

DANIEL

Samaritans & Synagogues

Where We Left Off...

DANIEL

- The Jews are back in Judah, the Temple is rebuilt, and the walls stand around Jerusalem again.
- **However, all is not well, as Malachi 2:11 explains:**
 - “Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the Lord which He loves and has married the daughter of a foreign god.”

Development #1: Samaritans DANIEL

- The name Samaria first appears in the Bible as the name of the capital of the northern kingdom.
- **Omri and Ahab built luxurious palaces there and on occasion the name of the capital is used to describe the entire kingdom.**
- It was also the last city to fall to the invading Assyrians in 722 B.C.

2 Kings 17:24-29

DANIEL

24 The king of Assyria brought men from Babylon and from Cuthah and from Avva and from Hamath and Sepharvaim, and settled them in the cities of Samaria in place of the sons of Israel. So they possessed Samaria and lived in its cities. **25** At the beginning of their living there, they did not fear the Lord; therefore the Lord sent lions among them which killed some of them. **26** So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, “The nations whom you have carried away into exile in the cities of Samaria do not know the custom of the god of the land; so he has sent lions among them, and behold, they kill them because they do not know the custom of the god of the land.” **27** Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, “Take there one of the priests whom you carried away into exile and let him go and live there; and let him teach them the custom of the god of the land.” **28** So one of the priests whom they had carried away into exile from Samaria came and lived at Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the Lord. **29** But every nation still made gods of its own and put them in the houses of the high places which the people of Samaria had made, every nation in their cities in which they lived.

The Babylonian Exile

DANIEL

- Changed everything, as the Samaritans and other neighbors were able to occupy former Judean territory.
- When the first Jewish settlers returned to Jerusalem following Cyrus' decree in 538 B.C., the Samaritans and their neighbors raised a resistance against the reconstruction of Jerusalem.

Samaritan Religion

- We know that the Samaritans had a temple on Mount Gerizim, which was later destroyed by a Hasmonean king named John Hyrcanus.
- Josephus tells us that this temple was built by Sanballat, and priests that refused to follow Ezra's commandment concerning mixed marriages served there, principally his son-in-law, Manasseh.



John 4:20

“Our fathers
worshiped in
this
mountain,
and you
people say
that in
Jerusalem is
the place
where men
ought to
worship.”



In Succeeding Years...

- The Jews and Samaritans became bitter enemies, which is confirmed in John 4:9, “Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.”
- **By the way, this is why it is so revolutionary for Jesus to travel through Samaria, interact with its people, and later teach the parable of the “Good Samaritan.”**

Development #2: Synagogues

- During the intertestamental period, there arose an institution which was to become the focal point of Jewish life through the centuries.
- **No record has been left of the origin of synagogue worship.**
- Jewish tradition suggests that the first synagogues were established during the time of the Babylonian exile.



Psalm 137:1-6

DANIEL

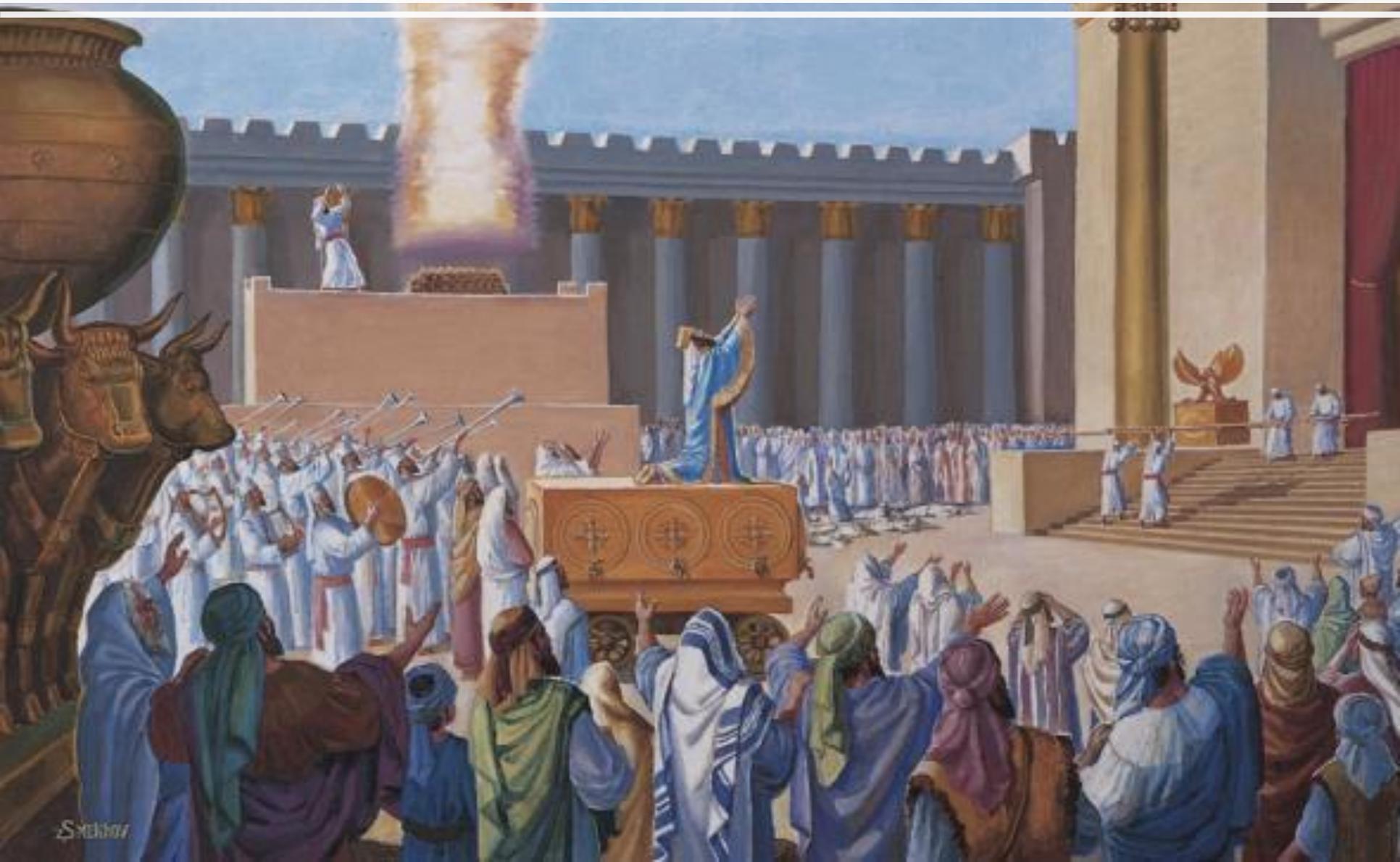
1 By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down and wept, When we remembered Zion. **2** Upon the willows in the midst of it We hung our harps. **3** For there our captors demanded of us songs, And our tormentors mirth, saying, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion.” **4** How can we sing the Lord’s song In a foreign land? **5** If I forget you, O Jerusalem, May my right hand forget her skill. **6** May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth If I do not remember you, If I do not exalt Jerusalem Above my chief joy.



Daniel 6:10

“[Daniel] entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.”

2 Chronicles 6:18-21



In Exile...

- Sacrifices ceased, but Prayer and the study of the Scriptures knew no geographical limitations.
- Look at Ezekiel 8:1 –
“It came about in the sixth year, on the fifth day of the sixth month, *as I was sitting in my house with the elders of Judah sitting before me*, that the hand of the Lord God fell on me there.”

Ezekiel 20:1-3

DANIEL

1 Now in the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth of the month, certain of *the elders of Israel came to inquire of the Lord*, and sat before me. 2 And the word of the Lord came to me saying, 3 “Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Do you come to inquire of Me? As I live,” declares the Lord God, “I will not be inquired of by you.”’”

συναγωγή (*synagōgē*)

- “a gathering of people; a congregation”
- **The Hebrew equivalent is *keneseth*.**
- In Hebrew a synagogue may be referred to as the *beth hakkeneseth*, “the house of assembly.”



That Being Said...

- With the return from exile and the construction of the 2nd Temple, Jerusalem once again became the focal point of Jewish religious life.
- However, not all Jews returned to the land, and therefore, the synagogue also continued to fill the spiritual needs of Jews in the diaspora.

We See This In:

DANIEL

- Acts 15:21 –

“For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”



Matthew 23:1-2

DANIEL

1 Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples, **2** saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses



Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai



Numbers

DANIEL

- 10 heads of families were required to organize a synagogue.
- **In larger communities, a body of 23 elders formed the local Sanhedrin.**
- In smaller communities, the number was 7.
- **The Sanhedrin served as a court and served both civil and religious functions.**
- In Jerusalem, the Great Sanhedrin ruled and was presided over by the High Priest and included 70 members.

Synagogue Worship

DANIEL

- Any competent Israelite could officiate.
- Think of the liberty afforded to the Apostle Paul in Acts 13:14-16:

14 But going on from Perga, they arrived at Pisidian Antioch, and on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. **15** After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, “Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it.” **16** Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said...

5 Parts of the Service

DANIEL

1. The Shema

2. Prayer

3. Reading of the Law (Torah)

4. Reading of the Prophets (Haftarah)

5. Explanation of the Scriptures

1. The Shema

- Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Numbers 15:37-41
- **A benediction is said before and after the reading.**
- Frontlets (phylacteries) are used.
- The Shema is both the confession of faith and the substitute for animal sacrifices.



2. Prayer

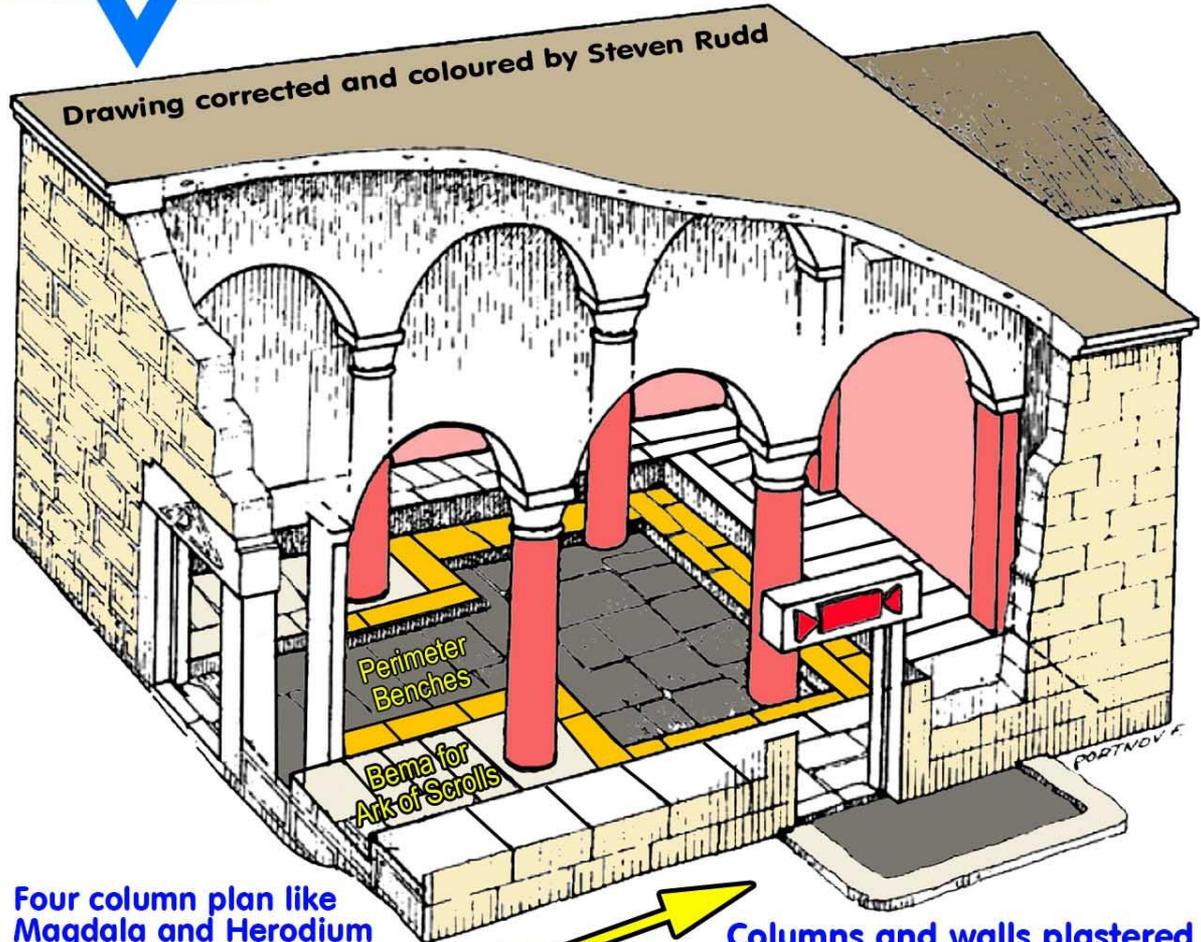
- *Shemoneh 'esreh*
 - “eighteen (benedictions)”
- The form seems to have varied among rabbis and their disciples, hence the disciples in Luke 11:1, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.”

3. Reading of the Law

- Most prominent part of the service.
- Traced back to Moses and Ezra
- On the Sabbath, at least 7 readers were chosen
- Priests read first, then Levites, followed by laymen
- After each verse an Aramaic rendering, called a *targum*, was given by an interpreter

31.926606° 35.042382°
90 BC
135 AD

Qiryat Sefer Synagogue



Four column plan like
Magdala and Herodium

Columns and walls plastered
and frescoed red like Modein
6 km south west.

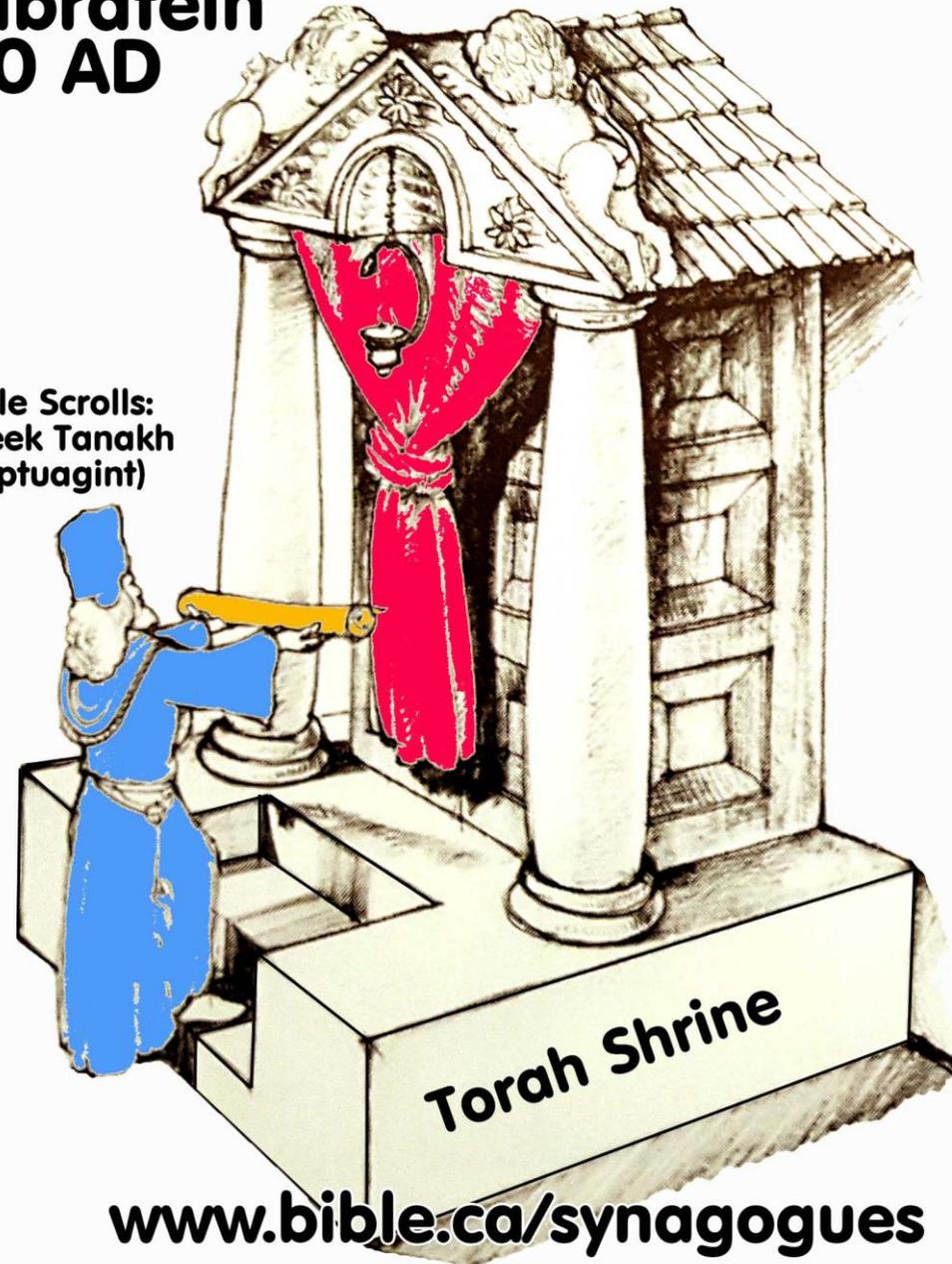
Steven Rudd

www.bible.ca/synagogues

Ark of the Scrolls

Nabratein
250 AD

Bible Scrolls:
Greek Tanakh
(Septuagint)



www.bible.ca/synagogues

4. Reading of the Prophets

- Probably a later development
- The selections seem to have been chosen with a view to the explanation or illustration of the Law
- As with the Law, an interpreter translated the lesson into Aramaic
 - With the prophetic portions, the interpreter was allowed to interpret 3 verses at a time

5. Explanation of the Scriptures

- Equivalent to a “preaching service”
 - In earliest times, the sermon seems to have been connected to the reading from the prophets
- Anyone able to instruct might be asked to preach (i.e., Paul in Acts 13:15).
- The preacher spoke from a sitting position on an elevated place, as Jesus did in Luke 4:20 –

“And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him.”

At the Closing

- A blessing was pronounced by a priestly member of the congregation.
- **All present responded with an Amen.**
- If no priest or Levite was present, the blessing was made into a prayer.

Layout

- As a rule, the synagogue faced Jerusalem and contained three entrances.
- It often sat on a high spot in the city and in close proximity to water.
- Many had elaborate murals and mosaics.
- The early Christian church adapted the synagogue service to their own services.

Dura-Europos Synagogue













Next Week:

**Alexander
the Great**

DANIEL