

Throughout Biblical History prophecy and scripture has always been a huge part of people lives. It has been a Substantial topic within society. Since the beginning of time God has ordained and appointed many priests, prophets and kings to maintain order and leadership to defend his divine Kingdom. However, whilst researching and studying the Bible texts it has been established that many kings have been wicked or evil in the sight of the lord including the Israelites who are recognised within scripture as Gods chosen people. There have been many periods throughout biblical history where Gods chosen people have rebelled or disobeyed Gods Laws due to lack of knowledge from generation to generation.

One unique period in the bible refers to the 400 years of silence which is also known as the intertestamental period which is in between the Old Testament and New Testament. A distinctive historical shift saw the rise of the Greek Empire which Spanned Three continents-Europe, Asia and Africa. The Greek Empire is also known as the Macedonian Empire. The Macedonian Empire was led by King Phillip II and his son King Alexander the Great (338-323BC).

Alexander (III) the Great (323BCE) and his Macedonian Empire Initiated Hellenism. After Alexander the Great's death in 323BCE the Seleucid army was formed. It spanned a 250year period from 312BCE to 63BCE.

Definitions

1. Hellenism/Hellenization is defined as an historical era which encompasses Ancient Greek Language and Culture. Hellenism constituted the spread of Art, Greek or pagan Gods and banning Godly religion, causing a considerable threat to people's Faith amongst the Jewish or Israelite community throughout Judea and Samaria. For Example, it is an empire including eastern cultures throughout the Mediterranean and Near East communities.
2. The Seleucid Empire (312BCE-63BC) was formed by Seleucus I Nicator one of Alexander the Great's generals after his death. It can be defined as a Hellenistic state which existed in between the 4th and 1st century BCE. Alexander's Empire and wealth was divided between Cassandre (Macedon/Greece), and Antigonos I (Asia Minor), Seleucus I (Babylon/Pers), Ptolemy I (Egypt), which sparked the Hellenistic war. The Hellenistic war became a major part of culture and a battleground between two opposing empires such as the Greece and western Asia and North Africa the Ptolemies dynasty which became a part of the Seleucid Empire. For example, the Seleucids are known for being Hellenistic, however many dynasties and regions were included.
3. The Maccabees (The Hasmoneans) family was initiated by Mattathias the father of the Maccabees. Mattathias the Hasmonean priest openly attacked and

rebelled against the Seleucid empire and authorities by opposing their pagan worship and Gods. After his death in 166BCE his sons called the Maccabee brothers led a successful revolt against the Seleucid empire and won victory in the Hasmonean Kingdom in 142BCE.

4. The Maccabees were given the role of high priests which involved the leadership of political, military and spiritual stewardship.
5. Pre-exilic Israel is a period which is referred to as the Babylonian exile prior to 586BCE.

Questions based on Reading

1. Main Arguments in the Reading.....

Judaism as a Hellenised religion: Language and culture and social life

The rise of Rabbinic Judaism: Decentralization and New Authority

Separation from Christianity and Judaism: Gentile Inclusion and Theological Shifts

The shift from first temple worship to second temple worship: Physical and spiritual differences, Worship practises and Leadership.

2. A major event leading up to the Maccabean revolt was the imposed Hellenization forced on Jews which involved the ban of religious practices, the ban of the sabbath and utilizing the second temple to worship Greek Gods such as erecting an altar to worship pagan idols such as Zeus.

3. Key Significances from a Jewish perspective are.....

Redefining Authority and Identity for example the Hannukah is a celebration which Jews take part in to commemorate and rejoice in the victory over the Seleucid empire. The successful Maccabean revolt of the cleansing and purifying of the Temple.

4. Significance of the Maccabees becoming high priests was that it allowed the Maccabean Family to become an independent state and changing Judean Leadership. Furthermore, the Consolidation of power and Political fairness changed the course of society.

5.

First Temple (Pre-exilic)		Second temple (Post Exilic)
Contained the Ark of the Covenant		Lacked the Ark of the covenant
Animal, Grain, sacrifice,		Turned into a Localised intuition for prayer and study

Idolatry, worshipping more than one God		Idolatry was replaced by worshipping one God
Just Focused on the Group		Focused on the group and Individual

6. The Biases for the Maccabean texts.....

Maccabees Scriptures are not historical reports which may replace the truth and may not be accurate.

Not Evidence based

Not rooted in solid primary facts

Primary source authenticity may be distorted.