

Getting the Big Picture: Session 10

Between the Testaments

Structure of the Bible

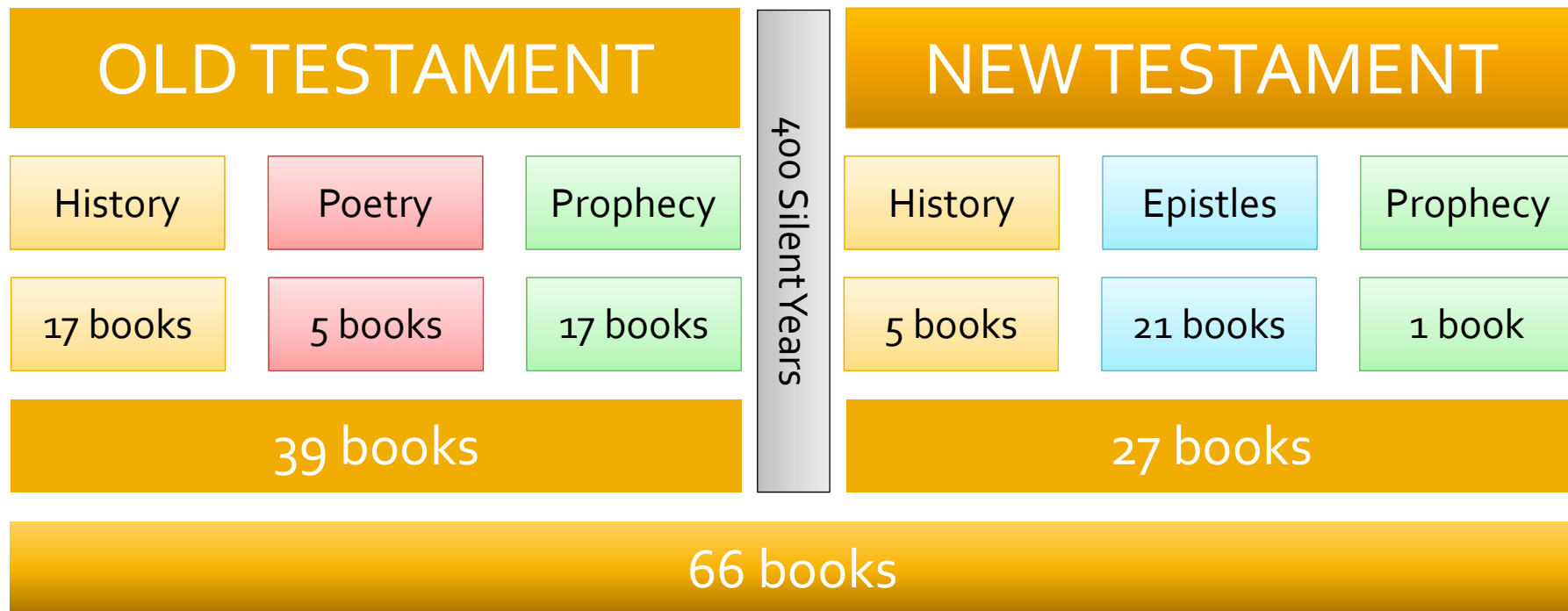
OLD TESTAMENT

- History of God's dealings with Israel
- Written in Hebrew and Aramaic
- Covers 4000 plus years

NEW TESTAMENT

- History of Christ and His Church
- Written in Greek
- Covers about 100 years

Structure of the Bible



Is this period important?

- It would be easy to think that because the Bible doesn't include this historical era that we have no need to study it.
- However, we want to show that some aspects of this period are spoken of in Scripture.
- But we also want to see how a study of extra-biblical history can throw light on the New Testament, particularly the Gospels.

400 Silent Years

- When we say these years were silent we do not mean that we know nothing about them. Rather, we believe that God was not speaking authoritatively through prophets during this period. The first century historian Josephus wrote:
 - *"from Artaxerxes [fourth century BCE] until our time everything has been recorded, but has not been deemed worthy of like credit with what preceded, because the exact succession of the prophets ceased"* (Contra Apion 1.8).
- It is instructive, however, to read the extra-biblical, historical narratives contained in books like 1 & 2 Maccabees

Daniel's prophecies

- Those who reject the supernatural inspiration of Scripture believe that the book of Daniel is not prophecy because it *too* accurately portrays the events of this intertestamental period.
- However, God declares that one of the proofs of His superiority to idols is that He alone can accurately predict the future (Isaiah 41:21-26).

Daniel's Visions

A Great Image 2:31-45	4 Great Beasts 7:3-27	Ram & Goat 8:3-26	Interpretation: World Empires
Head of gold*	Lion with eagle's wings		Babylonian * 2:37-38
Chest & arms of silver	Bear with 3 ribs in its mouth	Ram with 2 horns*	Medo-Persian * 8:20
Belly & thighs of bronze	Leopard with 4 wings & 4 heads	Male goat with large horn*	Greek * 8:21-22
Legs of iron	Dreadful & terrible beast		Roman
Feet part iron, part clay	Another horn, a little one		Revived Roman
Stone cut without hands	One like the Son of Man		Messianic

Daniel's 70 Weeks – Daniel 9:24-27

70 weeks (Heb. heptads) = 490 years

Six purposes are stated (v. 24)	Christ's first advent provided the righteous basis	Christ's second advent will see all six fulfilled for Israel
Note: The focus of the prophecy is the nation of Israel & the city of Jerusalem (v. 24).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To finish the transgression To make an end of sins To make reconciliation for iniquity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To bring in everlasting righteousness To seal up vision & prophecy To anoint the Most Holy

The Timing & Sequence of Daniel's 70 weeks

The 70 weeks begins with the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.

7 weeks = 49 years	62 weeks = 434 years	After the 69 weeks, But not during the 70 th week	1 week = 7 years
Rebuilding the city, 444 BC til 395 BC	Ended with Christ's triumphal entry	Messiah cut off, but not for Himself. He suffers for sins of others	Final week begins with 7-year covenant signed by Prince
		People of Prince shall destroy Jerusalem. Fulfilled in AD 70	In the middle of week, Prince causes sacrifices to cease
		Gap between 69 th & 70 th weeks has now extended nearly 2000 years.	There will then be much suffering until consummation

Intertestamental Era in Daniel 11

MEDO-PERSIA 11:2	GREECE, 11:3-35 (Divided into 4 parts, 2 impacting Israel)		ANTI-CHRIST 11:36-45
	KINGS OF SOUTH	KINGS OF NORTH	
Cambyses	Ptolomy I Soter 11:5	Seleucus I Nicator 11:5	
Pseudo-Smerdis	Ptolomy II Philadelphus 11:6	Antiochus II 11:6	
Darius I Hystaspes	Ptolomy III 11:7-9	Seleucus II Callinicus 11:7-9	
Xerxes I (Ahasuerus)	Ptolomy IV Philopater 11:11-12	Antiochus III 11:10-19	
	Ptolomy V Epiphanes 11:13-17	Seleucus IV Philopater 11:20	
	Ptolomy VI 11:25-28	Antiochus IV Epiphanes 11:21-35	

Times of the Gentiles, Luke 21:24

Babylon
626-539 BC

Medo-Persia
539-331 BC

Greece
331-63 BC

Rome
63-476 BC

From 609 BC, rulers of Judah were appointed by foreign powers.

Solomon's Temple destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC

Death of Belshazzar & Fall of Babylon in 539 BC

Cyrus heads Medo-Persian Empire

Cyrus the Persian decrees return of Jews to Jerusalem in 538 BC

Second Temple Period begins with Temple rebuilt between 536-516 BC

Walls of Jerusalem rebuilt under Nehemiah's command in 445 BC

Intertestamental period begins at the end of Malachi's ministry in 396 BC

Darius III defeated 331 BC

Alexander the Great heads Greek Empire

Times of the Gentiles

Babylon
626-539 BC

Medo-Persia
539-331 BC

Greece
331-63 BC

Rome
63-476 BC

Death of Alexander in 323 BC at just 33 years of age

Empire divided among Alexander's four generals in 315 BC

Ptolamiac Kingdom (Kings of the South/Egypt) rule Palestine from 315-198 BC

Seleucid Kingdom (Kings of the North/Syria) rule Palestine from 198-142 BC

Antiochus IV Epiphanes (king of the North) desecrates the Temple in 167 BC

Leads to the Maccabean Revolt against Seleucid Kingdom 167-134 BC

Hasmonean (Maccabean) Kingdom provides Jewish independence from 135-63 BC

Pompey took Syria from Seleucid control, as well as Judea in 63 BC

Times of the Gentiles

Babylon
626-539 BC

Medo-Persia
539-331 BC

Greece
331-63 BC

Rome
63-476 BC

Roman Senate ruled from 509-27 BC

Roman Senate replaced by Roman Empire which lasted from 27 BC-395 AD

Julius Caesar reigned as dictator from 49-44 BC when he was assassinated

Herod the Great (an Idumean) was appointed as King of the Jews by Rome in 37 BC

Octavian reigned as Emperor from 27 BC-14 AD and takes the title Augustus Caesar

Herod began reconstruction and enlargement of the Temple in 20 BC

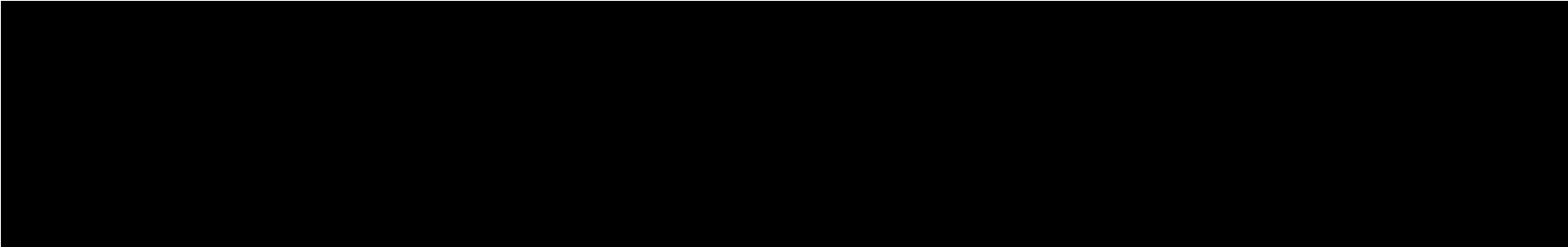
Jesus is born in Bethlehem c. 4/5 BC

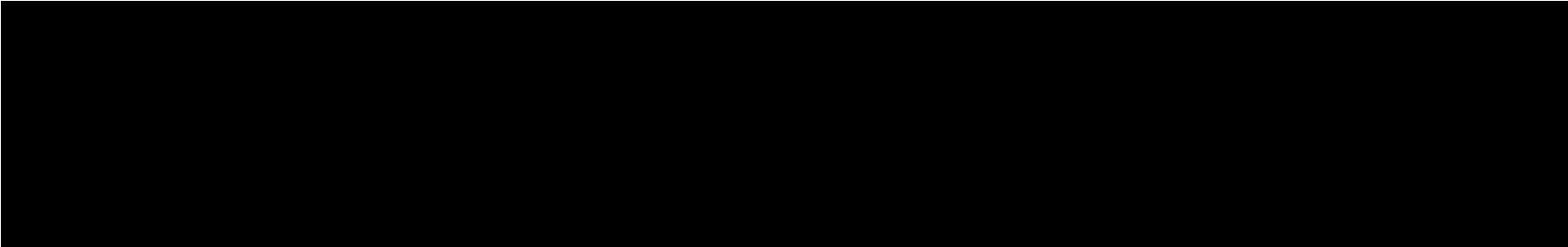
Herod the Great dies in 4 BC

General Titus destroys the Temple in 70 AD, ending the Second Temple Period

The challenge of Hellenization

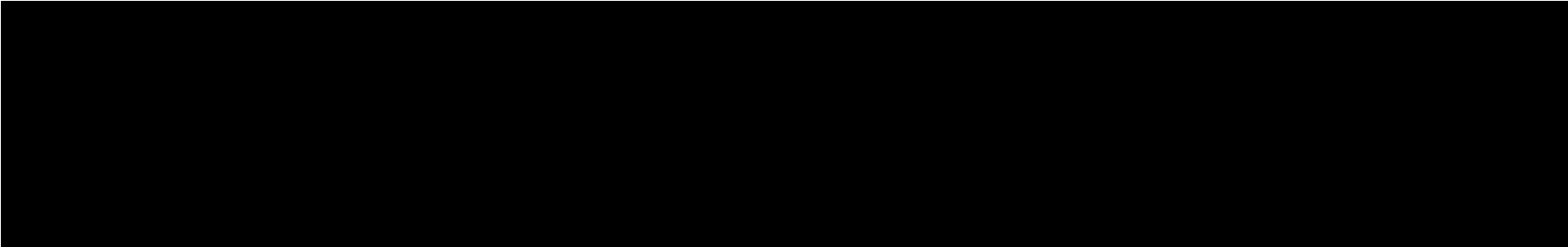
- “Hellenization” is the term used for the spread of Greek culture, religion, and language throughout the Greek Empire.
- Koine Greek became the dominant language of the Empire and lasted for centuries, even after the Empire fell.
- As a result, the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek in what is now known as the Septuagint, abbreviated as LXX.

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- But there were major negative impacts that came through Hellenization.
 - Much like today, their call for religious toleration left no room for worship of the one, true God.
 - This was particularly seen during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes of the Seleucid (Syrian) Kingdom.

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- Sadly, there were Jewish high priests who sought to accommodate this Hellenization.
 - First was Jason, whose father, Onias III, had been a devout and godly leader.
 - However, Menelaus, a Benjamite, was dissatisfied with the rate of change under Jason and bribed Antiochus to give him the priesthood.
 - Eventually, Jason raised an army to attack Menelaus but Antiochus came to his aid.

The Maccabean Revolt, 167-134

- Antiochus decided to unite his kingdom through religion and attempted to force the Jews to worship Zeus and to eat the flesh of pigs. He also banned circumcision and reading the Scriptures.
- Mattathias, a priest of the family of Hasmon, was committed to covenant faithfulness and with his sons began to oppose Menelaus and Antiochus.

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- When Mattathias died, he appointed his son Judas as commander of the rebel army. Judas became known as Judas Maccabees, “the hammer”, because of his accomplishments.
 - Initially, they focused on cleansing the land of pagan altars and of bringing Hellenized Jews back to covenant faithfulness, even forcibly circumcising their sons.

- Eventually, Judas Maccabees attacked Jerusalem and Menelaus fled.
- Judas cleansed the Temple and erected a new altar to Yahweh. This occurred on the 25th Kislev (December) 164 BC and has ever since been celebrated as the Feast of Dedication or Hanakkuk, The Feast of Lights.
- When Judas died, his brothers took over; first Jonathan, the youngest, and later Simon.

The Hasmonean Kingdom, 135-63

- Simon was able to negotiate terms of peace with Trypho, the first Syrian king not of Seleucid descent.
- As a result, the leaders in Israel appointed Simon and his descendants to be “leader and high priest forever,” even though they were not from the Aaronic line.
- When Simon was murdered by his son-in-law, his son, John Hyrcanus became head of the Hasmonean dynasty.

The religious developments

- The Septuagint
 - “The translation of the Old Testament into Greek; read in the early church and often quoted by the New Testament writers.
 - “The Septuagint often is represented as Roman numerals: “LXX” (L [50] + X [10] + X [10] = 70). According to Philo, Josephus, the Letter of Aristeas, and rabbinic sources, King Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–247 BC) assembled 70 (or 72) translators to render the Law of Moses into Greek. In the most limited sense, “Septuagint” refers just to this project, which covered the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy.”
 - The Lexham Bible Dictionary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015).

The religious developments

- The synagogue
 - “A place for assembly and worship that developed in Jewish communities throughout the Mediterranean in the late centuries BC.”
 - The Lexham Bible Dictionary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015).
 - “By about 300 BC a large community of Jews lived in Alexandria, Egypt. A marble slab found near Alexandria bears an inscription dedicating a synagogue to Ptolemy III (Euergetes), who ruled Egypt from 246–221 BC, and his queen Berenice. This is the first solid evidence of a true synagogue. Within Palestine one of the oldest known synagogues is the one uncovered on Masada near the Dead Sea, built in the first century BC.”
 - *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1995).

The religious developments

- The scribes
 - “After the Jews returned from the Captivity in Babylon, the era of the scribes began. The reading of the Law before the nation of Israel by Ezra (Nehemiah 8–10) signaled the nation’s return to exact observance of all the laws and rites that had been given. Following the Law and the traditions that had grown up around it became the measure of devotion and spirituality.
 - “At first the priests were responsible for the scientific study and professional communication of this legal code. But this function eventually passed to the scribes. Their official interpretation of the meaning of the Law eventually became more important than the Law itself.”
 - *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1995).

The religious developments

- The Pharisees

- “The Pharisees had their roots in the group of faithful Jews known as the Hasidim (or Chasidim). The Hasidim arose in the second century BC when the influence of Hellenism on the Jews was particularly strong and many Jews lived little differently than their Gentile neighbors. But the Hasidim insisted on strict observance of Jewish ritual laws.
- “Apparently from this movement of faithful Hasidim came both the Essenes—who later broke off from other Jews and formed their own communities—and the Pharisees, who remained an active part of Jewish life.”
 - *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1995).

The religious developments

- The Essenes

- The Essenes are not mentioned in either the OT or the NT, but we know of them from Jewish history.
- “A Jewish religious group of the Second Temple Period that emerged and flourished in Palestine from the second century BC to the first century AD. The Essenes are often connected with the Jewish sectarian community known from the Dead Sea Scrolls.”
 - The Lexham Bible Dictionary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015).

The religious developments

- The Herodians

- “A Jewish political party who sympathized with the Herodian rulers from Rome. They were at one with the Sadducees in holding the duty of submission to Rome, and of supporting the Herods on the throne (Matt 22:16; Mark 3:6; 12:13).”
- The Lexham Bible Dictionary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015).

Significance of this era

- This period of Jewish history is not directly recorded in Scripture but it does help us to understand the spiritual and political climate into which the Lord Jesus was born and in which the Church was birthed.
- And it reminds us that even when God was not speaking through His prophets, He was still caring for His chosen people.