

# THE YEARS OF SILENCE

**Lesson text: Amos 8: 11 - 12; Daniel 7: 1 - 8**

## Vocabulary Words:

**Gospel** - The good news of Jesus Christ; good message.

**Synagogue** - "A congregation"; "an appointed solemn meeting"; Buildings or tents where people went to worship God. These places of worship were probably introduced during the Babylonian captivity because the people could not go to the temple to worship.

**Redemption** - To purchase back something that has been lost by the payment of a price; (Men are in sin and the Redeemer (Christ) purchases man's deliverance by offering Himself. Eph. 1:7).

**Empire** - Supreme power in governing over a people; supreme control.

After the days that Ezra, Nehemiah and Malachi lived there were 400 years that God did not speak to His people. This period of time is called the "years of silence". The prophet Amos prophesied about this period of time:

***Amos 8:11 - 12** "Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord GOD, "when I will send a famine on the land— not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the LORD, but they shall not find it.*

We can't learn about the things that happened during the 400 years of silence in the Bible, but we can look at history that man has recorded and learn some of the things that happened then.

The prophet Daniel gave some prophecies about this period of time in Daniel 7: 1 - 7. We learn from man's history that the things Daniel prophesied about came true. Daniel prophesied about four kingdoms that would come: Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman. He had a dream, and in his dream he saw four great beasts. The first beast was like a lion with eagle's wings. This beast represented Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire. We know that this empire took God's people captive.

The second beast in Daniel's dream was a great bear raised up (Daniel 7:5). This beast represented the Medo-Persian kingdom (or empire). During this period of history the Medo-

Persian kingdom allowed the Jews to leave Babylon and go back to Jerusalem. The Persian King allowed Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

The Medo-Persian empire was the government in control as the Old Testament closed, but another kingdom, prophesied by Daniel, was coming to power. The Grecian Empire was represented by a leopard with four wings of a bird in Daniel 7:6. The Grecians drove the Persians from Asia Minor. The Greek people had much influence on the world when they came to power. Many Greek philosophers influenced how the people of that time thought, and they continued to influence people even when the next kingdom came to power.

The fourth beast of Daniel's dream was a strong beast with iron teeth. It devoured and broke in pieces what was left with its feet, and it had ten horns (Daniel 7:7). This beast represented the Roman Empire.

It was during the Roman Empire that the Greek language began to be spoken throughout the entire Roman Empire. This was good because when Jesus came to earth this made it much easier for men to spread the **gospel**.

The Roman Kingdom existed before the end of the Old Testament, but it was only small kingdom then. However, the Roman Empire grew and grew after the Old Testament days. The things that happened during the Roman Empire made it the best time in the history of man for Jesus Christ to come to earth. The Jews were allowed to build their **synagogues** during this period of time, and they could openly worship as they pleased. The Jews had the freedom to travel throughout the large Roman Empire, and this greatly helped the apostles and others who taught the gospel.

During the Roman Empire conditions were right for the coming of Jesus. The Jews had kept themselves as a separate people, not marrying people from other nations after the captivity, so the bloodline was pure for Jesus to come through the line of Abraham. Evidently the Jews had learned their lesson about worshipping idols during the captivity, so they did not worship idols again.

However, the Jews were not what they needed to be spiritually during the time of the Roman Empire. They had wicked hearts and they reacted to Jesus and His message in a manner that would carry out God's plan for the **redemption** of man.

The conditions were right! The time was right! All of God's plans foretold in the Old Testament were revealed and fulfilled. It was time for Jesus to come because it was the "*fullness of time*" (Galatians 4:4)!

## **Underline the correct answer**

1. God did not speak to His people for a period of ( 500, 400 , 100 ) years.
2. The period between the Old and New Testament is called ( Judah alone ; the years of silence.)
3. Daniel prophesied about ( 1 , 3 , 4 ) kingdoms that would come.
4. The first kingdom Daniel prophesied about was the ( Medo-Persian , Babylonian ) empire.
5. The second kingdom that Daniel prophesied about was the (Roman , Medo-Persian) empire.
6. The prophet (Daniel , Amos) prophesied about a time when there would be a famine of the word of God.
7. The third kingdom that Daniel prophesied about was the ( Grecian , Roman) Empire.
8. Greek philosophers influenced how the people ( ate, worshiped, thought) during the Grecian Empire.
9. The fourth beast of Daniel's dream was the ( Babylonian , Roman) Empire.
10. Speaking the Greek language throughout the Roman Empire made it easier for the people to (talk among themselves, spread the gospel).
11. The Jews worshiped (openly, secretly) in their synagogues during the Roman Empire.
12. Having the freedom to travel helped the people (go see their relatives, teach the gospel) in the Roman Empire.
13. It was time for Jesus Christ to come during the Roman Empire because (the Jews had wicked hearts, it was the fullness of time).

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