





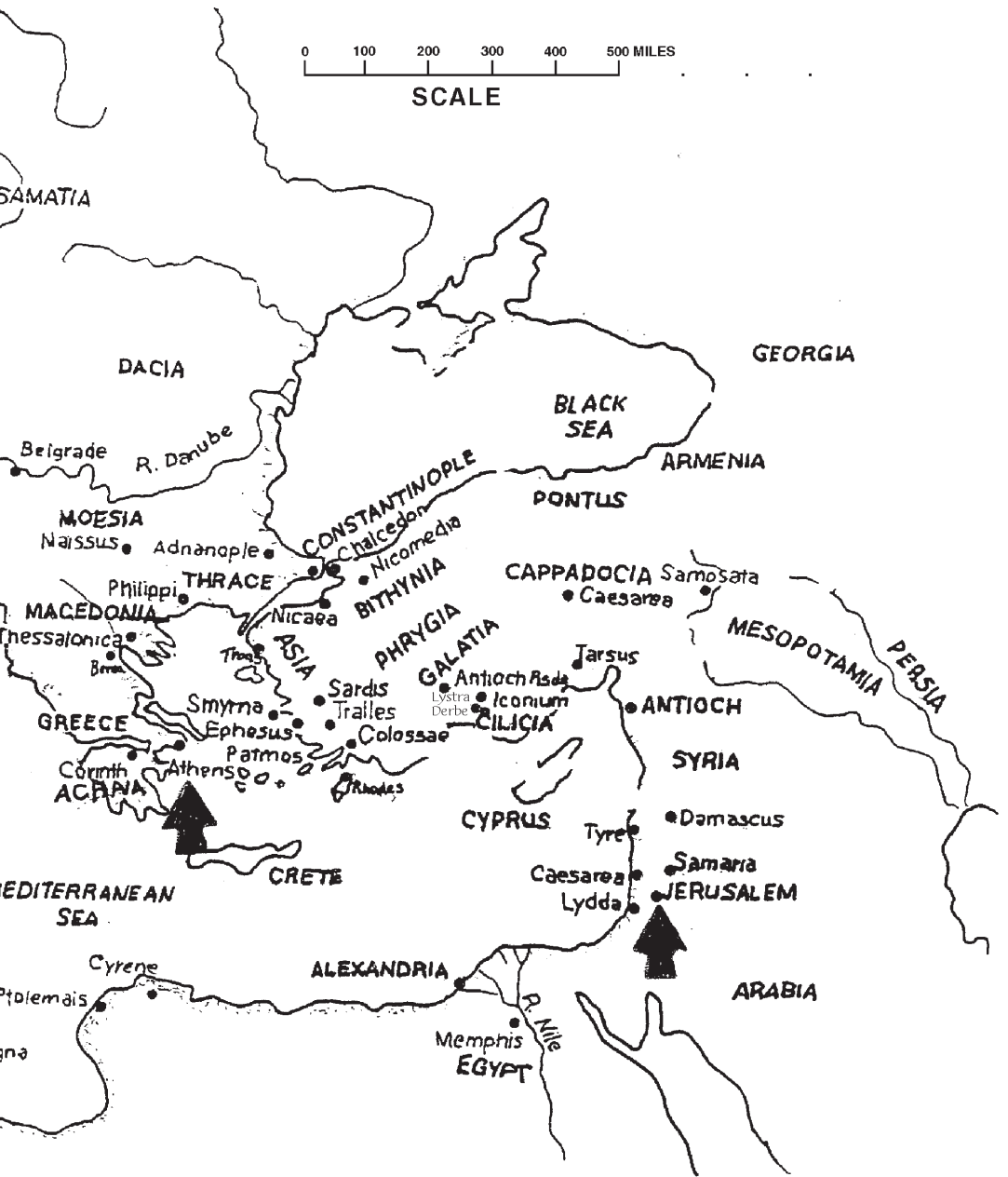
# ROMAN EMPIRE

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WHAT GOVERNMENT GOD SHOWED THE WORLD  
 Democracy, Ekklesia, Greco-Roman World and  
 Temple Mount Area

0 100 200 300 400 500 MILES

SCALE



### CHAPTER III      WHAT GOVERNMENT GOD SHOWED THE WORLD 500 B.C. - 6 B.C. & Beyond

Now we know why there was a gap of more than four hundred years between the last prophet and the arrival of Jesus into the world. God was inventing and perfecting the democracy. I know the Greeks take credit for this but I believe democracy came from God. A quick look at world history shows the benefits of democracy to both the Greco-Roman Empire in their time and the United States of America in theirs. All the world powers pale in comparison to these two. God was preparing the way for his Son to come and complete the redemption process of bringing mankind back to God. He needed a vehicle to continue this redeeming process even after His Son had died for man's sins, was resurrected and gone back to His Father as man's mediator. His Son called this vehicle His "ekklesia-church".

In Greece some eight hundred and twenty miles northwest across the Great Sea from Jerusalem, democracy was introduced to the world. Perhaps God did this because His chosen people, under the thumb of the Persian Empire had shown no propensity for self-rule. In fact, back in the days of the Judges, the Israelites had insisted on having a king like everybody else. Further back, in Moses day, they insisted he talk to God because they were afraid of God's manifestations (thunder, etc).

The democracy originated in Athens, Greece and replaced a system of kings and rulers. As Joel was prophesying to the Jews in Jerusalem about the coming Holy Spirit, the democracy was taking shape in Athens. Pericles of Athens described democracy in 429 B.C. as "the rule was not in the hands of a few but under the control of the majority". He also said "we have an equal concern for our home and our polis (community)." In other words we will fight to protect this way of life. He also said ***HOH p 18. We are the judges of our own actions and give careful thought to our affairs. For us discussion is no bar to action; what is harmful is to act before submitting a policy to discussion. We are unusual in that we are capable of taking risks even after we have weighed their consequences, while other men are brave as long as they are ignorant but draw back upon reflection.*** This was

the reason democracy worked. By having discussions they were able to take reasonable risk and could act with dispatch. When the group wanted something to happen, it happened and most likely for the best. After this process everyone fell in behind the decision with no divisions.

This was a vehicle God was looking for to continue His redeeming process rather than the existing Jewish hierarchy. Jesus would be the Vine and His people would be the branches receiving their sustenance from Him. The Body of Christ with the individual Gifts would act in a corporate way and take His place in the world after He ascended back to the Father.

The sovereign governing body of the Athenian democracy was the citizen's "ekklesia". The ekklesia was a gathering of the citizens for the purpose of public debate and vote. In Athens thirty thousand men belonged but only about five thousand actually participated. These were all men as the women could have no part in the ekklesia. They directed foreign-policy, revised the laws and approved or condemned the conduct of the public officials. The leaders were chosen by lot for a relatively short period. It was essential that its officials not have much individual power and if they showed a desire for too much, the ekklesia had a way to remove them. It was called "ostracism". The Athenian ekklesia met at least 40 times a year and any Athenian male had the right to address the group. They would meet in the public places under the stoas and colonnades around the Agora of the city and were completely free to discuss any subject.

Democracy made Greece a powerful nation. Now they could fight for their way of life instead of of some king or ruler. This freedom made Greece powerful in knowledge. Greeks were the first in narrative history, stage tragedy, comedy, philosophy, biological study (medicine) and political theory. They were noted for sports competition, sculpture, and theorems for geometry. Even today we continue to use their creations.

To understand the culture of this period when God (I think) introduced democracy we must know that Satan was also busy influencing man

because of this newfound freedom. Satan had countered God's plan with a myriad of gods. There was a Greek god for just about every situation. An examination of Greek mythology is almost a bottomless pit. From Achilles to Zeus, there are more than fourteen hundred characters involved in the mythology of these countless gods. Most of their main gods were involved in some sort of illicit sexual behavior. When the gods that were worshiped and revered were sexually active it made for a sexually active society. This was the natural result of this newfound freedom with Satan at the controls. These people just out from under the tyranny of kings with no restraints developed a society with wild imaginations and the result was gross "hedonism".

This "if it feels good, do it" attitude carried into the very fabric of the society---the more pleasure, the higher the social class. Polyarchus made this statement **SLAG p 16. *Nature herself demands that we should make pleasure the maxim of our life. The greatest possible exaltation of the feeling of pleasure is the aim of every intelligent man, but to suppress the desire for pleasure means neither intelligence nor happiness.***

This was a male-dominated society as the Greek women were only allotted two tasks, the management of domestic affairs and bringing up the children. Men led two lives, one social and one his home. He dealt with two types of women, mothers and courtesans. His social life included men friends, business associates, and public women. All aspects of public life were performed by men such as the ekklesia and even female roles in the theater were played by men in make-up. When the husband brought his male friends to his home for a meal, the wife would not participate for fear she would be considered a courtesan.

At the apex of the public women were the Hetairai. They were active in the business circles as they arranged meetings and banquets. Their hair was usually dyed blonde and they wore the finest of clothes. **SLAG p 357. *The hair was nicely curled, the nails neatly cut and polished, and a particularly tasteful, purple-colored dress was put on.*** She was very refined and usually very well educated. Some were life-long companions of famous men and were honored by portraits in the

public places. A famous philosopher, made this statement ***SLAG p 32. We have courtesans for our pleasure, concubines for daily personal service, and married women to bear us children and manage our house faithfully.***

The temple of Aphrodite (Goddess of Love) in Corinth was famous throughout the world. Aphrodite was the goddess of the Hetairai and other public women. Corinth was a bustling seaport and the tour guides in Greece said the Temple of Aphrodite was an integral part of the business world. A person was able to take a piece of paper issued by the Temple in Corinth and exchange it for an agreed on amount in gold in Rome. Therefore, it was the first "International Bank" in the world.

Alexander the Great took this democracy and its attendant sexuality to the rest of the world in 334 B.C. When he conquered Ephesus, he removed the oligarchies and tyrannies supported by the Persians and installed a democratic constitution. Democracy remained there until the Muslims took over the area in 673 A.D. Remember, when Paul was having trouble with the silversmiths, the city clerk of Ephesus told the crowd they could discuss this problem at the next ekklesia (Acts 19:39). This showed the democratic process was happening during Paul's time.

The new democracy caused an explosion of knowledge and the exchange of ideas throughout the world. In Alexandria, a group of Jewish scholars made the Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint. This helped to spread the story of God and the prophecies about the Messiah throughout the world in 275 B.C.

In 200 B.C., Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a Seleucid, one of the former Greek generals, despoiled the Jewish Temple with swine blood. The Jews rebelled because of this and were independent for a time. This independence lasted for a time mainly because the Seleucids were more concerned with the Roman threat from the north.

The Pharisees came along about this time and they tried to uphold the Law in the face of the Hellenistic (Greek) culture. The Hasmonians,

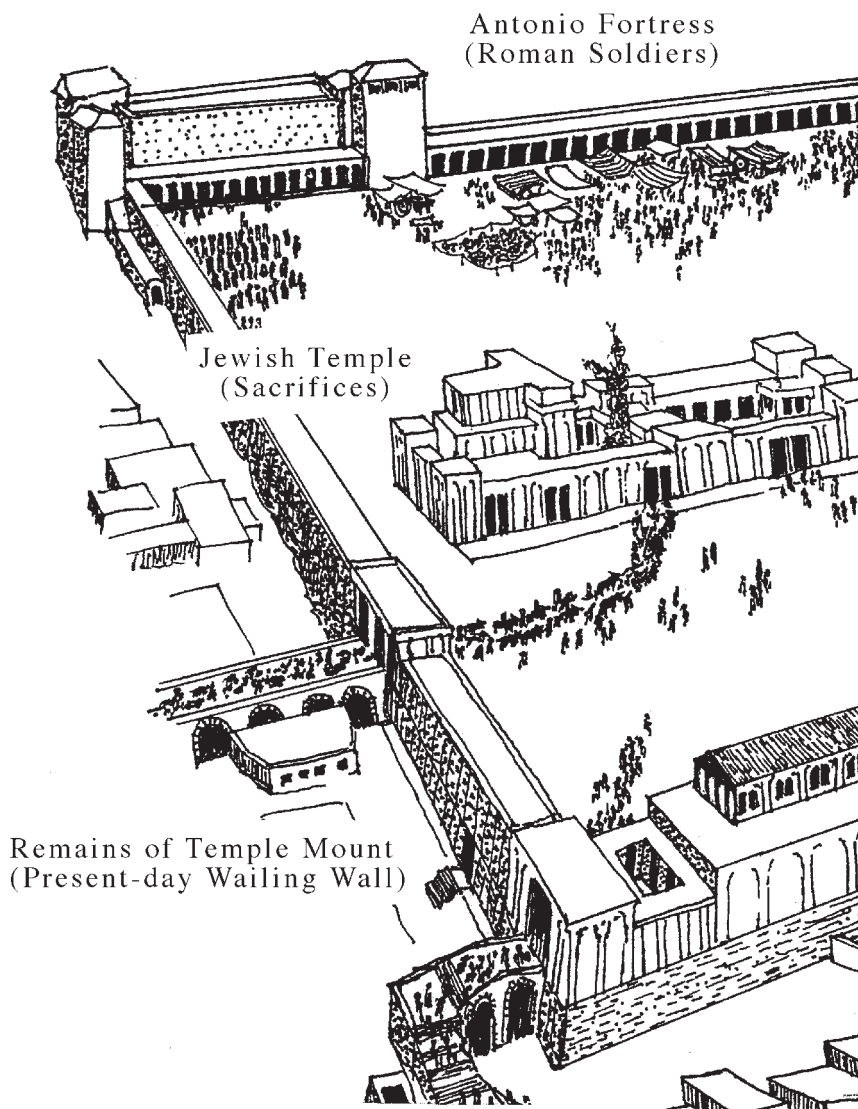
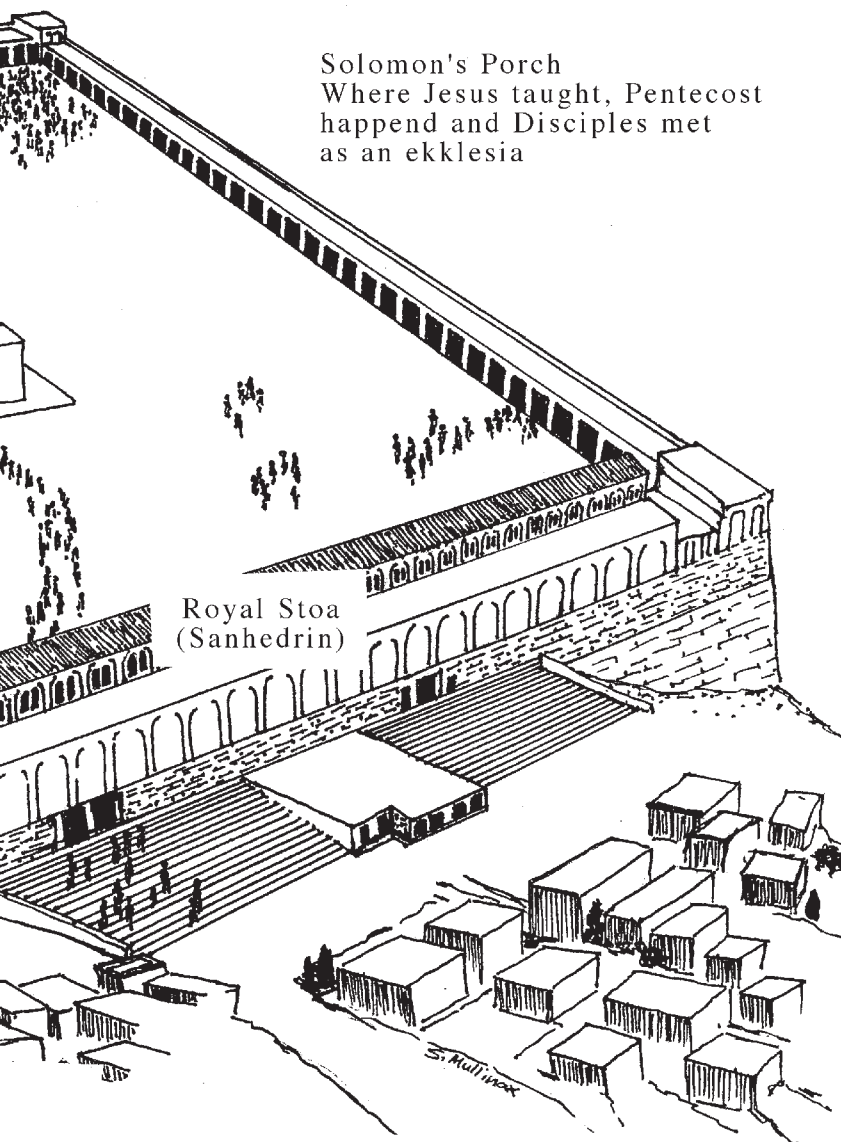


Figure 3 TEMPLE MOUNT AND JEWISH TEMPLE  
Jerusalem

AB John 10:23 It was winter and Jesus walked in Solomon's porch in the temple area.

AB Mark 11:27-28 "And when Jesus was walking about in the (courts and porches of the) temple, the chief priest and the scribes and the elders came to Him. And they kept saying to Him, By what (sort of) authority are You doing these things?"

AB Luke 21: 37-38 Now in the daytime Jesus was teaching in (the porches and courts of) the temple, but at night He would go out and stay in the Mount called Olivet. And early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple (porches or courts) to listen to him.



Solomon's Porch  
Where Jesus taught, Pentecost  
happend and Disciples met  
as an ekklesia

Royal Stoa  
(Sanhedrin)

S. Muller

AB Matt 26:55 Jesus said to the crowds, Have you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs to Capture Me? Day to day I was accustomed to sit in the porches and courts of the temple teaching, and you did not arrest Me.

AB John 18:20 Jesus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in a synagogue and in the temple area, where the Jews habitually congregate (assemble) and I have spoken nothing secretly.

one of a series of Jewish hierarchies during this time, refused to go along with the democracy and kept their own system under the High Priest.

The Sanhedrin, a Greek word for council, was formed and was used to settle disputes among the Jews. When the Romans came they left it in place, but I'm sure they were chagrined because the Jews insisted on having their High Priest as the leader. It seemed the Jews wanted no part of the democracy.

The Romans went on to conquer the world previously held by the Greeks. The Romans were a more brutal, ambitious, and practical lot, but the culture of the Greeks continued to dominate the social system. In 100 B.C., the Romans began their march and by 63 B. C. were in Jerusalem. Pompey, a Roman general, seized Jerusalem and went into the Holy of Holies of the Temple. He said he only found blank walls.

Augustus became the Emperor of Rome in 27 B.C. Unlike most places, he allowed the Jews to continue to sacrifice to their God in the Temple and meet in their synagogues. He also made Herod, who was connected to the Hasmoneans, King of the Jews with the Sanhedrin in a lesser role. Herod's job was a tough one because he had to keep the Romans happy as well as keep peace among the Jews.

Herod became a relentless builder. His pride and joy was the new Jewish Temple and the Temple Mount area of Jerusalem. This was done with the backing of Augustus who himself built or rebuilt many cities throughout the empire. Corinth and Ephesus underwent rebuilding at this time. In fact, the upper Agora (city center) in Ephesus has the same markings on the stones as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Probably, the same stone masons were used on both projects. The Jewish Temple and Temple Mount project in Jerusalem began in 19 B.C. The Temple Mount involved a tremendous amount of dirt work. Herod took Mount Moriah where the old Temple was located and made a large rectangular table-top area that completely covered the old hill. This was held up by tremendous retaining walls on every side. A portion of the western retaining wall is known as the "wailing wall" in present-day Jerusalem. The dimensions of this edifice were approximately 850 ft. on the south and north and 1450 ft. on the east

and west sides. On top, the aerial extent was about 30 acres. (FIGURE 3)

Herod built the Jewish Temple on the west side and the remainder of the Temple Mount area was made similar to every other Greco-Roman city. It had colonnades around the perimeter which made it the Agora or city center for Jerusalem. These colonnades formed stoas which had names such as Solomon's Porch on the east side and the Royal Stoa on the south side. On the northwest corner was the Antonio fortress which housed about five hundred Roman soldiers to keep the peace.

The Temple Mount area was a very busy place. Merchants sold their goods from carts within the courts of the Agora area. The Jewish Temple, which many people said was the most beautiful building in the world, had to handle all the sacrifices made by the Jews. There were many priests who served within the Temple with varying responsibilities. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist was one of these Temple priests.

There were many nationalities including Greeks and Romans in Jerusalem at this time, The Temple Mount area served as the Agora or city center and all the functions of the city took place in this area. The stoas provided a place for the citizen's democracy and its ekklesia. While the Jewish Sanhedrin met in the Royal stoa on the south side.

The Greeks provided the culture with its democracy and a universal language while the Romans provided the roads and laws which brought the entire world under one system.