

# THE JEWISH FOUNDATIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT



Class V – Order at What Price?

February 11, 2017



# An Introductory Reading

## *The War of the Sons of Light & the Sons of Darkness 12 (1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE) -*

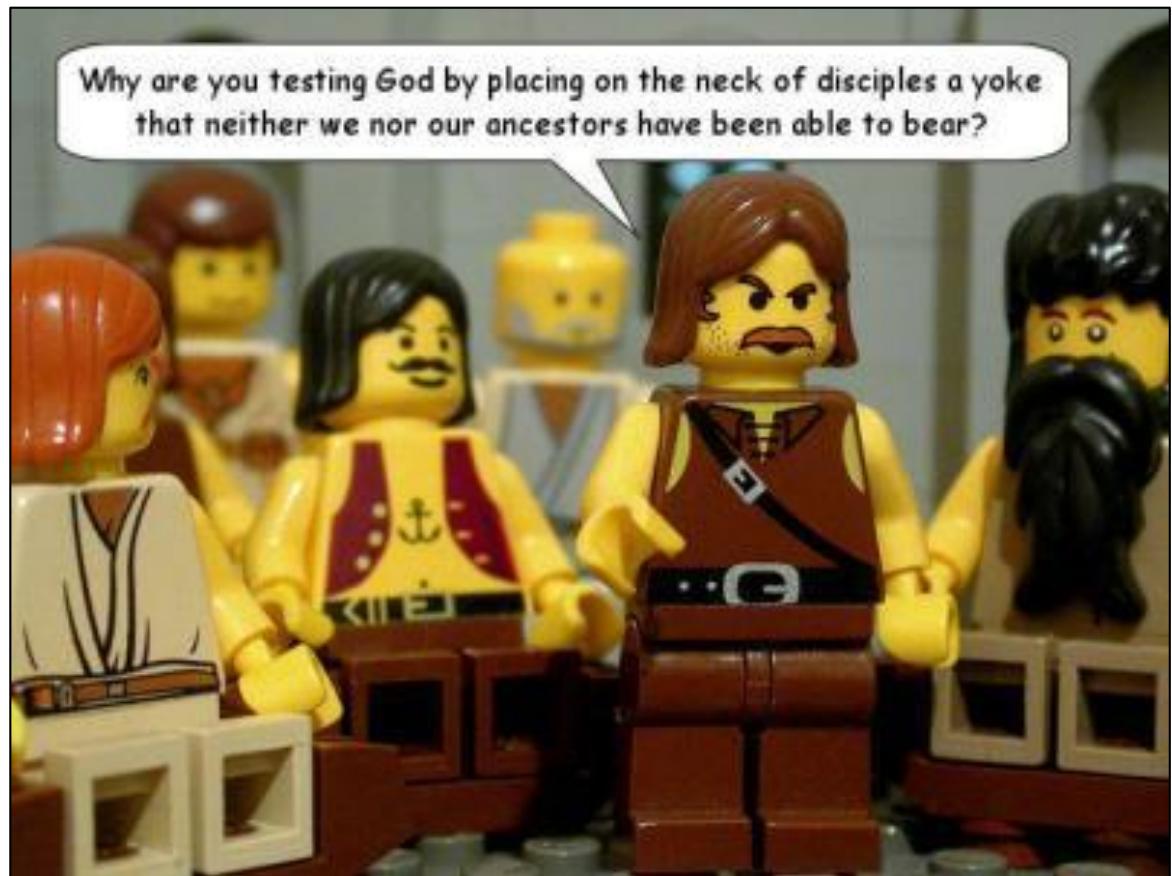
"Arise, O warrior!  
Take your captives, you man of glory;  
And reap your spoil, O valiant!  
Set your hand upon the neck of your  
foemen,  
And your foot upon the mounds of the  
slain.  
Smite the nations that assail you,  
And let your sword devour guilty flesh.  
Fill your land with glory and your  
inheritance with blessing.

Be a multitude of possessions in your  
fields,  
Silver and gold and precious stones  
in your palaces.  
Zion, rejoice exceedingly,  
And shine forth, O Jerusalem, with  
songs of joy,  
And let all the cities of Judah exult!  
Let your gates be continually open,  
That the wealth of the nations may  
be brought to you;  
And let their kings minister to you,

And all that oppressed you make  
obeisance to you,  
And lick the dust of your feet!  
O daughter of my people,  
Ring out your songs of joy!  
Put on your finery,  
Step forth [ ]  
[ ] Israel, to rule for evermore!  
[ ] the warriors, O Jerusalem!  
Be exalted, O Lord, above the  
heavens!"

# Last Week's Homework

- Read Acts 15
- What are the issues discussed at the council?
- What is decided and why?



# Last Week

## The Maccabean Revolt

- What changes occurred in the world after Exile?
- Why did the rulers want them to give up the “customs of the fathers”?
- What was the reaction from the inhabitants of Judea?



# Mattathias' Sons Establish a Dynasty

- 3<sup>rd</sup> son Simon succeeds Jonathan from 143 to 134 BCE
  - Named both “prince of Israel” and high priest
  - Enters into Seleucid wars of succession in return for political freedom
  - Justified attacks with the idea of “rescuing” fellow Jews
  - Forced Gentiles to convert to Judaism
- Simon’s son John Hyrcanus continues policies (134 – 104 BCE)
  - Ruled as a despot
  - Destroyed Samaritan temple on Mt. Gerazim and city of Samaria in 107 BCE (cf. Samaritan woman in John 5)

Coinage of John Hyrcanus



# Mattathias' Sons Establish a Dynasty

- Aristobulus ascends in 104 BCE
  - For the first time, names himself as “king”
  - Merges offices of priest and king – never happened before
- Alexander Jannaeus rules from 104 – 76 BCE
  - Pelted with citrus at Feast of Tabernacles for not following Pharisee version of the ritual – killed 6,000 people at festival
  - Crucified 800 Pharisees after learning they talked to Seleucid king about revolting



Coinage of Alexander Jannaeus

# Mattathias' Sons Establish a Dynasty

- Alexander's wife Salome Alexandra ascends to throne in 76 BCE
  - Follows husband's deathbed advice and aligns with Pharisees
  - She names her son Hyrcanus as high priest and heir
- Aristobolus deposes Hyrcanus and takes total control in 67 BCE

Over the approximately 100 years of the Hasmonean dynasty it has moved from rebellion leadership to increasing secular rulers, albeit with a formal religious capacity.



Coinage of Salome Alexandria

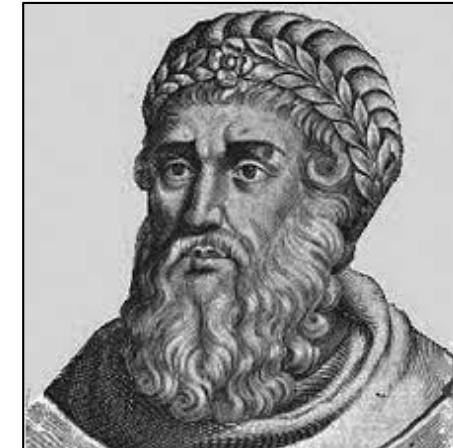
# Small Group Discussion

- What actions, attitudes, or ideas signify a good king/leader?
- How do the Hasmonean rulers stack up against those ideals?
- Why do you think things turned out that way?



# The Romans Arrive

- The Idumean ruler Antipater stirs the pot to gain power
- Roman general Pompey agreed to support Antipater/Hyrcanus and conquered Jerusalem after a siege in 63 BCE
- Aristobolus sent to Rome and later poisoned
- Antipater continued to rise in Roman favor by supporting Julius Caesar in the Roman civil war
- Antipater was rewarded Roman Procurator and two sons, Phasael and Herod, received governorships
- Hyrcanus re-installed as pseudo religious/political leader with very little real power (even this taken away later by Mark Antony)



Herod the Great

# The Romans Arrive

- Antigonus, the son of Aristobolus, convinced the Parthians to attack Jerusalem in 43 BCE
- Under flag of truce, Phasael murdered and Hyrcanus mutilated
- Herod flees to Rome and is given troops and title “King of the Judea” in 40 BCE by Roman Senate
- Herod retakes Jerusalem from Antigonus in 37 BCE
- Let in the gates by the Pharisees
- Gains legitimacy by marrying Hasmonean princess in 43 BCE



# Herod the Great

- Favored by Caesar Augustus – “First Princeps”
- Begins building program auspicious even by today’s standards:
  - Temple and precincts
  - Multiple palaces
  - Fortresses
- Political genius/psychopath – Herod puts to death all rivals as well as 3 sons, nephew, and wife over the course of his reign
- Remains in control until death in 4 BCE

Herod's palace outside  
Jerusalem, Herodium



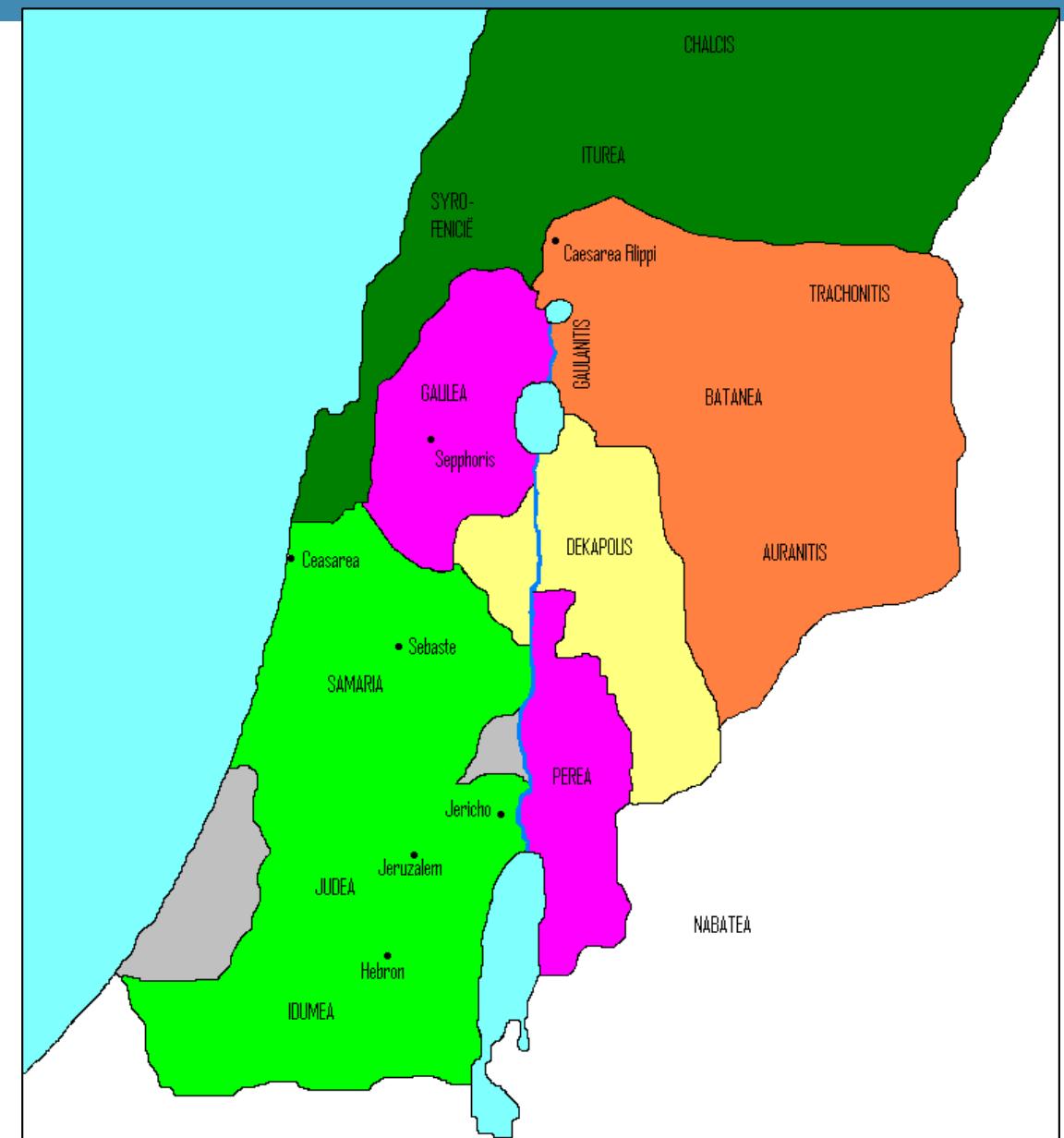
# Herod the Great

Josephus in *Jewish War 1.33.1* (Late 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE) –

“Now when these men were informed that the king was wearing away with melancholy, and with a distemper, they dropped words to their acquaintance, how **it was now a very proper time to defend the cause of God**, and to pull down **what had been erected contrary to the laws of their country**; for it was unlawful there should be any such thing in the temple as images, or faces, or the like representation of any animal whatsoever. Now **the king had put up a golden eagle over the great gate of the temple**, which these learned men exhorted them to cut down; and told them, that if there should any danger arise, **it was a glorious thing to die for the laws of their country**; because that the **soul was immortal**, and that **an eternal enjoyment of happiness did await** such as died on that account”

# Post-Herod

- Several rebellions at Herod's death – all crushed by Romans; Caesar divides kingdom
- Son Archelaus rules until removed by Romans; new Roman province created with direct rule under Procurators
- Herod Antipas (killed John the Baptist) rules until 39 CE, succeeded by Herod Agrippa I
- Philip rules until 34 CE
- Agrippa I rules until his death in 44 CE; succeeded by son Agrippa II in 53 CE
- Agrippa II rules until Jewish Revolt in 66 CE; helps Romans fight war; died in 92 CE



The Division of Herod's Kingdom:  
■ Tetrarchy (Judea) under Herod Archelaus, ■ Territory under Herod Antipas ■ Territory under Herod Philip II ■ Salome I (cities of Jabneh, Azotas, Phaesalis)  
■ Roman province of Syria ■ Autonomous cities (Decapolis)

# Additional Political Pressure Points

- Loss of political and social status
  - Destruction and enslavement of Sepphoris – 4 BCE
  - Poll tax in Egypt – 20 BCE
  - Appeal to Gaius to uphold Jewish citizenship (lost) – 39 CE
- Affronts to Jewish belief
  - Herod's Roman eagle on Temple gate – 4 BCE
  - Gaius wants to place his statue in Temple – 39 CE
  - Altar to Emperor in Jamnia destroyed – 39 CE
  - Regular confiscation of Temple tax revenue from Diaspora
- Forced exiles target Jews specifically
  - Tiberius conscripts 4k into army; exiles others – 19 CE
  - Claudius expels Jews from Rome – late 40s CE

# Political Effects on the 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE

*Current status under direct Roman rule not seen as ideal – the notion of the “restoration of Israel” gained traction*

***Psalms of Solomon 17:21 – 15 (1<sup>st</sup> 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 strength to **destroy the unrighteous rulers**, to **purge Jerusalem** from gentiles who trample her to destruction; in wisdom and in righteousness **to drive out sinners from the inheritance**; to smash the arrogance of sinners like a potter’s jar; to shatter all their substance **with an iron rod**; to **destroy the unlawful nations** with the word of his mouth; at his warning **the nations will flee** from his presence; and **he will condemn sinners** by the thoughts of their hearts.”

# Small Group Discussion: Luke 4:18 - 29

What is Jesus' message?

What is the reaction of the crowd initially?

What is their second reaction?

Why do you think they react that way?



# Political Effects on the 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE

*Political/social/religious divisions between Jews and Gentiles created conflict as seen in the New Testament's dialogue on meta-ethnic salvation*

## Luke 4:18 - 19, 28 – 29 (NIV)

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to **preach good news to the poor**. He has sent me to **proclaim freedom** for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to **release the oppressed**, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

“All the people in the synagogue **were furious** when they heard this. They got up, **drove him out** of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, **in order to throw him down**.”

The crowd liked Jesus' message until it was directed to the Gentiles!

# Political Effects on the 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE

*Distrust of political and religious leaders rose*

***Testament of Moses 5.3 – 6 (1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE)***

“**They will pollute** the houses of their worship **with the customs of the nations**; and they will play the harlot after foreign gods. For they will not follow the truth of God, but certain of them will pollute the high altar by [four to six letters are lost] the offerings which they place before the Lord. They are **not truly priests at all but slaves, yea, sons of slaves**. For those who are the leaders, their teachers, in those times will become **admirers of avaricious persons**, accepting polluted offerings, and they will **sell justice by accepting bribes**.”

# Political Effects on the 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE

*Created economic and social instability*

- Hellenism impacted the kinship structure that undergird the entire Old Testament
- Central governments imposed large taxes (over 50%)
- New rulers confiscated large swaths of land, breaking up family economic and social wealth and leading to a whole class of dispossessed Judeans
- Resulted in a rise of banditry and social ills  
(Parable of the Good Samaritan)



# Today's Takeaways

- Despite the successful rebellion, the new Jewish dynasty ended up looking just like their old rulers, not the idealized vision of David and Solomon
- The final subjugation under Roman rule and Herod further enhanced this conflict between the ideal and the political reality
- The political changes of the Period created multiple issues in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE around civic, religious, social, and economic lines

# Next Week's Homework

- Read Psalm 2
- How would this have been read by people in the 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE?
- What kind of feelings would it have inspired in them?
- What does it tell you about how they saw their world?

