

# Between the Testaments

October 2020

## Course Outline and Timeframes

TIMEFRAME	EVENTS
1000 – 420 BC	King David to Malachi. O.T. events that provide context to understanding the intertestamental period.
539 – 332 BC	Persians are mostly benign rulers of Palestine*.
332 – 323 BC	Alexander and the Macedonians conquer Persia and take over Palestine. Alexander dies in 323 BC, leaving his empire to whomever is the strongest.
323 – 301 BC	Macedonian generals fight for control of Palestine.
301 – 198 BC	(Greek) Ptolemies of Egypt rule Palestine. Jews pay their taxes and live their lives. BUT: Hellenization is ubiquitous.
198 – 166 BC	(Greek) Seleucids of Syria rule Palestine. The steady drumbeat of Hellenization, generated internally by Jews who accept Greek culture, and imposed by an unsympathetic foreign government, creates ever-increasing pressure on orthodox Judaism.
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166 – 142 BC	Jews revolt against the Seleucid effort to eradicate Judaism. Led by men of the family of Hasmon, Jews manage to win their freedom.
142 – 63 BC	Hasmoneans rule. The lofty goal of Jewish freedom falls victim to internal strife and treachery. Rome is invited to intervene.
63 – 37 BC	Roman troops march into Palestine by invitation of the Jews. Rome rules via a combination of (a) remnants of the Hasmoneans; and (b) an Edomite aristocratic family – starting with Herod's father Antipater.
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37 – 4 BC	King Herod rules as a vassal of Rome. Herod must thread the needle between giving Rome what Rome requires of its provinces, and not causing Jews enough discontent to spark a revolution.
4 BC – 6 AD	Herod's son Archelaus rules as a vassal of Rome. Archelaus' reign starts with insurrection, brutally squashed by Roman legions. Archelaus lacked his father's political judgment and finesse; he offended both Jews and Samaritans. In 6 AD Rome replaces Archelaus with a succession of Roman procurators.

\* The label "Palestine" does not exist until after 135 AD, but is nevertheless a convenient means to indicate the lands of modern Israel, Sinai, West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon, southern Syria, and western Jordan.