

The Life of Jesus Christ, Part 7

Setting the Stage, Part 6

The Greek Empire, Part 2

Alexander III (the Great) (ruled 336-323 BC)

- Student of Aristotle, great lover of Greek culture
- 20 years old when father assassinated
- Didn't want to just conquer militarily, but culturally
- The Greek city-states had beaten back the Persians 150 years before, but Alexander wanted to finally conquer them
- Spent a couple of years solidifying his support in Greece
- 334 BC: Captured Asia Minor
- 333 BC: Defeated Darius III of Persia at Issus, Darius escaped, but Alexander was able to use the spoils of war to pay his soldiers
- 332-331 BC: Moved south, secured Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine, Gaza, Egypt (called himself "Pharaoh"); one of Persia's great strengths was its fleet, Alexander knew he had to conquer the ports
- Some surrendered immediately to Alexander, but others didn't and were destroyed
- Tyre resisted: two-part city, on shore and island 1/2 mile offshore; Nebuchadnezzar had captured the city in 573 BC, after a 13-year siege; Alexander took the ruins of the city and threw them into the sea, making a causeway nearly to the island; sediment has accumulated over the centuries since, and the causeway and island became a peninsula
- Jerusalem received Alexander without a fight; according to Josephus, Alexander was shown the book of Daniel that had prophesied his success
- 331 BC: Went to Mesopotamia to finish off the Persians
- Gaugamela, near Arbela: defeated Darius again
- 330 BC: Captured Babylon, Susa, Persepolis, major cities of the Persians
- 327 BC: Advanced to India, army mutinied and force him to go back westward
- 323 BC: Died in Babylon, one month before his 33rd birthday: suggested causes: malaria, typhoid, alcohol poisoning, meningitis, pancreatitis, West Nile Virus, murder by poison, or an overdose of medication

Remind ourselves of Daniel 7:6; 8:5-8

After Alexander's death

Division of empire

Alexander had no viable heir; his wife was pregnant with Alexander IV when he died

Empire divided among a number of successors:

- Greece/Macedon (Antipater, later Cassander)
- Thrace/Asia Minor (Lysimachus)
- Most of Asia (Seleucus)
- Egypt/Palestine (Ptolemy)

Daniel 11:2-5: angel speaking: fourth Persian king = Xerxes (Ahasuerus); king of the South = Ptolemy; king of the North = Seleucus; following verses show alliances and then conflicts between these two kingdoms

Began to fight one another

Points of interest for Jewish/Christian history:

- 312 BC: Ptolemy I relocated a group of Jews from Jerusalem to Alexandria
- 301-200 BC: Ptolemies ruled Palestine; five wars fought with Seleucids over Palestine
- 200 BC: Seleucids begin rule of Palestine
- Seleucus I founded Antioch in 300 BC

Alexandria:

Founded by Alexander the Great in 331 BC

- On the Mediterranean Sea, the western edge of the Nile delta
- Became capital of Egypt after Alexander's death
- Became a center of Greek culture and commerce
- Ptolemy founded the library of Alexandria, the greatest library of ancient times, at one point over half a million volumes
- Lighthouse of Pharos, one of the wonders of the Ancient World: Pharos Island, connected by causeway, over 400 feet tall; tallest man-made structure for many years (except Great Pyramid of Giza); ultimately damaged by series of earthquakes around 1000 AD
- Septuagint begun in Alexandria, as many Jews had been forcibly removed from Palestine, and others had immigrated; adopted Hellenistic culture to varying degrees
- Home of Apollos

Septuagint

Greek translation of Old Testament

LXX: Why? Latin word meaning "70"; refers to 72 Jewish translators of the OT (originally Pentateuch) into Greek (6 from each of the 12 tribes), according to one tradition finished in 72 days

Begun under Ptolemy II (around 250 BC), possibly on the Island of Pharos, and finished perhaps 100 years later

Originally just the Pentateuch, and rest done over a period of years

Philo (1st century): translators "became as it were possessed, and under inspiration wrote, not each several scribe something different, but the same word for word, as though dictated to by an invisible prompter": legendary, but shows the respect given towards LXX

Was the Bible of Hellenistic Jews and early church: most quotes of OT in NT are from LXX

God preparing a way to spread His Word. Imagine if there had been no OT translation available in the time of Christ.