

The Seat of Moses: Some Scholarly Notes

The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat (καθεδρας): All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do you not after their works: for they say, and do not. Matt 23:2-3

Matthew 23:2-3 is one of the most controversial passages in scripture, and is of particular interest to those seeking to arrive at a correct understanding of the historical context of Yeshua's words. An article on Matt. 23:2-3 in the SDA journal *Andrews University Seminary Studies* (AUSS) that sheds light on the phrase "seat of Moses". In this article Kenneth Newport footnotes a number of scholars who believe in the literalness of a seat of Moses in local synagogues of the first century. These scholars provide no evidence, largely because most of them wrote before the archaeological discoveries of our day, but modern excavations have uncovered more than one "seat of Moses" to substantiate their belief.

Eleazar L. Sukenik, in his important study published in 1934, *Ancient Synagogues in Palestine and Greece*, provided several examples of "Chairs of Moses" found by archaeologists. The one at Hammath-by-Tiberias is most interesting, because the back of the chair faces towards Jerusalem, picturing the law going forth from that direction as the synagogue audience is facing Zion. Stone seats positioned so that their occupant sat facing the congregation have been found in synagogues at Chorazin (cf. Matt. 11:21, Luke 10:13) in 1962, in En Gedi, and two Diaspora synagogues, (1) in Delos, the marble seat found in its ruins is probably the oldest example of a seat of Moses known (ca. 100 BC), and (2) Dura-Europos. Noel Rabbinowitz says this evidence taken together bolsters our conviction that the "Seat of Moses" was a physical seat upon which the Pharisees sat.^[1] He goes on to explain that most of the synagogue furniture was made of wood, which is why so few of these objects have survived.

There is a gap of about 300 years between Matthew's reference to the seat of Moses and its next mention in Jewish literature, the *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana*, one of the oldest homiletic *Midrashim* (ca. 4th century),^[2] has a passage where R. Aha describes Solomon's throne, and says it is "like the Kathedra of Moses" (כהדא קתדרא דמשה), καθεδρα being the same Greek word used in Matt 23:2 for the *seat* of Moses. Matthew and Yeshua use the phrase as though their audience knows what is meant. The plethora of contradictory interpretations incongruous with the rest of Matthew 23 and the background of the rest of the book result from our having missed something. "His Gospel is not likely to present Jesus here as commending adherence to the teaching of Pharisees when elsewhere it presents Jesus as warning his disciples to beware of their teaching (12:34; 15:14; 16:12; 23:15)."^[3]

M. Ginsberger once suggested that the *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana* be drastically amended, since a "seat of Moses" never existed,^[4] but scholars have by and large rejected this notion. Newport states:

Relying partly upon the reading of Matt 23:2 itself, we may not be too far wrong in suggesting that this was a chair found in the synagogue of the type unearthed at Chorazin, Tiberias, an Delos.

All three of these chairs were wide enough for someone to sit in. The question remains, "How were these seats used?" Was it for the *hassan*, the Torah reader, or for setting the Torah scroll itself? Cecil Roth points to the Great Synagogue in Rome built 100 years ago as evidence that the Torah scroll was placed upon the "chair" especially designed for this purpose, having holes

drilled into the seat into which the staves of the scroll may be inserted. The basement of this synagogue has other chairs designed the same way which date to 1594.^[5] None of these was wide enough for a man to sit in.

Roth's evidence for this use of the "chair" is confirmed by the report of Jesuit priests in China. In 1704 a priest named Jean-Paul Gozani visited a community of Jews at Kai-Feng-Fu in China, and describes a "magnificent and highly elevated chair, with a beautiful embroidered cushion. It is the chair of Moses, on which on Saturdays and the most solemn days they place the book of the Pentateuch. . . ."^[6] Its use as a stand upon which the Torah scroll was placed when not in use during the synagogue service is supported by L. Y. Rahmi.^[7]

If Yeshua is drawing a metaphor in Matt 23, then the Pharisees and scribes have sat down in a seat reserved for the Torah scroll alone and one is tempted to agree with the negative connotation of "intellectual arrogance" assigned to the expression by Roth.^[8] But Newport feels it is more probable that "at one time the 'chair of Moses' was a seat upon which sat teachers who were in some way considered authoritative expounders of Torah."^[9] However one takes the expression, it remains a metaphor for the Pharisees' role within the synagogue as expositors of Moses. Powell derives from this that Yeshua is simply acknowledging the powerful social and religious position the Pharisees and scribes occupied in a world where many were illiterate and copies of Torah are rare.^[10] Yeshua's own disciples may have been dependent on the synagogue readings to know what Moses said on any given subject, thus they are admonished to heed them when they pass on the words of the Torah itself.^[11] It is implied that the leaders speak Torah but do not do Torah (cf. John 7:19 with Matt 23:3). The Pharisees and scribes are like Satan, capable of quoting scripture, but with perverse intent. They know that Messiah is the son of David, but fail to see that he was also David's Lord (Matt 22:42-45). The chief priests and scribes know that Christ is to be born in Bethlehem, but think nothing of endangering Him by cluing in Herod on the possible whereabouts of Yeshua. They know that Moses commanded the giving of writs of divorce, but failed to see how their leniency in this area reflected upon their own hardness of heart, even in the eyes of the scandalized Gentiles. At best the Pharisees and other leaders can be commended for knowing what scripture might say, but without the understanding. They give Yahweh's law a bad name by making it burdensome (23:4), which this author feels is a chief reason why 85% of the world's Jews do not practice Judaism. Nevertheless, in the first century if a person wished to become a disciple of Moses, the synagogue was the place to go, and the Pharisees and scribes were the ones who recited and interpreted him. Christian interpreters are wont to forget that the concluding statement of the Acts 15 conference, after four negative prohibitions, was a positive referral to the weekly reading of the law of Moses in the synagogues of every city (Acts 15:21). Since interpreting Moses for the present day falls under the category of "binding and loosing," and that responsibility was given to Peter and the Church (16:19; 18:18), it does not follow that Matthew 23:2-3 has left halakhic interpretation to any Jewish Sanhedrin ancient or modern.

In the following section we bring forth evidence to support the view that the Pharisees would not have hesitated to appropriate the seat of Moses to authenticate their theological and halakhic perspectives.

The Tradition of the Elders

"*The Pharisaic Paradosis*" is the name of a very insightful and scholarly article by renowned Jewish historian A. I. Baumgarten.^[12] The *paradosis* of the elders (cf. Mark 7:5) is a religious

tradition of laws going back to the time of the Maccabees that many Jews recognized as being extra-Biblical, as adding to the Torah of Moses (cf. Prov. 30:6). The literal meaning of the Greek word used to refer to these traditions, παραδοσις, is teaching or tradition handed down from one generation to another, including customs, precedents, laws and ideas, not all of which are bad. What we wish to look at is how this parallel^[13] tradition gained respectability in the eyes of many Jews by the time of the Second Temple, and specifically the kind of methods that Pharisees used to equate their teaching with that of Moses. But first it is necessary that we establish that these Pharisaic *paradosis* were the subject of serious disputation. The Sadducees rejected it. In *Antiquities of the Jews*, written by first century history Josephus, the two sects are described as engaging in “controversies and serious differences” over these traditions.^[14] Why? Because the Sadducees received only those laws hand down in the written law of Moses. The Pharasaic *paradosis* were not. Secondly, the Sadducees felt that the traditions of the Pharisees led to pointless self-denial. Pointless, that is, if you don’t believe in an after-life. Why give up pleasure unnecessarily in pursuit of an illusion of righteousness when there may not even be a resurrection of the just anyway, according to the Sadducees? Philosophically, the Sadducees were only interested in the here and now, particularly in acquiring political power and wealth.

The Essenes also rejected the Pharisaic accretions. According to Baumgarten, when the Pharisees are accused of following *לְבַס לְשִׁירֵי* in the Qumran scrolls,^[15] it is attacked as human willfulness rather than divine law.^[16] The Pharisees are seen as fulfilling Ps. 81:13, “I let them go after their willful heart (*לְשִׁירֵי*) that they might follow their own devices.”

The Herodians rejected the *paradosis*. Herod’s biographer and closest advisor—Nicolaus of Damascus—the one who defended his will before Augustus Caesar—disliked the Pharisees, accusing them of “pretending to observe the laws of which God approves.”

Last, but not least, Yeshua of Nazareth rejected the tradition of the elders in Mark 7:1-23 when the Pharisees confronted Yeshua for allowing the 5000 to eat bread without washing their hands:

Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, “Why do your disciples not walk according to *the tradition of the elders* (Greek = παραδοσιν των πρεσβυτέρων)?”

What we wish to focus on here is the term παραδοσιν των πρεσβυτέρων, translated “tradition of the elders” in Mark 7:5. Josephus uses the same phrase in *Ant.* 10.4.1 § 51. Baumgarten is correct in concluding that carefully crafted terminology was one of the means by which the Pharisees vaunted themselves into the religious center-stage of first century Judaism. It was a way of claiming great antiquity for their *paradosis*. Notice that Yeshua rejects their terminology and calls their traditionalism the “commandments of men.”

Before the time of the Maccabees, the elders formed the *gerousia* (council of elders) of Jerusalem. Stating that their traditions were “of the elders” may have been an attempt by the Pharisees to connect their traditions with the leading center of power in pre-Maccabean Jerusalem.^[17] Stating that their teachings were “of the elders,” of the *gerousia*, would have significantly enhanced the prestige of their traditions, according to Baumgarten.^[18]

At some point the Pharisees began to teach that their oral interpretations were derived from an oral tradition which Moses received on Mt. Sinai, which again looks like an attempt to invest their tradition with genuineness based on antiquity. Some of these efforts seem designed to compensate for the fact that they were not the ones originally invested with the duty of teaching the people (cf. Mal. 2, Ezra, and Neh. 8:7-8 where it is the priests and Levites who are charged with instructing the people out of Torah, not the elders).

Given the lengths the rabbis were willing to go to lend credibility to their teachings, it is not unreasonable to suppose they would have used the “seat of Moses” to seat the rabbi giving not only the Torah reading, but also its exposition. Keener says the Pharisees “adopted the role of the law’s interpreters, since instructors sat to teach.”^[19] We may suppose that Neh 8:8 was used to justify the necessity of both Aramaic translation and interpretation of any verse of Hebrew scripture: “So they (the Levites of v. 7) read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.” The JPS explains this verse with the following words: “The idea that the Torah text cannot simply be read and understood in a straightforward way... is particularly prominent within rabbinic culture.”^[20]

There is nothing in Yeshua’s statement, “The scribes and the Pharisees sat down on Moses’ seat,” which implies that Yahweh placed them there. It is only Yeshua’s *supposed* use of the plural pronoun ‘they’ in verse 3 that has led to total confusion on what the Savior actually taught. But was the original *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew* so-construed? The answer to this question may lie in Shem Tov’s Hebrew Matthew.

George Howard’s *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*

The *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*,^[21] called *Shem Tov*, has finally been published, translated, and thoroughly analyzed for the first time by Professor George Howard.^[22] “The Divine Name occurs 19 times in the text.” Howard argues cogently that it existed in the original Matthew,

“The conclusion seems inescapable that Shem-Tov found the Divine Name already in his gospel text, having received it from an earlier generation of Jewish tridents. He permitted the Divine Name to remain in the text perhaps because he was unsure himself about what to do with it.”^[23]

It is inconceivable that Shem Tov or any Jewish scribe would have inserted the Divine Name into his text of Matthew. As Howard aptly states, “No Jewish polemist would have done that. It must have included the Divine Name from its inception.” This is but one of a number of linguistic facts which demonstrate that the Shem Tov did not originate in the Jewish community, although there is evidence to suggest it may have been held by 3rd-4th C. followers of John the Baptist. The only other possibility would seem to be that messianic Jews had given copies of Shem Tov to their fellow Jews in Spain as a prudent way to defend their observance of Judaism in the inquisitions. Keep in mind that Jews were reluctant to destroy works that contained the Divine Name.^[24]

In addition to George Howard’s groundbreaking work (see footnote 16 below), Nehemia Gordon has made a very strong case for the validity of readings in the earliest copies of Shem Tov in his book, *The Hebrew Yeshua. vs Greek Jesus.* Shem Tov’s Matthew (which is dated 1380 A.D.) resolves the most critical, long-standing problem in the history of New Testament scholarship. More dissertations have been written trying to reconcile the word “they” of Matthew 23:3 with the balance of Yeshua’s teaching in Matthew 23, Matthew 15, Mark 7, Galatians, and Acts 15, etc. than any other single verse in the entire New Testament. How does one explain Yeshua’s telling his disciples to do whatsoever the scribes and Pharisees bid them to do when the rest of Matt 23 and indeed the entire Gospel plainly contradicts this?

The solution lies in the Hebrew text found in Shem Tov’s Matthew 23:3. Translated it reads:

Upon the seat of Moses the Pharisees and the sages sit. All which *he* (Moses) *continues to say* to you keep and do; but (according to) their *takanoteem* and *ma’aseem*, do not do because they say and do not.

Whatever is read from the Torah of Moses by the *hassan*, who was more often than not a scribe or Pharisee, DO THAT. Note the Shem Tov verb יִאָמַר in 23:3 is a Qal imperfect third person, masculine singular,^[25] not plural. יִאָמַר, thus we have translated it “all which *he continues to say* to you keep and do.” Yeshua is not telling his disciples to do whatever *they*, the Pharisees, might tell them to do. The corresponding verb in the Greek text, εἰπωσιν, is a third person plural aorist active subjunctive, quite different from the Qal Imperfect of the Shem Tov. One should also note that when Matthew wrote his Gospel the schism between the synagogue leadership and messianic followers of Yeshua was already serious. To assume Yeshua directed his followers to continue to listen to the Pharisees when the decisions of the Sanhedrin attempting to squelch the new movement were only a matter of months down the road (Acts 4:1-21) is to accuse Yeshua of a very uncharacteristic shortsightedness. Matthew himself would have been even more acutely aware of God’s rejection of the Sanhedrin’s authority by the time of his writing.

Pappias said around 90 AD that everyone translated Matthew’s Hebrew Gospel “as best he could,” which is as if to say they did not know how to translate out of the Hebrew into Greek very accurately. The student of Hebrew will note other instances in Shem Tov where the Hebrew verb is third person singular (“he”) where the Greek text has “they.”

Now let’s consider if the Shem Tov case were wrong. Then you would have an immediate internal contradiction in the text. Because Yeshua goes on to tell His disciples NOT TO DO according to the Pharisee’s *takanotiyim* and *ma’asiym*. These were the two most important categories of Oral Law, and in the first century had not yet been written down. But they were considered as binding on the religious adherents of Pharaseeism living in the first century as any command in the Law. Hence, it is absolutely absurd to suggest that Yeshua is telling his disciples to do whatever they bid Jews to do, but in the next breath telling them not to do according to the *takanotiyim* and *ma’asiym*. For a fuller explanation of how important these two were to the Oral Law of the rabbis and what they comprised, you will have to read Gordon’s book^[26] or Avi ben Mordecai’s *Galatians*. Suffice it to say, that since the early translators into Greek of Matthew’s Gospel did not understand what these terms meant, it looks like they simply conflated the two into one Greek word ἐργον, (works), has a similar meaning to *ma’asim* (deeds, actions). These laws were based on deeds or customs that became precedents over time. For instance, when, during the Middle Ages, the majority of Jewish men began to wear head coverings^[27], this became a precedent which the rabbis made a ruling on (*ma’asim*), declaring it to be binding law or *halakhah* (הלכה).

What is the upshot of all of this? Is it not apparent that somebody very familiar with Jewish Oral Law had to have authored the Shem Tov? Matthew, the accountant and tax-collector, noted exactly those areas of Oral Law that Yeshua spelled out as having gone beyond and added to the Law of Moses. Therefore, Shem Tov cannot be attributed to pro-rabbinic sources, as credulous Messianic teachers would like to do. The details about *takanotim* and *ma’asim* sharpen rather than blunt the attack on rabbinic authority. These details are absent from the Greek texts.

Call No Man Father

Laying aside, for the time being, the blatant violation of Matt. 23:8,10 by the vast majority of Messianic congregations who indulge in calling their pastors ‘rabbi’, I would like my readers to turn their attention to Matt. 23:9 and realize that Orthodox Judaism had a several hundred year head-start on Catholicism in violating the Savior’s injunction to “Call no man your father upon earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.” The passage says nothing about what you call

your physical father. The context of the passage is that we all have one spiritual Father and no one else is entitled to that designation. But what if you're a sect of Judaism trying to gain credibility, a foothold as it were, with other unaffiliated Jews, in, let's say the second century B.C. Baumgarten suggests that this is when the Pharisees started calling their prominent teachers and rabbis "father," in order to equate them with the patriarchs and Moses.

Since the Pharisees were not priests, they had no lineage or family ties to the priesthood. Most ancient cultures, especially the Jews, accepted religious traditions handed down from father to son (see Amos 2:4b). The Apostle Paul spoke in Gal. 1:14 how he had advanced in the Jews religion above many of his peers, being exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his fathers (Gr. πατρικῶν = of paternal ancestors). These traditions *had been handed down to him through his own father*, for Paul tells us he is the son of a Pharisee (Acts 23:6). Most scholars assume a link between Gal. 1:14 and the Pharisaic *paradosis*. In the context of the strength of Jewish tribal tradition, and the importance placed upon patriarchy, it is doubtful that the schools of the Pharisees had displaced the family as the main instrument for transmitting Jewish tradition from one generation to another. By the second century of the Christian era, however, all eyes began to look to the Pharisees for authority in religious matters.

The handing down of traditions was particularly true of priestly traditions (*C. Apion* 1.7 § 36). The Jewish arguments for Jerusalem over against Mt. Gerizim as the legitimate place where men ought to worship mostly hinged around the high priests having received their office from their father.^[28] The Pharisees, on the other hand, were scholastic, similar to Hellenistic schools, headed by scholars.^[29]

"The notion [in the 1st Century B.C.] that such a school possessed traditions concerning the religious laws to be observed by the nation would have been revolutionary in all the ancient world...Pharisaic tradition, as a nonpriestly school tradition, was therefore extremely vulnerable."^[30]

So what did the Pharisees do? They engaged in a piece of legal fiction that must have seemed quite brash to the first generation of Jews who saw them do it. Returning to Baumgarten's article on the Pharisaic *paradosis*:

When the Pharisees chose מִסֹּרֹת (*masorot*) as the name of the laws they observed not written in the Bible, they were investing those traditions with the prestige of the written word [because the term] means the written text of the Bible even in rabbinic sources.

Baumgarten sees this as part of the Pharisaic response to early Sadducean^[31] charges that the Pharisees had attempted to attach "the questionable to the unassailable."^[32] In a similar vein, Avi ben Mordechai states:^[33]

The rabbis have a rule that allows them to attribute precedents (*ma'asim*) to those that have gone before them, whether or not they actually instituted them or not. Examples: Magen Avraham, Orach Chayim 156 b [canonical commentary on Shulchan Aruch, 17th century] "If a person heard a ruling and it seems to him that the law is thus, he is permitted to say it in the name of a great person so that people will accept it from him."

The *takanot* enactment that clothes be washed on Thursday and garlic eaten on Friday is thus attributed to Ezra without evidence. Rashi speaks of someone attributing a teaching to R. Yose so that he would accept it from him, without passing moral judgment on such a practice. The term *masorot* 'Abot—traditions of the fathers—is the name of a tractate of the Talmud. In it, the founders of rabbinic Judaism of the first century B.C.--Hillel and Shammai—are called 'Abot *ha olam*, or "fathers of the universe," or alternately, "fathers of eternity."^[34] R. Akiva and other

prominent rabbis are also called fathers. Students of rabbis were called their *b'nai*, or “sons.” Calling the Pharisaic tradition that “of the fathers” was a very clever way for them to make a statement to the Jewish community worldwide: “Our rabbis are ‘*abot* just as Moses and the prophets were.”^[35] To quote Baumgarten:

“The status of Pharisaic leaders as ‘*abot* seemed so obvious to the heirs of the Pharisees that they called the tractate that began with the old list of scholars *Abot*.”

As for calling Shammai and Hillel “fathers of eternity/universe,” that is just the kind of blasphemous title one would expect from a religion emanating from Babylonia.^[36] The fact that they held contradictory opinions on every matter except “the washing of the hands” did not inhibit the Talmudic rabbis from saying--“the words of both are the words of the living Elohim.”^[37]

We have learned that the terms *paradosis* of the elders and ‘father’ as a spiritual title for the rabbis was a deliberate attempt by the Pharisees to aggrandize their movement and their schools. In defending their oral law, they hoped to raise its status from that of mere schools of men to the patrimony of the nation. As Yeshua indicated, they did whatever they did, “to be seen of men.” Any suggestion on the part of Messianic or Church of God sabbatarian leadership that somehow Yahweh placed them in Moses’ seat is disingenuous in the light of the present study. There is One Lawgiver who is able to save or destroy, and He gave but one Law to His servant Moses. Those who honor this parallel tradition to the holy writ by wearing *yamulkas*, calling their leader ‘rabbi’ in contravention of Yeshua’s instruction in Matt 23:8, and keeping the Jewish fixed calendar, are also supporting, directly or indirectly, a whole host of questionable and contradictory practices.

Many in the Messianic movement, I suppose, will continue to obfuscate the meaning of Matt 23:2-3 by supporting the patently false reading “whatsoever they bid you do, that do.” But those who are doing the will of God will welcome the light shed on this subject. It is surely ironic that the Hebrew roots movement, and Messianic Jews, who seem to be so interested in Hebrew and the Semitic origins of the New Testament, continue to neglect the study of George Howard’s ground-breaking research on *Shem Tov’s Hebrew Matthew*. Howard has shown that many of its readings reflect manuscript variants of the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th centuries, which make it as old as the vast majority of the extant documents of the New Testament.

Avi ben Mordechai’s chapter on “The Structure of Jewish Law” in his book *Galatians* is the major exception to this neglect. Mordechai points out that the Shem Tov has Yeshua using the same Hebrew word *takanot* in Matt. 23:3 as the Pharisees used in Matt 15:2, “Why do your disciples transgress the *takanot* of the first ones?” Yeshua responds to their question by saying, (in Shem Tov’s original Hebrew), “Why do all of you transgress the words of Elohim for your *takanot*?” Since *takanotim* and *ma’asim* were the biddings of the rabbis, an immediate and direct contradiction is created with the Greek of Matt 23:2-3, “all which they say to you do.”

Notice the Pharisees use the term *rishonot* (Heb = תראשונות) in ST Matt 15:2, translated “the first ones,” to refer to their own leaders, the formulators of *takanot enactments*. When we get to Matt 19:30, Yeshua tells us, “Many who are *first ones* (ראשונים) will be last, and many who exist behind [others] (Heb = אחרון^[38]) will be *first ones*.” It is hard, given the many confrontations depicted in Matthew’s Gospel between the Pharisees and scribes and Yeshua, not to think that He had them in mind.

The singularity of the lexical form יֹאמֵר (“whatever he [Moses] is saying”) found in Shem Tov’s Matt 23:3 resolves contradictions and inconsistencies created by Greek texts’ problematic third person plural, “all which they say.” Followed to its logical conclusion, we would be left with the absurd non sequitur that Yeshua agrees with the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees on ritual hand-washing (15:1-2, 10-20), on Corban (15:3-9), on Sabbath leniency (12:1-14), on divorce and remarriage (19:3-9), and a whole host of other teachings that He plainly disagreed with. Given the antinomian, anti-Judaic penchant of the second century Alexandria-based family of copyists, it is not surprising that the authorities there would have balked at such a clear-cut recommendation by the Savior to “Do whatever Moses bids you to do.” How much the transformation from “they say” to “he says” depended on ignorance of the Hebrew vs. New Covenant unwillingness to learn from Moses is impossible to say; but it is virtually certain that Matt 23:3 has mutated from its original Hebrew, which was consonant with the themes throughout the book.

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- [1] Rabbinowitz, “Does Jesus Recognize the Authority of the Pharisee?” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 46 (2003): 425.
- [2] *Enc. Judaica* 13, p. 333.
- [3] Mark Allan Powell, “Do and Keep What Moses Says (Matthew 23:2-7),” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 114 (1995),
- [4] M. Ginsberger, “La ‘Chaire de Moïse,”” *Revue des Études Juives* 90 (1931): 161-165.
- [5] Cecil Roth, “The Chair of Moses and Its Survivals,” *PEQ* 81 (1949): 103-104.
- [6] Kenneth Newport, “A Note on the Seat of Moses,” *Andrews Univ. Seminary Studies* 28 (1990), p. 56, Newport cites Sulzberger here.
- [7] “Stone Synagogue Chairs: Their Identification, Use and Significance,” *IEJ* 40 (1990) 182-214.
- [8] Cecil Roth, “The Chair of Moses and Its Survival,” *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 81 (1949):110.
- [9] Newport, *op cit.*, p. 57.
- [10] Powell, *op. cit.*, 431-32.
- [11] *Ibid.*
- [12] *Harvard Theological Review* 80:1 (1987).
- [13] Running parallel, or alongside the law of Moses, and competing with it for people’s obedience.
- [14] *Ant.* 13.10.6 § 298.
- [15] 1 QH 4 7, 11
- [16] “The Pharisaic Paradosis,” *HTR* 80:1, p. 71.
- [17] It is to that period of Jewish history we must look for the origin of this terminology.
- [18] *Ibid.* page 74
- [19] Keener, *Gospel of Matthew*, 541.
- [20] See commentary on Neh 8:8 in *The Jewish Study Bible* (JPS: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004).
- [21] Preserved by the Jewish community in Spain during the Middle Ages.
- [22] See Howard’s ground-breaking work in *The Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*, Mercer Univ. Press, 1995.
- [23] Cf. the famous rabbinic passage, *Tosefta Shabbath*, 13.5: “The margins and books of the minim (Christians) do not save.” The debate then follows about what to do with heretical books that have the divine name in them. R. Jose suggests the divine name should be cut out and the rest of the document burned. R. Ishmael and R. Tarphon say the entire books including the divine name should be destroyed.
- [24] For additional evidence that the Tetragrammaton was used in the Greek New Testament, see “The Tetragram and the New Testament,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 96 [1977], pp. 63-83, and “The Name of God in the New Testament,” *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Mar. 1978, 12-14.
- [25] Miles V. van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar* (2007), 420.

^[26] *The Hebrew Yeshua vs. the Greek Jesus*, Nehemiah Gordon. Hilkiah Press, 2005.

^[27] Messianic Jews would be hard-pressed to find a precedent during the Talmudic period for the practice of men wearing a yamulka. It cannot be found in the Talmud, according to Nehemia Gordon, who was raised to become a rabbi by next of kin who were themselves rabbis.

^[28] Ant. 13.3.4 § 78

^[29] Elias Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, p. 259-69.

^[30] A.I. Baumgarten, "The Pharisaic Paradosis", *Harvard Theological Review* (1987), p. 72

^[31] Strong arguments could be brought forward at this point that Essene, Samaritan (and later Herodian) groups were leveling similar charges against the Pharisaic 'laws' as early as the 2nd Century B.C.

^[32] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

^[33] *Galatians* (2005), p. 77.

^[34] *Ibid.*, see also Wylen, p. 148.

^[35] Baumgarten, *ibid.*, p. 74.

^[36] The rabbis who compiled the Babylonian Talmud were concentrated around their academies in Baghdad.

^[37] Wylen, *op cit.*, p. 51.

^[38] Wm. L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the OT*, 11.