

**HOPE OF  
ISRAEL  
MINISTRIES**

# **BIBLE**

**CORRESPONDENCE COURSE**

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The Temple: Seat of Judean Central Government

**Judean Central Government**

**Lesson 19**

## An Open Letter from the Staff...

*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defines **centralism** as “the assignment of power and authority to a central leadership in an organization.” It goes on to define **centralize** as “to bring under a single, central authority.: As we saw in Lesson 17, this is what men have been doing since the time of the tower of Babel. Man’s efforts at government have always resulted in centralization of power and authority into the hands of a single despot or a small group of men. Such was the case of the Judean culture.

Prior to King Saul, Israel functioned under a unique free theocracy with YEHOVAH God as the ONLY King. With the advent of human kings, Israel came under centralized government with power and authority concentrated in the hands of the king.

Beginning with King Solomon, the Temple at Jerusalem was set up as the center of government. Following the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities and the destruction of the Temple, a remnant of exiled Israelites returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt the Temple, re-establishing a centralized government. These Judeans, led by the high priest, established a national legislative/judicial body known as the Sanhedrin or “council” which was located at Jerusalem.

Synagogues were then organized in local communities to handle local government affairs, all under the centralized power and authority of the Sanhedrin under the leadership of the high priest.

When Yeshua the Messiah and YEHOVAH God return to this earth the Temple will once again become the center of government -- this time WORLD government! YEHOVAH God’s Shekinah Glory will dwell in a new Temple and Yeshua will be High Priest and king. The Kingdom of YEHOVAH God will eventually encompass the world as peace and prosperity replace Satan’s world of war and poverty. Pray earnestly for that time.



## HOPE OF ISRAEL MINISTRIES BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE LESSON 19

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### About Our Cover...

While the Temple was the center of the wrong sort of centralized government during the Messiah’s day, it will become the CENTER of YEHOVAH God’s government when He, along with the Messiah, return to this earth and take over rulership of the nations!

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## Judean Central Government

### LESSON 19

#### Israel's Desire for Central Government

Following her conquest of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, Israel lived in freedom for many years with YEHOVAH God as her only King. Then came a crucial moment in Israel's history.

1. Read **I Samuel 8:1-7**. According to **verse 4**, who gathered together and came to Samuel?

2. In **verse 5**, what did they ask Samuel to do? To judge them like all the other what?

3. How did Samuel react to their request? **Verse 6**.

4. In **verse 7**, YEHOVAH God said the people had done what to Him? They also said they did not want Him to do what?

#### YEHOVAH's Warning Against Central Government

After the elders of Israel asked for centralized government like the other nations, YEHOVAH God WARNED them of the consequences they would suffer under such a system.

1. Read **I Samuel 8:9**. What did YEHOVAH tell Samuel to do?

2. Read **I Samuel 8:10-17**. In **verse 11** Samuel told the people that the king who ruled over them would do what?

**COMMENT:** Isn't this the ancient equivalent of the military draft?

3. What did Samuel tell the people in **verse 12**?

**COMMENT:** Here Samuel is picturing the private armies that kings down through the centuries have maintained at the expense of the common people.

4. Then, in **verse 13**, Samuel says the

king will not be content with taking the young men but also will take what?

5. Not content with the above, Samuel tells the people that the king will then take what? **Verse 14**.

6. To add insult to injury Samuel tells the people that the king will exact what of their seed and give it to his officers? **Verse 15**.

**COMMENT:** This "tenth" is what is known as a TITHE.

7. In **verse 16** he tells them that the king will take what "and put them to his" what?

8. Finally, Samuel tells the people that the king will take a tenth of the sheep and that the people shall become what?

**COMMENT:** The above descriptions of PLUNDER and TYRANNY that a human king would bring upon Israel are STANDARD CHARACTERISTICS of human centralized government. History has proven that centralized governments DESTROY people's freedom and STEAL their substance. Compare Samuel's warnings to what has happened in America and other Israelitish countries.

9. Despite Samuel's warnings, **verse 19** indicates that the people refused to do what?

10. **Verse 20** explains the people's reasoning. What is it?

**COMMENT:** Israel rejected YEHOVAH God's leadership. They did NOT want the responsibility that goes with freedom. They did NOT want to be responsible for fighting their own battles and for governing themselves. Yet, they did NOT want YEHOVAH God to reign over them. Instead, they wanted to be like the other nations -- THEY WANTED CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO BE THEIR GOD!

*Hope of Israel Ministries -- Preparing the Way for the Return of YEHOVAH God and His Messiah!*

## Israel in Captivity

The Assyrian and Babylonian captivities of Israel put an end to Israel's monarchical centralized government. Jerusalem and the Temple (seat of government) had been destroyed. For all practical purposes, Israel ceased to be an independent nation. While in captivity, the Israelites had NO KING of their own and NO TEMPLE with its structured priesthood and worship.

### Judean Centralized Government

Under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah a REMNANT of Israelites returned to Judea to REBUILD the Temple and walls of Jerusalem. Once completed, the Temple again became the national seat of government. Rather than a king as the central reigning individual, the high priest served as president of a legislative/judicial body (like Congress in the U.S.) known in New Testament times as the "Sanhedrin" or "Supreme Council." Synagogues (churches) were established for purposes of tax promotion, propaganda, brainwashing and public relations.

### The Temple

The Temple (Capitol building) at Jerusalem served not only as the national place of worship and sacrifice but also as the NATIONAL SEAT OF GOVERNMENT. The Temple grounds consisted of a number of buildings, including the palace of the high priest (White House). It housed the priests and Temple officers as well as being the meeting place of the Sanhedrin. The national treasury was also kept at the Temple.

1. In **Matthew 24:1** the Messiah's disciples came to him and showed him what of the Temple?

2. In **Luke 22:52** Yeshua spoke to the chief priests of the Temple and who else?

3. According to **Acts 4:1-3**, as Peter and



**A Pharisee Showing Self-Promoting "Religious" Zeal**

John were teaching the people, the priests of the Temple, and who else, laid hands on them and put them in hold [prison].

4. **John 8:20** states that the Messiah spoke in what part of the Temple when he taught?

### The Sanhedrin

The Sanhedrin (or Supreme Council) served as the Judean high court as well as the national legislature. The number of members is usually given as 71. Its president was generally accorded to the high priest. Its members are thought to have consisted of a HIERARCHY of high priests, scribes and lawyers, and elders (wealthy and elite). These men were members of the sects of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Sanhedrin generally met in a hall (Congress/Senate) on the Temple grounds, but occasionally



it convened at the high priest's palace.

The Sanhedrin exercised great power over the Judean people, its authority being recognized even among Judeans residing beyond Judea. The Roman government allowed the Sanhedrin a great measure of independence, granting it civil and administrative authority. It had officers at its disposal and the power of arrest and imprisonment. As a judicial body, the Sanhedrin constituted a supreme or high court for adjudicating national and other important matters.

Apparently, a HIERARCHY of inferior courts (district, state, county), under the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin, were established throughout the cities of Palestine to adjudicate local and less important matters.

**1.** Read **Acts 4:1-22**. According to **verse 3**, what did the priests, and the captain of the Temple, and the Sadducees do to Peter and John?

**2.** Where, in the following morning, did the rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the high priest gather together? **Verses 5-6**.

**3.** Does **verse 7** indicate this group of men questioned Peter and John's authority for teaching and healing? What did they say?

**4.** According to **verse 15**, what did this body of men command Peter and John to do so that they could confer among themselves?

**COMMENT:** The word "council" in the above passage is translated from the Greek word *sunedrion* (#4892 in *Strong's Concordance*),

meaning "a joint session, i.e. (specially) the Judean Sanhedrin." The composition of the group, which included the high priest, combined with the fact they were meeting at Jerusalem, leaves NO DOUBT it was indeed the Sanhedrin.

**5.** Read **Acts 22:24-23:10**. After the chief captain realized Paul was a Roman citizen, he commanded the chief priests and all their what to convene so that he could bring Paul before them? **Verse 30, last part**.

**6.** **Verse 2** indicates that Ananias was in attendance. What was his function?

**7.** What religious groups was the Sanhedrin made up of? **Verse 6**.

**8.** Read **Matthew 26:1-5**. According to **verses 3-4**, where did the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people gather together to consult with the high priest? What was the subject of the consultation?

**9.** According to **Mark 14:43**, Judas led a great multitude (with swords and staves) to arrest the Messiah. What groups did this multitude represent?

**10.** **John 18:3** identifies this multitude as a band of men from the chief priests. What did this "band" consist of?

**11.** What was the name of the group, consisting of the elders of the people, the chief priests and the scribes, that the Messiah was brought before to be tried? **Luke 22:66**.

**12.** What did the chief priests hold with the elders, scribes and others before they delivered the Messiah to Pilate? What was the name of the group that comprised of the elders, scribes and others? **Mark 15:1**.

**COMMENT:** The centralized power and authority of the Sanhedrin, under the direction of the high priest, was not only exercised in Jerusalem and Judea, but it also extended beyond the limits of Palestine.

**13.** Read **Acts 9:1-2**. Saul asked for letters (written authorization) to the synagogues located in what city? **Verse 2**.

**14.** What was Saul going to do with these letters? **Verse 2**.

**15.** To whom did Saul go to receive this

authorization? **Verse 1.**

**16. In Acts 26:12** Paul states that he went to Damascus with what from the chief priests?

### Synagogues

The Greek word from which SYNAGOGUE is translated originally referred to the convening (bringing together) of a group of people for a designated purpose. Later, the term was also used for the place or building where the people met. The Greek word *sunagoge* is a generic term that can refer to ANY group of people who meet (assemble together) at ANY place for ANY purpose.

#### Synagogue

The word “synagogue” is translated from the Greek word *sunagoge* (#4864 in **Strong’s Concordance**), meaning “an assemblage of persons; (the meeting or the place).” It comes from the Greek root words *sun* (#4862) meaning “together” and *ago* (#71) meaning “bring.”

**1. Acts 6:9** states, “then there arose certain of the” what...”disputing with Stephen”?

**2. In Acts 13:43** of the King James Bible, which of the following English words is translated from the Greek word *SUNAGOGE* (**Strong’s** #4864)? A. Synagogue B. Church C. Congregation D. Council

**3. According to James 1:1**, who is James writing to?

**4. In James 2:2** James writes to his brethren concerning how to treat those who may come into their what? (#4864, *sunagoge*).

**5. Read Luke 7:1-10. In verse 5**, what did the elders say the centurion had built them?

**COMMENT:** Several important points can be determined from the above verses. First of all, the SAME Greek word *sunagoge* (#4864) was translated into THREE DIFFERENT ENGLISH WORDS: “synagogue,” “congrega-

tion” and “assembly.” Secondly, this Greek word was used for gatherings of BOTH Judeans and Christians, and it was used for assemblies beyond the Palestine area. Thirdly, the term was used for BOTH the GATHERING of people and the BUILDING in which they met.

#### Modern Meaning of “Synagogue”

1. A building or place of meeting for Jewish worship and religious instruction.
2. A congregation of Jews for worship or religious study.
3. The Jewish religion as organized or typified in such local congregations.

-- **The American Heritage Dictionary**

Comparing the LIMITED modern meaning of the English word SYNAGOGUE with the generic nature of its Greek root word *sunagoge*, points out the CHANGE in usage that has taken place. Today, the word “synagogue” is MONOPOLIZED by a people called “Jews” and a religion called “Judaism.” However, the term was ORIGINALLY tantamount to what Judeo-Christians today call a “church.” It is interesting that these “Jews,” who FALSELY claim (in the most part) Hebrew and Israelite ancestry, cling so adamantly to a term of GREEK origin!

The history of the synagogue can be traced back to the Babylonian captivity when the Israelites, their Temple and central control having been destroyed, had no ethnic public forum and centralized religion. In lieu of a Temple, the synagogue system was established. Later it was carried back to Palestine with those who returned with Ezra and Nehemiah. By the New Testament era, the synagogues had evolved into highly structured branch bureaucracies under the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin and Temple at Jerusalem.

Each town of any size had its own

synagogue, and the larger cities had more than one. Jerusalem had many. The synagogues served as local public relations offices. They were used for worship and prayer, religious instruction, tribunals (courts), and for controlling the masses via propaganda.

Synagogues (like churches) had a structural hierarchy consisting of presiding officers and overseers as well as attendants and assistants. The local synagogues were merely puppets of the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem. All minor court cases involving Judeans were heard and disposed of in the synagogues. Synagogues had the POWER and AUTHORITY to administer stripes and scourgings as well as to DIS-FELLOWSHIP or excommunicate members. As a result, the synagogue WIELDED MUCH POWER OVER THE PEOPLE.

1. **Mark 5:22** identifies Jarius as an important member of the synagogue -- what was he?

2. Read **Acts 13:13-15**. According to **verse 14**, Paul went into the synagogue in which city?

3. **Verse 15** indicates that Paul was invited by the rulers to speak to the people after what event took place in the synagogue?

4. According to **Acts 18:8**, what was Crispus' position in the synagogue? Did he believe on the Messiah with all his household?

**COMMENT:** The above verses indicate the existence of an authority structure within the synagogues. There was clearly a person "in charge" of each synagogue. The use of the word "director" in *Strong's* definition suggests a centralization of authority. The lexicon description of this person's duties indicates that he approved the speakers and their discourses as well as any of the activities conducted in the synagogue. This would imply rules of order to which CONFORMITY was required.

#### Recommended Book...

Judaism's Strange Gods, by Michael A. Hoffman II



Inside the Synagogue.

#### Ruler of the Synagogue

The phrases "ruler of the synagogue" and "chief ruler of the synagogue" are translated from the Greek word *archisunagogos* (#752 in *Strong's Concordance*), meaning "director of the synagogue services." *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* explains this person's duties as selecting the readers and teachers in the synagogue, examining the discourses of the public speakers, and overseeing ALL things.

5. In **Matthew 23:6** the Messiah states that the scribes and Pharisees love what sort of seats in the synagogues?

6. In **Luke 11:43** Yeshua accuses the Pharisees of loving the uppermost what in the synagogues?

7. In **Luke 20:46** Yeshua says to beware of the scribes who love what sort of seats in the synagogues?

**COMMENT:** The existence of "preeminent seats" and HIERARCHICAL positions of authority is a STANDARD

TRADEMARK of government bureaucracy. Men occupying such positions have the tendency to wield greater power over the assemblies (like church board members: elders, deacons, etc.). The synagogues were no exceptions.

"This part of the synagogue [the front] was naturally the place of honor. Here were the 'chief seats,' for which Pharisees and scribes strove so eagerly...In smaller towns there was often but one rabbi. Where a fuller organization was possible, there was a college of elders, presided over by one who was the 'chief of the synagogue.'"

-- **Smith's Bible Dictionary**

### Seats in the Synagogue

The phrases "chief seats," "uppermost seats," and "highest seats" are all translated from the Greek word *protokathedria* (#4410 in **Strong's Concordance**), meaning "a sitting first (in the front row), i.e. Preeminence in council." The word "council" can refer to administrative, legislative, or judicial assemblies.

### Put Out of the Synagogue

The phrase "put out of the synagogue" is translated from the Greek word *aposunagogos* (#656 in **Strong's Concordance**), meaning "excommunication." **Thayer's Greek Lexicon** further defines this word as "excluded from the sacred assemblies."

### Powers of the Synagogue

1. In **Matthew 10:17**, what did the Messiah warn his disciples that "men" would deliver them up to? What would these "men" do to the disciples in their synagogues?

2. In **Mark 13:9**, what did the Messiah warn his disciples would happen to them in the synagogues?

3. According to **Luke 12:11**, Yeshua prophesied that his disciples would be brought unto the what, and unto whom?

4. In **John 16:2**, the Messiah also warned his disciples that they would be "put out of" what?

5. Read **John 9:1-23**. In this passage **verse 22** indicates that the blind man's parents were afraid of what?

6. According to **John 12:42**, why were those of the chief rulers who believed on the Messiah afraid to confess him?

**COMMENT:** The above verses indicate the AMOUNT of power the synagogue and its rulers exercised over the people. EX-COMMUNICATION from the synagogue was considered to be a grave sign of humiliation and disgrace. This DREADED FEAR was used by the Judean rulers to control the conduct of the people and keep them in line. This threat of rejection, expulsion, and isolation (loss of salvation) has been a FAVORITE and most EFFECTIVE weapon of centralized government and churches at all levels.

It is commonly thought throughout the "Christian" world that the Judeans, while under Roman subjugation, had little or no government of their own. However, in this lesson we have seen otherwise. Not only did the Judeans have a centralized governing structure, but they also used it extensively to CONTROL and SUBJUGATE the people. It all began with Israel's insistence, despite YEHOVAH's warnings, on having a king like the other nations. From the time of King Saul until the time of the Messiah, Israel had been suffering

under the CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OF MEN.

We have seen how the apostle Paul, prior to his conversion by Yeshua the Messiah, and acting under the AUTHORITY and commission of the chief priests, was used as a TOOL of the tyrannical Judean central government against those who believed on the Messiah (**Acts 22:19**). Since that time, ungodly central government continues to persecute them.

7. What does **Acts 8:3** say that Saul (Paul) made of the church -- “entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison”?

8. According to **Acts 8:1**, what happened to the church in Jerusalem following the death of Stephen?

**COMMENT:** In the above verses the King James Bible, like most other translations and versions, MISTRANSLATES the Greek word *ekklesia* (#1577 in *Strong’s Concordance*) into the word “church.” This ERROR has caused great CONFUSION within the “Christian” world. In Lesson 21, we will examine this MISUSE of the word “church” and discover the TRUE meaning of the ecclesia.

### Recommended Reading...

Between the Two Testaments

Is Judaism the Religion of Moses?

Are Modern “Jews” *Really* Jews?

### Answers to Questions in Lesson 18

1. False 2. Satan is banished 3. Tenth  
4. No 5. Yeshua the Messiah 6. Yes  
7. Messiah’s 8. The Jubilee 9. his  
return to the earth. 10. The grave 11.  
Death 12. Yes 13. reconciled to  
YEHOVAH God. 14. Day of Atonement  
15. Joseph of Arimathea

### Notes:

# Check Your Progress...

**Question 1:** What is the term “tenth” also known as? \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 2:** What put an end to Israel’s monarchical centralized government?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Question 3:** Who led a remnant of Israelites back to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple and walls? \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 4:** The apostle Paul (before his conversion) was used as a \_\_\_\_\_ of the tyrannical Judean central government.

**Question 5:** What threat of the synagogue leaders was considered a sign of humiliation and disgrace? \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 6:** Where, in the synagogue, were the “chief seats”? \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 7:** Who, in the synagogue, examined the discourses of the public speakers before they delivered them? \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 8:** The local synagogues were merely \_\_\_\_\_ of the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem.

**Question 9:** Can the Greek word from which “synagogue” is translated refer to any group of people who meet at any place for any purpose? \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 10:** Did the power of the Sanhedrin and high priest extend beyond the limits of Palestine? \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 11:** The apostle Paul was a citizen of what state? \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 12:** Is it true that the Roman government did not allow the Sanhedrin a great measure of independence? \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 13:** To where can the history of the synagogue be traced back to?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Question 14:** Where did the Sanhedrin usually meet?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The answers will be found in the next lesson. Approximately 3 weeks after receiving Lessons 17 through 20, you will receive a mail-in test that covers these four lessons. The test will be returned to you after grading. Following the completion of the Hope of Israel Bible Correspondence Course you will receive a **Certificate of Completion**. If you complete the course with a grade of 75% or better you will also receive an **Outstanding Student Award**.

