

**Sunday School Lesson**

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the condemnation of Jesus. Yet their spiritual descendants may still live as a part of The United Methodist Church in 1969.

**The Scribes**

We are inclined to look with disapproval on those called "scribes" in the Gospels. Who were these scribes? What was their purpose or mission? Were all scribes alike?

The group of persons designated by this title arose soon after the Jews returned from exile. The title of "scribe" was

applied with honor in the early period of its use. (See Ezra 7: 12.) These early scribes might properly have been called "doctors of the law." They were the reliable interpreters of the will of God for the people.

In time, however, a split arose in the ranks of the scribes. A group of lay scribes (the earlier ones were either priests or from priestly families) formed another party. This group of scribes, together with their followers among the people, were known as the Pharisees.

The scribes were greatly concerned about their honor. This

honor was to come especially from their students. Their place came to be so great that, according to the tradition, if one's teacher and one's father both needed help at the same time, the student of the scribe was obligated to help his teacher first.

Because they were experts in religious matters, they also held places of honor among the people. They were probably called often to expound the law in the synagogue.

The functions of the scribes, then, were threefold: (1) to develop the law, that is, make it applicable; (2) to teach the law

to students; and (3) to act as judges in the local courts and in the national Jewish religious court, the Sanhedrin.

**The Pharisees**

In the two hundred years or so before the birth of Jesus, the religious people of Palestine divided into additional groups. These two groups were the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The separation was mainly between the group that was dominated by the high priest and his family (the Sadducees) and the group with a large lay element (the Pharisees). This separation was one of the most significant

changes in the religion of Israel in the period between the Testaments.

The Pharisees challenged the right of the priestly group to have sole authority to be the rulers of the people and the judges of the law. The word from which "Pharisee" comes means "separated"; the Pharisees separated themselves from those who were not closely following the observance of the Jewish law.

1. The first characteristic of these Pharisees was their separatism from those who did not

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## Give your friends a Christmas they won't forget.

Give them electric gifts. The gifts that keep on doing things for people.

Goodness knows, you won't run out of things to choose from.

There are irons, heaters, percolators, hot pots, toasters, waffle bakers, grills, griddles, frypans, blenders, mixers.

There are clocks, hair curlers, hair dryers, lamps, knives, can openers, ice crushers,

knife sharpeners, portable ranges, patio servers, kettles.

And even electric outdoor grills.

So do this: write down the names of all the people you want to remember this year.

Then run down to Duke Power or your favorite electric appliance dealer.

And give all those people a Christmas to remember.

Duke Power

