

Pharisees,
Sadducees, &
Civil War

Daniel 11:33-34

DANIEL

33 Those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for many days. **34**

Now when they fall they will be granted a little help, and many will join with them in hypocrisy.

John Hyrcanus (134-104 B.C.)

- He annexes the coastal plains and Edom (Idumea), both major trade routes, and destroys the Samaritan Temple on Mt. Gerizim.
- **The Idumeans were compelled to be circumcised and to convert to Judaism.**
- There is considerable irony in the grandson of Mattathias forcing religious conformity on a people at the end of a sword...

Hyrcanus Dies in 104 B.C. DANIEL

- But before he does, this lifelong member of the Hasidim, repudiated the Pharisees and declared himself a Sadducee.
- His children were aristocrats raised in the royal palace, their training was more Greek than Hebrew, and they looked with disdain upon the Pharisees.
- A struggle ensues for the throne.

A Tyrant Rises

- Hyrcanus' eldest son emerged as the victor; he was named Judah, but he preferred his Greek name, Aristobulus.
- After taking the throne, he cast three of his brothers into prison, where two are thought to have starved to death, while another brother was murdered in the royal palace.

Aristobulus (104-103 B.C.) DANIEL

- He continues his father's expansion and annexes land into Lebanon.
- He will be the first to take to himself the title of King.
- Josephus would declare him the first Jew in 481 years to “wear the diadem on his head” (Ant. xiii, 301) – more specifically, the first Jewish “king” not descended from Judah.

Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 B.C.)

DANIEL

- At his death, Aristobulus had one surviving brother in prison; his name was Jonathan and his Greek name, Alexander.
- He also expanded into Egypt and the Transjordan, and the Jewish state was comparable to what it had been in the days of David and Solomon.
- He began to build a navy.

Conflict with the Pharisees

DANIEL

- Open rebellion broke out at the Feast of Tabernacles when Alexander (the Priest-King) poured out a water libation at his feet instead of on the altar.
- Those in the Temple were enraged and pelted him with Temple coins; in response, Alexander called upon his soldiers to restore order, and hundreds were killed.

Civil War Begins

DANIEL

The Pharisees entreated the king of Syria to aid them.

Understand that these are the descendants of the Hasidim asking the descendants of Antiochus Epiphanes to aid them against the descendants of the Maccabees!

The Syrians Came

DANIEL

- And forced Alexander into hiding in the Judean hills, but now a new problem was at hand.
- **The Pharisees realize that the Syrians were now in position to claim Jerusalem; they also believe that Alexander and the Sadducees had been sufficiently punished.**
- And so, the Pharisees defected, joined Alexander, the now united Jews defeated the Syrians.



Alexander Returns

DANIEL

And institutes a hunt for the leaders of the rebellion in order to make an example of them.

He gave a banquet to the Sadducean leaders to celebrate his victory, and as the entertainment for the evening...

He crucified 800 Pharisees.

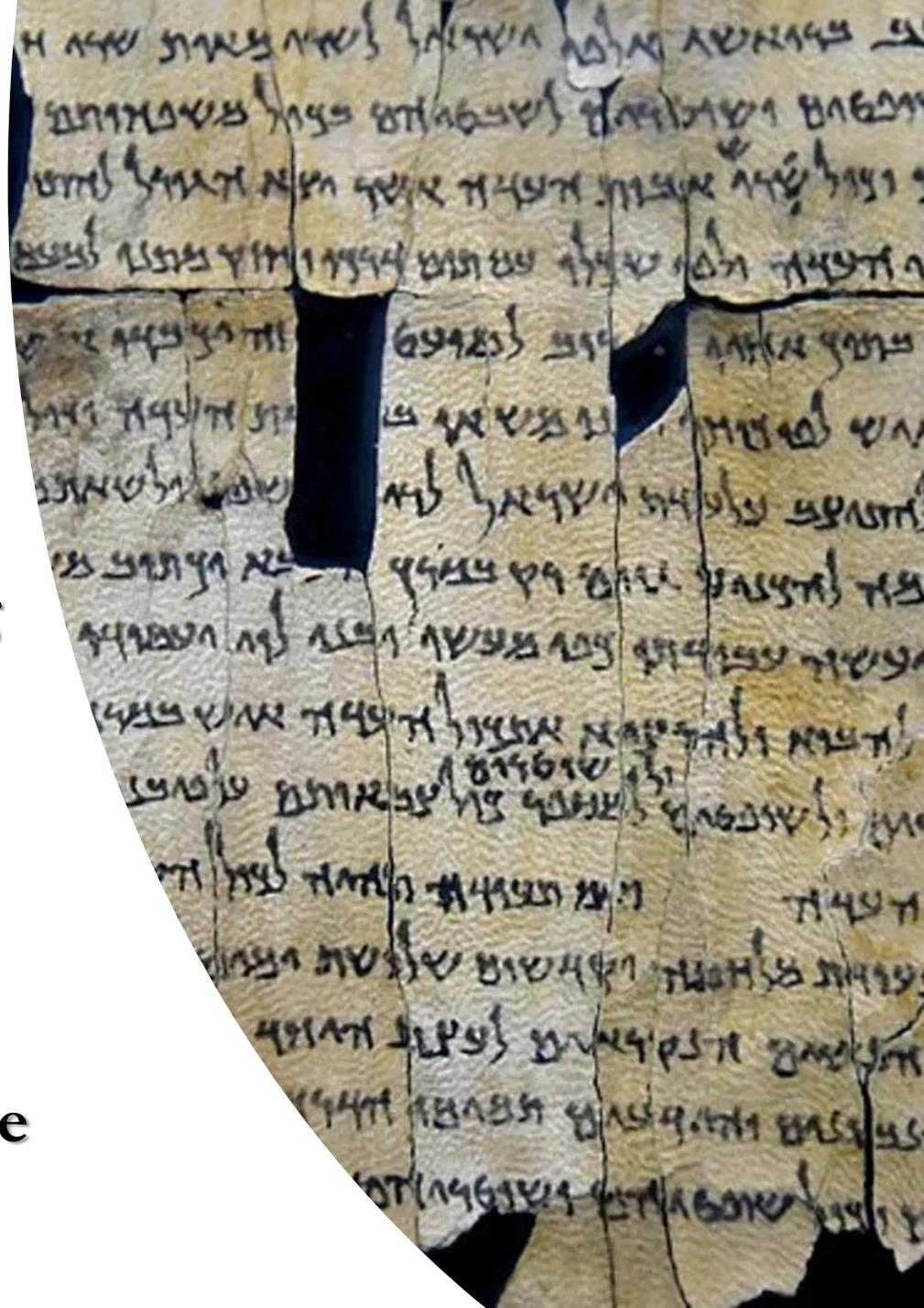
Now You Know

DANIEL

**Why Pharisees and
Sadducees Hold
Such Animosity for
One Another in
Jesus' Day.**

A Qumran Connection

In the Habakkuk commentary found among the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran, there are four references to a “Wicked Priest” who “ruled over Israel” with a proud heart “and he forsook God and betrayed the precepts for the sake of riches.”



Tradition Says...

Alexander repented on his deathbed and instructed his wife, Salome Alexandra, to dismiss his Sadducean advisers and reign with the aid of the Pharisees.

(Of course, Alexandra's brother, Simeon ben Shetah, was a leader of the Pharisees, so she may have influenced the dying king.)

Salome Alexandra (76-67 B.C.)

DANIEL

- She had been married successively to Aristobulus and Alexander Jannaeus, and succeeded the throne as queen at nearly 70 years of age.
- As a woman she could not be high priest, so her son, Hyrcanus II, assumed that role and his brother, Aristobulus II, received the military command.

The Pharisees' Turn

DANIEL

- Under Alexandra, the Pharisees made improvements, particularly in the area of education.
- **The Sanhedrin decreed that every young man should be educated in the Hebrew Scriptures.**
- The goal was that the towns and cities of Judea would produce a literate, informed people.

The Reign was Peaceful

DANIEL

- But if the Pharisees were happy, the Sadducees were resentful; the wounds remained open.
- To make matters worse, the Pharisees used their power to seek revenge for Alexander's massacre, and many Sadducees were killed.
- Potential civil war loomed again...

The Sadducees' Plot

DANIEL

- They found their man in Alexandra's younger son, Aristobulus II.
- He was a soldier, and appealed to the Sadducees, who dreamed of imperial expansion and worldly power.
- His older brother, Hyrcanus II, was congenial with the Pharisees and the rightful heir...

Hyrcanus II (67-66 B.C.)

DANIEL

- Already serving as High Priest, Hyrcanus II succeeded his mother to the throne.
- Immediately, Aristobulus II led an army of Sadducees against Jerusalem, and the Pharisees had neither the heart nor the skill for warfare.
- Hyrcanus II surrendered all his honors to Aristobulus II, who became both King and High Priest.

Aristobulus II (66-63 B.C.) DANIEL

- At his accession, Aristobulus and Hyrcanus vowed “eternal friendship.”
- Aristobulus’ eldest son, Alexander, married Hyrcanus’ only daughter, Alexandra.
- However, peace was short-lived, and Hyrcanus fled to the court of Aretas, the king of the Nabatean Arabs.

While There...

- He meets an Idumean named Antipater.
- Antipater saw in Hyrcanus an opportunity to fulfill his own dream of being a political power in Judea.
- He persuaded Hyrcanus that he had been unjustly deprived of his hereditary rights by his brother, and the deposed king joined forces with the Nabatean Arabs.

Hyrchanus Invades

- With the backing of the Nabatean army and besieges Jerusalem.
- **Aristobulus is caught totally by surprise, and he shuts himself up in the city while both sides prepare for a long siege.**
- Meanwhile, the Romans arrive in Syria in 63 B.C., and because of the unrest, send emissaries to investigate the events down the road in Judea.

Enter Rome

- Because of the unrest during this civil war, the Roman general Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus (you know him better as Pompey) sent his deputy Marcus Aemilius Scaurus to take possession of Seleucid Syria.
- **Both brothers appealed to Scaurus, each endeavoring by gifts and promises to win him over to his side.**

The Soap Opera

- Scaurus favors Aristobulus after a generous gift was given, but ultimately, Pompey sides with Hyrcanus, the weaker brother and more reliable ally of the Roman Empire.
- **Aristobulus and his son were captured in 63 B.C. after falling to Marc Antony and his calvary.**
- They were later killed by the Romans, and Hyrcanus II was restored to the high priesthood (without civil authority).

Hyrcanus II (63-40 B.C.)

DANIEL

However...while the government was in the hands of Hyrcanus II as High Priest and Ethnarch, effective power was in the hands of his adviser Antipater the Idumaeae.

So, What?

DANIEL





The Son of Antipater

Would be
known to the
world as
Herod the
Great



Next Week:

**Enter Rome
(and William
Shakespeare)**

DANIEL