



The Second Temple: Hellenistic Period¹

THE ROYAL LINE OF THE ACHAEMENIDS began with the Persian warrior-chief, Achaemenes (ca. 681 BCE). His fourth linear descendant, Cyrus II the Great, founded the Achaemenid Persian dynasty (559-530 BCE)² and was succeeded by 12 dynastic kings.³ It was Cyrus II who authorized the first return of Judean exiles under Sheshbazzar (539 BCE). Cambyses II (530-522 BCE) then invaded Egypt, quickly adding that territory to the Achaemenid Empire (525 BCE). Darius I (522-486 BCE) further granted the Davidic descendant, Zerubbabel, and the Zadokite priest, Joshua, their return to Jerusalem to assure the rebuilding of the Temple (520 BCE). Later, Artaxerxes I (465-424 BCE) probably was the emperor who initiated the restorative missions of Nehemiah and Ezra. Over the next century (ca. 425-330 BCE), however, the Persian hegemony over Judea was strangely silent. Nevertheless, the lineage of the Zadokite high priests throughout the Achaemenid era was preserved.⁴

Further clues provide the foundation for an enduring Hebraic ideal that emerged in this era. There was a revival of the Hebrew dream of restoring the Garden of Eden.⁵ The city of Jerusalem was believed to be at the

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center of the Garden. In Hebrew thought this was the Axis Mundi (the meeting point of heaven, earth and the netherworld). Near the base of the sacred hills flowed the paradisiacal spring, Gihon (1 Kings 1:33, 38, 45). Here in Jerusalem the Hebrews established YHWH's Temple. At the northern frontier of the Garden were the great Euphrates and Tigris (Hiddekel) Rivers, between which it is estimated that nearly one million Hebrews maintained their post-exilic settlement. The Genesis account preserved the assumption that this area, where the Tower of Babel had been located, marked the entrance to heaven (Genesis 11:1-9). The legendary river, Pishon, probably identified as the Nile, flowed through Egypt at the southern extremity of Eden.⁶ In the middle of the Nile, at the border between Egypt and Nubia (Sudan), was situated Elephantine Island. Egyptian myth located the entrance to Hades on the bed of the river immediately

south of this island.⁷ During Achaemenid rule the Hebrews established mercenary colonies along the Nile from the delta to Elephantine Island itself, where they built a temple. It was thus that the Hebrews quietly occupied and guarded not only the center of Paradise but also its northern and southern frontiers! Even the Macedonian overthrow of the Achaemenid Empire failed to thwart the Hebrews' dream of Paradise and their ultimate return to the "Beginning" of history.⁸

Alexander the Great's Era (332-323 BCE)

Political Developments. After Alexander the Great of Macedonia had defeated the Persian emperor, Darius III, at the Battle of Issus (near Iskenderun, Turkey) in 333 BCE, the Macedonians besieged and conquered Tyre. They then proceeded down the coast and besieged Gaza. Within two months Alexander and his forces advanced to Egypt and peacefully gained the entire country. Alexander and his armies then turned northward to again confront Darius III in the east. As soon as Darius had been defeated, Alexander is reputed to have deliberately turned against Zoroastrian monotheism and massacred the Zoroastrian priests (magi). He also destroyed their temples and burned the capital, Persepolis, to the ground. Alexander had a reason for this madness against Zoroastrian monotheism. ". . . [I]n the last year before his death [Alexander] demanded of the Greeks that they render him honor as a god, and his divinity was actually recognized by several Greek cities, including Athens. After his death Alexander was recognized as a god in all the lands of the Diadochi, and an official cult was set up in his honor at various places in Asia and Egypt."⁹ For this cult to divinize Alexander was to implicitly introduce the concept of the deification of mankind into the Hellenistic world.

Religious Developments.

Earlier, on his return from Egypt, Alexander is reputed to have met the Hebrew high priest, Jaddua. Alexander then acted to terminate the dual governance of Judah under a secular satrap and a sacred priesthood, making the high priest, Jaddua, the sole ruler of Judah. Alexander also granted Judah the continued right to exist as a theocracy under its ancestral Mosaic laws.

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Diadochi (Successors) Era (323-301 BCE)

Political Developments. Upon the death of Alexander the Great at the age of 33, imperial rulership was contested by his generals. For over two decades the vast empire was involved in military struggles. As a result, the people of Judah suffered greatly. The country was successively ruled by Laomedon (323- BCE), Ptolemy I (320- BCE), Antigonus (and son, Demetrius) (315- BCE), Ptolemy I again (312- BCE), and Antigonus again (311-302 BCE).

Religious Developments. Throughout the Diadochi period Onias I was apparently Judah's high priest and the only representative between the people and the king(s). There was no satrap or governor.

Ptolemaic Era (301-198 BCE)¹⁰

Political Developments. In 301 BCE Judah was conquered by Ptolemy I of Egypt and remained in the Ptolemaic kingdom for over a century. During this period the Greek population, military colonies, and cities, called *poleis*, increased greatly in number and significance. Judah was governed throughout the Ptolemaic era by the hereditary Zadokite high priests — Simeon I, Eleazar, Manasseh, Onias II and Simeon II.¹¹ It is particularly interesting that Onias II and Areus, king of Sparta, in Greece, entered into correspondence about the year 270 BCE. “According to 1 Maccabees (12:5-23) and Josephus, a bond was made between the citizens of Jerusalem and the people of Sparta, who saw themselves as descendants of Abraham and who sought to forge an alliance with Jerusalem.”¹²

Religious Developments. Greek (Hellenistic) religious and political culture and language made significant inroads only among the aristocratic Jews — priests, *Gerousia* (Council of Elders) and other leaders. The high priests presided over the *Gerousia*. They also had responsibility for the Temple, the security of Jerusalem, and the provision of its regular water supply. The ancestral laws, defined by the laws of Moses (the Pentateuch — Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), were recognized as the constitution of the entire country. The theocracy thus remained intact.

Meanwhile, the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into the Greek Septuagint (“Seventy Elders”) version at Alexandria, Egypt (ca. 282-246 BCE). According to tradition, Ptolemy II Philadelphus and Eleazar the high priest authorized this work particularly for the use of Jews in the Diaspora. Soon thereafter, the books of Ecclesiastes (250 BCE) and Esther (200 BCE) were incorporated into the Hebrew Scriptures and later canonized.

Seleucid Era (198-152 BCE)¹³

Political Developments. As tensions between Syria and Egypt intensified, the Jews in Jerusalem began to take sides. And since the Seleucids also governed Babylon, where a large proportion of Diaspora Jews continued to live, there was increasing support for the Syrian Seleucid dynasty. After several defeats, the Syrian king, Antiochus III the Great

(223-187 BCE), gained the victory in 198 BCE over Ptolemy V Epiphanes of Egypt and took control of Palestine. Because of the support he had received from Jerusalem, Antiochus III promised the Jews that they would always have the right to live under their ancestral laws and to practice the religion of their fathers. He further granted the Jews tax reductions and certain tax exemptions. He also provided an annual subsidy for offerings and forbade the Gentiles from entering the Temple.

However, 10 years later (188 BCE), after his defeat by the Romans and the peace treaty of Apamea, Antiochus III faced a political and financial crisis.

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Because of the heavy tribute demanded by Rome, Antiochus III began looking for treasures in temples — including the Temple in Jerusalem. His successor, Seleucus IV, proceeded to plunder the Temple treasuries. Although not a direct attack on the Jewish religion, this plunder launched the conflict between the Jews and the Seleucid kingdom.

At the same time, the Jewish factions continued to compete for influence in Jerusalem. Among the priestly families, pro-Egyptian sympathizers disputed with their pro-Syrian brethren. Meanwhile, there was an ongoing process of Hellenization — the process of adopting Greek cultural patterns. This became an increasingly important factor in the politics of Jerusalem. The leading priestly families, into which the aristocratic family of the Tobiads had intermarried, were largely Hellenized and were involved in heavy financial schemes that fueled rivalries over the priestly offices in Jerusalem.¹⁴

One vehicle of Hellenization was the proliferation of Greek *poleis* (plural of *polis*, the Greek word for city). The supreme concept of the *polis* was the explicit union of political and religious institutions. Thus, the Greek *polis* introduced the social organizing principle of “citizens” (qualified, free males) and their responsibility to participate in the religio-political life of the city. This included participation in the city’s cults, since the proper care of the gods was thought to ensure the future prosperity of the community. In addition, the *polis* introduced new cultural patterns to the Jewish world. These included formal education in the *gymnasium* in secular subjects, public nudity in athletic games, attendance at Greek theaters, the prominence of cultic clubs, and a host of other practices that were more or less offensive to Jewish sensibilities. The effect of the *polis* was to abolish the ancestral laws as the legal foundation of Jewish political and social life.

Nevertheless, fear on the part of conservative Jews that Hellenism might overwhelm Jerusalem does not seem to have sparked the internal civil conflicts that eventually erupted. Rather, these conflicts were initiated by the growing tension between the rival pro-Syrian and pro-Egyptian

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Hellenistic factions. After the death of Simeon II, his son, Onias III, became high priest. Soon a dispute arose between Onias III, of the Zadokite priestly family, and another Simeon, who was a member of the Bilgah priestly family and also head of the Temple. Simeon demanded the post of commissioner, with control over the market, the price of goods, and employment. In reality, this would have given Simeon authority over the city. When Onias III refused this demand, Simeon told the Seleucid officials that the Temple was filled with vast treasures. Heliodorus, the Syrian chancellor, was therefore sent to remove these treasures. However, he not only failed to do so but was forced to leave Jerusalem. The Syrian king, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, was furious with Onias III for frustrating Heliodorus’ assignment. In this situation Onias III’s brother, Joshua, promised Antiochus IV a very large sum of money in return for appointment to the high priesthood (175 BCE). As a result, Onias III was summoned to appear before Antiochus in Antioch, at which time Onias III was replaced as high priest by his brother, Joshua. Although Onias III was given refuge in Daphne, near Antioch, he was later

assassinated. Deprived of his right to the priesthood, Onias III's son, Onias IV, went to Egypt to serve the Ptolemaic king as a mercenary commander. For his service he received a land grant from the king and built a Jewish temple in Leontopolis, Egypt.

Once Joshua was installed as high priest, he took the Hellenized name of Jason. As the new high priest, Jason was a true Hellenist. He received permission from Antiochus IV Epiphanes to reconstitute the city of Jerusalem as a Greek *polis* under the new name, "Antiochia." He also appointed a Greek-style *Gerousia* (Council of Elders), built a *gymnasium* near the Temple mount, and made arrangements to educate Jewish youths as *epheboi* — male youth who underwent initiation rites and undertook civic responsibilities. These features of the Greek *polis* violated Jewish traditions and sowed the seeds of further internal strife within the community.

Meanwhile, Jason the high priest welcomed Antiochus IV Epiphanes to Jerusalem. Just three years later, because of internal strife, Jason sent Menelaus — a non-Zadokite priest and brother of Simeon of the Bilgah family — to Antiochus IV as an ambassador. However, Menelaus coveted the high priesthood for himself and bribed

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Antiochus so that he could receive this office, whereupon Antiochus deposed Jason from the high priesthood (172 BCE). Menelaus, his replacement, had utter contempt for the people's sacrifices. To many Jews the illegitimate high priest, Menelaus, was a far greater evil than Hellenization of the city. This backlash involved a conservative party called the Hasidim ("pious ones"), which opposed the aristocracy in Jerusalem. The Hasidim largely represented the scribes who interpreted the Mosaic Law and formed the Oral Torah. It is believed that they had been formally constituted as a party during the high priesthood of Simeon II.

Because of constant and costly wars between the dominant powers, Syrian military spending became the greatest burden on the empire. The resulting financial crisis, along with a critical military humiliation for Antiochus IV Epiphanes, added fuel and the final spark to the tinder that enflamed all Palestine in revolution. In desperation Antiochus turned again to the temple treasuries of important cult sites to finance his campaigns. With the help of Menelaus, this included the Temple in Jerusalem. In 168 BCE Antiochus IV launched another campaign against Egypt, but this time he was met at the border by a Roman envoy who had come to the aid of the Ptolemaic king. The envoy, Popillius Laenas, forced Antiochus IV to abandon his plans with the simple threat of Roman intervention, expressed as the will of the Roman Senate. Soon, fallacious rumors of Antiochus' death spread through Judea. Upon hearing these rumors, Jason, the exiled high priest, returned to Jerusalem, tried to seize power from Menelaus, and instituted a slaughter of the inhabitants.

Soon thereafter, while returning to Syria through Palestine, Antiochus IV Epiphanes sent military forces to secure Jerusalem, whereupon Jason was compelled to leave the city. The Syrian troops proceeded to execute more of the city's inhabitants, expelled many others, and imported colonists — largely soldiers and their families — to compose the citizen population. In reaction to the

continuing civil unrest, Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the Jerusalem Temple and established it as a cult of Zeus Akraios (“of the height,” possibly meaning the citadel of the Acra) (167 BCE).¹⁵ The “laws of the fathers” (i.e., the Jewish laws of Moses) were removed, and the practice of Judaism, including Sabbath observance, was essentially outlawed within the territory of Jerusalem and Judea. Antiochus introduced the idolatrous worship of Zeus into the precinct of the Temple itself, instituted the eating of pork as a test of one’s loyalty to the Syrian king, and prohibited the practice of circumcision on pain of death. It is believed that Menelaus was largely responsible for these desecrations and persecutions initiated by Antiochus. After Antiochus Epiphanes left Jerusalem, however, the Jewish conservatives again took control of the city and jailed Menelaus in the Acra. This action signaled the beginning of the ensuing revolt.

There has been a persistent question about whether the Jewish revolt against the Syrians was a response to unprovoked religious persecution by Antiochus IV Epiphanes or whether the revolt was the culmination of an intensifying interrelationship of both internal and external events. The fact is that Antiochus IV had never before persecuted an ethnic religion for any

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reason. Nevertheless, over time Antiochus came to believe that the most effective means to quell the Jewish revolt was to outlaw the practice of Judaism and to end the Temple worship of YHWH. Thus, it appears that Antiochus used the repression of Judaism as a means to end the rebellion by religiously conservative Jews. His actions, therefore, were a response to civil unrest in Judea.

Not surprisingly, the Hasidim violently opposed the pagan practices instituted by the Hellenizers with the help of Antiochus. These practices defiled the Temple, Jerusalem and all Judea. Yet because they refused to fight on the Sabbath, the Hasidim were repeatedly defeated. However, when the Syrians extended their prohibitions to the mountain villages of Judea, they were confronted in Modin by the priestly family of Mattathias the Hasmonean. Mattathias and his five sons — Judah, Simon, Johanan, Eleazar and Jonathan — were willing to fight on the Sabbath and launched a successful revolt against the Syrians (167 BCE). Not only did Mattathias refuse to abide by the rules of the Syrians; he also actively punished Jews who refused to circumcise their sons or otherwise tried to comply with the king’s demands. Mattathias was followed by his most famous son, Judah Maccabeus (the “Hammer”). The Hasidim allied themselves with Judah in their common fight against the forces of Antiochus IV.

While Judah gathered the Hasidim around him in the struggle, the Hellenized Jewish aristocracy in Jerusalem preferred to find an accommodation with the Syrians in the hope of a peaceful co-existence with Hellenic civilization. This meant that the revolt against the Syrians was also a war of Jews against Jews.

The fighting continued until 164 BCE, when on 25 Kislev (December) Judah and his troops liberated the Jerusalem Temple from the Syrians and began the process of cleansing it from defilement. The Jewish calendar celebrates this cleansing and re-founding of the Temple by Judah in the festival of Hanukkah. Even though Judah drove the Syrians out of the Temple and restored Jewish

worship there, he was unable to drive the enemy out of the Acra fortress. So the war continued. Antiochus was unable to make a full commitment to the war in Palestine because he faced much more serious threats in the eastern portion of his empire. In fact, it was there that Antiochus IV Epiphanes died in battle. Meanwhile, Judah reached an agreement with the Syrians that officially returned the Temple to Jewish control (2 Maccabees 11:22-26). Antiochus V, having succeeded his father, was apparently willing to reach a compromise and to rescind his father's decrees.

Under Antiochus V the Temple and its worship were restored. The Jews were granted full religious freedom and all other privileges. The high priest, Menelaus, was executed and replaced by Alcimus, a true Zadokite (162 BCE). However, these moves did not settle matters for many Jews. While the Hasidim were content with the outcome and many Jewish rebels quit the fight against the Syrians once the Temple had been purged, Judah Maccabeus believed that Alcimus was too sympathetic to Hellenism. Judah's suspicions were confirmed when Alcimus retained Syrian troops under the command of Bacchides and had 60 Hasidim arrested and executed. Furthermore, Alcimus subsequently removed the wall in the Temple that barred non-Jews from entering.

Meanwhile, the Maccabees sought an alliance with Rome. "Judas [Judah] chose Eupolemus, the son of John, the son of Accos, and Jason, the son of Eleazer, and sent them to Rome to make a league of amity and confederacy with them, and that they should take the yoke from them, when they saw that the kingdom of the Greeks did keep Israel in bondage" (1 Maccabees 8:17-32). Jewish political independence from Syria eventually arrived, but only as Syria became so embroiled in other, more pressing concerns that it had to come to an agreement with the Hasmoneans in order to turn its full attention elsewhere.

After the death of Judah Maccabeus in battle, his brother, Jonathan, took command of the Jewish forces. When Alcimus the high priest died (160/159 BCE), the priestly office was left vacant for over seven years. Nevertheless, by 157 BCE the Jews in Jerusalem were able to freely exercise their religion.

Religious Developments. Throughout the period of Hellenistic domination, and particularly during the later Seleucid era, the Jews adopted a number of Hellenistic religious beliefs and practices. These developments included:

1. The redefinition of God's transcendence as intangible, incorporeal and unapproachable. This redefinition excluded YHWH's promised active, historical presence as the Human One but retained the concept of YHWH as the God of the entire world.

2. The gradual transition from the hereditary deification of kings, priests and prophets to the acquired divinization of educated and well-to-do individuals through the immanent indwelling of deity. This development, influenced by Hellenistic democracy, was promoted by the concept that both an immortal soul and a mortal body constituted the individual. Depending upon obedience or

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disobedience to Mosaic law, the soul was destined for either eternal salvation or eternal damnation. After death of the fleshly body, the “saved” soul would continue to exist in the celestial sphere.

3. The substitution of autocratic power structures for the earthly presence of God. This led to the vast extension of the Temple and its services to include:

- a. Economics, with responsibility for banking, deposits, loans and the collection of taxes delegated to tax-collectors. In effect, the Temple became the Federal Reserve System of Judaism.
- b. Education, with the inclusion of a Greek *gymnasium* on an extension of the Temple mount.
- c. Politics, with the formation of a conference center on the Temple mount for the meeting of the Council of Elders (*Gerousia*), which later became known as the Sanhedrin.
- d. A military fortress, with the establishment of the Acra by Antiochus IV in order to protect the Hellenizers.¹⁶

4. The development of sacred documents to communicate the divine laws and instructions, with the final inclusion of the apocalyptic treatise of Daniel.¹⁷ In addition, there were:

- a. The introduction of apocryphal [non-canonical] writings such as Ecclesiasticus and the Book of Jubilees.¹⁸
- b. The emergence of apocalyptic, with “descriptions of heavenly journeys, angelic revelations of cosmic secrets to man, visions of the end of days, and the final judgment to be meted out by God on the world.”¹⁹ “Much Jewish apocalyptic literature conveys a picture in which the Jews violently opposed the imposition of Hellenistic culture. It is ironic that a positive Greek influence is seen in the changing Jewish religious beliefs.”²⁰
- c. The addition of the Oral Torah as the interpretation of the written Torah by the scribal group known as the Hasidim (“pious ones”).

Conclusion

Throughout the Hellenistic era the Jews opposed Hellenistic political domination. At the same time, the theocratic power of the high priesthood was gradually eroded by a number of developments. Debilitating issues included tensions within the Zadokite priestly family itself as well as conflicts between the Zadoks and other priestly families (e.g., Bilgah), between pro-Syrian and pro-Egyptian Hellenists, and between Jews of the Diaspora, in both Egypt and Syria, who variously supported the Temple. In addition, other official developments compromised the high-priestly office:

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1. The high priest had to report to the *Gerousia* (Council of Elders).

2. Financial authority was removed from high-priestly responsibility and given to tax-collectors.

3. The scribal class known as the Hasidim (“pious ones”) interpreted the Torah, thus diluting the power of the priesthood.

In this cultural cauldron the high priests sought the forceful restoration of their power by uniting religious and political functions in the form of the Greek *polis*. This quickly led to a showdown between the Hellenists and the conservative Jews. The conservative Hasidim believed that the priestly theocracy represented the authoritative human manifestation of God, while liberal Hellenistic Jews hoped that the Greek *polis* (politics), with its Hellenistic philosophy, would become the authoritative human manifestation of God. Unfortunately, both parties were deeply confused. Both envisioned manifestations portended the attempted exercise of autonomous human power over Creation rather than acceptance of the authoritative human presence of YHWH.

Beyond the extensive political and cultural transitions that occurred in Judaism during the Hellenistic era, there was a profound religious transition that superseded the translation and additions to the Scriptures, the changes in the priesthood, and the evolving worship in the synagogue. This most fundamental religious shift occurred in the Hebraic understanding of the human “soul.” Whereas early Judaism believed that the human person *was* a “soul” (Genesis 2:7), post-exilic Judaism adopted the Zoroastrian belief that human beings *possessed* a created soul (*menog*) that was later embodied in a mortal (*getik*) state. Then, under Hellenistic theology, the “soul” came to be regarded as uncreated and immortal, with the potential for ultimate deification after departure from the body at death. This change in belief laid the foundation for the later emergence of sectarian Judaism. Only the coming of the truly Human One would authoritatively anticipate and confront the implications of this development.

Notes and References

1. This essay was largely drawn and verified from the following sources: “The History of the Jews from Babylon to the Revolt against Syria” (Oxford, OH: Department of Comparative Religion, Miami University, 2000), at www.muohio.edu/religion/material/103/Macchist.htm; Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1959/1999), p. 563; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, CD-ROM ed. (1997); D. Lee I. Levine, “The Age of Hellenism,” in Hershel Shanks, ed., *Ancient Israel: From Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple* (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1999); Katie Maguire, Hellenism and the Jewish Afterlife, at classes.maxwell.syr.edu/his301-001/hellenistic_effects_on_judaic_li.htm [This reference documents the profound changes that occurred in Hebrew thinking during the Hellenistic era.]; “Bible Chronology,” at www.hooper-home.net/CHRONO/From3701.htm#anchor66843, and “Chronology BC 600-1,” at www.kfu.com/~pharvey/chronology600-1bce [These references verify the chronology of the Hellenistic era.]. All chronological dates are B.C.E. (Before the Common Era).
2. Teispes of Parsa, son of Achaemenes; then Cyrus I of south Parsa; later, Cambyses I (600-559 BCE), who married the Median princess, Mandane, thus uniting the kingdoms of Media and Persia, and their son, Cyrus II the Great, who defeated his father-in-law, Astyages, king of Media (550 BCE). See “The Achaemenid Empire,” at members.ozemail.com.au/~ancientpersia/history.html.

3. The Achaemenid successors of Cyrus II the Great (559-530 BCE) were Cambyses II (530-522 BCE), Smerdis (Bardia) (522 BCE), Darius I the Great (522-486 BCE), Xerxes I (485-465 BCE), Artaxerxes I (Makrocheir) (465-424 BCE), Xerxes II (424 BCE), Sogdianus (423 BCE), Darius II (Nothus) (423-404 BCE), Artaxerxes II (Mnemon) (404-359 BCE), Artaxerxes III (Ochus) (358-338 BCE), Artaxerxes IV (Arses) (338-336 BCE), Darius III (Codomannus) (336-330 BCE), Artaxerxes V (Bessus) (330-329 BCE). See "Achaemenid Dynasty Kings," at ancienthistory.about.com/library/bl/bl_time_persianempirekings.htm; see also "Achaemenids," at www.livius.org/aa-ac/achaemenians/achaemenians.html.
4. Jeshua (Joshua), son of Jehozadak (ca. 530 BCE); then Joiakim, Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan (Jonathon) and Jaddua (ca. 330 BCE). It is further known that Johanan "murdered his brother Joshua in the Temple (probably at the beginning of the fourth century B.C.E.). Bagohi [governor of the Persian satrapy Yhud (Judea)] forced his way into the Temple, declaring to the priests who opposed his entry (since he was a Gentile) that his defilement of the Temple was less than that of a person guilty of fratricide" (see *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, CD-ROM ed. [1997], s.v. Abraham Schalit, "Bagohi [also: Bagoas (bib. fig.)]").
5. See Abraham Malamat, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, CD-ROM ed. (1997), s.v. "Mari."
6. The river, Pishon, is identified with the land of Havilah (Genesis 2:11). In Genesis 10:7 Havilah is listed as one of the sons of Cush, who was a son of Ham. Not surprisingly, speculation on the location of the river has often focused on Egypt and Ethiopia and, therefore, the Nile River. See *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, CD-ROM ed. (1997), s.v. Mayer Irwin Gruber, "Havilah."
7. The huge serpent god, Apophis/Apep, lived in the bed of the Nile at the opening to Hades. Apophis was the demon enemy of the sun god, Ra.
8. While the Greeks primarily thought in spatial terms and focused on "reflection" rather than action, the Hebrews primarily thought in temporal (time) terms and focused on action. See Thorleif Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1960). Furthermore, although they thought in linear time like the Persian Zoroastrians, the Hebrews believed that they were moving back to the future. This Hebraic concept emerged from the Hebrews' conviction that the appearance of the Messiah would be accompanied by their return to the Garden of Eden. In fact, the Hebrew expression "end of days" was an explicit metaphor for the coming of the Messiah: ". . . [T]he Torah contains several references to 'the End of Days' (*achareet ha-yameem*), which is the time of the moshiach; thus, the concept of moshiach was known in the most ancient times" ("Moshiach: The Messiah," at www.jewfaq.org/moshiach.htm). Even in contemporary Jewish thought the concept of absolute time differs from the traditional view that time moves forward from beginning to end. Thus, ". . . [U]sing Moshe Carmeli's equations, cosmological time is read backwards, approaching the initial moment of Creation" (see Herman Branover and Ruvin Ferber, "The Concept of Absolute Time in Science and Jewish Thought," at www.ldolphin.org/jtime.html).
9. Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1959/1999), p. 11.
10. The Ptolemaic kings of Egypt in the Hellenistic era were Ptolemy I Soter (305- BCE), Ptolemy II Philadelphus (283- BCE), Ptolemy III Euergetes (246- BCE), Ptolemy IV Philopator (221- BCE), Ptolemy V Epiphanes (203- BCE), Ptolemy VI Philometer (181-145 BCE).
11. The high priests in the Hellenistic era were Jaddua (350- BCE), Onias I (323- BCE), Simeon I (?), Eleazar (brother of Simeon I) (292- BCE), Manasseh (uncle of Simeon I) (251- BCE), Onias II (son of Simeon I) (240- BCE), Simeon II (son of Johanan) (226- BCE), Onias III (198- BCE), Jason (Joshua) (175- BCE), Menelaus (172- BCE), Alcimus (162-160 BCE), (the high priesthood was vacant for about 7 years), Jonathan the Hasmonean (153-143 BCE).
12. Levine, "Age of Hellenism," p. 232.
13. The Seleucid emperors in this era were Antiochus III the Great (223- BCE), Seleucus IV Philopator (son of Antiochus III) (187- BCE), Antiochus IV Epiphanes (son of Antiochus III) (175- BCE), Antiochus V Eupator (son of Antiochus IV) (164- BCE), Demetrius I Soter (son of Seleucus IV) (162- BCE), Alexander Balas (150-145 BCE).
14. The Tobiads were an aristocratic family in Judea from the time of Nehemiah (445 BCE) to the Hasmonean revolt (167 BCE). Their main center was in Ammon (Transjordan). Linked by marriage to the Zadokite priesthood, they were the chief proponents of assimilation to Greek culture and identity and exercised a decisive influence on social, economic and political developments.

15. The action of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in placing a statue of Zeus in the Temple must be seen from his own Hellenistic perspective. Thus, “. . . [M]any Greeks, not really understanding Jewish monotheism, saw Jews as a people especially devoted to Zeus, the king and father-figure of the gods” (Stephen M. Wylen, *The Jews in the Time of Jesus: An Introduction* [New York: Paulist Press, 1996], p. 38). Antiochus IV, therefore, may have simply tried to please the Jews by filling the empty place in the Holy of Holies with the supreme god, Zeus.
16. “. . . [T]he Seleucid ruler of Syria built the Akra, a fortress intended to control the population of Jerusalem. It adjoined the southern side of the Temple platform. . . . The Hasmoneans extended the platform along the southern end of the Temple Mount in 141 B.C., building atop the dismantled Akra” (Leen and Kathleen Ritmeyer, *Secrets of Jerusalem’s Temple Mount* [Washington, D.C.: Biblical Archeology Society, 1998], pp. 65, 66).
17. There has been a long controversy over the origin and dating of the book of Daniel. Christian scholars generally trace its authorship to the Jewish exile in Babylonian times (ca. 545-535 BCE), while Jewish scholars regard the book of Daniel as a pseudo-epigraphic work dating to Maccabean and Antiochean times (ca. 168-165 BCE). In his treatise entitled *The Origins of the Bible: Rethinking Canon History*, the Mennonite scholar, John W. Miller, helps to resolve this debate. He records that, during the Antiochean persecution, any Jew who was discovered possessing and reading a biblical book was executed. In this crisis situation the Jews secretly dispersed the books found in Nehemiah’s library. The book of Daniel was among the archival manuscripts removed from the library. Under these circumstances Daniel was added to the canonical corpus of Law, Prophets and Writings. However, Miller further states that Daniel was not merely discovered and added to the canon at this time. “That the book of Daniel was *compiled* and added to this library at about this time is also indicated by Daniel’s absence from the list of ‘illustrious men’ in Sirach’s survey of biblical history in Sirach 44-49, something hard to imagine were Daniel part of this library then already (c. 180 BCE)” (see John W. Miller, *The Origins of the Bible: Rethinking Canon History* [New York: Paulist Press, 1994], pp. 155-157, 215 [italics supplied]).
 Since such well-known texts as the book of Daniel and the books of Enoch are Jewish apocalyptic documents, it also should be noted that apocalyptic was a broad movement that did not develop and flourish within Judaism until the second century BCE. “Apocalyptic,” meaning “uncovering” or “unveiling,” claimed that God had revealed to the writer the secrets of the imminent end of the world. Of particular significance to this movement was the sect called “Pharisees” (*Perushim* = separate), who emerged with sectarian Judaism from about the middle of the second century BCE. In adopting Zoroastrian beliefs, the Pharisees were convinced that the millennial appearance of a world savior, a final battle between good and evil, and the ultimate judgment were about to occur. This, combined with the absence of the legitimate Davidic kingship, the prophetic office and the Zadokite priesthood, led the Pharisees to author apocalyptic literature. Believers in apocalyptic despaired of events in this world, anticipated its imminent end, and expected a final judgment and restoration by means of a redeemer figure acting by the power of God. See M. Alan Kazlev, “Gnosticism and Apocalyptic,” at www.kheper.net/topics/Gnosticism/Gnosticism_and_Apocalyptic.htm. See also “‘Ye Shall Be As Gods,’” *Outlook* (March/April 2004), section “7. Sectarian Judaism and the Divinization of Mankind.”
18. See Levine, “Age of Hellenism,” p. 236.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Maguire, “Hellenism and the Jewish Afterlife,” p. 1.