

THE JEWISH FOUNDATIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT



Class VI – Will the Real Judaism Please Stand Up?

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An Introductory Reading

Psalms of Solomon 9.8 – 11 (1st c. BCE) –

“And now, you are God and we are **the people whom you have loved**; look and be compassionate, O God of Israel, for **we are yours**, and do not take away your mercy from us, lest they set upon us.

For **you chose the descendants of Abraham above all the nations**, and you **put your name upon us**, Lord, and it will not cease forever.

You **made a covenant** with our ancestors concerning us, and **we hope in you** when we turn our souls to you.

May the **mercy of the Lord** be upon the house of Israel forever.”

Last Week's Homework

Psalm 2 (JPS) -

"Why do nations assemble,
And people plot vain things;
Kings of the earth take their stand,
And regents intrigue together
against the LORD and against His
anointed?

"Let us break the cords of their yoke,
shake off their ropes from us!"
He who is enthroned in heaven laughs;
The LORD mocks at them.
Then He speaks to them in anger,
Terrifying them in His rage,

But I have installed my King on Zion,
My Holy Mountain!"
Let me tell of the decree:
The LORD said to me,
"You are My son,
I have fathered you this day.
Ask it of Me,
And I will make the nations your
domain;
Your estate, the limits of the earth.
You can smash them like potter's
ware.

So now, O kings, be prudent;
Accept discipline, you rulers of the
earth!
Serve the LORD in awe;
Tremble with fright,
Pay homage in good faith,
Lest he be angered, and your way be
doomed in the mere flash of His
anger.
Happy are all who take refuge in
Him."

Last Week

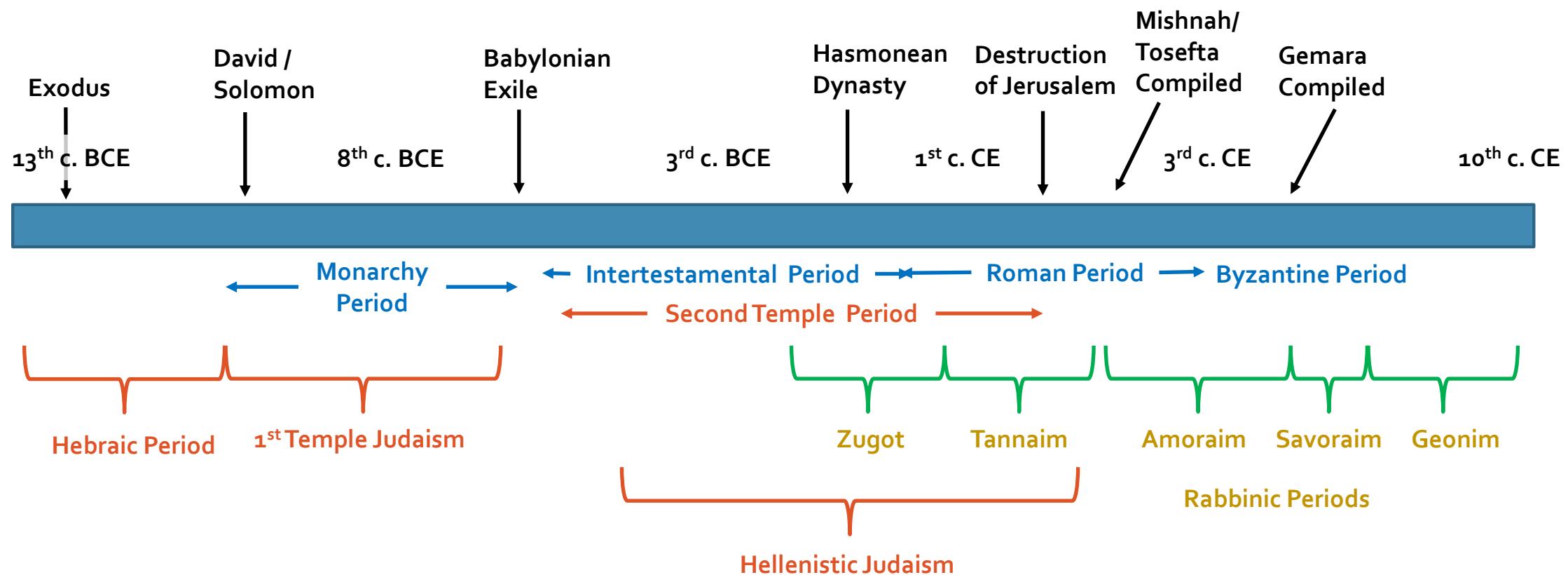
- Despite the successful rebellion, the new Jewish dynasty ended up looking just like their old rulers, not the idealized vision of David and Solomon
- The final subjugation under Roman rule and Herod further enhanced this conflict between the ideal and the political reality
- The political changes of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

Where are we going?

- Class I-II: Introduction & the Land of the Bible
- Class III-V: The Intertestamental Period
- Class VI: Will the Real Judaism Please Stand Up?
 - *What are the major beliefs of Hellenistic Judaism?*
 - *How did the changing political and cultural climate affect their identity?*
- Class VII: What is Judaism Look Like in the 1st Century?
- Class VIII-IX: What is the New Testament?

A Timeline of Judaism

- We often present Judaism as a monolithic religion with only one viewpoint



Which Judaism?

- The modern popularized view of 1st c. CE Judaism comes from Martin Luther
 - Judaism was thrown into the same bucket as Roman Catholicism – salvation by works
 - Read the conflict between Jesus and the leaders as one of empty ritual vs faith
 - Many churchgoers today believe Judaism is about legalism – earning your way to heaven
- For a long time, Christian scholars downplayed the Jewish aspects of the NT in favor of a Graeco-Roman cultural background
 - Paul's letters reflect his Hellenistic background rather than Jewish ancestry (Reitzenstein)
 - The Jesus of the Gospels is a creation by the later Greco-Roman Christian church and can't be relied to reflect the early 1st c. CE reality
 - Wrede: "Messianic Secret" – Disciples realized at Jesus' resurrection he was Messiah and wrote it back into his life, explaining their ignorance at the time by making it a "secret"
 - "They looked down into the well of history to see Jesus and saw their own reflection" – Albert Schweitzer

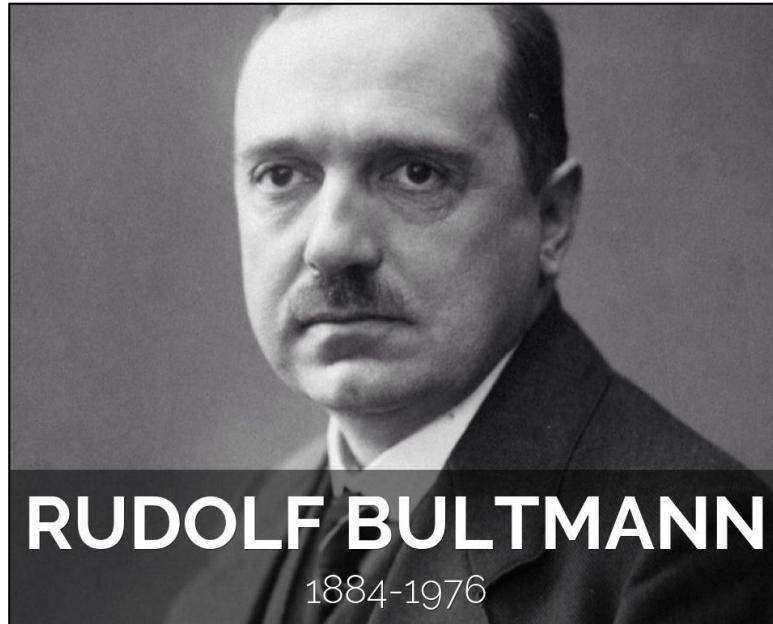
Which Judaism?



Roman Catholic Salvation of Works (Law) vs.
Lutheran Salvation of Faith (Grace)

Influences:

Anti-Semitism
Intellectual Laziness
"Superiority" of Christianity



RUDOLF BULTMANN

1884-1976

Jesus/Paul = Grace (Faith)
Luther's Opponents = Works (Law)
Judaism = Opponents
Judaism = Salvation of Works (Law/legalism)

Of ethics and ritual, ritual is the “more important of the two”
“The obedience” to the Law was “formal” not “radical”
“The accumulation of merits” might atone for breaking Torah
“We find the ‘righteous’ proud and self-conscious”
“Repentance itself became a good work which secured merit and grace in the sight of God”
“In the end the whole range of man’s relation with God came to be thought of in terms of merit...”

From *Primitive Christianity*

Small Group Discussion

- Read Matthew 15:1 - 20
- What are the Pharisees and scribes asking Jesus about?
- What is their motivation behind asking?
- What is Jesus' response?
- What is the following story about (vv.21 – 28)? What contrasts do you see?

Next Week's Homework

- Read Galatians 2:11 – 21
- What does Paul admonish Peter for in front of the church in Antioch?
- What is the effect of following the law according to Paul?

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