



Introduction

Differences between Old and New Testaments:

- The Old Testament was written over centuries, but the New Testament was written within a generation.
- The atmosphere of the New Testament is much different than the atmosphere of the Old Testament.
- The Old Testament introduced various covenants, whereas the New Testament introduces one covenant that fulfills all of the Old Testament covenants.
- There are multiple significant characters in the Old Testament, but the New Testament is all about Christ.

The New Testament shows the culmination of the Grand Narrative, the Big Picture, and the Plot Line in Christ.

Intertestamental Periods

Hellenistic Period

- When the Old Testament ends Judea is still under the control of Persia.
- Around 331 B.C. the Greeks, led by Alexander the Great, take control of Judea.
- The Ptolemaic Empire ruled Judea from 320 to 198 B.C.
- The Jews in Judea readily adapted to Greek culture.
- Around 198 B.C. the Seleucid Empire, named after Alexander's general Seleucus, conquered Judea. This empire eventually was hostile to Judaism and threatened death to anyone who practiced the Jewish religion. The temple in Jerusalem was turned into a pagan shrine and persecution was commonplace.

Hasmonean Period

- There was a revolt among the Jews led by the priest Mattathias and his five sons. When Mattathias died his son, Judas Maccabaeus, took over and won independence for Judah.
- The temple was cleansed in 164 B.C. and the burnt offerings resumed.
- The Hasmonean period lasted from 164 to 63 B.C. It is called the Hasmonean period because during this period all the rulers were priests from the same family and this family took its name from the Hebrew name of Simon, an early Maccabean leader.
- There were nine rulers after Judas Maccabaeus. However, they became more dictatorial, corrupt, immoral, and pagan.

Roman Period

- Roman rule began in 63 B.C. and lasted until the fourth century A.D.
- Pompey took the city of Jerusalem and entered the Holy of Holies. The Jews considered this sacrilege.
- The early church took advantage of the "Roman Peace," the *Pax Romana*.
- The Romans set up the governmental structures and appointed the rulers.



- Rome appointed Herod the Great as king of all Palestine in 37 B.C. He ruled until his death in 4 B.C.
- Herod's successors continued to play a significant role during the time of Jesus and the early church.
- The governors, such as Pontius Pilate, were instrumental during this time. In addition, the Greek influence still existed.
- The world events and changing of world powers of the time between the testaments were predicted in the book of Daniel so this time is not unrelated to the message of the Old Testament.

Religious Transformation

- The Second Temple era began when Jews returned from Babylon and rebuilt the temple.
- By 300 B.C. some Hebrews had decided the temple was not that important. The emphasis became obeying the Law.
- Worship moved from the temple to the synagogue, the place of learning.
- The rabbis taught the laws orally and the scribes wrote down these new laws.

Religious Groups

Sadducees

- They consisted primarily of wealthy, priestly families in Jerusalem.
- They only considered the five books of Moses to be authoritative while other Old Testament books carried less authority. Mark 12:18-27
- They emphasized human responsibility and free will at the expense of God's sovereignty. Also, they were all about political stability.

Essenes

- They believed the Old Testament prophecies were being fulfilled among them and they looked forward to a soon coming war that would destroy all of God's enemies.
- They held to a high view of God's sovereignty and maintained strict purity.
- They strictly observed the Sabbath even going beyond the teaching of Jesus by forbidding acts of mercy on the Sabbath.

Pharisees

- They mostly lived in Jerusalem.
- There were three schools of Pharisees: the disciples of Shammai, Hillel, and Gamaliel.
 - The Shammai were the most conservative and dominated before the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D.
 - The Hillel were more liberal. They had come from Babylon to Jerusalem about a generation before Jesus.



- Gamaliel was the son or grandson of Hillel. Acts 22:3
- Gamaliel was known for his wisdom and strict observance of the calendar.
- The goal of the Pharisee was to be blameless before God through observance of the Law of Moses. They took this seriously because they believed that the resurrection of the dead was a reward for living a righteous life.

Zealots

- They were radicals against Rome. Numbers 25:6-8
- They believed in violence against Rome was a way of purifying Israel of foreign influence. Matthew 10:4

Theological Developments

The Old Testament was the primary source for Jewish beliefs, but revisions occurred because of three primary factors.

1. The Jews lived either under subjugation to foreign powers or were heavily influenced by foreign powers.
2. Many Jews lived in foreign lands, so they needed to figure out how to worship God in the midst of pagans and without the temple.
3. The Jews were exposed to new ways of thinking, particularly Hellenism, which affected their beliefs.

Monotheism

- The Jews never lost the idea that there is only one true and living God that must be worshiped.

Election

- The Jews help tightly to the Old Testament teaching that God chose Israel to be his special people.

Centrality of Torah

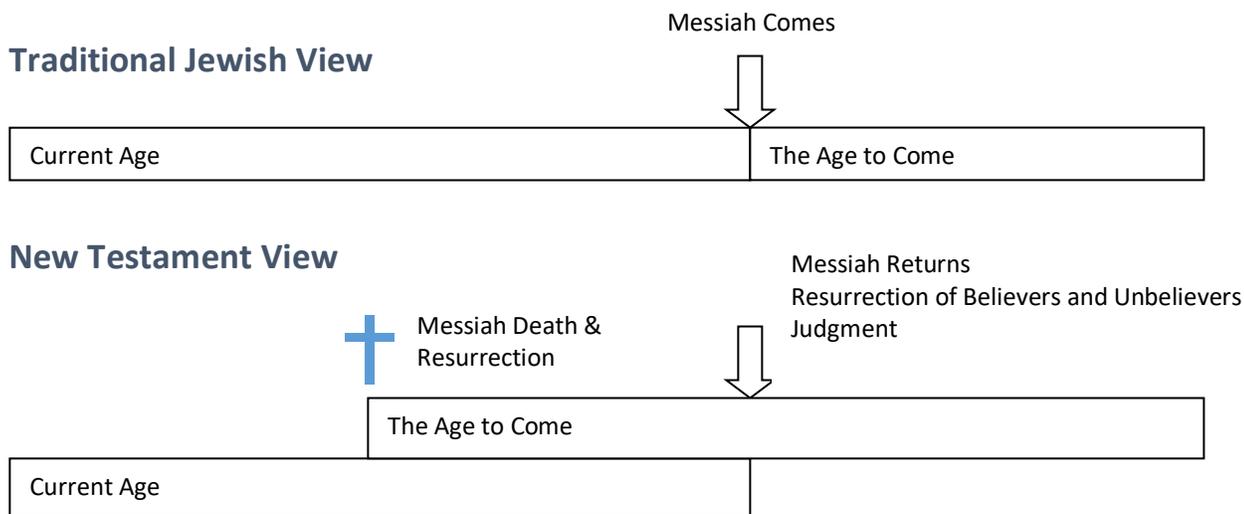
- The Law was significant to the intertestamental Jews.
- The content of the Law was debated.
- The stress placed on obedience to the Law created a kind of legalism among many of the Jews.



Eschatology

- Many Jews were looking for the time when God would directly intervene for his people and punish evildoers.
- The Sadducees enjoyed rule and power, so they weren't too interested in a hopeful future.
- For those who held a strong eschatological hope, some looked for a warrior after the model of David who would usher in the final kingdom.
- Some Jews expected two Messiahs, one royal and one priestly.
- Some Jews didn't expect a Messiah at all.

The concept of the end is modified in the New Testament.



The coming of Jesus inaugurated the age to come, but the current age does not end until Jesus returns.

New Testament Structure

There are 27 books in the New Testament and there are various ways to categorize them.

- The books by genre:
 - The Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts)
 - The Epistles (Pauline and General)
 - The Apocalypse (Revelation)
- The books by author:
 - Matthew, Mark, 1 & 2 Peter, Jude, and James are associated with Peter.
 - Luke, Acts, Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, 1 & 2 Timothy, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Titus, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and Hebrews are associated with Paul.
 - John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Revelation are associated with John.



New Testament Message

The message of the Old Testament is promises made, and the message of the New Testament is promises kept.

Christ

- God has fulfilled His most important promise—sending a Savior for His people.
- In the Gospels, we see the plans and promises of God from the Old Testament being fulfilled in the person of Christ.
- In Acts Christ's church is being expanded through the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- Matthew places emphasis on Jesus' fulfillment of prophecies in the Old Testament, which would have been important to Jewish readers.
- Mark seems to be recording Peter's account of Christ for Roman Christians at a time when Apostles were being killed and it was vital for the early church to have a recorded Gospel.
- Luke, in both the Gospel of Luke and Acts, seems to have a more Gentile audience in mind and emphasizes that Christ came not just for the Jews but for all who would repent and believe.
- John marvels at the person and work of Jesus while on this earth in human flesh.

The New Covenant People

- The New Testament is about the people of God—to whom has God fulfilled his promises.
- Christ's coming inaugurated a very different way of communicating with God the Father. Hebrews 9:11-15
- Those in Christ are distinct from the rest of humanity *not* because of their ethnic or socioeconomic similarity, but because they have been redeemed by the blood of the lamb and are now living out what it means to have the guilt of sins permanently removed.
- The Epistles of the New Testament are all about understanding what it looks like to be this new covenant people: on the one hand, understanding the truth of this radical gospel news—and on the other, learning how to live as a gospel-transformed people.



The New Creation

The New Testament concludes with a vision of a future that will be even better than the beginning. John's vision of the future New Creation in Revelation sees God's people living in God's city for eternity.