

The Intertestamental Period: The Maccabean Rebellion

Introduction:

1. Last week we covered the political landscape in the aftermath of Alexander the Great and the internal politics of Jewish High Priesthood.
2. This week we will take a look at the Seleucid persecution of the Jews and the rebellion for Jewish independence that ensues from it.

I. Antiochus IV in Prophecy

- A. Antiochus IV's war with Egypt
 1. (Daniel 11:25-28)
- B. Antiochus IV's confrontation with Gaius Pompeilius Laenas
 1. (Daniel 11:29-30)
- C. Antiochus IV's persecution
 1. (Daniel 11:31-35)

II. Three Major Factors Leading to the Rebellion:

A. Hellenistic Reform (from 174 BC)

1. Pushed by major influential figures in the High Priesthood, the Elders, and Tobiad Family
 - a) Gymnasium on the Temple Mount
 - b) Antioch-at-Jerusalem
 - c) The robbery of the Temple treasury

B. Political Changes (168 BC)

1. The buying and selling of the High Priesthood
 - a) Assassinations, coups, bribery
2. Retaliation for Jason's failed coup
 - a) The presence of Apollonius (a Seleucid general) and occupation of Syrian troops
 - b) The failed coup also resulted in 80,000 deaths in 3 days.
 - c) The Syrian troops would worship their own gods (Baal) on the Temple Mount.

C. Persecution from the Seleucids (167-164 BC)

1. Observance of the Law of Moses was outlawed.
 - a) Including Sabbath, kosher, and circumcision
2. Hellenization of worship
 - a) The temple was dedicated to Zeus.
 - b) Jews were compelled to participate in worship of Greek Gods, like Dionysius.
 - (1) (2 Maccabees 6:24-31)

3. Antiochus IV's cruelty towards the people
 - a) (1 Maccabees 1:54-64)
 - b) (2 Maccabees 7:1-6, 27-29)
4. Antiochus IV's desecration of the Temple
 - a) (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 12.5.4)

III. The Maccabean Rebellion (167-160 BC)

- A. Mattathias, a priest in the village Modein, killed a Jew who was about to offer a profane sacrifices to Zeus.
 1. (1 Maccabees 2:23-28)
 2. Mattathias fled to the country side with his sons and began a campaign of gorilla warfare against the Seleucid forces.
 3. Mattathias will die soon after and his sons will lead the rebellion in his stead. (166 BC)
- B. Mattathias's Sons:
 1. Judas Maccabeus
 2. Jonathan
 3. Simon
 4. Eleazar
- C. The Rededication of the Temple
 1. (1 Maccabees 4:52-58)
 2. After 3 years of war, the Temple was conquered and the Temple was rededicated in 8 days in December 164 BC
 3. Judas Maccabaeus tore down the idols and the altar of the Temple and erected a new altar.
 4. They sacred vessels were thrown out and new ones replaced them.
 5. This event would be memorialized and called "Hanukkah" (John 10:22-23)

IV. The Beginnings of the Hasmonean Dynasty

- A. Judas Maccabeus (165-160 BC)
 1. Becomes High Priest after the death of Menelaus from 165-162 BC
 - a) A Hellenistic Priest, Alcimus, appealed to Demetrius I, and gained the High Priesthood for himself. 162-159 BC
 2. Judas would die in the battle of Elsa in 160 BCE.
- B. Jonathan (160 -142 BC)
 1. A shrewd politician, played both sides of Seleucid internal conflicts.
 2. Regarded a the "Wicked Priest" by many. (See discussion of Dead Sea Scrolls next week)
 3. Shortly before his death, he was granted the High Priesthood by Alexander Balas (the ruler of the Selucids) (153-143 BC)
 4. Eventually he was taken into custody when he was betrayed and later killed.
- C. Simon
 1. Under his leadership, Judah becomes recognized (by Rome) as a free state in 142 BC
 2. Simon becomes High Priest in 142-134 BC.
 3. Simon is ultimately murdered by his son-in-law.

Conclusion:

1. Israel has gained its independence, but the Hasmonean Dynasty will be plagued with immoral actors, corruption, and cruelty.
2. Next week will look at some of the various groups that emerge from this time period.