

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES CAN BE PROFOUND

- Life lessons learned from traveling abroad
- Values, concerns, world-view shaped by local culture
- People everywhere are NOT the same !
- Culture and language determine how we perceive the world, AND how we communicate it



WORDS

HAVE MEANING

Changing

➤ In the Bible, culture and language affects the meaning of common words and terms

➤ In early OT times, word meaning is static, changes come slowly

➤ After Babylon, lines blur between Jewish and gentile society, word meaning becomes complex

➤ Major split in Jewish Society

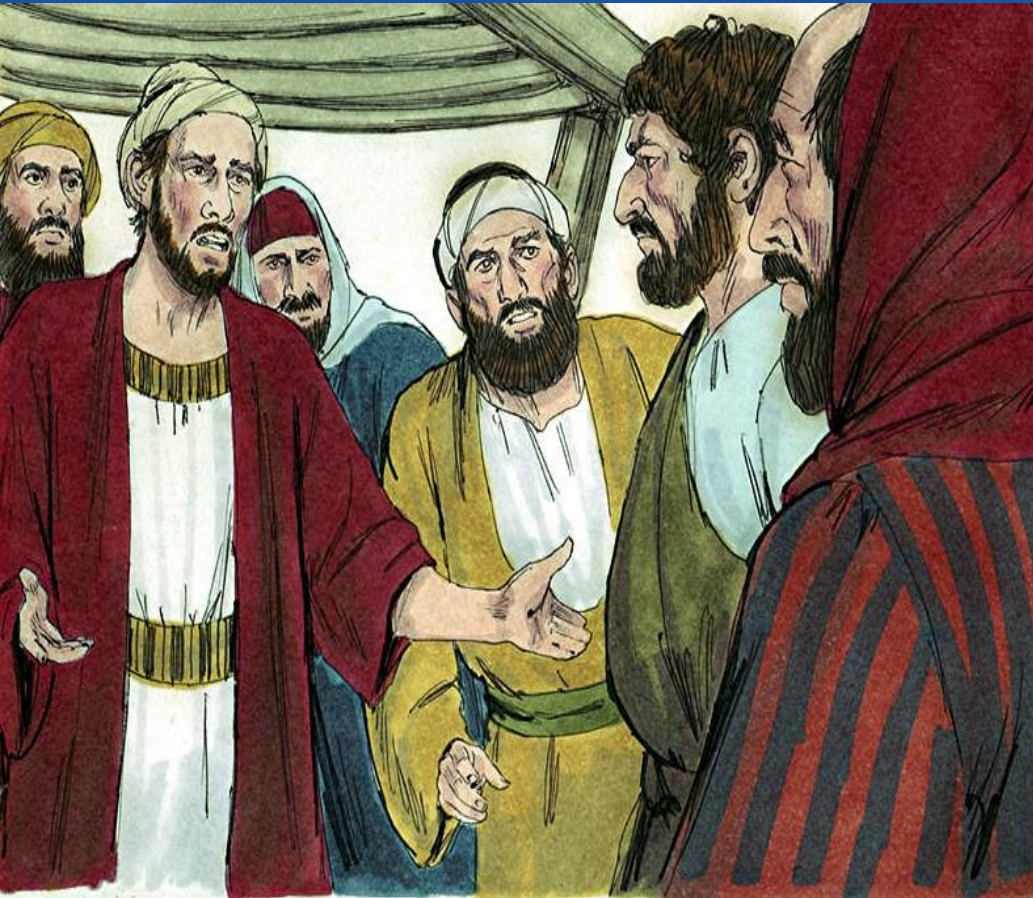
➤ Diaspora Jews vs. Holy Land Jews

➤ At beginning of NT, many Jewish factions, each with different sources of doctrines and religious authority



ACTS

CHAPTER 6



- Setting is Jerusalem, about the time of Peter's flogging
- Growing antagonism between Hellenists and Hebrews over widows
- *Elleniston* = Hellenists
- *Ebraious* = Hebrews
- Hellenist Believers = Diaspora Jews, Greek speaking (Liberal)
- Hebrew Believers = Holy Land Jews, Hebrew and Aramaic speaking (Conservative)

CARING FOR WIDOWS

- Cultural differences among Israeli Jews ends up in distrust and chaos
- Responsibility for care was the religious system and charity
- ***Ketubah*** = marriage contract
- Ketubah states what happens to property if marriage dissolves or wife is widowed
- Widow to be cared for at same level as when husband was alive
- Women cannot inherit property
- Property goes to husband's family
- Property income for widow
- Synagogue oversaw support



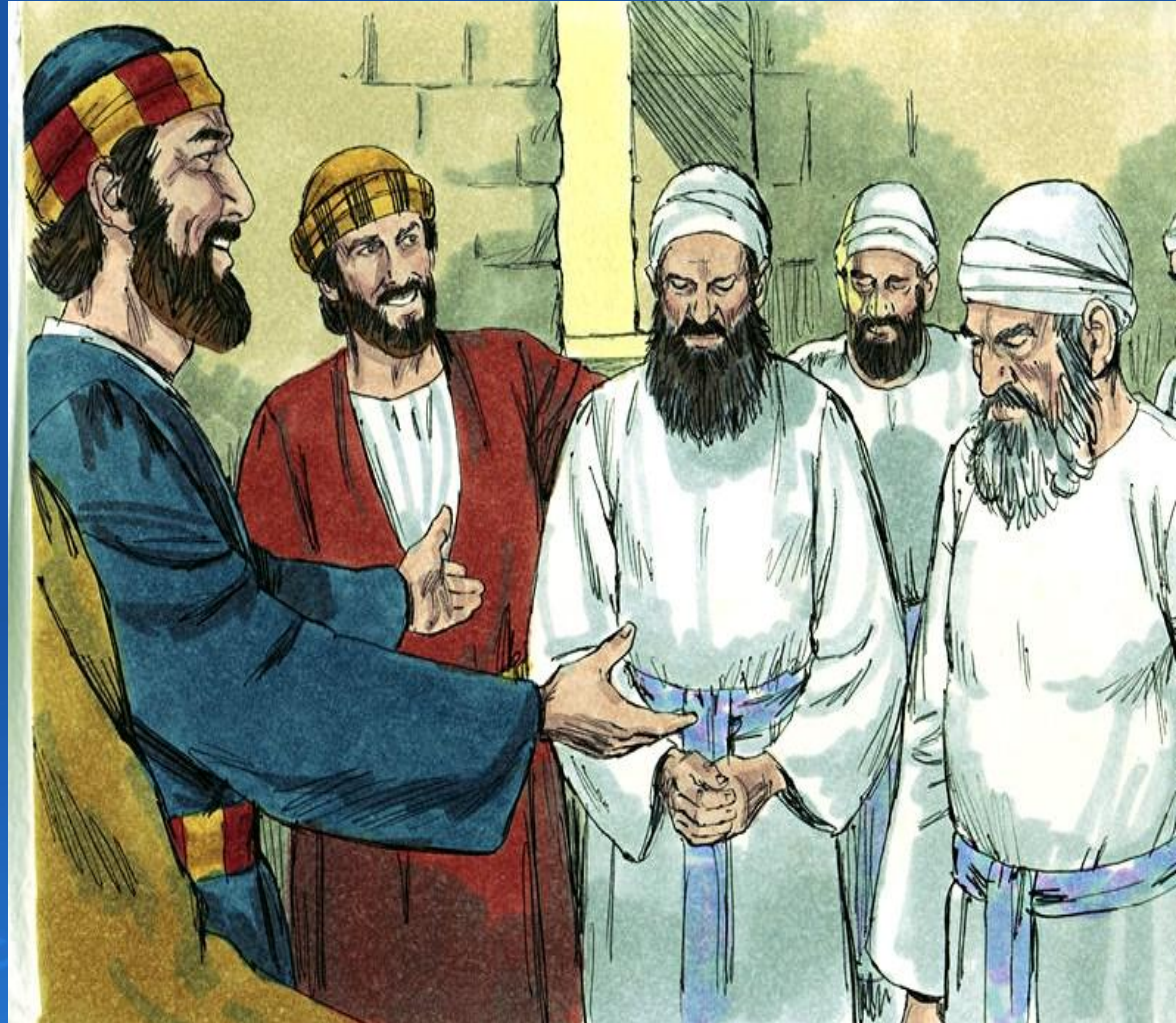
FOOD DISTRIBUTION DELEGATED

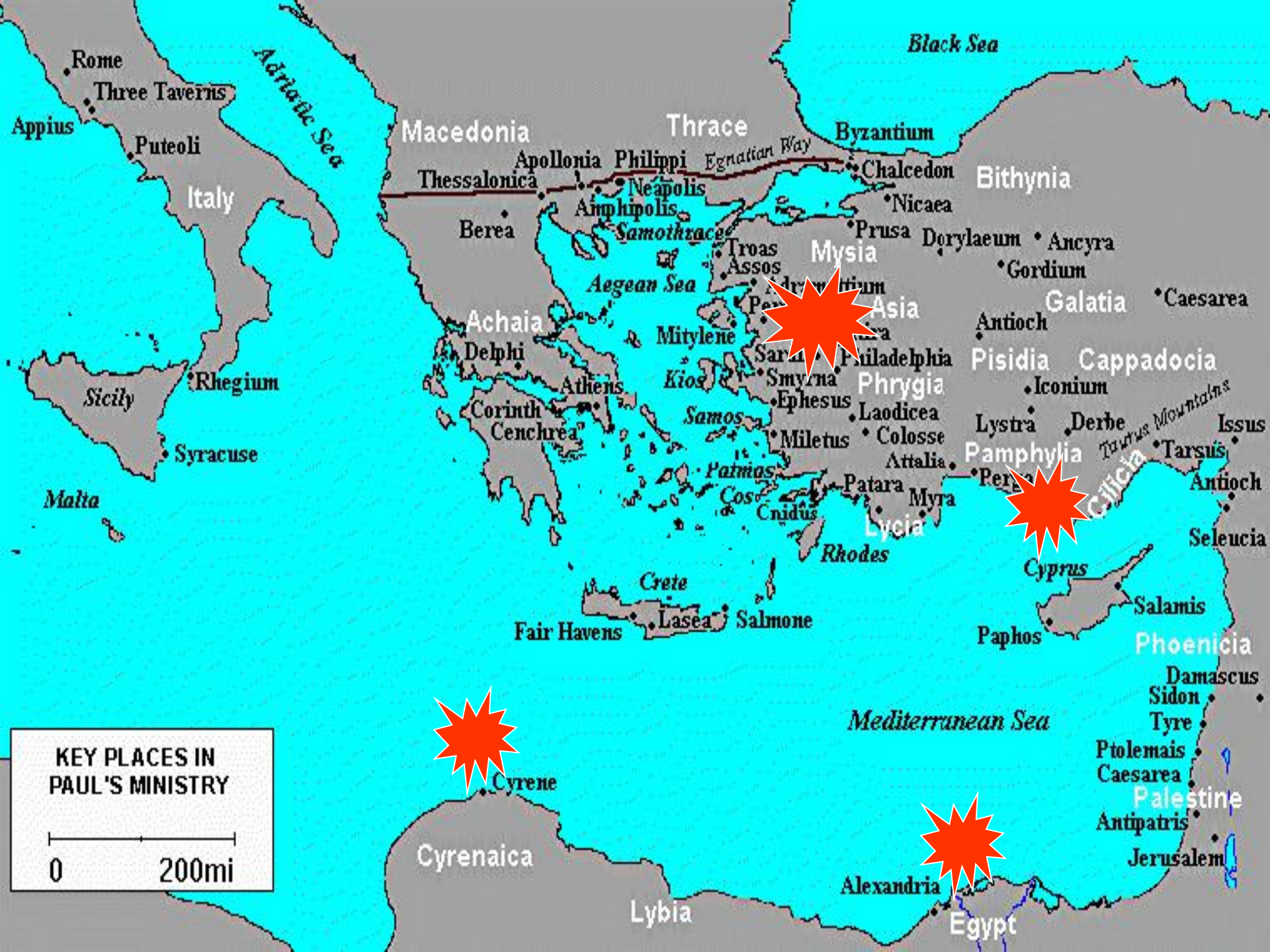


- 12 Disciples agreed that the complaint was legitimate
- “Serve tables” means to oversee food distribution
- 12 Disciples felt that they shouldn’t take time away from studying and teaching God’s Word
- 7 men selected, confirmed by laying on hands (*semichah*)
- All 7 had Greek names; they were the Hellenists
- Stephen was a Hellenist Jew

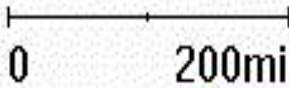
PRIESTS JOIN THE BELIEVERS

- Priests joining caused heartburn for the High Priest
- Priests served for 2 weeks each year
- 24 “courses” of priests worked in rotation
- No doubt priests were ostracized for becoming followers of Yeshua

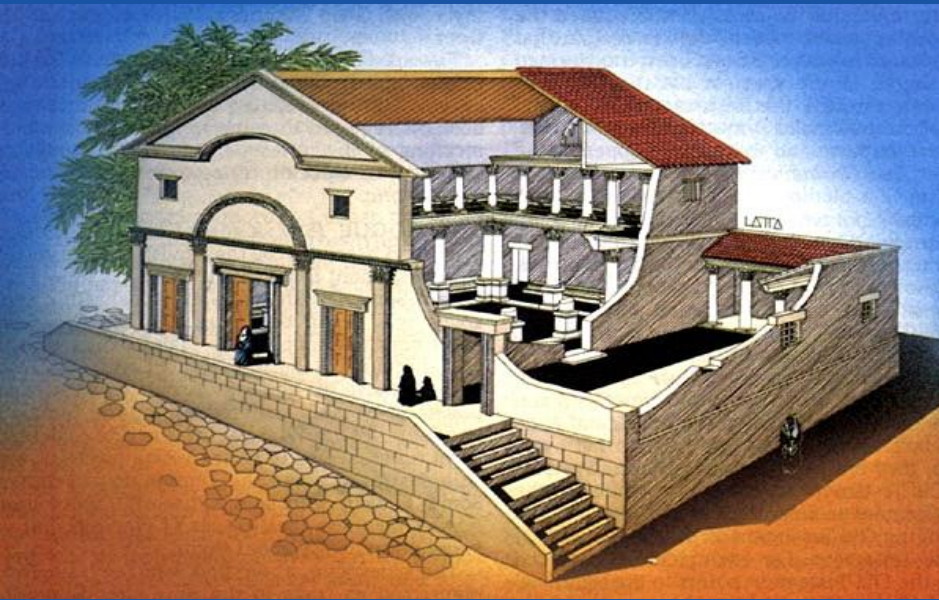




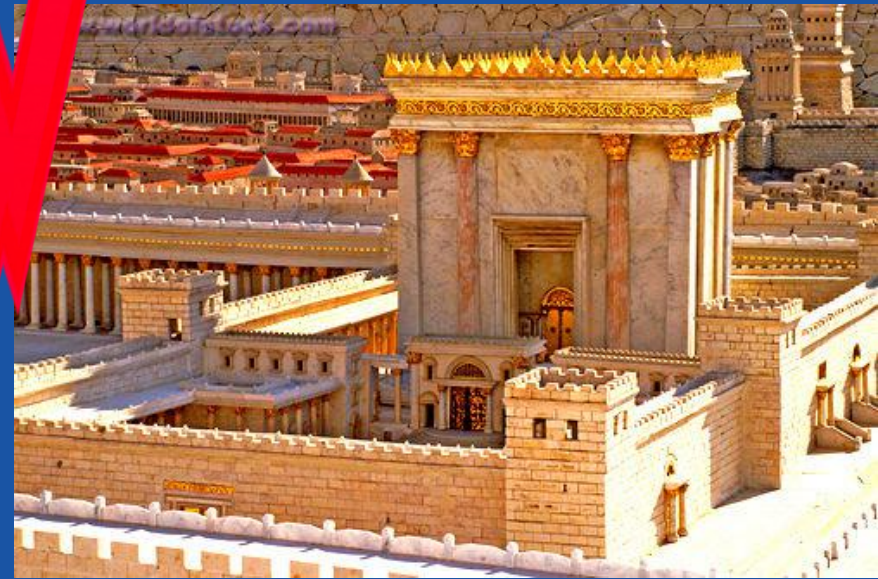
KEY PLACES IN PAUL'S MINISTRY



SYNAGOGUE VS. TEMPLE



All other Jews
Pharisees



Levites and Priests
Sadducees

ESSENES

THE SAMARITANS

- Samaritans the 4th faction after Pharisees, Essenes, and Sadducees
- Claimed the Law of Moses but used their own revised version of the Torah
- Disconnected from the Jerusalem Temple
- Temple at Mt. Gerizim, had their own Priesthood
- Called themselves “Jews” but were mostly of the 10 northern tribes that had mixed with gentiles
- Shunned by Jews of all other factions



BABYLON: REASON FOR THE SYNAGOGUE



- ONE place for worship, ritual and sacrifice ordained by God: The Temple in Jerusalem
- Temple destroyed 587 B.C.
- In Babylon, Jews found alternative ways to meet and worship
- Jews couldn't atone or purify
- Created Traditions to solve the problem
- Cyrus the Persian freed the Jews, but 95% did NOT go home to Judah
- Temple rebuilt, Priesthood re-established, sacrifices restarted by Ezra



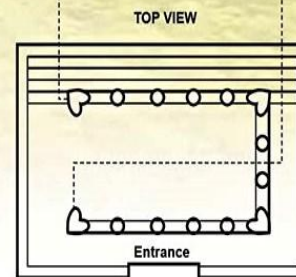
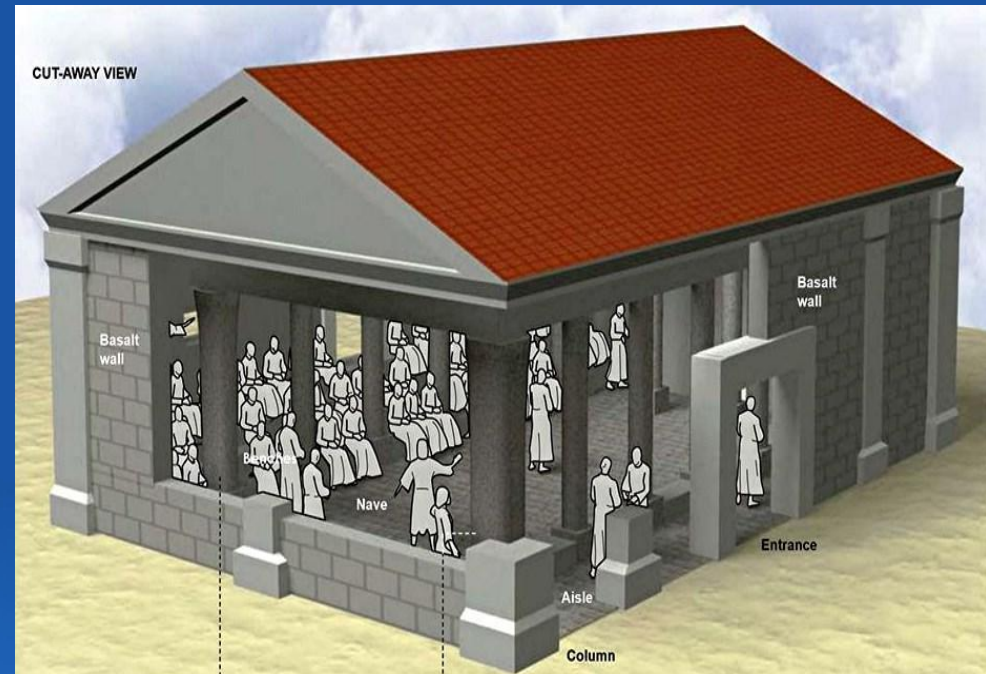
TWO RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS



- Synagogue became a reality for the last couple of generations of returnees to Judah, who grew up in it
- Jewish exiles became comfortable with its ways and wanted to maintain it
- The Diaspora Jews lived far away, much more convenient than traveling to the Temple!
- Jews now had 2 separate religious systems, each with their own authorities

MANY SYNAGOGUES IN THE HOLY LAND

- Synagogue did NOT disavow the Temple, or do sacrifices, or replace the Priesthood
- Synagogue controlled every day behavior, interpreted the Law
- Temple was for sacrifice and ritual
- Jerusalem Talmud says Jerusalem had 480 Synagogues!
- Luke 4:16
- Acts 17:2
- Paul was a product of the Synagogue and thus of Oral Tradition



Heart-shaped columns were constructed at each of the four corners.

The Synagogue at Capernaum

Luke's Gospel says the synagogue in Capernaum was built by the centurion of whom Jesus later said, "I have not found such faith in Israel" (Luke 7:5, 9). It was destroyed and rebuilt in the fourth century.