

## Intertestamental History – B.C.E. 539-4

By Mark Moore

- I. Nehemiah to Antiochus IV, 539-168 B.C.
  - A. Introduction--Four basic periods (Read Daniel 2 & 7-8; *Ant* 10.10.4; 10.11.7):
    1. Persian Rule; 539-331 B.C.
    2. Hellenistic Kingdoms; 331-167 B.C.
      - a. Egyptian (Ptolemies)
      - b. Syrian (Seleucids)
    3. Independence (Maccabean) 167-63 B.C.
    4. Herodian & Roman--63 B.C.-A.D. 70.
  - B. Significance of the Exile (Jer 29:10; 25:12; Dan 9:2 = 70)
    1. B.C. 605-536, Resettlement, or B.C. 586-516, Zerubbabel's Temple.
    2. Destruction of the Temple (B.C. 587)--Interpreted by some as God's impotence, showed a difference in God's relationship with man since sacrifice was no longer possible.
    3. The Synagogue represented personal piety and responsibility.
    4. Cessation of Idolatry.
    5. Demonstrated that God would annul a broken covenant (Jer. 3:8).
    6. Canonical form of the OT.
  - C. Persian Period (Read Ezra)
    1. Nebuchadnezzar (B.C. 605-562), (cf. 2 K. 24-25 & Daniel)
      - a. Succeeded by his son Evil Merodach (Amel Marduk) in B.C. 562. He was assassinated in c. B.C. 560 in a palace revolt. (2 Kings 25:27-30; Jer 52:31-34)
      - b. Evil Merodach was succeeded by his brother-in-law, Nergal-sharezer (Neriglissar) (c. B.C. 560-556; cf. Jer. 39:3, 13). He was succeeded by his infant son, Labashi-Marduk, who was quickly assassinated because Babylon was threatened by the rising power of Media and needed strong leadership.
      - c. One of the Assassins, Nabonidus, was appointed as king of Babylon.
    2. Cyrus--Ancestry unknown; Called "Father" by Persians, "Shepherd by Jews" (cf. Isa 44:28; 45:1; *Ant* 11.1.1). Apparently he was the grandson of Astyages who tried to kill him (cf. Herodotus, *The History*, 1.107-118).
      - a. In 559 B.C. at age 40 he inherits the small kingdom of Anshan, a tributary of Media.
      - b. Medes and Babylonians were brief allies in 612 B.C. when defeating the Assyrians.
      - c. Cyrus was in power when the unpopular Nabonidus was in power in Babylon. The Abu Habba Cylinder, Col. 1, 11. 8-31 predicts the advancement of Cyrus over all the Medes. Yet it did not include his overthrow of Babylon as well (See Pfeiffer, p. 12).
      - d. In 550-549 B.C. Cyrus revolted against Astyages, his Median overlord and grandfather, through the prompting of Harpagus who hated Astyages for having killed his son (Herodotus, *The History*, 1:119-130). During this time

two separate armies of Astyages mutinied over to Cyrus. The first was under the direction of Harpagus. He mutinied to Cyrus, remembering how Astyages had cruelly murdered his son. Then Astyages himself attacked Cyrus. But his troops mutinied and turned him over to Cyrus. He was now the ruler of Media, which also claimed control of Assyria, Syria, Armenia and Cappadocia.

- e. Meanwhile, Nabonidus turned his kingdom over to his son Bel-shar-usur (Belshazzar of Daniel), believing that Media was no threat because of their other occupations. He went to Tema to rest and do Archaeological work as well as to open a trade route to Egypt through southern Arabia so as to avoid the rising power of Media.
- f. The other great world powers were: Lydia, Babylonia and Egypt. The first two Cyrus would conquer. The third his son Cambyses would conquer. (cf. Isa 40-55)
- g. The fall of Lydia (see Pfeiffer, pp. 13-15)
  - i. When Croesus learned that Cilicia offered no resistance when Cyrus laid claims to Asia minor, he immediately allied with Egypt and Babylon against him. (For details on Croesus see Herodotus, *The History* 1.26-87)
  - ii. He hired Eurybatos, a trusted friend, to hire mercenaries. But he took this large sum of money and defected to Cyrus (Oct 29, 539 B.C.).
  - iii. As he crossed the Halys River he met Cyrus for the first time. He consulted the Apollo of the Oracle of Delphi. He tricked him into battle by saying that Croesus would destroy a great empire if he attacked Cyrus. He did. It was his own! Cyrus offered to allow him to keep his throne and kingdom if he would only recognize Persian authority. He refused. Cyrus attacked immediately. He was also looking for revenge against Cyrus who had dethroned Astyages, Croesus' brother by marriage (Herodotus, *The History*, 1.73)
  - iv. After two indecisive battles, Cyrus placed his Camels on the front line. The famous cavalry of Croesus freaked out since they had never seen camels (Herodotus, *The History* 1.80). Thus Cyrus routed Croesus. Thus Lydia became subservient to Persia. Croesus was saved from execution by burning when he prayed to Apollo and the suddenly dark clouds gathered on a clear day. Thereafter, Cyrus used Croesus as a counselor (Herodotus, *The History*, 1.87).
  - v. The rest of the Greek coastal cities refused to submit to Cyrus and were conquered (or bought with Persian gold) one by one.
- h. The fall of Babylon (Herodotus, *The History*, 1.191; Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, 7.5; Isa 13:1-22; 14:1-23; 21:1-10; Jer 50:1-46; 51:1-64; Dan 5:1-31).
  - i. The alliance between the Persians and Babylonians evaporated when Cyrus defeated their common enemy, Media. Now Cyrus considered himself a deliverer of Babylon, not a conqueror.
  - ii. Starvation was rife under the mismanagement of Nabonidus and Belshazzar due to mismanagement.

- iii. One of Nabonidus' "generals," by the name of Gobryas, deserted to Cyrus and began attacking Babylonian cities.
- iv. Hystaspes, father of Darius the great, "kinglet" of Hyrcania and Parthia, acknowledged Cyrus' rule. He became a Persian satrap.
- v. The priests of Marduk welcomed Cyrus because Nabonidus filled their temples with idols from all over Babylonia for protection of the city.
- vi. In 539-538 Cyrus marched across lower Mesopotamia, invading other cities, avoiding the impregnable Babylon.
- vii. When he finally came to Babylon, he and Elam (Darius of Dan. 6), marched under the impregnable walls by diverting the water of the Euphrates.
- i. Cyrus instituted a "back to normalcy" politics through which the Jews were sent back to Judea. This made for loyal subjects in the buffer state of Palestine while Egypt was his only unconquered territory. The "Cyrus Cylinder" reads "Marduk, the Great Lord, a protector of his people/worshipers, beheld with pleasure his (i.e. Cyrus') good deeds and his upright mind [lit. heart] [and therefore] ordered him to march against his city Babylon. He made him set out on the road to Babylon going at his side like a real friend. His widespread troops--their number like that of the water of a river, could not be established, could not be established--strolled along, their weapons packed away. Without any battle, he made him enter his town Babylon, sparing Babylon any calamity."
  - i. He returned the captives--50,000. (cf. Ezra 2:64-65). This would include women and children. Many did not return because of the poverty and hardships of Palestine as well as the relationships they had in Babylon.
  - ii. He rebuilt the Jewish temple, primarily with Samaritan revenues (*Ant* 11.1.3). Cf. Ezra 1:2-4 and 6:3-5 (cf. *Ant* 11.1.2). It took 4 1/2 years (Hag 1:1; Ezra 6:15). Compare this with the 7 years it took Solomon (1 Kgs 6:37-38).
  - iii. This was not all humanitarian. He was making valuable friends in a buffer state between himself and Egypt, his only standing competition.
- j. Cyrus died in B.C. 530 of an injury while putting down a minor skirmish on his eastern frontiers by the Caspian Sea (Herodotus, *The History*, 1:214). His body was supposedly carried back to Pasargadae, a capital city, covered with wax and guarded by faithful priests for 200 years. The tomb still stands but its contents are long since gone.
- k. He was one of the most highly regarded of all world rulers. He was prophesied by name in Isaiah (44:28; 45:1).
- 3. Cambyses, Son of Cyrus, B.C. 530-522
  - a. After his father's death, apparently Bardiya in 529 B.C., Cambyses' brother, Smerdis, made claims to the throne. Turmoil erupted everywhere. According to the Behistun inscription, Cambyses murdered him and it was unknown to the general populous.

- b. The Jews appealed to Cambyses when the Cutheans hindered their rebuilding of the Temple (*Ant* 11.2.1-2). Cambyses, however, reading in the history books how rebellious the Jews had been, refused to allow the rebuilding. Progress stopped for nine years.
- c. Four years after his father's death, having settled his domestic problems, Cambyses was ready to attack Egypt in B.C. 525. He was prodded by Phanes who wanted revenge on Amasis (Herodotus, *The History*, 3.1-11).
- d. Polycrates of Samos, the leader of the Greeks who had aligned with Egypt, deserted Amasis, king of Egypt and joined forces with Cambyses while he paused in Gaza to plan his attack.
- e. Several events led to the fall of Egypt:
  - i. The Bedouin Sheikh stationed relays of camels with water along the 25 mile stretch of desert which they quickly passed over.
  - ii. Amasis died and his son Psammetichus III ascended.
  - iii. Rare rain fell at Thebes; the Egyptians interpreted this as a bad omen.
  - iv. Herodotus (*Histories* 3.12) claims that he was shown the bones of the warriors strewn across the battle field at Pelusium 80 years after the battle. He was told that the skulls of the Egyptians were harder than the Persians.
- f. Psammetichus fled to Memphis where one last battle would decide the destiny of Egypt. For his treatment after the battle see Herodotus, *The History*, 3.14-15.
- g. As his father had adopted Babylonian customs so did Cambyses adopt Egyptian garb and language of the sun god Re as he ascended the throne as Pharaoh.
- h. He conquered even further west and south into Egypt and Africa. However, while his troops were marching west to conquer more territory, they were overwhelmed by a sand storm and mysteriously never heard from again.
- i. Cambyses attempted a campaign into Ethiopia (Herodotus, *The History*, 3.19-25). But only 1/4th of the way there their supplies ran out. When he returned to Memphis he reportedly changed his attitude toward Egyptian religion. He ridiculed the god Ptah, ordered the statues burned and stabbed to death the Apis-bull at Memphis (Herodotus, *The History*, 3.28-30).
- j. Cambyses remained in Memphis until news that a usurper (named Gaumata) at home claimed to be his brother Bardiya in B.C. 522. Gaumata remitted taxes for three years and attempted religious reform to gain favor (Herodotus, *The History*, 3.31-36, 61-62).
- k. Cambyses died of an accidental wound near Damascus on the way home as he mounted a horse. Some suggest suicide. He did suffer from Epilepsy and insanity in his later years (Herodotus, *The History*, 3.64-66).
- l. Smerdis, Cambyses brother, was secretly murdered to keep him from ascending the throne while he was gone. Gaumata, another brother (?), took advantage of his physical resemblance to Smerdis and ascended the throne. Upon the return of the troops, he was taken prisoner within two months and killed as Darius, a cousin of Cambyses, ascended the throne (B.C. 522), (Herodotus, *The History*, 3.68-89).

4. Darius (c. B.C. 521-486)
  - a. At age 20 he had accompanied Cyrus on his campaigns and he had been in Egypt with Cambyses
  - b. He was chosen king since his horse was the first to snort when the six Persian nobles met after killing the magi usurpers (Herodotus, *The History*, 3.84-85). Some considered him a usurper so that the beginning of his reign was not without turmoil (Herodotus, *The History*, 3.89).
  - c. In squelching the dissensions, his severity came to rival that of the ancient Assyrians. He boasts of mutilating one usurper in the Behistun Inscription (Col. 2, ln. 13): "cut off his nose and his ears and his tongue and put out his eyes" and put him in fetters in the royal court for people to gawk at to demonstrate that rebellion does not pay.
  - d. His Behistun inscription is a mountain-side memorial to himself on the main highway between Begdad and Tehran. It is 400 feet high, a series of inscriptions fifty-eight and a half feet long. It is by a spring where people had to stop. Because it is trilingual, it provided the key to deciphering Akkadian (Babylonian) cuneiform as the Rosetta stone did Egyptian hieroglyphics.
  - e. Haggai (Aug.) and Zechariah (Oct.) began to prophecy in Judah in the 2nd year of Darius (B.C. 520), telling the people to get back to work on rebuilding Jerusalem. They had stopped because during the troubled last years of Cyrus, their neighbors were free to harass them. (Cf. Hag. 1:2; Ezra 4:1-5)
  - f. Darius investigated this rebuilding (Ezra 5:3). When he found it was legitimate he even helped (Ezra 6:7-8). The temple was completed in the 6th year of Darius (516 B.C.), Ezra 6:15-18.
  - g. Darius was famous for his roads and postal system which resembled the pony express (Herodotus, *The History*, 8.98. It contained 111 post-stations along a 1677 mile road from Susa to Sardis to Ephesus. In fact Herodotus' description has been engraved on the front of the N.Y. Post Office: "These neither snow nor rain nor heat nor darkness of night prevent from accomplishing each one his appointed task, with the very utmost speed."
  - h. He pursued the nomadic Scythians north of the Black Sea (Herodotus, *The History*, 4.63-65, 135). He hoped to secure their vast gold and then control the wheat supply to Greece. They gave way but scorched the earth. Darius' army had to stop pursuit because the food supplies were destroyed. But they did conquer Thrace and Macedonia which gave them control of all Greek territory except Greece itself (Herodotus, *The History*, 7.1-4).
  - i. The democracy minded Greeks, especially of Athens, rebelled against Darius. There were a few skirmishes, all won by the Persians. However, several factors led to the defeat of Darius and Marathon:
    - i. The Ionians who had been subject to Darius, decided to align with their Greek compatriots.
    - ii. Datis, the Median admiral, after taking Eretria, burnt her temples and sold her citizens into slavery. This caused the Greek forces to align.

- iii. Trouble in Egypt divided Darius' forces.
  - j. After his death in the Egyptian campaign, there was no other organizer as adept who could pull together an empire already in decline.
- 5. Xerxes I (B.C. 486-465), (Heb = Ahasuerus; LXX & Josephus call him Artaxerxes; read Esther and Tobit)
  - a. Son of Darius by Atossa, Cyrus' daughter. Took over the throne at age 35 (Herodotus, *The History* 7:1-3).
  - b. Rebellions rose quickly.
    - i. Babylonian rebellion was squelched by tearing down its walls and temples and melting down its god.
    - ii. In Greece, there was almost total alignment against the Persians (Herodotus, *The History*, 7-8).
      - (a) Xerxes I came with 1,207 fighting ships and an army from 46 different nations with 5,283,220 men (Herodotus, *The History*, 7.60-99, 186-187). Earlier battles were lost by the Greeks.
      - (b) In August of A.D. 480 he was in Athens and burned the temples on the Acropolis (Herodotus, *The History*, 8.52-54).
      - (c) The Persians lost nearly 400 ships in a storm, the Greeks only lost three but captured another 15 Persian vessels (Herodotus, *The History*, 7.190-194, 210-211; 8.26). Even so, the Persians outnumbered them more than 2-1. Yet, the Greeks thoroughly routed the Persians at Salamis on Sept. 27-28, B.C. 480. This was supposed to be Xerxes' crowning victory. This turned the tables for Greece who was totally victorious by Autumn. Aeschylus wrote a historical tragedy about this battle entitled *Persians*. It won first prize in the Athenian theater in B.C. 472.
  - c. He is only mentioned in Ezra 4:6, outside the book of Esther.
  - d. He was a Zoroastrian. He acted like a spoiled child. This accords with what we read in Esther.
  - e. He lived another 14 years after the Greek wars. He was rather immoral (Herodotus, *The History*, 9.108-113). He was eventually murdered by a usurper, Artabanus--his body guard, who ruled 7 months before Artaxerxes, the third son of Xerxes murdered him and ruled in his stead.
- 6. Artaxerxes I (B.C. 465-423), (Read Nehemiah & Ezra)
  - a. Called Longimanus, apparently because one hand was longer than the other.
  - b. Nehemiah went to him with a request to help rebuild the walls of Jerusalem in B.C. 445.
  - c. Well documented by Herodotus.
  - d. He had the usual Persian problem of putting down rebellions.
  - e. After successfully putting down the Egyptian rebellion, Artaxerxes was approached by Ezra, the equivalent of the secretary of state of the Jews, and with a request for more Jews to return to rebuild the temple.
- 7. Decline of the Persian Empire
  - a. Contributions: Aramaic, 200 years of peace, commerce, and "pony express."
  - b. Dated from the death of Artaxerxes.

- c. Intrigue and power corrupted its leaders and satraps.
  - d. Athens made an alliance with Persia. Philip of Macedon and his Son Alexander saw that as a hostile move, and in 338 B.C. won a decisive victory over Athens.
  - e. In that same year, Bagoas, a eunuch, poisoned Artaxerxes and spared his son Arses to use as a puppet ruler. When Arses showed an independent mind, he too was poisoned. Bagoas was himself poisoned by a cousin of Artaxerxes III who called himself Darius III. Bagoas chose him because of his potential, but Darius turned on him.
  - f. In the same year, 336 B.C., the 21 year old Alexander ascended the throne of Macedonia.
  - g. In 333 B.C. Alexander defeated Darius III (perhaps the one mentioned in Nehemiah 12:22), and the Persian Empire went over to the Greek.
  - h. Thus the empire came to a close (539 B.C. to 330 B.C.)
- D. Hellenistic Period
- 1. Alexander the Great--The He-Goat (Dan. 8:5)
    - a. Alexander's father, Philip II, king of Macedonia, united all the Aegean city states by diplomacy and force (cf. Feb 1985 *Reader's Digest*, pp 167-176). Thrace, Macedonia and Greece were ready to throw off Persian control.
    - b. He was born to Philip II and Olympias c. 356 B.C. Plutarch reports several legends of divine omens in connection with his birth including a dream of lightening bolt in Olympias' body and the destruction of the temple of Diana in Ephesus (Plutarch, *Lives*, 541b-d)
      - i. He was said to be very beautiful, with pale skin and ruddy cheeks with a fragrant aroma exuding from his body and breath (Plutarch, *Lives*, 542a)
      - ii. While still a young boy he supposedly entertained Persian nobles and astounded them with his questions (Plutarch, *Lives*, 542c)
      - iii. He was upset whenever his father was successful in battle because he feared there would be nothing left for him to conquer (Plutarch, *Lives*, 542c)
    - c. Alexander, son of Philip II, rose quickly:
      - i. At 16--Regent, subdued Illyrian tribes
      - ii. At 18--Leader of a Cavalry Unit
      - iii. At 19--Exile due to his mother, Olympias
      - iv. At 20--had 70 talents in his treasure and owed 1,300; he had no fleet but 35,000 veteran soldiers.
      - v. At age 21 Alexander took over the mantle of leadership when his father was murdered at his daughter's wedding (336 B.C.). At that time he was preparing a campaign against Persia (*Arrian* I. 1).
    - d. He was Macedonian, not actually a Greek but loved its culture. He carried a copy of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* with him on all his campaigns (edited by Aristotle, who was Alexander's private tutor [Plutarch, *Lives*, 543b-c]).
    - e. His first campaign (B.C. 334) was across the Dardanelles to capture Troy. With him he had a small army which included historians, geographers

(routes), engineers (siege works), botanists and scientists (hanging gardens). Everywhere he went he abolished tribute to Persia and replaced the oligarchies with democracies; this made him extremely popular (*Arrian* I. 18)

- f. Darius ordered troops to capture this young upstart. He did not take Alexander seriously until his troops were defeated by a narrow margin at the river Granicus (*Arrian* I. 15; Plutarch, *Lives*, 547c-d). Alexander himself supposedly killed Mithridates, Darius' son-in-law. Most of the Greek mercenary troops of Darius slain as traitors; the survivors, along with the Persian captives were sent back to Macedonia to till the soil as slaves. Plutarch claims that Alexander lost 43 soldiers whereas Darius lost 20,000. Clearly this battle decisively changed Alexander's fortune -- he got spoils, clout, and regional support.
- g. Alexander pushed eastward, forcefully "liberating" Asia Minor. Darius' troops abandoned their fortress as the river Halys when they saw him coming. Thus he marched through the Cilician gates untouched. Tarsus was wholly abandoned when they heard Alexander was coming; thus he captured it in tact (*Arrian* II. 4). Here Alexander became deathly ill. His physician prescribed a purgative drink which Alexander was warned in a letter not to take because his physician had been bribed to poison him. Handing the letter to his physician he drank the potion showing (a) that he trusted his friend, and (b) that he would face death with courage.
- h. Darius led his army of some 600,000 men against Alexander personally. Unwisely, he advanced against Alexander near Tarsus where the hills hindered him from spreading out his vast forces. Thus, his impatience robbed him of his military advantage (*Arrian* II. 7-8, 11). Alexander won a decided victory. Darius escaped when night fell. However, he abandoned his chariot with his bow. Alexander captured that along with Darius' camp, his treasure, his mother, wife (who was also his sister), and his infant son (*Arrian* II. 11-12). He treated them with extraordinary respect. "Alexander, esteeming it more kingly to govern himself than to conquer his enemies, sought no intimacy with any one of them, nor indeed with any other woman before marriage . . ." (Plutarch, *Lives*, 550c). [Alexander apparently eschewed both sexual relations (although he entertained both male and female lovers), and sleep because "weariness and pleasure proceed both from the same frailty and imbecility of human nature" (Plutarch, *Lives*, 551a)].
- i. He took Damascus by surprise and captured Cyrus' great treasures and ambassadors from Sparta, Athens and Thebes. From this point on Alexander thoroughly defeated Darius who tried on a couple of occasions to make a treaty with Alexander. He wrote a letter requesting back his wife and mother. Alexander replied in a letter that Darius must come and request them in person and henceforth refer to Alexander as his king (Read *Arrian* II. 14 & 25).
- j. Alexander took all of Phoenicia with no resistance (Eze 26; Isa 23), except Tyre which took him 7 months to sack, which resisted Persia for 13 years.

He built a causeway out to the Island thus changing the map of Tyre (*Arrian* II. 18-24).

- k. A fascinating, and most incredible (if true) account of a meeting between Jaddua and Alexander the great is recorded in *Ant* 11.8.4-5.
- i. However, this story is probably not true. Josephus likely confused Jaddua of Neh 12:22 in the time of Darius II, with another Jaddua, H.P. in the time of Darius III. See *Biblical Archaeologist*, Dec. 1963, p. 121. Otherwise, Jaddua would be over 90 years old in 333 B.C. when he met Alexander, if the traditional date of 420 B.C. for the close of the O.T. canon is correct.
  - ii. On the other hand:
    - (a) Judea did, in fact, submit to Alexander.
    - (b) Jews were awarded many privileges.
    - (c) Many Jews were deported to Egypt to populate Alexandria.
  - iii. The Samaritans also asked for Jewish favors.
    - (a) Tried to claim the same rights as Jews (e.g. exemption from 7th year tax); Alexander refused them (*Ant* 11.8.6)
    - (b) While Alexander was in Egypt, they revolted by burning alive, Andromachus, the Macedonian governor.
    - (c) Alexander returned with haste and destroyed Samaria.
    - (d) Palestine was subsequently quiet until Alexander's death in 323 B.C.
  - iv. High Priests had become the international consulates for the Jewish People and thus gained in importance. According to Neh 12:22 the H.P. of the day were (cf. *Ant* 11.7.1):
    - (a) Eliashib--during the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.
    - (b) Joiada (or Judas)
    - (c) Jonathan, H.P. 32 years, 405-359 B.C.
      - Murdered his brother, Joshua (or Jesus), *in the temple*, because he was thought to aspire to the H.P.hood through the favor of Bagoses, the Persian satrap (*Ant* 11.7.1).
      - This crime was avenged by the satrap imposing a fifty shekel tax on every lamb offered. His presence in the temple polluted it in the minds of the Jews. (*Ant* 11.7, 1. About 366 B.C.)
    - (d) Jaddua
      - Last mentioned H.P. of O.T.
      - According to Eusebius he ruled 20 years, including the reign of Darius, 338-331 B.C.
      - According to Josephus, his brother, Manasseh, married Nicaso, the daughter of Sanballat, a Samaritan ruler. When Jaddua made him choose between his wife and his high priestly duties, he went over to Sanballat who offered to

make him a wealthy priest and rebuild the temple in Samaria (*Ant* 11.8.2-4).

- (e) Onias (*Ant* 11.8.7)
- v. The Elephantine papyri
  - (a) A Jewish temple on the Island of Yeb, Egypt was destroyed (c. 408 B.C) in an anti-Jewish uprising in the settlement.
  - (b) Likely built by the Jews of Jeremiah's day (Jer 43).
  - (c) He wrote to the H.P. in Jerusalem, John, the son of Eliashab (Neh 3:1; 12:23), who obviously refused to help rebuild the temple.
  - (d) Subsequently, they wrote letters to the Persian governors of Judea (Bagoas) and Samaria (Sanballat), requesting permission to rebuild their temple in which they worshiped a number of foreign deities as well as Jehovah.
  - (e) Permission was granted; temple rebuilt; again destroyed in B.C. 400 along with the colony, when Egypt revolted against Persia and regained its independence and cultural heritage.
- l. The Egyptians welcomed Alexander and the newly built city, Alexandria, named after him, replaced Tyre as the commercial center of the Mediterranean. Jews were encouraged to populate Alexandria which became critical to Jewish and Christian history.
- m. Darius then marched east. Alexander was met by his great Persian army at Gaugamela. Alexander outmaneuvered them on the battle field and marched unimpeded through Babylon, Susa, Persepolis and Ecbatana. Darius abandoned his chariot because he couldn't ride through all the slain bodies. Alexander would have captured him, but he had to go rescue Parmenio, whose troops were getting beat (Plutarch, *Lives*, 557b-c).
  - i. Babylon also welcomed Alexander, reminiscent of the days of Cyrus. They lined the streets with flowers, presented offerings to him, turned over sacred treasures to him and hailed him as the new Great King.
  - ii. In Susa, he simply walked in and helped himself to the treasures of Cyrus.
  - iii. Oddly, Alexander showed unusual cruelty in Persepolis, which had a reputation as the richest city in the world. He killed all its men and enslaved the women.
- n. He then spent three bitter years of fighting in what is now Russian and Turkestan territory. His armies refused to go into India, so that Punjab, India was the limit of his kingdom. He very nearly died from an arrow to his chest when he assailed a wall of the Mallians and was at first the only soldier to get into their city near the delta of the Indus (*Arrian* VI. 10-12). On his return to Susa through the desert, a soldier brought a helmet full of water to Alexander, which he poured on the ground. This invigorated the troupes as if they all had a drink (*Arrian* VI. 26).
- o. When he arrived in Susa in 324 B.C. he found mismanagement by his officials and resentment at his growing rule. They were embittered at (cf. *Arrian* VII. 6).:

- i. his accepting the title of Pharaoh in Egypt and Persian dress and oriental despotism in Persia. He was no longer Greek, he was oriental (cf. *Arrian* IV. 7).
  - ii. he executed his own nephew, the historian, Callisthenes as well as Clitus, who saved his life, when he insolently insulted Alexander in a drunken stupor (Plutarch, *Lives*, 565; *Arrian* IV. 8).
  - iii. he wanted to be treated as a god in Persia (*Arrian* IV. 10-12).
  - iv. his command that his men intermarry Persian women.
  - p. His boasting over his wounds and exploits sounds strangely like Paul (*Arrian* VII. 10, cf. 1 Cor 6:3-13).
  - q. He died at age 33 in 323 B.C. only 11 years after his first humble conquest across the Dardanelles. There was suspicion that he was poisoned by Antipater (*Arrian* VII. 27-28). His only son was born posthumously to Roxana, his Bactrian wife (*Arrian* IV. 19). The Indian prophets supposedly chided him saying that all men can only possess the ground under their feet, sufficient for their body to be buried in (*Arrian* VII. 1). [On ambition, read *Arrian* VII. 2!].
  - r. His influence on Jewish History:
    - i. Language, culture, freedom, philosophy, logic, LXX.
    - ii. He brought about the combination of Eastern and Western cultures so critical to Christianity. His goal was not merely the conquering of the world and its subjugation to Greece, rather the wedding of the world and its cultures under Grecian auspices through marriages.
    - iii. Fulfilled Dan 7:6; 8:8 and the four horns on the head of the He-goat. See also the description of 8:5-7, 21; 11:3.
  - s. His death led to a 7 year struggle for a fit successor. By 315 B.C. three men finally emerged (Dan 8:8).
    - i. \*Antigonus--Mediterranean to central Asia
    - ii. Cassander--Macedonia & Greece, after Antipater.<sup>1</sup>
    - iii. \*Ptolemy Lagi--Egypt & Southern Syria (Alexander's personal staff officer)
    - iv. Lysimachus--Thrace
    - v. \*Seleucus--Babylon & Persia

In the same year Antipater, Ptolemy and Seleucus formed an alliance against Antigonus who wanted full rights to Alexander's rule.
2. Ptolemies

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<sup>1</sup>Perdiccas was the guardian of Philip (Alexander's half-witted, half-brother) and his infant son, Alexander. Perdiccas was aligned with Roxanna (Alexander's wife) and Olympias (his mother). Fearing his power, the other three "biggies" allied against him. He was assassinated in B.C. 321 and Antipater replaced him. When Antipater died in B.C. 318, civil war ensued. Cassander, Antipater's son, finally obtained sole power in Macedonia by murdering Philip, then Olympias, Roxana and Alexander.

- a. Ptolemy's greatest general was Seleucus who would play an important role in later Jewish history. In 312 B.C. these two fought against the army of Antigonus at Gaza, after winning, they pursued the rest of Palestine.
- b. Captured Jerusalem by assaulting it on the Sabbath when the Jews refused to fight (Josephus, *Contra Apion I*, 22; *Ant* 12.1)! Aside from tribute paid to Egypt and the likely deportation of some Jews to populate Egypt, the Jews were fairly independent under Ptolemy. The H.P.'s were allowed to govern Palestine.
- c. Simon the Just, H.P., is credited for rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem which were torn down by Ptolemy I as well as the Temple and the excavation of a large water reservoir. Simon is also credited as being a great teacher. His famous saying: "The world rests on three things, on the Law, on Divine Service, and on Charity" (*Ant* 12.2.5).
- d. Seleucus began to strike out on his own. Antigonus tried to check him but was unable to do so. In 311 B.C. he conquered Babylon, which marks the beginning of the Seleucid Dynasty. Antigonus, however, still held Syria, which served as a wedge between the allied holdings of Seleucus and Ptolemy.
- e. In 301 B.C. the three, along with Seleucus, beat Antigonus at Ipsus in Phrygia. It has been prearranged that if they won, the Syrian territory would go to Ptolemy. However, Ptolemy stayed on the side-line during the fighting so that the others granted the territory to Seleucus. Problem: When Seleucus arrived with his army to seize the area, he found Ptolemy already there. He passed it over because of their long-standing friendship, but was displeased and told Ptolemy so (Diodorus, *Histories*, 21.5)
- f. Syria then became a pivotal territory, partially possessed by three kingdoms:
  - i. Demetrius Poliorketes, son of Antigonus on the Phoenecian coast.
  - ii. Seleucus in the north, where he built Antioch.
  - iii. Ptolemy, south of Aradus (Arvad), and quietly occupied Demetrius' territories while he was otherwise occupied.

us the three great ruling families of these years are Antigonus of Macedonia, Ptolemy of Egypt, Seleucus of northern Syria.
- g. In 285 B.C. Ptolemy Lagi Soter was succeeded by his son Ptolemy Philadelphus. In B.C. 280 Seleucus was murdered and succeeded by his son Antiochus I. The sons did not share the affections of their fathers. In 275 B.C. Ptolemy attempted to invade Syria, but was repulsed by Seleucid forces. His superior naval power, however, allowed him to prolong the fighting until B.C. 272 or 271. Neither won.
- h. Antiochus II, succeeded Seleucus to the throne in 261 B.C. War broke out and was not squelched until 252 B.C. Neither won. A partial bond was attained when Berenice, Ptolemy's daughter married Antiochus II. Thus, the grandchildren of the two friends were united. However, Antiochus II had to put away Laodice to marry her. So Laodice poisoned Antiochus II in B.C. 246. Her accomplices also murdered Bernice and her infant son. Hence, Laodice's son, Seleucus II took the throne.

- i. In B.C. 246 Antiochus II died, being succeeded by his son Seleucus II. Shortly afterwards Ptolemy II died and was succeeded by Ptolemy III, called Euergetes.
  - j. *BUT* Ptolemy III was honor-bound to avenge the murder of his sister. He won great victories into northern Syria until he was called back to Egypt to take care of domestic problems. At that time Seleucus II was able to regain his territory back to Damascus. Peace was again attained in 240 B.C.
  - k. In B.C. 226 Seleucus II died and was succeeded by Seleucus III. He was apparently poisoned and was quickly replaced by his younger brother, Antiochus III, "The Great." Meanwhile Ptolemy III died in B.C. 221 and was succeeded by Ptolemy IV, called Philopater, one of the worst Ptolemaic rulers.
3. Seleucids
- a. Antiochus III came to the throne of Syria in 223 B.C. at the age of 18.
    - i. He came to power with political experience already. He served as ruler of Babylonia under his brother Seleucus III.
    - ii. In 221 and 219 B.C. he made two attempts to capture Coele-Syria. The second was successful and he gained control of Ptolemais (Acre) and Tyre, when the Egyptian general, Theodotus defected to him. He was stopped short of Dora, South of Mt. Carmel, by the Egyptian commander-in-chief, Sosibius.
    - iii. Sosibius prepared his army for a showdown in 218 B.C. in the Lebanon mountains of Syria. Not only did Antiochus win the battle but pressed inland to cross the Jordan. He continued his conquests in the Spring of 217 B.C., taking Philistia and Gaza.
    - iv. However, Ptolemy (IV) Philopater organized an army himself and soundly defeated Antiochus at Raphia (cf. Dan 11 and 3 Maccabees 1:9-11, 24, which describes the persecutions of the Jews in Egypt under this man, B.C. 221-203; see also 4 Macc 4).
    - v. Ptolemy IV, Philopater died in B.C. 203. Strife was rampant in Egypt. Antiochus III took advantage of the situation and attacked in B.C. 202. He accomplished little or nothing. He took another shot at it in B.C. 201-200, but was pushed back to the sources of the Jordan by Scopas, the Egyptian general (*Ant* 12.3.3).
    - vi. In a third attempt, in the spring of 198 B.C., Antiochus III won all of Syria and Palestine by defeating Scopas in the Battle of Panion. This marks the beginning of the Seleucid rule of Palestine which was Hellenizing rather than tolerant as the Ptolemy reign had been (*Ant* 12.3.3-4). Originally, however, Antiochus III was well received by the Jews and rewarded them by releasing them from some of the tax burden and ordering the rebuilding of the temple and returning 2,000 Jewish families from Babylon and Mesopotamia.
    - vii. Afterward, Antiochus III made a league with Ptolemy V by giving him Cleopatra I in marriage, along with Coele-Syria, Samaria, Judea and Phoenicia as a dowry (*Ant* 12.4.1).

- viii. Hannibal of Carthage was defeated by the Romans. He fled to Antiochus III in B.C. 202 and encouraged him to fight Rome by liberating Greece. Thus Rome declared war on Antiochus III. He, of course, was defeated and had to surrender his war Elephants, his navy and even his son to Rome in B.C. 190 at Magnesia, between Sardis and Smyrna.
- ix. In order to raise the huge tribute imposed on him by Rome, he marched against Susiana to plunder the rich temple of Bel. The locals attacked and he lost his life in B.C. 187.
- x. Antiochus III was succeeded by Seleucus IV (B.C. 187-175). He also had to try to raise the funds to pay the tribute to Rome (Dan 11:20). When Seleucus IV sent Heliodorus to obtain the money from the temple of Jerusalem, he was supposedly attacked by a heavenly apparition (2 Macc. 3:4ff). Heliodorus returned and eventually assassinated Seleucus.
- xi. Antiochus Epiphanes was finally released from Rome after 12 years in exchange for Demetrius, his nephew, the son of Seleucus IV.
- b. Antiochus Epiphanes ("the illustrious")
  - i. The Jews nicknamed him "Epimanes" = "madman"
  - ii. Born in Athens and loved Greek culture. He wanted to civilize the whole world. By this he meant "Hellenize." Many Jews loved and followed his Greek program.
  - iii. Onias III, and descendant of Simon the Just was an orthodox Jew, ruling in Jerusalem. The Hellenistic Jews promised that if Jason, Onias' brother, who was also Hellenistic, was made H.P. then Antiochus would receive greater revenues. Thus, the transition was made. However, the Orthodox viewed the H.P. as a divine office, not a political one as did Antiochus. Thus, this became a sin against God to sell the position to the highest bidder. Tensions were immediate. (The true priesthood went from Onias to Jason to Menelaus).
  - iv. Jason build a gymnasium in Jerusalem where boys trained nude as was the Greek custom. Some even tried to conceal their circumcision. When Alexander visited Jerusalem in 170 B.C. he approved (*Ant* 12.5.1).
  - v. Rome had just annexed Macedonia at the Battle Pydna (B.C. 168), but was not yet ready to take Egypt and Syria. Antiochus, in a bid for power, was attempting to take Egypt, but he was well aware of the power of Rome.
  - vi. On his first trip to Egypt, she declared war against Antiochus. On his second trip to Egypt, when he came against them with an army, Popilius, his old friend from Rome, met him. Rome was in the throes of the third Macedonian war (B.C. 171-168) which ended right after Popilius met Antiochus. Rome was emerging as the world power and Antiochus knew it. Thus, within one week, Rome would gain control over Macedonia, Egypt and Syria. He went home mad, determined to strengthen his own position.

- vii. Meanwhile, Jason, who previously fled to Trans-Jordan when Menelaus outbid him for the High Priesthood, returned to Jerusalem with 1,000 troops and regained control of the temple, after hearing a rumor that Antiochus had been killed. But when word came that Antiochus was on his way, Jason had to flee again. Antiochus treated Jerusalem as a rebellious city and slaughtered its citizens and demolished her walls, etc. He attacked Jerusalem with a fervor on the Sabbath, slaying the opponents of Menelaus.
- viii. The Hasidim ("pious") arose at this time. They were even more infuriated when Menelaus, a Benjamite outbid Jason and won the H.P. Years later, when Antiochus was busy fighting Egypt, Jason would raise an army in the Transjordan and raid Jerusalem. It was not successful, but certainly sent a message to Antiochus that not all approved his Hellenization.
- ix. Alexander determined that all Jews would worship Greek Deities. An elderly Athenian Philosopher was brought to Jerusalem to organize this program. Jehovah was identified with Jupiter and an image of a bearded man was erected in the temple. The Jews referred to this as the Abomination of Desolation. Greek soldiers committed fornication in the temple precincts. Swine were sacrificed on the altar. The worship of Bacchus in a drunken orgy was mandatory. Jews were forbidden to circumcise, under the penalty of death. Likewise, Sabbath and Feast observances were forbidden. Copies of the Scriptures were systematically destroyed (*Ant* 12.5.4).

## II. Maccabean War, 168-106 B.C.

### A. Introduction

- 1. Revolt/Resistance in response to Antiochus Epiphanes IV.
- 2. Chasmonoean was the family name; Maccabee was originally the surname of Judas, the third son of Mattathias--it meant "hammer".

### B. Under Mattathias (*Ant* 12.6)

- 1. The old priest, Mattathias, escaped from Jerusalem early in the persecution of Antiochus. He fled to the city of Modin, 18 mi. N.W. of Jer.
- 2. Five sons of Matthias: John, Simon, Judas, Eleazar, and Jonathan.
- 3. The Revolt began when Matthias murdered an apostate and then the king's men and then tore down the altar (1 Macc. 2:15-26, 54; cf. Num. 25:7-8, 14 where Phinehas, his ancestor had done a similar thing).
- 4. Matthias proclaimed self-defense on the Sabbath legality.
- 5. The Assidoeans (Chasidim [or Hasidim] = pious/holy), joined him.
  - a. Took a vow to obey the law.
  - b. Appear to have arisen in opposition to Hellenization.
  - c. Name appears in Psa 79:2, etc.
- 6. Matthias died, was buried at Modin, after appointing Judas his successor (167 B.C.), 1 Macc. 2:49-70.

### C. Under Judas, Maccabaeus--The "Hammerer", for his warlikeness

1. He gathered about 6,000 men from the towns.
2. Attacked at night and in surprise.
3. Two first great victories:
  - a. Apollonius at Samaria, 1 Macc. 3:10-12 (also *Ant* 12.7.1).
  - b. Seron, governor of Coelesyria, at the passes of Beth-horon. 1 Macc. 3:13-24 (also *Ant* 12.7.1).
4. Antiochus took half his forces and marched to Persia and Armenia to collect tribute from the rebel nations. At the same time he placed the other half of his troops in the hands of Ptolemy Macron (also called Lysias) with the command to exterminate the Jews with the 40,000 infantry and 7,000 cavalry as opposed to Judas' 6,000 men. See 1 Macc. 3:27-60 for the rousing victory of Judas, Gideon style (cf. *Ant* 12.7.2-4).
5. The following year, Lysias again met Judas with 60,000 chosen foot and 5,000 horses at Bethsura against Judas' 10,000 men. Judas routed him (cf. *Ant* 12.7.5).
6. Meanwhile, Roman troops moved from Alexandria to Antioch to investigate Seleucid anti-Roman activity. They gladly heard Jewish accusations against Antiochus. Hellenizers, represented by Menelaus and Judaizers, represented by John, met there. Antiochus even returned from the east. He removed all bans on Jewish worship and removed the Syrian troops from Jerusalem. Menelaus was driven out.
7. This opened the way for the Maccabeans to enter Jerusalem. When they did, Menelaus and his supporters fled, giving the Maccabeans the entire city except the fort of Akra. They purification the temple on the 25th of Chisleu exactly 3 years after its desecration (Dec. 165 B.C. = 153rd Olympiad<sup>2</sup> [Josephus says that the destruction of B.C. 168 was 408 years after Daniel's prophecy]). The following festival became the Feast of Dedication, now called Hanukkah--Feast of lights (Jn. 10:22; *Ant* 12.7.6).
8. Thus Judas gained considerable power and began vengeful attacks on neighboring peoples (cf. *Ant* 12.8).
9. Antiochus IV died (164 B.C.) [for the gruesome details cf. 2 *Macc* 9]. His nine-year-old son, Antiochus V, succeeded him instead of Demetrius, his uncle, who was still held in Rome. This created tension and disunity among the Syrians which added to the Maccabean success. Encouraged by this, Judas laid siege to Acra, the Syrian stronghold in Jerusalem. Lysias counter Attacked. He laid siege to Bethsura. Judas went to its relief and lost. Lysias used elephants for the fight. Eleazar died after killing one of them (*Ant* 12.9.4).
10. As the forces of Antiochus IV returned from Persia under Philip, the rightful guardian of young Antiochus, Lysias urged Antiochus to make peace with the Jews, although they did break down the fortified walls surrounding the temple. Afterward, he immediately fled to Antioch and recovered the capital from Philip. His victory was brief. Demetrius, son of Seleucus IV, whose "rightful inheritance had been usurped by his uncle, Antiochus Epiphanes, overthrew Antiochus and Lysias (*Ant* 12.9.6).

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<sup>2</sup>The first Olympiad was 776 B.C. They were held approximately every four years.

11. Under this new provisional government, Alcimus, a moderate Hellenizer, represented the Jews to Syria. Anti-Jewish laws were repealed and Jews gained religious and some civil liberty. Judas disapproved. However, the Hasidim, who were primarily interested in religious liberty, swayed the people.
  12. Also, Menelaus was removed from High Priesthood and many priests fled to Egypt under Onias IV, the rightful High Priest, and build a temple there (*Ant* 12.9.7). It was a good thing too. The Hasidim seized a number of remaining priests and killed them. This led to another civil war in Palestine between Judas and Alcimus who appealed to Syria for help. With a huge army, they easily defeated the beleaguered troops of Judas, who was killed in the fray (*Ant* 12.11.1).
- D. Hellenization under Demetrius (*Ant* 12.10)
1. After the Romans came in B.C. 162 and destroyed Syria's ships and elephants for breaking a treaty, Demetrius saw his chance, escaped from Rome (when they refused to release him), and went to Syria. At his subtle suggestion, the army, put out with Lysias and Antiochus, killed them and enthroned Demetrius.
  2. Demetrius I. Soter, son of Seleucis, a Syrian ruler (*Macc.* 6), was shrewd in dealing with the Jews, taking advantage of their own divisions and their weariness of war and ultra-patriotism under the Maccabees.
  3. Alcimus complained to Demetrius about John's opposition. Demetrius supported him with troops under Bacchides and forcefully installed Alcimus. Sixty Hasidim who actually favored Alcimus, were killed because they were associated with John.
  4. During this period, Judas won a decisive victory against Nicanor, who had been Demetrius' most faithful friend, which won liberation for Jerusalem (1 *Macc.* 7:19-50; 2 *Macc.* 15:36).
  5. Judas, after being named H.P., enamored with the power of Rome and their republican government, draws up an alliance with them (1 *Macc.* 8:1-16 & *Ant* 12.10.6). But before the response returned, Demetrius returned from the east with his army and crushed Judas, reestablishing Alcimus as High Priest and the Hellenists as the dominant party (1 *Macc.* 8:17-32). Some believed, perhaps as God's judgement for seeking an alliance with a pagan power.
- E. Maccabees under Jonathan (B.C. 160-143) and Simon (B.C. 143-135)
1. Judas died in the second battle against Bacchides, a general of Demetrius, (1 *Macc.* 9), B.C. 161, after being H.P. for three years (*Ant* 12.11).
  2. Jonathan, the youngest took over, being the most warlike of the three surviving brothers (*Ant* 13.1). For an example of his warlike nature read *Ant* 13.1.2, 4.
  3. Alcimus died of a "divine" (?) paralytic stroke in B.C. 159, after giving orders to tear down the walls around the temple (1 *Macc* 9:55ff.).
  4. After much fighting Jonathan and Bacchides, the general of king Demetrius, made peace which lasted about 6 years (158-153), (cf. *Ant* 13.1.5-6).
  5. Alexander IV (also known as Balas), the supposed son of Epiphanes, attacked Demetrius, both tried to make friends with Jonathan. Alexander went so far as to declare Jonathan H.P., paid for rebuilding the temple, etc. Demetrius allowed him to raise an army and remitted their taxes (cf. *Ant* 13.2.1-3). Demetrius was

imprisoned on an excursion to Parthia (cf. Bruce, pp. 164-166), although Josephus says he died in the battle, fighting heroically (*Ant* 13.2.4).

6. Tryphon, a general of Antiochus, murdered the infant Antiochus VI, son of Alexander Balas, and established himself as king. However, the troops deserted to Cleopatra, the wife of Demetrius II. She offered to marry Demetrius' brother, Antiochus VIII who returned from Asia Minor upon hearing of his brother's capture.
  7. Tryphon seduced Jonathan to Ptolemais where he slew his 1,000 man body guard and imprisoned Jonathan. His brother, Simon took over and went out to meet Tryphon who was marching into Judea (See 1 Macc. 12:35-13:30 and (*Ant* 13.6). Simon foiled his invasion (*Ant* 13.6.3).
  8. Simon, the only remaining son, takes over and rules as H.P. from 143-135 B.C. He realigns with Demetrius, who releases Judea from Tribute (May, B.C. 142). Thus, Judea regained her independence. In the same year he also renewed an alliance with Rome.
  9. The final war against Syria (1 Macc. 15 & *Ant* 13.7) was won.
  10. Simon and two of his sons died treacherously at the hand of his ambitious son-in-law, Ptolemy (1 Macc. 16), 135 B.C.
- F. John Hyrcanus (135-106 B.C.), third son of Simon
1. He pursued Ptolemy to Dagon above Jericho, intending to take the fortress. But Ptolemy tortured his mother and brothers on the wall. This sapped Hyrcanus' courage. He finally left off the siege during the Sabbatical year (*Ant* 13.8.1).
  2. In B.C. 133, Antiochus VII took advantage of John's troubles, attacked and again subjugated Judea. But in B.C. 128, he went to fight Parthia. He was killed. Demetrius II was released and Judea threw off the shackles of a weak Syria (*Ant* 13.9.3).
  3. At this, John subjugated Samaria, tearing down its rival temple, and Idumea, subjugating its citizens to circumcision. It is a paradox that the Grandson of Mattathias would force religious conformity (*Ant* 13.9.1). John also renewed an alliance with Rome (*Ant* 13.9.2).
  4. The Pharisaic and Sadducean parties rose at this time. John favored the Sadducean party because at a banquet he threw one of the Pharisees insulted him by asking him to step down as H.P. because of the illegitimacy of his birth, suspecting his mother had been raped by a Syrian guard when she was in captivity (*Ant* 13.10.5-6).
  5. Died in 106 B.C. Which brought several changes:
    - a. He died without violence of his father and uncles.
    - b. His son Judas (Aristobulus), marks the transition from a theocratic common-wealth of the Maccabees to the Asmonaean kingdom, purely Hellenized.
    - c. The lines of demarcation between the Hellenists and the Hasmoneans are no longer clearly drawn.
- G. Summary of the Maccabees
1. Two major periods
    - a. 168-153 B.C.--Unified Syrian opposition.

- b. 153-139 B.C.--Syrian factions courting Judean favor and variously acknowledging independence.
    - 2. The control of Jerusalem was the deciding factor as to whether they were an army or guerrillas.
    - 3. Belief in resurrection grew at this time, 2 Macc. 7:14, 36; 14:46.
    - 4. Because of Antiochian persecution and destruction of the books of the law (1 Macc. 1:56-57; 3:48) the canon was solidified.
    - 5. Their progeny made the age-old mistake of trusting foreign armies, namely Herod and Rome.
  - H. Reasons for the success of the Maccabees
    - 1. Maccabees fought for and in their own land for which they were willing to die. Most of their opposing armies were made up of mercenaries who were in it for the money.
    - 2. They truly believed in God, Prayer, Sacrifice, and the Mosaic Law and obedience to it.
    - 3. Because these were Holy Wars, the stakes were higher.
    - 4. All the Maccabees were great orators and often used powerful speeches to rally the troops.
    - 5. They practiced guerrilla warfare with the support of the populous.
    - 6. It would appear that the hand of God was upon them in military victory and prophetic utterance.
    - 7. They were extremely violent.
- III. Asmonean (Maccabean) Kingdom
  - A. Under Aristobulus I (106-105 B.C.)
    - 1. Aristobulus I seized the titles of king (his predecessors had been content with the title of "ethnarch") and H.P. (*Ant* 13.11.1).
    - 2. This whole period is marked by wealth, avarice and dissensions.
    - 3. His step-mother and three of his half-brothers were put into prison. His mother and probably two of his brothers were starved to death.
    - 4. His only other brother accompanied him on a military venture of Iturea (later called Auranitis). Aristobulus had to return due to illness. When his victorious brother returned, Aristobulus' wife, Alexandra, moved him to jealousy, causing Aristobulus to murder his brother. Aristobulus was horrified after his crime, vomited blood (which the attendant then poured on the pavement with his brother's), and soon afterward he died (*Ant* 13.11).
    - 5. He reigned for only one year.
  - B. Alexander Jannaeus (105-78 B.C.), brother of Aristobulus
    - 1. Aristobulus' widow released Alexander Jannaeus from prison and married him. He thus took the title of king and High Priest.
    - 2. Secured the throne after the death of Aristobulus by putting his next eldest brother to death. John Hyrcanus had had a supposed vision from God predicting Alexander to rule next (*Ant* 13.12.1).
    - 3. His bloodthirsty nature made his H.P.hood an offence. He also married his brother's widow, which was expressly forbidden for the H.P. (Lev. 21:13-14).

4. Because of internal conflict of Syria and Egypt, Alexander took several cities of Palestine--Ptolemais, Gaza, Dora and the tower of Straton. Jewish territory rivaled that of the Glory days of David and Solomon (*Ant* 13.12.4-6).
  5. Judah was on the verge of civil war. As he was officiating the Feast of Tabernacles, he poured out a water libation at his feet, rather than on the altar, so as to insult the Pharisees. The people pelted him with citrons and reviled the day of his father's birth. By his guards, 6,000 people were killed. The people were displeased with his continued policy of territorial expansion (*Ant* 13.13.6).
  6. Civil war ensued for six years. Alexander killed no less than 50,000 Jews (*Ant* 13.13.6). At last, through the help of the rival kings of Syria, he was defeated and fled to the mountains.
  7. Then, the Pharisees fearing that Syria would again occupy Palestine, defected back over the Jannaeus. He regained all his former power and the civil war ended with much blood-shed of his enemies (*Ant* 13.14.2). For instance, he crucified 800 opposing Jews in front of their wives and children as a feast spectacle before his own concubines.
  8. 8,000 people fled the country. It was likely at this time that the Essene community began.
  9. *Ant* 15.4 delineates the areas under Jewish control.
  10. After ruling 27 years, he died at age 49 and his widow Alexandra succeeded the civil government and his oldest son, Hyrcanus became H.P. (*Ant* 13.15.5).
- C. Alexandra (78-69 B.C.)
1. She had been married successively to Aristobulus and Alexander Jannaeus who were brothers.
  2. Nearly 64 years old when she began her reign. It ended at her death at age 73.
  3. Give over all real power to the Pharisees on the advice of Jannaeus from his death-bed (*Ant* 13.15.5). Unfortunately, the Pharisees took the opportunity to revenge their compatriots and murdered many Sadducees. This eventually lead to another civil war through her sons.
  4. She gave power to her two sons:
    - a. Hyrcanus, the H.P., aligned with the Pharisees.
    - b. Aristobulus became the commander in chief of the army and aligned with the Sadducees.
  5. At her death, Hyrcanus II took the throne. But Aristobulus II (69-63 B.C.) gathered troops, defeated the Pharisaic party at Jericho and then marched on Jerusalem against his brother, Hyrcanus II (a supporter of the Pharisees), thus gaining both the throne and the priesthood. Hyrcanus II abdicated to a private life (*Ant* 14.1.2).
- D. Antipater, the new enemy (*Ant* 14.1.2-3).
1. Noble of Idumea, ostensibly embraced Judaism. Nicolaus of Damascus claimed that he was, in fact, Jewish.
  2. He persuaded Hyrcanus that his life was in danger, thus Hyrcanus fled to Aretas, king of the Nabateans, at Petra. While there, Antipater convinced Hyrcanus II that he was the rightful king and that he would help him regain his throne.
  3. The two returned with 50,000 men and besieged Aristobulus in the temple. Aretas joined forces with them upon the promise of receiving back 12 cities

which were taken by Alexander Jannaeus (*Ant* 14.1.4). During the passover they had no lambs. Aretas told them to let down baskets with the price of the lambs and they would supply them. Instead however, they just took the money or put swine in the baskets (*Ant* 14.2.2).

4. During this time Onias, an old man of Hyrcanus' camp, prayed that God would not hear the prayers of either side for the other's harm--He was stoned to death (*Ant* 14.2.1).

#### IV. Rome

##### A. Beginnings

1. Founded in 753 B.C. according to tradition. It was a new-comer in the arena of world powers: Sumerians, Hittites, Babylonians, Assyrians, Egyptians.
2. By the 5th century she was a thriving republic.
3. Her genius is in her military. Rome gained control over all the Mediterranean in 146 B.C. with the Punic wars against the Carthaginians.
4. Now the areas of Italy, Macedonia, Achaia and Asia were subject to Rome.

##### B. Roman intervention Into Palestine

1. Pompey was a famed Roman general who was noted for his moderation, humility, and forgiveness of those he had conquered (Plutarch, *Lives*, 502c & 503d). Although he was ambitious, even so much as to divorce his wife for a politically expedient marriage to Aemilia who was "great with child" by her current husband (Plutarch, *Lives*, 503a). He subdued rebellion in Spain, Asia, Africa, Mediterranean pirates of Cilicia and Crete, Syria, Arabia, Palestine and Egypt (Plutarch, *Lives*, 520c-521a).
2. After Pompey won a decisive victory over the Mithridates in Asia Minor (B.C. 63) [Plutarch, *Lives*, 514c-516b]. In the chase after Methridates, he also conquered the Albanians and the Iberians (who escaped the dominion of the Medes and Persians and even Alexander because he passed by them so quickly).
3. Afterward he sent Scaurus to help settle issues in Syria. When he learned of the strife in Judea, he decided they could take advantage of it. At first, Scaurus favored Aristobulus who then immediately attacked in Judea.
4. Pompey held court to decide between Hyrcanus (with Aretas' backing and 1,000 bribed nobles) and Aristobulus and his youthful, arrogant cohorts (*Ant* 14.3.2).
5. When Pompey left Petra, Aristobulus, fearing a decision for Hyrcanus, immediately laid siege to it. But upon Pompey's swift return, was forced to surrender.
6. He then went quickly to Jerusalem, but again Pompey met him and forced his surrender before he could prepare for defence. He was then put into prison for his resistance. His troops shut themselves in the Temple for three months. They were finally defeated at the cost of 12,000 Jewish lives (*Ant* 14.4.)! Plutarch gives this a sparse two sentences (!) that merely say, "He conquered also Judaea, and took its king, Aristobulus, captive. Some cities he built anew, and to others he gave their liberty, chastising their tyrants" (*Lives* 518b).
7. The temple was desecrated (B.C. 63; *Ant* 14.4.4):
  - a. By the slaying of the priests on the altar as they went about their daily sacrifices.

- b. Entrance of Romans and their standards into the temple.
  - c. Pompey, entering the Holy of Holy. He found it empty! He left the vast treasure untouched, however.
8. Rome then took charge of Jerusalem (63 B.C.). Read Julius Caesar's decrees (*Ant* 14.10.2,6,22).
- a. Hyrcanus conferred by Rome as H.P. but without the title of king.
  - b. Tribute imposed to Rome.
  - c. Walls of Jerusalem torn down.
  - d. During civil war, the people embraced Rome as an arbiter.
  - e. Aristobulus once more attacked Hyrcanus. Gabinius once more was sent from Rome as general. In the end, the land was divided into 5 councils--thus the transfer from an aristocracy to a theocracy (*Ant* 14.5.4).
  - f. Aristobulus was taken back to Rome. He escaped and returned to Judea for another revolt. Badly beaten, he was imprisoned in Rome again. He sent his son, Alexander, to revolt in Judea (*Ant* 14.5.2). He too was badly beaten and Herod Antipas was sent by Gabinius to "talk sense" into the Jews (*Ant* 14.6).
  - g. Caesar sent Aristobulus to Syria with troops to put down a rebellion. But Pompey's men poisoned him and embalmed him in honey (*Ant* 14.7.4).
  - h. The first Triumvirate was Julius Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus, who was killed in B.C. 53 in a campaign against Parthia.
  - i. In B.C. 49, civil war broke out between Pompey and Julius Caesar. Pompey fled to Egypt where he was killed in B.C. 48. When Caesar arrived in Egypt, they trapped him in Alexandria (B.C. 48-47). He was rescued by the Mithridates and Antipater. Thus Antipater was rewarded with the title of Procurator of Judea.
9. Julius Caesar was murdered in 44 B.C. (*Ant* 14.11.1) Cassius took the governorship of Syria with rapacity. This sent the empire into a 13 year period of confusion which would not be settled until 31 B.C. when Octavian defeated Antony and Cleopatra at Actium.
- C. Antipater to Herod
- 1. Antipater, when Caesar fought Egypt, was made Procurator of Judea. Both Hyrcanus and Antipater helped in the battle and both won great honors after the victory (*Ant* 14.8.1-3). Antipater was also made procurator of Galilee and Hyrcanus was made H.P. and allowed to build a wall around Jerusalem.
  - 2. Antipater was an Idumean (O.T. Edomite). This was offensive to the more orthodox Jews. He had four sons whom he made governors of various provinces (*Ant* 14.9.2):
    - a. Phasael--Jerusalem
    - b. Herod--Galilee
    - c. Joseph
    - d. Pheroras
    - e. Salome (daughter)
  - 3. This 15 year old governor of Galilee showed a severity and sternness which won victory and a mixed popularity. He often disregarded Jewish laws.

4. In the crisis which followed the murder of Julius Caesar, Herod was named "Procurator of Judea". He was promised the title of king later.
5. Not everyone liked Antipater and Co. They made this clear when Herod was accused of murder and called to stand trial before the sanhedrin (*Ant* 14.9.3-4). Antipater was finally poisoned in B.C. 43 by Hyrcanus' butler by the bribery of Malichus (Hyrcanus may also have been in on the plot).
6. Antony Spent the winter of B.C. 41-40 in Egypt and was spell-bound by Cleopatra.
7. Herod inherited the throne of Judea at the death of Hyrcanus. However, in 41 B.C. the Parthians invaded and captured Jerusalem, placing Antigonus, son of Aristobulus II, on the throne (B.C. 40-37; *Ant* 14.13.3-7). Herod had to flee to Rome where he was declared "King of the Jews" (*Ant* 14.14.1-5). With the help of Rome the Parthians were driven out and Herod began his rule in 37 B.C. Hyrcanus was imprisoned and had his ears cropped so as to keep him from ever being High Priest again. Antigonus was sent to Antony in chains and for the first time, the Romans enacted capital punishment on a king.
8. Herod had full favor with Cassius, proconsul of Syria. When Antony defeated Brutus and Cassius at Philippi, through tribute, presents, and flattery, he also gained the favor of Mark Antony. And he gained the favor of Hyrcanus by marrying his granddaughter, Mariamne (37 B.C.).

## V. Herods

### A. Background

1. The Herods adopted the Jewish religion after Idumea was captured by John Hyrcanus in 130 B.C.
2. They were descendants of Esau but claimed to be Jewish (*Ant* 14.15.2).
3. By necessity they aligned with Rome in hopes of creating a universal independent state.
4. The Herods established H.P. and deposed them with disregard for the sacred office.

### B. He Great (37-4 B.C.)

1. He was cruel and vicious. Upon coming to office he disposed of 45 adherents of Antigonus as well as the whole Sanhedrin. He also subdued the cave robbers (*Ant* 14.15.5).
2. Menahem, an Essene, predicted Herod's reign, even when he was a little boy (*Ant* 15.10.5).
3. Heavily involved in Greek worship and games as well as Jewish.
4. He did, however, offer some of the Jews what they wanted:
  - a. Peace and protection
  - b. Culture (along with Hellenization)--Games, theater, architecture and art.
  - c. Lower taxes and greater public service.
  - d. Freedom from Gentile corruption of their religion.
5. Herod realized that he could not trust Alexandra and had her constantly watched in the Palace. At one time she tried to escape with her son Aristobulus in two specially prepared coffins. One of the guards discovered the plot.

6. There is an interesting story of the H.P. Ananel which Herod brought from Babylon (*Ant* 15.2.5-6). Alexandra, Herod's mother-in-law was enraged that an Asmonean was not appointed. Through her intrigues with Antony and Cleopatra, Herod got scared and appointed her son, Aristobulus, then only 16, to the position. He was soon after drown, "by accident" by the rough play of some of Herods detractor while bathing in a tank near Jericho (Josephus, *Wars* I 22.2; *Ant* 15.3).
7. At her son's death, Alexandra again went to Cleopatra, who went to Antony who called Herod to Laodicea (*Ant* 15.3.5). Fearing he would die, and wanting revenge, he told his uncle, Joseph to dispatch his wife, Mariamne, on the first word of his death (Herod suspected that Antony was attracted to her beauty), (*Ant* 15.2.6). He did not die, but rather was rewarded with Coelesyria as part of his region. For a description of Antony's relationship with Cleopatra, see Plutarch's *Lives*, "Antony," (pp. 339-344).
8. His sister Salome poisoned his mind against his wife but love finally conquered. She convinced him that Joseph, his uncle, whom he had left in charge while he was with Antony, and to whom he had given the command to kill Mariamne, must have slept with Mariamne to get him to tell her about the orders. Joseph was immediately killed with no chance to defend himself. Mariamne was temporarily bound. But his love for her won out (*Ant* 15.3.5-9).
9. Cleopatra, on a trip to Jerusalem, tried to seduce Herod (*Ant* 15.4).
10. Plutarch describes three reasons for contention between Octavian and Antony:
  - a. Antony's neglect of his wives, Fulvia and Octavia (Octavian's sister).
  - b. Antony gave the power of newly conquered regions over to Cleopatra.
  - c. Octavian stripped Lepidius' power and territory and gave none of it to Antony or his army.
11. Battle of Actium, 31 B.C. Augustus Caesar (Octavian) beat Antony. Antony made two strategic errors:
  - a. He waited to attack, allowing the populace's anger at Octavian's heavy taxation to subside.
  - b. He allowed Cleopatra to talk him into a sea battle rather than a land battle.
12. Because of a recent devastating earthquake (*Ant* 15.5.2) in Jerusalem, and a recent expedition against the Nabatean Arabs, Herod failed to go to Actium. After the battle he killed Hyrcanus, the H.P., then went to meet the conqueror and made a friend (*Ant* 15.6.6).
13. Sohemus had told Mariamne and Alexandra of Herod's plans. When he returned with the "good news" she was sorry he was still alive (*Ant* 15.7).
14. After the Battle, Antony went to Cleopatra in Egypt. When the Romans arrived, she and two of her maids locked themselves up in a monument and made Antony think that she had committed suicide. Upon learning this, he thrust himself through with his own sword, but did not immediately die. She brought him into the monument where he expired. Legend has it that She committed suicide by letting herself be bitten by asps (Plutarch, *Lives*, "Antony," pp. 381-388).
15. He finally murdered Mariamne when she accused him a second time of affections with his sister Salome. On both occasions it was when she learned of Herod's treacherous orders to have her killed if he was. Her mother was to be

- killed with her but won a brief reprieve by insulting her daughter. This sent Herod into a guilty remorse from which he never recovered (*Ant* 15.7.4-5, 7-8).
16. In 25 B.C. there was a great famine and pestilence in Judea. Herod with his own expenses, sent to Egypt to buy corn and clothes for regular distribution among the people (*Ant* 15.9.1-2).
  17. He remarried the daughter of Simon, a priest but only after making him H.P. (*Ant* 15.9.3).
  18. His greatest claim to fame among the Jews was the rebuilding of the temple (19-20 B.C.; (*Ant* 15.11; Jn 2:20 [46 years = A.D. 27]). At the same time, however, he rebuilt the temple of Samaria, as well as providing for pagan worship in his new home-town of Caesarea. For a detailed description see Josephus, *Wars*, V, 5 and the Mishna, Tractate *Middoth*. It was still being built in Jesus' day and was not completed, according to Josephus, until 65 A.D. He also renovated the Olympic games with his generous gifts (*Ant* 16.5.3).
  19. After his sons returned from Rome, Aristobulus and Alexander were hailed by the populace as Asmonean princes. This moved Herod to jealousy, along with the schemes of Salome, who clearly outwitted the rash youth. Herod also had them accused in Rome (*Ant* 16.8.1,4) and he finally had them killed by strangulation (*Ant* 16.11.7).
  20. Herod opened the tomb of David to rob its treasures, as Hyrcanus had done. A report was made that 2 guards were killed when a mysterious flame burst out upon them (*Ant* 16.7.1).
  21. Herod's own son, Antipater, conspired against his father and uncle, Pheroras (*Ant* 17.2).
  22. Herod temporarily fell out of favor with Rome after attacking the Arabians (*Ant* 16.9.3).
  23. His final illness--ulcerated body (*Ant* 17.6.5)
    - a. On his death-bed Herod got permission from Rome to do as he pleased with Antipater after poison was discovered that Antipater had prepared for his father. One day Herod very nearly killed himself with a paring knife with which he was cutting an apple to eat. His first cousin, Achiabus stopped him and cried out with loud lamentations. When this noise was heard throughout the palace, rumors spread that Herod was dead. When Antipas heard it he bribed the guard to let him out so he could take over the kingdom. The guard refused and reported it to Herod on his death-bed who ordered Antipas killed immediately (*Ant* 17.7).
    - b. Augustus, however, sarcastically said, "It is better to be Herod's hog than his son."
    - c. He changed his will just before he died so that Archelaus was granted Judea and Antipas became the tetrarch of Galilee (*Ant* 17.8.1)
    - d. Commanded that the chief families of Judea be shut up in the hippodrome at Jericho. When he died they were to be slaughtered so that his burial would not be without mourning. Fortunately Salome let them go (*Ant* 17.18.2).
    - e. The murder of Bethlehem would likely have involved little more than a dozen children in this small town.

24. The party of the Herodians is mentioned only a few times in the Gospels, always in connection with their opposition to Christ. Nothing is stated of their theology. We can only infer that they supported Herod's policies of cooperation with Rome and Hellenization of culture.

C. Family of Herod the Great

1. Summary of Herod's 10 wives and Children: (cf. p. 123)
  - a. Doris married Herod before his accession to the throne. Her only Son, Antipater, was the recipient of Herod's final frenzy of rage and suspicion on his death bed.
  - b. Miriamne was the granddaughter of Hyrcanus. Her large family introduced the Agrippa (Acts 12:1-2) who martyred James and his son Agrippa II, before whom Paul made his defence (Acts 26).
2. Following Herod's Death
  - a. His funeral was accompanied by a solemn and magnificent ceremony supposedly reprieved in the evening with revelry (*Ant* 17.8.3).
  - b. The feast of Passover saw the death of 3,000 zealous and rioting Jews (*Ant* 17.9.3). The following Tabernacle feast saw the return of the zealous element, angry about being repelled 7 months before.
  - c. His will left most to the two sons of Malthace, Archelaus and Antipas. However, before the will was confirmed by Augustus, there was much dissention and squabbling over power (*Ant* 17.9.4).
  - d. When the brothers were in Rome contending their rights, anarchy broke out in Jerusalem although Sabinus had captured the Palace (*Ant* 17.10.2). Herod's troops pillaged at will. There thus grew up a common expectation of a savior--Messiah. There came to be much violence between three forces: Romans, the king's forces and the populace.
  - e. Varus, of Syria, finally subdued the seditions. 2,000 Jews were crucified as punishment. He dismissed his own army who had plundered and acted improperly (*Ant* 17.9:9-10). And the Angry Jews sent a complaint to Caesar (*Ant* 17.10)
  - f. Most of the family supported Antipas over Archelaus, especially since the previous will left the government to Antipas. Three charges were laid against Archelaus: (1) Killing 3,000 in the temple, (2) Usurping the kingdom before Caesar gave it to him, and (3) the last will was unauthentic due to Herod's illness. Meanwhile, it became obvious to Augustus that the only true government of Palestine had to be Roman (*Ant* 17.9).
  - g. The will was confirmed and the following areas bestowed (*Ant* 17.11.4):
    - i. Archelaus--Ethnarch of Judea, with the potential promise of King. Revenue of 600 talents. Chief cities: Jerusalem, Sebaste, Caesarea, Joppa.
    - ii. Salome received Jamnia, Azotus, Phasaelis, and a palace in Ascalon.
    - iii. Antipas--Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea with a revenue of 200 talents.
    - iv. Philip--Auranitis and Trachonitis.
3. Archelaus--9 year Rule
  - a. Distrusted by the Jews; ruled as a tyrant.
  - b. Divorced Mariamne to marry his brother Alexander's widow, Glaphyra.

- c. Jews appealed to Augustus against him and in A.D. 7 he was banished to Vienna in Gaul. The scepter had departed from Judah (Gen. 49:10; *Ant* 17.13.3-4).
- 4. Herod Antipas
  - a. Divorced the daughter of Aretas to marry Herodias. This precipitated his encounter and murder of John the Baptist. (cf. Matt. 14:9; Mark 6:20; *Ant* 28.5.1-2).
  - b. He was also involved with Christ's trial. (cf. Acts 4:25-28; Ps. 2:1-2).
  - c. Summary statements about him:
    - i. Jesus, "That fox" (Luke 13:32).
    - ii. Luke, "All the wickedness which Herod had done" (Luke 3:19).
  - d. He became jealous when Caligula heaped lavish honors on his nephew, Herod Agrippa. Herodias incited him to go the Rome and seek honors for himself. When he did, Agrippa sent charges of treason. Antipas was banished to Lugdunum in Gaul (A.D. 39). She chose to live with him rather than to share in her brother's fortune.
- 5. Herod Philip II
  - a. Appears to be a just ruler, not given to the avarice and excesses of the other Herods.
  - b. He built the Caesarea spoken of in Matt. 16:13; Mark 8:27.
  - c. Herodias, is half-niece, left him to marry is half-brother.

## VI. Government of N.T. Times

### A. Pontius Pilate (A.D. 26-37)

1. In 1961 a cornerstone bearing his name was found at Caesarea (*Biblical Archaeologist*, Sept. 1964, p. 70).
2. First offence was when he brought Roman troops and standards into Jerusalem by night from Caesarea. There was an immediate confrontation. They descended on him in Caesarea and asked to have them removed. After 5 days of discussion, Pilate ordered his troops to surround the crowds and kill the dissenters. They said that they were rather ready to die. At this he was forced to relent.
3. Later he attempted to hang some shields in the palace at Jerusalem which had no images but only the name of a god and its donor. The Jews appealed to Tiberias who ordered them taken down.
4. Another riot started when Pilate took the Corban to pay for an aqueduct into the city.
5. At some point he slaughtered some Galileans (Lk. 13:1-3).
6. When the Samaritans complained to Vitellius, the prefect of Syria and father of the Emperor, he summoned Pilate to Rome. Just after the death of Tiberius, one of Caligula's first acts was to banish Pilate to Vienna in Gaul. There is still a monument there that bears his name.

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