

## THE BIBLE PROJECT 2.03

### NT 1: *Between the Testaments (the rest of the story)*

*OT looks east; NT looks west*



Menorah on Titus Arch, Rome—JRT

*Represents the triumph of the Romans over Judah and the Maccabean Kingdom of Israel*

See Outline handout in class: *From Return to Renewal*

### **BIG IDEA 1: OT REVIEW**

I. **Persian Period**—Return from Exile beginning with Cyrus

II. **Alexander – Apostle of Hellenism (336-323)**

Alexander represented a change of **phenomenal proportions**, for it was with his language, ideas and culture that he conquered the world, not his political control. It's like today, American language, movies, clothing and money rule the world. HELLENISM.

### **BIG IDEA 2: BACKSTORY LEADING UP TO JEWISH REVOLT**

**Hellenism after Alexander in Judea A. Ptolemaic control—323-198 BC**



Alexander’s political empire falls apart immediately after he dies.

**Ptolemy (Egypt) takes Palestine and Syria  
 Seleucus takes Asia Minor – builds Antioch**

**PALESTINE IS conflict zone—especially between Egypt and Syria/Asia Minor**



**NOTE: Seleucid is the scholarly term for SYRIA. Ptolemaic is the term for EGYPT.**

***Seleucid [Syrian] King – Antiochus III conquers Ptolemy’s descendants in Egypt at Paneon/ Panian/ Banyas/ Caesaria Philippi in 199/8 BC and that starts the next era of the aggressive Hellenization of Palestine which produces the Maccabean Revolt our starting point this September.***



*Panias—Caesarea Philippi in NT times*

Antiochus III founds Antioch in Syria.

**196 BC The Sanhedrin formally constituted. *During this period the LXX [Septuagint] is translated. Letter of Aristeas tells the legend.***

But in 192 Romans defeat Antiochus III at Magnesia and take his son Antiochus IV hostage to Rome. Romans take Western Asia Minor and extract a huge indemnity. The Syrians have a real struggle to pay this off for decades.

Intrigue in Antioch finally led to ANTIOCHUS IV becoming King in 175 BC.

Antiochus III improved conditions in Israel

- High priests and majority of people preferred Syrians to Egyptians.
- Self-government was restored.
- Antiochus III even ordered that the Temple be closed to Non-Jews on pain of death and no unclean animals in Jerusalem.
- Plus tax relief
- Return of Jewish refugees.

### ***BUT***

Collaboration between Jewish ruling class and their Hellenistic lords had a **dark side**:

Alexander wanted not only political dominance, but also total dominance: thought, language, customs, literature, manners, entertainment and religion ...

To that end Alexander took “Hellenism” everywhere he went. Hellenism was a comprehensive world view.

- He planted whole new cities in the “trans-Jordan” area known in the OT as Gilead—



*Life Application Bible*

THE 10 CITIES OF THE DECAPOLIS *See map*

- Models of Hellenistic ideals and organization
- Governed by Hellenistic democratic senates
- Athletics: Gymnasiums and youth centers where competition was Greek style, nude.
- The new ideal was Hellenism.

*Imagine the world under Islam—so completely at variance with our culture. Language, morals, manners, education, law, entertainment, religion—what a change. Imagine our ruling elites finding accommodation with the rulers of Iran, Egypt, Saudi, Kuwait, etc. Multiculturalism at its most robust.*

Hellenism was not all exemplary civic development:

- Orgies associated with games and religion
- Cult prostitution male and female with festivals
- Baths and depraved literature, drama and poetry.
- Religious amalgamation (syncretism) Zeus, Hera, Apollo, Aphrodite were joined with Isis and Osiris, Zoroastrianism, Astarte, Baal and Ashtoreth. Even Yahweh.

Josephus tells how Alexander made sacrifices in the Temple in Jerusalem.

This hodge-podge, collection theory of religion [syncretism] ran completely against the new legal consciousness rising in Post exilic Judah—which undoubtedly became viewed as “intolerant.” Not to mention contrary to “holiness” and “exceptionalism.”

About this time *Hasidism* rises called forth as a reaction to the loss of holiness.

*So the conflict is set up* between slick and fashionable new Hellenism and holiness viewed by the ruling elites of the Jews themselves, as reactionary, crude, and old-fashioned Torahism.

Old fashioned in that it emphasized:

- Circumcision
- No images
- Non-participation in public civic athletic sacrifices. Modesty.
- Sabbath observance
- Ritual purity
- Kosher—food laws

So the new *in-crowd* developed, even including Jews whose favor and position was improved by their willingness to participate in the new culture.

The Hasidim emerge as a social reaction—“The pious ones.” Ancestors of the modern Hasids.

Joshua ben Sira (aka Jesus son of Sirach) wrote *Ecclesiasticus* about 180 BC to combat creeping Hellenism.

### **BIG IDEA 3: THE AGE OF ANTIOCHUS**



From the Arch of Titus, Rome

**The story behind Hanukah** illustrates the clash of cultures: Hellenism (worldliness) and Judaism (faithfulness) as it unfolds in history not just in ideas.

When ANTIOCHUS IV takes the Seleucid [Syrian] throne in 175 BC, the stage is set.

The tolerance of previous rulers gave way into coercion of the people into the Hellenistic mold.

Analogy with 1920s Nazism and late 1930s Nazism. [We may be seeing this happening in our society as “political correctness” becomes increasingly reinforced by law and bureaucracy.]

In China today it’s called “social credit” by which government sanctioned norms control the lives of the whole population—as depicted in *1984*, by George Orwell

**This drama sets the pattern for the rise of normative observant Judaism from thence forward.** The struggle to maintain its identity [holiness/exceptionalism] forges a pattern of practice and legalism that marks Judaism in a new and changed way:

There is a heightened emphasis on the visible legal practices and law as a means of belonging.

There is a rejection of outsiders—no means was left for outsiders to be accepted as “People of God” without diminishing godly IDENTITY—that is JEWISH identity. EXCEPTIONALISM DECAYS.

**ANTIOCHUS IV did face real pressures:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

These pressures were met with vigorous and compulsory Hellenization:

- Zeus worship was required—so that local gods became the local adaptation of Zeus.
- Emperor took title of “*Theos Epiphanes*” which means God Revealed or Manifest The epiphany of god. [Observant Jews derisively called him “Theos Epimanes”— “God out of his mind”.]
- No observant Jew could accept that title for the Ruler and keep Command #1.

So, in Palestine, the situation went from bad to worse.

**This next part is complicated but very revealing as to the spirit of those times and the motivation that created the new Judaism.**

***Long Story shortened:***

- The high priestly elite came to the surface—eventually would form the “Sadducee” party.
- A political faction led by a descendent of Tobiah the Samaritan opponent of Nehemiah denounced the High Priest, an observant descendent of the Zadokite/Aaronic priesthood.
- Antiochus IV appoints Jason (Onias’ brother) high priest because he promised a large bribe and more rigorous cultural coercion toward Hellenism
- Jason changed the constitution to make Jerusalem equal to Antioch as a Hellenistic city. Therefore, Judaism lost its legal exception to exist.
- ***The city of David was given over entirely to the way of Alexander. It was the age of Antiochus!***
  - --sing to the tune of *The Age of Aquarius*  
<https://music.apple.com/us/album/aquarius-let-sunshine-in-flesh-failures-from-american/303078879?i=303078892>
- The rising tide of law observance ran full force into compulsory Hellenism.
- NOW Jason’s original supporters among the elite (Hellenizing) social class of Jerusalem found he was not radical enough. Replaced him with a Benjamite Menelaus who bribed Antiochus IV to appoint him.  
*[Imagine the President replacing the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court with Bernie Maddoff because of a bribe and you will get the scandal of this time.]*
- BUT it’s now 169 BC. ANTIOCHUS IV had attacked Egypt and was defeated utterly. He’s in a foul mood.
- ANTIOCHUS IV sends a commander who waits for the Sabbath when he knows the Jews will not fight even in self-defense. He approaches the city with the appearance of peaceableness. He slaughters the people, torches the city, takes women and children as slaves and tears down the Temple walls.

- Now with a true position of power the Hellenistic priestly party exercises dominance.
- Baal and other Hellenistic deities were worshipped there under sponsorship the High Priest Menelaus and others of the ruling elite. God of Israel mingled into other gods in a broad-minded religious mud pie [syncretism].
- Still ANT IV was not satisfied: He now made a concerted attempt to exterminate Jewish religion completely. 167 BC Pronounces Decree forbidding the practice of Judaism and sends an emissary to enforce edict.
  - December 167 ANTIOCHUS IV rededicates the Jerusalem Temple to the Olympian Zeus. He sets up a statue of Zeus with his face as the face of Zeus declares himself God-Revealed (*Antiochus Epiphanes*) and compels Jews to offer pork on the Altar and eat it.

The full bloom of the “*Age of Antiochus*”. HISTORY has seen it again and again. Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Taliban, etc. Those claiming advanced enlightenment require totalitarian tactics to force it on others.

But even deeper is the internal struggle between “progressive” religion which constantly accommodates itself to the temper of the age and the rising tide of Jewish identity which recalled the people to its godly heritage. What is the most enduring and vital line of that heritage? Turns out it’s the LAW, THE TORAH.

## **BIG IDEA 4: THE PEOPLE REVOLT: MACCABEES AND HANUKAH**



Menorah relit at Dedication of Purified Temple 163 BC (*JRT photo*)

That reaction began with the family of an **aged priest Mattathias in the village of Modein** 17 miles NW of Jerusalem. Story is told in 1 Maccabees. ...

The zealous resistance drew great encouragement from **Daniel and Esther** for obvious reasons. Guerilla warfare from village to village ensued at the points of pressure and compelled compliance.

Mattathias dies in 166 BC. Judas his third son took leadership

Judas was known as the “Hammerhead”—meaning of “Maccabee”—because he pounded the Syrians. Finally Judas defeated the main army of ANTIOCHUS IV and forced him to return to Antioch—even though the AKRA remained unconquered.

But Jerusalem was back in the hands of the people.

**Now the Temple was cleansed, altar rebuilt and the Temple rededicated.**

Next Judas set himself to win independence for all the Jews in surrounding areas.

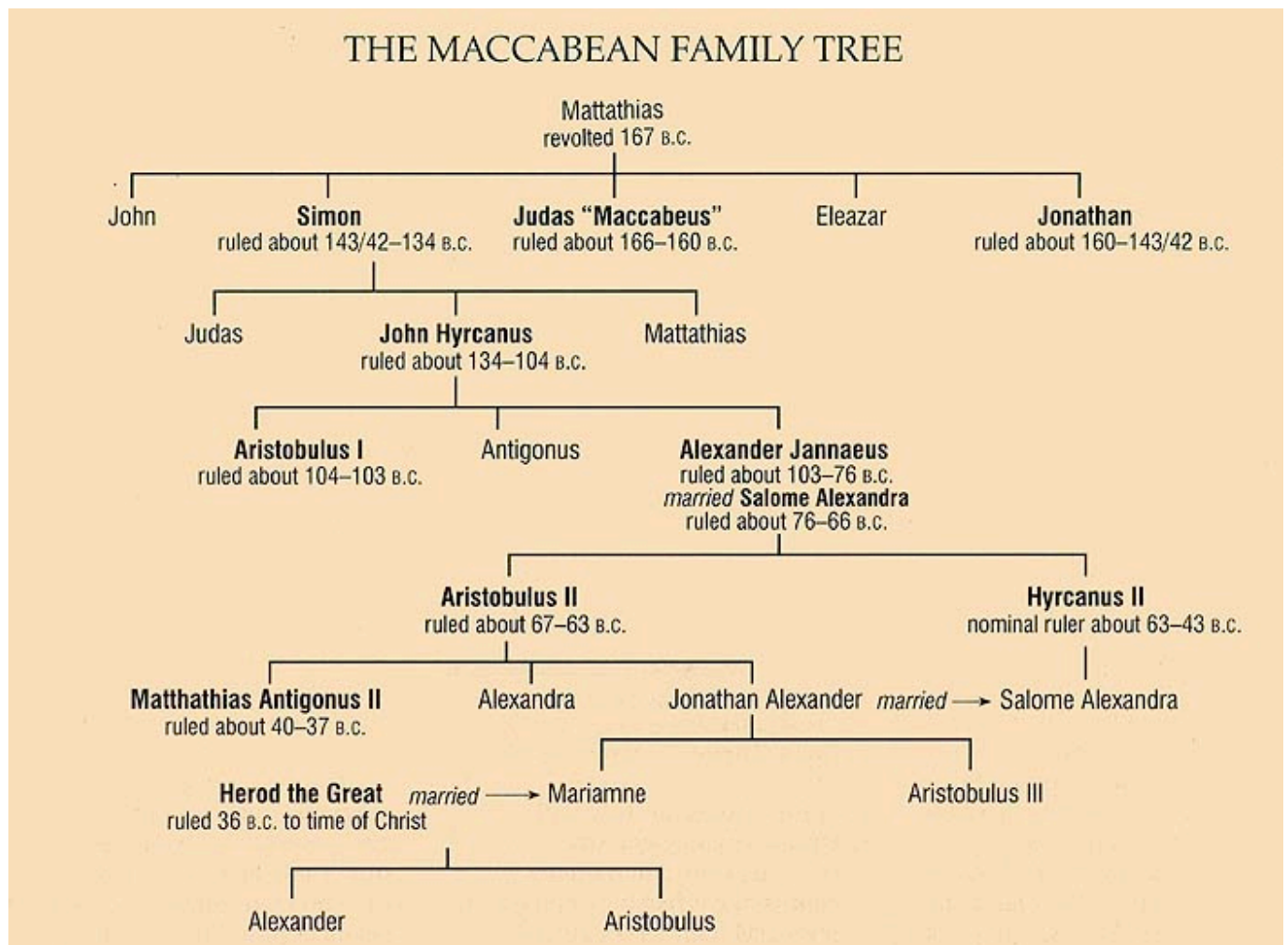
ANTIOCHUS IV died that year of 164 BC [to no one’s sorrow] and the Syrians revoked the repressive policy and granted religious liberty again to the Jews.

But the **struggle with Hellenization** continued [of course] when the next King ANTIOCHUS V appointed another High Priest (Alcinus) from among the priestly elite who were in tune with the *Age of Antiochus*.

- But Judas again asserted Jewish exceptionalism and defeated the Syrians and drove out Alcinus.
- Then Judas went to Rome where the Senate proclaimed his legitimacy.
- But the Syrians fought and killed him anyway.
- His brothers take up leadership.
- Eventually Simon (his next older brother) in 142 BC captured the Akra, cleaned out Jerusalem completely of the Syrian power (not the priestly elite, however). And the Jews were granted their independence by the Syrian king who was no longer an “Antiochus.”

**BIG IDEA 5 MACCABEAN RULE**—Jewish Independence 142-63 BC—*details, details, details ...*

The Maccabees thus achieved their political goals and also ushered in the principle of the dominance of the “Law” which was later to judge their rule and end their power.





The extent of the land ruled again by Israel under the Hasmoneans

[Maccabees are referred to as “Hasmoneans” because the grandfather of Mattathias was named Hasmoneas.]

The Maccabees /Hasmoneans themselves were corrupted like the Hellenizers before them through their attempt to keep and wield political power as an end in itself.

They [Simon] made a treaty with the new rising power of the times Rome in 142 BC.

Priesthood passed out of hands of Zadokites permanently. [Contrast the lineage of John the Baptist]

About 160 BC Jonathan another brother of Judas M. was appointed High Priest by Alexander Balas a pretender to the throne, son of ANTIOCHUS IV.

Zadokites had been deposed from Priesthood when Onias III was outbid for that position by Jason. **Onias IV migrated to Leontopolis, Egypt** about 161 BC where he built a new temple there modeled on Jerusalem that lasted 230 years to just after 70 AD when Vespasian destroyed Leontopolis just after Jerusalem.

Meanwhile back in Jerusalem Jonathan is assassinated [143] and another brother **Simon** was acclaimed civil governor, military leader and “High Priest forever, until a trustworthy prophet should arise” (1Macc. 14.41) with Roman collusion including a plaque set up in temple by Romans proclaiming **MACCABEAN RULE BOTH RELIGIOUS AND CIVIC**.

All this in the year (142) when independence is granted to Judea under Simon. Simon thus founded the hereditary line of priests that followed.

Here the **Hasidim break with the nation. And “Pharisees” come into the record** – one derivation for the name is from the word to separate.

The Hasmoneans now saw great expansion and opportunity. **They ruled an independent Judea for 75 years and kept priesthood for next 100.** John Hyrcanus, Simon’s son completely overran Idumea, Samaria and part of Galilee and added them to his realm.

His sons Aristobulus [104-3 and Alexander Jannaeus [103-76] [took title King] extended kingdom to Mediterranean and into Transjordan – to place where the Hasmonean kingdom **rivalled or exceeded the Solomonic kingdom**. See Map in slides.

**THIS IS ONLY THE 2<sup>ND</sup> PERIOD OF ISRAELITE INDEPENDENCE AS A WHOLE NATION IN ALL ITS HISTORY!**



These kings were unprincipled – acted just like Hellenistic rulers—but without the redeeming features of high Hellenism.

Alex Jan. was particularly unworthy both as ruler or priest – only out for his own power and conquest. A complete vandal without the redeeming graces of Hellenism –FF Bruce Succeeded by wife **Salome Alexandra** who made her son Hyrcanus II [who had no ambition] high priest and her younger son –Aristobulus II who had enough ambition for the whole family – a military command. **Her 9 years considered a “golden age.”**

Her death in 67 BC was followed by Civil war between partisans of the 2 brothers.

Hyrcanus unambitious though he was used as a front man by the Idumean politician, **Antipater** (Herod’s father), who saw the need to cooperate with Rome.

Jews appeal to Rome and Pompey marches on Jerusalem in 63 BC.

## **BIG IDEA 6: THE ROMANS TAKE OVER**

Rome occupied Judea in 63 BC on pretext of settling civil war.

Pompey occupied and reorganized Syria as Roman province. Jerusalem occupied in Spring 63 and became subject to Rome.

Pompey desecrates the temple by entering the Holy of Holies. Destroys city walls. Hyrcanus II was confirmed HIGH PRIEST. Titular leadership of nation.

**Antipater** continued behind the scenes to cultivate the Romans, particularly Julius Caesar, whom he assisted when **Julius Caesar defeated Pompey** (when the First Triumvirate fell apart) at **Pharsalus** and killed him in Alexandria with help from Antipater whose friend was Marc Antony.

Made Antipater a tax-free Roman citizen with the title of **Procurator of Judea**. Allowed to rebuild walls, taxes reduced for Jews and religion was respected.

Julius Caesar assassinated in 44 BC. Antipater assassinated 43. Sons Phasael and

Herod continued the pro Roman politics on the side of Caesar’s heir apparent **Augustus/Octavian** who with Marc Antony defeated Cassius and Brutus at **Philippi in 42** and Phasael and Herod were appointed **co-tetrarchs of Judea. –42 BC**

**IN 40 BC Parthians overran** and destroyed the Roman occupation placed another Hasmonean – Antigonus [son of Aristobulus II] -- on the throne and killed Phasael while Herod fled to Rome where Octavian and Antony had him declared *King of the Jews* by the Roman Senate.

Whereupon, not without considerable effort, Herod reconquered Judea for the Romans.

**[THE BACK STORY BEHIND HEROD’S FEAR OF THE WISE MEN FROM THE EAST]**

Antigonus sent in chains to Antony at Antioch and executed there at Herod’s request.

Herod divorced his first wife (Doris) to marry the Hasmonean princess Mariamne (granddaughter of both rival brothers Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II)

Jews nevertheless continued to look on him as Idumean interloper, who had usurped the throne over the “rightful” Hasmonean King, Antigonus.

Cleopatra VII took Jericho from him, even though he was Marc Antony’s friend who was also Cleopatra’s consort.

Hasmoneans kept right to succeed in the High Priesthood – therefore Mariamne insisted that Herod appoint her brother, Aristobulus III, 17, to that post. A few months later, however, Aristobulus III was drowned in an “unfortunate” swimming accident at one of Herod’s palaces.

Mariamne accused Herod who then had to appear before Antony and Cleopatra but was acquitted giving rise to the famous Cleopatra epigram:

**“one must not inquire too closely into the actions of a king, lest he cease to be king.”**

However, Antony and Cleopatra were to be defeated at **Actium by Octavian in 31 BC** after which they fled to Egypt and committed suicide the next year.

As Antony's friend Herod was summoned before Octavian at Rhodes.

He did not hide his friendship for Antony, but convinced Octavian that he could serve Rome best in Judea.

So Octavian reappointed him and even gave him back Jericho from Egypt, along with a number of Greek cities.

Octavian handed the republic back to the "Senate and People of Rome" [SPQR] and was proclaimed *princeps*, chief citizen of the republic, & given the name Augustus – but republic had become empire.

Jerusalem was recognized as a temple city, at first administered by "client King" Herod the Great.

Hierosolyma [like Hieropolis] temple-state with special privileges:

Roman military standards were not permitted inside city walls.

We will have more to say about the Herods in the course of the NT studies, but for now, Josephus is often quoted as saying that it was *safer to be Herod's enemy than to be his relative*.

We have told how he killed his brother-in-law the high priest age 17.

His sons enjoyed more popular favor than he because they had the blood of the Hasmonean princess whom Herod married. She bore two boys: Aristobulus and Alexander.

They were nominated as heirs by their father.

But he executed their mother while they were still very young – 29BC

Later, after having been educated in Rome, they, too, were executed at his insistence in 7BC.

Herod was incited by his eldest son Antipater by his first wife Doris.

Herod elevated Antipater to be joint king, but changed his mind and banished him when he suspected Antipater of plotting against his life. 4 or 5 days before his death, he ordered Antipater's execution.

Herod was a great builder. He built fortresses everywhere—because he was paranoid. He wanted a place to escape in any direction.

South—Herodium



East – Masada (and Machaerus)



West—Caesarea Maritima



Antonia Fortress--Jerusalem



## Judaism a different religion from OT times

### 1. Law obedience

Eventually the idea of faithfulness to the covenant relationship with God became interpreted to mean rigid observance of the law, particularly circumcision, Sabbath observance, purification and food laws, rather than the moral law.

“Here law has ceased to be the definition of the requisite response to the gracious acts of God and becomes the means by which men might achieve divine favor and become worthy of his promises.”  
 –John Bright

History conspired to make these legal requirements the test of faithfulness. So that the outcome of the Maccabean struggle was so to mold Jewish experience that its law became THE expression of its national identity and Mission.

### 2. Origin of a wide variety of sects and parties. (Metzger, *NT, Background, Growth and Content*)

Largest was the Pharisees, heirs of the Hasideans who began as a reaction to the aggressive Hellenizing influences preceding the Maccabeans under the Seleucids.

Maccabean struggle ceased to be about religious liberty and became contest for political power, Hasids lost interest.

Pharisees [Ps] first appear under John Hyrcanus (135-105 BC) Probably means “separated ones”  
 Josephus: “*The Pharisees are a group who have the reputation of excelling the rest of their nation in the observance of religion, and as exact exponents of the laws*” (*War, I.v.2*)

Pharisees	Saducees
foreordination consistent w/freewill	history not divinely controlled, individual freedom directs life and history itself
immortality of soul AND resurrection of body with rewards and punishments based on virtue	did not believe in afterlife
Angels, demons	did not believe in anything other than this world.
Authority: Hebrew scriptures + tradition of rabbis through the generations	Scripture only--TORAH; therefore rejected outright nothing they did not find taught in the OT TORAH Wealthy, politically connected, landowners Masses sided against them with Pharisees.

### **Pharisaism essence:**

Religion consists in conformity to the Law  
Promises God's grace only to doers of the Law  
Scrupulous adherence to legalistic traditions created the Pharisaic ethos.  
Outward formalism more important than inward disposition of heart  
It was heroism of those who opposed the idolatrous humanism of the Hellenistic ideal

### **Sadducees** – probably comes from Zadok written *Saddouk* in Greek

As political authority grew, spirituality waned – accommodated the Hellenizing to maintain power.  
By NT – small group in number.  
Influential in politics and Temple Administration

### **ESSENES**

- Information from Josephus, Philo and Pliny
- 4000 in number
- simple, abstemious life.
- The most strict refrained from marriage to keep pure.
- Communal life required three year probation, after which turned over property
- Primary religious observance: ritual washings, stated periods for prayer, continuous reading and study of OT scriptures
- They applied the prophecies and promises to their own community
- Did not participate in sacrifices at temple because they held temple worship polluted
- Wore white robes as symbolic of inward purity
- Sabbath law more rigid than Pharisees
- Qumran

### **HERODIANS**

Lots of theories about these people – not an organized party, but an attitude  
Jews of influence who supported Herodian rule and therefore Roman rule  
Asked Jesus about taxes

### **ZEALOTS**

Founded technically by Judas the Galilean a rebel in AD 6 (Acts 5.37)  
Opposed paying tribute on ground that this was treason to God  
Pharisaic religion  
Throwback to Judas the Maccabee  
AKA Sicarii (Assassins) Ac 21.38 Fomented last war and died in Masada

### **Scribes & Rabbis**

Goes back to Ezra  
Began in Babylon as the preservers of tradition  
Most scribes were Pharisees  
Called rabbi – “my great one”  
Profession:  
careful theoretical development of law  
the teaching of the Law to pupils who followed them dutifully  
practical administration of law in pronouncing legal decisions.

Always appealed, therefore, to the authority of the scribes from whom they learned.  
Contrast Jesus

Applying the law – “Binding and Loosing—depends on your rabbi.

Rabbi Jochanan said, “Concerning gathering wood on a feast day, the school of Shammai binds it and the school of Hillel looses it.”

### **COMMON PEOPLE – 90%-- AM HA-ARETZ—“THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND”**

#### **New Concepts that arise in the Inter-testamental period that profoundly affect NT**

1. Scripture as canon
2. Apocalyptic view of history
3. Messiah – Daniel – son of Man
4. Day of the Lord (cosmic)
5. Spiritual Kingdom of God
6. After life
7. Satan

#### **Essential marks of observant Judaism**

- Circumcision
- Sabbath observance
- No idols
- Ritual purity
- Legal regulation
- Kosher

## **THE BIBLE PROJECT 2.03 for next class**

NEXT WEDNESDAY CLASSES WILL BE SEPTEMBER 18.

REMEMBER THIS SEMESTER WEDNESDAY CLASS WILL **PRECEDE** SUNDAY CLASS.

NEXT SUNDAY CLASSES WILL BE SEPTEMBER 22.

If you choose to prepare for the next class which will on the providential timing for the arrival of Jesus, you might work on reading the Gospels. If you have the Chronological Bible, read the beginnings and early ministry of Jesus.

You might want to check out the intertestament literature in 1 Maccabees—in the Catholic Bible. It in what reformers have called The Apocapha.

To venture further, try F. F. Bruce: *New Testament History*.