

II. Between the Testaments

1. From 400-300 B.C.
2. From 300-200 B.C.
3. From 200-100 B.C.

A. Macedonia becomes a _____ province. 146 B.C.

In the third "Macedonian War," Rome defeated the Macedonian army under the last Macedonian king, Philip V's son Perseus (179-168 BC). Perseus died as a prisoner in Italy. A rebellion against the Roman rule failed, and by 146 B.C., Macedonia was a Roman province.

B. Egypt becomes _____ to Rome. 146-30 B.C.

The first defeat of the Seleucids by the Romans was 190 B.C. The Kingdom began to disintegrate during this century and eventually was totally conquered by Rome in 65 B.C.

C. Rome destroyed their greatest challengers, the _____, in 146 B.C.

In the following years, Rome continued its conquests in Spain with Tiberius Gracchus, and it set foot in Asia, when the last king of Pergamum gave his kingdom to the Roman people. The end of the 2nd century brought once again threat, when a great host of Germanic peoples, namely Cimbri and Teutones, crossed the river Rhone and moved to Italy. Gaius Marius was consul five consecutive times (seven total), and won two decisive battles in 102 and 101 B.C. He also reformed the Roman army, giving it such a good reorganization that it remained unchanged for centuries.

D. The Seleucids in Syria under _____ III. (242-187 B.C.)

He was also known as Antiochus the Great (Antiochus Megas; considering himself as great as Alexander) He ruled from 223-187 B.C. and died near Susan, Iran. He was the son of Seleucus II and succeeded his brother Seleucus III as king. He rebuilt the empire in the East but failed to challenge Roman ascendancy in Europe and Asia Minor.

He led administrative reforms by reducing the provinces in size and establishing a "ruler cult" with himself and his consort Laodice held as "divine." He improved relations with neighboring countries by giving his daughters in marriage to their princes and many of them paid tribute. He had an insatiable desire for expansion and took over Pergamum in 197 B.C. The Romans demanded that he free some areas but he considered it

an attack on his empire so he refused. Hannibal, who had fled from the Romans after his defeat, found refuge with him in 195 B.C. as his advisor.

He was decisively defeated by the Romans at the Battle of Magnesia (located in Greece) in 190 B.C. where his army of 70,000 was defeated by 30,000 Romans. He was forced to surrender most of his arms and give his son Antiochus IV as a hostage. In 187 B.C. he was murdered in a Baal temple near Susa where he was seeking tribute. In Israel during this time was the rise of two parties, one known as the "Hasidim" or "pious ones" and a reform party that favored Hellenization.

E. The Seleucids in Syria under _____ IV. (215-164 B.C.)

He was also known as "Epiphanes," meaning "God manifest or revealed." He was called "Epimanes" by the Jews meaning "madman." He was the third son of Antiochus III and was the hostage to the Romans from 189-175 B.C. where he learned the Roman Institutions and policies. He brother, Seleucus IV, traded him for Demetrius, the son of Seleucus. Seleucus was murdered by Heliodorus, a usurper, and then Antiochus ousted him. He reigned from 175-164 B.C.

He sought to install the Greek culture and institutions. In 169 B.C. he occupied Egypt with the exception of Alexandria. He contributed to the building of the temple of Zeus in Alexandria. Babylon revered him as "Soter" of Asia, meaning "savior." His attempted Hellenization of everything brought him into conflict with the religious Orientals and the Jews. The reform party allied with him and for a "considerable" sum of money he permitted the high priest, Jason, to build a gymnasium in Jerusalem and introduce the Greek mode of educating young people. In 172 B.C., for an even larger sum of money he appointed Menelaus in place of Jason. While he was in Egypt on a military campaign, Jason conquered Jerusalem and murdered many adherents of Menelaus. The city forfeited its privileges and was permanently garrisoned by Syrian soldiers.

Antiochus IV made the worship of Yahweh forbidden on pain of death. In the Temple an altar to Zeus Olympios was erected and sacrifices were to be made at the feet of an idol in the image of the King. In 166 B.C., he paraded his army near Antioch that included 46,000 foot soldiers, including a Macedonian phalanx of 20,000 men and 500 mercenaries equipped with Roman arms. There were also 8,500 horsemen and 306 armored elephants. Judas Maccabeus led a revolt against this and several times defeated generals that had been assigned to stop the revolt. He died of an illness in 164 B.C.

F. Judas _____.

In December of 164 B.C. he was able to tear down the altar of Zeus and reconsecrate the Temple. Antiochus had underestimated the strength of the Hasidean movement which maintained an independent Judean state for about a century. The Feast of Hanukkah was inaugurated to celebrate this victory.

G. The Books of the Maccabees.

They are also known as the “Book of the Hasmoneans.” There were four books that are only extant in some Greek manuscripts under the designation “Makkabaion.” It is believed to have been originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic with the originals lost before copies were made. The first and second books alone are found in Jerome’s Latin Bible of 390-405 A.D. The name “Maccabee” belongs strictly to Judas who in 2 Maccabees is called “the Maccabee,” with the title being applied to their entire family. He is often called the “Hebrew Hammer” although some think his name indicates the “extinguisher.” There are many references to 1 Maccabees made by the early church writers. Origen viewed it as non-canonical.

H. First Maccabees: Outline and comments.

- 1). **Rise of the Seleucid Dynasty. 1:1-10**
- 2). **History of the Jews from 175-135 B.C. 1:11-16:24**
 - a. **Introduction. Jews adopting Greek customs, Antiochus’ aim to conquer Egypt and suppress Judaism. Desecration of the Temple and martyrdom of many faithful Jews. 1:11-64**
 - b. **Revolt of Mattathias, the priest. 2:1-70**
 - c. **Leadership of Judas Maccabaeus after his father’s death. 3:1-9:22.**

This included victories over the Syrians, purification of the Temple, the death of Antiochus IV and accession of Antiochus V (Eupator). Demetrius I became king of Syria and Alcimus became the Jewish High Priest (162 B.C.). There was a treaty between the Jews and Romans, but the Jews were defeated, and death of Judas (161 B.C.).
 - d. **Leadership of Jonathan, 5th son of Mattathias, elected to succeed his brother Judas.**

He became high priest and secured the political independence of Judea. 9:23-12:53
 - e. **There was a peaceful and prosperous rule under Simon, the brother of Jonathan with accession to his son, John Hyrcanus (135 B.C.)**

The author of First Maccabees seeks to present truth correctly and practically all scholars accept it as accurate. The aid received from God is frequently recognized in the book, yet it is mainly through personal valor

that the Jews win. In 2 Maccabees it is seen as divine intervention. This book contains some mistakes of known facts concerning the partitions of Alexander's kingdom and 32 men riding on each elephant. In the book is a number of prayers, speeches and official records, as in Ezra.

The unknown author is clearly of the Sadducee party. The aim is clearly historical and patriotic, not religious. He does not use any divine name. He is a religious patriot who believed in divine selection of his people. He is a strict legalist. He teaches also that the age of inspiration is past and that the sacred books already written are the only source of comfort and encouragement under difficulties. The legitimacy of the high-priesthood of Simon is never questioned, even though it is condemned by Deuteronomic law, not being of the Tribe of Levi. There is no trace of the Messianic hope although it was entertained at that time in other circles (the Pharisees). There is a belief in restoration of the Davidic Dynasty and possibly realized in the Hasmoneans.

I. Second Maccabees:

This book was much less valued and read than the first one. Augustine was the only church father to hold it as canonical, and he even stated that this book had never been accepted as such. This book contains two letters from the Jews of Jerusalem to their brethren in Egypt urging them to keep the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah). This writer is writing to teach some doctrine or correct some supposed error. The writer is a Pharisee and some scholars see it as an answer to the Sadduceeism of 1 Maccabees. This book was probably originally written in Greek by an Alexandrian Jew.

J. The Maccabean Priests:

- A. Jonathan, 5th son of Mattathias, son of John. 152 B.C.
- B. Simon the High Priest. 135 B.C.
- C. John Hyrcanus. 105 B.C.

6. From 100-1 B.C.

- A. The Septuagint (LXX) was _____.
- B. Muscovy (_____) began its rise to power, expanding into Persia.
- C. In 102 B.C., Alexander Jannaeus (3rd son of John Hyrcanus, lived 126-76 B.C.) rose to power in _____.
His chief aim was to make Judea great and powerful. His pursuits became more political than religious and he proclaimed himself king, striking his own coinage in Greek and Hebrew. This offended the Pharisees because he was not of the Davidic line. He killed 6,000 of them. This incensed the Jews who arrayed against him upon a return from a military campaign. He

had 50,000 Jews killed. He allied with the Sadducees and one day crucified 800 Pharisees while executing their families in front of them and carrying on a drunken orgy. Many Pharisees fled to Syria. He became so weakened militarily that he made a disgraceful alliance with Aretas, an Arab king. He died after an illness lasting three years and gave his throne to his wife Salome. After her death, her son Aristobulus II became king and removed his older brother, Hyrcanus II, from the priesthood which sparked conflict. The chaos caught Rome's attention that sent Pompey, who calmed things down with Hyrcanus being appointed by Rome. His minister, Antipater, a Syrian, was the real power behind the throne who appointed his son Herod as prefect of Galilee. This began the Herodian Dynasty.

- D. Gaius Julius Caesar (July 13, 100 B.C.-March 15, 44 B.C.) was a Roman general and statesman who was critical in the transformation of the Roman Republic into the Roman _____.**

In 60 B.C. he entered a political alliance with Crassus and Pompey that dominated Roman politics for several years. They attempted to amass power through populist tactics and were opposed by the conservatives led by Cato and Cicero. He managed to win a civil war in the 40's and was proclaimed "dictator in perpetuity." He had veto power over the senate and could call them at any time. In 46 B.C., he gave himself the title "Prefect of Morals" and had censorial powers. In 45 B.C. he began the "Julian Calendar" after consulting with the astronomer Sosigenes of Alexandria. It was slightly modified into the Gregorian Calendar. A group of senators led by Marcus Brutus assassinated him March 15, 44 B.C., on a day that became known as the "Ides of March." The senators were hoping to restore the constitutional government. This led to a series of civil wars until Caesar's adopted heir, Octavius, later known as Augustus, consolidated a more permanent Roman Empire.

- E. In 65 B.C., Rome conquered the _____ Macedonian Kingdom in Asia under its last king, Antiochus XII.**

- F. In 63 B.C., Rome began to govern Jerusalem. Pompey (106-48 B.C., a Roman general) _____ it.**

- G. In 37 B.C., Herod the Great, an _____, became king of Palestine.**

He ruled until 4 B.C. One of his first acts was to appoint a high priest named Hananiel of Babylon, which is known to be Annas of the Gospels. This led to political issues with Marc Antony and Cleopatra who wanted Aristobulus. Herod's servants later drowned him in a bathtub because he was so popular with the people that Herod became jealous. In 20 B.C., Herod rebuilt Jerusalem. He made peace with Octavian and solidified his position as king of Judea, a Roman ally. Herod did have a strong military

that protected Palestine and built many fortifications through public works. He greatly increased the trade routes which helped bring peace and prosperity. At times he attended the Jewish celebrations but he was hated by the devout Jews. He died of intestinal cancer on April 1, 4 B.C.

H. In 30 B.C., the Roman victory over Cleopatra VII put an end to the last of the Macedonian descendants in Egypt and with it the last remains of the Macedonian Empire.

I. In 27 B.C., Caesar Augustus exterminated his opponents and became the first emperor of Rome. See Luke 2:1

The new government was a compromise between the old republicanism and the dictatorship of Julius Caesar. In 23 B.C., he was given the power for life and thus he was the permanent representative of the people. All his rights were founded upon a constitutional basis rather than upon an arbitrary seizure of power. During his reign many reforms were effected. A large part of the army was demobilized with the discharged veterans settled in colonies or on purchased land. A regular professional army was created which became a school for citizens. Upon retirement they were given a bonus and settled in communities to be loyal leaders for Rome. He sought to improve the morale of the people, reviving the state religion and rebuilding many temples. The "Imperial Cult" or the worship of Rome as a state was introduced into the provinces. In many places the emperor himself was worshipped as "Dominus et Deus" or "Lord and God." The Julian laws of 19 and 18 B.C. attempted to restore family life, encouraging marriage and the establishment of homes. To consolidate the empire he took a census of all people and property for the purposes of recruiting an army and taxation. He boasted that he found Rome made in brick and left it in marble. His adopted son, Tiberius, would succeed him.

J. Jewish Society:

- 1). There was a wealthy Jewish aristocracy, consisting chiefly of the families of the priesthood and leading rabbis.
- 2). They controlled a large portion of the commerce channeling all they could through the Temple.
- 3). The Sanhedrin came into existence which was the High Council of Judaism.
- 4). There was still the moral compass of the Mosaic Law which held all men equally accountable, so the leaders were kept from becoming too oppressive.
- 5). The oral tradition of scriptural interpretation was becoming as authoritative as the written text.
- 6). There is an ongoing societal battle between tradition and Hellenization (becoming Greek).
- 7). Interpretation moved from literal to allegorical.

K. Roman Society:

- 1). Landholders became the ***aristocrats*** of the provinces.
- 2). The middle class was almost squeezed out of the empire through their deaths in the many wars, or being starved from their homes by the larger estates. This group began to look to the ***state*** for their sustenance.
- 3). The “plebs” or “poor people,” were numerous and their condition pitiful. Many were ***worse*** off than slaves who at least were assured of food and clothing.
- 4). Slaves made up a large ***proportion*** of the population of the Roman Empire.

No exact numbers were attainable but probably less than half the inhabitants of the Roman world were free, and only a handful of them were citizens with full rights. Not all of them were ignorant and many were physicians, accountants, teachers and skilled artisans.

Epictetus, the Stoic philosopher, was one of them. The effect of slavery was debasing in that the ownership of slaves made the masters dependent upon the labor and skill of the servants with the result that they lost their own ingenuity and ambition. Morality became simply an issue of the whims of an arbitrary master.

- 5). **Under Augustus came a *literary* revival in Rome.**
Virgil the poet (71 B.C. - 20 B.C.) became the prophet of his day. Horace (66 B.C. - 9 B.C.) and Ovid (43 B.C. - 17 A.D.) also wrote mythology.
- 6). **The Romans produced an excellent system of *roads* which prior to the automobile were the best in the world.**
- 7). **In the early days of the Republic the dominant religion was *animism*.**
They adopted the Greek gods and goddesses. Worshippers often just worshipped the local deity that was said to rule over their city. The Seleucids and Ptolemy's, who had taken various titles like “Kurios,” “Soter” or “Epiphanes” are viewed as contributing factors to Emperor worship. Most all of the state religions fostered protection from deity rather than fellowship with it. None offered personal solace or hope for times of stress and trouble.
- 8). **Many of the mystery religions, mostly of *eastern* origin, centered around a god who had died and was resuscitated.**
Each had rituals of formulas to initiate the individual into the secret society. The Cult of Cybele (the Great Mother) came from Asia, that of Isis and Osiris/Serapis from Egypt and Mithraism from Persia.
- 9). **The practice of *Occultism*, consisting of superstitious practices and the powers of the universe, which they could not understand but could vaguely feel, rose in prominence.**

For them the entire world was inhabited by spirits and demons who could be invoked or commanded if one only knew the right formula.

- 10). **Many continued to practice Astrology in the empire.**
- 11). **Various religions had been growing for years and came to the forefront at the time of Jesus Christ.**

L. Roman Philosophies:

- 1). **Platonism. The real world is the world of ideas of which the material world is only a shadow.**
This led to the idea of “dualism.” Therefore one must become involved in reflection, meditation and asceticism to be delivered. Knowledge is salvation and sin is ignorance. Seeking the highest good is the way to be delivered from the material world.
- 2). **Gnosticism. It too promised salvation by knowledge.**
Followers believed God was too great and holy to have created the material world with all its corruption. They believed that the supreme Deity had produced successive emanations, each one being inferior to the last, until the last of these emanations or “aeons” created the world. Thus, matter was equated with evil and renouncing the material world and seeking the invisible world was the path to salvation. Out of this came two contradictory ethical conclusions, asceticism and gratification.
- 3). **Epicureanism. This taught that chaos accidentally brought about creation.**
In this world there is neither purpose nor design, therefore there is no absolute good other than pleasure which is defined as the absence of pain.
- 4). **Stoicism. Founded by Zeno (340-265 B.C.), who recognized no personal god but a universe controlled by Absolute Reason which was a divine will that was immanent and thoroughly pervading it. Conformity to reason becomes the highest good.**
Personal feeling is immaterial or harmful since it leads to unbalancing the rational solution to problems. Perfect self-control, unmoved by sentimental considerations, was the goal of the Stoic. Providence regulated the world and there was no room for altering any process, thus it was fatalistic.
- 5). **Cynicism. The man with simple needs would usually survive under conditions that would destroy those with elaborate wants.** (minimalists of today; tent-dwellers by choice)
They sought to abolish desire, abandoning all standards and becoming complete individualists. This is often seen in indecent language and behavior to prove oneself different. Cynicism arose from abandonment of the standard of ethics.
- 6). **Skepticism. Taught by Pyrrho of Elis (365-295 B.C.) under the premise that if knowledge rests upon experience, there can be no final standards, since the experience of each man differs.**

All terms of judgment therefore are relative. Unless one final starting point for reasoning can be found, no criteria for judgment exists and thus there is no such thing as truth. If the skeptics followed out their reasoning they would be able to make no statement of fact, since there were no acceptable premises. The logical end is intellectual paralysis. It arose from the abandonment of the standard of intellect.