

THE ETERNAL PLAN
The Period Between the Testaments

Lesson #12
February 20, 2019

As we inch closer to the cross of Christ, we will cover a period of about 400 years. It is known as the 400 years of silence. Although there were no inspired writers who recorded information for us, we have the accounts of secular historians.

The Story

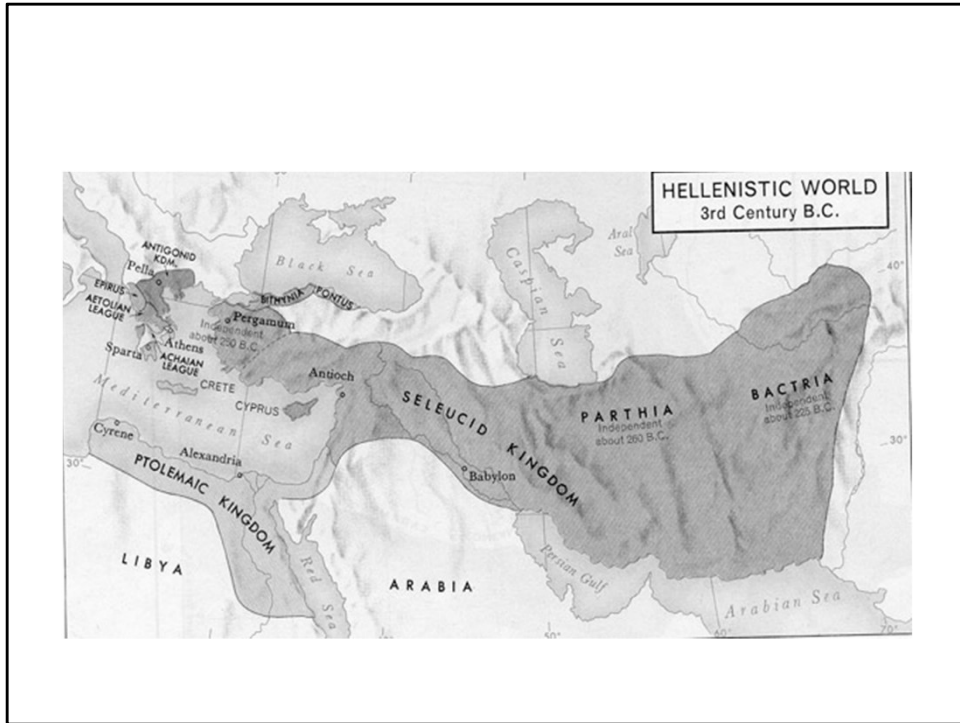
- The Old Testament history ends at the doorstep of the Medo-Persian Empire
- The Jews were permitted to return to the homeland and rebuild the temple, walls, and worship
- However in 333 BC the Persians were defeated by a Greek king, Alexander the Great
- He reigned from 336 -323 BC

Between the Testaments

- Alexander was a kind king. He allowed the Jews to continue to observe their laws and exempt them from paying taxes on Sabbath years
- Alexander believed a way to unite his kingdoms was to have a common (Koine) language “Greek” and wanted foreigners to adopt the “Greek” culture
- This influence led to the Old Testament to be translated into Greek (Septuagint version)

Between the Testaments

- After the death of Alexander the Great, his kingdoms were given to his generals. He had no offspring
- Two generals of notoriety were Ptolemy and Seleucus



(point out that Jerusalem is sandwiched between them).

In setting up the Ptolemy dynasty, they created unique names for all of their kings. Their names were Ptolemy. There were 14 kings in Ptolemaic dynasty and they all had the name Ptolemy.

There were 26 kings and one queen ruler in Seleucid dynasty. The one queen was Cleopatra Thea and she reigned from about 126 to 121 BC.

Between the Testaments

- A battle ensued between the two kingdoms when finally in 198 BC the Seleucids gained control over Jerusalem
- Antiochus IV would inherit the throne in 176 BC and force the Jews to embrace paganism. He did away with their holy days and religious rituals. He went as far as erecting an altar to the god Zeus in the temple, sacrificing swine in the temple, and allowing non Jews to enter and worship

Between the Testaments

- Such sac religious actions brought about a revolution
- Matthias, a Jewish priest, was forced to offer a sacrifice to a pagan god by a government official. Matthias killed the man
- In 167 BC, the Jews rallied behind Matthias and his five sons and fought for liberty
- The family of Matthias became known as “The Maccabees”
- However the family was more commonly known as the “Hasmoneans”
- The Jews would fight many years and gain control of their land and gain independence in 142 BC
- This lasted until 63 BC when Pompey, the Roman general captured Jerusalem and Palestine became subject to Rome

Between the Testaments

- When Pompey conquered Jerusalem, he would give authority to a man named Antipater
- Antipater was the father of Herod the Great, the one on the throne when Jesus was born

Things of Interest

- Synagogues
- We do not read of them in the Old Testament
- The word “Synagogue” means gathering of people or a congregation
- Many sound scholars believe the establishment of synagogues began while the Jews were in Babylonian captivity (Ezk.8:1; 20:1-3)

(Read portions of article on page 77).

Things of Interest

- The Pharisees and Sadducees
- Pharisee means separated ones. They were constantly trying to remain pure and ceremonially clean
- They were legalists, but yet took the liberty to exalt their man made traditions over the Word of God

Things of Interest

- The Sadducees were not as strict as the Pharisees
- They did not believe in angels, spirits, or the resurrection
- The two sects didn't agree on much other than conspiring to kill Jesus

Things of Interest

- The Apocrypha Books
- These books can be found in Catholic and Anglican Bibles
- The Apocrypha are divided up into four groups (1) Historical, (2) Legendary, (3) Prophetic, and (4) Ethical
- The books are useful, but have never been deemed divinely inspired

The Silence is Broken

- Matthew 2:1-6
- 1Pt.1:10-12

(Read passages).

Lord willing next week, we will look briefly at the life and death of Christ. We will finally see the completion of the circle as it relates to 1Pt.1:20.