

Independent Judaism Between the Greek and Roman Periods (143 BC to 63 BC)

Lecture

- Government of Judea
 - After the rededication of the Temple by the Maccabees in 165/164 BC, there were 20 more years of fighting between the Jewish people and the Seleucid rulers of Judah.
 - In 143/142 BC, the Seleucids finally agreed to give the Jews their independence.
 - At this point, only Mattathias' last son, Simon, was still alive. He claimed the role of High Priest and the throne of Judah, establishing the Hasmonean dynasty, which lasted as an independent monarchy for 80 years.
 - Claiming the throne of Judah was problematic for many strict Jews who believed that the king must only come from the line of Judah, which the Maccabees were not.
 - Also, there was no separation of powers.
 - However, in the mind of many Jews, they were willing to overlook these facts to be independent from the Greeks.
 - After the Roman conquest of Judea in 63 BC, the Hasmonean dynasty and Israel continued as a Roman puppet state until 37 BC, when the Hasmonean dynasty was replaced by the Herodian dynasty. Antipater was its founder, and he was an Idumean.
 - The Idumeans were actually Edomites who had been run out of their territory by the Nabatean Arabs. In 120 BC, John Hyrcanus, a Maccabean High Priest, had forcibly converted the Idumeans to Judaism. This is the first recorded forced conversion to Judaism.
 - Antipater's son, Herod I the Great, was made king of Judea by the Romans.
 - During the Independent period, the Hasmoneans expanded the territory of Israel to close to the size of Solomon's empire.

- Important Religious Developments
 - Apocrypha
 - *1 Maccabees* is an excellent history of the Maccabees and was written during the Independent period, sometime between 134 BC and 76 BC. Most scholars believe that it was originally written in Hebrew, but only the Greek version survives.
 - *2 Maccabees* was written sometime between 150 BC and 70 BC. It was written in Greek, possibly by an Egyptian Jew. The contents of this book predate the events of *1 Maccabees*.
 - Jewish Sects: Sadducees, Pharisees
 - The Sadducees held the High Priesthood from 100 BC onwards. However, the Pharisees still had influence with the Jews.

Independent Judaism Between the Greek and Roman Periods

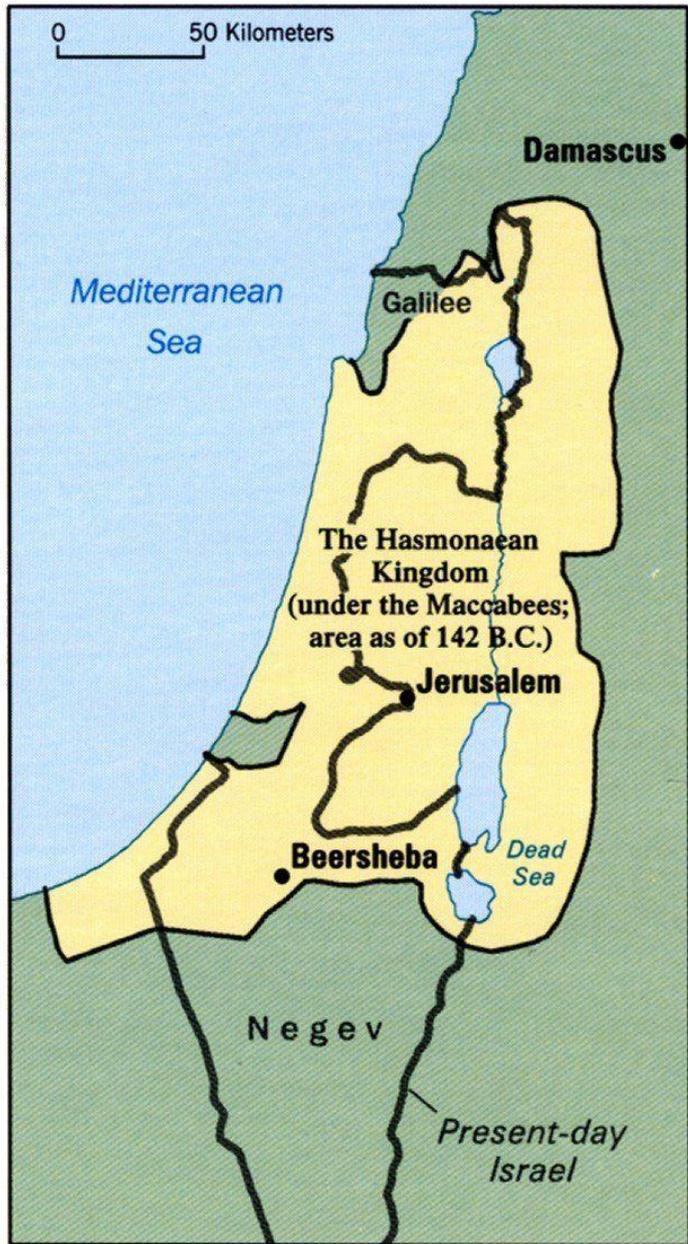
143 BC to 63 BC

Government of Judea

- After the Rededication of the Temple in 165/164 BC, 20 More Years of Fighting Between the Jews and the Seleucids
- In 143/142 BC, the Seleucids Gave the Jews Their Independence
- Only Simon, Mattathias' Last Son, Was Still Alive
 - He Claimed the Role of High Priest and the Throne of Judah
 - Established the Hasmonean Dynasty, Which Lasted as an Independent Monarchy for 80 Years
- Claiming the Monarchy Was Problematic for Many Strict Jews, Since the Maccabees Did Not Come from the Line of Judah; Also, No Separation of Powers
- However, in the Mind of Many Jews, They Were Willing to Overlook These Facts to Be Independent from the Greeks

Government of Judea

- After the Roman Conquest of Judea in 63 BC, the Hasmonean Dynasty and Israel Continued as a Roman Puppet State Until 37 BC; Hasmonean Dynasty Replaced by the Herodian Dynasty, Founded by Antipater
- Herod the Great, an Idumean, Was Made Judea's King by the Romans
 - Idumeans Were Edomites Who Had Been Run Out of Edom by Nabatean Arabs
 - In 120 BC, John Hyrcanus, a Maccabean High Priest, Forcibly Converted the Idumeans to Judaism
 - The 1st Recorded Forced Conversion to Judaism
- During the Independent Period, the Hasmoneans Expanded the Territory of Israel to Close to the Size of Solomon's Empire



The Hasmonean Kingdom as of 142 BC
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Important Religious Developments

- Other Writings: Apocrypha
 - *1 Maccabees*, an Excellent History of the Maccabees; Written Between 134 BC and 76 BC; Originally in Hebrew; Only the Greek Version Survives
 - *2 Maccabees*, Predates the Events of *1 Maccabees*; Written in Greek, Possibly by an Egyptian Jew Between 150 BC and 70 BC

The Jewish Sects: Pharisees; Sadducees

- The Sadducees Held the High Priesthood from 100 BC Onwards
- The Pharisees Still Had Influence with the Jews

Judaism Under the Romans

63 BC to 70 AD

Government of Judea

- Although Quasi-independent in 63 BC, Judea Was under the Oversight of the Roman Governor of Syria, as the Province of Palestine
- John Hyrcanus II, a Hasmonean, was High Priest from 76 BC to 40 BC; After His Mother's Death in 67 BC, He Became King of Judah
- He Had a Power Struggle with His Brother, Aristobolus II, Who Grabbed the Throne and High Priesthood in 67 BC and Held Both Until 63 BC
- John Hyrcanus II Sought Help from the Roman General Pompey
- Pompey Met the 2 Men in Damascus in 63 BC; Aristobolus Fled to His Fortress, Which Angered Promptly
- Pompey Invaded Judea; Aristobolus Surrendered but His Supporters Refused to Yield Jerusalem

Government of Judea

- John Hyrcanus' Supporters Opened 1 of Jerusalem's Gates; Pompey Lay Siege to the City, Slaughtering 12,000 Jews
- Pompey Entered the Holy of Holies of the Temple, Effectively Desecrating It
- Pompey Did Not Remove Any Objects from the Temple and Ordered the Jews to Re-Consecrate It and Being Using It
- Pompey Restored John Hyrcanus II as High Priest, But Stripped Him of His Royal Title; He Had Some Civil Authority
- After 63 BC, Judah Was Forced to Pay Tribute to Rome



Copy of Original Bust of Pompey, 70 – 60 BC;
Venice National Archaeological Museum,
Venice, Italy; copyright: en.Wikipedia.org

Government of Judea

- Judah Was Forced to Relinquish Its Territory on the Mediterranean Coastal Plain, as Well as Idumea and Samaria
- 10 Hellenistic Cities in Judea Were Granted Autonomy to Form the Decapolis

Roman Judaea
under Ethnarch
Hyrcanus II
(47-40BC)



Roman Judea Under Hyrcanus II (47 BC – 40 BC);
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The 10 Cities of the Decapolis circa 49 BC;
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Government of Judea

- 49-45 BC: the Roman Civil War Between Julius Caesar and Pompey; Caesar Was Victorious; John Hyrcanus and Antipater, an Idumean, Supported Caesar
- Caesar Restored John Hyrcanus' Religious Authority Over the Jews and His Role of High Priest (Which the Roman Gabinius Had Removed); But Antipater Was Appointed Procurator of Judea, Giving Him the Civil Authority
- Caesar Also Restored Joppa and Some Other Lands to Judea's Control
- Jews Living in Alexandria Were Granted Roman Citizenship
- All Jews in Asia Minor Were Guaranteed Freedom of Religion

Government of Judea

- In 47 BC, Antipater Appointed His Son Herod as Governor of Galilee and Herod's Brother Phasaël as Governor of Jerusalem
- After Julius Caesar Was Assassinated in 44 BC, There Was Another Roman Civil War; Herod Ingratiated Himself with Mark Antony and Octavian, Who Appointed Herod King of Judea in 40 BC
- Herod Did Not Have the Support of the Jews in Judea; He Had to Fight His Way Through the Country, Arriving in Jerusalem in 37 BC
- He Lay Siege to the Capital and Captured the Inner Court of the Temple and the Upper Part of Jerusalem in Under 60 Days
- His Forces Murdered Everyone They Could Find
- This Was the End of the Hasmonean Dynasty



Herod the Great; copyright: simple.Wikipedia.org

Government of Judea

- Herod Imposed Heavy Taxation on the People of Judea and Demanded They Swear an Oath of Allegiance to Him and to the Emperor
- Some Jews Refused and Were Punished; Others Were Not, Because Herod Liked Them
- Herod the Great Ordered the Killing of All Jewish Boys Under Age 2 Near Bethlehem Circa 8 BC to 4 BC (Matthew 2:16)
- Over time, the Romans Increased Taxation within Judea
- The Roman Procurators Sometimes Raised Taxes Above What Rome Required, Keeping the Overage for Themselves



The Massacre of the Innocents; Peter Paul Rubens, Circa 1638;
copyright: Bavarian State Paintings Collection, Munich, Germany;
image from the Netherlands Institute for Art History, image ID 194561

Government of Judea

- Starting about 6 AD, the Zealots Emerged as an Anti-Roman Political Force in Judea, Advocating for a Violent Overthrow of the Roman Government
- In 39 AD, Emperor Caligula Demanded that His Statue Be Erected in Every Temple Throughout the Realm; the Jews Refused; Had He Not Been Assassinated, the Jews Would Likely Have All Been Massacred
- In 66 AD, Florus, the Last Roman Procurator of Judea, Stole Vast Quantities of Silver from the Temple
- Outraged Jews Destroyed the Roman Garrison at Jerusalem

Government of Judea

- The Jews' Victory Convinced the Zealots They Could Defeat Rome; They Underestimated Rome's Power
- Rome Sent a Large Military Force to Galilee in 67 AD; 100,000 Jews Were Killed or Sold into Slavery
- By 68 AD, There Was Jew upon Jew Sectarian Violence in Jerusalem; Moderate Jewish Leaders Were Murdered
- In 67/70 AD, the Romans Moved on Jerusalem; Zealots Ordered the Slaying of Anyone Who Surrendered
- In 70 AD, the Romans Breached Jerusalem's Walls Again; They Destroyed Herod's Temple and Razed the City; Over 1,000,000 Jews Were Slaughtered or Sold into Slavery
- This Fulfilled Jesus' Prophecy about the Destruction of the Temple (Luke 21:5-6)

Important Religious Developments

- Herod's Temple

- In 20 BC, Herod Began to Expand and Improve the 2nd Temple (Zerubbabel's Temple)
- The Sanctuary Was Completed in 18 Months; the Rest of the Work Lasted until 62-64 AD, Resulting in a Magnificent Complex Covering 35 Acres
- Herod's Nearby Palace Was More Sumptuous
- The Temple Was Destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD; Only a Retaining Wall, Known as the Wailing Wall, Remains
- Herod Paid Lip Service to Judaism, Even Installing an Eagle Over the Temple Gate, Which Was Later Torn Down

Herod's Temple, artist's rendering;
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The Wailing Wall (Western Retaining Wall of Herod's Temple, Jerusalem, Israel; copyright: photo by Abhisek Datta, 2022



Important Religious Developments

- High Priest

- Herod the Great Appointed and Removed High Priests at His Pleasure
- Roman Rulers Continued to Appoint the High Priests
- Many High Priests Sought to Align Themselves and Their Fellow Priests with Rome to Curry Favor
- Caiaphas Was Appointed High Priest in 18 AD by the Roman Prefect Valerius Gratus. He Was High Priest During Jesus' Ministry

Important Religious Developments

- Josephus

- Flavius Josephus Was Born in 37 AD in Jerusalem to a Jewish Priest and a Mother Who Claimed Descendancy from the Hasmoneans; His Birth Name Was Joseph Ben Mattathias
- He Studied with the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, Eventually Aligning Himself with Pharisaic Thought
- During the Great Jewish Revolt which Began in 67 AD, Josephus Found Himself a Commander of Jews in Galilee
- He Was Captured by the Romans and Ingratiated Himself with the Roman General Vespasian by Reinterpreting Messianic Prophecies and Saying that Vespasian Would Become Ruler of the World
- This Turned out to Be True when Vespasian Became Roman Emperor in 68 AD
- Jews in Jerusalem Viewed Josephus as a Traitor

Important Religious Developments

- Josephus

- He Tried to Function as a Go-Between with the Romans and the Jewish Rebels in Jerusalem; He Failed and Had to Watch Jerusalem Be Destroyed in 70 AD
- Josephus Moved to Rome, Took the Name Flavius Josephus, and Became a Roman Citizen
- Historians are Indebted to Him for His Many Histories, Particularly His First-Hand Accounts of the Destruction of Jerusalem, which Emperor Vespasian Asked Him to Write

Important Religious Developments

- Josephus' Works

- *The Jewish War*, Written in 70 AD

- *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Written in 93 AD

- *Against Apion*, Written 96-100 AD

- *The Life of Josephus*, His Autobiography, Written in 100 AD

- Josephus Died Shortly after Completing His Autobiography

The Jewish Sects: Pharisees; Sadducees; Zealots; Herodians

- Pharisees

- By the Time of Jesus' Ministry (27-29 AD), the Pharisees Were the Moral Authority for the Jews
- They Taught That the Jews Should Observe the 600 Torah Laws, the Oral Tradition, and Ceremonial Purification Rituals
- They Felt Threatened by Jesus:
 - Jesus Called Them Hypocrites and Compared Them to Whitewashed Tombs (Matthew 23:27-28)
 - They Disapproved of Jesus Eating with Sinners and Tax Collectors (Matthew 9:11); Failing to Observe Sabbath Laws (Matthew 12:1-2); For Not Performing Appropriate Purification Rituals (Matthew 15:1-2)

The Pharisees

- They Felt Threatened by Jesus:
 - Jesus Said He Was the Son of God and the Messiah; He Healed the Sick, Drove Out Demons, and Raised the Dead Because His Power Came from His Father; The Pharisees Did Not Recognize Jesus as the Messiah and Accused Him of Having Powers Which Came From Satan (Matthew 9:34)
 - Jesus Was the Promised Messiah of Old Testament Prophecies; The Jews Looked for an Earthly Messiah Like King David; Jesus Spoke About the Kingdom of God Which Threatened the Pharisees Who Did Not Believe He Was the Messiah
- Ultimately, the Pharisees Plotted to Kill Jesus
- Pharisees Continued to Teach and Have Influence Among the Jews; The Apostle Paul (5 AD – 64/65 AD) Was a Notable Pharisee Who Persecuted Christians before His Conversion

The Sadducees

- By the Time of Jesus, They Held the Majority of the Seats in the Sanhedrin
- Sometimes They Had to Align Themselves with the Pharisees, Since the Common Jews Viewed the Pharisees as the Religious Moral Authority
- The Sadducees Were Very Wealthy and Accommodating to Rome
- The Sadducees Felt Threatened by Jesus:
 - Jesus Taught the Resurrection of the Dead Which the Sadducees Did Not Believe in (Matthew 22:23-34); They Were Alarmed When Jesus Raised People from the Dead (Mark 5:34-43)

The Sadducees

- The Sadducees Felt Threatened by Jesus:
 - Jesus Spoke Repeatedly About Angels (Matthew 13:40-43; Mark 12:24-25) and Drove Demons Out of the Sick (Mark 5:1-20); The Sadducees Did Not Believe in Angels or Demons
 - Jesus Challenged the Power Which the Sadducees Had Within the Sanhedrin and Their Relationship with Rome

The Sadducees

- When It Came Time to Condemn Jesus to Death, the Sadducees Aligned Themselves with the Pharisees and the High Priest; They Accused Jesus of Blasphemy When He Claimed to Be the Son of God, Which Was Punishable by Death (Mark 14:53-64)
- After Jesus' Death, the Sadducees Continued to Try to Punish the Disciples and Paul for Preaching About the Resurrection of the Dead (Acts 4:1-21; Acts 23:1-11)

The Zealots

- A Jewish Sect Founded by Judas of Galilee in 6 AD
- They Followed Pharisaic Ideas, but Their Driving Belief Was that Judah Must Be Freed from Roman Occupation at All Costs
- God Alone Would Be Their Ruler
- One of Jesus' 12 Apostles was Simon the Zealot (Matthew 10:4); He May Have Been a Member of the Radical Zealots Prior to His Conversion
- With the End of the First Jewish-Roman War in 73 AD, the Zealots Effectively Ceased to Exist

The Herodians

- A Jewish Political Party Who Supported Herod Antipas, Son of Herod the Great, Who Ruled 4 BC to 39 AD
- Herod Antipas Murdered John the Baptist and Ridiculed and Mocked Jesus Prior to His Crucifixion
- Some Scholars Believe That the Herodians Thought of Herod Antipas as Their Messiah
- The Herodians Wanted to Appease Rome
- The Herodians Wanted to Kill Jesus Because They Feared His Teachings About the Kingdom of God Would Diminish Their Power (Matthew 22)
- Other Jewish Groups, Such as the Pharisees, Did Not Like the Herodians Because of Their Roman Appeasement; This Conflicted with the Pharisees' View on a Jewish State, Ruled by a Davidic King

Judaism Under the Romans (63 BC to 70 AD)

Lecture

- Government of Judea
 - Although quasi-independent in 63 BC, Judea was certainly under the general oversight of the Roman governor of Syria, as the province of Palestine.
 - John Hyrcanus II, a Hasmonean, was High Priest from 76 BC to 40 BC. When his mother died in 67 BC, he became the Hasmonean king of Judah.
 - He had a power struggle with his brother, Aristobolus II, who grabbed the throne and the High Priesthood from him in 67 BC and held both until 63 BC.
 - John Hyrcanus II sought help from the Roman general Pompey to settle the civil war.
 - Pompey met with John Hyrcanus II and Aristobolus II at Damascus in 63 BC. He put off his decision about who should rule Judea until he arrived there. Aristobolus promptly fled to his fortress at Alexandrium, which angered Pompey.
 - Pompey and his forces invaded Judea, at which point Aristobolus surrendered. However, Aristobolus' supporters refused to let Pompey into Jerusalem.
 - John Hyrcanus' supporters opened one of the gates of Jerusalem's walls to Pompey's army. Pompey proceeded to lay siege to the city.
 - After successfully conquering the city, at which time 12,000 Jews were slaughtered, Pompey entered the Holy of Holies of the Temple, which, by Jewish law, only the High Priest could enter. This effectively desecrated the Temple.
 - Pompey did not remove any objects from the Temple and the next day he ordered the Jews to re-consecrate the Temple and begin using it for their religious observances again.
 - Pompey restored John Hyrcanus II to power. He continued to serve as High Priest, but Pompey stripped him of his royal title. He retained some civil authority.
 - After 63 BC, Judah was forced to pay tribute to Rome.

- Judah was forced to relinquish its territory on the Mediterranean coastal plain, as well as Idumea and Samaria.
- 10 Hellenistic cities in Judea were granted autonomy to form the Decapolis.
- The period from 49-45 BC marked the Roman Civil war between the forces of Julius Caesar and Pompey. Caesar was ultimately victorious. John Hyrcanus and Antipater, the Idumean, had thrown their lot with Caesar.
- John Hyrcanus's religious authority over the Jews and his role of High Priest (which had been stripped from him by the Roman Gabinius) were restored by Caesar, but Antipater was appointed procurator of Judea, effectively giving him the civil authority.
- Caesar also restored the city of Joppa and some other lands to Judea's control.
- Caesar granted Jews living in Alexandria, Egypt the privilege of Roman citizenship and all Jews in Asia Minor were guaranteed freedom to exercise their religion.
- In about 47 BC, Antipater appointed his son Herod as governor of Galilee and Herod's brother Phasael as governor of Jerusalem.
- After Julius Caesar was assassinated in 44 BC, there was another Roman Civil war. Herod ingratiated himself with Mark Antony and Octavian, who appointed Herod King of Judea in 40 BC.
- Herod may have been king, but he did not have the support of the Jews in Judea. He had to fight his way through the country, arriving at Jerusalem in 37 BC, where he immediately lay siege to the capital. In less than 60 days, the inner court of the Temple and the upper part of Jerusalem were in Herod's hands. His forces murdered everyone they could find.
- This brought an end to the Hasmonean dynasty.
- Herod imposed heavy taxation on the people of Judea. He demanded they swear an oath of allegiance to him and to the emperor. Some Jews refused and were punished; other Jews refused but were not punished because Herod took a personal liking to them.

- It is Herod the Great who ordered the killing of all Jewish boys under the age of 2 in the vicinity of Bethlehem circa 8 BC to 4 BC as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 2:16.)
- Over time, the Romans increased taxation within Judea. The Roman procurators sometimes raised the taxes above what Rome required, keeping the overage for themselves.
- Starting about 6 AD, the Zealots emerged as an anti-Roman political force in Judea. The Zealots advocated for a violent overthrow of the Roman government.
- In 39 AD, the Roman Emperor Caligula demanded that his statue be erected in every temple throughout the realm. The Jews of Jerusalem refused. They sent a delegation to Caligula to pacify him, but he accused them of being the only group which refused to recognize his divinity. Had Caligula not been assassinated in 41 AD, it is likely that the Jews would have all been massacred.
- In 66 AD, Florus, the last Roman procurator of Judea, stole vast quantities of silver from the Temple. Outraged Jews destroyed the Roman garrison at Jerusalem.
- The Jews' victory convinced the Zealots and other Jews that defeat of the Romans was possible. However, they underestimated the power of Rome.
- Rome sent a large military force to Galilee in 67 AD. 100,000 Jews were killed or sold into slavery.
- Back in Jerusalem, there began to be Jew upon Jew sectarian violence. By 68 AD, Jews who had managed to escape the Romans in Galilee fled to Jerusalem where they murdered the moderate Jewish leaders who had attempted to maintain the peace.
- In 69/70 AD, the Romans moved on Jerusalem. The Zealot leaders ordered the slaying of anyone who surrendered to the Romans.
- In the summer of 70 AD, the Romans breached Jerusalem's walls again. They destroyed Herod's Temple and razed the city. Over 1,000,000 Jews were slaughtered or sold into slavery. This fulfilled Jesus' prophecy about the destruction of the Temple (Luke 21:5-6).

- Important Religious Developments

- Herod's Temple

- In 20 BC, Herod began to expand and improve the 2nd Temple (Zerubbabel's Temple).
- The sanctuary itself was completed in 18 months. The Temple walls were of white marble and the eastern front and the gates were overlaid with gold. The rest of the work, which lasted until 62-64 AD, resulted in a magnificent complex covering nearly 35 acres. However, Herod's nearby palace was more sumptuous.
- The Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. Only a retaining wall, known as the Wailing Wall, remains.
- Herod may have built this magnificent Temple, but he paid lip service to Judaism. He insulted the Jews by placing an eagle over the Temple gate. Near the end of Herod's life, some Jews tore down the eagle. Herod retaliated by burning the perpetrators alive.

- High Priest

- Herod the Great appointed and removed High Priests at his pleasure.
- Roman rulers continued to appoint the High Priests. Many sought to align themselves and their fellow priests with Rome to curry favor.
- Caiaphas was appointed High Priest in 18 AD by the Roman Prefect Valerius Gratus. He was High Priest during Jesus' ministry.

- Josephus

- Flavius Josephus was born in 37 AD in Jerusalem. His father was a Jewish priest, and his mother claimed descendancy from the Hasmoneans. Josephus' birth name was Joseph ben Mattathias.
- He studied with the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. He eventually aligned himself with Pharisaic thought.

- During the Great Jewish Revolt which began in 67 AD, Josephus found himself a commander of Jews in Galilee. He was captured by the Romans and ingratiated himself with the Roman General Vespasian by reinterpreting the Messianic prophecies and saying that Vespasian would become the ruler of the world. This turned out to be true when Vespasian became Roman Emperor in 68 AD.
- The Jews in Jerusalem viewed Josephus as a traitor.
- Josephus tried to function as a go-between with the Romans and the Jewish rebels in Jerusalem. He failed and had to watch Jerusalem be destroyed in 70 AD.
- Josephus then moved to Rome where he took the name Flavius Josephus and became a Roman citizen.
- Historians are indebted to Josephus' many histories, particularly his first-hand accounts of the destruction of Jerusalem, which Emperor Vespasian asked him to write.
- His works are:
 - *The Jewish War*, written in 70 AD.
 - *The Antiquities of the Jews*, written in 93 AD.
 - *Against Apion*, written 96-100 AD.
 - *The Life of Josephus*, his autobiography, written in 100 AD.
- Josephus died shortly after completing his autobiography.

- Hebrew Sects: Pharisees; Sadducees; Zealots; Herodians
 - The Pharisees
 - By the time Jesus began his ministry circa 27 AD to 29 AD, the Pharisees had established themselves as the moral authority for the Jews.
 - They taught that the Jews should observe all the 600 laws of the Torah, the oral tradition (which had been developed by the Pharisees), and ceremonial purification rituals.
 - The Pharisees felt threatened by Jesus in multiple ways.
 - Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites. He compared them to whitewashed tombs. On the outside, they appeared to be pure, but on the inside their hearts were impure and unclean (Matthew 23: 27-28).
 - Because the Pharisees focused on keeping the law to remain pure, they disapproved of Jesus eating with sinners and tax collectors (Matthew 9:11). They also accused Jesus of failing to observe the Sabbath laws (Matthew 12:1-2), and for not performing the appropriate ritual purifications (Matthew 15:1-2).
 - Jesus said he was the Son of God and the Messiah. He healed the sick, drove out demons, and raised the dead because his power to do so came from his Father. The Pharisees did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah and accused him of having powers which came from Satan (Matthew 9:34).
 - Jesus said that he was the promised Messiah of the Old Testament prophecies. The Jews looked for a Messiah who would be an earthly king like King David. Jesus spoke about the kingdom of God in a way which threatened the Pharisees because they did not believe that he was the Messiah.
 - Ultimately, the Pharisees plotted to kill Jesus.

- The Pharisees continued to teach and have influence among the Jews. The Apostle Paul (5 AD – 64/65 AD) was a notable Pharisee who persecuted Christians before his conversion.
- The Sadducees
 - By the time of Jesus, the Sadducees held the majority of seats in the Sanhedrin. Even so, the Sadducees sometimes had to align themselves with the Pharisees since the Pharisees were viewed by the common Jews as the religious moral authority.
 - They were very wealthy and accommodating to Rome.
 - The Sadducees felt threatened by Jesus because:
 - The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Jesus taught this and therefore, the Sadducees felt threatened by Jesus' teaching (Matthew 22: 23-34). Not only this, but they were also alarmed when Jesus raised people from the dead. (Mark 5:34-43).
 - Jesus spoke repeatedly about angels (Matthew 13:40-43; Mark 12:24-25) and drove demons out of the sick (Mark 5:1-20). The Sadducees did not believe in angels or demons.
 - Jesus challenged the power which the Sadducees had within the Sanhedrin and their relationship with the Romans.
 - When it came time to condemn Jesus to death, the Sadducees aligned themselves with the Pharisees and the High Priest. They accused Jesus of blasphemy when he claimed to be the Son of God, which was punishable by death in the Torah. (Mark 14:53-64).
 - After Jesus' death, the Sadducees continued to try to punish the disciples and Paul for preaching about the resurrection of the dead (Acts 4:1-21; Acts 23:1-11).

- The Zealots
 - They were a Jewish sect founded by Judas of Galilee in 6 AD.
 - The Zealots followed Pharisaic ideas, but their driving belief was that of liberty. Judah must be freed from Roman occupation at all costs.
 - God alone would be their ruler and Lord.
 - Matthew 10:4 records that one of Jesus' 12 apostles was Simon the Zealot. He may have been a member of the radical Zealots prior to his conversion to Christianity.
 - With the end of the First Jewish-Roman War in 73 AD, the Zealots effectively ceased to exist.

- The Herodians
 - The Herodians were a Jewish political party who supported Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, who ruled from 4 BC to 39 AD. Herod Antipas murdered John the Baptist and ridiculed and mocked Jesus prior to his crucifixion.
 - Some scholars believe that the Herodians thought of Herod Antipas as their Messiah.
 - The Herodians wanted to appease Rome for political expediency.
 - The Herodians, like the Pharisees, wanted to kill Jesus because they feared Jesus' teachings about the kingdom of God would diminish their power. (see Matthew 22)
 - Other Jewish groups, such as the Pharisees, did not like the Herodians because of their Roman appeasement. This conflicted with the Pharisees' views on a Jewish state, ruled by a Davidic king.