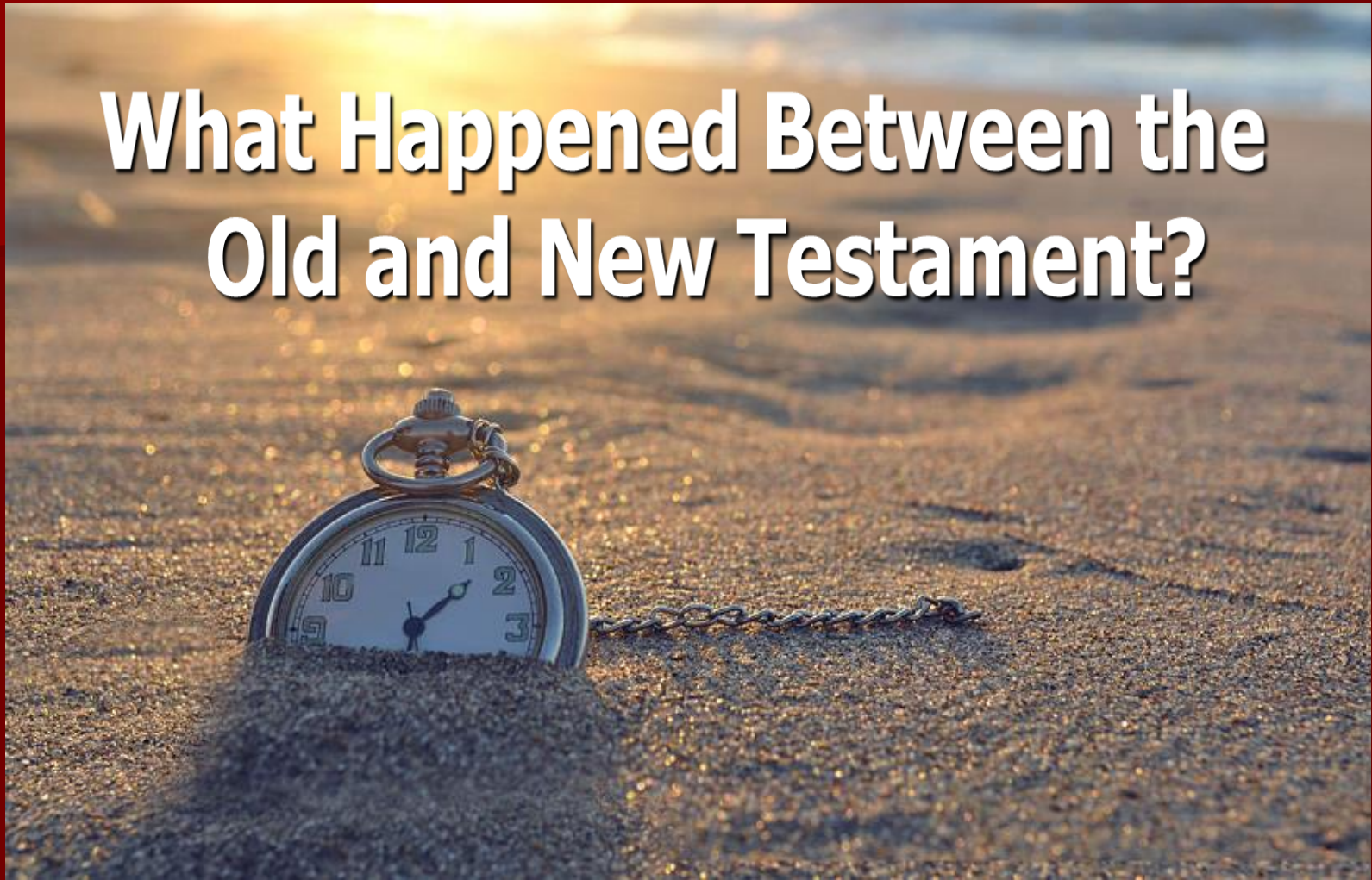


What Happened Between the Old and New Testament?



Neal Parker

What Happened Between the Old and New Testament?

■ Intertestamental Period

- The Old Testament period ended under the imperial control of Persia.
- **In the New Testament, Rome is in command.**
- The interval between the Old and the New Testaments is a dark period in the history of Israel and Judah.
- **It stretches itself out over about four centuries. During this time there was neither prophet nor inspired writer in Israel or Judah.**

What Happened Between the Old and New Testament?

■ The Persian Era (397-336 BC)

- The Persians were the dominating power in the Middle East as far back as 536 BC. God used the Persians to deliver Israel from Babylonian captivity (Dan 5:30-31).
- Persia's attitude was tolerant toward the Jewish remnant in Palestine, until internal rivalry over the politically powerful office of high priest resulted in partial destruction of Jerusalem by the Persian governor.



What Happened Between the Old and New Testament?

■ The Persian Era (397-336 BC)

- The Babylonian captivity was used by God to purge idolatry from His people, who returned to Jerusalem with a new reverence for the Scriptures and a firm grasp on the theological concept of monotheism.
- The rise of the synagogue as the local center of worship happened in the Persian Era.
- Scribes became very important for the interpretation of Scriptures in the synagogue services.
- Towards the end of this era, a temple rose up in Samaria, establishing a form of worship that rivaled Judaism.
- That event encouraged the ultimate social and religious separation between Jew and Samaritan.

What Happened Between the Old and New Testament?

■ The Greek Era (336-323 BC)

- Alexander the Great, in many respects the greatest conqueror of all time, was the central figure of this brief period.
- He conquered Persia, Babylon, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and western India. Although he died at thirty-three, having reigned over Greece only thirteen years, his influence lived long after him.



What Happened Between the Old and New Testament?

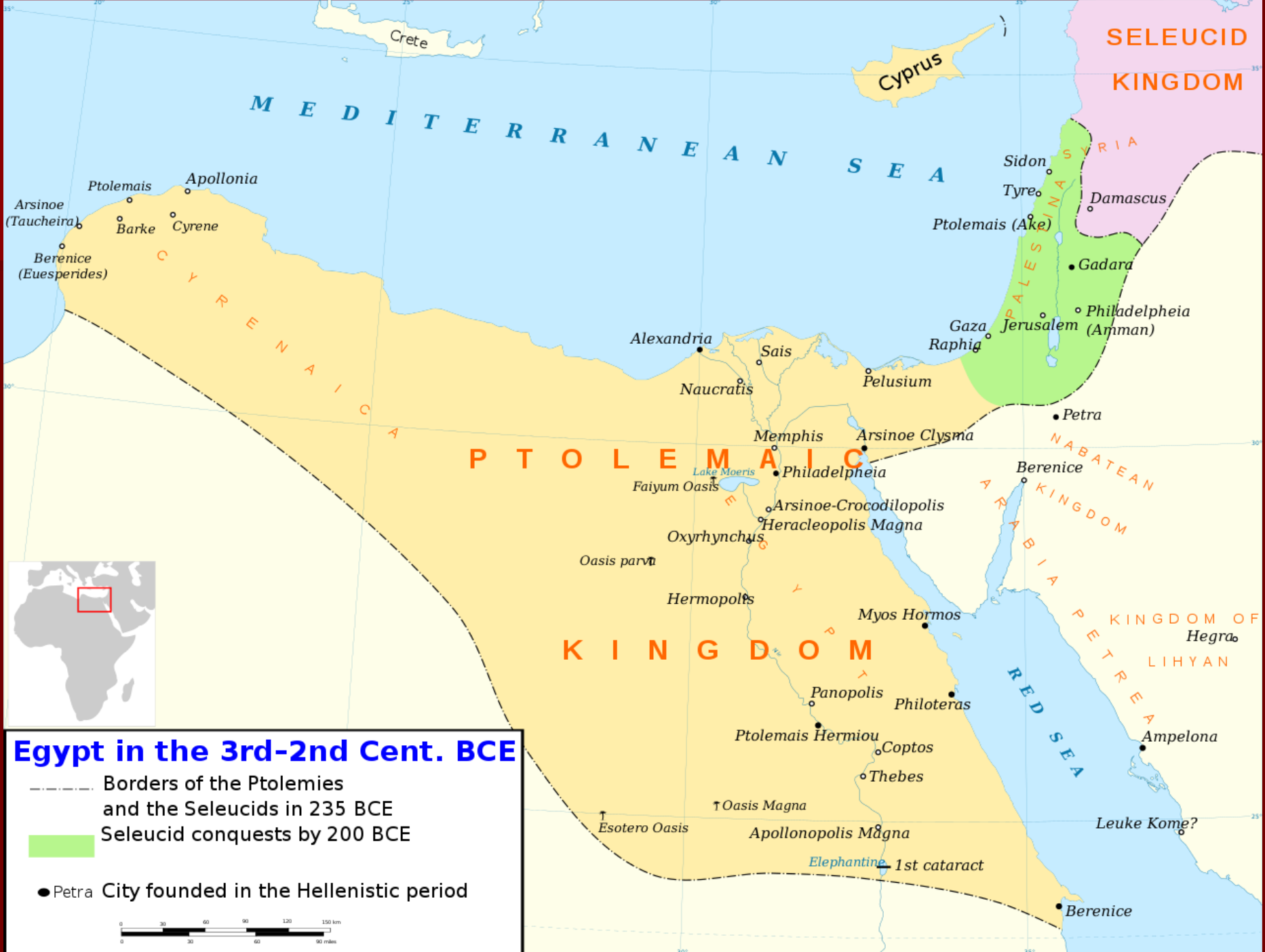
■ The Greek Era (336-323 BC)

- Alexander's desire was to found a worldwide empire united by language, custom, and civilization.
- Under his influence, the world began to speak and study the Greek language. This process, called Hellenization, included the adoption of Greek culture and religion in all parts of the world.
- Hellenism became so popular that it persisted even into New Testament times.
- The struggle that developed between the Jews and Hellenistic influence was long and bitter.
- Although faithful Jews staunchly resisted polytheism, Greek was common enough to need a Greek translation of the Old Testament.

What Happened Between the Old and New Testament?

■ The Egyptian Era (323-198 BC)

- With the death of Alexander in 323 BC, the Greek empire became divided into four segments, which were Daniel's "four kingdoms" that took the place of the "large horn" (Dan 8:21-22).
- Ptolemy Soter received Egypt and soon dominated nearby Israel. He dealt severely with the Jews at first, but toward the end of his reign and on into the rule of Ptolemy Philadelphus, his successor, the Jews were treated favorably.
- During this time, the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) became authorized.



Egypt in the 3rd-2nd Cent. BCE

- Borders of the Ptolemies and the Seleucids in 235 BCE
- Seleucid conquests by 200 BCE

● Petra City founded in the Hellenistic period



What Happened Between the Old and New Testament?

■ The Egyptian Era (323-198 BC)

- The policy of toleration followed by the Ptolemies, by which Judaism and Hellenism coexisted peacefully, was very dangerous for the Jewish faith.
- A gradual infiltration of Greek influence and assimilation of the Greek way of life took place. Hellenism's emphasis on beauty, shape, and movement encouraged Jews to neglect Jewish religious rites. Worship to become more external than internal, which had a lasting impact upon Judaism.
- Two religious parties emerged: the Hellenizing party, which was pro-Syrian, and the orthodox Jews, in particular the Hasidim or "Pious Ones" (predecessors of the Pharisees).
- A struggle for power between these two groups resulted in a polarization of the Jews along political, cultural, and religious lines.

What Happened Between the Old and New Testament?

■ The Syrian Era (198-166 BC)

- When the Syrians defeated Egypt in the battle of Panion in 198 BC, Judea annexed to Syria.
- Under the rule of Antiochus the Great and his successor Seleucus Philopater, the Jews, though treated harshly, were nonetheless allowed to maintain local rule under their high priest.
- All went well until the Hellenizing party replaced the high priest and set off a political conflict that brought Antiochus to Jerusalem.
- In 168 BC, Antiochus set about destroying every distinctive characteristic of the Jewish faith, forbidding sacrifices, circumcision, and observance of the Sabbath and feasts. He also desecrated the Most Holy Place by offering a sacrifice to Zeus.

Seleucid Empire



What Happened Between the Old and New Testament?

■ The Syrian Era (198-166 BC)

- During this era, the Jewish religion became divided over the issue of Hellenism.
- The groundwork was laid for an orthodox party, generally led by the scribes and later called the Pharisees, and for what we may call a more pragmatic faction of Jews which became more or less associated with the office of high priest.
- The pattern of thinking upon which the latter group was based fostered the rise of the Sadducees at a later date.

What Happened Between the Old and New Testament?

■ The Maccabean Era (165-63 BC)

- When a Syrian official tried to enforce heathen sacrifice in Modein, Maccabeans revolted, slew the Syrian official, and fled to the mountains.
- The revolt consisted of three successions and they successfully retook Jerusalem, cleansed the temple, and restored worship. Jews commemorate this event as the Feast of Hanukkah.
- Finally, the Jews received their independence (142 BC). They experienced almost seventy years of freedom under the Hasmonaean dynasty.

What Happened Between the Old and New Testament?

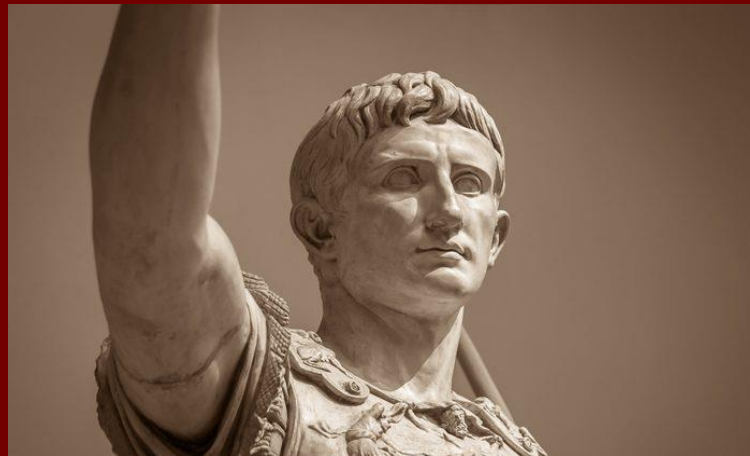
■ The Maccabean Era (165-63 BC)

- The most significant religious development resulted from a strong difference of opinion concerning the kingship and high priesthood of Judea.
- Emphasis had not been on the line of Aaron but political strength, which Orthodox Jews resisted.
- When John Hyrcanus became governor and high priest of Israel, his power and popularity led him to refer to himself as a king.
- This flew in the face of the orthodox Jews, who by this time were called Pharisees. They recognized no king unless he was of the lineage of David, and the Hasmonaeans were not.
- Those who opposed the Pharisees and supported the Hasmonaeans were called Sadducees.

What Happened Between the Old and New Testament?

■ The Roman Era (63-4 BC)

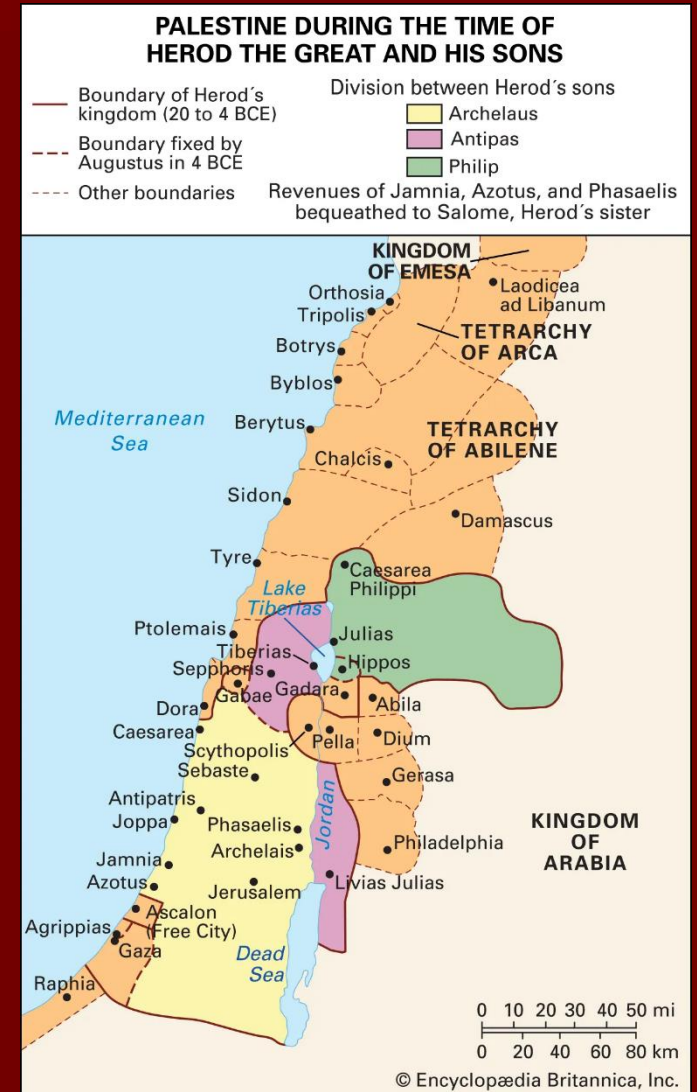
- The independence of the Jews ended in 63 BC, when Pompey of Rome took Syria and entered Israel.
- The Roman leader in anger took the city by force and reduced the size of Judea.
- In 47 BC, Julius Caesar appointed Antipater the Idumaean procurator of Judea. Herod, the son of Antipater, eventually became the king of the Jews around 40 BC.



What Happened Between the Old and New Testament?

■ The Roman Era (63-4 BC)

- Although Herod the Great, as he was called, planned and carried out the building of the new temple in Jerusalem, he was a devoted Hellenist and hated the Hasmonaean family.
- He killed every descendant of the Hasmonaean family, even his own wife Marianne, the granddaughter of John Hyrcanus.
- Then he proceeded to murder his own sons. He is on the throne when Jesus was born in Bethlehem.



What Happened Between the Old and New Testament?

■ Jewish Sects of Jesus' Time

- **Sadducees** / Claimed to be descendents from Zadok (High Priest under Solomon) / Theological conservatives; Political liberals.
- **Pharisees** / “Separated Ones” / Developed Oral tradition that interpreted Scripture (written and oral).
- **Essenes** / Not mentioned in New Testament, but mentioned by historian Josephus / Rejected Jerusalem priesthood and temple.
- **Samaritans** / Believed Shechem and Mt. Gerizim as holy place (not Jerusalem and Mt. Zion) / Moses was only prophet & intercessor.
- **Zealots** / Extremists / Forbid paying taxes to Rome / Believed in armed rebellion and killing for belief.
- **Scribes** / Guardians of the Law / Required absolute reverence from their students.

What Happened Between the Old and New Testament?

■ Jewish Institutions at Jesus' Time

- **The Temple / Only one Temple existed and it was in Jerusalem.**
- **The Synagogue / Place of worship, education, study of the Law and place of social functions for the community.**
 - **Greek term meaning "gathering place"**
 - **Most scholars believe it originated during or shortly after the exile**
 - **Tradition said that at least ten adult Jewish males were required for synagogue.**
 - **Order of Service: The Shema from Deuteronomy 6:4-6 / Prayer / Reading of the Lesson of the Law / If a competent person was present, he would give an exposition of the Scripture passages read. / Benediction**
- **The Sanhedrin / Supreme Judicial council of Judaism / Arbitrator and Final Decision / Origins: 70 Elders under Moses / Roman Procurator could ratify or veto their decisions /**