

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

THE ORIGIN STORY OF JESUS

RLJ-1894

JOHN S. TORELL

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PART 93: THE NOOSE TIGHTENS

WAR IS COMING

Any king engaging in the worship of pagan gods is at the mercy of Lucifer. Ptolemy IV Philopator was king of Egypt from 244-204 B.C. He was married to Berenice II and he won the Fourth Syrian War (219-217 B.C.) against the Seleucid kingdom. He died under mysterious circumstances and it is believed he was murdered. He was succeeded by his five-year-old son Ptolemy V Epiphanes. Sosibius and Agathocles became joint regent until Ptolemy V came of age. Sosibius did not want any competition from Queen Berenice and ordered her murder shortly after becoming regent. There was a fierce competition and regents came and went through different coup attempts.

When this instability became known outside of Egypt, Seleucid King Antiochus III and King Philip V of Macedonia joined to make war with Ptolemy V. This Fifth Syrian War lasted from 202-196 B.C. Egypt was badly beaten and lost all its territories in Asia Minor, as well as Syria and Palestine. Judah became a province of the Seleucid kingdom under Antiochus III.

The Jewish leadership did not participate in the wars between the Seleucids and the Ptolemies. Why should they participate in a war that did not benefit the Jewish people? They knew that in the end they would be a province of one or the other and both Greek kingdoms were two sides of the same coin.

THE POWER OF ROME

At this time the Roman Republic was on the rise and Antiochus III wanted to ensure that the Romans did not come east and threaten his kingdom. He tried to bribe them by sending a delegation from the royal family to Rome with a huge amount of gold and silver to make sure the Romans did not get involved in the fighting among the Seleucids and the Ptolemies. The royals became hostages of the Romans, who used them as a leverage to get more gold and silver.

In order for Antiochus III to procure more silver and gold, the population in the conquered lands were repeatedly taxed. The Seleucids tax collectors were ruthless and there were little the common people could do since soldiers accompanied the theft collectors. This caused the people to develop great anger toward Antiochus III and his régime.

The Jews were divided in their support of the Seleucids or Ptolemies. Joseph Tobias was dead and his son Hyrcanus had taken over the Egyptian tax system, favoring Ptolemy V. But the Tobias family was split as most of them favored Antiochus III and so



did a large number of other wealthy Jewish families who felt that Ptolemy V was going to lose the war. They thought to obtain favor by supporting the perceived winner.¹

DEFILING THE TEMPLE

Banks did not exist in Judah at this time and people used the temple to store their coins, silver, and gold. The priests ensured that records were kept and that no one stole the deposited funds. Thus, the temple served as a treasury for the tithes paid to the priests and it was also a Jewish national bank.

A Hellenistic political party developed with the aim to weaken the priestly administration in Jerusalem. They sent word to King Seleucus IV Philopator that substantial wealth was being stored at the temple in Jerusalem. He sent a tax collector named Heliodorus to plunder the temple in 187 B.C. There are two versions of what took place:

1. The first account is recorded in the book of Second Maccabees that holy angels met Heliodorus and forced him to flee from Jerusalem.
2. The second account is provided by Solomon Grayzel, who claims that when Heliodorus went into the temple, he was confronted by a man on horseback that had him almost beaten to death.²

I don't know which account is true, but something scared Heliodorus so badly that he returned home emptyhanded. Heliodorus did not travel alone to Jerusalem; he was a chancellor to the king, and as such, he would have arrived with a sizeable military force which makes the strange account an even greater miracle.

Eight years later in 175 B.C., Heliodorus led an uprising against Seleucus IV and killed him. He took the power and reigned as regent for young Antiochus, Seleucus' five-year-old son, until he was crowned the next king.

Antiochus IV was a younger brother of Seleucus IV who had been sent to Rome as a hostage. He was able to leave after being replaced by Seleucus IV's oldest son Demetrius I.

Once Antiochus IV arrived to Syria, he declared himself co-ruler with his five-year-old nephew, Antiochus, and terminated Heliodorus as regent. Five years later young Antiochus was murdered by great uncle Antiochus IV, who would be used by Lucifer to murder thousands of Jews during his lifetime as a king.

ANTIOCHUS IV (215 -164 B.C.)

Once he had taken power, Antiochus added Epiphanes (the visible god) to his name to inform everyone that he was not just a king, but a god! He was obsessed with becoming a great king and conquering territory. Despite thinking of himself as a deity, he was still a worshiper of Zeus. He frequented public bathhouses in Antioch where men engaged in adultery, fornication, and homosexuality. He was known for hosting great banquets and inviting aristocrats to dine and drink with him. People who did not like him called him "Epimanes," which refers to a mentally deranged person.

¹ A HISTORY OF THE JEWS, Solomon Grayzel, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1948, pp.46-53

² ibid p.54

BACK TO JERUSALEM

The Hellenistic party suffered a setback because they hoped the temple would be plundered to weaken the high priest and the council. A delegation traveled to Antioch where they told Antiochus IV of their disappointment that the Jewish people had not yet embraced Hellenization. Antiochus IV was delighted and asked them to share their plans for Jerusalem and Judah.

The Jewish leader of the group stated the first step was to remove Onias III, the current high priest. They wanted him replaced with his brother, Jason, who had embraced Hellenism. The delegation also brought a large sum of money that was given to Antiochus IV, who granted Jerusalem a Greek constitution and the right to coin money.

Antiochus IV sent a military detachment to Jerusalem and replaced Onias III with his brother as the new high priest. The common people were outraged as this was the first time since the return from Babylon that a foreign government had meddled in their affairs.

HELLENIZING JERUSALEM

Lucifer has one playbook that he has been using since the time he ruled the earth as a regent prior to Adam and Eve. He began by pursuing young people and gymnasiums were built within Jerusalem and the youth were encouraged to learn the Greek sports. The young priests neglected their duties at the temple and spent time in the gymnasiums. Public baths were built and Jewish men became addicted to sexual immorality. The clothing stores started to sell Greek style of clothing, people were encouraged to speak Greek, and streets were renamed after the Greek language. The common people stopped observing the Sabbath and synagogue attendance dropped.

The Hellenistic party leaders felt that the transformation of Jerusalem and Judah was not progressing fast enough and they sent another delegation to Antioch requesting that Jason be removed as the high priest.

Jason was forced to flee from Jerusalem and he was replaced with Menelaus, who was not a member of the priestly family in Jerusalem. Menelaus was instructed by the Seleucid government that he had to pay for his appointed office and he used temple money to appease Antiochus IV. He ordered holy silver and gold vessels from the temple to be sold to secure his position.

ANTIOCHUS IV IS FED UP BY THE RESISTING JEWS

Antiochus IV was enraged when he learned that the common people were resisting Hellenization. He ordered the Jewish religion obliterated and replaced by the Greek gods. The Syrian branch of his army was to march to Jerusalem and destroy Judaism. Menelaus was to be supported in his struggle against the Jews who clung to the God of the Old Testament.

The Hellenized Jews were more than happy to snitch on the Jews that stayed true to God. Thousands were killed in Jerusalem, and those that could, fled the city to hide in the countryside.

The occupying Syrian forces issued the following decrees:

- ❖ Jewish people were no longer allowed to observe the Sabbath day.
- ❖ No Jewish feast days could be observed.
- ❖ Jewish baby boys were not to be circumcised.

A large statue of Jupiter was erected above the altar in the temple. Strangely enough, the statue did not bear any resemblance to Jupiter, but an image of Antiochus IV.

Menelaus was to preside as the high priest in the temple as animals were sacrificed to the statue. The final indignation was that pigs, the most detested animal in Judaism, were to be sacrificed on the temple altar. This took place in 168 B.C.

THE HASIDIM MOVEMENT

Joshua ben Sirach's teachings led a group of people who became known as "Hasidim." They felt that the Torah should be followed word for word. They did not believe that God had given them the right of defend themselves and were essentially pacifists.

When belief in God and the Old Testament was outlawed in Judea, Seleucian soldiers fanned out over the countryside to every village and city to enforce the new law. Many men, women and children chose to die than renounce their faith in God.

Thousands abandoned their homes and farms and fled to the hills. The Jews who embraced paganism and abandoned their faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob started to betray those who resisted the Syrians. From a Christian perspective, these men and women were demon possessed and filled with hate towards their own people. The betrayals caused thousands of men, women and children to be slaughtered as the soldiers discovered their hiding places.

This should not come as a surprise and we know that Lucifer does not change his tactics. During the horrible years of Nazi Germany, millions of Jews were rounded up and put in concentration camps. The SS units in charge of the camps enlisted Jews who were willing to turn on their own people. "Kapos" were more evil and sadistic than the SS soldiers. Kapos reported Jews to the SS if they violated any rule and ensured they worked hard. When the SS told them to punish a Jewish inmate, the Kapos mercilessly beat them to a pulp and most died from the severe beating. Kapos were not paid with money, but were given better quarters, more food, and did not engage in slave labor. No Kapo survived when the camps were liberated by the Allies in 1945 as they were ripped apart by the inmates for their cruelty.

Jewish farmers and artisans that fled to the mountains and hills started an uprising. There was one thing that bizarrely hindered them and that was their refusal to fight on the Sabbath day. Once this became known to the Syrian army, they only attacked Jewish fortifications on the Sabbath. Thousands of Jews died because they refused to defend themselves.

SUMMARY

The Word of God cannot be broken or destroyed. Lucifer thought he had come to the time where Judaism was going to be destroyed with the following events:

1. He removed the high priest.

2. Installed a pagan statue next to the altar in the temple.
3. Pigs were sacrificed in the temple on a daily basis by a renegade Jew acting as the high priest.

Lucifer failed to take into account that God was still on the throne. There is no crisis in heaven and a reversal was coming. **Isaiah 55:6-13; 1 Peter 5:8-9**

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?