

Session 8: Between the Testaments

Apprentice Track Workshops

1. The History of Israel Between the Testaments

a. The _____ Period (539-331 BC)

- i. In the year 539, just as the prophets predicted, the Babylonians were conquered by the _____ - _____ under Cyrus.
- ii. Under Emperor Cyrus, _____ Jews were allowed to their homeland, rebuild the temple, and re-establish Jerusalem and the surrounding area (Esther, Nehemiah, Ezra, Haggai, and Zechariah).

b. The Hellenistic (_____) Period (331-164 BC)

- i. In _____ BC Alexander the Great and his armies swept across the known world.
- ii. “ _____ ” transported Greek culture into the land of Judea and the entire Near Eastern World.
- iii. _____ faded and the Old Testament was translated into Greek. This translation, called the _____, was the most common version of the Bible in the 1st century.

c. Ptolemaic (_____) Period (320 – 198 BC)

- i. After Alexander’s early death, the territory he conquered was eventually divided into _____ regions, each ruled by one of his generals.
- ii. Under the Ptolemies Judea was generally peaceful and well-governed.
- iii. Late in the Ptolemaic period, the Seleucids, based in Syria, began competing for possession of Palestine and Judea. During this time, the Jews suffered greatly. Josephus, an ancient Jewish historian, writes the Jews were “like a _____ in a storm which is tossed by the _____ on both sides.” (Cf. Daniel 11)

d. The Seleucid (Syrian) Period (198 -164 BC)

- i. The Syrians repressively _____ the Jews and aggressively _____ them to assimilate to Greek culture. This oppression reached a _____ during the reign of Antiochus IV. Epiphanes (175-164 BC).

- ii. "... every insult was heaped on the religion of the Jews, and its every trace was to be swept away." – Edersheim

e. The Hasmonean (Maccabean) Period (164-63 BC)

- i. This increasing political, religious, and economic oppression sparked a _____ outside _____ when an elderly priest named Matthias killed a Seleucid official who required him to sacrifice _____ on the altar.
- ii. Matthias' son, Judas, mustered up a small army and after successful guerrilla warfare, the Jews were finally able to take Jerusalem and re-purify the _____ on December 14th _____ BC, three years after its desecration (Hannukah).
- iii. In 116 BC Judas' son, John Hyrcannus officially threw off Syrian rule. Nothing like this had been accomplished since the time of _____ and _____ 900 years earlier.
- iv. Many 1st century Jews would expect a _____ just like Judas Maccabees and his relatives to lead an army and throw off Roman oppression.
- v. Though the Hasmoneans had started their reign by emphasizing strict devotion to Judaism and the Mosaic law, once in power they became heavily influenced by Greek _____. Moreover, John Hyrcanus' descendants were especially oppressive rulers.

f. The _____ Period (63 BC – 70 AD)

- i. The devolving and corrupt Hasmonean dynasty was a " _____ " for the expanding Roman Republic.
- ii. As the new High Priest, Hyrcanus II appointed Herod, the son of the High Priest's right hand man, as the governor of _____. Herod brought stability to the region and as a reward he was appointed as "King of the Jews" by the Romans in _____ BC. Yet, the Jews were not happy about this appointment.
 - 1. He was an Edomite (a traditional enemy of Israel) and a Gentile.
 - 2. This gentile was appointed by gentiles (the Romans) as the Jews' king.
 - 3. Herod was terribly cruel. Eventually he would have every Hasmonean descendent killed, including his wife.
- iii. Despite this cruelty, Herod was a great _____ and economic leader. He enhanced the region's infrastructure built a great artificial harbor and many other structures including a massive expansion of the _____ in Jerusalem.

- iv. Herod died in 4 BC and his kingdom was divided among his three surviving sons. Two of these are relevant to us.
 - 1. Herod Antipas ruled Galilee until 39 AD. He is the “Herod” we most often read about in the Gospels. He beheaded John the Baptist and was present in Jerusalem during Jesus’ trials.
 - 2. Herod Archelaus ruled Judea and Samaria. Archelaus was incompetent and cruel and was deposed by Rome in 6 AD.

2. The Jews in the Greco-Roman World

a. A _____ Burden

- i. The average Jew paid _____% of his income to the Roman state in taxes. This made tax collectors (Jews employed by Rome) especially hated and seen as _____.
- ii. Approximately 85% of the wealth was controlled by only 1- _____ percent of the population. Most people lived very poorly.

b. The Pax-Romana

- i. Rome’s _____ led to abundant peace and infrastructure in Palestine.
- ii. Moreover, Jews had more opportunity than ever to _____ with the cultures around them. This was made possible through the universalization of the Greek _____ and by the ease of _____.
- iii. Jews were one of the largest minorities in the Empire. And they were scattered all over the world. This allowed Christianity to spread quickly through the Mediterranean.

c. The _____ of the Temple

- i. Growing intolerance and disdain of foreign oppression led to a major Jewish _____ from 66-70 AD.
- ii. This led to the brutal sacking of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple.

3. What was God doing “Between the Testaments”???

a. Heightened oppression and poverty increased _____ for a messiah.

- i. John 6:15; Acts 1:6
- ii. This anticipation for a messiah was also fueled by the Jewish _____ of the time period.

1. The Apocrypha refers to a collection of writings from the period between about 200 BC and 100 AD. A dominant theme in these writings is the future vindication of the _____.
2. The Pseudepigrapha similarly deals primarily with future events. Its name means “false name.” Many of these writings are falsely attributed to _____ figures and contain “_____” prophecies, prayers, and history. They were written between 300 BC and 300 AD.
3. These writings provide insight into the Jewish mind-set at the time of the New Testament. They show us more about the Jewish expectation of their Messiah and help us understand Jesus’ teach about the last days in Matthew 24-25, 2 Peter, Jude, and Revelation.

b. The Remnant and the Diaspora

- i. At the time of Jesus, the _____ of Jews lived _____ the promised land. Only a remnant had returned and formed a people in the land.
- ii. A prime example of life in the Diaspora is found in the book of Esther.
 1. 480s BC- 40 years *after* the Temple was rebuilt.
 2. The book of Esther becomes symbolic for the state of God’s people during the diaspora. God appears to be _____, but he is still _____ in Persia and the exile.
- iii. God would use the scattering of the Jews across the Roman Empire as a means for scattering the gospel to the ends of the earth.
 1. Acts 2:5
 2. Without access to the Temple, a new place of worship developed in the Jewish Diaspora: the _____.
 - a. **Acts 15:19-20.**
 - b. It was always Paul’s custom to go into the synagogue (if one was present) and preach there first (Acts 13ff).

c. So, what was God doing???

- i. “It were a one-sided view to regard the Babylonian exile as only a punishment for Israel’s sin... There is always a positive element also of actual progress; a step forward, even though in the taking of it something should have to be crushed. And this step forward was...The idea of the _____ in its relationship to the _____. – Edershiem, Life and Times of the Messiah
- ii. In other words, God was using the darkness of the diaspora to prepare for the shining of the light of the gospel into all corners of the world.
- iii. God would _____ the exile and diaspora to fulfill his covenant with
 1. Adam - be fruitful and multiply, *fill* the earth and subdue it (Genesis 1:26-27)
 2. Abraham - through you all the families of the earth will be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3)
 3. Israel –
 - a. “All the earth will be filled with his glory” (Numbers 14:21)
 - b. “I will make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth” (Isaiah 49).
 4. And David (Psalm 2; 72)