

The Old Testament: Our Call to Faith and Justice

Chapter 10 Vocabulary

Dead Sea Scrolls Ancient scrolls containing the oldest known manuscripts of the books of the Old Testament in Hebrew. They were discovered in caves near Qumran on the Dead Sea between 1947 and 1956.

Essenes A group of Jews whose resistance to foreign influence took them to the extreme position of living in entirely separate communities in the desert around the Dead Sea beginning in the second century BC. It is probable that they were the ones who hid the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were not discovered until the middle of the twentieth century.

Hasideans A Hebrew word meaning “loyal ones.” It refers to a group of Jews who supported the Maccabees in their military effort against Antiochus IV. They also were probably the core members of the later group known as the Essenes.

Hasmonean Dynasty Descendants of the Maccabees who ruled in Judea from after the ousting of the last of the Syrians in 141 BC until the establishment of Roman authority in 63 BC. John Hyrcanus, the first ruler in this dynasty, ruled until 104 BC.

Koine The common Greek language introduced in Palestine by Alexander the Great in 333 BC. It is the language of the Septuagint and remained the common language of Palestine until Latin replaced it in AD 500.

Pharisees A group of Jews whose response to foreign rule was cultural and religious separatism. They valued adherence to the Law and exhibited great respect for teachers and interpreters of the Torah. They were responsible for the introduction of rabbis and synagogues into the cultural life of the Jews.

Ptolemies The dynasty descending from Ptolemy I, a general under Alexander the Great, that ruled Egypt and Palestine from 320 to 200 BC, when they lost control of the land to the Syrian Empire.

rabbi The local leader of a community's synagogue, respected for his piety and knowledge of the Law. This position came into being with the establishment of the synagogues by the Pharisees.

Sadducees Originally an aristocratic group of wealthy Jews in Jerusalem who favored strict adherence to the letter of the Torah and regarded Temple worship as essential to Jewish life. They denied such doctrines as the resurrection and the existence of angels because those subjects cannot be found in the Torah.

synagogue A meeting place for study and prayer introduced by the Pharisees to foster study of the Law and adherence to the Covenant Code.

Talmud A collection of rabbinical teachings compiled after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in AD 70.

Zealots A Jewish sect, active during New Testament times, who favored military resistance to Roman authority. Their belief in the coming of the Messiah was strongly linked to their desire for Jewish independence.

Zoroastrianism The official religion of the Persian Empire that understood the universe to be caught in a constant struggle between light and darkness. Jewish belief in angels and in Satan's influence can be traced to the influence of this foreign religion.

