

1. Review of Zealots (wk. 1):

- The Zealots were a revolutionary movement in the first century against the Roman Empire.
- Goal to bring about the kingdom of God – even if through violent means.
 - Throughout history, in every society, there are those who believe the use of violence for political or religious reasons will bring about their goals, even if their stated purpose is “to live in peace and harmony.”¹
- Heroes from the Bible as well as their recent history:
 - God is “zealous” – Exodus 34:14
 - Phinehas – Numbers 25
 - Elijah – 1 Kings 19:10
 - Maccabees (167-160 BC) – the holiday of Hanukkah.

2. Review of Sea of Galilee geography:

- **Gamla** – was the Zealot HQ.
 - Region called *Batanea* - also known as *Gaulanitis* (think Golan Heights).
- Political Boundary:
 - Herod Antipas ruled Galilee – west of the Jordan River.
 - Herod Philip ruled Batanea (Gaulanitis) – east of the Jordan River.
- Tiberias (Roman power) across from Gamla (Zealot HQ)

3. **Kana** – in Galilee:

- John 21:2 – tells us that Nathaniel is from Cana in Galilee
- Galilee is west of the Sea of Galilee.
 - Nazareth
 - Sepphoris
 - Cana

4. **Sepphoris**:

- Administrative center of Galilee under Herod the Great
- 4 BC – upon the death of Herod the Great – the zealots sacked the royal arsenal to gain weapons.
- Significant building during Jesus’ day (only 4 miles from Nazareth)
- The original seat of Herod Antipas’ government until he moved to Tiberias in 20 CE.
- Although this mosaic is from after Jesus – Sepphoris is famous for the “Mona Lisa of Galilee.”

5. Review of History up to Zealots (see timeline from week 1).

¹ Bryan Buroghs, *Days of Rage: America's Radical Underground, the FBI, and the Forgotten Age of Revolutionary Violence*

Period between Rome (63 BC) and Jesus.
6. Hezekiah (the Zealot):²

- Led a revolt (47 BC) against Rome in Galilee.
- Herod (before becoming king) was governor of Galilee.
- Herod had Hezekiah killed (Jos. Antiquities Book 14 (159))

7. Herod crushes opponents at Arbela (Mount Arbel) – (39-38 BC)

- (Jos. Antiquities 14.16 (414-433))
- Josephus calls them “bandits” or “robbers” – Greek *lestai*.
- Pursued them to the Jordan River.

8. Judas of Gamla (Judas the Galilean)³

- Son of Hezekiah the Zealot
- 4 BC – attacked Sepphoris and raided the armor (Jos. Antiquities book 17 (271))
- 6 AD – at the time of the census lead a revolt and officially started the Zealots.

But of the fourth sect of Jewish philosophy, Judas the Galilean was the author. These men agree in all other things with the Pharisaic notions; but they have an inviolable attachment to liberty; and say that God is to be their only Ruler and Lord.

Josephus Antiquities of the Jews – Book 18, (23)

- **Acts 5:37**

9. “robbers” or insurrectionists?

- Josephus uses the term “bandits” or “robbers” – Greek *lestai* – but the penalty for stealing under Roman law is NOT crucifixion.
- **Matt. 27:38** – Jesus is crucified between two? –
 - King James translated it “thieves,” but the Greek is *lestai* – which is used for ‘rebels’ or ‘revolutionaries’ – the same word Josephus uses for the Zealots.
- Jesus spends his entire ministry preaching – forgiveness and loving your neighbor – and in the end, he is falsely accused of being an insurrectionist and a rebel

² <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/7670-hezekiah-the-zealot>

³ <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/judah-the-galilean>