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a *Grace Notes* course

# The Acts of the Apostles

Section I: Acts 1 to 7

an expositional study  
by Warren Doud

Lesson 10: **Acts 4:1-8**

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## Acts 4:1-8

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## **Instructions**

Begin each study session with prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who makes spiritual things discernable to Christians, so it is essential to be in fellowship with the Lord during Bible study.

### **Instructions**

1. Study the lesson by reading the passage in ACTS, studying the notes, and studying the other passages of the Bible which are cited. It is a good idea to read the whole book of Acts regularly, perhaps at least once a month. This will give you a good overall view of the events in ACTS.
  2. Study the topics in the same way, paying close attention to all of the Bible verses which are mentioned.
  3. Review all of the notes in the ACTS study and the topics
  4. Go to the Quiz page and follow the instructions to complete all the questions on the quiz. The quiz is "open book". You may refer to all the notes and to the Bible when you take the test. But you should not get help from another person.
  5. When you have completed the Quiz, be sure to SAVE the file.
  6. Return the completed Quiz to Grace Notes, either by e-mail or regular mail. There are instructions below in the Quiz section.
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## Acts 4:1-8

### Acts 4:1

**And as they spoke unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,**

All the time that Peter was preaching, it is apparent that the Sanhedrin were getting organized. These men were the aristocrats of the land; the religious leaders and political leaders. They fancied themselves as the holders of all wisdom and power.

READ Romans 2:17-29 for the Apostle Paul's frank criticism of the Jews' religious superiority complex.

#### **the captain of the temple**

There were 24 to 30 bands (battalions) of Levites who took their turns serving as the Temple police. A band had enough members in it to carry out patrol and guard duty in all of the areas of the Temple.

The leader of each battalion was called "captain" (STRATEIGOS). While a police battalion was on duty, the captain reported directly to the high priest and other high ranking Sadducees. The captain would have responded immediately to the Sadducees.

#### **the Sadducees**

The Sadducees were politically and religiously very conservative; that is, they considered themselves the keepers of the *status quo*. They were automatically opposed to anything that threatened to change the way things were done; so this incursion by Peter and John was extremely agitating to them.

They object to Peter's teaching on many grounds:

1. They did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, so the resurrection of Christ was a false teaching to them.
2. They did not accept Jesus as Messiah.
3. They object to Peter's teaching in the Temple as an infringement on their prerogatives. After all, they were the "keepers of the Law," and people

had to get permission from them to teach. Peter was teaching without their permission.

Allied with the Sadducees were the Priests. Most of the priests were Sadducees, and all of the high priests had been Sadducees ever since John Hyrcanus I had deserted the Pharisees several decades earlier.

The Sadducees had been slow to line up with the Pharisees in opposing Christ, but now they are taking the lead in fighting against the Christian movement.

Now, this whole group of Sadducees and Temple police approached this large crowd, and, in particular, Peter and John. There is some feeling in the Greek of this verse that the Sadducees had a hostile attitude; but that would be clear anyway from this whole context.

### Acts 4:2

**Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.**

"being grieved" – from (DIAPONOUMENOS), "being sore troubled". They were worked up, indignant.

Indignation is a common symptom of self-righteousness. That is, when I see another person commit a sin, and I judge that person as if I, myself, were never guilty of sin, I am being self-righteous. And one expression of that self-righteousness is indignation. "Well, I never...", meaning, "I would never think of doing what that person did. That is so shameful!"

We see indignant attitudes in all circumstances of life, great and small. In traffic, we rail against other drivers as if we have no driving faults of our own. In restaurants, we complain about the service, as if we would could do a waiter's job perfectly. In church, we complain about how things are done, as if we would perform the same work flawlessly.

The Jewish leaders here were indignant and very angry.

The Sadducees were aristocrats and political religious leaders who disliked popular disturbances. And they particularly resented the

teaching about the resurrection of Christ, whom they had helped crucify.

**TOPIC: SADDUCEES**

**Acts 4:3**

**And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.**

Peter and John were placed under arrest by the Temple authorities. They were put in “the hold” which was the Temple jail. It was illegal to hold trials or hearings at night (after 5 pm), so the Sadducees would have to wait until the next day to bring proceedings.

**Acts 4:4**

**Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.**

Here are the results from Peter’s sermon.

“many of them ... believed” = therefore, not everyone who heard the Gospel here believed it.

“the number of the men” = only the men are mentioned, but there would have been women and children present. It could be that many more than 5000 individuals accepted Christ, if women and children could be included.

**Acts 4:5**

**And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,**

The “rulers, elders, and scribes” were the Sanhedrin. These were the three parts of the Sanhedrin:

There were 24 rulers, who were the chief priests or other religious rulers, 24 elders, or political rulers; and 22 scribes, who were the theologians and Talmudic scholars. These, with the high priest, made up the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem, with 71 members.

**TOPIC: SANHEDRIN**

**Acts 4:6**

**And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as**

**were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.**

There whole area of the Levant was controlled, economically and politically, by an extensive crime syndicate that had its headquarters in Jerusalem. These gangsters’ territory extended from Antioch in the north to Alexandria, Egypt in the south.

These criminals made millions every year, through every form of graft and corruption, bribes, kickbacks, and outright theft.

They skimmed taxes (cf. Zacchaeus). The Romans assessed the taxes, but the crooked tax collectors, who worked for the syndicate collected much more than was assessed, and the Romans looked the other way as long as they got theirs.

The syndicate operated north and south of Jerusalem, in Gaza, in the Negev desert, and along all of the caravan routes to India, China, and Africa. The bandit gangs hid out in the mountains, such as those east of the Sea of Galilee, and raided caravans and individual travelers. Herod the Great had cleaned out the mountain bandit gangs a number of years previously, but they were flourishing again at the time of the beginning of the new Church.

For many years, the head of this huge syndicate had been a man named Annas. Annas supervised all of the criminal enterprises and took care of bribing all the Roman officials and military officers so that they would go easy on criminals. Annas’ whole extended family were leaders in these criminal activities, and they were extremely wealthy, having been operating as criminals for nearly two decades.

Annas was called “Annas the high priest” because he had been the Jewish high priest on more than one occasion, serving a total of nine years. Annas’ father, also named Annas, had been a high priest, as had several of Annas’ brothers. Three of his sons had been high priests, also, and at the time of this story, Caiaphas, who was married to Annas’ daughter, was serving as high priest. Annas and his son-in-law Caiaphas are named in this verse.

There is speculation about who John and Alexander are. It seems probably that John was

Jochanan ben Zaccai, who was very famous at that time in the Jewish nation. The Talmud says of him, “Rabbin Jochanan ben Zaccai the priest lives 120 years. He found favor in the eyes of Caesar ... when he died, the glory of wisdom ceased.”

Alexander was probably Alexander Lysimachus, one of the richest Jews of his time, who made great gifts to the Temple, and was highly esteemed by King Agrippa. He was brother to the famous Philo Judaeus, and father of Alexander Tiberius, who married Berenice, the daughter of Agrippa the Elder and was governor of Judea after Cuspius Fadus. (Josephus, Antiquities 1, xix, c. 5, s. 1).

When Jesus was tried, they brought him to Annas first, even though Caiaphas was the high priest, because Annas was the political boss and had to approve everything that happened. Caiaphas was the high priest until 38 AD when he was finally deposed.

The “kindred of the high priest” were other sons, sons-in-law, uncles, brothers, all members of Annas’ family.

#### TOPIC: HIGH PRIESTS

One of the biggest rackets that this family engaged in was religion. And they didn’t even have to attract an audience, like TV evangelists do; they had a captive audience of people who were enslaved by a legalistic religious system that is unparalleled in human history.

The moneychangers reported directly to Annas. They collected the tithes, offerings, and the usual fees prescribed by the law, but by now the Jewish rulers had laid on many other fees and charges that the people had to pay to participate in Temple worship. These moneychangers were common crooks, selling “holy animals” at inflated exchange rates, and charging exorbitant fees to convert ordinary money into the Temple shekels that were the required currency inside the Temple walls. The system was devoid of any semblance of grace!

Now all these people are meeting here because they consider Peter and John to be a real threat to their enterprises. Christianity is always a threat to the powers that be, because when a person gets saved and starts to grow in Christ, a lot of the gullibility is washed away by the Word of God,

grace replaces legalism, and Christian production replaces religious ceremony. This hits these crooks right in the pocket.

#### Acts 4:7

**And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have you done this?**

“in the midst” – in the center of a semi-circle – like a court with 70 judges.

“by what power” – “by what authority” or “by what name” (EXOUSIOS)

One interpretation of this is that the Sanhedrin believed that the healing was the effect of magic. Since all contact with familiar spirits, spells, charms, witches, was unlawful, they may have hoped that they could show that Peter and John were witches and could be put to death. So their question would be “By what supernatural energy, or by what mode of incantation, or by what wizards or witches, do you do these things?”

A simpler explanation would be that the Sanhedrin are merely asking for the apostles to tell who gave them permission to teach in the Temple.

#### Acts 4:8

**Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, You rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,**

This verse makes it clear that Peter is in fellowship as he speaks. He is not preaching here, he is defending himself and John against the charges. He needs divine wisdom to give the right answers. He addresses the Sanhedrin ...

READ Matthew 10:18-20, “And you shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake; but take no thought how or what you shall speak; for it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you.”

#### Sadducees

The Hebrew word by which the Sadducees were called is **tsaddiqim**, “the righteous ones”. If we only look at the points of differences between them and the Pharisees, we get a distorted picture of the Sadducees; but each party had its strong

characteristics, that of the Pharisees being a rigid realism, while the Sadducees were aristocratic. According to Josephus, "they gain only the well-to-do; they have not the people on their side." The high priestly families, for example, were almost all Sadducees.

### BELIEFS OF THE SADDUCEES

The Sadducees accepted only the written law and prophets as binding. They rejected the entire traditional interpretations and the further developments of the Scribes. "The Sadducees say only what is written is to be thought of as legal...what has come down from tradition of the fathers need not be observed." (Josephus, Antiquities, XIII, 10,6).

In legal matters the Sadducees were very rigid in judging offenders, while the Pharisees were much milder. "They saw in the tradition of the elders an excess of legal strictness which they refused to have imposed upon them, while the advanced religious views were, on the one hand, superfluous to their worldly-mindedness, and on the other, inadmissible by their higher culture and enlightenment" (Scheurer, Jewish People, Div. II, Vol. I, p. 41). A more thorough discussion of legal matters among the Sadducees can be found in Unger's Bible Dictionary, pp. 952,953.

In ritual, the only important differences of Sadducees from Pharisees was in respect to laws of cleanness. They derided the Pharisees for the oddities and inconsistencies which they had brought into their laws of purity. They did not reject the idea of Levitical uncleanness, however, and they demanded a higher degree of cleanness for the priest who made the red heifer offering than did the Pharisees.

### DOCTRINES OF THE SADDUCEES

The Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection of the body or in retribution or reward in a future life. They did not feel bound by any doctrine which did not proceed from Moses, and there was no assertion by Moses in the Pentateuch of any resurrection from the dead. The Sadducees would have given much more weight to Moses' writings than to any of the prophets or historians, even though they regarded those writings canonical.

The Sadducees denied that there were angels or spirits, independent spiritual beings besides God. Even the soul, they said, was only refined matter and would perish with the body.

It is not surprising that the Sadducees laid great stress on human free will. With a strong insistence on personal liberty there came a decrease of the religious motive. They insisted that man was at his own disposal, and they rejected the idea that a divine cooperation takes place in human actions. The Pharisees accentuated the divine to the verge of fatalism, and insisted on absolute preordination of every event in its smallest detail. The Sadducees opposed notions like these.

### Sects and Parties of the Jews

from "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul" by W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, Chapter 2.

The Sadducees and Pharisees are frequently mentioned in the New Testament, and we are there informed of the tenets of these two prevailing parties. The belief in a future state may be said to have been an open question among the Jews, when our Lord appeared and "brought life and immortality to light." We find the **Sadducees** established in the highest office of the priesthood, and possessed of the greatest powers in the Sanhedrin; and yet they did not believe in any future state, nor in any spiritual existence independent of the body. The Sadducees said that there was "no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit." (Acts 23:8; Matt. 22:23,24) They do not appear to have held doctrines which are commonly called licentious or immoral. On the contrary, they adhered strictly to the moral tenets of the Law, as opposed to its more formal technicalities. They did not overload the Sacred books with traditions, or encumber the duties of life with a multitude of minute observances. They were the disciples of reason without enthusiasm – they made few proselytes – their numbers were not great, and they were confined principally to the richer members of their nation.

The **Pharisees** were the enthusiasts of later Judaism. They "compassed sea and land to make one proselyte." Their power and influence with the mass of the people was immense. The loss of the

national independence of the Jews – the gradual extinction of their political life, directly by the Romans, and indirectly by the family of Herod, caused their feelings to really round the Law and their religion as the only center of unity which now remained to them.

Those, therefore, who gave their energies to the interpretation and exposition of the Law, not curtailing any of the doctrines which were virtually contained in it and which had been revealed with more or less clearness, but rather accumulating articles of faith, and multiplying the requirements of devotion – who themselves practiced a severe and ostentatious religion, being liberal in almsgiving, fasting frequently, making long prayers, and carrying casuistic distinctions into the smallest details of conduct – who consecrated, moreover, their best zeal and exertions to the spread of the fame of Judaism, and to the increase of the nation's power in the only way which was not practicable – could not fail to command the reverence of great numbers of the people.

It was no longer possible to fortify Jerusalem against the heathen; but the Law could be fortified like an impregnable city. The place of the brave is on the walls and in the front of the battle; and the hopes of the nation rested on those who defended the sacred outworks, and made successful inroads on the territories of the Gentiles.

Such were the Pharisees. And now, before proceeding to other features of Judaism and their relation to the church, we can hardly help glancing at St. Paul. He was “a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee,” (Acts 23:6), and he was educated by Gamaliel, (Acts 22:3), “a Pharisee”. (Acts 5:34) Both his father and his teacher belonged to this sect. And on three distinct occasions he tells us that he himself was a member of it.

Once when at his trial, before a mixed assembly of Pharisees and Sadducees, the words just quoted were spoken, and his connection with the Pharisees asserted with such effect that the feelings of this popular party were immediately enlisted on his side. “And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the multitude was divided ...

And there arose a great cry; and the Scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man.” (Acts 23)

The second time was when, on a calmer occasion, he was pleading before Agrippa, and said to the king in the presence of Festus: “The Jews knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straightest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.” (Acts 26) And once more, when writing from Rome to the Philippians, he gives force to his argument against the Judaizers, by telling them that if any other man thought he had whereof he might trust in the flesh, he himself had more: “circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee.” (Phil. 3:4). And not only was he himself a Pharisee, but his father also. He was “a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee.” This short sentence sums up nearly all we know of St. Paul's parents. If we think of his earliest life, we are to conceive of him as born in a Pharisaic family, and as brought up from his infancy in the “straightest sect of the Jews' religion.”

His childhood was nurtured in the strictest belief. The stories of the Old Testament, the angelic appearances, the prophetic visions, to him were literally true. He needed no Sadducean explanation. The world of spirits was a reality to him. The resurrection of the dead was an article of his faith. And to exhort him to the practices of religion, he had before him the example of his father, praying and walking with broad phylacteries, scrupulous and exact in his legal observances. He had, moreover, as it seems, the memory and tradition of ancestral piety; for he tells us in one of his latest letters (2 Tim. 1:3) that he served God “from his forefathers.”

All influences combined to make him “more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his fathers,” (Gal. 1:14) and “touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless.” (Phil. 3:6) Everything tended to prepare him to be an eminent member of that theological party, to which so many of the Jews were looking for the preservation of their national life, and the extension of their national creed.

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But in this mention of the Pharisees and Sadducees we are far from exhausting the subject of Jewish divisions, and far less from enumerating all those phases of opinion which must have had some connection with the growth of rising Christianity and all those elements which may have contributed to form the character of the apostle of the heathen. There was a sect in Judea which is not mentioned in the Scriptures but which must have acquired considerable influence in the time of the apostles, as may be inferred from the space devoted to it by Josephus and Philo. These were the **Essenes**, who retired from theological and political distractions of Jerusalem and the larger towns, and founded peaceful communities in the desert or in villages, where their life was spent in contemplation and in the practices of ascetic piety. It has been suggested that John the Baptist was one of them. There is no proof that this was the case, but we need not doubt that they did represent religious cravings which Christianity satisfied.

Another party was that of the **Zealots**, who were as politically fanatical as the Essenes were religiously contemplative, and whose zeal was kindled with the burning desire to throw off the Roman yoke from the neck of Israel. Very different from them were the Herodians, twice mentioned in the Gospels (Mark 3:6; Matt 22:16; see Mark 12:13), who held that the hopes of Judaism rested on the Herods, and who almost looked to that family for the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Messiah. And if we were simply enumerating the divisions and describing the sects of the Jews, it would be necessary to mention the **Therapeutae**, a widely spread community in Egypt, who lived even in great seclusion that the Essenes in Judea. The **Samaritans** also would require our attention. But we must turn from these sects and parties to a wider division, which arose from the dispersion of the Hebrew people, to which some space has been devoted in the preceding chapter.

### HELLENISTS AND ARAMEANS

We have seen that early colonies of the Jews were settled in Babylonia and Mesopotamia. Their connection with their brethren in Judea was continually maintained; and they were bound to

them by the link of a common language. The Jews of Palestine and Syria, with those who lived on the Tigris and Euphrates, interpreted the Scriptures through the Targums or Chaldean paraphrases, and spoke kindred dialects of the language of Aram; and hence they were called Aramean Jews.

We have also had occasion to notice that other dispersion of the nation through those countries where Greek was spoken. Their settlements began with Alexander's conquests and were continued under the successors of those who partitioned his empire. Alexandria was their capital. They use the Septuagint translation of the Bible, and they were commonly called **Hellenists**, or Jews of the Grecian speech.

The mere difference of language would account in some degree for the mutual dislike with which we know that these two sections of the Jewish race regarded one another. We were all aware how closely the use of a hereditary dialect is bound up with the warmest feelings of the heart. And in this case the Aramean language was the sacred tongue of Palestine. It is true that the tradition of the language of the Jews had been broken, as the continuity of their political life had been rudely interrupted. The Hebrew of the time of Christ was not the oldest Hebrew of the Israelites; but it was a kindred dialect, and old enough to command a reverent affections. Though not the language of Moses and David, it was that of Ezra and Nehemiah. And it is not unnatural that the **Arameans** should have revolted from the speech of the Greek idolaters and the tyrant Antiochus, a speech which they associated moreover with innovating doctrines and dangerous speculations.

For the division went deeper than a mere superficial diversity of speech. It was not only a division, like the modern one of German and Spanish Jews, where those who hold substantially the same doctrines have accidentally been led to speak different languages. But there was diversity of religious views and opinions. This is not the place for examining that system of mystic interpretation called the Kabbala, and for determining how far its origin might be due to Alexandria or to Babylon. It is enough to say,

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generally, that in the Aramean theology, Oriental elements prevailed rather than Greek, and that the subject of Babylonian influences has more connection with the life of St. Peter than that of St. Paul.

The Hellenists, on the other hand, or Jews who spoke Greek, who lived in Greek countries, and were influenced by Greek civilization, are associated in the closest manner with the Apostle of the Gentiles. They are more than once mentioned in the Acts, where our English translation names them "Grecians" to distinguish them from the heather or proselyte "Greeks." Alexandria was the metropolis of their theology. Philo was their great representative. He was an old man when St. Paul was in his maturity; his writings were probably known to the apostles; and they have descended with the inspired Epistles to our own day. The work of the learned Hellenists may be briefly described as this – to accommodate Jewish doctrines to the mind of the Greeks, and to make the Greek language express the mind of the Jews. The Hebrew principles were "disengaged as much as possible from local and national conditions, and presented in a form adapted to the Hellenic world."

All this was hateful to the Arameans. The men of the East rose up against those of the West. The Greek learning was not more repugnant to the Roman Cato than it was to the strict Hebrews. They had a saying, "Cursed by he who teaches his son the learning of the Greeks." We could imagine them using the words of the prophet Joel (3:6), "The children of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them from their border," and we cannot be surprised that even in the deep peace and charity of the Church's earliest days, this inveterate division reappeared, and that "when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews." (Acts 6:1)

It would be an interesting subject of inquiry to ascertain in what proportions these two parties were distributed in the different countries where the Jews were dispersed, in what places they can into the strongest collision, and how far they were

fused and united together. In the city of Alexandria, the emporium of Greek commerce from the time of its foundation, where, since the earliest Ptolemies, literature, philosophy, and criticism had never ceased to excite the utmost intellectual activity, where the Septuagint translation of the Scripture had been made, and where a Jewish temple and ceremonial worship had been established in rivalry to that in Jerusalem, there is no doubt that the Hellenistic element largely prevailed. But although (strictly speaking) the –Alexandrian Jews were nearly all Hellenites, it does not follow that they were all Hellenizers. In other words, although their speech and the Scriptures were Greek, the theological views of many among them undoubtedly remained Hebrew.

There must have been many who were attached to the traditions of Palestine, and who looked suspiciously on their more speculative brethren; and we have no difficulty in recognizing the picture presented in a pleasing German fiction, which describes the debates and struggles of the two tendencies in this city, to be very correct. In Palestine itself, we have every reason to believe that the native population was entirely Aramean, though there was no lack of Hellenistic synagogues (see Acts 6:9) in Jerusalem, which at the seasons of the festivals would be crowded with foreign pilgrims, and become the scene of animated discussions. Syria was connected by the link of language with Palestine and Babylonia; but Antioch, its metropolis, commercially and politically, resembled Alexandria; and it is probable that, when Barnabas and Saul were establishing the great Christian community in that city, the majority of the Jews were "Grecians" rather than "Hebrews." In Asia Minor we should at first sight be tempted to imagine that the Grecian tendency would predominate; but when we find that Antiochus brought Babylonian Jews into Lydia and Phrygia, we must not make too confident a conclusion in this direction. We have ground for imagining that many Israelitish families in the remote districts (possibly that of Timothy at Lystra) may have cherished the forms of the traditional faith of the eastern Jews, and lived uninfluenced by Hellenistic novelties.

The residents in maritime and commercial towns would not be strangers to the western developments of religious doctrines; and when Apollos came from Alexandria to Ephesus (Acts 18:24), he would find himself in a theological atmosphere not very different from that of his native city. Tarsus in Cilicia will naturally be included under the same class of cities of the West, by those who remember Strabo's assertion that in literature and philosophy its fame exceeded that of Athens and Alexandria. At the same time, we cannot be sure that the very celebrity of its heathen schools might not induce the families of Jewish residents to retire all the more strictly into a religious Hebrew seclusion.

That such a seclusion of their family from Gentile influences was maintained by the parents of St. Paul is highly probable. We have no means of knowing how long they themselves, or their ancestors, had been Jews of the dispersion. A tradition is mentioned by Jerome that they came originally from Giscala, a town in Galilee, when it was stormed by the Romans. The story involves an anachronism and contradicts the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 22:3). Yet it need not be entirely disregarded, especially when we find St. Paul speaking of himself as "a Hebrew of the Hebrews" and when we remember that the word "Hebrew" is used for an Aramaic Jew, as opposed to a "Grecian" or "Hellenist." Nor is it unlikely in itself that before they settled in Tarsus, the family had belonged to the Eastern dispersion, or to the Jews of Palestine. But, however this may be, St. Paul himself must be called a Hellenist; because the language of his infancy was that idiom of the Grecian Jews in which all his letters were written. Though, in conformity with the strong feeling of the Jews of all times, he might learn his earliest sentences from the Scripture in Hebrew, yet he was familiar with the Septuagint translation at an early age.

It is observed that when he quotes from the Old Testament, his quotations are from that version/ and that, not only when he cites its very words, but when (as if often the case) he quotes it from memory. Considering the accurate knowledge of the original Hebrew which he must have acquired under Gamaliel at Jerusalem, it has been inferred

that this can only arise from his having been thoroughly imbued at an earlier period with the Hellenistic scriptures. The readiness, too, with which he expressed himself in Greek, even before such an audience as that upon the Areopagus at Athens, shows a command of the language which a Jew would not, in all probability, have attained, had not Greek been the familiar speech of his childhood.

But still the vernacular Hebrew of Palestine would not have been a foreign tongue to the infant Saul; on the contrary, he may have heard it spoken almost as often as the Greek. For no doubt his parents, proud of their Jewish origin, and living comparatively near to Palestine, would retain the power of conversing with their friends from there in the ancient speech.. Mercantile connections from the Syrian coast would be frequently arriving, whose discourse would be in Aramaic; and in all probability there were kinsfolk still settled in Judea, as we afterwards find the nephew of St. Paul in Jerusalem (Acts 23:16).

We may compare the situation of such a family (so far as concerns heir language) to that of the French Huguenots who settles in London after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. These French families, though they soon learned to use the English as the medium of the common intercourse and the language of their household, yet, for several generations, spoke French with equal familiarity and greater affection.

Moreover, it may be considered as certain that the family of St. Paul, though Hellenistic in speech, were no Hellenizers in theology; they were not at all inclined to adopt Greek habits or Greek opinions. The manner in which St. Paul speaks of himself, his father, and his ancestors, implies the most uncontaminated hereditary Judaism. "Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. > Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I." (2 Cor. 11:22) "A Pharisee" and "the son of a Pharisee." "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews."

## Jewish Religious System

The religious life of the Jews in the time of Christ was controlled by the members of the Jewish priesthood, composed of the high priest and his family, the members of the supreme council, the Sanhedrin, and the local priest, or rabbi, who presided over the synagogue. Among the religious leaders there were many factions; and these factions had grave and fundamental differences in doctrine and practice.

This paper contains a description of each of the main elements of the Jewish religious hierarchy, namely: the Scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Sanhedrin. There is also a discussion of the doctrinal differences between the Pharisees and Sadducees; and there is a description of the Jewish Talmud, which comprised the written and oral scriptures and traditions of the Jews.

### THE SCRIBES

In New Testament times the Scribes formed a small and exclusive class, holding absolute spiritual supremacy over the people. Everywhere you would see the Scribe as the mouthpiece and representative of the people; he pushes to the front, the crowd respectfully giving way and eagerly listening to his statements as those of a recognized authority. The great respect paid to Scribes is reflected in the title of honor "my master", in Hebrew **rabbi**. From this respectful address the title Rabbi was formed, probably beginning as such in the time of Christ. In John 3, Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee, addressed Christ as "rabbi", a form of respect for a recognized teacher.

In New Testament Greek the words **nomikos**, "learned in the law; jurist" (Matt. 22:35; Luke 7:30; 10:25; 11:45,52; 14:3), and **nomodidaskalos**, "teacher of the law" (Luke 5:17; Acts 5:34) are used.

The period of the Sopherim, Scribes, began officially with the return of the Jews from captivity. Ezra was both a priest and a scribe; and the law read by Ezra (Neh. 8-10) was the Pentateuch essentially as we have it now. And from that time the Pentateuch was acknowledged by Jews as the binding rule of life. The office of

scribe had its origin somewhat earlier than this official beginning, however.

The scribe of the Greek state (**grammateus**) was more than a mere writer; he was also the keeper and registrar of public documents (acc. to Thucydides, iv. 118; vii, 10; and also in Acts 19:35). Three men are mentioned as holding the office of scribe under Kings David and Solomon (2 Sam. 8:17; 20:25; 1 Kings 4:3). These were the king's secretaries, writing his letters, drawing up orders and decrees, and managing royal finances. At a later period, the word "scribe" is connected with the numbering of the military forces of the country (Jer. 52:25; Isa. 33:18).

King Hezekiah brought together a group of men whose work it was to transcribe old records and to put in writing what had been handed down orally (Prov. 25:1). So the new significance of the title "Scribe" probably dates to this time, no longer referring only to an officer of the king's court, but to a class of students and interpreters of the law, boasting in their wisdom (Jer. 8:8).

The Law had been handed to Moses by God at Mt. Sinai, and the writings of Moses, the Pentateuch, was the chief body of Scripture for the Jews after the exile. Very quickly, however, the inspired writings of the prophets and historians were added to the authoritative canon of scripture. At a still later period, a third collection of writings was begun which over many generations became for the Jews just as authoritative as the inspired writings. This body of work was the writings of the Scribes of decisions and interpretations of the Pentateuch, prophetic, and historical writings.

As the law became more complicated and comprehensive, more scientific study and professional interpretation was required. The many details and applications to everyday life involved patient study. In the time of Ezra, and for several generations thereafter, this study and teaching was the job of the priesthood. But the higher the law rose in the estimation of the people, the more its study and exposition become an independent activity. Thus the scholar class, the Scribes, was formed.

The priests had somewhat abdicated their God-given position as teachers of the congregation of

Israel because, under Greek influence, the higher strata of priests, applied themselves to the study of heathen cultures, and more or less neglected the law. The Scribes appeared as the zealous and single-minded guardians of the law, and became the real teachers of the people, over whose lives they had control.

The history of the Scribes is divided into five periods, indicated by the names given to Scribes during successive times:

- The Sopherim (see above): lasting from the return from Babylon and ending with the death of Simon the Just, from about 458 to 300 B.C.
- The Tanaim (repeaters, or teachers of the law): in New Testament times.
- The Amoraim (Heb. the expounders) "wise men" and "doctors" of the law, who alone constituted the authorized recorders and expositors of the Halachah (220 A.D. to the completion of the Babylonian Talmud, About 500 A.D.) See below regarding the Halachah.
- The Saboraim (from Heb. to think or to discern): teachers of the law after the conclusion of the Talmud, 500 to 657 A.D., who determined the law from a careful examination of all the considerations urged by the Amoraim in their controversies on divine, legal, and ritual questions contained in the Talmud.
- The Gaonim, the last doctors of the law in the rabbinic succession, from 657 A.D. to 1034.

#### **THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE SCRIBES**

In the time of Christ, the rabbis required from their students absolute respect, even greater than the honor due to parents. "If a man's father and teacher have lost anything, the teacher's loss should have the precedence, i.e., he must first be assisted in recovering it; the burden of a teacher is to be born in preference to that of a father, a teacher must be ransomed from captivity before one's own father." The rabbis in general everywhere claimed the first rank (Matt. 23:6,7; Mark 12:38; Luke 11:43; 20:46).

The main task of the Scribes was the theoretical development of the law. They developed the general precepts of the law; and where the written

law made no direct provision, they created an application, either by establishing a precedent that was followed thereafter, or by inference from previous legal decisions. In this way, up to the time of Christ, Jewish law became an extensive and complicated science. Very great study was needed to gain even a general acquaintance with it.

The Scribes assumed that it was their special task to improve what was already binding by developing more and more subtle sophistication in reasoning. To develop a system of law binding on everyone, it was necessary to come as near to a consensus as possible. So the whole process of systematizing the law was carried on by oral discussion, the acknowledged authorities instructing the students and debating legal questions with each other, for centuries.

This made it necessary that the chief among the Scribes live in certain central places, and until 70 A.D. Jerusalem was the main headquarters of the Scribes, after that at Jamnia and Tiberias. Gradually, the theories of the Scribes became valid law; the rules developed by them were recognized in practice as soon as the various schools were in agreement. The Scribes were, in fact, legislators, especially after the destruction of the Temple, for then there was no civil court of justice under the Sanhedrin (see below).

The second task of the scribes was teaching the law. Every Israelite was supposed to have a thorough knowledge of the law. As a consequence, the famous chief rabbis gathered about them large numbers of students. Because parts of the oral law were never committed to writing, constant repetition was required to make it stick in the minds of the learners. Questions were directed to the students for the decision, while pupils also questioned the teachers. Because all knowledge of the law was strictly traditional, the student had only two duties - to keep everything in memory, and to teach only what had been given to him.

There were special locations for this instruction, "houses of teaching" (synagogues), and the Temple itself among the colonnades or other spaces in the outer court (Matt. 21:23; 26:55; Mark 14:49; Luke 2:46; 20:37; John 18:20).

The third duty of Scribes was to pass sentence in the court of justice. Obviously, men so well versed in the law would be asked to be judges. We know that scribes were members of the Sanhedrin (see below). After the fall of the Jewish state in 70 A.D., scribes were both legislators and judges.

### THE WRITINGS OF THE SCRIBES

In the development and writing of the law there evolved two main bodies of written work, the Halachah and the Haggadah.

Edersheim, in *Life and Times of Jesus*, Vol. I, p.98, states that the Halachah contained "either simply the laws laid down in Scripture, or else derived from or traced to it by some ingenious and artificial method of exegesis; or added to it, by way of amplification and for safety's sake; or, finally, legalized customs. They provided for every possible and impossible case, entered into every detail of private, family, and public life; and with iron logic, unbending rigor, and most minute analysis pursued and dominated man, turn whither he might, laying on him a yoke which was truly unbearable. The return which it offered was the pleasure and distinction of knowledge, the acquisition of righteousness, and the final attainment of rewards."

Scheurer, in *Jewish People*, Div. II, Vol. I, pp. 339 ff, states that the Haggadah "is an amplification and remodeling of what was originally given, according to the views and necessities of later times. It is true that here also the given text forms the point of departure, and that a similar treatment to that employed in passages from the law takes place in the first instance. The history is worked up by combining the different statements in the text with each other, completing one by another, setting the chronology, etc. Or the religious and ethical parts are manipulated by formulating dogmatic propositions from isolated prophetic utterances, by bringing these into relation to each other, and thus obtaining a kind of dogmatic system."

### THE PHARISEES

The word "Pharisee" is from Greek by way of the Aramaic word for "separated". The name

Separatist is thought by some to be derived from that separation which took place in the time of Zerubbabel, and then again in the time of Ezra, when Israel separated from the heathen dwelling in the land and from their uncleanness (Ezra 6:21; 9:1; 10:11; Neh. 9:2; 10:29).

However, the name probably has a stricter meaning, coming to the Pharisees as a result of their extremely strict view of the idea of pollution, not only from the uncleanness of the heathen, but also from that pollution with which they thought the majority of Israelites were likewise affected. They might have been called "separatists" by some in praise, and by others in blame. It is unlikely that they took the name for themselves because they called themselves the haberim, those who "associate", this term referring to one who associates himself with the law in order to observe it strictly in opposition to the encroachments of the heathen world culture.

The priests and scribes (see above) formed the inner structure of Jewish religion after the captivity. These two groups became more and more separated until, in the Maccabean period, two parties, sharply at odds with each other, were developed from them, the Pharisees from the Scribes, and the Sadducees from the ranks of the priests (see below). The characteristic feature of the Pharisees arose from the legal tendency, while that of the Sadducees came from the social position.

During the Greek period, the chief priests and rulers of the people took an increasingly more negative attitude toward the law; so the Pharisees united themselves more tightly into a group that kept to a strict observance of the law. In the time of John Hyrcanus, they were in hostile opposition to the Maccabees, because the Maccabees chief objective was no longer the carrying out of the law but maintaining and extending political and economic power.

The stress which the Pharisees laid on the religion of the people won the majority of the nation to their side, and Queen Alexandra, to keep civil peace, gave the power into the Pharisees' hands. It was consistency with principle which gave them spiritual supremacy and kept people on their side.

Although the Sadducees were at the head of the Sanhedrin, the whole conduct of internal affairs was in Pharisee hands; they completely ruled the public life of the nation, and this continued essentially throughout the time of Christ and the apostles.

From Scheurer, *Jewish People*, Div. II, Vol. II, p. 28, "They had the bulk of the nation as their ally, and women especially were in their control. They had the greatest influence upon the congregations, so that all acts of public worship, prayers, and sacrifices were performed according to their injunctions. Their sway over the masses was so absolute that they could obtain a hearing even when they said anything against the king or the high priest; consequently, they were the most capable of counteracting the designs of the kings. Hence, too, the Sadducees, in their official acts, adhered to the demands of the Pharisees, because otherwise the multitude would not have tolerated them."

### TEACHINGS OF THE PHARISEES

Concerning immortality, the Pharisees taught "that every soul is imperishable, but that only those of the righteous pass into another body, while those of the wicked are punished with eternal torment" (Josephus, Wars of the Jews, II, 8, 14). "They hold the belief that an immortal strength belongs to souls and that there are beneath the earth punishments and rewards for those who in life devoted themselves to virtue or vileness, and that eternal imprisonment is appointed for the latter, but the possibility of returning to life for the former" (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, XVIII, 1,3).

The Pharisees also taught the existence of angels and spirits, while the Sadducees denied them (Acts 23:8), and this also represented the general standpoint of later Judaism.

Concerning divine providence and human freedom, the Pharisees "make everything depend on fate and on God, and teach that the doing of good is indeed chiefly the affair of man, but that fate also cooperates in every transaction" (Josephus, Wars, II, 8, 14).

"They assert that everything is accomplished by faith. They do not, however, deprive the human will of spontaneity, it having pleased God that there should be a mixture, and that to the will of fate should be added the human will with its virtue or baseness" (Josephus, Antiquities, XVIII, 1,3).

Concerning politics, the standpoint of the Pharisees was looking at civil affairs from a religious point of view. They could be content with any government as long as religion was not hindered; but they became, in a sense, a political party when they rose to oppose a government that interfered with the practice of the law.

### PRACTICES OF THE PHARISEES

All Israelites avoided, as far as possible, all physical contact with the heathen, in order to avoid being defiled. The Pharisee, in addition, avoided physical contact with any non-Pharisees, even among other Jews. The fact that the Pharisees found fault with Jesus' contact with publicans and sinners agreed exactly with this point of view (Mark 2:14-17; Matt. 9:9-13; Luke 5:27-32).

In the Talmud, seven kinds of Pharisees are described (from Delitzsch, *Jesus und Hillel*):

- The Schechemite Pharisee, so-called because he keeps the law for what he can profit from it, as Shechem submitted to circumcision to obtain Dinah (Gen. 34:19).
- The Tumbling Pharisee, who, to appear humble, hangs down his head and is in danger of falling down.
- The Bleeding Pharisee, who often meets with wounds because he walks around with his eyes closed so as not to see a woman.
- The Mortar Pharisee, who wears a cap shaped like a mortar to cover his eyes so as not to see impurities or indecencies.
- The "What-Am-I-Yet-To-Do" Pharisee, who, because he doesn't know much about the law, says "Tell me what my duty is now, and I will do it."
- The Pharisee From Fear, who keeps the law because he is afraid of future judgment.
- The Pharisee From Love, who obeys the Lord because he loves him with all his heart.

### A COMPARISON OF PHARISAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

It was Jesus Christ's great effort to make clear the principles of the Laws of the Old Testament dispensation and to carry them to their legitimate conclusions, to "fulfill the law", not to confirm the law as many have thought. The Pharisees taught such a slavish adherence to the letter of the law that its true character, which pointed to something higher than its letter, was completely overwhelmed; and its moral precepts, which were intended to elevate men, were instead made to contract and debase the ideas of morality.

While it was the aim of Jesus to call men to the law of God itself as the supreme guide of life, the Pharisees multiplied minute precepts and distinctions to such an extent that the whole life of Israel was hemmed in and burdened on every side by instructions so numerous and trifling that the law was almost lost sight of (Matt. 12:1-13; 23:23; Mark 3:1-6; 7:2-4; Luke 13:10-17; 18:12).

It was Christ's leading aim to teach men that true piety lay not in outward forms, but in substance; not in small details, but in great rules of life. The whole system of Pharisaic piety led to the exact opposite. Under its influence "the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith" (Matt. 23:23; Luke 11:42) were undervalued and neglected. Religion in the heart was ignored (Luke 11:38-41). The most sacred obligations were evaded (Mark 7:11). Vain and trifling questions took the place of serious inquiry into the great principles of duty (Matt. 19:3). Even the most solemn truths were handled as mere matters of curious speculation or means to entrap an adversary (Matt. 22:35; Luke 17:20).

Christ taught compassion for the degraded and friendless; liberality to the poor; holiness of heart; universal love; a mind open to the truth. The Pharisees shunned lower classes and pushed from themselves such as the Savior would have gathered into his arms (Luke 7:39; 15:2; 18:11; John 7:47,48). They made a prey of the friendless (Matt. 23:13). With all their pretence, they were really avaricious, sensual, and dissolute (Matt. 23:25; John 8:7). They devoted their energies to making converts to themselves (Matt. 23:15).

### THE SADDUCEES

The Hebrew word by which the Sadducees were called is **tsaddiqim**, "the righteous ones". If we only look at the points of differences between them and the Pharisees, we get a distorted picture of the Sadducees; but each party had its strong characteristics, that of the Pharisees being a rigid realism, while the Sadducees were aristocratic. According to Josephus, "they gain only the well-to-do; they have not the people on their side." The high priestly families, for example, were almost all Sadducees.

### BELIEFS OF THE SADDUCEES

The Sadducees accepted only the written law and prophets as binding. They rejected the entire traditional interpretations and the further developments of the Scribes. "The Sadducees say only what is written is to be thought of as legal...what has come down from tradition of the fathers need not be observed." (Josephus, Antiquities, XIII, 10,6).

In legal matters the Sadducees were very rigid in judging offenders, while the Pharisees were much milder. "They saw in the tradition of the elders an excess of legal strictness which they refused to have imposed upon them, while the advanced religious views were, on the one hand, superfluous to their worldly-mindedness, and on the other, inadmissible by their higher culture and enlightenment" (Scheurer, Jewish People, Div. II, Vol. I, p. 41). A more thorough discussion of legal matters among the Sadducees can be found in Unger's Bible Dictionary, pp. 952,953.

In ritual, the only important differences of Sadducees from Pharisees was in respect to laws of cleanness. They derided the Pharisees for the oddities and inconsistencies which they had brought into their laws of purity. They did not reject the idea of Levitical uncleanness, however, and they demanded a higher degree of cleanness for the priest who made the red heifer offering than did the Pharisees.

### DOCTRINES OF THE SADDUCEES

The Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection of the body or in retribution or reward in a future life.

They did not feel bound by any doctrine which did not proceed from Moses, and there was no assertion by Moses in the Pentateuch of any resurrection from the dead. The Sadducees would have given much more weight to Moses' writings than to any of the prophets or historians, even though they regarded those writings canonical.

The Sadducees denied that there were angels or spirits, independent spiritual beings besides God. Even the soul, they said, was only refined matter and would perish with the body.

It is not surprising that the Sadducees laid great stress on human free will. With a strong insistence on personal liberty there came a decrease of the religious motive. They insisted that man was at his own disposal, and they rejected the idea that a divine cooperation takes place in human actions. The Pharisees accentuated the divine to the verge of fatalism, and insisted on absolute preordination of every event in its smallest detail. The Sadducees opposed notions like these.

### THE SANHEDRIN

The rise of this great council of the Hebrews took place in the time of Greek supremacy, though there has been some attempt to trace its origins to the council of seventy elders named by Moses. The first mention of the Sanhedrin is in the time of Antiochus the Great (223-187 B.C.) It was evidently an aristocratic body, with the high priest acting as president. When the Roman order was introduced by Pompey, the high priest still retained the position of governor of the nation, making it likely that the Sanhedrin was carrying on.

Herod the Great began his reign by ordering the whole of the Sanhedrin put to death, appointing his own council of elders in their place. Under the Roman pro-curators, the internal government of the country was in the hands of the Sanhedrin to a much greater extent. And in the time of Christ and the apostles, the Sanhedrin is frequently mentioned as being the supreme Jewish court of justice. The Sanhedrin was abolished after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

### THE ORGANIZATION OF THE SANHEDRIN

The Sanhedrin was composed of 71 priests who served for life and who were selected from the following:

- The acting high priest presided over the council; all former high priests were members.
- Male members of the high priestly families
- Scribes, legal assessors, bureaucrats
- Pharisees and Sadducees
- Elders - tribal and family heads

Criminal judges were members of the Sanhedrin, and twenty-three of them sat in judgment, with two clerks to record votes for acquittal and conviction. In capital cases, argument for acquittal was heard first, then those in favor of conviction. Anyone who had spoken in favor of the accused could not then speak against him; but one who had spoken against the accused could change his testimony in his favor. Sentence for acquittal could be pronounced immediately; but sentence for conviction was reserved for the next day.

In voting, each member stood, beginning with the youngest. A simple majority was sufficient for acquittal; but a majority of at least two votes was required for conviction. More members of the Sanhedrin would be brought in two at a time to vote whenever there was a majority of only one for conviction. When all 71 had voted, the person was acquitted if there was still a majority of only one.

Jesus appeared before the Sanhedrin on a charge of blasphemy (Matt. 26:65; John 19:7). Peter and John were charged with being false prophets and deceivers of the people (Acts 4 and 5), Stephen with being a blasphemer (Acts 6:13 ff), and Paul with being guilty of transgressing the Mosaic law (Acts 23).

The Sanhedrin had the right of ordering arrests by its own officers; of finally disposing of such cases as did not involve capital punishment. A sentence of death had to be ratified by the Roman procurator.

## THE TALMUD

Extracts from “The Essential Talmud,” by Adin Steinsaltz.

The Bible is the chief cornerstone of the Jewish religion, and the Talmud is the central pillar. It is the most important book in Jewish culture and is the backbone of creativity and national life, shaping spiritual content and serving as a guide to conduct.

In a formal definition, the Talmud is “the summary of oral law that evolved after centuries of scholarly effort by sages who lived in Palestine and Babylonia until the beginning of the Middle Ages.” The Talmud has two main components: the Mishnah, a book of law (**halakhah**), written in Hebrew; and the commentary on the Mishnah, known as the Gemara, a summary of the discussions and explanations of the Mishnah, written in Aramaic.

The Talmud is the repository of thousands of years of Jewish wisdom, and the oral law, “which is as ancient and significant as the written law (the Torah),” finds expression therein. It is a collection of law, legend, and philosophy, a blend of logic and shrewd pragmatism, of history and science, anecdotes and humor. Is it a collection of paradoxes; its framework is orderly and logical, every word and term is subjected to meticulous editing, completed centuries after the actual work of composition came to an end; yet it is still based on **free association**, a harnessing together of diverse ideas, reminiscent of the modern stream-of-consciousness novel.

Here is a comment from Rabbi Steinsaltz’s book, Chapter 15, **The Sabbath**: “In the most general sense, the numerous Sabbath laws are an expanding network of minute details deriving from several basic concepts, which eventually create an almost Gothic structure made up of thousands upon thousands of tiny and meticulously fashioned details clustered around the original form.

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### The High Priest

1st high priest – Aaron

2nd – one of Aaron's sons

At this time, high priests served for life, and the position was usually passed from father to son.

From the time of Aaron until Solomon the King was 612 years. During this time there were 13 high priests. Average – 47 years.

From Solomon until the Babylonia captivity

466 years and 6 months; 18 high priests; average 26 years.

Josadek was high priest when the captivity began, and he was high priest during part of the captivity. His son Jesus, was high priest when the people were allowed to go back to the land.

From the captivity until Antiochus Eupator

415 years; 15 high priests, counting Jesus, son of Josadek, avg 27.6 years.

Antiochus killed Onias, the last of this series, and appointed Joacimus. Jacimus was descended from Aaron, but he was not the son of Onias.

Jacimus served three years, until his death. No one succeeded him, and there was no high priest for seven years.

When the Hasmoneans (Maccabees) had defeated the Greeks in war, the appointed Jonathan to be high priest.

Jonathan was killed by Trypho and was succeeded by his brother, Simon.

Simon was killed by his own son-in-law. and he was succeeded by his son Hyrcanus.

Hyrcanus was high priest for 30 years; died a natural death, leaving the succession to Judas Aristobulus.

Judas Aristobulus declared himself king of the Jews and for a short time had religious and political power. He died, and his brother Alexander was his heir.

Alexander was high priest and king for 27 years, and just before he died, he gave his wife, Alexandra, the authority to appoint the next high priest.

Alexandra gave the high priesthood to Hyrcanus, but she kept the throne for herself, ruled for nine years, and died.

After her death, Hyrcanus' brother, another Aristobulus, fought against him and took over both the kingship and high priesthood. But after a little more than three years, the Roman legions under Pompey took Jerusalem by force, put Aristobulus and his children in bondage and sent them to Rome. Pompey restored the high priesthood to Hyrcanus and appointed him governor. However, he was not allowed to call himself king.

So Hyrcanus ruled, in addition to his first nine years, another 24 years. Then, the Parthians came across the Euphrates river, fought with the Romans and with Hyrcanus, took him alive, and made Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus, king.

When Antigonus had ruled three years and three months, Herod the Great defeated the Parthians (and Antigonus). The Romans made Herod king, and he cut off the Hasmonean family from the high priesthood, preferring to appoint those who were from common families ... with one exception.

Herod made another man Aristobulus high priest, to try to win the good will of the people.

Aristobulus was the grandson of the Hyrcanus who had been captured by the Parthians. But Aristobulus proved to be too popular, so Herod had him drowned while he was swimming at Jericho.

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Herod's son, Archelaus, also appointed high priests who were relatively unknown, as did the Romans who were afterwards made rulers or governors in the land.

There were 28 high priests, in all, during the 107 years from Herod until 70 AD, when Titus burned the Temple and the City. So the average was about 3 ½ years per man.

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## Lesson 10 Quiz

The following questions relate to your study of this lesson.

To answer a question, type your response in the space provided after the word "Answer:". A question may be True/False, multiple choice, fill in the blank, or short answer type.

The last question requires you to write one or two paragraphs in "essay" form. Use the space provided; it will expand to accommodate your response.

You have choices about sending the quiz back to Grace Notes.

- If you received an email file containing the quiz, you can use the REPLY feature of your e-mail application to open the quiz. Enter your answers in the reply message. Then SEND the message to Grace Notes.
- You can enter your answers on these pages, then send the whole file back to Grace Notes as a file attachment. As an alternative,
- After you answer the questions here, copy and paste the whole list of questions into a new MS Word document; then, send the new file to Grace Notes as an attachment. The new file will, of course, be much smaller than this main file.
- Finally, you can print the Quiz pages on your printer and send your response back to Grace Notes in the regular mail. If you do this, send the mail to:

**Grace Notes**

**% Warren Doud**

**1705 Aggie Lane**

**Austin, Texas 78757 USA**

Whichever transmission method you use, when Grace Notes receives your completed Quiz, the next lesson will be sent to you, by the same means you received this one. EXCEPT: when you have sent in the FINAL QUIZ, we will send your certificate to you, by regular mail.

This Quiz may have Multiple Choice, True/False, Fill-in-the-Blank, and Short Answer questions. Type your responses after the word "Answer:" following each question. Type your response following the questions.

1. The Sadducees were high-ranking members of the Jewish aristocracy. [True/False]

Answer:

2. The sect of the Pharisees was opposed to the concept of the resurrection of the dead. [True/False]

Answer:

3. How many people believe in Christ as a result of Peter's teaching in the Temple?

Answer:

4. How many men were in the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem?

Answer:

5. What is the meaning of the word "Sadducees?"

Answer:

6. The Sadducees were in agreement on all major religious matters among the Jews.

Answer:

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7. The Jews who spoke Greek and used the Septuagint translation of the Bible were called \_\_\_\_\_.

Answer:

8. Those who occupied a respected position in the Jewish community, as teachers and rabbis, was the exclusive class known as \_\_\_\_\_.

Answer?

9. The main task of the Scribe was \_\_\_\_\_.

Answer:

10. Until 70 AD, the main headquarters of the Scribes was in \_\_\_\_\_.

Answer:

11. The Jewish writings which contained “either simply the laws laid down in Scripture, or else derived from or traced to it by some ingenious and artificial method of exegesis” were known as the \_\_\_\_\_.

Answer:

12. The \_\_\_\_\_ is “the summary of oral law that evolved after centuries of scholarly effort by sages who lived in Palestine and Babylonia until the beginning of the Middle Ages.”

Answer:

13. The Sanhedrin judged criminal cases as well as civil and spiritual cases. [True/False]

Answer:

14. What was the charge upon which the Lord Jesus appeared before the Sanhedrin?

Answer:

15. Who was the first High Priest of the Jews?

Answer:

End of Quiz

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