

Platonism & Christianity

Winter 2024
Week 2

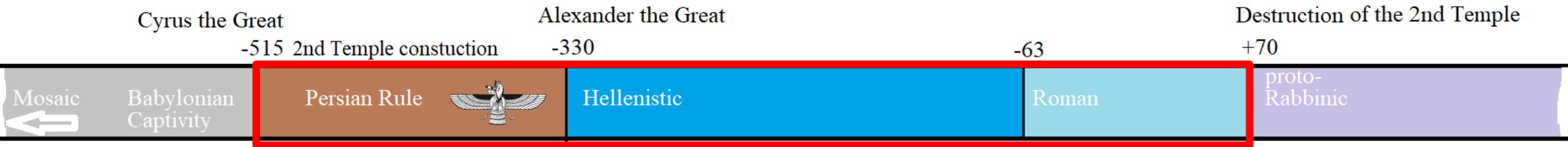
Hellenistic Judaism & Early Christianity

BERNIE LEWIN

Platonic Academy of Melbourne

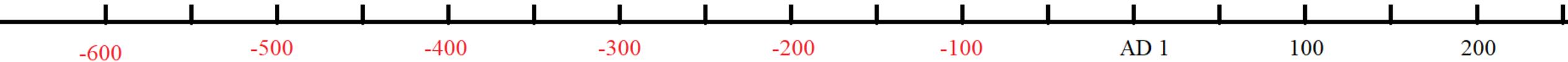
The Jewish Tradition

2nd Temple Period: Persian Rule



Books of Prophets

Sources of the 5 books of Moses





A Jew (?)
in the Syrian
delegation

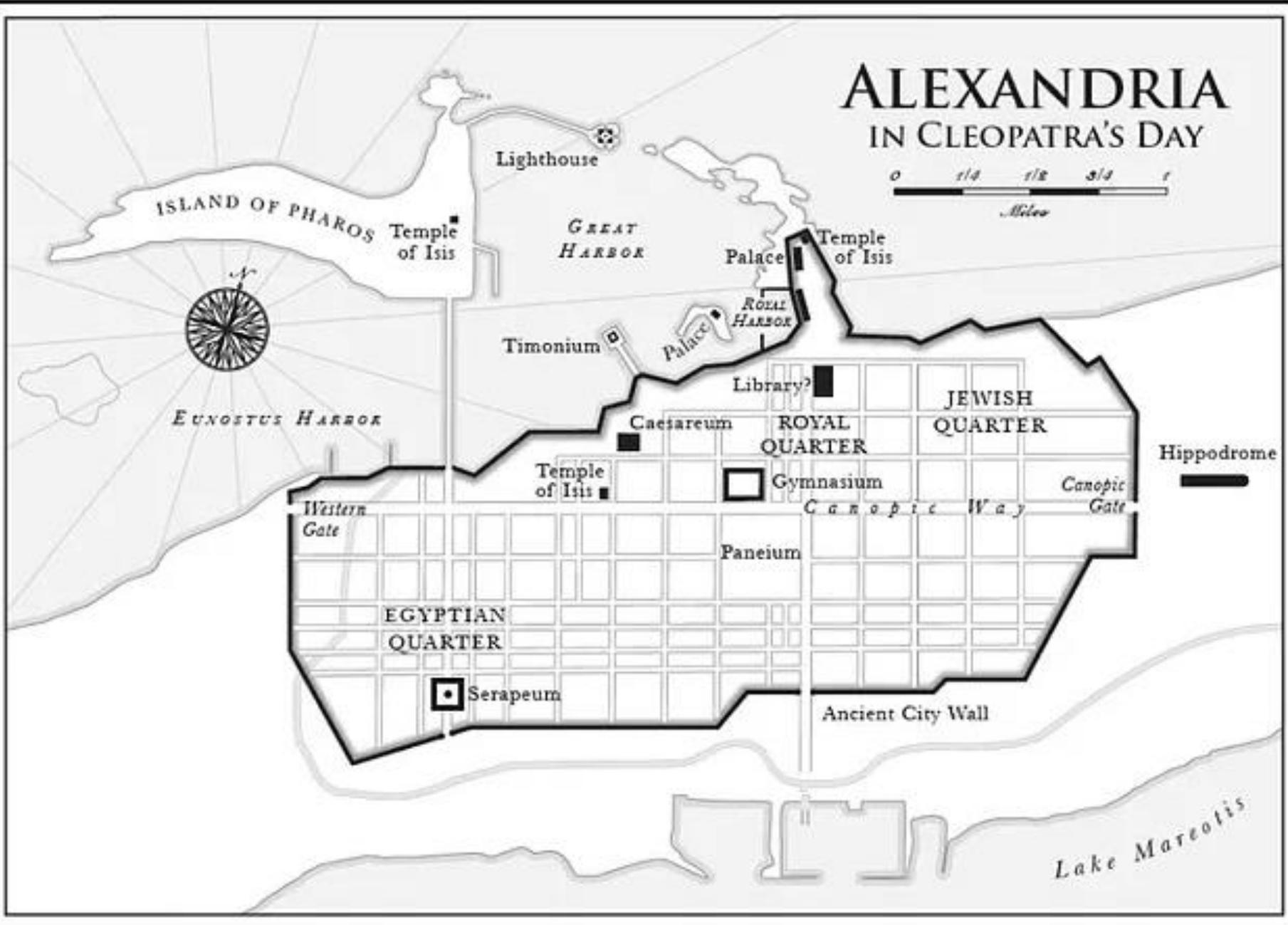
Map 4-1
Ways of the World, First Edition
© 2009 Bedford/St.Martin's



Hellenistic world centre for:

1. Philosophy/ science
2. Hellenistic Judaism
3. Platonic Christianity

From ~320 BC
To 6th Century AD



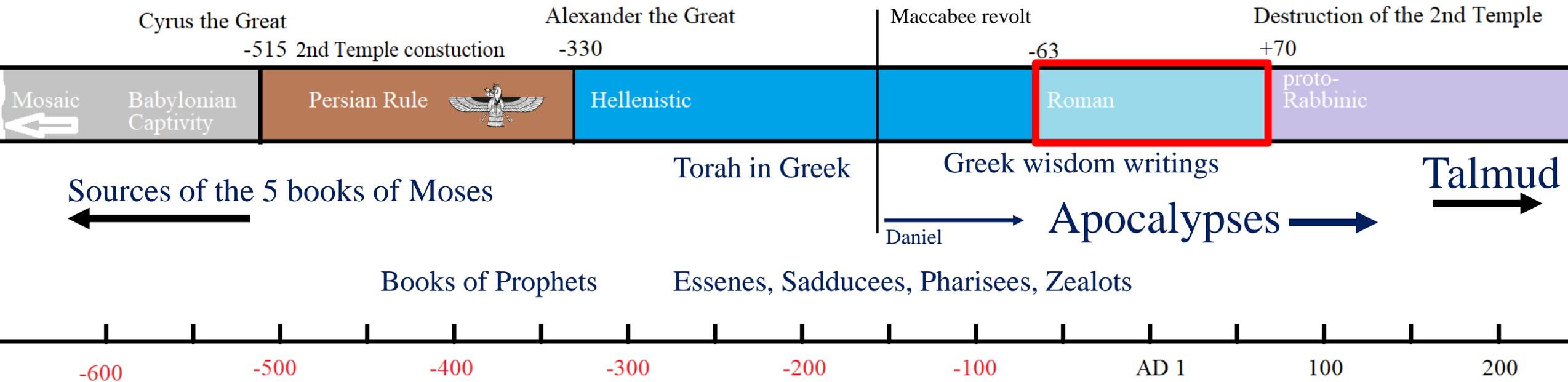
The Jewish Tradition

2nd Temple Period: Hellenistic



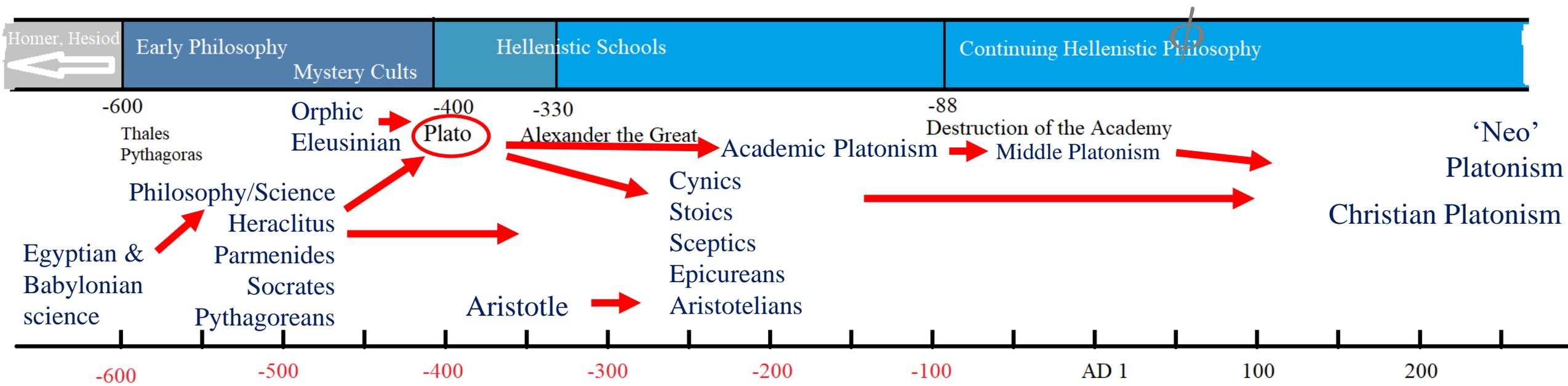
The Jewish Tradition

2nd Temple Period: Roman Rule

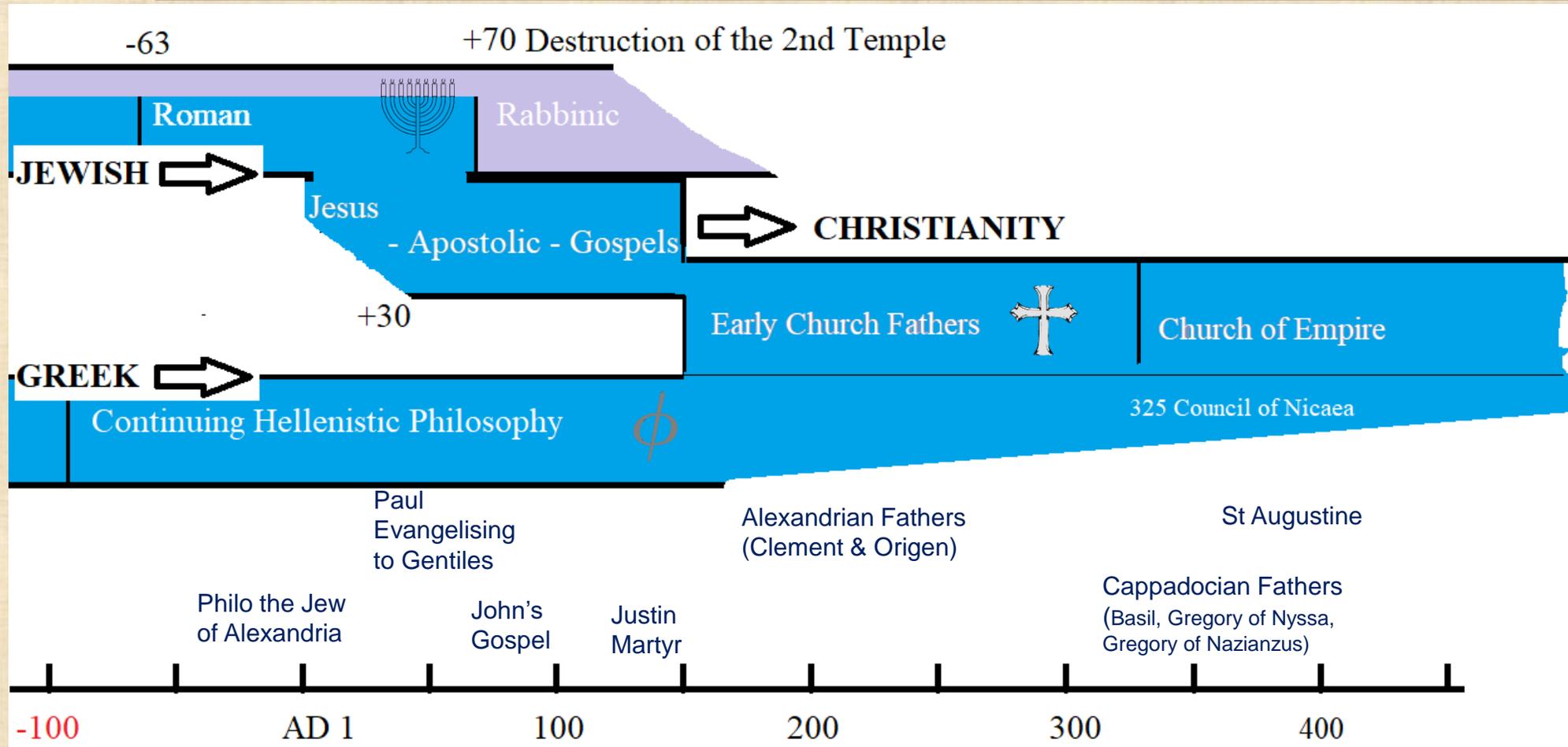


Greek Tradition

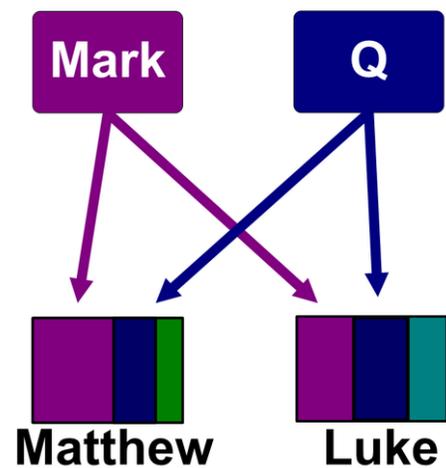
Emergence of Philosophy



From Hellenistic to Christian



Two-source Hypothesis



G O S P E L S

LITERATURE TYPE	THOMAS	MATTHEW	LUKE (+ ACTS)	MARK	JOHN
Summary	Written late but in the old "sayings" style 35% Q	2 nd written rough style	3 rd in finest style No pretence to eyewitness (compilation)	1 st Written (~70AD) Tragedy Structure	4 th Written Jesus Christ Son of God is the Divine <i>Logos</i>
Sayings of Jesus (Q)	Yes	Lots	Lots	++++	+++
Parables (Synoptic)	Many (13+)	Many	Many (≈ Matt)	Lots	+++
Miracles (+ exorcisms)	+++	Lots	Lots	Lots	Less (+ no exorcisms)
Passion story (arrest, trial, crucifixion)	+++	Full	Full	Brief	Yes (many differences)
Infant story	+++	Yes	Yes	+++	+++
Post-Resurrection	+++	Full	Full	+++	Yes (many differences)

Introspective Christianity

When Jesus is asked about the coming of the Kingdom of God, he replied:

*The kingdom of God does not come in such a way as to be seen.
No one will say, Look, here it is! or There it is! because the Kingdom of God is within you.*

Luke 17: 20-21

Jesus said,

If your leaders say to you, 'Look, the kingdom is in heaven,' then the birds of heaven will precede you.

If they say to you, 'It is in the sea,' then the fish will precede you.

Rather, the kingdom is inside you and it is outside you.

Thomas Saying 3

See also: Romans 8:9,11, and the *Logos* within of 1 John 2:14.

Old Judaism vs. Early Christianity

God is anthropomorphic, angry, jealous

Humans are mere mortals that should remain ignorant and submissive

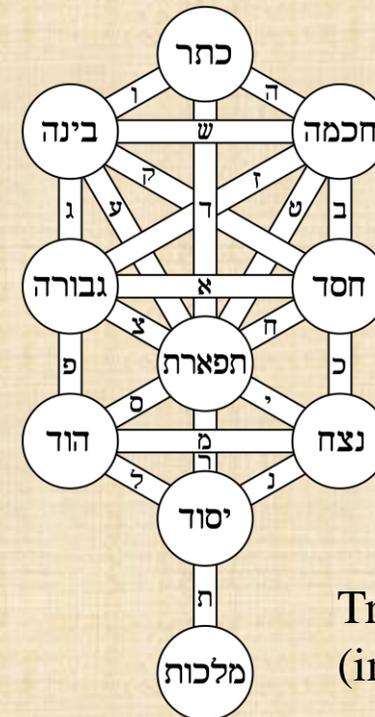
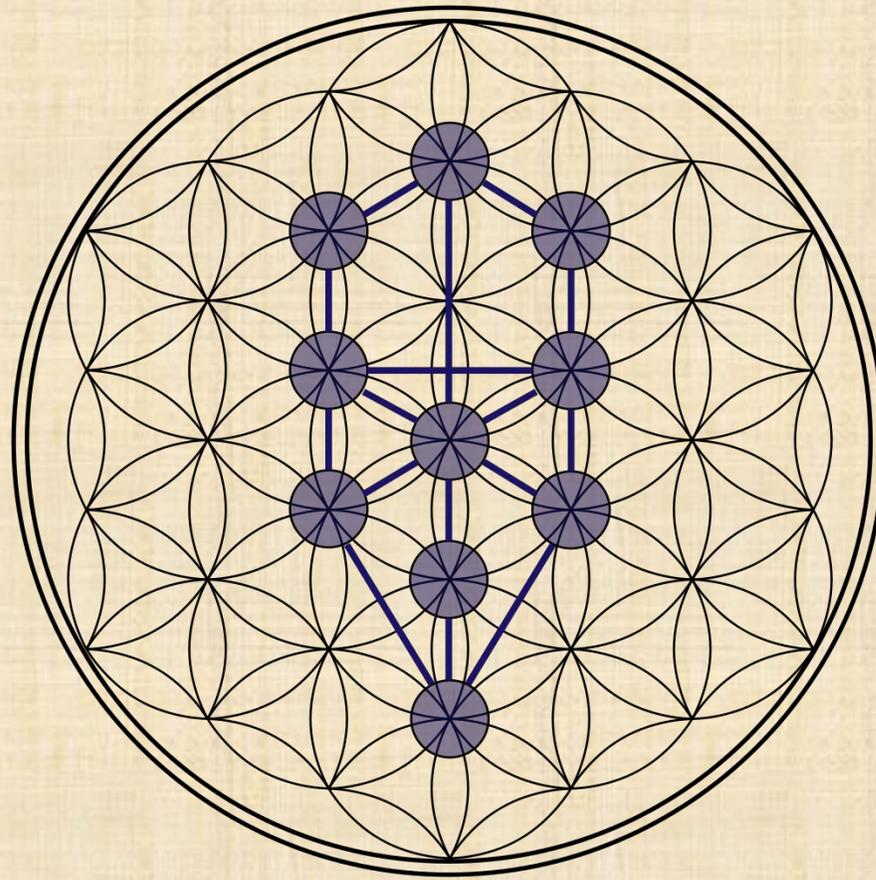
Individuals are controlled externally by fear and written law

God is formal, one and loving

Humans can aspire to divinity by being filled with the spirit, which gives life and wisdom (and perhaps life ever-after).

The convert is controlled by the internal spirit and its teaching (*logos*).

Esoteric Judaism (Kabbalah)



Tree of Life
(immortality)

Augustinian (Platonic) Science



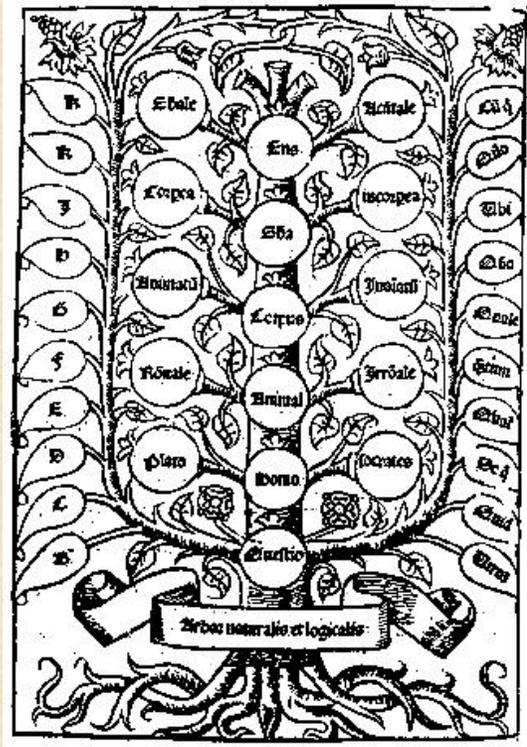
Medieval *Ars Magna*

Renaissance Humanism

Early Modern Science

Who would not wish to be so inspired by those Socratic frenzies which Plato sings in the *Phaedrus* that, swiftly fleeing this place, that is, this world fixed in evil, by the oars, so to say, both of feet and wings, he might reach the heavenly Jerusalem by the swiftest course? Let us be driven, Oh Fathers, by those Socratic frenzies which lift us to such ecstasy that our intellects and our very selves are united to God.

Then ye who now on heavenly nectar fare,
Come celebrate with me in song the name
Of Newton, to the Muses dear; for he
Unlocked the hidden treasures of Truth:
So richly through his mind had Phoebus cast
The radiance of his own divinity.
Nearer the gods no mortal may approach.



Ramon Llull's *Tree of Knowledge*, 1296 AD

Pico della Mirandola's *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, 1486 AD

Edmond Halley's *Ode to Newton*, 1686 AD