

THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN

All scripture is from the King James Version unless otherwise noted. Before beginning this study, I suggest you pray and ask God to guide you through this study. I also suggest that you do your own study of this material in order to ensure its accuracy.

The words "Synagogue of Satan" occur in only two verses of scripture, Revelation 2:9 and 3:9. The Synagogue of Satan is very real and exists today. Though it is mentioned by this name only in the Revelation, the Bible discusses it in several places.

Let us define our terms:

Synagogue:

Strong's definition:

4864. sunagoge, soon-ag-o-gay'; from (the redupl. form of) *4863*; an assemblage of persons; specifically a Jewish "synagogue" (the meeting or the place); by analysis, a Christian church:--assembly, congregation, synagogue.

4863. sunago, soon-ag'-o; from *4862* and *71*; to lead together, i.e. collect or convene; specically to entertain (hospitably):--+ accompany, assemble (selves, together), bestow, come together, gather (selves together, up, together), lead into, resort, take in.

A synagogue is a recognized place of regular assembly and worship; a church, if you will. Worship includes the reading of the Word, praying, singing, praising, dancing (yes, dancing, which is an expression of praise), and teaching and preaching. In the Jewish Synagogue, enough scripture is read at each gathering for the entire Law to be read in a set period or cycle of time, such as a year. It is read line by line in successive order. In other words, the Law is read in the manner of chapter by chapter and verse by verse (chapters and verses were not defined in the original texts but line and precept were). The other writings of the Bible are read and taught in a similar manner, including the New Testament in a Messianic congregation. When we study chapter by chapter and verse by verse, we are actually studying line by line and precept by precept.

In Biblical times, when people assembled in the Synagogue, someone stood up and read the law. Then the prophets were read. Then someone taught the law and prophets. Homilies were spoken. Prayer and celebration were and are also parts of synagogue worship. This information comes from Smith's Bible Dictionary.

Satan:

The word means accuser, opponent, or adversary. (Rev 12:9) And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. This verse tells us that Satan is the Devil, the Dragon, and the Serpent of Eden. There are many other names given to Satan, among them: Lucifer, the morning star, and Beelzebub, the lord of the flies, and Baal, lord, and the Prince of the Power of the Air, and many others. Satan is the opponent of God and anything that is of God. He rebelled against God and was sentenced to death (Isa 14:19-20 & Eze 28:18-19). He now awaits execution of sentence. While he waits, his spirit is loose on the earth.

So the Synagogue of Satan can be stated as the assembly (or church) of the followers of Satan. (I am not speaking of Satanic worshipers here, just those that are opposed to Christ--if you are not for Christ, you are against him--Mat 12:30 & Luke 11:23).

Jews:

Before we can begin a Bible study of the Synagogue of Satan, we must first understand who the Jews are. This is necessary because many (including the many of Jews themselves) think they know who the Jews are but are mistaken. For the last few centuries, the Jews have come to be known as the entire nation of Israel, when, in fact, they are only a small part of the nation of Israel. By the nation of Israel, I do not mean the *country* of Israel in Palestine, but the people of all the tribes of Israel.

Strong's *Concordance* defines the word Jew for us:

"3064. Yehuwdiy, yeh-hoo-dee'; patronymically from 3063; a Jehudite (i.e. Judaite or Jew), or descendant of Jehudah (i.e. Judah):--Jew."

"3063. Yehuwdah, yeh-hoo-daw'; from 3034; celebrated; Jehudah (or Judah), the name of five Israelites; also of the tribe descended from the first, and of its territory:--Judah."

A Judaite or Jehudite is a native or inhabitant of the land of Judah. The Funk and Wagnalls *Standard College Dictionary* defines the suffix "ite" as "native or inhabitant of."

2453. Ioudaios, ee-oo-dah'-yos; from 2448 (in the sense of 2455 as a country); Judaeon, i.e. belonging to Jehudah:--Jew (-ess), of Judaea.

2448. Iouda, ee-oo-dah'; of Hebrew origin [3063 or perhaps 3194]; Judah (i.e. Jehudah or Juttah), a part of (or place in) Palestine:--Judah.

2455. Ioudas, ee-oo-das'; of Hebrew origin [3063]; Judas (i.e. Jehudah), the name of ten Israelites; also of the posterity of one of them and its region:--Juda (-h, -s); Jude.

Young's *Analytical Concordance* defines Jew:

"A descendant of Judah; in later times also an Israelite. In 2 Kings 16:6 [the first use of the word, Jew, in the Bible] this appellation is applied to the *two* tribes [Judah and Benjamin]; in later days to the *twelve* tribes. Strictly speaking, the name is appropriate only to the subjects of the kingdom of the two tribes after the separation of the ten tribes, BC 975."

Vine's *Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* defines Jew:

"The name "Jew" is primarily tribal (from Judah). It is first found in 2 Kings 16:6, as distinct from Israel, of the northern kingdom. After captivity it was chiefly used to distinguish the race from Gentiles [which means "nations"]"

Funk and Wagnalls *Standard College Dictionary* defines Jew:

1. A member of the Hebrew people. 2. Any person professing Judaism. 3. Originally, a member of the tribe or kingdom of Judah.

The first definition in Funk and Wagnalls is misleading. The Hebrews include ALL of the descendants of Eber (or Heber) (*'eber*). For example, Terah, Abram, Nahor and Haran are Hebrews. Abraham's children, INCLUDING Ishmael, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, Shuah, Sheba, and Dedan, are ALL Hebrews. So are Esau and all his descendants, the Edomites. And let us not forget Moab. The list goes on. Are all of the above-mentioned people considered Jews? Of course they are not. Today, many are called Arabs. So definition one of the Funk and Wagnalls dictionary is inaccurate. That leaves definitions two and three. The people under definition two, "Any person profession Judaism," are the real crux of the Synagogue of Satan, as we will find out. Definition 3 agrees with Strong, Young and Vines, that the Jews are the descendants of Judah or inhabitants of the land of Judah.

So originally word Jew meant the descendants of Judah or natives or inhabitants of the land of Judah or Judea. The word later became applied to the entire nation of Israel. Even so, the Bible distinguishes between the Jews and the Israelites. Whenever the word Jew is used in the Bible, it is always in the context of the descendants of Judah or the inhabitants of the land of Judah or Judea (yes, even in the NT). In the Old

Testament, every reference to Jews is in the context of the kingdom of Judah (free or in captivity) or the return of the captives from Judah to Judea. In the New Testament, all references to the Jews are in reference to those living in Judea or the descendants of Judah. Jesus of Nazareth was a Jew by birth. He was of the line of David, who was of the line of Judah. The disciples were all residents of Judea. Peter was a Jew and Paul was a Jew, both by birth.

The point of all of this is that, in the Bible, The Jews are separate and distinct from the Israelites. The Jews either belong to the Kingdom of Judah, or are descendants of Judah or are residents of Judea. The Israelites are any of the twelve tribes BEFORE the division of the Kingdom into two kingdoms in 975 BC. After that, the people of the northern Kingdom, that is, the (ten) tribes of Reuben, Simeon, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, and Manasseh and Ephraim (both of Joseph) are referred to as Israelites. In the Bible, after the division of the tribes, the entire twelve tribes as a whole are referred to as Jacob. To summarize, The Jews are the people of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, or residents of Judah or Judea, the Israelites are the people of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, or residents of that land, and the entire twelve tribes as a whole are called Jacob.

Originally, being a Jew meant being of the tribe of Judah (after the division of Israel into the Northern and Southern kingdoms). A Jew could have been of the bloodline of Judah, or could simply have been a person living in Judea, the land of the tribe of Judah. After the captivity, the people of the tribe of Judah (as well as the Temple servants (Nethinim) and the Rechabites and the Hivites who were NOT of the tribe of Judah) returned to the land of Judea to rebuild it. They were all known as Jews, even if their lineage was not Jewish. As time passed the term Jew began to be used to describe all of Israel, including the ten tribes that were scattered among the nations.

I believe that the imprecise use of the word Jew may have been a ploy of Satan to pervert the word Jew and allow it to be used by people who have no right to use it (such as the non-Jew, non-Israelite people who returned with the true Jews from Babylonian captivity—the Nethinim, the Rechabites, and the Hivites). It also confuses the proper interpretation and right dividing of the Word of God. To properly understand prophecy, you must understand the difference between Israel, Judah (Jews), and Jacob. Each name refers to a different group of Israelites.

Again, Judah and Jew refer to the tribe of Judah, or a resident in the land of Judah, that is, Judea. Judah is also the name God uses when referring to the Southern

Kingdom, which includes the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi. Levi has no inheritance in the land of Israel, so they do not count as one of the twelve tribes.

Jacob is used by God to stipulate all twelve of the tribes of Israel. Israel and Ephraim refer to the Northern Kingdom which included the remaining ten tribes.

And again, the word Jew has come to indicate all Israelites, but that use of the word is imprecise. For the purpose of this study, we will attempt to use the word Jew accurately, in the way the Bible uses the word. For example, on May 15, 1948, modern Israel became a recognized nation (except by their enemies). The Jews regained the land of Judea, or at least a part of it. They didn't have Jerusalem, Gaza (the land of the Philistines), Golan, the West Bank, etc. They gained those lands in wars where they were the defendants. Here is the rub: the world believes that all of the tribes of Israel are simply the Jews. When the Jews of the world migrate to Israel, most people (even members of the Church) believe they are of all the twelve tribes. That isn't so.

In many places in the Word, God tells us that he has scattered the tribes of the Northern Kingdom throughout the world. They do not even know who they are. God also says He will gather them back to the land:

(Jer 16:13-15) Therefore will I cast you out of this land into a land that ye know not, neither ye nor your fathers; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night; where I will not show you favour. { 14 } Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; { 15 } But, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers.

Jeremiah is known as the prophet to Judah. But many of his prophecies apply to the kingdom of Israel, too. That is the case here. In 1-12, God tells why he will cast them out of the land. Many claim this prophecy was fulfilled when the Jews returned from Babylon. This cannot be the case. The Jews, exiled *to* Babylon, returned *from* Babylon. Here, the verse speaks of the *children of Israel*, which includes all twelve of the tribes. *Israel* specifically applies to the ten northern tribes, but *the children of Israel*, being all the children of Jacob, Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, and Zilpah, include all twelve of the tribes. Only the Jews, a few Benjamites, and some non-Israelites calling themselves Jews returned from Babylon. Here, all twelve tribes are brought back from *all lands*. That means every nation. These will be the true Israelites; no pretenders will be included.

Many commentaries teach that the Synagogue of Satan is just a reference to those in the church who were legalizers or Judaizers (those insisting on circumcision, and obedience to the law for salvation). Is that the case? Let's go to the Word and find out.

Here are the two places where the words, the Synagogue of Satan are written:

(Rev 2:9) **I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.**

(Rev 3:9) **Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.**

The first verse was written to the church at Smyrna and the second to the church at Philadelphia. These were the only two of the seven churches in Asia with which Jesus found no fault. The Synagogue of Satan must be important if Jesus only mentioned it in the letters to the churches without fault. He implied that those churches *knew about* the Synagogue of Satan and that they did not follow after it.

In Rev 2.9, He said He knew about the blasphemy of those of the Synagogue of Satan. What is blasphemy? Let's define.

Strong's definition:

988. blasphemia, blas-fay-me'-ah; from 989; vilification (especially against God).

989. blasphemos, blas'-fay-mos; from a derivative of 984 and 5345; scurrilous, that is, calumnious [slandorous or defamatory] (against man), or (specifically) impious (against God).

The two words of derivation mean hinder and fame. So blasphemy means literally to hinder fame.

Funk and Wagnalls *Standard College Dictionary* defines blasphemy:

1. Impious or profane speaking of God, or of sacred persons or things.
2. *Theol.* The act of claiming the attributes of God [such as claiming to be God].

Certainly, Judaizers could have been of the Synagogue of Satan because they wanted to put conditions, such as circumcision, on salvation, making void the Word of God. But the Synagogue of Satan goes much deeper. Jesus says they claim to be Jews but are not. This fact is the key to understanding the Synagogue of Satan.

Who, in the Bible, claimed to be Jews but were not? There were the Nethinims, or temple servants, and there were the Kenites or Rechabites who were the scribes and lawyers, and there were the Gibeonites or Hivites in the Book of Joshua. Since the Jews are of the tribe of Judah or residents of the land of Judea, we must prove a link between the groups mentioned above and the Jews. Let's look at each of these groups in turn. Since the Kenites (Rechabites) are the first mentioned in the Bible, we will study them first.

(Gen 15:18-19) In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: {19} The **Kenites**, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites,

In His promises to Abraham, the LORD gave the land to Abraham. In this land were several groups of whom the Kenites were one. Who are these Kenites? Let's look at some definitions.

Strong's:

7017. Qeyniy, kay-nee'; or Qiyniy (1 Chron. 2:55), kee-nee'; patronymic [named for their father] from 7014; a Kenite or member of the tribe of Kajiin:--Kenite.

7014. Qayin, kah'-yin; the same as 7013 (with a play upon the affinity to 7069); Kajiin, the name of the first child, also of a place in Palestine, and of an Oriental tribe:--Cain, Kenite (-s).

7013. qayin, kah'-yin; from 6969 in the original sense of fixity; a lance (as striking fast):--spear.

2535. Kain, kah'-in; of Hebrew origin [7014]; Cain (i.e. Cajiin), the son of Adam:--Cain.

Young's:

KE-NITES, belonging to Ken or Qen (Cain).

E.W. Bullinger

Kenite. A non-Israelite race. (Gen. 15.19, Num. 24.21 &c, 1 Sam. 27.10; 30.29). See Saul's correspondence with them (1 Sam. 15.6). One branch in the North ([Jud.] 4.11).

Quoted from The Companion Bible, note on Judges 1:16.

Check the spelling in the Hebrew. The letters making up the name Cain are qoph-yod-nun (קַיִן), qen, and the spelling of Kenite is qoph-yod-nun-yod (קַיִן־יָד), qeny. Note: the ending nun (n) is shaped differently from the nun (n) in the middle of a word, hence the different look between qen and qeny (read the Hebrew from right to left). Adding the syllable "y" (pronounced ee like in shiny) is equivalent to adding "ite" in the English. So qen is Cain and qeny is Cainite or Kenite.

The progeny of Cain are called Kenites. Cain did have children, see Genesis 4:17-24. Could they have survived the Flood? Yes, for the flood was possibly a localized flood covering only the land area of Noah and his countrymen. If it was a worldwide flood, then Noah took two of every living thing in the ark. He may have taken two of every race with him, including the Kenites. The descendants of Cain who were in the land of Nod, east of Eden, could very well have survived the flood. In fact, many teachers teach that the Kenites of the Bible were the descendants of Cain. It is very possible that this is so, but it is also possible that the Kenites mentioned in the Bible are from more than one person called Cain and therefore from different tribes of Kenites. The Kenites are around today. Anyone surnamed Cain could be called a Kenite, but that would not necessarily mean they were descendants of Cain. Of course, they could possibly be descendants of Cain. It is difficult to say. Having said all of this, I still believe that the Kenites in the Bible were the descendants of Cain, the son of Adam. It is not far fetched to do so. The etymology of the name is enough evidence for me to believe it.

I do not, however, adhere to the teaching that Cain is the offspring of Satan himself. 1 John 3:12: "Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." John tells us that Cain was of the wicked one, that is Satan. Note that John says that Cain's works were evil. I believe that John means that Cain decided to follow Satan thus becoming a spiritual child of Satan, much like as a follower of and believer in God, we are God's children. We are not begotten of God; that is we are not God's offspring through the seed of woman. Jesus was, but we are not. Yet we are still called God's children. Since Cain decided to follow evil, just as Satan was evil, he was considered to be of the wicked one.

Some say that John 8:44 proves that the Kenites were the offspring of Satan: "**Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer**

from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." The subject of this verse is the Devil, the father of the scribes and Pharisees to whom Jesus spoke. The phrase "he was a murderer from the beginning" could perhaps apply to Cain because Cain was the first man mentioned in the Bible who was a murderer. Cain was a murderer in the beginning of the Bible. But I do not believe the context will support that he was the murderer mentioned here.

"From the beginning" is a Hebraism meaning from the creation of the Universe. Here are some other witness to this Hebraism: Prov 8:23: "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." Isa 40:21: "Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?" Mark 10:6: "**But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.**" And finally, from the Septuagint rendering of Micah 5:2 we can know what the ancient Hebrew translators thought about the phrase: "from the beginning":

Micah 5:2, Septuagint (LXX): "And thou, Bethlehem, house of Ephratha, art few in number to be *reckoned* among the thousands of Juda; yet out of thee shall one come forth to me, to be a ruler of Israel; and his goings forth were from the beginning, *even* from eternity." The KJV says "whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting." The LXX states that Christ's goings forth "were from the beginning", and then the next phrase interprets that to mean "from eternity".

Who, from the creation of the universe was a murderer? I believe we can make a case for Lucifer/Satan. Because of Lucifer's fall from grace, he took one third of the Holy angels with him. He and they are all condemned to perish. Since Satan led them, he was a murderer. The same goes for the serpent in the beginning. Since he led Adam and Eve astray, he brought death to them and to humankind, making himself a murderer. So Lucifer/Satan/the Serpent was a murderer from the beginning and before Cain became a murderer.

So the verse in John applies to the Devil. The scribes and Pharisees to whom Jesus spoke were of their father the Devil and not their father Cain. This verse does not imply that Cain was the father of those sects, but rather Satan. Hence it does not say that Cain was a blood son of Satan.

Having said all that, the Kenites were still not Israelites. Gen 15:18-19: "In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: {19} The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites,"

The Kenites were also known as the Rechabites and they were scribes: 1 Chr 2:55: "And the families of the scribes which dwelt at Jabez; the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, *and* Suchathites. These *are* the Kenites that came of Hemath, the father of the house of Rechab." The scribes mentioned here are the Tirathites, Shimeathites, and the Suchathites, all of which are Kenites. From here forward in the Bible, the Kenites are known as the Rechabites.

The Southern Kingdom of Judah were carried away captive by Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon in 597 BC. Seventy years later they returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple. The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah are the history of this return to Judah. In those books are genealogies of those who returned. Among the returnees were men of Judah, Levi, and Benjamin. The returnees were the Jews, i.e. those who were descendants of Judah or those Israelites who lived in the land of Judea. There were also people who were not Jews (true descendants of Judah, Benjamin or Levi) among them. The Rechabites are numbered among those who were not Jews.

(Neh 3:14) But the dung gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Bethhaccerem; he built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

Nehemiah records that the Rechabites AKA the Kenites AKA scribes, were among those Jews who returned from Babylonian captivity. From the previous verses, we know that they were not Jews or Israelites. They claimed to be Jews but they were not. The Kenites or Rechabites are candidate number one for the Synagogue of Satan.

The next group of Non-Israelites we will look at are first mentioned in the Book of Joshua. They are the Gibeonites who are also known as Hivites.

(Josh 9:3-6) And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, {4} They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up; {5} And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry *and* mouldy. {6} And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us.

The Gibeonites or Hivites attempted to trick the Israelites into believing they were not from the land of Canaan. God had told Joshua to destroy all of the Canaanites. The Gibeonites or Hivites were afraid and resorted to deception. They succeeded in deceiving the leaders of Israel and made a covenant with them.

(Josh 9:15-17) And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them. {16} And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they *were* their neighbours, and *that* they dwelt among them. {17} And the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities *were* Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjathjearim.

Three days after the oath (which was by the Lord, v. 18) the Israelites had sworn unto the Gibeonites or Hivites, the deception became known. But because of the oath, the Israelites did not harm them.

(Josh 9:18-19) And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes. {19} But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them.

(Josh 9:22-23) And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We *are* very far from you; when ye dwell among us? {23} Now therefore ye *are* cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God.

They became temple servants who prepared the fires and kept fresh water in the temple. They became a part of the people: (Josh 10:1) "... the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them." The Gibeonites also known as the Hivites, dwelt among the children of Israel for centuries. They went into Babylonian captivity with Judah and were among those who returned with Ezra and Nehemiah, becoming known as Jews.

It is not difficult to see how the Gibeonites or Hivites became an integral part of the operation of the temple and therefore, the government. The government of Israel was also its religion. After centuries of service they took over more and more temple duties until they became equal with the priests and Levites. They would have become much like the civil service in our parliamentary system of government.

1 Chronicles chapter 9 tells about all of those in the service to the temple, and therefore, civil servants. 1 Chr 9:35 tells us that the Gibeonites or Hivites were among those civil servants, "And in Gibeon dwelt the father of Gibeon, Jehiel, whose wife's name *was*Maachah." They were also in military service. 1 Chr 12:1 tells us about the men who were David's helpers of war. 12:4 tells of the Gibeonite who helped David in war: "And Ismaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty..." The thirty

were mighty men of valor. The Gibeonites or Hivites resided in Judah just a few miles from Jerusalem.

And finally, the Gibeonites or Hivites were listed among those who returned with Ezra and Nehemiah and helped to repair the wall of Jerusalem. Neh 3:7, "And next unto them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon, and of Mizpah, unto the throne of the governor on this side the river." They were by then an accepted part of the Jews. They are candidate number two for the Synagogue of Satan.

The Nethinim were the temple servants.

Strong's definition of the Nethinim:

5411. Nathiyn, naw-then'; or ` Nathuwn (Ezra 8:17), maw-thoon' (the proper form, as passive participle) from 5414 [nathan]; one given, i.e. (in the plural only) the Nethinim, or Temple-servants (as given up to that duty).

Who were the Nethinim?

(Neh 7:73) So the priests, and the Levites, and the porters, and the singers, and *some* of the people, and the Nethinims, and all Israel, dwelt in their cities; and when the seventh month came, the children of Israel *were* in their cities.

Nehemiah separates the Nethinim from the Priests, Levites, porters, singers, and Israel. In this chapter of Nehemiah (vv. 46-60) we are given a genealogy of the Nethinim. The genealogy is separate from the genealogies given of the Israelites. In Nehemiah 11:21, we see them separated from the children of Israel. It is obvious that the Nethinim are not blood Israelites or Jews, but they are an integral part of Jewish worship and government. Ezra 8:20 tells us that David appointed them as servants to the Levites. The Nethinim are most likely from prisoners of war who were forced into temple service, just as the Gibeonites or Hivites were pressed into service because of their deception.

(Num 31:7-9) And they warred against the Midianites, as the LORD commanded Moses; and they slew all the males. {8} And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; *namely*, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword. {9} And the children of Israel took *all* the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods.

The Israelites took captives of the battle against the Midianites back to camp with them. Moses was told by the LORD to divide up the spoil and give a portion of the captives to the priests and Levites.

(Num 31:40-41) And the persons *were* sixteen thousand; of which the LORD'S tribute *was* thirty and two persons. {41} And Moses gave the tribute, *which was* the LORD'S heave offering, unto Eleazar the priest, as the LORD commanded Moses.

(Num 31:47) Even of the children of Israel's half, Moses took one portion of fifty, *both* of man and of beast, and gave them unto the Levites, which kept the charge of the tabernacle of the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses.

In verse 40, the priests received 32 captives (all women) into temple service, and in verse 47, the Levites received 320 (1/50 X 16000) of the captives into temple service. The word "gave" (*nathan* in Hebrew) in both verses is the root of the word Nethinim. These were the first of the Nethinim. Since Ezra tells us the David also gave Nethinim into temple service, it is a good assumption that they also were captives of war.

Not only did the Nethinim become an integral part of temple service and an accepted group among the Israelites they were also scribes. Neh 7: 46-50 gives the complete genealogy of the Nethinim. 7:57 says, "The children of Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the children of **Sophereth**, the children of Perida ..." Part of the Nethinim were the children of Solomon's servants. Sophereth means scribe:

5618. Cophereth, so-feh'-reth; feminine active participle of 5608; a scribe (properly female); Sophereth, a temple servant. (Strong's)

The Nethinim became scribes. Scribes are civil servants. The Sopherim, who were Nethinim, foreigners in service to Israel, were not females. History tells that the Sopherim were the authorized revisers of the text of the Hebrew Bible and that they were males. The work of the Sopherim

"under Ezra and Nehemiah, was to set the Text in order after the return from Babylon; and we read of it in Neh. 8.8 (cp. Ezra 7.6,11). The men of "the Great Synagogue" completed the work. This work lasted about 110 years, from Nehemiah to Simon the first, 410-300 B.C.

"The *Sopherim* were the authorised revisers of the Sacred Text; and, their work being completed, the *Massorites* were the authorized custodians of it."

The *Massorah* is the small writing in the margin of the Hebrew Text that fixes the text and its meaning for all time. We know that the Sopherim revised the Sacred Text because *Massorah* tell us that they did so.

(Neh 8:8) So they [the Sopherim] read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.

The Talmud explains that the book in this verse is the original text of the scriptures. So the Nethinim were so involved with their duties as scribes, that they were accepted as Jews, yet they were not Jews. By the way, the Gibeonites or Hivites could also be considered Nethinim which means given for temple service. The Nethinim: candidate number three for the Synagogue of Satan.

Before we go on, it is necessary to explain a bit about the Pharisees.

The scribes or Sopherim (which included the Nethinim and the Kenites or Rechabites and probably the Gibeonites or Hivites) got their start when they revised the sacred text. Jewish legalism prospered under the scribes from this point forward. A body of traditions called the Mishna blossomed. The Mishna is a part of the Talmud, which is the complete account of Jewish civil and religious laws. The Pharisees took the work of the scribes and put it into practice. What happened was that the doctrine of the Pharisees became intricate and overbearing. There were laws covering all of the minutiae in life. It was impossible to keep them all. The Scribes and Pharisees put the people under bondage to their laws. The Religion of the Pharisees became almost the opposite from that handed down by the prophets. The Scribes and the Pharisees were closely associated. You must note that the Scribes and Pharisees are often mentioned together. Many of the Scribes were Pharisees, so you seldom had one without the other.

The Pharisees were called *chasideim*. The English equivalent is Hasidim. The Hasidic Jews of today are fundamentalists much like the ancient Pharisees.

We must note that the Pharisees were not all bad. They lived frugal lives and tried to live according to their laws. They tried to be pious. There were many good men numbered among them, such as Nicodemus. The Pharisees were a highly respected group. Gamaliel, a great teacher, was a Pharisee and he was deeply respected. Paul, who was also a Pharisee, speaks of the Pharisees and of Gamaliel with respect. But they did have a set of traditions that made the Word of God void. Jesus did not hesitate to tell them on many occasions of the weakness of their position regarding their traditions.

Who were the Synagogue of Satan? Let's find out. In John 8:3, the scribes and Pharisees had brought a woman to Jesus who had supposedly been caught in adultery. You know the story, Jesus said, (John 8:7) "**He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.**" Of course they all left and Jesus told the woman that He did not condemn her and to go and sin no more. This sets up the real meat of Chapter 8, which is the Synagogue of Satan.

(John 8:12) Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, **I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.**

He spoke unto the Scribes and Pharisees who were gathered there.

(John 8:13) The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

This is a case of those who live in glass houses...

(John 8:14) Jesus answered and said unto them, **Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.**

They did not know or believe that He was the Son of God. With their hardened hearts, they could not know where He came from or where He was going.

(John 8:15) **Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.**

Their judgment was subjective and not perfect. Jesus did not judge then but He will and His judgment will be perfect as we see in the next verse.

(John 8:16) **And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.**

When He does judge, it will be true judgment and perfect because His knowledge of all things is perfect.

(John 8:17-18) **It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. {18} I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.**

Their law was the Talmud. The scriptures say (Deu 17:6) "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; *but* at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death." The law of the Pharisees was

narrower than God's law. But, according to their law, Jesus claims were true. There were the two witnesses: Jesus and His Father.

(John 8:19) Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, **Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.**

They didn't know Him as Messiah therefore they didn't know His Father.

(John 8:20) These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

The Scribes and Pharisees considered this to be blasphemous talk and they could have had Him arrested, but it was not time for His arrest.

(John 8:21) Then said Jesus again unto them, **I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.**

Understand that the Pharisees believed in life after death. In their condition, without a savior, they would die in their sin (v. 24). But even they could have repented and received life.

(John 8:22) Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, **Whither I go, ye cannot come.**

At least they knew he was talking about life after death. The Jews here are the Scribes and Pharisees who *claimed* to be Jews. Some were truly Jews. But remember the Scribes are the descendants of the Nethinim, Kenites, and Gibeonites or Hivites, none of which was a true Israelite but a foreigner.

(John 8:23-24) And he said unto them, **Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. {24} I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.**

They had the opportunity to believe in Him.

(John 8:25-27) Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, **Even *the same* that I said unto you from the beginning. {26} I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. {27}** They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

He had been telling them He was from the Father all along. They just didn't get it.

(John 8:28-30) Then said Jesus unto them, **When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. {29} And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. {30}** As he spake these words, many believed on him.

Many believed on Him and that included some of the Scribes and Pharisees. Why? Because their own Talmud associated the Son of Man with the Messiah.

Here is Daniel 7:13: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him."

Here is what the Babylonian Talmud says about this verse:

"If Israel behaved worthily, the Messiah would come in the clouds of heaven, if otherwise, humble riding on a donkey."

Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 98a.

The Talmud taught that the Son of Man of Daniel 7:13, was the Messiah and that He came from the Ancient of Days. Jesus had been teaching just this. That is why they believed.

(John 8:31-33) Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, **If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; {32} And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. {33}** They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

Those who asked this question were the Scribes and Pharisees who did not believe. They *claimed* to be Abraham's seed, but they were not as we shall see.

(John 8:34-36) Jesus answered them, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. {35} And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever. {36} If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.**

Sinners will die in their sin, but those in Jesus will live forever.

(John 8:37) **I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.**

He knew that the *claimed* to be Abraham's seed. Why did His word have no place in them? Let's see.

(John 8:38) **I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.**

Now were getting to the heart of the matter. He is getting ready to identify these Scribes and Pharisees and their father (who is *not* Abraham).

(John 8:39) They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, **If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.**

Which was good work. Abraham's works were believing on God, following where God led him, fathering Isaac, and offering up Isaac as a sacrifice. Because Abraham believed God, God credited him with righteousness (Rom 4:3). Abraham's belief and his action based on that belief was his greatest work.

(John 8:40) **But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.**

Abraham also saw the Father face to face (Gen 12:7, 18:22, etc.). They wanted to Kill the Truth, Abraham did not. Abraham pursued God and believed on Him and followed Him.

(John 8:41) **Ye do the deeds of your father.** Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God.

We change direction here. Now when Jesus said they did the deeds of their father, implying that because they did what Abraham did not, Abraham was not their father. They knew He was talking about following other than God. They sharply responded that they were not followers of idols. The context suggests that fornication or harlotry (Greek: *porneo*) was used in its figurative sense which is idolatry. They said they were not born of idolatry; they worshipped the One True God and He was their Father. This was their claim, that they were Israelites (Jews here), the children of Abraham, and God was their Father.

(John 8:42) Jesus said unto them, **If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.**

To them this was abject blasphemy for Jesus to consider Himself equal with God.

(John 8:43) **Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word.**

I want to quote Isaiah here: Isa 6:9 "And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not." Luke, quoting the Septuagint, records this scripture in Acts 28:26: "Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:" The scribes and Pharisees heard what Jesus' lips uttered, but did not understand what Jesus was saying. In other words, their spiritual ears were closed to Jesus' message. They fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy.

(John 8:44) **Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.**

Now we get to the heart of the matter. As we saw previously, this does not refer specifically to the Kenites, but to the Synagogue of Satan. The subject here is the Devil not Cain. Who is the Devil? He is the Serpent, the Dragon, and Satan (Rev. 12:9) and the father of liars. These scribes and Pharisees are of their father the Devil. They are liars, and Satan is the father of liars. They follow after the Devil and do evil as the Devil. They are the assemblage of Satan's own children, liars.

What is a synagogue? It is an assembly. Strong's: "*4864. sunagoge, soon-ag-o-gay*"; from (the reduplicated form of) *4863; an assemblage of persons*; specifically a Jewish "synagogue" (the meeting or the place); by analysis a Christian church. "**Remember this definition of the word Synagogue. Since those scribes and Pharisees were an assemblage of Satan's own, they were of the Synagogue of Satan.**

Just remember that the Pharisees formalized the doctrines of the scribes. They put those doctrines into practice. Recall also who the scribes and Sopherim were. I have made a fairly plain case from the Bible and from history that the scribes were the Nethinim, the Kenites or Rechabites, and the Gibeonites or Hivites. All of these people were not Israelites; they were foreigners and impostors. They were gradually accepted into Israeli and Jewish society. After the return from Babylon they became known as Jews even though they actually were not.

The doctrines of the scribes and Pharisees were not the true Word of God. They took the Law and devised elaborate traditions that dictated the correct way to observe the Law. They then elevated their traditions to be equal with God's Word. Their way became the only way. God's Word was secondary to their traditions.

Their doctrine was a way to achieve salvation by their own righteousness. They taught that by perfectly observing their traditions, one could be saved. It was a lie. They were deceiving many people. Their doctrine came straight from the grave. It led to the grave. The scribes and Pharisees (and the Sadducees, and the Sanhedrin--all the Jewish leaders who subscribed to the doctrines of the scribes, Sadducees and Pharisees) were liars.

We have seen how the scribes and many of the Pharisees were of those non-Israelite tribes of the Kenites, Rechabites, Nethinim, and Gibeonites, but what of the Sadducees? Jesus seems to have lumped them in with the scribes and Pharisees:

(Mat 3:7) But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? (John the Baptist said this)

(Mat 16:6) Then Jesus said unto them, **Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.**

(Mat 16:11) **How is it that ye do not understand that I spake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?** [leaven=doctrine, v. 12]

Here is what Jesus said about their doctrines and traditions:

(Mark 7:5-9) Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? {6} He answered and said unto them, **Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me. {7} Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men. {8} For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. {9} And he said unto them, **Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.****

The scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, etc., were teaching a lie, that one could be saved by observance of their doctrines. Our study verse said: (John 8:44) "**Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.**" They were liars as was their father. These are the words of Jesus, not mine. He said that they were of their father the Devil. They were liars, and the Devil is the father of liars, so

he was their father. They were the Devil's group or assemblage. An assembly is a synagogue and this assembly was also a synagogue, the Synagogue of Satan.

These groups fit both criteria set forth by Jesus for the Synagogue of Satan in Revelation 3:9: "**Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, (1) which say they are Jews, and are not, (2) but do lie...**" They (1) claimed to be Jews but they were not and (2) they were liars. It would be difficult to find a group more qualified for the Synagogue of Satan than these.

I previously gave three candidates for the Synagogue of Satan, the Gibeonites or Hivites, the Kenites, and the Nethinim. All three candidates qualify for this infamy. To say it in a straightforward way, the Kenites or Rechabites together with the Nethinim together with the Gibeonites or Hivites became the non-Israelite, non-Jewish scribes or Sopherim, and from them came the Synagogue of Satan.

I must add, that there are others who would fit into the category of the Synagogue of Satan. As Dr. Strong told us, the word synagogue can also mean a Christian church. The word that is translated church is *ekklesia* which means "called out ones" and *sunagoge* means an assemblage of persons. Since a local church is also an assemblage of people, it could be referred to as a synagogue.

Are there any in Christian churches that could be called the Synagogue of Satan? I believe we can say there are. The criteria might be altered slightly to (1) being a liar, and (2) claiming to be Christians when they are not. There are, sadly, many in the church who meet both of these criteria.

You may know of one. There are many out there who claim to be Christians but teach and believe their own traditions. As to their salvation we cannot judge. Only God knows their hearts. But we will know them by their fruits. If the fruits of their works do not align with God's Word, then the fruits are not Christian fruits. They *could* be said to be a part of the Synagogue of Satan.

Those Judaizers of the first century church were also possibly a part of the Synagogue of Satan. Let's take a look at them:

(Acts 15:4-5) And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. {5} But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.

They may have been non-Jews or they may have been sincere men. The Judaizers of these verses accepted that circumcision was not necessary, for they agreed with the whole church: (Acts 15:22) Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

But those who insisted that Christians be bound by the doctrines of the scribes and Pharisees cannot be ruled out. Titus speaks of them:

(Titus 1:10-16) For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: *{11}* Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. *{12}* One of themselves, *even* a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians *are* always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. *{13}* This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; *{14}* Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. *{15}* Unto the pure all things *are* pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. *{16}* They profess that they know God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

These people mentioned by Titus are of the Synagogue of Satan. He speaks of the circumcision group (the NIV uses this phrase in v. 10). They teach false doctrine, they lie, they teach fables and the traditions of men, and they claim to know God but deny him. They meet the criteria for the Synagogue of Satan.

Conclusion:

We have seen how the Gibeonites/Hivites and the Kenites/Rechabites and the Nethinim were accepted into the fold as members of the Israelite communities. We have seen how they were gradually elevated to equal status as Israelites and Jews. We have also learned how they became the scribes in the time between the return of the Jews to Jerusalem until the time of Christ. They helped to collate the scriptures into a useable format under Ezra and Nehemiah. We have learned that they developed traditions around the scripture in order to show the correct way to follow them. These traditions exceeded the Word of God. The Pharisees, Sadducees, members of the Sanhedrin and the priesthood came to accept these traditions as necessary. We discovered that these groups used their doctrines and traditions as a means for salvation. We have found out that they were liars and their father was Satan. They were a group or assemblage of persons whose father was Satan, therefore they were of the Synagogue of Satan.

There are others who qualify as the Synagogue of Satan. Many of the Judaizers of the first century church tried to get Christians to abide by their doctrines such as circumcision. They were liars and were not who they represented themselves to be. They were of the Synagogue of Satan.

There are those in churches today who profess to be Christians and teach the traditions of men. Their fruits show them up. The Synagogue of Satan is alive and well today.

There is one last group we need to mention who might be a part of the Synagogue of Satan though there is no direct evidence of this. We read of them in Nehemiah:

(Neh 7:61-65) And these *were* they which went up *also* from Telmelah, Telharsa, Cherub, Addon, and Immer: but they could not show their father's house, nor their seed, whether they *were* of Israel. {62} The children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred forty and two. {63} And of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai, which took *one* of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite to wife, and was called after their name. {64} These sought their register *among* those that were reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood. {65} And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood *up* a priest with Urim and Thummim.

These peoples came back to Jerusalem with the released captives and claimed to be Jews. They could not prove their claim but they were accepted as Jews but they could not hold the office of priest. It is possible that they could be reckoned among the Synagogue of Satan.

Jesus said that He would make the Synagogue of Satan come and worship before our feet. The Synagogue of Satan is comprised of those who profess to be something they are not. They are also liars, that is, teachers of false doctrine. They lead many astray. See to it that you know who the Synagogue of Satan are, and do not follow them.