New Testament Backgrounds

1. OT Foundations
   - “Look, the lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world” John 1:29
   - Climax of Institutions of Israel:
     - Prophet: Deut 18, Mal. 4:5f
     - King: greater son of David; temple builder
     - Priest: Aaronic → Melchizedek

2. NT Authors—diversity of witnesses
   - How can Peter say that God does not want anyone to perish whereas Mark claims that Jesus told his parables to prevent the repentance of some who heard them (2 Pet. 3:9; Mark 4:12)?
   - How can Jesus nullify the Mosaic dietary commandments in Mark’s gospel (Mark 7:15, 19) but claim in both Matthew and Luke that not a dot of the law will become void (Matt. 5:18; Luke 16:17)?

3. NT Authors—diversity of witnesses
   - How can James use Genesis 15:6 “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness”) to show that Abraham’s “faith was made complete by what he did” (James 2:22), when Paul uses the same text to show that “God…justifies the wicked” by faith without works (Rom. 4:5)?
   - How can Paul say that there is neither slave nor free in Galatians 3:28 but that slaves should obey their earthly masters with fear and trembling in Ephesians 6:5?

4. NT Authors—diversity of witnesses
   - How does the theology of glory advocated in Luke–Acts fit with the theology of the cross found in Paul?
   - How is it that the OT prophets promised a future new covenant where God would give Israel a new heart and restore them to their land but Paul’s letter seems to say the Jews stand condemned and many Gentiles have their hearts restored?
   - Diversity, contrary or Contradiction?

5. The Right person at the Right time
   - Gal 4:4 But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law, to redeem those under the law...

6. Initial Questions
What happens between Malachi (435 BC) and Matthew (AD 50-70)?

What shifts in culture took place between the Semitic OT and the Greek/Roman NT? What difference does it make?

Where did the synagogue come from?

Who are the Samaritans? Why do they hate Jews?

Who are the Pharisees and Sadducees?

Why is the NT in Greek instead of Hebrew?

Why was that time the “right time” for God’s son to come?
11. Rise of the Persians

- Major OT movements
- 612 BC Nineveh falls – Assyrian empire demise to Babylon
- 586 BC Jerusalem falls – people deported to Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar) - 1st temple gone
- 539 BC Babylon falls to Cyrus and the Medo-Persians
- Iranian/Persians – Aryan non-Semitic

12. Persians (539-333 BC) Cyrus – BB(i)BLED

- 559 Cyrus become king
- Cyrus in Bible Isa 45:1; 44:28; Ezra 1:2-4 (Edict); Ezra 6:3-8 esp. 6:11
- Benevolent policies—respect local customs, reverses exiles
- 3 Empires to conquer: Babylon, Lydia, Egypt
  - Babylon - Nabonidas
14. Cambyses (530-522 BC) TEASE

- Lydia – Croesus-Delphi Oracle
- Egypt—left to son
- Death / body 1000 miles / respect

- Egypt – takes it and Amasis daughter?, multilates corpse of Amasis
- Temple – rebuilding stops
- Apis Bull --Stabs it
- Ethiopia—Siwa lost in the desert
- Stabs himself—dies

15. Darius (522-486 BC) Empire organizer BBSSS GT

- Behistun Inscription-Elamite, Old Persian, Akkadian—usurper?
- Benevolent (Apis bull) + Firm (Ezra 6:11)
- Satrapy—governor organization
Street system-Postal system-Herodotus

Suez Canal?

Greece – Lost at Marathon

2nd Temple completed (515 BC)

16. Xerxes I (486-465 BC) BEG-300

Bel-Marduk statue melted down in Babylon

Esther’s husband (Ezr 4:6)

Greece – torches Athens, Loss at Salamis

300 Spartans versus Persia

17. Artaxerxes: (464-424 BC) NEE

Nehemiah was his cupbearer—wall builder

Egypt revolts

Ezra returns—scribe/priest

18. Later Persians: Disintegration

Darius II – Peloponnesian wars (Athens/Sparta (431-404 BC))

Xenophon in Anabasis tells of 10,000 Greek mercenaries to overthrow one side of Persian power struggling brothers –made their way back to Gk.—heroic tale

Darius III – lost battle of Issus 333 BC to Alexander—End of Persian Empire

19. Hellenism 333 BC

How did Alexander conquer the world in 10 years?

What happened to Alexander’s empire?

Why is the NT written in Greek instead of Hebrew?

How did the Jews get from Alexander to Roman rule?

Who were the Maccabees?
23. Alexander (333 BC)

- Philip II of Macedon – army fighting machine, son’s teacher Aristotle, 336 assassinated
- Alexander’s background - Aristotle
- Granicus River victory over Persians - 334 BC
- Issus victory over Persians (333 BC)
- Tyre (Ezek 26:1-6) - 7 months
- Siwa in Egypt
- Babylon – Roxanne, Opis banquet, intermarriage, drunk a lot...
- Hindu Kush mountains

24. Alexander (333 BC)

- Cultural amalgamations – transcending the polis, globalization
- Importance for NT: language, worldview: east [Semitic] → west [Hellenistic]

25. Diadochi – 4 Generals CLAPS

- Polis to oikoumene (whole civilized world)
- Cassander - Macedonia
- Lysimachus - Thrace
- Antigonus - Syria-Mesopotamia
- Ptolemy son of Lagi – Egypt
- Seleucus sent by Ptolemy to take Syria away from Antigonus

27. Tolerant Ptolemies (323-198 BC)
- Over Egypt, rule Palestine
- Ptolemy takes title of King (304 BC)
- Alexandria built by 200 BC--Library

28. Hellenism—Factions in Israel
- Areas of cultural interface: diaspora: REAP
  - Religion: Jewish // Greek // priests
  - Economic: taxes, merchants
  - Army: generals & army
  - Political: king, governors & courts
- Responses to Hellenism: TAWA
  - Tradition (Pharisees, separation ideology),
  - Assimilate (Sadducees),
  - Withdraw (Essenes, apocalyptic),
  - Attack (zealots)

29. Hellenism
- **Alexandrian allegorism**—hermeneutics, anthropomorphisms offensive
- Unified language—Koine Greek
- Septuagint (Hebrew→LXX – 250-150 BC) Greek translation of OT

30. Seleucids (198-167 BC)
- Antiochus III (the Great) – victory Panion 198 BC gets Palestine away from Ptolemy
- Romans begin taxing
- Antiochus IV (175-163 BC) Epiphanes
  - Hellenize the Jews: Grk. Deities, circumcision, pigs, Scriptures
  - Three high priests: OJM
Onias--money
Jason — gym, Hellenism
Menelaus—Benjamin, temple treasure
Abomination of Desolation

31. The Big Maccabees
Mattathias (167 BC)-- Father
Judas Maccabee (166-160 BC)—hammerer, Hanukkah
Poor Eleazar—Elephant man
Jonathan the diplomat, High priest
Simon the dynasty builder (Hasmoneans)

32. Hasmoneans – Questions
Who are the Hasmoneans?
Where did the Pharisees and Sadducees come from?
What was Herod the Great like? Why did everybody hate him?
How does Rome get into the picture?
Was Jesus an Essene from Qumran?

33. Hasmoneans
John Hyrcanus (135-104 BC) PECC
Religious Parties – Pharisees [Hasidim] /Sadducees [Hellenists]
Expansion of territory
Circumcision Idumeans (Edomites)
Children trained Greek
Aristobulus (103 BC)

34. Alexander Jannaeus (102-76 BC) F CAPE
Feast of Tabernacles
Crucifies Pharisees
Assimilation of all groups
Pharisees ask for Syrian help
Expansion of territory
35. Salome Alexandra (75–67 BC) HA MEPS
   - Hyrcanus = high priesthood; Aristobulus = army
   - Married: Aristobulus → Alexander Jannaeus
   - Education
   - Pharisee link
   - Sadducees abused

36. Hyrcanus II (66–63 BC)
   - Takes High priesthood
   - Aristobulus and Sadducees march on Jerusalem

37. Aristobulus (66–63 BC)
   - Hyrcanus goes to Aretas (Nabatean) for help
   - Enter Rome to break up the fight (63 BC)

38. Rome takes over (63 BC)
   - Pompey
   - Antipater’s boys (Idumean)
   - Roman Government structure
     - Senatorial provinces
     - Imperial provinces—legions, answerable to the emperor;
     - Client state under Rome

39. Herod the Great (37–4 BC) JK MCBS
   - Julius Caesar –First Triumvirate end 46 BC with Julius Caesar as supreme leader (assassinated 44 BC, Brutus).
   - Herod as “King of the Jews”
   - Mariamne (Hasmonean)
   - Cleopatra—Marc Antony, Second Triumvirate and Augustus (31 BC-14AD) as savior and good news (Luke)
   - Herod the Builder: Caesarea, Masada, Temple
   - Sons

40. Picture of Masada Fortress
41. Tetrarchs after Herod

- Archelaus: gets Judea, Idumea & Samaria [huge], kills 3,000 pilgrims to Jerusalem—exiled to Gaul (6 AD)
- Herod Antipas: gets Galilee & Perea: Kills John Bapt. At trial of Jesus, exiled France
- Herod Philip: Golan Heights, wife goes to Antipas
- Supposed to be 4 but only 3 listed; Archelaus may have 2 sections

42. Jewish Sects – Pharisees

- Pharisees
  - History
  - Sources—oral tradition big
    - Two types: Expository // Logical deductions
  - Expository
    - Midrash (ca. 200 AD) expository on Scripture
      - Halakhah: legal—ca 200 AD
      - Haggadah: stories—Rabbis
    - Targums: Hebrew → Aramaic translations

43. Jewish Oral Traditions

- Logical extractions/deductions
  - Mishna (200 AD)...oral tradition at Sinai; reflects beliefs around the time of Christ
  - Tosefta 250 AD –supplement comments on Mishnah
  - Talmud (elaboration on Mishnah): Babylonian (400 AD); Jerusalem (600 AD)

44. Extra biblical sources

- Apocrypha: 1 & 2 Mac., Ben Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon—not accepted by the Jews, 16th century AD first time in church council
- NT Pseudepigrapha:
  - Gospels of [Judas, Peter, Thomas. Phillip...];
  - Apocalypses of [Peter; Paul, Thomas]
  - Acts of [Peter, Paul, Andrew, John, Thomas]

45. New Testament Rabbinic Examples
Matt 23:25-26: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and plate but inside they are full of extortion; cf. Mishnah; Shammai (outside clean important), Hillel (inside is what matters)

- Lord’s prayer; Lk. 11:1
- Mat 7:4: You hypocrite, first cast the beam out of your own eye; and then shall you see clearly to cast out the mote out of your brother’s eye—Rabbi Tarfon similar
- Parables not found in DSS or pseudepigrapha but prolific in the Midrashim

46. Jewish Sects

- Saul/Paul; Gamaliel, Nicodemus—Pharisee Phil. 3:6f; respected by most!
- Sadducees--Hellenists
  - History—upper class, high priests; unpopular with masses
  - Beliefs: no resurrection, angels, oral tradition
- Essenes – Qumran-DSS
  - History—Hasmonean/Zadokite temple split
  - Beliefs—torah over temple scribes, monastic

47. Jewish Sects (cont.)

- Zealots—Kingdom political/military
- Samaritans—tale of two temples;
  - Origins
  - John Hrycanus destroys Samaritan temple
- Diaspora: Jews scattered around the world still, synagogues
49. Institutions

- Sanhedrin: High Priest run, Sadducees+ scribes+elders
  - Arrest and trial, no capital punishment; this court was disbanded after 70 AD
- Synagogue—background, diaspora
  - Structure: 10 heads
  - 4 Functions: school, worship, court, social (marrying/burying) among diaspora
  - Worship: Shema, prayer, Scripture, sermon, blessing

50. NT – Jewish backgrounds
- Josephus (37-100) – Jewish historian using Greek historiographic methods
- Philo (20 BC-50 AD)—Alexandrian Jew, merging of Greek philosophy and Judaism
- Later Judaism would see the LXX/Septuagint as a second golden calf (product of Hellenism; used by Christians)