

New Testament Life and Times

The World of Jesus in the Early Church --

5. History from Persia to Rome
6. The Jewish Context
7. The Greco-Roman Context

Leander Church of Christ

November 22, 2020

Notes available from <https://ClassNotes.LeanderChurch.org>

Where have we been? Where are we going?

Steps

- 1. Theory/Proposal**
- 2. Facts**
- 3. Application**

New Testament in its World

1. **PROPOSAL** -- Understanding that the NT was written within history, with certain presuppositions, using different types of literary genres *makes a difference in how we interpret it.*
2. **FACTS** -- What happened? What was the culture? Who had which worldviews?
3. **APPLICATION** -- How does this affect
 - Concepts?
 - Resurrection
 - Faithfulness
 - Books?
 - Galatians
 - Mark
 - Matthew
 - Etc.

NTiiW - 5 Jewish History (Persia to Rome)

Top Three Events Shaping the Jewish People in this Period

*** [TopThree \(video 3.5 minutes\)](#)

(web version: [TopThree \(web video\)](#))

Top Three

1. Alexander the Great – Greek Culture
2. Antiochus IV Epiphanes – Desecrated Temple
 - Maccabean Revolution – Hasmoneans
3. Roman Takeover

Second-Temple Judaism ??

- First temple destroyed by _____ in 587 BC
- Many Jews removed to Babylon
- Pre-exilic faith stretched to the breaking point. Had God forsaken them?
 - Isaiah/Jeremiah, God will bring them back from exile, new exodus, new king, new temple
 - New renewal of covenant, with God himself returning to dwell in the new temple.

Timeline

- 722 BC – Assyria takes the northern tribes
- 597 BC – Southern tribes conquered by Babylonia
 - 539 BC – Babylonia displaced by Persia
- 332 BC – Alexander the Great conquers Palestine
- 320 BC – Egyptian (Greek Ptolemies)
- 200 BC – Syrian (Seleucid)
- 142 BC – Hasmonean Dynasty
- 63 BC – Roman Takeover

“The World” has turned GREEK.

EXTRA CREDIT

_____ ? BC – God wrote the Ten Commandments
*** 1300 BC

_____ ? BC – David reigned as king
*** 1000 BC

_____ ? First Emperor of Rome – When? _____
*** Augustus, 31 BC

Extra Credit

- What percentage of the battles fought by Alexander the Great did he win?
- Why didn't Alexander conquer Europe?

National Culture, Expectation, Worldview

But God will again have mercy on them, and God will bring them back into the land of Israel; and they will rebuild the temple of God, but not like the first one until the period when the times of fulfilment shall come. After this they all will return from their exile and will rebuild Jerusalem in splendor; and in it the temple of God will be rebuilt, just as the prophets of Israel have said concerning it. Then the nations in the whole world will all be converted and worship God in truth . . . All the Israelites who are saved in those days and are truly mindful of God will be gathered together; they will go to Jerusalem and live in safety for ever in the land of Abraham, and it will be given over to them. Those who sincerely love God will rejoice, but those who commit sin and injustice will vanish from all the earth.

--- Tob. 14.5–7 NRSV

Greek, Greek, Greek

- 1st Century – 3:1 Jews outside:inside Palestine
- Main Language of Jews – **GREEK**
- Jesus grew up in Nazareth, a few miles from Sepphoris (**Greek**)
- After Roman takeover...
 - Palestine (the whole Near East) remained linguistically and culturally **GREEK** for _____(?) years.
 - 900 years, which is when WHAT happened?
 - Arab conquests
- **Extra Credit – What language is the Septuagint written in?**
 - **Did Jesus use the Septuagint?**

Ancient Greek philosophy arose in the 6th century BC and lasted through the Hellenistic period (323 BC-30 BC).

Greek philosophy covers an absolutely enormous amount of topics including: **political philosophy**, **ethics**, **metaphysics**, **ontology** (the study of the nature of being, becoming, existence, or reality), **logic**, **biology**, **rhetoric**, and **aesthetics** (branch of philosophy dealing with art, beauty, and taste).

Who's Who?

- Socrates (450 BC)
 - Plato (400 BC)
 - Aristotle (350 BC) [tutored whom?]
- Philo (of Alexandria, 40 AD)
- Pliny (the younger, senator 80 AD)
- Josephus (80 AD)

What's What?

- Homer's Illiad
 - Second best-preserved literary work from antiquity
 - 643 copies of manuscript support
 - 764 disputed lines of text
- Julius Caesar's Gallic Wars
 - 10 manuscripts. Earliest date – 1000 years after the original.
- God's New Testament
 - Best-preserved literary work from antiquity
 - 5600 copies and fragments in the original Greek
 - Earliest date – 100 years after the original
 - 40 disputed lines of text

Antiochus Epiphanes IV *(Greek: "God Manifest")*

- Selucid (Syrian) Ruler
- Goal: Use Judea as a buffer state against Egypt
- Method: Forcible Hellenization and elimination of Jewish religion.
- 12/25/-167 took over Temple, instituted worship of himself
- Used brutal methods
 - [Antiochus \(Audio 4.5 minutes\)](#) [web version: [Antiochus Epiphanes IV](#)]

Hasmoneans

- Heirs of successful Maccabean revolutionaries ruled as priest-kings
- Left a puzzle for the Jews
 - A 'return from exile' (from Persia) had occurred, but
 - It still seemed like another rescue needed to be carried out
 - Great prophecies seemed not yet to have been fulfilled.
 - No blaze of glory in Jerusalem, ruling the world, nations flowing to it, ...
 - Did God want the Hellenistic Hasmoneans in charge?

Mattathias
d. 166 BC

John Gaddi
d. 160 BC

Simon Maccabaeus
High Priest
142–135 BC

Judas Maccabaeus
High Priest
165–162 BC
d. 142 BC

Eliezer Avaran
d. 162 BC

Jonathan
Maccabaeus
High Priest
152–142 BC

John Hyrcanus I
ruled 134–104 BC

Mattathias
d. 134 BC

Judah
d. 134 BC

Alexandra Salome
ruled 76–67 BC

Aristobulus I
ruled 104–103 BC

Alexander Janneus
ruled 103–76 BC

Antigonus
d. 107 BC

Absalom

Hyrcanus II
high priest 75–66,
63–40
king 67 BC

Alexandra

Aristobulus II
ruled 66–63 BC

Alexander
d. 53 BC

Mariamne I

Antigonus Mattathias
ruled 40–37 BC

Herod
ruled 37 BC–4 AD

The Roman Empire

- 63 BC
 - Hasmonean civil war
 - Rome arrives, Rome conquers, Rome rules
 - Pompey wanders through the Holy of Holies (Are the Jews atheists?)
- Ruled through intermediaries (legates, proconsuls, Herod's family)
- AD 44 – 66
 - Brutal, corrupt, incompetent local overlords
 - Eleazar, captain of Temple, stopped daily Roman emperor sacrifices
 - War with Rome begins
- AD 70 – War ends
- **EXTRA CREDIT – Were most NT books written before, or after, 70 AD?**

AD 70 ... Then What? Transition until AD 132

- THEORY -- Pharisee, Johanan ben-Zakkai, friend of emperor, Jewish academy, modified twelfth clause in “eighteen Benedictions” invoking a curse on Christians – Stopped meeting in synagogues at this time.
- Complete disappearance of Sadducees and Essenes
- Three strands of Judaism (perhaps four) remained:
 - Anguish/Lament (4 Ezra and 2 Baruch)
 - Pragmatism, ben-Zakkai “God desires loving kindness rather than sacrifice.”
 - Smoldering rebellion, “How can we rebuild the true Temple?”
 - 4 – the young Christian church (Primarily opposed paganism, only secondarily Jews who would not accept Jesus as the Messiah.)

AD 132 – Bloody end of Transition Period

- Jews rebelled against the Roman emperor Hadrian
 - Hadrian created a law banning circumcision as barbaric.
 - Hadrian founded a pagan city on the site of ruined Jerusalem, with an altar to Zeus on the site where the Temple had been torn down.
- Massive defeat of Jews
 - Large numbers sold into slavery
 - Jerusalem became fully pagan
 - Jewish customs outlawed
- Not until the 20th century could the idea of a self-governing Jewish state even be considered a remote possibility again.

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NTiiW - 6 Jewish Context of Early Church

- What Questions maybe asked by Spelling Bee contestants?
 - alternate pronunciations
 - a definition
 - a part of speech
 - language of origin
 - for the word to be used in a sentence
 - for the word to be pronounced again.
- **SYNAGOGUE**
 - Language of Origen
 - Greek
 - Why?

Deuteronomy 17:11



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NTiiW - 7 Greco-Roman Context of Early Church

Closing (1)

Text goes here

Closing (2)

Text here

- And text here

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A
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P

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S

(ONLY IF TIME) [and/or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PWc2jyV40Y>]