

In His Dust is a series based on my notes and thoughts from Dwight Pryor's teaching. (For details, please see *In His Dust – An Overview*.) Yeshua and His disciples were thoroughly Jewish and immersed in the study of the Tenakh (the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings). Since the New Testament was recorded in their language of Hebrew before being translated into Greek, it is valuable to learn the Hebraic context, meanings, and idioms that are not always apparent in the Greek. The dates in the first section come from my Learning Tool called *A Bible Overview*.

In His Dust – The history and culture surrounding Yeshua's life and teaching, A Brief Overview January 5, 2023.

1. Yeshua lived about 4 BC to 30 AD in the Second-Temple period. Here is a brief history of the Temple:

- 950 BC – The glorious first Temple in Jerusalem was completed by Solomon.
- 586 BC – It was destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar, and the Jews were deported to Babylon.
- 538 BC – King Cyrus let the Jews return to Jerusalem to rebuild the second Temple. Through much adversity, it was completed (515 to 430 BC) with the oversight of Ezra and Nehemiah.
- Between the testaments, the Greeks (450-163 BC) and then Romans (63 and following) ruled with a period of Jewish freedom in between.
- 176-63 BC – The Jewish freedom years resulting from the Maccabean revolt.
- First century AD (Yeshua's day) – Herod the Great expanded the architecture of the second Temple. The Jews gathered, learned, prayed, and worshipped in local synagogues rather than the Temple. The timeline of the Passover observance in the year Yeshua was killed reflects this period.¹
- 70 AD – the Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans.

2. The language, agriculture, and politics

- The languages of Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek (the Romans), and Latin (official documents) contributed to the culture of the first-century, second-Temple period.
- Fishing flourished, along with abundant vineyards, wildflowers, tenant farming, olive oil, figs, and fertile soil. Yeshua spent most of His time in the fishing village of Capernaum.
- Revolutionaries and zealots, encouraged by the victory of the Maccabeans, trained in Galilee to revolt against Rome. Roman crucifixions were common to keep them in check.

3. Yeshua was thoroughly Jewish and a highly respected rabbi (i.e., a teacher of Torah/Law).

We know this because His parents were extraordinarily devout as indicated in their observance of circumcision, purification, and the Feasts, as well as their knowledge of Scripture. They pilgrimaged to Jerusalem for Passover each year which was rare because the journey was arduous and expensive. Their devotion indicates they would have raised Yeshua just as all the Jewish boys were raised:

- At 5 or 6 years of age, Yeshua studied Torah (the Law – the first five books) by oral repetition.
- At 10, He learned the Mishnah (the commentary or interpretation of Torah by the sages).
- At 13, He had his Barmitzvah (coming of age), worked alongside His father, and studied every day.
- At 15, He learned the legal rulings of the rabbis.
- Although Yeshua did not marry, 18 was the age men would marry.
- At 20, He pursued His vocation.
- At 30, He entered full spiritual vigor. (For ex., a man from a priestly family would begin serving at the Temple.) Yeshua's became a rabbi at His baptism. He chose and made disciples using the methods of the sages. He renewed and affirmed the Torah's true intent and hinted at His Messiahship. "He drew upon the ancient wells and brought forth living water." His teaching focused on the fruit of repentance – good actions from the heart, generosity, and dependence on God rather than on ritual purity.

4. Important Aspects of Judaism

- Judaism is not a religion; it is a way of life.
- Judaism is covenantal; obeying Torah was a response to His gracious deliverance; therefore, study was worship.
- The Jewish people considered the Torah to be a treasure, a precious inheritance, a gift of guidance.

¹ “The second series of sacrifices [Deuteronomy 16:2 and 2 Chronicles 35] came to be called Second Passover. The sacrifices of lambs became so numerous, they lasted two days. What began as one combined series of sacrifices from the time of Josiah onward was separated into sacrifices on two days. On Nisan 14, the sacrifice of the Passover lambs occurred; they were cleaned and given to the people to take home and eat. The next day, Nisan 15, was the second Passover for the sacrifice of all other bulls, lambs and goats, including the atonement sacrifice or sin offering [killed when Yeshua was killed].”
(Dwight A. Pryor, *Misconceptions about the Passover*)