

# ISRAEL AT THE TIME OF JESUS

# HOUSING IN VILLAGES & CITIES IN 1<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY ISRAEL

- **Food:** The woman's daily job included preparing food for her family – for example, they would grind grain, bake bread, milk the animals, and make cheese. Typically a family ate two meals: Breakfast – light or small amounts of food taken to work; and Dinner – A large meal with cheese, wine, vegetables and fruits, and eggs. As for meat, fish was most common, followed by chicken or fowl. Red meat (beef and lamb) was served only on special occasions, and pork and crustaceans were absolutely forbidden. Most foods were boiled or stewed in a big pot and seasoned.

- **Clothing**: The undergarment was called a "tunic". The outer garment was called a "mantle" – it was loose fitting with fringes, bound by blue ribbon. Men wore a belt. People also wore sandals on their feet, and a white cloth over their head, hanging to their shoulders. This cloth protected them from the sun.
- **General Physique**: Most Jews were fairly small in stature, light-skinned but tanned from sun. Most had black or brown hair worn long, and most men wore beards.
- **Role of Women**: considered second-class citizens, akin to slaves. The fact that they are mentioned as avid followers of Jesus is unusual – both that they would be allowed to follow him with his disciples, and unusual that the authors of Jesus' biographies would mention their presence at all.



# INDUSTRY

## A. Fishing

In ancient times fish were usually caught with either a hook, a spear, or a net.

Fishing goes back to the earliest of times. The Nile River in Egypt abounded in fish, and the fishing industry was very profitable there.



# AGRICULTURE, TRADE & BUILDING

- There was a very large disparity between rich and poor.
- The upper class was made up of the temple priests.
- The middle class was comprised of traders and merchants, artisans (stonecutters, masons, sculptors) and craftsman (metal, wood, cloth dye). The Pharisees (another Jewish sect), sages, scribes, and teachers were also a part of the middle class.
- The lower class was made of laborers (weavers, stone carriers, slaves (non-Jewish person taken into slavery because of debt), and the unemployable (lepers, blind, insane, crippled, etc.)