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| **Menu** | **Title** | **Introduction text** | **Subtitle** | **Description** |
| Life in the city | Residential areas in Jerusalem | After Herod rebuilt the Temple, many Jews from Judea, Galilee, and the Diaspora came to visit Jerusalem. These pilgrims sometimes never left, like Queen Helena of Adiabene - a rich benefactor - or poor pilgrims who didn’t have money to go back home.Aristocrats and Hellenized Jews lived in the upper city, near Herod’s palace, but the poor lived in the crowded lower city. | Bushel | “Is a lamp brought in to be placed under a bushel basket or under a bed, and not to be placed on a lampstand?” (Mark 4:21)BUSHELA bushel was a measuring unit for dry goods (about 30 liters). It also referred to the container for the dry goods: a wooden bucket, a pottery jar, or a cloth bag. |
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|  |  |  | City Street | “Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in here the poor and the crippled, the blind and the lame.” (Luke 14:21)More than in the country, one was struck by the difference between the rich and the poor in big cities like Jerusalem. Homeless people, like the Lazarus of Jesus’ parable (Lk 6:19-31), could be found begging at the gates of rich mansions in the Upper City. |
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|  |  |  | Lamp | “Or what woman having ten coins and losing one would not light a lamp and sweep the house, searching carefully until she finds it?” (Luke 15:8)OIL LAMPOil lamps were the most common way to light houses during Jesus’ time. Some lamps were hung from the ceiling; others were put in small niches cut into the wall. |
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|  |  |  | Stairs to the lower city | Stretching from present-day Mt. Zion to the area of the Western Wall, a naturally steep slope separated the wealthy residential area of the Upper City from the heavily populated neighbourhoods of the Lower City. The two areas were connected by stairs. The stepped streets of the Old City still preserve this feature. |
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|  |  |  | Flat rooftop | “Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house.” (Matthew 24:17)Much of daily life took place on the rooftop. Freshly dyed cloths, grains, fruits, and vegetables were laid on the flat rooftops to dry. Flat rooftops were also used as terraces where people could enjoy the fresh evening breeze. In the summer, the whole household might even spend the night on the rooftop, sleeping on mats. |
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|  |  |  | Pool | “Go wash in the Pool of Siloam” (John 9:7)The Pool of Siloam was fed with the water from the Gihon spring, but the flow of water of this one perennial spring was not enough for the needs of Jerusalem’s inhabitants, especially when pilgrims came flooding in for the Jewish festivals. Because of this, water had to be stored. Aqueducts and rainfall brought water to the hundreds of cisterns hollowed out beneath houses, or in the middle ofcourtyards. These provided the many pools and ritual bathing places of the city with fresh water. |
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| Life in a village | A Village in Jesus’ time | Jesus’ Nazareth was a tiny village, made up of several dozen houses carved into the soft limestone, far from the main roads. The people of Nazareth were probably farmers and craftsmen. | Basketweaving workshop | - |
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|  |  |  | Carpentry workshop | *“Where did this man get such wisdom and mighty deeds? Is he not the carpenter’s son?” (Mathew 13:54-55)*Tektōn, the Greek word Matthew put in the mouth of the inhabitants of Nazareth has been translated as “worker”, “artisan”, etc. Some have even suggested that Joseph was a blacksmith. Tradition, however, maintains he was a carpenter. The reality was probably somewhere in between, since the tektōn of a small village would have taken care of all kinds of jobs related to building and repairing houses. |
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|  |  |  | Granary/Barn | *“The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, `What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ Then he said, `This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain.´ ” (Luke 12:16-18)*Silos cut into the bedrock have been found in the ancient village of Nazareth. They were the most common place to store grain, but, large rural estates would have been equipped with more sophisticated granaries, such as the barns referred to by Jesus in this parable. |
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|  |  |  | House | *“Do not bother me; the door has already been locked and my children and I are already in bed. I cannot get up to give you anything.” (Luke 11:7)*Most village houses were small and had only one room, sometimes divided into an upper level, where the family lived together, and a lower level, where animals were kept. At night, the family spread out mats on the floor and slept on them. That’s why the man of the parable could not get up to answer his friend’s request without waking up the whole family. |
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|  |  |  | Market place | *“Going out about five o’clock, he found others standing around, and said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ They answered, ‘Because no one has hired us’. ” (Matthew 20:6-7)*Those idle workers would certainly have been standing – or rather sitting – around the main square, by the spring of the village, where most of social and economic activity of the village took place. |
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|  |  |  | Pool | - |
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|  |  |  | Pottery workshop | *“I went down to the potter’s house and there he was, working at the wheel. Whenever the vessel of clay he was making turned out badly in his hand, he tried again, making another vessel of whatever sort he pleased.” (Jeremiah 18:3-4)*POTTERY WARE (JAR)With great skill, the potter transformed raw clay into pots, jars, and all kinds of utensils, in his workshop. Then he would bake them in a pottery kiln outside.Clay-ware was used all the time in daily life, from storage to packaging. Pieces of broken pottery were actually used as a cheap material to write on. |
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| Life in the countryside | The countryside |  | Crop | *“A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold.” (Matthew 13:3-9)*Agricultural fields in ancient Palestine had little to do with what we know nowadays. In the hilly countries of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, terraces were built on hill slopes to prevent the good soil from being washed away by the heavy winter rains. Every inch of field was intensely exploited: barley and wheat were sowed between vineyards, as well as olive, almond, or fig trees. The whole planted area was irrigated with cuts in the bedrock. |
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|  |  |  | House | **-** |
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|  |  |  | Millstone | *“Whoever causes one of these little ones who* *believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.” (Matthew 18:6-8)*Jesus is probably referring here to a huge round stone used for grinding olives. Around the Sea of Tiberias, they are commonly made of basalt stone. There were also much smaller stone mortars used by women to grind the quantity of wheat their household needed daily, as wheat flour wasn’t easy to store. |
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|  |  |  | Oil press | - |
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|  |  |  | Sheepfold | *“Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate but climbs over* *elsewhere is a thief and a robber.” (John 10:1)*In Jesus’ time – and still nowadays in Palestine – goats and sheep grazed together, but they were probably segregated during the night, in the sheepfold, as Jesus seems to imply when he said that the Son of Man “will separate [the nations] one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats” (Mt 25:32). Sheepfolds were made of field stones roughly arranged in a square or a circle.  |
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|  |  |  | Vineyard | - |
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|  |  |  | Watchtower | *“There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower.” (Matthew 21:33)*Round or square watchtowers are still commonly found in the Palestinian countryside of Judea and Samaria. Their shape hasn’t changed much since the Bronze Age. In Jesus’ time, they were used to watch over the cultivated field and to provide a shelter for the workers.  |
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|  |  |  | Water reservoir | - |
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|  |  |  | Winepress | *“I have trodden the wine press alone, and from the peoples no one was with me.” (Isaiah 63:3)*Cut into the bedrock, a winepress was composed of a treading floor where the grapes were crushed and a vat where the juice was collected before being stored in jars for fermentation. Some treading floors had a small pit. There, grapes were crushed a second time: the must collected from this process would be used for lower-quality wines. |
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|  |  |  | Wineskins | *“Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.”* *(Matthew 9:17)*WINESKINSJesus, here is not appraising the quality of wine but the process of fermentation. The juice extracted from grapes was kept either in pottery jars or wineskins. The carbon dioxide released in the process of fermentation could find its way out through the pores of a fresh skin but not through an old skin covered with dredge. Also, goatskins were commonly used for churning milk, a process through which fatty materials and liquids are separated. |
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