**Groups Within Judaism at the Time of Jesus**

**The Great Majority**

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| * The vast majority of Jews were poor.
* Jesus showed them the respect and care that most did not.
* Jesus identified his mission as one to the poor, outcast, blind, oppressed & imprisoned.

A small faction of great majority: Tax collectors!! Jewish people reviled them, thought of them as traitors.  |

 **Sadducees Pharisees**

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| * Mostly priests who saw no harm in compromising the Jewish laws with the Greek and Roman laws to keep peace.
* Torah: devoted to it.
* Sanhedrin (a class of high priests): preserving the sanctity of the Temple.
* Had a great deal of social power.
* Wealthy

­­­ | * Well-educated, lay, religious Jewish leaders whose main focus was keeping Jews faithful to the Law.
* Sticklers for Letter of the Law (little room for compassion for “sinners”)
* Strict dietary laws. No pork!
* Cleansing rituals before entering holy space.
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 **Scribes Essenes Zealots**

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| -Jewish scholars who assisted in writing and telling Jews about their religious traditions.-Teachers -Associated with Pharisees and Sadducees.  | -Members of a Jewish sect who thought they were among God’s elect.-Disliked “corruption” in the Temple – they sought a purer faith. -Separated themselves from society. Lived in areas around the desert. -They were waiting for the end of the world to claim their peace with God.  | -Militant Jews who rebelled against Roman authority and battled for the recovery of Jewish independence. Wanted no presence of foreigners in their land, especially Romans. -Waited for a “militant Messiah” who would deliver them from the Romans  |