

Eyewitnesses

THE LIFE OF JESUS AND THE WRITINGS OF HIS FOLLOWERS

AN I.Q. CHURCH SURVEY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT - PART 1

Discuss

What is inaccurate about this picture of Jesus?

On a scale of 1-10, how accurate do you think these filmmakers understanding of Jesus was?

How do you think *they* would have answered that question?

THE NEW TESTAMENT

GOSPELS (4)

ACTS

THE LETTERS OF PAUL (13)

THE GENERAL LETTERS (8)

REVELATION

THE NEW TESTAMENT

GOSPELS (4)

ACTS

THE LETTERS OF PAUL (13)

THE GENERAL LETTERS (8)

REVELATION

Eyewitnesses Course Plan:

Session 1: Introduction & The Gospel of Mark

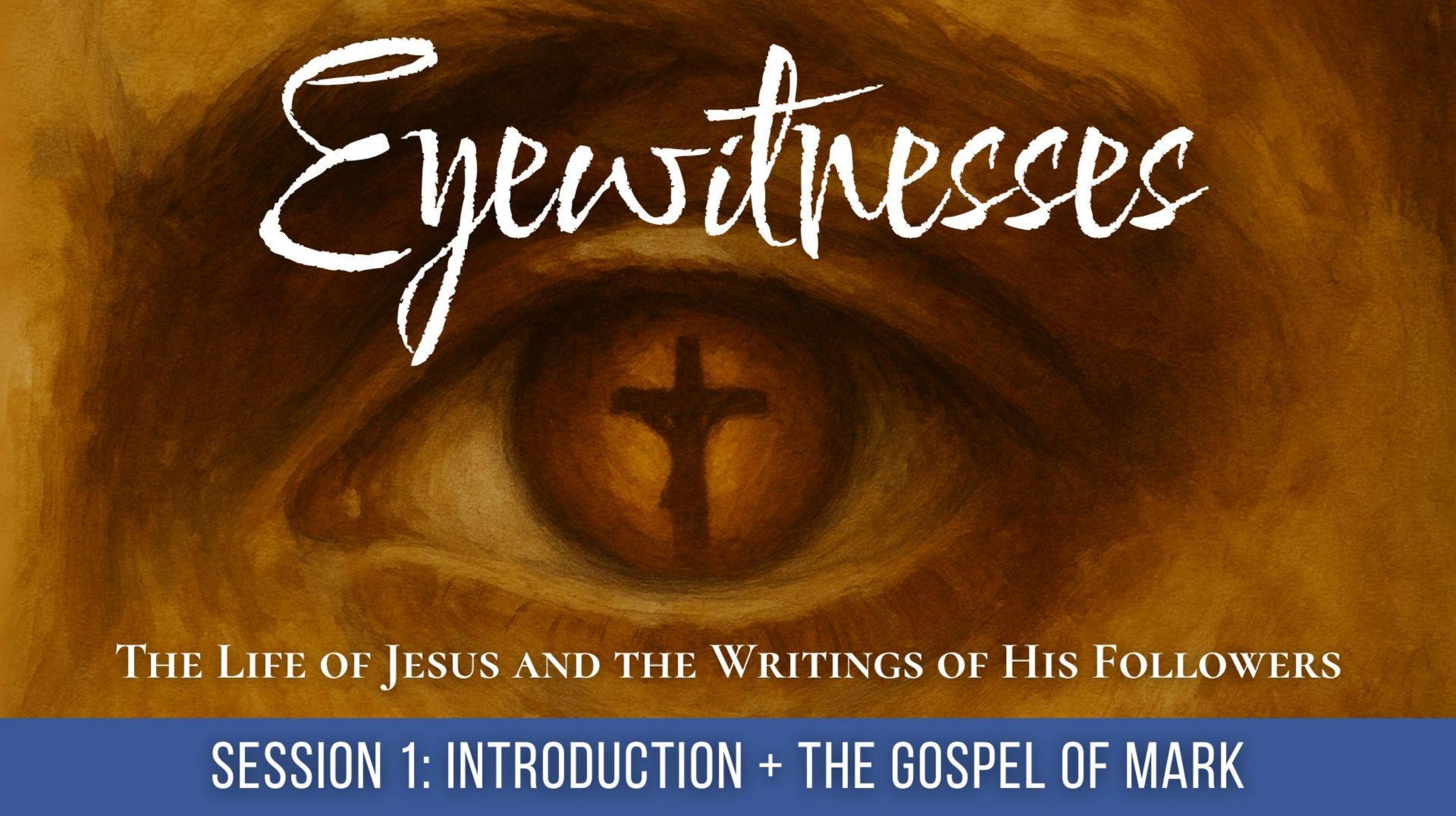
Session 2: The Gospels of Matthew & Luke

Session 3: Hebrews & James

Session 4: 1-2 Peter & Jude

Session 5: The Gospel of John & 1-3 John

Session 6: The Revelation of Jesus Christ



Eyewitnesses

THE LIFE OF JESUS AND THE WRITINGS OF HIS FOLLOWERS

SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION + THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Pre-Work Discussion:

From the Bible Project: In the Gospel of Mark, what is the significance of Jesus being called “The Son of God?”

From NT in 7 Sentences: How was Israel still “in exile” during Jesus’s life? What was the basic idea of “Messiah” in the first century?

From Scripture Readings: Why do you think Jesus wanted to keep His messianic identity a secret?

The Intertestamental Period

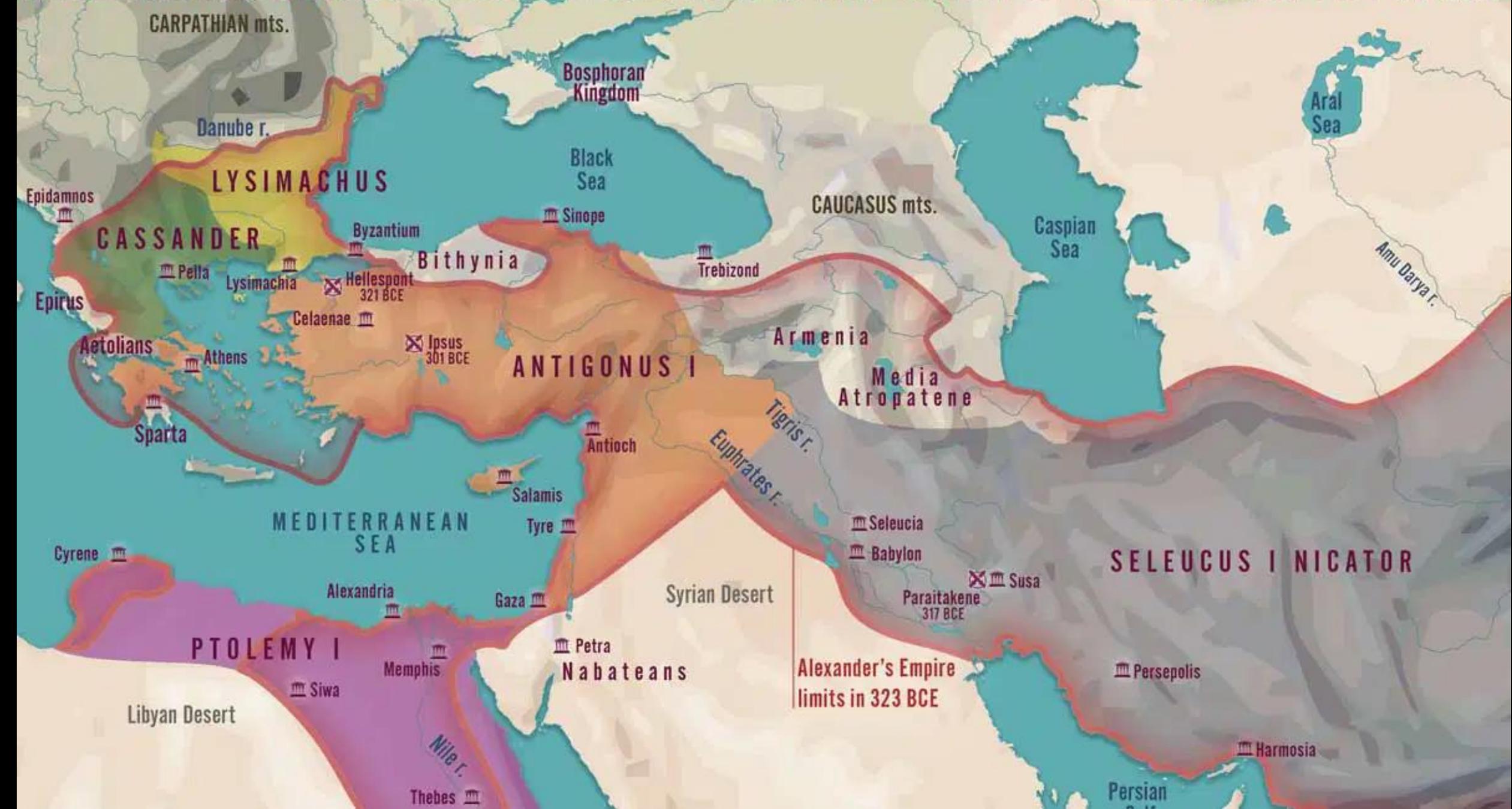
The Emergence of 4 Jewish Voices in the Time of Jesus

Old Testament Timeline

- **2000 BC** – Abraham's call (Genesis 12)
- **1446 BC** - The Exodus under Moses
- **1000 BC** – King David reigns over Israel
- **722 BC** – Fall of the Northern Kingdom (Israel)
- **586 BC** – Fall of the Southern Kingdom (Judah)
- **516 BC** – Second Temple completed (Ezra–Nehemiah)
- **400 BC** – Malachi, last OT prophet

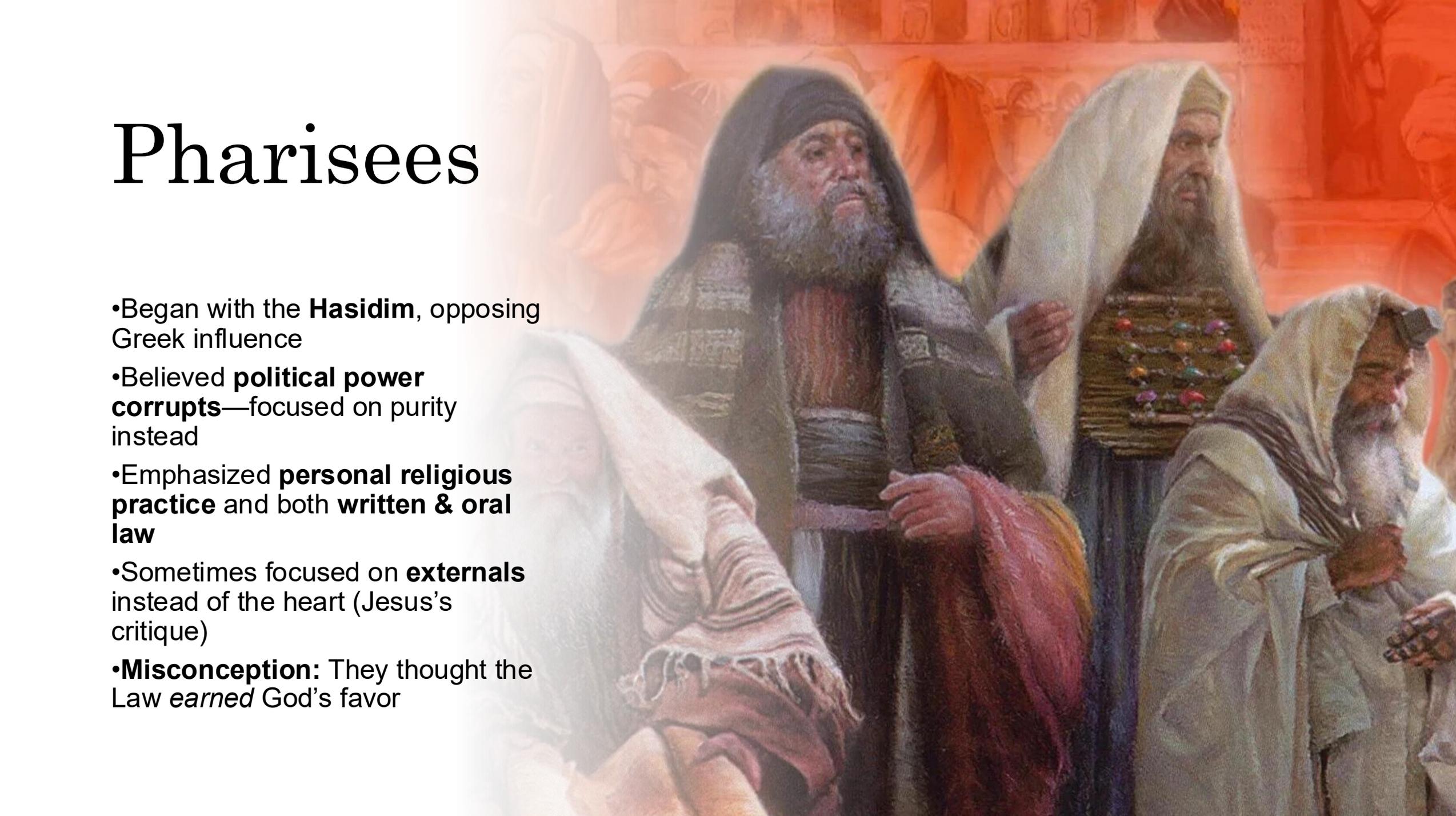


HELLENISTIC KINGDOMS c.301 BCE. AFTER THE DEATH OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT





Pharisees



- Began with the **Hasidim**, opposing Greek influence
- Believed **political power corrupts**—focused on purity instead
- Emphasized **personal religious practice** and both **written & oral law**
- Sometimes focused on **externals** instead of the heart (Jesus's critique)
- Misconception:** They thought the Law *earned* God's favor

Essenes

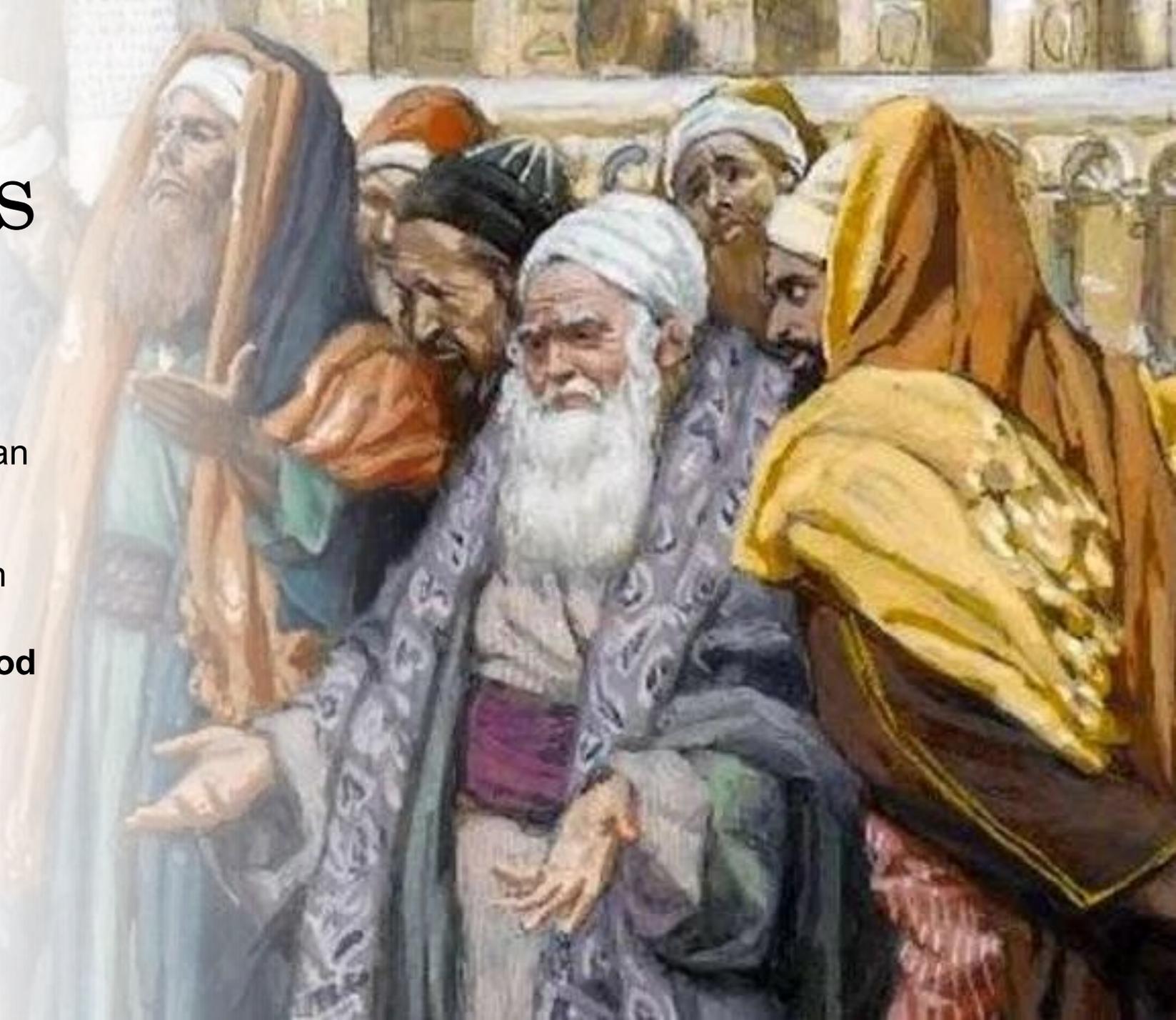
- Small **ascetic communities** scattered across Judea
- Offshoot of the **Hasidim**, seeking purity through **total separation**
- The **Qumran** group near En Gedi produced the **Dead Sea Scrolls**
- **John the Baptist** was likely influenced by them (and may have been a member)





Sadducees

- Descended from the **Hasmonean elite**, beneficiaries of the Maccabean Revolt
- **Aristocrats and wealthy landowners**, powerbrokers in Jerusalem
- Controlled the **high priesthood** and cooperated with **Rome**
- Upheld **only the written Law** with a very literal approach
- **Denied** resurrection, afterlife, and a future world



Zealots

- Revolutionaries who chose to **fight foreign rule with the sword**
- Inspired by the **Maccabean guerrilla campaigns**
- Advocated violent resistance against **Rome**
- One of Jesus's disciples (**Simon the Zealot**) came from this group



**WHO WERE THE
ZEALOTS?**



Genre of the Gospels: *Bioi*



The Gospels match the ancient genre of “biography” or “life”



Ancient biographies had no interest in development, “Instead, the biographer worked to unveil the true identity of a man or woman and thereby explain his or her great deeds.” (*New Testament in Antiquity*)



First century biographies were more concerned with character than chronology.

Authorship & Date

Authorship: John Mark

- Early tradition: *Papias* (c. 110 AD) — Mark wrote Peter's testimony
- Missionary companion of **Paul** (Acts 12:25; Col. 4:10)
- Later partnered with **Peter in Rome** (1 Pet. 5:13)
- Gospel reflects **eyewitness detail** and vivid storytelling

Date

- Likely **50s–60s AD**
- Before the destruction of the Temple (70 AD)
- Fits context of believers facing **persecution in Rome**
- Widely considered the **earliest Gospel**

Literary Structure of Mark's Gospel

Mark 1:1 "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."



Public Ministry
Galilee
Growing Popularity
"Who is Jesus?"

Mark 8:29 "Peter answered him, "you are the Christ.""

Private Ministry
Jerusalem
Growing Opposition
"How is He Messiah?"

Mark 15:39 "And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

The Gospel of Mark

A silhouette of a person carrying a cross against a sunset sky. The person is walking towards the right, carrying a large cross on their back. The sky is filled with clouds, and the sun is setting behind them, creating a warm, golden glow. The overall mood is solemn and reflective.

JESUS IS THE KING
REVEALED BY THE SERVANT'S CROSS,
NOT BY THE CONQUEROR'S CROWN

Themes & Style

Themes & Style

Markan Secret

Themes & Style

Observant Outsiders & Ignorant Insiders

Observant Outsiders - *Mark 1:21-34*

²¹ They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. ²² The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. ²³ Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, ²⁴ “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”

²⁵ “Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” ²⁶ The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

²⁷ The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.” ²⁸ News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

²⁹ As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰ Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. ³¹ So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

³² That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ³³ The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴ and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

Observant Outsiders - *Mark 3:11-12*

¹¹ Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." ¹² But he gave them strict orders not to tell others about him.

Observant Outsiders - *Mark 10:46-52*

⁴⁶ Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

⁴⁸ Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

⁴⁹ Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.”

So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” ⁵⁰ Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

⁵¹ “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.”

⁵² “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

Ignorant Insiders - *Mark 3:20-22*

²⁰ Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. ²¹ When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, “He is out of his mind.”

²² And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.”

Ignorant Insiders - *Mark 8:27-33*

²⁷ Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, “Who do people say I am?”

²⁸ They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.”

²⁹ “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.”

³⁰ Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

³¹ He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. ³² He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

³³ But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

Ignorant Insiders - *Mark 14:60-65*

⁶⁰ Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?” ⁶¹ But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”

⁶² “I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

⁶³ The high priest tore his clothes. “Why do we need any more witnesses?” he asked. ⁶⁴ “You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?”

They all condemned him as worthy of death. ⁶⁵ Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, “Prophecy!” And the guards took him and beat him.

Tied Together - *Mark 15:33-41*

³³ At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ³⁴ And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).^[a]

³⁵ When some of those standing near heard this, they said, “Listen, he’s calling Elijah.”

³⁶ Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to take him down,” he said.

³⁷ With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.

³⁸ The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. ³⁹ And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died,^[b] he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!”

⁴⁰ Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph,^[c] and Salome. ⁴¹ In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.

The Challenge - *Mark 16:1-8*

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. ² Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb ³ and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

⁴ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. ⁵ As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

⁶ "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

⁸ Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid

Themes & Style

Intercalation: A narrative interruption in which an inserted episode is used to shed light on, contrast with, or enrich the surrounding story.

Intercalation - *Mark 5:21-43*

²¹ When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. ²² Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³ He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” ²⁴ So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. ²⁵ And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶ She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. ²⁷ When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸ because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” ²⁹ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

³⁰ At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?”

³¹ “You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’”

Intercalation - *Mark 5:21-43*

³² But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³ Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

³⁵ While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?”

³⁶ Overhearing^[a] what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

³⁷ He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸ When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. ³⁹ He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” ⁴⁰ But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, “*Talitha koum!*” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). ⁴² Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. ⁴³ He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Intercalation - *Mark 14:1-11*

Now the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were scheming to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. ² “But not during the festival,” they said, “or the people may riot.”

³ While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

⁴ Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? ⁵ It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages^[a] and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly.

⁶ “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ⁷ The poor you will always have with you,^[b] and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. ⁸ She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. ⁹ Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. ¹¹ They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

Intercalation Experiment - *Mark 11:15-19*

¹⁵ On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, ¹⁶ and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. ¹⁷ And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’^[a]? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’^[b]”

¹⁸ The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

¹⁹ When evening came, Jesus and his disciples^[c] went out of the city.

Intercalation Experiment - *Mark 11:12-21*

¹² The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. ¹³ Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴ Then he said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard him say it.

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²⁰ In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. ²¹ Peter remembered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!”

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Caesar's Coronation:

1. Caesar would gather in the Praetorian with the Praetorian Guard (6,000 soldiers)



Caesar's Coronation:

2. The guards would place a purple robe on Caesar, an olive-leaf wreath crown on his head, and give him a scepter to signify his rule over Rome.



Caesar's Coronation:

3. Caesar would be loudly proclaimed as triumphant by the Guard.
4. There would be a parade through the streets of Rome. Caesar would be in the middle of the procession along with a bull (for a sacrifice)



Caesar's Coronation:

5. The parade moved towards the highest hill in Rome—the Capitoline Hill (“Head Hill”), where there was a Temple.

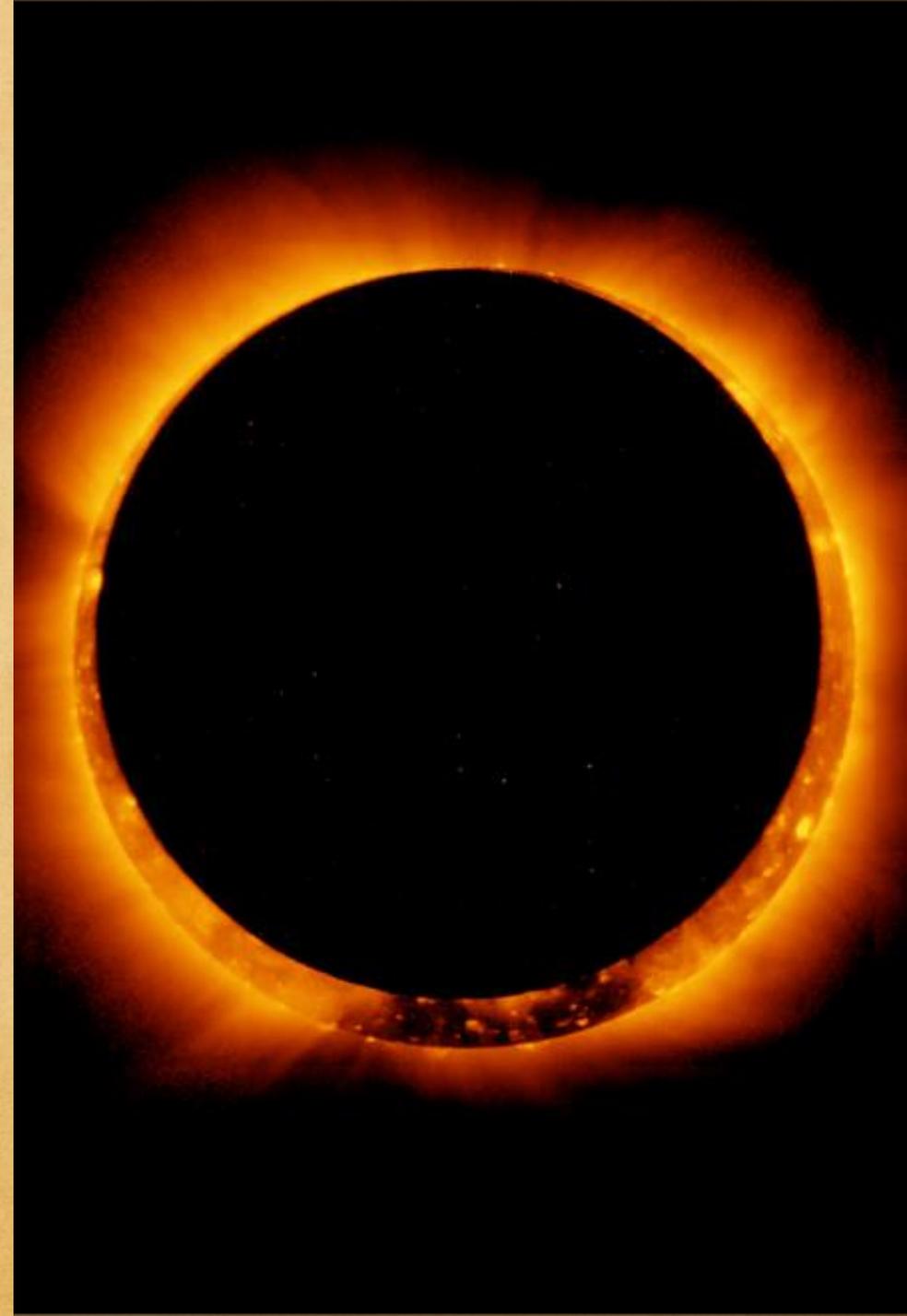
6. The bull would be slaughtered here in order to make the Caesar into a god.



Caesar's Coronation:

7. Caesar would ascend to the throne, with his next two in command on his right and left.

8. The crowd acclaimed the new emperor. People would look for signs of approval from the gods—such as a flock of doves or a solar eclipse.



Caesar's Coronation:

1. Gather in the Praetorian
2. Given purple robe, olive-leaf crown and a scepter
3. Loudly proclaimed as triumphant
4. Parade through the streets with a sacrifice
5. Head to the Temple at "Head Hill"
6. Sacrifice is killed to deify Caesar
7. Caesar ascends throne, with his next two in command on his right and left.
8. Look for signs of approval in the skies

Jesus's Coronation:

Mark 15:39 “And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”