Between the Testaments
The Not So Silent Time

Ron Holton
I will never forget the summer after I graduated from college and moved to the Philippines to be a summer missionary. This experience had a tremendous impact on my spiritual life and maturity. Although it is only recorded in the recesses of my memory, it was probably the most transformative period of my Christian life.

One of my most vivid memories occurred on my last day in Davao City, Philippines. To appreciate this story, you must first know the background.

The day that I arrived in Davao City my hosts, the Cebu family, picked me up and took me to their home, where 10 people were waiting to greet me. I figured this was a group of neighbors who lived in the area, but quickly found out that they all were related and every one of them lived in the home I was moving into; a home that consisted of three bedrooms and no air conditioning or shower.

We were cozy, to say the least! But even with so many people in the house, I was provided my own room. What I considered poverty-level housing was considered above average in their society. I was continually blessed by their words and deeds, even though most of the people I did life with lived significantly below the poverty line of the United States.

One young man, Ivan, was a second cousin of the family who lived in the barrio outside of town and obviously had very few material possessions. Every day he would wear the same old tattered white T-shirt, except for Sunday when he would wear a floral-print Hawaiian shirt, you know, the kind
On my final day in the Philippines, I had purchased a lot of inexpensive designer clothes, but I had no way to get them home except my suitcase. I decided to give my old clothes to my Filipino family. I divided my old clothes into six different bags and gave them as gifts to my male family members. (I also gave some other token gifts to the female members.)

As I was stuffing the last knock-off Gucci shirt into my suitcase, I heard a knock on my door. It was Ivan. As he was standing there, he handed me a brown paper bag. I opened it up and inside that bag was the shirt he had worn each Sunday – his best shirt.

I stood there in disbelief asking him to please keep it, but he insisted that I take it. When he left, I began to cry. I had given him my leftover scraps, and he had given me the best he had.

There are many obvious theological pictures in this gift. The fact is, other than my salvation, it is the single most influential act of generosity that I have ever experienced.

This happened in another time, another country, and another culture, but that does not lessen the great impact it has on my life today. The same is true of the intertestamental period – it is no less relevant now than when the events occurred. If we understand it a little better, it will help us to understand the New Testament of the Bible from a more in-depth perspective.

I hope this booklet brings greater insight to your biblical knowledge and to your faith.

God Bless,
Ron
Chapter 1: The Dusk of the Old Day

The “intertestamental period” is the time period of approximately 400 years between the end of Malachi and the writing of the gospels. Many have labeled this, “the silent period,” for two reasons. First, there is not a trustworthy record of a biblical prophet reclaiming “thus saith the Lord” in these years. Second, there is a 400-year gap between the last words of Malachi and the appearance of Jesus on the scene. While it may be correct to label this period as “silent” for those two reasons, the period was actually not so silent.¹ In fact, it was a period of rapid world change, especially in Israel and among the Jews. The religious, cultural, and political landscape underwent dramatic shifts that paved the way for Jesus and the gospel.

To feel some of the impact of this “silent period,” try this: Imagine reading the first few chapters of a book, turning a page, and discovering that someone has ripped out a good chunk of the middle section of the book. In order to find out where you were in the narrative, you would most likely read the next several pages. However, you quickly discover that you have no idea what’s going on in the story because a whole lot happened between the first few chapters you read, and the pages you are now reading. However, you don’t know what, because those pages detailing what happened were ripped out and are nowhere to be found!

In a similar sense, the Old Testament ends with Malachi warning the Jewish people to remember the law of the Lord, and the New Testament begins with promises of the Messiah, who is soon to appear. Thankfully, we have Daniel’s prophecy, extrabiblical writings, and stories in the

¹ Jerry Knoblet, Herod the Great (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005), i.
Gospels that reveal some of what happened during this intertestamental period. In short, the intertestamental period developed the conditions that made the context ripe for the Messiah to appear. This brief booklet provides a summary of the political, religious, and cultural developments that occurred between the Old Testament and the New Testament eras. You’ll see that the Old and New Testaments are not two isolated books, but one seamless story that has no cracks in its continuity. God’s silence does not imply His absence. During those times when He seems to be silent, He is actually working behind the scenes to create the next act of His great story in our lives.
Many people experience various waiting periods throughout life. We wait in line, we wait for the right job opportunity, we wait for the pain to pass, etc. In our desperation to reach the next big thing, we often miss what God wants to reveal to us during this “in the meantime period.” Little do we realize, God is working behind the scenes to accomplish His purpose in His time. God may delay, but He is never late. He is always on time.

The same is true during the intertestamental period. While there was not a “word from the Lord” spoken by the prophets during these 400 years, the world was going through rapid and significant transitions. These transitions, in government, culture, and religion, were ways in which God was preparing for the coming of His Son.

**Government**

In the approximately 400 years between the two testaments, there were several empires that held power over the Jewish people, including the Persian, Greek, and Roman empires. When Malachi proclaimed the words of God to the Jewish people, they were under Persian rule (532 - 334 BC). Under the Persians, Jews were allowed to practice their religion relatively unhindered. The Persian empire included the last hundred years of the Old Testament period and the first hundred years of the intertestamental period. Old Testament books written during this time include Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Daniel.

The Persian empire fell when Alexander the Great

---

conquered Darius of Persia (334 BC). In under a year, Alexander had effectively conquered the Middle East, along with everything else in the known world. This ushered in an age of change that influenced even modern society in the West. One can only imagine the immediate impact Greek culture made upon the Jewish people during the rule of the Greeks. Many scholars believe Alexander’s progress throughout the Middle East was the fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy in Daniel 8:21 and 10:20. Alexander’s reign was swift and forceful, but not long-lasting. After reigning for only 10 years as the King of Greece, Alexander died in Babylon at the age of 33. However, Alexander left behind a tremendous legacy in cultural and political influence. For example, as seen in the New Testament, the common language of the Greeks (koine) helped communicate to a wide variety of peoples. It was a language that everyone, even the common man, could understand, allowing the gospel to be communicated more effectively and efficiently to large groups of people.

After the fall of the Greek empire, a succession of rulers reigned over Judah. In a century and a half before Jesus was born (167 BC), a ruler by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes opposed the Jews and desecrated the Jewish temple. However, the Jews rebelled against his authority and restored the temple.

The Roman empire reigned over Israel when Pompey of Rome conquered Israel in 63 BC. Pompey was defeated when a civil war erupted between him and Julius Caesar. Caesar won and the father of Herod, Antipater, became loyal to Caesar in order to gain political power for his son. As a result of Antipater’s loyalty, Caesar awarded Herod the governorship of Galilee. After Caesar was assassinated, Herod switched sides and join Cassius. Cassius promised

---

that he would eventually give Herod the kingship of Judea. But before Cassius could deliver on his promise, he was defeated by Octavian and Anthony. However, not to be outdone or left behind, Herod was elected of king of Judea in 39 BC. This was like giving someone in ambassadorship to an irrelevant country with no power. Yet Herod tried his best to make his position one importance. During his rule, the were two more changes of ruling authorities over him, but each time he used the transition to pledge loyalty that whoever was the strongest. Thus, Herod’s ambition became more and more obvious as time went on. This ambition is seen clearly in the lives of his sons, Herod Antipas and Herod Philip, who were rulers when Jesus walked the earth.

Eventually, Caesar Augustus (Octavian) gained influence over Judea and established an era of domestic peace, which resulted from relative freedom given to outlying states, successful domestic policies, and the establishment of peace between the Roman empire and its surrounding enemies. In short, when Jesus appeared on the scene, He did so in the context of a dominant Roman authority. The earthly kingdom of the Roman empire was about to encounter the heavenly kingdom of Jesus.

**Culture**

This time period of Roman rule became known as Pax Romana (“Roman Peace”) and lasted from around 27 BC to 180 AD. This era led to incredible economic prosperity throughout the region that spread from England (north) to Morocco (south) and to Iraq (east). Rome’s citizens felt secure, and the government provided stability for its 70 million citizens.

Further, the era of Pax Romana produced many technological advances. The Romans built a system of roads

---

through the region that became the model of the modern highway system. For the Romans, this allowed the effective and efficient transport of its armies and provided faster means of communication. They also built pipes, or aqueducts, that carried water to cities and farms throughout the region. Their technological advances and discovery of concrete allowed for the building of curved domes, which led to one of the more famous buildings of the time: The Pantheon. This era also produced some of the more famous poets and authors, such as Horace, Virgil, and Ovid.\(^7\) The world was changing, but thanks to the Pax Romana, there was a stability that set the stage for the gospel to spread unhindered throughout the region.

**Religion/Politics**

During the intertestamental period, the religious tone of the era was increasingly diverse. However, in the Judean region, two groups develop significant religious and political influence among the Jewish people. First, the Pharisees believed in both a strict interpretation and application of the scriptures (the written law) and the Mishnah (the oral law). Second, the Sadducees were connected with the high priest and were composed of the wealthy, educated, and elite of society. They did not believe in the resurrection.\(^8\) They were also friendly to the Romans.

Other groups that were significant during this time were the Herodians, Zealots, and Essenes. The Herodians were more of a political party than a religious one. They were basically supporters of Herod. The Zealots were political party who opposed the Herodians. They were completely against Roman rule, to the point that they did not hesitate to revolt against the government. The Essenes were more religious than the Herodians and Zealots. They believed that

---


\(^8\) Christopher McMahon, *Jesus Our Salvation: An Introduction to Christology* (Winona: Saint Mary’s, 2007), 78
they had to isolate themselves from sinful society in order to truly follow God.

God’s people gradually succumbed to both political and spiritual bondage. Politically, after they had been exiled, their sense of identity was lost because so many of them lived outside of Palestine, and had intermarried with other peoples. They had lost hope because of the suppression of the Roman empire. Most of the political groups were against them, and their solutions to problems often failed.

Spiritually, the Jews felt like a lost people, with many thinking that God had abandoned them even after they were released from captivity. This often resulted in apostasy. Douglas Moo states,

“The tribulations of Israel in the intertestamental period forced many Jews to develop the notion of a true, faithful Israel within national Israel much more extensively. Under the stress of persecution, many Jews renounced their faith, and many more compromised their faith...”

The words of God were absent from the prophets despite works known as the Apocrypha (1-2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Rest of Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, Baruch, Letter to Jeremiah, Additions to Daniel, and 1-2 Maccabees) and the Pseudepigrapha. However, these writings were never accepted as part of the biblical canon. Many Jews still believe the Torah to be the supreme authority and consider it to be the religious, social, and political authority in all matters.

---

As we can see, the 400 “years of silence” were actually not so silent. In these 400 years, the world had changed. Craig Bartholomew explains,

“As the Old Testament story draws to a close, the people of Israel are living on “the land” in relative peace under the rule of the Persians, who have allowed Israel to return. But as the New Testament story begins, its context is quite different. The Persian empire has crumbled long since, and Israel now suffers under the brutal mastery of imperial Rome. Only a fraction of the people of Israel actually live in Palestine -- the majority are scattered throughout the Roman empire and even beyond its borders, where they too are subject to pagan masters. Among the Jews, whether in Palestine or elsewhere, there is a fervent longing for God to act, to bring liberation to his people. The captive nation seethes with anger and dreams of one day throwing off the yoke of oppression and driving the Romans out of the land for good. ... During this time the Jewish people strain to reconcile their faith in God’s promises of blessing with the ugly experience of life under a succession of increasingly malignant pagan rulers.”

The Old Testament ends with both a blessing and a curse. A blessing will occur to God’s people if they follow the law. A curse will occur to God’s people if they do not. The intertestamental period reveals that Israel struggled to follow God’s law while they were in exile and under spiritual and political bondage. Though Malachi concludes the Old Testament in a despairing context, he prophetically proclaims a word from God: “Behold, I send My Messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord whom you seek, will suddenly come to His Temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,’ says the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 3:1).
The New Testament opens with much promise. Matthew’s gospel begins with the genealogy of the Messiah. Mark’s gospel starts with the story of John the Baptist as he prepares the way for the coming Messiah. Luke begins his gospel by providing historical and political context for Theophilus before he describes the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus. Finally, John’s gospel provides words of incredible hope:

“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him; and without Him was not anything made that has been made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it.” (John 1: 1-5)

God used the events of the intertestamental period to prepare the way for the Messiah. The 400 years between the two Testaments were not silent, and God was not absent. God, at this time, was orchestrating world events behind the scenes to prepare the world and its culture for the arrival of the Messiah. Paul explains that “when the fullness of time had come,” God sent Jesus so those who were far from God could be near to God through adoption (Galatians 4:4-7).

What kind of world was Jesus born into? Jesus came into a world where God’s Word had not been heard for hundreds of years, where the people of God were under political oppression from the Roman empire led by a paranoid ruler (Herod), where the nation of Israel was losing
its identity, and where everyone seemed to be looking for hope. William MacDonald explains,

“The stage was set. Man’s futile attempt to deal with this shifting tide of political power and religious belief had produced very little. Israel was in a kind of spiritual bondage that was even worse than her political bondage. The rise of the various parties and movements … was evidence of a sincere search for some final solution to her problem. All seemed to have failed. The stage of history was dark. The situation was indeed separate. Amid this setting God broke 400 years of silence with the announcement of the coming of Christ, the faithful Servant of the Lord, and the intertestamental period came to an end.¹¹ The intertestamental period may remind us of today’s historical and religious context. We seem to live in dry times where the national political landscape and world context hinders the light of the Gospel from shining. Many modern believers want to know when the Messiah will appear again. It seems that we may learn from God’s “behind the scenes” sovereign hand that was at work during the 400 “not so silent” years of the intertestamental period.”

God was at work even though the Jewish people may have thought that He had abandoned them. We, too, can learn the same lesson the Jewish people learned, that God’s silence does not mean He is absent. Jesus is coming again. God is orchestrating all the world’s events to a climactic conclusion when every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord (Philippians 2:10-11).

Timeline of the Intertestamental Period

- **1400 BC**: Moses
- **400 BC**: Malachi
- **AD 46**: New Testament written
- **AD 90**: Old Testament written
- **400 years of silence**
I. Timeline of Intertestamental Period

A. Sources of Information

- OT Apocrypha
- OT Pseudepigrapha
- Josephus
- Dead Sea Scrolls
- Targums (Aramaic paraphrases of the Bible)
- Rabbinic Literature
- World History (Greek, Roman, Eastern)

B. Time Period

- 516 B.C. (Temple Rebuilt) ------------------ 70 A.D. (Temple Destroyed)
- Christians call this period the “Intertestamental Period” but Jews call it the “Second Temple Period.” Craig Bartholomew (modern scholar) calls this period “A Kingdom Story Waiting For An Ending.”

C. Six Empires Reign Over Israel During the Intertestamental Period

1. Persian Empire (532 B.C. – 332 B.C.)
   - Time period represents beginning and completion of temple.
   - Rulers include Cyrus the Great, Darius I, Xerxes, Darius II, and Darius III
   - Sanhedrin developed during this time (the supreme court of ancient Israel-71 members). Eventually the high priest developed political power and influence.

---


2 Jerry Knoblet, Herod the Great (Lanham, MD: University Press, 2005). i.

2. Greek Empire (334 B.C. – 323 B.C.)
   - Greeks were not powerful at first. They fought each other more than outside enemies. These civil wars caused them to be open to Philip of Macedon. Philip conquered and ruled Jerusalem until the rise of another great ruler, Alexander the Great.
   - Alexander, along with 40,000 Macedonians, took over the coastal regions of Persia and Egypt.
   - The region of Judea was under the control of Persia until Alexander the Great conquered them. The Jews enjoyed great freedom under Alexander.
   - Alexander was 20 when he began his military campaigns and in approximately 13 years he had completely conquered the Persian Empire. He then died at the age of 33. His generals divided his empire but unity did not last. The region that Alexander conquered was fractured.

   - Ptolemy aimed to make a profit off the Jews by imposing exorbitant taxes on them and controlling their trade. The high priest functioned as the mediator between the Jewish people and the Ptolemaic leaders, a continuation of the political nature of the high priest office begun during the Persian Empire.
   - Greeks began to influence Jewish culture and the Greek language became the common one spoken across the region. The Jews unofficially adopted this language.
   - The Septuagint was the first Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures (225 B.C.). It grew in popularity and was the primary set of Scripture used by the early church.

4. Seleucid Empire (204 B.C. – 165 B.C.) – ruled over

---

5. The Maccabean Empire (166 B.C. – 163 B.C.)

- Eventually Antiochus Epiphanes ruled over Syria and Palestine. He tried to expand his rule by invading Egypt. He killed 80,000 Jews in 3 days and also enslaved the same amount of Jews. He set up idols in the temple, sacrificed a pig on the altar (an unclean animal), and established strict rules over the Jews (i.e., they could assemble for prayer, could not observe the Sabbath, circumcision was banned).
- As a result of this harsh rule, Mattathias, a Jewish high priest, led a revolt against Antiochus. He and his rebels were largely successful and after he died, his son Judas took over the rebellion eventually reclaiming Jerusalem. The temple was cleansed of its idolatry and rededicated. This event is still celebrated by the Jewish people today. It is known as Hanukkah.  
- Eventually, Judah gained independence. From 166 – 63 B.C. the Jewish people enjoyed a period of self-governance. However, they were still treated harshly by the Hasmonean rulers. In fact, these kings were so evil that the Romans were viewed as liberators when they arrived.

6. The Roman Empire (63 B.C. – 4 B.C.)

- Jewish independence ceased when Pompey conquered Jerusalem for Rome in 63 B.C. Pompey sold many of the Jews into slavery.
- The Romans raised taxes significantly upon the Jews to pay for their continued military conquests.
- In 27 B.C. Caesar Augustus became the official ruler of the Roman Empire.
- Herod was chosen by Rome to be the king of Palestine in 37 B.C. This was actually not a high compliment because of the relative obscurity of the Palestine region. It is the equivalent of the President of the USA offering someone an ambassadorship to

---

Siberia. For the Jews, Herod represented Roman authority and suppression.

- To gain favor with the Jews, Herod rebuilt their temple at a much grander and spectacular scale (built between 20 B.C. and A.D. 64). He doubled the size of the temple court, which was the temple that Jesus taught in. Thus, it was not officially complete when Jesus was alive. Interestingly, in Matthew 24:4-35 Jesus prophesied the destruction of the temple before it had even finished being built. Can you imagine someone telling you during the last couple of months of building your dream home that it was going to destroyed by a tornado in a few years?
- Because of Herod’s insecurity and paranoia, he became increasingly watchful of internal and external revolts against him. He even executed his mother, one of his wives, and two of his sons.
- After hearing of a Jewish king being born in Bethlehem, he ordered the execution of all baby Jewish boys.

It is during the rule of the Romans that we see God’s plan working to bring things about in the fullness of time. As Henry Dosker states,

> “Throughout this entire dark period of Israel’s history, God was working out His own Divine plan with them. Their Scriptures were translated into Greek, after the conquest of Alexander the Great the common language in the East. Thus the world was prepared for the word of God, even as the latter in turn prepared the world for the reception of the gift of God, in the gospel of His Son.

The Septuagint thus is a distinct forward movement in the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise
(Gen 12:3; 18:18). As the sacrificial part of Jewish worship declined, through their wide separation from the temple, the eyes of Israel were more firmly fixed on their Scriptures, read every Sabbath in their synagogues, and, as we have seen, these Scriptures, through the rendering of the Septuagint, had become the property of the entire world. Thus, the synagogue everywhere became the great missionary institute, imparting to the world Israel’s exalted Messianic hopes.

On the other hand, the Jews themselves, embittered by long-continued martyrdoms and suffering, utterly carnalized this Messianic expectation in an increasing ratio as the yoke of the oppressor grew heavier and the hope of deliverance grew fainter. And thus when their Messiah came, Israel recognized Him not, while the heart-hungry heathen, who through the Septuagint had become familiar with the promise, humbly received Him (John 1:9-14). The eyes of Israel were blinded for a season, ‘till the fullness of the Gentiles shall be gathered in’ (Rom 9:32; 11:25)."

It is in this context that Jesus is born (between 6 B.C. and 4 B.C.) in Bethlehem.
II. Short Bios of Significant Figures (or “What does Philosophy have to do with the Gospel?)

The defeat of the Persian Empire in 481 B.C. by the Greeks paved the way for Western and European democracy. The Greeks championed the ideas of freedom, voting, and philosophy that would come to significantly influence American culture. It was in this context that great thinkers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle developed their philosophies and influence.

A. Socrates (470 – 399 B.C.)

Socrates was a self-proclaimed pursuer of truth who could not stand the relativists of his day. Though Socrates had his faults, his influence lies in his Socratic method. This method involved teaching his students through a continuous exchange of questions and answers. This method led to debate through dialogue and eventually became the favored method of debate among the Greeks. Paul noticed the Socratic method during his visit to Athens (Acts 17:16-21). Through this exchange with Athenian philosophers we can see how the Socratic method paved the way for the Greeks to be open to hearing about the Gospel. Further, Jesus used the Socratic method as revealed in Matthew 6:26-30, Matthew 12:10-11, Matthew 21:23-27, Matthew 22:41-45, Luke 22:67-68, and John 10: 31-36.6

B. Plato (437-347 B.C.)

Plato was a star student of Socrates. After Socrates death, Plato began a learning academy that educated exceptional students for almost a thousand years. Plato was known as

---

a rationalist who used thought to access the truth. Plato identified two elements of reality — the Ideal and the manifestation of the Ideal. The Ideal was associated with God and perfection. The manifestation of the Ideal was everything that functioned as an imperfect shadow of the Ideal. Thus, Plato viewed the spiritual soul as good and the physical body as evil. When someone does something bad it is not because of sin but is because of that person’s ignorance of what is good. Therefore, the answer to society’s ills was education not punishment.

There has been much written about Plato's influence upon the New Testament. While it is unlikely that Plato knew of the Hebrew Scriptures, it is more likely that, in His humanity, Jesus heard of Plato. Further, Paul would have encountered Plato and his famous work Republic during his travels on his third missionary journey. Regardless, there is no direct influence of Plato upon Christianity. However, Plato did pave the way in his philosophical thinking that gave the claims of Christianity a familiar ground upon which to build influence into the minds of the Greeks.  

C. Aristotle (384 B.C. – 322 B.C.)

Aristotle was Plato’s star student. Shortly after the death of his beloved wife Pythias, Aristotle began to teach the son of Philip of Macedon — Alexander. We know him as Alexander the Great. Aristotle taught him for four years (13-17 years old). Aristotle established his learning academy in Athens and intentionally developed a lush landscape where discussions of high ideas could take place. He was also a scientist who studied plants and animals.

Aristotle is most known today for developing modern logic. For him, there was no compartmentalization of the soul and body. The two were one and the same. The virtues of the soul led to a demonstration of them through our bodies.

---

Aristotle is also known for his definition of God as the “Unmoved Mover.” His logic that everything has a cause had to eventually lead back to something or someone that began everything. This is what we have come to know as the “Logos.”

III. Influence of Philosophers Upon the New Testament

Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle had both indirect and direct influence on the New Testament. During the Intertestamental Period, they were the three personalities that greatly paved the way for the reception of the Gospel among the Gentiles and even the Jews; Alexander's conquests contributed to this acceptance as well. In some remarkable research, one author noted the following about Paul's use of Greek philosophy: ⁸

“1Cor 15:33 - Evil communications corrupt good manners.
Quoted from Thais, a work done by “Menander”, a writer from the 3rd Century BC, who in turn is supposed to have quoted from another Scholar named “Euripides”.

Titus 1:12 - The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.
In writing to Titus Paul quotes a description of the Cretans taken from “Epimenides”. Paul calls Epimenides “one of themselves, a prophet of their own”.

Acts 17:24-29
In Acts 17:18 Paul is encountered by Epicureans and Stoics. Paul’s first sentence struck directly at the

“Epicurean” theory (the origin of the world by mere coincidence and of atoms) and arrayed himself with the “Stoics” in their doctrine of the (Divine Wisdom and Providence creating and ruling all things). His speech is made up of words quoted from a Roman Stoic philosopher called Lucius Annaeus Seneca as mentioned below.

Acts 17:24

Paul went on to say, “God dwelleth not in temples made with hands.”

Seneca, the most prominent contemporary representative of Stoicism, had put their doctrine into these words, “The whole world is the temple of the immortal gods,” and “Temples are not to be built to God of stones piled on high. He must be consecrated in the heart of every man.”

Acts 17:25

Paul said, “Neither is God served by men’s hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.”

Seneca put the same truth in this form: “God wants not ministers. How so? He himself ministereth to the human race.”

Acts 17:26-28a

Paul said, “God made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth.”

Seneca agrees, “We are members of a vast body. Nature made us kin, when she produced us from the same things and to the same ends.”

Paul said, “God is not far from each one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being.”

Seneca wrote, “God is at hand everywhere and to all
men” and again, “God is near thee; he is with thee; he is within.”

**Acts 17:28b**

Paul says, “*For we are also is offspring.*”

In Paul’s speech at Athens, he quotes from “certain of your own poets”. The poet he is talking about is Aratus, and this is a line found in the Phaenomena of Aratus.

**Acts 17:29**

Then Paul proceeded, “*Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think the godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art or device of men.*”

Seneca parallels the thought again: “Thou shalt not form him of silver and gold: a true likeness of God cannot be molded of this material.

**Gal 5:23b**

Paul says, “*Against such there is no law.*”

**Rom 2:14b**

Paul says, “*Are a law unto themselves.*”

Paul’s words are eerily familiar to Aristotle’s saying of men eminent for wisdom and virtue, “Against such there is no law, for they themselves are a law;”

**1 Cor 9:24a**

Paul says, “*Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize?*”

Plato says, “But such as are true racers, arriving at the end, both receive the prizes and are crowned”

**Rom 7:22,23**

Paul says, “*But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me*”
into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”

Plato says, “There is a victory and defeat – the first and best of victories, the lowest and worst of defeats – which each man gains or sustains at the hands not of another, but of himself; this shows that there is a war against ourselves – going on in every individual of us.”

Phil 3:19

Paul says, “Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.”

Plato gives a vivid description of those gluttonous and intemperate souls whose belly was their God, in Plato’s work called “the Republic”.

Rom 8:5

Paul says, “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.”

Gal 6:8

Paul says, “For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.”

Plato speaks of “to be carnally-minded was death” in Phaedo.

2 Cor 4:4

Paul says, “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.”

D.A. Hayes writes “Plato would have pictured for him the truth that the God of this world blindeth the eyes of his votaries, and Paul never could have forgotten the picture when he had once read it.” – Theaet., 176; Rep., 7, 514

Phil 1:21

Paul says, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”
Plato says, “Now if death is like this, I say that to die is gain.”

2 Tim 4:6

Paul says, “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. To be with Christ, which is far better.”

Plato says, “The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways, I to die and you to live. which is better God only knows.”

1 Cor 13:12

Paul says, “For now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face.”

Plato says, I am very far from admitting that he who contemplates existences through the medium of thought, sees them only “through a glass, darkly,” any more than he who sees them in their working effects.

1 Thess 5:15

Paul says, “See that none render evil for evil unto any man.”

Plato says, Then we ought not to retaliate or render evil for evil to anyone, whatever evil we may have suffered from him.

1 Cor 9:16

Paul says, “For necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”

Plato says, But necessity was laid upon me – the word of God I thought ought to be considered first.

Acts 14:15

Paul and Barnabas say, “We also are men of like passions with you.”
Plato says, I am a man, and, like other men, a creature of flesh and blood, and not of "wood or stone," as Homer says.

2 Cor 7:2
Paul says, "I speak because I am convinced that I never intentionally wronged anyone."
Plato says, We have wronged no man; we have corrupted no man; we have defrauded no man.

Rom 12:4
Paul says, "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office."
Socrates says "To begin with, our several natures are not all alike but different. One man is naturally fitted for one task, and another for another."

Eph 1:22,23
Paul says, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."
Plato says "First, then, the gods, imitating the spherical shape of the universe, enclosed the two divine courses in a spherical body, that, namely, which we now term the head, being the most divine part of us and the lord of all that is in us; to this the gods, when they put together the body, gave all the other members to be servants."

1 Cor 12:14-17
Paul explains that “a body is not one single organ, but many... Suppose the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', it does still belong to the body. If the body were all eye, how could it hear?
If the body were all ear, how could it smell? But, in fact, God appointed each limb and organ to its own place in the body, as he chose.”

Socrates asks Protagoras, “Is virtue a single whole, and are justice and self-control and holiness parts of it? … as the parts of a face are parts-mouth, nose, eyes and ears.” Socrates then probes into the metaphor further by asking Protagoras if they agree that each part serves a different purpose, just as the features of a face do, and the parts make the whole, but each serves a different purpose—“the eye is not like the ear nor has it the same function.”

1 Cor 12:25

Paul says “That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.”

Socrates says, that the best-governed city is one “whose state is most like that of an individual man. For example, if the finger of one of us is wounded, the entire community of bodily connections stretching to the soul for ‘integration’ with the dominant part is made aware, and all of it feels the pain as a whole.”

Paul’s use of Greek philosophy of his day and age, cannot be overlooked or dismissed. He used the words of intellectuals of his day to his advantage in taking God’s word and the good news to the Greek speaking Gentile world.”