

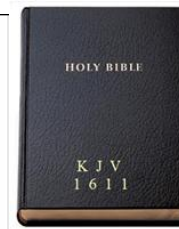
# Mt. Pleasant Bible Institute

*“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations” (Matt 28:19)*

**Dr. Joseph Speciale, Instructor**

A ministry of the  
**Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church**

**Lee Swor, Pastor**

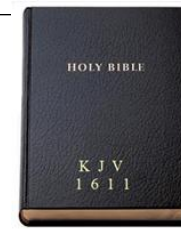


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# The Gospels

The Life And Ministry Of Jesus Christ

# Inter-Testament History



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## **I. POLITICAL CHANGE**

- The political changes that occurred between the Testaments are outlined in Daniel 2, 7-8, 11

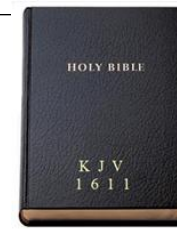
### **A. The Persian Period (400-334 BC)**

- The Persian Empire remained in power for approximately 65 more years
- While the Persians still oppressed the Jewish people (Neh 9:37), their rule was relatively tolerant
- The high priest was allowed to carry out his priestly duties and was also granted a degree of civil power under the authority of the governors of Syria
- Josephus states (Ant 11.8.2-4) that the rival temple at Mt. Gerazim (John 4:19-20) was established at this time

### **B. The Greek Period (334 BC-63 BC)**

- Alexander the Great conquered the Persians following the battle of Guagamela
- Alexander the Great was undefeated in battle and over the course of approximately 10-12 years, he built an empire that extended as far east as India (Dan 7:6; 8:5-7; 11:3)

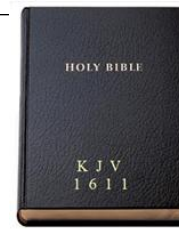
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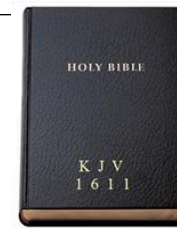
- Josephus states (Ant 11.8.5) that Alexander treated the Jews with favor
  - ✓ Alexander came to Jerusalem following his conquests of Syria and Phoenecia
  - ✓ He was greeted with fanfare and a hero's welcome
  - ✓ Juddua the high priest showed him from the book of Daniel how the Bible prophesied of his conquest of the Persians
  - ✓ Alexander was so impressed that he left the city alone and granted the Jews tolerance to keep their laws and sabbaths, and to be exempt from tax every seven years
- Alexander died in Babylon at the age of 33 with no heirs to bequeath his empire to (Dan 11:4), so the Grecian empire was divided among his four generals (Dan 7:6; 8:8; 11:4)
- The Holy Land originally fell under the rule of the Ptolemaic kings of Egypt
  - ✓ Tolerance toward the Jews continued and a large Jewish population emigrated to Egypt, particularly to the city of Alexandria
  - ✓ It was during this time (circa 285 BC) that the Septuagint was (allegedly) produced at the commission of Ptolemy II (Philadelphus) See: RELIGIOUS CHANGE
- The Seleucid king, Antiochus III (the Great), conquered the Holy Land in 198 BC and annexed it to Syria

# Inter-Testament History



- The land was then divided into five provinces: (1) Samaria; (2) Galilee; (3) Judea; (4) Trachonitis; and (5) Perea
- The Holy Land fell between the hammer and anvil of Syria (the “king of the north”) and Egypt (the “king of the south”) as the two divisions of the Greek empire battled for supremacy in the region (Dan 11:5-20)
- The Holy Land became the dowry of the Syrian princess Cleopatra as part of her marriage to Ptolemy Philometor, king of Egypt around 180 BC (Dan 11:11-17)
- Upon her death, the Holy Land was reclaimed by Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), the third son of Antiochus the Great, as he ascended the throne in 175 BC
- Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan 8:9-14; 11:21-35) is one of the greatest types of the Antichrist
  - ✓ He was not the rightful heir to the throne but gained it through manipulation and flattery
  - ✓ He made a covenant with the Hellenistic Jews (most notably represented by Menelaus)
  - ✓ Over three years after his covenant in 168 BC, he sent armies to Jerusalem feigning peace, who went on a killing and pillaging rampage when the sabbath arrived
  - ✓ He overthrew the city walls, set the city ablaze, took women and children captive, and massacred multitudes
  - ✓ He outlawed all Jewish customs including temple sacrifices, sabbath observance, circumcision, and the worship of Jehovah; and commanded that all offenders should be executed

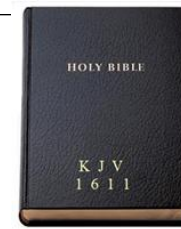
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- ✓ He ordered idols, altars, and groves to be erected to the Greek gods in every city and village and commanded the Jews to worship them (and himself) and sacrifice swine on the altars every day
- ✓ He outlawed the Hebrew scriptures and ordered his forces to confiscate and burn every copy they could find, and execute those in possession of them
- ✓ He had a citadel built in the lower part of the city to serve as an armory and quarters for the soldiers that would be permanently deployed there to enforce his decrees
- ✓ Many Jews complied with his decrees either out of apostasy or fear, but some refused and fled into the wilderness, while the rest were tortured and executed
  - ❖ Note: some were whipped with rods, others were torn to pieces, women who were guilty of circumcising their sons were crucified and then their infants sons were killed by hanging them from a rope placed around the neck of their crucified mothers
- ✓ Antiochus culminated his desecration of the holy on December 25<sup>th</sup>, 168 BC when he ordered a huge sow be sacrificed upon the temple altar
- ✓ He forced the priests to eat the swine flesh and made broth of the boiled flesh and blood, and sprinkled it all over the temple
- ✓ He then committed the “abomination of desolation” by placing a large image of Zeus in the holy of holies
- The abomination of desolation led to the Maccabean revolt led by a priest named Mattathias, of the house of Hasmon, and his five sons, of which the most notable were Judas, Jonathan, and Simon
- The height of the Maccabee’s triumphs was the recapturing of Jerusalem and the rededication of the temple on December 25<sup>th</sup>, 165 BC

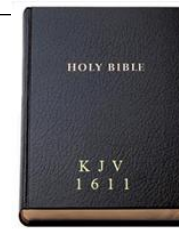
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- The miraculous events that led to the rededication of the temple are the source of the annual observance of the eight-day Feast of Dedication cf.(John 10:22)- *Hanukkah* (“dedication”), the Festival of Lights
- Most of the major military victories, including the recapturing of Jerusalem, were led by Judas
- Most of the major diplomatic victories were led by Jonathan who succeeded Judas
- Under Jonathan, a new found tolerance was given from the Syrian leaders and treaties were made with Sparta and Rome, all of which led to Jonathan’s appointment as both high priest and governor of Judea (i.e.- a uniting of civil and priestly authority)
- Under Simon, who succeeded Jonathan, the Hasmonean line of priestly rulers was officially established
- When Simon and two of his sons were murdered, his third son, John Hyrcanus succeeded him as high priest and head of state
- The Hasmonean line became increasingly corrupt over time
- The Jewish people plunged into civil war about the time of Roman expansion into the region

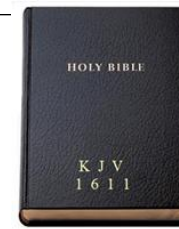
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## The Roman Period (63 BC-4 BC)

- The civil war ended as a result of Rome's conquest of Judea in 63 BC by Pompey
- Rome allowed the high priests nominal sovereignty, but gave increasing power to an Idumean named Antipater (Antipas), who was named procurator of Judea in 47 BC by Julius Ceasar
- Antipater appointed his son Herod as governor of Galilee, and his son assumed the title of procurator of Judea upon his death
- In 41 BC, the Parthians invaded Jerusalem forcing Herod to flee to Rome
- While in Rome, Herod won the favor of Marc Antony and was named "king of the Jews" in 40 BC
- He returned to Jerusalem with Roman soldiers who drove the Parthians out; Herod triumphantly entered Jerusalem as king
- He is known historically as "Herod the Great"
  - ✓ He ruled from 37 BC to 4 BC
  - ✓ He is renowned for his construction efforts including the massive and elaborate reconstruction and extension of the Jewish temple that began around 20 BC cf. (John 2:20) in an effort to curry favor with the Jewish population
  - ✓ He is the Herod who met with the wise men and out of fear of a contender to his throne, ordered the infanticide that forced Joseph, Mary, and the young child Jesus to flee to Egypt (Matt 2:1-8, 16-18)

# Inter-Testament History



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## II. RELIGIOUS CHANGE

- The religious attitude of Israel is outlined in Malachi

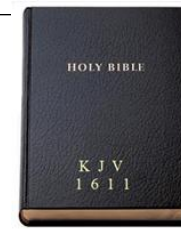
### A. The Scriptures

- The time between the Testaments is also called the “400 Silent Years” because there was no divine revelation during this time (i.e.- from the last words of Malachi recorded in Malachi 4:6 to the announcement of the birth of John the Baptist in Luke 1:13-17)

#### 1. THE SEPTUAGINT

- According to the Pseudepigraphal book, *The Letter Of Aristeas*, Ptolemy II (Philadelphus) desired to possess a copy of the world’s books in his own library including a copy of the Hebrew scriptures in the Greek tongue
- In 285 BC, he commissioned 72 Jews (six from each of the 12 tribes of Israel) to translate the Hebrew scriptures into the Greek language
- The result is what is known as the SEPTUAGINT (Lat. “the 70”)
- Josephus also documents this event (Ant 12.2)
- The circumstances of this translation completely nullify it as a work of God

# Inter-Testament History

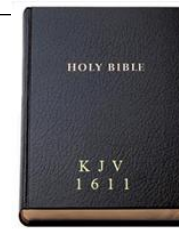


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## 2. THE APOCRYPHA

- The word *Apocrypha* means “hidden; concealed”
- The Apocrypha is comprised of 15 books written primarily during the Greek Period in Greek
- Although the Roman Catholic Church canonized 12 of the 15 books in 1546 AD at the Council of Trent, the truth is, **none** of these books are inspired
- While some of the books contain information of **historical** value they also support heresies (e.g.- salvation by works; purgatory) and superstitions
- The King James translators did not include the Apocrypha between the Testaments of the 1611 edition because they thought it was inspired, but because they thought it might give historical context to the obvious political and religious changes we see in the New Testament

# Inter-Testament History

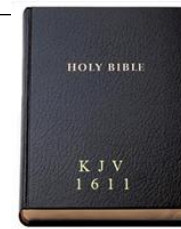


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**The Apocrypha** (those *italicized* are the books not canonized by the Roman Catholic Church)

1. *1 Esdras* (150 BC)
2. *2 Esdras* (100 AD)
3. Tobit (200 BC)
4. Judith (150 BC)
5. The Rest Of Esther (130 BC)
6. The Wisdom Of Solomon (30 BC)
7. Ecclesiasticus (130 BC)
8. Baruch (100 BC)
9. The Epistle Of Jeremiah (200 BC)
10. The Song Of The Three Holy Children (100 BC) (also called, “The Prayer Of Azariah”)
11. The History of Susanna (100 BC)
12. Bel And The Dragon (100 BC)
13. *The Prayer Of Manasseh* (150 BC)
14. 1 Maccabees (110 BC)
15. 2 Macabees (100 BC)

# Inter-Testament History



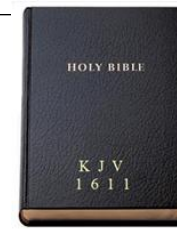
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## B. The Sects

### 1. THE PHARISEES (Matt 3:7)

- The word *Pharisee* means, “separated one”
- A party bearing the name is first mentioned about the time of John Hyrcanus (134 BC-104 BC)
- They most likely arose as part of the orthodox resistance to Hellenization and were the CONSERVATIVE party among the Jews
- While holding to the Law, they sought to make it more conformable to the changing culture of the world around them, so they developed a system of interpretive and oral traditions
- During the first century BC, two rabbis with different interpretations of how the Law was to be applied, gave their names to their respective schools of thought
  1. **Hillel**- moderate school of interpretation; accepted Roman rule as compatible with Jewish orthodoxy
  2. **Shammai**- strict school of interpretation; rejected Roman rule as compatible with Jewish orthodoxy; the Shammai school eventually gave rise to a sub-sect known as the *Zealots*
- The interpretation of the Law became an equal authority to the Law itself for both schools of thought

# Inter-Testament History



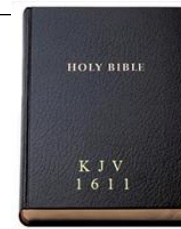
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- Oral traditions were also developed on the basis that Moses was given both an ORAL version of the Law at Mt. Sinai and a WRITTEN version (Exo 24:3-4)
- The oral law and traditions were viewed as an equal or greater authority to the scriptures based on the belief that they affected the lives of ordinary men more intimately than the Torah

## 2. THE SADDUCEES (Matt 3:7)

- The word *Sadducee* is derived from the Hebrew word *tsadaq* meaning, “to be right in a moral and ceremonial sense”
- They bear striking similarity to the party of Hellenized Jews who ruled over the people for most of the Inter-Testament in that they made peace their Gentile overlords and attained positions of power and wealth in return
- They were the party of aristocracy and the high priesthood, and were the LIBERAL party among the Jews
- While they restricted their authority to the Torah, they held extremely liberal interpretations including the rejection of the doctrines of angels and resurrection
- Unlike the Pharisees who actively engaged in proselyting, the Sadducees were a closed party restricted to members of the high priestly and aristocratic families

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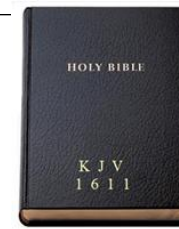
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- The only thing the Pharisees and Sadducees had in common was their deep hatred and rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ

## 3. THE ESSENES

- An ultra-conservative party whose members lived in a monastic communities
- They are not mentioned in the Bible, probably due to the fact of their relatively low numbers (about 4,000) and lack of impact and influence on Jewish life as a whole
- They are mentioned by ancient writers like Josephus, Philo, and Pliny and excavations at Qumran, near the northwest corner of the Dead Sea, reveal a community headquarters once resided there
- They rejected general society including slavery and war, and followed the typical monastic lifestyle regarding spiritual exercises and physical deprivations; and were a typical communal society regarding physical labor and shared resources
- They believed they could trace their origins back to Moses and that they were the TRUE Israel

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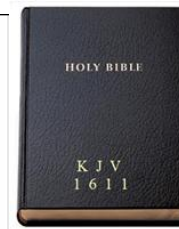
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## 4. THE HERODIANS (Matt 22:16)

- A political party supportive of the Herodian dynasty and Roman rule
- They were the SECULARIST party among the Jews

## 5. THE ZEALOTS (Luke 6:15)

- A sub-sect of the Shammai school of Phariseeism
- Simon Zelotes, one of the 12 disciples, was a converted zealot
- They believed in an insurrection and violent overthrow of Roman rule
- Barabbas and the two thieves crucified with Jesus were zealots (Mark 15:7)
- The continual and increasing violence perpetuated by the zealots forced Rome to respond with a heavy hand- resulting in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD and a war that left millions dead, the people of God dispersed throughout the world, and the Holy Land renamed



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