

High Priests

The Chronology of the High Priests

1st high priest – Aaron

2nd – one of Aaron's sons

At this time, high priests served for life, and the position was usually passed from father to son.

From the time of Aaron until Solomon the King was 612 years. During this time there were 13 high priests. Average term – 47 years.

From Solomon until the Babylonian captivity

466 years and 6 months; 18 high priests; average term 26 years.

Josadek was high priest when the captivity began, and he was high priest during part of the captivity. His son Jesus, was high priest when the people were allowed to go back to the land.

From the captivity until Antiochus Eupator

415 years; 15 high priests, counting Jesus, son of Josadek, average term 27.6 years.

Antiochus killed Onias, the last of this series, and appointed Joacimus. Jacimus was descended from Aaron, but he was not the son of Onias.

Jacimus served three years, until his death. No one succeeded him, and there was no high priest for seven years.

When the Hasmoneans (Maccabees) had defeated the Greeks in war, they appointed Jonathan to be high priest.

Jonathan was killed by Trypho and was succeeded by his brother, Simon.

Simon was killed by his own son-in-law. and he was succeeded by his son Hyrcanus.

Hyrcanus was high priest for 30 years; died a natural death, leaving the succession to Judas Aristobulus.

Judas Aristobulus declared himself king of the Jews and for a short time had religious and political

power. He died, and his brother Alexander was his heir.

Alexander was high priest and king for 27 years, and just before he died, he gave his wife, Alexandra, the authority to appoint the next high priest.

Alexandra gave the high priesthood to Hyrcanus, but she kept the throne for herself, ruled for nine years, and died.

After her death, Hyrcanus' brother, another Aristobulus, fought against him and took over both the kingship and high priesthood. But after a little more than three years, the Roman legions under Pompey took Jerusalem by force, put Aristobulus and his children in bondage and sent them to Rome. Pompey restored the high priesthood to Hyrcanus and appointed him governor. However, he was not allowed to call himself king.

So Hyrcanus ruled, in addition to his first nine years, another 24 years. Then, the Parthians came across the Euphrates river, fought with the Romans and with Hyrcanus, took him alive, and made Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus, king.

When Antigonus had ruled three years and three months, Herod the Great defeated the Parthians (and Antigonus). The Romans made Herod king, and he cut off the Hasmonean family from the high priesthood, preferring to appoint those who were from common families ... with one exception.

Herod made another man Aristobulus high priest, to try to win the good will of the people. Aristobulus was the grandson of the Hyrcanus who had been captured by the Parthians. But Aristobulus proved to be too popular, so Herod had him drowned while he was swimming at Jericho.

Herod's son, Archelaus, also appointed high priests who were relatively unknown, as did the Romans who were afterwards made rulers or governors in the land.

There were 28 high priests, in all, during the 107 years from Herod until 70 AD, when Titus burned

the Temple and the City. So the average was about 3 ½ years per man.

1. Ananelus
2. Aristobulus
3. Jesus, son of Fabus
4. Simon, son of Boethus
5. Marthia, son of Theophiltu
6. Joazar, son of Boethius
7. Eleazar, son of Boethus
8. Jesus, son of Sic
9. Annas, son of Seth
10. Ismael, son of Fabus
11. Eleazar, son of Annas
12. Simon, son of Camithus
13. Josephus Caiaphas, son-in-law of Annas
14. Jonathan, son of Annas
15. Theophilus, son of Annas
16. Simon, son of Boethus
17. Matthias, brother of Jonathan and son of Annas
18. Aljoneus
19. Josephus, son of Camydus
20. Ananias, son of Nebedeus (before whom Paul plead)
21. Jonathas
22. Ismael, son of Fabus
23. Joseph Cabi, son of Simon
24. Ananus, son of artanus
25. Jesus, son of Damnetas
26. Jesus, son of Gamaliel
27. Matthias, son of Theophilus
28. Phannias, son of Samuel