

### Roman Treaties

The ultimate reason that Rome intervened in the Middle East was due to the fact that Rome needed to control two pieces of territory in order to facilitate the total acquisition of the Mediterranean Basin.

For a long time there was a friendly power in the Eastern Mediterranean. The first nation that had been accepted on equal terms with Rome—this is the Roman point of view—were the Jews. The Jews had entered into a relationship with Rome that was unique among all powers in the eastern Mediterranean. It was a relationship in which they were accepted as "friends".

Now the Roman "friends" were usually on the following relationship with Rome: No nation could attack Roman friends without incurring the disapproval of Rome; and that Rome, upon her decision, would also aid her friends. In turn, the friends of Rome must aid Rome if any nation attacked Rome. So in this relationship you discover that the Romans were more equal than their friends! The reason is obvious: Rome was the strongest power and could dictate these terms.

When the Romans, for instance, elsewhere in Europe wanted to attack a German tribe that might have been temporarily at war or planning to be at war with some other tribe, the Romans often suddenly drew up agreements, made the other tribe a friend of Rome, so that Rome would have a reason to launch an attack against the real nation that it wanted to assault in the first place!

At the start, however, the relationship between Rome and the Jews was rather sincere. I think there was a real intent from every evidence. Josephus has quite a number of quotations pertaining to the documents that sealed that relationship. In the meantime, of course, the Jews were being made subject to both powers—the Seleucids (earlier the Ptolemies) and the Romans. About 200 B.C. the Ptolemaic domination in Palestine disappeared in favor of the Syrians. The Ptolemies had actually treated the Jews much better for a whole century than the Syrians had treated them for 40 years. The Jews had far more trouble in 40 years from the Syrians than they had from the Egyptians in a century. In a way that's true today: Nassar talks but the Syrians have taken much more action.

The Maccabean Revolt is discussed on page 94. You will notice to what extent there in the chart to what extent the Maccabean family had married ultimately into the family of Herod the Great who was from Idumea in southern Palestine. During this time the time of "friendship" existed between Rome and the Jews as pictured in this family outline. The Maccabean revolt was against the Seleucids and was a success.

### One World

Now a power of some significance was developing in Asia Minor. This power was located in the city of Pergamos. The Romans, in moving to the east, wanted to get control of the entire Mediterranean so they first took control of Asia Minor. This was the first of the two key pieces of territory. The other was Egypt proper. It would act as a pincers because in the middle, after all, were the Jews. The Jews had been able, now, to deliver themselves from the Syrians. The Syrians were the only power left competing with Rome—because they had defeated the Egyptian Ptolemies. So Rome came to the defense of the Ptolemies and occupied the country, were friends with the Jews, and received the province of Asia in western Asia Minor as the result of a will—a legal document (page 95 in Langer, first column).

It is unusual that the kingdom of Pergamos should have, in fact, turned over the province of Asia (kingdom of Pergamum) to the Romans by a will! But this was done to prevent the Selucids from occupying the country. There is much more to this story than I have given, but it implies that by this time the world had come to think in terms of one world far more than it ever had. The reason was that people were tired of the division in the Greek dominion; and they had recalled the situation that had existed under the Persians which was one world; and Babylon, which was also one world—smaller worlds, of course, but one nevertheless. Under the Greeks there were constant wars and divisions.

Now many nations were finding it made sense to combine with Rome, because Rome allowed these subservient nations to participate in the one world they were creating. Rome did not usurp all positions of authority. The Romans, in fact, made citizens of many people. Rome was the first "world state" that was not just a tribe like the Persians ruling over all other people. As time went on, maybe the Romans provided the families of the royal line—Italy provided most to start with. But by 50 or 100 years after the Empire was founded, many, many rulers of Rome came from outside Rome. So the idea of one world was impressive! And this is what we should recognize, that most of the world on the shores of the Mediterranean came to accept this. Most of the troubles that occurred were local rather than aimed against Rome. It took awhile to bring the Gauls into submission, and all these other peoples. But it is surprising to what extent in the eastern Mediterranean, where the one world idea still held influence from the past, as distance from Gaul or Spain or North Africa or Britain—or the Jews—that most of the people in the eastern Mediterranean accepted the "one world" idea. The Greeks did not at first, but once they were thoroughly conquered most of the peoples in the eastern Mediterranean accepted the idea of one world. They had once lived with it under the Persians, had tried to achieve it under the Seleucids and Ptolemies. (The Jews didn't like it later, but it wasn't because they objected to one world so much as they wanted to be independent to determine their own destiny.) It came to the place where it was better to have one Roman world than to have two divided worlds.