

## *Source for the study on Jesus:*

### **The Word of God**

It is the only recorded words of God given to man. It is the voice of God.

It is the story of God – of who He is and how He works with mankind.

It is a story of God's relentless pursuit to bring us back to Him, to restore and redeem us, and to fight for us (good vs evil).

It records God's promises to us, and gives real-life examples of people not so different from us.

It contains one of the oldest written historical texts of mankind, and has sold more copies than any other book in the world.

It is the ONLY book that answers the four basic questions in life: origin, meaning, morality, and destiny.

The Bible is complete, and shows that God did not plan on us doing life alone.

It is a source of hope, peace, encouragement, and moves us to action.

## *Historical Period and Events Leading up to Jesus:*

**400 Years of Silence between Old Testament and New Testament** – No word from God and no prophets, but lots of activity through the introduction of Synagogues, Pharisees, Sadducees, Sanhedrin, Scribes, and many man-made rules. There are new empires, new languages, new religious orders, and new ways of doing things. The people are in a waiting period - waiting for the coming of the Messiah.

**Timeline: 425 BC – 1 AD**

- The people have returned from exile (from Assyrians/Babylonians/Persians) and rebuilt the temple under Zerubbabel, who is Governor of Judah and from the line of David. This begins the second temple period.
- 424 BC – Malachi is the last writing prophet, and the final message and warning given. It is the last appeal of the OT for Judah to repent and return to God.  
*"Your words have been arrogant against Me,"* says the Lord. Malachi 3:13 (pride)

### **400 years later...**

- Israelites are now called Jews.
- Only Jerusalem and the surrounding area is left for the Jews. The region is now called Judea. High Priests and Prophets are gone. They are replaced with a Chief Priest, Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Sanhedrin (Jewish legislature). The Synagogue is a new institution used for Torah study and prayer.
- The Priests became paid positions instead of being inherited as it was in the past. This led to bribes and fighting within. They stole from the temple to pay bribes.

## **Leading up to this point are several significant events...**

The Greeks try to overthrow Persians, and eventually Romans replace the Persians.

### **Greek Period: (323-167 BC)**

- First came the Greek period with Alexander the Great.
- Hellenization – spread of a Greek way of life and culture, and universal language. Greek and Latin replace Aramaic (Old Testament common language).
- Translation of Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek, called Septuagint (LXX). It was used by early Christians and the New Testament writers quoted from it.
- After Alexander's death, Greece was divided up. (Daniel prophecy)

### **Jewish Independence: (167-63 BC)**

- Greeks put heavy tax burden on Jews. They tried to put an end to Jewish religion. Sacrificed pig on the altar (Daniel prophecy), circumcision was forbidden, Sabbath not observed, burned copies of the law, and told to sacrifice to Zeus.
- All of this led to a revolt by the Jews (Maccabean revolt) and ultimately resulted in their salvation because they revolted. They cleansed the temple and rededicated it. This is remembered in Hanukkah today.
- Part of this revolt led to the Jews destroying the temple of the Samaritans and conquering some of the land which was the ancient kingdom of Edom.
  - Residents were forced to immigrate or convert to Judaism (but they never really accepted them as Jews).
  - This was significant because Herod the Great (King Herod) came from these people. He was King of Judea - a Jew but not really. He was cruel but also could be generous (feeding during famine, restore temple). He restored the temple, which is one of the architectural wonders, and rebuilt Jericho into a wealthy city (known for medicinal balm).

### **Rise of Rome:**

- Earliest settlements from 1000 BC (King David) of Latin tribes near Tiber River crossing.
- 509 BC – Roman Republic established
- 312 BC – first of great Roman roads
- 200's BC – Roman colonization of Italian peninsula, occupy Spain, invade Asia (Macedonian wars)

### **Roman period (63 BC – 70 AD)**

- 46 BC – Julius Caesar declared dictator of Rome
- Emperor Caesar Augustus when Jesus was born
- Emperor Tiberius during ministry of Jesus and Paul
- Many civil wars, heavy taxes on Jews and persecution of Christians
- 70-79 AD – Jerusalem destroyed, Rome burned