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Finding Christ Between the Testaments



Part 12 (970226WE)

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Walk Between the Testaments

We have just finished our study of the last 12 books of the Old Testament. In that study we found the people of the Lord fluctuating between listening and refusing to listen to the Prophets of God. Then comes the Intertestamental Period, the 400 years between Malachi and Matthew. Many call this the "silent period" however, it is far from silent. The Word of God maps out the events of the entire period in advance. A study of this period provides a fascinating insight into the world of the Bible. Powerful lessons showing the weaknesses of God's people when they take their eyes off the Lord and His Word. The Jews were triumphant as they kept the Word. Defeated when they lost sight of the Word. We would do well to remember the lessons these centuries provided. Some of the valuable insights from this period beyond the practical warnings are: the development of the four main religious groups of Christ's day (Essenes, Pharisees, Sadducees and Zealots), an insight into the life and times of Joseph and Mary's world, Simeon and Anna's world, Elizabeth and Zacharius' world and so on. Additionally, the Apocrypha and the conclusion of Nehemiah, Ezra and Malachi's ministry is clearly recorded. And finally, we can see the fulfillment of the most explicit and detailed of all the Old Testament prophecies. Our next step in understanding this period is to look these 400 years into the Scriptures. To do this turn with me to Daniel 11.

History in Daniel 11

1. **Daniel 11:3** The "mighty king" is none other than Alexander the Great (336-323).
2. **Daniel 11:4** The "four winds" correspond to [Daniel 7:4-7](#) ("four heads").
3. **Daniel 11:5** The "king of the South" from history is Ptolemy I Soter (323-285 B.C.) of Egypt.
one of his commanders. Seleucus I Nicator (311-280).
his own kingdom. Initially Babylonia, to which he then added extensive territories both east and west.
4. **Daniel 11:6** The "daughter of the king of the South" is Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 B.C.) of Egypt.
king of the North. Antiochus 11 Theos (261-246) of Syria.
alliance. A treaty cemented by the marriage of Berenice to Antiochus.
she will not retain her power, and he ... will not last. Antiochus's former wife, Laodice, conspired to have Berenice and Antiochus put to death.
her father. Berenice's father Ptolemy died at about the same time.
5. **Daniel 11:7** One from her family line. Berenice's brother, Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221 B.C.) of Egypt, who did away with Laodice.
king of the North. Seleucus 11 Callinicus (246-226 B.C.) of Syria.
his fortress. *Either* (1) Seleucia (see [Ac 13:4](#)), which was the port of Antioch, or (2) Antioch itself.
6. **Daniel 11:8** their gods. Images of Syrian deities, and also of Egyptian gods that the Persian Cambyses had carried off after conquering Egypt in 525 B.C.
7. **Daniel 11:10** His sons. Seleucus III Ceraunus (226-223 B.C.) and Antiochus III (the Great) (223-187), sons of Seleucus II.
his fortress. Ptolemy's fortress at Raphia in southern Palestine. 11:11 king of the South. Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-203 B.C.) of Egypt.

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king of the North. Antiochus III. defeated At Raphia in 217.

8. **Daniel 11:12** slaughter many thousands. The historian Polybius records that Antiochus lost nearly 10,000 infantrymen at Raphia.
9. **Daniel 11:14** king of the South. Ptolemy V Epiphanes(203-181 B.C.) of Egypt.
10. *violent men among your own people, Jews* who joined the forces of Antiochus.
11. *without success* The Ptolemaic general Scopas crushed the rebellion in 200,
12. **Daniel 11:15** fortified city. The Mediterranean port of Sidon :
13. **Daniel 11:16** The invader. Antiochus, who was in control of Palestine by 197 B.C. *Beautiful Land.* See note on 8:9-12.
14. **Daniel 11:17** he will give him a daughter in marriage. Antiochus gave his daughter Cleopatra I in marriage to Ptolemy V 194 B.C.
15. **Daniel 11:18** he. *Antiochus. coast lands.* Asia Minor and perhaps also mainland Greece. *commander.* The Roman consul Lucius Cornelius Scipio Asiaticus, who defeated Antiochus at Magnesia in Asia Minor in 190 B.C.
16. **Daniel 11:19** stumble and fall. Antiochus died in 187 B.C. while attempting to plunder a temple in the province of Elymais.
17. **Daniel 11:20** His successor. Seleucus IV Philopator (187-175 B.C.), son and successor of Antiochus the Great. *tax collector.* Seleucus's finance minister, Heliodorus. *he will be destroyed.* Seleucus was the victim of a conspiracy engineered by Heliodorus.
18. **Daniel 11:21** contemptible person. Seleucus's younger brother, Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.).
19. *not been given the honor of royalty.* Antiochus seized power while the rightful heir to the throne, the son of Seleucus (later to become Demetrius I), was still very young. kingdom. Syro-Palestine.
20. **Daniel 11:22** prince of the covenant. Either the high priest Onias III, who was murdered in 170 B.C., or, if the Hebrew for this phrase is translated "confederate prince," Ptolemy VI Philometor (181-146) of Egypt.
21. **Daniel 11:23** he. Antiochus.
22. **Daniel 11:24** richest provinces. Either of Palestine or of Egypt. *fortresses.* In Egypt.
23. **Daniel 11:25** king of the South. Ptolemy VI.
24. **Daniel 11:26** his army. That of Ptolemy.
25. **Daniel 11:27** two kings. Antiochus and Ptolemy, who was living in Antiochus's custody.
26. **Daniel 11:28** against the holy covenant. In 169 B.C. Antiochus plundered the temple in Jerusalem, set up a garrison there -A massacred many Jews in the city.
27. **Daniel 11:30** Ships of the western coast lands. Roman vessels under the command of Popilius Laenas. *those who forsake the holy covenant* Apostate Jews (see also v. 32).
28. **Daniel 11:31** *abomination that causes desolation.* See 9:27; 12:1 1; the altar to the pagan god Zeus Olympius, set up in 168 B.C. by Antiochus Epiphanes and prefiguring a similar abomination that Jesus predicted would be erected (see note on Mt 24:15; see also Lk 21:20).
29. **Daniel 11:33** Those who are wise. The godly leaders of the Jewish resistance movement, also called the Hasidim. *fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered* See Heb 11:36-38.
30. **Daniel 11:34** *a little help.* The early successes of the guerrilla uprising (168 B.C.) that originated in Modein, 17 miles northwest of Jerusalem, under the leadership of Mattathias and his son Judas Maccabeus. In December, 165, the altar of the temple was rededicated.
31. **Daniel 11:35** time of the end See v.40;12:4,9. Daniel concludes his predictions about Antiochus Epiphanes and begins to prophesy concerning the more distant future.
32. **Daniel 11:36** From here to the end of ch. 11 the Antichrist (see notes on 7:8; 9:27) is in view. The details of this section do not fit what is known of Antiochus Epiphanes. See 2Th 2:4; cf. Rev 13:5-8.
33. **Daniel 11:37** *the one desired by women.* Usually interpreted as either Tammuz (see note on Eze 8:14) or the Messiah. **11:40-45** Conflicts to be waged between the Antichrist and his political enemies. He will meet his end at the "beautiful holy mountain" (v. 45), Jerusalem's temple mount, doubtless in connection with the battle of Armageddon (Rev 16:13-16).

The next step in understanding this section of Bible History is looking at a timeline of the Period from Malachi to Christ.

The Period between the Testaments

- 443 (C.) Nehemiah and Ezra read the Scriptures to the Jews; the first roots of the.,Vidrash begin
to sprout; the Sopherim (scribes) flourish.
- 436 (C.) Malachi begins to prophesy.
- 429 Death of Pericles. The Acropolis is finished. Plato is born.
- 342 Epicurius teaches his philosophy.
- 336 Darius III Codomannus becomes king of Persia. Alexander the Great becomes king of Greece.
- 332 Alexander destroys Tyre.
- 331 Alexander seizes Babylon.
- 327 Alexander invades India.
- 323 Alexander claims to be the son of Zeus.
- Alexander dies.
 - Alexander's empire divided among his four chief generals.
- 300 Rome becomes a major world power in the western Mediterranean. Seleucus I adds Syria to his realm.
- 285 Ptolemy II Philadelphia becomes king of Egypt. Between 285 and 130 the Septuagint translated.
- 274 (C.) Hinduism codified in India.
- 214 Construction of Great Wall of China begins.
- 168 The Romans interfere in Antiochus's war with Egypt and prevent his capturing Alexandria.
Antiochus pollutes the Temple in Jerusalem and suspends the sacrifices of the Jews.
- 166 Matthias leads the Jews in revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes.
- 165 The Jerusalem Temple repaired and cleansed.
- 164 Antiochus Epiphanes dies.
- 133 Rome begins to expand her empire eastward.
- 130 (C.) The Pharisees begin to emerge as a sect.
- 73 Spartacus leads a revolt of slaves and gladiators, which is crushed by Pompey and Crassus.
- 64 Pompey captures Jerusalem,- leaves the Maccabean high priest Hyrcanus in power with Antipater as civil adviser.
- 60 The first Triumvirate at Rome (Caesar, Crassus, and Pompey).
- 59 Julius Caesar becomes proconsul. Pompey marries Julia, daughter of Caesar.
- 58 Caesar conquers Gaul.
- 54 Caesar invades Britain.
- 49 Caesar crosses the Rubicon.
- 44 Caesar assassinated.
- 42 Caesar deified; temple to him erected in the Forum where his murder had taken place. Battle of Philippi fought.
- 40 Herod appointed king.
- 37 Herod captures Jerusalem.
- 27 Octavian assumes the title of Augustus.
- 20 Herod begins to rebuild the Jerusalem Temple.
- 4 The birth of Jesus.

AD

- 14 Augustus dies.Tiberius becomes Roman emperor.
- 26 Jesus begins to teach,- He characterizes rabbinic teaching (the Mishna) as "vain tradition."
Pilate becomes procurator of Judea.
- 30 Jesus crucified and raised from the dead. The Christian church is born at Pentecost.

I. **Literature**[1] During these unhappy years of oppression and internal strife, the Jewish people produced a sizable body of literature that both recorded and addressed their era. Three of the more significant works are the Septuagint, the Apocrypha and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

- A. Septuagint[2]. Jewish legend says that 72 scholars, under the sponsorship of Ptolemy Phladelphus (c. 250 B.C.), were brought together on the island of Pharos, near Alexandria where they produced a Greek translation of the OT in 72 days. From this tradition the Latin word for 70, "Septuagint," became the name attached to the translation. The Roman numeral for 70, LXX, is used as an abbreviation for it.
1. Behind the legend lies the probability that at least the Torah (the five books of Moses) was translated into Greek c. 250 B.c. for the use of the Greek-speaking Jews of Alexandria. The rest of

the OT and some noncanonical books were also included in the LXX before the dawning of the Christian era, though it is difficult to be certain when.

2. The Septuagint quickly became the Bible of the Jews outside Palestine who, like the Alexandrians, no longer spoke Hebrew. It would be difficult to overestimate its influence. It made the Scriptures available both to the Jews who no longer spoke their ancestral language and to the entire Greek-speaking world. It later became the Bible of the early church. Also, its widespread popularity and use contributed to the retention of the Apocrypha by some branches of Christendom.
- B. Apocrypha[3]. Derived from a Greek word that means "hidden," Apocrypha has acquired the meaning "false," but in a technical sense it describes a specific body of writings. This collection consists of a variety of books and additions to canonical books that, with the exception of 2 Esdras (C. A.D. 90), were written during the intertestamental period. Their recognition as authoritative in Roman and Eastern Christianity is the result of a complex historical process.
1. The canon of the OT accepted by Protestants today was very likely established by the dawn of the second century A.D., though after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in 70. The precise scope of the OT was discussed among the Jews until the Council of Jamnia (c. 90). This Hebrew canon was not accepted by the early church, which used the Septuagint. In spite of disagreements among some of the church fathers as to which books were canonical and which were not, the Apocryphal books continued in common use by most Christians until the Reformation. During this period most Protestants decided to follow the original Hebrew canon while Rome, at the Council of Trent (1546) and more recently at the First Vatican Council (1869-70), affirmed the larger "Alexandrian" canon that includes the Apocrypha.
 2. The Apocryphal books have retained their place primarily through the weight of ecclesiastical authority, without which they would not commend themselves as canonical literature. There is no clear evidence that Jesus or the apostles ever quoted any Apocryphal works as Scripture (but see note on Jude 14). The Jewish community that produced them repudiated them, and the historical surveys in the apostolic sermons recorded in Acts completely ignore the period they cover. Even the sober, historical account of I Maccabees is tarnished by numerous errors and anachronisms.
 3. There is nothing of theological value in the Apocryphal books that cannot be duplicated in canonical Scripture, and they contain much that runs counter to its teachings. Nonetheless, this body of literature does provide a valuable source of information for the study of the intertestamental period.
- C. Dead Sea Scrolls[4]. In the spring of 1947 an Arab shepherd chanced upon a cave in the hills overlooking the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea that contained what has been called "the greatest manuscript discovery of modern times." The documents and fragments of documents found in those caves, dubbed the "Dead Sea Scrolls," included OT books, a few books of the Apocrypha, apocalyptic works, pseudepigrapha (books that purport to be the work of ancient heroes of the faith), and a *iiu@i* of books peculiar to the sect that produced them.
1. Approximately a third of the documents are Biblical, with Psalms, Deuteronomy and Isaiah—the books quoted most often in the NT—occurring most frequently. One of the most remarkable finds was a complete 24-foot-long scroll of Isaiah.
 2. The Scrolls have made a significant contribution to the quest for a form of the OT texts most accurately reflecting the original manuscripts; they provide copies 1,000 years closer to the originals than were previously known. The understanding of Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic and knowledge of the development of Judaism between the Testaments have been increased significantly. Of great importance to readers of the Bible is the demonstration of the care with which OT texts were copied, thus providing objective evidence for the general reliability of those texts.

II. Social Developments[5] The Judaism of Jesus' day is, to a large extent, the result of changes that came about in response to the pressures of the intertestamental period.

A. Diaspora. The Diaspora (dispersion) of Israel begun in the exile

accelerated during these years until a writer of the day could say that Jews filled "every land and sea." Jews outside Palestine, cut off from the temple, concentrated their religious life in the study of the Torah and the life of the synagogue (see below). The missionaries of the early church began their Gentile ministries among the Diaspora, using their Greek translation of the OT.

- B. Sadducees. In Palestine, the Greek world made its greatest impact through the party of the Sadducees. Made up of aristocrats, it became the temple party. Because of their position, the Sadducees had a vested interest in the status quo. Relatively few in number, they wielded disproportionate political power and controlled the high priesthood. They rejected all religious writings except the Torah, as well as any doctrine (such as the resurrection) not found in those five books.
- C. Synagogue. During the exile, Israel was cut off from the temple, divested of nationhood and surrounded by pagan religious practices. Her faith was threatened with extinction. Under these circumstances, the exiles turned their religious focus from what they had lost to what they retained—the Torah and the belief that they were God's people. They concentrated on the law rather than nationhood, on personal piety rather than sacramental rectitude, and on prayer as an acceptable replacement for the sacrifices denied to them. When they returned from the exile, they brought with them this new form of religious expression, as well as the synagogue (its center), and Judaism became a faith that could be practiced wherever the Torah could be carried. The emphases on personal piety and a relationship with God, which characterized synagogue worship, not only helped preserve Judaism but also prepared the way for the Christian gospel.
- D. Pharisees. As the party of the synagogue, the Pharisees strove to reinterpret the law. They built a "hedge" around it to enable Jews to live righteously before God in a world that had changed drastically since the days of Moses. Although they were comparatively few in number, the Pharisees enjoyed the support of the people and influenced popular opinion if not national policy. They were the only party to survive the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 and were the spiritual progenitors of modern Judaism.

Essenes. An almost forgotten Jewish sect until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Essenes were a small, separatist group that grew out of the conflicts of the Maccabean age. Like the Pharisees, they stressed strict legal observance, but they considered the temple priesthood corrupt and rejected much of the temple ritual and sacrificial system. Mentioned by several ancient writers, the precise nature of the Essenes is still not certain, though it is generally agreed that the Qumran community that produced the Dead Sea Scrolls was an Essene group. Because they were convinced that they were the true remnant, these Qumran Essenes had separated themselves from Judaism at large and devoted themselves to personal purity and preparation for the final war between the "Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness." They practiced an apocalyptic faith, looking back to the contributions of their "Teacher of Righteousness" and forward to the coming of two, and possibly three, Messiahs. The destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, however, seems to have delivered a death blow to their apocalyptic expectations. Attempts have been made to equate aspects of the beliefs of the Qumran community with the origins of Christianity. Some have seen a prototype of Jesus in their "Teacher of Righteousness," and both John the Baptist and Jesus have been assigned membership in the sect. There is, however, only a superficial, speculative base for these conjectures.

THE ROMANS SET THE STAGE^[6]

As those and similar sects were developing among the Jews, history was hurrying on its way. The Romans had come and were hammering loudly at the door of Empire. Three Punic wars had reduced Rome's ancient enemy Carthage to rubble, making Rome mistress of Africa and Spain. Four Macedonian wars had added Greece to the growing empire; the Mithridatic wars had brought in the Seleucid kingdom, and, with the annexation of Egypt and Palestine, the whole Mediterranean became a Roman lake. Gaul and Britain were conquered, and Europe became one great community bound together by Roman law, Roman roads, and Roman troops. The republican form of government in Rome gave way to the imperial government as the day of the Caesars dawned. And, most important of all, in a tiny corner of the spreading empire of Rome, in a little Judean town called Bethlehem, Jesus was born.

JESUS AND THE JEWS

The greatest single tragedy in the story of the Jew is his national rejection of Jesus as Messiah, Savior, and Lord. The throne rights of Jesus ran back to David both through His mother, Mary, who miraculously conceived Him, and through His foster father,

Joseph, who adopted Him (Luke 3; Matthew 1). He was Israel's true Messiah, the only Messiah she will ever have. His claims to be both Messiah and Son of God were substantiated by the sinlessness of His life, by the countless miracles He performed, by the pungency and purity of His teachings, and by His clear fulfillment of many Old Testament prophecies.

The religious Jewish establishment, however, wanted no part of Him. The rabbis were jealous of the teaching of Jesus, which was so memorable and authoritative and which was so enthusiastically hailed by the common people. The Pharisees were infuriated by the way He attacked their precious oral law, their entrenched and cumbersome traditions, and their evident hypocrisy (for example, [Matthew 12:1-14](#)). The Sadducees saw their vested interests in the Temple threatened by Jesus, and they took umbrage at His teaching concerning the spirit world and the life to come ([Matthew 22:23-32](#)).

The priests feared that His messianic teachings would bring down on the nation the wrath of Rome. The scribes and the Levites were scalded by His exposure of their insincerity. The common people flocked after Him, thrilled by His miracles, astonished at His preaching, delighted with the forthright way He exposed error, hypocrisy, and pride. A crowd, however, is never anything else but a crowd-fickle, unstable, and easily swayed. Jesus never committed Himself to crowds.

The Jewish establishment became increasingly hostile to Jesus. The various factions stopped their fighting long enough to make common cause against Him.

The Apocrypha

There are about 13 recognized books in what is known as the Apocrypha. During the years of growth the Greek culture enjoyed in Palestine, many books were written by the Jews. These books were never considered as Scriptures by Christ or the Apostles. The early church saw lessons that were profitable in some of these books. However, there is such a mixed character about these books, they have always been treated with care by the church. The great Bible teacher Harry Ironside explains the difference. "But all of these were written ere the voice of prophecy was suspended; all the books now in our Bibles, and none other, were in the Bible loved, quoted and honored by the apostles, and endorsed as divinely-given by the Lord Jesus. He expressly refers to "Daniel the prophet," and "the sign of the prophet Jonah," in language that admits of no doubt as to the high plane on which He placed their writings. But in the Maccabean age and later there were other books of instructive character, making no claim of inspiration, which the Jews have always valued, and which the early Christians sometimes read in their meetings for the sake of the lessons they contained, though with no thought of putting them on a level with the Hebrew Scriptures or the Greek New Testament." [7] The first book of the Apocrypha is known as:

1. **I Esdras**, which is the Greek for Ezra. It consists of a copy of Ezra with quite a bit of questionable materials added. This book seems to have been composed as a "PR" for Jews in oppression. It shows how God cares for His people.
2. **II Esdras** is completely different. No doubt it comes from another author. Abounding with inaccuracies and flaming with Apocalyptic themes this book shows the flavor of Daniel and Zechariah. The author was obviously enraptured with Tribulational and Millennial promises and weaves a story around them. Much of this book contradicts the Scriptures.
3. **Tobit** is purportedly an Israelite of the tribe of Naphtali, carried away by the Assyrians. As a religious romance, full of absurdities, incantations and magic this book is totally unreliable. It does teach lessons of morality and true piety. It is in this book that we find an angel called Raphael. The only two angels actually named in Scripture are Michael and Gabriel. Much like fairy tales and stories for children in our day this book was used by Jews teaching character to their children in a attention getting way.
4. **Judith** is a woman who surrenders to the Babylonians. Her beauty attracts the general. He invites her to his tent. As he sleeps she kills him and delivers the Jews. With the exception of 1 Maccabees, the book of Judith is the finest narrative-work of the Apocrypha.
5. **"The rest of Esther,"** was an attempt by someone to add chapters that mention the name of God. Although Esther does not mention the name of the Lord, it is so clearly a book tracing His Sovereign hand. The added chapters are deplorably lacking the elevated character of the Holy Scriptures.
6. The **Wisdom of Solomon** is an anonymous work attributed to David's son. Although not inspired nor as well written as the next book, it is of some value.
7. "The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, or **Ecclesiasticus**." It is "generally conceded that this choice collection of proverbs and wise sayings is, as it professes to be, the production of Jesus (the Greek form of *Joshua*) the son of Sirach, who lived in the land " almost after all the prophets," and who has here embodied the sound instruction he received as a youth from his grandfather Jesus,

- who wrote in Hebrew, and died, " leaving this book almost perfected." The grandson translated, edited, and arranged it, making no claim to inspiration; he sent it forth hoping thereby to edify his nation, confessing his liability to error, but craving an unbiased reading of the work he had prepared in Greek from the Hebrew records left by the elder Jesus. The date given is in the years of Ptolemy Euergetes; and the praise of Simon the Just, in chapter 50, shows that the writer lived during his pontificate."
8. **Baruch.** This book purports to be the words of Jeremiah's scribe. The inferior quality of writing and the dubious 6 chapters to the captives from Jeremiah make this a book of little worth. There are three tales which were added to the book of Daniel, and are given in order in the next section of the Apocrypha. The first is entitled:
 9. **"The Song of the Three Holy Children,"** gives a good insight into the piety of the Jews in the time between the testaments. The words of this book are supposed to be inserted after [Daniel 3:23](#). They were supposedly the song the 3 sang as they went unhurt through the flames.
 10. **The History of Susanna** "was published as a preface to the canonical prophecy of Daniel. Shylock's exclamation, "A Daniel come to judgment!" upon listening to Portia's wisdom, finds its explanation here. It tells the story of the attempt of two lecherous elders, first to rob a young Jewish wife of her virtue, and upon being repulsed successfully, to blackmail the object of their vile but defeated purpose. Daniel, a mere youth, appears upon the scene, and by examining each of the villains separately, causes them to contradict one another in such a way as to establish both the innocence of Susanna and their own wickedness."
 11. The third tale was added at the end of Daniel, and is called, **" The History of the Destruction of Bel and the Dragon."** Is a fictional, fairy tale-like story of Daniel defeating a dragon with pitch, fat and hair. It is a reflection of Babylonian magic, superstition and incantations. Totally opposite the purposeful miracles of God this is a legend tale of no value.
 12. The **Prayer of Manasses** purports to be the prayers of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, seeking God's favor through repentance. Although fictional it does reveal Jewish devotional thought for the period.
 13. **First Maccabees** is the historical annals recounting the wars of the Jews from the death of Alexander the Great to the pontificate of Simon the brother of Judas Maccabeus. Most current knowledge of the Jewish wars of independence traces from this book. The unknown author carries along the story with such drama and action that the whole book is quite moving. Quite evident is the author's desire to exalt the God who forgives, defends and restores His people as they return to Him in faith. As one who loved Israel's God, the writer makes no claim to being inspired of God to record this book.
 14. **Second Maccabees** is far less valuable. There is a great deal of legendary material woven into the historical record. The Roman church especially esteems this book for its reference in 12:43-45 of a sin-offering for the dead. If this event happened it is not Scriptural for anyone to follow such an improper act for another's salvation.
 15. **3rd Maccabees** is an incomplete book filled with more of the unacceptable legendary matters.
 16. **4th Maccabees**, doesn't even make it into the Apocrypha by the Council of Trent. It is basically no more than a lengthy, religious novel.

There are other works of little value (many are lost from the present) such as the Book of Enoch; the Secrets of Enoch; the Book of Jubilees; Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs; Psalms of Solomon; Sibylline Oracles; Assumption of Moses; the Apocalypse of Elijah; the Apocalypse of Zephaniah, and some others, of which early Christian Fathers make mention, but which are no longer extant, so far as is now known. Some of these were begun during the days of the Hasmoneans, and only completed in the Christian era; thus partaking of a mixed Jewish and Christian coloring. The Sibylline Oracles and the Book of Enoch are of this character.

Ironsides concludes: "It is a significant fact that in all the long years of the four silent centuries we have had before us, not so much as a psalm or any other literary product has come down to us that is worthy to be compared with the precious treasures of the Old Testament. Some, it is true, have attempted to assign Maccabean dates to some of the books of the Prophets and to several of the more recent psalms, but their guess-work theories are of no real value, and there can be little doubt that all were written when the last line of Malachi had been penned. The canon of the Jewish Scriptures was then complete. No desultory fragments were to be added in after years. When again the prophetic voice should be heard, it would be to announce the coming of Him who was the object and theme of " all the Scriptures," and whose advent in grace would be the occasion for the production of a New Testament completing the written revelation of God to man."^[8]

The reader will have little difficulty in realizing why the Saviour was not received by the covenant people. Their long years of declension had rendered them unable to recognize their Messiah when He appeared in accord with the scriptures of the Prophets. Their eyes had become blinded; their ears heavy; their hearts hardened, and their consciences seared; and so, not knowing the Scriptures, they fulfilled them in condemning the Prince of Life. Yet they were in Immanuel's land and the Holy City; gathered to the place where Jehovah's Name had been set of old. They were punctilious about the services of the temple; fond of reasoning about the Scriptures; proud of their descent from the patriarchs; and in their self-righteous complacency, despising their Gentile neighbors. But all this availed nothing when spiritual discernment was gone and religion a matter of ritual rather than of life. It is not necessary to press the lesson for our own times. He who sees it not himself would not heed it if another urged it upon him.

Abiding truths from these 400 years:

1. BLESSING: Out of dark days come some bright saints: Joseph, Mary, Simeon, Anna, Elizabeth and Zachariah are wonderful examples of this.
2. BATTLING: When we leave God behind we fail.
3. BLINDING: When we leave God out we can't even see what is right in front of us from the Lord.

**GOD ALWAYS HAS HIS SERVANTS IN EVERY GENERATION.
GOD'S SERVANTS ALWAYS SPEAK FOR HIM.
SPEAKING FOR GOD ALWAYS BRINGS BLESSINGS!**

Mary "The Magnificat" Luke 1:46-55

1. v. 46 Praising God
2. v. 47 Rejoicing in Salvation
3. v. 48 Displaying a true servantheartedness
4. v. 49 Magnifying the Lord
5. v. 50 Remembering the Mercy of the Lord
6. v. 51 Humbling before God
7. v. 52 Yielding to the Sovereignty of God
8. v. 53 Extolling the Graciousness of God
9. v. 54 Exhibiting Loyalty to God
10. v. 55 Trusting the Enduring Commitment of God to His own

Zacharius' Benedictus Luke 1:68-79

1. v. 68 Worshiping God's Redemption
2. v. 69 Praising the Lord's Salvation
3. v. 70 Seeing God's Revelation of Himself
4. v. 71 Rejoicing in the Deliverence of the Lord
5. v. 72 Resting in the Mercy of the Lord
6. v. 73 Remembering the Covenant Loyalty of God
7. v. 74 Serving the Lord
8. v. 75 Living a Holy Life to God
9. v. 76 Tracing the Fulfillment of God's Promises
10. v. 77 Extolling the Forgiveness of God
11. v. 78 Hoping in Christ as the Sunrise
12. v. 79 Experiencing the Peace of God

Simeon's Nunc Dimitis Luke 2:25-32

1. v. 25: Holy Life, Patient Life, Consecrated Life ("Holy Spirit")
2. v. 26 Spirit Illumined Life
3. v. 27 Spirit led life
4. v. 28 Worship Energized Life
5. v. 29 Rejoiced in Bondslavery to God
6. v. 30 Trusted in Salvation through Christ
7. v. 31 Saw the Message of Good News to the world
8. v. 32 Understood Christ was the Light of the world

Anna's Holy Service Luke 2:36-38

Anna had a Spirit Led Walk, all her life was in God's Hands:

1. Her age: The Duration of Life

2. Her Husband: The Decisions of Life
3. Her Widowhood: The Deprivations of Life
4. Her Temple Ministry: The Destination of Life
5. Her Time was God's: she served
6. Her Feet were God's: she came that instant
7. Her Heart was God's: she gave thanks
8. Her Lips were God's: she spoke for God

[1] NIV Study Bible, p. 1431-33.

[2] NIV Study Bible, p. 1431-33.

[3] NIV Study Bible, p. 1431-33.

[4] NIV Study Bible, p. 1431-33.

[5] NIV Study Bible, p. 1431-33.

[6] Phillips, Exploring the World of the Jew, p. 34-36.

[7] Ironside, 400 Silent Years, p 96.

[8] Ironside, 400 Silent Years, p. 103.

[9] Ironside, 400 Silent Years, p. 94.

[1]

[1] NIV Study Bible, p. 1320.

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