

BIBLE 1105

THE NATION OF ISRAEL

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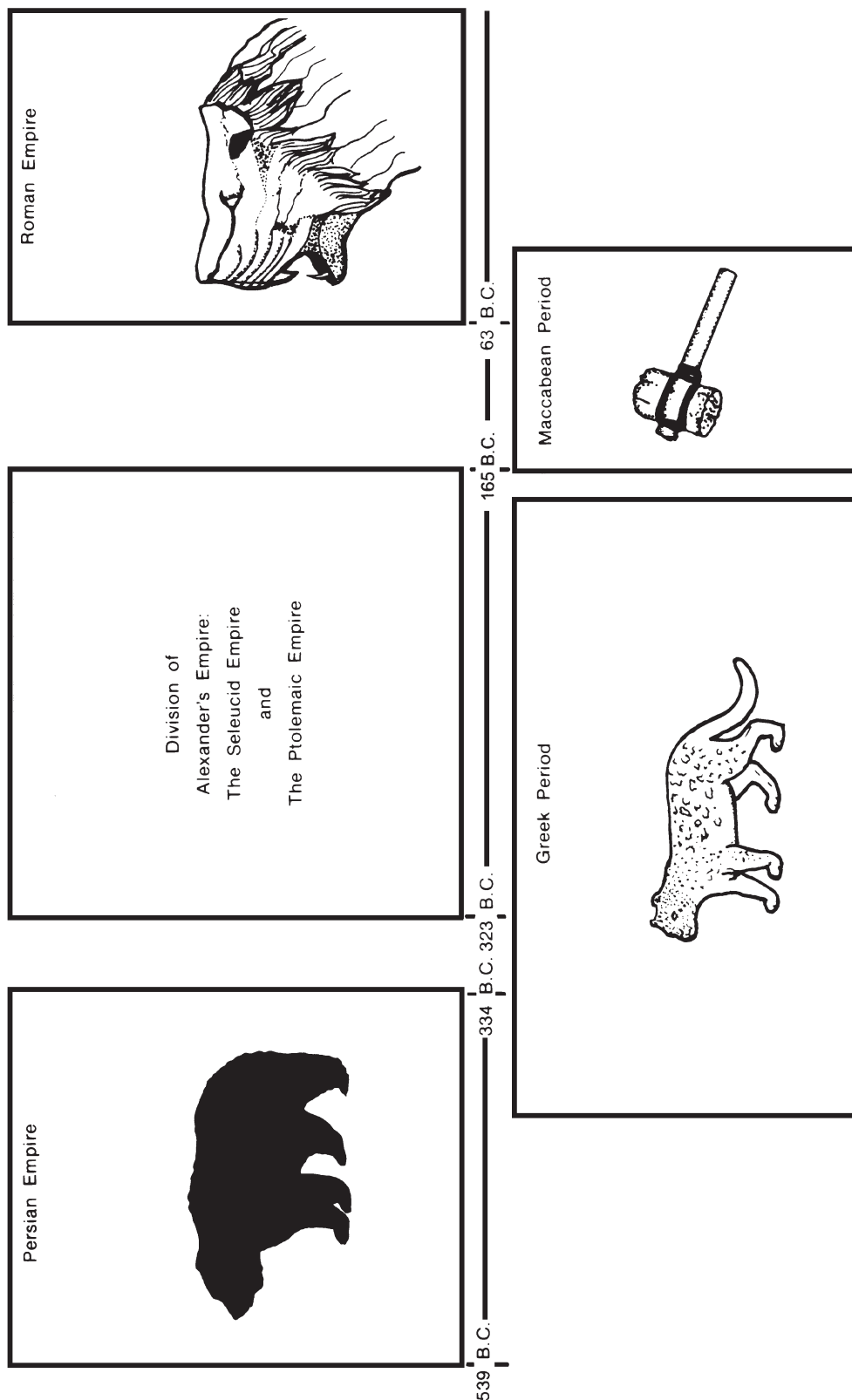
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INTER—TESTAMENTAL TIME LINE



Under the Persian Empire which lasted from 539 to 334 B.C., the Jews fared well. They were allowed to return to Jerusalem, to rebuild the Temple, and to observe their religious institutions without interference. Judea was governed by high priests who were responsible to the Persian government. This arrangement insured the Jews a great measure of autonomy. However, this arrangement also encouraged the priests to become politically oriented and sowed the seeds of future trouble. Soon the priests cultivated a greed for the office of high priest and this greed was marked by intrigue, jealousy, and even murder.

Alexander the Great brought an end to the Persian Empire. In 333 B.C., this young Greek ruler and his armies passed from Macedonia into Asia Minor and defeated the Persian armies. He continued southward through Syria and Palestine into Egypt where he was welcomed as a deliverer from Persian oppression. There was no need for a campaign against the Jews. Alexander had become a friend to the Jewish people when Jaddua, the high priest, came out to meet him and told Alexander of Daniel's prophecy which said that the Greek army would be victorious (Daniel, Chapter 8). Alexander had previously dreamed of this event and recognized the occurrences as being by the miraculous hand of the God of the Jews.

Although Alexander had been mighty in battle, the **Hellenistic** culture was to become his legacy to the Middle East. In each country of his empire Alexander founded a city which served as a model for reordering the life of the country along Greek lines. In these model cities, usually named Alexandria, he erected fine buildings, gymnasiums, and theatres. Individuals were encouraged to speak the Greek language, to adopt Greek dress, and to live a Hellenized life style. At the age of thirty-three, Alexander died in Babylon, after twelve short years which revolutionized the political, economic, and cultural life of the entire Near East. Historians have said that Alexander the Great so changed the ancient world that nothing following his career could ever be as it was before.

After Alexander's death, the Hellenistic Empire was divided among his four generals. Later, the empire was divided between two ruling families, the Ptolemies and the Seleucids. General Ptolemy I, surnamed Soter, meaning Deliverer, seized Jerusalem on a Sabbath day in 320 B.C. The central area of Ptolemy's kingdom

was the southern section of Alexander's empire, mainly Egypt. Ptolemy dealt kindly with the Jews, allowing them to settle in Alexandria, which became an important center of Jewish thought for many centuries. Under Ptolemy's son Philadelphus, the Alexandrian Jews believed that their heritage was being swallowed by Hellenistic influences. To preserve their heritage, they translated the Old Testament Scriptures into the Greek language. This translation, achieved by seventy Jewish scholars, became known as the Septuagint.

The Seleucid family, beginning with Seleucus I, ruled the northern section of Alexander's empire known as Syria. As the Seleucid empire began to increase in power, wars developed between the Syrian princes (Seleucids) and the Egyptian rulers (Ptolemies), with Palestine as the central battleground. The Seleucids finally gained control of Palestine in 200 B.C., which marked the end of the peaceful era of toleration toward the Jews. The Syrians were determined to enforce Hellenism upon the Jews. The Jews who favored the Greek culture became fiercely opposed to the conservative orthodox Jews and the office of the high priest. The political rivalry between these factions gave the Syrian ruler, Antiochus Epiphanes, an opportunity to overthrow Jerusalem in an attempt to remove all traces of the orthodox Jewish faith. He erected the statue of the Greek god Jupiter in the Temple, and swine were sacrificed on the altar. Jews were forbidden, under penalty of death, to observe the Sabbath, to practice the ancient rite of circumcision, or to celebrate the Jewish feasts. Copies of the Scriptures were destroyed; and Jewish men and women were beaten, killed, or taken into slavery. The orthodox Jews were willing to die for their faith, but some were not convinced that they should die passively.

An aged priest of a village near Jerusalem, along with his five sons, rose in rebellion against the Syrian oppression. Mattathias, his sons, and some followers fled to the hills and began planning the first historical account of guerrilla warfare against the Syrians and the Hellenistic Jews. After Mattathias died, his son Judas, known as *the Maccabee*, meaning *the hammer*, carried on the revolt. The Maccabees soon regained the city of Jerusalem. On December 25 they celebrated an eight-day feast of dedication, called Hanukkah, or the Festival of Lights, which marked the end of the desecration of the Temple.

Wars between the Syrians and the Maccabees

continued from about 165 to 63 B.C. With the aid of the upcoming power of Rome, the Maccabees governed Palestine. Pompey, a Roman general, finally seized Jerusalem in an

attempt to cease the political fighting. Pompey eventually subjected all of Palestine to Roman domination.



Write the correct answer on each line. Choose from the list on the right.

- | | | |
|------|--|-----------------|
| 1.42 | The inter-Testament period lasted _____ years. | 165 |
| 1.43 | The Persian Empire lasted from approximately
a. _____ to b. _____ B.C. | 334
400 |
| 1.44 | The armies of Alexander the Great passed from
Macedonia into Asia Minor, defeating the Persians,
in _____ B.C. | 333
63
12 |
| 1.45 | Alexander's reign lasted only _____ years. | 320 |
| 1.46 | Ptolemy Soter seized Jerusalem in _____ B.C. | 8 |
| 1.47 | The Maccabean period lasted from a. _____ to
b. _____ B.C. | 25
539 |
| 1.48 | After regaining Jerusalem, the Maccabees celebrated
an a. _____ -day feast called Hanukkah, which
began on December b. _____ . | |



Complete these statements.

- 1.49 Alexander's legacy to the Middle East was the _____ .
- 1.50 The main area of the Ptolemies' kingdom was _____ .
- 1.51 During Ptolemy Philadelphus' reign, Jewish scholars translated the Old Testament into Greek. This translation became known as the _____ .
- 1.52 The Seleucids ruled the northern part of Alexander's empire known as _____ .
- 1.53 The originator of the Maccabean revolt was an aged priest named _____ .
- 1.54 *Maccabee* means " _____ ."



Answer this question.

- 1.55 What specific events led to the Maccabean revolt? _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

New Testament period. During the four hundred years following the **Diaspora**, the Bible record is silent. During this period events of history occurred that gave Judaism a distinctive ideology including the formulation of various Jewish sects. God was providentially preparing the way for the coming of the Messiah. John the Baptist was used of God as the forerunner of Christ, yet for the Jewish nation his message of warning and preparations went unheeded. The Messiah Himself was scorned and rejected by those for whom He had come. Matthew 23:37-38 recorded Jesus' anguished lament over His rejection by His Jewish brethren: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

Following Jesus' death and Resurrection, the apostles continued to preach the Gospel to the Jews until God opened the doors of ministry to the Gentiles. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, never forsook his own Jewish brethren but uncompromisingly preached that their father Abraham obtained the Covenant of God through faith. The seed promised to Abraham were those who would believe God. When the Jews rejected their Messiah, they opened the door whereby Gentiles might also become the heirs of Abraham. In Romans 2:29 Paul wrote, "But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is

that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." To be an heir of Abraham, according to Paul, did not depend on racial heritage nor on becoming a Jewish **proselyte**, but on believing in Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:14 states, "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." The author of Hebrews said, concerning Jesus, in Hebrews 2:9 and 16: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man . . . For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." In His sovereignty God devised a plan whereby Gentiles could be grafted into the Covenantal promises of God and the Jewish nation could again be restored to fellowship with God.

In Romans 11:11-12 Paul declared, "I say then, Have they [the Jews] stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles. . . . Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?" In allowing the Gentiles to enter into the promises of God by faith, God did not forsake the nation of Israel. Paul explained, in Romans 11:25, that Israel was blinded "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."



Briefly answer the following questions.

- 1.56 What does Diaspora mean? _____
- 1.57 Who was the forerunner to Christ? _____
- 1.58 Who became the apostle to the Gentiles? _____
- 1.59 What is a proselyte? _____
- 1.60 According to Romans 11:25, how long will Israel remain blind? _____



Complete the research project.

1.61

Prepare a time line to be completed and submitted before continuing on to Section II of this LIGHTUNIT. Submit your time line to the teacher for checking. Use several sources for completing your research. Draw the time line down the center of your paper. Write the date and the event to the right of the line and the source of your information to the left of the line.

Example:

Unger's Bible Dictionary	—	—	1440 B.C. The Exodus.
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Select one of the following periods for your time line.

- a. Patriarchs, 2000 to 1440 B.C.
- b. Exodus and Judges, 1440 to 1050 B.C.
- c. United Kingdom, 1050 to 930 B.C.
- d. Israel, 930 to 721 B.C.
- e. Judah, 930 to 586 B.C.
- f. Captivity and return, 586 to 400 B.C.
- g. Inter-Testament period, 400 B.C. to A.D. 30



Review the material in this section in preparation for the Self Test. The Self Test will check your mastery of this particular section. The items missed on this Self Test will indicate specific areas where restudy is needed for mastery.