

## ***PROMISED LAND 2: Lesson Fourteen, Looking It Over*** ***1 Samuel 13 – Malachi and the Inter-testamental Period***

**Subject:** Overview of Old Testament and Inter-testamental history, emphasizing the anticipation of Messiah.

**Main Idea:** Old Testament and Inter-testamental history prove that Messiah was mankind's only real hope.

**Principles:**

1. *Left to us, the human race is without hope of making any true, permanent progress in solving our biggest problem.*
2. *God sent His Messiah when the set time had fully come (Galatians 4:4).*

### **Introduction**

With this lesson, we conclude the *Promised Land 2* study and our study of the Old Testament. In introducing this study, just fifteen weeks ago, I told the story of watching my neighbor try to free her car after it became stuck on her ice-covered driveway. I shared that the picture of my neighbor's vehicle was a reminder that, over the course of my life, I too have sometimes felt stuck. I work to change a habit or attitude and the "vehicle" creeps forward a bit, only to slide back to its former position. I used the story to illustrate a truth about Old Testament history. In one sense, it is the story of just how stuck humankind has been with regard to long-term moral progress.

As we have learned, the Old Testament particularly focuses on the Jewish people, and their history illustrates this very point. One individual or generation would do well, but the next would plummet to a new moral depth. One purpose of this discussion is to consider whether God's people (not to speak of those who had no knowledge of Him) were ever able to make any real progress in solving their deepest need over thousands of years of history. To the casual reader, the situation appears hopeless. But not to those who have unlocked the mystery of the Old Testament, those who have found the hope of Messiah woven like a golden thread through every book. He is God's ultimate promise, God's plan, to restore us to the freedom in which we were created. So, a second purpose is to trace the hope that God promised, the hope of Messiah.

People have always needed hope. The question of whether mankind is capable of solving their own moral dilemma is an important one. First, let's look back at the Old Testament to see whether the Jewish people made any lasting moral progress. Then, we will consider what kind of progress was made, if any, during the 400 years between our Old and New Testaments and how God was working in that time in history to bring His promise-plan to fruition. In the end, I believe you will conclude, along with me, that mankind was stuck and Old Testament and Inter-testamental history point to Messiah as the only real hope.

## I. Old Testament History in Review

### A. Primeval Biblical History, the Patriarchs, the Exodus, and the Settlement

- i. Genesis through Deuteronomy: Immediately after Adam and Eve's fall into sin, we learn that Eve bore two sons. This is hopeful! And yet, the very same chapter (Genesis 4) records the story of one son murdering the other. A third son, Seth, had righteous descendants. Nevertheless, within a few generations, human beings had become so wicked that every inclination of their hearts was only evil all the time (Genesis 6:5). The Flood cleansed the earth, leaving only righteous Noah and his family to repopulate it, yet soon after, mankind defied God's instructions to *fill* the earth (Genesis 9:1) and instead, *settled* in cities (Genesis 10:1-11, 11:1-4). Abraham, a man of great faith, received God's promises, yet the Israelites, his descendants, rebelled against the Lord and refused to enter the land God promised them (Numbers 14).
- ii. Joshua through Judges: The subsequent generation of Israelites recommitted themselves to God's covenant (Joshua 8:30-35) and entered the Promised Land, yet their children and grandchildren fell into a cycle of idolatry and apostasy throughout the period of the Judges (Judges 2:10-19).
- iii. 1 Samuel: God gave Israel a wise leader in Samuel, but the Israelites rejected Samuel and the Lord's theocratic rule because they wanted to be like the pagan nations around them and have a human king to lead them (1 Samuel 8:5-20). Like a vehicle stuck in snow and ice, the Israelites crept forward morally only to roll right back into the ditch of sin. Did the situation improve?

**B. The United and Divided Kingdoms** – 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, and the Prophets: In our *Promised Land 2* study, we saw Israel reach a new spiritual zenith under King David. Within just two generations, in the time of his grandson Rehoboam, the kingdom divided into two. Prophets like Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, and Jeremiah modeled faithfulness to the Lord and pointed the Israelites to God, but Israel's kings ignored God's messengers almost entirely. Many kings of Judah also ignored them. Periods of revival occurred in Judah under Hezekiah and Josiah, but under the sons of these kings, Judah stooped to new moral lows. Eventually, most of the people of the Northern and Southern kingdoms were judged by God and sent out of the Promised Land into exile. It seems that once sin entered the world, no one was able to make lasting moral progress, including God's own people. Sin had corrupted the human heart and apart from God's intervention, our situation would have remained hopeless. But there is one last period of Old Testament history: the judgment and resulting exile of the Jews, and the post-exilic restoration period, in which some resettled a portion of their land.

### C. The Periods of Exile and Restoration:

- i. Positive Outcomes of the Exile: How did the Exile impact the people of Israel? Did it better them? In some senses, it did. The Exile was a time of introspection, as Psalm 74 reflects: “*Why have you rejected us forever, O God? ...We are given no miraculous signs; no prophets are left, and none of us knows how long this will be.*” Apparently, a remnant of the exiled Jews realized the preciousness of what they had lost. God’s promises and God’s Temple were what had shaped them as a people. Apart from these, they had no unique identity.<sup>1</sup> The Exiles were left to ponder the promises of the land and the Messiah, how they could worship without a Temple, and whether they had a future as God’s unique people. Several positive things seem to have resulted from such introspection.
  1. *The Development of Synagogues*: After the destruction of the Temple, Jewish communities needed a place to gather for socializing, worship, and instruction. The gathering of elders at Ezekiel’s home may be an example of how synagogues started. “Synagogue” means “gathering.” From their experience in Exile, the Jews gained some sense that God could be worshipped outside the Temple. Perhaps for the first time, many understood that God was not limited to the geographical boundaries of the Promised Land or by the walls of the Temple (1 Kings 8:27). Even after the Temple was rebuilt, synagogues continued to exist as places for local worship and instruction. By the first century, most communities had at least one synagogue. Wherever there were as many as ten Jewish men, a synagogue was established. Since sacrifices could not be offered anywhere except the Temple, synagogues were never intended as substitutes. Nevertheless, they were still a gathering place for reading and teaching the Scriptures.
  2. *The Collection, Organization, and Transmission of Scripture*: A second positive impact of the Exile was the collection, organization and transmission of the Scriptures.
    - a. The Jews’ exile proved their failure to keep the Mosaic Covenant. Therefore, study and consideration of *Law* suddenly took on new importance. In addition, while in Exile, the Jews finally recognized *the words of the prophets* as scripture. The prophet’s predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple and the people’s exile had all been fulfilled, vindicating them and proving that their words were indeed God’s messages.

- b. As a result, the Exile became the occasion for collecting and organizing the books of the Hebrew Bible, our Old Testament. During the exile, the books of Deuteronomy through Kings were edited and assembled. After the Exile, Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah were written to remind God's people of the lessons from their past. Esther, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi were also written. This work of gathering a canon of recognized scripture paved the way for a similar process in the New Testament era.
    - c. The growing emphasis on the importance of God's word also resulted in the origination of a class of religious leaders known as *scribes*. The scribes carefully studied, copied and interpreted the law.
  3. *The End of Idolatry*: A third positive result of the Jews' realization that the prophets' warning had been ignored was the complete elimination of idolatry from their community (idolatry in the sense of worshipping pagan gods and their images). Since the time of the Exile, the Jews have been tenaciously monotheistic.
- ii. No Real Progress
  1. *Legalism*: Although the Exile certainly had some positive outcomes, it could not and did not change the human heart. The consequences of their earlier failures drove some Jews to devote themselves to strict Law observance. However, their self-effort only led to legalism. Eventually, the scribes and other religious leaders began insisting that their interpretations of the Law carried the same weight as the Scriptures. By Jesus' day, most religious Jews knew a great deal about ritual, but Jesus criticized their traditions and indicated that even the most devout among them were not righteous enough to enter heaven (Matthew 5:20). No amount of self-effort could correct the corrupt condition of the human heart.
  2. *Unchanged Behavior*: When given the opportunity to return to Judea, only a small remnant of the exiles was interested in doing so. Even they returned only at God's initiative, (Ezra 1:5), not because they had become intrinsically more spiritual. Shortly after their return, Ezra and Nehemiah chastened them for intermarriage with pagans, ignoring the Sabbath, refusing to tithe, ignoring social justice, and apathy toward God's priorities. God's people had learned some lessons, but in many ways, they were still repeating the same mistakes.

3. *Concept of Messiah*: Introspection and examination of the Scriptures caused some of the Exiles to anticipate Messiah more greatly than ever. Thus far, all human agencies had failed them. Subjection to the Babylonians, Persians, and later the Greeks and Romans, led them to value political deliverance more highly than spiritual deliverance. Many came to think of Messiah solely in political terms, someone who would free them from their oppressors and usher in a glorious revival of the Solomonic kingdom. As a result, prior to Jesus' resurrection, even his own disciples were at times disappointed (Matthew 11:2-3, 20:20-28) and even after His resurrection, most religious Jews refused to believe He could have been Messiah (Matthew 27:62-66, 28:11-15; Acts 5:40).

**Summary Statement:** Over thousands of years of Old Testament history, mankind was unable to fix their greatest problem, the problem of sin.

**Principle:** *Left to us, the human race is without hope of making any true, permanent progress in solving our biggest problem.*

Every religion suggests its own solution to evil. The Mosaic Law pointed people in the right direction, but no one was able to fully obey it. Some teach that the answer lies within us. One Christian commentator explains the philosophy this way: "There is no place other than oneself to seek an answer to life's issues because we have the 'divine' within to consult – our inner guide... This concept of truth lying deep within each of us, as if it were our genetic code, is likened to the idea that 'God' resides within each of us as an inner guide to show us the way to all truth. There is one truth, but many ways to discover it. You may choose the Christian path; another may choose the Buddhist path, or the Hindu path. It makes little or no difference which path one chooses... they all lead the inquirer to the same truth. God lies within you as your highest self." <sup>ii</sup>

Surely one purpose of Old Testament history is to prove that, over thousands of years, humankind was *unable* to save themselves.

**Application:** After 60 years of life, I am finally convinced that I am not trustworthy or capable of fixing my undisciplined habits, improving my prayer life, more effectively using my gifts and abilities, or bettering my relationships on my own. Yet, I find myself falling back into the trap of self-effort time and again. Do you hope to improve yourself? If so, you are no doubt experiencing great frustration. Jesus is our only hope for Heaven, and He is also our only hope in this life.

**Transition:** The Old Testament closes with Persian kings overseeing the known world.

We turn the page to the New Testament and find Caesar Augustus (the founder of the Roman Empire) issuing a decree that a census be conducted, one that forced a man named Joseph and his fiancée Mary to make a trip. Four hundred years have passed since the end of the Old Testament. Some call these the “Four Hundred Silent Years” since no new oral or written revelation from God was given during this time. Nevertheless, God was at work, setting the stage of history for the coming Messiah.

## II. The Inter-Testamental Period

### A. End of Persian Rule and Alexander’s Successors

- i. End of Persian Rule: The Jewish Exiles had been permitted to return and rebuild Jerusalem by Cyrus the Great, King of the Persian Empire. Darius is the last Persian ruler mentioned in the Old Testament. Up to this time, the world powers had either come from Asia or Africa (Sumerians, Egyptians, Hittites, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians).
- ii. Alexander the Great: By the time of the Persian ruler Xerxes, the European Greeks were a force to be reckoned with. After the assassination of Philip II of Greece in 336 B.C., Philip’s son Alexander (the Great) came to power at age 20.
  1. *New Unity*: The philosopher Aristotle tutored Alexander until he was sixteen. Alexander believed so strongly in the superiority of Greek culture that he set out to Hellenize the world. He has been called the “Apostle of Hellenism” (Greek culture). As a result of his campaign, the world experienced a unity it had not previously known. By 334 B.C., Alexander had conquered the Persian Empire, Palestine, and Egypt and had his sights set on India.
  2. *Greek Cities and Colonies*: Alexander established Greek cities and colonies throughout the territories he conquered. In Egypt, he established the city of Alexandria, which became the residence of kings of Egypt for the next 200 years. A very large population of Jewish exiles lived in Alexandria.
  3. *Unified Language*: An important part of Alexander’s campaign was to make Greek the common language. Native Greeks spoke classical Greek, but those who were not natives spoke Koine Greek (Koine means “common” or “profane”). The Jews of Jesus’ day spoke Aramaic (which they had learned in Persia) and Greek (as a result of Hellenization). Hebrew was not a dead language. In fact, some Jews responded to Hellenism by instituting a system of universal education in which all Hebrew boys were taught to read the Scriptures in Hebrew.<sup>iii</sup> Yet, Koine Greek was so common that it became the language of the New Testament. The existence of a universal language was one reason that news of Jesus and His work spread so quickly in the first century. God had prepared the world for Messiah.

4. *Alexander's Death*: Alexander died an untimely death in 323 B.C. Four of Alexander's generals, Cassander, Ptolemy, Seleucus, and Lysimachus, each ruled a portion of the Greek Empire. Ptolemy chose the land of Egypt and Seleucus took control of Babylonia and Syria. Palestine lay between them and the two generals and their descendants (the Ptolemies and the Seleucids) battled over Palestine throughout the third century. Daniel foretold many details of the ongoing struggle (Daniel 11).
- iii. Ptolemies (of Egypt)
    1. *Social and Economic Patterns*: Under the Ptolemies, the Jews were allowed to live in peace and continue their religious and cultural traditions. The high priests managed local affairs. However, tribute was paid to the king (the Ptolemies in Egypt). The economic and social patterns that developed at this time continued into the New Testament period. Jesus' parables referring to large landowners, tenants, moneylenders, tax collectors, and land leasing reflect these patterns.<sup>iv</sup>
    2. *Inter-testamental Jewish writings*
      - a. *The Septuagint*: During the years Palestine was ruled by the Ptolemies, a group of Jewish scholars living in Alexandria translated the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament) into Greek. This translation is known as the Septuagint (meaning "the Seventy"). The name comes from the unverifiable tradition that 72 scholars were involved and that it was translated in 72 days.
      - b. *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*
        - i. In addition, many books of the Apocrypha were written. "Apocrypha" means "hidden away." There are several traditions about why these books were considered "hidden," but the Latin church father Jerome related it to the fact that none of them were included in the Hebrew canon. The Jewish synagogue considered them uninspired. Additionally, some of their authors disclaim inspiration.<sup>v</sup>
        - ii. The books of the Apocrypha were written between 200 B.C. and 100 A.D., and are therefore divided between Old Testament and New Testament Apocrypha. Catholics accept a number of the Old Testament apocryphal books as inspired and authoritative, while Protestants do not. No church regards the New Testament apocryphal books as authoritative.

- iii. Among the Old Testament apocryphal works included in the Catholic Bible are the Books of the Maccabees, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, the Wisdom of Solomon, Tobit, and Judith. Some of these include stories about Biblical characters such as Zerubbabel, Daniel, and Daniel’s three friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The First Book of Maccabees is considered a generally reliable historical account of the successful rebellion of the Jews against the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes.
  - iv. Many other Jewish writings from this period are classified as Pseudepigrapha (a term meaning “false writings,” in the sense that their authorship was fictitiously attributed to notable personalities). Like the Apocrypha, many books of the Pseudepigrapha shed light on the Jewish background of the New Testament, yet unlike the Apocrypha, none of the books of the Pseudepigrapha has ever been considered a possible part of the Canon by any church.
- c. *The Dead Sea Scrolls*: In addition to the Jewish Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, a third group of writings that dates to the Inter-testamental period are popularly known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. They include Old Testament manuscripts, commentaries on the biblical books, and other writings.
- iv. Seleucids (of Syria)
1. In 198 B.C., the Seleucids gained the upper hand in the struggle to control Palestine and they continued to control the region until 167 B.C. The Seleucids were not as tolerant of the Jews and their independent religious practices as the Ptolemies had been. The worst of the lot was the ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes, known to the Jews as “The Madman.” Prior to Antiochus’ reign, the high priestly office had been hereditary and held for life. However, Antiochus accepted bribes from those who coveted the position and appointed them into the office.
  2. Antiochus marched into Jerusalem on a Sabbath day, when he knew the Jews would not lift their hands to oppose him, and slaughtered large numbers of Jews, destroyed the city walls, and sacrificed a pig on the altar of the Temple (desecrating it). He then set up a fortress to ensure the Jews were kept under a close watch. Antiochus was determined to Hellenize Palestine, even if he had to do so by force. He ordered all copies of the Law to be burned and insisted that only Greek gods be worshipped. Under penalty of death, he forbade

circumcision and Sabbath observance. Jews who refused to eat pork were flogged to death. However, the severity of his practices only fueled zeal for resistance among the Jews and ultimately led to the Maccabean Revolt.

## **B. The Maccabean Revolt**

### **i. Mattathias' Defiance**

1. In 168 B.C., in the obscure village of Modein, eight miles northwest of Jerusalem, some of Antiochus' emissaries erected a pagan altar. The Jews of the village were told to come forward and prove their loyalty to the government by offering a sacrifice on the altar. Mattathias, the elderly priest of the village, refused. However, a more timid Jew who feared Antiochus' wrath made his way to the altar. This enraged Mattathias so that he slew the apostate Jew and also Antiochus' emissary. With the help of his five sons, Mattathias destroyed the altar and fled to the hills to avoid the anticipated consequences.
2. Antiochus' forced Hellenization had especially incensed the strict, pious, orthodox Jews known *Hasidim*. In Mattathias, the orthodox Jews found the leader for which they had been waiting. Some of them joined Mattathias' family in their hideout. The band of rebels began raiding the towns and villages of Palestine, killing the royal officers of Antiochus and the Hellenistic Jews who supported him.

### **ii. Judas' Leadership**

1. Leadership of the band quickly fell to the third son of Mattathias, Judas who was nicknamed "Maccabeus" (meaning "the Hammerer," probably because of his success in battle). Thus, the guerrilla warfare became known as the Maccabean Revolt.
2. Judas fought against an enemy that greatly outnumbered him. Initially, the Syrian Seleucids underestimated the strength of the revolt. As the Maccabees continued to win battles against all odds, Antiochus finally sent Lysias, his best general, to put an end to the disturbance. However, by a surprise night attack, Judas annihilated the Syrian army and was able to gain control of Jerusalem.
3. The Maccabees removed all signs of paganism from the Lord's Temple, and beginning on December 25, 165 B.C., they observed an eight-day feast of rededication, known as the "Festival of Lights," or "Hanukkah." Hanukkah has continued to be observed by Jews as a remembrance of the rededication that followed the three-year period in which the Temple had been desecrated.

- iii. Sadducees and Pharisees: The Maccabean dynastic rulers were known as Hasmoneans (named for Mattathias' grandfather). They were priests but also kings for over 100 years, until 63 B.C. Judas was succeeded by Jonathan, Simon, and John Hyrcanus. Under John Hyrcanus, the *Sadducees* and *Pharisees* had their beginnings. The more progressive, Hellenistic, religious leaders became known as Sadducees. The strict, orthodox Jewish religious leaders became known as Pharisees.

### C. Roman Rule

- i. Pompey's Subjection of Judea: During these years, the power of the Roman Republic was on the rise. By 100 B.C., the Romans controlled Macedonia, Greece and much of Asia. Pompey, the Roman general responsible for Rome's control of the east, learned of the death of a Maccabean ruler named Alexander Jannaeus and of the power struggle ensuing between his sons. After investigating the situation, he learned that one of Alexander's sons (Aristobulus) intended to revolt against Rome. Pompey immediately besieged Jerusalem. However, the battle was not easily won. While Aristobulus led the fighting against Rome, one of his brothers (Hyrcanus II) supported Pompey. Before the fighting ended, 12,000 Jews were killed. In 63 B.C., Jerusalem and Judea became the subjects of Rome.
- ii. Antipater's Political Involvement
1. Under the Romans (and in the time of Christ), Palestine was divided into three regions: Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. Hyrcanus II, the Maccabean who had supported Pompey, was rewarded for his loyalty by being made governor of these regions.
  2. Additionally, a group of Jewish elders known as the *Sanhedrin* gained Roman recognition and approval. The Sanhedrin was comprised of 71 members plus the high priest, totally 72. Rome also vested the Sanhedrin with legislative and judicial authority.
  3. As it turned out, Hyrcanus relied heavily on an Idumean (from the land of Edom) friend named Antipater. Antipater began seeking increased power for himself and also positions of influence for his sons, one of whom was named Herod. Herod was half Idumean and half Jewish.
- iii. Herod the Great
1. When the Roman emperor Julius Caesar was murdered in 44 B.C., Antipater and his sons proved their loyalty to the new Roman emperor. One result was that Herod was given the titles "Procurator of Judea" and "King of the Jews."

2. Herod served as Rome's appointed ruler of Judea from 37 to 4 B.C. He is known in the Bible as the king who feared the birth of a rival and had the infants of Bethlehem murdered. However, Herod is known in history for his building programs. He spent nine-and-a-half years expanding the Temple, but work on the surrounding buildings was still going on in Jesus' day (John 2:20). Among his many other projects, Herod built an amphitheater, a hippodrome, the fortress at Masada, and a health resort in Jericho. He built or rebuilt whole cities (such as Samaria) and established a seaport at Caesarea.
3. Despite all his building projects, the Jews hated Herod for his tyrannical rule. The last of the Hasmonean males died during Herod's reign. Herod's three sons, Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Herod Philip, succeeded him. However, within a few years, other Roman procurators, such as Pontius Pilate, Felix, and Festus, replaced the Herods.
- iv. **Roman Roads:** One significant development credited to the Romans was their extensive road systems. "At the peak of Rome's development, no fewer than 29 great military highways radiated from the capital, and the late Empire's 113 provinces were interconnected by 372 great roads. The whole comprised more than 400,000 km of roads, of which over 80,500 kilometers (50,000 miles) were stone-paved... The courses (and sometimes the surfaces) of many Roman roads survived for millennia. Some are overlaid by modern roads."<sup>vi</sup> Of course, these roads were built for the movement of armies and for commercial enterprise, but God had another purpose for them. The Roman roads facilitated the rapid and widespread communication of the Gospel after Christ's ascension. Thus, the common Greek language and the Roman roads were part of God's preparation for the coming of Messiah.

#### **D. Anticipation of Messiah**

- i. **Foretold in the Scriptures:** In addition to the Roman roads and common Greek language, God had also prepared the world for the coming Messiah through the testimony of the Scriptures. Messiah means "anointed one." In the Old Testament, priests and kings were anointed with oil, consecrating them for their office. The term "Messiah" only appears twice in the Old Testament, both times in the book of Daniel (9:25, 26 [Anointed One]). Of course, the first great promise of Messiah can be traced back to Genesis 3:15, and it was followed by more definite and fuller promises.

1. In Genesis, He is the seed of the woman (3:15), the Seed of Abraham (12:3), the Seed of Isaac (17:19), and of the tribe of Judah (49:10).
2. In the rest of the Law, He is the Passover Lamb whose bones were not broken (Exodus 12:46); the Serpent to whom the wandering Israelites looked, in faith, for healing in the wilderness (Numbers 21:8-9); and the Prophet to be listened to (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19).
3. In Joshua, He is Commander of the Lord's Army (5:13-14) and in Ruth, we see Him pictured as the ultimate Kinsman-Redeemer (2:20, 3:9, 4:14).
4. In the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, He is the royal Son of David (2 Samuel 7:12-13, 16, 25-26, 1 Chronicles 17:11-14, 23-27, 2 Chronicles 21:7).
5. In the books of poetry and wisdom, He is Job's living Redeemer (Job 19:25-27) and a priest like Melchizedek (Psalm 110:1-7).
6. In the prophets, He is the King of Righteousness and Justice (Isaiah 32:1-4); the Healer of the blind, deaf, and lame (Isaiah 35:4-10); the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53); the Administrator of the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34); the Good Shepherd (Ezekiel 34:23-24); and the One whose kingdom would never be destroyed, given authority, glory, and sovereign power, and worshipped by men of every language (Daniel 7:13-14).

These promises kept the Jewish hope of Messiah alive from generation to generation.

ii. Anticipated as a King and High Priest

1. During the Exile and in later centuries, the Jews began to long for the return of a Davidic king. One of the clearest expressions of the continuing hope can be found in the Pseudepigraphal work *Psalms of Solomon* (17–18) (70–40 B.C.) “There, Messiah was a warrior-prince who would expel the hated Romans from Israel and bring in a kingdom in which the Jews would be promoted to world dominion.”<sup>vii</sup>
2. After the exile, the high priests were often the primary leaders of the Jews. Under divine direction, Zechariah crowned the priest Jeshua, stating prophetically, “Here is the man whose name is the Branch... It is He who will build the temple of the Lord and He will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on His throne. And He will be a priest on His throne. And there will be harmony between the two” (6:12-13).

3. Thus, in the exilic and postexilic periods, the expectation of Messiah as priest and king came into focus, although, as the passage in Psalms of Solomon indicates, the kingly role as political deliverer from Rome was often more in view.

**Summary Statement:** The 400 “Silent Years” were years in which God was preparing the world for His Messiah, just as He had been doing since the time of the Fall. And “when the set time had fully come, God sent His son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those under the Law, that we might receive adoption to sonship” (Galatians 4:4).

**Principle:** *God sent His Messiah when the set time had fully come (Galatians 4:4).*

### Conclusion

The root of all of our problems lies in our own hearts and we are unable to reform ourselves. Our only hope is that Someone greater could effect a radical change within us. An extreme measure was needed, unlike anything that had ever been tried or witnessed in human history. God took that extreme measure by putting on human flesh and coming to live among us as our substitute. Jesus lived the righteous life we could never live and died to pay a debt we could never pay. He bought our salvation and paid the full price Himself.

Jesus, Messiah and Deliverer, is the hope anticipated in the Old Testament and the hope fulfilled in the New Testament. Paul wrote,

*Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. (2 Corinthians 3:12-16).*

Those for whom the veil has been removed see Jesus standing at the center of the Old Testament and New Testament alike. He is the hope of the world and the answer to our every problem.

I invite you to join in studying the life of Jesus in *Gospels*, our next *GOD of the WORD* study.

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- <sup>ii</sup> Wise, Russ. Oprah Winfrey: The Oprahfication of America. [www.christianinformation.org](http://www.christianinformation.org), 11/23/05
- <sup>iii</sup> Dockery, D. S., Butler, T. C., Church, C. L., Scott, L. L., Ellis Smith, M. A., White, J. E., & Holman Bible Publishers (Nashville, T. (1992). *Holman Bible Handbook* (p. 505). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.
- <sup>iv</sup> Dockery, D. S., Butler, T. C., Church, C. L., Scott, L. L., Ellis Smith, M. A., White, J. E., & Holman Bible Publishers (Nashville, T. (1992). *Holman Bible Handbook* (p. 506). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.
- <sup>v</sup> Metzger, Bruce (1979). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary Introductory Articles*, Vol 1 (p. 162). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- <sup>vi</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_roads](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_roads)
- <sup>vii</sup> Martin, R. P. (2003). Messiah. In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (p. 1111). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.