

Bring Back To Remembrance

The Four Hundred Years Of Silence

(Ga 4:4-5)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning,
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of lessons on “Bring Back To Remembrance.”
 - a. Two weeks ago we looked at “The Great Divide.”
 - i. **I Ki 12:20** “And when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, they sent and called him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. There was none that followed the house of David but the tribe of Judah only.”¹
 - b. This week we will be examining “The Four Hundred Years Of Silence.”
 - i. **Ga 4:4-5** “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”
3. What time frame is this?
 - a. This is the time between the end of the O.T. writings and the beginning of the N.T. writings.
 - i. A time when there were no inspired writings taking place, at least none that were saved for all time.
 - ii. There are many writings that take place during this time but they have been proven to be uninspired.
 1. These would be what are commonly called today the “Apocrypha” books.
 - a. They span from about 200 B.C. to about 100 A.D.
4. There are a few other names for this ear of silence.
 - a. This is called the “Intertestamental Period.”
 - b. This is also called the “Between The Testaments Period.”
 - i. Obviously this last one is not grammatically accurate considering there was no period of time between the end of the O.T. and the beginning of the N.T.
5. This era is also that which is highly understudied by God’s children today.
 - a. It is understudied because...
 - i. There are no inspired writings to study today from that time.
 - ii. There is little preached on today from that era.
 - iii. There is little taught in Bible Classes from this time frame.
 - iv. Most don’t realize just how important a role it plays in the understanding of the N.T.
6. The truth is Christians cannot fully understand the N.T. without understanding this ear of time.

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

Bring Back To Remembrance

a. Notice just a few of the changes concerning the Jews.

- The Jews were a part of the Persian satrapy, or petty princes.
- They were surrounded and harassed by enemies.
- They were a scantily populated people.
- Their cities that were heaps of rubbish for the most part and were struggling.
- Poverty abounded.
- The people were mostly insignificant to the rest of the world as they struggled after returning from captivity.
- The people had no system of jurisprudence, no Sanhedrin to condemn or justify.
- The people had no earthly king.
- The Jews were a part of the Roman Empire
- They were under Rome's protection and restraint of injustices.
- They were a densely populated people.
- They had well-built cities and were thriving.
- General prosperity prevailed.
- The people were very well known and were heavily known throughout the world.
- The people had an enviable system of jurisprudence. The Sanhedrin was sufficient enough to condemn Jesus.
- The people had an Idumaeen "king of the Jews."

7. With these things in mind let us examine our text today.

I. The Medo-Persian Empire

A. Cyrus king of the Medo-Persian Empire let Israel return home

1. As prophesied by Isaiah Cyrus let the remnant return.

- i. **Is 44:28** "who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose'; saying of Jerusalem, 'She shall be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.' "
- ii. **II Ch 36:22-23** "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: 23 Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him. Let him go up.' "

Bring Back To Remembrance

B. Not every Jew returned home

1. We see in the book of Nehemiah that not every Jew returned when given the opportunity.
 - i. **Ne 1:1-3** “The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Now it happened in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Susa the citadel, 2 that Hanani, one of my brothers, came with certain men from Judah. And I asked them concerning the Jews who escaped, who had survived the exile, and concerning Jerusalem. 3 And they said to me, ‘The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire.’ ”
2. This is significant because it plays a pivotal role in the N.T. writings.
 - i. With the new found freedoms for the Jews under Medo-Persian rule it is during this time most think the Synagogues received widespread acceptance as a place to worship God.
 - a. Remember it later became such a common place to worship that they are found even in Jerusalem by the N.T. times.

C. Thus...

1. Without understanding how the Synagogues got their start one will find themselves lacking vital information concerning the N.T.
 - i. They played such a role in the N.T. that the early church even modeled their meetings after the Jewish Synagogue meetings.

II. The Greek Empire

A. The Greek Empire brought about a shift from East to West

1. “Until now the great powers of the world had been in Asia and Africa, but with the rise of the Grecian Empire, world power would soon shift to Europe in the west.”²
2. It was Alexander the Great that subdued the Medo-Persian Empire and it is he that established the Greek Empire.
3. Josephus writes that the reason Alexander the Great did not destroy Jerusalem was because Jaddua, the high priest at the time, came out to Alexander to show him the book of Daniel.
 - i. “And when the book of Daniel was showed him wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended; and as he was then glad...”³

B. The Greek Empire brought about many benefits to the fullness of time

² Notes on “Between The Testaments – The 400 Silent Years” by WVBS pg. 6

³ Josephus, F., & Whiston, W. (1987). The works of Josephus: complete and unabridged. Peabody: Hendrickson.

Bring Back To Remembrance

1. Some of the most well-known philosophers came from the Greeks and led to Alexander the Great and thus the Empire's strong love of education.
 - i. Socrates, who lived from 469 B.C. to 399 B.C., was mostly a self-taught man who became known as one of the great Greek philosophers.
 - a. He stressed "think for yourself."
 - ii. Plato, a pupil of Socrates, traveled all around and later came back to Athens where he established "The Academy" in 387 B.C. This later became the very first university.
 - a. He stressed "think spiritually."
 - iii. Aristotle, a pupil of Plato and a teacher of Alexander the Great, is considered by many to be the greatest of all the Greek philosophers.
 - a. He stressed "think logically."
2. The Greek Empire brought with it a unified language
 - i. The Greek Empire required everyone to learn Greek so as to have a unified language and to learn their customs.
 - a. This process is called Hellenization.
 1. In II Maccabees 4:13-14 it says, "Because of the surpassing wickedness of the profane Jason, who was not really a high priest, there was such a height of Hellenization and ascendance of the adoption of foreign customs 14 that the priests were no longer eager with regard to the services of the altar..." (LES)
 - ii. Hellenization was so successful that the Jews became a people that knew Greek better than Hebrew or Aramaic and as such the Septuagint or LXX was created.
 - a. Seventy Jews were sent to Alexandria, Egypt to translate the Old Testament into Greek.
 1. This took these men thirty-eight years from 285 B.C. to 247 B.C. to complete the translation.

C. Thus...

1. Without understanding the philosophies of the time and the Hellenization of the Jews one cannot grasp a full understanding of the New Testament.
 - i. The philosophies of the time led to the wide acceptance of truth amongst gentiles especially.
 - a. Why, because they had studied the philosophies of "think for yourself, think spiritually, and think logically."
 1. Each of these are vital to understanding truth i.e. God's Word.

Bring Back To Remembrance

- ii. The Hellenization of the Jews led to the New Testament having most of its Old Testament quotes from the LXX instead of the original language of Hebrew and Aramaic.
 - a. **He 1:6** “And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship him.’ ”
 - 1. **Dt 32:43** “Rejoice with him, O heavens; bow down to him, all gods...”
 - 2. **Dt 32:43** “Delight, O heavens, with him and worship him, you sons of God...” (LES)

III. The Roman Empire

- A. The Roman Empire further shifted the power from the East to the West
 - 1. When Pompey came to Palestine in 63 B.C. we find the Jews who had found independence for about 100 years. This freedom was won by Judas Maccabee and can be read about in I & II Maccabee.
 - i. Pompey conquered Palestine in 63 B.C. putting the Jews under Roman rule.
 - 2. Antipater, and Edomite i.e. descendent from Esau, was appointed as ruler of Judea.
 - i. His son Herod the Great succeeded him 37 B.C. through 3 B.C.
 - a. It is Herod that we read about in the N.T. and who rebuilt the Temple of God to find favor with the Jews.
 - b. This is the same Herod we find trying to kill Jesus and instead killed countless other children in Bethlehem.
 - 3. Judea was under the proconsul of Syria known as Antioch.
 - i. Each large province also had a Roman procurator.
 - a. At the time of Christ this was Pontius Pilate.
- B. The Roman Empire brought about many benefits to the fullness of time
 - 1. Though there would be some battles fought the war was basically over and thus peace resided for about 200 years.
 - i. Caesar Augustus inaugurated the “pax romana” or “Roman peace.”
 - 2. With economics a priority and quick military access to anywhere a must the Roman Empire built great roads.
 - i. These roads connected major cities as well as outlying areas.
 - 3. The Roman army was vast, great, and was found all over the Empire.
 - i. This allowed for safety in general.
- C. Thus...
 - 1. If one doesn’t study this period of time they will fall short in their studies of maturity in the New Testament.
 - i. Christianity could not have spread as far or as fast as it did without the aforementioned Roman benefits.

Bring Back To Remembrance

CONCLUSION

1. Brethren the common theme is easy to recognize, if we don't "Bring Back To Remembrance" this timeframe we will not be able to fully understand the Scriptures as God desires His mature children to do.
 - a. We therefore will fall short in God's eyes.
 - i. **He 5:12-14** "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, 13 for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. 14 But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil."
2. Question: Are you willing to show God the honor He is due by studying this era so that you can properly and maturely understand God's Word?
 - a. If so continue therein and grow thereby.
 - b. If not why not?
3. Invitation
 - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Have Faith In Jesus **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**