

# Between the Testaments

# I. Septuagint –

[earliest existing Gk. translation of OT]

## LXX: tradition

- Tradition says 72 translators, 6 from each tribe, translated Pentateuch in 72 days [Hebrew to Greek]
- Alexandrian Jews wanted their Greek-speaking children to read Scripture
- Septuagint acquainted non-Jews with OT
- 300 NT quotations from LXX

# Lessons: The Word of God is...

1. **Accurate** – even in translation
  - Non-Palestinian Jews highly respected LXX ... until early Christians used it ... Messiah
2. **Powerful** – only if we use it
  - Greatest problem the Bible faces is not the attack of enemies, but neglect of friends
3. **Effective** – even in translation
  - “God-fearers” [Ac.10:2, 35; 13:16, 26; 17:4, 12; 18:7-8]. Paved way for gospel...
4. **Abiding** – 1 Pt.1:25 → Is.40:6-8. “Lord”
  - Most English OT render YHWH as LXX

I. Septuagint

II. Sectarians Among Jews

# 1. Sadducees

- \*Sect [party] of Jerusalem aristocracy and high priesthood...
  - Only members of high priestly / aristocratic families of Jerusalem could be Sadducees.
- \*They had made peace with political rulers and attained positions of wealth and influence
  - They were aloof from the masses and unpopular [Josephus]
- \*About 14 NT references (not counting references to chief priests)

## Sadducees denied...

1. Authority of oral law (tradition); interpreted Mosaic law more literally than Pharisees
2. Future resurrection, life after death (Mt.22)  
[Ant. xviii.1,4]
3. Angels (Ac.23:8) ... and demons

## Danger of secularism (Mt.16:5-12)

1. Mt.22:23-33 – no resurrection...
2. My old position: Sadducees believed Genesis – Deuteronomy is false...
  - Truth: they rejected entire OT
3. No record of Sadducee becoming a Christian



## Danger of secularism today

\*John Shelby Spong denied bodily resurrection of Christ: “Is not the primary message of the Easter narratives that even the barrier or death must not deter us in our quest for life and love” (Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalists, 146).

\*Closer to home: “If we are under the law to Christ ... So far, in my understanding, it is to love one another”

– If...??

– 1 Co.9:21 . . . 7:19

## 2. Pharisees

“Separated ones,” probably because of their zeal for the law and separation from influences of Hellenism (heirs of the Hasidim). Ac.26:5

Josephus: John Hyrcanus

John Hyrcanus felt that the Pharisees were opposed to him

He became Sadducee, influencing future High Priests

Sadducees controlled the temple; Pharisees maintained synagogues

## Not all Pharisees were bad

- \* Nicodemus, Jn.3:1, a ruler of the Jews
- \* Gamalilel, Ac.5:34, a Pharisee...teacher of the law held in respect by all the people...
- \* Saul, Ph.3:5, concerning the law, a Pharisee

# Lesson: Danger of smug self-righteousness

1. Lk.16:14, Pharisees respected the Word, but valued human traditions more
  - Pharisaical pride led to covetousness (balance scale religion)
2. Lk.18:9-14, if satan can't win one way, he will try another
  - Encourages accuracy in doctrine and arrogance toward others (Jn.7:45-49)

### 3. Essenes

\*Essenes (and Pharisees) continued the philosophy of the Hasidim

- Usually lived in monastic communities (e.g.: Qumran)
- Adopted young boys to perpetuate their ideals
- Josephus mentions an order of marrying Essenes

# 3. Essenes

## Lessons –

- We cannot obey Lord by isolating ourselves from the world.
- Jn.17:14-16
- Mt.12:30

## 4. Herodians

Jews: believed that best interests of Judaism lay in cooperation with the Romans

Name – from Herod the Great; supported his dynasty. He sought to Romanize Palestine.

Mk.12:13, with Pharisees...laid tax trap for Jesus: *Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar...?*

Lesson: do not put your faith in wrong place

1. Politics. Isa.14, Nebuchadnezzar
2. Power. Mt.2, Herod
3. Promises, Ac.24:26-28, Felix

## 5. Zealots

### Most Jews hated Roman rule

Pharisees viewed Roman rule as punishment visited upon Israel because of its sins. It was to be accepted with humility, in prayerful anticipation of the day when God would remove the horrible Roman yoke

Zealots refused to pay taxes, and considered loyalty to Caesar a sin

Gamaliel may have wrongly regarded apostles as Zealot leaders, Acts 5:35-39



## Success of Zealots (sicarii)

Ultimately the Zealots won the bulk of the people to their side

But their defiance of Rome brought on the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70)

They ceased to exist (Masada, AD 73)

Lesson: beware zeal without knowledge

Ro.10:1-3

Mt.10:4, Simon the Cananean (zealot, not Cananean – an Aramaic surname)

– (Luke interprets zealot – 6:15)

Jesus chose a <sup>1</sup>zealot and a <sup>2</sup>tax collector to spread His peace

2000 years ago...

No denominations existed; there were different groups / doctrines; not all could be right

1. Divisions happen when people do not take God's word seriously. 1 K.12
2. Lord's church was right; others were wrong.

Mt.16:18 . . . 18:17

Ac.14:27 . . . 15 . . . 16:5

Ac.20:28