

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS
Lesson One
The Old Testament Period Comes To An End

When we come to the **book of Malachi**, the last book of the Old Testament, the pen of inspiration and the voice of prophets cease to exist for a period of around 400 years (**430 BC – AD 27**). Not until the coming of Christ will they reappear again. The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem in 605 B.C. Daniel and others of the royal family were taken captive to Babylon. Daniel had only been in Babylon for three years when the king had a dream which none of his wise men could interpret.

He is given the opportunity to interpret a dream of Nebuchadnezzar which none of his wise men were able to do. The king in his dream had seen an image of a man made up of five different parts. The head was gold, and it represented Babylon. The breast and arms were of silver. This represented the Persian Empire, which would conquer the Babylonian Empire.

The belly and thighs were of brass, representing the Greek Empire, which in a very short space of time (**about 10 years**), would conquer the world. The feet and toes were partly of iron and clay and represented the Roman Empire. It is during these last two Empires that the period between the Testaments falls. These two empires would have a great impact on the Jews and their homeland of Palestine.

A remnant of the Jews returned to Jerusalem in 538 B.C. by an order from Cyrus king of Persia under the leadership of Zerubbabel. The first thing they did was to reconstruct the altar to sacrifice burnt offerings on. The rebuilding of the temple was delayed for a short time but work began the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia. Two prophets Zechariah and Haggai both ministered to the Jews during the rebuilding of the temple which took four years to construct (**520 – 516**).

Sixty years later (**458 B.C.**) Ezra, a priest, came with a second contingent of Jews from Persia to Jerusalem. It took them four months to make the journey. Things had not been going well. Many had already turned to marrying people who lived around them. Ezra calls upon the people to repent and turn from their unfaithfulness to God. Fourteen years later (**444 B.C.**) Nehemiah came. He found large breaches in the wall that surrounded Jerusalem. He set out to rebuild and repair the walls, which was accomplished in only 52 days.

This was an amazing feat. The Samaritans were constantly opposing the Jews in everything they attempted to do. When the walls were completed Ezra then stood before the people and read the Law to them calling on them to remain loyal to the Lord.

During Malachi's time the remnant of Jews had been home from Babylon for about 100 years. They were cured by the Babylonian exile of their past idolatry. Never again would they worship idols as they had done in the past. But they were prone to neglect the house of God. The priest had become lax and degenerate. Their sacrifices were inferior and tithes were neglected.

They offered diseased and blemished animals. It was the priest who had been ordained by God to lead the people in righteousness who were responsible for their deplorable situation. The people had reverted to their practice of intermarrying with idolatrous neighbors.

They were withholding their tithes, which Malachi called "**robbing God.**" According to the Mosaic Law, one-tenth of all income was God's property, to which the donor had no more right than he had to another man's property. (**See Malachi 3:7-12.**) This is worth taking the time to read.

By Jimmy Eaton

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"Every since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord Almighty. But you ask, How are we to return? Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, How do we rob you? In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse---the whole nation of you---because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the Lord Almighty. Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land, says the Lord Almighty."

Thus they had settled down into a lethargic condition awaiting the promised of the Messiah, who they thought would restore the nation to its former glory as it was under David and Solomon. Their loose marriage morals, divorcing their wives to marry non-Jewish women, skepticism, and indifference left them with a spiritually low point. Noticing the wicked nations around them were more prosperous, the people were asking, "What profit is it that we have kept his ordinance." (See Malachi 3:14)

Malachi assures them that the Messiah would come, but it would mean judgment upon them rather than glory. The final prediction of Malachi was that Elijah will usher in "the Day of the Lord" (4:5). He did 400 years later, in the person of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1-12; 11:14). This closes the Old Testament. Four hundred years later the New Testament begins with the words, "A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ (the Messiah)" (Matthew 1:1).

Thus the story of the Old Testament ends around 430 B.C. with the prophet Malachi. The Babylonians who had destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C. had by now been conquered by the Medes and Persians. The Persian king Cyrus allowed the Jews to go back to Jerusalem. Under Ezra and Nehemiah the temple and walls were rebuilt. Thus, at the close of the Old Testament, Judah was a Persian province.

Not much is known about Jewish history during all of this period, except that Persian rule was, for the most part, mild and tolerant. Probably the most amazing event of this period was the willingness of the Persian King to allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem. However, we are somewhat disappointed that only a remnant of the Jews returned – about 50,000.

Most of the older people died out during the seventy years of captivity. The younger generation did not grow up in Jerusalem or Palestine. They would not remember the temple and all its glory. No doubt most of them by now had jobs and families to support thus were not interested in returning back to the Holy Land. By the time a remnant returned probably most of the Jews no longer spoke Hebrew but Aramaic.

The first group of Jews returned to Jerusalem in 538 B.C. Twenty years later the temple was completed. The story of Esther takes place about 40 years after the temple was rebuilt. She became queen of Persia in 478 B.C. and saved the Jews from being massacred in 473 B.C. Fifteen years after Queen Esther saved the Jews, Ezra went to Jerusalem (458 B.C.), and 13 years after that Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. If we are not careful we may overlook the real hero of this story--- Esther.

It seems that Esther made possible the work of Nehemiah and others. Her marriage to the king must have given the Jews great prestige. It is impossible to guess what might have happened to the Jews had there been no Esther.

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Except for her, Jerusalem might never have been rebuilt, and there might have been a different story to tell. The story of Esther is a story of providence just as Joseph being sold into slavery in Egypt was the providence of God.

RETURNING HOME Summary of Lesson One

When we come to Malachi the pen of inspiration and voice of prophets cease. It will be 400 years (430 BC – AD 27) from Malachi to Christ. When the Jews return home they would find a totally different environment.

Cultural changes - They would live under Greek culture & finally Roman. **Geographical changes** – Land no longer divided between 12 Tribes. Now Palestine is divided into three sections, Judah, Samaria and Galilee. **Religious changes** – Priest had been instructors now it is Scribes and Rabies. **Language** – No longer Hebrew. Now it will become Aramaic and Greek.

REVIEW

Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem 600 years before the coming of Christ. Daniel captive only three years when he interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream. After 70 years remnant of Jews return to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel (538)

The Altar was restored, but Temple would be delayed about 20 years. Zechariah and Haggai worked with Jews in the rebuilding. Took 4 years. Sixty years later Ezra, a priest, came to reestablish nation. Things had not been going well. Intermarriages were again taking place.

14 years later Nehemiah came and repaired the breaches in walls in 52 days. During Malachi's time Jews had been home for about 100 years. The priest had become lax and degenerate. Offered inferior sacrifices.

They are accused of robbing God. "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, In what way have we robbed You? In tithes and offerings, You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now in this Says the Lord of Host. If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it." (Malachi 3:8-10).

Loose moral, skepticism and difference had set in. They noticed the nations around them were more prosperous. They asked "What's the use of serving God?" The people had settled into a lethargic condition awaiting the promise of a Messiah who would restore Israel to former greatness.

Malachi assures them the Messiah would come--but in judgment upon them. Elijah would come in "the Day of the Lord" in the person of John the Baptist. Old Testament story ends in 430 B.C. There will be 400 years of silence until Christ.

THE REAL HERO

Esther became queen of Persia in 478 -- sixty years after the first contingent. It seems Esther made possible the return and work of Nehemiah.

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Her marriage to the king must have given the Jews great prestige. Impossible to guess what might have happened to the Jews if there had been no Esther. A story of providence just as Joseph being sold into slavery was providence.

"I will go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish' (4:16).

Haman personally had sent the decree to kill all the Jews in all provinces. This would include all Jews in Palestine as it was one of the provinces of the Persian Empire. It took great courage for Esther to do this. She was going against the proper way to approach the king. It is her humility and sincerity.

Lesson Two The Coming of Alexander and Hellenism

The story of the Old Testament ends around 430 B.C. with the prophet Malachi but the Persian Empire under which he lived would continue on until 332 B.C. The great Persian army had reached as far as the Aegean Sea and crossed over into Greece. This is as far as they ever advanced for the Greeks drove them out. This would mark the beginning of a period in history known as "Hellenism" (Greek culture).

Alexander the Great was the dominant personality in the beginning of this period. He was the son of King Philip of Macedonia, whose kingdom covered the northern part of Greece. In 336 B.C., at the age of 20 Alexander assumed command of the Greek army and swept eastward over lands that had been under the kings of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon and Persia for long periods of time.

The stories of his conquest of the world are amazing. He sought an end of the Persian Empire, which had ruled the world at that time and made Greece become the ruling power of the world. Educated under Aristotle he became an ardent disciple and spokesman for Greek culture.

Greek culture reached its zenith in the city of Athens in the 5th century B.C., the Golden Age of Greece. This was the era of great statesmen and philosophers. This was approximately the same period of time during which the temple and walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah after they had returned from exile.

In Daniel 10:20 an angel tells Daniel who was still in exile that "the prince of Greece would come." The angel is referring to the coming of Alexander the Great. History records he invaded Persia in 332 B.C. and completed his conquest by 323 B.C. In history the word "Hellenism" is commonly used to describe the civilization of the three centuries or so from the time when Alexander ruled until the time of the Romans. It was a distinct culture. It was the cherished desire of Alexander to found a worldwide empire bound together in unity of language, customs and civilization.

In his great military conquests, he did much to realize these ideals. Wherever his armies went, along with them came the institutions of Greek culture. In many cities he left behind a gymnasium, an amphitheater, a hippodrome, a stadium and a library. Emphasis was placed on games and races. The human body, its form and development were of chief interest. Probably his greatest contribution was to give to the world the Greek language, which in time would become the universal language.

Alexander invaded Palestine in 332 B.C. As he approached Jerusalem, Judea the high priest, with a group of priests in their official dress, went out to meet him, to ask for mercy. It is said that the prophecies of Daniel concerning Alexander were rehearsed in his hearing. No doubt flattered he showed great consideration for the Jews, sparing Jerusalem from any destruction.

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When he came to Jerusalem many looked upon him with favor. He in turn allowed them to have freedom of religion. Thus the priests carried on as usual their sacrifices at the Temple and other priestly functions.

Josephus tells a story of Alexander's offering a sacrifice at the Temple, "according to the High-priest's direction." While this may be unhistorical it does show the friendly attitude they had for Alexander. From that day on they became among his favorites. He employed them in his army and gave them equal citizenship with the Greeks.

He offered the Jews inducements to settle in Alexandria. This resulted with many Jews becoming citizens of Alexandria in Egypt and other Greek cities, which he founded. Alexandria would become home to thousands of Jews containing many synagogues.

In time the Jews would emigrate to neighboring countries for the purpose of trade and commerce. A strong Hellenistic spirit was created among the Jews. In New Testament times there were more Jews living outside of Palestine than in it. Acts 2:5-12 shows the extent of the "Diaspora" (Jews living outside Palestine while maintaining their religious faith).

About 17 countries were represented. He would die at the age of 33 of a fever in 323 B.C. upon returning from Persia back to Greece. His rule was for only 12 years, yet no one has ever accomplished as much as he did in his short rule. His empire did not last, but his dreams did. Hellenism would dominate the world.

At no time was his empire as strong as at his death. After his death his empire never regained its greatness and was never united. It would be divided among four of his generals. In Daniel 8:8 Alexander is spoken of as a great "he-goat." Daniel writes, "The goat became very great, but at the height of his power his large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven."

Here Daniel speaks of the death of Alexander. He is depicted as having his horn broken off. The four "four prominent horns" represented the division of Alexander's Empire into four separate kingdoms ruled by four of his generals. Thus Daniel is given a clear picture of the future, which would have a great influence on the future of the Jews.

The Old Testament scriptures were translated into Greek in the city of Alexandria, which had become a literary center. It is the oldest translation of scripture. Greek had become the language of the Jews living outside of Palestine. While in Babylonian captivity the Jews lost their mother tongue of Hebrew and could no longer read or understand it. When they returned to Palestine after their captivity Aramaic replaced Hebrew as the common language in Palestine.

It was a Semitic language related to Hebrew, yet different enough that it could not readily be understood by the average person in Old Testament times. As the Jews became scattered out to other countries they spoke Greek, because Greek had become the universal language. Its role was similar to that of English in the modern world today where English has become a second language in many foreign countries.

In some cities such as Alexandria, there were many Jews whose families had lived there for generations who spoke only Greek. If Judaism was to survive, it was necessary for these people to be able to read and understand the Old Testament in their adopted language.

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This version of the Old Testament is known as the Septuagint Version. Both Christ and the apostles quoted from it even though they spoke Aramaic, which means they were bilingual. All quotations from the Old Testament found in the New Testament are taken from the Septuagint Version.

According to tradition, 70 skillful Jewish linguists were sent from Jerusalem to Egypt at the request of Ptolemy II (Philadelphus 285-247 B.C.) the ruler of Egypt. It is said they completed the translation in 70 days. The Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy) was translated first. Later the rest of the Old Testament books were added. It was called the Septuagint because of the 70 translators who are reputed to have begun it. "Septuaginta" is the Greek word for 70.

Now Greek speaking Jews who lived outside of Palestine had access to the Old Testament scriptures in a language they understood. Later on the New Testament would also be written in Greek. Hellenism would come to divide the Jews. It would play a major part in later Jewish history. It would divide the Jews into two different camps. Daniel chapters 10--12 gives prophecy of the events of the period between the testaments. If you should read it, then read from a paraphrase. It reads like a history book. Actually a great portion of the Bible is history.

THE COMING OF ALEXANDER AND HELLENISM

Summary of Lesson Two

Old Testament ends around 430 BC with Malachi 100 years after return from exile but the Persian Empire would continue till 332 B.C. Persians met defeat in Greece. "Beginning of Hellenism." (Greek Culture). Alexander the Great becomes dominant personality at the beginning of the age of Hellenism. Educated under Aristotle became ardent disciple and spokesman for Greek culture.

In 336 at the age of 20 he assumed command of Greek army and swept eastward over every country reaching as far as the Ganges River in India. This was the Golden Age of Greece. It was an era of great statesmen and philosophers. "Hellenism" is a word used to describe the civilization or culture of Greece which reached its zenith in Athens in the 5th Century

It would correspond with the time when the temple and walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt under Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah after Babylonian exile. The Greeks placed emphasis on the harmonious form and beauty of the human body. Their emphasis on beauty, shape can be seen in their art and sculpture. Great Emphasis was placed on the development of the body. Great emphasis was placed on games, races and exercise.

As Alexander conquered cities He left behind gymnasiums, amphitheatres, hippodromes and stadiums all symbols of Greek culture. Invaded Palestine in 332BC. Met by High Priest, other priest in official dress. They rehearsed the prophecies of Daniel about him. No doubt flattered. Showed great consideration for Jews, sparing Jerusalem from destruction.

They became favorites. Employed them in his army giving them equal Greek citizenship. Reminds us of Paul's Roman citizenship. Offered a sacrifice at the temple once under the supervision of High-priest. While this may be unhistorical it does show the favor he had with the Jews. Offered them inducements to settle in Alexandria, Egypt. Thousands went there to live.

Many synagogues were established. Others spread other cities. In New Testament times more lived outside of Palestine than in it. Acts 2:5-12 shows the extent of the Di-as-pora. Seventeen nations represented.

By Jimmy Eaton

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In **Daniel 10:20** an angel tells Daniel **"The prince of Greece would come."** Alexander would begin his invasion of Persia in 332 B.C. He pushed on into Persia going even as far as India. By 331 B.C. the world lay at his feet. Stories of his conquests are amazing. In 12 years had conquered the world.

His greatest contribution was to give to the world the Greek language. Greek has been called the perfect language. For every emotion and feeling the Greeks had a word for it. It would become the universal language.

In **Daniel 8:8** Alexander is spoken of as a great **"he-goat."** Daniel writes, **"The goat became very great, but at the height of his power his large horn was broken off, and in its place four permanent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven."**

Daniel writes of his death (**large horn**). The four prominent horns represent the division of Alexander's Empire after his death into four separate kingdoms. Daniel is given a clear picture of the future which would involve the future of the Jews.

He would die at age of 33 in the year 323 B.C. returning to Greece. Old Testament scriptures translated into Greek in Alexandria. Had become literary center. Oldest and first translation of scripture. From Hebrew to Greek. Greek had become the language of the Jews living outside of Palestine.

Jews lost their mother tongue in Babylon. No longer read or understand Hebrew. Greek became the universal language. Similar to English today. For Judaism to survive, necessary people need to be able to read and understand the Old Testament. This version known as Septuagint Version. Christ, apostles all quoted from it. All Old Testament scriptures quoted in the New Testament comes from the Septuagint.

Why so little mentioned in the Bible of these years? However, **Daniel Chapters 10 – 12** gives details of the events between the testaments. If you read it read from a paraphrase. It reads like a history book.

Lesson Three

The Jews Under the Ptolemies (Egypt) and the Seleucids (Syria).

When Alexander died in 323 B.C. he left no heir. He had many able generals, but there was not one that arose as his logical successor. By 315 B.C., after seven years of struggle, four leaders appeared. Alexander's empire was divided between the four. The Jews found themselves sandwiched between the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids in Syria.

While the Jews had fared well under Alexander they were now to enter into a period of bitter sufferings. This was because of the struggle for control of Palestine between the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria. It is said that within 25 years after the death of Alexander, Jerusalem changed hands seven times. In the beginning Judea was under the control of Egypt. At first Ptolemy was harsh in his treatment of the Jews, but later on he learned to respect them.

His son was known for the lighthouse of Pharos, and the establishment of the Alexandrian library. It was during his reign that the translation of the Old Testament Scriptures into Greek was made. This became known as the Septuagint.

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From an early date there were Jewish settlements in Egypt, and Alexandria soon won for itself an honored name, particularly as a literary center. The translation of the "Torah" or Pentateuch took place probably during the reign of Ptolemy II (285-247).

There is a legend that the Septuagint was the result of a royal command of Ptolemy II. The Septuagint was extended later to cover the other parts of the Old Testament. It was given into the hands of 70 elders.

These men carried out their work of translation in separate rooms and produced results which were all exactly alike. Both Christ and the apostles quoted from it. It also meant that all Greek speaking Jews now had access to the Old Testament scriptures in a language he could understand. Later the New Testament was would be written in Greek because Greek had become universal. Greek was to the world then what English is to the world today in that many countries today teach English as a second language.

For the most part the Jews were permitted to live in peace and in accord with their religious and cultural traditions. Tribute was paid to the Egyptian government, but local affairs were administered by the High Priests who had been entrusted with responsibility for government of the Jews since Persian times.

One of the great figures among the Jews of the Ptolemaic period is Simon the Just, the High Priest who is the subject of high praise. He is credited with rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem which had been demolished by Ptolemy I. He is said to have repaired the Temple and directed the excavation of a great reservoir which would provide fresh water for Jerusalem even in times of drought or siege.

In addition to his office as High Priest and head of the community, Simon was reputed to be the chief teacher of the people. His favorite maxim was, "The world rests on three things, on the Law, on Divine Service, and on Charity."

As the power of Syria grew Palestine increasingly became the battle ground between them and Egypt. In a decisive battle between them Ptolemy of Egypt and Antiochus the Great of Syria the latter lost, therefore Judea remained an Egyptian province. Ptolemy, drunk with victory, came to Jerusalem and endeavored to enter the Holy of Holies of the temple but backed away before actually entering.

He vented his wrath on the Jews, for opposing his plan, by a cruel persecution. He was succeeded by his son Ptolemy Epiphanes, a child 5 years old. Antiochus now invaded Egypt and Judea would now be occupied by the Syrians and passed over into the possession of the Seleucids.

THE JEWS UNDER SYRIA (204 – 165 BC)

During the Syrian period Israel will now enter into the valley of the shadow of death. This entire period was an almost uninterrupted martyrdom. Although they hated the Jews Antiochus and his son Seleucis were not cruel to them. The high priests, as in former periods, were still the nominal ruler in Judea. But everything would change when Antiochus III (Epiphanes 175 – 164) came to the throne.

He may be described as the Nero of Jewish history. Antiochus III was only eighteen years of age when he came to the throne of Syria in 223 B.C. He had had experience in government having served as ruler of Babylonia under his brother Seleucus III. He bore the surname Epiphanes meaning (the illustrious," almost a title of deity).

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The Jews gave him the nickname, Epimanes ("the madman"). He was born in Athens, and had served as chief magistrate of the city whose culture was the epitome of everything Greek.

In the early days of the reign of Antiochus Jerusalem was ruled by the High Priest, Onias III who was a strict orthodox Jew. To Antiochus, the high priesthood was a political office. As Syrian king, he would have the right to appoint whomever he chose. To the pious Jews, however, the priesthood was of divine origin, and its sale to the highest bidder was looked upon as a grave sin against God.

A man named Jason was placed as High Priest by promising a larger tribute to Antiochus. Antiochus visited Jerusalem in 170 B.C. He showed his approval of things by authorizing the citizens to call themselves "Antiochites" after himself as their sovereign king. While there a dispute arose between Jason and one of his close associates, Menelaus who was of the tribe of Benjamin.

As such, he had no right to hold a priestly office. Nevertheless, by offering higher tribute to Antiochus than that paid by Jason, he was nominated to the office of High Priest. The orthodox Jews were infuriated with a Benjamite installed as the new High Priest. On the return of Antiochus from Egypt, Menelaus welcomed him to Jerusalem. What was left of the Temple treasure was placed at Antioch's disposal.

If Egypt was going to remain a rival power to Antiochus he found it necessary to retain his hold on Palestine as a buffer between him and Egypt. He sent his general, to occupy the city of Jerusalem. In a Sabbath attack when he knew that the orthodox Jews would not fight, he slaughtered large numbers of the opponents of Menelaus. The city walls were destroyed, and a new fortress was built.

Summary of Lesson Three

With the death of Alexander the Great there were no heir. None of his generals could step forward as the leader of the Greek Empire. They clashed among themselves. After seven years, Alexander's kingdom was divided among four of his generals by about 315.

Of concern to us is the Ptolemie dynasty which ruled Egypt and the Seleucid dynasty which ruled Syria. This left the Jews sandwiched between Syria on the north and Egypt on the south with both wanting to be in control of Palestine.

As time progressed the Jews would suffer severely under the rulers of these two countries. By 301 Jerusalem and Judea came under control of Egypt which would last for 103 years. The first two Egyptian rulers were not too hard on the Jews. Expected tribute.

The second ruler Ptolemy II, is famous for his Lighthouse of the Pharos (7 wonders). He is also known for the great library built in Alexandria. The largest in the world. Tradition says that during his reign he ordered the Old Testament Pentateuch be translated into Greek. It was named the Septuagint meaning 70. Seventy scholars from Jerusalem made the translation. Each worked independently in separate rooms. Results – all were alike.

Jews who had lost their mother tongue but read and spoke Greek now had access to Old Testament. As the Jews spread out over the world the Septuagint went with them. Jews lived in relative peace in accord with their religious & cultural practices. By paying their taxes local affairs were administered by the High Priest. Responsible for the people.

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After battle between Ptolemy II and Antiochus the Great of Syria Ptolemy won. Drunk with victory came to Jerusalem and tried to enter the Holy of Holies of the temple. Rejected, he vented his wrath on the Jews with a cruel persecution.

His child only 5 years old when he came to the throne. Antiochus, king of Syria took advantage of situation and invaded with the result Jerusalem and Judea now became occupied the Syrians. Jew would now enter into the valley of the shadow of death. First two rulers not cruel. The high priests as in former period still nominal rulers.

The next Syrian ruler Epiphanes was only 18 when he came to throne. Bore surname Epiphanes meaning "the **Illustrious.**" The Jews nicknamed him Epimanes (**the madman**). Born in Athens he was a disciple Hellenism. He is described as the Nero of Jewish history. Became violently bitter against Jews for their refusal to give up their religion and identity and accept Hellenism.

Attempted to eradicate them. Devastated Jerusalem, desecrated the temple by offering a pig on its altar. Put an altar to Zeus in temple. Prohibited temple worship, forbade circumcision on pain of death. Thousands sold into slavery. Destroyed all copies of Scripture that could be found. Resorted to torture to force the Jews to renounce their religion.

It is said he killed more than 100,000 Judeans. He gave the priesthood to the one who would pay the most. This resulted in a corrupt priesthood, one in particular who was not even from the tribe of Levi.

Sent a general to occupy Jerusalem. In a Sabbath attack he knew orthodox Jews would not fight he slaughtered a large number in a Sabbath attack. Deep resentment was building and would find him the target of the famous Maccabean revolt.

Daniel amazes us how events are presented in such a clear and precise way. Little doubt that it furnishes a history from Persian Empire to the reign of Epiphanes. Zero in on 11th.

V-2 Gives succession of kings of Persia – four in all. Includes Xerxes married to Esther.

V-3 Without doubt is Alexander the Great.

V-4 State of his Empire after death. Broken into four parts. Egypt, Syria, Greece, A.M.

V-5-19 Prophetic history zooms in on two of these empires – Ptolemy kings of south and the Selucian kings of Syria in the north. A great amount of detail--so much so principle events could have been readily anticipated by those in possession of Daniel's book.

V-20-35 The "**contemptible person**" is the notorious Antioch Epiphanes. His Actions against the Jews described in **Vs 28, 30-35**. God used this man to punish wicked Jews.

We might label Daniel as the prophet of world history. The period covers around 560 years. It is so detailed you have to be a student of history to appreciate the chapter. [How could Daniel lay out in such a vivid way the events of history 200 years before they happened?](#) He could not on the basis of his own wisdom and knowledge. The answer is he was provided divine help by Holy Spirit or else it would have been impossible.

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This chapter is just one of the many internal evidences that the Bible is the inspired word of God. Critics say written after the events. Historical fiction with the name of Daniel forged. We agree with Halley who writes, "We suspect that the real crux of the attempt to discredit the book of Daniel is the unwillingness of intellectual pride to accept the marvelous miracles and amazing prophecies recorded in the book."

There are some strange things that occur in Daniel's prophecy. The angel in 10:13 is delayed 21 days is interesting along with the appearance of Michael along with an angel in Persia. It would seem God has placed an angel over each country. But the angel of darkness has his angels too and places his angels to oppose what the angels of God attempt to do. Then there is the angel of Greece. Then there is 20 & 21.

Seemingly there is rank among angels. Michael was over the angel sent by God to Daniel. This arouses our curiosity since we are not aware of what is going on. See Revelation 12:7-9 A spiritual warfare between the Devil's angels and God's angels is apparent.

Lesson Four The Maccabees' Struggle For Independence

This period, which lasted from 167 to 63, B.C. might be designated as the "Era of the Maccabees." Much of what happened during this time centers around the famous Maccabees family. Mattathias, the father of five sons was a priest. He lived in Modeim, northwest of Jerusalem. His son's names were, John, Simon, Judas, Eleazer and Jonathan. The oppression of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes, (the king of Syria who had had profaned the Temple by offering a sow on the altar of burn offerings) produced a reaction which stunned Antiochus and surprised many of the Jews themselves.

An official of Antiochus erected a pagan altar at Modeim to the Greek god Zeus in 167 A.D. As a test of loyalty to the king, certain Jews were asked to step forward and make a sacrifice to set a good example for the others. Mattathias refused to offer a sacrifice at the pagan altar. A young man probably fearing the wrath of the official stepped forward to make a sacrifice.

Mattathias was enraged. He approached the altar, slew the apostate Jew and the emissary from Antiochus. With his five sons, Mattathias destroyed the heathen altar then fled to the hills to avoid the certain reprisals, which would be expected from Antiochus. Other Jews rallied and joined the family of Mattathias.

The early days of the Maccabean revolt, their struggles against Antiochus, were days of guerrilla warfare. From their mountain strongholds, the sons of Mattathias and their allies' raided towns and villages, killing the royal officers and the Hellenized Jews who went along with Antiochus. A religious factor, however, favored the Syrians.

Religious scruples kept the Maccabees from fighting on the Sabbath. On one Sabbath, a band of Maccabees was surrounded and slaughtered because they would not defend themselves on the Sabbath. Sensing the gravity of the situation Mattathias then adopted the position that fighting in self-defense was permissible even on Sabbath days.

Soon after the beginning of the revolt, Mattathias died. Before his death he urged his followers to choose as their military leader his third son Judas as their leader. He was well qualified for this position and became an outstanding military leader gaining independence for the Jews from Syria.

By Jimmy Eaton

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

He became known as "the hammer." This was a critical time for the Jews for many had become Hellenized and claimed loyalty to Syria. Most Jews did not follow Mattathias in his revolt. Many preferred to simply watch.

In the early days of the revolt the Syrians underestimated the strength of the Maccabees. Thinking the revolt was only a minor skirmish they sent inferior generals and small detachments of soldiers into the field.

The Maccabees, however, were able to hold their own. They defeated one after another of the Syrian armies thrown against them. Antiochus now sent his top general with an army of Syrians to defeat the Maccabean rebels.

Judas, however, by a surprise night attack, annihilated the Syrian army and seized an enormous amount of supplies. The victory at the town of Emmaus opened up the road to Jerusalem to the Maccabees. Judas and his army moved on toward Jerusalem. Menelaus (a false High Priest appointed by the Syrians) and his sympathizers fled.

The Maccabees entered the city and were able to take Jerusalem and the Temple. They entered the Temple and removed all of the signs of paganism, which had been installed. The altar dedicated to Jupiter was taken down and a new altar was erected to the God of Israel. The statue of Zeus was ground to dust.

Beginning on the twenty-fifth of December they observed an eight-day Feast of Dedication, known as "Hanukkah," or the "Festival of Lights." In this way they celebrated the end of the three-year period during which the Temple had been desecrated. This day is still observed today by Jews.

In the name of Syria, Lysias, a general of Antiochus, offered to refrain from interference in the internal affairs of Judea. Menelaus was to be removed from his office as High Priest. Lysias promised that Judas and his followers would not be punished. These terms of peace were accepted. The orthodox Jews evidently felt they had gained what they wanted – independence from Syria.

A new High Priest, Alcimus, was installed and Menelaus was executed. However, Judas and a few of his followers still left the city for fear of losing their lives. The fears of Judas proved to be correct as Alcimus the new priest had a number of the Jews who had opposed Syria seized and executed. Many loyal Jews returned to Judas again and civil war was renewed.

Judas was faced with a more formidable foe this time. Alcimus appealed to Syria for aid, and a sizeable army was sent. Judas was left with an ill-equipped army of eight hundred men. He bravely met the Syrians. He died in the battle ending the first phase of the Maccabean struggle.

Simon, Jonathan, Eleazer, and John along with several hundred Maccabean soldiers fled across the Jordan River. The Syrians looked upon them as a band of outlaws. Jonathan became their leader now. The Syrians attempted to destroy this band of patriots but were unsuccessful. Before the war was over Jonathan became High Priest and governor of Judea.

Rulership finally fell on Simon who was advanced in years when he assumed office. The question of the legitimacy of the Maccabean priesthood was settled at this time. Thus Simon was recognized as the rightful High Priest.

By Jimmy Eaton

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

In 142 B.C. Judea became politically independent. Thus the Maccabean revolt now ended after 25 years. This era is covered in the 12th chapter of Daniel by the angel which appeared to Daniel. Chapters 10, 11, 12 should be considered together and cover the period between the Testaments.

AN OBSERVATION ON THE POSSESSION OF THE LAND

God made a promise to Abraham and his descendents that he would give them the land that extended from the Red Sea to the Euphrates River. Under the leadership of Joshua they crossed the Jordan River and took possession of the land.

Joshua 21:43 states, "So the Lord gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their fore-fathers, and they took possession of it and settled there." After possessing the land Joshua gave a farewell speech to Israel. "Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed. Every promise was fulfilled; not one promise failed" (Joshua 23:14).

Not all of Israel's enemies were driven out of the land during the days of Joshua. Thus, their enemies retook portions of the land during the period of the Judges. During the reign of David these areas were re-acquired. Solomon reigned over all the land that God had promised Abraham. After his reign the land was divided into two separate kingdoms.

The Northern Kingdom (Israel) was deported to Assyria in 722 B.C. The southern kingdom (Judah) was carried into Babylonian captivity 136 years later. They returned beginning in 538 B.C. but would come under the control of Greece, Egypt and Syria and finally Rome who in 70 A.D. completely destroyed Israel as a nation.

The tragic truth is the Jews only possessed the entirety of the land that God had promised them for only about 80 out of all the years up to A.D. 70. None of this loss would have happened if they had remained faithful to God.

Today the Israeli government owns only a very small portion of the land God promised Abraham. Nothing in Scripture indicates they deserve the land they lost years ago as Dispensationalist claim. There will be no thousand reign of Christ in Jerusalem on the land God originally promised them.

Summary of Lesson Four

We now enter into the era of the Maccabees. It lasted from 167 to 63 B.C. Much of what happened during this time centers around the famous Maccabees family. The father Mattathias was a priest. He had five sons; John, Simon, Judas, Eleazer and Jonathan.

The terrible oppression by Epiphanes resulted in a revolt which stunned Epiphanes, Syria and the Hellenized Jews. The attempt to Hellenize the Jews had met with much success even to accepting some of the pagan gods. The Jews would now be divided into 2 groups

A pagan altar had been erected at Modein to the god Zeus in 167. As a test of loyalty the Jews were asked to step forward and make a sacrifice to set a good example before others. Mattathias the priest refused to do this. A young man did step forward to make a sacrifice. Mattathias was enraged. He slew the apostate Jew and also an official from Epiphanes.

By Jimmy Eaton

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

With his five sons they destroyed the altar, then fled to the hills to avoid reprisals. Other Jews would rally and join the family of Mattathias. In their struggle with the Syrians the Maccabees carried out guerrilla warfare. They attacked and raided towns and villages killing royal officers and the Hellenized Jews.

A religious factor favored the Syrians. Scruples kept the Maccabees from fighting on the Sabbath. One Sabbath a band of Maccabees were surrounded and slaughtered because they would not defend themselves on the Sabbath. Mattathias adopted a position to fight. Mattathias died. Before his death he asked his followers to choose Judas as their leader. He qualified well in this position. He put down every attempt of the Syrians in defeat.

In the early days of the revolt the Syrians underestimated the strength of the Maccabees. Thinking the revolt would only involve minor skirmishes thus they sent inferior generals with small detachments of soldiers. Epiphanes later sent his top general with a large army. Greatly outnumbered Judas, surprised them with a night attack, annihilating the Syrian army seizing great supplies.

With a great victory at the town of Emmaus the road to Jerusalem was now open to the Maccabees. Judas and his army moved on to take Jerusalem. Menelaus a false high priest appointed by the Syrians and others fled from the city.

The Maccabees entered the Temple and removed all signs of paganism including the altar dedicated to Jupiter and erected a new altar. A statue of Zeus was ground to dust. Beginning on the 25th of December they observed an eight-day Feast of Dedication know as "Hanukkah" or the "Festival of Lights." This ended a three year occupation and desecrated Temple. Day is still observed today. An interesting story about the lights.

A Syrian general in the name of Syria offered to refrain from interference in the internal affairs of Judea. Menelaus would be removed as High Priest. He promised that Judas and his followers would not be punished.

The orthodox Jews evidently felt they had gained what they wanted – independence. A new High Priest was installed and Menelaus was executed. However, Judas and a few followers still left the city for fear of being killed.

Their fears proved to be correct as Alcimus the new priest had a number of Jews who had opposed Syria seized and executed. This shows that Hellenization had not been wiped out. Many Jews did not take an active part in Maccabean revolt. Some even opposed it.

More attempts were made by the Syrians to destroy this band of patriots but were unsuccessful. Many Jews returned to Judas, and civil war was renewed. Judas was now faced with a more formidable foe. Alcimus asked Syria for aid and a sizeable army was sent. With only 800 ill-equipped men Judas bravely fought the Syrians losing his life.

Simon, Jonathan, Eleazer and John and several soldiers fled across the Jordan. They were now looked upon as a band of outlaws. Johathan became their new leader but the Syrians were still unable to destroy this loyal band of fighters.

By Jimmy Eaton

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

Daniel in chapter 12 is told by an angel that Michael would stand up and lend support to the Jews. It would be a difficult time but victory would come. In 142 B.C. Judea finally became politically independent. The revolt lasted for 25 years.

The Maccabees succeeded in restoring a large portion of the Jewish nation. The Maccabees will never be forgotten as long as a history book remains. Their victories and independence lasted for almost 100 years being almost military and political miracles.

OBSERVATION ON THE POSSESSION OF THE LAND

God promised Abraham and his descendents He would give them the land from the Red Sea to the Euphrates River. Under the leadership of Joshua they crossed the Jordan River and took the land. **"So the Lord gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their fore-fathers, and they took possession of it and settled there."**

Joshua told them, **"You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed. Every promise was fulfilled; not one promise failed."**

Not all enemies were driven out. Thus some retook portions. During reign of David these areas were re-acquired. David and Solomon reigned over all the land God had promised. When kingdom split the Northern kingdom was deported to Assyria.

The Southern kingdom was carried into Babylon. When they returned in 538 B.C. were under the control of Greece, Egypt, Syria and Rome. Sadly they only possessed the entirety of land promised to them by God for only about 80 out of all the years leading up to 70 A.D.

This would not have happened if they had remained faithful to God. Today the Israeli government owns only a small portion of the land promised. Nothing in Scripture indices they deserve the land lost years ago as Dispensationalist claim. There will be no thousand reign of Christ in Jerusalem on the land God originally promised.

Lesson Five The Jews Under Rome And The Herods

It was inevitable that Rome would rule over Palestine. Their power had increased since 147 B.C. as they added piece by piece to their territory. In the year 63 B.C. Pompey attacked the city of Jerusalem. It was besieged for three months. Twelve thousand Jews are said to have been slaughtered in the battle which followed.

Pompey, with his officers entered the Holy of Holies in the Temple, which the Jews looked upon as a scandalizing act. None but the High Priest had ever had access to the inner court of the Temple. However, Pompey did not plunder the Temple. He left its costly furnishings untouched and permitted temple worship to continue by the Jews.

Jerusalem was, in the words of Josephus, **"made tributary to the Romans,"** and the last vestige of Jewish independence was removed. Judea was made a part of the Roman province of Syria. The primary people we are concerned with during the later part of the period between the Testaments are the Herods who had such a great influence over Palestine.

HEROD THE GREAT (37 – 4 B.C.)

By Jimmy Eaton

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

The title Herod the Great refers not so much to Herod's greatness as to the fact that he was the first in a line of Herods. He did show some unusual abilities however. He was a ruthless fighter, a cunning negotiator and a subtle diplomat. The Romans appreciated the way he subdued opposition and at the same time maintained order among the Jewish people. He was appointed governor of Galilee and quickly established himself in the entire region.

For 33 years he remained a loyal friend and ally of Rome. Later he was given the title of "Procurator of Judea" with the promise that he would one day be named king. In his new position he was now in direct control of the Jewish hierarchy and people. He married into a recognized Jewish family, a granddaughter of Hyrcanus a Maccabees.

The Jews resented his presence because he represented Rome who controlled all of Palestine. Also he was an Edomite who were descendents of Esau. They had been enemies of the Jews for many years. They lived in the territory south of the Dead Sea but had expanded northward to the area around Hebron.

At first Herod was conscious of Jewish national and religious feelings. He moved slowly on issues such as taxation and religion. Earlier he did much to improve his relationship with the Jews when he prevented the Temple from being raided and defiled by invading Romans. To assure his continued rule, he slaughtered male infants who could possibly be considered legal heirs to the throne.

His wife Mariamne also became a victim of his suspicion and brutality, as he had her murdered. His murder of Mariamne apparently haunted him. This was compounded when his two sons from that marriage, Alexander and Aristobulus, realized that their father was responsible for their mother's death. By 7 B.C., Herod had both sons put to death. It was said, "It is better to be Herod's hog than to be his son."

The territories under Herod experienced economic and cultural growth. His business and organizational ability led to the erection of many important buildings. Greek ideas were introduced into Palestine through literature, art and athletic contests. His major building project was the Temple in Jerusalem, which according to [John 2:20](#), took 46 years to build.

From a Jewish perspective, this was his greatest achievement. Herod became increasingly ill resulting in a struggle within his family for succession to his throne. His 10 marriages and 15 children virtually guaranteed such a struggle. One son, Antipater, poisoned Herod's mind against two other eligible sons, Archelaus and Philip. This resulted in his initial choice of a younger son, Antipas, as sole successor.

However, he later changed his will and made Archelaus king. Antipas and Philip received lesser positions as rulers over small territories. After Herod died, his will was contested resulting in his son Archelaus becoming the ruler over Judea and Samaria with a promise by Rome to be appointed king if he proved himself as a leader.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem during the reign of Herod the Great. The wise men came asking, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" This aroused Herod's jealous spirit. According to Matthew's account, he tried to eliminate Jesus by having all male infants in the area of Bethlehem two years and younger to be put to death ([Matthew 2:13-16](#)). His attempt failed as Joseph and Mary were warned by an angel in a dream to take their child and flee to Egypt. Here they were able to hide safely until Herod's death.

By Jimmy Eaton

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS HEROD ARCHELAUS (4 B.C. – A.D. 6)

Archelaus inherited his father's vices without his abilities. He was responsible for much bloodshed in Judea and Samaria. His brothers Antipas and Philip did not approve of his methods and complained to Rome. He was finally stripped of his power. He is mentioned in [Matthew 2:22](#) where we learn that Joseph and Mary decided not to return to live in Judea. Being warned in a dream they passed through Judea to Nazareth in Galilee.

HEROD PHILIP THE TETARCH

Philip inherited the northern part of his father's kingdom which is mentioned in [Luke 3:1](#). He is considered as the best of Herod's surviving sons. He was responsible for building the city of Caesarea Philippi.

HEROD ANTIPAS (4 B.C. – A.D. 39)

Antipas was the ruler over Galilee and Judea during Jesus' life and ministry. He became infatuated with Herodias, the wife of his half-brother, Philip. The two eloped together, although both were married at the time.

This scandalous affair was condemned severely by John the Baptist ([Matthew 14:3, 4](#); [Mark 6:17-20](#); [Luke 3:19, 20](#)). Antipas had John arrested and imprisoned for his outspokenness. Later Antipas granted Salome, the daughter of Herodias a wish. At the urging of her mother she requested the head of John the Baptist ([Matthew 14:7-12](#); [Mark 6:21-29](#)).

Since he was under oath and did not want to lose face before his guests he ordered John's execution. Because of Jesus' popularity and miraculous powers, Antipas seems to have been haunted by the possibility that Jesus was John the Baptist who had come back from the dead. Luke says Herod wanted to kill Jesus.

Upon hearing this Jesus referred to Herod as a "fox." ([Luke 13:31-32](#)). The last encounter with Jesus occurred at the trial of Jesus ([Luke 23:6-12](#)). Luke indicated that Herod could not find anything in the charges against Jesus that deserved death; so he sent Jesus back to Pilate for a final decision.

HEROD AGRIPPA I

We know this Herod for his persecution against the church ([Acts 12:1-23](#)). He was responsible for putting to death James, the brother of Jesus. He tried to kill Peter also but an angel aided Peter in escaping from prison. A search was made for Peter but they could not find him. After questioning the guards he ordered them to be executed. Later an angel of the Lord struck Agrippa down. He was eaten by worms and died.

HEROD AGRIPPA II

He is the one who listened to Paul's defense while in prison in Caesarea but found no fault in him. He had no power to set Paul free but because Paul had already appealed to Caesar there was no choice but to send Paul to Rome. ([See Acts 26:30-32.](#))

Summary of the Herods

By Jimmy Eaton

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

Inevitable Rome would rule over Palestine. They had been expanding their kingdom since 147 B.C. In the year 63 Pompey attacked Jerusalem. Besieged it for three months. 12,000 Jews reported to have been slaughtered.

Pompey, with his officers entered the Holy of Holies of the Temple, which was looked upon as scandalizing by the Jews. Only the priests had access. However, Pompey did not plunder Temple. This may be due in part to the intercession of Herod.

Jerusalem was made a "tributary to the Romans." Thus the last vestige of the Jew's independence came to a close after 84 years which started with the Maccabees. Although free from Syrian rule Judea became a Roman province of Syria their old enemy.

It would be the Herods under the Roman Caesars who would now rule Palestine until 70 A.D. First was Herod the Great. He was one of four sons of Antipater. Began at age 25. He circulated his family descended from an illustrious Babylonian Jew, which was false.

He was a ruthless fighter, cunning negotiator and subtle diplomat. The Romans liked him because of his ability to subdue the Jews and maintain control of the Jews. He also raised tribute money for the Romans. For 33 years he remained a loyal supporter of Rome.

At first he was appointed to rule Galilee then later named "Procurator of Judea." Later he was given the title, "King of Judea." Jews hated him because he represented Rome. He was an Edomite, a descendent of Esau. He married a descendent of the Maccabee family.

He moved slowly on taxation and religion and did not attempt to force Hellenism on the Jews although he imported some of its symbols – Hippodrome, Gym and Amphitheater. Some pagan temples were brought in. Hellenism was introduced through literature, art and athletic contests. He robbed David's tomb of its treasures for Romans.

He formed a party known as the Herodians. To gain the favor the Jews he began the enlargement and beautifying of the Temple Zerubbabel had built when the Jews returned from Babylon. He attempted to out do the one Salomon built making it more magnificent. Construction began around 20 B.C. and was under construction 46 years.

The territories under Herod experienced economic and cultural growth. His business and organizational ability led to the erection of many important buildings including an elaborate Harbor in Caesarea, a fortress at Masada. He became increasingly ill resulting in a struggle within his family for succession to his throne. His 10 marriages and 15 children guaranteed such a struggle.

His insane jealousy is demonstrated in many ways. He appointed 17 year old brother-in-law Aristobulus III as High Priest for fear Jews might make him King of the Jews. Later he had him drowned at a party. Also executed a brother-in-law Kestobar. His vengeance turned the love of Mariamne into bitter hatred toward him.

He became suspicious of his wife Mariamni and planned to murder her. She stopped sleeping with him. He put her on trial on the charge of adultery. Her sister Salomel testified against her. Even her mother incriminated her. She probably did this because she was next on his list to be killed. Later she declared herself Queen saying Herod was insane. It backfired on her as he had her executed.

By Jimmy Eaton

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

Later he had the two sons of Mariamni; Alexander and Aristobulus put to death who had learned Herod had their mother murdered. He felt they were a threat to his life. Obviously he had deep depression and was paranoid.

He had an incurable and loathsome disease. His temper became more irritable as his malady became worse. Toward end of his life fearing no one would mourn for him at his death he assembled a group of nobles at Jericho to be executed at his death so there be mourning.

He died at the end of March or early April 4 B.C. during the 37th year of his reign. It is said he died a painful death. His tomb has been discovered recently in Jerusalem thus proving he is a historical figure of history and not just a fictitious person

He is best known to us in his attempt to have Jesus killed. Born in Bethlehem wise men came asking "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" This aroused his jealous spirit. According to Matthew's account, he tried to eliminate Jesus by having all infant in the area two year and younger to be put to death (Matthew 2:13-16). His attempt failed. Being a small village probably no more than 20 children would have been killed.

Archelaus inherited his father's position. He is mentioned in Matthew 2:22 where we learn Joseph and Mary decided not to return to live in Judea. His brother Antipas and Philip did not approve his methods and complained to Rome. He was stripped of his power.

Herod Philip the Tetarch inherited the northern part of his father's kingdom who is mentioned in Luke 3:1. He is considered the best of Herod's surviving sons. Built the city of Caesarea Philippi.

Herod Antipas became ruler over Galilee and Perea during life of Jesus. Became infatuated with Herodias, the wife of his half-brother, Philip. They eloped although both were married at the time. They were condemned severely by John the Baptist. Antipas had John arrested and imprisoned and later had him beheaded at the request of Salome, who was prodded by her mother Herodias. Later he was haunted by the possibility that Jesus was John the Baptist who had come back from the dead. He was sent by Pilate for questioning but found nothing deserving death.

Herod Agrippa brought persecution against the church (Acts 12:1-23). He was responsible for putting to death James, the brother of Jesus. Tried to kill Peter but aided by angel Peter escaped.

Herod Agrippa II is the one who listened to Paul's defense while in prison in Caesarea but found no fault in him.

With the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. the Herod family would fade out.

Lesson Six Herod's Temple

When Herod the great became the king in Jerusalem one of the first things he did to win over the people was to expand and beautify the temple of Zerubbabel. Herod's temple cannot actually be spoken of as a third Temple, for Herod himself said, in so many words, that he only intended to be enlarge and beautifying the Temple of Zerubbabel.

By Jimmy Eaton

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

You can be sure that his primary interest was to gain fame for himself. The temple that Solomon built brought him much fame. Herod no doubt thought that by doubling the size that Solomon built would bring him great fame.

Since the temple stood on the top of a hill, the only way to enlarge the area was to build massive retaining walls and fill in the area inside the walls so as to create a large flat area. Herod would double the size of the original platform of Solomon's temple. He had the materials for the new building collected before removing what remained from the old Zerubbabel temple.

He trained 1,000 priests to be masons and carpenters for work on the Temple itself. In all 10,000 skilled workmen were employed in this gigantic reconstruction effort. The temple was commenced in 20-19 B.C. in the eighteenth year of Herod's reign. The Temple itself in which only the priests and Levite worked was finished in a year and a half. It took eight years to complete the courts.

Subsidiary buildings were gradually added so that it was not actually completed till the time of Agrippa II in A.D. 62, which would be about 81 total years of construction. It was completely destroyed eight years later in A.D. 70 by the Romans. Some of the foundation walls of the temple are visible today. It is called "The Wailing Wall." Jews go there today to pray.

On one of His trips to Jerusalem for the Passover Jesus made a whip and drove out the animals and overturned the tables of the moneychangers. He said, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" And His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.'" Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these things?' Jesus answered and said, to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then the Jews said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple and will You raise it up in three days?'" (John 2:16-20).

This shows that at the time Christ visited Jerusalem the temple had been under construction for forty-six years. Herod dedicated the Temple in 18 B.C. The full realization of his plan actually took 84 years according to Josephus. He tells us that "the expenditure was incalculable and its magnificent was never surpassed". It is probable that the major part of the work had been accomplished when Jesus was there.

It is interesting that Jesus refers to Herod's Temple as "my Father's house" even though Herod is the one who had it rebuilt. Evil men often fulfill God's purposes not knowing how their self-centered deeds can be used to bring about God's purposes. Even though moneychangers and merchants were polluting the temple area with their animals along with a corrupt priesthood the temple itself remained the house of God.

It was built of white marble, covered with heavy plates of gold on the front side rising high above everything around it. Josephus compared it to a snow-covered mountain. Some said it was so dazzling that it was difficult to look directly at it when the sun was shining. Whichever side you approached, it was a dazzling sight.

The Jews for the most part hated Herod yet they had great admiration for what he built. Even the disciples show their admiration for the beautiful buildings on the temple grounds. On one occasion upon leaving the temple it is said, "His disciples came to Him to show Him the building of the temple."

By Jimmy Eaton

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

They must have felt he had not shown much interest in the many buildings located on the grounds of the temple and they wanted him to see their beauty. It must have shocked them when He told them, "not one stone shall be left here upon another that shall not be thrown down." As soon they reached the Mount of Olives they asked Him "Tell us when will these things be?" His answer must have mystified them.

The area inside the massive retaining walls has been estimated as anywhere from 26 to 35 acres. The shape was an irregular oblong shape, broader at the north than at the south. The walls had several gates. Looking at the drawing below you would be standing at the Southwest corner of the temple looking east toward the Mount of Olives. The Wall immediately in front is the west wall. Part of it remains today known as the "Wailing Wall."

Just beyond this wall you can see the Temple (center area) but we are seeing the backside as the Temple which faced toward the east and the Mount of Olives. Beyond the Temple you can see what was called Solomon's porch. It was covered allowing protection from rain and the hot sunshine. At the northwest corner was Antonia's Fortress.

Roman soldiers were placed there to keep an eye on the Jews and what was going on inside the Temple area. Pilate lived there at one time. On the south side (right) was a magnificent structure called the Royal Porch. The roof was of caved cedar. It may be that some of the chambers were for the priest, rabbis, officials and the Sanhedrin.

Herod's Temple figures prominently in New and Old Testament history. Mary and the infant Jesus would have entered from the east through the "Golden Gate" located on the east wall which opened into the court of women directly in front of the temple.

They were greeted by Simeon and Anna (Luke 1:25-38). At 12 years of age the boy Jesus amazed the temple rabbis by his understanding and answers (Luke 2:46-47). The court of the Gentiles was to the right of the Temple (south). Driving out the animals, moneychangers and merchants by Jesus was probably in the Court of the Gentiles.

At the second cleansing he would not allow anyone to carry anything through that part of the temple (Mark 11:15-17). He said to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations, but you have made it a den of thieves.'" Many times at festivals He walked in the temple-courts, and taught and disputed with the Jews.

He "sat down over against the treasury" and observed the people casting in their gifts and praised the poor widow who cast in her two mites which was above all who cast in out of their abundance (Mark 12:41-44). Part of the western wall still remains. It is the holiest shrine of the Jewish world. It was part of the retaining wall supporting the temple mount.

After the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D., Jews were not allowed to come to Jerusalem until many years later. Then they were only allowed to visit once a year on the anniversary of the temple's destruction and weep over the ruins of the Holy Temple. Thus this wall became known as the Wailing Wall

One interesting project by Herod was his raising an immense shrine over the cave of Machpelah, the burial place of the Patriarchs. It was constructed of massive stones characteristic of his structures. Much of this building remains today.

By Jimmy Eaton

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

More recently a long staircase leading down to the Tyropoem valley where there were public gardens and pools. The pool of Siloam was located in this area. On the day of Pentecost the only place that meets the conditions of **Acts 2** would be around Solomon's Porch. Which would accommodate a large gathering of people. Their meeting "**day by day**" after Pentecost was in the temple area – again at Solomon's Porch. Years later Paul would be accused of profaning the temple by bringing Greeks into a forbidden area of the temple.

Summary of Herod's Temple

One of first things Herod did to try to win the people over in his favor was to rebuild the temple. Stood on the highest point of Jerusalem. Only way to enlarge area was to build massive retaining walls. He trained 1,000 priests to be masons and carpenters. In all 10,000 skilled workmen were employed.

Began around 20-19 B.C. Temple was finished in a year and half. Eight years to complete the court. Subsidiary buildings gradually added. Christ visited the temple it has been 46 years under construction. Building would continue until A.D. 62 making a total of 81 years in all. Destroyed within eight years.

On one visit He drove out animals, overturned tables of Moneychangers "**Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise! And His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.'**" Then the Jews answered and said to Him, 'What sign do you show to us, seeing that You do these things?' Jesus answered and said, to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' Then the Jews said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple and will You raise it up in three days?' (John. 2:16-20).

Construction went on until A.D. 62 probably involving minor buildings, works, etc. Interesting that Jesus calls Herod's Temple "**My Father's house.**" God can use evil self-serving men to accomplish His purposes. Polluted by moneychangers, merchants and corrupt priests, the temple remained the House of God.

Built of white marble, covered with heavy plates of gold on front side. Josephus com-pared it to a snow-covered mountain. So dazzling it was difficult to look directly at it when the Sun was shining on it. The Jews for the most part hated Herod but admiration for what he built. Even the disciples showed their admiration.

"**His disciples came to Him to show Him the buildings of the temple.**" Must have felt Jesus did not notice all the buildings. It must have been a shock to them when he said, "**Not one stone shall be left here upon another that shall not be thrown down.**" As soon as they reached the Mount of Olives they asked Him, "**Tell us when will these things be?**" His answer consisted of a long description of the dismantling of the temple.

The area inside the massive retaining walls estimated 26 to 35 acres. Shape was irregular oblong, broader at northern end than at the south. Part of western wall remains today and is called the "**Wailing Wall.**"

The temple sets in the middle of the mound. Beyond (**eastern wall**) was Solomon's Porch. It most likely fits into the events of **Acts 2 (Pentecost)**. Their "**day by day**" activities fit into the area of Solomon's Porch.

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Herod's Temple figures prominently in both Old and New Testament history. Significant events occurred in Herod's temple.

1. Mary and the infant Jesus would have entered court of women on the East Side.
2. Greeting by Simeon and Anna (Luke 1:25-38).
3. At the age of 12 Jesus probably visited Jerusalem for the first time. He was found in the Temple "sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers."
4. Satan brought Jesus to the pinnacle of the Temple to tempt him. Driving out the animals, moneychangers and merchants by Jesus court of Gentiles
5. At second cleansing would not allow anyone to carry anything through that part of the Temple. "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations,' but you have made it a den of thieves."
6. He "sat down over against the treasury" observing the people casting in their gifts and praised the poor widow who cast in her two mites. (See Mark 12:41-44).
7. Jesus often taught and debated the scribes, teachers and priests at the Temple.
8. A major part of the activities of Pentecost took place within a temple court.
9. There were day by day activities of the early Christians in the Temple courts.
10. Paul was arrested and accused to bringing Gentiles into sacred areas of the Temple.
11. The Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70 by the Romans. Thousands of Jews were killed and many were carried away into slavery. With the destruction of the Temple Judaism as a system ceased to exist.

Lesson Seven The Synagogue

The oldest continuous religious institution on earth is the synagogue. Tradition says it dates back to the time of Ezekiel. With Israel in Babylonian captivity the Jews no longer had access to the temple. It is reported that Ezekiel held teaching sessions in his house. This grew into a simple teaching and worship service. There is no indication that the synagogue was ever authorized in the Old Testament scriptures but rather it was something that the Jews on their own developed over a long period of time.

When the Jews returned from captivity to Jerusalem in 536 B.C. they brought the synagogue with them. An old pottery fragment dating back to around 500 B.C. has the inscription, "The House of the Congregation in Jerusalem." By the time of their return there had been a great dispersion of the Jews into various areas of the world. Being cut off from Jerusalem, its temple and its priesthood the synagogue ended up replacing the temple as the center of religious life. Most cities of any size had a synagogue.

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Synagogue worship became more appealing than temple worship to the common people. They could better relate to the synagogue than the temple. In each village there was usually a synagogue where they could participate in its simple worship. On the other hand the temple was not as accessible. The temple had four courts, which eliminated how close the people could get near it. The people could not offer their sacrifices. The priest had to do this for them.

Only the priest had access to the altar of burnt offerings. The people could not enter the Temple for prayer. A priest went in at the time of prayer and burned incense. While the synagogue may not have inspired them with the same awe as the Temple did, yet the synagogue controlled their hearts and lives more because they could relate to it personally. The synagogue became much more than a place of worship. It ministered and addressed virtually every area of Jewish life.

The synagogue was a school. The Jews required the education of their children beginning at age 6 or 7. Each synagogue educated its own children. At first there were only scripture classes but this grew into a primary and later a secondary education. Synagogues provided a general education in all aspects of Jewish culture and activity. It was also a guesthouse. It had a room for wayfarers to eat, drink and sleep in.

Ruins of old synagogues reveal hospitality rooms were furnished with provisions for food and sleeping. An inscription from an ancient synagogue found on Mount Ophel mentions these things. It served as an Inn for those who were in need when coming from abroad.

The synagogue was a social center for Jewish community life. Celebrations and special occasions were observed in the synagogue. All ages could meet to enjoy social fellowship. To keep their children from being influenced by Grecian culture, they planned activities for their children centered around the synagogue so that every Jewish child would want to spend his leisure time there.

The synagogue also ministered to the sick, needy, orphans and widows. They had a kind of social security system that addressed every need and emergency. Everyone had the assurance that if they died their orphan children or aged parent would be taken care of. They sometimes had physicians who received a base pay for attending the poor free of charge. Special women were paid to be nurses and midwives.

A collection was taken at each service by at least two people (to count what was given) and distribution was made by at least three people to the needy. Each synagogue had elders. This explains how Paul could appoint elders so quickly in each of the churches he had established on his first missionary trip as he returned to Antioch. Former Jewish elders had been converted.

The synagogue was a place of worship. The worship was very simple and very much like Christian worship. Since the average Jew could not understand Hebrew the reading of the Old Testament was translated into Aramaic. This translation (a paraphrase) was called the Targum. There would be an explanation following its reading. However, unlike today the sermon could be interrupted. It was more like our Bible classes where the teacher is often interrupted or even challenged.

The synagogue engaged in the singing of Psalms and hymns. No instrumental music was used in their worship. Many believe the synagogue came into existence by the providence of God to prepare the people for the coming of the church. Its worship was identical to Christian worship with the exception of the Lord's Supper. When the church came into existence it was a relatively easy transition from synagogue worship to Christian worship.

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The synagogue was a court of justice. Troubles and strife arising within were settled by the elders rather than taken before Roman magistrates. This protected them from hostile Gentile courts. This may be why Paul was so upset that the Corinthian Christians were taking each other to Roman courts. The Talmud required a synagogue to have at least three elders. Elders could settle internal disputes and strife. So could the church.

In the first century, synagogues existed all over the world wherever there were Jews. According to the Jerusalem Talmud there were 480 synagogues in Jerusalem at the time of its destruction in A.D. 70. Some no doubt were very small. It took 10 males to form a synagogue. In large cities there would be more than one.

The worst possible thing that could happen to a Jew was to be put out of the Synagogue. You were "shunted." You were cut off from any and all social connections. No one would have anything to do with you. Jesus warned his disciples this would happen to them (John 16:2, Luke 21:12).

The blind man healed by Jesus was cast out of the Synagogue (John 9:22, 34). A Jew becoming a Christian faced the fact of his having no further social contacts in the community he lived in and even with his own family. Jesus warned that "a man's foes will be those of his own household" (Matthew 10:36). Again He warned, "From now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three" (Luke. 12:52)

There is no specific difference between the Greek word "ekklesia" translated as church in the New Testament and the word for synagogue. Both mean an assembly or a congregation. After the church was well established among the Gentiles, it became common practice to distinguish between Jews and Christians by using "ekklesia" for the church and "synagogue" for the Jewish Sabbath assemblies. Those outside the church looked upon Christians as a troublesome Jewish religious sect such as the Pharisees and Sadducees.

The synagogue's weekly assemblies kept the Torah (the law) fresh and alive in the minds of the Jews during the 400 years between the Testaments. It also kept alive Jewish culture and traditions. While the Temple priesthood degenerated under Sadducee influence the synagogue remained a source of spiritual strength. Synagogue worship prepared the Jews for the coming of Christian worship. The synagogue continues to this very day to be the most important institution in the lives of millions of Jews the all over the world.

Lesson Eight The Sabbath Day

The observance of the Sabbath Day was a part of the Law delivered to Moses on Mt. Sinai. "Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it must be put to death; whoever does any work on that day must be cut off from his people. For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord, Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day must be put to death. The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. It will be a sign between Me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he abstained from work and rested" (Exodus 31:14).

It was primarily a day of rest. Old Testament prophets recounted God's blessings upon those who properly observed the Sabbath (Isaiah 58:13-14). At the same time they soundly condemned those who broke the Sabbath. No list of what was considered work was not precisely given.

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We know of a man who was put to death for gathering wood, probably to build a fire. (See Numbers 15:32-36). There was to be no burden-bearing, traveling, or trading on the Sabbath. Nehemiah, to prevent marketing on this day, ordered the closing of the gates so merchants could not enter Jerusalem.

When the Jews returned from captivity they brought the synagogue with them. During the period between the Old and New Testaments as the synagogue developed it was natural that the Jews would not only continue to gather to be instructed in the Law but it would develop into a day of worship.

The study of the Law and worship were never considered work in any sense. However, some of the prophets found fault with their worship on the Sabbath, because it was not spiritual nor prompted by love and gratitude.

In the Persian period Nehemiah struggled earnestly to make the people of Jerusalem observe the law of the Sabbath. That the pious Jews in Israel carefully observed the Sabbath is clear from the conduct of the Maccabees and their followers, who at first declined to fight the onslaught made by their Syrian enemies on the Sabbath.

Knowing that they refused to fight on the Sabbath the Syrians would often wait and attack on the Sabbath, which resulted in many of the Jews dying. The Maccabees decided that in view of what they were defending they were justified to fight on the Sabbath. Necessity drove the faithful to defend themselves against hostile attacks on the Sabbath.

It was during the period between the Testaments that the spirit of Jewish legalism began to flourish. Jewish leaders added greatly to the details of Sabbath legislation. Their motive was to insure careful observance of the Sabbath by making certain the people did not even come close to violating it.

This ended up substituting human law for divine law (Matthew 15:9), and made the Sabbath law a burden rather than a day of rest. Innumerable restrictions and rules were formulated for the conduct of life under the Law. The greater principles of life such as justice, mercy, faithfulness and the saving of life were lost sight of in the many petty details they had accumulated (Matthew 23:23).

The many things they said were forbidden are to be found in the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era. The movement was at flood tide during our Lord's earthly ministry and continued for centuries afterwards. Apart from His claim to be the Messiah, there is no subject on which our Lord came into such sharp conflict with the religious leaders of the Jews as in the matter of Sabbath observance.

Jesus set Himself squarely against the rabbinic restrictions as contrary to the spirit of the original law of the Sabbath. The rabbis seemed to think that the Sabbath was an end in itself, an institution to which the pious Israelite must subject all his personal interests toward. In other words, man was made for the Sabbath. Man might suffer hardship under these prohibitions but the institution must be preserved inviolate.

Jesus, to the contrary, taught that the Sabbath was made for man's benefit. It was a day of rest. In saying this Jesus did not discredit the Sabbath as an institution. It was His custom to attend worship in the synagogue on the Sabbath (Luke 4:16). Because of his frequent visits to the synagogue the Pharisees were constantly watching his every move and every word to try and find if he was violating their Sabbath traditions in some way.

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There was no bigger issue among the Jews than the matter of a Sabbath day's journey. This wording is found only in **Acts 1:12** where it designates the distance from Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives as being a "**Sabbath's day journey.**" The usage of this rule was to set forth the exact distance the Jew might travel on the Sabbath without transgressing the Law.

The command against working on the Sabbath was interpreted as including travel as working. This amounted to about 1,333 yards. The Rabbis, however, invented a way of increasing this distance without technically infringing on their Law. By depositing some food at the 1,333 yard limit before the Sabbath at a tree or a stone and declaring that spot as a temporary domicile on the Sabbath, then they might proceed 1333 more yards from this point without transgressing the Law.

They had to be careful to say, "**Let my Sabbath residence be at the trunk of that tree,**" for if he merely said: "**Let my Sabbath residence be under that tree.**" This would not be sufficient, because the expression would be too general and indefinite. Other schemes for extending the distance were also devised. The Law of Moses did not set distance limit for walking on the Sabbath. It did forbid traveling on the Sabbath. Their list of things they could not carry was endless.

Synagogues had two main officials probably elected by the elders. The **First** was "**The Ruler of the Synagogue.**" He was responsible for the building and property and general oversight of the public worship; appointing a person to read the Scriptures and pray. He would invite a visitor or member to address the congregation.

Second was the "**Attendant.**" He was responsible for the building and its furniture, in particular the rolls of Scripture. During the worship he brought the roll from the chest handing it to the reader. He also returned it to its proper place. He also was responsible for the administering of scourging. He also blew three blasts on the trumpet to announce the beginning and end of the Sabbath.

Another important person was the "**Cantor**" who would be equivalent to a "**song leader**" in the church today. He often sang a solo. The congregation might echo his words and melody. The synagogue buildings varied. They were usually built of stone and lay North and South with the entrance at the South end toward Jerusalem.

The main articles of furniture were (1) a chest in which the Scriptures were kept and wrapped in linen cloth; (2) a platform on which was a reading desk; (3) lamps; (4) the chief seats and benches on which the worshipers sat. The congregation was divided with the men seated on one side and the women on the other. The more prominent members took the front seats.

Lesson Nine The Pharisees

The party known as the Pharisees is first mentioned by name during the reign of John Hyrcanus (134 – 104 B.C.). The influence of Hellenism (**Greek culture**) was particularly strong in Palestine at that time. Greek culture was considered immoral and opposed to the Law of Moses by many Jews. When the Syrian King Antiochus Epiphanes tried to do away with the Jewish religion by forcing Greek culture on them the Pharisees joined the Maccabees in their revolt against him.

Later on it is clear that the Pharisees resented the combination of High Priest and also having civil authority also over the people as was the case with the successors of the Maccabees. Before they had always had a king who was not a high priest. They did not think the two offices of High Priest and King should be combined.

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The word "Pharisee" means "separated ones." Some have suggested that the separation was from the common people, but it is more probable that the Pharisees were so named because of their zeal for the Law which involved separation from the influences of Greek culture. They would become the legalist of their day while the Sadducees were the liberals. The gospels records forty confrontations between Jesus and the Pharisees, usually over some legalistic matter.

Their motivation seemed noble—to protect the Law of Moses. They often produced scripture that they thought justified their position. Everyone is for protecting God's law. However, in order to protect some particular law they would build a fence of human laws around that law so it could not be broken. These fences became known as the "traditions of the fathers."

At the time of Jesus their legalistic system contained around 6000 rules and regulations, which they felt protected the Law of Moses. As we noted in our last lesson they had a list of 39 rules they felt protected the Sabbath from being violated.

When analyzed they failed to see the intent or purpose of the Sabbath law - rest from their six day of labor. They often criticized Jesus for what he did on the Sabbath even though He might be healing someone of some disease or caused the blind to see or a cripple to walk. Jesus reminded them that if an animal fell in a ditch on the Sabbath they would immediately rescue the animal. Life was more important than Sabbath keeping – rest.

He reminded them that man was not made for the Sabbath but the Sabbath was made for man. [With all their rules you wonder how they justified making a market place out of the Temple courts?](#) Jesus confronted them about this.

Mark 11:16. "On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, is it not written: My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations but you have made it a den of robbers" (Mark 11:16).

No item of food or drink was to be purchased from a "sinner," for fear of ceremonial defilement. A Pharisee might not eat in the house of a "sinner," although he might entertain a "sinner" in his own house, but he must provide the "sinner" with clothes to wear, for the "sinner's" own clothes might be ceremonially impure.

The particular domain of the Pharisees in the period between the Testaments was the synagogue. They wanted to be the leaders and authorities in the synagogues. There were two influential schools of legal thought among the Pharisees. Hillel headed one school. He was the more moderate of the two in his legal interpretations. He was known for his regard for the poor and was willing to accept Roman rule as compatible with Jewish orthodoxy.

Shammai headed the other. He was more rigid and strict in his interpretation and was bitterly opposed to the Romans occupying Palestine. His viewpoint ultimately found expression in the Zealots, whose resistance to the Romans brought on the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

The priest had been responsible for teaching and interpreting the Law (**Leviticus 10:8-11: Deuteronomy 33:8-10**) but between the Testament many of the people lost all respect for the priests because of the corruption in the Jerusalem priesthood. They began to look to the scribes to interpret the Law for them.

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They lived pious, disciplined lives; and had been trained to become experts in the Law. It was natural then, for people to follow their teachings rather than that of corrupt priests. It is from this group we have the beginning of the Pharisees.

To the Pharisee tradition was not just human rules. Rather tradition was raised to the level of Scripture itself. To justify this attitude they said an "oral law" was given by God to Moses at Mt. Sinai, in addition to the written Law.

They said oral law must be observed with even greater stringency than the written Law, because oral law (traditions) affected the life of the ordinary man far more than the written Law of Moses. Pharisaism involved little more than a concern for the minute things of the Law. Their piety had separated them from things they considered impure turning them inward to an attitude of pride in the observance of legal precepts.

They loved to be called "Rabbi," (a special title) and occupied the chief seats in the synagogue so they could be seen. They stood on the street corners and prayed long and loud prayers just to be seen of men. They wore conspicuous clothing with tassels and phylacteries. They thought this displayed piety toward God. It was not true piety. Their only reward was from men, not from God.

Their deeds needed to be accompanied with a heart that truly loved the Lord. However, the Pharisees and their scribes enjoyed a good deal of popular support. This is surprising since they separated themselves from most other Jews. They were highly critical, always ready to criticize others for not keeping the law, looking down on them as "sinners."

A question we might ask at this time is, [does the church of today and the Pharisees have much in common?](#) The truth is we have much in common. We see this in the many unwritten rules we have made to be sure we do not violate any teaching in the New Testament. As a people we have always struggled with recognizing the difference between what is human judgment and [what is a matter of true faith?](#)

We could begin with the Lord's Supper. Jesus said we are to do this in memory of him. To protect this command we have added our own rules. As an example are the one cup churches. Often our rules end up being a ritual or formalism. Many rules have been established about the order of worship. Any change in these rules is deemed as a serious violation of the words of Jesus that we are to worship God "in spirit and in truth."

Numerous rules have been made about the use of the church building yet for the first three centuries there were no church buildings. Our rules end up making the building sacred missing the point that a building is merely an expediency.

Rules about what could or could not be preached on particular Sundays. [Also which translations could be read in worship or even in private study?](#) The terrible debate over the support of orphan homes in the 50s and 60s. For example one unwritten law was that a child must be an "Orphan in deed" meaning that neither parent is living.

The attitude of the Pharisees still exists today. It binds human judgment on other Christians by demanding conformity to certain unwritten laws. Most of these laws come from sincere Christians who have a genuine concern about violating God's word but at the same time these brethren can be dangerous because this type of reasoning often results in factions and dissention.

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For all of us who are loyal to what the Bible teaches our basic problem is interpretation. What we have to be careful about is - **WHEN TO STOP** – not going ahead to add to or take away or add to the intent and purpose of the verse or verses under consideration. In spite of our best efforts there will always be matters over which we will disagree. When this happens it would be well for us all to recall an old motto used in the past that would prevent legalism. **“In matters of faith unity; in matters of opinion liberty, in all things love”**.

Another question to ask is, **does the issue we disagree on, something that would keep us out of heaven? Is it serious enough to cause harsh feelings or even cause division in the body of Christ?** The consequences usually are far worse than the issues brethren divide over; however division sometimes may be the best solution.

Lesson Ten The Sadducees

The Sadducees were a religious sect in the time of Jesus. Their origin is not known for sure. Some think they date back to Zadock, a high priest during the time of David and Solomon. However in all probability they came into existence during the period between the Old and New Testaments. We do know that they came from the leading families of the nation such as the priests, merchants, and the rich. They can well be described as aristocrats. The high priests, the most powerful members of the priesthood were mainly Sadducees. **(See Acts 5:17)**

One of the distinguishing marks of the Sadducees was their rejection of the **“traditions of the elders”** advocated by the Pharisees. They claimed that God not only gave Moses a written law, but also an oral law which was passed down and given to the elders. They in turn passed these oral laws on down to their successors. T

The Pharisees claimed the oral law was needed to interpret the written Law of Moses. They regarded these traditions as important as the Law of Moses itself. By contrast the Sadducees insisted that only the laws written by Moses **(the Pentateuch - the first five books of the Old Testament)** were the only binding laws. In short the main difference between the two parties was confined, on the whole, to this general rejection of Pharisaic traditions.

With the Sadducees little value was placed on the writings of the Prophets or the Psalms. They did not outright reject them but they did not feel they were on an equal with the Pentateuch. The most prominent doctrine of the Sadducees was the denial of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body. They believed that the soul dies with the body – thus the extinction of life.

The Sadducees said that Moses nowhere mentions anything about a soul or a resurrection. One incident where Jesus clashed with the Sadducees is recorded in three of the gospels **(Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-40)**.

They approached Jesus with a **“what if”** question, designed to show the consequences that can arise from believing in the resurrection of the dead. **“Suppose,” they asked, “a woman had seven husbands in this life and each of them died without leaving children? Whose wife would she be in the world to come?”** Jesus replied with a two-part answer.

First, He said that they were wrong to suggest that earthly relationships, such as marriage, will continue after the resurrection. **Second** He pointed out that they were wrong in not believing in the resurrection.

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He said, "Have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matthew 22:31-32; also Exodus 3:6, 15-16).

Jesus' argument was that since God told Moses that He was (not had been) the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob therefore their souls lived after their bodies died. If they were no longer in existence then He would not have said this for "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must have lived on after their deaths since God is still their God. If they did not live on then God could not be their God. He could not be the God of someone who did not exist.

From Acts 23:8 we learn that they did not believe in either angels or spirits. However, angels are mentioned a number of times in the writings of Moses. In view of this it is difficult to see how they could harmonize this with their denial of angels. They may have regarded angels as simply God appearing in some kind of visible form.

We wonder what kind of explanation they would have given for the demons who possessed the bodies of many of the people. At the death of Christ Matthew informs us that, "The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people." Did any of the Sadducees see them?

The Sadducees at first disregarded the quarrels the Pharisees had with Jesus as a matter about which they had no concern. It was not until many of the people believed the Lord to be the Messiah that it got their attention. Since the Roman government appointed the High Priest they were jealous of anyone who might threaten their power. Jesus was drawing large crowds and was popular with the common people.

They were afraid if He gained too many followers that the Romans might throw them out of their positions as priests. On one occasion they said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation" (John 11:48).

They were desperate to protect their high positions and rank for it was the Romans who appointed them. Should the Roman Emperor learn that the Jews believed in the coming of a Jewish king who was to rule the world, and that someone had appeared in Palestine who claimed to be that Messiah then their positions would be endangered?

It would appear to the Romans they had lost control over the people. With them it was strictly a matter of politics and power. It is clear the Sadducees played a major role in the arrest of Jesus and His condemnation. They urged Pilate to have him crucified (Mark 15:1, 3, 10-15).

After the resurrection of Jesus the Pharisees seem to become less hostile to the followers of Christ; but the Sadducees maintained an attitude of suspicion and hatred. This was because the resurrection of the dead became the leading doctrine of Christianity. Luke informs us that the Sadducees "were filled with jealousy" because the apostles were attracting crowds of people.

"And as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached through Jesus the

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resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already the evening" (Acts 3:1-4).

Something that is interesting about this situation is that Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee, was an agent of the Sadducean high priest that led him to persecute Christians. The Sadducees were in complete control of the Sanhedrin although there were a large number of Pharisees who also served on this ruling body of Jews.

For many years it was the responsibility of the priests to teach the law of God to the Israelites. They were the authorities the people would go to for interpretation or application of the Law (Deuteronomy 17:8-13). However, the leading priests lost the respect of the people by becoming corrupt.

When this happened, many Jews began to go to the scribes who had become experts in God's law and who usually lived pious, disciplined lives, although many of them were not priests. Thus many of the Jews began to follow the teachings of the scribes and to let the scribes interpret the law of God for them.

Unfortunately with this changeover to the Scribes the "traditions of the elders" were taught. These traditions were made up of customs, rulings, and interpretations that the scribes passed on as the authoritative way in which God's law should be applied.

The Sadducees also believed in the free will of man. Man is responsible for his own prosperity or misfortune. They interpreted the law literally and tended to support strict justice as opposed to mercy toward the offender. Considering their concept of no life after death it seems strange to us that they were so intent in punishing those who violated the Law. Stranger yet [why would they want to be priests and the religious leaders if there is no resurrection?](#) The answer may lie in their belief that God prospered the righteous.

Summary of the Sadducees

A prominent religious sect in the time of Jesus. Origin not know - Some think date back to Zadock, high priest during David's time. Probably came into existence during period between the Testaments. They seem to have accepted some parts of Hellenism.

Came from the leading prominent families - priests, merchants and rich - aristocrats. They were the most powerful members of the priesthood. All High Priests were Sadducees during the latter part of this period between the Testaments.

Strangely their distinguishing mark was the rejection of the "traditions of the elders." Said God only gave Moses a written law - No oral law was ever given. They did not place value on the Prophets and Psalms. Did not outright reject but felt not equal to Law. Most prominent doctrine of the Sadducees was their denial of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body. Believed soul dies with the body thus extinction.

Three of the gospels mention a confrontation the Lord had with the Sadducees on this subject. Approach Him with a "what if" question. Man had seven wives with no children. [Which one will be his wife in the resurrection?](#) Jesus replies with a two part answer.

By Jimmy Eaton

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

First, they were wrong in suggestion earthly marriage is carried over into heaven. Reminds them of scripture. "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but the living." They had to be alive or He would not have said this. Could not be the God of someone who did not exist.

From Acts 23:8 learn they did not believe in either angels or spirits. Yet, angels are mentioned a number of times in Moses' writings. What about Jacob's ladder dream? They may have regarded angels as simply God appearing in some kind of visible form. How did they answer the existence of evil spirits inhabiting the bodies of people? It seems this was a common occurrence.

At the time of the death of Christ Matthew informs us that, "Tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to live. They came out of the tombs. And after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people."

Did any of the Sadducees see them? The Sadducees at first disregarded the quarrels the Pharisees had with Jesus as a matter of which they had no concern. It was not until so many of the people began to believe the Lord to be the Messiah that it got their attention.

The High Priests were appointed by the Romans, primarily by Herod. They were afraid Jesus might gather a large number of people to follow him then the Romans might throw them out of their positions because they were unable to control the people.

They once said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation" (John 11:48).

They were desperate to keep their positions as priests. If the Romans became suspicious that this Jesus claimed to be a king it would appear they had lost control of the Jews. It was all strictly a matter of politics. They had no real concern about spiritual matters or the spiritual welfare of the people. They played a major role in the arrest of Jesus and His condemnation. They urged Pilate to have him crucified (Mark 15:1, 3, 10-15).

After His resurrection the Pharisees seem less hostile to the followers of Christ; but the Sadducees seem to take on a greater attitude of suspicion and hatred. The resurrection was a major doctrine of Christianity. Luke tells us they were "full of jealousy" because the apostles were attracting crowds of people.

"And as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already the evening" (Acts 3:1-4).

Something that is interesting is the fact that Paul a Pharisee was an agent of the High Priest, a Sadducee. He attempted to capture Jews who had become Christians. The Sadducees were in complete control of the Sanhedrin although there were a number of Pharisees who were members of the Sanhedrin. Paul must have had their respect.

For many years it was the responsibility of the priests to teach the word of God to the people. They were the authorities. But as they became corrupted the people lost respect for them.

By Jimmy Eaton

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Thus, they turned to the Scribes who had become experts in the Law and who lived pious lives. This brought about the teachings of the "traditions of the elders." Sadducees believe in free will. Man responsible for his situation in life. Your reward was in this world. Why did they want to be the religious leaders and priests if there is no resurrection? Would you be here today if there were no resurrection?

Lesson Eleven The High Priest

The High Priest was the supreme civil and religious leader of the people. Aaron, the brother of Moses was the first High Priest. The office was hereditary. One could easily recognize the High Priest as different from other priests by the kind of clothes he wore. These vestments symbolized glory and beauty. They set him apart as holy. The Ephod was made from gold, blue, purple, and scarlet material. The breastplate had 12 stones set in gold filigree.

They represented the twelve tribes of Israel. The robe was entirely of blue, with an opening for the head at the center with a hem around the edge so it would no tear. The edge of the skirt had pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet alternating with bells of gold. The turban had a plate of pure gold engraved with a seal: "Holy to God" and was tied to the front of the turban. The turban was made of fine linen. Their underwear was also made of linen "to cover their nakedness from the waist to the thigh."

His duties involved more than that of the other priests. Also there were particular requirements placed upon him as the spiritual head of God's people. Leviticus 21 required he had to be without any physical defects as well as his conduct had to be holy. He was not to show grief for the dead – even his father or mother by removing his head-dress or letting his hair go unkempt.

He must not tear his clothes in grief or go near a dead body. His duties took first place in his daily life. Leaving his duties unperformed because of a death would "profane the sanctuary." He could marry only a virgin of his own tribe. She could not be a widow or a divorced woman, or an impure woman. He must not, by a bad marriage, spoil his character or endanger the holiness of his son who would succeed him.

The high priest was installed in his office by an elaborate seven-day service at the Temple. He was cleansed by bathing. Then he was dressed in the special garments he was required to wear. He was anointed with a special oil. Sacrifices of sin offering, burnt offering, and consecration offering were made by him. He was then anointed with a special oil.

He participated in all priestly ministries including the daily offering during the week. One certain function was given only to him. He had to offer a sin offering for his own sins as well as the sins of the whole congregation once each year on the Day of Atonement. It is said that he also officiated at the Sabbath, the New Moon and yearly festivals.

One thing was unusual about his clothing and no one seems to know the specifics. He alone wore what was called the "Urim and the Thummim." This seems to have been a part of a breastplate with gems or stones imbedded in it. Some think the gems were in a pocket on the breastplate. For this reason the breastplate is often called the breastplate of judgment, or decision.

Some scholars believe these gems were cast much like dice are thrown today to aid the high priest in making important decisions. This enabled him to make decision about the people.

By Jimmy Eaton

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The theory contends that they could produce answers to questions which called for more than a mere yes or no reply. It is believed that Israel came to him to learn the will of God on important matters such as the movements of the army in the conquest of the land of Canaan.

Numbers 27:21 says, "He (Joshua) is to stand before Eleazar the priest, who will obtain decisions for him by inquiring of the Urim before the Lord. At his command he and the entire community of the Israelites will go out, and at his command they will come in."

The most important responsibility of the high priest was to conduct the service on the Day of Atonement, the tenth day of the seventh month each year. On this day he alone would enter the Most Holy Place behind the veil that separated it from the Holy Place.

Having made a sacrifice for himself and for the people, he brought the blood into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled it on the mercy seat, "God's throne." This he did to make atonement for himself and the people for all their sins committed during the year just ended.

It is with this particular service that the ministry of Jesus as high priest is compared in Hebrews chapter nine. As already noted the office of high priest was passed down from father to son. But in time this would cease to be hereditary.

For example Eleazar succeeded Aaron and was followed by his son Phinehas. Eli, a descendant of Ithamar, the younger brother of Eleazar, held the office by the Lord's choice at the end of the period of the Judges. Because of the sins of Eli's sons, Samuel appears to have succeeded Eli.

Since there was neither Temple, altar or Ark, there was no place for the functions of the high priest during the Babylonian captivity. However, the family line was preserved and Joshua the son of Jehozadak became the next high priest by the end of the captivity. He distinguished himself for his zealous cooperation with Zerubbabel in rebuilding the Temple being among those who first returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple and restoring what was left of the nation.

His successors were Joakim, Eliashib, Joida, Jonathan, and Juddua. Juddua was the high priest at the time Alexander the Great took possession of the land. However, the high Priest was given almost a free hand to rule over the country. Later a descendant named Eleazar became high priest.

It was during his reign that the famous Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek took place. Greek had by then become the universal language. Now the Jews were dispersed throughout the world and were unable to read Hebrew any longer, thus there arose a need for the Old Testament to be in the Greek language.

The high priesthood degenerated into apostasy and crimes under Menelaus but a new priesthood developed under the leadership of the Maccabees family (167 to 37 B.C.). They opposed the Syrians and their attempt to force Greek culture and false gods on the Jews. In 63 B.C. Pompey attacked Jerusalem putting it under Roman control. Aristobulus, the last high priest of the Maccabees line was murdered by order of Herod.

There were no fewer than twenty-eight high priests (most appointed by the Romans) from the reign of Herod to the destruction of the temple by Titus in 70 A.D. a period of one hundred and seven years. Herod could set up and depose of high priests at his pleasure. The Romans did the same, and changed so frequently that the position became almost an annual appointment.

By Jimmy Eaton

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The New Testament introduces us to Annas, Caiaphas, and Ananias who were some of the later high priest. Theophilus, the son of Ananias, was the high priest from whom Saul received letters to the synagogue at Damascus to bring back captive those Jews who had become Christians.

During the trials of Jesus it appears that both Annas and Caiaphas were high priests (**Luke 3:2**), though later on Caiaphas alone acted as such. Annas had probably been deposed by the Romans, yet retained much of his influence among the priestly families. It was these two high priests who were the chief conspirators against Jesus. Caiaphas was the son-in-law of Annas.

Summary of the High Priest

High Priest the supreme civil and religious leader. The office was hereditary. There were exceptions however, Eli to Samuel, passed from corrupt priesthood to Maccabees but would deteriorate. Changed frequently under Herod.

Easily recognize him by the clothing (**vestments**) which he wore. Symbolized glory & honor. They set him apart as holy. Ephod made of gold, blue, purple and scarlet material. Breast plate had 12 precious stones.

Robe was blue. Edge of skirt pomegranates and bells. Turban had plate attached (**Holy to God**). Turban made of fine linen. His duties encompassed more than that of other priests. **Leviticus 21** required no physical or spiritual defects.

Not to show grief for dead including parents. Could not come near a dead body. Duties took first place in his daily life. Unperformed duties "**profaned the sanctuary**." Could not marry a widow, divorced woman, or an impure woman.

He was installed into office by an elaborate seven-day service at the temple. Cleansed by bathing, dressed in special garments, anointed with a special oil. One unusual thing about his clothing. He wore what was called the "**Urim and the Thummim**".

This seems to have involved the gems or stones in the breastplate. They were used in making important decisions. Some think this was a Yes and No decisions. Mention is made of this in **Numbers 27:21**. "**He is to stand before Eleazar the priest, who will obtain decisions for him by inquiring of the Urim before the Lord. At his command he and the entire community of Israelites will go out, and at his command they will come in.**"

His main duty was to offer a sin offering for self as well as the whole congregation on the Day of Atonement. The tenth day of the seventh month. He brought the blood into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled it on the mercy seat. He officiated at other events also.

In **Hebrews 9** we learn that Jesus now serves as our high priest and cleanses us with his own blood **11-14**. Regarding the requirements for this office you wonder why God tolerated the corruptions that existed. Even the sacrifices themselves were polluted at times. Animals with disease and deformities

There were long periods when the Temple lay in disuse and disarray. The priests made no effort to carry on the services of the Temple. During the latter years of the Temple the High Priest was primarily from the Sadducee Party. This sect was composed of the rich and aristocrats.

By Jimmy Eaton

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

Since they denied a resurrection and the existence of a spirit (soul) within man why would they seek out these high ranking positions of High Priest, Chief Priests, Captain of the Temple, etc? Just ask yourself, would you be here today if you did not believe in a resurrection? If you knew there was no heaven, no future life, why would you want to be here to worship and study God's word?

It has been reported that the priests with authority over the temple area received kickbacks from the merchants and moneychangers who operated openly inside the temple grounds. Seemingly they were well off. Financial gain could have been a motivation for becoming a High Priest.

They sought the chief seats in the synagogues and would stand on the street and pray loudly so that others would hear them. No doubt there was a lot of prestige and honor that went along with these offices. Jesus said they loved the praise of men.

If they did not seek the office of High Priest for spiritual benefits it remains baffling that they would be so intent in seeking these high positions since they all related to the spiritual welfare of the Jews. No doubt many of the priests who served in lower capacities were sincere in what they did and were not seeking the praise of men. The father of John the Baptist was obviously a priest who took his responsibilities seriously.

We are told that many of the priests believed in Jesus but for fear of being put out of the Synagogue they would not reveal their convictions openly. These high officials were colossal hypocrites

The Sanhedrin

The Sanhedrin was the highest Jewish court during the period of the Greek and Roman occupation of Palestine. English versions translate the word "Sanhedrin" as "council." We are not certain of the origin of the Sanhedrin, as there is no historical evidence for its existence before the Greek period. It first appears during the reign of the Hellenistic kings who tried to imposed Greek culture on the Jews. Palestine was practically under home rule, and was governed by an aristocratic council of elders, presided over by the High Priest.

During the Roman period the internal government of the country was practically in the hands of the Sanhedrin even to the point it had influence over the Jews in other parts of the world. We see this in the case of Saul who had authority from the Council to act in places outside of Judea. In Acts 22:4-5 Paul spoke to the Jewish mob who captured and tried to kill him when they discovered him in the Temple.

He reminded them, "And I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring even those who were there in chains to Jerusalem to be punished."

After the death of Herod the Great during the reign of his son Archelaus the civil authority of the Sanhedrin was probably restricted to Judea proper, which is likely the reason it had no judicial authority over Jesus so long as He remained in Galilee. Once he entered Jerusalem they were in a position to bring accusations against him and have Him tried. After the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70 the Sanhedrin and its authority was completely destroyed never again to wield its power over the Jews.

By Jimmy Eaton

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

The Sanhedrin was composed of 70 members plus the president, who would be the present high priest. The members of the Sanhedrin came from three classes of men: the acting chief priests including those who had been high priest in the past, the scribes and the elders. Most of these people were from aristocratic families of that time.

The scribes were primarily from the Pharisees and the elders were primarily from the family heads of the people. They were, for the most part the secular nobility of Jerusalem which would include many Sadducees. The high priest himself was a Sadducee. He bore the honorable title of "Prince." Besides the president, there was also a vice-president, called the "head or father of the house of judgment."

While the high priest was a Sadducee he presided over the meetings of the Sanhedrin yet the Pharisees out numbered the Sadducees and controlled it. Members of the Sanhedrin probably remained members for a lifetime. When they died they were replaced but we are not sure how this process took place. The high priest (a Sadducee most of the time) was appointed by the Romans.

In the time of Christ the Sanhedrin exercised jurisdiction over religious matters. It was the final court of appeal for all questions connected with the Law of Moses. It also had the authority to summon in people to be heard. It had the right to inflict capital punishment until about 40 years before the destruction of Jerusalem. After that it could still pass a sentence of death but they could not execute a sentence of death without the confirmation of the Roman procurator.

This is why Jesus had to be tried not only before the Sanhedrin but also before Pilate (John 18:31-32). But even had he not gone before Pilate they were so determined to kill him there seems no doubt that they would have put Him to death without the approval of Pilate. It would have been in some other way than crucifixion as this was not a Jewish mode of punishment. Probably it would have been by stoning.

The stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:57-60) without the approval of the procurator was an illegal act – a lynching. There was one particular offense the Sanhedrin had authority to put to death, on its own authority. Anyone who passed the gate which divided the court of the Jews from the court of the Gentiles could be put to death. (See Acts 21:28.)

However, Roman authority was always absolute. The procurator could direct the Sanhedrin to investigate some matter. He could also remove a prisoner from its jurisdiction as was done in the case of Paul (Acts 23:23-24).

The Sanhedrin at first met in the "hall of hewn stones," one of the buildings connected with the temple. Later, the place of meeting was somewhere in the court of the Gentiles. They could meet on any day except the Sabbath and holy days. They met from the time of the offering of the daily morning sacrifice till that of the evening sacrifice. Their meetings were conducted according to strict rules and were enlivened by stirring debates.

The members of the Sanhedrin were arranged in a semicircle, so that they could see each other. Two notaries stood before them, whose duty it was to record the votes. The prisoner had to appear with humble attitude dressed for mourning. A sentence of capital punishment could not be passed on the day of the trial. The decision of the judges had to be examined on the following day, except in the case of a person who misled the people, who could be tried and condemned the same day or in the night.

By Jimmy Eaton

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Because of this, cases which involved capital punishment were not tried on a Friday or on any day before a feast. A herald preceded the condemned one as he was led to the place of execution. It was announced that he had been found guilty of death and if anyone knew anything to clear him, let him come forward and declare it. Near the place of execution the condemned man was asked to confess his guilt in order that he might partake in the world to come.

The trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin was the utmost miscarriage of justice one can imagine. They charged him with the crime of blasphemy. Although Pilate did not want to have him put to death. **John 19:6** tells us **"Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!"** These no doubt were the voices of members of the Sanhedrin. Even one of the thieves on the cross recognized his innocence.

In speaking to the other thief who was being crucified he said, **"Do you not fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong"** (Luke 23:40-41). A centurion who stood at the foot of the cross said, **"Certainly this was a righteous man!"**

We can identify some of the members of the Sanhedrin. There was Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, all Sadducees that were of the family of the high priest. There was Joseph of Arimathea who gave his tomb to bury the Lord in. Nicodemus was a secret disciple of Jesus and Gamaliel a former teacher of Paul and one who gave wise advice to the Sanhedrin.

People were being healed. While under heavy guard prison doors opened and Peter and John walked away. **How stubborn and blind the religious elite could be?** Seemingly nothing would change their stubborn minds. The highest court in the land containing some of the best minds could not believe! How tragic!

Lesson Twelve Pilate

Pontus Pilate is the last historical figure who lived between the Testaments that we will focus on in this series of lessons. Information regarding Pilate is primarily found in the gospels and by Josephus a Jewish historian of that time. Pilate was the sixth Roman procurator of Judea, appointed by Tiberius the Roman Emperor. Tacitus a pagan historian writes: **"Christ, while Tiberius was emperor, was executed by the procurator Pontius Pilate."**

A procurator was responsible for managing the financial affairs of a Roman province like Judea. He would have been on the level of a governor. He had the authority to judge in criminal cases arising in the area. Actually Pilate had full military and judicial authority in Judea which was considered a small Roman province but attached to the larger province of Syria. This put him under the oversight of the governor of Syria his superior officer.

Upon his arrival in Judea he moved his military headquarters from Caesarea on the sea coast to Jerusalem. His soldiers brought with them their standards with the emperor's image on them. The Jews rebelled and demanded that they be removed.

They said they would resort to rebellion and die rather than to allow an image of Caesar in Jerusalem. This caused Pilate to remove them according to Josephus. Jewish scruples so influenced Roman authorities that no coin could be stamped in Judea with a god or emperor on it.

By Jimmy Eaton

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

Caesar's image in **Matthew 22:20** was either a coin from Rome or some other province because only the shekel was acceptable in Jerusalem. Pilate again almost drove the Jews to rebellion by hanging shields with the names of idols inscribed on them in Herod's palace at Jerusalem which Pilate now occupied.

They were removed by order of Tiberius the Roman emperor. Pilate also got into hot water by taking temple revenue (**the Corban**) to build an aqueduct 30 miles long to supply water to Jerusalem. This caused another riot, which was put down by his soldiers.

This may have involved the slaughter of certain Galileans mentioned in **Luke 13:1**, who seems to have been slain while they were offering sacrifices in the Temple for reasons unknown to us. Thus Pilate never became popular with the Jews.

He seemed to be insensitive to their religious convictions and was very stubborn in things which were pursuant to advancing his policies. But whenever the Jews responded to his rule with enraged opposition, he often backed down, demonstrating his weakness at times. He was a weak ruler compared to Herod the Great.

Herod Antipas, (**4 B.C. – A.D. 39**) was the son of Herod the Great. He had become the ruler over Galilee and Perea. It so happened that he and Pilate were at Jerusalem at the time of the Passover when Jesus was crucified. Disturbances were more likely to occur in Jerusalem when Jews gathered from throughout the country and foreign cities for the yearly Passover feast. The presence of both of these Roman authorities put them in a better position to preserve order among the Jews.

After being up all night he is brought to the gates of the palace of Herod the Great where Pilate now resided. They accused Him of blasphemy. They were unable to enter the residence of a Gentile, lest they should be defiled and thus would be unfit to eat the Passover Supper (**John 18:28**). Pilate had to come outside his palace to learn their purpose and to demand the nature of the charges made against Jesus.

At first they seem to have expected he would have carried out their wishes that he was an "evil doer" without further inquiry. As a Roman procurator Pilate had respect for Roman law and justice. Thus to consent to a condemnation of death on a cross, they were obliged to come up with something more serious.

They then accused Jesus of assuming the title of King, showing disloyalty to the Roman Caesar. In addition they said he forbid the payment of taxes to Rome (**Luke 23:3**); which was an accusation trumped up by the Jewish leaders (**John 18:33**).

Their real motive was their intense jealousy of Jesus. They were concerned the masses of Jews would turn to follow Jesus. The High Priests and Jewish rulers were afraid they would lose their positions appointed to them by the Romans because it would appear the Jews were turning to Jesus as their leader.

It was already rumored that he had said he was a king. Because he exposed the corruption of the Jewish leaders he became the target of both the Sadducees and also the Pharisees. Nothing would satisfy them except crucifixion.

It is evident that from this moment on Pilate was distracted between two conflicting feelings. There was the fear of offending the Jews and at the same time a conviction that Jesus was innocent.

By Jimmy Eaton

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

This last feeling was strengthened by his own hatred of the Jews, whose religious scruples had caused him frequent trouble. **First** he examined the Lord privately taking him inside the palace asking Him whether He was a king. He came out to the Jews and declared the prisoner innocent.

To this they replied that his teachings had stirred up all the people from Galilee to Jerusalem. The very mention of Galilee suggested to Pilate an escape from his dilemma by sending Jesus to appear before Herod Antipas ruler of Galilee who was in Jerusalem at that time. However, Herod though pleased by this act of courtesy on the part of Pilate declined to be involved in the matter sending Jesus back to Pilate.

So Pilate was now compelled to come to a decision as to what he would do with Jesus. He assembled the chief priest and other Jewish authorities and announced to them that Jesus had done nothing worthy of death. He hopes of pacifying the Sanhedrin, by proposing to have Jesus scourged and then release Him. This in itself would have been a most painful punishment. Many times people died as a result of being scourged. His accusers were resolved to have him crucified.

The Sanhedrin could have claimed the authority to have him stoned as they did Stephen. (**See Leviticus 24:16**) but they wanted to see Jesus suffer and die on a cross. This was the cruelest way of putting one to death due to the intense suffering one endured hanging on a cross. They wanted Jesus to suffer. This is obvious.

Crucifixion would require the approval of Pilate as this was a Roman law. Their hatred for Jesus is almost unbelievable considering all the wonderful miracles he had performed on suffering people. The idea Jesus was some kind of criminal was preposterous.

Pilate then comes up with another way to avoid having Jesus crucified. It was the custom of the Roman governor to grant every year, in honor of the Passover, a pardon to one condemned as a criminal. Pilate therefore offered the people a choice between the murderer Barabbas or Jesus whom a few days before the people had hailed as the Messiah.

To receive their decision he ascended the Bema; (**a portable tribunal platform**) placed on the gabbatha, a mosaic pavement in front of the palace. As soon as he was seated he received a message from his wife, who had **"suffered greatly in a dream because of him"** (**Matthew 27:19**), urging him not to condemn this **"Just Man."**

Pilate must have felt he had no alternative, as the mob, urged on by the priests chose Barabbas for pardon and clamored for the death of Jesus. Insurrection seemed imminent thus Pilate yielded. Before issuing the fatal order he washed his hands before the multitude, as a sign that he was innocent of the blood of Jesus. This produced no results. Pilate then orders his soldiers to inflict the scourging preparatory to execution.

Once more Pilate takes Jesus into the palace and inquired **"Where are you from?"** This one last effort was an effort to save Jesus. The cry from the crowd came, **"If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar"** (**19:12**). Pilate pronounced the desired condemnation. Pilate is an example of the unprincipled desire for power by sacrificing what was right and just in order to accomplish his political goals. He gave in to the mob rather than risk any personal setback in his career and reputation.

Pilate had attached to the top of the cross: **"JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS."** The Jews complained but he did not give in. He answered, **"What I have written, I have written."** **You wonder what Pilate and the Sanhedrin said three days later when they learned the tomb was empty?**

By Jimmy Eaton

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

Pilate's rule as Procurator of Judea lasted for ten years. Josephus tells us that his anxiety to avoid giving offense to Caesar did not save him from political disaster. He led his troops against a Samaritan revolt and defeated them easily enough.

The Samaritans complained to Vitellius, the ruler over Syria who sent Pilate to Rome to answer the accusations of the Samaritans before the emperor who at that time was the tyrant Caligula. Tradition says that Pilate was banished from Rome and that he later committed suicide.

Lesson Twelve Summary of Pilate

Procurator managed financial affairs of a province. Judea was considered a small province and thus was attached or under larger province of Syria. He had the same status as a governor. Thus could judge and command troops. He moved his headquarters from Caesarea to Jerusalem.

Soldiers brought with them standards with emperor's image on them. Jews rebelled. No Roman coins were allowed only the shekel accepted. Pilate again almost drove Jews to rebellion by hanging shields with names of idols.

Got into hot water by taking the temple revenue to build a 30 mile long aqueduct. This Caused a riot put down by his soldiers. This may explain [Luke 13:1](#). He was never sensitive their religious practices. Never became popular with the Jews. However, he often backed down when something might hinder his political progress. He was a weak ruler compared to Herod the Great.

Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great. Ruled Galilee. He and Pilate were in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover. Disturbances more likely to occur at Passover. Presence of both put them in a better position to preserve order among the Jews.

After being up all night they brought Jesus to the gate of palace of Herod the Great. However, they could not enter palace as it would defile them for the Passover. Accuse Jesus of blasphemy. Pilate had to come outside his palace to learn of their accusations. At first they seemed to think he would condemn Jesus as an "evil doer."

Pilate was well versed in Roman law and knew anything deserving dead would have to something more serious than their frivolous charges. They next accuse him of assuming the title of King showing disloyalty to Caesar. Furthermore he forbids the payment of taxes to Rome.

Their real motive was their intense jealousy of Jesus. Concerned people would follow Jesus. They could lose their appointed positions if they did not keep Jews under control. It was rumored that he had said he was a king. Rome would not like this.

Also Jesus exposed their corruption thus He became a target of Sadducees and Pharisees. Nothing would satisfy them except crucifixion. But Pilate knew he was not guilty of any crime that called for crucifixion. He examines Jesus privately. Tells Jews Jesus was innocent.

Thinks he can escape. Sends him to Herod Antipas. But he sends him back. Due to the cries and demands of the crowd Pilate compelled to make a decision. Perhaps have Jesus scourged would pacify them. Nothing but crucifixion would satisfy. Sanhedrin could have stoned Jesus to death as they seemed to have that right. (Stephen)

By Jimmy Eaton

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

Convinced they want him dead but wanted him also to suffer the agony of the cross. Pilate comes up with another solution to his dilemma. He offers freedom to criminal at the time of the Passover to honor the day. Offers a choice of Barabbas instead of Jesus.

He now ascends the Bema a platform where he sat in judgment in front of the palace. Receives a message from his wife that she "suffered greatly in a dream because of him." She refers to Jesus as a "just man." How does she know he is a just man?

Pilate felt he had no other solution with the mob clamoring for the death of Jesus. Insurrection seemed about to take place so he yields to the mob. Political ambitions ruled over justice. He must maintain a good relationship with Rome. Control the mob.

Before order for crucifixion washes his hands as a sign he was innocent of His blood. Once more Pilate takes Jesus inside the palace and asked "Where are you from?" But the people cried out "If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar."

Pilate attached to top of cross a sign which read, "JESUS OF NAZARTH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." Jews complained. He said, "What I have written I have written." Seems this was his way of getting back at the Jews. Wouldn't you like to have heard what was said three days later when they found the tomb empty?

Pilate's rule lasted for ten years. Led his troops against Samaritans and was victorious. The Samaritans complained to Vitellius ruler of Syria who sent Pilate to Rome to explain his actions. Tradition says he was banished from Rome and later committed suicide.

Lesson Thirteen Destruction of Herod's Temple

The destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem in A.D. 70 does not fall between the Testaments. However it was constructed during that time. It was Herod's masterpiece. Ignoring the death of Christ on the cross, historians consider the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem the most important event of the first century. We have placed it here because of its relationship to these lessons.

The Zealots were a party of Jewish patriots who were regarded as the spiritual children of the Maccabees. They first appeared in Galilee under the leadership of a man named Judas during the early years of Roman rule. They refused to pay taxes and considered it a sin to acknowledge any loyalty to Caesar. They considered God their only Ruler and Lord.

Simon, one of the apostles had evidently been a member of the Zealot party. Ultimately the Zealots succeeded in winning the bulk of the people over to their side in rebelling against Rome. This would eventually lead to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Nero being informed of rebellions in Palestine and especially Jerusalem sent his top general, Vespasian with an army of 60,000 to put down the rebellions. Vespasian opened a campaign in the year 67 from Syria in the north against stout resistance. He overran the area of Galilee. News arrived in 69 that Nero had committed suicide so Vespasian returned to Rome where he was proclaimed Emperor. He left his son Titus in command.

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With an Army now of 80,000 Titus moved to Mount Scopus and the Mount of Olives where he had a complete panoramic view of Jerusalem. From here he plotted how he would overthrow Jerusalem. In April of A.D. 70 following the Passover when Jerusalem was filled with Jews, he began the siege. Josephus, a Jew who had ruled over Galilee after surrendering offered his services to the Romans.

He accompanied Titus and served as an interpreter calling out to those on the walls beseeching them to surrender to the Romans. Several skirmishes took place outside the city walls as bands of Zealots rushed outside the city inflicting heavy losses on the Romans. This increased the courage and confidence of the Jews. Titus now completely encircled the city with his army and it was not long until famine set in cutting them off from any food supplies.

Famine in time brings on diseases thus thousands died daily. The stench from the unburied bodies filled the city. It must have been a horrible existence. Desperate bands of thieves ran rampant throughout the city stealing, plundering and murdering their own people the Jews.

In July of 70 the castle of Antonia was taken by the Romans at night. Since it was located next to the Temple this prepared the way for the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. All sacrifices ceased July 17, as every hand was needed to defend the Temple. A thousand Jews who had crowded around the altar to fight were slaughtered. The Roman soldiers had to walk over piles of dead bodies to advance toward the Temple.

According to Josephus, Titus wanted to preserve the Temple because of its magnificent architecture and also as a trophy of victory, but it was set on fire by some of the Roman soldiers during the heavy fighting. Soon the entire structure was in a blaze illuminating the skies. It burned on the 10th of August, the same day of the year according to tradition that the first temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 B.C.

Josephus writes that no one can conceive of a louder, a more terrible sound than arose from all sides during the burning of the temple. There was the shout of victory from the Roman soldiers mixed with the terrible shriek and wailing of the Jews. It was so loud that it echoed across the mountains surrounding Jerusalem reaching as far away as Perea on the east of the Jordan River.

The misery itself was more terrible than the noise. The hill on which the temple stood was seething hot, and seemed enveloped to its very base in one sheet of flame. Blood flowed from the dead bodies. The ground was nowhere visible due to the large number of dead bodies.

The Romans planted their eagles (the Roman national symbol) on the ruins over against the eastern gate and offered their sacrifices to their own gods. Jerusalem was completely destroyed down to the very ground.

Historians say that this might not have happened but the division among the different Jewish sects was such that they were fighting among themselves before the Romans breached the walls. While Romans are besieging the city on the outside the Jews were waging civil war inside.

It is said one group deliberately burned the food supply, which could have sustained them for some time. A garrison of the 12th Roman Legion was left as an army of occupation. Josephus who was not a Christian believed it was all the divine judgment of God on the city.

He wrote: "I will not hesitate to say what gives me pain: I believe that had the Romans delayed their punishment of these villains, the city would have been swallowed up by the earth, or overwhelmed

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with a flood, or like Sodom, consumed with fire from heaven. For the generation which was in it was far more ungodly than the men on whom these punishments had in former times fallen. By their madness the whole nation came to be ruined."

Even Titus the general is reported to have publicly declared that God, by a special providence, aided the Romans and drove the Jews from their impregnable strongholds. Someone has said Jerusalem could have gone down as the only city the Romans were unable to siege. It was almost impregnable due to the steep cliffs and walls on the south, east and west sides of the city. Due to no cliff on the north side (level area), instead of one wall three walls had been constructed making it practically impregnable.

After the fall of the temple the battle raged on for a long time before the entire city was under complete control of the Romans. The number of Jews slain according to Josephus was one million, one hundred thousand. Thousands died of starvation and ninety seven thousand were carried away captives.

The handsomest and strongest were selected to march in a triumphal procession in Rome. Many items of furniture removed from the temple before the fire were brought and placed in the newly built Temple of Peace in Rome. Vespasian kept the purple vail and law for his own palace. **What about the Christians who had been living in Jerusalem? First**, they had exact knowledge and warning which the Lord had given in **Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21**.

Also, they had the book of Revelation, which warned of this destruction. As the Romans approached they fled to the city of Pella on the eastern side of the Jordan River, which gave them safe asylum. It is reliably reported no Christians perished in the destruction of Jerusalem as they fled when they realized the Romans were approaching the city. Never again would Jerusalem be the same. It would be many years before Jews would be permitted to return and live there.

Lesson Fourteen The Jews from A.D.70 to the Present

One last major resistance was made by the Jews against the Romans. This was at Masada a mountain stronghold overlooking the Dead Sea. The top of the mountain has a flat surface about 1,800 feet by 900 feet. There was a wall around the top of this plateau, which had windows in it and towers on it which was 12 feet thick. On the plateau were storehouses, a cistern filled with rainwater, barracks, armory, and Herod's palace.

According to Josephus it was first constructed by Herod the Great between 37 and 31 B.C. as a refuge for himself in the event of a Jewish revolt. In 66 A.D. it was overcome by Jewish extremist called Sicarii. After the fall of Jerusalem, Jewish rebels and their families fled Jerusalem and settled on this mountaintop.

In 72 A.D. the Roman governor with the Roman 10th Legion laid siege to the fortress. They failed in their first attempt but then built a ramp against the western face of Masada taking the fortress. The Romans were startled to discover the Jews had committed suicide rather than to be captured.

After Hadrian became the Roman emperor in 118 B.C. he was sympathetic to the Jews. At first he seemed willing to allow them to return to Jerusalem with permission to rebuild their temple. However, he quickly changed his mind. The Jews that remained in the land then prepared to rebel. They launched a surprise attacks on the Romans. Things only got worse.

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Extra soldiers were brought in and any Jewish resistance was crushed with the Jews being annihilated. The Romans plowed Jerusalem up. Those who were left were sold into slavery. Many were transported to Egypt. Jerusalem was turned into a pagan city and renamed Aelia Capitolina with Judea being renamed Palestina. Sabbath observances were forbidden.

Jews attempted from time to time to return to their country but were expelled many times. During the Crusader Period (1095 – 1291) Palestine was dominated by the Crusaders, who, following an appeal by Pope Urban II, came from Europe to recover the Holy Land "from the infidels." In 1099, after a five-week siege, Jerusalem was captured, massacring most of the city's non-Christian inhabitants. The Jews put up a defense only to be burned to death or sold into slavery.

During the next few decades, the Crusaders extended their power over the rest of the country. There were eight crusades during this period. This opened up transportation routes from Europe, thus pilgrimages to the Holy Land became popular and, at the same time, increasing numbers of Jews sought to return to their homeland.

The term "ghetto" was first used in Venice in 1516 which was the herding of Jews into areas specifically designated for them. Areas were set aside in cities where they were only permitted to live have actually begun several hundred years earlier. These areas were usually fenced off by a moat, a hedge or wall to designate the boundaries. Jews were allowed outside during the day hours, but at night they had to stay within their boundaries.

Around year 1100 a large number of Jews migrated to Poland. It was seen as a "land of opportunity." Yet we know that year's later Warsaw had one of the largest Ghettos in Europe when Hitler took over Poland. By way of contrast in 1190 about 2,500 Jews lived in England where they enjoyed rights that Jews on the continent did not have. During the middle ages Jews were driven out of many countries thus were forced to migrate to other countries.

In 1510 Jews were burned at the stake in Berlin. Martin Luther the German reformer at first was favorable toward the Jews but later changed his feelings. He vented his wrath in a special book he wrote about the Jews. He severely accused them of lying, blasphemy and cursing. This may be because they did not convert to his Protestant views.

In the 14th century the bubonic plague known as the "Black Death" hit Europe. At that time people had no idea of the causes of diseases and no idea that lack of hygiene caused the spread of bacteria. The plague is estimated to have killed up to half the population of Europe – about 25 million people.

The Jews got the blame for the plague. It was circulated that the Jews were getting poison from the devil and pouring it down the wells of Christians. During the time of the plague (chiefly 1348-1349) there were massacres of whole communities of Jews in various European cities and communities.

The Spanish Inquisition began officially by a papal bull issued by Pope Sixtus IV on November 1, 1478. The Spanish inquisition sought to punish Jews who had converted to Christianity but were not really "sincere" in their conversions. The irony is strange.

First they were told they had to convert or die, then, when they did convert, they decided to kill them anyway because their conversions were not sincere. Ferdinand and Isabella the King and Queen of Spain are associated with the inquisitions in which thousands of Jews were killed. Isabella a fervent Catholic in 1478 asked the Pope for permission to set up an inquisition to weed out heresy in the Christian world.

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The Pope obliged, issuing the bull authorizing the inquisitions. Jewish converts were arrested not knowing who was accusing them of not being sincere. Then they would be tortured until they confessed to being heretics. Then, once they confessed, they would be killed. The usual form of death was burning at the stake. Is it any wonder that Jews came to hate the so called Christianity of that period in history.

By 1740 England granted naturalization to Jews residing in England where 2,500 had migrated. During the American Revolution 1775 – 1781 Jewish freedom was guaranteed. In 1788 the ratification of the U.S. Constitution gave Jews the right to hold a federal office. In 1791 French Jews were granted full citizenship for the first time since the Roman Empire. In 1830 Greece granted citizenship to Jews.

One of the worse periods in Jewish history was the persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime called the "Holocaust." It is a word of Greek origin meaning, "sacrifice by fire." The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in January 1933, believed that Germans were "racially superior" to the Jews who were an alien threat to the Germans.

From 1933 to 1945 six million Jews plus millions of other groups considered inferior were murdered. Besides those killed thousands worked in labor camps. Germany's invasion of Poland resulted in one of the largest ghettos ever established (Warsaw). Conditions in the ghettos were deplorable – not enough food, water, space, sanitation, etc. Many died from these horrid conditions.

Jews for many years have longed to return to Zion and the Land of Israel. Large groups who were living in persecuting environments began to settle in the Holy Land especially during British Mandate Rule (1917 – 1948). By 1922 there were 752,000 Jews living there. The British wanted to limit the quota to 100,000 a year. Many Jews journeyed to Palestine to be turned back from entering. This resulted in several civil conflicts instigated by both Jews and Arabs.

By the end of WWII there were 250,000 Jews who were free from Nazi prison camps and had no place to go. Throughout this entire time frame there were constant uprising and resistance to the British. The British were ready to give up their rule of Palestine. In 1948 the newly established United Nations approved a plan dividing the country into two parts, one Arab and one to the Jews with Jerusalem being designated as an international city.

The Jews accepted the plan but the Arab League rejected it. Civil war broke out May 14, 1948 with the Jews prevailing. The Jews proclaimed independence naming their new country Israel which was admitted as a member of the UN on May 11, 1949. Suffice to say Israel still fights with some of their Arab neighbors today as continue to seek additional land for new settlements. Since 1949 the U.S. has sided with Israel in most cases resulting in resentment of the U.S. by the Arabs.

There are about 13.3 million Jews today spread throughout the world but they are not growing in numbers. During the Holocaust 6 million were killed. Population growth is close to zero percent which is a cause of concern. It is evident they have not recovered from the devastating effects of the Holocaust. Eighty percent of U.S. Jews now marry non-Jews and 81% say they have no religious beliefs that God exists.

How this works out in Palestine we do not know. No doubt many still claim to be believers but seemingly a large number are no longer believers. Some disbelief is a result of the difficult times Jews have endured. They ask, "Where was God." This brings up serious questions for the Dispensationalist. [Who are Jews and will they be God's people?](#)

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COUNTRIES WITH THE LARGEST JEWISH POPULATIONS (2006 Survey)

Israel	5,313,800	Argentina	184,000
U.S.	5,275,000	Germany	118,000
France	491,500	Australia	103,000
Canada	373,500	Brazil	96,500
U. K.	497,000	Ukraine	80,000
Russia	228,000	S. Africa	72,000

Lesson Fifteen Jewish Marriage

Marriage is as old as mankind beginning with Adam and Eve. God saw it was not good for man to be alone so he provided a help suitable for him. So Adam and Eve became the first married couple. With the Hebrews it was always God's plan that they marry those who were believers in the one true God. In the case of Isaac and Jacob special care was taken that they even marry within the family. Under the Law of Moses they were even expected to marry within their tribe. There was a reason for this.

To marry an unbeliever put them in a situation where they could be led into the idolatrous practiced by the wife. Even Solomon with all his wisdom fell into this trap. In addition a priest was forbidden from marrying a prostitute, a widow or a divorced woman. However, Rahab a prostitute did marry a Hebrew. Daughters who inherited their father's possessions had to marry within their tribe or lose their inheritance.

In the period leading up to Christ the parents chose the mate for their son. The primary reason for this was that the bride became a part of the clan. Although they were married and became "one flesh," the couple remained under the authority of the bridegroom's father.

The parents were careful to choose someone who would best fit into their clan and work harmoniously with the mother-in-law and sisters-in-law. Sometimes parents would consult with their children to see if they approved of the one selected to be their mate for life. Rebecca was asked if he was willing to marry Isaac ([Genesis 24:58](#)).

Frequently couples would marry at a very young age which surprises us somewhat. By the time of the New Testament period Jewish leaders had decided to establish a minimum age for which a marriage contract could be drawn up. The age was set at 13 for boys and 12 for girls.

If a young wife lost her husband in war or an accident, she remained within the clan and was wed to her brother-in-law or next of kin. This arrangement is known as Levirate Marriage. This is the basis for the story of Ruth and Boaz even though Ruth was a Moabite and not a Jew, yet she married into her adopted Hebrew clan.

Romance and courting were unknown before marriage although both bride and groom might already have known one another. They did not marry the person they loved: they loved the mate that they married. In other words love began at the time of marriage. When Isaac married Rebekah, the Bible records that "she became his wife, and he loved her" ([Genesis 24:67](#)). In the case of Jacob he loved Rachael from the moment he first saw her, but this was not the usual situation.

There were a number of customs that were involved in finalizing a marriage. The first was agreeing on a price to be given to the father of the girl. The payment was compensation for the loss of a worker. The sum was mutually agreed upon.

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It could consist of services instead of money. Jacob agreed to work seven years for Rachel. After the agreement was made, the couple was considered engaged.

The settlement (a written document securing property rights to the wife.) did not come into use until the period between the Testaments. Betrothal for marriage was a binding agreement that set the young woman apart from other young men. Death or a divorce could only void the agreement. The amount paid would be proportional to the position of the bride.

A poor man could not afford to marry a rich wife. During the engagement period, the bridegroom had certain privileges. It was declared, he was exempt from military duty (Deuteronomy 20:7). Usually a period of time elapsed between the betrothal and the marriage ceremony. During this time the groom began preparing a place in his father's house.

On the day of the wedding the groom and his friends dressed in their finest clothes then would go to the home of the bride. Together the couple went back to the groom's house. On the way they were preceded by a band of musicians or singers. Friends joined them singing and dancing their way to his house. The inhabitants of the area would press out into the street to watch the procession.

At the house a feast was prepared to which all the friends and neighbors were invited. The guests were even provided with wedding clothes by the host. The first act in the ceremony was the conducting of the bride to the bridal chamber where a canopy, named a huppa was prepared. The bride was still completely veiled. This explains the deception practiced on Jacob. The marriage was then consummated through sexual union. Once this fact was announced the wedding festivities continue.

Usually the wedding party lasted for a week. Considering the social and domestic life of a married Hebrew there is abundant evidence that woman, whether married or unmarried, went about without their faces being veiled. Women sometimes held important offices. They took part in matters of public interest. They enjoyed as much freedom in ordinary life as the women of our own country does today.

The use of wine at Jewish wedding feasts and the presence of Jesus at a feast where He turned water into a wine that tasted better than the previous wine they had been using have caused some concern in the minds of some. In order to protect the Lord from being involved with fermented wine efforts have been made to deny the miracle produced real wine (fermented), that he only produced grape juice. The answer to this is very simple.

A former chief rabbi of Jerusalem, Rabbi Rabinowitz states that the Jews have never used anything other than the ordinary red wine of Palestine mixed with three parts water, as in the Passover. McGarvey points out that the alcohol content was so low that it would not have produced drunkenness. Certainly Jesus would not have produced an intoxicating wine for the feast. The miracle began by filling the pots with water. All Jesus had to do was add red wine. The improvement in taste was part of the miracle.

Thus far we have only considered the marriage of single couples but what if one or both has been married previously? The Law stated "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her; then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife."

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Notice she was free to remarry. There were two schools of thought on this passage resulting in differences of opinion among the Jews. The school of rabbi Shammai said the word "uncleanness" meant un-chastity (sexual sins). The school of Hillel said it meant anything that displeased a husband. Interested in which side Jesus would take. His critics ask him, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" Jesus did not answer them directly either way. He said, "From the beginning it has not been so."

God's plan from the beginning was for marriage was to last until death separated them. It would seem that Jesus was saying that divorce was the sin, not remarriage. It has been calculate that about 30% of Jewish marriages on the average have ended in divorce through the last 2,000 years, better than the Gentile average in the U.S. today. Marriage was considered more binding than it is today in America.

Lesson Thirteen Burials

Burial or interment of the dead with the Jews was quite different from our customs of today. There would have been no embalming, no casket, or a vault. There would have been no funeral services such as we usually have today. The dead were usually buried within a few hours after death. This was due to the hot climate of Palestine.

Dead bodies decayed rapidly, so burial had to take place within a few hours after the death of someone. If they died late in the day then burial would take place the next day although some were buried at night. Most of the time burial would happen the same day as the death of a person occurring within occurring within two or three hours of their death. Again due to the hot climate, dead bodies decayed rapidly, so burial took place within a few hours after death.

Burial was never more than 24 hours from the time of death. Considering the climate and decomposition of the body there was no time for any elaborate funeral service before burial. We can understand why Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and begged for the body of Jesus so that burial could take place almost immediately.

Also the Sabbath would begin shortly at sundown. Jesus died around 3 p.m. thus there had to make haste in preparing his body for burial. This haste in burial of the Jews would to us appear as being disrespectful to the deceased.

However, considering the climate and how quickly a body would decompose they had no other choice than to have a hasty burial. Many times they were buried in the clothes they were wearing at the time of their death. They would be stretched out on a bier with a cloth thrown over it, then carried to the place of burial. In Acts 5:6 in the case of Ananias we are told that "The young men...wrapped him round, and they carried him out and buried him."

When death occurred in a family usually the oldest son or nearest of kin closed the eyes of the dead. The mouth was closed and the jaws bound up (John 11:43). Jacob was told by God that Joseph would put his hand upon his eyes and close them (Genesis 46:4).

After the body was washed (Acts 9:37), it was usually wrapped in cloth. The wealthy used linen with spices placed between the folds (John 19:40). A napkin was used to cover the head.

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Cremation of a body was rare. In such cases as Saul and his sons, who were slain by the Philistines since their heads were decapitated noble men came and burned their mutilated bodies, but then they buried their bones (1 Samuel 31:12, 13). This explains the hasty burial of Nadab and Abihu who were carried outside the camp and buried. The burial of Ananias and Sapphira were obviously done quickly. Ananias was not even aware of the death and burial of Sapphira when he arrived to speak with Peter.

Some countries practiced cremation such as the Greeks. Tacitus the historian expressly said in noting the contrast with Roman custom that it was a matter of piety with the Jews "to bury rather than to burn dead bodies." According to the Mosaic law burning was reserved, either for the living who had been found guilty of unnatural sins (Leviticus 20:4; 21:9), or for those who died under a curse, as in the case of Achan and his family, who after they had been stoned to death were, with all their belongings burned with fire (Joshua 7:25).

The Egyptians did practice embalming but it was far different than modern day embalming. It seems this was a long and difficult task that had to be performed by their physicians. According to Genesis 50:3 it took forty days to accomplish embalming. Both Jacob and Joseph were embalmed. Joseph gave command that his father be embalmed. It seems the period for mourning with the Egyptians lasted for seventy days.

When this period passed Jacob was taken and buried in the Cave of Machpelah, which Abraham had bought as a burial place for Sarah. Several of his family was buried there also. When the burial party arrived for Jacob's burial it is said, "They lamented loudly and bitterly; and there Joseph observed a seven-day period of mourning for his father."

Joseph himself was embalmed at his death. We are told, "And Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath and said, God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place" (Genesis 50:25).

In many cases the body was wrapped in linen cloths (somewhat like our gauze) which was saturated with aromatic spices and other preparations to retard decomposition. The linen cloths would seal the body so that air could not get to it thus slowing decomposition. Thus the friends at Bethany prepared the body of Lazarus because he came forth from his tomb wrapped in his grave-bands. Jesus asked them to remove the cloths, as he could not move about if he remained bound in them.

We are told that at the burial of Jesus, Nicodemus brought "a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds" to be use on his burial cloths. What surprises us is the amount of myrrh and aloes used – a hundred pounds. Then later early on Sunday morning Mary Magdalene and two other women brought spices for the same purpose. (John 19:39-40)

Coffins were unknown in Israel, as they still are among the Jews in the East today. The bier on which the body was carried to the grave sometimes had a pole on each side, which enabled them to carry the body on the shoulders of those who bore the body to the tomb. The procession was made up largely of relatives and friends of the deceased but it was led by processional mourning women, who made the air resound with shrieks and lamentations.

Amos alludes to this custom in describing the mourning that shall be over the desolation of Israel: "Wailing shall be in all the broad ways, and they shall say in all the streets, Alas! Alas! And they shall call the husbandman to mourning and such as are skilful in lamentation to wailing."

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Jeremiah said, "Call for the mourning women, that they may come;.....and let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters."

It seems it was customary for each family to have a family tomb: either in a natural cave, prepared with stone shelves to receive their bodies, or else they were hewn out of rock in the hillside with each tomb having many niches on which a body could be placed. Many were buried in shallow graves in the ground with stones placed over the body to prevent wild animals from getting to the body. All who possessed any land, or who could afford it, had their family tombs, hewn out of the rock.

The entrance to the tomb was often closed with a large circular stone set up on its edge and rolled in a groove to cover the opening to the tomb, so as to close it securely. The stone was often secured by a strap, or by sealing it. In the case of Jesus, Pilate directed that the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, in which the body of Jesus was laid, should be carefully sealed and made as secure as the officials could make it.

Ordinary graves were marked by the heaping of crude stones, but hewn stones and sometimes costly pillars were set up as memorials of the dead. Jacob set up a pillar over Rachel's grave ([Genesis 35:20](#)). As we approach New Testament times burial was uniformly outside the cities and villages. There was public provision made for the burial of strangers ([Matthew 27:7](#)). The location was not always desirable.

NOTES ON JERUSALEM Lesson Seventeen

There is so much history that occurred in this city that affected not only the Jews but also the entire world. In reading the Bible we usually form some kind of images in our minds of the places and events we read about in the Bible.

This drawing of Jerusalem is an attempt to give us the most accurate pictures of what Jerusalem looked like in the time of Christ. We do not know exactly how certain places in Jerusalem may have looked, but we do know the location of certain places. We can be certain about the walls, water system, palaces, even where certain houses were located.

We know the houses had flat roofs as people often slept on them in hot weather. Some were two stories. Our present knowledge is a result of the archeological work that has taken place since the 1700s. Today archeologist still continues to dig and gain new information.

This drawing of Jerusalem allows us to review some significant areas. You might imagine you are in a helicopter or airplane looking down upon the city as it was in Jesus' time. We are approaching the southwest corner of the city. In the future when reading the Bible perhaps we can have a better visual image of what we are reading about that took place in Jerusalem.

Notice first of all Jerusalem was located on a mountain. In the Bible it is called Mount Zion. It was the highest point in Palestine. This is why we read in the Scriptures that people either went up to Jerusalem or they went down from Jerusalem.

Notice the steep cliffs that drop off from the edge of the city walls on the east, south and west. This was the last city captured by David and his soldiers. Because of the steep cliffs and walls it made it very difficult to conquer.

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The Jebusites who occupied Jerusalem taunted David that even blind men could prevent any army in its attempt to conquer Jerusalem. But David did capture it, but we do not know how. The scriptures do not tell us how it was done. There have been various speculations.

Over on the eastern side of Jerusalem is the Mount of Olives. As its name suggests there would have been olive trees. The Garden of Gethsemane was located at the foot of the mountain. Probably a secluded place which some think Jesus used to teach his disciples. A road faintly seen in the picture led from the top of the mountain down to bottom.

This was the road from Bethany. Jesus rode a donkey down this road once. He was cheered by the people and children. It has been called His "triumphal entry." There would have been a number of graves in this area since burials had to be outside the city walls.

To get to the Mount of Olives from Jerusalem you had to descend from the eastern gate called the "Golden Gate" down across the Kidron valley. In this valley was a dry bed stream. On the south was the Valley of Hinnom.

The Greek word for hell (**Gehenna**) comes from the name of this valley. The Jews threw their trash, refuse, and dead animals into this valley. A fire burned most of the time to burn the refuse. It left a terrible stench in the air. It became representative of the place of everlasting punishment (**Hell**).

Notice the walled city of David (**immediately south of the temple**) was very small compared to the city in the time of Christ. Next look at the Temple area. Originally that area was a threshing floor. David bought it for 600 shekels. Later, Solomon would build the Temple there. David probably bought it in view of building a temple there but God would not allow him to do so because he was a man of blood.

Notice the pool of Siloam at the south end of the wall of the city of David. In the days of King Hezekiah he anticipated an attack by the Assyrian army. Thus he took a clear water spring that came out of the side of the cliff below the eastern wall to furnish water for the city. This was the only clear spring water in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

Before Jerusalem had received its water mainly by an aqueduct that brought water in from some distance. They dug a tunnel underneath the city of David letting water empty into a large pool called Siloam (**2 Kings 20:20**). Now the city would have a water supply in the event of a siege or attack on the city. They concealed the spring by covering it with masonry. Notice the long series of steps leading down to the pool of Siloam. Excavations indicate there were gardens in that area at one time.

The source of the pool's water was discovered by Robinson an archeologist in 1867. The tunnel was 1750 feet long cut through solid rock. A group started at one end and a second group started from the other end. When they met they were only a few feet apart. Can still see pick marks going in both directions.

It is said each group could hear the other using their picks. An inscription just inside the entrance to the tunnel was found in 1880 that verified it was the source of water to Siloam. The tunnel served as a natural siphon. Jesus told a blind man to go wash his eyes in the pool (**John 8:7**). The blind man and Jesus must have been close to the pool at the time.

By Jimmy Eaton

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

During Solomon's time the city was greatly expanded. The area west of the City of David was at a lower level, almost a valley. The city was expanded westward. It became known as the "lower city" whereas the city of David was known as the "upper city." You can see a newer wall as the city expanded westward.

As we move further westward we see a newer section of houses. In the 1970s the British did much excavating to find that the houses in this section were much finer, more like a Roman Villa. They were larger than those in the old city. Some had mosaic floors. This was probably due to Roman and Greek influence. Herod being very loyal to the Roman rulers may have had something to do with this. We can locate the place of his royal palace but we do not know what it looked like.

You detect two structures (6 & 8) that no doubt were the result of the attempt of Herod to Hellenize the Jews. These are the Hippodrome and the theater. An Amphitheater was built outside the city. Herod was very much interested in bringing in Hellenistic (Greek) culture. In these places he held musical concerts and athletic events.

Also you can see the location of the Hasmonean Palace (5). The Hasmoneans were the descendants of the famous Maccabees family, which fought for Jewish independence against Syria and eventually Rome. They became the official family of High Priests until Herod began to appoint who he wanted to be in that capacity. Herod Antipas (ruler of Galilee) probably stayed in this palace while visiting in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus' trials.

The drawing shows the houses of this area to be larger and more like the villa houses of the Romans. There seems to be no doubt that those who lived in that area were the wealthy Jews of that day. It is believed that both the High Priest Caiaphas and Annas lived in this secluded area of Jerusalem.

We also get a good view of the location of the Temple and its courts and surrounding buildings. On the south side you can see the Royal Porch which was highly decorated. Its ceiling and roof was carved out of cedar. We suspect high officials among the Jews would have occupied this building. Perhaps the Sanhedrin assembled there for their meetings. Prominent rabbis may have taught in this building.

It is the colonnade porch along the eastern wall (Solomon's Porch) that interests us more because it was here the church had its beginning and held daily meetings afterwards. This may be the place where Joseph and Mary found their son Jesus having discussions with some of the Jewish leaders and teachers. The court of the Gentiles would have been on the south side of the Temple.

The court of the women, which was not as large, would have been in the front of the Temple. The court of the priests was adjacent to and surrounding the Temple. The north court was the court of the Jews (Men).

Looking toward the Temple's northwest corner we can be seen Antonia's Fortress, which had been built by Herod the Great. Herod named it after his friend Mark Antony. Its walls were 60 feet high. The towers reached a height of 100 feet. Stairs connected the fortress to the temple area. Soldiers were stationed here and kept a close watch on Jewish activity in the temple compound.

Roman soldiers rescued Paul from the mob of Jews who were about to kill him. He was put into protective custody in the fortress until he could be removed from the fortress to Caesarea on the seacoast. As it turned out it was done secretly.

By Jimmy Eaton

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

An area we are extremely interested in is the Hill of Calvary (10) just outside the Western Wall of the city. There have been other places suggested as being the place where the crucifixion took place. The British excavating in this area in the mid-1960s but found no signs of any houses suggesting it had been a garden. We know that a garden was located near the sight of the crucifixion. A small hill exists in this area.

Just outside the eastern wall in the Kidron valley can be seen what appears to be two monuments. One of these has been labeled "Absalom's Tomb." More recently the tomb of Herod the Great has been found but it had been plundered. Keep in mind that New Testament Jerusalem was about 20 feet below the present level of the city. The city was destroyed several times. In rebuilding the city they would build on top of the ruins.

Excavations continue to find valuable information from the ruins buried beneath the city. When Peter spoke to the Jews on Pentecost he mentioned the fact that David tomb was in their midst and its location was well know enough that they could visit the tomb as many people today visit the tombs of famous people. David's tomb later was plundered from which a large amount of gold was taken. Today, guides point out certain places as significance Bible places yet present day Jerusalem lies 20 feet above old Jerusalem.

NOTES ON MASADA AND DOWN TO THE PRESENT

There was one last major resistance. Masada! Stronghold built by Herod overlooking Dead Sea. 1,800 feet by 900 feet (600 yrs x 300 yrs. Walls 12 feet thick with windows & towers. Storehouse, cistern, barracks, armory Herod's palace.

Rebels fled Jerusalem occupied fortress. Roman 10th legion attacks. Built ramp. Found people dead. Today Jewish inductees brought here for induction into military. Hardrian sympathetic but changed his mind. Jews rebelled and were annihilated

Period of Crusades 1095 - 1291. Pope's blessings. Eight crusades in all. Word Ghetto was first used in Vinice 1516. Herding Jews in specific areas. 1100 large number of Jews migrated to Poland considered "land of opportunity."

During the middle ages Jews driven out of many countries. Blamed bubonic plague "Black Death" on them. Poisons wells. 25 million died. Were burned at the stake in Germany. Luther struck out at them. Accused them of lying, blasphemy and cursing. Whole communities were massacred.

Spanish Inquisition. Ferdinand and Isaabella with blessings of the Pope. Inquisition sought to punish Jews who had converted to Christianity but not sincere. Jewish convert were arrested not knowing who accused them of not be sincere.

They would be tortured until they confessed then once they confessed would be killed. Usual form of death was burning at the stake. Any wonder Jews came to hate Christianity. 1740 England granted naturalization to Jews where 2,500 had migrated.

During American Revolution 1175 - 1781 Jewish freedom guaranteed. 1788 given right to hold federal office. 1791 French Jews granted full citizenship. Green followed 1830. One of worse periods was the murder of six million by Nazi regime – Holocaust.

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BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

Greek origin meaning "sacrifice by fire". German led to believe they "racially superior" to Jews a threat to the Germans. Warsaw became one of the largest ghettos were established. Conditions deplorable. Not enough food, water, space, sanitation. Many died.

For many years had longed to return to Zion. Many were living in persecution. In 1917 - 1948 British Mandate rule prevailed. By 1922 752,000 Jews living in Palestine. British tried to limit the quota to 1000,000. Many Jews upon reaching Palestine many were turned back. Russian torpedoed boat.

By end of WWII 250,000 freed from prison camps and death camps with no place to go. Many uprising in Palestine as groups attempted to enter. British ready to give up. After WWII N.N. approved a plan dividing Palestine into two parts - Arab - Jewish Civil war broke out May 14, 1948 with Jews prevailing. Proclaimed their independence naming their new country Israel admitted to U.N.

Still fight with their Arab neighbors today as they encroach upon Arab land. There are 13.3 million Jews today in world. Not growing numbers. Zero growth. A cause of concern. Holocaust 6 million killed. Evident have not recovered from its devastating effects. 80% of Jews now marry non-Jews. 81% say have no religious beliefs that God exists.

Brings up some serious questions for the Dispensationalist. [Who are the Jews?](#)

By Jimmy Eaton