

Introduction to the

Intertestamental Period

400+ years between OT and NT. Malachi and Matthew

Galatians 4:4

“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law...”

What is 400 years? It is a long time in which lots of things can change. In 1611 Henry Hudson died somewhere near Hudson Bay. In 2001 the Twins Towers were destroyed on 9/11/01, just short of 400 years. A lot had changed in those 400 years. So it was with the 400 years between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament. That period began around 433 BC and ended about 5 BC with the birth of Christ.

Malachi 4:5-6 end with ...

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

The Book of Daniel gives us great insight to this period as he predicts the kings and kingdoms leading up to Messiah and the end of days. Daniel 2:36-45 predict four kingdoms to follow Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel 7:2-27 reveals a vision of four beast representing four kingdoms which are like a Bear, a Lion, a Leopard and a Great Monster. Then in Daniel 8:15-25 there is a vision of a Ram and a Goat, again predicting the kingdoms to come. Finally, Daniel himself sought to understand the end times and is given a vision with specific dates in Daniel 9 leading us to the all important 70 weeks (weeks of years or 490 years) of Daniel until the coming of Messiah. (Daniel 9:20-27)

The book of Revelation picks up the same numerical issues of the end times predicting the kings and Kingdoms of the antichrist and the end. All these prophecies show us that God wanted His people to know He was in charge and already knows the end from the beginning. (Revelation 12-18) Certainly God sealed up some of His secrets as we read in Daniel 9:24 and in Revelation 10:4 *And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, **Seal up** those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.*

Gaps or pauses in God’s timeline. In these prophecies of kings and kingdoms there are “gaps.” By “gaps” we understand that God, in His perfect plan, planned for interruptions of the chronology for His purposes.

Thus there is the 400 years of prophetic silence before the coming of John the Baptist and Christ. Then there is the 70 week of Daniel that is suspended in the 69th week when Messiah is cut off, only for the clock to restart again at the appearance of antichrist. Then Jesus himself spoke of the “*time of the gentiles being fulfilled*” (Luke 21:24) and Paul

spoke of the “*fullness of the gentiles*” (Romans 11:25) as an extended time of grace in which God harvests the salvation of the gentile world while Israel is put on hold. And Peter also indicates this delay in the fulfillment of God’s time clock when he said,

*“The Lord is not **slack** concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”* (2Peter 3:9)

God has not chosen to reveal to us all things concerning the end times but what He has revealed are so that we may estimate the process of time and be ready for the coming of the Lord with power and glory.

Deuteronomy 29:29 ***The secret things*** belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

The Intertestamental Period is directly related to the first and second comings of the Lord. Therefore we would be wise to study and understand history as it unfolds so that we might know the times and seasons and that the coming of the Lord is drawing near.

Understanding the **Intertestamental Period** will help us understand some of the events of the New Testament, because we must understand that with the opening of Matthew the world was significantly different than what it was in Malachi’s day.

Footnotes

Luke 21:24 *And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down **of the Gentiles**, until the times **of the Gentiles** be fulfilled.*

Romans 11:25 *For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness **of the Gentiles** be come in.*

Daniel 9:24 *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to **seal up** the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.*

Revelation 10:4 *And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, **Seal up** those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.*

Acts 1:7 *And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which **the Father has** put in his own power.*

- Amos 3:6 *Is there evil in the city and the Lord has not done it? (ordered it)*
- Psalm 135:6 *The Lord does all that he pleases in heaven and earth*
- Psalm 115:3 *The Lord does all that he pleases in heaven and earth*
- Daniel 2:21 – *God sets the times and seasons, and sets up and deposes kings*
- Daniel 4:34-35 *He does his will in heaven and earth and not man can say, what are you doing?*