



## Intertestamental Period 400–4 B.C.

Second Temple Era

### Roman Contributions

- The Romans were mechanics not philosophers.
- They created the most elaborate government in the world up to that point.
- They knew how to administer a large empire.
- Citizenship was given to naturally born Italians, but could be earned by subjects through military service, or monetary purchase.
- Citizens were protected under the law, innocent until proven guilty, and could appeal their legal case to Caesar.
- In terms of capital punishment, citizens could only be beheaded.
- Paul took advantage of his citizenship (Acts 22:25-29 and Acts 25:11-12) – stops a beating & appeals to Caesar.
- Roman roads connected the empire and always led to Rome.
- Pax Romana provided a relative period of peace.
- Roman naval navigation had the currents of the Sea figured out (Acts 27).
- Demonstrates God's sovereignty – even in Christ's birth (Luke 2:1-6).

## Roman Religion

- Emperor worship (god in the Greek sense).
  - Subjects required to call Caesar as lord and pour libation at statue's feet.
- Syncretistic worship that adopted Greek system.
  - Zeus = Jupiter ; Hera = Juno ; Hermes = Mercury ; Poseidon = Neptune ; Aphrodite = Venus ; Aries = Mars ; Hades = Pluto ; Chronos = Saturn.
  - Other religions were adopted and conquered cultures were assimilated into Roman culture with conditions. Jews were the one exception. These were all religio lisita
- Mystery Religions were Eastern cults that competed with Christianity. Many were religio illisita.
  - Cybealian = worship of earth mother/ Isis & Dionysus
  - Mithras = savior religion. B-day is Dec 25.

## Jewish Culture

- This is the most important group to study.
  - Jesus, the Apostles, the early church, the Scriptures and the early Christian customs were all Jewish.
- The Jews were a dispersed people. After Babylonian Captivity, only 50,000 or 15% returned to the Holy Land. The rest stayed abroad.
  - When the Greeks took over, many settled in Greek cities. They did the same when the Romans took over. This is why Paul could go to Synagogues in any city.
- So many Jews were outside the Land that they built a temple in Heiropolis, Egypt. They made a Greek OT (Septuagint or LXX) – it paved the way for spread of Christianity.
- Both Jews in the Land and in diaspora expected the Messiah.

## Jewish Sectarianism

- Scribes and lawyers were responsible for copying Scriptures – emerged sometime after Ezra/Nehemiah.
  - By spending so much time in them, they became the experts on interpretation.
- The Pharisees were the largest party. Some trace their origin back to Ezra.
  - They were the good Jewish sect – purity of the Law, God as a loving Father for Israel, the Judge, personal responsibility, obligations to one's neighbor, resurrection of the dead, afterlife, & literal Messianic kingdom.
  - Many became corrupt, hypocritical, and bigoted by the time of the NT.
- The Sadducees were the party in political power. They denied the following.
  - No resurrection, angels, miracles, or Scriptures beyond Torah.

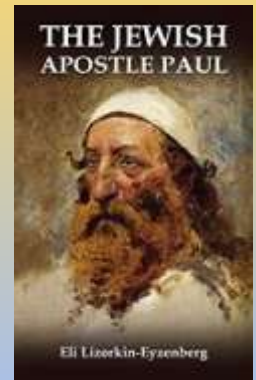
## Jewish Sectarianism

- The Essenes, and they are not mentioned in the NT. They saw the temple and society as corrupt.
  - Monastic Pharisees, Dead Sea Scrolls, pop of 4,000.
- The Zealots (Fourth Philosophy) shared the beliefs of the Pharisees, but were a militant wing.
  - Carried knives in their tunics and wanted to start a war with Rome to usher in Messianic era.
- Samaritans were people of mixed ancestry dating back to Babylonian Captivity.
  - The Jews considered them to be enemies.
- The Herodians were the patriots to the family of Herod the Great. They were Hellenists.
- Passages: Matt 7:28-29; Acts 23:6-8; Luke 6:15; Mark 3:6.



## Jewish Influence

- Jews contributed a great deal to the church.
  - Monotheism, morality and ethics, OT Scripture, the Synagogue (model for church), baptism (ritual washings), Lord's Supper (Passover), and the Messiah.
- They also contributed a high view of Scripture.
  - Hermeneutics (Peshat, Midrash, Peshet, etc.)
  - Theology (Kingdom; Present & Future ages; apocalypticism; etc.)
  - The NT itself is thoroughly Jewish.



## Jewish Influence

- It was not until after the death of the Apostles that the church left its Jewish flavor and began to be dominated by Western thinking.
  - Orthodox and Catholic Churches lost sight of Jewish roots. Protestants are correct in Sola Scriptura, but even they are largely ignorant of the Jewish context of the NT.
- Paul is a good mix of everything we spoke of.
  - An oriental raised in the East, yet educated in Western culture.
  - Communicated in Koine Greek, used Roman citizenship to assist in his mission work, yet was a Hebrew of Hebrews who took pride in being Jewish – had a burdened heart for his people.
  - Above all, Paul was a Christian, which in his case means completed Jew.

## Conclusion

- We have now closed the gap between the Old and New Testaments.
- The political situation changed through the succession of the Persian, Greek, and Roman empires.
- Historically, the Hebrew faith developed from Ezra's time to Christ's amid these political developments.
- The various Greek and Roman philosophies that are seen in Scripture have now been introduced.
- Put it all together:
  - Diaspora, roads, Pax Romana, sea currents, Jewish sectarianism, Koine Greek, etc., literally converge to create the world of the NT.