

Between the Testaments

Overview from Abraham to the Return from Exile (timeline slide)

- a. Abrahamic Covenant
- b. Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Egypt as a good place to sojourn
- c. Egyptian oppression, Moses, the 10 plagues, Red Sea
- d. Law given (10 commandments)
- e. Disobedience to enter the land (40 years wandering in the wilderness)
- f. Entering the land (Joshua and the Judges)
- g. First three Kings
- h. Kingdom Divides
- i. Israel taken into captivity
- j. Judah taken into captivity
- k. Judah returns

Age of Empires (flash animation)

- a. Assyrian Empire
- b. Babylonian Empire
- c. Persian Empire
- d. Greek Empire

Alexander the Great

- a. At 20 years old Alexander (son of Philip of Macedon) became king in 336 bc.
- b. military commander (undefeated in battle)
- c. defeated Darius III at the Battle of Issus in 333 bc
- d. conquered most of the world known to the ancient Greeks pressing east into India (map slide)
- e. Judah became a Greek province
- f. he founded Alexandria in Egypt
- g. In 331 bc, Alexander was welcomed as a liberator in Egypt and was pronounced the son of Zeus by Egyptian priests of the god Amun. From then on, Alexander referred to the god Zeus-Ammon as his true father.
- h. Alexander was a brilliant and fearless military strategist
- i. Aristotle was his personal tutor

Hellenization: Alexander's idea to make the world Greece

- a. Greece is "Hellas" or the "Hellenic" Republic in Greek
- b. he wanted to make the world like Greece, civilizing it.
- e. wanted people in his domain to speak Greek, act Greek, be Greek.
- f. Hellenizing: civilizing people to the Greek way of thinking and acting
- g. all conquered provinces were to be Hellenized
- h. method of indoctrination was simple & effective
- i. ordered his officers and men to intermarry with the native populations and to beget many children.
- j. in 10 years he founded 25 Greek cities in the Middle East
 1. most notably Alexandria

- c. He spread
 - 1. Greek language,
 - 2. religion
 - 3. philosophy
 - 4. city structure
 - 5. recreation
 - 6. educational structures
 - 7. sports
 - 8. attitude towards the body (i.e. circumcision)
- k. by the time of Jesus Greek was the international language
- l. his method of acculturation was extremely successful
- m. however he died at 32 before Hellenization was completed
- n. died in 323 bc of unknown causes—speculations include
 - 1. binge drinking,
 - 2. malaria,
 - 3. West Nile virus,
 - 4. typhoid,
 - 5. viral encephalitis
- o. His successors were more interested in military and political power than in Hellenizing the culture

Responses to Hellenism in Judah

- a. The lure of Hellenization (for business men and the youth)
 - 1. “When the Jews came under Grecian rule, their real enemy was Hellenism. The subsequent fight between Greek and Jew was the fight between two ideas packaged for export—Alexander’s Hellenic culture, and the Judaic religion of the Prophets. The Prophets won.

The Hellenization of the Jews began inconspicuously... The first was a daytime breakthrough, between nine and five, when Jewish and Greek businessmen met in bazaars and coffee houses. The second took place after five, when Jewish and Greek youths met in gymnasiums, theaters, and cabarets.

...

The after-five social encounters between Jewish and Greek youth had an even more corrosive effect on traditional Jewish ways than the nine-to-five business intermixing of their elders. Greek games were exceedingly popular and soon nude wrestling was commonplace among Jewish males. In the theater the younger set came in contact with the urbane sophistication of the Greeks, and from here the door led to the cabaret and to the couch of the concubine. Soon pleasure was pursued as a policy, and “folly soared into philosophy.” The road to apostasy ran from

the front pew in the synagogue to a seat in the theater to the embrace of the *hetaera* to a front pew in a pagan temple.”¹

- b. Origin of Hasideans (also called Hasidim)
 - 1. not to be confused with 18th century Chasidic Jews
 - 2. most Jews remained anti-Hellenistic
 - 3. Two strands bound the anti-Hellenizers together
 - i. the Mosaic law
 - ii. the belief that the Davidic line of kings would be restored
 - 4. the Hasideans were a political party
 - 5. originally formed to protest drinking and carousing now protested all Greek influence

The Seleucids and Ptolemies (map)

- 1. Seleucids
 - i. Ruled over Asia Minor and Syria
- 2. Ptolemies
 - i. Ruled over Egypt and Palestine
 - ii. “live and let live.”
 - iii. as long as the Jews paid taxes, they were left alone.
 - iv. self-government
 - 1. High Priest: chief administrator
 - 2. Sanhedrin: acted like a senate and supreme court
 - a. members chosen from the leading families, scholars, and intellectuals
 - v. complete cultural and religious freedom

Hellenization gains steam in Judah

- a. Palestine passes to Seleucid control
 - 1. In 198 BC Antiochus III also known as “Antiochus the Great” succeeded in wresting Palestine from the Ptolemaic empire.
 - 2. Even so, for a time Antiochus III continued the same tolerant policies of the Ptolemies allowing the Jews self-rule.
 - 3. However, Antiochus III knew that the Roman Empire was soon to come knocking at his door and he needed to strengthen his position.
 - 4. he felt he could defeat the Romans if he unified the empire
 - 5. He decided to do this through a program of intense Hellenization.
 - i. This involved erecting statues of the Greek gods and himself throughout the Seleucid kingdom
 - ii. This nationalistic drive was a success everywhere but Judah
 - iii. The Jews argued that by bearing arms and paying taxes they were supporting Antiochus
 - iv. Antiochus agreed to this, but his second son, Antiochus Epiphanes, who inherited the throne in 176 B.C., did not.
- b. Systematic persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes

¹ Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History*, (New York: New American Library, 2003), pp. 75-76.

1. Antiochus IV continues Hellenization program his father began to include Judah
2. Some ambitious aristocracy connive a plan
 - i. the king usually appointed a High Priest recommended by the Jews
 - ii. The Hellenized Jewish aristocrats thought that it would be to their advantage to help Antiochus to Hellenize Palestine
 - iii. Through intrigue and bribery these aristocrats convinced Antiochus to appoint Jason to high priest
 - iv. What 125 years of Ptolemaic and Seleucid rule had not been able to bring about, Jason accomplished in 12 months
 - v. Jason did the following:
 1. allowed pagan rites to be performed in the Temple
 2. Greek statues were introduced installed in the Holy Place
 3. Jewish priests in Greek costumes officiated at Greek cultic rites
 4. Greek games performed by naked Jewish boys became common place in the Temple courtyards
 5. Jewish representatives were sent to pagan festivals to represent Jerusalem
 6. Anger and resentment burned hot
 7. the Hasidean party ballooned as many Jews joined
 8. The Hasideans began to thunder against promiscuity and idolatry
3. Then with Judean Hellenization well under way, Antiochus IV marched to fight Egypt. He conquered much of the territory, but was backed down
 - i. "In 168 BC Antiochus led a second attack on Egypt and also sent a fleet to capture Cyprus. Before reaching Alexandria, his path was blocked by a single, old Roman ambassador named Gaius Popillius Laenas, who delivered a message from the Roman Senate directing Antiochus to withdraw his armies from Egypt and Cyprus, or consider themselves in a state of war with the Roman Republic. Antiochus said he would discuss it with his council, whereupon the Roman envoy drew a line in the sand around him and said, "Before you cross this circle I want you to give me a reply for the Roman Senate" - implying that Rome would declare war if the King stepped out of the circle without committing to leave Egypt immediately. Weighing his options, Antiochus wisely decided to withdraw. Only then did Popillius agree to shake hands with him."²
4. A rumor that Antiochus IV had died in battle reached Jerusalem, which resulted in an uprising

² From Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antiochus_IV_Epiphanes) the free encyclopedia

- i. Hasidean party leaders rounded up the leading Jewish Hellenizers and through them over the temple wall (a 100 foot drop) along with the Greek statues
 - ii. Next, a systematic massacre of all pro-Hellenizers ensued
 - iii. But, the rumor was false
- 5. Antiochus IV, angry he could not defeat the Romans decided to vent his anger on his return trip by stopping by Jerusalem and slaughtering 10,000 inhabitants. He put new statues in the Temple, appointed a new High Priest, and returned to Antioch.
- 6. Then, out of spite, Antiochus IV decided to outlaw observance of the Mosaic Law including the Sabbath and circumcision. Officials were sent throughout the villages of Judah in order to force them to offer sacrifice to pagan gods.
- 7. (slide) 1 Mac. 1.41-64 ⁴¹ ¶ The king then issued a proclamation to his whole kingdom that all were to become a single people, each nation renouncing its particular customs. ⁴² All the gentiles conformed to the king's decree, ⁴³ and many Israelites chose to accept his religion, sacrificing to idols and profaning the Sabbath. ⁴⁴ The king also sent edicts by messenger to Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, directing them to adopt customs foreign to the country, ⁴⁵ banning burnt offerings, sacrifices and libations from the sanctuary, profaning Sabbaths and feasts, ⁴⁶ defiling the sanctuary and everything holy, ⁴⁷ building altars, shrines and temples for idols, sacrificing pigs and unclean beasts, ⁴⁸ leaving their sons uncircumcised, and prostituting themselves to all kinds of impurity and abomination, ⁴⁹ so that they should forget the Law and revoke all observance of it. ⁵⁰ Anyone not obeying the king's command was to be put to death. ⁵¹ ¶ Writing in such terms to every part of his kingdom, the king appointed inspectors for the whole people and directed all the towns of Judah to offer sacrifice city by city. ⁵² Many of the people -- that is, every apostate from the Law -- rallied to them and so committed evil in the country, ⁵³ forcing Israel into hiding in any possible place of refuge. ⁵⁴ ¶ On the fifteenth day of Chislew in the year 145 the king built the appalling abomination on top of the altar of burnt offering; and altars were built in the surrounding towns of Judah ⁵⁵ and incense offered at the doors of houses and in the streets. ⁵⁶ Any books of the Law that came to light were torn up and burned. ⁵⁷ Whenever anyone was discovered possessing a copy of the covenant or practicing the Law, the king's decree sentenced him to death. ⁵⁸ Month after month they took harsh action against any offenders they discovered in the towns of Israel. ⁵⁹ On the twenty-fifth day of each month, sacrifice was offered on the altar erected on top of the altar of burnt offering. ⁶⁰ Women who had had their children circumcised were put to death according to the edict ⁶¹ with their babies hung round their necks, and the members of their household and those who had performed the circumcision were

executed with them.⁶² ¶ Yet there were many in Israel who stood firm and found the courage to refuse unclean food.⁶³ They chose death rather than contamination by such fare or profanation of the holy covenant, and they were executed.⁶⁴ It was a truly dreadful retribution that visited Israel.

- c. Maccabean Revolt (Mattathias and his five sons)
- d. Chanukah: after three years of guerilla warfare
- e. Continued fight for political independence
 - 1. In 143 BC, after 25 years of fighting under Simon (son of Mattathias), the Jews were granted complete political independence.
- f. Hasideans fragment into Essenes, Pharisees, and Sadducees
 - 1. Essenes:
 - i. came from the nucleus of the former Hasidean party
 - ii. no taste for politics
 - iii. withdrew from secular activities
 - iv. devote their entire lives to religious contemplation
 - v. formed their own religious communities
 - vi. major focus on coming messiah
 - 2. Pharisees:
 - i. anti-Hellenizers who wanted to remain political active
 - ii. Pharisee means “Separatist”
 - iii. they stood for Synagogue, Rabbi, and Prayer
 - iv. they were the party of the common men
 - v. highly respected by the people
 - vi. stressed the new Oral Law, a series of reinterpretations of the Mosaic law
 - 3. Sadducees:
 - i. pro-Hellenizers
 - ii. they had joined the Hasideans only to fight the common enemy
 - iii. they stood for Temple, Priest, and Sacrifice
 - iv. they were the party of the aristocrats and priestly class
 - v. they were liberal politically but conservative religiously
 - vi. believed that a reasonable amount of Hellenism was beneficial

Hasmonean Dynasty

- a. Mattathias (founder) [1 year]
- b. Judas Maccabeus [5 years]
 - 1. fierce on the battlefield
 - 2. capable leader
 - 3. won religious independence and dedicated the Temple
 - 4. died in battle after he made a treaty with Rome to be allies, but the news didn't get to the Seleucids in time
- c. Jonathan [18 years]
 - 1. Seleucid power struggle made room for Jonathan to leverage his way to be recognized as the official civil governor of Judah

2. He died when Antiochus V's general Trypho deceived and murdered him
- d. Simon [8 years]
1. a shrewd ruler who signed a treaty with Rome in order to guarantee the Seleucids and Ptolemies would leave his realm alone.
 2. *"There was a young lady of Niger
Who smiled as she rode on a tiger;
They came back from the ride
With the lady inside
And the smile on the face of the tiger.
For almost eighty years the smile was on the face of the rider of the Roman tiger; after that, the smile was on the face of the tiger which had swallowed the Jewish rider."*³
 3. he rarely needed to go to battle
 4. Judah achieved **complete** political independence between 143-142bc (the first time since 605bc, 463 years earlier)
 5. murdered by his power-hungry son-in-law at a banquet (along with 2 of his sons)
- e. John Hyrcanus [30 years]
1. crowned king and anointed High Priest after his father was murdered
 2. In his dual role of king and High Priest, he offended the Pharisees
 3. He hired foreign mercenaries
 4. struck coins bearing his name
 5. plundered the tomb of King David, taking from it 3,000 talents of silver
 6. The Pharisees were so enraged that they demanded he give up being High Priest
 7. Hyrcanus switched his party affiliation to the Sadducees, and further infuriated the Pharisees by introducing several Hellenizing measures.
 8. he conquered Idumea and Samaria and forcibly converted the inhabitants
 9. he destroyed the Samaritan temple on Mt. Gerizim
 10. first Hasmonean to die in peace
- f. Aristobulus I [1 year]
1. J. Hyrcanus left the throne to his widow
 2. he left the high priesthood to Aristobulus
 3. Aristobulus imprisoned his mother and allowed her to starve to death
 4. he murdered one of his brothers and imprisoned the other two
 5. He was an ardent Sadducee who really pushed for Hellenization
 6. he conquered Galilee and forcibly converted the inhabitants
 7. he died from a disease after only one year of reigning
- g. Alexander Jannaeus [26 years]
1. Aristobulus' widow, Salome Alexandra, released his brothers from prison and married the eldest—Alexander Jannaeus
 2. this was in violation of the Mosaic Law because the HP is to marry a virgin

³ Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History*, (New York: New American Library, 2003), pp. 82.

3. he loved war and drinking
 4. he greatly enlarged the kingdom but aggravated the Pharisees so much that a 6 year civil war broke out
 5. The Pharisees, ironically, asked the Seleucids for help, who were happy to send an invading army.
 6. Then the Pharisees changed their minds and joined Alexander Jannaeus in defeating the Seleucids.
 7. As punishment for their perfidy, Jannaeus crucified 800 of the Pharisees and slaughtered their wives and children before their eyes as they were dying.
 8. overall 50,000 Jews died during the civil war
 9. he died trying to conquer a Greek city in Palestine
- h. Salome Alexandra [9 years]
1. she made peace with the Pharisees (her brother was their leader)
 2. she founded free elementary schools and made primary education compulsory for boys and girls.
 3. "In the first century before Christ, in a world full of illiteracy, illiteracy among the Jews in the tiny kingdom of Palestine was for all practical purposes banished."
 4. She was an ardent supporter of the Pharisees so she persecuted the Sadducees.
 5. at her death civil war was brewing
- i. Aristobulus II [6 years]
1. Hyrcanus II, a Pharisee was appointed High Priest by his mother (the queen)
 2. he was a weak man who was easy to manipulate
 3. Aristobulus II, a Sadducee wrested the kingdom from his brother at the death of his mother and assumed both the scepter and the priesthood
 4. brothers who can't get along
 5. a crafter Idumean named Antipater convinces Hyrcanus to attack to take back the throne
 6. civil war ensues for which they both ask for Rome to intercede
 7. Pompey lays siege to temple mount and kills off the supporters of Aristobulus
 8. In 63 BC Judah is annexed and renamed Judea
- j. Hyrcanus II [23 years]
1. Hyrcanus is installed as Ethnarch and High Priest under the supervision of the Syrian governor
 2. Antipater really ruled things during this time until his death in 43 bc
- k. Antigonus [3 years]
- a. Made an alliance with Parthians to take Judea from being a Roman province in exchange for him ruling on their behalf
 - b. He was king and high priest in Jerusalem
 - c. His Hebrew name was Mattathias

- i. ironically the first and last Hasmonean rulers had the same name
- d. when this occurred, Herod (who was in charge of the Roman military for the Judean territory) fled to Rome at the advancing Parthians
- e. He promised Rome he would win back Palestine for Rome if they gave him Roman legions
- f. At this the Senate conferred upon him the title “King of the Jews”
- g. After three years, Herod took Jerusalem and became king
- h. This marks the end of the Hasmonean Dynasty and the beginning of the Herodian Dynasty

The Herodian Dynasty

- a. family tree (slide)
- b. Herod the Great
 - a. He was Idumean in descent (not Jewish)
 - b. At 25 he was put in charge of the military in Galilee
 - c. He married the teenage princess Mariamne of the Hasmonean family
 - d. He began his reign as the King of the Jews in 37bc and reigned until 4 bc
 - e. He favored the Sadducees
 - f. He had high taxes
 - g. He was famous for his building projects including
 - i. Herodium, the Temple, Caesarea-Maritima, and Masada
 - h. He loved to name things after the Caesars
 - i. He killed off any threats including
 - i. Hyrcanus his favorite wife’s grandfather
 - ii. Aristobulus his favorite wife’s little brother who was 17 and had just been appointed High Priest
 - iii. Mariamne his favorite wife
 - iv. Joseph his brother-in-law
 - v. his sons Alexander & Aristobulus
 - vi. his son Antipater (just before he died)
 - vii. Augustus was rumored to have said, “better to be Herod’s pig than his son” (Herod ate kosher)
 - j. He was pluralistic
 - i. He built pagan temples and also renovated the Jewish temple
 - ii. He kept kosher but didn’t care about breaking the law in private

The birth of the real “King of the Jews”

- a. Matthew 2