

THE JEWISH FOUNDATIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT



Class XIII – Are You In or Out?

April 22, 2017



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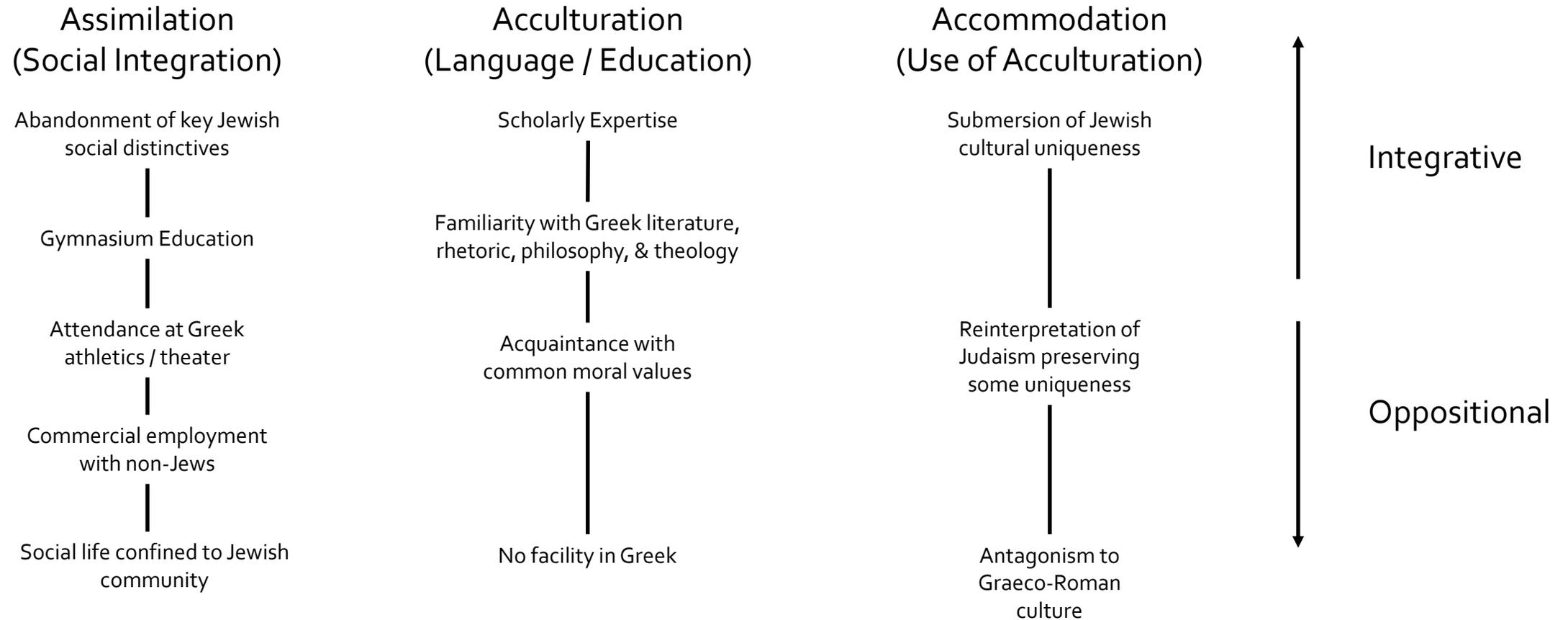
An Introductory Reading

First Epistle of Clement Ch. 14-15 (late 1st c. CE) –

It is right and holy therefore, men and brethren, to obey God rather than to follow those who, **through pride and sedition**, have become the leaders of a detestable emulation. For we shall incur no slight injury, but rather great danger, if we rashly yield ourselves to the inclinations of men **who aim at exciting strife and tumults**, so as to draw us away from what is good. Let us be kind one to another after **the pattern of the tender mercy and benignity** of our Creator. For it is written, "The kind-hearted shall inhabit the land, and the guiltless shall be left upon it, but transgressors shall be destroyed from off the face of it." And again says, "I saw the ungodly highly exalted, and lifted up like the cedars of Lebanon: I passed by, and, behold, he was not; and I diligently sought his place, and could not find it. Preserve innocence, and look on equity: for there shall be a remnant to the peaceful man."

Let us cleave, therefore, to those who **cultivate peace with godliness**, and not to those who hypocritically profess to desire it. For [the Scripture] says in a certain place, "This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me." And again: "They bless with their mouth, but curse with their heart." And again it says, "They loved Him with their mouth, and lied to Him with their tongue; but their heart was not right with Him, **neither were they faithful in His covenant**." "Let the deceitful lips become silent," [and "let the Lord destroy all the lying lips,] and the boastful tongue of those who have said, Let us magnify our tongue; our lips are our own; who is lord over us? **For the oppression of the poor, and for the sighing of the needy, will I now arise, says the Lord**: I will place him in safety; I will deal confidently with him."

Praxis in Hellenistic Judaism



From JMG Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora, From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE – 117 CE)*

Cultural Markers for Jewish Identity

- Circumcision
 - Background
 - Why a defining feature?
 - In daily life
 - Going to the (nude) baths
 - Gentile views



Egyptian practice of circumcision

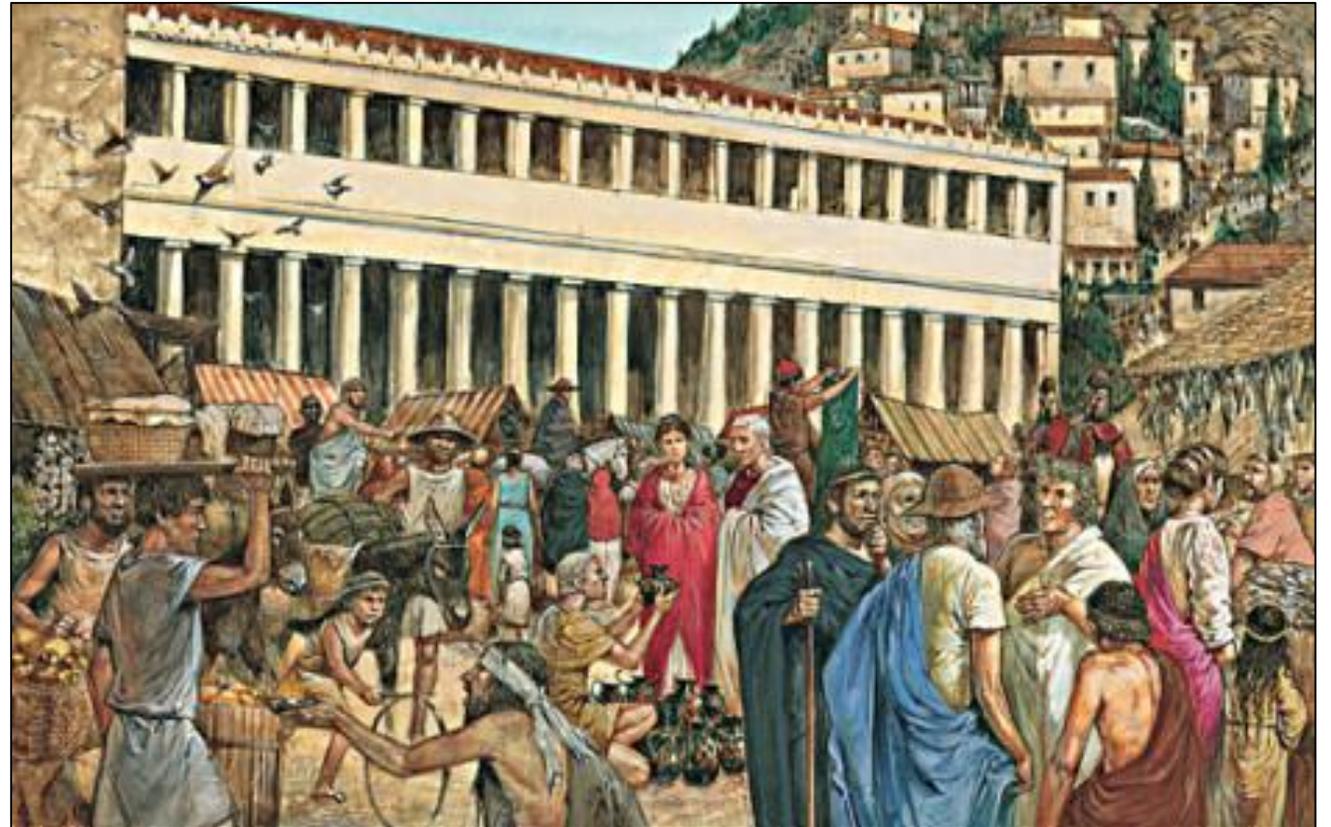
Markers for Jewish Identity

Jubilees 15:25 - 34 (2nd c. BCE) –

“And all the **sons of Beliar** will leave their sons **without circumcision** just as they were born. And **great wrath from the LORD** will be upon the sons of Israel because they have left his covenant and have turned aside from his words. And they have **provoked and blasphemed** inasmuch as they have not done the ordinance of this law because they have made themselves **like the gentiles** to be removed and be **uprooted from the land**. And there is therefore for them **no forgiveness or pardon** so that they might be pardoned and forgiven from all of the sins of **this eternal error**.”

Cultural Markers for Jewish Identity

- Dietary laws
 - Background
 - Why a defining feature?
 - In daily life
 - Gentile views



Greek "agora" (marketplace)

Cultural Markers for Jewish Identity

The Jewish Antiquities by Flavius Josephus 14.261 (1st c. CE) –

“Now the Senate and people have decreed to permit them to **assemble together on the days formerly appointed**, and to act according to their own laws; and that **such a place be set apart** for them by the Praetors, for the building and inhabiting the same, as they shall esteem for that purpose; and those that take care of **the provision for the city**, shall take care that such sorts of **food as they esteem fit for their eating** may be imported into the city.”

Cultural Markers for Jewish Identity

- Marriage
 - Background
 - Why a defining feature?
 - Ethnic concerns
 - Religious concerns
 - Possible influences on marriage in the ancient world
 - Gentile views



Isaac meets Rebekah

Small Group Discussion

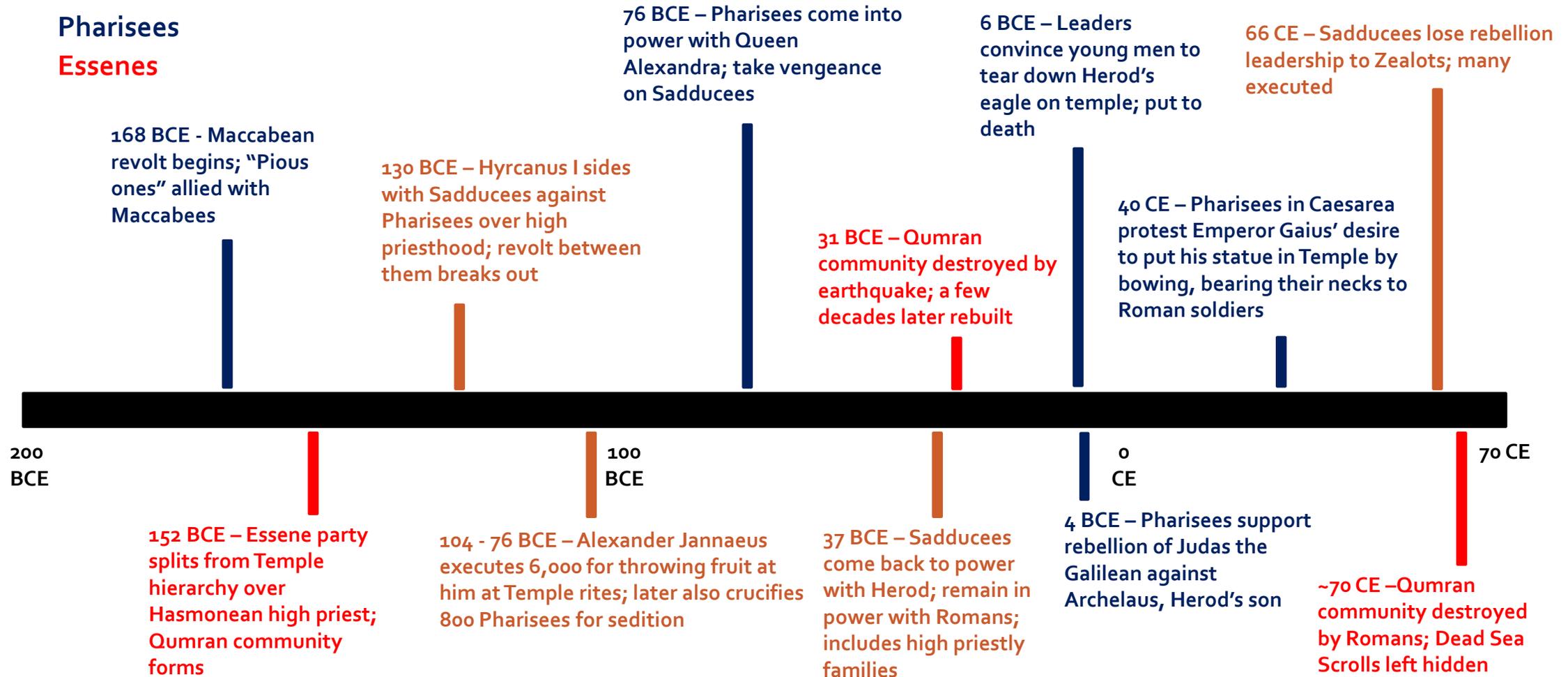
- Read John 8:31 - 47
- What do the Pharisees believe is their relationship to Abraham?
- What is Jesus' opinion? Why?
- What is the litmus test for belief in Jesus?

A History of Intertestamental Groups

Sadducees

Pharisees

Essenes



Perspectives on Religious Practice

The Jewish Antiquities 18.1.4 (1st c. CE) -

“But the doctrine of the Sadducees is this: That **souls die with the bodies**; nor do they regard the observation of **any thing besides what the law enjoins them**; for they think it **an instance of virtue to dispute** with those teachers of philosophy whom they frequent: but this doctrine is received but by a few, yet by those still of the greatest dignity.

But they are able to do **almost nothing of themselves**; for when they become magistrates, as they are unwillingly and by force sometimes obliged to be, they addict themselves to the **notions of the Pharisees**, because **the multitude would not otherwise bear them**.

Perspectives on Religious Practice

- Sadducees' Beliefs
 - Conservatives of Hellenistic Judaism
 - Rejected addition of "oral law"
 - Rejected idea of resurrection and afterlife
 - Membership based on social power structure
- John 10:45 - 54



Christ Before Caiaphas, Duccio
Buoninsegna

Next Week's Homework

- Read John 9
- Why are the leaders questioning Jesus' status as a Jew?
- How does Jesus come back at them?