

# **From Jesus to Christianity, Part I**

Religion and Society: Fall 2009

**I. Major Events and Texts**

**II. Some Main Factions in Judea**

**III. The Eschatological Tradition**

*and on Saturday...*

**IV. Jesus' Mission and Crucifixion**

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# Major Events and Texts

*539 BCE: Persia conquers Babylon*  
*End of exile*

*330: Alexander the Great conquers Persia*

*323: Death of Alexander — Seleucid Empire*

168: Revolt of the Maccabees (Hasmoneans)

63 BCE: Hasmonians rule as Roman clients

30 BCE-14 CE: Reign of Augustus

6 CE: Direct Roman rule of Judea

c. 6 BCE-33 CE: Life of Jesus (Yeshua ben Ioseph)

26-36: Pontius Pilate is governor of Judea

c. 48-60: Epistles of Paul

c. 50: Q (Quelle; "Source")

c. 50?: Gospel of Thomas (Nag Hammadi)

66-70: Jewish Revolt; Temple destroyed

c. 68-70: Gospel of Mark

c. 80-90: Gospels of Matthew and Luke

c. 90-100: Gospel of John

c. 125-150: "P"; earliest surviving NT fragment

# Factions in Judea (early 1<sup>st</sup> C.)

## Sadducees:

- Priestly aristocracy of Jerusalem
- Responsible for rituals at Temple
- Intermediaries between Romans and Jews
- Disappeared after fall of Temple

## Pharisees:

- Centered in synagogues
- Lay readers, interpreters of Torah
- Politically heterogenous
- Precursors of rabbis; leaders after fall of Temple

## Essenes:

- Separatist groups — avoided Temple
- Dead Sea Scrolls (Qumram)
- May have joined zealots during revolt

## Zealots:

- Violently resisted Roman rule (*lēstai*, *sicarii*)
- Apocalyptic, watched for a messiah

# “End of Times” and the Messiah

## ***Apocalyptic Eschatology***

= Revelation of knowledge of the end of time

Recurring theme in Judaism 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE-2<sup>nd</sup> c. CE

### **Main elements:**

- “Day of the Lord” — God’s army victorious
  - Led by God Himself?
  - Led by God’s *messiah*?
- Unrighteous punished, idolatry eliminated
- Kingdom of God established, everlasting peace
  - Israel, Jerusalem, Temple restored
  - Exiles will return
  - Gentiles transformed, at peace w/ Jews

### ***Messiah*** (cf. *meshiach*, “anointed one”)

- rooted in Davidic tradition
- a human military leader, divinely endowed (cf. Is. 45)
- dying messiah falls in battle
- cf. “Son of Man” (Dan. 7; 2 Esd. 13)