

Introduction to the Bible

Supplement: A Review of Inter-Testamental History

- I. The End of the Old Testament Period
 - A. The Jewish community in Judea was reorganized under the leadership of **Ezra** (who arrived in Judea in 458 B.C.) and **Nehemiah** (who arrived in 445 B.C.)
 - 1. Ezra's gifting enable him to reorganize and reform the Jewish community's spiritual life around the Law
 - 2. Nehemiah provided the community with strong administrative leadership and implemented measures designed to establish the Jewish community's political status in the region
 - a. A major accomplishment was Nehemiah's leadership in assembling the Jews to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem
 - b. He completed the task in fifty-two days (Neh 3-6)
 - B. Although politically subjected to Persia, the Jewish community in Judea had the status of a semi-autonomous commonwealth
 - 1. The Persians allowed the Jews to regulate their internal affairs in accordance with the Law
 - 2. This arrangement became the norm between the Jewish people in Judea and the nations which dominated the region for the next 500 years
 - C. Nehemiah's second term as governor of Judea ended around 427 B.C. and after this time, little can be said regarding this community for the next few hundred years
 - D. Apparently, the relationships between the Jews in Judea and Samaritans to the north continued to worsen
 - 1. The Samaritans did not embrace the "restoration vision" -- that the Jews returning from Babylon were the true Israel, nor did they believe Jerusalem was the only place God might be worshiped
 - 2. The Samaritans build a temple on Mount Gerizim during this time
- II. The Beginning of the Hellenistic Period
 - A. **Alexander the Great** (336-323 B.C.) Came to power following the death of his father Philip of Macedonia
 - 1. In 334 B.C., Alexander set out against the Persians
 - 2. He defeated the main Persian army at Issus in 333 B.C.
 - 3. He continued his campaign east, but he died of fever in Babylon in June of 323 B.C. (at the age of thirty-three)
 - B. After his death, Alexander's empire fell to his four generals and was soon divided
 - C. Two generals are important as it concerns the land of Israel

1. **Ptolemy** seized control of Egypt, and **Seleucus** ruled the region of the fertile crescent from Syria to Babylon
 2. Both rival generals desired to control the region of Israel and Phoenicia
- D. The Jews in Judea were initially under the Ptolemies (301 to 200 B.C.)
- E. In 198 B.C., the Seleucids gain control over Judea, and the region was under Seleucid rule until the Hasmonean uprising in 167 B.C.
1. **Antiochus IV Epiphanes** (175-163 B.C.) was a brilliant statesman who hoped to rebuild the empire of Alexander, to offset Roman power in the region
 2. In 168 B.C., Antiochus was four miles from Alexandria, Egypt, when he was forced to withdraw from the region by the Romans
 3. Following this defeat in Egypt, Jewish opposition broke out against Antiochus, and he launched harsh retaliations against the Jews in Judea and Jerusalem (167 B.C.)
- F. This led to the Hasmonean uprising (167 to 141 B.C.)
1. The revolt began in the Judean town of Modein
 - a. **Mattathias**, a respected priest, refused to offer a sacrifice to the Greek gods
 - b. When another Jew offered to do it instead, Mattathias killed him and the Greek official
 - c. Mattathias and his sons and the band that followed them launched a guerilla warfare against the Seleucids and the “renegade” Jews that had sided with the Greeks
 2. **Judah Maccabaeus** (“the Hammer”) assumed leadership after his father’s death, defeating the Seleucids in four major engagements
 3. Judah recaptured Jerusalem in 164 B.C.
 - a. Temple was re-dedicated on the 25th of Kislev
 - b. The Feast of Hanukkah celebrates this event (John 10:22)
 4. Eventually, the Jews gained their independence from the Syrians
- III. The Hasmonean Dynasty in Judea (141 to 63 B.C.)
- A. The Hasmoneans (the title given to the descendants of Mattathias) reigned as kings and high priests over the Jewish people; they were as follows:
1. Simon (142-135 B.C.)
 2. John Hyrcanus I (135-104 B.C.)
 - a. Built the most powerful army in the region (made up of Jews and Gentile mercenaries)
 - b. Sought to re-acquire all Jewish ancestral lands
 - c. Idumeans (to the south) were permitted to retain their land if they converted to Judaism
 - d. Samaritans (to the north) did not submit to Judaism – their temple on Mount Gerizim was destroyed

- e. Through his conquests, John Hyrcanus tripled the size of the Judea he inherited
- f. Hellenization of Judea – lost of Pharisaic support
- 3. Aristobulus I (104-103 B.C.)
- 4. Alexander Jannaeus [brother of Aristobulus I] (103-76 B.C.)
 - a. Continued massive territorial expansion (his kingdom embraced almost all the biblical land of Israel)
 - b. Increasing opposition to Hasmonean rule
 - (1) Jannaeus extremely cruel ruler
 - (2) Josephus records he executed 55,000 Jews in six years
- 5. Alexandra Salome (76-67 B.C.)
 - a. Wife of Jannaeus
 - b. Restored Pharisaic influence into government
- B. Upon the death of Salome in 67 B.C., **Hyrcanus II** succeeded to the throne
 - 1. His brother, Aristobulus II (backed by the Sadducees) led a revolt against him (civil war lasted from 67-63 B.C.)
 - 2. **Antipater**, an Idumean advisor, suggested Hyrcanus enlist the help of the Nabateans and the Romans
 - a. The civil war was the pretext for Roman intervention
 - b. **Pompey** seized Jerusalem from Aristobulus II in 63 B.C.
 - 3. The fall of Jerusalem to the armies of Pompey brought an end to the independent Jewish state
- IV. Roman Rule in Judea (63 B.C. onward)
 - A. Rome reorganized the region
 - 1. Judea, Galilee, Eastern Idumea, and the Jewish Trans-Jordan (Perea) made up the new boundaries of the nation
 - a. Samaria became independent
 - b. Greek and Hellenized cities were removed from Jewish rule
 - 2. **Hyrcanus II** was recognized as high priest and “**Ethnarch**”
 - B. Events in Roman history at this time
 - 1. In 60 B.C., Pompey, along with Crassus and **Julius Caesar**, formed an alliance to rule Rome
 - a. In 53 B.C., Crassus was killed in war
 - b. By 49 B.C., Pompey (jealous of Caesar) joined with the conservatives in the Roman senate to order Caesar to give up his army
 - c. Caesar refused (crossing the Rubicon) –
 - 2. Pompey’s army engaged the army of Julius Caesar for control over the empire
 - a. Caesar prevailed; Pompey fled to Egypt
 - b. Caesar became entangled in fighting in Egypt
 - (1) Antipater and the Jews were rewarded by Caesar for

