
Intertestamental and New Testament Historical Background



The Greek Period and Preliminaries

- The **Assyrians** conquered the northern kingdom and took most exiles into Assyria.
- The **Babylonians** took control of the Middle East from the Assyrians
 - Conquered southern kingdom of Judah
 - Took most of its inhabitants as exiles into Babylonia
- The **Persians** then took control from Babylonians, and let exiled peoples, including Jews, return to their native lands if they wished.

Intertestamental Period - “the four hundred silent years” because of a gap in biblical record

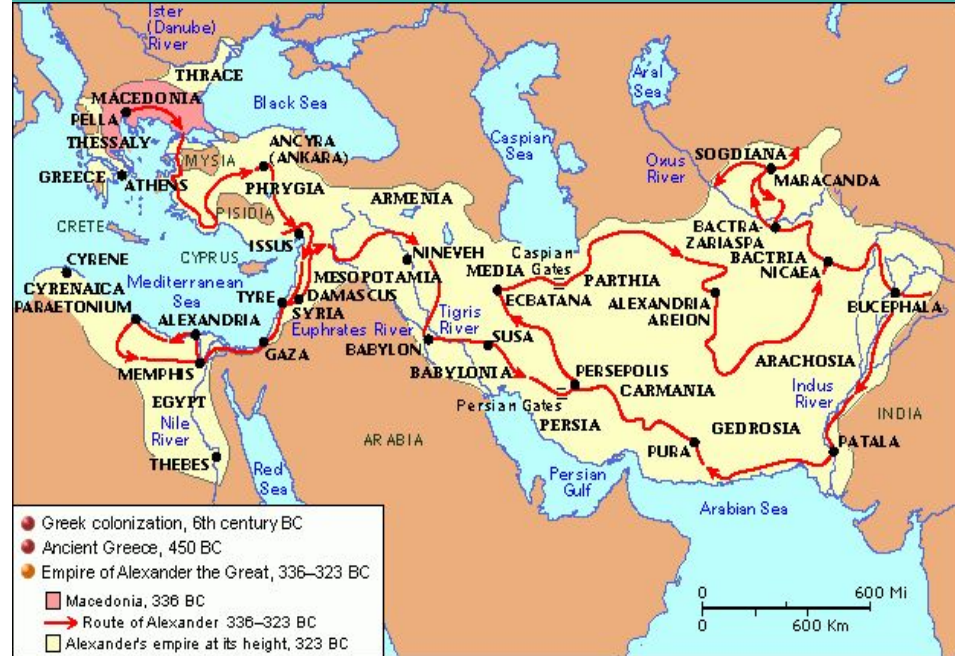


Alexander the Great

20/21 July 356 BC – 10/11 June 323 BC

Persian Empire: Borders of Greece in the West to the Hindu-Kush borders of India

- Largest empire that the world had seen.
- Early 20s age brought King Darius Persian empire to an end.
- Alexander died at 33 in 323 B.C.



Hellenization

Through Alexander's conquests:

Hellenism - spreading of the greek culture through Greek trade and colonization. (*in Jerusalem*)

- *Outlawed circumcision, desecrated the temple (burning a pig, took juice from pig and sprinkled it on the walls)*

Greek language became the *lingua franca* or common trade and diplomatic language of the civilized world. (scientific learning - Aristotle tutor)

By New Testament times Greek was street language in Rome (*being the reason why Paul wrote his letter to the Romans in Greek*) - New T written in Greek not

Alexander founded seventy cities and modeled them after the Greek style.



Diadochi

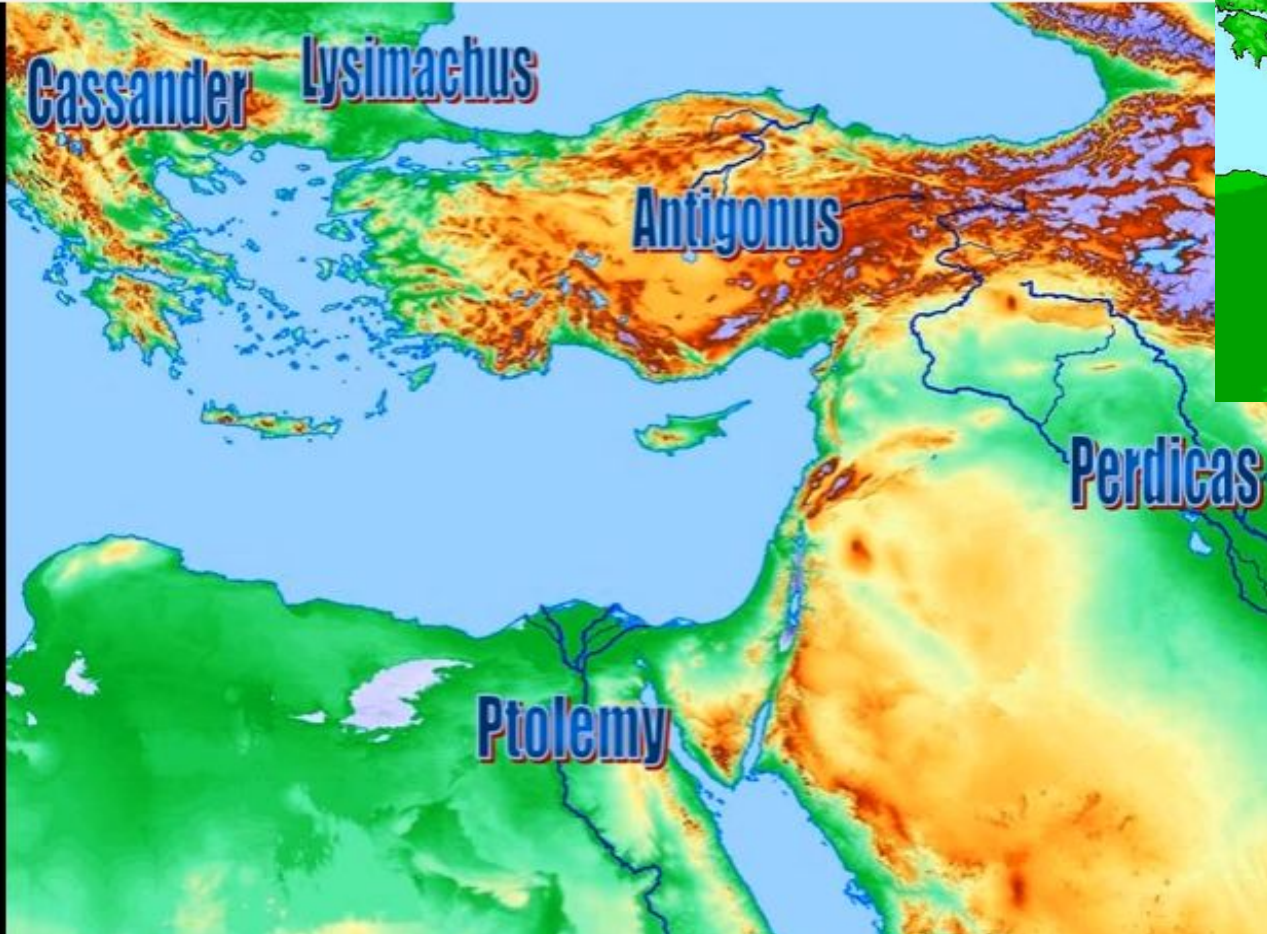
Diadochi - Alexander's lead generals; Greek for "successors."

- Divided empire into four parts
 - Two parts important:
 - **Ptolemaic empire** centered in Egypt
 - **Seleucid empire** centered in Syria
 - Palestine - territory fought over because of it was between the two

Hebrew Old Testament into Greek version called the Septuagint.



Power Struggle



Antiochus IV

- Angry at Jewish celebration of his rumored death.

As a result:

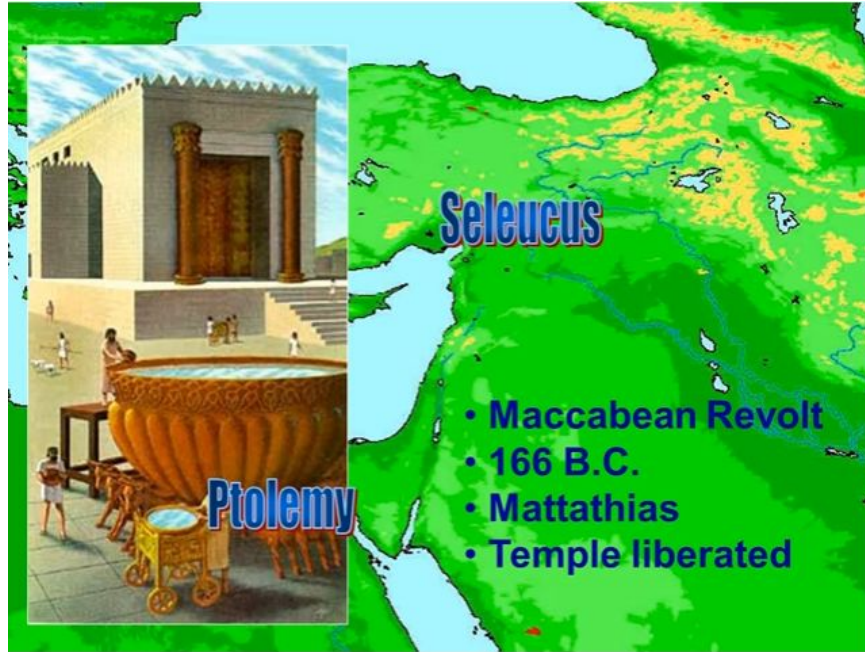
Antiochus imposed the following regulations

- Jews could not assemble for prayer
- Observance of the Sabbath forbidden
- Possession of the Scriptures illegal
- Circumcision was illegal
- Dietary laws illegal
- Pagan sacrifices mandated



The Maccabean Revolt 166 B.C. - “the hammer”

Recapture Jerusalem and the temple. The people return to the Lord - The Feast of Hanukkah



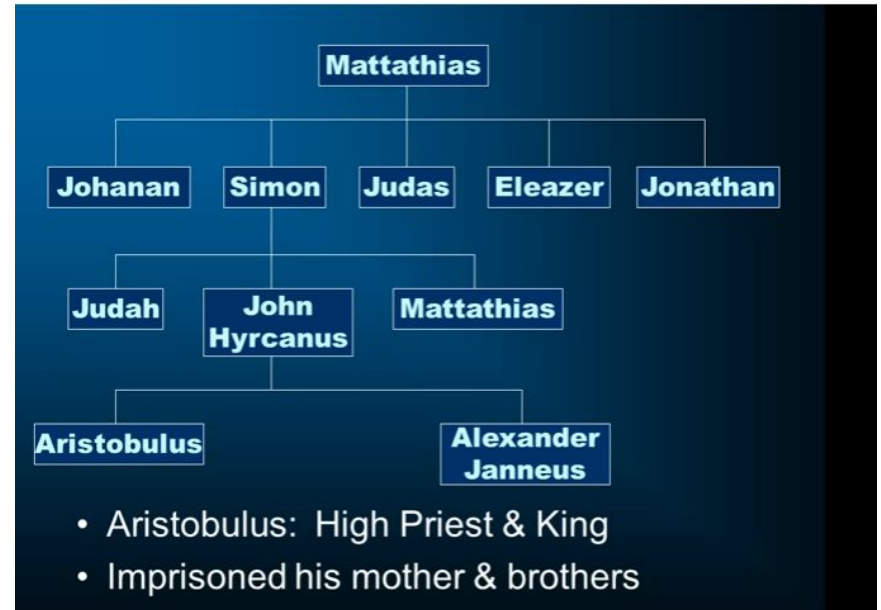
Maccabean / Hasmonean

Family of Priests

- Judas was first
- Then brother Simon takes role as High Priest; murdered by his son in law

Two New Jewish Parties

- Hasidim: "The Pious Ones"
 - Pharisees
- Hellenists: Greek influence
 - Sadducees
- Two brothers can't get along



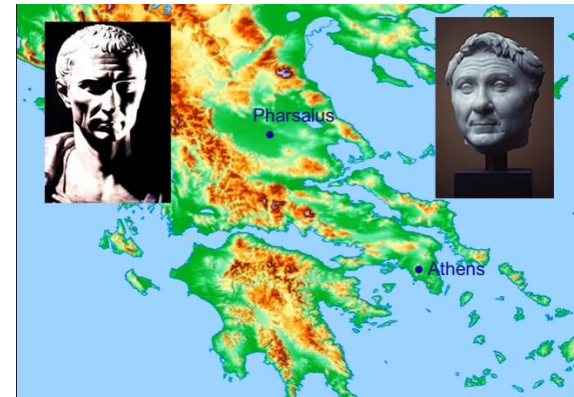
Pompey - Roman General

Both brothers call on him to get rid of the other
Judah now becomes Judea - a Roman province now
- Judah moves from Greek rule to Roman rule

Separate Northern area - Samaria
(intermarried with resident Jewish people - *half-breeds*)

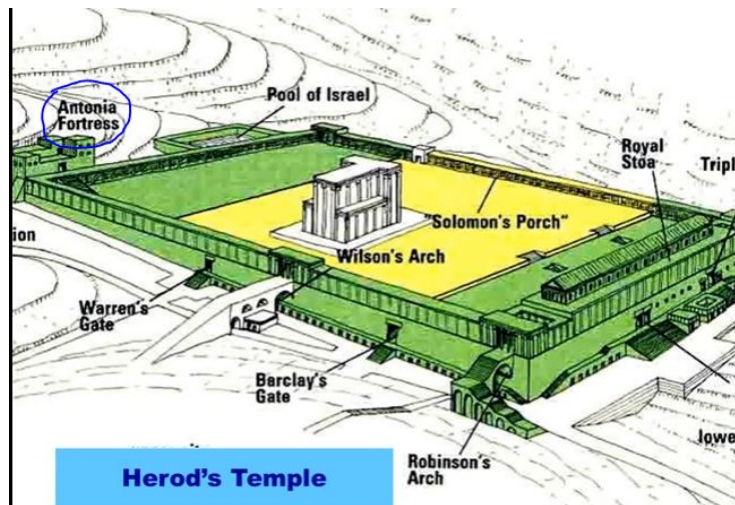
Herod the Great - King of the Jews 37 b.c.

The New Testament takes place in this time.



Herod the Great (40-4 B.C.) - King of the Jews 37 b.c.

- Building projects: the Temple (*Acts 21, 22*), the *Herodium*, *aqueducts*
- Caesarea Maritima Breakwater made with sunken stones
 - Israel did not have natural harbors, so He created one.





Herod's Domestic Troubles

Mariamne 1: last of the Maccabean rulers;
Murdered both sons and her; killed so many of his
Own son's; "better to be one of his pigs than his own
Son.
Archelaus throned then dethroned shortly after

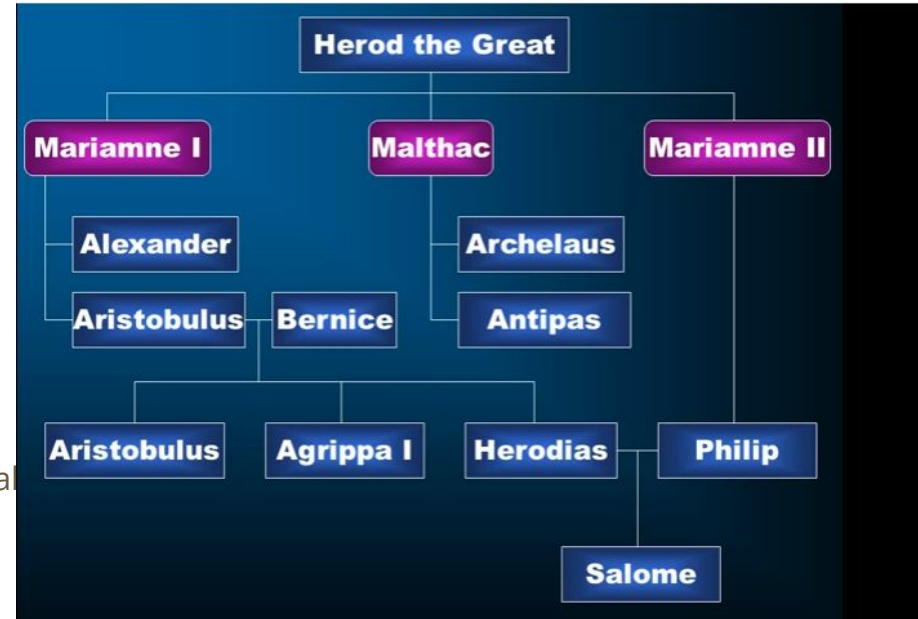
Herod Antipas:

Tetrarch - Galilee and Perea east of Jordan by Dead Sea

- Has an affair with niece Herodias (even though she was married to her half brother Philip) through Salome wants
- John the Baptist is arrested and executed b/c he speaks against the affair (Luke 3: 19)

Agrippa 1 - Acts 12 "King of the Jews"

1 generation later; then back to procurator



Sects: Pharisees /Sadducees

Pharisees	Sadducees
"Separated ones"	"Righteous ones"
Held to authority of entire Old Testament as well as oral law	Viewed the Torah as having the greater authority
Believed in miracles, angels, immortality	Rejected miracles, angels, immortality
Believed in future resurrection	Denied any life after death
Popular in the synagogues	Ruled in the Temple

- Wanted nothing to do with Greek culture
- small group but popular

- Rest of the Old Testament doesn't have that much Authority (Ex: Dan 12 - Resurrection)

- On supreme court; had big roles

- We are the old guard and hold to the Torah

