

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

THE ORIGIN STORY OF JESUS

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PART 92: THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM

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.

THE GOOD TIMES ARE OVER

Lucifer was in the attack mode as the Jews were no longer coming to his Baal altars. Thanks to Joseph ben Sirach, they were attending synagogues, reading the Torah and the prophets, and actively choosing to worship God. Lucifer realized that something had to be done since the common people were not interested in his Greek philosophers. He summoned his leadership and ordered them to Hellenize the Jews. Demons were given the assignment to entice the Jews to become like the Greeks.

The demons were most successful in their attack on the rich and secular political leaders who wanted to convert Judah to a modern Greek state.

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 he won the Fourth Syrian War (219-217 B.C.) 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 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.¹

DEFILING THE TEMPLE

Banks did not exist in Judah at this time and people used the temple to store their coins, silver, and gold. The priests ensured that records were kept and that no one stole the deposited funds. Thus, the temple served as a treasury for the tithes paid to the priests and it was also a Jewish national bank.

A Hellenistic political party developed with the aim to weaken the priestly administration in Jerusalem. They sent word to King Seleucus IV Philopator that substantial wealth was being stored at the temple in Jerusalem. He sent a tax collector named Heliodorus to plunder the temple in 187 B.C. There are two versions of what took place:

1. The first account is recorded in the book of Second Maccabees that holy angels met Heliodorus and forced him to flee from Jerusalem.
2. The second account is provided by Solomon Grayzel, who claims that when Heliodorus went into the temple, he was confronted by a man on horseback that had him almost beaten to death.²

¹ A HISTORY OF THE JEWS, Solomon Grayzel, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1948, pp.46-53

² ibid p.54

I don't know which account is true, but something scared Heliodorus so badly that he returned home emptyhanded. Heliodorus did not travel alone to Jerusalem; he was a chancellor to the king, and as such, he would have arrived with a sizeable military force which makes the strange account an even greater miracle.

Eight years later in 175 B.C., Heliodorus led an uprising against Seleucus IV and killed him. He took the power and reigned as regent for young Antiochus, Seleucus' five-year-old son, until he was crowned the next king.

Antiochus IV was a younger brother of Seleucus IV who had been sent to Rome as a hostage. He was able to leave after being replaced by Seleucus IV's oldest son Demetrius I.

Once Antiochus IV arrived to Syria, he declared himself co-ruler with his five-year-old nephew, Antiochus, and terminated Heliodorus as regent. Five years later young Antiochus was murdered by great uncle Antiochus IV, who would be used by Lucifer to murder thousands of Jews during his lifetime as a king.

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)

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?