

LESSON 26
INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

LOGOS

A General and Light Survey of the Bible

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Lesson 26

The Inter-Testament Period

- The period between Malachi and Matthew covers about four hundred years.
- The Old Testament canon of Scripture closed with Malachi about 397BC.
 - The Assyrians destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel in 722BC, before being conquered by the Babylonians.
 - The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and took a large number of the Jews into captivity in 587 BC.
 - As Daniel prophesied (Daniel 2; 7), Babylon was conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire and King Cyrus issued a decree allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.
 - Under Zerubbabel a remnant returned and twenty-one years later the temple was completed (515 BC).
 - Ezra led a small group back to Jerusalem and restored the worship in the temple, followed by Nehemiah who supervised rebuilding the city walls.
- When the Book of Malachi ended the Jewish remnant was back in Judah with worship restored and the temple and Jerusalem rebuilt, but a large number of the Jews remained in captivity and never returned.
- The four hundred period between Malachi and Matthew divides into six political periods of Jewish submission:
 - The Persians (538 BC). The Jews were under Persian rule at the end of Malachi and remained so for the first sixty years of the Inter-Testament period.
 - During this time the rival worship of the Samaritan people was established. The Samaritans came into being because of the unrest in Palestine:
 - In 721 BC the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom scattered by Assyria. The Assyrian emperor repopulated the cities of Israel and the result was a mixed people known as Samaritans.
 - When Nehemiah was traveling to Jerusalem and attempting to rebuild the wall, he and his workers faced significant opposition from the Samaritans (Nehemiah 2:10; 4:1–3).
 - By the days of Jesus, the animosity between Jews and Samaritans had escalated to the point where Samaritans were despised and considered unclean.
 - The Greeks (333 BC). Alexander the Great transformed the face of the world in just ten years. He is spoken of by Daniel in his prophecies (Daniel 7:6; 8:1–7, 21–23)
 - The Egyptians (323 BC). The death of Alexander the Great resulted in Judea falling into the hands of the Ptolemaic kings (a line of Greek kings over Egypt). They founded the Alexandrian library,

as well as commissioning the Septuagint (The Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament).

- The Syrians (204 BC). Antiochus Epiphanes came to power in 175 BC and a reign of terror fell on all Jews. He destroyed wrecked Jerusalem, tore down the walls and killed the people. He desecrated the rebuilt temple, culminating in the offering of a pig on the altar of sacrifice and erecting statues of false gods on the altar (Daniel 8:13).
- The Maccabeans (165 BC). The excesses of Antiochus Epiphanes provoked a revolt by an aging priest, Mattathias, and continued by his son, Judas Maccabeus. Judas Maccabeus restored the temple and orthodox worship. He was killed in battle and succeeded by his brother, Jonathan, who united civil and priestly authority, and began the Hasmonean line of high priests. Jonathan was killed and succeeded by his brother, Simon. He was succeeded by his son, John Hyrcanus who reigned 21 years.
- The Romans (63 B.C. to Christ). When the Maccabean line ended, Judea became a province of the Roman Empire. Julius Caesar appointed Antipater to rule over Judea in 47BC. Antipater appointed his son, Herod governor of Galilee. Herod was then appointed king of the Jews by Rome in 40 BC. He was extremely paranoid and murdered nearly all of his own family including his wife and sons so as to avoid the possibility of rebellion. He was still king when Jesus Christ was born.
- The political upheaval and submission of the 400-year period between Malachi and Matthew also impacted Jewish religious customs and practices.
 - New religious groups such as the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes were formed sometime during this period.
 - The Pharisees. The Pharisees held that the Oral Law was given orally to Moses, to Joshua, to the elders, to the prophets, and then to the men of the great synagogue. The Pharisees were the interpreters of the Oral Law. The name Pharisee means “separatists.” (Luke 7:39, Luke 15:2, Matthew 9:11)
 - The Sadducees. The Sadducees rejected the Oral Law and held only to “the law,” meaning the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy). They did not believe in the spirit world, angels, immortality, or the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:8). Sadducee means “righteous ones.” (Matthew 16:1, 11: 22:23; Acts 23:6, 12).
 - Scribes. The oldest of the three groups by far, Scribes existed back to the days of Israel’s kings. However, from the time of the Babylonian captivity, a group developed who were not just transcribers or secretaries, but a group who saw themselves as the expounders, guardians, and teachers of Scripture. Neither priests or Pharisees, they became a

distinguished order in the nation. Jesus denounced the scribes because of their corruption and false piety (Matthew 23:13–18).

- New institutions such as the synagogue and the Sanhedrin were accepted.
 - The Synagogue. There is no mention of synagogues in the Old Testament, but when the New Testament begins, they are widespread and accepted as normal in Jewish communities. Therefore, it is likely they began to develop during the captivity as Jewish people who no longer had a temple needed a teacher and a place for the reading of Scripture. They were common by Jesus' time (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; Luke 4:15, 44; Acts 13:5; 14:1; 17:10; 18:19) as a congregational, but not priestly institution.
 - The Sanhedrin. Sometime during the 400 Years of Silence the Sanhedrin developed as the civil and religious tribunal of the Jewish people (Matthew 16:21; Mark 14:55; 15:1; Luke 22:66; John 11:47; Acts 4:15; 5:21, 27, 34, 41; 6:12, 15; 22:30; 23:1, 6, 15, 20, 28; 24:20). The Sanhedrin was made up of 71 members:
 - The high priest.
 - 24 chief priests who represented the twenty-four orders of the priesthood.
 - 24 elders.
 - 22 scribes.

Introduction to the New Testament

- A major thread that ties the New Testament to the Old Testament is FULFILLMENT.
 - Again and again, we will see phrases like, “That it might be fulfilled” (Matthew 1:22; 4:14; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 26:56; 27:9, 35; John 12:38; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 19:24; 19:28; 36. 3).
 - Jesus said, “*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them*” (Matthew 5:17); and, “*Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing*” (Luke 4:21).
 - The New Testament in Jesus, his teachings and actions, is the fulfillment of the Old Testament.
- At the beginning of his gospel, Luke wrote, “*Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word*” (Luke 1:1-2). So, we know accounts of Jesus and his life were written down in the early 1st Century.
 - Documents were originally handwritten on separate scrolls and additional copies had to be made by hand. In many cases, one person would read at dictation speed while several others would take down the dictation, and others would check each copy against the

original.

- Over time the scroll gave way to the codex, a book bound more or less like a modern book.
- Because the early church, even within the Roman Empire, was made up of highly diverse groups, it was not long before the New Testament, and in fact the whole Bible, was translated into other languages. Here are some points along the way to the English language Bibles we know today:
 - Around AD390, Damasus, Bishop of Rome, commissioned Jerome to prepare an official Latin version that could be widely distributed. This Latin version, revised several times, became the Vulgate, published around 400.
 - The English language Bible was produced in the 1380's by John Wycliffe, an Oxford professor and theologian. Wycliffe's translation was based on the Latin Vulgate, which was the only source text available to him. The Pope was so infuriated by his teachings and his translation of the Bible into English, that 44 years after Wycliffe had died, he ordered the bones to be dug up, crushed, and scattered in the river! One of Wycliffe's followers, John Hus, was burned at the stake in 1415, with Wycliffe's manuscript Bibles used as kindling for the fire.
 - The chapter divisions commonly used today were developed by Stephen Langton, an Archbishop of Canterbury. Langton put the modern chapter divisions into place around 1227. The Wycliffe English Bible was the first Bible to use chapter numbers. Since then, nearly all Bible translations have included chapter numbers.
 - Johann Gutenberg invented the printing press in the 1450s, and the first book to be printed was a Latin Vulgate, printed in Germany. The invention of the movable-type printing press meant that books could be produced in large quantities in a short period of time. This would prove essential to making the Bible available to the masses and would fuel the Protestant Reformation.
 - When Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453, many scholars fled to the west bringing their Greek manuscripts, which were more closely aligned with the original texts, with them. Today there are roughly 5,000 of these manuscripts (or fragments of manuscripts) still in existence.
 - On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his now-famous 95 Theses of Contention (a list of 95 issues of heretical theology and crimes of the Roman Catholic Church) to the church door at Wittenberg. This is commonly considered the birth of the Protestant Reformation, but that movement was gaining momentum all over Europe.
 - Desiderius Erasmus, a Dutch scholar, completed a defini-

tive translation in 1527 that had three parallel columns: the Greek, the Vulgate, and Erasmus's own Latin translation. All the early editions of the Greek New Testament were copies or adaptations of the work of Erasmus.

- William Tyndale holds the distinction of being the first to ever print the New Testament in the English language. After his death, two of his followers, Myles Coverdale and John Rogers carried the translation forward. Coverdale printed the first complete Bible in the English language in 1535 and is known as the Coverdale Bible.
- In 1534 King Henry VIII requested that the Pope permit him to divorce his wife and marry his mistress. The Pope refused. King Henry responded by marrying his mistress anyway, renouncing Roman Catholicism, and establishing the Church of England (Anglican Church). He then funded the printing of the first the first legal English Bible, many say just to spite the Pope.
- After King Henry VIII, King Edward VI took the throne, and after his death, Queen "Bloody" Mary came to power. She was bent on returning England to the Roman Church and in 1555 she had John Rogers, among others burned at the stake. Many Protestant refugees fled to Geneva led by Myles Coverdale and John Foxe. With their help the Church of Geneva produced an English Bible in 1560. This was the first Bible to add numbered verses to the chapters, as well as extensive marginal notes and references so that this translation is considered the first English "Study Bible". William Shakespeare quotes hundreds of times in his plays from the Geneva translation of the Bible. It became the English Bible of choice for more than 100 years and heavily influenced the King James Bible of 1611. The Geneva was also the first Bible taken to American with the Puritans and Pilgrims.
- When Queen Mary's reign ended, Queen Elizabeth I assumed the throne, followed by Prince James VI of Scotland, who became King James I of England. Protestant clergy approached the king with a desire to produce a Bible for common people, in their minds a "translation to end all translations." They worked from 1605 – 1610 and published the King James Bible in 1611. It turned out to be an excellent and accurate translation, becoming the most printed book in the history of the world with over one billion copies in print.

*NOTE: For the past 250 years, all King James Version Bibles published anywhere by any publisher are actually Blaney's 1769 Revised Oxford Edition of the 1611 King James Bible. The original 1611 preface is almost always

deceivingly included by modern Bible publishing companies with no mention of the 1769 version so as not to hurt sales among those who think they are reading the original 1611 version.

- In 1885 Cambridge scholars published the English Revised Version. Not to be outdone, American scholars published the nearly identical American Standard Version in 1901, which was revised and called the New American Standard Bible in 1971. The New American Standard Bible and subsequent revisions are considered by nearly all Christian scholars and translators to be the most accurate, word-for-word translation of the original Greek and Hebrew scriptures into modern English that has ever been produced. It remains the most popular version among theologians, professors, scholars, and seminary students today.
- In 1973, the New International Version was produced as a “dynamic equivalent” translation into modern English. It was designed for “phrase-for-phrase” accuracy, and ease of reading even at a Junior High-School reading level. It was meant to appeal to a broader cross-section of the general public. It has become the best-selling modern-English translation of the Bible ever published.
- In 1982, Thomas Nelson Publishers produced the “New King James Version,” to appeal to King James Version loyalists, while updating obscure words and Elizabethan “thee, thy, thou” pronouns. However, upon discovering that this was not enough of a change for them to be able to legally copyright the result, publishers had to make more significant revisions and, while it has enjoyed a degree of public acceptance, it has never taken seriously by scholars.
- In 2002, a major attempt was made to bridge the gap between the readability of the N.I.V., and the extremely precise accuracy of the N.A.S.B. This translation is called the English Standard Version.

The Books of the New Testament

- Gospels.
 - Synoptics:
 - Matthew
 - Mark
 - Luke
 - John
- History - Acts.
- Epistles (letters written by an Apostle).
 - Paul's Epistles:
 - Romans
 - 1 & 2 Corinthians
 - Galatians
 - Ephesians
 - Philippians
 - Colossians
 - 1 & 2 Thessalonians
 - 1 & 2 Timothy
 - Titus
 - Philemon
 - General Epistles: There are eight general letters.
 - Hebrews
 - James
 - 1 & 2 Peter
 - 1, 2, & 3 John
 - Jude
- Prophecy - Revelation.

Chronology of the Synoptic Gospels

- Matthew 1-2; Luke 1-2
- Matthew 3-4; 12:1-32; Mark 1-3; Luke 3-6
- Matthew 5-7
- Matthew 8:1-13; 11; 12:33-50 Luke 7; 8:19-21; 11
- Matthew 8:14-10:42; 13 Mark 4-5; Luke 8:1-18; 22-56
- Matthew 14:1-15:31; Mark 6-7; Luke 9:1-17
- Matthew 15:32-18:9; Mark 8-9; Luke 9:18-62
- Matthew 18:10-35; Luke 10:1-12:12
- Matthew 19-20; Mark 10; Luke 12:13-19:27
- Matthew 21-25, Mark 11-13, Luke 19:28-21:38
- Matthew 26:1-46; Mark 14:1-42; Luke 22:1-46
- Matthew 26:47-28:20; Mark 14:43-16:20; Luke 22:47-24:53