

# CHAPTER 1

## INTERTESTAMENT PERIOD

### Summary of the Intertestament Period

#### *Limits of the period*

The last Persian king mentioned in the OT appears to be Darius II (423-404 B.C.), called “Darius the Persian” (Neh 12:22).

The last canonical prophet was Malachi, who probably write about 430 B.C. Mal 3-4 predict the coming of John the Baptist and of Jesus.

We know that Nehemiah had died by 407 B.C., or at least had ceased to be governor of Judah, since the Elephantine Papyri from that time name the governor of Judah as Bigvai or Bagoas.

Thus we should date the intertestament period ca. 420 B.C. to the time of the annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist, ca. 7 B.C.

#### *Periods of rule*

The history of Israel from Nehemiah to Christ falls naturally into six sections, depending on who was ruling over Israel:

1. Persian rule (539-331 B.C.; ca. 200 years)
2. Greek rule under Alexander (331-323 B.C.; ca. 10 years)
3. Greek rule under the Ptolemies of Egypt (323-198 B.C.; ca. 125 years)
4. Greek rule under the Seleucids of Syria (198-164 B.C.; ca. 35 years)
5. Independence under the Hasmoneans (164-63 B.C.; ca. 100 years)
6. Roman rule (63 B.C. through NT times and beyond; ca. 400 years)

In general there were three major empires or cultures that ruled over Israel during these centuries: Persian, Greek, and Roman.

The prophet Daniel lived and wrote during the earlier Babylonian period and into the beginning of the Persian period. Dan 2 and 7 contain vivid predictions of the four great empires that would rule Israel—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome—which predictions were fulfilled during the intertestament period. Daniel also predicted a renewed Roman Empire with a final godless ruler, who would be destroyed by the Messiah, after which the Messiah and his saints would rule; premillennialists place these final events at the second coming of Christ. Dan 11 contains an extremely detailed prophecy of the political events of the intertestament period, especially periods #1-4. The accuracy of these predictions is so precise that all critical scholars and even some evangelical scholars do not believe that Daniel actually could have made these prophecies; as a result, they date the book of Daniel in the second century B.C., after these events transpired.

### ***The Jews at the beginning of the intertestament period***

Having been displaced and scattered by the Assyrians and Babylonians, the Jews were dispersed over much of the ANE. The new Persian rulers allowed the Jews to begin resettling Jerusalem and its surrounding region; a large Jewish community remained in Babylon; there was a mixture of Jews and other peoples in Samaria; Jews also lived in “Upper Egypt” along the Nile in the town of Elephantine.

During the Babylonian captivity the Jews learned to speak Aramaic as the popular language, while educated Jews still retained a knowledge of Hebrew. This state of affairs is evident by Nehemiah’s time (Neh 8:8). After Alexander’s conquests and during the following Hellenistic periods, Hellenistic Greek became the popular language of the whole region. In general Jews who lived in Judea continued to speak Aramaic, but the Jews who lived in the rest of the Hellenistic world spoke Greek.

Religiously, the Jews were chastened by the Babylonian Captivity, the returning Jews were largely monotheistic, with strong resistance to idolatry. During the persecutions under the Seleucids most Jews were willing to suffer and die to maintain their religion. When in captivity the Jews could not worship at the temple (which was destroyed in any account); so they developed the synagogue system. After the return and the rebuilding of the temple the synagogue system continued, along with the renewed worship in the temple.

### **Persian Rule (539-331 B.C.)**

Starting with Cyrus, who conquered Babylon in 539 B.C., and allowed the Jews to reoccupy Jerusalem, the Medo-Persian Empire boasted a line of great kings. The Persian policy was to show more autonomy to those nations under their control and to reverse the policy of forced emigration used by the Assyrians and Babylonians.

### ***The early Achemenians***

- Cyrus (559-530 B.C.)
  - Raised up by God to restore the Jews to the Promised Land (Isa 45:1-2). Policy confirmed in Cyrus Cylinder (Finegan *LAP*, fig. 86).
  - Return of governor Zerubbabel and high priest Jeshua to Jerusalem
- Cambyses (530-522 B.C.)
  - Finished expansion of the empire into Egypt.
- Darius I, the Great (522-486 B.C.)
  - Organized the empire: satrapies
  - Facilitated communications and travel
  - Made initial attack on Greece—the battle of Marathon (490 B.C.)
  - The Behistun Inscription honors him and shows him defeating his enemies; an ancient billboard monument between Bagdad and Teheran; it became the key to cracking the ancient Babylonian and Elamite languages.
- Xerxes I (486-465 B.C.)
  - Same as biblical Ahasuerus (Persian “Khshayarsha”) in the book of Esther
  - Feast of Purim (“lots”) established under him
  - Massive invasion of Greece, failed; battle of Salamis (480 B.C.)
- Artaxerxes I (465-424 B.C.)
  - Last of the powerful rulers of the empire
  - Return of priest and scribe Ezra to Jerusalem (458 B.C.)
  - Return of governor Nehemiah to Jerusalem (445 B.C.)

### ***The later Achemenians***

With the death of Artaxerxes I, the decline of the power of the Persian Empire increased rapidly. The later kings more or less capably presided over this decline.

- Xerxes II (423 B.C.)
  - Murdered in the first year of his reign
  - Marks the end of the legitimate line
- Darius II (423-405 B.C.)
  - Illegitimate son of Artaxerxes I

- Last Persian king mentioned in the OT
- Elephantine Papyri written under his rule (407 B.C.)
- Artaxerxes II (405-358 B.C.)
  - Almost killed at his coronation by his brother Cyrus
  - Lost control of Egypt (401 B.C.)
  - Same year, a Greek contingent of Cyrus's army fought its way through Persian territory all the way to the Black Sea. Leader was Xenophon, who recorded their experiences in his famous Anabasis. This event revealed Persia's internal weakness.
- Artaxerxes III (358-338 B.C.)
  - Regained Egypt in 343 B.C.
- Arses (338-336 B.C.)
- Darius III (336-331 B.C.)
  - Became king the same year as Alexander of Macedon
  - Was defeated by Alexander at the critical battle of Issus (333 B.C.)
  - Final defeat at Gaugamela (331 B.C.)

### ***The Jews under the Persians***

Very little is known about the Jews in Palestine during the fourth century, the time of the end of the Persian Empire. Apparently they possessed reasonable freedom. The few archaeological remains from the period show that Judah minted its own coins, and had its own "governor," possibly the high priest.

### **Jews in Babylon**

Most of the Jews taken captive remained in Babylon. After the time of Christ they produced the Babylon Talmud (written ca. A.D. 500). These Jews appear to have been well established and prosperous.

### **The Elephantine Papyri**

Elephantine is an island in the Nile River in Upper Egypt. It is far south from the mouth of the Nile, at the first cataract, opposite Aswan. In the early 1900s many papyri were

discovered there, including legal documents, commercial agreements, and letters. They were written in Aramaic, and show a thriving Jewish community there ca. 407 B.C.

The Jews in Elephantine apparently originated with mercenaries stationed there by the Egyptians nearly 200 years previously. They had built there a temple to “Yaho” and offered sacrifices.

The most interesting letter is a request for aid sent to Jews in Judah and to Samaria. Some Egyptians in a fit of nationalism had destroyed their temple, and the Jews were asking help to rebuild it (*ANET*, 491-492; see Würthwein [2<sup>nd</sup> ed.], plate 5).

## **The Samaritans**

Throughout the Persian period the rift between the inhabitants of Judah and of Samaria, begun under Zerubbabel and continued under Ezra and Nehemiah, continued to widen. Late in the fourth century the Samaritans built their own temple to Yahweh, on Mt. Gerizim.

## **Changes in Judah**

During the Persian period Aramaic, the lingua franca and the language of other nations in the region, began to replace Hebrew as the most commonly spoken language in Judah. In addition, the Jews adopted the Aramaic, “square” letter alphabet to write their Hebrew works, by and large discarding the older “Old Hebrew” alphabet (cf. fold-out comparison in Gesenius’s Hebrew Grammar).

During this time, many Greek speaking people came and settled in the Near East, and Greek culture began to influence Israel. By the time of Christ most Jews could speak three languages, Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek, as well as snatches of Latin.

## **Greek Rule under Alexander (331-323 B.C.)**

### ***Alexander’s background and beginning conquests***

Alexander was the son of Philip of Macedon, a very capable general and administrator. Philip was able to force the independent and warring city-states of Macedonia and Greece proper into a national identity.

Philip obtained the best teachers for his young son Alexander; foremost among them was Aristotle himself. Later Alexander always took a copy of the Iliad and the Odyssey with him on his campaigns.

Philip was murdered in 336 B.C. At this point the young Alexander was forced, for his own survival, to assume aggressive military leadership of the nation which his father had forged together.

Alexander was a natural genius leading his army. He quickly solidified his hold on Greece proper. To intimidate the Greeks, he captured and burned the city of Thebes and sold its inhabitants into slavery. Shortly afterward he took a small Macedonian army across the Dardanelles and captured the ancient city of Troy.

### ***Campaign against the Persians***

One of the great military leaders of all time, Alexander dominated the Persian leadership, even though vastly outnumbered. Alexander refined the phalanx system of attack and defense, developed by his father. In addition, he made superior use of his cavalry. However, his military genius was not matched by greatness of character, and his dissolute life contributed to his early demise. His kingdom was divided up among his generals. One thing he did succeed at was spreading his Greek culture. Vast regions of the ANE were “Hellenized” because of his conquests.

### **Battle of Issus (333 B.C.)**

At first Darius III of Persia did not take Alexander’s campaign seriously. But soon it became evident that Alexander intended to “liberate” all of Asia Minor from Persian control. Darius with a large army met Alexander at Issus, near the Cilician Gates. There Alexander’s superior military tactics, especially his cavalry attack, utterly routed the Persians, and even captured the royal household. Darius barely escaped with his life. This battle marks the end of Persia’s dominance over the Near East.

### **Occupation of Jerusalem (332 B.C.)**

In order to protect his southern flank, Alexander marched south to take Palestine and Egypt. Most cities surrendered to him; he received determined resistance from only two cities: Tyre, which fell after a siege of seven months, and Gaza, which was besieged two months. Probably during the siege of Gaza Jerusalem surrendered to Alexander. Josephus records a romantic version of this event (*Antiquities* 11:8:4-5), in which the high priest Jaddua met the young conqueror outside the city and showed him how he fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel (Dan 7:6; 8:5-8, 21; 11:3).

Alexander then spent the winter in Egypt and returned north in the spring of 331. While he was in Egypt, Alexander ordered the building of a great city on the site of a village at the mouth of the Nile; he placed the Greek architect Dinocrates in charge of the project. The new city (Alexandria) quickly grew and became a prominent commercial, intellectual, and cultural center for the entire Mediterranean world.

Alexander gave good terms to the Jews. According to Jewish tradition, the Samaritans desired to share in their favor; they told Alexander they were Jews, descendants of Joseph. Apparently in 331, as Alexander moved north through Palestine, there was some kind of revolt in Samaria, and the Greeks destroyed the city. From that time the Samaritans moved their civil and religious center to the ancient city of Shechem.

## **A new Alexander**

After Darius's final defeat at Gaugamela (331 B.C.) and his subsequent death, Alexander declared himself *basileus* ("king") and the "son of Ammon" (an Egyptian sun god), and he adopted the clothing and behavior of an Oriental potentate. This attitude is quite different from the Greek ideal, and strained the relation between him and his army. He also became increasingly cruel, as shown by his merciless sack of Persepolis. However, he also desired to instill the grandeur of Greek culture into the East. The popularized Greek culture was called "Hellenistic," in contrast to the pure "Hellenic" culture of Greece itself.

## **Alexander's later life and death**

Alexander continued to push his troops eastward, trying to incorporate the entire Persian Empire into his new Greek Empire. On the way to the Ganges Valley in India his army refused to go further, and he was forced finally to start making his way back to Greece.

Alexander's dissolute lifestyle led to his early death. He had recently married a Bactrian princess named Roxana, but before their child could be born, Alexander died in Babylon (323 B.C.). He was only thirty-two years old.

## **Alexander's successors, the *Diadochoi***

The Greek word *diadochos* means "successor" (in the NT only in Acts 24:27); the plural form is *diadochoi*; it is the title given to the Greek generals who carved up Alexander's empire among themselves after his death. One of them, Cassander, murdered Alexander's widow Roxana and his infant son Alexander IV, clearing the way for the generals to claim the rule.

After seven years of fighting four men emerged as the most powerful:

- Antigonus (Mediterranean Sea to Asia)
- Ptolemy Lagi (Egypt and south Syria)
- Cassander (Macedonia)
- Lysimachus (Thrace)

In 312 B.C. the other three Diadochoi contained the overambitious Antigonus, and in the next year Ptolemy's general Seleucus split off on his own and established himself as ruler of

Babylon and Syria. So there were still four rulers, fulfilling the predictions of Daniel (Dan 7:6; 8:8; 11:4). Of special importance to Jewish history were the Greek dynasties of the Ptolemies in Egypt and the Seleucids in Syria; Palestine became a political football between these competing families.

## **Egyptian Rule under the Ptolemies (323-198 B.C.)**

### ***Egyptian control of Jerusalem***

Ptolemy Lagi had already been made satrap of Egypt by Alexander, and he was able to defend his position against Antigonos and others. In 320 B.C. he was able to gain some control over Jerusalem. He desired to annex Palestine to add to his protection, but could not do so until Antigonos was defeated in 312 B.C.

In 312 B.C. Ptolemy took advantage of the Jews' refusal to fight on the Sabbath and entered the city of Jerusalem without opposition (Josephus *Contra Apion* and *Antiquities* 12:1:1).

### ***The Jews under the Ptolemies***

In general the Jews enjoyed tolerance and peace during the third century, but little in particular is known of the Jews in Judah during this time. Apparently they continued to live under the local rule of the high priest, sending annual tribute to Egypt.

### **The Tobiads**

During the rule of the Ptolemies the house of Joseph Tobias grew in power, wealth, and prestige. Many Jews believed that he was the descendent of Tobiah the Ammonite (Neh 2:10; 4:3, 7; 6:1-19). The Tobiads administered order and taxes in the Transjordan area. A Tobiah of Ammon is mentioned in the correspondence of Zeno, finance minister for Ptolemy II.

### **Simon the Just**

Simon was the greatest high priest during the Egyptian period. He directed the rebuilding of the city walls, the construction of a huge city reservoir, and the repairing of the temple. Also he was remembered as a great teacher of the law.

### **Jews in Egypt**

Archaeological evidence shows the presence of Jews all over Egypt during this time. The Ptolemies built up Alexandria to become the largest city in Egypt (it is still the second largest city in the country, after Cairo). From the beginning Ptolemy settled many Jews in the new city.

Alexandria became an important city for the Jews, with many thousands of Jews living there. The Jewish philosopher Philo and the Jewish Christian preacher and apologist Apollos hailed from Alexandria. That probably was the place of residence for Joseph and Mary when they fled from Herod with the baby Jesus.

### **The Septuagint (LXX)**

According to the pseudepigraphical Letter of Aristeas, seventy-seven Jews translated the law of Moses into Greek in Alexandria under the sponsorship of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 B.C.) Actually, the Jews living in Egypt soon began speaking Greek as their first language, and it was inevitable that they translate the OT into Greek. Several translations of the various books were produced over the years, and gradually certain ones achieved prominence, producing an unofficial Greek translation called the Septuagint (named after the Greek word for seven).

The LXX was used by the Jews of the dispersion, and thereby became widely distributed through the pagan nations, introducing them to the monotheism of the Jews. The Christians later made such effective missionary use of the LXX that the Jews after Christ felt compelled to produce several other Greek translations of the OT, and also reasserted their use of the Hebrew text.

### ***War with the Seleucids***

As soon as Seleucus I split from Ptolemy I in 311 B.C., the two dynasties fought with other for control of Palestine. This fighting continued off and on over a hundred years. These wars were accurately predicted in Dan 11, where “the king of the north” represents Seleucids, and “the king of the south” represents Ptolemies.

### **Syrian Rule under the Seleucids (198-164 B.C.)**

When the Greek family of the Seleucids in Syria grew strong enough to grasp Palestine away from the Ptolemies, they exerted a more stringent and harsh rule over the Jews than the Ptolemies had.

The capital of the Seleucid empire was the new city of Antioch, established by Seleucus I to honor his father Antiochus; this city often is called Antioch-Syria, to distinguish it from Antioch-Pisidia, a city Paul visited in the book of Acts. Situated about fifteen miles from the mouth of the Orontes River, Antioch was on the main trade routes, designed to rival the Ptolemaic Alexandria. It became one of the great cities of the Roman Empire. This was the city where Christianity made its first major inroads into the Gentiles, and where the believers first were called “Christians”; it was the center from which Paul based his missionary travels.

## ***Antiochus III, the Great (223-187 B.C.)***

During the third century the Seleucid empire grew weaker, until Antiochus III, the sixth king in line, took the throne. He was capable and ambitious, and was able to assert his rule over much of Asia and to add the territory of Palestine.

### **Struggles for Palestine**

When Theodotus, general for Ptolemy IV, Philopater, defected to Antiochus III, Antiochus attacked Ptolemy at Raphia (217 B.C.). Because of brave leadership, Ptolemy was able to defeat the Syrians at that time.

Note: Dan 11:11 predicts this battle, and is more accurate than 3 Macc 1:9-11, 24, which purports to record that same battle.

Ptolemy IV died in 203 B.C., and was succeeded by the very young Ptolemy V. Antiochus III took advantage of his extreme youth and defeated his army at Panium (Caesarea Philippi) in 198 B.C.

This began Syrian rule over Palestine. The Jews in Jerusalem received Antiochus cordially, and he seemed a generous conqueror, giving them many benefits.

### **Hannibal and Antiochus III**

The Romans had recently defeated the Carthaginians in the Second Punic War (202 B.C.), and Hannibal came to live under the protection of Antiochus III. Hannibal convinced Antiochus to attack Greece, and thus expand his empire and contain Rome. If Antiochus had been successful, he would have been a greater threat to the Romans. So the Romans declared war against him, chased him out of Greece, and defeated and captured him at Magnesia, between Sardis and Smyrna in Asia Minor (190 B.C.).

### **Indemnity to the Romans**

Rome stripped Antiochus III of Asia Minor, and forced him to surrender his navy and his war elephants.

They also demanded a huge payment, to be spread over twelve years. To assure payment, which amounted to tons of silver, the Romans took as one of their hostages his younger son, to become Antiochus IV.

To meet this crushing annual payment, Antiochus was forced (as were his successors) to levy burdensome taxes and to plunder temples. Eventually, this led to his death, as he was murdered in an attempt to rob a temple in Elam.

## **Antiochus IV, Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.)**

Antiochus IV is remembered as the wicked and cruel persecutor of the faithful Jews in Jerusalem. His career was predicted by Daniel (Dan 11:21-35). His place in Judaism rivals that of Nero in Christian history.

### **Antiochus made king**

As a boy he was taken as a hostage to Rome, where he lived twelve years. There he further imbibed the Hellenistic spirit, and learned a healthy respect for Roman power.

When his father Antiochus III was murdered, he was succeeded by his older son Seleucus IV. Still desperately trying to get money, Seleucus tried to confiscate wealth from the Jerusalem temple, but the high priest Onias III defended the temple, traveling to Antioch to present his case.

In 175 B.C., as Antiochus was coming home from Rome, Seleucus IV was assassinated, making the younger brother Antiochus IV king. He proclaimed himself “Epiphanes” (“God is manifested”).

### **Onias III and Jason**

While the high priest Onias III was in Antioch defending the rights of the temple, his brother Joshua, who used the Greek name Jason and favored Hellenism, paid a large bribe to Seleucus and was declared by him to be the new high priest.

Jason immediately instituted a policy of pro-Hellenism. He built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, where pagan Greek games and ceremonies were practiced. Young men competed there in the nude, and some even underwent a surgical operation to disguise their circumcision. Even most priests were corrupted by his leadership. Throughout Judea many leading Jews openly ridiculed Jewish customs and ordinances. They were seeking to make Jerusalem the “New Antioch.”

### **The Hasidim**

Soon many priests and other Jews broke away from Jason and tried to stay loyal to the law; they supported the rightful high priest Onias III. This party was called the Hasidim, from the Hebrew word *chesedh*, meaning “pious” or “faithful.” The modern Hasidic Jews use the same name.

## **Menelaus**

Jason had ruled as high priest only three years before he was displaced by another high priest, even more wicked than himself. Menelaus offered an even larger bribe to Antiochus IV, and the king removed Jason and gave Menelaus the office. According to 2 Maccabees Menelaus was not even in the tribe of Levi, but was a Benjamite. However, some MSS place him in the priestly line, but not in the Zadokite family.

Menelaus took the office and began to plunder the temple to pay the bribe to Antiochus IV. Jason meanwhile fled across the Jordan. Menelaus arranged to have Onias III murdered.

In 169 B.C., while Antiochus IV was warring in Egypt, Jason crossed the Jordan, attacked the city, trapped Menelaus, and began to rule. Jason showed bad judgment in killing many Jews, and he lost support and had to flee the city once again. When Antiochus IV returned, he restored Menelaus; at that time he had the walls of Jerusalem destroyed and slaughtered many Jews and sold many others as slaves. The Akra dominated the city for twenty-five years before the Jews could take it.

One of the most serious acts of Menelaus was helping the Syrians to build the Akra, a large castle-fortress near the temple in Jerusalem. The Akra housed hundreds of Syrian soldiers and apostate Jews. When Antiochus IV returned from Egypt,

## **The great persecution**

In 168 B.C. Antiochus IV had begun a successful campaign in Egypt, but before he could capture Alexandria a large fleet of Roman ships arrived, and the Roman legate, C. Popilius Laenus, an old school chum of Antiochus's in Rome, warned him to turn back. The Romans would not permit the Syrians to get too powerful and take Egypt. Thus Antiochus was forced to return through Palestine empty handed and humiliated. In this frame of mind he began two years of horrible persecution.

Antiochus IV broke the word of his father, who had promised to Jews freedom to practice their own religion. When he returned from Egypt, Antiochus began his hostile Hellenization campaign by attacking Jerusalem on the Sabbath, killing thousands of Jews, destroying the walls, stripping the temple, carrying away 10,000 Jewish slaves, and building the Akra.

He then insisted that the Jews syncretize their religion with pagan Greek worship and emperor worship. Thus he introduced pagan worship into Jerusalem, even into the temple. He directed his Greek soldiers and their paramours to perform licentious rites in the temple courts; he made drunken orgies to Bacchus compulsory. In December 167 he had a statue of Zeus erected in the temple, and finally he offered a sow on the altar.

This Greek god in Syria was known as "Baal Shamem," which Daniel's wordplay in Hebrew describes as *shiqquts meshomem*, translated into English as "abomination of desolation/appalling sacrilege" (F. F. Bruce, *NT History*, 4).

In all these defilements Menelaus and his priests gladly participated. The Jews called the final pagan deeds “the abomination of desolation,” quoting Daniel (this deed is prophesied in Dan 11:30-31; cf. 1 Macc 1:54; on the other hand, Dan 9:27 and 12:11 seem to refer to the final abomination of the Antichrist; cf. Matt 24:15; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:14-15; in the structure of Daniel, Antiochus Epiphanes is pictured as a type of the future Antichrist).

As Antiochus grew more fanatical and vicious, the Jews mockingly called him, not Epiphanes, but Epimanes (“madman”).

Finally the king carried his orders to their natural conclusion: he forbade the practice of the Jewish religion. He destroyed all copies of the Scripture; he forbade any Jewish observances; he forbade circumcision; and he demanded that all Jews sacrifice on heathen altars and eat pig’s flesh. All these orders carried the death penalty for refusal. 2 Maccabees 7 records the valiant testimonies of Jewish martyrs who refused to disobey the regulations of the Torah. These martyrs are mentioned also in Heb 11:33-40.

### **The Samaritans**

Meanwhile, the Samaritans, eager to protect their interests, assured Antiochus IV of their cooperation. They said they were not Jews, but Sidonians. They renamed their temple on Mt. Gerezim “the temple of Jupiter Hellenius.” This duplicity contributed to increased hatred by the Jews in NT times.

### **Independence under the Hasmoneans (164-63 B.C.)**

For a relatively brief period of a hundred years the Jews in Jerusalem enjoyed a time of independence under a Jewish dynasty. However, during the earlier period they were under threat from the more powerful kingdom of Syria, and later in the period were subservient to Rome, until the Romans took official control in 63 B.C.

### ***The original Maccabees***

The Maccabee brothers led in the revolt against Antiochus IV and the Syrians, achieved victory, and ruled in turn over the small, newly-independent nation of Judah.

### **Mattathias of Modin**

Modin was a village located about 20 miles NW of Jerusalem, and only 10 miles east of the provincial district capital Lydda, where Syrian troops were stationed. When the emissary of Antiochus came to Modin to enforce the new regulations, an old priest who lived there rushed forward and killed the emissary and an apostate Jew about to sacrifice.

Mattathias took his five sons and other loyal Jews and fled to the mountains, probably the Gophna Hills, about 15 miles to the NE. There many other Hasidim joined them. From their mountain base the family of Mattathias conducted guerrilla warfare against the Syrians and their sympathizers. They decided that it was permissible to fight on the Sabbath for self defense.

The revolt began late in 167 B.C., and within a few months Mattathias died of old age. Before he died, he appointed his son Judas, his third son, to be the military leader. The five brothers:

- John
- Simon
- Judas
- Eleazar
- Jonathan

All these men were capable; three ruled over Judah in turn; all of them died violent deaths.

### **Judas Maccabee**

Judas was an extremely capable military leader, and with his small force he was able to defeat several larger forces sent against him. By so doing, he became known as “Maccabee,” “the hammer.”

The most important victory for Judas was the battle at Emmaus (165 B.C.). There he defeated the armies of three generals by his superior tactics. Since Antiochus IV was busy fighting wars in the East, Judas was eventually in control of Judea, except for the Syrians stationed in the Akra.

Finally, 25 Kislev (Dec. 25), 164 B.C., Judas was able to gain control of the temple area (but not the Akra) and lead the Jews in purifying and rededicating the temple in Jerusalem. The cleansing of the temple was made a national holiday, Hanukkah (Feast of Lights, Feast of Dedication; John 10:22). During the next year Antiochus IV died in Persia, and was succeeded by his young son Antiochus V.

After taking the temple, the Maccabee brothers continued to conduct successful military campaigns throughout Palestine. But in 162 B.C. the Syrian general Lysius came with a huge army to retake Jerusalem. In a great battle south of the city Eleazar, a younger brother, was killed by an elephant. Lysius and Antiochus V went on to capture the temple area and breach the walls, but they did not interfere with the Jewish worship.

In that same year Demetrius I, a rival for the throne of Syria, captured and executed Antiochus V. He sent this general Bacchides to control Judea. Bacchides had Menelaus executed and installed as high priest a man from the Aaronic line named Alcimus. Most of the Hasidim agreed to recognize Syrian rule and recognized Alcimus. Judas, hiding in the Gophna

Hills, warned them that religious independence required political independence, but the Hasidim refused to heed his advice.

It was not long before Alcimus and Bacchides revealed themselves as enemies of the Jews; they both soon executed many Jews and began supporting Hellenism. Alcimus even had the Hasidim leaders murdered.

In 161 B.C. Bacchides took a large army to drive Judas out of the mountains. Judas met the army with only 800 men, and was killed in the battle. His three brothers, under the leadership of Jonathan, fled to Tekoa, in the Judean desert.

### **Jonathan**

For the next ten years Jonathan rebuilt his base of support. In one skirmish with the Syrians John was killed; so the only brothers left were Jonathan and Simon.

By ca. 150 B.C. Jonathan was the *de facto* ruler of Judah, controlling the entire area, except the Akra in Jerusalem. He also had been awarded the title of high priest by one of the contenders for the Syrian throne.

Jonathan sent a message to Rome assuring them that Judah desired to be “a friend of Rome.” In less than 100 years, Rome would conquer Jerusalem.

In 142 B.C. there were two contenders for the Syrian throne, Tryphon and Demetrius II. Tryphon wanted Jonathan’s support, but tricked him. He invited Jonathan to Ptolemais with only 1,000 men with him. There Tryphon had all his men killed, and imprisoned and finally murdered Jonathan himself. Now only one brother was left, Simon.

### **Simon**

Simon quickly made an alliance with Demetrius II, who was then able to take the throne of Syria. In 142 B.C. Demetrius II officially granted independence to Judea, along with immunity from taxation. In the following year the Jews finally were able to drive the Syrian garrison out of the Akra. They tore it down and build the Hasmonean palace on its foundations.

The Hasidim gave Simon the title “Leader and High Priest forever,” that is, “until there should arise a faithful prophet” to instruct them further (1 Macc 14:25-49). The descendents of Onias III had moved to Egypt, thus forfeiting the high priesthood. Thus Simon began the Hasmonean dynasty, named after an ancestor named Hashmon (or Asmonaeus).

In 135 B.C. Simon and two of his sons treacherously were murdered by an ambitious son-in-law. Simon’s third son John Hyrcanus escaped.

## ***The later Hasmoneans***

The family descending from the Maccabees became a typical dynastic ruling family, adopting the attitudes and methods of the other rulers in the region. Eventually they left their original purpose, supporting pious Judaism, and became enemies of the Hasidim who had originally supported them.

### **John Hyrcanus (135-104 B.C.)**

John Hyrcanus, son of Simon, was the first in this dynasty to be a second-generation leader; he did not appreciate the convictions and sacrifices of his predecessors. In the early part of his rule John Hyrcanus had to beware of Antiochus VII, the last strong king of the Seleucid line. When that king died in 129 B.C., Hyrcanus was free to expand his holdings.

First Hyrcanus took territory in Perea; then he conquered the Idumeans, the Edomites then living to the south of Judea. He forced the Idumeans to be circumcised; later King Herod the Great would come from this tribe. Hyrcanus also conquered the Samaritans to the north, and defeated several strong Greek cities in the region, which blocked further expansion into Galilee. He thus opened up the way for his son to annex Galilee.

During the rule of Hyrcanus an important religious and political development occurred in Judea itself. When Antiochus VII died and the Syrians gave up serious interference in Judea, the Jewish Hellenizers lost their reason for being. They therefore tended to become supporters of the king. They became known as Sadducees. On the other hand, the Hasidim, who had been the more popular party and associated with the common people, tended to oppose the increasing power of the Hasmonean family. They were then called Pharisees. By the end of his reign, John Hyrcanus openly lined up with the Sadducees. Although the Pharisees could not criticize his personal life, which was flawless, they did oppose his holding the two offices of secular ruler and high priest.

### **Aristobulus I (104-103 B.C.)**

Aristobulus, the oldest son of Hyrcanus, assumed the rule in typical tyrannical fashion: he murdered one brother and starved two other brothers and his mother to death in prison.

He was the first Hasmonean to assume the title “king.” Josephus mentions the Pharisees for the first time in this historical context. During his short reign he continued the nation’s territorial expansion north all the way to Mt. Lebanon, incorporating the territory of Galilee. This area already contained many Jews, and became quite loyal to Judaism.

Aristobulus reigned only one year, dying as a result of drinking and disease. His widow’s name was Salome Alexandra.

### **Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 B.C.)**

Jannaeus was a surviving brother of Aristobulus. When Aristobulus died, Salome Alexandra had him released from prison and then married him. Jannaeus killed one surviving brother, but let his last one live in retirement.

Jannaeus was always seeking to add to Israel's possessions. Under him Israel reached its greatest extent during the period. He took land all around the Dead Sea, the Philistine coast, most of the Greek cities east of the Jordan and the Sea of Galilee, and the coast south of Mt. Carmel.

He was interested in building a Jewish navy. Boats are engraved on coins of the period, and on the family tomb in Modin.

One significant appointment was the man Alexander Jannaeus made governor of Idumea—Antipater, grandfather of Herod the Great.

During the reign of Jannaeus the strife between Sadducees and Pharisees broke out into open civil war. In the Feast of Tabernacles Jannaeus, as the high priest, poured a water libation at his feet, rather than on the altar, as the Pharisees required (cf. John 7:37-38). The enraged worshippers pelted him with citrons, and Jannaeus's troops slaughtered many of them. The Pharisees called on Syria for aid (an irony), and Jannaeus and the Sadducees fled to the hills for safety. Soon, however, most of the Pharisees recanted and defected to Jannaeus; the Syrian soldiers were sent home. Alexander returned to Jerusalem, but rather than seek reconciliation, he assured permanent hatred for himself. He gave a great banquet for his Sadducee friends, and during the festivities the banqueters watched as he had 800 Pharisees crucified.

By now some purist Hasidim, who would become the Essenes, had withdrawn from the religious/political centers of Judea into the deserts. Some of the sectarian Dead Sea Scrolls describe a Wicked Priest, who kills a Teacher of Righteousness. Most scholars identify these men as Alexander Jannaeus and an unknown Pharisee leader.

According to tradition Jannaeus on his death bed instructed his wife to seek reconciliation with the Pharisees. When he died he left his widow Salome Alexandra, who now had outlived two kings.

### **Salome Alexandra (76-67 B.C.)**

When Alexandra finally became queen, she was 70 years old. She quickly made peace with the Pharisees, and during her rule the Pharisees were able to exact some vengeance on the Sadducees.

Since she was a woman, Alexandra could not be high priest. She appointed her elder son Hyrcanus to that position. She made her younger son Aristobulus head of the army.

During this decade the Jews enjoyed some peace. Alexandra's brother, Simeon ben-Shetah, the president of the Sanhedrin, instituted universal elementary education throughout Israel, to take place in the synagogues. The main subject was the Hebrew Scriptures.

As Alexandra grew older the two brothers began to oppose each other, Hyrcanus favoring the Pharisees and Aristobulus the Sadducees.

### **Civil war: Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II (67-63 B.C.)**

When Alexandra died in 67 B.C. strife broke out immediately. Hyrcanus II, the rightful heir, claimed the crown, but he meekly retired from office when Aristobulus arrived with the Sadducees and at the head of his army. Hyrcanus soon fled for refuge to his allies in the south, Aretas III of the Nabateans (Arabs in Petra) and Antipater II of the Idumeans. These kings supported the claims of Hyrcanus, hoping to use him to secure and strengthen their own positions.

Aristobulus quickly crowned himself Aristobulus II and sought to confirm his claim by having his son Alexander marry the daughter of Hyrcanus, Alexandra.

Aided by Aretas and Antipater, Hyrcanus was able to seize most of Judea, taking the countryside first. The warfare between the two brothers continued for several months, but news of their fighting reached the Roman general Pompey, who was campaigning in the East. Pompey, eager to add to his conquests, moved south to "arbitrate."

### **Roman Rule (63 B.C. – NT times)**

The Roman Empire, the fourth kingdom predicted by Daniel (ch. 2, 7), was approaching its greatest power during the NT era. By the time the Romans took control of Israel they had spent several centuries growing from a local and regional power to the most powerful empire in the world.

#### ***Pompey***

After defeating Antiochus III of Syria, the Roman Empire assimilated most of the western Hellenistic states. By the first century B.C. Rome was expanding into the Eastern Empire.

Pompey, one of Rome's greatest generals, had been busy defeating the king of Pontus, and in 64 B.C. proceeded to enter Damascus and annex the province of Syria to the Roman Empire.

When news of the war between Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II first reached him, he dispatched an ambassador and ordered the fighting to cease; when it did not, he marched south.

In 63 B.C. Pompey determined that Hyrcanus was a more profitable candidate for ruler, and forced Aristobulus to surrender. But some of Aristobulus's supporters held out in Jerusalem, barricading themselves in the temple area and on the hill of the Old City. When Pompey reached Jerusalem with his army, the supporters of Hyrcanus let him enter the western half of the city, from where he besieged the eastern part for three months. He rebuilt the bridge with a ramp joining the two parts of the city and finally took the temple and the rest of the city. About 12,000 Jews were killed in the fighting. Pompey did not interfere with Jewish worship or practices, but he did out of curiosity enter the most holy place in the temple, thus alienating the Jews from Rome.

The pseudepigraphal "Psalms of Solomon" (ca. 50 B.C.) excoriated Pompey posthumously and anonymously: "I had not long to wait before God showed me the insolent one slain on the mountains of Egypt . . . with none to bury him, since he had rejected God with dishonor." (2:30-32)

Pompey incorporated Palestine into the Roman province of Syria (cf. Matt 4:24) and appointed Hyrcanus II to be ethnarch and high priest, which offices he held 63-40 B.C.

Pompey granted semi-autonomy to Samaria and to the Greek cities of the Decapolis, formerly under the control of the Hasmoneans. Galilee remained under Jewish jurisdiction.

Under Pompey's arrangements the real power behind the throne in Judea was the capable Antipater II. He was entrusted with the actual administration of the district.

## **Julius Caesar**

Julius Caesar was a great Roman general who eventually came to dominate all the Roman Empire. While not elevated by the Senate to the status of emperor before his murder, since the Roman republic allowed no such honor, he achieved during his life the *de facto* power of an emperor.

## **Campaign against Pompey**

As soon as Pompey achieved fame and power in the East, Julius Caesar began becoming more powerful in the West. Conflict between the two was inevitable. Their competition escalated to war, and finally was resolved when Julius Caesar pushed Pompey from power and pursued him to Egypt, where he was murdered. During the final stages of the war Antipater II and Hyrcanus II gave valuable aid to Caesar by sending relief to Caesar while he was besieged in Alexandria.

## **Antipater II, Phasael and Herod**

In gratitude Caesar confirmed Hyrcanus's appointment as ethnarch and appointed Antipater procurator of Judea (47 B.C.). Caesar also added to Judea several territories taken from it by Pompey.

Antipater II then appointed his two sons to important posts. His older son Phasael he made governor of Jerusalem, and his younger son Herod he designated governor of Galilee.

### ***Cassius and Brutus***

In 44 B.C. Brutus and Cassius led in the assassination of Julius Caesar in Rome. Cassius, proconsul of Syria, quickly seized control of Antipater's territory. Cassius was quite tyrannical, but Antipater aided him and raised taxes for him.

The following year Antipater II was murdered, but young Herod stepped in, executed the murderers, and restored order in the territory. In 42 B.C. Phasael and Herod were appointed joint rulers of all Judea.

### ***Mark Anthony and Octavian***

Octavian was Julius Caesar's nephew, a clever politician and statesman; Mark Anthony was the most powerful general. Together they defeated Cassius and Brutus in the battle of Philippi (42 B.C.). Many of Anthony's troops remained there in Philippi, which was granted the status of a Roman colony, making them all Roman citizens (Acts 16:12; cf. Phil 1:27; 3:20).

Mark Anthony controlled the eastern part of the empire; and although Phasael and Herod had supported Cassius, they quickly switched allegiance to Anthony, and were confirmed in their position.

In 40 B.C. the Parthians invaded Palestine and set up as ruler Antigonus, of the house of the Hasmoneans (40-37 B.C.). They captured and imprisoned Hyrcanus II and Phasael. Hyrcanus they maimed so as to make him ineligible for the priesthood. Phasael committed suicide in prison.

Herod managed to escape the Parthians. He fled south from Jerusalem into the desert, then crossed the Dead Sea and sought refuge in Petra. When the Arabs refused him protection, he moved on to Alexandria, and finally made his way to Rome.

In Rome Herod made a good impression on Octavian and Anthony, who persuaded the Senate to appoint him "king of the Jews" (40 B.C.; cf. Luke 19:11-12). In addition, the Romans also added additional parts of Samaria and Idumea to his kingdom. But at this point his kingdom was only theoretical; it was actually in the control of Antigonus and the Parthians.

## ***Herod the Great (37-4 B.C.)***

Herod is famous as the king under whom Jesus was born, and for his jealous cruelty when he sought to destroy the young Jesus and killed all the baby boys in Bethlehem.

### **Capture of Judea**

Having been proclaimed king, Herod set out the following year to seize his kingdom from the Parthians and Antigonus. He had the support of Roman troops. First he recaptured Galilee; then he took parts of the kingdom of Idumea and eastern Galilee. His first attack on Jerusalem failed when Antigonus bribed his Roman soldiers and they left the city. The next year Roman help was more effective; Herod retook much of the Jordan valley and Judah and again besieged Jerusalem.

Finally Jerusalem fell to Herod; Antigonus was executed; many Jews were slaughtered also (37 B.C.). To strengthen his claim to the throne, during that same year Herod married Mariamne, the Hasmonean princess, granddaughter of both Hyrcanus II and Aristobolus II.

### **Octavian becomes Caesar Augustus**

While Herod was fighting for Judea, Mark Anthony was fighting the Parthians, but Anthony was beaten by them and retreated to Alexandria. There he fell into the control of Cleopatra, heiress of the Ptolemies. Anthony abandoned his wife Octavia, the sister of Octavian, and openly produced his infant son by Cleopatra as his heir. This was the pretext for the war that developed between the two leaders; this war, however, was more a natural result of the power struggle between Anthony and Octavian.

Octavian won the decisive victory in the naval battle of Actium (31 B.C.). He was then the ruler of the whole Roman Empire. In the next year Octavian conquered Alexandria, and Anthony and Cleopatra committed suicide.

All during the war Herod had supported Anthony. Now that Anthony had lost, Herod promised the same allegiance to Octavian. The new emperor, now titled Caesar Augustus (“august, majestic”), accepted Herod’s promise, and even added to his domains. Actually, during his rule Herod nearly doubled the size of his kingdom by royal decrees from Rome. Augustus enjoyed a long reign as the first emperor of Rome (31 B.C. – A.D. 14), although he never sought the title from the Roman Senate, instead being titled “Princeps” (“First Citizen”). He outlived Herod by ten years. It was under his rule that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and lived as a child in Nazareth (Luke 2:1). Jesus’ adult years, ministry, and death were under the next emperor, Tiberius (14-37 A.D.; Luke 3:1).

### ***Herod’s family troubles***

In spite of Roman support and administrative capability, Herod never achieved popularity with the Jews. They looked on him as an Idumean upstart, and considered the Hasmonean house the true royal family. Herod tried to help himself by marrying into that family. He loved his wife Mariamne passionately, but his life was also jealous, cruel, and unreasonable. Also he was insanely jealous of his power.

For these reasons Herod was suspicious of everyone. He executed most of his family and friends during his long reign. He had ten wives in all, and murdered most of his children. Octavian mockingly said that he would rather be Herod's hog (Greek *hus*) than his son (*huios*)!

### ***Herod's building projects***

Herod sought to enhance his reputation by sponsoring many building projects both within and outside of his kingdom.

#### **Construction outside Jerusalem**

Herod donated many buildings and temples to other peoples to be built in their territories. This generosity was a part of his effective foreign policy.

Within his kingdom Herod established several cities; the most renowned was Caesarea, the "capital on the sea." He also rebuilt Samaria, renaming it Sebaste, in honor of Augustus. In addition, Herod built many gymnasiums, baths, parks, and streets throughout Judea, Samaria, and Galilee.

Herod built a number of fortresses: the Herodium near Jericho; Macherus on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea; and the famous Masada on the western shore of the Dead Sea, where the last valiant band of Jews held out against the Romans until A.D. 73.

#### **Construction in Jerusalem**

Herod built a magnificent palace for himself in the northwest corner of the Upper City (Western Hill), and capped it with three magnificent towers, named after Phasael, Mariamne, and his friend Hippicus. The base of the largest tower, Phasael, still remains, and today is called the Tower of David.

Herod rebuilt and enlarged the old Maccabean fortress just north of the temple, called Baris, and renamed it Antonia in honor of his friend Mark Anthony. Josephus's description of this fortress is difficult to interpret precisely. It has been thought that Antonia possessed four large towers, one on each corner. But now archeological research has shown that it probably consisted of only one tower. Furthermore, the celebrated "Lithostrotos" pavement now under the monastery of the Sisters of Zion, has been shown to be not from Herod's time, but the floor of a

Roman forum built by Hadrian 150 years later. Jesus' trial under Pilate probably took place in Herod's palace, not in the Antonia.

[See P. Benoit, "The Archaeological Reconstruction of the Antonia Fortress," *Jerusalem Revealed: Archaeology in the Holy City 1968-1974*, ed. by Yigael Yadin (1976).]

Herod sponsored various civic improvements in Jerusalem. He built a theater in the Upper City and a stadium in the Tyropoeon Valley. Also he built an additional protective wall south and east of the Upper City, and rebuilt the wall north of the Mishneh, and east of Ophel.

## **Herod's Temple**

The greatest achievement of Herod's building projects was the new temple and its surrounding courts and buildings. He began the work in 19 B.C. And we know from John 2:20 ("This temple has been forty-six years in building") that Jesus must have begun his ministry in the year A.D. 27. Work on the temple area was not completed until A.D. 64, only six years before it was all destroyed by the Romans.

The temple represented Herod's major effort to win the loyalty of the Jews, and while the Jews loved the magnificent temple, they still mistrusted and despised Herod.

In order not to offend the Jews, Herod specially trained the Jewish priests in construction, that they might themselves build the temple, lest Gentile hands should defile it. The new temple was twice the size of the old one, dating back to Zerubbabel. It was built around the old temple, and then the old one was dismantled and removed. Herod spared no pain or expense to make the temple the most magnificent structure in that part of the empire, and it was admired by all visitors, and the pride of the Jews (cf. Matt 23:16; 24:1).

In addition to the temple itself Herod built up the whole temple mount. He doubled the area of the temple esplanade, and built beautiful porticos, walls, gates, and stairways. Especially renowned was the "royal portico," a huge basilica at the south end of the temple area. He also constructed a large staircase leading from the SW corner of the temple mount down into the Tyropoeon Valley and the Lower City. It was thought earlier that this "Robinson's Arch" was a second bridge to the Upper City, but now archeologists have shown it to be the beginning of this great stairway (see B. Mazar, "The Archaeological Excavations near the Temple Mount," in *Jerusalem Revealed*).

Fine examples of large Herodian stone blocks can be seen on the southern portions of the eastern and western retaining walls around the temple mount. These blocks form the lower visible rows of the Western Wall ("Wailing Wall"). The largest one is 35 feet long! The heaviest stones weigh ca. 100 tons.

## ***Herod's last days and death***

As Herod grew older, he grew more and more suspicious, hostile, and cruel. By the time of his death he had lost the confidence and favor of the Romans. This fact can explain why Quirinius could order a tax registration in Herod's kingdom ca. 8 B.C.

Herod's claim to fame in history is his order to slay all the male infants in Bethlehem (Matt 2:16-18). Although this foul deed is not recorded in secular history, it was no worse than many other atrocities he committed, and it fits the pattern of his life. His insane jealousy for power surely would not have allowed unchallenged even an infant's claim to be "king of the Jews" (Matt 2:2).

In 4 B.C., shortly after the birth of Jesus, Herod contracted a terrible disease, described in gruesome detail by Josephus. Some have suggested dropsy, or cancer of the intestines. Josephus says that Herod knew the people would rejoice when he died; so he imprisoned the principal Jewish leaders and ordered that they should be executed when he died, so that there would be mourning in Jerusalem on that day. Fortunately, that order was not carried out.

### ***Division of Herod's kingdom***

Right up to the time of his death Herod kept executing his sons and heirs and rewriting his will; the final will was written only five days before he died. In the end three of his younger sons inherited the kingdom. Because of strife by the sons over Herod's will, the Romans did not bestow the title of "king" on any of his sons, although Augustus promised Archelaus could have the title later if he ruled well.

### **Archelaus (4 B.C. – A.D. 6)**

The most important part of Herod's kingdom was given to Archelaus, who became ethnarch of the Jews, with general oversight of all of his father's territory. His own territory included Judea, Idumea, and Samaria.

Archelaus was an incompetent and cruel ruler. His bad reputation is reflected in Matt 2:22, where it states that Joseph and Mary avoided his territory when they took Jesus out of Egypt to Nazareth.

In A.D. 6 a delegation of Jews and Samaritans agreed, and went to Rome to complain about Archelaus. Augustus deposed him and, instead of appointing another ethnarch, demoted his territory to an imperial province under the rule of a Roman prefect. This Roman governor would be of the equestrian class, the second highest class in Roman society.

The Roman prefects of Judea ruled a difficult people, and most did not last long. The most famous (or infamous) prefect was the fifth one, Pontius Pilate (A.D. 26-36).

### **Herod Antipas (4 B.C. – A.D. 39)**

Antipas was granted the title of tetrarch, and while not given the “king” title, he was given the family title “Herod” by the Romans. The title “tetrarch” (Greek *tetrarches*) originally meant “ruler of a fourth part” of a district; later it was applied to any petty dependent prince below the rank of a king. Both Herod Antipas and his brother Philip held this title (Matt 14:1; Luke 3:1). Occasionally the Gospels use the word “king” for Herod Antipas, but this word is used not in a precise way, but as a popular designation (Matt 14:9; Mark 6:14-26).

Antipas was given the territories of Galilee and Perea. Antipas ruled for many years, and he is the “Herod” mentioned in the Gospels (except in the birth narratives, when Herod the Great is intended). Since Jesus grew up in Galilee, he belonged to Herod Antipas’ jurisdiction (Luke 23:6-12).

Herod Antipas is remembered for beheading John the Baptist in Perea. While Herod was visiting in Rome, he was attracted to Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip (not Philip the Tetrarch). She forsook her husband, and with her daughter Salome she went with Herod back to Galilee. John the Baptist declared that Herod was guilty of grave sin. For this reason Herod imprisoned John and later executed him (Matt 14:1-12 = Mark 6:14-29).

When Jesus was warned to flee from Herod’s territory of Perea, Jesus took his time in leaving, and called Herod a “fox” (Luke 13:31-32). During his trial, Jesus refused to speak at all to Herod Antipas (Luke 23:9).

### **Philip the Tetrarch (4 B.C. – A.D. 34)**

Herod the Great’s son Philip received the least important section of his kingdom, the territories NE of the Sea of Galilee, including Iturea and Trachonitis.

Philip is mentioned in the NT only in Luke 3:1. He seems on the whole to have been a good ruler. He married Salome, who had danced for his brother Herod Antipas.

Jesus visited Caesarea Philippi, a city in Philip’s territory which he had built up and named for himself. While Jesus was there, Peter gave his great confession (Matt 16:13-20). Nearby Mt. Hermon may have been the site of Christ’s transfiguration (Matt 17:1-2).