
a *Grace Notes* course

The Acts of the Apostles

Section I: Acts 1 to 7

an expositional study
by Warren Doud

Lesson 11: **Acts 4:9-37**

Acts 4:9-37

Contents

Instructions	3
Acts 4:9-37	1
Acts 4:9.....	1
Acts 4:10.....	1
Acts 4:11.....	1
Acts 4:12.....	1
Acts 4:13.....	2
Acts 4:14.....	2
Acts 4:15.....	2
Acts 4:16.....	2
Acts 4:17.....	2
Acts 4:18.....	3
Acts 4:19.....	3
Acts 4:20.....	3
Acts 4:21,22.....	3
Acts 4:23.....	3
Acts 4:24.....	4
Acts 4:25, 26.....	5
Acts 4:27, 28.....	5
Acts 4:29.....	5
Acts 4:30.....	6
Acts 4:31.....	6
Acts 4:32.....	6
Acts 4:33.....	6
Acts 4:34, 35.....	7
Acts 4:36, 37.....	7
Pilate	7
Herod	14
Traditionalism	17
Barnabas	26
Lesson 11 Quiz	29

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.
-

Acts 4:9-37

Acts 4:9

If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

“good deed” – (EPI EUERGESIA) The benefit he has received is in his being restored to perfect soundness.

“If we ...” – he states his assumption, one that he has deliberately chosen, that he is being tried for healing the lame man. This immediately puts the court in an embarrassing situation; they are now in the position of having to try men for a good deed. As it turns out, there is no way the Sanhedrin can indict or try them. After all, the very man they are talking about is in the court with them, so it’s useless even to deny that the healing happened.

Acts 4:10

Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him does this man stand here before you whole.

Again Peter brings up the name of Jesus Christ, and the concept of Resurrection, and restates that it was the very men present who had participated in the murder of Christ, just two months before!

The healed man may have been kept overnight with Peter and John, which could have accounted for his being there with them. Or, he could have gone home in the evening and returned in the morning.

“In Jesus Christ this man stands before you whole...” This is a bold declaration in front of the Sanhedrin – and the Sanhedrin could judge whether the miracle was true or false. But the reality of it could not be questioned. The only question was, “How have you done this?”, and Peter answers, “...in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth...”

Acts 4:11

This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

“The stone” is Jesus Christ, and this is a reference to Psalm 118:22, where the builders are the rulers of Israel. Peter says “you builders”, placing the men of the Sanhedrin clearly in that role. Peter is saying, “By your rejection and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, you have fulfilled one of your own prophecies. And, just as surely as one prophecy has been fulfilled, so shall the other – the rejected stone will become the head of the corner!”

JESUS CHRIST THE ROCK

1. Christ is the Rock of Salvation: Exo. 17:1-7
2. Christ is the Rock of Judgment: Isa. 8:14; 1 Pet. 2:8
3. Christ is the Rock of Provision: Isa. 26:3,4
4. Christ is the Foundation Rock: Isa. 28:16; Psalm 118:22
5. Christ is the Rock of the Church: Matt. 16:16; 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20-22.
6. Christ is the Destroying Rock at the 2nd Advent: Dan. 2:35, He’s the Rock cut out without hands that crushes the image.

The Jews understood these references; and Peter is telling them that they have “set at nought” the Lord, having rejected Him and totally disregarded Him.

Christ “became” the “head of the corner,” referring to His joining the two spiritual kingdoms, the Church and born-again Israel. After the 2nd Advent, there will also be political unity, but of course made up only of believers in Christ.

Acts 4:12

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Peter makes salvation clear. This is a message to religious people who are trying to be saved by ritual, by keeping points of the Law, by tithes and offerings and sacrifices. Some of these people

thought they were saved just by having been born Jews.

But Christ is the only Person who could possibly bring salvation. Therefore, “we must” be saved through Him.

Acts 4:13

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

The reaction of the court.

Contract Peter’s “boldness” with his former cowardice at the crucifixion of Christ. He became bold because he was filled with the Holy Spirit, he was occupied with Christ, and he had doctrine in his soul and could speak from divine wisdom!

“perceived” (katalabomenoi) = “to seize; to lay hold of”. Occurs many times in the New Testament, in different meanings from this original sense. Thus, in Eph. 3:18, “to apprehend; to grasp”; in Mark 9:18, “seizure” by a demon; and of mental comprehension, here, and in Acts 10:34 and 25:25.

“unlearned” (agrammatoi) = literally, “unlettered,” with specific reference here to the Rabbinic culture, which Peter had never been involved with. Peter and John had no credentials to teach; they hadn’t studied in either of the great schools of Hillel and Schammai.

“ignorant” (idiotai). “Ignorant” is a poor choice for this translation. This Greek word referred to a person who was in a “private” situation, rather than someone in public office or community affairs. The word “layman” would be appropriate. But here, the Sanhedrin would consider themselves superior, so the meaning of “common” or “plebeian” would occur to them, since they regarded the men as ill-informed.

They “took knowledge” that they had been with Christ.

Acts 4:14

And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

This man is the picture of health; everyone is fascinated with this miracle. They can say nothing against it; they are flabbergasted and struck speechless (temporarily!).

The presence of the healed man makes it impossible to condemn Peter and John.

The Sanhedrin have previously rejected Christ (60 days earlier), and now they refuse again to acknowledge Him, even though the healing of the lame man indicated that Peter and John spoke with divine authority.

The Sanhedrin will release Peter and John because they can find no reason to detain them, and because public opinion would overwhelmingly against them if they punished the apostles.

Acts 4:15

But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

The Sanhedrin began to compare notes and take stock of their predicament.

Acts 4:16

Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle has been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.

A miracle has been done; and all Jerusalem knew that this man was healed. There was no way such a self-evident fact could be disproved. More than 5000 people had professed faith in Christ, after seeing this miracle, and believing the Gospel which Peter preached.

Acts 4:17

But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

If this teaching should be permitted to go on, perhaps accompanied by even more miracles, the Sanhedrin had reason to believe that all Jerusalem (except themselves) would become Christians, believers in the Gospel of Christ, whom they had so recently crucified.

“let us straitly threaten them” = (apeilei apeileisometha), “let us threaten them with a threatening.” This phrase in Greek is directly translated from a common Hebrew expression, and its use here shows that Luke translated directly the words of the Sanhedrin.

Here is the supreme court of law in Jerusalem, which is supposed to be protecting the innocent, trying to figure out how to intimidate the apostles, who were, after all, citizens of the land.

Acts 4:18

And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

“speak or teach” – the content of the speaking is teaching. The Sanhedrin are well aware of all of the activities of the Christians, which could not fail to be noticed in Jerusalem. (see the end of Acts chapter 2).

Acts 4:19

But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge you.

Here is the response of Peter and John. And here is a very good example of how to deal with a situation in which the law of God conflicts with the law of the land. They had to decide which way they would go, and the decision was not hard to make, because the issue was so clearcut. They know that where God’s law and human law are at odds, God’s law must take precedent.

But, by taking this stand they are trusting their lives to the Lord. And notice that in this passage, it is only public opinion which keeps the Sanhedrin from executing them out of hand! In fact, in Stephen’s case (Acts 7), there was no comparable public opinion to cause the Jewish religious rulers to hold back from murdering him.

Acts 4:20

For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

This is a double negative in the Greek, for emphasis. Peter says, “We are *not* able *not* to speak, the things which we have seen and heard.” The authorities have commanded these men to disobey God’s will, so this refusal is justified. But Peter and John are laying their lives on the line at this point.

Acts 4:21,22

So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.

For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was showed.

The word “punish” is (KOLASWNTAI), which originally meant, to “prune” a tree, or to “dock” the tail of a horse. It came to mean “to check; to keep in bounds; to curtail.” Therefore, the meaning from the Greek is broader than the word punish. The Sanhedrin is desperate to find a way to curtail the activities of the Christians; but at this point they couldn’t find anything to use against the apostles.

The Sanhedrin also feared that there would be a tremendous protest, even an insurrection, if they took extreme measures at this time. There were by now thousands of converts to Christ, and these converts had been devout religious Jews at the time of their conversion.

Acts 4:23

And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

“being let go” = “having been released” The court of the Sanhedrin could not hold them, as we have seen, because they had no real basis for condemning them, and they feared the people’s reaction if they should punish Peter and John at this point.

“they went to their own company” = they went directly to the community of believers. This was a close-knit fellowship of new believers, united because of their faith in Christ, but also thrown together by the persecution which they were already beginning to feel. Imagine the fear in the believers’ hearts as they go through these days of acute danger.

We hear the remark occasionally about whether a particular church is friendly or unfriendly. Often, a person will conclude that a church is unfriendly if it doesn’t provide certain types of support organizations for people with various problems, or if the person feels that not enough attention is paid to visitors.

But a truly “friendly” church is one where all the believers are relaxed, where there are no mental attitudes of antagonism, where there is no hatred or jealousy, or cliques organized around a particular mental attitude of superiority (mutual admiration societies). In a church where grace thinking prevails, you do not find believers who are antagonistic to one another, and there will be a minimum of gossiping, judging, or maligning, and you will usually not see acts of vindictiveness or attempts to get revenge for something.

The absence of these sin patterns among the believers here is expressed in this wonderful phrase, “their own company.”

Later on, the Jerusalem church will fall apart, after degenerating into the sin patterns so common to those believers who are not occupied with Christ, but who are slaves to the details of life.

Peter and John reported everything that had occurred in their appearance before the Sanhedrin.

Acts 4:24

And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, you are God, which have made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in is them:

The response to this report is prayer. “With one accord” means that everyone in the group was in fellowship and unified in their thinking and prayer.

To be effective in prayer, a person has to be a believer in Jesus Christ.

John 15:7, “If you abide in me, and I in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.”

Prayer is an extension of the Faith-Rest principle - it is a part of the Grace principle of claiming promises from the Bible.

Matt. 21:22, “And all things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.”

First – Faith; Then – claiming promises through prayer.

Here are some other principal passages dealing with prayer: Psalm 116:1,2; Isaiah 65:24; Jeremiah 33:3; Matthew 7:7; John 14:13,14; 15:7**;; Philippians 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Prayer must be offered according to the will of God. The people who are the most effective in prayer are those who understand the will of God, which means that they have a thorough and mature knowledge of Bible truth.

1 John 5:14, “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.”

Also, a believer must be filled with the Holy Spirit (in fellowship) to be able to offer effective prayer.

Eph. 6:18, “Prayer always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit...”

It follows from this, that prayer will not be effective when the believer is carnal (not in fellowship).

First, there is the carnality which is the result of mental attitude sin, sins which no one else but God sees, but of which you are very much aware.

Psalms 66:18, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”

Then, there is carnality which is the result of slavery to the details of life, a slavery which leads to great desire to obtain things in life and to achieve happiness through those things.

James 4:2,3, “You lust, and have not; you kill, and desire to have, and cannot

obtain, you fight and war, yet you have not because you ask not. You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts.”

The word “Lord” here does not refer to Christ; it is (DESPOTES) not (KURIOS). The latter is used when speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ; but the word here is primarily used for God the Father. It is a principle of prayer that prayer is made to the Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son.

Eph. 5:20, “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

These phrases refer to God the Father as the Designer of the creation. Other passages refer to Jesus Christ as the Creator (as in Col. 1:16; John 1:3; Heb. 1:10). The passages referring to Christ say that He created the heavens and the earth, the word “make” here has the idea of “design.” God the Father was the Designer; Jesus Christ was the Creator.

Acts 4:25, 26

Who by the mouth of your servant David has said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

This is a quotation from Psalm 2.

Recall from Acts 2, when Peter was quoting the Joel passage, that, while the passage was Millennial in interpretation, by application, and by analogy, the speaking in tongues and prophesying were occurring in the same manner on the day of Pentecost.

Likewise here, this is an application of the passage from Psalm 2, which, by interpretation, refers to events in the Tribulation, but by application is analogous to events occurring to these people. The Sanhedrin and the people in the land have gathered together against the Lord Jesus Christ.

“rage” is (**ephruaksan**), which means “to neigh like a horse; to stomp the ground; to put on lofty airs.” This words combines “arrogance” and “rage” in one concept. Philo describes a proud

man as “walking on tiptoe, and bridling (phruattomenos), with his neck erect like a horse.” This is the attitude of the heathen who have gathered together against Christ.

Acts 4:27, 28

For of a truth against your holy child Jesus, whom you have anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

To do whatever your hand and your counsel determined before to be done.

Now, the application of the Psalm 2 quotation is made.

Now, it is important to realize here that the Greek syntactical construction shows that the phrase “to do whatever your hand and your counsel determined before to be done” is associated in this context with the first phrase of verse 27. So the two verses read:

For of a truth against your holy child Jesus, whom you have anointed to do whatever your hand and counsel determined before to be done, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together.

This is important, because what God’s “hand and counsel determined before to be done” was *not* that which Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel had done, or were doing. Otherwise, their rage and vain counsel, which is both impious and evil, would have been determined by God to take place. Rather, it was the case that what God had determined to be done through Christ that these elements had gathered together to hinder.

Acts 4:29

And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto your servants, that with all boldness they may speak your word,

The believers are under tremendous pressure at this point. They have no idea what the Sanhedrin will do. They are aware that all the things they

have just stated in their prayers have been prophesied to come to pass; but they don't know what's going to happen to them.

Nevertheless, in the face of extreme opposition, they still want to be able to witness with confidence.

Acts 4:30

By stretching forth your hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of your holy child Jesus.

In the apostolic age, healing was a way of getting a hearing for the Gospel. The gift was used to establish the credentials of the apostles, before the canon of Scripture had been brought together.

The NASB has "servant" in place of "child."

"child" is (paidos) which is "servant," as in Acts 4:25, "(david paidos sou), "thy servant David," not "thy child David." Hence, "by the name of your holy servant Christ."

Acts 4:31

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

In verse 31 we have the witness of the lips; in verse 32, the witness of the life. The shaking of the room where they are gathered is a reminder from God the Holy Spirit that He is the power of witnessing.

Acts 1:8, "And you shall receive power, after the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and you shall be witnesses..."

"they spoke the word of God..." They gave the Gospel from the frame of reference they had already developed. You can't communicate what you don't understand; and you can't preach the Gospel, or teach the Bible, unless and until you have a good working knowledge of what you are talking about.

Acts 4:32

And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither

said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

There was unity of thinking among the believers.

READ Eph. 4:11-16

The word "heart" is (KARDIA) and refers to a person's mind, where thinking is done and where decisions are made. The people were looking at life from a common viewpoint, and that is divine viewpoint. So there are two things these people have: the filling of the Spirit and the knowledge of Bible truth. Both are required in order to have an effective witness or ministry.

"and one soul" = "one purpose" They all had the same direction and purpose in life.

The Christians were under great persecution and would continue under persecution for a long time, first from the Jews, then from the Roman Empire.

The Jews were dispossessing Christians, talking away their houses and lands, firing them from their jobs, in general treating them as outcasts.

Immediately, the grace characteristics of mature believers began to manifest themselves. This is illustrated here in the great spirit of sharing that is a sign of a gracious mental attitude, a spirit of true charity.

READ Ephesians 4:22-32.

Acts 4:33

And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

In those days, the primary subject of the preaching was the resurrection of Christ. This doctrine was important then, as it is now.

The fact that Christ was raised from the dead demonstrates that God the Father was pleased with the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. He did not leave Christ in the grave.

The concept of resurrection also connects eternity, and everlasting life, with the physical life we are leading here on earth. It is Christ's resurrection that demonstrates His victory over the grave, and since He is the "firstfruits," we have confidence that we, too, shall be raised again from the dead.

“great grace was upon them” means that God provided maximum support for the exercise of the believers’ spiritual gifts, so they had great spiritual power in witnessing.

Acts 4:34, 35

Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

And laid them down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

These next verses talk about another of the great dynamics of the local church, Christian giving. There was no begging for money, no pledges, no tithing, no campaigns, no envelopes. The people, filled with the Spirit, and motivated by the Word of God in their hearts, gave willingly out of the gracious generosity that was a product of their Christian lives.

READ Exodus 35:4-29.

Now, while some people in Jerusalem, at this time, were prosperous, and had some money and property they could share, the prosperity didn’t last. But as a result of the persecution that extended over years, eventually the entire body of believers in Jerusalem was destitute, including those who had previously been rich. Thirty years later, by 60 AD, you see the Apostle Paul and other apostles, taking up collections for the believers in Jerusalem, and writing to the Corinthians and Thessalonians, for example, and money was collected from many of the congregations Paul visited.

Acts 4:36, 37

And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet.

This was not communism, it was true Christian charity. Distribution was made to every man as he

had need. The apostles were the ones who made the distribution of funds.

Barnabas was apparently wealthy, owning land and estates in Cyprus. He brought all the money that he received from the sale of land.

Note carefully that it does not say here that he sold everything he owned, only that he sold some land. Furthermore, he was not required to do this; he did it of his own free will. There was no church policy or rule that people had to sell out and share with other Christians. There was no pressure being put on Christians to give.

It may be that Barnabas had the spiritual gift of giving, in which case he was motivated to minister in this way as a part of exercising that gift.

Pilate

from several sources, including:

Josephus, Flavius, *Antiquities*; and *Wars of the Jews*

Edersheim, Alfred, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life; The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*; and *The Temple*.

Bond, Helen, *Pontius Pilate*

Background

Pontius Pilate was the fifth governor of the Roman province of Judea. His rule began in 26 AD and lasted until early in 37 AD. See Luke 3:1; Matt. 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; and John 18,19.

He granted the request of Joseph of Arimathea, to be allowed to bury Christ: Matt. 27:57; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:50; John 19:38.

See also Acts 3:13; 4:27; 13:28, and 1 Tim. 6:13.

The Province

When Herod I died in 4 BC, Augustus upheld his will and divided the kingdom between three of Herod's surviving sons. Antipas was allotted Galilee and Peraea, and Philip was given Batanaea, Trachonitis, Auranitis and certain parts of Zeno around Pania (or Ituraea). Both were given the title tetrarch, literally the ruler of a fourth part of a kingdom. The remainder, amounting to half of the kingdom and comprising

of Idumaea, Judea and Samaria, was given to Archelaus with the title ethnarch.

Ten years later a combination of dynastic intrigue amongst the Herodians, Roman expansionist policies in the Near East and perhaps Archelaus' brutality, again led to Augustus' intervention in Judean affairs. Archelaus was exiled and his territory transformed into a Roman province. Although it included Samaria and Idumaea, the new province was known simply as Judea. The year was 6 AD.

Judea was formally a third class imperial province. These provinces, which were few in number, tended to be those which were least important in terms of expanse and revenue. Often they were territories in which the indigenous population presented particular problems.

The governors of these provinces were drawn from the equestrian rank and commanded only auxiliary troops.

Though technically independent, the new province was to a large extent under the guidance of the powerful and strategically important neighboring province of Syria. The Syrian legate, a man of consular standing, had three Roman legions at his disposal to which a fourth was added after 18 AD. He could be relied on to intervene with military support in times of crisis and could be called upon as an arbitrator by either the Judean governor or the people if the need arose.

Aside from the brief reign of Herod Agrippa I (41- 44 AD), Judea continued as a Roman province from 6 AD until the outbreak of the Jewish Revolt in 66 AD. Its borders remained unchanged throughout the first period of Roman rule but underwent some alterations in the second, 44- 66 AD.

The province of Judea was extremely small. In its first phase, to which Pilate's governorship belongs, it measured only approximately 160 km north to south and 70 km west to east. Yet despite its size, the population of the province came from ethnically diverse groups - Jews, Samaritans and pagans. This last group were located particularly in the pagan cities of Caesarea and Sebaste. To a certain degree, the province had two capital cities. The traditional capital, Jerusalem, continued as the

focus of Jewish religious; but the governor resided in Caesarea together with his troops and entourage, transforming the city into the Roman administrative headquarters. On occasion, the governor would move to Jerusalem, particularly during festivals both to keep the peace and to hear criminal cases.

The Governor

Rank: As was customary in relatively unimportant imperial provinces, the governors of Judea were usually drawn from the equestrian rank.

Equestrians formed the middle rank of the Roman nobility and under Augustus their order provided suitable men for a variety of essential public offices ranging from military commands to the collection of taxes and jury work.

Duties: Rome had few officials in its provinces; an imperial province would be administered by only the governor and a small number of personal staff. The governor's concerns, therefore, had to be limited to essentials, principally the maintenance of law and order, judicial matters and the collection of taxes. To enable him to carry out his duties, the governor possessed *imperium*, or the supreme administrative power in the province.

Law and Order: The primary responsibility of the governor of Judea was military. This crucial aspect of the governor's task is emphasized by his title which, in the period before Agrippa I reign (41 to 44 AD) was *praefect* (praefectus/eparcos). The appointment of men to a military *praefecture* shows the determination of early emperors to hold on to a newly subjugated territory and to bring the native inhabitants firmly under Roman control.

Under Claudius, however, *praefect* was changed to a civilian title, *procurator* (procurator/epitropos) which may have been designed to underscore the success of the pacification process. This change explains the confusion in the literary sources regarding the governor's title.

The governors of Judea had only auxiliary troops at their disposal. These appear to have been descendents of the Herodian troops drawn predominantly from Caesarea and Sebaste. They amounted to five infantry cohorts and one cavalry regiment scattered throughout the province. One

cohort was permanently posted in the Antonia Fortress in Jerusalem.

Judicial Matters: The governor possessed the supreme judicial authority within the province. He would presumably have had a system of assizes to which cases could be brought and receive a hearing. The precise division of judicial competence between the governor and native courts varied in different provinces. There is not enough evidence to determine whether or not Jewish courts could inflict the death penalty at this period; scholarly opinion is sharply divided on this issue. The Roman governor would doubtlessly wish to maintain his jurisdiction over political offences but it is not impossible that Jewish courts were able to execute when their own law had been contravened.

Collection of Taxes: Rome relied to a large extent on the help of local authorities and private agents in the collection of taxes. Supervising these was the governor, acting as the emperor's personal financial agent. The heaviest of these taxes was the *tributum*; by the first century AD this was primarily a tax on provincial land and the amount of tribute required from each person was worked out by means of a census. Only one census appears to have been conducted in Judea, that organized by Quirinius at the formation of the new province in 6 AD

General Administration: In accordance with general Roman practice, the entire day-to-day administration of the nation was left largely to the Jewish High Priest and aristocracy in Jerusalem. The Romans expected them to uphold imperial interests whilst the local aristocracies could expect their own privileged positions to be safeguarded by Rome in return. The Roman governors recognized the political importance of the High Priesthood and sought to keep a tight control over it, appointing and deposing High Priests at will.

PONTIUS PILATE

Nothing is known of Pilate prior to his arrival in Judea. Advancement at the time depended on patronage; a man's chances of promotion to public office depended on connections and influences in the imperial court. In all probability, Pilate was

helped to office by powerful patrons, perhaps even Tiberius himself or his powerful friend Sejanus.

Pilate may well have had previous military experience before coming to the province, but records are completely lacking. Most governors ruled over Judea between two and four years; Pilate and his predecessor Gratus, however, each governed the province for approximately eleven years. This is probably not an indication that these two governors were especially competent since Josephus tells us that part of Tiberius' provincial policy was to keep men in office for a long time.

In general, Pilate's term of office corresponds to the general picture of Judean governors sketched above. Two points, however, distinguish Pilate's governorship to some extent from the others.

The first is the lack of a Syrian legate for the first six years of Pilate's term of office. Tiberius appointed L. Aelius Lamia to the post but kept him in Rome, presumably trying out a form of centralized government. This may not have been altogether successful as subsequent legates governed from the Syrian capital, Antioch. The implication of this is that for the early part of his governorship Pilate had no legate on hand in Syria on whom he could call in an emergency. Unlike his predecessors, Pilate could not rely on the immediate support of the legions in case of unrest. This would mean that Pilate was more than usually dependent on his auxiliaries and that any potential uprising had to be put down quickly before it could escalate.

A second distinctive feature of Pilate's governorship is that, unlike his predecessor Gratus who changed the High Priest four times in his eleven years, Pilate made no change to the incumbent of the High Priesthood. This was presumably not out of any wish to respect Jewish sensitivities but rather because he found in Gratus' last appointee, Caiaphas, a man who could be relied on to support Roman interests and who could command some respect amongst the people.

Sources of Information for Pilate's Governorship

These fall into two groups: archaeological and literary.

The Acts of the Apostles	Page 10
Section I, Lesson 11	a Grace Notes study

Archaeological. We have two archaeological links with Pilate. The first is an inscription found on a block of limestone at Caesarea Maritima in 1961. Much of the inscription is mutilated, but the lettering is still visible.

inscriptions are tentative and extremely hypothetical in nature, three things are evident. The first is that the second line refers to Pontius Pilate, giving the first of his three names in the mutilated left side. Secondly, his title is clearly praefectus Iudaeae, prefect of Judaea. Thirdly, the inscription appears to have been attached to a building known as a "Tiberium". This was presumably either a temple or a secular building dedicated to Tiberius.

The second archaeological link with Pilate is a number of bronze coins struck by the prefect from 29 to 32 AD. Each depicts a distinctively Jewish design on one side along with a pagan symbol on the other. The first shows three ears of barley on the obverse and a *simpulum* (a sacrificial vessel or wine bowl) on the reverse. The second and third both contain the same design with a lituus (an augur's crooked staff or wand) on the obverse and a wreath with berries on the reverse. This blending of Jewish and pagan designs may stem from an attempt to integrate the Jewish people further into the empire. That the coins were not generally regarded as offensive is apparent from the fact that the coins would have been used until Agrippa's reign and he only changed the design in his second year.

Literary Sources. Specific events from Pilate's governorship are recorded in the writings of six first century authors - Josephus, Philo and the four Christian evangelists.

Josephus

By far the greatest amount of information comes from the Jewish writer Flavius Josephus who composed his two great works, the Antiquities of the Jews and the Jewish War, towards the end of the first century. Important as Josephus' accounts are, however, they can only be used with a certain amount of caution. Apologetic and rhetorical motives have shaped each narrative to a large extent, particularly his desire to impress on other nations the futility of revolt against Rome, his

attempt to stress the antiquity of Judaism, and his endeavor (in the Antiquities) to put some of the blame for the Jewish revolt on the Roman governors of Judaea.

In all, Josephus describes four incidents involving Pilate. His earlier work, the Jewish War, describes Pilate's introduction of iconic standards into Jerusalem and his construction of an aqueduct for the city. The Antiquities repeats these two stories (with slightly different emphases) and adds two more - the story of the execution of Jesus of Nazareth and an incident involving Samaritans which eventually led to Pilate's removal from the province.

The Standards (War 2.169-174, Antiq 18.55-59) Josephus accuses Pilate of deliberately bringing standards containing offensive effigies of Caesar into Jerusalem by night. The Antiquities account goes so far as to accuse Pilate of deliberately wanting to subvert Jewish practices. Seeing what had happened, the Jewish people flocked to Caesarea and surrounded Pilate's house for five days, imploring him to remove the standards. When Pilate eventually encircled the people with his troops, they declared that they were willing to die rather than see their ancestral laws contravened. Amazed at their devotion, Pilate had the standards removed.

Josephus has clearly allowed his rhetorical concerns to influence this story, particularly the description of Pilate's deliberate provocation and the people's unflinching devotion to their ancestral religion. Yet it may be possible to piece together something of the historical event behind the narrative.

Due to its position at the beginning of the accounts in both the War and the Antiquities, most scholars assume that this incident took place early on in Pilate's term of office, perhaps as early as winter 26 AD. A squadron could not be separated from its standards; if new standards were brought into Jerusalem that meant that an entirely new squadron was being stationed in Jerusalem, one which had not been used in the city previously. As a military prefect, Pilate's interest would have been in the troops themselves and their strategic positioning; the particular emblems on their

standards would not have been particularly important. As a new governor, Pilate may not even have realized that this particular cohort would cause offence in Jerusalem because of its standards. Or, if he had been warned, it might have seemed absurd to him that troops which could be deployed in Caesarea could not be moved to Jerusalem. The account gives the impression of a new governor anxious to take no nonsense from the people he is to govern. The fact that he was willing to reconsider the position and did eventually change the troops shows a certain amount of prudence and concern to avoid unnecessary hostilities.

The Aqueduct (War 2.175-177, Antiq 18.60-62) Again Josephus accuses Pilate of deliberately attempting to arouse hostilities, this time by using temple money to build an aqueduct for Jerusalem. Matters came to a head during a visit of Pilate to Jerusalem when the people rioted and many were killed.

As with the previous incident, Josephus' bias is evident, particularly in his description of Pilate's motivations. The building of an aqueduct for the city was surely a commendable undertaking, one which would have benefited the inhabitants enormously. The point of conflict seems to have been around the use of temple money for the project. Pilate must have had the co-operation (whether voluntary or forced) of Caiaphas and the temple authorities whose duty it was to administer the treasury; if he had taken the money by aggression Josephus would surely have mentioned it. What may have led to hostilities, however, was if Pilate had begun to demand more than simply the surplus for his building venture. The War's use of the verb *exanaliskon* in 2.175, whilst perhaps over-exaggerated, may imply that Pilate began to demand ever increasing amounts, draining temple supplies and treating the treasury as his own personal *fiscus*. The date of this incident is unknown.

The Execution of Jesus of Nazareth (Antiq 18.63-64) This passage, recorded only in the Antiquities, is generally referred to as the Testimonium Flavianum. Scholars are generally agreed that it has suffered at the hands of later

Christian interpreters and that the original wording is now lost. Given the context, the original text probably recorded another disturbance in the time of Pilate, centering on Jesus or his followers after his death. As it now stands, the Testimonium Flavianum adds little to our picture of the historical Pilate. He is shown working closely with the Jewish hierarchy to eliminate a common threat. It may also be significant that he has only the messianic leader executed and not his followers, a fact which may show a dislike for excessive violence. This event is usually dated to either 30 or 33 CE on the basis of astronomical and calendrical information derived from the gospels.

The Samaritan Uprising and Pilate's Return to Rome (Antiq 18.85-89) According to the Antiquities, a messianic figure stirred up the Samaritans to climb Mt Gerizim with him. They assembled in a nearby village carrying weapons and prepared to ascend the mountain. Before they could get very far, however, Pilate had his men block their route and some were killed. Many prisoners were taken and their leaders put to death. Later, the council of the Samaritans complained to Vitellius, the legate of Syria, about Pilate's harsh treatment. Vitellius sent his friend Marcellus to take charge of Judaea and ordered Pilate to Rome. Pilate hurried to Rome but reached the city after Tiberius' death (March 37 CE), suggesting that he was ordered to leave the province in the first few weeks of 37 CE.

In view of the fact that the Samaritans appear to have been armed as they undertook their trek up Mt Gerizim, Pilate's actions do not appear to be unnecessarily severe. Any Roman prefect neglecting to deal with such an uprising would surely have been failing in his duty. As in the previous incident, only the ringleaders were executed.

What happened to Pilate in Rome is unknown. The fact that the new emperor, Gaius, did not reappoint him does not necessarily indicate an unfavorable outcome to his trial. After eleven years in Judaea, Pilate may have accepted another commission.

Philo of Alexandria

A fifth incident from Pilate's term of office is described in Philo's *Legatio ad Gaium*, an incident

in which Pilate set up gilded shields in Jerusalem (Legatio 299-305). Although written only a few years after Pilate's departure from Judaea, this work is highly polemical in nature. The story is part of a letter, supposedly from Agrippa I to Gaius Caligula, in which the Jewish king attempts to persuade the emperor not to set up his statue in the Jerusalem temple. Philo uses all the drama and rhetoric at his disposal to cast Pilate in a particularly brutal light and to contrast him with the virtuous Tiberius, an emperor who (unlike Gaius) was intent upon preserving the Jewish law. Pilate is described as corrupt, violent, abusive and cruel (§§ 301, 302). He is accused of intentionally annoying the Jewish people by setting up gilded shields in Herod's palace in Jerusalem. These shields contained no picture but only an inscription stating the name of the dedicator and the name of the person to whom they were dedicated. When the significance of this inscription was widely known, the people chose four Herodian princes to appeal to Pilate on their behalf and ask for the removal of the shields. When Pilate refused, they threatened to send an embassy to Tiberius. According to Philo, this worried Pilate enormously because of the atrocities committed throughout his governorship. The embassy went ahead and Tiberius upheld the Herodian complaints, ordering Pilate to remove the shields to the temple of Augustus at Caesarea. Although Philo's picture of the ruthless Pilate is obviously over-exaggerated in accordance with his rhetorical aims, there is clearly some basis to the story. The most important starting point for any reconstruction is the shields themselves. Such honorific shields were common in the ancient world; generally they would contain both a portrait and an inscription. Pilate's shields were of this type, but even Philo has to admit that they differed by the fact that they contained no images. This suggests that, rather than deliberately acting against the Jewish law, Pilate took steps to avoid offending the people. Furthermore, they were set up inside the Roman governor's praetorium in Jerusalem, surely the most appropriate place in the city for such shields.

If this event occurred after the commotion caused by the introduction of iconic standards narrated by Josephus, then Pilate's behavior was both understandable and prudent. He wanted to honor the emperor without antagonizing the people. Where he went wrong, however, was in the wording of the inscription. This would have contained both Pilate's name and that of Tiberius. In official inscriptions the emperor was referred to as: Ti. Caesari divi Augusti f. (divi Iuli nepoti) Augusto pontifici Maximo. The reference to the divine Augustus could have been seen as offensive by some Jews, particularly when it was situated in the holy city. That not everyone found this immediately offensive is suggested by Philo's description of the Jewish reaction which is rather oddly put in § 300; it seems to give the impression that the wording of the inscription was generally known before its significance was realized. This reconstruction fits in well with the final part of the story. If Pilate had set out to be deliberately provocative, it is extraordinary that he would allow an embassy to go to Tiberius and inform the emperor of his atrocities. If, however, the shields were designed to honor the emperor and Pilate had deliberately tried to avoid offence by omitting images, his decision to allow Tiberius to adjudicate makes perfect sense.

The date of this incident is uncertain, but it probably occurred after the incident with the standards.

The Gospels

The trial of Jesus of Nazareth before Pontius Pilate is described in all four gospels (Mt 27.1-26, Mk 15.1-15, Lk 23.1-25 and Jn 18.28-19.16a). Although Matthew and Luke - and quite possibly John - used Mark's version as a source, each of the trial narratives is quite different and reflects the concerns of their own particular early Christian community. Similarly, the portrayal of Pilate in each is significantly different. It is often assumed that Pilate is a "weak" character in the gospels in contrast to the "harsh" prefect of the Jewish sources. When the gospels are read more closely and in a first century context, however, this generalization does not hold. In Mark's gospel, Pilate's repeated references to "the King of the

Jews" and then "your king" seem calculated to embitter the crowd who shout all the more for Jesus' execution. In the same way in John's Gospel, Pilate orders the execution of Jesus only when he has pushed "the Jews" into declaring Caesar to be their only king (19.15f). Pilate is weak in Luke's gospel and it is this weakness which allows Jesus' opponents to have their own way. Nevertheless, as a Roman judge, Pilate's three-fold declaration of Jesus' innocence serves an important apologetic point in the two-volume work Luke-Acts. In Matthew's narrative Pilate plays a secondary role, the emphasis is rather on Jesus' Jewish protagonists. Pilate is often referred to not by name but by the rather vague title hegemon, perhaps indicating that for Matthew he is representative of other Roman judges before whom members of his community may be forced to stand trial.

Later References to Pilate

Church tradition portrayed Pilate in increasingly favorable terms. In the second century Gospel of Peter, Jesus is condemned not by Pilate but by Herod Antipas. Tertullian asserted that Pilate was a Christian at heart and that he wrote a letter to Tiberius to explain what had happened at Jesus' trial (Apology 21). Eusebius cited a tradition that Pilate had committed suicide in the reign of Gaius Caligula out of remorse for his part in Jesus' condemnation (Hist. Eccl. 2.7.1). The fourth or fifth century Gospel of Nicodemus (which contains the Acts of Pilate), though far from "Christianizing" Pilate, also depicts the governor as more friendly towards Jesus than any of the canonical gospels. Pilate was canonized by the Coptic and Ethiopic churches.

QUOTATIONS FROM ORIGINAL SOURCES

Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, 2.169-174

"Pilate, being sent by Tiberius as procurator to Judaea, introduced into Jerusalem by night and under cover the effigies of Caesar which are called standards. This proceeding, when day broke, aroused immense excitement among the Jews; those on the spot were in consternation, considering their laws to have been trampled under foot, as those laws permit no image to be

erected in the city; while the indignation of the townspeople stirred the country folk, who flocked together in crowds. Hastening after Pilate to Caesarea, the Jews implored him to remove the standards from Jerusalem and to uphold the laws of their ancestors. When Pilate refused, they fell prostrate around his house and for five whole days and nights remained motionless in that position. On the ensuing day Pilate took his seat on his tribunal in the great stadium and summoning the multitude, with the apparent intention of answering them, gave the arranged signal to his armed soldiers to surround the Jews. Finding themselves in a ring of troops, three deep, the Jews were struck dumb at this unexpected sight. Pilate, after threatening to cut them down, if they refused to admit Caesar's images, signaled to the soldiers to draw their swords. Thereupon the Jews, as by concerted action, flung themselves in a body on the ground, extended their necks, and exclaimed that they were ready rather to die than to transgress the law. Overcome with astonishment at such intense religious zeal, Pilate gave orders for the immediate removal of the standards from Jerusalem."

Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18.55-59

"Now Pilate, the procurator of Judaea, when he brought his army from Caesarea and removed it to winter quarters in Jerusalem, took a bold step in subversion of the Jewish practices, by introducing into the city the busts of the emperor that were attached to the military standards, for our law forbids the making of images. It was for this reason that the previous procurators, when they entered the city, used standards that had no such ornaments. Pilate was the first to bring the images into Jerusalem and set them up, doing it without the knowledge of the people, for he entered at night. But when the people discovered it, they went in a throng to Caesarea and for many days entreated him to take away the images. He refused to yield, since to do so would be an outrage to the emperor; however, since they did not cease entreating him, on the sixth day he secretly armed and placed his troops in position, while he himself came to the speaker's stand. This had been constructed in the stadium, which provided concealment for the army that lay in wait. When

the Jews again engaged in supplication, at a pre-arranged signal he surrounded them with his soldiers and threatened to punish them at once with death if they did not put an end to their tumult and return to their own places. But they, casting themselves prostrate and baring their throats, declared that they had gladly welcomed death rather than make bold to transgress the wise provisions of the laws. Pilate, astonished at the strength of their devotion to the laws, straightway removed the images from Jerusalem and brought them back to Caesarea.”

Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, 2.175-177

“On a later occasion he provoked a fresh uproar by expending upon the construction of an aqueduct the sacred treasure known as Corbonas; the water was brought from a distance of 400 furlongs. Indignant at this proceeding, the populace formed a ring round the tribunal of Pilate, then on a visit to Jerusalem, and besieged him with angry clamor. He, foreseeing the tumult, had interspersed among the crowd a troop of his soldiers, armed but disguised in civilian dress, with orders not to use their swords, but to beat any rioters with cudgels. He now from his tribunal gave the agreed signal. Large numbers of the Jews perished, some from the blows which they received, others trodden to death by their companions in the ensuing flight. Cowed by the fate of the victims, the multitude was reduced to silence.”

Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18.60-62

“He spent money from the sacred treasury in the construction of an aqueduct to bring water into Jerusalem, intercepting the source of the stream at a distance of 200 furlongs. The Jews did not acquiesce in the operations that this involved; and tens of thousands of men assembled and cried out against him, bidding him relinquish his promotion of such designs. Some too even hurled insults and abuse of the sort that a throng will commonly engage in. He thereupon ordered a large number of soldiers to be dressed in Jewish garments, under which they carried clubs, and he sent them off this way and that, thus surrounding the Jews, whom he ordered to withdraw. When the Jews were in full torrent of abuse he gave his soldiers the prearranged signal. They, however, inflicted much

harder blows than Pilate had ordered, punishing alike both those who were rioting and those who were not. But the Jews showed no faint-heartedness; and so, caught unarmed, as they were, by men delivering a prepared attack, many of them actually were slain on the spot, while some withdrew disabled by blows. Thus ended the uprising.”

Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18.63-64

”About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who wrought surprising feats and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Messiah. When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing amongst us, had condemned him to be crucified, those who had in the first place come to love him did not give up their affection for him. On the third day he appeared to them restored to life, for the prophets of God had prophesied these and countless other marvelous things about him. And the tribe of the Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared.”

Herod

from several sources, including:

Josephus, Flavius, *Antiquities*; and *Wars of the Jews*

Edersheim, Alfred, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*; *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*; and *The Temple*.

THE FAMILY OF HEROD

The Herod mentioned in Matthew 2 and in Luke 1, is known to history as Herod the Great. His family was Jewish, by race, but they were actually Idumeans (Edomites).

Edom is the name of a country lying south of Judah. It is bounded on the north by Moab, and it extends from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba. The people of Edom were descendants of Esau, and the country has a prominence in the Bible (along with Moab) as the scene of the final destruction of the Gentile world-power in the Day of the Lord. Rev. 16:13-16; 19:17-21).

Nebuchadnezzar ceded portions of Judah to the Edomites after the fall of Jerusalem. This fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah in Jeremiah 49; and explains why Jeremiah had been exhorting the Jews to destroy the Edomites. Lamentations 4:21, Amos 1:11,12, and Obadiah 8-10, all prophecy the destruction of Edom by God.

The Nabataeans were the first of God's whips against the Edomites; for the Nabataeans pushed the Edomites back up into a small parcel of land next to Judah. Then John Hyrcanus I, king-hierarch of Judea, 134-104 BC, subjugated Edom in fulfillment of the above prophecies, "that Jacob shall lay Esau by the heel." Hyrcanus "permitted the Idumeans to remain in their country as free men if they would circumcise their genitals and observe Jewish law." (God's final whip against the Edomites was Rome. For the Romans used 20,000 of the Idumeans as allies in the siege of Jerusalem, 70AD. But afterwards, the Romans annihilated the Idumeans, stating simply that they were a lawless and despicable race.)

Herod's grandfather, **Antipas**, had been appointed as the governor of Idumea by the Romans. He died in 78 BC, and Julius Caesar appointed Herod's father, **Antipater**, procurator of Judea, who held the post from 47 to 43 BC.

After Caesar's death in 44 BC, Rome was ruled for a time by a triumvirate, including Mark Antony, who appointed **Herod the Great** as the tetrarch of Galilee in 37 BC. Herod increased the physical splendor of Jerusalem and erected the Temple, which was the center of Jewish worship in the time of Christ.

Herod's slaughter of the infants at Bethlehem (Matt. 5:16) was in keeping with his cruel character.

Four sons of Herod the Great are named in the New Testament:

1. **Archelaus** (Matt. 2:22). When Herod died in March of 4 BC, he was succeeded by Archelaus.
2. **Herod Antipas** (Mark 6:14ff; Matt. 14:1; Luke 3:1), who was the tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, from 4 BC until he was banished in 39 AD. He was opposed by John the Baptist (Luke 3:19; Matt. 14; Mark 6:14ff); he desired to see

Christ (Luke 9:9); he was reconciled to Pilate (Luke 23:6-12). He is the Herod of Acts 4:27.

3. **Herod Philip (Boethos)**, mentioned in Mark 6:17 as Philip (cf. also Matt. 14:3; Luke 3:19).

4. **Herod Philip** (Luke 3:1), the tetrarch of territory east of Jordan from 4 BC to 33 AD.

[A tetrarch is the ruler of the "fourth" part of a territory.]

Herod the Great had another son, **Aristobulus**, who is not mentioned in the Bible. Two of Aristobulus' children are mentioned, however:

1. **Herodias** (Mark 6:17ff; Matt. 14:3). She had been married to her uncle, Herod Philip (Boethos); but she left him to live with another uncle, Herod Antipas, the ruler rebuked by John the Baptist. It was Herodias' daughter who danced for Herod Antipas (Mark 6:22ff; Matt. 14:6-11). We know from historical sources that the daughter's name was **Salome**. Salome's first husband was her great uncle, the Herod Philip of Luke 3:1.

2. **Herod Agrippa I** (Acts 12:1, 6; 18-24).

Three other descendants of Herod the Great are mentioned in the New Testament, three children of Herod Agrippa I.

1. **Herod Agrippa II** (Acts 25:13ff; 26:1,2,27-32)

2. **Drusilla** (Acts 24:24)

3. **Berenice** (Acts 25:13; 26:30)

All told, then, two or more names from each of the three successive generations after Herod the Great are mentioned in the New Testament.

HEROD THE GREAT

Caesar Augustus (Octavian), now Princeps (first citizen) of the Roman Empire after the death of Julius Caesar, appointed Herod, the son of Antipater, king of Judea, and financed his Jewish army with Roman money. Herod drove out the Parthians, protected Jerusalem from pillage, sent Antigonus to Antony for execution, killed all the Jewish leaders who had supported the puppet government, and entered into one of the most colorful reigns in history, from 37 to 4 B.C.

The Acts of the Apostles	Page 16
Section I, Lesson 11	a Grace Notes study

Herod possessed intellect without morals, ability without scruple, and courage without honor. He was like the Caesars in many respects. He overlaid freedom with dictatorial order enforced by the military. He beautified Jerusalem with Greek architecture and sculpture. He enlarged his realm and made it prosper, achieving more by subtlety and intrigue than by force of arms. He was broken by the treachery of his offspring. He married many women and unwisely; and he knew every good fortune but happiness.

According to Josephus, Herod had great physical bravery, strength, and martial skill. He was a perfect marksman with javelin and bow, a mighty hunter who killed forty wild beasts in one day. He was always able to wind up on top of the heap even though enemies sought to discredit him with Antony, Augustus, or Cleopatra. From every crisis he emerged richer, more powerful than before.

Augustus judged Herod too great a soul for so small a kingdom and restored all the cities of the Hasmoneans to him and wanted him to rule over Syria and Egypt as well. He had become king by the help and money of Rome; and the Jewish people were working night and day to free themselves from Roman rule. So they hated Herod. Also, the fragile economy of the country bent and broke under the strain of the taxes used by the luxurious court and ambitious building program. He enlarged the Temple of Zerubbabel, calling it too small, and enraging the people. His own Temple was destroyed by Titus Vespasian in 70 A.D.

Herod's sister persuaded him that his favorite wife, Mariamne, sister of Aristobulus, and granddaughter of Hyrcanus II, was trying to poison him. He had Mariamne tried and executed. Thereafter he was faced by continual plots by his family, and he jailed some and executed others. As an old man he broke down with sickness and grief. He suffered from dropsy, ulcers, convulsions, and probably cancer. He died at the age of 69 hated by all his people. It was said of him that he stole to the throne like a fox, ruled like a tiger, and died like a dog. The Jewish kingdom was divided among his three sons Philip, Herod Antipas, and Archelaus.

The following paragraphs, to the end of the article, are reproduced from Conybeare and Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*.

At first Herod the Great espoused the cause of Antony; but he contrived to remedy his mistake by paying a prompt visit, after the battle of Actium, to Augustus in the island of Rhodes. This singular interview of the Jewish prince with the Roman conqueror in a Greek island was the beginning of an important period for the Hebrew nation. An exotic civilization was systematically introduced and extended. Those Greek influences, which had been begun under the Seleucids, and not discontinued under the Hasmoneans, were now more widely diffused; and the Roman customs, which had hitherto been comparatively unknown, were now made familiar. Herod was indeed too wise, and knew the Jews too well, to attempt, like Antiochus, to introduce foreign institutions without any regard to their religious feelings. He endeavored to ingratiate himself with them by rebuilding and decorating their national temple; and a part of that magnificent bridge which was connected with the great southern colonnade is still believed to exist – remaining, in its vast proportions and Roman form, an appropriate monument of the Herodian period of Judea.

The period when Herod was reigning at Jerusalem under the protectorate of Augustus was chiefly remarkable for great architectural works, for the promotion of commerce, the influx of strangers, and the increased diffusion of the two great languages of the heathen world. The names of places are themselves a monument of the spirit of the times. As Tarsus was called Juliopolis from Julius Caesar, and Soli Pompeiopolis from his great rival, so Samaria was called Sebaste after the Greek name of Augustus, and the new metropolis, which was built by Herod on the seashore, was called Caesarea in honor of the same Latin emperor; while Antipatris, on the road (Acts 23:31) between the old capital and the new, still commemorated the name of the king's Idumean father. We must not suppose that the internal change in the minds of the people was proportional to the magnitude of these outward improvements. They suffered much, and their hatred grew towards Rome and toward the Herods.

A parallel might be drawn between the state of Judea under Herod the Great, and that of Egypt under Mahomet Ali, where great works have been successfully accomplished, where the spread of ideas has been promoted, traffic made busy and prosperous, and communication with the civilized works wonderfully increased, but where the mass of the people has continued to be miserable and degraded.

After Herod's death the same influences still continued to operate in Judea. Archelaus persevered in his father's policy, though destitute of his father's energy. The same may be said of the other sons, Antipas and Philip, in their contiguous principalities. All the Herods were great builders and eager partisans of the Roman emperors; and we are familiar in the gospels with that Caesarea Philippi, which one of them built in the upper part of the valley of the Jordan and named in honor of Augustus; and with Tiberias on the banks of the lake of Gennessaret which bore the name of his wicked successor. But while Antipas and Philip still retained their dominions under the protectorate of the emperor, Archelaus had been banished and the weight of the Roman power had descended still more heavily on Judea. It was placed under the direct jurisdiction of a governor, residing at Caesarea by the Sea, and depending, as we have seen above, on the governor of Syria at Antioch.

And now we are made familiar with those features which might be adduced as characterizing any other province at the same epoch – the praetorium (John 28:28), the publicans (Luke 3:12; 19:2), the tribute-money (Matt. 22:19), soldiers and centurions recruited in Italy, Caesar the only king (John 19:15), and the ultimate appeal against the injustice of the governor (Acts 25:11). In this period the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ took place, the first preaching of His apostles, and the conversion of St. Paul. But once more change came over the political fortunes of Judea. Herod Agrippa was the friend of Caligula, as Herod the Great had been the friend of Augustus; and when Tiberius died, he received the grant of an independent principality in the north of Palestine. He was able to ingratiate himself with Claudius, the succeeding emperor. Judea was

added to his dominion, which now embraced the whole circle of the territory ruled by his grandfather. by this time St. Paul was actively pursuing his apostolic career. We need not, therefore, advance beyond this point in a chapter which is only intended to be a general introduction to the Apostle's history.

Traditionalism

from Alfred Edersheim, "Life of Jesus the Messiah"

In trying to picture to ourselves New Testament scenes, the figure most prominent, next to those of the chief actors, is that of the Scribe (*literatus*). He seems ubiquitous; we meet him in Jerusalem, in Judea, and even in Galilee. Indeed, he is indispensable, not only in Babylon, which may have been the birthplace of his order, but among the 'dispersion' also. Everywhere he appears as the mouthpiece and representative of the people; he pushes to the front, the crowd respectfully giving way, and eagerly hanging on his utterances, as those of a recognized authority. He has been solemnly ordained by the laying on of hands; and is the Rabbi. The title *Rabbon* (our Master) occurs first in connection with Gamaliel i. (Acts v. 34).

The NT expression *Rabboni* or *Rabbouni* (St. Mark x. 51; St. John xx. 16) takes the word *Rabbon* or *Rabban* (here in the absolute sense)= *Rabh*, and adds to it the personal suffix 'my,' pronouncing the *Kamez* in the Syriac manner.] 'my great one,' Master, *amplitudo*. He puts questions; he urges objections; he expects full explanations and respectful demeanor. Indeed, his hyper-ingenuity in questioning has become a proverb. There is not measure of his dignity, nor yet limit to his importance. He is the 'lawyer,' [c the *legis Divinae* peritus, St. Matt. xxii. 35; St. Luke vii. 30; x.25; xi. 45; xiv. 3.] the well-plastered pit,' filled with the water of knowledge' out of which not a drop can escape,' in opposition to the weeds of untilled soil' of ignorance He is the Divine aristocrat, among the vulgar herd of rude and profane 'country-people,' who 'know not the Law' and are 'cursed.'

More than that, his order constitutes the ultimate authority on all questions of faith and practice; he

is 'the Exegete of the Laws,' the 'teacher of the Law,' [St. Luke v. 17; Acts v. 34; comp. also 1 Tim. i. 7.] and along with 'the chief priests' and 'elders' a judge in the ecclesiastical tribunals, whether of the capital or in the provinces. [St. Matt. ii. 4; xx. 18; xxi. 15; xxvi. 57; xxvii. 41; St. Mark xiv. 1.43;xv. 1; St. Luke xxii. 2, 66; xxiii. 10; Acts iv. 5.] Although generally appearing in company with 'the Pharisees,' he is not necessarily one of them, for they represent a religious party, while he has a status, and holds an office. [The distinction between 'Pharisees' and 'Scribes,' is marked in many passages in the NT, for example, St. Matt. xxiii. passim; St. Luke vii. 30; xiv. 3; and especially in St. Luke xi. 43, comp. with v. 46. The words 'Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,' in ver. 44, are, according to all evidence, spurious.]

In short, he is the Talmid or learned student, the Chakham or sage, whose honor is to be great in the future world. Each Scribe outweighed all the common people, who must accordingly pay him every honor. Nay, they were honored of God Himself, and their praises proclaimed by the angels; and in heaven also, each of them would hold the same rank and distinction as on earth. Such was to be the respect paid to their sayings, that they were to be absolutely believed, even if they were to declare that to be at the right hand which was at the left, or vice versa.

An institution which had attained such proportions, and wielded such power, could not have been of recent growth. In point of fact, its rise was very gradual, and stretched back to the time of Nehemiah, if not beyond it. Although from the utter confusion of historical notices in Rabbinic writings and their constant practice of antedating events, it is impossible to furnish satisfactory details, the general development of the institution can be traced with sufficient precision.

If Ezra is described in Holy Writ [c Ezra vii.6, 10, 11, 12.] as 'a ready (expertus) Scribe,' who had 'set his heart to seek (seek out the full meaning of) the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel,' this might indicate to his successors, the Sopherim (Scribes), the threefold direction which their studies afterwards took: the Midrash, the Halakhah, and the Haggadah.

Of course, in another sense the Midrash might be considered as the source of both the Halakhah and the Haggadah, of which the one pointed to Scriptural investigation, the other to what was to be observed, and the third to oral teaching in the widest sense. But Ezra left his work uncompleted. On Nehemiah's second arrival in Palestine, he found matters again in a state of utmost confusion. [Neh. xiii.] He must have felt the need of establishing some permanent authority to watch over religious affairs. This we take to have been 'the Great Assembly,' or, as it is commonly called, the 'Great Synagogue.' It is impossible with certainty to determine, either who composed this assembly, or of how many members it consisted. The Talmudic notices are often inconsistent. The number as given in them amounts to about 120. But the modern doubts against the institution itself cannot be sustained.

Probably it comprised the leading men in Church and State, the chief priests, elders, and 'judges,' the latter two classes including 'the Scribes,' if, indeed, that order was already separately organized. [Ezra x. 14; Neh. v. 7.] Probably also the term 'Great Assembly' refers rather to a succession of men than to one Synod; the ingenuity of later times filling such parts of the historical canvas as had been left blank with fictitious notices. In the nature of things such an assembly could not exercise permanent sway in a sparsely populated country, without a strong central authority.

Nor could they have wielded real power during the political difficulties and troubles of foreign domination. The oldest tradition sums up the result of their activity in this sentence ascribed to them: 'Be careful in judgment, set up many Talmudim, and make a hedge about the Torah (Law).'

In the course of time this rope of sand dissolved. The High-Priest, Simon the Just, [In the beginning of the third century BC] is already designated as 'of the remnants of the Great Assembly.' But even this expression does not necessarily imply that he actually belonged to it. In the troublous times which followed his Pontificate, the sacred study seems to have been left to solitary individuals.

The Mishnic tractate Aboth, which records 'the sayings of the Fathers,' here gives us only the

name of Antigonus of Socho. It is significant, that for the first time we now meet a Greek name among Rabbinic authorities, together with an indistinct allusion to his disciples.

The long interval between Simon the Just and Antigonus and his disciples, brings us to the terrible time of Antiochus Epiphanes and the great Syrian persecution. The very sayings attributed to these two sound like an echo of the political state of the country. On three things, Simon was wont to say, the permanency of the (Jewish?) world depends: on the Torah (faithfulness to the Law and its pursuit), on worship (the non-participation in Grecianism), and on works of righteousness. They were dark times, when God's persecuted people were tempted to think, that it might be vain to serve Him, in which Antigonus had it: 'Be not like servants who serve their master for the sake of reward, but be like servants who serve their lord without a view to the getting of reward, and let the fear of heaven be upon you.'

After these two names come those of the so-called five Zugoth, or 'couples,' of whom Hillel and Shammai are the last. Later tradition has represented these successive couples as, respectively, the Nasi (president), and Ab-beth-din (vice-president, of the Sanhedrin). Of the first three of these 'couples' it may be said that, except significant allusions to the circumstances and dangers of their times, their recorded utterances clearly point to the development of purely Sopheric teaching, that is, to the Rabbinistic part of their functions.

From the fourth 'couple,' which consists of Simon ben Shetach, who figured so largely in the political history of the later Maccabees (as Ab-beth-din), and his superior in learning and judgment, Jehudah ben Tabbai (as Nasi), we have again utterances which show, in harmony with the political history of the time, that judicial functions had been once more restored to the Rabbis. The last of five couples brings us to the time of Herod and of Christ.

We have seen that, during the period of severe domestic troubles, beginning with the persecutions under the Seleucidae, which marked the mortal struggle between Judaism and Grecianism, the

'Great Assembly' had disappeared from the scene. The Sopherim had ceased to be a party in power. They had become the Zeqenim, 'Elders,' whose task was purely ecclesiastical, the preservation of their religion, such as the dogmatic labors of their predecessors had made it. Yet another period opened with the advent of the Maccabees. These had been raised into power by the enthusiasm of the Chasidim, or 'pious ones,' who formed the nationalist party in the land, and who had gathered around the liberators of their faith and country.

But the later bearing of the Maccabees had alienated the nationalists. Henceforth they sink out of view, or, rather, the extreme section of them merged in the extreme section of the Pharisees, till fresh national calamities awakened a new nationalist party. Instead of the Chasidim, we see now two religious parties within the Synagogue, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The latter originally represented a reaction from the Pharisees, the modern men, who sympathized with the later tendencies of the Maccabees. Josephus places the origin of these two schools in the time of Jonathan, the successor of Judas Maccabee, [160-143 BC] and with this other Jewish notices agree. Jonathan accepted from the foreigner (the Syrian) the High-Priestly dignity, and combined with it that of secular ruler. But this is not all.

The earlier Maccabees surrounded themselves with a governing eldership. On the coins of their reigns this is designated as the Chebher, or eldership (association) of the Jews. Thus, theirs was what Josephus designates as an aristocratic government, and of which he somewhat vaguely says, that it lasted 'from the Captivity until the descendants of the Asmoneans set up kingly government.' In this aristocratic government the High-Priest would rather be the chief of a representative ecclesiastical body of rulers.

This state of things continued until the great breach between Hycanus, the fourth from Judas Maccabee, and the Pharisical party, which is equally recorded by Josephus and the Talmud, with only variations of names and details. The dispute apparently arose from the desire of the Pharisees, that Hycanus should be content with the secular power, and resign the Pontificate. But it

ended in the persecution, and removal from power, of the Pharisees.

Very significantly, Jewish tradition introduces again at this time those purely ecclesiastical authorities which are designated as 'the couples.' In accordance with this, altered state of things, the name 'Chebher' now disappears from the coins of the Maccabees, and Rabbinical celebrities ('the couples' or Zugoth) are only teachers of traditionalism, and ecclesiastical authorities. The 'eldership,' which under the earlier Maccabees was called 'the tribunal of the Asmoneans.'

Thus we place the origin of this institution about the time of Hyrcanus. With this Jewish tradition fully agrees. The power of the Sanhedrin would, of course, vary with political circumstances, being at times almost absolute, as in the reign of the Pharisaic devotee-Queen, Alexandra, while at others it was shorn of all but ecclesiastical authority. But as the Sanhedrin was in full force at the time of Jesus, its organization will claim our attention in the sequel.

After this brief outline of the origin and development of an institution which exerted such decisive influence on the future of Israel, it seems necessary similarly to trace the growth of the 'traditions of the Elders,' so as to understand what, alas! so effectually, opposed the new doctrine of the Kingdom. The first place must here be assigned to those legal determinations, which traditionalism declared absolutely binding on all, not only of equal, but even greater obligation than Scripture itself.

Thus we read: 'The sayings of the elders have more weight than those of the prophets' (Jer. Ber. i. 7); 'an offence against the sayings of the Scribes is worse than one against those of Scripture' (Sanh. xi. 3). Compare also Er. 21 b The comparison between such claims and those sometimes set up on behalf of 'creeds' and 'articles' does not seem to me applicable. In the introduction to the Midr. on Lament. it is inferred from Jer. ix. 12, 13, that to forsake the law, in the Rabbinic sense, was worse than idolatry, uncleanness, or the shedding of blood. See generally that Introduction.]

And this not illogically, since tradition was equally of Divine origin with Holy Scripture, and

authoritatively explained its meaning; supplemented it; gave it application to cases not expressly provided for, perhaps not even foreseen in Biblical times; and generally guarded its sanctity by extending and adding to its provisions, drawing 'a hedge,' around its 'garden enclosed.'

Thus, in new and dangerous circumstances, would the full meaning of God's Law, to its every title and iota, be elicited and obeyed. Thus also would their feet be arrested, who might stray from within, or break in from without. Accordingly, so important was tradition, that the greatest merit a Rabbi could claim was the strictest adherence to the traditions, which he had received from his teacher.

Nor might one Sanhedrin annul, or set aside, the decrees of its predecessors. To such length did they go in this worship of the letter, that the great Hillel was actually wont to mispronounce a word, because his teacher before him had done so.

These traditional ordinances, as already stated, bear the general name of the Halakhah, as indicating alike the way in which the fathers had walked, and that which their children were bound to follow. These Halakhoth were 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; one of its chief advantages over our modern traditionalism, that it was expressly forbidden to draw inferences from these traditions, which should have the force of fresh legal determinations.

In describing the historical growth of the Halakhah,

Perhaps I may also take leave to refer to the corresponding chapters in my 'History of the Jewish Nation.' Similarly, the expressions in Ex. xxiv. 12 were thus explained: 'the tables of stone,' the ten commandments; the 'law,' the written Law; the 'commandments,' the Mishnah; 'which I have written,' the Prophets and Hagiographa; 'that thou mayest teach them,' the Talmud, which shows that they were all given to Moses on Sinai' (Ber. 5 a, lines 11-16).

A like application was made of the various clauses in Cant. vii. 12 (Erub. 21 b). Nay, by an alternation of the words in Hos. vii. 10, it was shown that the banished had been brought back for the merit of their study (of the sacrificial sections) of the Mishnah (Vayyik R. 7.)] we may dismiss in a few sentences the legends of Jewish tradition about patriarchal times.

They assure us, that there was an Academy and a Rabbinic tribunal of Shem, and they speak of traditions delivered by that Patriarch to Jacob; of diligent attendance by the latter on the Rabbinic College; of a tractate (in 400 sections) on idolatry by Abraham, and of his observance of the whole traditional law; of the introduction of the three daily times of prayer, successively by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; of the three benedictions in the customary 'grace at meat,' as propounded by Moses, Joshua, and David and Solomon; of the Mosaic introduction of the practice of reading lessons from the law on Sabbaths, New Moons, and Feast Days, and even on the Mondays and Thursdays; and of that, by the same authority, of preaching on the three great festivals about those feasts.

Further, they ascribe to Moses the arrangement of the priesthood into eight courses (that into sixteen to Samuel, and that into twenty-four to David), as also, the duration of the time for marriage festivities, and for mourning. But evidently these are vague statements, with the object of tracing traditionalism and its observances to primeval times, even as legend had it, that Adam was born circumcised, and later writers that he had kept all the ordinances.

But other principles apply to the traditions, from Moses downwards. According to the Jewish view,

God had given Moses on Mount Sinai alike the oral and the written Law, that is, the Law with all its interpretations and applications. From Ex. xx. 1, it was inferred, that God had communicated to Moses the Bible, the Mishnah, and Talmud, and the Haggadah, even to that which scholars would in latest times propound.

In answer to the somewhat natural objection, why the Bible alone had been written, it was said that Moses had proposed to write down all the teaching entrusted to him, but the Almighty had refused, on account of the future subjection of Israel to the nations, who would take from them the written Law. Then the unwritten traditions would remain to separate between Israel and the Gentiles. Popular exegesis found this indicated even in the language of prophecy.

But traditionalism went further, and placed the oral actually above the written Law. The expression, [Ex. xxxiv. 27.] 'After the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel,' was explained as meaning, that God's covenant was founded on the spoken, in opposition to the written words.

If the written was thus placed below the oral Law, we can scarcely wonder that the reading of the Hagiographa was actually prohibited to the people on the Sabbath, from fear that it might divert attention from the learned discourses of the Rabbis. The study of them on that day was only allowed for the purpose of learned investigation and discussions.

But if traditionalism was not to be committed to writing by Moses, measures had been taken to prevent oblivion or inaccuracy. Moses had always repeated a traditional law successively to Aaron, to his sons, and to the elders of the people, and they again in turn to each other, in such wise, that Aaron heard the Mishnah four times, his sons three times, the Elders twice, and the people once.

But even this was not all, for by successive repetitions of Aaron, his sons, and the Elders) the people also heard it four times. And, before his death, Moses had summoned any one to come forward, if he had forgotten ought of what he had heard and learned. [Deut. i. 5.] But these 'Halakhoth of Moses from Sinai' do not make up

the whole of traditionalism. According to Maimonides, it consists of five, but more critically of three classes.

The first of these comprises both such ordinances as are found in the Bible itself, and the so-called Halakhoth of Moses from Sinai, that is, such laws and usages as prevailed from time immemorial, and which, according to the Jewish view, had been orally delivered to, but not written down by Moses. For these, therefore, no proof was to be sought in Scripture, at most support, or confirmatory allusion (Asmakhtu).

At the same time the ordinances, for which an appeal could be made to Asmakhta, were better liked than those which rested on tradition alone (Jer. Chag. p. 76, col d.) Nor were these open to discussion. The second class formed the 'oral law,' or the 'traditional teaching' in the stricter sense. To this class belonged all that was supposed to be implied in, or that could be deduced from, the Law of Moses.

In connection with this it is very significant that R. Jochanan ben Zaccai, who taught not many years after the Crucifixion of Christ, was wont to say, that, in the future, Halakhahs in regard to purity, which had not the support of Scripture, would be repeated. In general, the teaching of R. Jochanan should be studied to understand the unacknowledged influence which Christianity exercised upon the Synagogue.

For this class of ordinances reference to, and proof from, Scripture was required. Not so for the third class of ordinances, which were 'the hedge' drawn by the Rabbis around the Law, to prevent any breach of the Law or customs, to ensure their exact observance, or to meet peculiar circumstances and dangers. These ordinances constituted 'the sayings of the Scribes' or 'of the Rabbis', and were either positive in their character (Teqqanoth), or else negative (Gezeroth from gazar to cut off).

Perhaps the distinction of these two cannot always be strictly carried out. But it was probably to this third class especially, confessedly unsupported by Scripture, that these words of Christ referred: [St. Matt. xxiii. 3, 4.] 'All therefore whatsoever they tell you, that do and observe; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind

heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but with their finger they will not move them away (set in motion).'

In further confirmation of our view the following may be quoted: 'A Gezerah (i.e. this third class of ordinances) is not to be laid on the congregation, unless the majority of the congregation is able to bear it', words which read like a commentary on those of Jesus, and show that these burdens could be laid on, or moved away, according to the varying judgment or severity of a Rabbinic College.

This body of traditional ordinances forms the subject of the Mishnah, or second, repeated law. We have here to place on one side the Law of Moses as recorded in the Pentateuch, as standing by itself. All else, even the teaching of the Prophets and of the Hagiographa, as well as the oral traditions, bore the general name of Qabbalah, 'that which has been received.'

The sacred study, or Midrash, in the original application of the term, concerned either the Halakhah, traditional ordinance, which was always 'that which was said' upon the authority of individuals, not as legal ordinance. It was illustration, commentary, anecdote, clever or learned saying, &c. At first the Halakhah remained unwritten, probably owing to the disputes between Pharisees and Sadducees. But the necessity of fixedness and order led in course of time to more or less complete collections of the Halakhoth.

The oldest of these is ascribed to R. Akiba, in the time of the Emperor Hadrian. But the authoritative collection in the so-called Mishnah is the work of Jehudah the Holy, who died about the end of the second century of our era.

Altogether, the Mishnah comprises six 'Orders' (Sedarim), each devoted to a special class of subjects.

The first 'Order' (Zeraim, 'seeds') begins with the ordinances concerning 'benedictions,' or the time, mode, manner, and character of the prayers prescribed. It then goes on to detail what may be called the religio-agrarian laws (such as tithing, Sabbatical years, first fruits, &c.).

The second 'Order' (Moed, 'festive time') discusses all connected with the Sabbath observance and the other festivals.

The third 'Order' (Nashim, 'women') treats of all that concerns betrothal, marriage and divorce, but also includes a tractate on the Nasirate.

The fourth 'Order' (Neziqin, 'damages') contains the civil and criminal law. Characteristically, it includes all the ordinances concerning idol-worship (in the tractate Abhodah Zarah) and 'the sayings of the Fathers' (Abhoth).

The fifth 'Order' (Qodashim, 'holy things') treats of the various classes of sacrifices, offerings, and things belonging (as the first-born), or dedicated, to God, and of all questions which can be grouped under 'sacred things' (such as the redemption, exchange, or alienation of what had been dedicated to God). It also includes the laws concerning the daily morning and evening service (Tamid), and a description of the structure and arrangements of the Temple (Middoth, 'the measurements').

Finally, the sixth 'Order' (Toharoth, 'cleannesses') gives every ordinance connected with the questions of 'clean and unclean,' alike as regards human beings, animals, and inanimate things.]

These 'Orders' are divided into tractates (Massikthoth, Massekhtiyoth, 'textures, webs'), of which there are sixty-three (or else sixty-two) in all.

The tractates are again subdivided into chapters (Peraqim), in all 525, which severally consist of a certain number of verses, or Mishnahs (Mishnayoth, in all 4,187).

Considering the variety and complexity of the subjects treated, the Mishnah is arranged with remarkable logical perspicuity. The language is Hebrew, though of course not that of the Old Testament. The words rendered necessary by the new circumstances are chiefly derived from the Greek, the Syriac, and the Latin, with Hebrew terminations. But all connected with social intercourse, or ordinary life (such as contracts), is written, not in Hebrew, but in Aramaean, as the language of the people.

But the traditional law embodied other materials than the Halakhoth collected in the Mishnah. Some that had not been recorded there, found a place in the works of certain Rabbis, or were derived from their schools. These are called Boraitas, that is, traditions external to the Mishnah.

Finally, there were 'additions' (or Tosephtoth), dating after the completion of the Mishnah, but probably not later than the third century of our era. Such there are to not fewer than fifty-two out of the sixty-three Mishnic tractates.

When speaking of the Halakhah as distinguished from the Haggadah, we must not, however, suppose that the latter could be entirely separated from it. In point of fact, one whole tractate in the Mishnah (Aboth: The Sayings of the 'Fathers') is entirely Haggadah; a second (Middoth: the 'Measurements of the Temple') has Halakhah in only fourteen places; while in the rest of the tractates Haggadah occurs in not fewer than 207 places. Only thirteen out of the sixty-three tractates of the Mishnah are entirely free from Haggadah.

Hitherto we have only spoken of the Mishnah. But this comprises only a very small part of traditionalism. In course of time the discussions, illustrations, explanations, and additions to which the Mishnah gave rise, whether in its application, or in the Academies of the Rabbis, were authoritatively collected and edited in what are known as the two Talmuds or Gemaras. [*Talmud*: that which is learned, doctrine. *Gemara*: either the same, or else 'perfection,' 'completion.']

If we imagine something combining law reports, a Rabbinical 'Hansard,' and notes of a theological debating club, all thoroughly Oriental, full of digressions, anecdotes, quaint sayings, fancies, legends, and too often of what, from its profanity, superstition, and even obscenity, could scarcely be quoted, we may form some general idea of what the Talmud is.

The oldest of these two Talmuds dates from about the close of the fourth century of our era. It is the product of the Palestinian Academies, and hence called the Jerusalem Talmud. The second is about a century younger, and the outcome of the

Babylonian schools, hence called the Babylon (afterwards also 'our') Talmud. We do not possess either of these works complete.

The following will explain our meaning: On the first 'order' we have the Jerusalem Talmud complete, that is, on every tractate (comprising in all 65 folio leaves), while the Babylon Talmud extends only over its first tractate (Berakhoth).

On the second order, the four last chapters of one tractate (Shabbath) are wanting in the Jerusalem, and one whole tractate (Sheqalim) in the Babylon Talmud.

The third order is complete in both Gemaras.

On the fourth order a chapter is wanting in one tractate (Makkoth) in the Jerusalem, and two whole tractates (Eduyoth and Abhoth) in both Gemaras.

The fifth order is wholly wanting in the Jerusalem, and two and a half tractates of it Babylon Talmud.

Of the sixth order only one tractate (Niddah) exists in both Gemaras.

The principal Halakhoth were collected in a work (dating from about 800 AD) entitled Halakhoth Gedoloth. They are arranged to correspond with the weekly lectionary of the Pentateuch in a work entitled Sheeltoth ('Questions:' bested.

Dghernfurth, 1786). The Jerusalem Talmud extends over 39, the Babylonian over 36 1/2 tractates, 15 1/2 tractates have no Gemara at all.]

The most defective is the Jerusalem Talmud, which is also much briefer, and contains far fewer discussions than that of Babylon. The Babylon Talmud, which in its present form extends over thirty-six out of the sixty-three tractates of the Mishnah, is about ten or eleven times the size of the latter, and more than four times that of the Jerusalem Talmud. It occupies (in our editions), with marginal commentary, 2,947 folio leaves (pages a and b).

Both Talmuds are written in Aramaean; the one in its western, the other in its eastern dialect, and in both the Mishnah is discussed seriatim, and clause by clause. Of the character of these discussions it would be impossible to convey an adequate idea. When we bear in mind the many sparkling, beautiful, and occasionally almost sublime

passages in the Talmud, but especially that its forms of thought and expression so often recall those of the New Testament, only prejudice and hatred could indulge in indiscriminate vituperation. On the other hand, it seems unaccountable how any one who has read a Talmudic tractate, or even part of one, could compare the Talmud with the New Testament, or find in the one the origin of the other.

To complete our brief survey, it should be added that our editions of the Babylon Talmud contain (at the close of vol. ix. and after the fourth 'Order') certain Boraithas. Of these there were originally nine, but two of the smaller tractates (on 'the memorial fringes,' and on 'non-Israelites') have not been preserved.

The first of these Boraithas is entitled Abhoth de Rabbi Nathan, and partially corresponds with a tractate of a similar name in the Mishnah. [The last ten chapters curiously group together events or things under numerals from 10 downwards. The most generally interesting of these is that of the 10 Nequdoth, or passages of Scripture in which letters are marked by dots, together with the explanation of their reasons (ch. xxxiv.). The whole Boraitha seems composed of parts of three different works, and consists of forty (or forty-one) chapters, and occupies ten folio leaves.] Next follow six minor tractates.

These are respectively entitled *Sopherim* (Scribes), [1 In twenty-one chapters, each containing a number of Halakhahs] detailing the ordinances about copying the Scriptures, the ritual of the Lectionary, and festive prayers; *Ebhel Rabbathi* or *Semakhoth*, containing Halakhah and Haggadah about funeral and mourning observances; *Kallah*, on the married relationship; *Derekh Erets*, embodying moral directions and the rules and customs of social intercourse; *Derekh Erets Zuta*, treating of similar subjects, but as regards learned students; and, lastly, the *Pereq ha Shalom*, which is a eulogy on peace.

All these tractates date, at least in their present form, later than the Talmudic period. [Besides these, Raphael Kirchheim has published (Frankfort, 1851) the so-called seven smaller tractates, covering altogether, with abundant notes,

only forty-four small pages, which treat of the copying of the Bible (Sepher Torah, in five chapters), of the Mezuzah, or memorial on the doorposts (in two chapters), of the Tsitsith, (Tephillin, in one chapter), of the Tsitsith, or memorial-fringes (in one chapter), of Slaves (Abhadim, in three chapters) of the Cutheans, or Samaritans (in two chapters), and, finally, a curious tractate on Proselytes (Gerim, in four chapters).]

But when the Halakhah, however varied in its application, was something fixed and stable, the utmost latitude was claimed and given in the Haggadah. It is sadly characteristic, that, practically, the main body of Jewish dogmatic and moral theology is really only Haggadah, and hence of no absolute authority. The Halakhah indicated with the most minute and painful punctiliousness every legal ordinance as to outward observances, and it explained every bearing of the Law of Moses. But beyond this it left the inner man, the spring of actions, untouched.

What he was to believe and what to feel, was chiefly matter of the Haggadah. Of course the laws of morality, and religion, as laid down in the Pentateuch, were fixed principles, but there was the greatest divergence and latitude in the explanation and application of many of them. A man might hold or propound almost any views, so long as he contravened not the Law of Moses, as it was understood, and adhered in teaching and practice to the traditional ordinances. In principle it was the same liberty which the Roman Church accords to its professing members, only with much wider application, since the debatable ground embraced so many matters of faith, and the liberty given was not only that of private opinion but of public utterance.

We emphasize this, because the absence of authoritative direction and the latitude in matters of faith and inner feeling stand side by side, and in such sharp contrast, with the most minute punctiliousness in all matters of outward observance. And here we may mark the fundamental distinction between the teaching of Jesus and Rabbinism. He left the Halakhah untouched, putting it, as it were, on one side, as

something quite secondary, while He insisted as primary on that which to them was chiefly matter of Haggadah.

And this rightly so, for, in His own words, 'Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth,' since 'those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and they defile the man.' [St. Matt. xv. 11, 18.] The difference was one of fundamental principle, and not merely of development, form, or detail. The one developed the Law in its outward direction as ordinances and commandments; the other in its inward direction as life and liberty.

Thus Rabbinism occupied one pole, and the outcome of its tendency to pure externalism was the Halakhah, all that was internal and higher being merely Haggadic. The teaching of Jesus occupied the opposite pole. Its starting-point was the inner sanctuary in which God was known and worshipped, and it might well leave the Rabbinic Halakhoth aside, as not worth controversy, to be in the meantime 'done and observed,' in the firm assurance that, in the course of its development, the spirit would create its own appropriate forms, or, to use a New Testament figure, the new wine burst the old bottles.

And, lastly, as closely connected with all this, and marking the climax of contrariety: Rabbinism started with demand of outward obedience and righteousness, and pointed to sonship as its goal; the Gospel started with the free gift of forgiveness through faith and of sonship, and pointed to obedience and righteousness as its goal.

In truth, Rabbinism, as such, had no system of theology; only what ideas, conjectures, or fancies the Haggadah yielded concerning God, Angels, demons, man, his future destiny and present position, and Israel, with its past history and coming glory. Accordingly, by the side of what is noble and pure, what a terrible mass of utter incongruities, of conflicting statements and too often debasing superstitions, the outcome of ignorance and narrow nationalism; of legendary coloring of Biblical narratives and scenes, profane, coarse, and degrading to them; the Almighty Himself and His Angels taking part in the

conversations of Rabbis, and the discussions of Academies; nay, forming a kind of heavenly Sanhedrin, which occasionally requires the aid of an earthly Rabbi.

Thus, in B. Mez. 86 a, we read of a discussion in the heavenly Academy on the subject of purity, when Rabbah was summoned to heaven by death, although this required a miracle, since he was constantly engaged in sacred study. Shocking to write, it needed the authority of Rabbah to attest the correctness of the Almighty's statement on the Halakhic question discussed.

The miraculous merges into the ridiculous, and even the revolting. Miraculous cures, miraculous supplies, miraculous help, all for the glory of great Rabbis, who by a look or word can kill, and restore to life. At their bidding the eyes of a rival fall out, and are again inserted. Nay, such was the veneration due to Rabbis, that R. Joshua used to kiss the stone on which R. Eliezer had sat and lectured, saying: 'This stone is like Mount Sinai, and he who sat on it like the Ark.' Modern ingenuity has, indeed, striven to suggest deeper symbolical meaning for such stories.

It should own the terrible contrast existing side by side: Hebrewism and Judaism, the Old Testament and traditionalism; and it should recognize its deeper cause in the absence of that element of spiritual and inner life which Christ has brought. Thus as between the two - the old and the new - it may be fearlessly asserted that, as regards their substance and spirit, there is not a difference, but a total divergence, of fundamental principle between Rabbinism and the New Testament, so that comparison between them is not possible. Here there is absolute contrariety.

The painful fact just referred to is only too clearly illustrated by the relation in which traditionalism places itself to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, even though it acknowledges their inspiration and authority. The Talmud has it, that he who busies himself with Scripture only (i.e. without either the Mishnah or Gemara) has merit, and yet no merit. Even the comparative paucity of references to the Bible in the Mishnah is significant Israel had made void the Law by its traditions.

Under a load of outward ordinances and observances its spirit had been crushed. The religion as well as the grand hope of the Old Testament had become externalized. And so alike Heathenism and Judaism - for it was no longer the pure religion of the Old Testament - each following its own direction, had reached its goal.

All was prepared and waiting. The very porch had been built, through which the new, and yet old, religion was to pass into the ancient world, and the ancient world into the new religion. Only one thing was needed: the Coming of the Christ. As yet darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness lay upon the people. But far away the golden light of the new day was already tingeing the edge of the horizon.

Presently would the Lord arise upon Zion, and His glory be seen upon her. Presently would the Voice from out the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; presently would it herald the Coming of His Christ to Jew and Gentile, and that Kingdom of heaven, which, established upon earth, is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Barnabas

Barnabas was born in Cyprus and died in Salamis in the 1st century. His Jewish parents called him Joseph, but when he sold all his goods and gave the money to the apostles in Jerusalem, the Christians gave him a new name: Barnabas, which means 'son of consolation' or 'man of encouragement.' Although Barnabas was not among the original Twelve, he is traditionally thought to have been among the 72 commissioned by Jesus to preach; thus, he is given the honorary title of Apostle.

Barnabas the Levite lived with the earliest Christians in Jerusalem. He was one of the first to welcome Saint Paul, the former persecutor of the early Church, and his former schoolmate. He persuaded the Christians of Jerusalem to accept Paul's claim that he was now a believer in Jesus (Acts 9:26-30). Barnabas was sent to Antioch, Syria, to investigate the community of non-Jewish believers there (Acts 11:22ff), and brought Paul there from Tarsus. It was in Antioch that the

followers of The Way were first called Christians. With Paul he took the donation from Antioch to Jerusalem community during a famine.

After this Barnabas, his cousin John Mark, and Paul returned to Antioch before setting out together on the first missionary journey of the Christian church (Acts 13:2ff). They went first to Cyprus, Barnabas's native land, and for this reason Barnabas is honored as the founder of the Cypriot church. Then they continued on to Perga (whence John Mark returned to Jerusalem), Antioch in Pisidia (where they were so violently opposed by the Jews that they decided to preach to the pagans), and Iconium (where they were stoned).

At Lystra in Lycaonia, they were thought to be gods because of the miracles they worked and the physical beauty of Barnabas. After being taken as pagan gods, they were stoned out of the city, and fled back to Antioch in Syria. When a dispute arose regarding the observance of the Jewish laws and customs, Paul and Barnabas returned to Jerusalem for the council that decided that non-Jews would not have to be circumcised to be baptized.

When they returned to Antioch, Barnabas wanted Paul and John Mark to continue their travels with him, but Paul fell out with John Mark, perhaps because John Mark had abandoned them at Perga. In spite of Paul's extremely forceful character, Barnabas took Mark's side, demonstrating that he was a man of considerable determination and courage. The Acts of the Apostles says, "There arose a sharp contention between them. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus" (Acts 15:39). Paul chose a new ally, Silas, and went elsewhere to strengthen the churches. Little more is heard of Barnabas though it is believed that the rift with Paul was healed because we read about Barnabas later in 1 Corinthians 9:6. Paul also discusses his relationship to Barnabas in his letter to the Galatians.

The Mission of Barnabas

When intelligence came to Jerusalem that Peter had broken through the restraints of the Jewish Law and had even eaten at the table of the Gentiles (Acts 11:3), there was general surprise and displeasure among "those of the circumcision."

But when he explained to them all the transaction, they approved his conduct, and praised God for His mercy to the heathen (Acts 11:18). And soon news came from a greater distance which showed that the same unexpected change was operating more widely. We have seen that the persecution in which Stephen was killed resulted in a general dispersion of the Christians. Wherever they went they spoke to their Jewish brethren of their faith that the promises had been fulfilled in the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This dispersion and preaching of the Gospel extended even to the island of Cyprus, and along the Phoenician coast as far as Antioch. For some time the glad tidings were made known only to the scattered children of Israel. But at length some of the Hellenistic Jews, natives of Cyprus and Cyrene, spoke to the Greeks themselves at Antioch, and the divine Spirit gave such power to the Word that a vast number "believed and turned to the Lord." The news was not long in traveling to Jerusalem. Perhaps some message was sent in haste to the Apostles of the Church. The Jewish Christians in Antioch might be perplexed how to deal with the new Gentile converts, and it is not unnatural to suppose that the presence of Barnabas might be anxiously desired by the fellow missionaries of his native island.

We ought to observe the honorable place which the island of Cyprus was permitted to occupy in the first work of Christianity. We shall soon trace the footsteps of the Apostle to the Heathen in the beginning of his travels over the length of this island and see here the first earthly potentate converted and linking his name forever with that of St. Paul (Acts 13:6-9). Now, while Saul is yet at Tarsus, men of Cyprus are made the instruments of awakening the Gentiles, one of them might be that "Mnason of Cyprus" who afterwards was his host at Jerusalem (Acts 21:16), and Joses the Levite of Cyprus, whom the apostles had long ago called "the Son of Consolation" and who had removed all the prejudice which looked suspiciously on Saul's conversion (Acts 9:27), is the first teacher sent by the mother church to the new disciples at Antioch. "He was a good man and full of the Holy spirit and of faith." He rejoiced when he saw what God's grace was doing, he exhorted all to cling fast to the Savior whom they had found, and he

labored himself with abundant success. But feeling the greatness of the work and remembering the zeal and strong character of his friend, whose vocation to this particular task of instructing the heathen was doubtless well known to him, “he departed to Tarsus to seek Saul.”

Whatever length of time had elapsed since Saul came from Jerusalem to Tarsus, and however that time had been employed by him, whether he had already founded any of those churches in his native Cilicia, which we read of soon after (Acts 15:41), whether he had there undergone any of those manifold labors and sufferings recorded by himself (2 Cor. 11) but omitted by St. Luke, whether by active intercourse with the Gentiles, by study of their literature, by traveling, by discoursing with the philosophers, he had been making himself acquainted with their opinions and their prejudices, and so preparing his mind for the work that was before him, or whether he had been waiting in silence for the call of God’s providence, praying for guidance from above, reflecting on the condition of the Gentiles, and gazing more and more closely on the plan of the world’s redemption, however this may be, it must have been an eventful day when Barnabas, having come across the sea from Seleucia, or round by the defiles of Mount Amanus, suddenly appeared in the streets of Tarsus. The last time the two friends had met was in Jerusalem. All that they then hoped, and probably more than they then thought possible, had occurred. “God had granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life”. (Acts. 9:18) Barnabas had “seen the grace of God” (9:23) with his own eyes at Antioch, and under his own teaching “a great multitude” (9:24) had been added to the Lord. But

he needed assistance. He needed the presence of one whose wisdom was higher than his own, whose zeal was an example to all, and whose peculiar mission had been miraculously declared. Saul recognized the voice of God in the words of Barnabas, and the two friends traveled in all haste to the Syrian metropolis.

Traditions of Barnabas

Tradition says that Barnabas preached in Alexandria and Rome, and was stoned to death at Salamis about 61 AD. He is considered the founder of the Cypriot Church. The Order of Barnabites, founded by Saint Antony Zaccaria in Milan in 1530, took their name from their principal church named for Barnabas, who was once believed to have been the first bishop of Milan.

The apocryphal Epistle of Barnabas was long attributed to him, but modern scholarship now attributes it to an Alexandrian Christian between 70 and 100 AD.

The Gospel of Barnabas was probably authored by an Italian Christian who became an Islamic. The Acts of Barnabas, once attributed to John Mark, are now known to have been written in the 5th century.

Barnabas is especially venerated in Florence, Italy, and Cyprus. He is invoked against hailstorms and as a peacemaker.

Bible references to Barnabas: Acts 4:36; 9:27; 11:22, 25,30; 12:25; 13:1, 2, 7, 43, 46, 50; 14: 12, 14, 20; 15:2, 12, 22, 25, 35, 36, 37, 39; 1 Cor. 9:6; Gal. 2:1, 9, 13; Col. 4:10.

The Acts of the Apostles	Page 29
Section I, Lesson 11	a Grace Notes study

Lesson 11 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. The last question is an essay question and requires you to write a few sentences. Type your response following the questions.

1. How was the lame man made whole?

Answer:

2. What was being referred to as "the stone which the builders rejected?"

Answer:

3. In what scripture verse are we told that Jesus Christ is the Rock of Judgment?

Answer:

4. The members of the Sanhedrin knew that a miracle had been performed in healing the lame man.

[True/False]

Answer:

5. How old was the man who was healed?

Answer:

The Acts of the Apostles	Page 30
Section I, Lesson 11	a Grace Notes study

6. What Bible verse says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me?"

Answer:

7. The statements in Acts 4:25,26 are quoted from the Old Testament in _____.

Answer:

8. Barnabas' given name was _____.

Answer:

9. Where was Barnabas born?

Answer:

10. Pontius Pilate was governor of the province of _____.

Answer:

11. Pilate made no changes to the High Priesthood. [True/False]

Answer:

12. Herod the Great originally came from the country of _____.

Answer:

13. Mark Antony appointed _____ as tetrarch of Galilee in 37 B.C.

Answer:

14. Barnabas was a Levite, but he was not one of the original twelve apostles. [True/False]

Answer:

15. On Paul's first missionary journey, he was accompanied by Barnabas, and Barnabas' cousin _____.

Answer:

End of Quiz
