

## **The Forgotten Jesus Podcast**

**S2E10**

**Title - Hellenism: Entertaining Ourselves To Death**

**Description - Have you ever “zoned out” or binged a show or series on a streaming platform? We’re probably all guilty of this, but for the 1st century, the binge was to spend time in the amphitheater. In this episode we’ll look at why this was such a big deal.**

We’ve been talking through the impact of Alexander the Great and his impact on the world through Hellenism. He conquered through coercion, through options, through new ideas.

Today we will wrap up how Hellenism impacted entertainment.

Alexander didn’t force the people to quit worshiping their God, he added to their options for worship.

Syncretism - the combining of different forms of belief or practice. Combining different schools of thought.

Hellenism is and was all about distracting through media, through sport, through consumerism. Anything to get you off of loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.

Beit Shean - “House of Security”

<https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Beth-shean.html>

Entertainment - “You’ve been working hard all week. Kick back for a few hours, relax and be entertained in the amphitheater.

The 1st century Roman theater:



From: <https://motionarray.com/stock-photos/beit-she-an-theater-833565/>

The stories are always the same, or had the same plot. It was a common everyday situation that people faced, wanting a child, losing a job, etc, and someone would come and tell the couple or the man, if you'd just pray to the greek gods, they would answer. They'd then answer, and the play would end in a miraculous ending. "And they lived happily ever after..." sort of endings.

The theater was so popular that Jesus even borrowed a term from the theater when he was speaking.

Matthew 6:1-2 - Jesus borrows a theater term to make a point. Shows just how common theater language had become that Jesus could use it and everyone knew what it was.

"Hypocrites" - "hupocrito" - the theater term for a character switch, where an actor would swap masks. A Hypocrite is someone who wears a mask.

Entertainment has become a subtle way to educate people, but it also served as a distraction from their responsibilities and duties. Very similar to today.

Stories, plays, movies, are emotive, they open up people's hearts to teaching and learning. The plays helped indoctrinate the people into belief of the greek pantheon of false gods.

The encouragement for us today, to live in a way where we're genuine. We're not hypocrites, we're not insincere. We live to be just us and who God created us to be.

Matthew 6:5

<sup>5</sup>“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

Today, we don't call it Hellenism. We call it Hollywood. The system, the culture that is promoted and valued, that is championed by Hollywood today. The evil that is forced on to society that we're told to accept, because eventually we just become so callous to it that we begin to accept evil.