

A wooden bench is positioned in a lush green field, surrounded by tall grass and several large, leafy trees. The background shows a dense forest of green trees under a clear sky. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

The Sabbath

Understanding the Sabbath



Sabbath — Overview of Session

- **Significance in the Torah**
- **Significance in Judaism/Jewish law**
- **Significance to Christians**

Sabbath – Significance in Torah

- Hebrew "Shabbat" is from verb *shabat* = literally means "to cease" (doing something)
- First holiday mentioned in the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible), as God was the first one to observe it
- Observance of Shabbat in Torah, 4th of 10 commandments (Ex. 20:8-11, Deut. 5:12-15)

Sabbath – Significance in Torah

- **Sabbath year (Ex. 23:10-11; Lev. 25:1-7)**
 - **70 years exile (2 Chron. 36:21)**
 - **Sabbath year restored (Neh. 10:31)**
- **Year of Jubilee every 50th year (Lev. 25, 27; Num. 36:4)**
- **Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)**

Sabbath – Significance in Judaism

Two purposes of Shabbat (according to Tanakh and Siddur):

- **Commemorates God's **creation** of the Universe; on the 7th day God rested from his work (Exod. 20)**
- **Commemorates Israel's **redemption** from slavery in Egypt (Deut. 5)**

Sabbath – Significance in Judaism

- Jewish law (*halakha*) accords Shabbat the status of a holiday with the status as the most important day in the Jewish calendar
- The Torah reading for the Sabbath has more *parshiot* (Torah reading) than Yom Kippur, the most of any Jewish holiday
- Penalty for violating Shabbat is greater than for violating any other holiday

Sabbath – Significance in Judaism

- **A day of rest observed once a week by practitioners of Judaism and secular Jews, sometimes refer to law of *Shemittah* or to the holidays**
- **Jewish people celebrate a Shabbat, a day of rest, on the 7th day of each week (sundown Friday to sundown Saturday)**

Sabbath – Significance in Judaism

- **Prohibited activities:**
 - Jewish law prohibits Jews from doing any form of *melachah* ("work")
 - 39 categories of activity prohibited

If a human life is in danger, a Jew is not only allowed, but required, to violate any Shabbat law which stands in the way of saving that life

Sabbath – 39 Prohibited Activities

Sowing	Grinding	Dyeing wool	Untying	Curing hide	Extinguishing a fire
Plowing	Sifting	Spinning	Sewing stitches	Scraping hide	Kindling a fire
Reaping	Kneading	Weaving	Tearing	Cutting hide up	Putting the finishing touch on an object
Binding sheaves	Baking	Making 2 loops	Trapping	Writing 2 or more letters	Transporting an object between a private and public domain
Threshing	Shearing wool	Weaving 2 threads	Slaughtering	Erasing 2 or more letters	
Winnowing	Washing wool	Separating 2 threads	Flaying	Building	
Selecting	Beating wool	Tying	Salting meat	Tearing something down	

Sabbath – Significance in Judaism

- **3 festive meals eaten each Shabbat**
- **all Jews encouraged to attend synagogue services**
- **activities encouraged on Shabbat**

Sabbath – Significance in Judaism

Activities Encouraged	Activities Encouraged	Not mandated
Visiting family & friends (within walking distance)	Singing folk songs, during or after meals	Playing board games
Spending Shabbat together with one's own immediate family	Reading, studying, discussing Torah and commentary	Reading modern Jewish fiction
Synagogue attendance	Sex between husband and wife (Kabbalah)	Taking a nature walk or hike
Hosting family and friends to sleep over for Shabbat or at least 1 of festive meal		Spending time with pets (Modern Orthodox/Conservative)

Sabbath – Significance to Christians

Westminster Confession of Faith (27.7)

- *“As it is the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be **set apart for the worship of God**; so, in his Word, by a positive, moral and perpetual commandment binding all men in all ages, he hath particularly appointed one day in seven, for a Sabbath, **to be kept holy unto him...**”*

Sabbath – Significance to Christians

Westminster Confession of Faith (27.8)

- *“This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, do **not only observe a holy rest, all the day**, from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations, but also are taken up, the whole time, in the **public and private exercises of his worship**, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.”*

I. Israel rested to maintain a holy walk with God.

- All Jewish men attended the three annual feasts to remind them of God's blessings in their lives (Exod. 23:14-19).
- Keeping the Sabbath was God's key command because it signified Israel's covenant with the holy LORD (31:12-17).
- One violation of holy rest was to start a fire on the Sabbath (35:1-3).

II. We also need holy times to rest and reflect on God's work in our lives.

- Holy time?
- Like Israel, we need *annual* celebrations of holy rest.
- Like Israel, we need *weekly* celebrations of holy rest.

Main Idea: Take a **holy break!**



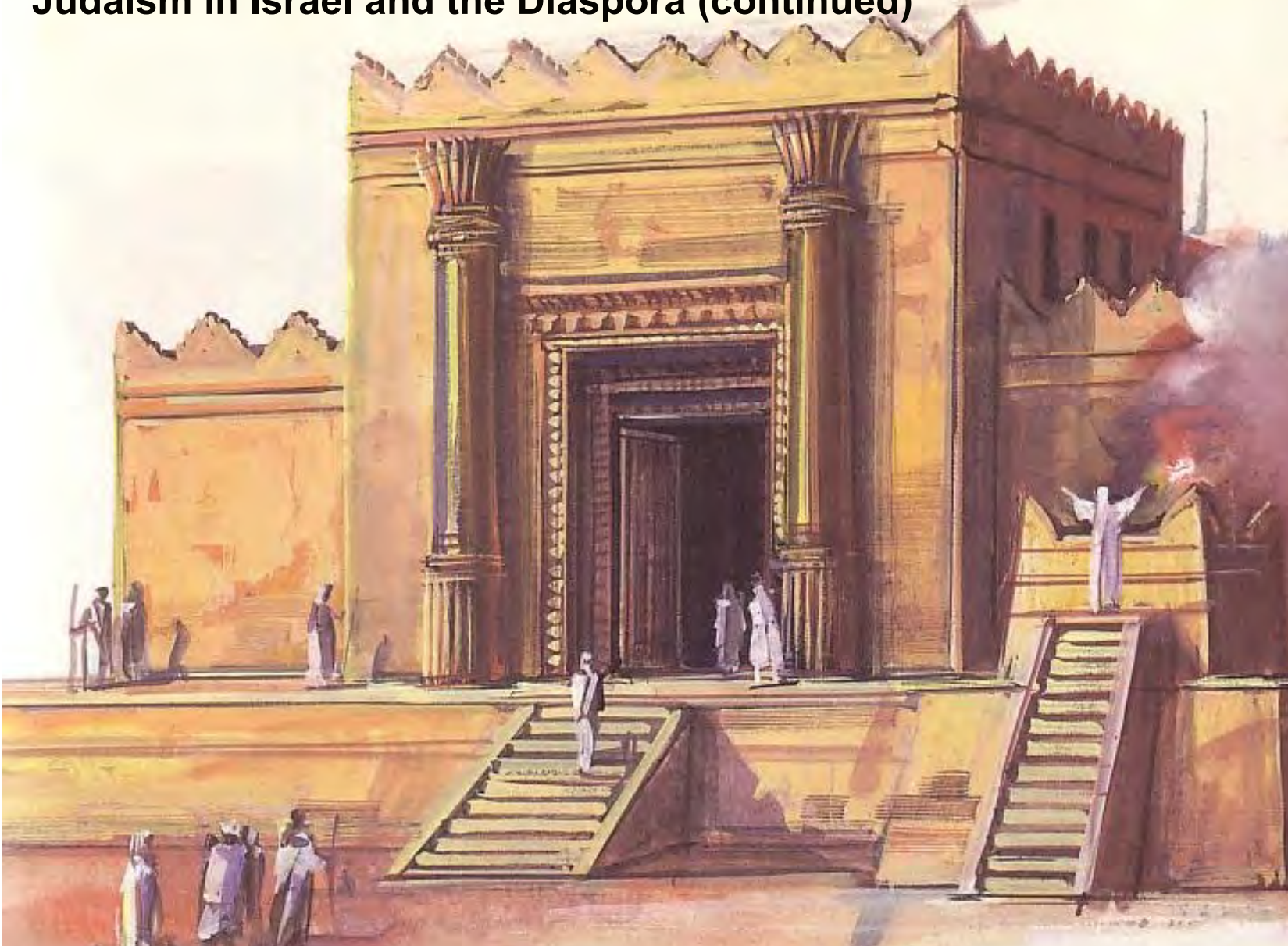
Discussion Questions

- What are we *really* saying when we complain that we don't have time to rest?
- In what way is God telling *you* to make time holy?

The Synagogue

- **What was it?**
- **How did it relate to the church?**

Judaism in Israel and the Diaspora (continued)



Jewish life revolved around Solomon's temple for 400 years (959-586 BC)

A painting of the Temple of Jerusalem, showing a large doorway flanked by two golden columns with ornate capitals. The scene is set in a courtyard with a stone floor. In the background, there are more structures and figures. A large red banner is overlaid diagonally across the center of the image, containing the text 'Temple Destroyed!'.

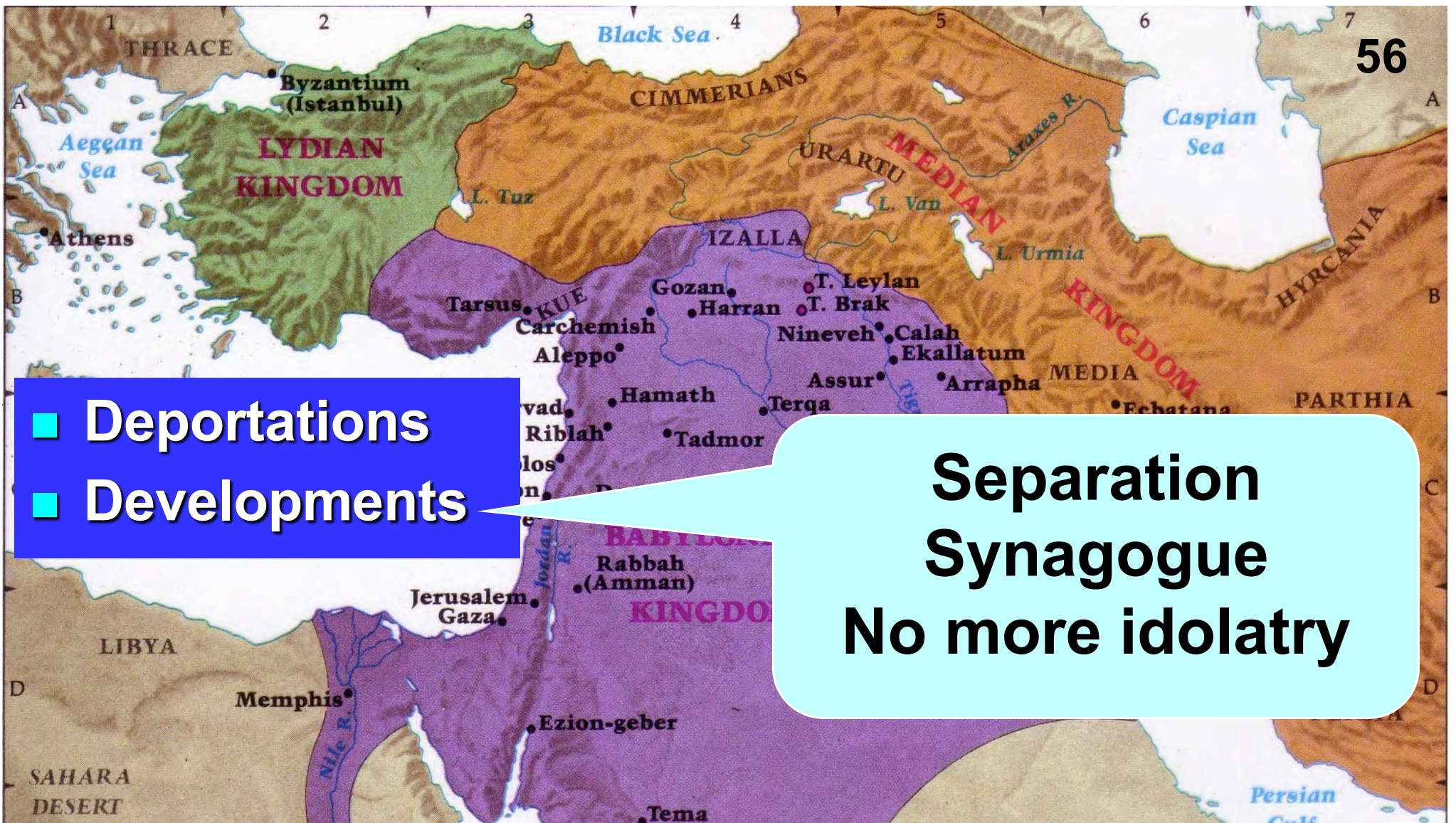
Jews Maintained
Holiness at the Temple

Temple
Destroyed!

Prayers for the Third Temple



**While praying for temple restoration
Jews needed a common place to bring
themselves "together" (*syn*) to
preserve their "way of life" (*agoge*).
Thus the "synagogue" was born.**



- Deportations
- Developments

**Separation
Synagogue
No more idolatry**

Synagogue Origin: Babylon

Polish couple



Indian



Algerians



Jews are Different

(all 19th cent. drawings)

Jerusalem couple



Moroccan



**So are
synagogues
too!**

Constantinople



Smyrniote



Synagogue Diversity



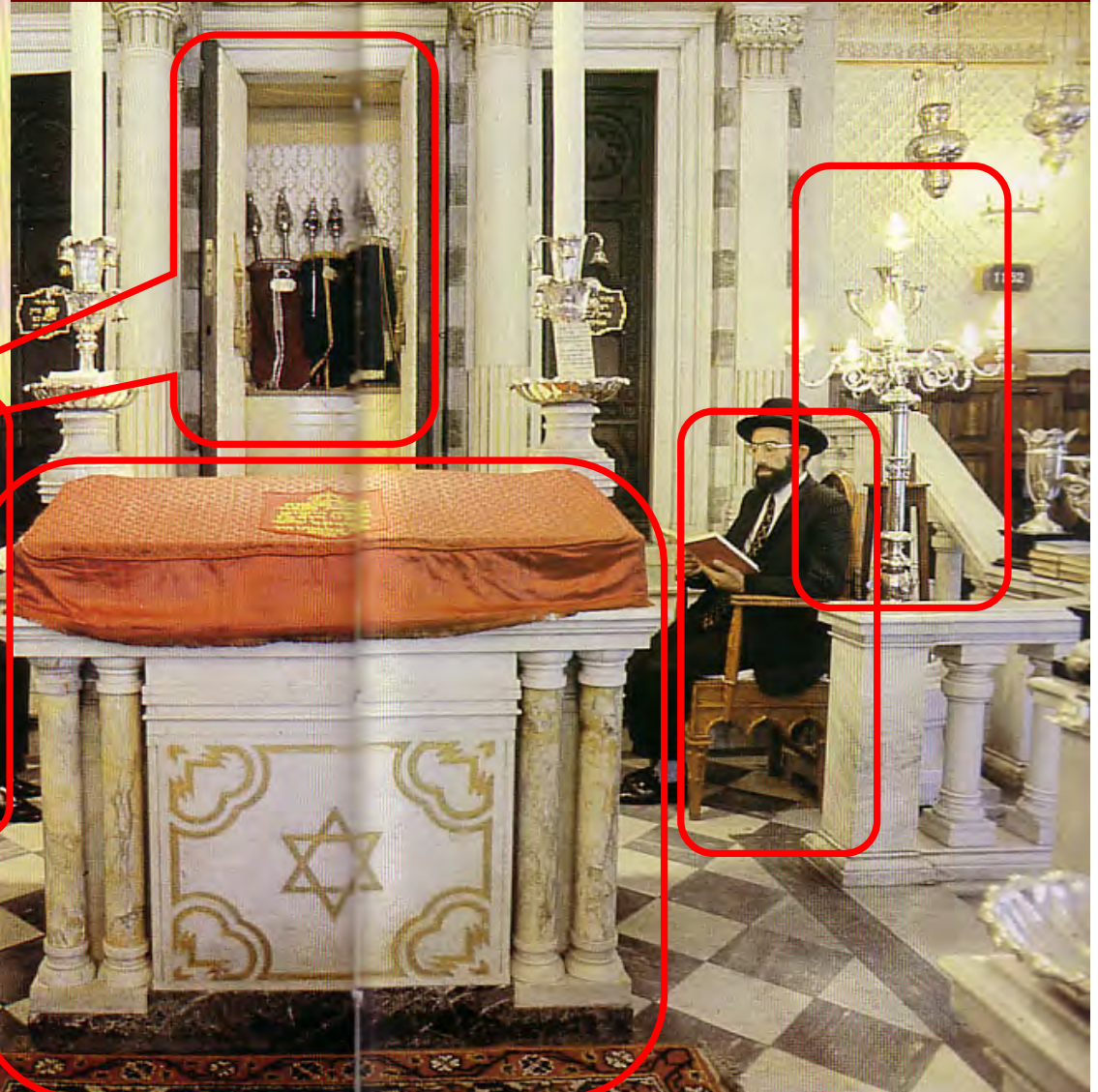
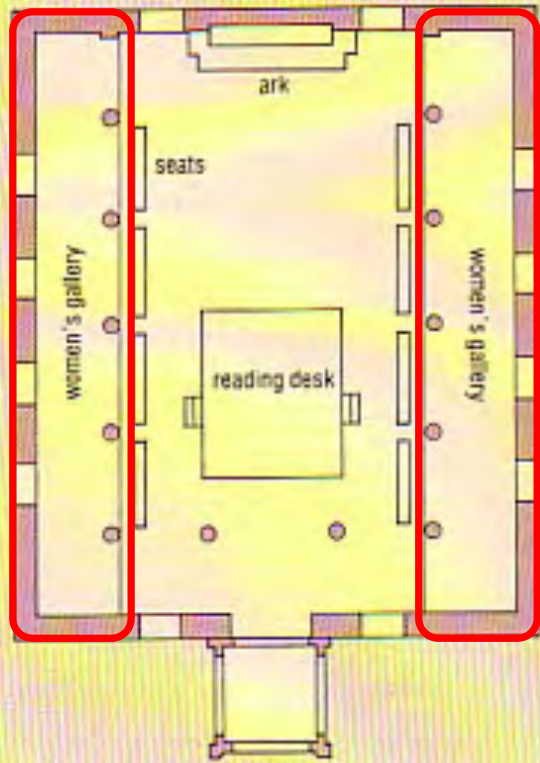
Synagogue in Florence, Italy (built 1874-82)



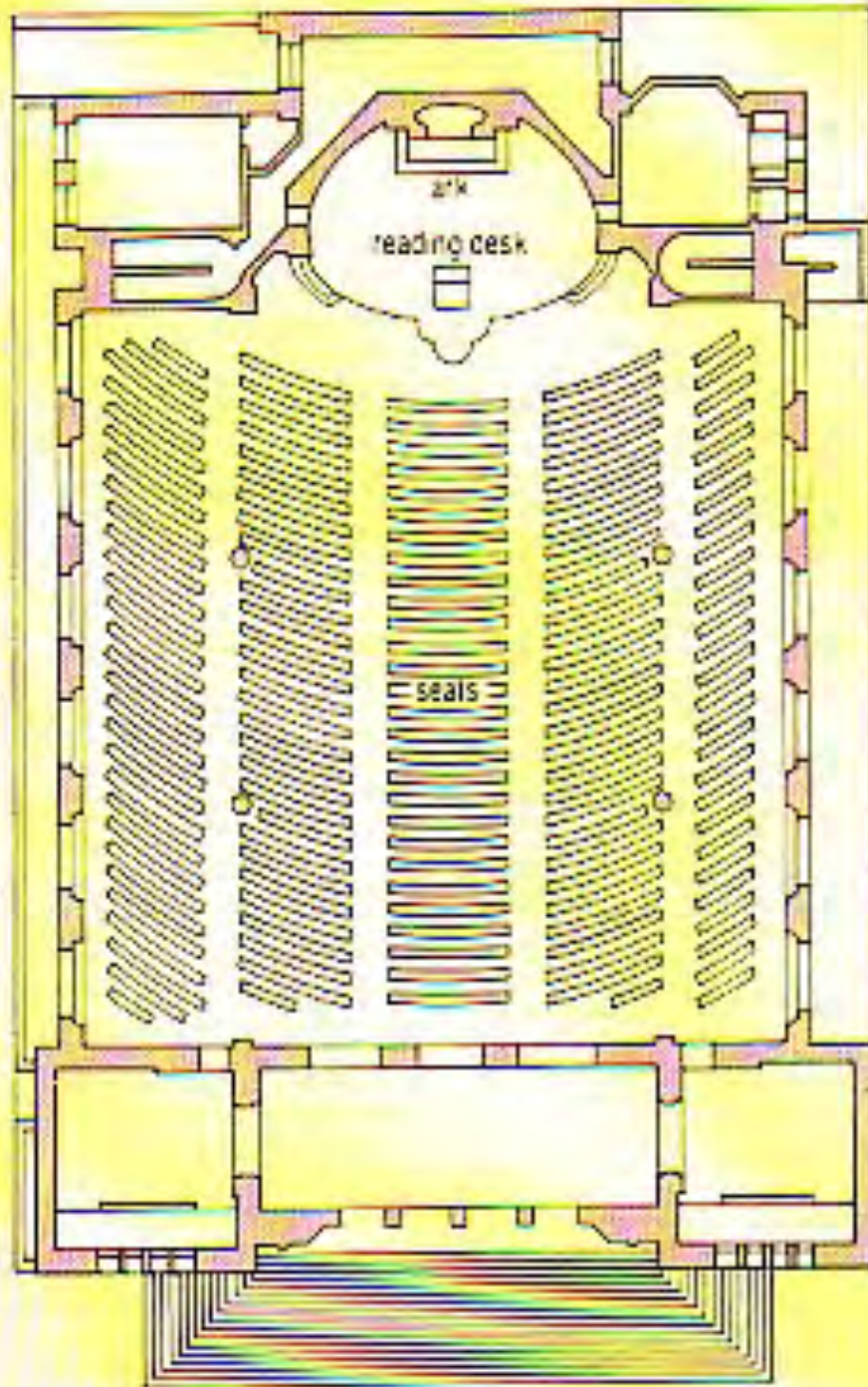
Even Masada had a Synagogue



Synagogue Furniture & Design



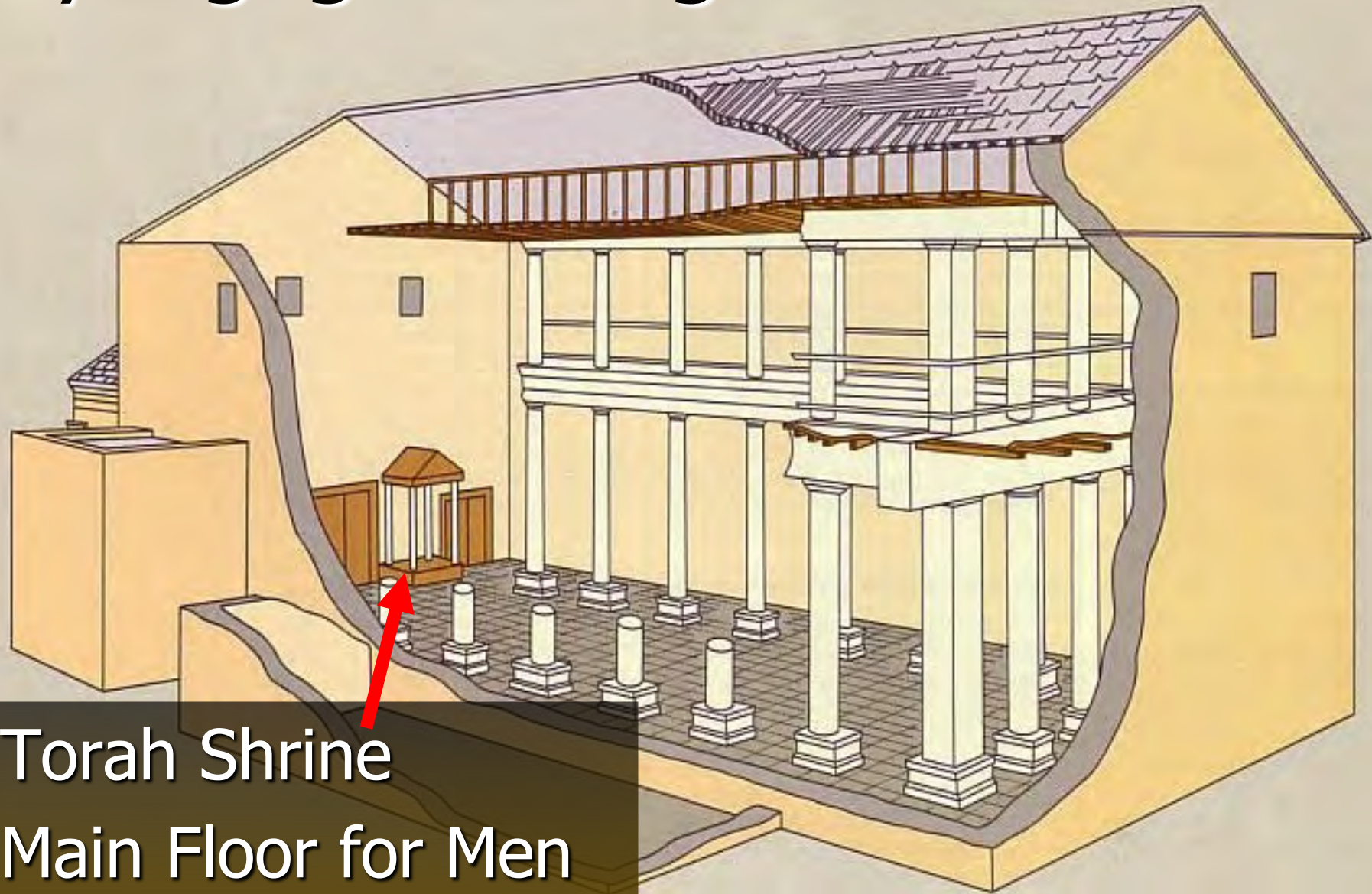
- Chest (Ark)
- Bema (Desk)
- Benches
- Lamps
- Women



Modern Synagogue Floor Plan

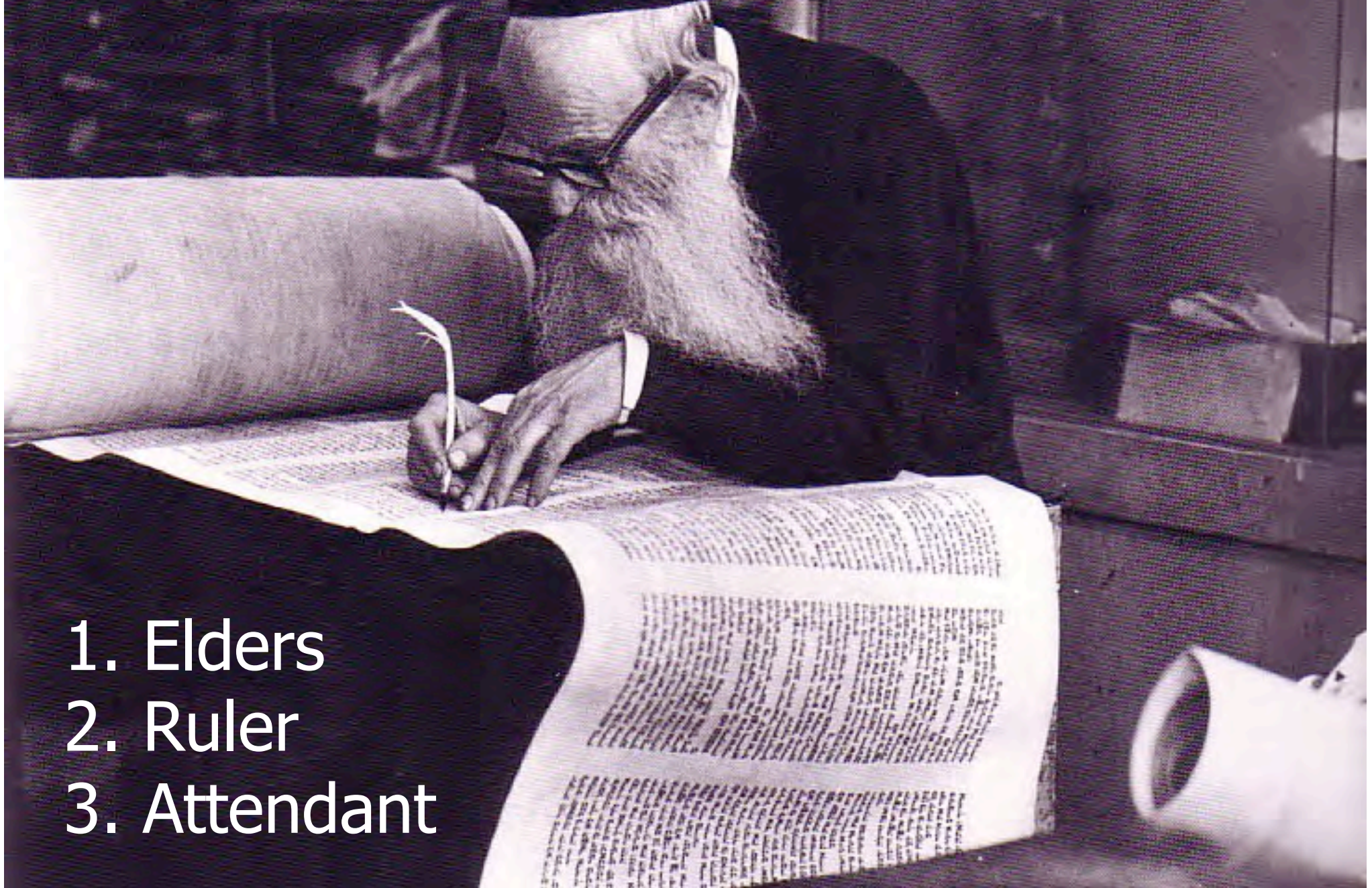
- Looks familiar, doesn't it?

Synagogue Design



- Torah Shrine
- Main Floor for Men
- Balcony for Women

Synagogue Leadership



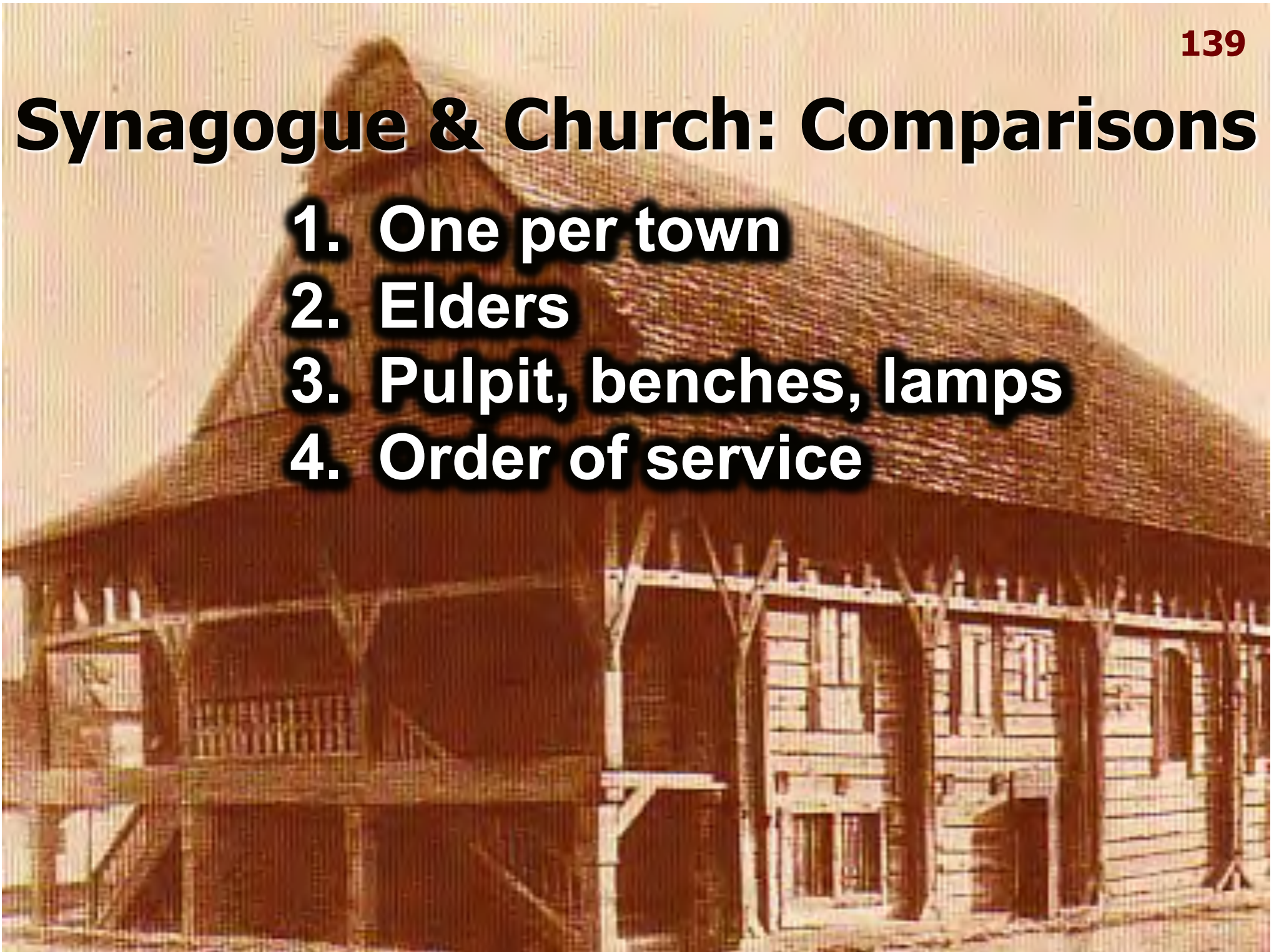
1. Elders
2. Ruler
3. Attendant

Synagogue & Church: Contrasts

- 
- Jews
 - Separations
 - Building
 - Structured
 - Political
 - Beatings
 - Sabbath
 - Like temple
 - Christians
 - Genders together
 - Homes
 - Spontaneous
 - Non-political
 - Non-physical discipline
 - Sunday
 - Like heaven

Synagogue & Church: Comparisons

1. One per town
2. Elders
3. Pulpit, benches, lamps
4. Order of service



Order of Service

Synagogue

Call to worship

Shema (Deut. 6:4)

Church

Same (invocation)

Creed (Phil. 2:6-11)



The Jewish Shema

***"Hear, O Israel:
The LORD our God,
the LORD is one"
(Deut. 6:4)***



***The Kenosis
("Emptying")
Passage
Philippians 2:6-11***

THE
PASSION
OF THE CHRIST

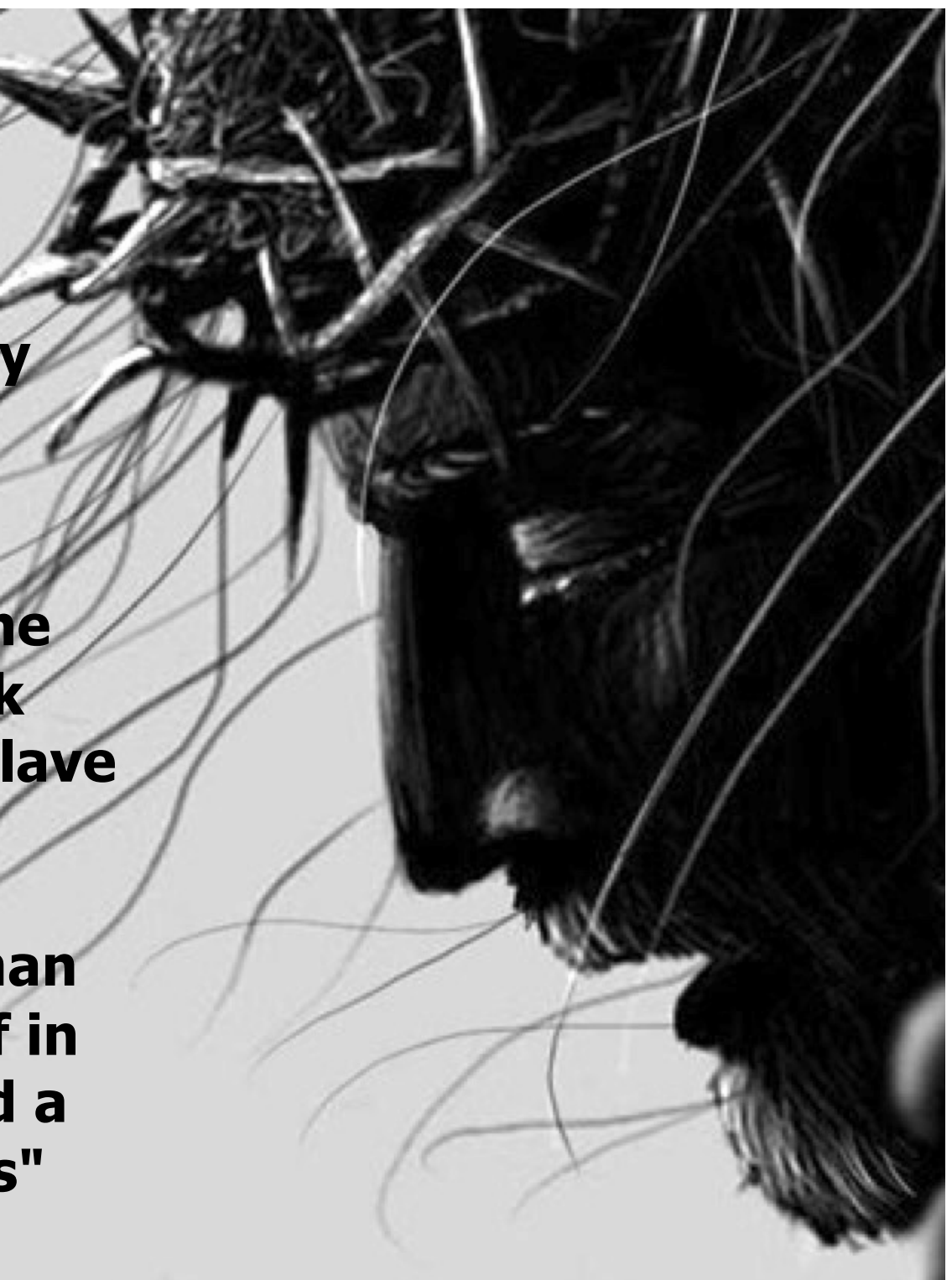
THE
PASSION
OF THE CHRIST
JIM CAVIEZEL

"You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

⁶Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to.

⁷Instead, he gave up his divine privileges [*Greek* "he emptied himself"]; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being.

When he appeared in human form, ⁸he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross" (Phil. 2:5-8 NLT).



Order of Service

Synagogue

Call to worship

Shema (Deut. 6:4)

Prayers & Amens

Scripture Read

–Torah/ Prophets

Exposition/Exhort

Blessing

(Num. 6:22-27)

Church

Same (invocation)

Creed (Phil. 2:6-11)

Prayers

Scripture Read

–OT + Gospels/Eps

Preaching

Benediction

(Jude 24-25)

Service Closings

Synagogue

The Priestly Blessing

Then the Lord said to Moses,
"Tell Aaron and his sons to
bless the people of Israel
with this special blessing:

'May the Lord bless you
and protect you.

May the Lord smile on
you and be gracious
to you.

May the Lord show you
his favor and give
you his peace'''

(Num. 6:22-27 NLT).

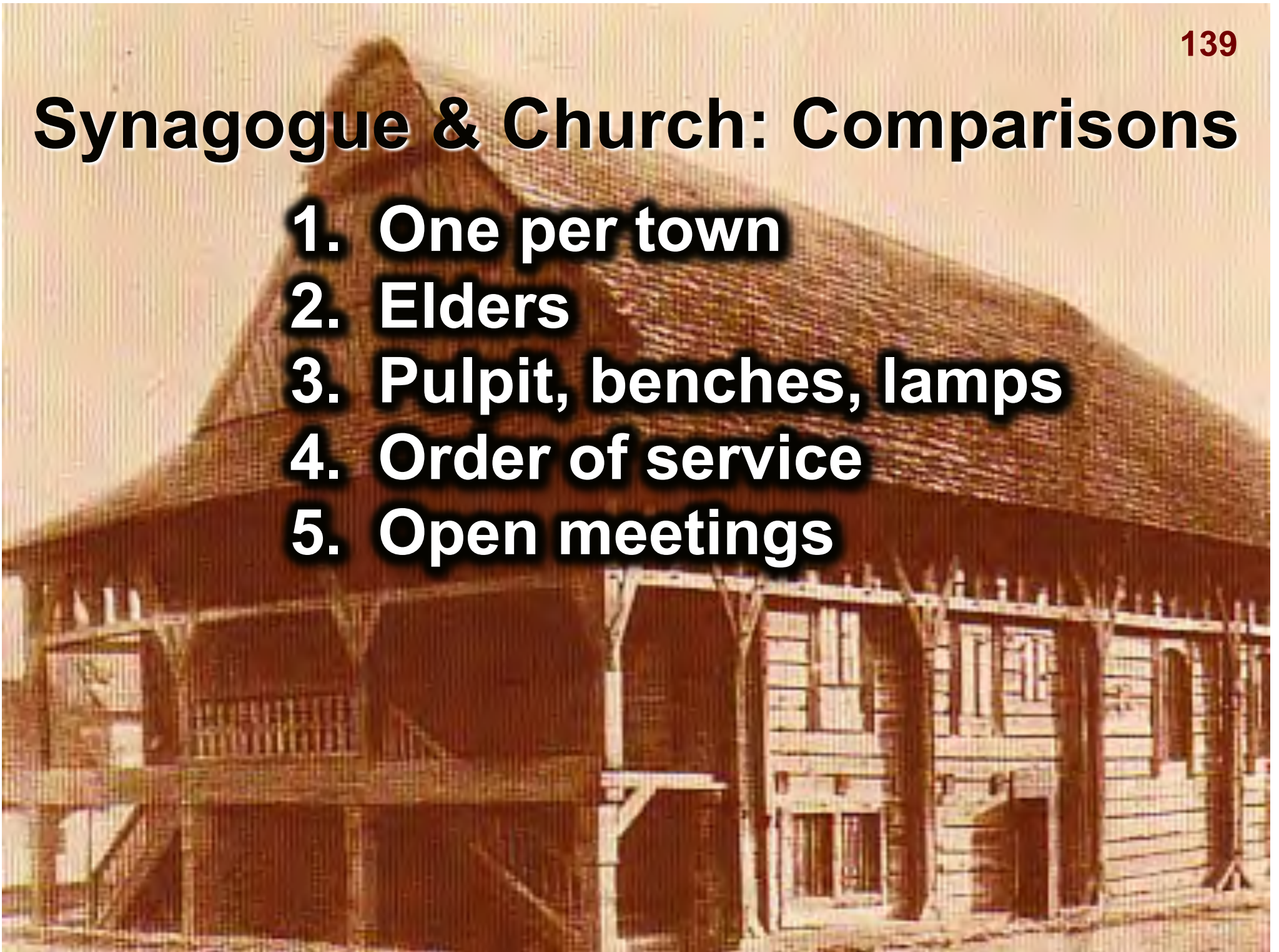
Church

A Prayer of Praise

"Now all glory to God, who is
able to keep you from falling
away and will bring you with
great joy into his glorious
presence without a single
fault. All glory to him who
alone is God, our Savior
through Jesus Christ our
Lord. All glory, majesty,
power, and authority are his
before all time, and in the
present, and beyond all time!
Amen" (Jude 24-25 NLT).

Synagogue & Church: Comparisons

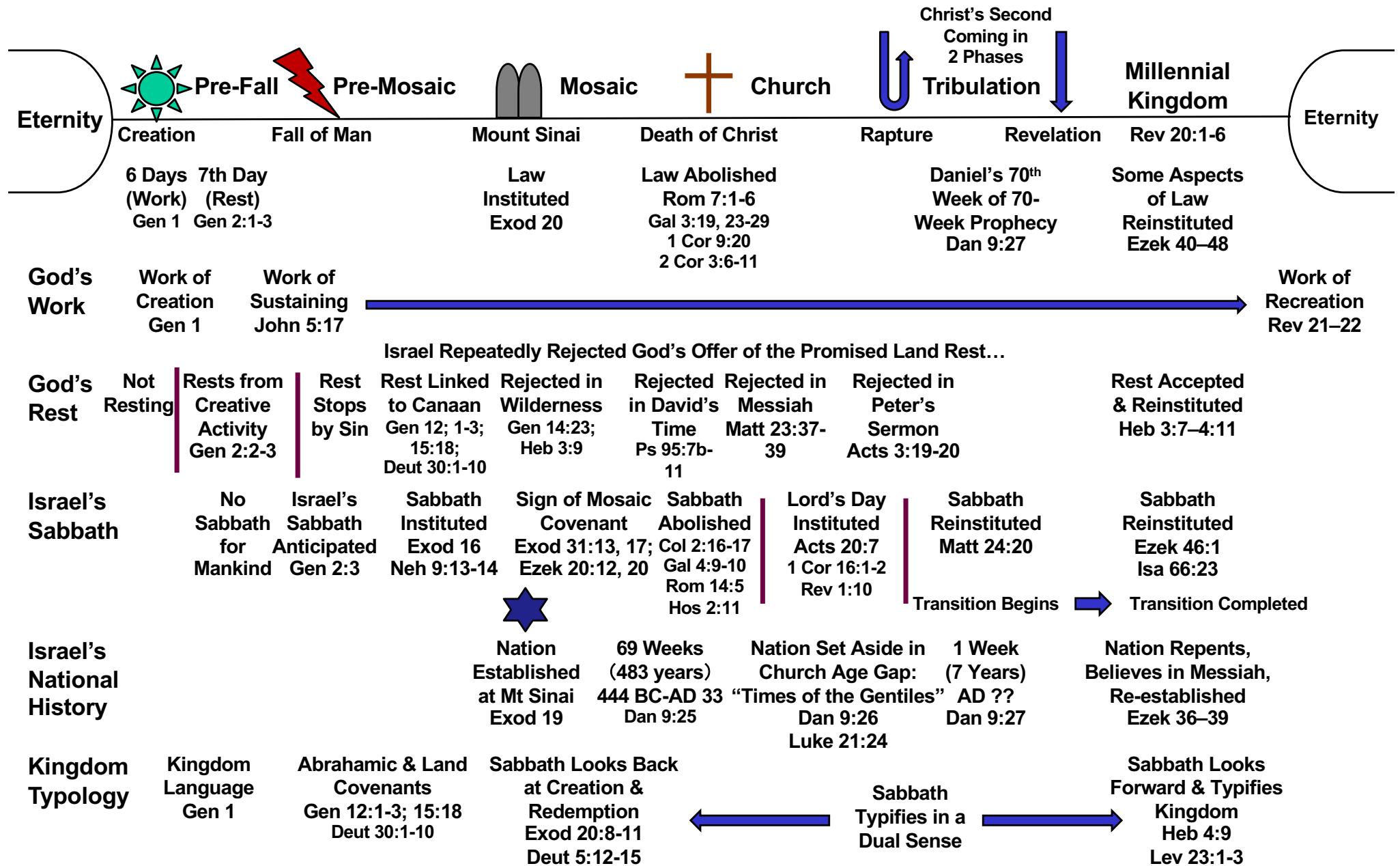
1. One per town
2. Elders
3. Pulpit, benches, lamps
4. Order of service
5. Open meetings



The Eschatological Significance of the Sabbath

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A visual summary of the ThD dissertation by Richard James Griffith, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1990



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