



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COURSE CODE: CTH 314

COURSE TITLE: INTER-TESTAMENTAL LITERATURE



CTH 314 INTER-TESTAMENTAL LITERATURE

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CONTENTS	PAGE
Introduction	iv
What you will Learn in this Course	iv
Course Aims	iv
Course Objectives	iv
Working through this Course	v
Course Materials	v
Study Units	v
Textbooks	vi
Assignment File	vii
Assessment	vii
Tutor-Marked Assignment	vii
Final Examination and Grading	vii
Course Marking Scheme	viii
Course Overview	viii
How to Get the Most from this Course	ix
Tutors and Tutorials	x
Summary	xi

INTRODUCTION

CTH 314 Inter-Testamental Literature is a 2-credit third year course. It is available for students in Christian Theology programme. The course consists of thirteen units which includes; introduction and definitions literature; necessity of inter-testamental period; definition of inter-testamental period; historical development of the great powers in inter-testamental period; the Jewish Sects; inter-testamental religion; Apocrypha literatures; Pseudepigrapha literature, the Dead Scrolls; the Apocalyptic literature; Rabbinical literature and Tannaitic literature. The course guide provides information on what the course is about and what you are expected to know in each unit. It also tells you about assessment, and periodic tutorial classes that are available for the course.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS COURSE

The overall aim of CTH 314: Inter-Testamental Literature is to introduce you to the basic understanding of inter-testamental history: The origin, history and literature of inter-testamental period. Your understanding of this course will prepare you to know the history of Jewish people during their dark period of 400 silent years and to theologise it. Specifically, the course will enable you to have a better understanding of the biblical period.

COURSE AIMS

This course aims at introducing you to the history and development of inter-testamental literature, the theological development of major events during inter-testamental biblical period and emergence of the Jewish sects.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In addition to the aims set above, each module and unit also has specific objectives. The modules and units objectives are at the beginning of every module and unit. You should read them before you start working through the unit. You may want to refer to them during your study of the module and unit to check on your progress.

You should always look at the module and unit objectives after completing each section. In this way, you can be sure that you have done what was required of you by the module and unit. Stated below are the wider objectives of this course as a whole. Definitely, by meeting these objectives, you should therefore know that you have achieved the aims of the course as a whole. On successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- define some inter-testamental concepts: inter-testamental literature and inter-testamental period
- describe the historical development of the period
- explain the historical origin of the Jewish sects
- highlight the development of inter-testamental religion
- identify the literature of inter-testamental period
- describe the contents of inter-testamental literature.

WORKING THROUGH THIS COURSE

To complete this course, you are expected to read the study units. Each unit under the modules contains some self-assessment exercises, and at a point in the course, you are required to submit assignments for assessment purposes. At the end of this course is the final examination. Stated below are all the components of the course and what you have to do.

COURSE MATERIALS

Major components of the course are:

1. Course guide
2. Study unit
3. Textbooks
4. Assignment file
5. Presentation

In addition, you must obtain text materials. They are provided by NOUN. You may contact your tutor if you have problems in obtaining the course materials.

STUDY UNITS

There are 15 study units in this course, broken into three modules. They are as follows:

Module 1 Introduction of Inter-Testamental Literature

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Unit 1 | Defining Inter-Testamental Period |
| Unit 2 | Biblical Criticism for Exegetical Study of Inter-Testamental Literature |
| Unit 3 | Biblical Methods for the Interpretation of Inter-Testamental Literature |
| Unit 4 | Number Symbolism and Images in Inter-Testamental Literature |
| Unit 5 | The Super-Powers in Inter-Testamental Period |

Module 2 Inter-Testamental Period (400 BC-1st Century AD)

Unit 1	The Jewish Sects
Unit 2	Jewish Independence
Unit 3	Inter-Testamental Religion
Unit 4	Features of the Jewish Religion
Unit 5	Other Events during Inter-Testamental Period

Module 3 Review of Inter-Testamental Literature

Unit 1	Apocryphal Literature
Unit 2	Pseudepigraphic Literature
Unit 3	The Dead Sea Scrolls
Unit 4	Apocalyptic Literature
Unit 5	Rabbanic Literature

Each unit contains a number of self-assessment questions.

The materials you have just covered or require to cover are to be of help to enable you evaluate your progress and to reinforce your understanding of the materials.

Alongside with your tutor-marked assignments, these exercises will assist you in achieving the stated learning objectives of the individual units and of the course.

TEXTBOOKS

Ferguson, E. (1993). *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. (2nd. ed.). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Flusser, D. (1990). "Jesus and the Essenes". *Jerusalem Perspective*. vol. 3, no. 3. May/June.

Freeman, J.M. (1972). *Manners and Customs of the Bible*. New Jersey: Logos International.

Green, J.B., McKnight, S. & Marshall, I.H. (1992). *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Leicester: IVP.

ASSIGNMENT FILE

The assignment file will be posted to you in due course. In this file, you will find all the details of the work you must submit to your tutor for marking. The marks you obtain for these assignments will be included in the final mark you obtain for this course. Further information on assignment will be found in the assignment file itself and later in this course guide under the section on assessment. There are more than fifteen assignments for this course. Each unit has one assignment, which is designed to cover every unit.

ASSESSMENT

There are two aspects of assessment in this course, first are the tutor-marked assessments, second there is a written examination. In tackling this assignment, every student is expected to apply information, knowledge and experience gathered during the course. The assignments must be submitted to your tutor for formal assessment in accordance with the deadlines stated in the assignment file. The work each student will submit to the tutor for assessment will count for 30% of the total course mark. At the end of the course, you will need to sit for a final written examination of three hours duration. This examination will also

TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

There are 15 Tutor-Marked Assignments in this course. You need to submit all the assignments. The best four (for instance, the highest four of the 13 marks) will be counted. Each assignment is based on 20 marks but on the average when the four assignments are put together, then each will now count 10% towards your total marks for the best four (4) assignments which would have been 100 marks will now be 30% of your total course mark. Assignment questions for the unit in this course are contained in an assignment file. NB: If for any reason, you cannot complete your work on time, contact your tutor before the assignment is due to discuss the possibility of an extension. Extensions will not be granted after the due date unless there are exceptional circumstances.

FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING

The final examination for CTH 314 will be of three hour's duration and have a value of 70% of the total course grade. The examination will consist of questions which reflect the practice exercises, and tutor-marked assignment you have previously submitted. All areas of the course will be assessed. You should use the time between finishing the last unit and sitting for the examination to revise the entire course. You

might find it useful to review your tutor marked assignments and comment on them before the examination. The final examination covers information from all parts of the course.

COURSE MARKING SCHEME

The following table shows the actual course score.

ASSESSMENT	MARKS
Assignment 1-4	There shall be four assignments out of which the best three counts for 30% of the course marks.
Final Examination	the overall course marks attract 70% while
Total	Total course marks will be 100%

COURSE OVERVIEW

Unit	Title of Work	Weekly Activity	Assessment (End of Unit)
	Course		
1	Defining Inter-Testamental Period	1	Assignment 1
2	Biblical Criticism of Exegetical Study of Inter-Testamental Literature	1	Assignment 2
3	Biblical Methods for the Interpretation of Inter-Testamental Literature	1	Assignment 3
4	Number Symbolism and Images in Inter-Testamental Literature	1	Assignment 4
5	The Super-Powers during Inter-Testamental Period	1	Assignment 5
6	The Jewish Sects	1	Assignment 6
7	Jewish Independence	1	Assignment 7
8	Inter-Testamental Religion	1	Assignment 8
9	Features of the Jewish Sects	1	Assignment 9
10	Other Events during Inter-Testamental Period	1	Assignment 10
11	Apocryphal Literature	1	Assignment 11
12	Pseudepigraphic Literature	1	Assignment 12
13	The Dead Sea Scrolls	1	Assignment 13
14	Apocalyptic Literature	1	Assignment 14
15	Rabbanic Literature	1	Assignment 15
	Total	15	

HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS COURSE

In distant learning, the study units replace the University lecturer. This is one of the great advantages of distant learning; you can read and work through specially designed study materials at your own pace, and at a time and place that suit you best. Think of it as reading the lecturer instead of listening to a lecturer. In the same way that a lecturer might set you some reading to do, the study units tell you when to read, your text materials or set books. You are provided exercises to do at appropriate points, just as a lecturer might give you an in-class exercise. Each study units follows a common format.

The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit and how a particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a

These objectives let you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. These learning objectives are meant to guide your study. The moment a unit is finished, you must go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives. If this is made a habit, then you will significantly improve your chances of passing the course.

The main body of the unit guides you through the required reading from other sources. This will usually be either from your set books or from a reading section. The following is a practical strategy for working through the course. If you run into any trouble, get in touch with your tutor. Remember that your tutor's job is to help you. When you need help, don't hesitate to call and ask your tutor to provide it.

1. Read this course guide thoroughly.
2. Organise a study schedule. Refer to the "Course Overview" for more details.
3. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units. Whatever method you choose to use, you should decide on and write in your own dates of each unit.
4. Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything you can to stick to it. The major reason that student fail is that they get behind with their course work. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please let your tutor know before it is too late for help.
5. Turn to unit 1 the "Course Guide" and read the introduction and the objectives for the unit.
6. Assemble the study materials. Information about what you need for a unit is given in the 'overview' at the beginning of each unit.

- You will almost always need both the study unit you are working on and one of your set books on your desk at the same time.
7. Work through the unit. The content of the unit itself has been arranged to provide a sequence for you to follow as you work through the unit you will be instructed to read from your set books.
 8. Complete your assignments in time. Keep in mind that you will learn a lot by doing the assignment carefully. They have been designed to help you meet the objectives of the course and, therefore, will help you pass the examination. Submit all assignments not later than the due date
 9. Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study materials or consult your tutor.
 10. When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can then start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the course and try to pace your study so that you keep yourself on schedule.
 11. When you have submitted an assignment to your tutor for marking, do not wait for its return before starting the next unit, keep to your schedule. When the assignment is returned, pay particular attention to your tutor's comments on the assignment. Consult your tutor as soon as possible if you have any questions or problems.
 12. After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives (listed at the beginning of each unit) and the course objectives (listed in this course guide).

TUTORS AND TUTORIALS

There are 8 hours of tutorials provided in support of this course. You will be notified of the dates, times and location of these tutorials, together with the name and phone number of your tutor, as soon as you are allocated a tutorial group.

Your tutor will mark and comment on your assignments, keep a close watch on your progress and on any difficulties you might encounter and provide assistance for you during the course. You must mail your tutor-marked assignments to your tutor well before the due date (at least two

They will be marked by your tutor and returned to you as soon as possible. Do not hesitate to contact your tutor by telephone, email, or discussion board if you need help. The following might be circumstance in which you would find help necessary. Contact your tutor if:

- you do not understand any part of the study units or the assigned readings
- you have difficulties with the exercises
- you have a question or problem with an assignment, with your tutor's comments on an assignment or with the grading of an assignment.

You should try your best to attend the tutorials. This is the only chance to have face-to-face contact with your tutor and ask questions which are answered instantly. You can raise any problem encountered in the course of your study. To gain the maximum benefit from course tutorials, prepare a question list before attending them. You will learn a lot participating in discussion actively.

SUMMARY

The course guide gives you an overview of what is expected in the course of this study. The course teaches you the basic principles of inter-testamental literature and how these principles can be applied in understanding the literatures that emerged during inter-biblical period.

We wish you success with the course and hope that you will find it both interesting and useful.

MAIN COURSE

CONTENTS	PAGE
Module 1 Introduction of Inter-Testamental Literature	1
Unit 1 Defining Inter-Testamental Period	1
Unit 2 Biblical Criticism for Exegetical Study of Inter-Testamental Literature	7
Unit 3 Biblical Methods for the Interpretation of Inter-Testamental Literature	15
Unit 4 Number Symbolism and Images in Inter-Testamental Literature	25
Unit 5 The Super-Powers in Inter-Testamental Period ..	41
Module 2 Inter-Testamental Period (400 BC-1st Century Ad)	51
Unit 1 The Jewish Sects	51
Unit 2 Jewish Independence	60
Unit 3 Inter-Testamental Religion	73
Unit 4 Features of the Jewish Religion	83
Unit 5 Other Events during Inter-Testamental Period ...	97
Module 3 Review of Inter-Testamental Literature	103
Unit 1 Apocryphal Literature	103
Unit 2 Pseudepigraphic Literature	115
Unit 3 The Dead Sea Scrolls	126
Unit 4 Apocalyptic Literature	137
Unit 5 Rabbanic Literature	162

MODULE 1 INTRODUCTION OF INTER-TESTAMENTAL LITERATURE

Unit 1	Defining Inter-Testamental Period
Unit 2	Biblical Criticism for Exegetical Study of Inter-Testamental Literature
Unit 3	Biblical Methods for the Interpretation of Inter-Testamental Literature
Unit 4	Number Symbolism and Images in Inter-Testamental Literature
Unit 5	The Super-Powers in Inter-Testamental Period

UNIT 1 DEFINING INTER-TESTAMENTAL PERIOD

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
3.1	Defining Inter-Testamental Period
3.2	Necessity of Studying Inter-Testamental Literature
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit is the beginning of module 1 and the overall course. In this unit, you shall learn the meanings of inter-testamental period and inter-testamental literature. The idea behind this unit is for you to be acquainted with the general outline of the discipline and to be able to concretely comprehend what the course is all about. The unit guides you through the definitions of inter-testamental literature and inter-testamental period as well as highlights its necessity in understanding biblical books.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the meaning of inter-testamental period
- define inter-testamental literature
- state reasons why inter-testamental literature are often called inter-biblical literature

- give five reasons for the necessity of the study of inter-testamental literature.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Defining Inter-Testamental Period

The inter-testamental period is a term used to refer to a period of time between the writings of the Hebrew Bible and the Christian New Testament texts. Traditionally, it is considered to be a roughly four hundred year period, because there was no prophetic word from God during this period. Some refer to it as the “400 silent years” spanning from the end of Malachi ministry (420 BC), the last of the Old Testament prophets to the appearance of John the Baptist in the early 1st century AD.

Several of the deuterocanonical books, accepted as scripture by Roman Catholicism and eastern orthodoxy, were written during this time, so it is sometimes also referred to as the deuterocanonical period. Many biblical scholars believe that several Hebrew Bibles were much later than 400 BC such as Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles. Thus, the period from the book of Malachi at the end of our Old Testament to the opening of Mathew at the beginning of our New Testament comprises of 400 silent years. These 400 hundred years were only silent in the sense that there were no prophets from God who were writing scripture. They were years which brought about dramatic and sweeping changes throughout the ancient world. However, many people are of the opinion that the teachings of the New Testament seem so foreign to those found in the Old Testament. In fact, it seems on the surface that the authors of the New Testament books almost lived in a different world from the prophets, kings and priests who composed the Old Testament writings.

The types of writings which make up the New Testament are of a fundamentally different kind from those of the earlier testament. However, all the writings of scripture originate from the same source and both sections were inspired by the Spirit of Yahweh. It is most important to understand that both the Old and the New Testaments complement one another and their full messages cannot be comprehended without both sections relying totally on each other. However, in order to blend the two together in a compatible way, the 400 silent years must be critically examined to mark the time between the close of Old Testament history and the beginning of the New Testament period.

This period though widely acknowledged because of its convenience, reflects the protestant conception of the biblical canon championed by Jerome that the Old Testament of the Christian Bible is identical with the Hebrew Bible of the Jews, and so ends its narrative in the period of the return from the exile. Thus, between the time of Nehemiah and Christ is an interval of about 430 years. And within these limits lies the inter-testamental period. Some scholars have called it “inter-biblical period” (a period of time between the writings of the Hebrew Bible and the Christian New Testament texts) or “the four hundred silent years”, or even “the dark period” of Israel’s history in pre-Christian times because throughout this period there was neither a prophet nor an inspired writer. To the historian, however, the centuries were anything but silent. The period was a difficult and yet a crucially important one in the history of the Jewish people and it covers the time between the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC and the futile revolt against Rome in 135 AD. The story narrated during this period is long and complex but therein lies much to be learnt about ourselves and our times.

The inter-testamental period gives us the necessary background to the New Testament and serves as a bridge between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Some of the most fascinating events of ancient history of the world particularly those that affects Christianity also occurred during this period of four hundred years, although, this period is traditionally considered to be roughly four hundred year. It is the era which saw the rise and fall of countless kings and their empires, the conquest of the nations by the superpowers of times long past, and the ultimate realisation that God molded history in his own hands.

The actual time period used to judge the span of the inter-testamental period is one that is often difficult to determine due to conflicting ways of dating Jewish histories. However, one can surmise two different starting “events” that define the start date with the first being approximately 539 BC according to rabbinical writings as this is the time of the Persian conquest of the Promised Land and the beginning of the first exile. This era is more of a precursor however as the remaining prophets of Old Testament Israel were still warning Yahweh’s people of their dire misdeeds against Him when Persia came to power and are, in essence, still “Old Testament” times. At its core, the Persian era was simply a political era and not a theological era.

Many scholars of the inter-testamental period settle on the 331 BC as it is an unmistakable end to the world of Israel as it was known before. This is the time when the great cultural spike of Greece known as “Hellenism” came to the people of Yahweh – carried by the hands of the eternal catalyst of Greek culture, Alexander the Great. It was during this time that the writing of the Old Testament ceased and the documents of

the early church shows a clear distinction of this date as the end of an era. From this point forward, the people of God took a very different course through one of the darkest times of their life that gave rise to messianic texts and their antithetical apocalyptic texts.

It is easy to think that the period ended when Jesus began his ministry. While it may be true that Jesus was the herald of the New Testament, he faced consistent revolts from Jewish leaders and even common citizens culminating in the crucifixion. If one wished to view the timeline of the actual text and the creation of the New Testament, they might date the end of the inter-testamental period as early as 60 AD which was the year that the oldest Gospel- Mark appeared. You could also date the end of the period as late as 397 AD which was the year Heinrich Joseph Denzinger numbered as the “third” Synod held in the African city of Carthage that confirmed the canonicity of the New Testament’s books... Most scholars agreed that the end of the period was approximately 135 AD, three years after the second Jewish revolt against the Romans ended in a bloody rebellion. This event led to the banishment of Jews from the city of Jerusalem for some time and summarily ended the recognised political entity known as Israel.

3.2 Necessity of Studying Inter-Testamental Literature

The study of inter-testamental literature is necessary for the following reasons:

- It provides adequate information that could not be gotten from the canons of the Bible on the life and history of the Jews. These informations are obtained from works of famous historians such as Flavius Josephus, apocryphal writings and secular history.
- Some of the most important colourful characters and religious books (deuterocanonical, apocrypha) and institutions that help one to understand the New Testament come from this literature. If nothing else, the literature makes us appreciate all that Judaism has given to the Gentiles who have become Christians.
- The literature furnishes us with information about the major events that took place from 600 to 5 BC.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Why is the literature of inter-biblical period referred to as inter-testamental literature?
- ii. State three reasons necessitating the study of inter-testamental literature.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Now that you know the meaning of inter-testamental period and inter-testamental literature, you are well on the way to understanding what inter-biblical period is all about. It simply means that all those assumptions concerning the definitions of inter-testamental period and inter-testamental literature you have learned, are brought to bear on the history of the Jewish people. Inter-testamental period is synonymous with inter-biblical period which marks the close of Old Testament and the commencement of the New Testament period. This period lasted for 400 years and is called the “dark age” in the Jewish life and history because there were lots of events which occurred during this period that are of paramount importance to our understanding of inter-biblical period. In the next unit more will be said about the history of inter-testamental period.

5.0 SUMMARY

From this unit, you have learned the meaning of inter-testamental period and inter-testamental literature. Within the constraints of space, the definitions of inter-testamental period and inter-testamental literature have been highlighted in such a manner that would help your understanding of the course.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. Define inter-testamental period.
- ii. Explain what you understand by the term inter-testamental literature.
- iii. Give four reasons to show the necessity for the study of inter-testamental literature.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Beers, V.G. (1981). *The Victor Handbook of Bible Knowledge*. Illinois: Victor Books.
- Box, G. H. (1945). *Judaism in the Greek Period*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Bright, J. (1967). *A History of Israel*. London: SCM Press.
- Bruce, F. F. (1971). *New Testament History*. London: Oliphants.

Chadwick, H. (2001). *The Church in Ancient Society - From Galilee to Gregory the Great*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Collins, J. J. (1978). *Judaism and their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

UNIT 2 BIBLICAL CRITICISM FOR EXEGETICAL STUDY OF INTER-TESTAMENTAL LITERATURE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Biblical Criticisms for Exegetical Study of Inter-Testamental Literature
 - 3.1.1 Critical Methods
 - 3.1.2 Textual Criticism
 - 3.1.3 Philological Criticism
 - 3.1.4 Literary Criticism
 - 3.1.5 Tradition Criticism
 - 3.1.6 Form Criticism
 - 3.1.7 Redaction Criticism
 - 3.1.8 Historical Criticism
 - 3.1.9 Religious Criticism
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the first unit, you learned the meaning of inter-testamental period and inter-testamental literature. The idea behind the unit was to acquaint you with the general outline of the discipline and to be able to understand what the course is all about. This unit is the second among the five constituent units of the module. The unit focuses on the forms of biblical criticisms for exegetical study of inter-biblical literature. The aim of the study is to guide you through not just on the necessity of studying inter-testamental history, but also to highlights its importance in the understanding of inter-testamental literature.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

- outline the sources of biblical criticism
- discuss the different types of biblical criticism
- examine the differences between the various forms of biblical criticism.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Biblical Criticisms for Exegetical Study of Inter-Testamental Literature

A vast amount of Jewish literature written in the inter-testamental period (mainly second and first centuries BC) and from the first and second centuries AD were preserved, for the most part, through various Christian churches. Some of this literature is commonly called the apocrypha and are regarded by the church as canonical or scripturally acceptable. These are Jewish exegesis or critical interpretation and hermeneutics or science of interpretive principles of the Bible that has been used by both the Jews and Christians throughout their histories for various purposes.

The most common purpose has been that of discovering the truths and values of the Old and New Testaments by means of various techniques and principles. Though very often, owing to the exigencies of certain historical conditions, polemical or apologetically situations anticipate the truth or value to be discovered and thus dictate the type of exegesis or hermeneutic to be used. The primary goal, however, is to arrive at biblical truths and values by an unbiased use of exegesis and hermeneutics. Biblical exegesis is the actual interpretation of the sacred book, the bringing out of its meaning while hermeneutics is the study and establishment of the principles by which it is to be interpreted where the biblical writings are interpreted on historical perspectives. There are therefore, many forms of biblical criticisms; however, in this study we shall discuss only eight of them. They are the following.

3.1.1 Critical Methods

A prerequisite for the exegetical study of the biblical writings, and even for the establishment of hermeneutical principles, is their critical examination. Most forms of biblical criticism are relevant to many other bodies of literature.

3.1.2 Textual Criticism

Textual criticism is concerned with the basic task of establishing, as far as possible, the original text of the documents on the basis of the available materials. For the Old Testament, until 1947, these materials consisted principally of:

- Hebrew manuscripts dated from the ninth century *AD* onward, the Masoretic text, the traditional Jewish text with its vocalisation and punctuation marks as recorded by the editors called

Masoretes (Hebrew *masora* “tradition”) from the sixth century to the end of the 10th century

- Hebrew manuscripts of medieval date preserving the Samaritan edition of the Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible)
- Greek manuscripts, mainly from the third and fourth centuries AD onward, preserving the text of the pre-Christian Greek version of the Hebrew Bible together with most of the apocryphal books (the Septuagint)
- Manuscripts of the Syriac (Peshitta) and Latin (Vulgate) versions, both of which were based directly on the Hebrew.

Since 1947 the discovery of Hebrew biblical texts at Qumrān (then Jordan) and other places west of the Dead Sea has made it possible to trace the history of the Hebrew Bible back to the second century and to recognise, among the manuscripts circulating in the closing generations of the Second Jewish Commonwealth (450 BC- AD 135) at least three types of Hebrew text:

- The ancestor of the Masoretic text
- The Hebrew basis of the Septuagint version
- A popular text of the Pentateuch akin to the Samaritan edition.

A comparative examination of these three indicates that the ancestor of the Masoretic text is in the main the most reliable; the translators of the Revised Standard Version (1952) and the New English Bible (1970) have continued to use the Masoretic text as their Old Testament basis.

For the New Testament the chief text-critical materials are (1) manuscripts of the Greek text, from the second to the 15th century, of which some 5,000 are known, exhibiting the New Testament text in whole or in part; (2) ancient versions in Syriac, Coptic, Latin, Armenian, Georgian, Ethiopic, and other languages; and (3) citations in early Christian writers. A comparative study of this material enables scholars to get behind the Byzantine type of text to a variety of types current in various localities in the generations immediately preceding; but the more recent discovery of manuscripts (mainly on papyrus) of the third and even second centuries, which cannot be neatly assigned to one or another of these types, makes the earlier history of the text more problematic.

3.1.3 Philological Criticism

Philological criticism consists mainly in the study of the biblical languages in their widest scope, so that the vocabulary, grammar, and style of the biblical writings can be understood as accurately as possible with the aid not only of other biblical writings but of other writings in the same or cognate languages. New Testament Greek, for example, is a

representative of Hellenistic Greek written in the 1st century, ranging from the literary Hellenistic of Hebrews, I Peter, and portions of Luke–Acts, to the colloquial or vernacular idiom of some other books (e.g., the conversations in the Gospels). Some Aramaic influences have been discerned in parts of the New Testament that have a Palestinian setting, but not to a point where scholars are obliged to conclude that some books, or parts of books, were originally composed in Aramaic.

Moreover, the Septuagint version exercised on some New Testament writers the kind of influence that the King James Version has exercised on many English writers, especially in the provision of a theological vocabulary in areas such as law, ethics, atonement, and sacrifice. The study of Old Testament Hebrew has been enriched by the study of other Semitic languages—Akkadian and Ugaritic among the ancient languages, and Arabic, which preserves many archaic features. Such comparative study has led to the suggestion of new meanings for a considerable number of biblical Hebrew words—a tendency that is amply illustrated by the New English Bible—but this department of philological criticism requires much more carefully defined guiding lines than have hitherto been laid down.

3.1.4 Literary Criticism

Literary criticism endeavors to establish the literary genres of the various biblical documents and to reach conclusions about their structure, date, and authorship. These conclusions are based as far as possible on internal evidence, but external evidence is also very helpful, especially where date is concerned. In the New Testament, literary criticism has centered principally on the Gospels. In the Synoptic Gospels (that is, those having a common source; for example, Matthew, Mark, and Luke) indicators as to source and composition are provided by the presence of so much material common to two or to all three of them.

The majority opinion since the mid-19th century has been that Mark served as a source for Matthew and Luke, and that Matthew and Luke have a further common source, generally labeled Q (for *Quelle*, the German term for “source”), comprising mainly sayings of Jesus. Aspects of the gospel problem that literary criticism leaves unsolved are more likely to be illuminated by other critical approaches. The fourth gospel (John), having much less in common with the synoptic gospels than the latter three have among themselves, presents an independent line of transmission, and a comparative study of those areas where the Johannine and synoptic traditions touch each other yields valuable conclusions for the beginnings of the gospel story.

In the second half of the 20th century, some biblical scholars began applying the critical methods developed in secular literary criticism to the study of the Old and New Testaments. During the 1960s new criticism, an approach that views literary texts as coherent units of meaning and focuses on technique and form, began to attract scholars who were interested in preserving a sense of the integrity of biblical texts in the face of archaeological research that raised questions of historical authorship. Other scholars, however, have insisted that new criticism favours certain notions of what constitutes a scripture.

3.1.5 Tradition Criticism

Tradition criticism takes up where literary criticism leaves off; it goes behind the written sources to trace the development of oral tradition, where there is reason to believe that this preceded the earliest documentary stages, and attempts to trace the development of the tradition, phase by phase, from its primary life setting to its literary presentation. The development of the tradition might cover a lengthy period, as in the Old Testament narratives of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the judges, such as Deborah and Samuel, many of which were originally attached to particular sanctuaries.

The recognition of the life setting of each successive phase is necessary for the interpretation of the material received and delivered by one generation after another. In the New Testament, too, special attention has been paid to the oral stage of the gospel tradition, though here the pre-literary period is measured in decades, not (as in the Old Testament) in generations and centuries. Not only has the record of the ministry of Jesus but the development of Christian theology in the short preliterate stage formed the subject matter of this study.

3.1.6 Form Criticism

Form criticism has become one of the most valuable tools for the reconstruction of the pre-literary tradition. This discipline classifies the literary material according to the principal “forms” such as legal, poetic, and other forms represented in its contents, and examines these in order to discover how they were handed down and what their successive life settings were until they assumed their present shape and position. In their various ways laws, narratives, psalms, and prophecies are amenable to this approach. By this means some scholars have undertaken to recover the *ipsissima verba* (“very own words”) of Jesus by removing the accretions attached to them in the course of transmission. The exegetical task assumes a threefold shape as scholars work back from (1) interpretation of the present gospels through (2) interpretation of the tradition lying behind them to (3) reconstruction of

the proclamation of Jesus. Scholars are not left completely to speculation as they attempt to reconstruct the stages by which the gospel tradition attained its final form.

3.1.7 Redaction Criticism

Redaction criticism concentrates on the end product, studying the way in which the final authors or editors used the traditional material that they received and the special purpose that each had in view in incorporating this material into his literary composition. It has led of late to important conclusions about the respective outlooks and aims of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

3.1.8 Historical Criticism

Historical criticism places the documents in their historical setting and promotes their interpretation in the light of their contemporary environment. This is necessary for their understanding, whether they are historical in character or belong to another literary genre. If they are historical in character, it is important to establish how faithfully they reflect their dramatic date, the date of the events they record. This test has been applied with singularly positive results to Luke–Acts, especially in relation to Roman law and institutions; and in general the biblical outline of events from the middle Bronze Age (21st BC to the first century AD) fits remarkably well into its near eastern context as recovered by archaeological research.

3.1.9 Religious Criticism

Religious criticism uses an ungainly expression to relate Old and New Testaments religion to the contemporary world of writings. It tries to explain biblical religion as far as possible in terms of current religious attitudes and practices. This is helpful to a point, insofar as it throws into relief those features of Hebrew and Christian faiths that are distinctive; it is carried to excess when it attempts to deprive those features of their unique qualities and to account completely for them in religious–historical terms.

Another attempt has been made by historians of religion to re-create for the first century a pre-Christian Gnostic myth referring to an esoteric dualism in which matter is viewed as evil and spirit good of the primal or heavenly man who comes from the realm of light to liberate particles of a heavenly essence that are imprisoned on earth in material bodies and to impart the true knowledge. By men's acceptance of this secret salvatory knowledge (gnosis), the heavenly essence within man is released from its thralldom and resends to its native abode. Fragments of

this myth have been recognised in several books of the New Testament. But the attempt has not been successful: according to many recent (latter half of the 20th century) New Testament scholars and historians of the early church, it is probable that the concepts of primal man and redeemer-revealer were not brought together in Gnosticism *except* under the influence of the Christian apostolic teaching, in which Jesus fills the role of Son of man (or second Adam) together with that of saviour and revealer.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

State three forms of biblical criticism and briefly comment on them.

4.0 CONCLUSION

You have been presented with the sources and criteria for exegetical study of inter-testamental literature. You also learned the different forms of biblical criticisms. The fact is that you cannot understand the literature of inter-testamental period unless you make a critical study of this period under reviewed. It is important for you therefore, to study deeper into this course, having in mind that such academic knowledge will expose you to this historical awareness of the historical development of this period.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit is to be taken as a further elaboration of inter-testamental literature discussed in unit one. I expect that you are as convinced as I am that the criticisms for the study of inter-testamental literature are largely academic and that inter-testamental literature is indeed very necessary for understanding of the major events during inter-biblical period.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Give two reasons why biblical criticism is significant in the study of inter-testamental literature.

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UNIT 3 BIBLICAL METHODS FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF INTER- TESTAMENTAL LITERATURE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Types of Biblical Hermeneutics
 - 3.1.1 Literal Interpretation
 - 3.1.2 Moral Interpretation
 - 3.1.3 Allegorical Interpretation
 - 3.1.4 Anagogical Interpretation
 - 3.1.5 Mariological Interpretation
 - 3.1.6 Parallelism
 - 3.1.7 Analogical Interpretation
 - 3.1.8 Other Types of Biblical Hermeneutics
 - 3.2 Importance of Interpretation of Inter-Testamental Literature
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit of this module, you have learned the various forms of criticism for exegetical study of inter-testamental literature. You were told that these forms of criticism bestowed great amount of investigations of the inner meanings of different literatures during inter-testamental period. In line with the modular goal, the objective of this unit is to expose you to yet another aspect of inter-testamental literatures. Though, there are different criticisms of inter-testamental period both of them are relevance tools for understanding inter-biblical literature. In this unit, we shall focus on the methods of interpretation of inter-testamental literature with a view to further enhancing your knowledge of literature that emerged during this period.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define the term hermeneutics
- list the types of hermeneutics
- explain the different methods of interpreting inter-biblical literature
- give the importance of interpreting inter-testamental literature.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Types of Biblical Hermeneutics

The terms exegesis and hermeneutics have been used interchangeably. However, hermeneutics is a more widely defined discipline of interpretation theory as it includes the entire framework of the interpretive process which encompasses all forms of communication: written, verbal and non-verbal. Thus, hermeneutics is the study of the theory and practice of interpretation, while exegesis on the other hand, focuses primarily on the written text. Hermeneutics consist of many types such as biblical hermeneutics which concerns the study of the interpretation of the Bible, Traditional hermeneutics which studies the interpretation of written texts, especially texts in the areas of literature, religion and law, modern hermeneutics encompasses everything in the interpretative process including verbal and non-verbal forms of communication as well as prior aspects that affect communication, such as presuppositions, the meaning, philosophy of language, and semiotics. Philosophical hermeneutics refers primarily to the theory of knowledge.

The folk etymology places the origin (Greek: *hermeneutike*) with Hermes, the mythological Greek deity whose role is that of messenger of the gods. Besides being mediator between the gods themselves, and between the gods and humanity, he leads souls to the underworld upon death. He is also considered the inventor of language and speech, an interpreter, a liar, a thief and a trickster. These multiple roles make Hermes an ideal representative figure for hermeneutics. As Socrates notes, words have the power to reveal or conceal, thus promoting the message in an ambiguous way. The Greek view of language as consisting of signs that could lead to truth or falsehood is the very essence of Hermes, who is said to relish the uneasiness of the recipients. Early use of the word hermeneutics places it within the boundaries of the sacred. The divine message can only be understood on its own terms, received with implicit uncertainty regarding its truth or falsehood. This ambiguity of message is irrationality, a sort of madness inflicted upon the receiver. Only one who possesses a rational method of

interpretation an early hermeneutic could divine the truth or falsehood (thus the sanity) of a statement. The traditional etymology of hermeneutics is derived from the Greek word ῥμηνεύω (*hermeneuō*, 'translate' or 'interpret'), and is of uncertain origin. It was introduced into philosophy mainly through the title of Aristotle's work Περὶ ῥμηνείας (*Peri Hermeneias*, 'On Interpretation', more commonly referred by its Latin title *De Interpretatione*). It is one of the earliest (360 BC) extant philosophical works in the Western tradition to deal with the relationship between language and logic in a comprehensive, explicit, and formal way.

3.1.1 Literal Interpretation

Literal Bible interpretation means you understand the Bible in its normal/plain meaning. The Bible says what it means and means what it says. Many make the mistake of trying to read between the lines and come up with meanings for scriptures that are not truly in the text. There are some spiritual truths behind the plain meanings of scripture. That does not mean that every scripture has a hidden spiritual truth, or that it should be our goal to find all such spiritual truths. Biblical hermeneutics keeps us faithful to the intended meaning of Scripture and away from allegorising and symbolising Bible verses and passages that should be understood literally.

Literal interpretation is often, but not necessarily, associated with the belief in verbal or plenary inspiration, according to which not only the biblical message but also the individual words in which that message was delivered or written were divinely chosen. In an extreme form this would imply that God dictated the message to the speakers or writers word by word. However, most proponents of verbal inspiration repudiate such a view on the reasonable ground that this would leave no room for the evident individuality of style and vocabulary found in the various authors. Verbal inspiration received classic expression by the 19th-century English biblical scholar John William Burgon: The Bible is none other than 'the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne!' Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, (where are we to stop?) every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High.

This explains Burgon's severe judgment that the revisers of the English New Testament (1881), in excluding what they believed to be scribal or editorial additions to the original text, "stand convicted of having deliberately rejected the words of inspiration in every page" (*The Revision Revised*, p. vii, London, 1883). Such a high view of inspiration has commonly been based on the statement in 2 Timothy 3:16 that "all [Old Testament] scripture is God-breathed" (Greek *theopneustos*, which

means “inspired by God”) or Paul’s claim in 1 Corinthians 2:13 to impart the gospel “in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths in spiritual language.”

Biblical hermeneutics is the science of knowing how to properly interpret the various types of literature found in the Bible. It is summarised best by 2 Timothy 2:15, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.**” Also, the book of Psalms should often be interpreted differently than a prophecy. A proverb should be understood and applied differently from a law. This is the purpose of biblical hermeneutics - to help us to know how to interpret, understand, and apply the Bible. The most important law of biblical hermeneutics is that the Bible should be interpreted literally.

3.1.2 Moral Interpretation

Moral interpretation of the bible is concern with moral obligation that is conscience or the sense of right and wrong of human conduct. Moral interpretation is necessitated by the belief that the Bible is the rule not only of faith but also of conduct. The Jewish teachers of the late pre-Christian and early Christian era, who found in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth, were faced with the necessity of adapting the requirements of the Pentateuchal codes to the changed social conditions of the Hellenistic age (third century *BC*–third century *AD*). This they did by means of a body of oral interpretation, which enabled the conscientious Jew to know his duty in the manifold circumstances of daily life. The Christian church rejected the Jewish “tradition of the elders” but for the most part continued to regard the Ten Commandments as ethically binding and devised new codes of practice, largely forgetting Paul’s appeal to the liberty of the spirit, or viewing it as an invitation to indulge in allegory.

In order to deduce moral lessons from the Bible, allegorisation was resorted to, as when the letter of Barnabas (100 *AD*) interprets the levitical food laws prescribed in the book of Leviticus as forbidding not the flesh of certain animals but the vices imaginatively associated with the animals. The difficulties of applying biblical ethics to modern situations do not mean that the task of application should be abandoned but mean that it should not be undertaken as though it provided an easy shortcut to moral solutions.

3.1.3 Allegorical Interpretation

In biblical context, allegorical interpretation is an approach assuming that the authors of a text (e.g., the [Bible](#)) intended something other than what is literally expressed. Allegorical interpretation places on biblical literature a meaning that was never intended to convey. Allegorisation was the only procedure compatible with a belief in the Bible as a divine oracle law, history, prophecy and poetry. The parables of Jesus in the bible yielded new meanings when allegorised. The surface sensuous meaning of the Canticles (the Song of Solomon) was gladly forgotten when its mutual endearments were understood to express the communion between God and the soul, or between Christ and the church. The fourth evangelist stresses the analogy between the sacrificial Passover lamb of the Hebrews and Christ in his death (John 19). The writer of the Hebrews treats the priest-king of Salem, Melchizedek, who was involved with Abraham as a type of Christ (Hebrews chapter seven) without using the word “type” and type and the Levitical ritual of the Day of Atonement as a model (though an imperfect one) of Christ’s sacrificial ministry (Hebrews chapter nine).

3.1.4 Anagogical Interpretation

Anagogical (mystical or spiritual) interpretation seeks to explain biblical events or matters of this world so that they relate to the life to come. Jordan is thus interpreted as the river of death; by crossing it one enters into the heavenly Canaan, the better land, the “rest that remains for the people of God.” Thus, “the Jerusalem that now is” points to the new Jerusalem that is above. In Judaism of the closing centuries *BC*, the Eden of Genesis, the earthly paradise, lent its name to the heavenly paradise mentioned occasionally in the New Testament (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 12:3; Revelation 2:7).

3.1.5 Mariological Interpretation

Another form of mystical interpretation is the mariological (referring to Mary, the mother of Jesus) application of scriptures that have another contextual sense. Thus, Mary is the second Eve, whose offspring bruises the serpent’s head (Genesis 3:15); Mary is the star-crowned woman of Revelation 12, whose son is caught up to the throne of God, and in more popular piety the dark-faced Madonna of the monastery at Montserrat, near Barcelona, Spain, can be identified with the “black but comely” bride of the Song of Solomon.

3.1.6 Parallelism

Parallelism, the interpretation of scripture by means of scripture, is a corollary of the belief in the unity of scripture. But as a hermeneutical principle it must be employed sparingly, since the unity of scripture should be based on comprehensive exegetical study, rather than itself provide a basis. Where one or two biblical documents (e.g., the letters to the Romans and to the Galatians) are treated as the norm of biblical doctrine, there is a danger that other parts of the volume (e.g., the letter to the Hebrews) will be forced to yield the same sense as the “normative” documents.

3.1.7 Analogical Interpretation

Analogical interpretation traditionally includes not only interpretation according to the analogy of Scripture (parallelism, in other words) but also interpretation according to the “analogy of faith”—an expression that misapplies the language of Romans 12:6 in the King James Version of 1611. It has at times been pressed to mean that no biblical interpretation is valid unless it conforms to the established teaching of a religious community, to the verdict of tradition, or to the “unanimous consensus of the fathers.” Where the established teaching is based, in intention on scripture, then an interpretation of scripture that conflicts with it naturally calls for further scrutiny, but such conflict does not rule out the interpretation beforehand; if the conflict is confirmed, it is the established teaching that requires revision.

3.1.8 Other Types of Biblical Hermeneutics

There is an unconscious tendency to confine hermeneutical principles to the climate of opinion in and around the community concerned, and to change the hermeneutic pattern as the climate of opinion changes. It is not surprising that in the circles where pseudo-Dionysius (early sixth century writings attributed to Dionysius, a convert of Saint Paul) was revered as a teacher, scripture was interpreted in Neoplatonic (idealistic and mystical) categories, and if in the latter half of the 20th century there is an influential and persuasive school of existential hermeneutics, this may be as much due to a widespread contemporary outlook on life as was the liberal hermeneutic of the preceding generations. At a far different level contemporary movements continue to influence biblical interpretation.

The interpretation of prophecy and the apocalyptic in terms of events of the interpreter’s day, which has ancient precedent, is still avidly pursued. Just as in the 16th century the apocalyptic beast of Revelation was interpreted to be the papacy or Martin Luther (in accordance with the

interpreter's viewpoint), so also today in some nonacademic circles the ten kings denoted by the beast's horns in Revelation are identified with the European Economic Community in its ultimate development, or the threat to "destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt" (Isaiah 11:15) is believed to be fulfilled in the condition of the Suez Canal in the years following 1967. Whatever critical exegetes think of such aberrations, historians of exegesis will take note of them and recognise the doctrine of scripture that underlies them.

The beginnings of biblical exegesis are found in the Old Testament itself, where earlier documents are interpreted in later documents, as in the recasting of earlier laws in later codes, or in the Chronicler's reworking of material in Samuel and Kings. In addition, even before the Babylonian Exile (586 *BC*) there is evidence of the kind of midrashic exposition (non-literal interpretations) familiar in the rabbinical period (300 *BC*– 500 *AD*) and after. In Isaiah 40 and following, the restoration of Israel after the return from exile is portrayed as a new creation: the characteristic verbs of the Genesis creation narrative "create" (*bara*), "make" (*asa*) and "form" (*yatzar*) are used of this new act of God (e.g., Isaiah 43:7). Even more clearly are the same events portrayed as a new Exodus: on their journey back from Babylon, as earlier through the wilderness, the God of Israel makes a way for his people; he protects them before and behind; he champions them "with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm,"; he brings water from the rock for their sustenance (Isaiah 43:2, 16, 19; 48:21; 52:12; Ezekiel 20:33).

A pattern of divine action in mercy and judgment is discernible as one move from the earlier prophets to the later prophets and apocalyptists (those concerned with the intervention of God in history). In some degree these later predictions are interpretations, or reinterpretations, of the earlier ones, as when the non-Israelite prophet Balaam's "ships from Kittim" (Numbers 24:24) are interpreted in Daniel 11:30 as the Roman vessels off Alexandria in 168 *BC* that frustrated the Syrian king Antiochus IV Epiphanes (c. 215–164/163 *BC*) in his attempt to annex Egypt. Ezra (400 *BC*), whose role as the archetypal "scribe" is magnified by tradition, is said in the canonical literature to have brought the law of God from Babylonia to Jerusalem (Ezra 7:14), where it was read aloud to a large assembly by relays of readers "with interpretation" and "they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading" (Nehemiah 8:8). This may be the first recorded use of an Aramaic Targum a paraphrase of the Hebrew that included interpretation as well as translation.

3.2 Importance of Interpretation of Inter-Testamental Literature

Interpretation of inter-testamental literature is necessary for the following reasons:

a. It is Religious Literature of Worth

Like the surviving religious literature of any other period of history, the inter-testamental literature is not all equally well written or edifying. It was necessary that the early Christians read the books which we call apocrypha much more than the rest of the literature, with the result that these books began to be included in biblical manuscripts. Judith is a stirring romance of religious zeal; Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus are classics of wisdom-piety, while 1Maccabees is a narrative of heroic faith which has a few equals. Outside the apocrypha, Josephus's accounts of the actions and character of Herod the Great are painfully graphic; but not much else in the literature deserves mention from this point of view. 1 Enoch has been described as one of the world's 12 worst books.

b. It is the Earliest Interpretation of the Old Testament

There are strong historical grounds for using the inter-testamental words to interpret the canonical books. Even when the age difference is much greater, and no direct dependence can be seen, the interpretation of inter-testamental literature may still be historically preferred to any other, and, as coming from the same nation and the same religious community, is entitled to respect. The pharisaic interpretation of the Pentateuchal ceremony, as embodied in the rabbinical literature, must be weighed against what we know of the Sadducees, Essenes and Samaritan interpretations, and against what recent scholarship has deduced from archaeological discoveries and from parallels in other Near-Eastern cultures of antiquity.

These developments of religious thoughts in inter-testamental period which are usually attributed to Persian or Greek influence, particularly those relating to angels, demons and life to come are probably from other viewpoint interpretations of the Old Testament.

The foreign influence is sometimes very apparent, as when Tobit gives a Persian name to a demon, or when Wisdom (followed afterwards by Philo and Josephus) asserts the immorality of the soul. Nevertheless, the developments were probably justified in the minds of those who made them as interpretations of the Old Testament. The Old Testament does speak of angels and demons, however, little it tells us about them, and it does hint (in the Prophets and Psalms) at a future life for believers more

significant than the shadowy existence of Sheol. The inter-testamental developments are in some ways speculative interpretations of what the Old Testament has to say, and an important consideration for Christians is whether the New Testament endorses them. In some respects the developments are rejected by the New Testament, and in others ignored, but in others again they are endorsed.

c. **It is the Background to the New Testament**

This final significance of inter-testamental literature is the amplest of the three. To begin with, the inter-testamental literature (with some help from Greek and Roman sources) traces the history of the Jews from the fifth century BC to the first century AD, which connects the two Testaments. Then again, it explains what has happened to Old Testament institutions which reappear in a modified form in the New Testament. Why are the scribes teaching the law to the people and not the priests? Why is the Passover meal held outside the temple court, using wine as well as the instituted elements, and with the participants reclining rather than standing? These are questions that can only be answered from the inter-testamental literature. Yet again, the inter-testamental literature enables us to put the New Testament narratives into a historical setting.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Give four types of biblical hermeneutics and discuss them in detail.
- ii. What is the difference between literal and allegorical interpretation of biblical literature?
- iii. How is anagogical interpretation related to mariological interpretation of biblical texts?

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit has wrapped up the discussions in the first two units of this module of the course. These two units have been concerned with the definition of inter-testamental literature and forms of biblical criticisms for exegetical study of inter-testamental literature. The problems posed as a result of the different forms of biblical hermeneutics have been highlighted and it was concluded that the different forms of biblical interpretations of inter-testamental literature provide information concerning the literature of the Jews during the dark age.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learned the methods of interpreting inter-biblical literature with the aim of furthering your knowledge of inter-testamental literature. You have also learned that these interpretations were used in decoding the inner meanings of inter-testamental literature.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. Give three significance for interpreting inter-biblical literature.
- ii. What is the different between parallelism and analogical interpretation of inter-biblical texts?

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UNIT 4 NUMBER SYMBOLISM AND IMAGES IN INTER-TESTAMENTAL LITERATURE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Use of Symbolic Numbers in Jewish Culture
 - 3.2 Number Symbolism in Christianity
 - 3.3 The Popular Images in Inter-Testamental Literature
 - 3.4 Apocalyptic Prophecy
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, you learned about the biblical methods of interpreting inter-testamental literature. In the subsection on the development of the biblical methods, you were presented with a list of the different methods of interpreting the Bible. You were told that these methods emerged during the inter-testamental period. In this unit, focus will be on examining the number symbolism and the use of images in interpretation of inter-testamental literature more closely. Inter-testamental literature is a genre of prophetic writings developed in post-exilic Jewish culture and it detailed the author's visions of the end time as revealed by heavenly messenger or angel.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define the term number symbolism
- list the popular inter-biblical images
- discuss number symbolism in Jewish culture
- explain the use of symbolic numbers in inter-testamental literature.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Use of Symbolic Numbers in Jewish Culture

In Jewish culture numbers have long been seen as expressions of cosmic order, possibly deriving from ancient Babylonian observation of regular cosmic events, such as night and day, the phases of the moon and cycles of the year. Viewed symbolically, numbers represent more than quantities, they also have qualities. To the Greek mathematician Pythagoras, even numbers were feminine, divisible into two equal parts and passive, odd numbers were masculine and active. In many cultures numbers are full of symbolic meaning and in some culture numerology have an influence on the future.

- **0-Zero**
Zero was invented in ancient India. Represented by the continuous circle, it signifies non-being and eternity. To Pythagoras it was the perfect form which contains all and from which all is created. In Islam it is limitless light and the divine essence.
- **1 - One**
It represents beginnings and the primal cause. It is a symbol of creation and the human species and is depicted in the standing stone, the upright staff and the erect phallus. It also symbolises the oneness to which all living things must return. In monotheistic religions one is the number of God, while in Jungian psychology, it is a unifying symbol a symbol of beginning, the self and loneliness. Some regard sets of two lucky, such as twins as especially lucky.
- **2 - Two**
Many cultures view the world as made up of opposing dualities, life and death, light and dark, male and female heaven and hell. Others see these pairs as complimentary such as the Chinese yin and yang. Two is the number of discord and conflict, but also of balance and marriage. To the Chinese it is a perfect number, expressing wholeness and fulfilment through the joining together of heaven, earth and humanity.
- **3 - Three**
Three is the most positive symbolic number in Jewish and Christian thought. It has a central importance as the doctrine of the trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Number three expresses all aspects of creation, including birth, life and death; past, present and future; mind, body and soul; man, woman and child. The symbolism of three is also linked with the triangle. The number 3 is also very mystical and spiritual

number featured in many folktales, (three wishes, three guesses, three little pigs, three bears).

- **The Four Humours**

The four bodily fluids- yellow bile, black bile, blood and phlegm - used in ancient times to analyse and describe a person's state of health.

- **4 - Four**

Four is the number of square. The four elements: earth, fire, water and air; the four points of the compass: North, South, East and West; the four seasons, the four phases of the moon (new, half-moon waxing, full, half-moon waning). Number 4 is associated with the earth and with completeness.

- **5 - Five**

As the sum of two, a feminine number and three a masculine number, the sum of the first even and odd numbers. ($2 + 3$) is five. It is a symbol for man. On a figure of man, a line joining head to outstretched arms and legs forms a pentagram and also there are five senses (hearing, smell, taste, sight, touch).

- **6 - Six**

According to the Bible, God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. Six represents balance, love, health and also luck, as it is the winning throw at dice.

- **7 -Seven**

Seven deadly sins - gluttony, sloth, lust, vanity, anger, envy and avarice - are the counterparts of the three theological and the four cardinal virtues. Seven is a sacred number representing the union of divinity (number three) and the earth (number four). Each of the four phases of the moon last seven days and there are seven days in the week.

- **8 - Eight**

As the first cubic number ($2 \times 2 \times 2$), eight is considered the perfect number.

- **9 - Nine**

Nine is a sacred number; three multiplied by itself to give eternity, completion and fulfillment.

- **10 - Ten**

As the numbers of the fingers, ten is the foundation of most counting systems including the decimal system. Ten also figures strongly in the Bible; there are ten commandments and ten Egyptian plagues.

- **12 - Twelve**

In Jewish and Christian symbolisms, twelve is a number of universal fulfillments, being the number of Christ's disciples, as well as the 12 Tribes of Israel, 12 knight of the round table and 12 days of Christmas.

- **13 - Thirteen**

In the West the number 13 is generally considered unlucky. This superstition may derive from the 13 people - Christ and his 12 disciples who were present at the fateful Last Supper. In other cultures the number 13 is considered sacred. In ancient Greece it represented Zeus, the 13th deity. Engaging with symbolic numbers may not come as naturally to us as it did to our ancestors in faith, but we haven't lost the ability entirely.

3.2 Number Symbolism in Christianity

Inter-biblical literatures are full of symbols, and many people think you can use them to plot the end of history, or count the number of the elect. But the symbolic nature of inter-biblical numbers, especially apocalyptic literature make for much more interesting readings than taking them literally.

- **Number 7-Seven**
The inter-biblical literature liking for seven is probably due to its being the number of perfection (the number of God [three] plus the number of the universe [four]).
- **Number 4-Four**
There are four creatures (the cherubim) around God's throne, because they represent all earthly creatures in heaven.
- **Number 12-Twelve**
Twelve, being three multiplied by four, is also a number of completions (hence twelve tribes and twelve apostles). This means that the famous number 144,000 is symbolically a number of inclusions: twelve multiplied by itself, multiplied by a thousand (signifying a large number). This is in sharp contrast to its common interpretation as a number of exclusion (only 144,000 will be saved, or will participate in Christ's thousand-year reign). Incidentally, even these 'thousand years' (Revelation 20:4-6) are probably symbolic rather than literal.
- **Number 666-Six Six Six**
But there is another number which never ceases to fascinate, the number of the beast (666). Revelation itself encourages speculation about it, stating that it is the number of a human being (Revelation 13:18). Catholics are particularly prone to attack here, for there is a long-established tradition identifying the beast with the papacy, or particular occupants of Peter's Chair. In fact, many have managed to fit 666 to the name of their enemies: both the thirteenth-century Pope Innocent IV and his political rival, Emperor Frederick II; from an earlier period, Julian the apostate; from a later, Napoleon and Patriarch Nikon of Moscow, with Adolf Hitler, Ronald Wilson Reagan (whose three

names each have six letters) and Saddam Hussein bringing us up to date.

But all these readings divorce the number from the time of John and his first audiences. Given the practice in both Greek and Hebrew to use letters for numbers (A = 1; B = 2 etc.), John is most likely urging his fellow Christians to associate the beast with Nero Caesar (this explanation also works for the variant 616). But perhaps again we shouldn't forget the symbolic significance. Six, one less than the perfect seven, is the number of imperfection: 666 then would be an intensification of imperfection, an appropriate number for the beast.

3.3 The Popular Images in Inter-Testamental Literature

We have to be careful how we use images in interpreting inter-biblical literature, especially apocalyptic images. Most of the time, we do take these images literally; it means what it means and says what it says. However, in “apocalyptic” literature or genre, the language is clear, such as the word, “lamb,” which is used often.

- **The Lamb**

The word lamb is used in apocalyptic literature for Christ. He is described as a lamb that was slain or sacrificed. A lamb is the common animal that was “slain” and sacrificed for the atonement of sin and used for commerce. Jesus replaces this lamb as the ultimate sacrifice—the sacrifice for our redemption. When you see the word, Lamb, it is most likely referring to sacrifice and our Lord who offers us salvation (John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18-20). In contrast to the image of a lion which means sovereign and judge, the lamb was considered the weakest of all animals, needing constant attention and care just to survive. A lamb would die in the wild, whereas the lion would thrive.

The image of the lamb was common in apocalyptic literature, also meaning victory and power through, and sometimes over death (Exodus 12:12-13; Isaiah 53:7; John 1:29; 21:15; Revelation 17:14). You can see that these images and themes have or will have history and significance. When we come to words that seem peculiar to our modern minds, such as “stars,” the first-century Jews would know that it meant “angels.” Lampstands meant “churches;” the phrase, “wife of the Lamb” meant “Jerusalem,” and the great prostitute was a covert slogan to refer to “Nero” or any corrupt leader in power.

Babylon usually referred to Rome (Revelation 1:20; 17:1-5, 18; 21:9-10). “Babylon the Great” mainly referred to Isaiah’s

mockery of sin and those who follow it as a “harlot” does. It is a contrast of evil governments in antagonism to God and God’s kingdom, the captivity of the Jews under Babylon and its moral decadence, and the early Christians under Rome, which was also steeped in immorality. This is also a reference to how people are led captive into sin.

It was a metaphor that meant to sin and fall into seduction, meaning what lures us away from faith and what replaces faith. The application of this word/term is that seduction becomes corruption; this can range from pagan worship and atheism to following what is fruitless and meaningless while ignoring our Lord. This is not necessarily referring to one specific ominous person or entity or political system, but pointing the faithful to what is evil in general. Nor, does this mean that Babylon will be rebuilt or restored in some way.

This theme is about enmity to God and people’s participation in it which is in direct contrast to what Christ offers and is—pure and holy (Isaiah 21:9; Jeremiah 51:7-8; Daniel 2:35, 4:30; 44; Revelation 13:1-18; 16:19; 17:1-5; 18:3; 18:2, 10, 21, also Ezra 4). Another apocalyptic word is “star”. A star in ancient cultures was a colloquialism for divinities or angels; context is the key. Is it talking about messengers, things to come, or stellar events such as astrology? If it is a message being delivered, it could refer to a mighty angel, or refer to a cosmic disturbance, an Angel or servant, or an instrument of God (Revelation 8:10; 9:1-11; 20:1). Context and commonsense are the keys. These images are metaphoric, or symbols of specific themes in judgment.

The obvious is that the actuality of this passage is pointing to God’s power, but these events are not necessarily verbatim, as it would be seemingly impossible. How could one star, much less billions upon billions land on this planet that is a billion times a billion smaller? The answer is, it is figurative, and it is a mystery how this will be eventually played out and what we will see. This is a depiction, just as a first century Jew would read and write. What we do know is that it will not be the same! The point of this metaphor is that no one is immune from experiencing God’s judgment. The entirety of the universe will bear witness to God’s will as an incredible phenomenon, displayed in the cosmos, that will herald Christ’s Second Coming (Mark 13:24-26; Luke 2:25-27).

- **The Beast!**

One of the things that people love to speculate about is the beast, which was a maxim, meaning a persecuting power and/or a

people who are demonic and evil. The beast in the original Greek refers to a “bestial” man, one who is brutal, savage, and ferocious. In apocalyptic context, this infers that the sea is a dwelling place for monsters, suggesting terrifying, repulsive, and evil things that seek to lead the world and the Church astray. It also gives comfort and hope because it depicts how God is still in control even over the beast, and even in times of insurmountable chaos and suffering (Job 7:12; 41:1; Psalms 74:13; 89:9-10; Isaiah 27:1). Whenever the “beast” makes his “appearance,” it may not be the same person all of the time such as the antichrist; rather, it is a metaphor or a theme of intent rather than a specific personality. In Revelation, the beast denotes someone of power and influence who is doing the persecuting (Psalms 89:10; Isaiah 51:9; Daniel 7:3-8, 16-25).

Thus, any dictator, or gossip for that matter (Romans 1), can be a beast. Some say this indicates that the antichrist will take over the temple and John is seeking to prevent or at least slow it down; however, this is not shown in the text or context (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). This term, the beast, from a literary, historical, or theological perspective does not denote a singular person being an antichrist, although the theme as John uses in 1 John does apply as opposing Christ. These two metaphors, beast and sea put together in Revelation 13 in this literature type, refers to the tenacity, fierceness, and repulsiveness of this beast, which is evil and has evil motives. In John’s time, this also represented the Romans or any secular, pagan authority because Rome was birthed near the sea in its Mediterranean location as compared to the inland Asia Minor churches. This term was also a symbol for Rome that had an eagle with 12 wings and three heads coming out of the sea on its banners (Daniel 7:3; Revelation 11:7; 13; apocryphal book 4; Ezra 11).

- **The Anti- Christ!**

Thus the term beast has more to do with “who are the beasts in your life?” Once in a sermon, Augustine asked his people if any of them were antichrist, as in opposing Christ in character or unfaithfulness. The 1 John definition of antichrist, the only place in scripture this term appears simply means anyone who opposes Christ. It isn’t about an ominous, opposing personality rising up and tricking us; rather, it is about our willingness to be tricked. God gives us a mind and the incredible resources of His Spirit and Word; we have no excuse to be disloyal to our Lord. The call here is to heed the warning, not engage in vain speculation; rather, we are to make sure we are linked up to Him, loyal to our LORD! This means that as we live our lives and run our

churches, we have to seek Him and ask, “are we being disloyal to our Lord?” The antichrist is not a political figure; it is you and me! We are the ones who are opposing Christ! This aspect is far more important than the speculations, because it all comes down to one thing- loyalty. Are you devoted to Christ or a slave to your will and to the manipulations of others?

- **Six Hundred and Sixty-Six (666)**

Another popular image is six hundred and sixty-six (666). This was a symbol typical of first-century Jewish apocalyptic riddles usually known to the audience for which it was written. John’s readers knew who he was talking about. It perhaps referred to Nero, and thus was a warning about making loyalty-oaths to Caesar. It was not a secret code to the hearers, only to those outside of the church such as Roman officials. This was also a common way to express or warn about godlessness or those opposing Christ while avoiding unnecessary reprisals. Some commentators have said this is “the trinity of evil”, referring to the number of the antichrist who seeks to combat God and His people.

This is called, in the Greek, a “triangular number;” it is used as a parody or a word play in the first century, referring to someone or something else. It was also a cryptic code word that referred to Nero, using the Hebrew translation of the Greek numerical values. This type of code is called “gamatria” where each of the letters in the Greek or Hebrew has an equivalent numerical value, such as *alpha*, which stands for one. This was not secret but common Jewish thinking. Jesus, in the Greek (IhsouV), has a numerical correspondent to 888. Some early Christian thinkers, such as Irenaeus, have attributed this to Euanthas or Lateinos or Teitan; Martin Luther thought it might refer to a Pope Benedict, and/or to other various evil Popes. In addition, 666, as a number, are diametrically opposed to the perfection of the number seven which means fullness and completeness. Thus, the theory of the numerical value is that a future antichrist may have a name equal in numerical value to 666 when it is written in Greek. Nero Caesar is 666 in Greek when transliterated from Hebrew (Mathew 24:15, 36-51).

There is no reason to seek to decode this; it is not about the world’s population hitting 6,666,666,666 that might have happened in November 2006, or some mathematical theory or whatever theory of the day. Thus, this term 666 could be attributed to a specific person such as Nero, or to any person who is in opposition to righteousness and God. In this way a first

century Christian can avoid unnecessary reprisals. The various theories of 666 do not always take into account what it meant then, which is crucial for our understanding and application of His Word. For example, the numerical value as that of a future antichrist may not be accurate, because it is also the name for Nero Caesar when it is written in Greek, transliterated from Hebrew (Mathew 24:15, 36-51). Sometimes the plain meaning is far more important to us than what speculators have come up with. We are to be watchful to those who oppose Christ and make sure we are not opposing Christ in thought, word, or deed, taking oaths, or making promises that counter Christ's principles.

- **The Mark!**

Another popular apocalyptic symbol is the mark. Mark basically means ownership and control. In its context, it also refers to a forgery of the seal and love of God given to Christians (Ezekiel 9:4-6; Revelation 7:2-8; 14:1; Revelation 13-14). This mark of the beast indicates the control of Satan. This beast forces people to bear the mark as a way to control and also as a counterfeit to the Holy Spirit that "marks" a true believer. In addition, this is also a pattern of the stranglehold that has been repeated throughout human history, such as the trade guilds that controlled who could buy or sell in the midst of the church at Thyatira (found in Revelation 2:18-29). Also, it is the corruption as exhibited in John's time by both Jewish and pagan priests, and especially the emperor cults. Additionally, it is also represented in countries that are run with totalitarian tactics by corrupt officials and/or dictators.

There are countless speculations on this, but it really denotes, from the word meaning and the context, that it is a metaphor for ownership and control, but the means by which this will occur is unknown. All we can do is see how this has played out before and be ready for the future. Fear mongering over technologies and personalities are beside the point; neither Satan nor God need technology to make this happen, because it has happened before in grand scale without it. However, since we do have it (Ephesians 1:13; Revelation 14:9-11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20 and 20:4).

- **The Dragon!**

The term "dragon" literally means "serpent" or "sea monster" such as the leviathan. It symbolises a monstrous evil (common in Canaanite and Mesopotamian myths). A dragon is also a description of Satan who is the enemy of God, who is a terrifying and destructive beast, and who seeks the total devastation of God's people. This image is not meant to terrify us, but to show

us how evil works and to be constantly on guard. This was also a metaphor for Babylon and the enemies of Israel and God. It is very unwise to read meanings that are not there to this and other metaphors (apocryphal book, “Bell and the Dragon;” Genesis 3:1-15; Psalms 74:13-15; 89:9-10; Is. 27:1; 30:7; 51:9; Ezekiel 29:3; Luke 10:18; 11:14-23; John 12:31; Col. 2:15; Revelation 12:7-9; 13:2; 20:2).

Many times, the metaphors are directly from the Old Testament, as scripture interprets scripture. For example, the Sea turned into blood. This term is indicative to the first plague in Egypt (Exodus 7:20-21). It means the ultimate destiny of mankind as being judged and the preparation for the second coming and/or the last judgment. This is also called “eschatological;” it is from God and His judgment, not the pollution from man’s industrial machine. Volcanic upheavals can also produce this effect from God’s direction (Isiah 15:9; 2 Peter 3:10-12; Revelation 6:13; 9:1).

- **Ixious the Fish**

Apocalyptic writing can also be cryptic as representing something else and symbolic such as “IXIOUS,” the “fish” which was a secret greeting in the early church, which was under persecution from Jewish leadership, Rome, family clans, and peer pressure. Thus, this was a greeting (not in scripture) to see if another person was also a Christian. IXIOUS was an acronym and is not directly in scripture in this form, but the meaning and the words spelling the acronym are. In the early church, Christians evading persecution would write out the Greek word for fish, “IXIOUS”, or the symbol <> which stood for Jesus, Christ, God, Son, and Saviour. This acronym stood for who Jesus was—the saviour; not a man or a half-god/man hybrid like Hercules, but the Mighty One of the universe, humanity’s God and saviour (meaning of Jesus).

The Apostles and most of the early Christians were fluent in Greek as well as Aramaic and some Hebrew; they fully knew the Old Testament and were immersed in that culture. Paul, John, and others used a good amount of borrowed material for illustration sake, which they knew but that we may not know so well. Consequently, the inscription key is the understanding of the Old Testament and Jewish customs and thought, not today’s newspaper headlines! So, you use a concordance and look up that word, such as lampstand, and see what it meant in Exodus and then in Zechariah, and you have your key to unlock the code of the word. Remember, the Bible interprets itself too. For more in-depth research, you can do what we do at “Into Thy Word”; we use the Old Testament first and foremost and then look in the other first century

literature that John and his reader would be very aware of and have borrowed from, such as the other apocryphal Jewish books.

But, keep in mind that these are hints and helps that give us insights to this type of genre and metaphors and their usage to a first-century Jewish understanding, but are not recognised or inspired as scripture. These works include the apocalyptic books, 4 Ezra, 1 Enoch, 2 Esdras, Profetes, Sibylline Oracles, Petronius, 4 Maccabees, Joseph and Asenath, Jubilees, Similitudes of Enoch, and the Qumran texts, to name the main ones (there are many more). They are available on CD and online that makes searching them easy (www.ccel.org). We also need to keep in mind that many of these images are metaphors with meanings that a first century Jew or Greek would clearly have known and understood which may not be so now - over two thousand years later. In addition, we need to seek the context and word meanings of the passage and image in question, and what they meant to the people at the time as well as comparing it to other passages.

Thus, we look to the underlying meanings in the Greek, and study Jewish apocalyptic literature and the Old Testament. Our big clue is the Old Testament where most of them reside. It is wrong to seek what they mean two thousand years later in someone's fantasy or speculations. For example, in Revelation chapter seven, the 144,000, the context and word meanings tell us that there is no ethnicity, as all in Him are His, and the numbers are beyond measure. The Old Testament is our code breaker and will help us unveil the clues. God's Word clearly tells us what the meanings are. It is not today's newspapers and popular trends that give us the meanings; it is the understanding of God's Word and the context that does.

Images such as the beast, the mark, or 666 are not to be taken literally; rather, they are symbolic depictions of dire warnings meant to strike terror. These were most terrifying images to an ancient person. They are meant to be a wake-up call to heed the sovereign Lord of the universe, and get our lives lined up to His, *or* else. And, the "or else" is that you will be judged, not just in eternity, but in this life too. What does it take to get you lined up to His precepts and yielded to His lordship? God wants us to make a real, passionate effort to repent, get right with Him, and not lead misguided and harmful lives by trying to serve other things, idols, desires, or trying to choose between two contradictory paths in life (Proverbs 24:3-4; Isaiah 45:7; Jeremiah 29:11-14; Philippians 2:3-4; James 1:6-8; 4:7-10).

God is far more concerned about how we lead our Christian lives, knowing Him, and making Him known than replacing or covering our speculations over our faith. Let us not get caught up and stuck in

meaningless speculations; rather, do as the passages tell us. Be caught up in Christ by your faith. Good exegesis means God has control of what He says; we do not. We are to dig out His precepts, not interject ours. We are to accept what it actually means for us, not what we want it to mean. When we come to an apocalyptic word or book, we need to realise it is not esoteric (meaningless or obscure or too deep and hidden); it also has a meaning for us today, as it contains past, present, and future events. Examples include the many prophecies concerning Jesus in Matthew 24 most likely many have been fulfilled, and there are parts of Daniel and Revelation that will yet come to pass. Prophecy does not always follow a clear, logical, systematic pattern; rather, it often jumps from thought to idea to another point and so forth.

It also may jump over large periods of time. Thus, in prophecy, we need to be aware of two essential forms of language. First there is the literal (didactic). This is the simple and direct meaning, or in other words, what it says is what it means. It has a plain meaning. Zechariah, chapter seven is a good example, as are much of Isaiah and Jeremiah. The imagery had a clear meaning to the people to whom it was first presented, so don't jump to conclusions or read in what is not there. If you get frustrated with it, put it aside. Most Bible scholars debate the meaning, so it is improbable that you will have a clear insight. Focus on the parts of Revelation that are crystal clear. The second form of language is the figurative (predictive). This is the category into which most prophecies and thus, Revelation falls. We are to always view prophecy with the attitude that it has a plain meaning until we have clear and compelling reasons to place it in the figurative category.

Our task is to determine the points and ideas that apply today and point to tomorrow. The bottom line is that it will happen at some point in history, and come to pass in a literal and plain way. We may not understand it until it is right on top of us. Daniel 7-12; Joel 2; Isaiah 11; and Zechariah 4 are clear examples of figurative language. Furthermore, some of the language in Revelation is "word pictures" where John is trying to describe in their language and culture as well as technology, such as Daniel, chapter seven, and many parts of Revelation. For example, if he was describing events we might see in our lifetime, how would he describe a helicopter if he had never heard of or seen one? For most parts of Revelation, John was using imagery from Ezekiel, Daniel, and other Jewish literature that they would have known. Unfortunately, there are few of the so called Bible scholars who write the popular books of today who are even aware that there is an Old Testament, let alone how to inductively read it. The key to the understanding of Revelation is in the Old Testament.

It is important to note that 28% of the Old Testament is prophecy, most of which came to pass in the life and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. The New Testament has over 20% of some form of prophecy too, of which most (although this is debatable) have not yet come to pass. Thus, prophecy is important because God has dedicated a significant portion of His Word to it. Again, do not speculate what is not there. We are given a clear warning in Revelation 22:18-19 not to add our ideas or take away His precepts and thus teach what is false. It is not wrong to speculate academically, research, argue and deliberate over certain views, but we are not to interpret what we want and then miss what He has. A lot of Christian writers love to embellish on this subject and give their own version of what will happen. But the scores of books that have been written in the last hundred years have not been infallible in their theories. Every prediction made by many melodramatic preachers and writers have not come true because it is their theories, not based on fact or careful study of Scripture. The Bible clearly tells us we do not have access to that information; no one will know the time (Mathew 25:13; John 16:4). When you come to a word in the Bible, it is best to first assume it is literal, unless the context speaks contrary.

It may be a metaphor. Just look it up in a Bible Dictionary, a Bible background commentary, language helps. A metaphor does not mean that the Bible is not literal, as finding the meaning of the word is a literal way to receive God's truth. The bottom line is this; the reason why we do not always take these images literally is for the reason that this is apocalyptic literature written in symbolism, poetry and imageries conveying ideas and representations, whereas most of scripture is narrative and epistles (letters) that we do take as literal; they mean what they mean plainly. Make sure you are not reading into the Bible what you want it to say; rather, allow His most precious word to challenge you to lead a great fruitful Christian life.

We can agree to disagree over what is literal and what is figurative, or what view one should take—or take no view at all, as I do. The main point is our love for the Lord and our willingness to learn and apply His precious Truth into our lives and church. He is the one who gives us life, salvation, is in control, has a plan, and will work it out in His perfect time.

3.4 Apocalyptic Prophecy

The apocalyptic writing took a wider view of the world's history than prophecy. Thus, whereas prophecy had to deal with governments of other nations, apocalyptic writings arose at a time when Israel had been subject for generations to the sway of one or other of the great world-powers. Hence to harmonise such difficulties with belief in God's

righteousness, it had to take account of the role of such empires in the counsels of God, the rise, duration and downfall of each in turn, till finally the lordship of the world passed into the hands of Israel, or the final judgment arrived. These events belonged in the main to the past, but the writer represented them as still in the future, arranged under certain artificial categories of time definitely determined from the beginning in the counsels of God and revealed by Him to His servants the prophets. Determinism thus became a leading characteristic of apocalyptic literature and its conception of history became mechanical.

The revelations from heavenly messengers about the end times may come from angels, or from people who have been taken up to heaven and are returning to earth with messages. The descriptions not only tell of the end times, but also describe both past and present events and their significance, often in heavily coded language. When speaking of the end times, apocalyptic literature generally includes chronologies of events that will occur and frequently places them in the near future, which gives a sense of urgency to the prophet's larger message. Though the understanding of the present is bleak, the vision of the future is far more positive, and includes divine victory and a complete reformation of absolutely everything. Many visions of these end times mirror creation mythologies, invoking triumph of God over the primordial forces of chaos, and clear distinctions between light and dark, good and evil.

The imagery in apocalyptic literature is not realistic or reflective of the physical world as it was, but is rather surreal and fantastic, invoking a sense of wonder at the complete newness of the new order to come. Some of these literatures are apocalyptic and pseudepigraphic. Except the passages from Ezekiel and Joel, the remaining passages of Daniel are attributed to the Maccabean period. Some consider Isaiah 33 to be written about 163 BC; Zechariah 12-14 about 160 BC; Isaiah 24-27 about 128 BC; and Isaiah 34-35 sometime in the reign of John Hyrcanus. Jeremiah 33:14-26 is assigned by Marti to Maccabean times, but this is disputed. In the transition from Jewish literature to that of early Christianity, there is a continuation of the tradition of apocalyptic prophecy.

Christianity preserved the Jewish apocalyptic tradition, as Judaism developed into rabbinism and gave it a christian character either by a forcible exegesis or by a systematic process of interpolation. Christianity cultivated this form of literature and made it the vehicle of its own ideas. Christianity saw itself as the spiritual representative of what was true in prophecy and apocalyptic. The entire apocalyptic literature is of great historical value. Toward the close of antiquity and through the middle ages it exercised extensive and permanent influence on the thought of the times. It reflects the hopes and fears which swayed the masses for

over 15 hundred years, and reflects them more directly than any other class of contemporary literature.

All the strange erratic thoughts which seem now but the outgrowth of a morbid fantasy, so grotesque and unmeaning do they appear were once full of life and keen significance, and had the power to move the readers to the depths of their being. The uneasiness and solicitude about the approaching end of the world, which were of constant recurrence during the Middle Ages, were nothing more than the impression made by the threats and promises of the apocalypses upon minds already susceptible and excited by external events. And in the history of the Jews in particular, the apocalypse was one of the most telling factors, contributing, as it did in such large measure, to determine the unique course of its development until long after the close of the middle Ages. The courage and persistency in their belief which the Jews have shown from the time of the Maccabees down to modern times, their indomitable hope under persecution, their scorn of death, were all nourished by the apocalyptic literature.

The darker their present grew, the more desperate their condition in the later medieval period, the more eagerly did their minds turn to the comfort offered by the apocalyptic promises which predicted the end of their suffering and the dawn of their delivery. The following outlines of the separate apocalypses will illustrate the characteristics of the neo-Hebrew apocalyptic. Only certain general points, however, are treated here, as the preliminary investigation, upon which any exhaustive treatment would have to be based, has not yet been made in this branch of apocalyptic literature.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

List three popular apocalyptic images and briefly comment on two of them.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have been presented with apocalyptic literature. The main objective is to expose you to the knowledge of inter-testamental literature. You should therefore, study deeper in this course, having in mind that apocalyptic literature is necessary for the understanding of inter-testamental literature.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit is to be taken as a further elaboration of inter-testamental literature discussed in the first units of this module. You are expected to understand that the study is largely academic and that the study of inter-testamental literature is necessary for the continued knowledge of the major events during inter-testamental period.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Explain the word apocalyptic literature and give one method of interpreting it.

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UNIT 5 THE SUPER-POWERS IN INTER-TESTAMENTAL PERIOD

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Emergence of the Great Powers
 - 3.1.1 The Persian Rule
 - 3.1.2 The Seleucid Period
 - 3.1.3 The Hellenistic Period
 - 3.1.3.1 The Greek Rule
 - 3.1.3.2 The Egyptian Rule
 - 3.1.3.3 The Syrian Rule
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, you learned about the number symbolism and images in inter-testamental literature. In this fourth unit, specific focus will be brought to bear on super-powers that emerged during inter-testamental period or inter-biblical period. The only sources that furnish us with information about this period are the history of Persia and Greece. We have no record in the Bible of the experiences of the Jew during this time, but the period is important because vast changes in social, economic, political and religious life took place during this time. In this unit, the major major great powers of inter-testamental period will be presented to you.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- outline the political situation that led to the emergence of the Persian, Seleucid and Hellenistic periods of rulership
- assess the contributions of Alexander the Great towards the establishment of the Egyptian rule
- discuss the reasons for the division between the Greek and Syrian dynasties
- state the policy of Hellenisation adopted by Antiochus Epiphanies to promote Hellenism during the Syrian rule.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Emergence of the Great Powers

There were many great powers that emerged during inter-testamental period. These include the followings:

3.1.1 The Persian Rule

In 539 BC, the Babylonian empire fell to Persia under King Cyrus who appeared in the history of the Jews as a Messianic figure. In 550-333 BC, the Persian empire ruled over western Asia, including Israel. Like most imperial powers during the iron Age, King Cyrus is reputed to be the brain behind the Persian kingdom. Cyrus first appears in history when in 559 BC at the age of forty, he inherited the small kingdom of Anshan. When Cyrus became the lord of Babylon, he adopted a benevolent policy towards former Babylonian provinces. He tolerated the peculiar cultures of those territories he conquered and also restored all the deities and the people he captured under Babylon.

He allowed citizens of his empire to practice their native religion, as long as they incorporated the personage of the Persian great king into their worship (either as a deity or semi-deity, or at the very least the subject of votive offerings and recognition). This tolerance together with his edict permitting the reconstruction or renovation of sanctuaries, the restoration of cults, the return of the Jewish treasures to Jerusalem as well as the sacred property of Mesopotamian temples which had been removed to Babylon by Nabonidus, made him a popular king. It is in line with this decree that about 50,000 Jews on their return were appointed as leaders of the returnees. In the fifth century, the Jews, who had remained in Mesopotamia, wanted to consolidate a community in Jerusalem.

Upon the commission of Cyrus, Nehemiah surrounded Jerusalem with a fortified wall and from the Jews a sworn promise not to enter into any marriages with members of alien neighbouring tribes. Then Ezra returned to Palestine in order to teach the city's inhabitants the law. This royal decree gave Israel's law the status of the Persian law on the lands of Jerusalem and Judah by according the Jewish culture the protection of the Persian government. These reforms are reflected in the famous Cyrus cylinder and biblical books of Chronicles and Ezra which states that Cyrus released Israelites from slavery and granted them permission to return to the land of Israel in 539 BC. The exiles did not return in one great caravan but kept coming back after 538 in separate groups and various tribes. Ssabasra (Shesbazzar), apparently a son of Joachim, the king of Judah who had been deported in 598 BC led the first group. The

first resettlers succeeded in leveling the Temple area and arranging the foundations of the Temple. Another Davidic prince, Zerubabel succeeded where his uncle had failed.

It is reported that in 458 BC Ezra, a secretary in charge of Jewish affairs in the Persian court, came, armed with a royal decree, to reorganise Judean community in accordance with the law of Israel's God in which he was an expert. He read part of the Law of Moses to the assembled people and they accepted by celebrating the rites of the Feast of Booths (Tabernacles). The law thus became the official constitution for the hieratic society. Ezra's religious reform gave birth to a national resurgence that had as its prime objective the rebuilding of Jerusalem's fortified walls.

3.1.2 The Seleucid Period

Antiochus IV is given by history to rule the Seleucian kingdom established by Seleucus 1 between 175-163 BC. He succeeded his father Antiochus the Great and belonged to the Antiochian dynasty. Surnamed Epiphanes (God made manifest). Antiochus IV was taken hostage after the battle of Magnesia in 190 BC and held in Rome for 15 years. Within this period, his father, Antiochus the Great died. A succession dispute arose as Heliodorus, the chief minister to Antiochus III murdered Demetrius the rightful heir to the throne within this period, Antiochus IV was released and supported by Rome he eliminated Helidorus and seized the throne. Antiochus IV was a very vigorous man and pursued war expeditions like his father even when he was not as successful. For example, his advancement on Egypt was frustrated by the Romans.

Having been frustrated all angles, he divert all his ambition to Jerusalem. After unsuccessful expeditions to Egypt, he rallied his army under Appolonius and attacked the Jews on a Sabbath day. He met with little opposition and cruelly murdered the male Jews, enslaved the women and children and built a garrison in the city.

Determined to live up to his name, Epiphanes (God manifest) Antiochus IV, did everything to Hellenise the Jews and have them totally under him. He was so ruthless in the pursuit of his ambition that his unchecked zeal earned him the name Epimanes-a crazy or mad man. His exploit of the Jewish religion began with his politicising of the office of the high priest. He intervened to settle the dispute between Onias III (high priest) and his brother Jason. Antiochus, after receiving a huge amount of bribe from Jason deposed Onias and enthroned Jason as high priest. Another character, Menelaus soon bribed his way in and Antiochus did not hesitate to depose Jason for him. Jason's attempt to revolt against this only attracted the wrath of Antiochus IV. He stripped the temple of its

treasuries and put Jerusalem under another despot, Philip who was determined to consolidate his hold on the Jews. He insisted and issued his famous edict which declared that everyone within his kingdom be of one religion, law and custom.

With that edict, the Jewish Sabbath observances, circumcision and food laws were abolished. Any Jew discovered with a copy of the Jewish law was executed. The height of the insult was the erection of an altar to the Olympian Zeus in the temple. This is the highest insult that could be given to the Jewish faith. This is why the Jews can never blot out his name from their history. He is known to be the cruelest tyrant of all times, furious and precipitate almost to the degree of madness. The Jews were compelled to take part in pagan festivals on pain of death. Though some pro-Hellenists like Menelaus, welcomed the move by Antiochus, most Jews remained conservative and refused to submit to the new faith.

3.1.3 The Hellenistic Period

The Hellenistic period was dominated by Greek, Egyptian and Syrian rules.

3.1.3.1 The Greek Rule

The Greek began to emerge as a nation several centuries before Alexander the Great occupied the South-east fringe of Europe and Aegean isles, the territory now called Greece. The Greeks developed the most effective language the world has ever known. They also made a contribution in philosophy, literature, sculpture, architecture and other liberal arts. They gave to the world such men as Thucydides, Aristophanes, Xenophon, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Diogenes, Alexander, Demosthenes and many others. In the fourth century before Christ, Greek culture was taken by zealous apostles into the Orient. Before the victory of Alexander the Great at Issus in 333 BC Greek influence had already spread into Palestine, and soon after it the whole of the Near East began to take on the Hellenistic appearance. Alexander's father- Philip- who was the king of Macedonia, one of the chief states of Greece had two great ambitions: first, to see Greece attain a place of leadership in the world, and second, to prepare his son, Alexander to realise this dream. He was able to give to his people a conception of their possibilities as a nation and he inspired in Alexander an ambition to rule the world.

While the classical age of Greece produced great literature, poetry, philosophy, drama, and art, the Hellenistic age "hellenised" the world. At the root of Hellenism were the conquests of Philip of Macedon and his son, Alexander. Macedon, a tiny backwoods kingdom was known by

the neighboring Greeks of Athens and Thessaly to be barbaric. But Alexander was seen from his childhood to be destined for greatness. Even as a child he dreamed of world conquest. The Iliad was his Bible and Achilles was his hero. He was seven years old, when a group of Persian envoys came to the palace while Philip was away. Alexander came in and proceeded to cross-examine the guests about the size and morale of the Persian army, the distance to Susa, and the condition of the roads leading there.

When Alexander finally set out on his conquest of Persia, he took with him a whole group of geologists, biologists, and experts in other fields of science. Alexander commanded the Macedonian heavy cavalry under Philip at the Battle of Chaeronea in 338 BC. Alexander was only 16 years old, yet it was his responsibility to hold the entire left flank against the Theban band who held the Athenian right flank. When a gap opened up between the allied Greek infantry and the Theban band, Alexander personally led a charge through and opened up a huge hole in the enemy line, breaking down all organised resistance. When he came to the throne of Macedon in 336 BC, Alexander was already used to the responsibility of authority, even though he was only 20 years old.

Alexander's ascension to the throne of Macedon galvanised him into action. Within his first year, he conquered all of Achaia, leaving only the Peloponnesian Peninsula out of his league of Greek nations. He then crossed over the Hellespont into Asia Minor. The Persians were waiting for him and he defeated them at the battle of Granicus. This left all of Asia Minor open to him and he wasted no time in consolidating his hold upon that land. A second Persian army had been assembled on the plains of Syria to await Alexander's coming. As he moved through the gates of Cilicia and southward down the coast of the Mediterranean, this Persian army moved in behind him, cutting off his supply lines. Alexander was forced to turn and attack. This time Alexander not only defeated the Persian army, he captured the wife and daughters of the Persian king Darius III who was forced to flee the field. Alexander was left free to make his way southward virtually unopposed.

Early in January 332 BC Alexander came to Tyre, the most powerful naval port in the Mediterranean. At that time the city of Tyre stood on rocky island about a half mile off the coast. It was surrounded by massive walls that rose to a height of 150 feet. The city was considered invincible. Nebuchadnezzar had attacked Tyre in 586 BC and had finally destroyed the mainland city. Even after a 13 year siege he had not been able to capture the island city. Alexander sent envoys asking that the city come to terms with him. The envoys were murdered and their bodies thrown into the sea. Alexander settled down in what was to be the longest siege of his career. Alexander had no navy and so he decided to

bring the island to him. He began by demolishing the ruins of the mainland city and using the rubble to construct a causeway across the water which separated the island from the coast. It was grueling work and further hampered by constant raids that the people of Tyre made in their swift warships. Alexander went to Sidon and Byblos and confiscated a fleet of ships which could bottle up the fleet of Tyre. The causeway was finally completed and Alexander launched a three-pronged simultaneous attack.

While the siege of Gaza was underway, Alexander took a small force and rode east to Jerusalem. Josephus relates how that the high priest of Jerusalem led a procession of priests out to meet Alexander. The high priest brought with him a scroll of the book of Daniel. And when the book of Daniel was showed him, wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended; and he was then glad. (*Antiquities* 11:8:5). Alexander was so impressed by the Jews and their Bible that he allowed Jerusalem to remain semi-independent and the Jews to practice their distinctive worship as long as they remained politically loyal to him.

During the next eight years, Alexander drove his armies all the way to India. It was only when they refused to go any further that he finally agreed to turn back toward home. Returning to Babylon, he became sick and died. He was only 30 years old. Alexander had reigned twelve years when he died. Four of his generals succeeded him, each in his own domain. Alexander stimulated trade between the east and the west. This brought about prosperity as well as a change of cultures. Both Alexandria and Antioch became important trading centres. Alexander encouraged scientific investigations. Specimens of plants and animals had been collected by biologists who had accompanied his army. This brought about a renewed interest in science into the ancient world. He began Hellenising the Persian Empire. By bringing in Greek settlers into the east and encouraging them to intermarry with the Persians, he was able to indoctrinate the conquered peoples with Greek ideas. He tried to advance the idea that all men whether Macedonian, Greek or Persian should feel a sense of brotherhood. He was largely successful in this endeavour with one important exception the Jews. Alexander accomplishment can be seen in several ways. These are:

- Intermarriage: Alexander encouraged his soldiers to intermarry with the Persians.
- Integrated military: He introduced Persians into his army and even into his elite Companion Cavalry.
- Greek cities: Alexander established many cities throughout his conquered territories. Alexandria in Egypt eventually developed

into one of the greatest centres of learning in the ancient world. Another great Greek city that sprang up was Antioch, located in western Syria near the Mediterranean.

One of the most significant changes was in the area of language. Following Alexander's conquests, Greek became the common language of the ancient world. It was for this reason that when the authors of the New Testament sat down to write, they wrote in Greek and not in the Hebrew of the Old Testament.

3.1.3.2 The Egyptian Rule

Ptolemy Lagi had already been made satrap of Egypt by Alexander, and he was able to defend his position against Antigonus and others. In 320 BC he was able to gain some control over Jerusalem. He desired to annex Palestine to his protection, but could not do so until Antigonus was defeated in 312 BC. In 312 BC Ptolemy took advantage of the Jews' refusal to fight on the Sabbath and entered the city of Jerusalem without opposition. In general the Jews enjoyed tolerance and peace during the third century, but little in particular is known of the Jews in Judah during this time. Apparently they continued to live under the local rule of the high priest, sending annual tributes to Egypt. During the rule of the Ptolemies the house of Joseph Tobias grew in power, wealth, and prestige. Many Jews believed that he was the descendent of Tobiah the Ammonite (Nehemiah 2:10; 4:3, 7; 6:1-19). The Tobias administered order and taxes in the Transjordan area. A Tobiah of Ammon is mentioned in the correspondence of Zeno, finance minister for Ptolemy II.

Simon was the greatest high priest during the Egyptian period. He directed the rebuilding of the city walls, the construction of a huge city reservoir, and the repairing of the temple. Also he was remembered as a great teacher of the law. Archaeological evidence shows the presence of Jews all over Egypt during this time. The Ptolemies built up Alexandria to become the largest city in Egypt (still the second largest city in the country, after Cairo). From the beginning, Ptolemy settled many Jews in the new city. Alexandria became an important city for the Jews, with many thousands of Jews living there. The Jewish philosopher Philo and the Jewish Christian preacher and apologist Apollos hailed from Alexandria. That probably was the place of residence for Joseph and Mary when they fled from Herod with the baby Jesus.

As soon as Seleucus I split from Ptolemy I in 311 BC, the two dynasties fought with others for control of Palestine. This fighting continued off and on over a hundred years. These wars were accurately predicted in Dan 11, where "the king of the north" represents Seleucids, and "the

king of the south” represents Ptolemies. During the third century the Seleucid Empire grew weaker, until Antiochus III, the sixth king in line, took the throne. He was capable and ambitious, and was able to assert his rule over much of Asia and to add the territory of Palestine. When Theodotus, general for Ptolemy IV, Philopater, defected to Antiochus III, Antiochus attacked Ptolemy at Raphia (217 BC). Because of brave leadership, Ptolemy was able to defeat the Syrians at that time. Note: Daniel 11:11 predicts this battle, and is more accurate than 3 Maccabees 1:9-11, 24, which purports to record that same battle.

Ptolemy IV died in 203 BC, and was succeeded by the very young Ptolemy V. Antiochus III took advantage of his extreme youth and defeated his army at Panium (Caesarea Philippi) in 198 BC. This began Syrian rule over Palestine. The Jews in Jerusalem received Antiochus cordially, and he seemed a generous conqueror, giving them many benefits. The Romans had recently defeated the Carthaginians in the Second Punic War (202 BC), and Hannibal came to live under the protection of Antiochus III. Hannibal convinced Antiochus to attack Greece, and thus expand his empire and contain Rome.

If Antiochus had been successful, he would have been a greater threat to the Romans. So the Romans declared war against him, chased him out of Greece, and defeated and captured him at Magnesia, between Sardis and Smyrna in Asia Minor (190 BC). Ptolemaic and Seleucid were in war mainly in the Palestinian lands. Just when things could not be bad enough, and days could seem no darker another individual comes along by the name of Antiochus III; who took control of Palestine and began to Hellenise the world. He introduced Greek language, adopted Greek culture, and Greek religion.

In 175 BC Antiochus Epiphanies, “The manifestation of God”, tried to force the idea of Hellenisation. His reign was a dark period in Jewish history and was regarded as the fore-runner and representation of the biblical Antichrist, of whom we read about in the book of Daniel. In 167 BC Antiochus Epiphanes, sacrificed a pig in the temple. Additionally, he outlaws the Sabbath and this brought forth the “Maccabean Revolt.” This period is noted as being the period of independence, and religiously, it was a time of restoring temple worship to the Lord, to the newly rededicated temple.

3.1.3.3 The Syrian Rule

When the Greek family of the Seleucids in Syria grew strong enough to grab Palestine away from the Ptolemies, they exerted a more stringent and harsh rule over the Jews than the Ptolemies had done. The capital of the Seleucid Empire was the new city of Antioch, established by

Seleucus to honour his father Antiochus. This city is often called Antioch-Syria, to distinguish it from Antioch-Pisidia, a city Paul visited in the book of Acts situated about fifteen miles from the mouth of the Orontes River. Antioch was on the main trade routes, designed to rival the Ptolemaic Alexandria. It became one of the great cities of the Roman Empire. This was the city where Christianity made its first major inroads into the Gentiles, and where the believers were first called Christians; it was the centre from which Paul based his missionary journeys.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Outline the flow of major historical development of Hellenism during inter-testamental period.
- ii. Explain how Antiochus Epiphanies successfully accomplished his policy of Hellenisation of the Jews during his reign as a king?
- iii. Discuss the political situation that lead to the conflict between the Selucid and the Ptolymics during the reign of Alexander the Great.

4.0 CONCLUSION

You have been presented with the historical development of events in Judea during the Hellenistic period. You have learnt that the political history of levant precipitated an inroad for the resurgence of different great powers during inter-testamental period. Your knowledge of inter-biblical period has been advanced further by a step.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have advanced a step further in understanding the historical development of Hellenistic culture during inter-testament period. You learned that the Greek conquest of Alexander the Great between 330-328 not only brought the Jews under Grecian domination but also introduced the Greek language and ideas throughout the ancient world. After the death of Alexander, his kingdom was divided, and a struggle between the ptolemies of Egypt and the monarchs of Syria ensued, resulting first in Egyptian rule, then in Syrian rule over Judea. This point will be clearer in the next unit which is on the Jewish independence.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. Describe the historical development in Judea during the Hellenistic period.
- ii. Asses the contributions of Alexander the Great to the development of Hellenistic culture.

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MODULE 2 INTER-TESTAMENTAL PERIOD (400 BC-1ST CENTURY AD)

Unit 1	The Jewish Sects
Unit 2	Jewish Independence
Unit 3	Inter-Testamental Religion
Unit 4	Features of the Jewish Religion
Unit 5	Other Events during Inter-Testamental Period

UNIT 1 THE JEWISH SECTS

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
3.1	The Origins of the Jews Sects
3.2	The Sadducees
3.3	The Pharisees
3.4	The Zealots
3.5	The Essenes
3.6	The Samaritans
3.7	The Qumran
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the first module, you were introduced into the study of inter-testamental literature. In the sub-section of the module, you learned about the definitions of inter-testamental period and inter-testamental literature. You were also told reasons that necessitate the study of inter-testamental literature. This unit is devoted to examining the emergence of the Jewish sects during inter-testamental period which is trace from the time between the years 200 BC -200 AD. These sects emerged as a result of the situation of protestation and reformation within the Hasidim that got to a climax during the Hasmonean dynasty under the reign of John Hyrcanus at about 134 BC. Consequently, there emerged different groups with different religious ideologies. There were those who were a little to the left and those who were a little to the right. Yet some others went either extremely to the right or to the left. Each group in an attempt to defend its position, claimed originality and authenticity. Some of these sects are discussed below.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

- trace the origins of the Jewish sects such as the Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, Essenes, the Samaritans and the Qumran
- state the features of each sect and their theological significance.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Origins of the Jews Sects

There are many factors responsible for the emergence of different sects during the inter-testamental period. The reason for this is that each group emerged from a particular situation in an attempt to defend its position, claimed originality and authenticity. Some of these sects include:

3.2 The Sadducees

Traditionally, the name “Sadducees” has been linked to the name of Zadok, a priest of the time of David and Solomon. In spite of the attempts to explain the origin of the word, nothing is actually known about its meaning or the origin of the group. There is no reference to a group called the Sadducees until the reign of John Hyrcanus (134-104 BC). They appear as loyal supporters of the Hasmonean kings, unlike the Pharisees who refused to support John Hyrcanus. It is probable, therefore, that the Sadducees of old did not exist for a very long time before the reign of John Hyrcanus. The Sadducees were an epitome of conservatism. They were strictly legalistic in following the letter of the law. They admitted no tradition developed by the Pharisees or oral interpretation of the law. During the Hasmonean period, they compromised their office by accommodating membership from a non-priestly line and accepting political offices. For example, when Jonathan Maccabus assumed the role of the high priest, as sons of Zadok the Sadducees should have opposed this Hasmonean usurper of the high priestly king, probably to ensure their own influence.

In social and political matters, the Sadducees restricted association to the priestly and aristocratic families. They denied the reward and punishment for the soul in the afterlife which implied belief in the existence of immortality of the soul and resurrection of the body. They also ruled out divine intervention in human affairs and believed that man is absolutely responsible for his actions. While the Sadducees had great political power during the reign of John Hyrcanus; they lost many of their important positions during the reign of Queen Salome of Alexandra

(76-67 BC) who favoured the Pharisees. Even when they did not have much political powers, they still had the power which comes from wealth.

The Sadducees regained the political power in 6 AD, when Judea, Samaria and Idumea were ruled by a Roman procurator. For the next sixty years, they controlled the Jewish council (the Sanhedrin) and most of the High Priests during this period were Sadducees. They played an important part in the arrest and trial of Jesus because they saw His message as a threat to their own power. They saw the incident commonly called the “cleansing of the temple” as a threat. Their attitude to life and religion was conservative and were concerned for the stability of the Jewish community under Roman rule.

3.3 The Pharisees

Not much is known about the origins of the Pharisees. They were however, the most powerful sect in the time of Jesus. We need to remember that the criticism of the Pharisees and the Sadducees which we find in the New Testament was often as a result of a prejudiced desire to show that Christianity was better than both groups. Pharisee is thought to have come from the Hebrew word “perush” which means “separatists” or “the separate ones”. They may have belonged to the group of the Hasidim, the godly or holy people who separated themselves from the Hasmonean rulers during the reign of John Hyrcanus. Separated from the common people is probably why they were so named and because of their Zeal for the law which involved separation from the influences of Hellenism. In this sense they were the heirs of the Hasidim. Some scholars interpret the name “Pharisee” to mean ‘people who expound or explain’, because the main work of the Pharisee was to expound or explain the Jewish law.

In spite of these theories, however, nobody really knows where the Pharisees come from. The party of the Pharisees is first mentioned by name during the reign of the first Hasmonean ruler John Hyrcanus (134-104 BC). Josephus says that the Pharisees appear more religious than others and seem to interpret the law more accurately. The laws regarding ceremonial purity were punctiliously observed by members of the Pharisaic brotherhood. The Pharisees were close to the ordinary working people who worshiped regularly in the synagogues.

The Synagogue was their domain in pre-Christian Judaism. In a sincere desire to make the law relevant in the changing culture of the Greco-Roman world, their scribes developed the system of oral tradition which became a burden to Judaism during the time of Christ. During the first century BC two schools of thought emerged within this sect. the school

of Hillel, known for their regard for the poor and their willingness to accept Roman rule as compatible with Jewish orthodoxy and the school of Shammai with their strict interpretation of the law and thus bitterly opposed to the Romans. This later school found expression in the Zealots whose resistance to the Romans brought the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

The Pharisees, in addition to the scripture believed in the resurrection of the dead and immortality of the soul, good and evil spirits, rewards and punishment. They represented the combination of the high priesthood with civil authorities in the successors of the Maccabees, represented initially in the reign of John Hyrcanus, the Hasmonean. They were craftsmen who earned the respect of the people by their devotion to the law and their study and explanation of it, not because they had been born wealthy and powerful.

Their power base was in the local synagogues and their teachings and acts of piety in the synagogues and the kind of hope they offered to the ordinary people, made them to become popular with the ordinary people. The Pharisees had no political ambitions. They believed that in the end God would replace the power of the Romans with his own power. The Sadducees also believed that the Messiah would do nothing political which might upset the Romans. The Pharisees believed in an eschatological Messiah who would appear at the end of the age to set up the kingdom of God and remove and destroy all earthly kingdoms like the Roman Empire. Jesus and his followers held beliefs about the kingdom of God which was very close to the belief of the Pharisees. These beliefs were political, because they looked forward to the conquest of the Roman Empire with God Himself and the replacement of the Roman Empire with the kingdom of God.

3.4 The Zealots

The party of the Zealots being one of the most formidable Jewish sects was founded by Judas the Galilean who led a revolt against the Roman domination in 6 AD. A suggestion that Israel should pay tribute to pagan overlords was intolerable to the zealots. Consequently, they considered it a sin to acknowledge loyalty to Caesar, for God alone was to be reckoned as king of Israel. They were called zealots because they followed the example of Mathathias and his followers who manifested Zeal for the law of God when Antiochus IV tried to suppress the Jewish religion. They were more or less fanatical nationalists who did not only believe in prayer but in physical combat.

The Romans called them “Sicarii” meaning “assassins” the name which comes from their practice of assassinating their political enemies in crowded streets. They, in fact, bear some resemblance to terrorist groups in modern times, but their terrorism had a distinctly Jewish theological basis. Unlike the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the Zealots did not believe that the condition of Judaism in the Roman Empire was a permanent state.

3.5 The Essenes

The Essenes were one of the leading Jewish sects. They flourished in the second century BC and rank after the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Concerning their origin, history, and tenets, there has been much controversy. The sect arose about 150 BC (the first named Essene was Judas, 100 BC) and disappeared towards the end of the first century AD. They worshiped one God, Creator and Ruler of all things. They had great reverence for Moses, and they kept to the strict observance of the Sabbath to the letter. They were also fanatical adherents to the law of circumcision. This sect came out of the syncretic tendencies that were manifested by their neighbours, that is, the mixture of the syncretic elements in their tenets and customs.

The Essenes believed very much in the levitical law of defilement. For this reason they isolated themselves from others. Because of this observance of purity, they would not attend the temple worship for fear of defilement or corruption. Buddhism, Pharisaism, Pythagoreanism, Hellenism etc. have all had their claims put forth as one of the parents of this hybrid sect. They believe that John the baptist and Jesus were Essenes because of the ascetic lives they lived. The Essenes, however, went to the extreme, for they even accused Jesus of mixing with sinners and tax collectors.

3.6 The Samaritans

The Samaritans were those who settled in the territory generally referred to as Samaria. Initially, Samaria was the capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel. With the dispersion during the exilic period, Herod the Great renamed this capital city Sabaste in 27 BC that is, the Greek equivalent of Augusta. The term Samaria then came to designate the entire territory beyond the Jordan river, comprising various cities, some of which Christ visited during his public ministry (John 4:4). Common presumptions, usually influenced by Jewish prejudice and polemics, take the Samaritans to be a generation of half caste people, the accidental consequence of the cultural intercourse between the Jews left behind during the deportations and the foreign peoples that came to settle in Israel.

Some scholars, however, prefer to see them as the other Jewish tribes who seceded from the Davidic dynasty after the death of Solomon, and later got colonised by the Assyrians during the mass conquest. The sharp division between the Jews and Samaritans began during the restoration period under the Persian domination. Internal evidence (Bible) has it that in the process of rebuilding the Jerusalem temple, the assistance of the Samaritans was wholly rejected and the Jews openly denounced any affiliation with them, branding them as unorthodox and somewhat inferior stock (Ezra 4:1-4). Extra-biblical sources reveal further that with their exclusion from the Temple cults, the Samaritans bitterly restored to establishing their own worshiping centres, taking Mount Gerizim as the "chosen place" in opposition to the Jewish Mount Zion. And they distinctively restricted themselves to recognising only an ancient text of the Pentateuch as their Holy Scripture, a version which deviates from the Hebrew masoretic text at some 6000 points. Fluctuations in relations had already been generated with the schism over the temple cults.

But the tension reached a climax in 128 BC when the Samaritan temple at Gerizim was destroyed by the Jews under the Hasmonean reign of John Hyrcanus. In retaliation, the Samaritans are said to have desecrated the Jerusalem temple. This heightened the tension between the two. During the inter-testamental period, the Samaritans stood out as a unique group, enjoying a middle status between the Jews on the one extreme and the Gentiles on the other. However, towards the close of the period, the Jews could no longer take it, and the break between the two became final, with the Samaritans placed on the same scale as the Gentiles.

3.7 The Qumran

In addition to showing the level of the expectancy of a Messiah during the inter-testamental period, the discovery of the scrolls at Qumran has shed new light on some of Jesus' words in the gospels in a way that the Old Testament cannot. For example, where Jesus refers to the teaching "Love your neighbour and hate your enemy" (Mathew 5:43), no exact statement can be found in the Old Testament alone. But now a similar statement is known from Qumran (1Q i.9-11; ix.21-22).⁶¹ Also, the use of "poor" as a religious term for the voluntary poor and humble (Mathew. 5:3) may be illuminated by the similar use at Qumran (1QpHab xii.3, 6 10 and 1QH ii.32).⁶² Flusser observations on how the scrolls were discovered also indicate that Jesus actually refers to the Qumran community in Luke 16:8. It also shows that the favourite self designation of the community was "the sons of light", the same term that Jesus uses in Luke 16:8. Flusser believes that Jesus was teaching His disciples not to engage in the extreme asceticism that the Qumran community practised.

Despite Jesus' apparent reference to Qumran community, other gospel evidence suggests that He did not commend their separatism and exclusiveness. Unlike those at Qumran, He did not engage in their ascetic practices, nor did He condemn the temple and religious life of the people. Jesus makes an ironic reference in condemnation of the practices of the Qumran community in the parable of the unjust steward in Luke 16:1-9 and its application in verses 10-12. However, with the victories of Alexander the Great, Hellenism swept through the ancient world both influencing, and at times, forcing itself as a lifestyle. Even with the victories of the Maccabees, and the later Roman domination, Hellenism continued to sustain its influence. This is seen in the gospels, most noticeably with the Sadducees and the establishment of the Sanhedrin. The Pharisees, however, tended to reject Hellenistic influence and arose from the pious party or Hasidim.

The authority of the Roman Empire is seen throughout the gospels demanding payment of taxes and obedience. In connection with the activity of Rome the Herods also emerge. There is no reference to the synagogue in the Old Testament and an understanding of inter-testamental history is important when considering its establishment as an institution. It has been seen that although messianic expectation certainly existed in the inter-testamental period, being discerned implicitly in most literature and explicitly in the Psalms of Solomon and the Qumran writings, some scholars have tended to over exaggerate how widespread it actually was. In addition to messianic expectation, the Qumran writings have also helped to illuminate some of Jesus' words in the gospels.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. How was the glory of Israel restored by King Cyrus?
- ii. Explain the contributions of Ezra and Nehemiah to the rebuilding of Israel.
- iii. Assess the process of hellenisation enforced on the Jews by Antiochus II.
- iv. Give the motivated forces for Maccabees revolt and the rule of Hasmonians?
- v. List any four Jewish sects and discuss them.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you learned the post-exilic history of Israel starting from the period of restoration of the nation's glory to the time of reconstruction of the new state of Israel. The aim of this is to make you understand the problem and reason for the struggles of the various religious groups during the inter-testamental period.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you learned about the reconstruction of the Israelites nations started by King Cyrus. The long years of Jewish humilitation and sorrows in exile were brought to an end by Cyrus who had concern for the welfare of his subjects, and reversed all former policies by enacting an edict which gave the people protection, assistance and freedom of worship. Many Jews returned from exile in Babylon to take part in reconstruction process of the nation. This paved way for inter-biblical period, and formation of modern state of Israel.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. Explain the process of hellenisation enforced on the Jews by Antiochus II.
- ii. How did King Cyrus restore the glory of Israel as a nation?
- iii. Give two reasons for the struggle of the Maccabees and the rule of Hasmoneans.
- iv. Explain briefly how the government of the modern state of Israel is run.

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UNIT 2 JEWISH INDEPENDENCE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Roman Rule
 - 3.2 The Maccabean Dynasty
 - 3.2.1 Antiochus III
 - 3.2.2 Jason
 - 3.2.3 Antiochus IV
 - 3.2.4 Mathathias
 - 3.2.5 Judas
 - 3.2.6 Jonathan
 - 3.2.7 Simon
 - 3.3 The Hasmonean Dynasty
 - 3.4 The New State of Israel
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit of this module, you learned about the emergence of Jewish sects during inter-testamental period. You read that many Jewish sects that emerged during inter-testamental period gave us the foundational knowledge of the period. These sects originated as a result of the political situation during inter-testamental period. In this present unit, you will learn about the Jewish independence and the historical developments of events during this period. The usefulness will be understood by citing the Maccabean revolt and the Hasmonean dynasty as pronounced by the literature of inter-testamental period.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the reasons for the late emergence of the Jewish nation
- state factors responsible for the Maccabean revolt
- discuss the historical origin of the Hasmonean dynasty.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Roman Rule

The Roman Empire occupies an important place in the history of the world. For centuries, it dominated the civilised world in which Jesus lived and did his works. The Jews were subjects of Rome, and like all their neighbours, were governed by Roman officials. They resented this domination chafed under its restrictions and so frequently rebelled against it, but to no avail. Their rebellion against Roman authority brought their national destruction, especially when Titus burnt Jerusalem and scattered them abroad in 70 AD.

The Jewish sects also originated in this trouble Maccabean period and continued their bitter rivalry during the first century BC. It was later divided and ravaged by civil war between the two claimants to the royal high-priesthood of the Hasmonean dynasty, Antiochus and Hyrcanus, who were supported by the Sadducees and the Pharisees. When the Roman General Pompey marched on Jerusalem in 63 BC, he demanded tributes from Judah and Hyrcanus, whom he allowed to serve as high priest. In 37 BC Herod laid siege and took Jerusalem with Roman aid, killed Antigonus, the last Hasmoneans, and began his long rule, which was to last until four BC. Herod, like his father, cleverly changed policies to fit the changes in Roman Empire. After the Battle of Actium, he submitted to Augustus and won a good deal of independence for the internal control of his kingdom. Under the rule of Alexander Jannaeus, he reconstructed the Jerusalem temple and won the support of his people.

After his death, the Romans disregarded his disposition to the kingdom by dividing it between three of his sons, Herod Antipas, Archelaus, and Philip. In six AD Archelaus was deposed by the Romans because of a complaint from the Jews, and the regions of Judea, Samaria and Idumea were placed under the direct control of Roman procurators until 41 – 44 AD when Herod Agrippa was allowed an internal control of Samaria and Judea. The increasing tyranny of the procurators of Pontius Pilate, despite the benign rule of Porcius Festus finally led to a Jewish rebellion in 66. It was put down with merciless efficiency in the campaigns of Vespasian and Titus between 67 and 70 AD.

When Jerusalem with its holy temple was captured and destroyed in April of the year 70 AD, the political history of Israel ended. Its sacred history continued in post-biblical period until the first Jewish-Roman war which lasted up to 73 AD. In 67 AD, Vespasian and his forces landed in the north of Israel, where they conquered the Jewish armies from Ptolemais to Sepphoris. The Jewish garrison at Yodfat (Jodeptah)

was massacred after a two months siege. By the end of the year, Jewish resistance in the north had been suppressed and in 69 AD the Vespasian seized the throne after a civil war. By 70 AD, the Romans had occupied Jerusalem. Titus, son of the Roman Emperor, destroyed the Second Temple on the 19th of Av Tisha B'Av (656 years to the day after the destruction of the First Temple in 587 BC). Over 100,000 Jews died during the siege, and nearly 100,000 were taken to Rome as slaves. Many Jews fled to Mesopotamia, and to other countries around the Mediterranean.

In 73 AD, the last Jewish resistance was suppressed by Rome at the mountain fortress of Masada and the last 900 defenders committed suicide rather than to be captured and sold into slavery. Rabbi Yochana ben Zakai escaped from Jerusalem and he obtained permission from the Roman general to establish a centre of Jewish learning and the seat of Saanhedrin in two towns of Yavneh. This is generally considered the beginning of rabbinic Judaism, the period when the Halakha became formalised. Some believe that the Jewish canon was determined during this period, but this theory has been largely discredited. Judaism survived the destruction of Jerusalem through this new centre and the Sanhedrin became the supreme religious, political and judicial body for Jews worldwide when it was forcibly disbanded by the Roman government and officially controlled by the Christian church.

Rome became the master of the world from 63 - 27 BC. Herod the Great became king in 40 BC, and he died in about four BC. His son Antipas was replaced by Herod Agrippa I, and he died around 44 AD. In 66 - 70 AD, the destruction of Jerusalem came by way of Titus, and in 70 AD Titus destroyed the temple. After this the diaspora came, and the Jews were dispersed. In third BC, the birth of Jesus Christ came to fruition. The political landscape was generally stable, but opposition to the Messiah's birth (coming) was quickly demonstrated by King Herod's reaction (Matthew 2:1-18).

3.2 The Maccabean Dynasty

The history of the Maccabees recorded in the book of Maccabees recounts the direct threat to the existence of the Jews since their exile in Babylon. They endeavoured to conquer Egypt from the Ptolemies but were unsuccessful. Seleucus IV came to the throne in 187 BC and ruled until 176 BC when Antiochus Epiphanes IV succeeded his father Antiochus the Great.

3.2.1 Antiochus III

Antiochus is said by history to have ruled the Selucian kingdom established by Seleucus 1 between 175-163 BC. He attempted to complete Hellenisation of the Jews by strengthening his hold on Palestine, destroying the cord of Jewish unity, and dedication to Yahweh's law, through the process of Hellenisation. He also attacked Judaism by forbidding the practice of Jewish customs, such as their dietary laws and circumcision, and by forcing them to idolatry. Thus, one of the biggest problems the Jews had to face under Greek control was how they could accept Hellenism and remain loyal to the faith of their fathers. Some felt that they could, and hence a few openly accepted it. While the big majority of them felt that they could not become Hellenists without betraying their faith. Many Jews therefore, resisted Hellenism even unto death. Rome stripped Antiochus III of Asia Minor, and forced him to surrender his navy and his war elephants. They also demanded a huge payment, to be spread over 12 years.

To assure payment, which amounted to tons of silver, the Romans took as one of their hostages his younger son, who became Antiochus IV. To meet this crushing annual payment, Antiochus was forced (as were his successors) to levy burdensome taxes and to plunder temples. Eventually, this led to his death, as he was murdered in an attempt to rob a temple in Elam. Antiochus IV was remembered as the wicked and cruel persecutor of the faithful Jews in Jerusalem. His career was predicted by Daniel (Daniel 11:21-35). As a boy he was taken as a hostage to Rome, where he lived 12 years and imbibed the Hellenistic spirit, as well as learned a healthy respect for Roman power. When his father Antiochus III was murdered, he was succeeded by his older son Seleucus IV, who was still desperately trying to get money confiscated from the Jerusalem temple. But the high priest defended the temple.

In 175 BC, as Antiochus was coming home from Rome, Seleucus IV was assassinated, making the younger brother Antiochus IV king. He proclaimed himself "Epiphanes" (God is manifested). While the high priest Onias III was in Antioch defending the rights of the temple, his brother Joshua, who used the Greek name Jason and favoured Hellenism, paid a large bribe to Seleucus and was declared by him to be the new high priest. Jason immediately instituted a policy of pro-Hellenism and built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, where pagan Greek games and ceremonies were practiced. Young men competed there in the nude, and some even underwent a surgical operation to disguise their circumcision. Most priests were corrupted by his leadership and throughout Judea many leading Jews openly ridiculed Jewish customs and ordinances. They sought to make Jerusalem the "New Antioch" and many priests and other Jews broke away from Jason and tried to stay

loyal to the law. They supported the rightful high priest Onias III and their party was called the Hasidim, from the Hebrew word *chesedh*, meaning “pious” or “faithful.”

3.2.2 Jason

Jason had ruled as high priest only three years before he was displaced by another high priest, even more wicked than him. Menelaus offered an even larger bribe to Antiochus IV, and the king removed Jason and gave Menelaus the office. According to 2 Maccabees, Menelaus was not even in the tribe of Levi, but was a Benjamite. He took the office and began to plunder the temple to pay the bribe to Antiochus IV. Jason meanwhile fled across the Jordan. Menelaus arranged to have Onias III murdered in 169 BC, while Antiochus IV was at war in Egypt. Jason crossed the Jordan, attacked the city, trapped Menelaus, and began to rule. Jason showed bad judgment in killing many Jews, and he lost support and had to flee the city once again.

When Antiochus IV returned, he restored Menelaus; at that time he had the walls of Jerusalem destroyed and slaughtered many Jews and sold many others as slaves. The Akra dominated the city for twenty-five years before the Jews could take it. One of the most serious acts of Menelaus was helping the Syrians to build the Akra, a large castle-fortress near the temple in Jerusalem. The Akra housed hundreds of Syrian soldiers and apostate Jews when Antiochus IV returned from Egypt.

3.2.3 Antiochus IV (Epiphanes)

In 168 BC Antiochus IV had begun a successful campaign in Egypt, but before he could capture Alexandria, a large fleet of Roman ships arrived, and the Roman legate, C. Popilius Laenus, an old school chum of Antiochus's in Rome warned him to turn back. The Romans would not permit the Syrians to get too powerful and take Egypt. Thus Antiochus was forced to return through Palestine empty handed and humiliated. In this frame of mind he began two years of horrible persecution. Antiochus IV broke the word of his father, who had promised the Jews freedom to practice their own religion. When he returned from Egypt, Antiochus began his hostile Hellenisation campaign by attacking Jerusalem on the Sabbath, killing thousands of Jews, destroying the walls, stripping the temple, carrying away 10,000 Jewish slaves, and building the Akra. He also insisted that the Jews should synchronise their religion with pagan, Greek and emperor worship even in the temple. He directed his Greek soldiers to perform licentious rites in the temple courts and made drunken orgies to Bacchus compulsory.

In December 167 BC he had a statue of Zeus erected in the temple, and finally offered a sow on the altar. This Greek god in Syria was known as “Baal Shamem,” which Daniel in Hebrew describes as *shiqquts meshomem*, translated into English as “abomination of desolation/appalling sacrilege”. In all these defilements, Menelaus and his priests gladly participated. The Jews called the final pagan deeds “the abomination of desolation,” quoting Daniel. As Antiochus grew more fanatical and vicious, the Jews mockingly called him, not Epiphanes, but Epimanes (madman). Finally the king carried his orders to their natural conclusion when he forbade the practice of the Jewish religion. He destroyed all copies of the Scripture; he forbade any Jewish observance; forbade circumcision; and commanded all Jews to sacrifice on heathen altars and eat pig’s flesh. All these orders carried death penalty for refusal.

3.2.4 Mathathias

Mattathias was a priest of Modein and father of Judas Maccabeus during the reign of Antiochus IV and the era of Hellenism, in which the emissaries of Antiochus erected a pagan altar at Modein. When the Jews were compelled to offer sacrifices on the pagan altar which was contrary to the Jewish laws, to show loyalty to the government, the aged priest of the village, Mattthias was asked to come forward first to set a good example for others. Mattathias refused to sacrifice on the pagan altar. A Jew, who was afraid of the wrath of Antiochus, made his way to the altar to offer the sacrifice, but Mattathias, who was enraged, approached the altar, slew the apostate Jew and the emissary of Antiochus. With his sons, Mattathias destroyed the heathen altar and fled to the hills to avoid the reprisals which might be expected from Antiochus. Others joined the family of Mattathias.

In the early days of the Maccabean revolt, as the struggle against Antiochus and Hellenism was on, Mattathias was joined by a group of Hasideans and with his small force carried on guerrilla warfare against the Hellenizing Greeks. From their stronghold, Mattathias, his sons and their allies raided the towns and villages killing the royal officers and the Hellenistic Jews who supported them.

Religious rite kept the Maccabean from fighting or taking to arms on the Sabbath. One Sabbath a horde of Maccabeans was surrounded and slaughtered. They would not defend themselves. Sensing the gravity of the situation, Mattathias adopted the principle that fighting in self defense was permissible even on a Sabbath day. Soon after the beginning of the revolt, Mattthias died in 166 BC and was buried in Modein. But before his death, he urged his followers to choose as military leader his third son Judas known as “the Maccabee”. His

continuing victories in guerilla warfare proved the choice a good one. This made more and more Jews rally to the banner of Judas.

3.2.5 Judas

Judas avoided open attacks but he got series of victory by his use of surprise attacks. He defeated the Syrian army three times, first under Apollonius who died at the same battle. At Beth-horon he defeated a second army under a commander named Seron, and a third time at Emmaus under Nicanor and Georgias (Maccabees 3:10-12;3). While all these were going on, Antiochus IV was on a campaign against the Parthians and Lysias who was left behind wanted to put a stop to the Jewish conflict. He was however, defeated so woefully that he had to inaugurate a revision of the Seleucid policies. Later, a letter came from Antiochus IV and the Romans to the Jews (II Maccabees. 11:27-33; 34-38). In his letter, Antiochus specifically allowed the Jews to enjoy their own food and laws and at the same time extended amnesty to all rebels who returned to their home town within 14 days. After three years the laws banning the Jews from obeying the Torah and the Ptolemaic constitution which had been forced upon the people were abrogated. Judas then went ahead and conquered and purified Jerusalem and reinstated the temple cult.

He sent a delegation to Rome to establish peace with the Romans who were interested in making their influence felt in that region. With this treaty the Romans pledged that if war comes first to the nation of the Jews, the Romans shall willingly act as their allies. And so, a letter was written and sent to Demetrius threatening in these words; “if they (Jews) appeal again for help against you, we will defend their rights and fight you on sea and on land” (1 Maccabees 9:32). At the end Judas lost his life in the vicinity of Jerusalem to an army sent by Demetrius under Bacchides. Alcimus was made the high priest and with the help of Bacchides the doors of lawlessness and injustice re-opened (1 Maccabees 9:23).

3.2.6 Jonathan

After the death of Judas, Jonathan reassembled and organised an armed resistance. First, he attacked an Arabian tribe in Transjordan which killed his brother John. Bacchides only saved his life by fleeing when he attacked Jonathan. It is said that Jonathan took the position of high priest Alcimus after he died. But in some sources, it is said that Jonathan died before Alcimus. Jonathan is said to have expelled the followers of the Qumran “teachers of righteousness” from office. He had thus become so powerful that he was not only able to survive without trouble as a result of a change of administration in Syria but also was successful in

obtaining further concessions in the struggle for power. He succeeded in luring Jonathan without his army at Accoptmais, and there had him imprisoned (1 Maccabees 12:39-49). It was there that he had Jonathan killed, when he could not get the throne that Simon had been elected to occupy. Not later than the time of Jonathan's murder, Simon established contact with Demetrius II who, more than ever, was dependent upon the support of the Maccabeans.

In recognition of Judas' sovereignty, Demetrius marked the new change in alignment with an amnesty decree, of a grand permanent exemption from taxation. For that reason the author of 1 Maccabees noted that in 142 BC the yoke of the Gentile oppressors was removed from Israel (Maccabees 13:41) and marked the decisive break to the Maccabean rebellion. This new feeling of freedom found expression in the fact that the Jews began their own era and their documents and contacts according to the years of Simon's administration (1 Maccabees 13:41). The hymn in 1 Maccabees 14:4-15 celebrated Simon and his success in almost messianic tones as the saviour of the nation and prince of peace. Confirmation and high point of this development was the decision of the Jerusalem popular assembly of the year 140 BC to legitimise the Maccabean family formally and to grant Simon the hereditary honour to the offices of prince, high priest and commander. The restriction "until a trustworthy prophet should arise" seem to point to a compromise between the gymnastic ambitions of the Maccabeans and the eschatological expectations of the "devout". Simon was very successful during his period of leadership. Though he had scarcely any reason to fear serious dangers to his rule from the outside; he was the first Maccabean to fall victim to an intrigue from within. His son-in-law Ptolemy who was governor of Jericho, sought to gain control of the government and had Simon and his sons Mattathias and Judas treacherously murdered at the beginning of 135 BC during a banquet in the fortress of Dok near Jericho (Maccabees 16:11-22).

3.2.7 Simon

Simon, the only remaining son of Mattathias, now became the leader of the Jews. Tryphon concluded that he had the best time to defeat the Jews. He marched south along the Mediterranean coast and then moved inland to come up at Jerusalem from the south, out-manoeuvring Simon and the Jewish army which waited for him west of Jerusalem. Just a few miles away from Jerusalem, Tryphon was caught in a snowstorm and forced to retreat back to Jerusalem. In May 142 BC Simon entered into negotiations with Demetrius II who still held all of northern Syria. In the following agreement, Judah was recognised as an independent state. Judah was once more a free nation.

The last king of Judah had been Zedekiah, son of Josiah. Since the Babylonian exile, Judah had been ruled by governors and prophets. The Maccabees were seen as military rulers, but did not take for themselves the title of king. Jonathan was given the position of high priest. This position continued to be held by the ruling sons of Mattathias. For a time there was prosperity and a continued spiritual awakening. But as the period of prosperity continued, the religion of the Jews began to take on more of a ritualistic attitude. At the same time, the rulers of Judah became greedy. Simon, the last of the sons of Mattathias was murdered by his son-in-law in 135 BC. In 135 BC both Simon and two of his sons were murdered by an ambitious son-in-law.

A third son managed to escape and take the leadership of Judah. His name was John Hyrcanus. He went on to reign for 31 years. During his rule Hyrcanus hired foreign mercenaries and plundered the tomb of King David. He conquered Samaria, taking the city after a year-long siege and burning it to the ground. He also conquered the Idumeans and the Galileans and forced them to convert to Judaism. This would have major repercussions. It would make it possible for an Idumean to ascend to throne of Israel. It also served to polarise the Jews into two distinct parties: the Hasmonean dynasty and the Hellenists.

3.3 The Hasmonean Dynasty

The term Hasidim literally means "the pious ones." This group came to be known as the Pharisees, the separated ones because they sought to retain the separation of their culture from the Greek influences of Hellenisation. The Hellenists were Jews who embraced Greek influences. They came to be known as Sadducees. The name is taken from the high priest Zadok because this view was popular among the priests as well as the aristocracy. The death of Hyrcanus started a dynastic struggle for the leadership of Judah. Aristobulus, the eldest son, emerged as the victor and promptly threw his mother and four brothers into prison where all but one of the brothers died. Not contented with the office of the high priest, Aristobulus crowned himself as king.

This is significant because he was the first to carry the title of king since the Babylonian captivity. Aristobulus was married to a remarkable woman named Alexandria. When Aristobulus died, she immediately freed his only surviving brother-in-law and married him, effectively placing him upon the throne of Judah. Alexander Janneus was not better than his murderous brother. Civil war broke out during the feast of tabernacles when he took a libation that was to be poured out on the altar in the temple and instead poured it on the ground at his own feet. The Jews responded by pelting him with fruit. Janneus called in his soldiers and put 6000 Jews to death.

This action led to six years of civil war. The Pharisees looked to the Seleucids for military aid and managed to drive Janneus into hiding for a time. Realising that they might be handing over the independence of their nation, they made peace with Janneus. Instead of keeping the peace, Janneus crucified 800 Pharisees. In the following years, he extended his kingdom all the way to the borders of Egypt, eastward into the Trans-Jordan lands, and north to Lake Huleh. When Alexander Janneus died in 76 B C his wife, Salome Alexandra, took the throne. She was nearly 70 years old. Her brother was the leader of the Pharisee movement and she was a religious conservative. The nine years of her reign were to be the golden age of Israel. Alexandra started a public school system in Israel and brought in compulsory education. The result was that years later in the time of Jesus, almost everyone could read.

As a woman, Alexandra could not officiate as high priest, so she appointed her oldest son to this position. Her younger son was made general of the armed forces. He was by nature a peaceful man, following the teachings of the Pharisees. As general of the military, he was popular with the Sadducees who envisioned an imperial Jewish state. The differences between these two sons would eventually make Israel a house divided. The Pharisees were dominant during the reign of Alexandra. They used their dominance to seek revenge upon the Sadducees for the persecutions that they had suffered under Alexander Janneus. Leaders from the Sadducees were put to death, bringing the nation to the brink of civil war.

When Alexandra died, Hyrcanus, being the oldest and therefore the heir, took over the throne. However Aristobulus gathered an army of Sadducees and marched on Jerusalem. Hyrcanus surrendered without a fight. Hyrcanus gave up the office of high priest and Aristobulus became both the king and the high priest. The two brothers swore eternal friendship and even sealed their alliance by the marriage of their children. For a time there was peace. After a time, Aristobulus became jealous of his older brother and Hyrcanus was forced to flee to Aretas, king of the Nabatean Arabs. It was here that he met a young Idumean prince named Antipater who would change the course of Jewish history.

3.4 The New State of Israel

The independent Republic of Israel was established on May 14th, 1948 in a part of ancient Palestine. The state of Israel occupies Galilee, the plain of Esdraelon, the Mount Carmel range, the coastal plain and the Shephelah, (the foothills of ancient Judah) from Carmel south to the Gaza Strip, including a corridor to Jerusalem, and finally the Negeb reaching to a point at the northern end of the Gulf of Aqada. It is therefore, an irregular, generally narrow strip about 265 miles in length

with disproportionately long borders, 590 miles on land and 158 miles on water. Its total area of 7,992.6 square miles is somewhat smaller than that of Massachusetts. It is bordered on the north by Lebanon and Syria, on the east by Syria and the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan, and on the south by the Gaza little of the strip and Sinai Desert, both held by Egypt. Modern Israel includes but little of the heartland of ancient Israel-the highlands of Samaria and Judea. The largest cities in Israel are Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem.

The state of Israel grew out of the Jewish national home, the establishment of which was undertaken by the Balfour declaration On November 2nd 1917, favouring a Jewish national homeland in Palestine, and secured by the attribution of Great British of the mandate of Palestine on July 24th, 1922. The working of the mandate was greatly hindered by the continuous friction between Arabs and Jews. Major riots occurred in 1921, 1929 and 1936. Matters were brought to a head after World War II, when the British refused to allow the immigration of Palestine of many thousands of Jews who had been victims of the Nazi persecution. Finally, Great Britain ruined her mandate, and the second General Assembly of the United Nations, (UN), recommended the partitioning of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states and the creation of a separate enclave embracing Jerusalem and its surroundings under UN supervision on November 29, 1947. The Arabs rejected outrightly the resolution and the mandatory administration and consequently refused to allow this special commission charged with its implementation to come to Palestine.

The mandate was to expire on May 15th 1948. On the eve of this day the Jewish National Council and the General Zionist Council at Tel Aviv proclaimed establishment of a Jewish State, to be called Israel. A provincial government was set up, which was promptly recognised by the United States, the USSR and a score of other Nations. Israel was admitted to the UN on May 11, 1949. The Arab-Jewish war had actually started many months before the proclamation of Israel's independence. Until this day, however, only irregular cities were engaged in warfare. Thereafter, the troops of the Arab countries (Lebanon, Syria, Transjordan and Egypt), invaded the region that had previously been under British mandate. After few weeks of fighting, the invaders were defeated, and Israel succeeded in occupying a larger part of Palestine than that stipulated by the UN partition plan.

Active hostilities did not cease until the beginning of 1949. After protracted negotiated held in Rhodes in the spring and summer of 1949, armistic agreements were signed between Israel and the Arab countries except Iraq and Saudi Arabia. These agreements, which are still in force, fixed the provisional boundaries of the state of Israel according to the

territory held at the end of the hostilities. Jerusalem was divided into two parts, the old city under Jordan's rule, and the new city under Israeli administration. In 1950 Jerusalem was proclaimed the capital of Israel. On October 29, 1956, Israel launched the so-called Sinai campaign and occupied the Sinai Desert and the Gaza Strip. In compliance with the resolutions of the UN general assembly, Israel withdrew its contingents from the occupied areas.

The State of Israel is a republic headed by a president who is elected for a five year term by the Knesset (Assembly). The Knesset is a one-chamber parliament of 120 members who are elected for a four-year term by secret ballot and the universal direct suffrage. Electors choose between national lists of candidates, seat being allocated in proportion to the number of votes obtained by each list. The government consists of the prime minister and a number of ministers who may, or may not be members of the Knesset. Because of the great diversity of views on the nature of the state, no constitution has been adopted. A certain number of basic laws deal with most of the topics usually set forth in the constitution. The most important laws passed by the Knesset are the following: the law of return, (1950) providing that every Jew shall be entitled to come to Israel as an immigrant; the equality rights-for-women law (1951); the nationality law (1952); the compulsory-and free-education law (1949); and the national insurance law (1953).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Give two reasons why Rome was late to rise to power.
- ii. What factors were responsible for Maccabean revolt and the emergence of Hasmonean dynasty during inter-biblical period?

4.0 CONCLUSION

The first unit of this module prepared you for this unit two. You should by now have a definite idea of what historical development of major events during the inter-testamental period is all about.

5.0 SUMMARY

You now know the reasons for the late emergence of the Jewish nation. You also know why the Macabbeans revolted during the Hellenistic period. You learned that the political history of the period paved way for the emergence of Hasmonean rule and Jewish independence in 63 BC when Pompey conquered Palestine, putting all of Judea under Roman control. This led to Herod being made king of Judea by the senate. Thus, the ultimate goal of the unit, namely introducing the emergence of the Jewish nation to you has expectedly been realised.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. Discuss the system of government practiced in the state of Israel today.
- ii. Give two reasons for Maccabeans' revolt during the Roman rule.
- iii. Outline the theological events during the Hasmonean rule.

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UNIT 3 INTER-TESTAMENTAL RELIGION

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Inter-Testamental Judaism
 - 3.2 The Core Tenets of Judaism
 - 3.3 The Strands of Wisdom Traditions in Judaism
 - 3.3.1 Torah-Centred Wisdom Tradition
 - 3.3.2 The Spirit-Centred Wisdom Tradition
 - 3.3.3 The Bennema Wisdom Tradition
 - 3.3.4 The Qumranian Wisdom Tradition
 - 3.4 Forms of Judaism
 - 3.5 Distinction between the Jews as a People and Judaism
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, you learned about Jewish independence. You also learned that the political situation of the time created an atmosphere of struggle among the various kingdoms which led to the domination of the Roman dynasty and subsequently their independence. In this unit, you will learn about the religion practiced by the Jews during inter-testamental period. The goal of this unit is to make you understand the religion of the Jewish and how it can be used in the study of religious phenomena, including the study of inter-biblical literature.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the inter-testamental religion
- explain the religious practices of Judaism during inter-testamental period
- highlight the forms of inter-testamental Judaism
- state the various writings of inter-testamental Judaism
- discuss the wisdom traditions of inter-testamental religion.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Inter-Testamental Judaism

The term Judaism derives from the Latin Iudaismus, which come from the Greek Ιουδαϊσμός Ioudaismos, and ultimately from the Hebrew Yehudah, or Yahadut (Judah). It first appears as the Hellenistic Greek iudaismos in the second Maccabees in second century BC. In the context of the age and period it had the meaning of seeking or forming part of a cultural entity, that of *iudea*, the Greek derivative of Persian Yehud, and can be compared with *hellenismos*, meaning acceptance of Hellenic cultural norms. The earliest instance of the term in English, used to mean "the profession or practice of the Jewish religion; the religious system or polity of the Jews".

Judaism is the "religion, philosophy, and way of life" of the Jewish people. Originating in the Hebrew Bible (also known as the Tanakh) and explored in later texts such as the Talmud. It is considered by religious Jews to be the expression of the covenantal relationship God developed with the children of Israel. According to traditional rabbinic Judaism, God revealed his laws and commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai in the form of the written and oral Torah. This was historically challenged by the Karaites, a movement that flourished in the medieval period that retains several thousand followers today who maintains that only the written Torah was revealed. In modern times, liberal movements such as humanistic Judaism may be nontheistic.

The religion of Judaism claims a historical continuity spanning more than 3,000 years. It is one of the oldest monotheistic religions, and the oldest to survive into the present day. The Hebrews/Israelites were already referred to as Jews in later books of the Tanakh such as the book of Esther, with the term Jews replacing the title "Children of Israel." Judaism's texts, traditions and values strongly influenced later Abrahamic religions, including Christianity, Islam and the Baha'i Faith. Many aspects of Judaism have also directly or indirectly influenced secular western ethics and civil law. Jews are an ethno-religious group that include those born Jewish and converts to Judaism. In 2010, the world Jewish population was estimated at 13.4 million, or roughly 0.2% of the total world populations. About 42% of all Jews reside in Israel and about 42% reside in the United States and Canada, with most of the remainder living in Europe.

Unlike other ancient Near Eastern gods, the Hebrew God is portrayed as unitary and solitary; consequently, the Hebrew God's principal relationships are not with other gods, but with the world, and more specifically, with the people He created. Judaism thus begins with an ethical monotheism: the belief that God is one, and concerned with the actions of humankind. According to the Hebrew Bible, God promised Abraham to make of his offspring a great nation. Many generations later, he commanded the nation of Israel to love and worship only one God; that is, the Jewish nation is to reciprocate God's concern for the world. He also commanded the Jewish people to love one another; that is, Jews are to imitate God's love for people. These commandments are but two of a large corpus of commandments and laws that constitute this covenant, which is the substance of Judaism.

3.2 The Core Tenets of Judaism

The core Judaism includes the following principles of faith:

- I believe with perfect faith that the creator, blessed be His name, is the creator and guide of everything that has been created; He alone has made, does make, and will make all things.
- I believe with perfect faith that the creator, blessed be His name, is one, and that there is no unity in any manner like His, and that He alone is our God, who was, and is, and will be.
- I believe with perfect faith that the creator, blessed be His name, has no body, and that He is free from all the properties of matter, and that there can be no (physical) comparison to Him whatsoever.
- I believe with perfect faith that the creator, blessed be His name, is the first and the last.
- I believe with perfect faith that the creator, blessed be His name, and to Him alone, it is right to pray, and that it is not right to pray to any being besides Him.
- I believe with perfect faith that all the words of the prophets are true.
- I believe with perfect faith that the prophecy of Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, was true, and that he was the chief of the prophets, both those who preceded him and those who followed him.
- I believe with perfect faith that the entire Torah that is now in our possession is the same that was given to Moses our teacher, peace be upon him.
- I believe with perfect faith that this Torah will not be exchanged, and that there will never be any other Torah from the creator, blessed be His name.

- I believe with perfect faith that the creator, blessed be His name, knows all the deeds of human beings and all their thoughts, as it is written, "Who fashioned the hearts of them all, Who comprehends all their actions" (Psalms 33:15).
- I believe with perfect faith in the Creator, blessed be His name, rewards those who keep His commandments and punish those that transgress them.
- I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah; and even though he may tarry, nonetheless, I wait every day for his coming.
- I believe with perfect faith that there will be a revival of the dead at the time when it shall please the creator, blessed be His name, and His mention shall be exalted forever and ever.

Scholars throughout Jewish history have proposed numerous formulations of Judaism's core tenets, all of which have met with criticism. The most popular formulation is Maimonides' thirteen principles of faith, developed in the 12th century. According to Maimonides, any Jew that rejects any of these principles would be considered an apostate and a heretic.

In modern times, Judaism lacks a centralised authority that would dictate an exact religious dogma. Because of this, many different variations on the basic beliefs are considered within the scope of Judaism. Even so, all Jewish religious movements are, to a greater or lesser extent, based on the principles of the Hebrew Bible and various commentaries such as the Talmud and Midrash. Judaism also universally recognises the biblical covenant between God and the patriarch Abraham as well as the additional aspects of the covenant revealed to Moses, who is considered Judaism's greatest prophet. In the Mishnah, a core text of rabbinic Judaism, the acceptance of the divine origins of this covenant is considered an essential aspect of Judaism and those who reject the covenant forfeit their share in the world to come.

3.3 The Strands of Wisdom Traditions in Judaism

There are four strands of wisdom traditions in religion of Judaism. These include:

3.3.1 Torah-Centred Wisdom Tradition

The first strand of wisdom traditions is the Torah-centred wisdom tradition, which is essentially a continuation of the Old Testament deuteronomic wisdom tradition. This strand of nomistic wisdom is found mainly in Palestinian and rabbinic literature. The book of Sirach probably functions as the best representative of the Torah-centred

wisdom tradition. Nevertheless, Sirach is probably also influenced by the Spirit-centred wisdom tradition in the Old Testament in at least two ways:

- In Sirach, wisdom is clearly personified and hypostatized. The relationship between wisdom and Torah culminates in an explicit identification: 'All these are indicative of the fact that wisdom is the book of the covenant of the Most High God, the law that Moses commanded us as an inheritance for the congregations of Jacob. wisdom is given to those who are prepared to seek her, to those who are prepared to work for the acquisition of wisdom excluding the apocalyptic literature of Palestinian Judaism, which represents the third strand of inter-testamental wisdom tradition.

3.3.2 The Spirit-Centred Wisdom Tradition

The spirit-centred wisdom tradition is the second strand of inter-testamental wisdom traditions, as a continuation of the Old Testament strands. There is, however, no place for the spirit in rabbinic charismatic exegesis. Although most wisdom writings of diaspora Judaism come under the heading spirit-centred wisdom and the writings of Josephus belong rather to the Torah-centred wisdom tradition. Josephus' usage of divine spirit seems to be limited solely to the biblical period.

3.3.3 The Bennema Wisdom Tradition

The Bennema wisdom tradition of spirit-centred wisdom is found in diaspora Judaism. The Wisdom of Solomon is the best representative of this strand. We also find in this book the personification and hypostatisation of wisdom. The exact association, if any, between wisdom and Torah is difficult to determine. Wisdom leads people to keep the Torah, yet wisdom is not equated with the Torah. 47 wisdom's laws are identical with wisdom's teaching/instruction, the contents of which includes not only the divine commandments but also God's will and purpose in the widest sense of the word. Hence, in wisdom of Solomon the locus of wisdom is not the Torah but rather wisdom herself. Following and receiving wisdom leads to blessing, ethical guidance, renewal and salvation (immortality) (6:18; 7:27; 8:9-18; 9:11, 17-18). However, the ultimate goal of the pursuit of wisdom is fellowship/friendship/union with God.

3.3.4 The Qumranian Wisdom Tradition

The fourth and final stand of wisdom tradition is found in the writings of the Qumran community. It is very difficult to classify this wisdom tradition because its wisdom is closely associated with the spirit, the

Torah and apocalyptic wisdom. Wisdom is associated with the Torah in that the Torah is the source of wisdom, and obedience to the Torah leads to eternal life. This concept of wisdom as the source of salvation, including its relationship with Torah, is probably best summed up in 4Q525 f2 2:3-7 and 4Q185 2:10-13, which are exhortations to adhere to personified wisdom and Torah:

“Blessed is the man who attains wisdom, and walks in the law of the Most High, and dedicates his heart to her ways. For he always thinks of her, and in his precepts he meditates on [the law,] [and throughout] his [whole] life [he thinks] of her, [and places her] in front of his eyes in order not to walk on paths of evil. God has given her to Israel, and like a good gift, gives her. He has saved all his people...Whoever glories in her will say: he shall take possession of her and she will find him...With her there are long days...Her youth [increases] favours and salvation.”

This wisdom of the Qumran community is the revelatory knowledge of the hidden meaning of the Torah and the result of divine revelation. Moreover, wisdom is the exclusive possession of the community and teaching communicates this divine revelatory wisdom. Although it could be argued that the Qumran community is merely a different sociological group with a similar concept of wisdom as the Torah-centred wisdom tradition, we would like to maintain that the Qumran literature presents a distinct wisdom theology, in that it contains a partly realised eschatology and a strong emphasis on the spirit. Looking at the inter-testamental Jewish literature therefore, we seem to detect four distinct wisdom strands, which are rooted in and are in continuation with the three Old Testament wisdom strands.

3.4 Forms of Inter-Testamental Judaism

The largest Jewish religious movements are orthodox Judaism (Hareidi Judaism and modern orthodox Judaism), conservative Judaism and reform Judaism. A major source of difference between these groups is their approach to Judaism law.

a. Orthodox or Traditional Judaism

Orthodox Judaism maintains that the Torah and Jewish laws are divine in origin, eternal and unalterable, and that they should be strictly followed. It also maintains that a Jew, whether by birth or conversion, is a Jew forever. Thus a Jew who claims to be an atheist or converts to another religion is still considered by traditional Judaism to be Jewish. According to some sources, the reform movement has maintained that a Jew who has converted to another religion is no longer a Jew, and the Israeli government has also taken that stance after Supreme Court cases and statutes.

b. Reform Judaism

Reform Judaism is more liberal, with conservative Judaism generally promoting a more "traditional" interpretation of Judaism's requirements than reform Judaism. A typical reform position is that Jewish law should be viewed as a set of general guidelines rather than as a set of restrictions and obligations whose observance is required of all Jews. However, the reform movement has indicated that this is not so cut and dry and different situations call for consideration and differing actions. For example, Jews who have converted under duress may be permitted to return to Judaism "without any action on their part but their desire to rejoin the Jewish community" and "a proselyte who has become an apostate remains, nevertheless, a Jew".

c. Karaite or Alternative or Conservative Judaism

Karaite or alternative or conservative Judaism defines itself as the remnants of the non-rabbinic Jewish sects of the second temple period, such as the Sadducees. The Karaites ("Scripturalists") accept only the Hebrew Bible and what they view as the Peshat ("simple meaning"); they do not accept non-biblical writings as authoritative. Some European Karaites do not see themselves as part of the Jewish community at all, although most do. The Samaritans, a very small community located entirely around Mount Gerizim in the Nablus/Shechem region of the West Bank and in Holon, near Tel Aviv in Israel, regard themselves as the descendants of the Israelites of the Iron Age kingdom of Israel. Their religious practices are those of Judaism, but they regard only the written Torah as authoritative scripture (with a special regard also for the book of Joshua).

3.5 Distinction between the Jews as a People and Judaism

According to Daniel Boyarin, the underlying distinction between religion and ethnicity is foreign to Judaism itself, and is one form of the dualism between spirit and flesh that has its origin in Platonic philosophy and that permeated Hellenistic Judaism. Consequently, in his view, Judaism does not fit easily into conventional western categories, such as religion, ethnicity, or culture. Boyarin suggests that this in part reflects the fact that much of Judaism's more than 3,000-year history predates the rise of western culture and occurred outside the West (that is, Europe, particularly medieval and modern Europe).

During this time, Jews have experienced slavery, anarchic and theocratic self-government, conquest, occupation, and exile; in the diasporas, they have been in contact with and have been influenced by ancient Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, and Hellenic cultures, as well as modern movements such as the enlightenment (see Haskalah) and the rise of

nationalism, which would bear fruit in the form of a Jewish state in the levant.

In contrast to this point of view, Boyarin (1994) asserts that the practices such as humanistic Judaism reject the religious aspects of Judaism, while retaining certain cultural traditions. According to traditional Jewish law, a Jew is anyone born of a Jewish mother or converted to Judaism in accordance with Jewish law. American reform Judaism and British liberal Judaism accept the child of one Jewish parent (father or mother) as Jewish if the parents raise the child with a Jewish identity. All mainstream forms of Judaism today are open to sincere converts, although conversion has traditionally been discouraged since the time of the Talmud.

The total number of Jews worldwide is difficult to assess because the definition of "who is a Jew" is problematic; not all Jews identify themselves as Jewish, and some who identify as Jewish are not considered so by other Jews. According to the Jewish Year Book, the global Jewish population in 1900 was around 11 million. The latest available data is from the world Jewish population survey of 2002 and the Jewish year calendar in 2005, which put the Jewish Population at about 13.3 million around the world. The Jewish year calendar cites 14.6 million. Jewish population growth is currently near zero percent, with 0.3% growth from 2000 to 2001.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Define the term inter-testamental Judaism
- ii. Name three features of inter-testamental religion and briefly comment on them
- iii. Give three Jewish moments in Israel known to you and discuss them
- iv. List five core tenets of Judaism known to you and explain them.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Though, you have learned about the inter-testamental religion and its literature, it is essential to note that the religion of the inter-testamental period was a separation to the law. There is no doubt that the Jews were affected by their foreign overlords in their culture, language and thought, and especially by their Greek overlords; but this influence only produced a crisis when it directly challenged the Jewish religion. Consequently, there arose different schools of thought to the interpretation of the law.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you learned the nature of inter-testamental religion and its literature. We also examined the development of rabbinic Judaism and the features which formed the basis of its beliefs and practices during the inter-testamental period.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. List four strands of wisdom traditions in Judaism and comment on them.
- ii. Give four forms of inter-testamental Judaism known to you and discuss any two of them.
- iii. What do you understand by the Jewish religion philosophy?
- iv. Give two differences between the Jews as a people and Judaism.

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UNIT 4 FEATURES OF THE JEWISH RELIGION

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Features of Jewish Religion
 - 3.1.1 Prayer
 - 3.1.2 Clothing
 - 3.1.3 Holidays
 - 3.1.4 Shabbat
 - 3.1.5 Pilgrimage Festivals
 - 3.1.6 High Holy Days
 - 3.1.7 Hanukkah
 - 3.1.8 Purim
 - 3.1.9 Other Holidays
 - 3.1.10 Torah Readings
 - 3.1.11 Synagogues and Religious Buildings
 - 3.1.12 Dietary Laws: Kashrut
 - 3.1.13 Laws of Ritual Purity
 - 3.1.14 Family Purity
 - 3.1.15 Life-Cycle Events
 - 3.1.16 Classical Priesthood
 - 3.1.17 Prayer Leaders
 - 3.2 The Roles of Religious Functionaries in Jewish Religion
 - 3.3 Relationship between Islam and Jewish Religion
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, you learned about inter-testamental religion. You also read that it was the religion and way of life practiced by the Jewish people during inter-biblical period. In the sub-section of the unit you learned the various forms of inter-testamental Judaism such as reform Judaism, Karaite or conservative Judaism and orthodox or traditional Judaism. The objective of this unit is to expose you to the religion of the Jews during inter-testamental period. In this unit, we will take a look at the features of Jewish religion practiced during inter-testamental period.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the roles of religious functionaries in Judaism
- enumerate the key Jewish religion laws
- states the major characteristics of Jewish religion
- mention some of the major Jewish festivals.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Features of Jewish Religion

The inter-testamental religion of the Jews known as Judaism is a separation between traditional and secular citizens. The term "secular" is used as a self-description among Israelites of western (European) origin, whose Jewish identity may be a very powerful force in their lives, but who see it as largely independent of traditional religious belief and practice. This portion of the population largely ignores organised religious life, be it of the official Israeli rabbinate (orthodox) or of the liberal movements common to diaspora Judaism (reform, conservative). On the other hand, the term "traditional" (*masorti*) is used more commonly as a self-description among Jews of eastern origin (the Middle East, Central Asia, and North Africa). The term, as commonly used, has nothing to do with the official *masorti* (conservative) movement. There is a great deal of ambiguity in the ways "secular" and "traditional" are used in Israel. They often overlap, and they cover an extremely wide range in terms of ideology and religious observance.

The term orthodox is not popular in Israeli discourse, although the percentage of Jews who come under that category is far greater than in the diaspora. What would be called orthodox in the diaspora includes what is commonly called *dati* (religious) or *haredi* (ultra-orthodox) in Israel. The former term includes what is called "religious Zionism" or the "national religious" community, as well as what has become known over the past decade or so as *haredi-leumi* (nationalist *haredi*), or "Hardal", which combines a largely *haredi* lifestyle with nationalist ideology. The Jewish religion therefore, has many features. These include:

3.1.1 Prayer

The traditional Jews recite prayers three times daily, Shacharit, Mincha, and Ma'ariv with a fourth prayer, Mussaf added on Sabbath and holidays. At the heart of each service is the Amidah or Shemoneh Esrei. Another key prayer in many services is the declaration of faith, the

Shema Yisrael (or Shema). The Shema is the recitation of a verse from the Torah (Deuteronomy 6:4). Most of the prayers in a traditional Jewish service can be recited in solitary prayer, although communal prayer is preferred. Communal prayer requires a quorum of ten adult Jews, called a minyan. In nearly all orthodox and a few conservative circles, only male Jews are counted toward a minyan; most conservative Jews and members of other Jewish denominations count female Jews as well.

In addition to prayer services, observant traditional Jews recite prayers and benedictions throughout the day when performing various acts. Prayers are recited upon waking up in the morning, before eating or drinking, after eating and so on. The approach to prayer varies among the Jewish denominations. In most conservative synagogues, and all reform and reconstructionist congregations, women participate in prayer services on an equal basis with men, including roles traditionally filled only by men, such as reading from the Torah. In addition, many reform temples use musical instruments such as organs and mixed choirs.

3.1.2 Clothing

A kippa is a slightly rounded brimless skullcap worn by many Jews while praying, eating, reciting blessings, or studying Jewish religious texts, and at all times by some Jewish men. In orthodox communities, only men wear kippot; in non-orthodox communities, some women also wear kippot. It is a small round beanie covering only the back of the head together with a snug cap that covers the whole crown

3.1.3 Holidays

Holidays are special days in the Jewish calendar, which celebrate moments in Jewish history, as well as central themes in the relationship between God and the world, such as creation, revelation, and redemption.

3.1.4 Shabbat

Two braided Shabbat challahs placed under an embroidered challah cover at the start of the Shabbat meal. Shabbat, the weekly day of rest lasting before sundown on Friday night to nightfall Saturday night, commemorates God's day of rest after six days of creation. It plays a pivotal role in Jewish practice and is governed by a large corpus of religious law. At sundown on Friday, the woman of the house welcomes the Shabbat by lighting two or more candles and reciting a blessing. The evening meal begins with the Kiddush, a blessing recited aloud over a cup of wine, and the Mohtzi, a blessing recited over the bread. It is customary to have challah, two braided loaves of bread, on the table.

During Shabbat Jews are forbidden to engage in any activity that falls under 39 categories of *melakhah*, translated literally as "work". These activities banned on the Sabbath include such actions as lighting a fire, writing, using money and carrying in the public domain. The prohibition of lighting a fire has been extended in the modern era to driving a car, which involves burning fuel, and using electricity.

3.1.5 Pilgrimage Festivals

Jewish holy days (*chaggim*), celebrate landmark events in Jewish history, such as the exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah, and sometimes mark the change of seasons and transitions in the agricultural cycle. The three major festivals, Sukkot, Passover and Shavuot, are called "regalim" (derived from the Hebrew word "regel", or foot). On the three regalim, it was customary for the Israelites to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices in the temple.

a. Passover (Pesach)

Passover or Pesach is a week-long holiday beginning on the evening of the 14th day of Nisan (the first month in the Hebrew calendar), that commemorates the exodus from Egypt. Outside Israel, Passover is celebrated for eight days. In ancient times, it coincided with the barley harvest. It is the only holiday that centres on home-service, the Seder. Leavened products (*chametz*) are removed from the house prior to the holiday, and are not consumed throughout the week. Homes are thoroughly cleaned to ensure no bread or bread by-products remain, and a symbolic burning of the last vestiges of *chametz* is conducted on the morning of the Seder. Matzo is eaten instead of bread.

b. Pentecost or Feast of Weeks (Shavuot)

Pentecost or Shavuot celebrates the revelation of the Torah to the Israelites on Mount Sinai. Also known as the festival of *Bikurim*, or first fruits, it coincided in biblical times with wheat harvest. Shavuot customs include all-night study marathons known as *Tikkun Leil Shavuot*, eating dairy foods (cheesecake and blintzes are special favorites), reading the book of Ruth, decorating homes and synagogues with greenery, and wearing white clothing which symbolise purity.

c. Tabernacles or The Festival of Booths (Sukkoth)

A commemoration of the Israelites' forty years of wandering through the desert on their way to the Promised Land. It is celebrated through the construction of temporary booths called *Sukkoth* (*sukkah*) that represent the temporary shelters of the Israelites during their wandering. It coincides with the fruit harvest, and marks the end of the agricultural cycle. Jews around the world eat in *Sukkoth* for seven days and nights. *Sukkoth*

concludes with Shemini atzeret, where Jews begin to pray for rain and Simchat Torah, "Rejoicing of the Torah", a holiday which marks reaching the end of the Torah reading cycle and beginning all over again. The occasion is celebrated with singing and dancing with the Torah scrolls. Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are technically considered to be a separate holiday and not a part of Sukkoth.

3.1.6 High Holy Days

Jews praying in a synagogue on Yom Kippur, from an 1878 painting by Maurycy Gottlieb, the high holidays (*Yamim Noraim* or "Days of Awe") revolve around judgment and forgiveness.

a. **Rosh Haashanah**

Rosh Hashanah also known as *Yom Ha-Zikkaron* or day of remembrance, and *Yom Teruah*, or day of the sounding of the Shofar is the Jewish new year (literally, "head of the year"), although it falls on the first day of the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar, Tishri. Rosh Hashanah marks the beginning of the ten-day period of atonement leading up to Yom Kippur, during which Jews are commanded to search their souls and make amends for sins committed, intentionally or not, throughout the year. Holiday customs include blowing the shofar, or ram's horn, in the synagogue, eating apples and honey, and saying blessings over a variety of symbolic foods, such as pomegranates.

b. **Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)**

The day of atonement is the holiest day of the Jewish year. It is a day of communal fasting and praying for forgiveness for one's sins. Observant Jews spend the entire day in the synagogue, sometimes with a short break in the afternoon, reciting prayers from a special holiday prayerbook called a "Machzor". Many non-religious Jews make a point of attending synagogue services and fasting on Yom Kippur. On the eve of Yom Kippur, before candles are lit, a prefast meal, the *seuda mafseket*, is eaten. Synagogue services on the eve of Yom Kippur begin with the Kol Nidre prayer. It is customary to wear white on Yom Kippur, especially for Kol Nidre, and leather shoes are not worn. The following day, prayers are held from morning till evening. The final prayer service, called "Ne'ilah", ends with a long blast of the shofar.

3.1.7 Hanukkah

Hanukkah also known as the festival of lights is an eight day Jewish holiday that starts on the 25th day of Kislev (Hebrew calendar). The festival is observed in Jewish homes by the kindling of lights on each of the festival's eight nights, one on the first night, two on the second night and so on. The holiday was called Hanukkah, meaning "dedication" because it marks the re-dedication of the temple after its desecration by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Spiritually, Hanukkah commemorates the "Miracle of the Oil". There was only enough consecrated oil to fuel the eternal flame in the temple for one day burned for eight days - which was the length of time it took to press, prepare and consecrate new oil. Hanukkah is not mentioned in the Bible and was never considered a major holiday in Judaism, but it has become much more visible and widely celebrated in modern times, mainly because it falls around the same time as Christmas and has national Jewish overtones that have been emphasised since the establishment of the State of Israel.

3.1.8 Purim

Purim is a joyous Jewish holiday that commemorates the deliverance of the Persian Jews from the plot of the evil Haman, who sought to exterminate them, as recorded in the book of Esther. It is characterised by public recitation of the book of Esther, mutual gifts of food and drink, charity to the poor, and a celebratory meal (Esther 9:22). Other customs include drinking wine, eating special pastries called hamantashen, dressing up in masks and costumes, and organising carnivals and parties. Purim is celebrated annually on the 14th of the Hebrew month of Adar, which occurs in February or March of the Gregorian calendar.

3.1.9 Other Holidays

Tisha B'Av (Hebrew: תשעה באב, "the Ninth of Av, ") is a holiday of mourning and fasting commemorating the destruction of the first and second temples and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. The modern holidays of Yom Ha-shoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) and Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israeli Independence Day) commemorate the horrors of the Holocaust and the achievement of Israel independence respectively.

3.1.10 Torah

Readings

The core of festival and Shabbat prayer services is the public reading of the Torah, along with connected readings from the other books of the Tanakh, called Haftarah. Over the course of a year, the whole Torah is read, with the cycle starting over in the autumn, on Simchat Torah.

3.1.11 Synagogues and Religious Buildings

Synagogues are Jewish houses of prayer and study. They usually contain separate rooms for prayer, smaller rooms for study, and often an area for community or educational use. There is no set blueprint for synagogues and the architectural shapes and interior designs of synagogues vary greatly. The Reform movement mostly refers to their synagogues as temples. The synagogues have features which include:

- a. The ark also called *aron ha-kodesh* by Ashkenazim and *hekhal* by Sephardim where the Torah scrolls are kept (the ark is often closed with an ornate curtain outside or inside the ark doors);
- b. The elevated reader's platform (called *bimah* by Ashkenazim and *tebah* by Sephardim), where the Torah is read (and services are conducted in Sephardi synagogues);
- c. The eternal light (*ner tamid*), a continually lit lamp or lantern used as a reminder of the constantly lit menorah of the temple in Jerusalem;
- d. The pulpit, or *amud*, a lectern facing the ark where the hazzan or prayer leader stands while praying.

In addition to synagogues, other buildings of significance in Judaism include yeshivas, or institutions of Jewish learning, and mikvahs, which are ritual baths.

3.1.12 Dietary Laws: Kashrut

The Jewish dietary laws are known as kashrut. Food prepared in accordance with them is termed kosher, and food that is not kosher is also known as *treifah* or *treif*. People who observe these laws are colloquially said to be "keeping kosher". Many of the laws apply to animal-based foods. For seafood to be kosher, the animal must have fins and scales. Certain types of seafood, such as shellfish, crustaceans, and eels, are therefore considered non-kosher. However, mammals that have split hoofs and chew their cud are considered kosher. In addition to the requirement that the species be considered kosher, meat and poultry (but not fish) must come from a healthy animal slaughtered in a process known as shechitah.

Without the proper slaughtering practices even an otherwise kosher animal will be rendered *treif*. The slaughtering process is intended to be quick and relatively painless to the animal. Forbidden parts of animals include the blood, fats, and the area in and around the sciatic nerve. Jewish law also forbids the consumption of meat and dairy products together. The waiting period between eating meat and eating dairy varies by the order in which they are consumed and by community, and can extend for up to six hours.

Chicken and other kosher birds are considered the same as meat under the laws of *kashrut*, but the prohibition is rabbinic, not biblical. The use of dishes, serving utensils, and ovens may make food *treif* that would otherwise be kosher. Utensils that have been used to prepare non-kosher food, or dishes that have held meat and are now used for dairy products, render the food *treif* under certain conditions. Furthermore, all orthodox and some conservative authorities forbid the consumption of processed grape products made by non-Jews, due to ancient pagan practices of using wine in rituals. Some conservative authorities permit wine and grape juice made without rabbinic supervision.

The Torah does not give specific reasons for most of the laws of *kashrut*. However, a number of explanations have been offered, including maintaining ritual purity, teaching impulse control, encouraging obedience to God, improving health, reducing cruelty to animals and preserving the distinctness of the Jewish community. Torah forbids Israelites from eating non-kosher species because they are unclean. The Kabbalah describes sparks of holiness that are released by the act of eating kosher foods, but are too tightly bound in non-kosher foods to be released by eating. Survival concerns supersede all the laws of *kashrut*, as they do for most halakhot.

3.1.13 Laws of Ritual Purity

The Tanakh describes circumstances in which a person who is *tahor* or ritually pure may become *tamei* or ritually impure. Some of these circumstances are contact with human corpses or graves, seminal fluid, vaginal fluid, menstruation, and contact with people who have become impure from any of these. In rabbinic Judaism, Kohanim, members of the hereditary caste that served as priests in the time of the temple, are mostly restricted from entering grave sites and touching dead bodies.

3.1.14 Family Purity

An important sub-category of the ritual purity laws relates to the segregation of menstruating women. These laws are also known as *niddah*, literally separation, or family purity. Vital aspects of halakha for traditionally observant Jews, they are not usually followed by Jews in liberal denominations. In orthodox Judaism, the biblical laws are augmented by rabbinical injunctions. For example, the Torah mandates that a woman in her normal menstrual period must abstain from sexual intercourse for seven days. A woman whose menstruation is prolonged must continue to abstain for seven more days after bleeding has stopped. The rabbis conflated ordinary *niddah* with this extended menstrual period, known in the Torah as *zavah*, and mandated that a woman may not have sexual intercourse with her husband from the time she begins her menstrual flow until seven days after it ends.

In addition, rabbinical law forbids the husband from touching or sharing a bed with his wife during this period. Afterwards, purification can occur in a ritual bath called a *mikveh*. Traditional Ethiopian Jews keep menstruating women in separate huts and, similar to Karaite practice, do not allow menstruating women into their temples because of temple's special sanctity.

3.1.15 Life-Cycle Events

Life-cycle events, or rites of passages, occur throughout a Jew's life that serves to strengthen Jewish identity and bind him/her to the entire community. These life-cycle events include Brit milah, Bar mitzvah, Bat mitzvah and Mitzvah, marriage, death and mourning.

- a. **Brit Milah** - Welcoming male babies into the covenant through the rite of circumcision on their eighth day of life. The baby boy is also given his Hebrew name in the ceremony. A naming ceremony intended as a parallel ritual for girls, named *zeved habat* or *brit bat*, enjoys limited popularity.
- b. **Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah** - The passage from childhood to adulthood takes place when a female Jew is twelve and a male Jew is thirteen years old among orthodox and some conservative congregations. In the reform movement, both girls and boys have their bat/bar mitzvah at age thirteen. This is often commemorated by having the new adults, male only in the orthodox tradition, lead the congregation in prayer and publicly read a portion of the Torah.
- c. **Marriage**- It is an extremely important lifecycle event. A wedding takes place under a *chupah*, or wedding canopy, which symbolises a happy house. At the end of the ceremony, the groom

breaks a glass with his foot, symbolising the continuous mourning for the destruction of the Temple, and the scattering of the Jewish people.

- d. **Death and mourning** - Judaism has a multi-staged mourning practice. The first stage is called the *shiva* (literally "seven", observed for one week) during which it is traditional to sit at home and be comforted by friends and family, the second is the *shloshim* (observed for one month) and for those who have lost one of their parents, there is a third stage, *avelut yud bet chodesh*, which is observed for eleven months.

3.1.16 Classical Priesthood

The role of the priesthood in Judaism has significantly diminished since the destruction of the second temple in 70 AD when priests attended to the temple and sacrifices. The priesthood is an inherited position, although priests' duties now are mainly ceremonial, yet they are still honoured in many Jewish communities. Many orthodox Jewish communities believe that they will be needed again for a future third temple and need to remain in readiness for future duty. The Kohens (priests) are patrilineal descendant of Aaron, brother of Moses. In the temple, the *kohanim* were charged with performing the sacrifices. Today, a Kohen is the first one called up at the reading of the Torah, performs the priestly blessing, as well as complying with other unique laws and ceremonies, including the ceremony of redemption of the first-born. The Levi (Levite) is patrilineal descendant of Levi the son of Jacob. In the temple in Jerusalem, the Levites sang Psalms, performed construction, maintenance, janitorial, and guard duties, assisted the priests, and sometimes interpreted the law and temple ritual to the public.

3.1.17 Prayer Leaders

From the time of the Mishnah and Talmud to the present, Judaism has required specialists or authorities for the practice of very few rituals or ceremonies. A Jew can fulfill most requirements for prayer by himself. Some activities reading the Torah and *haftarah* (a supplementary portion from the prophets or writings), the prayer for mourners, the blessings for bridegroom and bride, the complete grace after meals require a minyan - ten Jews. The most common professional clergy in a synagogue are: the Rabbi, Hazzan, Shaliach tzibur or shatz, baal kriyah or Baal Koreh and Gabbai. The Rabbi Jewish scholar charged with answering the legal questions of congregation. Some congregations have a rabbi but allow members of the congregation to act as *shatz* or *baal kriyah* for example, the Hassidic Rebbe - rabbi who is the head of a Hasidic dynasty.

The Hazzan (cantor) is trained vocalists who acts as shatz and are chosen for their good voices, knowledge of traditional tunes, understanding of the meaning of the prayers and sincerity in reciting them. A congregation does not need to have a dedicated hazzan since Jewish prayer services do involve two specified roles, which are sometimes, but not always, filled by a rabbi and/or hazzan in many congregations. In other congregations these roles are filled on an ad-hoc basis by members of the congregation who lead portions of services on a rotating basis. Shaliach tzibur or *Shatz* are "agents" or "representatives" of the congregation that leads those assembled in prayer, and sometimes prays on behalf of the community. When a *shatz* recites a prayer on behalf of the congregation, he is not acting as an intermediary but rather as a facilitator.

The entire congregation participates in the recital of such prayers by saying amen at their conclusion; it is with this act that the *shatz's* prayer becomes the prayer of the congregation. Any adult capable of reciting the prayers clearly may act as *shatz*. In orthodox congregations and some conservative congregations, only men can be prayer leaders, but all progressive communities now allow women to serve in this function. The *baal kriyah* or *baal koreh* (master of the reading) reads the weekly Torah portion. The requirements for being the *baal kriyah* are the same as those for the *shatz*. These roles are not mutually exclusive. The same person is often qualified to fill more than one role, and often does. Often there are several people capable of filling these roles and different services (or parts of services) will be led by each. Many congregations, especially larger ones, also rely on *gabbai* (sexton) who calls people up to the Torah, appoints the *shatz* for each prayer session if there is no standard *shatz*, and makes certain that the synagogue is kept clean and supplied.

3.2 The Roles of Religious Functionaries in Jewish Religion

The specialised roles of religious functionaries in Judaism include the following:

- Dayan (judge) - An ordained rabbi with special legal training who belongs to a Beth Din (rabbinical court). In Israel, religious courts handle marriage and divorce cases, conversion and financial disputes in the Jewish community.
- Mohel (circumciser) - An expert in the laws of circumcision who has received training from a previously qualified mohel and performs the brit milah (circumcision).
- Shochet (ritual slaughterer) - In order for meat to be kosher, it must be slaughtered by a shochet who is an expert in the laws of kashrut and has been trained by another shochet.

- Sofer (scribe) - Torah scrolls, teffillin (phylacteries), mezuzot (scrolls put on doorposts), and *gittin* (bills of divorce) must be written by a *sofer* who is an expert in Hebrew calligraphy and has undergone rigorous training in the laws of writing sacred texts.
- Rosh yeshiva - A Torah scholar who runs a yeshiva.
- Mashgiach of a yeshiva - Depending on which yeshiva, might either be the person responsible for ensuring attendance and proper conduct, or even supervise the emotional and spiritual welfare of the students and give lectures on mussar (Jewish ethics).
- Mashgiach - Supervises manufacturers of kosher food, importers, caterers and restaurants to ensure that the food is kosher. Must be an expert in the laws of kashrut and trained by a rabbi, if not a rabbi himself.

3.3 Relationship between Islam and Jewish Religion

The relationship between Islam and Judaism is special and close. Both religions claim to originate from the patriarch Abraham, and are therefore considered Abrahamic religions. As fellow monotheists, Muslims view Jews as "people of the book", a term that Jews have subsequently adopted as a way of describing their own connection to the Torah and other holy texts. In turn, many Jews maintain that Muslims adhere to the seven laws of Noah. Thus, Judaism views Muslims as righteous people of God. Jews have interacted with Muslims since the seventh century, when Islam started and spread in the Arabian Peninsula, and many aspects of Islam's core values, structure, jurisprudence and practice are based on Judaism. Muslim culture and philosophy have heavily influenced practitioners of Judaism in the Islamic world.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- List three features of Jewish religion and discuss them.
- Give four major Jewish festivals and briefly comment on any two of them.
- Distinguish between the dietary laws and the laws of ritual purity in Judaism.

4.0 CONCLUSION

You have learned the features and festivals of inter-testamental religion. You have also been exposed to characteristics and other feasts of the Jewish religion. You should never lose sight of the purpose of this unit it is a historical course, and not a theological course. The

conceptualisation of theology is therefore undertaken only with a view to making you understand inter-testamental religion or Judaism.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learned that Judaism was the religion practiced by Jewish people during inter-testamental period. You were also told that the religion had many features and characteristics that made it a distinctive religion during inter-biblical period. The feasts and other practices helped the Jewish people to maintain their religion from the dark age of their history up to the present time.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. Give five specialised roles of religious functionaries in Judaism and discuss three of them.
- ii. List two relationship between Islam and Judaism
- iii. Name two synectics movements incorporating Judaism known to you and briefly elaborate on them.

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UNIT 5 OTHER EVENTS DURING INTER-TESTAMENTAL PERIOD

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Events Before the Birth of Jesus
 - 3.1.1 Announcement to Zechariah of the Forerunner (Luke 1: 1-17)
 - 3.1.2 Announcement to Mary of the Coming Messiah (Luke 1: 26-35)
 - 3.1.3 Preaching of John the Baptist (Mathew 3:1-6)
 - 3.2 Crucial Events during Inter-Testamental Period
 - 3.2.1 The Translation of Jewish Scripture into Koine Greek
 - 3.2.2 Adoption of Aramaic as the Common Language of the Jews
 - 3.2.3 The Beginning of Herod the Great Dynasty
 - 3.2.4 Production of the 14 Books of the Apocrypha
 - 3.2.5 Production of the Pseudepigraphic Literature
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit of this module, you learnt about the features of Jewish religion. The idea behind the unit was to make you understand the religion practiced by the Jews during inter-testamental period. In this unit, you will learn some of the events during inter-testamental period.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the significant events before the birth of Jesus
- discuss other events in inter-testamental period
- narrate the story of the announcement of the coming Messiah.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Events before the Birth of Jesus

3.1.1 Announcement to Zechariah of the Forerunner (Luke 1:1-17)

Only Luke and Mathew take their accounts as far back as the birth of Jesus. The two accounts supplement each other. God was in the events which led to the birth of Jesus Christ. John's conception was in itself inexplicable on purely human level like that of Isaac, Jacob, Samuel and Samson. Zechariah was in Jerusalem for his annual two-week spell of duty as a priest when came the honour of a lifetime. He was chosen to offer incense alone in the temple. And at that movement, God sent to tell him that the long years of prayer for a son are over. He will remove the stigma of childlessness. As he answered the deep inner longing of Zechariah and his wife, God at the same time fulfilled far wider purposes for the nation, and for the world. John will be the link between the Old Testament and the New Testament. He will be the new Elijah (Malachi 4:5), herald of the long-promised, long-awaited Messiah.

3.1.2 Announcement to Mary of the Coming Messiah (Luke 1:26-35)

Both Luke and Mathew stated that Jesus was conceived by an action of the Holy Spirit without the intervention of a human father, and thus born of a virgin, Mary (Luke 1:30-35; Mathew 1:18-25). We call this event the "virgin birth", or more accurately, "the virginal conception" of Jesus. In both Luke and Mathew gospels, the emphasis lies on the power and activity of the Holy Spirit in the birth of Jesus. It is this, not the absence of a human father, nor even the co-operation of the virgin mother, which is the important point. From his mother, Jesus was born as a man, but by the creative act of the Spirit is a new humanity, the starting point, a new race. It is arguable that this would have been possible apart from a virgin birth, but the biblical evidence points to this miracle as the means which God employed in order to bring his son into the world.

We are not told anything about the physiology of the incarnation, but simply that it was through the activity of the Spirit that Mary became pregnant. That is indeed all that can be said, since we are concerned here with the entry of the infinite God into his creation, and this is something that cannot be described, neither can the virgin birth be rejected simply because it is a miracle. The supreme miracle is the incarnation itself, and if we can accept that miracle, there should be no difficulty about accepting the means by which God chose to affect it. The virgin birth is

seldom mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament. That is a warning to us not to get it out of proportion.

The fact is stated, but scripture nowhere makes the deity of Christ, nor his incarnation, nor his sinlessness stand or fall by the method of his birth. The prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 that a young woman should conceive and bear a son called 'Emmanuel' ('God with us') was seen to have a deeper meaning after the birth of Jesus (see Mathew 1:22-23). In Mark 6:3, the people of Nazareth call Jesus 'son of Mary', a phrase that may well have been an insult based on the rumour that Joseph was not his father. John 8:41 contains a similar slander. Some have found further references to the virgin birth in Galatians 4:4 where Paul says that God 'sent forth his son, born of woman', and again when he spoke of Jesus as the second Adam, the first of the new race (1 Corinthians 15:4-47).

Six months later the messiah's birth was announced-this time to the young woman chosen to be his mother, and without the agency of a human father. Mary's quiet acceptance of a situation bound to cause scandal, and possibly the breaking of her marriage contract, shows something of the kind of woman through whom God chose to fulfill his purposes. Having heard the news, Mary sets straight out on the four-or five-day journey south. It is a meeting of special joy and significance for the two women who have much to share. Their thoughts and feelings are crystallised in Elizabeth's benediction and Mary's hymn of praise. The hymn is full of the Old Testament phrases which Mary must have known and loved from childhood (see especially Hannah's song, 1 Samuel 2:1-10). Mathew 1:18-25 tells us what happened after Mary went home.

3.1.3 Preaching of John the Baptist (Mathew 3:1-6)

Luke and Mathew historical details makes it possible to date John's ministry (and the beginning of Jesus ministry a few months later) somewhere between AD 26 and 29. It was the 15th year of the rule of Emperor Tiberius; Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip was ruler of the territory of Iturea and Trachonitis; Lysanias was ruler of Abilene, and Annas and Caiaphas were high priests. At that time the word of God came to John, son of Zechariah in the desert. So John went throughout the whole territory of the Jordan River, preaching, "Turn away from your sins and be baptised, and God will forgive your sins". Some tax collectors came to be baptised and people's hope began to rise. They wonder whether John might be the messiah. In many different ways John preached the good news to the people and urged them to change their ways. But John reprimanded Governor Herod, because he had married Herodias, his

brother's wife, and had done many other evil things. Then Herod did an even worse thing by putting John in prison and later beheaded him.

3.2 Crucial Events during Inter-Testamental Period

There were other significant events that took place during inter-testamental period. These include:

1. The translation of Jewish scripture into Koine Greek.
2. Adoption of Aramaic as the common language of the Jewish people.
3. The beginning of Herod the Great dynasty.
4. Production of the 14 books of the apocrypha.
5. Production of the pseudepigraphic literature.

3.2.1 The Translation of Jewish Scripture into Koine Greek

Many Jewish literatures appear in the Septuagint and vulgate but not in the Hebrew Bible. The Catholics distinguished between them by using the names deuterocanonical and all books that are called apocrypha for pseudepigrapha. These literatures were written in either Hebrew or Aramaic and latter translated into koine Greek.

3.2.2 Adoption of Aramaic as the Common Language of the Jews

The Aramaic language was adopted as a language of writing inter-testamental literature with the events preceeding Jesus. Many inter-biblical literatures such as Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and rabbinic literatures were written in Aramaic language. The appearance of rabbinic Judaism largely assisted a portion of Jewish language to become a dominant language during the inter-biblical period.

3.2.3 The Beginning of Herod the Great Dynasty

Herod began his dynasty after the assassination of Herod Antipater during the civil war that followed Caesar's rise to power. This assassination paved way for his son Herod the Great to succeed him and also for the Roman Senate to recognised him as king of Judea. In 37 BC he laid siege and took Jerusalem with Roman aid, killed Antigonus the last Hasmoneans and began his long rule which was to last until four BC. Like his father, Herod changed policies to fit the changes in the Roman Empire.

3.2.4 Production of the 1 Books of the Apocrypha

The apocrypha is a body of religious literature which belongs to inter-testamental period that super-experienced the rise of New Testament canons. These books are called “Hidden” or “Sacred” books of the Bible. Although, they help to bridge the chasm between the Old and New Testaments and throw light upon the preparation in the world for the advent of the Christian faith, their composition vary in character, from the narrative and legendry to the didactic and prophetic. As a whole, they reflect the later development of social and religious life among the Jews, their national vicissitudes, and the foreign influences to which they were subjected.

Many of them are distinguished from the canonical scripture. They manifest inferiority of thought and style which betrays them as a result of their freshness, lack of originality and tendency for rhetorical and artificial expressions. References to the past are a prevailing feature of these books and they appear sometimes, as modification and enlargement of Old Testament narratives. There is also exaggeration in the accounts of the doings of Jewish heroes and fulsome estimates of their characters. For example, the encounter of Zerubabel with king Artaxerxes, their experiences during the Maccabeans revolt. The books regarded as “Hidden” or “Sacred” formed part of the Septuagint text and were interspersed among other books of the Old Testament.

3.2.5 Production of the Pseudepigraphic Literature

The pseudepigrapha are books under false name. They are works whose real authors attributed them to a figure of the past. It covers the false ascription of names of authors to works, even to perfectly authentic works that make no such claim with their texts. These works were Jewish religious works written in 200 BC to 200 AD and not all of them are literally pseudepigrapha.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. List three significant events that took place between the inter-testamental period and the birth of Jesus Christ.
- ii. Name four other events during this period.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, the goal has been to sensitise you to be conscious of the various events that took place immediately before the birth of Jesus Christ.

5.0 SUMMARY

We have discussed some of the significant events immediately before Jesus and others that happened after his birth. These events have helped in understanding the Jewish life and history during the inter-testamental period.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Explain three significant events between the birth of Jesus and the inter-biblical period.

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MODULE 3 REVIEW OF INTER-TESTAMENTAL LITERATURE

Unit 1	Apocryphal Literature
Unit 2	Pseudepigraphic Literature
Unit 3	The Dead Sea Scrolls
Unit 4	Apocalyptic Literature
Unit 5	Rabbanic Literature

UNIT 1 APOCRYPHAL LITERATURE

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
3.1	The Contents of Apocryphal Literature
3.1.1	Tobit
3.1.2	Judith
3.1.3	Esther
3.1.4	Wisdom of Solomon
3.1.5	Sirach
3.1.6	Baruch
3.1.7	Letter of Jeremiah
3.1.8	Song of the Three Young Men
3.1.9	Bel and the Dragon
3.1.10	I Maccabees
3.1.11	II Maccabees
3.1.12	I Esdras
3.1.13	II Esdras
3.1.14	Prayer of Manasseh
3.1.15	Susanna
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last two modules, you learned about the background information and history of inter-testamental period. In this module, focus will be placed on the review of inter-testamental literature. According to the theory of the Jewish church, a considerable body of literature belongs to this period that super-experienced the rise of New Testament canons. These books are called “hidden” or “sacred” books of the Bible. Many

of them are distinguished from the canonical scripture. These first units examine the apocryphal literature which form part of the Septuagint text that were interspersed among other books of the Old Testament.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

- define what apocrypha is
- explain the apocryphal literature
- discuss the contents of the apocrypha.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Contents of Apocryphal Literature

The Greek texts of apocrypha were not only widely used by Jews but were known as well by numerous “God-fearing” Gentiles who were attracted to the high moral teachings of the Old Testament, even though they had not themselves become converts to Judaism. One can thus readily understand how and why early Christianity, as it spread among Greek-speaking Jews and Gentiles, employed this Greek text. In fact, majority of Old Testament quotations in the New Testament are based on this translation. Precisely, when Jewish leadership officially adopted the traditional 39 books, the so-called “Hebrew canon” is not known; nor is there agreement as to exactly what criteria were used in determining the canon. According to tradition, the determination of the books of the Hebrew canon was made about 90 AD, but there is evidence to believe that official and widespread agreement on this issue came somewhat later.

Among Christians, it was apparently only in the fourth century that the issue of canonicity of apocryphal books arose, a situation which is reflected in Jerome’s placing these books in a separated section in his Vulgate translation of the Old Testament. In 1546, at the Council of Trent the Rome Catholic Church officially declared these books to be sacred and canonical and to be accepted “with equal devotion and reverence”. At the time of reformation, Martin Luther did not regard these books as scripture but as “useful and good for spiritual reading”. In his German translation of the Bible he followed the practice of Jerome in placing them at the end of the Old Testament with the superscription “Apocrypha”. Protestant generally continued this practice in their translations of the Bible into such languages as Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish, Slovenian, French, Spanish and English (King James Version).

However, there were Christians who do not accept these books as scripture, despite the widespread agreement as to their importance in providing much valuable information on the Jewish history, life, thought, worship, and religious practice during the centuries immediately prior to the time of Christ. Accordingly, they make possible a clearer understanding of the historical and cultural situations in which Jesus lived and taught. Catholics speak of these books as “deuteron-canonical” to indicate that their canonical status as scripture was settled later than that of the “proto-canonical books”. Protestant usually refers to these books as “Apocrypha”. These books include: Tobit, Judith, Esther (the Greek text), wisdom of Solomon, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Song of the Three Young men, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, 1 and 2 Maccabees, 1 and 2 Esdras.

3.1.1 Tobit

This is a religious claiming tales of domestic piety. It may have had a historical basis, but that would be of little importance in comparison with its purpose. It was so popular among early Christians that it was translated from Hebrew into Greek, Latin, Armenian, (Syriac) and Ethiopic. Tobit is a literary romance-an only apparently historical narrative full of historical and geographical inaccuracies. It is also filled with irony, but little suspense. One of the features of the Book of Tobit has to do with God-fearing Jews who were exile in Assyria, who despairs life because of their blindness and poverty. Tobit son, Tobias and angel Raphael disguised as Azariah a relative, were God's agents in restoring his fortunes. Their quest of deliverance for Tobit, leads also to the rescue of the seven-time widowed Sarah, who became Tobias' wife.

The book emphasises the pious deeds of prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and proper burial of the dead. It includes early examples of demonic exorcism and healing by means of magical potions. The moral in it is that everyday piety will ultimately be rewarded. Tobit utilises stories, themes, and images from the Old Testament and from several well known tales from the ancient world- "The Grateful Dead," "The Monster in the Bridal Chamber," and "The Story of Ahiqar." The Author of the Book of Tobit is an anonymous Jew (probably of the Diaspora) and it was written in the late third to second century BC after the canonisation of the prophets, but before the Maccabean crisis. Until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the book of Tobit was known only in Greek Aramaic and Hebrew copies have been found at Qumran.

3.1.2 Judith

Judith is an obviously fictional ironic folktale (or Jewish novella) about a beautiful widow who single-handedly defeats the Assyrians in a battle to save her city of Bethulia. Assyria's King Nebuchadnezzar calls on his chief general, Holofernes, to lead a great army to conquer the Judeans, who recently returned from exile. The city refuses to submit and pay tribute in defiance of Yahweh. But when the Assyrians capture the town's water supply, its leaders decide that if God doesn't rescue them in five days, they must surrender. Upon hearing the decision, Judith devises a plan to defeat the Assyrians. She employs her feminine charms to deceive and decapitate the military leader. The Assyrian army flees in dismay and the Israelites plunder their camp. The author of the Book of Judith is an anonymous Jew, probably a Pharisee from Palestine. It was written in the final form around second century BC in Hebrew language during the time of the Maccabean struggle against the foreign oppression. Another school of thought suggested its time of writing to be first century, during the time of Hyrcanus II. The reason for this later date is found in the veiled allusions to the qualities with which the heroine is credited to queen Alexandra a strong supporter of the Pharisees (76-67 BC). The writing of the Book of Judith probably belongs to one or other of these periods.

3.1.3 Esther

The book of Esther in Greek is a translation and expansion of the book of Esther in Hebrew. The chain of events is much the same, but there are many variations in text, including different proper names and strong religious tone. The six additions, shown as chapters A-F in this translation, provide a different introduction and conclusion, introduce documents in an official style, and emphasise the religious elements by the addition of prayer and accounts of how they were answered. The book of Esther is written by an anonymous Jewish author or authors, probably of Palestine. The date of additions may have originated at different times, probably second or first century BC.

The original language of the book is Hebrew although no Hebrew text of the additions survives. The Greek versions of some of them seem to presume a Semitic (Hebrew or Aramaic) vulgate. The "Additions to Esther" consist of six passages and 107 verses, found in the Septuagint's texts of Esther but not in the traditional Hebrew text. The additions introduce references to God 50 times and Jewish religion (prayer, election, law, kosher food, Jerusalem, temple), which are entirely missing in the Hebrew. The additions also de-emphasise Purim and are strongly anti-Gentile. They were probably added to compensate for the

religious deficiencies of the Hebrew text and to enhance the book's chances of achieving canonical status.

3.1.4 Wisdom of Solomon

The book is a philosophical sermon (proleptic rhetoric, didactic exhortation, hortatory discourse, diatribe style) urging readers to pursue the traditional faith of Israel, conceived as divine wisdom. Wisdom grants the gift of immortality, which will vindicate the righteous in the final judgment. The book praises wisdom, conceived as a divine hypostasis (a personified attribute), which is coeternal with God - the Saviour, Word, and Revealer of God. The attributes of wisdom are adapted from Greek philosophy (Stoic-Platonic). But wisdom's saving power in history retells the history of Israel. The rewards of Israel's monotheistic religion are contrasted with the folly of pagan idolatry and immorality, and its fitting punishments. The book presumes the preexistence and immortality of the human soul.

Although Solomon is not mentioned by name, the book implicitly claims him as its pseudonymous author and it was written in Greek language from the first to third century BC. Yet another tradition is of the opinion that the book of Wisdom was originally written in Greek by an unknown Jewish author from the late first century AD. The book of Wisdom makes use of traditional Jewish materials, as well as ideas borrowed from Greek philosophy, in order to teach that God rewards those who are faithful to him.

3.1.5 Sirach

The wisdom of Jesus, son of Sirach, also known as Ecclesiasticus, was written in Hebrew by a man named Joshua (or Jesus) and was later translated into Greek by his grandson. The book of Sirach left us with wealth of valuable teachings and also called for praising the writer for the information and wisdom it provides. The information includes traditional Jewish wisdom materials which make a defence of Judaism by showing that God has given true wisdom to his people. Many subjects of a religious, moral, and practical nature are presented, sometimes at length and sometimes in short proverbial sayings.

3.1.6 Baruch

The book of Baruch is a collection of four distinct, short discourses attributed to Baruch the secretary of prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 32:12; 36:4). These discourses written at various times, probably in Hebrew originally were later put together into a single document. These four divisions of Baruch make earlier study and understanding of the

prologue of the book of Baruch. The book of Baruch was written by Baruch, son of Neriaiah, grandson of Mahseriah, and a descendant of Zedekiah, Hasadiah and Hilkiah. It was written in Babylon on the seventh day of the month in the fifth year after the Babylonians captured Jerusalem and burned it down.

3.1.7 Letter of Jeremiah

The letter of Jeremiah is in the form of a letter, claiming to be written by prophet Jeremiah to the Jews who were about to be taken into exile. It is a homily attacking the folly of idolatry, credited to Jeremiah as a literary fiction. The book is made up of two sections. The first section (1-40) deals with the helplessness of idols, while the second section (41-73), treats the foolishness of worshipping idols. The two sections give clear informations about the letter sent by Jeremiah to the people at Jerusalem just before they were captured by Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king and taken to Babylon. The letter contains the message of their sins against God which He had commanded Jeremiah to give them. An alternative titles for the letter of Jeremiah, is "Epistle of Jeremy". The author of the Letter of Jeremiah is an anonymous Jewish author probably of the diaspora in Babylon (or Egypt) or of Hellenistic Palestine and it was written in the late fourth to early first century BC. Certain features of the Greek versions presume a Semitic (Hebrew or Aramaic) vulgate. Other early versions (Latin, Syriac, and Arabic) are translations of the Greek.

3.1.8 Song of the Three Young Men

The prayer of Azariah and the song of the three young men is one of the three major additions to the book of Daniel in Greek version. This insertion between chapters 3;23 and 3;24 of the book of Daniel gives the prayer of Azariah and the Song of the three young men after king Nebuchadnezzar had them thrown into the blazing furnace. It is a prayer and hymn credited to the three young associates of Daniel- Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, better known by their Babylonian names- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The addition begins with Abednego's prayer of confession for Israel's sins while three of them were in the fiery furnace. This poetry is followed by a brief prose account, identifying the fourth man in the fire as an angel of the Lord.

This poetry resumes in the hymn of the three, still in the furnace, who blessed God for his deliverance. The addition turns attention from the tyranny of the Jews' oppressors to the reward of piety. Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah are the original names of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Daniel 1:6-7). The author of the song of the three young men is an anonymous Jewish author of the diaspora and it was written in the

2nd century BC. Two slightly different Greek versions of the prayer survived in the Septuagint and Theodotion, both marked by semitisms. Many scholars argue for an Aramaic or Hebrew vulgate, although no Semitic original has been discovered to date.

3.1.9 Bel and the Dragon

Bel and the Dragon are two-part narratives which were added to the Greek translation of the Bible with an intention to demonstrate the folly and deceitfulness of idolatry and pagan priests. The motif of eating unifies the accounts. In the first story, Daniel's detective work proves that the idol Bel, the Babylonian god Marduk, does not actually eat sacrificial food; rather, pagan priests and their families do. So the king has them executed for their deception and allows Daniel to destroy the idol and its temple. In the second, Daniel killed a serpent worshipped as a god, representing the Babylonian dragon goddess Tiamat, by feeding it with a noxious concoction. Daniel's punishment was to be placed in a den of hungry lions; but they refused to eat him. Instead, an angel carried the prophet Habakkuk from Judea to Babylon to feed Daniel.

Those who tried to destroy Daniel are fed to the lions. The moral is that God protects his people. The author of the Book of Bel and the Dragon is said to be an anonymous Jewish of the diaspora. It was written in the 2nd century BC. The Greek version of the book only survived marked by semitisms. Some scholars argue for an Aramaic or Hebrew vulgate, although no Semitic original has been discovered to date.

3.1.10 I Maccabees

The first book of Maccabees describes events in Jewish history from the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (175 BC), to the rise of John Hyrcanus (134 BC). The historical interest of the book centres on the Hasmonean, or Maccabean family, and it supports the view that they are divinely chosen to save Israel. I Maccabees is a generally trustworthy historical narrative of the events surrounding the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes during the second century BC (167-135 BC). The book is an apology for the Hasmonean (Maccabean) dynasty as the divinely appointed leaders of Israel (1 Maccabees 5:62). The story mentions the death of Alexander the Great and the rise to power and atrocities of Antiochus IV. It recounts the exploits of the Hasmonean heroes: Mattathias, and his five sons - particularly Judas Maccabeus, Jonathan, and Simon, and Simon's son and successor as king and high priest, John Hyrcanus. The book presumes that the prophetic voice has been (for the moment) silenced (4:46; 9:27; 14:41). The book was written in the style of Judges; Samuel; and Kings in 100 BC, shortly after the death of John Hyrcanus I. Its English translations

are based on Greek (or Latin) versions, which are derived from a now lost Hebrew vulgate, whose existence is attested by early authors. The book also has a strong religious theme: “God is at work in history and will give victory as a reward to those who are faithful to him”. The I Maccabees gives the history of maccabean dynasty beginning from Alexander the Great, son of Philip of Macedonia, when he attacked Darius, king of Persia with a strong army, dominated the whole nations and their rulers, and forced everyone to pay him taxes. This resulted into a Maccabean revolt which broke up during the reign of Antiochus IV Eppiphanes.

3.1.11 II Maccabees

The second book of Maccabees is a condensation of a five-volume history by Jason of Cyrene. The book reports events in Jewish history from the time of the High priest, Onias the III (about 180 BC), to the death of Nicanor (161 BC), and parallels in part the events described in the early chapters of I Maccabees. There is a strong emphasis on loyalty to the law and on God’s reward for martyrs. Two introductory letters and a prologue identify the book as a summary of a (now lost) 5-volume history by Jason of Cyrene. Its basic story is similar to 1 Maccabees, but with significant differences. This historical epitome (specifically, pathetic history) outlines the events surrounding the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucids between 187 and 161 BC, considerably dramatising the story as compared to 1 Maccabees. The book is full of miracles and long, grizzly stories about martyrs. Nearly every victory of the Maccabeans is attributed to God, who at times sends horse-mounted angels to lead the Jews in battle. It also contains emotional descriptions of Jewish persecutions, such as the gruesome deaths of Eleazar and a mother and her seven sons.

II Maccabees is divided into four parts which provide consistent analysis of 1 Maccabees and easy understanding of the II Maccabees. The author of II Maccabees is an anonymous Jew of the diaspora who was influenced by Greek rhetoric and style. It was written in the first introductory letter around 124 BC. The second introductory letter was written in 163 BC. The epitome was written between second century BC and first century AD. However, the time when the writing of the final form of the letters was joined and epitomised is unknown. The second book of Maccabees was written in Greek with Egyptian influence, especially the Ptoleme of Egypt.

3.1.12 I Esdras

The Lion Handbook to the Bible (1986) pointed out that, Esdras is the Greek form of the name “Ezra” and is largely identical with some Ezrarites. Dummelow (1936), in his commentary, sees Esdras as a name of the great Jewish scribe with whom two of the canonical books are intimately concerned. These are frequently conjoined in a sequence with the two apocryphal books which then become third and fourth, first and fourth, or first and third Esdras respectively. The English usage, which however follows the method of the Geneva Bible, is to give names of Ezra and Nehemiah to the canonical books and in the apocrypha is called first and second Esdras. This agreement is sufficiently convenient and warranted by the fact that the apocryphal books exist in Greek and Latin versions and not in Hebrew or chaldaic. The date of this book is not certain as there is no external evidence of its existence earlier than Josephus (100AD). It is supposed, however to have been written in Alexandria about the end of the second or the beginning of the first century BC.

3.1.13 II Esdras

The second book of Esdras is an apocalypse that attempts to explain why God allowed the Jewish temple in Jerusalem to be destroyed by Gentiles in AD 70. The book claims to report seven visions of Esdras the scribe concerning ethical issues and the problem of evil and suffering. The first three revelations (3:1-9:25) concern Angel Uriel's instructions to Esdras about the spiritual-moral realm. In the fourth revelation (9:26-10:59), Ezra witnesses a mourning woman change into the heavenly Jerusalem. The fifth and sixth revelations (11-13) condemn the Roman Empire and forecast its destruction along with other evil Gentile nations by a messiah. The seventh revelation (14) describes Esdra's role in producing the books included in the canonical scriptures (the 22 books in the Hebrew Bible) and the (70) apocryphal books.

This revelation closes with Esdras being taken into heaven without dying. Chapters one and two; 15 and 16 are generally recognised as subsequent Christian interpolations. The authors of II Esdras are anonymous Palestian Jews and Chrristians (Chapters 3-16). Different dates were stated as the time the II Book of Esdras was written. In Chapters 3-11 late 1st century AD (after AD 70) was stated. Chapters 1-2 says the second century AD while Chapters 15-16 recorded that it was written in the third century AD. Greek and Hebrew/Aramaic are the two original languages the second book of Esdras were written (Chapters. 3-14, 1-15). No original Hebrew or Aramaic manuscripts survived from the central section (chapters 3-14). This section was translated into Greek, but no manuscripts are extant from this version either. A

fragment (Chapter 15:57-59) survived from the third, and latest, section (chapters 15-16) in Greek. Translations from the Greek are extant in Syriac, Latin, Arabic, Georgian, Armenian, Ethiopic, and fragments from a Coptic version. Cast as prophetic rather than a historic mould, this book differs widely from the foregoing (First Esdras). It used to be hailed "the Revelation of Ezra".

It is a combination of three distinct writings or an original writing supplemented by two considerable additions from different hands. It has 16 chapters in all. Their affinities with the New Testament, thought and phraseology suggest for each of them a Christian source. The composition of the book is generally placed between 81 AD - 96 AD. The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and the consequent troubles of the Jews may account for the melancholy of the writer and his choice of subject. There is another section of this book which is larger than the first part especially chapters 3-14, which are purely Jewish origin, though they are known from early times to the Christian church.

These chapters describe a series of revelations and vision, purporting to have been communicated to Ezra in the thirtieth year of the Babylonia captivity. Depressed with the sorrows of his people and doubts of the righteous God, he was visited by the Angel Uriel who reproached his sadness and threw light upon the moral mysteries of the world. In three revelations and two visions Uriel show him that though the purpose of God is unsearchable, his providence is surely working for the defeat of evil and the triumph of good. Iniquity may succeed for a time but it has its appointed limits, and when the signs indicated in the vision are fulfilled, the son of God the anointed one shall appear and reign. The book also foretells Israel's gathering together in their Zion, and thus the power of the heathen is broken. Meantime Ezra is to have the book of the law written out for the people and seventy books of mysteries prepared for those worthy participate in the secret things of God. Mention is also made of the messiah and a curious statement regarding His death.

3.1.14 The Prayer of Manasseh

The prayer of Manasseh is a beautiful short prayer of repentance offered by Manasseh, who is referred to in 2 Chronicles 33,12,18,19 as the wicked king of Judah. It is a poetic prayer of lament for personal sin placed on the lips of Judah's King Manasseh. The book fills the gap created by the reference to his repentance in 2 Chronicles 33:12-19. The author presumes that God is infinite in his mercy and grace to the repentant. The prayer of Manasseh was written under the pseudonym of Judah's most wicked and long-lived king by an anonymous Jew in or near Jerusalem as early as the second century BC, no later than the first

century AD, before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 (2 Kings 21; 2 Chronicles 33). The language was semitising Greek, a Semitic original is possible, but no longer survives.

3.1.15 Susanna

The book of Susanna is a story that was added to the book of Daniel evidently when the latter was translated into Greek. The book is a narrative about a beautiful Jewish wife living in Babylon who becomes the object of the lustful schemes of two perverse Jewish elders. Because she refuses their advances, they falsely accuse her of an adulterous affair. She was condemned to death. But in answer to her prayer, God sent the young Daniel to defend her. His cross-examination exposed their deceit; Susanna was spared; and they were executed. The moral is that God vindicates virtue. The author of the book of Susanna is said to be an anonymous Jewish author of the diaspora. It was written in second century BC. Two quite different Greek versions of the story survived in the Septuagint and Theodotion, both marked by semitisms. Some scholars argue for an Aramaic or Hebrew vulgate, although no Semitic original survive.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Why is the Apocrypha also called the deuterocanonical books?
- ii. Trace the historical origin of any four of apocryphal books.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you learned about the apocryphal books of inter-testamental period. You also read that without these “hidden books”, much would not have been known about the major events during inter-testamental period. This shows that inter-testamental literature provides new ideas and insights for the understanding of inter-testamental period.

5.0 SUMMARY

You have examined the apocryphal literature in this unit and the outline contents of the books. You also learned about the historical formation and the features of each book.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. What do you understand by the term “apocryphal books”?
- ii. How many apocryphal books do we have?
- iii. Discuss any two of the apocryphal books known to you.

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UNIT 2 PSEUDEPIGRAPHIC LITERATURE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 What is Pseudepigraphic Literature?
 - 3.2 Pseudepigraphic Apocrypha Literature
 - 3.2.1 Letter of Aristeas
 - 3.3 Pseudepigraphic Apocalypses
 - 3.3.1 Baruc
 - 3.3.2 Fourth Baruch / Paraleipomena Jeremiou
 - 3.3.3 The Martyrdom of Isaiah
 - 3.3.4 The Life of Adam and Eve
 - 3.3.5 Apocalypse of Moses
 - 3.4 Pseudo-Prophectic Works
 - 3.4.1 I Enoch
 - 3.4.2 II Enoch
 - 3.4.3 The Book of 2 Syriac, and Quot
 - 3.4.4 Testament of Abraham
 - 3.4.5 Testament of Job
 - 3.4.6 Testament of Solomon
 - 3.4.7 Jubilee
 - 3.5 Pseudo-Phocylides
 - 3.5.1 Word and Revelation of Esdras, the Holy Prophet and Beloved of God
 - 3.5.2 Sibylline Oracle
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, you learned about pseudepigraphic literature- its contents, authors and dates.. In continuation of the quest to ensure that you have a full comprehension of inter-testamental literature, this third unit examines another literature of inter-testamental period, namely the pseudepigraphic literature.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the meaning of pseudepigraphic literature
- discuss the different categories of pseudepigraphic literature
- describe the basic structure of pseudepigraphic literature.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 What is Pseudepigraphic Literature?

Pseudepigrapha are falsely attributed works and texts whose claimed authorships are unfounded. They are works, simply, whose real authors attributed them to a figure of the past. The word "pseudepigrapha" is the plural of "pseudepigraphon" or "pseudepigraphum" which means "inscription". The angelic forms "pseudepigraph" and "pseudepigraphs" covers the false ascription of names of authors to works, even to perfectly authentic works that make no such claim within their texts.

3.2 Pseudepigraphic Apocrypha Literature

The literature of pseudepigrapha include.

3.2.1 The Letter of Aristeas

The Letter of Aristeas summarises the events allegedly surrounding the production of the Septuagint. King Ptolemy Philadelphus II of Egypt (285-247 BC) needed a copy of the "laws of the Jews" to complete his collection of the world's books for his royal library. To secure translators for the Hebrew Scriptures, Ptolemy contacted Eleazer, the Jewish High Priest. Released all the Jewish captives in Egypt in exchange for 72 competent men - six from each tribe - to make the Greek translation. Upon their arrival in Alexandria, Ptolemy hosted a seven-day banquet, during which he gave difficult questions to each translator. Their answers, reflected stoic moral philosophy satisfied Ptolemy. The translation was completed in 72 days and was agreed by all to be perfect. They pronounced a curse on anyone who attempts to alter the text.

The account of the translation of the LXX occupies only 11 verses. Greater attention was given to a lengthy description of Palestine and Jerusalem (about 40 verses) and to the questions and answers at the banquet (nearly 150 verses) to serve as an apology for those unfamiliar with Palestine. The anonymous author claims to be Aristeas, a Jewish official in the court of Ptolemy, writing to his brother Philocrates. The

real author must have been an Alexandria Jew. His claim of Egyptian pagan authorship is false. The letter of Aristeas was written originally in Greek in the 3rd century BC and it gives a partly legendary account of the translation of the Pentateuch.

3.3 Pseudepigraphic Apocalypses

These are pseudepigraphic books that are not under false names. They include the followings.

3.3.1 Baruch

Baruch lamented the destruction of Jerusalem until an angel of the Lord led him through five heavens and revealed to him the divine mysteries. He struggled with the questions raised by the termination of Temple sacrifices. Among the unique features of the book are: its identification of the "tree" that occasioned the sin of Adam and Eve as the grape vine, which made drunkenness possible; the fall's meaning as the loss of "the glory of God;" Satan's name as Satanel, the legend of the Phoenix; and the angel Michael's intercession in the heavenly Temple, where he offered the prayers, virtues, and righteous deeds of believers as sacrifices to God. The Book was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD but before the earliest possible citation by Origen in 231 AD in Greek language.

3.3.2 Fourth Baruch / Paraleipomena Jeremiou

The night before Jerusalem's destruction, the Lord revealed to Jeremiah that the city is to be attacked by his angels so it can be handed over to the Chaldeans. He instructed Jeremiah to hide the Temple vessels and to accompany the exiles to Babylon. Baruch is to stay in Jerusalem until their return. Jeremiah requested that his faithful servant Abimelech be spared and send out of the city to gather figs at the farm of Agrippa, Abimelech took a 66-year nap. When he woke, his figs were still fresh, but he did not recognise his surroundings. He was eventually reunited with Baruch, who took his wake as a sign that the exiles will soon return and the fresh figs as proof of the resurrection. Baruch sent a letter to Jeremiah, urging him to return with the exiles.

Back in Jerusalem, Jeremiah has a vision of divine mysteries, including the coming of Jesus Christ. The book was written in Greek after the destruction of the temple in AD 70, but probably before the second Jewish revolt in AD 132.

3.3.3 The Martyrdom of Isaiah

The martyrdom of Isaiah is a story of a great prophet who lived in Jerusalem in the latter half of the eighth century BC. The book narrates how the prophet experienced torture and death as a result of his preaching against the nation's sin, disobedience and lack of trust in God. It also narrates how the prophet stood trial before the cruel kings because of his righteousness and refusal to worship Baals during the reign of Manasseh who forsook the service of the God of his father Hezekiah.

3.3.4 The Life of Adam and Eve

This is an elaboration of the biblical account of the story of Adam and Eve. The story is the Latin version called *Vita Ada et Evae*, which probably comes from the same source as the apocalypse of Moses. Various significant differences, however, allow for a variety of explanations as to their relation. The account began after Adam and Eve have been forced to leave the garden. The characters recalled their life in the garden on several occasions. Eve is portrayed as entirely responsible for the fall and subsequent transgressions. While Adam attempted penitence, Eve was again deceived by Satan, who, this time, appeared to her as an angel of light. Thus, when in the pain of childbirth Eve pleaded with God for mercy, she received none. But when Adam asked for assistance for her, his request was granted.

Many other elements of the story that were not provided in the canon were included in *The Life*, such as: Satan's fall from Heaven, an early vision given Eve regarding her son's demise, Adam and Eve's 60 additional children, and the serpent biting Seth. In this story, the supposition is that when a person dies, his or her spirit leaves the body and is not rejoined until the resurrection in the age to come. The Book was written in Hebrew, translated into Latin and Greek. The developed independently Armenian recension was made in the fifth or sixth centuries, from the apocalypse of Moses, an existing Slavonic translation mixes the Greek and Latin versions.

3.3.5 Apocalypse of Moses

The apocalypse of Moses is an expanded version of Genesis chapters 3 and 4. The story begins with Adam, who was at the point of death, asking Eve to call in their children and tell them about their transgression. Before the fall, the two inhabited Paradise, which was in the third level of Heaven. Eve explained how the serpent came to her while their protective angels were in a higher level of Heaven.

worshiping God. Satan convinced her to eat from the forbidden fig tree; and she persuaded Adam to sin as well. As a result, they lost their original righteousness and innocence, which God had given them at creation. As punishment, God sent them out of Paradise to the Earth below.

The future that awaits Adam, if his life is good, is resurrection to the third heaven, where he can once again continually eat from the tree of life and so live forever. The book was written by an anonymous Jew around the fourth century AD in Greek language.

3.4 The Pseudo-Prophetic Works

The oldest of these works are I Enoch, Jubilees and the testaments of the twelve Patriarchs which date from the third to second century BC. They are works of Essene outlook, embodying Essene interpretations of the Pentateuch and Essene eschatological beliefs. There are two new English editions: The Old Testament pseudepigrapha and apocrypha Old Testament, the latter been misleadingly named.

3.4.1 1 Enoch

There are five books within Enoch. These include:

- a. **The Book of the Watchers (chs. 1-36)**
 Enoch is a righteous man who had received heavenly visions. The book is a collection of revelations regarding divine judgment. It describes the rebellion of angels. The fallen angels, called "Watchers," have sexual intercourse with earthly women, who gave birth to a race of wicked giants. The giants laid waste the earth and humanity, and so gave occasion for the flood, in which they were destroyed. But once their demonic spirits were released from their dead bodies, these demons continue to wreak havoc in the world until the end time of judgment.
- b. **The Book of the Similitudes (Parables; chs. 37-71)**
 Enoch again received heavenly visions, which were interpreted by angels. The primary character of these revelations is the "son of man." Other titles employed to name this messiah figure are "the Chosen One" (the most common title), God's "Anointed One," and "the Righteous One." This heavenly being is God's agent for the final judgment and vindication of the righteous.
- c. **The Book of Astronomical Writings**
 Visions of heavenly and earthly occurrences advocate a 364-day solar calendar, as opposed to the controversial lunar calendar. Enoch described to his son- Methuselah, his journey through the stars above the earth, guided by Angel Uriel.

d. The Book of Dream Visions (Animal Apocalypse)

Enoch recounted two visions to Methuselah. The first vision was of the sky falling and the earth undergoing cataclysmic disasters as a result. The second vision took the form of an apocalyptic allegory describing the history of humanity from the creation of Adam to the final judgment. In it, humans are represented as animals and angels are represented as human beings. The apocalypse details the relationship of Jews with Gentiles and the end-time judgment.

e. The Book of the Epistle of Enoch

This epistle was written by Enoch for later generations. Righteousness and wickedness were contrasted throughout the letter in order to show that goodness and truth will be rewarded by God, but evil and sin will be punished by God. This sober eschatological prophecy admonishes readers about the final divine judgment. Also called the Ethiopic apocalypse of Enoch attempts to explain some enigmatic passages from the book of Genesis through inspiration from the canonical books of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Daniel. It was written by anonymous Jews around 50 BC - 50 AD. The five books within First Enoch were apparently written at different times by different authors. Their probable chronological order from earliest to latest is: 3 - 1 - 4 - 5 - 2. Though written originally in either Aramaic or Hebrew, this book is fully extant only in ancient Ethiopic (Ge'ez) translation. Fragments exist in Latin, Greek, and Aramaic. Some fragments have been identified among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

3.4.2 II Enoch

Second Enoch is a pseudepigraphic apocalypse mixed with narrative, biblical Midrash, and wisdom teaching. The first section (chs. 1-68) deals with Enoch's life, while the second (chs. 69-73), deals with events from the time of Enoch until the death of Noah. Themes discussed include Enoch's tour of heaven and hell, ethical teaching, Adam and Melchizedek, angels and the seven heavens, human souls, and the creation of the world out of nothing. No direct citations of the Old Testament, although it addresses subjects found in Genesis. The book was written originally in Hebrew or Aramaic by an anonymous Jew between the first century and the tenth century AD.. This book survived only in old Slavonic manuscripts, probably translated from a Greek translation.

3.4.3 The Book of 2 Syriac, and Quot

The book of Syriac and Quot are the documents which are full-blown apocalypse based on the lost Greek text that is defective of the late Syriaic text. The books were written in seven sections by an author believed to have been Akiba or belonged to Akiba's group at Jamai. Other scholars attributed the work to Rabbi Joshua ben Hanniah (chapters 40-125). The contents of the book which are divided into seven sections include: The destruction of Jerusalem (chapters 1-2); the impending judgment (chapters 13-20); retribution and the messianic era (chapters 21-34); Baruch's lament and an allegory of the vine and the cedar (chapters 35-46); the endtime, the resurrected body, paradise (chapters 47-52); Baruch's vision of a cloud (chapters 53-76); and the epistle of Baruch (chapters 77-87). The general consensus was that the book was composed in Palestine in Greek, Hebrew or Aramaic language.

The author claims apologetically that Israel's enemies were allowed to enter Jerusalem only after "all the sacred vessels" had been removed and the angels had destroyed the walls (chapters 7:1-8:5). He thereby removes the Romans' reason for boasting (chapter 7:1). Rejecting the explanation that evil originates from "the fall" or evil angels, the author of 2 Syriac puts the blame on humankind, lamenting in poetic language that insinuates some free will. "Adam is, therefore, not the cause, except only for himself, but each of us has become our own Adam". His explanation for the delay in the consummation of the ages is that the endtime will not come until the number of those to be born is fulfilled.

3.4.4 Testament of Abraham

The book more closely resembles an apocalypse than a testament. The testament exists in two versions, both of which tell the same basic story. The main difference between the two is that in the shorter version (B) Abraham sees the judgment before going on the tour. It is generally agreed that the author was an anonymous Jew. Further identification is highly debated. The book is believed to have been written between the second century BC and the sixth century AD, most probably between 100 BC and 100 AD. Both versions stem from a single Egyptian original language written in Greek about 30 Greek manuscripts of the two versions survived.

3.4.5 Testament of Job

The Testament of Job is a twelve- chapter story of a good man chosen by God who suffered total disaster. In three series of poetic language, the author shows how Job's friends and Job himself reacted to these calamities. In the end, God himself, whose dealings with mankind have been a prominent part of the discussion, appeared to Job. The friends of Job explained his suffering in traditional religious terms. Since God always rewards good and punishes evil, the sufferings of Job they assumed can only meant that he had sinned. But for Job, this is too simple; he does not deserve such cruel punishment, because he had been an unusually good and righteous man. He cannot understand how God can let so much evil happen to one like him, and he boldly challenged God.

Job did not lose his faith, but longed to be justified before God and to regain his honour as a good man. God did not answer Job's questions, but responded to his faith by overwhelming him with a poetic picture of his divine power and wisdom. Job then humbly acknowledged God as wise and great, and repented of the wild and angry words he had used. The prose conclusion recorded how Job was restored to his former condition, with even greater prosperity. God reprimanded Job's friends for failing to understand the meaning of Job's suffering. Only Job saw that God is greater than whom the traditional religion had depicted Him.

3.4.6 Testament of Solomon

The Testament of Solomon is a testament in name only. It actually belongs to the genre of magical literature, with a few features of testamentary literature added. The story takes the form of a haggadic folktale in which Israel's King Solomon employed magic to force demons to aid the construction of the temple. The author also links demonology with astrology and provides information regarding ancient magic, medicine, astrology, and angelology. 1 Kings 9:5-14 (LXX 4:29-34) is the widespread Jewish traditions about Solomon's magical wisdom, and it is allegedly the last words of King Solomon. It is said to have been written by an anonymous Christian author, probably of Egypt, who was attracted to "white" (protective) magic in the first to third centuries AD.

3.4.7 Jubilees

A jubilee is a narrative of Moses' experience on Mount Sinai. The book is parallels with the Genesis narrative of creation during the time of Moses (Genesis 1-Exodus 14), with additional stories told of the biblical characters. The book reports that the patriarchs observed festivals and

legal practices later formalised in the Law. It mentions two "Satan" figures: Belial and Prince Mastema. The title, Jubilees, comes from the fact that the narrative is broken down into divisions of time called jubilees. The book asserts that 49 jubilees passed from the time of Adam to this dictation to Moses. Jubilees are largely based on the biblical book of Genesis, the non-canonical books of Noah and Enoch. The Jubilees was written in Hebrew by an anonymous Jewish priest, with Pharisaic sympathies in the mid-second century BC (after the Maccabean revolt).

3.5 Pseudo-Phocylides

This is a gnomic poem intended for educational purposes for the youth urging practical ethical conduct, particularly warning against sexual immorality, fornication, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, greed and envy. It also stresses universal moral themes such as justice, mercy, and care for the poor, honesty, modesty, self-control, virtue, moderation, industry, and loyalty to family and friends. The work is a Jewish attempt to persuade Hellenised Jews to retain Jewish values, by synthesising biblical and Greek ethics as did some New Testament authors - Paul and 1 Peter. The works were written under the pseudonym of Phocylides by an anonymous Jewish wisdom poet of Alexandria in the second half of the first century BC to first half of the first century AD in original Greek language, but using vocabulary of later Hellenistic and imperial times.

3.5.1 Word and Revelation of Esdras, the Holy Prophet and Beloved of God

The word and revelation of Esdras is additional literature accepted by many Protestants, (especially Anglicans and Episcopalians) as part of the apocrypha. It constitutes a part of the Septuagint Greek text of the Old Testament used by Christians during the early centuries of Christianity. The book may not have been in its final form until toward the end of the second century AD. The revelation of Esdras is similar to the account given in 2 Chronicles, although there are omissions, additions and variation in both order and detail. The most distinctive new material is the revelation of the prophet about heaven and the earth judgment day.

3.5.2 Sibylline Oracles

The standard Sibylline Oracles consist of post events, the after-the-facts. This is eschatological prophecies in the genre of female prophetesses at pagan oracles. The books in their probable chronological order are: Book three, the earliest Jewish oracles, denounced Rome for injustice, idolatry, and homosexuality; and predicted its defeat by a Ptolemy favourable toward the Jews.. Book five prophesied against various

nations, predicted Nero's return and defeat by a heavenly saviour, condemned Rome for destroying the temple, and forecasted fiery destruction. Book four predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, eruption of Vesuvius, return of Nero, and God's fiery destruction of the earth, followed by the resurrection and final judgment.

Book 11 reviews history from the flood to the death of Cleopatra. Books 1-2 and book eight adapt and incorporate Jewish oracles in Christian prophecies of final judgment. Books nine and ten duplicate materials in books one-eight. Books six and seven are Christian compositions, including a hymn to Christ. Books 12-14 are later works with no Jewish and few Christian features. They were written by Jewish and Christian authors imitating the style of the pagan sibyls – epic Greek hexameters. The earliest oracles in first century BC in Egypt and the latest in the third century AD.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. What do you understand by pseudepigraphic literature?
- ii. Name five pseudepigraphic books and discuss them.
- iii. List three pseudepigraphic works and examine their contents, dates of writing and the authors.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The conclusion just as unit two is that a survey of inter-testamental literature, especially the pseudepigrapha helped in your understanding of inter-testamental religion and its literature.. This literature comes under false names and the time of emergence dates back to the fifth century BC.

5.0 SUMMARY

You have learned in this unit that pseudepigraphic literature has contributed greatly in understanding the historical developments and mindset of Judaism during inter-testamental period. The literature include the old story of Ahikar (the Aramaic fragments of which were found at Elephantine and date from the fifth century BC), and the letter of Aristaeas, giving a partly legendary account of the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek at Alexandria (probably second century BC), the apocalypses and pseudo-prophetic works. This point will be made clearer in the next unit, which is on the Dead Sea Scrolls.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. Name three pseudepigraphic books and discuss them in details.
- ii. Give three pseudepigrapha apocalypse literature and comment on them.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Definition of the Dead Sea Scrolls
 - 3.2 Origin of the Dead Sea Scrolls
 - 3.3 Theories the Origin of the Dead Sea Scrolls
 - 3.4 Types of the Dead Sea Scrolls
 - 3.5 The Discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls
 - 3.6 The Doctrine of the Dead Sea Scrolls
 - 3.7 Literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls
 - 3.8 Significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Study of Inter-Testamental Literature
 - 3.9 The Exhibition of the Dead Sea Scrolls
 - 3.10 Similarities of the Dead Sea Scrolls with the Bible
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, you learned about pseudepigraphic literature. You read that it can be classified into four broad groups, namely the Apocrypha, Apocalypse, pseudo-prophetic works and Pseudo-Phocyclides. In this unit, you will study the Dead Sea Scrolls that were written between the third and fourth century BC and were passed on to our own generation to be preserved for years, at Qumran in the Judean desert, now known as Essenes centre. Though the Scrolls are fragmentary, they are however very substantial.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain what the Dead Sea Scrolls is
- discuss the literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls
- trace the origin and the theories of the Dead Sea Scrolls
- list the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Definition of the Dead Sea Scrolls

The Dead Sea Scrolls are a collection of 972 texts from the Hebrew Bible and extra-biblical documents found between 1947 and 1956 on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea, from which they derived their name. They were specifically located at Khirbet Qumran in the British Mandate for Palestine, in what is now named the West Bank. The texts are of great religious and historical significance, as they included the oldest known surviving copies of biblical and extra-biblical documents and preserved evidence of great diversity from the Second Temple Judaism. The Dead Sea Scrolls were written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek mostly on parchment, but with some written on papyrus. These manuscripts generally date between 150 BC and 70 AD. The scrolls are traditionally identified with the ancient Jewish sect called the Essenes, though some recent interpretations have challenged this association and argue that the scrolls were penned by priests in Jerusalem, Zadokites, or other unknown Jewish groups.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are considered by many to be the single most important archaeological finding of the twentieth century. They comprise more than 800 documents, some complete or nearly complete (such as the Isaiah Scroll), but many are quite fragmentary. There are about 100,000 fragments in all. Most of the scrolls are made of dried animal skins (parchment), and some of the larger ones stretch as long as 30 feet. Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts were written on the scrolls in columns. They contain all or part of every book of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) with the exception of Esther. The scrolls also include many non-biblical books, some previously known only in Greek or other languages, but now found in Hebrew. There are many compositions which were previously unknown.

3.2 Origin of the Dead Sea Scrolls

There has been much debate about the origin of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The dominant argument remains that the scrolls were the product of a sect of Jews living at nearby Qumran called the Essenes. The most famous of these arguments is the one which postulates that the the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered from eleven caves near Qumran, where a community lived which some scholars identify as Essenes; a Jewish sect known to have existed elsewhere in Israel during the second temple period, even till the time of Jesus. The caves surrounding Qumran are numbered based on the order of their discovery and the production of the scrolls and scroll fragments. Therefore, caves 7-9 and 4 are very close to the settlement at Qumran, while caves 1, 3, and 11 are farther

away. Likewise, there are hundreds of other caves surrounding Qumran, discovered both before and after the 11 scroll caves that did not produce scrolls and are therefore not numbered as scroll caves.

3.3 Theories of the Origin of the Dead Sea Scrolls

There are different theories concerning the origin of the Dead Sea Scrolls. However, we shall discuss only five of them in this unit. These include:

a. **Qumran-Essene Theory**

The prevalent view among scholars, almost universally held until the 1990s, is the "Qumran-Essene" hypothesis originally posited by Roland Guerin de Vaux and Jozef Tadeusz Milik. The Qumran-Essene theory holds that the scrolls were written by the Essenes, or perhaps by another Jewish sectarian group, residing at Khirbert Qumran. They composed the scrolls and ultimately hid them in the nearby caves during the Jewish revolt sometime between 66 and 68 AD. The site of Qumran was destroyed and the scrolls were never recovered by those that placed them there. A number of arguments are used to support this theory. Josephus declared that the Essenes lived a communal life of sharing property among themselves. During the excavation of Khirbert Qumran, two ink wells and plastered elements thought to be tables were found, offering evidence that some form of writing was done there. More ink wells were discovered in nearby loci. De Vaux called this area the "scriptorium".

b. **Qumran-Sectarian Theory**

Qumran-Sectarian theory is a variation of the Qumran-Essene theory. The main point of departure from the Qumran-Essene theory is the hesitation to link the Dead Sea Scrolls specifically with the Essenes. Most proponents of the Qumran-Sectarian theory agree that a group of Jews living in or near Qumran wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls, but do not necessarily conclude that the sectarians are Essenes.

c. **Qumran-Sadducean Theory**

A specific variation on the Qumran-Sectarian theory that has gained much recent popularity is the work of Lawrence H. Schiffman, who proposes that the community was led by a group of Zadokite priests (Sadducees). The most important document in support of this view is the "Miqsat Ma'ase Ha-Torah" (4QMMT), which cites purity laws (such as the transfer of impurities) identical to those attributed in rabbinic writings to the Sadducees. 4QMMT also reproduces a festival calendar that follows Sadducee principles for the dating of certain festival.

d. Christian Origin Theory

Spanish Jesuit Josep O'Callaghan Martinez has argued that one fragment (7Q5) preserves a portion of text from the New Testament Gospel of Mark 6:52-53. In recent years, Robert Eisenman has advanced the theory that some scrolls describe the early Christian community. Eisenman also attempted to relate the career of James the Just and the Apostle Saul/Paul of Tarsus to some of these documents.

e. Jerusalem Origin Theory

Some scholars have argued that the scrolls were the product of Jews living in Jerusalem, who hid the scrolls in the caves near Qumran while fleeing from the Romans during the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Karl Heinrich Rengstorff first proposed that the Dead Sea Scrolls originated at the library of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. Later, Norman Golb suggested that the scrolls were the product of multiple libraries in Jerusalem, and not necessarily the Jerusalem temple library. Proponents of the Jerusalem origin theory point to the diversity of thought and handwriting among the scrolls as evidence against a Qumran origin of the scrolls. Several archaeologists have also accepted an origin of the scrolls other than Qumran, including Yizhar Hirschfeld and most recently Yizhak Magen and Yuval Peleg, who all understand the remains of Qumran to be those of a Hasmonean fort that was reused during later periods.

3.4 Types of the Dead Sea Scrolls

The Dead Sea Scrolls are traditionally divided into two groups. These include:

a. Biblical manuscripts

Biblical manuscripts are copies of texts from the Hebrew Bible, which comprises of roughly 40% of the identified scrolls. These include the apocrypha or "Pseudepigraphical" manuscripts or documents from the second temple period like Enoch, Jubilees, Tobit, Sirach, non-canonical Psalms, among others and which comprise roughly 30% of the identified scrolls. The Hebrew biblical manuscripts were written a thousand years older than the Essene apocalypses and the sectarian works. The manual of discipline (community rule), and the Damascus (Zadokite) document consist of regulations for the lives of their communities. The temple scrolls were pseudonymous interpretation of the pentateuchal law, comparable to Jubilees. There were also biblical commentaries, often understanding the text as foretelling their own sectarian history, and liturgical works.

b. Sectarian Manuscripts

Sectarian manuscripts are previously unknown documents that speak to the rules and beliefs of a particular group or groups within greater Judaism. Examples of these manuscripts or documents include the community rule, war scroll, Pasher on Habakkuk (Hebrew: pesher "Commentary"), and the rule of the blessing, which comprise roughly 30% of the identified scrolls. In the winter of 1946–47, Muhammed Edh-Dhib and his cousin discovered the caves, and soon afterwards the scrolls, not far from the known ruins of Khirbet Qumran that had been known to European explorers since the 19th century. No texts were found within the excavated settlement, therefore failing to attract further investigation of the nearby terrain, and it remained unknown that the settlement originally included the caves which were not mentioned in the ancient texts. However, later comparative analysis of pottery, discovery of ink wells, and two layers of ash suggest that scrolls were produced at the settlement, but any texts present in the buildings during the Roman raid were destroyed in the ensuing fire, which explained the lack of organic material in the site.

3.5 The Discovery of Dead Sea Scrolls

The story of how the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered is very clear and precise. According to this story, Juma began to get nervous as some of his goats were climbing too high up the cliffs. He decided to climb the cliff himself to bring them back. Little did Juma realise as he began his climb on that January day in 1947 that those straying goats would eventually involve him in “the greatest archaeological discovery of the 12th century. Such thoughts were far from his mind when he saw two small openings to one of the thousands of caves that dot those barren cliffs overlooking the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea.

He threw a rock into one of the openings. The unexpected cracking sound surprised him; what else could be in those remote caves but treasure? He called to his cousins, Khalil and Muhammed, who climbed up and heard the exciting tale. But it was getting late, and the goats had to be gathered. Tomorrow they would return perhaps their days of following goats would come to an end once the treasure was uncovered! Cave 4 at Qumran was where approximately 15,000 fragments from some 574 manuscripts were found.

The youngest of the three, Muhammed, rose the next day before his two fellow “treasure-seekers” and made his way to the cave. The cave floor was covered with debris, including broken pottery. Along the wall stood a number of narrow jars, some with their bowl-shaped covers still in

place. Frantically, Muhammed began to explore the inside of each jar, but no treasure of gold was to be found... only a few bundles wrapped in cloth and greenish with age. Returning to his cousins, he related the sad news. No treasure indeed! The scrolls those Bedouin boys removed from that dark cave that day and the days following would come to be recognised as the greatest manuscript treasure ever found.

Such was the discovery of a group of manuscripts which were a thousand years older than the then-oldest-known Hebrew texts of the Bible (many of which were written more than 100 years before the birth of Jesus). These manuscripts would excite the archaeological world and provide a team of translators with a gigantic task that even to this day has not been completed. The story of how these Dead Sea Scrolls travelled from the hands of young Bedouin, the goat herders under the scrutinous eyes of international scholars is stranger than fiction.

Clay jar of the Dead Sea Scrolls were found from Qumran, now in the Citadel Museum at Jordan. Three of the other original scrolls found by the Bedouin boys were sold to E. L. Sukenik an archaeologist at Hebrew University and father of Yigal Yadin, a general in the Israeli army who later became a famous archaeologist and excavator of Masada and Hazor. It should be noted that the drama of these events was heightened because these were the last days of the British Mandate period in Palestine, and tensions between the Arabs and Jewish populations were great. This made examination of the scrolls by scholars extremely dangerous. All of the scrolls finally came together at Hebrew University under another strange set of circumstances.

3.6 The Doctrine of the Dead Sea Scrolls

The men of Qumran fervently believed in a doctrine of “last things.” They had fled to the desert and were preparing themselves for the imminent judgment, when their enemies would be vanquished and they, God’s elect, would be given final victory in accordance with the predictions of the prophets. It was in connection with these end-time events that one of the most fascinating teachings of the sect emerges.

Another document found in cave four and referred to as the “Testimonia,” contains a number of Old Testament passages brought together which formed the basis of their messianic expectations. The way in which these three quotations were brought together suggests that the writer looked forward to the advent of a great prophet, a great prince and a great priest. There were three individuals in the Old Testament writings that were referred to as “my anointed ones”—the prophet, the priest and the king (Exodus 29:29; 1 Samuel 16:13, 24:6; 1 Kings 19:16; Psalms 105:15). Each of these was consecrated to his work by an

anointing with oil. The Hebrew word for "anointed" is *meshiach*, from which we get the word Messiah.

The marvelous truth of the New Testament doctrine of the messiah is that each of these three offices found fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth! The people were amazed at His feeding of the multitude and said, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world". Jesus also was a priest, not from the order of Levi but from the order of Melchizedek who offered Himself as a sacrifice and appears for us in the presence of His Father. Also, Jesus was announced as the one who will receive "the throne of His father, David. And He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." He will be acclaimed "King of kings, and Lord of lords".

Although the men of Qumran were mistaken in the details of their messiah, they did expect one whose general characteristics were strikingly illustrated by Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God and Messiah. It is not known if some early Christian brought the message of Jesus to this wilderness community. We are left only to speculate on how they would have responded to the wonderful child born in Bethlehem who was the prophet, priest and king of Israel.

3.7 Literature of Dead Sea Scrolls

The literature of the Dead Scrolls includes:

Septuagint

The greatest work of Hellenistic Judaism was the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, which began with the Pentateuch about 275 BC, and from which the religious Greek of the New Testament is largely drawn. Some books of the Old Testament were translated much more literally than others, possibly because (as with Targums) some of the translations were designed to be read in the synagogue, others not; but the question also arises whether what looks a paraphrastic translation may not sometimes be due to a divergent text of the original, a question much discussed in the writings of D.W. Gooding and E. Tov. The existence of some divergent Hebrew texts of septuagintal type has been put beyond doubt by the Qumran discoveries.

The Septuagint was often revised, as by Theodotion in the first century AD, and there are later Greek translations; and what has survived in manuscripts as the Septuagint is not always the old Greek version. The Septuagint has generated a very large literature, which provides a guide. The surviving Aramaic translations or Targums, are of later date, but especially those on the Pentateuch reflect early tradition, and, though derived from the synagogue liturgy, do not always contain

the same interpretations of the text as are found in the rabbinical literature. The Qumran Targum on Job and the newly discovered Targum Neofiti on the Pentateuch are of particular interest. Targumic renderings seem sometimes to be echoed in the New Testament.

Philo

Philo was the first Jewish writer of this period with extensive literary works. He was an older contemporary of Jesus and an Alexandrian Jew writing in Greek. Most of his works are expositions of parts of the Pentateuch, interpreting the text in the light of Greek philosophy. He has also left several accounts of the Essenes and an account of the related Therapeutae. His works are edited, with an English translation, in the Loeb series (Helleinmann).

Josephus

The second voluminous Jewish writer, Josephus, was a historian living in the later half of the first century AD. He was a Palestinian priest and Pharisee, and a leader in the first Jewish revolt. His works are in Greek, though this was not his first language. They are edited, with an English translation, in the Loeb series. His Jewish “War and Life” is chiefly concerned with the first Jewish revolt. His antiquities retell the history of his nation from Adam to the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.

3.8 Significance of Dead Sea Scrolls in the Study of Inter-Testamental Literature

The significance of the scrolls relates in a large part to the field of textual criticism and how accurately the Bible has been transcribed over time.

- (1) They provided the Old Testament manuscripts which were approximately 1,000 years older than the previous oldest manuscript.
- (2) They demonstrated that the Old Testament was accurately transmitted during this interval.
- (3) They provided a wealth of information on the times leading to, and during the life of Christ.

Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest Hebrew manuscripts of the Bible were Masoretic texts dating to 10th century AD such as the Aleppo Codex. The biblical manuscripts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls pushed that date a millennium back to the second century BC.

Before this discovery also, the earliest extant manuscripts of the Old Testament were in Greek such as Codex Vaticanus Graecus 1209 and

Codex Sinaiticus. The biblical manuscripts from Qumran, which included at least fragments from every book of the Old Testament, except the book of Esther, provided a far older cross section of scriptural tradition than those of other earlier scholars. While some of the Qumran biblical manuscripts were nearly identical to the Masoretic or traditional Hebrew text of the Old Testament, some manuscripts of the books of Exodus and Samuel found in cave four exhibited dramatic differences in both language and content.

3.9 The Exhibition of the Dead Sea Scrolls

The exhibition of the scrolls from the Dead Sea at The ancient library of Qumran and modern scholarship brought before the American people a selection from the scrolls which have been the subject of intense public interest. Over the years, questions have been raised about the scrolls' authenticity, about the people who hid them, about the period in which they lived, about the secrets the scrolls revealed, and about the intentions of the scrolls' custodians in restricting access. The library's exhibition describes the historical context of the scrolls and the Qumran community from whence they may have originated; it also relates the story of their discovery 2,000 years later. In addition, the exhibition encourages a better understanding of the challenges and complexities connected with scroll research.

The exhibition is divided into five sections: The original exhibition included nearly 100 objects: scroll fragments, artifacts from the Qumran site, and books and illustrations from the library of congress' collections. The online exhibit includes images of 12 scroll fragments and 29 other objects loaned by the Israel Antiquities. The scrolls comprise, among other things, the oldest copies of the Bible. The Qumran scrolls date from approximately 250 BC to about 65 AD and at some other locations to about 135 AD. Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest existing manuscripts of parts of the Hebrew Bible date about 800-1,000 AD. The oldest complete copy of the Hebrew Bible, the Leningrad Codex, dates to 1008 AD. This means that the Dead Sea Scrolls give us texts of the Bible which were copied more than 1000 years earlier than any others now in existence. The scrolls are also important because they have enabled scholars to gather an immense amount of information about how the Bible was written and how it was transmitted from generation to generation.

3.10 Similarities of the Dead Sea Scrolls with the Bible

- a. In many cases the scrolls show a remarkable similarity to the text of the Hebrew Bible currently in use.
- b. In some cases, differences between the scrolls and the traditional Hebrew text help explain difficulties in the present Hebrew Bible, and most modern translations of the Bible incorporate some of the new information from the scrolls.
- c. The picture they portray of the Judaism of Jesus' day.
- d. The Dead Sea scrolls show that Judaism in that period was more diverse than was once thought and the literary parallels between the Gospels and the literature of Qumran demonstrate several instructive points of contact between Jesus' teaching and the Judaism of his day.

Almost all of the scrolls are in Jerusalem. A few are in Jordan and Europe. The few scrolls on display at the shrine of the book are accessible to all. Most of the extremely fragile fragments are stored in a vault on the campus of the Israel Museum in a small temperature and humidity -controlled vault.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Name three literary works of the Dead Sea Scrolls and briefly comment on them.
- ii. Discuss in details the doctrine of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt the meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls, its different types and the literature. The unit in a way prepared you for an understanding of the Dead Sea Scrolls which were discovered Qumran now known as Essene centre. You should by now have a fairly definite idea of what the Dead Sea Scrolls are all about and their significance in inter-testamental literature studies.

5.0 SUMMARY

You now know that the Dead Sea Scrolls are part of the important literature of our contemporary society. You also read that these scrolls give judicious guidance of great value in our society.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Justify the need for the Dead Sea Scrolls in not more than one typewritten A4 pages.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4 APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Definition of Apocalyptic Literature
 - 3.2 The Contents of Apocalyptic Literature
 - 3.2.1 The Book of Daniel (Chapters 7-12)
 - 3.2.2 First Book of Enoch
 - 3.2.3 The Fourth Book of Esdras
 - 3.2.4 The Ascension of Moses
 - 3.2.5 The Revelation of R. Joshua b. Levi
 - 3.2.6 The Hebrew Elijah Apocalypse
 - 3.2.7 The Apocalypse of Zerubbabel
 - 3.2.8 Legend of Messiah b. Joseph
 - 3.2.9 The Wars of King Messiah
 - 3.2.10 Revelation of R. Simon b. Yohai
 - 3.2.11 The Prayer of R. Simon b. Yohai
 - 3.2.12 The Midrash of the Ten Kings
 - 3.2.13 The Persian Apocalypse of Daniel
 - 3.2.14 The Second and Third Books of Baruch
 - 3.2.15 First Book of Baruch
 - 3.2.16 Fourth Baruch
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the preceeding unit, you learned about the Dead Sea Scrolls. You also read that the Scrolls were written between the third and fourth century BC and were passed on from one generation to another. In this unit, attention will be on the apocalyptic literature. This literature is meant to help people in understanding the words of God and history of the Jewish people during the inter-testamental period.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define the apocalyptic literature
- discuss the apocalyptic literature
- examine the contents of apocalyptic literature.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Definition of Apocalyptic Literature

Apocalyptic literature is a term in the common vernacular usage to denote something that is written in an ominous or threatening way. It is scary, thwarting, and about imminent evil. The dictionary defines it as the act of presaging people of imminent disaster, exaggerated predictions, or allusions of the last days. However, this is not what apocalyptic literature meant in the original Greek or Hebrew or at the time this term was penned. The term means “discourser of events,” and that is what it literally and truly means today. Apocalypse also means an “uncovering” or “unveiling, of events” and “Revelation” means “discourser of the apocalypse.”

As product of the Judeo-Christian tradition, apocalyptic literature consist of narrative form, employ esoteric language, expresses a pessimistic view of the present, and treat the final events as imminent. The only people who should be scared are those who reject and hate Christ. When you see how the literature operates, it will help you greatly to unfold historical events of the past, present, and future, with God’s plan and purpose being the ultimate goal. Thus, if you take the time and effort to understand this type of genre, it will make things clearer for you, expose and not conceal what God has for you.

Apocalyptic literature professes to be a revelation of future events, particularly the time and manner of the coming of the final age when the powers of evil will be routed in bloody combat with God. The earliest apocalypses are Jewish works that dates from about 200 BC to about 165 BC. Whereas earlier Jewish writers, the Prophets, had foretold the coming of disasters, in an esoteric language. They neither placed these disasters in a narrative framework nor conceived them in eschatological terms. During the time of the Hellenistic domination of Palestine and the revolt of the Maccabees, however, a pessimistic view of the present came coupled with an expectation of an apocalyptic scenario, which is characterised by an imminent crisis, a universal judgment, and a supernatural resolution.

The Contents of Apocalyptic Literature

The Apocalyptic literature include the following.

3.2.1 The Book of Daniel (Chapters 7-12)

The most famous and influential of the early Jewish apocalypses is the last part of the biblical book of Daniel (chapters 7–12), written about 167 BC and attributed to a revered wise man who supposedly lived at the time of the Babylonian captivity. Daniel recounts a series of visions, the first of which (chapter 7) is the most succinct. He sees a succession of four terrible beasts, evidently representing a succession of earthly persecutors culminating in the contemporary Hellenistic tyrant Antiochus IV Epiphanes (the “eleventh horn” of the fourth beast). Daniel then sees the destruction of the last beast by the “Ancient of Days” and the coming of “one like the Son of Man,” to whom is given “everlasting dominion that shall not pass away” and whose kingdom will be inhabited by “the people of the saints,” who will forever serve and obey him.

3.2.2 First Book of Enoch

The other Jewish apocalypse is the first book of Enoch written in 200 BC. Up to the present day the book of Enoch has been confounded with “Pir e Hekalot” and it is said to have been written by R. Ishmael. The book is the original title established by a manuscript in the Bodleian Library. There are two editions of the book, one by Jellinek, and the other printed together with a prayer attributed to R. Ishmael, in Lemberg, 1864, and reprinted in Warsaw, 1875. According to the title page, the latter gives the text of a very old manuscript, and in many cases has better readings than Jellinek's edition. An unedited manuscript of this apocalypse is in the Bodleian Library. Both the printed editions are incomplete, but fortunately they supplement each other.

After chapter 16 of Jellinek's edition, six chapters are missing. The Lemberg edition breaks off suddenly in the middle of the apocalypse, what follows belonging to “Hekalot Rabbati” with the exception of the “addition” (הוספה) in chapter 29., which is taken probably from one of the recensions of the Alphabet-Midrash of R. Akiba (see below). The number of chapters in Jellinek is forty-two, which, with the six missing chapters (supplied by the Lemberg edition) makes forty-eight, and this is also the number which, according to Neubauer, is contained in the Bodleian manuscript. This apocalypse is quoted very often in the rabbinical literature of the Middle Ages, particularly in the cabalistic branch. In the Zohar it is even twice called *Sefer Razin de anok*. The Book of the Secrets of Enoch at the beginning of section *Te awweh*. A

new critical edition is much to be desired, and in connection with the preparation of such. It would be necessary to determine to what extent the quotations from the Book of Enoch in the rabbinical literature of the Middle Ages belong to the present book, or are taken from other books of Enoch.

The first book of Enoch is an interesting specimen of the apocalypse, and illustrates strikingly many of the characteristics of the literature to which it belongs. It shows an intimate dependence upon the "Book of the Secrets of Enoch" discovered some years ago in a Slavonic translation. A brief synopsis of the book will best show the metamorphosis which the old pseudepigraphic writing underwent, and what new elements from other apocalypses were added in the process; it will also show that there is justification for considering it a genuine apocalypse and treating it altogether apart from the "Hekalot" literature. The book opens with Genesis 5 verse 24 concerning Enoch's godly life. Ishmael narrates how he ascended into heaven to see the Merkabah, and how, after he had passed through six heavenly halls Metatron came to meet him at the entrance to the seventh, and conducted him inside, leading him straight before the celestial chariot into the presence of God (compare "Secrets of Enoch," 21. 2*b*-5).

At the sight of the heavenly hosts Ishmael fell unconscious; but God motioned them back and Me a ron restored Ishmael to consciousness. Ishmael then proclaimed the glory of the Lord, and all the angels joined him. In chapter two, Me a ron conquered the objection of the angels to Ishmael's approach to God's throne. In chapters 3.-5 and 7-16 Me a ron relates to Ishmael that he is Enoch b. Jared, and that at the time of the Deluge God had him translated to heaven, by his angel 'Anpi'el, in a chariot of fire, that there he might bear eternal witness against his sinful contemporaries. Furthermore, that God overruled the protests of the heavenly hosts transfigured him with the rays of heavenly glory and made him as one of them in order that he might serve before His throne as one of the highest angel-princes. Initially however, the Angel of Wisdom, at God's command, had instructed him in all wisdom and knowledge and had imparted to him all the mysteries of creation of heaven and earth, of past and future things, and of the world to come.

In chapter six Me a ron told Ishmael that, after Adam was driven out of paradise God abode under the tree of life, and the angels and heavenly hosts descended to the earth in many divisions. Adam and his generation, sitting at the entrance to paradise, beheld the heavenly glory until, in the time of Enoch, Aza and Azael led men to idolatry (compare *ib.* xxxi. 2, where it says, however, that at the time Adam dwelt in paradise "God made the heavens opened to him that he might behold the angels," and the following words, the meaning of which is obscure,

occur: "and he was constantly in paradise"). Chapters 17-22 (not in Jellinek's edition) describe the seven heavens with their hosts of angels and the courses of the sun, moon, and stars, dwelling with special minuteness on the highest heaven and its hosts. This account is an interesting mixture of the description of the seven heavens contained in "Ascensio Isaïæ" and of that given in the "Secrets of Enoch." As in the former, the seven heavens are represented as being inhabited by angels and as increasing in glory in each successive heaven; and they are described in the descending order. And just as recension.

The "Secret of Enoch" mentions, besides the seven heavens, an eighth (*muzalot*) and a ninth (*kuchavim*) and above them all a tenth (*'arabot*), the seat of God's glory, so this book has a separate heaven for the sun and moon, together with the stations of the moon (*mazzalot*), another for the stars (*kokabim*) with the difference, however, that these two are under the seven heavens—and the highest heaven over them all, called here also *'arabot*, the abode of God and of the highest angelic hosts. In chapter 23, Me a ron describes to Ishmael the winds issuing from the Cherubim of the heavenly chariot, and tells how these, after traversing the universe, enter paradise to waft the fragrant odours and exquisite perfumes there unto the pious and just, for whom paradise and the tree of life are prepared as an eternal inheritance (compare "Secrets of Enoch," 9. and the somewhat obscure passage in 8. 5d-6).

In chapters 24.-26 Enoch (Me a ron) gives Ishmael a description of the chariot and of the many-eyed, radiant, God-praising Cherubim and Seraphim (compare *ib.* 20. 1, 21. 1), the latter of which burn the accusations against Israel, which Satan, in conspiracy with the guardian angel of Rome and the guardian angel of Persia, continually sends in. In chapter 27 he describes the archangel Radveri'el, the heavenly registrar and keeper of the archives (compare *ib.* 22. 11 *et seq.*); in 28.-29., the "Irin and Kaddishin," who daily sit in judgment with God; in 30.-34., the judgment itself; in 35.-11 he tells how the heavenly hosts appear in presence of God to praise and glorify Him with the song, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord ebaot!" and how, at that, the Ofanim, Cherubim, ayyot, and Seraphim standing around the throne prostrate themselves in adoration, responding with, "Praised be the glory of His Kingdom forever!" (Compare *ib.* 20. 3b-21. 1).

In chapters 12.-17, Enoch (Me a ron) reveals to Ishmael the mysteries of creation, and shows him the repositories of the rain, snow, hail, thunder, and lightning; the courses of the stars; the spirits of those angels who were punished because they did not give praise to God at the right time, and whose bodies were turned to great fiery mountains (in striking analogy to Ethiopic Enoch, xviii. 11-16, xxi.); the souls of the righteous departed, who hover around God's throne in the form of birds, and the

souls of the righteous yet unborn; the places of punishment and the tortures of the wicked in hell (compare "Secrets of Enoch," 10.). Then Ishmael sees how the souls of the Patriarchs and of all the righteous ascended out of their graves to heaven, beseeching God to deliver His people Israel from their bondage among the heathen. God answers them that the sins of the wicked hold back the delivery of His people and the realisation of His kingdom.

While the Patriarchs were weeping at this declaration, Michael, Israel's guardian angel intervened, pleading for Israel's delivery. Thereupon Meaaron allowed Ishmael surveyed all past and future ages from Adam to the end of time: he saw Messiah b. Joseph and his age, and Messiah b. David and his age, together with the wars of Gog and Magog and the other events of the Messianic era. In the concluding chapter (18), Meaaron showed Ishmael the glorious future Jerusalem, where the souls of the righteous stand praying for its advent upon earth. At the same moment God's right hand poured forth five streams of tears which, falling into the ocean, caused the world to shake; and God said, that, although there is no righteous man upon earth whose intercession could bring about Israel's delivery, yet He will save them for His own sake, for the sake of His justice and His own goodness. God prepares Himself to reveal His mighty power to the heathen; whereupon Israel will be immediately delivered and the Messiah will appear to them, in order to conduct them to Jerusalem, where they, to the exclusion of the tyrannical heathen, will share his kingdom, and God will be king over the whole earth.

Apart from the fact that R. Ishmael, of the period of the Hadrianic persecution, figures as the author, and from the allusion in the last chapter to the destruction of the Temple (through which data the earliest date possible is fixed), there are no definite references to historical events and conditions from which the date of the composition of the "Book of Enoch" could be more exactly determined. There is, however, a passage in Talmud Berakot about R. Ishmael which naturally suggests itself in this connection, and which admits of the adoption of at least a latest possible date. The passage (7a) reads: "R. Ishmael Elisha related: 'Once I entered into the inmost sanctuary to offer incense; there I saw Akatriel Yah YHWH ebaot sitting upon the high and exalted throne of mercy, and He said to me: "Ishmael, My son, bless Me!" Thereupon I spoke: "May it please Thee that Thy mercy conquer thy anger and that Thy mercy gush forth as is the way of mercy; mayest Thou deal with Thy children according to Thy mercy, and requite them, though contrary to the rules of the rigid law. The fragment reads as if it were written under the immediate impression of the Hadrianic persecution. It seems plausible that this book was the intermediary through which the peculiar

metamorphosis of the "Secrets of Enoch," into the neo-Hebrew book of Enoch was accomplished.

3.1.3 The Fourth Book of Esdras

The fourth Book of Esdras consists of seven visions of Esdras the scribe. The first vision took place when Ezra was still in Babylon. He asked God how Israel can be kept in misery if God is just. The archangel Uriel was sent to answer the question, responding that God's ways cannot be understood by the human mind. Soon, however, the end would come, and God's justice would be made manifest. Similarly, in the second vision, Ezra asked why Israel was delivered to the Babylonians, and was again told that man cannot understand this and that the end was near. In the third vision Ezra asked why Israel did not possess the world. Uriel responded that the current state is a period of transition. Here follows a description of the fate of evil-doers and the righteous. Ezra attempted to intercede for the condemned, but was told that no one can escape his destiny.

The next three visions are more symbolic in nature. The fourth is of a woman mourning for her only son, who was transformed into a city when she heard of the desolation of Zion. Uriel says that the woman is a symbol of Zion. The fifth vision concerns an eagle with three heads and twenty wings (twelve large wings and eight smaller wings "over against them"). The eagle was rebuked by a lion and then burned. The explanation of this vision is that the eagle refers to the fourth kingdom of the vision of Daniel, with the wings and heads as rulers. The final scene is the triumph of the Messiah over the empire. The sixth vision is of a man, representing the Messiah, who breathes fire on a crowd that was attacking him. This man then turned to another peaceful multitude, which accepted him.

Finally, there is a vision of the restoration of scripture. God appeared to Ezra in a bush and commanded him to restore the Law. Ezra gathered five scribes and began to dictate. After forty days, he produced ninety-four books: the twenty-four books of the Tanakh and seventy secret works. (This vision is omitted in the Latin translation of the text): "Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first, and let the worthy and the unworthy read them; but keep the seventy that were written last, in order to give them to the wise among your people." The "seventy" might refer to the Septuagint, most of the apocrypha, or the lost books that are described in the Bible. Most Latin editions of the text have a large lacuna of seventy verses between 7:35 and 7:36 due to the fact that they trace their common origin to one early manuscript.

3.1.4 The Ascension of Moses

The Latin version of "The Assumption of Moses," which is preserved only as a fragment, must certainly have contained, in its missing part, an account of the death of Moses and of the dispute between archangel Michael and Satan (or the angel of death) over the dead body. Among the neo-Hebrew apocalypses there is an "Ascension of Moses," as well as a fragment which, besides revealing the future, tells of the death of Moses and of the dispute that ensued after his death. This apocalypse was published for the first time in Salonica in 1727, under the title *גדולת משה*, and has been printed several times since. It was translated by Gaster under the title "The Revelation of Moses." An Arabic translation also exists in the Karaite manuscript, written in 1828, discovered by Tischendorf in the library of the University of Leipsic. This Arabic version has a longer introduction, and varies somewhat in the text from our version. The contents of the book, according to Gaster's translation, are thus summarised. For the modesty displayed by Moses when summoned to appear before Pharaoh to demand the liberation of the Israelites, God commanded Me a ron Enoch to allow Moses to ascend into heaven.

After Me a ron had transformed Moses' body into a fiery figure like unto that of the angels, he led him up through the seven heavens. In the first heaven Moses saw waters "standing in line," and windows to let in and out all the things pertaining to human life and its needs. In the second heaven he saw the angels who control the clouds, the wind, and the rain; in the third, the angels placed over vegetation; in the fourth, those over the earth, sun, moon, stars, planets, and spheres; in the fifth, angels half of fire and half of snow; in the sixth, the "Irin and Kaddishin"; in the seventh, 'Arabot, he saw first the angels of wrath and anger, then the angel of death, then the Hayyot standing before God, and finally an angel engaged in teaching the souls which were created by God at the time of creation and placed in paradise. Thus, there are two passages of later interpolation, one from Pes. 54a-b, treating of Nebuchadnezzar's presumptuous desire "to ascend the heights of the cloud and to be like the Most High", and the other from the Zohar, intended to show that Moses really ascended to heaven.

God then told Moses that He will confer on him the further privilege of seeing hell and paradise, and, at God's command, angel Gabriel took Moses to see hell. There he saw the manifold torments and punishments of the different classes of sinners, those who were envious of their fellow men and bore false witness against them; women who exposed their charms to young men; sinners who committed adultery, theft, and murder; those who perjured themselves; those who desecrated the Sabbath, despised the learned, and persecuted orphans; those who

committed sodomy and idolatry, or cursed their parents; those who took bribes, put their fellow men to shame, delivered up their brother-Israelite to the Gentile, and denied the oral law; those that ate all kinds of forbidden food; usurers; apostates, and blasphemers; those who wrote the ineffable name of God, and those who ate on Yom Kippur.

Gabriel then led Moses back to paradise. Here he saw first the guardian angel of paradise, sitting under the tree of life, who showed him the several costly thrones erected in paradise, each surrounded by seventy angels the thrones for the Patriarchs, for the scholars who studied the Law day and night for the sake of heaven; for the pious men, for the just, and for the repentant—and a throne of copper, prepared for the wicked whose sons are pious, as in the case of Terah. Finally, he sees the fountain of life welling forth from beneath the tree of life, and dividing itself into four streams, and four rivers flowing under each throne, "the first of honey, the second of milk, the third of wine, and the fourth of pure balsam." (Here another passage from the Zohar, interrupting the narrative, is inserted.) As Moses was leaving paradise a voice called from heaven: "Moses, . . . as thou hast seen the reward which is prepared for the just in the future world, so also in the days to come shalt thou see the rebuilding of the Temple and the advent of the Messiah, and shalt behold the beauty of the Lord and shalt meditate in His Temple."

Up to the present no attempt has been made to ascertain the date of composition of this apocalypse; but the allusion in the last chapter to the rebuilding of the Temple places it after that event. The descriptions of the different classes of sinners in hell and their punishment are strikingly similar to (in fact, are in parts identical with) those found in a number of Christian apocalypses; namely, the "Apocalypse of Peter," that of "Pastor Hermas," and the second book of the "Sibylline Oracles" (all three written in the second century), and the later apocalypses of Esdras and Paul, both perhaps dependent upon the "Apocalypse of Peter." It is possible that a critical examination of these relations might throw further light on the date of composition of "The Ascension of Moses."

However, the "Assumption of Moses" was a fragment preserved in the "Midrash Bereshit Rabbati" of R. Moses ha-Darshan. It was published by Jellinek. As an exegesis to Genesis xxviii. 17*b*. The following is a synopsis of its contents: As the time for Moses' death approached, God permitted him to ascend into heaven, and unveiled to him the future world. There Middat ha-Ra'amim (the Attribute of Mercy) came to him, saying: "I will announce good tidings." Turning his eyes to the throne of mercy, Moses saw God building the temple out of precious stones and pearls; he saw also the rays of the Godhead, and Messiah the son of David with the Torah in his arms; also his own brother Aaron in priestly

robes. Aaron imparted to Moses that his death was near at hand, whereupon Moses asked God for permission to speak with the messiah.

The latter then revealed to him that the sanctuary which God was then constructing was the temple and the Jerusalem, which would be established for Israel in the future world to endure for all eternity, and that God had shown the same Jerusalem to Jacob in his dream in Beth-el. To Moses' question when the new Jerusalem would descend to earth, God replied: "I have not yet revealed the end to any one; should I reveal it to thee?" Thereupon Moses said, "Give me at least a hint from the events of history," and God answered: "After I have scattered Israel among all the nations, I will stretch out My hand to gather them in a second time from all the ends of the earth." Moses then joyfully departed from heaven, followed by the angel of death, who demanded his soul. Moses refused to yield it; but finally God appeared to him, and he surrendered his soul to God willingly and cheerfully.

3.1.5 The Revelation of Joshua, R. and Levi, B.

It has already been noted that the Babylonian Talmud tells of revelations which R. Joshua b. Levi was supposed to have received from the prophet Elijah and from the messiah. In this apocalypse R. Joshua himself figures as the author. The book first appeared in the collection "Li utim Shonim," published in 1519 at Constantinople, under the title "The Story of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi", and it has since been reprinted several times, under the same title by Jellinek: Gaster published a translation of it with the correct title, "The Revelation of R. Joshua b. Levi"; for the contents leave no doubt that it really is an apocalypse. An Aramaic version also existed, a fragment of which is preserved in Moses b. Na man's "Torat ha-Adam". Jellinek points out that this Aramaic version is a proof of the ancient origin of the apocalypse (*l.c.* ii. 18), of which the following is a summary.

As the time of R. Joshua b. Levi's death was drawing near, God sent the angel of death to him, commissioning him to fulfil whatever R. Joshua might wish. The latter requested to be shown the place awaiting him in paradise, and desired the angel to give his sword to him. Upon arriving in paradise, Joshua, against the will of the angel, leaped over the wall: God allowed him to remain there, but commanded him to return the sword. Elijah called out: "Make way for the son of Levi!" The angel of death thereupon related the incident to R. Gamaliel, who sent him back to R. Joshua with the request that he explore both paradise and hell and send him a description of them. R. Joshua carried out this request. Here follows a description of the different compartments of paradise, seven in number.

In the first dwell the proselytes to Judaism; in the second, repentant sinners with King Manasseh presiding over them; in the third, the Patriarchs and the Israelites who came out of Egypt, David and Solomon, and all the kings of their house; in the fourth, the perfectly righteous. In the fifth, which is of special splendor and exquisite beauty, are the Messiah and Elijah, the latter caressing the messiah and saying to him, "Be comforted, for the end draweth nigh!" The Patriarchs also speak in the same strain at certain times, as do Moses and Aaron, David and Solomon, and all the kings of Israel and Judah. In the sixth, dwell those who died in piety; and in the seventh, those who died for the sins of Israel.

To his question, whether any of the heathen, or even any of his brother Esau's descendants, were in paradise, R. Joshua received the answer, that they obtained the reward for their good works in this world, and therefore in the other world must dwell in hell; in the case of the sinners in Israel, however, just the opposite principle is followed. Hell could not be viewed immediately, for just at that moment the news reached heaven of the execution of the Ten Martyrs. When R. Joshua entered hell some time later, he saw there ten heathen nations, over who, as a punishment for his disobedience to his father, Absalom, the son of David, is compelled to preside. Seven times a day these heathen are burned by angels in pits of fire, being brought out whole again every time. Absalom alone is exempted from this punishment: he sits upon a throne, honored as a king.

The Revelation of Joshua, R. and Levi, B. comprises a number of writings treating the same theme. The chief centre of thought of all of them is the mystical signification, of the names of God made up of four, twelve, and forty-two letters. It is stated that the present world was created with He (ה) and the future with Yod (י), and eschatological theories are built up out of the forms of these letters. In the Babylonian Talmud (Shab. 104a), also, all sorts of similar interpretations are given in regard to the names, forms, and combinations of the various letters, and are made to bear upon eschatological questions in the same way as in these apocalypses. In *id.* 71a, it is said that the mysteries of the three names of God were treated as esoteric doctrine, and that whoever became thoroughly initiated into the mystery of the name consisting of forty-two letters might be sure of inheriting both the present and the future world. Similarly, R. Akiba, the reputed author of the "Alphabets," is especially commended in the Talmud as interpreter of the strokes, dots, and flourishes of the letters (compare, for example, Men. Up to the present time, the pseudepigrapha in question have been generally considered mystical writings treating upon some eschatological points, not as real apocalypses; but the different compositions, as far as they are known, show clearly that the real theme of all is the eschatological

problem, and that the discussion of the other supernatural mysteries only goes hand in hand with this, as in the apocalypses hitherto noticed.

So far, two of the alphabets have appeared in print, one of which is three times as long as the other: the longer was published first in Constantinople, 1519 and again in Venice, 1546. Both editions are incomplete; but the gaps are filled in part by the Cracow edition, which was published in 1579, was reprinted in Amsterdam, 1708, and which contains also the shorter version. Jellinek published both in "B. H." iii. 12-49, 50-64; the longer, based on the incomplete Constantinople-Venice edition. Several manuscripts of both have been preserved; as, for example, in the Munich Codex 22, folio 70-103, which supplies the gaps purposely left in the longer composition in the Cracow-Amsterdam edition; in the Vatican Codex, 228. And one manuscript in the Bodleian Library which is described in Neubauer, "Cat. Bodl. Hebr. MSS." No. 1927.

A fragment of the shorter is contained in the Bodleian Library manuscript, No. 1322 (Neubauer, *ib.*). There are, besides, three other manuscripts in the Bodleian Library containing alphabets of R. Akiba. The catalogue does not give any details of their contents; but the fact that none of them is marked "printed" would indicate that they are not identical with the published "Alphabets." A fragment consisting of two leaves ("Mysterium"), also differing from the published alphabets, is in the Almanzi Library and deserves special notice because it furnishes strong support to the theory that the writings under the present heading are genuine apocalypses. It begins "Aleph stands for the Most High, who is the First" and the conclusion. In the longer of the published alphabets, as in the Hebrew book of Enoch, Me a ron (Enoch) is represented as the revealer of the secrets disclosed in these writings.

There is also a very brief and condensed narration of Enoch's assumption into heaven, of his transformation into one of the angels at the heavenly throne, and of his initiation into all the mysteries of heaven and earth. This piece is not in the Constantinople-Venice edition, but is to be found in the Cracow-Amsterdam edition, and also in the Munich Codex. The latter has also the seventy or seventy-two names of God and the ninety-two names of Me a ron, which, from religious scruples, were omitted in the Cracow-Amsterdam edition. The names of God are obtained from combinations of the different letters of the alphabets, already alluded to as characteristic of this group of writings. Closely bound up with the relation of the above mysteries is the glorification of the Torah as the aim and end of creation and the centre of future bliss. Because of its observance Israel will inherit the joys of paradise, whereas the heathen, having disregarded it, will be given over to hell.

God Himself, surrounded by His host of angels, will expound the Torah to the righteous in paradise, whereupon Zerubbabel will proclaim God's glory, so that it will resound over the whole world; the sinners of Israel and the pious among the heathen in hell will add their "amen" to this glorification and will be found worthy of admittance to paradise. The pleasures of the righteous in paradise are described in a glowing, sensuous style: God Himself dwells among and associates with them like one of themselves, contributing actively to their entertainment. The circumstance, that in these writings the Torah is placed in such prominence, explains, too, their eminently parenetic character. In regard to R. Akiba's alleged authorship of these writings, it may be recalled, that, as early as the Jerusalem Talmud, a legend was current that R. Akiba enjoyed the superhuman privilege of ascending to heaven and having the secrets of God revealed to him.

Further, it seems worthy of notice, that, in the fragment of an "Alphabet of R. Akiba" contained in the Lemberg edition of the Book of Enoch, xxix. 2, and referred to above, the story of Enoch's assumption, etc. (there condensed to a few sentences), is narrated as if Akiba had heard it in heaven. To conclude, with Jellinek and Steinschneider from the quotations which are found in the medieval literature—but which are not in the printed editions. Anything more than that the "Alphabets of R. Akiba" are incomplete to the extent suggested here, would be premature until all the manuscripts have been published. Brief reference may again be made to the views of Zunz and Graetz regarding the origin of the theosophical speculation contained in the apocalypses which have been discussed thus far.

If both hold Islam responsible for the theosophy in these Neo-Hebrew apocalypses, because similar vagaries and stretches of imagination are found in its literature and especially in "Monatsschrift," the reply may be made that, as Steinschneider well observed and Noeldeke, the foremost Arabist of the present time, corroborated him later Jewish literature had the widest and deepest influence on the formation and development of the views and teachings of Islam. From the presence of mystical speculations about the essence and being of God, etc., in the Arabic literature, similar to those in the Neo-Hebrew, it is quite impossible to conclude that they found their way from the former into the latter; rather would the opposite conclusion be justified.

3.1.6 The Hebrew Elijah Apocalypse

This apocalypse, appeared first in Salonica in 1743, printed in the same volume with several other pieces, and was reprinted by Jellinek. A critical edition, according to a Munich manuscript, with translation, explanatory notes, and an attempt to ascertain the date of composition,

was published by Moses Bittenwieser. The result arrived at in this essay was that in this book it is necessary to distinguish between the original apocalypse and a later addition, which consists of a dispute among the doctors of the Law of the second and third centuries, concerning the name of the last king of Persia.

The original apocalypse was written amid the confusion of the year 261 AD, caused by the wars of Sapor I. against Rome and his capture of Valerian; but in its original form it was probably more voluminous. In all probability the author lived in Palestine. During the exciting period of the Perso-Roman wars waged by Chosroes I. (540-562) or Chosroes II. (604-628), the apocalypse was furnished with the addition mentioned above, in order to make the prophecies appear to agree with the changed times and conditions, and for the outcome of the dispute is that "Kesra" (the Arabic form of "Chosroes" must be the name of the last Persian king. The contents of the book of Elijah are as follows: Michael reveals the end of time to Elijah on Mt. Carmel.

Elijah is first conducted through various heavenly regions, and the revelations regarding the end are imparted to him. The last king of Persia will march to war against Rome in three successive years, and will finally take three military leaders prisoner. Then Gigit will advance against him, "the [little] horn," the last king hostile to God who will rule upon earth, as Daniel beheld. This king will instigate three wars and will "also stretch out his arm against Israel." The three wars and the attack upon Israel are described in detail in the following part. Then the messiah, whose name is Winon, will appear from heaven, accompanied by hosts of angels, and engage in a series of battles—first to annihilate the armies waging these wars, and secondly to vanquish all the remaining heathen.

After this, Israel will enjoy the blessings of the messianic kingdom for 40 years, at the end of which time Gog and Magog will muster the heathen to war around Jerusalem; but they will be annihilated, and all the heathen cities will be destroyed. The day of doom will then come and last 40 days; then the dead will be awakened and brought to judgment. The wicked will be delivered over to the torments of hell: but to the good the tree of life will be given; and for them the glorious Jerusalem will descend from heaven, and among them shall reign peace and knowledge of the Law. From this summary will be noticed how closely the picture of the future world given in this apocalypse resembles the Revelation of John; the description also of Elijah's transportation through the heavenly regions shows a striking relation to the Ethiopic book of Enoch (compare *ib.* xiv. 8, 9, 12-19, 22*a*, xviii. 13-15, xxii. 1, 11). Worthy of attention is the description of the adversary of

the messiah, the Anti-christ, who before the advent of the messiah shall subdue the world and persecute Israel.

This description is a conventional feature of a great number of neo-Hebrew apocalypses. It is found, for example, in much the same form in all those treated below. In the latter, however, the adversary is called Armilus (Romulus); while in the Elijah apocalypse he is called Gigit, which is an enigmatical designation of Odhenat, the duke of Palmyra. The description of the adversary in the present apocalypse shows also, as Bousset has pointed out striking parallels to the description of the Antichrist in the Coptic Elijah apocalypse, discovered a few years ago, the manuscript of which can in no case be later than the beginning of the fifth century (see Steindorff, "Apocalypse des Elias," p. 6); while the apocalypse itself is probably of the third or fourth century.

Of other Christian apocalypses with descriptions of the Antichrist, offering no less remarkable parallels to the apocalypses in the writings presently to be mentioned, and also in part to the Elijah apocalypse, may be enumerated: "The Testament of the Lord," "Apocalypse of Esdras," the "Pseudo-Johannis Apocalypse," and the Armenian "Seventh Vision of Daniel" (compare also Bousset Descriptions of the Antichrist in these apocalypses except the "Seventh Vision of Daniel"—may be found in James, "Apocrypha Anecdota," in "Texts and Studies".

3.1.7 The Apocalypse of Zerubbabel

There are various recensions of this apocalypse. One was printed in Constantinople in and was reprinted in Wilna, 1819, together with "Sefer Malkiel". Another was edited by Jellinek ("B. H." ii. 54-57), based on two manuscripts in the Leipsic City Library, which, however, an examination of the manuscripts by Bittenwieser proved to be inexact; and a third recension, differing from both of the above, is in manuscript in the Bodleian Library. Besides these, the Bodleian contains a manuscript of one of the printed editions. A new edition is most desirable. As this book foretells the year 990 or 970 after the destruction of the temple by Titus as the time of delivery, it must have been written in the 11th century at the very latest. This apocalypse describes how Zerubbabel was carried in spirit to Nineveh, the city of blood, the Great Rome, where Me a ron revealed to him the occurrences at the end of time.

He saw the messiah there, whose name is Mena em b. 'Amiël, and who was born at the time of King David, but was brought thither by the spirit to remain concealed until the end of time. Apart from a few details, the description of the course of events in the end of time is very much the same as that in "The Wars of King Messiah," "Revelations of R. Simon

b. Yo ai," and "Prayer of R. Simon b. Yo ai." In all of them, the name of the "Evil Adversary" is Armilus, the Aramaic form of Romulus. Except the "Revelations," they all contain the curious fancy that he is to be born of a marble statue in Rome. According to the "Apocalypse of Zerubbabel," he will be begotten out of the statue by Satan: in the "Revelations of R. Simon b. Yo ai," he is represented as a creation of Satan and Diabolus. In "The Wars of King Messiah" the epithet "Satan" is applied to him. The description of Armilus in the "Revelations of R. Simon b. Yo ai" has more resemblance to that in the Elijah apocalypse, whereas in the "Apocalypse of Zerubbabel," in "The Wars of King Messiah" and "Prayer of R. Simon b. Yo ai," he is described as a human monstrosity.

3.2.8 Legend of Messiah B. Joseph

"The Wars of King Messiah" and the "Prayer of R. Simon, and B. Yo ai" state that he will claim to be the Messiah and a god, and that he will be accepted by the heathen as such, whereas Israel will refuse to acknowledge him. In the Constantinople edition of the "Apocalypse of Zerubbabel," as Bousset has observed, Satan is called, "Belial," the name by which the Antichrist is called in the "Sibylline Oracles", "Testament of the Patriarchs" (Daniel) and "Ascensio Isaïæ." This circumstance is of great importance, inasmuch as by its means the Armilus legend, as it is found in the above-mentioned apocalypses, seems particularly adapted to throw light upon various points in the Antichrist legend. All four apocalypses contain the legend of Messiah b. Joseph in common. They state that he will gather Israelites around him, reintroduce the worship of the Temple, and establish his own dominion.

This, however, will be of short duration; for Armilus, with the heathen, will appear before Jerusalem to battle against him and will slay him. Then the time of the last extreme suffering and persecution for Israel will begin, from which escape will be sought by flight into the wilderness. There Messiah b. David and the prophet Elijah will appear to them and lead them up to Jerusalem, where the Messiah will destroy Armilus and all the armies of the heathen. In the "Apocalypse of Zerubbabel," as well as in "The Wars of King Messiah," The Messiah b. David, in company with Elijah, will resurrect Messiah b. Joseph, who lies slain at the gates of Jerusalem.

Another point common to the "Apocalypse of Zerubbabel" and the "Revelations of R. Simon b. Yo ai" is that, on his advent the Israelites will not acknowledge Messiah b. David. The one point mentioned which only the "Apocalypse of Zerubbabel" contains is that, besides the two Messiahs there is to be a woman, Hephzibah, the mother of Messiah b. David. According to the text in Jellinek's edition, she will come upon the

scene five years before Messiah b. Joseph; and a great star will light up her path. She will slay two kings, and assist Messiah b. Joseph in his war against the king of Persia; and during the flight into the wilderness she will shelter Israel from the persecution of Armilus.

This last feature of the description calls to mind the flight of the woman, as described in the Revelation of John, and the description of Tabitha in the Coptic "Apocalypse of Elijah." The picture of the future world in the Zerubbabel apocalypse is also distinctive; for in addition to the establishment of the heavenly Jerusalem upon five mountains (Lebanon, Moriah, Tabor, Carmel, and Hermon), nothing more is mentioned than the resurrection of the generation buried in the wilderness, and of the faithful who met death during the general persecution.

3.1.9 The Wars of King Messiah

The Wars of King Messiah also called "The Book of the Wars of YHWH," or the "Occurrences at the Time of the Advent of Messiah," and, finally, "The Wars of Gog and Magog, of Messiah b. Joseph, Messiah b. David, and Elijah the Prophet"). This apocalypse must have had a very wide circulation, as evidenced by the many manuscripts in which it is preserved. It is contained in a Parisian manuscript in one in Leipsic and another at Halberstamm, and in three manuscripts at the Bodleian Library. The first of these is complete; in the second the introduction and conclusion are missing; the third seems to be only a fragment. In a Munich manuscript, the introduction and conclusion are also omitted it was also included in the "Mazor Vitry," in which, however, as some pages in the manuscript are missing, only the first and last parts are preserved.

This work was printed in the Constantinople collection mentioned above, in 1519, and also in "Abbat Rokel" by Jacob Machir. The Munich manuscript was found by the present writer, who collated it with the text in "Abbat Rokel," and with Jellinek, to contain a number of better readings and variants than the latter.

The following may be added to what has been related above as explanatory of the contents of this book: A parenetic discourse forms the introduction; after which the unusual phenomena that will usher in the end unnatural and pestilence-producing heat, poisonous dew, and an eclipse of the sun lasting thirty days are depicted. The Roman "kingdom" will spread its dominion over the whole world, and will persecute Israel most cruelly for the space of nine months, at the end of which time Messiah b. Joseph will appear. From here on, the description continues as outlined above. After Messiah b. David shall have destroyed Armilus and the heathen armies, together with the "wicked"

Rome, then the dead will arise, and the Israelites, dispersed over all lands, will be gathered into Jerusalem.

The heathen will convey them thither, and will offer homage to Israel; also, the ten tribes, together with the descendants of Moses, will return, enveloped in clouds, from the regions of Chaboras and Halach and from Media; and as they march, the earth will be transformed before them into a paradise. The conclusion contains the description of the glorious new Jerusalem and of the other blessings of the future world, which are here of a more spiritual character. According to the various editions, it is said of Armilus, that "the nations call him Antichrist." But the Munich manuscript reads here, "He is called Gog and Magog"; and for "palace of Julian," it reads "palace of Hadrian."

3.1.10 The Revelation of R. Simon B. Yoai

This apocalypse was printed at Salonica in 1743, in the collection already mentioned, and was reprinted from it by Jellinek. It is preserved also in the Munich manuscript, which contains better readings in some places. The apocalypse really ends with "Thy people shall all be righteous." This apocalypse was written during the stormy period of the deposition of the Ommyads. It describes plainly the wars of Merwan II., who is mentioned by name, his flight after the battle on the bank of the Great Zab, his capture and his assassination.

The revelations about the end are made by Mea ron to R. Simon b. Yo ai, while the latter was dwelling in a cave, hiding from the Roman emperor. The history of Islam is reviewed from the appearance of the prophet up to the events just mentioned. From this point on, the real prophecy of the future begins. It opens with the prediction that after Merwan's successor has reigned three months, the nine months' dominion of the "wicked empire" will set in for Israel; then the course of events is described as before set forth under the "Apocalypse of Zerubbabel"; and, finally, the picture of the future world is drawn.

After the dispersed Israelites are gathered together, and the earthly Jerusalem in addition to the heathen part of its population is consumed by fire from heaven, the glorious new Jerusalem will descend from heaven; Israel will dwell in it for 2,000 years in perfect peace, and as in the "Apocalypse of Baruch" and IV Esdras will feast on the Behemoth and the Leviathan. At the end of this time God will descend into the valley of Jehoshaphat to hold judgment, and heaven and earth will disappear; the heathen will be put into hell; Israel will enter into paradise: and for a year the sinners in Israel will suffer the tortures of hell and then be admitted to paradise.

3.2.11 The Prayer of R. Simon b. Yo ai

This apocalypse was published by Jellinek, according to a manuscript of Mortara. It shows the closest relation to the preceding; and begins with a similar retrospect of the Mohammedan history, but carries it on to a later date, and finally refers to events which, Jellinek observes, may be unmistakably recognised as the Crusades. Graetz thought that this apocalypse contained allusions to the inroads of the Mongols, and believed that these events led directly to its composition. But this is out of the question; for the passage about the appearance of deformed, swift-footed men from the far East, upon which Graetz founded his argument, occurs in the middle of the historical retrospect, and not in the description of the events immediately preceding the end. In this part of the apocalypse the reference is solely to the crusades, and could hardly be plainer.

The point in question is a favorite one in apocalyptic description, and is simply taken from older writings; "The Wars of King Messiah" also contains it; but in the latter the picture of the monstrosities is still more horrible and bears more resemblance to the description in the Revelation of John written erroneously in one place, and in another the collapse of which is taken in the "Revelations of R. Simon b. Yo ai" and in the "Prayer of R. Simon b. Yo ai," as well as in the "Midrash of the Ten Kings" which also has the corruption, as an ominous prognostication of the imminent fall of the Islamic kingdom, is nothing else, as Steinschneider clearly proves, than the famous eastern gate, Bâb Girûn, of the Mosque in Damascus.

3.2.12 The Midrash of the Ten Kings

This belongs to the same class as the two preceding apocalypses. It has been published by C. M. Horowitz in "Sammlung Kleiner Midraschim" according to a manuscript of De Rossi's. The apocalypse begins with a very diffuse description of the eight kings who have already ruled the first being God; the last, Alexander the Great—and relates, in connection with this subject, the destruction of the temple by Titus and the Hadrianic persecution, and leads over in this way to Simon b. Yo ai's hiding from the Roman emperor in a cave, and to the revelations regarding the end, which he received while there. As in the two preceding books, the different Islamic rulers, beginning with Mohammed, are described. The references to the six following rulers are so vague that no certain conclusions can be drawn regarding their identity.

The remainder of the book is taken up with prophecy of the future, in which, at first, occasional allusions to historical events seem to be interspersed. Here also the prophecies of the future begin with the announcement of the period of nine months of intense persecution, whereupon Armilus will reign forty days. At the termination of his reign, Messiah b. Joseph will appear and restore the temple in Jerusalem, and will establish for Israel an epoch of peace. At the conclusion of this period, Gog and Magog will march upon Jerusalem, and Messiah b. Joseph will fall in battle against him. Three-fourths of the Israelites will wander into exile. God will then destroy the armies of Gog and Magog; and Israel, including the "nine and a half tribes," will return to Jerusalem. The rulership will recur to the house of David; Messiah b. David will rule as the ninth king over the whole world; and Israel will enjoy the blessings of the messianic kingdom. At the end of 2,000 years God will Himself descend to judgment.

3.2.13 The Persian Apocalypse of Daniel

This apocalypse was published and translated by Zotenberg in Merx. It also belongs to the group just treated; but at the same time it occupies, as Bousset observes, a peculiar place within the Neo-Hebrew apocalypse, by reason of the rôle which Messiah b. Joseph plays in it. The account, however, is not perfectly clear. First comes a very diffuse legendary narrative of the events of the time of Daniel; that is, from the appearance of prophet Jeremiah down to the time of King Darius I., Hystaspes (B.C. 485). Then it relates how Daniel mourns and fasts because of the destruction of the Temple, and how an angel appears to unveil the future to him. Here follows abruptly, regardless of the thousand intervening years, a transparent description of Mohammed and the Islamic rulers following him. In the ruler with three sons, from the bottom), as Bousset observes, Harûn al-Raschid and his three sons are with certainty recognisable.

3.2.14 The Second and Third Books of Baruch

The second and third books of Baruch (100 AD) are "apocryphal" insofar as they do not belong to the canonical Hebrew Bible. They are extant in Ethiopic, Syriac, Greek, and Latin translations made by Christians rather than in their original Hebrew or Aramaic forms. The reason that the apocalypses survived in this manner seems to be that, after the failure of a series of Jewish revolts against the Roman Empire in about 135 AD, the rabbis who began the process of codifying the Jewish tradition turned away from apocalypticism emphasis on upholding and interpreting the law of the Pentateuch. Fatefully, however, while Jewish apocalypticism was still flourishing, it was taken up by Christians.

3.2.15 First Book of Baruch

In this apocalypse, Baruch laments the destruction of Jerusalem until an angel of the Lord leads him through five heavens and reveals to him divine mysteries. He struggles with questions raised by the termination of temple sacrifices. Among the unique features of the book are: its identification of the "tree" that occasioned the sin of Adam and Eve as the grape vine, which made drunkenness possible; the "fall" meaning the loss of "the glory of God;" Satan's name as Satanel, the legend of the Phoenix; and the angel Michael's intercession in the heavenly temple, where he offered the prayers, virtues, and righteous deeds of believers as sacrifices to God. The book was written after the destruction of the temple in 70 AD before the earliest possible citation by Origen in 231 AD around late first / early second century AD in Greek language in Egypt.

3.2.16 Fourth Baruch

The night before Jerusalem's destruction, the Lord revealed to Jeremiah that the city is to be attacked by his angels so it can be handed over to the Chaldeans. He instructed Jeremiah to hide the Temple vessels and to accompany the exiles to Babylon. Baruch is to stay in Jerusalem until their return. Jeremiah's requests that his faithful servant Abimelech be spared and sent out of the city to gather figs at the farm of Agrippa, Abimelech takes a 66-year nap. When he woke, his figs are still fresh, but he did not recognise his surroundings. He was eventually reunited with Baruch, who took his wake as a sign that the exiles will soon return and the fresh figs as proof of the resurrection. Baruch sent a letter to Jeremiah, urging him to return with the exiles. Back in Jerusalem, Jeremiah had a vision of divine mysteries, including the coming of Jesus Christ. The book was written in Greek after the destruction of the temple in 70 AD, but probably before the second Jewish revolt in 132 AD. Probably during the first third of the second century AD (probably in Palestine).

Most authorities regard early Christianity as a fervently apocalyptic religion, intent on the imminent "Second Coming" of Christ to preside over the last judgment and the end of the world. Early Christian apocalypticism is evident in the Gospels, which are permeated with language taken from Daniel. The so-called little apocalypse, a sermon by Jesus found in Matthew Chapters 24–25 with parallels in Mark Chapter 13 and Luke Chapter 21, foretells the imminence of collective tribulation and chastisement before the coming of the "Son of Man" who will sit upon the throne of his glory and separate the sheep from the goats. Some Pauline epistles also contain apocalyptic content. The last book of the New Testament, the Revelation to John, also known as the

apocalypse of St. John concludes canonical Christian scripture in a ringingly apocalyptic key. Written in Asia Minor about 95 AD by a Christian named John. The revelation offers a vibrant, sometimes lurid, account of imminent crisis, judgment, and salvation.

Evidently obsessed by the persecution of Christians by the Roman Empire, which he refers to as “Babylon,” John recounts a series of visions that foretell a crescendo of persecutions and martyrdoms followed by universal judgment, retribution for the forces of evil, and rewards for the faithful. Details are often impenetrable because of esoteric allusive language, for example, a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet...being with child and travailing in birth. Moreover, the narrative is bewildering because it repeats itself frequently. Nevertheless, the psychedelic imagery is easily etched in the mind, and the mysteries found in the text have proved endlessly fascinating. Nor can there be any doubt of their ultimate message: the world, which is already suffering, will soon be washed in blood, but the “King of Kings” will come to “tread the winepress of the wrath of God,” and everlasting rewards will be given to those who have “washed their robes in the blood of the lamb” (Revelation 14:19).

A number of other Christian apocalypses were written during the period between 100 AD and 400 AD, including the Apocalse of Peter, the Apocalypse of Paul, and the testament of Abraham. Although these works adhere to apocalyptic form in recounting supernatural visions pseudonymously in esoteric language, they refer to an individual’s salvation and lack the characteristic apocalyptic content of treating collective history and collective salvation. The trend toward concentrating on individual salvation was reinforced in the theology of the leading Church Fathers, preeminently St. Augustine. The Fathers were eschatological insofar as they believed in the last judgment but non-apocalyptic in that they insisted that the time of the last act of history was utterly uncertain. Yet beliefs inherited from Daniel and the New Testament permitted the survival of apocalyptic thinking in the Middle Ages and led to the creation of new apocalyptic works, such as the Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius (mid-seventh century) and the Vision of Brother John (late 13th century).

Many medieval authors also wrote pseudonymous prophecies that did not take the form of narrative visions but foresaw imminent crisis, judgment, and salvation. Although the apocalyptic genre disappeared after the Middle Ages, an apocalyptic mood, reinforced by explicit references to the revelation to John, appears in numerous modern literary works. It is estimated that 40 million copies of books in the Left Behind series were in print by the early 21st century, and a computer game based on the series was also produced. The apocalyptic literature

of Judaism and Christianity embraces a considerable period, from the centuries following the exile down to the close of the Middle Ages.

Apocalyptic elements (*αποκαλύπτειν*, to reveal something hidden) can be detected in the prophetic books of Joel and Zechariah, while Isaiah chapters 24-27 and 33 present well-developed apocalypses. The book of Daniel offers a fully matured and classic example of this genre of literature. The non-fulfillment of prophecies served to popularise the methods of apocalyptic in comparison with the non-fulfillment of the advent of the messianic kingdom. Thus, though Jeremiah had promised that after 70 years Israel should be restored to their own land, and then enjoy the blessings of the messianic kingdom under the messianic king, this period passed by and things remained as of old. Some believe that the messianic kingdom was not necessarily predicted to occur at the end of the 70 years of the Babylonian exile, but at some unspecified time in the future. The only thing for certain that was predicted is the return of the Jews to their land, which occurred when Cyrus the Persian conquered Babylon in 539 BC. Thus, the fulfillment of the messianic kingdom remained in the future for the Jews.

Haggai and Zechariah explained the delay by the failure of Judah to rebuild the temple, and so hope of the kingdom persisted, till in the first half of the second century the delay is explained in the books of Daniel and Enoch as not because of man's shortcomings but to the counsels of God. Regarding the 70 years of exile predicted in Jeremiah 29:10, the Jews were first exiled in the year 605 BC during the reign of king Jehoiakim and were allowed to return to their land in 536 BC when King Cyrus conquered Babylon. This time period was approximately 70 years, as prophesied by Jeremiah. But some people believe that the 70 years of Jeremiah were later interpreted by the angel in Daniel 25-27 as 70 weeks of years, of which 69½ have already expired, while Enoch 85 interprets the 70 years of Jeremiah as the 70 successive reigns of the 70 angelic patrons of the nations, which are to come to a close in his own generation. The book of Enoch, however, was not considered as inspired scripture by the Jews, so that any failed prophecy in it is of no consequence to the Jewish faith. The Greek empire of the East was overthrown by Rome, and in due course called forth a new interpretation of Daniel.

The fourth and last empire which, according to Daniel 7:10-25, was to be Greek, was declared to be Roman by the Apocalypse of Baruch chapters 36-40 and 4 Ezra 10:60-12:35. (Again, these two books were not considered as inspired scripture by the Jews, and thus were not authoritative on matters of prophecy). Earlier in Daniel chapter seven, and also in chapter two, however, the fourth and final world empire is

actually Rome, since Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome were world empires which all clearly arrived in succession.

After Babylon fell, Media and Persia merged in a joint empire known as the Medo-Persian or Achaemenid Empire. Thus, it appears that Daniel is saying here that Rome would be the last world power before the kingdom of God. Such ideas as those of "the day of Yahweh" and the "new heavens and a new earth" were re-edited by the Jewish people with fresh nuances in conformity with their new settings. Thus the inner development of Jewish apocalyptic was conditioned by the historical experiences of the nation. But the prophecies found in Jewish scriptures, which have not changed over time, await their fulfillment.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Define the term apocalyptic literature.
- ii. List five apocalyptic writings and discuss them.
- iii. Outline the contents of the Hebrew Elijah Apocalypse

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learned about apocalyptic literature, their contents, the theme of alphabets and generic character. You also learned the time of their publications as well as the authors. The idea behind this unit is to make you to be acquainted with inter-testamental literature.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you learned the apocalyptic literature. The objective of this unit is to expose you to another aspect of inter-testamental literature, namely apocalyptic literature.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. Give the features that differentiate the first, second and third books of Baruch.
- ii. How was the first book of Enoch composed?
- iii. Discuss the themes assumption, hell and paradise in Apocalypse of the Ascension of Moses.

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UNIT 5 RABBANIC LITERATURE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Rabbinic Judaism
 - 3.1.1 Rabbinic Hermeneutics
 - 3.2 Jewish Legal Rabbinic Literature
 - 3.2.1 The Torah
 - 3.2.2 The Mishnah
 - 3.2.3 Gemara
 - 3.2.4 Baraitot
 - 3.2.5 Sefar ha- Mafteah
 - 3.2.6 Rashi
 - 3.2.7 Tosafot
 - 3.2.8 Meforshim
 - 3.2.9 Talmud
 - 3.2.9.1 The Jerusalem Talmud (Talmud Yerushalmi)
 - 3.2.9.2 Babylonian Talmud (Talmud Bavli)
 - 3.2.9.3 The Differences between the Babylonian Talmud and the Jerusalem Talmud
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This is the last unit of the module and the whole work. This unit contains another aspect of the literature of inter-testamental period, namely rabbinic literature. This is a form of literature that also emerged during inter-testamental period around 400 BC. The rabbinic literature attempts to write down in Hebrew and Aramaic languages the pharisaic oral traditions (previously memorised) after pharisaism had taken roots in inter-biblical period of Jewish history.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the contents of rabbinic literature
- discuss the rabbinic literature of inter-biblical period

- highlight the role of Talmud study in inter-testamental history.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Rabbinic Judaism

The rabbinic Judaism or rabbinism has been the mainstream of Judaism since the sixth century BC, after the codification of the Talmud. Rabbinic Judaism became the predominant stream within the Jewish diaspora between the second to sixth centuries, with the redaction of the oral law and the Talmud as the authoritative interpretation of Jewish scripture and to encourage the practice of Judaism since temple sacrifice and other practices were no longer possible. This form of Judaism is based on the belief that at Mount Sinai, Moses received directly from God the Torah (Pentateuch) as well as additional oral explanation of the revelation, the "oral law," that was transmitted by Moses to the people in oral form.

The mainstream rabbinic Judaism contrasts with Karaite Judaism which does not recognise the oral law as a divine authority, and the rabbinic procedures used to interpret Jewish scripture. The rabbinic Judaism appears to be assigned largely to a portion of Jewish history to imply the dominance of rabbis in the religious and national life of Jews in post-destruction Israel and beyond in the first century AD. There are indications that "rabbinic Judaism" activities predate this period by at least 1,000 years. Moses, himself was always referred to as "Moshe Rabbeinu - Moses our Rabbi/Teacher".

3.1.1 Rabbinic Hermeneutics

Principles of rabbinic hermeneutics include the followings:

- A law that operates under certain conditions will surely be operative in other situations where the same conditions are present in a more acute form.
- A law operating in one situation will also be operative in another situation, if the text characterises both situations in identical terms.
- A law that clearly expresses the purpose it was meant to serve will also apply to other situations where the identical purpose may be served.
- When a general rule is followed by illustrative particulars, only those particulars are to be embraced by it.
- A law that begins with specifying particular cases, and then proceeds to an all-embracing generalisation, is to be applied to

particulars cases not specified but logically falling into the same generalisation.

- A law that begins with a generalisation as to its intended applications, then continues with the specification of particular cases, and then concludes with a restatement of the generalisation, can be applied only to the particular cases specified.
- The rules about a generalisation being followed or preceded by specifying particulars (rules four and five) will not apply if it is apparent that the specification of the particular cases or the statement of the generalisation is meant purely for achieving a greater clarity of language.
- A particular case already covered in a generalisation that is nevertheless treated separately suggests that the same particularised treatment be applied to all other cases which are covered in that generalisation.
- A penalty specified for a general category of wrong-doing is not to be automatically applied to a particular case that is withdrawn from the general rule to be specifically prohibited, but without any mention of the penalty.
- A general prohibition followed by a specified penalty may be followed by a particular case, normally included in the generalisation, with a modification in penalty, either toward easing it or making it more severe.
- A case logically falling into a general law but treated separately remains outside the provisions of the general law except in those instances where it is specifically included in them.
- Obscurities in biblical texts may be cleared up from the immediate context or from subsequently occurring passages.

3.2 Jewish Legal Rabbinic Literature

Rabbinic literature is frequently called the oral Torah. Tradition has it that God gave the laws and customs contained in the oral Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai at the same time with the Written Torah (the first five books of the Bible). This oral Torah was passed down through the generations, "from Moses to Joshua; Joshua to the elders and from the elders to the prophets." (M. Pirkei Avot 1:1). However, some scholars believe that the teachings of the oral Torah developed during a much later period. Regardless of the time of its genesis, the oral Torah was the sages' method of making the written Torah meaningful to the people of their day. Rabbinic legal literature is made up of five major groups.

These include.

3.2.1 The Torah

The basis of Jewish law and tradition (halakha) is the Torah (also known as the Pentateuch or the five books of Moses). According to rabbinic tradition there are 613 commandments in the Torah. Some of these laws are directed only to men or to women, some only to the ancient priestly groups, the Kohanim and Leviyim (members of the tribe of Levi), and some only to farmers within the land of Israel. Torah was transmitted by the Pharisee sect of ancient Judaism, and were later recorded in written form and expanded upon by the rabbis. Rabbinic Judaism (which derives from the Pharisees) has always held that the books of the Torah (called the written law) have always been transmitted in parallel with an oral tradition.

Orthodox and many other Jews do not believe that the revealed Torah consists solely of its written contents, but of its interpretations as well. For the sages of the Mishnah and Talmud, and for their successors today, the study of Torah was therefore not merely a means to learn the contents of God's revelation, but an end in itself. In Judaism, the study of Torah can be a means of experiencing God.

3.2.2 The Mishnah

The Mishnah is a compilation of legal opinions and debates. Statements in the Mishnah are typically texts recording brief opinions of the rabbis debating a subject; or recording only an unattributed ruling, apparently representing a consensus view. The rabbis recorded in the Mishnah are known as Tannaim. The Midrash texts include a much broader selection of halakhic subjects than the Mishnah. Midrash is a method of reading details into or out of a biblical text. It is a compilation of Midrashic teachings, in the form of legal, exegetical, homiletical, or narrative writing, often configured as a commentary on the Bible or Mishnah. There are a large number of "classical" Midrashic works spanning a period from Mishnaic to Geonic times, often showing evidence of having been worked and reworked from earlier materials, and frequently coming to us in multiple variants. A compact list of these works is given below; a more thorough annotated list can be found under Midrash. The timeline below must be approximate because many of these works were composed over a long span of time, borrowing and collating material from earlier versions and their histories are therefore somewhat uncertain and the subject of scholarly debate.

3.2.3 Gemara

The Gemara mainly focuses on elucidating and elaborating the opinions of the Tannaim. The rabbis of the Gemara are known as *Amoraim* (sing. *Amora*). Much of the Gemara consists of legal analysis and the starting point for the analysis is usually a legal statement found in a Mishnah. The statement is then analysed and compared with other statements used in different approaches to biblical exegesis in rabbinic Judaism (or simpler interpretation of text in Torah study) exchanges between two (frequently anonymous and sometimes metaphorical) disputants, termed the *makshan* (questioner) and *tartzan* (answerer). Another important function of Gemara is to identify the correct biblical basis for a given law presented in the Mishnah and the logical process connecting one with the other. This activity was known as Talmud long before the existence of the "Talmud" as a text. Gemara frequently refers to these rabbanic statements in order to compare them to those contained in the Mishnah and to support or refute the propositions of Amoraim.

3.2.4 Baraitot

The baraitot cited in the Gemara are often quotations from the Tosefta (a tannaitic compendium of Halakha parallel to the Mishnah) and the Halakhic Midrashim (specifically Mekhilta, Sifra and Sifre). Some *baraitot*, however, are known only through traditions cited in the Gemara, and are not part of any other collection. In the three centuries following the redaction of the Mishnah, rabbis throughout Palestine and Babylonia analysed, debated, and discussed *baraita* work. These discussions form the Gemara. Gemara means "completion" (from the Hebrew *gamar* : "to complete") or "learning" (from the Aramaic: "to study"). All such non-Mishnaic tannaitic sources are termed *baraitot*.

3.2.5 Sefer ha-Maftea

The *Sefer ha-Maftea* (Book of the Key) is another rabbinical literature produced by Nissim Gaon, which contains a preface explaining the different forms of Talmudic argumentation and then explains abbreviated passages in the Talmud by cross-referring to parallel passages where the same thought is expressed in full. Some of the commentaries such as *iddushim* by Joseph ibn Migash on two tractates, Bava Batra and Shevuot, based on ananel and Alfasi also survived during this period. Other compilations of inter-testamental period are "Sefer ha-Ner" and "Arukh" produced by Zechariah Agamati and Rabbi Nathan b. Jechiel in the 11th century to help translate difficult words.

3.2.6 Rashi

However, the best known commentary on the Babylonian Talmud is “Rashi” written by Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac. This commentary is comprehensive, covering almost the entire Talmud. It was written as a running commentary and it provides a full explanation of the words, and explains the logical structure of each Talmudic passage. Most scholars considered it to be indispensable to students of the Talmud.

3.2.7 Tosafot

Tosafot is another major commentary of rabbinical literature produced by medieval Ashkenazic Jewry as additions or supplements on the Talmud. The *Tosafot* is collection of commentaries by various medieval Ashkenazic Rabbis on the Talmud. One of the main goals of the *Tosafot* is to explain and interpret contradictory statements in the Talmud. Unlike Rashi, the *Tosafot* is not a running commentary, but rather comments on selected matters. Often the explanations of *Tosafot* differ from those of Rashi. Among the founders of the *Tosafist* school were Rabbi Jacob b. Meir (known as Rabbeinu Tam), who was a grandson of Rashi, and, Rabbeinu Tam's nephew, Rabbi Isaac ben Samuel. The *Tosafot* commentaries were collected in different editions in the various schools.

3.2.8 Meforshim

Meforshim is a Hebrew word meaning "classical rabbinical commentators" or roughly meaning "exegetes", and is used as a substitute for the correct word *perushim* which means "commentaries". In Judaism this term refers to commentaries on the Torah five books of Moses, Tanakh, the Mishnah, the Talmud, response, even the siddur Jewish prayerbook, and more. By the time of Rabbi Judah haNasi (200 AD), after the destruction of Jerusalem, much of these materials were edited together into the Mishnah. Over the next four centuries this law underwent discussion and debate in both of the world's major Jewish communities (in Israel and Babylonia), and the commentaries on the Mishnah from each of these communities eventually came to be edited together into compilations known as the two Talmuds.

3.2.9 Talmud

The Talmud (Hebrew: *talmūd* meaning "instruction" or "learning" or "teach") is a central text of mainstream Judaism. It takes the form of a record of rabbinic discussions pertaining to Jewish law, ethics, philosophy, customs and history. The Talmud has two components: the Mishnah (c. 200 AD), the first written compendium of Judaism's oral

Law; and the Gemara (500 AD), a discussion of the Mishnah and related Tannaitic writings that often ventures onto other subjects and expounds broadly on the Tanakh. These terms are often used interchangeably. However, they form the basis for all codes of rabbinic law and are quoted in other rabbinic literature. This Talmud is a synopsis of the analysis of the Mishnah that was developed over the course of nearly 200 years by Academies in Israel, especially those of Tiberias and Caesarea. The Talmud is broadly divided into two categories. These include:

3.2.9.1 The Jerusalem Talmud (Talmud Yerushalmi)

The Jerusalem Talmud is evidently incomplete and is not easy to follow because the compilers lacked the time to produce a quality work they had intended. The text is the apparent cessation of work on the Jerusalem Talmud in the fifth century which has been associated with the decision of Theodosius II in 425 AD to suppress the Patriarchate and put an end to the practice of formal scholarly ordination. There are traditions that hold that in the Messianic Age the Jerusalem Talmud will have priority over the Babylonian. This may be interpreted as meaning that, following the restoration of the Sanhedrin and the line of ordained scholars, the work will be completed and "out of Zion shall go the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem". The Jerusalem Talmud or the *Talmud Yerushalmi* also known as the Palestinian Talmud, was one of the two compilations of Jewish religious teachings and commentary that was transmitted orally for centuries prior to its compilation by Jewish scholars in Israel.

It is a compilation of teachings of the schools of Tiberias, Sepphoris and Caesarea written largely in a western Aramaic dialect that differs from its Babylonian counterpart. This form of the Talmud was compiled in the fourth century in Israel and has not received much attention from commentators. The Jerusalem Talmud has a greater focus on the Land of Israel and the Torah's agricultural laws pertaining to the land because it was written in the Land of Israel where the laws applied. It does not cover the Mishnaic order of Kodashim, which deals with sacrificial rites and laws pertaining to the Temple, while the Babylonian Talmud does cover it. It is not clear why this is so, as the laws were not directly applicable in either country following the Temple's destruction in 70 AD. In both Talmuds, only one tractate of *Tohorot* (ritual purity laws) is examined, that of the menstrual laws, *Niddah*. The *Talmud Yerushalmi* is like *Tosefta*. He listens to the Mishnah and *Tosefta* and then takes over the conversation, citing statistics and information from a vast library of knowledge.

3.2.9.2 Babylonian Talmud (Talmud Bavli)

The Babylonian Talmud was a documents compiled over the period of late antiquity 3rd to 5th centuries. It comprised of the Mishnah and Gemara which latter represented the culmination of more than 300 years of analysis of the Mishnah in the Babylonian Academies. The compilation of the Babylonian Talmud in its present form is ascribed by tradition to two Babylonian sages, Rav Ashi and Ravina. Rav Ashi who were presidents of the Sura Academy from 375 to 427 AD and was completed by Ravina, traditionally regarded as the final Amoraic expounder. Accordingly, traditionalists argue that Ravina's death in 499 AD is the latest possible date for the completion of the redaction of the Talmud. This called for Talmudic scholarship which developed out of the need to ascertain the Halakha.

3.2.9.3 The Differences between the Babylonian Talmud and the Jerusalem Talmud

The differences between the Babylonian Talmud and the Jerusalem Talmud are:

- a. The Babylonian Talmud records the opinions of the rabbis of Israel as well as of those of Babylonia, while the Jerusalem Talmud only seldom cites the Babylonian rabbis.
- b. The Babylonian version of Talmud contains the opinions of more generations because of its later date of completion than the Jerusalem Talmud. For this reason the Babylonia Talmud is regarded as a more comprehensive collection of the opinions available.
- c. Because of the centuries of redaction between the composition of the Jerusalem and the Babylonian Talmud, the opinions of early *Amoraim* might be closer to their original form in the Jerusalem Talmud. The influence of the Babylonian Talmud has therefore been far greater than that of the *Yerushalmi*.
- d. The influence and prestige of the Jewish community of Israel which steadily declined in contrast with the Babylonian community in the years after the redaction of the Talmud and continuing until the Gaonic era also serve as a major different between the two Talmud.
- e. The editing of the Babylonian Talmud was also superior to that of the Jerusalem version, making it more accessible and readily usable. According to Maimonides (whose life began almost a hundred years after the end of the Gaonic era), all Jewish communities during the Gaonic era formally accepted the Babylonian Talmud as binding upon themselves, and modern

Jewish practice follows the Babylonian Talmud's conclusions on all areas in which the two Talmuds conflict.

3.2.9.4 The Role of Talmud in the Study of Judaism

The role of Talmud in the study of inter-testamental Judaism is better examined in connection with the past and current views of the various Jewish movements.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. List five rabbinic writings known to you and briefly discuss three of them.
- ii. Give five principles of rabbinical literature and comment on any three.
- iii. State the differences between Babylonian Talmud and Jerusalem Talmud.

4.0 CONCLUSION

You have learned about rabbinic literature and their historical origins. It should be pointed out to you, that this literature emerged in the first century as an attempt to write down pharisaic oral traditions after pharisaism had triumphed over its rivals. The rabbinical literature helps in interpreting and understanding the scripture as the divine words of God.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you learned the names of writings in rabbinic literature. The general belief is that your understanding of the emergence of this literature and its contents will go a long way in the understanding of the history of Jewish people during the inter-testamental period. This objective has been achieved in this unit.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. Give two significant roles of Talmud in the study of Judaism.
- ii. List three rabbinic writings and discuss them in details.

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