



Where has Israel come from? A Biblical version:

After the period of
living together
two kingdom lived
separately:
northern **Israel** and
southern **Judah**



... summarizing the last lessons:

Where has Israel come from?

A Biblical version

David and Solomon (around 1000 BCE)

– the books of Samuel and Kings

The kingdom of Israel divided towards the end of 10th century BCE

– 2Kings

Northern Israel disappeared after the Assyrian conquest in 722 BCE

2Kings, Isaiah

Southern Israel – Judea (reformist kings Hezekiah (8th c. BCE) and Josiah (7th – 6th c. BCE)

2Kings, Isaiah

Judean kingdom defeated 586 BCE by Babylonians, the temple completely destroyed, most of the Jews deported to Babylonia

– 2Kings, Jeremia

Persians defeated Babylonians, Cyrus the Persian king allowed Jews to come back to their land and to build the temple there after 539 BCE

– Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai and Zechariah

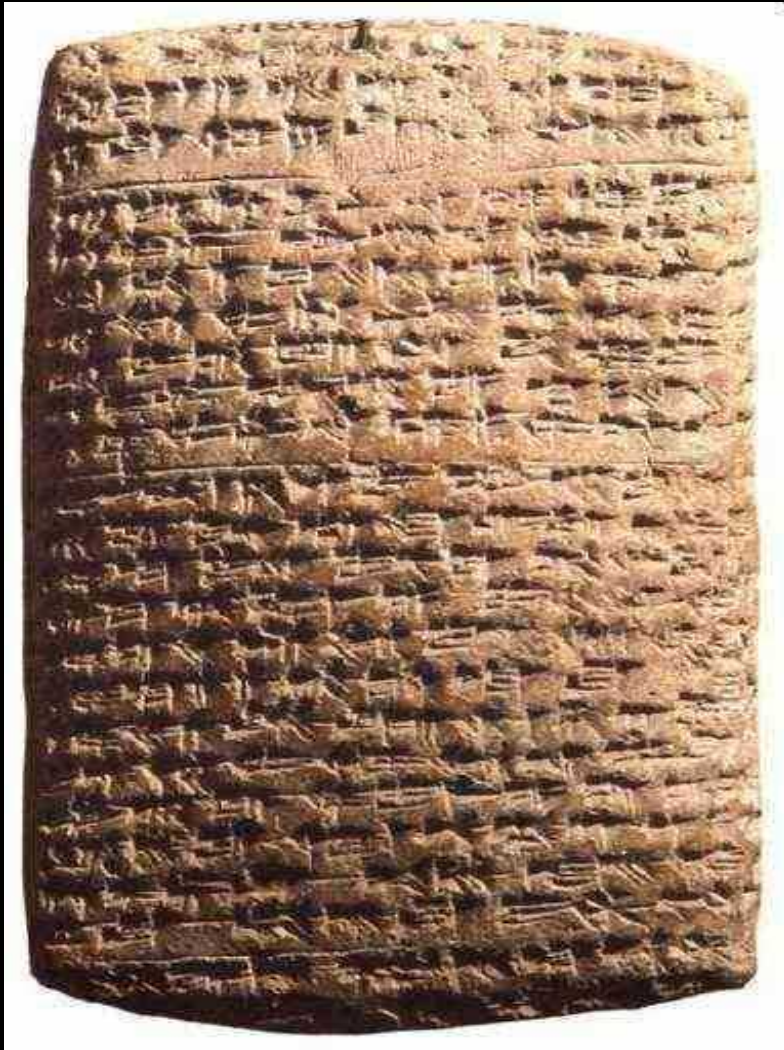
Israel in the force field of super-powers

Until 9th c Egypt, from 9th c Mesopotamia



The El-Amarna archive (14.c. BCE)

clay tablets discovered in 19th c., contain diplomatic correspondence between the Egyptian administration and vassal kings of the city-states of Palestine (e.g. Jerusalem or Shekhem). The danger of “Habiru”.



**Akhenaten or Amenhotep IV.
1353 – 1334 BCE**





Where has Israel come from?

External evidence:

Merenptah's victorious stele from Thebes in Egypt 1220 BCE

THEBES. INSCRIPTION ON STELE OF MERENPTAH. XIV.



The princes are prostrate, saying, "Peace!" ... The Canaan has been plundered into every sort of woe: Ashkelon has been overcome; Gezer has been captured; Yano'am is made non-existent. **Israel is laid waste and his seed is not**; Hurru is become a widow because of Egypt.

Where has Israel come from?

ethnogenesis of Israel

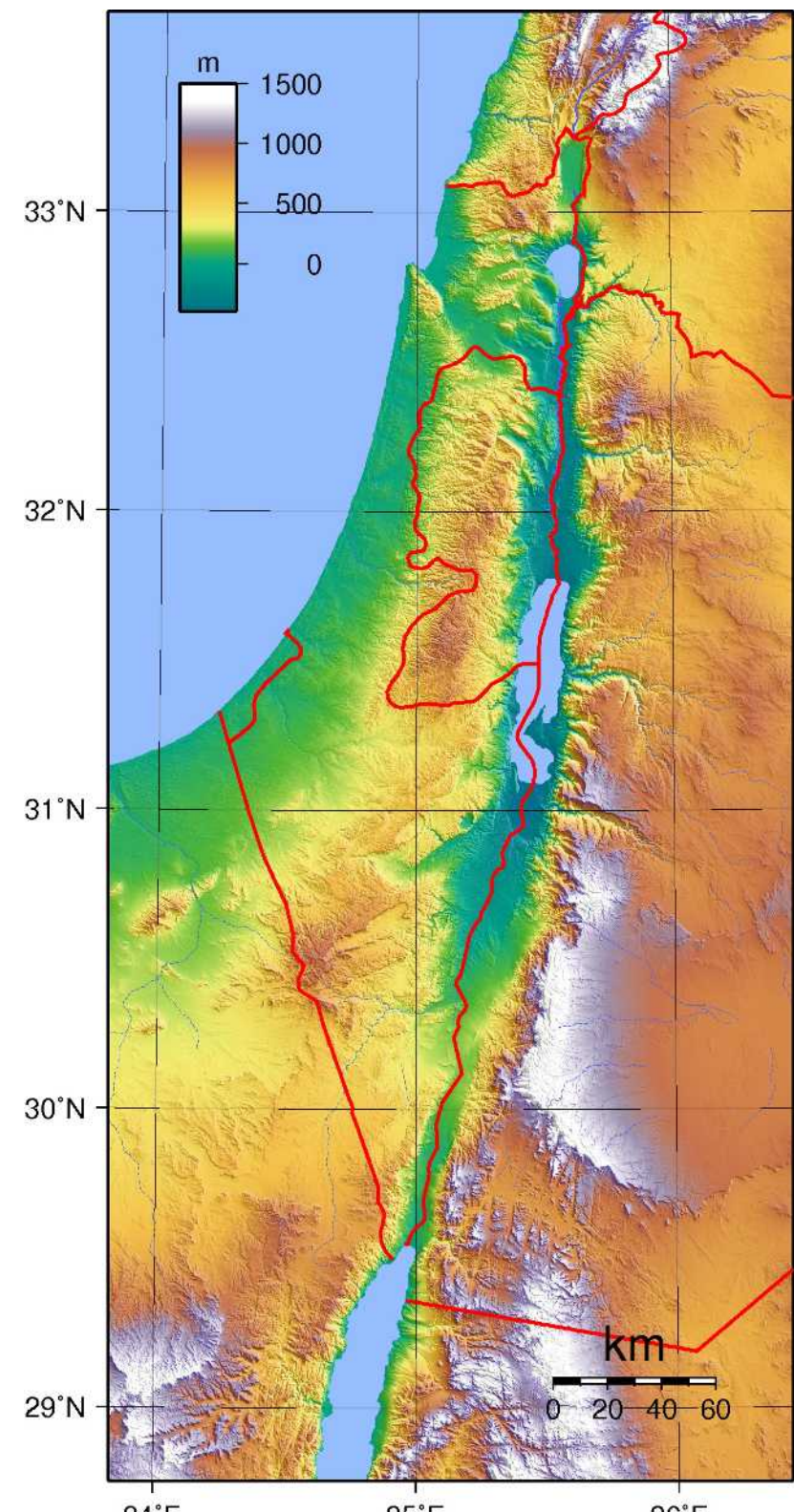
Three approaches to the emergence of Israel at the end of the Bronze age:

- **Military conquest** (the book of Joshua, pre-critical reading, conservative archaeologists).
- **Gradual infiltration** in connection with the waves of Semitic population from the East to the West (German Bible scholars Albrecht Alt, Martin Noth, Leonhard Rost).
- **Socio-oeconomical process inside of Cenean**, as a result of which Israel emerged (*endogenous vs. external* origin of Israel; very popular since seventies of the 20th c.).

Where has Israel come from?

Two kingdoms at the S-N central range

- El Amarna in Egypt (14th BCE): the pre-Israelite city states of Jerusalem and Shekhem: “Hapiru harass us”
- Merentptah in Egypt (12th BCE): “Israel is laid waste”.
- Sheshonq I in Egypt (10th BCE): List of captured cities, no mention of Jerusalem.



Where has Israel come from?

In the shadow Syrians and Assyrians

- Tel Dan Inscription's Aramean (Syrian) king Hazael (9th BCE): defeated ...king of Israel and ... king ... of the house of David.
- Senacherib's cylinder (8th BCE): having defeated Northern Israel in 722, Assyria made Judah its vassal.
- Between 722 and 586 Judeans adopted many refugees from the North together with Israelite traditions (the story of Exodus, the traditions about Jacob or Elijah). This was the key period for crystallization of many Biblical texts.

1. and cut
2. my father went up ... he fought at
3. And my father lay down, he went to his ... And the king of I
4. rael entered previously into my father's land ... Hadad made me king
5. And Hadad went in front of me... I departed from ... seven...
6. s of my kingdom, and I slew ...nty kin... who harnessed thou...
7. riots and thousands of horsemen, ... ram son of
8. king of Israel, and ... killed ... iahu son of ...
9. g of the house of David. And I set
10. their land into
11. other
12. led over Is
13. siege upon



Where has Israel come from?

Judeans (Jews) adopted the identity and traditions of Israel after historical (Northern) Israel had been destroyed in 722 BCE

In earlier texts

- ...the **men of Israel** were three hundred thousand, and the **men of Judah** thirty thousand (1Sam 11:8)
- And **Judah** and **Israel** dwelt in safety, from Dan even to Beersheba, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, all the days of Solomon. (1Kings 5:5)
- In the twentieth year of **Jeroboam king of Israel** Asa began to **reign over Judah**... (1Ki 15:9)
- She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, **Israel, I had sent her away** with a decree of divorce; yet her false sister **Judah did not fear**, but she too went and played the harlot. (Jeremiah 3:8)
- And the LORD said, "I will remove **Judah** also out of my sight, as I have removed **Israel**.(2Kings 23:27)

In later texts

- Son of man, set your face toward Jerusalem and preach against the sanctuaries; prophesy against the land of Israel (Ezekiel 21:7)
- And the LORD roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shake. But the LORD is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel. (Joel 4:16)
- I the Qohelet have been **king over Israel in Jerusalem** (Ecclesiastes 1:12)
- Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! (Zephania 3:14)

Where has Israel come from?

The Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem in 597 a 586 BCE

- Neo-Babylonian empire defeated Egypt in 605 BCE (the battle of Carchemish)
- Judean kingdom became vassal state: the last kings were Jehojakim, Jehoiakin and Zedekaiah
- Defection of Judah to Egypt brought repeated invasions of Neo-Babylonians
- Finally, the Jerusalem temple destroyed in 586, elites deported
- The Exile of Israel



King Nebuchadnezzar II
(605-562 BCE)

Persian kings in 6th – 5th century allowed Jews to return to their land



- **Cyrus II the Great** (600-530 BCE): the conqueror of Babylonia
- **Cambyses II** (+ 522): the conqueror of Egypt
- **Darius I the Great**: dividing the land into the system of satrapies relatively autonomous (provinces).

Where has Israel come from?

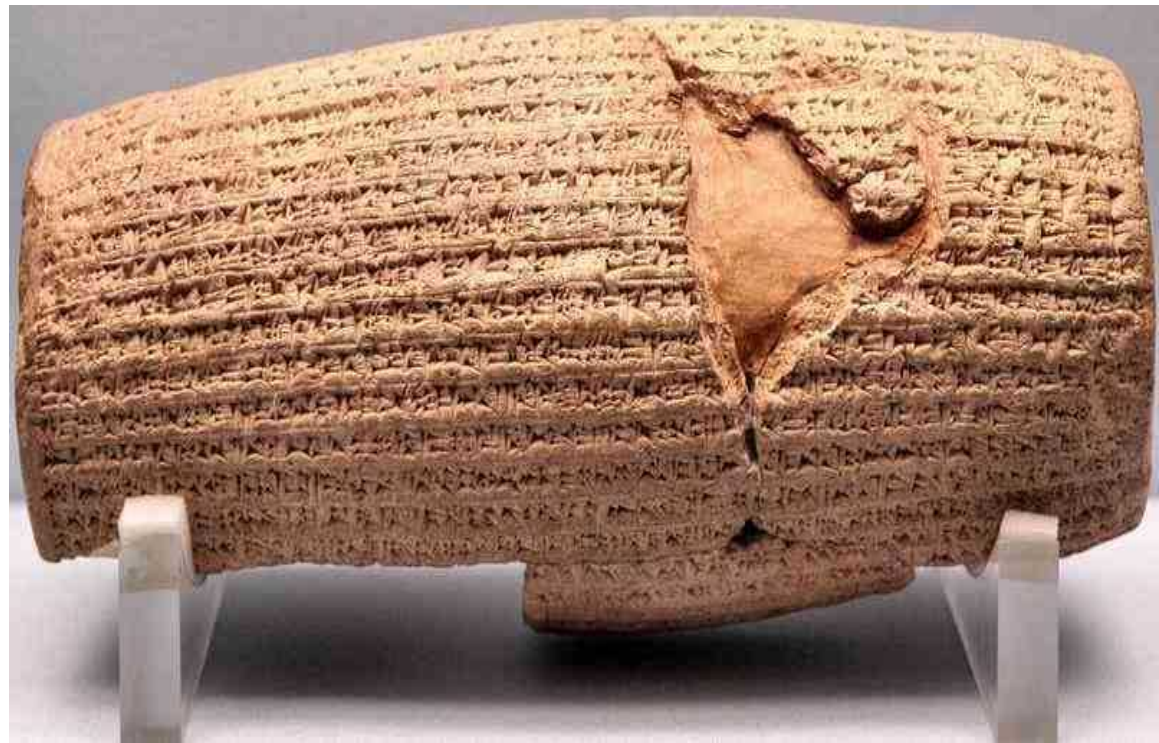
Back from Persia

Under Persians who defeated Babylonians in 539 BCE, the **Jews were allowed to return** to their homeland and to build a new temple in Jerusalem. In spite of the expectations of some people, the Davidic dynasty **was not installed** to the throne in Jerusalem. Instead the priestly functionaries around the temple ran the society. The **expectation that the Davidic dynasty** will one day take power **was transformed into a *messianic* expectation.**

Ezra 6:1-5 + Haggai 1:12 – 2:5 + Zechariah 3

Cyrus's cylinder:

“I am Cyrus, king of the world ... When I entered Babylon ... I sought the welfare of the city of Babylon and all its sacred centers. As for the citizens of Babylon, ... I relieved their weariness and freed them from their service ... , I returned the (images of) the gods to the sacred centers [on the other side of] the Tigris whose sanctuaries had been abandoned for a long time, and I let them dwell in eternal abodes. I gathered all their inhabitants and returned (to them) their dwellings. In addition, at the command of Marduk, the great lord, I settled in their habitations, in pleasing abodes, the gods of Sumer and Akkad, whom Nabonidus, to the anger of the lord of the gods, had brought into Babylon. **May all the gods whom I settled in their sacred centers ask daily of Bel and Nabu that my days be long and may they intercede for my welfare ...**”



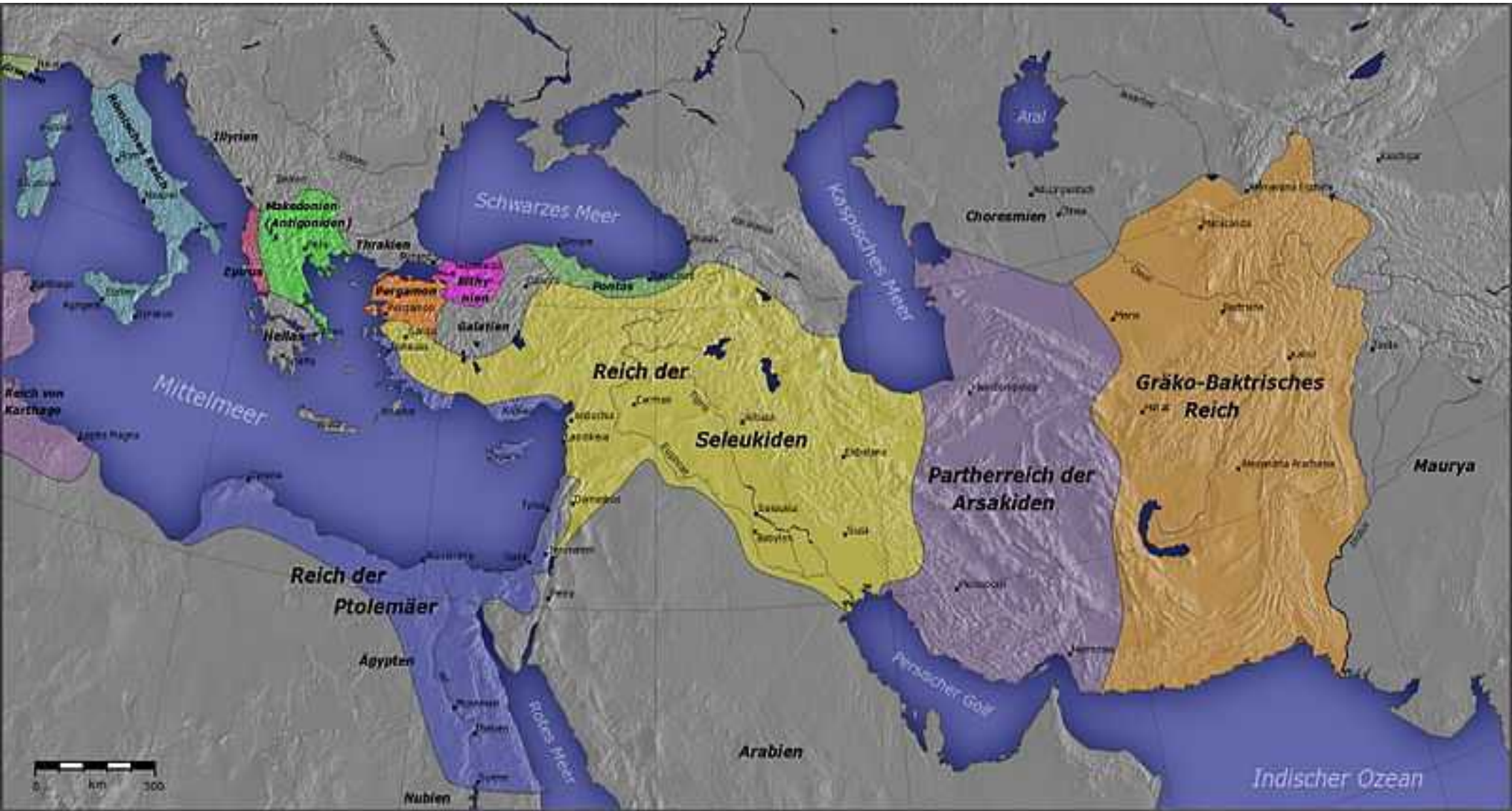
Alexander the Great and the *Hellenisation* of the Ancient Near East

356-323 BCE



Diadochi = successors of Alexander (his generals)

During the 3rd century BCE Israel found itself in the force field of Ptolemaic Egypt and from 200 BCE of Seleucide Syria



Maccabees or Hasmoneans (2nd – 1st c. BCE)

a priestly family from Modiin, taking lead of a revolt against the hellenizing pressure of the Seleucides in 176 BCE. For about 100 years the Jews have a dynasty again.



- Judah the son of Mattathias, the *Maccabee* („the hammer“)
- Jonathan the brother of Judah
- Simon the brother of Judah
- John Hyrcanus
- Alexander Jannaeus
- Salome Alexandra
- Hyrcanus II. and Aristobulos II.
- Antigonos Mattathias

Apocalyptic: in the swing of hopes and disappointments



- Jewish historian **Josephus Flavius** (1st cent. CE) in his *Jewish War II*, 119 lists following streams within Judaism
- **Pharisees**: to keep the Torah in all details of life
- **Sadducees**: everything stands and falls with the Temple. To be on good terms with Roman authorities
- **Essenes**: to separate themselves from the sinners, imminent expectation of the end of the world, hard core in Qumran and many sympathizers among normal Jews.
- **radicals**: to implement God's kingdom by violence