

Intertestament

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Apochryphal texts

The Apocrypha is the name given to a group of writings found in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox version of the Old Testament. They were included in Protestant ones until the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

In 382 A.D., Jerome was commissioned by the pope to make a new translation of the Scriptures.

He went to Palestine rather than to Alexandria, Egypt, to obtain original copies and discovered fourteen books included in the Alexandrian, or Greek, version of the Old Testament that were missing in the Palestinian version. The question then arose concerning the status of these newly discovered books.

The name Apocrypha, which means "hidden things," was given to these books because of the belief that the men who wrote them were not addressing their contemporaries but were writing for the benefit of future generations; the meaning of these books would be hidden until their interpretation would be disclosed at some future date by persons qualified to do so.

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Deuterocanonical books in the Catholic Bible

Tobit	Discusses Jews who have been faithful to the ritualistic requirements of their religion and have been abundantly rewarded for their good works.
Judith	Tells of a Jewish woman in Jerusalem when the city is besieged by the Assyrians. She is a faithful and courageous woman who invades the camp of the enemy and enables the Jews to achieve a remarkable victory.
Additions to Esther	Includes several prayers to God, perhaps because it was felt that the above-mentioned lack of mention of God was inappropriate in a holy book.
Wisdom of Solomon	Appears to have been written as a reply to the argument given in the Book of Ecclesiastes. In it, the author affirms his belief in Yahweh, whose activities influence the course of Hebrew history. Interestingly, the author believes in a life after death
Sirach (or Ecclesiasticus)	Sometimes been called "The Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach." Ecclesiasticus, which resembles the Book of Proverbs but covers many more topics.
Baruch (including Letter of Jeremiah)	Central themes are Israel's disobedience to God, God exiling Jews to Babylon due to their behavior, God's just action, the need to repent and honor and obey God's Word.
Prayer of Azariah	Additions to the Book of Daniel - a record of the prayer that was offered by a Hebrew who was thrown into a fiery furnace by King Nebuchadnezzar.
Song of the Three Children	Additions to the Book of Daniel - the song of praise that was sung by Hebrews as an expression of gratitude for the marvelous way in which they were delivered from Nebuchadnezzar's furnace.
Story of Susanna	Tells of a woman who has been accused unjustly of the sin of adultery. The wickedness of her accusers and the innocence of the woman are established by the prophet Daniel
Bel and the Dragon	Relates how Daniel was delivered from the hands of his enemies, who were trying to put him to death.
1 Maccabees	Maccabean war from the position of the Sadducees
2 Maccabees	Maccabean war from the position of the Pharisees

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Eastern Orthodox Bibles add the following books	
3 Maccabees	The story of Jewish persecution under Ptolemy IV Philopator (222—205 BC) is told.
4 Maccabees	More philosophical than historical. In it, the idea that pious reason trumps passion is illustrated by the martyrdom of Eleazer and the Maccabean youths under Antiochus IV Epiphanes.
1 Esdras	First Esdras contains the whole of Ezra with the addition of one section; its verses are numbered differently. Just as Ezra begins with the last two verses of 2 Chronicles, 1 Esdras begins with the last two chapters; this suggests that Chronicles and Esdras may have been read as one book at sometime in the past.
Letter of Jeremiah (separate from Baruch)	The Book of Baruch is an addition to the Book of Jeremiah. In some versions, it contains a section called "An Epistle of Jeremiah."
Psalms 151	Written by David after his battle with Goliath
Prayer of Manasseh	Supplements a story recorded in the Book of Chronicles, telling how Manasseh, who had done so many wicked things during his life, repented of his sins before he died.

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The Empires

ASSYRIAN EMPIRE: The Northern 10 tribes were conquered by the Assyrians (722BC). Most of the Northern tribes were scattered throughout the Assyrian empire never to be heard from again in history, but some of the poorest were left behind.

BABYLONIAN EMPIRE: The Babylonian Empire then overtook the Assyrian empire and then conquered the Southern 2 tribes, Judah and Benjamin, and, took the best and brightest of those tribes into captivity. It was at this time that the Israelites, now predominately from the tribe of Judah, were called Jews.

PERSIAN EMPIRE: The Persian empire then overtook the Babylonian empire and allowed the exiled Jews to return. After being settled in for many years, most of the Jews decided to stay in Babylonia but some did return.

Many of the returning Jews intermarried with the Samaritans and others. For the Jews, the Samaritans who had intermarried with the Assyrians were not considered to be Jews.

The temple, now called the second temple, was rebuilt between 586-515BC. The second temple was not built in a grand a fashion as the temple Solomon built. Neither did the Glory of the Lord enter the second temple as it did in the Tabernacle or in Solomon's temple.

In 430BC Nehemiah and Malachi were the last books written for the Hebrew scriptures.

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The Essenes

The origin of the Essenes is somewhat mysterious and were largely unknown until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Essenes were a sect that isolated themselves in the desert and maintained minimal contact with outsiders. They are possibly an offshoot of the “Hasideans,” the pious ones, mentioned in 1 Maccabees. They considered the temple and its practices to be corrupted and then considered themselves to be the ‘chosen ones’ who would be saved at the end times. They lived communally and celibately and had a 3-year probationary process before accepting new members. There are unproven speculations that John the Baptist and Jesus were affiliated with the Essenes.

Although there is no direct evidence of Jesus interacting with the Essenes, the criticisms that Jesus raised against the Pharisees were similar to the criticisms that the Essenes had. Later on, as we examine the practices of the early church, we will also see parallels to the Essenes. Jesus’ followers and the Essenes anticipated an eschatological restoration of Israel, and both groups also believed in the necessity of national purification.

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Gentiles

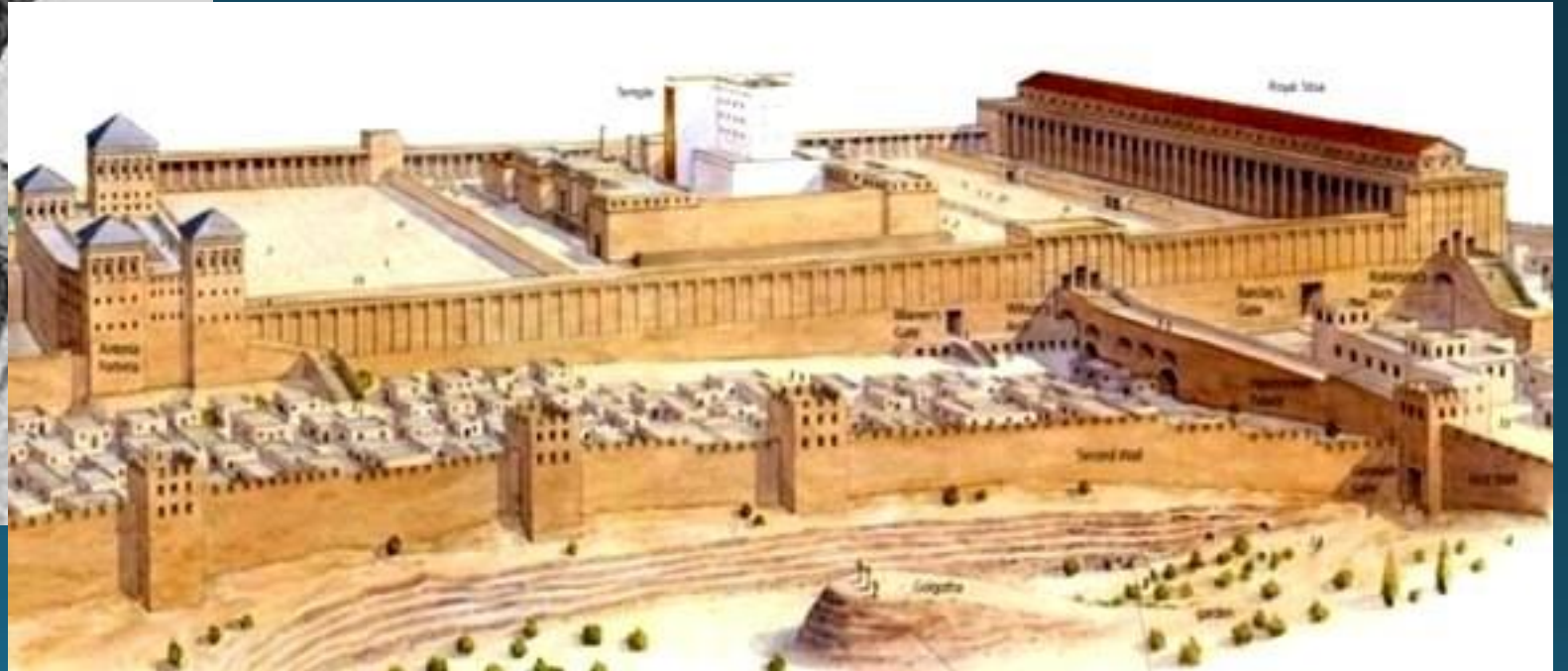
The term refers to anyone who is not Jewish. When we think of Jesus' interactions with the Gentiles, we primarily think of their role during Jesus' trial and execution, but there were a couple of instances of Gentile displaying great faith. Jesus had high praise for the faith of a Roman centurion when the centurion trusted the Jesus to heal his servant while Jesus was still a distance away. In another case, a Canaanite woman persisted in seeking Jesus' healing for her demon oppressed daughter. Even though Jesus' reminded her of his mission to 'the lost sheep of Israel' she still pressed the issue by insisting that even dogs eat the crumbs from the master's table. This was in addition to all

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Herodians

The Herodians were a political party, likely associated with the Sadducees in their support of King Herod. However, they were known to have joined forces with the Pharisees in trying to entrap Jesus.



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Lost Sheep of Israel

In the Old Testament, the term 'lost sheep' initially referred to all of Israel. After the division of the kingdom, the term 'lost sheep' referred to the northern tribes of Israel. In the New Testament, Jesus uses the term, 'lost sheep of Israel,' to distinguish the people to whom his ministry would focus on. When Jesus used the term 'lost sheep of Israel' it is to specify that Jesus only intended, at that time, to serve the Jews in Israel, not to the Gentiles, not to the Samaritans and not to Jews that are in other countries.

Jesus' ministry focused his efforts on the 'lost sheep of Israel.' These people were the ones who knew they needed help, needed rescuing from their situation. They were aware of their need for healing, wholeness and love. They were the sinners, tax-collectors, harlots, and backslidden. They found in Jesus one who loved them and did not reject them when acknowledged their needs.

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Pharisees

The Pharisees developed out of the scribes who were copying the writings of Moses were concerned with how to interpret the law to make applicable to everyday life. The people identified as rabbis came from this group. The Pharisees became more identified with the everyday people as opposed to the Sadducees who were identified with the wealthy ruling class.

It would have been normal for the scribes and Pharisees to question this new teacher, Jesus, and 'test his knowledge to see if knew what he was talking about'. The question would be about whether the intention was to gain understanding or to discredit Jesus.

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Sadducees

The Sadducees were priests who based their legitimacy on their descendance to Zadok, a priest who lived at the time of King David. They were intent on holding onto their power which came through the ministry of the temple. The Sadducees regard only the writings of Moses to be scripture and they interpreted them very literally.

The Sadducees became the prominent group controlling the Sanhedrin notably during the Greek and Roman occupation and became corrupted trying to cooperate with the Greeks .

Because the Sadducees only included the books of Moses in the scripture. In contrast to the poor and needy 'lost sheep of Israel,' the Sadducees were the rich upper class. The Sadducees disappear from history upon the destruction of the temple by the Romans in AD70.

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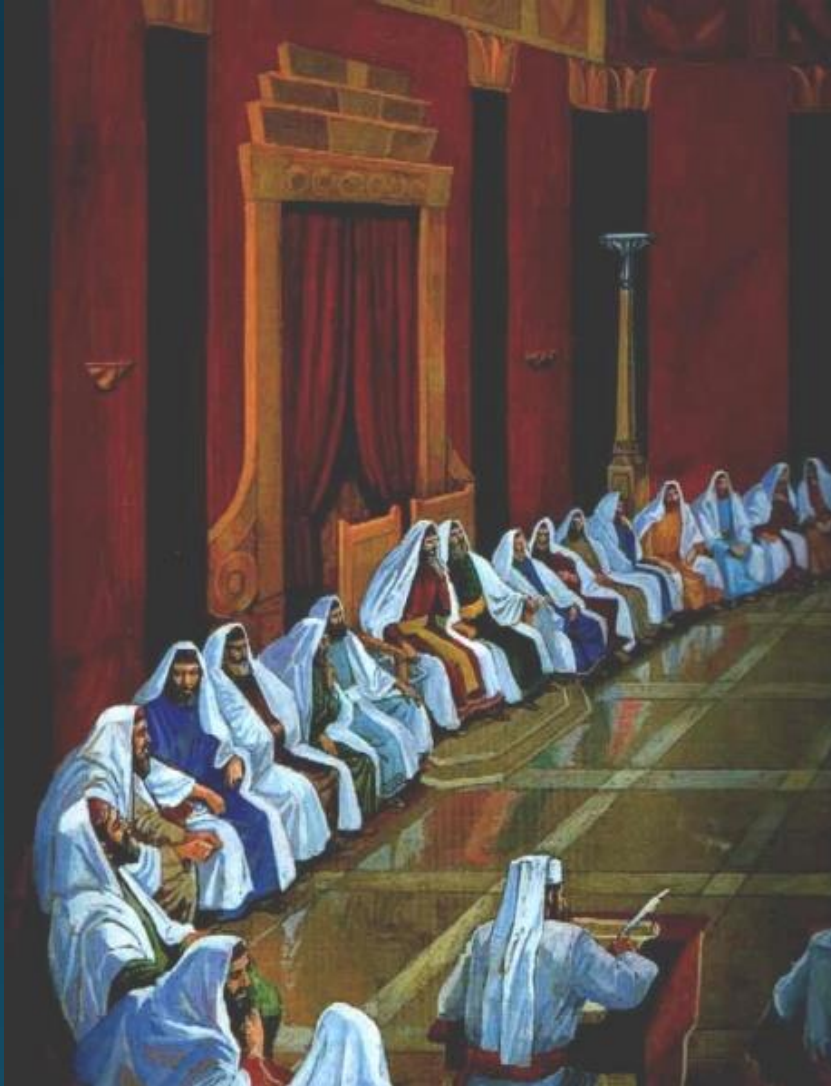


Samaritans

The Samaritans came out of the poor people left behind when the Assyrians took most of the Northern Kingdom into exile and intermarried with foreigners who came in to replace the exiles. Considered to be impure, the Samaritans were rejected as foreigners by the Jews returning from captivity in Babylon. The Samaritans built their own temple on Mount Gerizim near Shechem, the place where the tabernacle was placed after Israel entered the Promised Land. The Samaritans consider only the Torah, the 5 books of Moses, to be scripture, rejecting the writings and prophets that the Pharisees incorporated into their scripture. Samaritans and Jews normally avoided each other as they looked down on each other.

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Sanhedrin



The Sanhedrin served as a religious court for the Jewish nation. The beginnings can be traced to the 70 leaders the Moses selected to help him lead the Israelites. This council eventually developed into Great Sanhedrin who ruled over the all Jews with the Lesser Sanhedrin, councils of 23 judges, who ruled over the individual towns. The last Sanhedrin met in AD358 when it was dissolved by the Byzantine emperor. There have been various attempts to restart it since the 1530's but they have not been successful.

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Scribes



The scribes were trained in writing legal documents, deeds and copying scriptures and, because of their knowledge of scripture, they sometimes acted as interpreters and teachers of the Law. Sometimes they were referred to as lawyers. Although at times they opposed Jesus there were times when they were neutral, or even praised by Jesus.

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Masada a fortress on top of a plateau where the last of the zealots all died resisting the Romans

Zealots

The Zealots were also known as Galileans because of the region in which they were concentrated and, also the founder of the group was Judas the Galilean. The Zealots were a messianic group and would only identify God as king, they would not accept any foreign rulers. Ideologically, the zealots agreed on many points with the Pharisees, except for their refusal to accept foreign rulers. The more militant faction of the Zealots was known as the Sicarii (daggers) because of their use of assassination.

One of Jesus' twelve disciples was identified as Simon the Zealot. As a Zealot, Simon would have been looking for a ruler who would come from God that would displace the Romans. Since Jesus' message was about the Kingdom of God (or Kingdom of Heaven), that would have been attractive to Simon.