

# BGM BIBLE COLLEGE

## NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY

### Lecture 01 By Pastor Munawar Khurshid

#### INTRODUCTION

##### A Survey of the New Covenant Scriptures

In this course, we shall take a general survey of the New Testament. A thorough study of the entire New Testament would require much time, but in this course, an introduction to each book shall be given to aid students in understanding the New Covenant Scriptures. This course is mandatory for all classes alike. There shall be a midterm and a final examination. All students are earnestly requested to begin reading the New Testament diligently. Your attendance and punctuality are of great importance.

Before one may rightly comprehend the New Testament, it is needful to understand the time in which it was given. There is a gap of four hundred years between the Old and New Covenants, which is referred to as the *Period of Silence*, for in those four hundred years no divine revelation was given. This time is also called the *Inter-Testamental Period*.

If one considers the days of the prophet Malachi, the last book of the Old Covenant, it is evident that the people then spake in the Hebrew tongue. Yet, by the time the New Covenant began, the people spake in the Greek language. How did such great changes come to pass? It is essential to understand these matters in order to rightly discern the New Testament.

##### The Persian Era (536–333 B.C.)

The dominion of the Persian Empire began in 536 B.C. In that time, the Jews were encouraged to rebuild the Temple. The Persian rulers, desiring to strengthen their kingdom, sought to gain the favour of all by such measures. This period is known by the name of King Artaxerxes. The events of this era are recorded in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. During these days, the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi ministered unto the people.

In this time, the Jews, under the leadership of Zerubbabel, returned to Jerusalem and began the rebuilding of the House of the LORD. The second Temple was completed in the year 516 B.C.

##### The Greek Period (333–323 B.C.)

This era began with Alexander the Great. His father, Philip, was a wise and valiant general who united the city-states of Greece and became ruler over all the land. The upbringing of Alexander by his mother had a profound impact upon him. She taught him superstition and persuaded him that he was the son of the god Zeus. From his father, he learned the art of war,

and from his teacher, Aristotle, he was instructed in the ways of Greek philosophy and culture. Thus, three influences greatly shaped his life: his mother, his father, and his tutor.

Alexander ascended the throne at the age of twenty and brought all of Greece under his dominion. By the year 334 B.C., he had completed many conquests. He marched as far as the river Indus and reached even unto Taxila.

A reference to him may be found in [the eighth chapter of the Book of Daniel](#).

The influence of his reign was far-reaching. He greatly promoted the Greek language and culture. After his death, his vast empire was scattered and divided. Though the kingdom was broken, the imprint of his civilization remained deep and lasting. Even in the days of Christ, the Greek language and culture held a place of prominence. Greek was then the common tongue of the known world — the international language of the time.

#### **The Egyptian Period (323–204 B.C.)**

This period was marked by gentleness and favour toward the Jewish people. The rulers dealt kindly with them. It was during this time that the Old Testament Scriptures were translated into the Greek tongue, a work known as the *Septuagint Translation*.

#### **The Syrian Period (204–165 B.C.)**

This was a time of great affliction for the Jewish people. The Syrians bore much hatred against them. They changed the name of the city of Jerusalem to *Antioch*. The Syrian king, **Antiochus**, exalted himself as a god and defiled the Temple by offering a swine upon the altar. Thus, the Holy Sanctuary was profaned and rendered unclean.

#### **The Maccabean Period (165–63 B.C.)**

In response to this blasphemy, **Mattathias the Maccabee** slew the man who offered the abominable sacrifice. He then gathered about ten thousand men and waged war, cleansing and rededicating the Temple. To this day, the Jews commemorate this rededication through the Feast of Dedication, also known as *Hanukkah*.

#### **The Roman Period (63 B.C. – 476 A.D.)**

The Roman Empire began humbly, by conquering small villages. In 63 B.C., the Roman general **Pompey** brought Israel under Roman dominion. The Jews despised the Romans, and among all the nations under Roman rule, the Romans regarded the Jews with the greatest caution.

During this time, the *Pax Romana* — the Roman Peace — was established, bringing stability and order to many regions. A vast network of roads was built, facilitating travel and communication.

To be a Roman citizen was a mark of great honour. Yet such citizenship could only be obtained through a large sum of money or by birth. The benefits included exemption from certain taxes, protection from severe judgments, and various legal privileges. Citizens were also permitted to practice their religion — provided it did not disturb the public peace.

This is why, as thou mayest recall, charges were brought against **Paul and Silas**, not for preaching their faith, but for causing unrest. For proclaiming one's religion was not a crime, but stirring up disorder was.

