

The Silent Years

400 Years of Silence



Lesson 18: The Silent Years

400 Years of Silence (also known as the Intertestamental Period)

BIBLE

No books were written during this period.

SUMMARY

The intertestamental period was the 400 years between the Old and New Testaments, when no new books of the Bible were written but major changes happened in politics, culture, and religion. During this time, empires like Persia, Greece, and Rome ruled over the Jewish people, setting the stage for Jesus' arrival and the world of the New Testament.

NOTES

Greek Conquest

- Alexander the Great conquest (334 - 323 B.C.) - Stretches from Greece to Egypt and deep into Asia.
- Spreading Hellenistic (Greek) culture and ideas throughout the region
- Greek language becomes widely adopted and used as a language for trade, education and government across much of the known world.

Maccabean Revolt

- Once again there was an attempt made to destroy the Jewish people - this time by King Antiochus IV of the Seleucid Empire
- This sparked the Maccabean uprising which led to the rededication of the Temple - commemorated in Hanukkah
- Leading also to a brief period of Jewish independence and reignited Jewish commitment to their religious identity.
- Renewed focus on study of the Torah, temple rituals and purity laws
- It was shortly after the revolt that the Pharisaic traditions emerged (165-160 B.C.)

Rome Law and Governance

- The Roman conquest of Judea began in 63 B.C. bringing the region under Roman control
- Rome introduced order, structure and centralised authority, which helped to stabilise the region - allowing for better trade, travel and communication across the territories.
- Local rulers were set up, like Herod the Great, who governed Judea as a 'client King', and blended Roman political power with local customs.

Roman Roads and Infrastructure

- Rome's great contribution was its famous 'Roman Road System' and expanded to connect cities across the vast empire.
- These roads enabled safe and efficient travel, which would become crucial for the spread of the Christianity - The Apostle Paul clearly relied heavily on the Roman infrastructure to complete his missionary journeys.

KEY POINTS

1. The Persian Empire offered the means a means for the exiled Jews to return to their promised homeland - starting at the end of the Old Testament
2. The Greek Empire offered the world a common language that would allow for the Christian faith to be recorded and communicated widely across the known world.
3. The Maccabean revolt created a greater focus for the Jew on their religious identity and increased their longing for and expectation of the coming Messiah.
4. The Roman Empire offered a relatively stable environment and roads that would allow for Christianity to spread.