

Setting the Table

I) Jewish Groups During Apostolic Period

The Pharisees- p.64 (Hist. Christian Church) Sect. 1

- Represented traditional orthodoxy/ stiff formalism, legal self-righteousness and fanatic bigotry.
- Had most influence w/ people & the women.
- Controlled public worship
- Piety = orthodoxy
- Overloaded the scriptures (heavy burdens)
- (Nicodemus, Gamaliel, Paul)

Sadducees- p.65 (Hist. Christian Church) Sect. 2

- Smaller group than Pharisees
- Skeptical, rationalistic, worldly-minded.
- Similar to Epicureans or New Academy in Greek and Roman thought.
- Accepted written Scriptures (esp. Pentateuch)
- Rejected oral tradition
- Denied the resurrection of the body
- Denied immortality of the soul
- Denied existence of angels and spirits
- Denied all-ruling providence.
- Some were high-priests (Caiaphas was one of them)
- Pharisees v. Sadducees is similar to modern Orthodox Jews v. liberal Jews.

Essenes

- Not a party (like Pharisees and Sadducees)
- Mystic and ascetic brotherhood.
- Lived in monkish seclusion in villages and in the desert Engedi on the Dead Sea
- Only about 4,000 members.
- Allegorical interpretation of Old Testament
- Mixed other schools of thought and religion

- Wore white garments.
- rejected animals as food, bloody sacrifices, oaths, slavery, marriage (few exceptions)
- lived in simplicity in hopes of attaining a higher degree of holiness.
- Forerunners of Christian monasticism.
- Seldom or never came in contact with Christianity under Apostles. (except for a heresy in Colossae.)

Considering God's Work in Heathenism

- Read p. 77 (par. 2-3) to introduce a view of God's preparatory work in even the heathen nations to bring about His church.
 - These works became valuable and useful to the church
 - Greece gave the apostles the most copious (technical language) and useful language to communicate with
 - God's ordering of political movements provided a wide-spread area that understood Greek.
 - Greek was the "organ of civilization and international intercourse"
 - **Cicero**- "Greek is read in almost all nations; Latin is confined by its own narrow boundaries."
 - **Roman Law**- under Roman law the apostles were able to travel safely (relatively) and make themselves understood through Greek in a way that would never have been possible earlier in history.