

Second Temple Judaism

The Intertestamental Period

Religious
Developments

Religious Parties

Pharisees

- Origin (traditionally) from Ezra through the Hasidim
- Oral law (→ “your own tradition” – Mark 7.9)
 - Held that God had given both a written law and an oral law to Moses
 - Oral Law → Talmud (completed one century *after* Christ)
 - By keeping oral law, the people were guaranteed to keep the written Law

Pharisees

- Doctrines: resurrection, last judgment, divine providence, angels & spirits, a coming Messiah
- Popular influence
- “Party of the Synagogue”
- Practiced interpretation of Scripture and rigorous adherence to it
→ Rabbis

Sadducees

- “Party of the Temple”
- Aristocratic: supported by upper class and priesthood
- Rejected oral law, accepting only Pentateuch
- Held to a literal interpretation
- *Accommodation* with Hasmoneans and Romans

Sadducees

- Doctrines: *denied* resurrection, angels, last judgment, life after death, divine providence, and a coming Messiah
- Came to an end in AD 70

Essenes

- Also from the Hasidim
- Withdrew from society
 - Practiced personal piety and separation (holy, clean)
- Focused on and prepared for an apocalyptic conclusion of history
- Held that they alone represented the true remnant of Israel

Essenes

- Doctrines: predestinarians, the pre-existence and immortality of the soul, legalistic
- Looked forward to two Messiahs: one priestly, one kingly
- Did not survive AD 70
- → Dead Sea Scrolls?
 - “Essene writings”

Literature of the Period

1. Apocalyptic

- Uniquely Judeo-Christian genre
- Proliferated from about 200 BC to AD 100
- The book of Daniel (especially chapters 7-12) is considered the original Jewish apocalyptic writing
- Written during times of oppression; focus is theodicy

Characteristics of Apocalyptic Literature

The revelatory communication of heavenly mysteries by an otherworldly being to a seer who presents visions in a narrative framework

Example: Daniel 7

revelatory
communication
heavenly mysteries
otherworldly being

a seer
visions in a narrative
framework

Characteristics of Apocalyptic Literature

- Visions guide readers into a transcendent reality that takes precedent over the current situation and encourages readers to persevere in the midst of their trials
- Presents heavenly mysteries as the actual or real world, while depicting the present crisis as a temporary and illusory situation

Literature of the Period

2. The Septuagint (LXX)

- Origin according to the tradition of the *Letter of Aristeas*:
 - written in the mid-2nd century BC, to present Judaism in a favorable light to pagans and make strict observance of religious laws attractive to Hellenistic Jews
 - Oldest extant OT manuscripts

The Septuagint

- Ptolemy Philadelphus in Egypt (280 – 245 BC) desired a copy of the Jewish law in Greek for the famous Alexandrian library
 - Aristeas assisted in the writing
 - 72 scholars (6 from each of the 12 tribes!) were called to Alexandria
 - sequestered on the Island Pharos
 - completed the translation in 72 days
 - → LXX (“70”)

The Septuagint

- Became the Bible of the Diaspora
- Compared with Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT)
 - 1) some significant differences, with Jeremiah being most notable
 - 2) books occur in different order
 - 3) ~ contains some books and portions of books not in the MT

The Septuagint

- 4) The Dead Sea Scrolls indicate that the LXX was based on a Hebrew original that diverged from the text on which the MT was based
 - LXX rejected by “mainline” Jewish community shortly after the time of Christ
 - had already become the Bible of the Christian community
- 5) The church preserved the translation

The Septuagint

- 6) Its language profoundly influenced the language of the NT, providing Greek words for Hebrew equivalents, frequently modifying the Greek meaning of the terms to accommodate the Hebrew idea (including at times opposite meanings from the original Greek understanding!)

The Septuagint

- Made Judaism accessible to non-Jewish people, opening the way to proselytism
- Facilitated the spread of Christianity by making its early Scriptures available in the prevailing *lingua franca*

Literature of the Period

3. Apocrypha

ἀποκρυφός (*apokryphos*): “hidden”

- Esdras (Ezra) was commanded to publish the 24 books of the Hebrew canon but to hide the remaining 70 books given to him by inspiration (2 Esdras 14.46)
- These 70 writings *include* what we know as the Apocrypha as well as other works known as Pseudepigrapha, and many lost writings

Apocrypha

- When Jerome translated the Bible into Latin (The Vulgate), he included the outside books of the LXX, in use among the Church for 3 centuries
- But he did so with a disclaimer saying he did not consider them authoritative
- The disclaimer was subsequently forgotten

Apocrypha

- The Reformers returned to the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, bypassing the Vulgate
- In reaction to this, the Council of Trent gave the full weight of the Roman Church to the Apocrypha, excluding only *1* and *2 Esdras* and *The Prayer of Manasseh*

Literature of the Period

4. Dead Sea Scrolls

- Discovered in 1947 in **caves** in the Judean desert on the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea; mostly from 11 **caves** from near Qumran
- Represent the “library” of a Jewish sect (Essenes?) from the Maccabean period through the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70



Dead Sea Scrolls

1. Every OT book except Esther has been discovered
2. Demonstrate the consistency of transmission of the Hebrew text for a period of ~ 1000 years
3. Oldest extant Hebrew manuscripts of OT
4. OT Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha also represented
5. Commentaries on OT books



Israel in New Testament Times

To AD 70

Governmental Authority in Israel

Roman Occupation
and
The Herodians

63 BC – AD 70

A misty, teal-toned landscape with mountains and a lake. The scene is hazy and atmospheric, with a soft glow in the center. The mountains are layered, and the lake in the foreground reflects the surrounding environment.

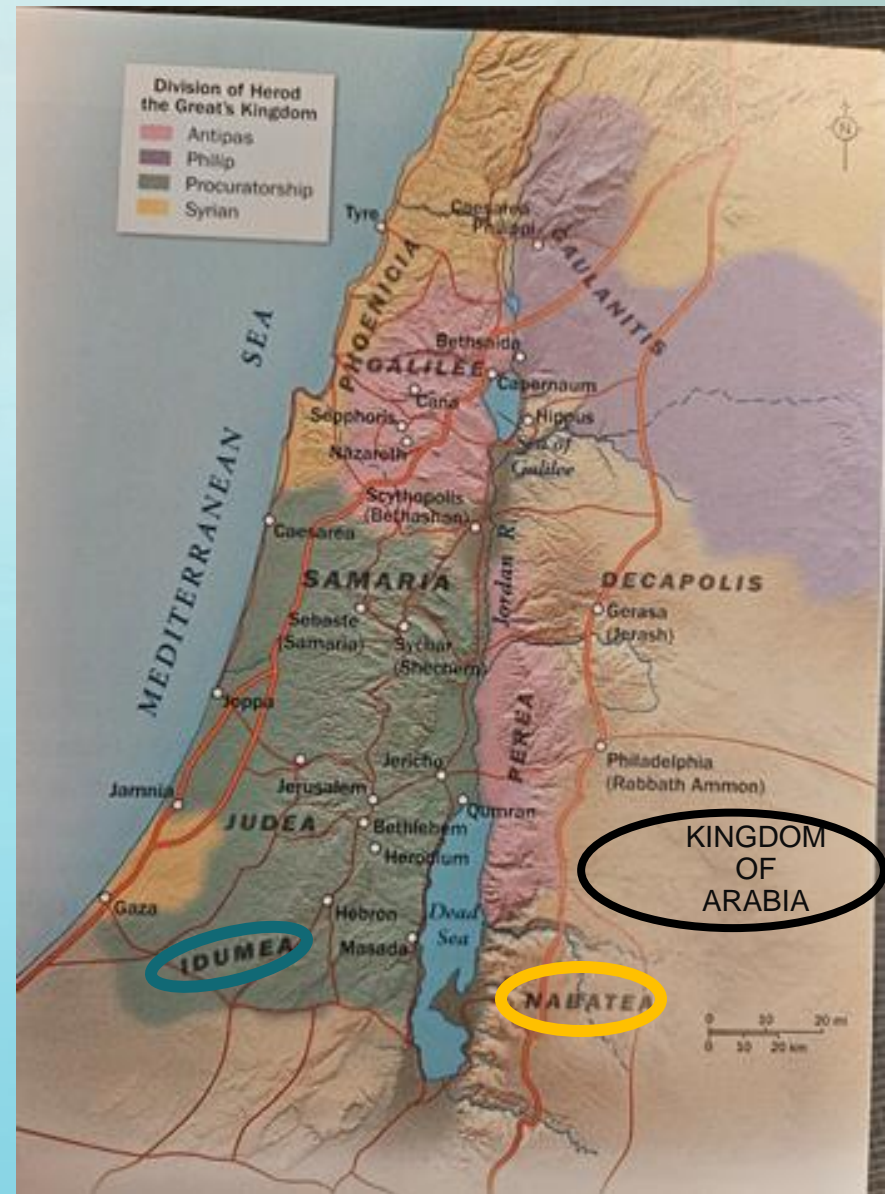
The Herodians

Herod I (the Great)

37 – 4 BC

Herod I

- Half-**Idumean** (mother Arabian or **Nabatean**): “half-pseudo-Jew”
- Cassius appointed Herod as a governor of Cilicia – Syria
- After Octavian and Antony defeated Brutus and Cassius, Antony appointed Herod and Phasael, his elder brother, as tetrarchs



Herod I

- Parthians invaded on behalf of Aristobulus II, capturing Hyrcanus II and Phasaël (who was advisor to Hyrcanus)
- Herod flees to Rome, wins support of Octavian and Marc Antony, appointed “King of Judea”
- Returned and took Idumea, Samaria, Judea, Galilee

Herod I

- Civil war between Octavian and Antony/Cleopatra
 - Herod fought on behalf of Antony against the Nabateans, defeating them
 - after Octavian's victory over Antony & Cleopatra, Herod met him on Isle of Rhodes and in a speech spoke of his devotion to Marc Antony, and of his equal devotion now to Octavian
 - charged Hyrcanus II before Octavian with plotting with the Nabateans (the only rival as ruler over Judea)
 - had Hyrcanus killed

Herod's Passion for Building

- Walls; Royal palace of Jerusalem
- Theatres, amphitheatres, hippodromes, pagan temples
- Caesarea: his crowning achievement
 - named for Augustus Caesar (Octavian)
 - built to rival Alexandria; opulent; in Greek style (market, aqueduct, government buildings, bath houses, villas, circus/theater)
 - The port was an engineering masterpiece with a wave-breaking structure to protect its piers
- The “Third” Temple (“Herod’s Temple”)
 - began in 19 B.C., not completed until AD 63; magnificent white marble with cream (and perhaps blue)

“he who has not seen the Temple in its full construction has never seen a glorious building”

Herod's Ruthlessness

- Murders of Hyrcanus II, Aristobulus II, rabbis of the Great Sanhedrin
- Killed his uncle Joseph on suspicion of affair with his favorite wife Miriamne I (who was granddaughter of Hyrcanus II whom Herod had killed)
- Killed Miriamne I because of growing suspicions of infidelity and because of her Hasmonean ancestry
 - lifelong guilt
 - body preserved in honey
- Killed three of his own sons because of fear they would usurp his throne
- Killed all male children ≤ 2 years old in and around Bethlehem (Matthew 2.16)

Herod I

Succumbed to a terrible sickness

- Ulcerated entrails, gangrene, seizures
- Ordered all heads of the leading families of Judaism to be imprisoned in the hippodrome
 - ordered his sister to kill them at his death so Israel would go into mourning at his death
 - his sister freed them at his death

Herod I

- Succeeded by 3 sons in accordance with his will, which Augustus honored
 - Archelaus
 - Philip
 - (Herod) Antipas

Palestine During Herod the Great & His Sons

- Archelaus
- Antipas
- Philip



Archelaus

- Ethnarch of Idumea, Judea, Samaria
- Rome took away his ethnarchy and appointed a governor (Pilate et al.)
 - significantly, this placed Jerusalem directly under Roman control

Philip

- Tetrarch of Iturea, Batania, Trachonitis, Auranitis (“Decapolis”)
- Mentioned in Luke 3.1

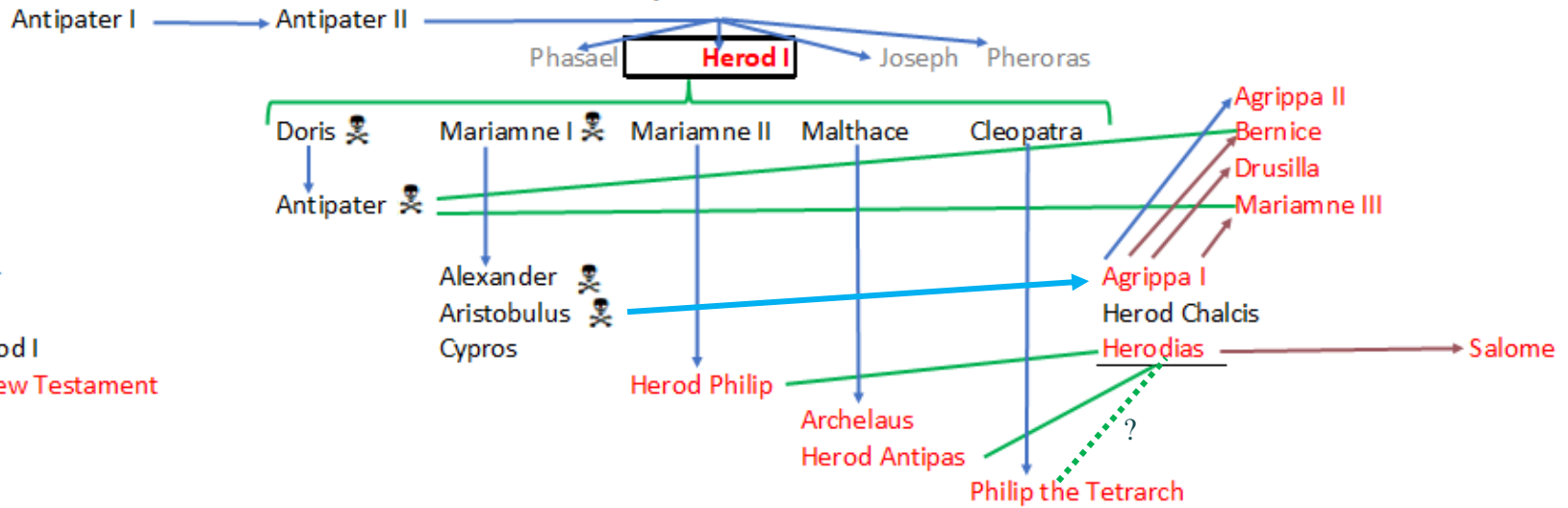
(Herod) Antipas

- Tetrarch of Galilee, Perea
- Married Herodias, wife of half-brother Herod Philip (Herod II)
- Beheaded John the Baptist because of John's condemnation of his marriage to Herodias, at her request through her daughter, Salome (Matthew 14.3ff)
- "That fox" (Jesus)
- Pilate sent Jesus to him for judgment (Luke 23.6ff)

Herod the Great's Further Progeny

- Herod Agrippa I (Herod II*; Agrippa I)
 - grandson of Herod I and Mariamne I)
 - brother of Herodias
 - several Roman emperors granted him increasing territories so that his kingdom became larger than that of Herod the Great
 - beheaded James (Acts 12.1, 2)
 - eaten by worms (Acts 12.23)
- Herod Agrippa II
 - 2 sisters (both of whom figure in the story of Paul in Caesarea)
 - Drusilla
 - Bernice

Family of Herods



- son
- daughter
- wife
- ☠ killed by Herod I
- mentioned in New Testament