

The Story of the Bible: Volume II, The New Testament © 2015 TAN Books, PO Box 410487, Charlotte NC, 28241.

Much of the content of this book originally appeared in *Bible History: A Textbook of the Old and New Testaments for Catholic Schools* © 1931 Benziger Brothers, Inc., Printer to the Holy Apostolic See, New York. The rights were purchased from Benziger by TAN Books in 2000.

Nihil obstat for *Bible History*: Arthur J. Scanlan, S.T.D.

Imprimatur for *Bible History*: + Patrick Cardinal Hayes
Archbishop of New York
New York City, New York
July 1, 1931

The Story of the Bible: Volume II, The New Testament includes an extensively revised and updated version of the New Testament portion of *Bible History*, edited by Brian Kennelly and Paul Thigpen, Ph.D., to which has been added chapters 19–23 by Paul Thigpen, © 2015 TAN Books.

All Scripture quotations have been freely adapted from the New Testament, Confraternity Text © 1941, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C.

All rights reserved. With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Cover and illustrations by Chris Pelicano

Maps by Abby Glazier

ISBN: 978-1-61890-644-1

Cataloging-in-Publication data on file with the Library of Congress

Printed and bound in the United States of America
TAN Books
www.TANBooks.com
Charlotte, North Carolina
2015

THE STORY OF
THE BIBLE

VOLUME II:
THE NEW TESTAMENT

Fr. George Johnson, Ph.D. Fr. Jerome D. Hannan, D.D.
Sr. M. Dominica, O.S.U., Ph.D.

REVISED EDITION
Brian Kennelly Paul Thigpen, Ph.D.

TAN

CONTENTS

1 **Introduction: Your Time Has Come**

PART ONE: How Christ Prepared to Redeem the World

7 Chapter 1: The World Into Which the Messiah Came

21 Chapter 2: The Redeemer Comes to Earth

PART TWO: How Christ Ministered

35 Chapter 3: Christ Begins His Public Ministry

45 Chapter 4: Christ Calls All People to Repentance

61 Chapter 5: Christ, the Great Teacher

75 Chapter 6: Christ Works Miracles

83 Chapter 7: Christ, the Friend of the Sick

93 Chapter 8: Christ Casts Out Demons and Raises the Dead

105 Chapter 9: Christ, the Friend of the Poor

115 Chapter 10: Christ Finds His Church

133 Chapter 11: The Disciples Struggle to Understand

**PART THREE: How Christ Redeemed
the World and Returned to Heaven**

- 141 Chapter 12: The Enemies of Christ
157 Chapter 13: The Last Days of Christ's Ministry
167 Chapter 14: Christ at the Last Supper and in the Garden
179 Chapter 15: Christ Before His Accusers
191 Chapter 16: Christ Is Crucified, Dies, and Is Buried
201 Chapter 17: The Proof of Christ's Divinity

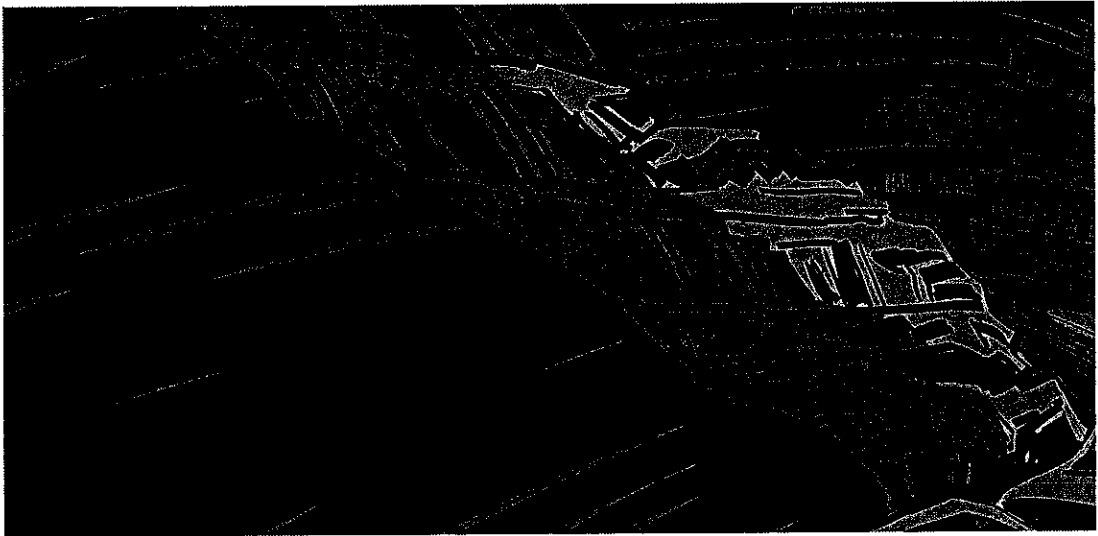
**PART FOUR: How the Apostles Became
the Foundation of the Church**

- 215 Chapter 18: The Growth of the Early Church
225 Chapter 19: The Seed of God Is Scattered
239 Chapter 20: Paul's Conversion and Early Ministry
247 Chapter 21: Paul Takes the Gospel to Europe
257 Chapter 22: Paul's Third Missionary Journey
263 Chapter 23: Paul in Jerusalem and Rome

275 **The Books of the New Testament**

276 **Maps**

281 **Index**





INTRODUCTION

Your Time Has Come

Get ready for an adventure.

Open your mind and stretch your imagination. Soon we'll travel back in time to trace the origins of the universe and of the human race. Through the power of a Book unlike any other book, we can journey to a distant age, all the way back to the first age.

By the time this voyage is complete, you'll arrive back home in the present day. But what you learn along the way will help you understand better your unique place in today's world. And it will allow you to look forward, with hope and wonder, to the world to come.

Your ancestors before you, those who lived in the days of old, once sat by firelight as they studied and learned from this Book. It's filled with tales of adventure, betrayal, vengeance, war, love, heroism, and hope. As you embark on this journey, you'll come to know men and women of great holiness, and some of great wickedness as well. You'll encounter angels and demons, kings

and queens, warriors and prophets—and everyday people like yourself, all with a story to tell.

Your time has come to learn this story. *It's your turn now.* You must take this Book, the one we call the Bible, and learn everything there is to know about it. Think of it as a flaming torch that has been carried through the long, dark nights of human history, a torch that has now been passed to you. Take it, steady it, and move forward with its knowledge and wisdom, so that one day you can pass it on to the ones who follow you.

But before you take up this torch, burning with the power of God's Word, it's important to understand why our heavenly Father gave it to us.

The Book of Nature

God created us to know Him, love Him, and serve Him in this world, so that we can be happy with Him forever in the world to come. The better we know Him, the more we'll love Him; and the more we love Him, the more eager we'll be to do His holy will.

For this reason, the most important lessons we must learn are those that help us to know more and more about God.

We can learn many things about God from the world around us. The radiant stars, moon, and sun that light the sky; the fragrant forests and pastures, dotted with blossoms; the towering mountains and vast deserts—all these were made by God. They are *beautiful*, so they tell us that the God who made them is *beautiful*.

The mighty rivers flow, and the great waterfalls come crashing down. The ocean tides rise and fall, and no one can resist them. Storms come thundering with lightning and gale winds. All these are *powerful*, so they tell us that the God who made them is *powerful*.

Our families and friends are kind and good to us. They watch over us lovingly and take care of our needs. So they show us that the God who made them is *loving and caring*.

In all these ways, the world tells us about our God. Since He's the One who created it, we might think of Him as an Author, and the world as His Book. Just as an author writes words on a page, so God writes with his divine Hand on the sky, the land, the sea, and the people of our world. Each morning when we open our eyes, we're able to read from this "Book of Nature" that He's written.

Even so, we need more than this "book" all around us to understand who God is and how He wants us to live. That's because we aren't always able to read correctly the wonderful lessons that are found in the Book of Nature. The things of this world are so beautiful and powerful and good that we may be tempted to think more of them than we do of the God who made them. We may end up loving them more than we love God.

But there's another reason as well why we need more than the Book of Nature to learn about God. We find that many important things about God and His will for us aren't written in that book. Some truths are above and beyond nature, and we call these *supernatural*.

God knows these truths because He is all-wise and knows all things. He wants to share them with us. Why? If we learn these supernatural truths, we'll know how to love and serve Him in a nobler way. And that will make us far happier than we could ever be if we had to depend on the Book of Nature alone.

Why We Have the Bible

For this reason, God gave us another book, which we call the Bible. It helps us make sense of the lessons that are written in the Book of Nature, as well as many other

things that otherwise we could never know or understand about God, ourselves, and the world around us.

Children can't understand everything that adults can, but even the wisest adult can never understand certain things in the mind of God. They are simply too far beyond us, too complex, too vast, for us to grasp. So we must trust in Him when He tells us that something is true.

How can we trust that everything God says is true? Because He knows all things, and He cannot lie. The truths that we can't fully understand, even after God has told them to us, we call *mysteries*.

The Bible was written by men who were chosen by God especially for that purpose. These men wrote down what God wanted them to write, and nothing else. He guided them so they would not make a mistake. He brought to their memories the truths they had learned, and He placed thoughts in their minds that would never have come to them otherwise. The help that God gave to these sacred writers we call *divine inspiration*.

After Christ ascended into heaven, God inspired some of His apostles and disciples to write down many of the things He had said and done. God watched over them and guided them, making sure they would write all that He wanted them to write. After the generation of the apostles, no one ever had that special gift of divine inspiration again. By that time, God had revealed to us all the truths that are necessary for us to enter into the kingdom of heaven and to live with Him forever.

The Church that Christ founded guards the truths that He revealed. It's like a castle built to protect a great spring of life-giving water. When the spring is protected, the living water can flow out from it to all those who come to drink.

Christ promised to be with His Church—the King in His castle—until the end of time. Through this promise,

we know that the Church cannot make a mistake when she tells us what we must believe and do if we wish to know, love, and serve God, both in this life and the next. Because the Church cannot make a mistake in these matters, we say she is *infallible*.

The Parts of the Bible

The Bible is divided into two parts: the *Old Testament* and the *New Testament*. The word “testament” means an agreement, or more exactly, a *covenant*. When two persons enter into a covenant, they promise to give themselves to each other in love and to be faithful in that love. Marriage is one clear example of what we mean by a covenant.

The forty-six books of the Old Testament tell us about the covenant between God and His people before Jesus came into the world. The Old Testament shows us again and again how God loved His covenant people faithfully, even when they broke the covenant and failed to love Him in return. These books tell how God promised us a Redeemer who would save us from our sins, and how He chose a certain nation, the Jews, to prepare the world for the Redeemer’s coming.

The New Testament contains twenty-seven books. It tells how God’s promise was fulfilled in Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and in the Church that He founded.

The Bible, then, is one large book, made up of seventy-three smaller ones.

The books in the Bible are not all alike. Some tell the story of things that happened in the past, called historical books. Others contain rules of conduct for how to live properly, called moral books. Others foretell things that will happen in the future, called prophetic books. Some of the books are even written in poetry rather than prose.

The Story of the Bible will take you through the adventures of both Testaments, in two volumes. The first volume covers the Old Testament, and this second volume covers the New Testament.

Scripture and Tradition

We should note one last thing about the truths God has revealed. Even though *Sacred Scripture*—another name for the Bible—is essential for knowing about God, other truths that He wanted us to know were not written down there. Instead, they have come to us by word of mouth and by example, beginning with the preaching and practice of the apostles. Since the time of Jesus, each generation has received these truths and handed them down to the next generation. We call this the *Sacred Tradition*.

We shouldn't be surprised that the Bible can't contain the entire teaching of the Sacred Tradition. Think only, for example, of the life of Our Lord, so full of wonderful teachings and deeds. In the Gospels, we read about many events from Jesus' life. But at the end of the Gospel of John, we're told that there were many other things Jesus said and did. If they all were written down, St. John insists, the whole world couldn't hold the books that would have to be written!

PART ONE

How Christ Prepared to Redeem the World

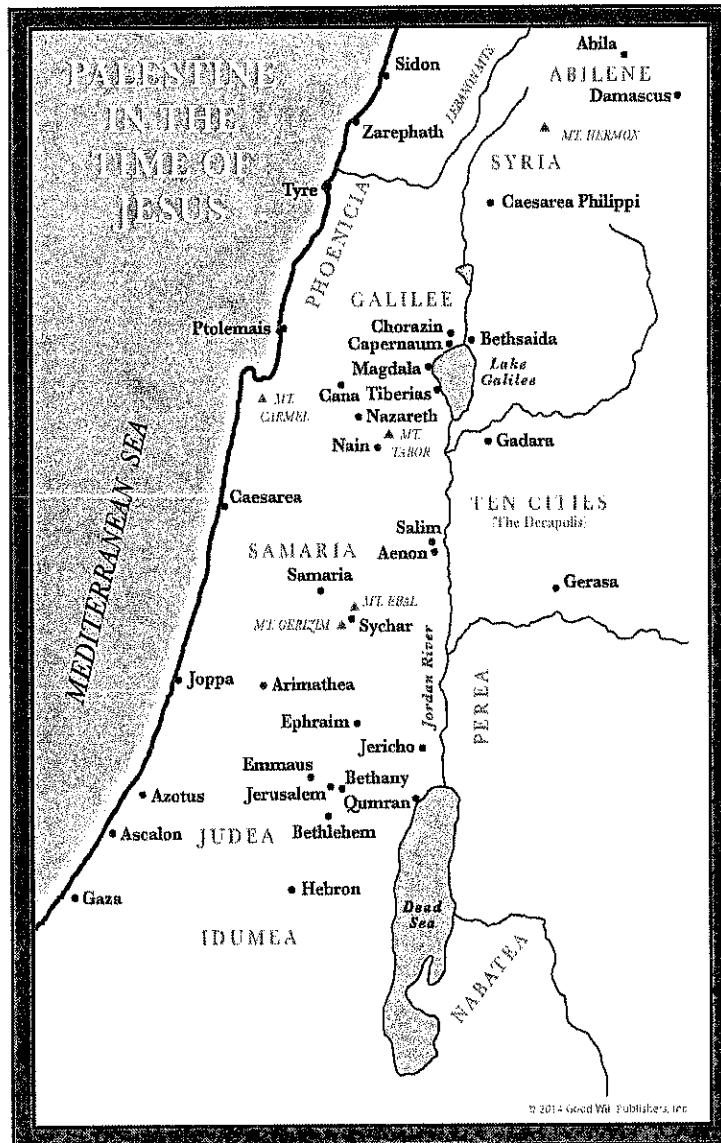
CHAPTER 1

The World Into Which
the Messiah Came

God's Surprising Plan

God could have chosen to send His Son into the world at any time, at any place, and among any people of His choosing. Our Lord could have been born in a great and famous city, to a wealthy and influential family, in a powerful nation. He could have been born today, when modern communications media could have announced His birth around the world within minutes. But that was not heaven's plan.

THE STORY OF THE BIBLE—THE NEW TESTAMENT



Instead, the Son of God was born to a humble peasant woman unknown to anyone but her friends and neighbors. He was laid in a borrowed feeding trough, in a humble stable with dusty, smelly animals. And His infant cries first rang out in a small town in the land of a powerless people, who were despised and oppressed by the mighty men of their day.

Jesus Christ, God's Son, was born about two thousand years ago in the land of Palestine. It was the homeland that God had promised to His chosen people, the Jews. They had lived there for centuries, and at one time they had been a great nation. But their history came to be filled with terrible tragedies as they struggled, and often failed, to be faithful to the Lord.

Over the centuries, it had become abundantly clear that the Chosen People—and the whole world as well—desperately needed the Savior that God had promised to send them. Let's take a look now at the world into which He was born.

The Land of Palestine

At the time Our Lord was born, Palestine was about the same size as the state of Maryland in the United States today. West of the Jordan River, which flows through the middle of the country from north to south, were three provinces: *Galilee*, *Samaria*, and *Judea*.

The principal towns of Galilee, the northernmost province, were *Capernaum*, *Tiberias*, *Chorazin*, *Cana*, and *Nazareth*.

In Samaria, the central province, were three major cities. *Shechem* was the first capital of the rebel kings after the kingdom of Solomon had divided. *Sebaste* was the name that Herod had given to the city of Samaria, the last capital of the Northern Kingdom, after he had rebuilt it. *Caesarea* was a port on the Mediterranean Sea built by Herod.

Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jericho, and Arimathea were the principal cities of Judea, the southernmost province.

On the other side of the Jordan, to the southeast, was the country known as *Perea*, whose principal city was *Pella*. Not many Jews lived in this part of Palestine during the time of Our Lord. The northeastern part of this country was divided into several provinces.

Shortly after they had gained control of Palestine, the Romans built ten cities in this region. The neighborhood of these ten cities was known as the *Decapolis*, which means “ten cities.”

Palestine and Rome

Palestine was now a part of the Roman Empire. The Romans didn't govern it directly, but through rulers whom they approved. When our Savior was born, the first of four rulers by the name of Herod was the king of Palestine. Now known as *Herod the Great*, he was an Edomite appointed by the Roman ruler Julius Caesar. The people resented him because of his great cruelty, and also because he wasn't a Jew.

After the death of this Herod, his kingdom was divided among his three sons, Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Herod Philip. Archelaus governed Judea and Samaria; Herod Antipas was ruler of Galilee and Perea; and Herod Philip governed the territories east of the Jordan.

Ten years after the death of Herod the Great, the Romans took the government of Samaria and Judea away from Archelaus because he had shown himself incapable of ruling wisely. In his place they put a *procurator*, or governor. This procurator was a Roman and had his headquarters at Caesarea. He visited Jerusalem only on the occasion of the great Jewish festivals.

The Romans kept a garrison of soldiers on guard in

the city of Jerusalem. They were stationed in the *Antonia*, a fortified building northwest of the Temple. Whenever the procurator was in Jerusalem, he lived in a palace that had been built by Herod the Great on Mount Zion, across the valley from the Temple. Between the Antonia and the Temple was a large square or court called *Gabbatha*. In this square the procurator met the people on certain occasions.

The Jews were compelled to pay taxes to Rome. The Romans sold the privilege of collecting these taxes to tax collectors. The tax collectors tried to enrich themselves at the expense of the Jews. They oppressed the people and forced them to pay as large a tax as possible.

The people hated the tax collectors, not only because they oppressed them, but also because they were a constant reminder that the Jews were no longer an independent nation, but were under the domination of a foreign power. Most of all, they despised those tax collectors who were Jews, for they considered them traitors to their nation.

Roman money was used throughout Palestine. The Roman coin most commonly mentioned in the Bible was the *denarius*. Four Roman *denarii* made one Jewish *shekel*.

The changing value of our coins today makes it difficult to compare them to these ancient coins. But we can gain some idea of their value when we note that the *denarius* was a day's wage for a common laborer of the time.

Greek coins were also in use in Palestine. A Greek *stater* was equal to the Jewish shekel. The Greek *drachma* was equal to the denarius, and the *didrachma* was equal to two drachmas. These are the kinds of coins that were entrusted to Judas for the support of the apostles. Finally, the *talent* mentioned in the Gospel was more than fifteen years' wages for a laborer.



Only Jewish money was permitted to be offered for sacrifices in the Temple. The role of the moneychangers there was to exchange Jewish coins for the people's Greek and Roman coins.

Everyday Life in Palestine

Some aspects of life in Palestine had changed very little from the time of Joshua to the time of Our Lord. People wore a cotton or linen sleeveless garment reaching to the knees, called a *tunic*. Over this was worn a long-sleeved loose garment open at the front and bound at the waist with a belt.

The outermost garment consisted of a long, loose robe with or without wide sleeves, and striped with various colors. The most popular colors were white, purple, red, and violet. Around their heads the men wore a piece of wool wrapped in the style of a turban, and the women wore a veil. On their feet they wore sandals.

The houses of the Jews were built mostly of stones piled one upon another. Hardened clay served the purpose of mortar. The house usually had one room and was one story high. It had a flat roof with a railing around it, which served as an outside deck. The floors were either unpaved earth or roughly polished stones.

The wealthy people had chairs and couches made of fine cedar wood, beautifully carved. The common people had rough benches and tables made of pine. For beds, the Jews used a thin mattress with one or two coverings, which was laid on the floor. Other common household items were little clay lamps, which burned olive oil; various wooden kitchen utensils; bottles made of skins; clay pitchers; and a hand mill for grinding grain.

The wealthier people had plates, knives, bowls, and cups made of gold, while the poor had to settle for stone and clay vessels. The meals of the rich included exotic foods brought by merchants from all parts of the Roman Empire. The poor ate lamb, fish, bread, and such fruits and vegetables as Palestine produced.

It was the custom of the time for the people to recline on cushions on the floor around dishes of food set in the middle, much like spokes around the hub of a wheel. They ate with their fingers from a common dish.

Because the climate was hot and the roads dusty, the Jews bathed often. They also anointed their skin with oil. Before coming into the house or sitting down at table or going to bed, they washed their feet.

Among the Jews were tradesmen of every kind, carpenters, masons, jewelers, tailors, and shoemakers. There were also shopkeepers who sold food, clothing, and furniture. But most of the people in Judea made their living by herding sheep and cattle or tilling the soil. In Galilee, the

people typically lived by fishing and farming. In Samaria, they lived chiefly by farming.

They had no threshing machines in those days, but after the wheat was cut down, the sheaves were brought to a threshing floor. There, oxen trampled them and loosened the grain from the stock.

Usually there was a breeze in the evening. That's when the farmer used the threshing fork, which looked like a wide wooden fork with a short handle. With this he tossed the wheat into the air. The grain, being heavier, fell to the ground, while the chaff was blown away.

A day for the Jews lasted from sunset to sunset. The "first hour," as they called it, was 6 a.m.; the third hour, 9 a.m.; the sixth hour, noon; the ninth hour, 3 p.m.; and the twelfth hour, 6 p.m.

In the time of Christ, four languages were used in Palestine. The Sacred Books were written in ancient Hebrew, which few of the Jews understood. The language used in everyday life was Aramaic.

Usually those in high positions, and many of the Galileans, knew Greek. Since the time of Alexander's conquest, Greek had become an international language for people living in the lands he had conquered. A few also knew Latin, since it was the language of the Romans. Public signs and notices were often written in Aramaic, Greek, and Latin, so that all might be able to read them.

Religious Life

Every morning and evening a lamb was sacrificed at the Temple to acknowledge God's ownership of all things. Special sacrifices were offered on the great feast days. The *Feast of the Pasch* (or *Passover*) and the *Feast of Weeks* were observed in spring. The *Day of Atonement* and the *Feast of Tabernacles* (or *Booths*) were observed in September.

Two feasts had been added to the Jewish calendar after the time of Moses. These were the *Feast of Purim*, celebrated in February to commemorate the day when Queen Esther saved her people in Persia; and the *Feast of the Dedication*, observed in November in honor of the rededication of the altar and the Temple by Judas Maccabeus. This Jewish feast is known today as *Hanukah*. On the first day of every month as well, special religious ceremonies were conducted for the people.

Though the Jews were under the power of the Roman emperor, they were allowed to govern themselves in many things. For this purpose, they had the *Sanhedrin*, which was a body of seventy-one members. To this council belonged the *chief priests*, as the former high priests were called; the *elders*, who were the leading men of the people; and the *scribes*, who were specialists in religious law. The council was presided over by the current *high priest*, who was usually appointed by the ruler of the country.

The Sanhedrin met in one of the halls of the Temple. It had authority over all religious matters in the land. It controlled the public worship, saw that the Law of Moses was carried out properly, and decided which prophets were true and which were false. It was a kind of supreme court that could pass judgment on those who were found guilty of disobeying the Law. However, it had no right to condemn anyone to death. This power was reserved to the Roman procurator.

Since the Temple in Jerusalem had been rebuilt, sacrifices were offered only there, as the Law of Moses required. But as we noted before, during the time of their exile the Jews had developed the custom of gathering together in local *synagogues*, for worship, religious instruction, and the reading of Scripture. This custom was maintained by the Jews who returned to Judea from exile,

and these synagogues now served also as schools and courthouses. They were found throughout Palestine and in other parts of the world, wherever Jews gathered to worship.

Every synagogue had its ruler and elders. The rulers had the power to “cast out of the synagogue” those members they declared unworthy. The people “cast out” were no longer considered part of the religious community.

The duty of instructing the people in the Law of Moses, and of translating and explaining the Scriptures to them, had become a special profession in the time of Our Lord. The men who performed this duty were known as *scribes*. In the Bible they are also called *lawyers*.

Religious Parties

The *Pharisees* were a sect that had been formed after the Jews returned from captivity. Their purpose was to preserve the Sacred Scriptures and to keep them free from error. They were deeply patriotic and tried to keep alive the ancient traditions of the people.

In the beginning, they had done splendid work and had brought about a great reform in the conduct of the Jews. But as time went on, many Pharisees became more interested in the letter of the Law than in its spirit. They had a high opinion of themselves and made a great show of their carefulness in observing every detail of the Law of Moses.

The Pharisees often despised those who didn't observe the Law as they did. At the hours of prayer they recited long prayers in public and wore on their foreheads or arms larger *phylacteries* than the other Jews wore, to make a show of their religious practice. These phylacteries were bands of parchment containing sacred texts.

Most of the scribes were Pharisees. But some scribes belonged to other religious parties.



Opposed to the Pharisees were the *Sadducees*. They denied some of the teachings found in the Jewish Scriptures that had been written in later centuries than the others. They didn't believe, for example, in angels, the resurrection of the body, or the life of the world to come.

The Sadducees ridiculed the Pharisees for their strictness in keeping the law. Many of them belonged to the wealthy classes and imitated the fashions of Greece and Rome. Some of them belonged to the court of Herod the Great; in contempt, the people called them *Herodians*.

The high priest sometimes belonged to the party of the

Sadducees, as did most of the members of the Sanhedrin. They tended to be worldly men who followed the external observances of the Law only because they feared the people. They also tended to be more politically active and accepted the Roman domination of their land.

The *Essenes* were another sect that had grown up after the Jews returned from captivity. They lived apart from the people in communities governed by strict rules, very much like certain monks of our day.

The *Nazarites* were a class of men who took a vow to serve God by a life of penance and mortification. They had existed among the Chosen People since the days of Moses. During the time he was bound by his vow, the Nazarite was not allowed to drink intoxicating liquor or to cut his hair. He was not permitted to approach dead bodies.

How Judeans Saw Galileans and Samaritans

Though the Jewish people of Galilee usually lived according to the Law of Moses, they were not held in very high esteem by the people of Judea. Some of them were fishermen, but most of them worked small farms. They spoke a distinctive dialect and were not as highly cultured as the people of Judea. In addition, many pagans lived in Galilee, so the Judeans looked down on the region.

The people of Samaria, called *Samaritans*, had a religion of their own that differed from that of the rest of the Jews. Their Bible consisted only of the first five books of our Bible. They had their own temple on Mount Gerizim, which they insisted was the only temple of the true God.

The people of Judea and Galilee avoided them. They refused to pass through Samaritan territory unless it was absolutely necessary. They wouldn't even ask Samaritans for a drink of water if they were thirsty, because they refused to drink out of the same vessels as Samaritans.

Herod's Temple

In the time of Our Lord, the great Temple at Jerusalem was spoken of as *Herod's Temple*, because Herod the Great rebuilt it after it had been partially destroyed by fire during a siege of Jerusalem. It had the same three main divisions as the earlier temple: the *Porch*, the *Holy Place*, and the *Holy of Holies*.

The Porch was on the east side. It was one hundred and fifty feet high, much like a great hall with three rows of beautiful columns running its whole length. The entrance to the Porch was through beautifully decorated gates.

The Temple itself was made up of the *Holy Place* and the *Holy of Holies*. Surrounding the Temple and on a lower level was the large *Court of the Priests*, which only priests and Levites were permitted to enter. In it was the altar of sacrifice. On the north, south, and west of this was the *Court of the Israelites*, which all Jewish men might enter. East of this was the *Court of the Women*, which Jewish women were allowed to enter.

Surrounding the Court of the Israelites and the Court of the Women was the *Court of the Gentiles*. It was separated from the other courts by a wall four and a half feet high. There were openings in this wall to allow the Jews to enter or leave the other courts.

Near these openings were signs in Latin and in Greek warning all those who were not Jews that they would be punished by death if they entered within the enclosure. This Court of the Gentiles became in many ways a market place, where animals for the sacrifices were bought and sold, and where the moneychangers had their booths. It was from this Court that Christ drove out the buyers and the sellers. On the outside of this Court was a large open space, flanked on all sides by a high wall containing porches and halls. At its

southeast corner was a high tower known as the *Pinnacle* of the Temple.

Knowing these aspects of life in Palestine helps us understand better the world into which our Savior was born. It also makes us familiar with a number of terms used in the Gospels that have to do with the objects, customs, and attitudes of everyday life and religious life. With these in mind, we can now turn to the stories of Jesus' birth, childhood, and youth.