

# Smoky Mountain Bible Institute

## History 123 Time between the testaments

We left off last month at the end of the Old Testament chronology in 428 BC. The prophets and scripture fall silent at that time, so we must rely on ancient texts other than scripture to learn of the historical events between 428 BC and the birth of Christ. There are a number of good sources if you want to go deeper into this time period, but I think the best synopsis can be found in *The Apocrypha: the Lutheran Edition with notes*, from CPH. The introductory matter in this book covers the period of 538 BC to 135 AD in about 40 pages, and gives a great overview.

While the bulk of ancient written histories during this time period still cover the happenings in the fertile crescent of the Middle East, we begin to see datable events in cultures all over the world. If the Tower of Babel event took place around 2242 BC, 106 years after the flood and just after the birth of Peleg (Gen 11:16-19), then by 428 BC, ~1800 years had passed for the earth to be populated, and that is exactly what had happened. In the Americas, in the central region pyramids were built in like the ones at Monte Alban or Chitzen itza. The famous Mayan calendar was created during this time, around 580 BC (this was the civilization the preceded the classical period in North America which began around 50 BC).

In South America, the Tiahuanaco civilization began around 600 BC until the dominant culture of the Paracas in the Andes took hold around 100 BC. In the Orient, Japan's city states began to take shape around 260 BC, while in China, the Zhou Dynasty came to a close, the Qin Dynasty followed with its first uniting emperor, and the Han Dynasty followed that. Russia was in the middle years of their Scythian period, and during that time India was part of a few empires including both Persian and Greek invasions, as they entered their classical period around 200 BC. The Greek republic peaked somewhere between 650 and 350 BC, building the Parthenon, and giving birth to the western idea of a democratic republic along with philosophers like Plato, Socrates & Aristotle.

Greece entered its Macedonian period when Alexander the Great began his reign at the age of 20 in 336 BC. Much has been written about his famous conquest of the kingdoms of North Africa and the Middle East. To summarize, he became Pharaoh of Egypt in 332 BC, the first King of Asia in 331 BC, and King of Persia in 330 BC. After his death in Babylon in 323 BC, his four Generals divided up his kingdom. Africa entered the Ptolemaic period until conquered by Rome in 30 BC. Mesopotamia entered the Seleucid period until conquered by Rome around 65 BC. Greece stayed in its Macedonian period until conquered by Rome around 150 BC.

Rome was founded as a city state around 625 BC and would be in control of most of the Mediterranean countries of North Africa, Europe, and Asia by the time Christ was born. It would be better stated that Rome conquered what was left of the three kingdoms listed above, because what it conquered in many cases were towns and cities that were part of kingdoms that no longer existed or had dwindled to only a few cities.

Finally, let's discuss "the time between the testaments" in the Levant. The "Levant" is a geographical term that refers to a large area in Southwest Asia, south of the Taurus Mountains, bounded by the Mediterranean Sea in the west, the Arabian Desert in the south, and Mesopotamia in the east. The term is also sometimes used to refer to modern events or states in the region immediately bordering the eastern Mediterranean Sea: Cyprus, Palestine, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, and Syria. This general area was Part of the Persian empire until conquered by Alexander the Great in the late 330s BC. From around 310 to 200 BC the Ptolemaic empire controlled most of the region. From 200 to 160 BC the Seleucid Empire controlled most of the region. For about 100 years the Jewish Maccabeans had primary control of the region.

The Roman period for this region around Israel, (called Syria by the Romans) began in 63 BC. However, it was through alliance rather than conquest. Rome first become an ally then later its ruler. The Idumean or Edomite dynasty lasted from 63 to 6 BC. Herod the Great, who ruled from 37 to 4 BC (consensus view) is called "the Great" primarily for his building projects, not the least of which were the temple mount improvements that stand today, and a complete renovation in 20 BC of the second temple finished by Zerubbabel in 515 BC. Sadly, that temple was destroyed in 70 AD only years after the finishing touches were put on the surrounding structures. The Al-Aqsa Mosque was built on that location in 705 AD.

I think we have sufficiently filled your head with names dates and locations for one session and covered

the time between the testaments. Next month we will begin to look at the time into which our Lord and savior was born.

Till next month,  
Pastor Portier