

BAC Podcast Notes

Episode 8: "The Silent Period"

This week's episode covers the 400+ years (the "Silent Period") between the Old and New Testaments.

- The last books of the Old Testament (Malachi and Ezra–Nehemiah) were written around 430 BC
- Jesus was likely born around 4 BC
- The 400+ years in between are referred to as the "Silent Period" because there were no inspired prophets or words from God during this time
- But God was still at work to prepare the way for his Son and his Gospel

Historical Context of the Silent Period

- Israel had been under foreign rule/influence for many years
 - Egypt (enslaved Israel for 400 years)
 - Assyria (conquered Israel in 722 BC)
 - Babylon (conquered Judah in 586 BC)
 - Persia (allowed God's people to return to the land)
 - Greece (conquered Persia)
 - Rome (conquered Greece)
- God used these historical developments to prepare the way for his Gospel
 - Greeks:
 - Attempted to install Greek culture and language in every city in the region
 - **Result:** This allowed the Gospel to later spread throughout the region without a language barrier, and it allowed the New Testament books (which were written in Greek) to be widely circulated
 - Romans:
 - Brought political stability to a volatile region
 - Established extensive road networks
 - Gave certain rights to Roman citizens
 - **Result:** Allowed Paul and the early Christians to easily travel throughout the Roman Empire with some measure of protection

Theological Context of the Silent Period

- Some Israelites returned to Jerusalem and the surrounding area after exile, but many remained scattered throughout the region
- The religion of the Jews began to undergo changes
 - Instead of the Temple being the primary place of worship, local places of worship and learning, called "synagogues," were developed
 - Teachers, called "Rabbis," became prominent in local synagogues
 - Since Judaism was less centralized, new interpretations of Scripture and new traditions formed
 - New religious "parties" like the Pharisees and Sadducees formed
 - **Result:** The development of synagogues gave the Apostle Paul a starting point for missions in new areas (a place for him to teach and discuss Scripture in light of Jesus)

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Quarter 1, Episode 12: "The Silent Period"

The "Apocrypha," or "Apocryphal Books," refer to 14 books written between the time of the Old Testament and New Testament.

- **The Apocryphal Books**
 - 1–2 Esdras
 - Tobit
 - Judith
 - Additions to Esther
 - Wisdom of Solomon
 - Ecclesiasticus
 - Baruch
 - Song of Three Young Men
 - Susanna
 - Bel and the Dragon
 - Prayer of Manasseh
 - 1–2 Maccabees
- These books are not considered part of Scripture by Protestant Christians...why?
 - They contain historical/geographical and doctrinal inaccuracies (e.g., salvation by works, creation out of pre-existent matter, prayers for the dead)
 - They don't claim authority for themselves or claim to be the Word of God (and they point to there being no inspired words from God after the close of the Old Testament period)
 - They were not regarded as divine by the Jews, from whom the books originated
 - There were no disputes between Jesus and the Jews over which books are in the Old Testament
 - Jesus and the NT authors directly quote the Old Testament about 300 times (with many other indirect references); however, they never quote or reference the Apocrypha