

TH  
G 378

THE CONTRIBUTION  
OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS  
TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL  
TEXTBOOKS OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

By

MERRILL T. GILBERTSON

B.A., University of Wisconsin

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
in  
The Biblical Seminary in New York

New York, New York  
April, 1956

18585

**BIBLICAL SCHOOL OF  
THEOLOGY LIBRARY**  
HATFIELD, PA.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	V
A. Statement of Problem . . . . .	V
B. The Subject Delimited . . . . .	X
C. Source of Data . . . . .	X
D. Basis for Selection . . . . .	X
E. Method of Procedure . . . . .	XI
 I. SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS INVOLVED IN THE BIBLICAL CONTENT OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEXT BOOKS OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH	
A. Introduction . . . . .	1
B. Grade One . . . . .	2
C. Grade Two . . . . .	6
D. Grade Three . . . . .	7
E. Grade Four . . . . .	12
F. Grade Five . . . . .	16
G. Grade Six . . . . .	20
H. Grade Seven . . . . .	20
I. Grade Eight . . . . .	23
J. Summary . . . . .	24
 II. THE PALESTINIAN FAMILY	
A. Introduction . . . . .	26
B. The Homes and Their Furnishings . . . . .	28
1. The House of Hair . . . . .	28
2. The Furnishings of the House of Hair . . . . .	31
3. The House of Brick and Stone . . . . .	32
4. The Floors . . . . .	34
5. The Roofs . . . . .	35
6. The Outside Stairs . . . . .	36
7. The Upper Chamber . . . . .	37
8. The Windows . . . . .	38
9. The Doors . . . . .	38
10. The Furnishings of the House of Brick and Stone . . . . .	39
11. The Lamp . . . . .	40

Gift of Author

36198

May 1956

Chapter	Page
C. The Foods . . . . .	42
1. Milk . . . . .	42
2. Meat . . . . .	43
3. Agricultural Foods . . . . .	44
4. Bread . . . . .	45
5. Manna . . . . .	49
6. Water . . . . .	50
7. Oil . . . . .	51
D. The Clothing . . . . .	52
1. The Tunic . . . . .	52
2. The Coat . . . . .	52
3. The Cloak . . . . .	53
4. The Girdle . . . . .	54
5. The Sandals . . . . .	55
6. The Turban . . . . .	56
7. The Dress of the Women . . . . .	57
8. Ornementation . . . . .	57
9. Eye Paint . . . . .	58
E. Summary . . . . .	59

### III. THEIR CULTURE

A. Introduction . . . . .	62
B. Customs of the Home . . . . .	64
1. Hospitality . . . . .	64
2. The Patriarchical System . . . . .	68
3. The Birth of a Child . . . . .	69
4. The Naming of a Child . . . . .	70
5. The Selection of a Life Mate . . . . .	71
6. The Betrothal . . . . .	72
7. The Wedding . . . . .	72
8. Death in the Home . . . . .	74
C. Their Religion . . . . .	75
1. The Altar . . . . .	76
2. Almsgiving, Prayer, and Fasting . . . . .	77
3. The Feasts . . . . .	78
a. The Feast of the Passover . . . . .	79
b. The Feast of Pentecost . . . . .	80
c. The Feast of the Tabernacle . . . . .	81
d. The Feast of Purim . . . . .	82
e. The Feast of Lights . . . . .	83
4. The Sabbath . . . . .	84
5. The Tabernacle . . . . .	88
6. The Ark of the Covenant . . . . .	89
7. The Temple of Solomon . . . . .	89
8. The Temple of Zerubbabel . . . . .	91

Chapter	Page
9. The Temple of Herod . . . . .	91
10. The Synagogue . . . . .	93
11. The Early Christian Churches . . . . .	94
12. Music and Religion . . . . .	95
D. The Livelihood . . . . .	97
1. Religious Occupations . . . . .	97
a. Prophets . . . . .	97
b. Priests . . . . .	98
c. Levites . . . . .	98
d. Scribes . . . . .	99
e. Doctors of Law . . . . .	100
f. Pharisees . . . . .	100
g. Sadducees . . . . .	101
h. Rabbis . . . . .	101
2. Secular Occupations . . . . .	102
a. Potter . . . . .	102
b. Carpenter . . . . .	105
c. Fisherman . . . . .	106
d. Mason . . . . .	108
e. Metal Worker . . . . .	109
f. Tanner . . . . .	110
g. Dyeing . . . . .	111
h. Tent Maker . . . . .	111
i. Merchant . . . . .	112
j. Money Changer . . . . .	113
k. Banker . . . . .	113
l. Tax Collector . . . . .	114
m. Physician . . . . .	114
n. Day Labor . . . . .	115
o. Scribe . . . . .	116
p. Weaver . . . . .	116
q. Vine Dresser and Farmer . . . . .	117
E. Summary . . . . .	119
 IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION . . . . .	 124
A. Summary . . . . .	124
B. Conclusion . . . . .	130
 BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	 132



INTRODUCTION

THE CONTRIBUTION OF  
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS  
NECESSARY TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEXT BOOKS  
OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of Problem

In this bewildered, fearfilled age when rapid and revolutionary changes are taking place, people everywhere are conscious of an urgent need of something that is solid and unchanging to which they might cling. This problem of uncertainty is especially baffling to the youth of this day. What shall be given to them? There is only one "Rock" upon which one can stand and this is the Word of God. Many parents have not the interest nor the religious background to give their children this Word which might stabilize their pent up energy and vitality. Hence much of the religious instruction in the Bible must be given by the Christian teacher in the Sunday School.

The Lutheran church has always prided itself on its educational emphasis in the training of its youth. One of the great mottoes of the church has been "The Word alone." W. E. Schram brings this out vividly in these words:

In the Lutheran church it is a fundamental principle that the Scripture is the supreme authority in all spiritual matters. We reverently bow to this authority and we refuse to submit to any other. Our motto has ever been, and, please God, it shall ever be "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible."<sup>1</sup>

Thus the center for all study in the Sunday School should be the Word of God. This is the only source of solidarity and stability in the world today. It behooves the teacher in the Sunday School to have as a constant and uppermost aim the presentation of the Scriptures to the youth of the church. To carry out this task in an efficient manner the teacher must be conversant with the Scriptures. He must be a student of the Bible and know more about the Book than the pupils. He will have to secure the materials and guides which will assist in understanding the backgrounds out of which the Bible grew and to which it has constant reference.<sup>2</sup> This will necessitate an understanding of the social and cultural backgrounds of the same.

The Bible is a concrete, picture-filled Book. Even chapters which are characteristically devotional in nature are full of phrases as vivid as the people of the East are vivid. It was written nineteen centuries ago by Oriental people. It was written in an Oriental language.

. . . . .

1. W. E. Schram: What Lutherans Believe, p. 13.
2. Cf. D. C. Wyckoff: The Task of Christian Education, p. 63.

The writers used Oriental modes of thought. It is impossible to understand the Bible unless one knows something of the manners, customs, and life of its people. People who have traveled or lived in the East are disturbed as they listen to the interpretation and explanation of the Bible made by teachers who do not know the life of the Orient.<sup>1</sup> It is easy to read into the Scriptures Western manners and customs instead of interpreting them from the Eastern point of view. A. Hovey in his book, The Bible, emphasizes this when he says:

A study of the Bible backgrounds will render an inestimable service to Christianity, not only by confirming the truth of the Bible in many ways, but also by rendering it more intelligible to the popular mind.<sup>2</sup>

Experience has shown that most Sunday School teachers, even though earnestly seeking to teach and serve Christ, do not have an adequate background of the Bible times and life to make it alive to the imaginations of healthy minded and vigorous young people.<sup>3</sup> With the present revival of interest and the challenging need for such a study of the Bible in our Sunday Schools, it is necessary to become more conscious of the times, customs, and manners of the Bible People. Joseph Gettys in his book, How to Teach the Bible, brings out this idea in these words:

. . . . .

1. Cf. G. H. Scherer: The Eastern Color of the Bible, p. 5.
2. A. Hovey: The Bible, p. 43.
3. Cf. Mt. Hermon School and Northfield Seminary: Beginner's Course in Bible Study, p. 5.

The conviction that the Bible must come out of the life and go back into life is implicit in the principles of teaching. The Bible must be understood in its own times before it can be applied to our times. To that end the study of backgrounds, settings, customs, and civilization are important.<sup>1</sup>

What is a mill stone? What is a tunic? What is pottage? How was bread baked? How did these people make a living? What were their homes like? What is the betrothal? These are a few of the questions that are constantly confronting the teacher. Young people are full of such questions about details that the adult world takes for granted. The number and diversity of these questions baffle the teacher in the Sunday School. If the teacher discourages the asking of questions he is destroying the imagination and doing serious harm to the appreciation of the Word of God. The honest teacher will not dare to thrust these questions aside. Mary Entwistle says:

Every effort teachers make to encourage children to visualize the setting of the Bible story, to enter with imagination into the action, brings its own reward in an increased interest and a growing power of appreciation.<sup>2</sup>

To the conscientious teacher the big problem is where to go to get this material. Most Sunday School teachers are so busy with their daily routines of life that, were a library in readiness, there would be little time to hunt for

. . . . .

1. J. M. Gettys: How to Teach the Bible, p. 150.
2. Mary Entwistle: The Bible Guide Book, p. 11.

the background material needed. Furthermore, most books dealing with the subject of Bible backgrounds are either too thorough or too complex to be of any value to the average teacher in Sunday School. On the other hand the material offered in the Teacher's Manuals of the Sunday School texts is too brief to furnish adequate background. Very few books dealing with the subject have been published recently. Out of thirty books checked at random, only five were published since 1935. Many of the source materials date back to 1878, 1898, 1901, and 1907. Some of the books are merely travelogues which are hardly suitable for research for the average lay teacher. A great number of these books are foreign publications. Teachers who live in small communities and in the rural sections of the church rarely have a library at their disposal.

In the light of the above it is the purpose of this thesis to examine the Sunday School textbooks used in the Evangelical Lutheran Church to determine the Bible backgrounds and materials necessary to an intelligent teaching situation in each course of study. These findings will then be related to a research of the source materials available in this field of study. The materials thus gathered will be catalogued in such a way as to be accessible for the teacher. This thesis will present such materials and provide a bibliography for those who wish to do some further study.

## B. The Subject Delimited

It is recognized that in the broadest sense the term "Bible Backgrounds" also refers to the historical and geographical aspects of Palestine necessary to an understanding and appreciation of the Scriptures. But for practical purposes a narrower concept needs to be considered. Time and space will not permit the inclusion of this material, however relevant it might be to the study. This thesis will, therefore, make a study of only the cultural and social background of the Hebrew people in relation to the Sunday School texts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. This will afford a more exhaustive study of the materials available in the cultural and social backgrounds of the Bible lands.

## C. Source of Data

The books to be studied are the eight current texts used in the Sunday Schools of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Bible, and the available source material dealing with Bible backgrounds, in relation to the above texts.

## D. Basis for Selection

Only those texts used in the Sunday School of the Evangelical Lutheran Church will be used. These texts are found in nearly all of the Sunday Schools of the synod.

Week day, released time, and vacation Bible school materials will not be included in this study. Standard source materials of Bible backgrounds will be used. Travelogues and hypothetical sources will be eliminated. The material will be checked with Scripture for its relevance to the particular study and appreciation of the Bible.

#### E. Method of Procedure

1. A thorough study of the texts used in this particular Sunday School series will be made. This exploration will determine the Bible backgrounds necessary for an intelligent teaching situation in each course.

2. A research of the source materials available in this field of study will be made. The purpose of this thesis will be to discover the information at hand concerning the people and their customs which will contribute to the Bible study outlined in the above mentioned texts.

3. The materials thus gathered will be assorted, weighed, modified, and arranged in such an orderly fashion as to be readily accessible to the Sunday School teacher of the above mentioned texts.



CHAPTER I

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS INVOLVED IN THE  
BIBLICAL CONTENT OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEXT BOOKS  
OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

## CHAPTER I

### SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS INVOLVED IN THE BIBLICAL CONTENT OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEXT BOOKS OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

#### A. Introduction

This is an eye-minded age. People think in pictures. Television, cinema, and other visual aids have trained the minds of young and old to be pictorial minded. They remember that which is seen, or that which is presented in a pictorial and graphic way. This eye-mindedness is definitely carried over into the Sunday School work of the church. The teacher of religion must know the background of each lesson in such a vivid manner that it can be presented to the class in word pictures.

The purpose of this chapter will be to make a detailed study of the eight Sunday School text books used in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and to determine such terms, phrases, and references dealing with social and religious customs which would need elucidation on the part of the teacher. A study will be made of the Teacher's Manuals to determine what help is given. If the text or the manual does not give adequate information or background, it is the purpose of this thesis to give help. An attempt

will be made to provide the necessary social and religious background for an understanding and appreciation of these text books in the second and third chapters of this thesis.

Because of a lack of space it will be necessary to select only those terms which deal with the cultural and religious life of the Hebrews. The historical and political background would entail a study just as detailed and significant; hence these latter two subjects will be omitted.

The study in this chapter will begin with the text and teacher's manual of Grade One. The other texts will be studied in their consecutive order. Any material that is duplicated in these eight texts will be deleted so as not to overlap. Specific terms, phrases, clauses, and quotations will be listed in order to show what material would need elucidation. If the teacher's manual gives sufficient material to cover the social and religious background, this will be noted in the chapter. All of the material that is not adequately covered will be included in the body of this chapter so as to give a basis for the social and religious backgrounds necessary to an understanding of the eight Sunday School text books used in the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

#### B. Grade One

"My First Sunday School Book" is the title of the text used in grade one. The author of this text and

the Teacher's Manual is Hannah Schonhovd. There are fifty lessons in this series all dealing with the life of Jesus. The stories are given in very simple and short form for this particular age group. The aim of the course is to present Christ to the first grade child.

The story used in Lesson Eight is that of the anointing of Jesus by Mary in Bethany.<sup>1</sup> To understand the true significance of this story, the teacher will need to know the custom of anointing, and the kinds of oil used in this ceremony. The Teacher's Manual does not give any explanation whatsoever of this interesting and important custom that was carried on throughout Bible times.<sup>2</sup> It will be necessary to study the Old Testament to find its origin. The anointing of Saul and David by Samuel will prove interesting examples. Also, in the social life of these people there will be indications of its use among friends and guests in the ordinary Palestinian home.

The story of the healing of the paralytic<sup>3</sup> will take on new meaning with a study of the types of Palestinian homes, outside stairways, and especially the construction of the roofs. The Teacher's Manual does not mention how it would be possible for the four friends to carry the paralytic up on the roof nor what would be involved in

. . . . .

1. Cf. Hanna C. Schonhovd: My First Sunday School Book, p. 20.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. xxxi.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 24.

breaking through the roof.<sup>1</sup> This story will be much more meaningful with a knowledge of the Palestinian home.

Lesson thirty-six and thirty-seven deal with death and the raising from the dead of the daughter of Jairus and the Widow of Nain's son.<sup>2</sup> With the first grade child it might be best not to go too much into the details of death, mourning, and the burial; yet the teacher will need to know this background for his understanding of the lesson. Some of this knowledge will have to be imparted to the child, especially the loud mourning at the death of Jairus' daughter. Here the Teacher's Manual gives very little, if any, help.<sup>3</sup>

The first grade child will be interested in the stories of the fishermen that Jesus called to become "fishers of men."<sup>4</sup> Fishing was one of the important vocations. The art of fishing was well developed by these people. A knowledge of this industry with its hooks, spears, drag nets and casting nets will provide an interesting background. Washing and mending the nets was an important part of this occupation, too. Most of the first grade children today have probably never seen a net. They will not understand its significance unless it is explained to them. The Teacher's Manual is silent here.<sup>5</sup>

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., p. xxxiii.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 76-78.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. lxi-lxiii.
4. Ibid., p. 82.
5. Cf. Ibid., p. lxv.

The water supply was probably one of the greatest concerns of the Orient. The flocks had to be near the source of supply, but water was just as essential for the family. The story of Jesus' visit with the woman of Samaria by Jacob's well will be a good opportunity to stress this need to a class of first graders.<sup>1</sup> The Teacher's Manual does give a good introduction of what a well is; however, little is said about the need for water, the hour that water was carried to the home, and the kind of jars used in supplying the home with water.<sup>2</sup> All of this information would add much interest.

Lesson forty-five is the story of Peter's denials of Jesus.<sup>3</sup> This scene took place in a courtyard. A courtyard will be entirely out of the experience of the child of this age group. In the homes of the Oriental the courtyard was a part of every habitation that had more than one room. The use of the courtyard, with its cisterns, its millstone, and its gardens will enhance the teacher's understanding of this meeting before Caiaphas.<sup>4</sup>

The Easter story in lesson forty-six would take on new meaning with a knowledge of the climate of Palestine, the need to have funerals as soon as possible, the spices used in burials, and the kind of tombs in which the bodies

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 90.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. lxix.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 94.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 94.

were placed.<sup>1</sup> Very few children would have any knowledge of a tomb. Some of the children from the larger cities may have visited a mausoleum, yet even this would hardly give an adequate picture of a tomb. It would not be advisable to spend more time than necessary on the burial with this age group, yet the teacher needs this background to understand the significance of the lesson.

### C. Grade Two

The text for the second grade is written by Clara Boxrud and is entitled, "My Second Sunday School Book." The Teacher's Manual is written by A. B. Swan. In this course of study a survey of the highlights of the Old and New Testaments have been given. The first eleven chapters are devoted to the Old Testament, the remaining twenty-five chapters are a survey of the New Testament.

This text book has only a few references to the cultural and social backgrounds of the Hebrew people. In lesson thirteen the story of Jesus' birth is presented.<sup>2</sup> Here the teacher will need to know something of the inns used in the first century era.<sup>3</sup> Swaddling clothes will be a term which is unfamiliar to the child of this age group.

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 96.

2. Cf. Clara Boxrud and A. B. Swan: My Second Sunday School Book, p. 42.

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 42.

The social customs of these people will bring new light to the practice that all mothers carried out in wrapping a baby.

The story of the Boy Jesus lost in the temple, in Lesson Eighteen, will be enhanced by a study of the Jewish custom of bringing boys to the temple at the age of twelve for a service of consecration.<sup>1</sup> This will be a splendid opportunity to talk about the temple, its builder, former temples, and the purpose of this edifice. The modes of travel and the custom of traveling in family clans to these great festivals of the church will increase the appreciation of the lesson. It will be necessary to know something about the teachers, doctors of law, and the scribes to understand with whom Jesus was speaking.<sup>2</sup> The Teacher's Manual does not shed any light on the background of this story.

In Lesson Twenty the story of Jesus selecting His disciples is presented.<sup>3</sup> Since Matthew was a tax collector, this vocation would need some enlightenment.<sup>4</sup> Neither the text nor the manual gives any insights for the teacher.

#### D. Grade Three

"God Speaks To Me" is the title of the text used for grade three. This text and Teacher's Manual are written

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 53.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 58.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 64.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 64.



by Inez Steen. The thirty-six lessons in this course are based upon the Catechism text without Luther's explanation.<sup>1</sup> The catechism lesson is illustrated by stories from the Bible.

The story of King Josiah is told in chapter one.<sup>2</sup> When the long lost book was discovered, the high priest, chief priests, priests, and the Levites were called together to study this parchment.<sup>3</sup> The teacher of this course ought to have an appreciation of the duties of the religious leaders. No word should ever arise in a lesson unless the teacher is able to make the meaning clear to the pupil. The Teacher's Manual does suggest, however, that:

The teacher needs to make sure that the words he uses are familiar to the child. He needs to make sure that the ideas he expresses are understood as he means them. Otherwise the child will misunderstand the lesson, or else get nothing at all out of it, because there are certain words he does not understand.<sup>4</sup>

Yet, this same manual does not give any help as to this information. Without this knowledge at hand, it is doubtful that the teacher will have a clear concept of the above terms.

Chapter five speaks of the shepherd, the sheep, the sheep fold, the sling, and the harp.<sup>5</sup> To understand

. . . . .

1. Cf. Inez Steen: God Speaks To Me, p. xiii.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 7.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 8.
4. Ibid., p. xli.
5. Cf. Ibid., p. 25.

David's home life and early training it will be helpful to know about the care of sheep, the conditions under which the shepherd lived, the dangers involved in this work, and its loneliness. The sling and the harp must have been a source of comfort to the lonely shepherd boy. It will be helpful for the teacher and the pupils to know the rudiments of this type of occupation. The Teacher's Manual suggests that some of this information be given, but it does not furnish the background necessary to an appreciation of David's childhood.<sup>1</sup>

The lesson in Chapter six is an interesting study of the Sabbath observance. Here such terms as Sabbath, synagogue, the scroll, the gallery, the screen, and the ruler are used.<sup>2</sup> None of these words will lie within the experience of a child. Two of the terms, namely synagogue and ruler, are explained in the lesson, but only in one short sentence. The Teacher's Manual suggests the display of synagogue exteriors and interiors.<sup>3</sup> However it is very doubtful if the average teacher will have this material at hand. A thorough study of the synagogue with its furniture, floor plan, and order of service will enhance the lesson for both the teacher and the pupil.

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., p. lxvii.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 29-30.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. lxx.

Lesson eight will provide an excellent continuation of the worship of the Hebrews, especially the early forms of worship. This lesson treats of the story of Cain and the first murder. Here such terms as offering, sacrifice, and altar are used.<sup>1</sup> The Teacher's Manual suggests in the assignment that the students discuss the temple of Solomon and other temples.<sup>2</sup> This lesson would require a great deal of knowledge of the religious life of the Hebrews. It will afford an opportunity to study the altars of Cain, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Solomon, Zerubbabel, and the altar of Herod's temple. The pupils ought to know something about the sacrifices and offerings brought to the temple. In order to present this lesson intelligibly it will be necessary for the teacher to have this background.

The patriarchial system plays an important part in the story of Jacob stealing the birthright from his brother in Lesson Ten.<sup>3</sup> The birthright itself is explained in the text book.<sup>4</sup> The Teacher's Manual gives no information whatsoever to enlighten the instructor in the intricacies of this unique system. The liberty loving youth of this age will hardly grasp the significance of family life in Palestine without some enlightenment on the subject.

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 38.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. lxxvii.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 45-47.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 45.

The teacher will most certainly need to have this material in hand so as to be conversant with the patriarchial system.

In Chapter Twenty-seven, such terms as lamp, light, and bushel are used.<sup>1</sup> The lamp played an important part in the life of the Hebrews. The use of the bushel and other measures in the Orient had a special significance. The pupil's text and the Teacher's Manual do not give any information on the lamp, light, and bushel. A knowledge of these terms will give new meaning to the expression, "A city set on a hill cannot be hid."<sup>2</sup>

To have an appreciation of the lesson found in the twenty-eighth chapter of the text, the teacher will need to understand some of the other aspects of the Hebrew worship such as the giving of alms,<sup>3</sup> and the hours set aside for prayer.<sup>4</sup> In the Teacher's Manual the term "alms" is suggested in the "word study."<sup>5</sup> Nothing is said about the fixed hours of prayer observed by the Jews. It will be necessary for the teacher to go to other sources to find available material, in order to present this lesson intelligibly to the class.

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 114.
2. Ibid., p. 114.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 120.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 120.
5. Cf. Ibid., p. cxxv.

The study of the Sacrament of the Altar is found in chapter thirty-six. To have an appreciation of this lesson it will be necessary to be acquainted with such terms as: Passover, upper room, sandals, leaven, unleavened bread, the breaking of bread, the dipping of bread in the dish, and the washing of feet.<sup>1</sup> All of this is intimately tied up with the social and cultural background of the Israelites. The student's text does give an interesting picture of the first Passover,<sup>2</sup> however it does not say anything about the continuation of the feast for future generations. The Teacher's Manual gives no elucidation on any of these terms. It does suggest that unleavened bread and sandals be included in the "word study."<sup>3</sup>

#### E. Grade Four

In the fourth grade the text used is "Listening To God" written by Mabel Erickson. This text is based on Luther's Catechism, illustrated by stories from the Bible. The Teacher's Manual is written by the same author.

In the first lesson of this text the pupil is confronted with the story of the "Four Soils."<sup>4</sup> Agriculture was one of the chief vocations of the Jewish people. An

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 158-162.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 158.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. cxli.
4. Cf. Mabel Erickson: Listening to God, p. 25.

understanding of the primitive methods of plowing, seeding, harvesting, and threshing will enhance the appreciation and comprehension of this story. It will be especially important for the teacher to have this background to present the lesson in an interesting and intelligible way. Here the text and the Teacher's Manual have failed.

Chapter three deals with Job and his tragic loss of house, home, and property.<sup>1</sup> Job offered sacrifices to the Lord for his children,<sup>2</sup> and this practice is far removed from the experience of fourth-grade children. Yet, to appreciate the sacrifices of Job, the teacher and the pupil should know something about its origin, purpose, and significance.

Job's body was covered with terrible boils. He scratched himself with a potsherd.<sup>3</sup> No information is provided in either the text or the manual as to the meaning of the term "potsherd."

The rending of the robe, the shaving of the head, and the repenting in dust and ashes are all a part of the religious background of the Jews.<sup>4</sup> A study of these terms in the light of the culture of these people will make this lesson more intelligible. Since no help is given for either

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 31-33.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 31.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 32.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 32.

the teacher or pupil, these customs will be included in the following study.

The story of the first Christmas comes in chapter fifteen.<sup>1</sup> The teacher of this lesson will need to know something about the enrollment or census, the inns, stables, manger, and the laws of hospitality.<sup>2</sup> These terms will be quite meaningless without some of the social and cultural backgrounds of the Hebrews. The Teacher's Manual says:

Even today the shepherd folk of the Holy Land bring offerings of their flocks to each and every new-born babe and its mother--hence the presumption that such offerings were brought to Jesus, and borne out by the fact that the wise men brought offerings--so why not the shepherds?<sup>3</sup>

This is all the light given by the above manual on the background for an appreciation of this story. The teacher will need to go to some other source to find further information.

Chapter nineteen is a study of the Christian Pentecost.<sup>4</sup> The teacher will need to understand the significance of the Hebrew Pentecost or the "Feast of the First Fruits" as it was also called.<sup>5</sup> It will also be necessary to know something about the burnt offering and its meaning.<sup>6</sup> The use of wine also plays into the story since the

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 70-72.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 70.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. xl.
4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 83-85.
5. Cf. Ibid., p. 83.
6. Cf. Ibid., p. 83.

disciples were accused of drinking new wine.<sup>1</sup> None of this information is given.

Paul's visit to the Philippians is brought out in chapter twenty-four.<sup>2</sup> The first European convert was Lydia, a seller of purple.<sup>3</sup> It will be difficult for the modern child to understand the significance and value of this industry without some knowledge of this dye. Neither the text nor the manual offers any insight into this important work in which Lydia was engaged.

The making of tents is another interesting industry of Bible times.<sup>4</sup> Chapter twenty-six speaks of Paul as a tentmaker. His parents wanted him to study to be a rabbi.<sup>5</sup> This will also be a new term for the student. In the nine short sentences used in the Teacher's Manual for this lesson, nothing is said to enlighten the teacher. The text offers no help for the pupils.

In connection with the stoning of Stephen in chapter twenty-seven the term, "council" is used with reference to the Jewish Sanhedrin.<sup>6</sup> Yet, one cannot truly appreciate the situation involved in this lesson without some information about this important court and its function.

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 85.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 99-101.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 100.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 105.
5. Cf. Ibid., p. 105.
6. Cf. Ibid., p. 110.



In chapter thirty-four such terms as swineherd, the fatted calf, the best robe, and the ring are used.<sup>1</sup> All of these are closely related to the cultural and social background of the Hebrew people. Without an understanding of these terms and their significance in the lives of the people, the story will lose much of its interest. Neither the text nor the Teacher's Manual sheds any light whatsoever on the importance of these terms.

An interesting custom is brought out in the story of the Lord's Supper in chapter thirty-six.<sup>2</sup> The bread eaten at the Lord's Supper and at their "love feasts" was always broken.<sup>3</sup> Unless the teacher and student know the value of bread for the people and the fear that they had of cutting the "staff of life" it will not be possible to understand why this practice was carried out.<sup>4</sup>

#### F. Grade Five

"God's Chosen People" is the text book used in grade five. It is written by Olaf and Fernanda Malmin. The plan of this course is to present Old Testament history in thirty-six lessons. The stories are told in chronological sequence and are as complete as the space permits. The same authors have written the Teacher's Manual.

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 132.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 138-139.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 138.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 139.

The story of Abraham and Isaac is found in chapter six.<sup>1</sup> Here it will be necessary to understand the laws of hospitality which were so important to the Hebrew people. Abraham brought water, washed the feet of the guests, gave them bread, and Sarah baked cakes while he prepared the fatted calf.<sup>2</sup> The preparation and baking of the cakes was an interesting process. The significance of the fatted calf was also important.<sup>3</sup>

The Teacher's Manual does suggest that the term "burnt offering" be made a part of the "word study."<sup>4</sup> However, no helps are provided. The significance of the "burnt offering" in the religious life of these people will need to be grasped.

It will also be necessary to have an understanding of the betrothal and marriage in the cultural background. Abraham wanted to choose the wife for his son.<sup>5</sup> He sent a servant to do this for him. This will be a strange experience for the Sunday School pupil of today. The betrothal was different from our marriage. The teacher and pupil will have to go to some outside source to obtain this information, as no help is given in the lesson.

. . . . .

1. Cf. Olaf and Fernanda Malmin: God's Chosen People, pp. 40-42.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 40.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 40.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. xxviii.
5. Cf. Ibid., p. 41.

The Day of Atonement was one of the three great festivals of the Hebrews. Chapter thirteen deals with this important part of their religious life.<sup>1</sup> The manual suggests that there be a discussion of the festivals, yet no information is given to throw any light on the subject.<sup>2</sup> Outside material will have to be studied to get the background of the three festivals of the Jewish people.

Chapter sixteen speaks of the winepress and threshing floor.<sup>3</sup> Both played an important part in the lives of the Hebrews. These terms are outside the experience of the teacher and pupil. Information of the harvesting of grain and the grapes will need to be given in order for the lesson to be meaningful. None of this material is provided.

The next chapter deals with Ruth gleaning in the fields of Boaz.<sup>4</sup> The Hebrews had rigid rules in regard to the poor and their right to go into the fields to glean. Without an appreciation of this background the story will not be given its true significance. The Teacher's Manual suggests that "gleaning" be included in the word study but it does not elucidate.<sup>5</sup> Not even Bible references are given.

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 70.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. xliv.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 77.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 82.
5. Cf. Ibid., p. liii.

This chapter also uses the term "sheaves" which might need some explanation in order to be thoroughly appreciated.<sup>1</sup>

The custom of anointing with oil would make a fascinating study in connection with lesson nineteen.<sup>2</sup> No helps are given for either the teacher or the pupil. Oil played an important part in the culture of these people. Chapter twenty-five speaks of the widow's jar of oil that never failed.<sup>3</sup> None of the interesting information concerning the use of oil is given in either the text or the manual.

Lesson thirty-three tells the story of King Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem. The temple was destroyed. The pots, shovels, snuffers, spoons and all of the vessels of brass were carried away into Babylon.<sup>4</sup> To appreciate the use of these instruments the teacher and pupil will need to know the background of Hebrew worship. The offerings, sacrifices, and burning of incense required the use of vessels. The Teacher's Manual asks what material these instruments were made of but it does not give any suggestion of the purpose that they served in the worship of the Jews.<sup>5</sup>

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 82.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 86.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 105.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 27.
5. Cf. Ibid., p. xc.

In chapter thirty-five the story of the return of the Jews to their homeland after the captivity is told. Here the pupil is introduced to three of the interesting occupations followed by the people. "Some of them were farmers, others silversmiths, still others perfumers."<sup>1</sup> The Teacher's Manual and the text do not furnish any of the background or Bible references to these occupations.

#### G. Grade Six

In grade six, the text and manual used is called, "The March of Faith" by Inez Steen. The plan of this book is "to present the story of the Christian Church from 30 A. D. to the present time, with an emphasis on the history of the Lutheran Church."<sup>2</sup> Due to the subject matter there are not many references to Scripture. Chapter one speaks of fasting,<sup>3</sup> an important part of the worship experience of the Hebrew people. The Teacher's Manual does not give any of the background material necessary to an appreciation of the purpose of the fast, the fast days, or what was required in a fast.

#### H. Grade Seven

The text and manual used in the seventh grade is

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 133.
2. Inez Steen: Teacher's Manual, p. viii.
3. Cf. Inez Steen: The March of Faith, p. 31.

entitled, "Forward With Christ" by George Aus. This text is "an attempt to write a New Testament Bible History for twelve year olds in a series of thirty-six lessons."<sup>1</sup> In chapter two the story of the boyhood home of Jesus is told. It speaks of the village life, the well, the market place, the synagogue, the schools, the vineyards, and the sheepfolds.<sup>2</sup> This lesson affords the industrious teacher an opportunity to give the social and religious background of Jesus' day. Here the Teacher's Manual gives a rich and varied background for the study. It also suggests a bibliography of books where additional material can be obtained.<sup>3</sup>

The story of John the Baptist appears in chapter four. John's raiment was of camel's hair. His girdle was of leather.<sup>4</sup> The use of the girdle for men would hardly be understood by the modern Sunday School pupil. This, as well as the eating of locusts and wild honey will not seem so strange if the social and cultural background of the clothing and foods of these people are understood.<sup>5</sup> The Teacher's Manual is most helpful and will provide a good understanding of the simple garb and fare of the people.

. . . . .

1. Cf. George Aus: Forward With Christ, p. 35.
2. George Aus: Forward With Christ, Teacher's Manual, p. 7.
3. Cf. George Aus: Forward With Christ, Teacher's Manual, pp. 61-66.
4. Cf. George Aus, op. cit., p. 47.
5. Cf. Ibid., p. 47.

Such terms as the ax, threshing floor, fan, winnowing fork, garner, and chaff are used in this lesson.<sup>1</sup> It is fortunate for the teacher that the manual gives a suggested list of readings so that the appropriate background can be obtained.<sup>2</sup> Most of these readings will be too difficult for the pupil; hence the teacher will need to furnish this material.

Lesson seven treats of the temple, tax, the money changers, the animals used for sacrifices, and the corruption of the temple.<sup>3</sup> To appreciate this section the teacher and the pupil would need a rich and varied background of the worship of the Jewish religion. Here again the Teacher's Manual is helpful in providing a fine selection of additional readings and in giving in brief form much of the background necessary to understand and enjoy the lesson.<sup>4</sup>

In chapter eighteen the author says, "Jesus was very open and free in breaking customs and traditions--yes, He even dared to criticize the accepted interpretations of the law."<sup>5</sup> In the Teacher's Manual some of these interesting traditions of the Hebrews are given and a book that would give additional material is suggested.<sup>6</sup> However, due

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 47.
2. Cf. George Aus: Teacher's Manual, p. 74.
3. Cf. George Aus: Forward With Christ, p. 60.
4. Cf. George Aus: Teacher's Manual, pp. 94-99.
5. George Aus: Forward With Christ, p. 101.
6. Cf. George Aus: Teacher's Manual, pp. 166-170.

to a lack of space the author is limited in the number of traditions that he lists. There are many other traditions that would be of interest to this age group.

"Widening Horizons" is the title of chapter thirty-four. In this lesson there is a discussion of circumcision, uncleanness, unclean foods, and other ceremonial laws.<sup>1</sup> Terms as centurion, proselyte, the ninth hour, sixth hour, and tanner are used.<sup>2</sup> Much of this material will be outside the comprehension of the pupils. The Manual for this text gives valuable material for the teacher.<sup>3</sup>

#### I. Grade Eight

The eighth grade pupils use the text, "On The Way" by Alvin Rogness. This text is a "running discussion between the author and imagined groups of youth of those matters of Christian faith and life which derive from the Holy Scriptures."<sup>4</sup> There is no Teacher's Manual for this course. Because of the nature of the subject matter contained in this text book there are not too many references to the social and cultural background of the Bible Land people. Chapter thirteen does refer to the term "stewards."<sup>5</sup>

. . . . .

1. Cf. George Aus: Forward With Christ, pp. 164-166.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 165-166.
3. Cf. George Aus: Teacher's Manual, pp. 262-267.
4. Alvin Rogness: On The Way, Preface.
5. Cf. Ibid., p. 47.



This idea of stewardship was a vital and integral part of life. Here both the pupils and probably the teacher might need some explanation. Since there is no teacher's manual for the course, it will be necessary to go to outside sources for this information. In chapter twenty-one the text speaks of the carpenter.<sup>1</sup> This was one of the trades common to the Israelite. A study of the work of the carpenter, his tools, and the articles made in the shop would enhance the lesson.

#### J. Summary

This chapter has been based upon a page by page study of the eight text books being used in the Sunday Schools of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. In the study an attempt has been made to find all of the terms dealing with cultural backgrounds, terms needing to be explained in order to give pupils and teachers an understanding of the material contained in these books. Because of a lack of time and space it was necessary to delimit the cultural background to its social and religious aspects.

It was discovered that with only one exception, all of the texts are inadequate in giving this information. Seven of the texts under consideration have teacher's manuals, yet in these manuals there is not included the necessary

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 71.

information for the teacher to get this background. Likewise in all but one of the texts and manuals studied no adequate bibliography of suggested reading lists is given.

The only text and Manual that is adequate in this area is Grade Seven, "Forward With Christ," by George Aus. Here the teacher is given ample information to understand and appreciate the cultural background necessary to a fuller appreciation of the Scripture passages being studied. In the Teacher's Manual an excellent "Suggested Reading List" is given for each lesson so that the industrious teacher can go further in the study to enrich his knowledge.

In conclusion, it was discovered that there is a definite need for auxiliary material to aid the teacher and the pupil in their study. Unless this background is provided, much of the true significance of the material studied will be lost. A manual containing the religious and social background of the Hebrew people would be a real source of help in the use of the Sunday School text books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

CHAPTER II

THE PALESTINIAN FAMILY

CHAPTER II  
THE PALESTINIAN FAMILY

A. Introduction

Joseph M. Gettys in his book How to Teach the Bible says:

The psychology of the appeal to Bible Backgrounds lies primarily in the fact, that we tend to identify ourselves with the characters of Scripture. We identify ourselves with their foods, manners, customs, and homes. It makes the characters suddenly come to life for the teacher, in order to hope to bring about this desired result in the pupil.<sup>1</sup>

It will be the purpose of this chapter to present material necessary to an understanding of the homes, food, and clothing in which the Bible Land people lived. As indicated in the preceding chapter, five of the Sunday School text books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church namely, My First Sunday School Book, God Speaks to Me, Listening to God, God's Chosen People, and Forward With Christ make reference to the homes, furnishings, food, and clothing of the Oriental people. To provide this material in a more interesting form, it will be presented in a chronological order, beginning first with the camel hair tent and its simple furnishings. Next the one room house of sun dried brick or crude stone

. . . . .

1. J. M. Gettys: op. cit., p. 150.

will be described in detail. Then will follow a description of the larger house used by the city dweller. My First Sunday School Book, God Speaks to Me, and Forward With Christ require a knowledge of the construction of floors, the roof, the outside stairs, the upper chamber, the windows, and the doors of these homes. These topics will be presented in the above order. This section will be brought to a conclusion with a discussion of the furnishings of the more elaborate dwellings.

This chapter will also provide the necessary background for an understanding of the foods eaten by the Oriental people and their clothing. Many of these foods and nearly all of the clothing used are out-dated and are not within the comprehension of the American Sunday School child. Fred H. Wight says:

It is easy for Occidentals to overlook the fact that the Scriptures had their origin in the East and that each of the writers was really an Oriental. Since this is so it might well be said that the Bible is an Oriental Book. But many are apt to read into the Scriptures Western manners and customs, instead of interpreting them from the Eastern point of view. Many passages that are hard to understand are readily explained by a knowledge of the customs of Bible Lands.<sup>1</sup>

A special emphasis will be placed on bread and its preparation as it was such a vital part of the diet. Water was one of their greatest problems, hence a considerable portion of the chapter will be devoted to water, its

. . . . .

1. Fred H. Wight: Manners and Customs of Bible Lands, p. 7.

storage, and availability. Other auxiliary foods will be considered. An attempt will be made to determine from Scriptures all of the foods eaten by these people.

The clothing of the Oriental was simple, yet it was so radically different from that of the Occident that much of it will have to be described in detail in order to comprehend its significance. There will be a description of the tunic, cloak, coat, robe, girdle, sandals, and the headdress. The difference between the clothing worn by the men and the women will be emphasized. The chapter will be brought to a conclusion by a study of the veil and ornamentation. The Bible will be the most helpful source from which this information will be obtained.

## B. The Homes and the Furnishings

### 1. The House of Hair

The earliest reference to the home of Bible lands is found in Genesis 4:20. Jabal, the sixth generation after Cain, dwelt in tents. Abraham "pitched his tent" near Bethel.<sup>1</sup> Isaac "pitched his tent" in the valley of Gerar.<sup>2</sup> Jacob "pitched his tent" before the city of Shechem.<sup>3</sup> During the forty years of wandering in the wilderness, God's chosen people were tent dwellers. Moses said, "The children

. . . . .

1. Genesis 12:8.
2. Genesis 26:17.
3. Genesis 33:18.

of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp."<sup>1</sup> For many years after they entered the Promised Land these people still lived in these "houses of hair." Even in the days of King David many of the people lived in this type of home. Jeremiah in Lamentations says, "For the whole land is spoiled, suddenly my tents are spoiled."<sup>2</sup>

The tent of the Israelite was his home. All the material for these "houses of hair" was woven by the women of the household on a family loom. The coarse black goat's hair was woven into strips varying with the size of the hand loom. These strips were in turn sewed together to make a tent of the desired proportions.<sup>3</sup> The size of the tent would vary with the number of individuals which made up the household. The average tent would probably be fifteen feet long and ten feet wide. During the first heavy rains the goat hair would shrink, making the material nearly waterproof. This heavy material would protect the family from the cold in the winter. During the summer the flaps of the tent could be lifted to form a sunshade.<sup>4</sup> Solomon gives an interesting picture of these tents in his song, "I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,

. . . . .

1. Numbers 1:52.
2. Jeremiah 4:20.
3. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 57.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 55.

as the tents of Kedar."<sup>1</sup> The tent villages of Abraham must have been an imposing array out on the fields of Canaan. When Lot was taken captive by the kings of Elam, Shinar, and Ellasar, Abraham went out after them with three hundred trained soldiers born within his household. How many hundreds of tents it would require for such a family must be left to the imagination. These encampments of tents were arranged in a circle for defense purposes.

A curtain hung down from the roof in the middle of the tent to separate the women's quarters from those of the men. Thus Sarah at Mamre, in her compartment, could overhear the conversation between Abraham and the angel guest in their home.<sup>2</sup> In Genesis 31:33 a reference is made to the tent of Jacob, to Leah's tent, to Rachel's tent, and to the tent of the two maidservants. In many families there were separate tents for the men and for the women. These tents were very flexible. When the family increased in size they would add another few feet to the length of their tent. Little wonder Isaiah said, "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen they stakes."<sup>3</sup> The roof of the tent was supported by poles.

. . . . .

1. Song of Solomon 1:5.
2. Cf. Genesis 18:10.
3. Isaiah 52:2.



These poles were held in position by cords, and the whole was fastened to the ground by tent pegs. It was such a peg that was used by Jael in killing Sisera.<sup>1</sup> This "house of hair" was an emblem of their simple, unfettered life. These people loved the out of doors and really preferred the tent to the house of wood and stone that came later. The Apostle Paul was the most famous maker of tent cloth in all of Scripture.

## 2. The Furnishings of the House of Hair

The tents were furnished in the most simple manner. The floor was the hard-packed earth. For poorer families there was no floor covering of any kind. In the more progressive homes there were mats of straw, wool, or a coarse camel's hair rug. Along the sides of the tent were piled the bed rolls or pallets. Hanging on the wooden pillars would be the collection of pots, pans, kettles, and the caldron.<sup>2</sup> Over against a pillar or on one of its pegs, were the goat skin bags and bottles. The family pestle and mortar stood near the door.<sup>3</sup> Every home had a kneading trough.<sup>4</sup> No habitation could be complete without the mill stones.<sup>5</sup> The tent lamp stood on its stand. For those who

. . . . .

1. Cf. I Kings 12:16.
2. Cf. I Samuel 2:14a.
3. Cf. Numbers 11:8.
4. Cf. Exodus 12:34.
5. Cf. Deuteronomy 24:6.

were fortunate enough to have a camel, the saddle bag served as a seat.<sup>1</sup> All of this household equipment could be packed in a moment's notice and placed on the back of a camel in case of an attack or a decision to move to better pastures. The making, pitching, and taking down of the tent was wholly a woman's job. The stove for baking the bread and cooking the family food was simply a few stones set up at the tent door. These stones were heated with charcoal until warm enough to bake the flat cakes of bread.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. The House of Brick and Stone

During the reign of King David the people gradually changed from their nomadic ways and began to settle down to agriculture and farming. This necessitated the building of a more permanent home. One by one the "houses of hair" began to disappear and homes of mud, brick, and stone became the accepted thing. The Hebrews were still an outdoor people; hence they did not at first build large homes. They preferred the freedom of the out of doors. The home served as a place to eat and sleep. The women were usually out in the fields working with the men. The house was simply a place of retirement.<sup>3</sup> All that was required of a home was that it might provide a shelter.

. . . . .

1. Cf. Genesis 31:34.

2. Cf. Miller and Miller: Encyclopedia of Bible Life, p. 239.

3. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 20.

The walls of the home were made of unbaked mud and clay bricks, which were dried in the sun. Sometimes the corners might be made of stones so as to support the roof beams.<sup>1</sup> Little wonder that Job said, "In the dark they dig through the house."<sup>2</sup> The more permanent homes were made of stone. Sandstone was very common in this land and was readily available for the construction of a new house. These stones were not always cut, hence they might vary a great deal in size. The mortar that held the stones together was made of mud. These small one-room homes would be found in villages. In the cities the people built larger and better homes.<sup>3</sup>

The city home would have more than one room. However the rooms would not be built side by side as one thinks of a home today. A space or open court would be left between the two rooms. If there were to be three or four rooms they would all be built around a central court.<sup>4</sup> The length of the court would depend upon the number of rooms planned. The front of the rooms would always face the court. These people were interested in seclusion. The court yards were open to the sky. Here trees, shrubs, and

. . . . .

1. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 57.
2. Job 24:16a.
3. Cf. G. M. Mackie: Bible Manners and Customs, p. 90.
4. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 35.

flowers were planted for beautification.<sup>1</sup> Every court had its cistern to catch the rain water and to serve as a storage place for a limited water supply. It was in a cistern like this that Jonathan and Ahimaz hid from Absalom. The woman covered the top of the well with ground corn so that the men were not found.<sup>2</sup>

#### 4. The Floors of the Home

Even these larger homes with several rooms had no floors except the dirt upon which the house was built. The ground was made smooth and packed firmly. Sometimes lime was mixed into the mud and spread over the floor until it hardened. This type of floor could be swept and was comparatively dust free. In some cases cobblestones and shale were mixed with lime and packed into the floor. The best covering for a floor consisted of large square slabs of limestone placed end to end. This was permanent, and could be scrubbed.<sup>3</sup> At the time of Christ, the Romans introduced the mosaic floors. These were made by embedding small smoothly cut squares of stone into the wet earth.<sup>4</sup> In wealthy homes the floor was paved with marble and ornamented with bands of black slate and colored stone.<sup>5</sup>

. . . . .

1. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
2. Cf. II Samuel 17:18-19.
3. Cf. George A. Barton: *Archaeology of the Bible*, p. 126.
4. Cf. G. H. Scherer: *op. cit.*, p. 57.
5. Cf. G. M. Mackie: *op. cit.*, p. 94.

## 5. The Roofs of the Homes

The roofs of these larger homes were supported by several large, roughly dressed logs which were laid across from wall to wall. Smaller beams were laid at right angles with the large timbers. Above these beams was placed a layer of thin boards. This in turn was covered with reeds, grass, thorns, or mats of straw. Upon this surface was spread about ten inches of wet earth and clay; the whole was trodden down and packed very tightly. This surface was covered with a layer of sand and pebbles.<sup>1</sup> After every rain this roof would have to be rolled again and repacked to prevent leakage. Every roof would have its stone roller stored on one corner for future use.<sup>2</sup> With clay roofs one can easily visualize green grass growing during the rainy season. The Psalmist says, "Let them be as the grass upon the house tops, which withereth before it groweth up."<sup>3</sup> Isaiah speaks of his people as being like the "grass on the house tops."<sup>4</sup> The homes of the wealthy were covered with tiles of baked clay that could easily be removed and repaired at will. The roof was supported from the inside by a pillar rising from the center of the room to support the cross-beams.<sup>5</sup>

. . . . .

1. Cf. Emma W. Gill: Home Life in the Bible, p. 31.
2. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 59.
3. Psalms 129:6.
4. Isaiah 37:27.
5. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 57.

## 6. The Outside Stairs

On the outside of these houses, whether of the poor or the wealthy, were built the stairs that led up to the roof. These stairs were made of stone. Here on the housetop, much of the family life was enjoyed, especially in the cool of the evening. The streets were dusty and noisy, while up here it was quiet and restful. Solomon preferred a little corner of his roof to a wide house with a contentious woman.<sup>1</sup> When Joshua's spies came to Jericho in Canaan, Rehab hid them under the flax that she had spread out on the roof to dry, and in so doing saved their lives.<sup>2</sup> In large houses and palaces great groups of people often gathered on the house top. It was in such a place that the Philistine men and women assembled to rejoice over the capture of their enemy, Samson. But with his returned strength Samson pulled down the great pillars that supported the roof and destroyed his enemies.<sup>3</sup> Peter in the home of Simon, the tanner, at Joppa went up on the housetop to pray.<sup>4</sup> Little wonder that the four friends of the palsied man could carry him up the outside stairway to the rooftop, remove the tiles, and lower him so that Jesus might speak those

. . . . .

1. Cf. Proverbs 25:24.
2. Cf. Joshua 2:6.
3. Cf. Judges 16:27.
4. Cf. Acts 10:9.

immortal words, "My son, your sins are forgiven you."<sup>1</sup> Grain, fruits, and fuel were spread out on the housetops to dry in the hot sun.<sup>2</sup> In the summer the entire family would leave the close confinement of the lower quarters to go up on the housetop to sleep.<sup>3</sup>

The Palestinian roofs were used in so many ways that it was necessary to have laws requiring the owner of the home to build a parapet or railing around the rooftop in order that neighbors and friends might not fall off and injure themselves.<sup>4</sup>

#### 7. The Upper Chamber

Every family that could afford the extra cost, would build themselves an upper chamber or room on the housetop. Those who were unable to do this, had to satisfy themselves with a booth or shelter of palm leaves, straw, or reeds upon the roof so that they, too, might have, in a small way, an upper room. It served as a cool place of retreat from the confusion of the narrow streets below. When guests were in the home it served as a place of hospitality. The Shunamite woman and her husband built such a room for Elisha "with a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick" so that he might have a place of abode for

. . . . .

1. Mark 2:3-5.

2. Cf. Joshua 2:6.

3. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 60.

4. Cf. Deuteronomy 22:8.

himself.<sup>1</sup> It was in such an upper chamber that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. The disciples met together in an upper room after the Ascension to await the coming of the Holy Spirit. If more than one room was built on the roof, it was called a summer house.<sup>2</sup>

#### 8. The Windows of the Homes

The homes, whether large or small, had few windows. The openings toward the street were usually located high in the wall as a safety measure from intruders.<sup>3</sup> The larger windows opened into the court yard. Glass for windows was unknown, so the large openings were barred with wood or covered with a frame of lattice work.<sup>4</sup> At night the windows were closed with shutters for privacy and safety. The windows in the upper rooms would not need bars as no thief could scale the walls.<sup>5</sup>

#### 9. The Doors of the Homes

The door was a place of peculiar sanctity and importance. The difference between the outside of the home and the inside was that of two distinct worlds. The inside was a haven of shelter. It shut out noise, confusion, and intrusion. The outside was an impersonal place,

. . . . .

1. II Kings 4:10.
2. Cf. Amos 3:5.
3. Cf. Proverbs 7:6.
4. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 95.
5. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 62.



filled with thieves and enemies. In the larger homes the doorkeeper sat at the entrance to answer the inquiries for the family and to admit guests. At night he slept in a little room near the door.<sup>1</sup> In the smaller village home this responsibility was shared by the members of the family. The father's place of importance was at the door.<sup>2</sup> The doors were left open all day as a symbol of hospitality. A closed door signified that the family had done something that they were ashamed of. At sunset the door was closed and remained so until the next morning.<sup>3</sup> Ancient locks were made of wood, as were the keys to the doors. Ordinarily the doors were made of sycamore wood. It was only the wealthy that ornamented their doors with cedar wood.

#### 10. Furnishings of the House of Brick and Stone

The furnishings of the simple one room dwelling were slightly different from those of the tent dwellers. In the city home, a shelf would display the cooking utensils of copper. In a recess of the wall, the piles of bedding and pallets were stored.<sup>4</sup> These later developed into clothes closets. Around three sides of the wall there

. . . . .

1. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 61.
2. Cf. Genesis 18:1b.
3. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 26.
4. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 63.

would be divans.<sup>1</sup> They were covered with cotton, wool, silk, and gold cloth from the native looms. It was the custom to sit on the divan during the day with the lower limbs of the body crossed. At night the divan became a bed. Some were more elaborate. Amos spoke of beds of ivory.<sup>2</sup> A large brass brazier in the center of the room would give warmth and a cheerful glow to the home.<sup>3</sup> The dining table might be a wicker mat for the peasant, but for the rich a large brass tray was brought into the room and set upon a carved stand. Rugs and carpets of every hue covered the floors.<sup>4</sup>

#### 11. The Lamp

Light was supplied by the olive oil clay lamp set on a stand and thus "it giveth light to all that are in the house."<sup>5</sup> The Palestinian dreaded and abhorred the dark.<sup>6</sup> Night was the time of danger from robbers, hostile neighbors, and the enemy. It was only the men of evil that loved the darkness.<sup>7</sup> Thus the lamp was very precious to the house-holder.<sup>8</sup> The lamps were in reality just little clay saucers to hold oil, in which a wick was

. . . . .

1. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 94.
2. Cf. Amos 6:4.
3. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., pp. 63-64.
4. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 94.
5. Matthew 5:15.
6. Cf. Genesis 15:12.
7. Cf. John 3:19.
8. Cf. Emma Gill: op. cit., p. 63.

placed. In making the saucer the sides were pinched up a little, then more and more, until they covered the top, leaving two openings, one in front as a sort of spout for the wick, and one behind through which the oil could be fed.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes a handle was added. Taste and ingenuity then varied the shape and ornamentation. Solomon's lamps for the Temple were of gold.<sup>2</sup> The lamp burned all night even in the poorest homes. The woman in Proverbs 31:18 never allowed her lamp to go out. Lampstands were not in use during the Old Testament times. However during the days of Jesus they were in common usage. Archaeologists have found many of these lampstands. Some were made of bronze, fourteen or sixteen inches in height. The poor no doubt had a less expensive type.<sup>3</sup> If the family could not afford a stand, the lamp was placed in a niche in the wall or on a bushel that had been turned upside down.<sup>4</sup> If the family had a table, this too might serve as a place to set the lamp.<sup>5</sup> The wick was often made of the twisted strands of cotton or flax. This was then put into the saucer of oil. When the oil was almost used up it would give off an offensive odor and smoke. This was an indication that the oil had to be replenished. If the wick was

. . . . .

1. Cf. Elihu Grant: op. cit., p. 112.
2. Cf. I Kings 7:49.
3. Cf. George Barton: op. cit., p. 151.
4. Cf. Matthew 5:15.
5. Cf. Matthew 5:15.

well worn, the housewife would quench the fire and put in a new wick.<sup>1</sup>

### C. The Foods

Eating and drinking together among these people of Bible lands signified a bond of friendship that was highly respected. When they ate together, there was bread and salt<sup>2</sup> between them and they were no longer strangers to each other, no matter what their previous state might have been.<sup>3</sup> Bread and salt were the two most important items of food. To share this was to forget all previous grievances. This made eating almost a sacred affair.

#### 1. Milk

The tent dwellers lived on a very simple fare. Since there was little settled agriculture they were required to live from their animals and the little herbage that grew wild. Ready-made food was the milk of goats, ewes, and camels in the order of preference.<sup>4</sup> In the intense heat of this climate the milk had to be used fresh or heated. To make butter the cream was poured into a goat skin bag and rocked against the knee until the butter was formed. This then was melted and boiled, the impurities

. . . . .

1. Cf. Isaiah 42:3.

2. Cf. Numbers 18:19.

3. Cf. G. H. Scherer: *op. cit.*, p. 65.

4. Cf. Albert Baily: *Daily Life in Bible Times*, p. 36.

were skimmed from the surface, and the butter stored for later use. Cheese was also a popular food.<sup>1</sup> The most common food made of milk was "leben" or curds. This was probably what Jael served to Sisera.<sup>2</sup> Abraham treated his guests to curds, milk, and the flesh of a young bullock.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Meat

Meat was not the usual fare. On rare occasions they ate the flesh of bullocks, lambs, and kids. Sometimes these were roasted whole, and so thoroughly done that the meat would readily fall off the bones. It was only for special guests that the fatted calves were killed.<sup>4</sup> Game such as venison was eaten if available.<sup>5</sup> These meats were boiled or roasted on hot stones. Generally they were cooked with herbs and vegetables into a type of stew. This was made by cooking small bits of meat with potatoes, beans, and onions. Meats were always served in the container in which it was cooked. Fish was abundant near the Mediterranean Sea and the Sea of Galilee.<sup>6</sup> This was broiled over coals. Fowl, such as quail, pigeons, and partridges were roasted whole.<sup>7</sup> Some time between the

. . . . .

1. Cf. I Samuel 17:18.
2. Cf. Judges 5:25.
3. Cf. Genesis 18:7-8.
4. Cf. Genesis 18:7; Luke 15:23.
5. Cf. Genesis 25:28.
6. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 51.
7. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 103.

days of Elijah and the birth of Christ the domestic fowl and the everyday use of eggs was introduced into Palestine.<sup>1</sup> Jesus spoke of a son asking his father for an egg.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Agricultural Foods

The Hebrews also depended upon foods which were products of the earth, wherever they could be found. In the oasis moisture and heat helped to produce dates. Figs and grapes could be cultivated. The fruit of the vine was made into wine, which could be kept without refrigeration in this hot climate. Olives cured in strong brine were a regular part of the diet. Sometimes the olives were cracked to hurry the curing process, otherwise the family would have to wait several months before they could have olives with their meals. Raisins were in common use.<sup>3</sup> The seeds of pomegranates were eaten.<sup>4</sup> Anise and mint were used as seasonings. Spices were imported from the East. In the cleft of the rock there might be honey, provided flowers abounded near by. Wheat and barley grew for the farmer who would till the soil. When Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to buy wheat, he sent along gifts for Pharaoh of honey, gum, laudanum, pistachio nuts, and almonds.<sup>5</sup> Lauda-

. . . . .

1. Cf. William Albright: The Archaeology of Palestine, p. 217.
2. Cf. Luke 11:12.
3. Cf. I Samuel 25:18.
4. Cf. Deuteronomy 8:8.
5. Cf. Genesis 43:11.

num was a type of tobacco or opium. The pistachio nut was a part of the cashew family. Locusts were mentioned as the food of John the Baptist; the hind legs were picked off and roasted.<sup>1</sup> The cucumber was in common use at this time.<sup>2</sup> Mellons, leeks, onions, and garlic were a part of the menu. The pulse that Daniel and his friends longed for in their Babylonian captivity was probably a vegetable of Palestine.<sup>3</sup> Jacob used lentils in his famous red stew.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4. Bread

Certain foods had to be prepared. Lot invited his guests to come in and eat cakes of unleavened bread.<sup>5</sup> When Abraham sent Hagar away from his home he sent along bread.<sup>6</sup> Rebekah gave bread with the savory meat to Jacob to present to his blind father, Isaac.<sup>7</sup> Bread and water were the two essentials of life.<sup>8</sup> Famine was described as a time when there was no bread.<sup>9</sup> Prosperity was the time of fullness of bread.<sup>10</sup> Much of the time of the housewife was spent in making this food. The wheat that was brought from the threshing floor must be cleaned from bits of

. . . . .

1. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 104.
2. Cf. Numbers 11:5.
3. Cf. Daniel 1:12.
4. Cf. Genesis 25:34.
5. Cf. Genesis 19:3.
6. Cf. Genesis 21:14.
7. Cf. Genesis 27:17.
8. Cf. Isaiah 3:1.
9. Cf. Lamentations 4:4.
10. Cf. Ezekiel 16:49.

stone, earth, straw, and poisonous tares. This wheat must be sifted carefully.<sup>1</sup> Afterwards the grain was washed and spread out on sheets of skin or cloth on the housetop, or in the open court below to dry. The clean dry grain was then stored in the kitchen in large churn like barrels or vessels made of wicker or clay.<sup>2</sup> Some homes may have had underground cisterns or pits to store the wheat.

To make flour the grain was usually pounded with a pestle and stone mortar.<sup>3</sup> Some times the family had a mill made of two circular stones eighteen to twenty-four inches in diameter.<sup>4</sup> The upper stone could be rotated by hand on the lower one. The lower stone was often convex and made of limestone or basalt. In the center of the lower stone was a pivot which projected through a hole in the middle of the upper stone. The hole was larger than the pivot. The woman poured the grain, a handful at a time, through this hole into the mill. From the upper stone extended a wooden peg which the woman could grasp to revolve the mill.<sup>5</sup> The larger mills were elevated so that a donkey, fastened to a single tree would turn the stones.<sup>6</sup> The size and weight of this stone was illustrated

. . . . .

1. Cf. Luke 22:31b.
2. Cf. Albert Bailey: op. cit., pp. 38-39.
3. Cf. Leviticus 2:14.
4. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 82.
5. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., pp. 98-99.
6. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 260.



by Jesus very forcefully in the story of the millstone.<sup>1</sup> These mills produced the flour for bread. For the unleavened bread the flour would be mixed with water and salt in a wooden or baked clay kneading bowl. The dough was made into flat cakes for baking, usually twelve to sixteen inches in diameter and from one-eighth to one quarter of an inch thick.<sup>2</sup> Unleavened bread was eaten in connection with their feasts or in time of dire need.<sup>3</sup> Leavened bread was made by adding to the dough a lump of leaven saved from the previous baking. The batter stood until the entire mass had been leavened, usually over night. Early in the morning this dough was mixed with more flour, water, and salt and again set aside until the dough was raised.<sup>4</sup> Bread of barley and millet was used by the poorer people.<sup>5</sup> Another interesting bread was cut about six inches in diameter. In the baking process the heat separated the loaf into an upper and lower layer of bread, hollow in the middle. In this loaf the workman would carry olives, figs, and dates as if in a bag.<sup>6</sup> Parched wheat, made of the immature head of wheat, roasted to a dark color, formed a substantial food for these

. . . . .

1. Cf. Mark 9:42.
2. Cf. Exodus 12:34.
3. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op cit., p. 68.
4. Cf. Albert Bailey: op. cit., pp. 38-39.
5. Cf. Elihu Grant: The People of Palestine, p. 78.
6. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 69.

people.<sup>1</sup> The raw grain was often eaten. The disciples of Jesus plucked the ears of grain, rubbed them between their hands, and ate.<sup>2</sup>

To bake the bread a fire was built on a flat stone. When the stone was thoroughly heated the embers were raked off; the cake laid on. To bake the other side this same process was repeated with the cake turned over.

Later bread was baked over a convex sheet of iron, supported on stones six or eight inches above the ground. A fire of thorns or small brush burned underneath this to heat the iron.<sup>3</sup> In the city the bread was sent to a public oven to be baked. This oven might be shared with several of the neighboring families.<sup>4</sup> The women often had to wait for their turn. Here at the oven the women would sit and chat, plying their needle work or embroidery as they waited for the bread to be baked. These public ovens were domed stone huts, the fire being built underneath.

The attitude of these people to bread was almost one of sacredness. It was their staff of life.<sup>5</sup> Hence the bread was never cut with a knife. To cut with a knife would be to cut life itself. Thus the bread was always

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ruth 2:14.

2. Cf. Mark 2:25.

3. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 69.

4. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., pp. 47-48.

5. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 45.

broken and divided between those partaking of the meal.<sup>1</sup> In Lamentations 4:4 we read, "The young children ask bread, and no man breaketh it for them." The expression "breaking of bread" also included eating of the whole meal, whatever food might be served with the bread. "Jesus took bread and blessed it, and broke it, and gave to His disciples."<sup>2</sup> Thus in Acts 20:7 we find these words, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them."

#### 5. Manna

God provided for the Israelites in the wilderness by giving them manna every morning, except on the Sabbath day. Every Saturday a double portion was collected.<sup>3</sup> It came in the form of small, round seeds resembling the hoar frost.<sup>4</sup> It had to be gathered early before the sun rose to prevent melting. If one gathered more than was needed the manna would become wormy and offensive. It was prepared for food by grinding and baking. When they arrived in Canaan other food was plentiful so they no longer needed it. Manna was a miraculous gift of food from God.<sup>5</sup>

. . . . .

1. Cf. James Neil: Pictured Palestine, p. 78.

2. Matthew 26:26.

3. Cf. Exodus 16:4-5.

4. Cf. Exodus 16:14.

5. Cf. William Smith: Dictionary of the Bible, pp. 376-377.

## 6. Water

Water was the second essential food of Palestine. The melting snows of Lebanon and Mount Hermon would sink into the ground and burst forth at various places in springs or fountains to water this thirsty land. From these waters came the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River. In certain places wells were dug into the ground until an underground stream was tapped. Jacob's well of Samaria was a good example of this.<sup>1</sup> In other places it was necessary to dig cisterns to catch the rain water. If these should become dry from delayed rains or if the cistern become cracked,<sup>2</sup> a water famine would ensue.<sup>3</sup> At such time water would be sold in the streets by the measure.

The water was carried to the house in large clay pots supported and balanced on the heads of the women of the household. No wonder the disciples could easily locate the Upper Room where the Passover was to be kept. It would be a rare occasion to find a man carrying a jar of water.<sup>4</sup> The day's supply of water was always carried at twilight, in the cool of the day.<sup>5</sup> The women loved to stand by the wells and fountains to visit and gossip about the day's adventure. Thus the woman at the well in Samaria

. . . . .

1. Cf. John 4:6.
2. Cf. Jeremiah 2:13.
3. Cf. Jeremiah 14:3.
4. Cf. Mark 14:13-16.
5. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 89.

betrayed her unpopularity with the other women by coming to the well at noon time.<sup>1</sup> A small earthen pitcher of water was kept standing on the window sill during the day, where the water was kept cool through the process of evaporation by the breeze. At night this pitcher stood by the head of the bed.<sup>2</sup> Beggars at the door were always thirsty. No village or city could be built where there was no supply of water. Often large cities had only one source for the entire community. These people learned to love the taste of the water from the city fountain. David longed for the water from the well at Bethlehem, when he was a fugitive.<sup>3</sup>

#### 7. Oil

Oil played an important part in the diet of Bible Land people. It was obtained by crushing the olives in a large stone mill. The bulk of the olives were used for this purpose. The oil was stored in clay or bronze jars, or it might be put in cemented cisterns beneath the ground.<sup>4</sup> Oil was essential in the preparation of certain foods. The widow complained to Elijah that she had only a little oil in the cruse. She could not prepare a meal without it.<sup>5</sup>

. . . . .

1. Cf. John 4:6-7.
2. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 70.
3. Cf. II Samuel 23:15.
4. Cf. Elihu Grant: op. cit., p. 80.
5. Cf. I Kings 17:12.

## D. The Clothing

### 1. The Tunic

The important item of clothing was the tunic. This was a long kimona-like dress worn next to the skin. It was made of leather, haircloth, wool, linen, or cotton. Women wore them as well as men.<sup>1</sup> These were often made without sleeves and reached to the knees. The wealthier people would have sleeves in their tunics. Among the poorer classes of people the tunic was often the only garment that was worn in warm weather. People of higher rank might wear it alone in the privacy of their homes, but they would never appear in public without an outer garment. In the Bible the word "naked" is used of men who wore only their tunic.<sup>2</sup> When Jesus sent out the disciples on their internship He told them not to take more than one tunic with them.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes in the Bible this word has been translated coat, which really gives the wrong connotation. It was, however, correctly referred to as a sheet,<sup>4</sup> a linen garment,<sup>5</sup> or a linen cloth.<sup>6</sup>

### 2. The Coat

Several garments were worn over this tunic. The

. . . . .

1. Cf. E. P. Barrows: Sacred Geography and Antiquities, pp. 396-397.
2. Cf. Isaiah 20:2.
3. Cf. Matthew 10:10.
4. Cf. Judges 14:12.
5. Cf. Leviticus 6:10.
6. Cf. Mark 14:5.

simplest one was called a coat. Joseph's coat of many colors was a garment like this.<sup>1</sup> This was similar to the tunic except that it always had sleeves. The sleeves of the coat had long pointed ends which reached almost to the ground. These points were very convenient when working for they could be tied together and thrown over the shoulders, leaving the arms free.<sup>2</sup> The action of baring the arms is an indication of readiness for energetic action.<sup>3</sup>

### 3. The Cloak

The cloak was often mentioned in Scripture. It was similar to the coat in many respects, yet it was a looser and longer kind of garment. It had no sleeves and was not held together by a girdle as was the tunic and the coat. It was also called a robe. When Job heard of the loss of his oxen, sheep, camels, and children, he rent his robe.<sup>4</sup> Hannah made a little robe and brought it to her son every year.<sup>5</sup> David, upon finding King Saul in the cave, cut off a part of the King's robe.<sup>6</sup> Elijah used his robe to strike the waters of the Jordan when he crossed over with Elisha. When Elijah went into heaven, his robe

. . . . .

1. Cf. Genesis 37:3.
2. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 75.
3. Cf. Isaiah 52:10.
4. Cf. Job 1:20.
5. Cf. I Samuel 2:19.
6. Cf. I Samuel 28:14.

became the property of Elisha.<sup>1</sup> The three young men cast into the fiery furnace were clad in their mantles or robes.<sup>2</sup>

The robe was made by taking two lengths of thick woolen material which was sewn together.<sup>3</sup> In some cases the robe might be woven without a seam. This was true of the one which Jesus wore.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4. The Girdle

The tunic was held close to the body by the girdle. Ordinarily this girdle was just a broad leather belt, usually six inches in width and fastened either in a knot, by twisting it around itself, or with a clasp. This was the kind of girdle worn by Elijah,<sup>5</sup> and by John the Baptist.<sup>6</sup> Those who loved fine clothing had girdles made of broad bands of silk, linen, or heavily embroidered material. The girdle was often used to fasten the sword to a man's body.<sup>7</sup> It was also used as a purse in which to keep money.<sup>8</sup> Sometimes food was carried in the girdle. The ink horn of the scribe was kept here.<sup>9</sup> When Jesus

. . . . .

1. Cf. II Kings 1:8.
2. Cf. Daniel 3:21.
3. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 110.
4. Cf. John 19:23.
5. Cf. II Kings 1:8.
6. Cf. Matthew 3:4.
7. Cf. I Samuel 25:13.
8. Cf. II Samuel 18:11.
9. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 112.



said to his disciples, "Let your loins be girded about," He simply meant that they should pick up the long loose ends of their skirt and tuck them in under the girdle so that they would be free to run or move swiftly. It would not be easy to run after the sheep or wild animals with these long flowing robes. Thus in Bible language the phrase "to be girded" means to be ready for action, to be free to move swiftly.<sup>1</sup> Paul spoke of the girdle as a necessary part of the Christian's armor in the fight against sin. Paul knew that the entire armor of the Roman soldier was held in place by the girdle, thus he conceived that the Christian armor should be held in place by the girdle of "truth."<sup>2</sup>

##### 5. The Sandals

Sandals were the common footwear of Bible times. They consisted of a sole of either leather or wood which was fastened to the foot by leather thongs.<sup>3</sup> More often than not the toes were left uncovered. In some cases, however, there might be a covering for most of the foot.<sup>4</sup> In walking over the dusty roads of Palestine the people would have to pause to shake off the dust from their feet. They did this by removing the sandal and slapping it against

. . . . .

1. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 93.
2. Cf. Ephesians 6:14.
3. Cf. Genesis 14:23.
4. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 97.

a stone or a wall.<sup>1</sup> Socks or stockings had no part in the dress of Oriental people. Because they trod in the dirt and dust of the roads, they always removed their sandals on entering the house, or any sacred place.<sup>2</sup> It was the task of the humblest servant to wash the dust from the feet of one who came from a journey.<sup>3</sup> Jesus was willing to serve in this capacity by washing the disciples feet.<sup>4</sup> Because of their contact with various forms of disease and filth, sandals were a sign of degradation,<sup>5</sup> of abasement,<sup>6</sup> or of despising a right.<sup>7</sup>

#### 6. The Turban

When in public the Hebrews always wore a turban. The intense heat of the summer sun made it dangerous to expose oneself to its direct rays. The turban was made of thick material wrapped around the head several times. Job spoke of the turban.<sup>8</sup> Isaiah said that the turban was one of the signs of finery worn by the people. The turban and girdle were often the most ornamental part of the clothing of these people.<sup>9</sup>

. . . . .

1. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 113.
2. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 78.
3. Cf. Luke 7:44.
4. Cf. John 13:3-5.
5. Cf. Psalm 108:9.
6. Cf. John 1:27.
7. Cf. Ruth 4:8.
8. Cf. Job 29:14.
9. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 112.

## 7. The Dress of Women

The law of Moses forbade the men to wear women's clothing and for the women to dress like men.<sup>1</sup> The difference in the dress of the two was in detail rather than the kind of clothing.<sup>2</sup> The women wore the shirt and the cloak or robe, but they used colored needle work of black, yellow, red, and green silk to make them feminine.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes their outer robe was made of silk.<sup>4</sup> Thus these robes would often indicate the distinction of social rank. The women's garments were longer than those worn by the men. The veil was the distinctive apparel of the woman. All of the women wore veils except the maidservants and women of low estate.<sup>5</sup> They usually never laid it aside, except when they were in the presence of the servants or were alone in their quarters.<sup>6</sup> Thus Rebekah, when she saw Isaac approaching her camel caravan covered her face with her veil.<sup>7</sup>

## 8. Ornamentation

The men often carried a cane or a staff. These would vary in design from a plain stick to those that were

. . . . .

1. Cf. Deuteronomy 22:5.
2. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 79.
3. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 108.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 107.
5. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 98.
6. Cf. Ibid., p. 99.
7. Cf. Genesis 24:64-65.

hand carved and highly ornamented at the top. This cane served as a support while walking and as a protection from the wild animals and robbers.<sup>1</sup> Men also wore a ring,<sup>2</sup> which was really a signet ring or seal used to sign documents and letters.<sup>3</sup> Other than the ring and the staff, men wore very little ornamentation.

Among the women this was not nearly so true. Abraham's servant had two bracelets to give to Rebekah.<sup>4</sup> Earrings were worn by the women of Jacob's family.<sup>5</sup> The earrings of the Israelitish women were melted in the wilderness to make the golden calf.<sup>6</sup> Isaiah lists many of the ornaments worn by women:

In that day the Lord will take away the finery of the anklets, the headbands, and the crescents; the pendants, the bracelets, and the scarfs; the headdresses, the armlets, the sashes, the perfume boxes, and the amulets; the signet rings and the nose rings; the festal robes, the mantles, the cloaks, and the handbags; the garments of gauze, the linen garments, the turbans, and veils.<sup>7</sup>

#### 9. Eye Paint

An eye paint, consisting of a paste made from colored powder was used by the women, to give brilliancy to the eyes.<sup>8</sup> Applied to the eyes of children it was

. . . . .

1. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., pp. 99-100.
2. Cf. Luke 22:15.
3. Cf. Genesis 38:18.
4. Cf. Genesis 24:22.
5. Cf. Genesis 35:4.
6. Cf. Exodus 32:2.
7. Isaiah 3:18-23.
8. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 80.

supposed to strengthen them.<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel speaks of women who paint their eyes.<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah tells of women who paint their faces.<sup>3</sup> Jezebel painted her face.<sup>4</sup> This paint was kept in small ornamented jars having a rod attached to the stopper to apply the paint to the eyelashes.<sup>5</sup>

#### E. Summary

The aim of this chapter has been to discover the information necessary to an understanding and appreciation of the homes in which the Israelites lived. The evolution of Bible land homes from the primitive tent of Jabal, Cain, the patriarchs, and the twelve tribes to the more elaborate homes built during the golden age of David, Solomon, and the homes of Jesus' day was shown. Evidence portrayed the importance of the floor, roof, the outside stairs, the upper chamber, the windows, and the doors; all this influenced the life of the people.

The furnishings of these homes varied according to the economic and social standards of the family. Cooking utensils hung on the tent pole or were displayed on the shelves of the stone and brick home. The people slept

. . . . .

1. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 116.
2. Cf. Ezekiel 23:40.
3. Cf. Jeremiah 4:30.
4. Cf. II Kings 9:30.
5. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 117.

on pallets which were rolled up during the day and tucked into a recess in the wall. The homes were heated by a brazier. Light was furnished by the olive oil lamp.

The simple foods were gathered from the trees, the vines, and the crops produced by tilling the soil. Wheat, barley, grapes, olives, raisins, nuts, mellons, leeks, onions, cucumbers, and pomgranites served as table fare for these people.

Meat was not the usual fare, but on rare occasions the flesh of bullocks, lambs, kids, quail, pigeons, partridges, and fowl was eaten. Meat was boiled, broiled, or roasted over hot coals.

Bread was the staple food. It was made with leaven except during feast days and in times of famine. Since bread was their staff of life it was never cut with a knife, for that would be to cut life itself. The bread was always broken.

Water and milk were the simple beverages of the Hebrew people. Water came from the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, underground springs, wells, and cisterns. Delayed rains brought a water famine. Water was carried by the women in large clay pots.

The clothing worn was simple in every detail. Leather, haircloth, wool, linen, or cotton were used according to availability, economic conditions, and social standards. The most important article of clothing was the

tunic. This was held in place by the girdle. Over the tunic a coat, cloak, or robe was worn. Prominent people never appeared in public without an outer garment. To be seen without this apparel was to be "naked" according to Bible standards. The feet were protected from rocks and briars by sandals. No socks or stockings were ever worn. The head was covered with a turban to avoid the intense rays of the Palestinian sun.

Women wore the same kinds of clothing as did the men. However, their tunic and cloaks were longer and richly ornamented with needle work of bright colors. The outer garment was often made of silk or fine linen. The women also used nose rings, ear rings, bracelets, headbands, armlets, pendants, and scarfs. The veil was the distinctive apparel of women. Eye paint was used even in Old Testament times.

In this chapter, word pictures describing the homes, furnishings, food, and clothing have been presented so as to make the culture of the Hebrews vital and alive.

CHAPTER III

THEIR CULTURE



# THE CULTURE OF PALESTINE

## CHAPTER III

### A. Introduction

The customs and manners of the Oriental people have always been an absorbing topic of interest for the Occidental. It was one of the queer tricks of nature that the people of the Orient had not changed in their modes of living appreciably from the days of Abraham through the New Testament times. The climate, natural resources, and the culture were such that change was not the order of the day. Customs and manners were handed down from one generation to the next and were carefully guarded.

Every one of the text books of the Sunday School series under consideration would require a knowledge of the customs and manners of these people which are to be considered in this chapter. The chapter will begin with a discussion of the laws of hospitality that were so unique. There will be an attempt to show how various laws influenced the lives and situations of the Old and New Testament.

There will also be a study of the patriarchal system which began with Abraham and was carried through all of the generations up to New Testament times. This system

created some problems that couldn't be appreciated without a thorough study of their implications.

The laws of betrothal, marriage, and divorce were an interesting part of the culture of these people. Without an appreciation of these laws it would be difficult to understand the Annunciation of Mary,<sup>1</sup> the parable of the Ten Virgins,<sup>2</sup> the question of the Sadducees in regard to the woman with seven husbands,<sup>3</sup> the numerous other incidents in the Old and New Testaments.

Death and the burial of the dead were a vital problem to these people. Here again there were certain customs with which the Sunday School teacher must be conversant in order to understand some of the situations involved.

The Hebrew people were essentially religious. They held many strange and imperfect concepts of God, yet they were far ahead of the neighboring peoples in their religious ideals. This was what made them a separate nation and a "peculiar people".<sup>4</sup> No one can intelligently interpret the stories of Scripture without an adequate knowledge of the background of the religious life of the Bible land people. This chapter will present the rudiments

. . . . .

1. Cf. Luke 1:26-38.

2. Cf. Matthew 25:1-13.

3. Cf. Mark 12:18-23.

4. Cf. Mary Entwistle: op. cit., pp. 177-178.

of their religious concepts, their feasts, their attitudes toward the Sabbath, and their worship in the synagogue and the temple.

No study of culture would give an adequate picture without an insight into the vocations and industries of these people. The actual differences between the Pharisees and the Sadducees must not be ignored. Some of Jesus' teaching cannot be understood without this information.<sup>1</sup> It will explain and emphasize the figurative language in the Parables of the Sower, the Vine, the Branches, and the Husbandman. These stories will take on new meaning as the vocations of the Hebrew people are studied.<sup>2</sup> The religious vocations will be taken first, as they are primary in the understanding of Scripture. Yet the study would not give the complete concept of Hebrew life without a consideration of the purely secular vocations.

## B. Customs of the Home

### 1. Hospitality

The Bible lands have always been known for their hospitality. To the Oriental this was a sacred duty. They believed that a guest in their home was sent to them by God. Perfect strangers were welcomed into the home as eagerly as were the members of the family and friends. The arrival of

. . . . .

1. Cf. D. C. Wyckoff: op. cit., pp. 63-64.

2. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 3.

strangers was a rare occasion.<sup>1</sup> Abraham sat in his tent door watching for guests to come.<sup>2</sup> When he saw the three strangers coming toward his tent, he ran to meet them and welcomed them into his home and fellowship. He asked Sarah, his wife, to make cakes while he prepared the fatted calf and set milk and butter before the company.<sup>3</sup> Job wished for guests when he said, "Or having eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof."<sup>4</sup> The Orientals have a proverb which says, "Every stranger is an invited guest."<sup>5</sup>

The guest in the tent dweller's home shared sleeping quarters with the men.<sup>6</sup> Since the people slept with their clothes on there was little need for privacy.<sup>7</sup> In the small house where there was only one room, the guest ate, was entertained, and slept in this one room. In the larger dwellings a special guest room was provided. This might be the "upper room." The Shunemite woman and her husband built such a room for Elisha that he might have a place to stay while in their home.<sup>8</sup>

When the guest came into the home, the host would bow to the ground in welcome, sometimes even falling to his

. . . . .

1. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 137.
2. Cf. Genesis 18:1.
3. Cf. Genesis 18:2-8.
4. Job 31:17.
5. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 70.
6. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. Cit., p. 93.
7. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 77.
8. Cf. II Kings 4:10.

knees. Each guest would be greeted with a kiss. Jacob kissed his father.<sup>1</sup> Esau kissed Jacob.<sup>2</sup> Joseph kissed his brothers.<sup>3</sup> Aaron kissed Moses.<sup>4</sup> Jonathon and David kissed each other.<sup>5</sup> Hence Jesus said to Simon the Pharisee, "Thou gavest me no kiss."<sup>6</sup> After the greeting the guest would take off his shoes. This was necessary because they would sit on a mat or divan with their feet crossed beneath them.<sup>7</sup> Then the host would bring a basin of water to wash the feet of the guest. The wearing of sandals in this dusty, rocky country would require this practice. If there was no servant to do this menial task the host must do it himself. Abraham washed the feet of his guests.<sup>8</sup> The disciples refused to do this lowly task so Jesus girded himself with a towel and washed their feet.<sup>9</sup> The next duty of the host would be to offer oil to anoint the head of his guest. Olive oil was used in most cases, but sometimes it was mixed with spices. This oil would be a comfort to travelers coming into a home from the heat of a Palestinian sun. David spoke of how refreshing this was when he said, "Thou anointest my head with oil."<sup>10</sup> Simon the Pharisee

. . . . .

1. Cf. Genesis 27:27.
2. Cf. Genesis 33:4.
3. Cf. Genesis 45:15.
4. Cf. Exodus 4:27.
5. Cf. I Samuel 20:41.
6. Luke 7:45.
7. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., pp. 74-75.
8. Cf. Genesis 18:4.
9. Cf. John 13:5.
10. Psalm 23:5.

refused to do this for Jesus when he came into his Galilean home. This was a sign that Jesus was not truly welcomed as a guest.<sup>1</sup>

In the early days of the Christian era it was important for the members to practice this type of hospitality. In the times of persecution the people had to flee for their lives. Hospitality was then a great necessity. "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word."<sup>2</sup> It must have been a comfort to know that they would be welcome any place. A Christian home would be a place of refuge for one who had to flee because of his testimony for Christ. Paul stayed in the house of Priscilla and Aquila while he carried on the work in Corinth.<sup>3</sup> Paul said that one of the qualifications of a bishop was that he should be given "to hospitality".<sup>4</sup> He stressed to laymen that they too, were to be given "to hospitality."<sup>5</sup> Peter told the Christians in his letter to "use hospitality to one another without grudging."<sup>6</sup> John in his third Epistle says, "It is a loyal thing you do when you render service to the brethren, especially to strangers ... you will do well to send them on their journey as befits God's servants."<sup>7</sup> This fostered Christian fellowship and strength-

. . . . .

1. Cf. Luke 7:46.
2. Acts 8:4.
3. Cf. Acts 18:1-3.
4. I Timothy 3:2.
5. Romans 12:13.
6. I Peter 4:9.
7. III John 1:5-6.

ened their faith.

## 2. The Patriarchial System

In the patriarchial system the father was the head of the household. The family was a little kingdom within itself.<sup>1</sup> The father had the supreme authority over the family, even to the right of the life and death of his children, the children's children, and the servants. He also had the moral obligation to protect them. It was his responsibility to administer justice to the members of the family. His orders could not be disputed. The principle duties of the children in this home were obedience and reverence.<sup>2</sup>

Every home must have a father. If he should die, his place was automatically taken by the oldest son. He, then, became the father of the whole family.<sup>3</sup> In some cases the father might designate another of his sons to take his place. Isaac gave this place of authority to Jacob instead of Esau.<sup>4</sup> Judah should have taken over the family instead of Joseph, but Jacob willed it otherwise.<sup>5</sup> David placed the throne in Solomon's hands.<sup>6</sup>

When a man married he brought his bride home to the father's house to live. Hence, the daughters always

. . . . .

1. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 103.
2. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 92.
3. Ibid., p. 92.
4. Cf. Genesis 27:28-29.
5. Cf. Genesis 29:22-26.
6. Cf. I Kings 1:33-34.

left home to go to the house of their bridegroom. Thus the birth of a son was always a welcome event. He would become another defender of the family honor and would continue the father's name. To have no son was an occasion for divorce.<sup>1</sup> The birth of a daughter was often considered a cause for sympathy or an occasion for sorrow.

In the patriarchial home the wife was in a subordinate position. Women were never treated as equals,<sup>2</sup> nor were they ever permitted to eat with the men. The husband and brothers were always served first; the wife and sisters learned to wait and partake of what was left over. On a journey, the man always walked a few steps ahead of the wife so that she might be at a respectful distance. The women as a rule were kept closely confined within the home and watched over with jealousy. The women were not slaves, however. In some cases they did exert a powerful influence over the husbands. Bathsheba,<sup>3</sup> Athaliah,<sup>4</sup> and Jezebel<sup>5</sup> were women who rose to power even in politics. However this was the exception.

### 3. The Birth of a Child

When a child was born it was sprinkled with salt, but was seldom washed.<sup>6</sup> The arms were laid at its side and

. . . . .

1. Cf. W. M. Thomson: The Land and the Book, p. 122.
2. Ibid. p. 122.
3. Cf. I Kings 2:19.
4. Cf. II Kings 11:1.
5. Cf. I Kings 21:7-14.
6. Cf. Ezekiel 16:4.



it was snugly wrapped in bandages of linen or cotton, four or five inches in width and from five to six yards long. A band was also placed under the chin and over the forehead. In this way the child could hardly move a muscle of the hand or foot.<sup>1</sup> Thus Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes. It was believed that this wrapping would make the child healthy and strong. It also made it easy for the mother to carry him. As the child became older he was removed from these swaddling clothes.

#### 4. The Naming of a Child

When a child was named the parents tried to find an expression indicating something connected with birth, gratitude, hopes, or aspirations.<sup>2</sup> All Hebrew names had a meaning. Moses meant "drawn from water", Samuel meant "asked of God", and Cephas meant "rock". It was also a common custom to include a name for God as a part of their children's names.<sup>3</sup> A few examples of such names are: Obadiah - "Servant of Jehovah"; Daniel - "God is my judge"; Elijah - "My God is Jehovah"; and Ezekiel - "God will strengthen."<sup>4</sup> Jewish girls were often named after something beautiful or something virtuous, such as Rachel which meant "lamb", Salome which meant "peace", and Dorcas which meant

. . . . .

1. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 95.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 96.
3. Cf. Fred H. Wight; op. cit., p. 110.
4. Cf. Ibid. p. 110.

"gazelle." Naomi told the women of Bethlehem, "Do not call me Naomi, call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me." Naomi meant "pleasant", while Mara meant "bitter."<sup>1</sup> Often the son added the name of his father after that of his own in order to indicate the family from which he came. Thus Jesus spoke of Peter as Simon bar Jona. The word "bar" indicates "son of."<sup>2</sup> The magician in Paphos was "a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus."<sup>3</sup>

#### 6. The Selection of a Life Mate

The parents selected the bride for the son.<sup>4</sup> The new bride was to become a member of the family clan. Therefore, the whole family was interested in knowing if she would be suitable. Sometimes the parents might consult the bride to see if she were willing to go into this new clan. Rebekah was asked if she would be willing to go and become the wife of Isaac.<sup>5</sup> But the parents felt that they had the right to make the final choice. Marriage demanded a dowry. Wives were regarded by law as property.<sup>6</sup> When a daughter was given in marriage, the family was actually diminishing its efficiency. The unmarried daughters

. . . . .

1. Ruth 1:20-21
2. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 110.
3. Acts 12:6.
4. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 97.
5. Cf. Genesis 24:50.
6. Cf. Albert Bailey: op. cit., p. 194.

would take care of the flocks, work in the fields, or help in other ways. Thus when a young woman married she would increase the efficiency of her husband's clan.

Therefore, the young man who expected to get possession of a daughter must compensate with a dowry.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes a part of the dowry would be given to the bride as a gift.<sup>2</sup> The father often gave gifts to the bride when she left home. Rebekah's father gave her a nurse and maids when she went to Isaac.<sup>3</sup> Caleb gave his daughter a dowry of a field with springs of water.<sup>4</sup>

#### 7. The Betrothal

The betrothal was really a covenant of marriage. The families of the bride and groom would meet with some outside witnesses. The young man would give the bride a ring of gold, or some article of value, or it might be only a document by which he promised to marry the girl. Then he would say, "See by this ring (or token) thou art set aside for me according to the law of Moses and of Israel." This betrothal was as binding as marriage.<sup>5</sup> At least a whole year passed between the betrothal and the actual marriage.

#### 8. The Wedding

The actual marriage consisted simply in coming to

. . . . .

1. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 128.
2. Cf. Albert Bailey: op. cit., p. 194.
3. Cf. Genesis 24:59-61.
4. Cf. Judges 1:15.
5. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 97.

take the bride to the family home to live. Not until the date of the wedding were the couple brought together.<sup>1</sup> The groom would dress in his very best for the great occasion. He would dress as much like a king as possible.<sup>2</sup> Isaiah was thinking of this preparation of the groom when he said, "He hath clothed me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments."<sup>3</sup> Dressed in all of his finery, the groom went with his friends to the house of the bride to bring her to his home.<sup>4</sup>

The adornments of the bride were also a costly affair. Everything possible was done to prepare her to receive her husband. Her hair was braided and interwoven with jewels, if the family could afford it. Often jewels were borrowed from their friends for this occasion.<sup>5</sup> Little wonder that John spoke of the New Jerusalem as a "Bride adorned for her husband."<sup>6</sup> The bride left her father's house in all of her finery and perfume, with a crown on her head.<sup>7</sup> Ezekiel gave a good description of the bride: "I decked thee also with ornaments and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head."<sup>8</sup>

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 97.
2. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 130.
3. Isaiah 61:10.
4. Cf. Albert Bailey: op. cit., p. 195.
5. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 131.
6. Revelation 21:2.
7. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 131.
8. Ezekiel 16:11-12.

There was no religious ceremony in the wedding. The arrival of the bride and groom at his father's house was a signal for feasting. The festivities would continue for a whole week. Friends, neighbors, and relatives would stay in the home during this time.

The bride in the home of her husband's father was valued for her personal worth.<sup>1</sup> She was now legally a piece of clan property. She would be assigned her share of the duties of the household.

#### 9. Death in the Home

Death always brought deep tragedy to these people. Those watching by the bedside would raise a shrieking wail as soon as death came.<sup>2</sup> This was a signal for loud mourning. Friends and relatives crowded into the house and practised all of the customary signs of grief. They tore their hair, beat their breasts, and cried out loudly until sheer physical exhaustion brought on dulness and depression.<sup>3</sup> As each new group of friends came into the home, the wailing raised in volume.<sup>4</sup> They often tried to speak to the departed one or to other members of the family who had died in order to force themselves to cry out afresh.<sup>5</sup> When an unmarried person died, the event was made all the more pathetic by first going through

. . . . .

1. Cf. Albert Bailey: op. cit., p. 196.
2. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 108.
3. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 126.
4. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 108.
5. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 127.

some form of a wedding ceremony.<sup>1</sup> Hired mourners were often employed.<sup>2</sup> Elisha rent his clothes when Elijah was taken into heaven.<sup>3</sup> Amos spoke of putting sackcloth on the body.<sup>4</sup>

The art of embalming had not come into practice in Palestine so the burial occurred on the day of death if at all possible. The body was dressed in a single mantle, or wrapped in a sheet. It was then placed on a bier and carried out to the place of burial. Friends vied with each other for the privilege of acting as bearers.<sup>5</sup> Only men accompanied the body to its resting place. The women could go later if they so desired.<sup>6</sup> The tombs were usually cut out of rock in a family garden. Elaborate ones were sometimes constructed. Joseph of Arimathea asked that the body of Jesus might rest in his garden tomb.<sup>7</sup> Large stones were rolled in front of the tomb to give privacy to the burial place. The poor, however often used caves.<sup>8</sup>

### C. Their Religion

The life of the Jewish people was religious from the cradle to the grave.<sup>9</sup> It was the solemn duty of parents

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid. p. 127.
2. Cf. Edward Day: Social Life of the Hebrews, p. 205.
3. Cf. II Kings 2:12.
4. Cf. Amos 8:10.
5. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 109.
6. Cf. Ibid. p. 109.
7. Cf. John 20:38.
8. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 145.
9. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 158.

to teach their children the commandments of the law. The Law of Moses was most specific at this point. Parents must train their children in the knowledge of the Lord: "Teach them to thy sons and thy son's sons."<sup>1</sup> The meaning of all religious observances must be explained by the father to the children. The father was the priest of the household.<sup>2</sup> It was his responsibility to teach and to train the children to "love the Lord their God." He taught them the Law of Moses. He told them about the Covenant with God and the implications of that relationship. They learned of the marvelous providence of God throughout their history. It was from the father that they heard the promise of a Messiah and of salvation in His name. If the father died this responsibility was passed on to the oldest son.<sup>3</sup>

#### 1. The Altar

The religion in the home usually centered around the altar where animals were sacrificed and offered to God. When Abraham came into Canaan he pitched his tent at Bethel and "there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord."<sup>4</sup> When he came to Hebron he built an altar there.<sup>5</sup> Jacob built an altar at Shechem.<sup>6</sup> God spoke

. . . . .

1. Deuteronomy 4:9.
2. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 118.
3. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 118.
4. Genesis 12:8.
5. Cf. Genesis 13:18.
6. Cf. Genesis 33:18-20.

to him so he went and built an altar at Bethel as his grandfather had done.<sup>1</sup> The altar in these homes helped to produce a sense of sin, a realization of the holiness of God, and an assurance that God could be reached through a sacrifice.<sup>2</sup> Later when God gave the instructions for the "Tent of Witness" in the wilderness, the sacrifices were made at the altar of the Holy Place.<sup>3</sup> After the completion of Solomon's temple in Jerusalem the sacrifices were offered by the priests in the Holy Place of the temple.

## 2. Almsgiving, Prayer, and Fasting

Almsgiving, prayer, and fasting were the chief aspects of worship. Alms were given because the people felt that the poor were so by the will of God and would always be found among the people.<sup>4</sup> Hence he who gave to the poor was lending to the Lord, who would repay his debt.<sup>5</sup> Everyone had to give alms to the beggar on the corner of the street and at the city gate.<sup>6</sup>

Prayer was communion with God. They cried out to the Lord in times of need; thanked the Lord for his blessings; and asked the Lord for guidance. Certain hours were set aside for public prayer. Standing was the usual posture when praying. Three o'clock in the afternoon was a definite time of

.....

1. Cf. Genesis 35:3.
2. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 119.
3. Cf. Genesis 26:1-37.
4. Cf. Deuteronomy 15:11.
5. Cf. Proverbs 19:17.
6. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 113.



prayer at the temple. Noon was also an hour of prayer. Peter prayed at noon in the house of Simon the Tanner in Joppa.<sup>1</sup>

Fasting was also a part of worship. It was observed with various degrees of strictness. Sometimes there was entire abstinence from food.<sup>2</sup> On other occasions it appears to have been only a restriction to a very plain diet.<sup>3</sup> The days of fasting were observed on the second and fifth days of the week. Fasts were an indication of sorrow for sin, of gratefulness to God for his mercy, and of dependence upon God in times of grave danger. Those who fasted frequently dressed in sackcloth, put ashes on their forehead, and went barefoot.<sup>4</sup> Fasting was an indication of the sacrifice of the personal will to God.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. The Feasts

An important part of the religious life of the Hebrews was the pilgrimage to the place of the Sanctuary or temple, as it was later called in Jerusalem. "Thrice a year shall all your men children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel."<sup>6</sup> The whole family could go, but the male members were required to make this pilgrimage.

. . . . .

1. Cf. Acts 10:9.
2. Cf. Esther 4:16.
3. Cf. Daniel 10:3.
4. Cf. I Kings 21:27.
5. Cf. William Smith: op. cit., p. 192.
6. Exodus 34:23.

a. The Feast of the Passover.

The first of these feasts was that of the Passover. It was also referred to as the Feast of "Unleavened Bread." It was held from the fourteenth to the end of the twenty-first of the Jewish month Nisan or what is now April.<sup>1</sup> This was a season of great rejoicing and feverish preparation in the Jewish families. It was the beginning of the Jewish religious year. When the sun set on the fourteenth day, and the stars began to appear, everything must be in readiness for the celebration. The house had been cleaned and all the food prepared. The family were dressed in their newest clothes. The celebration began with the reading of the Scriptures in the Hebrew tongue in a high nasal monotone.<sup>2</sup> The head of the family explained the purpose of the feast and the circumstance under which it was first instituted. The father would ask each of the sons present where they were going and he would receive from each one the same answer, "I am going from the land of Egypt to the land of Jerusalem."<sup>3</sup> Four cups of wine diluted with water were appointed to be drunk during the celebration. It had to be wine of the best quality and free from Gentile contamination.

During the time of preparation for this feast great care was taken to rid the house of leaven and leavened

. . . . .

1. Cf. Exodus 12:6, 18.
2. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 161.
3. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 160.

bread. Every utensil for making, holding, or storing leavened bread had to be removed. In making the unleavened bread, great care was observed that no crumb of leavened bread should fall into the dough.<sup>1</sup> The unleavened bread was eaten in commemoration of the hasty flight from Egypt; haste that would not allow for the ordinary leavened dough to rise.<sup>2</sup> The Passover Lamb was roasted whole. It must be a male and without blemish. The lamb had to be slain at the temple.<sup>3</sup> Any of the uneaten flesh had to be burned after the feast. They also ate bitter herbs in commemoration of the bitter suffering these people experienced at the hands of the Egyptians.<sup>4</sup> The Feast was celebrated in family groups of not less than ten people or more than twenty. The celebration of this feast lasted for eight days.

b. The Feast of Pentecost

The second great feast of the Hebrews was that of the Pentecost. This must not be confused with the Pentecost of the New Testament. The Holy Spirit came upon the disciples on the day of the celebration of the Old Testament feast, hence the term Pentecost was carried over into the Christian Church. The Old Testament Pentecost occurred fifty days after the beginning of the Passover, on the seventh day of the Jewish month Sivan which is about the same

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid. p. 161.
2. Cf. Mary Entwistle: op. cit., p. 169.
3. Cf. William Smith: op. cit., p. 495.
4. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p.160.

as our month of June. It was also called the Feast of Harvest,<sup>1</sup> or the Feast of Weeks.<sup>2</sup> This feast lasted only one day. In the temple offerings were made of bread from the new crop of wheat. Two loaves of this bread were brought to the priest for the "wave" offering before the altar of the Lord.<sup>3</sup> They were permitted to use leaven in their bread for this festival.<sup>4</sup>

c. The Feast of Tabernacles

The third great festival of the Jewish people was the Feast of Tabernacles. This feast began after sunset on the fourteenth of the Jewish month Tishri which is comparable to our October. It was their Thanksgiving Day for the ingathering of the fruits of the summer, especially grain, raisins, figs, and olives.<sup>5</sup> The feast lasted for seven days, yet they always observed the eighth day as a day of holy convocation.<sup>6</sup> During this feast the Jews would erect tabernacles or booths of the branches of palm trees, or reeds upon the roofs of their homes, or in the courtyard as a commemoration of the days when they dwelt in tents in the wilderness. For a whole week they lived out of doors in these booths, or tent houses. It is from these booths that

. . . . .

1. Cf. Exodus 3:17.
2. Cf. Deuteronomy 16:6.
3. Cf. Mary Entwistle: op. cit., p. 171.
4. Cf. Miller and Miller: op. cit., p. 458.
5. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 161.
6. Cf. William Smith: op. cit., p. 679.

the feast received its name. The boughs were plaited together to make the sides and the roof. The front was usually left open to the weather. They tried to make these little booths as beautiful as possible.<sup>1</sup> This was the most joyous of the feasts.<sup>2</sup> All cares were forgotten and laid aside for the moment of celebrating the generosity of God.<sup>3</sup> The people came from all over the land. As they entered the city they marched to the temple in procession, carrying baskets of corn and fruit, singing verses from the Psalms as they wound their way to the temple. All the gifts were placed by the side of the altar as they worshipped God silently. There was much singing and the music of harps, cymbals, and trumpets, for it was a joyous thanksgiving time for mercies past and present.<sup>4</sup>

d. The Feast of Purim

A lesser feast, yet one which meant a great deal was the Feast of Purim. This was celebrated by the Jews in commemoration of the frustration of the plot to massacre the Jews through the wisdom of Esther, the queen, and Mordecai, her uncle, during the captivity in Babylon.<sup>5</sup> This feast did not have to be celebrated in the temple at Jerusalem as the other feasts did. The story of Esther was

. . . . .

1. Cf. Mary Entwistle: op. cit., p. 170.
2. Cf. Deuteronomy 16:13-16.
3. Cf. Miller and Miller: op. cit., p. 458.
4. Cf. Mary Entwistle: op. cit., p. 171.
5. Cf. Esther 9:26.

always read in the synagogue during the Feast of Purim.<sup>1</sup>  
The Festival lasted for two days and was regularly observed on the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month Adar which is our September.

e. The Feast of Lights

The Feast of Lights was celebrated in commemoration of the glad time when Judas Maccabaeus drove out the enemy from the temple. The Greeks had conquered Palestine and set up idolatry in the temple and had defiled its holy place. The Jews rallied under Maccabaeus, drove out the enemy, and cleansed the temple. The temple was rededicated and a great service of praise and thanksgiving was held. This event happened between the two Testaments, hence its story is not recorded in Scripture.<sup>2</sup> During this feast the temple was ablaze with lights as the worshippers carried palm leaves in procession. The stories of Judas Maccabaeus were related by the fathers to their sons. This feast could also be celebrated in the synagogues.

The Lord made a special promise to those going to the temple for the celebration of its great feasts: "Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord."<sup>3</sup> With so many men gone, God promised to look after their homes from possible attack of

. . . . .

1. Cf. Mary Entwistle: op. cit., pp. 171-172.
2. Cf. Mary Entwistle: op. cit., p. 172.
3. Exodus 34:24.

an enemy while the family was on this pilgrimage. Elkanah was accustomed to take his wife and make this journey. "And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord God in Shiloh."<sup>1</sup> It was on one of these pilgrimages that Hannah prayed for a son, and in due time the baby Samuel was born. The most famous journey to the feasts, of course, was the one made by Joseph, Mary, and the twelve-year-old boy Jesus. "Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast."<sup>2</sup> How Jesus must have been filled with anticipation as they set out on the journey to the Holy City! But to Him, of course, the greatest joy was to be in His Father's House. Every Jewish boy must make this journey to Jerusalem at his twelfth birthday to be made a "son of the Covenant." The father would thank God that he was now relieved from the moral responsibility for the boy, as at twelve years he received the spirit of discernment of good and evil.<sup>3</sup>

#### 4. The Sabbath

The Sabbath began on Friday evening at sundown. Friday was called the Day of Preparation. No business could be started unless it were finished before evening. On Fri-

. . . . .

1. I Samuel 1:3.

2. Luke 2:41-42.

3. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 158.

day all of the food for the Day of Rest must be prepared. The Sabbath was never a fast day, hence much food would be prepared.<sup>1</sup> Elaborate means were made to keep the food warm as no fire could be built.<sup>2</sup> As soon as sun set, the oil lamp would be lighted, family prayers were prayed, and stories from the Old Testament were related to the children. On the Sabbath morning the entire family went to the synagogue service. The synagogue would be the most imposing building in the community. No structure was permitted to look "down on the synagogue."<sup>3</sup> The father would wash his hands in the court in preparation for the service, and then enter the center door with the rest of the men of the congregation. The women and the boys under twelve years of age had to go around to the side where they found some stone steps which led up to a second story. Here they entered a gallery that ran around three sides of the building. In front of the gallery was a wooden grill so the women and boys could see and hear the reader, but they themselves would be barely discernible. This was the women's gallery.<sup>4</sup>

In the middle of the synagogue floor was a structure about twice the height of a man. It was called the "ark."<sup>5</sup> On top of this ark was the scroll or their copy of

. . . . .

1. Cf. Albert Bailey: op. cit., p. 250.
2. Cf. Exodus 35:3.
3. Cf. Albert Bailey: op. cit., p. 250.
4. Cf. Albert Bailey: op. cit., p. 252.
5. Cf. William Smith: op. cit., p. 673.



the Old Testament. When the service began, the Ruler of the Synagogue climbed the ladder-like stairs and took his seat near the scrolls. He was not a teacher but was held in high honor in the community. It was his duty to keep the sacred Scrolls in good condition. He appointed the reader and the speaker for the day. If there were not ten men present, they could not hold a service.<sup>1</sup> If there were more than ten men the service began by the appointment of the reader. The reader stepped up to the desk to lead the congregation in the reciting of the "Shema"<sup>2</sup> which was their confession of faith or creed:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.<sup>3</sup>

The men chanted these words in unison.<sup>4</sup> When this was completed the ruler took from its place in the ark the "Scroll of the Law" and gave it to the reader. The Scroll was usually made of the skin of a goat, dried and scraped until it was as thin as a sheet of paper.<sup>5</sup> On this the Old

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 252.
2. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., pp. 121-122.
3. Deuteronomy 6:4-9.
4. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 114.
5. Cf. William Smith: op. cit., p. 759.

Testament was written by hand. This long narrow sheet of parchment was fastened to spindles, one on each end. Thus the reader had to unroll or roll the Scroll until he found the passage that he wanted to read. When he finished reading he rolled up the Scroll and gave it back to the Ruler of the Synagogue. After the law was read the speaker gave the sermon or explanation of the law.

The people were very rigid in their observance of the Sabbath. No work was permitted, but the problem was to determine what was work. They divided work into thirty-nine classes such as sowing, plowing, reaping, baking, and spinning.<sup>1</sup> Under each of these heads there were many special classes. To tie a camel driver's knot or a boatman's knot was sin; but if a man could tie or untie any knot with one hand that was not work. A fire could not be lighted.<sup>2</sup> No one could swat a fly on the Sabbath day as that was hunting. No woman was permitted to comb her hair. A stick could not be pushed forward into the earth, for that was plowing, but it would be all right to pull this same stick from behind. No one could walk more than a mile and two-fifths on the Lord's Day.<sup>3</sup> To walk two miles was sin. There was the constant concern whether or not one might eat an egg laid on the Sabbath.

. . . . .

1. Cf. Albert Bailey: *op. cit.*, p. 250.
2. Cf. William Smith: *op. cit.*, p. 592.
3. Cf. Samuel Fallows, *Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. III, p. 1501.

Children were not allowed to run or skip in play. Weaving was work, and forbidden: tying or untying knots or putting two threads together were weaving actions and therefore also forbidden. If a man was sick unto death he might receive help, but minute rules governed even the use of medicine and remedies. He who had a toothache must not rinse his mouth with vinegar (as a gargle), but he could wash his mouth with vinegar (that is, swallow it), for that would be like taking food.<sup>1</sup> There was always danger in breaking the Sabbath rest.<sup>2</sup>

#### 5. The Tabernacle

During the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Joseph there was no appointed place of worship. Sacrifices were offered on the family altar. The first tabernacle or Tent of Meeting was set up by Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. This tent house was dedicated to communion with God. It was made so that it was easily moved from one place to the other as they wandered in this wilderness. The story of its building is given at great detail in the Book of Exodus, chapters twenty-five through twenty-eight. The decorations and furnishings symbolized the religious beliefs of the time. They were designed to show the people that God was holy, and righteous.

. . . . .

1. Cf. Mary Entwistle: op. cit., pp. 182-183.
2. Cf. Albert Bailey: op. cit., p. 255.

## 6. The Ark of the Covenant

Into this Tent of Meeting was placed the Ark of the Covenant. It was a wooden chest, lined with gold, about four and one-half feet in length and two feet in height and breadth.<sup>1</sup> The cover was of pure gold. Into this ark were placed the two tablets of stone, a pot of manna,<sup>2</sup> and the rod of Aaron.<sup>3</sup> This movable Tabernacle with its Ark of the Covenant was in use until the Hebrews were finally settled in the Promised Land. Then a more permanent home was made to house the Ark. The city of Shiloh became the headquarters of the priests and a building of brick or stone became the place of worship.<sup>4</sup>

## 7. The Temple of Solomon

When Jerusalem became the center of this great civilization under the reign of David, the king longed for a beautiful temple where God could be worshipped and the Ark could be set up. But David, himself, was not permitted to build the temple.<sup>5</sup> This task was left to his son Solomon. Solomon had magnificent ideas about construction and adornment. Hiram, the King of Tyre, furnished the cedar for the temple. He had skilled workmen which he promised

. . . . .

1. Cf. Exodus 25:10-22.
2. Cf. Exodus 16:11-18.
3. Cf. Numbers 17:1-11.
4. Cf. Mary Entwistle: op. cit., p. 185.
5. Cf. II Samuel 7:4-16.

to loan to Solomon. Thus all of the artistry and skill of Phoenicia went into this temple. It was an oblong shape, about one-hundred and twenty-four feet long and fifty-five feet wide. The temple faced the east. The great folding door of the temple opened onto a porch. On either side of the door stood a large bronze pillar.<sup>1</sup>

The temple was divided into two parts, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, the latter being the smaller of the two. A heavy curtain separated the two rooms. The Holy Place was furnished with an altar table. Only the high priest was permitted to go into the Holy of Holies and he could enter only once a year to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat (the cover of the Ark). Two great figures of cherubim were carved from olive wood and overlaid with gold and set on either side of the Ark. The wings were so great that they touched each other and the outer wings touched the walls.<sup>2</sup>

In the courts around the temple stood the altars, lavers, and water tanks used in the sacrifices.<sup>3</sup> It took seven and one-half years to build this temple. It stood for 350 years. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the temple in the year 586 B. C.<sup>4</sup> All of its treasures were carried away to Babylon.

. . . . .

1. Cf. I Kings 7:15.
2. Cf. I Kings 6:23-28.
3. Cf. William Smith: op. cit., p. 689.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 689.

### 8. The Temple of Zerubbabel

For nearly fifty years the lovely Temple of Solomon lay in ruins. In the meantime Babylon fell to the Persians. Cyrus, the great Persian King, gave permission for the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city, its walls, and the temple. This movement back to Jerusalem was led by Zerubbabel.<sup>1</sup> The temple was apparently built on the same pattern as Solomon's. However, the magnificance of the first temple was never achieved. The returning exiles were poor. They could not hire the skilled workmen that Solomon had. The sacred Ark was gone. It probably was burned by Nebuchadnezzar or taken away because of its gold. When the old men who had seen the glory of Solomon's temple saw the new one they wept because of its inferiority.<sup>2</sup> The second temple stood for five centuries. The Greeks robbed and defiled it. The Romans plundered it mercilessly when they captured the city.<sup>3</sup>

### 9. The Temple of Herod

When Herod was appointed governor of Judea he promised the people that he would build for them a new temple. The work started about 20 B. C. which was about

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ezra 4:1-2.

2. Cf. Ezra 3:10-13.

3. Cf. Mary Entwistle: op. cit., pp. 187-188.

sixteen years before the birth of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> It was not really completed until around 62 - 64 A. D., just a few years before it was destroyed. The actual construction required about eight years for the outside buildings.<sup>2</sup> This time Roman architecture was used. No doubt Herod used many of the stones of the first two temples. However, he covered his temple with white marble gilded with acroteria. It was larger than the temple of Solomon. The inner enclosure was about 270 feet wide and 360 feet long. It was adorned with porches and magnificent gateways. Beyond this was an outer enclosure measuring 600 feet each way with porticoes of great splendor. This temple occupied an area four and five times greater than the two temples that preceded it.<sup>3</sup>

The temple had nine gates. The eastern gate was made from Corinthian brass and was called the "Gate Beautiful."<sup>4</sup> The inner courts included courts for the women, the men, and the priests. The outer courts were paved with stone. Here the buying, selling, and the exchange of money was permitted. The Gentiles might walk in here freely without hindrance. The colonades around the sides of the outer court were open places where people would gather for discussion. Here the doctors of law and

. . . . .

1. Cf. William Smith: op. cit., pp. 690-691.
2. Cf. Archibald Henderson: Palestine, p. 147.
3. Cf. William Smith: op. cit., pp. 690-691.
4. Acts 3:2.

other learned men gathered to interpret the law. It was here that Jesus was probably talking when His parents left for Nazareth. This lovely temple was destroyed in the year 70 A. D. under the siege of the Romans. Since that date there has never been a temple to the Jewish faith in Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup>

#### 10. The Synagogue

During the Babylonian exile the Jews felt the need of coming together to talk over the things of God, and to pray for their deliverance and restoration to the homeland. The Sabbath day was the logical time for quiet reciting and studying of the law. At first probably homes were used for meeting places. Later special buildings were erected for this purpose. These were called synagogues. When the Jews traveled from place to place they looked for people of their own nationality. The synagogue was the logical place to find this fellowship. While on his missionary journeys Paul always went to the synagogue to preach.<sup>2</sup>

In the synagogue the men with the most learning helped those with little or none. Not all read the scrolls, but all took part in the chanting of the psalms. These synagogues were the center of learning. Little boys went

. . . . .

1. Cf. Mary Entwistle: op. cit., p. 189.
2. Cf. Mary Entwistle: op. cit., pp. 189-190.



every day to learn to read Hebrew and the scrolls. Services were held every Sabbath day. Prayer, praise, reading of Scriptures, and instruction found its place in the service. If a distinguished visitor came to the synagogue he was invited to speak.<sup>1</sup> Thus Paul was able to give his Christian witness in many cities.<sup>2</sup> It was when Jesus preached in the synagogue of Nazareth that His own people rejected Him.<sup>3</sup>

#### 11. The Early Christian Churches

The earliest gathering place for the Christians was in the homes of its members. The church in Jerusalem met in the home of Mary, the mother of Mark.<sup>4</sup> In Philippi the church met in the home of Lydia.<sup>5</sup> Priscilla and Aquila opened their home for a congregation.<sup>6</sup> Paul asked Philemon to greet the "church in your house."<sup>7</sup> Joseph P. Free in his book, Archaeology and Bible History, says,

The earliest church which has yet been excavated and dated with certainty comes from the third century A. D. at Dura in Mesopotamia, on the Euphrates River. This was merely a room in a house which had been set apart and furnished as a chapel for worship.<sup>8</sup>

. . . . .

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 191.
2. Cf. Acts 13:14-15.
3. Cf. Luke 4:16-30
4. Cf. Acts 12:12.
5. Cf. Acts 16:40.
6. Cf. I Corinthians 16:9.
7. Philemon 1:2.
8. Joseph P. Free: Archaeology and the Bible, p. 335.

## 12. Music and Religion

Music played a very important part in the religious life of these people. The singing voice was accompanied by instrumental music. Jubal seemed to be the pioneer maker of such instruments. The Bible says, "He was the father of all such as handle the harp and the pipe."<sup>1</sup> Jubal was not too many generations from Adam, hence we assume that music soon played an important part in the religious lives of these people. The trumpets used were in three forms. The earliest ones were made of the horn of an ox or a ram. A second form was curved into a metallic form similar to an ox horn. A later form was straight like the trumpets today.<sup>2</sup> God commanded Moses to make two silver trumpets to call the people together.<sup>3</sup> The year of the Jubilee was ushered in by the blowing of trumpets.<sup>4</sup> The timbrel was used for banquets and for religious gatherings.

In the victory over the Egyptians at the Red Sea, Miriam, the sister of Moses, went out with the timbrel in her hand. All of the women followed her to sing and dance.<sup>5</sup> This timbrel was a circular hoop made either of

. . . . .

1. Genesis 4:21.
2. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., pp. 230-231.
3. Cf. Numbers 10:2.
4. Cf. Leviticus 25:8-9.
5. Cf. Exodus 15:20.

wood or brass and covered with skin drawn tightly, and with bells hung around it. The pipe used by the shepherd was a reed. The flute was a double pipe. The harp was similar to the lyre. These harps were made with a sound form at the base. From the end of this sound form two upright rods, curved or straight, rose up and were connected by a cross piece. The strings were stretched from the base upwards to the cross piece.<sup>1</sup> The most famous player of the harp was David. The "organ" was really a pipe and was more like the flute than any other instrument. When Jesus came into Jairus' home he saw the flute played.<sup>2</sup> The psaltery and viol were stringed instruments. There is no way of knowing their exact shape. The cymbal consisted of two large and broad brass plates of convex form which when clanged together made a ringing sound.<sup>3</sup> The bagpipe was also used.<sup>4</sup>

The Book of Psalms was really a hymn book. Psalms were sung antiphonally by dividing the company into two bands. One group sang a phrase and the other group gave the response. All united on the final line.<sup>5</sup>

. . . . .

1. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 233.
2. Cf. Matthew 9:23.
3. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 234.
4. Cf. Daniel 3:5.
5. Cf. Ezra 3:2.

## D. Their Livelihood

### 1. Religious Occupations

The Orient has always been deeply religious. To be without religion, for these people, was to live in a moral void. Scepticism was considered the self defense of a disobedient heart. To deny or to prove the existence of God was considered impossible.<sup>1</sup> Because of this strong emphasis on religion, many of the people were engaged in religious work. In order to appreciate the background of the Hebrews it is necessary to know something about these religious occupations.

#### a. Prophets

The prophets were a special group of people called and chosen by God to interpret His will. They were seers, servants of God, and interpreters of the divine will.<sup>2</sup> With a sensitive conscience and a deep communion with God each prophet was given the power to protest against the social sins of his day. Amos preached against the corruptions of Samaria. Isaiah spoke against the religious and political iniquity of Jerusalem. The prophets lived in bands or schools. When Saul was king they lived at Gibeah. Samuel and his prophets lived at Ramah.<sup>3</sup>

. . . . .

1. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., pp. 155-156.
2. Cf. Miller and Miller: op. cit., p. 337.
3. Cf. I Samuel 19:19-20.

Elijah and Elisha lived at Gilgal.<sup>1</sup> The greatest of the prophets was Jesus who was the fulfillment of all Prophecy.

b. Priests

Priests were the most influential members of the society of the Bible lands.<sup>2</sup> They were the holiest of the religious leaders, entrusted with the sacrifices at Jerusalem and the temple. The priests who lived at Jerusalem dwelt in large palaces and had enormous staffs to assist them. Some were devout and sincere in their service to the Lord, such as Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist. The priests were permitted to go into the Holy Place of the temple to offer the sacrifices at the appointed times. They also handled the sacred treasures. Priests were selected for their physical fitness and good character.<sup>3</sup> They worked in groups or shifts. There were twenty-four groups of priests, and each group was on duty at the temple for seven days at a time.<sup>4</sup> Thus Zechariah was fulfilling his service as priest when the angel came to foretell the birth of his son.

c. Levites

The Levites were entrusted with the care of the property of the temple. They originated in the days of

. . . . .

1. Cf. II Kings 4:38.
2. Cf. Miller and Miller: op. cit., p. 338.
3. Cf. Mary Entwistle: op. cit., p. 192.
4. Cf. Luke 1:8-9, 23.

Moses and were chosen from the tribe of Levi. Their duty was to care for the Tabernacle or the Tent of Witness in the wilderness.<sup>1</sup> The Levites did not inherit any part of the Promised Land; hence, they owned no property nor could they cultivate any land.<sup>2</sup> They lived from the offerings paid to them by the people. In a sense these Levites were the temple police or the "go-betweens" for the priests and the laity. It was their duty to chant in the temple choir and to take part in the great processions.<sup>3</sup>

d. Scribes

The task of the scribes and lawyers was to interpret the law. Ezra was the first scribe.<sup>4</sup> He introduced a new set of sacred rules from Babylon which were called the "priestly code."<sup>5</sup> The people had developed a great reverence for the Hebrew law. However, as the scribes grew in importance they became arrogant, hungry for compliments and jealous of their position in the Sanhedrin.<sup>6</sup> They were domineering in the synagogues. Scribes also served as teachers of the law, gathering about them pupils whom they compelled to memorize the sacred law.

The scribes became expert copiests of the Scripture and of the interpretation of the same.<sup>7</sup> Jesus poured

. . . . .

1. Cf. Mary Entwistle: op. cit., p. 193.
2. Cf. Miller and Miller: op. cit., p. 338.
3. Cf. Mary Entwistle: op. cit., p. 193.
4. Cf. Ezra 7:6.
5. Cf. Miller and Miller: op. cit., p. 339.
6. Cf. Ibid.
7. Cf. Ibid.

out His greatest condemnation against them.<sup>1</sup> He called them hypocrites, whited sepulchres, offspring of vipers, blind guides, and extortioners. The scribes retaliated by endeavoring with the help of the priests to put Jesus to death.<sup>2</sup>

e. Doctors of the Law

The Doctors of the Law had specialized in the sacred statutes.<sup>3</sup> They were able jurists. Gamaliel was probably the most famous person in this class.<sup>4</sup>

f. Pharisees

The Pharisees were a Jewish party who used their power for political purposes.<sup>5</sup> They were the strictest religious sect and were remembered for their extreme nationalism. They protested vigorously against anything that was non-Jewish. Therefore, the Pharisees became very uncharitable about the observation of the laws and regulations of the Jewish religion. They would adhere to the very last jot and tittle of the law, and were anxious to maintain tradition at all costs. This group, too, was bitterly opposed to Jesus.

The Pharisees carefully avoided contamination. They could not buy from or sell to anyone but a member of their order, nor have social dealings with anyone outside

. . . . .

1. Cf. Matthew 23:1-36.
2. Cf. Luke 22:2.
3. Cf. Luke 5:17.
4. Cf. Acts 5:35.
5. Cf. Miller and Miller: op. cit., p. 339.

of their group. They wore long fringes on their robes in order to show that they were separate from other Jews, and prayed long prayers in public places to be heard of men. Jesus condemned them for their hypocrisy and falsity.<sup>1</sup>

g. Sadducees

The Sadducees cared nothing about tradition.<sup>2</sup> They were an aristocratic, priestly party, and did not believe in a personal resurrection from the dead, in spirits, or in angels.<sup>3</sup> They were in reality the modernists of their day opposing Jesus because of His claims to the resurrection and the Messiahship, which they feared might menace their own power. In politics, the Sadducees sided with the Roman rulers, and had little to do with the ordinary people.<sup>4</sup>

h. Rabbis

The rabbi was a teacher or master, deserving of great respect.<sup>5</sup> During the time of Jesus he usually presided over the temple. The disciples addressed Jesus as "Rabboni."<sup>6</sup> Nicodemus, a ruler of the synagogue, said to Jesus, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God."<sup>7</sup>

. . . . .

1. Cf. Mary Entwistle: op. cit., p. 195.
2. Cf. Miller and Miller: op. cit., p. 339.
3. Cf. Acts 23:8.
4. Cf. Mary Entwistle: op. cit., p. 195.
5. Cf. Miller and Miller: op. cit., p. 339.
6. John 20:16.
7. John 3:2.



## 2. Secular Occupations

A study of the trades and professions of the Hebrew people is necessary to understand their social and religious backgrounds. The trades of the Orient were remarkable for the skill shown in the use of simple tools and the excellent work produced by their rude instruments. These people were expert artisans in their crafts. The same work was usually engaged in by father and son from generation to generation. Sometimes the family developed trade secrets which were closely guarded.<sup>1</sup> The artisans took great pride in their work, and developed their trade into a skill.

### a. The Potter

The making of pottery was one of the most important trades of the Bible Lands. Large jars were needed to carry water, to store oil, honey, and meal. Vessels of copper and bronze were very expensive. Leather was unsatisfactory. Thus, there was a real demand for clay pottery. However, these clay jars broke easily. It was necessary to replace them constantly. The prophet Jeremiah spoke of visiting the potter.<sup>2</sup> The clay used in making these pots was trodden under foot so that it might be the right consistency.<sup>3</sup> Isaiah spoke of the treading of the clay.<sup>4</sup>

. . . . .

1. Cf. G. M. Mackie: op. cit., p. 57.
2. Cf. Jeremiah 19:2.
3. Cf. Albert Bailey: op. cit., p. 188.
4. Cf. Isaiah 41:25.

When this was accomplished the potter brought the clay into his crude workshop where the potter's wheel stood by a heavy wooden bench. The potter's wheel consisted of two flat circular wooden wheels supported on an axle or wooden stick standing up from the center of the lower disc.<sup>1</sup> The lower wheel was put into action by the foot. This in turn began the spinning of the upper wheel in a horizontal motion. A small lump of clay was put on this revolving upper wheel. As it turned the soft clay was shaped into a conelike vessel. The thumb was used to make a hole in the top of the whirling clay.<sup>2</sup> This opening was widened until it was the desired size of the jar wanted. If necessary, water was sprinkled on the clay to keep it moist and pliable. A small piece of wood in the right hand was used to smooth the outside of the vessel. This was also used to give the pottery a grooved or rough surface if that was desired. Jeremiah, the prophet, spoke of the potter's wheel.<sup>3</sup>

Sometimes the vessel would not have the desired shape, or it might have become marred in the process of shaping. The potter then crushed the vessel into a lump, softened it with water and began again. Jeremiah spoke of the "vessel that . . . was marred."<sup>4</sup> Paul said, "Hath not

. . . . .

1. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 151.
2. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 204.
3. Cf. Jeremiah 18:3.
4. Jeremiah 18:4.

the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?"<sup>1</sup> The finished vessels were put on a shelf, protected from the sun, but opened to the wind so that they would slowly set in shape.<sup>2</sup> When a sufficient number of jars had been prepared they were put in a small circular kiln or oven. The fire hardened the clay to make it fairly strong. Nahum speaks of the brickkiln.<sup>3</sup> Some of the pottery was glazed before baking.<sup>4</sup> However, water jars were left unglazed, so that the process of evaporation would keep the water cool.<sup>5</sup>

This type of pottery was very brittle and broke easily. No wonder the Bible writers spoke of God's divine judgment like the "breaking of a vessel." "Thou shalt break them in pieces like the potter's vessel."<sup>6</sup> "As the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers."<sup>7</sup> "I will break this people and this city as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again."<sup>8</sup>

The broken pieces were often used by the people, even if broken. Isaiah said:

And He shall break it as the breaking of the potter's vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare:

. . . . .

1. Romans 9:20-21.
2. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 50.
3. Cf. Nahum 3:14.
4. Cf. Proverbs 26:23.
5. Cf. Albert Bailey: op. cit., p. 188.
6. Psalms 2:9.
7. Revelation 2:27.
8. Judges 19:11.

so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water out of the pit.<sup>1</sup>

These potsherds were used in carrying hot coals, in draining a pit, as ladles in filling vessels, and as drinking cups. The sherds were also used in recording memoranda of business transactions. Many of these have been uncovered by the archaeologists.<sup>2</sup>

### c. The Carpenter

The work of the carpenter was done at his bench. Isaiah mentions four tools that were used by this artisan. "The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it with a line: he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass."<sup>3</sup> The rule was no doubt a measuring line. The line was probably a stylus taking the place of a pencil.<sup>4</sup> The plane would smooth the lumber, and the compass was an instrument for making a circle. In Deuteronomy we read of the ax that was used to hew down the timber.<sup>5</sup> The awl was in common use at that time.<sup>6</sup> They used a saw made from sharp flint stones placed in a row. Later the saws were made from thin pieces of metal.<sup>7</sup> Isaiah spoke of the saw.<sup>8</sup> Jeremiah referred to the use of hammer and nails.<sup>9</sup>

. . . . .

1. Isaiah 30:14.
2. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 205.
3. Isaiah 44:13.
4. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 208.
5. Cf. Deuteronomy 19:5.
6. Cf. Exodus 21:6.
7. Cf. George Barton: op. cit., p. 152.
8. Cf. Isaiah 10:15.
9. Cf. Jeremiah 10:4.

These rough tools were used to make the yokes for the oxen, plows, tables, chairs, benches, chests, wooden locks, keys and sandals.<sup>1</sup> The carpenter was called upon to make the wooden sledge for the threshing floor, the crude frames for the doors and windows, and to lay the beams to support the earthen roofs of their buildings.<sup>2</sup>

d. Fishermen

Fishing was an important vocation of the Bible land people. Bethsaida on the northern shore, where the Jordan River entered the Sea of Galilee, and the other Bethsaida near Capernaum were the best fishing places along the Sea.<sup>3</sup> The Mediterranean Sea furnished much fishing for those who lived along its coast. The Bible speaks of the Nile River as being a good fishing ground.<sup>4</sup> In the wilderness the Israelites remembered the "fish they did eat in Egypt."<sup>5</sup>

Hooks were used for catching fish. Peter caught with a hook the fish in which he found the coin to pay the temple tax.<sup>6</sup> Isaiah says, "The fishers shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament."<sup>7</sup> Amos spoke of this also when he said, "He will take you

. . . . .

1. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 209.
2. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 43.
3. Cf. Miller and Miller: op. cit., p. 346.
4. Cf. Numbers 11:5.
5. Numbers 11:5
6. Cf. Matthew 17:27.
7. Isaiah 19:8.

away with hooks, and your prosperity with fishhooks."<sup>1</sup>  
Archaeologists have discovered these fishhooks in Galilee.<sup>2</sup>  
Job refers to another way of catching fish. "Canst thou  
fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish  
spears?"<sup>3</sup> Thus the custom of spearing fish is very old.  
Peter and Andrew were casting nets into the sea when Jesus  
met them and called them to be his disciples.<sup>4</sup> Miller and  
Miller in their book, Encyclopedia of Bible Life, describes  
this kind of net:

This casting net was draped over the arm of the fisher-  
man who stood on the shore or waded into the water.  
This net was skillfully whirled around and allowed to  
fall in a teal shape or cone; its lead weights pulled  
it to the bottom so that it would enclose the fish.<sup>5</sup>

These nets were always washed after they were used and hung  
out in the sun to dry. The fishermen had to keep constant  
watch over the nets so that rips and tears were mended  
immediately. James and John were mending their nets when  
Jesus called them.<sup>6</sup> Jesus spoke of the dragnet which was  
"cast into the sea and gathered of every kind: which when  
it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered  
into vessels, but cast away the bad."<sup>7</sup> This was the type  
of seine which had floats on the top and weights on the

. . . . .

1. Amos 9:2.
2. Cf. George Barton: op. cit., p. 154.
3. Job 41:7.
4. Cf. Mark 1:16-17.
5. Miller and Miller: op. cit., p. 346.
6. Cf. Matthew 4:21-22.
7. Matthew 13:47-48.

bottom. Sometimes these nets were worked with two boats, especially out in deep waters.

e. The Mason

Masonry was always an important work among the people of the Bible. Masons were clever in shaping stones and building arches.<sup>1</sup> Jesus told of the good mason who "dugged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock."<sup>2</sup> The plumbline was used to insure a perpendicular wall. Amos spoke of this instrument: "Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel."<sup>3</sup> This tool was simply a small piece of metal or stone fastened on the end of a line. When suspended over the stone wall the line would just barely touch the wall. This was the guide for laying the successive layers of stone.<sup>4</sup> Ezekiel spoke of a mason using a "measuring reed."<sup>5</sup> A cane was used by the mason to lay the foundations of the walls in a straight line and to measure the spaces between the doors and windows.<sup>6</sup>

The first task of a mason was to dig a deep, wide trench. Into this, stone and lime was packed for the foundation. When the first layer of stone was laid above the foundation, a large square stone was laid at each

. . . . .

1. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 44.
2. Luke 6:48.
3. Amos 7:8.
4. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 45.
5. Ezekiel 40:3.
6. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 218.

corner to bind the walls together.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, a thin square stone was often placed at the top of each corner to bind the top course of stones together. This was the head of the corner. A stone rejected as too thin for the main wall was often found to be just the right stone for this purpose.<sup>2</sup> Thus Jesus was referred to as the stone which the builders rejected, yet He became the chief corner stone.<sup>3</sup>

f. The Metal Worker

Metal workers had an early origin in the Scriptures. "Tubal Cain, the forger of cutting instruments of brass and iron" appears in the fourth chapter of Genesis.<sup>4</sup> Thus in the first few generations after Adam, men had learned the use of metal crafts. In the days of King Saul the Philistines placed a ban on Hebrew blacksmiths. "Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords and spears."<sup>5</sup> Jewish blacksmiths were active in the days of Isaiah for he said, "The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers."<sup>6</sup> Isaiah also refers to the blacksmith's "anvil" which was a cube of iron fixed upon a block of wood.<sup>7</sup> Jere-

. . . . .

1. Cf. Job 38:6.
2. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 45.
3. Cf. Matthew 21:42.
4. Cf. Genesis 4:22.
5. I Samuel 13:19.
6. Isaiah 44:12.
7. Cf. Isaiah 41:7.



miah mentioned the "bellows" made of the undressed skin of a goat, and usually worked by the foot of the workman.<sup>1</sup> The blacksmith made the plough share, mattock, ax, fork, and goad.<sup>2</sup> When King Solomon built the temple he engaged workers to build the vessels, the pots, the shovels, and the basins of brass.<sup>3</sup> Nehemiah spoke of the "goldsmiths."<sup>4</sup> Paul's missionary work in Ephesus was hindered by the silversmiths who made images of the goddess Artemis.<sup>5</sup> Peter spoke of the goldsmith's task in relation to the Christian life, "That the trials of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth."<sup>6</sup>

g. The Tanner

The tanning of skins and hides was an important industry among these people. Peter stayed in the house of Simon, "the tanner," while he was at Joppa.<sup>7</sup> Goatskins were used in making bottles to carry water, to hold the new wine, and to store milk. These goatskin bags were often used as churns to make butter. The holes of the legs and tail were sewn up and the neck opening served as the top of the bottle. Jesus spoke of the "wine bag" in

. . . . .

1. Cf. Jeremiah 6:29.
2. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 48.
3. Cf. I Kings 7:45.
4. Cf. Nehemiah 3:8.
5. Cf. Acts 19:23-27.
6. I Peter 1:7.
7. Cf. Acts 9:43.

connection with His denunciation of the Pharisees.<sup>1</sup> Sheepskins were used in the making of shoes.<sup>2</sup> Many articles of clothing were made from leather, tanned and prepared by the tanner.

#### h. Dyeing

Dyeing was another industry of the Bible land people. Purple was made of the murex of the shellfish. The purple was very valuable because only one drop was found in each fish.<sup>3</sup> Thus purple became the "royal" color for kings and their nobles. Lydia, "a seller of purple" was the first Christian convert in Europe.<sup>4</sup> Blue came from the rind of the pomegranate.<sup>5</sup> The dye for brilliant crimson came from a grub that fed on the oak and other plants.<sup>6</sup> The various colored dyes were put in large stone vats.<sup>7</sup> The cloth or yarn was soaked in the colored dye. When sufficiently colored, the dyer would wring out the surplus dye; then the color was set by soaking for a time in a lime mixture.<sup>8</sup>

#### 1. The Tentmaker

Because of the general use of tents by the Hebrew people, the making of tents was an important industry. The material for making the tent came from the coarse black

. . . . .

1. Cf. Mark 2:22.
2. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 220.
3. Cf. Albert Bailey: op. cit., p. 192.
4. Cf. Acts 16:17.
5. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 221.
6. Cf. Ibid., p. 221.
7. Cf. William Albright: op. cit., pp. 119-121.
8. Cf. Albert Bailey: op. cit., p. 191.

hair of goats. Priscilla and Aquila were tentmakers. Paul worked with them in Corinth.<sup>1</sup>

#### j. The Merchant

The market place was important in the lives of these people. Here the merchants applied their trade. The places were usually near the gate, or out in the open squares in the center of the city. Often certain streets were set aside for some particular trade or merchandise. Jeremiah spoke about the "bakers'" street.<sup>2</sup> Barter and trade often took the place of money. Sometimes metals were weighed out in payment of a commodity. Thus Abraham "weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth" for the purchase of the cave of Machpelah.<sup>3</sup> Often there was no set price for an article, hence there was always much controversy, argument, and haggling. When the sale was made the buyer walked away boasting of the good bargain he had made.<sup>4</sup> The Book of Proverbs pictures such a person, "It is bad, it is bad, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth."<sup>5</sup> Many times credit was used. Jesus tells of the unjust steward who tried to collect "an hundred measures of oil" and "an hundred measures of wheat."<sup>6</sup> A bushel

. . . . .

1. Cf. Acts 18:1-3.
2. Cf. Jeremiah 37:21.
3. Cf. Genesis 23:16.
4. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 223.
5. Proverbs 20:14.
6. Luke 16:5-7.

measure was used for measuring grain. The measure, however, must always be "pressed down and running over."<sup>1</sup>

k. The Money Changer

The money changer was a familiar sight in every village and city. He would sit by a table in a conspicuous place to change the people's money from one type of currency to another. A usury or interest rate was charged for the transaction. Sometimes this was unfair and expensive. In the temple the money changers were busy, because the temple tax of a half shekel had to be paid by every male Israelite who was over twenty-one years of age. This had to be paid in the exact Hebrew half shekel. Many of these people used a different system of coinage in their homeland. Thus it was necessary to go to the money changer to get the right and accepted coin.<sup>2</sup> A rate of about twelve per cent was charged for this according to the Hebrew Talmud. These money changers were also necessary to provide the exact coins with which to purchase the doves, lambs, or whatever the family offered as a sacrifice. This business was unscrupulous and was held in ill repute by the people.

1. The Banker

In the parable of the talents, Jesus implies that there were bankers in His day. "Why then did you not

. . . . .

1. Luke 6:38.

2. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 52.

put my money into the bank, and at my coming I should have collected it with interest?"<sup>1</sup> The law of Moses did not allow the people to charge interest on money loaned to a fellow Israelite, but it was permissible to charge a Gentile.<sup>2</sup>

m. The Tax Collector

The tax collector was not a very popular person. The task itself was probably legitimate enough as taxes had to be collected in order to run the government. However, the resentment came because they collected the taxes for the Roman government. There was much graft in connection with the collection of this money. The Publicans of Jesus' day were always designated as "sinners."<sup>3</sup> They were also classed with "harlots."<sup>4</sup> Certain men gave Jesus the title, "friend of Publicans and sinners," because He was concerned about their souls.<sup>5</sup> In fact Jesus called a Publican to be His disciple.<sup>6</sup>

n. The Physician

There were physicians in Bible times. The first ones, however, were simply magicians. They had some practical ability such as the "plugging of the nose for hemor-

. . . . .

1. Luke 19:23.
2. Cf. Deuteronomy 23:19.
3. Cf. Matthew 21:31.
4. Cf. Matthew 9:11.
5. Cf. Matthew 11:19.
6. Cf. Mark 2:14.

rhages."<sup>1</sup> Dipping in the Jordan River seemed to have been advocated as a cure for leprosy. Washing in the Pool of Siloam was looked upon as a cure-all. Boils were treated with a plaster of hot figs.<sup>2</sup> Spas with hot baths were also recommended for healing of diseases. Job talked of "physicians of no value."<sup>3</sup> King Asa put his confidence in "physicians" instead of the Lord.<sup>4</sup> Jeremiah cried out, "Is there no physician there?"<sup>5</sup> Mark speaks of the poor woman who "suffered many things of physicians."<sup>6</sup> Paul speaks of Luke the "beloved physician."<sup>7</sup> Luke was well trained in the medical knowledge of his day. Most of this training was in Greece. The greatest physician of all times, of course, was Jesus. The Gospels are filled with cures that He wrought by the sheer power of the Word and prayer.

o. The Day Laborers

In every city there were many people who worked by the day. They gathered in the public market places to seek employment.<sup>8</sup> Some of these people served as porters, who carried heavy loads from place to place. Others were mason's assistants, who carried the stones from the quarry

. . . . .

1. Cf. Miller and Miller: op. cit., p. 334.
2. Cf. II Kings 20:7.
3. Job 13:4.
4. Cf. II Chronicles 16:12.
5. Jeremiah 8:22.
6. Mark 5:26.
7. Colossians 4:4.
8. Cf. Hosea 8:10.

to the wall.<sup>1</sup> A few carried their pick-ax and hoe, ready to till the soil for those who needed such help. Many were willing to cut wood for the ovens. These day laborers stood in groups waiting to be hired for the day.<sup>2</sup> If there were no employment they and their families went hungry. Jesus spoke of the householder, "who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard."<sup>3</sup>

p. The Scribe

Aside from the religious scribe, there was also a public scribe who sat in front of the government buildings, or on important street corners with his ink horn and parchment. His principal task was to write letters for those who could not write, to draw up contracts, and to make legal documents.<sup>4</sup>

q. The Weaver

Weaving of cloth was an essential vocation of these people. Every home had a loom. Albert Bailey describes one of these looms in this way:

To make a loom, two stout posts were driven into the ground. Between these near the bottom was a horizontal roller to which the warp threads were fastened and on which the cloth was wound up as woven. The warp threads then went horizontally under another roller, up to the ceiling in the farther corner of the shop, and there were tied in a hank and weighted to keep the threads tight. The warp threads were alternated by two har-

. . . . .

1. Cf. Nehemiah 4:10.
2. Cf. Deuteronomy 24:15.
3. Matthew 20:1-16.
4. Cf. G. H. Scherer: op. cit., p. 52.

nesses worked by treadles, and the shuttle containing the woof thread was thrown by hand from side to side. The operator sat on the floor with his feet in a pit where were the treadles. After a few shots with the shuttle the worker took a wooden "pin" shaped like a long blunt-edged knife, and with it beat the woven threads close together to make the cloth firm.<sup>1</sup>

The wool which was used came from the flocks. It had to be spun into yarn without the use of modern spinning wheels. They used the hand spindle.<sup>2</sup> This is spoken of by the writer of the Book of Proverbs, "She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff."<sup>3</sup> They were so adept that they could spin the yarn as they walked, talked, and even ate in an informal way.<sup>4</sup>

#### r. The Vine Dresser and Farmer

Vine culture and agriculture were important occupations of these outdoor people. The vineyards were usually located on the hillsides. A retaining wall was built around the vineyard. The hills were terraced by filling in with earth from the valley. Each vine was trained in a separate stock, pruned back each season to the main stem, and propped up to keep the grapes above the soil. Nothing else was ever planted in the vineyard.<sup>5</sup> It took generations to build up these vineyards. Sometimes a briar hedge was planted beside the wall to keep out the thieves.<sup>6</sup> Every vineyard had a watch tower, built of field

. . . . .

1. Albert Bailey: op. cit., p. 191.
2. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 83.
3. Proverbs 31:19.
4. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 84.
5. Cf. Deuteronomy 22:9.
6. Cf. Isaiah 5:2-5.



stones. Here the owner or vinedresser stayed during the harvest season to guard the grapes. There was also the winepress. This was hollowed out of solid limestone in the ground. Here the grapes were placed; the juice was trodden out by bare feet.<sup>1</sup> The juice ran into a vat hewn out on a lower level. The liquid was allowed to settle. The clear liquid was stored in jars of clay or the skin of a goat.

Grains were sown by hand as described so completely in the story of the Four Soils.<sup>2</sup> The ground was made ready by crude wooden ploughs pulled by oxen. Those who had no oxen used the mattock or pickax to break up the soil and prepare the seed bed. The ripened grain was cut with a sickle. In early times sickles were made of flint, but in later periods iron was used.<sup>3</sup> The women bound the grain into sheaves so that it could be carried to the threshing floor. W. M. Thomson describes these threshing floors thus:

The construction of the floor is very simple. A circular space, from thirty to fifty feet in diameter, is made level, if not naturally so, and the ground is smoothed off and beaten solid, that the earth may not mingle with the grain in the threshing.<sup>4</sup>

The most common method of threshing the grain was to pound it out with a flail. This must have been a wooden

. . . . .

1. Cf. Isaiah 63:2.

2. Cf. Mark 4:3-8.

3. Cf. Fred H. Wight: op. cit., p. 180.

4. W. M. Thomson: op. cit., Vol. I., p. 151.

instrument of some kind. We discover that Ruth "beat out that she had gleaned."<sup>1</sup> "Gideon was beating out grain in the winepress."<sup>2</sup> A wooden sledge pulled by oxen was also used to beat out the heads of grain. Some of these sledges had stone or metal teeth to assist in the pulling out of the grain. Isaiah describes such a threshing instrument: "Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth."<sup>3</sup>

The wheat was separated from the straw with a winnowing fork. During a breeze, the grain was thrown up into the air so that the chaff would be blown to one side and the ripe heads of grain would fall directly to the ground.<sup>4</sup> Sometimes this fork was called a fan.<sup>5</sup> John the Baptist spoke of the winnowing fork in connection with the work of Jesus: "His winnowing fork is in His hand, and he will clear the threshing floor and gather the wheat into the granary, but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire."<sup>6</sup>

#### E. Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to present a picture of the cultural life of the Oriental. It was

. . . . .

1. Ruth 2:17.
2. Judges 6:11.
3. Isaiah 41:15.
4. Cf. Psalms 1:4.
5. Cf. Jeremiah 15:7.
6. Matthew 3:12.

discovered that every part of their social pattern from the birth of a child until death and burial was governed by rigid social pressures.

Hospitality was a sacred duty. Even strangers must be treated as intimate friends. Food had to be served, a bed made ready, a basin of water provided to refresh the feet, oil to anoint the head, and a kiss of greeting. Nothing could be omitted. During the persecutions of the early Christian era, this was a boon and blessing to fleeing refugees. Paul and Peter stressed the need of hospitality to foster fellowship and Christian growth.

The father was truly the head of his household, even to the right of the life and death of his own children, and his children's children. Every home must have a father! The oldest son automatically took his father's place at death. Each son brought the bride to his father's house to live. The wife was always in a subordinate position. Women were confined to the home, never being treated as equals.

The life mate was selected by the parents. The new bride would become a member of the family clan. Since she would be a valuable asset in tending flocks, working in the fields, and helping in the household, a dowry was always demanded by the father. The betrothal was a covenant of marriage and needed no further ceremony. The actual

marriage occurred when the bridegroom came to the home of the bride to take her to his family clan to live. The arrival of the bride at her husband's home was a signal for a week's feasting and festivities.

Death was stark tragedy to these people. Mourning brought loud cries, the bending of breasts, and the tearing of hair. Prominent people hired mourners to enhance this pathetic ceremony. Burial took place in the family tomb on the day of death, or as soon thereafter as possible. These Oriental people were deeply religious. In the Old Testament worship centered about the altar and the sacrifice of life and blood. Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving were prominent in religious observances. Three great feast days were observed, namely; the Feast of the Passover, the Feast of Pentecost, and Tabernacles. The Sabbath was observed rigorously. No work was tolerated on the this day. Only men could worship in the sanctuary. Women and children sat in the gallery.

The first appointed place of worship was the Tabernacle or Tent of Meeting in the wilderness. God gave to Moses the instructions for its building. In the Promised land the city of Shiloh became the headquarters of the priests and the place of worship. When Jerusalem became the capitol of the Israelite Kingdom, the center of worship was moved to Mt. Moriah. Here the temple of Solomon, Zerubbabel, and Herod stood. The synagogue was not developed

until during the Babylonian captivity. The Levites were given the custody of the property of the temple. The priest offered the sacrifices, while the prophets warned the people of sin and its fearful consequences. The scribes and lawyers were the custodians of the law, its interpretation, and its preservation. The rabbis were the teachers. The Pharisees were the strictest of the religious groups. They were extremely nationalistic and legalistic. The Sadducees were the liberal wing of the Hebrews.

The people not engaged in religious work, made their living in the secular field. Common among these occupations were those of the potter, carpenter, fishermen, stone masons, metal workers, tanners, tentmaker, weavers, merchants, money changers, tax collectors, and farmers. Their economic demands were not great, yet life was a constant struggle against poverty and want. Even these secular vocations were closely connected with their religious life. When the prophets spoke to the people they drew their illustrations from every day life. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and many others selected their analogies from the winnowing fork, the ax, the chaff, the winepress, the olive mill, and the wine skin. The illustrations that Jesus used in His sermons, parables, and teachings came from the simple forms of life.

This chapter has presented both the religious and social culture of the Oriental in such a way that the Sunday School and Bible teacher might be conversant with its background. Without this information it would be difficult to understand and appreciate the Scriptures.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

### CHAPTER IV

#### A. Summary

This is an age of secularism. On every hand forces are at work to destroy Christian faith. The greatest onslaught is against the young people of the church. To combat this force of evil it is necessary to strengthen the Christian nurture in the home, the Sunday School, and the Young Adult instruction in the church. The purpose of this thesis has been to examine the eight Sunday School text books and the seven Teacher's Manuals used in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, to determine the Bible backgrounds necessary to an understanding and appreciation of the subject matter contained in the above mentioned texts. If the Sunday School teacher is to do effective work in training and holding the young people for Christ, he will need to have an adequate knowledge of Scripture, its background, and the culture of the people who lived in its time.

Chapter one of this thesis consisted of a page by page study of each of the eight text books and the seven teacher's manuals used in the Evangelical Lutheran church,



to determine what references were made to religious and social practices and what information was provided for the pupil and the teacher to make these references meaningful and thus to make the Scriptures alive and vital in the classroom. The social and religious practices of the Hebrew people that were not clearly explained in either the text or manual were noted, so that the adequate background might be provided.

The text and manuals used in Grade One, Two, Three, Four, Five, and Seven, it was found, had many references to the religious and social customs of the Israelites. Many of these terms would be meaningless to this age group without the proper elucidation as to their significance for the people. The practice of anointing, the burial of the dead, the Patriarchical system, the laws of hospitality, and their religious observances were different from those of the present day. The construction of the Palestinian home, the problem of water, and the simple vocations of the Hebrews played an important part in the Bible stories presented by the above mentioned texts. It was discovered that both the texts and manuals were too brief to provide the necessary background.

The course offered in Grade Seven, "Forward With Christ," was seen to be the only text that provided adequate information about the religious and social life of the

Hebrews. Here the teacher's manual offered much valuable and interesting material for the teacher to make the class alive for the pupil. Suggested readings were given for each lesson, so that the teacher might know which source books would provide additional information about the Bible lands.

In analyzing the material used in Grades Six and Eight it was noted that there were only a few references to the religious and social background of the people who lived in Bible times. The subject matter in Grade Six and Eight was such that there would be little need for background material dealing with the Scriptures. Grade Eight did not have a teacher's manual to provide any help whatsoever for the teacher of this course.

This lack of background material, in both the student's text and the teacher's manual, pointed up the need for this information to be provided in a simple, concise form readily accessible to the teacher. The teacher, particularly, would be in need of much help to make the class hour effective and fruitful. The information might also be of such style and form that the students in the upper grades of the Sunday School could study it with profit.

With these facts in mind, in the second chapter the social and religious backgrounds of the Palestinian family were presented under four headings. The first section

of this chapter gave the background of the Hebrew home and its furnishings. The home went through a number of evolutions. The simplest and earliest home was the "house of hair" or the tent. These tents were arranged in villages for the purpose of protection. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the other early Hebrews lived in tents. The furnishings of these tents were simple and readily transferred to the back of a beast of burden when the family found it necessary to break camp, and move to green pastures, or to find new supplies of water.

The earliest permanent home was a simple structure of one room furnished in about the same way as the tent. In the cities and larger villages these one room homes were enlarged to as many rooms as necessary to meet the needs of the family. The larger the house the more elaborate were the furnishings.

Many parts of the tents, the permanent homes, and the furnishings had been found mentioned in the eight Sunday School text books. Since a knowledge of these homes and their construction would enhance the interest in the lesson and would bring out the significance of the story, these facts were included also in the first section of chapter two. The color of the tents, the pegs used in holding down the tent, the cords, the courtyard, the upper room, the outside stairs, the use of the roof, the lamp, the bushel, the bed,

the water pot, and the wineskin bag were added details given.

Because the Sunday School texts had many references to the food and the eating habits of Orientals, the second part of the second chapter was devoted to the foods of the Bible land people, the preparation of such foods, and the laws of hospitality which governed the eating habits. Bread, salt, and water were the most necessary items of food. Fruits were eaten when they could be obtained or cultivated. Meat was not the usual fare; it was a treat reserved for guests. For the settled farmer, wheat was the staple crop. Water was always a constant cause for anxiety as a shortage meant famine and the necessity of moving to some other place to live. It was carried and stored in large clay pots. Many villages and cities had only one source of supply. Oil for the lamps and for the preparation of foods came from the olive grove.

The third part of the second chapter presented a discussion of the clothing used by the Israelites. The coat, cloak, tunic, girdle, turban, and sandals had been found referred to in many places in these Sunday School text books and teacher's manuals. Therefore, each part of the dress of these people was described in detail. Customs thus explained included the girding of the loins, the washing of the feet, the anointing of the head, and many other interesting practices common in Bible times.

Chapter three was devoted to a study of the culture of the Hebrews and included such information as would specifically increase the understanding and appreciation of the lessons used in the Sunday School texts. The laws of hospitality, it was pointed out, governed the conduct of the Hebrews to friends, strangers, and enemies. Even in the early days of the Christian church these laws of hospitality were a source of comfort and strength to the persecuted and fleeing disciples. The patriarchal system kept the people closely knit together as a clan and race. The Hebrews were to be a "separate people." the laws of the clan did much to hold them together and to keep them from mingling with Gentiles. The selecting of a life mate, the betrothal, and the marriage all centered around the patriarchal system. Even the birth of a child and the death of a member of the family were governed by the rigid rules of this system.

In connection with the religious life of the Hebrews it was necessary to present information related to the altar, sacrifices, offerings, tithes, fastings, alms, worship, festivals, the Sabbath, and the prayer life of the Israelites, because without an understanding of these, many of the Bible lessons would not be meaningful. A careful step by step discussion of the religious life of these people was therefore given in this chapter in order to assist

the teacher to present the lessons in an intelligible way.

The last half of the chapter consisted of a discussion of the ways in which these people made their living. Since the people were fundamentally religious, many of them were in religious occupations such as: prophets, priests, Levites, scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and rabbis. The secular occupations common to the Hebrews were that of the potter, carpenter, fisherman, mason, metal worker, tanner, tentmaker, merchant, money changer, banker, tax collector, weaver, and the day laborer. All of these occupations played an important part in the life of the Bible people and therefore in the writing of the Scriptures. The material presented in this section was planned so that it would provide the necessary understanding and appreciation of the Bible for the Sunday School teacher. The significance of these occupations in the lives of the people was discussed.

#### B. Conclusion

The survey of the eight Sunday School texts and the seven Teacher's Manuals used in the Evangelical Lutheran Church revealed a need for a manual which would give in concise form the background of the religious and social culture of the Hebrew people. Without this help, since most teachers do not have access to scattered source materials, it would be difficult for the teacher in these courses thoroughly to understand the material at hand and to present it in an in-

teresting and helpful way to the class.

The study also revealed the need for more literature on the subject of Bible backgrounds. Of the books surveyed for this thesis it was discovered that there is a dearth of material that is up to date. Most of the books in this field are old and not printed in good type or book form. There have been only a few books published within the last few years on the subject. Many of the books were too involved in their presentation or not written in an easy, readable form for the average Sunday School teacher.

In an attempt to meet the need existing, this thesis has presented in as brief a form as possible the religious and social backgrounds necessary to an understanding and appreciation of the text books used in the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

BIBLIOGRAPHY



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### A. Primary Sources

Aus, George: *Forward With Christ*, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1940.

*Forward With Christ, Teacher's Manual*, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1941.

*The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version*, Thomas Nelson and Sons, New York, New York, 1952.

*King James Version*, John C. Winston Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1902.

Boxrud, Clara: *My Second Sunday School Book*, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1937.

Ericksen, Mabel: *Listening to God*, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1938.

Malmin, Olaf and Fernanda: *God's Chosen People*, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1939.

Rogness, Alvin: *On the Way*, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1939.

Schonhovd, Hannah: *My First Sunday School Book*, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1936.

Steen, Inez: *God Speaks to Me*, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1938.

### B. Secondary Sources

Adams, A. McKee: *Biblical Backgrounds*, Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1934.

Albright, William: *The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible*, Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, New York, 1935.

- Bailey, Albert: Daily Life in Bible Times, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, New York, 1943.
- Barton, George: Archaeology and the Bible, American Sunday School Union, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1916.
- Day, Edward: The Social Life of the Hebrews, John C. Nimmo, London, England, 1901.
- Eavey, C. B.: Principles of Teaching for Christian Teachers, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1940.
- Edersheim, Alfred: The Life and Times of the Messiah, Vols. I-II, E. R. Herrick and Company, New York, New York, 1886.
- Ellis, William: Bible Lands To-day, D. Appleton and Company, New York, New York, 1927.
- Entwistle, Mary: The Bible Guide Book, Cokesbury Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1937.
- Fallows, Samuel: Bible Encyclopedia, Howard-Severance Company, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.
- Free, Joseph: Archaeology and the Bible, Van Kampen Press, Wheaton, Illinois, 1950.
- Finnegan, Jack: Light from the Ancient Past, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1946.
- Gettys, Joseph: How to Teach the Bible, John Knox Press, Richmond, Virginia, 1949.
- Gill, Emma: Home Life in the Bible, Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1936.
- Grant, Elihu: The People of Palestine, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1921.
- Henderson, Archibald: Palestine, Its Historical Geography, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, Scotland, 1893.
- Hovey, Alvah: The Bible, The Griffith and Rowland Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- Kelman, John: The Holy Land, Adam and Charles Black, London, England, 1904.

- Mackie, George: Bible Manners and Customs, Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, New York, 1903.
- Miller, Madeleine and Lane: Encyclopedia of Bible Life, Harper and Brothers Publishers, New York, New York, 1944.
- Miller, Randolph: The Clue to Christian Education, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, New York, 1950.
- Scherer, George: The Eastern Color of the Bible, The Sidney Press, Bedford, England.
- Smart, James: The Teaching Ministry of the Church, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1954.
- Smith, George Adam: The Historical Geography of the Holy Land, Harper and Brothers Publishers, New York, New York, 1931.
- Smith, William: A Dictionary of the Bible, Fleming H. Revell New York, New York.
- Thomson, W. M.: The Land and the Book, Baker Brothers House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1954.
- The Land and the Book, Vols. I - III, Harper and Brothers, New York, New York, 1886.