

THE INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD

Religious Groups in the New Testament

GROUP		Textual references
Pharisees	Origins from the Hasidim, “pious men” who resisted the Hellenization movements. More religious than political, but they enjoyed the respect of the people. A “people of the Book, they observed strict adherence to the minutia of the legal tradition. Strong attachment to the oral law as equally inspired as the written Law (eventually became the <i>Mishnah</i> c. 200 AD). In the Gospels they become adversaries of Jesus. Teachings: Messianic, life after death, free will balanced by Providence, angels and spirits, highly ethical.	Josephus, <i>Antiquities</i> , XIII.9; Matt. 23:13-39; Mark 7:6-9; Mat. 12: 23:2f.; Matt. 16:1, 22:15f.; Mark 3:6, 12:13.
Sadducees	More political than religious, arose from the priestly aristocracy of the Hasmonean period. The group ceases with the destruction of the Temple (70 AD). The high priests, who resided over the Sanhedrin, arose from among this group. Josephus described them as “boorish and with their peers they are as rude as to aliens.” Teachings: Denied oral law, defended private opinion, literalists in interpreting Law, free will, no resurrection, no angles or demons,	Josephus, <i>Antiquities</i> XIII.5.9; Matt. 26:67f.; Acts 23:2-8; Mark 12: 18ff., 4:2; Matt. 3:7; 16:1; Matt. 22:22-33, Lk. 20:27-38, Mk. 12:18-27; Mk. 14:53ff.; Acts 4:1ff., 5:17ff.; not mentioned in Gospel of John.
Hellenists	Refers to Jews who adapted the culture and mindset of the Greek influence propagated by Alexander the Great during his conquests. Their influence is seen predominantly in Alexandria, Egypt, where they translated the O.T. into Greek (the Septuagint, LXX), and in the influence on the early church by their philosophers, like Philo.	Matt 8:28-34 (Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-37); Acts 6:1; 9:29; 11:20; Acts 2:5-11.
Zealots	A Jewish political party with religious underpinnings. Did not hesitate to use violence, intrigue, deception or force to accomplish its goal of political liberation. Originated during the reign of Herod the Great as Palestine came more and more under the control of the roman governors and armies.	Josephus, <i>War of the Jews</i> II.4.1; IV.4.1; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13.
Herodians	A party who were partisans of Herod the Great and his dynasty, especially in support of Antipas as rightful ruler of the Jews over against the Romans.	Mark 3:6 (Matt. 22:16; 12:14); Mark 12:13 (Matt 22:17)