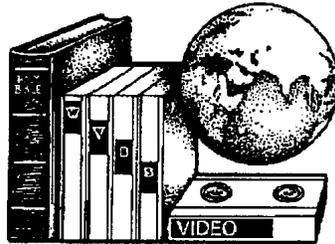


World Video Bible School®

Established 1986



INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD



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BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS - THE 400 SILENT YEARS
Table of Contents

1.	Introduction: Between The Testaments (The 400 Silent Years).	Page 1
2.	Chronology and Important Dates.	3
3.	The Babylonian Empire.	5
4.	The Persian Empire.	5
5.	The Greek Empire.	6
6.	Period of Independence:	
	The Maccabean Period.	7
	The Abomination of Desolation.	7
	Antiochus Epiphanes	
	The Feast of Dedication, John 10:22	
7.	Roman Period:	
	Pompey.	7
	Roman Kings, Luke 3:1.	8
8.	The Herods (Edomites – Esau's Descendants).	13
9.	Cities of Decapolis (Raphana, Kanatha, Dion, Gerasa, Hippos, Gadara, Pella, Philadelphia, Scythopolis and Damascus), Matthew 4:25; Mark 5.	15
10.	The Great Synagogue.	17
11.	The Synagogues and the Dispersion.	17
12.	The Sanhedrin.	18
13.	The Septuagint (Greek Language Predominant - 70 Translators - 38 Years - Alexandria, Egypt - 285 B.C. - 247 B.C.).	18
14.	Old Testament Text.	18

15.	Aramaic Language..	19
16	The Targum and the Talmud.	19
17.	The Pharisees, the Scribes and the Sadducees.	19
18.	The Epicureans (Founder was Epicurus about 300 B.C. in Athens, Greece - Acts 17:18-39), and The Stoics (People of the Porch - Founder was Zeno about 300 B.C.).. . . .	20
19.	Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.	21
20.	Summary.	23
21.	Bible Verses Enhancing the Subject (Between the Testaments)..	27
22.	Reference Books Used in This Study.	32
23.	Destruction of Jerusalem.. . . .	47

INTRODUCTION

This study of the 400 Silent Years between the Old and New Testaments is a journey few Christians have taken. However, if you do, it will strengthen your faith, and give you a better understanding of the New Testament. Without this study you will never know how the prophecies of Daniel and Isaiah were fulfilled during this time period. Who was the “he goat” with his broken horn, that turned into four horns? The prophecies also tells us that of two horns of the four, one of the two will be the greater. When we consider the prophecies of Isaiah (44:28; 45:1) concerning Cyrus (king of Persia), we are thrilled to see them fulfilled 150 years after the death of Isaiah. We will learn how the conquests of the Babylonian, Persian, Greek, Roman Empires and The Period of Independence prepared the way for the coming of our dear Lord and Savior Jesus, The Christ, in the fulness of time (Gal 4:4). Due time (Rom 5:6). We will also learn that the scattering (or dispersion), the synagogues and the Septuagint played a large part in the “fulness of time” drama. What influence did Socrates, Plato and Aristotle have on man's attitude concerning his thinking logically, for himself, concerning religious matters? What was the Period of Independence or the Maccabean Period? Who was Antiochus Epiphanes, and what was the abomination of desolation (prophecy of Daniel)? What happened at the village of Modin? In this period we also learn of the Hasmonaeans, Judas Maccabee, and The Feast of Dedication (Jn 10: 22). If we do not study this period of time, we would never know about The Feast of Dedication, as it is not mentioned in The Old Testament.

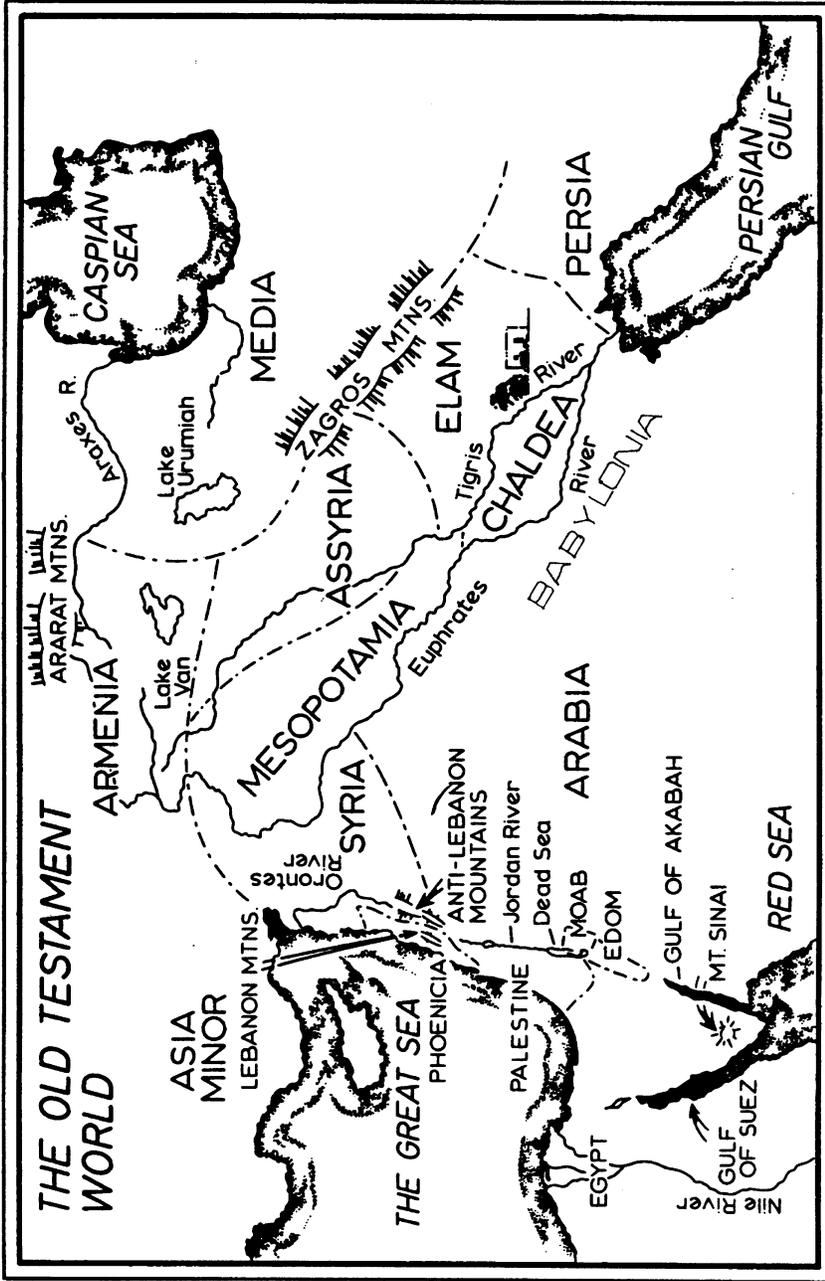
Where did the Herods come from? Who were the Epicureans, Stoics, scribes, Sadducees and the Pharisees. We do not hear about them in the Old Testament. Where were the cities of Decapolis, and how do they relate to the Grecian widows of Acts 6:1? If we did not study this period of time, we would never know why Jesus told some people He healed, “Do not tell anyone,” while to others Jesus said, “Go tell everyone.” Why did the people praise Jesus, laying palm branches before Him one day, then want to kill Him the next? What was the prominent language of the day? What was the attitude toward religious freedom by the Roman Empire? All these subjects will be explained in greater detail in the Subject Section of this lesson. We will try to expand upon the various subjects just enough to have a reasonable grasp of the study, but yet enough to excite you to a deeper study on your own.

Johnny Ramsey's two video's *Journey Through The Bible* and *Between The Testaments* inspired me to a deeper study on my own. I wanted other Bible students to have a prepared lesson on the subject to aid them in their study. Use the chronology chart and map as you study the various subjects.

Imagine looking over the shoulder of God as He busied Himself reigning and ruling in the kingdom of men (Dan 4:25). When the fulness of time was just right, Jesus came suddenly to His temple (Mal 3:1.).

Chronology Chart

	933 B.C. Divided Kingdom	
B A B Y L O N	721-606 B.C. Israel taken by Assyria	
	606 B.C. Judah taken into Babylonian captivity (called Jews - Judah & Israel both in captivity)	
	600 B.C. Judah & Israel both in captivity	
	586 B.C. Destruction of Jerusalem by Babylonians	
P E R S I A	536 B.C. Cyrus, king of Persia, conquered Babylonia (Babylonian captivity 70 years)	
	500 B.C. The prophecies of Isaiah came true 150 years after his death (Isa 44:28; 45:1)	
	478 B.C. Esther made queen of Persia	
	430 B.C. Malachi (close of the Old Testament)	
	400 B.C.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scattering 2. Synagogue 3. Septuagint
G R E E K	332 B.C. Conquered by Greece	
	323 B.C. Death of Alexander the Great at age 33 (born 356 B.C., came to power 336 B.C., age 20)	
	300 B.C.	
	285-247 B.C. The Septuagint (38 years - 70 men)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ptolemies (Egypt) 2. Selucian (Syria) Important 2 of 4 Greek kings
	200 B.C.	
	168 B.C. Jerusalem temple violated (sow offered on the altar by Antiochus Epiphanes, Greek king of Syria - Selucian - died 164 B.C.)	
M A C C A B E A N	167 B.C. Period of independence (village of Modin, priest named Mattathias, 5 sons, one was Judas "The Hammerer")	
	165 B.C. Jerusalem temple purified & rededicated (established the Feast of Dedication - Jn 10:22)	
	100 B.C. For about 100 years Asmonian priests ruled Judea	
R O M E	63 B.C. Roman general Pompey conquered Palestine	
	37 B.C. Herod the Great made king of Judea (an Edomite - Esau)	
	4 B.C. Death of Herod	
	1 A.D.	
	6 A.D. Established Roman procurators	



Lesson #3 Please use your Map and Chronology Chart with this study.

The Babylonian Empire

After the Assyrians conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel in about 722 B.C. Judah paid tribute to Assyria until the Babylonians conquered Assyria, Israel and Judah (606 B.C.). Judah, in four phases, was taken to Babylonia into captivity (606 to 586 B.C.). Jerusalem was burned and the walls torn down in 586 B.C. The Jews were in captivity in Babylonia 70 years until 536 B.C.

In ancient times Babylonia was called “Mesopotamia” and occupied the valley between the Euphrates and the Tigris Rivers. As the cities along the Euphrates River were established, the city of Babylon became a great city, and the land of Mesopotamia was called “Babylonia” after its greatest city. By 2,000 B.C., Babylonia was a world power. During the next 1,000 years there was an intermittent struggle with its northern part, Assyria. The 300 years that followed were the years of Assyrian supremacy (until 606 B.C.).

In 606 B.C. the New or Neo-Babylonian Empire conquered the Assyrians, destroyed Judah, and took the Jews into captivity in Babylonia for 70 years. The prophecy of Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1 was fulfilled in 536 B.C. when Cyrus, king of Persia, conquered Babylonia and its empire. Daniel was in captivity in Babylonia for 72 years (606 to 534 B.C., 2 years after the return).

Lesson #4

The Persian Empire (536 B.C. to 331 B.C.)

The Persian Empire was more vast than any of its predecessors, extending eastward to India and reaching westward to Greece. The capitals were Persepolis, Susa and sometimes Babylon. The custom of the Assyrians and Babylonians was to deport conquered peoples, that is, take them out of their own land and scatter them in other lands. The Persian policy was just the opposite. The Persian was to repatriate them, that is, to send them back to their own land. Persian kings were more humane than the Assyrian and Babylonian kings.

The Jews were allowed to return to their own land in the first year of conquest by Cyrus, the Persian king (536 B.C.). The closing section of the Old Testament, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther, tell of the Jews' return from Babylon, the rebuilding of the temple and of Jerusalem, and reestablishment of the Jews' national life in their home land. This took about 100 years (536 to 432 B.C.), also covered by the last three prophets, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. Esther was made queen of Persia about 478 B.C. At the close of the Old Testament, about 430 B.C., Judea was a Persian province. It remained so for another 100 years. The reign of the Persian kings was mild and

tolerant, and lasted until 332 B.C., ending with the world conquest of the Grecian Empire.

Lesson #5 Please use your Map and Chronology Chart with this study.

The Grecian Empire (331 B.C. to 167 B.C.)

Until now the great powers of the world had been in Asia and Africa, but with the rise of the Grecian Empire, world power would soon shift to Europe in the west. Alexander the Great, 336 B.C., at the age of 20, took command of the Greek army. Alexander, like a meteor, moved eastward to Asia Minor, then south through Syria where he routed the Persian army of king Darius III at Issus. He was one year in subduing Tyre and Gaza on the Mediterranean coast. He moved on south to Egypt. The Egyptians looked upon Alexander as a liberator, not a conqueror, because of their hatred of their Persian oppression. The Egyptians called Alexander a God, (The Son of Aman Re, the Sun God of the Egyptians).

When Alexander invaded Palestine and Jerusalem, he showed great consideration to the Jews, and offered them immunities to settle in Alexandria in Egypt. The Greek army moved north to Assyria, Babylonia, Persia and as far east as Punjab, a province of India. While in this area Alexander took a Bactrian wife. He returned to Babylonia where he died of the fever in the city of Babylon. Alexander died in 323 B.C. at the age of 33 years, after leaving Greece eleven years before. The death of Alexander left his Bactrian wife with child, and after the child was born the mother and child were both murdered. The prophecy of Daniel is now unfolding. Daniel prophesies that the "he goat" (Alexander) would have his one horn and it would be broken, and four horns would be formed, two being greater than the other two. The two greater kingdoms were the Greek kings of Syria called the "Seleucids," and the Greek kings of Egypt called the "Ptolemies." Palestine went first to the Greek Syrian king, and in 301 B.C. passed to Egypt under the Ptolemies. The Greek Syrian king conquered Palestine, and it fell from Egypt to Syria (the Seleucids) in 198 B.C. The Jews were scattered throughout the kingdoms of their conquerors and they built synagogues in their settlements. Alexandria, in Egypt, became an influential center of Judaism. The Greek language and culture were spread over the Eastern World. Alexander the Great was brought up at the feet of Aristotle, and was dedicated to the spread of Greek Culture.

Antiochus Epiphanes, Greek Syrian king (175-164 B.C.), put a terrible oppression on the Jews and was violently determined to exterminate them and their religion. With the coming of Antiochus Epiphanes the further prophecy of Daniel chapter eight was fulfilled concerning the four kingdoms that would be formed after the death of Alexander, one of these four would grow greater and greater and would desolate the sanctuary and persecute the people of God. He devastated Jerusalem (168 B.C.), defiled the temple, offered a sow on its altar, erected an altar to Jupiter, prohibited temple worship, forbade circumcision on threat of death, sold thousands of Jewish

families into slavery, destroyed all copies of scripture that could be found, slaughtered everyone discovered in possession of such copies, and resorted to every conceivable torture to force the Jews to renounce their religion. This led to the Maccabean revolt, one of the most heroic feats in history. This period of independence was from 167-63 B.C.

When Antiochus Epiphanes offered a sow on the altar in the temple at Jerusalem, Daniel's prophecy concerning "the abomination of desolation" was believed, by the Jews, to have been fulfilled by this terrible act. Antiochus died in 164 B.C. with a violent pain in his bowels, and such a rottenness came on his flesh that worms bred in it. He placed his nine year old son, Antiochus Eupater on his throne, but the young boy was soon murdered. Antiochus Epiphanes declared at his death that he was stricken for his actions at Jerusalem.

Lesson #6 Please use your Chronology Chart and Map with this study.

Period of Independence, also called the Maccabean, or Asmonean, or Hasmonaean Period (167 to 63 B.C.)

The persecution of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes was brought to a climax when Antiochus sent an envoy to the little village of Modin to Mattathias, a priest, who was of intense patriotism. When the envoy came to defile the altar at Modin, Mattathias cut him in four pieces, thus began the Maccabean war for Jewish independence. Mattathias had five heroic and warlike sons; Judas, Jonathan, Simon, John and Eleazar. Mattathias died in 166 B.C., and his mantle fell on son Judas Maccabee. He won battle after battle against impossible odds. He reconquered Jerusalem (165 B.C.), and purified and rededicated the temple. This was the origin of the Feast of Dedication (Jn 10:22). Judas Maccabee brought together the priestly and civil authority unto himself. Thus began the line of Asmonean priest-rulers that ruled Judea for about the next 100 years, until 63 B.C. when the Roman general Pompey conquered Palestine.

Lesson # 7

Roman Empire rules Palestine (63 B.C. to the time of Jesus Christ)

The Romans under Pompey conquered Palestine in 63 B.C. Antipater, an Idumaeen (Edomite, descendant of Esau), was appointed ruler of Judea. He was succeeded by his son Herod the Great who was king of Judea (37-3 B.C.). To gain favor of the Jews, Herod rebuilt the temple with great splendor. Herod was an evil and cruel man, and ruled Judea when Jesus was born. He was responsible for the slaughter of the children of Bethlehem.

Judea was under the Roman proconsul of Syria (Antioch). Each large province also had a Roman procurator. At the time of Christ the procurator was Pontius Pilate. There was a rebellion of the Jews in 66 A.D. against the Romans, and was finally put down in 70 A.D. when Jerusalem was slaughtered and destroyed. The Christians fled to Pella, east of the river Jordan, one of the cities of Decapolis. One last outpost remained, Masada, the Dead Sea fortress, that held out until 73 A.D. The next study will be the Herods.

Roman Procurators

	A.D.		A.D.
Coponius	6-09	Cuspius Fadus	44-46
Marcus Ambivius	9-12	Tiberius Julius Alexander	46-48
Annius Rufus	12-15	Ventidius Cumanus	48-52
Valerius Gratus	15-26	Antonius Felix * *	52-59
Pontius Pilate*	26-36	Porcius Festus * *	59-62
Marcellus	37	Albinus	62-65
Marullus	37-41	Gessius Florus	65-66

*Tried Jesus

**Tried Paul

Porcius Festus died in office in 62 A.D. and there was a three month period before Albinus arrived. This gave Annus II, the high priest, a chance to kill a number of his enemies, one of whom was James, the half-brother of the Lord. Gessius Florus appropriated temple funds, and was ruthless in dealing with the riot that followed. These events set off the nation-wide revolt of 66 A.D.

ROMAN EMPERORS

Julius Caesar - Military Dictator of Rome	Assassinated March 15, 44 B.C.
Augustus Caesar (Octavian)	27 B.C. - 14 A.D.
Tiberius	<u>A.D.</u> 14-37
Gaius (Caligula)	37-41 Desecrates the temple in 40
Claudius	41-54 Expelled Jews from Rome
Nero	54-68 Committed suicide in 68. Burned Rome (64), blamed the Christians and persecuted them. Martyred Paul and Peter.

Galba	68-69
Otho	69
Vitellius	69
Vespasian	69-79 Jewish revolt 66-72
Titus	79-81 Destroyed Jerusalem 70
Domitian	81-96 Brought terrible persecution on the Christians
Nerva	96-98 Further persecution
Trajan	98-117

Roman Emperors	Procurators and Rulers in Palestine			High Priests
Augustus (31 B.C.-14 A.D.)	Herod the Great (27-4 B.C.)			
	Judea, Idumaea, and Samaria	Iturea, Trachonitis, Batanea and Auranitis	Galilee and Peraea	Jesus, son of See (3/4 B.C.-5 A.D.)
	Archelaus, son of Herod (4 B.C.-6 A.D.)	Philip, son of Herod (4 B.C.-33/34 A.D.)	Antipas, son of Herod (4 B.C.-39 A.D.)	Joazar, son of Boethus (5-6 A.D.)
	Coponius (6-9 A.D.)			Ananus, son of Seth (6-15 A.D.)
	Marcus Ambibulus (9-12 A.D.)			Ishmael, son of Phabi (15-16 A.D.)
	Annius Rufus (12-15 A.D.)			Eleazar, son of Ananus (16-17 A.D.)
Tiberius (14-37 A.D.)				Simon, son of Camith (17-18 A.D.)
	Valerius Gratus (15-26 A.D.)			
				Joseph Caiaphas (18-37 A.D.)
	Pontius Pilate (26-36 A.D.)			
		Attached to Syrian Province (34-41 A.D.)		
	Marcellus (36-37 A.D.)			
Gaius Caligula (37-41 A.D.)	Marullus (37-41 A.D.)			Jonathan, son of Ananus (37 A.D.)
				Theophilus, son of Ananus (37-41 A.D.)
			Agrippa I (40 A.D.)	
Claudius (41-54 A.D.)	Agrippa I (41-44 A.D.)			Simon Cantheras (41 A.D.)
				Matthias, son of Ananus (41-44 A.D.)

	Fadis (44-46 A.D.)	Elionaeus, son of Simon Cantheras (44-46 A.D.)
	Tiberius Alexander (46-48 A.D.)	Joseph, son of Camith (46-48 A.D.)
	Ventidius Cumanus (48-52 A.D.)	Ananias, son of Nedebaeus (48-59 A.D.)
	Felix (52-60 A.D.)	
Nero (54-68 A.D.)		
		Ishmael, son of Phabi (59-61 A.D.)
	Porcius Festus (60-62 A.D.)	
		Joseph Kabi, son of Simon (61-62 A.D.)
	Albinus (62-64 A.D.)	Ananus, son of Ananus (62 A.D.)
		Jesus, son of Damnaeus (62-63 A.D.)
		Jesus, son of Gamaliel (63-64 A.D.)
	Gessius Florus (64-66 A.D.)	Matthias, son of Theophilus (64-66 A.D.)
	Provincial Government of Israel (66-68 A.D.)	Ananus, son of Ananus (Leader of provisional Government) (66-68 A.D.)
		Phineas, son of Samuel (by lot) (68-70 A.D.)
Galba (68-69 A.D.)	Zealot Coalition (68-69 A.D.)	
Otho (69 A.D.)	Simon bar Giora (69-70 A.D.)	
Vitellius (69 A.D.)		
Vespasian (69-79 A.D.)		
	Fall of Jerusalem (70 A.D.)	

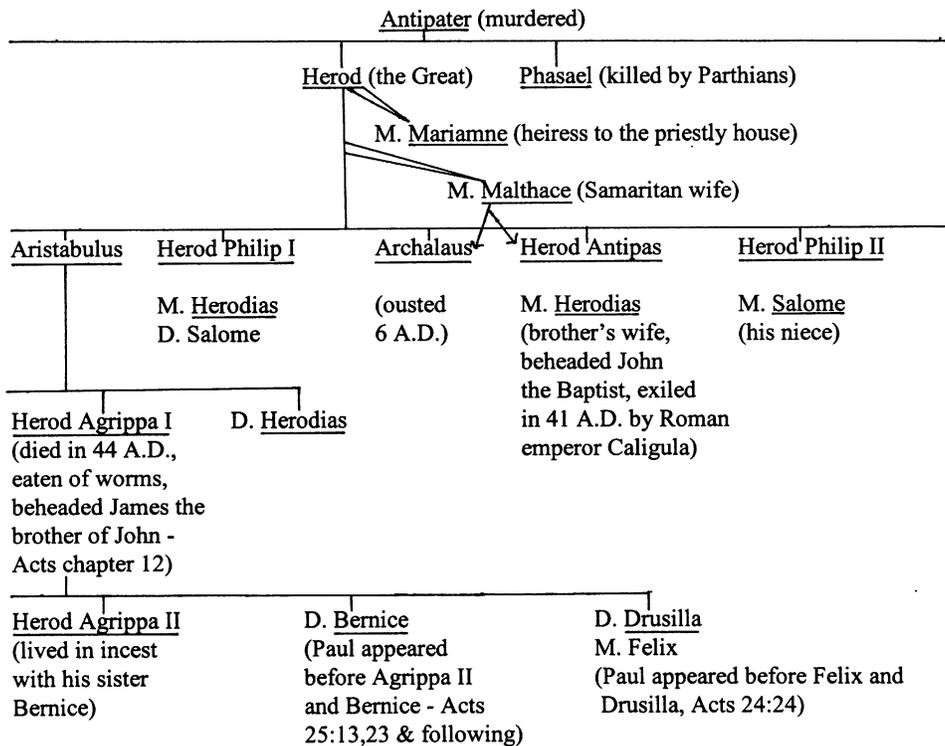
	Fall of Masada (74 A.D.)	
Titus (79-81 A.D.)		

THE HERODS

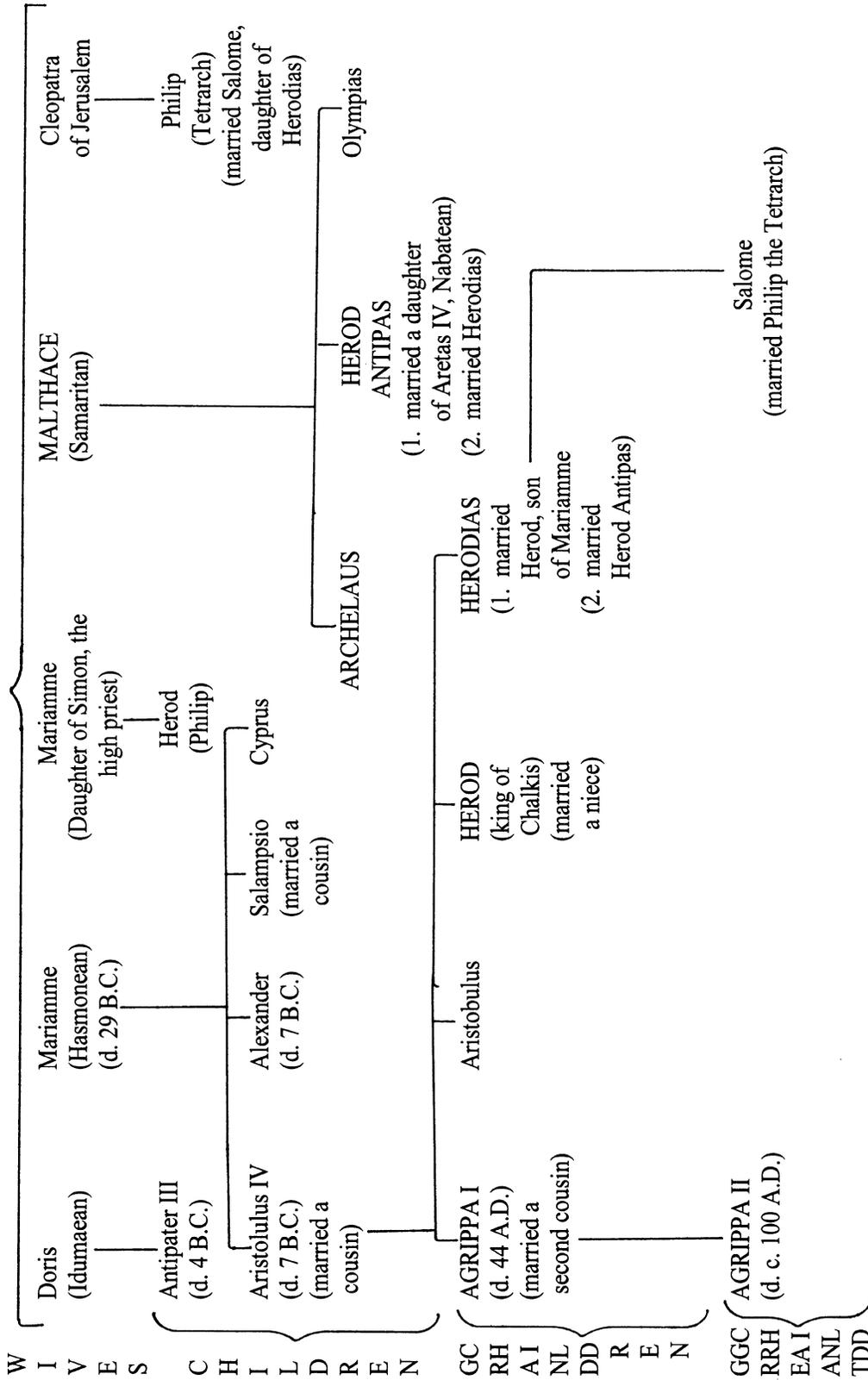
Study # 8

The Family of the Herods (Edomites) (Half Jew - Descendants of Esau)

Note: When Pompey, the Roman general, conquered Palestine he made a priest named Hyrcanus to rule over Galilee, Samaria, Judea and Peraea (63 B.C.). Hyrcanus had an astute advisor, an Idumaeen named Antipater, who knew how to use his power shrewdly for his family's advantage. He secured his two sons, Phasael and Herod, in key governorships, and when Antipater was murdered in 43 B.C., the two young men succeeded jointly to the viziership in Hyrcanus' court. Phasael was soon killed in a Parthian raid. Herod escaped to Rome and so impressed Octavian (the future ruler Augustus Caesar) that he received a mandate to recover Palestine, which he did between 39 and 36 B.C. He carried on a pro-Roman rule until his death in 4 B.C. It is from here we look at the family of the Herods.



HEROD'S FAMILY TREE
ANTIPATER (d. 43 B.C.)
HEROD THE GREAT (74-4 B.C.)



This is a "simplified" form of the family tree, intended to show the relationships of those mentioned in the text (whose names are printed in capitals) and to provide some information about marriages within the family and important marriages outside the family.

**CITIES OF DECAPOLIS
MAP AND STUDY
Lesson # 9**

The cities of Decapolis were ten cities (shown here on the map). These cities were all located on the east side of the Jordan river except Scythopolis, which was located on the west side of the river. They are mentioned in Matt 5:20; Mk 7:31.

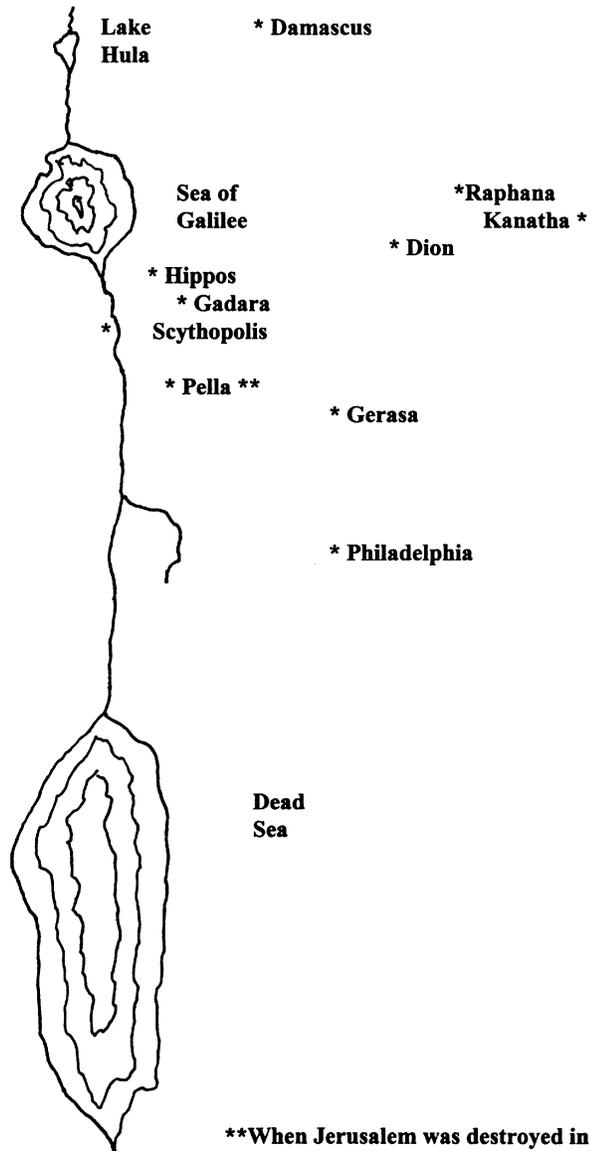
These cities were predominately Grecian in population and culture. They banded together to form the League For Mutual Protection Against the Semites (Jews).

These cities were occupied by the Greeks as early as 200 B.C.

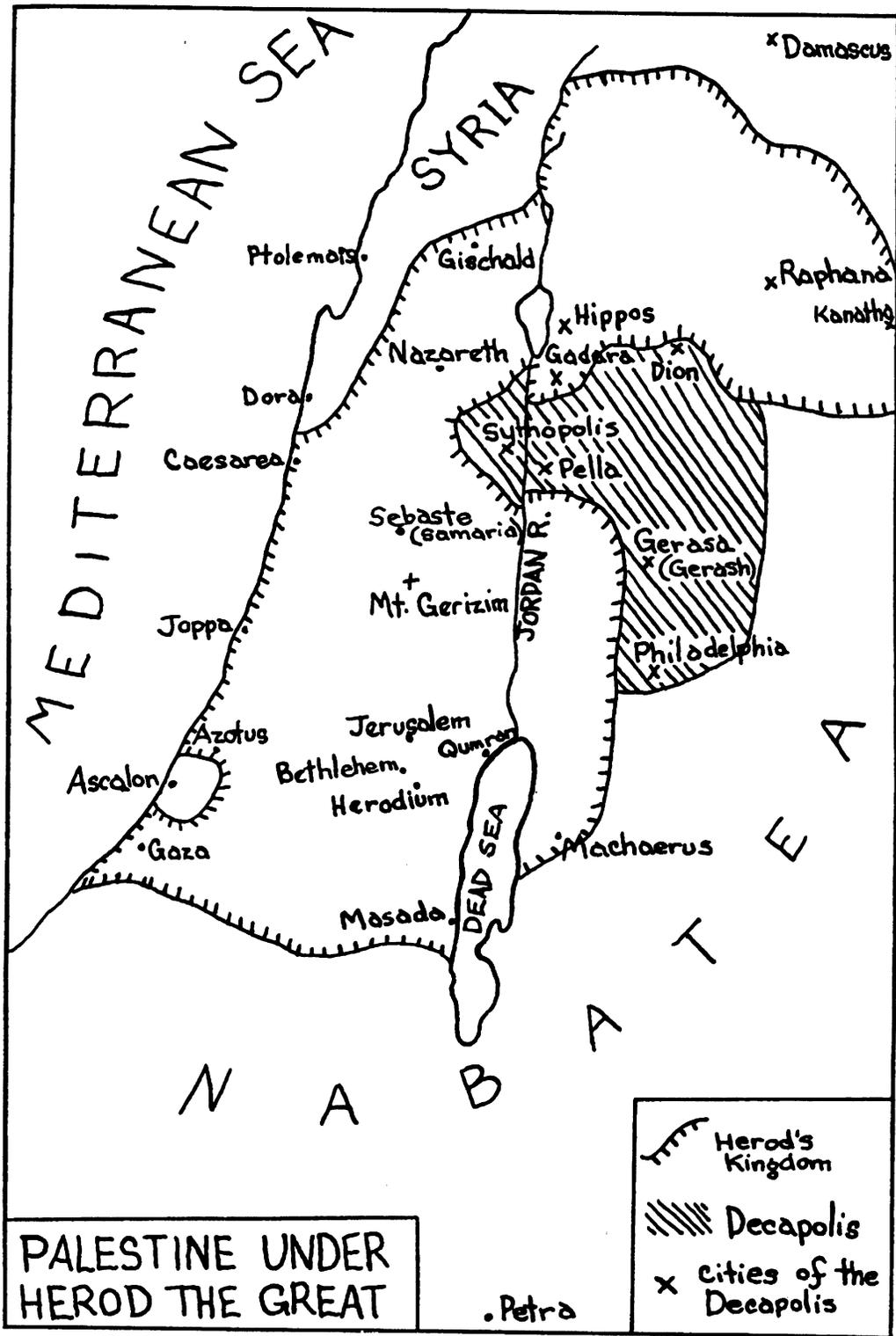
The Roman general Pompey, in 63 A.D., liberated the cities from the Jews. Pompey put the cities under the Roman province of Syria.

The Jews living in these cities were thought to have adopted Grecian ways. They were looked down upon by other Jews as being "too Grecian."

The Grecian widows of Acts 6:1 were probably Jewish widows with Grecian ways.



When Jesus came over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, He came to the country of the Gadarenes. Gadara was one of the ten cities of Decapolis by the Sea of Galilee (Mk 5:1). After Jesus cast out the demons from the man into the swine, they ran into the sea and perished. Jesus told the man to tell everyone what He, the Lord, had done for him (Mk 5:19). The man then went and published in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him (Mk 5:20). After this, when Jesus came near to Decapolis, they came out to meet Him, and He could teach them also (Mk 7:31,32).



Lesson: #10

The Great Synagogue

The name of the council, consisting of 120 members, said to have been organized by Nehemiah, about 410 B.C. under the presidency of Ezra, for the purpose of reconstructing the religious life of the returned captives. It is thought to have been a continuing body, governing the returned Jews till about 275 B.C. It is said to have had an important part in gathering, grouping, and restoring the Canonical books of the Old Testament.

Lesson #11

The Synagogues and the Dispersion

Synagogues arose in the days of the captivity. The temple destroyed, and the nation scattered, there was need for places of instruction and worship wherever there were Jewish communities. After the return, synagogues were continued both in the homeland and in Jewish centers in other lands. All larger towns had one or more. In Jerusalem, even though the temple was there, there were many synagogues. They were presided over by a board of elders, or rulers. Early Christian meetings were modeled in part after the pattern of synagogues.

The Dispersion

This is the name for the Jews living outside of Palestine. Very many of them chose to remain in the lands of the captivity. In the intertestamental period Jews outside Palestine came to be far more numerous than those in Palestine. There grew to be strong colonies of Jews in every land and in all the chief cities of the civilized world: Babylon, Assyria, Syria, Phoenicia, Asia Minor, Greece, Egypt, North Africa and Rome. The three main divisions of the dispersion were Babylonian, Syrian and Egyptian. In the time of Christ the number of Jews in Egypt was estimated at a million, and there were strong populations in Damascus and Antioch. So, in the providence of God, captivities turned out to be for the benefit of the nations among whom they were scattered. They influenced the thought of the nations, and also were influenced by thought of the nations.

When Babylonia took the Southern Kingdom, Judea, into captivity, it was at this time they were first called Jews. The scattering of the Jews by their conquerors throughout all of the Eastern World, made it possible that on the day of Pentecost Jews from every nation came together (Acts 2:9,10). And when they heard the words of Peter by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they returned to their respective countries bringing back the words of the New Way. This, then, shows our great God working in the kingdoms so that His Son could be brought forth in the fulness of time (Gal 4:4). That is when things were just right, according to His plan.

Lesson # 12

The Sanhedrin

The Sanhedrin was the recognized headship of the Jewish people in the days of Christ. It is thought to have originated in the 3rd century B.C. It was composed of 70 members, mostly priests and Sadducean nobles, some Pharisees, scribes and elders (tribal or family heads), presided over by the high priest.

Lesson #13

The Septuagint

This was a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek. It was made in Alexandria, where there were many Greek speaking Jews. Tradition has it that it was done at the request of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.). Seventy Jews, skillful linguists, were sent from Jerusalem to Egypt. The Pentateuch was first to be translated. Later the rest of the Old Testament books were added to the translation. It was called the "Septuagint" from the seventy translators who were reputed to have begun it. Greek was the language of the world at that time. This version was in common use in the days of Christ. The New Testament was written in Greek. Many of its quotations from the Old Testament are from the Septuagint.

The Septuagint was begun in 285 B.C. and was completed in 247 B.C., taking about 38 years. The Septuagint was to play a large role in the fulness of time aspect of the 400 silent years between the testaments. Many of the children of the Jews were being raised in the Greek gymnasium schools and were not as fluent in the Hebrew language as their fathers, therefore the need for the translation from the Hebrew into the Greek. This accomplished three things: it made it easy for the Jewish children, who mainly spoke Greek, to understand the scriptures; it made the scriptures come alive in the Greek, which was the language of the day; and made it possible for the Greeks also to hear about the one God of the Jews. Again, God is setting the stage for the coming of His Son in the fulness of time.

Lesson #14

Old Testament Text

It is believed that the Old Testament books were written originally on skins. They were copied by hand. Hebrew was in square characters, from right to left with small dots or signs, variously attached for vowels (the vowel system was not introduced till the 6th century A.D.). Though copied with the greatest care, it was easily productive of various readings. Until the captivity, official copies were kept in the temple. Afterward, many copies were made for synagogues. Apparently, in some cases, marginal notes made by copyists were, by later copyists, incorporated into the body of the text. The invention of printing removed danger of errors in the text, and now, as a result of the work of scholars in comparing the various manuscripts, there is a recognized Hebrew text known as "Massoretic."

Lesson #15

Aramaic Language

This was the common language of Palestine in Jesus' day. After the return from Babylonian captivity it had gradually displaced Hebrew as the ordinary speech of the people. It was the ancient language of Syria, very similar to Hebrew.

Lesson #16

The Targum and the Talmud

The Targum

These were translations of the Hebrew Old Testament books into Aramaic, oral translations, paraphrases and interpretations reduced to writings. They became necessary as the use of Aramaic became prevalent in Palestine.

The Talmud

This was a collection of various Jewish traditions and oral explanations of the Old Testament which were committed to writing in the second century A.D., with a later commentary thereon.

Lesson # 17

The Pharisees, the Scribes and the Sadducees

Pharisees

The sect of Pharisees is thought to have originated in the 3rd century B.C. in days preceding the Maccabean wars when, under Greek domination and the Greek effort to Hellenize the Jews, there was a strong tendency among the Jews to accept Greek culture with its pagan religious customs. The rise of the Pharisees was a reaction and protest against this tendency among their fellow countrymen. Their aim was to preserve their national integrity and strict conformity to Mosaic Law. They later developed into self-righteous and hypocritical formalists (see Matt 23). They also added about 1,100 more of their man-made traditions of which Jesus spoke on several occasions. Paul described himself as a Pharisee (Acts 23:6; Phil 3:5; Acts 26:5). The Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead and the Sadducees did not. Paul used this on several occasions to divide the crowds that clamored for his blood. The Pharisees were also known as the "pure ones."

Scribes

Scribes were copyists of the scripture. It was a calling of very early origin. Their business was to study and interpret, as well as copy, the scriptures. Because of their minute acquaintance with the Law they were also called lawyers, and were recognized

authorities. The decisions of leading scribes became oral law, or “tradition.” They were quite numerous in the Maccabean period, and became very influential among the people. A vocation of scribe was of great importance before the days of printing.

Sadducees

The Sadducees are thought to have originated about the same time as the Pharisees. Being guided by secular considerations, they were in favor of adopting Greek customs. They took no part in the Maccabean struggle for their nation's liberty. They were a priestly clique, and though they were the religious officials of their nation, they were avowedly irreligious. They were not numerous, but were wealthy and influential. To a great extent they controlled the Sanhedrin, even though they were rationalistic and worldly minded. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead.

Lesson #18

The Epicureans and the Stoics

Epicureans

This was one of the two great schools of Greek thought in the first century. Men who embraced the doctrines of the philosopher Epicurus (342-270 B.C.) were called “Epicureans.” Some of the major tenets of the Epicureans were: (1) Pleasure is the highest end of living. “Eat, drink and be merry” has come to be a popular summary of this philosophy, but it may be a not quite proper summary. By pleasure, Epicurus meant good pleasure (and it pleased him to be generous, kindly and patriotic). But his followers formed their own standards of pleasure, and too often they lived lives indulging in the pleasures of the flesh. (2) They taught that matter is eternal, and therefore they denied the world was created by some deity. (3) They denied the immortality of the soul. (4) They denied any idea of future retribution after death, for deeds done in this life. (5) They denied the idea that the gods exercised any providential control over human affairs.

Stoics

Stoic philosophers were advocates of the theory originally taught by Zeno of Cyprus who died in 264 B.C. after living to the age of 96. Because he regularly held his classes on one of the porches in the marketplace, his followers were called “Stoics” (from the Greek word *stoa* which means “porch”). The Stoic philosophy was well known in Tarsus, Paul's hometown; it is possible to name at least six famous Stoic philosophers who came from Tarsus.

Doctrines of the Stoics included these: (1) The world was created by Zeus. (2) All things were governed by the “Fates” to whom Zeus himself was subject. (3) Self-denial was thought to contribute to the highest end in life. Passions and affections were to be suppressed and restrained (grin and bear it!); apathy or indifference to either pleasure or pain, or mastery over all desires and lusts, so that none gained control of the man; these were what the Stoic aimed for. (4) They denied the immortality of the

soul, some holding that the soul would exist only until the destruction of the universe, and others that it would finally be absorbed into the divine essence and become a part of deity (i.e., they believed the transmigration of souls).

Both systems of thought, Epicurean and Stoic, were different attempts by pre-Christian pagans to explain the great questions of life. Post-Christian philosophers who ignore God's revelation will not do appreciably better in formulating a world-view than these men did, nor in fact have they, though a number have tried.

Seneca was a teacher of the Stoic philosophy who lived in Rome at the time of Nero's reign and had a large influence on Nero, emperor of Rome, who burned Rome in 64 AD. Nero blamed it on the Christians, brought forth terrible persecution and martyred Paul and Peter about 69 A.D. Nero died by his own hand in that same year.

Lesson # 19

Socrates, Plato and Aristotle

Socrates (469-399 B.C. - 70 years)

Born in Athens, he was one of the greatest of the Greek philosophers. He received only a meager education in his youth, but later became familiar with the best philosophy and thought that the highly cultured Athenian society could offer. At first he was a sculptor, but soon he began to walk the streets and marketplaces, talking to anyone he might meet regarding his soul and the moral life of man in general. He served in the military service from 432 B.C. to 429 B.C. He was not popular among the citizens of Athens as a teacher. His personal appearance was against him for he was bald, had large thick lips, a flat nose, ungainly figure and dressed like a beggar. He married a woman named Xanthippe, who was a nagging shrew, whom he endured as a form of self-discipline. He had many illustrious friends - Plato, and other philosophers - but his work was mainly among the Athenian youth. He taught them "know yourself" or think for yourself. He taught that being educated did not make good rulers, but how wisely they ruled and the ability to make their subjects happy made good rulers. It was because of his influence on the Greek youth that he was tried by a jury of 500 men and put to death in 399 B.C. He took the poison they gave him, walked up and down in his cell, then lay down on his couch and quietly died (his eulogy by Plato).

Plato (427-347 B.C. - 80 years)

Born on the island of Aegina, belonging to Athens. In his youth he received the usual education of the time. He was a poet, and won distinction in gymnastics, and at the age of 20 became a pupil of Socrates and turned to philosophy. After extensive travel he established his school called "The Academy" one mile outside of Athens on an estate (387 B.C.). He taught that man should think on a higher plane and "think spiritually." He died in obscurity and not much is known about the last years of his life. Aristotle was a student of Plato. Plato said of Aristotle that he was "the intellect of the school."

Aristotle (384-322 B.C. - 62 years)

Born in Stagira, a Greek colony in Thrace, he was a pupil of Plato, and a teacher of Alexander the Great. He was the greatest of the ancient philosophers, and the creator of natural science. His father was court physician to Amyntas II, father of Philip II, the next king of Macedon who completed the subjugation of Greece, paving the way for the exploits of his son, Alexander the Great, in 338 B.C. Alexander came to the throne at age 20. Alexander at age 33, in 323 B.C., died of the fever in Babylon. Alexander spread the teachings of Aristotle, Plato, Socrates and other Greek philosophers over the conquered Greek kingdom. The Greek language became the language of the conquered kingdom. The Greek language was the language of the New Testament. Aristotle's teaching that man must "think logically" was having its influence everywhere. Four years after the death of Plato (347 B.C.), he married Pythias in 343 B.C. She was the sister of his friend Hermias, tyrant of Atarneus, a province in Asia Minor. Aristotle had served in his court for three years. He then returned to Athens where he began the education of the thirteen year old prince, Alexander, in 343 B.C. As Alexander conquered, he would send great sums of money to Aristotle for his school and scientific studies. Alexander designated a thousand men over his empire to collect samples and scientific data for Aristotle. He established his own school in the Lyceum, a gymnasium in the suburbs of Athens. The school was called the Peripatetic School of Philosophy. Aristotle would walk up and down in the shady walkways with his students, teaching as they walked. Here he taught until the death of Alexander in 323 B.C. He was suspected of hostility against the reestablishment and, fearing for his life, he went to Chalcis, in Euboea, where he died within a year (322 B.C.) .

In this study, remember the following:

Men were:

1. Thinking for themselves (Socrates).
2. Thinking spiritually (Plato).
3. Thinking logically (Aristotle).

Greek language and culture were then covering the kingdom of Alexander the Great.

God was playing His "chess game of nations," and was preparing men's minds for the reception of the gospel. (In the fulness of time Gal 4:4.)

Lesson #20

Summary of the lesson

It is my hope, and prayer, that your knowledge of the period between the Old and New Testaments has been greatly increased, your faith multiplied and your appetite for Bible study stimulated. I hope you have been using the Map and Chronology Chart with the various lessons that call for them. If you have used them properly, you now have a better understanding of that part of the world.

As we studied the four great kingdoms; Babylonia, Persia, Greece and Rome, foretold in actual sequence in Daniel, chapter 2, we see the Jews scattered over the entire Roman Empire. The scattering began, of course, with Israel in captivity by Assyria 721 B.C. and Judah taken into Babylonian captivity beginning in 606 B.C. By 586 B.C. the Babylonians had destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. Since the Jews had no place to worship God, they built synagogues in all the main cities of their scattering. With the coming of Cyrus, the conquering king of Persia in 536 B.C., the prophecy of Isaiah came true 150 years after his death (Isaiah 44:28; 45:1). Esther was made queen of Persia in 478 B.C. The mighty Greek army under Alexander the Great conquered Persia's kingdom in 332 B.C. Alexander favored the Jews, moving them to different cities and responsible positions.

The Greek philosophers had changed the thinking of the world between 469 and 322 B.C. This was the period of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Socrates taught that man must "think for himself," Plato said man should "think spiritually," and Aristotle proclaimed that man should "think logically." Aristotle taught Alexander the Great from the time the young Greek king was thirteen years old, and Alexander spread his teachings and Greek culture throughout his kingdom. Men were thinking for themselves, thinking spiritually and thinking logically; and the Greek language was fast becoming the language of the world. The young Jewish children, in many cases, were better at reading and speaking the Greek language than the Hebrew and Aramaic. Even though Aramaic was the language of Palestine at the time of Jesus Christ, the New Testament was written in Greek.

The Hebrew Old Testament was translated into the Greek language beginning in 285 B.C. and was completed in 247 B.C. It was known as the Septuagint. The seventy skillful Jewish linguists, sent from Jerusalem to Alexandria in Egypt, completed the translation in thirty-eight years. It was called the Septuagint because of the seventy translators. The Pentateuch was first translated into the Greek and the rest of the Old Testament was then added. Since the New Testament was written in Greek, many of the quotations from the Old Testament were from the Septuagint.

The Septuagint also gave the Greeks the opportunity to hear about the great God of the Jews. The vision of Daniel (chapter 8) came to pass with the appearance of Alexander the Great in God's chain of events, leading to the birth of His Son. The ram with its two horns (Persia), was subdued and beaten to the earth by the "he goat" with one large horn on his forehead. In the vision, the large horn was broken and became four horns. From one of these four horns came one small horn that grew larger and larger, and persecuted the people of God, and desolated their sanctuary. As we said above, the ram with the two horns is the Mede and Persian Empires; the greater horn of

the two being Persia. The conquering he goat with its one horn is Alexander the Great. At his death, his kingdom was divided into four kingdoms. These were the Ptolemies in Egypt, Macedonia (Casander), Asia Minor (Antigonus) and Syria (ruled by the Seleucian kings). Palestine was at first under the Greek kings of Syria (the Seleucids), but in 301 B.C. Palestine was ruled by the Ptolemies of Egypt. Palestine passed back to the Syrian Greek kings when Antiochus the Great took it from the Ptolemies in 198 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes (Antiochus IV) came on the scene and hated the Jews. He killed and persecuted them, destroyed their scripture writings, took thousands into slavery, offered a sow on the altar in the temple in Jerusalem, and put a picture of himself and a statue of Jupiter to be worshiped in the temple. Now we know that Antiochus Epiphanes was the one referred to (Daniel chapter 8) as the horn that grew larger and larger and came out of one of the four Greek kingdoms. After his furious and determined effort to exterminate the Jews and their religion, and his defiling of the temple in Jerusalem (168 B.C.), Antiochus sent an emissary to the little village of Modin to desecrate the temple there also. The priest there, Mattathias, took a sword and cut the Greek emissary into four pieces; thus began the revolt for independence. Mattathias died in 166 B.C. However, he had five brave and warlike sons and his mantle fell to his son Judas, a warrior of amazing military genius. After winning battle after battle against overwhelming odds, he recaptured Jerusalem and cleansed the temple in 165 B.C. The Feast of Dedication was established with the purifying of the temple. We read about this feast in John 10:22, but if we had not studied this period we would not know anything about this feast. (Not mentioned in the Old Testament.)

With the recapture of Jerusalem and cleansing of the temple by Judas Maccabee, began "The Period of Independence," or the "Maccabean Period," also called the "Hasmonaean Period" (166 B.C. to 63 B.C.). Priest kings ruled over Palestine in this period for about a hundred years, beginning with Judas Maccabee. Antiochus Epiphanes died in 164 B.C. His death was horrible. He had violent pain in his intestines, large sections of his flesh fell off his body, and the wounds were eaten by worms. He said, before he died, that he was being punished for what he had done to God's people. With the death of this arrogant, ungodly monarch came the end of the little horn that grew larger and larger out of one of the four, which came from the broken horn of the he goat (Daniel chapter 8).

With the arrival of the Roman general Pompey into Palestine (63 B.C.), we see the prophecy of the large image with its legs of iron and feet of iron and miry clay (the Roman Empire) coming true almost 600 years later. What a wonderful God we have! "The fulness of time" when God will bring forth His precious Son, is now coming very near. But we must now include Herod, the ruthless and wicked Edomite (descendant of Esau). He was made king of Judea about 36 or 37 B.C. until his death in 3 B.C. He was the Herod who murdered the male babies of Bethlehem at the time of the birth of Christ. To please the Jews, he had remodeled the temple in Jerusalem. His reign was filled with murder and incest. I refer you to the study of the Herod family tree in Lesson #8 for a more complete look at the Herods to follow.

Now we would be neglecting our study if we did not discuss the ten cities of Decapolis. These cities were Philadelphia, Gerasa, Pella, Scythopolis, Gadara, Hippos, Dion, Kanatha, Raphana and Damascus. They were located on a line east of the Jordan river with the exception of Scythopolis, which was just slightly on the west side of the Jordan. Pella would later be mentioned by Josephus as the main city occupied

by the Christians fleeing from Jerusalem when it was destroyed in 70 A.D. (consult map, Lesson # 10). These cities were predominately Greek in population, but the Jews living in these cities had mostly Grecian ways and were looked down upon by other Jews as being too Grecian. (This is where the Grecian widows came from in Acts 6 - they were Jews with Grecian ways). When Jesus was in the cities of the Jews, He would heal someone and tell them to tell no one; but, when He healed those of the Decapolis area He would tell them to go tell everyone. When Jesus was healing in the cities of the Jews He wanted to teach them also, not just heal them. It was because of this, He told them not to tell anyone. He had come "To save the lost sheep of Israel," not just heal them. But it was a different matter with those He healed in the cities of Decapolis; He wanted them to tell everyone. Then when He came near to these cities, the people would come out to meet Him, and He could teach them also (Matt 4:25; Mk 5:20; 7:31).

Now let us address the question - Why did the Jews throw palm branches in front of Jesus and praise Him, and the next minute they wanted to kill Him? The Jews were looking for one who would free them from the yoke of the Romans and reestablish Israel as a great nation. When they saw His miracles they were sure He was the Messiah. Some even thought him to be Judas Maccabee who had come back from the dead to free them. They soon became disillusioned and turned away from Him when they found out He wanted to save them from their sins, and was not concerned with them politically. Besides, they did not think they had any sin from which to be cleansed. Jesus said in Mark 16:20 that miracles were done to confirm the Word. The Jews' preconceived notion of the expected Messiah could not have been more wrong. In the Patriarchal Age it was a family worship. In the Mosaic Age they worshiped as a nation, and the priests made sacrifices for their sins and the sins of the people. They were used to living under the laws given to Moses, plus 1,100 more they added themselves. With the arrival of John the Baptist to make straight the path of our Lord Jesus, suddenly each individual, personally, had to hear and repent. John said, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and preached that they must be baptized. The Jews had no idea that this straight way John the Immerser was speaking of, would be the way that Jesus would speak of when He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh to the Father but by me." After Jesus' death, ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit, the book of Acts would tell both Jew and Gentile how to get on that road or way. The books on Christian living would tell us how to stay on that way and the book of Revelation would tell us of our reward if we stay on the way until the end, and of our home with God and Jesus. (Oh, look! The tree of life that was in the garden is now in heaven!)

If you have studied Lesson # 17 and 18, you know who the Pharisees, Scribes, Sadducees, Epicureans and Stoics were and what their beliefs were.

As we near the time of the birth of Christ, we observe the following:

- (1) Rome was in power.
- (2) Greek was the language of the world.
- (3) Under Roman rule there was freedom of religion.
- (4) The Romans had built an elaborate highway system.
- (5) Man was thinking for himself, thinking spiritually and thinking logically.

- (6) The scattering or dispersion of the Jews was complete, ready for the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).
- (7) Synagogues were built in all the key cities. (Just waiting to come alive with the teachings of Jesus. What an aid to the spreading of the gospel!)
- (8) The Old Testament was available in the Greek (the Septuagint).
- (9) Herod was in his palace to fulfill his part of murder, deceit and jealousy. (Jer 31:15 - the murder of Jewish babies two years old and under.)

Even though God's prophets were silent, the Lord of the universe had finished His tapestry of nations and events, and was now ready to bring forth His son (Gal 4:4; Rom 5:6; Jer 31:22). Little did the Eastern World know that it would be "turned upside down" by the birth of God's Son, His sinless life, ministry, death, burial, resurrection and ascension to heaven. Then, ten days after His ascension, God's Spirit would be poured out onto all flesh (Joel 2:28-32; Acts chapters 2 and 10). At this time we see the prophecy of Daniel 2 and Isaiah 2 coming true. Jesus said, "Upon this rock (the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God), I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The rock of Daniel 2 is turning into a mountain and filling the whole earth. The church of Jesus Christ was purchased by His blood (Acts 20:28): who had a better right to call it "His Church?" Are we not glad His Church is that mountain that fills the whole earth and breaks to pieces all other kingdoms?

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal 4:4,5).

"Suddenly Jesus will come to His temple" (Mal 3:1).

OH BELOVED, DON'T YOU SEE IT - DON'T YOU SEE IT? BE BEREANS. See if what I have taught is so (Acts 17:11). STUDY-STUDY-STUDY. Make that spiritual, inner man "pleasingly plump." We do not want our spiritual man to look like it has been in a prison camp all its life (Hosea 4:6).

God Bless You!

Lesson #21

Key Scriptures for our Lesson

1. Gal 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.
2. Rom 5:6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.
3. Dan 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.
4. Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.
5. Gen 12:1,2,3
 - (1) Now the Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:
 - (2) And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:
 - (3) And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.
6. Gen 22:18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.
7. Gal 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.
8. Gen 46: 3,4
 - (3) And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation:
 - (4) I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.
9. Ex 3:12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token into thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

10. Ex 12:12 For I will pass through in the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord.
11. God had a: (1) Special People.
(2) Special Law and Worship.
(3) Special Land.
(4) Special Purpose.
(5) Special Person (in the Perfect One, Jesus the Christ.)
12. Ex 40:16 Thus did Moses: according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he.
13. Josh 1: 1, 2 (1) Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord spoke unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,
(2) Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.
14. Josh 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.
15. Judges 21:25 (read also Judges 2:11-19) In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.
16. Hosea 13:11
(1 Sam 8) I gave thee a king in my anger, and took him away in my wrath.
17. Psa 106:15 And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.
18. Psa 106:24 Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word.
19. Ezek 36:19 I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them.
20. Dan 2:28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these:

21. Dan 2:36-44
- (36) This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.
 - (37) Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, strength, and glory.
 - (38) And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thy hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. (BABYLONIA)
 - (39) And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, (PERSIA) and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. (GREECE)
 - (40) And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise (ROME).
 - (41) And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; and there shall be in it of the strength of iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.
 - (42) And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so shall the kingdom be partly strong, and partly broke.
 - (43) And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay (verses 41, 42, 43 - FALL OF ROME). (Parentheses added - JB)

In the preceding verses of Daniel 2:36-43, we have the interpretation of king Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The head of Gold (King Nebuchadnezzar or Babylonia), the chest and arms of silver (the Persian Empire, Cyrus), belly and thighs of brass (the Grecian Empire), the legs of iron and feet of iron mingled with miry clay (the Roman Empire, and its decline). And now in Daniel 2:44, the meaning of the last part of the dream: the rock fashioned from nothing, that destroyed the figure by crushing the feet. The rock then turned into a mountain, and Dan 2:44 tells of the church to be established (Acts 2) "In the days of these kings" (Luke 3:1), and purchased by the blood of our precious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28).

- (44) And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it will break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.
- (45) Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and it break in pieces the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and

the interpretation thereof sure. Dan. 2:35 states that the stone which smote the image became a mountain, and filled the whole earth.

In the preceding verses Daniel outlines, in order, the conquering nations from Nebuchadnezzar to the time of Jesus Christ. Our lesson, The Four Hundred Silent Years, takes place from Malachi about 430 B.C. to the birth of Jesus Christ - Persia, Greece and Rome. Isaiah predicted the appearance of the conquering Persian King Cyrus in 536 B.C. (150 years after the death of Isaiah). Isaiah called him by name, "Cyrus, king of Persia," Isa 45:1, Isa 44:28.

22. Dan 2:28 There is a God in heaven.
- Dan 4:25 God ruleth in the kingdom of men.
- Dan 3:17 God is able to deliver us. (Rom 13:1 - there is no power but of God)
23. Daniel chapter 8 is the vision of the ram with two horns, one horn being greater than the other. The kings of Media and Persia, with Persia the greater (Daniel 8:20). The rough he goat stamped the ram until it was helpless. The he goat is the great king of the Grecians, Alexander the Great, represented by the one big horn. This big horn breaks into four horns - Dan. 8:21,22. At the death of Alexander the Great, his kingdom was divided into four kingdoms; Macedonia, Asia Minor, Syria (The Seleucids) and Egypt (The Ptolemies), the Seleucids and the Ptolemies being the greater of the four. All ruled by Greek kings, after the death of Alexander. This vision and interpretation of Daniel chapter 8 came true 200 years later. Our God is so wonderful and is "ruling in the kingdom of men."
24. Psa 14:1 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.
25. Psa 137:4 How can we sing the Lords song in a strange land?
26. Ezek 37 Please read the vision of the valley of dry bones (showing the revitalization of God's people).
27. 2 Chron 13:12 And, behold, God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper.
28. 2 Chron 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and heal their land.
29. Job 13:15 Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. (All Christians should say this like Job.)
30. Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

I hope this will help to increase your knowledge, and faith, and increase your appetite for BIBLE STUDY.

REFERENCE BOOKS USED IN THIS STUDY

1. God Among the Nations.. Edward Wharton
2. Israel in Revolt. Josephus
3. Between the Testaments. Charles F. Pfeiffer
4. Bridge Between the Testaments. Donald E. Gowans
5. New Testament Commentary. Howley Bruce & Ellison
6. New Testament History - Acts. Reece
7. Archaeology and Bible History. Joseph R. Free
8. Halley's Bible Hand Book. Henry H. Halley
9. All the Men of the Bible. Herbert Lockyer
10. All the Kings and Queens of the Bible. Herbert Lockyer
11. World Book Encyclopedia
12. My Large King James Bible. (Between the Testaments Section)
13. Journey Through the Bible (Video). Johnny Ramsey
14. Between the Testaments (Video).. Johnny Ramsey
15. Old Testament History. William Smith

I must stop here and tell you how wonderful and inspiring are these two videos by Johnny Ramsey. I first heard Johnny teaching on The Four Hundred Silent Years at the Eastwood Church of Christ in Hutchinson, Kansas. His class helped me to understand the Old and New Testaments so much better that I became very interested in Bible history. That is why I prepared this study so others might also have an appetite for this faith-strengthening subject. Thanks again, Johnny.

I. Jericho - John Garstang, Archaeologist (English) 1929-1936:

Discovered the following:

Two walls - 15 ft. apart.

Inner wall was 12 ft. thick.

Outer wall was 6 ft. thick and 30 ft. high, with foundations of brick.

Israel silently marched around the city once a day for six days. On the seventh day they marched around the city seven times, then blew the rams horn trumpets (7) with one blast. Then all the people gave a shout, and walls came tumbling down.

Garstang found:

The walls fell down flat.

Apartments were built across between the 15 ft. space separating the two walls (such as Rahab's apartment).

Charred remains of pottery, fruits, vegetables and food that was uneaten.

II Mesopotamia - their Gods:

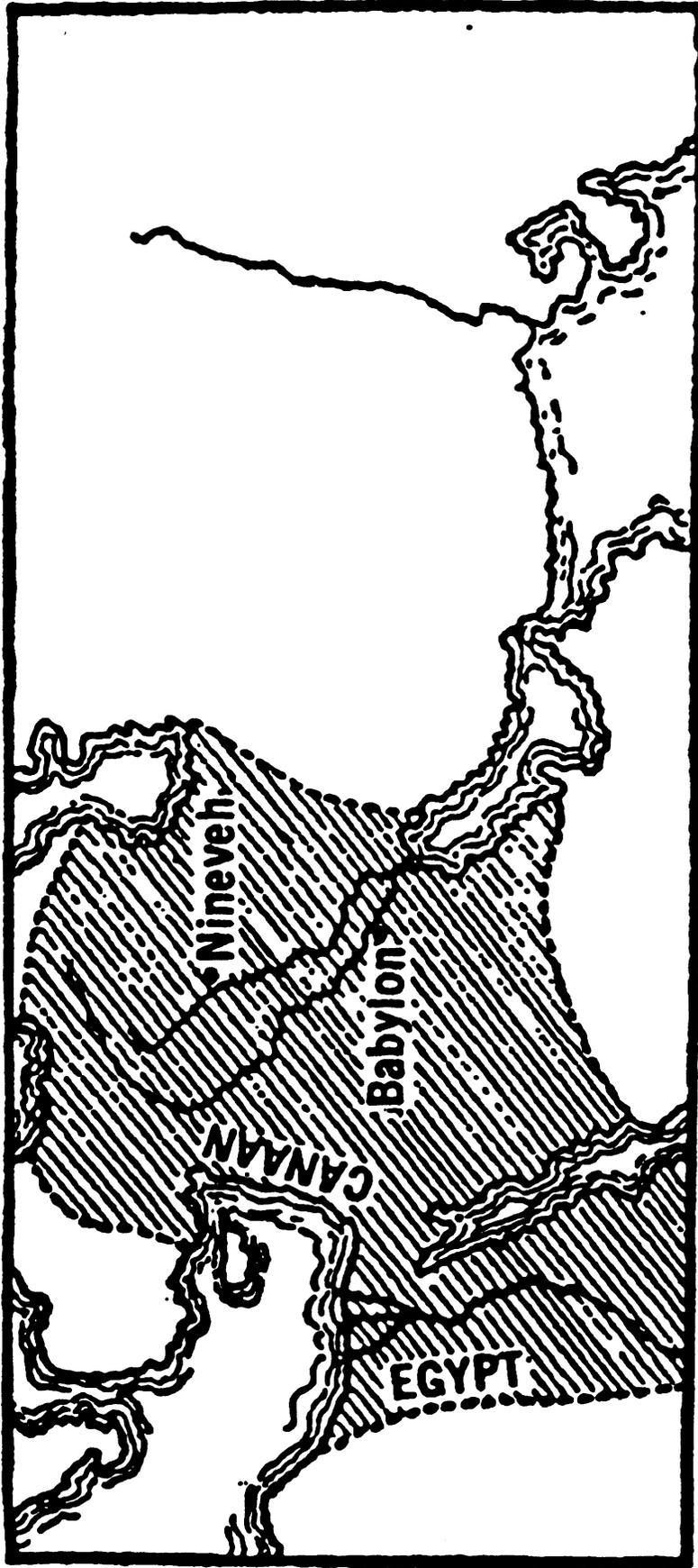
Moon God - Nannar (Sin).

Moon Goddess - Ningal or Nina (wife of Nannar, city of Nineveh named after Nina).

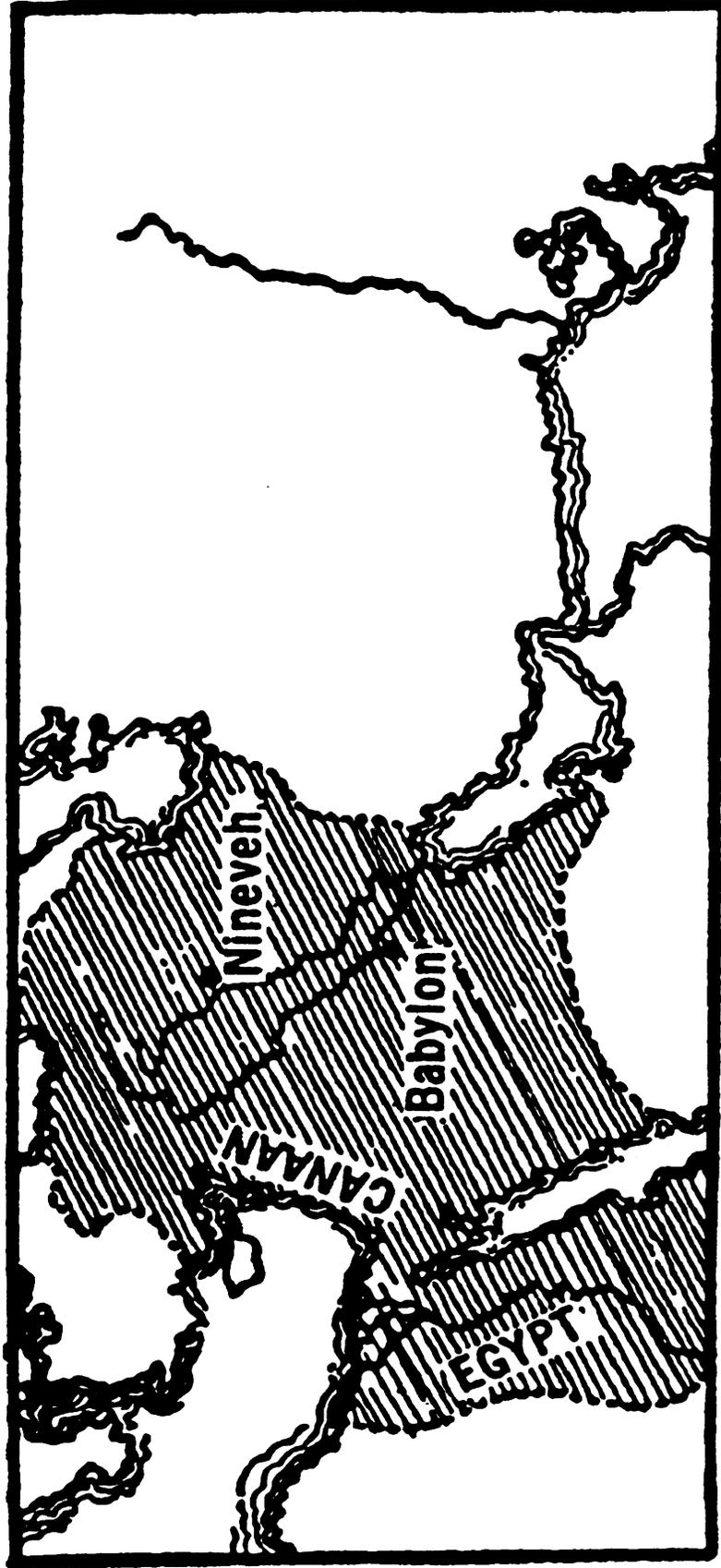
Marduk or Bel-Shamash - The Sun God (the main god of Babylonia).

They worshiped: Fire, Sun, Moon, Stars and various forces of nature.

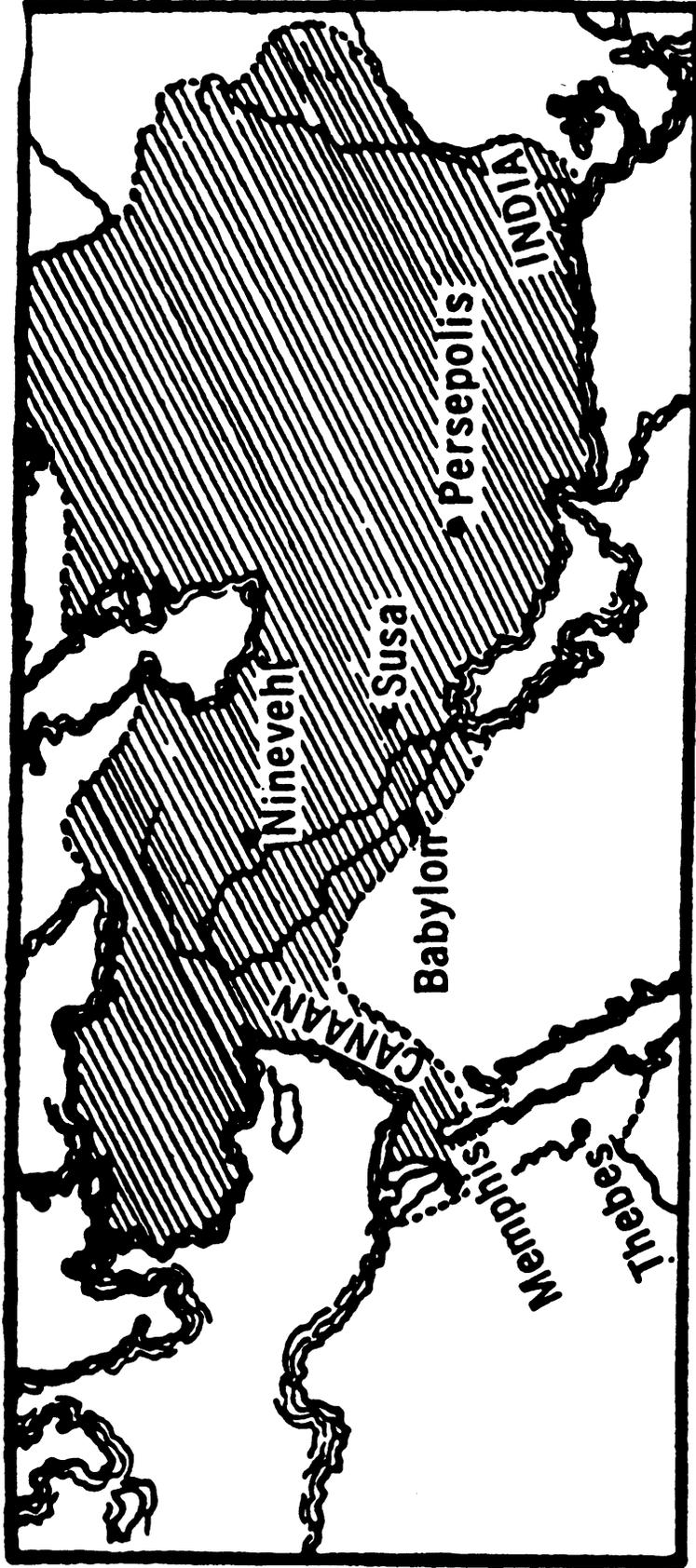
The prostitute priestesses of the moon Goddess Nina served in the temple. Each maid, wife or widow had to officiate at least once in their life time. These were the Gods of Abraham's father, Terah. Also, God called Abraham out of this land of idolatry to make of him a new nation, and through his seed all nations of the earth would be blessed. That seed is Jesus Christ (Gal 3:16).



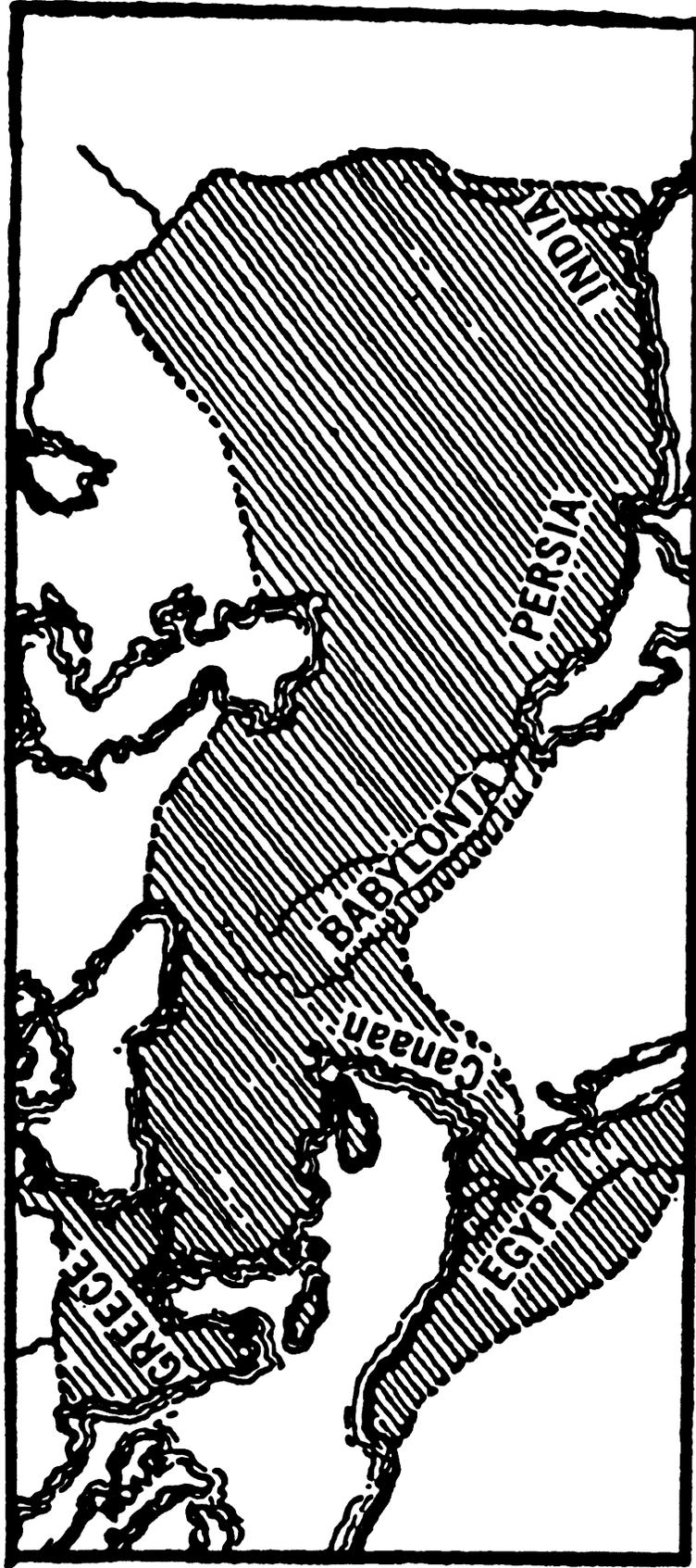
Map 10. Assyrian Empire, 721-606 B.C.



Map 11. Babylonian Empire. 606-536 B.C.



Map 12. Persian Empire, 536 - 332 B.C.



Map 13. Greek Empire. 332 - 167 B.C.

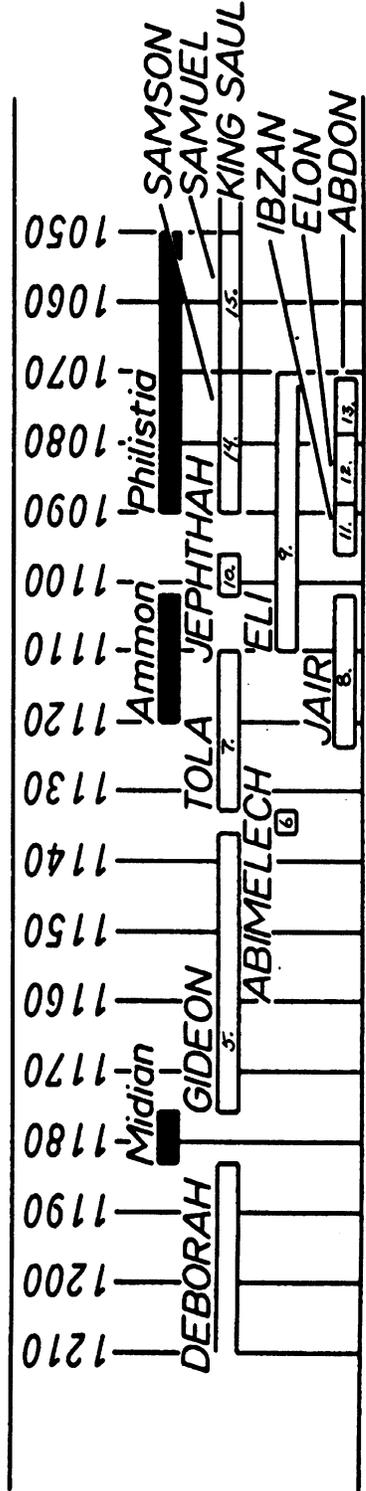
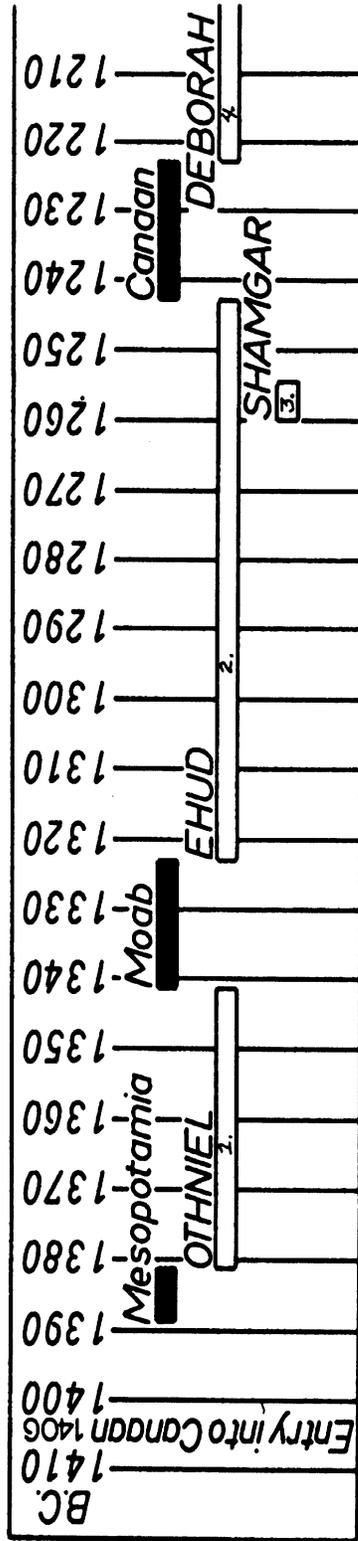


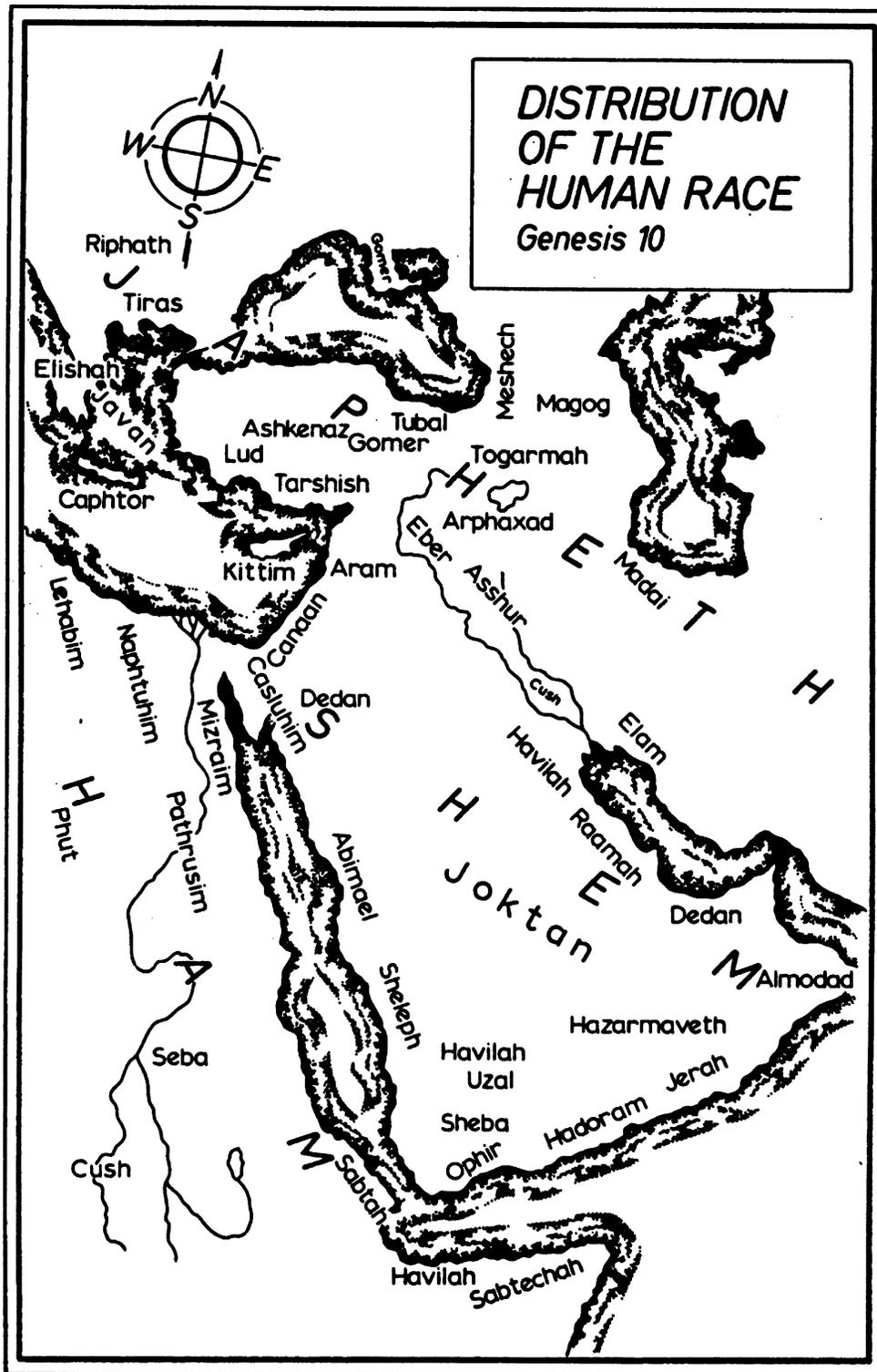
Map 14. Roman Empire. 63 B.C. (POMPEY)

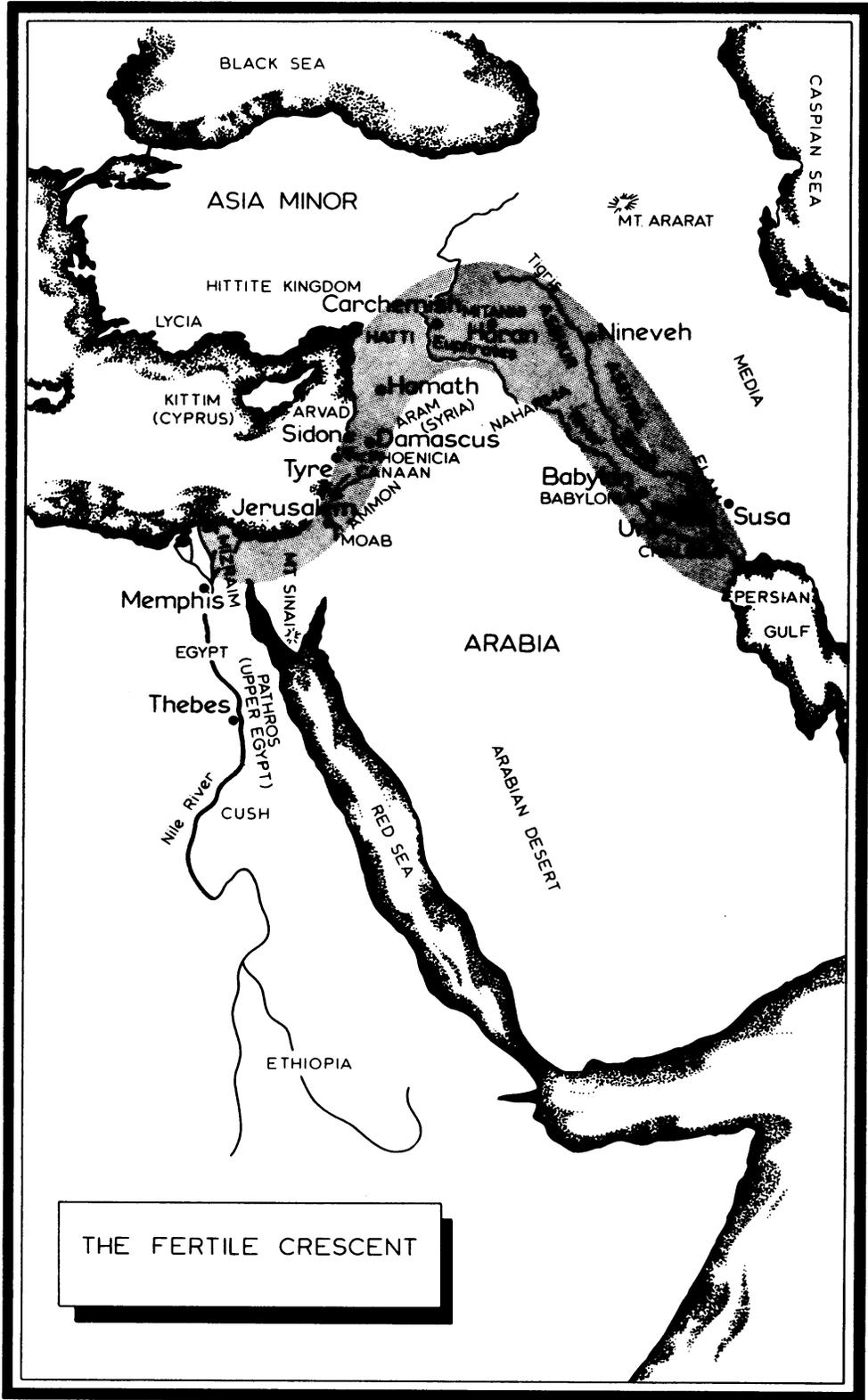
167 - 63 B.C. PERIOD OF INDEPENDENCE (ALSO MACCABEAN PERIOD)

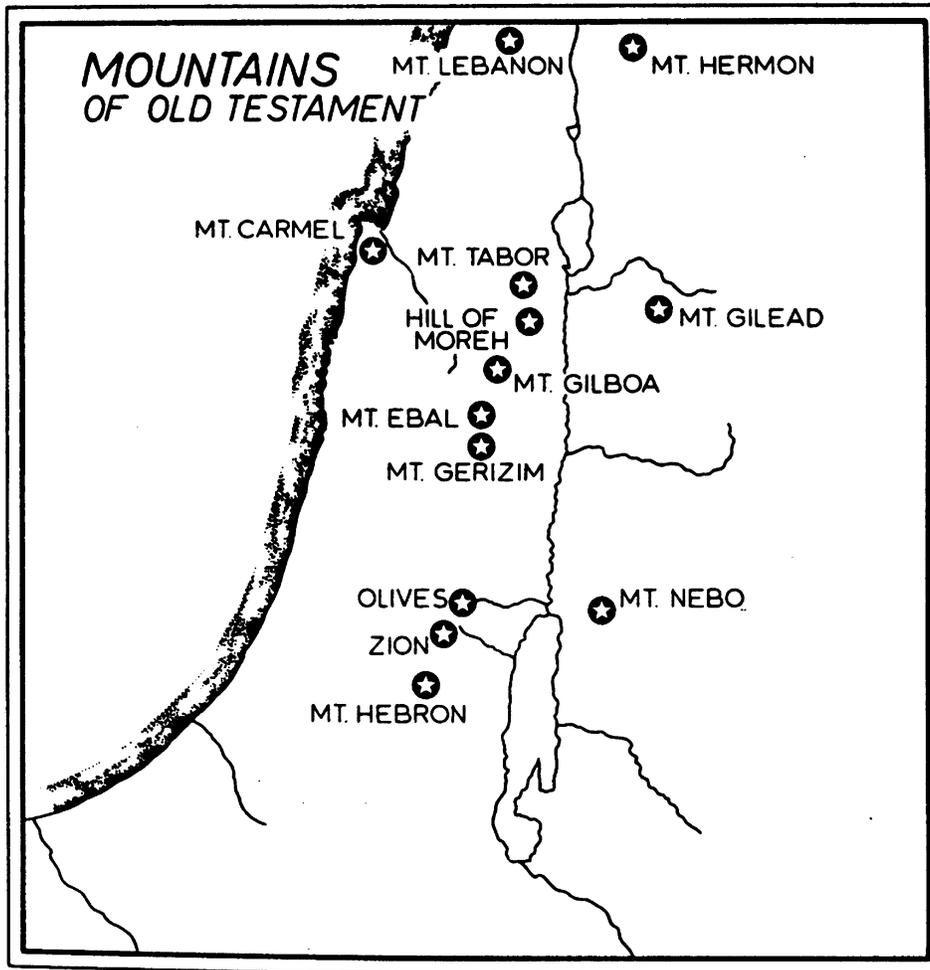
THE JUDGES

Oppression **■**
 JUDGESHIP **□**



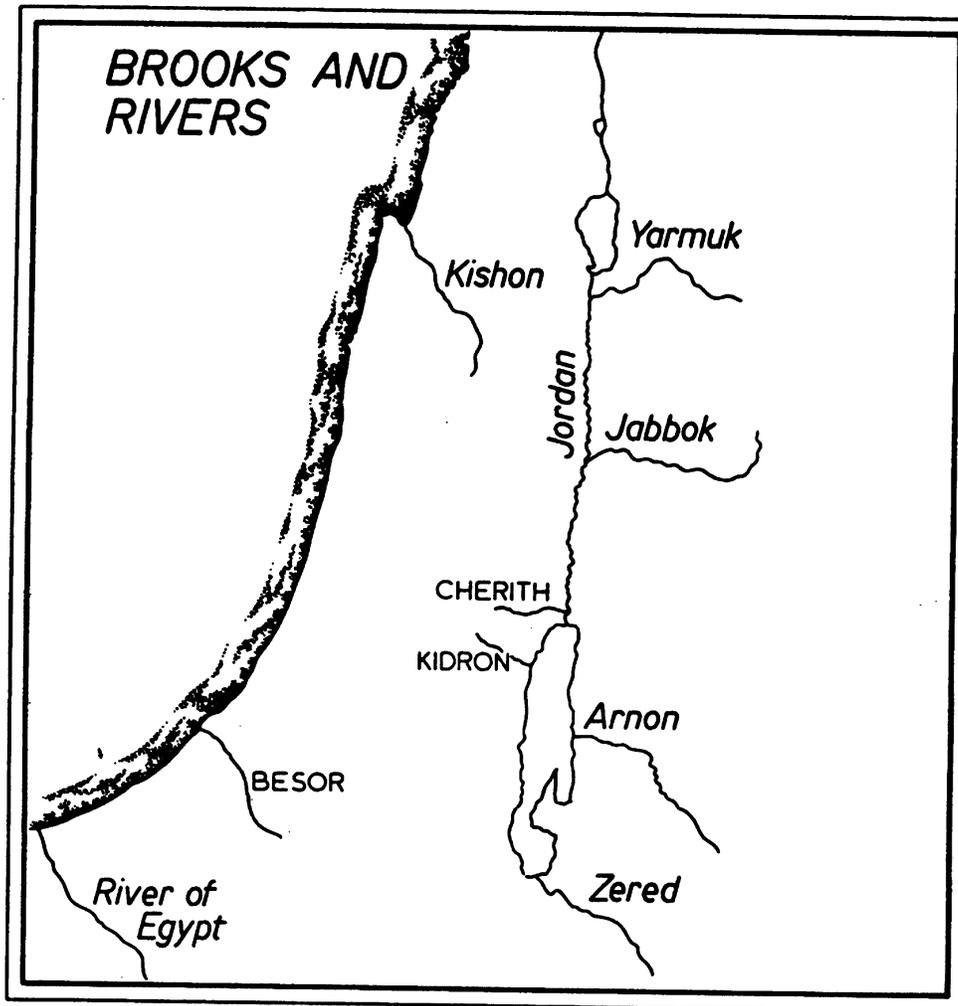






Mountains of the Old Testament

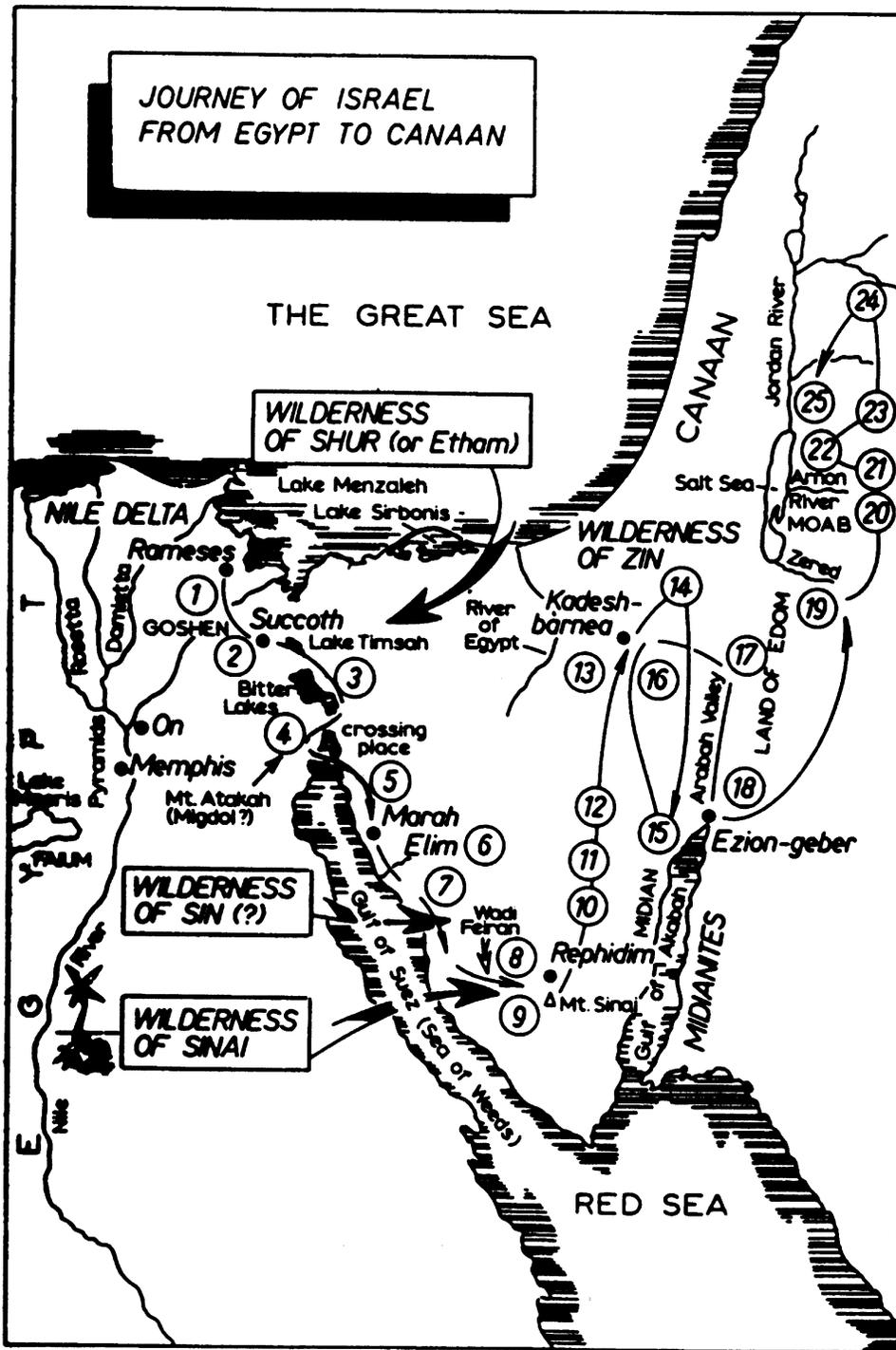
- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| (1) Mt. Lebanon, a range.
Highest peak is 10,200 ft. | (7) Mt. Gerizim. 2,850 ft. |
| (2) Mt. Carmel. 1,750 ft. | (8) Mt. of Olives. 2,665 ft. |
| (3) Mt. Tabor. 1,843 ft. | (9) Mt. Zion. 2,550 ft. |
| (4) Hill of Moreh. 1,815 ft. | (10) Mt. Hebron. 3,030 ft. |
| (5) Mt. Gilboa. 1,715 ft. | (11) Mt. Hermon. 9,200 ft. |
| (6) Mt. Ebal. 3,075 ft. | (12) Mt. Gilead. 3,000 ft. |
| | (13) Mt. Nebo (Pisgah). 2,670 ft. |



Brooks and rivers of the Old Testament

- (1) Yarmuk.
- (2) Jabbok. Jacob wrestled here. Gen. 32:22.
- (3) Arnon. The border of Moab. Num. 21:13.
- (4) Zered. Israel and Moses camped here. Num. 21:12.
- (5) Kishon. This swept away God's enemies. Judges 5:21.
- (6) Besor. David pursued enemies across this. I Sam. 30:9.
- (7) River of Egypt. The southern limit. Gen. 14:18.
- (8) Cherith. Ravens fed Elijah here. I Kings 17:5.
- (9) Kedron. David crossed this in sorrow. II Sam. 15:23.
- (10) Jordan.

**JOURNEY OF ISRAEL
FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN**



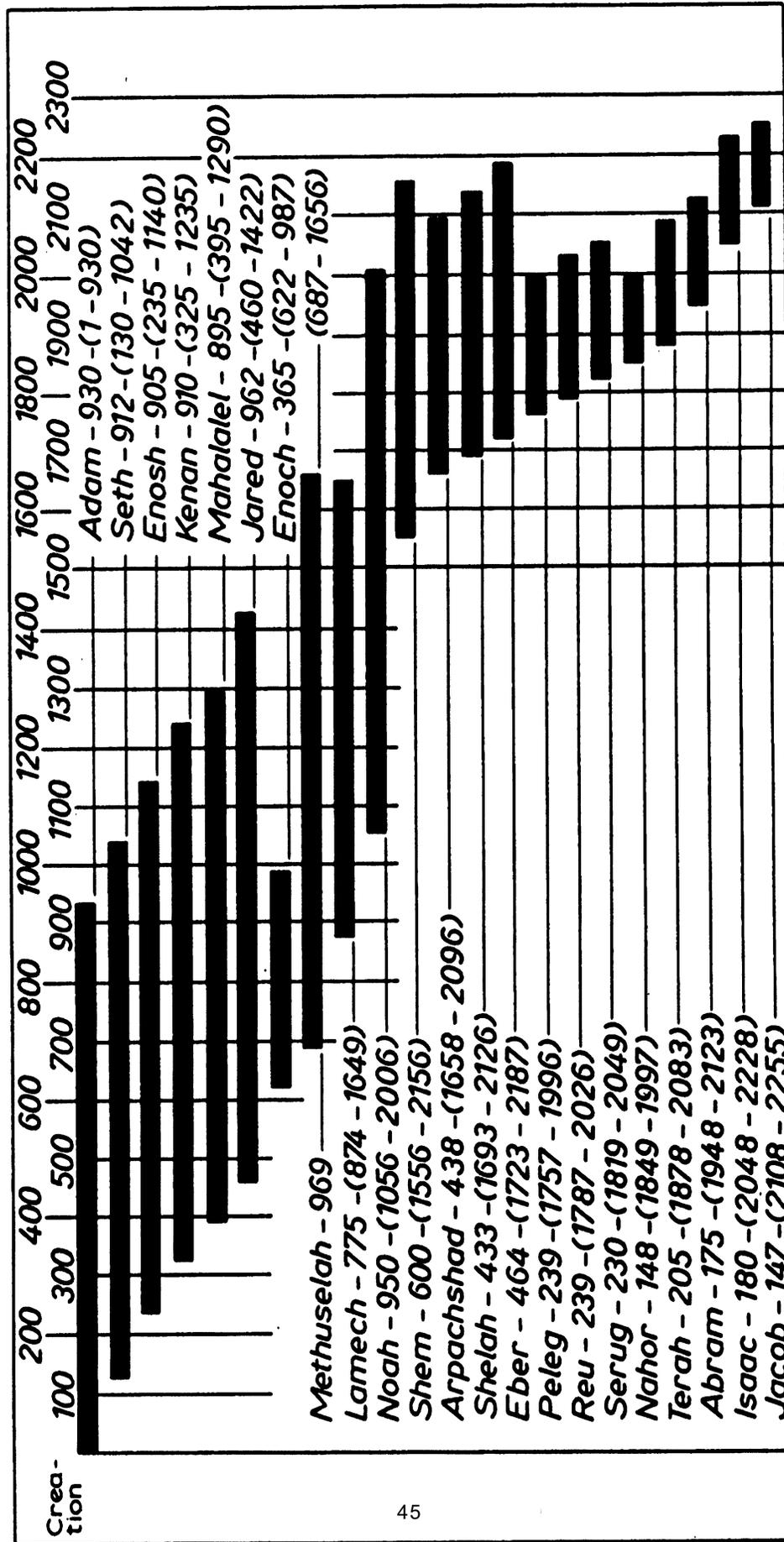


TABLE OF THE PATRIARCHS

The Jordan Valley

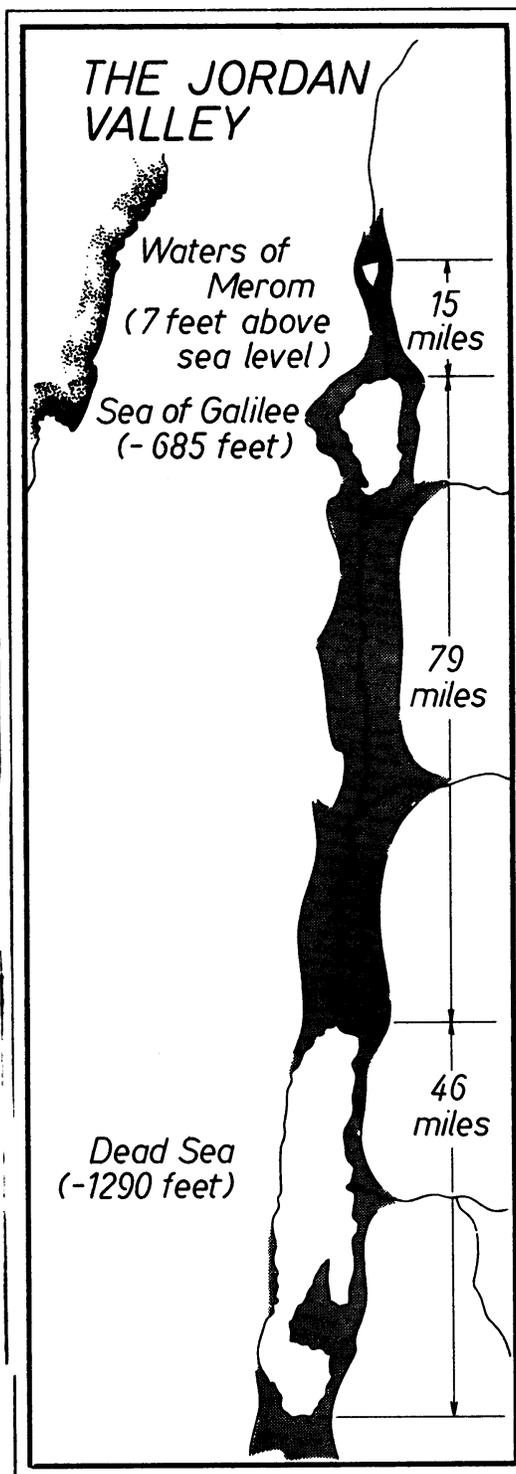
Three bodies of water connected by the Jordan river lie in the great depression of the Jordan valley.

- (1) Waters of Merom — A swampy lake three miles across, seven feet above sea level.
- (2) Sea of Galilee — This is called Chinneroth or Chinnereth in the Old Testament. It is 9 mi. x 13 mi. and 685 feet below sea level.
- (3) Dead Sea — Also called the Salt Sea or the Sea of the Plain. It is 46 miles long and 1,290 feet below sea level. It is the lowest surface on earth. Water can escape only by evaporation.

The Jordan originates at several springs on or near Mt. Hermon. From its source it is 40 miles to the Waters of Merom, 15 miles more to the Sea of Galilee, and 70 miles to the Dead Sea. While the river extends 134 miles in a line, its wanderings make it 200 miles long.

“The Jordan falls over 3,000 feet from its source, an average fall of over 22 feet to the mile. It varies in width from 80 to 180 feet and in depth from five to twelve feet. (Hurlbut's *Bible Atlas*.)

The deep depression of the Jordan valley extends on south of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Akabah. This depression is called the *Arabah*. The Jordan valley north of the Dead Sea is also called *Arabah*.



THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM,
THE END OF THE WORLD AND
OUR LORD'S SECOND COMING

MATTHEW 23 and 24, LUKE 21 and MARK 13.

By
Jerry Betts

DEDICATION:

I would like to dedicate this lesson to one who stood on the Mount Olivet with His four disciples, and gave us the powerful lesson in the first place. We must remember, "Without Him we can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). What a wonderful LORD and SAVIOR we have in JESUS THE CHRIST! Thank you, Almighty God, for sending your SON to die for the sins of all mankind. "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men to me.' This He said, signifying that death he should die." If we lift up Jesus in our Bible classes, our preaching, our congregations, and our daily lives, teaching our children likewise, we will truly DRAW ALL MEN TO JESUS. We will GROW, GROW, GROW!

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO:

My son, Brad Betts, who worked so hard on this lesson with me. He did all of the computer work, print outs and spelling corrections. He is a great source of pride in my life. He is a living example of growth by diligent Bible study. He believes if the Bible says it, that's the way it is.

To my precious wife Maxine, who teaches me daily for forty-seven years, what real love, encouragement and devotion really are.

Jerry Betts
January 1998

THE PIVOTAL VERSES OF MATTHEW CHAPTER 24,
MARK 13 and LUKE 21

Now let us start where all things should start, that is, at the beginning. However, we might call it the “occasion.” The occasion of this lesson is taken from Matthew’s gospel, beginning at 23:29. Jesus is pronouncing His condemnation upon the scribes and Pharisees by saying:

29. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchers of the righteous,
30. And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.
31. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.
32. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.
33. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?
34. Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:
35. That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.
36. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.
37. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!
38. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.
39. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Beginning on the next page we will discuss these verses and set the stage for our study of Matthew 24:1-36.

Verses where Jesus stops talking about the destruction of Jerusalem and changes to His second coming, and the end of the world (Matt 24:34, Mk 13:30 and Lk 21:32) will be referred to as “pivotal verses.” Also, we must note that the Greek word used in these pivotal verses for the word generation is *genea*. Vine gives the meaning of this Greek word as, “A multitude of men living at the same time,” and refers to all three pivotal verses as examples of this usage of *genea*. Further, Vine indicates, “that a generation is a time of about 30 to 40 years” (W. E. Vine, pg. 42). Here is our Lord's commentary on the verses prior to Matthew 24:34 (our pivotal verse).

Matt 24: 34. “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.”

Since “God is not the author of confusion” (1 Cor 14:33), and “God who can not lie (Titus 1:2),” we must conclude that verses prior to Matthew 24:34 of that chapter are referring to the destruction of Jerusalem. Our Lord then goes on to discuss His second coming and the end of the world, when He says in verse 36:

“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”

Jesus said then that there are no signs of His coming and the end of the world. This places “these things” in a different category, the destruction of Jerusalem, for which Jesus said there would be a sign.

“And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh” (Lk 21:20 - KJV).

Now we must address verses 29 through 33 and establish those verses referring to the destruction of Jerusalem. Our Lord was talking to men who knew the Old Testament and its prophetic and figurative language concerning the fall of nations, empires, and the righteous judgment of God upon them. If we hold the position that figurative language in the Old Testament, when quoted in the New Testament, suddenly becomes literal, then we will have a difficult time understanding the book of Revelation, as well as these passages from Matthew 24:29-33. I hope these introductory thoughts will aid you as you now enter our study. Our scene will open with Jesus speaking to the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:29.

In Matthew chapter 23, we find Jesus pronouncing seven woes upon the scribes and Pharisees beginning with verse 13. However, we will concern ourselves with the seventh and last woe (verse 29). Jesus is on the temple grounds and gives His stern rebuke before the multitude.

COMMENTARY # 1: THE OCCASION.

Matthew 23:29 (Woe # 7).

- A. Verses 29-35 Jesus rebukes them for saying if they had lived when their fathers lived, they would not have persecuted and killed the prophets of God. Jesus knew all the time that they were about to kill Him, and would persecute those He

would later send. Further, we know that this is just what happened when the apostles went out to preach the gospel (Acts 8, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 28 and 2 Cor 11:23-33).

- B. Verse 35 “That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth.” Then they would commit the final act against the God of the universe by killing His Son on the cross.
- C. Verse 36 Now Jesus pronounces a terrible doom upon them and Jerusalem. “All these things shall come upon this generation” (*genea*, see introduction).
- D. Verses 37-39 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them, your house is left unto you desolate.” A grim prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. Jesus now leaves the temple grounds.

After leaving the temple, Jesus' disciples come to Him and discuss the beauty of the temple. Then Jesus pronounces the destruction of the temple that they were admiring so much. “There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.” Jesus then goes up the Mount of Olives and, as He sits there looking down on Jerusalem, His disciples come to Him privately (James, John, Peter and Andrew - Mk 13:3).

COMMENTARY # 2: QUESTIONS.

Jesus is now on the Mount of Olives looking down on Jerusalem and the temple. Being much disturbed by His prophecy concerning the temple's destruction, Peter, Andrew, James and John come to Jesus privately to ask him questions.

Part 1 - Matthew 24:3:

1. “When shall these things be?” Jesus answers in verses 4 through 34.
2. “And what shall be the sign of thy coming?” Jesus answers in verses 36 through 51, and in Matthew 25.
3. “When will the end of the world come?” Jesus answers in verses 36 through 51, and in Matthew 25.

Part 2 - Mark 13:4:

1. “Tell us, when shall these things be?”
2. “And what shall be the sign when these all things shall be fulfilled (ASV)?”

Part 3 - Luke 21:7:

1. “And they asked him, saying, Teacher, when therefore shall these things be?”
2. “And what shall be the sign when these things are about to come to pass” (ASV)?

We can see by looking at Matthew 24:34 that Jesus understood the questions they were asking. What, and when, will be the sign? Jesus answers in verses 4

through 34. Verse 34 sums up the answers. Further, our pivotal verse 34 states that everything Jesus said prior to verse 34 would happen to those of that generation.

Matthew 24:34: "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (KJV).

The Greek word for "generation" is *genea*. *Genea* refers to a multitude of people living at the same time (W. E. Vine, pg. 42).

COMMENTARY # 3: THE SIGNS THAT WILL LEAD YOU ASTRAY.

Matthew 24:4: "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man lead you astray" (ASV).

1. False Christs - false teachers - "lead many astray" - verse 5 (ASV).
2. Wars and rumors of wars - "but the end is not yet" - verse 6 (ASV).
3. Nation against nation - verse 7 (ASV).
4. Kingdom against kingdom - verses 7, 8 (ASV).
5. Famines and earthquakes - "All these things are the beginning of travail" - verses 7,8 (ASV).
6. Jesus' followers will be delivered up and killed - verse 9.
7. "Ye shall be hated of all the nations for my name's sake" - verse 9.
8. Many will stumble - verse 10.
9. Deliver one another - verse 10.
10. Hate one another - verse 10.
11. "Many false prophets shall arise, and lead many astray" - verse 11.
12. "Because of the iniquity (persecution) the love of many shall wax cold" -verse 12.
13. "But he that endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" - verse 13.
14. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the whole world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" - verse 14 (Col 1:6,23 - 62-63 A.D.) (ASV).

Comments:

Isaiah 62:2 and Isaiah 65:15 prophesy that God's people will be called by a new name:

"And thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name" (ASV).

"And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" - Acts 11:26 (ASV).

Isaiah, prompted by the Holy Spirit, said that the Lord would name them. In Acts 11:26, the Greek work for "called," is *chrematizo*. *Chrematizo* means "to be called by God." Isaiah's prophetic statement was made 750 years before the Acts 11:26 account.

What a wonderful God we have, and how wonderful is His inspired word!

Persecution of the way began in Acts chapter 7 with the stoning of Stephen. In Acts 8:1 persecution came on the church by Saul (Paul), and they were scattered and went everywhere preaching the word (Acts 8:1-4). After Paul's conversion, the persecution subsided, the church had rest (Acts 9:3 1). A rest, but not for long,

because in 64 A.D. Nero burned Rome and blamed the Christians. So began the persecution to which Jesus referred to in Matthew 24:9 and 13. The book of Acts has many occasions of stoning, imprisonment, and the apostles being beaten nigh unto death. Paul lists his persecutions in 2 Corinthians 11:23-33.

Let us look for a moment at the four apostles whom Jesus was speaking to in Matthew 24. James would be the first to be martyred in 44 A.D. by Herod with a sword. Andrew was crucified in Patre in Achia (Greece). Tradition has it that Peter was crucified upside down in Rome by Nero. About this same time, Paul was beheaded in Rome (A.D. 68). John died a natural death about the turn of the first century after his exile to the Isle of Patmos.

Now let us turn to verse 14: The gospel of the kingdom would be preached to the whole world. While Paul was imprisoned in Rome (62-63 A.D.), Paul wrote that the gospel (God's dynamite) has been preached to the whole world (Col 1:6,23). Also, some of Caesar's household had obeyed the gospel (Phil 4:22).

COMMENTARY # 4: THE SIGN.

The actual sign that the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem is about to take place appears in Matthew 24:15 - "When ye shall therefore see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)." Refer to Daniel 9:27; 12:11.

Luke 21:20 - "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (KJV).

Comments:

The Roman army ravaged Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Read Josephus' chilling account of that bloody siege. Thanks to the warning of our Lord, (they took Him at His word), they fled to the city of Pella. Pella was in Decapolis just east of the Jordan river, and a little over half way between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee. All the events mentioned in verses 4 thru 14 were not the signs, but verse 15 indicates this is the sign.

COMMENTARY # 5: NOW GO QUICKLY!

1. Those in Judea flee to the mountains - verse 16.
2. If you are on the housetop do not go down stairs in the house to get anything, take the outside stairs and leave - verse 17.
3. If you are in a field working, do not even go home for your clothes - verse 18.
4. If you are with child or have little babies, it will be more difficult, but you must go quickly, anyway - verse 19.
5. Pray your flight will not be in winter (when it is bitter cold) or on the sabbath day (when the gates of the city are closed) - verse 20.

Comments: Verses 16-20.

Remember we are still prior to our pivotal verse 34, so Jesus is still talking about the destruction of Jerusalem, not the end of the world. Jesus would not tell them to do anything quickly, or to flee to the mountains if the mountains were to be destroyed with the entire world. So we can plainly see that Jesus was referring to the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem. Since the Bible is its own best commentary, we will let Luke 21:24 comment: "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (KJV).

COMMENTARY # 6: EVENTS OCCURRING UPON, OR IMMEDIATELY AFTER, THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

Events occurring with the destructions of Jerusalem - Matthew 24:1-28.

- A. The tribulation and destruction will be terrible and complete - verse 21.
- B. If the time of this tribulation (or destruction) had not been shortened all flesh would have perished. Jesus is then saying, if it had gone on longer, the destruction would have spread to trap the Christians (or the elect, Col 3:12). In the New Testament the "elect" are those baptized believers in Christ who were added to the church (Act 2:41,47). These comments concerned Matthew 24:22.
- C. False Christs will appear, and people will say, He is here or there, but Jesus said: "If I had come, it would be like lightning in the sky, and all will see me" (Rev 1:7), and "Behold, I have told you before" - verses 23-27.
- D. "For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagle be gathered together" - verse 28. As Jerusalem was dying (the carcass), the Roman army, with eagles on their Standards would be there like a vulture to devour her.

Comments: Verses 21-28.

Comments at this point, pertaining to the destruction of Jerusalem according to Josephus, indicates that the factions that fought inside the walls were nearly as devastating as the Roman Army outside. Inside, the Jews were eating their own starved children. If the bodies were so decomposed they could not be eaten, the stench would be great. The bodies were then thrown over the walls into the valley below. Further, Josephus records the remark made by the Roman general Titus upon looking upon the stacks of bodies: "I call God to be my witness, this is not my doing, but such was the sad case of the city itself." Those who escaped were tortured and crucified. Some of those who escaped, swallowed their gold. But upon learning this, the Romans dismembered the bodies to recover the gold. When the Romans finally entered the city, the carnage only increased. The Romans even plowed the city of Jerusalem under, thus fulfilling the prophecies of Matthew 24:2 and 23:38 ("not one stone left on another" and "your house will be left unto you desolate").

COMMENTARY # 7: EVENTS THAT WILL FOLLOW.

Events which will follow - "When Lord?" IMMEDIATELY (Matt 24:29-31)! It may seem that these verses are suggesting the end of the world, but we must look at the following points:

- A. We are not yet to our pivotal verse 34.
- B. These things would IMMEDIATELY follow Jerusalem's destruction. Remember, earlier we indicated that figurative language in the Old Testament, when quoted in the New Testament, is still figurative and not literal.
- C. Things that happen immediately! Verses 29,30.
 - (1) "The sun shall be darkened."
 - (2) "The moon shall not give her light."
 - (3) "The stars shall fall from the heavens."
 - (4) "The power of the heavens shall be shaken."
 - (5) "The sign of the Son of man."

Comments: Verses 29-31.

We will examine scriptures from the Old Testament, where the same figurative language is used to depict the fall of a nation.

Isaiah 13:10 - The fall of Babylon: "For the stars of the heaven, and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth and the moon shall not cause her light to shine."

Isaiah 34:4,5 - The fall of Idumaea, Edom (Esau): "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment."

We have just seen prophetic, or figurative, language used in Isaiah 13:10 and Isaiah 34:4,5. These prophesied the fall of Babylon and Idumaea. The figurative language used in these passages shows us that Jesus was referring to the downfall of Jerusalem.

Let us now examine another Old Testament passage concerning the fall of a nation.

Ezekiel 32:7,8 - The fall of Egypt: "And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of the heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord God."

In Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2:16-21, Peter, full of the Holy Spirit and power, boldly quotes Joel 2 and states that what you see here is the fulfillment of that prophecy. Almost the same apocalyptic language is used to depict: 1. The end of Mosaic Age, and the beginning of the Christian Age (the last days), 2. The coming of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh (Acts 2:38). I hope that we can see that Jesus was using figurative

language in Matthew 24:29 to depict the fall of Jerusalem and certainly not His second coming and the end of the world.

Finally, the fifth of our events that will occur immediately, in reference to Matthew 24:30: “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven.”

Comments: Matthew 24:30.

Jesus does not say that they would see Him, but they would see His sign. That sign is seen immediately when the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple would occur. Thus, Jesus' prophecy would be fulfilled. Where is Jesus today? In heaven seated at God's right hand (Acts 2:33; Col 3:1).

Matthew 24:30 - “And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn.”

Comments:

Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of their beloved city, Jerusalem, was coming true in front of their eyes. We know that all the tribes of Israel would mourn over such destruction and carnage. The city gone, plowed under. The temple worship and priesthood gone. The Jews' favored status as a nation crushed by the wrath of God. Mourn? I would think so!

Matthew 24:30 - “And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

Comments:

We are still before our pivotal verse 34, and our dear Lord is still speaking of Jerusalem's terrible destruction. The language is again prophetic or figurative. We certainly know from holy scriptures that Jesus is on the right of God, and is reigning there now at this writing (Col 1:3, Acts 2:33; 7:56; Matt 26:64; Lk 22:69; Rom 8:3 4, Heb 1:3,13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2 and Eph 1:20). The above scriptures proclaim that Jesus is reigning in heaven on His throne, and is at God's right hand where He is our mediator (1 Tim 2:5). Jesus said in Matthew 28:18, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” Jesus is both sitting in heaven on His throne and coming in a figurative way. Jesus is using prophetic language when He said, “And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Coming in the clouds figuratively, but using Titus and his army to destroy Jerusalem and the temple, even though Jesus did not personally come to do it. Again, it is similar language used to depict God coming in judgement on the of Babylon, Egypt and Idumaea. The prophet Daniel called Nebuchadnezzar “God's servant,” but only in the sense that he was being used by God to bring His righteous judgement against Israel and Judah. Titus is playing the same part in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. God truly does rule in the “kingdom of men” (Dan 4:25).

Let us now take a moment and look at Matthew 26: 63,64:

“But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of

God. Jesus saith unto him, 'Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.'"

Comments:

Jesus told the high priest that he would see these things in his time. Did Jesus come again during the lifetime of the high priest? We know He did not. So we must affirm that Jesus was speaking figuratively and not literally to the high priest. Jesus was speaking of His fulfilled prophecy that "their house would be left desolate," speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (Matt 23:38). Here we again see Jesus depicted as sitting in heaven, reigning and coming figuratively in power and judgment.

In Isaiah 31:4 God is depicted as coming down to fight for Judah: "So shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof."

In Lamentations 2:1 we see more figurative language concerning the clouds and God's wrath: "How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger!"

Now for a real "jumping up and down" verse please turn to Psalms 104:3. We see here that the clouds are God's chariot: "Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind." What a powerful verse to parallel Matthew 24:30: "And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

To sum up, Jesus is speaking figuratively of the fulfillment of His prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Jesus, we can now plainly see, is not referring to His second coming, and the end of the world. We have used the holy scriptures as its own best commentary. Just remember the words of Isaiah 19:1 as God pronounced judgment on Egypt:

"Behold the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it."

Matthew 24:31 - "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

Comments:

Keep in mind that we are still not to our verse 34. We then understand that Jesus is speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, and not Jesus' second coming, and the end of the world.

At this point we will address the word "angels." The Greek word for angel is *aggelos*. *Aggelos* refers to a messenger, or agent. Also, passages such as Matthew 13:

41,42 and 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, angels are referred to as having a specific part in our Lord's second coming, and the end of the world. In the context of these passages *agge/los* is translated "angel" or "heavenly spirits." However, *agge/los* is translated "messenger" in the following scriptures:

Matthew 11:10 - John the Baptist was a messenger sent to pave the way for our Lord.

Luke 7: 24,27 - Followers of John the Baptist are called messengers. Luke 9:52 - Jesus sent messengers to the Samaritans.

In Revelation chapters 2 and 3 the apostle John writes to each of the seven churches of Asia (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea). We know that John was writing to those in authority in the churches who would be his messengers and relay our Lord's message to the congregations. John's letters to those churches were not sent to spirit beings, but human beings who would be earthly messengers. They then would inform the congregation by reading John's letters from the visions Jesus put before him ("What thou seest, write in a book...").

So as we can see that in Matthew 24:31 Jesus is talking about earthly messengers going forth "with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

In Joshua chapter 6, the description of the taking of the city of Jericho is climaxed by a blast on the trumpets followed by the shout of the Israelites. Then, and only then, did the walls of Jericho fall down. The year of Jubilee was the year after seven times seven years from its beginning, or the fiftieth year. This was the year heralded by the "sound of the trumpet." For this reason the occasion was called "Jubilee." Jubilee meaning "a joyful shout." The trumpets' blast was a sign to Israel's countrymen that all Israelites in bondage were to be given their freedom, and that their property was to be returned to those who had to sell because of poverty. Also, the ground in the year of Jubilee was to be left fallow. The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple would be as the sound of the trumpet heralding the final end of the old dispensation. The lineage records were even destroyed so the Jews could no longer prove what tribe they were from. The priesthood and its worship was also ended. Christians were no longer considered by Rome to be just a branch of Judaism. Therefore after 70 A.D. Rome's persecution of the Lord's church was greatly intensified. The persecution grew even stronger in the reign of Domitian (81 A.D. - 96 A.D.), and was continued by his predecessor, Nerva, and those emperors that followed. There would be persecution, but the millstone of Judaism would be lightened. After the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, Israel's favored nation status was at an end. With the heralding of a figurative trumpet, God's messengers will gather the elect (baptized believers), from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. The elect continue on with the preaching of the gospel which began at Pentecost - Acts chapter 2.

COMMENTARY # 8: THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE.

Matthew 24:32 - "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh."

Matthew 24:33 - "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors."

Comments: Matthew 24:32,33.

Just as you see the leaves come out on the fig tree (all the trees, Lk 21:29), you will know summer is nigh. When you see all these signs I have told you about you will know the destruction of Jerusalem is at hand. The key phrase in verse 33 is, "when you see all these things." What things, Lord? The things I have been telling you about until now. Especially verse 15, and Luke 21:20, "And when you see Jerusalem compassed about with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." Again, Jesus is giving us signs for the destruction of Jerusalem, but He tells us in Matthew 24:36 that there will be no signs of His coming, and the end of the world.

COMMENTARY # 9: OUR "PIVOTAL VERSE" 34 AND VERSE 35.

Matthew 24:34 - "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

Matthew 24:35 - "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

Comments: Matthew 24:34,35.

As we set the stage for this lesson, we said that the Greek word *genea* is translated "generation." *Genea*, meaning "a multitude of men living at the same time" (W. E. Vine, pg. 42). The same usage of *genea* is used in Mark 13:30, Luke 21:32 and Matthew 23:36. Jesus tells the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:36: "Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation (*genea*)." Jesus continues in Matthew 23:38: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." This means that the destruction of Jerusalem would take place in their generation. W. E. Vine, page 43, indicates that a "generation" is about 30 to 40 years. After Jesus' disciples ask Him, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign?" (Mk 13:4) our Lord then discusses the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, the signs leading up to that destruction, what to do and how to escape. This discussion starts in Matthew 24:4 and ends with our pivotal verse Matthew 24:34. The Christians of that generation understood His words of warning and heeded them when the time came. Josephus records that all the Christians escaped to Pella, a city of Decapolis, east of the Jordan river. Jesus' prophecies in these passages were fulfilled in 70 A.D. when Titus, the Roman general, destroyed Jerusalem and plowed it under. Jesus affirms His words of prophecy in Matthew 24:35 with these words, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Is it not wonderful to serve a Savior to whom all power in heaven and earth is given? God will always take care of his adopted sons and daughters!

COMMENTARY # 10: JESUS' SECOND COMING, AND THE END OF THE WORLD.

Matthew 24:36 - "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Mark 13:32 adds, "neither the Son."

Comments:

In the phrase, "But of that day," Jesus answers His four disciples' question regarding, "What shall be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt 24:3). One thing we can certainly store in our spiritual storehouse is that Jesus' prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem came true with such accuracy, that we must tremble when we think of "his coming, and the end of the world." No wonder we should make our calling and election sure, 2 Peter 1:10.

In Matthew 7:22, Jesus speaks the same words "that day," to refer to His second coming, and end of the world (final judgment). Let us take a look scripturally at the phrase "the last days." Television evangelists many times will say: "Christ is coming and we are now in the last days." They are saying that these are the days just before our Lord's second coming.

According to the word of God, "the last days" began with the coming of the Messiah, and will end at His second coming. Study carefully Hebrews 1:1,2; 1 John 2:18; 1 Peter 1:10 and Peter's commentary on Joel 2:28. Peter preached in Acts 2:16,17 on the Joel 2:28 account. These scriptures show that we are in the "last days" but they did begin with Jesus' first appearance on earth, and will end when He comes again.

We have established that the words "in that day" refer to Jesus' second coming. Jesus said in Mark 13:32, concerning His return, that the angels in heaven do not know the time and, while on earth, neither did Jesus. In light of this, how could any of the signs referred to by Jesus, in the verses prior to verse 34, be about anything but the destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus would certainly not be giving signs about events, the time of which He did not know.

Jesus goes on in Matthew 24:37-39 to compare the time before the flood, and the flood event, to His second return. Life will be going on as usual. Then without warning, just as the great flood came, Jesus will come without a sign or warning. Also, Jesus goes on to say in Matthew 24:40,41: "Then shall two be in the field; one will be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left."

WATCH THEREFORE! Matthew 24:42: "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

LIKE A THIEF! Matthew 24:43: "But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up."

THEREFORE BE READY! Matthew 24:44: "Therefore ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

Jesus said of His second coming, and the “end of the world:” There will be no signs. No one knows the hour (only God), things will be as normal, and Jesus will come as unexpectedly as a “thief in the night.” So watch and be ready!

Comments: Matthew 24:45-51 and Matthew 25.

Jesus spends the remainder of the chapter comparing the good servant and the bad servant. When the Lord of the house comes, he finds one fulfilling his task and the other is slothful. In verse 51, the evil servant is cast into the portion with the hypocrites: “there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” What a chilling account of His second coming, the end of the world, and judgment to come! Matthew 25 goes on as Jesus uses more parables to describe His second coming, the end of the world, and the final judgment.

I hope and pray this study has strengthened your faith, and given you a greater desire for Bible study. As we come down the slope of Mount Olivet, we look back and see our dear Lord and Savior departing with His four disciples. By studying our Bible we know Jesus is soon to be crucified, and rise again on the third day. Paul states, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that this is the gospel (1 Cor 15:1-4). Everyone will have to deal with that open tomb. Every man or woman will have to accept or reject it. Jesus said in John 14:6: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” Brothers and sisters, we do not want to be in the category of the unprofitable servant. Remember: “We are saved to serve, won to win and told to tell!” God bless you!

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