

JEWS AND SAMARITANS



At the time of Jesus the land of Palestine was ruled by the Romans. It was split up into different areas. Most Samaritans lived in Samaria. The Samaritans were different from the Jewish people who lived in the surrounding areas in Palestine. Samaria was between Galilee in the north and Judea and Jerusalem in the south. The shortest way for Jewish people to go north from Jerusalem or south from Galilee was to travel through Samaria.

However, for hundreds of years the Jews and the people of Samaria had been enemies. They did not agree about where God's people should worship. Jews worshipped at the Temple in Jerusalem. The Samaritans had made another place for worship. It was in their land, on the top of a mountain.

Jews and Samaritans hated each other. Most Jews would not travel through Samaria. They went by a longer route to avoid Samaria and any contact with Samaritans.

Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan after he had been asked by a Jewish man: "What must I do to receive eternal life?"

Jesus asked him what the Jewish law said. He answered: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind and, love your neighbour as yourself."

"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

The man then asked Jesus: "And who is my neighbour?"

