When the Heavens were silent

400 Silent Years of History
World Empires - Babylon

Four Major Kings
1. Nabopolassar (626-605 BC)
   Rebelled against Assyria 626 BC
   Joined forces with Medes to defeat Nineveh 614 BC

2. Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 BC)
   Conquered Judah and Egypt
   Extended Babylonian influence over world
Four Major Kings

3. Nabonidus (555-539BC)
   Not of royal descent
   Thought to have married widow or daughter of Nebuchadnezzar
   Usurped the throne

4. Belshazzar (552-539BC)
   Son of Nabonidus
   Co-regent of Kingdom
   Saw “Handwriting on the Wall...”
World Empires - Babylon

Four Major Kings
What about “gap” between Nebuchadnezzar and Nabonidus?
1. Evil-Marodach reigns for one year (Jer 52:31)
2. Neriglissar reigns for three years
3. Labosoarchad reigns about a year.
Nabonidus was not a legitimate heir to the throne...
Some accounts say he was even of Assyrian descent...
World Empires - Babylon

Three Jewish Deportations
605 BC
• Daniel taken to Babylon
597 BC
• Ezekiel taken to Babylon
586 BC
• Jerusalem sacked
• Temple destroyed
• Remainder of Judah taken captive
World Empires - Babylon

Results of the 70 Years Captivity
Elimination of Idolatry
Rise of Synagogues
Rise of Scribes
Diaspora (Dispersion)
World Empires - Babylon

Nabopolassar 626 - 605 BC
Nebuchadnezzar 605 – 562 BC
Nabonidus 555– 539 BC
Belshazzar 552– 539 BC

3 Deportations
605
597
586
Destruction of Jerusalem
World Empires – Medes & Persians

Five Major Kings
Cyrus the Great (II) 555 – 529 BC
• One of four major world powers
• Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt were remaining three
• Cyrus conquered first two; his son conquered last one
• One of his generals killed Belshazzar

Cambyses 529 - 522 BC
• Son of Cyrus
• Conqueror of Egypt
• At his death, THE world power
Five Major Kings
Darius the Great (I) 522 – 486 BC
• Ruled for over 40 years
• Consolidated power and reorganized the empire
• Haggai and Zechariah are during his reign
• “Jump-started” the rebuilding of the temple
• Tried to conquer Greece, defeated at Athens

Xerxes (Ahasuerus) 464- 423 BC
• Continued fighting Greeks
• Defeated at Salamis
• Helped to create environment for Alexander the Great
World Empires – Medes & Persians

Five Major Kings
Artaxerxes 522 – 486 BC
- Return of Ezra and Nehemiah took place
- Made peace with Greece
- Persian Empire began to decline
- Nations began throwing Persian Yoke off
World Empires – Medes & Persians

Four Major Decrees

Decree of Cyrus 536 BC
  • Ezra 1:1-4 – Permission to rebuild temple

Decree of Darius 516 BC
  • Ezra 6 – Permission reconfirmed

First Decree of Artaxerxes 458 BC
  • Ezra 7:11-26 – Permission for Temple worship

Second Decree Artaxerxes 444 BC
  • Nehemiah 2 – Permission to rebuild walls
World Empires – Medo Persian

- Cyrus the Great: 555 – 529 BC
- Cambyses: 529 – 522 BC
- Darius the Great: 522 – 486 BC
- Xerxes (Ahasuerus): 486 – 464 BC
- Artaxerxes: 464 – 423 BC
Two Major Rulers

Philip of Macedon  359 – 336 BC
• United all Greek city-states into a “country”
• Great military leader
• City of Philippi named in his honor

Alexander the Great  336 – 323 BC
• Perhaps greatest military leader ever
• His kingdom covered 2.2 million miles
• From Macedon to Egypt; From Persia to India
• Died at age 32 after conquering his known world
World Empires – Greece

**Alexander’s Achievements**
- Hellenization of conquered lands
- Greek became the common language
- Constructed major Alexandrian library
- Brought East and West together in Science, Philosophy and Art
World Empires – Greece Divided

Alexander’s Empire Divided – Daniel 8:8

Lysimachus  
Thrace, Asia Minor

Seleucus  
Northern Syria, Babylon

Ptolemy  
Syria, Egypt

Cassander  
Macedonia

NOTE: The Ptolemies and Seleucids fought between themselves for Judah and Syria. (By this time, there was no Israel – lost in the Assyrian captivity...)

World Empires – Greece Divided

**Seleucids and Ptolemies**

**Ptolemaic Influence**  
323 – 198 BC  
- Judah prospered under Ptolemies  
- Ptolemy II Philadelphius responsible for LXX

**Seleucid / Ptolemaic Wars**  
275 – 198 BC  
- Prophesied in Daniel 11:5ff  
- King of the South – Egypt (Ptolemy)  
- King of the North – Syria (Seleucid)
World Empires – Greece Divided

Seleucids and Ptolemies
A Marriage  
Daniel 11:5-6

Revenge  
Daniel 11:7-8

Antiochus the Great  
Daniel 11:9-10
  • Antiochus was a Seleucid
  • At his time, Judah was under the Ptolemies
  • He marched through Palestine with an army of 75,000 men

Southern Retaliation  
Daniel 11:11-12
  • Ptolemy IV defeated Antiochus the Great
  • Ptolemy’s victory only served to anger Antiochus
World Empires – Greece Divided

Seleucids and Ptolemies  
Return of the North  
  Daniel 11:13-20
  • 13 years later, Antiochus the Great returned
  • 199 BC, Antiochus routed the Southern (Egyptian) army

Antiochus Epiphanes  
  Daniel 11:21-35
  • Obtained throne by deceit – 175 BC
  • He soundly defeated the Egyptian boy-King, Ptolemy VI
  • He plundered the Temple and sacked Jerusalem
  • He attacked Egypt again, being humiliated by Roman intervention
  • He took out his frustration on Judah
  • His atrocities led to Maccabean revolt – 166 BC
World Empires – Greek Rulers

Philip of Macedon
359 – 336 BC

Alexander the Great
336 – 323 BC

Lysimachus
Thrace / Asia Minor

Seleucid
Syria / Babylon

Ptolemy
Syria / Egypt

Cassander
Macedonia
The Maccabees – The Context
Antiochus Epiphanes attempted to *hellenize* the Jews
He had slaughtered a pig in the Temple, 167 BC
To observe the Torah was a capital offense
Gymnasiums were built in which Jews were displayed humiliatingly
Sabbath was abandoned
Jewish names were exchanged for Greek names
Sacrifices to pagan deities were made public
Those who refused to participate were martyred
The Maccabees – A Cause
Mattathias, father of the Maccabean “clan” was a priest
He had served for a time at the Temple
Had moved outside of city
Antiochus’ soldier came to his city demanding he sacrifice to a god
He refused, then killed a fellow Jew who had stepped forward
While he destroyed the altar, his sons destroyed Greek officials

His words: “Let everyone who has zeal for the Torah and who stands by the covenant follow me...”
World Empires – Maccabean Wars

The Maccabees – A Cause
Mattathias died and leadership fell to his son, Judah
His “surname” was Maccabeus, or the Hammer
He led a guerrilla war against the Greeks
164 BC – Judah Maccabeus re instituted Ceremonial system in Jerusalem
At this time, Hanukkah was instituted
163 BC – Antiochus dies; Lysias and Judah make a treaty
This treaty restored Judaism making it the dominant religion
161 BC – Judah Maccabeus dies; brother Jonathan rules
World Empires – Maccabean Wars

The Maccabees – A Corruption
Jonathan “buys” himself the job of High Priest
He began process of Hellenizing the Jewish law to fit political atmosphere
143 BC – Jonathan dies; brother Simon leads
134 BC – Simon dies, his son John Hyrcanus leads the people
  • During his reign, two political parties arose
  • The conservative, Separatist group became the Pharisees
  • The Hellenizers became the Sadducees
  • He destroyed Samaritan Temple at Mt. Gerazim

104 BC – John Hyrcanus dies; son Alexander Jannaeus reigns
World Empires – Maccabean Wars

The Maccabees – A Corruption
76 BC – Alexander Jannaeus on deathbed transfers rule to his wife Salome Alexandra

67 BC – Alexandra dies, two brothers Aristobulus and Hyrcanus II fought for control

65 BC – Hyrcanus lays siege to Jerusalem aided by Antipater, father of Herod the Great

63 BC – Enter the Romans led by Pompey (b. 106 – 48 BC)
World Empires – Rome

**Judea under Rome**

63 BC – Pompey occupies Jerusalem
This is the end of independent rule for Judah until 1948
47 BC – Pompey murdered during conquest of Egypt
Antipater (Herod the Great’s father) assisted Rome’s conquest of Egypt
Julius Caesar made Antipater the Procurator of Judea in return
44 BC – Julius Caesar murdered by Brutus
Empire is ruled by Octavius and Marc Antony
World Empires – Rome

Judea under Rome
31 BC – Octavius defeats Brutus and Antony
He claims for himself the title Augustus
We are now in “New Testament times...”

Rome had two types of Provinces:
• Imperial – frontier areas needing strong army to keep people in line
• Senatorial – basically peaceful areas
  • Imperial Provinces ruled by Procurators selected by Emperor
  • Senatorial ruled by Proconsuls appointed annually by Senate
World Empires – the Caesars

Augustus
30 BC– 14 AD
Luke 2:1

Tiberius
14 – 37
Luke 3:1

Caligula
37 - 41

Claudius
41 – 54
Act 11:28; 18:2

Nero
54 – 68
Acts 25:10; 28:19

Galba
68

Otho
69

Vitellius
69
World Empires – the Caesars

- Vespasian: 69 - 79
- Titus: 79 - 81
- Domitian: 81 - 96
- Nerva: 96 - 98
- Trajan: 98 – 117
World Empires – Rome

Roman Procurators in the New Testament

- Coponius 6-10
- Ambivius 10-13
- Annius Rufus 13-15
- Valerus Gratus 15-26
- Pontius Pilate 26-36  Luke 3:1; 23:1
- Marcellus 36-38
- Maryllus 38-41
World Empires – Rome

Roman Procurators in the New Testament

Cuspius Fadus  44-46
Tiberius Alexander  46-48
Ventidius Cumanus  48-52
Antonius Felix  52-59  Acts 23-24
Porcius Festus  59-61  Acts 24-27
Albinus  61-65
Roman Empire in New Testament

Augustus Caesar

Herod the Great
40 – 4 BC

Archelaus
4BC – 6 AD
Judah

Philip
4BC – 34 AD
Northern Palestine

Herod Antipas
4BC – 39AD
Galilee / Perea

Roman Procurators
Roman Empire in New Testament

Herod was loved by the Jews
He tried to live according to their law
He was the brother of Herodias
  • She was wife of Philip
  • Later, wife of Antipas
  • Granddaughter to Herod the Great
He killed James (Acts 12:1)
He died suddenly (Acts 12:20-23)
Roman Empire in New Testament

Seventh and last King of the Herods
Had at least two sisters
  • Drusilla, married to Felix
  • Berenice, who Paul appeared before
He was “almost persuaded” to be a Christian
Jew by religion; Roman at heart
Fought with Titus against the Jews
Ultimately ended with destruction of Temple
Land renamed Palestine