Alright let’s go ahead and get started. Let’s open with prayer and then what I want to do today is wrap up our discussion of the political situation leading up to the time of the New Testament leading up to and including the time the New Testament. Then I want to move from the political environment to talk a little bit about the religious of the environment identifying what competing religious ideologies Christianity competed with as it began to take root in the first century world. So we’ll look at a number of the options religiously, although you’ll soon see that it's somewhat artificial to distinguish politics and religion in the first century-- to distinguish a political power and religious power. The two were very closely intertwined. But let's open with prayer and we’ll continue to look at the environment of the background and foreground of the writing of the New Testament.

Father, I pray now that You help us to focus our attention on issues related to the history, the background of what was going on in the first century during and leading up the writing of the New Testament. We do this not just to fulfill an academic exercise but out of hopes it will be better equip us to have the requisite background for reading and understanding Your revelation in a more profound way. So that we’ll have a greater appreciation of an understanding of the situation in which You originally revealed Yourself in order that we may have a greater appreciation and understanding of how that Word continues to speak to us as Your people today. So we commit this class to You we and ask for Your presence with us and Your enablement to think clearly and understand these things in Jesus’ Name we pray, Amen.

Alright, in the last class period we ended talking politically about the significance particularly of Roman rule and this map is meant to demonstrate the red line is roughly an
indication of the extent of Roman rule, the Roman Empire, of the first century so that's nothing escaped its power or its influence. We talked a little bit about the process of Hellenization which you remember go back before the spread of the Roman Empire. Hellenization was the name we give to the process of Alexander the Great spreading Greek influence, Greek thinking, Greek culture, and the Greek language throughout the world. But after Alexander's conquest and after another period of struggle the next superpower looming on the horizon was Rome. So Rome soon spread to include an empire that even far outstripped Alexander's. Rome was the superpower the day. You could live virtually nowhere to escape its influence and its impact. So even Jerusalem, even the land of Palestine, the land of God's people could not escape the influence and the power of the Roman Empire and of Roman rule.

So that one of the things that of both Jews and Christians alike wrestled with it in this kind of environment was living in the context of foreign rule and oppression what does it mean to be God's people? How do we maintain our identity as God's people in the midst of pagan and Roman rule? What does it mean to be God's people and how do we respond to that? How do we respond to God's promises when they seem to go unfulfilled? For example, as we said last class period, one of the significant covenants and promises in the Old Testament was the promise that God would restore his rule over his people; over creation through a king in the line of David. Now as God's people look around, instead of a son in David's line sitting on the throne now we have Caesar, a pagan ruler, ruling over the entire inhabited world. What does that do to God's promises? What does that do to us as God's people? Will God fulfill his promises? How do we respond to that? And much of the New Testament, I'm convinced, responds to those kinds of questions as to what it means to live life as God's people who have yet to see God's promises fulfilled but instead in a sense see those promises contradicted by seeing evil in the world by seeing a foreign ruler whose purposes and plans are inimical to God's purposes and plans. What does it mean to live as God's people in light of that?

Now in addition to the political environment as I said I want to look a little bit at the
religious environment of the first century, but as I already said it's somewhat artificial to distinguish the religious and political environments of the day. Instead religion and politics were very closely intertwined. You'll see that especially when it comes to looking a little bit more closely at the Roman emperors and how they went about the business of establishing and maintaining Roman rule. But if you lived in the first century, you would soon learn that there were a number of religious/philosophical options that were open for you to follow. So Christianity was not the sole religion that emerged. It emerged in competition with and in the context of a number of other religious and philosophical movements. But, again, keep in mind it's not easy to distinguish these from what was going on politically and historically during the time. I've listed several of the basic ones again painting with very broad brush strokes. I've listed some of the basic ones in your notes.

The first one is wrapped up with the thinking of Plato and again some of you may be far better scholars of Plato of his writing than I am but just to summarize what is important for our purposes is: one things that Platonic thinking passed down to a lot of people in the first century was the dualism between spirit and matter. That is, the physical world was seen as only a reflection of, only a shadow of, the true spiritual reality basically. So that what was important was the spiritual reality and there were different ways that the physical reality would be subordinate to that even sometimes denigrated and despised in light of the true reality which was the spiritual. The upshot of that was that, for most persons, thinking and in those terms salvation then meant an escape from the physical body or escape from the physical world and attaining to the true reality which in Platonic type of thinking, this dualistic type of thinking was spiritual. So Plato a passed on this legacy of this dualism between spirit and matter. Again what was really important was the spiritual world, and the physical world was seen as only a reflection, only a shadow of, the true reality. I going to argue that sometimes there are sections of the New Testament where the authors seem to be reacting to that kind of thinking. One way that might, whether consciously or not owe its thinking to Platonic dualism is the way that that surfaces in some
of our thinking today. Although, you don’t hear it as much, but often as Christians we talked about the salvation of souls or you hear about saving someone's soul. The soul referring to the immaterial, the spiritual part of the human being as if God is not interested in the physical body or the physical part of humanity. But again Platonic dualism emphasizing the spiritual over the physical. We'll talk more about that and how the New Testament responded to that type of thinking.

By the way I was going to show this bust of Nero, one of the Roman emperors. I was going to show that during our discussion of Roman rule. But Nero was one of the ones that he was known for being relatively cruel to Christians as legend has it he's the one that blamed Christians for the burning of Rome. There may be as tradition has it that the apostle Paul died under Nero's rule. There may be a couple of New Testament documents that were written addressing the Christians living under Neronic rule or under Neronic persecution.

The next for picture I want show you this is a stoa. This is the Greek word stoa is a word that refers to these columns. Basically that's a stoa. So you when see those pictures of Greek architecture and they have the big colonnades in the supporting the porches and things, those were known as stoa. That brings me to the second kind of religious/philosophical option in the first century and that is what is known as stoicism. Again stoicism is taken from the Greek words stoa which refers to one of these columns or pillars, and as we explain what it is you kind of see why. In fact I don't hear this a whole lot any anymore but have you ever referred to someone or heard someone referred to as “stoic”? Ok, a few of you have. The last time I taught this class don't think anyone had heard that so, you're doing well. Anyway, when you call someone “stoic,” what do we mean by that? If you say that someone is stoic or you refer their characteristic is as being stoic when what we mean by that? They’re brave unmoved in the face especially of adverse circumstances.

So in the first century the movement known as “Stoicism” basically said this: everything that exists, all exist in the world is matter. Nothing exists outside of the material
world. However, matter and the physical material world is infused with a kind of a divine order that is known as the “Logos” which is the exact word that John uses in John Chapter 1 to refer to Jesus Christ. But that same word Logos is the one used to refer to this kind of “divine soul” or “world soul” that permeated all physical matter according to Stoicism. So what that meant is the key to contentment, stoicism emphasized being content no matter what the circumstances. The key to contentment was simply realizing that you can't control everything, there's nothing you can do and simply to accept the way things are and not to respond in extreme emotions and not to respond in extreme ways. You can kind of start to see why it’s called “stoicism,” a pillar that just stands there--it's unmoved. A Stoic in the first century then was one that just accepted the way things were and realize that they could not control that. All there was, was matter. It was infused with this divine or world soul. They simply accepted things the way they were, realizing they could not control everything. The key to contentment was just accepting that and not responding with extremes in emotion. To live in harmony with the physical world or simply live in harmony with and except your circumstances is what Stoicism taught.

If you didn’t like that one, another religious option or another religious/philosophical option is what was known as “cynicism,” which is the third religion listed you notes. Cynicism very generally, maybe too simply, it called for the person to live a rather simple and unconventional life. So cynicism was called to cultivate the unconventional life. It kind of it kind of upset or overturn the status quo, the way things are, is the way things were. Cynicism was very critical of the status quo especially of wealth. It basically taught you were to deny wealth you were to deny physical comfort and just living a very simple life. There are actually some that think that Jesus had cynical tendencies that, by “cynical” I mean being a cynic in that by critiquing society, pursuing the unconventional simple life, and despising wealth and the comforts of the world. So that was basically cynicism, again very critical of popular culture and sometimes it could span, run the gamut from for more mild to more radical expressions of of cynicism. But that’s pretty much what cynicism was: pursue the simple life, the unconventional life, reject
comforts, reject wealth, or is critical of the popular culture.

Another religious/philosophical option is what is known as, “magic.” And by “magic” I don't mean sawing someone in half or causing someone to float or doing card tricks or something like that. But by “magic” I primarily mean this: in the first century magic although in the context of the Roman world is illegal it seemed to be fairly widespread. What I want to focus on in terms of magic is this: magic in the first century was a way of sometimes manipulating or calling upon and availing yourself of the power of the gods by using the correct formulas. Or, it could take the form for example of warding off demonic beings or exercising or casting out demonic beings by utilizing the correct formula, the correct spells, incantations and things like that. So magic was fairly prominent in the first century in the Greco-Roman world.

I have given you this as an example of this as an abbreviation for a what is known as a “magical text.” We've actually uncovered a number of early manuscripts that are known as “magical texts” or “magical papyri.” A papyri was simply a sheet to give you little bit of background some of you may have a talked about this in Old Testament class, I'm not sure. But a papyri was basically a piece of writing material and it came from a plant, a reed, that grew in swampy areas and you’d basically unroll these things and glue them together to produce writing paper. A lot of our New Testament manuscripts, as well as some other early manuscript writings, including these magical texts, occur on these papyrus sheets that have been discovered and preserved for centuries. But this is an example, obviously, in English translation from one of these magical texts. What I want you to notice is these words here that look kind of funky to you, are actually Greek words that are meant to be unutterable or unpronounceable but they're meant to be the names of different gods. As you can see by repeating the name over and over, by repeating in the correct order, and again I'm not sure how they would be pronounced because they are supposed to be unpronounceable. But you can see “God of god benefactor, Greek word, Greek name, Greek name, and you who direct day and night” followed by two more Greek names to express the name of this god. Again the thought was by uttering the right
formula one could call on the god and about the god or at least perhaps to avail oneself of
the power of the god for certain purposes. Or again there's other texts similar to this that
were incantations or spells to ward off the demonic or to cast out demons etc.

A couple of examples of where this might be significant in the New Testament. It is
entirely possible, in my opinion, at the very beginning of the Lord's prayer in Matthew
chapter 6 we all know the section: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy
kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” etc. What we don't often read
is what comes right before that were Jesus teaches his disciples to pray but he teaches them
to pray not as the pagans do, who babble and therefore think that somehow they can about
involve their god. I wonder to what extent Jesus may have this thing kind of thing in mind
that the repetition of the divine name over and over again in magical texts to evoke the gods
to act. So Jesus tells his disciples but that's not how you get the God, your father, to act on
your behalf like in magical texts by simply invoking his Name over and over in some
patterns so you can somehow manipulate him into acting on your behalf.

The other thing is given the prevalence perhaps of magic in the first century you
might begin to see how people may have responded to Jesus when he arrives on the scene
and begins casting out demons. It may have been easy for them to look at that and see that
in light of these magical texts and in light of the phenomena of magic. Here’s simply
another magician, in a sense. I don’t think they called him a magician. But here’s
another person practicing magic that is simply casting out with magical spells, invoking the
powers of the gods. Here is simply someone who's come to cast out the demonic. So you
can perhaps see how this might provide the backdrop for how some may have understood
Jesus, or misunderstood him, when he came casting out demons and performing miracles.

An interesting example of this gets into religion or religious practices more
generally, but along with that, another interesting phenomenon in the first century was
what were known as “oracles”. An Oracle originally referred to a certain location such as
a cave or something that you can go to and usually at these oracles there would often be a
priestess, a female priest, and you would ask the priestess a question. Maybe you wanted to
know, for example, if you were a general and you wanted to know if you’re going to win the war you were about to embark upon. Or maybe you want to know who you’re going to marry or whether you should quit your job or whether you should move somewhere or whether you should plant this crop or that crop. So what you would do is go to these oracles and there would be a priestess on duty. One of the most famous oracles was called the Oracle of Delphi. In fact, if you Google that you can see a picture the location of that and the ruins. But the Oracle of Delphi was a well-known oracle and I think on the seventh day of each month you could go to this Oracle, like a shrine and there would be a priestess on duty you would ask her the question and she then would ask the god and get a response and respond back to you. Sometimes the responses could be very ambiguous, “a mighty general’s going to win the war.” You think, “oh great this means I’m going to win” but maybe it wasn't referring to you. So the responses sometimes were very ambiguous but the point is you could, by invoking the right formula, invoke the gods to speak and to reveal themselves and answer your questions. So oracles were fairly prominent and you can avail yourself of them to get responses from the divine. You could get responses to your questions.

Another religious option that again is very broad is in your syllabus is pagan religions. The religious environment of the first century Greco-Roman empire tended to be very polytheistic, that is, it tolerated numerous gods. That's why I said earlier is as long as Christianity was just viewed as another type of Judaism, it was usually it was generally tolerated in the first century. As I said we need to get ourselves out of this framework where we see first century Christians always lived in danger. They always had to hide and the Roman armies were always going through the cities, dragging them out into the streets. That was very rare. A lot of the pressure came more from a local level. At times under Nero and in certain locations the pressure would be more acute. But a lot of the stories of Christians being dragged out in the streets or thrown to the lions in the arena a lot of that came a little later on. Christianity, interestingly, as long as it can be seen as just another religion like Judaism, Rome really didn't care a whole lot about it but the difficulty is when
it came to be seen as something separate and when it came to be seen as actually
challenging an exclusive religion that challenged the Lordship of Caesar. But the first
century Greco-Roman world is characterized by a toleration of a variety of pagan gods and
religions.

So that virtually any city that you would’ve lived during the first century would have
presented you with a variety of options for religious beliefs. In fact there were different
kinds of gods. There were gods of fertility, not only for childbirth, but for your crops.
There were gods, there were patron deities associated with you work, that is your success
even in work or farming was owed to the gods. So there was opportunity to worship and
show gratitude towards the gods who would have provided for your well-being. Most
Greco-Roman cities would've had a variety of temples that you could go to and worship for
a variety of reasons.

So this is one of the more famous temples. This is the Temple of Artemis that was
one of the most significant temples in Asia Minor, or modern-day Turkey, starting a little
bit before the first century A.D. There may be a couple New Testament documents that
have situations having this Temple in mind. For example, in the book of Acts the apostle
Paul finds himself confronting a situation surrounding the Temple of Artemis and the
religion that took place there.

A couple of other examples: this is the Temple of Apollo in the city of Corinth.
Again there are the stoa. Those are the remains of one of the temples in Corinth to the god
Apollo. This is this is the goddess Artemis in Ephesus. We’ll talk more about that in the
book of Ephesians. Although I’ll have something a little bit different to say about that
book. But the city of Ephesus, was known for the goddess Artemis who was the god of
fertility which you could tell by the way she is built. That was Artemis. This is a picture
of an altar that probably would have been found in an individual's home. So not only were
there opportunities to worship in the various temples at center of a Greco-Roman city but
also you often had your smaller private altars in your own home. This is one that I think
was actually found excavated from someone's home.
So my point is: in the first century you had a variety of religious options when it came to worship and frequently different cities were very pluralistic and tolerant of different gods. And again there are different gods responsible for your success at work or your crops or whatever. And it was expected that you would honor them and worship them and show gratitude for what they had done.

Another religious option, I think that's the last one. This is Zeus, a picture the god Zeus. Another religious option in the first century is what is known or what has been described as “Gnosticism.” Gnosticism comes from the Greek word *gnosis* which means “knowledge” and you'll see why that's the case. But actually full-blown Gnosticism as kind of a religious movement, so to speak, did not actually emerge until the second century after the New Testament documents had been produced. Yet most scholars are agreed that already Gnostic ideas that later emerged into full-blown Gnosticism were already present in the first century. Basically Gnosticism in some respects resembled Platonic dualism that we talked about the dualism between spirit and matter. Gnosticism said that basically the material world is evil and in fact the God of the Bible did not create the physical world. That was made by a lesser god that rebelled, in full-blown Gnostic thinking. But Gnosticism says that again the spiritual world is the real world, the true world and is good the physical world is evil. So salvation then consists of escaping from the imprisonment of the physical world and attaining to a spiritual existence. Where it gets its name Gnosticism, salvation comes about by the possession of a secret knowledge that belongs to an elite few. Hence the title “Gnosticism.”

Now this comes in this document fragment I think, we just talked about. This is a fragment of the what is known as the gnostic Gospel of Thomas which is a well-known writing in the first century which technically wasn’t a gospel, but a well-known writing produced in the second century that testifies to Gnostic belief and Gnostic thinking. This idea that salvation comes about by a secret knowledge that belongs to an elite few, and salvation consists of escaping the physical world. What this gnostic Gospel of Thomas is, is basically a record of Jesus teaching and it portrays Jesus teaching Gnostic ideas and
Gnostic beliefs. But again, so while this full-blown Gnosticism did not emerge until the second century a lot of the thinking may have already been prevalent in the first century. And so again is it possible that some of the New Testament documents may respond to Gnostic-type of thinking. There’s some who are convinced that they do.

A final religious belief, and you'll notice in your notes I have divided the religious beliefs again, and maybe a little bit artificial, but I’ve divided religious beliefs into religious beliefs in the Greek and Roman world but then religious beliefs or religious/political movements in the Jewish world. The last one I want to talk about is Emperor worship and here's where it becomes clear that politics and religion were blurred in the first century, cannot easily be separated. There was no separation of church and state, but instead, religion and politics were closely intertwined. That was certainly true of the Greco-Roman empire. As the Greco-Roman Empire began to spread, this idea that the Roman emperors soon began to be viewed as deities or as gods at first only after their death. It was only upon the death posthumously that an Emperor would be deified or considered God. However there is some evidence that towards the towards the end of the first century that living emperors began to, even if they did not demand it, at least accept acclamations of deity and actually titles of worship. There is evidence that one of the emperors that is, probably the Emperor ruling when the book of Revelation was written, the Emperor actually accepted, whether he demanded or not, certainly accepted the title of “Lord” and “God” and even “Savior.” So what was often going on in the first century perhaps the grew up along with worshiping other gods, it was natural that in connection that the Emperor would be worshiped as well. So along with some of the temples of the pagan deities were actually temples established in honor of some of the emperors. I think this next one is such a picture. This is the Temple of the ruins of the Temple of Domitian. Domitian is the Emperor who lived and ruled at the end of the first century. He's probably Emperor ruling when the book of Revelation was written. This is a again a picture of the ruins of the Temple to the Emperor Domitian. So it was not only other pagan gods but also you will be expected to render allegiance to the Emperor as well.
There were different kinds of temples. Some temples are actually sanctioned and established by the Emperor himself. But most temples were actually done in honor of the Emperor that is that the Emperor did not sanction. Perhaps the Emperor may have helped fund it or at least approved of it but often it was some wealthy individual in the community who would build the Temple as a way of showing honor to the Emperor who was responsible for their peace or safety and well-being, for being the savior of the world, for being the true Lord and God. So Emperor worship was endemic in the first century.

What is now modern-day Turkey, Asia Minor, in some of those cities those major cities like Ephesus and some of those other cities like Thyatira some of the cities you read about Revelation, a lot of them had one or couple temples built in honor of the Emperor. So you can begin to see as a Christian living in one of these first century cities especially in connection with your vocation you may be expected to participate in events such as a meal or banquet in honor of the Emperor, that would border on showing the Emperor worship and allegiance that only Jesus Christ deserved.

So Emperor worship was probably for the most part not enforced at the top. In other words, for the most part the Emperor was not going around forcing people to worship him. It usually was at the local level the persons who built and maintained the shrine in honor of the Emperor. It's unthinkable that you would rebel by refusing to join in. So again you and your town do not want to be perceived as failing to show gratitude towards the Emperor. So it is expected as a Christian that you would join in demonstrating allegiance, even bordering on worshiping the Emperor.

So you can start to see the difficulty that this might cause some Christians. To what extent can we engage in Emperor worship or honoring the Emperor yet still maintain our allegiance to Jesus Christ? Or is that not possible at all? It seems to me a number of books in the New Testament may address that issue.

For example in light of what I've said have you ever thought then about what this vocabulary of Jesus. Why is Jesus frequently called “Lord” in the New Testament? Why is he often called “Savior”? Well, you say that’s a word we’re taught in church that's the
right language used to describe Jesus Christ. Or what about what you even the word “Gospel”? The fact that this message about that Jesus Christ is come to provide salvation for humanity in fulfillment of the Old Testament, the New Testament writers frequently call that the “Good News of the Gospel.” Why do they do that? One reason may be because all those words God, Savior, Lord, and good news or gospel were common words used of the Emperor in the first century. The Emperor was often perceived as the Savior of the world or as Lord and God. I have a picture and in one of my books, a coin with a picture of Domitian on it and it calls him, “Lord and God.” So “Savior,” “Lord,” and “God” were frequent titles applied to the Emperor. The word “good news” that we translate gospel in English word was often used of significant events in the life of an Emperor such as the Emperor's birth. So if it may not be insignificant that the old the New Testament authors use that terminology.

I think they primarily got it out of the Old Testament but they may also be aware that they are using language that is subversive to the Roman Empire. That it's not the title for one who is the Lord of all. It's not the Emperor who is the Savior of the world. It's not the Emperor's birth or it's not the events surrounding the life the Emperor that are good news. But now that language gets applied to Jesus Christ who is the true Lord and God, the true Savior and the salvation he brings is the true good news. So I think quite often the New Testament documents tend to be subversive of Roman rule and ideology. Christianity rose up and was given birth to in the context of Roman rule. And so often the authors will present it as kind of the parody of or answer to what Rome claimed.

Alright, I think that's all I want to show. Any questions regarding Greco-Rome, before I move on to talk a little bit about on the Jewish side of things and Jewish religious/philosophical/political options. Any questions related to any of these Greco-Roman?

Question: Was Gnosticism considered derived from Christianity?

Response: Generally in my opinion: yes, I think it was is largely a second century movement again a lot of Gnostic documents are meant to try to demonstrate that Jesus and
the apostles actually taught Gnostic beliefs and Gnostic teaching.

Now when you consider Jewish options again I want to paint with a fairly broad brush strokes and I want to look at them in terms of when you look at your notes. I've listed a number of slogans here that you'll see: let's study Torah, let's separate, let's accommodate, etc. These slogans are mine. I'm not claiming that any of the people that I place under these categories would've actually subscribed to that or said that. But I think they are summaries of what these groups may have thought. But most of these groups that I want to talk about, most of these movements within Judaism, could be defined and seen as responses to the situation of foreign rule and oppression. How the various groups answer the question: “What does it mean to be God's people?” “What does it mean to maintain my identity as God's people as Israel in the context of foreign influence?” Again remember that the temple had been destroyed that there's no son of David sitting on the throne in fulfillment of Old Testament promises. Instead, now, Caesar’s on the throne ruling over everything. Besides all the pagan religions and influence the question is: what does it mean to be God's people and maintain my identity? How do we maintain identity as the people of God in that kind of situation? These different groups or movements within Judaism could be seen partly as responses to that question and various responses.

Now the thing I want to say though is, it would be incorrect to take all of Judaism, all the Jews in the first century, and to divide them up into these parties. There seems to be a simple common Judaism that everyone belonged to. But within that one can identify different parties, different movements, different responses to what's going on in the world in the context of Roman rule and foreign oppression and the fact that God's promises seem to be contradicted. How do they respond to that?

The first one is: Let’s study Torah. That’s not so much perhaps a response to foreign oppression but it certainly characterizes one expression of Judaism in the first century. I have in mind the label that you find in certain places in the Gospels of the scribes. They were kind of professional students or scholars of the Old Testament whose job it was to copy and to interpret the Old Testament for the people in general. But once
again I don't want to suggest these categories are all mutually exclusive. A couple them were but there's probably some overlap between some of them. But the scribes as their slogan could have said: “our slogan is: ‘Let’s study the Torah.”’ They were preoccupied with studying the Old Testament and in interpreting the Old Testament for the people of God. Probably the scribes are the ones that after 70 A.D. when the Temple was destroyed became to be known as the rabbis.

But the second group, a second slogan is: “Let's separate.” Within Judaism there would've been a group that could have claimed as its slogan: “Let's separate.” This group was interested in personal and moral purity. They were interested in strict observance of the Mosaic Law. They were highly respected in society and highly influential as well. They responded to the situation in the first century and Roman rule by pursuing purity, by keen observance of the law, by teaching others to do so, by moral purity through obedience the Law of Moses. They were very influential and for the most part highly respected. Does anyone know what group I have in mind, the biblical name? The Pharisees would be the group that could have said “let's separate” that is by pursuing moral purity through obedience of law. Again there's other things that we could say about the Pharisees. I will talk more about them perhaps when we get to the Gospels, but again, they thought that the transformation and renewal of society in the midst of Roman rule would come through observance of the law and in personal purity. That is the Pharisees. They were anti-Roman and they did not like the fact, obviously, that Rome was ruling. But they weren't quite ready to do what another group did that we’ll look at in a minute. Although some of them did and there's a little bit of overlap. But not all of them went as far as another group that we’ll look at in a moment.

Another group could have had as its slogan: "Let's accommodate." That is, this group tended to be a little bit more pro-Roman and they were more keen to maintain the status quo in the Greco-Roman world and were not particularly upset the Romans. They were generally at odds with the Pharisees. They basically consisted of the more well-to-do and elite members of society and were largely at odds with the Pharisees until they found a
common enemy and then they seem to be quite willing to cooperate with the Pharisees. That enemy was the person of Jesus Christ. The Pharisees in this group were willing to work together to try to get rid of this guy. What group do I have in mind? The Sadducees. Their most common and popular belief is that they denied the resurrection. That may have gone along with their desire not to upset the status quo by thinking in terms of complete restoration transformation of the world, etc. But again the Sadducees, the elite, the well-to-do members of society content and maintain the set status quo and not upset the Roman government.

Another group that's similar to the second one "let's separate," could have had as their slogan: "Let's withdraw." That is I'm thinking of a group that actually in response not only to Roman rule but in response to what they saw and thought was the corruption of the worship that was going on in Jerusalem. They weren't only upset with Rome, they were upset with other Jewish movements. They thought that Jerusalem itself in the Temple was corrupt. So this group decided that in response to that they would actually withdraw and set up their own sect, their own community and pursue purity, pursue obedience of the law and by doing that they would then usher in God's visitation to the world where God reestablishes Temple the true pure Temple. The one in Jerusalem was corrupt. They're dissatisfied with it. So by separating physically, setting up their own community, strict observance and purity then God would one day return, setup his kingdom and reestablish the Temple. Anyone know what group I have in mind? The Essenes or the Qumran community, there's some debate whether those two are the exactly the same.

The Qumran community, we'll talk a little bit more about them. Basically the Qumran community which is my next slide, this is some ruins of the community by the Dead Sea. You know them more properly from the mention of the Dead Sea scrolls. The Qumran Community was a sect that separated and established a community. You can see the Dead Sea in the background. They had very strict regulations as to who could get in. There were very strict steps that you had to go through to be admitted to the community. Again they were in the end insistent on their observance of the Sabbath and of the Old
Testament law. But they tended to think of themselves they did not have their own Temple, as the Temple until the day when God Himself would build a Temple, a renewed and physical Temple in their midst. So this was the Qumran community that isolated themselves and separated themselves to maintain purity and escape. Basically to escape the corruption of the world and society and express their dissatisfaction with what was going on in Jerusalem. This is one of the pictures of the cave may be Ted recognizes which--I think that's cave Four. There's a number of caves above that. I’ve shown you the pictures of the remains of community on the bluffs kind of those above it so what we call the “Dead Sea Scrolls” were found in a number of caves. This is cave number four. If you ever read the Dead Sea scrolls you'll see them are named like 4Q or 11Q, 1Q. Those numbers 4 and 11 are simply the numbers of the caves in which they were found. The Qumran community, I don’t think numbered them. These are just the numbers we’ve given them. So this is one of the caves that had a number of documents. This was a particularly fruitful cave that revealed the number of documents many of them testifying to the establishment of this community. Again they saw themselves as the true Israel-- the true people of God. They maintained that status and purity by separating themselves, observing the law. I think I have one more this is actually a picture of maybe I'm not sure what that is as well. These are some of the fragments of one of the scrolls. A lot of the scrolls look like this obviously they are old, a lot of them are in fragmentary form and again making it difficult to decipher but that's an example of one of the scrolls that was uncovered from one of the caves. Again I can’t remember precisely which one it was. If you're interested, don't everybody go run out check it out, but there are English translations of the Dead Sea scrolls, a number of them, so you can read them for yourself.

So those were the four of the main options as far as Jewish religion/political/philosophical movements. It might seem strange to call them “philosophical” but the historian Josephus calls all of these “philosophies.” You can kind of see even that the different Jewish religious movements were often tied with their political views, how they looked at Rome as well.
One final option and that is another group, again this is the group that's probably
difficult to draw distinct lines around as a separate group from all the others, but another
option, another expression of one's religious devotion and belief to God and the law and
how that makes a difference in your response to Rome was exemplified in the group whose
slogan could've been: “Let's fight”. So basically their view was, you have to remember
that God had given Israel the law that they’re to keep and God had also promised that that
he would set a King on the throne, a King in the line of David on the throne. Now that is
contradicted by a foreign ruler, in this case the Caesar of the Roman Empire sitting on the
throne. So their response is that if God has made this promise of a King ruling over us and
out of desire to keep the law and to maintain our purity their response was “let's fight”; that
is, “let's take up arms against Rome.” These were the first century terrorists basically “let's
take up arms against Rome” and in doing so they thought that basically God would join in
and give them the victory over Rome and they would set up His kingdom.

What group do I have in mind? The zealots. Paul obviously had Zealot tendencies it
appears. Paul himself tells us that he far surpassed his comrades when it came to devotion
to the Mosaic Law. He tells us that he violently persecuted the church of Jesus Christ. Paul
is a good example of a first century terrorist. So devout was he in his observance of the law
that you even try to destroy what he thought was a threat to his ancestral religion to
Judaism.

So again these are some of the options. They are not air-tight categories. There are
other options we could talk about. But again I don't want you to think that every Jew could
be put in one of these categories there seems and have simply been a general Judaism in the
first century and then several belong to these different groups as well. But one thing you
can see: it's important to understand this is while there is a there's an element of all of these
expressions of Judaism being bound together into what we could call a “Judaism”, that is
that demonstrated a loyalty to God, a desire for a person to obey his laws, to keep the Law
of Moses, to maintain the distinct identity as God's people. At the same time there was a
diversity of expressions to the extent that some people prefer the word “Judaisms,” plural,
over just “Judaism.”

But again what I want you to see is that Christianity emerged in the context of, in cooperation with, and sometimes in conflict with a variety of: religious, political, philosophical movements both from the Greco-Roman background and the Jewish background as well. Hopefully as we start working through the New Testament we’ll see how that shaped the way Christianity developed, how it responded to some of these movements as well.

Alright, have a good afternoon. I will see you on Friday.

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