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NT Religious and Domestic Structures

Religious Structures:

Synagogues:

1. The word "synagogue" refers to the gathering of a people as well as to a building or institution.
2. Not mentioned in the OT. Originated in Babylon after the destruction of the 1st temple. More than 50 references in the NT. There is no recorded commandment by God to tell his people to build a "synagogue," but Jesus obviously honored the institution.
3. Found nearly everywhere in the ANE where there was a Jewish population of 10 men or more.
4. Was for worship and social gatherings. Only in the temple were sacrifices made.
5. Early Jewish believers met in synagogues (James 2:2).
6. Dozens of synagogues have been excavated and studied to determine the development of an architectural style(s). Four are suggested:
 - a. Reused buildings (1st cent. A.D.) Existing buildings were remodeled of houses of worship.
Q: If synagogues were established 5 centuries earlier, why use remodeled buildings?
A: The Romans destroyed earlier ones.
 - b. Early synagogues. No Torah Ark or bema pulpit. Plain with a 2nd floor for women and children. Originally thought to be 2nd or 3rd century, now believed to be later. Commonly known as the Galilean or Basilical style. The revolts A.D. 70 and 135 caused widespread poverty limited building abilities. Featured flagstone floors.
 - c. The transitional Broadhouse synagogues. A