

17-18 Bible Study #13

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The Book of 1st Maccabees

Administrative Information

- The Bible Study Class will be presented in the parish hall every Tuesday morning from **9:30 A.M. until 11 A.M.** beginning **September 12, 2017** and ending **May 15, 2018** except for the following Tuesdays related to a holiday:
 - Nov 21, 2017 – Thanksgiving Week
 - **Dec 26, 2017 – Christmas Week**
 - **Jan 2, 2018 - New Year's Week**
 - Mar 27, 2018 – Holy Week
- The same class will be given every Tuesday evening from **7:30 until 9:00 P.M.** in the parish hall
- Contact info (703) 644-5873; email rew6710@gmail.com
- Inclement weather decision will be **based on Fairfax County Public School announcements**

A comparison of the two versions of the Old Testament

- ***Septuagint* - 46**

- Pentateuch – 5
- Prophets - 18
- Historical - 16
- Wisdom - 7

- **Hebrew Bible - 39**

- Pentateuch – 5
- Prophets - 21
- Writings - 13

Books Of The Old Testament

Septuagint

- *Pentateuch - 5*
 - Genesis
 - Exodus
 - Leviticus
 - Numbers
 - Deuteronomy

Hebrew Bible

- *Pentateuch - 5*
 - Genesis
 - Exodus
 - Leviticus
 - Numbers
 - Deuteronomy

Books Of The Old Testament (Cont)

Septuagint

- *Prophets – 18 (15 in common)*
 - Isaiah
 - Jeremiah
 - **Lamentations**
 - **Baruch ***
 - Ezekiel
 - **Daniel**
 - Hosea

Hebrew Bible

- *Prophets – 21 (15 in common)*
 - **Joshua**
 - **Judges**
 - **1 & 2 Samuel**
 - **1 & 2 Kings**
 - Isaiah
 - Jeremiah
 - Ezekiel
 - Hosea

Books Of The Old Testament (Cont)

Septuagint

- *Prophets (Cont)*
 - Joel
 - Amos
 - Obadiah
 - Jonah
 - Micah
 - Nahum
 - Habakkuk
 - Zephaniah
 - Haggai
 - Zechariah
 - Malachi

Hebrew Bible

- *Prophets (Cont)*
 - Joel
 - Amos
 - Obadiah
 - Jonah
 - Micah
 - Nahum
 - Habakkuk
 - Zephaniah
 - Haggai
 - Zechariah
 - Malachi

Books Of The Old Testament (Cont)

Septuagint

- ***Historical Books - 16***

- Joshua
- Judges
- Ruth
- **1 & 2 Samuel**
- **1 & 2 Kings**
- 1 & 2 Chronicles
- Ezra
- Nehemiah
- Tobit*
- Judith*
- Esther
- 1 & 2 Maccabees*

* Deuterocanonical books

Hebrew Bible

- ***Writings - 13***

- Job
- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Ruth
- Song of Songs
- Ecclesiastes
- **Lamentations**
- Esther
- **Daniel**
- Ezra
- Nehemiah
- 1 & 2 Chronicles

Books Of The Old Testament (Cont)

Septuagint

- *Wisdom Books - 7*
 - Job
 - Psalms
 - Proverbs
 - Ecclesiastes
 - Song of Songs
 - Wisdom*
 - Sirach*

* Deuterocanonical books

Hebrew Bible

- *Wisdom Books - 0*
 - Part of the Writings

Prophets Studied 2016-2017

- **Non Conical Prophets**

- Ahijah
- Shemaiah
- Prophets from Judah
- Lying prophets
- Hanani
- **Elijah**
- **Elisha**
- Three anonymous prophets
- Micaiah

15 prophets studied 2016-2017 in historical order

- Jonah
- Amos
- Hosea
- Isaiah
- Micah
- Zephaniah
- Nahum
- Jeremiah

15 prophets studied 2016-2017 in historical order (Cont)

- Ezekiel
- Daniel
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malachi
- Obadiah
- Joel

Prophet not studied in 2016-2017

- **Baruch** (*Septuagint only*)
- **Lamentations** (*Septuagint only*)
- **Habakkuk** (Both)

Baruch 600 BC Exile

- Baruch
 - Not listed in the **Hebrew Bible**
 - Believed to have been written in Babylon after the deportation
 - Was later sent to Jerusalem to be read at liturgical gatherings
 - Contains a prayer acknowledging guilt, but expressing hope

Baruch

- Is a wisdom poem in which wisdom is identified with the Law
- Gives valuable information about the Jewish communities in the dispersion and the ways their religious life was sustained

Lamentations Post Ex

- Listed in the Hebrew Bible in the **Writings** listing
- The Book of Lamentations is a:
 - Prayer book for the people of God who suffered the ravages of war
 - Collection of five psalm voices of victim's grief over the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem
 - Commentary on an intense relationship between the Lord and Judah

Lamentations

The writings are subscribed to *Jeremiah* by the Septuagint but many scholars believe that they were written by someone else

- The author was probably standing in the ruins when he composed the psalms
- They may have been written by a priest who remained in Jerusalem for the liturgical rites in the temple ruins

Lamentations

- Each year for centuries the people of Judah prayed these psalms on the anniversary of the destruction of the temple
- Ironically the Romans destroyed the second temple on the same day and month that the first temple was destroyed

Lamentations

- It was the sins of the people that provoked God to destroy the city
- It was a reflection of God's righteousness
- Paradoxically therein lies the hope for restoration
- Babylon is not mentioned because the author sees the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple as a theological rather than political event

Habakkuk 610-605 BC Pre Ex

- Habakkuk:
 - Listed in both the Septuagint and the Hebrew Bible
 - Is a contemporary of the prophet Jeremiah
 - Begins with a two part dialogue between the prophet and God where he complains and God responds
 - Wrote about sin in Jerusalem around 598 BC
 - Depicts God embracing Judah through the destruction of the Chaldeans

Habakkuk

- In one oracle he calls down five curses (woes) on the wicked oppressor (Babylon) and celebrates the final triumph of God
- Pronounces that those who love evil do so by their own actions because evil does not come from God
- Depicts Yahweh as a majestic God whose holiness can be seen by worshippers
- Concludes with a psalm of God's victory

Key Dates

- ***King Nebuchadnezzar* – 605-562 B.C.**
- ***King Cyrus* – 550 – 525 B.C.**
 - Fall of Babylon and the **Edict of Cyrus** – 539 B.C. allowed Jews to return to Israel and rebuild the Temple and the city
 - Based on prophecies of *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah*
 - **1st return – 538 B.C.**
 - **Zerubbabel** was the governor
 - **Jeshua** was the high priest
 - The Altar was built 536 B.C. (construction on the rest of temple halted for 20 years)
 - The Samaritan offer to help was rejected

Key Dates

- 536 B.C. Foundation of the Temple was laid
 - Youth rejoiced
 - Elderly wept
- 534 – 520 B.C. B.C. work stopped due to Samaritan harassment

Key Dates

- **2nd return 525-457 BC**
- *The prophet **Haggai*** called for the people to return to the construction of the Temple
- *The Prophet **Zechariah*** called for construction of the Temple 520 – 480 B.C.
- ***King Darius 522-486 B.C.***
 - Jews were ordered to stop building of Jerusalem
 - Issued an edict to stop construction
 - Asked by the Jews to check the records of Cyrus
 - Finds Cyrus letter and allowed building to resume
 - **Temple was completed and dedicated – 515 B.C.**

Key Dates

- ***King Artaxerxes* 465-424 B.C.**
 - Restoration of the temple and Jerusalem
 - Allows *Nehemiah*, his cupbearer, to return and rebuilds the walls of Jerusalem
- **3rd return 444 B.C.**
 - Ezra returned and taught in Jerusalem in 458 B.C.
 - **Nehemiah led the rebuilding of walls of Jerusalem – 444 B.C.**
- **Darius III – 336-330 B.C.**

Important Kings of the Greece Empire

- **Alexander the Great 356-323 B.C.**
 - Defeated **King Darius III in 330 B.C.**
 - Died in 323 B.C. at age 32
 - Succeeded by four generals who divided the empire
 - **Ptolemy I - VI 323- 170 B.C.**
 - Controlled Egypt
 - Defeated by **Antiochus Epiphanes in 170 B.C.**
 - **Seleucus I- IV - 305-175 B.C.**
 - Controlled Syria
 - Defeated **Ptolemy VI in 175 B.C.**
 - Controlled Palestine

1st Maccabees (Cont)

- **1st Maccabees 1:1-4**

- The first book of *Maccabees* leads off with the historical setting focusing on ***Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.)***
- These passages connects us to **Joel 3:6*** with the reference to the *Kittim*
 - Kittim was the great-grandson of Noah and a member of a coastland people
 - He was a descendant of *Japheth*, the third son of Noah (*Shem, Ham, Japheth*) and *Javan* his father (**Gn 10:2***)
 - In the Hebrew text of Joel we hear about an attack upon the people by the sons of *Javan*
 - The Septuagint translated Kittim as the Greeks

1st Maccabees (Cont)

- The explanation of who these people were helps us to believe that *Joel* was a post-exilic prophet talking about the second destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.)
- Thus, the people of *Kittim* were a northern seagoing coastal people (Greeks) who defeated King Darius III of the Persians *

1st Maccabees (Cont)

- **1st Maccabees 1:5-9**

- One of the most significant dates of antiquity was the **death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C.**
- Just before his death he divided his empire among **four** generals, each to rule a portion of the Empire (these were the four horns of **Daniel 8:1-8***)
- As you would expect, two of them, (along with their sons), began to war among themselves for power
 - **Ptolemy** (323-285), one of the four ruled over Egypt
 - **Seleucus** (312-281), the son of Antiochus, one of the four generals, gained control over Syria and most of Asia Minor
 -

1st Maccabees (Cont)

- These events mark the beginning of the reign of ***Antiochus Epiphanes*** in 137th year of the Kingdom of the Greeks (175B.C.)
- They also set the stage for the period of the Maccabees which ends with the arrival of the Romans in 63 B.C. under Pompey *

1st Maccabees (Cont)

- **1st Maccabees 1: 10-11**

- From the *Seleucids* we get the terrible ruler known as ***Antiochus IV (Epiphanes)***, the major protagonist during the Maccabean period who:
 - Was held hostage by Romans for 14 years
 - Succeeded his older brother on the throne in 175 B.C.
 - Invaded and captured Egypt
 - Came to Jerusalem and imposed the Seleucid stamp on Jerusalem in 169 B.C.

1st Maccabees (Cont)

- Plundered and desecrated the Temple (sacrificed pigs on the sacred altar)
- Issued edicts propagating pagan rituals and forbade the practice of Judaism including the Law and circumcision
- Burned the books of the Law
- Killed all who continued to practice the religion of the Jews
- Inaugurated the cult of Olympian Zeus in 167 B.C.
- Demanded tribute from the Jews
- Set the stage for the remnant under the leadership of Mattathias to begin the Maccabean revolt

1st Maccabees (Cont)

- At the outset of his rule some of the Jews decided to accept the Greek rule at the expense of the Torah
- “Lawless” meant that they did not keep the Torah (Law)
- The idea that “many evils came upon us” is a summary for the major themes running through the Books of Maccabees

1st Maccabees (Cont)

- Many of the people of Israel wanted to make a covenant with the pagan gentile Greek rulers
- Hearing this should make us cringe
- Obviously, such a covenant was forbidden in Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus and Deuteronomy as it implied accepting the worship of pagan gods!
- But, the “lawless ones” wanted to make a covenant with the gentiles because by that time many evils had come upon them*

1st Maccabees (Cont)

- **1st Maccabees 1:12-15**

- Here is our introduction to King *Antiochus Epiphanes*
- Father Sebastian is not sure how they attempted to “remove the marks of circumcision”
- But whatever they did, they tried to hide their Jewishness
- They abandoned the holy covenant with Abraham (**Gn 17**)
- Highlight **1st Maccabees 1:11 and 15*** as they are key to the entire passage

1st Maccabees (Cont)

- Father Sebastian stated that many people today are not aware of this thematic problem running throughout the story
- 1st Maccabees is very carefully constructed, and here the author was pointing out that the joining with the gentiles was very evil and forbidden by the Torah

1st Maccabees (Cont)

- **1st Maccabees 1:16-19**

- *Antiochus Epiphanes* was ruling over Syria when he decided to conquer the *Ptolemaic* kingdom of Egypt
- To get there he had to go through Israel
- *Antiochus Epiphanes* defeated *Ptolemy* and plundered Egypt*

1st Maccabees (Cont)

- **1st Maccabees 1:20-24**

- These events occurred in the year 143 of the Greeks (169 B.C.)
- Next, *Antiochus Epiphanes* turned his focus on capturing Jerusalem and Israel
- Looking at the list of his plunder, we once again see that the Ark of the Covenant was missing
- This meant that the Holy of Holies in *Zerubbabel's* new temple was empty
- This remained the major problem during the entire post-exilic period and into the New Testament *

1st Maccabees (Cont)

- **1st Maccabees 1:25-28**

- The RSV indicates that by modifying the structure of the text, the author shifted from prose to poetry indicating that this passage might have been sung
- The text returns to prose as the gentiles come to collect their taxes and then conquer the city of Jerusalem *

1sr Maccabees (Cont)

- **1st Maccabees 1:29-35**

- Two years later the king sent a large force to collect the taxes (tribute) and they plundered, burned and captured Jerusalem again
- They killed and captured many people and created a fortified **citadel** where they stored arms, food and spoils from Jerusalem *

1st Maccabees (Cont)

- **1st Maccabees 1:36-40**

- Again, the text shifts to poetry relating to the defilement of the sanctuary of the temple
- At this point we need **to look back at Daniel 9:24 *** where the prophet indicated that the exile would continue for 490 years before the defilements of the exile would end and the messianic age would begin
- This could be seen to fall between 170 -163 B.C. to include the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes to the purification of the temple and the death of Antiochus

Daniel

- **Daniel 9:24**

- *Seventy weeks of years* computes to 490 years
- Further, at the end of that period, all things would be completed to include the end of sin, atonement for their iniquities and the arrival everlasting righteousness
- Originally, Daniel expected the exile to end after the 70 year period prophesied by *Jeremiah*
- But here an angel tells Daniel that it will only be completed after 490 years

Daniel (Cont)

- **Daniel 9:25**

- The first question is which of the three commandments to restore and rebuild Jerusalem and the temple was the angel discussing
 - Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes all directed this to happen
- Who is the “anointed one” that he is talking about?
 - Cyrus is called the Christ in Isaiah 44-45
 - Zerubbabel was in the line of David but he was not the king, yet he was called an anointed one in the Book of Zachariah
 - Alexander the Great or Antiochus Epiphanes were anointed kings

Daniel (Cont)

- **Daniel 9:26-27**

- *“For one week”* is referring to Antiochus Epiphanes
- *“Shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease”* may be a reference to what we just heard in **1st Maccabees 1** when the Jews were ordered to stop offering sacrifices
- *“Abominations shall come”* we heard about abominations and desolation in **Daniel 11:31***
- *“The abomination that makes desolate”* sounds like what was prescribed by Antiochus Epiphanes who set up a pagan altar on the Jewish altar and offered pagan burnt offerings (again in **Daniel 12:1**)
- Many commentators see some references in 1st Maccabees to Daniel 9
- Let’s return to 1st Maccabees 1:41 *

1st Maccabees (Cont)

- **1st Maccabees 1:41-50**

- Here we see the full extent of Antiochus' hold on the Jewish people to make them comply with the rest of his empire
 - Surrender all customs
 - Cease all religious practices to include circumcising their children
 - Profaned the sanctuary
 - Profaned the Sabbath
 - Required to offer swine blood on altar
- Failure to comply meant death
- We also see that many Jews gladly accepted these mandates*

1st Maccabees (Cont)

- **1st Maccabees 1:51-53**

- The requirement of offer sacrifices in each city was a pagan sacrifice
- The true people of God fled, leaving only the gentiles and the Jews who had forsaken the Torah
- These were the Hellenized Jews *

1st Maccabees (Cont)

- **1st Maccabees 1:54-59**

- This date was happening in 167 B.C.
- As we know, the altar of burnt offering was outside of the temple proper
- The Greeks were requiring the burning of incense to the pagan gods on the top of the altar *

1st Maccabees (Cont)

- **1st Maccabees 1:60-64**

- This is a kind of introduction or prologue setting the stage for the book of Maccabees
- We will see some very intense stuff in the following passages
- Father said that this book would make an awesome movie *