

## Time Between the Testaments: *God Prepares the World to Receive Her King*

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- There is approximately 400 **years between the writings of Malachi and the coming of the Messiah**, which opens the New Testament. Sometimes these years are referred to as the “silent years” since God did not send any prophets to speak to the people in these years (at least any whose messages He wished to have recorded). However, these years were anything but silent. The world empires were changing and world conditions were changing. God brought His Son, Jesus the Messiah, into the world at precisely the moment He intended from before the beginning of time. But for those 400 years, He directed history in such a way as to “prepare the way” for His Son’s coming. When the New Testament opens, the scene is vastly different from that at the close of the Old Testament.
- When Malachi closes the Old Testament period of history, the Jews had gone into exile due to their disobedience, and returned from Babylonian captivity (*lasted 70 years, as God ordained*). **They returned to a city of rubble, and struggled to rebuild their Temple, city walls, and their homes.** After much delay and oppression, they finally built a much smaller, less grand Temple (under Ezra and Zerubbabel’s leadership), and eventually the city walls (under Nehemiah’s leadership). They rebuilt their homes gradually and settled back into the land and the city of Jerusalem.
- However, they were **no longer under their own rule**. After Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem (606 BC), and took the people captive to Babylon, Israel was no longer a sovereign nation, but ruled by and part of the Babylonian Empire, then the Persian Empire, then the Greek Empire, and eventually the Roman Empire at the time of Jesus first coming. The Gentile kings allowed the Jews to continue their religious practices. This was generally the case with conquering forces. If the people lived peacefully and didn’t rebel against the power that had conquered them, they were usually allowed to live their normal, typical lives, but without self-governorship.
- After the Temple was rebuilt in Jerusalem, the people **re-instituted the God-directed Aaronic priesthood**, and all the associated rites, rituals and sacrifices. The priests were of the tribe of Levi, from the family of Aaron, as God directed. At this time we don’t hear of the political and religious sects and factions that split the people of Jesus’ time. However, under Greek (Syrian) rule after Alexander the Great’s death, Antiochus Epiphanes **deposed the last hereditary priest**, Onias, and began “selling” this position to the highest bidder. This practice continued until Jesus came. The High Priest was usually not even Jewish.
- One practice that was established during the exile in Babylon was that of **synagogues as local “houses of worship.”** Prior to the exile, worship was done at the Temple in Jerusalem, as God directed. However, now there was no Temple. The people still wished to worship together, so began building local places to do this. They would celebrate, worship and pray and meet together, but they could not conduct their sacrifices, which according to the Law of Moses had to happen at the Temple. When the people returned to the land, this practice continued, and local towns and communities built synagogues for their local populations. Even after the Temple was rebuilt, local synagogues were used. This practice continues today, when once again the Jews find themselves without a Temple.
- **Grecian influence was strong.** Greek became the common language (Old Testament translated into Greek in 275 BC), and a group sprung up among the Jews called Hellenists, who wanted to bring the Greek culture and philosophy to Israel. They wanted to “liberalize” Jewish law. The move to “Hellenize” Israel caused the ultimate split among the Jews into religious and political sects of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes.
- The Jews enjoyed a very **brief period of self-rule** after reclaiming Jerusalem and routing out Antiochus Epiphanes who desecrated the Temple and halted Jewish practice of their faith. They cleansed the Temple, and established the Hasmonean family on the throne. This lasted about 100 years, until they made the mistake of signing a treaty with Rome for protection from Syria, but this is what allowed **Rome to take this region and rule it themselves**, ending this short period of self-rule. The people are then back under Gentile dominion.



## Highlights: Israel's Timeline

<p><b>Unknown</b></p>	<p><b>CREATION, FALL</b> (Genesis 1-3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Humanity grows (Adam, Cain and Abel, Seth, etc.) (Genesis 4-5)</li> <li>▪ Noah, Flood (Genesis 6-9)</li> <li>▪ Table of Nations (Genesis 10)</li> <li>▪ Tower of Babel (Genesis 11)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>17th Century BCE</b></p>	<p><b>TIME OF THE PATRIARCHS</b> (Genesis 12-50)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Call of Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees (Babylonian region) to Canaan at God's direction (Genesis 12)</li> <li>▪ Covenant relationship (Genesis 12-15)</li> <li>▪ Patriarchs of the Israelites, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 12-45)</li> <li>▪ Famine forces the Israelites to Egypt for survival (Joseph, Genesis 46-50)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>13th Century BCE</b></p>	<p><b>DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT</b> (Exodus-Deuteronomy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Moses born, saved from death, raised Egyptian royalty, called by God to deliver people</li> <li>▪ Moses leads Israelites from Egypt, followed by 40 years of wandering in the desert</li> <li>▪ The Torah (Law, including 10 Commandments) received at Mount Sinai, Mosaic Covenant</li> <li>▪ Tabernacle built</li> <li>▪ Moses dies, Joshua takes over</li> </ul>	
<p><b>13<sup>th</sup> Century – 930 BCE</b></p>	<p><b>THE UNITED NATION OF ISRAEL</b> (Joshua-2 Chronicles)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Israelites settle the Land of Israel</li> <li>▪ Judges rule the land for 350 years, terrible time of disobedience, 7 sin cycles</li> <li>▪ Monarchy begins (first king Saul, 1020 BCE)</li> <li>▪ King David's reign to unite the kingdom (1004-965 BCE)</li> <li>▪ Jerusalem becomes capital of Israel</li> <li>▪ King Solomon (David's son) (965-935 BCE), kingdom flourishes, Temple built (960 BCE)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>930 – 606 BCE</b></p>	<p><b>NORTHERN KINGDOM OF ISRAEL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Under Solomon's son, Rehoboam, kingdom split into two (10 northern tribes as "Israel")</li> <li>▪ Capital Samaria</li> <li>▪ Continued decline of northern kingdom, all evil kings (none good)</li> <li>▪ Lasted 200 years under 19 kings</li> <li>▪ Prophets: Elijah, Elisha, Hosea, Amos, Jonah (to Nineveh), Nahum (to Nineveh),</li> <li>▪ Conquered by Assyria (no return) 722 BCE</li> </ul>	<p><b>SOUTHERN KINGDOM OF JUDAH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Capital Jerusalem</li> <li>▪ Two southern tribes as "Judah"</li> <li>▪ Also in decline, but had a few good kings</li> <li>▪ Lasted 350 years, also 19 kings, but all from the line of David</li> <li>▪ Threatened by Assyria, but conquered by Babylon (who also conquered Assyria)</li> <li>▪ Prophets: Obadiah, Elijah, Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah</li> </ul>
<p><b>606- 536 BCE</b></p>	<p><b>BABYLONIAN DOMINATION</b> (2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Prophets: Jeremiah (and Lamentations), Ezekiel, Daniel)</p> <p>Judah conquered by Babylon</p> <p>Jerusalem and First Temple destroyed (586 BCE)</p> <p>most Jews exiled to Babylon (for 70 years)</p> <p>Little to no Jewish presence in the land</p>	
<p><b>536-333 BCE</b></p>	<p><b>PERSIAN DOMINATION (POST EXILE: Ezra-Esther, Prophets: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Some (remnant) Jews return from Babylon</li> <li>▪ Temple, city walls rebuilt</li> <li>▪ Jews under Persian rule</li> <li>▪ People continue to fall away from God</li> <li>▪ Old Testament time line ends</li> </ul>	
<p><b>332-166 BCE</b></p>	<p><b>GREEK DOMINATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Land conquered by Alexander the Great; Greek Empire begins</li> <li>▪ Hellenistic influence on world (Greek common language, academics, philosophers, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Alexander dies, empire divided among 4 generals</li> <li>▪ Jews ruled by the Syrian Seleucid rulers, including Antiochus Epiphanes</li> <li>▪ Old Testament (Hebrew) translated into Greek (common language), called the "Septuagint," (275 BCE)</li> </ul>	

166-63	<p><b>HASMONEAN PERIOD OF SELF RULE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maccabean (Hasmonean) revolt against Antiochus (who desecrated the Temple, and prevented Jews from practicing their faith)</li> <li>▪ Jews enter Jerusalem, cleanse the Temple (164 BC)</li> <li>▪ Syrians granted self-rule to Israel (Judea as it was called then)</li> <li>▪ Collapse of Seleucid kingdom allowed Jewish independence, for a time</li> <li>▪ Jews flourished under Hasmonean dynasty</li> </ul>
63 BCE-313 CE	<p><b>ROMAN DOMINATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jerusalem captured by Roman general, Pompey (63 BCE)</li> <li>▪ Rome places a vassal “king” on the throne in Israel, Herod (not Jewish, an Idumean)</li> <li>▪ Temple restored and refurbished as Herod’s pet project for his posterity</li> <li>▪ Priesthood appointed, not hereditary (Aaronic) (throne, priesthood not occupied by Jews)</li> <li>▪ Jesus born, ministers, crucified, resurrected, ascended to Heaven, sitting on Throne</li> <li>▪ Jews revolt against Rome in 66 BC, Rome destroys Jerusalem and 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple (70 AD), takes Jews captive as slaves, scatters (the Diaspora) around the world</li> <li>▪ New Testament written</li> </ul>
313-636	<p><b>BYZANTINE RULE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Roman empire splits (east and west) East considered “Byzantine” Empire, technically still Roman Empire dominion</li> <li>▪ Emperor Constantine declares Christianity the state religion (combines Christian and pagan practices, theologies, rites and rituals)</li> <li>▪ Land of Israel “Christian”</li> <li>▪ Churches built in Israel on holy sites, monasteries</li> <li>▪ Jews deprived of autonomy, could not enter Jerusalem except on Tisha b’Av, the mourning day of the destruction of the Temple</li> <li>▪ Many Jews move to Alexandria which becomes a large Jewish center</li> </ul>
636-1099	<p><b>ARAB RULE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Arab conquest 4 years after death of Muhammed (632)</li> <li>▪ Caliphs rule from Damascus, Baghdad, Egypt</li> <li>▪ Beginning of Islamic rule</li> <li>▪ Jewish settlement in Jerusalem resumed, lived under “protection” in return for taxes</li> <li>▪ Many restrictions against Jews</li> <li>▪ Dome of the Rock built on site of both Jewish Temples (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>) (691)</li> <li>▪ By end of 11<sup>th</sup> century Jews diminished greatly in the land</li> </ul>
1099-1291	<p><b>CRUSADER DOMINATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Under Pope Urban II, attempt to “save Holy Land from infidels”</li> <li>▪ Knights of First Crusade capture Jerusalem, massacre most of non Christians</li> <li>▪ Jews defended their quarter, but later either burned to death or sold as slaves</li> <li>▪ Crusaders extended their power over land of Israel</li> <li>▪ Opened trade routes from Europe, pilgrimages to Holy Land popularized</li> <li>▪ Jews wanted to return, many did</li> <li>▪ Saladin (Muslim) overthrew Crusaders (1187)</li> <li>▪ Jews granted more freedom, right to live in Jerusalem</li> <li>▪ Crusaders regain some power after Saladin’s death, but limited</li> <li>▪ Crusaders finally defeated by Mamluks (an Islamic military group, from Egypt)</li> </ul>
1291-1516	<p><b>MAMLUK RULE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Land fell into neglect, some ports destroyed to prevent further Crusader control</li> <li>▪ Urban centers mostly in ruins</li> <li>▪ Much of Jerusalem abandoned, small poverty-stricken Jewish communities</li> <li>▪ Political and economic crises, plagues, locust invasions, earthquakes</li> </ul>
1517-1917	<p><b>OTTOMAN RULE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Land divided into 4 districts, administered by Damascus, ruled from Istanbul</li> <li>▪ 400 years of Ottoman (Islamic) rule ended by British conquest</li> </ul>

<p><b>1918-1948</b></p>	<p><b>BRITISH RULE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ottomans overcome by British Empire in 1917</li> <li>▪ Becomes British “colony”</li> <li>▪ Minister Balfour pledges establishment of Jewish homeland, continual delays</li> <li>▪ World War II (1939-1945)</li> <li>▪ European Holocaust</li> <li>▪ Jews return to Israel, Zionism begins in late 1900s</li> <li>▪ Many Jewish communities built, Kibbutz concept</li> <li>▪ Continued Arab influence and violence against Jews</li> </ul>
<p><b>1948 -</b></p>	<p><b>RESTORED STATE OF ISRAEL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ End of British Mandate, State of Israel announced (14 May)</li> <li>▪ War declared against Israel by all surrounding Arab nations (15 May)</li> <li>▪ War of Independence (May 1948-July 1949)</li> <li>▪ Continued wars and battles with Arab nations, Muslims pledge destruction of Jews</li> <li>▪ Ongoing terrorism against Jews</li> <li>▪ Establishment of PLO, increasing violence</li> <li>▪ Many international attempts at peace, none work or last</li> <li>▪ US backs Israel from beginning (1948), but support wanes in 21<sup>st</sup> century</li> <li>▪ World nations turn against Israel</li> <li>▪ No peace in Israel yet</li> <li>▪ Israel still waiting for Messiah</li> </ul>



“Eretz Israel” – literally the land of Israel, as God defined it in scriptures

**NOTES**