Notes CLE 9 (Church History)

**The world in the New Testament**

The world that Jesus grew up and lived in is very different from the world we live in right now. The culture, the language, the political views and even religious views are very different from the world we have now.

The culture and the language that people had was very different. Culture and language were influenced mainly by Greek culture or Hellenism. The spread of Hellenism was brought about by three factors: 1.) The institution of city states; 2.) The implementation of a common language; and 3.) The integration of religious beliefs.

1. The Institutions of city states. City states had been around since the Sumerians (ca. 3500 BC), these became the most potent instrument for the spread of Greek culture. All gathered in one plaza, often the marketplace, where citizens could meet, trade, debate and vote. The context of a city also allowed culture to flourish and be passed on through educational institutions, like the gymnasium which trained for both physical and intellectual virtue, and the *ephebion,* which was for military training. Through organized religious activities, the city’s citizens achieved common identity.
2. The implementation of common language. Greek replaced Aramaic as the *lingua franca.* Used for trade and government, philosophy, and religion, the common Greek language, or *koine,* made possible the rapid diffusion of new ideas. This, however, did not prevent local languages to continue to be spoken. The native tongue became an expression of local identity and often a focal point for resistance.
3. The integration of religious beliefs. The Greek rulers embarked on a policy of religious syncretism. Aimed at reducing local allegiances, local gods were identified with their Greek counterpart. Thus, Baal was identified with Zeus of Olympus, and Astarte with his wife Hera. This “simplification” of religion hastened the movement toward monotheism, and this manipulation of the “divine status” of local gods made the people yearn for true religious experiences.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Another factor for us to consider in understanding the life and culture of Jesus and the early Christians is to understand Roman History.

The history of Rome can be divided into three phases: the Kingdom or Period of the Kings (754-510 BC), which extended to the mythical foundation of the city of Rome to the deposition of the last king, Tarquinius the Haughty. The rules of the kings were replaced by an independent senate, Rome was ruled by a Triumvirate. By choosing three outstanding senators from its ranks, the citizens of Rome hoped to stave off dictators. The fall or decadence of the republic was when Julius Caesar declared himself as the dictator of Rome after winning against Pompey and having as declared as Dictator Perpetuus or dictator for life. After Caesar was murdered by assassins, Gaius Octavius Thurinus (Octavian) was heir. Octavian defeated Marcus Antonius (Mark Anthony), the second choice as heir, in Egypt. Octavian deified his adoptive father and proclaimed himself as a son of god and took the name Augustus Caesar, Emperor. In doing so, he initiated the end of the Roman Republic and the beginning of the Roman Empire.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Octavian’s reign (27 BC- 14 AD) was marked by peace and prosperity. His reign was called period as the first stage of Pax Romana or Roman Peace.

There are other emperors. One is Claudius (45-54 AD). He is remembered as the emperor who was responsible for the expulsion of the Jews from Rome (49 AD). The tension was caused by Jewish Christians or Jews who believe in Jesus as messiah, in the synagogues boiled over into the streets of the city. To quell the riots all Jews were expelled from Rome. Gentile Christians however remained in Rome.

Another is Nero (Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus also called Nero Claudius Drusus Germanicus, original name Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus)[[3]](#footnote-3) (56-68 AD) who succeeded Claudius, he was a demented and an inconsistent ruler. He is best remembered for his cruelty and persecution of Christians. Although his persecution of Christians was largely limited to Rome and its environs, the victims of his insanity included prominent Christian leaders, among them Peter and Paul. As the first notable persecution of Christians, the blood bath under Nero left an indelible mark on the Christian psyche and caused his identification in Christian writings with the anti- Christ (Rev. 13:18).[[4]](#footnote-4)

Vespasian (69-79 AD) was formerly the governor of the province of Syria, to which Judea belonged, during the start of the first Jewish Revolt (66-70 AD). He laid the siege to Jerusalem and had to leave it to his son Titus for completion. Vespasian himself was summoned to assume emperorship after the turmoil immediately following Nero’s death, when there was succession of three brief reigns (Galba, Otho and Vitellius in 68 AD). Titus succeeded his father Vespasian both in the siege of Jerusalem and the emperorship. Despite the falling debris of the burning Temple, Titus rushed into the Holy of Holies to view the God of the Jews, only to be disappointed by the lack of the Jews.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The reign of Domitian (81-96 AD) is perhaps the most decisive in the development of early Christianity. Though there is no proof that he himself ordered the persecution of Christians, it was during his time that local officials in Asia Minor harassed and made life difficult for Christians. At times they even engaged in real persecution and torture. They implemented religiously the Roman policy of emperor worship for “unbelievers” (cf. Meeting of Jamnia). Consdering all Christians as atheists, they imposed on them the obligation of offering incense to the emperor, rejection of which meant death. This local yet intense persecution of Christians caused both apostasy and martyrdom. To encourage flagging spirits, Christian literature blossomed, among them the Gospels of Matthew (ca 80- 85 AD), Luke (ca. 85-90 AD), and John (ca. 90-100 AD). This was also the time for writing of the many of the epistles, particularly the Deutero- Pauline, the Pastoral letters and the early Catholic Epistles. This was also the bleak period described in the Book of Revelation. [[6]](#footnote-6)

The long reign of Trajan(96-117) brought about a new era for Rome. An able general and administrator, he ushered in a new period of prosperity for the empire, known as the second phase of the Pax Romana.

His son and successor, Hadrian (117-138) is best remembered for ordering the destruction of Jerusalem after the Second Jewish Revolt (132-135). Intent of teaching rebellious Jews a lesson, he had the whole of Jerusalem razed to the ground and a new wholly Roman city, Aelia Capitolina, took its place. In the process all religious sites were replaced with pagan temples. Providentially, this marked and preserved Christian places, now found within the walls of pagan temples, until the time of Constantine the Great (312-337 AD) when Christianity could be publicly practiced after the Edict of Milan (313 AD). [[7]](#footnote-7)

The Herods

There are three references of Herods in the New Testament.

Herod the Great (73-4 BC). He was the second son of Antipater II and was the ruler during Jesus’ birth. He was born of an Idumean father and a Nabatean mother. This technically makes him only a “quarter- Jew,” which explains both Jewish animosity against the man and his own insecurity regarding his throne. Named by Mark Anthony as tetrarch of Galilee at the age of 25 (47 BC), he was admired by the Romans for his swift capture and ruthless execution of rampaging bandits. When his father was assassinated (43 BC) during the power struggles of the Hasmoneans, Herod fled to Rome where he ingratiated himself before Octavian, who in turned confirmed him as “King of the Jews” in 40 BC, though he could assume his throne three years later. That same year (37 BC), for political expediency, he married the Hasmonean princess Mariamne I, who bore him Alexander and Aristobolus IV, the father of Herod Agrippa I.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Herod’s reign can conveniently be divided into three periods. His initial years (37-25 BC) were dedicated to consolidating power. Intent on avoiding the fate of his father, he systematically eliminated all threats to his throne. These included his wife Mariamne I (d. 29), her brother Aristobolus (d. 35) and their mother Alexandra (d. 28). Herod’s middle years (23-13 BC) were spent in the construction of massive projects, including the foundation of new cities, the renovation of old ones and restoration of the Temple in Jerusalem (19 BC-64 AD). He named most of his projects after his Roman benefactors, Augustus in particular-among them the Caesarea Maritima and Sebaste (Augustus’ family name). Ever troubled and suspicious by nature, Herod the Great’s last years were marked by domestic strife and cruelty. Insecure of his throne, he had his own son murdered, Alexander and Aristobolus in 7 BC and Antipater just five days before his own death![[9]](#footnote-9)

Matthew’s portrayal therefore of the cunning, deceitful and cruel Jewish leader who orders the massacre of the innocents (Mt. 2) is not without historical basis.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Herod Antipas (21 BC-39 AD). At the death of Herod the Great, the Romans divided his kingdom among his sons. Archelaus (4 BC-6 AD) was made tetrarch of Judea, Idumea and Samaria. Inheriting the cruel streak of his father (Mt. 2: 22), he was charged by the Jews of gross mismanagement and was eventually deposed and exiled to Gaul in 6 AD. His territory was assumed under the direct control of the Roman prefect who made his seat of government in Caesarea Maritima. Herod’s son Philip (4 BC-34 AD) was made tetrarch of Gaulantis and Iturea, the territory northeast of the Decapolis. He restored the northern city of Panias and renamed it Caesarea Philippi (cf. Mk 8:27-30) both in honor of Augustus and himself. He later married Salome, daughter of Herodias (Mt. 14, 6), and had relatively uneventful reign. Herod Antipas (4 BC-39 AD) was made tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. He restored Sepphoris, just adjacent to Nazareth, and founded the Galilean port city of Tiberias, which he named after Augustus’ successor. In the NT, he is remembered for his notorious relationship with his niece Herodias (Mt. 14:3-12), wife of his brother Herod II, also called Herod Philip, and for having ordered the execution of John the Baptist. During the time of Jesus’ trial, he even questioned Jesus at length (Lk 23: 8-12) and together with his guards maltreated him.[[11]](#footnote-11) Herod Antipas was eventually charged with treason and deposed in 39 AD to make way for his nephew Agrippa I.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Herod Agrippa I (10 BC- 44 AD). He had the fortune of being in the right place at the right time. After his father’s murder (7 BC), he was sent to Rome where he grew up among Roman youth, among them was Caligula, the future emperor (37-41 AD). Appointed ruler of Galilee (39 AD) by his boyhood friend, Agrippa I traveled to Rome in 41 AD and supported the cause of Claudius, who had now become emperor. As a reward, he was also given Judea and Samaria (the entire extent of the realm of Herod the Great) that same year. To win the favor of his Jewish subjects in 44 AD he had James, brother of John, executed (Acts 12:1-3) for which Agrippa I us meted a wicked man’s death (vv. 20-23). He is also remembered for fortifying Jerusalem by building the “third wall” which enclosed Calvary within the city. [[13]](#footnote-13)

Marcus Agrippa II (48-93 AD). Too young rule at the time of his father’s death, Agrippa II grew up in Rome in the Claudius’ court. His early upbringing left a deep mark on him and caused him to be staunchly pro-Roman until his death (93 AD). As a ruler of Chalcis (48 AD) and Iturea (53 AD), he visited Caesarea Maritima in 60 AD accompanied by Bernice, where he heard Paul’s defense upon the invitation of the Roman procurator Festus (Acts 25:13-26, 32). He was unflinching in his support of the Romans during the first Jewish Revolt (66-70 AD). With his death, the Herodian dynasty came to an end.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Another factor that we must consider in studying the life of Jesus and that of the Church is to understand the different political and religious groups and institutions in their time in Judea.

Jewish Religious Leadership

The High Priest. The high priest was the head of the priestly aristocracy in Jerusalem. Already an institution since OT times (Ex 28), he was the chief authority of the Law and the Temple. By the time of Jesus, the High Priest was drawn only from four prominent priestly families. They were Sadducees and were subservient to the Romans. During the time of the Hasmoneans, the same individual could be both High Priest and king, as in the case of Aristobolus II (69-63 BC). This mixture and politics and religion had its adverse effects on the high priesthood. Whereas previously consecrated for life, by the time of the Hasmoneans, and especially during the Roman rule, the High Priests were at the mercy of the civil authority that appointed or deposed them at will. This explains why there were two High Priests during the trial of Jesus: the current High Priest, Caiaphas and the former High Priest Ananias, the former’s father-in-law (Jn. 18:3). As the president of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling body, he wielded great political power. Through the management of the Temple tax and the profitable sale of animals for sacrifice, the High Priest also had sufficient economic clout. His most important role, however, was on the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur. Dressed in all his high priestly splendor, it was then that he entered the Holy of Hollies, only once a year, to beg pardon for the sins of the nation (Lev 23: 26-32). The Letter to the Hebrews identifies Jesus as the perfect High Priest who fulfilled this function once and for all by his expiatory death on Calvary (Heb 9:11-14).[[15]](#footnote-15)

Country Priests. Unlike the members of the high priestly families who resided in Jerusalem and belonged to the wealthy Sadducean party, most of the priests resided in country villages. Many belonged to the Pharisees. Some were learned as scribes, or experts of the Law; most were poor. Being closer to the common people both in status and in mentality they wielded immense influence among them. The high point of a priest’s life was to offer incense in the inner Temple during either the morning or the evening sacrifices. Since this role was determined by lot and could not be repeated until all had an opportunity, for most it was a chance of a lifetime. It was while fulfilling such role that Zechariah received the news of Elizabeth’s pregnancy. The angel had struck him dumb (wordless) until the divine word had been fulfilled (Lk 1:5-25).

Levites. The subordinate Temple duties were divided among the Levites. These were members of the tribes of Levi, who at this time numbered some 10,000 and, like, the priests, were divided into 24 sections. They prepared the sacrifices, collected tithes, provided music and acted as Temple police. Perhaps the best-known New Testament Levite was the Cypriot Joseph, also known as Barnabas (Acts 4: 36-37), renowned for his generosity and as the senior companion of Paul (13:3 ff).[[16]](#footnote-16)

Elders. In Jerusalem, the elders were some kind of lay aristocracy coming from the class of the Sadducees. With close links both to the Romans and the high priests, this small group of rich merchants and wealthy farmers had the seats in the Sanhedrin, in which they had considerable influence.[[17]](#footnote-17)

The term *elder* is also used of the local leader for the synagogues in Palestine and the Diaspora. These respected senior members of the community formed an organized council interested to watch over the spiritual and material interests of their communities (e.g. Acts 11:30; 15:1ff; 16:14). It is on them that Christianity would base its own elders, the *presbyteroi* or priests.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Scribes. These were essentially specialists or doctors of the law. Some scribes belonged to the priestly class, although the majority were lay and affiliated to the Pharisees. They endured a long and rigorous study of the Law, often until the age of forty. As the official interpreters of scripture, they had great influence on the daily life of the Jews. Intending to enable even ordinary Jews to experience “being close with God,” they extended to all the people the rules of purity, some 613 minor rules all in all, before reserved only to the priests. For this they were soundly rebuked by Jesus for laying on the people unbearable burdens (Mt. 23:2-4).[[19]](#footnote-19)

**Religious Groups in Jerusalem**

Sadducees. Believing themselves to the descendants of Zadok, Solomon’s priest (1Kng. 2:35), they were religious fundamentalists. They recognized only the Torah, not the Prophets nor the Writings. They refused to accept as tenets what could not be found in the Torah, and so rejected belief in angels, and the resurrection (Acts 23:8), which were brought about by later Persian and Greek influences. The Sadducees were above all wealthy priestly, aristocrats who resided in Jerusalem and, as political opportunists, collaborated with the Romans. They were particularly harsh against Jesus and the developing Christian movement (Mt. 22:23 ff; Acts 5:17-18ff). Unemployed after the destruction of the Temple, they did not survive after 70 AD.

Pharisees. The term itself is derived from the Hebrew verb *paras,* meaning “to rend, to tear in two,” and aptly describes the mentality of these self-styled *Saddikim,* or holy men, who opted for a life separated from ordinary practices to better concentrate on the holiness of God and the meditation of his Law. Appalled by the lifestyle of the Hasmoneans, they instituted a whole network of practices in order to live constantly in the presence of God. Their desire for holiness was sincere. Their fault lay in the fact that they considered salvation as the just compensation for their own merits, and not as God’s gracious gift, and that they looked down upon those who could not meet their standards (Lk. 18: 10-14).

In contrast to the Sadducees, the Pharisees accepted the entire Hebrew Scriptures, including the belief in angels and the afterlife. Socially they were of the poorer class and were more influential with the common folk. Politically they were anti-Roman and more associated with the zealots. Their regrouping at Jamnia in 80 AD and the events consequent to it, all of which were posterior to Jesus’ own lifetime.

Essenes. The existence of Jewish sectarians living in the area of he Dead Sea was already known through the writings of Flavius Josephus, Philo of Alexandria and Pliny the Elder. However, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (1947) and the excavations made at Khirbet Qumran (1952) renewed interest in them and made known their community.

The Essenes trace their origins to an ultra-conservative branch of Babylonian Jewry, whose reflection on the causes for the Exile resulted in an apocalyptic-style Judaism. Back from Babylon only by the 2nd century (ca. 172 BC), they were shocked by a Palestinian Jewry already heavily influenced by Hellenism. Retreating into the seclusion of the Dead Sea valley, they devoted themselves to a life of prayer and meditation on Scripture, preparing actively for the coming of the Kingdom of God. Under the leadership of a priest, whom they called their “teacher of righteousness,” they developed a doctrine and a compendium of writings which were dichotomous in outlook, distinguishing between what was “heavenly” and “earthly,” of “light” and “darkness,” of the “spirit” or of “the flesh.” They also employed much ritual purification, constructing numerous *mikvaot,* or ritual baths, apparently in preparation for the last days.

Baptist Movements. The effects of Hellenism on the Jerusalem priesthood and Temple sacrifices led many to adopt a hostile attitude towards the Temple cult. Between 150 BC-300 AD, there arose in the Judean desert many types of Baptist movements. Chiefly apocalyptic in character, these attached importance to ritual purification as an initiation rite and as a token of forgiveness. This phenomenon shows that the figure of John the Baptist must be seen within greater backdrop of a movement popular in his time (Acts 19:1-7).

Samaritans. Among its neighbors, the Samaritans were perhaps the Jews’ most detested peoples. The Samaritans were a foreign people transplanted in the land of Ephraim by the Assyrians when the Jews of the Northern Kingdom were sent to Nineveh in 722 BC. These colonists of mixed origins brought with them their own traditions and their own gods. Yearning for assimilation with the Jewish people, they adopted their own version of the Pentateuch and even instituted their own temple ritual in their shrine on Mt. Gerezim. By putting up a temple to rival that in Jerusalem, the Samaritans merited the perpetual wrath of the Jews. During the time of Jesus, the relationship between Jews and Samaritans was tense, at best (Lk.9:52 ff; Jn.4:ff). Jesus’ attitude (Lk. 17: 11-19) and use of Samaritans as examples in his parables (10:29-37) and teaching scandalized his contemporaries. Following Jesus’ example, later Christian missions first developed in that direction (Acts 1:8; 8:5-25; 9:31).

People of the Land. The “people of the land” was the scornful title used by the Pharisees of the common people. Too busy in earning a living by tilling the soil, casting their nets or pasturing their flock, these poor folks knew nothing much about the Law. Their ignorance of the manifold regulations stipulated by the Scribes and Pharisees often caused them to be in the lamentable impure state (Jn. 7:49; Acts 4:13). It was to such as these that Jesus first found an audience.

Gentile Adherents to Judaism. During this time, Stoicism was the most popular philosophy of life among the Gentiles. Nauseated by the moral excesses of Rome, many Gentiles sought to find an encounter with the divine through the orderliness found in nature. This attraction for order made the Torah, with its clear- cut patter of laws, and the exemplary Jewish lifestyle, with its high standard of moral rectitude, most appealing to many Gentiles. Gentiles who converted to Judaism by accepting the Jewish Law, including circumcision, were acknowledged as proselytes (Acts 2:11; 6:5, 13-43). There were also many Gentiles who were sympathetic to Judaism, adverse only to circumcision, and who accepted Jewish beliefs. These were called “God-fearers” (Acts 10:2, 22; 13:16,26, 43; 16:14).

Political Groups

Zealots. Oppressive policies, particularly insensitive actions against the Torah, led the most passionate Jews to rebel against the ruling powers. During the First Jewish Revolt (66-70 AD), many such zealots carried with them short swords, or *sica*, hidden under their clothing, for which they were given the popular name *sicarii.* There were mainly responsible for that revolt and the disaster of 70 AD. One of them, Simon ben-Kosibah, led the Second Jewish Revolt (132-135 AD), taking the *nom de guerre* Bar-Kokhba (son of the Star; cf. Num. 24:17), alluding to the coming of the Messiah. This association of the “messiah” with the political liberation of the Jews led Jesus to be wary of the term.

The Herodians. These were clearly the friends and supporters of Herod’s family who showed themselves severely hostile to Jesus (Mk. 3:16). Found mainly in Galilee, particularly in the court of Herod of Antipas, they were staunchly conservative and pro-Roman, and considered Jesus a dangerous disturber of peace.

Jewish Institutions

The Temple. The Temple was the center of Jewish life in more ways than one. Primarily it was the center of the Israelite faith. In ancient Israel, Solomon’s temple was where the “mercy seat,” or the Ark of the Covenant was kept. In that Ark, the most sacred symbols of Judaism were kept, the tablets of the Decalogue and a jar of manna. Despite the Ark’s disappearance during the destruction of 587 BC, the restored Temple remained, primarily the House of Yahweh, the preeminent locus of his presence in Israel. As the House of God, the Temple was exclusive to him alone. Humans, in particular, the priests, entered the Temple only to offer Yahweh worship. Priests offered incense in the inner sanctuary twice daily. The high priest entered the Holy of Holies only once, on *Yom Kippur* or the Day of Atonement, for the benefit of the people, to obtain pardon for the sins of the nation.

The Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was the central council for the nation Israel. Post-exilic in origin, it traces its roots to the assemblies of elders (Ezra 5:5; 6:7; 10:8; Neh. 4:14) and representatives of the nation (Ezra 10:9; Neh. 7:5) during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. It was composed of priests, elders and scribes from both the Sadducees and Pharisees, totaling 70 members, without the counting the High Priest who presided over it. Its functions varied according to the form of government in place. Under the Hasmonean rulers, for example, it shared in the responsibility of ruling the nation (1Macc. 12:6, 35-36; 2 Macc 13:13) but was limited mainly to the implementation of Temple laws during the time of the Romans. During the time of Jesus, it functioned as the central authority for the administration of Jerusalem. It was the supreme religious court which fixed doctrine, established the religious calendar and regulated religious life.

The Synagogue. The origin of the synagogue is not clear. These started as community centers for Jews in the Diaspora. Far from the Temple in Jerusalem, these Jews of the dispersion gathered together for fellowship, affirmation in their national identity, and, among other things, to hear the Torah. In the course of time, the synagogue paralleled the worship in the temple through its three daily prayer times, although it was not limited to it. Other than for prayer and the study of the Torah, it functioned as a school, a house of the Law, and even as a hostel for passing guests.

Jewish Festivals and Celebrations

Jews, like us Christians also celebrate several festivals recounting their encounter with God. In fact, some of our celebrations have Jewish origins such as Pentecost.

Passover

Passover (Pesach in Hebrew) is celebrated to commemorate the liberation of the Children of Israel who were led out of Egypt by Moses.

It is a major eight day festival. A highlight is the Seder meal held in each family's home at the beginning of the festival, when the story of their deliverance is recounted as narrated in the Haggadah (the Telling, the Story). Matzah (unleavened bread) is eaten throughout the festival, as are other foods that contain no leaven. There is a great spring cleaning in the home before the festival to ensure that no trace of leaven is left in the home during Pesach.

Rosh Hashanah - Jewish New Year

Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year festival and commemorates the creation of the world.

This festival marks the Jewish New Year and begins with ten days of repentance and self examination, during which time God sits in judgement on every person. The festival is also known as the Day of Judgement, the Day of the Sounding of the Shofar, and the Day of Remembrance.

Over the two days of Rosh Hashanah, there are special services at the synagogue. A musical instrument, called a shofar, is blown. It makes a loud piercing sound like a trumpet and reminds Jews of God's great power.

People east slices of apple dipped in honey. This is a way of wishing each other a sweet and happy New Year.

Happy New Year - 'Leshanah Tovah Tikatev'

Yom Kippur - the Day of Atonement

Yom Kippur, the most sacred and solemn day of the Jewish year, brings the Days of Repentance to a close.

As well as fasting for 25 hours, Jews spend the day in prayer, asking for forgiveness and resolving to behave better in the future.

Sukkot / Sukkoth

Sukkot commemorates the years that the Jews spent in the desert on their way to the Promised Land. Some lived in tents whilst others built huts out of leaves and branches. These huts were called sukkah.

During the festival, some Jews build their own sukkah in the garden or at the synagogue. Jews eat their meals in the sukkah for the eight or nine days of the festival.

There are rules to making the sukkah. Each sukkah must have at least three walls. The roof of the sukkah must be made of material referred to as sekhakh, which means "covering." Thie 'covering' must be something that grew from the ground and was cut off, such as tree branches, corn stalks, bamboo reeds or sticks. Sekhakh (the roof covering) should be sparse and left loose enough so that the stars can be seen.

There is a special Sukkot service in the synagogue. Everyone holds branches from three trees in their hands and a citron fruit in their right. They walk around the synagogue seven times, waving the branches.

Hanukkah

Menorah Hanukkah or Chanukah is the Jewish Festival of Lights. It dates back to two centuries before the beginning of Christianity. It is an eight day holiday starting on the 25th night of the Jewish month of Kislev

Hanukka celebrates the miraculous victory over religious persecution in the Holy Land and also commemorates the re-dedication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem and the miracle of the burning oil. This is where the oil of the menorah (the candelabrum in the temple) miraculously burned for eight days, even though there was only enough oil for one day.

Tisha B’av

Tisha B'av is a solemn occasion because it commemorates a series of tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people over the years

Tu B’Shevat

Tu B'Shevat is the Jewish 'New Year for Trees'. It is one of the four Jewish new years (Rosh Hashanahs).

Yom Hashoah

Yom Hashoah is a day set aside for Jews to remember the Holocaust.[[20]](#footnote-20)

1. Hanep, Biblia! An Integrated Bible Study Guide for Filipino Youth. John Aranda Cabrido, SDB. Salesiana Publishers, Inc. 2004. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://[www.ancient.edu/Julius](http://www.ancient.edu/Julius)\_Caesar [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://britannica.com/biography/Nero> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Hanep, Biblia! An Integrated Bible Study Guide for Filipino Youth. John Aranda Cabrido, SDB. Salesiana Publishers, Inc. 2004. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Hanep, Biblia! An Integrated Bible Study Guide for Filipino Youth. John Aranda Cabrido, SDB. Salesiana Publishers, Inc. 2004. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Hanep, Biblia! An Integrated Bible Study Guide for Filipino Youth. John Aranda Cabrido, SDB. Salesiana Publishers, Inc. 2004. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
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11. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
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19. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. <http://www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/religion/jewishfestivals.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-20)