

Dr. Elaine Phillips, Introduction to Biblical Studies, Session 17, Rabbinic Literature

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This is Dr. Elaine Phillips and her teaching on Introduction to Biblical Studies. This is session 17, Introduction to Rabbinic Literature.

Well, here we are in our last little visit into things that we have called extracanonical literature.

If you remember that set of categories from several lectures back, one of those was rabbinic literature. This in itself is absolutely huge. The rabbinic literature is going to be, in a nutshell, all of those texts coming from the successors to what we might think of as Pharisees, who, over the centuries, are responding back to the Hebrew Bible.

That's a nutshell. And we want to look at it a little bit and just see if we can get some sense of what this is and why it might be helpful. Now, if you look at that screen, you probably see some words that aren't yet making a lot of sense to you.

Rabbinic literature, at least we know that. We're going to talk about what the Mishnah is eventually. Yomah is actually the title of a section of the Mishnah, which actually has to do with Day of Atonement.

It's the Aramaic of the day. And so, this is the section of Mishnah, again, we'll parse out what that means, that is going to deal with all the things that had to do with Day of Atonement. And particularly, and I'm going to come back to this, but I'll say it for starters as well.

One of the things that we need to say about the Mishnah is that it, in a sense, was representing the folks who are involved in the discussion, the audiences of it, if you will, representing the ideal that was in Torah. So, the ideal things that were to happen in the temple, the ideal things that were to happen with regard to God's people. Even though, as we're going to see, our Mishnah does not get written down and compiled until the 3rd century AD, it is going to present the temple as if it's still there because it's an ideal look.

Mishnah Yomah is particularly important because we can reflect on what 1st-century temple procedures might have been like for the Day of Atonement, i.e., during the times when Jesus was present. So we'll revisit that a little bit later on. We do have here one of our earlier best manuscripts of the Mishnah.

It happens to be something called the Kaufman Manuscript of the 11th century. We're going to try and approach this through a set of lenses. One's going to be kind of a review of history to see how we got to where we got with the rabbinic movement.

And I'll try and give a little sketch to that and a backdrop for the historical material. But also, we're going to think of it through literary lenses because, as with so many of our other things, there are a variety of genres that are part of this whole thing, too. So those are the directions we're going.

Before we do, some questions to kind of set our thinking stage for us. Coming through our, by and large, New Testament framework, let's look at this. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul's excellent, wonderful presentation of the historicity of the resurrection is based on eyewitness accounts.

He starts out by saying, for what I received, I passed on to you as a first importance. And you know, you and I skip over that. For what I received, I passed on to you.

But that is very distinctly material that was part of the whole handing on of authoritative tradition. So the rabbis in those centuries would say, I received this from so and so rabbi, so and so, and I'm handing it along to you. I received, I hand along.

I kibble, I'm a star, are the Hebrew verbs there. So, when Paul's doing that, he's actually articulating a principle of receiving authoritative tradition and then handing it on. In this case, it has to do with definitely stuff of first importance, the death, burial, and resurrection according to the scriptures.

So, just recognize that we've got a very interesting little hook to attract us to study this a little further. Here's another one. Speaking of that authority issue, it turns out we see this right away early on in the Gospel of Mark.

The audiences are astonished because Jesus is teaching with authority. He's not depending on somebody else's authority that he's receiving and handing on to them. He's speaking with his own authority.

That's out of the ordinary for his audiences. That's why they're surprised. He didn't say, I received from Antigonus of Sotah, I received from Shammai, I received from Hillel.

No, he's speaking with authority, and it shows up in how they're responding. Or, to pick up on another interesting example, in Matthew chapter 12, or one of the parallels, at the end of Mark chapter two, there is a discussion. What's lawful on the

Sabbath? Because you may remember those narratives, the disciples are walking through the grain fields.

Turns out they may be rubbing a little grain and doing some work. What was lawful to do on the Sabbath? It's a discussion. The term lawful is important.

We're going to revisit that as well. Each one of these questions or statements, examples, is fleshed out just a little bit when we look at some of the things that are happening in rabbinic literature. And again, I am hasty to say, this is just the tiniest, tiniest dip into a very, very vast sea.

In fact, there is an expression, the sea of the Talmud, because it is everything in there. Those are things that connect particularly with New Testament thought and so forth. One more question for us, because an assignment that I often give, some of you may have done this, is to actually read the first Mishnah, the first teaching, which starts out that whole corpus of material.

The very first thing starts out with the whole corpus. I'll talk about how that corpus is organized and how it's structured a little bit later on. But your assignment was to read the very, very first statement.

And here's how it goes. It is, from when do we recite the Shema in the evening? Okay, from when do we recite the Shema? Now, the Shema is the creed of Judaism. That's the word for hear.

Shema Yisrael. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And they were supposed to be reciting that.

The very first statement in the entirety of this Mishnaic and then Talmudic corpus is, from when can we recite that as we recite in the evening? Why evening? Because they view the day as starting at that point, going all the way back to Genesis, evening, it was morning, day, this, that, or the other thing. So here they are saying nothing more important than when we recite that. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

Shema Yisrael--Hear, O Israel. And it goes on for a fairly lengthy discussion. because if that's their most important creedal statement, and if they have to say it, then within which boundaries are they saying it and fulfilling that admonition? Or is there a point in time when it's too late, you haven't done it? And that's part of the discussion. So, there we have it, just a couple of things to be thinking about as we move through our quick survey of the rabbinic literature. As I said a moment ago, a little bit of history first.

The exile. The exile to Babylon. Keeping in mind that we've already had ten tribes taken off into a variety of contexts, but this, of course, is our huge exile.

By the way, for this lecture I am using BCE and CE because we're dealing with Jewish texts. Normally, I would not do that for the audiences for whom I'm speaking, but we are dealing with Jewish history and Jewish texts. So, our BCE refers to the era before the common era.

They return from exile, Cyrus's edict, long about 539. Sometime during the exile, we don't know exactly when, how, what because the origins of the synagogue are shrouded and we don't know where, but the idea is that no longer having a temple, which would draw people, the synagogue, if it didn't start then, at least really began to flourish during that time. Once they return, what had been called exile, galut, is now thought of as the diaspora, because there were people who came back.

We know that. Haggai, Zechariah, we have Sheshbazar and all those guys who are bringing a little bit of a remnant back. But as you know from reading the biblical text, most of God's people stayed away from the land.

They didn't come back. And therefore, you have a concept developing now, which is the diaspora spread throughout, seeded throughout. So, the Jews that have not returned to the land to the tiny little province of Judea become diaspora.

That's important. The second temple does indeed get built, completed in 516. Important because that's 70 years after its destruction.

According to what Jeremiah had said, and Daniel picking up on that, it's completed. And that temple, although Herod the Great is going to embellish it and enlarge it in a radical way, that actually stands then until the Romans destroy it in 70 of the Common Era or AD 70. Now a couple of things just to keep in mind in terms of what's happening with Judaism and the backdrop for our rabbinic period developments.

The Persians do indeed dominate. They dominate until Hellenism comes in. Hellenistic, Greco-Roman ways of thinking are indeed a threat to traditional Judaism.

We've talked about that before, but just a reminder that we have within Judaism now, Judaisms, we've got those who are more inclined towards adopting some of these Hellenistic ways of thinking. But we've also got those who are more conservative, and everything in between becomes a rich, rich backdrop. Rome comes in.

Rome occupies. Rome was going to be there until the first Jewish revolt. All those centuries and all the developments in them are summarized in great detail, as we've seen by Josephus.

They are summarized in an entirely different way and very succinctly in some of our Jewish texts that are the backdrop, we might say, to what we have in the rabbinic material. So, hold on to that. I'm coming back to it in a moment in terms of those centuries being transcended by a very, very important chain of tradition.

That's what we want to come back to. So, before we have the destruction of the temple by the Romans, the first Roman destruction, and the first Jewish revolt, there were some things that were happening. This is an expression that comes from Jacob Neusner, a very significant scholar who has done a lot in terms of making this rabbinic literature accessible to Gentile readers who don't know a lot of Hebrew.

He and his students translated a whole battery of these rabbinic texts. But one of the things that he developed was this concept of the Judaism of the dual Torah. Now, let me explain it just a little bit and then read this passage from something called a vote.

I will explain that in just a moment. First of all, Judaism of the dual Torah. The concept was that when Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving Torah, he not only received what you and I know of as the covenant and the Torah, and we have it in the Hebrew Bible in the first five books of Moses.

That was part of it. That's the first part of the dual Torah. But according to this concept developed in what we're going to read in a moment, Moses also received the oral Torah.

Okay, he received the oral Torah, which is only going to get written down later on. But here's what we need to understand, and I hope I can make this clear. According to rabbinic Judaism, the oral Torah is as important and as authoritative as it was handed along as the written Torah that we know in the first five books of Moses.

So, you've got the Judaism of the dual Torah. Now, how do we get that? Well, you have a very interesting, here is Neusner's translation of the Mishnah. Again, I'm going to talk about what the Mishnah is as a piece of literature, how it's organized, how it's divided.

But there is a particular section, it's called a tractate, we'll get back to that in a moment, called avot. That's the plural of av, and basically, av means father. And so this is the father's.

Sometimes, it's called Pirkei avot, sayings of the fathers or paragraphs of the fathers. But just quickly called avot. And it runs kind of like this.

Let me read it for you. It shows up, you can see my book, it shows up kind of in the middle of this. But people who study this stuff say, don't let it be buried in the middle of this particular order of the Mishnah.

Don't let that rob you of your understanding of its importance. Avot will serve as the linkage for understanding how Torah, revealed to Moses at Sinai, gets to the point where all these guys are discussing this stuff. Let me read it for you and see if it makes sense.

I wish I had a class in front of me to ask questions if I'm not making sense, but here we go. Avot starts out as follows. Moses received Torah at Sinai, right? Moses handed it on to Joshua.

Joshua to the elders, the elders to the prophets. Well, right there in that first sentence, we have the whole of a sense of revelation, Torah at Sinai. We would be inclined to say, fine, good, it's written, got it.

Three parts of the canon, done. But Avot goes on. In the second part of the first statement, the prophets handed it on to the men of the Great Assembly.

Well, now they were those who were living at the time of Ezra. So, when you hear men of the Great Assembly, that's the time of Ezra. We're coming to the close of the Old Testament period.

Are you catching that in terms of history? Right? Ezra, Nehemiah, fifth century, pretty much close to the close of our written Old Testament. And here's where it gets really interesting. The men of the Great Assembly said three things.

Okay. Up till now, we simply have what we know of as the whole component of the written Torah. That's the one part of dual Torah.

But now Avot is going to tell us what it is that these guys say, and it builds, and it grows, and it grows exponentially. I won't read the whole thing, but let's get a flavor for it. The men of the Great Assembly said three things.

This was oral. This is oral up until the early third century AD. That's when all this stuff gets written down that I'm reading to you now.

So, it's reported orally. They said, be prudent in judgment, raise up disciples. Oh, and make a fence around the Torah.

And Simon the Righteous, Shimon HaZedik, was one of the last survivors of the Great Assembly. And he would say, on three things does the world stand. Torah, temple service, deeds of loving-kindness.

And Antigonus of Soka received the Torah from Shimon HaZedik. And he would say, and then those things he said. And then you have two guys, two Yoses, actually, who receive the Torah from what's gone before.

And they add on three things. And you've got ongoing development. Each generation of these teachers is saying three things.

And it's adding on to what's gone before. And it becomes commentary in some ways on what's gone before. We get to a point.

So, pairs going on through. Shimon HaZedik, last of the men of the Great Assembly, Ezra's time. So, it was in those intervening centuries.

Remember, I said this is a very thumbnail sketch from a literary theological perspective. And the growth of the second part of the dual Torah of those time periods. In the end, or towards the end of this chapter, it is a fascinating statement.

Hillel and Shammai received from them. And Hillel says, be disciples of Aaron, loving peace, pursuing peace, loving people, drawing them near to Torah. And then he says, in Aramaic, well, that tells us something interesting as well.

And he goes on and says what he says. You've got Shammai making some contributions. By the way, these two guys, Hillel and Shammai, lived a generation before Jesus.

They are names that show up over and over and over again in the discussions that we have about how to conduct yourselves in certain areas. One of our classic ones is a New Testament backdrop. I'm taking a digression here, but it's an interesting one.

When Jesus is asked in Matthew 19, can a man divorce a woman for any reason whatsoever? That's a discussion Hillel and Shammai and their successors, the house of Hillel and the house of Shammai, were having. It's recorded in the Mishnah. And when Jesus is asking that question, or is asked that question, he's being quizzed on where he comes down in terms of that ongoing discussion that these two, on the one hand, pretty conservative Shammai types, rather liberal Hillel types were having at that point in time.

What are they discussing? Deuteronomy 24 verse 1, which has a very odd word in it, and it provides the basis for the reason for divorce. I don't have time to go into that right now, but that's just a little bit of a break. At any rate, we have an ongoing development here with receiving, passing along, receiving, passing along, fascinating stuff.

And the oral Torah, that second part of the dual Torah is growing and growing and growing. And I'll just reiterate what I said before, up through those centuries, and even into the two centuries AD or common era, it's oral. It's not written down at all, but it continues to grow exponentially.

So that's important. We have pairs of teachers. I've mentioned that a moment ago.

The names that are probably the best known are Hillel and Shammai. At the same time, just to kind of track back to what we were saying with regard to our discussion of Dead Sea Scroll texts, we have Pharisees. Josephus has told us now about Pharisees as they were in the first centuries.

And our Pharisees and Sadducees and Essenes, as they exist in the first century, become, well, the Pharisees become sort of the fertile ground from which the rabbinic movement continues and thrives. Sadducees, well, they kind of come to an end because they're associated with the temple. The temple's destroyed.

Sadducees are the rich and wealthy sorts anyway. They're gone. Essenes also, because they are a very select, exclusive community in the wilderness.

It's the Pharisees who will continue. It's the Pharisees who will, as I said a moment ago, be sort of our backdrop for what becomes the rabbinic movement. Just one more thing that we want to make a note of because, of course, we see the Sanhedrin showing up in the New Testament text because Jesus will appear before the Sanhedrin.

As the rabbinic materials deal with this, this particular legal institution, again, I'm not exactly sure of its origin, point of origin historically, but there are different sizes of Sanhedrins. The great Sanhedrin was, of course, the 71 individuals, but the collection of people who were 23 in number could actually deal with death penalty cases. Three more of the kinds of things that had to do with property issues.

So, the Sanhedrin is going to be an important legal body. In fact, as we look at this whole Mishnah again, there's a whole section of Mishnah devoted to, called Sanhedrin. I'm going to be returning to that a little bit later on.

Well, after the fall of the temple to the Romans, the destruction of the temple, I should say, the fall of Jerusalem, we have some important movements and developments in terms of leadership. So, let's put these in kind of a nutshell. Jerusalem destroyed.

Jews have to leave Jerusalem. And therefore, out here, a place called Yavne, Jamnia, depending on what you're reading, but the leadership is going to reconvene in Yavne. Yavne by the sea, away from Jerusalem.

The name Yochanan ben Zakkai is highlighted because he's important. He was a significant rabbi. There's all sorts of fascinating, probably slightly embellished stories in terms of how he got out of Jerusalem when Jerusalem was being besieged by the Romans.

But he does, along with his students, kind of reconvene Judaism. That takes about 20 years or so. But in the next 20 years, there is going to be, for lack of a better term, a restructuring of how to think about Jerusalem.

Because what's the problem? They don't have a temple. How do you deal with Judaism? How do you deal with this religion when your relationship with God is so shaped around a temple representing his presence with you, a priesthood being your mediating presence, sacrifices, and that relationship there? How on earth does Judaism continue? How does Judaism continue without that temple? Yochanan ben Zakkai and his students are a major contributing force to rethinking what Judaism is going to be. Two things I want to say in this regard, and I'm being terribly oversimplistic.

But temple service, do you remember on Three Things the World Stands that I read from one of those guys? One of those was temple service. Now we're going to have Judaism resting on the pillars of deeds of love and kindness, Torah study, and prayer. Now there's going to be some additions to that, but those are three key elements to what Judaism will become.

And here's the second thing related to that. The study of Torah was not just, oh, let's study Torah. The study of Torah was study of Torah specifically with regard to what it said about temple, what it said about sacrifices, what they implied in terms of the holiness of God and the person in the place of his people.

And so here you've got, and I said this a moment ago when I was talking about the ideal view of the Mishnah. The Mishnah, among other things, is representing all these things that are part of Torah, all the things that are part of the temple in terms that kind of presented a way of continuing all of this without actually having physical temple. So, it's an idealized thing, and the study does that.

Fine, I've spent a little bit too long on that. We need to talk also about this second term. It's an Aramaic term, Tannaim.

These are a set of five pairs, I should say, of scholars who are going to make their way. I don't really want to say it that way. Yochanan ben Zakkai is functioning long, about AD 90 or 90 CE.

The Tannaim are going to be pairs of teachers from that point on until the early third century. The word itself comes from Shana, that's Hebrew, which means to repeat. Tana is the Aramaic part of it.

And so, these are the repeaters, and they repeat accurately. As I said a moment ago, the Mishnah is not written down until early third century. But the Tannaim are there.

They are constantly repeating, repeating, repeating. They were called upon to repeat with great accuracy. Here's a quick aside, by the way.

When you think of the teachings of Jesus, the fact that they were remembered or remembered accurately is not just a claim off the top of our heads. This was a culture that dealt well with oral teaching. And the Tannaim are a good illustration of this.

Repeaters. Well, at any rate, in the middle of the second century, the common era, we have a second Jewish revolt under Bar Kokhba. A quick note at this point, there was a Jewish rabbi. His name was Akiba. He was kind of the counterpart. They were two Tannaim of a guy named Ishmael, Ishmael, and Akiba.

And Akiva actually gave his blessing, as it were, to the leader of the second Jewish revolt. Bar Kokhba was what they called him, son of the star. Because you have in Numbers chapter 24, you've got a star shall rise out of Jacob, verse 17.

That became kind of the hallmark for this startup of this revolt against Rome, the second Jewish revolt. Because they saw that the time had come. They computed that the time had come.

You know, go back to the destruction of the first temple. 70 years. It was rebuilt.

They were probably thinking history was going to repeat itself. Temple destroyed in 70. Do your math and add 70 years.

And here in this decade prior to that, there is going to be the work up to a restructured temple. And so, Bar Kokhba and the people, along with him, initiated a revolt against Rome. It was a vicious, bloody time.

Romans brought in everything they had to quell this revolt. They did quell it tragically. Akiva, Ishmael, and those two Tannaim, major teachers, were both martyred under this particular revolt.

At any rate, interestingly enough, they bounced back. But this time, the Jews are going to move up to the center of Judaism; Jewish teachers and Jewish rabbis are going to move up to the area of Galilee. There are some major towns up there.

Sepphoris becomes one. Usha is another. Tiberias is another.

Major towns in which we have establishment of Jewish presence. And quite quickly, what had been the teachings of Akiva and Ishmael, yes, martyred. But they were redacted in a simple way by a guy named Rabi Meir.

Now, he's generally forgotten. But the next highlighted guy, Judah the Prince, is who's really important. So, in 220 CE, Rabbi Judah the Prince is going to put together this thing that we call the Mishnah.

Again, hold on. After this historical survey, we're going to unpack a little bit of what the Mishnah is. Judah the Prince is so important that he's simply called Rabi, Rabbi.

And whenever you read that title, Rabi, you know who it is. It's this guy, Judah the Prince, Judah Hanasi, Rabbi Judah Hanasi, who has been the major figure in compiling, writing down our Mishnah. Interestingly enough, by that time, he was getting on pretty well with the Romans.

So, you see some fluctuation in that way as well. Third century in the Roman Empire, a terrible time geopolitically, economically, socially. Third century was awful.

The 200s. And there's going to be some very persecuting emperors at that point. Decius is one, and Diocletian is another.

But that will be sort of the jumpstart for getting the empire, pagan Roman empire, to make a shift. Constantine, hugely important figure in that. But Christianity becoming the ideological religion, if you will, as opposed to paganism in the empire.

Now, there's lots more to say about every one of those things. But all I'll say at this point is that Judaism actually did a little better under pagan Romanism than it did under Christianity. Because Christianity, under the ideologically Christian empire, tended to persecute the Jews from time to time.

That's history. Let's take a quick turn-through. And again, simplified here.

But as we look at our rabbinic literature, there's some categories we need to talk about. First of all, there's midrash. A term that is broadly used comes from a Hebrew verb, darash, which means to seek, investigate, explore, examine, et cetera.

And so in its broadest of terms, midrash is referring to taking biblical texts and exploring their meaning. Now, there are different styles and different approaches, given what century we're talking about, in terms of how this is done. But simply, midrash is that.

Exploration of the biblical text. Halakah is something else. Way back when we talked about the seekers after smooth things, in terms of our Qumran material, we made mention of this word halak, which means to go, to wa, meaning to conduct yourself.

That's a Hebrew verb. And therefore, the noun, halacha, is going to have everything to do with how one conducts themselves. In all areas of life.

So, for example, going back to Berachot, our very first Mishnah, in all of this whole compilation of text, the very first one deals with when one recites the creed of Judaism. The Shema, the hero Israel, the Lord our God, is one. So halacha is going to deal with these religious obligations and they affect every area of life. And that's the important thing.

It's not law. We don't want to think of it so simply. It has to do with obligations and how we think about them and reshaping our lives.

So, kind of keep that in mind as we work our way through this business of halacha and nature of the Mishnah. Interestingly enough, once we get into Mishnah itself, coming to that in a moment, it's going to be primarily halacha. But it's so understood to be the way you think about how you conduct yourself, that there's very few statements of Mishnah that actually are going to cite, oh, and here's the biblical reason for doing this.

Here's the biblical reason for doing this. They don't go that direction, primarily in Mishnah. But still back to genre.

We've got another category. These are very broad categories-Agadah.

Nagad is our verb. And it means to tell, tell a story. You're telling good stories.

For those of you who might be listening to this somewhere in the context of Passover, the Jews, as they do Passover, are going to read the Passover agadah, sometimes called hagadah. But at any rate, this is going to be the narration that has to do with leaving Egypt, the Passover agadah. But agadah, in general, is going to take biblical narratives and retell them, and retell them sometimes with all kinds of wonderful imagination.

Having said all that, those are three very, very broad terms. Once you start reading these compilations of texts, we're going to see them come together. So, you do have halachic midrash.

In other words, midrash that's exploring the meaning of the biblical text and looking at those biblical texts, say, for example, the Ten Commandments, and saying, okay, how are we going to understand these instructions for how we conduct ourselves?

Halachic midrash will explore that. Agadic midrash, well, just to take Exodus again, agadic midrash is going to say, ah, here's what we have when the people actually arrived at Sinai. You've got Moses up and down, and you have all the things that are being said in Exodus 19, or 18, or 17.

Those narratives become the basis for agadic midrash. So, combinations, and I'm just given two very, very simple approaches. All right, we've done history.

We've talked about major genre categories. Now let's talk about texts. Again, this is a very simple overview.

I've used the term Mishnah multiple times. Underlying Mishnah, you should hear Shana. Counterpart to Shana, as I said earlier, is the Aramaic Tanna.

So, in the Mishnah, we're seeing teachings, right? And in fact, sometimes when we have these teachings referred to in documents that are primarily in Aramaic, as opposed to being in Hebrew, things are called matnita. Instead of being called Mishnah, this, that, or the other thing, it's matnita. And you hear that T-S-H combination.

For our purposes, you know what? Let's just see if we can kind of unpack this. The Mishnah then is going to be a compilation of halachic teachings. And their halachic teachings, as I note for you, picking apart every clause, phrase of this, Judah, our Judah the prince, our major character, he has taken the work that's gone before him.

He's taken all these teachings that have been part of the oral tradition, handed along by the Tannaim, started to put together by that guy named Meir. And he's going to bring them together. And the way he brings them together is actually indicative of what kind of culture is refracted through this.

Because we have, notice, six different things. They're called orders, right? So, here's our six orders. One, two, three, four, five, six.

Seeds, well, no surprise there. We're talking about an agriculturally-based community. And so, a lot of things are going to have to do with how you live in an agriculturally-based community.

Having said that, the very first thing is barachot, which means blessings. How can you, as you're an observant Jew, even think about doing agriculture upon which your whole subsistence exists without dealing with blessings? And then, of course, without dealing with the Shema. But after that, notice the second one, festivals.

Festivals, also called appointed times. It's entitled Mo'edim, the appointed times. And we have not only Sabbath discussions, but we have all the major and minor festivals.

We have Passover, Pesachim described. We have Yomah. You'll remember that Day of Atonement thing in which we opened up our whole slide presentation with a picture of the manuscript.

So, no matter what the festival, it gets a tractate devoted to it within the order of festivals. Then, again, kind of get a sense in terms of the nature of these communities. Because there's a whole order, not just tractate, but a whole order devoted to women.

There are things in there such as marriage contracts, betrothal, and so forth and so on. We have the fourth one, called damages. And this is going to deal with all kinds of legal things.

Within that order of damages, we have a tractate entitled Sanhedrin. We've seen that before. And I just want to read to you a little bit of tractate Sanhedrin.

Chapter 10, verse 1. It's one I normally assign because it's really interesting. Listen carefully. All Israelites have a share in the world to come.

But these are those who have no portion in the world to come. Notice our world to come. These are those who have no portion in the world to come.

Number one, the one who says the resurrection of the dead is a teaching that does not derive from Torah. Ooh, isn't that interesting? These folks are saying the idea of resurrection can be derived from Torah. Now, that could lead us off to a very interesting thing.

But here's the second category of those who say, who don't have a portion in the world to come. They're the ones who say Torah doesn't come from heaven. In other words, it sounds, you know, kind of denying anything supernatural.

And here's the third, an Epicurean. Apikoros is how it's said in the Hebrew, which is actually stealing a Greek word. Those are the ones who have no share in the world to come.

And then there are a few add-ons, the ones who read seritical books, the ones who pronounces the divine name, and then some kings who are bad and so forth and so on. But what I want to say at this point is this. In a moment, we're going to talk about the commentary on the Mishnah.

I'll get to that in a moment. The commentary on this Mishnah goes on for about 30 pages, specifically with regard to the topic of the resurrection. They spend a lot of time talking about the resurrection.

Now, they bring in all kinds of other things, too, but that's an important topic. Well, at any rate, that's our Sanhedrin Mishnah. Notice we have holy things.

This is the tractate that deals idealistically with the temple. The temple doesn't stand anymore, but that certainly doesn't preclude talking about it, remembering what it used to be like, and so forth. And then, finally, purities.

Well, that's all to do with how you live in accordance with the fact that all of life is lived in the presence of God. Everything, purity. So those are our six orders of Mishnah.

Again, just to kind of remind ourselves in terms of what they are. Seeds, festivals, women, things that have to do with legal issues by and large, things that have to do with sanctuary. By the way, this one does, too, because those festivals are celebrated in the sanctuary.

And then purity. Is that all? No. Now we have, whoops, two of those, that's fine.

We've got the Tosefta. It comes from a word that means to add on. And you know what? When Judah the prince compiled all these things in the Mishnah, well, there was a lot of other stuff still out there that didn't make the cut.

But it was still valuable and important, so these additions were compiled some time thereafter. There's some debate about the date of the Tosefta itself.

But it sounds a lot like Mishnah. In fact, in some cases, it overlaps a lot with Mishnah. But it's a gold mine in terms of additions to our understanding of how they were thinking about these things.

Of greatest interest to us, I think it's probably fair to say, is this Talmudim right here. Talmud is a singular. There are two of them.

So, we have Talmudim for plural. One was compiled in Israel itself, Talmud of the Land of Israel, sometimes called the Jerusalem Talmud. That is a misnomer.

Talmud of the Land of Israel, about 400. And then later on, about 150 years later, but growing even beyond that, the Babylonian or the Bavli. The Talmud, especially the second of those two, is what we want to refer to when I use that expression, the sea of the Talmud.

Everything is in this. It's not organized. I've got encyclopedia in quotation marks because it's not organized the way we would think of organizing an encyclopedia alphabetically or whatever.

Everything is there. And the way it comes together is going to be linkages. Linkages between, well, this topic and maybe rabbi so-and-so said this topic and then moving on to another thing.

And with regard to the resurrection that I mentioned a moment ago, you know, that starts out as being those folks who deny that resurrection is taught in the Torah don't have a place in the world to come. But in the course of dealing with that, oh, the rabbis are ranging all over everywhere. One more thing we want to say, and that is just circling back to our midrash.

Because when I defined midrash earlier, it was more in terms of a genre of literature. But now we actually have compiled texts as well that are midrashic texts. They're exegetical works.

The earliest ones are dealing with Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. The one dealing with Genesis is a little bit later on. They're all extremely important sources.

In a moment, I'm going to give you just a couple of illustrations from the midrash on Exodus. Well, before we do that, I just want to let you see what this text looks like. I realize that that's probably a little small.

I will tell you that as you look at that page of text, I've taken the photograph from Page of the Babli, the Babylonian text. And in fact, see if I can make this make sense. Right here.

And I'm going to have some arrows and stuff in a moment. But that is the very first word of the Mishnah. But now, of the Mishnah as it's incorporated into the Talmud.

So the Talmud is going to be a commentary on Mishnah and bringing in everything else as well. If you'd like to get some sort of a size thought, even though that's pretty small, think of this particular page being, oh, let me just see. I'm going to guess maybe 18 inches tall and perhaps, oh, a foot wide.

So, we've got a very significant size of page here. What is it made up of? Well, first of all, there's our first Mishnah. Within that red rectangle, we have the question from when does one recite the Shema, the hero Israel in the evening? And as part of the Mishnah, you're going to have some rabbis making this suggestion and that suggestion and so forth and so on.

That's our first Mishnah. Now, the next section is Gemara. I didn't put any kind of a marker around it because it sneaks off over here, too, and that was kind of hard to do.

But Gemara means to complete, Gemar. So here, Mishnah, but now this is going to be the commentary on it. This is the place where all these subsequent two or three centuries of rabbis are going to expand on what was said in the Mishnah.

They're going to expand on what the Tannaim talked about. They're going to add to it. They're going to add in stuff from Midrash.

They're going to add in stuff from Tosefta. They're going to add in all kinds of things. Isn't that fascinating? Oh, and by the way, it doesn't stop here.

It continues on to the next page. But in the meantime, we've got some other stuff going on, don't we? There is a very significant, probably the most significant commentator in medieval Judaism, 11th century. Rashi is an acronym.

It's Rabbi Shimon ben Yitzhak Rashi, okay, Rashi. And we've got his commentary. And that's all this stuff on this side right here.

So he's going to pick up every word or phrase in both the Mishnah and in the Gemara and add his own commentary. And then over on the other side of the page, this is our classic printing of the Talmud, a page of Talmud. You have the two centuries, some of them actual descendants of Rashi or Rashi students, I should say, who are adding there.

Tosefta, remember Tosefta, this too is the additions, Tosefta. That's this whole column right here, 12th, 13th centuries. And then, just to add on in the 16th century, way over here, we've got even more additions to this stuff.

Are you seeing a dynamic growing tradition here? You don't just have end closure. No, it continues to grow and grow and grow. And even though I didn't mention it, there's notes over here that help make some kinds of connections as well.

Sometimes, the biblical texts. That is one page of Talmud. Think in terms of probably, well, depending on the size of the tractate, lots of pages, 90, 100, depending on where you are.

Well, let's just look at some examples here. When we talked about the end of Mark chapter two and the parallel in Matthew 12, the laws of Sabbath, where do they come from? Because, you know, when you read the Old Testament text there, well, it's serious business because if you break the Sabbath, that's the sign of the Sinai

covenant. You get the death penalty, but there's precious little articulation in terms of what constitutes work.

The Pharisees were very concerned. Remember, they were the popular party. The people, you know, they met the needs of the people.

And so, they're concerned for their folks and they don't want them breaking the Sabbath. So, with really good motivation, they came up with a whole bunch of things that constituted work. Now, they themselves recognize that in terms of Torah, there's a lot lacking.

So here they are, the laws of Sabbath. Though they're like mountains hanging by a string or hanging by a hair, for they have little scripture for many laws. So, they're acknowledging that that is true, but they're also acknowledging that keeping the Sabbath is important enough that they need to come up with these.

We could talk more about why this is a Mishnah Hagigah, but we won't. So, I've said this already. Scripture is not specific regarding the precise nature of work.

So, look at what we've got. 39 categories of work. In other words, things they were forbidden to do.

I will not read all these through, but notice, even as you look at them, the kind of culture that this is reflecting. Everything has to do with agriculture, whether it is fields or whether it's dealing with the product of animals and flocks and beyond that, wool and weaving and so forth, slaughtering, salting meat, curing hides, scraping, cutting hide up. But then the rest of living too.

Writing, erasing two letters, tearing a building down, dealing with fire, hitting with a hammer or taking an object from a private domain to the public or transporting in the public domain. So, they're trying to be very careful to prevent people from engaging in something that would be a serious infraction of that commandment about the Sabbath. Now, I will say that sometimes we look at that and smile a little bit, but we need to back up and realize, A, this is one of the 10 words, 10 commandments.

They took those seriously. And B, if these Pharisees and rabbinic teachers did indeed sense, know that breaking the Sabbath earned the death penalty, you can see why they would create these strictures for their people. It was intended to be protection.

Well, just for the next, oh, 10 minutes or so, we're going to look at a couple of examples of both halachic and agotic midrash. One of the reasons I want to do this is because there's been a tendency in New Testament scholarship over the last, oh, I

don't know, 20, 30 years or so to say, oh, well, there's midrash in the New Testament. I'm not so sure.

I think with the gospel writers and particularly Matthew are doing is something unique to the gospel approach. Just like Peshar, going back to our Qumran texts, Peshar was a unique way of dealing with the biblical text for that community. The gospels and what they do with the Hebrew Bible are a unique way of dealing with the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy in the gospel narratives.

So that's one of the reasons we want to explore the Mishnah and consider several examples. Before I move through some of these characteristics, I'll simply say this: Even within Jewish scholarship, particularly 20, 30, 40 years ago, there was not a lot of agreement. Well, there was some, but there wasn't complete agreement on what actually constituted midrash because, you know, there are different kinds of midrash.

There are different kinds of midrash depending on what the people were dealing with and when the text was produced. Having said that, let's at least get some of our characteristics here. When the people, the students, the scholars were doing their study, their investigation, remember what midrash means.

It means investigation to seek. They focused on things that were unusual about the biblical text. Those were the things that captured their attention.

So unusual lexical word things and unusual grammar things. We're going to come back, I hope, to a couple of illustrations of that. In addition, when people doing midrash were working through these biblical text studies, they did a lot of what's called intertextuality.

You compare this text with this text. You move in terms of Torah shaping your whole thought process. So, analogies amongst various things within Torah.

Associations, comparisons, contrasts. And it's working within that Torah-shaped worldview. We have to keep that in mind.

It's a Torah-shaped worldview. So parallel verses, words, and related ideas. Some of them may strike us as very odd combinations, but nevertheless, they're careful students.

Another thing that's part of this whole process, in addition to the two that I've just described, is that especially with our halachic midrash, our midrash which is dealing with instructions on how to conduct oneself in ways that are pleasing. They would use standard rhetorical formulas. You have heard it said, but I say to you, does that sound familiar? Jesus uses that.

That's a rhetorical formula. You've heard it said, but I say to you. Well, interestingly enough, we're going to see a couple of examples don't use that, but they use clear rhetorical patterns to make points.

And so, we see something happening with that. I've mentioned already that Torah shapes their whole process. They see Torah as absolutely seamless.

It all interfaces. Chronology is not necessarily really significant. So, for example, there's going to be some things that we look at and say, what? That's anachronistic reading.

But see, we've lost sight of the fact that they're seeing all of what's in Torah as interfacing, intertextually combined, because it's all God's word. And therefore, it's going to transcend what we might think of as chronological boundaries. So I've said this last one already, but let's just read it through.

Torah is a fundamental symbol and not just a symbol but a shaper of everything, and is key to the entire system of doing Midrash. Entire system. So, no matter what the current dismal circumstances were, guess what? Torah contributes to how things are eternally.

Once we, as students of the rabbinic materials, the rabbis themselves understand how it is that the Torah is conveying a message, we get a sense of their view of the other side of things, the world to come. The world that always is, actually, it's the ideal reality for them. So, it is key to the entire system.

That's a overview of the things that are involved in the Midrash process. Just a couple of illustrations from one of my favorite Midrash texts, mainly because it's easier to read. It's the text that deals with Exodus.

Not all of it. Parts of it. And I'm going to try and clarify why that might be true.

This is called the Mechilta. I won't get into what that word means. That's a discussion.

But she'll recognize Rabbi Ishmael. We've talked about him already. He and Akiba, two guys who were living in second century AD.

So, the abbreviation of Mechilta of Rabbi Ishmael is going to be MRI. Don't think of a medical procedure here. All right.

But that's the way to talk about the early exegesis of Exodus. Probably one of our earliest of our midrashes, midrashim on books of Torah. What it does is a lot of really interesting things, but I'll try and pass out a couple of them.

It doesn't start with chapter one and zip all the way through to chapter 40. It starts with chapter 12. So interestingly enough, this particular midrash doesn't do anything with chapter three of Exodus, where God appears to Moses at Sinai and calls him at the burning bush and so forth.

It doesn't do anything with the plagues that are unleashed against Egypt. No, it starts with chapter 12. And chapter 12 is all about Passover.

It's all about the Passover, how you take the lamb, how you have four days, how it's got to have certain characteristics. Very important things about this Passover lamb and what God tells the people to do. And that's where this midrash starts.

Because for them, just remembering, if we think of Judaism, think of the Israelite religion first, as we see it in the historical books, and then think of Judaism, what's their national narrative? Their national narrative is redemption, and it's going to be shaped around this Passover celebration. That's really the centerpiece. And so our midrash is starting with that.

And I'm going to suggest a little bit of an aside here. Very few of these midrashic texts ever take on Christianity directly. They just don't.

You've got Christians who are blasting Jews. You've got Justin Martyr and a few other people like that. But the rabbinic texts never take on Christianity directly.

That might be because they are now a religion, especially after the fourth century, that isn't exactly viewed kindly by the officials. But they do, in oblique ways, address issues. And in many ways, what this text does is work its way from the Passover lamb through other very significant aspects of that redemptive process, right on up through Torah at Sinai.

And then it closes with some Sabbath things from chapter 31, skipping in between some tabernacle stuff. It skips, by the way, the golden calf incident. It has nothing to say about Exodus 32 through 34.

Why? I'll guess. But I think it works. That was one of the key places where the Christians were really beating up on Jews.

You guys gave in to this whole golden calf. You were idolaters. And that's something the church fathers, early church fathers, were really pretty ugly about.

The Jews just leave it alone. Sorry. The rabbinic text about Exodus just leaves it alone.

At any rate, it seems to me that part of the agenda behind the structure of this text, the choice of what they deal with and don't deal with, might be specifically to take some symbols that the church had claimed, as in Passover lamb and made the church's own. This text is claiming them back for Judaism. Just another small illustration.

When you have Aaron and Hur on the mountains, sorry, when you have Aaron and Hur holding up Moses' arms while the battle is being fought, the allegorical interpretation of that from the church was, you know, you've got, this is Jesus, he's on the cross and so forth. This text does never say anything about that, but you can see it's claiming that back for themselves as well. Well, all right.

In addition to that, this text emphasizes justice. No surprise there. It's going to deal with Torah as articulated at Sinai.

So, you not only have it dealing with the Ten Commandments, but chapters 21 through 23 are also going to be part of the focus of this text. And that has everything to do with how the judicial components are supposed to be functioning. Now, if you've looked at that, you've seen, I hope, the possibility of putting together a Gothic Midrash, the rescue, bringing out Sinai, out to Sinai, with Halachic Midrash, how you deal with the Passover Lamb, how you deal with Torah.

And so Mechiltev Rabi Yishmael is a really great place to just dip in and sample some of these kinds of Midrash. Just one more quick summary here in terms of Halachic Midrash, just to kind of repeat stuff I've said, there's going to be an attempt to pick up on these instructions. But instructions are challenging here.

One of the examples I'm going to draw on momentarily is going to be that rather sobering thing that runs something like this. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, wound for wound, bruise for bruise, life for life. What do the rabbis do with that? Because that is a piece of biblical instruction.

How do you make it fit not only with other biblical texts, but with a, well, compassionate way of dealing with things? Halachic Midrash is going to do this. As they do, well, the rabbis not only have rhetorical processes to walk them through this stuff, but you know what? They even developed rules for doing exegesis.

I'm not even going to get into these, but there was our friend, Rabbi Hillel, who had seven rules for exegesis. We see some of them surfacing in the New Testament, by the way, the argument from the lesser to the greater, the greater to the lesser, that shows up. You have another one who actually goes as far as 32 rules for exegesis.

So, they're doing that. An atomistic reading, well, you know, it's something we don't ever dare do now because what it means is taking a very small portion of the text, maybe even part of a word or a word, and combining it over here and those two don't go together, except the fact that they correspond in one way, allows you to read this atomistically, lift that word out, and then compare it here and come to a conclusion. Now, if that doesn't make sense, I understand we're going to try an example.

In the section that is dealing with Exodus 21, I just cited it for you a moment ago. How in the world can you apply and understand eye for eye all the way or down to life for life? Do you have to apply it literally? Or is there a way that you can do a substitution in some way? Their rabbis wrestled with this. They were not really keen on coming up with literal bodily harm as a measure for measure.

Measure for measure was important for them, no question about it. That's justice. But how did you affect it? Well, here's how it works.

And this is just a part of a much longer discussion, but this gives us an illustration. One rabbi is going to say this means he's got to pay with his life, i.e. a literal interpretation. Now, of course, that's going to be the foil against which other things are going to be said.

Another interpretation. And I should tell you that the rabbinic material, both halachic and aggadic, is full of another interpretation. Usually, we want to say at least five or six of them.

But here's another one. He can pay or he shall pay with his life, but not with life and money. In other words, you can't extort on the basis of this.

But now along comes our rabbi. Student of the prince. Nope, he says.

This means monetary composition. And how do we know this? You can't just say it because you want to be nice. No, no, no.

You can compare it with verse 30, where it turns out one little word seems to be the same Hebrew verb in a different context, but the same Hebrew verb is used. And because it means monetary compensation there, well, you can say that it means monetary compensation here, and you do not have to take life for life. Finding that word in verse 30 then opens up a whole interpretive range.

This happens a lot and it leads to this richness in interpretation. Now, you know, some of us kind of our eyebrows raised, but it's a rich study, a rich study. That's only one example.

Let's do a couple more. Here's a second one. On Exodus 20.

Here's where rhetorical patterns are going to come into play. Because what is Exodus 20 all about? Well, you know, it's the 10 commandments. Thou shalt not, thou shalt not, thou shalt not.

What the rabbis are going to do is to say the fact that you have those warnings, that thou shalt nots, is necessary before you effect any kind of a punishment. So it's a significant aspect about God's justice. He doesn't just do punishment.

He's giving a warning. Here's how it goes with one illustration. You shall not murder.

Sixth commandment. The rhetoric. Why is this said? Well, because it also says, way back in Genesis, whoever sheds a man's blood.

We've heard the penalty on it. That's the continuation of Genesis 9:6. But we haven't heard the warning against it. Therefore, it does say you shall not murder.

Now we're going, wait a minute, that's not chronologically working. But remember, they're thinking of Torah as a whole here. And so our rhetoric is, there has been a warning.

Genesis 9:6 says there's going to be a punishment. You do murder; you get the death penalty. But there's a warning.

Let's do another one. You shall not commit adultery. Why is this said? Here comes the rhetoric pattern.

Because it says Leviticus 20, in this case, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. We've heard the penalty. Leviticus 20, 10.

We haven't heard the warning. But we have the warning here. It says here, you shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal. Why is this said? Because it says, notice the pattern is allowing them to walk through each one of these and make sure that God's justice is front and center. He steals a man and sells him.

And by the way, the death penalty is there in that context for kidnapping. We haven't heard the warning. It says here, you shall not steal.

And then it goes on from there. So, two illustrations of a whole array of halakhic midrash. Let's do just a couple of agotic midrash things.

And then I promise you, we'll stop. But these are interesting ones. You may think Exodus 20, what? That's not going to be agotic midrash.

How could it be agotic midrash? It's the Ten Commandments. But there's that very interesting line in terms of, you shall not lift up the name of the Lord your God to emptiness. It says the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless.

Well, okay. What does that mean? The rabbis are asking. Bobby Eleazar says one thing.

You must therefore say, he clears those who repent, but does not clear those who do not repent. So now we're going to explore this a little bit. But here's where it gets really interesting.

So, track with me on this. And before we read it through, and I talk about it, let's make two points. One of them goes back to our discussion of, oh no, what do the Jews do? The temple isn't here anymore.

How in the world can they possibly have a means of atonement without the temple? By the way, we get asked that oftentimes in the 21st century. How did Jews deal without a temple? Well, they did then too. They had to wrestle with this.

So that's our first question. The second thing we want to say is notice the rhetoric, because there's going to be rhetoric structuring this whole response to how in the world do you accomplish atonement when you don't have a temple? The third thing we need to say, I said two, but there are three. This is going to refer to some teaching of Rabbi Ishmael.

So, dial back to our historical survey. Ishmael, Akiba, living at the same time as the Bar Kokhba revolt, having high expectations for maybe a temple being rebuilt, but that revolt failed, they're martyred, and things go down the tubes. Against those little bits of backdrop, let's read this long boy.

For four things, did Mati ben Heresh go to Rabbi Elazar HaKappar to Laodicea. He said to him, Master, have you heard the four distinctions in atonement, which Rabbi Ishmael used to explain? So, there's going to be something very subtle happening here. He said to him, oh, yes.

And now we have them articulated. One biblical passage says to return all backsliding children, picking up on Jeremiah 3, from which we learn repentance brings forgiveness. So, notice, you're going to have an appeal to a biblical text.

The appeal to the biblical text is going to demonstrate something about God's receiving a person and in effect, having atonement made for them. This first one is repentance. Second, another biblical passage says, for on this day, atonement shall be made for you.

Ooh, it's actually right there, Leviticus 16, from which we learn that the day of atonement itself brings forgiveness. Do you have to have a temple and sacrifice for that? No, in Leviticus 16, you didn't have that yet. And yet you have atonement being made.

The third biblical passage says, surely this iniquity shall not be expiated by you till you die, from which we learn death brings forgiveness. And still, a fourth biblical passage says, then I will visit their transgressions with a rod in their iniquity with strokes, from which we learn chastisements bring forgiveness. So, what have they done? Rabbi Ishmael has attributed to him a system, I want to say that carefully, for dealing with the absence, the continued absence, the heartbreaking absence of a temple from the biblical text.

They can derive the fact that any Jew who will, A, repent, B, participate in day of atonement. Death is going to be part of it. It's not going to be fully reached until they die.

But then prior to that chastisement is also part of this process. And those are then the four means towards atonement or the four distinctions. So just one quick illustration there.

And then our final one. And with this, we really will end. Agadic Midrash.

You have in Exodus 13. Just a quick mention. As the Israelites are leaving Exodus, sorry, as the Israelites are leaving Egypt, it says, and Moses took the bones of Joseph with him.

Well, that makes perfect sense because in Genesis, we find out that Joseph made them swear under oath that he would. The oath is important. The oath becomes an important part of this narrative.

But then, of course, the question is, all right, so how in the world would they know where? And so the rabbis are going to deal with this. How did Joseph, sorry, let's try it again. How did Moses know where Joseph was buried? We've got, you know, if you're reading the Masoretic text, 430 years in between.

You've had change over pharaohs, etc. How did Moses know where Joseph was buried? Well, here's our Agadic Midrash in all of its fullness. It's grand stuff.

It's told that Serach, the daughter of Asher, survived from that generation. He's a really old person. She showed Moses the grave of Joseph.

And she said the Egyptians put him into a metal coffin, which they sunk in the Nile. So Moses went and stood by the Nile. And now, here's where it gets so much fun.

He took a tablet of gold on which he engraved the divine name, the Tetragrammaton. And throwing it into the Nile, he cried out and said, remember, we got an oath that's been sworn. So, something's got to happen to make that come true.

He cried out and said, Joseph, son of Jacob, the oath to redeem his children, which God swore to our father Abraham, has reached its fulfillment. If you come up well and good, but if not, we are guiltless of this oath. The oath that Joseph made them swear at the end of Genesis.

Immediately, Joseph's coffin came to the surface. Moses took it and the rabbis go on. You know, don't be so surprised it's that.

And then they tell a whole long story of Elisha who makes an axe head rise. So if you can do that, certainly the Lord can bring up Joseph's coffin. By the way, we don't have time to do this, but I just note for you here.

This is a measure for measure justice. And now in agotic fashion, that principle is going to be illustrated. How is it that Joseph had the privilege of not only having his coffin come to the surface, but actually be carried along side the Ark of the Covenant? What's fascinating is those two Hebrew words are the same.

Our own and our own. And so the text is at length. And here's where the anachronism becomes so much fun.

In the text, the rabbis go to great lengths to demonstrate that Joseph kept every one of the commandments, not just the 10 commandments, but all the ones after. A number of the ones after that. And again, you're thinking now, wait a minute, Joseph lived before the articulation of the 10 commandments.

But the rabbis don't care. That's not the important point. Those commandments have existed in the heavenly realms forever.

This is the rabbis' conception of it. And so, Joseph has been a righteous person. And they go back to the Genesis narrative and they draw this text and this text and this text to demonstrate how he's kept all of those commandments.

And therefore, he merits being able to go alongside the Ark of the Covenant on the way to the land of Canaan. Well, it's so interesting, but you know what? We need to stop for now. So let me just recap a whole sweep back over the last four lectures.

Here it is. We remind ourselves that these folks, no matter what community they were part of, were interested in understanding the biblical text. Canaan is sacred scripture to them.

It's divinely revealed. It has everything to do with who they are in every aspect of their lives. No matter what the communities, diverse communities, different places, their intent was to study that text, whether it's Peshet, whether it's Midrash, doesn't matter.

They're studying the text in order to apply it and maintain the continuity and applicability of that text. So that is a fast, fast sweep through extracanonical literature. Coming back to our four C's. I don't know if that will stop.

This is Dr. Elaine Phillips and her teaching on Introduction to Biblical Studies. This is session 17, Introduction to Rabbinic Literature.