

Assignment 12

- Due Sunday, August 17, 2014
- Topic & Texts: Between the Testaments
- Memorize: Timeline Abraham through birth of Jesus

Consult the article on the next page to help you prepare for this lesson. You may also want to download this PDF file from Gene Taylor at <http://www.padfield.com/acrobat/taylor/between.pdf>. It's an excellent summary of the between the testaments period.

ABRAHAM	JACOB TO EGYPT	LAW	CONQUEST	JUDGES	SAUL DAVID	SOLOMON
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DIVIDED KINGDOM	FALL OF ISRAEL	FALL OF JUDAH	RETURN	TEMPLE REBUILT	NEHEMIAH
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MALACHI	ALEXANDER THE GREAT	LXX (SEPTUAGINT)	MACCABEAN REVOLT	BIRTH OF JESUS
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Questions

1. Where was a "famine of the word of the Lord" prophesied about in the OT?
2. Why is some knowledge of this period helpful in understanding the New Testament?
3. What is the "Apocrypha"? Which religion(s) includes them in their versions of the Bible?
4. What is the Sanhedrin? Who appeared before the Sanhedrin in the New Testament record of events?
5. Who were the Samaritans and what part do they play in the ministry of Jesus?

What Happened Between Malachi and Matthew?

Between the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, and the events recorded in the gospels, a period of 400-plus years passed. Many important events took place during this time. There are several things mentioned in the New Testament are not mentioned in the Old Testament. A good way to remember these events that came about between the testaments is to remember "Seven S's."

Silence — There was no inspired word from God written during the 400 years between Malachi and the events recorded in the gospels. See Amos 8:11, where a "famine of the words of God" was prophesied. This is not to say that God was not active in the lives of people — just that nothing was recorded during this time. This was not the only time in which God was quiet. During Eli's time we read, "And word from the LORD was rare in those days, visions were infrequent" (1 Sam. 3:1; cf. Prov. 29:18).

Septuagint (LXX) Written — Due to the conquests of Alexander the Great, the Greek language became the language of the world. Alexander wanted to "Hellenize" (i.e., impose the Greek culture) the world and thus ordered all literature to be translated into the Greek language. The Septuagint is a translation of the Old Testament into Greek by a group of 70 (or 72) Jewish scholars (hence, it abbreviated LXX). The books were translated gradually from about 300 BC to 200 or 150 BC. This was the first known translation of the Bible. Jesus and the apostles usually quoted from this version when they quoted Old Testament passages.

Sectarianism in Judaism — The Pharisees and Sadducees appear on the scene for the first time in the gospels. They were the two dominant sects within the Jewish religion. The Pharisees (John 3:1; 4:1; 7:32, etc.) were the largest of these groups, though they numbered only about 6000 in Jesus' day. They were the highly regarded religious leaders in Palestine at that time. Nicodemus, Saul of Tarsus (Paul) and Joseph of Arimathaea were well-known "good-hearted" Pharisees. They accepted all the Law and prophets but also believed that the oral teachings about the law, the "traditions of the elders," was just as important as the Law itself. They figure prominently in exchanges with the Lord in the gospels (cf. Mt. 19:3. See also Mt. 15:1-9; 6:2,5,16; 23).

The Sadducees were generally the wealthier and politically powerful Jews, the aristocracy of Palestine. Though they were significantly fewer in number, they dominated the Sanhedrin (see below) and controlled the temple functions. Doctrinally, they accepted only the Torah (the first 5 books of the OT) as Law. They denied the existence of angels and did not believe in the resurrection (Mt 22:23-33; Acts 23:8).

There were several other Jewish groups that emerged during this time (rarely, if at all, mentioned by name in the gospels). The Essenes, from the Qumran region, was the sect responsible for writing and storing what we call "The Dead Sea Scrolls" (discovered first in 1947). They held to communal property and refrained from marriage. The Essenes numbered about 4000 during the days of Jesus.

Other groups were the Herodians, a political group that supported Herod's dynasty and their foes, and the Zealots, Jewish revolutionaries who wished to overthrow Roman rule (Acts 21:38 – "assassins").

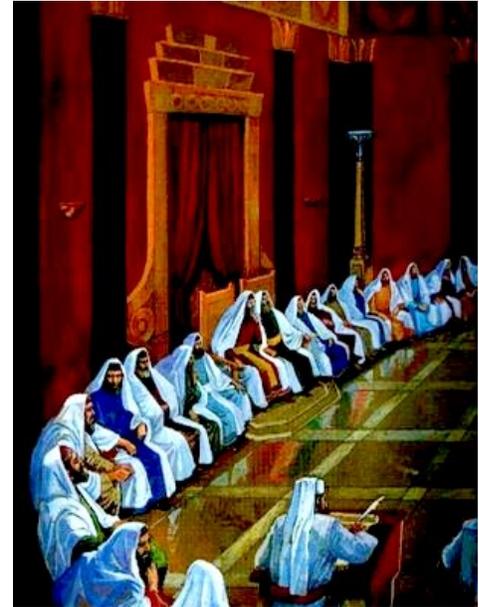


Synagogues Established — Most of the prominent cities in the New Testament had synagogues, gathering places for Jews to read and discuss the Old Testament. Jesus and the apostle Paul often taught in synagogues. In Luke 4:16-30, we read about Jesus coming to a synagogue in Nazareth, for example. The synagogues had chief seats (Mt. 23:6) and rulers (Mk. 5:22; Acts 18:17) and were the main meeting places for the religious activities of the Jews (see John 6:59; 12:42; 18:20).

Sanhedrin — The Sanhedrin was the Jewish Supreme Court, made up mostly of Sadducees. Sometimes it was called “the council.” There were 71 members (the high priest, plus 70 who were appointed). Jesus and the apostles appeared before the Sanhedrin to make their defense (cf. John 18:12ff; Acts 4:5ff; 6:12ff.; 22:1ff.; 23:1ff.).

Samaritans — The Samaritans are a prominent part of Jesus’ teaching (The Good Samaritan – Lk. 10:30-37; the thankful leper who was healed – Lk 17:12-19; the woman at the well – Jn 4:7-9). The Samaritans were Jews who had married into other nations after Palestine was repopulated after the Assyrian Captivity (722 BC). By the time of the New Testament, the relationship between the Samaritans and the Jews had deteriorated so badly that the Jews would have nothing to do with the Samaritans (Jn. 4:9) – a Jew would not even pass through Samaria on the way to Judea or Galilee. But many of the Samaritans became followers of Christ (John 4; Acts 8:12).

Secular Writings — A group of Jews wrote a series of books during the time between the Old Testament and the New Testament called “The Apocrypha.” There are 14 books with titles such as *I & II Maccabees* (a record of the Maccabean revolt), *Judith*, and *Bel and the Dragon*. Roman Catholics accept these writings as canonical, but the early church rejected them. There are many other apocryphal books besides these, but these are the most significant and do offer some insight into the between the testaments period. However, neither Jesus or the apostles ever quoted from them and they do not claim inspiration. They contain errors of history and are inconsistent with other Bible passages. For these reasons they are not considered a part of God’s word.



The Sanhedrin Council

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Resources

Some good material covering the Divided Kingdom through the Between the Testaments Period, by Gene Taylor
<http://www.centerville.com/downloads/class-books/between.pdf>