

Learn to Read the Bible Effectively

Distance Learning Programme

Session 6



SESSION 6

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Section 1

Overview of the books of the Bible (Part 3)

In this section we take a look at the second period of history following on from where we arrived in Session 4, Section 2. We went as far as the start of the reign of David. We start this time with David's reign, and go through to the end of the northern kingdom of Israel. This covers the period in time from about 1050 BC to about 700 BC.

As in the last overview section, we shall review what happened to the nation of Israel historically, and indicate, at the same time, the books and passages that are relevant. The time chart on pages 2 and 3 shows the time period we shall be looking at in this session and in the next "overview session".

We are dealing with a period of history with which very few people are familiar.

1 Samuel 16 v 1 to 13; 19 v 1 to 24 v 22 David was chosen to be king long before king Saul died. As a result Saul regarded David as a threat and tried to kill him on more than one occasion.

2 Samuel 1 v 1 to 20 v 26 David was made king after Saul's death. David conquered lands and suffered political intrigues during his reign.

1 Kings 1 David's son Solomon was most noted for his wisdom.

2 Chronicles 1 When Solomon began to reign, he made an excellent start. He "loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of his father David" (1 Kings 3 v 3).

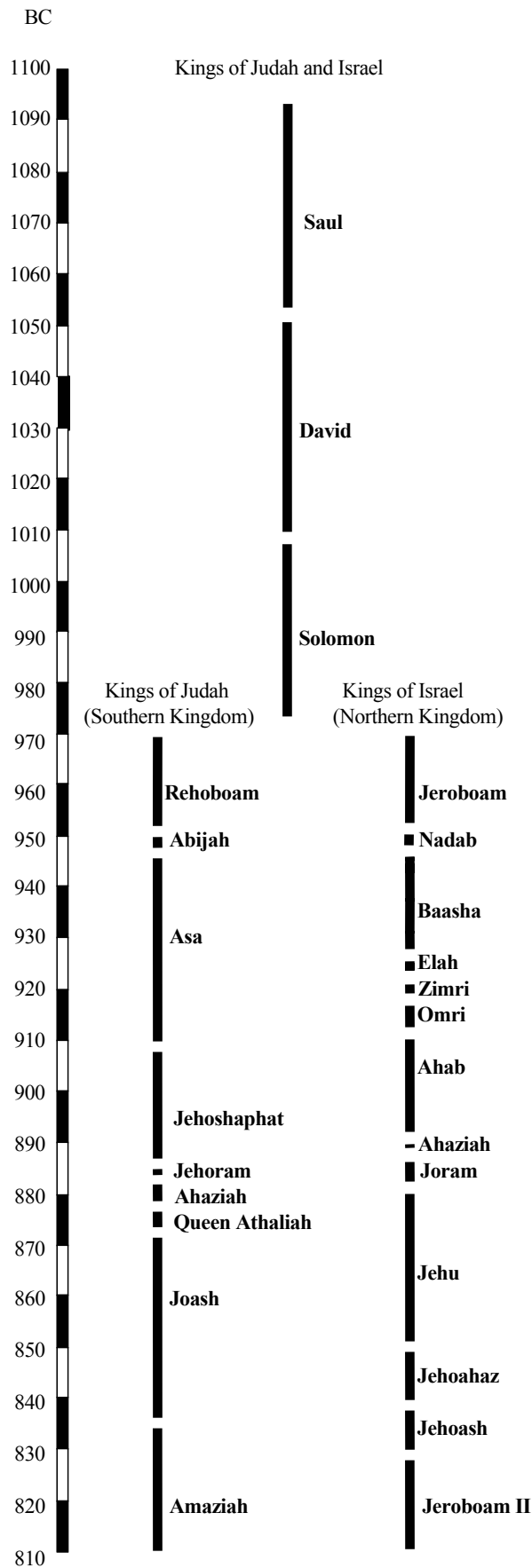
1 Kings 3 God appeared to Solomon in a dream and asked him what he wanted. Solomon requested wisdom to rule the nation of Israel. So God gave him the wisdom he asked. In addition to wisdom, Solomon was granted riches and glory. Israel was at its height.

1 Kings 6 Solomon built the Temple. When it was built, God's glory came to fill the temple.
2 Chronicles 3 to 5

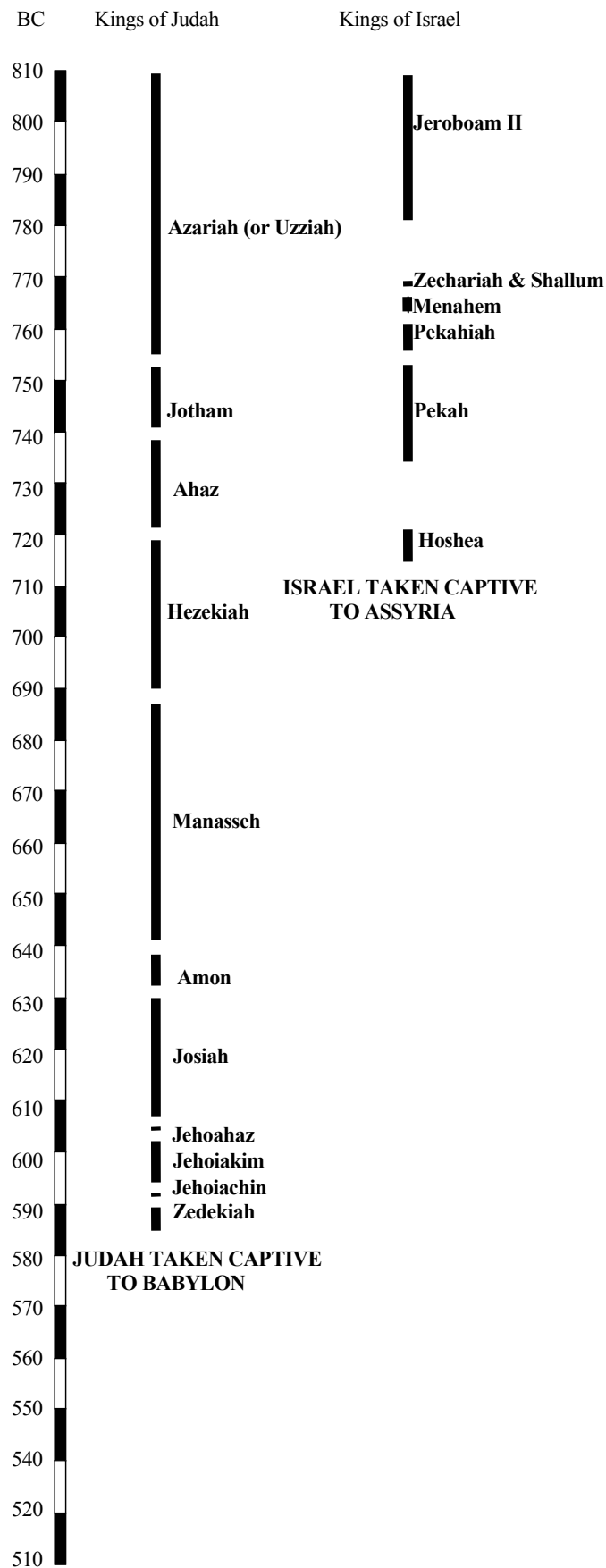


*A reconstruction of
King Solomon's Temple*

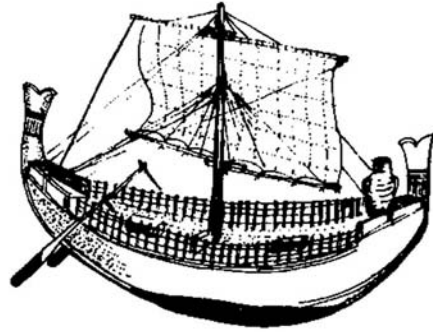
The Kings of Judah and Israel (BC 1100 to 810)



The Kings of Judah and Israel (BC 810 to 510)



Model from the Maritime Museum, Haifa, Israel of a merchant ship from King Solomon's fleet.



1 Kings 4

Solomon's weaknesses.

2 Chronicles

Solomon was a great king for a period of time, but all his wealth and importance began to have their effect. A desire for selfish glory was aroused and he began to look for other avenues to fulfil these desires.

1 and 9

The Bible tells us that Solomon gathered together chariots, horsemen and horses from Egypt. He became like the kings of the nations about him, trusting in himself.

Solomon, in effect, turned his back on God, the real strength of Israel.

1 Kings 11

In addition to this, Solomon failed in another way, and that was with women. He ended up having over 700 wives and 300 mistresses.

The Scriptures teach that when he was old these women turned his heart from God and he followed after other gods – those of his wives. It is interesting to note that they were from all those nations that Israel was supposed to have driven out of the land.

It is a tragic story and an important example for us. Despite his wisdom, he was not strong enough to resist his selfish nature, and slowly drifted away until his heart was turned from God and he became an idol-worshipper.

The son of faithful David, instead of showing wisdom, stability and leadership, became at length an old and foolish king.

Solomon himself seemed to confess this in the book of Ecclesiastes, when he wrote:

“Better is a poor and a wise youth than an old and foolish king who will be admonished no more” (Ecclesiastes 4 v 13).

As Solomon ignored God’s principles, the kingdom was divided, and most of it taken from Solomon’s son Rehoboam.

God raised up political opponents, one of whom was Jeroboam.

1 Kings 12 Jeroboam represented the people in a plea to Rehoboam, Solomon’s son,
2 Chronicles 10 requesting that the burden of taxation be lessened.

Rehoboam made the grave mistake of increasing the taxation, ignoring the council of the wiser, old men and accepting, instead, the advice of his young friends to show himself tougher than his father.

So Jeroboam led ten tribes in a revolt against Rehoboam, and the nation divided.

The nation then had two kings; Jeroboam ruled over the northern section, and Rehoboam ruled over the southern part.

The map on page 6 shows these two parts.

It is very important to remember that the northern ten tribes were known as “Israel” and sometimes “Ephraim”. The southern two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, were normally referred to as “Judah”.



- 1 Kings 12
v 25 to 33
- Jeroboam's problems
- Early in Jeroboam's reign he was faced with a crisis. Jeroboam wanted to maintain the political split with the southern kingdom of Judah, but he thought that the worship of God, centred in Jerusalem, would provide a unifying influence which would prove stronger than the political forces driving them apart. So he decided to set up a religion of his own in the northern kingdom.
- 1 Kings 12
v 28 to 30
- He denied a fundamental doctrine and made two golden calves which he placed at Dan and Bethel in the northern kingdom. He argued that it was too far for the people to go to Jerusalem to worship there.
- v 31
- Jeroboam did not deny the need for a priesthood, but he changed the qualifications of the priests: instead of being drawn exclusively from the sons of Aaron, priests were made from other families.
- v 32 to 33
- He did not deny the need for feasts, but he changed the timings. The feast of tabernacles should commence on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, Jeroboam's feast began on the fifteenth day of the eighth month. His religion was man-centred.

However, people cannot worship God in any way they want.

For his sins Jeroboam became notorious in Israel. All of the kings of the northern kingdom who came after him followed in his ways. In the summary of the lives of most of the following kings, the words recur: "He walked in all the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin..."

So the age of gold and glory under David and Solomon descended to an age of division and false religion.



King Ahab's evil wife Jezebel introduced the worship of the weather-god Baal, shown here holding an axe and thunderbolt.

Jeroboam's bad influence on the northern kingdom continued through the reigns of all the kings of the northern kingdom, to king Hoshea, who was taken captive to Assyria.

1 Kings 5 to
2 Kings 17 v 23,
2 Chronicles
13 to 28

The kings of the southern kingdom were not much better, but the southern kingdom lasted longer. All of the southern kings were descendants of David. There were some good kings.

We shall look at the southern kings in Session 8.

The role of the prophets

The time chart on pages 10 and 11 shows the kings of Judah and Israel along with the prophets who were sent by God to Judah and Israel. You will notice that towards the end of both the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah there was an increase in the number of the prophets. This was because the people were evil and God sent the prophets to turn the people back to Him. And since this period of time was a steady decline, God kept sending prophets, to try to get the people to turn back from their idolatry and to serve Him; but the decline just would not stop, until God had no option but to destroy them.

Examples of prophets

Prophets who were sent to the northern kingdom, such as Hosea and Amos.

Prophets who were sent to the southern kingdom, such as Micah and Isaiah.

Prophets who were sent to other nations, such as Jonah and Nahum.

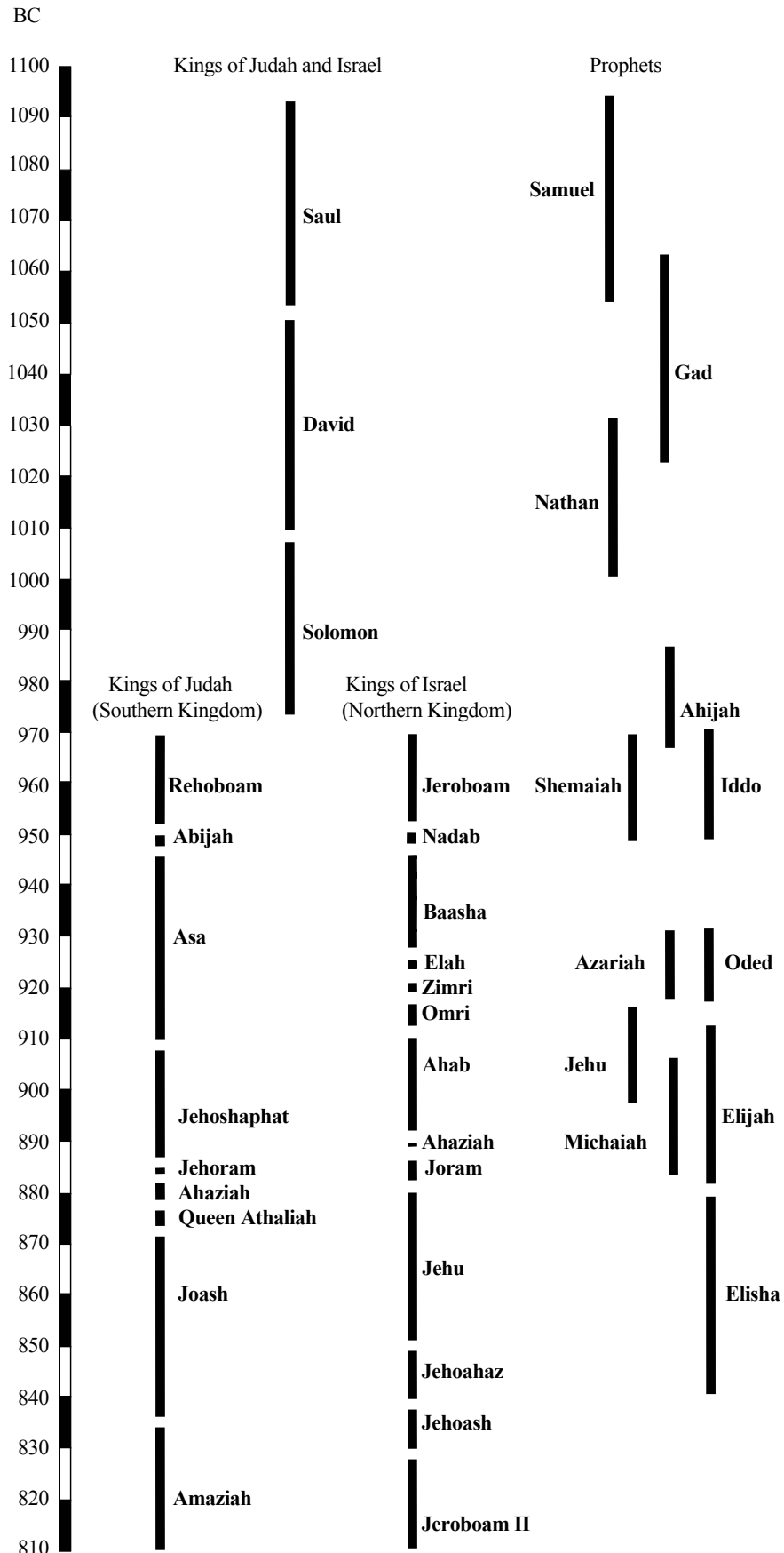
There were prophets who do not have a book of the Bible named after them, the most famous of whom were Elijah and Elisha.

OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENT 8

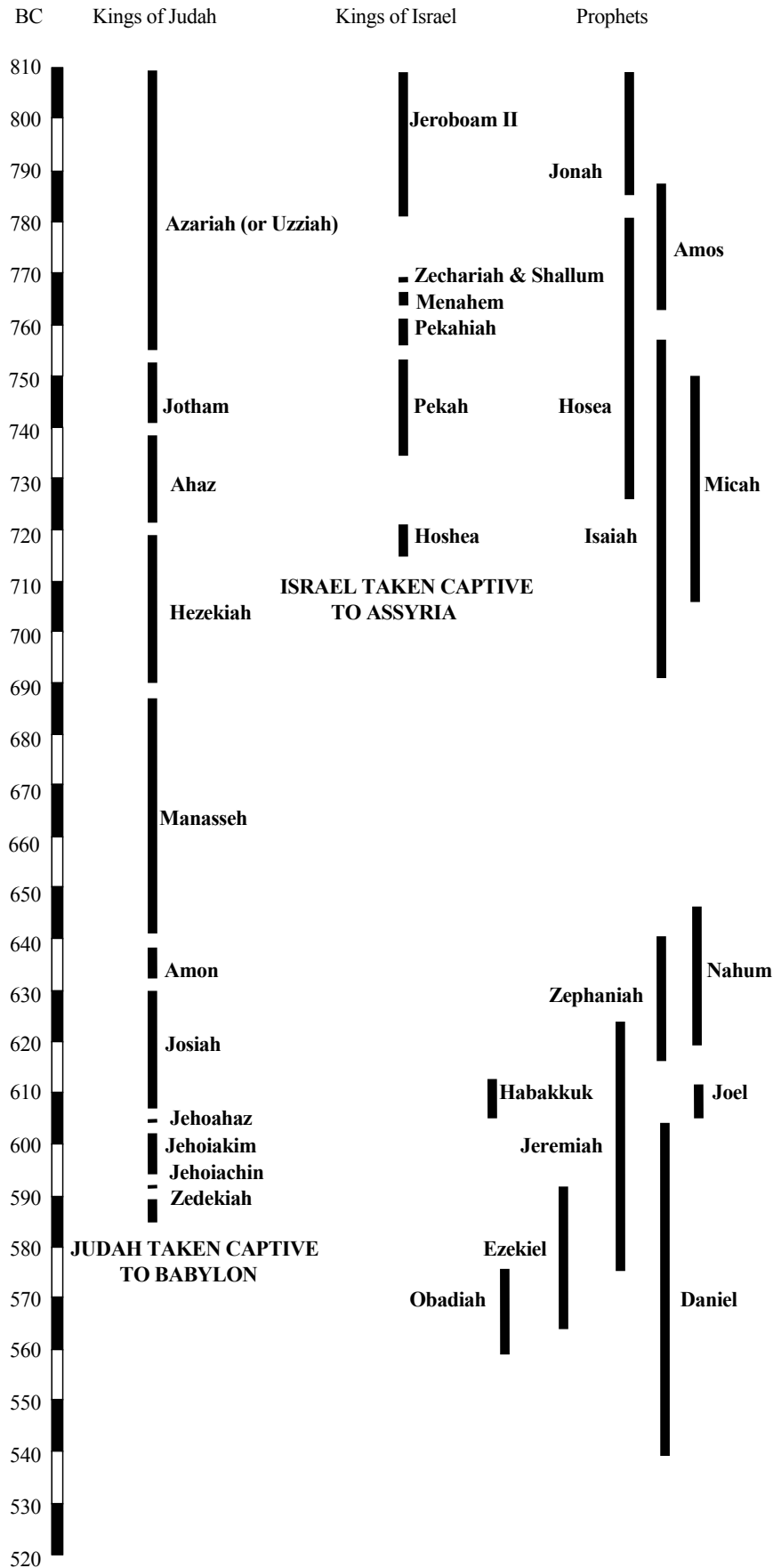
Overview of the books of the Bible

As in assignment 6 at the end of Session 4, Section 2, read the references we have given in the books of Kings and make your own summary. You can then add it to your own summary of the Bible story if you have done assignment 6.

The Kings and Prophets of Judah and Israel (BC 1100 to 810)



The Kings and Prophets of Judah and Israel (BC 810 to 510)



Section 2

Terminology (Part 2)

Circumcision – Cutting off the fold of skin (foreskin) of all Jewish males.



Read Genesis 17 v 11

Pharisee – The Pharisees were a religious party or group among the Jews at the time of Christ. The word means “separated”. The Pharisees used an oral law to expand the written Law of Moses. It was claimed that this oral law was given to Moses on Mount Sinai and transmitted by him by word of mouth. This oral law was considered far more important than the written law.



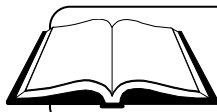
Read Matthew 3 v 7
and 23 v 14

Sadducee – The Sadducees, meaning “the righteous”, were a religious party among the Jews at the time of Christ. They denied that the oral law was a revelation of God to the Israelites, and deemed the written Law of Moses alone to be obligatory on the nation, as the Divine authority.



Read Acts 23 v 8

Scribe – A clerk, especially a public servant, secretary, recorder, whose exact job and influence differed in different time periods. A religious teacher.



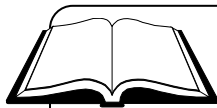
Read Jeremiah 36 v 32

Priest – Male descendant of Aaron of the tribe of Levi, who performed the necessary duties within the tabernacle as laid out in the book of Leviticus. In a wider sense, a priest was one who performed the role of a teacher, judge and mediator.



Read Leviticus 1 v 5

Tabernacle – Dwelling place, tent, portable temple of worship. God told the children of Israel to make a tabernacle in the wilderness to form the central point of their worship of God.



Read Exodus 26 v 1
Revelation 21 v 3

Temple – Sanctuary, place of worship.



Read 1 Kings 6 v 1 to 3
Ezra 3 v 10 and 11

Sin – To miss the mark. Disobedience of God's commandments.



Read 1 John 3 v 4

Apostle – Messenger, one sent.



Read 1 Timothy 2 v 7

Disciple – A learner, pupil, student. Used of the close companions of Jesus during his ministry.



Read Matthew 9 v 10
Luke 6 v 40

Repent – To change one’s mind and turn away from (sin).



Read Ezekiel 18 v 30
Acts 2 v 38, 3 v 19, 17 v 30

Righteousness – To be correct in God’s eyes, faultless, without blame.



Read Romans 4 v 3 to 8

Conversion – To turn and have a different direction in life.



Read Psalm 51 v 13,
Matthew 18 v 3, Acts 3 v 19

Notes

Notes