

"The 400 Years of Silence"

Sunday Morning Bible Class by Ray Reynolds (January 5, 2014)

Introduction: What have you enjoyed the most about **The Story**? Which part was your favorite? To which characters did you relate? Are you glad we engaged in this study? How do you think it will affect your part of God's story? Today, we find ourselves in the middle of a transitional period. The Old Testament has concluded and the New Testament is yet to begin. Next week we will begin in Matthew and continue in chapter 22 of **The Story**. Until then we are given an opportunity to discuss what happened during the 400 years between the testaments. Let study together.....

Discussion:

I. THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

This nation was established between the Tigris & Euphrates river (1500 BC). These people are regarded to be among the tribesmen in **Genesis 10:22**. They defeated the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC, and warred against the southern kingdom of Judah in 701 BC (**II Kings 19:35**). From 833-745 BC they faced internal struggles and war with Syria. To learn more read Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Jonah, and Nahum.

II. THE BABYLONIAN EMPIRE

This nation was established by Nimrod after the flood (**Genesis 10:8-10**). Like the Assyrians they have roots around the Euphrates River (Persian Gulf). This nation became one of the first great nations of the world with This region was considered to be the "cradle of civilization" and the site of the Garden of Eden (**Genesis 2:14**) and Tower of Babel (**Genesis 11**). This is the region as Shinar (**Genesis 10:10,11:2, Isaiah 11:1**) and the land of the Chaldeans (**Jeremiah 24:4, Ezekiel 12:13**). Daniel referred to the beauty of this site in his book (**Daniel 4:28-30**). Babylon is often associated with pain, suffering, and demonic activity (**I Peter 5:13, Revelation 14:8, 17:5, 18:2**).

III. THE EGYPTIAN EMPIRE

This nation was established after the flood in the Northeast corner of Africa. It is one of the 70 nations that spread over the earth after the flood through the descendants of Mizraim (**Genesis 10:13-14**). This region was settled by Arba, among the Anakims (**Genesis 35:27, Joshua 14:15, Number 13:22**). **Number 13:22** says this nation was established seven years after Hebron (Kirjatharba - **Genesis 23:12, Joshua 15:54**). For the next 3,000 years around 30 dynasties of Pharaohs would rule.

IV. THE ORIENTAL EMPIRE

The Bible reveals that all the nations came from Noah (**Genesis 10**).

Noah (**Genesis 6-9**) lived 350 years after the flood (3000-2000 BC).

His sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth (firstborn but listed last) took their families and spread out over the earth.

It is believed that Canaan's descendants, specifically the Sinites, travelled all the way to China and settled there.

Magog's descendants come from these people (**Genesis 10:2**,

Ezekiel 38-39, Revelation 20:8) and also the Oriental people played a vital role in the NT (**Matthew 2, Zechariah 8:7, Malachi 1:11**).

V. THE MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE

The first Persian empire was established as an Iranian empire in Western Asia by Cyrus the Great, 6th century BC (Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah).

The history of the Median culture and country is difficult to obtain, but most believe the nations of Iran, Iraq, and Turkey make up its previous borders.

Cyrus overthrew the Median confederation and conquered the Babylonian empire, just as the prophet Daniel had prophesied (**Daniel 2**).

At the height of its greatness the Medo-Persian Empire controlled Asia, Africa, and Europe (almost 5 million miles).

VI. THE GRECIAN EMPIRE

The history of the Greek empire is surrounded by mythology and tradition.

Scholars believe it had its beginnings in the time of the Judges, as the nation was present during the reign of Kings David & Solomon.

The formation of the empire is credited to Philip of Macedon, the king of Macedonia (359-336 BC).

The prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah prophesied of the Greeks.

Consider the exploits of Alexander the Great.

VII. THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The history of the Roman empire is surrounded by mythology and tradition.

Compromises with Rome would allow Jewish independence, but demanded tribute to Caesar, which further divided the Jewish people.

The rise of the Caesars, and influence of Roman procurators in Palestine, would play a large role in the background of the New Testament.

In the coming week we will deal heavily with the Romans.

Conclusion: Remember that one thing the Jews did not restore once they arrived back in Jerusalem was a king. No doubt they were waiting on the King to come!