

Between the Testaments

~420 BC – 6 AD

Week 1: October 5, 2020

General Comments...

- **Focus is HISTORY**

- Theology is covered in the context of history

- **Dates / Sources**

- **Why do empires care about this strip of land??**

- Trade routes! Yields Taxes and Power!
- Buffer between empires.

Breakout of Historical Periods Covered...

Baseline: The World of Malachi

Intertestamental Period:

- Persian Rule**
- Greek Rule**
 - Ptolemies of Egypt**
 - Seleucids of Syria**
- Maccabean Revolt / Hasmonean Rule**
- Herod the Great and the Romans**

Between the Testaments – Outline and Timeframes

TIMEFRAME

EVENTS

1000 – 420 BC

King David to Malachi.

539 – 332 BC

Persians are mostly benign rulers of Palestine.

332 – 323 BC

Alexander conquers Persia and Palestine.

323 – 301 BC

Macedonian generals vie for control of Palestine.

301 – 198 BC

Ptolemies of Egypt rule Palestine.

198 – 166 BC

Seleucids of Syria rule Palestine.

166 – 142 BC

Jewish revolt against Seleucid rule.

142 – 63 BC

Hasmoneans rule.

63 – 37 BC

Romans move in.

37 – 4 BC

King Herod rules as a vassal of Rome

4 BC – 6 AD

Herod's son Archelaus rules as a vassal of Rome

Old Testament Baseline

Hebrew society: theocracy

Concept of God

Twelve Tribes... Two Kingdoms

A Jew: a person who is (a) born to a Jewish woman; or (b) accepts Mosaic Law and formally converts to Judaism.

Torah and Oral Law

Assyrian Conquest 722 BC

Old Testament Baseline

Hebrew society: theocracy

Concept of God

Priests must be from the tribe of Levi

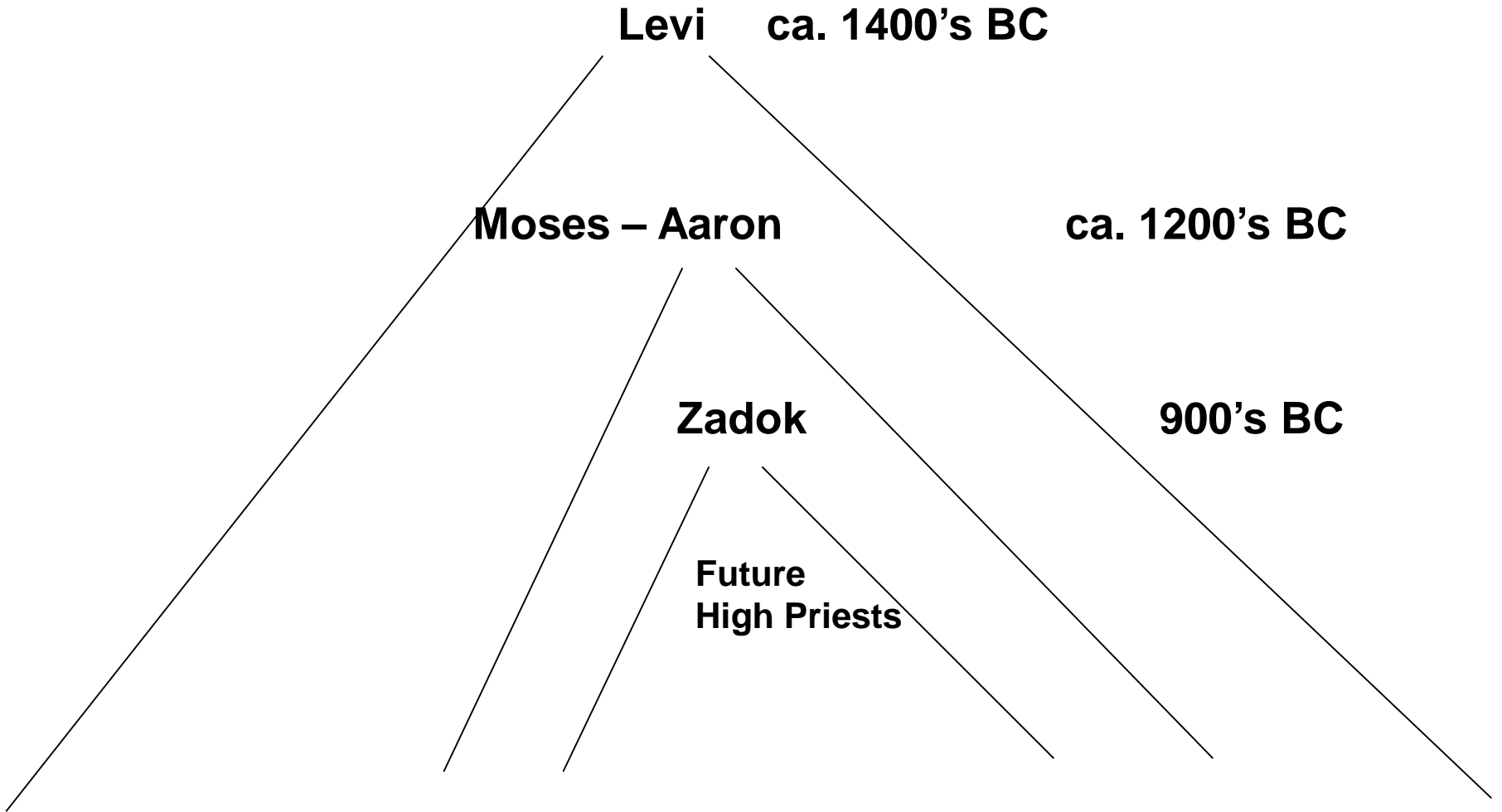
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Torah and Oral Law

Assyrian Conquest 722 BC

The High Priest



Babylonian Conquest 612 – 587 BC

- Babylonians = Southern Iraqis**
- Babylon defeats Assyria in 612 BC; claims Assyria's holdings including Israel and Judah.**
- Judah rebels in 587 BC.**
- Babylonia destroys Jerusalem and the Temple; takes Jewish leaders, tradesmen, etc. into exile in Babylon.**
- Jews in Babylon *and Judah* had to reconcile their faith with the lack of a Temple.**

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Persian Conquest 539 BC (Persians = Iranians)

Cyrus “the Great” takes an enlightened approach to conquered nations and tribes.

Jews in Babylon are allowed to return to Judah.

- “Locals” and Samaritans did NOT welcome them home!

In Jerusalem, former exiles rebuild altar and temple.

Rebuilt temple is dedicated in 515 BC.

Malachi's World: ~450 – 420 BC

Persia rules Palestine.

Aramaic overtakes Hebrew as the “language on the street”.

Nehemiah leads the rebuilding of Jerusalem and city walls.

Ezra rebuilds Jewish awareness of the requirements of their faith.

Jews and Samaritans are free to worship as they wish.

High Priest administers both civic and religious affairs.

Jews and Samaritans pay their taxes and live their lives.

Jews and Samaritans are estranged.

Old Testament Ends ~420 BC

Everyday Life in Judea & Samaria...

Mostly agrarian; small farms, a few goats...

- Farmers often lived in nearby towns or cities.

Tradesmen lived in the towns and cities;

Fishermen lived at the seashore or lakeshore.

Daily staple: bread!

Fluids: water, wine, and milk (goats or sheep).

Meat, if available, was for special occasions.

Extended families often lived together.

Sabbath was a day for rest and worship.

Sacrificial System

Suitable Sacrifice: Domesticated animal or milled grain.

Problem with definitions...

- **English: “*sacrifice*” = Give up something in exchange for something else.**
- **Hebrew: “*korban*” = To draw near; to approach.**

Two words that capture the nature of a sacrifice:

- **“Propitiation”:** Appease the gods’ anger (pagan).
- **“Expiation”:** Remove the effects of sin.

Burnt Offering / Peace Offering / Guilt Offering / Sin Offering

No sacrifices other than the Temple in Jerusalem!

Reflection...

Primary challenge to Judaism...

Old Testament: Idolatry!

Intertestamental period: Hellenization!

- **Celebration and promotion of all things Greek.**
- **Language, culture, philosophy...**

Intertestamental period starts with ~90 years of peace and prosperity under the Persians... ~420 – 332 BC

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Alexander Conquers in 332 BC... and Dies in 323 BC

Macedonians (Greeks) conquer Persia and claim the empire.

Jews and Samaritans capitulate.

Egypt welcomes Alexander; declares him a god.

Alexander supposedly bequeaths his empire to...

The Strongest!

Alexander's generals take note...

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Four Principal Generals Initially Emerge...

Antigonos: Mediterranean Sea to central Asia

Cassander: Macedonia

Ptolemy: Egypt & Palestine

- Seleucus: General under Ptolemy

Lysimachus: Thrace (Area in Balkans)

Ptolemy strikes first!

-Takes Alexander's body and gold sarcophagus to Egypt.

- Moves his army into Palestine.

Palestine: A Decades-Long Battleground

Between 323 and 301 BC, Palestine changes Hands five times.

Jews and Samaritans keep their heads down.

A coalition develops: Ptolemy, Seleucus, Cassander, and Lysimachus team up against Antigonus.

Foundation for Seleucid Dynasty...

In 312 BC...

Ptolemy, Cassander, Lysimachus, and Seleucus defeat Antigonus in battle of Gaza.

**Seleucus takes over Babylon and northern Syria.
- Establishes his western capital in Antioch.**

**Institutes a new calendaring system...
- 312 BC is denoted “Year 1 of Seleucus”.**

Syrian rulers from the lineage of Seleucus are called “Seleucids”, as are their supporters... army etc.

A pesky problem... Alexander has a son.

Cassander solves the problem by having Alexander’s wife and son murdered (311 BC).

Battle of Ipsus – 301 BC

**Coalition generals agree that if victorious,
Ptolemy gets Palestine and Seleucus gets all of Syria.**

But... Ptolemy's army doesn't show up for the battle.

Coalition wins; Antigonus is killed on the field.

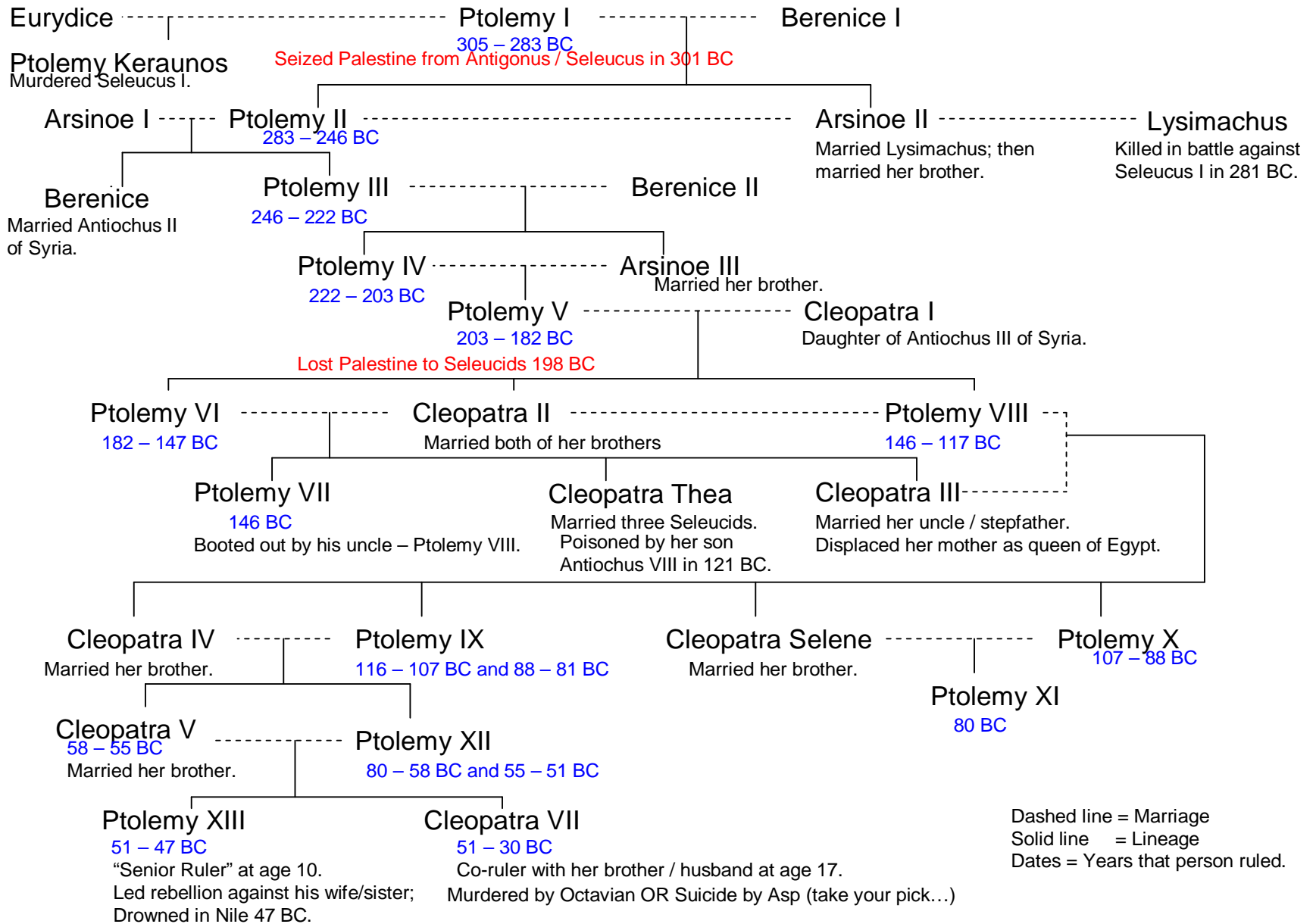
**Coalition gives Palestine to Seleucus since his
army participated in the battle.**

BUT...

Ptolemy grabs Palestine!

- Seleucus is NOT pleased...

Greek Control of Egypt – The Ptolemies



Ptolemies of Egypt Rule Palestine

~100 years of mostly peaceful times for the Jews.

Frequent battles with Seleucids, but Jews weren't involved.

Palestine was a buffer state between Egypt and Syria, so the Ptolemies wanted to keep the Jews & Samaritans happy.

Ptolemy II (283 – 247 BC) sponsors the Septuagint.

-Translation of the Torah from Hebrew to Greek.

- Many Jews no longer speak Hebrew; only Aramaic or Greek.

Unrelenting pressure from internal and external sources to become “more Greek”.

Greeks' Stealth Weapon: Hellenization!

Greek culture and language has an intoxicating influence on all nations they encounter.

Celebration of beauty – nature and body.

- Art and sculpture

Open spaces; open minds / Unbridled capitalism

Mindset of Hellenizers: You are either..

a) Hellenizer; or

b) Barbarian.

No middle ground!

Mindset of orthodox Jews: Greeks elevate man at the expense of God... Blasphemy!

Hellenization and orthodox Judaism... oil and water.

Strong Seleucid Ruler: Antiochus III: 223 BC

Weak Ptolemaic Ruler: Ptolemy V: 203 BC

198 BC: Seleucids capture Palestine

192 BC: Antiochus III invades Roman-controlled Greece.

- Influenced by Hannibal. (Yes, *that* Hannibal...)

- VERY bad move!

188 BC: Seleucids must pay monthly indemnity to Rome.

188 BC: Antiochus III killed; his son Seleucus IV takes throne.

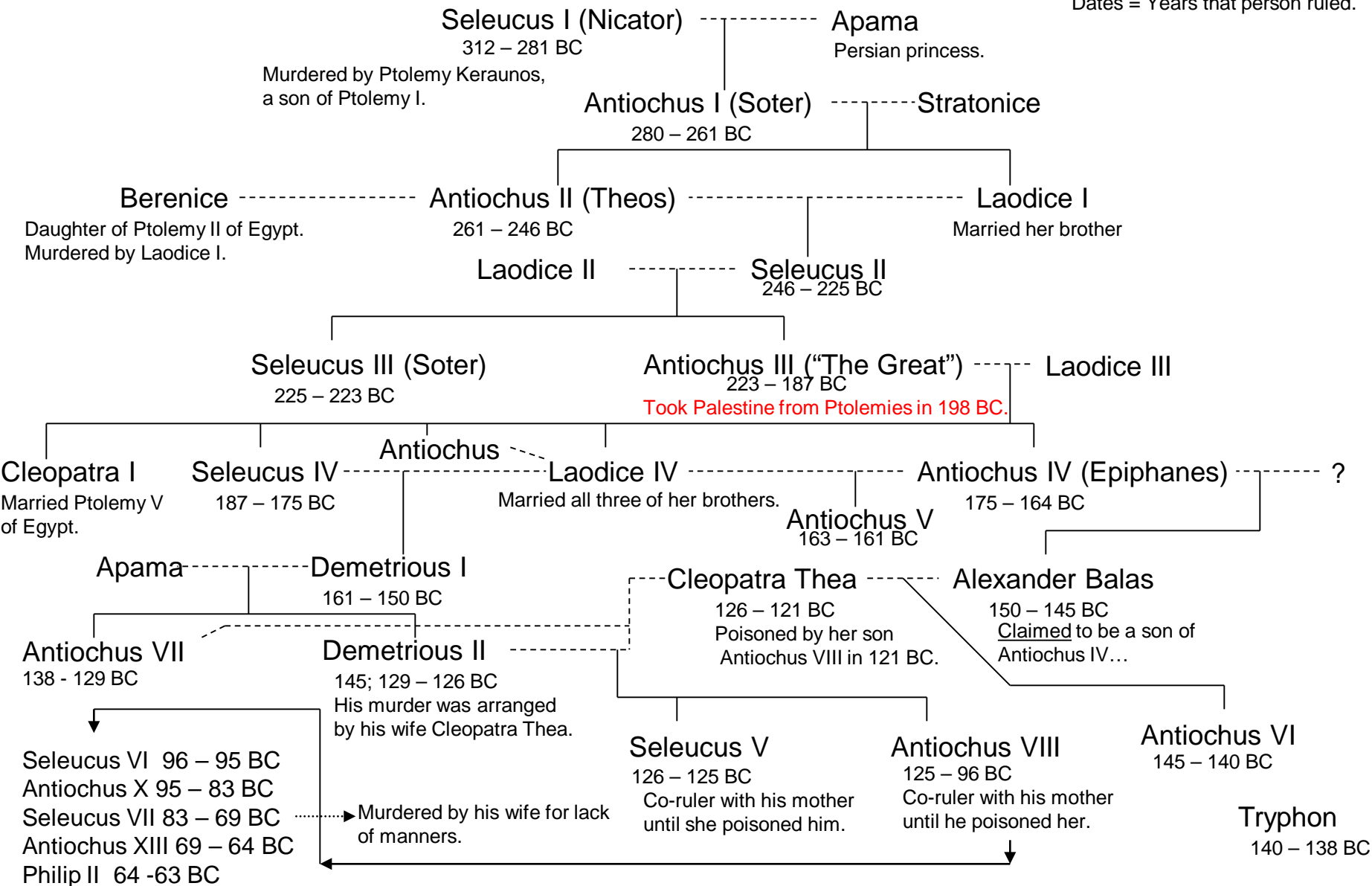
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Greek Control of Syria – the Seleucids

Dashed line = Marriage
 Solid line = Lineage
 Dates = Years that person ruled.



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Antiochus IV “Epiphanes”

Antiochus IV: Most hated figure in ancient Jewish history!

-Sells High Priest position.

- Decides to unite his empire via universal acceptance of Greek culture and religion.

-In 170 BC...

- The “True” High Priest is assassinated; Temple is looted by the newly appointed High Priest.

- Devout Jews revolt.

- Antiochus IV manages to sympathize with the devout Jews; restores order... for now...

The Gathering Storm... (Apologies to Winston Churchill)

Passive resistance develops amongst Jews – especially the Hasideans.

Antiochus IV's Egypt campaign – 168 BC

In Jerusalem, Antiochus IV's High Priest is unseated.

Army of Antiochus IV raids Jerusalem, kills hundreds, loots temple.

Antiochus IV: Hellenization is Moving too Slowly!

Decree of 168 BC: Judaism must be wiped out!

- Rescinds his father's freedom of worship decree.**
- Obedience to Torah is a crime.**
- Everyone must worship Greek gods.**
- All Jewish sacrifices are forbidden.**
- Prohibited: Sabbath observance; feast days.**
- Prohibited: circumcision.**
- Jews must eat pork.**
- Pigs must be sacrificed at the altar to Yahweh.**
- Jerusalem temple must be rededicated to Zeus.**

Seleucid Army Implements Decree – 167 BC

Seleucid army led by General Apollonius...

- Enters Jerusalem on the Sabbath.**
- Pulls down the city walls.**
- Sets fire to much of Jerusalem.**
- Restores Antiochus' choice for High Priest (Menelaus)**
- Plunders temple.**
- Massacres thousands.**
- Destroys all copies of the Torah that can be found.**
- Forces Jews to eat pork.**
- Establishes a colony (fortress) of gentiles on the edge of Temple Mount.**

Temple in Jerusalem is converted to worship of Zeus.

- Mid-December 167 BC**

The Fuse is Lit... 166 BC

Seleucids extended idolatry to the villages.

Many Jews question if Judaism can survive.

Jerusalem is increasingly Hellenized.

Severe persecution for noncompliance.

•This is the first time in recorded history where thousands died not in battle but for practicing their religion.

The Fuse Burns... 166 BC

An elderly priest – Mattathias of the family of Hasmon – has taken his family to the village of Modein (NW of Jerusalem).

Seleucid agent in Modein...

- Sets up a makeshift altar.**
- Demands Mattathias perform a sacrifice to Zeus.**

Mattathias refuses!

A Jew offers to perform the sacrifice for Mattathias...

- Mattathias kills the Jew, then kills the Seleucid agent!**

Mattathias and his five adult sons – Simon, Judas, John, Eleazar, and Jonathan – head for the Judean hills.

REVOLUTION!

