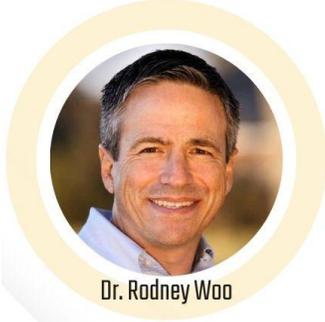




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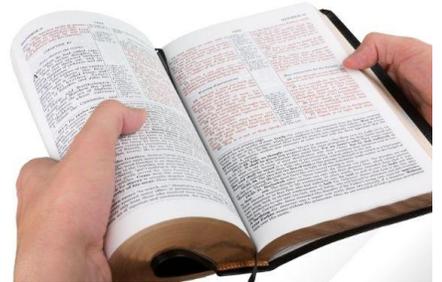
Dr. Rodney Woo

# HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE FOR ALL ITS WORTH

EVERYDAY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

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**2026**  
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**FEBRUARY 25TH**  
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**February 27-28, 2026**  
**Dr. Rodney Woo**

## **NEW TESTAMENT BACKGROUND**

### **INTRODUCTION TO NEW TESTAMENT FOUNDATIONS**

- ▶ The Importance of NT History and Background
- ▶ The Definition of the Intertestamental Period

Radical Shifts from Malachi to the NT

1. Language
2. Geography
3. Ruling powers
4. Judaism
  - a. priests
  - b. groups
  - c. oral traditions
  - d. doctrines

### **KEY EVENTS THAT TRANSFORMED OT JUDAISM TO NT JUDAISM**

- ▶ Destruction of the Temple
  - a. 586 BCE
  - b. AD 70
- ▶ Rise of Hellenism

### **INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD**

#### **KEY CHARACTERISTICS**

- ▶ A descendant of OT Hebrew faith and culture, but not identical
- ▶ Society, culture and faith had many distinct parts.
- ▶ Traditional elements of Jewish and Hellenistic too simplistic
- ▶ The 4-sect division of Judaism are inadequate
- ▶ Apocalyptic and eschatology movements are very important
- ▶ No separation of church and state

- ▶ A dynamic civilization with genuine tensions and issues
- ▶ Diversity in every area of life played a role in Christianity and Judaism

“The Ideal interpreter would be one who has entered into that strange first-century world, has felt its whole strangeness, has sojourned in it until he has lived himself into it, thinking and feeling as one of those to whom the Gospel first came, and who will then return into our world, and give to the truth he has discerned a body out of the stuff of our thought. “

C.H. Dodd

## **CHAPTER ONE--SOURCES**

- ▶ Primary Sources
- ▶ 1. The Hebrew OT
- ▶ 2. The Septuagint (LXX)
- ▶ 3. The Apocrypha
- ▶ 4. The Pseudepigrapha
- ▶ 5. The Dead Sea Scrolls

Primary Sources (Cont'd)

- ▶ 6. The NT
- ▶ 7. The Jewish Writers—Philo, Josephus
- ▶ 8. Greek Historians—Strabo,

Plutarch, Dio Cassius; Roman

Historians—Pliny the Elder, Tacitus,

Suetonius

## **CHAPTER 2—GEOGRAPHY OF THE LAND**

1. Central Hill Country
2. Jordan River Valley
3. Transjordan Plateau
4. Coastal Plains

Geography—Cont'd

- ▶ Seasons
- ▶ Significance of the Land of Palestine

## **CHAPTER 3-SURVEY OF OT**

- ▶ The Beginnings (Creation—2000 BCE)—Genesis 1-11
- ▶ The Patriarchs (2000-1650 BCE)—Middle Bronze Age—Gen. 12-50
- ▶ The Exodus (1445-1405 BCE or 1290-1250 BCE)—Late Bronze

Age—Exodus—Deuteronomy

### 3 Types of Covenant

- ▶ Suzerainty Covenant
- ▶ Patron Covenant
- ▶ Parity Covenant

OT Survey—Cont'd

- ▶ Conquest and Occupation of Canaan (1400-1350 BCE or 1250-1200 BCE)—Late Bronze Age—Joshua
- ▶ The Judges (1350-1250-1050 BCE)—Iron Age I—Judges and Ruth

▶ United Kingdom (1050-931 BCE)—Iron Age I—1-2 Samuel, 1 Kings 1-11, 1 Chron. 10-29, 2 Chron.

1-9—Saul-David-Solomon

OT Survey—cont'd

▶ Divided Kingdom (931-586 BCE)—Iron Age II—1 Kings

12-22, 2 Kings, 2 Chron. 10-36

▶ The Exile of Judah (586-538

BCE)—Iron Age III or Persian

Age

Influence of the Exile

▶ Sociological

▶ Theological

▶ God's Blessing—the Promised Land

▶ God's Presence—the Temple

▶ God's Law—obedience is the path back to Blessing and

Presence

OT Survey—cont'd

▶ Post-Exilic Period (538-400

BCE)—Persian Age—Ezra and Nehemiah

▶ Repair of the Temple (Ezra)

▶ Rebuilding of the Walls (Neh.)

▶ Renewal of Priority of the Law

Religious Conditions at End of Persian Period

▶ The Jews proved ability to survive

- ▶ Idolatry all but eradicated
- ▶ Jewish Exclusiveness and Samaritan Schism (380 BCE)
- ▶ Development of the Scribe
- Religious Conditions at End of Persian Period
- ▶ Torah-Centricity ▶ Messianic Hope
- ▶ Key Doctrinal Developments

## **CHAPTER 4-OT IDEAS AND INSTITUTIONS**

- ▶ Theology
- ▶ One God—One People—One Law
- ▶ OT Worship
- ▶ Tabernacle

### OT Worship—cont'd

- ▶ Duties of the OT Priests
- ▶ Consult God and transmit God's message to people
- ▶ Instruct people in the Law
- ▶ In charge of rituals, sacrifices, holy days
- ▶ Judicial responsibilities
- ▶ Guardians of Sanctuary

### OT Worship—cont'd

- ▶ Purposes of Sacrifices in Religion
- ▶ Appease the Wrath of God
- ▶ Assure continuation of Blessings

▶ Express Gratitude to God

▶ Enjoy Fellowship with

God—unique to Israel

OT Worship—cont'd

▶ Types of Jewish Sacrifices

▶ Burnt Offering

▶ Peace Offering

▶ Sin Offering

▶ Guilt Offering

▶ Grain Offering

OT Worship—cont'd

▶ Feasts and Festivals and Holy Days ▶ Sabbath

▶ Passover—Feast of Unleavened Bread

▶ Pentecost—Feast of Weeks

▶ Feast of Trumpets

▶ Feast of Tabernacles or Booths

## **CHAPTER 5—SURVEY OF INTERTESTAMENTAL AND NT JUDAISM**

▶ Persian Period (539-331 BCE)

▶ Cyrus issues decree to permit Jews to return to Jerusalem

▶ Aramaic became the primary language

▶ Renewed emphasis on the temple and the law

▶ Doctrine of demons, angels, Satan

Hellenistic Period

(331-164 BCE)

- ▶ Alexander the Great (331-320 BCE)
- ▶ Major accomplishments
- ▶ Conquered the known world in 12 years
- ▶ New military strategy—Phalanx, Cavalry, New Siege Machines
- ▶ Advocated Hellenism (tutored by

Aristotle)

- ▶ Strategy—Conquest and Fusion

Alexander the Great

5-fold Plan

- ▶ One language—Koine
- Greek—common language

- ▶ One Fusion of gods
- ▶ One Empire
- ▶ One Monarch-god
- ▶ One Blend of Culture--Hellenism

Ptolemaic Period

(320-198 BCE)

- ▶ Egypt and Israel under General Ptolemy
- ▶ Many Jews settled in Alexandria
- ▶ Septuagint (LXX) was written in 250 BCE
- ▶ 2 Jewish families struggled for power in

Judea

- ▶ Oniads—connected to Zadok
- ▶ Tobiads—Nehemiah's opponents

Seleucid Period--198-164

▶ Under Antiochus III (223-187 BCE)—accelerate adoption of Hellenism

▶ Antiochus IV (175-163 BCE)—imposing Hellenism

▶ Plundered temple to pay Rome tax

▶ Destroyed the walls of Jerusalem

▶ Constructed Acra (military stronghold in Jerusalem)

▶ High Priest went to the highest bidder

▶ High Priest now over religious and civil matters

Antiochus IV—Cont'd ▶ Increase measures to eliminate Judaism

▶ Stop all Temple Activity

▶ Scriptures were to be destroyed

▶ No Observance of Sabbath, feasts, food laws, circumcision

▶ Erected a new altar to

Zeus—Abomination of Desolation

(Dan. 9:27)

▶ Lack of Compliance—torture-death

Responses to Hellenism

▶ The Collaborators—fully embraced Greek lifestyle

▶ The Accommodators—accepted

Hellenism from necessity—not conviction

▶ The Pacifists—Willing to Die for Faith, not kill for it

- ▶ The Defenders—Willing to Fight to Save their Lives
- ▶ The Aggressors—Call to Arms to take fight to Greeks

#### Hasmonean Dynasty

- ▶ Judas Maccabeus (164-160 BCE)
- ▶ Jonathan (160-143)
- ▶ Simon (143-134)
- ▶ John Hyrcanus (134-104)
- ▶ Aristobulus (104-103)
- ▶ Alexander Jannaeus (103-76)
- ▶ Salome Alexandra (76-76)
- ▶ Hyrcanus II, Aristobulus, Antipater

#### Judas Maccabeus-164-160

- ▶ Took over movement from his dad, Mattathias
- ▶ Nicknamed "The Hammer"
- ▶ Military Tactics
- ▶ Guerrilla Warfare-night attacks
- ▶ Knowledge of the Land
- ▶ Zeal for the Law

#### Hasmonean DynastyCont'd

- ▶ Jonathan (160-143 BCE)
- ▶ Became High Priest in 152 BCE, now both Religious and Military Leader
- ▶ Simon (143-134 BCE)--
- ▶ Secured Political Freedom (142 BCE)—Tax Exemption
- ▶ Combined Religious (HP), Political, Military Leader

- ▶ Messianic Expectations High

#### Hasmonean Dynasty Cont'd

- ▶ John Hyrcanus (134-104 BCE)
- ▶ Expanded Jewish territory as large as time of Solomon
- ▶ Destroyed Samaritan Temple at Mt. Gerizim
- ▶ Shifted allegiance from Pharisees to Sadducees
- ▶ Increased Secularization of Society
- ▶ Aristobulus (104-103 BCE)—claimed title of King

#### Hasmonean Dynasty Cont'd

- ▶ Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BCE)
- ▶ Married Aristobulus' widow
- ▶ High Priest and King
- ▶ Killed Jews who opposed him
- ▶ Imposed Judaism on those in Expanded Territory

#### Hasmonean Dynasty-cont'd

- ▶ Salome Alexandra (76-67 BCE)
- ▶ Shifted allegiance from Sadducees to Pharisee
- ▶ Golden Age of Judaism-peaceful
- ▶ Hyrcanus II, Aristobulus II, Antipater

(67-63 BCE)

- ▶ Forced to Pay Tribute to Rome
- ▶ Jewish Religion became Legal under Rome

#### Characteristics of Maccabean Period

- ▶ Continued Conflict between Hellenism and Judaism

▶ Time of Religious Freedom and

Rededication of Temple (164 BCE)

▶ High Priest Office under Political Influence

▶ First mention of Religious Parties

Characteristics of

Maccabean

Period—Cont'd

▶ Time of Political Freedom under Simon-142

▶ Development of Doctrine of Resurrection

Roman Emperors

▶ Emperors in the NT

▶ Caesar Augustus (27 BCE-AD 14)—Jesus' Birth

▶ Tiberius (AD 14-37)—John the Baptist and Jesus' ministries

▶ Claudius (AD 41-54)—worldwide famine (Acts 11:28) Jews expelled from Rome (Acts 18:2)

Roman Emperors—cont'd

▶ Other Emperors of Importance

▶ Nero (AD 54-68)—Martyrdom of James and persecution of Christians

▶ Vespasian (AD 69-79) Jewish revolt (AD 70)

▶ Domitian (AD

81-96)—Empire-wide

Persecution

## Jews in Roman Empire

- ▶ 4 Million Jews in Roman Empire (50 million total pop), 700,000 in Palestine
- ▶ Common language for Jews--Aramaic, priestly language--Hebrew, common language of Empire--Greek, official language--Latin

## Jews in Roman

### Empire-cont'd

- ▶ Pax Romana
- ▶ Policy of Tolerance—govern themselves, worship their own gods
- ▶ Judaism was a “legal” religion
- ▶ Safe and unified road system

## Roman Emperor Worship

- ▶ Caesar Augustus—prompted the imperial cult, worship was sign of loyalty to Rome
- ▶ Caligula encouraged worship of himself as deity
- ▶ Domitian (AD 81-96) demanded emperor worship
- ▶ Jews vs. Christians with emperor worship—“Caesar is Lord”

## Herod the Great (37-4 BCE)

- ▶ Building Projects
- ▶ Built 2 cities—Samaria and

### Caesarea Maritima with harbour

- ▶ Rebuilt Jerusalem with Fortress Antonia
- ▶ Theatre and Amphitheatre

► Reconstructing the

Temple—Wonder of the World ► 10,000 workmen

Herod the Great—Cont'd

► Brought Political Stability—great relationship with the Romans

► Offended the Jews often

► Attached trophies on the Walls of the Temple

► Killed many of his family members—Paranoid

► Killed the babies in Bethlehem

► Projects financed by Jews' taxes

► Married 10 times

Herod the Great's Sons

► Archelaus—Ethnarch of Samaria and Judea (4 BCE—AD 6)—incompetent,

Joseph and Mary's flight to Egypt

► Philip—Tetrarch of lands NE of Sea of Galilee—rebuilt Caesarea Philippi

► Herod Antipas—over Galilee and

Perea, beheaded John the Baptist,

Jesus called him “that fox”

Herod the Great's Lineage

► Grandson—Herod Agrippa I (AD

41-44) ruled over Israel, killed

James

► Great-grandson—Herod Agrippa II—In AD 53, Judea and Samaria under his control. In the NT, with Paul's imprisonment (Acts 25).

Sided with Romans in the Jewish

Revolt (AD 66-70)

Jewish Revolts

- ▶ 1st Jewish Revolt (AD 66-70)
- ▶ Roman Procurator Gessius Florus insulted Jewish customs
- ▶ Romans destroyed the Temple in AD 70
- ▶ Last of Jewish Resistance at

Masada

- ▶ Jews fled to Jamnia—Rabbinic Judaism began

Jewish Revolts

- ▶ 2nd Jewish Revolt (AD 132-135)
- ▶ Led by Simon Bar Kosiba, hailed as Messiah
- ▶ After Jerusalem was captured, rebuilt as Gentile city and temple dedicated to Jupiter
- ▶ Jews were forbidden to re-enter the city, sentence of death

Religious

Conditions--Roman Period

- ▶ The Law was an object of idolatrous reverence
- ▶ Hellenism--the enemy of Judaism
- ▶ Temple rebuilt
- ▶ Religious Groups continued as objects of persecution
- ▶ Office of High Priest was in chaos

## **CHAPTER 6—CRISES OF 6TH**

and 4th Century BCE ▶ The 6th Century Crisis—Fall of  
Jerusalem 586 BCE

- ▶ Lost Blessing of God—the Promised Land

- ▶ Lost the Monarchy—Davidic line will always be on throne
- ▶ Lost Presence of God—the Temple, sacrifice and atonement

#### 6th Century Crisis—cont'd

- ▶ Theological Questions—Did Yahweh love them; Was Yahweh powerful enough to save them?
- ▶ Prophetic Silence

#### 4th Century Crisis- Hellenism

- ▶ Definition of Hellenism—"Extension of Greek way of Life"
- ▶ Greek culture asked "HOW" East "WHO"
- ▶ Greeks more analytical, philosophy was a Greek discipline; Education is a priority
- ▶ Greek cities-government, architecture, gymnasium, theatre, temples
- ▶ Deemed labour class as "human tools" and non-Greeks as "barbarians"

#### Overview of Hellenism

- ▶ Advocated a spirit of individual liberty
- ▶ Emphasized Freedom from tradition
- ▶ Encouraged Scientific and Critical Inquiries
- ▶ Love of Body and Architect
- ▶ Development of Body and Mind—no circumcision

#### Strategy of Hellenism

- ▶ Encourage Soldiers to Intermarry
- ▶ Established Greek cities and architecture
- ▶ Spread of rational Philosophies
- ▶ Emphasis on education and training in Gymnasium

- ▶ Promoted Koine Greek

#### Epicurean Philosophy—Acts 17

- ▶ World began by chance, collision of atoms
- ▶ No final purpose no judgment of sin
- ▶ Gods are remote from human affairs
- ▶ Highest good-Pleasure--no Pain
- ▶ Motto is "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die"

#### Stoicism Philosophy-Acts 17

- ▶ Founded by Zeno (335-265 BCE)
- ▶ Reason-Logos is the highest good
- ▶ Fatalistic, Universe is to be accepted—no change
- ▶ In the end, the entire Cosmos will return to pure fire
- ▶ The Goal is Perfect Self-Control
- ▶ Stoic Seneca was Nero's Tutor

#### Judaism vs. Hellenism

- ▶ Judaism—monotheistic, ethical, practical vs. Hellenism—polytheistic, metaphysical, and speculative
- ▶ Judaism—particularism and isolation vs. Hellenism—universal and syncretistic
- ▶ Judaism emphasis on community vs. Hellenism focused on individual
- ▶ Judaism—circumcision sign of covenant and Jewish distinctive identity vs. Hellenism—circumcision was a mutilation of human body

## CHAPTER 7—RESPONSE TO INTERTESTAMENTAL JUDAISM

- ▶ Jews had to address tensions from Exile—past, present, future
- ▶ Past—disobedience to the law brought exile—solution is obey
- ▶ Present—Emphasis on

Particularism vs. Universalism

- ▶ Future—Led to Emphasis on Apocalypticism

Post Exilic Shifts in Judaism

- ▶ From Ceremonial to Moral Law—temple gave way to synagogue, priest gave way to scribe—Covenant faithfulness—Hesed

- ▶ Orthopraxy over Orthodoxy—emphasis on correct action and practice led to legalism. E. P. Sanders “Covenantal Nomism”

- ▶ Particularism, Exclusivism “Jewish Privilege”
- ▶ Renewed Emphasis on Jewish Distinctives—circumcision,

Sabbath-keeping, keep food laws

Interpretive Methods

- ▶ Targums (translation)-Aramaic paraphrase-commentary of Hebrew text
- ▶ Midrash (examine)—biblical exposition, exegesis and commentary
- ▶ Mishnah (Commandments)-oral law—hedge around Torah
- ▶ Halakah (walking uprightly)—dealt with legal material of Torah
- ▶ Haggadah (teaching)—provides illustrations and application of legal and ethical material
- ▶ Talmud is an expansion of the

Mishnah—homiletical commentary

Interpretive Methods-cont'd

▶ Peshar (interpretation)—(1) not connected to writer's time but the end time; (2) depends on a divinely appointed interpreter; (3) interpreter living in end time

▶ Allegory—text means something different than what is said (symbols). Purpose was to bridge cultural and historical gap (Gal.

4:21-31) to present day reader

▶ Typology—use of symbols but appreciates the significance of historical event

Septuagint--Translation

▶ Ptolemy II Philadelphos enlisted Jewish scholars to translate Hebrew Bible into Greek (250 BCE)

▶ Differences between Hebrew Bible

(MT) and Septuagint (LXX)

▶ The Order of the Books

▶ Content is different, e.g., Jeremiah is 1/8 shorter in LXX

▶ Apocrypha in LXX

The OT Canon

▶ Tradition—OT Canon was established during Ezra and Nehemiah

▶ Questionable books—Eccl. And Song of Songs, Esther)

▶ Council of Jamnia formerly finalized Canon (AD 90) in response to Christian writings

NT Canon

▶ First NT Canon—Heretic Marcion (AD

150)—most of Paul's letters and version of Luke, anti-Jewish

▶ Muratorian Canon-AD 180-22 of 27 books, excluding Heb., James, 1-2 Pet., 3 John

▶ Criterion for Canon

▶ Apostolic Authorship

- ▶ Inspired by Holy Spirit
- ▶ Orthodoxy—right belief
- ▶ Accepted by Churches

#### Development of Synagogue

- ▶ Origin likely in Babylon during Exile or with Ezra in Persian Period
- ▶ Synagogue Service
- ▶ Shema
- ▶ Daily Prayer (18 Benedictions)
- ▶ Reading of the Law and Prophets
- ▶ Translation and Interpretation (Targum)
- ▶ Sermon
- ▶ Preceded and Concluded with Blessings

#### Synagogue—cont'd

- ▶ 4 Primary Functions: (1) worship; (2) education; (3) social; (4) judicial
- ▶ 2 Officials: (1) elder—supervisor of community life; (2) ruler—upkeep of synagogue
- ▶ Importance in NT
- ▶ Jesus' first sermon in Luke 4
- ▶ Paul's point of contact in missionary journeys
- ▶ Christian worship 1st in synagogue

### **CHAPTER 8—RECONSTRUCTION OF OT INSTITUTIONS—TEMPLE**

- ▶ 1st goal of exiles returning to

#### Jerusalem—to rebuild the Temple

- ▶ Rebuilt under Haggai—held real and symbolic significance

▶ 2 Acts of Desecration: (1) Antiochus IV Epiphanes—168 BCE; (2) Pompey entered the Holy of Holies

▶ Herod the Great refurbished the Temple

NT and the Temple

▶ Jesus Cleanses the Temple (Mark 11:15-19)—“something greater than the Temple is here” (Matt. 12:6)

▶ Stephen calls the Temple a house “made with hands” (Acts 7:48), same word as “idols”

▶ For Paul, each believer is a “temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 6:19-20)

Intertestamental Feasts--Purim

▶ Purim—rooted in book of Esther

▶ Book of Esther is read and then giving of gifts to poor and friends and then feasting

▶ God is faithful to His people in the midst of persecution

Feast of

Dedication--Hanukkah

▶ Celebrate the Rededication of

Temple after desecration by

Antiochus IV

▶ Lighting of 8 lamps, one each day

▶ Celebrating in home and gifts given to children

## CHAPTER 9-SCRIBES-TRADITIONS

▶ The Exile transformed the OT scribe (copyist-secretary, Baruch) to expert teachers and interpreters of the law

▶ Scribes usually linked with Pharisees, but were separate from them, “scribes and Pharisees” 6 times in

Matt. 23; linked with variety of groups

▶ They are conspirators against Jesus and connected with chief priest and elders (Matt. 26:57)

Tractate Aboth

▶ Form of Midrash (3rd cent. BCE to 2nd Cent. AD, composed by 65 named rabbis and others)

▶ Involved (1) careful study of the law; (2) teaching of the law; (3) expansion of the law with new interpretations; (4) application of the law to specific situations

Famous Rabbis-Scribes

▶ Shammai (30 BCE—AD 10)—more

conservative, marriage dissolved only if adultery or abandonment occurred

▶ Hillel—more liberal, dominated the Sanhedrin. Marriage could be dissolved for burning food, another lady prettier than your wife, wife is a brawler, etc.

▶ Gamaliel (Acts 5:34-39; 22:3) either son or grandson of Hillel

The Tractate Aboth

▶ Rabbinical Material from 3rd cent BCE until 2nd Cent. AD

▶ Collections of sayings from rabbis, 65 of them are named

▶ Affirmations from the Aboth

▶ There is written Scriptures and oral tradition

- ▶ God originated this tradition, passed to Moses
- ▶ Carries Divine Authority
- ▶ Each generation must apply the law and add laws (fences) to protect it
- ▶ Faithfully Transmit law to future generations

## **CHAPTER 10--APOCALYPTIC**

- ▶ Key features—dreams and visions, symbols, angels and demons, pessimistic, pseudonymous, dualism, cosmic catastrophes, mediated by other-than-worldly being to human recipient
- ▶ Hope is not found within context of historical events but the realm of heaven. Like Peshet and Allegory, removes text from the original life situation
- ▶ Originated during post-exilic period
- ▶ Apocalyptic views of God's intervention
- ▶ Universal hope—restoration of people of God
- ▶ Judgment of God on enemies of Jews

## **CHAPTER 11—RELIGIOUS PARTIES--SAMARITANISM**

- ▶ Origin—Intermarriage of the conquering Assyrians and the defeated Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 BCE
  - ▶ The Samaritan Perspective—the ones who stayed behind in Palestine during the Exile Period—Worship Yahweh, Torah (their version is their primary Scripture)
  - ▶ Denied legitimacy of Jerusalem temple, Prophets and Writings
- Samaritanism—cont'd
- ▶ Samaritan Schism in 380 BCE, solidified when John Hyrcanus destroyed the city of Samaria, destroyed the Temple (108 BCE)

- ▶ In NT—John 4:9—reflects social segregation; John 8:48—indicates long history of hostility
- ▶ Jesus makes the Samaritan the hero in Parable of Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37); Only the Samaritan leper returned to give thanks (Luke 17:11-19)
- ▶ Samaria—first mission field for Christianity

#### Pharisees

- ▶ All background information from NT, Josephus, rabbinic sources
- ▶ Hebrew term parash, Aramaic term perash means “one who separates” possibly from lawless people or what is unclean
- ▶ Josephus reports 6000 Pharisees at time of Herod
- ▶ Origin—Possibly Ezra, the Hasidim, but they appear as a group during John Hyrcanus ▶ Under Alexander Jannaeus, 800 crucified

#### Pharisees—cont'd

- ▶ In the NT—depicted as opponents of Jesus and early Christians
- ▶ Beliefs are in Acts 23:8, resurrection, angels and spirits
- ▶ Distinctive is their strict adherence to oral law, but also made them flexible in adapting to new situations. Able to survive the destruction of the Temple in AD

70

- ▶ Jesus targets those who emphasize the letter of the law over the spirit of the law

#### Pharisees—cont'd

- ▶ Pharisees' Attitude toward Jesus
- ▶ Offended that Jesus associated with tax collectors (Luke 7:36-50; 15:1-2)
- ▶ Offended that Jesus set Himself above the Sabbath (Mark 2:23-3:6)
- ▶ Offended that Jesus did not observe commandments regarding ritual purity

(Mark 7:1-15)

- ▶ Jesus charged them with destroying

God's law with their traditions (Mark 7:13)

Sadducees

- ▶ Sources are from Josephus, Talmud, NT
- ▶ Origin is linked to priestly family of Zadok—King David and Solomon
- ▶ Believed in no resurrection, as seen in interaction with Jesus in Mark 12:18-27)
- ▶ Believed in no angels or spirits (Acts 23:8)
- ▶ Held to authority of only the Torah, rejected Prophets and Writings and oral tradition—see Jesus' response to resurrection from Exod. 3:6 (Matt. 22:23-32)

Sadducees—cont'd

- ▶ Religiously conservative and literalistic in understanding the Torah
- ▶ Politically and socially liberal, especially to Hellenism and relationship with the ruling power-Rome
- ▶ No view of afterlife fed their desire for wealth, which connected them to the Temple
- ▶ No group loyalty
- ▶ Sadducees ceased to exist after destruction of Temple in AD 70

Herodians

- ▶ Either Members or supporters of Herod's dynasty. Most likely emerged under Herod

Antipas

- ▶ Same beliefs as Sadducees except that the Messiah would come from this line. Pro-

Roman

- ▶ In the NT, they appear with Pharisees against Jesus on issue of paying taxes

Zealots—4th Philosophy

▶ Origin under Judas of Galilee, AD 6 rebellion against more taxes. Not officially designated as “zealots” until AD 66-70

▶ 3 possible identifications for Zealots

▶ Those with fervent devotion to the Law—Phineas, Mattathias, Simon

▶ General Movement under Judas of Gamal in AD 6 (Acts 5:37)

▶ Jewish Revolutionary Factions that emerged in AD 66-70 under John of Gischala

Sicarii

▶ Terrorist Group using curved dagger (sica) concealed under clothing to stab enemies

▶ Paul was mistakenly identified as one (Acts 21:28)

▶ The Sicarii leader at Masada, Eleazar, son of Jairus, was a relative of Judas of Galilee

▶ Zealots and Sicarii may have been totally different groups

Essenes

▶ Resources are Josephus, Philo, Pliny the Elder, numbered 4000

▶ Originated likely from the Hasidim separated from Judas Maccabeus, preferred to be called “sons of Zadok”

▶ Strict Probation Period—focused on strict adherence to law, monastic and ascetic expression 40 KM from Jerusalem

▶ Devoted to study of Scripture

Essenes—cont'd

▶ Rejected legitimacy of priests, but sent offerings to Temple

▶ Teacher of Righteousness vs. Wicked Priest

▶ Expectation of 2 Messiahs: from Judah (Kingly) and one of Levitical descent (Priestly)

▶ During Jewish Revolt—hid scrolls in caves

## Dead Sea Scrolls

- ▶ Discovery of the DSS in 1947 by shepherd boy
- ▶ DSS (800-900 scrolls) include:
- ▶ Copies or fragments of all OT books except Esther
- ▶ Parts of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha
- ▶ Writings of the Qumran community

## Dead Sea Scrolls

- ▶ Wide range of letters, reports, biblical and religious and commercial material
- ▶ Key Scrolls
- ▶ Damascus Covenant—Existence of

Group in 196 BCE and Teacher of

## Righteousness

- ▶ War Scroll—foretells imminent battle with Rome, Jews victory over forces of darkness
- ▶ Manual of Discipline—withdrawal into the wilderness

## Therapeutae

- ▶ Name “Therapeutae” means
- “slaves” of God
- ▶ Only Philo makes mention of this group in Alexandria, Egypt
  - ▶ Only distinct party in Diaspora Judaism
  - ▶ Devoted to monastic life and study of Scripture

## Theological Contradiction

- ▶ Pharisees—rectified by internal reforms
- ▶ Sadducees—rejected any effort to change status quo
- ▶ Essenes—no hope, so withdrew

▶ Zealots—sought to overthrow

Romans by military might

Christian Response to Roman Rule

▶ Jesus taught “principled pacifism” moral commitment to non-violence (Matt. 5:5, 9, 38-43)

▶ Jesus’ stance on taxes, “Render to Caesar..” Ultimate allegiance is to God

▶ Paul and Peter taught submission to government (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17), though a time will come where they cannot co-exist (Rev. 17-18)

▶ Rome treated Christianity as an illegal religion in contrast to Judaism as legal religion

Charges against Christians

▶ Cannibalism—eating flesh and drinking blood at Lord's Supper

▶ Treason—Christ is Lord vs. Caesar is Lord

▶ Incest—Emphasis on loving each other as brothers and sisters in Christ

## **CHAPTER 12—COMMON LIFE**

▶ People of the Land—Am-ha-Eretz, about

92% of population

▶ Divisions among the people: Jew vs.

Gentile; Palestinian Jew vs. Diaspora Jew; Galilean vs. Samaritan vs. Judean; pro-Roman vs. nationalist; rich vs. middle class vs. lower class

▶ The Economy—an agricultural society, farming of crops, cattle, fishing. 3 different types of money in circulation: Jewish,

Greek, Roman

Common Life—cont'd

▶ Homes—most homes made of stone, mud brick, hard-packed dirt floors, flat roof. Central courtyard shared by many families

▶ Marriage—long betrothal with financial implications (dowry) and legal covenant.

Monogamous. Children are a blessing from God

▶ Son was circumcised on 8th day. At 13 boys finished school and began to work.

▶ Women—from daughter to wife to mother to widow

Education

▶ The centrality of the Law in the curriculum

▶ Home provided most of the education, with help from community and synagogue

▶ Fathers responsible for education with reading, studying, and applying the law to daily life

▶ Communities provided schools

▶ Formal education concluded at 12-13 with the exceptional students continuing with rabbi

## **CHAPTER 13—RELIGIOUS THOUGHT**

▶ Existence of God—Jews started each day with the Shema

▶ Acknowledged and worshiped God as

Creator, Sustainer, Sovereign God,

Covenant-making God

▶ Challenges to Jewish view of God

▶ Fall of Jerusalem—God's judgment, but God will bring them out of exile

▶ Hellenism—influenced the translation of LXX, no more use of YHWH

Religious Thought-Worldview

▶ Creation—Focus on truth of Creation not method. Creation-good

▶ The Fall—rebelled against God, sinners, guilty before God

▶ Regeneration—God takes initiative to redeem and restore—Salvation History

▶ Consummation—Final Age, Fruition of God's Redemption

Religious Thought--Law

▶ E. P. Sanders "Covenant Nomism" claims that each Jew enters covenant by grace but stays in covenant with obedience to law

▶ Scott's Response—No normative Judaism at this time, high merit motive, Jesus and NT writers argue against Jewish legalism

▶ During Intertestamental Period, greater focus on keeping the law

Religious Thought-Immortality-Resurrection

▶ Belief in afterlife-OT (Prov. 12:28) yet this period, focus on individual not nation (Ezek. 18:4)

▶ OT term Sheol-shadowy gloomy existence. Belief all people go there, righteous and wicked (Jacob, Hezekiah, Job)

▶ NT-Lazarus resting in bosom of Abraham; Paul asserts those who die in the Lord will be present with the Lord

## **CHAPTER 14—FINAL AGE**

▶ Final Age is last phase of Salvation

History-ushered in by Kingdom of God, Messiah

▶ Preliminary events: Tribulation, threatening signs of cosmic order, rampant wickedness, forerunner—Elijah-like

▶ Nature of Final Age

▶ Paradise Returned--Eden restored

▶ New Exodus—Spiritual Deliverance

▶ Renewed Davidic Kingdom—Israel completely restored

Final Age—cont'd

- ▶ Events of the Final Age
- ▶ Antichrist and his forces are defeated by the Lord
- ▶ Messianic Kingdom established in Israel with worldwide dominion
- ▶ City of Jerusalem and Temple purified
- ▶ Variable time frames
- ▶ 2 Esdras—400 years; Jubilees 1000 year; Talmud—2000 years

Final Age—cont'd

- ▶ Intertestamental Judaism eschatology expected a radical changes in environment, human experience and spiritual sphere
- ▶ Jesus' Kingdom involves no national renewal but simple call to repent
- ▶ Jesus did not implement the Final Age, but redefined it
- ▶ Early disciples actually living in the Final Age, the future is now

## **CHAPTER 15-KINGDOM OF GOD**

- ▶ John the Baptist and Jesus began their preaching with the Kingdom of God has come
- ▶ Kingdom refers to rule, realm, sovereignty, Lordship
- ▶ Kingdom is both spiritual and material, present and future
- ▶ Human sin is a rejection of God's rule in our lives

Kingdom of God—cont'd

- ▶ Struggle between Satan and God in spiritual realm
- ▶ This battle is played out between those who yield to God's rule versus those who yield to Satan's rule
- ▶ Two Key Variables with the Coming of the Kingdom
- ▶ Initial Breakthrough of God's invasion into enemy's territory

- ▶ Final victory and complete restoration of Kingdom of God

Kingdom of God—cont'd

- ▶ Kingdom of God and Nation of Israel
- ▶ OT—Israel was originally a theocracy, promised David everlasting kingdom
- ▶ Intertestamental period, expectation of Kingdom of God being restored under the Davidic Messiah. Includes political freedom, elimination of natural evils, social order of peace, justice prevails

## **CHAPTER 16-MESSIANIC HOPE**

- ▶ Messianic Hope in the OT
- ▶ Most of the material is in the Prophets
- ▶ Earlier forms, focus on the restoration and glorification of Israel
- ▶ Latter forms, focus on the person of the Messiah
- ▶ Messianic Hope became universalized and personalized

Messianic Hope-cont'd

- ▶ Titles and Names—Moses and Elijah were always included
- ▶ Qumran Community expected a Levitic Messiah and Royal Messiah from Judah, possibly prophet like Moses
- ▶ In the NT, Pharisees asked John the Baptist if he was the Messiah
- ▶ The disciples of Christ had no problem acknowledging Jesus as Messiah

Messianic Hope—cont'd

- ▶ Messianic Titles
- ▶ Messiah—Anointed One, mostly the coming of the Davidic King
- ▶ Levitic Messiah—a Priest from tribe of Levi (Ps. 110:4). Qumran contended that Levitic Messiah would have priority of Davidic

## Messiah. Jesus as High Priest

(Heb. 4:14)

▶ Son of Man (2 Esdras, 1 Enoch, Dan. 7)—Eternal, heavenly, Judge. Question is the Son of Man the Messiah. Jesus uniquely adopted this self-designated title

▶ The Servant of the Lord—(Isaiah in Servant Songs)—Chosen, Anointed, Suffering,

Atones for sinners

▶ Prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:15)—new Exodus, teacher of New Covenant

▶ Elijah (Mal. 4:5-6)—Most believed an Elijah-like figure as forerunner

▶ Other Possible Messianic Titles

▶ Savior, Judge, Deliverer, the Word (1:1-18), Shepherd gathering His flock, the Righteous, the Branch, Chosen One, Son of God, Son of David, the Stone (Ps. 118:22), and the Coming One

▶ Signs of Messiahship (John 7:31; Acts

2:22). Jesus responds with "signs" (Matt. 11:2-5)—Blind receive sight, lame walk, lepers cleansed, dead are raised, good news preached to poor.

▶ In NT, assumption that the Messiah would prove Himself with signs (Mark 14:61-65), identify who struck Him.

▶ Widespread Expectation of Political- Military Messiah

## CHAPTER 17—COVENANT-LAW

### ▶ Covenant in Final

Age—Jeremiah-Ezekiel announce

New Covenant

▶ Intertestamental sources—only have permanent validity of law (Jubilees)

▶ In the NT—Last Supper renews the new covenant, "This is the blood of My covenant."

Hebrews--new covenant made the old covenant obsolete (8:13). Jesus-Mediator--New

New Covenant-Law-cont'd

▶ Law in Final Age—W.D. Davies argues that the OT, Apocrypha,

Pseudepigrapha, rabbinic sources expect Torah to persist in Messianic Age, some modifications.

▶ Jesus challenged the Jewish interpretations, such as the Sabbath (Mark 2:23-3:6), traditions of elders, food (Mark 7:2-23). Law is fulfilled, coming of Messiah (Matt. 5:18)

▶ Paul says, Christ is the end of the law (Rom. 10:4); Christ redeemed the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13)

▶ Hebrews asserts that in Christ, old revelation, Moses, priesthood, sacrifices gave way to the new

▶ Davies claims law of the final age is the person of Christ

▶ Summary of law and covenant options

▶ Law will stay the same but more reverence

▶ Better understanding and deeper devotion and increased ability to keep the law

▶ Old law will remain but with modifications

▶ Summary of law and covenant options—cont'd

▶ Old and New Law co-exist side by side

▶ Old Law completely abolished and replaced by new Written Law

▶ Messiah will reign, so Messiah will be the law during Final Age

Gnosticism

▶ Term “Gnosticism” comes from Greek word “Knowledge”

▶ Basic beliefs include

▶ Greatest human need is not sin but ignorance

▶ Knowledge is superior to faith

▶ Matter is evil and spirit is good

Gnosticism-cont'd

▶ Basic Beliefs—cont'd

▶ God of the OT is different than God of NT. God created the world through a series of “aeons,” each being a little less like God than the previous one. Last link is Jesus in the flesh, far removed from holy God of OT

▶ Distinct Expressions of Gnosticism

▶ Asceticism—body is evil, so inflict pain on it

▶ Libertinism—Antinomism—indulge flesh because it does no matter

## **CHAPTER 18-ATTITUDES TOWARD GENTILES**

▶ Rabbinic view of Gentiles—deep hostility, suspicion, contempt

▶ The OT prophets—wide Range from Habakkuk viewed Gentiles' hostility and brutality toward Israel as opposition to Israel. Jeremiah saw

Gentiles as possible recipients of

God's salvation

Attitude toward Gentiles

▶ Challenge is the Jewish self-perception of being God's

chosen and Gentiles outside the covenant

- ▶ 3 key Factors that led to Jewish minimal contact with Gentiles
- ▶ Gentile idolatry-blasphemous
- ▶ Low Ethical-Moral Standards
- ▶ Ceremonial

Uncleanness--Defilement

- ▶ Some Efforts Made to Reach

Gentiles

- ▶ Allowances for Strangers and Aliens (Exod)
- ▶ Temple Worship with Court of Gentiles—yet there was a wall of separation and a warning sign of a death penalty if Gentile entered Jewish section

Attitude toward Gentiles

- ▶ Scott McKnight Summary of Jewish

Attitudes toward Gentiles

- ▶ God is Lord of All—Jews-Gentiles
- ▶ Jews generally tolerant of Gentiles
- ▶ Gentiles allowed participation in Jewish Religion
- ▶ Jews participated in Gentile Society to some degree
- ▶ Scott McKnight Summary of Jewish

Attitudes toward Gentiles-cont'd

- ▶ Jews thought they were better than Gentiles
- ▶ Jews-God's chosen to exclusion of all others
- ▶ Jews critical of pagan religious practices
- ▶ Gentiles had contempt for

Jews—treated them unjustly

- ▶ Mission to Gentiles—no clear evidence

- ▶ Jeremias claims Jesus' statement, "You scribes and Pharisees, cross sea and land to make a single convert" (Matt. 23:15) indicate there was a mission

- ▶ Intertestamental Jews were not aggressively seeking converts

- ▶ The Jewish monotheism, morality, purity attracted Gentiles

- ▶ Proselytes are full converts to Judaism, fully accepting law, national allegiance, social and cultural customs—naturalized Jews

- ▶ Proselytes at Pentecost (Acts 2:11)

- ▶ Among the 7 proto-typical deacons

- (Acts 6:5), and in Antioch Pisidia (Acts

- 13:43)

- ▶ Expected to be circumcised (if male), offer a sacrifice, baptism

Attitude toward Gentiles

- ▶ God-Fearers—literal "fearing God" or those who "worship God"

- ▶ Uncircumcised Gentiles stopped short of becoming proselytes

- ▶ Limited participation in Jewish worship

- ▶ Beliefs and practices—monotheism, morality, observing the Sabbath and food laws and ceremony. Parallel to

OT resident alien

## **GENTILES IN FINAL AGE**

▶ Jewish Intertestamental Perspective

▶ In the Final Battle, the Gentiles would join hostile spiritual powers and be defeated—Gog and Magog (Ezek. 38-39)

▶ The Final Messianic Age would embrace the whole world (Zech. 8:20-21; Isa. 11:10)

▶ No clear picture during this period

Gentiles in Final Age

▶ Scott offers options of Jewish view of

Gentiles in Final Age

▶ Gentiles are the enemy and will be defeated

▶ Gentiles are beyond God's concern and salvation

▶ Gentiles are so depraved, even if they had an opportunity to become proselytes, they would resist and reject the Lord

Gentiles in Final Age

▶ Scott offers options—cont'd

▶ Gentiles who seek, are motivated by self-interest and will be rejected

▶ Gentiles will serve the Lord but not as proselytes

▶ Surviving Gentiles will be slaves to serve Israel

▶ Gentiles fully incorporated to receive full blessings and salvation