

Babylon and Beyond

The Roman Empire

The Rise of Rome

- Rome began around 750 B.C. as a tribe of outcasts on the Tiber River in Italy.
- As it grew in power, it slowly conquered surrounding territory and began to push on to the world stage.
- It developed from a monarchy to a republic to an empire.
- In 30, Julius Caesar's heir Octavian gains control of Rome and is made the first emperor, taking the regal name of Augustus.

Roman Intervention

- In 64 or 65, Roman general Marcus Aemilius Scaurus intervened in the Hasmonean civil war between Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II and sided with Aristobulus after a bribe.
- In 63, Pompey the Great invaded and the nation became a ward of Rome.
 - When Pompey captured Jerusalem, he entered the Holy of Holies in the Temple and found nothing there.
 - Hyrcanus was made high priest but not king.
- When civil war broke out in Rome, Hyrcanus and Antipater initially backed their benefactor Pompey but switched sides to Caesar after Pompey's murder in 48.
- In 47, Antipater was made *procurator* and Hyrcanus made *ethnarch*.
- In 44, Caesar was assassinated again upsetting the balance of power in the world.
- In 43, Antipater was assassinated, but his sons Herod and Phasaël maintained power.
- In 40, the Parthians invaded and placed Antigonus II Mattathias both high priest and king.
 - Hyrcanus had his ears mutilated (to disqualify him from priesthood) and was taken prisoner to Babylon.

The Herodian Dynasty

- In 37 while Rome was pushing back the Parthians, Herod (a.k.a., "the Great" gained control of Jerusalem, deposed Antigonus, and was proclaimed King of the Jews.
- Aristobulus III, whose sister Mariamne was one of Herod's wives, was briefly high priest in 36 and was the last Hasmonean ruler.
- In 31 after the Battle of Actium, Herod was able to gain support from Octavian (the future Caesar Augustus) and keep his position.

- Herod ruled with a heavy hand and started many building projects, including a major renovation of the Temple complex.
- Herod the Great is the ruler at the birth of Christ that interacted with the Wise Men – Matthew 2:1-19
- After Herod's death, his territories were split among three sons who were appointed as *ethnarchs*: Archelaus (Matthew 2:22), Herod Antipas (the "Herod" of Christ's ministry and crucifixion), and Philip (Luke 3:1).
- Herod's grandson, Herod Agrippa I (the "Herod" of Acts 12) was king of Judea from 41-44
- Herod Agrippa I's son Herod Agrippa II (the "Agrippa" of Acts 25-26) was king of territories around Galilee from 53-100.

Prefects and Procurators

- While Rome often governed foreign territories through vassal kings, it did take some direct control over portions of Israel.
- A series of *prefects* governed Judea from 6-41 under the authority of the province of Syria.
- A series of *procurators* governed Judea from 44-70 under the authority of the emperor.

The Great Jewish Revolt

- In 66, the Jews rebelled against the oppressive Roman governors.
- General Vespasian was sent to quell the rebellion but returned to Rome to seize power in 69.
- His son Titus captured Jerusalem in 70 and the Temple was destroyed.
 - This fulfilled the Christ's prophecy in Matthew 24:1-2
- A few strongholds, such as Masada, held out until 74.
- The spoils from this war helped pay for the construction of the Roman Colosseum.
- The Romans implemented a special tax for Jews: the *Fiscus Judaicus*
 - The half-shekel Temple tax (Exodus 30:13) was made a Roman tax
 - Ended by Emperor Nerva in 96.

The Bar Kokhba Revolt

- In 132, Simon Bar Kokhba lead a final rebellion against Rome with the support of rabbi Akiva.
- In 135, Bar Kokhba was surrounded and besieged at Betar, where he was killed when the city fell shortly thereafter.
- After this revolt, almost no Jews were left in their homeland.