

## The Story of The Bible Week 10 - The 2nd Temple Period and the Great Reset

### Questions:

Does learning some of the history between the two testaments help you understand the world Jesus lived in any better?

Jesus came as the ultimate “reset” for the relationship between Yahweh and mankind. What do you think about His unrelenting pursuit to have a relationship with His Creation?

### The Second Temple Period



After years of living in exile in Babylon a new kingdom arose to challenge Babylon, the Persians. The Persians defeated Babylon in 539 BC capturing the city. It would be a few years in 537 BC that the words that Jeremiah prophesied would be fulfilled. Cyrus, king of Persia, would allow the first Jews to return to Jerusalem. The first things built by the returning Jews was the altar and the Temple. However Judah faced opposition and the Temple building stopped. After several years of no building Yahweh raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah who encouraged the people who began to build the Temple again. It still faced opposition but Judah finished building the Second Temple. However, the Second Temple dedication is missing important details. When Israel made and dedicated the Tabernacle of Moses the Glory of Yahweh filled the tent in a thick cloud and His Presence was in the Holy of Holies. The same happened when Solomon made and dedicated the First Temple. When the Second

Temple was made their was celebrations, but there was no Ark of the Covenant, there was no cloud, there was no presence. In fact when Pompey conquered Jerusalem records report him going into the Holy of Holies. Had the Glory of the Lord been in the room, he surely would have died.

Israel had returned from Babylon but in the minds of the Jews the exile was not entirely over. The prophets had not only prophesied that Judah would be set free but all 12 tribes. They were also still under the service of the Persian empire, they were not independent in any way. This is a big part of the mindset of a Jew living in the time of Jesus. This is what the people expected of Jesus and likely what they were expecting on Palm Sunday. It's why the Apostles asked Jesus:

Acts 1:6 (ESV)

6 ...“Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

The end of the exile is a big deal in the theology of the Bible, especially in regards to Pentecost and the Great Commission.

The period of time from the end of Babylonian exile to the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD is considered the Second Temple Period. This is the period that the Old Testament would be completed. Up to this point they had the Law, they had the various prophets, but it was during this period where the Holy Spirit led the priests and scribes to accumulate and put together that we know as the Jewish Bible, our Old Testament. This is important because it gives a more complete picture of theology, which is exactly what took place during this period of time. People were able to see a more complete picture of Yahweh, His plan, and the role they played in the story. They began coming up with their theologies, they began theorizing who the Messiah would be, what He would look like, and when He would come.

Unfortunately, with the rise of good theology came poor theology. Sects of teachers began to form and during this time period the Jewish “parties” would form. These parties will be discussed in further details below, but the foremost thought that began to infect Jewish society was the belief in salvation through works. In hindsight the Jews began looking at why they were in exile and why the exile had not ended. This caused an extreme reaction where “works” or following the law to the smallest details began to take over. Rather than the law being a reflection of what it meant to be a follower of Yahweh it was not about earning your place as a child of Yahweh. When Jesus would arrive on the scene He would challenge these beliefs as would His apostles who would write the New Testament. It is not that works are not important, but they were never the means of salvation. Israel was exiled because they broke His commands, but the reason they broke His commands was because they did not have loving-loyalty toward Him which caused Israel to reject His ways.

Being the period of time where the Old Testament was completed is important for the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls which were recently discovered in 1947. The Dead Sea Scrolls were written during this time period, which means we aren't dealing with translations of translations from the originals that were hundreds or thousands of years old, they were written at the same time as the canonized originals.

Greeks defeat the Persian Empire and Hellenism begins.



Judah would continue being under Persian rule until 332 BC when Alexander the Great would amass an army of more than 30,000 and come against the Persian army in the region of Palestine (basically the region between Macedonia/Greece and Persia/Babylon) and defeat the Persian army. In Palestine was obviously Judah and thus the Greeks now controlled Judah. The Greeks were a culture of “advancement.” Technologically and culturally speaking they spread their knowledge through the regions that they conquered. Greeks famously used the aqueduct system which was used to bring water to remote areas. While it may be normal for us to expect water in most areas of life it wasn’t so ancient days. The idea of being able to transport water wherever needed was a game-changer. It allowed areas previously uninhabitable to be livable. It allowed great advancements in farming as farms could expand and the crops could be more easily watered. Watering flocks of livestock was easier and more convenient. Life began to be less harsh, you didn’t have to work as hard just to survive day to day. This naturally led to people having more free time in life. To fill this free time the Greeks began the arts. This naturally spread the Greek worldview and ideals which were very contrary to the ways of Yahweh. By the time Jesus was born many in Judea has fully embraced Greek culture in a process that is called “Hellenization.”

## **Translations of the Septuagint (LXX)**

In 250 BC the Hebrew Bible was translated from Hebrew for the very first time. It would be translated into Greek. It is called the Septuagint because it was translated by 72 translators. “Septuaginta” is the Latin word for 70. The Septuagint is often referenced as the LXX, which is the Roman Numeral for 70. The tradition of the translations says that Ptolemy II (the Greek who was Pharaoh of Egypt at the time) gathered 6 translators from each of the 12 tribes of Israel and sent them to Jerusalem. The story goes that they 72 elders each went into their own rooms, prayed, and translated the text. According to the Talmud (Oral Law Jewish Writing) each and everyone of the 72 translators wrote the identical translations and this they knew God was in it. Others have refuted and tell different stories of how it was written. The important part is it was written and serves as one of our oldest copies of the original text. This is important from preservation and keeping translations honest. It also gives us insight into how the original Jewish texts were read as translation requires interpretation to a certain extent. Words in one language do not always perfectly match another language, and seeing how a scribe translates a text gives insight into how they thought.

The LXX would come to be the primary Bible for the Greek speaking world, including in Judea. The New Testament in several occasions quotes the LXX not the Hebrew. The idea of a translation being used in our New Testament is comforting for us today, who don't speak Hebrew and Greek. Just because ours are translations doesn't mean they are worthless, it is the Word of God and He does speak to us through it. While the originals will always be the most accurate, we can rest assured that translations are an OK thing (otherwise Scripture itself wouldn't quote a translations).

## **The Maccabean Revolt and the Hasmonean Dynasty**

Over the years the fighting inside the Greek Empire would take place and change hands. In 175 BC a man named Antiochus IV Epiphanes became ruler of the Seleucid Empire by assassinating the legitimate heir to the throne. The Seleucid Empire was a Greek Empire that controlled from modern day Turkey to Persia (modern day Iranian area). Essentially he controlled most of the Greek Empire except Greece itself and eastward. The Greek Empire's history is complicated and requires a lot more time to understand the entire story than this book will cover. There was a lot of internal conflict among the Greeks. Antiochus IV would eventually be a Greek who was in control of Syria. While his story is a complicated one we will pick up with what he did in 167 BC. On December 25th, 167 BC, Antiochus ordered that an altar to Zeus be build on top of the altar of burnt offering in the Second Temple. Here they offered swine to Zeus on the altar and desecrated the Temple (swine being an unclean animal, and being used in worship of an opposing god).

Zeus is comparatively the same god as a Canaanite god we have spoken of a lot up to this point, Baal. The book of Revelation contains many theological attacks against Zeus and his worship. The sacrificing to Zeus by Antiochus IV is considered the fulfillment of some of the prophecies of Daniel, especially Daniel 11:31, by Jews and many Christians. Antiochus also outlawed all Jewish worship practices.

In response to this the Maccabean Revolt began when Antiochus ordered that everyone sacrifice to Zeus. When a Jewish man was going up to offer his sacrifice, Mattathias ran up and killed him. Mattathias then gathered an army to oppose Antiochus.

1 Maccabees 2:40–45 (LES2)

40 And each man said to his neighbor, “If all of us act as our brothers did and do not fight against the nations for our life and our duties, now quickly they will slaughter us from the earth!” 41 And they resolved on that day, saying, “Every person who should come to us in battle on the day of the Sabbath, we will fight against them, and we will not all die like our brothers died in their hiding places.” 42 Then there gathered to them a congregation of Hasideans, a strong force from Israel, all who were devoted to the law. 43 And all the fugitives from the evil joined with them and became for them as support. 44 And they organized a force and struck sinners in their wrath and

lawless men in their rage, and those who remained fled to the nations to escape. 45 And Mattathias and his sons went around and tore down the altars.

The next year Mattathias would die:

1 Maccabees 3:1–2 (LES2)

1 And Judas, who was called Maccabeus, his son, rose in his place. 2 And all his brothers helped him, and everyone, as many as had joined his father. And they fought the battle for Israel with joy.

Maccabee means “the hammer.” Judas was a “competent military chief” who led the Jews to victory, the enemy was forced to make peace with Judas and repeal the laws against Jewish worship. Maccabeus then went to Jerusalem where there was a grand celebration and cleansing of Temple. This is what the Jewish feast of Hanukkah celebrates to this day.

1 Maccabees 4:54–56 (LES2)

54 According to the season, according to the day during which the nations defiled it, on that day, they dedicated it with songs and lutes and kinyrais and with cymbals. 55 And all the people fell on their face and bowed and gave praise to heaven, which had caused them to prosper. 56 And they performed the dedication of the altar for eight days and offered up burnt offerings with cheer and sacrificed the deliverance and thanksgiving sacrifice.

The fighting didn’t stop there, for several more years Judas and his army fought against the foreign army until they defeated Antiochus IV’s replacement Demetrius I Soter. Judas prayed in victory:

2 Maccabees 15:23–24 (LES2)

23 And now, O Ruler of the heavens, send a good angel before us for fear and trembling. 24 May those who are coming against your holy people with blasphemy be terrified by the greatness of your strength.” And this one ceased praying with these words.

In 160 AD Judas died and his youngest brother Jonathan became the leader. He fought against the foreigners for eight years until he was the ruler of most of Judea. Meanwhile during this eight years power struggles inside the Seleucid Empire (Greeks who controlled from Turkey to Persia) caused some of the Greeks to call for Jonathan support in overthrowing the current King. In 153 BC Alexander Balas, one of the Greeks who sought the throne, appointed Jonathan as high priest. In 150 BC he was also appointed the governor of Judea. During his reign he fought against Hellenism in the Jewish culture. Jonathan died in 143 BC when he was betrayed by an ally.

After Jonathan’s death his brother Simon was made High Priest and began what is called in history the “Hasmonean Dynasty.” The Hasmonean Dynasty is essentially a long period of time where Jewish Priests were also the Kings of Judea. Of course the priests were not supposed to be the rulers of Israel, but because of a prophecy about the Messiah in Zechariah 6 they were able to retain power. In 140 BC Judea would enjoy a period where they were independent again, however not all twelve tribes were in the land, so the exile was still not over.

## The Second Temple Period

250 BC

Septuagint (LXX)

Greek OT

167 BC

Antiochus IV sacrifices  
pigs to Zeus in the Temple

167-161 BC

Maccabean Revolt

160 BC

Pharisee, Saducee, Essene  
groups begin to form

143-142 BC

Hasmonean Dynasty  
begins

140 BC

Israel is  
independent

76 BC

Salome Alexandra rules  
Judea in peace for 10 years

### The Sadducees

After the Maccabean Revolt “political parties” began to emerge in Judea. These parties would function both as political parties but also much like denominations of the Jewish faith. The Sadducees would become the ruling political party. Although the origin of the Sadducee is not known or agreed upon, we do know that when the Maccabees took control of Judea wealthy priests soon rose to power. These were the Sadducees. The Sadducees weren’t as much interested in theology as the other groups, they held only the Torah (the first 5 books of the Bible) as Canon. They are reported as rejecting the supernatural, including angels, demons, and the afterlife. Their main desire was control and wealth.

### The Pharisees

The Pharisees opposed the Sadducees in most areas of theology. They started as a formal group around 160 BC. The Pharisees held to the same Old Testament Canon as protestant churches do today, 39 books in total (in English). However, they also held oral law as equal with the scriptures. This led to a “salvation by works” theology that the New Testament spoke against many times. The Pharisees, contrasted to the Sadducees were usually (relatively) poor. Because the Sadducees controlled the temple, the Pharisees started the synagogue institution, where worship would take place separate from the Temple. Their emphasis was not on the sacrifices done by the Temple priests, but on prayer and study. As we know Jesus butted heads with the Pharisees often, whom Jesus often spoke of having correct theology but not understanding the truth behind it. After the 2nd Temple was destroyed in 70 AD the Sadducees ceased to exist.

Ironically Jesus would cause the Pharisees and Sadducees to set aside their disagreements and unite against Jesus. Meeting in the house of the High Priest to decide how they could come against Him.

## **The Essenes**

The Essenes were polar opposite of the Sadducees and Pharisees. While we cannot be certain, the consensus is that the Essenes are the community who lived in Qumran, responsible for writing what we call the “Dead Sea Scrolls.” The Dead Sea scrolls were found 1947 in a cave near the Dead Sea. A shepherd boy kicked a ball into a cave one day and heard a pot shatter, there he discovered ancient scrolls, written in Hebrew, which are the oldest copies of the Old Testament we have, written during the Second Temple period. These scrolls went a long way in showing how well preserved the Scriptures were and are, in my opinion, the most important archaeological find in history. While no one called themselves “Pharisees” today, it is the Pharisee legacy that Orthodox Jews hold today and have held through the ages.

The people of Qumran, rather than get involved in politics, decided they would rather live in a community secluded from outside influence at all. They focused solely on the Scriptures. Apart from Biblical texts the Dead Sea Scrolls contain commentaries and other texts related to scripture. The Essenes were radical in their beliefs, one of the topics that caused them to separate was over the kind of calendar the Jews were using. The other parties had adopted a lunar (moon cycle) calendar, which is contrary to the calendar that had been used before it, a solar calendar. While this may seem arbitrary, books like Daniel (and later Revelation) use a solar calendar in their prophecies. With the Qumran calendar they calculated that the Messiah would be born between 3 BC and 2 AD. That guess was pretty spot on. With 3 BC being a very viable year for the birth of Jesus. Not only did they predict the correct time frame some of their writing on what they expect of the Messiah are spot on. They even predicted two comings of Messiah (although they weren’t sure if it was the same Messiah or two Messiahs-they weren’t perfect, but considering they are working from before the events happened it’s impressive). If you want to go deeper into this look up “Dead Sea Scroll 11Q13 or 11QMechizedek” and compare it to what the writer of Hebrew writes in Hebrews 5-7 and what Jesus said about Himself in Luke 4:16-21. It’s crazy stuff that the people of Qumran predicted this stuff at least 200 years before Jesus arrived. Unfortunately we don’t know what happened to the Essenes, the Dead Sea Scrolls are all dated earlier than 100 BC and believed to be older than that. Some believe they died out due to their extremely isolated community. Others believe they may have all become Jesus followers considering how close their predictions of Messiah came.

## **The Zealots**

The zealots are the last political party, however they were not a religious party in the same way as the others. The Zealots were a group of radicals who violently opposed Rome and the occupation of Rome in Judea (which we will speak of next). Famously the Zealots got some of the population to rally against the census that was decreed, the same census that caused Joseph and Mary to return to Bethlehem where Jesus was born. One of Jesus’ disciples, Simon, was formerly a Zealot before becoming one of Jesus’ Apostles. The Zealots are most famously known for starting the revolt that caused the destruction of the Second Temple, something prophesied by Jesus in Matthew 24. In 66 AD the Zealots began a revolt in Jerusalem where they were besieged by Rome for 3 and a half years. Following their defeat in Jerusalem and the rest of Judea they retreated to a mountain top fortress called Masada where they held against the Romans for months before they killed themselves rather than be taken as slaves.

Rome takes over the world.

## The Birth Of Jesus

**67 BC**

Salome dies

Brothers fight for throne

**67-63 BC**

Civil War

**63 BC**

Israel under  
Roman leadership

**40 BC**

Parthians take over Israel  
Parthians = People Group from Iran

**37 BC**

Herod is made king, comes  
with Roman Legions

**6-3 BC**

Jesus' Birth  
\* multiple dates possible

The Hasmonean dynasty ruled from 142 BC to 63 BC. Notable in this time was the reign of Queen Salome who ruled Judea for 10 years (76-67 BC) in peace with the surrounding nations. She in particular welcomed the Pharisees, who were rising in power enough to join the ruling council the "Sanhedrin." In fact she removed Sadducee from power who were overly hostile to the Pharisees. However, when she died in 67 BC her sons Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II both contended for the throne. Because of this Civil War broke out. With the Pharisees supporting Aristobulus and the Sadducees supporting Hyrcanus. At the same time the Roman Empire under the leadership of Julius Caesar, was sweeping through the world conquering nation after nation. Both Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II sent to Rome for support offering financial incentive. Ultimately a Roman General named Pompey supported Hyrcanus. In 63 BC Hyrcanus rules Judea and is now under Roman control. With Hyrcanus the Sadducees are now the majority priestly party with the most power in the Sanhedrin.

### Herod becomes king in Judea

In 40 BC the son of Aristobulus joined with the Parthians (Northeast Iran) to overthrow Hyrcanus II. The Parthians tricked Hyrcanus and took over Jerusalem from 40-37 BC. Herod who was a governor in Judea fled to the Romans, specifically to Mark Antony. There Herod was made the official King of Judea and marched upon Jerusalem with two Roman legions. The Romans besieged Jerusalem for six-months until they were forced to surrender in 37 BC. Herod had Aristobulus' son killed and married the granddaughter of Hyrcanus II, Mariamne. Herod also bribed the Romans to not destroy the Jewish Temple, which was standard Roman practice.

King Herod also known as Herod the Great was a builder. He built some of the most wondrous things the world has ever seen. Foremost is how he renovated the 2nd Temple. The Temple grounds were expanded to 36 acres and the Temple itself began renovation. Ancient writing describe Herod's renovated temple as a wonder to behold.



Along with the temple Herod would build fortresses, theaters, roads, aqueducts, and fully embraced Roman culture (which was very similar to Greek culture that came before it).

While Herod was a great builder he was a mentally unstable person. Herod had orders that should he ever die his favorite wife, Mariamne, was to be put to death immediately so no other men could be with her. In the end he himself had her killed along with her two sons, her brother, her grandfather, and mother because of fear of the that the Hasmonean's would rise against him.

Herod himself would die while Joseph took Mary and Jesus to Egypt to flee from Herod's decree to kill all male children in the area of Bethlehem 2 years and under after being warned by an angel.

### The Census of Caesar Augustus

After Julius Caesar was assassinated his grandnephew, Octavian, would claim the throne. Octavian would eventually defeat Mark Antony and be sole ruler of the Kingdom. The senate honored Octavian with the title Augustus Caesar, augustus means "exalted." It would be Caesar Augustus who would make a decree that a census of the Roman world be taken.

Luke 2:1 (ESV)

1 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

This would cause Joseph and Mary to return to the town of Bethlehem the city of David. Where the Messiah, Jesus would be born.

### **Jesus, the ultimate "reset."**

We started this story by describing how Yahweh created everything and made an earthly and heavenly family. We explored how both families rebelled and how Yahweh kept reaching out to his creation time and time again. Along the line several times Yahweh would hit a reset switch. The first was after the angels and humans had offspring together in the Nephilim. Yahweh flooded the earth and started over with Noah and his family. Next was as Babel, when mankind was in the process of exalting itself Yahweh disinherited the nations and choose a man named Abraham to build a nation as Yahweh's elect nation, Israel.

Yahweh would make a covenant with Israel based on "loving-loyalty." The general idea was He loves His people and wants their love. If they truly love Him and want a relationship with Him it would cause them to live their lives a certain way, these ways are laid out in the Law. Along with behavioral laws (like the 10 commandments) there are ritual laws. These ritual laws were focused on "resetting" the people, the Tabernacle, and the land of Israel. If someone accidentally sinned they would "reset" their cleanness with a sacrifice. Every year of the Day of Atonement the unintentional sins of the people and the cleansing of the Tabernacle were reset. There were resets that took place every 7th year, and a big reset called the Year of Jubilee where every fifty year there would be a massive reset. All land returned to the original owner and all servants were released from their contracts (which usually meant their debt was released).

When Jesus came He became the Jubilee fulfillment. In the Gospel of Luke, Luke records the birth of Jesus, His baptism, His temptation then the first thing he records is Jesus teaching in Nazareth.

Luke 4:16–21 (ESV)

16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. 17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, 18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” 20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

The passages that Jesus read were from Isaiah 61 which itself is taken from Leviticus 25, the year of Jubilee. Jesus ends his reading by saying “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” Why? Because Jesus is the ultimate, the final, the complete, and the perfect reset. He is the one who perfectly resets our relationship with Him. By His death, resurrection, and ascension He has permanently restored access to His Presence, all we must do is put our loving-loyalty, our faith, in Him and His finished work. When we do our sins are forgiven. He makes us His dwelling place, He writes His commands on our hearts, and He makes us into His image, leading us in the ways of holiness.

### **More on Loving Loyalty**

Both the Old Covenant and the New Covenant are based on “loving-loyalty.” He loves His people and He wanted them to choose to love Him back. In the Old Covenant He gave them a set of laws that served as the “loyalty” aspect. If Israel loved Yahweh it would look a certain way. Yahweh is holy, He is perfect, He is just, and He expected those who love Him to try and live a holy life. For something to be holy means that it is ‘set apart’; different from the ordinary, separate from sin. These laws told Israel what was and was not holy in His eyes. What He wants are both love and loyalty from His creation. Love without loyalty is not true love. In a loving relationship there is an expectation of loyalty, of treating the other person well, of caring for them, of living in a way that honors them. If a husband and wife love each other in the way the Lord expects they will have loyalty to each other, forsaking everyone else. In that marriage there are going to be expectations and rules if the relationship is going to work. These rules should be followed not out of obligation but out of love to the spouse.

It works the same with our relationship with Yahweh. In Judaism there is something that is called the Shema which means “listen” in Hebrew. It stands as a basis of what a relationship with Yahweh should look like to Jews starting in the Second Temple Period. The Shema are three different passages Deuteronomy 6:4–9, Deuteronomy 11:13–21, and Numbers 15:37.

The Shema starts with the command to love the Lord and teach your children to love the Him:

Deuteronomy 6:4–9 (ESV)

4 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Continues with the benefits of loving and obeying Him and the consequences of not loving and obeying Him:

Deuteronomy 11:13–21 (ESV)

13 “And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, 14 he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil. 15 And he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you shall eat and be full. 16 Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them; 17 then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and he will shut

up the heavens, so that there will be no rain, and the land will yield no fruit, and you will perish quickly off the good land that the Lord is giving you. 18 “You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 19 You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 20 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, 21 that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth.

And ends with setting yourself apart and obeying His commandments:

Numbers 15:37–41 (ESV)

37 The Lord said to Moses, 38 “Speak to the people of Israel, and tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a cord of blue on the tassel of each corner. 39 And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the Lord, to do them, not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes, which you are inclined to whore after. 40 So you shall remember and do all my commandments, and be holy to your God. 41 I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am the Lord your God.”

If I were to summarize the Shema, if I were to define loving-loyalty the best definition is the one Jesus already gave us:

John 14:15–21 (ESV)

15 “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. 18 “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21 Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”

We don’t obey Him out of obligation, we don’t obey Him to earn something or to put Him in our debt. We obey Him simply and only because we love Him and want to live holy in His sight.