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The Book of Enoch and Second Temple Judaism

A thesis

presented to

the faculty of the Department of History

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Masters of Arts in History

by

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ABSTRACT

The Book of Enoch and Second Temple Judaism

by

Nancy Perkins

This thesis examines the ancient Jewish text the Book of Enoch, the scholarly work done on the text since its discovery in 1773, and its seminal importance to the study of ancient Jewish history. Primary sources for the thesis project are limited to Flavius Josephus and the works of the Old Testament. Modern scholars provide an abundance of secondary information. These scholars include R. H. Charles, D. S. Russell, Albert Baumgarten, Seth Schwartz, George Nickelsburg, and James VanderKam. The Book of Enoch was composed from roughly 300 BCE to 10 BCE. The Book of Enoch stands as substantial proof that there was not a single Judaism practiced in Palestine during the Second Temple period, but rather multiple Judaisms that interacted with one another, and out of that both post-Destruction Judaism and apocalyptic Christianity emerged.

CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	2
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	5
The Nineteenth Century	7
The Era of R. H. Charles.....	11
Modern Scholarship.....	13
2. THE HISTORY OF THE SECOND TEMPLE PERIOD	18
Antiochus the Great (222 – 187 BCE).....	19
Seleucus IV (187 – 175 BCE).....	21
Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175 – 164 BCE).....	23
Antiochus IV’s Cultural Campaign	25
The Maccabean Revolt (ca. 166 – 152 BCE)	27
Antiochus V (164 – 162 BCE).....	30
Demetrius I Soter (162 – 150 BCE)	31
Significant Jewish Sects of the Period	34
Sadducees	34
Pharisees	35
Essenes.....	36
Qumran	37
Messianic Expectations	40
The Rule of the Hasmoneans	40
John Hyrcanus I (135 – 104 BCE)	43
Aristobulus I (104 – 103 BCE).....	44

Alexander Jannaeus (103 – 76 BCE).....	45
Alexandra Salome (76 – 67 BCE)	47
Aristobulus II (67 – 63 BCE).....	48
Roman Intervention	48
Hyrchanus II (63 – 40 BCE)	50
Mattathias Antigonus (40 – 37 BCE).....	53
Herod the Great (37 – 4 BCE)	54
Under Roman Control	56
The Focal Point of the Problem: Religion and Temple	59
The Jewish War of 66 – 70 CE	62
3. THE BOOK OF ENOCH AND SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM	65
Judaism versus “Judaisms”	67
The Rise of Sectarianism	69
Torah versus Myth	74
The Book of Enoch	80
The Book of Watchers (ca. 300 BCE)	80
The Book of Luminaries (ca. 300 BCE)	82
The Epistle of Enoch (200 – 100 BCE)	82
The Dream Visions (164 – 160 BCE)	84
The Book of Parables (ca. 10 BCE)	85
Conclusions	88
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	91
VITA	94

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Enoch codex is a composite of various sectarian works written during the Second Temple Period in Palestine, between roughly 400 BCE and the end of the first century CE.¹ It is probable, though not certain, that the individual texts of Enoch were written by a wide array of sectarians; they certainly were not all composed at the same time, nor were they all written by the same author. The Book of Enoch, also called 1 Enoch, is a Jewish pseudepigraphal and apocalyptic book that, as it exists in the Ethiopic version, contains five individual works, followed by two addenda. These five books are The Book of Watchers (chaps. 1 – 36), The Book of Parables (chaps. 37 -71), The Book of the Luminaries (chaps. 72 – 82), Dream Visions (chaps. 83 – 90), and The Epistle of Enoch (chaps. 91 – 105). The two addenda are entitled The Birth of Noah (chaps. 106 -107) and Another Book by Enoch (chap. 108). Dating the original composition of the Book of Enoch is problematic for the very reason that it is a compilation of smaller texts. The Book of Watchers, that recounts two stories concerning the origins of sin, is generally agreed to be “among the earliest portions of the book.”²

In chapter one, I discuss the scholarly work that has been applied to the Book of Enoch from its discovery in 1773 up to modern day. In the second chapter, I lay out a brief overview of the historical events of the Second Temple period. Finally, in chapter three I discuss the debate concerning Second Temple Judaism versus “Judaisms”, the rise

¹ George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, 1 Enoch: A New Translation (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), vii.

²G. H. Box, et al., The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English, ed. R. H. Charles. Vol. II: Pseudepigrapha. II vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 163.

of sectarianism, the socioeconomic realities that caused this phenomenon, and the Book of Enoch as a combination of both myth, based on the Yahwehist source in the Old Testament, and as sectarian propaganda.

Each section of Enoch was written at an unique time and by different authors; scholars agree that all of the texts that comprise the Book of Enoch, with the exception of the Book of Parables, date from between “the late fourth century B.C.E. and the turn of the era.”³ The Book of Parables is believed to be a late second or early third century C. E. Christian writing because of its usage of the phrase Son of Man and also because it is the only part of the Book of Enoch that was not found at Akhmin or Qumran. “If a pre-Christian copy of the Parables were ever discovered, it would create a sensation, since it is the only text besides the Christian Gospels that uses the title ‘Son of Man’ for the heavenly Savior of Israel.”⁴

The Book of Enoch is of utmost importance to scholars because it provides rare insight into the religio-political thought of the Jewish peoples during the Second Temple Period. It also played an influential role in the formation of early Christian apocalyptic. “The Book of Enoch...is cited in Jude, vs. 14 – 5, and [was] held in high esteem by early Christian thinkers such as Tertullian and Origen.”⁵ However, the ancient texts that comprise the Book of Enoch were lost to Western Christendom by the fourth century of the Common Era, due to the ban placed upon them by such early Church Fathers as Jerome, Hilary, and Augustine. “In his fourth century *City of God*, Augustine says that

³George W. E. Nickelsburg, and James C. VanderKam. 1 Enoch: A New Translation. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), vii.

⁴Michael Wise, Martin Abegg, Jr. and Edward Cook. The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation. (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2005), 279.

⁵J. C. M. van Winden, Review of The book of Enoch or Enoch 1: a new English edition by Matthew Black. *Vigiliae Christianae* 41, no. 1 (March 1987): 98.

the writings circulating under the name of Enoch ‘are properly judged by prudent men to be not inspired’ (15.23). Today it is accepted as canonical only in the church of Ethiopia.”⁶

The Book of Enoch in its entirety survives only in the Ethiopic language (also called Ge’ez) and is “itself is a translation from a Greek version.”⁷ Parts of the Book of Enoch have been found in Greek, Latin, Syriac, and since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, in Aramaic. Having been lost to the West for over 1400 years, the Ethiopic version of the Book of Enoch was rediscovered in 1773 by the Scottish explorer James Bruce in Ethiopia and was taken to Europe for scholarly study. Scholarship on the Book of Enoch over the ensuing 237 years has developed in three main phases, each division highlighted by the discovery of new material. These are in the nineteenth century following the discovery of the Ethiopic Book of Enoch, the era of R. H. Charles and the discovery of the Gizeh Greek manuscripts, and modern scholarship with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Nineteenth Century

“During the Renaissance in Europe and in the following centuries an interest developed not only in Greek but also in various Oriental languages.”⁸ This interest in foreign languages, as well as the Protestant Reformation, gave birth to the development of serious biblical inquiry. By the nineteenth century, scholarship on the Book of Enoch was aided by the development of nascent archaeology and the gradual secularization of the academic community; the 1820s and 1830s saw an end to the central idea that divine

⁶Michael Wise, et al, 280.

⁷D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic: 200 BC – AD 100*. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), 51.

⁸Michael E. Stone, “Why Study the Pseudepigrapha?” *Biblical Archaeologist* 46, no. 4 (1983): 235-6.

intervention was an acceptable explanation for historical events.⁹ Napoleon's sojourn into Egypt and the priceless artifacts he brought back to Europe also ignited an interest in antiquities and cultural studies. Scholars began to take a serious interest in attempting to decipher cuneiform and hieroglyphics, as well as translating Latin and Greek manuscripts. Within this framework, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries scholars became interested in those writings that might shed light on ancient Judaism, the development of early Christianity, and the writings of the New Testament.

Scholars were also influenced by the work of Giambattista Vico, the Italian professor of rhetoric from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, whose writings had gained widespread popularity through the works of the Frenchman Jules Michelet (1798 – 1874).¹⁰ Vico asserted that humankind creates the societies in that they live and therefore, because societies are made by man, they can be fully understood by man. Additionally, Vico did not believe societal changes to be the result of mere coincidence or cause and effect but rather were a conscientious movement towards human illumination, i.e. "man's effort to understand himself and his world, and to realize his capacities in it."¹¹ Changes in societal norms, Vico asserted, are most readily evident in language. Because of this fact, if scholars are able to reconstruct a given civilization's dialects then, according to Vico, they are given a direct view into that civilization's cultural worldview and their ideas about their own history. What eventually came out of Vico's work was a general idea about how "historical change might be viewed and investigated."¹² This method of historical inquiry, that focused on language comparison

⁹Michael Bentley, *Modern Historiography: An Introduction*. (New York: Routledge, 1999), 43.

¹⁰*Ibid*, 5.

¹¹*Ibid*, 6.

¹² Bentley, 6.

and linguistic idioms, was used by the scholars of the nineteenth century as they worked on translations of the Ethiopic manuscripts of Enoch. During this period, the focus was on paleographic dating of the manuscripts, translating the content of the Book of Enoch, and determining the language or languages in that it might have originally been written. The Ethiopic version of the Book of Enoch is believed to be from the sixth century.¹³

In 1821, the British philologist Richard Laurence published the first English translation of the Book of Enoch. In 1838, Laurence issued a transcript of the Ethiopic manuscript; his transcript was roundly attacked by the German philologist and Old Testament exegete August Dillmann for its substantial grammatical errors. Dillmann presented his own translation of the Book of Enoch in 1851. Additionally, he divided the text into 108 chapters, a division “retained, since, by every editor.”¹⁴

The next important discovery came in 1886 when a sixth century CE manuscript of Enoch was found at Akhmin, Egypt, an ancient Christian burial site, “by excavators under the direction of the French archaeologist Grebaut.”¹⁵ The manuscript was written entirely in Greek and contained chapters 1-32 of Dillmann’s division of the Book of Enoch. This was a significant development as “the Greek version was known only through a few quotations in the Byzantine chronicler George the Syncellus” until the discovery of the Akhmin manuscript.¹⁶ The Syncellus Greek dates from the eight century and contains fragments of chapters 6 – 16 of Enoch, although the source these fragments

¹³Charles C. Torrey, “Notes on the Greek texts of Enoch.” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 62, no. 1 (March 1942): 54. R. H. Charles, *The Ethiopic Version of the book of Enoch*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906): x.

¹⁴W. Muss-Arnolt, “Review of *The Ethiopic version of the book of Enoch* by R. H. Charles.” *American Journal of Theology* 12, no. 4 (1908): 661.

¹⁵George H. Schodde, “The new Greek Enoch fragments.” *Biblical World* 1, no. 5 (May, 1893): 359.

¹⁶Naphtali Lewis, “The last chapters of Enoch in Greek by Campbell Bonner”. *The Classical Weekly* (1938): 232.

were copied from is unknown. With the discovery of the Akhmin manuscript, scholars for the first time had substantial amounts of Greek to compare with the Ethiopic. In 1892, M. Bouriant published the Akhmin manuscript (also called Gizeh Greek) in that he compared the Gizeh Greek to the Syncellus Greek and again to the Ethiopic version. It became evident that the Gizeh Greek contained a number of unique renderings that did not synchronize with the Ethiopic version or the Syncellus Greek version.¹⁷

In 1892, Dillmann issued a second edition of his translation based on both the Ethiopic and Gizeh Greek. At this time, Dillmann and other scholars understood that the Ethiopic version of the Book of Enoch was a translation from Greek, yet it was uncertain if Greek was the original language. Dillmann argued for a Hebrew original and attempted through linguistics to show that the Greek was a translation of a Semitic original, either Hebrew or Aramaic. Additionally, Joseph Halevy published an essay “in the *Journal Asiatique* in 1867, argu[ing] ably and in detail for a Hebrew original of the whole book. What they actually succeeded in demonstrating was that the Greek is a translation, a faithful rendering of a text that was Semitic but not necessarily Hebrew.”¹⁸

During the nineteenth century, the work of scholars was focused on producing an accurate translation of the Book of Enoch based on the manuscripts at hand. Disagreements among scholars were rooted in both philological and theological concerns, including disagreements about word choices, scribal inaccuracies, linguistic idioms, and hypotheses concerning the Book of Enoch’s original language. The publication of Dr. R. H. Charles’s initial translation of the Ethiopic Book of Enoch in 1893 and the death of

¹⁷Schodde, 360-2.

¹⁸Torrey, 52.

August Dillmann the following year heralded the end of nineteenth century scholarship on the Book of Enoch.

The Era of R. H. Charles

At the turn of the twentieth century, twenty-nine manuscripts “of the Ethiopic *Book of Enoch* were known to exist in the West: fifteen in England, eight in France, four in Germany, one in Italy, and one in the United States.”¹⁹ The reason R. H. Charles was so influential in Enoch studies was three-fold. First, he was thorough and precise in his work. He used twenty-six of the twenty-nine known manuscripts in the production of his translation. In comparison, Laurence used only one manuscript for his 1821 translation; Dillmann used five in 1851. Dr. Charles also used better quality manuscripts than those Dillmann employed.²⁰ Second, the publication of his translation and commentary of Ethiopic Enoch in 1893 “was a major factor in arousing interest in the Jewish background against that Christianity arose.”²¹ Finally, Charles worked to place the Book of Enoch in the broader context of Jewish apocalyptic literature and the historical atmosphere of Second Temple Judaism. “That we have now a practically exhaustive edition of the only extant version, the Ethiopic, together with the fragmentary Greek and Latin renderings, we owe to the painstaking labor of Professor Charles, the leading editor of Ethiopic texts and one of the best scholars of the Ethiopic language and literature.”²² The Book of Enoch became part and parcel of works on the Old Testament Jewish Pseudepigrapha.

¹⁹Ephraim Isaac, “New light upon the book of Enoch from newly-found Ethiopic manuscripts.” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103, no. 2 (April-June, 1983): 399.

²⁰M. R. James, “Charles’s translation of the ‘Book of Enoch’.” *The Classical Review* 8, no. 1 (February, 1894): 42.

²¹Jonas C. Greenfield, and Michael E. Stone. “The books of Enoch and the traditions of Enoch.” *Numen*. 26, no. 1 (June, 1979): 89.

²²Muss-Arnolt, 660.

During the period of the work of R. H. Charles, scholars were still intensely interested in comparison and collation of the various Enoch manuscripts. Professor Charles believed that the original language of the Book of Enoch was Hebrew, but this was prior to his study of the Gizeh Greek; further study convinced him that at least the section containing chapters 6 – 36 was originally written in Aramaic. In the preface to his 1906 edition of the Book of Enoch, Dr. Charles wrote that he had “abandoned the view that Enoch was originally written in Hebrew, and [had] come to the conclusion that, like Daniel, it was written partly in Aramaic and partly in Hebrew.”²³

Working with manuscripts is painstaking, particularly when there are multiple languages used, scribal errors abound, and the various manuscripts render different readings. Additionally, there are problems with translation when the language used is textually one language but idiomatically another. Dr. Charles stated in 1903 that “the more a scholar works with manuscripts, the more distrustful he becomes of his own collations and those of others...hence one comes to regard photographic reproductions of the chief MSS. of a book as indispensable in his preparation of its text. The scholar must procure these; if not, he must revise his collations thoroughly, at least one or more times.”²⁴

This intense interest in the Book of Enoch was led by predominately Christian scholars, who were focused on understanding the Jewish roots from that early Christianity sprung. Growing cultural anti-Semitism prior to World War II and theological differences between Christianity and Judaism hampered research on the Book of Enoch. In 1930, Greek manuscripts found among the Chester Beatty papyri at the

²³R. H. Charles, *The Ethiopic Version of the Book of Enoch*, iii.

²⁴R. H. Charles, “The book of Enoch: review of *Das Buch Henoch* by Joh. Flemming and L. Radermacher.” *The American Journal of Theology* 7, no. 4 (1903): 691.

University of Michigan and containing chapters 97 – 107 of the Book of Enoch were translated and published by Campbell Bonner.²⁵ Bonner believed that the scribe “copied carelessly from a somewhat corrupt original of the third century and added to its vagaries a number of transcriptional and orthographic mistakes and some phonetic and syntactic vulgarisms.”²⁶ Regardless, this meant that for the first time scholars had access to the first and last parts of the Book of Enoch in two languages, Ethiopic and Greek, though for the middle section of the text only the Ethiopic remained extant. After the major contributions of Dr. Charles and Campbell Bonner, there was a static period in Enoch scholarship, until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Modern Scholarship

The timing for the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls could not have been more fortuitous for Enoch scholars. The Scrolls were discovered in 1947, just after the close of World War II, when the world was coming to terms with the shock of Nazi Germany’s violent anti-Semitism. “It took the Holocaust to shake even the most insulated consciences and lay the foundations for a different relationship between Christians and Jews.”²⁷ In addition, the Dead Sea Scrolls proved to be priceless treasures; for the first time, ancient manuscripts of the pseudepigrapha were available. The Dead Sea Scrolls “helped to provide a context for the understanding of the origins of Christianity. No

²⁵T. W. Manson, “Review of The last chapters of Enoch in Greek by Campbell Bonner.” *The Classical Review* 52, no. 2 (1938): 84.

²⁶Robert P. Casey, “Review of The last chapters of Enoch in Greek by Campbell Bonner.” *The American Journal of Philology* 60, no. 1 (1939): 136.

²⁷Gabriele Boccaccini, ed. *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005): 2.

longer was rabbinic Judaism to form the primary basis for comparison with earliest Christian literature, but rather the Jewish literature of the Second Temple period.”²⁸

The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in caves at Qumran and were discovered to be the writings used by a sectarian community that resided there during the late Second Temple Period. “We are not certain about the city or place in that 1 Enoch was, or its constituent parts were, composed. However, it is clear that the work originated in Judea and was in use at Qumran before the beginning of the Christian period.”²⁹ At Qumran were found seven fragmentary Aramaic copies of the Book of Enoch (excluding the section called the Parables), four manuscripts of an earlier and longer Book of the Heavenly Luminaries, and nine fragmentary scrolls of an Enoch story that scholars call the Book of Giants.³⁰ The languages used in the texts include Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. One thing that the Dead Sea Scrolls prove is that various dialects of Hebrew and Aramaic were in use during Second Temple Judaism. Because of the Dead Sea Scrolls, scholars now know that the Book of Enoch was originally written entirely in Aramaic. However, the discovery of the scrolls raises many more questions than it has thus far answered.

In 1976, J. T. Milik published the results of his studies of the Enoch fragments from Qumran. With Milik’s publication, “the Jewishness of the document was now apparent to both Christian and Jewish scholars, as were its relevance and popularity in its own time.”³¹ This fact led some scholars to question when the Book of Enoch had first been compiled. “We have to ask whether this Enoch corpus always existed as one whole

²⁸Stone, 240.

²⁹James H. Charlesworth, ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*. Vol I of II vols. (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1983), 7 – 8.

³⁰Boccaccini, 2005.

³¹Boccaccini, 3.

or has it been first assembled in Ethiopic?"³² Scholars also became increasingly interested in the Parables (chapters 37 – 81), that were conspicuously absent from the Qumran cache, as well as being absent from the Gizeh Greek. Disagreements about the date and origin of their composition have been numerous. Were the Parables a Jewish work, or an early Christian one? In what time period were they written? If the work is Jewish in origin, then it certainly helps to explain the Son of Man references in the New Testament. If the work is not Jewish, then it is highly probable that it is an early Christian composition.

Milik believed that the Parables of Enoch had been composed at a later date than the rest of the Book of Enoch and that it was a Christian composition. He hypothesized that the Parables were written around the third century AD, that would make them the latest addition to the Enoch corpus.³³ This ordering of the material makes the most sense, considering that the Parables are absent from every cache of Enoch manuscripts that have been discovered except the Ethiopic, that itself is a Christian compilation. However, it may be assuming too much to think that the Greek version that was used by the Ethiopic translators was identical to the Greek manuscripts that have survived.³⁴ It is possible that the Greek version used by the Ethiopic translators contained the Parables; at this point in the scholarship, the date of composition for the Parables is still debatable.

Since 1985, the focus within Enoch studies has shifted to the intellectual and sociological characteristics of the group or groups that produced and used the Enoch

³²G. D. Kilpatrick, "Review of The book of Enoch or 1 Enoch, a new English edition by Matthew Black." *Novum Testamentum*, vol. 29, Fasc. 4 (1987): 384.

³³*Ibid*, 384.

³⁴James C. VanderKam, "Review of The Ethiopic book of Enoch: a new edition in the light of the Aramaic Dead Sea fragments by Michael Knibb." *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 101, no. 3 (Jul-Sep, 1981): 413.

material. The community at Qumran has become the center of focus because it is a sectarian group isolated for the most part from the larger Jewish population during the turbulent Second Temple Period, and the members of that society obviously valued the Enoch literature a great deal. “It has become apparent that the texts in 1 Enoch were the core of a distinctive movement of thought in second temple Judaism.”³⁵ Scholars now know that the Qumranites split off from another, larger group that remained entrenched within Jerusalem and the surrounding areas. The Qumran community developed around an enigmatic figure called the “Teacher of Righteousness” though scholars are still uncertain who this figure was and what caused the split. Work is still being done to discover what exactly the Enoch literature can reveal about the religious factions at play within Palestine during the Second Temple Period. Modern scholarship has seen the advent of an international collaborative effort to understand the Enoch literature and the Qumran evidence and to glean from them as much as possible about the religious sects active during the Second Temple Period. Since the time of R. H. Charles, the field is no longer dominated by white, male, Christian scholars; scholars at work on Enoch studies now include females and individuals of Middle-eastern descent. “Launched in 2000 by the Department of Near-Eastern Studies of the University of Michigan, in collaboration with the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies and the Michigan Center for Early Christian Studies, the Enoch Seminar has become the center and the engine of the contemporary renaissance of Enochic studies.”³⁶ The amount of material to work with has grown as well; there are now over sixty Enoch manuscripts available to international scholars.

³⁵Boccaccini, 3.

³⁶Boccaccini, 8.

CHAPTER 2

THE HISTORY OF THE SECOND TEMPLE PERIOD

In order to fully understand the Book of Enoch, it is imperative to understand the historical situations that produced each composite section. The overwhelming majority of writings contained within the Book of Enoch were written during the Second Temple period, from 300 BCE to 70 CE. Therefore, an overview of the history of this period as it pertained to the Jewish peoples is warranted. Why these books were written and why they were so popular amongst the people should become obvious, once there is an understanding of the historical context. As Gary E. Kessler states in his text, *Ways of Being Religious*, “One way to get at the context is to discover what the Germans call the *Sitz im Leben* (situation in life) of a text. Where and when was it written? By whom and to whom was it written? What is its purpose or function?”³⁷ This historical overview is an attempt to find answers to these very questions. The primary historical sources available for this period are the books of First and Second Maccabees and the writings of Flavius Josephus. Secondary sources include writers like Tacitus and Dio Cassius. It must be taken into account that these sources are not thoroughly objective; however, they do provide the backbone for any history written concerning this period in Palestine.

Because of its geographical location, the Levant was viewed as an economic and strategic prize throughout ancient history. It provided a land route for trade and was situated strategically in the center of the ancient world powers of Greece, Egypt, Babylon, and Persia. Because of its central geographical location, the peoples of the Levant were routinely attacked militarily, and regular attempts were made to assimilate

³⁷Gary E. Kessler, *Ways of Being Religious*. (New York: McGraw Hill Publishing Co., 2000), 27.

the area into Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, and finally, Greek culture. By the time of the Second Temple period, the peoples of Judea were at the threshold of rampant Hellenization under the Seleucid kings of Syria, having earlier in the millennium been under the cultural influences of Assyria and Babylon. The Second Temple period of Jewish history encompassed a time of great political upheaval and social unrest as a result of the growing military power of Rome and this widespread Hellenization. “The Hellenistic culture and civilization were characteristic of the whole Graeco-Roman period and it is against this broad historical and cultural background that we are to study the reactions of the Jewish people and their religious faith.”³⁸

Despite the onslaught of integration and cultural assimilation, many Jewish peoples of this period fought to retain their cultural identity, particularly their religious ideals. These people viewed Hellenization as a loss of their unique religious and social customs, that were based originally on their specific relationship with their deity, Yahweh. Significant parts of the Book of Enoch were written in an attempt to maintain Jewish cultural identity in the face of Hellenization. These parts were written against the persecutors of Judaism from a religious perspective and were couched in symbolism and metaphor in order to protect the authors and the works’ adherents.

Antiochus the Great (222 – 187 BCE)

The Seleucid king Antiochus III (the Great) defeated the Egyptians at the Battle of Panias in 198 BCE and took control of the territory of Palestine. The Jewish militia had assisted Antiochus in routing an Egyptian garrison from the city of Jerusalem in 200 BCE. The area had been under the control of the Ptolemies of Egypt for about a century. The region of Judea was referred to as the “nation of Jews” by the Seleucids, yet

³⁸D. S. Russell, *Between the Testaments*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 15.

it was a small part of the larger province of Syria. The term “Jew” only applied to those peoples living around the Temple in Jerusalem. Other inhabited areas were seen as villages. The Seleucid kings were historically tolerant of indigenous religious practices within the areas they conquered, and Antiochus the Great continued this policy with the peoples of Judea.

Antiochus allowed the Jews to continue their cult of Yahweh and their religious rituals; he initially left the Temple in Jerusalem alone. To encourage allegiance and prosperity, Antiochus assisted Judea in recovery from war by releasing captives and allowing refugees to return. He allotted tax-exempt status to the priests and staff of the Temple in Jerusalem and guaranteed his new subjects religious freedom. “Judea continued to be a self-governing unit; there was no royal governor in Jerusalem, although the citadel of the Holy City was garrisoned by royal troops...about 200 BCE the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt by the Jewish authorities.”³⁹

At the time Antiochus III acquired Palestine, the office of high priest was hereditary, and the position was held for life. The high priest, under Egyptian rule, had become the intermediary between the Jewish people and the royal government. He was responsible for accumulating taxes and tribute paid to the ruling government and, in this way, became the *de facto* head of the Jewish state. An example of the broad range of power the high priest held at this time is evident in the work of Ben Sira who, about 190 BCE, spoke “of the High Priest Simeon in terms appropriate to a prince: he was the glory of his people, in his time the Temple was fortified, he protected his people.”⁴⁰

³⁹Louis Finkelstein, ed. *The Jews: Their History*. 4th ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1970), 94.

⁴⁰*Ibid*, 95.

After acquiring Palestine, Antiochus the Great turned his attention to Greece and Macedonia, in an attempt to broaden his area of control. However, not long before Antiochus began his expansion into Greece, the Romans defeated Hannibal and ended the Second Punic War in 202 BCE. This strengthened Rome's military power. Greece appealed to the Romans to assist them in overcoming the expansionist policy of Philip V of Macedonia, that the Romans did. In turn, the Romans gave the Greek peoples strict conditions, at that they balked. These Greek cities then appealed to Antiochus the Great. Antiochus landed in Greece with troops and managed to occupy parts of it in 192 BCE, but he was soon driven out by the Romans. The Romans pursued him into Asia Minor, where in 190 BCE he was defeated at Magnesia. Among the hostages taken back to Rome was his younger son, Antiochus, who later became Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

In 188 BCE, a peace was concluded at Apamea in that Antiochus rescinded all territory west of Taurus and agreed to pay a war indemnity of 15,000 talents in twelve annual installments.⁴¹ This war indemnity would prove to be problematic for succeeding Seleucid kings in their relationships with the Jewish peoples. Antiochus then concentrated on raising his annual payments to Rome by confiscating temple treasuries. This plan backfired, as he was killed by the local population while attempting to rob the temple of Bel at Elam, in 187 BCE. Upon his death, his son, Seleucus IV, became king.

Seleucus IV (187 – 175 BCE)

Seleucus IV did not pursue military conquests, as the Romans had already driven his father out of Greece and expropriated a huge war indemnity on the Seleucid kingdom. Seleucus IV instead concentrated on making payments to Rome and attempted to rectify

⁴¹Henk Jagersma, A History of Israel from Alexander the great to Bar Kochba. John Bowden, trans. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 37.

the financial arrears of his kingdom. “During his reign his every policy was dominated by the question how the annual tribute imposed by the Romans at the peace treaty of Apamea was to be paid.”⁴² Additionally, Seleucus IV was threatened by the aspirations of Ptolemy V to regain the Syrian territory that had been lost to Antiochus III. This threat passed in 181 BCE, when Ptolemy V died. Closer to home, Seleucus IV had to contend with a serious split in the population of Jerusalem between those who supported Seleucid rule and those who desired a return to Ptolemaic rule.

The high priest of Judea at the start of Seleucid rule was Simon II (c. 220 – 190 BCE). His relationship with Antiochus III appears to have been good.⁴³ Simon II was succeeded by Onias III, who held the office of high priest from about 190 to 174 BCE. During Onias III’s reign, there was a change in the political climate in Jerusalem as a result of the Treaty of Apamea. Conflict arose between the Tobiad and Onias families, of that Simon II and Onias III were members, respectively. Most of the Tobiad family supported Seleucid rule, but a significant minority, led by Hyrcanus, favored the Ptolemies. The Onias family also supported the former, Ptolemaic rule. This conflict produced a split in the population between the supporters of competing regimes. Eventually, Hyrcanus had to leave Jerusalem under growing political pressure.

Conflict within Jerusalem grew when Onias III opposed some new policies of Simon, the captain of the Temple who was also responsible for its finances. Simon and Onias argued over the market inside the Temple complex. Although it is not clear what precisely the argument was about, Onias III refused to concede to Simon’s innovations, presumably out of concerns for ritual purity. Simon appealed to the governor of Coele-

⁴²Jagersma, 37.

⁴³Ibid, 39.

Syria, Apollonius, for help. Apollonius informed Seleucus IV of the situation, who sent his financial administrator, Heliodorus, to Jerusalem. When Heliodorus attempted to procure the taxes due to the Seleucids, he was told by Onias III that the Temple treasury was “the savings of widows and orphans and a contribution deposited by Hyrcanus...who was in Transjordan.”⁴⁴ Presumably, this was in part because Onias III did not want to pay the tribute due to the Seleucids, as he was a supporter of the pro-Ptolemaic faction. As a result, Onias III was forced to go to Antioch to give an account of his actions. Just as Onias arrived, Seleucus IV was assassinated by Heliodorus, in 175 BCE. Onias III never returned to Jerusalem; he was taken captive by the Seleucids and later murdered. Heliodorus was soon driven from power by Antiochus IV.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175 – 164 BCE)

With the death of Seleucus IV, kingship should have passed to one of his sons, either Antiochus or Demetrius. However, Antiochus was still a child and Demetrius was a hostage in Rome at the time of their father’s death. Seleucus IV’s brother, Antiochus Epiphanes, saw an opportunity to capture the Seleucid throne, and “he succeeded in this move, with the assistance of armed forces sent by Eumenes II of Pergamum (cf. Dan 11:21, ‘he will seize the kingdom by dissimulation and intrigue in time of peace,’ ...).”⁴⁵ Antiochus, the younger brother of Seleucus IV, became Antiochus IV. Antiochus IV was a Hellenophile and had been living in Athens at the time of his brother’s death. When he came to the Syrian throne, he brought with him a policy of military expansion and cultural change.

⁴⁴Jagersma, 41.

⁴⁵W. Stewart McCullough, *The History and Literature of the Palestinian Jews from Cyrus to Herod: 550 BC to 4 BC*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 106.

The administrative structure of Palestine at the time Antiochus IV took the Seleucid throne is unclear. Palestine was clearly part of the district of Syria and Phoenicia; however, it was divided at least between the Temple state of Judea (including Jerusalem), and Samaria, that was a separate administrative unit. It is unknown whether Galilee was considered part of Samaria or an individual unit unto itself. It is important to note that by 175 BCE, there was, within Palestine, “a mixture of population and language and a diffusion of the foreign (Hellenic) culture unparalleled in the Persian period...there were now many Hellenic cities in Palestine.”⁴⁶

Unlike his brother before him, Antiochus IV desired both military and cultural expansion of his kingdom. He wanted to create a culturally unified territory in order to make his kingdom stronger against possible Roman or Parthian attacks. Antiochus also intended to expand his territorial holdings in order to increase his overall wealth. “The Seleucid kingdom rested upon military conquest and it could be maintained only by military power.”⁴⁷ Antiochus IV faced the impressive military powers of Rome, Egypt, and Parthia. In 169 BCE, the Egyptians sent an army to attack Palestine; the army never arrived at its destination because it was met by Antiochus IV and defeated before entering Palestinian territory. Antiochus IV then continued onward into Egypt and captured Memphis and the king Ptolemy VI Philometor. He then laid siege to the city of Alexandria but was convinced to raise the siege by Hellenistic ambassadors living there. His foray into Egyptian territory garnered the attention of Rome, and the Roman Senate demanded via dispatch that Antiochus IV evacuate Egypt. Apparently realizing that he could not take on the Roman military machine, Antiochus complied and returned to

⁴⁶Finkelstein, 95.

⁴⁷McCullough, 109.

Syria. However, he retained control of Palestine, and it was specifically his cultural campaign of Hellenization in Palestinian territory, during the period 169 – 167 BCE, that directly resulted in the Maccabean revolt.

Antiochus IV's Cultural Campaign

Initially, Hellenism and Judaism coexisted peacefully, but under the rule of Antiochus IV this policy changed to one of persecution of the Jewish faith. This change resulted in a violent reaction including a profound hatred of the Hellenistic way of life, particularly among the poor and more conservative Jews. Most of those who were Hellenized during this period were the aristocracy and priestly classes. A bitter rivalry developed between the House of Onias and the House of Tobiad for control of the high priesthood. The House of Onias supported the former, Ptolemaic rule, while the House of Tobiad supported Seleucid rule and the policy of Hellenization. In the face of rapid Hellenization, a backlash of strong Jewish nationalism developed during the period 170 BCE to 70 CE.

When Antiochus IV had captured the Seleucid throne, he appointed Onias's brother, Jason (Hellenized form of the Hebrew name Joshua), to the High Priesthood. Jason was pro-Hellenic and received permission from Antiochus IV to remodel Jerusalem along Hellenistic lines, that included the building of a gymnasium where athletes competed in the nude. Additionally, the gymnasium was dedicated to the Greek gods, so that activities within its confines were seen as an affront to Yahweh. As a footnote in the St. Joseph's edition of the Catholic Bible, the Greek gymnasium is defined as "the symbol and center of athletic and intellectual life, it was the chief instrument of Hellenistic propaganda. Jewish youths were attracted by sports and encouraged to join

youth clubs. They received training in military skills and in the duties of citizens. Through participation in the intellectual life, many were gradually won over to paganism.”⁴⁸ This new development incised the Jewish orthodox population because they believed that only God could appoint a high priest, and the presence of the gymnasium within sight of the Temple complex was offensive to Jewish sensibilities. “The orthodox elements of Judean society, and the common people of Jerusalem and the Judean countryside, continued to live and worship as their fathers and grandfathers had done. The Temple remained the centre of their faith. There was a growing schism between them and the pro-Hellenic groups.”⁴⁹ Jason was high priest for three years but then was ousted by Menelaus through the latter’s bribery of Antiochus; Menelaus was not a member of the high priestly family but was an ardent supporter of Hellenization.

Menelaus sold Temple treasures in order to raise money for Antiochus IV, that inevitably led to rioting by the orthodox Jews. During the riots, Menelaus’s brother was killed. The conservative Jews demanded the removal of Menelaus from office, but Antiochus IV responded by militarily crushing the riots and confirming Menelaus in office. He then provided Menelaus with military protection. In 168 BCE, while Antiochus IV was campaigning in Egypt, Jason returned to Jerusalem in an attempt to retake the high priesthood. Jason, it is presumed, did this as a result of rumors that Antiochus IV had been killed. Upon his return from Egypt, Antiochus IV was angered at the situation in Jerusalem and sent Apollonius, one of his top commanders, to Jerusalem with an army, to occupy the city. Under the command of Apollonius, “a number of inhabitants were butchered; some quarters were destroyed and the rest looted; the defence

⁴⁸1 Maccabees 1:14f. The New American Bible, St. Joseph Edition. (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1970), 514.

⁴⁹Joan Comay, The Temple of Jerusalem. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), 111.

walls were pulled down. A citadel called the Acra was constructed and a Seleucid garrison stationed in it. It soon became clear that these measures had horrified the Jewish population but not cowed it.”⁵⁰ Antiochus IV was at this point determined to completely Hellenize the whole area and ordered copies of the Torah to be burned. He viewed the rioting as a weakness, the result of cultural and religious separatism, and felt that it could no longer be tolerated in the face of threatening Roman power.

In 167 BCE, Antiochus IV, through a series of royal decrees, did away with the guarantee of religious freedom given by Antiochus III when Palestine was first incorporated into the Seleucid kingdom. Jewish religious practices were made illegal, including Temple sacrifices, observance of the Sabbath, celebrations of feast days, and the practice of circumcision, with a death penalty for their commission. Within the Temple itself, Antiochus had an altar erected to Zeus and pigs were sacrificed upon it. This was the act that is referred to in Daniel as “the desolating sin”.⁵¹ In addition to Hellenizing the Jerusalem Temple, Antiochus had altars erected throughout the countryside where Jews were forced, under military authority, to “take part in pagan rites and eat pig’s flesh.”⁵² It was this aggressive campaign of Hellenization, and the presence of an illegitimate high priest, that gave rise to the Maccabean revolt.

The Maccabean Revolt (ca. 166 – 152 BCE)

The Maccabean Revolt did not begin in Jerusalem but twenty miles north in the countryside at a village called Modi’in. Mattathias, an aged priest, and his five sons (John, Simon, Judah, Eleazar, and Jonathan) resided there and when the Seleucid soldiers ordered the people to take part in the sacrifice of pigs on a pagan altar, Mattathias

⁵⁰Comay, 112.

⁵¹Daniel 8: 13.

⁵²Comay, 112.

refused. “In a loud voice he said, ‘Although all the Gentiles in the king’s realm obey him, so that each forsakes the religion of his fathers and consents to the king’s orders, yet I and my sons and my kinsmen will keep to the covenant of our fathers. God forbid that we should forsake the law and the commandments. We will not obey the words of the king nor depart from our religion in the slightest degree.’”⁵³ As another villager stepped forward to comply, Mattathias killed him, and one of the Seleucid officials as well. Thereafter, “Mattathias and his sons, with the bolder men of the village, fled to the nearby Gophna hills in the Judean range north of Jerusalem...joined by other rebels and religious diehards, they lived the tough and dangerous existence of a partisan group, receiving supplies and support from friendly villages and farmsteads.”⁵⁴

With the beginning of the Maccabean Revolt, passive resistance gave way to open conflict. Seleucid soldiers were dispatched to hunt down the rebels, and a group of Hasidim (meaning “pious”) were massacred on a Sabbath because they refused to fight. Mattathias, his sons, and followers henceforth determined to fight if they were attacked on a Sabbath. Not long after the Revolt began, around 165 BCE, Mattathias died. His third son, Judah, became the leader of the rebels.

When Judah took command of the rebellion, he embarked on guerilla-style warfare against the Seleucids. He defeated and killed Apollonius, and then defeated Seron, the commander of the Syrian army, at Beth-horon, twelve miles north of Jerusalem.⁵⁵ Judah quickly became known as “Judah the Maccabee,” that in Hebrew meant “Judah the Hammerer,” and it was this title, “Maccabee,” that was used to refer to

⁵³1 Maccabees 2:19-22.

⁵⁴ Comay, 117. Flavius Josephus, *The Complete Works*, trans. William Whiston (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 268.

⁵⁵1 Maccabees 3:13.

all of the brothers and the revolt in general.⁵⁶ The revolt spread throughout the Judean countryside, and Judah's military successes had the effect of cutting off Jerusalem from the Seleucid capital at Antioch. Judah was effective because he used guerilla tactics against regular Seleucid troops, and he had the advantage of knowing the terrain much better than his opponents. It was also beneficial to Judah that at this time Antiochus IV was involved in an eastern war with the Parthians.

In the fall of 165 BCE, Antiochus IV gave orders to Lysias, his chancellor and the guardian of his son, to put the rebellion to an end. Lysias then sent three generals to Judea: Ptolemy, Nicanor, and Gorgias. These generals were defeated by Judah near Emmaus. At that point, Lysias himself went to Judea, and was in turn defeated at Bethzur.⁵⁷ Once he had been defeated, Lysias was compelled to return to Antioch, as Antiochus IV had become ill.

Following his military successes, Judah entered Jerusalem and purified and rededicated the Temple in December of 164 BCE. This historic event is still celebrated among the Jews as the Festival of Hanukkah. It is important to note that up to this point in the Jewish religion all feasts had been established as a result of divine decree, as handed down in the Torah. When Judah enacted the annual commemoration of the rededication of the Temple, he made a significant break with Judaic tradition, and it can be argued that this was an introduction into Judaism of a predominantly Hellenistic custom. It had been three years since Antiochus IV desecrated the Temple. The Hasidim aided Judah in the quest to end Hellenism and restore the Jewish religion to its pure form. Eventually, the Hasidim became estranged from the Maccabees and so

⁵⁶Comay, 117.

⁵⁷1 Maccabees 4:34, 2 Maccabees 11:1; Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, XII, 314.

“received the name of ‘Perushim’ or ‘Separatists,’ the ‘Pharisees’ of the later pre-Christian and New Testament times.”⁵⁸ It was during this period, from about 165 BCE onward, that apocalyptic literature enjoyed its most popularity. “A whole series of apocalyptic writings appeared at this time. In addition to Daniel, the most important of them are 1 Enoch, Jubilees, IV Ezra, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and...the Revelation of John.”⁵⁹

In 163 BCE, Judah laid siege to the Acra, that was garrisoned with Seleucid troops, but his siege was unsuccessful. In a battle with Lysias at Beth-zachariah, Judah’s brother Eleazar was killed and the Judeans defeated. Lysias then advanced on Jerusalem, and laid siege to Judah. With reports of Antiochus IV’s failing health, and the knowledge that another man, Philip, had been named regent for Antiochus V instead of himself, Lysias broke off the siege, made peace with the Judeans, and took the high priest Menelaus with him on his return to Antioch.

Antiochus V (164 – 162 BCE)

When Antiochus V ascended the Seleucid throne, he granted full religious freedom to the Judeans in keeping with the terms of peace that Lysias had made with them before returning to Antioch. Upon his return, Lysias eliminated Philip as a competitor; however, his success was short lived because of the appearance of Demetrius I Soter, son of Seleucus IV, and claimant to the Seleucid throne.

Demetrius I had been sent to Rome as a political hostage by his father Seleucus IV to take the place of Antiochus IV. He was able to escape from Rome in 163 BCE, and with the help of an army, took control of Antioch and had Lysias and Antiochus V put to

⁵⁸Henry Kendall Booth, *The Bridge Between the Testaments*. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1929), 20.

⁵⁹Jagersma, 53.

death. Menelaus, the once-high-priest who had accompanied Lysias on his return to Antioch, was also put to death, although on the orders of Antiochus V, not Demetrius. Demetrius I appointed Alcimus, a descendant of Aaron, as the new high priest. “By 162 BC, now that religious freedom was restored and a legitimate high priest had again been appointed, for many people, including the Hasidaeans, the aim of the struggle had been achieved.”⁶⁰ This was not the case for the Maccabeans, though. They sought full political independence for Judea, and over the next two years Seleucid troops struggled to wipe out the resistance. It was presumably at this time that the split occurred between the Maccabees and the Hasidim.

Demetrius I Soter (162 – 150 BCE)

When Alcimus arrived in Jerusalem with a Seleucid army under the command of Bacchides to take up his post as high-priest, Judah Maccabee occupied the Temple and refused to allow Alcimus to perform his duties. According to 1 Macc. 7:13, sixty Hasidim were killed in the ensuing struggle, and as a result, Alcimus appealed to Demetrius I for further assistance. In 161 BCE, Demetrius sent an army to Judea under the command of Nicanor. Nicanor’s troops were defeated at the battle of Adasa, and Nicanor was killed. In the meantime, Judah made a treaty with the Romans, in that the Romans agreed to treat the Judeans as “friends and allies;” the Romans then informed Demetrius of their treaty.⁶¹

The political sphere shifted again in 160 BCE when, at the battle of Elasa, the Seleucid general Bacchides crushed the Maccabean rebels and Judah was killed. Supported by Bacchides and his troops, Alcimus ascended to the high priesthood. The

⁶⁰Jagersma, 62.

⁶¹ 1 Maccabees 8:31, 529.

Seleucids and Hellenists at that juncture controlled Judea and Jerusalem; they constructed fortresses at Jericho, Emmaus, Beth-horon, Bethel, Timnah, Pharathon, and Tephon.

Jonathan Maccabee was forced to take refuge in Tekoa, and later Transjordan. Jonathan became the leader of the Maccabean Revolt and remained at that post until his death in 142 BCE. Jonathan's one consolation during this period was increased Roman influence and Roman support for the rebels. However, the revolutionaries had little influence on political affairs during this period, and Jonathan settled in Michmash, north of Jerusalem.

After a lull in the action, about 153 BCE, an intense political crisis arose within the Seleucid empire. Civil war broke out within the Seleucid kingdom when Alexander Balas, claiming to be the son of Antiochus IV, attempted to take the throne from Demetrius I. The Roman Senate recognized Balas's rights to the throne, and with their backing, Alexander was able to oust Demetrius I from power.

About 156 BCE, the high priest Alcimus, appointed by Demetrius I, died. Josephus states that there was not a high priest in Jerusalem from 159 – 152 BCE.⁶² It is uncertain how the government in Jerusalem was organized during these years. The situation in Antioch, however, worked to Jonathan Maccabee's favor because of his astute political intellect; by turns supporting both Alexander Balas and Demetrius I in their struggles for power, Jonathan received concessions from both men. In 152 BCE, Demetrius allowed Jonathan to enter Jerusalem. Additionally, Jonathan was allowed to maintain his own troops within the city proper, ostensibly for Judean defense, and Seleucid troops were withdrawn from all quarters of the city except for a small force housed within the Acra. The only signs of Seleucid control became a small contingency of troops and an annual tribute that Jonathan agreed to pay to the Seleucid king.

⁶²Josephus, *Antiquities*, XX, 237.

Fearing the backing of Jonathan would give Demetrius I the upper hand, Alexander Balas rushed to make concessions with Jonathan of his own. Balas requested Jonathan's help against Demetrius I, and Jonathan agreed, upon the condition that Jonathan receive the office of high priest. Alexander Balas granted Jonathan this position.⁶³ "This was again seen by many people as a break with an existing tradition, for while Jonathan was of priestly descent, he could not be regarded as a legitimate descendant of the Zadokites, who were regarded as the legitimate high-priestly family. [Zadok was the high priest during the reigns of King David and King Solomon.] For these reasons many people regarded the nomination of Jonathan as illegal."⁶⁴ It is also stated in 1 Macc. 10:65 that Jonathan was made governor of a province and that province was, in all likelihood, Judea.

The appointment of Jonathan as high priest widened the gulf between the different religious factions within Jerusalem. This situation was exacerbated by the fact that Judea had been experiencing a severe famine for some time. Most of the inhabitants, it would seem, hoped the Maccabees would help solve the social and economic problems they were enduring, yet apparently this was not the primary concern of the Maccabees.

Alexander Balas held the Seleucid throne until 145 BCE, when Demetrius II took the kingship in his stead. Balas fled to Arabia, where he was murdered. When Demetrius II came to power, he confirmed Jonathan in his position as high priest and governor, and three additional districts were added to his area of control; all of these districts were in Samaria. Demetrius II also granted Jonathan some tax exemptions. Details of these events can be read in 1 Macc. 11:32-37 and in Josephus's *Antiquities*,

⁶³1 Maccabees 10:18-20, 532. Josephus, *Antiquities* XIII, 45.

⁶⁴Jagersma, 66.

book XIII, sections 125 through 128. With the appointment of Jonathan Maccabee to the office of high priest in 152 BCE, it seems that the primary aim of the Maccabean Revolt was achieved and, for all intents and purposes, the rebellion against the Seleucids was finished.

Significant Jewish Sects of the Period

The Sadducees

All information that can be gleaned concerning this religious sect must come from those who wrote about them, as nothing of their own remains extant. The sources that are available include Flavius Josephus, brief parts of the New Testament, and rabbinic literature. However, it must be remembered that writings concerning the Sadducees are often polemic, because Josephus himself was a Pharisee, the details provided within the New Testament are generally negative in aspect, and the rabbinic literature was written by Pharisees. Therefore, any perusal of these sources for information concerning the Sadducees must include a high level of objectivity.

The name “Sadducee” is often associated with Zadok, the high priest of the period of Kings David and Solomon; it is possible that members of the Sadducees saw themselves as the descendants of Zadok, but this is not clear. Similar views were also held by the Qumran community; both groups laid claim to the high priesthood.⁶⁵ At any rate, there is a certain degree of continuity between the Sadducees and the Zadokites of the Persian period. It is also not known when they formalized as a group, although according to Josephus they existed in the time of Jonathan Maccabee.⁶⁶

⁶⁵Jagersma, 69.

⁶⁶Josephus, *Antiquities*, XIII, 173.

The Saducean sect was made up of the aristocracy and senior priestly circles. They were primarily concerned with political and social stability, and because of this they were frequently supporters of Hellenization. In their religious views, the Sadducees were conservative, rejecting the Pharisaic doctrines of the resurrection, the existence of angels and spirits, and the promotion of an oral tradition of the Law. Sadducees followed a strict observance of the Mosaic Law, as handed down in written form through the Torah. They rejected apocalyptic and prophetic writings from their own time, as well as messianic movements, that were quite popular during this period. The Sadducees favored a policy of cooperation with foreigners and desired to preserve the status quo, thus ensuring their aristocratic and priestly positions within the society. This sect did not survive the Destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, so all material we have concerning them comes from the writings of other groups.

The Pharisees

The sources for this group are the same as for the Sadducees: namely, Josephus, the New Testament, and rabbinic literature. The regulations and teachings of the Pharisees prior to 70 CE are not written down, so all information concerning these things must be gleaned from writings following the Destruction of the Temple. This was the only religious group to survive the Destruction, and therefore the Pharisees had a huge impact on Judaism from this time onward. They are the primary authors of the rabbinic literature.

The name “Pharisee” derives from a Hebrew and Aramaic word for “separated” and was probably given to the group by one or many of its opponents. Little is known of the group’s origins, although it is often argued that they were the sect the Hasidim, who

originally supported the Maccabean Revolt. They first appear, like the Sadducees and Essenes, during the time of Jonathan Maccabee.

From the beginning of the first century CE, the Pharisees banded together in communities and supported the middle class, drawing popular support from the common people. Significant to the Pharisees was the establishment of synagogues and schools, and their political leanings were always oriented toward religious ideals. Most of the Pharisees were scribes, though this was not always the case. Josephus states in the *Antiquities* that during the time of Herod the Great, the Pharisees only numbered about 6,000.⁶⁷

The Pharisees applied great importance to oral traditions, regarding these as further interpretation and development of the Torah. Unlike the Sadducees, they believed in the resurrection of the body, angels, and spirits. They also believed in divine omnipotence and providence. The Pharisees stressed personal responsibility and individual free will to a greater extent than the apocalyptic groups of the period. There were more divisions of the Pharisees than the Sadducees; the Zealots were a splinter group of the Pharisees. Additionally, there were two major schools of Pharisees, those that followed the teachings of Shammai, and those that followed Hillel. The Hillelian school was less conservative and more popular.

The Essenes

Sources for this group include Josephus, Philo, Pliny the Elder, and possibly the Dead Sea Scrolls. “We know nothing about Essene writings, unless we put those from the library of Qumran in this category.”⁶⁸ The Essenes are neither mentioned in the New

⁶⁷Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVII, 42.

⁶⁸Jagersma, 73.

Testament nor in the rabbinic literature. The name “Essene” is usually associated with an Aramiac word for “pious”, and it may also be connected with a word for “healers” as well. Nothing is known of their origins, as those who wrote about them did not go into detail about their creation as a group. Based on the writings of Josephus, the Essenes existed in the time of Jonathan Maccabee.

In their religious views, the Essenes were much more conservative than either the Sadducees or the Pharisees. The Essenes were very concerned with ritual purity; they held no slaves, were careful to avoid oaths, and rejected the idea of animal sacrifice. They usually wore white, maintained strict observance of the Sabbath and were pacifists and celibate. They lived in groups communally, i.e. all property was considered community property, and they maintained specific rites of initiation to become a member. Some members may have lived in cities, but the largest proportions lived in villages and were employed in agriculture or crafts. Little else is known about this religious group.

The Qumran Community

Many scholars believe that the Qumran Community consisted of Essenes, or a group closely related to them. A minority believe that it consisted of a group of Pharisees or Zealots. It is certain that the community that lived at Qumran held close association with the beliefs and lifestyle of the Essenes, and this “is in fact their most striking feature, but that does not mean that we should immediately identify the group with the Essenes.”⁶⁹ The community seems to have consisted primarily of priestly families who referred to themselves as the “sons of Zadok”. Based on archaeological evidence, there seems to have been inhabitants at Qumran off and on from about 150 BCE to 68 CE. The physical location seems to have been abandoned during the period 31 BCE to 1 CE due to

⁶⁹Jagersma, 75.

an earthquake. The community was ultimately destroyed by the Romans during the struggles of 68 to 70 CE.

With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, much more was learned concerning the Qumran Community. A large number of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek manuscripts were found at Qumran, and manuscripts from a much later period were also found at Herbed Mired and Wade Murabba'at, six and twelve miles south of Qumran respectively. Manuscripts found at Nahal Tse'elim, Nahal Hever, and Nahal Mismar, even further south of Qumran, come "for the most part...from the period of AD 132 – 135."⁷⁰ However, the earliest documents from Qumran can be dated to the second century BCE. "The significance of these manuscript discoveries is enormous...they are important for studying Hebrew from the third century BC to the second century AD and for the history of the text of the Old Testament. Finally, the great importance of the literature for understanding the background to the New Testament needs to be stressed."⁷¹

The Community Rule (ca. 90 BCE), the Damascus Document (ca. 30 BCE), and the Temple Scroll (ca. 100 – 1 BCE) are all important documents that shed light on the beliefs and customs of the community. It is clear that the Qumran community regarded itself as the true Israel; the members wrote polemics against the priests in Jerusalem, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. They viewed the priests in Jerusalem as illegitimate, and therefore worship at the Temple in Jerusalem as sacrilege. There was significant importance placed on ritual purity, and in order for someone to be admitted into the community, a probationary period of three years had to be completed, at that time the initiate was required to take an oath. Banishment from the community resulted from

⁷⁰Jagersma, 77.

⁷¹Ibid, 77.

instances of rebellion against the community or as a result of dishonoring the name of the Lord. In contrast to worship in Jerusalem, the worship cycle at Qumran was based on the solar calendar of fifty-two weeks, that is known to scholars from the Book of Enoch and Jubilees.⁷² This meant that feast days occurred on the same day of the week every year. The Temple in Jerusalem followed the more archaic, lunar cycle.

Certainly the most enigmatic figure from the Qumran writings is the individual referred to as the “Teacher of Righteousness,” although it is unclear whether or not he was the founder of the community. His true identity is obscured. It would be easier to ascertain if his opponent, “the godless priest / man of lies” was identified by name. This “godless priest” was almost certainly a high priest working within the Temple of Jerusalem, but his actual name is not extant in the sources, so there is no way to be sure of his identity. Without a doubt, however, the Teacher of Righteousness held widespread influence at Qumran and appears to have been the group’s de facto leader. Leadership of the community was organized along the lines of a council, that was composed of twelve people and three priests. Historical and sociological scholarship on the Book of Enoch has recently focused on the Qumran Community because manuscripts of the text have been found there in multiple, written in the languages spoken by the inhabitants of Judea during the Second Temple period.⁷³ A better understanding of the historical period is continually made available, as new material is uncovered, examined, and discussed; this is a current and on-going area of Second Temple and Enoch studies.

⁷²Boccaccini, 111-118.

⁷³Ibid, 3.

Messianic Expectations and Apocalyptic

The messianic hopes that arose from the political and religious turmoil of the time were maintained among the common people and directed toward a desire for impending salvation. These movements were purely a product of the time. The various groups that maintained these hopes were not uniform. Sometimes the messiah was viewed as embodied in a single individual, at other times more than one messiah was mentioned. Dual messiahs, for instance, were mentioned in the Qumran writings and in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. All of the messianic movements stressed a common belief that God would deliver his people from the current circumstances and provide them with freedom. This was often in opposition to the apocalyptic movements, that saw the end of the world's existence as the answer to the situation. Messianic movements played a key role in sects such as the Zealots and in uprisings like that of Bar Kochba, in 132 CE.⁷⁴ Messianic movements became the only route of hope for the impoverished country inhabitants, as they had no representation within the Jewish council. The Sanhedrin consisted exclusively of Sadducees until the reign of Alexandra Salome when Pharisees were allowed to become members.

The Rule of the Hasmoneans

“When Jonathan officiated for the first time in the Temple he broke the line of succession of the Jerusalem high priests that extended back eight centuries to Zadok, in the time of King David. For over a century the office was to be held by the Hasmonean dynasty, so called because Mattathias, who started the Maccabean revolt, had been of the House of Hasmon.”⁷⁵ The ascension of Jonathan to this post signaled the end of the

⁷⁴ Jagersma, 93-4.

⁷⁵ Comay, 124.

revolt, as this appears to have been its primary aim; that is, the Maccabees appeared to have desired the high priesthood and once they were ensconced in that position, there was no further need for rebellion. This was an interesting turn of events, because in 161 BCE, when Alcimus was appointed high priest, Judas Maccabee and his followers had refused to accept that appointment despite the fact that Alcimus was a descendant of Aaron.

Jonathan ruled as high priest from 152 to 142 BCE, when he was captured and killed by the Seleucid commander Trypho, who had previously wanted to place Antiochus VI, the son of Alexander Balas, on the Seleucid throne. In 142 BCE, Trypho seized the Seleucid throne himself and had Antiochus VI put to death. With Jonathan's death, the last surviving Maccabean brother, Simon, became high priest and ethnarch of Judea. Trypho ruled the Seleucid kingdom from 142 to 138 BCE, when he was driven from power by Antiochus VII Sidetes, who in turn ruled from 138 to 128 BCE. Both the Parthians and the Maccabees benefited from the weakening of the Seleucid empire; eventually, the Seleucids lost control of all the territories they had acquired in Parthia, as well as all Judean territories. The success of the Parthians and Judeans against the Seleucids during this period was largely due to Roman assistance because the Romans had an interest in seeing the Seleucid kingdom crumble as well.

Simon, like his brother Jonathan, was able to use the Seleucid troubles to his own benefit. In exchange for support in 143 BCE, Simon was able to procure complete tax exemption for the Judeans from Demetrius II.⁷⁶ The Seleucid calendar was abolished in Judea around the same time, and all official documents were thenceforth dated according to the years of Simon. This was a symbol of Judea's new-found independence from

⁷⁶1 Maccabees 13: 36-40; Josephus, Antiquities, XIII, 213.

Seleucid rule. The tax-exempt status that Demetrius II conferred on the Judeans was viewed as an end to foreign oppression.⁷⁷

Simon's rule brought an era of peace and prosperity to the Jews; he fortified the city's defenses and was granted the hereditary title of high priest until such time as "a true prophet shall appear."⁷⁸ This confirmation as hereditary high priest again broke with tradition, as the Zadokites were, up to this point, the only family that had been regarded as legitimate holders of the high priesthood. Being given hereditary status meant that when Simon died, the office would remain in the Hasmonean family indefinitely. When Antiochus VII Sidetes ousted Trypho and became ruler of the Seleucid kingdom, he confirmed Simon in the post of hereditary high priest and conceded to continue the tax-exempt status that Simon had been granted by Demetrius II.

According to 1 Macc. 15: 16-21, Simon also sent a delegation to Rome to garner favor and protection, whereupon the consul Lucius sent a letter to the kings of the territories surrounding Judea stating that Rome guaranteed Judean independence. However, the authenticity of this is disputed by scholars because Josephus puts this letter at a later date, during the time of Hyrcanus II (cf. *Antiquities*, XIV, 145 – 148). At some point, Antiochus VII decided that he wanted the Judean holdings of Gezer, the port city of Joppa and the Acra in Jerusalem back in Seleucid hands, and he sent the general Cendebaeus to Judea to procure these for him. Simon's sons Judas and John defeated Cendebaeus and killed him; during the rest of Simon's reign, Antiochus VII left Simon alone. Not long thereafter, Simon and two of his sons, Mattathias and Judas, were assassinated during a dinner party thrown by Simon's son-in-law, Ptolemy. Simon's son

⁷⁷1 Maccabees 13: 41; Josephus, *Antiquities*, XIII, 213.

⁷⁸1 Maccabees 14: 41.

John Hyrcanus managed to escape the attempt on his own life and seized the city of Jerusalem. First Maccabees ends with Simon's death. Thereafter, the writings of Josephus are the only real reference to the rest of Hasmonean history.⁷⁹

John Hyrcanus I (135 – 104 BCE)

When John Hyrcanus became high priest, Antiochus VII again attempted to take control of Judean territory. He sent an army south, that besieged Hyrcanus I at Jerusalem. A lack of food forced Hyrcanus to negotiate with Antiochus VII, whereupon Hyrcanus I was forced to pay 500 talents of silver, tear down the walls of the city, and muster troops to assist the Seleucids against the Parthians. This campaign against the Parthians ultimately failed, and internal conflicts in the Seleucid kingdom resulted in Hyrcanus I being able to make Judea an independent territory once again. Antiochus VII died in battle against the Parthians, in 128 BCE. As the Seleucid Empire declined, the Jewish state entered a period of peace and prosperity and expanded its borders militarily. Hyrcanus I took control of Samaria, Perea, and Idumea and forced the inhabitants of these territories to convert to Judaism.⁸⁰ He also conquered the Transjordan cities of Medeba and Scythopolis. When he conquered the Samaritans, he destroyed their temple at Mt. Gerizim, that had been used as an alternative to the Temple in Jerusalem and, during the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, had blended the worship of Yahweh with that of the Greek god, Zeus.⁸¹ This destruction widened the gulf between the Judeans and the Samaritans, that continued through the period of the New Testament. Hyrcanus I used mercenary troops to enact his plans of expansion, and in order to pay them, he

⁷⁹ Jagersma, 82.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 83. Comay, 125.

⁸¹ 2 Maccabees 6: 1 – 3.

robbed the tomb of King David.⁸² “Under [Simon’s] son and successor, John Hyrcanus...prosperity and power were increased...and to him were ascribed the qualities of Messiah...so this era of a half century (143 – 105 BC) was to the popular mind the Golden Age of the New Jerusalem.”⁸³

It was also during John Hyrcanus I’s reign that two of the three major Jewish sects, the Sadducees and the Pharisees, began to wield considerable political power and also began their longstanding and bitter rivalry.⁸⁴ As Hyrcanus I’s rule progressed, he became increasingly Hellenistic, and combined with other influences, a rift developed between Hyrcanus I and the Pharisees. The Pharisees arrived at a point where they wanted Hyrcanus I to give up his office as high priest. This made Hyrcanus’s ties with the Sadducees even closer.⁸⁵ John Hyrcanus I died in 104 BCE, and his son Aristobulus I became high priest and ethnarch.

Aristobulus I (104 – 103 BCE)

Aristobulus I, according to Josephus, was the first to take the title of king.⁸⁶ He was the oldest son of John Hyrcanus I, and in order to ensure his success, he had his mother and brothers placed in prison, except for his brother Antigonus, whom he had executed. It is not known if there was serious opposition to Aristobulus taking the title of king, but from the time of the Babylonian captivity, “a majority in Judea was against the restoring of the monarchy,” so it may be assumed that there was.⁸⁷ The Hasmoneans

⁸² Jagersma, 85; Josephus, Antiquities, XIII, 249.

⁸³ Booth, 21.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 21.

⁸⁵ Josephus, Antiquities, XIII, 293 – 298.

⁸⁶ Jagersma, 85. Josephus, Antiquities, XIII, 301.

⁸⁷ Jagersma, 87.

held the positions of high priest and king, combined as such, for over 40 years, until Roman annexation, when the title of ‘king’ was again downgraded to that of ‘ethnarch’.⁸⁸

Aristobulus I was pro-Hellenistic, as his name indicates, his Hebrew name was Judas. He conquered a large part of Ituraea in northern Galilee and had the inhabitants forcibly circumcised. He died suddenly in 103 BCE. He may have been poisoned due to his policies. Upon his death, his brother Alexander Jannaeus ascended to power.

Alexander Jannaeus (103 – 76 BCE)

It was toward the beginning of Jannaeus’s reign that the final redactions of 1 and 2 Maccabees were made. The book of Jubilees as a whole survives only in Ethiopic, like the Book of Enoch, but fragments found at Qumran indicate that there was a Hebrew original. Both texts come, at least in part, from this period and support the use of a solar calendar, as opposed to a lunar calendar.⁸⁹ The solar calendar had been replaced in Jerusalem in favor of the lunar one after the Babylonian captivity, and this suggests that the authors and adherents of the Books of Enoch and Jubilees were anti-Hellenistic and interested in preserving the old tradition.⁹⁰ Alexander Jannaeus was most likely the first Hasmonean to have coins minted. Because Rome was preoccupied during this period with civil war in its own land and a war against Mithridates as well, Jannaeus was left to pursue his expansionist policies for a time unchecked. He captured Gadara and other cities in Transjordan; he had the city of Gaza razed to the ground. From about 95 BCE, Jannaeus controlled the entire coastal plain except for the city of Ashkelon.⁹¹

⁸⁸Comay, 125.

⁸⁹Boccaccini, 111 – 118, 129.

⁹⁰Jagersma, 85-6.

⁹¹Ibid, 88.

The Pharisees adopted a critical view of the Hasmoneans, particularly under the rule of Alexander Jannaeus; this was exacerbated by a number Jannaeus's actions. Jannaeus married his brother's widow, something that was against Mosaic Law, and an action that angered the Pharisees. The Pharisees were also displeased with the Hasmoneans carrying the title of king, even though they were not descendants of David. Additionally, at a Feast of Tabernacles around 90 BCE, while performing the ritual, Jannaeus poured the holy water on the ground rather than the altar, as he was traditionally supposed to do. He was then pelted with lemons by the crowd, and according to Josephus, Jannaeus had 6,000 people slaughtered on the spot.⁹² As a result, civil war broke out in Judea.⁹³

The civil war lasted six years, and an estimated 50,000 Judeans lost their lives. About 88 BCE, those in revolt against Jannaeus appealed to the Seleucids, under Demetrius III, for assistance. The Seleucids invaded with an army, and Jannaeus suffered a heavy defeat at Shechem. After this defeat, many people began to support Jannaeus, ostensibly because they decided that rule under Jannaeus was preferable to rule under the Seleucids again. Demetrius III was then forced to leave Judea and, in the aftermath, Jannaeus had about 800 of his opponents crucified. Many of the remainder fled into exile.⁹⁴ "The later Maccabees were men of lesser mould...the reigns of Aristobulus and Alexander Jannaeus were times of despotic acts, of sectarian rivalries and of extravagant wastefulness."⁹⁵ Throughout Jannaeus's reign, there were violent conflicts between the king and the Pharisees, his largest and most significant body of opponents. It was also

⁹²Josephus, *Antiquities*, XIII, 373.

⁹³Russell, 25.

⁹⁴Jagersma, 90.

⁹⁵Booth, 22.

during this period that among the common people growing messianic hopes became prominent.

Alexandra Salome (76 – 67 BCE)

Shortly before his death in 76 BCE, Alexander Jannaeus instructed his wife to make peace with the Pharisees.⁹⁶ Scholars believe that he did this out of fear that the Pharisees would otherwise murder his entire family, thus eliminating Jannaeus's line from power. Alexandra followed her late husband's advice, and the Pharisees grew in power during her reign. A very important concession that Alexandra made to the Pharisees was to give scribes admittance to the Sanhedrin, and since the largest proportion of Pharisees were scribes, this meant they now had a place on the council. During Alexandra's reign, many exiles returned to Jerusalem, and many people who had been imprisoned under Jannaeus were set free. "However, when the Pharisees began to take vengeance on their former opponents, the fervent supporters of Alexander Jannaeus, opposition developed."⁹⁷

Initially, a delegation of Sadducees under the direction of Alexandra's younger son, Aristobulus, managed to persuade Alexandra to constrain the power of the Pharisees and all out war was avoided. Aristobulus began to gather soldiers and occupy fortresses throughout Judea. Shortly before Alexandra's death, Aristobulus commanded control of twenty-two fortresses. He was supported in his efforts by the Sadducees, and both began to grow in power.

⁹⁶Josephus, Antiquities, XIII, 400.

⁹⁷Jagersma, 96.

Aristobulus II (67 – 63 BCE)

At the time of Alexandra's death in 67, Hyrcanus II was high priest, yet Aristobulus was making a forceful attempt to take over power. A battle ensued near Jericho, in that Aristobulus, backed by the Sadducees, faced off against Hyrcanus II, backed by the Pharisees. Fate was on the side of Aristobulus, and Hyrcanus II had to flee to the safety of the Acra in Jerusalem. Not long thereafter, Hyrcanus II (the legitimate heir as Alexandra's oldest son) capitulated to Aristobulus, giving to him the office of high priest and king. Aristobulus allowed his brother to retain an annual income and his personal possessions, although allowing Hyrcanus II to live would soon come back to haunt Aristobulus.

Roman Intervention

The agreement that Aristobulus and Hyrcanus II made could well have stood, if Hyrcanus II had been left to his own devices. However, Hyrcanus II was emboldened by Antipater, the father of Herod the Great, to take back the position that, by birth, was rightly his. Together, Hyrcanus II and Antipater managed to procure the king of the Nabateans, Aretas III (c. 85 – 62 BCE) as an ally. Aretas III arrived in Jerusalem with a large army and laid siege to Aristobulus in the Temple. At this point, both Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus appealed to the Romans for help.

Initially, the Romans backed Aristobulus and Pompey's general, Scaurus, commanded Aretas to leave Jerusalem; Aretas complied. As Aretas was retreating with his army, Aristobulus attacked, and the Nabateans suffered heavy losses. In 63 BCE, Pompey arrived in the city of Damascus and received three delegations, one from Hyrcanus II, one from Aristobulus, and one from a group of the people of Judea.

Interestingly, this last group appealed to Pompey to abolish the Hasmonean kingship, presumably because they feared the fighting for power had weakened their state. Pompey did not give a rendering on the situation immediately but rather told all parties to wait. In the meantime, Aristobulus established himself at the fortress of Alexandrium. This action was seen as a threat to Pompey, who then immediately invaded Judea. Aristobulus quickly surrendered to Pompey, but many of his supporters fled to the safety of the Temple in Jerusalem. Thereafter, Pompey laid siege to the city.

The siege of Jerusalem lasted three months, at that time the Romans were successful and took prisoner the surviving supporters of Aristobulus. Aristobulus himself had already been a Roman prisoner for some time. When Pompey eventually returned to Rome, these prisoners were paraded through the streets in Pompey's triumphal march. Much to the dismay of the local Jewish population, once Pompey had successfully laid siege to Jerusalem, he entered the Temple, including the Holy of Holies, that desecrated it in the eyes of the people. When he entered the Holy of Holies, Pompey was amazed to discover nothing there. In the ancient world, the lack of an iconic representation of the deity was an innovation unheard of amongst all other known Mediterranean peoples. As a result of this incident, a rumor spread widely that the Jews worshipped the head of an ass.⁹⁸

Rome's involvement in the struggle for power between Aristobulus and Hyrcanus II effectively ended about eighty years of Jewish independence under the Hasmoneans. Judea lost all of the territories that had been conquered by Simon and Jonathan, as well as the areas taken under the reign of Alexander Jannaeus. Judea, including Jerusalem, became part of the Syrian province and was required to pay tribute to the Romans.

⁹⁸ Comay, 132.

Hyrchanus II was established as the Jerusalem high priest, but he was now under the authority of the Syrian governor. The real power seems, however, to have been in the hands of Antipater, whose domestic policies were favorable to Rome. This, in effect, began a long period of Roman domination in the affairs of Judea. However, the period during that the Jewish state was independent was important for the development of a sense of national identity, of that religion was a paramount concern, and strong patriotism, that often invoked martyrdom. As a result, “the next quarter century under the nominal rule of Hyrchanus, as an appointee of Rome, was a time of turmoil and factionalism.”⁹⁹ For the next two thousand years, there would be no Jewish independence, save for the three years of reign under Mattathias Antigonus (40 – 37 BCE), the five year period of the Jewish Revolt (66 – 70 CE), and the uprising of Bar-Kochba (132 – 135 CE). Despite that, there existed during this period a strong undercurrent of revolt among the Jews, aimed at the Romans and Hellenistic culture, that lasted from the time of Pompey until the Destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.¹⁰⁰

Hyrchanus II (63 – 40 BCE)

With the power of the Roman Empire backing him militarily, Hyrchanus II at the beginning of his tenure as high priest could rest easy. This would not always be the case, however. He did, from the start, have to pay annual tribute to the Romans, and his rule was under the authority and direction of the governor of Syria. He was also somewhat of a pawn in Antipater’s grasp, as Antipater seems to have had more political savvy and motivation. Hyrchanus II’s position was somewhat strengthened when, in 48 BCE, he correctly chose to back Julius Caesar in Caesar’s bid for power. As a reward, Hyrchanus

⁹⁹Booth, 24.

¹⁰⁰Russell, 27.

II received the title of ‘ethnarch of the Jews’ from Caesar in 47.¹⁰¹ During the years of Hyrcanus II’s reign, Antipater was working to put his sons in positions of power throughout Judea.

Antipater’s father, confusingly also named Antipater, had been made *strategos* (a kind of governor) over the territory of Idumea by Alexander Jannaeus when Jannaeus had conquered it.¹⁰² The younger Antipater, while holding political power alongside Hyrcanus II, appointed his two sons, Phasael and Herod, as governors of Jerusalem and Galilee, respectively. In so doing, Antipater was able to keep himself and his sons in positions of importance. Antipater’s younger son, Herod, would quickly make a name for himself fighting against rebellious religious factions in his new territory of Galilee.

In 47 BCE, Herod waged a fierce campaign against a rebellious group in northern Galilee, led by Hezekiah. He was successful and soon thereafter had Hezekiah and his men put to death following a mock trial. Upon hearing of this, the Sanhedrin then called Herod to account for his actions. It appears that he was about to be condemned by the Sanhedrin, that would likely have culminated in his death, but at the last moment was saved by Hyrcanus II, who broke up the session and advised Herod to get out of Jerusalem. He was, at about the same time, given the *strategos* of Coele-Syria by the Romans.¹⁰³

In 43 BCE, Herod’s father Antipater was poisoned by a man named Malichus. Malichus seems to have been trying to win more political influence in Judea. His victory was short-lived. Herod ordered assassins to hunt him down and kill him, that they accomplished in the region of Tyre.

¹⁰¹Jagersma, 99.

¹⁰²Ibid, 100.

¹⁰³Ibid, 100.

With the assassinations of Julius Caesar and Antipater, the glue that held these threads of political factions together deteriorated rapidly. Brutus and Cassius were defeated by Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus at Philippi in 42 BCE, and all the eastern provinces of the Romans became territory under the authority of Marc Antony. Not long after, a Jewish delegation appeared before Antony to complain about the policies of Herod and Phasael. The delegation achieved no success, as Herod also appeared before Antony and, through a combination of pledged fidelity and bribery, was able to win Antony's support. In fact, Herod and Phasael were then named tetrarchs of Judea by Antony.¹⁰⁴ It did not seem to bother Antony that Herod had initially supported Cassius, until his crushing defeat at Philippi. Under the rule of Marc Antony, the situation in Judea deteriorated economically.

Antony exacted heavy taxes from Herod and Phasael, that further strained an already tight economy. On top of economic concerns, in 40 BCE the Parthians launched a huge military offensive into the area. Mattathias Antigonus, a son of Aristobulus II, offered to support Herod and Phasael in their defense against the Parthians in exchange for the brothers' support to put Antigonus on the Jewish throne. This was a bit of trickery, however; Antigonus had already made arrangements with the Parthians to win their support for the same end.

Phasael and Hyrcanus II were taken prisoner by the Parthians, but Herod managed to escape and fled to Rome, where he received the Senate's endorsement to become King of Judea. Herod now faced the situation of claiming his newly granted kingdom by military force, as Antigonus had by this time assumed the throne himself. The Parthians chopped off Hyrcanus II's ears, making him unable to ever perform the duties of high

¹⁰⁴ Jagersma, 101.

priest again. Phasaël was jailed and committed suicide. Hyrcanus also eventually died in Parthian captivity.

Mattathias Antigonus (40 – 37 BCE)

Antigonus had the unfortunate situation of holding on to his political office at the pleasure of the Parthians, and the fact that Herod was able to win over the Romans to his own side meant that Antigonus's days as high priest and king were numbered. In 40 BCE, the same year in that Antigonus claimed the throne, Herod achieved the approval of the Roman Senate to become the King of Judea. He quickly set about winning his territory militarily, with the help of the Romans.

In 39 BCE, Herod captured the port of Joppa and the city of Masada, but his siege on Jerusalem was unsuccessful because of a lack of Roman military support. Herod also established a military base in Galilee and filled it with mercenary troops. When the Roman general Ventidius defeated the Parthians in 38, Roman soldiers were made available to assist Herod. That same year, Herod managed to conquer all of Palestine except Jerusalem with the aid of Ventidius's successor, Sosius. In the spring of 37, Sosius sent several legions and cavalry to assist Herod in his siege of the city.¹⁰⁵

The inhabitants of Jerusalem feared that Herod and Sosius would destroy the Temple, and for this reason, among others, they held out against the siege as long as possible. However, little could be done in the face of Roman military might, and the city soon fell. When the walls were breached, the resisting inhabitants fled to the Temple Mount. It was Herod's intention that the Temple itself not be razed, so amidst the slaughtering of inhabitants and the plundering of homes, "Herod had to use all his available funds to buy off the troops and their commanders and restore order...once he

¹⁰⁵ Comay, 135. Jagersma, 102.

succeeded in occupying the Temple he was able to ensure that it was kept safe.”¹⁰⁶
During the taking of the city, Antigonus was captured and soon thereafter he was executed at Antioch, “by the wishes of Herod and on the orders of Antony.”¹⁰⁷ In 37 BCE, Herod was finally seated on the Jewish throne as king; many of the supporters of Antigonus were put to death.

Herod the Great (37 – 4 BCE)

While on his military campaign to claim Judea, Herod married a niece of Antigonus, who was also a great-granddaughter of Alexander Jannaeus. He did this to lend legitimacy to his claim as king in the eyes of the people of Jerusalem. However, many remained loyal to Antigonus. Herod’s reign lasted 33 years and he was one of the most successful rulers in Jewish history; his extensive building program is probably what earned him the epitaph “the Great”.

Herod was responsible for the building of what is commonly referred to as the Second Temple, although in actuality it was the third temple to be built by the Jews on that site. The temple that had been constructed after the return from the Babylonian exile was in serious disrepair by the time Herod became king. In 20 BCE, Herod announced his plans for the building of another temple on the scale and grandeur of Solomon’s that had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 BCE. Construction began in 19 BCE and continued almost until it was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE. Herod also enacted changes on the political and religious fronts. He “discarded the principle that the office [of high priest] was hereditary; it became not even a life appointment, but one held at the

¹⁰⁶ Jagersma, 136.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 102.

king's pleasure."¹⁰⁸ With this move, Herod ensured that the high priest, whoever it may be, would follow his directives. It was also an important check to the high priest's power; frequently, as we have seen, the high priest ended up proclaiming himself king and Herod wanted to avoid that competition at all costs. "For high priests he chose people who were well disposed towards him and took little notice of existing traditions. This way of carrying on did not do much for the respect of this old institution. It can also be assumed that Herod's action widened the gulf between the people and the priests. Even apart from this, the reputation of the priests continued to sink in an uninterrupted decline."¹⁰⁹

Hellenization continued under the rule of Herod, and the common people seemed to have not respected him very highly regarding religious matters. At heart, Herod was thoroughly Hellenized, yet he did his best to present himself as a Jew to the people he governed. That was his obvious motive when he married Mariam, the great-granddaughter of Alexander Jannaeus. "Although under the influence of his court historian Nicolaus of Damascus he favoured Hellenism, he presented himself to the Jewish community as a Jew."¹¹⁰

Although Herod's reign was mostly peaceful, the burden of taxation on the common people was harsh. As a client of the Roman state, Herod had to pay tribute to the Romans and could not wage war or make treaties without Roman consent. However, this also meant that he had the power of the Roman military backing him, and this, combined with his harsh treatment of rebels during his governorship of Galilee, probably dissuaded larger revolts during his tenure as king. Prior to Marc Antony's defeat at

¹⁰⁸ Comay, 137.

¹⁰⁹ Jagersma, 111.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 106.

Actium, Herod had confiscated large swathes of Sadducean property in order to raise the tribute that Antony had demanded of him. He also did this to replenish his own coffers, that had been depleted by his payments to the Roman soldiers, that had saved the Temple from destruction. Herod's contempt for the Sadducees appeared to come from his previous experience with them in the Sanhedrin, a political body for that he also had no use. However, being an astute politician, Herod was lenient towards the Pharisees because they had so much influence with the common people. One move Herod made that seriously angered much of the population was to have golden eagles placed on top of the gates of the Temple. Many viewed this as idolatrous and an affront to their god, Yahweh; the fact that the eagles were actually placed on Temple grounds made it even worse. Some scholars have argued that the Book of Admonitions (a part of the larger Book of Enoch), chapters 91 -105, excluding the Apocalypse of Weeks, was written during this period.¹¹¹

Under Roman Control

Herod the Great died in 4 BCE, and immediately thereafter rebellion broke out in Jerusalem. This was in large part due to the executions of Judas and Mattathias, two scribes who had plotted to remove the golden eagles from the Temple gate. Herod's son Archelaus sent troops into Jerusalem to put down the rebellion, but this suppression turned bloody. While Archelaus was travelling to Rome to work out the distribution of his father's kingdom, the governor of Syria, Varus, policed the city of Jerusalem and then left a legion behind, under the command of Sabinus, when he returned to Antioch. The rebellion spread quickly and was led by Judas, son of Ezechias, in Galilee and by Simon, a former slave of Herod's, in Perea. The rebellion became so intense that Varus had to

¹¹¹ Jagersma, 111.

return to Jerusalem to overcome the rebellion; when he did, some 2,000 people were crucified.

Upon Herod's death, his three surviving sons and two other delegations travelled to Rome in hopes of influencing the distribution of Herod's kingdom. One of the delegations was Jewish and requested that none of Herod's sons be made king but rather that the government be run by a high priest. The second delegation was made up of inhabitants of the Greek cities of Gadara, Gaza, and Hippus and requested incorporation into the province of Syria. Ultimately, the district of Gaza and an area southeast of the Sea of Galilee were absorbed as parts of the province of Syria. The division of the rest of Herod's kingdom was among Herod's three surviving sons as follows: Archelaus was named ethnarch of Judea (a title that was higher than tetrarch, but lower than king), Herod Antipas was awarded the tetrarchy of Galilee and Perea, and Herod Philip was given the tetrarchy of the Golan Heights and the newly settled territory to the east of it.¹¹² Herod Antipas's territory of Galilee became, upon the death of Herod, the center of Jewish rebellion and nationalism and remained so until the destruction of the temple in 70 CE.¹¹³

Herod Antipas was tetrarch of an area that included Perea, home of John the Baptist, and Galilee, home of Jesus of Nazareth, areas that contained large pockets of revolutionaries. Antipas desired the military support of the Nabateans in order to protect his position as tetrarch. Therefore, he made an alliance with the Nabateans in that he married one of the Nabatean princesses. However, he later rejected this wife and married Herodias, the former wife of his brother Philip, in her stead. As a result, the Nabateans

¹¹² Comay, 144.

¹¹³ Russell, 28.

no longer supported Antipas, and they inflicted a heavy military defeat on him.

Notwithstanding, he remained in power under the control of the Romans until the death of Tiberius in 37 CE. With that event, his power began to fade. He fell out of favor with the new emperor, Caligula, and was banished to Gaul in 39 BCE.

The territory that was awarded to Herod Philip consisted almost exclusively of non-Jewish residents. Among other things, Philip rebuilt and expanded the old city of Pnias and renamed it Caesarea Philippi. Upon his death, all of his territory became part of Syria. In 37 BCE, it was given to Agrippa I, who was Philip's nephew.

The title of ethnarch, that the Romans granted to Archelaus, was an indication that Archelaus ruled at the pleasure of the Romans; in other words, Archelaus and his territory were vassals of the Roman state. His rule was short-lived, from 4 BCE to 6 CE, when he was dismissed by Augustus and sent into exile in Gaul. At that point, Archelaus's territory became part of the province of Syria and was governed by a succession of Roman procurators from 6 to 66 CE. "Despite everything, both Herod and Archelaus, unlike the Roman procurators, had taken account of Jewish religion because of their knowledge of affairs in this area. The subsequent procurators Coponius (6 -9), Marcus Ambibulus (9 – 12), Annius Rufus (12 – 15), Valerius Gratus (15 – 26), Pontius Pilatus (26 – 36), Marcellus (36 – 37), and Marullus (37 – 41) made mistake after mistake in this respect."¹¹⁴ Once Judea became a province under the rule of a procurator, the procurator took responsibility for appointing the high priest and kept custody of the priestly garments at all times they were not in use for rituals. Additionally, under the Roman legate of Syria, Quirinius, a census was taken in 6 CE that included a head count and registration of all privately owned land. This provoked religious objections, as a

¹¹⁴ Jagersma, 116.

census was traditionally seen as punishment from Yahweh (cf. II Samuel 24:1). The high priest Joazar tried to persuade the people to submit to this Roman census, but a small part of the population still rebelled, under the leadership of Judas the Galilean. This revolt was suppressed by the Romans, during that Judas probably lost his life. However, this rebellion foreshadowed the rebellion of 66 CE.¹¹⁵ The fact that succeeding emperors did not have the diplomacy and political acumen of Augustus further exacerbated strained Roman-Jewish relations. The four emperors who followed Augustus were Tiberius (14 – 37), Caligula (37 – 41), Claudius (41 – 54), and Nero (54 – 68); two of these four were notoriously mentally ill, Caligula as a result of a high fever during illness and Nero, presumably from birth. These facts, in combination with the lack of cultural sensitivity of the Roman procurators, created a ready environment for revolutionary movements in Palestine. “Under the Roman procurators...[and] within the Jewish community there was a spectrum of attitudes ranging from open collaboration with authorities to an activist call for armed resistance.”¹¹⁶

The Focal Point of the Problem: Religion and Temple

The central material symbol of the Jewish religion was the Temple in Jerusalem, from the time of its completion about 515 BCE, until the destruction of the structure in 70 CE. Jews scattered throughout the Mediterranean world as a result of the Diaspora continued to pay a yearly temple tax to ensure the survival of the structure and its rituals. Tens of thousands of Jews made annual pilgrimages to its gates every year, particularly for the three great Jewish festivals. Sacrifices were made every day, both morning and evening, and these sacrifices were central to the cult’s practice. The Temple was also

¹¹⁵ Jagersma, 117.

¹¹⁶ Comay, 177.

central to economic matters, as it operated as a type of bank, whereby individuals could store money, as in the case of Hyrcanus I during the rule of Onias III as high priest and Seleucus IV as king of Syria. As illustrated, when Heliodorus came to Onias III to procure money from the Temple treasury, he was told that it was the savings of widows and orphans and one man, Hyrcanus, who had fled to Transjordan. This policy of holding monies for individuals, families, and political groups was consistent throughout the existence of the Temple complex. The Temple also held great stores of animals for sacrificial purposes and gifts given for the upkeep of the structure and its priests.

The Romans did not appear to understand the religious idiosyncrasies of the Jewish religion. When Pompey and several of his soldiers braved the curtain of the Holy of Holies, they were shocked to see that there was no representation of the Jewish deity within its confines. They were not able to comprehend the idea of an all-permeating, yet invisible god and, as mentioned earlier, as a result the rumor spread that the Jews worshipped the head of an ass. It was more believable to Romans that the Jews would worship an ass than seemingly “nothingness”. Because of the misconceptions about Jewish religion and the lack of understanding of its principles, the Seleucids and the Romans after them, consistently offended the more conservative Jewish factions, including the common people. Certainly, by the time of the Roman procurators, the Seleucids and the Romans had offended almost all of the Jews, in one manner or another. The actions of the procurator, Pontius Pilate, and the emperor, Caligula, are good examples.

Pontius Pilate ordered shields containing portraits of the emperor to be placed in his palace in Jerusalem, that was within sight of the Temple. This was seen as idolatry by

many of the Jews, and they complained to Tiberius, who then ordered Pilate to take the shields down and return them to Caesarea. While Caligula was emperor, he gave orders for a statue of himself to be placed in the Temple in order for it to receive daily sacrifices and worship. Around 41 CE, the Syrian governor Petronius went to Jerusalem to carry out Caligula's order, but he did not follow through with it because it quickly became clear that to do so would incite an all-out war. Petronius did not have to suffer the consequences of his disobedience because in the same year Caligula was murdered.

Claudius, the successor of Caligula, made Agrippa I the king of Judea. Agrippa had a short reign of three years, from 41 to 44 CE. Agrippa I presented himself, much like Herod the Great, as a pious Jew to the general population. However, outside of Jerusalem proper, Agrippa was clearly a patron of Hellenistic culture. He had statues of his daughters placed in the palace at Caesarea and was responsible for the organization of Greek games in his territory.¹¹⁷ Agrippa I died in Caesarea in 44. Upon Agrippa I's death, his son, Agrippa II, ruled the territories north of Jerusalem, including the area of Galilee, under Roman protection from 44 to 66 CE. Claudius made all of Palestine a Roman province, the first procurator of that was Cuspius Fadus, who ruled from 44 to 46 CE. During his tenure, a prophet named Theudas appeared, along with a significant following, but Fadus's suppression of this movement turned into a bloodbath. Fadus's successor was Tiberius Julius Alexander (46 – 48 CE); under Alexander, the region of Palestine endured a serious famine, that resulted in poor farmers selling their land. Alexander, as a message to other dissidents, had the sons of Judas the Galilean, James and Simon, crucified.

¹¹⁷ Josephus, *Antiquities*, XIX, 343 & 357.

Following the rule of Alexander, Ventidius Cumanus served as procurator from 48 to 52 CE. Around the end of his term, probably in 52 CE, a serious conflict developed between the Galileans and the Samaritans over a murder committed by a Samaritan against a Galilean. Unfortunately, Cumanus failed to pay much attention to the conflict, and it quickly spread to Jerusalem. Two Zealots, Eleazar and Alexander, upon learning that Cumanus did not plan to do anything about the situation, took a group of followers and embarked on a punitive expedition into Samaria. Once the Zealots began causing havoc in Samaria, Cumanus decided to intervene, declared the Samaritans guilty, and exacted punishment on them. Cumanus, however, had waited too long to act. He was quickly relieved of his post and sent into exile.¹¹⁸ Social and political tensions continued to mount between the Romans and the Jews and culminated in the Jewish War of 66 – 70 CE, that ultimately led to the destruction of the Temple, the fundamental symbol of Jewish nationalism and religion.

The Jewish War of 66 – 70 CE

“The last of the Herodian dynasty, Agrippa II, tried to act as an intermediary between the authorities and the turbulent population, especially on touchy problems concerning the Temple and religion.”¹¹⁹ The Romans granted him authority to supervise Temple functions and the authority to appoint the high priest. However, this did not dissuade the rebellious factions of the population because Agrippa II’s compliance with the Romans made him suspect in their eyes. Disputes erupted over the appointment of a high priest, and Agrippa II further angered the Temple authorities by residing in the Hasmonean palace that overlooked the Temple complex. The Temple authorities then

¹¹⁸ Jagersma, 132.

¹¹⁹ Comay, 177.

appealed to Nero for help, at that point Agrippa fired the high priest and appointed one more closely aligned to Agrippa's position. As a result, a revolt broke out in Jerusalem, and Agrippa had to flee to Rome for asylum.

The Romans were not about to allow their Judean subjects to get away with this victory, so Nero sent one of his leading generals, Vespasian, to Judea to put down the revolt. Joining Vespasian from the south was his son, Titus, who brought a legion from Egypt to assist in the assault. The Romans planned to take Palestine piece by piece, crushing the rebellion as they went, and leaving the city of Jerusalem to the last, so that all the territory surrounding it would be subdued and the impending siege would have more chance of success.

During the winter of 67 – 68 CE, Vespasian was able to conquer the area east of the Jordan River, the coastal regions and Idumea. By spring, only the city of Jerusalem and a small area surrounding it were under Jewish control. However, Rome was about to be thrown into political crisis with the assassination of Nero. Vespasian quickly left command of the Roman forces in the hands of his son, Titus, and returned to Italy. Not long thereafter, Vespasian was proclaimed emperor, in 69 CE. Titus certainly had the upper hand in the siege of the city, that began early in the year of 70 CE. "Titus' army numbered 80,000 men, against 25,000 Jewish fighters within the city."¹²⁰ Nevertheless, the siege lasted three months. By the time Titus's soldiers breached the north wall, many of the inhabitants were starving from lack of food. Even under these conditions, it still took the Romans three weeks to fully control the inner city.

When the Romans breached the northern wall, many of the dissidents fled to the upper city, the citadel of Antonia, and the Temple complex. "The Romans were able to

¹²⁰ Comay, 182.

capture the citadel of Antonia in a night attack; it was then completely destroyed.”¹²¹ It was after the destruction of the citadel that the daily sacrifices in the Temple could no longer be performed. This, in combination with the continuous lack of food, weakened the defenders’ morale.

Titus suffered heavy losses as he fought his way into the Temple; scholars dispute whether or not he intended to burn the structure beforehand, but regardless of whether it was his intention or not, during the chaos of the fighting, the Temple was set on fire. “The end came when the sanctuary itself was set alight. Soon, in the words of Josephus, ‘The flames of fire were so violent and impetuous that the mountain on that the Temple stood resembled one large body of fire, even from its foundations.’”¹²² The Temple was destroyed on the ninth day of the month of Ab (August); this was the same date on that Nebuchadnezzar’s army had destroyed Solomon’s Temple, six hundred years before.

Although small bands of rebels managed to escape Jerusalem and take refuge in the hills outside the city, for all intents and purposes, the destruction of the Temple signaled the end of the fighting. It also signaled the end of the Jewish nation as a political state.¹²³ Titus kept, and placed in his own residence, both the curtain that “had hung before the entrance to the Holy of Holies and a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures.”¹²⁴ The material symbol of the Jewish nation’s religious culture was no more; today, the Islamic Dome of the Rock stands on the site.

¹²¹ Jagersma, 144.

¹²² Comay, 187-8.

¹²³ Russell, 31.

¹²⁴ Comay, 188.

CHAPTER 3

THE BOOK OF ENOCH AND SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM

In order to discuss the scholarly debate on the religion(s) practiced by the Jews of the Second Temple Period, it is important to understand that there are two legalistic foundations for Judaism, i.e. the Mosaic and Deuteronomic laws. The Mosaic laws were most likely produced in Judaea after the fall of Israel to the Assyrians, in 720 BCE.¹²⁵ The Deuteronomic laws were being produced and edited during the post-exilic era, with revisions and prophetic additions continuing into the fourth century and even later.¹²⁶ In addition, the legalistic strand of Judaism was at this same time being carefully interwoven with a much older, mythological tradition that pre-dates the Babylonian exile by centuries.

The various religions practiced by the Israelites, in conjunction with other indigenous peoples of Palestine, were widely different from the religion practiced by the Jews of the Second Temple Period.¹²⁷ While there is substantial archaeological evidence to support the claim that the proto-Israelites were both polytheistic and iconic in religious practice, the Judaism practiced by the Jews of the Second Temple Period, *as presented in the Torah*, was henotheistic and aniconic.¹²⁸ This caveat is made because although the primary written text (the Torah) presupposes a henotheistic culture, there is no proof that

¹²⁵Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of its Sacred Texts* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 10.

¹²⁶Lester L. Grabbe, *Ancient Israel: What do we Know and How do we Know it?* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 44 & 83. Joseph A. Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 9 & 11. Albert I. Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of Jewish sects in the Maccabean Era*, (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1997), 130.

¹²⁷Grabbe, 150-164.

¹²⁸Henotheist is a term first used by Max Muller to denote the early stages of monotheism; it means the worship of a single deity, without denying the existence of other deities. Aniconic is a term used to denote the absence of any representation of the deity, i.e. no pictures, statues, etc.

many of the new “Jews” in areas such as Idumaea, Galilee, and Samaria (absorbed during the Hasmonean “Judaizing” campaigns) ever abandoned worship of their house deities or the worship of other, local deities.¹²⁹ There is also textual evidence to support the notion that the Israelites, at least at some point, practiced necromancy.¹³⁰ However, what is significant is that the Torah “played a central role in the shift from ancient Israelite religion to the Judaism of the Second Temple period.”¹³¹

In the wake of the return from Babylonian captivity, the Jews were encouraged by their Persian overlords to produce copies of their laws, to be used as a quasi-Jewish constitution. “It is nearly certain that the Jerusalem Temple was built under the aegis of the Achaemenids, and likely too that some version of the Torah became the authorized law of the Jews in the same general period, if not in the circumstances the biblical books describe. The regime initiated in Judaea by the Persian emperors and their Jewish vassals lasted, with few interruptions, until the middle of the second century BCE.”¹³² The establishment of a written law code had the effect of separating the Jewish people from their neighbors and laid the foundations for Second Temple Judaism and “the birth of the Hebrew Bible in its substantially final form.”¹³³

¹²⁹Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 BCE to 640 CE* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 36-39.

¹³⁰Grabbe, 160.

¹³¹Martha Himmelfarb, “Judaism in Antiquity: Ethno-Religion or National Identity?” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 99, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 69.

¹³²Schwartz, 20-21.

¹³³Finkelstein and Silberman, 301.

Judaism versus “Judaisms”

Jacob Neusner believes that ancient documents should be read and studied individually before being compared to, and collated with, other ancient documents.¹³⁴ Based on his methodology, and other factors, the idea arose that multiple versions of Judaism were practiced during the Second Temple period. This assumption by scholars that each text was “self-contained” led to the eventual conclusion that each one represented “the product of an impermeably discrete social organization.”¹³⁵ This, in turn, led to the widely adopted usage of the term “Judaisms” in scholarly works on the Second Temple period. While I do agree with the assessment that there were multiple versions of Judaism practiced during the Second Temple period, I hesitate to agree with the premise that each text represents a distinct sect. The rate of literacy that that would suggest simply cannot be supported by the evidence at hand.¹³⁶

Seth Schwartz categorically rejects the idea of “Judaisms” and further postulates that the known sects, taken from ancient sources, namely, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes, were in fact a central part of the “Torah-centered Judaeen mainstream elite.”¹³⁷ Albert Baumgarten, in his monograph *The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era*, agrees with Schwartz that the majority of members of the three major sects were part of the elite or, as Baumgarten refers to them, from the “middling sort” of

¹³⁴Dr. Jacob Neusner, b. 1932, American scholar of Judaism, educated at Harvard, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, Oxford and Columbia, he is often cited as one of the most published authors in history, with more than 950 books edited and/or written.

¹³⁵Schwartz, 9.

¹³⁶Ibid, 10-11.

¹³⁷Ibid, 49. Seth Schwartz is a political/cultural/social historian of the ancient Jews; PhD, 1985 from Columbia University.

Judaeen society.¹³⁸ What Schwartz refers to as “Torah-centered Judaism,” both Baumgarten and E. P. Sanders refer to as “covenantal nomism,” or “common Judaism,” and all three appear to agree that it was an active force in the existence of Ancient Judaism during the Second Temple period.¹³⁹

If, in fact, adherence to Torah law is the prerequisite factor in determining Judaism, as Baumgarten, Schwartz, and Sanders seem to suggest, then what was being practiced in the Temple during the decrees of Antiochus IV? Alongside varying degrees of adherence to Torah law, there were additional beliefs and interpretations unique to each sect. Therefore, it follows that there were multiple versions of Judaism during the period rather than one, clearly defined, cohesive Judaism. Some of the writings, in particular the Book of Enoch, show clear syncretism between the worship of Yahweh and the dualism of Persian Zoroastrianism, and further still, how can the practices at Qumran be reconciled with the Judaism practiced in the Temple? How can both be lumped together under one heading, “Judaism”?

Schwartz discusses at some length the opposition that he sees between the Jews who argue for the mythological interpretation of their religion and those who follow only the Torah, so it is a little confusing when he is adamant that there was only one Judaism at the heart of it all. Although there is no evidence to support the argument that any of the sects did not revere and attempt to follow the laws enumerated in the Mosaic and Deuteronomic codes, there were certainly times when the Temple aristocracy acted with

¹³⁸Baumgarten, 47. Baumgarten received his PhD in History from Columbia University in 1972, and is Associate Professor of Jewish History at Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel.

¹³⁹Ibid, See the discussion in the Introduction, n. 107.

disregard for Torah precepts.¹⁴⁰ In the writings of Josephus, who is one of the few ancient sources on the Jewish sects, there is substantial evidence that the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes all followed some version of Torah law, albeit via their unique interpretations of what Torah law required.¹⁴¹

The Rise of Sectarianism

There is no certainty as to when the sects of Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Qumran first began to form. Baumgarten writes:

“Scholars have seen the emergence of the Jewish groups introduced above as part of the experience of times ranging from the mid-fifth century BCE to the first century CE, from Ezra and Nehemiah to the destruction of the Temple by the Romans. To further complicate the question, there is a good deal of justification for the earliest possible dates, as well as for the latest suggested ones: the books of Ezra and Nehemiah portray a significant dissension among Jerusalem Jews, with a lively (often harsh) debate taking place between proponents of alternative interpretations of their religion.”¹⁴²

Baumgarten continues with the theory that the groups that we know from the writings of Josephus saw their full formation during the turbulent period of the Maccabeans. He distinguishes antecedents (in the debates of the Persian period) from forerunners (the authors of the Book of Enoch and the Damascus Document) and further still from full-blown sectarianism (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Qumran).¹⁴³ He bases his argument largely on the socioeconomic changes that took place during the Maccabean era and enumerates these changes as Hellenism, growth in literacy, urbanization, eschatology, and independence.

¹⁴⁰I am referring here to the assumption of the high priesthood by the Hasmoneans, although they were not descendants of the Zadokites; also, of the high priests who officiated within the Temple during the decrees of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

¹⁴¹Flavius Josephus, *The Complete Works*, trans. William Whiston (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998). For Pharisees and Sadducees upholding the written law, *Antiquities* 13:10:6; for Essene study of the writings of the “ancients,” *Jewish Wars* 2:8:6

¹⁴²Baumgarten, 18.

¹⁴³Jonathan Klawans, *Review of The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era: An Interpretation*, by Albert I. Baumgarten, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, New Series, 90, no. 3-4 (Jan. – Apr., 2000), 470-475.

Baumgarten defines sectarianism as being the “voluntary boundary marking against Jews considered insufficiently observant.”¹⁴⁴ He takes note of the comment by Hecataeus of Abdera that Jewish culture was no longer “as different from that of other nations as it had once been, as a result of the Jews being subjected to foreign rule.”¹⁴⁵ He then goes on to explain that Antiochus III (ca. 200 BCE) supported the priests of Jerusalem by royal decree, as the priests established the separateness of the Jews and their religion, and Baumgarten cites Josephus at length to back up his claim. The decrees of Antiochus IV, however, attacked those very points of separateness, and according to 1 Maccabees 1:11-13 there were those among the Jews who believed that their cultural differences were a source of dissention:

“In those days there appeared in Israel men who were breakers of the law, and they seduced many people saying: ‘Let us go and make an alliance with the Gentiles all around us; since we separated from them, many evils have come upon us.’ The proposal was agreeable; some from among the people promptly went to the king, and he authorized them to introduce the way of living of the Gentiles.”¹⁴⁶

The point at that Baumgarten believes that full-blown sectarianism erupted was following the Maccabean victory and their “claim for the restoration of traditional rule,” because, “in fact...Maccabean policy concerning the surrounding culture was inconsistent.”¹⁴⁷ In connection with disappointment in the Maccabean rule, growing literacy and urbanization, followed closely by eschatological hopes, are cited as additional reasons for the maturation of sectarianism.

¹⁴⁴Baumgarten, 81.

¹⁴⁵Ibid, see note 2, 81.

¹⁴⁶New American Bible, St. Joseph’s Edition, (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1992), 514.

¹⁴⁷Baumgarten, 86 – 87.

Under the relative peace of Persian and Ptolemaic rule, the area of Palestine had experienced substantial population growth, along with increasing urbanization, technological advances in agriculture, and growing literacy.¹⁴⁸ By the time of the writing of Ben Sirach, the Hebrew Bible had achieved a “universal role.” It became the literature on that Jewish education was based and was no longer the restricted literature of the priests but was becoming “more widely known by members of the nation.”¹⁴⁹ Baumgarten cites both Josephus and Philo in defense of growing literacy and awareness of Torah law. In addition to the importance of knowing the Torah, literacy was also important for the operation of the new, independent government that was established under the Hasmoneans.¹⁵⁰ In Baumgarten’s model, these changes led to dissention between the newly literate and the old aristocracy. Baumgarten makes a point to note that “people who have advanced or declined socially, who find themselves in an ambiguous relation to hierarchical structures, might be receptive to symbols of the world as itself out of joint and on the brink of radical transformation.”¹⁵¹ Schwartz is in agreement with Baumgarten and states that the three main sects arose out of “the anomalous character of the economy and society of first-century Judaea, that had produced an unusually large class of well-to-do, pious, educated, and idle young men.”¹⁵²

In Schwartz’s book, the author “argues that the Persian and then Hellenistic overlords of Palestine legally and financially backed the Temple and Torah. The nearly universal Jewish response to this imperial support was the assimilation of these

¹⁴⁸Baumgarten, 143.

¹⁴⁹Ibid, 118 – 119.

¹⁵⁰Ibid, 122.

¹⁵¹Ibid, 164 – 165.

¹⁵²Schwartz, 98.

institutions into a unifying ideological core that Schwartz calls 'Judaism'.¹⁵³ This core Judaism was represented in what Schwartz calls the "three pillars," namely, one God, one Torah, and one Temple.¹⁵⁴ Schwartz determines that the sects of that we are aware actually supported this ideological system, even if they disagreed on interpretation and everyday implementation of its laws.¹⁵⁵ Schwartz spends some time discussing the pressures that Hellenism played on Jewish society during the Second Temple Period, and how those pressures caused many Jews to find ways "to circumvent the separatist requirements of Jewish law."¹⁵⁶ As a case in point, he discusses the Tobiad family, who were regarded by the author of Nehemiah (ca. 500 BCE) as foreigners, even though they were joined by marriage to a prominent priestly family; by the time of the Second Temple period, the Tobiad family was considered fully Jewish.

Schwartz uses this information, along with the story of the Tobiads in Josephus's *Antiquities, Book XII* to explain that, under Ptolemaic rule, opportunities were available to make a great deal of wealth for those who had money to invest, and that there was some degree of social mobility. The Tobiads become a particularly interesting case subject in this regard because although they took advantage of the financial opportunities, they eschewed the idea of becoming fully Greek and so, "successfully walking this tightrope, came to play an important role in Judean society."¹⁵⁷ Schwartz contends that the Tobiads were only one family of many who reacted to the changing social / political

¹⁵³Satlow, Michael. A History of the Jews or Judaism? On Seth Schwartz's Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 BCE to 640 CE. *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 95, no. 1 (Winter 2005), 151-152.

¹⁵⁴Schwartz, 49.

¹⁵⁵Ibid, 49.

¹⁵⁶Ibid, 22.

¹⁵⁷Ibid, 28.

climate in this manner.¹⁵⁸ The most interesting theory that Schwartz presents is that of the division between covenant, Torah-only Jews (i.e., the Sadducees, possible unbeknownst-to-us others) and those who supported, to varying degrees, a mythological / eschatological interpretation (Pharisees, Essenes, and Qumran).

Schwartz's contention is that ancient Judaism was not radically diverse, that the mythological narrative was only "mildly" dualistic, and that it was actually a "subsidiary" of the Torah-Temple-Yahweh ideological system, even though the mythological narrative contradicts the legalistic system.¹⁵⁹ I do not agree with Schwartz on this issue. In fact, it is my contention that ancient Judaism was radically diverse, and that the mythological narrative, when compared to the priestly material (P source), clearly shows dualistic, even some polytheistic, features. I argue that Schwartz is attempting to show that all Judaism practiced during the Second Temple Period used the Torah as the basis for their religion, so that he can then assign nationalistic ideology to a group of individuals who had no such concept. Schwartz states that every foreign ruler, from the time of the return from the Babylonian exile until the Jewish Revolt of 66 CE, supported the Temple in Jerusalem and its priestly staff. He does this to support his idea that Torah-Temple-God was the ideological basis for "Jewishness" during the Second Temple Period. While I do believe that this was true, to a point, I believe that it was true from *the viewpoint of the foreigners, not the Jews themselves*.

It is all well and good to define what "Jewishness" meant in terms of rulers and the aristocracy, but what about the rest of the population? How often did those practicing Judaism in areas outside of Judaea actually go to the Temple? Most of them probably

¹⁵⁸For a full discussion of these ideas, see Schwartz's chapter, Politics and Society, 19 -48.

¹⁵⁹Ibid, 49.

worshipped in synagogues and only made a pilgrimage to the Temple once a year, if at all. Until its destruction by the Hasmoneans, the Samaritans worshiped Yahweh, along with Zeus, in their own temple on Mt. Gerizim. In addition to those who practiced Judaism in areas such as Galilee, Samaria, and Idumaea, what about the people who practiced other religions? Putting aside his arguments for a single Judaism, the most significant aspect of Schwartz's work for the current discussion is his Torah versus Myth hypothesis.

For Schwartz, the fact that the Torah and the cult of the Temple in Jerusalem were consistently backed by the foreign rulers meant that Jewish society was centralized around these institutions. He argues that without this stabilizing feature to ancient Judaism, the society would have fractured even further, and that Torah law perhaps would have been replaced altogether by the myth.¹⁶⁰ So what was the myth? How was it at odds with Torah law? Why was it so popular among sectarians, as evidenced in the apocalyptic writings of the period?

Torah versus Myth

The Torah, used here as Schwartz uses it, i.e. to mean the books of the Pentateuch, established the covenant between the god, Yahweh, and his chosen people, the Jews. It is presented in the Torah as a contract, whereby the people of Yahweh are obligated to obey the laws and ritual practices enumerated by their deity and, in exchange, Yahweh will protect and bless his people. As was discussed above, it was institutionalized at the behest of the Persians, and its authority lay with those same rulers. The priesthood was given special status as interpreters of Torah law, and their authority

¹⁶⁰Satlow, 152.

rested with the Torah itself.¹⁶¹ This meant that the Torah enjoyed not only imperial support but aristocratic support as well. Extreme displays of dissent “were not tolerated, unless the authorities were too weak to control them or considered them harmless.”¹⁶² In Torah ideology, the universe is a stable, simple, and well-ordered entity, and Yahweh alone rules over it, although the existence of other deities is attested to in the first commandment. There is no tension between good and evil and no cosmic battle to win the worship of men. The problem with this presentation is that it does not answer vital questions about why the world works as it does. Why, if Yahweh is just and all-powerful, does he allow evil to exist in the world? Why do terrible things happen to good people? Why is there so much chaos?¹⁶³

Schwartz argues that the apocalyptic myth arose as a response to questions such as these. The apocalyptic myth is a powerful response because it takes the focus off of contemporary political and historical events and puts it on a grander, archetypal scale; the myth reassures its adherents that things are going along as they should be, regardless of the problems that plague society. Schwartz contends that the apocalyptic myth emerges first in the literature of the Second Temple period, in the Book of Watchers, written around 300 BCE, and now part of the larger Book of Enoch. While I have no basis to disagree with him on this issue, I contend that the apocalyptic myth is based on the mythic tradition of the Yahwehist source as incorporated into the Pentateuch. I would suggest that it was written by sectarians who disagreed with the highly legalistic nature of the Torah-only party and was written in order to preserve older, oral traditions of Israelite religion.

¹⁶¹Leviticus 10:8-11

¹⁶²Schwartz, 57.

¹⁶³Ibid, 64 – 68.

If my assumption is correct, it means that the myth was already a popular and accepted feature of Judaism, before it was presented with apocalyptic features by the author of the Book of Watchers. Obviously, it was the product of the literate. Schwartz argues that it was produced by the same scribes who were promulgators of the covenant. However, it seems unlikely to me that the same people would write two opposing explanations for how the world works. In regard to my decision to assume that the material of the Book of Enoch was written, albeit at different times, by ideologically similar sects (if not the same sect), I agree with Schwartz's contention that each text does not necessarily represent an independent group. I do believe, however, that any group that embraced the myth, and its antecedent the apocalyptic myth, is a possible source for the authorship of the texts of Enoch.

Baumgarten explicitly states that he believes the early sections of the Book of Enoch to be reactions to the encounter with Hellenism, and that those texts lead directly to the community at Qumran.¹⁶⁴ While Baumgarten believes most of the Book of Enoch was authored by the sect who became the Qumran community, Nickelsburg argues for an entirely independent sect of Judaism behind the Enoch writings, a movement that he calls Enochic Judaism. Nickelsburg believes that the Book of Enoch is "a witness to a form of Judaism in the Hellenistic age that was not centered on the Torah of Moses."¹⁶⁵

The myth, as presented in the Yahwehist source of the Pentateuch, states in Gen. 6: 1-4:

When men began to multiply on earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of heaven saw how beautiful the daughters of man were, and so they took for their wives

¹⁶⁴Baumgarten, 25.

¹⁶⁵John J. Collins, "Review of 1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1-36; 81-108 by George W. E. Nickelsburg," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 9, no. 2 (2002): 267.

as many of them as they chose. Then the LORD said: My spirit shall not remain in man forever, since he is but flesh. His days shall comprise one hundred and twenty years.

At that time the Nephilim appeared on earth (as well as later), after the sons of heaven had intercourse with the daughters of man, who bore them sons. They were the heroes of old, the men of renown.

First, it is important to note that this myth rests on the idea that divine or semi-divine beings descended from the heavens, mated with mortal women, and thus procreated a race of giants, resulting in all sorts of wickedness. Because the Nephilim are central to the myth, it is interesting to note that every mention of the Nephilim (or other races of giants) within the Pentateuch occurs in the writing of the Yahwehist (J) source.¹⁶⁶ The Yahwehist source is considered by most scholars to be the oldest part of the Pentateuch, and so I would argue that the myth is the oldest extant version of Yahweh worship. It should be noted that the myth is clearly not monotheistic; Yahweh is presented as having little control over the other gods and their offspring. For the author of this part of Genesis, Yahweh's solution to the problem is to destroy the world with a flood and, basically, to start over with Noah (a descendant of Enoch) and his family.

In the apocalyptic myth, again Yahweh does not rule alone. Yahweh is joined by subsidiary deities who rebel and take over the task of creation; the Book of Enoch equates these deities with the sons of gods descending to Earth in Genesis 6: 1-4. Yahweh loses control of creation to the sons of the gods, and the world becomes a wicked place. Additionally, according to the apocalyptic myth, a coming great battle will occur between good and evil, and good will, of course, win. Interesting to note is Schwartz's contention that this part of the Book of Enoch was written at roughly the same time as the priestly strain of the Pentateuch, that includes most of Genesis 1 – 11.¹⁶⁷ What concerns me is

¹⁶⁶Gen. 6 : 1 -8, Num. 13: 32 – 33, Deut. 2 : 10 – 11.

¹⁶⁷Schwartz, 77.

that the priestly source of the Pentateuch did not write anything concerning the myth; does this mean that the priestly source did not give credence to the myth? Or is it possible that the Yahwehist source was interpolated later, after the priestly source had been produced, and by other individuals who relied heavily on the myth?

The priestly (P) source does mention Enoch, as does Sirach and, in the New Testament, the book of Hebrews.¹⁶⁸ This leads me to believe that Enoch was considered an important, revered, and prophetic figure throughout Judaism and nascent Christianity. In turn, it makes the problem of discovering that group might have authored the Book of Enoch, or one of its constituent parts, all the more problematic. Let me be clear here: I fully understand that the ancient holy man named Enoch did not author any of the parts of the Book of Enoch. I understand that ancient works are often written under pseudonyms in order to give the work legitimacy. Clearly, whoever authored these works considered Enoch an authority figure, but, unfortunately, that does not help in detecting who the authors might have been because it is clear that all practicing Jews held Enoch in high regard.

The apocalyptic myth is opposed to the covenant in its cosmology; the myth is dualistic / polytheistic, while the covenant always uses henotheistic rhetoric. The myth makes human beings the victims of divine action, and there is no explicit directive to obey the commandments of Yahweh; however, those individuals who do attempt to obey the commandments are considered worthy of reward at the end of time. In its dualism / polytheism, the myth shows influences from Persia, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. “The Enochic tradition may owe something to Mesopotamian lore associated with the

¹⁶⁸Gen. 5 : 1 – 32, Sirach 44:16 & 49:14, Hebrews 11:5.

antediluvian hero Enmeduranki, but in its Jewish version this lore is associated with a biblical hero.”¹⁶⁹

Torah law presupposes human agency; it is a person’s free will to decide whether or not he/she will obey the commandments of the covenant. If a person does, he/she is promised the protection and blessings of Yahweh. In the myth, there is either very little free will, or none at all. Human beings are merely the victims of actions and desires carried out by deities on the world stage. The myth shows the events of the world as being preordained and fatalistic, and very little in the realms of human agency can change the course of those events.

At some point it is clear that the myth (but not the apocalyptic strand) and covenant branches of Judaism were incorporated into one system, as there are traces of the myth in the Pentateuch, that I have already enumerated and, I would argue, in the David and Goliath legend, as it appears in 1 Samuel 17.¹⁷⁰ However, I do not agree with Schwartz that this interweaving started contemporaneously with their formations as ideological systems. As I have tried to make clear before, I believe the myth to be much older than the legalistic codes. I do believe that the clear differences between the two approaches give indication that there were opposing sects of Judaism during the period between the return from exile and the destruction of the Temple; I believe that every part of the Book of Enoch virtually screams sectarianism, from its apocalyptic myth and its

¹⁶⁹Schwartz, 79, see specifically note 74.

¹⁷⁰This story (David and Goliath) is part of the Deuteronomistic History, and could possibly be an allegorical way of giving humans (David) some sort of agency against the giants (Goliath), and therefore some significant part to play in Yahweh’s triumphant return at the end of time; it could also be the author’s way of alluding to the uselessness of the myth in the face of correct Temple and Torah practice. See the discussion in Finkelstein on Deuteronomy, p. 13.

astronomical calendar (that was different from the one the Temple used), to its messianic and millenarian rhetoric.

The Book of Enoch

The Book of Watchers (chs. 1 – 36) and the Book of the Heavenly Luminaries (chs. 72 – 82) are recognized as the oldest parts of the Book of Enoch. Both texts have been dated to roughly 300 BCE. The Epistle of Enoch (chs. 91 – 105) was added as a conclusion to the codex prior to the addition of the Parables and the Book of Heavenly Luminaries and was probably produced during the period 200 – 100 BCE. The Dream Visions (chs. 83 – 90) were composed during the reign of Judas Maccabeus, from 164 – 160 BCE. The Book of Parables (chs. 37 – 71) was written around the turn of the era, about 10 BCE. The two addenda, that are entitled the Birth of Noah (chs. 106 – 107) and Another Book by Enoch (ch. 108), were both composed sometime during the first century CE.¹⁷¹ Based solely on the dating information scholars now have, it is clear that the composite texts of Enoch were written at different times by various authors. As mentioned earlier, the Book of Watchers is the oldest extant version of the apocalyptic myth in Judaism, and I will now discuss the work in greater detail.

The Book of Watchers (ca. 300 BCE)

Chapters 1 – 5 of the Book of Watchers constitutes an introduction, “in that Enoch announces the coming theophany, when God and the heavenly entourage will render judgment against the rebel angels who introduced evil into the world and against sinful humans, who perpetrate it.”¹⁷² Enoch’s authority is based on his special relationship with Yahweh, and it is clear from scriptural references to Enoch’s holiness

¹⁷¹Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 1 – 13.

¹⁷²Ibid, 1. Nickelsburg teaches at the University of Iowa, Dept. of Religious Studies and James VanderKam (PhD, 1976, Harvard) is professor of Hebrew Scriptures at Notre Dame.

that he was revered not only by the Jews but also by the early Christians.¹⁷³ “By attributing the pseudepigraphical work to an ancient wise man (such as Enoch)...its writer invokes a stereotypical framework of that visions are a part. The purpose of the attribution to an ancient prophet or sage is primarily to invest the actual author’s words with the authority of antiquity.”¹⁷⁴ Chapters 6 – 11 are a retelling and expansion on Genesis 6; the sons of the gods are identified as angels / watchers, who rebel against Yahweh, descend to earth and mate with mortal women, producing the race of giants, to whom reference is made numerous times in the Pentateuch.¹⁷⁵ Determining the meaning of the symbolism in the text is largely contingent on when the work is believed to have been written, i.e. while Schwartz dates the writing to 300 BCE, George Nickelsburg and James VanderKam date it to ca. 250 – 200 BCE.

Nickelsburg and VanderKam explain that the giants in the Book of Watchers represent the Hellenistic kings of the author’s time; the author uses the events of the ancient past (the myth) to mirror the current events of his own period in chapters 6 – 11. Chapters 12 – 16 are a commissioning of Enoch by Yahweh to announce the coming judgment, and chapters 17 – 32 give “a spatial reference to the previous temporal prediction of a future judgment. Enoch sees the places where the apparatus of judgment has been prepared and where it will be executed.”¹⁷⁶ Chapters 33 – 36 constitute a brief summary of material in chapters 72 – 82. It is intriguing to note that the fallen angels commit evil acts, according to the text, by teaching mankind the secrets of astrology so that, “they [the Watchers] all began to reveal mysteries to their wives and to their

¹⁷³See note 40, this text.

¹⁷⁴Stone, Michael. *A Reconsideration of Apocalyptic Visions*. The Harvard Theological Review, 96, no. 2 (Apr. 2003), Cambridge University Press.

¹⁷⁵See note 38, this text, for a list of references to the giants in the Pentateuch.

¹⁷⁶Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 2.

children, (and) as men were perishing, the cry went up to heaven,” and yet, apparently, no such evil is committed when the archangel Uriel teaches Enoch the same information (cf. 33:1 – 4). I speculate that this is proof that the Book of Watchers is a combination of at least two traditions that predate its current composition.

The Book of the Luminaries (ca. 300 BCE)

The Book of the Luminaries comprises chapters 72 – 82 and is an astrological treatise on the proper reckoning of the calendar. Enoch is associated with the solar calendar, in that tradition states he lived for 365 years. The calendar that is promulgated in this text consists of twelve months of 30 days each, with one extra day being added to the third, sixth, ninth, and twelfth months. It is compared with the lunar year of 354 days, and the solar calendar is clearly given preference. It is possible that the Book of the Luminaries predates even the Book of the Watchers; it was originally written in Aramaic and was quite popular with the Qumran community. The text, it might be noted, never mentions “Jewish festivals or the Sabbath and thus does not date them according to either of these calendars.”¹⁷⁷ Only two minor parts of the work contain any eschatological features, and those are in 72:1 and 80:2 – 8; most likely those parts were later interpolations.

The Epistle of Enoch (200 – 100 BCE)

The Epistle of Enoch, chapters 91 – 105, is “ostensibly addressed to Enoch’s children...it is in fact directed to the author’s own contemporaries, ‘the future generations that will practice righteousness and peace’.”¹⁷⁸ The introduction assures the righteous that Yahweh will prevail, that justice will be served, and that the wicked and the

¹⁷⁷Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 8.

¹⁷⁸Ibid, 10.

righteous will receive their just punishments and rewards. The text then includes a section referred to as the Apocalypse of Weeks (91: 11 – 17 & 93: 1 – 10) in that Enoch recites “world history from his time to the eschaton, employing a scheme of ten periods of uneven length called ‘weeks’ ...this central part of the epistle is composed almost entirely of three literary forms well known from the biblical tradition, especially the prophets. All three carry the theme of the coming judgment.”¹⁷⁹

The Epistle also contains “woes” and “consolations” and, indeed, this text has been called Woes & Consolations by many scholars. The woes are a combination of religious and social evils; the consolations call “the righteous to courage, faith, and hope in view of the sinners’ coming judgment described in the second part.”¹⁸⁰ Included in religious woes are idolatry, consuming blood, blasphemy, cursing, and the perversion of divine law as “the wise” interpret it. Through these woes, the wicked lead “many astray with their lies [when they hear them].”¹⁸¹ Social woes include the hoarding of wealth, display of wealth through clothing and jewelry, the building of mansions and the abuse of the poor and the pious:

For men will put on adornments as women,
and fair colors more than virgins,
in kingship and majesty and power.
And silver and gold will be among them as food,
and in their houses these will be poured out like water,
because they have no knowledge or understanding.¹⁸²

The conclusion of the Epistle of Enoch references the continuing transmission of his teachings, and states that future generations will “believe in them [Enoch’s teachings]” and “will rejoice and be glad to learn from them all the paths of truth.”¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 10 – 11.

¹⁸⁰Ibid, 11.

¹⁸¹1 Enoch 98: 15.

¹⁸²1 Enoch 98: 2-3.

The Dream Visions (164 – 160 BCE)

This section of the Book of Enoch was “composed among people who considered the Second Temple to be polluted and who understood themselves to be the eschatological community of the righteous constituted by a claim to revelation (1 Enoch 90: 6).”¹⁸⁴ The symbolism of the work has been much discussed by scholars, and because this section, in part, retells the myth of the Book of Watchers, it would be worth explaining here in some detail. The history from the time of Adam to Enoch is allegorical, and human beings are depicted as cattle and sheep. Adam is the white ox, Eve is the white cow, Cain is the black ox, Abel, the red ox, and Seth, the white ox. The black ox strikes the red ox, that then disappears from the face of the earth (1 Enoch 85: 4). The black ox goes on to procreate many other black cattle, and the white cow (Eve) gives birth to the white ox (Seth), that goes on to procreate many other white cattle. At this time, stars (angels/deities) fall from heaven and have intercourse with the black cows (the descendants of Cain) and produce elephants, camels, and donkeys that represent the giants.¹⁸⁵ The “ram with the great horn” is identified by scholars as Judas Maccabeus. It is clear that this is a retelling of the myth as seen in the Book of Watchers and in Genesis, with the significant addition that it *identifies the origin of the people with whom the fallen angels procreated*, i.e. the descendants of Cain.

From the time of Jacob onward, the white cattle are replaced by white sheep and the birds of prey and wild beasts represent the Gentile rulers; the shepherds are the angels commissioned by Yahweh to protect a certain percentage of the sheep. Schurer writes:

¹⁸³1 Enoch 104: 13.

¹⁸⁴Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 9.

¹⁸⁵Emil Schurer, *The Literature of the Jewish People in the time of Jesus*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), 61 – 62.

From the moment that in accordance with the divine purpose Israel was assailed and subjugated by the Gentile powers, God appointed angels whose duty it was to see that these powers executed upon Israel the judgment with that He intended them to be visited; and not only so, but also to see that they did not oppress and persecute Israel unduly. But the watchers neglect their duty; they allow the wild beasts to destroy a greater number than they ought to have done, and, as is predicted toward the conclusion, they are for this to be cast into hell-fire along with the fallen angels.¹⁸⁶

Reference is also made to the apostate Jews, who defile the Temple with their polluted sacrifices and will be thrown into hell along with the rebellious angels at the final judgment.¹⁸⁷ The text is a clear piece of sectarian propaganda and is also decidedly pro-Hasmonean. The text argues that “although the temple is rebuilt, all its sacrifices are polluted, and the sheep are blinded (89: 73 – 74). During the Seleucid rule (after 198 BCE), a time of unmitigated violence, some of the younger generation (the pious Jews) open their eyes and appeal to the older ones (in part, the Hellenizers) to return from their wickedness, but to no avail (90: 6 – 8).”¹⁸⁸

The Book of Parables (ca. 10 BCE)

The Book of Parables consists of three allegories and a two-chapter conclusion that as a whole differ from the other parts of the Book of Enoch. In this part of the codex, prominence is given to messianic expectations, and belief in an actual personage of the Messiah. Schurer points out that while the rest of the texts of Enoch contrast the wicked in general against the pious, in this section the wicked are portrayed as the Gentile rulers and powerful men of the Earth. In tandem with this, the messianic figure is also portrayed as archetypal and larger-than-life.¹⁸⁹ Reference to the Parthians and Medes is made on the basis of events that had already taken place prior to the author’s writing, that

¹⁸⁶Schurer, 64 – 65.

¹⁸⁷For polluted sacrifices, 1 Enoch 89:73; for casting into hell of apostate Jews, 1 Enoch 90:26 – 27.

¹⁸⁸Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 9.

¹⁸⁹For examples, see 1 Enoch 38:4-5, 46:7-8, 48:8-10, 53:5, 54:2, 55:4, 62:1-11, 63:1-12.

being the Parthian invasion of Palestine from 40-38 BCE. Additionally, stating that the Parthians would be hindered by “the city of my righteous ones” assumes the position that Jerusalem has not yet been destroyed by the Romans, i.e. the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE has not yet occurred.¹⁹⁰

Destruction of the world by flood in the Noachian tradition is a type of final judgment, that mirrors the floods of chapters 6-11 and 106-107; these are considered later interpolations that are often referred to as the Parables of Noah and include the sections 60:65-69:25 and 54:7 – 55:2.¹⁹¹ The journey and visions in 52:1 – 56:4 relate to the myth of Genesis 6 and to the journey in 1 Enoch 6-11 and 17-21. Of particular interest is the description of the Chosen One in the Parables because it is “presumed in the gospel traditions about Jesus, the Son of Man.”¹⁹² It is my contention that the Parables were written by Nazarenes (very early Christians) and allude to Jesus of Nazareth. The other possibility is rather distasteful, however, it does not mean it is untrue, that being that Jesus was educated on the Parables, as well as other sectarian writings, and preceded to presuppose himself the Chosen One and attempt a fulfillment of prophecy that, albeit depending on viewpoint, drastically backfired.

It is also clear from the text that the author believed in the resurrection of the dead, as he writes, “And in him [the Chosen One] dwell the spirit of wisdom and the spirit of insight, and the spirit of instruction and might, and *the spirit of those who have fallen asleep in righteousness.*”¹⁹³ Phrases that are used in the Parables are also used by New Testament authors concerning Jesus. While there are many, for purposes of length I

¹⁹⁰Schurer, 68.

¹⁹¹Ibid, 68.

¹⁹²Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 6.

¹⁹³1 Enoch 49:3; emphasis my own; see also 51:1.

will include only one: “Even before the sun and the constellations were created, before the stars of heaven were made, his name was named before the Lord of Spirits...and he will be the light of the nations.” Compare this to the beginning of John, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God...and this life was the light of the human race.”¹⁹⁴ Although there has been lively debate among scholars concerning the actual date of composition for the Parables, many now believe that it was produced around the turn of the era.

¹⁹⁴1 Enoch 48:3, 4; John 1:1-4.

Conclusions

The Book of Enoch is difficult to study because it consists of so many individual parts; however, the work as a whole is congruent with the religious issues of the day and age in that the writings were composed. The Book of Enoch is indispensable in shedding light on the two centuries leading up to the birth of Christianity. Though largely ignored from the time of its rediscovery in 1773, the Book of Enoch came to the forefront gradually with the works of August Dillmann, R. H. Charles, and Campbell Bonner. With the discovery in 1947 of the Dead Sea Scrolls, interest in the Enoch literature vastly increased, both in the academic community and within the general population. In 2005, Gabriele Boccaccini wrote, “A book on Enoch and Qumran origins shows how dramatically our understanding of second temple Judaism has changed in contemporary scholarship. Such a topic would have been inconceivable only half a century ago, when Qumran had still to reemerge from the sands of the desert with its precious manuscripts and 1 Enoch was still struggling against the impediments of its ‘non-canonical’ status and its dubious reputation as a bizarre and marginal pseudepigraphon.”¹⁹⁵

Scholarship on the Book of Enoch initially focused on translating and collating the various manuscripts as they became available. Academic debate focused on theological and philological concerns. With the aftereffects of World War II and the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, scholarship has shifted to a focus on the sociological and historical conditions that gave birth to the Enoch writings. Scholars want to know how and why these writings maintained their widespread popularity for hundreds of years in the Palestinian region, even influencing the writings of early Christians. Though much has been learned already, scholars are still searching for additional information the

¹⁹⁵Boccaccini, 1.

writings can reveal about the various religious sects active during Second Temple Judaism.

The history of the Second Temple period was a time of chaotic political and social changes in that many of the Jewish peoples fought to retain their old traditions. Understanding this period of Jewish history is complex because of the myriad of cultural influences that the Jewish people endured from the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, and, finally, the Greeks and Romans. Although it is true that the war that raged during the Second Temple period was between Jewish culture and Greco-Roman culture, many sects of Judaism had already begun to appear as a result of previous cultural influences. As a result, there were a range of reactions to the Hellenistic Seleucids and the Romans after them.

The primary feature of the historical period during that the Book of Enoch was composed was that it was one of rapid social and political changes. It seems certain that there were different Judaisms practiced by the many peoples who worshipped in Palestine during the Second Temple period; if everyone supported the one Temple-Torah-God model, as Schwartz seems to suggest, then what was all the fighting and desert isolation about? In support of the hypothesis that there were multiple Judaisms, the Book of Enoch is a mythic/metaphysical treatise that contradicts the Torah-centered Judaism of the Temple. Each section of it, but particularly the oldest parts, seem to have been written for two main purposes: (1) to preserve ancient, once oral, traditions and (2) as a juxtaposition to the Torah-centered Judaism of the Temple.

While it appears that the Pentateuch was written, in part, to help define what “Jewishness” meant for foreigners, it also was probably the causal factor in the formation

of sectarianism, i.e. Baumgarten's antecedents. These sects seem to have formed over a great many years around educated, well-to-do scribes and priests who promulgated the myth, to one extent or another. As discussed above, the specific socioeconomic realities of Second Temple Palestine made it easier for families of some means to secure higher social status, as the case of the Tobiads shows. As this influx of new participants became active in the educated class of Palestine, the inevitable result was divergent opinions on interpretation of what was important and what was not. Once individuals could read the Pentateuch for themselves, they could make up their own mind about it; they no longer had to take another individual's interpretation at face value. For this reason, I believe that growing literacy had much to do with the success of the sects during the period 200 BCE – 70 CE. The Book of Enoch, that contains several retellings of the myth, became very popular among some sects, particularly the community at Qumran and the early Christians. Most significantly, the Book of Enoch stands as proof that there were multiple versions of Judaism practiced in Palestine during the Second Temple period.

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