

NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY

PART ONE - TIME BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

JUDAISM

LESSON 2

OUTLINE

- I. INTRODUCTION
- II. MAIN TEACHING OF JUDAISM
- III. TEMPLE
- IV. SYNAGOGUE
- V. LEARNING
- VI. IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER
- VII. WORDS TO LEARN
- VIII. ASSIGNMENT

JUDAISM

I. INTRODUCTION

The people of Judah were taken to Babylon in 586 B.C. This made the people of Judah change some of their ways of worship

Before the people of Judah were taken to Babylon, they often forgot about God. They often prayed to idols. Example: Baal worship 1 Kings 18:18,19; worship of the host of heaven, 2 Kings 17:16; 2 Kings 21:4-7; worship of golden calves, 1 Kings 12:25-33; 2 Kings 17:16.

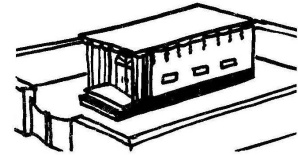
Because the people of Israel and Judah forgot God, God let the people be taken from their country, 2 Kings 22:15-17; 23:27.

The people of Judah were in Babylon 70 years, Jeremiah 25:11; Daniel 9:2. During this time many people realized they sinned when they forgot God. In Babylon the people gave up all the false gods. They prayed to the God in heaven alone, Psalm 137:1-4.

When the people of Judah were taken from their country, the temple was destroyed, 2 Kings 25:8,9. In the strange land they could not go to pray in the temple.

It is believed that during this time the Jews started the synagogues. They gathered at the synagogues to pray to God.

While in Judah they had the priests in the temple. In Babylon the priests were scattered. Many Jews began to study the laws by themselves. Ezra is an example of this. Also Daniel and his friends learned of God.



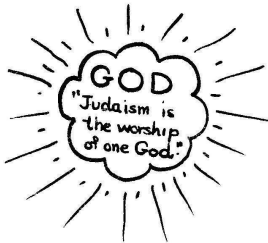
When the Jews came back to their own country (Palestine), they started to build the temple again, Ezra 3:8-10. The Jews did not always obey the Lord God, but they never went back to worshipping idols again.



When the Romans defeated the different countries they divided them into provinces. The people in the provinces had to pay their taxes to the Roman government. They were not to rebel. Otherwise, the people were free to do as they pleased.

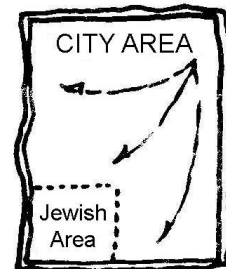


All through the history of the Jews, the priest really led the people. He was God's messenger to the people. The people were ready to hear what the priest said. Even the Roman rulers listened to what the priest said.



The religion of the Jews is often called Judaism. It is the worship of one God in heaven. Judaism was based on words and things God had shown to His people. These words were written in the Scriptures (the Law and the prophets). Most of the Jews kept their own religion, Judaism.

The religion of Judaism kept the Jews from mixing with other people. They had their own little settlements. The other people did not like them because they lived in their own settlements. You find Jewish settlements in our cities today.



Judaism really started in Babylon. The temple had been destroyed. There was no place to make sacrifices. The Jews knew that if they were to stay God's special people they would have to leave the other gods and worship the Lord God. The Jews knew that the only way to truly worship the Lord God was through the study of His Word. Men who studied the Word of God were called scribes. These men became religious leaders.

The people started to meet in buildings called synagogues. They listened to what the scribes taught. In time the people stopped studying the Word of God for themselves. Some scribes and Pharisees made new laws for the people. The people listened more to the new laws than to the Word of God. In time the people did not really know what the Word of God said.

Judaism had its different groups like Christianity has its different groups today. We will talk about those groups later. They were the Pharisees, Sadducees and Scribes.

The life of the Jews was centered around the synagogue.

II. MAIN TEACHING OF JUDAISM

The main teaching of Judaism is that “Jehovah, our God, is one God.” Judaism had no room for many gods. Some Jews saw God as a personal God. They called Him, “Our Father,” John 8:39-41. Some Jews saw God “so great” He could not be compared with man. This is why they thought God had no feeling for man.

The Jews were to keep the Law and laws, Mark 7:3-8. They were to be circumcised. They were to keep all the ceremonies of Judaism. The Jews were to attend some of the feasts every year. If they were circumcised and kept the laws they would go to heaven, Philippians 3:4-6; Romans 2:17-20. If they broke the laws, they sinned. It did not matter if these were the laws of Moses or the laws of the religious leaders, Luke 6:1,2; John 9:16.

III. TEMPLE

The temple was in poor condition during the time of the Maccabees. Herod the Great rebuilt the temple. He made it of white marble. Much of the temple was covered with gold. When the sun shone on it, it was beautiful. The temple was on Mount Zion. (There is a Muslim mosque on Mount Zion today.)



The dome

The outer court was open to Jews and Gentiles. The court was like a market place. Only the Jews were allowed to go into the inner part of the temple.

The Roman government allowed the Jews to have their own temple police, Acts

4:1-3; John 7:32-46. These police were to protect the temple. They were to keep law and order in the temple.

The temple was the main center of worship. Jesus and His disciples often taught in the temple, Mark 14:49; Luke 22:53; Acts 3:1.

IV. SYNAGOGUE

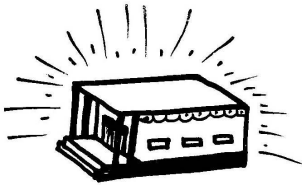
The synagogue was started while the Jews were in Babylon. The Jews wanted a place to worship. So they built a synagogue. The Jews still have synagogues today. You can find them in the larger cities of Canada and the United States.



The group of people who met together to worship in a synagogue was also called synagogue. There had to be at least ten men to start a synagogue.

The synagogue is to the Jews what the church is to the Christians. The early Christians built their churches like the synagogues.

The synagogues were led by a group of men called elders. A rabbi was the leader. The Scriptures were read and explained to the people by the Rabbi. Sometimes visitors were allowed to speak to the people. Example: Jesus and Paul spoke in the synagogues, Luke 4:16-21; Acts 17:1,2.



The synagogue building was a plain, rectangular building. When the people went in to worship, they always faced toward Jerusalem. A wall or curtain down the middle of the synagogue separated the men from the women. The Pharisees and Sadducees used to fight over the important seats, Matthew 23:6. The important seats were near the front of the synagogue.

In the front of the synagogue was a chest or box. It was shaped like the ark of the covenant. It was also called the ark. The chest had the scrolls of the Scriptures in it. Near this was a lamp stand with eight branches on it. This lamp stand was like the one that was in the tabernacle. Near the center of the synagogue was a platform where the speaker stood.

It was the synagogue that kept Judaism going after the temple was destroyed. The Jews are still worshipping in synagogues today.

V. LEARNING

The synagogue was the school house for the Jewish boys. They were taught to read and write. Most of their schooling was in the laws of Moses. These Laws of Moses were written in a book called Torah. The Jewish boys had to memorize this book. They were also taught the traditions and laws of Judaism. The traditions and laws of Judaism were written in a book called Midrash. (It is the Midrash which led the Jewish people away from the Scriptures.)

The Jewish boys were also taught how to work. Jesus was a carpenter. Paul was a tent maker. Peter and John were fishermen.

Some Jews did not live in Palestine. They lived in different parts of the Roman empire. Some of these Jews stayed true to Judaism. Some would not learn the Greek or Latin languages. These Jews were called Hebrews (Philippians 3:5). Even though some of the Jews kept Judaism, they learned Greek and Latin. These Jews were called Hellenists (Acts chapter six).¹

VI. IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER

It is important to know something about Judaism when we study the New Testament. It is important to know because:

1. Almost all the books of the New Testament were written by Jews.
2. The teachings about God, sin, salvation, grace, prayer and many other things had their beginning in the Old Testament.
3. Jesus was a Jew, born of a Jewish family, Matthew 1:1-16.
4. Jesus lived like a Jew among Jews.

Even though the Jews had been taught the Word of God, they did not know the Savior when He came, John 1:11.

The Jewish religion (Judaism) teaches that a person gets to heaven by keeping the Jewish laws and ceremonies. Judaism does not teach salvation by faith. See Philippians 3:4-6,9; Romans 2:17-20.

¹M.C.Tenny, New Testament Survey, p. 119.

The religion of Judaism kept the Jews from mixing with other people. They had their own little settlements. The other people did not like them because they lived in their own settlements. You find Jewish settlements in our cities today.

There was a difference between Judaism and the teachings of the Old Testament. There is a difference between Judaism and Christianity because the Jews rejected Jesus, John 1:11.

VII. WORDS TO LEARN

1. ark - chest or box in the synagogues where the Old Testament scrolls were kept.
2. ark of the covenant - box used in the Holy of Holies. They kept the stone tablets of the ten commandments in this box.
3. ceremony - a religious act, or a religious way of doing something.
4. elder - an older man who is a leader in the synagogue or church.
5. Hellenist - a Jew who learned the Greek language and the Greek way of living.
6. Judaism - the religion of the Jews. The main teaching is, "Jehovah, our God, is one God."
7. rabbi - a teacher in a synagogue.
8. scroll - book written on parchment or papyrus and rolled up on sticks.
9. synagogue - 1) a Jewish place of worship, but not the temple.
2) a group of people who worship in a synagogue.
10. Torah - a book in which the laws of Moses were written.
11. tradition - that which is handed down from parents to children. This may be in the way of thinking about things, or in the way of doing things. Usually the thoughts and acts are not written down.

12. Holy of Holies - that part of the tabernacle where God lived. The priest would go in here only once a year to make atonement for the people.

VIII. ASSIGNMENT

1. What is the main teaching of Judaism?
2. What was the condition of the temple during the time of the Maccabees?
3. Who rebuilt the temple after the Maccabees?
4. What are the two meanings of synagogue?
 - a.
 - b.
5. What is the Torah?
6. Did Jesus look like a Jew? How do we know He looked like a Jew? John 4:7-9
7. What part of the Scripture did Jesus read when He was in the synagogue in Nazareth? Luke 4:16-19
8. In what three languages did Pilate make a writing on the cross of Jesus? John 19:19,20
9. Where in Jerusalem did the disciples preach about Christ? Acts 5:17-25

10. When Paul came to a new city, where did he go first to preach? Acts 17:1-2

11. Was Paul able to speak Greek? Acts 21:37-40

Was Paul able to speak Hebrew?

12. Paul was trained in Judaism. What things had he been trained in? Philippians 3:4-6

Was Paul satisfied with this? Philippians 3:7-11

Why?

NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY by Joseph F. Pope. Copyright, 1989 by Northern Canada Evangelical Mission, Inc., Box 3030, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Canada, S6V 7V4. Edited 2019 by Helen Pope.

References taken from the NEW LIFE Testament are identified (New Life Testament). It is published by the Christian Literature International, Canby, Oregon. Used by permission. Thought quotes from NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY, M.C. Tenny used by permission. Copyright Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1961. "Bible history" and "Footprints of Jesus" maps from the "Thompson Chain Reference Bible" used by permission. Copyright by B. B. Kirkbride Bible Co., Inc