



Setting the Scene Characters and Places

When reading literature, we need some knowledge about the *scene* of the story in order to understand what is going on. By *scene* we mean the places, customs, attitudes and social groups found in the story. The New Testament writings assume that we are familiar with the social groups and areas of Roman-occupied Palestine. This worksheet gives us our places and cast of characters found in the gospels. Your task is to use the research tools in the library to identify the following political powers, religious factions, and places (be able to identify the places on a map):

Political Powers:

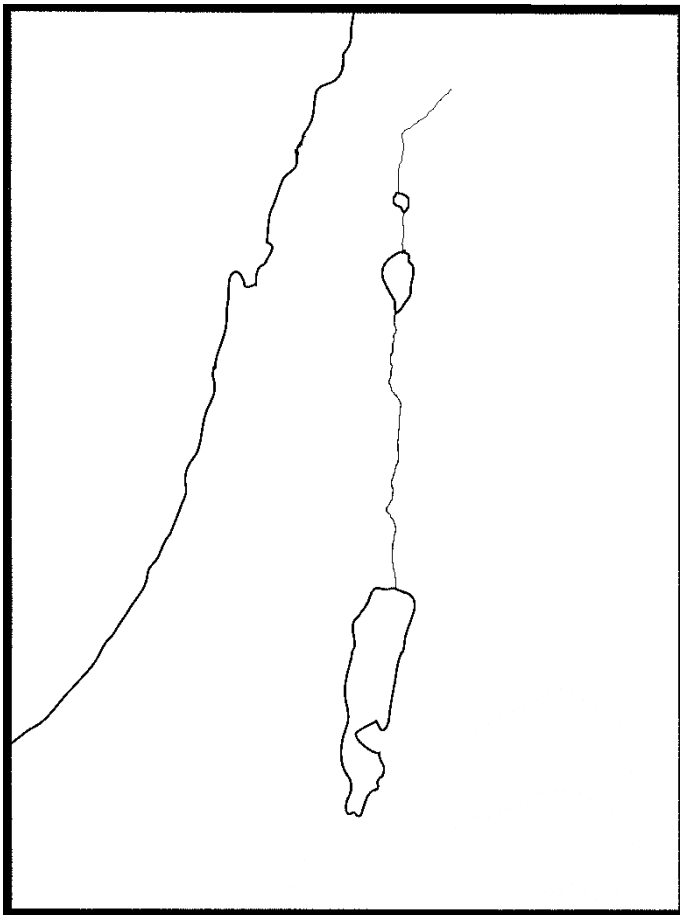
- The Roman emperor at the time of Jesus' birth
- The Roman emperor at the time of Jesus' death
- Herod the Great (when, where)
- Archelaus (when, where)
- Herod Antipas (when, where)
- Pontius Pilate
- Titus and the destruction of Jerusalem (who, when)

Religious/ethnic factions:

- Samaritans
- Sadducees
- The Sanhedrin
- Pharisees
- Hillel
- Shammai
- Essenes
- Zealots

Places:

- Galilee
- Samaria
- Judea
- The Decapolis
- Capernaum
- Nazareth
- Bethsaida
- Jerusalem
- Bethlehem
- Sea of Galilee
- Dead Sea
- Jordan River
- Caesarea Philippi
- Bethany



Palastine at the time of Jesus

Research Hints:

- One group practiced baptism and celibacy.*
- One group was composed of remnants of the Northern Kingdom.*
- One religious group's name means "Separate"*
- One group wanted to overthrow the Romans.*
- One group only accepted the written law (Pentateuch) as authentic.*
- One group accepted the written law and oral tradition as authentic.*
- This group denied the existence of life after death.*
- The Romans removed this king because of his cruelty.*
- Members of this group were experts in the law.*
- The Jews hated this group for religious reasons.*
- This town served as the center of Jesus' ministry.*
- This town is known as the birthplace of Peter.*
- This area is a predominantly Gentile area of Palestine.*
- Ruled Israel from the revolution of the Macchabees until the Roman conquest.*
- The Jewish religious court composed of 71 members.*
- This city was built as the capital of one of Palestine's rulers and named in honor of the Roman Emperor.*