

***Am ha'aretz* (עם הארץ)**

...ignoramus, uneducated, boorish, indifferent.

Am ha-areZ (eretz)

literally means

"people of the land" or the heathen.

They were viewed as religiously negligent Jews, who either did not know the scribal laws, or who, knowing them, were indifferent to their observance.

UNTOUCHABLE

- * among the pledges of the "CHaberim" when joining their fellowship were vows to **never be the guest of an am ha-arez**
- * to **never entertain one** unless the unclean visitor, the **am ha-arez**, leaves his cloak outside (it may be unclean)



- * never travel in the company of an **am ha-arez**
- * never sell an **am ha-arez** any products or buy from him anything that could legally be subject to impurity
- * never perform purifications before praying in an **am ha-arez** presence

* one rabbi described the kind of girl a good Jew might marry said "let him not marry the daughters of the **am ha-arez**, for they are loathsome, and their children are abominations, and of them the scriptures say "cursed is he who lies with any manner of **animal**..."

Talmud

Pesachim 49b ✓
The William Davidson Talmud



תנו רבנן לעולם ימכור אדם כל מה שיש לו וישא בת תלמיד חכם לא
מצא בת תלמיד חכם ישא בת גדולי הדור לא מצא בת גדולי הדור ישא
בת ראשי כנסיות לא מצא בת ראשי כנסיות ישא בת גבאי צדקה לא מצא
בת גבאי צדקה ישא בת מלמדי תינוקות ולא ישא בת עמי הארץ מפני
שהן שקץ ונשותיהן שרץ ועל בנותיהן הוא אומר ארור שוכב עם כל
בהמה

The Sages taught: A person should always be willing to sell all he has in order to marry the daughter of a Torah scholar. If he cannot find the daughter of a Torah scholar, he should marry the daughter of one of the great people of the generation, who are pious although they are not Torah scholars. If he cannot find the daughter of one of the great people of the generation, he should marry the daughter of one of the heads of the congregations. If he cannot find the daughter of one of the heads of the congregations, he should marry the daughter of one of the charity collectors. If he cannot find the daughter of one of the charity collectors, he should marry the daughter of one of the schoolteachers. However, he should not marry the daughter of an ignoramus [*am ha'aretz*] because they are vermin and their wives are similar to a creeping animal, as their lifestyle involves the violation of numerous prohibitions. And with regard to their daughters the verse states: "Cursed is he who lies with an animal" (Deuteronomy 27:21), as they are similar to animals in that they lack any knowledge or moral sense.

* another rabbi said "it is lawful to stab
(not slaughter) to death an **am ha-arez** on
the Day of Atonement..." (Yom Kippur)

Talmud

Pesachim 49b ✓
The William Davidson Talmud



אמר רבי אלעזר עם הארץ מותר לנוחרו ביום הכיפורים שחל להיות
בשבת אמרו לו תלמידיו רבי אמור לשוחטו אמר להן זה טעון ברכה וזה
אינו טעון ברכה:

The Gemara proceeds to mention some sharply negative statements of the Sages in which they overstated their negative sentiments with regard to ignoramuses, although these ignoramuses were wicked in addition to being boors (*ge'onim*). **Rabbi Elazar said: It is permitted to stab an ignoramus to death on Yom Kippur that occurs on Shabbat. His students said to him: Master, at least say that it is permitted to slaughter him. He said to them: I intentionally used the word stab, as this term, slaughtering, requires a blessing when one slaughters an animal, and that term, stabbing, does not require a blessing in any context.**

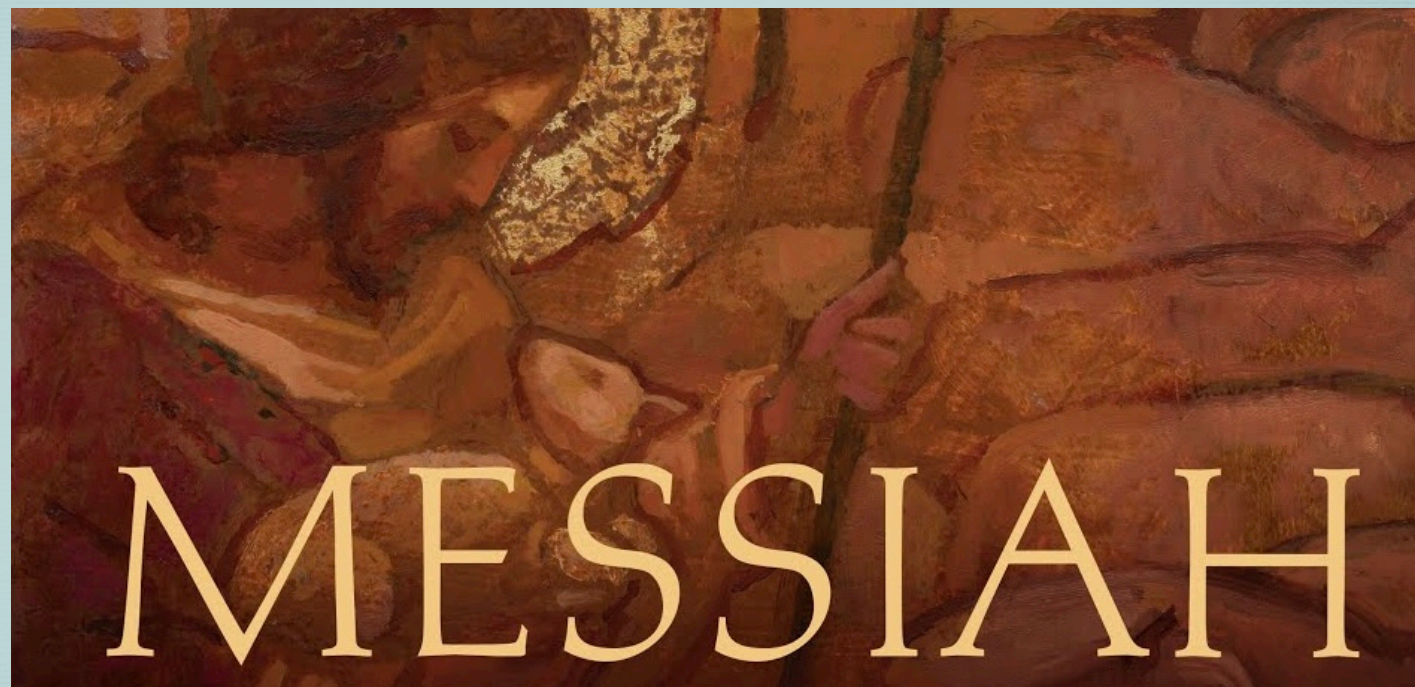




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- * The **Haberim** believed that they themselves were the last hope of Israel and that if they only lived good enough lives then God would reward them by sending the Messiah.



For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, **so that no one can boast.** -Ephesians 2

* The **Haberim** also speculated that the reason why the Chosen people of Israel had been conquered by **Rome** was that God was punishing Israel because of the unfaithfulness of the **am ha-arez**.

J. W. Eap (ECL, 1902), 299–303.

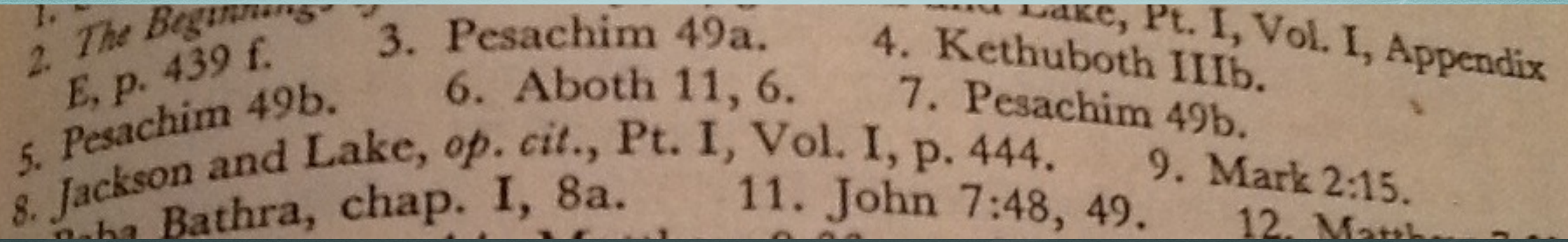
6. One **rabbi** denied all hope of resurrection to the *amehharetzim* (*Ketchuboth* IIIb), and **even Hillel** said “**No *am ha-aretz* is truly religious**” (*Aboth*, 11, 6). In *Baba Bathra*, 1, 8a we read the rabbinic comment that **it is only because of the *amehhartez* that God’s punishment enters the world**. *Pesachim* 49b relates the hatred of the *amehharetzim* for the

**“it is only because of the
am ha-arez that God’s
punishment enters the world...”**

It's not surprising that the contempt of the **haberim** was returned in kind by the **amme ha-arez**.

One rabbi said:

"the hatred of the amme ha-arez for the learned class is greater than the hatred of the Gentiles against Israel, and the hatred of their wives exceeds theirs..."

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1. The Beginning
 2. E, p. 439 f.
 3. Pesachim 49a.
 4. Kethuboth IIIb.
 5. Pesachim 49b.
 6. Aboth 11, 6.
 7. Pesachim 49b.
 8. Jackson and Lake, *op. cit.*, Pt. I, Vol. I, p. 444.
 9. Mark 2:15.
 10. Baba Bathra, chap. I, 8a.
 11. John 7:48, 49.
 12. Matthew 23:15.

It's not surprising that the contempt of the **haberim** was returned in kind by the **amme ha-arez**.

One rabbi said:

גדולה שנאה ששונאין עמי הארץ לתלמיד חכם יותר משנאה ששונאין
אומות העולם את ישראל ונשותיהן יותר מהן: תנא שנה ופירש יותר מכולן

Similarly, he said: **The hatred which ignoramuses have for a Torah scholar is greater than the hatred that the nations of the world have for the Jewish people. And the wives of the ignoramuses hate Torah scholars more than the ignoramuses themselves. It was taught in the *Tosefta* that one who studied Torah and left his studies hates Torah scholars more than all of them.**

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12. Matthew 23:15.



Rabbi Akiba related: "when I was an amme ha-arez I used to say '**I wish I had one of those scholars, and I would bite him like an ass.**' His disciples asked, 'you mean bite him like a dog?' Akiba replied 'a dog's bite breaks the skin, an ass's bite breaks the bone.'"

Such was the hatred of the
amme ha-arez for the haberim.



Such was the hatred of the amme ha-arez for the haberim.

תניא אמר רבי עקיבא כשהייתי עם הארץ אמרתי מי יתן לי תלמיד חכם
ואנשכנו כחמור אמרו לו תלמידיו רבי אמור ככלב אמר להן זה נושך
ושובר עצם וזה נושך ואינו שובר עצם:

It was taught in a *baraita* that Rabbi Akiva said: When I was an ignoramus I said: Who will give me a Torah scholar so that I will bite him like a donkey? His students said to him: Master, say that you would bite him like a dog! He said to them: I specifically used that wording, as **this one**, a donkey, **bites and breaks bones**, and **that one**, a dog, **bites but does not break bones**.

**Jesus and most of his followers
were Am ha-arez... lower class Jews
who were considered to be
untouchable.**

כח תְּנֵה-עֲוֹנִי, עַל-עֲוֹנָם; וְאַל-יָבֹאוּ, בְּצִדְקָתְךָ.
28 Add iniquity unto their iniquity; and let them not come
into Thy righteousness. -Psalm 69:28

כט יִמְחוּ, מִסֵּפֶר חַיִּים; וְעַם צְדִיקִים, אַל-יִכָּתְבוּ.
29 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not
be written with the righteous. -Psalm 69:29

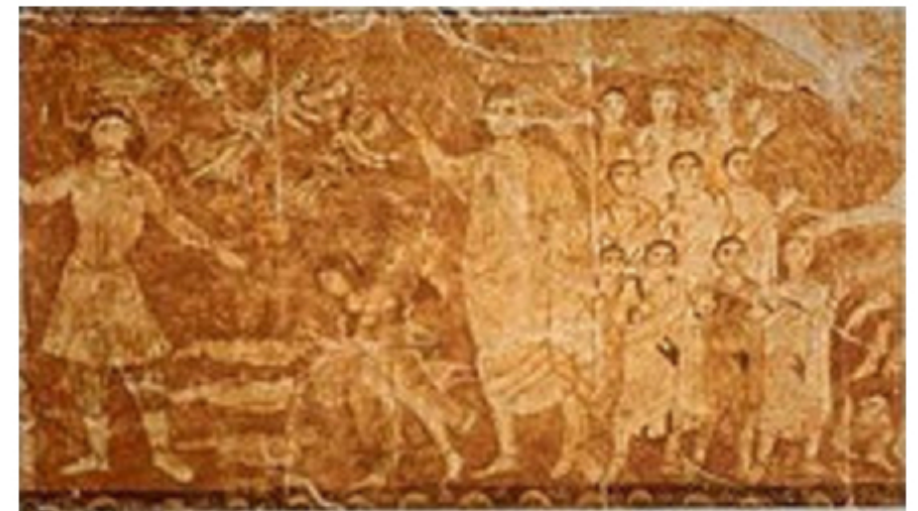
**They had been told their
entire lives that God hated
them and that they had no
hope of ever going to heaven.**



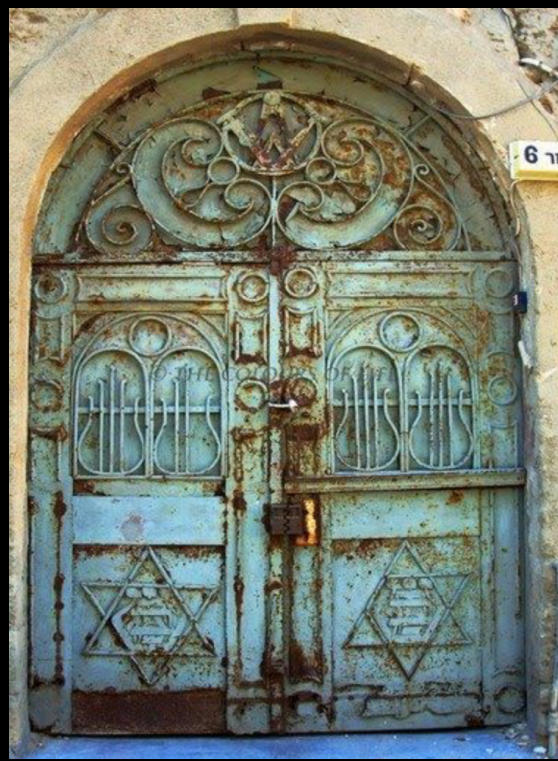
en.m.wikipedia.org

^ Jewish eschatology

HaOlam HaBa, or "the world to come", is an important part of [Jewish eschatology](#), although [Judaism](#) concentrates on the importance of *HaOlam HaZeh* ("this world"). The [afterlife](#) is known as *Olam haBa*, *Gan Eden* (the Heavenly Garden of Eden) and *Gehi-nom*.^{[3][4][5]} According to the [Talmud](#), any non-Jew who lives according to the [Seven Laws of Noah](#) is regarded as a *Ger toshav* (righteous gentile), and is assured of a place in the world to come, the final reward of the righteous.^{[6][7]}



[Resurrection of the dead](#), fresco from the Dura-Europos synagogue

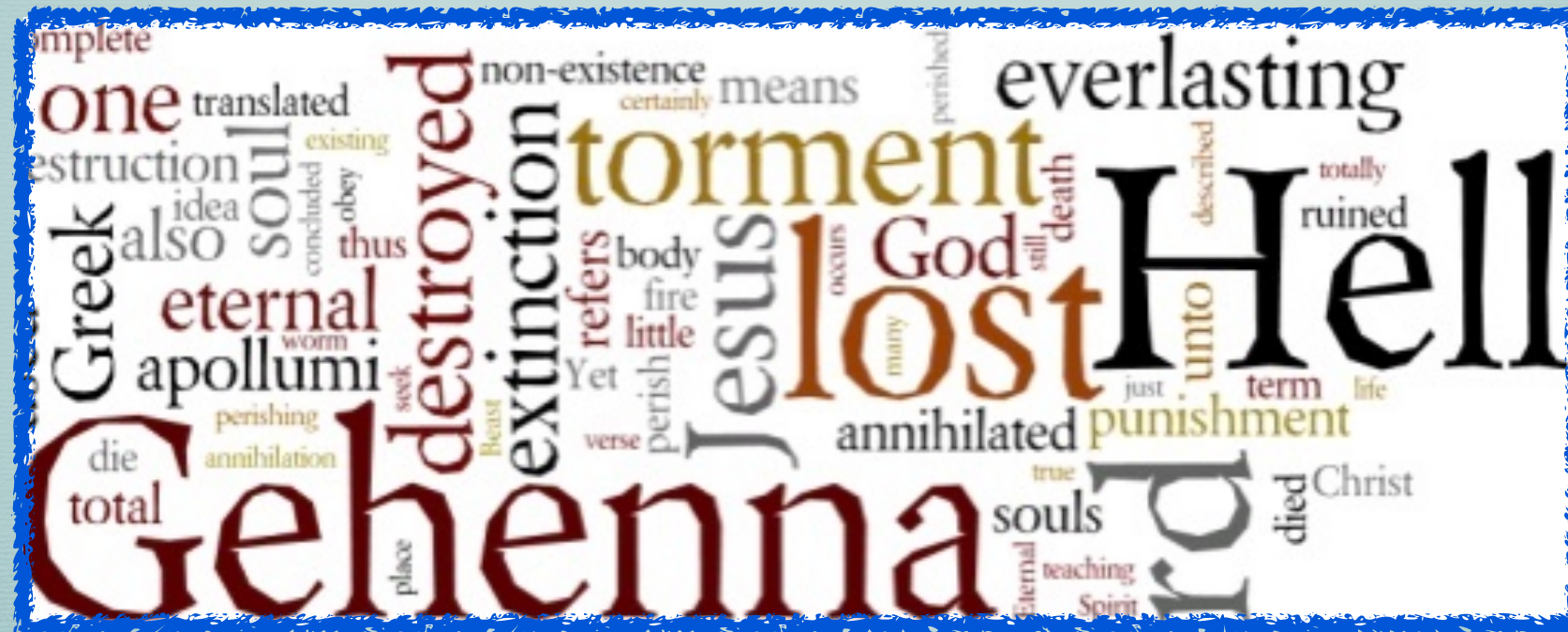


will, and those who will not, live again, i.e. rise at the Resurrection. In the great passage in the *Mishnah Sanhedrin* (x, 1), it is categorically asserted that all Israelites, except certain special sinners and unbelievers, shall have a share in the world **to** come. Therefore, they will all rise again. But various Rabbis exclude whole classes of Israelites. Thus:

[1650] R. Elazar said: Those who die outside Palestine will not live again. The **Amme** *ha-Aretz* will not live again. Whoever is slack about Torah will not live again. Whoever makes use of the light of Torah, the light of Torah will revive [after death]; and whoever does not make use of the light of Torah, the light of Torah will not revive. (*Ket.* 111a, b.)

Am ha'aretz (עם הארץ)

The *am ha'aretz* were of two types, the *am ha'aretz le-mitzvot*, Jews disparaged for not scrupulously observing the [commandments](#), and the *am ha'aretz la-Torah*, those stigmatized as ignoramuses for not having studied the Torah at all. [\[9\]](#)



In [rabbinic literature](#) Gehenna is a destination of the wicked.^[3] This is different from the more neutral [Sheol/Hades](#), the [abode of the dead](#), although the [King James Version](#) of the Bible usually translates both with the Anglo-Saxon word "[hell](#)".



Thomas was ***am ha-arez***, a lower class Jew. He had been told his entire life that God hated him... and that he had no chance of ever going to heaven. That's why Thomas was surprised when Jesus told him that there was a place of honor waiting for him in God's house.

Of course, Thomas then wanted to know how to get to God's house. Jesus told him that he was the **highway** that would get him there.

John

14

Version

Commentary

DO NOT let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me.
²My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am going."

Jesus the Way to the Father

⁵Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

⁶Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really know me, you will know ^b my Father as well. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

John

14

Version

Commentary

⁵ Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? ⁶ Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.



Viewed this way, this statement made to Thomas, who was a socially untouchable outcast, was intended to **include** him and was not intended to **exclude** him.

◀ John 14:6 ▶

1473 [e]	1510 [e]	3588 [e]	3598 [e]	2532 [e]
Egō	eimi	hē	hodos	kai
, Ἐγώ	εἰμι	ἡ	ὁδὸς	, καὶ
I	am	the	way	and

**Jesus was
the true
road who
led to life
& to
heaven**

**HODOS =
ROAD**

Strong's Concordance

hodos: a way, road

Original Word: ὁδός, οὔ, ἡ

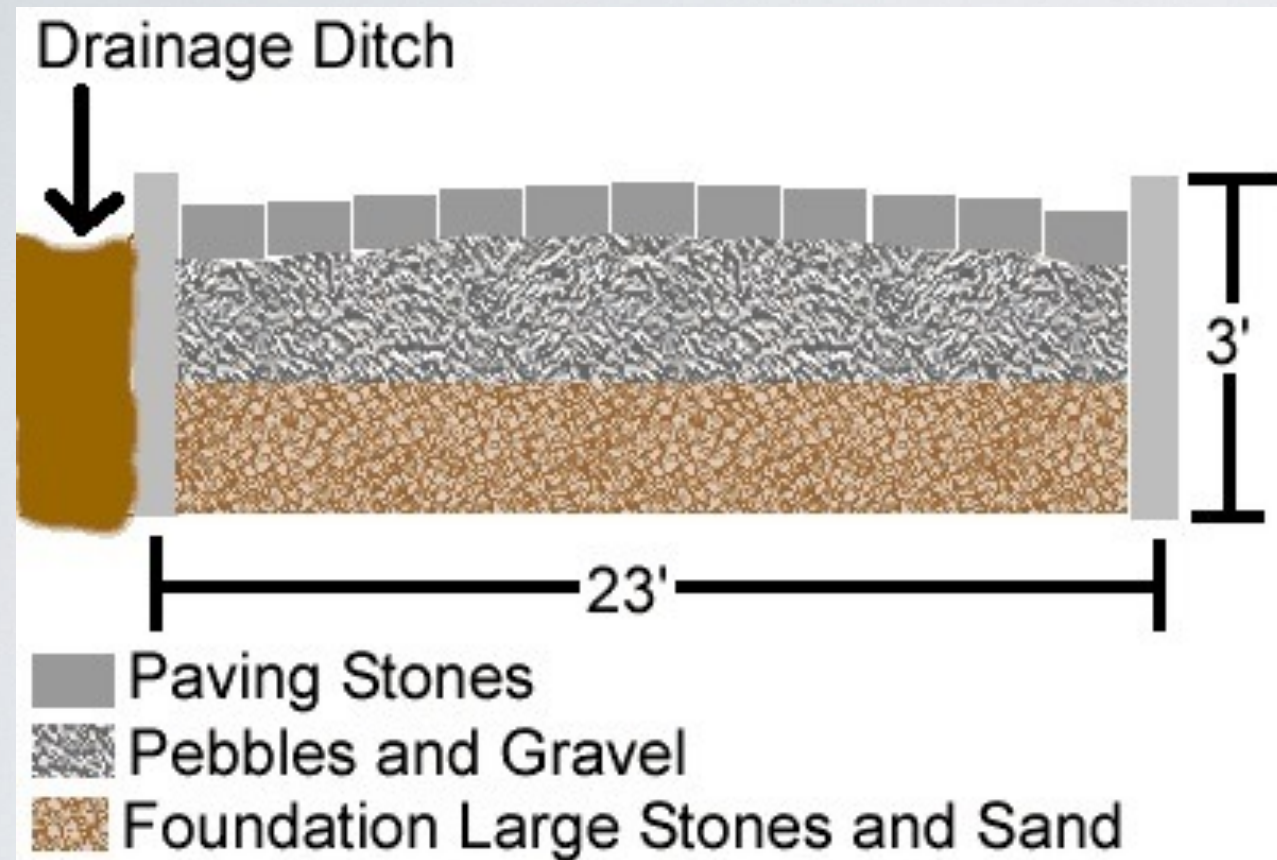
Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: hodos

Phonetic Spelling: (hod-os')

Short Definition: a way, road, journey

HODOS = ROAD



Roman roads (HODOS) were built to allow two chariots to pass each other going in opposite directions.



Jesus promised that HE,
and only he, was going
to personally get
Thomas into heaven.

Think about it. Who
else in Thomas' life
could he rely on to
get him there?

INCLUSIVE not EXCLUSIVE

Were the Pharisees going
to get Thomas into
heaven? No.
The Saducees? No.

Jesus was the only
one. The only **way**.



And this is what Jesus meant
when he told Thomas that he was
the true **highway to heaven...**

**The only problem?
Thomas may not have
realized that before
you can go to heaven
you have to die first.**



Jesus' comments about the CHaberim...

...the upper caste Jews

"WOE unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, HYPOCRITES... FOR YOU SHUT UP THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AGAINST MEN...

...THEY BIND HEAVY BURDENS and GRIEVOUS to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders...

WOE unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, HYPOCRITES... you DEVOUR WIDOW'S HOUSES... you shall receive the greater damnation...

WOE unto you, ye BLIND GUIDES... You FOOLS AND BLIND...

WOE unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, HYPOCRITES! You... have omitted... JUDGMENT, MERCY, and FAITH...

You BLIND GUIDES, which strain out a gnat, and SWALLOW A CAMEL.

WOE unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, HYPOCRITES... within they are full of EXTORTION AND EXCESS...

WOE unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, HYPOCRITES! You are FULL OF DEAD MEN'S BONES, and ALL UNCLEanness... and HYPOCRISY and INIQUITY...

WOE unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, HYPOCRITES!... you are the children of them which KILLED the prophets. FILL YOU UP then the measure of your fathers. You SERPENTS, you GENERATION OF SNAKES... you KILL AND CRUCIFY... you SCOURGE in your synagogues... Behold your house is left unto you DESOLATE"!!

Matthew 23