countering Claims of Rabbinic Authority
- A. Authorized Version – Pharisees unilaterally seated themselves in this seat; Greek & Hebrew merely says to “guard” what they tell you to “guard” – i.e., the Torah
 - B. Y’Shua transferred Halachic authority from the Pharisees to His Disciples – see, e.g., Mth 16:6-12; Mth 21:43-45; Acts 15
 - C. Sarcasm; Irony (Joachim Jeremias; D.A. Carson)
 - D. Shem Tov Hebrew Version of Matthew
 - (i) Church Fathers say Matthew originally written in Hebrew
 - (ii) Many Hebraic plays on words and idioms in Shem Tov Version
 - (iii) Mth 23:1-3 reads: “All that **he** [Moses] says, do.” **Not** “All that **they** [Pharisees] say, do.”
 - (iv) Difference in Hebrew is only one letter – “Omer” [he says] v. “Omru” [they say]
 - (v) But don’t do acc. to their deeds [“Takanot”] – same Heb word used in Mth 15 when Y’Shua opposes the Traditions of Men that make null the Word of God
 - E. Seat of Moses had only limited power, as per Deut 17:8-9, to decide certain cases that came before them, not to make universal halachah over every area of one’s life, binding for all time