

The Intertestamental History of Palestine: Four Salient Points

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1. First point: 198 B.C.: Ptolemies-->Seleucid

Sudden death of Alexander (323) and consequent division of his kingdom to four generals and their power struggle for restoration of glory of the world kingdom. Among them, Ptolemy and Seleucus will affect the destiny of Palestine permanently. Both kingdoms were anxious to control Palestine as a buffer zone to protect their respective kingdoms from aggression.

A. 301-198 Ptolemies ruled. Egyptian Hellenism. Moderate Impact. Inward and peaceful penetration. Zadokian Priesthood.

A deliberate policy not introducing any revolutionary changes in government or customs in Judea. Judaism could encounter Hellenism within a tolerant context. A moderate impact of Hellenism on Palestinian Judaism. Piety characterized by a moderate spirit of moderation and an opposition to any radical Hellenization of Judaism.

1) Economic and social Hellenization.

Ptolemy I transported many Jews to Egypt: Alexandrian Community:
LXX

Inward & Peaceful Hellenization.

2) Religious freedom: Jerusalem as a temple state

Judaism intact at least outwardly.

Zadokian High Priesthood.

B. 198-167 Seleucids ruled after a decisive battle in 198 B.C. Syro-Hellenism. Antiochus III.

1) Jews welcomed him. Mistake!

190 Defeat by Rome at Magnesia: Heavy tribute. Taxation to Jews.

2) Rivalry in Jerusalem: Two authorities.

Oniads: H. Priesthood: Zadokian

Tobiads: Collecting taxes for Ptolemies and Seleucids.

3) Onias IV: Temple at Leontopolis: H. Priest.

2. Second Point: 167 B.C.

Conflict between Judaism and Hellenism. Struggle for the life or death of Judaism and biblical faith. No more Zadokian priesthood. Radical Hellenization. Radical Reaction of Extreme Judaists. Maccbean Revolt.

A. Antiochus IV: Radical Hellenization

1) Loss of Political and Religious freedom

a. Jason bribed Antiochus IV: High Priest (175 f).

Jerusalem: Temple-State-->Greek City-state

Renamed Antioch. Acceleration of Hellenization.

H. Priest: became Seleucid official.

b. Menelaus (Menahem): Extreme Hellenizer bribed Antiochus IV. H. Priest. No ancestral grounds. Ended Zadokian H. Priesthood.

Clear division: Hellenizers: Jerusalem

Hasidim: Judea

2) 169 Antiochus IV plundered the temple treasury.

168 Desecration of the temple. Erecting Zeus. Abomination.

167 Antiochus IV: Decree to prohibit the practice of the Jewish religion. No more sacrifice. Scripture, Sabbath, Food law, Circumcision. Abomination of desolation erected.

B. 167-63 Judaism strikes back. Maccabean Period. Radical Reaction against Hellenization. Uprising of extreme Judaists. Hasidim.

1) Internal Cooperation between Patriotists and Judaizers

a. Modin: Mattathias and five sons: Judas

b. Restoration of religious freedom: 164 Antiochus IV withdrew the ban.

a) Rededication of the temple: Hanukkah.

b) Jonathan (160-143): Dissension over Seleucid throne

c. Political independence and Hasmonean dynasty: 142 Capture of Acra

Simon (143-134): Last of the five sons.

United sacral and civic leadership

140 Commander of army, ethnarch, High Priest.

H. Priest: Zadok-->Hasmonian

d. Summary

162 Religious freedom: Judas

152 Priestly aristocracy: Jonathan

142 Political independence: Simon

Military conquest: Hyrcanus: Kingship

2) Turning Point: Death of Antiochus IV:

No other strong ruler in Syria: Internal weakness. No further threat to Jewish independence.

3) Stability and Security-->Corruption of Maccabean dynasty

a. Secular city-State

Judea became a secular city-state. Violent reaction of the Hasidim.

b. John Hyrcanus: Expansion: Use of Mercenaries.

South: Idumeans: Circumcised them.

North: Destroyed Samaritan Temple (128). Samaria (109)

c. Two groups: Pharisees: Opposition group

Sadducees: Support

4) Internal Struggle between Hellenizers and Judaizers

a. Aristobulus I (104-103):

Kingship: Hellenistic monarchy: Increasing acceptance of Hellenization. Patriots became Hellenizers.

b. Alexander Jannaeus (103-76): Worst.

Greatest extent of conquest since Solomon.

Extensive use of foreign mercenaries.

Use of Bi-lingual coins: Hebrew and Greek.

Opposition by Pharisees.

War.

c. Salome Alexandra (76-67): Alexander's wife.

Pharisees: Dominant in Sanhedrin.

3. Third point: 63 B.C.

Pompey entered the Holy of Holies.

A. Inner strife and consequent doom

1) Hyrcannus II and Aristobulus II (67-63): Strife between brothers.

Sadducees supported Aristobulus.

Antipater on the scene.

2) Pompey in Syria

B. Roman Period (63-)

1) 63 Pompey entered the Holy of holies.

Sided with Hyrcanus. Only High Priesthood

Judea and Idumea: tributary to Rome under the governor of Syria.

Decapolis: Independence.

Took slaves to Rome-->Jewish community in Rome

2) 57-55 Aristobulus II and two sons revolted three times.

Hyrcanus: Deprived of civil rule.

4. Fourth Point: 37 Herodian dynasty

A. Civil wars in Roman Republic.

Antipater and two sons (Phasael and Herod) sided with the west. Favor by Caesar: Antipater: Roman citizen and procurator.

B. Herod the Great (37 B.C.-4 A.D.)

Flee to Rome: King of the Jews (40): Winning the kingdom (37)

Successful king: Peace and order

Wealth: Agricultural and commercial enterprises

He was a fox. Both builder of the temple as a champion of Judaism and builder of gymnasium and stadium as a champion of Hellenization.

C. Herod's sons

Division of the kingdom after Herod's death

Archelaus: Judea, Samaria, Idumea: Ethnarch (4 B.C. - 6 A.D.)

Herod Philip: Iturea, Trachonitis: Northeast Galilee: Tetrach (4 B.C. - 34 A.D.)

Herod Antipas: Galilee, Perea: Tetrarch

Herodias. John the Baptist

D. Early Governors (6 A.D.-41 A.D.)

6 A.D. Territory of Archelaus-->Roman Province. Imperial governors. Prefects.

In general, great respect for Jewish religious scruples.

Pontius Pilate (26-36)

Seriously antagonized the Jewish populace.