

NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY

Biblical Studies 181

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Dates of the class and number of sessions: June 7-30, 1978  
Sixteen (16) sessions

Syllabus included with class.

Course Description:

New Testament history is intended to present an historical overview of the development of the Word of God in the first century. Although the period covered extends from the end of Malachi through the writing of Revelation, the emphasis will center from the birth of Christ until approximately 70 A.D. The course will cover three time periods in sequence--the years preceding the birth of Christ; the years of his lifetime and those years following his death and resurrection in which is included the rise, expansion and subsequent decline of the first century church. New Testament History will present some of the people, places, events and factors involved with and surrounding the writing of the gospels, Acts, the epistles and Revelation.

Course Goals:

1) To chronologically highlight many of the major relevant events that occurred from the closing of the book of Malachi through the writing of the Book of Revelation in regard to the factors (geographical, social, political, cultural, economic, religious, etc.) that influenced times; 2) To develop an awareness and appreciation of the rich historical heritage of the Christian believer so that we can better understand and fulfill our position in the Body of Christ for the outreach of God's Word; 3) To build commitment and believing by showing how God has continually protected His Word and provided for His people even in the midst of adversity and declination in the surrounding social environment.

It is a great joy and privilege to have this opportunity to share with you some of the gems of God's Word dealing with New Testament History. We count it an honor and a responsibility to share God's matchless Word with you, trusting that your heart will burn within you as we open up new doors of understanding on this subject.

It is with heartfelt thanks we wish to show our appreciation to Dr. Wierwille, the Board of Trustees and the staff of The Way College of Emporia for allowing us this privilege to share our lives and God's Word with you. We are here to serve you. God bless you!

George Hendley and Steve Strzepek

## NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY

### Introduction

History is "His-Story"--the Bible is our "Historical Heritage."

The Bible is all history (His-Story).

Genesis 3:15

Revelation 22:13-21

We are all history majors. Not only do we study history, but we are also making history. Only a few names make the history book(s). Yet far many more people make history.

History recalls those who do things first and those who do things best.

Genesis 3 - Adam and Eve

Genesis 6 - Noah

Numbers 12:3 - Moses

Acts 13:22 - David

Acts 2:4ff - Peter and the eleven

Acts 1:1ff - Jesus Christ

We are also history teachers. We need to know our material.

Acts 2:14-36 - Peter

Acts 3:11-26 - Peter

Acts 7:1ff - Stephen

Acts 13:16-42 Paul

The greatest history teacher of all time was Jesus Christ!

Luke 24:13ff

"How proud people are of their physical ancestry; how little we have been aware of our spiritual ancestry." (Dr. Wierwille)

Our heritage as believers supersedes what we are in the flesh.

Spirit is thicker than blood!

Israel was called in Jacob. Abraham is the father of all believers.

Our heritage goes beyond the children of Israel.

Ephesians 1:4

II Thessalonians 2:13

II Timothy 1:9

Romans 8:29

We are God's masterpiece! This is the heritage we should recognize.

Ephesians 2:10

We are shaping history as we mold our minds from the Word of God.

The master mold was cast from God and stands throughout all eternity.

Romans 12:2

History is happening now!

## Political Setting of the New Testament

### I. Israel's Old Testament Political History--Stephen's address in Acts 7:2ff; Paul's first recorded sermon in Acts 13:16ff

- A. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob--Palestine
- B. Joseph in Egypt and his sons until Moses
- C. Exodus from Egypt under Moses and Aaron
- D. Joshua entered Promised Land
- E. Israel ruled by Judges; Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, Eli, Samuel
- F. Israel ruled by Kings; Saul, David, Solomon
- G. Kingdom Divided--Israel/Judah
- H. Fall of Israel to Assyria--721 B.C.
- I. Babylonian Captivity of Judah--588 B.C.
  - 1. Babylonian Rule--(588-536 B.C.) Psalms 137; Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel 1:1,2; 2:1-49
- J. Persian overthrow of Babylon
  - 1. Persian Rule--(536-330 B.C.) Cyrus overthrew Babylon and allowed Jews to return to rebuild the temple. Ezra 2:1, 64-70; 3:1-13; Temple completed in 516 B.C.; In 458 B.C. Ezra came to Jerusalem and in 445 Nehemiah came and rebuilt walls of Jerusalem. (450-430 or 374 Malachi prophesies); Matthew 1:1-17

### II. Israel's Inter-Testamental Political History--Apocrypha

- A. Greek Rule--(330-321 B.C.) Alexander the Great destroyed the Persian Empire and ruled Jerusalem for nine years.
- B. Ptolemaic Rule--(321-198 B.C.) Ptolemy, one of Alexander's four top generals took Egypt and then annexed the Palestine area within it; Historically quiet period for Israel; In 285 B.C. the Old Testament was translated into the Greek by Jewish elders at Alexandria, called the Septuagint; Jewish priests ruled, while subject to Egyptian overlords.
- C. Seleucid Rule--(198-166 B.C.) The Syrian Dynasty started by Seleucus was not popular among the people; the empire reached from Greece to India; the successor to Seleucus, Antiochus Epiphanes strongly oppressed the Jews; tried to force Greek culture on the Jewish people and this led to the revolt in 168 B.C.
- D. Maccabean Independence--(166-142 B.C.) After 2 years of revolution led by the priest Mattathias and his five sons, especially Judas Maccabeus, the Jews gained independence. The temple was cleansed and rededicated and a feast was established to commemorate the occasion. Two parties

formed after the revolution: (1) Maccabean Priest Princes (aimed at political power) later called Sadducees; (2) Hasideans who supported Judas Maccabeus down to the rededication of the temple (aimed only at religious freedom) later called Pharisees.

- E. Hasmonean Rule--(142-37 B.C.) Simon, one of Mattathias' sons, was instated as high priest for life. He was murdered by Ptolemy, his son-in-law in 135 B.C. Simon's son, John Hyrcanus took over before Ptolemy could move in to the ruling position. Hyrcanus conquered Idumea on the south and Samaria on the north. He became high priest and head of state and the founder of the Hasmonean dynasty. There followed much inner dissension and family warring until Pompey conquered Jerusalem in 63 B.C. and reinstated Hyrcanus II as king. His minister, Antipater appointed his son Herod, as prefect of Galilee. After a short rule of Jerusalem by the Parthians led by Antigonus, Herod was able to regain the rulership of Jerusalem and eventually of all of Palestine with the help of the Roman government and their power.

### III. Israel's New Testament Political History--rule of the Herodians and Roman Procurators and the Emperors

- A. Herod the Great--(37-4 B.C.) In 20 B.C. proposed the rebuilding of the temple which began in 18 B.C. and completed in A.D. 65. Destroyed by Titus in A.D. 70. Herod died after a fearful reign in March, 4 B.C.; Matthew 2:16-19; Luke 1:5
- B. Herod's Sons--Palestine divided among them
1. Archelaus--(4 B.C.-A.D. 6) Judea and Samaria; Matthew 2:22
  2. Antipas--(4 B.C.-A.D. 39) that "fox"; Galilee and Perea; Luke 3:1; 13:32
  3. Philip--(4 B.C.-A.D. 33) Tetrarchy, Iturea, etc.; Luke 3:1
- C. Roman Procurators--(A.D. 6-37) Over Judea and Samaria; the fifth one was Pontius Pilate (A.D. 25-35)
- D. Herod's Grandson--Agrippa I; Acts 12:11-19; died in A.D. 44
1. Tetrarchy of Philip--(A.D. 37-44)
  2. Galilee and Perea--(A.D. 39-44)
  3. Judea and Samaria--(A.D. 41-44)
- E. Roman Procurators--(A.D. 44-?) Felix and Festus
- F. Agrippa II--(A.D. 53-101) given Philip's and Lysanias' tetrachies and parts of Galilee and Perea; Acts 25:13 ff

## G. Roman Emperors--

1. Augustus--(31 B.C.-A.D. 14) Roman rule was established and he became the princeps or first citizen of the land. Died in A.D. 14
2. Tiberius--(A.D. 14-37) adopted son of Augustus was appointed upon the death of Augustus. Became very suspicious and cruel in his latter rule. Died in A.D. 37
3. Caligula--(A.D. 37-41) known as "little boots" and was appointed by the Senate at the death of Tiberius. Ruthless in his rule and careless in his expenditures. Killed in A.D. 41 by an imperial guard.
4. Claudius--(A.D. 41-54) Selected by the praetorian guard and a good ruler. Died in A.D. 54.
5. Nero--(A.D. 54-68) He succeeded his father by adoption upon his death. Under his reign Christians were persecuted and killed (possibly Peter and Paul). Was killed while fleeing from Rome by one of his own freedmen in A.D. 68.
6. Galba--(A.D. 68)--killed by praetorian guards
7. Otho--(A.D. 69)--killed in battle
8. Vitellius--(A.D. 69)--killed by Vespasians army
9. Vespasian--(A.D. 69-79)--built the Colosseum; died in A.D. 79 and was the first of the Flavian dynasty
10. Titus--(A.D. 79-81)--very popular emperor; died in A.D. 81
11. Domitian--(A.D. 81-96)--the Senate gave the imperial power to the younger brother of Titus, Domitian who was a thorough autocrat. Assassinated by order of his family in A.D. 96
12. Nerva--(A.D. 96-98)--selected by the Senate; died in A.D. 98
13. Trojan--(A.D. 98-117)--succeeded Nerva upon his death; died in A.D. 117

## H. Roman Provinces--32 in number; Macedonia, Achaia, Cyprus, Cilicia, etc.

1. Roman Senate--11 Senatorial Provinces; Older peaceful territories each governed by a legate
2. Emperor--21 Imperial Provinces; Newer factious territories each governed by a governor
3. Semi-Independent Kingdoms--governed by kings
  - a. Territories governed by ethnarch or governor
  - b. Districts governed by tetrarchs

## Geographical and Physical Setting of the New Testament

### I. The Area of Palestine--Canaan, Israel, Judea, Palestine, The Land of Promise, The Holy Land

#### A. Divisions (Political)--Five Provinces

1. Galilee--"Galilee of the Gentiles"; Matthew 4:15
2. Samaria--"half-Jews"; John 4:4-42
3. Judea--home of the Jews; Luke 7:17
4. Perea--"beyond" Jordan; Matthew 19:1
5. Tetrarchy of Philip--Iturea, Trachonitis, Gaulanitis, Auranitis, Batanea, Decapolis; Mark 7:31

#### B. Physical Features of the Land in Palestine

1. Sea Coast Plain--by the Mediterranean Sea; Plain of Sharon
2. Shephela--foothills; 300-500 foot high a.s.l.
3. Mountain Region--2,500-3,000 foot high a.s.l.
4. Jordan Valley--below sea level
5. Eastern Table Land--Trans-Jordan; high mountains, more level summits

#### B. Bodies of Water in or around Palestine

1. Jordan River--origin at Mt. Herman, destination is Dead Sea; means "descender"; Mark 1:5,9
2. Lake Merom (Huleh)--Joshua 11:5,6
3. Sea of Galilee--fed by the Jordan River and is largest fresh water body in Palestine; Mark 1:16
  - a. Lake of Gennesaret--Luke 5:1
  - b. Sea of Tiberias--John 6:1
4. Dead Sea--fed by the Jordan River and is the largest inland salt-water body in Palestine; 1,280 foot, b.s.l., 26% salt content;
  - a. Salt Sea--Genesis 14:3
  - b. Lake Asphaltitis
5. Mediterranean Sea (Great) -- borders the entire western coast of Palestine; very few natural harbors on Palestinian coasts
6. Brook Kidron (Cedron)--runs between Mt. Moriah and the Mt. of Olives; John 18:1
7. Pool of Siloam--in Jerusalem; John 9:1ff
8. Pool of Bethesda--in Jerusalem; John 5:2

D. Cities and Towns of Palestine

1. Galilee--mostly Jews but some Gentiles
  - a. Bethsaida of Galilee--not Bethsaida--Julias in Gaulanitis; home of Andrew, Philip and Peter; John 1:44; 12:21; Matthew 11:21; Mark 6:45; Luke 10:13
  - b. Capernaum--Jesus abode here; now in ruins, as are all the cities that rejected the Lord Jesus Christ; Matthew 4:13; 8:5ff; 11:20-24; 17:24; Luke 4:31; 10:15, etc.
  - c. Cana--first miracle of Jesus Christ performed here; John 2:1,11; 4:46; 21:2
  - d. Chorazin--near Capernaum; Matthew 11:21; Luke 10:13
  - e. Dalmanutha--may be the same as Magdala (Mary Magdalene); compare Matthew 15:39 and Mark 8:10
  - f. Nazareth--Jesus opened his ministry here in his own home town; Luke 4:16ff; John 1:45,46
  - g. Nain--no wall around the city and never has been; Luke 7:11
  - h. Bethlehem--two Bethlehems, one in Galilee and one in Judea; Matthew 2:1; John 7:42
2. Samaria--mixture of Jews-Gentiles; "half-Jews"; John 4:9ff
  - a. Sychar--Jesus didn't baptize; John 4:1-5
  - b. Aenon--near the Jordan River; John 3:23
  - c. Salim--same general location as Aenon; John 3:23
3. Judea--primarily all Jews except for Roman soldiers and a few other Gentiles; Luke 2:4
  - a. Jerusalem--city of Jewish spiritual life; called the "City of Herod"; Luke 19:28; John 2:13,23; 5:1; 10:22; 11:55; 12:12
  - b. Bethlehem--means "House of Bread"; Matthew 2:1
  - c. Bethany--means "House of Dates"; Jesus stayed here while visiting Jerusalem, in the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus; Matthew 21:17; Mark 11:1,11,12; Luke 10:38ff; 24:50; John 11:1,2
  - d. Bethphage--means "House of Figs"; adjoins Bethany and Jerusalem; Mark 11:1
  - e. Ephraim--John 11:54
  - f. Jericho--parable of "Good Samaritan"; home of Zacchaeus; Matthew 20:29; Mark 10:46; Luke 10:30; 18:35; 19:1

- g. Emmaus--Jesus taught the two disciples on the road to Emmaus; Luke 24:13
  - 4. Perea--on the east side of the Jordan River
    - a. Bethabara--means "House of Preparation"; (Bethany) John 1:28
    - b. Machaerus--fortress near the Dead Sea; supposed to be the site of John the Baptist's imprisonment and death
  - 5. Tetrarchy of Philip--"Tetra" means four, "archy" means king or ruler; Philip was one of Herod's sons
    - a. Caesarea Philippi--also called Paneas after the worship of the god, Pan; Matthew 16:13; Mark 8:27
    - b. Gerasa--(Gadara, Gergesa); there were swine in this area because of the Gentiles; Matthew 8:28; Mark 5:1; Luke 8:16
    - c. Bethsaida-Julias--named after Julia, the daughter of Augustus Caesar; Mark 8:22; Luke 9:10
- II. The Areas Outside of Palestine--All under Roman Rule; included Phoenicia, Syria, Cilicia, Galatia, Cappadocia, Pisidia, Pamphylia, Lycia, Bithynia, Pontus, Asia, Macedonia, Thrace, Moesia, Illyricum, Egypt, Cyrenaica, Libya, Italy, Sicily, Crete, Cyprus and other lesser known kingdoms
- A. Asia Minor
- 1. Phoenicia
    - a. Tyre--Matthew 11:21,22; 15:21-28; Acts 21:3-6
    - b. Sidon--Mark 7:24-31; Luke 6:17; 10:13,14; Acts 12:20; 27:3
  - 2. Syria
    - a. Damascus--Acts 9
    - b. Antioch--Acts 11:26; 13:1; 15:36; 18:22
    - c. Seleucia--Acts 13:4; 14:26??
  - 3. Cilicia
    - a. Tarsus--Acts 21:39
  - 4. Galatia--(Galatian-Phrygia) Acts 16:6; 18:23
    - a. Lystra--Acts 14:6,8,21; II Timothy 3:11
    - b. Derbe--Acts 14:6; 16:1,2; 20:4
    - c. Iconium--Acts 14:1; 19:21; 16:2
    - d. Antioch of Pisidia--Acts 13:14;14:19,21



5. Asia

- a. Ephesus--Acts 18:24ff; 19:35; I Corinthians 15:32
- b. Miletus--Acts 20:15,17
- c. Laodicea--Colossians 2:1; 4:13,15; Revelation 3:14-22
- d. Colosse--Colossians 1:2; 4:9; Philemon 1,10
- e. Troas--Acts 16:8,11; 20:5,6; II Corinthians 2:12
- f. Thyatira--Acts 16:14

B. Europe

1. Macedonia--Acts 16:9,10

- a. Philippi--Acts 16:2; Philippians 1:1; I Thessalonians 2:2
- b. Thessalonica--Acts 17:11,13; I Thessalonians 1:1
- c. Berea--Acts 17:13; 20:4

2. Achaia--Acts 19:21; Romans 15:26; I Thessalonians 1:8

- a. Athens--Acts 17:15ff
- b. Corinth--Acts 18:1ff

3. Italy--Acts 27:1

- a. Rome--Acts 28:14ff

C. Africa

1. Egypt

- a. Alexandria--Acts 18:24; 27:6
- b. Cyrenaica

(1) Cyrene--Mark 15:21; Acts 2:10; 11:20

D. Islands

1. Crete--Titus 1:5,12

- a. Salmone--Acts 27:8
- b. Fair Havens--Acts 27:7
- c. Lasea--Acts 27:8-13

2. Cyprus--Acts 4:36

- a. Salamis--Acts 13:5
- b. Paphos--Acts 13:6,13

3. Melita--(Malta) Acts 28:1ff

4. Patmos--Revelation 1:9

## Religious and Philosophical Setting of the New Testament

### I. Judaism--the worship of Jehovah, the one true God

#### A. The People--Jews (Judeans)

1. Jew--the term Jew came into being around the 1600's; they were really Judeans
2. Hebrew--Aramaic speaking Jew--II Corinthians 11:22; Philippians 3:2-5; cf. Acts 23:6; 22:26-29--Hebrew and Roman citizens
3. Hellenists--Greek speaking Jew; Acts 6:1ff
4. Israelite--indicates one's religious privileges (Jew) II Corinthians 11:22

#### B. The Languages--many people were bi-lingual or even multi-lingual

1. Hebrew--Old Testament used in synagogues and temples
2. Aramaic--Jew's spoken language; different accents
3. Greek--International language used by many, but opposed by Jews (especially Pharisees) Paul spoke Aramaic and Greek
4. Latin--used by Roman officials in Palestine

#### C. The Sects--two main groups, several lesser divisions

1. Pharisees--from parash, "separated"; conservative formalists; largest and most influential of Jewish sects; popular among the people, although they looked down on the common people; majority in the Sanhedrin; they held the "oral law" which was later written in the Mishna (first part of the Talmud), higher than the written law of the Old Testament.
  - a. Opposed to Christ--Matthew 13:55; 15:1-6; Mark 3:1-5; Luke 15:1,2; John 7:15; The Pharisees had been the popular party, but Christ became popular among the common people and opposed their ritualistic and empty traditions and their "oral law." He was not their type or pedigree
  - b. Circumcision Group in Acts--Acts 15:5
  - c. Beliefs--Mark 7:1-13; Acts 23:6-9
  - d. Good Pharisees--Nicodemus, John 3:1ff; 7:50; Joseph of Arimathea, John 19:38ff; Luke 23:50
  - e. Scribes of the Pharisees--Rabbis, teachers, masters; Matthew 16:11-21
  - f. Seven varieties of Pharisees (Talmud)

- (1) "wait-a-little"
- (2) "bruised" or "bleeding"
- (3) "shoulder"
- (4) "hump-backed"
- (5) "ever-reckoning"
- (6) "God-fearing"
- (7) "God-loving"

2. Sadducees--probably from Zadoc; advanced free thinkers; the sophisticated urban class, wealthy land-owners; smaller group, not supported by the masses; Matthew 22:23-46; Acts 4:1,2; They were literalists in interpretation
3. Essenes--a mystical pious group; an intensified form of Pharisaism; some pagan influence evident; they wore white robes to indicate inward purity; located by the Dead Sea and throughout Judea; not mentioned in the New Testament. Qumran was an Essene community
4. Herodians--a minority of Jews who favored and supported the Herodian rule; in opposition to the Pharisees; Matthew 22:16; Mark 3:6; 12:13
5. Zealots--pro-Pharisee, but insisted on war against Rome; instrumental in the Jewish War (A.D. 66-70); founded by Judas the Galilean, who rebelled against Rome in A.D. 6, Acts 5:37; Later a group of them from Egypt known as Sicarii (assassins) gathered, Acts 21:38; Masada was last stronghold of the Zealots; Cf. Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13
6. Proselytes--converted Gentiles to Judaism
  - a. Proselytes of the Gate--uncircumcised, but God-fearing Gentiles; Acts 10:1,2
  - b. Proselytes of Righteousness--circumcised and law-keeping Gentiles

#### D. The Places of Worship and Teaching

1. The Temple--three in number, but built in the same place and for primarily the same reason; God's Dwelling Place
  - a. First--built by Solomon; 1 Kings 6:1; it lasted about 400 years; destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and Jews taken captive; Daniel 1:1,2
  - b. Second--built by Zerubbabel after Babylonian captivity; Ezra 6:2-5
  - c. Third--Herod the Great rebuilt the temple to enlarge and enrich it starting in about 20 B.C.; destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70

- d. High Priest--despite the many foreign rulers who conquered Palestine, the real controlling force in Israel in the minds of the Jews was the priesthood; the High Priest was the chief administrator of internal affairs, executive officer; he entered the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement when he made propitiation for the sins of the people; Aaron's descendants; Mark 15:11; John 18:12-15
  - e. Priests and Levites--20,000 priests assisted by twice as many Levites, in 24 courses, each serving a week in turn were in charge of the Temple and the burning of incense and sacrifices. The Levites were guards, porters, musicians, etc. Two daily public services were held at 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.; Acts 2:6-15; Acts 4:36
2. The Synagogues--Originated during the Babylonian captivity when the Temple was destroyed; could be started wherever ten heads of families lived
- a. Organization of Synagogue
    - (1) Ark for sacred scrolls
    - (2) Chief seats near ark for elders; Mark 12:39
    - (3) Platform and reading desk
    - (4) Areas graded by rank for worshippers--men; women in a gallery where they could worship unseen; Proselytes
  - b. Probable Order of Service
    - (1) Opening--call to prayer (Shema)
    - (2) Prayer--ritual and silent
    - (3) Reading of the law and prophets in Hebrew (Cannon) and then interpreted in Aramaic (Targum). Then a competent person would expound the passages; Luke 4:16-21; Strangers were invited to give a word of exhortation; Acts 13:15
    - (4) Benediction--Blessing or Prayer
- E. The Sacred Year of Jewish Feasts--The Jewish year consisted of twelve lunar months. The religious year began with the first month, in which occurred the Passover, the first great feast of the Jewish cycle. The first five were prescribed by the Mosaic law; the last two were post-exilic in origin.

Nisan (April)	14--Passover: Exodus from Egypt
Iyar (May)	
Sivan (June)	Pentecost (seven weeks (50 days) Passover)
Tammuz (July)	
Ab (August)	
Elul (September)	
Tishri (October)	1 and 2--Feasts of Trumpets--Rosh Hashanah (begins civil year) 10--Day of Atonement 15-21--Feast of Tabernacles
Marchesvan (November)	
Kislev (December)	25--Feasts of Lights (Dedication) Hanukkah
Tebeth (January)	
Shebet (February)	
Adar (March)	14--Feast of Purim

F. The Literature

1. Hebrew Old Testament Canon
2. Aramaic Targums of the Old Testament
3. Talmud--"oral traditions"--Mark 7:3
  - a. Mishna--oral law
  - b. Gemara--interpretation of the oral law
4. Septuagint--LXX--Greek translation of Old Testament
5. Apocrypha--"Hidden or secret"; 17 books written by Hellenistic Jews; not in Old Testament Canon
6. Apocalyptic Literature--a number of anonymous and/or pseudonymous writings characterized by visions and mysticism
7. Later Literature
  - a. Philo--(20 B.C.-A.D. 53) Jewish--Alexandrian philosophical thought; developed harmony between Greek philosophy and the Old Testament; he said all Greek wisdom lay concealed in the Old Testament; he also developed the Logos doctrine
  - b. Josephus --(37-100 A.D.) Jewish priests, a General of Jewish rebels in Galilee; later a protege of roman Emperor Titus; politician, writer, soldier

G. Messianic Hope--The Messiah was to be:

1. A man--Genesis 3:15
2. A Semite, Israelite--Genesis 12:3

3. Of the tribe of Judah--Genesis 49:10
4. Of the house of David--Isaiah 11:1
5. Born in Bethlehem--Micah 5:2
6. Christ was a prophet, a priest, a king, a servant, a man, the son of God, etc., but the Jews of the first century A.D. expected a political deliverer preceded by a series of struggles and signs from heaven; John 2:18-21

## II. Prevailing Philosophies and Pagan Religions

### A. Greek Philosophy--"love of wisdom" (earthly)

1. Epicureans--Acts 17:15-21; skeptics; against all religion; the world arose from chance; no providence; soul is mortal; pleasure is the ultimate goal in life; eat, drink and be merry; most popular in first century; developed by Epicurus (342-270 B.C.). He and his students met in a garden.
2. Stoics--Acts 17:18; materialistic pantheists; fatalists; everything and everyone is part of god; virtue, not pleasure, is the goal of life; freedom from passion; infliction, suicide is a means to the end; developed by Zeno, who lectured in the Painted Porch (stoa) (336-263 B.C.)  
Acts 17:28; 22-27,29-32
3. Academics--John 18:37,38; agnostic; objective truth is impossible to arrive at; questioned the existence of a god, etc.
4. Aristotelians--deists; god set things in motion, but is indifferent to the affairs of men.
5. Platonists--god has imperfections; the soul's eternal home is beyond the senses. Man must escape the material world and search for the good and true; developed by Plato (427-347 B.C.)
6. Eclectics--Plato and other systems merged; they selected the best features of the various philosophies
7. Cynics--return to nature; simple life; Cynic means "like a dog"; they shared and taught their doctrine to common man. Developed the diatribe, literary form using conversational style such as a series of questions and answers--ex. I Corinthians 6:2-19
8. Sceptics--developed by Pyrrho (365-295 B.C.); all judgments are relative; if knowledge rests on experience then there can be no universal standard.
9. Gnostics--"gnosis" means knowledge; salvation through knowledge.
10. Pythagoreans--developed by Pythagoras; mysticism; used numbers symbolically; communicated in secret symbols; vegetarians

**B. Pagan Religions--**Roman religion was more form and ritualism than feeling. A Pontifex Maximus watched over the religious affairs of state. Quite often emperors were the objects of worship.

1. Graeco-Roman Pantheon--Acts 14:8-18; 19:24ff; a collection or council of gods; combination of Greek and Roman gods and ideas
2. Emperor Worship--Mark 12:14; grew out of Seleucid and Ptolemaic dynasties where the state was worshipped
3. Occult--Acts 8:9-24; 13:6-11; 19:19; Astrology; fortune telling and foretelling; magic and incantations to evoke the spirits
4. Mystery Religions--centered around some kind of rebirth
  - a. Eleusian Cult--Percephone, daughter of Demeter (giver of good crops), was carried off by Pluto. Rites at Eleusis in Greece and surrounding area.
  - b. Mithraic Cult--Mithra was mediator between man and the god of light in Zoroastrian pantheon; cult carried west from the Indo-Iranians by Persians and Romans; only men allowed; initiates were branded; II Chronicles 36:8; Leviticus 19:28; Revelation 13:16,17; 14:9,11; 16:2
  - c. Isiac Cult--Osiris, killed by brother, was revived by wife Isis to become Lord of Underworld and Ruler of the Dead. Funeral rites for the dead were thus carried out; worship appealed to women.
  - d. Dionysiac Cult--drank until drunk, danced in frenzies, ate raw goat freshly torn apart in orgies to attain communion with Dionysus or Bachantes.
  - e. Cult of Cybele or Magna Mater--Attis, consort of Cybele, died and was restored by the goddess. Celebrated by frenzies, gashing of arms and sprinkling their blood on altar, emasculation, etc. Carry over of Nimrod.

\*Ecclesiastes 1:1-10

## Social and Moral Setting of the New Testament

### I. Family Structure--home life aspects varied greatly from Jews to Romans

#### A. Marriage--Godly instituted estate

1. Romans--no respect for marriages; divorced and re-married without a thought; had orgies and abortions freely; Luke 3:29
2. Jews--great respect for marriage and almost a mandatory part of culture; Jewish man got married for four basic reasons according to Talmud:

- a. passion
- b. wealth
- c. honor
- d. glory of God

Divorce was allowed but a very rare occasion. Ephesians 5:20-33

#### B. Child rearing--

1. Romans--they felt children were a problem; openly indulged in abortion and even killed their young to rid themselves of the responsibility;
2. Jews--sons were highly favored; he was considered independent when he could earn his own living; the daughter was under the eyes of her parents until marriage. Ephesians 6:1-4; Proverbs 22:6,15; 23:13,14; Luke 2:40-52.

### II. Education--secular and religious

#### A. Home Education--began at an early age

1. Romans--"paidagogos" or slave teacher was in charge of the child's education
2. Jews--Psalms 1:1-3; memorization of the law and the other scriptures; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11

#### B. Elementary schools

1. Romans--public alcoves or halls; repetition and harsh punishment
2. Jews--continued to learn the Law (Torah) and how to read and write; Luke 3:46,47



- C. Synagogue schools--Luke 4:15; Acts 5:2-25,42
    - 1. Great respect for the teachers--John 3:1; 1:38; 7:15-18; for every 25 students there was one teacher
    - 2. At age 6 the children were sent to school
  - D. Academies--Advanced training where Doctor's of the law taught; Boys in age 12-15; Acts 22:3
  - E. Private Schools--Acts 19:9; School of Tyrannus; Gamaliel's school
  - F. Female Education--taught in the homes; domestic chores and how to raise a family
- III. Class Structure--I Corinthians 10:32; 9:19-23; Galatians 3:28
- A. Jews (Judeans)
    - 1. Jews of Palestine
    - 2. Jews of the Dispersion
      - a. original dispersion in Babylon
      - b. Syria and Asia Minor
      - c. Egypt
      - d. Rome and Westward
  - B. Samaritans--after the fall of the kingdom of Israel to the Assyrians, the few Israelites who remained intermarried with the Assyrians. Hence, they were impure. They were half-breeds and hated by the pure Jews. II Kings 17:24-41; Ezra 4; John 4:9-25; They expected a Messiah. They only accepted the Pentateuch of the Old Testament.
  - C. Gentiles--despised by Jews because of their religious and social connotations; originally meant "nations" but acquired a restricted sense by usage; Luke 2:32; Matthew 12:18; John 7:35; Acts 10:1ff; Romans 1:16; Colossians 3:11
  - D. Role of Women--respected by Jewish culture, but ravaged by the Romans; I Peter 3:5,6; one major role was in childbirth; barrenness caused shame and disgrace, Luke 1:7; Women helped to move the Word, Acts 5:14; 8:3,12; 17:4,12,32-34; 16:13 Lydia was a business woman; Acts 18:1,2,25-28; Romans 16:1-8; Philippians 3:1-3; Proverbs 31:10-31
  - E. Slavery--the Roman Empire contained about 6 million slaves; the effect of slavery was debasing; people lost their ingenuity and ambition and became lazy and dependent on the slaves; when a master was murdered, all of his slaves were killed being under suspicion

- F. Aristocracy and Masses--sharp contrast in the social strata
1. Ultra Rich--land owners and businessmen who took advantage of the lower class and slaves; games and banquet
  2. Middle Class--practically non-existent because of the upper class and slavery
  3. Plebs--lower class very poor; worse off than the slaves

## Economic Setting of the New Testament

### I. Occupations and Professions

- A. Attitude toward work (Manual labor)--II Thessalonians 3:7-10; Ecclesiastes 3:12; Ephesians 4:28; Romans considered labor a disgrace
- B. Tradesmen and Trade Guilds (unions)--Acts 19:25; 18:3; had their inceptions in ancient times; 1 Chronicles 4:14,21; Nehemiah 11:35
- C. Types of Jobs
  - 1. Potter--vases, jars; Jeremiah 18:3,4
  - 2. Builders--architects; 1 Corinthians 3:10, architekton
  - 3. Carpenters--Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3
  - 4. Masons--worked in stone
  - 5. Smiths--iron work; also gold, silver, copper
  - 6. Tanner--Acts 9:43; considered unclean ceremonially
    - a. Leather worker--Paul, Acts 18:3
  - 7. Dyer--Acts 16:14; cloth of Thyatira
  - 8. Fuller--Mark 9:3; cleansing and bleaching cloth
  - 9. Spinning and weaving--John 19:23; goats hair and wool

### II. Commerce and Industry

- A. Manufacturing--the factories were private enterprises employing slaves; small shops were the rule rather than the exception; each country, even each village was mostly self-sufficient; mass production of cheap goods was practically impossible.
- B. Import and Export--luxury goods were imported; Caravans and/or shipping were the main means of moving the goods.
- C. Trading and transportation--greatly facilitated by the system of roads; caravans were cumbersome and subject to attack by robbers; traffic was costly and slow because of the means of power (donkeys, camels, horses, oxen); Most of the commercial transportation was by water; the Mediterranean Sea abounded in good ports except in Palestine; Alexandria was a chief port as was Corinth; Alexandrian ships were the finest of the day; Acts 27:6; 28:11; Warships were lighter and faster and propelled by slaves
- D. Significance of roads--"All roads lead to Rome"
  - 1. Ancient Roads--built by the Romans are still in existence; straight, with drainage and paved with stone; sometimes used viaducts to span valleys and streams

- a. Appian Way--mainline between Rome and south Italy; Acts 28:15; inns were located at convenient intervals
- b. Egnatian Highway--crossed Illyricum and Macedonia to Thessalonica and then to Byzantium
- c. Kings Highway--in Palestine; many other caravan routes

2. Origin of "the way"--dates back to antiquity

III. Agriculture--the coastal territories around the Mediterranean were more fertile than they are today; North Africa, now semi-arid, contained immense farms with fruit and cattle; the plains of Gennesaret and Esdraelon flourished with grain and orchards

IV. Finance--I Timothy 6:6-10

A. Coinage--Luke 20:24; Matthew 17:24-27

1. Denarius--"penny" or "shilling"; ordinary day's wage for a laboring man; Matthew 20:2
2. Aureus--"pound"; gold; Luke 19:13

B. Taxation--Luke 2:1-5; many types of taxes evoked by the Publicans; Luke 19:1-8; Matthew the publican; Matthew 10:3

C. Weights and measures--John 12:3; 19:39; dry and liquid

D. Wages and prices--Matthew 20:2ff

## Cultural Setting of the New Testament

- I. Influence of Hellenization--little is known of the growth and achievements of the Jewish people in any of these categories; they seemed to be stifled and suppressed by the influences of their ruling overlords.
  - A. Art--Jews didn't like paintings or sculpture because they felt it violated the first and second commandments; Romans produced a lot of statuary primarily of people
  - B. Music and Drama--Jews had songs of praise from the Psalms of David; music and stage were the entertainment of the "mob" in Roman society; far different than the Greek tragedies and plays done centuries earlier
  - C. Architecture--the great piece of work was Herod's Temple in Jerusalem, the center of spiritual life for all of Israel; Romans build famous bridges, aqueducts, theaters, baths, roads, arenas, colosseums; used the principle of the arch well and were experts in brick and cement work
  - D. Athletics and the Arena--Jews were only interested in physical training for warring purposes; they didn't like the naked training of the gymnasiums nor the bloody battles in the arenas; Romans followed the Greek style with gymnasiums and baths; also developed the amphitheater and arenas for gladiator battles and chariot races
  - E. Literature--Augustus sparked a literary revival in Rome; Virgil, the poet, became the prophet of a new era.
    1. Horace--poet of the golden period
    2. Ovid--stories of Greek and Roman mythology
    3. Seneca--Stoic moralist
    4. Petronius--wrote a novel
    5. Pliny the Elder--wrote Natural History
    6. Tacitus and Suetonius--historians
    7. Juvenal--satirist, bitter critic of his day

The Word of God is still and always will be the literature of eternity.

## Legal and Judicial Setting of the New Testament

### I. The Hebrew Law

#### A. The Sanhedrin (Jewish Senate)--began after Babylonian captivity

1. Jewish governing power--legislative and judicial, but not executive (high priest)
2. Seventy men who were the elders and rulers; the high priest was president ex-officio; chief priests (mostly Sadducees--heads of the 24 orders) and scribes (mostly Pharisees--greater influence on the people). Mark 15:1; John 11:47
3. Qualifications for membership
  - a. good looking
  - b. of blameless life and morals
  - c. the father of a family
  - d. learned in the law, science and language
4. Small Sanhedrin--24 members; Jesus' night trial
5. Met in the Temple Hall
6. Lesser cases came before the Lesser Sanhedrin--two in Jerusalem and one in every town of more than 121 inhabitants.

#### B. The Torah--mentioned 220 times in the Old Testament; the Greek word nomos is the equivalent of the Torah in the New Testament; used most frequently in Romans and Galatians; the law of Moses given especially through the first five books (Pentateuch) of the Old Testament; Leviticus and Deuteronomy gave the sum and substance of the life style of the God-fearing Jew; Ten commandments

### II. The Roman Law--Rome stood for order, laws and administration. Law was the most lasting expression of the Roman spirit.

#### A. Sources of Roman Law

1. Citizens--leges and plebs were the ultimate source of law
2. Senate--its directives become imperatives and later took the force of laws
3. Municipal Officials--made the edicta which were more specific laws governing smaller sections of people
4. Statues of the Princes--Constitutiones Principum
  - a. Edicta--edict
  - b. Decreta--decree

- c. Rescripta
- d. Mandata--mandate

5. Jurists--like the rabbis of the Jews they reconciled contradictions and interpreted and adjusted the ancient laws

B. The Law of Persons--The first person in Roman law was the citizen; "All law pertains to persons, to property or to procedure," Gaius

- 1. Full citizens
- 2. Citizens without suffrage
- 3. Freedmen--Acts 22:24-29

The second person in Roman law was the father; as the power of the government rose, the power of the father declined.

**THE HERODIAN FAMILY**

**GENERATION I**

**HEROD THE GREAT**  
King of Judea  
37-4 B.C.  
Matt. 2:1-19  
Luke 1:5

**GENERATION II**

\*Son of *Doris*  
Antipater

Sons of *Mariamme* - *granddaughter of*  
*Aristobulus*  
*Alexander*

Son of *Mariamme* of Simon  
Herod Philip (*not the tetrarch*)\*  
(First husband of  
Herodias - *Mark 6:17*)  
*(Matt 14:3)*

Sons of *Malthace*

**HEROD ANTIPAS**  
Tetrarch of Galilee  
4 B.C. - A.D. 39  
Luke 3:1, Mark 6:14ff.  
Luke 13:31ff., 23:7-12

**ARCHELAUS**  
Ethnarch of Judea  
4 B.C. - A.D. 6  
Matt. 2:22

Son of *Cleopatra*

**HEROD PHILIP**  
Tetrarch of Iturea  
and Trachonitis  
4 B.C. - A.D. 34  
Luke 3:1

**GENERATION III**

Herod of Chalcis

**HEROD AGRIPPA I**  
King of Judea  
A.D. 37-44  
Acts 12:1-24

Herodias  
Consort of Herod Antipas  
Mark 6:17  
*(Matt 14)*

**GENERATION IV**

Bernice

became consort of her brother  
Acts 25:13

**HEROD AGRIPPA II**  
Tetrarch of Chalcis and of  
northern territory  
A.D. 48-70  
Acts 25:13-26:32

Drusilla  
married **FELIX**  
procurator of Judea  
A.D. 52(?) - 59(?)

Salome  
Matt. 14:6-11

Reigning kings of New Testament note are in **CAPITALS**, wives and relatives by marriage are in *italics*. Other members of the house are in small letters.

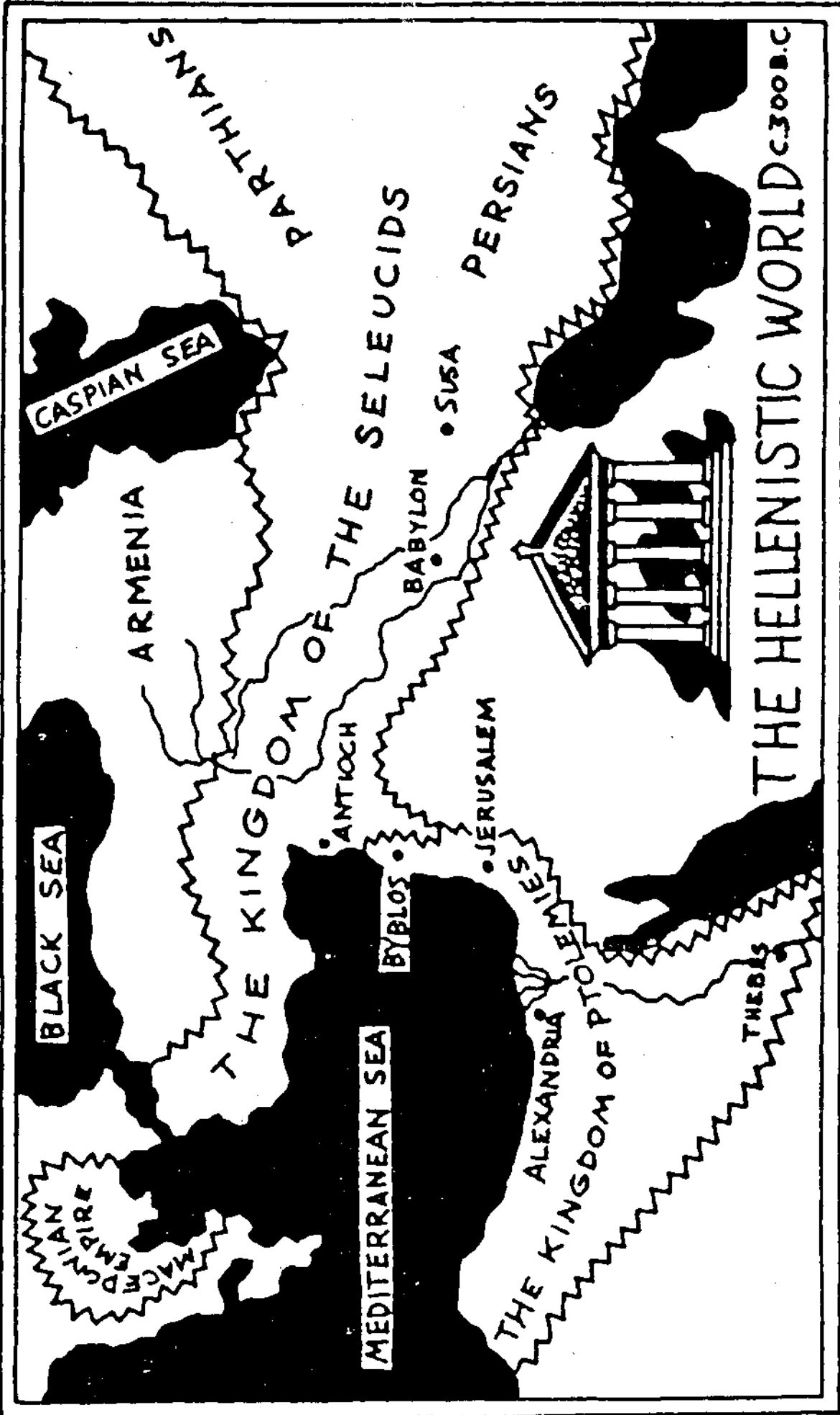


## THE ROMAN PROCURATORS OF JUDEA

YEARS	PROCURATORS	RELATION TO NEW TESTAMENT
5		
A.D. 6	Coponius	
10		
A.D. 13	M. Ambivius	
15		
A.D. 15	Annius Rufus	
20		
25	Valerius Gratus	
A.D. 26		
30	<i>Pontius Pilate</i>	Crucifixion of Jesus
35		
A.D. 36	Marcellus	
A.D. 38		
40	Marryllus	
A.D. 44		
45	Cuspius Fadus	
A.D. 46		
A.D. 48	Tiberius Alexander	
50		
A.D. 52	Ventidius Cumanus	
55		
A.D. 59	<i>M. Antonius Felix</i>	Trial of Paul: Acts 23, 24
60		
A.D. 61	<i>Porcius Festus</i>	Trial of Paul: Acts 25, 26
65		
A.D. 65	Albinus	
70		
A.D. 65	Gessius Florus	
75		
A.D. 65	<i>Siege of Jerusalem</i>	
75	Vettulenus Cerialis Lucilius Bassus	
80		
A.D. 86	M. Salvienus Flavius Silva	
85		
A.D. 86	Pompeius Longinus	
90		

## THE ROMAN EMPERORS OF THE FIRST CENTURY

YEARS	NAMES	EVENTS	REFERENCES
30 B.C.-			
A.D. 14	Augustus	Birth of Christ	Luke 2:1
A.D. 14-37	Tiberius	Ministry and death of Jesus Christ	Luke 3:1
A.D. 37-41	Caligula		
A.D. 41-54	Claudius	Famine Expulsion of Jews from Rome	Acts 11:28 Acts 18:2
A.D. 54-68	Nero	Trial of Paul Persecution at Rome	Acts 25:10-12 27:24 II Tim. 4:16, 17
A.D. 68	Galba		
A.D. 69	Otho		
A.D. 69	Vitellius		
A.D. 69-79	Vespasian	Destruction of Jerusalem	
A.D. 79-81	Titus		
A.D. 81-96	Domitian	Persecution (?)	
A.D. 96-98	Nerva		
A.D. 98-117	Trajan		



CASPIAN SEA

BLACK SEA

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

ARMENIA

THE KINGDOM OF THE SELEUCIDS

PERSIANS

• ANTIOCH

• BYBLOS

• JERUSALEM

• BABYLON

• SUSA

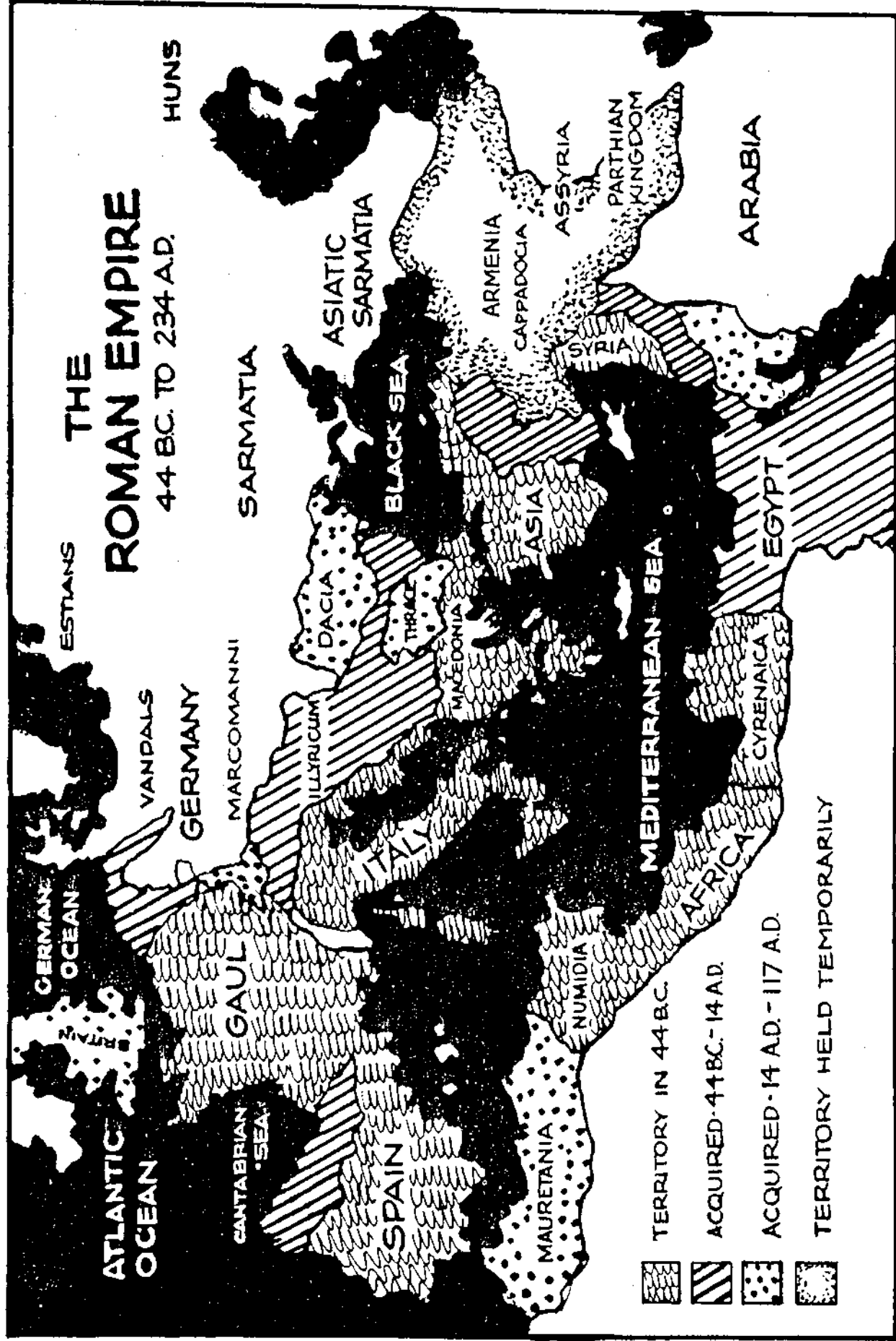
THE KINGDOM OF PTOLEMIES

THE BALKANS

THE HELLENISTIC WORLD c.300 B.C.

# THE ROMAN EMPIRE

44 BC. TO 234 A.D.



ESTIANS

VANDALS  
GERMANY

MARCOMANNI

SARMATIA

ASIATIC  
SARMATIA

BLACK SEA

ARMENIA

CAPPADOCIA

ASSYRIA

PARTHIAN  
KINGDOM

ARABIA

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

EGYPT

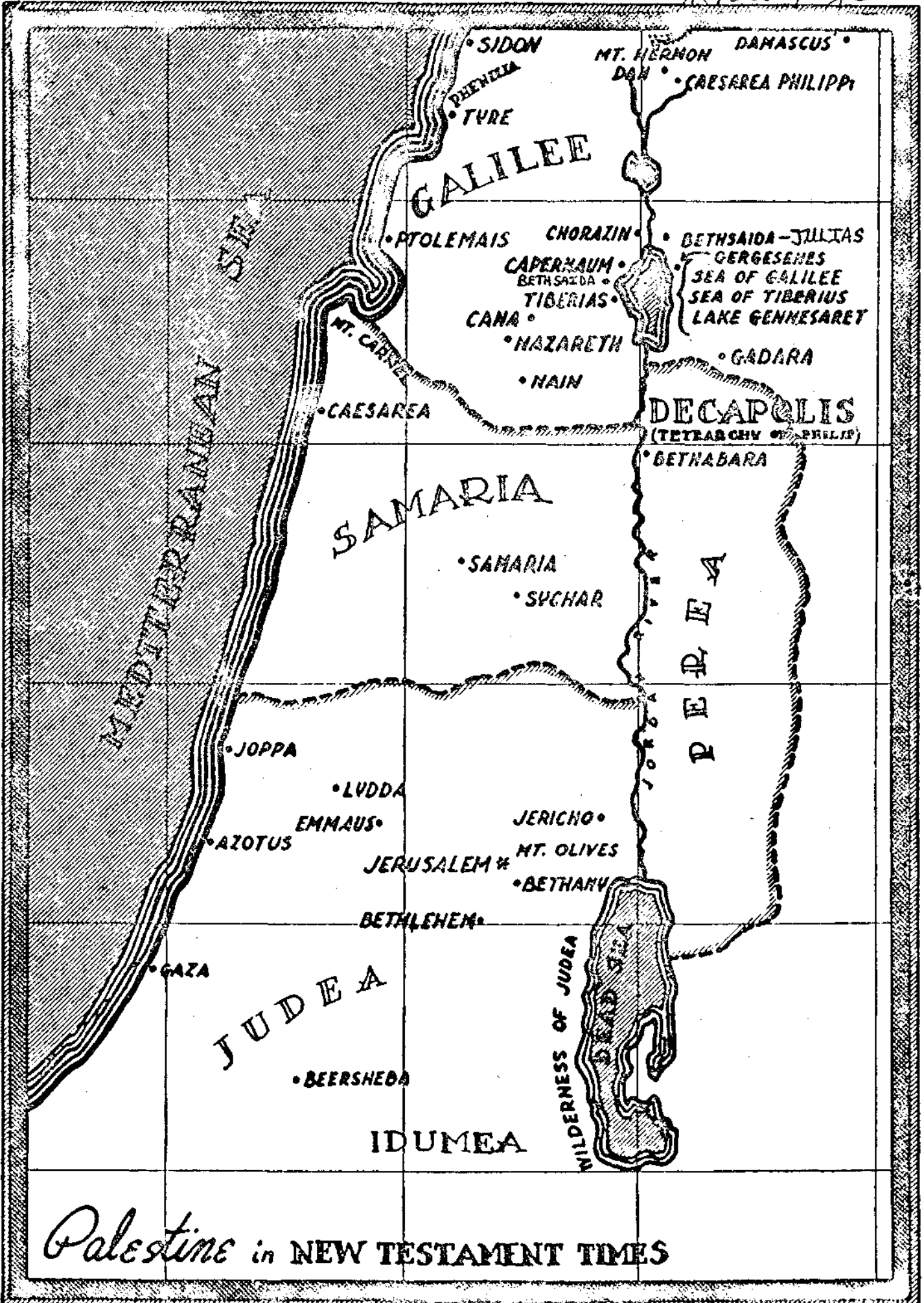
TERRITORY IN 44 BC.

ACQUIRED 44 BC. - 14 AD.

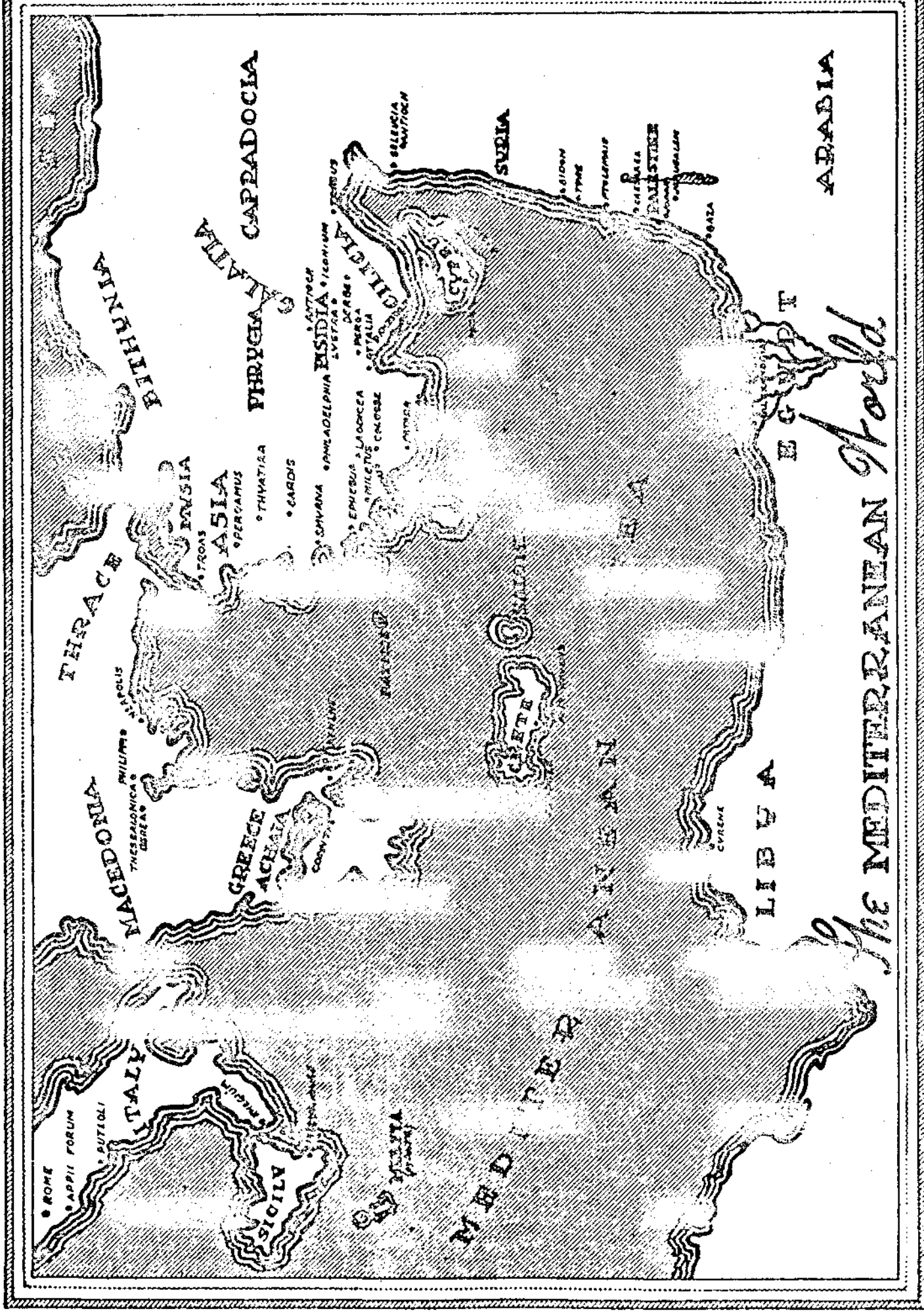
ACQUIRED 14 AD. - 117 AD.

TERRITORY HELD TEMPORARILY





*Palestine* in NEW TESTAMENT TIMES



*The MEDITERRANEAN World*

# HEROD'S TEMPLE

