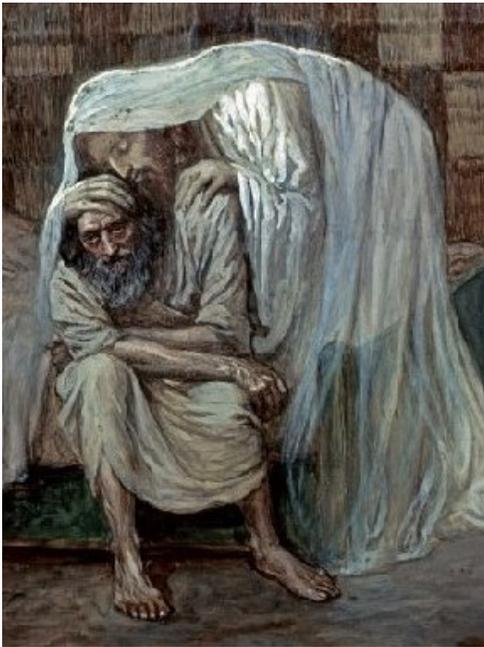




³⁰Great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the mute, and many others. They put them at his feet, and he cured them, ³¹so that the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.
NRSV Matthew 15:30-31



God Is Near the Afflicted James Tissot

MATERIAL UNIQUE TO MATTHEW CONTINUED

- **Blessing of Peter** (16:17-19)
- **Peter Pays the Temple Tax** (17:24-27)
- **Recovering the Sinful Member** (18:15-20)
- **Peter Asks about Forgiveness** (18:21-22)
- **Parable of the Unforgiving Servant** (18:23-35)

FORMS OF RELIGIOUS JEWISH EXPRESSION

Pharisees

- Most frequently mentioned religious group in the New Testament.
- Portrayed harshly in Matthew's Gospel.
 1. *Vipers* (3:7;12:34;23:33)
 2. *Hypocrites* (23:23,27)
 3. *Blind guides* (23:16,24)
 4. *Murders of the prophets* (23:1)
 5. *Whitewashed tombs* (23:27)
- They took seriously (if not literally) the command in Exodus 19:6 to become a *kingdom of priests*.
- They treated all aspects of daily life as if it were a part of the temple service (the field, the kitchen, the bed and the street).
 - a. *This broad based application was considered innovative.*
- Believed in the sovereignty of God, yet human freedom and responsibility in decision making.
- Believed in resurrection of the soul for the righteous.
- Popular with the masses.
- Served as the scholar class interpreting both oral and written tradition.

Sadducees

- Priestly aristocracy at the top of the social pyramid.
 1. *Descendants of Aho, a priest under David and chief priest under Solomon*
 2. *Their lineage precedes the temple.*
- Occupied the majority of seats on Israel's high court, the Sanhedrin.
- Accommodated themselves to Roman rule and collaborated with the Romans to implement policies that profited them.
- Held to a more conservative interpretation of Scripture than the Pharisees.
 1. *Pentateuch (1st 5 books of Hebrew Bible) primary in importance*
 2. *Prophets & Writings secondary in importance*



The Transfiguration James Tissot

Tanakh: Acronym for the Hebrew Bible which used in the Jewish tradition.

- The Hebrew Bible is arranged with the notion that the Torah is at the center, and the lens through which the Prophets and Writings are seen.

T: Torah (*Teachings*)

N: Nevi'im (*Prophets*)

K: Ketuvim (*Writings*)

- *Wisdom*
- *Poetry*
- *History*

- Christians refer to these books as the Old Testament; however, the order is not the same.
 - *Pentateuch* (Latin for five = to Torah)
 - *Writings* (History, Wisdom, Poetry)
 - *Prophets* (Major & Minor)
- The arrangement of the Christian Old Testament is linear, ending with the Prophets which point to Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecy.

- Believed the soul perishes with the body. They did not believe in resurrection (Acts 23:8)
- Did not believe in “fate”. All human decision making relies in one’s own hands.

Scribes

- Professional scholars of the first century (literally those who write)
- Offered authoritative interpretation of sacred traditions
- Rendered judgments according to the Torah.
- Some occupied important seats in the halls of justice, especially the Sanhedrin.
- Specialist that were utilized by the Pharisees and Sadducees for their expertise.
- Descendants of Ezra (5th century B.C.E.)
- Negatively portrayed in Matthew except for 13:52

Zealots

- Believed that occupation by Romans or any alien power was a violation of Yahweh’s (YHWH) design.
- Held tax collectors in contempt.
- Looked for a prophetic or messianic figure to:
 1. *Liberate them from foreign occupation*
 2. *Purge the temple from corruption*
 3. *Revoke unholy taxes*
 4. *Restore religious and political independence*

Am ha-aretz (People of the Land)

- The vast majority of Israelites fell into this category.
- Not as stringent about observing laws of purity and the commandments.
- Ignorant of the content in the Torah and shunned its study.
- Tended to be farmers or part of the peasant population.
- Likely to be considered ritually unclean.