

The Intertestamental Period

PODCAST 6 – WHAT DOES TORAH TEACH? PART B

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Exploring the Intertestamental Period

Over 6 lessons we will discuss three categories that shaped Jewish belief during the period up to the time of Jesus

1. Political changes and the new ways of understanding YHWH's reign over the Jewish people (and the world!)
2. The new cultural impulse of Hellenism and how it affected Jewish identity
3. Religious developments during the period as well as different groups within Judaism that sprang up

We will also discuss specifically how these changes are reflected in the New Testament

Last Session Review

- The Hellenistic Jewish groups found in Judea in the 1st century had a long history of interactions, rivalries, and disagreements
- The beliefs of each group were influenced by many factors including social status, political leanings, and
- While each of the groups discussed here believed their perspective was superior to the others, the Essenes were unique in asserting the other groups were not part of the covenant people of God

Our focus for today:

- The Jewish hope for national revolution
- The effects on the New Testament

New Religious Challenges

The challenges of the Intertestamental Period caused the Jewish community to look at Torah in new ways.

- The belief in the ethnic/national restoration of Israel
- How did these Intertestamental beliefs affect Jesus' ministry and the nascent Christian church?



Restoration of Israel

Where did these ideas come from?

Torah references:

Jeremiah 33:15 – 16 (JPS) –

“In **those days** and at **that time**, I will raise up a **true branch of David’s line**, and he shall do what is **just and right** in the land.”

Isaiah 11:1 – 3 (JPS) –

“But a **shoot shall grow out of the stump of Jesse**, a twig shall sprout from his stock. The **spirit of the LORD shall alight** upon him: a spirit of wisdom and insight, a spirit of counsel and valor, a spirit of **devotion and reverence** for the LORD. He shall **sense the truth by his reverence** for the LORD.”

Restoration of Israel

Where did these ideas come from?

Torah references:

Numbers 24:17 – 18 (JPS) –

“A **star** rises from Jacob, a **scepter** comes forth from Israel; it **smashes** the brow of Moab, the foundation of all children of Seth. Edom becomes **a possession**, yea, Seir a possession of its enemies; but Israel is **triumphant**.”

Psalm 2:8 – 9 (JPS) -

“Ask it of me, and I will **make the nations your domain**; your estate, **the limits of the earth**. You can **smash them** with an iron mace, **shatter them** like potter’s ware.”

Restoration of Israel

Where did these ideas come from?

Torah references:

Genesis 49:10 – 12 (JPS) –

“The **scepter** shall not depart Judah,
Nor the **ruler’s staff** from between his feet;
So that **tribute shall come** to him
And the **homage of peoples** be his.”



Balaam in Numbers 24

Restoration of Israel

What did restoration mean?

Whole people of Israel re-assembled

Baruch 5:5-6 (early 2nd c. CE) -

“Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height; look toward the east, and see **your children gathered** from west and east at **the word of the Holy One**, rejoicing that **God has remembered them**. For they went out from you **on foot, led away by their enemies**; but **God will bring them back** to you, carried in glory, as on a royal throne.”

War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness 2:2 (1st c. BCE) -

“Furthermore, 26 major officials duly assigned to service shall serve in their appointed offices; and after them there shall be **12 major Levites, one for each tribe, to serve constantly.**”

Restoration of Israel

What did restoration mean?

Overthrow/subjugation of the Gentiles

Jubilees 24:30 (2nd c. BCE) -

“And **no remnant will be left** to them, nor one who escapes on the day of wrath of judgment; because all of the **Philistine seed** is (destined) for **destruction and uprooting and removal** from the earth.”

Sibylline Oracles 3.616 (2nd c. BCE) –

“And **God will speak**, with a great voice, to **the entire ignorant empty-minded people**, and **judgment will come** upon them from the great God, and **all will perish** at the hand of the Immortal...All **well-constructed walls of hostile men will fall** to the ground, because **they knew neither the law** nor the judgment of the great God, but with mindless spirit you all **launched an attack** and raised spears **against the sanctuary**.”

Restoration of Israel

What did restoration mean?

Religious focus on Zion / Jerusalem with Temple rebuilt more in glorious form

1 Enoch 90:29 (1st c. BCE) –

“I went on seeing until the Lord of the sheep **brought about a new house, greater and loftier** than the first one, and set it up in the first location which had been covered up – all its **pillars were new, the columns new**; and the **ornaments new as well as greater** than those of the first, (that is) the old (house) which was gone.”

1 Enoch 91:13 (1st c. BCE) –

“At its completion, they shall **acquire great things** through their righteousness. **A house shall be built for the Great King in glory forevermore.**”

Restoration of Israel

What did restoration mean?

Establishment of God's righteous kingdom

Psalms of Solomon 17:32 (1st c. BCE) –

“And he will be a **righteous king** over them, **taught by God**. There will be **no unrighteousness among them** in his days, for **all shall be holy**, and their king shall be the Lord Messiah.”

Jubilees 33:20 (2nd c. BCE) –

“...Israel is a **holy nation** to the Lord his God, and a **nation of inheritance**, and a **nation of priests**, and a **royal nation**, and a **(special) possession**.”

Restoration of Israel

Who would lead them?

Possible leadership figures in Intertestamental literature

Messiah: 2nd Baruch 30:1 (early 2nd c. CE) -

“And it will happen after these things when **the time of the appearance** of the **Anointed One** has been fulfilled and he returns with glory, that then **all who sleep in hope of him will rise.**”

TWO Messiahs: The Community Rule (1QS) 9.11 (1st c. BCE) –

“Until the coming of the Prophet and of **both the priestly and the lay Messiah**, these men are **not to depart from the clear intent of the Law** to walk in any way in the stubbornness of their own hearts. They shall judge by **the original laws** in which the members of the community **were schooled** from the beginning.”

Restoration of Israel

Who would lead them?

Possible leadership figures in Intertestamental literature

Son of David: *Psalms of Solomon* 17:21 – 23 (1st c. BCE) -

“See, Lord, and raise up for them **their king, the son of David**, to rule over your servant Israel **in the time known to you**, O God. Undergird him with the strength to **destroy the unrighteous rulers**, to **purge Jerusalem from gentiles** who trample her to destruction; in wisdom and in righteousness **to drive out the sinners** from the inheritance; to **smash the arrogance of sinners** like a potter’s jar.”

Restoration of Israel

Who would lead them?

Possible leadership figures in Intertestamental literature

Son of God: 4th Book of Ezra 13.32 – 35 (late 1st c. CE) –

“...then **my son will be revealed**, whom you saw as a man coming up from the sea. And when **all the nations** hear his voice, every man shall leave his own land and the warfare that they have against one another; and an **innumerable multitude** shall be gathered together, as you saw, **desiring to come and conquer him.**”

Elijah: Apocalypse of Elijah 5.32 (1st – 4th c. CE) –

“After these things, **Elijah and Enoch will come down**. They will lay down the flesh of the world, and they will **receive their spiritual flesh**. They will pursue **the son of lawlessness and kill him** since he is not able to speak.”

Restoration of Israel

Historical examples of revolutionary figures

- Judas the Galilean – 4 BCE
- Samaritan prophet – 36 CE
- Theudas – 46 CE
- The Egyptian – ca. 50s CE
- Simon bar Giora – 68 CE
- Simeon bar Kochba (“son of the star”) – 135 CE

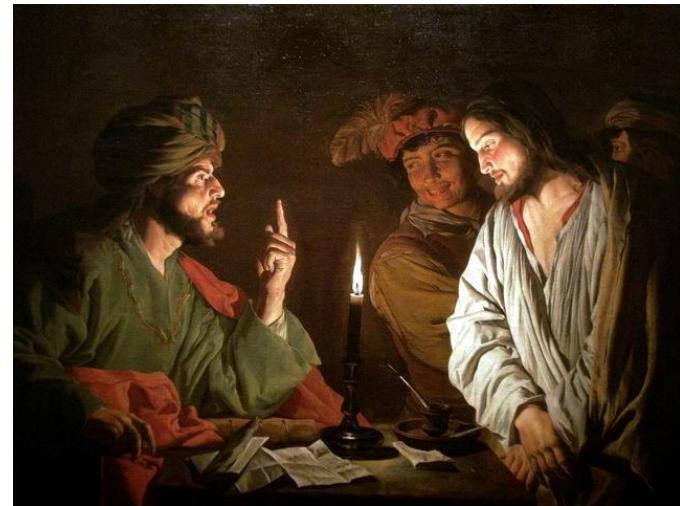


Religious Effects on the 1st c. CE

Confrontation between groups and Jesus

Jesus is *himself* the new focus of the symbols of Intertestamental Judaism

- *NOT* a conflict over interpretations of Torah
- Thus, Jesus' claim *IS* a conflict over symbols of Hellenistic Judaism
 - The Temple
 - "Customs of the Fathers"
 - Ethnic identity / covenant people of YHWH



**Jesus before the
Sanhedrin – Matthias
Stom, c. 1630**

Religious Effects on the 1st c. CE

Confrontation between groups and Jesus

Matthew 9:15-17 (NIV):

*“How can the guests of the bridegroom **mourn** while he is with them?...No one sews a patch of **unshrunk cloth** on an old garment...neither do people pour **new wine** into old wineskins.”*

Luke 11:32 (NIV):

*“The **men of Ninevah** will stand up at the judgment with this generation and **condemn it**; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now **one greater than Jonah** is here.”*

Religious Effects on the 1st c. CE

Early church's picture of Jesus uses the figures of the period to explain Jesus' character

- *Christos* = "Anointed One" = Messiah
- *Son of David*
- *Son of God*

Also used these as touchstones for what Jesus is **NOT**

- **NOT** the magician of *Gospel of Thomas*
- **NOT** the created being of Arianism



Religious Effects on the 1st c. CE

Church rejected the religious/ethnic nationalism of Intertestamental Period that led to the destruction of Jerusalem

Paul: Galatians 3:28 (NIV) – “*There is neither Jew nor Greek...*”

Apostle John: John 12:20-23 (NIV) – “*...there were some Greeks...and Jesus replied, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.’*”

Apostle Peter: Acts 11:47 (NIV) – “*Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.*”

What does the Intertestamental Period Mean to Us Today?



Daniel feeding the Dragon before the king
(Later Greek addition to the book of Daniel
from the 2nd c. BCE)

Questions and Feedback

I hope you were blessed by this study. I pray that God might deepen your knowledge and faith through it.

For any questions or feedback, I can be reached at:
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Charis!

Thom Rowe, March 2017

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