

TIME BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS II

THE GRANDEUR THAT WAS ROME

A. Greeks and the Jews (323 BC – 165 BC)

1. Welcome to the Time Between the Testaments Part II. Please turn to Dan 11. [NEXT SLIDE] This week we will continue to see specific prophesies in Daniel come true in the years after the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC. Turn to Daniel 11. Read verse 2. Who is this describing? Xerxes and his campaign against Greece 50 years later in 480 BC. Verse 3. Who is this describing? Alexander the Great. Verse 4. This is exactly what happened. Following his death, Alexander's empire was broken up by his generals into 4 different kingdoms, each taking a part of the larger empire. A general named Ptolemy took Egypt and ruled from the capital city of Alexandria – founded by Alexander during his time in Egypt. Another general name Seleucus took Babylon, Persia and Syria as his kingdom known as the Seleucid kingdom and the capital city became Antioch. Both of these became centers of Greek culture and learning eclipsing Greece itself. Alexandria was known for its lighthouse & library.
2. Dan 11:5ff talks about the King of the South and the King of the North and their rivalry, diplomacy and wars. Again, that is exactly what happened. [FLY OUT TO MAP] Israel was caught the middle between the Ptolemaic kingdom of Alexandria to the South and the Seleucid kingdom of Antioch to the North. We won't go into all the details but the chapter describes many historical events that occurred in the 150 years following the death of Alexander. **The prophesies of Daniel continue to come true prove true 250 to 350 years after they were given.**
3. During this time, the pervasive influence of Greek culture also affected the Jews. OT was translated into Greek by 70 Jewish scholars in Alexandria around 250 BC (the Septuagint abbreviated LXX). The OT "Bible" of most NT Christians was the Septuagint. Most NT quotations of the OT are from the Septuagint (i.e. not directly from the Hebrew). Even in Israel itself, Greek was an acceptable language for the Bible and related works. The Dead Sea Scrolls (written in Israel around 100 BC) include OT books in both Hebrew and Greek.
4. First trivia question is who came up with the most Jews mentioned in the NT with Greek names. Anybody get 10? 5? Philip the Apostle (John 12:20-22); the 7 deacons in Acts 6; Sosthenes the synagogue ruler in Acts 18:17 (and 1 Cor 1:1). Turn to Acts 18:24 - a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria (in Egypt). How in the world did a nice Jewish boy get a name like Apollos? Where does that name come from? Greek god. Any Jews in the OT name their children after pagan gods? Any Jews today? Shows you the influence of Greek culture even on the Jews.

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B. Hasmonean Dynasty (162 BC to 63 BC)

2. Dan 11:28-32. This also happened. Antiochus IV Epihanes (one of the kings of the North who reigned 175 - 164 BC), attempted by force to eliminate Judaism and fully Hellenize the Jews. He in effect outlawed Judaism and forced Jews to eat pork (“corrupt those who violate the covenant”) and erected an altar to Zeus in the temple (“abomination that causes desolation”). **The prophecies of Daniel are nearly 400 years old!**
3. This was too much for the Jews. v32: “Those who know their God will firmly resist him.” A man named Judas Macabees led a revolt against Antiochus IV and established an independent Jewish state in 165 BC (commemorated by Hanukkah). In cleansing the temple of the desecration, the Book of First Macabees says one day’s worth of oil miraculously burned for 8 days until new oil could be prepared.
4. Origin of the Sadducees and Pharisees.
5. Jewish kings rule until 63 BC when Rome conquers Israel.

[NEXT SLIDE] Read *To Helen* [NEXT SLIDE]

C. Rise of Rome (753 BC – 202 BC)

6. City state similar to the cities of Greece. Republic ruled by a deliberative body of leading citizens - the Senate. Influence spread across Italy.
7. Rivalry with Carthage. By the 3rd Century BC, Rome controlled all of Italy and came into conflict with the North African maritime power of Carthage. Rome and Carthage fight the 1st Punic War, but it was inconclusive and the rivalry continued.
8. 2nd Punic War at the end of the 3rd Century was famous and decisive. Carthage has a great military genius leading her armies. Next trivia question: Who was he? [DISSOLVE TO HANNIBAL] From Spain, he marches with his elephants through France across the Alps and invades Italy from the north. He defeats every Roman army sent against him and at one point camps under the walls of Rome, but is not able to take the large and heavily fortified city. He spent several years ravishing the countryside. Roman general decides not to fight him but merely shadows him and avoid direct battle. The Senate grows impatient and appoints new generals and sends the largest army yet to face him. Hannibal completely crushes this army at Canae (still studied at West Point today).
9. Most would have given up at this point and sued for peace, but Rome fought on and adopted a new strategy. Rome sends a new general to invade Spain to cut off Hannibal’s supply lines and then invade North Africa to advance against Carthage itself. Hannibal returns to Africa and is finally defeated near Carthage (202 BC). Rome’s victory in the 2nd Punic War against impossible odds is the defining moment in Roman history. Unlike the Greeks after Salamis, this does not lead to cultural development but confidence in the might of Rome and the further spread of Roman rule. God is preparing a 4th kingdom to replace the Greeks.

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D. Rome Moves East (202 – 63 BC)

10. Rome proceeds to conquer the Eastern Mediterranean, moving down the Balkans to conquer Macedonia and Greece by 146 BC.
11. In the first half of the 1st Century BC, Rome conquers the Seleucid kingdom of Antioch and the Ptolemaic kingdom of Alexandria. Like the Macedonians had done, Rome respected and basically adopted Greek civilization. Roman culture was more or less a continuation of Greek culture; not many cultural innovations except in the realm of law.
12. Israel is conquered in 63 BC. Herod the Great is appointed by the Romans to rule Israel and rules from 37 BC to just after Jesus birth. Renovates the Temple. Murders many of his own family. Slaughter of the Innocents. Later Herods in the NT are his descendants.
13. Rome rules every shore touched by the Mediterranean Sea **fulfilling the 500 year old prophesy (Nebuchadnezzar's Dream) that a 4th kingdom would replace the Greeks and set the stage for the Kingdom of God.**

E. Transition from Republic to Empire (49 BC – 14 AD)

1. Julius Caesar crosses the Rubicon (49 BC) and initiates civil war against Republicans led by Pompey. Caesar is victorious and proclaimed dictator for life. Assassinated on the floor of the Senate in 44 BC. Civil war continues between Republicans and Caesarians.
2. Julius Caesar's great nephew Octavian inherits the party of Caesar. Trivia question: changed his name to what? AUGUSTUS CAESAR. He was victorious in 27 BC. Official beginning of the Roman Empire. Ruled to 14 AD. Measured in terms of the longevity of the institutions he established, Augustus Caesar was arguably the most successful ruler in world history. The Roman Empire he founded would rule the entire Mediterranean world for another 500 years. (Persian & Babylonian Empires both lasted about 200 years; Alexander's disintegrated upon his death.)
3. *Pax Romana*. Roman Legions stationed throughout the Empire. General peace and political stability for the next 200 years (27 BC to 180 AD). No political boundaries across the entire Mediterranean World. Local autonomy and respect for local culture, but zero tolerance for revolt. Built aqueducts, roads and bridges (many still in use today). Easy to travel across the entire region. Universality of the Greek language.
4. Incredible disparity between rich and poor; slavery; no upward mobility; brutality (flogging & crucifixion). "Bread and circuses" to keep the masses content in Rome. People in need of good news in an environment where good news could spread easily. Unique moment in history.
5. Rom 5:6 "at just the right time...Christ died for the ungodly." Pray.

Q & A?

Next week: Jesus. Homework: Read the Sermon on the Mount.