



CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE  
DIOCESE OF SALE

# ***Teaching and Learning About Scripture***

## **Diocese of Sale: Religious Life**



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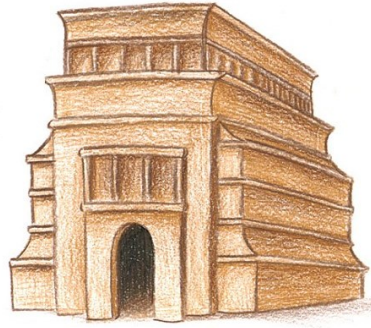


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# The Temple





- The Temple in Jerusalem was the centre of religious life in Judaism in the time of Jesus. It was here that the major festivals were held, it was here that the people offered their sacrifice to God.
- The Temple was destroyed in the year 70 CE so we have no photos of what it was like. However, during their wandering in the desert, the people carried and used a 'portable temple'.
- A exact replica of this construction helps us know what the Jerusalem Temple would have been like. The pictures you will see were taken there. You can visit their website on [www.wildernesstabernacle.com](http://www.wildernesstabernacle.com)



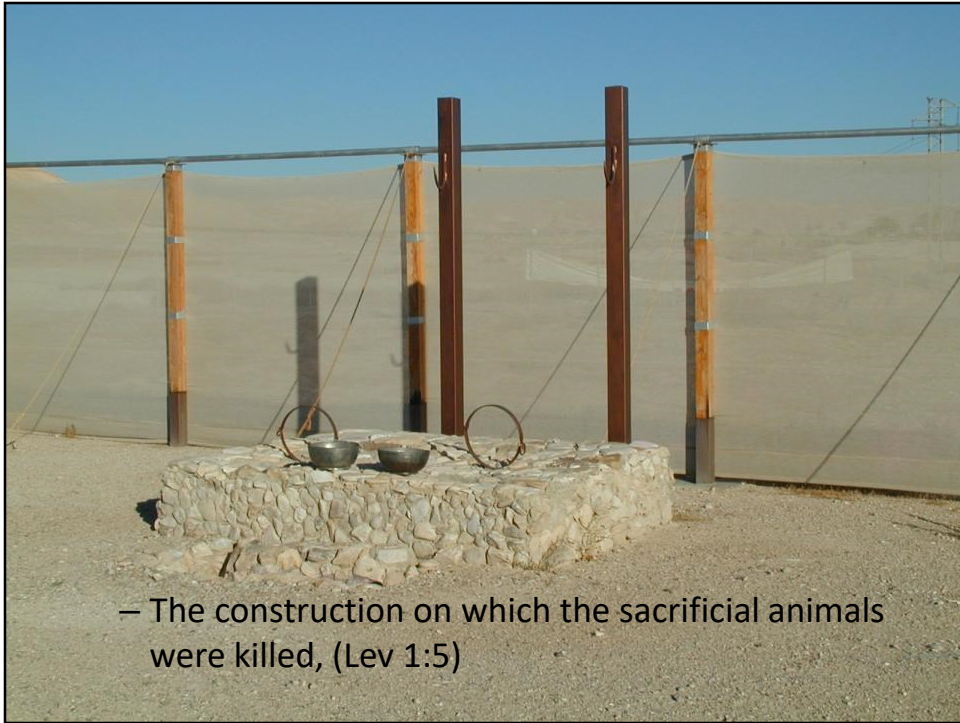
## *Reconstruction of the Ancient Desert Tabernacle*

- The Temple in Jerusalem was built following the same dimensions and layout as the ancient Tent of Meeting.
- The Tabernacle (meaning 'dwelling place') or the Tent of Meeting was a huge construction; the outer boundary walls measured 46 metres x 23 metres.

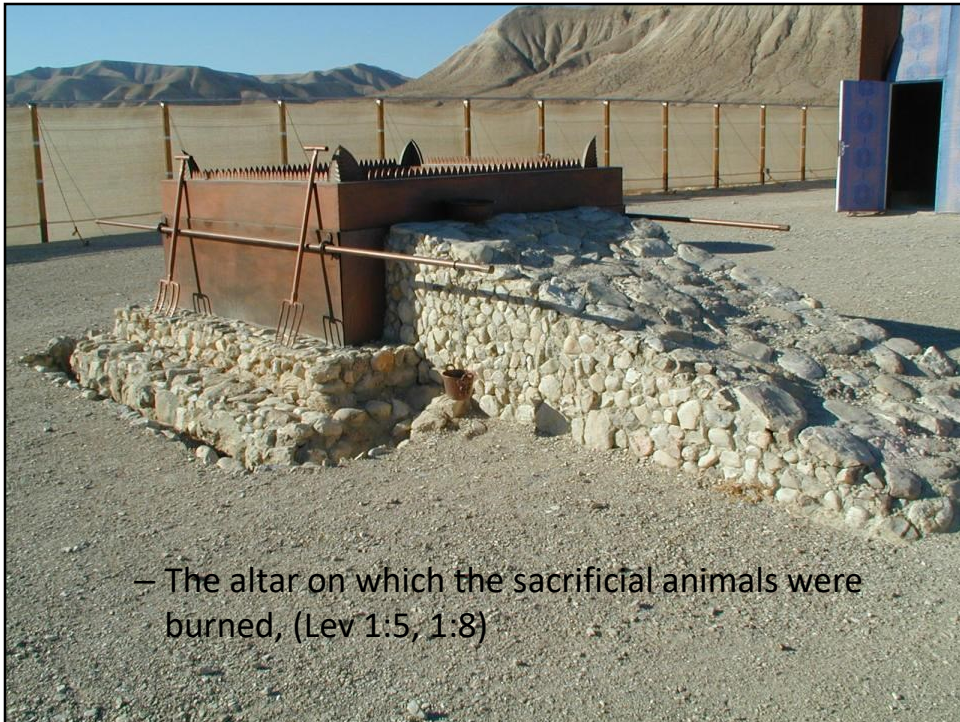




- Inside this large space were a number of items.



– The construction on which the sacrificial animals were killed, (Lev 1:5)



– The altar on which the sacrificial animals were burned, (Lev 1:5, 1:8)

- The laver or basin in which the Priests washed their hands during their rituals (Ex 30:17-21)



- Besides these items used for the sacrifice of animals, a second tent was built inside the outer wall. It measured 13.7 metres x 4.6 metres.
- The Israelites believed God had come to visit them on Mt Sinai, they believed God could visit them again. This inner tent was therefore 'God's tent'.



- The inner tent consisted of two rooms; the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.
- The Holy Place (the first room in the tent) was built according to strict instructions given in Exodus. Even the fabrics used on the front doorway and hanging from the roof had to be exactly as described (Ex 26).





- The Holy Place (the front room) had three items inside it.



– The altar of the bread. This bread was left for God to eat during God's visit to the people. (Ex 25:23 ff)



The menorah (Ex 25:31 ff)



The altar of incense (Ex 30:1-10)

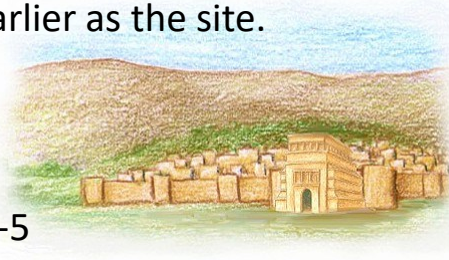


- A second, back, room could be accessed from the Holy Place, and this space was the most holy in the temple. This was the Holy of Holies and could only be entered by the High Priest once a year. The Holy of Holies contained only one item, the most sacred of those possessed by the Israelites: the ark of the covenant which contained the tablets on which Moses inscribed the commandments.





- Once the Israelites had settled in the promised land they began the task of building a permanent Tabernacle or Temple. They chose the piece of land in Jerusalem that they believed Abraham had been going to sacrifice Isaac on generations earlier as the site.
- The account of the wilderness temple coming to Jerusalem is recorded in 1 Kings 8:1-5





- King Herod (Herod the Great) came to power in 37 BCE. He was not a Jew, but wanted to please his subjects and keep them in order.
- Herod decided to rebuild the Temple to a standard never heard of before. He spent 84 years (19 BCE – 64 CE [he had died by then]) and is estimated to have used over 80,000 workers to complete it.
- Herod's Temple was extraordinarily magnificent.



## *Model of Herod's Temple*

- The first thing Herod did was to build a retaining wall around the site which was on a small hill. He filled the space in between the wall and the top of the hill with rock, thus making a large flat area.



- (The building on the model in the next photo is the mosque which is currently there)



- The whole area became known as the Temple Mount.

The model shows the houses which have since been built up so they see the top of the mountain. They have been put there in the last 2000 years and were not there in the time of Jesus when you could walk right round the mount wall.



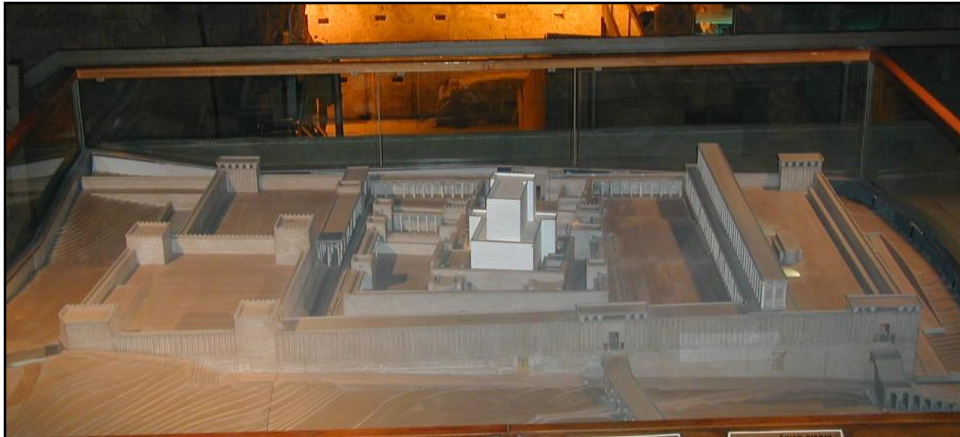


- Then Herod built the actual Temple. The Temple did not cover the whole site, but was a separate building in the middle of it.
- Following the directions in Exodus, the Temple was an exact copy of the Holy Room and the Holy of Holies of the Wilderness Temple – only MUCH grander.





- The next model shows the whole Temple Mount.
- Notice the retaining wall, the stairs onto the site and the Temple itself in the middle.



- The whole Temple Mount. Anyone was welcome on the Temple mount but only Jews could go into the actual Temple. Because he was not a Jew, Herod built himself a long portico (like a huge pergola) which is on the left of the picture.

Jews believed that all people, Gentile and Jew alike, should be able to come onto the Temple Mount and worship God. It may have been this belief which Jesus felt had been abandoned by the religious authorities in their letting of the selling of animals and the changing of money on the mount itself during Passover. Covered in animals and stalls, the people would have been prevented from coming to God to worship. See the words Jesus says: 'My house shall be a house of prayer.' Luke 19:46

- The actual Temple.  
The front section  
was the courtyard  
for the women. Men  
alone were allowed  
into the back  
section where the  
altar was.



- Only Priests and High Priests could go into the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.





- There are a number of web sites which show models of Herod's Temple. Here are some of them:
  - <http://www.ebibleteacher.com/imagehtml/jerusalem.html> (This one is very good)
  - <http://www.inisrael.com/holyland/model.html>



- Herod's Temple was destroyed in 70 CE when the Jews revolted against the Romans who ruled the land. The Roman's retaliated by destroying their most precious possession, their Temple.



- All that remains now in Jerusalem is the Temple Mount; a flattened mountain about 20 acres (4-5 times the size of the school grounds.)
- The gold roofed building in the middle of the Temple Mount is a Islamic Mosque. It has been built where the Temple was sited.



- Jews were required to visit the Temple for Religious festivals.
  - The Feast of Pentecost (a major feast)
  - The Feast of Tabernacles (a major feast)
  - The Day of Atonement
  - The New Moon
  - The Feast of First Fruits
  - The Feast of Trumpets
  - The Feast of Passover (a major feast)



- During these festivals they would offer sacrifice and be involved in the prayers and rituals that were required.
- These would be led by Temple Officials: Priests, High Priests and Levites.



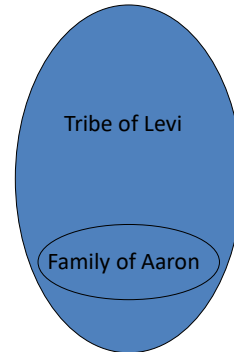
# **Temple Officials:**

## **Priest**



## Priest

- Priest
  - Priests were among a very select and esteemed group of people in Israelite community. Not everyone could become a priest. Only those from the family of Aaron, (the brother of Moses and Miriam) who was part of the tribe of Levi (one of the tribes who came out of Egypt in the Exodus) could become priests.



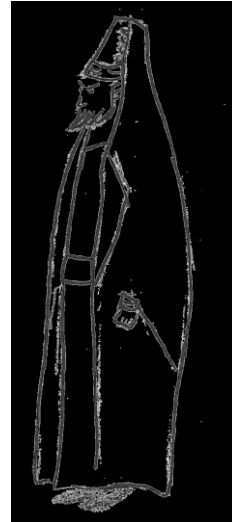
Twelve tribes came out of Egypt at the time of the Exodus. (Jacob [whose name changed to Israel] had 12 sons, each of who became a tribe of Israel. When they came to Palestine, eleven tribes were given land: Levi's tribe were not – they were dedicated to Temple service. Aaron (Brother of Moses and Miriam) was part of the tribe of Levi – only his direct descendants could become Priests.

During the time of Solomon's and Herod's Temples priests were clustered together into 24 groups of between 7-9 priests. Each Sabbath (Friday night to Saturday night) they changed duty. During festivals, all 24 groups would be present at the Temple.



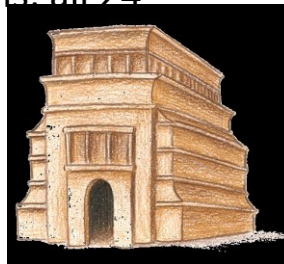
- Priest

- The priest's duties were valued by the people. Their role was set apart from the everyday – it involved daily and festive worship of God. Priests did what 'ordinary people' could not do: they offered the daily sacrifices of animals in the Temple and blessed the people in a ceremony known as the raising of the hands.





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- Purity rules for priests

- As they were responsible for offering prayers and sacrifices to God in the Temple, priests were bound by strict purity laws. (Lev 21)
- They could not have any physical blemish (be blind or lame) or break other rules (such as eating unclean food). Also, they could not come into contact with any dead people, except for members of their immediate family.
- Observation of these purity regulations showed great devotion to God and to the work being undertaken – it kept the 'holy men' clean for their holy work.

See Leviticus 21 for purity regulations.



# **Temple Officials:**

## **High Priest**



- During the time of Jesus the High Priest was a man named Caiaphas. As High Priest and chief religious authority in the land, Caiaphas had many important responsibilities. He was responsible for the Tabernacle, its daily offerings and functions and also its regular feasts.
- On the Day of Atonement it was the High Priest's responsibility to take the blood of the sacrificed goat into the Holy of Holies where the ark of the covenant was kept and offer it to Yahweh on behalf of all God's people, for forgiveness of their sins.



- The High Priest also had to control the Temple treasury (the collection of money given by Jews), to manage the Temple police and other personnel, and perform religious rituals.



- Another important duty was to serve as the president of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish council and law court that considered the cases of Jews who broke Jewish law – including Jesus. The Sanhedrin are the 'council' referred to in the trial of Jesus.





- However, as well as serving as a religious figure, the high priest had another, more controversial function in first-century Jerusalem: he had to be a sort of liason or go-between between the Roman authority and the Jewish population.
- High Priests were appointed by the Romans and during the time of Herod the Great, the Romans expected the High Priest to keep the Jewish population under control and in line.



- Although little is known of Caiaphas, historians think that his long reign as High Priest (from 18 CE to 36 CE) must have meant that he worked well with the Roman authorities otherwise he would have been replaced.
- For ten years, Caiaphas served with Pontius Pilate and the two are believed to have had a close relationship.





- The Book of Exodus (Ch 39:1-31) gives us a very clear indication of what the High Priest was to wear. He wore four garments.
- The first garment was a long white robe or tunic. It had long sleeves and was full length – meaning it went to the floor. It was made of linen.
- He also wore a turban, made of linen also. It had a long purple sash over and around it. The turban had a gold rosette or ring on the front of it which said "HOLY TO THE LORD".



- The third garment was an ephod (sleeveless split tunic) made of gold, blue, purple and crimson yarns. Gold leaf was beaten into thread and woven into the fabric. The ephod had shoulder pieces with stones attached, engraved with the names of the Israelites on them. The robe was sleeves less and had bells and pomegranates sewn at the bottom of it.
- [www.prophecysigns.com/images/high\\_priest.jpg](http://www.prophecysigns.com/images/high_priest.jpg)



- Finally, the fourth garment was a breastplate set with four rows of three stones worn over the apron. The individual stones to be used are listed in Ex 39:10



- [www.prophecysigns.com/images/high\\_priest.jpg](http://www.prophecysigns.com/images/high_priest.jpg)



# Temple Officials:

## Levite



- Levite

- Levites were also members of the tribe of Levi but they were not from the specific family of Aaron.
- They were, therefore, also dedicated to service in the Temple but not as priests.
- Levites looked after the music and songs used during Temple offerings. They also assisted with maintenance duties: guarding the Temple, repairing and cleaning it as well as helping the Priests wash their hands and feet before services.



- While the Israelites were wandering in the desert, the Levites were responsible for packing up and re-assembling the Tent of Meeting ( the portable Temple).





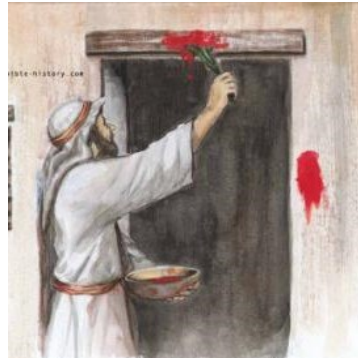
# Temple Festivals:

## Passover



- **Passover**

- One of the three festivals which required the Jews to journey to the Temple in Jerusalem.
- The feast remembered the exodus from Egypt, in particular the 'passing over' of the angel of death on the Hebrews houses (Ex 12:13)





- The family or a group of men would choose the sacrificial lamb and bring it to the Temple to be slaughtered. It had to be a perfect lamb, with no blemishes.



- The priest would slaughter the lamb and give the people bitter herbs and unleavened bread to eat. After evening prayers, meat would be taken from the cooked lamb. The people would be ready: loins girded, sandals on, staves in hand. They would eat... in haste...and anything found next morning would be burned.



# Temple Festivals:

## Shavuot



- Pentecost is a Jewish religious festival, in Hebrew it is called Shavuot.
- The festival was held at the Temple in Jerusalem and people travelled from their homes to be at the Temple for the ceremonies.



Pentecost (sometimes called the Festival of the Weeks) was and is a Jewish festival celebrated 49 days after the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the Passover week (50 days) after Passover begins (hence 'pent' – meaning 5). Shavuot is a festival of freedom from religious bondage: at Passover the Israelites celebrate their freedom from physical slavery through the Exodus, at Pentecost they celebrate their freedom from worshipping false gods and idols (eg money) through the given of the Torah.



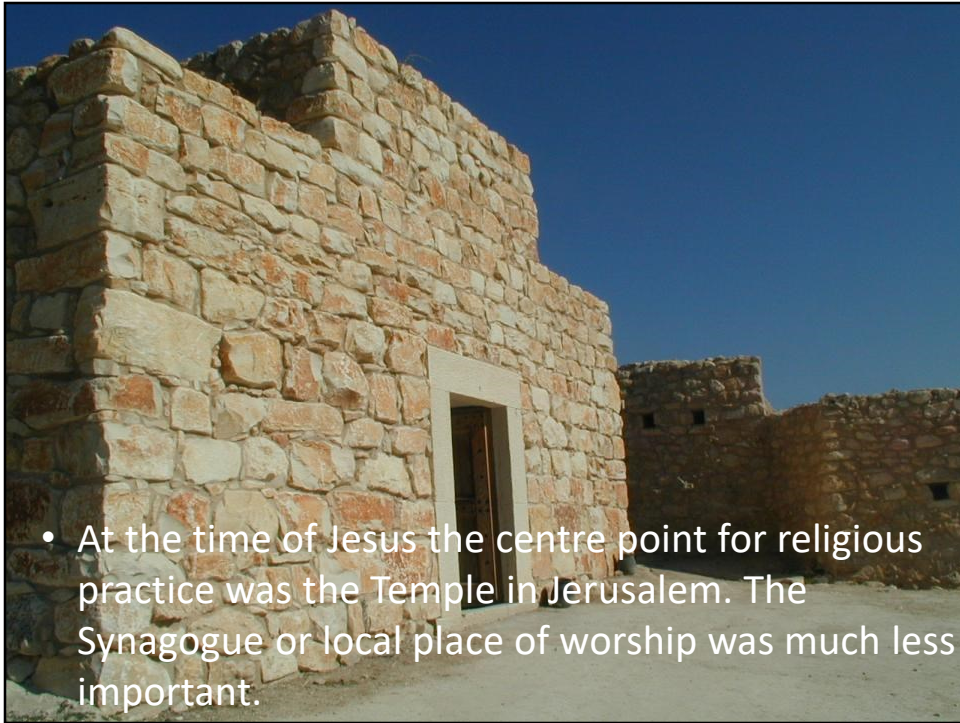
- Shavuot celebrated two great gifts from God: the gift of food gathered in the harvest and the gift of the Torah given to Moses at Mt Sinai.
- In the time of Jesus Jews brought some of the first fruits of the crop to the Temple as an offering.



Pentecost is still celebrated today in the homes of Jewish people. Jews emphasise that Pentecost/Shavuot remembers the giving of the Torah, not the receiving of it as the wisdom and riches the Torah holds are still being received today.



# Synagogue



- At the time of Jesus the centre point for religious practice was the Temple in Jerusalem. The Synagogue or local place of worship was much less important.

This synagogue is a replica of a 1<sup>st</sup> century one. It is built in Nazareth Village, Nazareth. The Village is a working museum, set up to replicate a village that Jesus might have known. Other images are available on their website.





- However, faithful, observant Jews went to the Synagogue to pray during the week, and every Sabbath (Friday night to Saturday night) Sabbath day services were held in the synagogue.





- The synagogue service revolved around readings from the Jewish Scripture.
- The first reading came from the Torah (first five books of our Bible) and then another reading from the Prophets was read.
- The Psalms were then prayed or sung together.



- Synagogues also acted as a hall, at times being a local library, school or place for studying Scripture.

The Liturgy of the Word in the Mass includes readings very similar to those used in the synagogue service.



# Synagogue Officials: Pharisees





- The Pharisees (a word which means 'separate ones') were responsible for the local synagogues.





Pharisees believed that the Israelites were a kingdom of priests and that they should observe purity regulations at all times.

They often washed frequently to cleanse themselves from direct or indirect contact with unclean people and things.





- Pharisees were interpreters of the law and while most Pharisees took into consideration the circumstances of the situation, some stressed strict observance of the law and neglected the spirit behind it.
- Pharisees believed in angels and spirits and that after death each person would be judged and rewarded or punished accordingly.





- In some gospels the Pharisees appear to be rigid and unfeeling, in others they seem to be open to the teaching of Jesus. This probably reflects the reality of the day as well as each authors' perception of the Pharisees.

We should not think that every Pharisee hated Jesus or was out to get him! Jesus probably learned a great deal from the Pharisees of his day.





# Synagogue Officials: Scribes or Lawyers





- Scribes were professional copyists and teachers of the Law. Their writing was, therefore, beautiful.
- Most scribes were or had been Pharisees who had undertaken a period of study or 'apprenticeship' with another Scribe. Because of their training, they were also called lawyers. When you spoke to them you addressed them as 'Rabbi' or 'Master'.
- The writer of the Gospel of Matthew is thought to have been a scribe.