

GOVERNMENTS OVER THE JEWS**Persian Empire 536 - 334 BC****Greek Empire 334 - 323 BC** Alexander the Great conquers the Persians; his influence changes the course of history.**Egyptian Greek Empire 323 - 204 BC** The Ptolemies**Syrian Greek 204 - 142 BC** The Seleucids

- Syrians divide the land of Israel into 5 provinces:
Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Perea and Trachonitis

- Syrian Greek king Antiochus Epiphanes **175 - 153 BC**

He believes he is deity, so takes the name *Epiphanes* which then gives him the title - *visible god*.

In **170 BC**, he invades Jerusalem, robs all the money reserves from the Temple and installs a non-Levite as high priest.

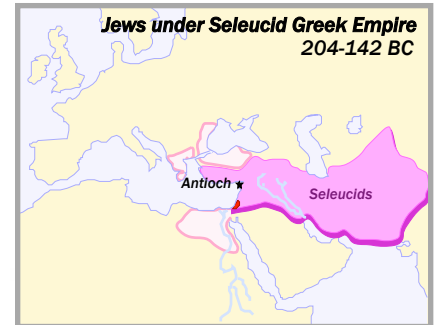
In **168 BC** he orders the entire province of Judea to be Hellenized.

To do this, he first goes to the Temple grounds and burns a pig on the altar of animal sacrifice. He enters the Temple, goes to room where the ark used to be and puts up statue of Zeus. Going outside, he tells the people it is an image of himself and they must worship him. This is *the abomination that causes the temple to be unusable* mentioned in Daniel 11:31; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

Antiochus destroys the wall Nehemiah repaired 300 years earlier, burns all sacred scrolls that are found, kills thousands of Jews and sells women and children as slaves. He names a foreigner to be governor. A Levite had become high priest again, but Antiochus reinstates the non-Levite.

Judaism is outlawed, with no more animal sacrifices, Sabbath observance or circumcision. Only Greek gods can be worshipped and altars to Zeus are built throughout the land.

Some Jews accept it out of preference or out of fear. Others remain faithful to God.

**Maccabean Rebellion 167 - 142 BC** The Asmonean dynasty**167 BC - Mattathias**, a priest in a small village refuses to worship Zeus and kills the king's agent.

He and his 5 sons, with many others, hide in the hills by day. (John, Eliezar, Judas, Jonathan and Simon)

By night, they overturn the Greek altars and encourage the Jews to follow God.

166 BC - Judas, his son and successor is nicknamed *the Hammer - Maccabeus*

They deliver hammer-like blows of quick strikes against the Syrian forces. After 3 years they defeat the Syrian armies around the immediate area. This gives them freedom to purify and rededicate the Temple.

Because they have survived as a people and culture, because they now have freedom to use their Temple and worship God openly, they rejoice and make this a Jewish holiday to be celebrated forever. It is called the Feast of Dedication; the Feast of Lights; **Hanukkah** (*dedication*).

According to Jewish tradition, they lit the Temple menorah with only a 1-day supply of sacred oil. They use it and miraculously the menorah burns for 8 days until they can make new consecrated oil. Today, the 9-branch hanukkah, with its 8 candles and the servant candle, commemorates those 8 days.

161 BC - Jonathan, his brother becomes Jewish leader and high priest.

He leads the Jews in many more victories over the Syrian armies.

Maccabean Independence 142 - 63 BC The Asmonean dynasty**142 BC - Simon**, his brother is named *leader and high priest forever until a trustworthy prophet arises*.

This means, *until the Messiah comes, all their rulers must be high priest from the line of Simon*.

It is the beginning of the **Asmonean/Hasmonean** line of ruling priests.

Under Simon, the Jews have independence - the first since the days of Nebuchadnezzar.

He is the last of the 5 sons of Mattathias.

134 BC - John Hyrcanus, is the last godly leader in this Asmonean ruling line 134 - 104 BC.

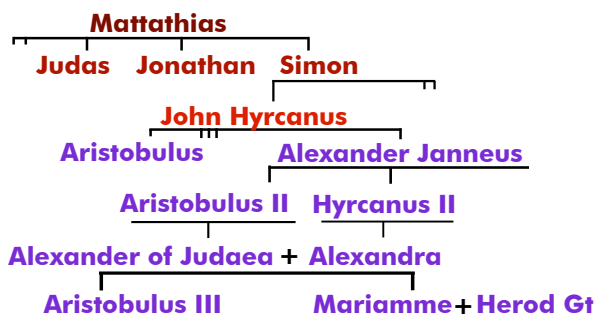
104 - 63 BC Sadly, these 41 years are filled with murder, family strife and civil war. Each of the 2 grandsons of John Hyrcanus sell out to the Romans in order to be high priest.



Maccabean Independence 142 - 63 BC *continued*



Maccabees & Asmonean line 142 - 36 BC



Roman 63 BC - 70 AD

63 BC - General Pompey makes one Asmonean grandson the high-priest and puts the other in prison. In return, he receives from the newly named high priest, the Jewish nation to add to the Roman empire.

48 BC - Julius Caesar appoints an Idumean as governor of Judea in reward for saving his life.

40 BC - Octavius Caesar appoints the Idumean's son as **king** of Judea - (a glorified title of *governor*)
 He (Idumean son) connects himself to the Asmonean line of Jews by marrying the granddaughter of John Hyrcanus II (the grandson who sold out to the Romans; he makes her 17-year-old brother the high priest.
 He uses Roman money to beautify Jerusalem and enlarge the Jewish temple.
 He is king in Judea 40 years. Over this time, when he thinks his power is threatened, he kills family members - 2 of his sons, his Jewish wife, her mother and her 3 brothers.

This is Herod the Great - **King of Judea** - when Jesus is born in Bethlehem.

DIVISIONS OF THE JEWS

Jewish people are divided into parties based on their identity - national, religious and cultural.

Those who want all things Jewish have *Pharisee* belief – in the Pharisee party

They are conservative, wanting *separation* from Gentile influence and strict Jewish laws.

Those who want to be more open to Greek ideas are *Sadducee* in belief – in the Sadducee party.

Jewish Sanhedrin is divided into 3 branches - **chief priests, scribes and elders**. Matthew 16:21

24 chief priests – from the Sadducee party, known as *The Sadducees*. They **explain** the law.

They oversee priests who serve in the Temple and influence who is high-priest. They are an elite group of priests from wealthy Jewish families. They are known for their pro-Greek, Hellenists views and beliefs.

22 scribes – from the Pharisee party, known as **The Scribes, Teachers of Law**. They are pro-Jewish /Pharisee in belief. They are the part of the Sanhedrin who **teach /explain** the law and the expectation of the Messiah. In the beginning, they only explained the 613 laws of God. Now they spend all their time teaching “fence” laws - the Mishnah laws.

24 elders - older members from the Pharisee party, known as **The Pharisees** – pro-Jewish, **enforcers** of the law. In the beginning, they were concerned about people breaking God's laws. Now all their attention is on people breaking Mishnah laws. They bring them before the Sanhedrin to reprimand, fine or put them in prison.

APPLICATION

During the 400 years, there was so much corruption and evil with the Gentile rulers and within Jewish leadership. One has to ask - *How could there be **any** believing remnant when Jesus came to this earth?* The answer is 2-fold.

The Believing Remnant stayed faithful because teachers in the local synagogue taught and explained God's Word faithfully and accurately. Then they encouraged people to live godly lives.

The Remnant stayed faithful because people studied God's Word on their own, grew in the knowledge of God and put it into practice in daily life. When others watched them, they wanted it for their life. So the believing remnant grew and continued thru the years.

Today, there will be a believing remnant when Jesus returns for us in the same way. We need to sit under teachers who teach and explain God's Word faithfully and accurately. We need to be faithful to study on our own, grow in the knowledge of God and live so others will spiritually want what we have. With this, the believing remnant will grow and continue until Jesus returns.

