

Philo lived in an era of increasing ethnic tension in Alexandria, exacerbated by the new strictures of imperial rule. Some expatriate Hellenes in Alexandria condemned the Jews for a supposed alliance with Rome, even as Rome was seeking to suppress Jewish nationalism in Judea. [9].

Philo was influenced by Platonic and Stoic writings and probably also by certain postbiblical Jewish beliefs and speculations. His father had apparently played a prominent role in Palestine before moving to Alexandria. Philo was born between 15 and 10 bce. The community of Alexandria, to judge from the language of the Jewish papyri and inscriptions, had for nearly three centuries been almost exclusively Greek-speaking and indeed regarded the Septuagint the 3rd-century-bce translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek as divinely inspired. These men were often influenced by the Greek culture in which they lived and wrote apologies for Judaism. The Alexandrian Jews were eager to enroll their children of secondary school age in Greek gymnasiums, institutions with religious associations dedicated to the liberal arts and athletics; in them, Jews were certainly called upon to make compromises with their traditions. It may be assumed that Philo was a product of such an education: Like the cultured Greeks of his day, Philo often attended the theatre, though it had distinctly religious connotations, and he noted the different effects of the same music on various members of the audience and the enthusiasm of the audience for a tragedy of Euripides. He was a keen observer of boxing contests and attended chariot races as well. He also mentions the frequency with which he attended costly suppers with their lavish entertainment. Philo says nothing of his own Jewish education. The only mention of Jewish education in his work indicates how relatively weak it must have been, because he speaks only of Jewish schools that met on the Sabbath for lectures on ethics. That he was far from the Palestinian Hellenizers and that he regarded himself as an observant Jew is clear, however, from his statement that one should not omit the observance of any of the Jewish customs that have been divinely ordained. Philo is critical both of those who took the Bible too literally and thus encountered theological difficulties, particularly anthropomorphisms. Philo says nothing of his own religious practices, except that he made a festival pilgrimage to Jerusalem, though he nowhere indicates whether he made more than one such visit. In the eyes of the Palestinian rabbis the Alexandrian Jews were particularly known for their cleverness in posing puzzles and for their sharp replies. On the whole, Philo is in accord with the prevailing Palestinian point of view; nonetheless he differs from it in numerous details and is often dependent upon Greek and Roman law. That Philo experienced some sort of identity crisis is indicated by a passage in his *On the Special Laws*. In this work, he describes his longing to escape from worldly cares to the contemplative life, his joy at having succeeded in doing so perhaps with the Egyptian Jewish ascetic sect of the Therapeutae described in his treatise *On the Contemplative Life*, and his renewed pain at being forced once again to participate in civic turmoil. Philo appears to have been dissatisfied with his life in the bustling metropolis of Alexandria: He praises the Essenes—a Jewish sect who lived in monastic communities in the Dead Sea area—for avoiding large cities because of the iniquities that had become inveterate among city dwellers, for living an agricultural life, and for disdaining wealth. Philo was prepared to answer the charge of disloyalty levelled against the Jews by the notorious anti-Semite Apion, a Greek grammarian, when the Emperor cut him short. Thereupon Philo told his fellow delegates not to be discouraged because God would punish Caligula, who, shortly thereafter, was indeed assassinated. Scriptural essays and homilies based on specific verses or topics of the Pentateuch the first five books of the Bible, especially Genesis. The most important of the 25 extant treatises in this group are *Allegories of the Laws*, commentary on Genesis, and *On the Special Laws*, an exposition of the laws in the Pentateuch. General philosophical and religious essays. Essays on contemporary subjects. A number of works ascribed to Philo are almost certainly spurious. Most important of these is *Biblical Antiquities*, an imaginative reconstruction of Jewish history from Adam to the death of Saul, the first king of Israel. His style is generally involved, allusive, strongly tinged with mysticism, and often obscure; this may be a result of a deliberate attempt on his part to discourage all but the initiated few. To Aristotle he was indebted primarily in matters of cosmology and ethics. To the Neo-Pythagoreans, who had grown in importance during the century before

Philo, he was particularly indebted for his views on the mystic significance of numbers, especially the number seven, and the scheme of a peculiar, self-disciplined way of life as a preparation for immortality. The Cynics, with their diatribes, influenced him in the form of his sermons. Though Philo more often employed the terminology of the Stoics than that of any other school, he was critical of their thoughts. Again, in his view of God, Philo was original in insisting on an individual Providence able to suspend the laws of nature in contrast to the prevailing Greek philosophical view of a universal Providence who is himself subject to the unchanging laws of nature. As a Creator, God made use of assistants: Philo did not reject the Platonic view of a preexistent matter but insisted that this matter too was created. Philo saw the cosmos as a great chain of being presided over by the Logos, a term going back to pre-Socratic philosophy, which is the mediator between God and the world, though at one point he identifies the Logos as a second God. Philo departed from Plato principally in using the term Logos for the Idea of Ideas and for the Ideas as a whole and in his statement that the Logos is the place of the intelligible world. In anticipation of Christian doctrine he called the Logos the first-begotten Son of God, the man of God, the image of God, and second to God. Philo was also novel in his exposition of the mystic love of God that God has implanted in man and through which man becomes Godlike. Perhaps, through his mystic presentation of Judaism, Philo hoped to enable Judaism in the Diaspora to compete with the mystery religions in its proselyting efforts, as well as in its attempts to hold on to its adherents. That he was essentially in the mainstream of Judaism, however, is indicated by his respect for the literal interpretation of the Bible, his denunciation of the extreme allegorists, and his failure to mention any specific rites of initiation for proselytes, as well as the lack of evidence that he was himself a devotee of a particular mystery cult. Like Plato, Philo regarded the body as the prison house of the soul, and in his dualism of body and soul, as in his description of the flight from the self, the contrast between God and the world, and the yearning for a direct experience of God, he anticipated much of Gnosticism, a dualistic religion that became important in the 2nd century ce. But unlike all the Greek philosophers, with the exception of the Epicureans, who believed in limited freedom of will, Philo held that man is completely free to act against all the laws of his own nature. In his ethical theory Philo described two virtues, under the heading of justice, that are otherwise unknown in Greek philosophic literature—religious faith and humanity. Again, for him repentance was a virtue, whereas for other Greek philosophers it was a weakness. In his political theory Philo often said that the best form of government is democracy, but for him democracy was far from mob rule, which he denounced as the worst of polities, perhaps because he saw the Alexandrian mob in action. For Philo democracy meant not a particular form of government but due order under any form of government in which all men are equal before the law. From this point of view, the Mosaic constitution, which embodies the best elements of all forms of government, is the ideal. Indeed, the ultimate goal of history is that the whole world be a single state under a democratic constitution. Learn More in these related Britannica articles:

Chapter 2 : CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA: Philo of Alexandria

Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 B.C.E.–40 C.E.) Philo of Alexandria, a Hellenized Jew also called Judaeus Philo, is a figure that spans two cultures, the Greek and the Hebrew.

Anthropomorphisms[edit] Philo characterizes as a monstrous impiety the anthropomorphism of the Bible, which ascribes to God hands and feet, eyes and ears, tongue and windpipe. God as such is untouched by unreasonable emotions, as appears, e. But He is frequently represented as endowed with human emotions; and this serves to explain expressions referring to His repentance. Similarly God cannot exist or change in space. Freudenthal, "Hellenistische Studien," p. But Philo, who was a pious Jew, could not accept the un-Jewish, pagan conception of the world and the irreligious attitude which would have been the logical result of his own system; and so he accepted the Stoic doctrine of the immanence of God, which led him to statements opposed to those he had previously made. While he at first had placed God entirely outside of the world, he now regarded Him as the only actual being therein. God is the only real citizen of the world; all other beings are merely sojourners therein. Hence God must call upon other powers to aid Him in the creation of man, as He can have nothing to do with matter, which constitutes the physical nature of man: God stands in a special relation to man. It is a reflex of God, a part of the divine reason, just as in the system of the Stoics the human soul is an emanation of the World-Soul. The life of the soul is nourished and supported by God, Philo using for his illustrations the figures of the light and the fountain and the Biblical passages referring to these.

Doctrine of the Divine Attributes[edit] Although, as shown above, Philo repeatedly endeavored to find the Divine Being active and acting in the world, in agreement with Stoicism, yet his Platonic repugnance to matter predominated, and consequently whenever he posited that the divine could not have any contact with evil, he defined evil as matter, with the result that he placed God outside of the world. Hence he was obliged to separate from the Divine Being the activity displayed in the world and to transfer it to the divine powers, which accordingly were sometimes inherent in God and at other times exterior to God. This doctrine, as worked out by Philo, was composed of very different elements, including Greek philosophy, Biblical conceptions, pagan and late Jewish views. The Greek elements were borrowed partly from Platonic philosophy, insofar as the divine powers were conceived as types or patterns of actual things "archetypal ideas" , and partly from Stoic philosophy, insofar as those powers were regarded as the efficient causes that not only represent the types of things, but also produce and maintain them. He further made use of the pagan conception of demons ib. In the Haggadah this fundamental power divides into two contrasts, which modify each other. Philo, however, interpreted "Elohim" LXX. The Logos[edit] Philo used the term Logos to mean an intermediary divine being, or demiurge. This name, which he borrowed from Greek philosophy, was first used by Heraclitus and then adopted by the Stoics. But Philo borrowed also Platonic elements in designating the Logos as the "idea of ideas" and the "archetypal idea". He calls the Logos "second god [deuteros theos]"

Questions and Answers on Genesis 2: The Logos, like the high priest, is the expiator of sins, and the mediator and advocate for men: As such, the Logos becomes the aspect of the divine that operates in the world—through whom the world is created and sustained. He translates this passage as follows: The Logos is a kind of shadow cast by God, having the outlines but not the blinding light of the Divine Being.

Pneumatology[edit] The relation of the Logos to the divine powers, especially to the two fundamental powers, must now be examined. And here is found a twofold series of exegetic expositions. According to one, the Logos stands higher than the two powers; according to the other, it is in a way the product of the two powers; similarly it occasionally appears as the chief and leader of the innumerable powers proceeding from the primal powers, and again as the aggregate or product of them. It separates the individual beings of nature from one another according to their characteristics; but, on the other hand, it constitutes the bond connecting the individual creatures, uniting their spiritual and physical attributes. It may be said to have invested itself with the whole world as an indestructible garment. It appears as the director and shepherd of the things in the world insofar as they are in motion. The Logos has a special relation to man. It is the type; man is the copy. For the shaping of his nous, man earthly man has the Logos the "heavenly man" for a pattern. As the latter, he

softens punishments by making the merciful power stronger than the punitive. The Logos has a special mystic influence upon the human soul, illuminating it and nourishing it with a higher spiritual food, like the manna, of which the smallest piece has the same vitality as the whole.

Chapter 3 : The Works of Philo by C. D. Yonge

Information on Philo of Alexandria James C. VanderKam writes: "Although many of Philo's writings have survived, little is known about his life. We do not even know when he was born or when he died.

Quotes[edit] Are you making war upon us, because you anticipate that we will not endure such indignity, but that we will fight on behalf of our laws, and die in defence of our national customs? For you cannot possibly have been ignorant of what was likely to result from your attempt to introduce these innovations respecting our temple. A Judge must bear in mind that when he tries a case he is himself on trial. Special Laws, 1st century. It would be a sign of great simplicity to think that the world was created in six days, or indeed at all in time; [Therefore it would be correctly said that the world was not created in time, but that time had its existence in consequence of the world. For it is the motion of the heaven that has displayed the nature of time. Yonge, The works of Philo Judaeus , Vol. On the Special Laws[edit] translated by F. Colson Moses â€¦ denied to the members of the sacred commonwealth unrestricted liberty to use and partake of the other kinds of food. All the animals of land, sea or air whose flesh is the finest and fattest, thus titillating and exciting the malignant foe pleasure, he sternly forbade them to eat, knowing that they set a trap for the most slavish of the senses, the taste, and produce gluttony, an evil very dangerous both to soul and body. The holy Moses â€¦ discarded passion in general and detesting it, as most vile in itself and in its effects, denounced especially desire as a battery of destruction to the soul, which must be done away with or brought into obedience to the governance of reason, and then all things will be permeated through and through with peace and good order, those perfect forms of the good which bring the full perfection of happy living. Moses â€¦ takes one form of desire, that one whose field of activity is the belly, and admonishes and disciplines it as the first step, holding that the other forms will cease to run riot as before and will be restrained by having learnt that their senior and as it were the leader of their company is obedient to the laws of temperance. The road that leads to pleasure is downhill and very easy, with the result that one does not walk but is dragged along; the other which leads to self-control is uphill, toilsome no doubt but profitable exceedingly. The one carries us away, forced lower and lower as it drives us down its steep incline, till it flings us off on to the level ground at its foot; the other leads heavenwards the immortal who have not fainted on the way and have had the strength to endure the roughness of the hard ascent. The natural gravitation of the body pulls down with it those of little mind, strangling and overwhelming them with the multitude of the fleshly elements. Blessed are they to whom it is given to resist with superior strength the weight that would pull them down, taught by the guiding lines of right instruction to leap upward from earth and earth-bound things into the ether and the revolving heavens. There is no sweeter delight than that the soul should be charged through and through with justice, exercising itself in her eternal principles and doctrines and leaving no vacant place into which injustice can make its way. If one adds anything small or great to the queen of virtues, piety, or on the other hand takes something from it, in either case he will change and transform its nature. Addition will beget superstition and subtraction will beget impiety. On the Virtues[edit] Even the great king will appear as the poorest of men if compared with a single virtue. For his wealth is soulless, buried deep in store-houses and recesses of the earth, but the wealth of virtue lies in the sovereign part of the soul, and the purest part of existence. God has no wants, He needs nothing, being in Himself all-sufficient to Himself, while the fool has many wants, ever thirsting for what is not there. Colson But some, making no account of the wealth of nature, pursue the wealth of vain opinions. They choose to lean on one who lacks rather than one who has the gift of sight, and with this defective guidance to their steps must of necessity fall. We must mention the higher, nobler wealth, which does not belong to all, but to truly noble and divinely gifted men. This wealth is bestowed by wisdom through the doctrines and principles of ethic, logic and physic, and from these spring the virtues, which rid the soul of its proneness to extravagance, and engender the love of contentment and frugality, which will assimilate it to God. For God has no wants, He needs nothing, being in Himself all-sufficient to Himself, while the fool has many wants, ever thirsting for what is not there, longing to gratify his greedy and insatiable desire, which he fans into a blaze like a fire and brings both great and small within its reach. But the man of worth has few wants, standing

midway between mortality and immortality. The health of the soul is to have its faculties, reason, high spirit and desire happily tempered, with the reason in command and reining in the other two, like restive horses. If they are unwilling to give, they should at least lend with all readiness and alacrity, not with the prospect of receiving anything back except the principal. And what acquisition can rival these? Nay, even the great king will appear as the poorest of men if compared with a single virtue. Can we then hold the poverty-in-wealth of the money-grubbing usurers to be of any account? They may seem to be kings with purses full of gold, but they never even in their dreams have had a glimpse of the wealth that has eyes to see. Colson Loeb Classical Library: They in their desire for health commit themselves to physicians, but these people show no willingness to cast off the soul-sickness of their untrained grossness by resorting to wise men Wisdom 'never closes her school of thought but always opens her doors to those who thirst for the sweet water of discourse, and pouring on them an unstinted stream of undiluted doctrine, persuades them to be drunken with the drunkenness which is soberness itself. Bodies have men as their masters, souls their vices and passions. God and no mortal is my Sovereign. He who has God alone for his leader, he alone is free. If one looks with a penetrating eye into the facts, he will clearly perceive that no two things are so closely akin as independence of action and freedom, because the bad man has a multitude of encumbrances, such as love of money or reputation and pleasure, while the good man has none at all. He stands defiant and triumphant. The good man 'has learnt to set at naught the injunctions laid upon him by those most lawless rulers of the soul, inspired as he is by his ardent yearning for the freedom whose peculiar heritage it is that it obeys no orders and works no will but its own. They are led by strong drink and good looks and by baked meats and savory dishes and the dainties produced by cooks and confectioners, to say nothing of their craving for silver and gold and grander ambitions. Those in whom anger or desire or any other passion, or again any insidious vice holds sway, are entirely enslaved, while all whose life is regulated by law are free. And right reason is an infallible law engraved not by this mortal or that and, therefore, perishable as he, nor on parchment slabs, and, therefore, soulless as they, but by immortal nature on the immortal mind, never to perish. One may well wonder at the short-sightedness of those who ignore the characteristics which so clearly distinguish different things and declare that the laws of Solon and Lycurgus are all-sufficient to secure the greatest of republics, Athens and Sparta, because their sovereign authority is loyally accepted by those who enjoy that citizenship, yet deny that right reason, which is the fountain head of all other law, can impart freedom to the wise, who obey all that it prescribes or forbids. We have a very clear evidence of freedom in the equality recognized by all the good in addressing each other. Nothing will a man rue more than refusal to listen to the wise. The majority, who through the blindness of their reason do not discern the damages which the soul has sustained, only feel the pain of external injuries, because the faculty of judgment, which alone can enable them to apprehend the damage to the mind, is taken from them. Nor is it a matter for wonder that the good do not appear herded in great throngs. First because specimens of great goodness are rare, secondly, because they avoid the great crowd of the more thoughtless and keep themselves at leisure for the contemplation of what nature has to show. Those who prefer idleness to labor, not only prevent the growths but also wither and destroy the roots. But those who consider inaction mischievous and are willing to labor, do as the husbandman does with fine young shoots. By constant care they rear the virtues into stems rising up to heaven, saplings ever blooming and immortal, bearing and never ceasing to bear the fruits of happiness, or as some hold, not so much bearing as being in themselves that happiness. These Moses often calls by the compound name of wholefruits. And yet these things for which we should strive eagerly, things so closely akin to ourselves, so truly our own, we treat with great slackness and constant indifference and thus destroy the germs of excellence, while those things in which deficiency were a merit we desire with an insatiable yearning. A far greater glory is it to the wise to die for freedom, the love of which stands in very truth implanted in the soul like nothing else, not as a casual adjunct but an essential part of its unity, and cannot be amputated without the whole system being destroyed as a result. Nature 'has born and reared all men alike, and created them genuine brothers, not in mere name, but in very reality, though this kinship has been put to confusion by the triumph of malignant covetousness, which has wrought estrangement instead of affinity and enmity instead of friendship. Noble souls, whose brightness the greed of fortune cannot dim, have a kingly something, which urges them to contend on equal footing with persons of

the most massive dignity and pits freedom of speech against arrogance. This too is a truth well known to everyone who has taken even a slight hold of culture, that freedom is an honorable thing, and slavery a disgraceful thing, and that honorable things are associated with good men and disgraceful things with bad men. Hence, it clearly follows that no person of true worth is a slave, though threatened by a host of claimants who produce contracts to prove their ownership. As parents in private life teach wisdom to their children, so do [poets] in public life to their cities. Diogenes the cynic, seeing one of the so-called freedmen pluming himself, while many heartily congratulated him, marveled at the absence of reason and discernment. A Spiritual Memoir by Dan Wakefield. It has also been wrongly attributed to Plato and Ephrem the Syrian. It is a variant of the Christmas message "Be pitiful, for every man is fighting a hard battle," written by the Scottish preacher Ian Maclaren also known as John Watson in This [is a] complete disintegration of the Greek ideal of virtue To know God and to disown oneself is a standing correlation in Philo. There was now a tumult arisen at Alexandria, between the Jewish inhabitants and the Greeks; and three ambassadors were chosen out of each party that were at variance, who came to Gaius. Now one of these ambassadors from the people of Alexandria was Apion, 29 who uttered many blasphemies against the Jews; and, among other things that he said, he charged them with neglecting the honors that belonged to Caesar; for that while all who were subject to the Roman empire built altars and temples to Gaius, and in other regards universally received him as they received the gods, these Jews alone thought it a dishonorable thing for them to erect statues in honor of him, as well as to swear by his name. Many of these severe things were said by Apion, by which he hoped to provoke Gaius to anger at the Jews, as he was likely to be. But Philo, the principal of the Jewish embassy, a man eminent on all accounts, brother to Alexander the alabarch, 30 and one not unskillful in philosophy, was ready to betake himself to make his defense against those accusations; but Gaius prohibited him, and bid him begone; he was also in such a rage, that it openly appeared he was about to do them some very great mischief. Flavius Josephus Jewish historian, Antiquities of the Jews, xviii. By this, as Erdmann observes, the Bible narrative was found to contain a deeper, and particularly an allegorical interpretation, in addition to its literal interpretation; this was not conscious disingenuousness but a natural mode of amalgamating the Greek philosophic with the Hebraic doctrines. Many of the Christian writers grew up in communities where the teaching of the Stoics was all-pervasive in cultured circles. Through this philosophy they became familiar with the concept that "reason pervades all things like a fiery essence, and that the soul of man is a spark from this universal reason. Philo attempted to combine Hebrew religion and Greek philosophy. He gave great impetus to the tendency to allegorize the Old Testament and to derive from it highly speculative ideas which became universal among Christian theologians. So all pervasive indeed was this moral philosophy of the Stoics that it was read by the Jews of Alexandria into Moses under the veil of allegory and was declared to be the inner meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Chapter 4 : Philo - Wikipedia

Philo Judaeus, also called Philo of Alexandria, (born bce, Alexandriaâ€”died ce, Alexandria), Greek-speaking Jewish philosopher, the most important representative of Hellenistic Judaism.

Major Works on Philo 1. Life Very little is known about the life of Philo. He lived in Alexandria, which at that time counted, according to some estimates, about one million people and included largest Jewish community outside of Palestine. He came from a wealthy and the prominent family and appears to be a leader in his community. Once he visited Jerusalem and the temple, as he himself stated in Prov. He donated money to plate the gates of the temple in Jerusalem with gold and silver. The other son, Tiberius Julius Alexander, described by Josephus as "not remaining true to his ancestral practices" became procurator of the province of Judea C. Philo was involved in the affairs of his community which interrupted his contemplative life Spec. He was elected to head the Jewish delegation, which apparently included his brother Alexander and nephew Tiberius Julius Alexander, and was sent to Rome in B. One has the impression that he attempted to show that the philosophical Platonic or Stoic ideas were nothing but the deductions made from the biblical verses of Moses. Philo was not an original thinker, but he was well acquainted with the entire range of Greek philosophical traditions through the original texts. If there are gaps in his knowledge, they are rather in his Jewish tradition as evidenced by his relying on the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. In his attempt to reconcile the Greek way of thinking with his Hebrew tradition he had antecedents such as Pseudo-Aristeas and Aristobulus. The first group comprises writings that paraphrase the biblical texts of Moses: A series of works include allegorical explanations of Genesis A series of works classified as philosophical treatises: The third group includes historical-apologetic writings: The first extract is a rationalistic version of Exodus giving a eulogic account of Moses and a summary of Mosaic constitution contrasting its severity with the laxity of the gentile laws; the second extract describes the Essenes. Technique of Exposition Philo uses an allegorical technique for interpretation of the Hebrew myth and in this he follows the Greek tradition of Theagenes of Rhegium second half of the sixth century B. He said that the myths of gods struggling with each other referred to the opposition between the elements; the names of gods were made to refer to various dispositions of the soul, e. Anaxagoras , too, explained the Homeric poems as discussions of virtue and justice. The Sophist Prodicus of Ceos b. He also employed ethical allegory. The allegory was used by the cynic Antisthenes contemporary of Plato and Diogenes the Cynic. Using this allegorical method, Philo seeks out the hidden message beneath the surface of any particular text and tries to read back a new doctrine into the work of the past. In a similar way Plutarch allegorized the ancient Egyptian mythology giving it a new meaning. But in some aspects of Jewish life Philo defends the literal interpretation of his tradition as in the debate on circumcision or the Sabbath Mig. Though he acknowledges the symbolic meaning of these rituals, he insists on their literal interpretation. Philo disdained the material world and physical body Spec. But it was a necessary evil, hence Philo does not advocate a complete abnegation from life. On the contrary he advocates fulfilling first the practical obligations toward men and the use of mundane possessions for the accomplishment of praiseworthy works Fug. Similarly he considers pleasure indispensable and wealth useful, but for a virtuous man they are not a perfect good LA 3. He believed that men should steer themselves away from the physical aspect of things gradually. Some people, like philosophers, may succeed in focusing their minds on the eternal realities. To him, mystic vision allows our soul to see the Divine Logos Ebr. In a desire to validate the scripture as an inspired writing, he often compares it to prophetic ecstasy Her. His praise of the contemplative life of the monastic Therapeutae in Alexandria attests to his preference of bios theoreticos over bios practicos. He adheres to the Platonic picture of the souls descending into the material realm and that only the souls of philosophers are able to come to the surface and return to their realm in heaven Gig. Philo adopted the Platonic concept of the soul with its tripartite division. But if it were to die, then our soul would live according to its proper life being released from the evil and dead body to which it is bound" Op. To him philosophy is "the greatest good thing to men" Op. It is a devotion to wisdom, and a way to acquire the highest knowledge, "an attentive study of wisdom. Hence it follows that Moses, as the author of the Torah, "had

reached the very summit of philosophy" and "had learnt from the oracles of God the most numerous and important of the principles of nature" Op. Moses was also the interpreter of nature Her. By saying this Philo wanted to indicate that human wisdom has two origins: Moreover, that Mosaic Law is not inconsistent with nature. A single law, the Logos of nature governs the entire world Jos. Because of this we have a conscience that affects even wicked persons QG 4. Wisdom is a consummated philosophy and as such has to be in agreement with the principles of nature Mos. The study of philosophy has as its end "life in accordance with nature" and following the "path of right reason" Mig. Philosophy prepares us to a moral life, i. From this follows that life in accordance with nature hastens us towards virtues Mos. Thus Philo does not discount human reason, but contrasts only the true doctrine which is trust in God with uncertain, plausible, and unreliable reasoning LA 3. To Philo man is basically passive and it is God who sows noble qualities in the soul, thus we are instruments of God LA 2. Still man is the only creature endowed with freedom to act though his freedom is limited by the constitution of his mind. As such he is responsible for his action and "very properly receives blame for the offences which he designedly commits. Philo advocates the practice of virtue in both the divine and the human spheres. Lovers only of God and lovers only of men are both incomplete in virtue. Philo advocates a middle harmonious way Decal. He differentiates four virtues: Human dispositions Philo divides into three groups "the best is given the vision of God, the next has a vision on the right i. Felicity is achieved in the culmination of three values: Philo adopts the Stoic wise man as a model for human behavior. Such a wise man should imitate God who was impassible apathes hence the sage should achieve a state of apatheia, i. In such a state of eupatheia, the sage achieves a serene, stable, and joyful disposition in which he is directed by reason in his decisions QG 2. But at the same time Philo claims that the needs of the body should not be neglected and rejects the other extreme, i. Everything should be governed by reason, self-control, and moderation. Joy and pleasure do not have intrinsic values, but are by-products of virtue and characterize the sage Fug. It is usually associated with some mental and physical training and in the theistic version it involves a sensation of closeness to or unity with God experienced as temporal and spatial transcendence. It is similar to a later doctrine of intellectual contact of our human intellect with the transcendent intellect developed by Alexander of Aphrodisias and Ibn Rushd and different from the Plotinian doctrine of the absorption into the ineffable one. But this position is rather alien to biblical and rabbinical understanding. In the Bible, God is represented in a "material" and "physical" way. Philosophically, however, Philo differentiated between the existence of God, which could be demonstrated, and the nature of God which humans are not able to cognize. Therefore, we cannot say anything about his qualities "For God is not only devoid of peculiar qualities, but he is likewise not of the form of man" LA 1. Strictly speaking, we cannot make any positive or negative statements about God: But he alone can utter a positive assertion respecting himself, since he alone has an accurate knowledge of his own nature" LA 3. Moreover, since the essence of God is single, therefore its property must be one which Philo denotes as acting "Now it is an especial attribute of God to create, and this faculty it is impious to ascribe to any created being" Cher. The expression of this act of God, which is at the same time his thinking, is his Logos Prov. But there are degrees and levels to our cognizance of God. Those at the summit and the highest level may grasp the unity of the powers of God, at the lower level people recognize the Logos as the Regent Power, and those still at the lowest level, immersed in the sensible world are unable to perceive the intelligible reality Fug. Steps in mystic experience involve a realization of human nothingness, a realization that the one who acts is God alone, and abandonment of our sense of perception Her. A mystic state will produce a sensation of tranquility, and stability; it appears suddenly and is described as a sober intoxication Gig. Source of Intuition of the Infinite Reality According to Philo the highest knowledge man may have is the knowledge of infinite reality which is not accessible by the normal senses, but by unmediated intuition of divinity. Humans were endowed with the mind, i. We received the first in order that we might consider the things that are discernable only by the intellect, the end of which is truth, and the second for the perception of visible things the end of which is opinion. Opinions are unstable, based on probability, and untrustworthy. Thus by this divine gift men are able to come to a conclusion about the existence of the divinity. They can do it in two ways: And in the process the soul may climb the ladder to perfection by using natural means i. The other is a direct apprehension by being instructed by God himself

when the mind elevates itself above the physical world and perceives the uncreated One through a clear vision Praem. This vision is accessible to the "purified mind" to which God appears as One. To the mind uninitiated in the mysteries, unable to apprehend God alone by himself, but only through his actions, God appears as a triad constituted by him and his two powers, Creative and Royal Abr. Such a direct vision of God is not dependent on revelation but is possible because we have an impression of God in our mind, which is nothing but a tiny fragment of the Logos pervading the whole universe, not separated from its source, but only extended Det. And we receive this portion of the Divine Mind at birth being endowed with a mind which makes us resemble God Op. At birth two powers enter every soul, the salutary Beneficent and the destructive Unbounded. The world is created through these same powers. The creation is accomplished when " the salutary and beneficent power brings to an end the unbounded and destructive nature. Thus both the world and humans are a mixture of these powers and the prevailing one has the moral determination: But the prudent and noble [soul] receives the powerful and salutary [power] and, on the contrary, possesses in itself good fortune and happiness" QE 1.

Chapter 5 : Philo of Alexandria (Philo, of Alexandria) | The Online Books Page

In the 4th century so impressed was Church propagandist Eusebius by Philo's descriptions of the Therapeutae (Hellenized Jewish Buddhists of Alexandria) that the church historian decided the Therapeutae were in fact early Christian monks.

He was a Roman citizen, raised in both a Jewish as well as a Greek cultural background. His philosophy sought to combine the two by interpreting the Hebrew Bible exegesis through the lens of Greek philosophy. His philosophy and approach would serve as the basis for later developments in Christianity. By interpreting religion philosophically, he is a founder of what is known as religious philosophy. Philo was both a Roman citizen as well as one of the million Jews living in Alexandria at the time. Flaccus had put up statues of Caligula in Jewish temples across Alexandria, requiring the Jews to revere him as a God, which was against their religion. When the Jews resisted, thousands were killed cruelly, while the rest were forced into a ghetto. Philo had come from an influential family and was respected for his wisdom. He served as a representative to the Jewish community, visiting Caligula and requesting for the persecution to end. Philo used his extensive background in Greek philosophy to justify and explain the religious truths of the Hebrew Bible. Like the Platonists, he understands matter as dead in contrast to the soul which is alive, and like the Neo-Pythagoreans sees the soul as divine while the body is the source of all evil. He was influenced by the Stoics belief that the world is governed by divine reason logos. Philo believed that the Bible has two meanings, one literal and another allegorical. This means that those who understand the truth of reality can see in the Bible the expression of these truths. The figures in the Bible are seen as representing a spiritual progression, where Noah is only good relative to the wickedness of others, Abraham is better in that he turns from sensuality to reason, and finally Isaac represents a man who has achieved perfection. Based on things like a repetition of a phrase, a striking statement, or a numerical significance, Philo would use these occasions to interpret the Bible allegorically. In Hebrew, every letter is equal to a number for example: Therefore, every letter, word and passage of the Hebrew Bible is comprised of a series of numbers. Philo used these numbers to see deeper meanings in the Bible this is known as gematria. Like the Stoics, Philo believes the goal is to be like a wise man who lives in a state of apatheia, free of unnecessary and irrational emotions such as desire or anxiety. By focusing on positive emotions eupathia such as joy and serenity, one can remain rational. Philo believed it is also possible, through meditation and the practice of virtue, to ultimately be able to have a direct mystical experience of the divine as One. In the Greek philosophical tradition, such as Stoicism, logos meant divine reason, while in the Hebrew tradition logos meant the word of God. With his mind, God therefore causes all things. As humans, we possess rational and immortal souls, which Philo sees as being the divine breath of God as the Father, Creator, and logos of the world. Philo understands creation as having taken place from an early, shapeless matter chaos or darkness, which God gives order through the incorporation of Forms. Philo also understands the world as being constantly created by God. Philo understands miracles as acts of God, but not in supernatural terms. The miracles of the Bible either refer to natural events, or are to be interpreted allegorically. For example, Philo believes the plague of darkness which befell the Egyptians was the result of an eclipse. A miracle is therefore not supernatural, but rather an expression of divine reason logos. The merging of Greek and Hebrew cultures in Hellenistic times would result in the unique synthesis of ideas, such as Philo. By interpreting the Bible according to Greek philosophy, as well as understanding Greek philosophy as originating in the truths of religion, Philo would pave the way for developments in Christian theology and philosophy.

Philo of Alexandria is a Jewish thinker who lived in Alexandria in the first half of the first century BCE. Whether he really was a philosopher is a question still debated at length.

Alexandrian philosopher; born about 20 B. Mangey [hereafter cited in brackets], ii. The only event that can be determined chronologically is his participation in the embassy which the Alexandrian Jews sent to the emperor Caligula at Rome for the purpose of asking protection against the attacks of the Alexandrian Greeks. This occurred in the year 40 C. Philo included in his philosophy both Greek wisdom and Hebrew religion, which he sought to fuse and harmonize by means of the art of allegory that he had learned from the Stoics. His work was not accepted by contemporary Judaism. Greek science, suppressed by the victorious Phariseism Men. Philo was all the more enthusiastically received by the early Christians, some of whom saw in him a Christian. These are chiefly commentaries on the Pentateuch. It can not now be determined how far he carried out this method. Only the following fragments have been preserved: The explanation is confined chiefly to determining the literal sense, although Philo frequently refers to the allegorical sense as the higher. This great commentary included the following treatises: Von Arnim, "Quellenstudien zu Philo von Alexandria," , pp. Migratione Abrahami," on Gen. The first of these on the dreams of Abimelech and Laban preceded the present book i. On a doxographic source used by Philo in book i. The exposition of the Law then follows in two sections. First come the biographies of the men who antedated the several written laws of the Torah, as Enos, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These were the Patriarchs, who were the living impersonations of the active law of virtue before there were any written laws. Then the laws are discussed in detail: The work is divided into the following treatises: The lives of Isaac and Jacob have been lost. The three patriarchs were intended as types of the ideal cosmopolitan condition of the world. The latter point may be admitted. It seems most natural to preface the discussion of the law with the biography of the legislator, while the transition from Joseph to the legislation, from the statesman who has nothing to do with the divine laws to the discussion of these laws themselves, is forced and abrupt. Moses, as the perfect man, unites in himself, in a way, all the faculties of the patriarchal types. His is the "most pure mind" "De Mutatione Nominum," 37 [i. As the person awaiting the divine revelation, he is also specially fitted to announce it to others, after having received it in the form of the Commandments ib. To the first and second commandments he adds the laws relating to priests and sacrifices; to the third misuse of the name of God , the laws on oaths, vows, etc. The first book includes the following treatises of the current editions: The second book includes in the editions a section also entitled "De Specialibus Legibus" ii. The complete text of the second book was published by Tischendorf in his "Philonea" pp. The third book is included under the title "De Specialibus Legibus" in ed. The fourth book also is entitled "De Specialibus Legibus"; to it the last sections are added under the titles "De Judice" and "De Concupiscentia" in the usual editions; and they include, also, as appendix, the sections "De Justitia" and "De Creatione Principum. This is the conclusion of the exposition of the Mosaic law. The genuineness of this work has been disputed by Frankel in "Monatsschrift," ii. The meaning of the title is open to discussion; it may be identical with the following No. Other Works Ascribed to Philo: This work describes the mode of life and the religious festivals of a society of Jewish ascetics, who according to the author, are widely scattered over the earth, and are found especially in every home in Egypt. The writer, however, confines himself to describing a colony of hermits settled on the Lake Mareotis in Egypt, where each lives separately in his own dwelling. Six days of the week they spend in pious contemplation, chiefly in connection with Scripture. On the seventh day both men and women assemble together in a hall; and the leader delivers a discourse consisting of an allegorical interpretation of a Scriptural passage. The feast of the fiftieth day is especially celebrated. The ceremony begins with a frugal meal consisting of bread, salted vegetables, and water, during which a passage of Scripture is interpreted. After the meal the members of the society in turn sing religious songs of various kinds, to which the assembly answers with a refrain. The ceremony ends with a choral representation of the triumphal festival that Moses and Miriam arranged after the passage through the Red Sea, the voices of the men and the women uniting in a choral symphony until the sun rises. After a common morning prayer each

goes home to resume his contemplation. But the ritual of the society, which was entirely at variance with Christianity, disproves this view. The chief ceremony especially, the choral representation of the passage through the Red Sea, has no special significance for Christianity; nor have there ever been in the Christian Church nocturnal festivals celebrated by men and women together. But there are great dissimilarities between the fundamental conceptions of the author of the "De Vita Contemplativa" and those of Philo. The latter looks upon Greek culture and philosophy as allies, the former is hostile to Greek philosophy see Siegfried in "Protestantische Kirchenzeitung," No. He repudiates a science that numbered among its followers the sacred band of the Pythagoreans, inspired men like Parmenides, Empedocles, Zeno, Cleanthes, Heraclitus, and Plato, whom Philo prized "Quod Omnis Probus," i. He considers the symposium a detestable, common drinking-bout. This can not be explained as a Stoic diatribe; for in this case Philo would not have repeated it. And Philo would have been the last to interpret the Platonic Eros in the vulgar way in which it is explained in the "De Vita Contemplativa," 7 [ii. It must furthermore be remembered that Philo in none of his other works mentions these colonies of allegorizing ascetics, in which he would have been highly interested had he known of them. While Philo desired to renounce the lusts of this world, he held fast to the scientific culture of Hellenism, which the author of this book denounces. Although Philo liked to withdraw from the world in order to give himself up entirely to contemplation, and bitterly regretted the lack of such repose "De Specialibus Legibus," 1 [ii. Its Peripatetic basic idea that the world is eternal and indestructible contradicts all those Jewish teachings that were for Philo an indisputable presupposition. Bernays has proved at the same time that the text has been confused through wrong pagination, and he has cleverly restored it "Gesammelte Abhandlungen," i. Origen enlarged it by adding New Testament names; and Jerome revised it. Philo, of Jewish descent, was by birth a Hellene, a member of one of those colonies, organized after the conquests of Alexander the Great, that were dominated by Greek language and culture. The vernacular of these colonies, Hellenistic Greek proper, was everywhere corrupted by idiotisms and solecisms, and in specifically Jewish circles by Hebraisms and Semitisms, numerous examples of which are found in the Septuagint, the Apocrypha, and the New Testament. In the same way Philo formed his language by means of extensive reading of the classics. Scholars at an early date pointed out resemblances to Plato Suidas, s. But there are also expressions and phrases taken from Aristotle, as well as from Attic orators and historians, and poetic phrases and allusions to the poets. But more important than the influence of the language was that of the literature. He quotes the epic and dramatic poets with especial frequency, or alludes to passages in their works. He holds that the highest perception of truth is possible only after a study of the encyclopedic sciences. Hence his system throughout shows the influence of Greek philosophy. The dualistic contrast between God and the world, between the finite and the infinite, appears also in Neo-Pythagorism. The influence of Stoicism is unmistakable in the doctrine of God as the only efficient cause, in that of divine reason immanent in the world, in that of the powers emanating from God and suffusing the world. In the doctrine of the Logos various elements of Greek philosophy are united. The influence of Pythagorism appears in the numeral-symbolism, to which Philo frequently recurs. In his psychology he adopts either the Stoic division of the soul into eight faculties, or the Platonic trichotomy of reason, courage, and desire, or the Aristotelian triad of the vegetative, emotive, and rational souls. The doctrine of the body as the source of all evil corresponds entirely with the Neo-Pythagorean doctrine: His ethics and allegories are based on Stoic ethics and allegories. Although as a philosopher Philo must be classed with the eclectics, he was not therefore merely a compiler. He made his philosophy the means of defending and justifying the Jewish religious truths. These truths he regarded as fixed and determinate; and philosophy was merely an aid to truth and a means of arriving at it. With this end in view Philo chose from the philosophical tenets of the Greeks, refusing those that did not harmonize with the Jewish religion, as, e. His Knowledge of Hebrew. These etymologies are not in agreement with modern Hebrew philology, but are along the lines of the etymologic midrash to Genesis and of the earlier rabbinism. His knowledge of the Halakah was not profound. Ritter, however, has shown 1. His Methods of Exegesis: Philo bases his doctrines on the Old Testament, which he considers as the source and standard not only of religious truth but in general of all truth. Its pronouncements are for him divine pronouncements. The extent of his canon can not be exactly determined comp. Bissel, "The Canon of the O. Kautzsch, "De Locis V. Philo

regards the Bible as the source not only of religious revelation, but also of philosophic truth; for, according to him, the Greek philosophers also have borrowed from the Bible: Greek allegory had preceded Philo in this field. As the Stoic allegorists sought in Homer the basis for their philosophic teachings, so the Jewish allegorists, and especially Philo, went to the Old Testament. Attitude Toward Literal Meaning. Philo bases his hermeneutics on the assumption of a twofold meaning in the Bible, the literal and the allegorical comp. The two interpretations, however, are not of equal importance: As a result of some of these rules of interpretation the literal sense of certain passages of the Bible must be excluded altogether; e.

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Answer: Philo of Alexandria, sometimes known as Philo Judaeus, was a first-century philosopher who was born sometime between BC in Alexandria, Egypt. A member of the Jewish Diaspora, he was raised with a Jewish and Greek education, giving him an impressive status in a non-Jewish city like Alexandria.

Commemorative inscription, Herculaneum pre AD , erected by the "Augustals", freed slaves who were members of a cult dedicated to the worship of the emperor Augustus. From a distance of years Jesus Christ appears in glorious technicolor, a veritable rainbow of the power and the glory. Every child "knows" his story, every individual "recognizes" his slender frame, his flowing chestnut hair, his kindly blue eyes. But up close and personal our superhero evaporates into the ether, a phantom that leaves no trace upon the paper, no imprint in the historical record. Not only does no one notice Jesus during his supposed lifetime; Jesus notices nothing of the wider world into which he makes his spectral appearance. Long before any mythical Nazarene had epithets of wisdom put into his mouth, other "real, yet mortal" philosophers taught a morality of brotherly love and human compassion. Christianity merely sequestered and then ignored those ideals. The "witnesses" who saw and heard nothing As it happens, we have an excellent witness to events in Judaea and the Jewish diaspora in the first half of the first century AD: Philo was an old man when he led an embassy from the Jews to the court of Emperor Gaius Caligula. The year was AD. Philo clearly, then, lived at precisely the time that "Jesus of Nazareth" supposedly entered the world to a chorus of angels, enthralled the multitudes by performing miracles, and got himself crucified. Philo was also in the right place to give testimony of a messianic contender. A Jewish aristocrat and leader of the large Jewish community of Alexandria, we know that Philo spent time in Jerusalem On Providence where he had intimate connections with the royal house of Judaea. His brother, Alexander the "alabarch" chief tax official , was one of the richest men in the east, in charge of collecting levies on imports into Roman Egypt. Alexander also loaned a fortune to Herod Agrippa I Antiquities Much as Josephus would, a half century later, Philo wrote extensive apologetics on the Jewish religion and commentaries on contemporary politics. About thirty manuscripts and at least , words are extant. Philo offers commentary on all the major characters of the Pentateuch and, as we might expect, mentions Moses more than a thousand times. Yet Philo says not a word about Jesus, Christianity nor any of the events described in the New Testament. But not a murmur. Nothing of Agrippa "vexing certain of the church" or killing "James brother of John" with the sword Acts Strange, but only if we believe Jesus and his merry men existed and that they established the church. If we recognize that the Christian fable was still at an early stage of development when Philo was pondering the relationship of god and man, there is nothing strange here at all. Where did they get their ideas from? Mocking Jesus or Agrippa? On the voyage home from Rome, this new King of the Jews, stopped over in Alexandria where his presence in the city provoked anti-Jewish riots. Agrippa became the target of ridicule and lampoon. Philo described the course of events in his work named for the anti-Jewish governor of Egypt, Flaccus. His work was familiar to the early Christians when decades after his death they composed the gospels. One passage of Flaccus contains a curious pre-figuring of several famous verses found in the Gospels. But then the Lord moves in curious ways. Yet he remained tenaciously loyal to his Jewish faith, and regarded Mosaic scripture as a source not only of religious revelation, but also of the philosophic truths propounded by the Greeks. According to Philo, the Greek philosophers had "borrowed from Moses" and had received their insights from the God of the Jews. To substantiate this dubious claim Philo found subtle and obscure nuances in the biblical sagas. Simply put, the wisdom of the Greeks was to be found entire within the books of Moses "all that one had to discern was the "hidden meaning" of words that, to the uninitiated, patently had no bearing on Greek philosophy. Philo was thus able to preserve the arrogant superiority of the Jews who in reality had been subsumed into the Greek world. How did a transcendent God communicate with the world? Here, a term from the Stoics proved most useful. According to Philo, "Logos" "Greek for "word" or "reason" equated to divine reason. The Logos or Word emanated from the ineffable God and communicated with his creations. Thus it was the Logos that spoke to Moses from the burning bush, and it was the Logos that infused the righteous High Priest. And this same Word is continually a

suppliant to the immortal God on behalf of the mortal race, which is exposed to affliction and misery; and is also the ambassador, sent by the Ruler of all, to the subject race. For I will proclaim peaceful intelligence to the creation from him who has determined to destroy wars, namely God, who is ever the guardian of peace. Thus the scripture of the Jews could be scoured for subtle clues supposedly prophesying a saviour in human form. Again, Philo pointed the way: Thus the Christian apologist Justin Martyr multiplexed "divine reason" into the myriad forms that populate the landscape of Christian theology: As for Philo himself, Eusebius cheerfully disregarded chronology and credibility and had the grand old Jewish philosopher reading the as yet, unwritten gospels and epistles "and conversing with Peter in Rome! It is also recorded that under Claudius, Philo came to Rome to have conversations with Peter, then preaching to the people there It is plain enough that he not only knew but welcomed with whole-hearted approval the apostolic men of his day, who it seems were of Hebrew stock and therefore, in the Jewish manner, still retained most of their ancient customs. Philo played a major role in the Hellenization of Hebrew scripture, unwittingly preparing the ground for an upstart heresy to supplant and marginalize the ancestral religion he set out to defend. Germania, like Judaea, had been annexed by the empire in 6 AD and it, too, was being taxed and organised as a province. But in 9 AD, an alliance of German tribes ambushed and annihilated three legions in the Teutoburg Forest. The disaster permanently curtailed Roman designs in northern Europe. The ill-fated commander in Germany had been none other than Publius Quinctilius Varus "the former governor of Syria. A few years earlier, Varus had crushed revolts in Judaea and Samaria and crucified rebels. Eulogies from Tiberius and Drusus were followed by a pyre on Campus Martius and deification. Even in life, images of Augustus had been erected in temples throughout the empire: This cameo of "divus Augustus" depicts a crown with rays of the sun god, just like the nimbus of Jesus. Would not a "real" god Jesus have had something to say about the "imitation" god Augustus? He died suddenly in Antioch amid speculation that the governor of Syria, Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso, had poisoned him on orders from the emperor. Tiberius compelled Piso to commit suicide but became increasingly paranoid as his unpopularity grew. Germanicus "a noble Roman Plenty of stuff here, surely, for wise words about nobility and baseness. From Jesus "nothing. Emperor Tiberius "honoured by Herod Antipas with the new capital city of Tiberias "withdrew to debauchery on the island of Capri. Eventually alarmed, Tiberius had Sejanus arrested and killed, and returned to Rome. Not a word about the evil designs of men from the "perfect" Jesus?

Chapter 8 : Philo of Alexandria > By Individual Philosopher > Philosophy

Philo was a Hellenistic Jewish philosopher who left behind one of the richest bodies of work from antiquity, yet his personality and intellectual development have remained a riddle. Maren Niehoff presents the first biography of Philo, arguing that his trip to Rome in 38 CE was a turning point in his.

The Man and His Work 1. The consensus is that he lived between the end of the first century BCE and the middle of the first century CE, during a period of acute agitation and interethnic tensions in Alexandria. The Romans, with their universal ambitions, had replaced the Macedonians, leaving to the Greeks only the pride of their identity and some fiscal advantages. The history of the apostate within his family was certainly a problem for Philo, who tried to raise the issue with his nephew in the *De providentia* 2 and in the *De animalibus*. Though he never specified his own political status, Philo was likely a citizen of this prestigious city. Finally, the native Egyptians were despised by both Greeks and Jews. This tension erupted into the Alexandria riots of 38 CE, the first major pogrom in the history of Jewish people, leading in turn to the installation of a ghetto, murders, tortures, humiliations, and mockeries of Agrippa I, the king of Judaea. We must keep all this in mind in order not to imagine Philo merely as a scholar burrowed away in the Great Library, nor as a rabbi lecturing peacefully in the synagogues. There was a time when I had leisure for philosophy and for the contemplation of the universe and its contents, when I made its spirit my own in all its beauty and loveliness and true blessedness, when my constant companions were divine themes and verities, when I rejoiced with a joy that never cloyed or sated. Even before this violence, however, the environment he faced was a hostile and resentful one. He was full of reverence and fear toward the Romans, or at least pretends as such in his two books on the pogrom of 38 CE: That is to say, however distinctive his views, he was a sincerely pious Jew. He knew very little Hebrew, though he went to Jerusalem to pray and offer sacrifices in the Temple Prov. His paideia or Greek education was excellent, both in philosophy and the liberal arts, as he says in *Congr.* For instance when first I was incited by the goads of philosophy to desire her I consorted in early youth with one of her handmaids, Grammar, and all that I begat by her, writing, reading and study of the writings of the poets, I dedicated to her mistress. In his own person, Philo brought together two elements that the Greek elite now held to be incompatible: His understanding of rhetoric was not merely theoretical. He was probably a great orator. The addressees of his treatises were foremost the Jews, both believers and unbelievers. He may have had a second, much more hypothetical, audience in mind as well: Greek philosophers and intellectuals more generally. In the fragments of Greek and Roman writers carefully collected by Menahem Stern, we find two kinds of Greek reactions towards Judaism. In fact, as we can see in Posidonius, Seneca, or Chaeremon, Stoic antisemitism was a product not of racism, but of an erroneous understanding of rationalism and universalism. For these men, the Jews were a very superstitious nation, blemished by strange habits and strong animosity towards foreigners. Except for the case of Varro, the Roman scholar of the first century BCE who appreciated Jews for their refusal of images, it would be impossible to give an example of a Greek or Latin text of this period showing sympathy or even interest toward the Jews. This was a condition of which Philo could not have been ignorant. In the background of his life and of his work lay an antisemitism growing more and more violent. In contrast to Flavius, who decades later wrote the *Against Apion* in order to refute Greek antisemitism, Philo seems to have preferred to extol the virtues of Judaism than to fight against the adversaries of Jews, as we can see in the extant fragments of his *Hypotetica*. The relation of Philo to the Hebrew exegetical traditions of his time is an important and controversial question. One of the major paradoxes for his posterity is that his work was ignored by Jews and saved by Christians, some of whom thought that he was himself a Christian. In CE the entire corpus was brought to Caesarea, a city that became the main center of its transmission, though some papyri suggest the circulation of at least some of his treatises in Egypt. The more or less generally accepted classification is that of Massebiau, completed by Cohn. It is divided into five principal categories: Allegorical commentaries 39 treatises Twelve treatises of exposition of the law 12 treatises Questions and answers on Genesis and Exodus 6 treatises Four historical and apologetic treatises 4 treatises Five philosophical treatises No definite chronology of the works was established until the very recent book of

Niehoff Philo gives very few hints regarding his process of composition, offering only a few remarks about the structure and divisions of his treatises. Regarding the strange fact that these Greek treatises bear Latin titles, Monique Alexandre conducted a complete study in which she examines a complex philological process from Antiquity to the nineteenth century through the humanists of the Renaissance and their immediate successors. Philosophy, Philosophers, and Rhetoric 2. His five philosophical works are *De providentia* 1 and 2, *De animalibus*, *De aeternitate* and *Quod omnis probus*. The two latter works are the only ones for which we have Greek texts. With the exception of a few rare references to the Bible, these texts could well have been written by a pagan philosopher. In any case, the most discussed problem today is the skepticism regarding the authenticity of the *De aeternitate*, the treatise in which we find the most explicit references to philosophy and philosophers. For Runia, there is no contradiction in the fact that Philo goes against the biblical tradition and defends the eternity of the world not only in the future but also in the past. It is probable that Philo, who seems to have had good knowledge of skeptical methods, was trained to argue both pro and contra of a thesis, a dialectical technique of which the *De aeternitate* is probably the best illustration. We will return to the question of the authenticity in the supplementary document About the *De aeternitate* and the *De providentia*. One of our main sources is the *Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, most likely written in Alexandria by a Jew. They show an interesting mix of Jewish and Greek elements: It is not easy, however, to date these *Sentences*. Regardless, the *Sentences* provides an image of what could have been a Jewish openness towards pagan culture if relations were calmer. According to a well-attested tradition, some Jews posited that Plato had taken his inspiration from Moses, an idea that seems to have been popularized by Aristobulus of Paneas, a Jewish philosopher who lived in the first half of second century BCE. Philo, who lived in a more unstable period, employs this kind of assertion with prudence *Spec.* In fact, there is only one clear allusion to these phusiologi, i. It is likely that in Alexandria there were Jews who attempted to interpret the Bible as the Stoics had interpreted Homer Niehoff It is unclear whether their interpretation was integrated into a comprehensive system of rationalism. The allegoric interpretation did not prevent Stoics from defending divination, a practice that was considered absurd by their opponents. One could add that this evolution towards a more religious cast of mind was not a distinctive characteristic of Philo, but rather a hallmark of the Middle-Platonist period as a whole. For example, he never mentions Posidonius, one of the greatest names of Stoicism, who was the first to attempt a reconciliation of at least some Stoic and Platonic themes. There are reasons to think Philo read this Rhodian philosopher, but he is silent about Posidonius. He was clearly acquainted with these Academics, since there are some rather clear allusions in his work to their brand of skepticism. It is therefore curious that he gives the first version of the Skeptical tropes without any allusion to Aenesidemus, who developed them a century before. Leaving aside the contested *De aeternitate*, we notice that Philo fails to mention Aristotle even once. While Stoicism plays a leading role in most Philonian treatises, we only find four allusions to Zeno, the founder of the doctrine. They are all in the *Probus*, a treatise with strong Stoic features. There is only a single mention of Epicurus, in *Post.* Plato is mentioned twice each in the *De opificio* and the *De uita contemplativa*, and once in the *Probus*. Only three mentions of Socrates are found, but surprisingly, the presocratic thinkers are quoted much more than one would have thought: The *De aeternitate* is striking because Aristotle is mentioned four times. In this treatise, Philo cites a book written by the Pythagorean Ocellos of Lucania, who established the eternity of the world in a way that Philo seems to find satisfactory. This, notably, is the only time when he mentions a specific text and explicitly affirms having read it. Several elements point us toward a more complete understanding. First, Philo evidently prefers indirect allusions to direct citations. Philosophical concepts are necessary to the elaboration of exegesis, but too many precise mentions of philosophers would have presented Philo as subordinate not to the Word of God but to the doctrines of philosophers. He is still more silent about the great rabbis he would have certainly met in Alexandria and perhaps in Jerusalem. In his philosophical references, it is clear that he prefers to evoke the presocratic thinkers and the classical period of philosophy than the Hellenistic one. This is paradoxical since he was deeply marked by Hellenistic philosophy, which was the natural environment of his education. It must be added that his prose is also generally classical, reluctant to admit neologisms and technical vocabulary. He certainly wanted to appear in all areas a man of tradition. In recent years, the temptation has been great among some scholars to imagine that

he had at least some knowledge of non-Greek thinkers such as Cicero and Seneca. The problem remains that we have no evidence of this hypothesis. Philo never evoked Roman philosophers, so we cannot pass beyond statements of probability. Jewish wisdom surpasses all other wisdom, both Greek and barbarian, because it is the only one inspired by God. The Septuagint is implicitly presented as proof that the distinction between Greek and barbarian could be abolished, though for Greek civilization this distinction had great ontological weight. Even Greek education, despite its exceptional prestige, is unable to provide access to the truth. A learned man according to the criterion of the paideia is no more able than anyone else to say what the world truly is. Philo did not deny that barbarians were able to create sophisticated forms of sciences and culture. Despite his own contempt for the Egyptians, he stresses that Moses himself received an education in which Egyptian sciences were included. Furthermore, he argues that many barbarians, though untutored in philosophy, have a natural intuition of how to live in agreement with virtue. Philo displays a sound knowledge of rhetoric. Sophisteia, sophistry, is in Philo a frequent concept attached to a range of negative meanings. For Philo, rhetoric is neither an activity nor an abstract ideal but a human reality, the nature of which is laid out in the Bible. Moses is the man who saw God in the Sinai, but he by himself would have been unable to speak to Pharaoh and persuade him to let his people go. Moses needed the presence of Aaron in order to obtain what he sought. Moses represents the metaphysical truth, Aaron its implementation in reality, akin to the two faces of logos: It can be added that Abraham is said by Philo Mut. In literary and philosophical texts, it means freedom of speech, frankness, and honesty. Philo and Philosophical Schools Philo had no philosophical affiliation. To say that he was a Pythagorean, a Platonist, or a Stoic would have been for him to admit that he sought truth in spaces outside the Bible. Was he an Eclectic? The concept of eclecticism is a complicated one. If it means that Philo used different philosophers as sources of inspiration and expression in order to elaborate his work, this cannot be denied.

Chapter 9 : Philo of Alexandria

Born about 25 BC in Alexandria, Egypt, of a sacerdotal line, was one of the most powerful of the populous Jewish colony of Alexandria. His brother Alexander Lysimachus was steward to Anthony's second daughter, and married one of his sons to the daughter of Herod Agrippa, whom he had put under financial obligations.

Who was Philo of Alexandria? Philo of Alexandria, sometimes known as Philo Judaeus, was a first-century philosopher who was born sometime between 15–30 BC in Alexandria, Egypt. A member of the Jewish Diaspora, he was raised with a Jewish and Greek education, giving him an impressive status in a non-Jewish city like Alexandria. I was there, at the time when I was on my journey towards the temple of my native land for the purpose of offering up prayers and sacrifices therein. But this theory is little more than speculation. Philo believed it was a history of his people and God that demanded the reader to perform an allegorical interpretation. For Philo did not believe that all the stories in the Septuagint were literally real, but were constructed in the same manner as Greek texts such as The Iliad and The Odyssey. Since Philo wrote several books, we can formulate several major doctrines that emerge from the body of his work. One would be the doctrine of Moses, in which it is evident that Philo regards Moses as not only a real historical figure who wrote the first five books of the Old Testament, but a heavenly figure because of his role in distributing the Law to the Jewish people directly from God. Philo wrote a considerable amount on Moses and interpreted him as the ultimate philosopher from which all philosophy, in particular Greek, originated. Another would be the doctrine of Creation, in which Philo enforces biblical creationism in a Greek context. Philo planted the seeds of what would later evolve into the concept of creation ex nihilo, a concept implicitly stated in Hebrews. Then there was the doctrine of the logos. Although his celebrated idea of logos was not entirely new, Philo personified the term. Philo believed that logos made God known, as cited in Questions in Exodus. The doctrine of man is also evident. Perhaps the greatest contribution to Christian theology Philo made, in addition to being such a prominent Jewish biblical scholar in the emerging West, is that he was one of the first to initiate a strong allegorical reading of Scripture. While not all Scripture is to be read in this manner, there is clear allegory in many books from the Old and New Testament from Daniel to Revelation, and Philo was one of the first to emphasize this approach and to be wary of reading everything literally. This technique of exegesis was unique for its time, and Philo could be declared one of the first Bible commentators ever in history. In fact, his allegorical approach to Scripture later influenced Christian theologians such as Clement, Origen, and Didymus the Blind.