

## GLOSSARY OF MAJOR TERMS – THEO 111

**APOSTLE** is from the Greek word *apostolos*, meaning "one who is sent (delegated)." According to Mark 3:16-19, from the crowd of his *disciples*, Jesus chose twelve men to be "apostles," whom he sent out to preach and heal. There are four lists of the Twelve (Matt. 10: 2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13), with slight differences among them. Matthew 19:28 and Luke 22:29-30 suggest that the choice of twelve men had to do with their eschatological role as judges (rulers) over the twelve tribes of Israel. There were many more apostles than the Twelve (Luke 10:1-12; 1 Cor 15:5-7) and, in the early Church, the most famous apostle was *Paul*, who did not know Jesus during his ministry. Romans 16:7 names Junia, a woman, as being "famous among the apostles"; other women also did apostolic work (e.g. Rom 16:1-6; Phil 4:2-3).

**BABYLONIAN EXILE**: Following the division of the kingdom of *David* and *Solomon* (c. 960 BCE; see 1 Kings 12), and the destruction of "Israel," its northern half, by the Assyrians (721 BCE; see 2 Kings 17), "Judah" in the south was much weakened and could not resist the onslaught of the Babylonians. In 597 BCE the Babylonians took King Jehoiachin and many others into exile; ten years later, under Zedekiah, Judah rebelled again. In retaliation, the Babylonians destroyed the city and the *temple* and took more of the people into exile (2 Kings 25). The exile ended with the decree of King Cyrus of Persia in 538 BCE (Ezra 1).

**CANON** is from a Greek word that means measure, rule or standard. In the *New Testament* and early church it came to refer to the rule or order of apostolic instruction (Gal 6:16) or Christian tradition (1 Clem 7:2). By the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE, it came to refer to the list of sacred books accepted as scripture, but discussion of which books should be so accepted goes back much earlier. Although some books of the TANAKH (the Jewish canon) were deemed sacred (canonical) as early as Ezra (c. 400 BCE), the final listing did not occur until some time after 200 CE. Similarly, Christians began to regard some letters of Paul as "scripture" even in the NT period (2 Peter 3:15-16), but differing lists and sometimes vigorous debates continued well into the fourth century and beyond. All Christians now agree about the canon of NT books, but (mostly friendly) disagreements continue.

**CIRCUMCISION** means literally "cutting around" and involves the removal of the foreskin of a male's penis. In the Old Testament, circumcision was instituted by God as a sign of the *covenant* (Genesis 17:1-14), and was performed on the eighth day after birth (Luke 2:21). The defense of the practice of circumcision was one of the big issues in the *Maccabean rebellion* (1 Macc 1:60-61), so that dispute about the need for circumcision in the New Testament was inevitably very intense (e.g. Acts 15:1-5; Gal 5:1-4). Though most Jews always insisted on the full, physical practice of circumcision, it was also always emphasized that the circumcision of the heart was essential (e.g. Deut 10:16; Jer 4:4), and this is reflected in New Testament teaching (Rom. 2:29; Col. 2:11). At the Council of Jerusalem, it was decided that *Gentiles* who became believers did not have to be circumcised (Acts 15:1-29; Gal 2:1-10); this was a painful decision for many of the

Jewish believers, which contributed considerably to the eventual separation of Judaism from Christianity.

**COVENANT** denotes a sacred treaty or agreement; it can be between humans (1 Sam 11:1; 18:3) or between humans and God. It is the latter which is most important in scripture, beginning with God's covenant with Abraham (Gen 15 and 17). The solemn covenant ratified between God and Israel at Mount Sinai (Exod 19-20), after the *exodus*, is the one to which the prophets mostly refer (e.g. Is 24:5; Jer 11:8-10), even when not naming it (Hos 11:1). Jeremiah especially looks forward to God making a "new covenant" with Israel (Jer 31:31; also Ezek 16:60), and this idea was picked up in the *New Testament*, especially in relation to the *Eucharist* (1 Cor 11:25) and by the writer of Hebrews (Heb 8:6-13).

**DAVID** succeeded Saul as king of Israel (2 Samuel 5:1-5) and reigned for about forty years (c. 1010—970 BCE), uniting the twelve tribes and establishing *Jerusalem* as the nation's capitol. His reign, along with that of his son *Solomon*, comprised the golden age of the ancient kingdom of Israel. God promised David that his kingdom would be everlasting (2 Samuel 7:8-16); thus, "Son of David" is an important title for Jesus in the New Testament (e.g. Matthew 1:1; Rom 1:3).

**DISCIPLE** is a Latin word, meaning "pupil" or "learner" (Matt 10:24); it translates the Greek word *mathetes*, which is often used in the gospels to refer to the followers of Jesus - sometimes the whole company (Mk 2:18; Luke 19:37), sometimes just the Twelve (Matt 10:1). Disciple, however, should not be confused with *apostle*, a more specific term. Jesus warned his followers that, if they wished to be his disciples, they would have to make sacrifices, suffer and perhaps even give their lives for the gospel (e.g. Matt 10:16-26; Luke 14:25-33).

**ESCHATOLOGY** is the section of Christian theology dealing with the "end things," especially the ideas of resurrection, hell, and eternal life. In the *Old Testament* (e.g. Is 24--27), and then increasingly during the last two centuries BCE, the Jews began to look for God to bring history, as they knew it, to an end, and to establish "an everlasting kingdom" under divine rule, centered on Israel (Dan 7:1-27). This is the background of Jesus' proclamation of the coming "*kingdom of God*" (e.g. Mark 1:14-15). It is possible that Jesus expected the *eschaton* (end) to happen very soon (Mk 9:1), but he also said that "no one knows the day or hour ..." (Mk 13:32). The early church, as exemplified by Paul (1 Thess 4:13-18), certainly expected Jesus to return, and the end to come, very soon (Rev 1:1-3). The Biblical texts that are concerned with the *eschaton* are often called "apocalyptic"; "apocalypse" is a Greek word, meaning "revelation" (see Rev 1:1, 9-11).

**ESSENES**: The *New Testament* never mentions the Essenes, but Jewish writers contemporary with it do so. They were probably spiritual descendants of the "Hasideans" (1 Macc 2:42), who were prominent in the *Maccabean rebellion*. By Jesus' time they were probably characterized by a strictly separatist, monastic-type of lifestyle, living a communal life, sharing their possessions (cf. Acts 2:44-45) and waiting for God's final victory over evil. It is almost certainly their copies of the scriptures and their other

communal texts which comprise the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Essene community at Qumran was destroyed by the Romans after the destruction of *Jerusalem* in 70 CE.

**EXODUS** is the name of the second book of the Bible. It tells the story of the great foundational event when God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, brought them through the sea (Exod 14) and gave them the Law at Mount Sinai (Exod 19-20). *Moses*, with the help of Aaron and Miriam (see *Mary*), was the great leader of the exodus, who went to Pharaoh and demanded that he let Israel go. After the ten plagues, culminating in the death of the first-born of the Egyptians (see *Passover*), Pharaoh first complied (Exod 7--13), but then sent his army in pursuit, leading to the great rescue at the sea.

**FAITH** is a gift, created by God's revelation and love. Jewish-Christian faith has its foundation in Abraham when he "put his faith in God" (Genesis 15:6); *Paul* presents Abraham as the model for Christian faith (Rom 4; Galatians 3), but he also speaks of "faith coming" into the world, and includes faith among the gifts (fruits) of the *Holy Spirit* (Gal 5:22). Faith, therefore, is both a gift created by God and human response and commitment to God (e.g. Rom 10:9-11). Because of the latter, it also involves proper conduct (e.g. Gal 5:6; James 2:14-17). Martin Luther's focus on "faith alone," as opposed to human "works," was one of the great battle-cries of the 16th century Reformation. Only in the late 20th century did Catholic and Lutheran theologians create a statement that provides for a resolution of the dispute.

**GENTILE** denotes a person who is not Jewish. It is from a Latin word, meaning "nation." It translates Hebrew and Greek words that refer to the non-Israelite or non-Jewish nations or individuals. In the *Old Testament* foreigners dwelling in Israel were to be treated with love, "for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt" (Lev 19:34), but Israel's relations with neighboring nations were problematic, and because of the fear of idolatry, intermarriage with them was sometimes forbidden (Deut 7:1-6). After the *Babylonian exile*, Ezra and Nehemiah enforced strict policies of separation from the Gentiles (Ez 6:21; 10:1-44; Neh 13:23-31). According to Matthew 10:5, when Jesus sent the disciples on mission he forbade them to go to the Gentiles or Samaritans, and with few exceptions (e.g. Mk 7:24-30; John 4:1-42), he himself preached only among Jews; his own people were Jesus' priority. But in the final words of Matthew's gospel, Jesus sends the disciples to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19). After the resurrection, the Church very quickly expanded its mission into Samaritan and Gentile towns; Acts 10 says that *Peter* needed a special divine revelation to recognize he must do this. Paul's mission was "to preach the gospel among the Gentiles" (Gal 1:15-16; 2:7-9). An early Christian baptismal formula proclaims that in Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek" (Gal 3:28; see 1 Cor 12:13; Col 3:11); Ephesians explains Christ's entire mission as the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles (Eph 2:11—3:7).

**GRACE** is the free and undeserved love God gives; it is a participation in the divine life of love that also enables humans to respond to God. In scripture, Paul is the writer who most uses and develops the concept of grace; the grace (*charis*) of Christ, which is his death for us (e.g. Rom 3:24-26; Gal 2:20-21), is also manifested in the particular gifts of the Spirit (*charismata*) which empower the body of Christ (1 Cor 12).

**HEROD** is the name of several kings and governors under Roman rule who are mentioned in the New Testament. 1. "Herod the Great" was king of the homeland of Jesus from 37 to 4 BCE; Jesus was born during the final years of his reign (Matt 2:1; Luke 1:5). He substantially rebuilt the temple of Jerusalem. This Herod, in a vain attempt to kill Jesus, had infants of less than two years killed (Matt 2:16). 2. "Herod Antipas," a son of Herod the Great, was "tetrarch of Galilee" and Perea (Luke 3:1) from 4 BCE to 39 CE. This Herod, according to Luke 13:31, wanted to kill Jesus; Mark 6:14-16 portrays him simply as very curious about Jesus. It was this Herod, with the conspiracy of his wife Herodias, who had *John the Baptist* killed (Mk 6:17-29). 3. "Herod Agrippa," grandson of Herod the Great, was king of Judea from 41-44 CE. It was this Herod who had James, brother of John, killed and had Peter arrested (Acts 12:2). Luke says that he died a horrible death because of his pretensions to divinity (Acts 12:21-23).

**HOLY SPIRIT** is the powerful, loving, active presence of God in the world. "Holy Spirit," as such, is mostly a Christian term, referring to the "helper" or "comforter" (*Paraclete*) sent by Jesus (e.g. John 16:7) and as experienced through faith in him (e.g. Gal 3:2-5). However, both the *Old Testament* and other Jewish writings (see *apocrypha*) speak of the Spirit of God, especially in the context of creation and new life (e.g. Gen 1:2; Ps 104:30; Ezek 37:1-14). To understand the texts well, it is important to know that both the Hebrew and Greek words for "Spirit" (*Ruach & Pneuma*) can also denote "wind." According to Luke, *Pentecost*, with the signs of wind and fire, was the occasion of the Spirit coming upon the first apostles and disciples (Acts 2). John places Jesus' "breathing" of the Spirit into the disciples on the evening of the day of the resurrection (John 20:22-23). In later theology, the Holy Spirit is thought of as the third person of the *Trinity*.

**IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**: In the early church the *Infancy Gospel of James* (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century) reflected a popular tradition about Mary, Jesus' mother, being singularly prepared from birth by God to be the mother of Jesus. By the 7<sup>th</sup> century a feast of the Conception of Mary was celebrated in Palestine. As church teaching about Mary evolved, so this feast gradually became the feast of the Immaculate Conception, celebrating God's preserving of Mary from sin from the time of her conception. This doctrine is to be distinguished from the scriptural doctrine of the Virgin birth (Luke 1:34-35; Matt 1:18) that Mary conceived Jesus simply by the power of the Holy Spirit. Pope Pius IX defined the Immaculate Conception as a dogma of the Church in 1854.

**INCARNATION** is the event in which God became human (literally, became "enfleshed") in the person of Jesus Christ (John 1:14; see also Phil 2:6-8). Early Christian councils (Nicaea, 325; Ephesus, 431; Chalcedon, 451) made clear that "incarnation" meant belief in *Jesus Christ* as fully divine and fully human (see also *Trinity*).

**JERUSALEM** is a holy city for Jews, Muslims, and Christians. It was made the center of Israel's religious and civil affairs by King David (c. 990 BC). Solomon had the first *temple* built there (c. 950 BC). The city and temple were destroyed in 587 BC (by

the Babylonians - see *Babylonian exile*), and were rebuilt in the late 6th-early 5th century. They were destroyed again in 70 AD (by the Romans). Jerusalem is revered by Christians as the place of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection, as well as the birthplace of the church (see *Pentecost*).

**JESUS CHRIST**: "Jesus" (Yeshua) means "savior"; according to Luke 1:31, Jesus was given his name by the angel as a sign of his role as savior. "Christ" (see *Messiah*) means "anointed" and was a title given to Jesus by the first believers. It quickly became so common, among believers, to refer to Jesus as "Christ," that "Jesus Christ" became simply Jesus' fuller name, as is apparent from Paul's letters (e.g. Rom 1:8).

**JOHN THE BAPTIST**, according to Luke 1:36, was a relative of Jesus. He baptized Jesus (Mark 1:9), and Jesus remained with John for some time (John 3:26); some of John's disciples became disciples of Jesus (John 1:35-40). Jesus had a very high regard for John, calling him "more than a prophet" (Luke 7:24-28). John was beheaded by *Herod Antipas* (Mk 6:14-29). John is regarded as a prophet by both Christianity and Islam. Isaiah 40:3 (see Matt 3:1-4) is commonly read by Christians as a prophecy of John. Acts 19:1-5 shows that there were disciples of John well into the time of the early church.

**KINGDOM OF GOD**: New Testament scholars all agree that, at the heart of Jesus' ministry, was his proclamation that "the kingdom of God is at hand" (e.g. Matthew 4:23), but there is little agreement about what precisely he meant by this. The phrase "kingdom of God" is very rare prior to Jesus, but the sense of it can be seen in the psalms (e.g. Ps 145) and Daniel 7:26-27 (see *Eschatology*). With reasonable certainty, we can say that Jesus was announcing God's plan to fulfill the ancient promises to deliver Israel, to bring about God's reign of justice and peace. It is not certain whether Jesus expected this fulfillment, and thus the end of human history, in the near future (see Mark 9:1; 13:1-7) or whether he envisaged an extended period of the Church's ministry. A useful summary of Jesus' teaching is that the kingdom is *already* present, but *not yet* fulfilled. It is a mistake to think of "the kingdom of God" simply in terms of heaven and the after-life; Jesus' main focus was on God's action here and now for human salvation.

**MACCABEAN REBELLION**: Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria ( BCE), desiring to unite his kingdom under one religion, forbade "particular customs," including the Jewish *Torah*. In 167 BCE this led to rebellion under Mattathias of the Hasmonean family. The rebellion was mostly led by his sons, especially Judas, nicknamed "Maccabaeus" ("hammer-hand"), a very successful soldier and general. By 162 BCE the rebellion led to the liberation of Jerusalem and the rededication of the *temple*, an event celebrated today in the Jewish feast of Hannukah. Mattathias' sons and their descendants (the Hasmoneans) made themselves kings and high priests of Israel, ruling over an independent Jewish state for close to a century (162-66 BCE). A fairly accurate history of the rebellion and its aftermath is told in 1 Maccabees.

**MARY** (from *Mariam* in Hebrew) is the name of several women in the Bible, most especially of the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:27). 1) The first "Mary" in the Bible was

Miriam, the prophet (Exod 15:20-21), one of the leaders of the *exodus* from Egypt. 2) Mary, mother of Jesus, is especially featured in the gospel of Luke 1—2; Luke also mentions her presence at *Pentecost* (Acts 1:14 with 2:1). Mary is revered for her humble acceptance of God's plan for her (Luke 1:38), for her strength in guiding Jesus (John 2:1-11) and for remaining by his side through his passion and death (John 19:25-27). Apocryphal gospels (see *Apocrypha*) created stories about Mary's childhood, her taking a vow of virginity and other details, which influenced Church tradition (see *Immaculate Conception*). 3) see *Mary Magdalene*. Mary was also the name of the mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12) and of a woman in Rome to whom Paul sent greetings (Romans 16:6).

**MARY MAGDALENE** was one of the disciples of Jesus (Luke 8:1-3) who followed him from Galilee, was present at his death (Mark 15:40) and, according to all four gospels, was a witness of the resurrection (e.g. Luke 24:1-10). There is no basis in the New Testament for the later portrayal of her as a sinful woman, much less as a prostitute. She was remembered as "apostle to the apostles"; Gnostic texts (2nd - 3rd c's) portrayed her as a major leader of the apostles.

**MESSIAH** is the Hebrew word for "anointed" [by God]; it originally referred to the priests (Exod 40:15) and kings of Israel (1 Sam 10:1; 16:13; Pss 2:2; 18:50), as God's chosen instruments. Isaiah 45:1 applies the term to king Cyrus of Persia, whose decree of 538 BCE allowed the *Babylonian exiles* to return to Judah. In Isaiah 61:1-3 the "anointed one" (Messiah) speaks of his mission "to proclaim good news to the poor ..." Late in the *Old Testament* period, mostly in apocryphal texts, the term was sometimes used to refer to the figure Yahweh would send to save Israel. Luke 4:18 shows Jesus applying Isaiah 61:1 to himself, and during his ministry there was much speculation whether Jesus was the promised Messiah (e.g. Mk 8:27-30; Luke 7:18-23). The Church proclaimed Jesus to be "the Messiah" from its very earliest days (e.g. Rom 1:3-4; Acts 2:36). The Greek translation of Messiah is *Christos* (see *Jesus Christ*).

**MIRACLE**: "Miracle" translates various words in the Bible ("wonder," "power" etc) that refer to extraordinary divine events and deeds. The ten plagues of the *exodus* (Exod 7-12), the miracles of Elijah, Elisha (1 Kgs 17—2Kgs 6) and Jesus are all viewed in scripture as deriving from divine power. Both *Old* and *New Testaments*, however, also regard *faith* as powerful, sometimes essential, in the performance and the reception of miracles (e.g. Mk 5:34; 11:22-24). Modern rationalistic explanations of miracles (e.g. that the 9<sup>th</sup> plague, darkness, was due to an eclipse or that Jesus was actually walking in shallow water, while the disciples thought they were in the middle of the lake [Matt 14:22-33]) all miss the major point of the Biblical narratives: that the events were God's actions and revelations. It is reasonable to note the creativity of the writers who, on occasion, insert "miracles" into the narrative (e.g. compare Matt 27:51-54 with Mark 15:38-39), but this does not permit dispensing with all of the miracles (see Mk 8:11-21).

**MOSES** (c. 1250 BCE) received his call to lead Israel out of slavery in Egypt when he had a vision of God in a burning bush (Exodus 3); on Mount Sinai God gave him the *Ten Commandments* (Exodus 19-20). Moses was remembered as the great prophet, who met

with God face to face (Numbers 12:6-8), and as the source of all the laws written in the *Pentateuch*.

**NEW TESTAMENT** denotes both the twenty-seven books that comprise the New Testament canon (list of sacred books) and the period of time stretching from Jesus' ministry (27-30 CE) to about the year 100. "Testament" is a Latin word meaning "covenant" (see *Old Testament*). The phrase "new covenant" occurs several times in the New Testament, twice in reference to the *Eucharist* (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; also 2 Cor 3:6; Heb 8:8) which thereby is designated as renewing God's covenant with Israel by the death and resurrection of Jesus. The books that comprise the New Testament were written between c. 40's-50's CE (earliest letters of Paul) and 70's-90's CE (gospels and later books). The process of deciding which books were "canonical" (normative, sacred) began in the late New Testament period (see 2 Peter 3:15-16); it was mostly decided by the 4th century but, for Catholics, it did not officially end until the Council of Trent (1545-1563)!

**OLD TESTAMENT** is a Christian expression for the *Tanach*, the Hebrew scriptures of the Jews; Christians add a few extra books (e.g. Wisdom of Solomon, 1 & 2 Maccabees), taken from the *Septuagint*, the Greek translation (of around 250 BCE) of the Hebrew Bible. "Testament" is from a Latin word meaning "covenant," but God's covenant with the Jews is not "old" in the sense of obsolete, as the Second Vatican Council made clear. Some, therefore, prefer to speak of the "First Testament."

**PARABLE** is a Greek word that translates the Hebrew term *mashal*, which refers to many types of speech: proverbs (1 Sam 10:12; 24:13), prophetic oracles (Num 23:7; Ezek 20:49) riddles (Ps 78:2; Prov 1:6), wisdom sayings (Prov 26:7, 9) and allegories (Ezek 24:3). Parables were sufficiently mysterious that their interpretation was not always straightforward, as when Nathan tricked David into self-condemnation (2 Sam 12:1-7), but in general, especially in Jesus' use of parables, they were a teaching device, intending to rouse hearers to new awareness and vision (Mk 4:33); even his enemies could understand them (Mk 12:12). Still, even Jesus' parables were sometimes regarded as deliberately obscure (Mk 4:10-12). Jesus' most memorable parables are simple narratives (e.g. Sower, Mk 4:3-7; Good Samaritan, Lk 10:30-37; Prodigal Son, Lk 15:11-32).

**PASCHAL MYSTERY**: The Greek word *pascha* is derived from the Hebrew *pesach*, meaning *Passover*. It was in Passover time that Jesus celebrated the Last Supper, suffered, died and rose from the dead; "paschal mystery," therefore, refers to God's bringing about the salvation of humanity through Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension. The paschal mystery is at the heart of all Christian liturgical celebrations, but is especially prominent in the Easter triduum (three days) from Holy (Maundy) Thursday to the Easter vigil (Holy Saturday night).

**PASSION** means "suffering" and, within theology, refers to the suffering and death of Jesus under Pontius Pilate, the Roman Prefect (c. 30 CE).

**PASSOVER** refers originally to the night before the *exodus* from Egypt under *Moses* when God slew the firstborn of the Egyptians, but spared the Israelites (Exodus 12:12-13). Subsequently, Passover became the most important annual feast of Israel, and was probably the occasion of Jesus' last supper with his disciples (Mark 14:12), though John's gospel suggests that Jesus died on the day of preparation for Passover (John 13:1; 19:14).

**PAUL**: By his own account, Paul (whose Jewish name was Saul) was a *Pharisee* (Philippians 3:5) who, for reasons he does not specify, "persecuted the Church and tried to destroy it" (Galatians 1:13-14; see Acts 9). However, in or near Damascus, God "called" him to preach Christ "among the Gentiles" (c. 33-34 CE). Thereafter, Paul established churches in Asia Minor (Turkey), Macedonia and Achaia (Greece). Thirteen letters in the New Testament are in Paul's name, and two thirds of Acts are about his travels and preaching; no surprise, therefore, that the early church knew him as "*the* apostle." Scholars all agree that Paul wrote at least seven of those letters (Rom, 1 & 2 Cor, Gal, Phil, 1 Thess, Phm); the others are more or less disputed. His ministry lasted close to thirty years; he was martyred in Rome in the early 60's. (See "Grace" and "Faith").

**PENTATEUCH** means "five scrolls" and refers to the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Together these books comprise the *Torah* or Law of ancient Israel, which is referred to by Jesus and others in the New Testament (e.g. Matt 22:40; Gal 2—3).

**PENTECOST** is originally a harvest festival of ancient Israel, called the "feast of weeks" (Exod 34:22), which was celebrated fifty days after *Passover* and therefore coincided with the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. By Jesus' time Greek-speaking Jews referred to it as Pentecost (a Greek word meaning "fifty" – e.g. Tobit 2:1) or *Shavu'ot* ("Weeks"). It was during this festival, according to Luke (Acts 2), that the *Holy Spirit* descended on the men and women, the first apostles and disciples, gathered in the upper room (Acts 1:13-14). Christians celebrate Pentecost fifty days (seven weeks) after Easter as the feast of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church.

**PETER**: Peter's original name was "Simon" (Matt 16:17), but Jesus gave him the name "Kepha" ("Cephas") which means "rock" in Aramaic (John 1:42), the language of Jesus, and is translated as "Petros" (Peter) in the Greek of the *New Testament*. His name always appears first in listings of the twelve apostles and, according to Matthew 16:18, Jesus gave Simon the name "Rock" on the occasion of making him the foundation of the Church (see also Luke 22:31-32; John 21:15-19). He was a leader among the disciples both during Jesus' ministry and within the early church (e.g. Acts 2:14-40), but he was also well-known for his denying of Jesus (Mk 14:66-72) and ran foul of Paul in Antioch (Gal 2:11-14). Clement of Rome suggests that Peter was martyred in Rome in the early 60's.

**PHARISEE**: The Pharisees, like the *Essenes*, probably had their historical origins, as a group, in the third or second century BCE, among the Hasideans (1 Macc 2:42). After the *Maccabean rebellion*, when the Jews gained some measure of independence (until 66

BCE), they rose to prominence as religious, and sometimes political, leaders. They were deeply respected for their piety and devotion to the Law. Probably because of their clashes with the early church, the gospels mostly portray them in a very negative light (esp. Matthew 23), but there were Pharisees, most notably Nicodemus (John 3:1-9; 7:50; 19:39), who were friendly to Jesus (see Luke 13:31), and some became part of the infant church (Acts 15:5). Gamaliel, a famous Pharisee, “respected by all the people” (Acts 5:34), spoke against persecution of the early church. *Paul* was a Pharisee (Phil 3:5; Acts 26:5). It is inaccurate, not to say unfair, to portray the Pharisees in purely negative terms. They were probably the spiritual ancestors of the Jewish scholars (Rabbis) who began codifying the Jewish law after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, leading eventually to the creation of the Mishnah and the Talmud.

**PROPHET**: “Prophet” is a Greek word that literally means “foretell.” However, the prophets of scripture did not primarily foretell the future, though occasionally they did so (e.g. Amos 5:16-20). Their oracles show that they were primarily concerned with the affairs of the present time and with proclaiming (forthtelling) God’s message in the present context (e.g. Amos 5:21-27). Abraham, Moses, Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Elijah and Elisha were all known as prophets; the great classical *writing* prophets include Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Jesus was seen, and viewed himself, as a prophet (e.g. Luke 9:18-19; 13:33-35) and there were many prophets (men and women) in the early churches (see Acts 2:17; 21:8-9; 1 Cor 14:1-5).

**REVELATION** is God’s self-disclosure that enables a relationship between God and humans. This revelation takes place in numerous ways, including nature in general (Ps 19) and human nature in particular (Gen 1:26-28). The foundational revelations of the Jewish-Christian tradition are mostly historical (e.g. Call of Israel, *Exodus*, Sinai, the *Prophets*) and, for Christians, culminate in Jesus, “the Word made flesh” (John 1:1-18). Scripture also, as inspired by God (2 Tim 3:16), is a primary source of revelation, providing the authoritative interpretation of God’s saving actions. The Second Vatican Council, in the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*, 1965), explained how scripture, tradition and magisterium (teaching authority of the Pope and Bishops) coordinate in a Catholic understanding of revelation.

**SACRAMENT**, broadly, is any visible sign of God’s invisible presence. More narrowly, sacraments are liturgical celebrations of the Christian community through which God becomes present to the community. Catholics, the Orthodox churches and some others have seven sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Marriage, Holy Orders) but Protestants usually consider only baptism and Eucharist to be sacraments.

**SADDUCEE**: Very little is known about the Sadducees. Their name may derive from Zadok, high priest under king *Solomon*. They seem to have come to prominence after the *Maccabean rebellion*, as supporters of the Hasmoneans who combined the offices of king and high priest. Only Matthew gives them any prominence during Jesus’ ministry (e.g. 3:7; 16:1, 6, 11-12); Mark and Luke mention them only once (Mk 12:18; Luke 20:27), John not at all. Luke mentions them several times in Acts (e.g. 23:6-8). They were

closely associated with the (high) priests. With the destruction of *Jerusalem* and the *temple* in 70 CE, the Sadducees disappeared from history.

**SALVATION**, along with the verb “save,” refers both to the process of God rescuing humans (thus, to the relationship between God and humans) and to the state of peace or happiness to which God brings them. In the Old Testament, the language of “salvation” appears especially in the Psalms and in Isaiah (e.g. Ps 27:1; Is 60:17-18); in the New Testament, Jesus says several times, “Your faith saves you” (e.g. Matt 9:22; Mark 10:52) and several writers (especially Paul & Luke) refer many times to salvation (e.g. Rom 1:16; Luke 19:9; Acts 4:12). The term does not only refer to life after death; it primarily denotes God’s rescuing humans here and now.

**SOLOMON** was the son of *David* and his successor to the throne of Israel (c. 970-930). Solomon was the one who built the first *temple* in *Jerusalem*, and is also credited with being the author of some of the wisdom books of the *Old Testament* (e.g. Proverbs, Song of Songs). After his reign the unity of the twelve tribes as one nation ended, and the kingdom split into "Israel" in the north and "Judah" in the south.

**TEMPLE**: The first temple in *Jerusalem* was built by *Solomon* (c. 950 BCE; see 1 Kings 6), but it was destroyed by the Babylonians (2 Kings 25) early in the period of the *Babylonian exile* (586 BCE). After the exile, the returnees built a second temple (completed c. 515 BCE; see Ezra 6), which was substantially rebuilt by *Herod the Great* (34--4 BCE) and was the temple known by Jesus (e.g. Mark 13:1-2). This temple was destroyed by the Romans after the Jewish rebellion of 66-70 CE; the "wailing wall" in modern Jerusalem is a part of its ruins.

**TEN COMMANDMENTS**: The “Ten Commandments” (“Decalogue”) lie at the heart of the Torah (“Law”) which was given to *Moses* by God on Mount Sinai (“Horeb” in Deuteronomy). They are found in Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21, with slight differences. The Ten Commandments are apodictic laws (i.e. absolute commands: “You shall ...” or “You shall not...”), as opposed to the casuistic laws (“If ... then ...”) of other parts of the Torah. They have a paramount place in the ethical systems of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The first four commands stipulate duties toward God, the last six one’s neighbor. Important though the Ten Commandments are, Judaism and Christianity agree that the greatest commands are love of God and neighbor (Mark 12:28-34).

**TRINITY** is a term of Christian theology (not found in the Bible) that refers to the “three in one” (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) of the Godhead. Matthew 28:19 and 2 Corinthians 13:14 are the clearest Bible texts referring to the Father, Son and Spirit together. Trinity is a Latin word, first used by Tertullian (c. 200 CE), but the doctrine of the trinity was already being developed before his time. The first official statement of the doctrine was at the Council of Nicea in 325 CE; it was further developed at the councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451) (see also *Incarnation*).