

THE JEWISH FOUNDATIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT



Class IV – Beware Getting What You Want

February 4, 2017



An Introductory Reading

1st Enoch 100. 1-6 (1st c. BCE) -

“In those days, **the father will be beaten together with his sons**, in one place; and **brothers shall fall together** with their friends, in death, until a stream shall flow with their blood...From dawn until the sun sets, they shall slay each other. **The horse shall walk through the blood of sinners up to his chest**; and the chariot shall sink down up to its top. In those days, the angels shall descend into **the secret places**. They shall gather together in one place all those who gave aid to sin. And the Most High will arise on that day of judgment in **order to execute a great judgment** upon all the sinners. He will **set a guard of holy angels over all the righteous and holy ones**, and they shall keep them as **the apple of the eye** until all evil and sin are brought to an end. From that time on the righteous ones shall **sleep a restful sleep**, and there shall be no one to make them afraid. Then the wise people shall see, and the sons of the earth **shall give heed to all the words of this book**. They shall know that **their wealth shall not be able to save them** at the place where their sins shall collapse.”

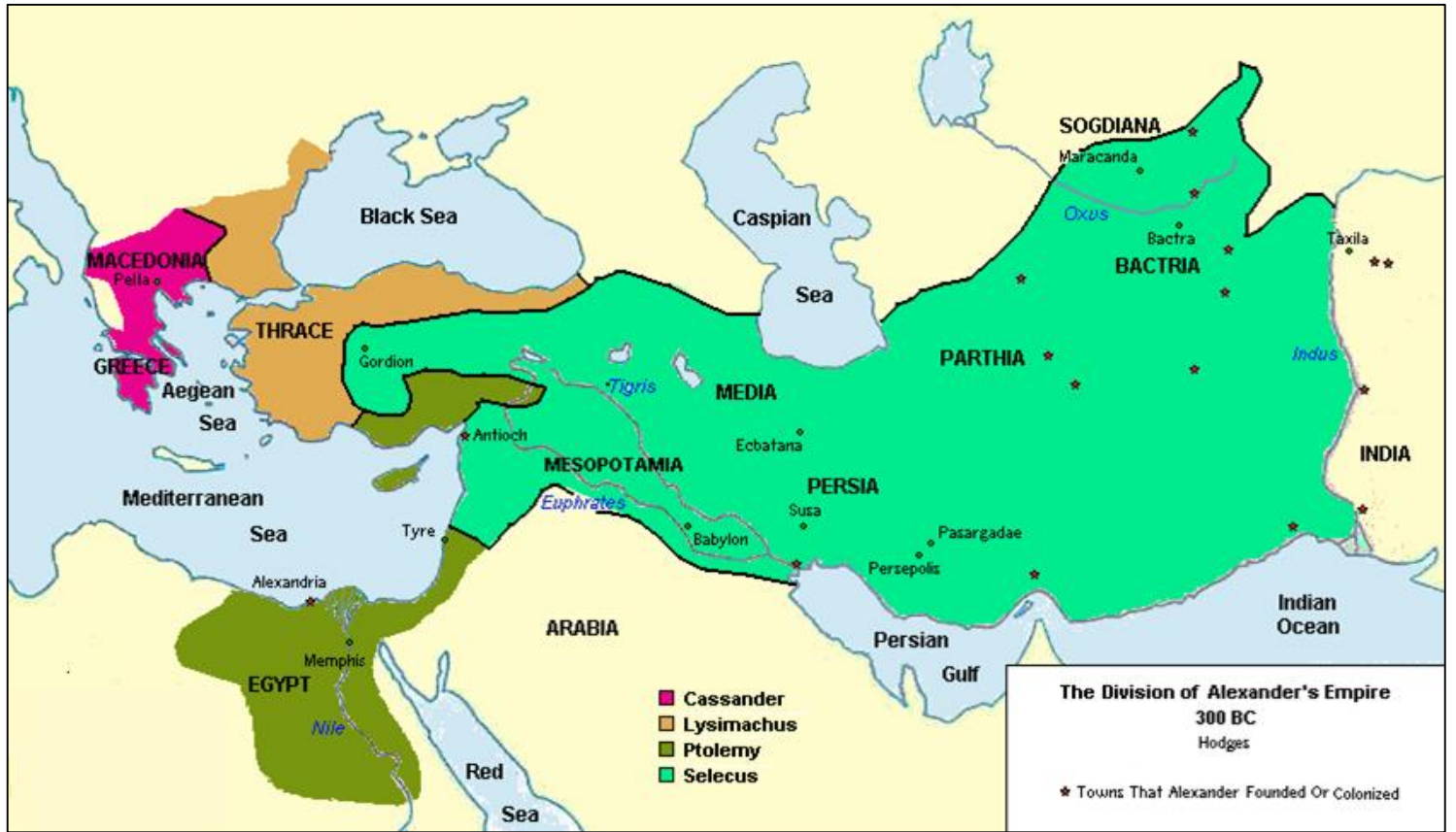
Group Discussion: Esther 7 - 9



- Is the plot to kill the Jews a governmental affair, a religious dispute, or an ethnic conflict?
- What is the Jewish response once the political upper hand has been gained?
- Here in our study, the Jewish rebellion has been successful and a new Jewish kingdom has been established – what do you think the new ruler's approach will be?

Last Week

- Explored the Intertestamental Period
- Major changes in the nation
- Changes in how they perceived their faith



His Generals Divide the Kingdom



Ptolemy I "Soter" (Savior)

“Good” Life as Minority under Ptolemies

- Egyptian Jews enjoyed some political and religious freedoms, gaining acceptance and increased influence in society
- Jewish community expands all over the Mediterranean (the “Diaspora”)
 - Alexandria ascends in importance – intellectual, social, and economic pinnacle
- Tensions arise in the Jewish community around ethnic identity just as in Judea
 - What does it mean to be Jewish in a minority context?
 - Start to see various means of dealing with the situation

Cultural Convergence in Egypt

The Fragments of Artapanus 27.3 – 6 (approx. 200 BCE) -

“As a grown man he was called Mousaeus by the Greeks. This Mousaeus was **a teacher of Orpheus**. As a grown man he bestowed many useful benefits on mankind, for he **invented boats** and **devices for stone construction** and **the Egyptian arms** and the **implements for drawing water** and for **warfare**, and **philosophy**. Further he...**appointed** for each of the nomes [states] **the god to be worshipped**, and for the priests the sacred letters, and that **they should be cats and dogs and ibises**.

On account of these things then Moses was loved by the masses, and was **deemed worthy of godlike honor by the priests and called Hermes**, on account of the interpretation of the sacred letters.”

Moses as the creator of the Egyptian religion and as the Greek God Hermes?!?!

New Seleucid Rulers = New Rules

- Seleucids (NE part of Alexander's empire) take over Judea in 204 BCE
- A debate begins in Judea on how to deal with Hellenism
- Seleucid king Antiochus IV ("Epiphanes") "encourages" the growth of Hellenism
- Antiochus also alienated many Jews with actions



Coinage of Antiochus IV

Judean Debate on Hellenism

1 Maccabees 1:11 – 15 -

“In those days certain renegades came out from Israel and misled many, saying, ‘Let us go make a covenant with the Gentiles around us, for since we have separated from them **many disasters have come upon us.**’ This proposal pleased them, and some of the people eagerly went to the king, who **authorized them to observe the ordinances of the Gentiles.** So they **built a gymnasium** in Jerusalem, according to Gentile custom, and **removed the marks of circumcision,** and **abandoned the holy covenant.** They joined with the Gentiles and sold themselves to do evil.”

Why would someone choose to repudiate their religious/ethnic identity?

The Maccabean Revolt

- Antiochus is in conflict with the Ptolemies in Egypt
- Wants to unite his kingdom and assure loyalty of subjects who were formally part of Egypt's sphere of control
- Appoints a high priest favorable to himself from a non-high priestly family for the first time
- Pushes Hellenism as the dominant cultural/religious outlook in Judea



Antiochus IV

Antiochus Desecrates the Temple

1 Maccabees 1:20 – 23 -

“After subduing Egypt, Antiochus returned in the 143rd year. He went up against Israel and came to Jerusalem with a strong force. He **arrogantly entered the sanctuary** and took the golden altar, the lampstand for the light, and all its utensils. He took also the table for the bread of the Presence, the cups for drink offerings, the bowls, the golden censors, the curtain, the crowns, and the gold decoration on the front of the temple; **he stripped it all off**. He took the silver and the gold and the costly vessels; he took also the hidden treasures he found.”

Antiochus Enforces Hellenism

1 Maccabees 1:41 – 50 -

“Then the king wrote to his whole kingdom that **all should be one people**, and that **all should give up their particular customs**...he directed them to follow customs strange to the land, to **forbid burnt offerings** and sacrifices and drink offerings in the sanctuary, to profane sabbaths and festivals, to defile the sanctuary and the priests, to build altars and sacred precincts and shrines for idols, to **sacrifice swine** and other unclean animals, and to **leave their sons uncircumcised**. They were to make themselves abominable by everything unclean and profane, so they would forget the law and change all the ordinances. He added, ‘And **whoever does not obey the command of the king shall die.**’”

The Revolt Begins

1 Maccabees 2:19 – 27 -

“But Mattathias answered and said in a loud voice: “I and my sons and my brothers **will continue to live by the covenant of my ancestors**. Far be it from us **to desert the law and the ordinances**. We will not obey the king’s words by turning aside from our religion to the right hand or the left...When Mattathias saw [a Jew come forward to sacrifice], he **burned with zeal and his heart was stirred**. He gave vent to his righteous anger; **he ran and killed him** on the altar...Then Mattathias cried out in the town with a loud voice, saying: ‘**Let everyone who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come out with me!**’ Then he and his sons fled to the hills and left all that they had in town.”

Small Group Discussion: Numbers 25:1 - 13

- What are the circumstances surrounding Phineas' actions?
- How does God describe the motivation for his actions?
- How does this episode compare to Mattathias' actions in Maccabees?
- Can you think of anyone in the New Testament who used violence against his religious opponents?
- What are the effects of legitimizing violence against your opponents?



The Maccabean Revolt

- A lower priestly family forges Jewish dissatisfaction into a military movement that rebels against the Seleucid king
- Temple re-dedicated in 164 BCE – new annual 8-day festival inaugurated (Hanukkah)
- Priestly family becomes the de facto Jewish leaders and founds Hasmonean dynasty in 163 BCE



The Cleansing of the Temple

1 Maccabees 4:42-43, 54 - 56

“[Judas] chose blameless priests **devoted to the law**, and they cleansed the sanctuary and **removed the defiled stones** to an unclean place.”

“At the very season and on the very day that the Gentiles had profaned it, it was dedicated with songs and harps and lutes and cymbals. All the people fell on their faces and worshipped and blessed Heaven, who had prospered them. So they **celebrated the dedication of the altar for 8 days**, and joyfully offered burnt offerings; they offered a **sacrifice of well-being** and a **thanksgiving offering**.”

Mattathias' Sons Establish a Dynasty

- Mattathias – dies early on in the rebellion (165 BCE)
- Judas – also called “Maccabeus” (the Hammer) succeeds him
 - Recaptures Jerusalem and cleans Temple
 - Signs treaty with Rome against Seleucids
 - Killed in 161 BCE
- 2nd son Jonathan succeeds Judas
 - Allied with Jewish group called the Hasidim (“pious ones”) against the Seleucids
 - Deposes the existing high priest and takes office for himself in 152 BCE
 - Killed by Seleucids in 143 BCE

Next Week's Homework

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

