

My Rabbi, Jesus

(parts from Rob Bell's "I Love My Rabbi"- info supplied to him by Ray Vanderlan)

Matt 23:1-11

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, 2 "The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees are the official interpreters of the Scriptures. 3 So practice and obey whatever they say to you, but don't follow their example. For they don't practice what they teach. 4 They crush you with impossible religious demands and never lift a finger to help ease the burden.5 "Everything they do is for show. On their arms they wear extra wide prayer boxes with Scripture verses inside, and they wear extra long tassels on their robes. 6 And how they love to sit at the head table at banquets and in the most prominent seats in the synagogue! 7 They enjoy the attention they get on the streets, and they enjoy being called 'Rabbi.' 8 Don't ever let anyone call you 'Rabbi,' for you have only one teacher, and all of you are on the same level as brothers and sisters. 9 And don't address anyone here on earth as 'Father,' for only God in heaven is your spiritual Father. 10 And don't let anyone call you 'Master,' for there is only one master, the Messiah. NLT

Rabbis and the Education of 1st Century Jewish Boys

1. Ages 6-10 - Bet Seffer (the House of the Book) - taught in a synagogue by a Torah rabbi - He would cover their writing slate with honey (the wonderful, luxurious, sweet substance that reminded Jews of God's favor) - The rabbi would say, "may you never forget that the words of God are like honey." By age 10 these students would have put to memory the entire Torah (the first 5 books of the Bible - the Greek word for Torah is *Pentateuch*)

- Rabbi - master, teacher; a Jew qualified to expound and apply the *halakhah* (the legal part of the Talmud) and other Jewish law
- Talmud - the authoritative body of Jewish tradition comprised of: 1. The Mishnah (the oral law that was compiled and written down around AD 200 and made the basic half of the Talmud) 2. And, the Gemara (a commentary on the Mishnah forming the second part of the Talmud)
- Cabala - a medieval and modern system of Jewish theosophy, mysticism, and thaumaturgy (the performance of miracles) marked by belief in creation through emanation and a cipher method of interpreting Scripture.
- Septuagint - a pre-Christian Greek version of the Old Testament used by Greek-speaking Christians.

2. Ages 10-14 - Bet Talmud (for the better students from Bet Seffer) - (during this second stage students were required to memorize Joshua through Malachi and they would learn the interactive art of questions and answers. What is 2 x 2? A sharp student might answer 16 divided by 4)

- Jewish girls generally married around age 13

3. Ages 15 and above - Bet Midrash (for the best of the best of the best - the "Harvard boys") - these young men aspired to be rabbis or teachers (the highest position in Jewish society) - each rabbi had his own interpretation of the Torah that was called his "yoke" which he desired to perpetuate. He would determine from the text what was permissible and what was not. This was called "binding and loosing." If he wanted to preach a new "yoke," he had to be approved by two other rabbis with "schmeha." If he was approved, he was deemed to have "schmeha" or authority as well. He would begin his teaching by saying, "You have heard it said, but I say unto you..." The disciples of a rabbi were called Talmudine. They learned a kind of "intellectual Kung Fu" where they used a questioning technique called a "remez. A question was asked about a verse in the text, but was really intended for the verse before or after. There are 22 remezes in the 4 Gospels. Jesus, our

rabbi, was *good*, and his opponents in their jealousy became furious. Today, even those Jews who reject Jesus as Messiah believe that He was brilliant.

- A Rabbi called a student whom he believed "had what it would take," by saying, "come follow me." This was the highest of honors for the young man and for his parents.
- Rabbis were passionate, and quirky. They would often dance when handed the Torah.
- A young Talmude would endeavor to imitate everything about his Rabbi.
- A common blessing of Jesus' day was, "May you be covered by the dust of your Rabbi."
- If a young man were flunking out, his rabbi would say, "Go ply your trade."
- Only two rabbis ever called disciples: Hillel and Jesus. All the rest required their disciples to pursue them.
- The Apostles were likely all under 20 years of age except for Peter. Only Peter and Jesus seem to be concerned about the temple tax which was required only by men over 20.
- The average life expectancy in the days of Jesus was between 30 and 40. By age 20 most people had lost their teeth.
- Because the Jews feared standing water like that in a lake (it represented chaos and the abyss), Jesus walking on the water was a powerful event.
- Peter was likely called to join Jesus because he was the oldest. Normally a rabbi would pick one older Talmude to help with the young ones.
- It is likely that the Apostles were another rabbis' rejects.
- Talmudine were taught to have faith that they could do things just as those done by their rabbi. Thus, Phillip defied Dominican's authority at Heiropolis.

Num 15:37-41

37 The LORD said to Moses, 38 "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'Throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels on the corners of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel. 39 You will have these tassels to look at and so you will remember all the commands of the LORD, that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by going after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes. 40 Then you will remember to obey all my commands and will be consecrated to your God. 41 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD your God.'" NIV

- A prayer shawl had blue tassels on it. The border was call the "knaf" or wings and the fringe was called the tzitzit (pronounced seitsee) with 5 knots for each book of the Torah. (God is a tactile God and a God of props.)
- David likely cut off Saul's tzitzit; the hemorrhaging woman probably grabbed Jesus' tzitzit
- When a Jew, wearing his prayer shawl, crossed his arms, he was said to be in his prayer closet.
- Blessings:

Num 6:22-27

22 The LORD said to Moses, 23 "Tell Aaron and his sons, 'This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

*24 ""The LORD bless you
and keep you;
25 the LORD make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
26 the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace.' "*

27 "So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them." NIV

and

May you be covered in the dust of your rabbi!

