

Pharisees and Sadducees

Pharisees

generally middle class

power base outside Jerusalem

closely associated with synagogues

primarily teachers and scholars

theologically committed to maintaining Israel's relationship with God through obedience to the law

accepted as Scripture most of what Christians call the "Old Testament"

believed in resurrection of humans to a life beyond death

recognized existence of spiritual beings, including angels and demons

regarded as social moderates who objected to imposition of Roman authority but did not advocate armed revolt against the Roman powers

prominent Pharisees: Shammai (strict interpretations of law), Hillel (more lenient interpretations of law)

in the New Testament they argue with Jesus over matters of law but are only peripherally connected to the plot to have Jesus put to death

the primary forebears of modern Judaism

Sadducees

mainly upper class

power base in Jerusalem

closely associated with the temple

primarily priests

theologically committed to maintaining Israel's relationship with God through the sacrificial system

accepted only the Torah (Pentateuch) as Scripture

did not believe in resurrection to a life beyond death

skeptical of beliefs regarding different spiritual beings

regarded as social conservatives who sought collaboration with Roman authorities in ways that would ensure their own place in the status quo

prominent Sadducees: Caiaphas and Annas, identified as high priests during the lifetime of Jesus

in the New Testament they are the primary architects of the plot to have Jesus put to death

disappear from history after the disastrous Jewish war with Rome in 66–73 CE