

CHAPTER 2

A Thematic Read of Pirkei Avos

The Sixteenth Street Synagogue – April 21, 2007

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PART 1: TRANSMISSION OF THE PATRIARCHATE

FROM CHAPTER 1

8. **Hillel** (Mishnah I: 12, 13, 14) (aka haZakein, 20 BCE – 20 CE)
9. **Rabban Gamliel** (Mishnah I:16) (aka haZakein, Gamliel I, (d. 50 CE)
10. **Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel** (Mishnah I: 17, 18) (10 BCE – 70 CE)

Omitted

11. **Rabban Gamliel II** (aka Gamliel of Yavne, became the first post-Temple Nasi, in 80 CE.) The controversial Gamliel, who excommunicated his own brother-in-law, Eliezer ben Hyrcanus in a dispute about fixing the calendar, Rabban Gamaliel humiliated Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah, and establish Maariv as obligatory. This led to a rabbinic revolt against Gamaliel's leadership of the sanhedrin. Ultimately his title is restored.)
12. **Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel II** (In Usha).

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13. **R. Yehudah HaNasi** (Mishnah II: 1, flourished 170-220 in Beit Shearim).
 14. **R. Gamaliel III** (Mishnah II:2, 3, 4, 3rd century CE. He was Nasi from 220 CE - 230 CE.)
- 8 or 14. **Hillel** (Mishnah II:5, 6, 7, 8). This might me another Son of Yehudah haNasi, or a return to the

PART 2: TRANSMISSION OF THE SAGES

FROM CHAPTER 1

8. **Hillel** (Mishnah I: 12, 13, 14) (aka haZakein, 20 BCE – 20 CE)

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9. **R. Yochanan ben Zakai** (Mishnah II:9-14 He was the youngest student of Hillel. Recorded as having lived 120 years).
10. **R. Eliezer (Hurkanus)** (He married Gamliel II's sister! Was a Beit-Shammai sympathizer). (Mishnah II:15)
10. **R. Yehoshua son of Hannania** (Mishnah II:16)
10. **R. Yosi haCohen** (Mishnah II:17)
10. **R. Shimon son of Netanel** (Mishnah II:18)
10. **R. Elazar son of Arakh** (Mishnah II:19)
11. **R. Tarfon** (Mishnah II:20, 21)

STRUCTURE OF CHAPTER 2

Part 1:

- 1 Statement of R. Yehuda Hanasi
- 2 Statements of R. Yehuda's son Gamliel
- 4 Statements of R. Yehuda's son Hillel

TOTAL = 7

Part 2:

- 1 Statement of R. Yochanan ben Zakai
- 2 Statements of R. Yochanan ben Zakai to his students
- 5 Statements of his students
- 2 Statements of R. Tarfon

TOTAL = 10

THEMES OF CHAPTER 2

Part 1:

1. Devotion, Service, Cautiousness
2. Study with life, Kindness, Cautiousness
4. Devotion
5. Kindness, Humility, Cautiousness, Study,
6. Cautiousness, Study, Devotion
7. Quid pro quo (Cautiousness), Humility
8. Cautiousness, Study, Integrity, Kindness, Devotion, Torah

Part 2:

9. Torah, cautiousness
10. n/a
11. n/a
12. n/a
13. Kindness
14. Cautiousness
15. Kindness, Cautiousness, Perfection (Devotion), Study, Cautiousness
16. Cautiousness, Kindness
17. Cautiousness, Study, Devotion
18. Cautiousness
19. Study, Cautiousness
20. Cautiousness, Study
21. Cautiousness, Study