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Lecture 16

Pharisees Scribes Sadducees and the Sanhedrin Excursus on The Sadducees

Remember that we will be doing how we got our Bible this
10 summer. Tim Hegg's book by that title is the book we will be
using to guide our studies. It can purchased here:

<http://www.torahresource.com/CourseStudies.html>

Today will be looking at the Sadducees and what caused the
15 split of origins, beliefs and politics. It is important to remember
that office High Priest was Hereditary. The Sadducees believe that
they could trace their lineage of the High Priest back to Zadok the
High Priest at the time of Solomon, though this seems unlikely. A
division arose later in the Hasmonean era. What happened was that
20 the High Priest's office became more than an office of service to
Hashem, but also a Kingly one with secular power and
responsibilities. This most likely underlines the origin of their
name in Hebrew צד"ק. These combined offices of the King/High
Priest then lead to the division between the Sadducees and
25 Pharisees.

What caused the exact division is unclear and when exactly it
happened is also unclear, but the division came about for two
reasons. The first thought that comes is the text in;

30

*1Ch 28:3 But God said to me, 'You may not build a house for
my name, for you are a man of war and have shed blood.'*

The understanding then that at some point in time the family that
35 would have been in charge of the High Priest office in the office of
king would act in some way to have voided their ability to stand in
the office of Priest/High Priest through the shedding of blood.¹
What that event was is lost to us in history. The second thing that
seems to separate the Sadducees was this statement from the
40 "Ethics of our Fathers";

*Antigonus leader of Socho (Thought to be a name of
Sadducees given by the Rabbi's) received the tradition from
Shimon the Righteous. He used to say: Be not like the*

¹ Interprets Dictionary of the Bible vol 4 pg 160

5 *servants who serve their master for the sake of receiving a reward; instead be like servants who serve their Master not for the sake of receiving a reward. And let the awe of Heaven be upon you.*²

10 From this statement we see their focus was that of service and not reward for example the after life or world to come. This is consistent with their not having a belief in the after life.

15 The Romans struggled to find a High Priest that would be subservient to them without success. The people were not happy with the choice of the Romans and demanded a change and when changed the Romans were upset with the choice. Finally the decisive act came in 66 CE when Eleazer, the son of the High Priest Ananais, who was the governor of the temple, refused to accept temple sacrifices for foreigners³. This then meant the sacrifice for the Roman Emperor was disallowed it was perceived as insult to Roman itself. This suggests “that preponderance of the priesthood certainly were Sadducees. When Ananias was murdered Eleazer made a bid against Menahem for leadership of the revolt; he was supported by the Sadducees.”⁴

25 The Sadducees represented the nobility, power and wealth⁵. They centered their lives in politics of the day. They did not share in Messianic hopes of the Pharisees or the people. They took their destiny in their hands, fighting and negotiating with the heathen nations they thought best, while having as their aim their own welfare and worldly success.⁶

30 The consequences of this was that would not accept the Pharisaic doctrine of resurrection. They were more concerned with national revitalization than individual salvation⁷. This would have lead them to be very hostile to the followers of the Master. Simply because of the follower’s resurrection claims and the belief in the Messiah.

35 “According to Josephus they regarded only those observances as obligatory which are contained in the written word, and did not recognize those not written in the Law of Moses and declared by

² Piekei Avos; Ethics of the the Fathers Mesorah Pub. 1984 pg 9

³ Interprets Dictionary of the Bible Vol 4 pg 161

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Josephus Ant 28.1.4

⁶ Dictionary of Ancient Rabbis Edit by J. Neusner pg 359

⁷ Ibid

5 the Pharisees to be derived from the teachers; they considered it a
virtuous to dispute by argument.”⁸ From this we can understand
that they did not accept the previous judgments as important in
evaluating present issues. This is significant differently for the
command in Deut 17:7-11. They believed they could vary from the
10 previous decisions, which is clearly not following the command.
How they dealt with this issue in debate we are not certain. We
should not confuse the Karites of today with the Sadducees; the
Karites arose in 700CE and have come and gone throughout
history. The Karites reject oral tradition or Rabbi’s but have their
15 own traditions.

“In regard to criminal jurisdiction they were so rigorous that the
day which their code was abolished by the Pharisaic Sanhedrin
under Simeon b. Shetah’s leadership during the reign of Salome
Alexandra was celebrated as a festival. They insisted on literal
20 execution of law of execution: Eye for eye, tooth for tooth’.”⁹ They
would not execute someone would had perjured themselves unless
the person at trial had been executed; whereas the Pharisees would
have executed someone who had perjured themselves in a capital
offence trial.

25
*t San 6:6f “But this was in order to uproot from the heart
of the Boethusians (another name for Sadducees) the
position which they stated, that [a perjured witness could
not be put to death] until after the person whom he accused
30 had actually been executed”¹⁰*

They were inconsistent within their own approach to the Torah.
Sadly enough they are not alone with this fault.

35 “They held the owner of a slave fully as responsible for the
damage done by the latter as for that done by the owner’s ox or
ass; where as the Pharisees discriminated between reasonable and
unreasonable beings.”¹¹

⁸ Ibid pg 359f

⁹ Ibid pg 360

¹⁰ The Tosefta; Translated from the Hebrew with a new Introduction ed/tran
Jacob Neusner Hendrickson Pub 2002 pg 1166

¹¹ Dictionary of Ancient Rabbis pg 360

5 “They also insisted according to Meg Ta’an iv upon a literal interpretation of”¹²;

10 *Deu 22:17 ESV and behold, he has accused her of misconduct, saying, "I did not find in your daughter evidence of virginity." And yet this is the evidence of my daughter's virginity.' And they shall spread the cloak before the elders of the city.*

15 After the wedding night, the family would spread the bedsheets to those present from the community. I think this would be very embarrassing for the young women.

This next issue has bearing on this time of the year. “They contended that the seven weeks from the first barley-sheaf offering (omer) to Pentecost should according to:

20 *Lev 23:15-16 "You shall count seven full weeks from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering. (16) You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath. Then you shall present a grain offering of new grain to the LORD.*

25 They counted from “*the day after Sabbath*” and consequently, that Pentecost should always be celebrated on the first day of the week. In this way they obviously followed the old Biblical view which regards the festival of the firstlings as having no connection whatsoever with the Passover feast; whereas the Pharisees connect the festival with the Exodus with the festival of the giving of the Law, interpreted the morrow after the Sabbath to signify the second day of Passover.”¹³

35 “Especially in regard to the Temple practice did they hold older views, based upon claims of greater sanctity for the priesthood and of its sole dominion over the sanctuary and of its dominion over the sanctuary. This they insisted that the daily burnt offerings were, with reference to the singular used in;

40 *Num 28:4 The one lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight;*

45 to be offered by the high priest at his own expense; whereas the Pharisees contended that they were to be furnished as a national sacrifice at the cost of the Temple treasury into which the

¹² Ibid

¹³ Ibid pg 360f

5 “shikalim” collected from the whole people were paid.”¹⁴ “They
claimed that the meal-offering belonged to the priest’s portion
where as the Pharisees claimed it for the altar.”¹⁵ “They insisted on
an especially high degree of purity in those who officiated at the
preparation of the ashes of the Red Heifer. The Pharisees, on the
10 contrary demonstratively opposed such strictness.”¹⁶ They opposed
the popular festivity of the water libation and the procession
preceding the same on each night of the Sukkot feast, as well as the
closing festival, on which the Pharisees laid much stress, of beating
of the Willow trees.”¹⁷

15 In regard to the Day of Atonement there was debate about how
the incense was to be offered. “They (the Sadducees) declared that
the kindling of the incense in the vessel with which the high priest
entered the Holy of Holies of the Day of Atonement was take place
outside, so that he might be wrapped in smoke while meeting the
20 Shekinah with in the, according;

*Lev 16:2 and the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron your
brother not to come at any time into the Holy Place inside
the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he
25 may not die. For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy
seat.*

Whereas the Pharisees, denying the high priest’s claim of such
supernatural vision, insisted that the incense be kindled within.”¹⁸

30 This outlines just some of the key differences between the
Pharisees and Sadducees. With the destruction of the temple they
lost their power and faded from the scene. Karite of today may
claim them as their ancestors, but there is no actual link. The word
Zaddukim found in later Talmudic literature is not reference to
35 Sadducees but reference to Heretic (Yes believers in Yeshua as
well as other Jews who did not accept the Talmud’s position) and
was used interchangeably with the word *minim*.

Excursus on The Sanhedrin

40 The word Sanhedrin is Greek word which is συνέδριον.¹⁹ We
find used in the LXX in Proverbs according to Brenton translation;

¹⁴ Ibid pg 361

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Ibid pg 373

5 *Pro 11:13 A double-tongued man discloses the secret
 counsels of an assembly: but he that is faithful in spirit
 conceals matters. Again Pro 22:10 Cast out a pestilent
 person from the council, and strife shall go out with him;
 for when he sits in the council he dishonours all.²⁰.*

10 A town had to be either have a minimum of 120²¹ residents in it or
 230 to have a Sanhedrin²²

 The idea of Sanhedrin in Mishnah is not at all like what we
 have in mind when we think of the chief priest sitting in judgment
15 in the case of the master. That is not what it is solely the Mishnah
 tells there are courts of 3 judges²³ for various types of the value of
 the crop from the fourth year²⁴ damages, flogging, rape and
 seduction. The new moon is before 3 judges; the New Year is
 decided with 5 judges; then 7 judges if they are not able to
20 decide.²⁵ 5 Judges is used to break Levirate bond in regarding;

*Deu 25:7-9 And if the man does not wish to take his
 brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the
 gate to the elders and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to
25 perpetuate his brother's name in Israel; he will not perform
 the duty of a husband's brother to me.' (8) Then the elders
 of his city shall call him and speak to him, and if he
 persists, saying, 'I do not wish to take her,' (9) then his
 brother's wife shall go up to him in the presence of the
30 elders and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face.
 And she shall answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the
 man who does not build up his brother's house.'*

 Twenty three judges are required for a death penalty cases, in
35 those cases of bestiality, for an ox to be stoned.²⁶ The presence of
 the 71 members of the Sanhedrin for the trial of false prophet,
 going to war, to declare a city apostate, or if the king seeks
 instruction about going to war.²⁷

 There are rules about who can sit in judgment;

²⁰ It should be noted it does not appear in its Lexicon/Dictionary form in either
of these verses it appears as συνεδριω

²¹ m San 1:6.Q

²² Ibid 1:6.S

²³ m San 1;1,2

²⁴ Ibid 1:3

²⁵ Ibid 1:2

²⁶ Ibid 1;4

²⁷ Ibid 1:5

5 *And these are relatives[prohibited from serving as one's*
 witness or judges]: (1)One's father, (2) brother, (3)father's
 brother, (4)mother's brother, (5) sister's husband, (6)
 Father's sister's husband (7) Mother's sister's husband,
10 *(8)Mother's husband, (9) Father-in-law, (10) wife's sister's*
 *Husband*²⁸

 There are then rules about who can replace a sitting judge in
 case of conflict and how that is done; this very much legal
 document regarding court proceedings and ruling and how things
15 are to done.

 The focus for most of us is the Jerusalem Sanhedrin. This was
 known as *the Great Sanhedrin which sits in the hall of hewn stone*
 according to Neusner.²⁹ The other name by which it was known is
 בית דין גדול in English *The great house of Justice*.³⁰ This institution
20 varied power after Pompey took control of Jerusalem for Rome in
 69BCE after the 44CE the area Israel was in cooperated into the
 Rome province of Syria and the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem gained
 prominence again till the destruction of Jerusalem. The Sanhedrin
 had sat in the Temple grounds until the Pharisees took over; it was
25 then moved out to the stone grotto because of the Secular nature of
 the Sanhedrin. We must remember that Sanhedrin judged Secular
 cases as well as religious cases. We need to differentiate between
 that in our view of Sanhedrin: it was not only a religious body.

 When we get to the trial of the master, we will revisit the issues
30 about how trials were to proceed and what the rules of evidence
 were.

²⁸ Ibid 3;4

²⁹ Dictionary of Ancient Rabbis pg 373

³⁰ Interprets Dictionary of the Bible Vol 4 pg 215