

# The Intertestamental Period



An Open Seminar  
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**I DON'T  
KNOW!**

# When Was the Intertestamental Period?

- Even though it is sometimes called the “400 Years of Silence” opinions vary
- Traditionally starts after the last Hebrew Prophets, usually Nehemiah, who is dated to the late fifth Century BCE, or from about 445 on.
- End is placed from 1 CE to the end of the first Century CE



596 – CAPTURE OF JERUSALEM

538 – FIRST RETURN FROM EXILE

465 } NEHEMIAH'S GOVERNORSHIP  
454 }

418 – LAST PROPHETIC WRITINGS

336 } ALEXANDER THE GREAT  
323 }

198 } JUDEA UNDER SELEUCIDS  
110 }

63 – POMPEY OCCUPIES JERUSALEM  
37 } HERODIAN DYNASTY

586 – DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

539 – BABYLONIAN RULE ENDS

516 – SECOND TEMPLE DEDICATED

420 – BOOK OF NEHEMIAH ENDS  
423-404 – ELEPHANTINE PAPYRI

336 – PERSIAN RULE ENDS

JUDEA UNDER PTOLEMIES

164 – REDEDICATION OF TEMPLE

HASMONEAN DYNASTY

37

# Differences Between OT and NT

Hebrew Scriptures	New Testament
Consolidated Nation	Exile, Diaspora
No clear Scriptural Authority	Establishment of a Canon
Prophecy	Prophecy no longer functions
Common language, Hebrew	Aramaic, Greek. Hebrew a liturgical language only.
Strict monotheism; God has no rivals	Emergence of Satan as a counterforce
No instances of demons or demonic possession	Demons are everywhere. Possession is common.
Very little said about the afterlife	Strong interest in afterlife, resurrection, final judgment.
No mention of punishment in the afterlife	Hell is the ultimate place of punishment
God occasionally intervenes in "Day of the Lord" to impose occasional correctives.	Growing belief in a final, cosmic to settle the fate of the cosmos, followed by a completely changed universe.

# Deuterocanonical/Apocrypha Comparison Chart

Codex Vaticanus (B)	Codex Sinaiticus (X)	Codex Alexandrinus (A)	Greek Orthodox Deuterocanonical	Roman Catholic Deuterocanonical	Protestant Apocrypha
1 (3) Esdras	1 (3) Esdras	1 (3) Esdras	1 (3) Esdras		1 (3) Esdras 2 (4) Esdras
Tobit Judith Additions to Esther Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus	Tobit Judith Additions to Esther Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus	Tobit Judith Additions to Esther Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus	Tobit Judith Additions to Esther Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus	Tobit Judith Additions to Esther Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus	Tobit Judith Additions to Esther Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus
Baruch Epistle of Jeremiah Prayer of Azariah Story of Susanna Bel and the Dragon	[Prayer of Azariah Story of Susanna Bel and the Dragon]	Baruch Epistle of Jeremiah Prayer of Azariah Story of Susanna Bel and the Dragon	Baruch Epistle of Jeremiah Prayer of Azariah Story of Susanna Bel and the Dragon Prayer of Manasseh	Baruch Epistle of Jeremiah Prayer of Azariah Story of Susanna Bel and the Dragon	Baruch Epistle of Jeremiah Prayer of Azariah Story of Susanna Bel and the Dragon Prayer of Manasseh
	1 Maccabees  4 Maccabees	1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees 3 Maccabees 4 Maccabees	1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees 3 Maccabees 4 Maccabees	1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees	1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees
Psalms 151	Psalms 151	Psalms 151	Psalms 151		

# What's so Apocryphal About the Apocrypha?

- Jerome objected to texts not found in Hebrew
- Augustine accepted their authority
- Athanasius mentions them in his Festal Letter
- Luther rejects them completely
- Council of Trent (1546) confirms their part in the Catholic scriptures



# 39th Festal Letter of Athanasius, 367 CE

*“But for greater exactness I add this also, writing of necessity; that there are other books besides these not indeed included in the Canon, but appointed by the Fathers to be read by those who newly join us, and who wish for instruction in the word of godliness. The Wisdom of Solomon, and the Wisdom of Sirach, and Esther, and Judith, and Tobit, and that which is called the Teaching of the Apostles, and the Shepherd. But the former, my brethren, are included in the Canon, the latter being [merely] read...”*



# Pseudepigrapha

- Means “falsely written” or “falsely attributed”
- “End of prophecy” prompted books authored in the name of past prophets

Life of Adam and Eve

The Apocalypse of Adam

1 Enoch

2 Enoch

The Testament of Abraham

The Story of Asenath

Revelation of Moses

The Assumption of Moses

The Martyrdom of Isaiah

The Ascension of Isaiah

The Revelation of Esdras

The Book of Jubilees

The Letter of Aristeas

The Book of the Apocalypse of Baruch

# Other Sources for the Intertestamental Period

- Apocrypha
- Flavius Josephus
- Philo Judaeus
- Early Rabbinic Works
- The Dead Sea Scrolls
- Greek Historians



# Did Paracanonical Documents have any Influence?

- Wisdom of Solomon contains the first identification of Satan as the Serpent in the Garden of Eden
- Infancy Gospel of James contains the earliest known reference to the perpetual virginity of Mary
- 2 Maccabees includes the first use of the word “Judaism.”
- 2 Maccabees includes some of the earliest references to prayers on behalf of the dead.

# New Testament Influences?

Nestle's Greek New Testament lists some 132 New Testament passages that appear to be verbal allusions to paracanonical books.

- *Book of Enoch* (Jude 4,6,13,14–15,[23] 2 Peter 2:4;3:13[23][24])
- *Epistle to the Laodiceans* (Colossians 4:16 "read the epistle from Laodicea")
- *Life of Adam and Eve* (2 Corinthians 11:14 "Satan as an angel of light", 12:2 "Third Heaven")[25]
- A section of the *Assumption of Moses* in Jude 9
- *Martyrdom of Isaiah* (Hebrews 11:37 "they were sawn in two")

# Interetestamental Period: The State of Judaism

- Loss of the cultic center: usually fatal to an otherwise cohesive community
  - Some observances (unleavened bread) did not require the Temple
- Exile among foreigners
  - Synagogue
- Repatriation and Restoration
- Thriving in Diaspora

# Case Study: Elephantine

- Discovery of a cache of Jewish documents on the Egyptian island of Yeb
- Dated to c. 400 BCE
- Colony of Jewish Mercenaries, probably founded around 600 BCE



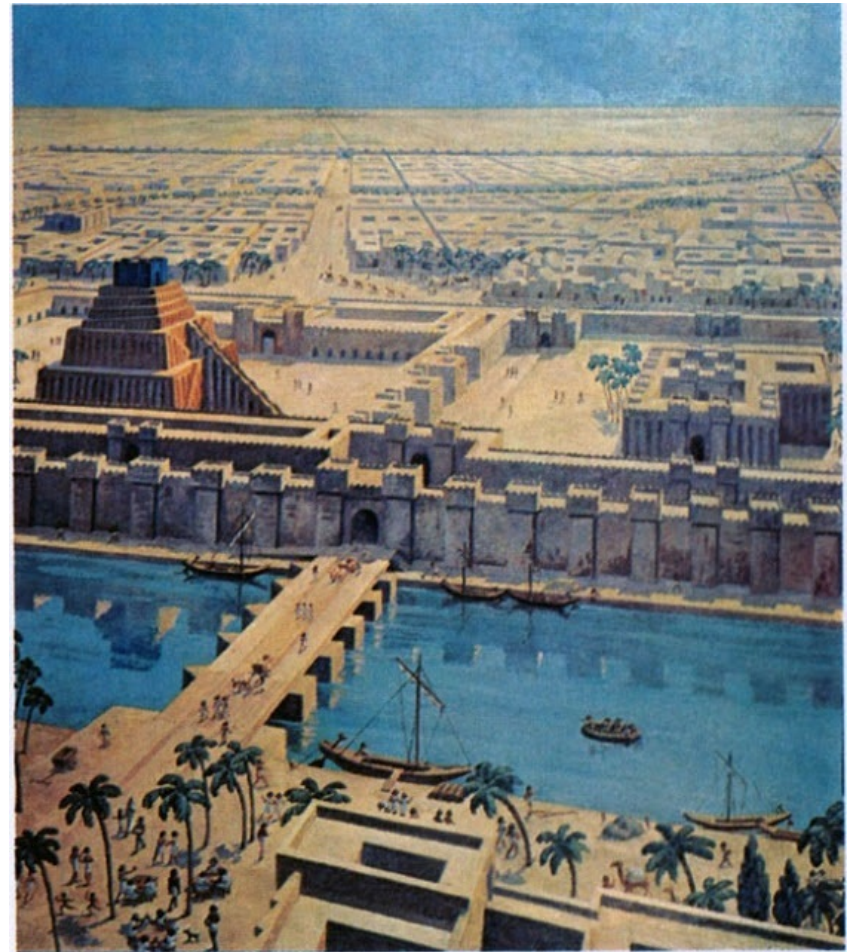
# Request for a New Temple

**Language:** Aramaic  
**Medium:** papyrus  
(written on both sides)  
**Size:** 24 cm h x  
32 cm w  
**Length:** 30 lines  
**Authors:** Yedaniah bar-Gemariah and other priests at Elephantine  
**Addressee:** Bagohi  
(governor of Judea)  
**Dated:** November 25, 407 BCE  
**Discovered:** 1 January 1907



# Possible Temple Near Babylon?

Ezra 8:17: the new Jerusalem temple didn't have sufficient Levites to officiate and he calls for them to be sent from "b'khasif'ya ha-maqom"; "in the Casiphia place." Maqom is a term reserved in the Bible to designate a holy place or shrine. Casiphia (Ctesiphon) is located near Baghdad, and may have been some kind of shrine there throughout the Exile.





# The Synagogue

- Functioned as a community gathering place in lieu of the Temple
- Continued and augmented the tradition of open, public worship.



# Additional Survival Factors

- Political stability of the Persian Empire
- Largeness of Persian Empire
- Acceptance of proselytes
- Codification and canonization
  - Study of Torah becomes the defining religious act in Judaism
- Widespread use of sacred texts
- Translation of sacred texts

# The Intellectual Landscape: Zoroastrianism

- Religion of Persia, and of Cyrus I, liberator of the Jews
- Much has been lost regarding this religion
- Probably spread by word of mouth



# Zoroastrianism: Key Beliefs

- Universal struggle between good and evil
- Good and evil divine entities of roughly equal power
- Coming final cosmic battle.
- Elaborate beliefs in angels and demons
- Strong interest in the afterlife
- Belief in resurrection of the dead at the end of the world
- Final judgment

# Zoroastrianism and Judaism: Points of Overlap

- Both religions are revealed on a mountain top
- Purification laws, especially for contact with the dead
- Six days/periods of creation
- Cosmic destruction except for a single person with three sons
- Founders are regarded as “lawgivers”