

ALL THINGS JEWISH

Geography and Time

Jewish Beliefs

Mishnah Teaching

People

Politics

Religious Life

Social Life

Geography and Time

GEOGRAPHY OF ISRAEL

Size: 70 miles at its widest point; 265 miles long. 130 miles of that is desert in the south.
11,280 sq. miles which is 1/8th the size of Oregon.

Divisions: 4 provinces are mentioned in the New Testament - Galilee, Samaria, Judea, Perea.

Topography: There are 4 distinct areas running north and south.

Coastal plain at sea level

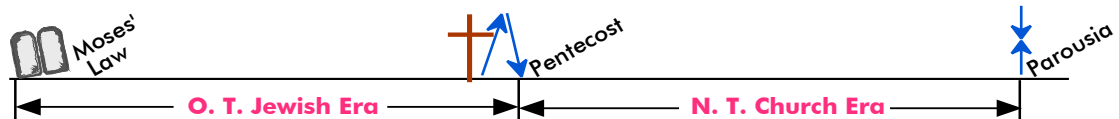
Foothills leading to mountain ranges of 2-3000 ft.

The great Rift /gorge including Sea of Galilee, Jordan River, Dead Sea (1300 ft. below sea level)

The mountain range at 6,000 ft. on the east side of the Jordan

Capital: Jerusalem is located on the western mountain range at 3000 ft. It is why a person always goes **up** to Jerusalem

GOD'S TIME PERIODS



Old Testament Jewish Era - From the Law of Moses (1400 BC) until the Day of Pentecost (31 AD).

People were forgiven thru animal sacrifice. Their sin was covered, not taken away. Willful sin could not be forgiven with sacrifice; there was only the death penalty. The Holy Spirit was on or over them for ministry. If they disobeyed, the Holy Spirit left them.

New Testament Church Era - From Pentecost until we meet Jesus in the air to be with Him (Parousia).

During this time people are forgiven thru repentance and belief in Jesus. Their sin is taken away. All sin can be forgiven. When we accept the payment of Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of us and will be with us forever.

The Gospels are still in the time of the **Old Testament Jewish era**. This means the Gospels are about the Jews and for the Jews. Jesus' direct instruction and commands are not to the Church. It had not yet been formed. His instruction is to the Old Testament believing remnant living under Old Testament laws and standards. Principles and lessons from the Gospels apply to us, but not the direct commands unless they are repeated in Paul's writings for the Church.

JEWISH TIME

CALENDAR

The Roman calendar

Started counting time from the beginning of the Roman empire, 500 years before the New Testament begins. Was used for hundreds of years but had so many errors that Julius Caesar tried to fix it.

His additions and corrections became known as the Julian calendar.

Everyone used it during New Testament days.

Jesus was born in the Roman year 511.

Five hundred years later a monk made a new calendar, counting the years from Jesus' birth. However he made an error of 6 years. Nine hundred years after the monk's calendar, Pope Gregory made further adjustments, giving us the Gregorian calendar, which is what we use today. However there is still an error of 6-7 years.

The Jewish calendar

Their religious year begins between March and April; it begins with Passover.

Their civil and agricultural year begins between September and October; it begins with Rosh Hashanah.

Geography and Time

JEWISH TIME (continued)

DAYS

The Roman 24 hour day – went from midnight to midnight.

The Jewish 24 hour day – went from literal sundown to sundown.

A new day began when you saw the first star in the sky

Dawn is the beginning of a new Jewish day, just after sundown. We would call it “**dusk**”.

Any part of a day is counted as the full 24 hours of night and day.

On the 3rd day: only a part of 3 consecutive days is needed.

After the 3rd day: anytime after the 3rd day has started.

3 days and 3 nights:

A Jewish idiom meaning any time involving 3 days; it could be as short as 24 hours, 2 minutes.

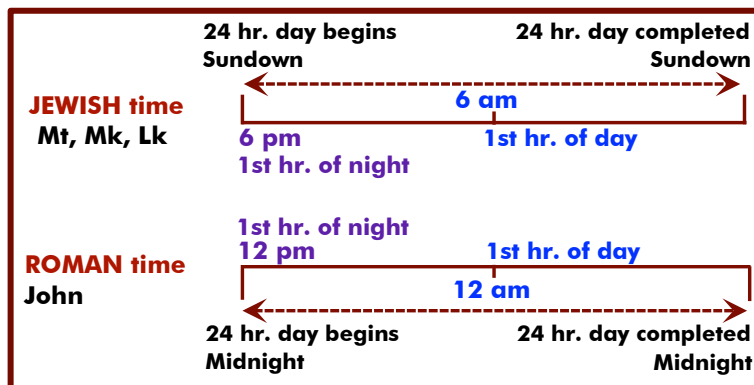
HOURS - There are 12 hours for night and 12 hours for day.

Roman hours started counting from 12:00 pm or am. 1st hour would be 1:00 pm or am - used in John.

Jewish hours started counting from 6:00 pm or am. 1st hour would be 7:00 pm or am -

used in Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Jews marked the night hours of midnight, 3:00 and 6:00 in Jerusalem, with some kind of sound that could be heard thruout the city. Each ringing or sound was called a **cock-crow**. It did not refer to a literal rooster.



DATE OF JESUS' BIRTH between 7 and 6 BC, based on the historical dates of Herod the Great.

Herod: died in 4 BC

left Jerusalem for the last time in 5 BC.

talked with the Magi in Jerusalem in 5 BC and concluded the birth of Jesus had been 1 to 1½ years earlier.

It is why he killed all infants 2 years and under.

Jesus therefore would have been born between 6 and 7 BC.



DATE OF JESUS' MINISTRY

Tiberius became Caesar in 14 AD. **Jesus** began His ministry in the 15th year of Tiberius. Luke 3:1

This means Jesus' first year of ministry was 28 AD and Jesus was 34 years old. (28 + 6 years of BC).

Luke said He was about or in His early 30's.

Jewish Beliefs

ANIMAL SACRIFICES

They only forgave sins that were unintentional. The animal died in the place of the person. There were no animal sacrifices for intentional sin so the person himself physically died for that sin. Most sins that carried the death penalty were violations of the 10 commandments.

The Jews were God's people by means of agreements that He made with them. So when a person died for their sin, it did not mean they were damned or separated from God for all eternity. It meant a loss of their life in this world as the consequence of their choice. Their body was put in a tomb. Their spirit or soul went to the place of departed spirits known as Paradise or Abraham's bosom.

KINGDOM OF GOD and KINGDOM OF HEAVEN mean the same thing in the Gospels

It means: God's control as it is experienced in history.

5 possible meanings, depending on the context:

Universal kingdom: "He's got the whole world in His hands". God is sovereign.

Spiritual, invisible kingdom: *My kingdom is not of this world.*

Theocracy of the Old Testament: a literal, physical kingdom with a king ruling on God's behalf.

Promised perfect kingdom with a perfect King who is called Messiah.

It was postponed when the Jewish leaders of the 1st century rejected Jesus as their Messiah.

Interim or temporary, divided kingdom - a time of continued battle between God and Satan for the lives and minds of individuals.

PLACE OF DEPARTED SPIRITS

bad	(Heb) Sheol/Hades (Gk)	good
Hell/Gehenna souls of unbelievers	GULF	Paradise Abraham's bosom (Rabbinic name)
Abyss - temporary confinement for evil angels can be released Rev 9, 20		Souls/spirits of Old Testament believers until the Ascension
Tartarus - permanent confinement for evil angels		Their sins were only covered, so they could not enter God's holy presence. When Jesus made payment for sin, it was credited to them & their sin was taken away. On the day Jesus ascended to heaven, He took Paradise & the spirits of these believers with Him. Eph. 4:8-10

It was possible to see & talk with each other, but not to cross the gulf.

When Jesus was in Paradise, Friday to Sunday, He made a declaration to the evil angels in their places of confinement. He told them He won and their leader, Satan, lost. Therefore they will be under judgment forever 1 Peter 3:18-20; Colossians 2:13-15

The spirits / souls of believers from the beginning of the Old Testament until the time of Jesus' Ascension were in Paradise. Jesus took Paradise and all the spirit / souls with Him when He ascended into heaven. The author of Hebrews refers to them as a great cloud of witnesses and the spirits of the righteous made perfect. Heb. 12:1, 23-24.

Their bodies continue to be in the grave until their resurrection. Because they are all part of the Old Testament era, their bodies will not be resurrected until the beginning of the perfect kingdom.

Jewish Beliefs

PLACE OF DEPARTED SPIRITS *continued*

Because Jesus took Paradise into heaven, when we die, our spirit / souls go to Paradise in God's presence. Our bodies are buried and remain in the grave until the Parousia / Rapture when we meet Jesus in the air.
I Thessalonians 4:13-18

MISHNAH "Fence laws"

The Mishnah was the thousands of man-made Jewish laws and explanations, memorized by Sanhedrin scribes starting in 350 BC and continuing into the days of Jesus. Some Jews considered them equal to or even greater than Moses' laws. The Sanhedrin believed their laws could act like a fence around Moses' law so if Jewish people obeyed their laws, they would not break the law of Moses. For example, to protect the one law about keeping the Sabbath holy, the Sanhedrin wrote 1,500 Mishnah laws of what the Jews could or could not do on the Sabbath.

MIRACLES

General: anyone could do general miracles thru the power of the Holy Spirit.

Messianic: 3 miracles only the Messiah could do because up to this point, none of these had ever happened.

Healing a Jewish leper Matt. 8:2-3; Luke 17:12-14

Leprosy in the Bible means either Hansen's disease or any contagious skin disease that spreads, is contagious and causes a person's health to deteriorate.

Healing a person mute because of an evil spirit Matt. 12:22-24; 9:27-34; Mk. 9:17-26; Lk. 11:14

Jews believed that to drive out an evil spirit from a person you had to ask the demon his name. The demon would answer by using the voice of the person afflicted. Knowing the name of the demon gave you power and authority to command the spirit to leave. If the evil spirit controlled a person so he could not speak, there was no way to get the spirit to leave. Only the Messiah would know the name of the demon without being told. Only He could drive out an evil spirit from someone unable to speak. Needing to know a demon's name was Jewish Mishnah belief. This was and is not a true fact.

Healing a person born blind John 9

Jews believed that from the moment of conception, the fetus has 2 inclinations - a good inclination and an evil inclination. The 2 are struggling for control within the womb. If the evil inclination wins, gets mad at the mother and kicks her in anger, then for that ill will against its mother, the fetus is born with a defect. In this case, he is born blind. Because they believe this is punishment from God, then only God can remove it. Therefore only the coming Messiah, as deity, would have the right and the ability to heal a person *born* blind. This is not teaching from God. God never sends physical defects as punishment

Even tho these concepts are not correct and were never given by God, Jesus follows the conditions the rabbis set up some 300 years earlier. They said when their Messiah came, He would do these 3 miracles. This is how they would know He was their Messiah. Jesus wants them to have proof based on the requirements **they** set up. Jesus uses their ways so they cannot possibly miss it. What grace and mercy of God!

SHECHINAH GLORY *Shechinah means to dwell or live.*

It is a Jewish term for the visible glory and presence of God that lived in the midst of His people.

In the Old Testament

It was in the tabernacle and Solomon's temple in the form of a cloud and light.

It left the temple in the 500's BC because of evil at the temple and in the nation. Ezek. 8-10

It was not seen in Israel for 500 years.

Jewish Beliefs

SHECHINAH GLORY continued

In the New Testament

It returns with the birth of Jesus

It is the light and glory of the Lord that appears to the shepherds.

It is the brilliance the wise men see and follow; they refer to it as *His star*. Matt. 2:2

It is Jesus Himself. He came to be the visible presence of God.

It is why He is called *light* Isa. 9:2; Luke 1:79; 2:32; John 1:4; 9:5 are just a few examples

John 1:1-14 says Jesus is the Shechinah glory.

The Word was made flesh and lived, "shechined", for a while among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and only Son who came from the Father 1:14

The apostles saw it in the transfiguration of Jesus.

SIGN OF JONAH

It is the sign of resurrection that will be given 3 times to the nation of Israel to help **individuals** believe.

Lazarus John 11

Jesus Matthew 28;

The 2 prophets mid-way thru Satan's kingdom (Tribulation) Revelation 11.

WELL KNOWN PHRASES

Eye for an eye

This was God's law to protect people when someone demanded punishment that did not fit the crime. If a person lost an eye, they couldn't demand the death penalty. But the Sanhedrin used the law for personal vengeance.

Judge not We are not to set up our own rules and use them to judge others. But if God has given a command, we have a right to agree with God. We can say it is wrong or right because God said so. Matt. 7:1

Turn the other cheek; go the extra mile Those believing in Jesus should accept persecution for their faith in Jesus, without trying to retaliate. This applies only to persecution for one's faith; it does not support abuse. Matt. 5:38-41

The one without sin is to be the first stone to cast a stone. John 8:1-11

This applied to the Jews as they used God's laws for capital punishment. When a person violated a law given to Moses by God that carried the death penalty, there needed to be 2-3 witnesses to make the accusation. If found guilty, the witnesses were the ones required to first throw the stones to put them to death. These witnesses could not be guilty of this same sin in their life, because if they were, they also should die. It would be hypocrisy and total injustice.

The Unpardonable Sin could only be committed by the Jewish **nation** in the first century Matt. 12:22-50

The Sanhedrin had been formed by Ezra in 400 BC with the responsibility to protect the teaching of a coming Messiah. When someone claimed to be the Messiah, the Sanhedrin was to investigate the person and then decide for the nation, *yes, He is our Messiah or no He is not our Messiah and this is why*.

John the Baptist announced that Jesus was the Messiah. When Jesus started His ministry, He first stated He was the promised Messiah. Then He did two of the miracles the Jewish Sanhedrin said only the Messiah could do.

The second miracle was the healing of a man who could not speak because of an evil spirit. Jesus did it by the power of the Holy Spirit.

When the people asked the Sanhedrin to decide for them as a nation if **Jesus** was the Messiah, the Sanhedrin said, *no, Jesus did the miracle thru sorcery or the power of an evil spirit*. This was blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. The Sanhedrin made this national decision because Jesus would not support their authority or their Mishnah laws.

Jewish Beliefs

The Unpardonable Sin continued

This was a one-time national sin that the Jewish nation could only commit when Jesus lived among them. This national sin or rejection could not be forgiven the nation in the 1st century. Therefore it would be destroyed in 70 AD and the majority of that generation would be killed.

Individual Sanhedrin members could not be forgiven *in that age* - which was still a part the Old Testament period. Forgiveness was still thru animal sacrifice and there was no sacrifice to forgive blasphemy. It required the death penalty. After Jesus' death, resurrection and Pentecost, any individual Sanhedrin members could be forgiven if he repented and believed in Jesus. Jesus' payment was for any sin by anyone. But if Sanhedrin members continued to reject Jesus in spite of the conviction of the Holy Spirit, then they could not be forgiven in *the age to come*, meaning *the Church age*. They would be eternally separated from God.

It was a **one-time** sin, that only the Jewish **nation** could commit in the 1st century.

It was a **one-time** consequence - the nation and that unbelieving generation was destroyed in 70 AD.

The nation and people would never again be punished for this sin. No one else can ever commit this sin. Therefore it is not possible for us to commit it today.

Altho Israel was removed from the land from 70 AD to 1948, God was still holding the deed to the land and remembering His unconditional promise to Abraham. Abraham's descendants that came thru Isaac and Jacob - the Jews - would inherit the land. In the perfect kingdom when Jesus is King, the Jews will possess the land of Israel to the full extent of the boundaries that God set aside for them. No one can ever destroy the Jews as a people or ever take away their land permanently. Nothing can ever change God's promise.

THE WORD, LOGOS, MEMRA (Aramaic)

In the four hundred "Silent Years", (400 – 0 BC), Jewish rabbis had made an in-depth study of what the Old Testament said about the *Word* - the *Memra*. From that study, guided by the Holy Spirit, they developed 6 concepts about the Word as it related to God in the **Old Testament**. These concepts were taught in all Jewish synagogues during the 1st century.

1. The **Word** was **separate** from God - but also the **same** as God. John 1:1
The rabbis knew it was a contradiction and could never explain it. They just knew it was fact.
He sends His command to the earth; His word runs swiftly. Psalms 145:15
2. The **Word** created things. John 1:3
By the word of the Lord, the heavens were made. Psalms 33:6
3. The **Word** brought **salvation** - physically or spiritually. John 1:12
God spoke - the Word gave instruction to Moses about crossing Reed Sea.
4. The **Word** was the **visible form** of God John 1:14
In the Old Testament, this visible form was called the Shechinah.
It was seen in the form of glory, brightness or a cloud.
Moses saw a burning bush and the Word spoke out of the bush Ex. 3:2
Take off your sandals for...you are standing on holy ground. I am the God of your fathers...
5. The **Word** made God's **covenants**. John 1:17
The Lord made a covenant and said... Gen. 15:18
6. The **Word** revealed God's **character**. Gen. 15:1 John 1:18
The Word of the Lord came to Abraham...I am Your shield - Your very great reward.

John then begins his Gospel by saying,

*Everyone knows about the Greek **Logos**, an idea or expression, an **IT**. Let me tell you about the **Jewish Logos** - a **HE**. Jesus is the Logos, the Word. He was revealed in the Old Testament as the Word.*

John wants people to know as they start reading his book, Jesus is the real *Logos*, revealed as:

Deity, Creator, Savior, The visible presence of God, The maker of the New Covenant,
The revelation of what God the Father is like.

Mishnah Beliefs

These are man-made laws and writings of the Jewish rabbis about:

DEATH

When Jewish people were going to die, they believed they would see the spirit of death coming for them.

After death, for 3 days the soul hovered over the body, so there was always a slight chance of resuscitation.

On the 4th day corruption and decay began; there was no chance whatever to come back to life.

EVENTS AT JESUS' DEATH based on Jewish traditions and legends

- ▶ The middle light of the menorah in the Temple went out.
- ▶ The Temple doors opened by themselves - *O temple, O temple, there is no need for you to say anything; I know you are destined for destruction.* Rabbi Johanan Ben Zekai, 31 AD
- ▶ The top support of the temple door suddenly broke and fell.
- ▶ The red ribbon on the scapegoat sent into the wilderness on Yom Kippur, no longer turned white. (Isa. 1:18)
In picture language it meant, from the year Jesus died, the scapegoat could no longer take away the sin of the nation. Only Jesus, the Lamb of God can take away our sin.

SOCIAL LIFE

Gentiles were called *dogs* and rejected by God.

Money

The Jews coined their own money for Jewish business and offerings. They used Roman money only for the outside world. No one could bring a Roman coin with the image of Caesar into the inner Jewish court of the Temple.

Taxes

If you, a Jew, pay taxes to Caesar, you are accepting Caesar as your king and you are denying Yahweh as your King.

Sabbath observance

Jews could not walk more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile and were limited in what they could carry. No one could heal another person on that day

Unwashed hands

Jews became ceremonially unclean by talking with Gentiles, non-practicing Jews or with tax collectors. Then if they touched food, the food was unclean. Eating the unclean food made them unclean on the inside. This made them unacceptable to God, according to the Mishnah.

So before a meal there was always a special ceremony to pour water over the fingers. This made the Jews ceremonially clean. Mishnah said, *It is better to have to walk 4 miles to water than to incur guilt by neglecting hand washing. One who neglects hand washing is as bad as a murderer.*

JESUS

The Talmud says Jesus was executed at Passover time, *because He seduced Israel by the practice of sorcery.*

MESSIANIC MIRACLES

From 350 - 30 BC, Mishnah teaching said Jews would be able to recognize their Messiah when He came, by three miracles He would do that no one else had ever done. He would heal:

- * A Jewish leper (most likely any skin disease that was contagious, spread and incurable. see Lesson #4)
- * A man who could not speak because he was controlled by an evil spirit see Lesson #7
- * A person who was born blind see Lesson #9

Mishnah Beliefs

MESSIANIC MIRACLES continued

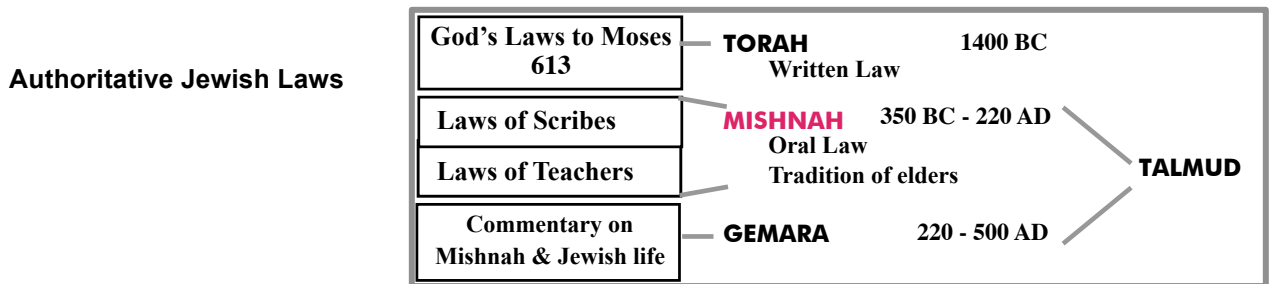
In 30 BC, because the Sanhedrin was afraid of losing their authority and power, they changed the rules for how they (the Jewish rulers) and the Jewish people could recognize their Messiah when He came. He would be like the Sanhedrin Pharisees; He would accept their authority; He would support all Mishnah teaching and even help them write new Mishnah laws.

From 30 BC onward, there were now 2 sets of rules about the Messiah. Each generation of Sanhedrin could choose which they wanted to use - miracles or Mishnah - to make their decision about any Messiah.

MISHNAH - also called the *oral law*, *traditions of the elders*, *law of the Pharisees* or *the customs of the ancestors*.

These were thousands upon thousands of man-made rules and opinions written by the rabbis to act as a fence around the law of Moses. They started being written in 350 BC and continued into the 2nd century AD. They were passed down thru the centuries only in spoken form, so it became known as the *oral law*. In 30 BC, the Sanhedrin rewrote history and said that God's laws and the oral laws were equal because they were both given at the time of Moses. Then they proclaimed,

It is a greater sin to disobey the laws of the scribes than to disobey the laws of God.



PARENTS

Jewish men did not have a responsibility towards their parents if they used the loopholes of Mishnah.

He that curses his father or his mother is not guilty, unless he curses them with express mention of the name of God.

Corban was a Mishnah law and explanation allowing a Jewish man to dedicate his possessions to God to avoid responsibilities to his parents. Mark 7:11

Moses' laws said adult children should help parents financially if they needed help.

Sanhedrin leaders did not want to share their wealth with their parents, so they wrote a new law.

If you dedicated all your possessions or money to God, you then had two options. You could give them to God or use them yourself, but you could not give them to anyone else, including parents.

SAMARITANS were part Jewish and part Gentile. Jews called them *dogs*.

Jews were not to ask Samaritans for anything.

A common Jewish prayer was, *May mine eyes never set upon a Samaritan*.

SANHEDRIN PHARISEES

They believed tax collectors and sinners (prostitutes) were unacceptable to God. Therefore...

They could not buy from or sell to them; they could not eat with them at their homes; they could not invite them to their home. They could not even say anything to encourage them to change.

Mishnah said: *God rejoices over the death of tax collectors and sinners.*

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Prayer, study and understanding their sacred writings.

If Jews sat under a fig tree while they reflected on spiritual questions, they would get more insight.

Mishnah Beliefs

SPIRITUAL LIFE continued

Getting into the Kingdom

All Israel has a share in the world to come. This meant if you were born a Jew, you had blood ties to Abraham and therefore were automatically part of God's kingdom.

Whomever the Lord loves, He makes rich.

Wealth is a guarantee you will be in His kingdom; it is proof of God's acceptance.

TAX COLLECTORS

Altho they are Jewish, they cannot worship in the Jewish part of the Jerusalem temple or the local synagogue.

They can never serve as a witness.

Their money is unclean; anyone taking their money is unclean.

They have no hope of ever being accepted by God; repentance is impossible.

*God rejoices over the **death** of tax collectors and sinners.*

TEMPLE EVENTS

In 31 AD, after Jesus' death, there were Temple events that were so unusual, they were described in the Jewish Talmud.

Middle light of the Temple menorah went out.

Temple doors opened by themselves *O temple, O temple, there is no need for you to say anything;*

I know you are destined for destruction. Rabbi Johanan Ben Zekai, 30 AD

Lintel of the temple suddenly broke and fell.

Scapegoat was sent into the wilderness.

From 31 AD onwards, the red ribbon on its horn no longer turned white (Isa. 1:18). The meaning: the year Jesus died, God no longer forgave sins on the basis of goats, but on Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

God in His mercy has left clues in the writings of the Jews to point them to Jesus.

People

12 APOSTLES

Disciples means: those who *follow, learn and develop maturity*. The word does not include having authority.

Apostles means: those who are *sent* with authority to preach and heal.

The 12

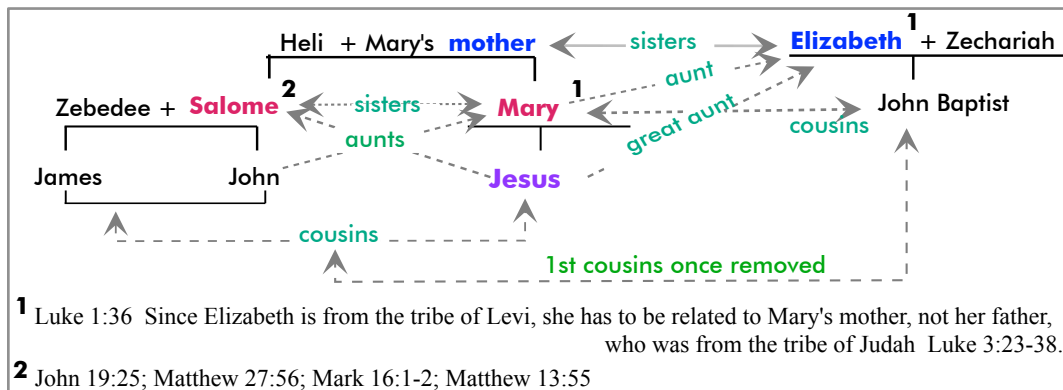
Simon	} sons of John	<i>Peter</i> - Greek name; <i>Cephas</i> - Aramaic name both mean <i>rock</i>
Andrew		
James	} sons of Zebedee & Salome (sister of Mary, mother of Jesus) Jn 19:25; named "Sons of Thunder" Mk. 3:17	Mt. 27:56; Mk. 16:1-2
John		
Philip		
Nathaniel		
Bartholomew		
Matthew		Levi - former tax collector; wrote the 1st gospel
Thomas		(Aramaic) Didymus (Greek) both names mean <i>twin</i>
James #2		son of Alphaeus
Judas Thaddeus		
Simon the Zealot		- member of violent resistance group
Judas Iscariot		means <i>man of Kerioth</i> (town in southern Judea)

BELIEVING REMNANT

The name for the Jews who remained faithful to God, generation after generation, thruout the 400 years between the Old and New Testament. These are the ones who would respond to God and be used by Him thruout the Gospels. They are called the believing remnant because they are in the minority.

The Jewish majority are like the Sanhedrin - their spiritual leaders.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS OF JESUS



HIS "BROTHERS and SISTERS"

The Greek word *adelphos* can mean any near relative. Roman Catholics say they are *cousins*;

Protestants say they are *half-brothers/sisters*.

Rather than argue and miss the point why they are mentioned, why not say *blood relatives*?

MARY'S SISTER is Salome (see chart above);

MARY'S SISTER-IN-LAW is Mary, wife of Clopas and mother of James and Joses. John 19:25; Mark 15:40

HEROD ANTIPAS - ruler over Perea and Galilee provinces; a son of Herod the Great (he tried to kill baby Jesus).

Made "protector of the Temple area" by Rome, because of his knowledge of the Jews and their customs.

People

SANHEDRIN of the 1st CENTURY

They accepted responsibility for Jesus' death *His blood be on us and our children* Mt. 27:25

God held them accountable and brought judgment in 70 AD.

Roman armies killed over one million Jews, destroyed the Temple and the city of Jerusalem.

But, none of the believing remnant were killed. They all escaped to Pella in the area of the Gentiles.

The nation of Israel was taken off the map and ceased to exist from 70 AD to 1948.

That unbelieving generation, because their leadership was responsible for the death of Jesus was judged.

No other generation was or is to be punished for their sin.

SINNERS When Gospel writers use the word *sinner* with *tax collectors*, they are talking about *prostitutes*.

TAX COLLECTORS

Who they were

Jews who wanted to get rich quickly could buy the position of collecting taxes for Rome. They could collect any amount they wanted. In old English they were called "publicans" meaning public servants.

How they were viewed

They were thought of as the scum of the earth, equal to traitors and criminals because they worked for the Roman government. They were hated because they used their power to extort money from their own people, the Jews.

Politics

1st century

SANHEDRIN

The Jewish rulers over the nation of Israel who served as their civil and religious leaders.

Membership: 70 members plus the high priest. Matthew 16:21 and Mark 11:27 refer to the 3 branches.

There are 24 **chief priests**. In the Bible they are called Sadducees.

They are an elite group from wealthy Jewish families.

They are from the **SADDUCEE** party, known for their pro-Greek beliefs and views.

They only use the books of Moses to develop their beliefs and do not accept Mishnah laws.

They do not believe in angels, spirits, resurrection of the body, miracles or anything supernatural.

They are in charge of the priests in the Temple. Today we would call them ultra-liberal or progressives.

There are 22 **scribes**. Sometimes they are called *teachers of the law, experts in the law or lawyers*.

They are from the **PHARISEE** party, known for their pro-Jewish beliefs.

They are supposed to teach and explain Moses' law, but instead they only write and teach Mishnah laws.

The 3rd branch is the 24 **elders**. In the Bible they are called The Pharisees

They obviously are from the **PHARISEE** party, known for their pro-Jewish beliefs.

They are supposed to enforce the laws of Moses, but instead, only enforce the laws of Mishnah.

Both the Scribes and Pharisees are ultra-conservative.

They believe in angels, spirits, resurrection of the body, miracles and the supernatural.

Their Purpose: God directed Ezra to form the Sanhedrin in 400 BC:

To **teach** God's Word by putting it in the language of the people and explaining it.

To **preserve** the Jewish faith by supporting the expectation of the coming Messiah.

To **guard** the faith by investigating anyone who says he **is** the Messiah. They must decide for the nation,
Yes, He is our Jewish Messiah or no, He is not our Messiah and this is why.

Their False belief about the...

Mishnah They said,

The oral laws were given at the time of Moses.

Moses' written laws and Jewish oral laws are equal.

It is a greater evil for Jews to break the Mishnah laws than Moses' laws.

Messiah They said,

He will be a religious leader from the Pharisees and obey all the laws of Mishnah.

He will join them in writing additional laws for Mishnah.

He will be recognized by His support of the Sanhedrin and Mishnah laws.

Their Function in the 1st century. They were the Supreme Court over religious affairs.

They made all national decisions for the Jewish people in religious issues.

They decided who should receive capital punishment under Jewish law (stoning to death).

Only 23 of the 71 were needed (quorum) for a verdict; 11 to acquit; 13 to convict.

One year before Jesus' death, the Roman senate took away their right to stone people to death.

They could no longer pronounce the death penalty or actually put a person to death.

JEWISH IDENTITY - NATIONAL, RELIGIOUS and CULTURAL

Pharisees is the Greek word which means *separatists*. As a group, they developed c. 150 BC.

Thru the influence of the Maccabean leaders, the majority of Jewish people became conservative in their ideas. They believed the Jewish nation, faith and practice needed to be completely separated from Greek religious beliefs. They wanted to follow God and keep God's laws given thru Moses.

JEWISH IDENTITY - NATIONAL, RELIGIOUS and CULTURAL

Pharisees continued

They believed in angels, spirits, resurrection of the body and miracles. By remaining separate, the believing remnant was able to remain faithful to God. This was their wonderful beginning.

But by the years 75 - 50 BC the Pharisees had become a group within the Sanhedrin leadership. They became arrogant, wrote thousands of Mishnah laws and then used them to have power and control over the people. By the time of Jesus, they were the 3rd branch of the Sanhedrin - ultra-conservative, extreme right wing.

Sadducees also developed as a group c. 150 BC. They wanted Greek ideas to become part of the Jews' culture, as well as their national and religious beliefs. They were more liberal and progressive in their thinking.

In Jesus' day, the Sadducees were descendants of the Maccabean priests who ruled the Jews for many years. But instead of following the godly leadership of the early Maccabee family, they became power-hungry and were willing to do anything to keep their authority and control.

They were the 1st branch of the Sanhedrin. They were priests from elite, wealthy families who often paid to become Sanhedrin members. They only accepted the authority of the Torah - the books of Moses. They did not believe in angels, spirits, resurrection of the body or the supernatural. They did not accept Mishnah laws or teaching.¹

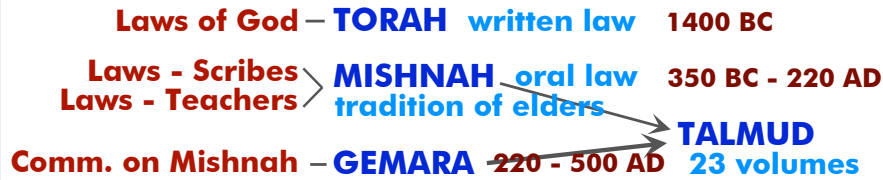
¹ *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period*, Jacob Neusner, editor-in-chief, Hendrickson Publishers, 1999)

Herodians were influential Jews who supported Herod's leadership and the Roman government.

Zealots were just the opposite. They were a resistance group who wanted to overthrow the Roman government thru violence.

Religious Life

AUTHORITATIVE JEWISH LAWS



CEREMONIES

Baptism was used by all Greek and Roman religions, Judaism and secular philosophies.

Meaning: *identification with a message or belief.*

Purpose: to publicly show one's agreement with the belief or teaching of a person or group.

Passover: a reminder feast - see **lesson #11, page 2** for the complete ceremony.

A male lamb one year old, without any imperfection was chosen 4 days before Passover.

It was set aside and examined during the 4 days to be sure it was perfect.

It was killed in late morning, the day before Passover; part was sacrificed while the rest was taken home and roasted.

After sundown, it was the beginning of Passover and the Seder Meal was eaten.

There were 2 Passover lambs and 2 Passover meals; Passover began after sundown.

The 1st lamb was the Seder meal with family or a group. It was eaten after sundown, the beginning of Passover.

The 2nd lamb was the Passover Sacrifice for the nation at 9:00 am at the Temple (some 15 hours later).

Priests on duty ate the meat of that lamb for their Passover meal later that afternoon.

When Passover fell on Friday, there were 2 days of Preparation. One on Thursday to prepare the meal.

The other on Friday to prepare for High Sabbath which was a special holy day.

PLACES OF WORSHIP

Temple in Jerusalem People could only worship **outside** in the courtyard.

God lives in heaven; He is omnipresent. God also localized His presence in the Jerusalem temple so He could live with His people. It was His house, so Jews worshipping at the temple were *in the presence* of God. Since animal sacrifices had to be offered directly to God, the Temple was the only place to offer them.

Synagogues People worshipped **inside**.

They were developed by Ezra in 400 BC for Jews who lived outside of Jerusalem. Wherever there were 10 Jewish men, a building had to be built. It would be the place where men, women and children could worship, pray and receive instruction.

In the days of Jesus, there were synagogues in every city in Israel. There were services on holy days and Sabbaths. In addition there were services on Monday and Thursday - days people came to market. The teachers were rabbis either from the local area or who were visiting.

Because synagogues were places of instruction for the Jews, it was the logical place for Jesus to present Himself as the promised Messiah.

Social Life

DEATH BY CRUCIFIXION

The weight of the body hanging on a cross, kept a person's lungs from filling with air. Death by suffocation would come quickly. So a ledge was always put on the cross underneath the person's feet. Altho it created unbelievable pain, the person could push himself up to get air. By doing this, he could survive for days on the cross, without food, but receiving liquid as he requested it.

If death had to be hurried, the person's legs would be broken and death would come within minutes. If a person died unusually fast, soldiers proved his death by piercing the body with a spear, just under the heart. If blood and water came out, they had the evidence.

EATING and HAND WASHING According to the Mishnah, Jews became...

Ceremonially unclean by talking with Gentiles, a non-practicing Jew, a tax collector or by touching forbidden items.

If they touched food, the food was unclean.

Eating that food made a person unclean inside. This made them unacceptable to God.

It was called "eating with unwashed hands".

Ceremonially clean by pouring water over the fingers before the meal.

FAMILY

Babies When a Jewish baby was born, it was wrapped in long, narrow strips of cloth, called *wrapping* or *swaddling* cloths. If it was a boy, when he was 8 days old, he was circumcised and named. When he was 40 days old, he was taken to the temple courtyard in Jerusalem. If he was the first-born, he belonged to God; he must be consecrated and redeemed for 5 shekels. The mother must offer a lamb and a bird. If she and her husband were poor, she could offer 2 birds Lk. 2:24.

Children This applied mostly to boys, but girls could also be trained in the Old Testament.

At 5-6, they studied Old Testament Scripture; at 10, they studied Jewish legal traditions.

At 12, they apprenticed to their father's work; at 13, they had their bar-mitzvah.

For Jesus, from birth to at least 12, He was specially taught by God the Father every morning. Isa. 50:4.

Engagement lasted for one year, followed immediately by marriage.

The year of engagement was as binding as marriage. Any immorality by an engaged girl was considered adultery and punishable by death. The only way to break an engagement was by death or divorce. Communication between an engaged couple was usually thru their fathers because they were the ones who arranged the marriage. A godly Jewish man could not marry his fiancé if she were guilty of immorality. He must either divorce her or condemn her to death, along with the guilty man.

LEPROSY LAWS

Leprosy could mean Hansen's disease or any skin disease that spread, was contagious, incurable and debilitating.

Jews were declared lepers by the high priest in Jerusalem, using the laws of Moses. They were quarantined; no one could touch them.

Jews were declared healed by the high priest in Jerusalem, using the laws of Moses.

They had to present themselves to the Jewish high priest in Jerusalem.

The high priest offered 2 bird sacrifices and then had a 7 day investigation. Was the person really a leper? If so, how was he healed and by whom?

If after 7 days, the priest was convinced the person was healed, on the 8th day, there was a special ceremony with a series of animal sacrifices. After this, the person was declared healed and could re-enter society.

Social Life

JEWISH BURIALS John 19:39-40

Women were trained to wash and anoint the body with perfumed ointment.

Friends wrapped the body in long, wide strips of linen cloth with 75 pounds of spices in the wrappings.

They wrapped the head in a separate long strip of linen cloth.

They stored these burial cloths in the natural caves that were on their property or nearby in open fields.
