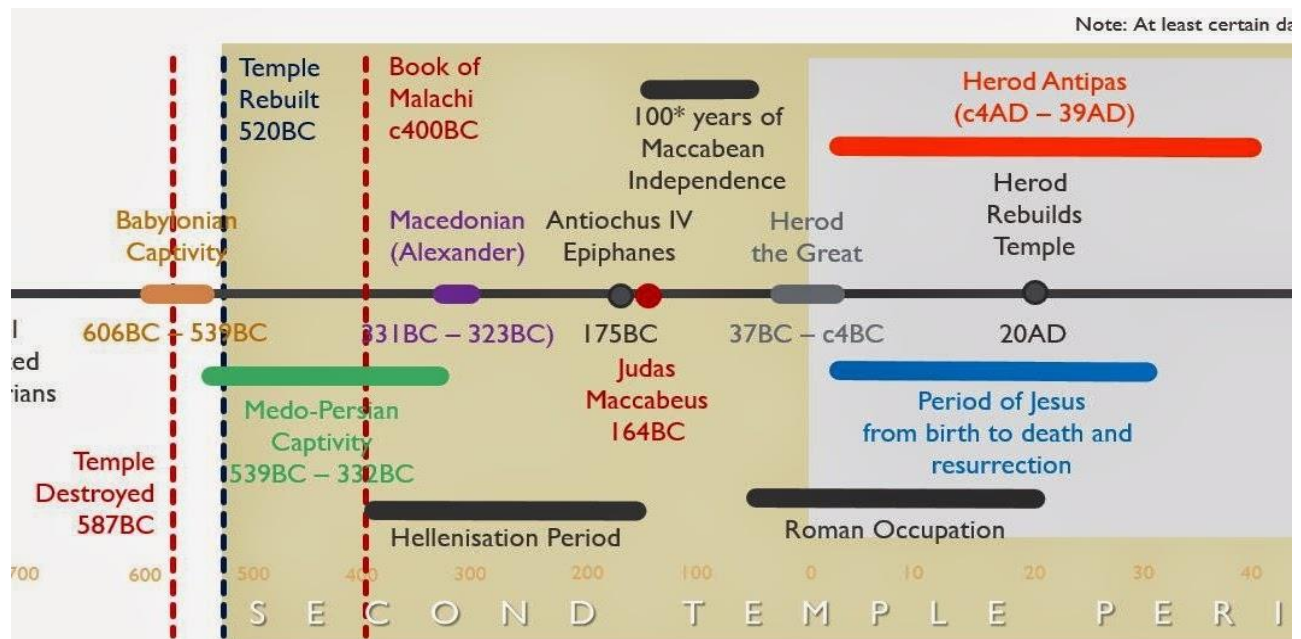




Jewish History 5

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Josephus 100 CE

Now Yehudah celebrated the festival of the restoration of the sacrifices of the temple for eight days; and omitted no sort of pleasures thereon: but he feasted them upon very rich and splendid sacrifices; and he honored God, and delighted them, by hymns and psalms. Nay, they were so very glad at the revival of their

customs, when after a long time of intermission, they unexpectedly had regained the freedom of their worship, that they made it a law for their posterity, **that they should keep a festival, on account of the restoration of their temple worship, for eight days. And from that time to this we celebrate this festival, and call it 'Lights'**. I suppose the reason was, because this liberty beyond our hopes appeared to us; and that thence was the name given to that festival.

Talmud Rosh Hashanah 18b 100 CE

There was an incident and the Sages decreed a fast on Hanukkah (i.e. they wanted to abolish Hanukkah) in Lod, and Rabbi Eliezer went down on that day and bathed in the bathhouse and Rabbi Yehoshua went down and cut his hair to show that they did not accept the fast.

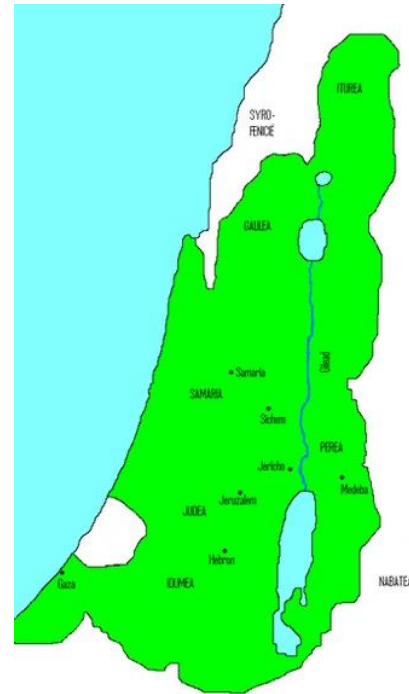
120 BCE

1 Maccabees

At that time there appeared in the land of Israel a group of traitorous Jews who had no regard for the Law and who had a bad influence on many of our people. They said, Let's come to terms with the Gentiles, for our refusal to associate with them has brought us nothing but trouble. This proposal appealed to many people, and some of them became so enthusiastic about it that they went to the king and received from him permission to follow Gentile customs. They built in Jerusalem a stadium like those in the Greek cities. They had surgery performed to

hide their circumcision, abandoned the holy covenant, started associating with [\[b\]](#) Gentiles, and did all sorts of other evil things....

A Jew came forward in the sight of all to offer sacrifice on the Greek altar in Modi'in, as the king had commanded. When Mattathias (the priest) saw this, he burned with zeal and his heart was stirred. He was filled with righteous anger; he ran and killed the man on the altar. At the same time, Mattathias killed the king's officer who was enforcing the sacrifice, and he tore down the altar. Thus Mattathias burned with zeal for the law... Then Mattathias cried out with a loud voice, saying: "Let every one who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come with me!" Then Mattathias and his sons fled to the hills and left all that they had in the town.



...

When the Greeks looked up and saw them coming against them, they went out from their camp to battle. Then the men with Judah blew their trumpets and engaged in battle. The Greeks were crushed, and fled into the plain, and all those in the rear fell by the sword. The Maccabees pursued them to Gazara, and to the plains of Idumea, and to Azotus and Yavneh; and three thousand of the the Greeks fell....

Early in the morning on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, which is the month of Kislev, they rose and offered sacrifice, as the law directs, on the new altar of burnt offering that they had built. At the very season and on the very day that the Greeks had profaned it, it was dedicated with songs and harps and lutes and cymbals. All the people fell on their faces and wished and blessed Heaven, who had prospered them. So they celebrated the dedication of the altar for eight

days, and joyfully offered burnt offerings; they offered a sacrifice of well-being and a thanksgiving offering... There was a very great joy among the people, and the disgrace brought by the Greeks was removed.

Shaye Cohen - From Maccabees to the Mishna

The Maccabean period lasted a century, from the victory of 164 B.C.E. to the entrance of the Romans into Jerusalem in 63 B.C.E. During their tenure, the Maccabees gradually increased their power and prestige. They pursued an aggressive foreign policy, seeking alliance with Rome against the Seleucids and carving out for themselves a kingdom larger than that of David and Solomon. Their fall from power was caused by both internal and external enemies....

Many Jews opposed Maccabean rule. These opponents were not “Hellenizers” and “law- less” Jews who supported Antiochus’ attempt to destroy Judaism, but loyal Jews who had had enough of the Maccabees’ autocratic ways.

The Hasmonean dynasty was not itself a sect; it was the corrupt ruling power under whose rule it became clear that the Jewish Commonwealth and Temple were doomed. The sects were a natural response... the emergence of a plan for a new age. The Hasmoneans left little more than a trail of blood. They took power, land and made treaties with foreigners when it served their purpose. Their dynasty ended when the wicked Herod was appointed Governor.. they had prepared the way.

What is Hanukkah? For our Rabbis taught: On the twenty-fifth of Kislev [commence] the days of Hanukkah, which are eight on which a lamentation for the dead and fasting are forbidden. For when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oils therein, and when the Hasmonean dynasty prevailed against and defeated them, they made search and found only one cruse of oil which lay with the seal of the High Priest, but which contained sufficient for one day's lighting only; yet a miracle was wrought therein and they lit [the lamp] therewith for eight days. The following year these [days] were appointed a Festival with [the recital of] Hallel and thanksgiving.

Josephus

The Antiquities of the Jews

The Jews had for a great while had three sects of philosophy peculiar to themselves; the sect of the Essens, and the sect of the Sadducees, and the third sort of opinions was that of those called Pharisees;

3. Now, for the Pharisees, they live meanly, and despise delicacies in diet; and they follow the conduct of reason; and what that prescribes to them as good for them they do; and they think they ought earnestly to strive to observe reason's dictates for practice. They also pay a respect to such as are in years; nor are they so bold as to contradict them in any thing which they have introduced; and when they determine that all things are done by fate, they do not take away the freedom from men of acting as they think fit; since their notion is, that it hath pleased God to make a temperament, whereby what he wills is done, but so that the will of man can act virtuously or viciously. They also believe that souls have an immortal rigor in them, and that under the earth there will be rewards or punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but that the former shall have power to revive and live again; on account of which doctrines they are able greatly to persuade the body of the people; and whatsoever they do about

Divine worship, prayers, and sacrifices, they perform them according to their direction; insomuch that the cities give great attestations to them on account of their entire virtuous conduct, both in the actions of their lives and their discourses also.

4. But the doctrine of the Sadducees is this: That souls die with the bodies; nor do they regard the observation of any thing besides what the law enjoins them; for they think it an instance of virtue to dispute with those teachers of philosophy whom they frequent: but this doctrine is received but by a few, yet by those still of the greatest dignity. But they are able to do almost nothing of themselves; for when they become magistrates, as they are unwillingly and by force sometimes obliged to be, they addict themselves to the notions of the Pharisees, because the multitude would not otherwise bear them.

5. The doctrine of the Essens is this: That all things are best ascribed to God. They teach the immortality of souls, and esteem that the rewards of righteousness are to be earnestly striven for; and when they send what they have dedicated to God into the temple, they do not offer sacrifices because they have more pure lustrations of their own; on which account they are excluded from the common court of the temple, but offer their sacrifices themselves; yet is their course of life better than that of other men; and they entirely addict themselves to husbandry. It also deserves our admiration, how much they exceed all other men that addict themselves to virtue, and this in righteousness; and indeed to such a degree, that as it hath never appeared among any other men, neither Greeks nor barbarians, no, not for a little time, so hath it endured a long while among them. This is demonstrated by that institution of theirs, which will not suffer any thing to hinder them from having all things in common; so that a rich man enjoys no more of his own wealth than he who hath nothing at all. There are about four thousand men that live in this way, and neither marry wives, nor are desirous to keep servants; as thinking the latter tempts men to be unjust, and the former gives the handle to domestic quarrels; but as they live by themselves, they minister one to another. They also appoint certain stewards to receive the incomes of their revenues, and of the fruits of the ground; such as are good men and priests, who are to get their corn and their food ready for them.

