

A SURVEY OF THE PROPHETS

Lesson 20 - The Silent Years

The Old Testament ends around 435 B.C. with the book of Malachi. About 430 years will pass before the inspired narrative resumes with the promised birth & return of “Elijah”. To conclude our study of the prophets, let’s look ahead at these “silent years” prior to the New Testament. The questions below will require considerable research outside of the Bible, so plan your preparation time accordingly.

A. Since this time period is not recorded in the Bible, we have to rely on other historical documents.

- a) What are the Dead Sea Scrolls? When were they written and what were their relationship to this time period?
- b) What does “apocrypha” mean?
- c) Briefly summarize the contents of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Maccabees.
- d) How should we view apocrypha books today?
- e) Who was Josephus? What was his relationship to this time period?

B. After the book of Malachi was written under Medeo-Persian rule, the next world empire prophesied in Daniel 2:39 as the “bronze kingdom” came to power.

- a) Which empire was it?
- b) When did the land of Canaan fall under its control?
- c) Who was Alexander the Great and what did he do?
- d) Who were the Ptolemies and the Seleucids? How did their attitudes toward Judaism differ?

C. During this time, the “Septuagint” was written.

- a) What is it?
- b) Who wrote it?
- c) Why was it written?
- d) What significance does it have for New Testament times?

D. Beginning around 175 B.C., a series of historically significant events happened in the land of Canaan.

- a) Who was Antiochus Epiphanes (a.k.a. Antiochus IV)?
- b) Who were the Maccabees?
- c) What did they do?
- d) What is Hanukkah?
- e) What was the Hasmonean dynasty? How long did it last?

E. During the time of the Maccabees, the next world empire prophesied in Daniel 2:40-43 as the “iron/clay kingdom” came to power.

- a) Which empire was it?
- b) When did the land of Canaan fall under its control?
- c) Who was Pompey and Marc Antony? What roles did they have regarding Canaan?

F. Beginning in 47 B.C., Julius Caesar appointed Antipater to be procurator of Judea.

- a) Who was Antipater (also known as Antipater the Idumaeen)?
- b) His son went on to be first the governor of Galilee and later the “King of the Jews”. Who was he and what role did he have in New Testament times?

G. A number of terms absent from the Old Testament appear suddenly in the New Testament. For each of the terms below: 1) define the term, 2) try to find out its origin, and 3) find one occurrence in the New Testament.

- a) Synagogue
- b) Sanhedrin
- c) Hellenists (NKJV)
- d) Pharisees
- e) Sadducees
- f) Zealots
- g) Herodians
- h) Caesar
- i) Publicans
- j) Legion
- k) Centurion
- l) Praetorium
- m) Denarius
- n) Crucifixion

H. Galatians 4:4 talks about “the fullness of time”. A number of political, economic, cultural, and religious influences existed at the close of “the Silent Years” that facilitated the rapid spread of early Christianity. Review the material at the following website and come prepared to discuss at least seven of these influences.

<http://mason.gmu.edu/~ddonald/typeassignment/index3.htm>