

## Intertestamental Period & the Herods in the Bible

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- The intertestamental period
  - Not a whole lot we know about this time period other than the obvious fact that God preserved His people
    - As He always does
    - **Romans 11:1-5**
      - God always has a remnant
      - He did not reject Israel
      - Rather, He wanted them to become Christians and be subject to the law of Christ, not the law of Moses
      - And for those that were obedient, along with Gentiles who were obedient were a remnant
      - And we are as well if we are obedient
    - **1 Kings 19:9-18**
      - Elijah thought he was all alone
      - But no – God says that He has 7000 in Israel
      - None of which have bowed before Baal
      - God always has a remnant
      - His kingdom will endure forever
    - **Matthew 24:15-16**
      - God gave His people a warning 30 years in advance of what the sign would be to get out of Jerusalem before Rome was to destroy it
      - God never leaves His people unattended to
      - He always provides and always will
    - **Revelation 7:1-4**
      - 4 angels here are holding back the winds that will bring great damage to the land and the sea
      - But a 5<sup>th</sup> angel appears and tells the 4 others to hold the winds until the people of God are sealed
      - His people were spared from this harm
    - God always has a remnant – even today
      - His church is as strong as ever and it will last forever (Matthew 16:18)
  - There is ~400 years between Malachi and Matthew
  - My study Bible says Malachi was written in ~397BC if you can believe that (I'd buy that – that's certainly in the ballpark. Anywhere between ~450BC and this time would be a fairly accurate estimate based on what we know from the Bible)
    - There is little historical information to pull from in Malachi
    - We know that governors were around (1:8)

- And that was a Persian thing – the Persians instituted the use of governors (satraps) vs a total 1 man monarchy type rule like the Babylonians had with Nebuchadnezzar and their other kings
  - So we know that it was likely written during the time when Persia was imperialistically in charge
  - To further support this, the temple had been rebuilt (1:10)
  - Who led the rebuilding of the temple after Babylon destroyed it? Ezra
  - And when did Ezra come back to Jerusalem? Under the imperialistic rule of Cyrus, who was Persian (Ezra 1)
- Just to give you a brief timeline of events here
  - Babylonian Captivity happened in three stages starting in ~606BC (2 Kings 24:1 under the reign of Jehoiakim)
  - Jerusalem was destroyed in ~586BC (2 Kings 25 under the reign of Zedekiah)
  - Medo-Persia overthrew Babylon as the imperialistic power in ~539BC
    - Here's where some of the details get a little tricky
    - Ezra 1:1 refers to Cyrus as the king of Persia, but Daniel 5:30-31 refer to Darius the Mede as the king
    - I tell you that because if you do go home and do your own research – be very careful what you read and believe
    - There are several folks to date who think CH's 1-6 of Daniel is a bunch of hogwash and that CH's 7-12 were written way later than what it was
    - That is hogwash – we know that the Bible is true
    - I'm not going to try and teach you apologetics, because I know the Scriptures in the Bible that tell us it is God's word and that it is true – and that's good enough for me
    - My best analysis of this specific situation comes from Daniel 6:28 in which Daniel mentions both Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian
    - So it was obviously some sort of a joint rule between kinsman (several sources indicate that these 2 individuals were related – and Cyrus probably had a little more authority given that he was Persian and Darius was a Mede (of the 2, Persia was the stronger power))
  - And in that same year, ~539BC, Cyrus issues a decree for the Jews to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple
  - ~536BC – the first Jews begin reaching Jerusalem from Babylon and rebuilding the temple
  - Ezra and Nehemiah come back around ~450BC (Ezra 7:1-6, Nehemiah 2), the wall is rebuilt and Jerusalem starts to look like a city again (Nehemiah 6:15-16)
- Not exactly sure where in all that Malachi fits in as we don't have any information on him other than what's in the book of Malachi, but it seems to fit in the general timeframe of Ezra and Nehemiah, so anywhere from ~450BC – early 390's BC seems to fit

- To make it a whole number, we'll say ~400BC
- Fast forward to Matthew
  - Imperialistically speaking, who's in charge now? Rome
  - So we've went from Persia to Rome
  - We missed an entire group – the Greeks (Alexander, Philip, Seleucus, Ptolemy, etc)
  - We have prophecy of the Greeks (the book of Daniel), but we don't have any Bible books that were written during the imperialistic reign of Greece
- What's one of the first things we read of in Matthew, historically speaking? Herod issuing the decree to kill boys 2 years and younger in Bethlehem and its vicinity (Matthew 2:16)
  - **Matthew 18:1-6**
    - There's no denying the fact that Jesus loves children
    - They are innocent – in total need of a savior (physically speaking – usually their parents, but Jesus of course is our spiritual savior)
    - And these are the people that Herod targeted out of jealousy
    - Don't think you can't be affected by jealousy
    - It is something that we all must watch out for
    - Herod obviously did not do a great job with that here
  - This was issued toward the end of Herod's life
  - Jesus was still a child when He was taken to Egypt (Matthew 2:13)
  - And He was still a child when they returned to Israel (Matthew 2:21)
- Herod the Great (the one who issued this decree) died in 4BC
  - So the events of Matthew (Jesus' birth) probably start around 6BC or so
- All this to say that we have ~ 400 years of silence Biblically speaking
- There was not 400 years of silence in Jewish history though – quite the opposite
  - These 400 years were very tumultuous for the Jews to say the least
- But thanks be to God that our lives do not have to be tumultuous in a spiritual sense (Romans 7:25)
  - Acts 20:28 – *“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”*
  - Christ has purchased His church with His own blood
  - And this is the church that we can belong to today
- The plan of salvation is simple and it is how God has instructed us to receive His saving grace
  - **Step 1: Hearing the gospel** – *Romans 10:13-17*
    - Gospel = Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, arose, and appeared to many – *1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Romans 1:16*
  - **Step 2: Believing the gospel** – *Mark 16:16, John 3:16*
  - **Step 3: Confession that Jesus is Lord** – *Romans 10:8-10, 1 John 1:9*
  - **Step 4: Repentance of sins** – *Luke 13:3, Acts 2:38*

- Repentance: a turning away from sin, disobedience, or rebellion and a turning back to God. Change of mind that produces a change in action.
- **Step 5: Baptism into Christ** – *Galatians 3:27, Acts 2:38, Romans 6:1-10, 1 Peter 3:21-22*
  - Baptism: immerse or submerge
- **Step 6: Live faithfully** – *Revelation 2:10*