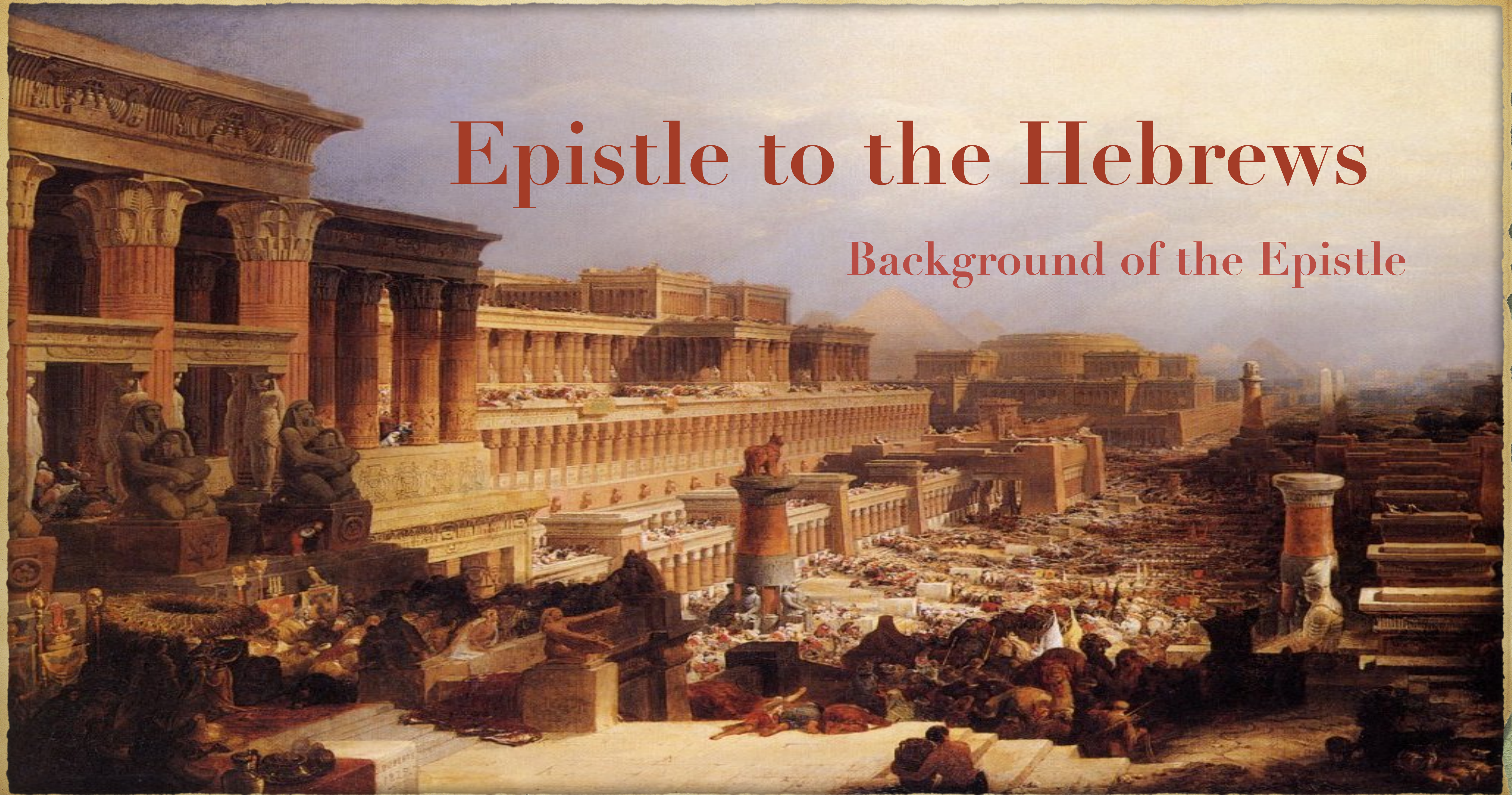


Epistle to the Hebrews

Background of the Epistle



The Shaking

This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain

YET
ONCE
MORE

Hebrews 12-27

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Heb. 12.25 ¶ See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.

Heb. 12.26 And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven."

Heb. 12.27 This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

Heb. 12.28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

Heb. 12.29 for our God is a consuming fire.

Hebrews was specifically written to Jewish Christians

1. The remnants of the captivities of Israel and Judah eventually spread out over Europe and Asia
2. As the Greek and Roman empires allowed travel, Jewish communities and synagogues could be found everywhere
3. Peter wrote to Jewish Christians from Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia but he called them “sojourners” because Jerusalem was still the center of Jewish feasts and life



By the time of Paul's imprisonment in Jerusalem (57 AD) Jewish life was out of control

1. **Pontius Pilate** was removed as governor of Judaea in 36AD after massacring Samaritans on Mt Gerizim. After returning to Rome he committed suicide in 38AD leaving no ruler over Judaea

2. **Herod Agrippa** became king of all Judaea in 41AD by erecting a huge brass statue of Caligula in the Temple

3. He died 4 years later while speaking in Caesarea when people called him a god

4. Rome dreaded ruling and dealing with Judaea and saw it politically like Afghanistan today



By the time of Paul's imprisonment in Jerusalem (57 AD) Jerusalem was uncontrollable

1. The Temple and the Sadducees were defiled and corrupted for the Jews
2. The Pharisees had been taken over by radical zealots who terrorized the Roman peace keeping forces there
3. Many Pharisees now were Christians but their judaizing had torn the churches unity
4. Paul would have been killed without Roman intervention



Setting the scene in Jerusalem: 57-66AD

1. False messiahs and radicals were popping up everywhere (Ac. 21.38) - Josephus comments
2. Rome had taxed and offended the righteous Jews who revolted in their extreme poverty
3. The sadducees were in- fighting and had become corrupt beyond respect
4. The classic pharisees had lost their power to their right wing zealots
5. The apocalyptic messianic hope became the last ditch belief of the Jews



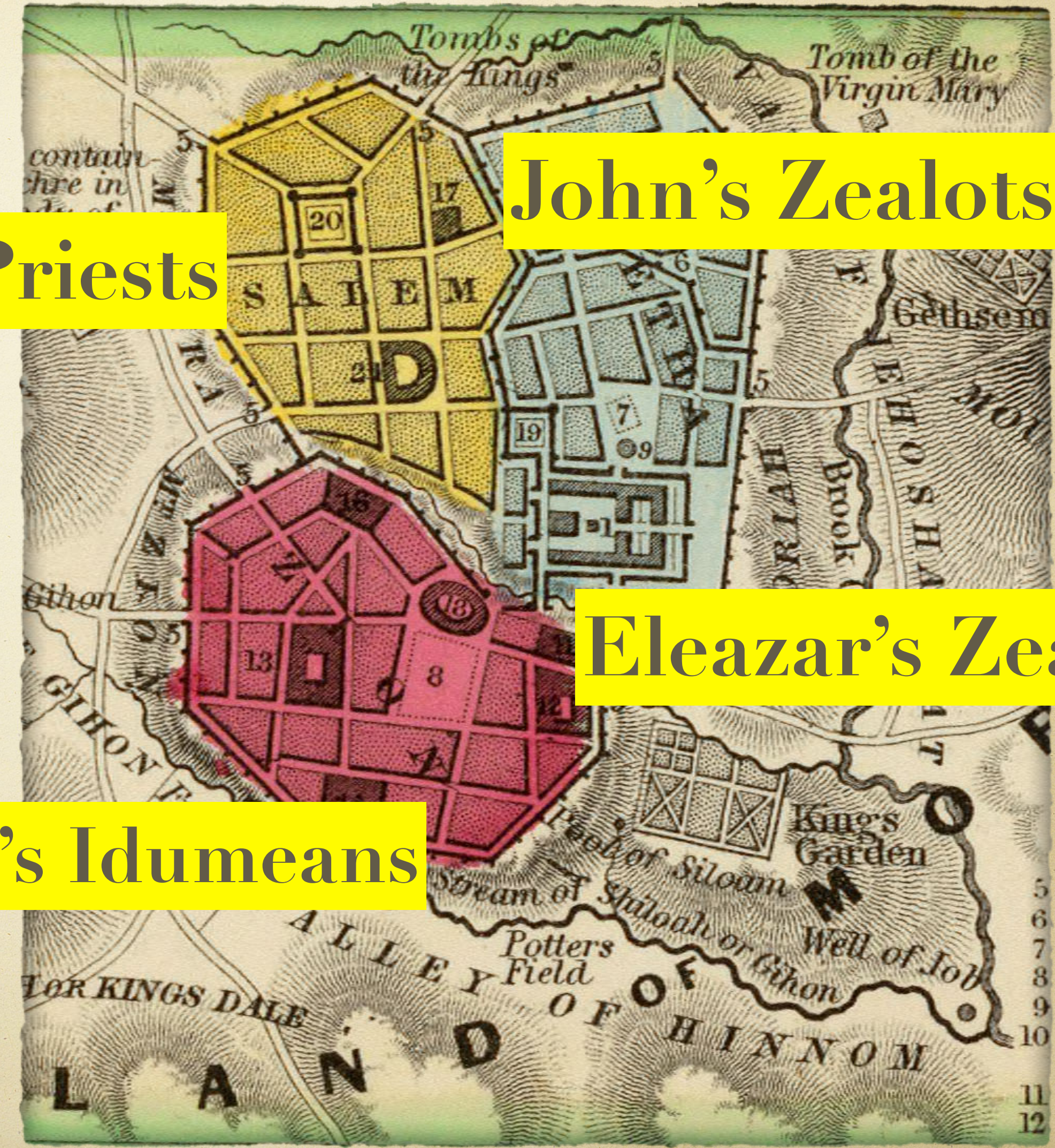
66AD - The Great Revolt- the spark that set in motion Jerusalem's destruction

1. The new governor, Gessius Florus plundered the gold from the Temple and sent it to Nero
2. In May 66 Rebellion broke out, and the Romans murdered 3600 Jews (2000 crucified)
3. In Oct. Jews took over Jerusalem massacring its Roman garrison while Herod Antipas II and all Roman officials fled
4. Romans marched from Caesarea killing 30,000 Jews in Galilee
5. Judaeen Free Govt. massacred the Syrian Roman Legion of 6000 until rebel groups controlled Galilee, Samaria, Judaea



66-70 AD - Jerusalem's inner turmoil and divisions

1. Menachem led 15000 Sicarians (dagger zealots) into Jerusalem, slaying the high priest but being slain by Sadducee priests (the Sicarii fled to Masada and held it till 74AD)
2. By the Roman siege of Jerusalem at Passover in 70 AD, the city was divided by 4 different, competing groups



Priests

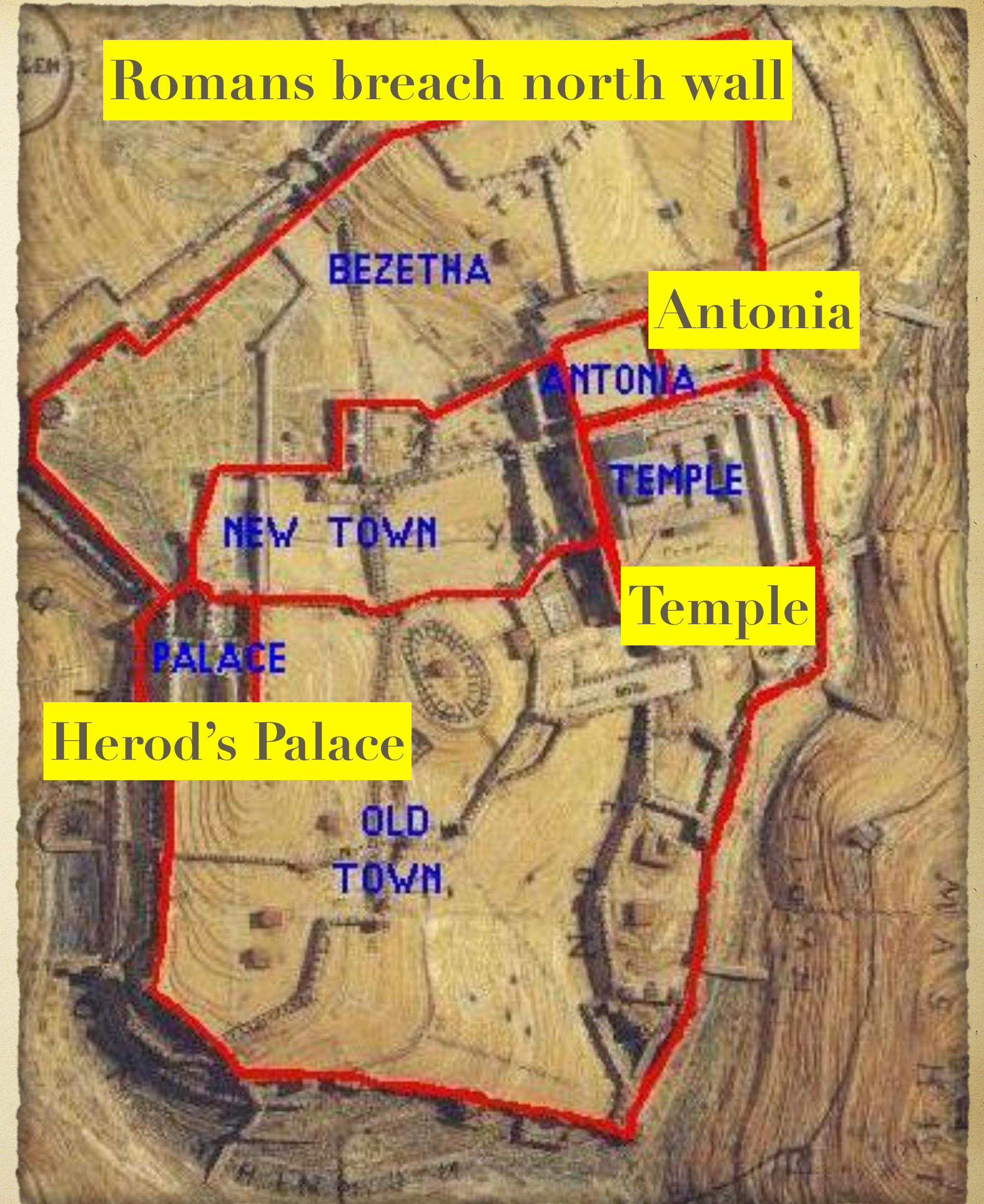
John's Zealots

Eleazar's Zealots

Simon's Idumeans

70AD - Jerusalem destroyed and classic Jewish religion ends

1. Vespasian became emperor and son Titus began siege of Jerusalem during Passover in April 70AD and 1.1 million Jews and pilgrims were trapped in city
2. Breaching the north side, fighting continued in the city until the Temple was set on fire and Antonia destroyed in July. Jews eating their babies
3. On Sept 8 Titus entered Jerusalem. He took 97,000 slaves back to Rome with the golden Temple Furniture
4. Estimations of 1.1 million Jews were killed in Jerusalem, 100,000's others in surrounding areas



In 30AD Jesus predicted this destruction because they rejected the Messiah

Matt. 23.37 ¶ “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.”

Matt. 23.38 “Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!”

Matt. 23.39 “For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

Matt. 24.1 ¶ Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him.

Matt. 24.2 And He said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down.”



In 68-69AD the prophet who wrote Hebrews warned Jewish Christians of a shaking

- 1. What will you do when there is no more Jerusalem? Temple? Sacrifices? Offerings? Pascal Lambs? Priests? Wailing wall?**
- 2. Analogy: what if you were Catholic and suddenly there was no more Rome, Mother church, Pope, confession, rosary, confirmation, Latin, Saints? - but this has no racial identity**
- 3. Analogy: what if you were Chinese and suddenly there was no more China, culture, literature, worship, language, Beijing, Shanghai - but there is no common religious unity**

