

SCRIPTURE IN CONTEXT

- What the ancient writers of the Bible meant, is how we are to understand it
- Two main factions of the Jerusalem Believers were the Hellenists and the Hebrews
- **Hellenists** = 1) Mother tongue is Greek. 2) From the Diaspora. 3) Taught by Rabbis in their Synagogues. 4) Used the Greek Septuagint for their Bible. 5) Most would never visit or sacrifice at the Temple.
- **Hebrews** = 1) Native tongue is Hebrew. 2) Born in the Holy Land. 3) Belonged to Synagogue, but had regular contact with the Temple including Festivals and making sacrifices.
- Hellenists and Hebrews both were racial/ethnic Jews

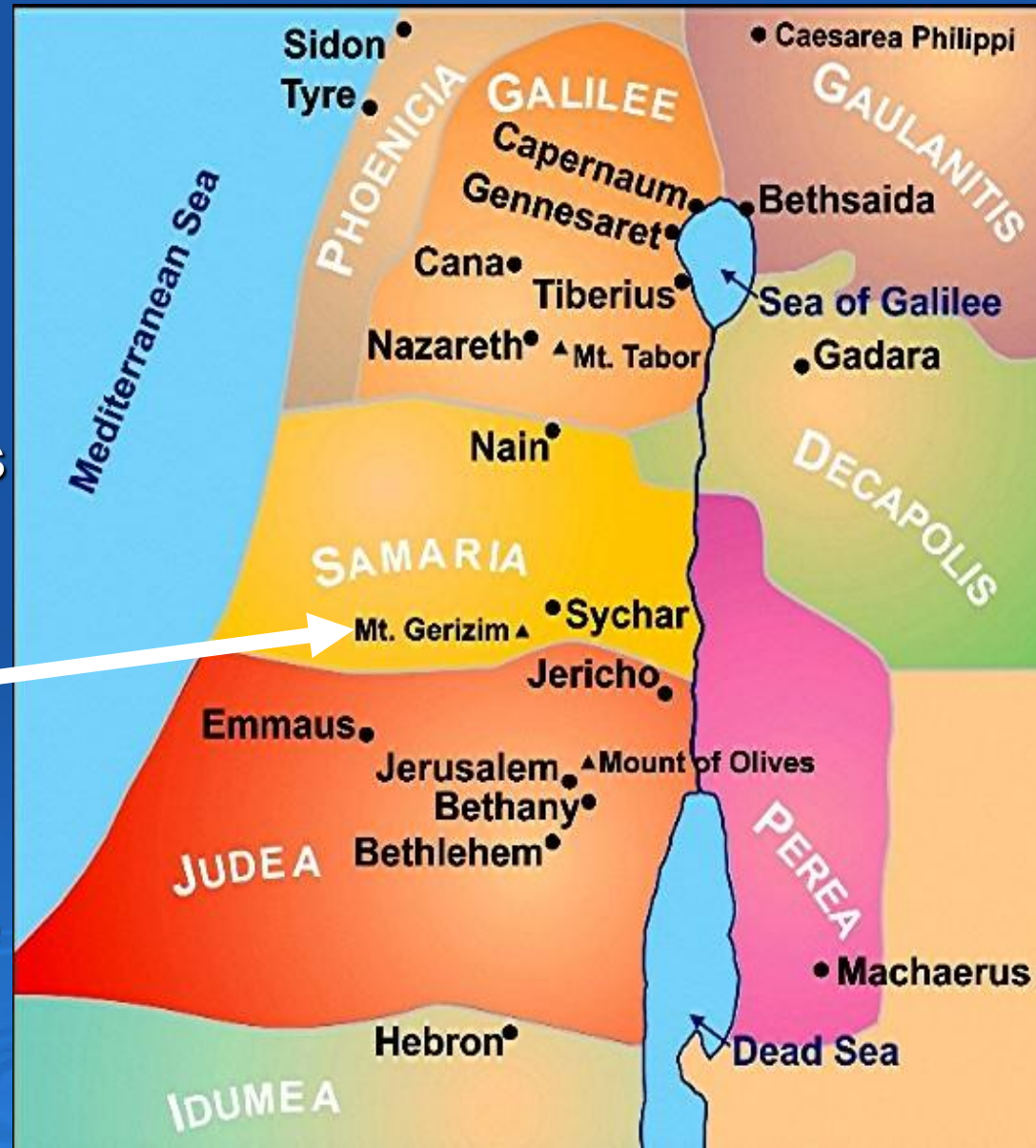
THE PROBLEM OF THE WIDOWS



- Hellenists vs. Hebrews
- Poor widows' only means of support was charity, often through the Synagogue
- 7 men chosen to oversee the widows' care
- All 7 seem to be Hellenists

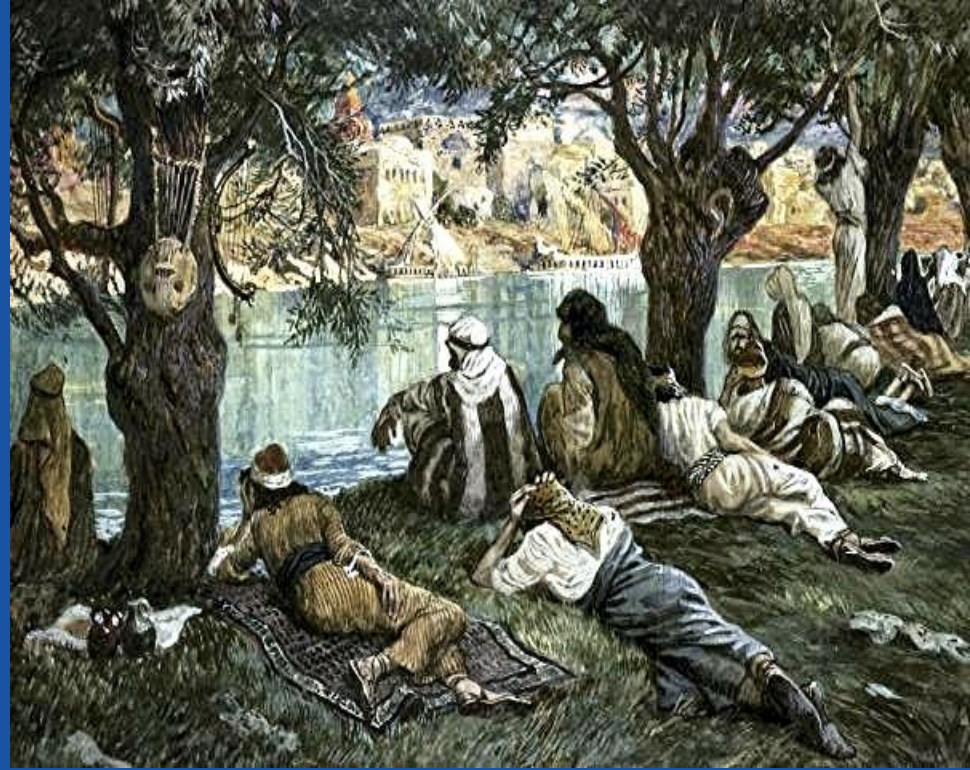
ISSUE WITH THE SAMARITANS

- Best known and socially accepted parties of the Jews were Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes
- Samaritans seen as traitors
- Remnants of 10 lost tribes who married gentiles
- Set up their own Temple and Priesthood at Mt. Gerizim
- No ties with the Synagogue or the Temple in Jerusalem
- Samaritan Pentateuch

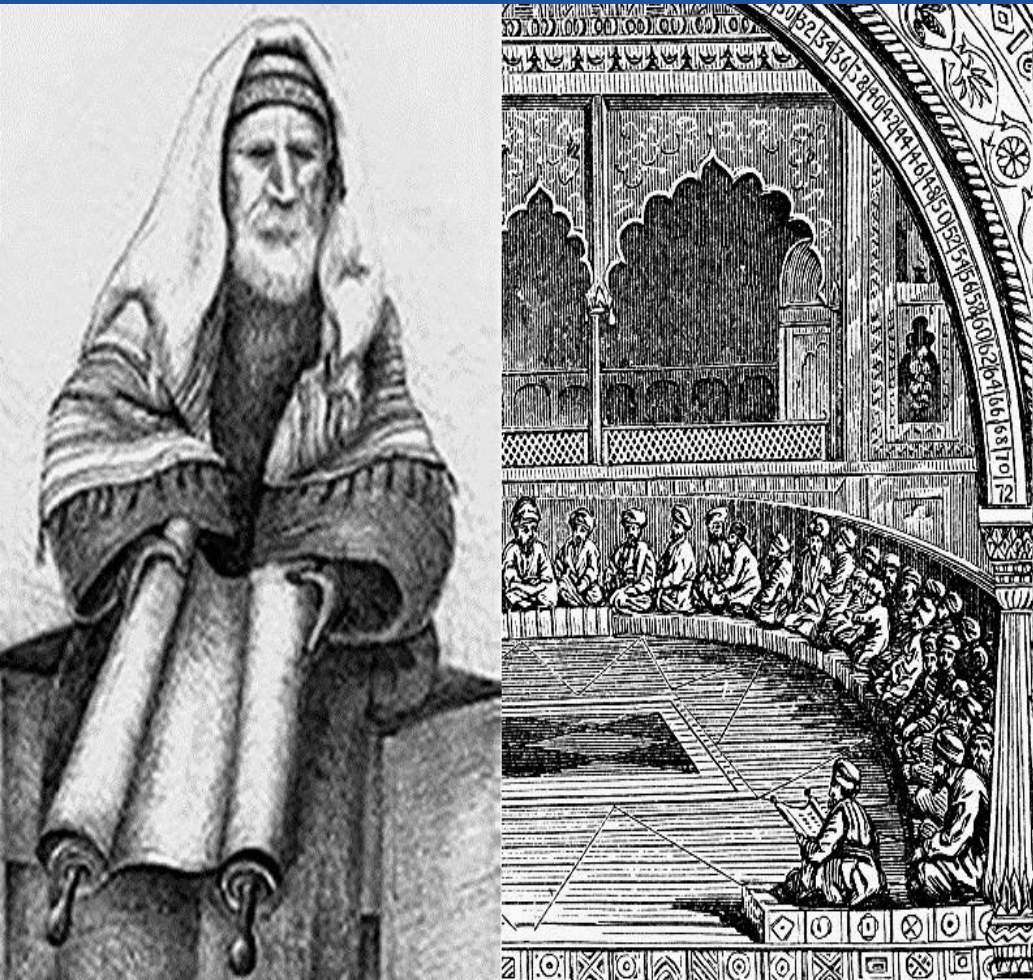


BABYLON: BIRTHPLACE OF JUDAISM AND SYNAGOGUE

- No mention of synagogue in the OT
- Jews to Babylon in early 6th century B.C.
- Synagogue NOT led by priests, but rather laymen
- Born out of necessity, kept Jewish life intact, prevented assimilation



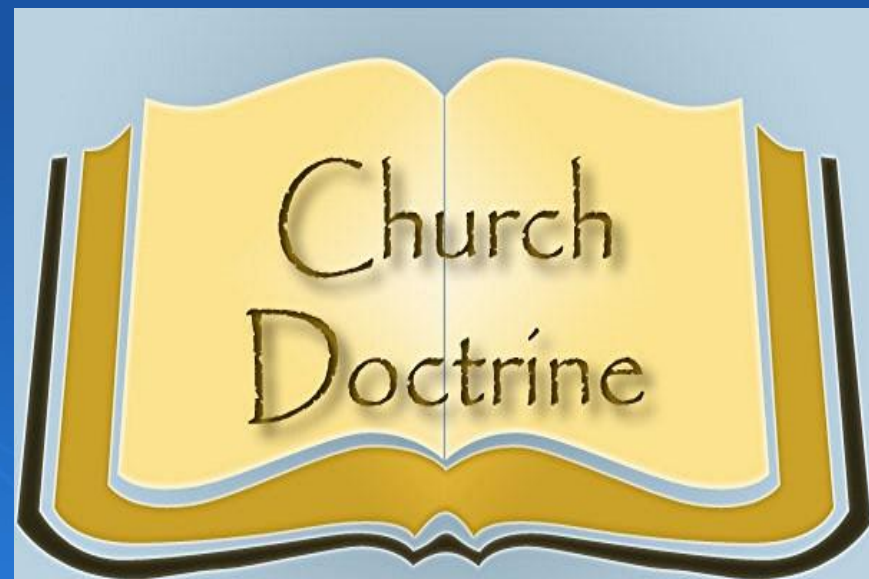
SYNAGOGUE IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES



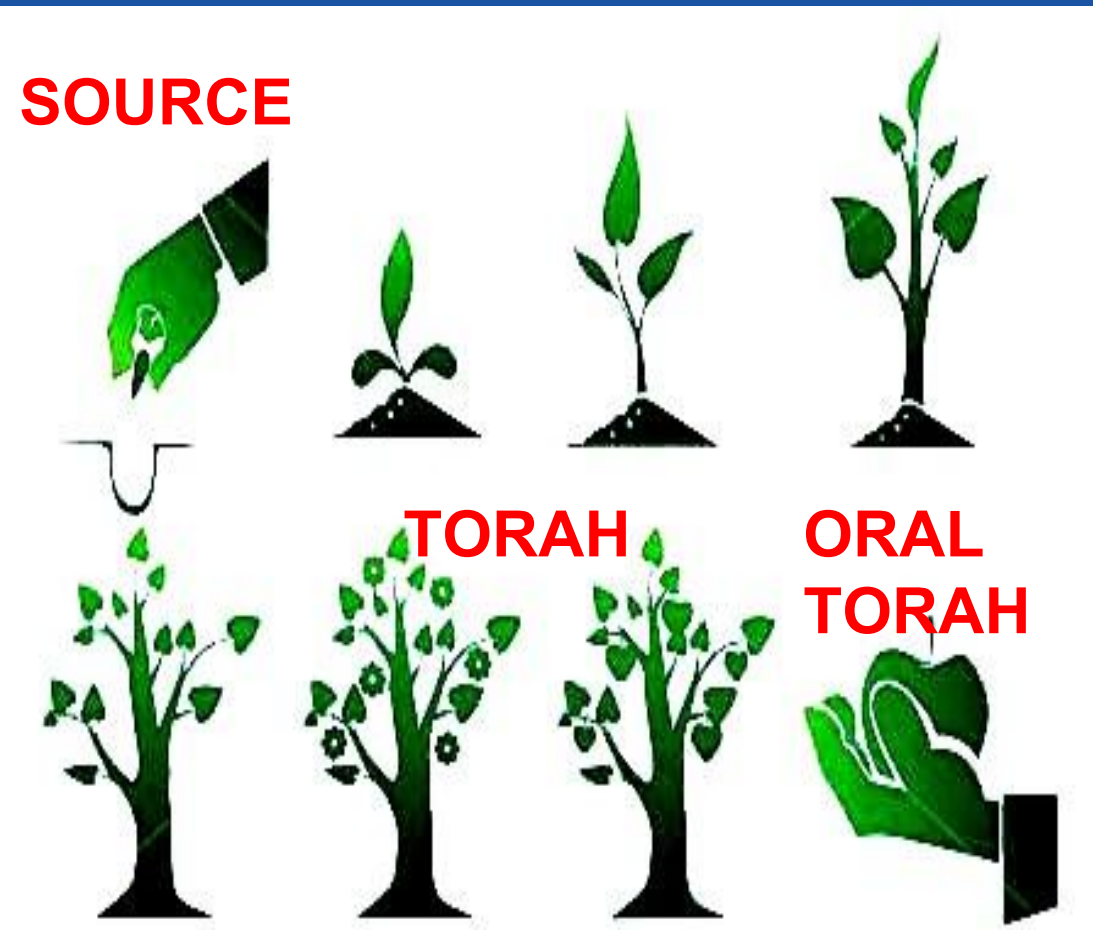
- Even though the Temple was operating, the Synagogue flourished
- Pharisees controlled Synagogues
- Religious schools set up, strictly associated with Synagogues
- Taught Oral Torah (Traditions of the Elders)
- Stood in opposition to the Temple, run by Sadducees who did not accept Oral Torah as valid

TRADITIONS AND DOCTRINES

- Oral Torah = Traditions = interpretations of the Law of Moses
- Christianity = doctrines
- Judaism = Traditions
- Judaism and Christianity see their traditions and doctrines less as interpretation and more or less the same as the Bible
- Saul Kaatz 1923: Oral Torah is “..taken as...the original divinely willed interpretation of (Scriptural) text....”
- Oral Torah is discovery of what was given to Moses at Sinai



JUDAISM AND CHRISTIAN VIEW OF TRADITIONS AND DOCTRINES



- If Torah and Oral Torah come from the same seed, then they must be the same
- Church uses different terms, but has the same view
- This viewpoint is not usually challenged because it represents 2000 years or more of custom

TERMS GET BLURRED

- Law can mean Law of Moses, or a ruling of Oral Torah
- ALL the writers of the New Testament were products of the Synagogue
- Schooled in Tradition, used Synagogue vocabulary
- Yeshua seen as a great Rabbi
- Giving new Oral Torah (Torah interpretations) at the Sermon on the Mount that at times refutes former Oral Torah

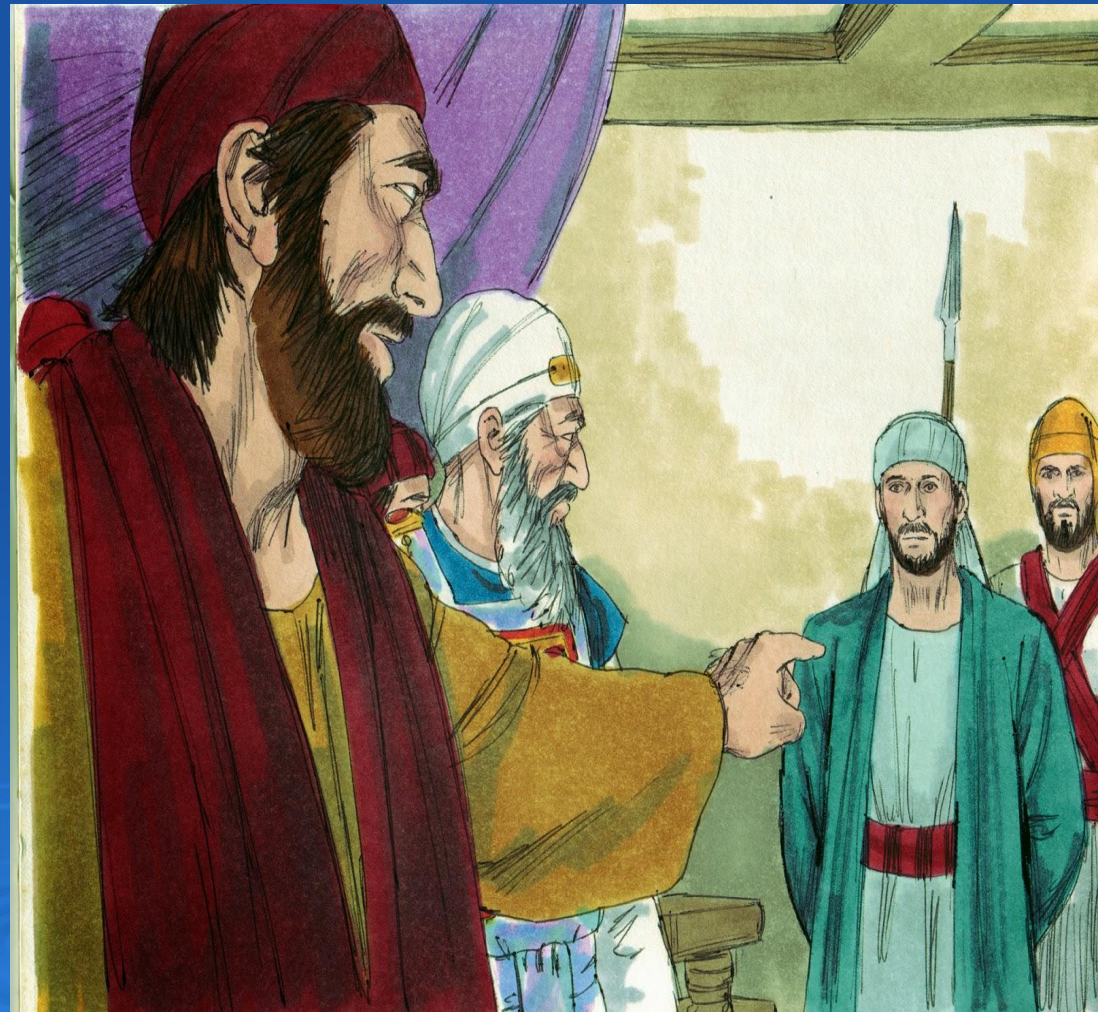
Human Authors of the New Testament

Books	The Apostles	Companions	Jesus' Brothers
Matthew	Matthew		
Mark		John Mark	
Luke		Luke	
John	John		
Acts		Luke	
Romans-to-Philemon	Paul		
Hebrews	-	-	-
James			James
1 & 2 Peter	Peter		
1, 2 & 3 John	John		
Jude			Jude
Revelation	John		



STEPHEN ACCUSED OF BLASPHEMY

- For the 1st time the Synagogue comes against the Believers
- To blaspheme Moses means to go against the Torah
- Blaspheming God meant to utter the Holy Name (YHWH, Yehoveh)
- Tradition that began in the late 300's B.C.
- Bible has God's name 6000 times!
- OT encourages people to call on God's holy name
- ONLY prohibition is found in the Mishnah and the Talmud (Rabbis)





- Matthew 15:1 – 9
- ***“Thus by your Tradition you make null and void the Word of God!”***
- Christ was NOT putting down all Traditions and customs
- He was saying that manmade Traditions and Doctrines are not equal to God’s Word

FALSE WITNESSES



- False witnesses lie and fabricate
- Charge that Yeshua is going to destroy the Temple is silly on its face!
- He was dead, according to their way of thinking
- Stephen accused of changing customs of Moses
- NOT changing the Law of Moses
- Stephen indeed challenging the Tradition taught in the Synagogues

STEPHEN BROUGHT BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

- The Jewish Supreme Court would decide, or condone, Stephen's fate
- This was the legitimate Jewish government
- Stephen's face glowed like an angel
- Exodus 34:29 – 30
- Moses' face also glowed

