

Remez

The great teachers (rabbis) during Jesus' day used a technique that was later called remez. In their teaching, they would use part of a Scripture passage in a discussion, assuming that their audience's knowledge of the Bible would allow them to deduce for themselves the fuller meaning of the teaching. Apparently, Jesus, who possessed a brilliant understanding of Scripture and strong teaching skills, used this method often.

For example, when the children shouted "Hosanna" to him in the temple and the chief priests and teachers of the law became indignant ([Matt. 21:15](#)), Jesus responded by quoting [Psalm 8:2](#): "From the lips of children and infants, you have ordained praise." The religious leaders' anger at Jesus can be better understood when we realize that the next phrase in the Psalm reveals why children and infants offer praise—because the enemies of God would be silenced. The religious leaders realized that Jesus was implying that they were God's enemies.

Jesus used this teaching method again when speaking to Zacchaeus. "For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost," Jesus said ([Luke 19:10](#)). The background to this statement is probably [Ezekiel 34](#). God, angry with Israel's leaders for scattering and harming his flock, stated that he would become the shepherd and would seek the lost ones and save them. Based on this, the people of Jesus' day understood that the Messiah to come would "seek and save" the lost. By using this phrase, knowing that his listeners knew the Scripture, Jesus communicated several things. To the people, he communicated, "I am the Messiah and also God." To the religious leaders, whose influence kept Zacchaeus out of the crowd, he said, "You have scattered and harmed God's flock." To Zacchaeus, he said, "You are one of God's lost sheep and he still loves you."

Jesus best fit the type of rabbi believed to have s'mikhah, the authority to make new interpretations of the Torah. Whereas most teachers of the law could only teach accepted interpretations, teachers with authority could make new interpretations and pass legal judgments. Crowds were amazed because Jesus taught with authority ([Matt. 7:28—29](#)), and some people questioned his authority ([Matt. 21:23—27](#)).

The Tassels

As a Jewish rabbi, Jesus probably wore tassels on the corners of his garment. The Jewish practice of wearing these tassels developed from God's command in [Numbers 15](#): "You are to make tassels on the corners of your garments...so you will remember all the commands of the LORD" ([v. 38-39](#)).

Later in Jewish history, the tassels were incorporated into the Jewish prayer shawl, called the *tallit*, which is worn by many Jews today. On each corner of the prayer shawl are long tassels, or *tzitzit*, knotted five times to remind Jews of the five books of Moses. The four spaces between these knots represent the letters of God's name, YHWH. And the knots along the prayer shawl edges use exactly 613 knotted strings, representing the 613 laws of the Torah.

Ezekiel prophesied that the Messiah would come with healing in his "wings." But the Hebrew word for "wings" could also be used to identify the tassels that Jewish men wore on the corners of their robe. Based on this prophecy, the Jews expected the Messiah to have healing in his tassels.

During his ministry, one woman demonstrated her faith in Jesus by seeking healing in his tassels. [Matthew 9](#) tells us that a sick woman, whose disease had probably left her untouched for twelve years, thought to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed" ([v. 21](#)).

When she touched the Messiah's tassels, the woman was healed. And Jesus commended her for her faith.