

# *Resurrection Life of Jesus Church*

## THE ORIGIN STORY OF JESUS

RLJ-1896

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### PART 95: FREE, BUT STILL SLAVES

#### **THE RULE OF SIMON**

Once Jonathan had been murdered, it left a great void among the Jews. There was only one son left of Mattathias and that was Simon, who at this time was old. There was no way that he could lead a Jewish army.

Simon decided to call together a council and it became known as the Great Assembly. The aristocrats who in times before had held power in Jerusalem and Judah, were not invited, since most of them had been Hellenized. The majority of the leaders at this assembly were from the Hassidic party.

The Hassidim faced a legal problem. According to the Old Testament, the family of the former high priest Onias was the only legitimate high priest family and Onias' son should have been selected to be the next high priest. But when Mattathias and his sons started the uprising against the Seleucid kingdom, he had run off to Egypt, instead of joining the uprising. No Jew would want to have this man to rule Judah, since he fled instead of being part of the uprising.

The Great Assembly elected Simon to become the high priest and the ruler of Judah. Simon had one of his sons, Johanan Hyrcan, to lead the Jewish army. During the reign of Simon things were mostly peaceful in Judah. Simon died in 135 B.C.

#### **THE RULE OF JOHANAN HYRCAN**

Johanan Hyrcan became the next Jewish ruler. At this time Demetrius II was the Seleucid king, who was challenged by the Ptolemies in Egypt. Demetrius II sent a delegation to Jerusalem to get the support of the Jews. The Seleucid king offered to stop supporting the Hellenized Jews, which in time led to the demise of the Hellenists in Judah. He also offered to recognize Hyrcan as the ruler of Jerusalem and Judah. In return he requested military support from Hyrcan. Hyrcan had also give up all the pagan cities the Jews annexed, except Jaffa that was the seaport of Judah. Thus, a treaty was signed between Demetrius II and Hyrcan.

Hyrcan was not happy with the treaty and in 127 B.C. he sent a number of Jewish diplomats to Rome, where they were received by the Roman Senate. The Jewish diplomats requested a senatorial decree that would force the Seleucid kingdom to give up a number of cities along the coastline of what is today Lebanon and northern Israel. The Roman Senate approved the request from Hyrcan.

Hyrcan took advantage of the violent struggles in the Seleucid kingdom and in time he recaptured all the cities on the coast from Lebanon down to Gaza. Demetrius II was in a civil war with Alexander II and in 126 B.C. he lost the battle in Damascus. He fled but in time he was captured and killed. Alexander II became the next king in the Seleucid kingdom.



Alexander II maintained a friendly relationship with Hyrcan, who by now had created a strong semi-independent state and ruled as a vassal king. Some of the taxes that Hyrcan collected were sent to the Seleucid kingdom. Alexander II only ruled for three years, when he was killed in 123 B.C.

## **CIVIL WAR IN THE SELEUCID KINGDOM**

The civil wars continued in the Seleucid kingdom and Cleopatra Thea became the ruler of the Seleucid kingdom with her son Antiochus VIII. The mother and son did not get along and in 121 B.C. she had a cup of wine prepared, that she tried to give to her son. He realized it was poisoned and he forced his mother to drink it and she died.

Antiochus VIII married Tryphaena in 124 B.C., who was the daughter of the Egyptian king Ptolemy VIII. She remained a queen of the Seleucid kingdom to 111 B.C.

Antiochus VIII fought a civil war from 116 B.C. against his half-brother Antiochus IX. The latter was married to the Egyptian princess Cleopatra IV, who was a sister of Tryphaena, who hired assassins who murdered her sister Cleopatra IV in 112 B.C. Antiochus IX was enraged and sent his own assassins and murdered Tryphaena.

Once the two sisters were dead, their mother Cleopatra III of Egypt made the arrangement for her daughter Cleopatra Selene to marry Antiochus VIII. Antiochus VIII was murdered in 96 B.C. by Heracleon, a minister in his government.

He was succeeded by his son Seleucus VI, who reigned from 96-94 B.C. His uncle Antiochus IX started a civil war against his nephew, but in a battle in 95 B.C. he was killed in a battle. Antiochus X, son of uncle Antiochus IX continued the battle and Seleucus VI was forced to flee to the Cilician city of Mopsuestia, which was located in what is today the southern coast of Turkey, next to Lebanon. When he tried to raise taxes in the city to finance the war with his relative, the towns people rose up in rage and burned him alive in a fire in 94 B.C.

Antiochus VIII and his wife had several children, two of them were twins, Antiochus XI and Philip I. Antiochus XI ruled from Antioch, while his twin brother ruled in Cilicia. In 93 B.C. Antiochus X had rebuilt his base and attacked Antiochus XI, who was defeated and killed. Antiochus X had problem to have a stable government, since he was fighting the three brothers Antiochus XI, Philip I and Demetrius III. In 93 B.C. Antiochus X battling against Antiochus XI, who he was able to kill. The civil war continued as Philip I and Demetrius III continued to fight Antiochus X. To shore up his power he married his step mother, the Egyptian princess Cleopatra Selene, and she bore him several children. One of them was to be a future king, Antiochus XIII. Antiochus X was killed in a battle in 88 B.C.

Philip I was not able to control all of the Seleucid kingdom and ruled from 93-83 B.C. Upon his death he was succeeded by Antiochus XIII, who was the son of Antiochus X and Cleopatra Selene.

In the meantime, an Armenian king named Tigranes the Great invaded the Seleucid kingdom in 83 B.C. Cleopatra Selene was captured by Tigranes, who had her killed. Rome was not happy with the advances of the Armenians and a Roman army under the

command of Council Lucius Licinius Lucullus defeated Tigranes the Great at the battle of Tigranocerta in 69 B.C.

Antiochus XIII became the king of what was left of the Seleucid kingdom and he was approved by Lucullus in 69 B.C. He was now considered a client king of Rome and he paid taxes to Rome. In 64 B.C. the Roman general Pompey entered the Seleucid Kingdom and Antiochus XIII was killed. This was the end of the Seleucid kingdom.

## **BACK TO HYRCAN**

The many battles had decimated the male population in Judah and Hyrcan, who was not only a skilled politician, but also an able military leader decided that in order to have a strong army, it had to be augmented by mercenaries. Taxes were levied on the people in Judah and Jerusalem to pay the salaries for these mercenaries.

With the civil wars going on in the Seleucid kingdom, Hyrcan decided that he was going to capture Samaria, that once had been part of the old kingdom of Israel. In 113 B.C. Hyrcan ordered his army to besiege the city of Samaria and he put his sons Antigonus and Aristobulos in charge of the siege. The Samaritans requested help from the Seleucid king Antiochus IX, who sent 6,000 soldiers. The city fell to the Jews after a year. From having been battered for years and many Jews had been sold into slavery, Hyrcan ignored the teaching of the Torah and the people who survived the siege of Samaria were forced into slavery. As Hyrcan's army "liberated" more territories from the Seleucid kingdom, he forced the local non-Jewish population to adopt Jewish customs. Forgotten was the Hellenization of the Jews by the Seleucids and the old slogan that might makes right, the Jews did to these people, what was once done to them.

Looking back in history, it is obvious that Hyrcan slowly but surely was trying to take back the lands that once made up the nation of Israel as it existed during the time of king Solomon. In 110 B.C. Hyrcan's mercenary army invaded Transjordan, the land east of the Jordan river, which once was the inheritance of the tribes of Gad and Reuben. The Jewish mercenary army laid siege to the city of Medeba, which fell into Jewish hands after six month. Hyrcan then led his army north and took the cities of Shechem and Mount Gerizim. Since the area at this time was populated by Samaritans, Hyrcan ordered Shechem to be destroyed and the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim was demolished, despite that the Samaritans worshipped the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This boosted Hyrcan's statues among the religious elite and conservative Jews, who did not accept any temple dedicated to God, outside of Jerusalem.

After placing garrisons in the newly conquered areas, Hyrcan turned south into what was known as Edom, or Idumea. Part of this area was once the possession of the tribe of Simeon.

Hyrcan decided that in order to make sure that the people living in Idumea would not rebel in the future, they were compelled to convert to Judaism. What king Antiochus IV had done to the Jews some 57 years earlier, when he had forbidden the Jewish faith and tried to force them to worship Jupiter, Hyrcan now did to the people in Idumea. By the third generation of Idumeans, they had totally adopted Judaism, despite that they had no blood line to Abraham. Hyrcan did not know what the consequences would be of his religious rape of the people of Idumea.

In 72 B.C. a boy by the name of Herod was born in Idumea and later as an adult he became known as Herod the Great, who ordered the slaughter of all boys two years and younger in Bethlehem to make sure that Jesus, the Messiah, would not survive.

Hyrchan was a grandson of Mattathias, who had fought for religious freedom. It is clear to me, that Hyrchan was possessed by demons, who wanted to pollute the Jewish people and in time destroy their faith in God.

## **LIFE IN JUDAH**

Once Antiochus VII had died, the economy started to grow in Judah. Hyrchan and his government did not have to pay taxes any more to the Seleucid kingdom and looting of the newly taken territories increased the money supply in Jerusalem and Judah. Hyrchan opened up a mint in Jerusalem, which started to manufacture coins. Cheap slave labor made it easier to increase the agriculture business in Judah. Trading with other nations increased and suddenly the rich aristocrats had to compete with rich business men in Judah. With trade agriculture and manufacturing a middle class developed as well as plenty of work for laborers. Life was good for the rich as Judah was prospering financially and no foreign armies were attacking them. Hyrchan was a popular ruler of Judah. He begun a public building project; the walls of Jerusalem were repaired. He built a fortress north of the temple called the Baris and a fortress in the Judean desert, called Hyrcania.

Hyrchan knew that he wanted to avoid wars with stronger nations. He had sent diplomats to Rome on several occasions and the Roman Senate had passed a treaty of friendship between the two nations. Hyrchan also maintained good relationship with Ptolemaic Egypt, which had a large Jewish population. The cities of Athens and Pergamon maintained good relationship with Hyrchan.

## **TROUBLE IN PARADISE**

Not everyone in Judah were happy over the expansion wars led by Hyrchan. Even if he used mercenaries for his army, young men from Judah were still drafted and had to go to war, with many of them killed or wounded. The shopkeepers, the artisans and the farmers did not understand how taking more land from other nations, would benefit them. There were still poor people in Judah and the economic boom had done nothing for them.

The Scribes were busy educating the common people in the Old Testament, there was no pagan worship among the Jews, as they served the Lord to the best of their abilities. The synagogue system had been enlarged and covered all of Judah, including Jerusalem.

What the common people saw was the aristocrats and politicians gained more and more wealth and the priests became more worldly. Leaders of the common people complained at the Council, that they wanted peace, no more wars and conquest. They demanded that the people of Judah should concentrate on study the Torah and apply it to their daily lives.

This internal conflict led to the establishment of three political parties. The scribes formed a political party named the Pharisee Party.<sup>1</sup> The party stood for religious education and against military expansion.

The other party was called the Sadducees Party and the members were priests, political leaders, aristocrats and Jews who wanted to restore Israel to its former glory, like during the time of King Solomon.<sup>2</sup>

The third party became known as Essenes, which was more of a religious party. They were much smaller than the two other parties. They preferred communal living and they taught that poverty was a virtue. They also practiced a daily ritual bath through immersion to stay pure, asceticism.<sup>3</sup> Their priests could not be married. Some of them lived in communes in wilderness areas and it is from one of these communes that the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1949.

Both the Pharisee and Sadducee parties wanted to have pagans convert to Judaism, the Pharisees through teaching and the Sadducees through force.

The strange thing is that the Pharisee Party wanted to have a liberal interpretation of the Torah in principle, not being dogmatic, but taking the principles of the Torah and then applying them to the current time. By the time of Jesus, this had been reversed.

The Sadducees wanted a strict observance of the Torah, that every word should be observed.

As long as Hyrcan lived, he was able to control the two parties and keep them from open fights, but that changed with his death in 104 B.C.

## **THE NEXT GENERATION**

Hyrcan had four sons, Judah Aristobulus, Antigonus, Alexander Jannai, Absalom and Hezekiah. The sons had been raised in a palace, they had never known hardship or poverty. During their life time Judah had been strong and they had never experienced foreign armies coming into Jerusalem. According to historical records, they were spoiled and arrogant. Despite that they were the great great grandchildren of Mattathias, they had received a Greek education. Hyrcan had stressed that the education should also include military science. They despised the different political parties in Judah and considered themselves as aristocrats and above the Jewish people.

## **THE KINGS OF JUDAH**

### **ARISTOBULUS I**

Since Aristobulus was the oldest son of Hyrcan, he became the next ruler of Judah. He was not satisfied to be the high priest; he also added the title of king to him.

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<sup>1</sup> Pharisee means "One who is separated" in Hebrew.

<sup>2</sup> A member of a Jewish sect or party of the time of Jesus Christ that denied the resurrection of the dead, the existence of spirits, and the obligation of oral tradition, emphasizing acceptance of the written Law alone.

<sup>3</sup> A lifestyle characterized by abstinence from sensual pleasures for the purpose of pursuing spiritual goals.

His first order of business as king was to arrest three of his brothers and send them to prison to safeguard his position. He starved two of them to death and a few months later he had the third brother murdered in the palace. Aristobulus was an alcoholic and had lived a life of pleasure when he became king. He immediately started to increase the territory of Judah by attacking people groups outside Judah. He only reigned one year, when he died of alcohol abuse and different diseases. He reigned from 104-103. The people in Judah were relieved when he died.

### **KING ALEXANDER JANNAI**

A surviving brother, Alexander Jannai became king and ruled for 15 years and continued the wars to increase the territory of Judah.

In 89 B.C. King Jannai waged war against the Arabs in the south and his army was mostly destroyed. The Pharisees organized an uprising against him when he returned in a weakened condition. As Alexander was in the temple officiating as the high priest, there were thousands of Jews on the temple grounds. The Pharisees had in advance prepared to embarrass the king and on a given signal, the people brought out lemons they had brought with them and started to pelt the king. The ladder got furious and ordered his soldiers to attack the people and hundreds of them were killed.

The Pharisee leadership played dirty politics and requested that the Seleucid king come and help them to dispose of Jannai. Thousands of soldiers from the Pharisaic party joined the Syrians and King Jannai was defeated and forced to flee into the hillsides.

Some of the Pharisee soldiers realized that the Syrians had come to stay and thousands of them left the Seleucid army and joined forces with King Jannai and their combined force defeated the Seleucids and the Pharisee soldiers who were still with them.

King Jannai took revenge upon the Pharisees during a banquet at the palace for the Sadducees when he had 800 Pharisees crucified while his guests ate and drank and watched their archenemies killed.

### **QUEEN SALOME ALEXANDRA**

King Jannai on his death bed appointed his wife, Salome Alexandra, to be ruling Judea as queen in 76 B.C. Their oldest son Hyrcan became the high priest. She dismissed all political leaders from the Sadducee party and replaced them with Pharisees. During her nine-year rule, the Pharisees took revenge on the Sadducees and the hate between these two groups grew in intensity. Having this knowledge will help you understand the times during which Jesus lived in Israel.

The council that had been ruling Judah since the time of Nehemiah were now purged of Sadducees and replaced by Pharisee leaders. The name of the council was now changed to the Sanhedrin.

Once the Pharisees were in charge of the legislated branch of Judah, they passed a law that prohibited the state of Judah to wage war in order to increase its territory.

They also passed laws against superstition, that at this time were plaguing the Jewish people. These were pagan fables that had crept into the Jewish population.

The biggest achievement by the Pharisees was the universal school act. Up to this time in Judah, children had been home schooled with an elementary education. The law now required that every boy (girls were not included) in Judah were to be educated and schools were set up around the nation. But this system only worked in Jerusalem, other cities and larger villages. But it raised the literacy rate of the Jewish male population. Queen Salome died in 67 B.C.

## **SUMMARY**

In this sermon we have covered the years 143-67 B.C., a time period of 76 years. We have looked at the remaining years of the Seleucid kingdom and its surmise. This was a time of betrayal, murder and infighting among family members. There was no love, no grace, only war and hate. By their fruit we can determine that all the different kings were demon possessed to the Nth degree and ruled by Lucifer himself. **John 8:44; James 3:14-16**

As for Judah, it started out with war with the Seleucid kingdom, but as it was weakened, Judah more or less became an independent state, where the Jews could govern themselves. One would think that the Jews would be filled with joy and love to one another, but that was not the case. The Satanic archon over Judah and Jerusalem made sure that there would be no peace or harmony in Jerusalem and Judah. Murder, betrayal and for the first time in recorded history, 800 Jews were crucified at a banquet, where other Jews ate and drank and enjoyed the screaming from the dying Jews on the crosses. The Jews had not understood that they could not have two masters. **Matthew 6:24**

None of them were led by the Holy Spirit. **John 16:7-13**

***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?***