

The Second Temple Period
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1.1 Introduction

For serious students of the Bible a course on the second temple period is designed to provide a link between the world at the close of the Old Testament canon with the world at the opening of the New Testament period. For this reason, such a course explores knowledge covered by several disciplines. A knowledge of Old Testament Studies, New Testament studies, the history of Israel and the ancient world are integral for starters. Events at the close of the Old Testament period deeply influence the intertestamental period. In the same fashion, events of the intertestamental period shape the world of the New Testament. Each of these eras themselves were shaped by a long history. In order to understand these influences, we go back to the pre-exilic times in Israel.

1.2 Solomon's Temple

Solomon's temple was a crowning achievement of the Davidic monarchy. Solomon's father, David, had made preparations for the temple and had determined its location (I Chron. 21:15-2:1; Ps. 132). He was its designer (I Chron. 28:12,19) and had hoped to be its builder. He spent many years making material provision for the magnificent building which was to be the sanctuary of the Lord (I Chron. 22:2 ff., especially v. 14). Because of David's life as a warrior he was informed by the prophet Nathan that his son Solomon, a man of peace would build the temple (I Chron. 17:12; 28:2-3).

The central place in the Temple, the Holy of Holies and its furniture were based on the pattern which had been given to Moses on Mount Sinai. The tent of meeting which had housed the tabernacle and its furniture including the ark of the covenant (Ex. 25:10 – 27:21) had been the visible dwelling place of God with the children of Israel since the exodus.

The ark and the tabernacle (or tent) had several stopping places with children of Israel before coming to rest on Mount Zion (Shiloh, I Sam. 1, Kiriaith Jearim, I Sam. 7: 1-2, Mt. Zion in Jerusalem, II Sam. 6:16).

The ark of the covenant and the Holy of Holies were the central place of God's presence in the temple and among the people of Israel. It was transferred from Mount Zion to the temple mountain Jerusalem (I Kings 8:1 ff.).

The dedication of the temple was a solemn occasion and one of the high points for the people of God in the Old Testament (I Kings 8).

1.3 The Fall of Judah and the Exile

After a long history of over 350 years as the central place of worship for Israel and Judah (930-586 B.C.) the people, the temple and their political system fell under judgment. Events surrounding the fall of Judea helped create some institutions and collective experiences that remained influential through New Testament times.

It is important first to recognize certain constitutional and prophetic aspects of Israel's history before examining the fall of Jerusalem. Two statements from the Old Testament are significant. First, Moses warned in Deuteronomy concerning the consequences of disobedience:

“And the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known” (Deut. 28:64 ESV).

Later Solomon in the prayer of the dedication of the temple,

If they sin against you – for there is no one who does not sin – and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near, yet if they turn their heart in the land to which they have been carried captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captors, saying, ‘We have sinned and have acted perversely and wickedly,’ if they repent with all their mind and all their heart in the land of their enemies, who carried them captive and pray to you toward their land, which you gave to their fathers, the city you have chosen, and the house that <I have built for your name, then hear in heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause and forgive your people who have sinned against you, and grant them compassion in the sight of those who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them” (I Kings 8:46-50 ESV).

The first attack against Jerusalem was during the reign of Rehoboam, son of Solomon. Shishak, king of Egypt, attacked Jerusalem and carried away some of the treasures of the temple, but it did not result in the fall of Jerusalem (II Chron. 12:1 ff.). That event would take place centuries later.

So we see that the possibility of captivity and exile were expressly stated at earlier stages of Israel's history, and served as a warning to the generations to come. In fact, an earlier dislocation of the northern tribes was a prelude to the later captivity of Judea and the fall of Jerusalem. The scriptures describe this event as follows:

In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria, and he carried the Israelites away to Assyria and placed them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. And this occurred because the people of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt . . .

The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Chutah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the people of Israel. And they took possession of Samaria and lived in its cities. At the beginning of their dwelling they did not fear the Lord (II Kings 17:6-7, 24-25a ESV)

The remainder of this passage tells how the people who inhabited Samaria came to fear the Lord Yahweh, and also continued to worship and serve their idols in a syncretistic religious expression. This occurred in 722-1 B.C. Over a century later the southern kingdom of Judah fell to the Babylonians.

One of the great events to affect the people of Israel was the invasion of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar in the year 605 B.C., and then later in 597 B.C. and again in 586 B.C. In 605 some of the inhabitants of Judah were taken captive to Babylon, the seat of King Nebuchadnezzar's empire. These events are recorded in the prophets Daniel and Jeremiah, and in II Kings.

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god (Daniel 1:1-2).

So Judah went into captivity, away from her land. This is the number of the people Nebuchadnezzar carried into exile:

in the seventh year, 3,023 Jews;
in Nebuchadnezzar's eighteenth year, 832 people from Jerusalem;
in his twenty-third year, 745 Jews were taken into exile by Nebuzaradan the commander of the imperial guard. There were 4,600 people in all" (Jer. 52:27-30).

Though the number of exiles was relatively small, many were the most influential members of the population in Jerusalem and Judah. Their bitter experience is commemorated in the Psalm 137:

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept
when we remembered Zion.
There on the poplars we hung our harps,
For there our captors asked us for songs,
Our tormentors demanded songs of joy;
They said, 'Sing for us one of the songs of Zion!'
How can we sing the songs of the Lord
While in a foreign land?
If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
may my right hand forget its skill.

May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you,
If I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy (Ps. 137:1-6).

1.3.1 Prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel

The destruction of Jerusalem and its temple and the exile had been prophesied by Jeremiah and Ezekiel:

Hear the word of the Lord, all you people of Judah who come through these gates to worship the Lord. This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel says: Reform your ways and actions, and I will let you live in this place. Do not trust in deceptive words and say, ‘This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord!’ If you really change your ways and actions and deal with each other justly, if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods, to your own harm, then I will let you live in this place in the land I gave your forefathers forever and ever. But look you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless...

Go now to the place in Shiloh where I first made a dwelling for my Name, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel. While you were doing all these things, declares the Lord, I spoke to you again and again, but you did not listen; I called you but you did not answer. Therefore what I did to Shiloh I will now do to the house that bears my Name, the temple you trust in, the place I gave to you and your fathers. I will thrust you from my presence, just as I did to all your brothers, the people of Ephraim (Jeremiah 7:2-8,12-15).

Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: As I have given the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest as fuel for the fire, so will I treat the people living in Jerusalem. I will set my face against them. Although they have come out of the fire, the fire will yet consume them. And when I set my face against them you will know that I am the Lord. I will make the land desolate because they have been unfaithful declares the Sovereign Lord (Ezekiel 15:6-8).

This is what the Sovereign Lord says: ‘When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’ (Jeremiah 29:10-11).

1.3.2 Destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem

The destruction of the temple and its environs in Jerusalem is recorded in the prophet Jeremiah:

On the tenth day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard, who served the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. He set fire to the temple of the Lord, the royal palace and all the houses of Jerusalem. Every important building he burned down. The whole Babylonian army under the command of the imperial guard broke down all the walls around Jerusalem...The Babylonians broke up the bronze pillars, the movable stands and the bronze Sea that were at the temple of the Lord and they carried all the bronze to Babylon.. They also took away the pots, shovels, wick trimmers, sprinkling bowls, dishes and all the bronze articles used in the temple service. The commander of the imperial guard took away the basins, censers, sprinkling bowls, pots, lampstands, dishes and bowls used for drink offerings – all that were made of pure gold or silver” (Jer. 52:12-19).

These events were lamented by Jeremiah in the Lamentations:

The Lord has swallowed
up without mercy
all the inhabitants of Jacob;
in his wrath he has broken
down
the strongholds of the
daughter of Judah;
he has brought down to the
ground in dishonor
the kingdom and its rulers.

The lord has become like
enemy;
he has swallowed up Israel;
he has swallowed up all its
palaces;
he has laid in ruins its
strongholds,
and he has multiplied in the
daughter of Judah
mourning and lamentation (Lamentations 2:2,5 ESV).

Another lament is declared in the Psalms:

O God, the nations have
Come into your
inheritance;
they have defiled your holy
temple;
they have laid Jerusalem in

ruins.
They have given the bodies of
your servants
to the birds of the heavens for
food,
the flesh of your faithful to the
beasts of the earth.
They have poured out their blood
like water
all around Jerusalem,
and there was no one to bury
them.
We have become a taunt to our
neighbors,
mocked and derided by those
around us.

Let the groans of the prisoners
come before you;
according to your great power,
preserve those doomed to
die! (Psalm 79:1-4, 11 ESV).

Nebuchadnezzar's army left Judah a shambles. As archaeological evidence eloquently testifies, all, or virtually, all of the fortified towns in the heartland of Judah were razed to the ground, in most cases, not to be rebuilt for many years to come . . . The population of the land was drained away. Aside from those deported to Babylon, thousands must have died in battle or from starvation and disease (Lam. 2:11f., 19-21; 4:9 f.) some – and surely more than we know of (II Kings 25:18-27) – had been executed, while others (Jer.chs. 42 f.) had fled for their lives. . . . Judah's population, which probably exceeded 250,00 in the eighth century and was probably half that figure even after the deportation of 597, was scarcely above 20,000 even after the first exiles returned, and must have been sparse indeed in the intervening years (John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 4th Edition, Louisville, John Knox Press, 2000, p. 344).

As is recorded in Jeremiah, Nebuchadnezzar appointed Gedaliah as governor of the province of Judah. After his assassination, many Jews emigrated to Egypt against the counsel of the prophet Jeremiah who accompanied them (Jer. 41 f).

At some unknown point the Jews who migrated to Egypt were formed into a military colony (possibly under Pharaoh Apries, Bright, p. 347) at Elephantine on the first cataract of the Nile. Subsequent archaeological discoveries reveal that these exiles built and

maintained a temple there and practice a syncretistic form to the Jewish faith. Year later, a large Jewish community in Alexandria formed a world center for Hellenistic Judaism.

1.3.3. Exile Period

From Nebuchadnezzar's first exile in 605 B.C. until the rule of the Persian king Cyrus in 539 and beyond, these exiles lived in Babylon under Babylonian rule, and later under Persian rule.

The exiles taken by Nebuchadnezzar represented the elite citizenry of Judah. The events of the exile are recorded in Daniel, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Of particular interest is the status of the Jewish people during the exile. They were originally interred together in some type of settlement, but later found their way into the cities of Babylon and into the king's court. Jehoiachin who had been taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar was released thirty-seven years later, having found favor with the king, Evil-merodach.

Jeremiah advises the exiles in (Jer. 29:1-23),

Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare (Jer. 29:6-7 ESV).

Daniel's career takes place during the exile period and shows the extent to which some exiles influenced the events and rulers of Babylon and, later, Persia, during this period. Personal interactions with Babylonian kings Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar are recorded as well as interactions with Persian rulers. "So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian" (Dan. 6:28 ESV).

Israel's faith was of utmost importance to her during this period. As John Bright states: "A new community did, in fact, begin to emerge, though the details are almost wholly obscure. It was no longer a national cultic community, but one marked by adherence to tradition and law." (*A History of Israel*, p. 349).

Babylon's rulers during the exile were as follows.

Nabopolassar	626-605
Nebuchadnezzar	605/4 – 562
Amel-marduk	562-560
Neriglissar	560-556
Nabonidus	556-539

According to Bright, Babylon had a strong and impressive, but brief, zenith on the stage of the world political scene. The Babylonian rule ended when Persia under Cyrus overthrew Babylon. Cyrus' decree (538/7 B.C.) allowing exiled Jews and their descendants to return to Jerusalem was greeted with joy by many. Still many Jews remained scattered through the Persian Empire under Cambyses, Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes of Media-Persia.

1.4 Return from Exile

Cyrus' decree is recorded in Ezra 1:1-4 and II Chronicles 36:22-23.

In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah, the Lord moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing:

‘This is what Cyrus king of Persia says:

The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Anyone of his people among you – may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the Lord, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem. And the people of any place where survivors may now be living are to provide him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem’ (Ezra 1:1-4).

1.4. 1. The policy of Cyrus

The 19th century archaeological discovery of the cylinder of Cyrus confirms that his policy was to return transplanted populations to their original lands. “Cyrus reversed the inhumane policy of deporting whole populations practiced by Assyrian and Babylonian conquerors.

From Ashur and Susa, Agade, Ashnunnak, Zamban, Meturnu, Deri, with the territory of the land of Gutium, the cities on the other side of Tigris, whose sites were of ancient foundation – the gods who dwelt in them, I brought back to their places, and caused them to dwell in a habitation for all time. All their inhabitants I collected and restored them to their dwelling places... May all the gods whom I brought into their cities, pray daily before Bel and Nabu for long life for me... (Quoted in Merrill F. Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1954, p.304).

1.4.2. A Good Beginning

The return of the first exiles to Judah is recorded in Ezra:

Then the family heads of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and Levites – everyone whose heart God had moved – prepared to go up and build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem. All their neighbors assisted them with articles of silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with valuable gifts, in addition to all the freewill offerings. Moreover King Cyrus brought out the articles belonging to the temple. Of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and had placed in the temple of his god (Ezra 1:5-7).

When they arrived at the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, some of the heads of the families gave freewill offerings toward the rebuilding of the house of God on its site. According to their ability they gave to the treasury for this work 61,000 drachmas of gold, 5,000 minas of silver and 100 priestly garments. The priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers and the temple servants settled in their own towns, along with some of the other people, and the rest of the Israelites settled in their towns. When the seventh month came and the Israelites had settled in their towns, the people assembled as one man in Jerusalem. Then Jeshua son of Jozadak and his fellow priests and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and his associates began to build the altar of the God of Israel to sacrifice burnt offerings on it, in accordance with what was written in the law of Moses the man of God. Despite their fear of the peoples around them, they built the altar on its foundation and sacrificed burnt offerings on it to the Lord, both the morning and the evening sacrifices (Ezra 2:68-3:3).

When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests with their vestments and with trumpets, and the Levites (the sons of Asaph) with cymbals, took their places to praise the Lord, as prescribed by David king of Israel. With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the Lord:

‘He is good;
his love endures forever.’

And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads who had seen the former temple wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy. No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping, because the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away (Ezra 3:10-13).

1.4.3 Opposition and Delay

This good beginning didn't last long, though. Opposition soon arose from the people of the land which delayed work on the project for another 15 years.

“Then the peoples around them set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building. They hired counselors to work against them and frustrate their plans during the entire reign of Cyrus king of Persia and down to the reign of Darius king of Persia” (Ezra 4:4-5).

1.4 4 Revival in 520 B.C.

After an extended period when no work was done on the temple, the Lord inspired the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to exhort the people to continue with the project of temple restoration. These prophets both began their ministries in the second year of the reign of Darius the Great, 520 B.C.

Both Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the inhabitants of Judah to continue work on rebuilding the temple. Two typical prophecies are as follows:

Review in detail Haggai's prophecies

“ ‘Go up into the mountain and bring down timber and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored,’ says the Lord (Haggai 1:8).

“Then the word of the Lord came to me: ‘The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you’ ”(Zechariah 4:8-9).

1.4.5. Legal maneuvers

When the Jews began rebuilding the temple they were again opposed by the people of the land. Again they attempted to use a legal challenge to halt the work on the temple. In a letter to King Darius, Tattenai, the governor of Trans-Euphrates and his associates, attempted to stop further construction on the temple. “We questioned the elders and asked them, ‘Who authorized you to rebuild this temple and restore this structure?’”(Ezra 5:9). The Jews responded that King Cyrus had authorized the rebuilding of the temple. Darius subsequently defended the Jews claim to imperial authority. “Now then, Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and you their fellow officials of that province, stay away from there. Do not interfere with the work on this temple of God. Let the governors of the Jews and the Jewish elders rebuild this house of God on its site”(Ezra 6:6-7). The work began on September 21, 520 and was completed on March 12, 516 B.C.,

Then because of the decree king Darius had sent, Tattenai, governor of trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and their associates carried it out with diligence. So the elders of the Jews continued to build and prosper under the preaching of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah, a descendant of Iddo. They finished building the temple according to the command of the God of Israel, and the decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, kings of Persia. The temple was completed on the third day of the month Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of king Darius. Then the people of Israel – the priests, the Levites and the rest of the exiles – celebrated the dedication of the house of God with joy (Ezra 6:13-16).

1.4.6 Ps. 126

Psalm 126 is written from the post-exilic point of view. “It is the exiles at home again upon the soil of their fatherland who here cast back a glance into the happy time when their destiny suddenly took another turn, by the God of Israel disposing the heart of the conqueror of Babylon to set them at liberty, and to send them to their native land in an honorable manner” (Keil and Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentaries*, Vol. 4. Grand Rapids: Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., p. 264).

When the Lord brought back the captive ones of Zion,
We were like those who dream.
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
And out tongue with joyful shouting;
Then they said among the nations,
‘The Lord has done great things for them.’
The Lord has done great things for us;
We are glad.
Restore our captivity, O Lord,
As the streams in the South.
Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting.
He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed,
Shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his
sheaves with him. (Psalm 126 NASB).

1.5 Late Post-Exile

In 457 B.C, Ezra, a descendant of Aaron, returned to Jerusalem from Persia to instruct the people in the law of God. Thirteen years later in 444, Nehemiah returned to rebuild the walls of the city and to establish it.

Various dating schemes exist for Ezra and Nehemiah. 458 and 445 are alternative dates, and Bright defends the view that Ezra came from Persia after Nehemiah, and places his arrival at 428 B.C. (See Bright, excursus II, *The Date of Ezra’s Mission to Jerusalem*, p. 391).

1.5.1 Ezra: Rebuilding the faith

After these things, during the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra ... came up from Babylon.. He was a teacher well versed in the law of Moses, which the Lord, the God of Israel, had given. The king had granted him everything he asked, for the hand of the Lord hid God was on him. Some of the Israelites, including priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, and temple servants, also came up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of king Artaxerxes. Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth month of the seventh year of the king ... For Ezra had devoted himself to the

study and observance of the Law of the Lord., and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel (Ezra 7:1,6-8, 10).

In 457 B.C. Ezra returned with 1,700 men and the temple vessels that had not been brought back from Babylonia. Upon His Arrival In Jerusalem Ezra was shocked to find that the Jews had violated the law of Moses through intermarriage with foreign and Canaanite women. He gave himself to prayer and confession of the sins of the people. Ezra succeeded in persuading the priests to put away their heathen wives, but later Nehemiah had to take the same action.

The efforts of Ezra were especially concerned with instructing the Jews in the law of God as it was revealed in the Pentateuch. This resulted in the strict observance of the Sabbath, the conducting of the liturgy as prescribed, the suppression of mixed marriages, and the dismissal of foreign wives.

...Ezra and Nehemiah cooperated to improve the religious and social condition of the people. In this effort they were assisted by Malachi, the prophet. (Surburg, p. 13).

Ezra had the law read to the people and translated/interpreted for Aramiaic speakers. “So they read in the book of the law of God, distinctly and gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading” (Neh. 8:8).

1.5.2 Nehemiah: Rebuilding the city

In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem. They said to me, ‘Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.’ When I heard these things I sat down and wept (Nehemiah 1:1-4).

I also said to him, ‘If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe conduct until I arrive in Judah? And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the kings forest, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?’ And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me the king granted my requests. So I went to the governors of Trans-Euphrates and gave them the kings letters. The king had also sent army officers and cavalry with me. When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about this, they were very much disturbed that someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites ... Then I said ... ‘You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.’

I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me and what the king had said to me. They replied, 'Let us start rebuilding.' So they began this good work. But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arab heard about it, they mocked and ridiculed us (Nehemiah 2:7-10, 17-18).

Nehemiah succeeded in completing the wall of Jerusalem in 52 day in the midst of strong opposition. (Neh. 6:15).

Both because of heavy taxes and poor seasons (ch. 5:1-5, 15) the province was in dire economic straits. Greedy men had used the opportunity to get the poor in their debt and dispossess them. Nehemiah enraged with these abuses acted with characteristic decision (vs. 6-13). Calling the offenders before him he made a rousing appeal to their consciences and their status as Jews and then exacted their promise to leave off usury and make restitution. . . . Nehemiah himself set an example by dispensing with the usual perquisites of the governor, acquiring no property, and taking only such levies as were necessary to maintain his establishment (vs. 14-19).

Nehemiah's term of office lasted twelve years (until 433:Neh. 5:14), after which he returned to the Persian court (Neh. 13:6). . . .When Nehemiah returned he found a bad situation worse . . . Nehemiah took vigorous action against the prevailing religious laxity. Finding that Levites, their allotments unpaid, were leaving the temple in order to work (ch. 13:4-9), he saw to it that tithes were collected, and appointed honest treasurers to administer them. He also saw to it (v. 31) that a supply of wood for the altar was maintained. To stop business from going on as usual on the Sabbath, he ordered the city gates shut all that day; when merchants then began to set up markets outside the city, he threatened them with arrest and drove them away (vs. 15-22). (Bright, p 383-384).

1.5.3 Malachi: The last prophecies and a call to repentance

Malachi is the last of the Old Testament prophets. He is either contemporary with or slightly later than Ezra and Nehemiah, depending on the particular view of the commentator. Malachi can be dated approximately 430 B.C. (Though Bright dates him c. 450). In the Protestant Bible, Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament canon. Malachi ends the period of inspired speech, the last of the Old Testament prophets. With the conclusion of Malachi we begin the intertestamental period. Though the events prophesied in Daniel 10 and 11 cover the time between the testaments, Daniel words are prior to the actual events prophesied.

In Malachi's time,

(I)t is abundantly evident that the morale of the community was not good. Disappointment had led to disillusionment and this, in turn, to religious and moral

laxity. The words of Malachi . . . illustrate this clearly. Priests, bored by their duties, saw nothing wrong in offering sick and injured animals to Yahweh (Mal. 1:6-14), while their partiality in handling the law debased their sacred office in the eyes of the people (Mal. 2:1-9). The Sabbath was neglected and given over to business (Neh.13:15-22). Nonpayment of tithes (Mal. 3:7-10) forced Levites to abandon their duties in order to make a living (Neh.13:10f.) The feeling withal, had taken root that there was no profit in being loyal to the faith (Mal. 2:17; 3:13-15). Such attitudes naturally led to a widespread breakdown of public and private morality, and even to the danger that the community would disintegrate from within. The prevalence of divorce was a public scandal (Mal. 3:5).)Bright, p. 378).

It was in such an atmosphere that Malachi promised the coming of Elijah.

1.5.4 A list of Persian rulers

“*Cyrus* (538-529) was king of Anshan and vassal of Media from about 550. After a successful rebellion he gained control of the Median empire and founded the Achaemenid dynasty. In 539 he took Babylon and from 538 dated his years as ‘king of Babylon and king of the countries.’ Reversing the policy of earlier conquerors of the near east, the Persians permitted the conquered people to maintain their cultures in their homelands. Accordingly, Cyrus allowed the Jews in Babylon to return to Judea and rebuild the temple. (Ezra 1:1-4; 2 Chron. 36:22-23). The Persian empire was the first in the near east with a great design of tolerance and decentralization of government.

Cambyses (529-522) enlarged the empire in 525 by doing what few have accomplished, conquering Egypt.

Darius (522-486) was the real organizer and consolidator of the Achaemenid empire. He ruled long enough to give stability and a consistent administrative policy to the extensive domains which by the time of his successor stretched ‘from India to Ethiopia.’ (Esther 1:1), the largest empire in the ancient Near East up to this time.

Xerxes (485-465) was the Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther. He had to subjugate Egypt again and invaded Greece in 480-479.

Xerxes turned to the invasion of Greece. Bridging the Hellespont (480), he moved with a huge army through Macedonia, overwhelmed the heroic Spartan band at Thermopylae, captured Athens, and put the Acropolis to the torch. But then came the fiasco at Salamis in which a third of the Persian fleet was destroyed. Xerxes thereupon returned to Asia, leaving the general Mardonius in Asia with an army. But the following year (479) this was cut to pieces at Plataea, while the remnant of the Persian fleet was destroyed near Samos. Further reverses, culminating in the decisive defeat on the banks of Eurymedon (466),

finally forced Xerxes from Europe, and his fleet from Aegean waters, altogether (Bright, 374-5).

Artaxerxes (464-424) was the king under whom Nehemiah served as cupbearer and Ezra received permission to come to Judah. "His long reign foreshadowed the future in being filled with struggles against Greeks, Syrians and Egyptians." (Ferguson, p. 6). The early signs of weakness begin to appear during his reign.

Darius II Nothus (423-404) "witnessed the interruption of the Peloponnesian War Its resumption, and finally its ending with the capitulation of Athens in 404. Persia was able by diplomacy and bribery, and thanks to Greek corruption, to turn all this into a victory for herself and to establish her hold on Asia Minor more firmly than ever" (Bright, 405-6).

Artaxerxes II Mnemon (404-358)

Artaxerxes III Ochus (358-338)

Arses (338-336)

Darius III Codomannus ((336-331)

1.6 Excursus: Samaritans and the nations surrounding Judah

In the Old Testament Samaritans are mentioned in II Kings 17:29. They are members of non-Israelite races who practice a syncretistic form of Judaism. It is argued that those referred to as Samaritans in post-exilic literature are actually inhabitants of Shechem and may not be directly descended from the original Old Testament Samaritans. They identify themselves as Sidonians who dwell in Shechem in the Antiquities of Josephus (Josephus, Book XII, v, 5). There is some speculation that the inhabitants of the land were the remnant of the Northern Kingdom who opposed the exiles on their return. The inhabitants of the land clearly opposed the rebuilding of the temple during the time of Haggai and they opposed the rebuilding of the city in the time of Nehemiah.

It is known that the Samaritans built an alternate temple on Mt. Gerizim which was a rival to the temple in Jerusalem. During the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes they renamed the temple on Mt. Gerizim after *Jupiter Hellenius*. Jewish historian Josephus records this event in some detail. (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book XI, v, 5). John Hyrcanus, the Jewish Maccabean ruler destroyed the Samaritan temple on Mt. Gerizim in 128 B.C. thus fueling antagonism between Samaritans and Jews. Jesus encounters the Samaritan woman in John's Gospel and they discuss the issue of the rival places of worship, "*Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem. Jesus declared, 'Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem... Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth'*" (John 4:19-21,23).

"Only the five books of the Pentateuch in their Samaritan recension (2nd century BC) were regarded as canonical, and this is reflected in their creed, whose elements must date

back to early times; belief in one God, in Moses the prophet, in the law, in Mt. Gerizim as the place appointed by God for sacrifice...in the day of judgment and recompense, and in the return of Moses as Taheb (the 'restorer' or 'returning one')...It is thus noteworthy that the NT is almost consistently favourable towards them.. and that the Samaritans are portrayed as responding enthusiastically both to Jesus himself and to the preaching of the early Christian church”(H.M.G. Williamson, *New Bible Dictionary*).

1.7 Hellenization of the Ancient World

One of the seminal events of the intertestamental period was the spread of Hellenistic (Greek) language and culture throughout the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Persia. This process was known as Hellenization. It began with the rise of Philip of Macedon and became a major force under Alexander the Great. It was solidified under the influence of Alexander's successors known as diadochi. Two major dynasties eventually emerged in the century following Alexander, the Seleucid and Ptolomaic. But I get ahead of myself.

1.7.1 Philip of Macedon and the Hellenic League.

The influence of Philip was greatest between 338 and 336 B.C. “He became ruler of all Greece after the battle of Chaeronea in 338 B.C. He did not change the internal organization of the Greek cities, and his legal position was that of a general at the head of a league to fight the weakened Persian empire” (Ferguson, p. 10). He was over what was called the Hellenic League. He was assassinated in 336 B.C. It was Philip who brought Aristotle to educate his son, Alexander.

Before the time of Philip of Macedon, the city states of Greece had never formed a united government. Heretofore the Persian kings had been able to manipulate one Greek state after another. Ever since the days of Xerxes the power of the Greek states had been increasing, but their lack of unity had prevented them from becoming an offensive power in world politics. It was Philip of Macedon who achieved this unity, although not all Greeks were a part of the Hellenic League, which became the instrument for the conquest of the Persian Empire (Surburg, p. 17).

1.7.2. Alexander the Great

“Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, highly esteemed Greek culture. He entrusted his son Alexander to a teacher named Symmachus, who acquainted him with the Iliad of Homer. When Alexander was 13, the great philosopher Aristotle was appointed as his teacher. From him Alexander learned to know and appreciate Greek literature and art, and he developed an intense admiration for Greek religion, culture and civilization and eventually became ‘the Apostle of Hellenism.’...Alexander in 334 left Europe for Asia, and Macedonia never again saw him. With the aim of conquering and

making himself ruler of the Persian Empire, he crossed over into Asia Minor with about 30,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry, less than half of whom were Macedonians” (Surburg, p. 17).

After conquering Asia Minor (the territory of modern day Turkey) in 333 at the battle of Issus, Alexander defeated Darius III, signaling the downfall of the Persian empire. Alexander conquered Damascus and traveled down the Mediterranean coast, conquering as he went. There is a legend preserved in Josephus of how Alexander was greeted by and paid homage to the high priest. He conquered Egypt, where he founded the port city of Alexandria. Alexander founded many Greek cities throughout the conquered territories. These became the source of the Hellenizing influence through their Greek population, language and customs, such as the establishment of the gymnasium. Later he pushed to Susa and eventually conquered as far as Afghanistan, Turkestan and northern India. He encouraged intermarriage between his Greek troops and Oriental women, as well as a mingling of Greek and Oriental cultural customs. He died of a fever in 323 B.C. He was always very favorably disposed toward the Jews and his policies were influential in causing Jews to be settled in various parts of his empire.

Surburg lists the beneficial effects of his activities as follows:

- a) Hellenistic civilization spread over Egypt and western Asia.
- b) The distinction between Greek and barbarian was broken down to some degree and constituted an aid in preparing the minds of men for the Christian Gospel.
- c) The Greek language became the universal language, spoken and written by the cultured.
- d) A sea route from Europe to India was discovered.” (Surburg, p. 20).

1.7.3. Four Generals

After the death of Alexander, four of his generals came to the fore in the ensuing power struggle. “The more important of Alexander’s successors were Antipater and his son Cassander, who gained control of Macedonia; Lysimachus who ruled in Thrace; Ptolemy I who ruled in Egypt; and Antigonus I whose base of operation was Asia...By 280 three dynasties descended from Alexander’s generals were well established: the Ptolamaic in Egypt, the Seleucid from Persia across Syria to Asia, and the Antigonid now controlling Macedonia”(Ferguson, p. 15)

“Many students of the Bible believe that this happened in fulfillment of the prophecy of Daniel 11:4: ‘And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven.: and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled, for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.’” (Surburg, p. 22). This is written regarding the breaking up of Alexander’s empire.

1.7.4. Two dynasties

The two main dynasties affecting the fortunes of the Jews and therefore, the later New Testament period were the Seleucid from Syria to the East and the Ptolemaic based in Egypt.

“The Jews were to be found in large numbers in Ptolemaic Egypt as is indicated by the Egyptian inscriptions and papyri. While many Jews had been in Egypt before the time of the rule of the Ptolemies, it is still true that many were brought to Egypt by Ptolemy Legi” (Surburg, p22).

Alexandria in Egypt became world-renown for its library and as a center for scholarship.

a. The Ptolemies are listed as follows:

Ptolemy I	323-283 B.C.
Ptolemy II (Philadelphus)	283-247
Ptolemy III	247-221
Ptolemy IV (Philopater)	221-203
Ptolemy V	203-181
Ptolemy VI	180-146
Ptolemy VII	145-117

Some of the notable members of the dynasty include Ptolemy I who first invaded and controlled Palestine. He took many Jewish captives back to Egypt. He founded the large museum and library in Alexandria. Ptolemy II added to the museum and library and founded a zoo as well. Ptolemy II (Philadelphus) initiated the project of translating the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek, thus ultimately producing the Septuagint (LXX).

Under Ptolemy V the control of Palestine passed to the Seleucid dynasty in 198 B.C.

“In characterizing the rule of the Ptolemies, Dorothy Miller wrote:

‘The entire history of the Ptolemies, and indeed the history of all the Hellenic dynasties, is an outstanding illustration of the fact that brilliancy of intellect, material splendor, and the highest civilization, without true religion, the presence of God in the life and the State, do not add one iota to morality or beneficence. It would seem there are no crimes and no vices that were not common in the lives and families of the most enlightened princes of the era. The life of a mother, a brother, a sister, a child, or a friend was worth nothing if it stood in the way of personal desire or political ambition” (Surburg, p. 26).

b. Surburg lists the Seleucids are listed as follows:

Seleucus I (Nicator)	312-280 B.C.
Antiochus I (Soter)	280-261
Antiochus II	261-246
Seleucus II	246-226

Seleucus III	226-223
Antiochus III	222-187
Seleucus IV (Philopater)	187-185
Antiochus IV (Epiphanes)	175-163
Antiochus V	163-162
Demetrius I	162-150

Demetrius II and Alexander Balas struggle for the throne:

Alexander Balas	150-145
Demetrius II	145-139
Antiochus VII	139-134

Seleucus I Nicator, one of Alexander's generals was ultimately able to get control of Syria and Asia Minor. He is the founder of the city of Antioch on the Orontes River. This city became the capital of the Seleucid empire and later the capital of the Roman province of Syria. The Seleucids founded many cities intended to be a means of spreading Hellenistic culture.

Under Antiochus III, Palestine fell into the hands of the Seleucids in 198 B.C. Antiochus opposed the emerging power of the Roman Republic and lost Asia Minor to Rome. He settled many Jews in the Seleucid cities, thus enhancing the diaspora. He was favorable toward the Jews in most of his dealings.

Seleucus IV (187-185) tried to raid the temple of the Jews to pay war indemnities to the Romans. His successor, Antiochus IV is viewed as the great enemy of the Jewish people and faith in the books of the Maccabees. He deemed himself, Epiphanes, the manifestation of god, and sought to be worshiped as Olympian Zeus. Under the high priest Onias III (Jason) the process of Hellenization of Palestine intensified. The gymnasium gained greater influence and the high priesthood was actually sold to his brother Menelaus. The temple was pillaged. "A decree was then issued by Antiochus IV that all Jews were to conform to Syrian laws, customs, and religion. The worship of Greek gods and goddesses was to replace adoration of Jehovah. Distinctly Jewish customs such as Sabbath observance, the rite of circumcision, and the avoidance of unclean food, were prohibited on penalty of death. Those mothers who had their babies circumcised were crucified with their babies hung around their necks. The daily sacrifices were prohibited. A herd of swine was driven into the temple, and on the altar dedicated to Olympian Zeus, swine flesh was sacrificed"(Surburg, p. 31).

Referring to the activities of Antiochus Epiphanes, I Maccabees states the following:

The king then issued a decree throughout his empire: his subjects were all to become one people and abandon their own laws and religion. The nations everywhere complied with the royal command, and many in Israel accepted the foreign worship, sacrificing to idols and profaning the sabbath. Moreover the king sent agents with written orders to Jerusalem and the towns of Judea. Ways

and customs foreign to the country were to be introduced. Burnt-offerings, sacrifices, and libations in the temple were forbidden; Sabbaths and feast days were to be profaned; the temple and its ministers to be defiled. Altars, idols and sacred precincts were to be established: swine and other unclean beasts to be offered in sacrifice. They must leave their sons uncircumcised; they must make themselves in every way abominable, unclean, and profane and so in every way forget the law and change all their statutes. The penalty for disobedience was death (I Macc. 41-50).

1.8. Revolt against Hellenization: The Maccabees (167-63 B.C.)

Reading from Maccabees chapter 1.

Resistance to the policies of Antiochus IV Epiphanes began with Mattathias of the Hasmonean family. He and his sons were later to be called the Maccabees. At Modin he struck down a Jewish priest who was preparing to offer idolatrous sacrifice and called faithful Jews to follow him. This started a successful resistance movement which ultimately led to the establishment of a Jewish monarchy/dynasty in Palestine. The Maccabean period is dated from this time.

Mattathias died a short time later (166/5), and was succeeded by Judas who also died a short time later in 160. It was he who was given the name Maccabee possibly meaning hammer. The movement became known by this name. They carried on a war against the Syrian occupation and destroyed pagan altars. Antiochus IV withdrew the prohibitions against Judaism in 164 and the temple in Jerusalem was rededicated to the Lord. Burnt offerings were again sacrificed on a new altar. The 25th of Kislev is celebrated as the Feast of Lights (*Hanukkah*) and is mentioned in the 10th chapter of John's gospel.

Jonathan succeeded his brother Judas and was named high priest by Alexander Balas who was a disputed claimant to the throne of Antiochus. He was succeeded by Simon (143-134). During this period the tribute obligation ceased and complete independence from Seleucid control was achieved. Simon was given status as commander of the army, ethnarch, and high priest. This became the basis for the Hasmonean dynasty. He was assassinated.

1.8.1. The Renewed Kingdom of Judea

John Hyrcanus (134-104) succeeded his father Simon. He conquered and annexed Idumea (Edom) and made the Idumeans accept circumcision. He also captured Samaria, destroying their temple on Mt. Gerizim. It was in this time that the Pharisees began to oppose the Hasmoneans, while the Sadducees supported him. He was succeeded by Aristobulus I (104-3) who conquered the region of Galilee. He was the first to be called King. He was succeeded by Alexander Janneus (103-76). His conduct brought the

disdain of many Jews toward him. He introduced mass crucifixion against his own people who rebelled against him.

Salome Alexandra (76-67) succeeded her husband Alexander Janneus. She was allied with the Pharisees and they came into prominence at this time. Her sons Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II disputed over the throne of the high priest. This led to intervention from the Roman general Pompey who had conquered the vestiges of the Seleucid kingdom. Thus in A.D. 63 was the beginning of the Roman period.

Simon, High Priest	142-134
Hyrcanus I, High Priest	134-105
Aristobulus I, King	104
Alexander Janneus, King	103-76
Alexandra, Queen	76-67
Hyrcanus II, King	67
Aristobulus II, King	66-63

1.9. Rome in Palestine

During the time of Judas Maccabeus we read the following:

Now, Judas heard of the reputation of the Romans, their military strength and their benevolence toward all who made common cause with them; they wanted to establish friendly relations with anyone who approached them, because of their military strength . . . Having chosen Eupolemus son of John, of the family of Accos, and Jason, son of Eleazar, Judas sent them to Rome to make a treaty of friendship and alliance with these people, who would surely lift the yoke from their shoulders once they understood the kingdom of the Greeks was reducing Israel to slavery (I Maccabees 8:1-2, 17-18).

It was at the other end of the Hasmonean rule in 63 B.C. that the Roman general Pompey entered the holy of holies in the temple. He was condemned for this act in the apocryphal Psalms of Solomon. He awarded the high priesthood to Hyrcanus, re-establishing the practice of appointment by Gentile governing authority. The status of Judea was reduced to Judea and Idumea under the oversight of the governor of Syria. Thus ending independence for Judea. The Decapolis (ten cities) area of Trans-Jordan was granted independence under Pompey.

1.9.1. The Herods

Antipater was governor of Idumea at this time. “Antipater and his son Phasaël and Herod, successfully changed allegiance with each change in Rome – to Julius Caesar, to Mark Antony, and to Octavian. One notable bit of assistance to Caesar brought the Jews to Roman favor. After Pompey’s assassination in 48 B.C. Caesar landed in Egypt; but the

supporters of Ptolemy XII blockaded him in Alexandria. Timely aid from Antipater enabled Caesar to defeat his enemies, and he responded with favor to the Jews” (Ferguson, p. 388).

Herod the Great (37-4 B.C.) came to power after being declared king of the Jews by the Roman senate. He established his rule in 37 B.C. He was a client king, sworn to obey Rome. Though an Idumean, Herod ruled ably in Palestine, but always knew antagonism from the Jews. He was an outstanding architect/builder who was involved in projects both in Palestine and other parts of the empire. His great work was the restoration/expansion of the second temple (Zerubbabel’s temple). He was ruthless toward family members who were suspected of plotting against him, and had several of them killed. It is Herod the Great who is cited in Matthew’s gospel as having the innocent children in the region of Bethlehem slaughtered (Matt. 2:16-18).

Herod’ kingdom passed to his sons Archelaus (Judea, Samaria, Idumea), who was later deposed by the Romans and replaced with a Roman prefect or procurator, Philip (tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis) and Herod Antipas (Galilee and Perea). Among the procurators of Judea were Pontius Pilate (26-36 A.D.).

Other political figures of New Testament times include Herod Agrippa I (Herod the Great’s grandson) friend of Gaius Caligula. He was made king over the northern tetrarchies in 37 A.D. He is noted in Acts 12 as beheading James and imprisoning Peter. Herod Agrippa II was given the northeastern territory and is mentioned in Acts chapter 26.

1.9.2. Herod’s Building Projects (The Temple)

In the second period of Herod’s reign, 27-13 B.C., the item of greatest interest is a number of magnificent public buildings that he constructed, which witness to the high financial and cultural status of the king. They enhanced the reputation of Judaism greatly. Herod had the means to adorn his kingdom sumptuously with examples of Hellenistic and Roman architecture. He also went far beyond the borders of his own country, taking part in the restoration of cultural centers in Greece and elsewhere. The ruins of Herod’s enterprises in Palestine remain spectacular to this very day.

He enlarged Samaria, for example, the ancient royal capital of the Northern Kingdom, adorning it with a temple of Augustus, a magnificent thoroughfare, a forum, etc., in honor of Augustus it was renamed Sebaste, i.e. Augusta. Strato’s Tower, an ancient Egyptian site on the coast, he made into an extremely important harbor. It was named Caesarea, again in honor of the *Princeps*, and contained a temple of Augustus. It was also furnished with the usual embellishment of a Hellenistic city: a palace, a theatre, an Amphitheatre, a stadium and a hippodrome. Caesarea later became a fit residence for the Roman procurator. In addition, Herod build or added to a whole series of cities and fortresses; as an

example, we may mention Masada, an incredibly strong fortress on the west shore of the Dead Sea.

His most impressive buildings, however, Herod built in Jerusalem. In the western quarter, south of the present-day Gate of Jaffa, he built his palace. Imposing remnants of its mighty towers are still standing, especially the tower of Phasaël, built as a memorial to Herod's brother. The Acra, the old fortress at the northwest corner of the Temple area, was fortified and renamed the Antonia, in honor of the triumvir of the same name. This is presumably the site of The Pavement (John 19:13), so that the trial of Jesus took place alongside the Antonia, where a Roman cohort was garrisoned and where Paul was later taken prisoner (Acts 21:31-34). The southern quarter of the city received a theater, an amphitheater, and a hippodrome; games were to be held every four years. The devout however, refused to attend these games because of their connection with the state cult.

Herod's greatest accomplishment was the Hellenistic rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple, which had been constructed by Solomon and restored after the exile by Zerubbabel, but was now beginning to deteriorate. Work on the third Temple was begun in 20 B.C. After nine and a half years, the structure of the temple proper was finished; the rest of the temple precinct took longer (more than the forty-six years mentioned in John 2:20). The whole complex was not officially consecrated until A.D. 63. Tragically, the Herodian Temple stood in all its glory for only a few years, being destroyed in A.D. 70, at the end of the first Judaeo-Roman War. Herod's additions to the south and east enlarged the Temple precinct so greatly that it came to occupy twice the area of the Solomonic Temple. A person walking around the Temple area, one of the largest of the ancient world, would have been greatly impressed by its proportions and adornments as the enthusiastic comments of Jesus' disciples indicate (Mark 13:1: "What wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings; Luke 21:5: "... how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings").

The substructure, which reached a depth of thirty-five meters, was invisible; but the height of the Temple must have filled every visitor with awe. The Temple itself was itself twice as large as it formerly had been. Its exterior length was fifty meters, the same as the width of the entrance hall to the east, which was attached like the crossbar of a "T" to the main building, whose long axis ran from east to west. Over the gate of the entrance Herod placed the resplendent gold eagle of the so god which shocked the Jews. Otherwise he respected the religious sensibilities of the people. Images and distracting symbols were prohibited, even on the local coins. Gentiles were forbidden under penalty of death to enter beyond the outer court of the Temple precinct. This so-called court of the Gentiles was a terrace surrounding the raised inner precincts of the Temple. The terrace was provided with beautiful colonnades; on the east, the Portico of Solomon, where Jesus and the Apostles spent significant time. (John 10:23; Acts 3:11 FF.); on the south, the Royal Portico, which had five rows of pillars.

Signs in Greek and Latin, of which fragments have been found, prohibited all who were uncircumcised, on pain of death, to climb the steps leading to the inner area of the Temple precinct, the Sanctuary (Greek *to hieron*) in a specific sense. The New Testament calls the main gate, leading into this inner area from the east, the Beautiful Gate (Acts 3:10; because he was ritually defective, the lame man mentioned in this passage could be brought only as far as this boundary between the Court of the Gentiles and the Sanctuary). The so-called Sanctuary contained first the Women's Court and then west of it the Men's Court, each court constituting a higher terrace.

Finally, at the western end of the Temple precinct, came the plateau on which stood the Temple proper, with an imposing flight of stairs before its eastern facade. In front of the Temple, on the terrace of the Men's Court, stood the great altar of the burnt offerings surrounded by other sacred implements. The structure occupied an area marked off by a fence; this area was called the Priest's Court. Here the sacrificial priests carried out their bloody service (Bo Reicke, *The New Testament Era*, pp. 97-100).

The Qumran community disputed the suitability of the temple as a place of worship.

1.10. Developments in literature

One of the significant event of the intertestamental period is the development of certain genres of literature. Specifically apocalyptic literature and pseudipigrapha. These forms of literature are preserved in many writings of the era some of which are preserved in the Septuagint as the apocrypha. These apocryphal works are utilized by some churches even today.

1.10.1. The Apocrypha

From the word for "hidden" this includes a list of books which among Protestants are not approved for public reading in the church. These books are found in the Greek translation of the OT (LXX), but were not approved as canonical by the rabbis at Jamnia c. 90 A.D. They were read in Eastern and Western Catholic churches but were considered "deutero-canonical." That is their level of inspiration was considered inferior to the canonical books. "Christian usage and opinion about their status was somewhat ambiguous until the 16th century, when twelve works were included in the canon of the Roman church by the Council of Trent; but Protestant thought (e.g. Luther, and the English church in the thirty-nine articles) admitted them only for private edification.

The Old Testament Apocryphal books include: I and II Esdras (sometimes termed II and IV Esdras); Tobit, Judith, Additions to Daniel (Prayer of Azariah, Song of the Three Holy

Children, Sussanah, Bel and the Dragon), additions to Esther, the prayer of Manasses, the Epistle of Jeremiah, the book of Baruch, Ecclesiasticus, the Wisdom of Solomon, and I and II Maccabees.

The order of placement of the Old Testament differs from version to version. The *Masoretic* text follows a formula known as the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The Law consists of the five books of Moses – Genesis through Deuteronomy. The Prophets consist of the former prophets – Joshua, Judges, I and II Samuel and I and II Kings – and the later prophets – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve Minor Prophets. The Writings consist of poetry and wisdom - Psalms, Proverbs and Job, Song of Solomon – the scrolls - Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther- and historical books - Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, I and II Chronicles.

The *Masoretic* text contained all 39 of these writings, but counted only 24 books, combining I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles, the twelve Minor Prophets, and Ezra and Nehemiah.

The *Septuagint* changed the order of the books resembling the order of the Protestant Bible. It also included additional books to the Hebrew Canon known as the Apocrypha (of questionable authorship or authenticity). Catholic and Orthodox Churches retained the books of the apocrypha in their translations and refer to them as deuterocanonical. That is, they can be read publicly in church services but do not possess the same authority as the books of the Hebrew Canon. These books were rejected by Protestants and are not included in Protestant translations of the Old Testament.

How was the Old Testament canon formed? The word canon comes from Greek *kanon* meaning measuring instrument, or rod. The word indicates a standard or list and is applied to the closed, standardized list of books which have been received as inspired Holy Scripture. The Old Testament canon is composed of 39 books (English Bible), which are variously combined in Ancient Israel as scrolls containing 22 or 24 books. The discrepancy in number is due to grouping numerous books together on one scroll in various fashions. In addition to the 39, 14 apocryphal books have been passed down through the Septuagint and Vulgate into the Catholic and Orthodox churches. However, even church fathers Jerome (c. 400) and Athanasius (c. 367) recognized the deuterocanonical, or secondary status of the apocryphal books.

What makes a book canonical? “The only true test of canonicity ... is the testimony of God the Holy Spirit to the authority of His own Word. This testimony found a response of recognition, faith and submission in the hearts of God’s people who walked in covenant relationship with Him” (Archer, p. 78). In addition to acceptance by the community of believers over a long period of time, there are the issues of subject matter, orthodoxy of doctrine, Hebrew language, and antiquity.

Questions of the Old Testament canon, especially in regards to the Apocrypha, were resolved/closed for Jews by the deliberations of rabbis at Jamnia c. 90 A.D.

1.10.2. Apocalyptic literature

This refers to a specific type of Jewish and Christian literature which is found both in the pseudepigrapha and books within the OT and NT canon. It comes from the Greek for reveal or disclose (lit. *apo* from *kalupto* hiding). Apocalyptic makes use of highly symbolic language, addresses future events, offers encouragement to God's people who are suffering persecution, and often speaks of cataclysmic future events which will introduce both judgment and a coming age of blessedness. Parts of the minor prophets, Isaiah, Daniel, Mark 13, Matt. 24, Luke 21 and Revelation are examples of apocalyptic literature.

Apocalyptic eschatology can be found especially in IS. 24-27; 55-66; Joel; Zc. 9-14. In these passages the eschatological future is envisioned in terms of direct divine intervention, a universal judgment of the nations and a new age of salvation, in which the cosmos will be radically transformed. This transcendent eschatology is the central core of apocalyptic belief. The apocalyptic doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is also probably found already in Is. 26:19, as well as in Dan. 12:2. The literary forms of the apocalypse, however, are anticipated especially in the visions of Ezekiel and Zc. 1-6. (R..J. Bauckham, "Apocalyptic" in *New Bible Dictionary*, Downers Grove: IVP, 1996).

1.10.3. Pseudepigrapha

"The term is used to describe those Jewish writings which were excluded from the Old Testament canon and which find no place in the Apocrypha...Unlike the Apocrypha which were included in the Greek scriptures, these pseudepigrapha never approached canonical status. They nevertheless played an important role during the intertestamental period. And are valuable for the light they shed on the Jewish background of the New Testament" (Donald Guthrie, "Pseudepigrapha," in *New Bible Dictionary*, London: IVP, 1962, p. 1059).

The pseudepigrapha used a literary device which claimed authorship of an ancient and recognized figure in Israel's past. The writings were seen as interpretations of the Old Testament in the time when prophetic oracles had ceased. "As a whole the pseudepigraphic literature throw interesting light on the preparation period for the gospel... These books had wide circulation among the Jews, and many of the New Testament writers may have been acquainted with them. The literary device seems strange to modern ideas ... it may have been adopted by reason both of security and of the need to ensure the maximum authority for the writings" (Guthrie, p. 1061).

1.10.4. The Dead Sea Scrolls

Ancient manuscripts discovered in and around the cliffs along the W shore of the Dead Sea.

In the broadest usage the expression Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) embrace all epigraphic remains discovered since 1947 over a 75 km stretch from Wadi-el-Deliyeh 25 km N of the Dead Sea southward to Masada, mostly in caves. Strictly speaking DSS designates only those manuscripts discovered in the vicinity of Khirbet Qumran. At present this includes approximately 800 manuscripts from eleven caves, many extremely fragmentary. Almost certainly the scrolls represent a 'library' for the community – probably Essenes which inhabited the buildings at Qumran (D.K.Faulk, "Dead Sea Scrolls," *New Bible Dictionary*, Downers Grove: IVP, 1996).

The scrolls themselves include early Biblical manuscripts, books of scriptural interpretation and *peshet* exegesis, pseudepigrapha, special documents used by the community as instructional documents. Some of these documents shed light on the teachings and practices of the Essene community living in the monastic setting of Qumran.

1.10.5. The Messianic Expectation

(Based on F.F. Bruce, "The Messianic Hope," in *New Testament History*)

The Messiah, or anointed one, is a concept found in the Old Testament and relates to several offices in that dispensation. The term refers to prophets, the chief priest, but especially to the king of Israel. The reference comes from the use of oil to anoint the king or other official in Israel, such as the high priest. Saul is referred to as God's anointed even after his apostasy when he seeks David's life (I Sam. 24:2-7).

The house of David plays a special role in the development of the concept of the Messiah. Samuel's anointing of David is discussed in I Samuel 16:1f. There Samuel pours the horn of oil on the new king and the Spirit of the Lord comes upon him mightily, while leaving Saul. This indicates the role of the Holy Spirit in empowering the messiah, or anointed one to carry out his specific office in Israel. David is promised a perpetual sovereignty for his house II Sam. 7:8-16. It is repeated in Psalm 89:19-21, 27-37. The prophets repeatedly emphasized the significance of the house of David, and reinforced the promise of the Messianic hope. The concept of the day of the Lord, and the establishment of the Davidic monarch often merged in the teaching of the prophets, thus giving the messianic promise an apocalyptic tone.

Isaiah 9:6-7, Jeremiah 23:5-6; 33:14-16, and Ezekiel 34:23f.; 37:24 all refer to the messianic theme, the restoration of David's throne. Messianic reference is specifically revived during the return from exile when Zerubbabel of the Davidic line is named governor of Judea. He is hailed in messianic language by both Haggai (2:23) and Zechariah (6:12, also 9:9 is messianic). But even these references are apocalyptic and future in scope.

The alternative idea, an anointed priest-king also came to popular usage during the reign of the priestly Hasmonean family. The pseudepigraphal *Testament of Reuben* bears

witness to this. But the Qumran community and the composers of the Psalms of Solomon sought a high priest from the Zadokite line and a king from the house of David and thus rejected the Hasmonean kingship on those grounds. Some of the stronger references to the Davidic Messiah are found in early prophecies of the New Testament, specifically Luke 1:32 f., 68-71.

Daniel speaks about a 'son of man' figure with clearly messianic overtones. He makes his appearance as receiving his dominion from the Ancient of Days (Dan 7:13f., also Ps. 80:17). Other apocalyptic literature in the intertestamental period develops this concept, such as the pseudepigraphal *Similitudes of Enoch* and the *Ezra Apocalypse*.

It was in response to the high priest's question that Jesus invoked the messianic image of the Daniel that he was convicted of blasphemy in Matthew 26:63-65.

Simeon ,as well as Luke, uses messianic language in Luke 2:30-32.

Mine eyes have seen thy salvation
Which thou hast prepared in the presence of all people
A light for revelation to the Gentiles
And for glory to thy people Israel. (Luke 2:30-32).

2. New Testament Background

The events of the intertestamental period lead directly into the time of the New Testament. They are foundational to a clear understanding of the New Testament background. We will survey historical events, institutions and the personalities and parties which figure prominently in the development of New Testament history.

2.1. The Romans

After the death of Herod who rules as a Roman client king over Palestine including Galilee, Decapolis, Judea and Idumea, his kingdom was divided between his sons Philip, Herod Antipas and Archelaus. Due to misrule and the objections of the aristocracy, Archelaus was removed from power and sent into exile in 6 A.D. It was at this time that Judas the Galilean led a rebellion against the taxation inaugurated by the Roman Governor of Syria.

Judea, the segment of Herod's empire inherited by Archelaus, came directly under Roman rule, a procurator being placed in charge of the province. The procurator's residence was normally Caesarea, but on feast days the prefect would take up residence in Jerusalem. Troops were stationed both in the Antonia fortress in Jerusalem and in Caesarea.

The procurators of Judea are listed as follows (Reicke, p. 128, 199):

Coponius	6-9 A.D.
Ambibulus	9-12
Rufus	12-15
Valerius Gratus	15-26
Pontius Pilate	26-36
Marcellus	36
Marullus	37-41
Agrippa I, King	41-44

Agrippa was named King by his childhood friend Gaius Caligula (died 41)

Procuratorship restored:

Cuspius Fadus	44-46
Tiberius Alexander	46-48
Ventidius Cumanus	48-52
Antonius Felix	52-60
Porcius Festus	60-62
Lucceius Albinus	62-64
Gessius Florus	64-66
The Jewish War	66-70

The most famous of the Roman procurators was, of course, Pontius Pilate. According to Josephus, Pilate had a stormy relationship with the leaders and people of Judea. Two incidents in particular strained relations. Pilate attempted to import Roman standards (military flags) with the image of the Roman eagle into the temple area. The Jews considered the presence of these images to be blasphemous especially in the temple precincts. At a later date Pilate took money from the temple treasury to finance the building of an aqueduct in the region of Jerusalem. Pious Jews considered this a violation of the appropriate use of the Corban, or sacred gifts offered and kept in the temple treasury. Both incidents resulted in demonstrations and violent protests which were subdued by Pilate with violence. Of course, Pilate is most well-known for his role in the trial and condemnation of Jesus. The decision to permit the crucifixion rested with Pilate since the Sanhedrin had no power to execute capital punishment. His tepid response, simply permitting the execution was, nevertheless, the exercise of the emperor's authority over the life of Christ. According to Eusebius Pilate reported the events surrounding the crucifixion to Tiberius, who was favorably impressed. It is believed that Pilate was banished under Caligula after being recalled to Rome to account for a violent persecution of the Samaritans who had gathered at their demolished temple sight in search of treasures ostensibly long-hidden since the time of Moses. Eusebius, at least, indicates that Pilate committed suicide. Another tradition is that he was banished to Vienne in Gaul.

Tiberius, emperor of Roma at the time of Jesus' ministry and crucifixion was influenced against the Jews by his counselor Sejanus. After his death in 37 A.D. Caligula came to the throne and promoted his friend Herod Agrippa who replaced Herod Antipas and Philip, eventually re-establishing the kingdom of Judea (41-44), briefly under Claudius before his death in 44 which is recorded in Acts 12 and Josephus.

The real problem for Rome came with the renewal of the zealot movement. According to Bruce:

[W]hen the crisis came to a head it was not a Zealot leader but a pillar of the temple establishment who decisively repudiated the sovereignty of Rome. This unexpected turn of events must be attributed to the blind folly of Florus (Roman governor).

Florus's lust for wealth was such that all the resources of bribery and extortion were exploited to gratify it. Breaking-point came when he raided the temple treasury and seized seventeen talents, claiming they were required for imperial service . . . [H]is action – sacrilegious in Jewish eyes – provoked a riotous demonstration which he treated as a display of rebellion; he seized a number of leading citizens indiscriminately and crucified them, and handed over part of the city to his troops to plunder. The people then destroyed the communication between the Antonia fortress and the outer court of the Temple, to prevent the soldier sfrom making a sudden incursion and occupying the Temple area.

...[When the younger Agrippa] admitted that submission to Rome meant submission to Florus until the emperor saw fit to replace him, he was shouted down and driven from the city.

It was at this point that Eleazar, captain of the temple, persuaded the priests to discontinue offering the daily sacrifice for the emperor's welfare. This was an open declaration of revolt against the Romans. Many of the most responsible citizens were appalled at its implications and took desperate measures to reverse the trend of revolt, but the insurrectionary spirit spread with rapidly increasing momentum and the point of no return was passed when, early in September, the insurgents seized the Antonia fortress and wiped out its Roman garrison (Bruce, 378-9).

A list of Roman emperors in the New Testament era:

Augustus	30 B.C. -- 14 A.D.
Tiberius	14 – 37 A.D.
Caligula	37-41
Claudius	41-54
Nero	54-68
Galba	68-69
Otho	69
Vitellius	69
Vespasian	69-79

2.2. The Herods

Details of the activities of various members of the Herod family are included in other headings above. They derived their power from Rome and figure prominently in all facets of Jewish and Christian life in New Testament times.

The following is a list of the rulers from the Herod family (Reicke, p. 85, 128)

Antipater	63- 43 (Procurator after 55)
Hyrchanus II (Ethnarch)	47- 40
Phasael and Herod (Generals)	43-40
Antigonus (King)	40-37
Herod I, King	37-4
Archelaus	4 B.C. – 6 A.D.
Herod Antipas	4 B.C. – 39 A.D.
Philip	4 B.C. – 34 A.D.
Herod Agrippa I (King of all Palestine)	41-44 A.D.

2.3. Pharisees: Their name is taken from a word meaning “separated one,” though some associate it with the word for “Persianizer.” This group accepted the entire Old Testament canon as scripture but focused on the Law of Moses and also followed a large body of tradition said to be passed down from Moses. They believed Roman control of Judea was God’s judgment to be removed only by God himself. They did not advocate violent overthrow of the Roman government. They especially observed the practices of tithing, ritual cleansing, separations from the unclean and keeping the Sabbath. They date back to Maccabean times when separation from Hellenistic influences was critical to preserving the Jewish faith. “Out of the circle of the *chasidim* i.e., “the pious ones”, who supported the Maccabean rebellion, issued the Pharisees, a group of law-observing Jews who did not have political aims, but who were filled solely by zeal for the law by which Israel was supposed to live its life” (Lohse, p. 77). They eventually became separated from the Hasmoneans. The Pharisee party was the decisive influence in shaping Jewish belief and practice after the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. (Mark 2:13-3:6; Matt. 5:20; John 3:1ff.; Acts 15:5).

2.4. Sadducees: This group formed a kind of priestly aristocracy. They did not believe in angels, spirits, the resurrection or miracles. They viewed only the Pentateuch as authoritative scripture. They were closely aligned with the high priest. They were strongly committed to keeping the Sabbath. Their name is taken from Zadok, the high priest in David’s time, or the Hebrew word for righteousness. Sadducees exercised leadership under Herod and the Roman governors. They opposed the zealots and espoused a moderating attitude toward the Roman overlord. In this sense they were very “worldly-wise” and governed by what they perceived to be practical sensibilities. They differed from the Pharisees in that they accepted Gentile rule, whereas the Pharisees accepted Gentile rule with reservation. (Mark 12: 18-27, Acts 23:6-10)

2.5. Herodians: A party which looked after the interests of Herod. Thus they would have sought to preserve Roman rule since Herod ruled through Roman sponsorship.

2.6. Publicans: Tax collectors who worked for the Roman government and who profited from the practice of excessive taxation. They were despised by society in general, and their occupation was considered unclean by the Pharisees.

The task of collecting these numerous tributes was delegated by the procurator to private companies and entrepreneurs, the tax contractors, who were often accused of avarice . . . We now find a well organized profession, not uncommonly rapacious and therefore detested: the equestrian publicans there humbler colleagues, the so-called *conductors*. Ever since the second century B.C., the Roman East bemoaned the presence of the publicans (Latin *publicanus*, “state contractor”) i.e. members of the Roman capitalist class who were organized into large companies and were allowed to exercise monopoly on the collection of taxes in the provinces.

To be sure, such taxes and tolls were collected for the most part by indigenous entrepreneurs, who, according to Roman terminology, would have been called

conductors. But seeing that people in Galilee classed their Jewish “tax collectors” (Greek *telonai*) with Gentiles and sinners (Matt. 5:46, *et pass.*), it is also possible that they were associated with the detested publicans; and since the procurators in Caesarea were responsible to the fisc in Rome and was himself a member of the capitalist class, it is reasonable to assume that he employed Roman publicans. Out of respect for the sensibilities of the people, however, he saw to it that for the most part those who actually collected the taxes were Jews. This explains why in the New Testament the tax collectors are generally Jews whom the Pharisees and the nationalists shunned as collaborators, so that Jesus’ association with them appeared repugnant (Matt. 19:11 *et pas.*) (Reicke, p. 138-9).

2.7. Scribes and Lawyers: These were often of the Pharisee party. They were highly trained in the study of scripture and the legal interpretation of Moses’ Law. Many Sanhedrin members were scribes or lawyers. In addition, scribes were responsible for the faithful transmission of the Old Testament scriptures.

2.8. Proselytes: Full converts to Judaism from among the Gentiles. They kept the food laws, accepted circumcision, ritual washing (baptism) and offered sacrifice in the temple at Jerusalem. One of the seven ordained in Acts 6 was Nicolaus a proselyte from Antioch (6:5).

2.9. God-fearers: Gentiles who showed interest in the God of Israel and attended the synagogue service. They did not keep the food laws or accept circumcision as did the proselytes.

2.10. Excursus: John the Baptist and the sons of Abraham

One of the most significant figures in the New Testament other than Christ and his apostles is John the Baptist. John is introduced in the beginning of each of the gospels, and his message is deemed integral to the gospel message itself. In John’s gospel he is introduced as the one who bears witness to the light. He is also questioned by priests and Levites sent from Jerusalem by the Pharisees who ask “Who are you?” He denies being the Christ, or Elijah, or ‘that prophet,’ but admits to being the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Here the references are to Malachi’s prophecy and Moses’ expectation that ‘The Lord will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from among your brothers -- it is to him you shall listen --’ (Deut. 18:15). This expectation is repeated by Peter in Acts 3:22-23 in reference to Christ.

In Luke’s gospel, however, John’s father, Zechariah, is told by the angel Gabriel that ‘He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, and to make ready for the Lord a people prepared’ (Luke 1:17). This is, of course, a clear reference to Malachi’s prophecy concerning the coming of Elijah before the great and awesome day of the Lord. Jesus

confirms this to his disciples in Matthew 17:10-13. ‘Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.’

John’s message warned of coming judgment. His baptism was one of repentance which required the bringing forth of the fruit of repentance. He taught the people to care for their neighbor and called both soldiers and tax collectors to ethical lives, but not an abandonment of their vocations.

There are instances later in the New Testament in the book of Acts where individuals continue to hold to John’s baptism only, until they are instructed in the meaning of Christian baptism. This includes Apollos and the twelve Ephesian disciples (Acts 18:25; 19:1f.).

John was beheaded after having been arrested by Herod, who, according to Josephus, feared his popular hold on the people would lead to insurrection. John had denounced Herod’s marriage to Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, and made an enemy of her. It was at the request of Herodias through her daughter Salome that John was beheaded.

An important aspect of John’s message was that God was able from the stones to raise up sons to Abraham, a reference to God’s promise to multiply Abraham’s offspring. This message is especially expanded in Matthew’s gospel where it is clearly stated that the kingdom is now passing from the Jews to the Gentiles. While the first disciples are told to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, the appearance of Gentile figures such as the centurion whose servant is healed, reference to those coming from east and west to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and especially the parables of warning concerning the turning of the vineyard over to others while the current tenants are expelled, along with the cursing of the fig tree, and the eschatological statements about the temple, culminating in the Great Commission to go and teach all nations lead us to see that the kingdom is now passing from the first Jewish recipients to the Gentiles.

2.3. Institutions in first century Judea

These institutions play central roles as the developments of the New Testament unfold. Many of them have their origin in the intertestamental period or earlier.

2.3.1 Temple: Herod the great began restoration of the second temple in 19 B.C. Herod was internationally famous as a builder/architect. His work on the temple was magnificent and a focal point of Jewish national pride, though Herod himself never fully found favor with the people because of his Idumean (Edomite) ancestry, violent suppression of threats to his power, alliance with Rome and sympathy with Hellenizing influences. Jesus, Stephen, and Paul were all charged with offences against the temple. (Matt. 26:60; Acts 6:12; Acts 21:27-30).

The Temple of Herod the Great:

Some statements of Josephus regarding Herod's Temple:

“And now Herod in the eighteenth year of his reign...undertook a very great work, that is to build of himself the temple of God, and to make it larger in compass, and to raise it to a most magnificent altitude, as esteeming it to be the most glorious of all his actions, as it really was, to bring it to perfection, and this would be sufficient for an everlasting memorial of him...

Now the temple was built of stones that were white and strong, and each of their length was twenty-five cubits, their height was eight and their breadth about twelve; and the whole structure as also the structure of the royal cloister, was on each side much lower, but the middle was much higher, till they were visible to those that dwelt in the country for a great many furlongs, but chiefly to such as lived over against them, and those that approached to them.

He also built a wall below, beginning at the bottom, which was encompassed by a deep valley ...till it proceeded to a great height, and till both the largeness of the square edifice and its altitude were immense, and till the vastness of the stones in front were plainly visible on the outside

...the middle was much higher than the rest, and the wall of the front was adorned with beams, resting on pillars that were interwoven into it, and that front was all of polished stone, insomuch that its fineness to such as had not seen it, was incredible, and to such as had seen it was greatly amazing”(Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XV, xi, 1,3,5).

2.3.2 High Priesthood: This was an hereditary office according to Mosaic law. In New Testament times the high priest was appointed by the Roman procurator. Though the office remained within the high priestly family (Sadduceean), the office changed hands many times under Roman rule contrary to the law of Moses which prescribed a lifetime term for the high priest. (John 11:47; Matt. 26:62-66; Acts 22:30-23:5).

High Priests under Roman Procurator (According to Reicke,):

Ananus I (Annas)	6-15 A.D.
Caiaphas, Annas' son-in-law	18-36
Jonathan, Annas son-in-law	36-37
Annaias, a powerful financier	48-58
Annaias II, Annus' son	62

The high priests oversaw and no doubt benefited from the sale of sacrificial animals and money-changing activities in the outer court area of the temple. Jesus objected to this activity both on ethical grounds and, according to Bruce, because it eliminated Gentile access to at least the outer court area.

2.3.3 Synagogue: In New Testament times, ten Jewish men were required to form the nucleus of a synagogue known as a *minyan*. The synagogue as a Jewish institution probably had its beginning during the exilic period as a replacement for temple worship. Synagogue is taken from the Greek to come or gather together. Synagogues were formed throughout the Roman empire and as far as Persia. The people gathered to worship and

to hear the scriptures read and explained. (Mark 3:1; Luke 4:15-16; Acts 13:5 (?); Acts 15:21).

2.3.4 Sanhedrin: This was a Jewish senate (sabor) meeting in Jerusalem composed of leading Sadducees, Pharisees, scribes and elders. They were responsible under Roman rule for managing legal and temporal affairs of Jewish life, particularly in Judea. Five separate courts were under the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin. These included judgment of false prophets and the direction of the affairs of the temple. (John 11:47-49; Luke 22:66; Luke 23:50).

2.4. Movements in first century Judea

2.4.1. Essenes: This group split off from the Hasidim in the time of John Hyrcanus. Many of them lived ascetically in the desert of Judea, observing the law but refraining from offering sacrifices in the temple of Jerusalem. It is believed that the scrolls discovered at the caves of Qumran (Dead Sea Scrolls) are the library of an Essenes community. Of particular and peculiar interest for understanding their discipline and apocalyptic eschatology are the documents found there known as *The Damascus Document* and *The War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness*.

2.4.2. Zealots: Advocated the violent overthrow of the Roman government. This group possibly began at the time of the uprising under Judas the Galilean at the time of the census (6 A.D.) Barabbas and the thieves crucified with Jesus may have been members of zealot bands.

Of all the parties in Israel at this time, none was more self-sacrificingly devoted to the ideal of the coming kingdom of God than that of the Zealots. In their eyes, talk about waiting for God's good time was not what the present crisis demanded. The Sadducean chief priesthood might collaborate with the occupying power; the Pharisees might submit under protest; the Essenes in their desert retreat might remain aloof from public affairs. But what the situation called for the Zealots maintained, was violent action against the enemy; God would not fail to aid those who undertook his cause and devoted themselves to the establishment of his kingdom, as he had not failed to aid Judas Maccabeus and his brothers in an earlier crisis (Bruce, p. 179).

The Zealots who had been garrisoned in Herod's fortress, Masada, which they had taken from the Romans prior to 66 came to Jerusalem with arms taken from Masada to join the insurrection initiated at the time of the Roman governor Florus in 66 A.D.

2.4.3. Diaspora: The Jewish nation was dispersed throughout the Hellenized world from Persia to Syria, Asia Minor, Cyprus, Egypt, Northern Africa, Italy and the Mediterranean. They often formed local synagogues, read from the Septuagint, and sent offerings to the temple in Jerusalem.

2.4.4 The New Testament Church

Formed on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. Local gatherings of believers or *ekklesia* began to spring up throughout Judea and later throughout the Roman world. The gospel accompanied by the establishment of local assemblies spread with the persecution of Stephen and later the missionary activity of Paul and many others. These local assemblies, at least in Paul's mission, often began with a nucleus from the synagogue. The organization of the local church tended to be similar to the synagogue.

2.5.. Judaism and Early Christianity

The temple: As noted the temple was the centerpiece of Jewish nationalism. It was the focal point of the sacrificial system as well as the seat of government for the Sanhedrin. The gospels record Jesus' relationship to the temple in a number of places. Luke makes mention of Jesus' dedication in the temple as a child as well as the incident when he was left by his parents who later found him with the learned men in the temple precincts. Jesus prophesied the destruction of Herod's temple. Jesus, Stephen and Paul were all brought before the Sanhedrin on charges relating to speaking against or desecrating the temple. The church in Jerusalem used the temple as a primary place of meeting, especially for instruction in doctrine. The following scriptures address these issues in the New Testament context: Luke 1:21 ff., 1:41ff.; John 2:13, 5:1ff., 7:14, 10:22ff.; Matt. 24:1ff.; Luke 24:52-3; Acts 2:46, 3:1; 5:17-26, 21:20ff.

The synagogue: The synagogue played a major role in the life and ministry of Jesus. Much of his preaching, teaching and healing ministry took place in the synagogues, especially in Galilee. Later, the synagogues of the diaspora were a primary meeting place for Paul's missionary ministry. The local New Testament churches were modeled after the synagogue in many respects. The Jewish synagogues added a curse against the "Nazarenes" in their service, effectively pushing Jewish Christians out of the synagogue. This was known as the *birkhat-ha-minim* (Though disputed in sources cited by Wright, in *The New Testament and the People of God*); Mark 1:21, Mark 1:39; Mark 3:1, Luke 4:14-20; Matt. 4:23ff.; Acts 6:8-9; Acts 9:1-2; 13:5; 13:14, 14:1, 17:1ff., 18:1-4,7ff.

2.6. Crossing barriers

In Acts 1:8 Jesus makes his goal of spreading the gospel beyond cultural and geographic barriers very plain. The witness is first proclaimed in Jerusalem, then Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts. Here, a vision for crossing geographic, political, cultural, linguistic and ethnic/racial barriers is made clear. It was with difficulty that this purpose was fulfilled.

2.6.1. Hellenism: Acts 6:1

The first clash within the life of the church took place in the conflict over distribution of provisions for widows. The Hellenists brought a complaint that their widows were overlooked in favor of the Hebraic widows.

2.6..2. Samaria Acts 8:4ff

As a result of the persecution connected with Stephen's death, Philip went to Samaria and found a very open response. Jesus example and ministry had paved the way for the Samaritan response and the attitude of the apostles toward inclusion of the Samaritans in the plan of salvation.

2.6..3. Gentiles Acts 8:26 ff., 10:1ff, 11:19ff.

Philip the evangelist, also met, proclaimed the gospel to and baptized a member of Queen Candace's court, a eunuch from Ethiopia, who was, of course, a Gentile. Peter was the next to cross the divide between Jew and Gentile by visiting Cornelius' house. Many came to faith in Jesus and were baptized. Though the leaders in Jerusalem questioned this development, the conclusion was that salvation had come even to the Gentiles. Others who had been scattered in the persecution began to witness to both Jews and Hellenists in Cyprus, Cyrene and Antioch. This resulted in the first bi-cultural church in Antioch.

2.6.4. Diaspora

Paul's ministry among Jews in the diaspora synagogues resulted in the conversion of many God-fearers. Coupled with the conversion and expulsion of Jews from the synagogues, new bi-cultural churches were formed. The acceptance of Gentile converts without requiring circumcision and the procedure used for Jewish proselytes created a great controversy in the early church known as the Judaizing controversy.

2.6.5. Judaizing Controversy: Acts 15:1ff.; Galatians 2:11 ff., 5:2 ff., 6:12ff.; Phil. 3:2-3. The council in Jerusalem was called to resolve this problem of how to receive Gentile converts. The decision rendered had vast consequences for the future of the church. Circumcision and keeping of the Jewish dietary laws was not required of the Gentile converts to Judaism. This removed a great cultural barrier from those who would be saved by faith in Christ.

2.7. The Jewish War

As a result of Roman governor Florus's invasion of the temple treasury and violent mishandling of the ensuing conflict with the citizens of Jerusalem, Eleazar called for the cessation of the sacrifice in behalf of the emperor. Joined by Zealots and other factions the rebellion gained momentum and spun out of control when Romans garrisoned in Jerusalem were attacked and killed. Vespasian was charged with subduing the revolt in Palestine and pacified Galilee, and the regions surrounding Jerusalem. He was named emperor before completing the siege of Jerusalem. His son Titus completed the siege broke through the resistance, invaded and destroyed Herod's temple, burning it to the ground and destroying the site.

2.8. The Destruction of the Temple This event was predicted by Jesus in the apocalyptic sections of the gospels. It is implied that Stephen spoke of the destruction of the temple, and he was accused of this in Acts 6. One of Paul's crimes for which he was falsely accused was bringing gentiles in to the sacred precincts of the temple.

The whole body, however, of the church at Jerusalem, having been commanded by a divine revelation, given to men of approved piety before the war, removed from the city, and dwelt at a certain town beyond the Jordan called Pella. Here, those that believed in Christ, having removed from Jerusalem, as if holy men had entirely abandoned the royal city itself, and the whole land of Judea; the divine justice for their crimes against Christ and his apostles, finally overtook them, totally destroying the whole generation of these evildoers from the earth (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book III, v).

An ‘abomination’ in Old Testament idiom is an idolatrous affront to the true worship of God, and the reference in Daniel was to the pagan statues which Antiochus Epiphanes set up in the temple in Jerusalem in 167 BC, thus ‘desolating’ the worship of the temple. Jesus thus looks for a repetition of this act of sacrilege (France, p. 340).

Such a crisis (v.23-25) will be a golden opportunity for the sort of Messianic pretenders already predicted in v. 5; in the urgency of Israel’s need they will be eagerly welcomed as God’s answer to her problems. Often in the church’s history (and sometimes today) a period of crisis leaves God’s people wide open to plausible perversions of the truth, particularly if they are accompanied by *great signs and wonders*. ‘Miraculous’ activity is, in the Bible, by no means always the work of God (France, p. 342).

The way in which these options are described helps to give more concrete meaning to ‘being ready’; it is not to sit quietly waiting, but to provide for the *household* (vv. 45-46) – *i.e.* it is in service to others that we prepare for the parousia. In contrast, unpreparedness consists in selfish exploitation of others (v.49). So, to watch means an active, laborious, responsible service (France, p. 349).

The Siege of Jerusalem:

Thus did the miseries of the Jews grow worse and worse every day, and the seditious were still more irritated by the calamities they were under, even while the famine preyed upon themselves, after it had preyed upon the people. And indeed the multitude of carcasses that lay in heaps one upon another was a horrible sight, and produced a pestilential stench, which was a hindrance to those that would make sallies out of the city, and fight the enemy: but as those were to go in battle array, who had already been used to ten thousand murders, and must tread upon those dead bodies, as they marched along, so were they not terrified, nor did they pity men as they marched over them: nor did they deem this affront offered to the deceased to be any ill omen to themselves; but they had their right hands already polluted with the murders of their own countrymen, and in that condition ran out to fight with foreigners... (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Book VI, chapter i,1)

Now there was a certain woman that dwelt beyond Jordan, her name was Mary...She was eminent for her family and her wealth, and had fled away to Jerusalem with the rest of the multitude, and was with them besieged therein at this time...while the famine pierced through her very bowels and marrow...She then attempted a most unnatural thing; and snatching up her son ...she said, ‘O thou miserable infant! For whom shall I preserve thee in this war, this famine and this sedition? As to the war with the Romans, if they preserve our lives, we must be slaves! This famine will destroy us even before that slavery comes upon us.; ye are these seditious rogues more terrible than both the other. Come on, be thou my food., and be thou a fury to these seditious varlets and a bye-word to the world, which is all that is now wanting to complete the calamities of the Jews.’ As soon as she had said this she slew her son; and then roasted him, and ate the one half of him, and kept the other half by her concealed (Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book VI, Chapter iii, 4).

The destruction of the temple:

(A)nd as they were crowding in on the temple together, many of them were trampled on by one another, while a great number fell among the ruins of the cloisters, which were still hot and smoking , and were destroyed in the same miserable way. With those whom they had conquered: and when they were come near the holy house, ...they were everywhere slain, and everywhere beaten; and as for a great part of the people, they were weak and without arms, and had their throats cut wherever they were caught. Now, round about the altar lay dead bodies heaped one upon another; as at the steps going up to it ran a great quantity of their blood, whither also the dead bodies that were slain above 9on the altar) fell down...And now the Romans, upon the flight of the seditious into the city, and upon the burning of the holy house itself, and of all the buildings lying round about it, brought their ensigns to the temple, and set them over against its eastern gate; and there they did offer sacrifices to them, and there they did make Titus emperor, with the greatest acclamations of joy (Josephus, Book VI, v, 3, vi,1).

The destruction of Jerusalem “certainly spelled the end of a crucial redemptive-historical epoch. It must be viewed as the end of some age. It also represents a significant visitation of the Lord in judgment and a vitally important “day of the Lord”.” Whether this was the *only* day of the Lord about which Scripture speaks remains a major point of controversy among preterists (Sproul, *The Last Days According to Jesus*, p. 203).

Thus there was a star resembling a sword, which stood over the city and a comet, that continued for a whole year. Thus also ... when the people were come .. to the feast of unleavened bread ... a great light shone around the altar and the holy house, that it appeared to be bright day time; which light lasted for half an hour. This light seemed to be a good sign to the unskillful, but was so interpreted by the

sacred scribes, as to portend those events that followed immediately upon it (Josephus, quoted in Sproul, *The Last Days According to Jesus*, p. 122).

The history on which I am entering is that of a period rich in disasters, terrible with battles, torn by civil struggles, horrible even in peace. Four emperors fell by the sword; there were three civil wars, more foreign wars, and often both at the same time. There was success in the East, misfortune in the West. Illyricum was disturbed, the Gallic provinces wavering, Britain subdued and immediately let go. The Sarmatae and Suebi rose against us; the Dacians won fame by defeats inflicted and suffered; even the Parthians were almost roused to arms through the trickery of a pretended Nero. Moreover, Italy was distressed by disasters unknown before or returning after the lapse of ages. Cities on the rich, fertile shores of Campania were swallowed up or overwhelmed; Rome was devastated by conflagrations, in which her most ancient shrines were consumed and the very Capitol fired by citizens' hands ... the sea was filled with exiles, its cliffs made foul with the bodies of the dead. In Rome there was more awful cruelty... Besides manifold misfortunes that befell mankind, there were prodigies in the sky and on the earth, warnings given by thunderbolts, and prophecies of the future, both joyful and gloomy, uncertain and clear. For never was it more fully proved by awful disasters of the Roman people or by indubitable signs that the gods care not for our safety, but for our punishment (Tacitus, quoted in Sproul, p. 123).

2.9. Josephus' Summary of the fate of Jerusalem

And thus was Jerusalem taken in the second year of the reign of Vespasian, on the eighth day of the month Gorpheus (Elul). It had been taken five times before, though this was the second time of its desolation.; for Shishak, king of Egypt and after him Antiochus and after him Pompey and after him Sossius and Herod took the city, but still preserved it; but before all these the king of Babylon conquered it, and made it desolate one thousand four hundred sixty eight years and six months after it was built. But he who first built it was a potent man among the Canaanites, and is in our tongue called Melchisedek the Righteous King, for such he really was; on which account he was there the first priest of God and first built a temple, there and called the city Jerusalem which was formerly called Salem. However, David, the king of the Jews, ejected the Canaanites and settled his own people therein. It was demolished entirely by the Babylonians, four hundred seventy seven years and six months after him. And from King David who was the first of the Jews who reigned therein, to this destruction under Titus, were one thousand one hundred and seventy nine years; but from its first build to this last destruction, were two thousand one hundred and seventy seven years; yet hath not its great antiquity, nor its vast riches, nor the diffusion of its nation over all the habitable earth, nor the greatness of the veneration paid to it on a religious account, been sufficient to preserve it from being destroyed. And thus ended the siege of Jerusalem (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, VI, x).

2.10. Rabbinic Judaism after 70 A.D.

After the destruction of the temple, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai received permission to open a school on the Philistine plain about 20 miles east of Jerusalem and to reconvene the Sanhedrin. This body which met at Jamnia, powerless in political affairs, did serve to salvage the Judaism of the school of Hillel and through the compilation of commentary of jurisprudence and tradition formed the mishnah. The larger compilation of older traditions, the Jerusalem and later the Babylonian Talmuds, also emerged from the work of this era in A.D. 200 and 500 respectively.

Further work was done by Rabbis Aqiba and Me'ir establishing rabbinic Judaism as the dominant form of Judaism to emerge after the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. They also commissioned a new Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible to replace the LXX known as the translation of Aquila.

In the year 73 the Romans finally crushed the revolt of the Zealots at Masada. These Zealots committed suicide after resisting from that center, a former stronghold of Herod the Great, rather than falling to the Romans. Another revolt in 132-135 A.D. led to the final destruction of Jerusalem and its reestablishment as a pagan city Aelia Capitolina.

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