

# MYSTERIES OF THE MESSIAH

## *Mini-Vol. 4: Cultural Background Studies & Definitions*

**William H. Heinrich**

**Updated October 18, 2015**

### **Categories of Topics**

#### **Unit 02 Cultural Background Studies**

**02.01 People Groups**

**02.02 Biblical and Extra-Biblical Writings**

**02.03 Significant Cultural Elements**

**02.04 Differences between First Century Roman-Greek and Jewish  
Worldviews**

#### **Definitions**

**Appendix 26: Glossary of Technical Terms and Word Definitions**

Heinrich, William H., 1947-

Mysteries of the Messiah / by William H. Heinrich

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data:

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. First Century Judaism        | 2. Biblical History                     |
| 3. Roman History                | 4. Theology                             |
| 5. Hermeneutics and Apologetics | 6. Ancient Middle East Cultural Studies |

**© 1997 – 2015 by William H. Heinrich. All Rights Reserved**

**Published by**

Evidence of Truth Ministries, Inc.

P O Box 1 Witmer, PA 17585-0001 United States

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced for commercial purposes without the prior permission of the publisher, except as follows: Individuals may copy and paste a section or download the entire e-Book for the purpose of private study, research, or for classroom use. Appropriate credit (title of this website/e-Book and author's name) must be given. Any fees charged must be limited to paper and ink and additional fees shall be considered an infringement of international copyright.

### **Fair Use Statement**

This site may contain copyrighted materials, the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the original copyright owners. We are making their material available in an effort to advance understanding of environmental, political, human rights, economic, democratic, and social justice issues, etc. of the subject matter. We believe this constitutes a 'fair use' of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law. While every effort has been made to trace copyright holders and seek permission to use illustrative material, the author and publisher apologize for any inadvertent errors or omissions and would be glad to rectify these in future editions.

In accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, the material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed an interest in receiving the included information for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted materials from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owners.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holman Christian Standard Bible, a/k/a HCSB®, Copyright © 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2009 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. HCSB® is a federally registered trademark of Holman Bible Publishers.

***“It is good to be highly educated; it is better to be educated from on high;  
but it is best to be both.”***

- Author Unknown

## **Tables of Content**

### **01.03.01 Table 1 of Biblical Passages and Commentary**

#### **Unit 02 Cultural Background Studies**

##### **02.01 People Groups**

[02.01.01](#) Introduction

[02.01.02](#) Arabs (See “Idumeans”)

[02.01.03](#) Diaspora

[02.01.04](#) Elder

[02.01.05](#) Epicureans

[02.01.06](#) Essenes

[02.01.07](#) Gentiles

[02.01.08](#) Greeks

[02.01.09](#) Hasidim

[02.01.10](#) Hellenists

[02.01.11](#) Herodians

[02.01.12](#) Idumeans

[02.01.13](#) Jews

[02.01.14](#) Pharisees

[02.01.15](#) Romans

[02.01.16](#) Sadducees

[02.01.17](#) Samaritans

[02.01.18](#) Sanhedrin

[02.01.19](#) School Of Hillel

[02.01.20](#) School of Shammai

[02.01.21](#) Scribes

- [02.01.22](#) Sicarii
- [02.01.23](#) Zealots

## **02.02 Biblical And Extra-Biblical Writings**

- [02.02.01](#) Introduction
- [02.02.02](#) Ante-Nicene Fathers
- [02.02.03](#) Apocrypha
- [02.02.04](#) Bible
- [02.02.05](#) Codex
  
- [02.02.06](#) Dead Sea Scrolls
- [02.02.07](#) Deuterocanonical Books
- [02.02.08](#) Didache
- [02.02.09](#) Gemarah
- [02.02.10](#) Gnosticism
  
- [02.02.11](#) Gospels
- [02.02.12](#) Hebrew Bible
- [02.02.13](#) Jewish Writings
- [02.02.14](#) Josephus
- [02.02.15](#) Midrash
  
- [02.02.16](#) Mishnah
- [02.02.17](#) New Testament (NT)
- [02.02.18](#) Oral Law
- [02.02.19](#) Old Testament (OT)
- [02.02.20](#) Oral Tradition
  
- [02.02.21](#) Pentateuch
- [02.02.22](#) Philo
- [02.02.23](#) Pliny The Younger
- [02.02.24](#) Pseudepigrapha
- [02.02.25](#) Septuagint

- [02.02.26](#) Talmud
- [02.02.27](#) Tanakh (See “Hebrew Bible”)
- [02.02.28](#) Targum
- [02.02.29](#) Torah
- [02.02.30](#) Tosefta

### **02.03 Significant Cultural Elements**

- [02.03.01](#) Introduction
- [02.03.02](#) Agriculture
- [02.03.03](#) Economy
- [02.03.04](#) Education
- [02.03.05](#) Ethnic Diversity
  
- [02.03.06](#) Family
- [02.03.07](#) Government
- [02.03.08](#) Language
- [02.03.09](#) Messianic Expectations
- [02.03.10](#) Occupations And Trades
- [02.03.11](#) Religious Institutions

### **02.04 Differences Between First Century Roman-Greek And Jewish Worldviews**

- [02.04.01](#) Introduction
- [02.04.02](#) View Of God
- [02.04.03](#) Significant Writings & Truth
- [02.04.04](#) Position Of Man, View Of Life
- [02.04.05](#) Individualism vs. Community
  
- [02.04.06](#) Sabbath Day Observances
- [02.04.07](#) Work And The Purpose Of Education
- [02.04.08](#) Views Of Body, Soul, And Spirit
- [02.04.09](#) Understanding History And The Future
- [02.04.10](#) Divine Healing
- [02.04.11](#) Human And Divine Relationships

### **01.03.02 Table 2 of Photographs and Illustrations**

## **Unit 02 – Cultural Background Studies**

### **02.01 People Groups**

- [02.01.00.A.](#) Christ And The Young Child
- [02.01.05.A.](#) Fragment Of Philodemus’ Epicurean Writing
- [02.01.16.A.](#) Evidence Of Sadducean Extravagance
- [02.01.16.B.](#) Sadducean Tomb Inscription
- [02.01.17.A.](#) Ruins Of The Samaritan Temple
- [02.01.17.B.](#) The Samaritan Torah Scroll

### **02.02 Biblical And Extra-Biblical Writings**

- [02.02.00.A.](#) Jesus Heals the Leper
- [02.02.03.A.](#) The Heliodorus Stele
- [02.02.05.A.](#) The Codex Sinaiticus
- [02.02.06.A.](#) Young Scholars Examine An “Ancient Jar”

### **02.03 Significant Cultural Elements**

- [02.03.00.A.](#) Children In A Synagogue School
- [02.03.08.A.](#) The Name “Jesus” In Old Semetic Script

### **02.04 Differences Between First Century Roman-Greek And Jewish Worldviews**

- [02.04.00.A.](#) Salome’s Exotic Dance

### **01.03.03 Table 3 of Maps**

## **Unit 02 – Cultural Background Studies**

- [02.01.03.Z](#) Map Of The Two Jewish Diasporas

### **01.03.04 Table 4 of Hermeneutical Principals Used by First Century Jewish Writers**

<None>

### **01.03.05 Table 5 of Answers to Questions Presented by Critics and Analytical Thinkers**

<None>

### **01.03.06 Table 6 of Video Mini-lectures by Archaeologists, Historians, Scholars, and Other**

## Unit 02

### Cultural Background Studies

#### Chapter 01

#### People Groups



**02.01.00.A. CHRIST AND THE YOUNG CHILD** by Carl Bloch. Saint Augustine once said that Jesus died for every one of us, as if there was only one of us. His life, message, and sacrifice was for everyone regardless of age, occupation, or ethnicity.

**02.01.01 Introduction.** The Holy Land in the first century consisted of several Jewish subgroups along with a variety of Gentile ethnic groups. The following definitions clarify people groups discussed in this e-book. They represent religious sects, cultural and political bodies that conflicted with each other and shaped the ministry environment of Jesus. Not all are mentioned in the gospels, but nonetheless, their influence was present, and sometimes quite powerful.

### 02.01.02 Arabs (see Idumeans)

**2.01.03 Diaspora.** The term refers to Jews who were dispersed from their Holy Land, either forcefully or by free choice.<sup>1</sup> So many Jews lived “abroad” that by the end of the Inter-Testamental Period there were two Diasporas. The “Western Diaspora,” located in the area from Tarsus and Ephesus in modern Turkey to modern France, was dominated by the Hellenistic culture. The “Eastern Diaspora,” located in a region encompassed by eastern Turkey, Egypt, and Babylon, was dominated by rabbinic law and lore. Both cultural groups had a tendency to confront each other, especially when they met during the festivals in Jerusalem.



**02.01.03.Z MAP OF THE TWO JEWISH DIASPORAS.** By the end of the Inter-Testamental Period the Jewish people had spread over a large region from the Persian Gulf to Western Europe. The eastern rabbinic Jewish Diaspora tended

1. Mills and Michael, *Messiah and His Hebrew Alphabet*, 104.



to clash with their western Hellenistic counterpart. Courtesy of International Mapping and Dan Przywara.

**02.01.04 Elder.** There are several definitions for the term elder, (*presbuteros* 4245) and there are corresponding variations of the Greek term,<sup>2</sup>

1. The older of two persons.
2. A person who is advanced in age.
3. The head of a tribe or clan.
4. In the first century, every village had a group of elders<sup>3</sup> who functioned as a judicial body, had general administrative duties, and represented the village to their Roman overlords. It was also their responsibility to insure that all villagers remained faithful to the teachings of Moses. Theologically, they were more aligned with the Pharisees and their Oral Law than with the Sadducees.<sup>4</sup> However, within the sect of Pharisees there were two schools of theology, the School of Hillel and the School of Shammai, who held opposing views of application of the Oral and Mosaic Laws.

**02.01.05 Epicureans.** The Epicureans were originally Greeks who followed the philosophy of life developed and taught by the Athenian teacher Epicurus (341-270 B.C.). The purpose of his philosophy was to bring stability to an unstable social environment caused by the death of Alexander the Great and the empire division that followed. The religions of the Greeks and Romans had lost their vitality and never succeeded in changing the heart.

Into the volatile Middle East came Philodemus (110 - 30 B.C.), an influential Epicurean philosopher and poet to the Roman world in the century prior to the time of Jesus. He was born in Gadara, the Greek city where Jesus healed the demoniac and 2,000 swine committed suicide in the Sea of Galilee. He, as other Epicurean philosophers, promoted the common saying that “pleasure is the beginning and end of living happily.” Epicureanism is essentially a feelings-based philosophy of life. It states that all experiences related to pain are directly associated with evil while pleasure is associated with the highest good. The function of wisdom is to measure the

---

2. Vine, “Elder, Eldest.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:191.

3. See 03.05.11.

4. Shepherd, “Elder in the New Testament.” 2:73-75.

cost of pain and to best achieve the full pleasure of life. Happiness was totally a human responsibility and achievement because the gods were not interested in what people did.<sup>5</sup>



**02.01.05.A. FRAGMENT OF PHILODEMUS' EPICUREAN WRITING.**

The Epicureans believed that the sole purpose of life was the pursuit and achievement of pleasure. Internet Photo: [www.bibleistrue.com](http://www.bibleistrue.com)

Historians have said that by the first century (B.C.), Gadara was equal to Athens in philosophy, art, and other aspects of Greek culture. Certainly this underscores the significant influence Hellenism<sup>6</sup> had upon the close proximity to the Jewish people. It has rivaled Judeo-Christian ethics throughout history and, today, it is embodied in popular humanistic philosophies. The Syrian King Antiochus IV Epiphanes (reigned 175-164 B.C.) attempted to replace Judaism with Hellenistic Epicureanism.<sup>7</sup> There is no record that Jesus ever encountered promoters of this philosophy, although He probably did while traveling through the Greek cities of the Decapolis.

5. <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/pqna63.htm> Retrieved March 13, 2012.

6. The Greek word *Hellen* means *Greek*. Bietenhard, "Greek." 2:124.

7. DeLaney, *Dictionary*. 2-3; Cressey, "Epicureans." 1:465.

The Bible does indicate, however, that the Apostle Paul had dialogues with such philosophers in Athens (Acts 17:18). Among the Jewish people, the Hellenists and Sadducees endorsed this lifestyle while maintaining some Jewish traditions for cultural reasons.

In response to the hard issues of life, the philosophy of Epicureanism<sup>8</sup> (Gk. *apicuros*)<sup>9</sup> exalted self-indulgences and happiness as the ultimate goals in life. Some six decades before the birth of Jesus, Julius Caesar told the Roman senate that there was no future life after death and no immortality of the soul; one needed to live for the present.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, by the time Jesus came on the scene, there was a discouraged Gentile audience searching for hope. They accepted Him, and within a century the Gentile church exploded in numbers, far outpacing the number of Jewish believers.

**02.01.06 Essenes.** The origin of the Essenes has been a subject of debate among scholars, as some believe the group broke from the early Sadducees, while others believe the group separated from the early Pharisees. The former point to Dead Sea Scroll 4Q MMT (Heb. *Miqsat Ma'ase ha-Torah* meaning *Some Principles of the Law*)<sup>11</sup> that is dated to the early Hasmonean Period.<sup>12</sup> This scroll is believed to have been written by conservative Sadducees and sent to their Hellenistic brothers in Jerusalem. In it, the author(s) compared Hasmonean rules to biblical rules and said that God's rules would result in divine blessings. The scroll pertains to those who would *not* accept the rulings of the Hasmonean and scholars believe this suggests that the Essenes came out of the early Sadducean movement.

However, other scholars believe the Essenes were a group of Jews who separated from Pharisees early in the second century B.C. and they were the descendants of a group known as the *Hasidim*.<sup>13</sup> Like the Pharisees, their primary concern was purity and strict observance of the Mosaic Law, although they differed on some doctrines and practice.<sup>14</sup> The name "Essene," is thought to have originated from the breastplate that was worn by the high priest.<sup>15</sup> They were

---

8. De Lacy, "Epicureanism and the Epicurean School." 3:2-3; Bruce, *New Testament History*. 39-41.

9. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 196.

10. Geikie, *The Life and Words*. 1:28.

11. Schiffman, Lawrence H. "A Short History of the Dead Sea Scrolls." 49.

12. Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 5, Session 2.

13. See 02.01.14 "Pharisees"; Bruce, *New Testament History*. 65-66, 96.

14. Recent scholarship has explored the possible relationship between the Essenes and Pharisees. See 02.01.06.Q1 "How did a one become a member of the Essene sect and how does this relate to the Pharisees?"

15. Schmaltz and Fischer, *Messianic Seal*. 12.

descendants of the Zadokite Dynasty and some of them moved to the desert regions of Damascus after Antiochus IV Epiphanes killed the High Priest Onias III around 171 B.C.<sup>16</sup> Other Essenes relocated to the wilderness near the Dead Sea to escape persecution by the Hasmoneans (ruled Jerusalem 163-63 B.C.).<sup>17</sup> The first members of the Essenes were priests, but by the time of Alexander Jannaeus (104-76 B.C.) many others joined the group. According to Philo and Josephus,<sup>18</sup> approximately four thousand Essenes lived in Israel,<sup>19</sup> although archaeological studies reveal that only about three hundred lived in Qumran. That leaves a majority of them to have lived in other areas such as the western part of Jerusalem, Damascus, Alexandria, and Cairo, Josephus said they established their own orthodox theology,<sup>20</sup> which was considerably more restrictive than the Oral Law, but like the Oral Law, was held as superior to the Mosaic Law. They also believed Moses was almost equal to God.<sup>21</sup> They were highly disappointed by the spiritual corruption of both the Pharisees and Sadducees in Jerusalem as well as the leaders of government. They had such a great disdain for the religious establishment that they chose not to be involved in any sacrifices or religious observances in the temple. This was in part because the Essenes adopted a 365 day calendar as opposed to the 360 day calendar used by the rest of the Jewish world. This meant that their festivals were observed at different times of the year. In response, the ruling Sadducees excluded them from worship at the temple which intensified the hatred between them.<sup>22</sup> Some scholars believe that Jesus observed Passover a day earlier than did other Jews, because He observed it according to the Essene calendar.<sup>23</sup>

Since the temple was the only place where sacrifices could be made for the atonement of sins, the Essenes taught that any Jew could abolish his or her sins by repentance and strict observance of the laws of Moses. However, this abolishment of sin would occur only if the repentant Jew observed the Essene interpretation of Scripture and practiced the Essene laws. They coined phrases in observance of these laws, such as, “sons of light, sons of darkness,” and “Belial,”<sup>24</sup> a

---

16. Schmaltz and Fischer, *Messianic Seal*. 10-13; Bruce, *New Testament History*. 55.

17. Schmaltz and Fischer, *Messianic Seal*. 10-14.

18. Josephus, *Wars* 2.8.4.

19. Cited by Charlesworth, *Jesus within Judaism*. 60.

20. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.1.5 (18-22).

21. Ironically, Moses is a prophetic picture or “type and shadow” of Jesus. See comparisons in Appendix 2.

22. Crutchfield, “The Essenes.” 104-07; Bruce, “Essenes.” 1:478.

23. See 14.02.05.V See 14.02.05 for more details, including the video *The Last Passover and Possible Connection to the Essene Calendar* by Dr. Paul Wright.

24. Schmaltz and Fischer, *Messianic Seal*. 10-14; The name “Belial” in Hebrew is *Bee-Ya’al*, and means *utterly worthless*.

name given to Satan (cf. 2 Cor. 6:14-15). In addition, they called themselves “The Way,” “The Elect,” “The New Covenanters,” and the “*Yahad*” (Heb. meaning “those who have become one”).<sup>25</sup> They considered themselves to be the “voice in the wilderness,” calling upon people to repent from sin and return to the one true God.

As to their daily activities at Qumran, they arose at sunrise in the nearby caves, where they slept every night, and then came to the community center. They spoke no words, prayed certain prayers, and performed their assigned tasks until about 11:00 a.m. In this communal village, they held all property in common, shunned trade, wore white garments, and maintained a strict lifestyle of work, study, and worship.<sup>26</sup> Then they had a ritual bath and a communal meal in strict order. The evening meal was the same as the previous one. Strict discipline was their way to earn salvation and encourage the coming of the messiah, which was the major emphasis of their theology.

They believed that God demanded purity and holiness, but such virtues needed to be developed by their own efforts and not by His grace. Their worldview was rather Calvinistic in that they believed they were predestined to be the holy sons of light, being the exclusive ones to enjoy the blessings and approval of God, while those outside their group were damned unto death.

As to the messiah, they had difficulty separating the Old Testament prophecies that referred to Him as a suffering servant from those that referred to Him as a victorious king. So they concluded that there would be two messiahs: The messianic king who would be a descendant of David and the other, a descendant of Aaron who would be a priest and suffering messiah.<sup>27</sup> The messiah of Aaron would restore the temple and the messiah would lead the sons of light into war against the sons of darkness, and the present evil age would end, Rome would be defeated, and the Davidic Kingdom would be restored.<sup>28</sup> The Essenes, as well as so many other Jewish people, had four faulty concepts of their messiah.

1. They were interested in a messiah who was only for the Jews
2. They were interested in a messiah who would accept every Jew

---

25. Schmaltz and Fischer, *Messianic Seal*. 18.

26. Buchanan, “Essenes.” 2:152-55; Connick. *The Message and Meaning of the Bible*. 116; Bruce, “Essenes” 1:478.

27. Buchanan, “Essenes.” 2:152-55; Harrison, “Essenes.” 2:370-74; A few scholars do not agree with the two messiah concept, including L. D. Hurst of the University of California, Davis, who believes that the Qumran texts do not necessarily support the two messiah viewpoint. See [http://www.ibr-bbr.org/files/bbr/BBR\\_1999\\_09\\_Hurst\\_QumranMessiah.pdf](http://www.ibr-bbr.org/files/bbr/BBR_1999_09_Hurst_QumranMessiah.pdf). Retrieved October 10, 2013. See also Geikie, *The Life and Works of Christ*. 1:459-61.

28. Mellowes and Cran, Producers. *From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians*. (DVD). Part 1.

3. They were interested in a political messiah who would overthrow the Romans
4. They were interested in an economic messiah who would restore the prosperity their forefathers enjoyed during the reign of King David and, hence, the name, “son of David.” The phrase “son of David” was an allusion to the Davidic Covenant that was expected to be restored.<sup>29</sup>

All the Jews wanted a messiah who would pander to Israel but instead, they were confronted by a Messiah who confronted Israel – and consequently, they rejected Him. The Essenes were also observers of the end-times, as they believed the messiah would come and destroy the Romans. Therefore, the Romans considered this non-violent group potentially dangerous and killed thousands of them after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. They would have faded into history were not for their Dead Sea Scrolls which were discovered in the years 1947 to 1956 (See 02.02.06). Note that “messiah” is with a lower case “m” because they did not associate deity with him.

Critics have long said that phrases such as “sons of light” did not exist in the first century Jewish world, but were inserted in the gospels by later editors. When the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, the truth was revealed – those phrases were in common use in the days of Jesus.<sup>30</sup>

#### **02.01.06.Q1 How did a one become a member of the Essene sect and how does this relate to the Pharisees?**

The Essenes, like the Pharisees, were very legalistic. How a young man became a full pledged member of the Essene community would generally not have any interest to the study of the life of Jesus, until one scholar<sup>31</sup> concluded that the Pharisees may have had similar requirements of membership. If so, that presents insights of their Pharisaic attitudes as revealed in the gospels. Therefore, if it is possible to review the Essene requirements, we can “look backwards” and obtain a better understand of the Pharisees.

There are some interesting common factors between the Essenes and the Pharisees. It is common

---

29. The messianic title “Son of David” appears in the following three groups of passages in the gospels where it is always reflective of the Davidic Covenant: 1) In various healings by Jesus – Mt. 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; Mk. 10:47-48; Lk. 18:38-39. 2) In connection of the harassment the religious leaders gave Jesus – Mt. 22:42-43, 45; Mk. 12:35, 37; Lk. 20:41, 44, and 3) The praise the crowds gave Jesus at His entry into Jerusalem – Mt. 21:9, 15; Mk. 11:10. See Rogers. “The Davidic Covenant in the Gospels,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*. Part 1 of 2. 158-78.

30. See 02.02.06 and the video 02.02.06.Vof Dr. Bryant Wood who discusses the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

31. Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. 86-88.

knowledge that both groups originated in the early second century (B.C.) in response to the advances of the Hellenistic culture. Both groups were separatists and, in fact, the name Pharisee originated from the Hebrew phrase meaning *the Separated ones*. Both groups were also highly legalistic in their doctrines and lifestyle.

Fortunately, the Dead Sea Scrolls, written by those Essenes living in the Qumran community near the Dead Sea, contained two important documents that tell us much about their lifestyle and the requirements for entrance into their community of believers. According to the *Damascus Document* and the *Manual of Discipline*, the Essenes had the following beliefs and practices:

1. They categorized members as priests, Levites, Israelites, or proselytes.<sup>32</sup>
2. The minimum age of admission was twenty.<sup>33</sup>
3. New members had to learn and observe all admission requirements.<sup>34</sup>
4. Once a candidate felt he was ready for membership, he had to pass a preliminary examination. Evidently notes were carefully taken as the exam was administered by a scribe.<sup>35</sup>
5. The candidate was required to give an oath of loyalty, after which he was informed of the secrets of the community.<sup>36</sup>
6. Upon the completion of the ceremonial oath, the candidate was on a two-year probationary status.<sup>37</sup>
7. Any transgressions during this time could result in either temporary or permanent expulsion from the community.<sup>38</sup>

---

32. Dead Sea Scrolls, *Damascus Document* 13:12; 14:3.

33. Dead Sea Scrolls, 1 Qsa. 1, 8; This age limit may have been derived from Numbers 1:3.

34. Dead Sea Scrolls, *Damascus Document* 13:1, 2; 15:5, 6.

35. Dead Sea Scrolls, *Damascus Document* 13:11, 12; 15:11.

36. Dead Sea Scrolls, *Damascus Document* 15:6.

37. Dead Sea Scrolls, *Damascus Document* 20:1-13; MD 1QS 4:24 – 7:25.

38. Dead Sea Scrolls, *Damascus Document* 20:1-13; MD 1QS 4:24 – 7:25.

8. All supervisory scribes had to be between the ages of thirty and fifty.<sup>39</sup>

9. Since supervisory scribes were experts of the Hebrew laws, as well as the community rules, they could either “bind” or “loose” the judgment of a transgressor<sup>40</sup>

10. Supervisory scribes as well as judges collected charitable gifts from the community and distributed them to the needy.<sup>41</sup> They also functioned as shepherds of the flock and, in that sense they were like a pastor or rabbi.<sup>42</sup>

While these legalistic requirements cannot be imposed upon the Pharisees *per se*, these do give some insight as to what a legalistic group might have required of a new candidate.<sup>43</sup> Scholars are examining these requirements with the possibility that very similar procedures existed for new Pharisee candidates.

**02.01.07 Gentiles.** This term refers to any person who was not a Jew or a Samaritan.<sup>44</sup> It is from the Latin word *genus* meaning *of the same birth or race*, as well as from the Greek word *ethnos*, meaning *heathen*. *Ethnos* is also translated to the English word *ethnic*.<sup>45</sup> Jewish views of the Gentiles differed between two Jewish schools of biblical interpretation. The School of Shammai<sup>46</sup> taught that there was no possible salvation for the Gentiles, which was in total agreement with the Essenes. The School of Hillel,<sup>47</sup> however, taught that the mercy of God was extended to the Gentiles if they obeyed the Noahide Commandments; and if so, they could worship God in the Court of the Gentiles.<sup>48</sup>

---

39. Dead Sea Scrolls, *Damascus Document* 14:8.

40. Dead Sea Scrolls, *Damascus Document* 13:10; 9:18, 22; 12:12.

41. Dead Sea Scrolls, *Damascus Document* 14:13.

42. Dead Sea Scrolls, *Damascus Document* 13:10.

43. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 260.

44. See 02.01.17.

45. Miethe, *The Compact Dictionary of Doctrinal Words*. 98.

46. See 02.01.20.

47. See 02.01.19.

48. The Noahide Commandments were and continue to be, in the opinion of orthodox Jews, divine laws that Gentiles need to obey to obtain favor with God if they did not want to convert to Judaism. See Appendix 17 for more information.



**02.01.08 Greeks.** The Greek culture had spread throughout the Mediterranean world during the three centuries before Christ, primarily because of the military victories of Alexander the Great. They believed in a variety of gods who were quickly accepted by all conquered peoples with the exception of the Jews. The Greeks chose to represent their heroes and gods in the nude because they viewed the human body as beautiful and full of meaning. This was, of course, in direct conflict with the values of Judaism. The Greek cities along the Jordan River were originally Canaanite cities, who also accepted the Greek culture and religions, known as *Hellenism*. By the time Jesus was in His ministry, pagan thought and reason had made major inroads into Jewish life and theology.<sup>49</sup>

Finally, the Greeks and Romans had great difficulty understanding the Jewish religion. They could not understand how anyone could worship a god they could not see, and that deity did not behave as they did. Their thoughts were expressed very well by Tacitus, a Roman historian who wrote *Histories* between the years A.D. 69 and 96. He made the following comments about the Jews.

**The most degraded out of other races, scorning their national beliefs, brought to them their contributions and presents. This augmented the wealth of the Jews, as also did the fact, that among themselves they are inflexibly honest and ever ready to show compassion, though they regard the rest of mankind with all the hatred of enemies.**

**They sit apart at meals, they sleep apart, and though, as a nation, they are singularly prone to lust, they abstain from intercourse with foreign women; among themselves nothing is unlawful. Circumcision was adopted by them as a mark of difference from other men. Those who come over to their religion adopt the practice, and have this lesson first instilled into them, to despise all gods, to disown their country, and set at naught parents, children, and brethren. Still they provide for the increase of their numbers. It is a crime among them to kill any newly-born infant. They hold that the souls of all who perish in battle or by the hands of the executioner are immortal.**

**Tacitus, *Histories* 5.5**

**02.01.09 Hasidim.** Also known as Hassidim, or Hassideans, they were an orthodox Jewish group that became popular in the third century B.C. This was a reactionary group that stood up to the growing influential Greek culture (Hellenism) and their primary focus was to bring a revival to

---

49. Pasachoff & Littman, *Jewish History in 100 Nutsbells*. 49-51; Blaiklock, "Greece" 2:824-25; Strange, "Greece." 2:566-67.

the Jewish people so that they would return to their orthodox faith; their goal was the purification of their faith.<sup>50</sup> The name means *pious ones* and it is believed that the founders of this group also formed the religious nucleus of the Maccabean Revolt, the Essene movement, and the Pharisees. Some scholars believe that the Hasidim were probably the religious group that was the closest to biblical Judaism.<sup>51</sup> But by the first century A.D., they had become nearly extinct.<sup>52</sup>

**02.01.10 Hellenists.** The Hellenists were Jewish people who abandoned the laws of Judaism and accepted the Greek culture<sup>53</sup> (Hellenism comes from the Greek word *Hellen* meaning *Greek*).<sup>54</sup> They believed the laws of Moses prevented them from enjoying the full pleasures of life promoted by the Greeks and, later by the Romans. For example, young men at times desired to participate in the public baths or play in the Greek games to obtain the perfect body. But since the athletic games were played in the nude, they were embarrassed and could not assimilate into the Greek-Roman community.<sup>55</sup> Since the Gentiles believed circumcision was disgusting, some Jewish men endured a surgical procedure known as *epispasm*, in which the marks of circumcision were removed.<sup>56</sup> They could then participate in the Greek games and not be identified as being Jewish. For that reason orthodox Jews accused them of abandoning the holy covenant.

Hellenists were almost indistinguishable from their Greek neighbors. During the Maccabean Revolt they fought with the Greeks of Syria against the Hassidim and Hasmonean family. By the time of Jesus, their religious allegiance was with the Romans and Sadducees; and in fact, the Sadducees were Hellenistic.

**02.01.11 Herodians.** This was a small political non-religious group, sometimes known as the Boethusians, after Boethus,<sup>57</sup> whose daughter Mariamne was one of the ten wives of Herod the Great. But some scholars believe the name “Boethusians” was just another name for a group

---

50. Cate, *A History of the New Testament and its Times*. 75.

51. Safrai, “The Jewish Cultural Nature of Galilee in the First Century.” 180.

52. House, *Chronological and Background Charts of the New Testament*. 73.

53. Amir, “The Term *IOUDAISMOS*: A Study in Jewish-Hellenistic Self-identification.” 38; See also 03.04.05 “334 – 63 B.C. Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic Period.”

54. Bietenhard, “Greek.” 2:124. See also Acts 6:1.

55. Niswonger, *New Testament History*. 24.

56. <http://www.bibarch.com/glossary/MI/epispasm.htm>; July 20, 2012.

57. Simon, the son of Boethus, was the high priest from 22 – 5 B.C. The family had incredible political power.

within the Sadducees (Acts 4:1; 23:12-14).<sup>58</sup> These two opinions could very well be in agreement with each other, as at times specific details are less clear than is desired.

The Herodians were Roman sympathizers and individuals of prestigious status in the royal court, who always promoted their so-called “rightful” claims to the Jewish throne. They were neither Roman agents nor servants, but Jews who were either secular or Sadducees.<sup>59</sup> They are mentioned three times in the gospels as opponents to Jesus (Mt. 22:16; Mk. 3:6, 12:13), and Josephus mentioned them, as “those of Herod’s party.”<sup>60</sup> The entire group was wiped out during the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

**02.01.12 Idumeans.** The Idumeans, also known as the Edomites, were descendants of Esau.<sup>61</sup> In the Inter-Testamental Period they relocated from the Petra region of modern Jordan, westward into the Negev Desert of southern Israel. They were eventually absorbed into the larger Arab people group. For that reason, some scholars have traditionally said that the Arab people *per se* did not exist in the biblical land of today’s Israel/Palestine during the first century. The vast majority of Arabs were a nomadic people who lived in the area that is modern day Saudi Arabia. Nonetheless, one of the reasons the Jews hated Herod the Great was that he was an Idumean – a hated descendant of Esau.

**02.01.13 Jews.** In the Old Testament Period, particularly in the book of Esther, the name *Jew* was associated with all Israelites, but it originally was applied to only those who came from Judea.<sup>62</sup> A similar association is found in the older book of Daniel (3:8, 12). In the New Testament era, the name is one of cultural and religious identity. A Jew was one who was not a Samaritan (Jn. 4:9), nor a Gentile (Gal. 2:14; 3:28; Acts 14:1, 5), nor a proselyte (Acts 2:10). He had to be of the lineage of Abraham, and hence, his race, nationality, and religion were all equal components of his identity.<sup>63</sup> Jews considered themselves to be the “chosen people,” and therefore, by the time of Christ they thought of themselves as a privileged people.

It is important to note variations of thought among the Jewish people. Those living in Jerusalem were more legalistic and conservative than their Galilean counterparts, but the former were also

---

58. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 59.

59. Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 346-47; Blizzard, “Judaism - Part 1” *Yavo Digest*. 1:5, 7.

60. Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.15.6; Hiebert, “Herodians.” 3:145.

61. Thompson, “Idumea.” 2:682.

62. Some ancient writers use the term “Judea” in the broadest sense. Examples are found in Pliny the Elder. *Natural History* 5.15.70; Strabo. *Geographia* 16.4.21; and Dio Cassius. *Roman History* 37.15.2.

63. Gasque, “Jew.” 2:1056.

more appealing to the Roman establishment. Those living in Galilee and Perea,<sup>64</sup> on the other hand, were more lax in their theological viewpoints, but considerably more nationalistic, especially those in the northern mountains of Galilee. The cradle of Roman anti-sentiment was in the mountainous areas of Galilee.

Outside the country of Judaea, Jewish people in the Diaspora held a wide range of viewpoints. In Babylon they were conservative as they were in Jerusalem, whereas elsewhere theological viewpoints ranged from Hellenistic to orthodox. At times it can be somewhat challenging to understand precisely who the gospel writers are referring to when they speak of “the Jews.” John, for example, uses the term for the following people groups:

1. In reference to all of those who are descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
2. In reference to those Jews living in Judea, as opposed to those living in Galilee, Perea, or elsewhere.
3. In reference to Jewish leaders, namely the leading Pharisees, but not all Pharisees.

Therefore, the context of the term *the Jews* is very important. An unfortunate example in church history is that *all* the Jewish people have been blamed for the decisions made by their leaders.

**02.01.14 Pharisees.** The Pharisees (Gk. *pharisaïos* 5330)<sup>65</sup> were the dominant Jewish party that consisted of a number of religious sects, from the early second century B.C. They first appeared in *1 Maccabees* 9:13 and *2 Maccabees* 14:6 as they developed as a result of opposition and persecution by the Greek dictator Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who was overthrown in the Maccabean Revolt in 164 B.C.<sup>66</sup> Understandably, the name *Pharisee* comes from the Hebrew *perushim*, *perusin* or *perusim* meaning *pious ones, separated, or detached*.<sup>67</sup> Some scholars believe they evolved from the previous Hassidean movement<sup>68</sup> because the Pharisees were known for seven major characteristics:

---

64. In the days of Jesus, Perea was often referred to as the “region of Judea across the Jordan.”

65. Vine, “Pharisees.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:470-71.

66. [http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish\\_Holidays/Hanukkah/History.shtml](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Hanukkah/History.shtml) Retrieved September 20, 2014; See also Josephus, *Antiquities* 11.4.8 and 13.10.5-6; Babylonian Talmud, *Kiddushin* 66a.

67. Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. 86; Vine, “Pharisees.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:470-71.

68. See 03.04.17; House, *Chronological and Background*. 73.

1. Separation. They considered themselves *the separated ones*, who emphasized strict adherence to the Mosaic laws pertaining to purity, Sabbath observance, prayer, tithing, and separation from anyone who was Hellenistic. There were four levels of Pharisees,<sup>69</sup> and the upper echelon is referred to in this e-Book as the “leading Pharisees.” They were so extremely legalistic, pious, and self-righteous that they even avoided the *Am Ha-Aretz*, meaning *the common people*.<sup>70</sup>

2. Legalism. Due to the encroachment of Greek values into Jewish life, the Pharisees promoted the legalistic observance of Jewish laws on both the national and personal level.<sup>71</sup> An example was recorded by the first century historian Josephus who noted that at one time more than six thousand of them refused to take the oath of allegiance to Caesar or Herod.<sup>72</sup> They were willing to lay down their lives for their religious laws. They considered themselves to be the honored ones who were called to practice and honor the Priestly Code of Ezra, with an emphasis on the Oral Laws.

3. They were social and cultural liberals.

4. They were religious conservatives.

5. Most of them hated Rome, with the leading Pharisees being a possible exception.<sup>73</sup> They believed that if they could not fortify their cities against the Roman occupiers, they would fortify their laws to keep the Greco-Roman culture out of Judaism and their personal lives.

6. They tried to be spiritual while the Sadducees tried to maintain their religious bureaucracy.

7. Most Pharisees were sincere, honest synagogue leaders who cared for their people, while the leading echelon were the ones with whom Jesus had multiple conflicts.

8. Many Pharisees were also scribes, judges, magistrates, teachers, rabbis, and priests. The people willingly put all power and authority into the hands of their rabbis, as orthodox Jews still do today. In fact, twice scribes are referred to as the “scribes of the Pharisees” (Mk. 2:16; Acts 23:9).

---

69. See 02.01.14.Q1 below.

70. Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. 86.

71. Finkelstein, *The Pharisees*. 145.

72. Josephus, *Antiquities* 17.2.4.

73. Many scholars believe the leading Pharisees were associated with the legalistic School of Shammai.

The Pharisees believed they had three obligations to strictly observe to find favor with God:

1. Tithing, known as *Neeman*.<sup>74</sup> This was on *all* earnings.
2. Observance of all Levitical laws on ritual purity known as *chabher* (a/k/a *chabber*).<sup>75</sup>
3. The practice of purity, which included separation from people considered to be “impure.”

There were many sects within the broad group of “Pharisees,” but among them were two major theological schools that had major influences in the culture. Furthermore, some discussions Jesus had with “the Pharisees” were the result of disputes between these two schools.

1. Beit Hillel (House or School of Hillel)<sup>76</sup>
2. Beit Shammai (House or School of Shammai)<sup>77</sup>

Named after their founding rabbis, these schools of theology held opposing opinions on how certain written and oral commandments were to be practiced. Their varied opinions are preserved in the *Mishnah*. The Pharisees, whom Jesus addressed, were the Oral Law traditionalists who had become aristocratic and powerfully similar to the Sadducees, whom they greatly disliked. The religious ideology of the Pharisees ranged widely as some were condemned by both Jesus and by some of their own leaders in the third century (A.D.).<sup>78</sup> For example, the School of Shammai held it was unlawful to comfort the sick or visit the mourner on the Sabbath, but the School of Hillel permitted it.

The leading Pharisees were usually synonymous with the teachers of the Law,<sup>79</sup> which is why it can be difficult to distinguish them from the scribes.<sup>80</sup> While most leading Pharisees considered themselves scribes, not all scribes considered themselves Pharisees.<sup>81</sup> They were scholars of the

---

74. Lee, *The Galilean Jewishness of Jesus*, 112; Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 216.

75. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 215-17.

76. See 02.01.19.

77. See 02.01.20.

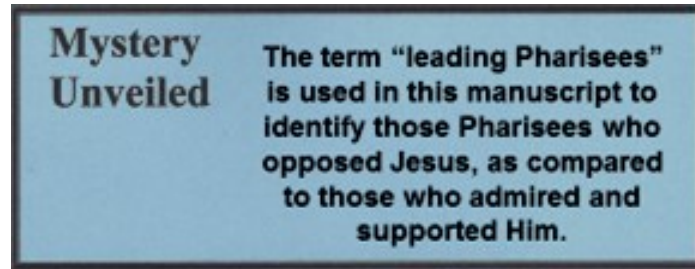
78. Mishnah, *Sotah*. 3:4; Babylonian Talmud, *Sotah*. 22b.

79. Mt. 3:7; 15:1; Mk. 2: 16, 24; Lk. 11:38.

80. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 59.

81. Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. 93-94.

biblical text.<sup>82</sup> Whenever Jesus confronted them, He confronted the aristocratic leadership.<sup>83</sup> Most of the Jewish people obeyed codes of conduct and religion according to the Pharisees, even though they did not formally belong to this religious sect.<sup>84</sup> While some aristocratic Pharisees, such as the Herodians, were comfortable with the Romans, and Josephus said that a majority was fiercely patriotic and hated the foreign yoke with an impassioned bitterness.<sup>85</sup>



The upper echelon consisted of men who had become religiously and politically corrupt and were under constant rebuke by Christ. They held the Oral Law in higher esteem than the written Mosaic Law. It was to this group that Jesus most frequently applied the word *hypocrite*, from the Greek *hupokrites*, meaning *actor* or *pretender*.<sup>86</sup> All confrontations Jesus had with them were related to the *Halakhah*, the regulations that pertained to the daily life activities.<sup>87</sup>

However, not all were evil. It should be noted that among these religious leaders were Simon, who made a banquet for Jesus (Lk. 7:37), and others who warned Jesus of Herod's attempt to kill Him (Lk. 13:31). They are often referred to in this manuscript as the "leading Pharisees," the "Pharisee elitists," or "the aristocrats of the Pharisees,"<sup>88</sup> as opposed to the common Pharisees, many of whom became followers of Jesus. The Pharisees were by no means a homogeneous group.

---

82. Bruce, "Josephus, Flavius." 69-71; Major, Manson, and Wright, *The Mission and Message of Jesus*. 601-02; Josephus, *Wars* 1.5.2; *Mishnah. Aboth*. 2:5.

83. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 259, n42.

84. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 258.

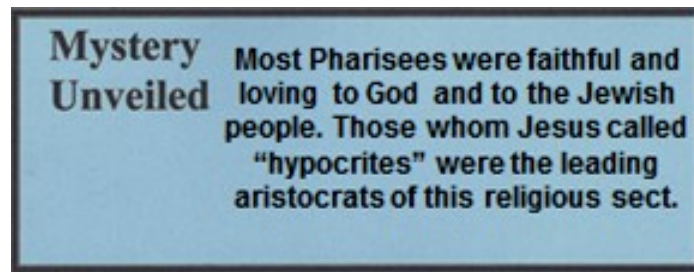
85. Read the full account of Josephus pertaining to the Pharisees in *Antiquities* 18.1.3 (12-15).

86. Herbert, "Hypocrite." 109-10; Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 172-73.

87. Bruce, *Jesus Past*. 69-71; Lee, *The Galilean Jewishness of Jesus*. 106-07.

88. Other Jewish writers also criticized the leading Pharisees as found in *1 Enoch* 102:9-10; *Testament of Moses* 7:3; *Tosefta, Menahot* 13:22. This is a recommended subject for further study in Appendix 33.

The Apostle Paul proudly maintained his status as a righteous Pharisee (Phil. 3:5; Acts 22) and, as a Pharisee, he was a messenger of God to the Gentiles (Gal. 1:16). It should be noted that among the Pharisees were those who were devoted to Jesus,<sup>89</sup> and they were probably followers of Hillel. Those who planned evil against Him were probably of Shammai and the aristocratic followers of Hillel.



In summary, the Pharisees (compare to 02.01.16 "Sadducees") were,

1. In strong opposition to Hellenism
2. Had great disdain for the Romans
3. Generally middle class although the leadership was aristocratic
4. Theologically progressive, but within the Pharisee sect there was a diversity of opinions
5. Believed in the entire Old Testament (Hebrew Bible)
6. Affirmed the resurrection of the soul and heaven
7. Held a mythological belief that Abraham was seated at the gates of hell waiting to make sure no Jew would enter. To have been born a Jew meant automatic rights to the eternal Messianic Kingdom.<sup>90</sup>
8. Believed in a final judgment for non-Jews, angels, etc.
9. Some Pharisees affiliated with the common people (*am-ha-arets*)<sup>91</sup> and sought converts (except for the leadership). However, the leading Pharisees had great disdain for

---

<sup>89</sup>. Jn. 3:1, 19:38-39, Acts 5:34, 23:6-8.

<sup>90</sup>. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor's Manual*. Class 6, page 6.

<sup>91</sup>. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 173; Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 145; Geikie, *The Life and Works of Christ*. 2:33-35.



them and separated themselves from them. This may be why Jesus referred to the common people as “sheep without a shepherd” (Mt. 9:36). Yet, in spite of this, many people sided with the Pharisees.<sup>92</sup>

10. Estimated to be over 6,000 in number who belonged to a *chebher* or *chabher*,<sup>93</sup> which was their *association* or *fraternity*.<sup>94</sup>

11. Believed that man has control of his decisions and actions, but that God ultimately controls all things.

12. They believed that their Oral Law (a/k/a Mishnah) superseded the authority of the Old Testament. Jesus referred to them as “hypocrites”<sup>95</sup> because, while they made the laws a heavy burden for the common people, they created loopholes for themselves.<sup>96</sup> Theologically speaking, the leading Pharisees canonized their own interpretation of the Law.<sup>97</sup>

13. Under the umbrella term of *Pharisee*, there were many religious sects. The two most notable were the theological School of Hillel and School of Shammai. By the time Jesus was in His ministry, the Sadducees controlled the temple, but the Pharisees controlled the synagogues. Many were led by Rabbi Hillel who won the hearts of the people.

14. In judicial matters, the Pharisees were kinder, more merciful, and more lenient than the Sadducees, with the possible exception of the Pharisaic School of Shammai.<sup>98</sup>

15. In the book of Acts, Luke speaks frequently of the Pharisees and always in a positive manner. This is profoundly different from the Pharisees who repeatedly plotted to kill Jesus in the gospels, and then stepped aside and let the Sadducees do their dirty work.<sup>99</sup>

---

92. Josephus, *Antiquities* 13.10.6.

93. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 215-17.

94. Josephus, *Antiquities* 17.2.4; Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 172-73.

95. See the discussion on hypocrites / hypocrisy in 08.03.04 (Mt. :5-15).

96. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor's Manual*. Class 20, page 11.

97. Lee, *The Galilean Jewishness of Jesus*, 13.

98. For additional information on the resulting judicial differences between these two schools, see Babylonian Talmud, *Gittin* 18b and *Yebamoth* 14a in 02.01.20 “School of Shammai.” See also 13.02.04.

99 Stemberger, *Jewish Contemporaries of Jesus: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes*. 31.

**02.01.15 Romans.** The Roman Empire<sup>100</sup> belted the Mediterranean Sea, at times called a Roman lake, and extended into Europe. It eventually included twelve language groups and was so huge that Rome could hardly administer. In 63 B.C., the Roman General Pompey easily took control of Jerusalem on the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*) in a battle that cost the lives of twelve thousand men, women, and children. The Romans were seen as a friend by some, as an enemy by others; but soon all discovered them to be incredible oppressors.

The Roman military power brought forth a fearful peace known as *Pax Romana*<sup>101</sup> meaning *peace to Rome and quiet to the provinces*.<sup>102</sup> At the head of this incredible empire was a single man, Octavianus Caesar – now better known by his imposing title, Caesar – who ruled as absolute lord and dictator. His continuous challenge however, was to maintain peace over the three rebellious Jewish provinces of Galilee, Perea, and Judea. Between the years 63 B.C. and the so-called “First Revolt” in A.D. 66, there were 13 revolts and many riots.<sup>103</sup>

As to philosophical and religious values, the Romans adopted beliefs from the Greeks, Etruscans, and Epicureans.<sup>104</sup> They enjoyed the Greek culture with all its gods and goddesses, but while many believed in these religious myths, agnosticism<sup>105</sup> became increasingly commonplace. Emperors considered themselves to be gods and by the end of the first century (A.D.), Emperor Domitian required his subjects to offer sacrifices to him and to call him “Lord and God.”<sup>106</sup>

The Roman world was one wherein a small aristocratic group controlled the wealth and power while a massive peasantry produced a large agricultural surplus and, to a smaller extent, the other necessary products. The common people in occupied lands, such as the Jews of Judaea, were essentially economic slaves.<sup>107</sup> They were taxed so heavily that they lived in constant poverty

---

100. The historical periods of Rome are as follows: Roman Kingdom 753-509 B.C.; Roman Republic 509-27 B.C.; Roman Empire 27 B.C. – A.D. 476.

101. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 423. See “Pax Romana” in Appendix 26.

102. Lee, *The Galilean Jewishness of Jesus*. 72-73; Mellows and Cran, Executive Producers. *From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians*. (DVD). Part 1.

103. See Appendix 25 for a listing of false prophets who had messianic expectations and for a partial listing of revolts and social disturbances from 63 B.C. to A.D. 70.

104. The Etruscans lived centuries earlier northwest of Rome. Their influence continued but was minimal.

105. Agnosticism is the belief that the existence of God is unknown and probably unknowable.

106. Metzger, *New Testament*. 61.

107 The subject of high taxation that resulted in economic slavery is presented by Josephus, *Antiquities* 17.11.2 (307-308). See also 02.03.03 “Economy” and 03.06.04 “4 B.C. The Death of Herod the Great.”

without any hope of escape. Hence, they had a dire hope that a messiah would come to deliver them.<sup>108</sup> However, any action or discussion that could have been interpreted as leading to a possible revolt resulted in death. The Romans were especially sensitive to a possible revolt, not only for national pride, but also because the Jewish land was the frontier to the rising Parthian Empire in the east. And Israel was the most problematic region they had to govern – riots and rumors of riots and rebellions were constantly in the air.

Historians tend to be cruel in their comments about the Romans, and do not give them credit or grace for anything. But in fact, while the Romans were cruel, they did make some attempts to be considerate of their Jewish subjects. For example,

1. Emperor Augustus and his wife sent brazen wine vessels to the temple in Jerusalem along with other costly gifts.<sup>109</sup> Philo says that Augustus personally also provided two lambs and an ox for sacrifice, but Josephus said the cost was borne by the Jewish people.<sup>110</sup>
2. No demand was ever made upon the Jews, except during the reign of Caligula, for them to worship the emperor. All other people groups of the empire, including the Samaritans, worshiped the emperor along with local deities.
3. All the emperors, to and including Vespasian, attempted to honor Jewish sensitivities by not minting coins for circulation in Judea with the image of the emperor or a Roman god, but these coins only had his name and traditional Jewish emblems. However, coins minted in other provinces did have his image and often his claim of divinity. For example, in the year 4 B.C. Emperor Augustus minted a coin with his image and the words “son of God,” meaning he was the son of the god Apollo.<sup>111</sup> These coins were at times carried by pilgrims to Jerusalem festivals where they became the subject of debate and controversies. Such a coin was given to Jesus – one with the idolatrous image on one side and the legend of Jewish subjection on the other.<sup>112</sup>

---

108. Crossan, *Who Killed Jesus*. 39.

109. Josephus, *Wars* 5.13.6; Philo, *Legat. Ad Cajum* 37.

110. Philo, *Legat. Ad Cajum* 23; Josephus, *Wars* 2.10.4 and 17.2-46; Schurer, *The History of the Jewish People*. First Division, 2:76.

111. Suetonius, *Deified Augustus* 94.4; Franz, <http://www.lifeandland.org/2009/02/the-angelic-proclamation-to-the-shepherds-luke-28-15/> Retrieved August 13, 2013.

112. Geikie, *The Life and Works of Christ*. 2:419.

4. The Romans respected the Jews by not bringing any image that represented the emperor or Rome. Unfortunately, as is explained elsewhere, Pilate violated this policy shortly after he took control of Judea. Nonetheless, the Romans for the most part, honored this practice. For example, when Vitellius, the legate of Syria marched against Aretas, an Arabian king, he was about to cross Jewish lands. Since Roman soldiers always carried the likeness of the emperor on their standards, the Jews objected. According to Josephus, he rerouted his march as not to offend the Jews and the images of the emperor never entered Jewish lands.<sup>113</sup>

5. The Romans granted the Jewish people religious freedom. Judaism was one of the recognized religions of the empire, but not so with Christianity. Everyone had to worship Julius Caesar as a “son of a god,” but not the Jewish people.<sup>114</sup> In fact, Judaism was under Roman protection as evidenced in two accounts reported by Josephus.

a. When the pagan residents of Dora erected a statue of the emperor in the synagogue, the Jews went to the legate Petronius who ordered the statue to be removed.<sup>115</sup>

b. When a soldier destroyed a Torah scroll, he was put to death by the procurator Cumanus.<sup>116</sup>

In response to Roman kindness, the Jewish people in the diaspora prayed for the emperor in their synagogue services. It is unknown if the Jews in Galilee, Perea, and Judea did likewise.

**02.01.16 Sadducees.** The Sadducees appeared on the scene after the elimination of the Greek Antiochus IV Epiphanes from power in Israel (ten northern tribes) and Judea (two southern tribes). They were the descendants of the Hasmonean rulers who ruled Judea (163 – 63 B.C.) after the Maccabean revolt. The members of this religious sect were in fact the ruling aristocratic political-religious party in Jerusalem and close friends of the Herodian family and the Romans. They held prominent positions in the city. More importantly, they controlled the Sanhedrin and the temple.<sup>117</sup> It was through this political relationship that they were able to attain control of the Sanhedrin, the temple, the priesthood, throughout the life of Christ until the

---

113. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.5.3.

114. Mellows and Cran, Producers. *From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians*. (DVD). Part 1.

115. Josephus, *Antiquities* 19.6.3.

116. Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.5.4; *Wars* 2.12.2.

117. Josephus, *Antiquities*. 18.1.4.

Romans destroyed them in A.D. 70.<sup>118</sup> Control of the temple afforded them an incredibly lavish lifestyle, unimaginable even for ancient times as shown by the glass artifact shown below (02.01.16.A).

The origin of the name “Sadducee” is somewhat mysterious. The once-held belief that the name was derived from Zadok, a high priest in Solomon’s court has some serious etymological<sup>119</sup> difficulties.<sup>120</sup> Recent scholarship suggests that the name could refer to the “righteous ones” because it emphasizes religious purity and because the Sadducees are direct descendants of the Hasmoneans. Some scholars believe the name “Boethusians” was just another name for a group within the Sadducees (Acts 4:1; 23:12-14), because the House of Boethus was a highly influential family.<sup>121</sup> These two opinions could very well be in agreement with each other, as at times specific details are less clear than is desired. Nonetheless, they were ruthless and did whatever was necessary to protect their position and status.<sup>122</sup> The Essenes referred to them as the “wicked priests” in their Dead Sea Scrolls.<sup>123</sup> There are five major aspects to the powerful Sadducees:<sup>124</sup>

---

118. Moulder, “Sadducees.” 4:278-81.

119. See “Etymology” in Appendix 26.

120. Guignebert, *The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus*. 162; Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 123-24.

121. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 59; See “Boethusians” in Appendix 26.

122. Moulder, “Sadducees.” 4:278-81.

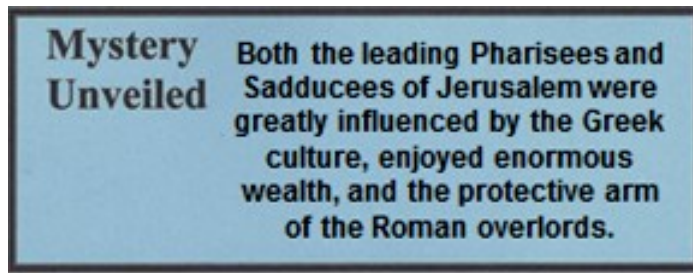
123. Schmaltz and Fischer, *Messianic Seal*. 22.

124. Bookman, *When God Wore Sandals*. CD Trac 6.



**02.01.16.A. AN EXAMPLE OF SADDUCEAN EXTRAVAGANCE.** LEFT: A partially melted glass pitcher of exquisite design and craftsmanship was found in the burned ruins of the home of a Sadducean priest. Molded glass jug signed by Ennion, probably of Sidon. RIGHT: The recreated drawing of the pitcher as in its original design: dark lines reflect actual remains and the light lines are of the upper portion. This was obviously owned by one of Jerusalem's wealthiest families. Photograph and illustration courtesy of the Israel Museum.

1. They were social conservatives
2. They were supporters of the Romans, and in fact, the high priest Caiaphas was a Roman appointment.
3. They were liberal in their theology. In fact, so liberal that some have said they gave only lip service to the Torah.



4. Their greatest condemnation was that they were Hellenistic; they enjoyed the Greek lifestyle but covered it with Jewish traditions.<sup>125</sup>

5. While the Pharisees controlled the local synagogues, the Sadducees controlled the temple and all its wealth; the Pharisees tried to be spiritual while the Sadducees tried to maintain their religious bureaucracy. Because of their theological and ritualistic differences, there was constant tension in the temple. Josephus said that the Sadducees had to submit to the Pharisees' method of performing ceremonial rituals, celebrations, and processions or the masses would not have tolerated them.<sup>126</sup> An example is found in the Mishnah: in the tractate *Sukkah*, are the directions for the Feast of Tabernacles ritual. That includes the procedure of the water libation that was be poured into one of two bowls located to the right at the top of the altar ramp. However, one time King Alexander Jannaeus (reigned 105-79 B.C.) poured the libation over his feet and all the people threw their citrons at him.<sup>127</sup> The Talmud identifies the offender as a Sadducee (or *Boethusian*).<sup>128</sup> In response, he called his soldiers and several thousand were massacred that day. While this took place a century before Jesus, the Pharisees did not forget this or any other events of persecution by the Sadducees.<sup>129</sup>

7. In terms of judicial actions, they were extremely harsh and rude, especially when compared to the Pharisees who were far more forgiving and compassionate.<sup>130</sup>

---

125. Visitors in Jerusalem today can see one of the homes of the Sadducees at the Wohl Archeological Museum. These opulent homes, known today as the Herodian Mansions, are located a short walk from the Western Wall.

126. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.1.4 (16, 17).

127. Mishnah, *Sukkah* 4:9.

128. Babylonian Talmud, *Sukkah* 48b. See "Boethusian" in Appendix 26.

129. Geikie, *The Life and Words*. 2:637-38.

130. Josephus, *Wars* 2.8.14 (163-166); See also Stemberger, *Jewish Contemporaries of Jesus: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes*. 16.

Regardless of the evil passion of many in the temple, it should be noted that many Levites, priests, and chief priests were godly men, and not members of the Sadducees or corrupted Pharisees. Josephus summarized the leading Pharisees and Sadducees as follows:

**Of the first named schools, the Pharisees, who are considered to be most accurate interpreters of the laws, and hold the position of the leading sect, attribute everything to fate and God; they hold that to act rightly or otherwise rest, indeed, for the most part with men, but that in each action fate cooperates. Every soul, they maintain, is perishable, but the soul of the good alone passes into another body, while the soul of the wicked suffer eternal punishment.**

**The Sadducees, the second of the orders, do away with fate together, and remove God beyond, not merely the commission, but the very sight of evil. They maintain that man has the free choice of good and evil, and that it rests with each man's will whether he follows the one or the other. As for the persistence of the soul after death, penalties in the underworld, and rewards, they will have none of them.**

**The Pharisees are affectionate to each other and cultivate harmonious relations with the community. The Sadducees, on the contrary, are, even among themselves, rather boorish in their behavior, and in their intercourse with their peers are as rude as to aliens. Such is what I have to say on the Jewish philosophical schools.**

**Josephus, *Wars* 2.8.14 (163-166)<sup>131</sup>**

Concerning the Sadducees and their belief in the resurrection, the historian said,

**But the doctrine of the Sadducees is this: That souls die with the bodies; nor do they regard the observation of anything besides what the law enjoins them, for they think it an instance of virtue to dispute with those teachers of philosophy whom they frequent.**

**Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.1.4 (16)**

The family clan of Annas was extremely greedy and wealthy. They were the envy of those who achieved the “lifestyles of the rich and famous,” as expressed in modern terms. As priests of the temple, they had afforded themselves a lifestyle beyond the imaginations of both the common people and modern scholarship. Annas, who was a Sadducee, converted the Gentile Court of the

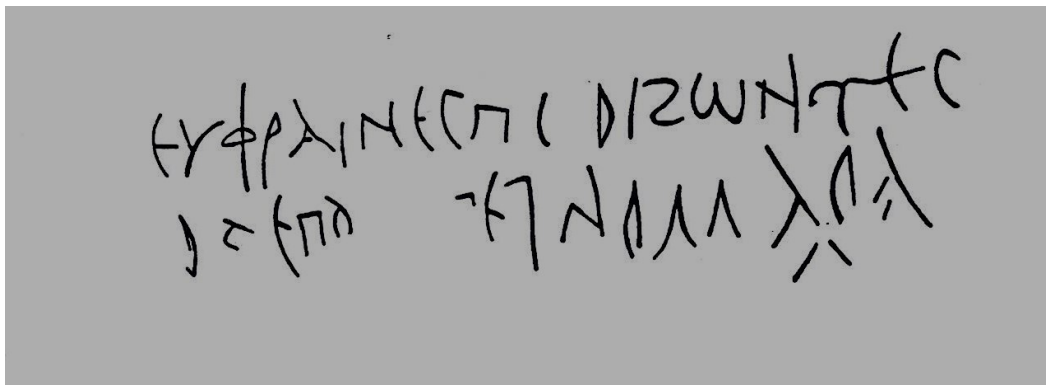
---

131. Neusner, “Josephus’ Pharisees.” 279.



temple into a commercial market of animal sales, moneychangers, and pedestrian traffic, but Jesus had something to say about it.

By cleansing this area of the temple, Jesus demonstrated His Messianic authority, to which neither the Romans nor the Sadducees offered a strong challenge. While He taught one should not use force, in the temple, He did. The reason was that the cleansing was not so much an act of reformation or purification, but a symbolic gesture of pending judgment. In doing this, He not only displayed His divine intention, but also confirmed the words of judgment spoken by the Old Testament prophets.<sup>132</sup> The prophetic act that symbolized destruction was also reflective in Jeremiah 4:5-5:31; 7:14; 25:1-38; 26:1-24; Ezekiel 4:1-7:27; and Micah 3:9-12. Witnesses would have connected the cleansing with these prophets.



**02.01.16.B. SADDUCEAN TOMB INSCRIPTION.** A tomb inscription of a first century A.D. Sadducee that reads, *Enjoy your life*. Illustration courtesy of the Israel Museum.

There was an anti-Gentile attitude in some Jewish circles. The attitude was that since they were God's chosen elite, all other people were as spittle. This is reflected in the Pseudepigrapha book of *4 Ezra*. It reads as follows:

**All this I have spoken before you, O Lord, because you have said that it was for us that you created this world. As for the other nations, which have descended from Adam, you have said they are nothing, and that they are like spittle, and you have compared their abundance to a drop from a bucket. And now, O Lord, behold, these nations, which are reputed as nothing, domineer over us and devour us. But we your people, whom you have called your firstborn, only begotten, zealous for you, and most dear, have been given into their hands.**

132. See Jer. 8:10; 14:18; 23:11, 33-34; 32:31-32; 34:18-19; Lam. 4:13; Ezek. 22:26; Zeph. 3:4; Zech. 14:21; *Testament of Levi* 14:1-8; Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.8.8; *Targum of Jeremiah* 7:1-11.

**4 Ezra 6:55, 58<sup>133</sup>**

Being a Sadducee was not necessarily an easy task, regardless how much power the Sadducees had in controlling the temple and being Roman pawns. The fact remained that all temple services were at the direction of the Pharisees. Most certainly the Sadducees were not very delighted with having the Pharisees tell them what to do and when to do it. The politics and in-house squabbling within the temple was phenomenal and often escapes modern scholarship. There was constant bickering and rivalry, not to mention a long history of animosity between the two religious groups.<sup>134</sup>

An important aspect to note is that the Sadducees were extremely rigid in judging others. In fact, they even had their own penal code.<sup>135</sup> That is precisely how Josephus described them. Speaking of Ananus, a/k/a Annas, he,

**Took the high priesthood, was a bold man in his temper, and very insolent; he was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders, above all the rest of the Jews.**

**Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.9.1 (199)**

Similar words were written about three or four decades before Jesus was born by an unknown author who said,

**Why are you sitting in the council of the devout, you profaner?  
And your heart is far from the Lord,  
Provoking the God of Israel by lawbreaking;  
Excessive in words, excessive in appearance above everyone,  
He who is harsh in words in condemning sinners at judgment.**

***Psalms of Solomon* 4:1-2**

---

133. Scholars debate on the classification of *3rd Ezra* (a/k/a *1 Esdras*) and *4th Ezra* (a/k/a *2nd Esdras*). Sometimes these are listed in the Apocrypha (see 02.02.03) and other times they are listed in the Pseudepigrapha (see 02.02.24). The reader is reminded that quotations from non-biblical sources are not to be understood as being of equal authority with the biblical narratives. See 01.02.04.

134. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 262-66.

135. Megillah, *Taanith* 10; Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 127.

Clearly, the Sadducees had a well established reputation of corruption. They were the primary instigators and final actors to have the Romans crucify Jesus. In summary, the theological and social positions of the Sadducees (compare to 02.01.14 “Pharisees”) were,<sup>136</sup>

1. Their theology reflected strong influences of Epicurean philosophy and other popular Greek ideas.<sup>137</sup>
2. Wealthy aristocrats; by the early first century A.D., the Sadducees had become an elite social-religious group who controlled the temple and were interested only in their own wealth, power, and welfare.
3. Theologically conservative but gave only lip service to the Old Testament laws, yet they had no problem accepting Hellenism.
4. Theologically, the Sadducees believed only in the Torah and gave no credibility to any other books of the Hebrew Bible, nor did they give credibility to the Oral Law.<sup>138</sup> They said that books such as Daniel, Ezra, and Esther were “foreign,” implying that they contained imported ideas from the Persians.
5. Denied the resurrection of the soul.<sup>139</sup> And by denying the resurrection and immortality in general (Acts 23:8), they also renounced the messianic hope.
6. Denied belief in final judgment, angels, etc.
7. They were separated from the common people who were called the *am-ha-arets*, meaning *the unlearned*.<sup>140</sup> They had no concern for them, nor did they feel obligated to intercede to God for their behalf.<sup>141</sup>
8. Few in number
9. Were very friendly to, and in co-operation with, the Romans
10. They believed that whatever wealth, power, status, and influence they acquired were blessings of God, but they would have to strive for them by whatever means possible.

---

136. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 326.

137. Farrar, *The Life of Christ*. 41, 349.

138. Moulder, “Sadducees.” 4:278-81, Schmaltz and Fischer, *Messianic Seal*. 22.

139. Josephus, *Antiquities*. 18.1.4 (14-17).

140. Bailey, *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes*. 292; Geikie, *The Life and Works of Christ*. 2:348.

141. Moulder, “Sadducees.” 4:278-81.

11. In the book of Acts, Luke said that the Sadducees were the primary opponents of the early Christian Church, not the Pharisees. In fact, many Pharisees came to faith in Christ Jesus in the book of Acts (i.e., Acts 15:5).<sup>142</sup>

Therefore, not only did the Sadducees not believe in an eternity, but in doing so, they denied any messianic hope. That, coupled with their Hellenistic ideals and lifestyle, explains why they sought to destroy the work of Jesus by whatever means possible and were the major oppressors of the early church.<sup>143</sup> They were arrogant and rude to Jews of other sects and, as Josephus said, to foreigners who came to Jerusalem.<sup>144</sup> When Jesus was before Pilate, it was they who cried, “Let His blood be upon us and our children.” Their wish came true because the Romans killed every one of them with the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70.

**02.01.17 Samaritans.** The Samaritans claim to be descendants of Jacob, his son Joseph, and his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. (cf. Jn. 4:12) but scholarship denies it. In 733 B.C. the Assyrians conquered the ten northern Israelite tribes, known collectively as Israel.<sup>145</sup> In an attempt to destroy the culture and prevent possible future uprisings, about a decade later the Assyrians deported a vast majority of the ten Israelite tribes far to the east. For similar reasons, they imported five foreign tribes from other conquered lands.<sup>146</sup> The Israelites who were not deported intermarried with their new neighbors and their descendants became known as the Samaritans,<sup>147</sup> named after the land of Samaria in which they lived.<sup>148</sup> Amazingly, they followed the Jewish Torah but with several significant changes.

1. The Samaritans removed all references pertaining to Jerusalem from their Torah.

2. The Samaritans believed that Mount Gerizim instead of Jerusalem was the divine location to offer sacrifice and worship God.

---

142 Stemberger, *Jewish Contemporaries of Jesus: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes*. 31.

143. Mt. 22:23; Mk. 12:18; Acts 4:5; 23:8

144. Josephus, *Wars* 2.8,14. Josephus, at times makes a passing comment on foreigners living in the land, such as their presence in Galilee. See also *Wars* 3.3.2 (41).

145. *New International Version Archaeological Study Bible*. (notes) 1737. See 03.02.04 “733 B.C. Israel Falls To The Assyrians; Israelites Deported To The East; 723 B.C. Israel Ends”

146. Gaster, “Samaritans.” 4:190-93.

147. As of this writing, the total population of the Samaritans is under one thousand. They still practice their religious rituals such as Passover sacrificial offerings, as during the time of Christ. They claim to be descendants of the tribes of Levi, Ephraim, and Manasseh. They further claim to have maintained a continuous priesthood from Aaron (brother of Moses) through Eleazar and Phinehas until the 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

148. Cf. 2 Kg. 17; see also 03.02.04; Anderson, R. T. “Samaritans.” 303; La Sor, “Samaria.” 4:298-303.

3. They believed Mount Gerizim was where God created Adam and Eve.
4. The Samaritans also believed Mount Gerizim was where Abraham offered Isaac, and every Samaritan child knew where the thicket bush was where the ram got caught.
5. While the Samaritan Torah was modified from the Jewish edition, there is agreement between the two holy books on more than two thousand other passages.<sup>149</sup> Ironically, this reflects accuracy of transmission and translation over many centuries to the modern Bible versions.
6. After the Babylonians took the captured Jews of Jerusalem and Judea to Babylon in 585 B.C., the Jews changed their Hebrew alphabet to the Aramaic Square Script. Since the Old Testament until that time was written in the older Hebrew script, the Samaritans felt the Babylonian Jews polluted the Scriptures by making this change. Therefore, the Samaritan form of writing is a much older version of Hebrew, but it too, has undergone some changes throughout history.<sup>150</sup>
7. The Samaritans, like so many others in the ancient Middle East, believed that God would send someone soon to restore their land and people. That “someone” was called the *Taheb* or *Restorer* – a great prophet of the end-time whom Moses referred to in Deuteronomy 18:15.<sup>151</sup>
8. Concerning ritual purity, the Jews were insistent on ritual purity on a variety of issues, but not so the Samaritans. They accepted Greek coins with pagan deities, temples for pagan worship, and even the name *Sabaste* is the Greek name for *Augusta* or *Augustus*.<sup>152</sup> These things the Jews desperately opposed, and they hated the Samaritans for accepting them.
9. The Samaritan calendar is different from the Jewish one, making the festival observances at different times than Jewish ones.<sup>153</sup>

---

149. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 19 n27.

150. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 18-20.

151. Bruce, *New Testament History*. 34-35; Scott, Jr. *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*. 200. See also 06.01.03.

152. Geikie, *The Life and Works of Christ*. 1:51, 117.

153. Scott, Jr. *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*. 200.



**02.01.17.A. RUINS OF THE SAMARITAN TEMPLE.** The ruins of the Samaritan temple lay beneath the Byzantine ruins in the foreground. The Byzantine church was built to honor the Samaritan temple. Photograph by the author.

Therefore, the Samaritans, like the Sadducees, the Pharisees, the Essenes of Qumran, and all the smaller Jewish sects, they all identified themselves to be “Israelites,” between the years 250 B.C. and A.D. 200.<sup>154</sup> However, the Samaritans did not take on the name “Jew” as did the other sects. If the religious differences were not enough to cause conflicts, actions by both sides intensified the hatred and conflict. The following is an abbreviated list of repulsive actions.

1. When the Jews returned from Babylon to Israel to rebuild the temple, a Horonite (Samaritan) by the name of Sanballat harassed them with the help of a “garrison in Samaria” (Neh. 4:2).<sup>155</sup>

---

154. Charlesworth and Evans, *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation*. 22.

155. Sanballat is among fifty biblical names whose existence has been verified by archaeological studies in a published article by Lawrence Mykytiuk titled, “Archaeology Confirms 50 Real People in the Bible.” *Biblical Archaeology Review*. March/April, 2014 (40:2), pages 42-50, 68. This archaeological evidence confirms the historical accuracy of the biblical timeline. For further study see the website for Associates for Biblical Research, as well as Grisanti, “Recent Archaeological Discoveries that Lend Credence to the Historicity of the Scriptures.” 475-98. However, some scholars debate the identity of Sanbalat as there was more than one individual of importance by this name. For example, there is a Sanbalet mentioned in the Elephantine Papyri; a literary work written by Jews who escaped the Babylonians and Persians

2. When the Greek General Alexander the Great conquered this part of the world, he destroyed the Samaritan cities but left Jerusalem untouched.<sup>156</sup> This caused jealousy.
3. But a little more than a century later during the Maccabean Revolt, when the Jews fought against the Syrian Greeks, they had to fight the Samaritans as well.
4. During the Revolt, the Samaritans to advantage of every opportunity to capture Jews and sell them into slavery.
5. In 128 B.C. when John Hyrcanus became the Jewish governor and high priest, he destroyed the Samaritan temple.<sup>157</sup>
6. In 107 B.C., Hyrcanus destroyed the Samaritan city of Shechem.<sup>158</sup>
7. In 63 B.C. when the Romans conquered the Jewish lands and the Samaritans again fought against the Jews.<sup>159</sup>
8. Between the years 40 to 37 B.C., when Herod the Great fought various political and criminal entities to gain control of the Jewish nation, the Samaritans fought with him.
9. Josephus recorded a number of accounts where the Samaritans attacked the Jews. In one such case, when the temple gates were opened at midnight to accommodate the worshipers with their Passover lambs, a number of Samaritans entered and desecrated the temple by throwing human bones throughout the sanctuary.<sup>160</sup> This sacrilege occurred shortly after Coponius, the first procurator after Archelaus, was deposed.
10. At this time it was common practice that priests would give trumpet and fire signals from the pinnacle of the temple to mark the beginning of the Sabbath, the beginning of a month, and special festivals. The fire signals were repeated from one hill-top community

---

in the 6<sup>th</sup> century to live on the island of Elephantine in southern Egypt. The name also appears in the Wadi Daliyeh papyri (4<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C.).

156. Kelso, "Samaria, City of." 5:238.

157. Some scholars believe Hyrcanus destroyed the Samaritan temple in 108 B.C.

158. Kelso, "Samaria, Territory of." 5:242; Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 283.

159. Gaster, "Samaritans." 4:191-96.

160. A.D. 6 or 7; Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.2.2; Geikie, *The Life and Works of Christ*. 1:293.

to another, and within minutes all Israel knew when that the Sabbath had begun.<sup>161</sup> The Samaritans would at times set off a false signal, much to the anger of the Jews who had been deceived.

11. At times, when Jews traveled from Galilee through Samaria on their way to Jerusalem, they were beaten and sometimes killed. However, leaving the Holy City and returning north to Galilee was always seen as a good thing by the Samaritans.

Little wonder then that by the time Jesus came on the scene the social tension was extremely volatile. This is seen in John 8:48, when the accusers referred to Jesus as a Samaritan. It was in the cultural context and connection that, in rabbinic demonology, a leading demon was named *Shomroni*, which was also used to refer to either a demon or Samaritan.<sup>162</sup> Obviously this reflects the tension between the two groups. Yet according to John 4 and the book of Acts, missionary efforts in Samaria were successful in the early years of the church.<sup>163</sup>

In light of these hostilities, the words and work of Jesus were absolutely profound. Imagine what the Jews thought when Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan, or when He healed the ten lepers, and only the Samaritan returned to thank Him. Jesus was not only a profound Person to the Jews, but also to the Romans who were quietly watching Him with the help of the Herodians.

---

161. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 2:113.

162. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor's Manual*. Class 16, page 2.

163. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 19-21.





**02.01.17.B THE SAMARITAN TORAH SCROLL.** Husney W. Kohen, Director of the Gerizim Center and Museum as well as the future Samaritan high priest, discussed the Samaritan Torah Scroll and faith with the author in 1999. Photo by translator Arie bar David.

**02.01.18 Sanhedrin** The Greek word *Sanhedrin* is a combination of *syn*, meaning *together* and *hedra*, meaning *seats*.<sup>164</sup> The court consisted of the following entities:<sup>165</sup>

- a. 1 President and high priest who was Caiaphas during the ministry of Jesus.
- b. 24 chief priests who were Sadducees
- c. 24 elders who were Pharisees
- d. 22 scribes who were Pharisees

The Sanhedrin was the legislative and judicial body / Supreme Court of the Jewish nation. This is evident in Matthew 26:65-66 and 27:1-2. It was the policy of the Romans to permit captured people groups to have limited self-government. However, when there was a new aspiring

---

164. Parry, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Talmud*. 36.

165. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor's Manual*. Class 24, page 6.

messiah or rabbi, as was common at this time, the Sanhedrin investigated the speaker in two stages.

1. The first was an observation stage when representatives went to the community where the self-proclaimed rabbi was teaching. Observers never asked questions or objections. Then they returned to the temple and reported what they heard and saw.
2. The second stage was one of interrogation where questions were asked and objections were raised. Their motive was to find a basis to either accept or reject the speaker and his message.

That is why in the early days of the ministry of Jesus, agents for the high court were sometimes present but said nothing. Later in His ministry they discussed various issues with Jesus.

**02.01.19 School of Hillel.** Rabbi Hillel, a/k/a Hillel the Elder, was one of the most important religious leaders in Israel during the time of Roman occupation. He was born in Babylon around 50 B.C., although a few sources date his birth as early as 110 B.C., and he died in A.D. 10. Because Isaiah said that the law should proceed forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3), Jerusalem became the center of religious training. Hillel came to study in Jerusalem at the famous schools of Abtalion and Schemaiah.<sup>166</sup> About three decades before the birth of Jesus, he rose from the lowest ranks among the rabbis and became President of the Sanhedrin.

Hillel is at times romantically compared to Moses, as both supposedly lived to an age of 120. Hillel lived in Babylon for forty years, then studied for forty years, and in the last forty years he was a leader to his people. Those comments of are obviously somewhat fanciful, but reflect the high respect later generations had for him. He was also from the line of David, of Shephatiah, the son of Abital – a genealogical record that added to his credentials.<sup>167</sup> There is an excellent possibility that he and/or his students were in the temple when Jesus was there at the age of 12.

Hillel established an academy, which was known for its compassion toward fellow Jews and moral Gentiles. His school of biblical interpretation<sup>168</sup> held to the orthodox form of Judaism, but was known for its kindness, gentleness, and influence during the reign of Herod the Great (37 – 4 B.C.) and the childhood days of Jesus. He was a strict rabbi with a strong leaning to charity and mercy along with some Hellenistic or liberal ideas of the time. In fact, some of his ideas and

---

166. Geikie, *The Life and Works of Christ*. 1:275.

167. Babylonian Talmud, *Juchas*. 19.2; Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 3:35.

168. See Rabbi Hillel's "Seven Guidelines or Rules of Interpretation" in Appendix 30.

ways of teaching the core values of the Torah were nearly identical to those of Jesus.<sup>169</sup> Scholars have often said that Jesus agreed much more with the teachings of Rabbi Hillel than with the opposing Rabbi Shammai.<sup>170</sup>

Since his teachings were often similar to those of Jesus, some scholars have suggested he was a significant element of “the fullness of time” phrase of Galatians 4:4b, in that he brought many people in line with what Jesus would be teaching. After the destruction of the temple, his followers became the dominant influence in Jewish lives. Leaders of both the Schools of Hillel and Shammai claimed to have heard a “voice from heaven,” even though on occasion they had strong contrasting interpretations of Scripture. It is difficult to classify either one as liberal or conservative. However, Hillel had a reputation for being kind and gentle while Shammai was impatient and abrasive.<sup>171</sup> (See last paragraph of 02.01.19 “School of Shammai” below.) One of the lasting contributions of Hillel was his seven rules of biblical interpretation.<sup>172</sup> Most Jewish scholars agree, however, these did not all originate with him, but he popularized them. See Appendix 30 for the complete listing.

Finally, Hillel’s family may have had more influence in biblical history than is commonly understood. Some scholars believe that it was his son Simeon who served in the temple and dedicated Jesus (Lk. 2:25-26).<sup>173</sup> The grandson of Hillel, Gamaliel, trained a student by the name of Saul, who became the famous Apostle Paul.<sup>174</sup>

**02.01.20 School of Shammai.** Rabbi Shammai (c. 50 B.C. – A.D. 30) was a leading Jewish scholar during the time of Herod the Great and Jesus. He was the embodiment of the narrow-minded legalistic Pharisaic spirit.<sup>175</sup> His school of biblical interpretation became popular about 30 B.C. and he took control of the Sanhedrin ten years later when he was most powerful.<sup>176</sup> Shammai, an aggressive man with a rough personality, established an academy to promote his

---

169. Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. 111.

170. Pixner, *With Jesus through Galilee*. 32.

171. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 91; Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbath* 31a.

172. There are multiple sources that explain Hillel’s Rules of Interpretation. His seven rules were later expanded into thirteen by Rabbi Ishmael. See Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 11, Session 1.

173. See Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 2:31.

174. Falk, *Jesus the Pharisee*. 48.

175. Geikie, *The Life and Works of Christ*. 1:276.

176. Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 5, Session 2.

theology. Students of Shammai, along with the leading Pharisees,<sup>177</sup> the Sadducees and Herodians, were the most aggressive challengers to Jesus.<sup>178</sup>

Essentially, this school introduced some new changes in the way the Mosaic Law was applied to the common people. The Jerusalem Talmud reports that one member of this group practiced polygamy, a severe change from the norm in first century Judaism.<sup>179</sup> The rabbis of this school placed restrictive rules upon the people (“binding”), which were released by the rabbis of Hillel (“loosening”). When Jesus made harsh statements toward the Pharisees, it was generally to the School of Shammai. Hence, there was not only conflict between the Pharisees and Sadducees, but also between these two theological centers within the Pharisee sect.<sup>180</sup> In A.D. 70 when the temple was destroyed, the School of Shammai was also destroyed along with the Sadducees.<sup>181</sup>

Comparing the differences of Hillel and Shammai can be challenging for modern students because they do not fit well in the “conservative vs. liberal” mold. Shammai and his followers were stricter in their interpretation of the Mosaic Law, Jewish traditions, and in their judicial decisions. Hillel and his school were more merciful, kinder, and forgiving in their handling of the law. An example is as follows:

**If someone stole a beam and built it into a house—**

**The School of Shammai says, “Let him tear down the whole house and return the beam to its owner.”**

**And the School of Hillel says, “The owner has a claim only for the value of the beam alone, on account of the good order of those who repent.”**

**Babylonian Talmud, *Gittin* 18b<sup>182</sup>**

---

177. Only the leading Pharisees, but by no means, all the Pharisees opposed Jesus.

178. *New International Version* Study Bible note on Leviticus 24:20.

179. Falk, *Jesus the Pharisee*. 54. Harvey Falk reports that a Rabbi Eliezer was married, and in his later years he also married his niece; but his first wife, whom he never divorced, outlived him. There is a well documented case of first century polygamy in the religious establishment of the Pharisees, but it was not a common practice. See the Jerusalem Talmud, *Yevamot* 13.2 and *Sanhedrin* 68a.

180. Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 307.

181. <http://www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk/Tyndale/staff/Instone-Brewer/prepub/Sanhedrin%2043a%20censored.pdf>. Retrieved May 26, 2013.

182 Cited by Neusner, *The Talmud of Babylonia: An American Translation*. Vol XVIIIIB: *Gittin*. 93.

The entire conflict between the two schools of theology, Hillel and Shammai, became so intense that it caused division and conflict in the Jewish judicial system. Notice the following warning.

**Abbaye said, “The caution against splintering into deviant groups applies only in the case of two courts of law, such as one deciding according to the views of Beit (meaning *House of*) Shammai and one according to the views of Beit Hillel, but two courts of law in separate cities would not be subject to this limitation.” Rava challenged this, “But were not the Shammaites and the Hillelites like two courts of law [and they differed freely from each other in the same locale]?” Said Rava, “The caution applies in the case of one court in the same city, with half the judges deciding according to the Beit Shammai and the other half according to the Beit Hillel.”**

**Babylonian Talmud, *Yebamoth* 14a<sup>183</sup>**

Furthermore, the Mishnah has numerous situations where the application of the Mosaic Law or Oral Law by these opposing schools led to intense arguments. There can be no question that some, if not all, of the legalistic questions presented to Jesus were from the Shammaite branch of the Pharisees.

In the case of a violation, the rabbis of Shammai demanded physical punishment whereas the Pharisaic Hillelites offered a milder punishment that was often in the form of a monetary fine.<sup>184</sup> Those who confronted Jesus about healing on the Sabbath were most likely to be followers of Shammai, rather than Hillel. The School of Shammai had the following objections concerning so-called sinners, Gentiles, and the poor:

1. They were not permitted to have a continuous relationship, unless absolutely necessary, with a “sinner.”
2. They were not to eat any food that was not tithed, especially if it came from a “sinner.” That meant a Pharisee could not enjoy a dinner<sup>185</sup> in the home of a “sinner.”
3. They were not permitted to invite a “sinner” to their home.
4. The best relationship a Pharisee could have with a “sinner” was none.

---

183. Cited by Boker, *The Talmud: Selected Writings*. 134-35; Bracketed insert by Boker; Definition in parenthesis mine.

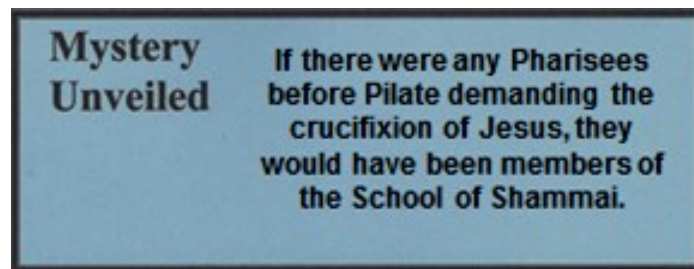
184. Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 2:106.

185. The evening meal was the “chief” meal of the day, usually held in the evening. It was the primary meal during the feasts, such as the Passover meal and marriage feast.

5. The leading Pharisees believed that wealth was the result of Divine favor and, therefore, contact with poor people should be avoided.

6. No animal could be sacrificed in the temple if the owner had taken it from non-Jewish land or it crossed heathen territory.

Clearly, the followers of Shammai would not be the judges anyone would have to be accountable to. If there were any Pharisees before Pilate demanding the crucifixion of Jesus, it would have been those of this school.



**02.01.21 Scribes.** In the early years of the Old Testament era, scribes were little more than secretaries who functioned as copy writers and performed dictations.<sup>186</sup> But by the beginning of the Inter-Testamental Period, they were generally considered to be scholars of the Mosaic Law (Ezra 7:6; Neh. 8:1), who had excellent writing skills, and by the first century they also functioned as lawyers (Gk. *nomodidaskalos*), teachers of the Law, accountants, secretaries, journalists, historians, librarians, and teachers.<sup>187</sup> It is believed that most were clerks in a small middle-class society, but some rose to wealthy and powerful prominence.<sup>188</sup> The skill of writing became a monopoly for some families which insured wealth for future generations.<sup>189</sup>

Most people were closely aligned to the Pharisees because this religious group controlled the local synagogues, and the people felt comfortable because they had studied the Written and Oral Laws more than any other religious sect.<sup>190</sup> Because Pharisees were usually synonymous with the teachers of the Law,<sup>191</sup> it is at times difficult to distinguish them from the scribes<sup>192</sup> although

---

186. 1 Chron. 2:55; 26:6; 27:32; 2 Chron. 34:13; Ezra 4:8-9, 17, 23; Ps. 45:1; Jer. 8:8; Nah. 3:17.

187. Hillyer, "Scribe, Writing," 3:477-78.

188. Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*. 417-18.

189. Hillyer, "Scribe, Writing," 3:477-79.

190. Cited from Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. 92.

191. Mt. 3:7; 15:1; Mk. 2: 16, 24; Lk. 11:38.

the scribes generally read Scripture in the synagogue. Not all scribes were Pharisees, but all the Pharisees who were members of the Sanhedrin were also scribes (cf. Mt. 23:7-8).<sup>193</sup> Whenever Jesus criticized them,<sup>194</sup> He did so for the following reasons:

1. They imposed restrictive laws on people which they avoided themselves.
2. They built beautiful monument tombs for the prophets who were sent by God, but whom they killed.
3. They kept knowledge of God's Word essentially for themselves, and made themselves judge and jury of biblical interpretation.
4. They were incredibly prideful in dress, in greetings, and in public places such as the market and synagogue. The leading Pharisees were so self-righteous, that they often bathed after being in public with the common people.

A scribe was called in Hebrew a *talmid*, meaning *a learned one*, or *the educated one*, but he was also known as a *chakham*, meaning *wise man* because he studied all the laws and knew how to apply them to daily life.<sup>195</sup> Scribes were literary professionals who were available for the purpose of writing legal contracts. There were various divisions of scribes. For example, some scribes functioned as royal secretaries (2 Sam. 8:17) and others were military scribes (Jer. 37:15). It appears that the art of writing was a craft controlled by selected families. The Kenites had families of scribes living at Jabez (1 Chron. 2:55) who appear to have kept a monopoly on their craft. However, in Jerusalem, scribal schools trained priests and Levites who in turn, trained the people of the Law. Ezra could not have taught the people the Law of Moses if there were no scribal schools in Babylon. Thankfulness should be granted to the Levitical scribes who copied the books of the Old Testament (Deut. 17:18; Jer. 8:8). They wrote various documents that pertained to the maintenance of the temple facility (2 Kg. 12:10; 2 Chron. 34:13).<sup>196</sup>

---

192. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 59.

193. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 236. Being a scribe was a family occupation, handed down from one generation to another. For a list of families of scribes, see I Chronicles 2:55, and for a "company of scribes," see *1 Maccabees* 7:12.

194. Other Jewish writers also criticized the leading Pharisees as found in *1 Enoch* 102:9-10; *Testament of Moses* 7:3; *Tosefta*, *Menahot* 13:22. See also Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 259, n 42.

195. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 173.

196. See also Josephus, *Antiquities* 12.3.3; cf. 11.5.1.

The famous leader, Ezra, for whom an Old Testament book is named, created this separate body known as scribes or the *sopherim*. They copied Scriptures for all occasions, carefully counting every letter to insure accurate transmission of the Sacred Word.<sup>197</sup> By the first century they became known as lawyers<sup>198</sup> and doctors of the law.<sup>199</sup> Since nearly every aspect of Jewish life was controlled by religious law, scribes were theological lawyers who were trained in the application of the Torah and the Oral Law. They were often given the honored position of reading the Scriptures in the synagogues and were authoritative consultants who settled disputes.<sup>200</sup>

Scribes existed in all major religious sects, but most belonged to the Pharisees.<sup>201</sup> Twice some are referred to as the “scribes of the Pharisees” (Mk. 2:16; Acts 23:9), suggesting that there were scribes of other religious groups. However, as a group, they were technically a trade guild and not a separate religious sect or party.<sup>202</sup> They are best remembered for being extremely detail-oriented concerning religious law, masters of “hair-splitting details” and theological debates. This explains why they were in constant discussions with Jesus, which ultimately led to their humiliation before their favorite audiences.<sup>203</sup>

**02.01.22 Sicarii.** (See also Zealots 02.01.23). This group of freedom fighters was known as the “Sicarii” to the Romans and as the “Zealots” to the Jewish people. Some scholars say that the names are interchangeable, but are listed as two separate groups because other scholars say that the Zealots were a subgroup within the Sicarii organization. Nonetheless, they were dedicated to eliminating Hellenized Jews, overthrowing the Roman Empire to gain independence for Israel, as well as reestablishing the Torah and the orthodox faith in Judaism.

Josephus identified them as a nationalistic group that was known for various terroristic murderous activities.<sup>204</sup> For example, they would walk in a crowded market, surround their victim who was unaware of his situation and, on a given secret signal, pull out short thin daggers

---

197. Freeman, *The New Manners and Customs of the Bible*. 420.

198. Mt. 22:35; Lk. 7:30; 11:45; 14:3.

199. Lk. 2:46; 5:17; Acts 5:34; Freeman, *The New Manners and Customs of the Bible*. 420-21; Guignebert, *The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus*. 71.

200. Freeman, *The New Manners and Customs*.” 420.

201. Metzger, B. *New Testament*. 48-49.

202. Hagner, “Scribes.” 4:360-61; Guignebert, *The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus*. 71.

203. Wilson, *False Trials of Jesus*. 18.

204. Josephus, *Wars* 4.9; *Antiquities* 20.8.6.



and assassinate the victim. In fact, the name *Sicarii* is the Latin word meaning *dagger* or *short sword*.<sup>205</sup> The group would then walk away as if nothing had happened leaving the victim dead on the street. They utterly terrorized Jerusalem.<sup>206</sup> Luke mentioned a false messiah who led four thousand *Sicarii* terrorists in a revolt that failed (Acts 21:38). The last of these hyper-Zealots was destroyed in A.D. 73 with the fall of Masada.<sup>207</sup>

**02.01.23 Zealots.** (See also 02.01.22 *Sicarii*.) The Zealots were not only freedom fighters, but they were extremely hostile to the Romans, Herodians, and the wealthy aristocratic Jews of Jerusalem – namely the Sadducees.<sup>208</sup> Their name was taken from 1 Kings 19:10, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty.”<sup>209</sup> They called themselves by the Hebrew term *Ganna'im* or Aramaic *Qan anayya*, which in Greek is *Zelotai*.<sup>210</sup> Obviously the English word is derived from the latter. Their rallying cry was “No king for Israel but God.” They believed it was a sin to pay taxes to a pagan overlord and were determined to fight for their freedom.

While these first century terrorists first became organized and fought against Herod the Great in the years 40-37 B.C., they did not become a political movement until Jesus was about eight or ten years old. By then the name Zealot identified those who participated in the uprising of A.D. 6 led by Judas of Gamala, the son of Saripheus and Mattathias. This Judas (also known as Judas the Galilean in Acts 5:37) said that Jews were a chosen people of God and, therefore, had no obligation to pay taxes to the Roman government. This is the background of Matthew 22:17 when Jesus was asked, “Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?” While the revolt failed, a Pharisee by the name of Zadok joined Judas and together they formed a loosely knit religious political party which Josephus called the “fourth philosophy.”<sup>211</sup> They were trained to fight to their death and to recognize no messiah except a messiah of the sword.<sup>212</sup> From the time the Romans entered the land in 63 B.C. until the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, there were thirteen revolts<sup>213</sup> and sixty claimants to the title of messiah.<sup>214</sup> Some historians say there were

---

205. Bruce, *New Testament History*. 93.

206. Josephus, *Wars* 2.13.3.

207. House, *Chronological and Background Charts of the New Testament*. 75.

208. Bruce, *New Testament History*. 94-95.

209. Pixner, *With Jesus in Jerusalem*. 126.

210. Bruce, *New Testament History*. 88.

211. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.1.6 and 20.8.10.

212. Farrar, *The Life of Christ*. 442.

213. See Appendix 25 for a listing of false prophets who had messianic expectations and for a partial listing of revolts and social disturbances from 63 B.C. to A.D. 70.

three major revolts that overshadowed dozens of smaller ones. Only one of the Zealots, Menahem ben Hezekiah, claimed to be a descendant of David.<sup>215</sup> However, the greatest of these revolts became known as the “First Revolt” (A.D. 66), which led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

They originated in the Galilee region while Herod the Great was governor there – before he became king of the entire Jewish region, but became better organized under Judas in A.D. 6. Josephus said<sup>216</sup> they were the most active freedom-fighting party at the time, convinced that God would help them only if they helped themselves.<sup>217</sup> Their concept of a messiah was one who would lead them to military victory over Roman oppression. The concept of separation of “church and State,” or as would have been said at that time, the separation of synagogue and state, did not exist at that time. Religious faith was the primary motivation behind political movements; as it is with radical Islamic terrorists today. The center of the Jewish resistance movement was in the city of Gamala, located in the mountains east of Galilee, where in A.D. 66 more than five thousand Zealots chose to commit suicide rather than die by the Roman sword.<sup>218</sup> From this group came a disciple of Jesus by the name of Simon who was referred to later as “Simon the Zealot,” to differentiate him from Simon Peter.<sup>219</sup>

The violent activities of the Sicarii / Zealots initiated the First Revolt.<sup>220</sup> The last of these freedom fighters died at Masada in A.D. 73, but their ideals and dreams of the restoration of a political dynasty equal to that of King David continued. Six decades later the Jews were at war again, in what has become known as the “Second Revolt” (A.D. 132-135). This revolt is also known as the Simon bar Kokhba Revolt and resulted in the dispersion of all Jews and Christians from Jerusalem by the command of the Roman General Hadrian.<sup>221</sup>

214. Geikie, *The Life and Works of Christ*. 2:114.

215. Jerusalem Talmud, *Berakboth* 2.4, 5a.18. Menahem ben Hezekiah was a major leader in the revolt of A.D. 66 (Josephus, *Wars* 2.17.8). For more than a hundred years the Hezekiah family was involved in various revolts, and mutinies. This has given credibility to some that they were of royal lineage as they claimed.

216. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.1.6 (23-25).

217. Golub, *In the Days*. 274.

218. Pixner, *With Jesus in Jerusalem*. 126.

219. Pixner, *With Jesus in Jerusalem*. 126.

220. For more information on the Zealot movement, see Josephus, *Wars* 2.4.1 and 4.4.1.

221. Donaldson, 4:1175-79; Crossan and Reed, *Excavating Jesus*. 190-92.

## Unit 02

### Cultural Background Studies

### Chapter 02

### Biblical And Extra-Biblical Writings

**02.02.01 Introduction.** This study contains dozens of quotations from ancient extra-biblical sources. The importance of these writings lies in the fact that they aid in the understanding of the problems of daily first century life, including theological discussions, major cultural, historical events, and the reaction of rulers and people to various problems. A brief description of each source is given so the reader will understand why some extra-biblical writings are more reliable and significant than others. For example, books such as the *Didache* (a first century church document) and *Mishnah* (the written version of the Oral Law) are important while other works, such as the Gnostic writings, hold almost no historical value and are theologically worthless and possibly deceptive.

As stated previously, for the purpose of this study, the ideal writer of yesteryear quoted herein was one who lived in the land of Jesus and at the time of Jesus. The further in time and geographical distance an ancient writer was from the life of Christ, the more suspect his manuscript becomes. That does not negate it – but it raises the bar for discerning critique. Scholars universally discount writings after the sixth or seventh centuries. There are hundreds of old manuscripts in the possession of universities and museums pretending to provide additional detail to the life and ministry of Jesus, and nearly all of them are fanciful stories that should never have been written.<sup>222</sup>

**02.02.02 Ante-Nicene Fathers.** The Ante-Nicene Fathers are those church leaders who were influential *prior* to the Church Council of Nicea in the year 325, but after the Apostolic Fathers who were personally taught by the apostles. The ante-Nicene Fathers discussed a wide variety of theological and church issues. Since they lived within three centuries of Jesus, they present valuable insight into the cultural and background setting, as well as early interpretations of Scripture.

---

222. Two examples are: 1) Ron Charles, who has gathered scores of fanciful legends and myths, mostly written between the sixth and sixteenth centuries, that pertain to the life of Christ in his book titled, *The Search: A Historian's Search for Historical Jesus*. (Self-Published, 2007). 2) Nicholas Notovich, whose book, *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ*. Trans. (Virchand R. Gandhi, Dover Pub.) is a so-called historical account of when Jesus went to Asia to study between the ages 13 and 29.

**02.02.03 Apocrypha.** The Apocrypha<sup>223</sup> is a collection of about fourteen books<sup>224</sup> written, for the most part, during the Inter-Testamental Period in the Holy Land.<sup>225</sup> However, It was the intent of the authors to write a message to an inner circle of the faithful, which could not be understood by outsiders. Hence the Greek name *apokryphos*, meaning “hidden” or “concealed.”<sup>226</sup> The Roman Catholic<sup>227</sup> and Eastern Orthodox Churches have accepted them as inspired Scriptures.<sup>228</sup> Protestants, however, recognized these books only for the historical values, as they believe these add nothing of theological value to the canonical Scripture.<sup>229</sup> They enhance the understanding of the Greco-Roman-Jewish atmosphere and are a witness to the faith of the Jewish people living in the second century B.C. Hence, these provide essential historical background for understanding the Judaism of Jesus’ day and the Jewish matrix of early Christianity.<sup>230</sup> Each book must be evaluated for its worth and intended use in a particular study. For example, the book of *Judith* is essentially a book of fables common in the days of Jesus, whereas *1* and *2 Maccabees* are both well-written, highly respected contemporaneous historical accounts of the second century B.C.

Apocalyptic literature appears in both the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. The very nature of the word “apocalyptic” has the meaning of pending divine judgment and an end of the world.<sup>231</sup> These authors were convinced of the following:

1. They were living in the proverbial end times,

---

223. See Fritsch, “Apocrypha.” 1:161-66; Davies, “Apocrypha.” 1:161-65; Harrison, R. “Apocrypha.” 1:205-10; Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. Vol. 1 and 2; Metzger, B. ed., *The Apocrypha of the Old Testament: Revised Standard Version*.

224. The Apocrypha consists of the following books: (1) *I Esdras*, a/k/a *3<sup>rd</sup> Ezra*, (2) *II Esdras*, a/k/a *4<sup>th</sup> Ezra*, (3) *Tobit*; (4) *Judith*; (5) *Additions to the Book of Esther*; (6) *The*; (7) *Ecclesiasticus*, a/k/a *The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach*, or simply as *Sirach*; (8) *Baruch*, including the *Letter of Jeremiah*; (9) *The Prayer of Azarab and the Song of the Three Young Men*; (10) *Susanna*; (11) *Bel and the Dragon*; (12) *The Prayer of Manasse*; (13) *1 Maccabees* and (14) *2 Maccabees*. Unfortunately, some authors ascribe other books to this category. However, not all churches recognize the same books within this classification. See 02.02.01.V.

225. Golub, *In the Days*. 240-41.

226. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 23.

227. The Roman Catholic Church, as late as 1546, embraced the Apocrypha as Scripture at the Council of Trent.

228. Davies, “Apocrypha.” 1:161-65; Bright, *History of Israel*. 455.

229. Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 6, Session 1.

230. Foster and King, *Binding and Loosening*. 26.

231. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 16, 23, 779.

2. The Messiah would soon come,
3. The age of humanity was quickly coming to a close,
4. The events they witnessed in their day were signs of the struggles between God and the evil one, and
5. In a final armed conflict God would win and righteous people would likewise be brought into victory with God.
6. Then Satan and all Gentiles would be destroyed along with non-observant Jews.<sup>232</sup>

Two biblical books that are outstanding examples of apocalyptic literature are Daniel and the Revelation.<sup>233</sup> Like the Pseudepigrapha (described below), some Apocrypha books were written in part to justify portions of Scripture that were embarrassing to the Jews. Since they had elevated their patriarchs to near deity level, they could not accept the fact that they were men who had sinned and were extended forgiveness by the grace of God. This is evidence of the theological chaos that existed in the first centuries B.C. and A.D. Jerome made this comment about these books in his *Letter to Laeta*.

**They are not written by those to whom they were ascribed ... many faulty elements have been introduced into them, and ... it requires infinite discretion to look for gold in the midst of dirt.**

**Jerome, *Letter to Laeta***

A number of older Bible manuscripts, such as the Sinaitic, Vatican, and Alexandrian contain the Apocrypha. The oldest Syriac version does not have it but newer ones do.<sup>234</sup> It was first printed in the English language in 1535 as part of the Coverdale Bible where it was placed between the Old and New Testaments. It was often a part of the Protestant Bible, but solely for its historical value until 1827.<sup>235</sup> By the end of the 1800s, all Protestant Bibles eliminated the Apocrypha while the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Bibles continue to include it.

---

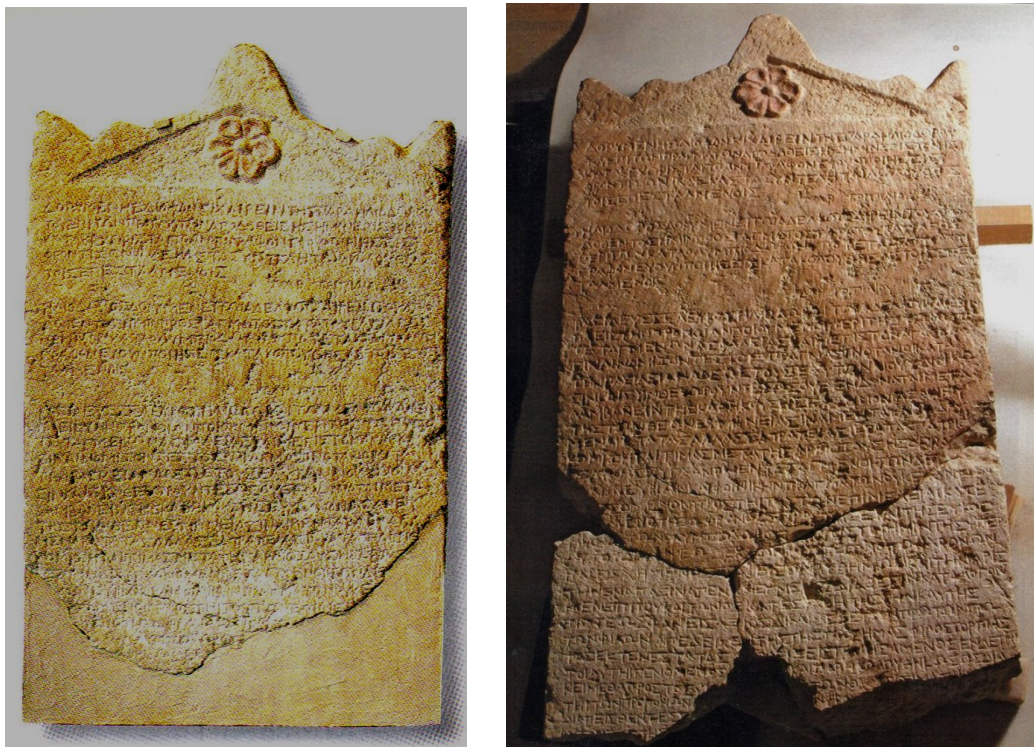
232. Bright, *A History of Israel*. 454-56.

233. The book of Daniel was written by the prophet of the same name, after he and many others were taken captive into Babylon in 605 B.C. However, critics maintain that since it is apocalyptic and prophetic in nature, it must have been written after 170 B.C. as a historical description of the horrors unleashed by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The Revelation was written in A.D. 95 by John.

234. Heysham, *The Birth of the Bible*. 31.

235. Davies, "Apocrypha." 1:163; Heysham, *The Birth of the Bible*. 9-11.

Two of the books within the Apocrypha category are *1* and *2 Maccabees*. Some scholars have questioned the reliability of these works, until the Heliodorus Stele was discovered. The inscribed stone preserves part of a letter of King Seleucus IV Philopator (218-175 B.C.) that was written to a Seleucid official, Heliodorus, who is believed to have been the assassin of the king. The account provides the historical context for the royal official Heliodorus named in the miraculous story in *2 Maccabees*, chapter 3. The communication was engraved in the stone stele for public display. In it the king discusses the proper care of temples in his domain, specifically Coele-Syria and Phoenicia, which included Judaea.<sup>236</sup> The king's proclamation represents the beginning of royal policy of religious exploitation and interference that would lead to the Maccabean Revolt a decade later.



**02.02.03.A. THE HELIODORUS STELE.** LEFT: This stele, dated to 178 B.C., is shown with the missing portions in place, and RIGHT: the portions discovered in 2005 and 2006. It illustrates the background of *2 Maccabees* and demonstrates that the book is an authentic and independent information source on this historical period. The inscription marks the beginning of the Greek-Seleucid intervention of Jewish life that eventually led to the Maccabean Revolt in 167 B.C. Heliodorus was ordered by King Seleucus IV (reigned 189-175 B.C.) to remove the treasures

236. Resig, Dorothy D. "Volunteers and Missing Pieces to Looted Inscription." 64-67.

from the Jewish temple. The king called for the appointment of overseers in various provinces, including Judea.

Of course the historical accuracy of *1* and *2 Maccabees* does not imply that other books within this category have the same historical accuracy. Nonetheless, when researching cultural norms, it is exciting to uncover historical accuracy as well.

**02.02.04 Bible.** The name was derived from the Greek word *biblia* meaning *book*. The earliest *biblia* consisted of papyrus sheets fastened together and rolled around a wooden rod, or two wooden rods, to form a scroll.<sup>237</sup> By the second century A.D., sheets were sewn together (see 02.02.05.A) to form the modern concept of a book. The earliest use of *ta biblia* (“the books”), is from the mid-second century A.D. church father, Clement. In *2 Clement* 14:2, he said, “The books and the apostles declare that the church ... has existed from the beginning.”<sup>238</sup>

Today, Bibles have the convenience of chapter and verse divisions. Most historical sources credit Stephen Langton (1150-1228) for placing chapter divisions in the Vulgate Bible in the year 1228. Then, in 1240, Hugh De St. Cher introduced verses in the Hebrew Bible. But it wasn’t for another three centuries, in 1551, that Robert Stephen put verses divisions in the Green New Testament.<sup>239</sup>

**02.02.05 Codex.** A codex is another name for an early book when pages made of paper or vellum were cut into sheets and sewn together. Eventually hard covers were added. Modern books have developed out of the codex. Prior to the codex, most writings were on papyrus or vellum scrolls.

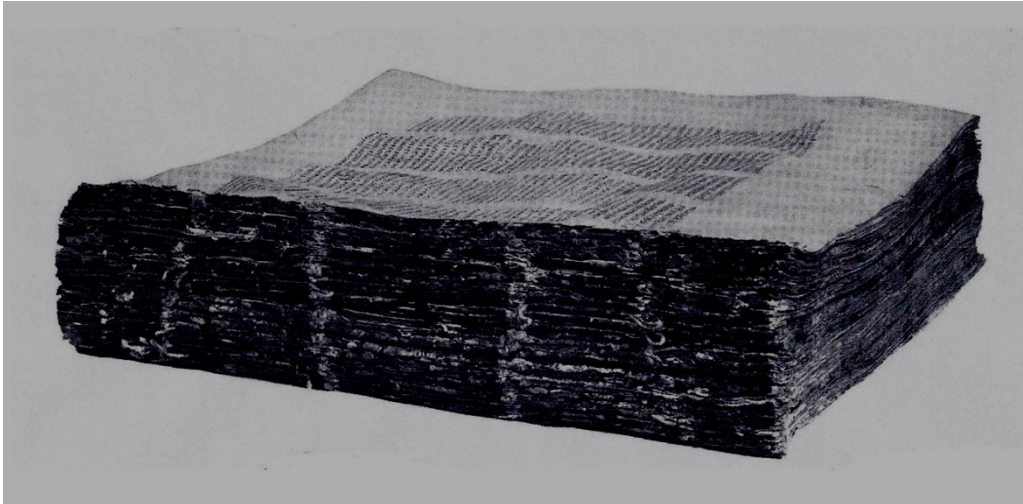
---

237. Cosby, *Interpreting Biblical Literature*. 86.

238. Bruce, “Bible,” 1:193.

239. Heysham, *The Birth of the Bible* 10.





**02.02.05.A. THE CODEX SINAITICUS.** This Codex dating of the 4<sup>th</sup> century contains the earliest complete copy of the New Testament and the Old Testament is the Septuagint translation from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. The Scriptures were written in columns, as chapter and verse divisions did not occur until centuries later.

**02.02.06 Dead Sea Scrolls.** This is a collection of scrolls and scroll fragments that were written between the second century B.C. and A.D. 70, by the Essenes who lived in the village of Qumran along the northwestern side of the Dead Sea. While scholars have questioned whether the Essenes wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls, technological evidence has revealed that they were the authors.<sup>240</sup> These writings were hidden in caves when the Roman army was descending upon Qumran after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. From the time Judaea ceased being a semi-autonomous political state, these scrolls remained hidden until 1947, a year prior to the creation of the state of Israel. After much negotiation, on the day of Israel's independence, the fledgling state purchased the first scroll discovered which, incidentally, was the book of Isaiah. This may have been by divine appointment since this book has two significant themes:

1. The return of Jews to Israel and
2. The coming of the Messiah.

---

240. For example, in 2010 a team of Italian physicists used a new scientific device known as a "XPIXE," which is an acronym for "X-ray and Particle Induced X-ray Emission" It tested the chlorine and bromide residue found on the leather parchment on which the *Temple Scroll* was written. The physicists found that the ratio of the two elements to be the same as in Dead Sea water which is many times higher than in fresh water or sea water. The conclusion is that leather was tanned by the Essenes, and not elsewhere by others, who some say, may have written this document. See "Temple Scroll Produced at Qumran." *Artifax*. 25:4 (Autmun, 2010). 10; *Discovery News*, July 20, 2010.





**02.02.06.A. YOUNG SCHOLARS EXAMINE AN “ANCIENT JAR.”** The author’s grand-daughters Maggie (left) and Carlie Jo examine a certified reproduction of a clay jar identical to the ones in which some of the Dead Sea Scrolls were hidden for 2,000 years. Photograph by a *very* proud grandpa.

**02.02.07 Deuterocanonical Books.** Those writings are books accepted by the Roman Catholic Church in addition to the thirty-nine Old Testament books. The Deuterocanonical books include some writings classified as Apocryphal books, but not New Testament books.<sup>241</sup> The term means *second canon*, and some books in this category are also found in other classifications and with other titles.<sup>242</sup> For example,

1. *1<sup>st</sup> Esdras* is a/k/a *3<sup>rd</sup> Ezra*
2. *2<sup>nd</sup> Esdras* is a/k/a *4<sup>th</sup> Ezra*<sup>243</sup>

---

241. House, *Chronological and Background Charts of the New Testament*. 84.

242. Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 6, Session 1.

243. Some scholars believe this book was written in the late first century A.D. and it reflects long-held messianic opinions. See Saperstein, *Essential Papers on Messianic Movements and Personalities in Jewish History*. 103.

3. *Ecclesiasticus* is a/k/a *Jesus, ben Sirach, Ben Sirach, The Wisdom of Jesus, the Son of Sirach*, or just *Sirach*.<sup>244</sup>

4. The *Assumption of Moses* is a/k/a the *Testament of Moses*<sup>245</sup>

Unfortunately, the Deuterocanonical books are generally of little value, but are mentioned here because the serious student will encounter them from time to time, and should be aware of them.

**02.02.08 Didache.** The *Didache*, meaning *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*<sup>246</sup> is a small book that describes the church rule of order. It was written about the time John wrote the book of Revelation, or possibly a decade or two later (A.D. 95-120). It begins with the statement “There are two ways, one of life and one of death.”<sup>247</sup> It describes the basic instruction of the early church<sup>248</sup> with a focus on how converts need to change their lives in order to belong to a Jewish-Christian fellowship; what responsibilities were expected of them. Scholars believe that since baptism (Ch. 7) is followed by communion (Ch. 9 & 10), this underscores the point that the book was intended only for the full membership of the congregation.

1. Chapters 1 through 6 explain the two ways of life and death, and that there is a huge difference between them.

2. Chapter 7 is on baptism

3. Chapter 8 discusses prayer and fasting, and includes the direct quotation of the Lord’s Prayer. The Jewish people already had a ritual of praying three times a day,<sup>249</sup> now they replaced their traditional prayers with the Lord’s Prayer. Since the Pharisees fasted on Mondays and Tuesdays, early Christians fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays – the fasting tradition continued but they did not want to be identified with the Pharisees.

4. Chapters 9 and 10 discusses the Communion service, and

5. Chapters 11 through 15 discuss church organization and administrative issues as well as discipline of those who violated the biblical commands of a Christ-like life described in chapters 1 through 6.

---

244. This book was written approximately 100-50 B.C. and resembles the book of Proverbs.

245. Some scholars believe this book could have been written during the lifetime of Jesus. However, it appears to be of little academic value. Silver, *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel*. Boston: Beacon Hill. 7.

246. Cate, *A History of the New Testament and its Times*. 40.

247. *Didache* 1:1a.

248. One minority view argues for a date as early as A.D. 60, and another for a late date of mid-second century.

249. See 08.03.04; Acts 3:1; 10:3, 30; *Didache* 8:3.

**02.02.09 Gemarah.**<sup>250</sup> The Gemaarah, a/k/a Gemara, is the section of the Babylonian Talmud that explains the *Mishnah* (Oral Law or Tradition of the Elders, i.e. Mt 15:1-2) and exists in two versions authored by two rabbinic schools: one in Jerusalem and the other in Babylon. Each wrote independently of the other. The result is that the Mishnah and Babylonian Gemarah together form the Babylonian Talmud, and the Mishnah and Jerusalem Gemarah together form the Jerusalem Talmud. While the Gemarah is a commentary of the *Mishnah*, this writer believes the *Mishnah* is the book of greater value for biblical studies (see 02.02.16).

**02.02.10 Gnosticism.** This term refers to a philosophy from the Greek thinker, Plato (428-348 B.C.), who suggested the contrast between the invisible world of ideas and the visible world of matter. By the first century his ideas were formulated into two opposing modes of lifestyles:

1. Asceticism, which attempted to suppress all emotions because they were thought to be related to matter and classified as evil, and
2. Sensualism, which was the indulgence of passions without regard to control or consequences which was an affront to Judaism. While these philosophies were a part of the pagan Greek lifestyle at the time of Christ, it had only limited popularity in the Middle East later in the first century when the epistles were written.<sup>251</sup>

The two basic errors of Gnosticism are:

1. All matter, including man's body is evil when in fact Scripture states the human body is the temple of God and, therefore, good.
2. Gnosticism teaches that salvation is an escape from the body with the use of "special knowledge."

The Bible teaches that salvation is only by faith in the resurrected Christ. In the Gnostic heresy known as Cerinthianism, it was believed that the divinity of Jesus came upon Him at His baptism but left shortly before His death.<sup>252</sup> Other Gnostics said that since the body is evil, Jesus did not exist, but only appeared to exist. Finally, since the body was evil and the spiritual was good, there were no applicable laws of human behavior; therefore, Gnosticism led many into sinful lifestyles.

---

250. See the video by Messianic Rabbi John Fischer, Ph.D., Th.D. at 02.02.16.V.

251. Gundry, *Survey of the New Testament*. 60-62; Drane, "Gnosticism." 1:566-67.

252. *New International Version Study Bible*, 1906.

Gnosticism never became an institutionalized movement or religion, nor was it popular in Palestine, but it did exist.<sup>253</sup> Likewise, there were Stoic and Cynic philosophers peddling their ideas from community to community. This explains why Jesus referred to it indirectly, with general statements on “secrets” and “whispers” (Mt. 10:26-27). They all claimed to have so-called higher knowledge and wisdom secrets<sup>254</sup> – ideas and concepts written in various books<sup>255</sup> – things that Jesus warned against. Gnosticism was more popular in Greece, which is why the Apostle Paul addressed Gnostic philosophers in Athens, and why there is limited mention of it in the Gospels. Among Christians, there were those who attempted to blend this philosophy with Christianity, but they were always labeled heretics.<sup>256</sup>

**02.02.11 Gospels.** The word *gospel* is from the Greek term *euaggelion* (2098),<sup>257</sup> meaning *good news* or *joyful news*,<sup>258</sup> but it is good news for those who accept it and bad news for those who reject it. The English word is from the Anglo-Saxon term meaning *God-spell*, or *God story*.<sup>259</sup> The term *Gospels* refers to the four New Testament books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.<sup>260</sup> These books paint a portrait of Jesus as the Messiah of the Jewish people and all humanity. The first three are also known as the “synoptic gospels,” because they “see together” a common message. Each writer presented his account from his unique perspective. Only Luke had any intention of writing a chronological account. However, the chronology of events was considered to be a relatively minor point compared to the words and works of Jesus and His ultimate goal.<sup>261</sup> These four books were written for the following reasons:

---

253. Martin, L. *Hellenistic Religions*. 37.

254. Renwick, *Gnosticism*. 484-85.

255. Of the many Gnostic books that have been written, in 1896 three manuscripts were discovered in Egypt. Known as the *Gospel of Mary*, the *Apocryphon of John*, and the *Sophia of Jesus Christ*, these books were published in 1955.

256. Rudolf, *Gnosis*. 210, 293.

257. Barclay, *A New Testament Wordbook*. 41-42; Vine, “Gospel.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:275.

258. The *good news* is a theme throughout the New Testament, such as the good news of truth (Col. 1:5; Gal. 2:5), of hope (Col. 1:23), of peace (Eph. 6:15), of promise (Eph. 3:6), and of salvation (Eph. 1:13). See also Richardson, “Gospel.” 100.

259. Miethe, *The Compact Dictionary of Doctrinal Words*. 99.

260. Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, eds., “Gospel Genre.” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. 345. For further study, see *Who Chose the Gospels: The Great Gospel Conspiracy* at <http://www.slideshare.net/Athenagorus/who-chose-the-gospels-the-great-gospel-conspiracy>. Retrieved March 4, 2015.

261. See also 01.02.03 “The Analysis of Ancient Writings.”

1. The Jewish Oral Tradition accurately conveyed the Oral Law from generation to generation. The Gentiles, however, did not have that tradition, and therefore, needed written materials.
2. Although written separately, each clarifies and supplements the other books. Mark wrote his book with an emphasis on historical events, even if these placed a negative light on the disciples. Since he was writing to Gentiles, he explains many Jewish customs. Luke wrote to a Greek audience to proclaim that Jesus was the Savior of all humanity, whereas John is a theological text that proclaims Jesus is the divine Son of God, and hence, he used numerous “I am” statements.
3. The Jewishness of Jesus is portrayed differently in each text so that, when all are considered, a broad view of Him is presented.<sup>262</sup> Note the following characteristics:
  - a. Matthew: Jesus is the coming Messiah who fulfilled prophecies.<sup>263</sup> Matthew wrote specifically to the Jewish people for whom the Davidic line was important, and furthermore, he wrote in five distinct teaching blocks.<sup>264</sup> Some scholars debate whether he wrote in Hebrew (or Biblical Hebrew) or in a new slightly modified Jewish style known as Mishnaic Hebrew.<sup>265</sup>
  - b. Mark: Jesus is the suffering Servant. Mark wrote to the Romans who were more interested in what Jesus did rather than what He taught. Therefore, words such as “immediately” appear more than forty times. He recorded Peter’s preaching without chronological order. Scholars almost universally agree that the book was written in geographical sections.<sup>266</sup>
  - c. Luke: Jesus is the Savior of all humanity. Luke wrote to the Greeks who idealized the perfect man and were also interested in historical accuracy. Therefore, he begins his gospel record with the comment concerning his

---

262. Daniel, *A Harmony*. 25-27.

263. See Appendix 7 “Major Old Testament Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus.”

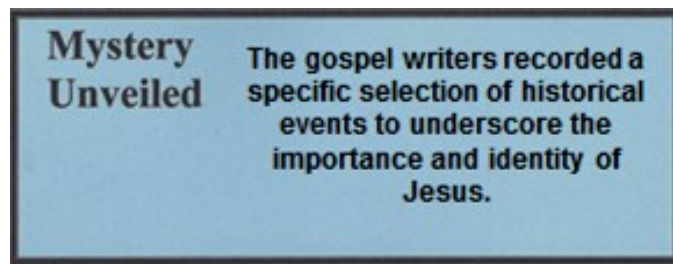
264. 1) Mt. 5-7 is on ethics; 2) Mt. 10 is on mission; 3) Mt. 13 is on kingdom parables; 4) Mt. 18 is on the new community; and 5) Mt. 24-25 is the eschatological discourse. Matthew closed each discourse or block, with the phrase “finished these sayings” (Mt. 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1); Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*. 125, 153; Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, eds., “Matthew.” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. 542-44.

265. See “Mishnaic Hebrew” in Appendix 26.

266. The sections are as follows: 1) the introduction to the book (1:1-13); 2) the ministry of Jesus in Galilee (1:14-6:6a); 3) His missionary journeys (6:6b-10:52); 4) His ministry in Jerusalem (11:1-15:47); His Resurrection (16:1-8); and 6) an appendix (16:9-20). Mark’s primary focus is on the deeds of Jesus rather than His teachings, and it is the shortest of the four gospels.

investigation and chronological accuracy. He also mentioned the humanity of Jesus, such as being tired or thirsty, which is reflective on his professional life as a physician,<sup>267</sup> which added respect to his work.

d. John: Jesus is the divine Son of God. John wrote to the church at large and emphasized the life of Jesus theologically – with a greater focus on what He taught than what He did – the opposite of Mark. John also made use of the “perfect number” seven,<sup>268</sup> mentioning seven “I am” statements,<sup>269</sup> seven discourses,<sup>270</sup> and seven signs or miracles.<sup>271</sup>



Three other significant points of study are that,

1. The gospels repeatedly attest to the historical reliability of the life of the Jews and
2. Each gospel was written to address a specific need for some specific people – also known as contextualization.

---

267. Concerning medical procedures available in the first century Israel, a number of good resources have been published by the University of Haifa, Hebrew University, and the Israel Museum. For further study, see the articles published in *Michmanim*, (English and Hebrew), Haifa, ISRAEL: University of Haifa (Vol. 13) May, 1999.

268. Bruce, “Gospels.” 2:582-83 and “The Gospels.” 3:16-18.

269. The Seven “I AM’s”: Bread of Life (Jn. 6:35, 41, 48, 51); Light of the World (Jn. 8:12); Door of the Sheep (Jn. 10:7, 9); Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:11, 14); Resurrection and the Life (Jn. 11:25); the Way, the Truth, the Life (Jn. 14:6) and the True Vine (Jn. 15:1, 5).

270. The Seven Discourses: new birth (Jn. 3:1-21); Works of God (Jn. 5:19-47); Bread of Life (Jn. 6:26-58); Water of Life (Jn. 7:11-52); Light of the World (Jn. 8:12-59); Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:22-39) and Upper Room Discourse (Jn. 13:1-17:26).

271. The Seven Signs: Water into Wine (Jn. 2:1-2); Healing the Nobleman’s Son (Jn. 4:46-54); Healing the Paralytic (Jn. 5:1-17); Feeding the 5,000 (Jn. 6:1-14); Calming the Storm (Jn. 6:15-21); Healing Man Born Blind (Jn. 9:1-14) and Resurrection of Lazarus (Jn. 11:17-45).

3. Finally, the gospels are not letters, commonly known as “epistles,” but are a unique genre of literature. Essentially, they are accounts or reports of the good news of Christ Jesus, or, as one scholar said, they are a kind of informative advertisement.<sup>272</sup>

It is generally agreed that all these were written before A.D. 70, as evidenced by a constant reference to the temple and its functions. Obviously, these references would be absent if written after its destruction. Matthew and Mark, writers with some idealistic tendencies, would certainly have recorded destruction and its profound influence upon the Church and Jewish people. Jesus’ teachings, miracles, and resurrection were very important to Mark who wrote his gospel during Nero’s persecution of Christians in Rome. The Roman Gentiles had a theological difficulty with a deity who was crucified, but Mark addressed this issue.

Luke was not a disciple of Jesus but came to the faith through the teachings of the Apostle Paul. As a physician, he was a highly educated and observant man who carefully researched various accounts before writing his gospel and the book of Acts. His literary style is of the finest Greek, which is a reflection of his cultural and educational background. However, there is growing evidence that causes some scholars to argue that some words of Jesus may have been recorded in His lifetime.<sup>273</sup> This is not to say that the gospels were written at that time, but some people may have taken notes and kept them.

Of course, life would not be complete without some problems. The “Johannine Problem” is similar in that critics maintain that there are a number of points that do not agree with the synoptic books. While the book of John is often referred to a “spiritual gospel,” John obviously had a somewhat different reason for writing it in the form that is found in Bibles today.<sup>274</sup> These “problems” are addressed throughout this e-Book. As previously stated, each writer gave his narrative from his unique perspective concerning the major events in the life of Jesus to convince his audience that Jesus was the focus of the Hebrew Bible and that all messianic prophecies were fulfilled in Him.

Some scholars have difficulties with the gospels concerning what is known as the “synoptic problem.” The “problem” is that various portions of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are in exact verbal agreement with each other, while other sections are somewhat different. Hence, scholars believe that some narratives were copied from either another gospel (probably Mark or Luke) or a source that has been lost in history. Furthermore, the reliability of Mark has been questioned since he was not a disciple of Jesus. However, that issue was resolved by Eusebius.

---

272. Mellowes and Cran, Producers. *From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians*. (DVD). Part 3.

273. Millard, “Literacy in the Time of Jesus.” 37-45.

274. Rensberger, “The Politics of John.” 394.

Eusebius Pamphili (A.D. 263-339) was a renowned Roman historian and defender of the Christian faith. For his many literary works, including *Ecclesiastical History*, he has become known as the “Father of Church History.” He recorded the words of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis (A.D. 70-155) concerning the composition of the book of Mark.<sup>275</sup> As to Papias, he was a disciple of John, the author of the fourth gospel and four other New Testament books and, therefore, was well acquainted with the accuracy of the newly written Scriptures. Many decades later, Eusebius included that information in his historical writings and said, for the benefit of modern scholars, that the book of Mark was not written in chronological order, but for the benefit of his audience. Note a portion of his comment:

**This also the Elder said: “Mark, who became Peter’s interpreter, wrote accurately, though not in order, all that he remembered of the things said and done by the Lord. For he had neither seen the Lord nor been one of his followers, but afterward, as I said, he had followed Peter, who used to compose his discourses with a view to the needs (of his hearers), but not as if he were composing a systematic account of the Lord’s sayings. So Mark did nothing blameworthy in writing some things just as he remembered them; for he was careful of this one thing, to omit none of the things he had heard and to state no untruth therein.”**

**Eusebius, *Church History* 3.39.14-15**

Finally, Bible scholars today frequently refer to the meaning of various Greek words in the New Testament. It is common knowledge that word studies greatly improve understanding of the Scriptures. However, there appears to be a fly in the proverbial ointment: Matthew was written in Hebrew! That is that according to a number of early church fathers,<sup>276</sup> including Eusebius, who said the book was written in Matthew’s first language – Hebrew. Note his words,

**But concerning Matthew, he writes as follows: “So then Matthew wrote the oracles in the Hebrew language, and everyone interpreted them as he was able.**

**Eusebius, *Church History* 3.39.16**

Eusebius confirmed this again later when he said,

**Matthew published his gospel among the Hebrews in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching and founding the church in Rome.**

---

275. Cranefield, “Mark.” 267; Halley, *Halley’s Bible*. 414.

276. Irenaeus (about 180); Papias (about 130); Pantaeus (about 200); Clement of Alexandria (about 150-215); Origen (about 186-254); and Tertullian (about 160-240).



### Eusebius, *Church History* 5.8.2

The ultimate challenge for die-hard scholars is to translate the Greek back into Hebrew to gain the fine nuances that are often lost in translations. Matthew is believed to have been originally composed in A.D. 50, possibly earlier, and translated into Greek thirty or forty years later.<sup>277</sup> His gospel was cited in the *Didache* and by a number of early church fathers.<sup>278</sup> While some critics place the composition of the gospels into the late first century, one of the most vocal critics, John Dominic Crossan, the founder of the ultra-liberal Jesus Seminar, said that the gospels were written 20 to 40 years after the death of Jesus.<sup>279</sup>

**02.02.12 Hebrew Bible.** This is more commonly known as the Old Testament to Christians and as the *Tanakh* to Jewish people. The books are the same as in the Christian Old Testament, although it has three divisions, a different book order, and some minor variations in chapter and verse divisions. The divisions are as follows:

1. The ***Torah*** (“Teaching”): Known as the Five Books of Moses or the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy).
2. The ***N’vi’im*** (“Prophets”): Includes the historical books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings; the three major prophets of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel; and the twelve minor prophets of Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.
3. The ***K’tuvim*** (“Writings”): Includes the books not listed above – Psalms, Proverbs, Job, the “five scrolls” (of Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther) Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles.<sup>280</sup>

**02.02.13 Jewish Writings.**<sup>281</sup> The term usually refers to a collection of religious books that include the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds, the Mishnah, the Midrash, and the Tosefta.<sup>282</sup> But this collection does not include the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha. Most of these were written within four centuries of the life of Jesus. Of particular interest, is that many sections of

---

277. Wijngaards, *Handbook to the Gospels*. 9.

278. Clement of Rome (c. 95); Ignatius (c. 105-110); Polycarp (c. 120); Justin (c. 150); and in the *Epistles of Barnabas* (c.120).

279. Crossan, *A Long Way From Tipperary*. 153.

280. Spangler and Tverberg, *Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus*. 40-42.

281. See the video by Messianic Rabbi John Fischer, Ph.D., Th.D. at 02.02.16.V.

282 See 02.02.01.V for more information on this subject.

these writings reflect Jewish life *before* the temple was destroyed. For example, the Jerusalem Talmud *Moed Quatan* 1:5 provides information on the burial of the dead that give understanding to Matthew 8:21-22.<sup>283</sup>

Insights acquired from the Jewish writings are important. There were many cultural and theological changes from the time the last Old Testament book was written, until the birth of Christ. Essentially, there are five reasons why this classification of books should be studied.<sup>284</sup>

1. Some books have a sense of urgency similar to the New Testament concerning the awareness of living near the end of time.
2. These writings show various Jewish opinions concerning the kingdom of God, a subject obviously dear to the heart of Jesus.
3. The strength of Jewish traditions, combined with the political anticipations of national freedom, was clearly revealed by some writers.
4. Some difficult passages and concepts of the New Testament are clarified by rabbinic methods of interpretation. Some of these books provide cultural details that help “flesh out” biblical narratives.
5. Finally, within Jewish literature is the general background against which the New Testament can be understood, an understanding that is beyond specific verses and passages, and pertains to the “macro-view” of the words and work of Jesus.

**02.02.14 Josephus.**<sup>285</sup> He was born as Josephus ben Mattathias, and by a series of unusual events he retired in Rome as Flavius Josephus. He was of a noble family of priests which traced its descent from the Hasmoneans, a powerful family of the second and first centuries B.C. So one might expect him to be a Sadducee, but in his biography, written in A.D. 94 or 95, he clearly identified himself as a Pharisee.<sup>286</sup> He was a brilliant scholar well versed in the writings of the

---

283. See 09.04.02.

284. For further study, see Scott Jr., J. Julius. “On the Value of Intertestamental Jewish Literature for New Testament Theology.” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*. 23:4 (Dec. 1980) 315-24.

285. There are two major methods in referring to the literary works of Josephus. The most common method was created by William Whiston who divided each literary work into books, chapters, and paragraphs. For example, the death of James in *Antiquities of the Jews* is found in *Antiquities* 20.9.1. Another method is the Loeb edition which divides each of Whiston’s books into smaller sections. Therefore, the same account of James is found in *Antiquities* 20 (200) or 20.200.

286. Josephus, *The Life of Flavius Josephus* 10-12; See also Stemberger. *Jewish Contemporaries of Jesus: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes*. 6.

Greeks and the Romans. While not a theologian, he remained faithful to the priestly ideals of the Jewish theocracy. He served as a military general in Galilee in the early days of the “First Revolt” (A.D. 66-70), but when he realized the Jewish cause was hopeless, he encouraged his fellow Jews to make a truce with the Romans. That failed. He also predicted that Vespasian would eventually become emperor of Rome. While the Jews refused to consider his advice, the Romans eventually rewarded him. After the fall of Jerusalem, he retired in Rome under the imperial patronage and wrote his major works pertaining to the Jewish people for a Roman audience. Of his four literary works, *Wars* and *Antiquities* are the most significant.<sup>287</sup>

1. His first book, the *Wars of the Jews*, was written from A.D. 75-79. It covers important people and events between the rise of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 175 B.C. to destruction of the temple in A.D. 70. Josephus had access to a number of historic sources, including *I Maccabees* and the *Chronicles of the Priesthood of John Hyrcanus*.<sup>288</sup>

2. The *Antiquities of the Jews*, was written from A.D. 93-95, to help the Romans understand the Jewish religion and way of life. It is also an apologetic work defending the Hebrew Bible. In it he recorded many interesting historical accounts that are related to, but are not mentioned in the Old Testament narratives. It is a running history from earliest biblical history to the First Jewish War. Josephus had access to the imperial library and referred to the works of other writers, such as John of Damascus who was the historian for Herod the Great, and the Greek historian Strabo.

3. The book *Against Apion*, is also an apologetic works,

4. Josephus also wrote a brief biography titled *The Life of Flavius Josephus*.<sup>289</sup>

Critics of his day, namely the Zealots and most Jewish people, considered him to have been a traitor. Possibly his most outspoken critic was John of Giscala who personally financed a company of Zealot soldiers to fight the Romans. John stirred up the people against Josephus and some historians claim he even attempted to kill him. That may be the reason why Josephus was given a retirement in Rome rather than in the Holy Land.<sup>290</sup> Yet Josephus strongly defended the Jewish faith and people; he shifted the blame of the revolt from the population at large (as the Romans perceived it) to a minority of unwise leaders and Zealots.

---

<sup>287</sup> See 02.02.01.V for more information on this subject.

<sup>288</sup> Whiston, ed. *The Works of Josephus Complete and Unabridged*. 543 note “a.”

<sup>289</sup> Martin, L. *Hellenistic Religions*. 40-42.

<sup>290</sup> Golub, *In the Days*. 328-29.

Josephus is frequently quoted by scholars because he presents detailed descriptions of places, peoples, festivals, and other cultural events, as well as the socio-political environment in the two centuries preceding Christ. He died shortly into the second century leaving a wealth of written information. No study can be complete without his comments.<sup>291</sup> The value of his work lies in two areas:

1. Just as the Dead Sea Scrolls reflect first-century Judaism unchanged by Christian belief, Josephus likewise has insights into the cultural, social, and political forces in which Jesus lived. Simply said, his writings were not influenced by Christianity; they are purely from a Jewish perspective. From his pen we have the oldest comments about Jesus, John the Baptist, and the death of James, the half-brother of Jesus.
2. His writings, namely the *Antiquities*, clearly reflect his theology *and* that he believed in the historical accuracy of the Old Testament, as it relates to secular historical accounts. His work also agrees with other ancient writers concerning the Inter-Testamental Period. Therefore, it can be assumed that his descriptions of the first century are equally accurate.

However, there is a note of caution for the serious research student: scholars have observed, and this writer agrees, that Josephus is not without his biases.

1. It has been pointed out that his accounts of the population of various communities, distances between communities, and the agricultural production of the land are, on occasion, exaggerated.
2. Also, he was careful not to blame the Romans for the uprising that led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Why would he, since he was given a comfortable retirement and spacious villa?

Josephus received his information from a variety of sources, including Nicholas of Damascus, the personal historian for Herod the Great.<sup>292</sup> Nonetheless, any reader must filter his biased opinions. Critics of Josephus, however, tend to overlook other ancient writers who agreed with him. For example, Marcus Terentius Varro (116 – 27 B.C.) was a wealthy Roman scholar who produced seventy-four literary works on numerous topics, including agriculture. In his work, *Agriculture*, he identified three areas in the Roman Empire where crop yields were one hundred fold. They are,

---

291. Schreckenberg, "Josephus, Flavius." 2:1132-33; Stone, "Josephus, Flavius." 3:696-97; Bruce, "Josephus, Flavius." 2:816.

292. Josephus, *Antiquities* 16.7.1 (183).

1. Sybaris in Italy,
2. Gadara in Syria, and
3. Byzacium in Africa.

Varro mentioned Gadara as being in Syria because that region was under the governmental district of Syria, as was Galilee at that time. More specifically, he wrote that in this region the crop yield was “a hundred to one.”<sup>293</sup> This observation would certainly have made Josephus proud. Another ancient author who described the bounty of his land was Herodotus who said of Babylonia that,

**In grain, it is so fruitful as to yield commonly two-hundred fold; and when the production is the greatest, even three-hundred fold.**

**Herodotus, *The Histories* 1.93<sup>294</sup>**

Scholars have noted that the comments by Josephus concerning the Essenes’ care for the poor and needy is echoed in the Essene *Damascus Document* (14.14), which is additional evidence of the historian’s care concerning accuracy. He remains one of the most important sources of information concerning first century life in Judaea.<sup>295</sup> His description of the Roman conquest of the ancient Zealot city of Gamala is another excellent example of his historical accuracy. The city fell in A.D. 66 and remained undisturbed and lost in history.

However, in recent history, one day an Israeli military officer flew over some mountains that he recognized by the description Josephus wrote concerning the setting of Gamala. A short time later in the late 1970s archaeologists began to excavate the site. They found his descriptions, such as patched walls and filled-in buildings, precisely as he had described.<sup>296</sup> Likewise, when he described the Roman conquest of Masada, his details of the fortress palace, including various rooms and destructive events that had occurred, have been found to be precise, even though he was not there. He obtained his information from a number of individuals who were there and personally witnessed the conquest. Therefore, while some of his opinions are biased, most of his observations are incredibly accurate. Josephus is also valuable concerning some Jewish cultural attributes.

---

293. [http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Varro/de\\_Re\\_Rustica/1\\*.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Varro/de_Re_Rustica/1*.html) Retrieved July 9, 2011.

294. Cited by Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 1:80.

295. Lee, *The Galilean Jewishness of Jesus*. 98; Bruce, “Josephus, Flavius” 2:816; Schmalz and Fischer, *The Messianic Seal*. 24; Grant, M. *Ancient Historians*, 258.

296. Syon, “Gamla.” 30. The name “Gamla” is sometimes spelled “Gamala.”

In his youthful years, he placed himself under the instruction of the major religious sects of Judaea. In his work *Vita* 2 (10-12), he claims to have studied with the Essenes, the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and an individual by the name of Bannus, of whom little is known. Josephus had excellent reading and writing skills for his day, considering the magnitude of writings he produced.<sup>297</sup> While historians have seen him as a Jewish Pharisee,<sup>298</sup> a few others speculate that he may have quietly converted to Christianity. In fact, some believe that at the time of these writings, he had been an Ebionite Christian for many years.<sup>299</sup> This, however, remains a minority view. His comments on the life of Christ and related events have been subject of many scholarly discussions.<sup>300</sup>

**02.02.15 Midrash.** The Midrash is a Jewish commentary on the Old Testament. The name means *to investigate, to search, or to study*, is based on the reference by the prophet Iddo (2 Ch. 13:22). Synagogues had a room known as the *beit Midrash*, meaning *house of interpretation*, dedicated to the study of Scripture.<sup>301</sup> The tradition of the Midrash is, no doubt, as old as the written Scripture,<sup>302</sup> but by the first century it was the commentary on the Hebrew Bible.<sup>303</sup>

The *Midrashim* (plural form) are thought to be commentaries on historical narratives that evidently were used extensively by Ezra (7:10) upon his return from Babylonian captivity. At the time, the Torah was accepted as the sole authority of the Word of God. Some scholars believe the Midrashim were part of the Oral Law and not recorded until the second or third century A.D.<sup>304</sup>

But this document became a point of controversy between the Sadducees, who were literal interpreters of the Torah, and the Pharisees, who upheld the Oral Law. The focus of attention was on the application of the Mosaic books to daily life in a culture that had radically changed in the fourteen centuries since Moses wrote them. While the Midrash is not mentioned in the New

---

297. Schreckenberg, "Josephus, Flavius." 2:1132-33.

298. Josephus, *The Life of Flavius Josephus*. 3, 13, 15, 19, 21, 25.

299. Whiston, ed., *The Works of Josephus*. 9 - See footnote "k."

300. For further study see Appendix 31.

301. Spangler and Tverberg, *Sitting at the Feet*. 25.

302. Harrison, "Midrash." 351.

303. Goulder, *Midrash and Lektion in Matthew*. 28.

304. Lee, *The Galilean Jewishness of Jesus*. 60-61.

Testament, it and the Oral Law were certainly at the root of some heated discussions between Jesus and his opponents.<sup>305</sup>

**02.02.16 Mishnah.** It is a compilation of the oral laws<sup>306</sup> as taught in many first century rabbinical schools. These laws were the interpretation and application of the written laws of Moses. The name *Mishnah* was derived from a Hebrew word meaning *to repeat*.<sup>307</sup> But under the influence of the Aramaic word *tanna*, the meaning was changed *to learn*.<sup>308</sup> The Mishnah was built upon the rules and regulations established by two other theological schools in Jewish history in the Inter-Testamental Period as well as the early Christian Period.<sup>309</sup>

1. *The Sophrim*, which was popular from 450 to 30 B.C., instituted thousands of rules and regulations that pertained to every aspect of Jewish life. These were intended to build “a fence around the Torah” as described in Mishnah, *Aboth* 1.1.<sup>310</sup>

2. *The Tannaim* was a second school of rabbinic scribes who decided that the rabbis of the *Sophrim* left too many holes in their laws. So the *Tannaim* rabbis added more restrictions. This school started in 30 B.C. and continued to about A.D. 220.

These various rules and regulations became the Oral Law in the days of Jesus, and when written, became known as the Mishnah.<sup>311</sup> The development of the Mishnah is rather interesting and provides insights into the religious environment of the gospels.

So many scribes, rabbis, and sages were killed in the two revolts (A.D. 66-73 and 132-135), that there was deep concern among the survivors that the Oral laws would be lost if not written. Once written, these were divided into six major sections of the Mishnah, each called a *tractate*. The tractate *Aboth* is considered to contain the oldest teachings and even has the names of sixty-five rabbis. Most scholars believe that the entire collection of Oral Laws occurred between the years A.D. 90 and 200, and by the year 220, Y’hudah HaNasi (“Judah the Prince”) served as editor and

---

305. Coker, “Midrash.” 4:222-23.

306. See also Oral Law 02.02.18 and Oral Tradition 02.02.20. See 02.02.01.V for more information on this subject.

307. Farrar, *The Life of Christ*. 241.

308. “Mishnah” *Encyclopedia Judaica* CD ROM 1997; See also Mishnah, *Avot* 3:8-9 See also 02.02.09.

309. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor’s Manual*. Class 8, pages 2-4.

310. See video 02.02.16.V by Messianic Rabbi John Fischer who discusses the term “fence around the Torah” from a first century Jewish perspective.

311. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor’s Manual*. Class 7, page 13.

compiled them as the Mishnah.<sup>312</sup> Since writing was a long and tedious work, it was finally completed in 279 by Johanan bar Nappacha.

The writers were extremely devoted to accuracy when copying Scripture and commentaries. They determined that their commentaries would accurately reflect daily religious life in Judea, Galilee, and Perea without any trace of Greek philosophy or Christianity.<sup>313</sup> It does, however, present various rabbinic opinions such as the disputes between Rabbi Hillel and Rabbi Shammai whose teachings were hotly debated during the life of Jesus.

This work has preserved elements of the Midrash, which is an earlier method of teaching the traditional laws by means of a running commentary on the biblical text. There is some lack of uniformity in the Mishnah because some teachers established certain portions prior to A.D. 220, while other rabbis completed other sections more than a century earlier.<sup>314</sup> It was quickly accepted as the authoritative code-law of Judaism.<sup>315</sup> However, caution should be noted. Not all the comments within the Mishnah and other Jewish writings reflect life in time of Jesus. The greatest of care has been taken to discover those rules and regulations that were in effect at the time of Jesus.<sup>316</sup> Note these two examples:

1. Discussions by Rabbi Hillel and Rabbi Shammai and their peers are certain to be of His era.
2. On the other hand, some passages clearly state that certain events happened *after* the destruction of the temple – obviously *after* the time of Jesus. For example, an interesting comment found in *Sotah* 9.15 discusses the moral cultural break-down of society prior to the coming of the messiah.

Therefore, great caution has been taken to present an accurate cultural and religious picture in this e-Book. The modern Gentile Bible students often find the Jewish writings confusing. They are unsure of when a particular passage was written and to what part of Jewish history it applies. Therefore, the following diagram may help bring basic clarity to this matter.

---

312. Runes, *The Talmud of Jerusalem*. 6.

313. Lee, U. *The Life of Christ*. 78.

314. Danby, ed., *Mishnah*. 14, 25.

315. Neusner, *A Midrash Reader*. 9.

316. For example, see Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 355.



1. The Mishnah covers a time span of 450 B.C. to A.D. 220, but most is pre-destruction temple era.
2. The Gemarah (02.02.09) covers a time span of A.D. 220 to 500.
3. The Mishnah + the Gemarah = The Talmud (Babylonian and Jerusalem editions)

**02.02.17 New Testament (NT).** The covenants of the Bible are, in fact, *suzerainty covenants*, which are defined as agreements between two unequal parties, where the stronger and more powerful party functions for the benefit of the weaker one.<sup>317</sup> The New Testament (Heb. *Brit Chadash*) includes the gospels, which according the sequence of covenants, was still within the Old Testament Period. The New Testament Period did not begin until Jesus walked out of the tomb (many believe it began on the day of Pentecost). The New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old Testament and its prophecies and promises. This new covenant, which is the fulfillment of the old, must therefore be used to interpret the Old Covenant. The gospels are placed in the New Testament, but historically, are in the Old Testament Period. Jesus lived and functioned as an orthodox Jew under Old Testament rules and regulations.

**02.02.18 Oral Law.** (See also *Mishnah* – 02.02.16 and *Oral Tradition* - 02.02.20). Today, and in the days of Jesus, Jewish people believe that the “Torah” is divided into two parts: the written and the unwritten (known as the Oral Law).<sup>318</sup> Some scholars believe that the phrase in 1 Peter 1:18 “handed down from one’s fathers” (Gk. *patroparadotos* 3970) is a reference to the oral tradition of conveying an historical account from father to son.<sup>319</sup> It was the Oral Law, also known as the “Law of the lip, or *Torah Shebeal pih*,”<sup>320</sup> although some Jewish scholars today believe that ancient rabbis were permitted to keep personal notes on issues not discussed often.<sup>321</sup> Nonetheless, it was the cause for confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees because they considered it to be superior to the Mosaic laws. However, the Oral Laws were not honored by the Sadducees. When the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity, they instituted this new set of regulations to protect themselves from sinning against God, and later, from the influences of the Greco-Roman culture. They felt that failure to protect themselves would most certainly cause

---

317. Payne, J. B. “Covenant (In the Old Testament).” 1:1102-03; See “Suzerainty Treaty” in Appendix 26.

318. Chajes, *The Student’s Guide through the Talmud*. 1.

319. Vine, “Handed Down.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:288.

320. Farrar, *The Life of Christ*. 241.

321. Parry, *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to the Talmud*. 20.

them to be exiled again.<sup>322</sup> The irony is that the Oral Law was the major reason the Jewish leadership rejected Christ, which led to their dispersal from the land in A.D. 70 and in 135.

There is a debate as to when the Oral laws originated. Most Jews believe it originated as the verbal explanation of the written law by Moses<sup>323</sup> while Christians believe it dates to the time of Ezra. When the Jews who had returned to Jerusalem were gathered at the temple, Ezra read the Torah to them (Neh. 8). After the reading, he explained the biblical text “so that the people could understand what was being read” (Neh. 8:8). The Torah by this time was nearly a thousand years old and the language and customs had changed, making the reading somewhat archaic. Hence, Ezra’s explanation of the Law became the foundation of the Oral Law.

Many years later, in the first half of the second century B.C., when the Holy Land was dominated by the Greeks, Antiochus IV Epiphanes forced the Greek culture upon the Jews. The need for a “protective fence” around the Torah became critical, as the Jews strengthened their set of laws to insulate themselves from the pagan influences.<sup>324</sup> These laws enhanced the “Oral Law,” or “Oral Tradition.” The purpose of the additional laws was to serve as a protectorate so that the religious authorities could punish anyone before he had the opportunity to break one of the more serious laws of God, and thereby possibly cause the entire nation to suffer divine punishment. While the intent of the Oral laws was good, in time, they become oppressive and restrictive for the people whom they were intended to protect.<sup>325</sup> To the Pharisees the Oral Law superseded all Scripture, and therein was the foundation for the conflict with Jesus. In the *Aboth* 1:1 there is an interesting statement that clearly defines the Oral Law. It reads:

**Moses received the Torah at Sinai and handed it on to Joshua, Joshua to elders, and elders to prophets. And the prophets handed it on to the men of the Great Synagogue. They said three things: Be prudent in judgment. Raise up many disciples. Make a fence around the Torah.**

**Mishnah, *Aboth* 1:1<sup>326</sup>**

In the three centuries following the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 135, the Oral Laws were recorded and by the end of the second century or early third century, these became known as the

---

322. Danby, ed., *The Mishnah*. 60-61; Neusner, *A Midrash Reader*. 4.

323. Parry, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Talmud*. 9.

324. Lee, *The Galilean Jewishness of Jesus*, 77-79, 99-103; Wheaton, “Antiochus.” 1:71-72.

325. Lee, U., *The Life of Christ*. 60-61.

326. Danby, ed., *The Mishnah*; See also Neusner, *Rabbinic Judaism*. 207. See video 02.02.16.V by Messianic Rabbi John Fischer who discusses the term “fence around the Torah” from a first century Jewish perspective.

*Mishnah*. Other commentaries followed such as the *Tosefta*, *Mekilta*, *Sifra*, *Sifre*, and the *Baraita*. The oral traditions were well preserved by professional scribes,<sup>327</sup> even though there were other writers who attempted to remold and reshape Jewish history with writings known as the *Pseudepigrapha*. Therefore, the scribes preserved an excellent background on how the Torah was interpreted and applied to daily life during the time of Christ as well as other aspects of Jewish life. By the first century rabbinic rules influenced every part of a Jewish person's life including the dimensions of tombs. For example, in the *Mishnah* are the rabbinic directives that stated that a burial niche had to be four cubits long and seven handbreadths high and six handbreadths wide.<sup>328</sup> Furthermore, carcasses, graves, and tanneries were not permitted within 50 cubits of a town.<sup>329</sup> If a town grew to the point that it surrounded a cemetery, the tombs had to be removed.<sup>330</sup>

Today, the various sects of the ultra-orthodox Jews, such as the Satmars, the Gerers, the Bratslavers, and the Lubavitchers believe that the five books of Moses are absolutely divinely inspired. But they also believe the Oral Law that includes the Talmud, are also divinely inspired and are bitterly opposed to Christians and Messianic Jews.<sup>331</sup> In that sense, the first century Pharisees live on.

Most of the arguments Jesus had with the leading Pharisees pertained to the regulations of daily life, known as the *Halakhah*.<sup>332</sup> These were oppressive restrictions religious peddlers promoted rather than helping people find the purpose God has for their lives. The question people today have about stories of Jesus that were passed down until they were written is, did the stories change during transmission? In other words, can we trust the biblical narratives? Those are valid questions.

The fact is that the ancient Jewish culture was an *oral culture*. That means that Oral Laws were passed from one generation to the next, and often recited publically. When there was an error made by the speaker, one or more listeners quickly corrected him. Furthermore, if a law was quoted correctly, but in some way its meaning was belittled or degraded, he was quickly

---

327. Freeman, *The New Manners and Customs*. 420-21.

328. *Mishnah*, *Baba Bathra* 6.8

329. *Mishnah*, *Baba Bathra* 2.9.

330. *Mishnah*, *Baba Bathra* 1.11; See also Kloner and Zissu. *The Necropolis of Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period*. 21.

331. Schneider, "Who are the Ultra-Orthodox?" 15.

332. Lee, *The Galilean Jewishness of Jesus*, 107.

corrected. Since there is no equal in Western culture, it is difficult to accept the fact that traditions and information were accurately transmitted, but that is precisely what occurred.<sup>333</sup>

**02.02.19 Old Testament (OT).** The Hebrew Bible is a collection of religious and historical books that were written over a fifteen hundred year period and compiled at the Council of Jamnia in A.D. 90 by prominent Jewish leaders, led by Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai.<sup>334</sup> These were accepted as early as 400 B.C., but were not in an official canon format. It is believed that after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 135, when Gentiles took control of the Jerusalem Church, the Hebrew Bible became known as the “Old Testament.” The gospels and other Scriptures written since the birth of Christ became known as the “New Testament.” Nowhere in the New Testament is there a reference to the Hebrew Bible as being replaced or called the “Old Testament,” but rather, it simply referred to as “Scriptures.”<sup>335</sup>

**02.02.20 Oral Tradition.** (See *Oral Law* – 02.02.18 and *Mishnah* – 02.02.16) The Oral Tradition was in place during the entire Second Temple Period (515 B.C. – A.D. 70). The significance of the *Oral Tradition* increased significantly after the Maccabean Revolt. The Pharisees had just emerged as a significant religious sect and they emphasized additional rules and regulations that were intended to prevent the rise of another Antiochus IV Epiphanes as well as an eviction from their land. In the century after the destruction of the temple and deaths of many rabbis, the *Oral Tradition* was written and became known as the *Mishnah*.

Critics have maintained that in the process of orally conveying history and religion from one generation to another, changes and errors have slowly infiltrated and changed meaning of the biblical text. However, this is hardly the case.<sup>336</sup> The ancient Jews had an oral culture, but we who live in a modern non-oral culture have great difficulty realizing the great care that was exercised by the ancients to transmit information to the next generation. Whenever a teaching or tradition was presented, there was also an audience present to make the necessary correction. This Tradition is a unique feature of the Hebraic culture and Jesus referred to it in Matthew 15:2 and Mark 7:3, 5. The strongest point for an accurate oral transmission of the gospels is that the

---

333. The Jews were by no means the only ones with an oral culture. Oral cultures existed in many parts of the world. In fact, some Native American Indians also had an oral culture in which laws and traditions were passed from father to son.

334. Rabbi Zakkai was the last disciple of the famous Rabbi Hillel. See Parry, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Talmud*. 38-39.

335. For example: Mt. 21:42; 22:29; 26:54, 56; Mk. 12:10; 15:28; Lk. 4:21; Jn. 2:22; 7:38,42; 10:35; 13:18; 17:12; 19:24, 28, etc.

336. For additional study on the accuracy of oral transmission of commentary and biblical knowledge, see Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity*, especially the section on Techniques of Repetition (page 163). The importance of this lies in the fact that the gospel narratives are believed to have been transmitted orally in the same manner until the gospel writers recorded them.

oral custom was in place and had functioned for many centuries previously. Since the primitive Church was essentially Jewish, it was only reasonable to expect that a new Oral Tradition carried the accounts of Jesus and the apostles until the gospels were written. Luke recorded a classic oral conveyance of information in this statement, “Just as they were handed down to us....”

**Many have undertaken to compile a narrative about the events that have been fulfilled among us, <sup>2</sup> just as the original eyewitnesses and servants of the word handed them down to us. <sup>3</sup> It also seemed good to me, since I have carefully investigated everything from the very first, to write to you in an orderly sequence, most honorable Theophilus, <sup>4</sup> so that you may know the certainty of the things about which you have been instructed.**

#### **Luke 1:1-4**

Luke gathered his information from the eyewitnesses which he then recorded. Therefore, he wrote what would normally have been first generation information of the new Oral Tradition. His choice of words in verse 2, **“the word handed them down to us.”** clearly echoes the Oral Tradition. It reflects the accuracy of the eyewitnesses in the telling of the events to him, as “handed down,” a technical term used for oral conveyance.<sup>337</sup> He also wrote of events that he personally witnessed.<sup>338</sup>

**02.02.21 Pentateuch.** The Greek word means *Five Part Work* or *the Five Rolls*<sup>339</sup> and consists of the five books of Moses: Genesis Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The English word Pentateuch is derived from the Greek term *Pentateuchos*, which is from the Hebrew term *Torah*. These five books are also referred to as the *Mosaic Law* or the *Written Law*.<sup>340</sup>

**02.02.22 Philo.** Also known as Philo of Alexandria as well as Philo Judaeus (20 B.C. – A.D. 50), was a Jewish philosopher who attempted to blend the Greek and Jewish philosophies together.<sup>341</sup> While he was a resident of Egypt, he was of a wealthy family that, historically, had ties with the Hasmoneans of Jerusalem as well as the Seleucid and Ptolemaic dynasties, both of which were Greek. As a Jew, his writings are valuable because he gave us insight as to how the Egyptian Jews reacted to an encroaching Greek culture. He described the culture in which the gospels and epistles of the New Testament were written.

---

337. *New International Version* Study Bible Footnote on Luke 1:2.

338. Acts 16:10-17; 20:5 – 21:18; 27:1 – 28:16.

339. Barclay, “Matthew.” 1:127.

340. Carpenter, “Carpenter.” 3:740-41; Porter, *The New Illustrated Companion to the Bible*. 411.

341 See 02.02.01.V for more information on this subject.

Philo was not orthodox in his religious heritage, but a mystic with a strong Gnostic philosophy. This pagan belief system entered Judaism as well as the early church and, consequently, was addressed by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Colossians. Philo's interpretation of the Scripture was allegorical rather than literal, which is why neither orthodox Jews nor Christians endorsed his views. His work reflects the philosophy he was promoting.<sup>342</sup> The Jews in Jerusalem and Galilee rejected Gnosticism in the early first century, which may be why Jesus did not address the philosophy. Yet like many other Jewish philosophers, Philo attempted to prove that all wisdom of the Greeks was already written in the Jewish Scriptures.<sup>343</sup>

**02.02.23 Pliny the Younger.** Pliny is known primarily for his eye witness account of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79. His full name was Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secudus (A.D. 61 – 113), but became known to historians as Pliny the Younger. This was to set him apart from his uncle and adopted father, Pliny the Elder. The Younger was a lawyer, author, and magistrate to the court of Emperor Hadrian. He left numerous letters and documents that survived the centuries which present insight into the Roman culture of his time. His contribution to this study of first century Christianity is minimal, although he is believed to have been a fair and just magistrate concerning early believers.

**02.02.24 Pseudepigrapha.** The name *Pseudepigrapha*, meaning *false writings*, is a classification of books sometimes referred to as the *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*.<sup>344</sup> These literary works were written roughly between 200 B.C. and A.D. 200.<sup>345</sup> This open-ended category is said to have been written by biblical figures such as Abraham or Noah, but in fact were created by other writers who attempted to convey the wisdom of whom they named the books. The practice of writing under another's name may have contributed to why James said that one should not falsify the truth (James 3:14b). There were several reasons as to why these were written.

1. The authors attempted to deal with the social and religious issues of the day, including the expected messiah. For example, the author of book 3 of the *Sibylline Oracles* believed that the Greek Ptolemaic king could be the long-awaited savior or messiah for the Jews. (Note: a small "m" is used since the messiah was not recognized as a deity, but super-human or angelic figure).<sup>346</sup>

---

342. Clark, "Philo Judeus." 4:773-77; Wilson, "Philo Judeus." 3:847-50.

343. Golub, *In the Days*. 242.

344 See 02.02.01.V for more information on this subject.

345. Scott, Jr. *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*. 29-31.

346. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. 1:356, 1:381.

2. The Jews had difficulty dealing with the issue of how God, who is holy, just, righteous and all-powerful, could permit the pagan Greeks and Romans to oppress His righteous Chosen People.<sup>347</sup> Many books attempted to resolve this problem and the struggle to find an answer is evident. Some attempted to blame the problems of humanity upon Eve, as found in the *Life of Adam and Eve* (18:1) and in *Sirach* (25:24) of the Apocrypha. Others blamed the devil or evil angels, but none fully addressed the issue except for Jesus.<sup>348</sup>

3. Some new theological ideas were also created by these authors, such as the concept of purgatory even though there is no mention of it in the Bible or Oral Law. Several books, such as *4 Enoch*, were written in the Christian era and reflect some Christian teaching, but are at times in serious conflict with the Bible. The primary challenge with these writings is to determine at what point historical facts end and legends begin. Their value lies in the fact that they permit scholars to understand the mindset of the writers during the theologically chaotic time of Christ.

4. Possibly one of the most influential books of this category is the *Psalms of Solomon*, which was written by the Pharisees after the Roman invasion of Judaea in 63 B.C.<sup>349</sup> Some scholars believe it can be dated between the years 40 and 30 B.C.<sup>350</sup> Chapters 2 and 17 make reference to the Gentile foreigners (Romans) who invaded the land; killing men, women, and children. The author also calls upon the Lord to bring forth the son of David, an unmistakable phrase calling for the messiah to bring justice (see 06.08.03.Q3).

5. Some of these books, such as the *Gospel of Peter*, have both affirmations and discrepancies with the gospel narratives. This *Gospel* is a re-telling of the passion of Jesus with fictional elements added, so discernment is required when assessing their historical and literary value.<sup>351</sup> Another, the *Ascents of James*, has a brief description of the death of Jesus (1.41.2 - 1.43.4). Quotations from *Ascents* were not included in this eBook because *Ascents* is not an independent source, but it was based upon the account recorded in Matthew.<sup>352</sup>

---

347. Davies, "Apocrypha." 1:161-65; Ladd, "Pseudepigrapha." 3:1040-43.

348. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. xxx.

349. Some ancient writers use the term "Judea" in the broadest sense. Examples are found in Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 5.15.70; Strabo, *Geographia* 16.4.21; and Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 37.15.2.

350. Cosby, *Interpreting Biblical Literature*. 285.

351. Webb, "The Roman Examination and Crucifixion of Jesus." 761.

352. For more information see Carroll and Green, *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity*. 155-57.

6. One of the qualities of the four biblical gospels is that they agree with each other; and where there is apparent disagreement, the differences are understood in light of the audience or other cultural backgrounds. However, the Pseudepigrapha books often have differences that simply cannot be explained other than these are the result of creative historical writers.<sup>353</sup> For example, several books have the names of the two Zealots<sup>354</sup> who were crucified with Jesus. Suggested names are Dismas and Gestas, as in the *Acts of Pilate*. But other books identify them as Zoathan and Chammata, or as Joathas and Maggattras, or as Titus and Dumatchus. Clearly this demonstrates why these writings must be evaluated with great suspicion.<sup>355</sup>

Since Luke gathered his information from various sources, his work reflects the established view of the early Church. Had his writings conflicted with Church leadership, his book would have been immediately attacked and discarded. He would also have been the subject of discussion by early defenders of the faith such as Justin Martyr and Irenaeus. Nonetheless, he was never attacked and there is no evidence that he and his works received negative reactions from other apostles or Church leaders.

The sixty plus Pseudepigrapha books appear to satisfy the “itching ears” of those of those who are “ever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim. 4:3; 3:7), as they lack the gift of discernment. Only a few books in this category have any merit. That is why the Apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:2 warned his readers not to get troubled and upset by a writing that supposedly came from him. That may also be why later in 3:17, he said that the greeting was in his own handwriting – his way of certifying the genuineness of his second letter, and his letter was not the creation of Pseudepigrapha author.

**02.02.25 Septuagint.** In the beginning of the third century B.C., the Greek language had become so prominent in Egypt, that the Hebrew language was threatened with extinction. In Alexandria, a group of scholars in the royal library made the first translation of Hebrew Scriptures into another language – Greek.<sup>356</sup> This translation became known as the Septuagint.<sup>357</sup> The rabbis

---

353. Creative writers and other “false teachers and prophets” have existed throughout the centuries. Ron Charles has gathered scores of fanciful legends and myths, mostly written between the sixth and sixteenth centuries, that pertain to the life of Christ in his book titled, *The Search: A Historian’s Search for Historical Jesus*. (Self-Published, 2007). Another researcher is Nicholas Notovich, whose book, *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ*. Trans. (Virchand R. Gandhi, Dover Pub.) is a so-called historical account of when Jesus went to Asia to study between the ages 13 and 29. All of these accounts are truly fanciful.

354. Only Zealots and murderers were crucified by the Romans. Thieves were not crucified for their crimes unless they were also involved with insurrection against Rome (Zealot activity) or they murdered someone in their crimes spree.

355. Jordan, *Who’s Who in the Bible*. 240; See 16.01.14.

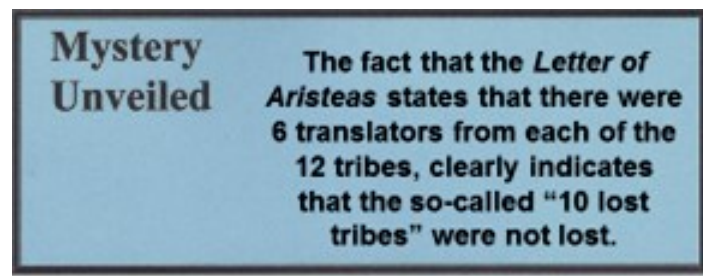
356. See 02.02.01.V for more information on this subject.



attempted to meet the need of their youth who were losing the Hebrew language. The rabbis were constantly challenged to keep the faith of their people intact. The Septuagint was their attempt to keep the Word of God relevant and vibrant.<sup>358</sup>

However, Jews living in the Holy Land did not accept the Greek language as readily as did their counterparts in Egypt. Holy Land Jews appeared to have been far more concerned with keeping their traditions and faith. One reason may be because they were close to the temple and were constantly influenced with Greek paganism. Ironically, those living in Babylon were more faithful to biblical Judaism than were their counterparts in Jerusalem who had developed the Oral laws. This will be explained in more detail later.

Finally, there is an interesting legend concerning the translation work. In the Pseudepigraphical book, *Letter of Aristeas* is an account that states that 72 men, six from each tribe, translated the entire Hebrew Bible in 72 days. That number was rounded off to 70, which is the origin of the name “Septuagint” and its abbreviation of “LXX.” Jewish records supposedly also preserved the names of the 72 scholars. However, the work took several decades, not seventy-two days. Incidentally, since the *Letter* refers to all twelve tribes, obviously the so-called “ten lost tribes” were not lost.



**02.02.26 Talmud.** The term Talmud refers to two sets of writings that reflect Jewish philosophy and theology: The Babylon Talmud and the Jerusalem, a/k/a Palestinian Talmud.<sup>359</sup> Of the two Talmuds, the Babylonian edition is considered to be the authoritative one as it offers a broader scope in discussions and its themes are richer and cover longer periods of time. Over the centuries, it became the more popular because it was more challenging and interesting for rabbinic study. It was completed around the year A.D. 500 and contains 5,894 large pages (27 x 36 cm.) while the Jerusalem Talmud, completed a century earlier, has only 574 pages.<sup>360</sup> Hence,

---

357. Soderlund, “Septuagint.” 4:401-03. See also a brief discussion by Dr. Petra Heldt at 02.04.01.V.

358. Soderlund, “Septuagint.” 4:402-04.

359. See comments by Rabbi John Fischer on the significance of Jewish literature for Bible students today, 02.02.16.V.

360. Bivin, “Jesus and the Oral Law” 2:2, 8.

the Babylonian Talmud is used almost exclusively in biblical research and whenever a reference is given to the “Talmud,” the reference is to the Babylonian edition.<sup>361</sup>

The Babylonian Talmud is essentially the interpretation and elaboration of the Mishnah as it was taught in the Jewish academies in Babylon. Because the Jews had been removed from Jerusalem and the land of Judea in 586 B.C., they strove to insure that the laws were carefully followed and preserved. This was especially significant since the priesthood in Jerusalem had a renowned reputation of corruption, so Greek influences were removed. It incorporates the teachings from Jewish sages who lived from 20 B.C. to A.D. 450. This Talmud illustrates two interesting features:

1. It presents insights of the Jewish legal system prior to the destruction of the temple that enhances our understanding of the cultural environment of Jesus. An example of Talmud’s historical value is found in the story Jesus told about the persistent widow and unrighteous judge (Lk. 18:1-8).
2. It discredits the argument that since it was written at a late date it should be discredited as a source for biblical study on Jewish life and culture. Another example of the value of the Talmud was revealed in the early 1960s. Archaeologist Yigael Yadin was excavating Masada when he discovered what he thought was a ritual bath known as a *mikvah* (see Glossary). When the dimensions and description were compared with requirements of the Talmudic law, there was no question of its identity. He had discovered the first *mikvah* in modern Israel.<sup>362</sup> Since then, hundreds have been excavated.

Some scholars believe that since the Babylon Talmud was compiled around the year 500, and the Jerusalem Talmud about a century earlier, both sources are far too late to have any significant value concerning the study of the Second Temple Period. Their reasoning is logical, but they do not fully comprehend the Jewish tenacity to preserve the Judaism of the Second Temple. Consider the following:

1. Josephus, writing at the end of the first century, presented considerable details of the temple in his two books, *Antiquities of the Jews*, and *Wars of the Jews*.
2. The two Talmudic books also have considerable details of the temple, and these details are nearly identical to those of Josephus.<sup>363</sup>

---

361. Neusner, “Talmud.” 4:717-24.

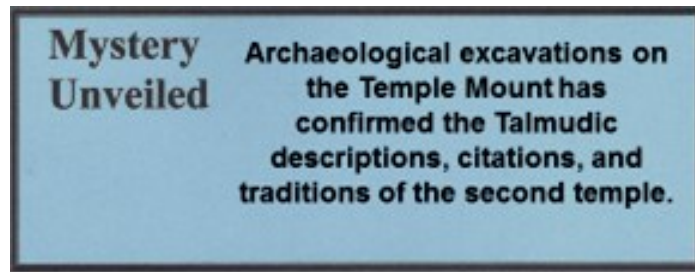
362. La Sor, “Discovering What Jewish Miqva’ot Can Tell Us About Christian Baptism.” 52.

363. Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 6, Session 1.

Note the following comments about the Babylonian Talmud were found on a *Jewish* website:

1. “The Talmud is, then, the written form of that which in the time of Jesus was called the Traditions of the Elders” by Rabbi Michael L. Rodkinson.<sup>364</sup>
2. “The Jewish religion as it is today traces its descent, without a break, through all the centuries, from the Pharisees” by the Universal Jewish Encyclopedia.<sup>365</sup>

Therefore, the accuracy of Jewish writings concerning the temple can be considered to be as passionate as translating the Hebrew Bible into Aramaic,<sup>366</sup> where a translator was considered to be a traitor if he translated accurately but failed to convey the full meaning of the biblical passage.<sup>367</sup> Furthermore, archaeological research on the Temple Mount in the past 30 – 40 years has further reinforced literary Talmudic data, and has not contradicted Talmudic descriptions, citations, or descriptions of the Second Temple Period.<sup>368</sup>



Finally, both editions have some legends, myths, and fictitious charges against Jesus but also contain condemnations against former Jewish leaders. For example, the Babylonian Talmud has the account of a certain rabbi who had his donkey trained so well, that the beast would not eat grain from harvested crops of which the tithes were not paid.<sup>369</sup> While both contain highly significant historical accounts concerning the second temple period, obviously a degree of discernment is required. Therefore, their references to Christianity are highly limited because it ignored Jesus and the early Judeo-Christian sect. The work is more non-Christian than anti-Christian; more non-Jesus than anti-Jesus.<sup>370</sup> But it is a good resource into first century Judaism.

364. Quoted from a Jewish website, <http://www.come-and-hear.com/navigate.html> April 11, 2012.

365. Quoted from a Jewish website, <http://www.come-and-hear.com/navigate.html> April 11, 2012.

366. See 02.02.28 “Targums.”

367. Lee, U., *The Life of Christ*. 121-23.

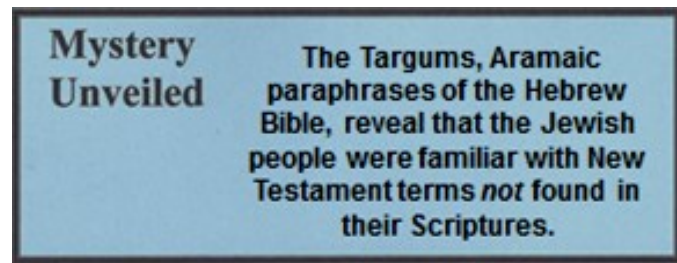
368. Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 6, Session 1.

369. Quoted by Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 1:124.

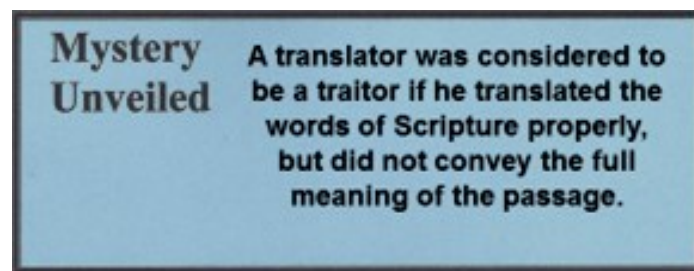
370. Neusner, *The Mishnah: An Introduction*. 221.

**02.02.27 Tanakh.** See “Hebrew Bible.”

**02.02.28 Targum.** In the early Inter-Testamental Period, Aramaic was the language of the Persian government (5<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) and continued to be the language of the common people at the time of Jesus. Because culture and language had changed since the days of Moses more than a thousand years earlier, there was a need for an Aramaic rephrasing of Hebrew writings. The Targum was not so much a translation, but a paraphrase and commentary of the Hebrew Bible for the benefit of those who were more fluent in Aramaic than Hebrew.



In synagogue services, Scriptures were read in Hebrew as was the Aramaic paraphrase.<sup>371</sup> The translator was given the honorable assignment of explaining or writing a Targum of Scripture, but so important was his assignment that he was considered a traitor if he translated the words properly but did not convey the full meaning.<sup>372</sup>



**02.02.29 Torah.** The name means *doctrine, instruction, or teaching*, and is generally referred to as *the Law*,<sup>373</sup> *the Written Law* or *the Mosaic Law*.<sup>374</sup> It is more accurate to say that the *Torah* is “God’s Instructions” than the modern concept of “legalistic law.” It is the Hebrew name for the first five books of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and considered sacred by the Essenes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Samaritans.

371. Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 6, Session 1.

372. Lee, U., *The Life of Christ*. 121-23.

373. Guignebert, *The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus*. 62.

374. See 08.01.04 for more details on the issues pertaining to the Law.

**02.02.30 Tosefta.** A supplement and the earliest commentary to the *Mishnah* was written in the second to third centuries A.D.<sup>375</sup> Both contain the “Traditions” that Jesus frequently denounced.

## Unit 02

### Cultural Background Studies

## Chapter 03

### Significant Cultural Elements

**02.03.01 Introduction.** Every culture has certain elements that are unique and significant to its people. An overview of the significant Jewish cultural elements in first century Judaea is presented in this chapter. This basic knowledge will enhance the reader’s understanding of the gospels.

**02.03.02 Agriculture.** Agriculture was the primary occupation for the majority of Jewish peasants which is why many comments by Jesus alluded to agricultural endeavors. Israel is a diverse land that has five distinct climate zones.<sup>376</sup> Furthermore, there are six divisions in the agricultural year with each zone, each lasting about two months and the every two-month period is somewhat different in each climate zone. The agricultural divisions are as follows:

1. Seedtime: In Israel crops were sown late fall, depending upon the climate zone, as this is the beginning of the rainy season (November to April).<sup>377</sup>
2. Winter (rainy season)
3. Spring

---

<sup>375</sup>. Neusner, *A Midrash Reader*. 10.

<sup>376</sup>. For example, Jerusalem receives more than 24 inches of rainfall per year while Jericho, which is less than 20 miles to the east, receives barely 4 inches. Therefore, the mount region of Jerusalem has numerous fruit trees and gardens while the Jericho area is a desert – the city itself is located at a huge oasis.

<sup>377</sup>. Today, with the invention of the drip irrigation system, crops are growing year-round in fulfillment of the prophecy of Amos 9:13 that says that the ploughman will overtake the reaper.

4. Harvest: The harvest season is the beginning of the six to seven month period when there is no rain (dry season).

5. Summer (dry season)

6. Season of incredible heat (August).

Winter crops and cattle flourish in the Galilee area whereas the southern desert section of Judea is ideal for flat-tailed sheep, goats, and tropical fruits. Various grapes<sup>378</sup> and olives are in abundance almost everywhere with the exception of the semi-arid southern region. The land was famous for olives, dates, figs, incense, pomegranates, citrons, and almonds. Oils included olive oil, poppy seed oil, nut oil, and palm oil. There were a variety of wines, black wines, white wines, reddish wines, Sharon wines, Carmel wines and spiced wines, all of which were shipped abroad in ancient time.<sup>379</sup> The diet of the ancients was basically a cereal diet. It was extremely low in fat and calories, but olives made up for this deficiency. Josephus wrote of the productiveness of the land:

**Their soil is universally rich and plentiful and full of plantations of trees of all sorts, insomuch that it invites the most slothful to take pains in its cultivation by its fruitfulness. Accordingly, it is all cultivated by its inhabitants, and no part lies idle.**

**Josephus, *Wars* 3.3.2 (42b)**

The historian continued to say,

**The country also that lies over against this lake has the same name of Gennesaret (Galilee); its nature is wonderful as well as its beauty. Its soil is so fruitful that all sorts of trees can grow upon it, and the inhabitants accordingly plant all sorts of trees there; for the temper of the air is so well mixed that it agrees very well with those several sorts, particularly walnuts, which require the coolest air, flourish there in vast plenty. There are palm trees also which grow best in hot air; fig trees also and olives grown near them which yet require an air that is more temperate.**

**Josephus, *Wars* 3.10.8 (516-517)**

---

378. Originally Israel had five kinds of grapes. One kind produces the earliest fruit that only grows well on the ground, not on a grape arbor. Its fruit ripens early and the other kinds ripen later and thereby, people enjoyed fresh grapes from June through October. Many grapes today were brought into the country from France by the Rothschild family in 1882 because Muslims destroyed the vineyards.

379. Golub, *In the Days*. 137.

Another writer was Marcus Terentius Varro (116 – 27 B.C.), a Roman scholar thought to have been of the equestrian rank, and as such, had the finances for extensive travel and the establishment of his own library. He produced 74 literary works on numerous topics, including agriculture. In his work, *Agriculture*, he identified three areas in the Roman Empire where crop yields were one hundred fold – in Sybaris in Italy, near Gadara in Syria, and in Byzacium in Africa. Of interest in this study is Gadara. Varro mentioned it as being in Syria because it was under the Roman governmental district headquarters in Damascus, Syria, just as Galilee was at time. More specifically, he wrote,

**Around Sybaris in Italy the normal yield is said to be even a hundred to one, and a like yield is reported near Gadara in Syria, and for the district of Byzacium in Africa. It also makes a great difference whether the planting is on virgin soil or on what is called restibilis — land cultivated every year — or on vervactum, which is allowed sometimes to lie fallow between crops.**

**Varro, *Agriculture* 1.44.2<sup>380</sup>**

The area Varro described near Gadara is in the region surrounding the Sea of Galilee. The reason the land was extremely fertile is because of the extinct volcanoes in the Golan Heights area. Over the centuries, the rains disintegrated the volcanic rock, called basalt, into extremely fertile soil. Therefore, when Jesus spoke of a hundred fold increase,<sup>381</sup> it was not an exaggeration; it was a multiplication factor with which the Galileans were well acquainted.

The olive tree has been a vital element in all Mediterranean cultures. Its fruit is crushed and pressed in several stages for its oil, the first part of which is used for religious purposes. The next oil extracted is used for medical purposes, followed by oil for cooking, lamps, and other uses.<sup>382</sup>

With the exception of the desert areas, vineyards have been planted throughout the land since the earliest times. According to the oral tradition, the wine was mixed 1:3 with water.<sup>383</sup> Water stored in cisterns for long periods of time tended to become a haven for micro-organisms and the alcohol in wine purified the water. The small alcohol content had a purifying effect on the water

---

380. [http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Varro/de\\_Re\\_Rustica/1\\*.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Varro/de_Re_Rustica/1*.html) Retrieved July 9, 2011.

381. Mt. 13:1-9; Mk. 4:1-9; Lk. 8:4-8.

382. See 15.02.01.B. “Illustration of a Beam Olive Press.”

383. 05.05.02.Q3 “Did the wine that Jesus created, contain alcohol (Jn. 2:1-11)?” and 05.05.02.Q4 “What is the difference between wine and strong drink (Jn. 2:1-11)?”



which was collected in cisterns<sup>384</sup> during the rainy months of November through April for use in the arid summer months.

Most crops were planted in October and November at the time of the early rains. After the later rains came in March and April, the crops were harvested. The farming methods included the hand sowing of seed (Mk. 4:1-20), work in the vineyard (Mt. 20:1-6), care of fruit trees (Mt. 7:15-20), guarding food from thieves (Mk. 12:1), and storage of food (Lk. 12:13-21). These vignettes were some of the illustrations used by Jesus to communicate his message.<sup>385</sup>

Wheat was the grain of choice and the primary food staple, whereas barley was the food for the poorer classes and animals.<sup>386</sup> It requires a shorter growing season than does wheat and grows well in poor farmland east of the central mountains and areas adjacent to the Judean desert south and east of Jerusalem. This was the only land the poor could afford to purchase.<sup>387</sup> Most other soils were extremely fertile and expensive. The biblical phrase that described the land flowing with “milk and honey” had reference to two areas. The southern desert area was ideal for milk-producing herds, such as goats and camels, while the northern area produced vineyards and orchards as well as “honey.”

Some villages enjoyed diversity of trades and income. Capernaum and other villages along the edge of the fresh water lake known as the Sea of Galilee, prospered from both fishing and farming.<sup>388</sup> The lake, called by locals *Yom Kinneret*, literally “Sea Harp” in Hebrew, is thirteen miles long and seven miles wide. It is the only known lake with fresh water sardines. In spite of that, a vast majority of the population were involved in agriculture. Hence, the entire social and religious life centered around the agricultural cycles, as can be noted by the Jewish festivals.

Finally, it should be noted that there is a misconception today that the vegetation of modern Israel has not changed since the earliest biblical times. The land, except some desert areas, was heavily forested throughout most of pre-biblical history.<sup>389</sup> When Joshua divided the land he told some Israelites to clear the forested hill country (Jos. 17:15-18). Destruction of the forests came

---

384. See “Cisterns” in Appendix 26.

385. Packer and Tenney, eds., *Illustrated Manners*. 263-70; See also Packer, J. I., and M. C. Tenney and William White Jr. eds. *Nelson's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Facts*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson. 1995.

386. Ruth 2:17; Ezek. 4:9; Jn. 6:9.

387. Hepper, “Grain.” 2:591.

388. Packer and Tenney, eds., *Illustrated Manners*. 263-70.

389. It appears that in centuries past, the farmland in Babylon was also more productive than it is today. Herodotus in his work, *The Histories* (1.93) said that “In grain, it is so fruitful as to yield commonly two-hundred fold; and when the production is the greatest, even three-hundred fold.”



centuries later. For example, when Hadrian destroyed Jerusalem in 135 A.D. he commanded that every tree within ten Roman miles of the city be cut down to remove the main source of fuel for cooking and heating. When the Turkish Ottoman Empire was in power of this region (1407-1917), they taxed every tree and in the nineteenth century most surviving forests were used for railroad ties and fuel for railroad engines. The reforestation of today is nothing short of a miracle. At the time of Jesus central and northern Israel was covered with rich farmland and forests.

**02.03.03 Economy** – In Western culture today there is, for the most part, a large middle class of people, a small upper class of extremely wealthy people, and a class of poverty-stricken people. In many non-Western countries, the middle class is smaller and the poverty is the largest. However, in the first century biblical era the economic-social structure was quite different. The religious and government leaders comprised a small powerful wealthy upper class. A vast majority of impoverished people were subsistence peasant farmers who barely eked out a living from a small plot of land. There was also a small group of destitute people – the blind, lepers, and others who generally had health issues of some kind. These were also the ones Jesus referred to as “the poor” (Lk. 18:1-19:10). Therefore, instead of having a Western social structure that was small upper class – large middle class – small lower class, in the first century it was small upper class – larger poverty class – small destitute class. There was also a small middle class that emerged who consisted of merchants.

The livelihood of the average first century Jewish peasant centered primarily on producing or obtaining food. It was the commodity most often bought and sold. While currency was available, it was generally used only to pay Roman and temple taxes. The price paid for needed services or products was determined by bartering as price tags did not exist.<sup>390</sup> Food markets were only in the larger cities. To date, archaeologists have not found any evidence of shops or markets in small rural villages. No ancient writings have been found with reference to an *agoranomos*, the government inspector of shops and markets who was appointed to a village. Nearly anything that was needed by a family could be secured within the village, or most certainly, in a neighboring one. The village economy was self-contained.<sup>391</sup> However, not all scholars agree with this. Some feel that the taxes and rents were so high that many families had to work in a second craft for additional income. Frequently, such endeavors produced a village that had a specialty such as pottery.<sup>392</sup> The high Roman taxation created economic slavery and was the leading cause of frequent revolts by the impoverished peasants.

---

390. Price tags on merchandise and food products were invented by John Wannamaker in the 1860s, after he opened his department store in Philadelphia. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wanamaker's> Retrieved July 9, 2015.

391. Safrai, *The Economy of Rome*. 56-58, 231.

392. Horsley, *Archaeology, History, and Society in Galilee*. 74-76.

Imported products were exclusively for the rich. The city of Sepphoris, a mere three miles from Nazareth, was a community of wealthy Greeks and Romans who enjoyed a wide variety of imported goods. This was in sharp contrast to the average village community where impoverished living continued generation after generation. Seldom did a village break out of this cycle. Tabgha, located on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee, is believed to have been a rare exception to the village trade. This community produced salted fish that was shipped by camel caravan throughout the eastern Roman Empire. A growing number of scholars believe Capernaum was also an exception in that it may have had an industry of manufacturing basalt grinding stones. Seldom was there any hope for a change to a better life.

The teachings of Jesus are filled with economic lessons of life. He taught that one must first consider the needs of others (Mt. 25:31-46; Jn. 3:17-18), place one's economic needs second to devotion to God (Mt. 6:19-21, 24), to seek the holiness and righteousness of God, and "all these things will be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33). He demonstrated that every spiritual condition of mankind has a material manifestation.<sup>393</sup>

Banking did not exist as we know it today.<sup>394</sup> However, the wealthy did place their currency funds in the temple, which served as a bank.<sup>395</sup> This was typical of all ancient Near Eastern cultures (now called ancient Middle East cultures). Most notable was the temple of Diana in Ephesus, which was the central bank for a third of the Roman Empire. In Jerusalem, the temple had divided funds for sacred and secular uses. When Pilate took funds from the temple to complete the aqueduct, the people rebelled. Josephus said that they rebelled because Pilate stole the more valuable sacred monies, rather than private funds.<sup>396</sup> The maintenance of the infrastructure of Jerusalem – the walls, water-channels, towers, storm sewers, maintenance workers and street sweepers<sup>397</sup> – were all paid for by the temple, not the Romans.<sup>398</sup> The irony is

---

393. Packer and Tenney, eds., *Illustrated Manners and Customs*. 330-39; See also Packer, Tenney, and White, eds. *Nelson's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Facts*.

394. See the discussion on a possible private banking system in 05.05.04. Furthermore, see 05.05.04.V1 "Professor Gary Byers and Dr. Paul Wright discuss what scholars believe was a private banking system affiliated with the religious establishment in the temple. Introduction by Dr. Bill Heinrich."

395. Crossan, *Who Killed Jesus?* 64-65.

396. Josephus, *Wars*. 2.9.4.

397. Since Jerusalem was considered to be a Holy City, the streets were swept every day (Babylonian Talmud, *Baba Metzja* 26A and *Pesachim* 7A). The Valley of Hinnom had a dump site by the dung gate where all the filth was thrown. With the exception of rose gardens, gardens were not permitted in the city because they required dung (Mishnah, *Maaseroth* 2.5; Babylonian Talmud, *Baba Kamma* 82B). This illustrates to what measures the laws of purity were taken by the time of Jesus.

398. Mishnah, *Shekalim* 4.2.

that when Pilate raided temple funds to complete the construction of the aqueduct, he essentially finished the work that the religious aristocrats were supposed to do in the first place.

Prior to the reign of Herod the Great there was limited prosperity, low unemployment, and high taxation.<sup>399</sup> Note the words of the historian:

**When he took the kingdom, it was filled in an extraordinary flourishing condition, he had filled the nation with the utmost degree of poverty; and when under unjust pretenses, he had slain any of the nobility, he took away their estates and when he permitted any of them to live, he condemned them to the forfeiture of what they possessed. And, besides the annual impositions which he laid upon every one of them, they were to make liberal presents to himself, to his domestics and friends, and to such of his slaves as were vouchsafed the favor of being his tax gatherers, because there was no way of obtaining a freedom from unjust violence without giving gold or silver for it.**

**Josephus, *Antiquities* 17.11.2 (307-08)**

Upon his death, the construction projects ended and the economy went into a recession until his sons continued various construction projects in their respective districts. But none of them had the administrative or engineering skills of their father. The nation was demoralized by the Hellenistic inroads and impoverished by the high taxation – Judea alone had to pay 600 talents annually.<sup>400</sup>

The economy recovered somewhat by the time Jesus began His ministry. However, outdated Roman laws did not help the matter either. The enforcement of obsolete usury laws had spread financial ruin over the entire empire.<sup>401</sup> Forced sales made property almost worthless as bankruptcies spread far and wide. Courts from Rome to Alexandria and beyond were filled with men imploring the repeal of outdated financial laws, and in the meantime, investors kept their money. Prosperity and businesses were paralyzed. Wealthy merchants were reduced to beggars and the poor became poorer. Many who could not pay their debts died of starvation in prison, and in Rome, their bodies were thrown into the Tiber River.<sup>402</sup> Even the historian Tacitus wrote

---

399. Josephus, *Antiquities* 17.11.4 (320). That was a huge sum and, according to Tacitus (*Annals* 2.42), in the year A.D. 17, the provinces of Syria and Judea begged to have their taxes reduced, but their petition was denied.

400. Josephus, *Antiquities* 17.11.4 (320). That was a huge sum and, according to Tacitus (*Annals* 2.42), in the year A.D. 17, the provinces of Syria and Judea begged to have their taxes reduced, but their petition was denied. See also 02.03.03 “Economy.”

401. Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 1:352-53.

402. Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 1:353-54.

of the financial distress that was upon the people.<sup>403</sup> The economy for the Jewish people in Israel and elsewhere wasn't much better.<sup>404</sup> This economic situation coupled with the theological conflicts the Jews had with the Romans, set the stage for rebellions and riots, as well as the expectations of the m/Messiah. Therefore, when Jesus spoke of forgiving debtors or finding buried treasures (probably hidden from tax collectors), He was speaking of real-life issues.

#### **02.03.04 Education.**

The origin of the school as well as the synagogue is rather obscure. The Hebrew word for synagogue is *beit-kneset* or *beyt-kneset*, meaning *house of gathering*.<sup>405</sup> It is strongly believed to have begun in the exilic period or shortly thereafter by the prophet Ezra. By the time Christ came on the scene, the educational process took on a significant importance to combat the growing Greek influence that had taken a firm grip on the Jewish community.<sup>406</sup> Wherever the Jewish people lived, they established community centers within their synagogues. It was in the synagogue that children and adults were taught the Scriptures and local festivals, unless, of course, they traveled to Jerusalem to observe the national religious festival celebrations.<sup>407</sup>

In recent centuries scholarship assumed that the Jewish people were essentially illiterate and girls were never sent to schools. Essentially, formal education of children in the first century was limited to boys until they reached the age of thirteen. However, recently that opinion began to change dramatically as scholars examine Jewish writings that were previously overlooked. While full literacy is defined by having proficient skills in both reading and writing, various levels do obviously exist, and did so likewise in the first century. Many who have basic reading skills usually have a lower level of writing skills. For example, you, the reader may be able to read this eBook but may have difficulty spelling some words if you were asked to write what you read.

This theory on literacy for boys and girls has several good arguments.

1. Archaeologists have uncovered numerous legal documents that were written by professional scribes. Their handwriting and signatures are neat and accurate. The other signers have signatures that look like graffiti, which is indicative that they were novices but had basic abilities to write.
2. A number of ossuaries were discovered with beautiful carvings, such as the one of Caiaphas (see 15.03.07.A); reflecting the high level of craftsmanship of those who

---

403. Tacitus, *Annals of Imperial Rome* 6.9, cited by Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 1:355.

404. For further study of loans, debts, and how first century Jewish courts ruled, see the Mishnah and the chapter titled *Baba Bathra*.

405. Mills and Michael, *Messiah and His Hebrew Alphabet*. 7.

406. Culpepper, "Education." 2:23-27.

407. Golub, *In the Days*. 240.

created them. However, the graffiti-like names of the deceased inscribed in the sides of the stone boxes appear to have been written by family members rather than professional scribes.<sup>408</sup>

3. Some women had sufficient writing skills to prepare their own divorce decrees, which is obviously reflective of a culture where women had basic literacy skills and knowledge of family law.<sup>409</sup>

4. There are several biblical examples of women who were well versed in Scriptures. One of them was Mary, who praised God with her poetic *Magnificat*. She referred to no less than twenty Old Testament references, an impossible task for many Bible students today.<sup>410</sup> This is a clear demonstration that she knew her Bible, and leaves modern scholars to wonder how much more she knew at her young age. Scholars believe that by the middle of the first century, the *Magnificat* and several other New Testament passages became hymns in the early Jewish-church congregations.<sup>411</sup>

5. The Babylonian Talmud speaks of women reading from the Torah in the synagogue near the end of the second temple period.<sup>412</sup> The fact that men and women had equal opportunity to read during the Sabbath service is indicative that boys and girls both went to school to learn how to read.

In light of these considerations, is it possible that some of the words of Jesus could have been written down during His lifetime?<sup>413</sup> Most certainly the scribes and leading Pharisees took notes

---

408. Ossuaries were bone boxes, in which the bones of the deceased were placed about a year after the burial. Ossuaries were popular only for a brief time – from about 50 B.C. until the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70.

409. Mishnah, *Nashim Gittin* 2.5; Mishnah, *Nashim Gittin* 3.1; See the divorce decree written in Aramaic on papyrus at 08.02.03.A.

410. It is doubtful that many seminary students today could do this without a computer or concordance. Mary was a well-educated teenaged girl.

411. A number of early Christian hymns are embedded in the New Testament. The best known are 1) the *Magnificat* (Lk. 1:46-55); 2) the *Nunc Dimittis* (Lk. 2:29-32); 3) Eph. 5:14 is considered to be either a baptismal hymn or a hymn to the unconverted; 4) 1 Tim. 3:16 is an early church creed that was sung, and 5) 2 Tim. 2:11 ff. is thought to be a fragment of an Eucharistic hymn. Philippians 2:6-11 was known as the *Christ Hymn*. Other verses that were incorporated into songs are. Acts 4:24-28, Col. 1:15 ff., Mt. 11:25 ff., and Jn. 1:1-5, 9-13. See Mould, *Essentials of Bible History*. 527; Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, eds., “Christ Hymn.” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. 144-45.

412. Cited by Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 7, Session 1.

413. This interesting question is presented by Alan Millard in “Literacy in the Time of Jesus: Could His Words have been Recorded in His Lifetime?” (*Biblical Archaeology Review*. July-August 2003. 19:4. 37-45). Millard argues that some words of Jesus were probably written down by His listeners. See Alan Millard, “Words of Jesus Written Down as He Spoke?” *Artifax*. Summer, 2003, 18:3, 6.

that were a type of shorthand that the Romans developed. While a negative answer has been *assumed* in the past, it may be time to reconsider this hypothesis. Writing materials such as papyrus were expensive, but broken pieces of pottery were commonplace. Is it possible that key words or phrases of parables were written on pottery pieces by His listeners? This practice was so common that the pottery shards have their own name – “ostraca.”<sup>414</sup>

Education became significant during the Babylonian exile after Ezra established a new religious class known as scribes, whose principle responsibility was to study Scripture and teach it. By the first century B.C. there were many itinerant rabbi-teachers wandering throughout the Jewish communities with their disciples, teaching as they went. This was the practice replicated by Jesus. But by the first century there were two other important factors that changed education, especially for girls:

1. High divorce rate. This was a major reason for educating girls.
2. The acceptance of Hellenism by many Jews. This was a major reason for adding legalistic restrictions in the Oral Law.

Centuries earlier, Abraham commanded his children – boys and girls – and his entire household, to keep the ways of Jehovah (Gen. 18:19). Furthermore, they were instructed in the commandments and ways of a godly life while performing the daily activities of normal life.<sup>415</sup> The education of the children was the responsibility of both parents. Timothy was educated by his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois, which implies that they too were educated to some degree (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15) – obviously in some form of educational setting such as a local synagogue school. Timothy grew up outside of Israel in a Gentile community. Philo (25 B.C.- A.D. 50), the Jewish philosopher and historian from Egypt made this comment,

**Since the Jews look on their laws as revelations from God, and are taught them from their earliest childhood, they bear the image of the Law on their souls....They are taught so to speak, from their very swaddling clothes, by their parents, masters, and teachers, in the holy laws, and in the unwritten customs, and to believe in God, the one Father and Creator of the world.**

#### ***Philo, On the Embassy to Gaius 31-32***

Synagogues were community centers where all community events occurred, such as childhood education. A unique custom was that during days of fair weather, rabbis taught their students

---

414. See “Ostraca” in Appendix 26 for more details.

415. Deut. 4:9-10; 6:6-7; Ps. 78: 1-8; etc.

outside under a fig tree. In time, the Torah was compared to the fig tree because, unlike most trees that have a short harvest season, the fig tree produces some ripe figs throughout most of the year. And so it is with the Torah, one learns a little today, and a little more tomorrow, and a little more the next day.<sup>416</sup> It was said that under the tree one “eats” the Word of God as one eats figs from the tree. The tree had become symbolic of the nation, the Torah, and eventually of the Jewish ordinances and traditions.<sup>417</sup>

Grapevines and fig trees were frequently planted near doors of homes or in the home courtyards of people so families could be seated beneath them and enjoy the fruit in season (Mic. 4:4). Fig trees were also planted along roadways so travelers could obtain some nourishment as they walked on their journey.<sup>418</sup>

The Jerusalem Talmud records that by the end of the second century and early first century B.C., the president of the Sanhedrin, Simeon ben Shetah, along with Rabbi Judah ben Tabai, required compulsory education for all boys to the age of sixteen.<sup>419</sup> Nearly every town and village of significance had a “Beth Midrash” or “Beth Rabban,” although Nazareth was too small to qualify at that time. In communities with schools, the village rabbi held classes in the synagogue where the study of the Torah was central. The entire educational process in the villages can best be understood as a form of elementary school, at that time known as a *bet sefer* or “house of reading,” or the “house of study.”<sup>420</sup> It was there where they learned to read, write, and do basic arithmetic. Learning was rote oral memorization and repetitive. Jesus used this same method, as he did not write his teachings, but constantly repeated them. In school, the rabbi would read from the Torah and the boys would repeat his words. According to a rabbinic tradition, by the age of ten a boy was ready to study the Mishnah or Oral Law of the Pharisaic tradition in the *bet Talmud* or “house of learning.”<sup>421</sup> The tradition reflects the importance of biblical study in the ancient culture.

**He used to say: five years [is the age] for [the study of] Scripture, ten for [the study of] Mishnah, thirteen for [becoming subject to] commandments, fifteen for [the study of] Talmud, eighteen for the [bridal] canopy, twenty for pursuing, thirty for**

---

416. Breshit Rabba 46.1 as paraphrased from Beth Uval, ed. *Self-Guided Tour Trail “C.”* Neot Kedumim Ltd. Lod, Israel. 1987. 15.

417. Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 72, 338-39. See discussions on the fig tree in 13.02.01 and 09.03.09.

418. Geikie, *The Life and Words*. 1:581.

419. Safrai, *The Economy of Roman*. 947; Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. 134-35; Farrar, *The Life of Christ*. 46.

420. Mishnah, *Berakoth* 4.2.

421. Mishnah, *Abot* 5.21; Martin, *Worship in the Early Church*. 26.

**[full] strength, forty for understanding, fifty [for ability to give] counsel, sixty for mature age, seventy for a hoary head, eighty [is a sign of superadded] strength, ninety [is the age] for [a] bending [figure], at a hundred, one is as one that is dead, having passed and ceased from the world.**

**Mishnah, *Aboth* 5.22<sup>422</sup>**

The Oral Law gives a prescription of life that is strictly observed.<sup>423</sup> At the age of thirteen, a young teenager celebrates a bar or bat mitzvah and becomes a son or daughter of the Commandment. Further study is at the discretion of the family, but whenever a son completes this formal education, he is ready to learn a trade with his father.<sup>424</sup>

Boys generally learned a trade from their fathers, but there were exceptions. In larger cities, labor guilds, similar to modern labor unions were established. The guilds trained young men for careers, such as pottery making and metallurgy.<sup>425</sup> In Jerusalem the guilds were so well established that they had their own synagogues for the sole use of their members.<sup>426</sup>

There is another point to consider: the influence of Hellenism on the Jewish community. The study of philosophy was to the Greeks as the Scriptures were to the Hebrews. The Old Testament is actually theology and related systems and beliefs about God. The Jews looked upon their studies as a matter of how man and nature related to God who was central to all of life. To the philosophic Greek, man was central to all of life.<sup>427</sup> It was a conflict in which the Jews drew up a strong defense in the form of their educational system. Today there is the same conflict – a conflict between Christian values and God of Judeo-Christianity versus the humanistic culture to which the ancient Greek philosophy is foundational.

A good student was a good listener. Information was constantly repeated to be permanently recorded in his mind. Writing devices were expensive and rare, although many students had a wax board and stylus that served as “paper and pencil.” The *Mishnah* described a good student as “a whitewashed well, which did not leak a drop.”<sup>428</sup> This is what is meant by a whitewashed

---

422. Bracketed inserts by Danby, ed.

423. Bivin, *New Light on the Difficult Words of Jesus*, 4-8.

424. Lee, U., *The Life of Christ*. 122-26.

425. *Sirach* 24:30-34, 33:16-18, and 34: 9-12.

426. Neusner and Green, eds., *Dictionary of Judaism*. 620.

427. Brown, *Philosophy*. 7.

428. Mishnah, *Aboth* 2.1.



well. In Judaea (modern Israel) there is no rain for at least six months of every year. Therefore, every family had a cistern (called here a well) into which rainwater was collected in the rainy season for storage during the long, hot and dry summer. A large portion of the central mountain area of Israel has porous cretaceous limestone bedrock, which does not hold water. Hence, underground storage tanks carved in the soft limestone had to be plastered.<sup>429</sup> A good whitewashed cistern was critical to the survival of the family and it did not leak a drop, just as a good student did not forget anything.

Schools were located in synagogues that were filled with noise as students read aloud. Reading out loud, called *chanting*, helps with memorization. Furthermore, when one recited an Oral Law or Scripture and made a mistake, there were many in the audience who would announce the error and make a correction. This was part of the culture where Oral Tradition was significant.<sup>430</sup> Silent reading was not a skill known to man until the second or third century A.D. That is why Jesus said “Let those who have ears, listen.” He never said, “Let those who have eyes, read.” For the most part, letters and other documents were an extension of oral communication. St. Augustine, in his fourth-century *Confessions*, wrote that St. Ambrose was the most incredible man he had ever met because he could read without moving his lips or making a sound.

Most certainly, Jesus attended such a school in his synagogue in Nazareth; He grew up as an average boy of His time. The question refers to higher rabbinic education that came after the boy had become a son of the Commandment at age thirteen. Jesus attended the local synagogue school that was required of all boys until the age of twelve. But according to the Isaiah, every morning God awakened Jesus and instructed Him (Isa. 50:4-5). For the Jews, however, the only kind of advanced learning was theology, generally at a school of one of the famous rabbis. Jesus, did not attend any rabbinical school, yet He clearly spoke words that challenged the teachers of His day as if He had attended the premier schools of Hillel or Shammai. Furthermore, the fact that He was never a disciple of such recognized scholars made His critics wonder in amazement at His knowledge and understanding.

Jerome, living in Bethlehem and writing in Latin, said that “There is not a Jewish child who does not know the Scriptures from Adam to Zerubbabel.” Adam is obviously the first man and Zerubbabel is in the last book in the Hebrew Bible because the order of the books is different in

---

429. To make plaster, the ancients burned limestone for 72 hours until it became a heavy dust. Then they added water and placed it on the walls with a trowel. Because limestone is about thirty percent water, the burning process required considerable fuel. The result was that during the Roman period many areas were deforested. SOURCE: Interview with Arie bar David, tour guide and lecturer. August 1999.

430. Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 7, Session 1.

the Jewish Bible than in the Christian Bible. The books are the same, but the order is different.<sup>431</sup>

While it has been generally assumed that the educational process was primarily geared to boys, as in neighboring cultures, there is, however, evidence that has been overlooked that clearly indicates girls were included in the educational process as well. This was especially true in the Galilee region. In fact, some Messianic scholars believe that the religious education in Galilee surpassed that of Jerusalem, in part, because, they had to compete with those in the cosmopolitan city.<sup>432</sup> In particular, the section that pertains to divorce in the *Mishnah* refers to a woman writing her own divorce document:

**All are required to write a bill of divorce<sup>433</sup> even a deaf-mute, an imbecile, or a minor. A woman may write her own bill of divorce and a man may write his own acquittance, since the validity of the writ depends on them that sign it. All are qualified to bring a bill of divorce excepting a deaf-mute, an imbecile, a minor, a blind man, or a gentile.**

**Mishnah, *Gittin* 2.5<sup>434</sup>**

There were some situations where a woman was free to file for a divorce if she wanted to. There were a few occupations, such as dung collectors and leather tanners, that were considered repugnant to the point that a wife who filed for divorce could also request, and receive, compensation for her loss – even if she had agreed to the husband’s occupation before getting married.<sup>435</sup>

Divorce had become of such great public concern that one first century rabbi suggested daughters be educated in this area of law, so they would not be taken advantage of in the event of a divorce in later life. The Mishnah records the following:

---

431. Cited by Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 7, Session 1. Note: Sometimes the chapter and verse divisions are also different.

432. Source: Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 7, Session 1.

433. For a typical bill of divorce format, see 08.02.03.A and Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 2:124-25.

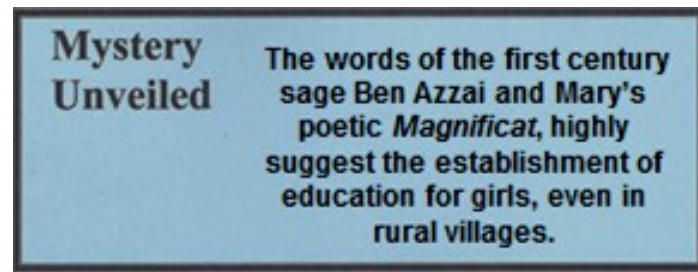
434. See also Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 160-62.

435. Mishnah, *Ketuboth* 7.10.

**Ben Azzai says: A man ought to give his daughter knowledge of the Law so that if she must drink [the bitter water]<sup>436</sup> she may know that the merit [that she has acquired] will hold her punishment in suspense.**

**Mishnah, *Sotah* 3.4<sup>437</sup>**

However, not all Jewish scholars were in agreement with the above statement.<sup>438</sup> There were many Jewish sects who held a wide range of opinions, as reflected in the following statement.



**Rabbi Eleazer said, “Let the words of the Law be burned rather than committed to women.”**

**“He who instructs his daughter in the Law instructs her in folly.”<sup>439</sup>**

The difference between these quotations reflects both common theological and geographical differences.<sup>440</sup> Girls were educated in the Galilee area, but not in Jerusalem. It is questionable if she personally wrote the divorce document or if she authorized it. Nonetheless, it demonstrates the rights of women, as she must have had some degree of literacy to know what she was signing. Literary scholars today have identified a number of writings that evidently were written and/or signed by non-professional scribes.<sup>441</sup> Evidently, this was considered important, as it was repeated in a later section as follows:

---

436. The term “bitter water” was a concoction of consecrated water flavored with dirt from an open area of the temple. A woman suspected of adultery was given this bitter water to drink, and if she was guilty, her stomach would rupture and she would be killed. See Parry, *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to the Talmud*. 82.

437. Bracketed clarification by Danby, ed. *Mishnah*.

438. The wide range of rabbinic opinions is evident in various Jewish writings. See 02.02.01.V for more information on this subject.

439. Cited by Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 1:530.

440. See also Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*. 435-37.

441. Millard, “Literacy in the Time of Jesus.” 40-42.

**Hence, you may conclude that a woman may write out her own bill of divorce and a man his own a quittance, for the validity of a document depends only on its signatories.**

**Mishnah, *Eduyoth* 2.3<sup>442</sup>**

Josephus presented a first century case where a woman, Salome, divorced her quarrelsome husband Costobarus.<sup>443</sup> In addition, he referred to a Zealot named Joseph from the Jewish freedom-fighting village of Gamala who was the “son of a female physician.”<sup>444</sup> Obviously, she had advanced education to become a physician and Josephus made no other comments about her, such as indicating that this was an unusual occupation for a woman. This is additional evidence that some women of the first century were educated and literate.

To make the matter of reading more challenging, papyrus and ink were expensive and scribes were among the highest paid professionals in the land. Furthermore, Greek and Hebrew documents frequently had no separation of words, sentences, paragraphs, punctuation, etc. To read ancient texts required excellent reading skills, even by today’s standards.<sup>445</sup>

An example of a well-educated scholar who was born and raised in the Holy Land was Justin Martyr. He was born at the end of the first century (A.D.) to Greek parents in ancient Shechem, known today as modern Nablus. He was brought up with a good education in history, poetry, and rhetoric – an education he acquired in Samaria and Galilee, not Jerusalem, Gadara, or Athens.<sup>446</sup> After he became a believer of Jesus, he was an influential church father and apologist. Some of comments are quoted in this e-Book.

There were essentially only two forms of education:

1. Theology

2. Vocational

---

442. Cited by Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 425.

443. Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.7.10.

444. Josephus, *The Life of Flavius Josephus* 37; Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 161 n46.

445. Witherington, *Living Word*. 173.

446. Witherington III, Ben. “Almost ‘Thou Persuadest Me...’” 67.

Of these two forms of education, a vocational trade is discussed simply because commentary on the subject is short and brief. The rabbis taught that son had to learn a trade, even if he was to serve in the temple. Note the following popular opinion:

**He who does not teach his sons a craft teaches him brigandage.**

**Babylonian Talmud, *Kiddushin* 29a**

If a young man demonstrated a passion for learning theology, he could continue his education until age 18, and sometimes beyond. Repetition was the basic method of education. In fact, the Hebrew word for *repeat* is *shannah* and means also *to teach*.<sup>447</sup> Note the following two comments:

**A person who repeats his lesson a hundred times is not to be compared with him who repeats it a hundred and one times.**

**Babylonian Talmud, *Hagigah* 9b**

**If [the student] learns Torah and does not go over it again and again, he is like a man who sows without reaping.**

**Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 99a**

This strong emphasis on repetition can be seen in the name of the fifth book of Moses which reiterates the laws of Exodus, Numbers, and Leviticus. The English name is derived from the Greek *Deuteros Nomos*, which means *repetition of the Law*.<sup>448</sup> A good rabbi taught and preached the Word of God, exhorting and edifying the people, as did the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:3.<sup>449</sup> However, the aristocratic Jews referred to common Jews as *agrammatoi*, a Greek word meaning *uneducated*.<sup>450</sup> This clearly was an arrogant attitude they held against the common people, especially if they did not observe all the legalistic laws they promoted.

One of the distinctive teaching styles common among rabbis was to answer a question with another question. It is essentially a form of repetition; the purpose was not to elicit a response, but to think through the details of the subject of discussion. People generally ask questions with a set of assumptions. There are two reasons for responding with another question:

---

447. Metzger, *New Testament*. 50.

448. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor's Manual*. Class 5, page 13.

449. Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. 11.

450. An example is found in Acts 4:13 where John and Peter were both referred to as *agrammatoi*. See Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 278.

1. You force someone to open up assumptions
2. You can determine how to answer

Jesus followed the teaching practice of a typical rabbi as shown by the three examples below.

**Question:** Good Master, what must I do to obtain eternal life?

**Response:** Why do you call me good?

**Question:** Are we to pay taxes to Rome?

**Response:** Whose picture do you see?

**Question:** Under whose authority are you doing this?

**Response:** Under whose authority did John the Baptist minister?

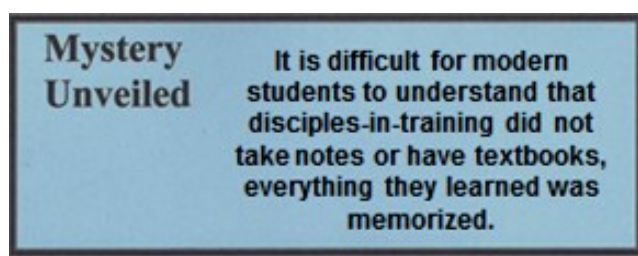
Without question, by the first century, Jerusalem was considered to be the center of religious education. While there were fine educational schools in Galilee, those in Jerusalem looked down upon any other schools outside of the Holy City. That is why the Jews asked “How does He know the Scriptures, since He hasn’t been trained” (Jn. 7:15; see Acts 2)? Scholars believe that the Jerusalemites saw themselves as cosmopolitan citizens and viewed the people of Galilee as backward and uncultured. But the religious education in Galilee surpassed that of Jerusalem, in part because they had to compete with those in the cosmopolitan city.<sup>451</sup>

Yet Jerusalem attracted scholars from Egypt, Babylon, and from all corners of the Roman Empire.<sup>452</sup> Hillel came from Babylon and eventually became one of the two most significant rabbis of the second temple period. Saul, later known as the Apostle Paul of Tarsus, came to Jerusalem where he lived with his sister (cf. Acts 23:16) while he studied under Gamaliel, the grandson of Hillel. A conflict the religious leaders had with John the Baptist and Jesus, was that neither one of them was a graduate of one of Jerusalem’s many seminaries – so how could they have been of God, or so it was thought.

---

451. Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 7, Session 1.

452. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 75.



**02.03.05 Ethnic Diversity.** The small country of Judaea had significant problems related to ethnic diversity. The Jews lived in three provinces known as Israel or Judea<sup>453</sup> (including Jerusalem). The District of Perea which was east of the Jordan River,<sup>454</sup> and the District of Galilee which included the plain west of the lake or sea of the same name.<sup>455</sup> Between Judea and the district of Galilee was a large area inhabited by the Samaritans. The hostilities between the two groups have been well established.

To the southwest, along the beautiful Mediterranean coast, was a large Gentile population in the ancient Philistine cities, although the Philistines no longer existed as such. The eastern and southeastern areas of the Sea of Galilee were the Decapolis cities, ten Greek districts.<sup>456</sup> In the Negev Desert and into modern Jordan lived the descendants of Esau – the Idumeans.

Galilee by this time was mainly occupied by Jewish people,<sup>457</sup> although within the Jewish provinces there was a large contingency of Gentiles.<sup>458</sup> Jerusalem was a cosmopolitan city with many internationals in residence. In addition, the Jewish ethnic groups in various geographical locations had their own manners, customs, and even language dialect. For example, an ancient deed (certificate) of marriage in Jerusalem is identical to one found of the Galilean type, but different from one found in nearby Judea.<sup>459</sup> Social issues were certainly complex and in tension – perfect for Jesus to preach His message of love and acceptance.

---

453. Some ancient writers use the term “Judea” in the broadest sense. Examples are found in Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 5.15.70; Strabo, *Geographia*, 16.4.21; and Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 37.15.2.

454. In the days of Jesus, Perea was often referred to as the “region of Judea across the Jordan.”

455. Mishnah, *Shebuoth* 9.2; Mishnah, *Ketuboth*. 13:10.

456. See “Decapolis” in Appendix 26.

457. For demographic studies, see articles in *Biblical Archaeology Review* July-August, 2000. See also Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 7, Session 2.

458. Pellett, “Decapolis.” 1:810-12.

459. Mishnah, *Ketuboth* 4:12.

**02.03.06 Family.** As it is today, the family in the first century was the basic element of society. In fact, it is a critical unit throughout the Bible and has been throughout human history. A unique feature of biblical times that is different from Western culture today is the extended family. In ancient times, an individual was part of a family that was part of a larger unit known as a clan, which in turn was part of a larger tribe. People did not think of themselves individually, but as part of a blood-related community. That is why, for example, prayers in the Bible are in the plural such as “Give us this day, our daily bread.” However in Western culture, people think of themselves as individuals separated from clans and recently, even families. Western culture has glorified “the Me generation” to divine status. Therefore, it is more difficult for modern Westerners to obtain the full meaning of the Apostle Paul’s references to “in the body.”<sup>460</sup> That is primarily because Paul was an orthodox Jew who preached Jesus and the Christian life in the proper Jewish context.

The husband/father of the home functioned as the dominant figure in the affairs of the family. He was responsible for the welfare of everyone regarding food, shelter, and clothing. In the Jewish home, he was specifically responsible for the spiritual leadership (Gen. 12:8; Job 1:5) on a daily basis, as well as for the various religious rites such as Passover. It was his responsibility to teach his sons and daughters the Mosaic Law, even though by the first century this instruction was enhanced by the rabbi in the local synagogue. In addition, he had four other responsibilities:

1. The father had to insure that his son was circumcised (Gen. 17:12-13).
2. The firstborn son was to be dedicated to God (Num. 18:15-16).
3. The father was to find a wife for his son (cf. Gen. 24:4), although by the first century both the son and daughter had the opportunity to voice their opinions in this selection.
4. Finally, the father was to teach the son a trade or have him be trained by someone else.<sup>461</sup>

The Mishnah quoted a rabbi whose words have transcended the centuries:

**Rabban Gamaliel the son of Rabbi Judah the Patriarch said: “Excellent is study of the Law together with worldly occupation, for toil in them both puts sin out of mind. But all study of the Law without (worldly) labor comes to naught at the last and brings sin in its train.”**

---

460. Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 8, Session 1.

461. Packer and Tenney, eds., *Illustrated Manners and Customs*. 412; See also Packer, Tenney, and White, eds., *Nelson’s Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Facts*.



### **Mishnah, *Aboth* 2.2**

The responsibilities of the wife/mother were essentially to be a mate to her husband, bear his children, and maintain the home. In an agrarian society, it was common for her to be in the fields with him during sowing or harvesting times. By the first century, she also had the mobility to function in the marketplace and other areas that would benefit the family unit.<sup>462</sup>

The children had their responsibilities to the family as well. The oldest son would eventually be the next head of the family, and it was his responsibility to care for the parents in their old age and their burial at time of death. This was demonstrated when Jesus was dying on the cross and He transferred His duty toward His mother to His disciple John (Jn. 19:27). For this reason, the eldest son received a double portion of the inheritance (Deut. 21:17; 2 Ch. 21:2-3).

In the ancient non-Jewish world, sons were always prized higher than daughters. However, girls in the Jewish world were more dearly prized than their counterparts among the Romans or Greeks where an unwanted newborn girl was often tossed outside into the elements to die. The Jewish girl remained under the domain and care of her father until she was married.<sup>463</sup> These family relationships and attitudes would hardly be acceptable today, but in the ancient world, Jewish families functioned rather well within this protective structure.

**02.03.07 Government.** In 63 B.C., the Roman General Pompey took control of Judaea, and the Jewish people came under Roman control. Their method of governing was to give their subjects limited autonomy, a tradition begun by the Persians centuries earlier (Ezra 7:25-26; 10:14). The Romans had three desires:

1. That the people pay tribute (taxes).
2. *Peace of Rome and quiet in the provinces*<sup>464</sup>
3. The statue of the Roman emperor is to be erected in the temple. However, after much argument, the Romans rescinded this requirement, but the taxation was tantamount to that of slavery.

---

462. Packer and Tenney, eds., *Illustrated Manners and Customs*. 413-14.

463. Packer and Tenney, eds., *Illustrated Manners and Customs*. 414-16; See also Packer, Tenney, and White, eds., *Nelson's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Facts*.

464. This phrase is the definition of *Pax Romana*. Lee, *The Galilean Jewishness of Jesus*. 72-73; Mellowes and Cran, Executive Producers. *From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians*. (DVD). Part 1; See "Pax Romana" in Appendix 26.

Therefore, the Jews had limited self-governmental powers that functioned through the high court known as the Sanhedrin. But the Sanhedrin was under the control of the provincial king, Herod the Great, who in turn, was a puppet king of Rome who also had to report to the governor of Damascus. When General Pompey took control, he permitted the high court to rule all three Jewish provinces of Galilee, Judea, and Perea. But Herod restricted Sanhedrin control to Judea and Jerusalem.<sup>465</sup> He also removed the right to inflict capital punishment except in the event a Gentile entered the sacred area of the temple. In such cases, the temple police were given authority to enforce the law.

The position of high priest was not occupied in accordance to biblical protocol, but by an appointment by the Roman government. In this manner, Rome had control of the people who also had limited government and religious freedom. This freed Herod and other Roman officials from the petty problems of the common people. Rome was the central seat of government. The provinces throughout the empire had various classifications and, hence, the rulers had different titles. A *procurator* ruled a province that was second-class to a province ruled by an *ethnarch*. In the case of Archelaus, when his province was re-classified, he came under the direct rule of neighboring Syria. This insured that Rome would receive its taxes and peace was maintained.<sup>466</sup>

The Romans were hardly the ideal slave masters. But while considerable negative press has been given to them, credit should be given to them as they made some feeble attempts to be fair to their subjects. For example, coins minted for use in Judaea did not have any images that were offensive to the Jews.

Another example was the census that was taken every fourteen years. This was not only to count the number of persons in any given district, but the information was also used to build a form of equity or equality in taxation.<sup>467</sup>

Taxes were collected by Jewish men who contracted for the position of tax collector. Any sense of fairness or equality failed at this point because the tax collector could collect as much as he desired so long as he gave the Romans what they had initially requested. The remaining funds were his personal property. Consequently, tax collectors used the power and authority of the Roman government to increase their personal wealth. The Jews considered tax collectors, such as Matthew, to be the worst of the worst of all humanity.

---

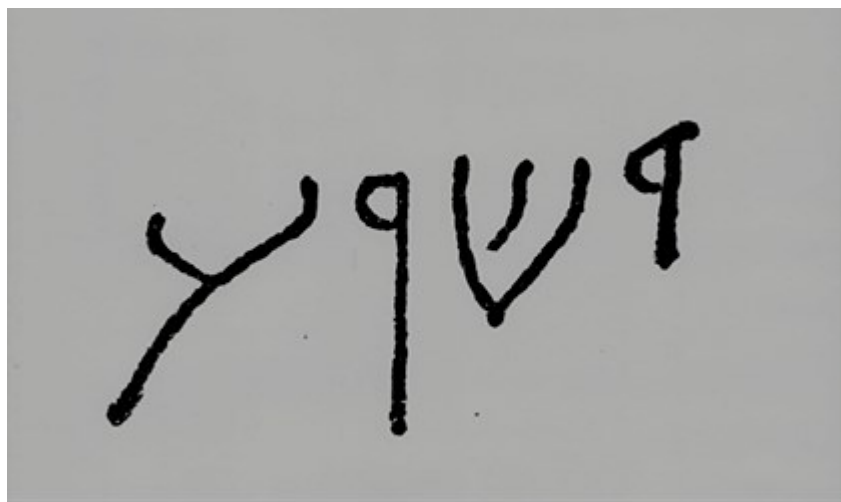
465. Thompson, "Sanhedrin." 3:1390.

466. Guignebert, *The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus*. 37; Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.6.2.

467. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.1-3.

**02.03.08 Language.** For more than a century many scholars were convinced that first century Jews in Judaea did *not* speak Hebrew, but Greek, and to a lesser degree, Aramaic. The irony is that Aramaic is a sister language to Hebrew.<sup>468</sup> Some even believed that Hebrew was a lost language in the first century stating that it was lost during the exile. However, would a people lose their language in 50 or 70 years? They did not lose it in Egypt in four centuries.

Today scholars understand that Aramaic was generally the language of the common people, Hebrew was the sacred language of religious worship and of scribal discussion, and Greek was the linguistic medium for trade, commerce, and government administration.<sup>469</sup> The biblical books written during and after the exile were mostly written in Hebrew.<sup>470</sup> The Mishnah was written in Hebrew and the bar Kokhba letters were written in Hebrew. The gospels were written in Hebrew or possibly Aramaic, but not Greek.



**02.03.08.A THE NAME “JESUS” IN OLD SEMETIC SCRIPT.** The name of Jesus, or Yeshua, as He may have written it in the Old Semitic Script, although the new Aramaic Square Script had gained popularity. This example was taken from an ossuary (bone box) of someone else by the same name, Yeshua.

This erroneous belief has affected a few translations of the Bible. For example, in the New International Version of the Bible (1984), the phrase “in Aramaic” really should read, “in Hebrew” in Acts 21:40, 22:2, and 26:14. To complicate matters the standard New Testament

---

468. Mishnah, *Megillah* 4:4,6,10; Mishnah, *Sotah* 7:2.

469. Witherington III, Ben. “Almost Thou Persuadest Me...” 67.

470. Daniel, Chronicles, Nehemiah, Ezra, Malachi, Haggai, Zechariah, Ezekiel.

Greek lexicon also endorses the same error.<sup>471</sup> Yet Aramaic was the language spoken by Jesus in daily life and His Aramaic words are recorded in Mark 5:41 and 15:34. The leading Pharisees spoke only Hebrew as not to be associated with the common people.<sup>472</sup> Today Aramaic remains the language taught and spoken in religious schools in Armenia.<sup>473</sup> Since Aramaic and Hebrew are sister languages, the differences are small. For example, the English name of *Jesus, son of Joseph* in Aramaic is *Yeshua bar Yosef* while in Hebrew it is *Yeshua ben Yosef*. Both mean Yeshua, son of Joseph, or Jesus, son of Joseph. In both languages, the letter “J” becomes a “Y.”<sup>474</sup>

While all languages change slowly over the centuries, some change rapidly as the culture changes. In the lands of the ancient Assyrians and Babylonians, there had been few changes until the twentieth century. After studying the languages in the region, some Bible translators have concluded that a dialect known today as “Aramaic M-South” is the closest form of Aramaic commonly spoken in the days of Jesus.<sup>475</sup>

In Babylon, the Jews spoke Aramaic. It had been the *lingua franca*, or language of commerce, throughout the Persian Empire since the sixth century (B.C.) and when they returned home to Judaea, they naturally spoke it along with Hebrew. But with the advancement of the Greek culture, orthodox Jews in Israel rejected the Greek language because they did not want their children to be absorbed into Hellenism. This was in stark contrast to those living in Alexandria, Egypt, where Greek became so common that the Scriptures were translated into Greek<sup>476</sup> so the youth could read it.

When Antiochus IV Epiphanes came to power in the third century B.C., Greek became the language of all legal and political matters, although Aramaic remained in common use. Classical Greek had died out and was replaced with *koine* Greek – the language of the common people. This remained unchanged in the days of Jesus, although Latin was gaining a foothold. By the first century, the Greek language belted the Mediterranean Sea, which permitted the gospel to be preached effectively to many people groups, nearly all of whom spoke the same language. A

---

471. Bauer, Arndt, and Gengrich, *A Greek Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 213.

472. Bailey, *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes*. 292.

473. An excellent resource for further biblical study is Ethelbert W. Bullinger’s book titled *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*. (Grand Rapids: Baker. 1898, 1995). For more than a century it has been the classic resource tool for the serious Bible student.

474. <http://boards.straightdope.com/sdmb/showthread.php?t=231844> Retrieved January 14, 2015.

475. Moore, “New Life for Ancient Aramaic.” 15. This publication is produced by The Seed Company, a Bible Translation ministry located in Santa Ana, California. For more information, see [www.theseedcompany.org](http://www.theseedcompany.org).

476. See “Septuagint” in 02.02.25.

study published in 1992 revealed that 40 percent of pre-A.D. 70 burial inscriptions are in Greek.<sup>477</sup> Clearly the language was well established. The fact that the Greek language became accepted over a massive area, was beneficial not only for the spread of the gospel, but also for the Romans. Their empire was so massive that it had hundreds of people groups with many languages and dialects. Alexander the Great reduced those languages to twelve.

When the Maccabean Revolt brought victory in the early second century B.C., there was a revival of Hebrew as evidenced on coins, ostraca,<sup>478</sup> and papyrus fragments, all of which have Hebrew writing. The Dead Sea Scrolls, various inscriptions, and other fragments written by the orthodox Jews are seldom found to be in Aramaic, Greek, or Latin, but were written in Hebrew. At Masada, Hebrew writings were found on fourteen scrolls, 4,000 coins, and 700 ostraca.<sup>479</sup> Archaeological discoveries show that Hebrew writings were more common than Aramaic by a ratio of nine to one.<sup>480</sup>

The land of the Jews was literally a little enclave of a subculture surrounded by Hellenistic peoples. Even within its borders, Samaria and the Decapolis city of Beit Shean (also known as Scythopolis), were two Hellenistic strongholds. Consequently, the Jewish cultural island was constantly inundated with Greek philosophies, religion, and temptations. There is no question then that the Jewish people were very familiar with the Greek ways of life and thinking.<sup>481</sup> It is generally accepted that Jesus read from a Hebrew scroll, spoke to the crowds in Aramaic, and conversed with the Roman authorities in Aramaic or Greek. While Latin was the official language of Rome, it was seldom used in Israel. The Empire was so enormous that it had 12 language groups.

The introduction and use of *koine* Greek was an important development in preparing the world for the gospel.<sup>482</sup> Of all the ancient languages, this was the best medium for the accurate expression of ideas. The vocabulary is clearly extensive in philosophical, ethical, and religious concepts. Hebrew is a pictorial language using phrases such as “He is my rock,” or “cleft of a

---

477. Cited by Scott, Jr. *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*. 117 n9.

478. An ostraca is a pottery fragment that was used as a writing surface or material, since papyri and parchment were extremely expensive. See “ostraca” in Appendix 26 for more details. An example is the King David Fragment at 03.02.01.A

479. See Appendix 26.

480. Bivin and Blizzard, *Understanding the Difficult Words*. 37.

481. Schurer, *The History of the Jewish People*. 2:75-79.

482. See also 03.05.12 “Summary Influence of ‘Hellenistic Reform’ (331 – 63 B.C.) that shaped Jewish life in the First Century.”

rock,” whereas Greek is more descriptive of human emotions and virtues. Jesus used verbal pictures of objects, plants, animals, and most of all, people, in teachable moments to convey His message of the Kingdom of God.<sup>483</sup> Furthermore, and so importantly, He repeatedly connected these to various Old Testament passages.<sup>484</sup>

Were it not for the advent of Hellenism, the New Testament would not have been written in the Greek which brought a new realm of words to express emotions and thought.<sup>485</sup> Hebrew is not a language that is rich with adjectives.<sup>486</sup> Therefore, a phrase might read, “a son of quarrels,” rather than “a quarrelsome man.” Another example is to say that he was a “son of God” rather than saying he was a “godly man.” The expressions of “Son of Man” and “Son of God,” express the deity of Jesus,<sup>487</sup> but the former title also asserts His humanity.<sup>488</sup> The beauty of the Greek language is that it introduced adjectives that enriched the meaning and understanding of the New Covenant. Yet it was Jesus Himself who introduced at least one change – He introduced the term *Abba*<sup>489</sup> (means *Daddy*, 5)<sup>490</sup> in the Lord’s Prayer, as this revealed that prayers were welcomed in any language.<sup>491</sup> He revealed to the Jewish people that Hebrew was no longer the exclusive “language of God.”<sup>492</sup>

It is clear that whatever New Testament books were written in Hebrew – namely Matthew and possibly Hebrews – these were almost immediately translated into Greek. While some early Church fathers have stated that two books were written in Hebrew, nearly all papyrus fragments and scrolls discovered are in Greek. The New Testament was primarily written in Greek for the benefit of the Gentiles and Jews living in foreign countries. The strong isolationists, who desired to keep the Hebrew language and culture separate, did not prevent the gospel from quickly spreading throughout the Roman Empire. However, because of the Second Revolt (A.D. 132-35), the Hebrew language had nearly disappeared, with the exception of use in the synagogues

---

483. Mould, *Essentials of Bible History*. 306-08.

484. Horne, *Jesus the Teacher*. 77, 83, 93.

485. Mantey, “New Testament Backgrounds.” 3:3-14.

486. Mould, *Essentials of Bible History*. 306-08.

487. Jn. 3:13; 5:27; 6:27; cf. Mt.26:63-64; Tenney, *The Gospel of John*. 105.

488. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 1:312.

489. While the term *abba* has often been defined as a child’s expression of *daddy*, language scholar James Barr has suggested that *abba* was a solemn adult address to *father*. See Pilch, *The Cultural Dictionary of the Bible*. 2.

490. Vine, “Abba.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:1.

491. Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus*. 14-16.

492. Bailey, *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes*. 95. The term *Abba* appears in Mk. 14:36; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6.

and *yeshivas* (seminaries). It would lie dormant for nearly seventeen centuries before being revived in a modified form in modern Israel.<sup>493</sup>

**02.03.09 Messianic Expectations.** There was an intense expectation throughout the ancient world that a messiah would come at any moment and bring political freedom.<sup>494</sup> People had a wide variety of opinions of the messiah, like who he would be, and what he would do. However, since he was expected to come as a political leader who would overthrow the Romans and usher in an era of peace and prosperity, he was not seen as any kind of a divine figure. Hence, in this context, messiah is spelled with a lower case “m” whereas the divine Jesus is referred to as the “Messiah.”

The Jews had great difficulty understanding the prophecies of some of their prophets since they appeared to be in conflict. Most notable were those prophecies that described the messiah both as a suffering servant, and as a victorious king. In their thinking, a victorious king would not be one who suffered. Note, for example, the differences between Daniel 7:13-14 and Zechariah 9:9-10.

**<sup>13</sup> I continued watching in the night visions,**

**and I saw One like a son of man  
coming with the clouds of heaven.  
He approached the Ancient of Days  
and was escorted before Him.**

**<sup>14</sup> He was given authority to rule,  
and glory, and a kingdom;  
so that those of every people,  
nation, and the Law  
should serve Him.  
His dominion is an everlasting dominion  
that will not pass away,  
and His kingdom is one  
that will not be destroyed.**

---

493. Grintz, “Hebrew as the Spoken and Written Language in the Last Days of the Second Temple.” 47.

494. See 12.03.01.Q1 “What ‘Messianic problems’ did the Jewish leaders have with Jesus?” and 12.03.01.A “Chart of Key Points of the Messianic Problems.” See also 02.03.09 “Messianic Expectations”; 05.04.02.Q1 “What were the Jewish expectations of the Messiah?” and Appendix 25: “False Prophets, Rebels, Significant Events, and Rebellions that Impacted the First Century Jewish World.”

**Daniel 7:13-14**

**<sup>9</sup> Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!  
 Shout in triumph, Daughter Jerusalem!  
 Look, your King is coming to you;  
 He is righteous and victorious,  
 humble and riding on a donkey,  
 on a colt, the foal of a donkey.  
<sup>10</sup> I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim  
 and the horse from Jerusalem.  
 The bow of war will be removed,  
 and He will proclaim peace to the nations.  
 His dominion will extend from sea to sea,  
 from the Euphrates River  
 to the ends of the earth.**

**Zechariah 9:9-10**

The first part of each passage is especially challenging. In Daniel 7:13, the messianic figure comes with clouds of heaven while the counterpart in Zechariah 9:9 portrays him riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. Each of these sections is clearly about a leader who would have a dynamic effect upon the people. While Christians today have the advantage of recognizing the differences between the first and second comings of Christ, the first century Jews were unaware of God's divine plan and, therefore, could not explain the apparent biblical difficulties.

Adding to the mystery, Zechariah 12:10, describes the messiah as one who would suffer. In their thinking, one who would be victorious over all of Judaea's enemies could not be made to endure agony. Therefore, they apparently ignored passages such as:

**And I will pour out on the house of David  
 and the inhabitants of Jerusalem  
 a spirit of grace and supplication.**

**They will look on me,  
 the one they have pierced,  
 and they will mourn for him  
 as one mourns for an only child,  
 and grieve bitterly for him  
 as one grieves for a firstborn.**



**Zechariah 12:10 NIV (1984)**

Other challenging passages in the Hebrew Bible are found in the book of Psalms and pertain to the Gentiles coming to God (Ps. 22:27ff; 36:7ff et. al). The common first century belief was that because the Gentiles had sinned for so many centuries, they would never come to God nor would God want them. This belief was enhanced by the repeated statement that God said that the Jews were “His Chosen People.” Hence, there was no need for their salvation (they already were saved), and the Gentiles, not being among the Chosen People were therefore forever damned. Little wonder then, that the temple area known as the Court of the Gentiles was turned into a market place. Yet, as will be shown later, some Gentiles did convert to the Jewish faith.

These passages illustrate the messianic problems with which the Jews were grappling. In essence, they shut their eyes to those writings that predicted the sufferings of the Messiah. The disciples had difficulty believing Jesus would suffer on the cross and die. The Essenes, on the other hand, thought they resolved the problem by teaching that there would be two messiahs ruling together (see 02.01.06).

The rise of Antiochus IV Epiphanes and his Hitler-like tortures in the early second century B.C., led to a new form of literature known as apocalyptic writings. There was considerable debate in the Jewish communities as to whether these books were genuinely divinely inspired or simply creative penmanship. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that there were various opinions among the common people. While scholars still debate what various people groups believed, what is known is that nobody expected a messiah like Jesus. Apocalyptic writers created various themes and stories of the future events of the victorious messiah but nearly all of them rejected the concept of a suffering messiah. The victorious messiah concept was popular during times of oppression; first by the Greeks, then their own leaders, followed by the Romans. Most of the expectations follow these lines of thought even though there were about as many variations as there were Jews:

1. According to the *Apocalypse of Baruch* 48:41, the people would realize the coming of the Messiah by the calamities that would fall upon humanity such as wars and famines. Even nature would experience cataclysmic upheavals. Today orthodox Jews call this time the “Time of Jacob’s Troubles” and Christians call it the “Tribulation.”
2. The Messiah could not come to the world unannounced; therefore, he will send Elijah who will announce His arrival. According to a second century B.C. Jewish writer by the name of Jesus ben Sirach,<sup>495</sup>

---

495. See Metzger, *The Apocrypha of the Old Testament*. 193.

**You who were taken up in a whirlwind of fire,  
in a chariot with fine horses of fire;  
you who are ready at the appointed time, it is written  
to calm the wrath of God before it breaks out in fury,  
to turn the heart of the father to the son,  
and restore the tribes of Jacob.**

***Ben Sirach 48:9-10***<sup>496</sup>

3. The Jews attempted to connect Elijah with the coming judgments, resurrection, and the end of the world. When he would come, he would settle the major controversies of the first century, including

- a. Settle family issues and bring estranged families together.
- b. Settle issues of what is clean and unclean – a major issue of contention between various religious sects.
- c. Settle property disputes.
- d. Announce the coming of the messiah (small “m” because they did not know that the Messiah would be Deity)<sup>497</sup>

4. The messiah would provoke a coalition of evil men whose identities remain unclear. Apocalyptic writers mentioned them in *Enoch* 90; and the *Apocalypse of Baruch* 40. While they simply described these as evil, Christians identified them as those who would be a part of the Antichrist.

5. In the final battle between good and evil, those who are evil will be destroyed. However, the identity of the destroyer is somewhat unclear. Some Jews felt it would be God Himself according to a book known as the *Assumption of Moses* (10:7)<sup>498</sup> while a majority felt it would be the Messiah as found in the *Apocalypse of Baruch* (39:7ff).<sup>499</sup>

---

496. *Ben Sirach* and *Tobit* belong to a classification of extra-biblical books known as the Apocrypha. These two literary works reflect the opinions of many Jewish people. See 02.02.03 “Apocrypha” for more information. The reader is reminded that quotations from non-biblical sources are not to be understood as being of equal authority with the biblical narratives. See 01.02.04.

497. Barclay, “John.” 1:78.

498. The *Assumption of Moses* is a/k/a the *Testament of Moses*. Some scholars believe this book could have been written during the lifetime of Jesus. However, it appears to be of little academic value. Silver, *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel*. Boston: Beacon Hill. 7.

6. Once the wicked would be destroyed, the messiah would establish his messianic kingdom and rule from Jerusalem. This would necessitate that all forms of evil, idols, and wickedness be purged from the city, while instituting pure worship according to the Torah. This new era would be considered the Kingdom of God. The nation would enjoy peace, joy, prosperity, and a close relationship with God.

7. The messianic age would not be eternal, but endure for a thousand years after which there would be another transformation.

8. At the end of the millennium, those who had died would be raised from the grave and would in fact be restored to their physical bodies.

9. The opinions of the final judgment have a wider spectrum. Some believed that the wicked would be destroyed at this point and Yahweh Himself would be the judge, while others believed it would be the Son of Man who in reality was seen as an angel of the Lord (*Enoch* 69:27). Scholars disagree as to when the book of *Enoch* was written. Most believe that the earliest part was written about 300 B.C. but the chapters 37-71 were written in the first century B.C., or possibly in the Christian era. Critics believe that any resemblance to Christian theology might be the result of Christian interpolation. Concerning the final judgment, the wicked will be thrown into Gehenna (hell) while the righteous will spend eternity with our Lord in heaven.

10. The Essenes hardly agreed with anyone else. They had great difficulty reconciling the prophetic passage of the suffering servant with those of the victorious king. They questioned how a suffering servant could be a victorious king. Therefore, they concluded there would have to be two messiahs (see 02.01.06).

11. In addition to the books mentioned above that made mention or an allusion to a messiah, are the following:<sup>500</sup>

a. Psalms of Solomon (40-30 B.C.)

b. Tobit (3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.)

---

499. These books should not be considered equal to the Bible, but are listed because some first century Jewish people considered them important.

500. Silver, *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel*. Boston: Beacon Hill. 5. See also 02.02.01.V for more information on this subject.

c. Wisdom of Solomon (1<sup>st</sup> century B.C.)

d. Jubilees (2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.)

The expectations were at a fever pitch. Furthermore, the Jews remembered very well the overwhelming victories God had given them during the Maccabean Revolt. The Essenes and the Zealots believed, as did many others that the Messiah would be like a glorified Judas Maccabee and bring a greater victory over Roman domination and oppression.

To the Pharisees, the messiah would be one who would institute the holiness, purity, and truthfulness of the Torah to all the Jewish people, and purge the effects of Hellenism from the culture. The Sadducees were the only ones who failed to believe in the coming of a messiah, and if there was one coming, they feared he would take control of the temple, which was the source of their power and wealth. The Romans had distrust for anyone who called himself a messiah. The Jews seemed to produce a messiah every ten or fifteen years, much to the dismay of the Sadducees and Romans. Into this caldron of severe social tensions and messianic expectations, Jesus came to bring life and hope to all humanity. Little wonder then, that Jesus was careful to articulate His identity. All three groups had thoughts about a messiah, but had not believed their messiah would be God in human form, which is why a lower case “m” is used for this term.

Most Jewish peasants were downtrodden, depressed, enslaved, and discouraged with the corrupt religious leadership and merciless Romans. Therefore, hope and interest skyrocketed when Jesus began doing miracles. He was surrounded by competing religious groups such as the Pharisees, the Essenes, the Schools of Hillel and Shammai, the Sadducees, and the unknown community/ies that produced the Pseudepigrapha books such as 4 *Esdras*, *Baruch*, and the *Psalms of Solomon*.<sup>501</sup> In keeping with Jewish traditions, each group had a keen interest in solidarity and distinctiveness. Each promoted its own agenda of righteousness as superior to other groups and shunned any challenges for change.<sup>502</sup> But none could speak or perform miracles as Jesus did.

The messianic expectations among Jews and Gentiles were at a fever pitch in the early first century. Men would spend their evenings in the synagogue debating various subjects such as this messianic problem. The Apostle Paul said that in the fullness of time Jesus came to this earth (Gal. 4:4). If anything, his words were an understatement.

Among the Zealots, who were nationalistic, there was an opinion that during the war with the Romans, their messiah would come and save them from final destruction. He would then destroy

---

501. The *Psalms* were written between the year 40-30 BC, although some scholars place the time period between 60 and 30 B.C. See Cosby, *Interpreting Biblical Literature*. 285. It may also have been used as liturgy according to Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. 104.

502. Charry, *By the Renewing*. 61.

the Gentile enemies and rule the entire world. This opinion was summed up by Josephus as it was the prevailing opinion of the Zealots during the First Revolt that began in A.D. 66. The historian said,

**But now, what did most elevate them in undertaking this war, was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writings, how, “about that time, one of their country should become governor of the habitable earth.”**

**Josephus, *Wars* 6.5.4 (312)**

Finally, it has often been said as a point of humor that if you want three or four opinions on something, ask a Jew. There were many Jewish sects in ancient Israel and not all would have agreed with the above 10-point list. But a vast majority would have agreed with the following expectations:

1. The messiah will be a warrior king who will destroy the Romans
2. The messiah will come for all Jews.
3. The messiah will come only for the Jews.

Those who failed to accept Jesus as their Messiah, such as Judas Iscariot, did so essentially for those three reasons.

**02.03.10 Occupations and Trades.** While most of the Jewish people were involved in agriculture, some were active in other endeavors. Residents along the Sea of Galilee were involved in fishing or in salting fish for the caravans that frequently passed through the region. By the first century, there were so many various occupations that in major cities like Jerusalem, labor guilds were formed.<sup>503</sup>

These guilds often formed their own synagogues. Synagogues were sometimes a form of labor unions. For example, a synagogue may have been started by a group of butchers, and the wool dealers belonged to another synagogue, etc.<sup>504</sup> An example of this is found in Acts 6:9 where the Libertines had their own synagogue. Some sources say there were 460 synagogues in Jerusalem; others say the number was 480.<sup>505</sup> Both could have been right, depending when the counts were

---

503. For further study on commerce, labor, trades, and occupations, see Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*.

504. Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 1:80.

505. Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 1:78-79; Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 1:185.

made. However, some scholars believe, considering the size of Jerusalem, that both figures are exaggerated. Nonetheless, there were many schools that were frequently run by a single rabbi, and when he died, the school either closed or continued by one of his students. Craftsmen had their shops along the main street of the city, that the Romans called the *Cardo Maximus*. Some streets were known for their wool merchants, others for butchers, others for wood workers, etc.<sup>506</sup> Residents would go to the street and barter for their goods. Some scholars believe that Joseph and Jesus, who were carpenters, sold their wooden goods along the *Cardo Maximus* in Sepphoris, a Greek city that was only an hour's walk from Nazareth.

The ancient Jews were so highly productive, that many of their products were shipped overseas, especially wine, olive oil and wheat. The ancient Phoenicians may have originated merchant trade on the Mediterranean Sea, but King David and his son Solomon expanded it. Not only did they have merchant trading ships, but also caravans that traveled to distant lands to buy and sell various goods. In the Inter-Testamental Period, the Greeks dominated the international trade of the Middle East. However, after the Maccabean Revolt, Greek shipping gave way to Hasmonean rulers who proudly erected a ship's mast on their monuments. In later years, when the Romans conquered the Jewish state, they boasted in their triumph that they vanquished "Judea Navalis" – *Juda, the sea-power*.<sup>507</sup> One of the reasons Herod the Great built an artificial seaport at Caesarea Maritima, was to increase international trade.

**02.03.11 Religious Institutions.** The religious faith of the Jewish people has always been anchored to a number of covenants, such as the Abrahamic Covenant, Davidic Covenant, and others. In essence, the covenants stated that if they obeyed God, He would bless them and if they disobeyed Him, they would be punished.<sup>508</sup> After several generations of disobedience, judgment fell – and the defeat and deportation to Babylon had been a crisis for the Jews. To the Hebraic mind, the destruction of the temple was paramount to the destruction of God. In fact, the destruction of a temple was associated with the defeat of a deity in all ancient Middle East cultures. Now the Jews had no place to worship or to offer sacrifices. (It was during this captivity, known as the "Exilic Period," that scholars believe the synagogue developed as a place for worship, communal support, and family activities.)<sup>509</sup> For years it has been the common

506. Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 1:76.

507. Golub, *In the Days*. 142.

508. For a study of Jewish covenants from a messianic Jewish perspective, see Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*.

509. See 03.02.10 "587 – 516 B.C. Exilic Period" for further information.

opinion that when the Jews gathered in synagogues to worship, they faced Jerusalem in a similar manner that Muslims face Mecca today.<sup>510</sup>

However, an archaeological survey of many of the 200 synagogue ruins revealed that pre-destruction synagogues *did not* face Jerusalem. Only after the temple destruction were synagogues built facing the Holy City.<sup>511</sup>

It has been generally said that to establish a new synagogue, ten men were needed. Furthermore, this is well attested in Jewish writings. However, those writings are from the fifth century and later. Furthermore, it has generally been said that men and women were separated in the synagogue at the time of Jesus. This too is found in Jewish writings dated from the fifth century and later.<sup>512</sup> There is, in fact, no archaeological or literary proof that women were separated from men *until* the 500s in the Common Era. In fact, there is evidence that women could make up the ten persons needed to establish a new synagogue, and most likely did so in areas such as the District of Galilee.<sup>513</sup> However, there were differences in various communities, and Jerusalem may not have permitted women to teach, speak, or be part of the organization of a new synagogue. No archaeological evidence has been found, such as a women's balcony, in synagogue ruins that would suggest separation between men and women.<sup>514</sup> See 02.03.04 "Education" concerning women in the synagogue, as this was where learning for boys and girls took place.

In the days of Jesus, the synagogue, not the temple, was the center of life in the local village and in the cities. The synagogue was more of a teaching institution than a worship institution. In fact, the Hebrew word for synagogue is *beit-knesset* or *beyt-knesset*, meaning *house of gathering*.<sup>515</sup> Instruction was given by anyone who was willing and able to do so, including visitors. It was not restricted to a local rabbi, although he served as an overseer. Synagogues housed a school and at times living quarters for visitors. It was here that men would gather to discuss various points of the Torah in endless intellectual debates, arguing how a particular law should be applied in every possible situation. It was truly a community center and, for this

---

510. Freeman, *The New Manners and Customs*. 406; Metzger, *New Testament*. 56-60.

511. For further study on pre- and post-destruction synagogues, see Hachlili, Rachel. "Synagogues: Before and After the Roman Destruction of the Temple." *Biblical Archaeology Review*. 41:3 (May/June 2015) 30-38, 65.

512. Safrai, Shmuel. "The Place of Women in First-Century Synagogues," *Jerusalem Perspective*. 40 (1993): 3-6, 14; See also Spangler and Tverberg, *Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus*. 12.

513. Source: Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 7, Session 1.

514. See articles in the Sept-Oct., 2000 of *Biblical Archaeology Review* issue concerning this topic (no evidence for a separate women's section).

515. Mills and Michael, *Messiah and His Hebrew Alphabet*. 7.

reason, the Jews were best described as the people of the Torah, or people of the synagogue. Religion was their essence.<sup>516</sup>

The chief “operating officer,” to use a modern term, of the synagogue was the ruler (Heb. *Chazzan*).<sup>517</sup> His responsibilities included the following:

1. He was responsible for the safekeeping of the sacred scrolls of Scripture. He brought a scroll out in the beginning of the service and returned it in the storage “ark” at the end of the service.
2. He was the custodian in charge of keeping the synagogue clean.
3. He blew the silver trumpet three times to announce the moment the Sabbath had begun.
4. He was responsible for the education of the children in the community.
5. He was the distributor of alms
6. He was not an ordained rabbi or the local preacher.<sup>518</sup>

Since the synagogues did not have professional ministers, Jesus could walk into any synagogue, and as an honored visitor, begin preaching. This was especially true after He performed some miracles and people wanted to hear His message.

References to a synagogue are found in the second century (B.C.) book of *3 Maccabees* (7:20), the New Testament, and in the works of Josephus.<sup>519</sup> As to the Old Testament, a passage in Psalm 74:8, which was written late in the post-exilic period, appears to refer to places of worship other than the temple, and may have been a reference to synagogues.

The significance of the temple lies in the fact that it was the only place where a priest, on behalf of the Jewish people, could offer sacrifices to God. Sacrifices were most often offered for the forgiveness of sin and for fellowship with God. Jewish people living in the land were expected to travel to Jerusalem three times a year for the observance of the biblical festivals. But those who lived in foreign lands were expected to journey to the Holy City only once in their lifetime.

---

516. Guignebert, *The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus*. 75-77.

517. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 276, 308-09.

518. Barclay, “Mark.” 30-31.

519. La Sor and Eskenazi, “Synagogue.” 4:680; Freeman, *The New Manners and Customs*. 405-06.



Visiting Jerusalem had become a religious rite and was accompanied with expectations and excitement.

However, at the time of Jesus, the temple priesthood had become steeped in corruption, in sharp contrast to the ideal temple worship described in Ezekiel 40-48. The Sadducean High Priest was a Roman appointee who controlled all the worship activities. He used his religious authority to attain personal wealth. For this reason, some rabbis and the Essenes dissociated themselves from the established religious order. They were looking for a political-messiah who would deliver them from the Roman tyranny and temple corruption so as to establish another temple.

The Inter-Testamental writings give ample evidence of temple corruption.<sup>520</sup> Furthermore, it was believed that the earthly temple was a copy of the dwelling place of God in heaven.<sup>521</sup> Jesus arrived at a time when the temple was in a moral and spiritual free-fall and the people were praying for a divine intervention.<sup>522</sup> The temple was a building of such paramount beauty and significance that there are at least nine ancient sources that give physical descriptions of the building.<sup>523</sup> Yet its exterior beauty was a facade covering internal corruption. Twice Jesus cleansed the edifice and caused mayhem for the controlling Sadducees.

The Sanhedrin was the Jewish Supreme Court consisting of 70 members plus its president, who at the time of Jesus was Caiaphas. The court was comprised of 24 Sadducees, 24 Pharisees, and 22 Scribes, plus the president, who also functioned as the temple High Priest.<sup>524</sup>

Prior to Herod the Great, the Court's authority was over the three provinces of Galilee, Perea, and Judea, but the tyrannical king limited its power to Jerusalem and Judea. Hence, Jesus was able to minister in Galilee and Perea without concern of an arrest by the Sanhedrin, although they did send spies. Other members of the court were the elders, the tribal and family representatives of lay aristocracy, as well as the scribes who were the lawyers of religious law.<sup>525</sup>

---

520. See *Tobit* 14:5; *1 Enoch* 90:28ff; *Jubilee* 1:15-17, 26-29, as well as in the Dead Sea Scroll: 11QTemple 29:8-10.

521. This belief was written in Exodus 25:9; Revelation 11:19; 14:17; 15:5; and the *Testament of Levi* 5:1.

522. Westerholm, "Temple." 4:768.

523. The nine ancient sources that record information concerning the temple building and/or its religious functions are (1) Josephus, *Wars*. 5.5.1 - 5.7; (2) Josephus, *Antiquities*. 15.11.1 - 11.7; (3) Mishnah, *Middoth* 1 - 4; (4) From the Dead Sea Scrolls a description is found in The Temple. See Yadin, Y. ed. *Megillath Hammiqdash* Jerusalem: I E S, Hebrew University, 1977. 1:145-214; and pages 153, 159, 192, 195; (5) Strabo, *Geographyy* vii. 281; 16.28-40; cf 16.2.34; (6) Tacitus, *History*. 4.4; (7) Dio Casius, *History of Rome* 37.15-17; 49.22; 66.4-12; (8) Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*. 5.14; and (9) Polybius, *The Histories of Polybius*. 16.4.

524. Thompson, "Sanhedrin." 3:1390.

525. Metzger, *New Testament*. 52.

However, the Jews were not the only people living in their Promised Land. They had plenty of company, including

1. Greeks who had lived there for centuries, mostly from the Dead Sea northward and toward the Mediterranean Sea.
2. Some Idumeans, (in later years became part of the Arab world) lived in the Negev desert region, south of the Dead Sea.

Among the Romans, Greeks and Idumeans there were a wide variety of religions, and all were polytheistic. The Romans were pagan idol worshippers who took the gods of the Greeks and gave them Roman names. Accompanying the assortment of false gods were lascivious religious rituals and customs, temple prostitution, drunkenness and other vices that appealed to many and were common across the empire. Similar to the Greeks, the Romans worshipped mythological figures who freely gave in to carnal desires—deceiving, stealing, getting drunk and committing fornication, adultery, even rape! They chose to depict their heroes and gods in the nude which they deemed as beautiful, but to the Jews this was an affront and incredibly shameful.

The Roman/Greeks in the region of Caesarea Philippi, now known as Banias, worshiped the half man-half goat deity of Pan. There were religious philosophies rooted in Platonism, such as Epicureanism, Stoicism, Cynicism, and Skepticism. The Persian religion known as Zoroastrianism was growing in popularity and had some parallels with Judaism, since part of it was founded upon Judaism. Astrology and a wide variety of mystery religions were commonplace throughout the Holy Land. Many of these belief systems were introduced during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and were never completely eradicated after the Maccabean Revolt. Therefore, their influence continued in the lives of Jewish people in the days of Jesus.<sup>526</sup> The legalism of the Pharisees was an attempt to curtail the Greco-Roman influence upon the Jewish people.

The Idumeans believed in a variety of gods, although each tribe had its own supreme deity.<sup>527</sup> The most common one was Babylon's ancient moon god of war, later known as Allah. Judaea was known for its hot springs that many believed had healing qualities.<sup>528</sup> This in turn was attractive to many pagans who were suffering from various ailments. Therefore, by the time Jesus began His ministry, He had an audience waiting for Him.

---

526. Mould, *Essentials of Bible History*. 563-70; Wheaton, "Antiochus." 1:71-72.

527. Thompson, "Idumea." 2:682.

528. Hot springs were located primarily along the eastern and western sides of the Jordan River Valley. Hammat-Tiberias (1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century), along the western side of the Sea of Galilee was a well-known hot spring. Others were on the eastern side of the river.

While discussing the religious institutions, it is also important to briefly review the relationships between various religious sects. While this is discussed with each individual sect, this may be a good place to illustrate relationships. The high priest and Sanhedrin played a significant role in Israel because the people had no king, but were under foreign domination. The Sadducees were few in number but had the full support of the Roman overlords, while the Pharisees were more numerous and had the support of the common people. There were not only conflicts between these two religious groups, but also animosity between the subgroups within each party. So many righteous Levites, scribes, and priests were so frustrated with the corrupt religious establishment, that Josephus said that when the revolt began in A.D. 66, they joined the Zealots and fought against the religious aristocrats as well as the Romans. There were three priests who served as commanders in Galilee region<sup>529</sup> and four in Jericho,<sup>530</sup> just to name a few.

A chief priest was in charge of each of the 24 courses that ministered in the temple on a rotating schedule throughout the year. Since many priests belonged to the Pharisees, it is generally assumed that the chief priests did likewise. However, according to Josephus, there were about 6,000 men who belonged to the Pharisees, but there were about 24,000 or more priests. Obviously not all belonged to this religious sect, but most followed the teachings of the Pharisees to one degree or another, as there were several sects within the Pharisees. To understand the role various individuals had within the temple, a brief listing of the temple hierarchy is presented below.<sup>531</sup>

1. High priest<sup>532</sup>
2. Captain of the temple (*sagan*)<sup>533</sup>
3. Director of the weekly course (*ros-ha-mismar*)
4. Director of the daily course (*ros bet ab*)

---

529. Josephus, *Wars* 2 (562).

530. Josephus, *Vita* 29.

531. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 160. Jeremias notes that not all Jewish sources agree on the details of this hierarchy.

532. Whenever the term “high priest” is written in the plural form, it refers to the high priest in office as well as those who previously held the office. Mishnah, *Hor.*3.4.

533. Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.6.2 (131); Acts. 4:1; 5:24, 26. This person had oversight of all temple activities and, being the captain of the temple police, he had the power to arrest. At the time of the crucifixion, he was the liaison between Caiaphas, the chief priests, and all others involved in the process.

5. Temple overseer (*'ammalkal*)
6. Treasurer (*gizbar*)
7. Chief priests (*ha kohen*)
8. Ordinary priests (*kohen hedyot*)<sup>534</sup>
9. Levites

The scribes, elders and Pharisees, were not on the official temple staff although many worked there. While the chief priests were very influential, there were four individuals above them controlled by the high priest, who at the time of Jesus was Caiaphas. Prior to the rule of Herod the Great, the high priest would not be placed in his position unless he first served as the captain of the temple. But from the years 37 B.C. to the destruction of the temple, all high priests were appointed by a local Roman ruler. In the 108 year span from 37 B.C. to A.D. 70,<sup>535</sup> there were twenty-eight high priests.<sup>536</sup>

Therefore, the reign of Caiaphas from A.D. 18-36 was incredibly long.<sup>537</sup> Yet these frequent changes reflect the change of appointments by various governors who sold the office of high priest to the highest and most loyal bidder. During this century-long period there were four priestly families that competed against each other for the envied position. Each had complete control of temple proceedings at one time or another according to the Talmud, which is briefly confirmed in Acts 4:5-6. The families are as follows:

1. The family of Boethus had eight high priests. This influential family from Egypt became so powerful that years later, the Sadducees were at times referred to as the "Boethuseans."<sup>538</sup> The first member of this clan was Simon, the father-in-law of Herod

---

534. These priests were members of the twenty-four courses who ministered in the temple for one week twice a year, plus at the three major festivals; Deut. 16:16; Ex. 23:14-17; 34:20, 23-24.

535. In the study of history, there was no year zero. The modern Julian calendar ends the B.C. era with December 31, 1 B.C. and the A.D. era begins with January 1, A.D. 1. The time from December 31, 1 BC to January 1 A.D. 1, is one day, not one year.

536. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 190, 93.

537. See Appendix 1. Jeremiah argues that Caiaphas was the high priest until the year 37, because according to Josephus, *Antiquities* 18 (89). Vitellius, the governor of Syria, sent Pilate to Rome to account for his actions. But Pilate did not arrive until March, 37, after the death of Tiberias. See Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 195 n153.

538. Tosephta, *Sukkah* 3.1; *Yom.* 1.8; 1.181; Babylonian Talmud, *Sukkah* 43b.

the Great.<sup>539</sup> Therefore, the relationship of the chief priests and government dictator was well-established from the beginning of Herod's reign, and continued for more than a century.

2. The family of Annas had eight high priests, the most famous of which is, of course, his son-in-law, Caiaphas.<sup>540</sup>

3. The family of Phiabi had three high priests

4. The family of Kamithos had three high priests according to Josephus, but the Talmud reports seven. In order to keep the family in power and wealth, this family eventually became related to the Boethus family through marriage.

As if the Sadducees were not bad enough during the life of Jesus, four powerful Pharisaic families became so powerful and corrupt, that the common lament was this:

**Woe unto me because of the house of Baithos [Boethus],  
Woe unto me for their lances [evil-speaking],**

**Woe unto me because of the house of Hanin [Annas]  
Woe unto me for their whisperings**

**Woe unto me because of the house of Qadhros [Kantheras]  
Woe unto me because of their reed pens.**

**Woe unto me because of the house of Ishmael ben Phiabi  
Woe unto me because of their fists.**

**For they are high priests and their sons are treasurers  
And their sons-in-law are temple overseers  
And their servants smite people with sticks.**

**Tosephta,<sup>541</sup> *Menahoth* 13.21<sup>542</sup>**

---

539. Josephus, *Antiquities* 19 (297).

540. Annas served from A.D. 6 to 15. See Appendix 1 and Lk. 3:2; Jn. 18:13, 24; Acts 4:6.

541. The Tosefta is a compliment to the Mishnah, written in the late second century. It obviously reflected first century life as these families were destroyed during the destruction of Jerusalem.

The internal strife among the temple staff was phenomenal before, during, and after the life of Jesus. A vast majority of priests and a number of Levites had to find employment outside of the temple to support themselves and their families. The Jewish writings identify a number of them and the occupations at which they were employed.

According to Josephus, the greed of the chief priests as well as the Sadducees was so great that they sent out armed servants to the threshing floors in order to take the priestly tithes by force,<sup>543</sup> ungodly acts of violence which were also recorded later in the Babylonian Talmud.<sup>544</sup> They even took the tithes that were given to them by the local people. As a result, some priests died of starvation because the “big men of the priesthood” took their wheat.<sup>545</sup> The Pharisaic leaders and teachers in the local synagogues were among the poor, just as were the common peasants. Local Pharisees suffered as much from their Pharisaic leaders as did nearly everyone else.<sup>546</sup> The difference between righteous godly Jewish leaders in the local synagogues and those in the temple could not have been more profound. A brief overview of the political infighting of this era leaves one to conclude that it was far superior to anything that occurs today in modern politics, especially since the temple was to be a holy sanctuary.<sup>547</sup>

Unfortunately, the aristocratic leaders who consisted of priests, chief priests, scribes, elders, and Sadducees, all had great disdain for the common people. Some priests even wore gloves as not to become “defiled” by touching common people whom they called *issah*, meaning *mixture*, as in *mixed breed of families*.<sup>548</sup> Even pure blooded Jews were degraded in this manner if they were common peasants. When a Levite or priest was ordained into office, the genealogical records were examined to see if there were any *issah*, in his ancestry going back five generations.

---

542. Quoted by Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 195-96. Bracketed inserts by Jeremias. See also Babylonian Talmud, *Pesahim* 57a. See also Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 1:344.

543. Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.8.8 (181); 20.9.2 (206).

544. Babylonian Talmud, *Pesahim* 57a.

545. Another name for these priests was “men of violence.” See Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.8.8 (181); 20.9.2 (206); Babylonian Talmud, *Pesahim* 57a; Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 98, 106-07.

546. Golub, *In the Days*. 272-73.

547. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 179-81, 190-97.

548. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 221.

## Unit 02

### Cultural Background Studies

#### Chapter 04

### Differences Between First Century Roman-Greek And Jewish Worldviews

#### **02.04.01 Introduction**

As with any capital city in ancient times and today, Jerusalem was a melting pot of many cultures. This caused a degree of constant tension for those who were faithful to their Bible and the Hellenistic Jews. Consequently, as stated previously, there were significant differences in worldviews between the European Roman-Greeks and the common Jewish people. The Romans accepted the Greek lifestyle and are often referred to as Roman-Greeks or Greco-Romans. Modern students generally do not realize the vast degree of cultural and religious differences between these groups. Understanding these differences will not only bring insight to the Scriptures but will also bring interesting reflective insights into modern Western culture. In this chapter, the brief descriptions of ten opposing philosophical and theological positions presents a foundation of the opposing worldviews that people held.

An example of a basic cultural difference is this: If an American or European asks you what you believe, you will tell him. However, if a first century Jew wanted to know what you believed, he would have followed you for a month and then told you. Now who would have the greater degree of accuracy? The answer is obvious. The first century Jew would have placed you in your cultural context. So likewise, our perspective in understanding the gospels needs to be focused on the context to perceive the full message.

#### **02.04.02 View of God**

The Romans simply accepted the Greek gods but changed the names. When a people group were defeated and brought into the empire, their gods were accepted by the Romans as a method of controlling the people. Pagan gods had all the sinful vices of humanity. While Romans gods were looked upon for guidance and wisdom, the prevailing culture really looked upon the reasoning abilities of wise men to resolve problems. The Jews were persuaded by miracles, which were signs of the continuation of God in their midst, whereas the Greeks were persuaded by logic and reason (1 Cor. 1:22). Hence, man is his own god. Emperors were frequently deemed as gods, not only among the Romans, but in many other cultures as well. Likewise,

emperors were often worshiped, which is why, for example, Herod the Great built a temple in Samaria for the sole purpose that the Samaritans could worship the Roman Emperor.<sup>549</sup>

The Jews accepted only one God as the God of the universe. It has been suggested that for this reason alone they may have suffered many centuries of persecution. Recognizing only one God, they therefore claimed that all other gods were in fact impersonators of the true God. This most certainly would upset their neighbors. The God of the Jews does not have the sinful vices of humanity, but rather, instructs humanity to be pure and holy as is He. In ancient history they were the only people who believed in a single deity, with the exception of one Egyptian pharaoh who also believed likewise – and he was hated by the local priesthood.

Finally, among the Greeks, the idea that a god might appear in human form was accepted in mythology. So when they heard that Jesus was God, they could accept this fact easier than the Jews who had great difficulty with it. This belief, coupled with the expectation of a messianic figure, explains in part, as to why Christianity exploded in Gentile nations. Some scholars have suggested that the New Testament *had to be* written in Greek for these new believers.

#### **02.04.03 Significant Writings & Truth**

The Romans found significance in the writings of Greek and Roman philosophers and poets, to whom truth was relative. This philosophy of thinking was revived in the 1960s by Anglican priest Joseph Fletcher with what is known as *Situational Ethics*. His theory was that moral Christian principles can be occasionally set aside for the better good of any situation.<sup>550</sup>

To the Jews, the Scriptures were of ultimate significance because these were the inspired Word of God given to man to teach him how to live. To the Jews, truth was not relative, but was established by the decrees of God. All their decisions were based on Scripture and its interpretation (the Oral Law) and they believed they had to live in obedience to their Scripture.

However, the Greeks and Romans could not understand how God could direct men to live. To them, the gods had the same passions, vices, and problems experienced by humanity. Consequently, the worldview and related writings between the Jewish people and their Greek and Roman neighbors were vastly different.

#### **02.04.04 Position of Mankind, View of Life**

In all ancient cultures one was born into a class system or social order in which one was expected to live out his life. To the Romans, abortion and infanticide was acceptable and elderly people were expected to end their lives peacefully so as not to burden families. On occasion a prominent

---

549. See 03.05.21.I, the temple ruins of Emperor Augustus; Kelso, "Samaria, Territory of." 5:240.

550. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Situational\\_ethics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Situational_ethics) Retrieved September 16, 2012.



figure would object to the lack of value of human life, but such individuals were rare. The prevailing Roman opinion was that human life was expendable, not sacred, and dedicated to the state.

The human body was admired and worshiped. For this reason, athletic events were performed in the nude and statues of gods and goddesses were likewise nude. Sex was not restricted to marriage, but was thought best to be unlimited. Pleasure and sensuality were considered goals to be achieved, which is why the Herodian dynasty was known for lavish and outrageous parties and celebrations. On the other hand, to insure ultimate punishment, when the Romans crucified anyone, he/she was completely nude.

To the Jews, all men were created equal and in the image of God. Therefore, human life was sacred. Those Jews who lived in slavery did so for economic reasons, but with a limit of seven years.<sup>551</sup> Abortions and infanticide were strictly forbidden and elderly people were highly respected and admired for their wisdom. In the early days of the Enlightenment, European artists painted biblical scenes of various personalities. The fact that these artistic renderings were often either nude or scantily clothed is reflective of the Greco-Roman influence in the church, and not reflective of the Jewish roots of Christianity.<sup>552</sup>

A final point on the sacredness of the human body is this: modesty in dress was stressed and nudity strictly forbidden. For example, Jewish fishermen fishing at night on the Sea of Galilee would wear only a small loin cloth to permit freedom while working the nets even though there were no women in the area. Sex was considered sacred and ordained to be only within marriage.

#### **02.04.05 Individualism vs. Community**

At the time of Moses, the cultural system of families, clans and tribes was strong. Some fifteen centuries later at the time of Christ this cultural characteristic was still strong among the Jews, but much weaker in some Gentile groups. Among the Gentile family and clans, loyalty was becoming secondary to a national identity. Gentile prayers were almost always individualistic.

The Jews, however, did not see themselves as individualistic, but rather as part of a community of believers. Jewish prayers are nearly all prayed in the first person plural such as the well-known Lord's Prayer. This was underscored when Jesus prayed His prayer of unity in the church (cf. Jn. 17:21). The strong sense of community was enforced during the Babylonian exile, when the community center was established within the synagogue system.

---

551. God hates slavery, but it was part of the human predicament, which is why He permitted slavery for a limited duration of seven years (Ex. 21:2 ff.; Deut. 15:12). In Amos 2:6 He brought judgment upon Israel for the enslavement of its own people. The way the Apostle Paul dealt with Philemon, demonstrates how God changed the slavery-based economy by changing the hearts of men.

552. The divine plan of salvation of the Old and New Testament was taught by the Hebrew prophets, as outlined in Appendix 9.

### 02.04.06 Sabbath Day Observances<sup>553</sup>

It is almost impossible for anyone who has a Western mindset to fully comprehend the importance of the Sabbath (Gk. *Sbbaton* 4521)<sup>554</sup> day and its regulations of first century Jewish life. The Sabbath day was ordained by God for His people to rest. But to *rest* was defined as ceasing from work activities so one could reconnect with God, family, and friends, and reflect upon the blessings of God in the past week.<sup>555</sup> Its origin is in Genesis 2:2, where God, when He finished creating the world and universe, rested on the seventh day. The observance of the seventh day became one of the Ten Commandments. However, that day of rest is more than what the English term implies. The day is a day to worship, as sacrifices were to be made on that day (Num. 28:9-10). Therefore, it is more than just resting and doing nothing, but one is to be actively mindful of God. For that reason, other days of worship became known as Sabbaths. The following examples are a brief summary:

1. Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:31)
2. The Festival of Trumpets (Lev. 23:24)
3. The Festival of Booths (Lev. 23:39)

In addition, in every seventh year the land was to rest and no crops were to be planted (Lev. 25). When the Jews honored the Sabbath, God blessed them. However, in the course of time they failed to do so and were taken into captivity for 70 years (2 Chron. 36:21) so the land could rest (see 02.04.06).

By the first century, life had become extremely challenging for Bible-believing Jews. The Sabbath day became a significant identity that separated them from all other cultures. Observing it was probably the most important way they stood against the encroachment of Hellenism. To understand the issues involved, it is necessary to first observe the Sabbath restrictions given by God to His prophets. There are several, beginning with four by Moses:

1. Moses mentioned the following two together: plowing and reaping (Ex. 34:21)
2. Starting a fire (Ex. 35:3)

---

553. For further study of the Sabbath regulations that were a constant subject of discussion of Jesus and the leading Pharisees, see the two sections of the *Mishnah*, titled *Shabbath* and *Erubin*. See also Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, eds., "Sabbath." *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. 747-48.

554. Vine, "Sabbath." *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:542.

555. Parry, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Talmud*. 60.

3. Gathering sticks of wood (Num. 15:32-36)
4. Jeremiah said not to bear a burden on the Sabbath (Jer. 16:19-20)
5. Amos prohibited business activities on the Sabbath (8:5) which was confirmed by Nehemiah (Neh. 10:32; 13:16-23)

While these six were identified, Jewish scholars emphasize that these were random examples of the general customary law which was expanded over time to meet the needs of the people in changing circumstances.<sup>556</sup> While the laws had a good intent, by the time of Jesus, the Sabbath restrictions were overwhelmingly burdensome. The Essenes recorded in their *Damascus Document* 28 Sabbath prohibitions<sup>557</sup> and the Pharisees identified 39 prohibited categories of work in the Oral Law.<sup>558</sup> These were beyond the understanding of the Gentiles.

The Romans and Greeks labored every day of the week. To them the concept of not working on one day in the week was considered laziness.<sup>559</sup> They could not comprehend why anyone would *not* work on a particular day of the week in order to worship a god they could not see. Therefore, observing the Sabbath Day was often a point of confrontation.<sup>560</sup> This was especially true for Jews who were economic slaves of the Romans. Early Christians found themselves in the same predicament when they refused to work on the first day of the week.

Within the world of Pharisees, there were several schools of theology, of which the two most influential were the School of Hillel and the School of Shammai. The latter held it was unlawful to comfort the sick or visit the mourner on the Sabbath, but the School of Hillel permitted it. In the case of a violation, the school of Shammai demanded physical punishment whereas the Pharisees, as strict and legalistic as they were, offered a milder punishment that was often in the form of a monetary fine.<sup>561</sup> Those who confronted Jesus on healing on the Sabbath were most likely to be followers of Shammai, rather than Hillel.

---

556. Sharvit. "The Sabbath of the Judean Desert Sect." 43.

557. Dead Sea Scroll, *Damascus Document*. 6QD 10:15-16.

558. Mishnah, *Shabbat*. 7:2.

559. See the quotation by first century Roman historian, Tacitus, in "Jews" 02.01.13, concerning his opinion of the Jewish people.

560. During the Maccabean Revolt, since the Jews refused to fight on the Sabbath, the Greeks slaughtered more than a thousand men, women, and children. Thereafter they decided to defend themselves so as not to be removed from the face of the earth (*1 Macc.* 2:31-38).

561. Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 2:106.

The leading Pharisees were passionate about observing the strict Sabbath regulations because they believed that their forefathers failed to observe the Law, as stated below 2 Chronicles 36:21. That resulted in the destruction of their temple by the Babylonians, and exile to Babylon. They based their opinion on the following prophetic words by Jeremiah and Nehemiah:

<sup>19</sup> This is what the LORD said to me, “Go and stand at the People’s Gate, through which the kings of Judah enter and leave, as well as at all the gates of Jerusalem.

<sup>20</sup> Announce to them: Hear the word of the LORD, kings of Judah, all Judah, and all the residents of Jerusalem who enter through these gates. <sup>21</sup> This is what the LORD says: Watch yourselves; do not pick up a load and bring it in through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. <sup>22</sup> You must not carry a load out of your houses on the Sabbath day or do any work, but you must consecrate the Sabbath day, just as I commanded your ancestors. <sup>23</sup> They wouldn’t listen or pay attention but became obstinate, not listening or accepting discipline.

<sup>24</sup> “However, if you listen to Me, says the LORD, and do not bring loads through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day and consecrate the Sabbath day and do no work on it, <sup>25</sup> kings and princes will enter through the gates of this city. They will sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses with their officials, the men of Judah, and the residents of Jerusalem. This city will be inhabited forever. <sup>26</sup> Then people will come from the cities of Judah and from the area around Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin and from the Judean foothills, from the hill country and from the Negev bringing burnt offerings and sacrifice, grain offerings and frankincense, and thank offerings to the house of the LORD. <sup>27</sup> If you do not listen to Me to consecrate the Sabbath day by not carrying a load while entering the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, I will set fire to its gates, and it will consume the citadels of Jerusalem and not be extinguished.”

**Jeremiah 17:19-27**

<sup>15</sup> At that time I saw people in Judah treading wine presses on the Sabbath. They were also bringing in stores of grain and loading them on donkeys, along with wine, grapes, and figs. All kinds of goods were being brought to Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. So I warned them against selling food on that day. <sup>16</sup> The Tyrians living there were importing fish and all kinds of merchandise and selling them on the Sabbath to the people of Judah in Jerusalem.

**<sup>17</sup> I rebuked the nobles of Judah and said to them: “What is this evil you are doing —profaning the Sabbath day? <sup>18</sup> Didn’t your ancestors do the same, so that our God brought all this disaster on us and on this city? And now you are rekindling His anger against Israel by profaning the Sabbath!”**

**<sup>19</sup> When shadows began to fall on the gates of Jerusalem just before the Sabbath, I gave orders that the gates be closed and not opened until after the Sabbath. I posted some of my men at the gates, so that no goods could enter during the Sabbath day.**

**<sup>20</sup> Once or twice the merchants and those who sell all kinds of goods camped outside Jerusalem, <sup>21</sup> but I warned them, “Why are you camping in front of the wall? If you do it again, I’ll use force against you.” After that they did not come again on the Sabbath. <sup>22</sup> Then I instructed the Levites to purify themselves and guard the gates in order to keep the Sabbath day holy.**

### **Nehemiah 13:15-22a**

Because the Jewish people did not observe the Sabbaths as stated above, the Pharisees agreed with the writer of 2 Chronicles that their forefathers were sent out of the Holy Land so the land could enjoy its Sabbath rest.

**This fulfilled the word of the LORD through Jeremiah and the land enjoyed its Sabbath rest all the days of the desolation until 70 years were fulfilled.**

### **2 Chronicles 36:21**

Nehemiah 13:15 clearly states that violation was conducting business on the Sabbath day in the same way as it was done on any other day. Some four centuries later in the days of Jesus, the leaders of the Pharisees took this passage to the extreme legalism and argued that one could not carry a needle or walk with an artificial (wooden) leg on the Sabbath Day. Jesus totally disagreed with this.<sup>562</sup>

While a number of Jewish writings are quoted within this eBook that reflect the rigid Pharisaic Sabbath rules, this may be a good place to introduce chapter 50 of the book of Jubilee. It shows the opinions in the Inter-Testamental Period, namely 150 – 100 B.C. The book reflects the strong attempt to return to Orthodox Judaism in light of the encroachment of Hellenism. The more the values of the Greek culture permeated Jewish society, the more legalistic the Jewish leaders became. At no time in Jewish history were Sabbath regulations as severe as they were during the time of Jesus. The book of *Jubilees* is considered one of the most important

---

562. See also 02.02.18 “Oral Law” and 02.02.20 “Oral Tradition.”

authorities on Jewish customs and opinions at the time of Jesus, second only to the *Mishnah*.<sup>563</sup>  
 Note the following:

**<sup>6</sup> And behold the commandment regarding the Sabbaths, I have written (them) down for thee and all the judgments of its laws.**

**<sup>7</sup> Six days shalt thou labor, but on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it ye shall do no manner of work, ye and your sons, and your men-servants and your maid-servants, and all your cattle and the sojourner also who is with you.**

**<sup>8</sup> And the man that does any work on it shall die: whoever desecrates that day, whoever lies with (his) wife, or whoever says he will do something on it, that he will set out on a journey thereon in regard to any buying or selling: and whoever draws water thereon which he had not prepared for himself on the sixth day, and whoever takes up any burden to carry it out of his tent or out of his house shall die.**

**<sup>9</sup> You shall do no work whatever on the Sabbath day save what you have prepared for yourselves on the sixth day, so as to eat, and drink, and rest, and keep Sabbath from all work on that day, and to bless the Lord your God, who has given you a day of festival and a holy day: and a day of the holy kingdom for all Israel is this day among their days for ever.**

**<sup>10</sup> For great is the honor which the Lord has given to Israel that they should eat and drink and be satisfied on this festival day, and rest thereon from all labor which belongs to the labor of the children of men save burning frankincense and bringing oblations and sacrifices before the Lord for days and for Sabbaths.**

**<sup>11</sup> This work alone shall be done on the Sabbath-days in the sanctuary of the Lord your God; that they may atone for Israel with sacrifice continually from day to day for a memorial well-pleasing before the Lord, and that He may receive them always from day to day according as thou hast been commanded.**

**<sup>12</sup> And every man who does any work thereon, or goes a journey, or tills (his) farm, whether in his house or any other place, and whoever lights a fire, or rides on any beast, or travels by ship on the sea, and whoever strikes or kills anything, or slaughters a beast or a bird, or whoever catches an animal or a bird or a fish, or whoever fasts or makes war on the Sabbaths:**

---

563. Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 1:560.

**<sup>13</sup> The man who does any of these things on the Sabbath shall die, so that the children of Israel shall observe the Sabbaths according to the commandments regarding the Sabbaths of the land, as it is written in the tablets, which He gave into my hands that I should write out for thee the laws of the seasons, and the seasons according to the division of their days.**

### **Jubilees 50:6-13**

Another example of the Jews not “working” on a holy day was when the Romans besieged Jerusalem in 63 B.C. After the Roman General Pompey captured Damascus,<sup>564</sup> he traveled south to capture all of Judaea in only three months – the time it took to walk from one end of the country to the other and back. With mechanical engines, namely stone-throwing catapults, and battering rams shipped in from Tyre, the Romans battered Jerusalem until victory was secured.<sup>565</sup> Ironically, the Jews felt that since the attack occurred on the Day of Atonement which was a holy day, they should not fight as fighting was considered “working.” Consequently, Pompey’s army entered Jerusalem and slaughtered 12,000 men, women, and children. It was the one day of the year Jews thought God would forgive them of their sins, and instead they became servants to a pagan master. Additional details on the complex Sabbath Day issues are given in the appropriate places within this eBook.

Finally, some scholars have suggested that the church has lost the definition of *rest* as it pertains to the Sabbath. Often the term *rest* has only a modern definition while its biblical definition is forgotten and those who desire not to focus upon it claim it is legalism to do so.

While Jesus did say that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath, that statement tends to open more questions than it answers. Some Messianic believers say that for six days God performed His work in the creation, and the seventh day is set aside for His superior creation (mankind) to focus attention on Him.<sup>566</sup> When one’s attention is focused on Christ Jesus, then the issue related to many potential activities becomes a moot point.

### **02.04.07 Work and the Purpose of Education**

To the Greeks and Romans, the pursuit of study was to enter a “spiritual realm” and, therefore, escape the rigors of work. The pagans believed the world was in two dimensions: spiritual and temporal. The goal was to escape from the temporal world and live in the spiritual world. Everything physical in the world was evil and to live in the spiritual world was the ultimate goal.

---

564. Damascus was the capital city of the region and the districts of Galilee, Perea, Samaria, and Judea were within its domain. It was also a busy commercial city and the hub of well-traveled caravan routes.

565. Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.4.2.

566. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 199-202.

This is the essence of Gnosticism. In recent Western church history this philosophy was reflected in “sweet bye and bye” hymns, Negro spirituals, and other songs of escape.

The Romans believed work was evil, and was for those in the lower classes of society, namely slaves and the poor. Those in the lower classes saw that the purpose of an education was to acquire material things and become socially elevated. On the other hand, a scholar was one who pursued the spiritual life. Hence, “scholar” by definition meant “leisure.” Philosophers, priests (incl. theologians), etc., were the ideal spiritual class. The Greeks studied to comprehend while the Jews studied to revere God.<sup>567</sup> The Greco-Roman philosophy teaches that man is basically good, but has the potential for doing evil. Jewish thought is that man is by nature evil, but has the potential for making good decisions. To the Greeks and Romans, the highest level of education was philosophy, and logic, in the form of dialectic, was common to philosophy and rhetoric. “Learned people” knew how to argue philosophically and theologically.<sup>568</sup>

To the Jews there was only one subject of study: theology. Mothers taught children Bible stories prior to entering the synagogue school at the age of five. The Scriptures were studied daily by all, as it was the only way by which one could learn what God required of humanity. If one did not study, he had no opportunity to be obedient to God. It was the method of understanding and attaining the character of God. Work was not seen as an evil endeavor, but a divine blessing. To the Jew, all men were equal before God, an idea that was completely foreign to other religions.

Another unique feature of Judaism was that all men, including priests, were trained in an occupation, in the event they would be called upon to support themselves. Work was admired and considered to be God-given. The work ethic had no hierarchy, but was considered to be a blessing for all.

#### **02.04.08 Views of Body, Soul, and Spirit**

This issue will no doubt be a challenge for some readers. The concept *in the culture* of a three-part person as body, soul, and spirit is said to be of Greek origin. This, however, is radically different from the New Testament teaching. The Greeks believed that the ultimate life was to live spiritually and that the body was evil. This philosophy is reflected in Watchman Nee’s book *Body, Soul, and Spirit* wherein he states that we should essentially throw away the body and brain to love in the Spirit. The Greco-Roman concept of body, soul, and spirit is radically different from the New Testament concept.

The Jewish tradition of the Bible is that man is a single unity. In the New Testament the body is the temple of God, but more importantly, body, soul, and spirit function together. Jesus died for

---

567. Young, *Paul the Jewish Theologian*. 65.

568. Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages*. 32, 128.



the salvation of the entire body, soul, and spirit. They are not divorced one from the other, but rather, three parts to a whole.

#### **02.04.09 Understanding History and the Future**

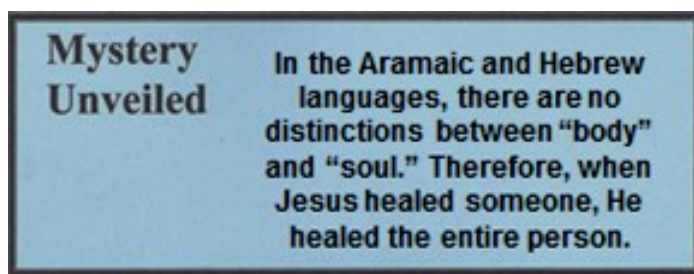
The Greco-Romans saw history as being circular. Therefore they could look to astrology and read their future by looking at the past. There was no change in humanity, no beginning or end, and according to the proverbial saying, “What goes around comes around.” There was no meaning to life other than the proverbial “wine, women, and song.”

The Jews on the other hand, believed in linear time with a definite beginning of time and an end of the age. There was no repetition as might be seen in the cyclical patterns of the stars. Therefore, whatever decisions one would make today would determine his destiny tomorrow or in the future.

#### **02.04.10 Divine Healing**

Both Greeks and Jews believed that illnesses came into one’s life because of affliction or anger from the gods / God. The Greeks, however, attributed sickness to bad luck, destiny, or displeasure of the gods. They also believed healing was available through the worship of Serasphis, Amphiaraus, Trophonios, and especially Aesculapius who apparently had at one point entered Jerusalem.<sup>569</sup>

It should be noted that in Hebrew and Aramaic there is no distinction between “body” and “soul.” Therefore, Jesus always healed the whole person. For that reason, when He healed people of physical diseases, He made comments such as “Your faith has saved you,” or “Go in peace.”<sup>570</sup> In Matthew is the phrase “Lord have mercy” wherein the gospel writer makes it clear that the entire person was healed, not only the body.<sup>571</sup>



Early in the ministry of Jesus, people were healed who had no faith. This was because Jesus was unknown to them, and they had no understanding that He was the Healer sent by God. In the

---

<sup>569</sup>. Kelsey, *Healing and Christianity*. 37.

<sup>570</sup>. i.e. Mk. 5:34; 10:52; Lk. 7:50.

<sup>571</sup>. Mt. 9:27-29, 15:22, 20:31.

course of time, after listening to His sermons and watching Him perform miracles, many came to Him because they had developed faith. Some were healed because of the faith of others (i.e. Mk. 2:5), while in some places He could perform few miracles because of their lack of faith.<sup>572</sup> Miracles are granted by the gracious love of God for the purpose of bringing people to Himself. Jesus never met a demon He could not exorcise or a sickness He could not heal; but He could not convert an unbeliever or skeptic who refused to believe who He was.

#### **02.04.11 Human and Divine Relationships**

The Greeks and Romans saw no need to have a covenant with their gods. Gods were considered a necessity, although the Greeks worshiped beauty, and the Romans, power. Whatever happened in life was the result of fate, which was said to be cyclical, which in turn led to a strong belief in fatalism and astrology.

The Jews, on the other hand, had not only a covenant with God, but believed they were His special people living on land that was given to them by His divine command through Abraham. The Old Testament covenant is in fact, a *suzerainty covenant*, which is defined as a covenant with unequal parties, where the stronger and more powerful party functions for the benefit of the weaker one.<sup>573</sup>

While the New Covenant or New Testament is also a *suzerainty covenant*, there are some notable differences. For example, in the Old Testament, miracles were generally punitive, whereas those of Jesus were redemptive. Yet Jesus did *not* come primarily as a miracle-worker, but He came to reveal the Father and to preach that the Kingdom of God was about to come to those who placed their faith in Him. Profound miracles of healing and raising the dead captured everyone's attention to His Kingdom message.

---

572. i.e. Nazareth, see Mt. 13:58; Mk. 6:6.

573. Payne, "Covenant in the Old Testament." 1:1102-03.

## Appendix 26: Glossary of Technical Terms and Word Definitions

- Abba** The Aramaic term used for *papa* or *daddy*.<sup>574</sup> The significance of this term is that it reflects the intimate relationship Jesus had with the Father (Mk. 14:36) and the intimate relationship Jesus desires with each of His believers. Paul used the term in Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6 (see also 2 Cor. 6:18).
- Abyss** This word is from the Greek term *abussos*, and it means *bottomless* or *depth*. It refers to the bottomless pit that is the dwelling place of demons. It is where Satan will be during the Millennial Reign of Jesus.
- Allegory** A literary term: A story that has two or more levels of meaning – a literal meaning plus one or more symbolic or spiritual meanings.<sup>575</sup> A unique feature is that it is *not* based on reality. Allegories were common in all ancient cultures, but especially among the Greeks. It is unknown when the allegorical interpretation was applied to literature, but fifth century B.C., it was part of the general intellectual movement.<sup>576</sup> This may be why some church fathers, such as Augustine, applied the allegorical interpretations to some parables of Jesus, and thereby lost the essential truth of what Jesus tried to teach. Unfortunately, by the time of Jesus, allegorical interpretation – or “mysteries” – as some referred to it, had entered Judaism.<sup>577</sup>
- Allusion** A literary term: A narrative that has a reference to a well-known person, place, event, or Scripture reference. By using an allusion, a writer can suggest complex ideas and concepts in a simple and easy to understand manner.
- Amen** The word is a confirmation of truthfulness, to confirm a curse or a blessing, or to accept a blessing. It means *be it so*, and has at times been translated as *truly*, *truly*, or just *truly*.<sup>578</sup>
- Am-ha-arets** The spiteful Hebrew word that the leading Pharisees called the common people that meant *the unlearned*.<sup>579</sup> Since the common people were well educated at

---

574. Miethe, *The Compact Dictionary of Doctrinal Words*. 13.

575. Mowry, “Allegory.” 3:650-52.

576. Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages*. 59, 66-67, 128.

577. Geikie, *The Life and Works of Christ*. 1:195.

578. Bietenhard, “Amen.” 1:97-99.

home and the local synagogues, the term appears to be more of an insult rather than an accurate description of education. Leading rabbis, Levites, and priests would not consider marrying someone who was of the common people. As such, the Jewish society had a caste system much like in India.

**Analogy** A literary term: This is an extended comparison of relationships between one pair of things and another pair of things. Because an analogy is an explicit comparison, the words *like* or *as* are used to bridge the two comparisons.

**Annals** Annals are a year-by-year concise arrangement of historical writings in chronological order. In Roman historiography, annals generally begin with the founding of Rome. Proper annals include whatever events were of importance each year, such as names of various officials.

### **Ante-Nicene Fathers**

See 02.02.02

**Antichrist** The term *antichrist* (Gk. *antichristos*, 500) can mean either *against Christ* or *instead of Christ*.<sup>580</sup> However, twice the gospel writers used the phrase *pseudochristos*, meaning *false Christ*. (Mt. 24:24; Mk. 13:22). Some scholars believe both terms refer to anyone who denies the incarnation of Jesus. He said that many would come “in His name,” meaning that they will be messianic pretenders and deceive many (Mt. 24:24; Mk. 13:22). John used the term in 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3 and 2 John 7. Paul referred to the Antichrist, meaning the key figure at the end of time who would oppose Jesus, perform miracles (2 Thess. 2:9-10), and be a man of lawlessness (2 Thess. 2:3, 8-9). In the book of Revelation the Antichrist is referred to as “the Beast” who will rule and reign briefly upon the earth before the Second Coming of Jesus.

### **Apocalyptic Literature**

A category of Jewish and Christian writings that contain the alleged secrets of God, the end of the world, usually with climatic warfare, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God or Messianic reign on earth. The word *apocrypha* is from the Greek *apokrypha*, meaning *the hidden things*.<sup>581</sup> This category contains books from the Pseudepigrapha as well as the book of *Revelation* from the New Testament. The significance of these books, most of which were written during

---

579. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 173; Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 145.

580. Vine, “Antichrist.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:30.

581. Miethe, *The Compact Dictionary of Doctrinal Words*. 31-32.

the Inter-Testamental Period, is that they reveal first century Jewish ideas concerning God, evil, the Messiah, the Kingdom of God, the Son of Man, etc. Therefore, when Jesus began teaching, His listeners were already familiar with many of the terms He frequently used.

This class of literature is also known simply as the “Apocrypha.” A category of non-canonical books written primarily between the second century BC and the end of second century AD. However, the Roman Catholic Church recognizes these books as “second canonical” or *deuterocanonical*, with the exceptions of *1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Esdras* and *the Prayer of Manasseh*.<sup>582</sup>

Other books are:

<i>Tobit</i>	<i>Judith</i>
<i>Additions to the book of Esther</i>	<i>The Wisdom of Solomon</i>
<i>Ecclesiasticus</i> (a/k/a <i>Jesus ben Sirach</i> or <i>ben Sirach</i> )	
<i>Epistle to Jeremiah</i>	<i>Susanna</i>
<i>Bel and the Dragon</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Maccabees</i>
<i>The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men</i>	
<i>Baruch</i>	

In addition to these, there are more than one hundred New Testament-era Apocryphal books. See also 02.02.03.

### Apocryphal Gospels

A classification of books that claims to give insight into the life and ministry of Jesus in addition to what is written in the biblical gospels.<sup>583</sup> The earliest is the *Gospel of Thomas* (4th Century), and like many other apocryphal gospels, it contains some truth concerning Jesus. Unfortunately, these texts also have historical and theological narratives that are absurd; such as an account of Jesus performing miracles when He was a child. These writings excluded themselves from Scripture by not being in conformity with the message and teachings of Jesus<sup>584</sup> and, in fact, served as literary devices to promote Gnosticism.<sup>585</sup>

**Apologetics** The English term apologetics is from the Greek word *apologia*, which means

---

582. Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 6, Session 1.

583. Miethe, *The Compact Dictionary of Doctrinal Words*. 31-32.

584. Metzger, *New Testament*. 101.

585. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 415.

*defense*.<sup>586</sup> Apologetics is that field of study that deals with the defense of the biblical truths against heresies and false teachings.

- Arabs** See Idumeans 02.01.12.
- Aramaic** A Semitic language of Aram (ancient Syria) that is related to Hebrew, having the same ancestral language.<sup>587</sup> More specifically, the Aramaic language spoken in Galilee, a/k/a Galilean Aramaic, is a branch of Middle Western Aramaic.<sup>588</sup> It was the language of the Babylonians and, in the time of Jesus, became the language of commerce and daily life throughout the Holy Land. Hebrew was used in the synagogues, religious services and legal documents. Jewish scholars, however, often spoke only Hebrew as not to be associated with the common people.<sup>589</sup> Aramaic and its dialect, Syriac, are still spoken in some rural areas of Syria, Iran, and Iraq. Parts of Daniel (2:4-7:28) and Ezra (4:8-6:18; 7:12-26) were written in Aramaic.
- Ashlar(s)** An ashlar is a stone, cut in a square or rectangular shape, with extreme accuracy as to have very thin joints between it and other ashlars. See 14.01.03.A.
- Autograph** The original text of a document, a/k/a “a witness.”
- Blasphemy** The term *blaspheme* is from the Greek word *blasphemia*, meaning *to insult*. But there is an additional implication that one who blasphemes has placed himself in the place of God and thereby, degrades the Divine.<sup>590</sup> Blasphemy is anything less than complete holiness attributed toward each member of the Trinity.
- Bath** A unit of measure: A bath is a volume equal to today’s amount of 10 gallons or about 45 liters. Luke 16:6 refers to “a hundred bath of oil,” which is equal to about 1,000 gallons today. See Appendix 20.
- Ballanim** A Hebrew term meaning *ten elders* or *men of leisure*.

---

586. Cate, *A History of the New Testament and its Times*. 41.

587. Miethe, *The Compact Dictionary of Doctrinal Words*. 35; Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*. 64.

588. Cohen, “Galilean Aramaic: Its Linguistic and Historical Significance” 53.

589. Bailey, *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes*. 292.

590. Barclay, *A New Testament Wordbook*. 51.

- Baptism** Baptism was originally practiced by the Jews, so it was not a new concept when introduced by John the Baptist. Today, it is commonly thought of as a Christian sacrament of being admitted into the fellowship of believers. Historically, it has been the practice that a new convert to the faith is either sprinkled with water, or immersed in water, which is symbolic that the old life is dead and when he comes out of the water, new life is received. Baptism is a symbolic public declaration of faith, but the true conversion (salvation) occurs in the heart when one accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior. It is different from the Jewish immersion, in that the immersion in a *mikvah* was in response to defilement caused by a physical transgression (touching a dead body, walking over a grave, etc.), whereas baptism was for repentance of sin and the coming to faith in Christ Jesus.
- Barabbas** The Hebrew name meaning *son of the father*. The term was often used for the son or special student of a rabbi.
- Batlanim** Every synagogue had at least one *batlanim*, that is, a scholarly teacher who could answer the variety of questions posed by men and women at the end of a sermon. Some scholars believe there were ten *batlanim* for every hundred and twenty synagogue members.<sup>591</sup> When the Apostle Paul said women should be quiet during the service, it was in reference to the discussion period that followed a sermon.
- Bema** Hebrew: The elevated seat (Seat of Moses). The seat of the *Maphtir* (reader).
- Bema stone** Hebrew: The stone on which a reader would stand for the reading of Scripture during congregational worship in the synagogue.
- Beth ha Midrash**  
The Hebrew term for *House of Learning or Study*.<sup>592</sup>
- Betrothal** A formal contract between two families whereby two of their children will become married in about a year. During that time the bride and bridegroom continue to live with their parents although they are considered married. Separation can occur only by death or divorce. Only after the wedding ceremony, did they live together. The wedding is one of the greatest celebrations in the life of a Jew, and it lasts from three to seven days.

---

591. Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. 10.

592. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 15-16.

**Bible** See 02.02.04

**Bier** A bed upon which the body of the deceased was laid and carried to the family tomb.

**Bitter Waters** When a woman was suspected of adultery, she was required to submit to a test of drinking bitter water in the temple. The term “bitter water” was a concoction of consecrated water flavored with dirt from an open area of the temple. A woman suspected of adultery was given this bitter water to drink, and if she was guilty, her stomach would rupture and she would be killed.<sup>593</sup> There is no record of a woman being stoned to death by court action for committing adultery in this era.<sup>594</sup> Furthermore, according to some Messianic scholars, shortly after the life of Christ, Rabbi Yokamen ben Zikai terminated the practice of bitter waters as a test for determining the guilt of an adulteress.<sup>595</sup> However, the issue of divorce was so painful, that the emotional turmoil of divorce was at times referred to as “bitter waters.”

**Ben Azzai says: A man ought to give his daughter knowledge of the Law so that if she must drink [the bitter water] she may know that the merit [that she has acquired] will hold her punishment in suspense.**

**Mishnah, *Sotah* 3.4<sup>596</sup>**

**Blessed** As a noun the term *blessed* in Hebrew is *baruk* and in Greek is *makarios* (3109).<sup>597</sup> The word means to praise God with a sense of happiness and joy upon man.<sup>598</sup> A word spoken in the name of God that invites His divine favor, goodwill, health, prosperity, and His grace which results in prosperity in every area of life; the opposite of curse.<sup>599</sup> More specifically, it refers to a quality of spirituality that is

---

593. Parry, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Talmud*. 82.

594. Source: Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 9, Session 2.

595. Source: Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 9, Session 2.

596. Bracketed clarification by Danby, ed., *Mishnah*.

597. Vine, “Bless, Blessed, Blessedness, Blessing.” *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:69.

598. Weasel, “Blessed.” 1:201.

599. Herbert, “Curse.” 57-58.



already present.<sup>600</sup> As a verb, the term *blessed* in Greek is *eulogeo* (2127), and means *to speak well of, to praise, and to celebrate with praises*.<sup>601</sup>

- Boethusians** A political-religious group closely associated with the Sadducees and Herodians. It is believed they organized after Jesus and continued into the second century. Some scholars believe this was another name for the Sadducees, but other scholars believe it was a name for Herodians.<sup>602</sup> However, the House of Boethus was one of the influential priestly Sadducean families of Jerusalem.<sup>603</sup> They are not mentioned in the Bible, but are referred to in Jewish writings and had a reputation of leading righteous Jews astray concerning various religious rituals.<sup>604</sup>
- Born again** A term used when someone is “born again” spiritually by making a decision to live according to biblical principles and instruction. It is also referred to as *regeneration*. See 05.05.05.
- Canon** The English term *canon* is rooted in the Greek *Kanon*, meaning *rule*.<sup>605</sup> The Old Testament Canon is the Old Testament, also known as the Hebrew Bible, and the New Testament Canon is today’s New Testament. All books of both testaments are considered Divinely inspired.
- Cache** A hidden quantity of items, such as a “cache” of coins or a “cache” of glass vessels.
- Caravansary** Also spelled *caravanserai*, but known generally by its shortened name, *khan*.<sup>606</sup> This was a commercial inn for camel caravan merchants. A caravansary was a low one-story structure built of rough stones or sunbaked bricks that provided a safe enclosure for many camels. Khans were generally found along international highways throughout the ancient Middle Eastern world.
- Cataphracts** The English word cataphracts is derived from the Greek term *kataphraktos* that

---

600. Bailey, *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes*. 66-68.

601. Vine, “Bless, Blessed, Blessedness, Blessing.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:69.

602. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 164-67, 738-39.

603. Hachlili, *Jewish Funerary Customs, Practices and Rites in the Second Temple Period*. 203.

604. Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 3:79-81.

605. Miethe, *The Compact Dictionary of Doctrinal Words*. 54.

606. Farrar, *The Life of Christ*. 98.

means to *completely enclose* or to be *completely armored*. Both the horse and rider were heavily armored, and it was the branch of the military that broke through infantry lines. With the use of Cataphracts, the Parthians defeated the superior Roman forces at the Battle of Carrhae in 53 B.C.

**Cetoneth** See Tunic

**Chazzan** The minister of the synagogue was known as the *chazzan*, who preached, prayed and took care of the duties of the congregation.<sup>607</sup> While he did not read the Law, he selected those persons who could read and stood beside them as they read the scrolls.<sup>608</sup> He also maintained the synagogue facilities.

### Chiastic literary structure

See Appendix 11.

**Chief priests** See “Course.”

**Chiliarch** The chiliarch was a Roman cohort commander of 1,000 men, or ten centuries of a hundred men each.<sup>609</sup> It was to the chiliarch whom the Apostle Paul requested permission to speak to the people in Acts 21:31-40.

**Christ** The English term is derived from the Greek word *Christos*, meaning *Anointed* or *Anointed One*. The Hebrew participle is *Mashiach*.<sup>610</sup> It designates the royal king of Israel as a Son of David (king of Israel 1000 B.C.). See Daniel 9:25; Luke 3:15.

**Christology** The study of the divinity of Jesus, including His divine and human natures, namely, that He was 100% human and 100% deity (see “hypostatic union”). It is a field of study on the nature and person of Jesus and His relationship with the nature and person of God the Father. The term includes the existence or “eternity past” existence of Jesus and His role in the Old Testament. However, that latter role is defined as “theophany” – the visible manifestations of God which are visitations of Jesus to mankind. The Christology of Jesus is impossible for the

---

607. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 160-61, 303-04, 306-07. Not all sources agree that this was the title of the preacher, but that might be because he had several responsibilities.

608. Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. 9; Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 276, 308-09.

609. Josephus, *Wars* 5.5.8.

610. Campbell, “Christ.” 44-46.

human mind to fully comprehend. To emphasize either the divine component without the human element, or vice versa, is heresy.<sup>611</sup>

**Church** The original definition was not of a building, but rather, a community of believers who gather together for worship, as well as to minister to each other and to those outside their community. In the course of time, the term has also been applied to a building or facility where the community of believers met for worship and other related activities. The term “church,” is rooted in a discussion found in Matthew 16:13-20 wherein is the statement “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church.” The two key words in this statement are “Peter” and “church,” and both need to be carefully examined.<sup>612</sup>

**Cock’s Crow** The name of the trumpet blast that sounded the end of one night watch and the beginning of another. The cock’s crow blast was at the end of the second watch (midnight), at the end of the third watch (3:00 a.m.) and at the end of the fourth watch (6:00 a.m.).<sup>613</sup> See 19.16.00.A.

**Codex** See. 02.02.05

**Cohort** A *cohort* is a Roman military unit consisting of six centuries of ninety to one hundred men each, or approximately 5,000 to 6,000 soldiers.<sup>614</sup> A legion consisted of ten *cohorts*. However, some scholars believe that a *cohort* consisted of 200 to 600 fighting men.<sup>615</sup> Clearly, there are a variety of opinions on the size of this military unit. An army consisted of about 30 legions.

**Communion** Communion is an ordinance (Webster: an established rule, religious rite, or law) established by Jesus to (Mt. 26:28-29) and affirmed by the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 11:23-25).

---

611. A typical example is the Jesus Seminar – a group of scholars who promote the humanity of Jesus but deny His deity. This group generally has various articles published at Christmas and Easter holidays in popular magazines and television programs.

612. For further study, see 10.01.29.

613. See 14.02.22 and Appendix 16; Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor’s Manual*. Class 24, page 9; Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 3:419, 436-37.

614. A cohort at full strength consisted of 600 soldiers, although the word was also used for a *maniple*, that is a detachment of 200 soldiers. See Harrison, *A Short Life of Christ*. 199.

615. Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*. 384.

1. Commemorate His death and resurrection
2. Fellowship of the brotherhood, and
3. Show obedience to Scripture.

**Corban** See “Corban” in 10.01.20

**Cornerstone** In the construction process of a building, the cornerstone was a stone placed in the corner of the building from which all the measurements were taken to complete the construction. As such, it was the focal point of the building. Jesus is referred to as “the Cornerstone” because He is the focal point of life and from where humanity receives directives for a successful life. But the Jewish leaders of His day found Jesus to be a stumbling stone, because they rejected Him as their Messiah.<sup>616</sup>

**Course** A group of five hundred or more priests who served in the temple twice a year for an eight-day week.<sup>617</sup> There were twenty-four courses, and all of them, about 20,000 men served together at the three high festival events of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.<sup>618</sup> Those who functioned as the administrators of the courses were known as the *chief priests*.<sup>619</sup>

**Covenant** A covenant or agreement, is the primary way in which the Bible portrays the relationship between God and His people, and to a lesser extent, to humanity in general.<sup>620</sup> A covenant can also be an agreement between two beings – such as kings, nations, and people groups. The word covenant (Greek: *diatheke*) therefore, reflects a special relationship on the part of both parties.<sup>621</sup> Each has responsibilities to the other for the covenant to remain in effect. See the book of Hebrews for more details, but essentially said, Jesus is the fulfillment of all Old Covenant promises.

---

616. Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, eds., “Cornerstone.” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. 167.

617. Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 1:99. The courses overlapped on the Sabbath Days.

618. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 1:254; When priests and Levites served in the temple, they stayed in rooms within the temple buildings. Otherwise, they lived in communities throughout the countryside. Deut. 16:16; Ex. 23:14-17; 34:20, 23-24; Geikie, *The Life and Works of Christ*. 1:93.

619. Farrar, *The Life of Christ*. 387.

620. Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, eds., “Covenant.” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. 176-78.

621. Guhrt, “Covenant, Guarantee, Mediator.” 1:365-66.

**Cross** The Cross as an instrument of the most painful form of capital punishment was in use centuries before the Roman occupation in Judaea. It is believed to have originated in Assyria, but became more common in Babylon.<sup>622</sup> By definition, a cross (Gk. *stauros* 4716) is only the upright stake upon which one could be hung, bound, or impaled.<sup>623</sup> The “cross” that Jesus carried was, in reality, the cross beam (Latin, *patibulum*) which the four soldiers who accompanied Him to the crucifixion site secured to the upright stake, which was generally permanently secured in the ground. By the Inter-Testamental Period the Greeks and even the Jews used it. However, with the crucifixion of Jesus, it became a profound symbol.

1. Symbol of persecution to the Jew
2. Symbol of death to Jesus
3. Symbol of renewed life to the church

The cross was so cruel that the Romans abolished its use in A.D. 315. To the believers in the primitive church it symbolized a horrific death, but the meaning quickly changed to eternal life and it was for this reason that many early churches were built in the shape of a cross.

**Cubit** A unit of measure: The Scriptures at times refer to a specific length or distance in the term of cubits, and today there are feet and meters. The true length of a cubit has been a challenge for archaeologists until they realize that there were two cubits. King Solomon’s Long or Royal Egyptian Cubit was a distance of 52.5 cm. (20.67 inches)<sup>624</sup> while the later Short Cubit was 45 cm. (17.71 inches).<sup>625</sup> The latter being the length from the elbow to the end of the middle finger.<sup>626</sup> Travel on the Sabbath limited to 2,000 cubits – probably the shorter measurement.<sup>627</sup>

---

622. Garr. *Restoring Our Lost Legacy*. 169.

623. Taylor, “Cross.” 57; Vine, “Cross.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:138.

624. Barkay, “Measurements in the Bible-Evidence at St. Etienne for the Length of the Cubit and the Reed,” 37; Ritmeyer, “Locating the Original Temple Mount.” 33.

625. Barkay and Kloner. “Jerusalem Tombs from Days of the First Temple.” 37.

626. Wijngaards, *Handbook to the Gospels*. 82.

627. Mishnah, *Sotah*. 5:3.

**Curse**<sup>628</sup> A word spoken in the name of God that invites His wrath, as well as diseases, ill-success, ruin, destruction, and death; the opposite of blessing.<sup>629</sup>

***Dayyaney Gezeloth***

Hebrew: A local magistrate as found in Luke 18:1-8. Judges in this position were generally corrupt and cared little for the common people over whom they were to render decisions.<sup>630</sup>

**Dead Sea Scrolls**

See 02.02.06

**Decapolis** The Greek term meaning *ten cities*. These “cities” were a loose confederation of Greek city-states on the eastern side of the Jordan River and in the Trans-Jordan Mountains, with the exception of Scythopolis (also known as Beth Shean) located west of the Jordan.<sup>631</sup> These cities formed a large bloc that encompassed an area from Philadelphia (today’s Amman, Jordan) in the south to Damascus, Syria in the north; and from Beit Shean west of the Jordan River to Canatha (today’s Kanawat, Syria) in the east.

They were faithful to the Romans and played a key role in maintaining stability on the eastern front of the Roman Empire, especially since there was a constant threat from the Parthian Empire to the east. It was into the Decapolis cities that the Greco-Roman culture first introduced theaters, schools, philosophy, hippodromes, athletic events, etc. It was also from this area that the Greco-Roman culture was exported to other parts of the Roman Empire – a constant threat to the small Jewish population nearby.

The historian Gaius Plinius Secundus (A.D. 23 – 79), better known as Pliny the Elder, in his work titled *Natural History*, listed the ten as: Damascus, Philadelphia, Raphana, Scythopolis, Gadara, Hippos, Dium, Pella, Canatha, and Gerasa.<sup>632</sup> However, another historian Claudius Ptolemy (A.D. 60-168), wrote in his book titled *Geography*, a different list of names.<sup>633</sup> Clearly, they had different

---

628. Some sources indicate the Old Cubit, a/k/a Short Cubit, was 17.49 or 17.71 inches, or 45 cm.

629. Herbert, “Curse.” 57-58.

630. Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. 351; Barclay, “Luke.” 221-22.

631. Pellett, “Decapolis.” 1:810-12.

632. Gaius Plinius Secundus, Gerasa. *Natural History* 5, 74.

633. Claudius Ptolemy. *Geography* 5, 14, 18.

opinions of what they considered to be a district, city or village. While the number of cities is uncertain, it is known that there were ten administrative districts for military and tax purposes, which were instituted by Pompey in 63 B.C.<sup>634</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that critics would also have comments about it. See the Map of the Decapolis Cities and Region at 03.04.17.Z.

On a side note, in North Africa a group of five city-states was established for similar administrative reasons, known as the Pentapolis. Cyrene was one of those cities.

### **Decapolitan towns/cities**

These were Greek cities such as Tiberias, Caesarea Philippi, and Sepphoris that were not the center of taxing districts, which is the point of difference that separated them from Decapolis cities.<sup>635</sup> However, the number of cities of the Decapolis was not always ten, at times it included several of the Decapolitan towns. Therefore, ancient writers were sometimes somewhat loose with their definitions and descriptions.

### **Defile**

The term *defile* (Gk. *koinoo* 2840) is difficult to understand for non-Jews as there is no equivalent in Christian theology. The term denotes *to make common, to render unclean, unholy*.<sup>636</sup> For example, to walk over a tomb made one “unclean,” but it was not a sin as understood today by Christians. Another word, translated from the Greek is *miaino* (3392) that means *to paint, color, or stain*.<sup>637</sup> The causes of defilement were numerous, such as walking over a grave or giving childbirth. The cleansing process usually included a ritual dip in the *mikvah*, prayers, etc. The Jewish people therefore, were always concerned about living a pure lifestyle, an issue important to all Christians even if the term *defile* is not understood. Yet Revelation 14:4 transfers the meaning by referring to believers who have not *defiled* or *soiled* themselves with adultery or fornication.

### **Desert**

The term has two definitions commonly used in the Bible:

---

634. Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. (Video “E”).

635. Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 1:251-52.

636. Vine, “Defile.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:151.

637. Packer, “Defile.” 1:447-49.

1. An area that receives little or no rainfall that results in minimal vegetation, if any.<sup>638</sup>

2. An area that is unfit for agriculture, and therefore, has no human population. The land is used as pastureland (Mt. 24:26; Jn. 6:31).<sup>639</sup>

### **Dialectic argument**

Dialectic argument is a discussion between two or more people who hold opposing viewpoints. In the process, questions and answers are presented in a logical sequence, to arrive at a conclusion. The goal is to establish the truth of a matter as the result of reasoned arguments. This style of discussion, also known as the dialectical method, is believed to have originated with the Greeks, particularly with Socrates.

**Diaspora** The Greek word means *dispersion*, and technically, could be applied to any dispersed people.<sup>640</sup> However, throughout history it has been applied to only the Jewish people who live outside of their Promised Land. Most of them were removed as a result of the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. See Acts 2:5, 9-11 and 02.01.03.Z.

**Didache** See 02.02.08

**Disciple** The term *disciple* is derived from the Latin *discipulus* the Greek *mathetes* (3101) and Hebrew *talmid*. In all three languages the word means *to learn*, the acquisition of knowledge, theory, and practice. Those who became disciples transformed their lives to the image of their mentor.<sup>641</sup> Therefore, a good disciple was a devout student and imitated the life of his or her teacher (cf. Jn. 8:31; 15:8).<sup>642</sup> While a majority of the disciples were men, a female disciple was known in Greek as a *mathetria* (3102), as was Tabitha in Acts 9:36.<sup>643</sup> One scholar

---

638. Vine, "Wilderness." *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:676.

639. "Wilderness." *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. 948-951.

640. Mills and Michael, *Messiah and His Hebrew Alphabet*. 104.

641. Campbell, "Disciple." 68-70.

642. Vine, "Disciple." *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:166.

643. Vine, "Disciple." *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:166.



defined a disciple (Heb. *talmid*) as one who has dedicated himself to the learning of the rabbi's understanding of Scripture and his way of living it out.<sup>644</sup>

**Dittography** A scribal error when copying a text. In this case, when one or more lines are repeated because a word, or another that is similar to it, occurs in two places that are close to each other.

**Docetism** A heresy that states that Jesus did not really come as a human being, but He only *appeared* to be human. Therefore, He really did not suffer and die on the cross for the sins of humanity.<sup>645</sup> For that reason, John said that the Word became flesh (Jn. 1:14). The origin of this philosophy is unknown but it continued to be a challenge for centuries and was condemned by the Council of Nicea in 325 as a heresy.<sup>646</sup>

### “Documentary Hypothesis”

The hypothesis essentially says that Moses did *not* write the first five books of the Old Testament, but that sections of the Torah were written in various areas by different authors. Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) is credited for popularizing this hypothesis, also known as the Wellhausen hypothesis or the JEDP theory.<sup>647</sup> These essential ideas were originated by 17<sup>th</sup> century critics and are as follows:

1. The Yahwist source (Symbolized by “J”) supposedly written in the 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.
2. The Elohist source (Symbolized by “E”) supposedly written in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.
3. The Deuteronomist source (Symbolized by “D”) supposedly written about 600 B.C.
4. The Priestly source (Symbolized by “P”) supposedly written about 500 B.C.

Wellhausen argues that the writings of these four sections were later assembled by

---

644. Spangler and Tverberg, *Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus*. 54.

645. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/docetism>. August 17, 2013.

646. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Docetism>. August 17, 2013.

647. Mould, *Essentials of Bible History*. 295-302.

an unknown editor or editors in the sixth century B.C. Two major reasons for the conclusion of the critics are,

1. The variations of writing styles and
2. The different names of God (Elohim, Jehovah, Adonai, etc.).

However, when comparing the history of the Jewish people with recent archaeological and literary discoveries, his theory fails. The skepticism of many liberal theologians stems not from a careful evaluation of available data, but from a predisposition against the Supernatural. Arguments that discredit this theory are beyond the purpose of this study, but a few sources are footnoted below.<sup>648</sup> In addition, there are numerous references throughout the Old and New Testaments, as well as the rabbinic writings, that Moses authored the Torah. Furthermore and most important, Jesus never questioned the authorship of Moses.

### **Double Reference**

A theological phrase used when a passage describes both the national life of Israel and the life of Jesus. See to “type and shadow” below for further information.

### **Ebionites**

A name for many early Christians that was derived from a Hebrew word meaning *poor*.<sup>649</sup> Like the name *Nazarenes*, it once was a common name for all believers in Christ Jesus. Among the early Christian writers who mention the Ebionites, are Minucius Felix (c. 150-270)<sup>650</sup> and a better known writer, Origen (c. 185 – 254). Felix referred to “the poor” as being defined within the name “Ebionites.” Origen made a stereotypical comment which was unfortunate, as not all Jews were known by that name. But his comment identifies some Jews who held a belief system that was obviously opposed to the instruction of the Apostle Paul.

**We are called the poor is not our disgrace, but our glory.**

**Minutius Felix, *Octavius* 36**

---

648. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14Vc5BzVLpI>; Edward. J. Young. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1964. M. W. J. Phelan. *The Inspiration of the Pentateuch*. Waterlooville, UK: Two-edged Sword Publications, 2005; <http://creation.com/debunking-the-documentary-hypothesis> Retrieved September 26, 2013;

649. Uhlhorn, “Ebionites.” 2:684-85.

650. Scholars are uncertain of the date of his life or if he depended upon another church father, Tertullian, for his information.

## The Jews who accept Christ are called Ebionites

### Origen, *Against Celsus* 2:1

However, while the Nazarenes accepted the Apostle Paul's teachings, the Ebionites rejected most of his instruction and considered him to be an apostate. Another distinction was that the Ebionites rejected the virgin birth.<sup>651</sup> Consequently, this branch of Christianity became classified as a cult and its leaders as heretics.

**Elders** Older men who were members of the Sanhedrin. The Greek term is *presbuteron*, and literally means *old men*.<sup>652</sup> See also See 02.01.04

**Epicureans** A self-centered pleasure-seeking philosophy of life developed by Epicurus. See Acts 17:18 and 02.01.05.

**Epispasm** Epispasm was the surgery Jewish men endured in which the marks of circumcision were removed.<sup>653</sup> Young Hellenized Jewish men who desired to participate in the Greek games, which were played in complete nudity, had the sign of circumcision removed as not to be identified as being Jewish. The Sadducees were prone to endorse this practice. In response, orthodox Jews highly condemned the procedure and accused them of apostasy.

**Eschatology** The term is from the Greek word *eschatos*,<sup>654</sup> which technically means *end* or *last*.<sup>655</sup> Eschatology is the church doctrine or teaching that looks for and anticipates the imminent return of Jesus, commonly known as the "Second Coming," as well as all the prophetic events that are connected with His return. Some believe the end of the world / end of the age is part of eschatology.

**Essenes** See 02.01.06

**Ethnarch** The Greek term that means *ruler of a nation* by Rome.<sup>656</sup>

---

651. Uhlhorn, "Ebionites." 2:684-85; Miethe, *The Compact Dictionary of Doctrinal Words*. 78.

652. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 311.

653. <http://www.bibarch.com/glossary/MI/epispasm.htm>; July 20, 2012.

654. Miethe, *The Compact Dictionary of Doctrinal Words*. 78.

655. Scott, Jr. *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*. 25.

656. Batey, *Jesus and the Forgotten City*. 52-53.

**Etymology** Etymology pertains to the origins, history, and meaning of words, especially how meanings change over time. Since languages are fluid, being that they are in constant change, this causes etymological difficulties. The term *etymon*, is used describe the source or root of a word.

**Eunuch** There are three definitions to the term:<sup>657</sup>

1. An emasculated man
2. One who is naturally incapacitated
3. One who voluntarily abstains from wedlock

**Exegesis** The determination of meaning of a biblical text in its historical and literary contexts. It is from two Greek words *ex* meaning *out*, and *hegeisthai*, meaning *to guide*.<sup>658</sup>

**Faith** To have complete confidence and trust in. The oldest definition of faith is in Gen. 3:15 where Abraham's faith in God was considered equal to righteous and was his complete sanctification.

### **Figure of Speech**

A literary term: This form of literature is not to be taken literally. Writers used figurative language to express concepts and ideas in a vivid and imaginative manner.

**Galileans** This term was applied to anyone from the Galilee area, and sometimes specifically to the followers of a rebel named Judas of Galilee. See Luke 13:1.

**Gematria** Gematria is a system of numerology that assigns numerical value to a word or phrase, with the foundational theory that other words and phrases with the same number are in some way related. This system is believed to have originated with the Assyrians and Babylonians and later adopted by the Jews. It has no biblical foundation, and in fact, reflects the acceptance of pagan ideology by the Jews.

**Gemarah** See 02.02.09, 02.02.16, and 02.02.16.V.

**Genizah** The genizah was a special area in a synagogue where old scrolls of Scriptures were laid to rest when too old to use. Throughout the centuries, when religious

---

657. Vine, "Eunuch." *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:204.

658. Miethe, *The Compact Dictionary of Doctrinal Words*. 89.

books are worn out, they are placed in a genizah or are buried in the ground with the same dignity as a person would be.<sup>659</sup>

**Gennesaret** A common name for region of Galilee which means *garden of abundance*.<sup>660</sup>

**Genre** A literary term: The term genre is a division, style, or type of literature. The three most common genres of literature are poetry, prose, and drama. The gospels are written, for the most part, in prose but do contain numerous poetic sections. Prose can be divided into two forms of genre: fiction and non-fiction. Poetry also has a number of genres, such as parallel, concrete, narrative, etc.

**Gentiles** See 02.01.07

**Gnosticism** A Greek philosophy religion that infiltrated church and Judaism in the first century. (See Gnostic 02.02.10) In essence it promoted the teachings that all that pertained to knowledge and spirituality is good and all that pertained to the physical realm was evil. Its essential doctrines stated:

1. Man's spirit, God and/or gods are all good and the human body is evil.
2. Man is in an evil world as long as he is confined in a physical body and therefore salvation is attained only by an escape from the body. Since the human body is evil it needs to be severely disciplined, which was the purpose of Paul's comment to the Colossians (2:21-23).
3. The irony of this concept of evil, is that it led to the reasoning that breaking of the divine moral code (i.e. Ten Commandments) was of no moral consequence. The dualistic reasoning of good and evil led to licentiousness (cf. Jn. 3:4).
4. Gnosticism denied the humanity of Jesus by (a) stating that He did not really have a body, but only appeared to have one. (b) Also stated that the divine nature entered Jesus at His baptism and left shortly before His death. The gospel writer John addressed the latter issue in his first epistle (1:1; 2:22; 4:2-3).

---

659. Parry, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Talmud*. 32.

660. Farrar, *The Life of Christ*. 93.

Among the early Gnostic leaders was Cerinthus (late 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.). He was a Jewish-Christian who followed Jewish law but denied that God created the world, as well as denying the deity of Jesus. He was a contemporary to and an opponent of John.<sup>661</sup> Some in the church looked upon Cerinthus as the antichrist, but many believers saw him as a heretic. It has been suggested that he was the focus of 1 John 1-4.<sup>662</sup> John's gospel is, to a certain degree, a defense against Gnosticism. For this reason John said that Jesus is the *real light* (1:9); the *real bread* (6:32); the *real vine* (15:1); and it is Jesus who will one day rule and reign with complete and *real judgment* (8:16). The Gnostic philosophy says that God essentially has nothing to do with the world, to which John says that not only did God make the world, He deeply cares for it, and everyone in it and His presence fills it. Clearly, Gnosticism was an early challenge that the apostles strongly opposed. However, other scholars believe that the Gnostics stole some of their ideas from Christianity; that Gnosticism came after Jesus and His disciples, so it was not much of a threat to which John had to respond.

**Golgotha** An Aramaic term that means *skull place* or *the place of the skull*. The Latin translation is "Calvary," the name commonly used in English Bibles.

**Gospels** See 01.02.03 "The Analysis of Ancient Writings" and "Gospels" 02.02.11.

**Great White Throne Judgment**  
See. 1 Cor. 15:26

**Greeks** See 02.01.08

***Haberim*** Strict followers of the rabbis.<sup>663</sup>

**Hades** The Greek god of the underworld and death.

**Hadith** This Arabic term *hadith*, has two definitions:

1. A hadith is a saying from the book Hadith, and

---

661 . <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cerinthus>. Retrieved on August 17, 2013; <http://latter-rain.com/earlychurch/cerin.htm>. Retrieved on August 17, 2013.

662. <http://dougwils.com/s8-expository/cerinthus-the-antichrist.html>. Retrieved on August 17, 2013.

663. Geikie, *The Life and Works of Christ*. 1:250.

2. The Hadith is a book that contains the traditions and sayings of Muhammad of his daily life. This book constitutes the guidance for Muslims along with the Qu'ran.

- Halakhah*** The Hebrew term for the regulations of daily life such as hand washing, and ritual observances, that the leading Pharisees placed on the Jewish people.<sup>664</sup>
- Hallel*** The term means *praise*, and is based upon Psalm 111-118. According to some writers, Psalm 111 and 112, are called the *Hallel*, and Psalm 113 to 118 is called the *Great Hallel*,<sup>665</sup> a liturgy which was recited at festivals and new moon celebrations.
- Hallelujah*** The Hebrew term *hallelujah* is comprised of two terms, the root word *halal* which means praise and *jah* which is derived from *Yahweh*, the Jewish name for God. In essence, “praise Yahweh” or “praise God.”<sup>666</sup>
- Hasmoneans** Also known as the Maccabees, the Hasmoneans were a wealthy and influential family who led a rebellion against the Greek Syrians in the early second century B.C.
- Haphtarah*** Hebrew: The reading of the Prophets during congregational worship in the synagogue.
- Hassidim** See 02.01.09
- Hazzan*** The blowing of the horns and trumpets to announce the beginning and ending of the Sabbath and other significant holy days.
- Hebrew** The language of the Israelites, today known as the Jewish people. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 135 A.D. and the scattering of the Jewish people from their homeland, it fell into disuse with the exception in Jewish seminaries and synagogue services. However, it was revived and modernized during the Zionist movement in the early twentieth century and today a modernized version of biblical Hebrew is the language of Israel.

**Hebrew Bible** See 02.02.12

---

664. Lee, *The Galilean Jewishness of Jesus*, 107.

665. Geikie, *The Life and Works of Christ*. 2:504.

666. Motyer, “Hallelujah.” 1:99-100.

**Hebrew Poetry**

See Appendix 11.

**Hedonistic** Hedonism is the pursuit of self-gratification and pleasure seeking. The Roman emperors were famous for their hedonism and the Herodians were determined to outperform them.

**Hell** See 08.01.05, 10.01.29, and 12.01.02.Q2 What are the differences among the terms “Hell, Hades,” and “Gehenna?”

**Hellenism** Hellenism was the act of spreading the Greek culture.<sup>667</sup> The term is a general term for the entire period of Greek culture following the great general.<sup>668</sup> The Greek culture attained a high degree of maturity in the arts, sciences, medicines, philosophy, and other cultural elements. It is often equated with Alexander the Great (356 – 323 B.C.) who established one of the largest empires of the ancient world.

**Hellenists** For the purpose of biblical studies, the Hellenists were Jews who abandoned Judaism and adopted the Greek language and culture, and were in close ties with the Sadducees. However, scholars do not agree if all Hellenists adopted the Greek culture, or if some “Hellenists” were Jewish people living in Greek-speaking areas.<sup>669</sup> Nonetheless, at the time of Jesus there were Hellenists who opposed Him and His message, as well as the disciples.<sup>670</sup>

The modern use of the term *Hellenism* was coined by Gustav Droysen (1808-1884) who took it from 2 *Maccabees* 4:12. The author of Second *Maccabees* used the term in reference to Jews who abandoned Judaism, adopted the Greek lifestyle (*Hellenists*), and attempted to force *Hellenism* on their Jewish friends and family.<sup>671</sup>

---

667. Amir. “The Term *IOUDAISMOS*: A Study in Jewish-Hellenistic Self-identification.” 38.

668. See “Hellenism” in Appendix 26.

669. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 14-6, 12-16, 42-43.

670. See also Acts 6:1, 03.04.05 and 02.01.10.

671. Amir. “The Term *IOUDAISMOS*: A Study in Jewish-Hellenistic Self-identification.” 38.



## **Hellenistic Reform**

By definition, this term referred to the expected compliance by everyone to the Greek culture, including the acceptance of Greek religious values. And it was the subject of religious values that split the Jewish community.

**Hematidrosis** The medical term a/k/a hematohidrosis, is an extremely rare condition in which a person sweats blood. It is believed that due to emotional pressure, blood is forced into the sweat glands and then surfaces through the skin.<sup>672</sup>

**Heresy** This term has often been incorrectly applied because its definition is not fully understood. Christianity is essentially the reconciliation of God and man through the person and work of Jesus Christ. Man is unable to approach God until reconciliation has been made by Jesus, who is the Mediator. Whatever contradicts that reconciliation is called a heresy. Throughout history the church has identified four kinds of heresies, each linked to the corresponding church doctrine. These are,

1. The nature and character of God and of His relation to the universe and to man.
2. The dual human/divine nature of Christ
3. The nature of man
4. The nature of the results of Christ's work among men

To oppose any one of these essential doctrines has been considered heresy.

## **Hermeneutics**

The science and art by which the meaning of the biblical text is determined. The term “science” refers to the principles of thought and language and the classification of facts and results of various texts. The term “art” refers to the proper application of these principles with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The term hermeneutics, for the purpose of this manuscript, is the study of how a passage was understood by those with whom Jesus conversed and taught.<sup>673</sup>

**Herodians** The political dynasty that was established by Herod the Great. The Herodians not

---

672. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2810702/>. Retrieved March 5, 2015.

673. Bruce, “Hermeneutics.” 1:640.

only included family members, but all those who were fervently loyal to them. Some scholars believe the name Boethusians was another name for the Herodians while others believe it was a name for Sadducees.<sup>674</sup> See Mark 3:6; 8:15; 12:13-17 and 02.01.11.

### **Hillel, School of**

See School of Hillel 02.01.19

### **Homer (or Cor)**

A unit of measurement: The homer, or cor, is equal to today's measurement of 100 gallons or 440 liters. The term is found in Luke 16:7, in relation to "a hundred homer of wheat" which would be about 1,250 bushels of wheat. See Appendix 20.

**Hosanna** See "Hosanna" in 13.01.14.

### **Hypostatic Union**

A theological term that is part of the study of Christology. The term applied to the two natures of Jesus of being fully human while at the same time being fully divine. The hypostatic union refers to Christ as being totally divine, while also being totally human.

**Hyperbole** A literary term: A deliberate exaggeration or overstatement to emphasize a point, sometimes with a sense of humor.

**Idol** An object that represents a deity and is worshiped. Every idol has a "demon" associated with it that induces idolatry with its worship and sacrifices. Idol worship among the Jews was highly and repeatedly condemned. Among the Greeks and Romans, a demon signified an inferior deity, whether good or bad.<sup>675</sup> Gods among the Gentiles had all the human vices as had humanity for centuries. Only the God of the Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob brought mankind to a higher plane of moral and ethical standards.

**Idumeans** See 02.01.12

---

674. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 164-67, 738-39.

675. Vine, "Demon, Demonic." *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:151.

**Imago Dei** A Latin phrase and theological term meaning *the image of God*. It is based upon Genesis 1:27, and that the image of God in humanity was damaged, some say lost, at the fall of man.<sup>676</sup> The work of salvation by Jesus is to restore that lost image.

**Inn** See 04.03.10

**Interpolation** Interpolation is the insertion of a word or paragraph into an existing text so that it appears to be the work of the original author. For example, some scholars believe that the words by Josephus concerning Jesus in *Antiquities* 18 were added by Christian writers a century or two after the author passed. If that were true, that would be interpolation.

***Ipsissima verba***

See 08.03.04.Q4 for *ipsissima verba* and *ipsissima vox*,

**Israelites** A term given to the Hebrew children of all twelve tribes. During the Babylonian captivity, the Israelites became known as Jews, a term first associated with those who belonged to the tribe of Judah, but then applied to all Israelites.

**Jehovah** A popular name for God that is the result of a mistaken translation. In 1520 Petrus Galatinus translated the Sacred Tetragrammaton into the Latin name for God, *JHVH*. However, he needed vowels which he derived from *Adonai*, one of many Hebrew names for God. The result was a new name *Jehovah*.<sup>677</sup> However, scholars disagree on the origin of the error, some believe it dates back to the thirteenth or possibly to the fifth century.

*Jehovah* is defined as the Relational God (Jn. 17:23) and the Self-Existing One (Gen. 2:4). The primary meaning of this Divine Name originated from the Hebrew word *Havah* meaning “to be” or “to exist,” but over the course of centuries it also suggested the meaning of “to become” or “to become known”. The latter translation has become a prefix for other descriptive names of God as is shown below. *Jehovah* by itself is now defined as “The Existing One” or “Lord,” the latter of which is commonly used in Bible translations.<sup>678</sup>

---

676. Miethe, *The Compact Dictionary of Doctrinal Words*. 112-13.

677. Cosby, *Interpreting Biblical Literature*. 193; <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Tetragrammaton>. December 21, 2013.

678. See Appendix 32 for other names of God that were personified by Jesus.

### ***The Jesus Seminar***

The Seminar was established in 1985 and at that time had about 150 critical scholars who studied the gospels, although membership since then has dropped to about half. In 2006 the group analyzed the gospel narratives of Jesus and voted, with the use of colored beads, as which words and deeds were actually His and which were not. In their collective decision they concluded, for example, that only two words of the Lord's Prayer were actually said by Him, they voted that the virgin birth is a myth, there was no resurrection, and after the resurrection that did not happen there were no miracles. Opinions of the Seminar are not posted within this manuscript for obvious reasons.

**Jews**            See 02.01.13

### **Jewish Writings**

See 02.02.13

**Josephus**      See 02.02.14

**Judaea**            There has often been name confusion between the southern region known as Judah or Judea, and the name of the entire country – Judaea. The name “Judaea” is often used interchangeably with “Israel,” although the latter term seems to have been used less often in the first century. Amazingly, John 3:22 is the only place in the New Testament where the name “Judaea,” meaning “Judean” appears.

Furthermore, the name “Judah” is generally that of a person, and the descendants of Judah are also known as “the people of Judah” or “the people of Judea.” Some writers use the term “Judea” in the broadest sense. Examples are found in Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 5.15.70; Strabo, *Geographia*, 16.4.21; and Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 37.15.2. While the term Judea or Judah is generally applied only to the tribal area that includes Jerusalem and the area south and east of it, sometimes it is also in reference to the entire Holy Land as is the term “Israel.”

**Judea**            See **Judaea** above

**Judah**            See **Judaea** above

### **Judaism, Biblical**

The religious faith of Judaism that is based solely on the teachings in Hebrew Bible, a/k/a the Old Testament.

**Judaism, Rabbinic**

The religious faith of Judaism that is a blend of the teachings in Hebrew Bible and in the rabbinic writings such as the Mishnah, Midrash, Talmud, and others. Rabbinic Judaism of today was founded by the Pharisees of the time of Christ although it has changed throughout the centuries so that many practices of rabbinic Judaism today are cultural additions to the biblical foundation of faith.<sup>679</sup>

**Judaizer**

A Christian term of the born-again Pharisees in the first century church who believed that a Gentile had to first convert to Judaism and then become a Christian. These Christian Pharisees who believed that the entire Mosaic Law had to be applied to Gentile Christians, were the ones who gave the Apostle Paul considerable trouble.<sup>680</sup> However, the term could also be applied to Gentiles who converted to Judaism, became “God-fearers,” or lived like Jews as mentioned in Esther 8:17.

**Justified**

A legal term in which a judge pronounces a criminal as not guilty. Every believer who has placed their faith in Jesus for mercy and salvation is pronounced justified and righteous by God as if no sins were ever committed (Romans 3:24).

**Khan**

See caravanserai.

**Katuvah**

The marriage contract between a man and woman that was signed at the time of betrothal. At the time of Christ a *Katuvah* or *katubah* stated that the husband could not have a second wife, and if there was a divorce, what his obligations were. For further details, see 04.03.03.A and 08.02.01.<sup>681</sup>

**Koine Greek** The dialect of Greek (as opposed to classical Greek) commonly spoken in the ancient

Near East and in which the New Testament was either written, with a few possible exceptions such as Matthew, which were immediately translated into Greek.

**Kosher laws** Dietary laws that dictate which foods are pure and which are impure and therefore, cannot be eaten. These laws also indicate how acceptable foods are

---

679. Garr, *Restoring Our Lost Legacy*. 146.

680. Uhlhorn, “Jewish Christians, Judaizers.” 2:1179.

681. Ilan, “How Women Differed.” 38.

prepared.<sup>682</sup>

## Law

The Jewish people used the term *Law* in four distinct ways.

1. They used it in reference to the five books of Moses. In Hebrew these books were known as the *Torah*, but in Greek they were called *The Pentateuch*, which means *The Five Rolls*.<sup>683</sup>
2. They used it in reference to the Ten Commandments.
3. They used it in reference to the entire Hebrew Bible.
4. They used the term in reference to their Oral Law, also known as the Traditions of the Elders in Matthew 15:1-2.

The context of a conversation or writing determined which of the above four definitions apply. To add confusion for the modern reader, while the first three references have specific orientation to the Written Word, the fourth definition is a reference to the Oral Law, which in the second century (A.D.) was written and became known as the *Mishnah*. Jesus always honored the Written Law, but he challenged the leading Pharisees who placed the Oral Law in a superior and more authoritative position than the Hebrew Bible.

On an important side note, the Gentile Church has adopted a Roman view of the term *law* (Gk. *nomos* 3551), that means *restriction* and the implication is therefore, *bad*, while the Hebrew Bible views Law (Heb. *torah* (309) as *Instruction* and *Freedom*, and therefore *Good*. Therefore, the negative tone of the phrase *Law* is often placed upon the term *Old Testament*. However, scholars have long recognized that the Old Testament is the New Testament “hidden” and the New Testament is the Old Testament “revealed.” Both testaments should be viewed as a whole unit. However, the Hebrew meaning emphasizes *instruction*, a vital concept that is lost in translations. Even though the gospels were written or translated into Greek, Matthew, Mark, and John were Jewish, and thought in Jewish terms. Therefore, the Hebrew definition of key terms is critical to

---

682. A point of interest is this: the church instituted a taboo on eating horsemeat, but it was not for religious reasons. In 732 Pope Gregory III decreed the first “Christian” prohibition against any kind of food – horsemeat. The reason was that it was reserved for the soldiers who were fighting the invading Muslims.

683. Barclay, “Matthew.” 1:127.

understanding their message. Greek dictionaries very seldom include the Hebrew meaning.<sup>684</sup>

**Leaven** It is often, but not always, symbolic of sin and false teaching as illustrated in Mark 8:15 (the Herodian family and the religious elites), the sin of malevolence, immorality and wickedness in 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, the sin of religious legalism in Galatians 5:9. Under the Mosaic instruction leaven was to be removed from the home prior to Passover, and the significance of the Passover lamb is that it covered the sin. Jesus, in turn, was the perfect Lamb of God who did not cover but removed all sins from the life account of every believer by His sacrificial death. The false teaching, or lies, about Jesus were as follows:

1. The Leaven of the Pharisees – They said Jesus was demon possessed and blasphemed God.
2. The leaven of the Sadducees – They were Hellenized Jews who claimed Jesus was against the temple.
3. The leaven of the Herodians – They said Jesus was against Roman rule.

**Legend** For the purpose of this study, there are two definitions:

1. The script on coins is at times referred to as a “legend.”
2. In literary use, it is a fanciful story that has historic roots. Often the account of an actual event was repeated and, over time, was embellished so that it is no longer true.

**Levites** Descendants of Levi who served in the temple as assistants to the priests. See John 1:19 and Luke 10:32. Since they served the priests, they were known as *clerus minor* (Latin)<sup>685</sup> and considered second class by superior temple staff, especially the Sadducees.<sup>686</sup> They were the singers, reed-pipe musicians, police

---

684. With all due respect to W. E. Vine’s incredible work, and that of many other fine scholars like him, in his Greek dictionary he failed to show that the gospel writers were Jews who acted and wrote like Jews. Vine did not indicate the Hebraic definition of *law* (= *instruction*) within his Greek dictionary, therefore, many students of Scripture miss this concept that was vital to the gospel writers. While he did define it in his Hebrew dictionary, the connection is lost. He is typical of many Gentile scholars. See Vine, “Law.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 1:133-34; 2:354-57.

685. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 208.

686. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 212.

force, entry guards, and maintenance workers who performed all the functions needed to keep the temple spotlessly clean.<sup>687</sup>

**Libertines** A group of former slaves who had their own synagogue in Jerusalem (Acts 6:9).

### **Linguistic equivalence**

A literary term related to the translation of the Bible whereby the translators attempt to produce a literal word-for-word translation.

**Living water** A phrase used to reveal the eternal life and refreshment found in Jesus. See discussions in 05.05.05; 06.01.03 and Jn. 4:4-26; 11.02.14; Jn. 7:37-39; 11.02.14; 11.02.22; 18.01.05; and Appendix 13.

**Lord** The Hebrew word for “Lord” is *El*, and has several different meanings as follows:<sup>688</sup>

1. It is generally a reference to a deity, including the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but also to pagan gods such as Asclepius, Hermes, Zeus, and others.
2. The term is applied to the head of a family, especially in the Old Testament era.
3. In the writings of the Apostle Paul, the term is used in reference to the master of slaves (1 Tim. 4:1-2; Tit. 2:9; 1 Pet. 2:18)

**Love** The English language has only one basic word for “love,” the meaning of which is determined by the context in which it is used. But the New Testament Greek has four words for “love,” each with a different shade or tone of meaning. They are:<sup>689</sup>

1. *Philia* is the deep affection or love between friends.
2. *Storge* is the love between members of a family.
3. *Eros* is the love that attracts two people together. It is the root word for

---

687. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 208-10.

688. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 1:113.

689. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 53.



the English term *erotic*. It tends to be a self-seeking love that seeks passion and lust.

4. *Agape* is opposite of *eros*, in that it seeks the highest and best good for the other person; it is self-sacrificing for another. This term is the most frequently used word for love in the New Testament <sup>690</sup> and is the least used word for love by Greek writers. *Agape* love is the God-kind of love that Jesus demonstrated. It isn't heart love as much as it is *will* love.<sup>691</sup>

**Lulab** This is a Hebrew term for branches of palm, myrtle, and willow tied together and carried during the Feast of Tabernacles festival.

**LXX** Roman numerals that comprise the abbreviation for the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible known as the Septuagint. See Septuagint in 02.02.25.

**Maccabee** The nickname, meaning *the hammer* for the family of fighters and their followers who fought against the Greeks in the second century B.C. The entire movement became known as the Maccabean Revolt (see 03.04.19-21).

**Madaba Map** The Madaba Map is a huge mosaic map (51 ft. by 19 ft.) that was created in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD in the church floor in Madaba, in modern Jordan. Made with an estimated 1.1 to 2 million small mosaic tiles (*tesserae*), it depicts Jerusalem and the Holy Land, but nothing related to Judaism. For example, it shows the Church of the Holy Sepulchre but not the Temple Mount. In that sense, it is an excellent representation of replacement theology. Its historical significance is that it reveals places that would otherwise have been lost and how the Byzantine church viewed the Jewish people.<sup>692</sup>

**Magi** A group of highly educated priestly men who functioned as ambassadors and advisors to the kings of Persia and Parthia. They taught the children of the royal court a wide range of subjects, including mathematics, astronomy, astrology, the sciences, divination, military skills, and magic, but mainly religion.<sup>693</sup> See also 04.04.06.Q3.

---

690. Examples are 1. Cor. 13 (the classic love chapter), 1 Pet. 1:22; Rom. 12:10 and Jn. 3:16.

691. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 155.

692. See also 14.02.03.D and 05.02.03.Z.

693. The Babylonians, followed by the Persians, who in turn were followed by the Parthians, all had a reputation for predicting the future. Two ancient writers who made specific mention of this art among the Persians are Cicero, *De divinatione* 1.47 and Plutarch, *Alexander and Caesar* 3.2. See also Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*. 472.

**Magianism** The studies, through astrological research, of the priestly caste of ancient Media and Persia who promoted the coming of a savior.

**Maleficium** The Latin term for *magic*.

**Manuscripts** The original handwritten documents are known as *autographs*, *witnesses*, or *manuscripts*. None of these original writings of Scripture have survived due to their frequent use. However, a few have survived as early as the second century A.D.

**Maphtir** Hebrew: The title given to the man reading the Scriptures during congregational worship in the synagogue.

### **Masoretic Text**

The Masoretic text is the standard Old Testament translation that was produced by a group of Jewish scholars known as the Masoretes, between the third and sixth centuries (A.D.). Since the written biblical Hebrew has only consonants, the Masoretes added vowel points and punctuated the text. The oldest version is dated to 1088, barely a thousand years old. While the modern Old Testament is based upon the Masoretic text, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has revealed that the Scriptures were faithfully transmitted for more than 2,000 years. See 02.02.06.V.

**Nazarite** This term is not related to anyone from the village of Nazareth, but rather, a Nazarite was any man who took a “Nazarite vow” as prescribed in Numbers 6. See also Judges 13:3-7 and Luke 1:15.

**Menorah** The Menorah is the seven lamp candelabra that is generally said to be symbolic of the Jewish people and their faith. God said that He ordained the lamp for His anointed servants (Ps. 132:17). In reality God said it was *His* symbol for His people and in Revelation 1:12-13 Jesus said He was the center of the seven lamp candlestick symbolic of Him being the light of the world. Since the church was grafted into the seed of Abraham (Rom. 8-11) then the Menorah is obviously symbolic of God’s people under both the Old and New Covenant. Both Jews and Christians are identified in this symbol. The Menorah has seven candles for the seven priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant (Josh. 6:4) and later the seven men called to ministry in the church (Acts 6:3). It has been suggested that the seventy-two decorations on the Menorah are representative of the seventy-two elders who received the spirit of Moses (Num. 10) as later the seventy-two

apostles were sent out by Jesus (Luke 10) to preach the Kingdom of God.<sup>694</sup>

### **Messianic banquet**

At the end of the church age, the final fulfillment of the Kingdom of God will include a huge banquet with the Messiah. See Isaiah 25:6-9 and Luke 14:15-24.

### **Messianic consciousness**

Some scholars debate whether or not Jesus believed and claimed that He was the Messiah.<sup>695</sup> Others say that at the early age of 12 Jesus was fully aware that He was the Messiah and had a special calling and responsibility upon His life. This writer says that since Jesus communicated with His heavenly Father daily, He was aware of his messianic calling from childhood, but the first recorded expression of it was when He was in the temple at age 12.

### **Messianic problem**

The Messianic problem refers to the two opposing characteristics given to the Messiah. Psalm 2:7 refers to a messianic royal announcement while the messianic verse of Isaiah 42:1 refers to a servant. The problem lies in the fact that while both passages were seen as messianic, in common opinions, a king would never be a servant. To resolve this problem, some Jews, such as the Essenes, believed that there would be two messiahs. A messiah of Aaron would restore the temple and a messiah of David would direct the war between the sons of light and the sons of darkness (Romans and infidels) and the present evil age will end (a political statement, not the end of the world).<sup>696</sup> It was not until after the resurrection that believing Jews realized that Jesus was both their Servant and King.

**Metaphor** A literary term: A figure of speech in which one thing is spoken as if it were something completely different.

**Metrete** A unit of measure: This Greek word refers to a volume of 8.8 gallons, or 39.4 liters. When Jesus turned water into wine, the six ceremonial jars each held about 2 or 3 metretes, or a total of about 600 liters (Jn. 2:6). See Appendix 20.

**Meturgan** Some synagogues had a *meturgan*, an interpreter, since many foreign people came

---

694. Garr, *Restoring Our Lost Legacy*. 170-72.

695. [http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/pdf/vos\\_consciousness.pdf](http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/pdf/vos_consciousness.pdf). Retrieved January 17, 2014.

696. Mellows and Cran, Producers. *From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians*. (DVD). Part 1.

to Jerusalem.<sup>697</sup>

**Middle East** The phrase is used to aid the modern reader who many not be aware of the fact that historically, this area was commonly referred to as the Ancient Near East. The latter phrase is more accurate, but out of common use.

**Midrash** See 02.02.15

**Mikvah** A mikvah (mikva'oth, plural) is a square or rectangular hole cut in stone usually 4 feet by 4 feet by 3 feet deep or somewhat larger.<sup>698</sup> It is filled with water for the purpose of ritual immersion every time someone became impure or entered the temple or participated in major festival services.<sup>699</sup> The practice is based upon Numbers 31:21-23 where Moses said that metals had to be cleaned by immersion in water. Consequently, the Pharisees decided to apply the rule to themselves. Immersion in a *mikvah* was in response to defilement caused by a physical transgression (touching a dead body, walking over a grave, etc.), whereas baptism was for repentance of sin and the coming to faith. This may be the reason, the Apostle Paul said there was only one baptism (Acts. 2:38; Rom. 6:3-5; Eph. 4:5). Ritual immersion is different from baptism in that baptism is a one-time public declaration of the acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Savior and repentance of a sinful life. See images at 04.04.03.B, 04.04.03.C, and 05.05.05.C, with additional information in 05.05.05.

**Mishnah** See 02.02.16 and 02.02.18

### **Mishnaic Hebrew**

The Mishnaic Hebrew language, a/k/a Early Rabbinic Hebrew language, is a slightly modernized version of the Old Testament biblical Hebrew. It began to develop in the second half of the Inter-Testamental Period and this dialect is found in the *Mishnah* and later *Talmudic* books. It was the spoken Hebrew in the days of Jesus. The minor differences between biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew are beyond the scope of this study. It is mentioned here only to recognize that there is a difference, but those differences are not significant.<sup>700</sup>

---

697. Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. 11.

698. Zondervan's *New International Version Archaeological Study Bible*. 2005. 1562.

699. See Num. 9:10; Jn. 11:55; Acts 21:24-27; Josephus *Wars*, 1.11.6.

700. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mishnaic\\_Hebrew](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mishnaic_Hebrew). Retrieved March 4, 2015. Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 4, Session 1.

[http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/115257/jewish/The-Mishnaic-Age.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/115257/jewish/The-Mishnaic-Age.htm). Retrieved March 4, 2015.

**Miracles** Evidential proof of direct communication between the spiritual world and the physical realm. A miracle is considered of divine origin when associated with the message of Jesus as Lord, Savior, and Healer. This distinguishes the miracle from demonic miracles.

**Mnemonic** A Mnemonic is a play on words – words that sound alike but may have different meanings. People in all languages use *mnemonics*, often as a point of humor, but also as a memory device for the listeners.<sup>701</sup>

### **Money Changer**

See 05.05.04 and 05.05.04.C

**Monograph** A monograph is a comprehensive literary work on a single subject. It could be written about a single event, technique, rhetoric, or one of any number of other subjects. For example, Pliny the Elder once published a monograph on the use of the throwing-spear by the cavalry. Monographs are among the most common literary works found in Romans writings.

### **Mount Moriah**

It is where Abraham was about to offer Isaac as a sacrifice God until God prevented the child's death. The mount became later known as the Temple Mount where both Solomon's Temple (the first temple) and the Herod's Temple (the second temple) once stood. The Hebrew word for Mount Moriah is *har ha-bayit* meaning *mount of the house*.<sup>702</sup>

**Mount Zion** Originally Mount Zion was a hill in the western end of Jerusalem and Mount Moriah was called the Temple Mount. Eventually, however, the temple became known as Mount Zion. By the New Testament era the name Mount Zion was applied to,

1. The Temple Mount
2. The name of a hill in the western part of the Old City of Jerusalem.
3. The name for the city of Jerusalem.

---

701. Fruchtenbaum, *Life of the Messiah*. Tape 2, Side B; Barclay, "Matthew." 1:13; See 04.05.04.Q1, 04.05.04.X, and 05.01.02.Q1.

702. Mills and Michael, *Messiah and His Hebrew Alphabet*. 7.

The context of the term defines the geographical area.

**Nazi** The president or synagogue leader was known as the *nazi*.<sup>703</sup>

**Narrative** A literary term: A narrative is a story.

**New Testament**

See 02.02.17

**Old Testament**

See 02.02.19

**Omer** The first sheaf (bundle of grain freshly cut) of the harvest season that is offered at the temple as a meal offering. See Appendix 20.

**Onah** An *onah* is a 24-hour period of a single day and one night.<sup>704</sup> See Appendix 11.

**Oral Law** See 02.02.18 Mishnah 02.02.16, and Oral Tradition 02.02.20

**Oral Torah** See also Oral Law. The Oral Torah was the teaching of the rabbis. Disciples never wrote down the teachings of their rabbi, in part because writing materials were rare and expensive.<sup>705</sup> Furthermore, it was not practical to carry such material around from town to town. When the disciples followed their rabbis around the countryside, listening to him teach and preach, they did not carry an arm-load of scroll on which to write notations. Memorization was common practice, not only of the Scriptures, but other Jewish books also.

**Oral Tradition**

See 02.02.20 and Mishnah 02.02.16

**Ossilegium** The process or act of collecting the bones of a deceased person. This was part of the Jewish funeral tradition at the time of Jesus, when about one year after a person died, the bones were collected and placed in an ossuary (bone box). The *ossilegium* was also known as a *secondary burial*.

---

703. Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. 9.

704. Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 2:210.

705. Fischer, *The Gospels in Their Jewish Context*. (Lecture on CD/MP3). Week 2, Session 1.

- Ostraca** Prior to the invention of paper, papyrus was expensive and broken pieces of pottery were used for note pads. An ostraca is a pottery fragment that was used as a writing surface. Since pottery does not deteriorate as do other writing surfaces, ostraca have incredible value to archaeologists as these reveal written thoughts, concerns and comments of a by-gone era. An example is the King David Fragment at 03.02.01.A.
- Oxymoron** A literary term: The term oxymoron is from two Greek words *oxus*, meaning “sharp, pointed,” and *moros*, meaning “dull foolish.”<sup>706</sup> In modern English the term “oxymoron” means two opposites that are combined as a single phrase, such as “military intelligence,” or an “icy hot” medical patch.
- Paleo-Hebrew** The Paleo-Hebrew script was used by the ancient Hebrews prior to their adoption of the Aramaic square script that was used in the Inter-Testamental Period and is still in use today. By the first century Paleo-Hebrew was out of use with the occasional exception of coins.
- Palestine** The name given to the land of Israel after the destruction of Jerusalem in 135 A.D. At that time Emperor Hadrian renamed the land *Palestina*, in honor of Israel’s ancient enemies, the Philistines. While the name did not originate with him, he popularized it. The name “Palestine” does not appear as a proper name in any biblical books. Over the centuries scholars and Bible publishers used the name on Bible maps because readers could identify Palestine with current events. Israel did not become resurrected again until 1948.
- Pan** The Greek god of the forest who also kept order among rival deities. Pan was among the supreme gods, and is where the name “pantheon” originated.
- Papyrus** Papyrus is a paper-like material made from the pith (center) part of the papyrus plant. This writing material originated in Egypt but was used throughout the ancient world. Thousands of papyri fragments with biblical verses and historical events have been found in tombs, caves, and even garbage dumps, and are well preserved due to the dry Egyptian climate.
- Parable** A literary term: A parable is a form of teaching in which one thing is set aside another. In essence, the first object which is understood is compared to the second object so it will be understood.<sup>707</sup> There are only two exceptions (Job 27:1 and

---

706. Various biblical writers used oxymorons, as found in Job 22:6; Isa. 68:10; Jer. 22:19; Mt. 16:25; Acts 5:41; 1 Cor. 1:25; 1:27-29, 9:17; 2 Cor. 6:4, 8-10; 8:2; 12:10,11; Eph. 3:8; 1 Tim. 5:6.

707. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 1:74-75; Mowry, “Parable.” 3:649.

29:1) where a parable is not a comparative story. Parables have a single central theme and cannot to be used to support or deny doctrine, but they convey a divine truth. Sometimes, what appears to be a parable, isn't, such as Matthew 25:31-46.<sup>708</sup> See also 08.04.07.Q2 "Why did Jesus teach with parables?"

<b>Paradox</b>	A literary term: A statement that seems to be contradictory but contains truth.
<b>Parashah</b>	Hebrew: The reading of a lesson from the Law or Torah during congregational worship in the synagogue.
<b>Parchment</b>	A leather writing material produced most often from the hides of sheep and goats.
<b>Parnasim</b>	Men who held a position in the synagogue similar to deacons in the church. The structure of the early church imitated the structure of the synagogue. The synagogues generally had three men known in Hebrew as <i>almoners</i> or <i>parnasin</i> , who cared for the poor and others in need. <sup>709</sup>
<b>Passion</b>	The term "Passion" as used in the phrase "Passion Week," refers to the suffering and death of Jesus, not a love-type emotion. The week ends with His resurrection.
<b>Pax Romana</b>	The term literally means <i>peace to Rome and quiet in the provinces</i> , <sup>710</sup> was a period of unprecedented peace and prosperity throughout the Roman Empire from 27 B.C, when Octavian became the sole dictator and monarch of the empire, until about A.D. 180. Even though in this 200 year period there were two Jewish revolts in Jerusalem (A.D. 66-73; 132-135), a Jewish Revolt in Egypt in A.D. 115, and smaller revolts elsewhere; overall, it was a peaceful time for a population that grew to an estimated 70-75 million people. Beginning with the reign of Nero (A.D. 37-68), Christians were persecuted mercilessly, but the lack of military conflicts enabled the gospel to spread quickly throughout the empire and beyond.
<b>Pentapolis</b>	A group of five city-states in North Africa that were established for Greek administrative reasons. Cyrene, the home of Simon of Cyrene, was one of those cities. East of the Jordan River a similar administrative jurisdiction was created with ten city-states known as the Decapolis.

708. See also 14.01.09 and 09.03.11.X "The First Principle Of A Parable."

709. Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. 10.

710. This phrase is the definition of *Pax Romana*. Lee, *The Galilean Jewishness of Jesus*. 72-73; Mellowes and Cran, Executive Producers. *From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians*. (DVD). Part 1; See "Pax Romana" in Appendix 26.



- Pentateuch** See 02.02.21
- Perea** One of three Jewish districts, but it lies east of the Jordan River whereas Judea and Galilee lie west of the Jordan River. Perea is also referred to in the gospels as the “Judea beyond the Jordan” (cf. Mt. 19:1).
- Pericope** A set of verses which may consist of more than a single paragraph that form a complete thought, theme, coherent unit, or story. The term is generally used for religious literature such as the gospels, but may be used for other readings as well, especially for public reading.
- Permutation** An accidental error made by a scribe while copying the text. It is the substitution of a letter with another letter it resembles.
- Pharisee** A religious sect who considered themselves to be the guardians of the written and oral laws. This was a separatist movement with significant influence over the common people. See various references including Matthew 12:1-2; 23, and 02.01.14.
- Philo** See 02.02.22
- Philosophy** Philosophy is the study of the principles of reality, knowledge and values, and is based upon logic and reasoning. It attempts to answer a number of issues, such as the purpose of life. Since the central core of Greek philosophy is to obtain the ideal goal of life, it has been suggested that philosophy is a false substitute for religion, and that it stems from the world of paganism which first gave rise to Plato and Aristotle
- Phylactery** A small leather box that was worn on the forehead and left arm, and contained Scripture verses. Women, servants and children were not required to wear them, although women could, if they wanted to, wear them on Passover.<sup>711</sup>
- Pliny the Younger**  
See 02.02.23
- Pogroms** A systematized execution of Jewish people as occurred in A.D. 39-41 in Rome, in Russia in the 1880s, and in Germany in the 1930s and ‘40s.

---

711. Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 2:69.

**Polis** The Greek word for *city*, one that was a government administrative center for a Greek district or region.

**Poseidon** The Greek god of the sea, earthquakes, storms, and horses.

**Postexilic** The term means “after exile,” as in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. when the Jews returned to Israel after being in exile in Babylon.

### **Preparation Day**

See 07.02.02.Q1 “Were there “non-Sabbath” Sabbath Days?”

**Proconsul** A Roman official, generally of the Praetorium or consular rank who served as a deputy consul in the Provinces governed by Rome. The assignment was generally for a year, and sometimes longer, and the proconsul had unlimited power in all civil and military affairs. Paul recorded two men of such rank and office: Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:7) and Gallio (Acts 18:12).<sup>712</sup> The office of the proconsul, also known as a “legate” by some historians, was equal to a modern governor-general.

**Procurator** The governor of a province whose position was appointed personally by the emperor. Three procurators of the New Testament era are Pilate, Felix and Festus, all of whom had their headquarters in Caesarea Maritima. However, as mentioned previously, Pilate’s title was prefect, not procurator, as incorrectly mentioned by some ancient historians.

On the other hand, the mysterious Quirinius of Luke 2:2 was not an official governor or procurator of Syria, but a temporary imperial legate who functioned as a procurator on behalf of the emperor.<sup>713</sup>

**Prophet** A prophet, or *nabi*, is one who “speaks forth” the word of God.<sup>714</sup> The words of a prophet are not so much of a predictive nature as they are of a right and wrong nature – that people obey the directives of God. Old Testament prophets were active in social justice and often gave dire warnings to religious leaders and kings of pending doom, when they failed to obey God, but also gave words of hope and a future.

---

712. Tenney, ed., “Proconsul.” 13:1660.

713. Tenney, ed., “Procurator.” 13:1660.

714. Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages*. 73.

**Propitiation** A theological term that means “God is satisfied with what the death of Messiah accomplished” (1 Jn. 2:2). The basic meaning, “to propitiate,” is “to appease the wrath of God.” But it does not mean His death merely satisfied an angry and vengeful God, but it satisfied a God who is just, righteous, and holy. The death (or blood) of Jesus was the price that was paid for the penalty of sin (Mt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:6).

**Proselytes** Gentiles who converted to Judaism and participated in the religious rituals required (baptism and circumcision for men). See Matthew 23:15 and Acts 2:10; 13:43.

### ***Protevangeliu*m of James**

A second century book that glorifies Mary, the mother of Jesus. The author of *The Protevangeliu*m of James, was not a biblical figure, as he had little or no knowledge of the Jewish culture. Consequently, the book is full of imaginative details. Some scholars have dated it to about A.D. 200 and identified it as a creative novel.<sup>715</sup>

### **Pseudepigrapha**

See 02.02.24. A classification of books not found in the Hebrew Bible or Apocrypha. The name literally means, “false writings,” because these books were ascribed to earlier biblical heroes who are said to be the authors. The books contained therein are:

*The Ascension of Isaiah*

*Assumption of Moses*

*Book of Enoch*

*Book of Jubilee*

*Greek Apocalypse of Baruch*

*Letters of Aristeas*

*3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Maccabees*

*Psalms of Solomon*

*Secrets of Enoch*

*Sibylline Oracles*

*The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*<sup>716</sup>

**Publicans** This English word came from the Latin term *publicani*, meaning *tax collector*. These Jewish men bid for a position to collect taxes in a particular region and the highest bidder received the appointment.<sup>717</sup> Anything that he collected beyond what he needed for the governor was his to keep. But if he did not receive sufficient funds, he had to pay

715. Bailey, *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes*. 27.

716. Tenney, ed., “Pseudepigrapha.” 13:1694.

717. Josephus, *Antiquities* 12.4.3.

the difference. This often opened the door for legalized extortion to be applied to Jews who had become economic slaves.<sup>718</sup> See Luke 3:13; 19:8 and Matthew 9:9.

## Purity Laws

The purity laws were those laws within the Old Testament and Oral Law that pertained to the daily activities of life by which one kept himself pure. Some Jewish scholars believe these originated with Moses, but that opinion is said to give these laws greater authority. However, most scholars believe these originated in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, and were later expanded after the Maccabean Revolt. See “Oral Laws” for more information.

**Q** The word/letter **Q** stands for the German word *Quelle* meaning *source*, that is said to be a lost gospel – in theory. A number of German scholars have said that approximately 235 verses of oracles (sayings) in the gospels of Matthew and Luke parallel each other and, therefore, *must* have come from a *common* source. That theoretical source is said to be **Q**. These scholars have placed so much faith in their analysis, that they have *created* this hypothetical document and refer to it as a historical fact.

However, this writer agrees with most Messianic scholars who say that the entire issue revolving around the hypothetical **Q** is the result of not understanding the Oral Tradition of the biblical Jews.

No reference to a **Q** document is made within this manuscript for obvious reasons, but it is mentioned here so the reader is somewhat knowledgeable of it because he may find it in other sources. Another less known theoretical source is **M**.<sup>719</sup> However, no literary or archaeological evidence has ever been found to support these theories with the exception of Papias who said that “Matthew composed the oracles in the Hebrew language and each person interpreted them as best he could.”<sup>720</sup> Messianic scholars believe he referred to the gospel of

---

718. Schurer, *A History of the Jewish People* First Division, 2:68-69.

719. Blomberg, “The Authenticity and Significance of Jesus’ Table Fellowship with Sinners.” 237, 262.

720.

[https://www.google.com/search?q=papyrus+bodmer+ii+\(p66\)+200+c.e&biw=1920&bih=955&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=AW33VJHGA8adNvnUg-gH&ved=0CB0QsAQ&dpr=1#imgdii=&imgsrc=j-GQyE7aUJkAaM%253A%3BRWJrnkngqXnPZM%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fimage.slidesharecdn.com%252Fwhochose-thegospelsshare-140913011229-phpapp01%252F95%252Fwho-chose-the-gospels-the-great-gospel-conspiracy-85-638.jpg%253Fcb%253D1410589093%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.slideshare.net%252FAthenagorus%252Fwho-chose-the-gospels-the-great-gospel-conspiracy%3B638%3B359](https://www.google.com/search?q=papyrus+bodmer+ii+(p66)+200+c.e&biw=1920&bih=955&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=AW33VJHGA8adNvnUg-gH&ved=0CB0QsAQ&dpr=1#imgdii=&imgsrc=j-GQyE7aUJkAaM%253A%3BRWJrnkngqXnPZM%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fimage.slidesharecdn.com%252Fwhochose-thegospelsshare-140913011229-phpapp01%252F95%252Fwho-chose-the-gospels-the-great-gospel-conspiracy-85-638.jpg%253Fcb%253D1410589093%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.slideshare.net%252FAthenagorus%252Fwho-chose-the-gospels-the-great-gospel-conspiracy%3B638%3B359). Retrieved March 4, 2015. Papias, *E H* 3.39.16.

Matthew. This subject is recommended for further study in Appendix 33.

### **Quartodeciman**

The early church's practice and custom of celebrating the death and resurrection of Jesus on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan. This practice continued for three centuries, mostly in Asia Minor, until the year 325 when the Council of Nicea officially ended the practice. The Council also severed all ties with Judaism, which resulted in the loss of understanding by Christians concerning the Jewish roots of their faith.

### **Rabbi**

The term means *teacher*. The Greek word *didaskalos* is generally translated as *rabbi*.<sup>721</sup> Most men who became rabbis, received their training in one of the yeshivas (seminaries) in Babylon or Jerusalem. In the first century, the term was not an official office, but one given for respect. Therefore, to be a rabbi, all what one had to do was to have disciples.<sup>722</sup> Jesus, of course, did not attend a yeshiva, but gathered disciples once people heard Him teach. And the fact that He had disciples and was teaching people without any formal education highly irritated the leading Pharisees.

The rabbis were the heads of the congregations, although the title was also used by scribes, as noted in Matthew 23:7-8.<sup>723</sup> However, the local rabbis were generally godly men who tried their best to serve God and their congregation. However, the upper levels of the Pharisees were wealthy, arrogant, and powerful individuals who manipulated all the rabbis below them. It was these aristocratic Pharisees with whom Jesus had numerous conflicts. See also "School of Hillel" in 02.01.19 and "School of Shammai" in 02.01.20, which were two opposing schools of Pharisaic theology centered in Jerusalem.

### **Rabbinic**

Pertaining to the rabbis. The term is usually used as "rabbinic literature" meaning literary works written by the rabbis either before, but usually after the time of Jesus.

**Rabbinic Age** The time from the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century (AD) to the early 7<sup>th</sup> century when the great rabbis lived such as Yohannan ben Zakkai, Akiva, and Judah the Prince. They were leaders in the writing of the existing Oral laws (Mishnah) and the

---

721. Barclay, "John." 1:7-8; Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*, 11.

722. Bookman, *When God Wore Sandals*. CD Trac 7.

723. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 236; Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 1:20-21.

development of the Talmud.

**Rabboni** “Rabboni” and “Rabban” are higher titles than rabbi. A rabbi was a teacher at the time of Jesus but the phrase did not become an official clergy title until centuries later.

**Ransom** The term “ransom” as it applies to Jesus means that the blood of Messiah was the price that had to be paid for the penalty of my sin, and the sin of everyone else. It was paid to the holy Law of God (Mt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:6).

**Rapture** A theological term applied to when Jesus comes to *get* His church prior to catastrophic warfare on earth.<sup>724</sup> It is not the second coming, which many believe will be seven years after the rapture.

### **Reconciliation**

The term means, “to change the relationship of one person to another person”, such as “to change from enmity to friendship.” Reconciliation is the restoration of a broken relationship, either between people or between a person and God.<sup>725</sup>

**Redemption** This refers to the price paid by God to remove a sinner from condemnation. The price was the death of Jesus, who arose three days later.

**Red Heifer** There is no mention of the sacrifice of the red heifer<sup>726</sup> in the New Testament, and its connection with the life and ministry of Jesus is seldom mentioned in Christian literature. Yet it must have been significant since Herod the Great built a bridge east of the temple that was called the Bridge of the Red Heifer. Scholars believe a red heifer was sacrificed on the Mount of Olives. Some scholars believe the ashes of the last red heifer were saved when the temple was destroyed and kept in Galilee until the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>727</sup> There is much that remains a mystery concerning this sacrifice and the current status of the ashes of the last sacrificed heifer.

**Repent** The word *repent* in Greek is *metanoias*, which literally means *to change one’s mind*. In biblical thinking, to change one’s mind also meant to change one’s

---

724. Mt. 24:23; Jn 14:3; Acts 1:11; Lu 12:40; I Thess. 4:4-18, 5:2; Rev. 3:11.

725. See Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:20; 2 Cor. 5:19.

726. The whole matter involving the red heifer sacrifice is one this writer believes is in need of further study. See Appendices 6 and 33.

727. Babylonian Talmud, *Hagigah* 25a and *Niddah* 6b ((Soncino ed.); Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. 139, 142.

lifestyle to match his new way of thinking.<sup>728</sup> Because of a Godly sorrow for sin, the believer knowingly turns away from a sinful lifestyle and toward Christ by faith for his/her salvation, and then in pursuit of a biblical lifestyle (Luke 13:3). But it is more than to be honestly sorry for committed sin, it is to have an attitude that to repeat it is offensive to one's self and to God.

### **Replacement theology**

A doctrine of the church that essentially says that all of God's blessings and promises to the Jewish people have been terminated and now have been passed on to the church. Therefore, they have only divine curses. This doctrine also says that the Law (Gk. *telos* 5056)<sup>729</sup> has ended and Jesus ushered in the age of grace. It must be noted that not all evangelical Christians accept this position.

### **Righteousness**

Essentially it is being in right relationship with God. Righteousness (Greek *dikaiosyne*) is defined by a number of terms such as "uprightness, upright, just, acquitted"<sup>730</sup> or as children say in a simplified manner, "as if I never sinned." A righteous person is not one who observes a particular code of ethics or rules, but one who has a special *relationship* with God.

The cultural meaning of *righteousness* was to hold the biblical code of ethics, such as giving to the poor or expressing kindness, especially in situations when it would not be expected. Jesus introduced a new definition of *righteousness* – that is to have an *ongoing relationship* with God.

**Romans**      See 02.01.15

**Sabbath Day** See 02.04.06 "Sabbath Day Observances."

### **Sabbath Day's Walk (or Journey)**

Taking a long journey on the seventh day was deemed as "work" and, therefore, a violation of Sabbath regulations. It is based upon Numbers 35:4-5. Ironically, the School of Sopherim/Sophrim popularized travel restrictions and how to avoid them, which were eventually recorded in the Mishnah. It was a distance of two

---

728. Barclay, "Mark." 26; Richardson, "Repent." 191-92.

729. Vine, "End, Ending." *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:191.

730. Brown, "Righteousness, Justification." 3:352-54.

thousand cubits (at this time 1 cubit = 17.71 inches).<sup>731</sup> By the first century the regulation was extended and the rabbis placed a marker outside of every village to indicate the end of a Sabbath Day's journey. If, however, one wanted to walk a greater distance on the Sabbath, then on the previous day some personal belongings would be carried to the "mile marker." The personal belongings were said to create a type of "second home" so that one could begin walking another two thousand cubits without violating the rabbinic rules.<sup>732</sup> See the "School of Sophrim" below for more details and 06.02.02.Q2 "The Sabbath Day's walk – How far did they take Jesus?"

**Sadducees** An aristocratic religious sect that controlled the temple and, at the time of Jesus, was incredibly corrupt. See Mark 12:18; Luke 20:27 and 02.01.16.

**Salvation** The term *salvation* comes from the Greek word *soteria* that means healing for the body and soul.<sup>733</sup> God's plan is to bring man back to Himself. It is not just a hope, but an absolute necessity to inherit eternal life.

### **Samaritan Hebrew**

A dialect of the Hebrew language that was spoken by the Samaritans. Eventually it was used only in religious services, but was replaced by a Samaritan dialect of Aramaic for daily use, which in turned was replaced by Arabic. Samaritan Hebrew ceased to be a daily spoken language by the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Samaritan Papyri**

The Samaritan Papyri are documents discovered in 1962-64, in a cave about nine miles north of Jericho near the Wadi Daliyeh. In addition to the literary fragments, there were coins, jewelry, household goods, and skeletons. Archaeologists believe these are the remains of upper-class Samaritans who fled from the advancing Alexander the Great in 332 B.C., and may have been killed by his army. The papyri provide understanding of the time and situation ascribed to them in late 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.<sup>734</sup>

**Samaritans** A people group who were descendants of Jews and Gentiles brought together by

---

731. See "Cubit" in Appendix 26.

732. Mishnah, *Erubin*, 5.1-5.9; Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 1:232.

733. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 246.

734. Scott, Jr., *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*. X.



the Assyrian Empire in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. They lived in an area between Galilee and Judea. See John 4:9; 8:48; Matthew 10:5; Luke 10:33; 17:16 and 02.01.17.

### **Sanctify / Sanctification**

Sanctification means to be separated from sin and separated unto God. To sanctify is to set apart for some specific or holy use (Jn. 17:16; 1 Jn. 2:15).

**Sanhedrin** See also 02.01.18. The religious and legal supreme court of the Jewish people. See Matthew 26:65-66 and 27:1-2. The court consisted of the following entities:<sup>735</sup>

1. 1 President and high priest who was Caiaphas during the ministry of Jesus.
2. 24 chief priests who were Sadducees
3. 24 elders who were Pharisees
4. 22 scribes who were Pharisees

The high court in Jerusalem was known as the “Great Sanhedrin” and the courts in cities were known as the “Lesser Sanhedrins.” The Great Sanhedrin had anywhere from 23 to 70 members plus the president, whereas the Lesser courts had only 23 members. The Sanhedrin of the New Testament era was disbanded in Tiberias in 358, but it was re-established in the same city in October, 2004.

**Sarcophagus** (Plural – sarcophagi). A coffin, that remained above ground and was usually ornately carved. Since the sarcophagus was made from limestone, the body decomposed and “disappeared” quickly leaving only teeth and skeletal remains.

**Satan** The great enemy of God and believers. He is at times referred to as “the evil one” (Mt. 5:37; 6:13, etc.). Satan (Gk. *satanas* 4567; Heb *satan*)<sup>736</sup> is the adversary, the one who comes to steal, kill, and destroy the work of God and the church (I Peter 5:8).

**Saved** To be rescued or be delivered from destruction by the grace of God. However,

---

735. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor's Manual*. Class 24, page 6.

736. Vine, “Satan.” *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:547, and “Satan” 1:213.

this gift of deliverance has to be accepted by the sinner to become effective.

**Scribes** The scribes were the lawyers – students, interpreters and teachers of the Written and Oral Law. See Matthew 16:21; 21:15; 23:2; 26:3 and 02.01.21.

**Scriptures** The desires of God and the history of His people as originally recorded on parchment and papyri, which was later compiled into a book known as the Bible.

**Sea of Galilee** The “Sea of Galilee” is an inland fresh-water lake and is known in Scripture by the following four names, but in the original language, it was *not* known as the “Sea of Galilee.”

1. The “Sea of Chinnereth,” or “Chinneroth” (Heb. Kinneret, meaning *harp-shaped*), for the shape of the sea (Num. 34:11; Josh. 12:3; 13:27).
2. The “Lake of Gennesaret” (Lk. 5:1), the name of the extended plain adjoining the lake.
3. The “Sea of Tiberias” (Jn. 6:1; 21:1), the name used by the natives at this time – Bahr Tarbariyeh;
4. “Galilee” (Mt. 4:18; 15:29).

### **Second coming**

A term applied to the return of Christ *with* His church to rule the earth for a thousand years from Jerusalem. This will be seven years after the rapture.

### **Second Sabbath**

Certain festival weeks had a second Sabbath that was honored as highly as an ordinary Sabbath. For example, the final day of the Feast of Tabernacles was known as *the Day of the Great Hosanna* or *Hosanna Rabba*. It was a day of great celebration and considered a “Second Sabbath” of that week (11.02.14; Lev. 23:36; Jn. 7:37-39).<sup>737</sup> Another example was the Day of Preparation<sup>738</sup> in the Feast of Passover (17.01.01; Jn. 19:31-37).

---

<sup>737</sup> Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 582. See also 11.02.14.

<sup>738</sup> 2 Kgs. 11:5; 1 Chron. 9:25; 24:19; Josephus, *Antiquities* 7.14.7; See also Simmons, “The Origin of Christmas and the Date of Christ’s Birth.” 321-22.

**Semantic equivalence**

A literary term related to the translation of the Bible whereby the translators attempt to produce a meaning-for-meaning translation. It is clearly different from word-for-word translation.

**Septuagint** See 02.02.25

**Shammai, School of**

See School of Shammai 02.01.20

**Shema**

The *Shema* is the phrase “Hear of Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One” (Deut. 6:4).<sup>739</sup> However, the *entire Shema* is a creedal statement combining Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21 and Numbers 15:37-41. These Bible verses were recited twice a day,<sup>740</sup> and continue to be recited by practicing orthodox Jews today. The *Shema* is often thought of as a prayer, which it isn’t. It is a confession of faith; the chief ancient prayer is the *Eighteen Benedictions*.<sup>741</sup>

**Shekinah**

The Hebrew root word *Shekinah* or *Shechinah* is *shachan* and means *that which dwells*.<sup>742</sup> It is the presence of God in a most profound way that is recognizable by mankind as a bright light or an illuminated cloud. The Hebrew *Kvod Adonai* means *the Glory of the Lord*, while its Greek counterpart *Doxa Kurion* means *brilliance*, or *splendor* of the appearance of the Shekinah Glory.<sup>743</sup>

In the Old Testament, the Shekinah Glory appeared several times to specific people. Several examples are as follows:

1. The Glory of God appeared to Abraham as a blazing light and smoking oven in Genesis 17:17.
2. Moses saw it in the burning bush that was not consumed in Exodus 3:2.

---

739. [http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Scripture/Torah/The\\_Shema/the\\_shema.html](http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Scripture/Torah/The_Shema/the_shema.html). Accessed September 28, 2013. The words *LORD* and *God* can be somewhat confusing for modern readers. When Hebrew names are applied to the passage, it reads as follows: **Hear, O Israel; YHVH our Elohim is one YHVH** (Deut. 6:4, KJV).

740. Mishnah, *Berakot* 1.1-2.

741. See Appendix 18; Smith, *Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament: Matthew*. 108.

742. Barclay, “John.” 1:69.

743. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor’s Manual*. Class 14, page 9.

3. The children of Israel saw it descend upon Mount Sinai in a cloud and with fire. Then it was a pillar of fire at night and a cloud during the day. (The cloud protected them from the burning sun as they traveled through the desert.)

4. When Ezekiel was along the Chebar River during his exile, he saw the Shekinah Glory in a vision as it left the temple prior to the Babylonian invasion (Ezek. 11:22-23).

After rarely appearing in the Old Testament era, the Shekinah Glory appeared an astonishing four times in the life of Jesus:

1. To the shepherds (Lk. 2:8-9)
2. At His baptism (Mt. 3:16)
3. At the transfiguration (Mt. 17:5) and
4. At His ascension (Acts 1:9).

**Sicarii** See 02.01.22 and Zealots 02.01.23

**Sin** The condition that humanity inherited from Adam and Eve that causes a separation of Man from God. However, in the eyes of the Pharisees, a “sin” was an infraction of the ritual commands and the Oral Laws which required obedience and immersion in a mikvah. To Jesus and John the Baptist, “sin” was broken faith with God which required repentance followed by obedience.<sup>744</sup>

**Sins** Our words, deeds, and thoughts that violate the commandments of God.

**Sinner** As defined by the leading Pharisees, a sinner was anyone who did not conform to their legalistic rituals, which included numerous prayers and washings throughout the day. When the term is applied to a woman, such as “she is a sinner,” the phrase nearly always means that she was a prostitute or that she had her hair uncovered.

**Sirocco Wind** East of the Jordan River is the northern end of the Arabian Desert. By late April and early May extremely hot, dry winds from this desert region at times blow

---

<sup>744</sup> Smith, *Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament: Matthew*, 51.

westward and bring a quick end to crops and flowers. These hot winds are known as “sirocco winds.”<sup>745</sup>

### **Shofar**

A ram’s horn that is blown at selected times at the temple and local synagogue. There were three trumpet blasts from the synagogue on the eve of Sabbath.<sup>746</sup>

1. The first blast warned the peasant farmers in the distant fields to end their labors.
2. The second blast was the signal for village business folk to close their shops.
3. The third was for families to light their holy Sabbath lamps which were to burn until the sacred day ended.

**Son of David** The son of David was the messianic title for the literal descendant of King David who was expected to overthrow the Roman occupation, re-establish pure and holy worship in the temple, re-establish peace and prosperity in the land. Furthermore, that land area was expected to be the restored Davidic Empire. Since people had this preconceived idea of their messiah, many were challenged by the ministry of Jesus.

However, His goal as the Messiah was not to be the messiah for the Jewish people, but to be the Messiah for the whole world, including the Jews. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, as reported by the gospel writers. The messianic title “Son of David” appears in the following three groups of passages in the gospels where it is always reflective of the Davidic Covenant:

1. In various healings by Jesus – Mt. 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; Mk. 10:47-48; Lk. 18:38-39.
2. In connection of the harassment the religious leaders gave Jesus – Mt. 22:42-43, 45; Mk. 12:35, 37; Lk. 20:41, 44, and
3. The praise the crowds gave Jesus at His entry into Jerusalem – Mt. 21:9, 15; Mk. 11:10.<sup>747</sup>

---

745. Levy, *The Ruin and Restoration of Israel*. 89.

746. Geikie, *The Life and Works of Christ*. 2:183.

747. Rogers, “The Davidic Covenant in the Gospels,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*. Part 1 of 2. 158-78.

**Son of Man** The phrase *son of man* could mean any boy or man, however, the capitalized phrase *Son of Man* in the book of *Enoch* is a figure who is waiting in heaven until God sends Him to earth where He would establish His kingdom and rule over it. This book was common knowledge to the Jewish people, so when Jesus applied the phrase to Himself, He was clearly claiming to be the long-awaited Messiah. The expressions of “Son of Man” and “Son of God,” express the deity of Jesus,<sup>748</sup> but the former title also asserts His humanity.<sup>749</sup>

### **Sopherim, School of**

A Jewish school of theology that was popular from 450 B.C. to 30 B.C. It instituted thousands of rules and regulations that pertained to every aspect of Jewish life in an attempt to make the lives of Jewish people more righteous and prevent any breaking of the Torah laws. Scribes and rabbis of this school attempted to build “a fence around the Torah” as described in Mishnah, *Aboth* 1.1.<sup>750</sup> One of its regulations promoted the idea that a man’s home was wherever his possessions were. Therefore, on a Friday, one could place a few personal items near the end of a Sabbath’s Day walk and then, on a Sabbath, he could walk to his possession and continue on a second Sabbath’s Day walk without violating the first.<sup>751</sup>

**Stadia** The *stadia*, (or *stadion*, plural), is a unit of measurement that originated from a race course in the Olympics. Its distance was one-eighth Roman mile or 600 Greek feet,<sup>752</sup> that is equivalent to today’s English distance of 202 yards or 185 meters. John 6:19 indicates that the apostles had rowed about 25 to 30 *stadia* across the Sea of Galilee when they encountered Jesus walking on the water. John 11:18 indicates that Bethany was about 15 *stadia* from Jerusalem, which is equivalent to today’s distance of two miles or three kilometers.

748. Jn. 3:13; 5:27; 6:27; cf. Mt.26:63-64; Tenney, *The Gospel of John*. 105.

749. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 1:312.

750. See “Mishnah” 02.02.16. See video 02.02.16.V by Messianic Rabbi John Fischer who discusses the term “fence around the Torah” from a first century Jewish perspective.

751. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor’s Manual*. Class 8, pages 2-4 and Class 13, page 11.

752. Vine, “Furlong.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:259.

**Star of David** The Star of David as is commonly seen today and associated with Israel and Judaism did not exist in the first century. No literary or archaeological evidence exists that can support its existence in the biblical period.

**Stele** A stele is a monument, usually taller than wide, and made from stone or wood. In the Middle East, a number of stone steles have been found on which are commemorative inscriptions. These were generally written at the command of a king so his legacy would be preserved.

**Stoics** A philosophy of life founded by Zeno (335-263 B.C.),<sup>753</sup> who believed that the main goal in life was to rise above all issues of life and reveal no emotions in pain or pleasure. Zeno taught his disciples in the Athenian marketplace so passersby could stop and listen to him expound truths as he understood them. The name Stoic was acquired from the *Stoa Poikile* that is the *Painted Portico* of the marketplace.<sup>754</sup> The concept of deity for the Stoics is that of a “world-soul,” meaning that everything is a god – which is a pantheistic worldview. See Acts 17:18. Stoicism appears to have been more popular in the Holy Land than Epicureanism.<sup>755</sup>

**Strophe** A strophe (strophes, plural) is a division structure within a poem that has stanzas of various lengths. It is found in Hebrew and Greek poems.

**Sukkah** A temporary swelling or “booth” built each year at the Feast of Tabernacles, a/k/a the Festival of Booths, to commemorate the temporary shelters the Israelites built during their exodus from Egypt. It is part of the Passover observance.

### ***Suzerainty Treaty***

A *suzerainty* treaty was between two kings, usually between the victorious king and his vassal king.<sup>756</sup> In the treaty, the stronger king promises to protect and defend the weaker one, but the weaker king is committed to certain obligations to the stronger king. Deuteronomy 27 and 28 is reflective of a *suzerainty* treaty.

**Synagogue** The local Jewish house of worship that is believed to have originated in Babylon. The Hebrew word for synagogue is *beit-knesset* or *beyt-knesset*, meaning *house of*

---

753. This Zeno is not to be confused with the Zeno who authored the Zeno Papyri; Scott, Jr. *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*. 115.

754. Bruce, *New Testament History*. 41-43.

755. Mould, *Essentials of Bible History*. 563-70.

756. Cate, *A History of the New Testament and its Times*. 54.

*gathering*.<sup>757</sup> In the course of time it became known as a *house of prayer* or *house of worship*.<sup>758</sup> Josephus said that Caesar Augustus referred to it as a *sabbateion*, or *Sabbath house*.<sup>759</sup> Simply stated, wherever there was a Jewish community, the synagogue was the center of Jewish life and activities. According to the book of *Jubilees*, Jewish sermons were a tiresome study of the smallest rabbinic rules. In fact, the book of *Jubilees* is considered one of the most important authorities on Jewish customs and opinions at the time of Jesus, second after the *Mishnah*.<sup>760</sup> The synagogue was open daily for prayer, worship, children's education, and discussions of community importance, legal decisions, and other important issues that might arise. It was not, however, a place for sacrifices, as these occurred only in the temple.

### Synoptic gospels

Since Matthew, Mark, and Luke have similar wording, content, and order, they are referred to as the “synoptic gospels.” The term *synoptic* meanings *seeing together*.

**Syriac** Syriac is the original language of many Christian communities in the Middle East including Israel. It is a late version of Aramaic, the language which Jesus normally spoke.

**Taheb** The Samaritans, like so many other people groups in the ancient Middle East, expected someone to come from God and restore peace and order in the land. The Samaritans called that “someone” the *Taheb* or *Restorer* – a great prophet of the end-time whom Moses referred to in Deuteronomy 18:15.<sup>761</sup> To the Samaritan woman, Jesus was the *Taheb*.

**Talmud** See 02.02.26 for a description of the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds.

**Tanakh** See Hebrew Bible 02.02.12

**Tannaim, The** A second rabbinic school that decided the rabbis of the *School of Sopherim* left too many holes in their laws. So the *Tannaim* rabbis added more restrictions. This

---

757. Mills and Michael, *Messiah and His Hebrew Alphabet*. 7.

758. Scott, Jr. *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*. 139.

759. Josephus, *Antiquities*. 16.6.2 (164).

760. Geikie, *The Life and Works of Christ*. 1:560.

761. Bruce, *New Testament History*. 34-35.



school started in 30 B.C. of the Inter-Testamental Period and continued to about A.D. 220. It eventually became part of the Mishnah. (see 02.02.16 “Mishnah”).<sup>762</sup>

**Targum** See 02.02.28

**Tax collector** A tax collector was generally a Jewish man who became an agent of the oppressive Roman Empire. Collectors were known for their corruption, requiring taxes far in excess than required by the heads of state. Furthermore, they used Roman soldiers, if needed, to collect taxes and increase their wealthy position. Hence, they were hated by the Jews. See 06.03.11 for more details, including the types of tax collectors.

**Tebhah** The Hebrew word *tebhah* was the cabinet or “ark” of painted wood in which the Torah scroll was kept in the local synagogue.

**Temple** One of two institutions where the Jewish faith was expressed, the other being in the local synagogue. The temple was the place of sacrifice for sins and the observation of the seven festivals, which were grouped together in three festival events. Since more Jewish people lived outside of the Holy Land than inside, and since travel was difficult in ancient times, those who lived more than 15 miles from Jerusalem were encouraged to make a Passover pilgrimage only once in a lifetime. Those within the 15 mile perimeter were required to make annual observations of the feasts.

**Testament** The word *testament* is a synonym for *covenant*. The term *covenant* is hardly understood, although the closest example is the marriage covenant between a man, woman, and God. A *covenant* can also be understood in parent-child relationships.

### **Tetragrammaton**

The name of God was so sacred to the Jews that they refused to pronounce it. The Tetragrammaton is the four Hebrew letters *yod*, *he*, *vav*, and *he*, transliterated without vowels as *YHWH*, but pronounced as *Adonai*.<sup>763</sup> The Jewish Encyclopedia identifies the translated name of God to be “Elohim.”<sup>764</sup>

**Tetrarch** A Roman title for a ruler of the fourth. A tetrarch held the position and

---

762. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor's Manual*. Class 8, pages 2-4.

763. <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Tetragrammaton>. Retrieved December 21, 2013.

764. <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14346-tetragrammaton>. Retrieved March 5, 2015.

responsibilities of a governor or puppet king.<sup>765</sup> Herod Antipas and Philip both inherited a fourth part of their father's dominions.

### Textual Criticism

The term as applied to biblical studies means the study, analysis, and comparison of ancient documents to determine the original of the text. This field of study arose because there are slight variations of some ancient texts. The term does not mean "to find fault," but to uncover the original meaning of the writer to his audience.

**Therapeutae** The Therapeutae was a Jewish sect that lived in the Diaspora, but had a large concentration in Alexandria, Egypt. While they were not Pharisees, they observed the regulations and doctrines of the Pharisees. What is known about them is primarily from an account in *De Vita Contemplative* translated as *The Contemplative life*, authored by the Jewish philosopher Philo who lived in Alexandria (20 B.C. – A.D. 50).

### Theocratic anointing

A theological term that applies to a special intervention by the Holy Spirit who equips someone who is called to fulfill a special mission.<sup>766</sup> Moses and the seventy elders (Num. 11:17; 25) are among several examples of the Old Testament era.<sup>767</sup> The most significant example occurred at the baptism of Jesus (See 05.02.03).

**Theophany** A theological term that refers to the visitations of God in one form or another, such as the various appearances of "an angel of the Lord" mentioned in the Old Testament. Such visitations are now generally regarded as by the "pre-incarnate" Jesus.

**Threshing** The process by which grain, such as wheat or barley, is loosened from the stalk. The process included spreading the grain out on a threshing floor after which a donkey or ox pulled a threshing sled over the grain. The sled crushed the grain stalks sufficiently to loosen the kernel, after which it was winnowed. Note: Threshing floors are generally located on a hilltop so the breeze can blow away the chaff in the winnowing process.

---

765. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 1:82; Vine, "Tetrarch." *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:624.

766. <http://www.bookmanministries.com/Documents/Theocratic%20Anointing.pdf>. Retrieved January 17, 2014.

767. Joshua, (Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9), Othniel (Jg. 3:10), Gideon (Jg. 6:34), Jephthah (Jg. 11:29), Samson (Jg. 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14).

***Thomas, The Gospel of***

In 1945 two peasants in the village of Nag Hammadi in southern Egypt discovered a cache of jars containing numerous papyri manuscripts including the *Gospel of Thomas*. This 4<sup>th</sup> century text contains a number of sayings, parables, and proverbs attributed to Jesus. In fact, some are nearly word for word accuracy. The author, Didymus Judas Thomas, had a strong proponent of gnostic philosophy which emphasized secret sayings and mysteries that need to be discovered for one to find salvation. The phrase “secret sayings” was a key element on the growing religious-philosophy of Gnosticism during these early years of the church. The Gnostics called their own writings “gospels” to counter the four inspired gospels which had become inspirational for the exploding new faith. For this reason the gospel is given little credence by biblical scholars. The opening line begins with:

**These are the secret sayings which the living Jesus spoke and which Didymus Judas Thomas wrote down....Whoever finds the interpretation of these sayings will not experience death.**

**Gospel of Thomas 1:1 ff.**

The fact that the author attributes the understanding of the sayings, typical of Gnosticism, to obtaining eternal life is contrary to the message of Jesus Christ, and therefore, it is a false gospel. Since they did not recognize Jesus as the only way to salvation, their writings are noticeably void of any passion narratives or comment of salvation through Christ Jesus.<sup>768</sup>

**Time** See Appendix 16.

**Tithe** Tithing is the act of giving 10% of one’s income to the church (Gen. 14:17-20, 28:22; Mal. 3:8-10; Mt. 23:23). Offerings and alms are gifts given in addition to a tithe and can be given to any person or organization. The Jews also had second and third tithes that were given, but not annually. The practice of tithing predated the Mosaic code as evidence by the practice of Abraham presenting tithes to Melchizedek (Gen. 14:20).

**Torah** *Torah* is the Hebrew word that is often translated as *law*, although a better translation is *instruction*. See 02.02.29 and 08.01.04.

---

768. Carroll and Green, *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity*. 153.

**Tosefta** See 02.02.30

**Transliterate** To reproduce the sound of a word in one language by using the letters of a different language. For example, the Hebrew word *Hallelujah* which is spelled in English and means *praise the Lord*, sounds the same in both English and Hebrew.

**Tribulation** A period of time when the earth will experience destruction as never before and Israel is punished for rejection of the Messiah 2000 years ago. (Rev. 4-19).

**Tunic** An outer garment similar to a modern short sleeve shirt that was worn by both men and women, by ancient Greek and Roman citizens and non-citizens. It extended from the neck to above the knees.<sup>769</sup>

### **“Type and shadow.”**

A literary term: A “type and shadow” is a prophetic picture that describes a person or event of history, but that image will reoccur in the future in the form of another person or event. Sometimes it is referred to as a “double reference.” For example, Moses was a person who led the Israelites out of Egypt’s bondage of slavery. He is considered a “type and shadow” of Jesus who, leads those who accept Him, out of the bondage of sin (see Appendix 2). The phrase is found in Hebrews 8:5, although some translations use the words “sketch and shadow,” that carries the same meaning. Joseph was sold by his brothers, imprisoned, eventually rose to power and authority and saved his people and the world of the Egyptians from death (see Appendix 3).

**Wadi** A river or stream bed that is dry except for when it rains during the rainy season. In Israel, storm clouds often bring rain in the central mountain region but the water runs eastward in dry river beds bringing a torrent of water to unsuspected people.

### **Wadi Daliyeh Papyri**

See Samaritan Papyri

---

769. Some scholars identify the garment that was worn closest to the skin as a *tunic* while others call it a *cloak*. It is doubtful that Jesus would have told someone to give a second pair of underwear to another person, but to give a second coat would have been more acceptable. The Jewish culture was a highly modest one and nakedness was condemned. Pilch, *The Cultural Dictionary of the Bible*. 15-17; Vine, “Clothing, Cloths, Clothes, Cloak, Coat.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:105-07.

**Wadi of Egypt**

The southern boundary of the Promised Land (see 04.05.02.Z), that is also known as the *Wadi El Arish*, the *Brook of Egypt*, the *River of Egypt*, or the *Rhinokolura Wadi*.<sup>770</sup> It was a recognized boundary facing Egypt dating back to 1 Kings 8:65 and possibly before.

**Winnow**

The winnowing process is the act of throwing the wheat into the air, usually on a hilltop. The wind blows the chaff to the side and the heavier grain falls to the floor to be collected and stored.

**Witness**

In biblical studies a *witness* is an original document or early writing, also known as a *manuscript* or *document*.

**Wood-fest**

The Wood-fest was a half-holiday established by the Pharisees that was celebrated on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of Av (August). It was held in the honor of the gathering of the wood for the temple altar. Only quality wood was accepted; any lumber or tree limbs with rot or insects was denied.<sup>771</sup>

**Word play**

Two words that sound alike but may have opposite meanings. In every language there are word plays. At times word plays create humor and other times they are ideal teaching tools. For example, the Hebrew word *Netzer* is the root word for Nazareth, but is also the root word for *branch*, such as the branch that comes out of the root of Jesse – the father of King David. This play on words is known as a *mnemonic*<sup>772</sup> and served as a memory tool.

**Zealots**

The Zealots were Jewish patriots, radical defenders of theocracy who passionately hated Romans and Hellenists. They were the terrorists of the first century Israel. See also 02.01.23, “Sicarii” 02.01.22, Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13, Josephus, *Wars*. 2.4.1 and 4.4.1.

**Zeno Papyri**

Zeno was an administrator under Apollonius, a treasury official of Ptolemy II Philadelphia (285-246 B.C.) in Egypt. Zeno traveled in the Holy Land between the years of 260 to 258 B.C. and recorded comments concerning life and conditions of the time. About one-fourth of the papyri is dedicated to that journey and contributes to understanding the Inter-Testamental history. This historical

---

770. Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 1:205.

771. Encyclopedia Judaica, “Wood-fest” 16: 630; See also Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. 135.

772. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*. 710.

treasure was discovered in 1915.<sup>773</sup>

**Zeus** The king of the Greek deities. In the second century B.C. Antiochus IV Epiphanes sacrificed a pig on the temple altar in the worship of Zeus.



**Please note that all references to footnotes are in the “Works Cited”  
section located in the last volume.**

---

<sup>773</sup>. See <http://www.lib.umich.edu/reading/Zenon/zenondates.html> Retrieved December 29, 2014.