

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

THE ORIGIN STORY OF JESUS

RLJ-1892

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PART 91: UNCERTAIN TIMES

PHILOSOPHY

Even though the Alexander's kingdom collapsed and was divided into many parts by the successors, Greek influence in the old Persian empire became influential. Greece produced a number of philosophers who wielded great authority, but their philosophical ideas dealt great damage to the Christian faith during the last 2,000 years. They had a great influence on Judaism from 300 B.C.

I want to provide a brief overview of what these Greek philosophers taught. In examining their teachings, it becomes clear that powerful fallen angels were behind these men and they were responsible for introducing concepts that would intrigue men and inoculate them from hearing and believing the simple teaching of Jesus.

- ❖ Socrates (470-399 B.C.) was a philosopher from Athens. His teaching focused on mankind, not on the universe. Mankind's conduct of morality was important. The correct action for a man depended upon his knowledge. There were four virtues: prudence, courage, self-control and justice.
- ❖ Plato (427-347 B.C.) was from Athens and a student of Socrates. He was described as a man of a mystical piety with profound spiritual insight. He taught that the knowledge of the truly permanent and real comes from man's acquaintance with the "ideas," those changeless, typical and universal patterns which exist in the invisible spiritual world – the "intelligible" world, since known by reason rather than by the senses – and gives whatever of reality is shared by the passing phenomena present to our senses. The soul knew these "ideas" in previous existence.
- ❖ Aristotle (384-322) was from Stagira and was a student of Plato. He moved to Athens at the age of 18 and joined Plato's academy. After the death of his mentor, Aristotle left the academy at the request of King Phillip II of Macedonia and became the tutor of Alexander.

Even though Aristotle was a student of Plato, he discarded Plato's sharp discrimination between "ideas" and phenomena. Neither exists without the other. Matter in itself is only potential substance. It has always existed, yet never without form. The world is the prime object of knowledge.

- ❖ Epicurus (341-270 B.C.) was born on the island of Samos. He moved to Athens as an adult where he turned against the teaching of Plato and founded his own philosophy. He taught that mental happiness is the highest aim for man. This state is most perfect when passive. The worse foes of mental happiness are groundless fears. Fear of the anger of the gods and death are the worst of fears. According to Epicurus fear of gods and death are baseless. The gods exist, but



they did not create nor do they govern the world. Death ends all, but is no evil, since in it there is no consciousness remaining.¹

COLLISION WITH JUDAISM

For more than 2,400 years the thinking of the classic Greek philosophers has been treated like they were superior to anything that mankind has come up with over the millennia. This teaching hit the Jews especially hard after Judah became a Greek province in 323 B.C. and continues to play havoc with Christianity today. When I attended seminary from 1969-1973, I was forced to take a class in philosophy even though I did not want to learn the depths of Satan's thinking.

Greek philosophy is inferior to the writings of the Old Testament, and if we compare their philosophy with the five books of Moses, we find that philosophy is nothing more than garbage that was written and promoted by Lucifer and his fallen angels.

Philosophy is man's effort to reach God, while Judaism in the Old Testament and Christianity in the New Testament is God reaching out to man.

HELLENIZATION OF JUDAH

There was a battle in the spirit world over Judah when Alexander the Great came to Jerusalem. Jesus protected Jerusalem from destruction and Lucifer was furious. He ordered demons to introduce Greek culture and philosophy in order to contaminate the Jews and sway them to leaving the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

It was easy for Satan to change the religions of the Ammonites, Syrians and the Philistines. Some 20 years after the death of Alexander the Great, the pagan population in and around Judah started to use Greek names for their children and copy their culture. Amphitheaters and gymnasiums were built from Syria, Lebanon, and the coastal strip down to the Gaza area.

Since there was peace in the area, extensive trading took place and the pagan cities around Judah started to prosper as trade between east and west increased. This also brought prosperity to the Jews who could sell grain, wine, olive oil, fruit and fish to the Greek inspired cities.

Since the Jews had large families, it did not take more than 40 years until there was a large Jewish population in Judah that they began to move into pagan territories where they bought land and developed farming. Large numbers of Jews settled in the Greek inspired cities and became skilled craftsmen and merchants.

As we look back in time, we can see that spiritual forces more or less wiped out the different people groups like the Syrians, Samaritans, Ammonites, Moabites and other ancient people groups and molded them into Greek clones. The different demon gods of these people groups were replaced by the gods from Greece.

The Jewish priestly leadership initially resisted the Greek culture that swept into Judah. They had been fighting Baal worship for centuries only to be confronted by the cruel

¹ A HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, Williston Walker, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952, pp.3-5

gods of Olympus, Greek games, public baths, festivals, self-indulgence, and immorality that followed these activities.

But a new generation of Jews had forgotten what happened when their ancestors pursued other gods and pressure mounted for the priests in Judah to Hellenize.

1 Samuel 8:19-20

Judah at this time was inhabited by farmers, local merchants and artisans who did not have a desire to adopt Greek culture, religion, language, and identity. However, the upper classes (nobility) of Jews residing in Jerusalem, the chief families of the priests, the importers and exporters, and the wealthy Jews wanted such a change.

Lucifer set his demons upon the wealthy Jews and the political leaders, convincing them that Jerusalem should be made into an important prosperous trading center. These people advocated that Jews should adopt Greek dress, young men were encouraged to participate in Greek games, and the political system in Jerusalem should be revamped to a democratic form of government.

SONS OF TOBIAS

Tobiah was an Ammonite and they were pagan worshipers.² Their gods were Milcom and Molech, both of which required human sacrifice, particularly babies and young children.

Tobiah was appointed governor of Ammon by King Cyrus of Persia. Ammon was located east of the Jordan river and north of the nation of Moab. Tobiah was a pagan and possessed by demons. Tobiah and Sanballat, the governor of Samaria, tried to use their positions to sabotage the rebuilding of Jerusalem's wall. **Nehemiah 4:1-3**

According to Jewish tradition, Tobiah married the daughter of Shechaniah, a high-ranking Jewish leader. His son, Jehohanan, had in turn married the daughter of a Jewish leader by the name of Meshullam. Tobiah eventually exerted such a strong influence in Jerusalem that he had made an alliance with the high priest, Eliashib, to secure a storage room in the newly built temple that he used as a warehouse for the goods he sold. When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem and discovered what had transpired, he angrily cast out all of Tobiah's items. **Nehemiah 13:5-9**

Around 230 B.C., some 130 years later, the Tobiah clan had grown in number, and through more intermarriages, they had established themselves as Jews. The Tobiah clan were members of the national council that I described in the previous message, and thus being able to influence policies in Judah.³ The powerful evil spirits that had possessed Tobiah spread out to the entire clan and they certainly had no love for the Jews.

Joseph Tobiah was one of the most powerful and rich members of the clan and in 230 B.C. used his wealth to purchase the right to be tax collector for Judah and the district of Syria. Ptolemy III Euergetes of Egypt during the Third Syrian War (246-241 B.C.) had

² The Ammonites were the descendants of Ben-Ammi, the bastard born through incest when one of Lot's daughters made her father drunk and procreated with him. Genesis 19:30-38

³ See RLJ-1890 Part 90: The Greek Century

attacked the Seleucid Empire and soundly defeated the Seleucids. This put Syria and Judah firmly in total control by Egypt.

Joseph Tobiah was obligated to pay Ptolemy III a certain sum of money once a year. In return, he had the authority to set up a tax collection agency where he arbitrarily decided how much tax the people had to pay. Since no one in Judah and Syria knew how much Tobiah had to pay to the Egyptian king, Tobiah collected way more than he needed to satisfy Ptolemy III Euergetes.

Tobiah's family members became the supervisors of this huge operation and thousands of local tax collectors were hired. The average taxpayer had to pay the salaries of the tax collectors, contribute to the Tobiah family members, and enrich Tobiah himself.

Tobiah and his clan became very wealthy and dominated politics in Syria as well as in Judah. Tobiah used his political clout to bring more and more international trade through Jerusalem so that it became a trading hub for the region.

The clan eventually became a social class by themselves, enjoying the fact that the Jewish population danced after their music and wanted to transform them into a Greek society.

JOSHUA BEN SIRACH

As the Tobiah clan took power in Judah, there was a scribe named Joshua ben Sirach. He wrote a scroll of instruction that was a teaching on the five books of Moses and the Hebrew prophets.

According to Joshua, the ideal life was a farmer who worked his fields with no ambition to become wealthy or to become a powerful force in the community, but served God wholeheartedly. A God-fearing Jew should strive for peace in the family. Any Jew that lived like this was a wise man. Joshua opened up an educational system to try and get the youth of Judah to follow his teachings.

The simple message became popular and his scroll was repeatedly copied so that more of the common people could read what he had written. But the Jewish rabbis did not consider Joshua inspired by God and his writings were not included in the Old Testament.

WAR IS COMING

Any king engaging in the worship of pagan gods is at the mercy of Lucifer. Ptolemy IV Philopator was king of Egypt from 244-204 B.C. He was married to Berenice II and during the Fourth Syrian War (219-217 B.C.) he won against the Seleucid kingdom. He died under mysterious circumstances and it is believed he was murdered. He was succeeded by his five-year-old son Ptolemy V Epiphanes. Sosibius and Agathocles became joint regent until Ptolemy V came of age. Sosibius did not want any competition from Queen Berenice and ordered her murder shortly after becoming regent. There was a fierce competition and regents came and went through different coup attempts.

When this instability became known outside of Egypt, Seleucid King Antiochus III and King Philip V of Macedonia joined to make war with Ptolemy V. This Fifth Syrian War lasted from 202-196 B.C. Egypt was badly beaten and lost all its territories in Asia

Minor, as well as Syria and Palestine. Judah became a province of the Seleucid kingdom under Antiochus III.

The Jewish leadership did not participate in the wars between the Seleucids and the Ptolemies. Why should they participate in a war that did not benefit the Jewish people? They knew that in the end they would be a province of one or the other and both Greek kingdoms were two sides of the same coin.

THE POWER OF ROME

At this time the Roman Republic was on the rise and Antiochus III wanted to ensure that the Romans did not come east and threaten his kingdom. He tried to bribe them by sending a delegation from the royal family to Rome with a huge amount of gold and silver to make sure the Romans did not get involved in the fighting among the Seleucids and the Ptolemies. The royals became hostages of the Romans, who used them as a leverage to get more gold and silver.

In order for Antiochus III to procure more silver and gold, the population in the conquered lands were repeatedly taxed. The Seleucids tax collectors were ruthless and there were little the common people could do since soldiers accompanied the theft collectors. This caused the people to develop great anger toward Antiochus III and his régime.

The Jews were divided in their support of the Seleucids or the Ptolemies. Joseph Tobias was dead and his son Hyrcanus had taken over the Egyptian tax system, favoring Ptolemy V. But the Tobias family was split as most of them favored Antiochus III and so did a large number of other wealthy Jewish families who felt that Ptolemy V was going to lose the war. They thought to obtain favor by supporting the perceived winner.⁴

SUMMARY

This message covers about 100 years of Jewish history. While there was war all around Judah during these years, the Jews themselves did not participate in the fighting. The main danger that they faced was the damnable Greek philosophy inspired by Lucifer.

How can a pagan worshiper receive knowledge about spiritual matters from God? They cannot. What they received was the babbling from rebellious fallen angels who have been sentenced to the Lake of Fire. Philosophy is a graveyard that contains no knowledge of God, is void of faith, and leads a person straight to hell.

The apostle Paul made it clear we are to avoid philosophy, vain deceit, profane babblings, and foolish questions. **Colossians 2:6-10; 2 Timothy 2:16; Titus 3:9**

During this 100-year period the Jewish population was divided into three classes:

1. The wealthy upper class
2. Merchants and artisans
3. Peasants (farmers)

⁴ A HISTORY OF THE JEWS, Solomon Grayzel, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1948, pp.46-53

The priests and the scribes were the glue that held it together with the five books of Moses, the prophets, and the writings.

While it may not seem like it, this 100-year period was the calm before the storm when powerful spiritual tempests would sweep over the Jewish people during the remaining years before the incarnation of the Messiah.

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?