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Reading the New Testament
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Gundry Essay #1

In what providential ways did the events of the intertestamental period prepare for the coming of Christ and the rise of the church?

The best way for me to describe how the intertestamental period prepared for the coming of Christ is to relate it to our modern day experience. The gap of time between the Old and New Testament is a representation of God's silence. Personal experience dictates that God is often silent right before He does something big in the life of His servants. In modern day we refer to this as a wilderness or valley experience; it's a time of very little direction when we become very eager to hear God's voice again and our hunger for Him is intensified.

The children of Israel were waiting and anticipating a Savior. There was a separation of God's people during this time and many Jews were under Persian rule during this period. This may likely indicate that many were not practicing it adhering to the Laws of Moses and may have still been stuck in the ways of the Babylonian system. They truly needed a reconnection to God.

Why did Palestinian Jewry tend to be culturally backward?

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; 1 Peter 2:9

During this period in Palestine, Jews were a minority. One theme that stood out most to me within this chapter is that of morality. If the Jews at this time are truly royal, holy, and a peculiar set of people, this had to be exhibited in everything they did. Jewry in Palestine were culturally

backwards because they lived outside the box of what was expected in Palestine. They were indeed rebellious to the culture and especially the moral standard of the time.

Other differences included language as many Jews spoke Aramaic and Hebrew in addition to the more popular Greek. Jews usually consumed only two meals per day with fish being the main meat consumed in contrast to the four meals eaten by the Romans. Also slavery was not very prevalent among the Jews. Even forms of entertainment were quite different as there was also a moral gap. While there were some who participated in some of the customs, the majority did not leaving them to be targets.

In what ways have educational practices in Western culture combined traits characteristic of both Jewish and Greco-Roman educational practices?

There are definitely several similarities between our modern world of education that is shared with both Jewish and Greco Roman educational practices. Education is still very important with special attention paid to the early years. In today's society the early years are most likened to that of the Jewish household as we hold to the tradition that education begins at home. Before even entering a kindergarten setting children must first learn the alphabet and be able to count to a certain number.

In contrast the religious studies emphasis has, in recent years, been removed from public schools and is prevalent only in church sponsored schools and in Jewish communities. Then, young boys were trained mostly in trade in addition to their biblical studies. In our current society the emphasis on learning a trade rather than attend a traditional University has also seen a shift.

One similarity that we share with the Greco Roman World would be the liberal approach of educating girls, which didn't seem to be an emphasis in Jewish households. Again, a the focal point of our modern day education is geared towards non-religious subject matter as was the case in the Greco Roman World.