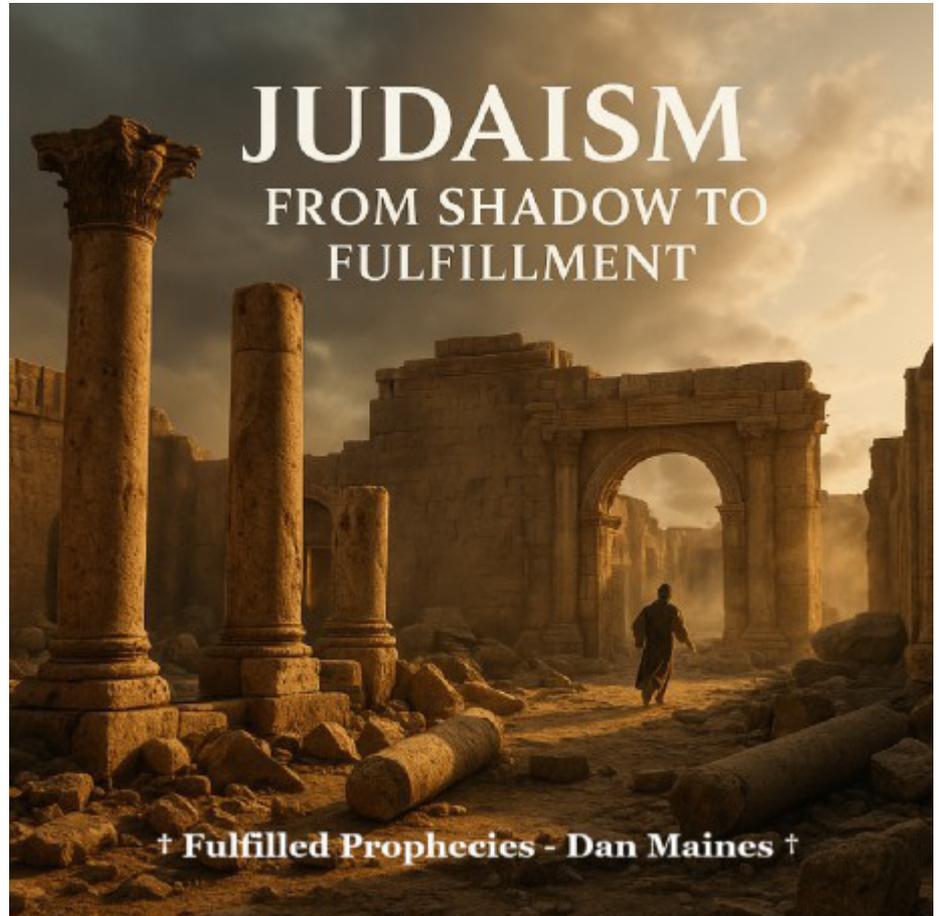


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Judaism: From Shadow to Fulfillment



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† Judaism was established by God through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, forming a nation that would bear His covenant, His Law, and His promises. Through Moses, Israel received the Law on Sinai, and the priesthood, temple, and sacrifices were established as shadows pointing to Christ. Every ritual, feast, and ordinance had prophetic meaning fulfilled in Jesus. By the first century, those shadows had reached their end, yet Judaism

as a system resisted the transition to the New Covenant, holding to the letter rather than the Spirit.

The Foundation of Judaism

† Judaism began with the call of Abraham: Now the Lord said to Abram, Go from your country and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing (Genesis 12:1-2).

† The covenant was reaffirmed through Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 26:3-5, Genesis 28:13-15). From Jacob's descendants came the twelve tribes of Israel, to whom God gave His Law: You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exodus 19:6).

† This covenant made them distinct from all nations. The Law of Moses defined their worship, sacrifices, and civil life (Deuteronomy 4:7-8). Yet it was temporary: The Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith (Galatians 3:24).

The Purpose of the Law

† The Law revealed sin and man's inability to attain righteousness through works: By the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20).

† The sacrifices of animals served as continual reminders of sin: For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins (Hebrews 10:4). The tabernacle and later the temple symbolized God's dwelling among His people but weren't His true dwelling: The Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands (Acts 7:48).

† Prophets declared a new covenant was coming: Behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah (Jeremiah 31:31).

Judaism in the First Century

† By the time of Christ, Judaism had fragmented into sects, Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Zealots. The Pharisees clung to oral traditions that nullified God's commandments (Matthew 15:3-9). The Sadducees denied the resurrection and the unseen realm (Acts 23:8).

† Jesus rebuked the leaders: Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law, justice and mercy and faithfulness (Matthew 23:23).

† He came as the fulfillment of everything they were waiting for: Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill (Matthew 5:17).

† Yet the leaders rejected Him: He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him (John 1:11). This rejection sealed their judgment: The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruit (Matthew 21:43).

The End of the Old Covenant System

† The apostles proclaimed the transition: When He said, A new covenant, He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear (Hebrews 8:13).

† That disappearance occurred in AD 70 when the temple was destroyed exactly as Jesus foretold: Not one stone here will be

left upon another, which will not be torn down (Matthew 24:2).

† Judaism as a covenant system ended there. The priesthood ceased, sacrifices stopped, and temple worship ended forever. God's dwelling was now with His people in the Spirit: Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (1 Corinthians 3:16).

Judaism After the First Century

† After AD 70, Judaism reorganized without a temple, becoming Rabbinic Judaism. The focus shifted from temple priesthood to rabbinic authority grounded in the Oral Torah, later codified in the Mishnah and Talmud. The temple's destruction was reinterpreted as temporary exile rather than divine judgment, but scripture declares otherwise: These are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled (Luke 21:22).

† Without atonement, modern Judaism remains a religion of self-righteousness through works. It looks for a Messiah who's already come. The veil remains: Their minds were hardened, for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ (2 Corinthians 3:14).

Modern Judaism Today

† Judaism today lives as a covenantal community ordered by Torah and tradition without temple, sacrifice, or an active Levitical priesthood. Its various movements, Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist, each differ in authority and practice, but all share one common denial, that Jesus is the Messiah.

† The prophets had declared that salvation would come through Israel to the nations (Isaiah 49:6), but the New Covenant fulfilled this in Christ through the church, the true Israel of God

(Galatians 6:16, Ephesians 2:11-22).

† Judaism now stands as a reminder of what was fulfilled. The Law and Prophets pointed to Christ, and now all who come to Him, Jew or Gentile, enter the true covenant promises (Romans 10:4, Galatians 3:28-29).

Who Practices Judaism Today

† Those who practice Judaism today are primarily ethnic Jews who follow Rabbinic traditions through four main branches, Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist. Each upholds portions of Mosaic law, observes the Sabbath from Friday evening to Saturday evening, and celebrates feasts such as Passover, Yom Kippur, and Hanukkah.

† While all no longer offer sacrifices, many within Orthodox Judaism await a rebuilt temple and the coming of Messiah, whereas other branches emphasize ethical monotheism and communal life without a rebuilt temple. Their worship centers on the Torah and Talmud rather than on the New Covenant established by Christ.

† However, not all who keep aspects of the Law are Jews. Some Christian-based movements such as the Seventh-day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses retain elements that echo Judaism. Adventists retain the seventh-day Sabbath and clean-unclean dietary distinctions, while Witnesses deny the full divinity of Christ and bind salvation to organizational teachings and duties. Though neither group is Jewish, both mirror outward observances rather than the completed work of Christ.

† Paul warned that returning to the Law nullifies grace: You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law, you have fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4). The New Covenant calls all people to faith in Christ alone, apart

from the works of the Law.

The Fulfilled Purpose

† The Old Covenant system served its divine purpose: These things are a mere shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ (Colossians 2:17). The Law, priesthood, and sacrifices all reached their end in Him.

† True Judaism was never about nationality or ritual, it was about faith in God's promises. He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit (Romans 2:28-29).

† Through the cross and resurrection, Christ became the fulfillment of all shadows, the true temple, and the eternal priest.

Historical References

† Josephus reports about 1,100,000 perished and the temple was consumed by fire (Wars 6.9).

† Tacitus, a Roman historian, described the city's devastation and the burning of the temple (Histories 5.13).

† Eusebius records that Christians fled the city before its fall, viewing it as fulfillment of Christ's words (Ecclesiastical History 3.5).

How It Applies to Us Today

† We aren't to rebuild what God destroyed. If I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor (Galatians 2:18). The true temple is now spiritual, not made with hands (Acts 17:24, Mark 14:58, 2 Corinthians 6:16, Ephesians 2:19-22).

† Modern Judaism still seeks through works what God gave through grace. The church must bear witness to the finished work of Christ and call both Jew and Gentile into the New Covenant reality.

† The end of Judaism as a covenantal system wasn't the end of God's plan for Israel but the revelation of its true meaning, fulfilled in Jesus and extended to all nations.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Genesis 12:1-2; Exodus 19:6; Deuteronomy 4:7-8; Jeremiah 31:31; Matthew 5:17; Matthew 15:3-9; Matthew 21:43; Matthew 23:23; Matthew 24:2; Luke 21:22; John 1:11; Acts 7:48; Acts 17:24; Mark 14:58; Romans 2:28-29; Romans 3:20; Romans 10:4; Galatians 2:18; Galatians 3:24, 28-29; Galatians 5:4; Galatians 6:16; Ephesians 2:11-22, 19-22; Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 10:4; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 3:14, 6:16; Isaiah 49:6

† Josephus, Wars 6.9

† Tacitus, Histories 5.13

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5

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