

The Gospel According to John

5-1-2019

1. Last week I completed a study of Joh 2:23-25 by way of the *Doctrine of the Passover* and then I taught a word study of *Omniscience*. When the clock tolled 7:45 we were about to study John's encounter with Nicodemus.
2. Before we return to our study, I want to give you opportunity to use 1Jo 1:9 as may or may not be necessary.
3. Let's begin by looking at an expanded translation of Joh 2:23-25.

Expanded Translation

Joh 2:23 Now while Jesus was in Jerusalem during Passover week, many people saw the miraculous signs he performed and many believed in his name.

Joh 2:24 But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for He knew all men.

Joh 2:25 Jesus knew from His omniscience what those he encountered were thinking; He knew what was in the minds of all men.

4. Jesus visits with Nicodemus:

KJV

Joh 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

Joh 3:2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Joh 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Joh 3:4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Joh 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Joh 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Joh 3:7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Joh 3:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

NIV

Joh 3:1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council.

1. Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews. Specifically, he was an **Archon** and a member of the Sanhedrin. Joh 7:50

Doctrine of the Pharisee

1. A Pharisee was a follower of the sect of the Pharisees, a numerous and powerful sect of the Jews. They were distinguished for their ceremonial observances, and apparent sanctity of life.

1.1 The Pharisees were also rigid interpreters of the Mosaic law; but they frequently violated its spirit by their traditional interpretations and precepts. They ascribed these interpretations and precepts equal with the Old Testament Scriptures.

Mat 5:20 For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Mat 12:2 But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.

Mat 23:4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

Mat 23:5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

Mat 23:6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

Mat 23:7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

Mat 23:8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.

2. The Pharisees are first mentioned as an existing party in Israel during the reign of John Hyrcanus (135-104 B.C.). Hyrcanus I was the first to lead the new Jewish state after the Maccabees.

2.1 According to Josephus, "They (*the Pharisees*) had at this time great influence with the masses." Hyrcanus was at first one of their disciples, but because of a misunderstanding broke with them and joined the Sadducees." His defection began a series of power struggles that ultimately resulted in Roman intervention.

3. As a foreboding note, Josephus adds: "Out of this, of course, grew the hatred of the masses for him and his sons. Hyrcanus was also said to have set aside certain "regulations" which the Pharisees had established for the people. All of this created political confusion and discord among the Jewish citizenry.

3.1 Josephus explains, "The Pharisees had passed on to the people certain regulations handed down by former generations and not recorded in the laws of Moses, for which reason they were rejected by the Sadducean group."

4. Josephus's account underlines the key factor in any definition of Pharisaism--the concept of tradition, of the continually expanding oral law during the period bridging the Old and New Testament.

4.1 It also indicates that by the time of Hyrcanus, Pharisaism was already a flourishing movement with great popular influence.

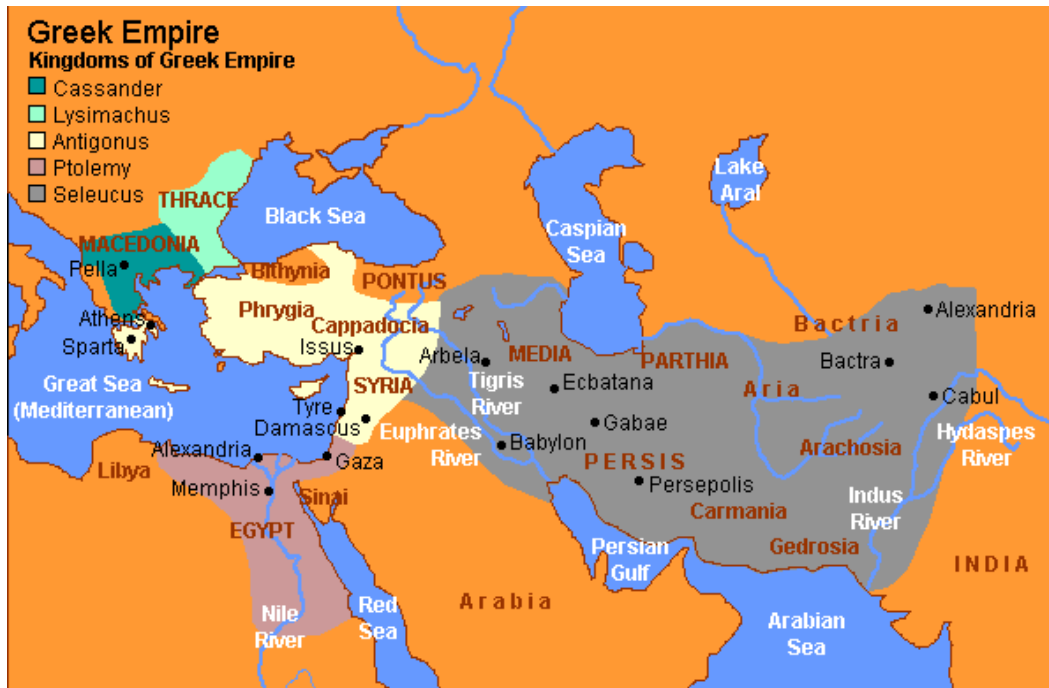
4.1.1 Passing on regulations handed down by former generations certainly suggested to the people, continuity with the past.

4.1.2 Although some of the beliefs of the Pharisees may have roots that go back much earlier, Pharisaism as we know it seems to have come into being as a Jewish response to the challenge of Greek culture in the early second century B.C.

4.2 Most probably the Maccabean era does mark their real beginning. They may even have possessed some oral traditions that went back to early post-Exilic times. After the Maccabean revolt, the political fortunes of the Pharisees fluctuated.

4.2.1 When war against the external enemy (Greece) came to an end, an internal struggle broke out between the Hellenist Jews, Sadducees and the Pharisees only to be finally put-down by a Roman army led by Pompey.

4.3 Let me quickly review the events following the break-up of Alexander's hegemony.



4.3.1 Two of the four generals serving Alexander were Seleucus and Ptolemy. These two soon eliminated Antigonus, leaving the “sharing” of Syria and parts of Asia Minor for Ptolemy (who reigned over Egypt with aspirations of ruling the Holy Land) and Seleucus (who reigned over what was formerly Persia with similar aspirations).

4.3.2 After several battles, marital intrigues and various political machinations between the Ptolemies and Seleucids, the Seleucids won out taking control of what we call today Israel.

In approximately 173 B.C. a particularly onerous “king” named Antiochus Epiphanies took the throne of Greece. He abused both priests and lay people. Finally in 167 B.C. a revolt on the part of “Israel” occurred.

4.3.3 The popular revolt was led by Mattathias Hasmoneas and his sons Judas, Simon and Jonathan. Guerilla warfare ensued and the Maccabeans (as the Hasmoneans came to be known) were victorious. Israel became a free and autonomous state but a state rife with religious controversy; ergo, a failure waiting to happen.

4.3.4 The first ruler was Mattathias Hasmoneas followed by a co-regency of Simon, Judas and Jonathan Maccabee. The name Maccabee was an appellative of praise for the sons of Mattathias who excelled at military tactics and were thus given the name "Maccabee" meaning hammer. The first ruler to follow the Maccabean boys was John Hyrcanus I who at his coronation was a Pharisee. He would later convert and become a Sadducee.

4.3.5 With the rise of Aristobulus, Jannaeus and Salome. the Pharisees, with the support of Salome, were given a position of influence. Many historians believe the threat of war with Syria also made compromise the order of the day. The compromise however was short-lived.

4.3.6 Rome was desirous of influencing Israel to avoid the many internal squabbles so prevalent in the land. Political independence, gained earlier, was lost again and the Jewish people were placed under Roman rule in 63 B.C.

4.4 The Pharisaic piety, so despised by Jesus, seems to date from the troubled period that followed Pompey's conquest. The Pharisees believed God's judgment was a direct result of Israel's failure to comply with their interpretation of God's protocol.

4.5 The doctrine of a future resurrection so uniformly attributed to the Pharisees is simply the product of their consistent application of this retribution principle--you will be resurrected and judged.

4.6 The Pharisees believed in a Messianic hope. Of Him it is said, "He shall be a righteous king, taught of God, over them, and there shall be no unrighteousness in his days in their midst, for all shall be holy and their king the anointed, the Lord."

4.7 While the king and the kingdom for which the Pharisees looked was earthly, it was also spiritual, and not to be gained by "trust in horse and rider and bow." From Pompey's conquest forward, the Pharisees were for the most part peace loving and good citizens.

4.7.1 Although some of the zealots came out of their number, the Pharisees as a group sought to avert conflict with Rome, but were finally drawn into the ill-fated revolt of A.D. 70 with great reluctance.

4.8 After the destruction of Jerusalem, it was the Pharisees who undertook to pick up the shattered pieces of Jewish faith and life and to reconstruct Judaism as we know it in the rabbinic writings.

4.8.1 The situation was analogous to that which prevailed after the Babylonian exile: there was no Jewish nation, and the unity of the people was expressed through the law and the synagogue and good works.

4.8.2 Eschatological hopes were pinned not on revolutionary activity but on God's intervention and that in His own good time.

4.9 At the time of Jesus, the Pharisees seem to have been a group of laymen (not priests) some of whom were especially trained in the study of Scripture. These were the scribes and it was against the scribes and Pharisees that Jesus directed some of His most scathing denunciations. He did not take sharp issue with their synagogue teachings; they sat in Moses' seat and their words were to be kept.

Mat 23:2 "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.
Mat 23:3 So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.

4.10 But they were hypocrites because they did not live up to their own high standards of righteousness.

- They laid burdens upon others which they themselves were unwilling to bear.

Mat 23:4 They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

Mat 23:5 "Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long;
Mat 23:6 they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues;

- They used sophisticated and subtle reasoning to evade the spirit of the law while carrying out its letter.

Mar 7:9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

Mar 7:10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

Mar 7:11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free.

Mar 7:12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

Mar 7:13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

End Lesson

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