

Israel, the Church & the Abrahamic Promises

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1. The Abrahamic Promises

Genesis is the first book of a nine-volume history of Israel:

- Torah: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy (= Pentateuch)
- Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings (English Bibles place in the Historical Books)

This tells the story of OT Israel from Abraham until the exile from the Land.

This history is preceded by a Prologue (Gen 1:1–11:26), presenting the context for God's promises to Abraham which lead to Israel.

I. Prologue: The Primeval History (Gen 1:1–11:26)

Creation: Blessed life (Gen 1:1-2:3)

Gen 1:1–2:3 is a prologue to the prologue. It is best read not as a 21st-century science text but as an ANE cosmological text, addressing the three big topics of all such texts: the genesis and meaning of god(s), cosmos and humanity:

- theogony/theology
- cosmogony/cosmology
- anthropogony/anthropology

1. Theogony (1:1a)

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (1:1).

There is no theogony. God is singular. There is no conflict between multiple gods. Other ANE accounts start with a *Chaoskampf*, a primordial struggle. God created, establishing an absolute distinction between creator and creation. In the NT we learn there is relationality within the singular godhead.

2. Cosmogony (1:1b-31)

Like other ANE accounts, cosmogony is about bringing order to what is non-ordered.

Starting with a formless and empty (*tohu wa-bohu*) earth, God gave it form (days 1-3) and content (days 4-6). He made it functional and gave it functionaries.

Realm	Days 1-3			Days 4-6		
		<i>Formation</i>	<i>Differentiation</i>		<i>Filling</i>	<i>Functionaries</i>
heavens	1	light	light : darkness	4	heavens	sun, moon, stars
waters	2	firmament	water above : below	5	sky + sea	sea creatures, birds
land	3	dry ground vegetation	sea : land	6	land	animals mankind

Seven creative acts (days 1-6a) produce an ordered cosmos that is good: it is functional, serving the purposes for which God created it. Seven categories (seed-bearing plants, fruit-bearing trees, fish, birds, domesticated animals, wild animals, creepy-crawlies) are according to their kind (10×).

God created (ברא *bara'*) living creatures (1:21) and blessed them: ‘Be fruitful, multiply and fill (פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלְאוּ) the waters in the sea...’ (1:22), endowing them with abundant and effective life, i.e., he enabling them to fulfill the command, to be functional.

1. The Abrahamic Promises

3. Anthropogony (1:26-30)

Though the cosmos is full functional after seven creative acts, God does an eighth act. He created (בָּרָא *bara'*) the human, not according to its kind, but according to his kind, in his image and likeness (1:26-27). Similar blessing: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (1:28).

God gives the human an additional function: rule over the animals of the three realms (1:28). As God’s image, the human represents God’s presence on earth; he is God’s vice-regent Lat. *rego* rule).

4. Entering into Rest (2:2-3)

After creating a world that was very good, God did something special with the seventh day:

he finished his work and he rested (שָׁבַת *shabat*) from his work. God took his rest in the realm of time.

he blessed it and sanctified (קִדְּשׁ) it. This establishes a major division: six days that are very good vs. a seventh day that is holy. Does this imply an eschatology? Will it be God’s purpose to extend holiness to all time?

B. The Garden of Eden (Gen 2:4-25)

Gen 2:4 (the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created) starts the history.

In Gen 1, God specified where the creatures of the sea, sky and land were to live, but not where the humans are to live.

The LORD God formed (יָצַר *yatsar*), like a potter, the man (אָדָם *adam*) from the dust of the ground (אֲדָמָה). Man’s origin was the ground, but that was not his destiny. In Eden, God planted a garden (גֶּן *Gk paradeisos*), the original paradise. Here he put the man (2:8).

- The LORD God settled (נִיחַ *hi*. “caused to rest”) the man in the garden (2:15).
- The LORD God gave him two tasks: to work (עָבַד) and keep (שָׁמַר) (2:15). This is often understood as to work and keep the garden, but is better understood as priestly language of serving the Lord.
- The LORD God supplied the humans with everything they needed for life. He did the work, planting the garden, making the trees spring up.
- The Lord God immediately gave a commandment to keep (2:16-17). The human was to heed God’s word. This was not complicated: a single thing was off-limits amidst all God’s bounty.
- The garden was God’s garden, his sanctuary on earth. Here he was present to the human, walking (הִלֵּךְ *hitp*.) in the cool of the day (3:8). Here he communicated with humanity. The garden was an intrusion of heaven onto earth.

Exile (Gen 3–11)

Instead of heeding the Lord’s voice, the woman listened to the serpent’s voice, and the man listened to the woman’s voice. The woman *saw* that the fruit was *good* and she *took*, an act of moral autonomy, making her own decision of right and wrong.

God’s judgment on sin:

- Pronounced the serpent cursed (אָרֶר) the opposite of “blessed.” Frustrates life, rendering it futile.
- Inflicted man and woman with pain.
- Expelled (גרשׁ) them east of Eden to work (עָבַד) the ground (*adamah*). Working the ground is very different from serving in the sanctuary (garden). Mankind returns to his origins: the dust of the ground.

The rest of primeval history is divided into two sets of ten generations:

5. Adam to Noah

Escalation of sin:

1. Two ways of approaching God: Cain & Abel.

2. Ignoring God's warning, Cain let sin in the door. He murdered Abel. God curses (אָרִיֶר) him, an escalation of the curse to humans. Cain's line continues to the 7th generation. Cain went into voluntary exile from God, settling in the land of Nod (wandering), east of Eden (4:16).
3. Civilization flourished east of Eden. The tools of civilization are not the gifts of the gods, but human development outside God's presence.
4. The sons of God *saw* that the daughters of men were *good* (fair) and they took (6:2). World's heroes: the Nephilim.

God's response: the Flood. Undoes creation: returns order to non-order in response to human disorder. Noah: walked with God and heeded his voice. God's hero.

6. Noah to Abram

A new beginning with Noah, a new Adam: "God blessed Noah and his three sons and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth'" (9:1).

God makes a covenant with Noah and all living creatures to not resort to a Flood again. Sign: rainbow.

Escalation of sin:

1. Ham's sin against Noah (9:20-24). Noah, presumably on God's behalf, passes judgment: Canaan is cursed (9:24).
2. Tower of Babel (11:1-9). Humanity, still wandering east of Eden, fearing dispersion over the earth, gathers to make a city, tower (ziggurat) and name. Human effort to bring divine presence to earth. Divine judgment: confusion of language, scattering over the earth.

II. The Patriarchal History (Gen 11:27–50:26)

A. The Call of Abraham

God's response to the sin of the primeval history.

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

And I will make of you a great nation,
and I will bless you and make your name great,
so that you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
and him who dishonors you I will curse,
and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen 12:1-3)

The promises:

1. Blessing: 5× in 12:2-3. God will bless Abram, so that through him all nations will be blessed. God restores blessing, as he did with Noah, but now will be more proactive "I will bless you...all the families of the earth shall be blessed."
2. Seed: God will make Abram a great nation (גוי גדול). Rather than commanding Abram, "be fruitful and multiply," God will do it.
3. Land: calls Abram to leave his land and go to another one which God will show him. The land is identified in 12:5-7 as the land of Canaan.

Election: God chose Abram, no better than anyone else; he's an idolater living in Ur, s. Mesopotamia. He chose him for the benefit of others also: chose him *from* the nations *for* the nations.

Obstacles

There are obstacles to fulfilling the promises of both seed and land:

1. Seed: Sarai is barren (11:30), highlighted by the chiasmic structure of 11:28-32, centering on v. 30.
2. Land: the Canaanites were then in the land (12:6).

B. The Seed and the Land in the Patriarchal Narratives (11:27-25:18)

The Abraham narrative is developed in a chiasmic structure:¹

- A Genealogy of Terah (11:27-32)
- B Start of Abram's Spiritual Odyssey (12:1-9)
- C Sarai in foreign palace; ordeal ends in peace and success; Abram and Lot part (12:10–13:18)
- D Abram comes to the rescue of Sodom and Lot (14:1-24)
- E Covenant with Abram; Annunciation of Ishmael (15:1–16:16)
- E' Covenant with Abraham; Annunciation of Isaac (17:1–18:15)
- D' Abraham comes to the rescue of Sodom and Lot (18:16–19:38)
- C' Sarah in foreign palace; ordeal ends in peace and success; Abraham and Ishmael part (20:1–21:34)
- B' Climax of Abraham's Spiritual Odyssey (22:1-19)
- A' Genealogy of Nahor (22:20-24)

This pattern focuses attention on:

- the start and climax of Abraham's spiritual odyssey: beginning with the call to go (הָלַךְ-אֶל-הָאֲדָמָה) "to the land I will show you" (12:1), ending with the command to go (הָלַךְ-אֶל-הָאֲדָמָה) to "one of the mountains of which I shall tell you"

1. Gary A. Rendsburg, *The Redaction of Genesis* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1986), 28-29.

(22:2).

- the two covenants, associated with two annunciations concerning the two sons.

First covenant ceremony (15):

Follows Abram's faith: "he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness" (15:6).

- believed: regarded God and his word as trustworthy, faithful.
- righteousness: community loyalty, here in front of God.

Promise: the extent of the land is specified: from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates (15:18).

Second covenant ceremony: changed Abram's name to Abraham (father of a multitude). Abraham is given a part: circumcision, the sign of the covenant.

Motivated by what he saw, Lot separated from Abram and journeyed east, while Abram settled in the land of Canaan (13:11-12). But the only land which Abraham acquired is a burial plot for Sarah: the cave at Machpelah in Kiriath-Arba (later Hebron) (ch. 23). Two generations later, when Rachel died in childbirth (Benjamin) on the road from Bethel to Ephrath (Bethlehem), Jacob erected a pillar over her tomb (35:20).

God continued his election, choosing Isaac not Ishmael, Jacob not Esau. With Jacob the process is complete. By the end of Genesis, the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob number 70, equal to the number of nations (Table of Nations, ch. 10). But they are in Egypt, outside the land.

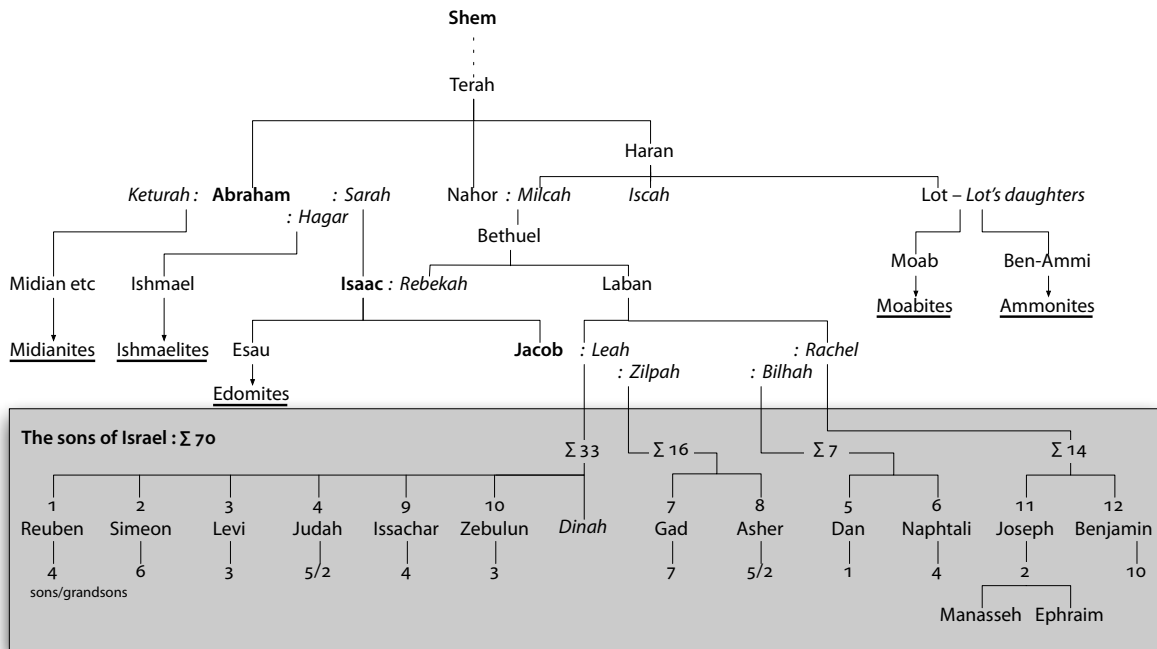


Fig. 1-1: The descendants of Terah and the "sons" of Israel

2. Israel

I. The People enter the Land

A. Exodus from Egypt

The sons of Jacob/Israel (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל sons and grandsons) who entered Egypt numbered 70 (Gen 46:27; Exod 1:5), equal to the number of nations in the Table of Nations (Gen 10). This was the nucleus of a new nation. It was in Egypt that God multiplied these 70 into a numerous people (Exod 1:7, 12, 20; cf. Gen 47:27). They were fruitful and multiplied and spread out over the land (cf. Gen 1:27; 9:1). Pharaoh tried to prevent this multiplication by subjecting the Israelites to harsh labor (עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה) and by ordering the killing of all the baby boys, but God frustrated his purposes (cf. Gen 12:3 “him who dishonors you I will curse”).

The Israelites cried for help; God heard and remembered his covenant with the patriarchs (Exod 2:24). He appeared to Moses in the burning bush: “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (3:6). God would deliver his people (עַמִּי “my people” for the first time, Exod 3:7) from the Egyptians, bring them out of Egypt, and into the land (3:7-11).

Pharaoh tried to thwart God’s purpose, but again God frustrated his efforts, overpowering him, his magicians and the Egyptian gods in a series of ten plagues.

The Israelites left Egypt:

1. on the 15th day of the 1st month of the 1st year of their new calendar
2. 430 years to the very day (בְּעֶצְמָם הַיּוֹם) that Israel had been in Egypt (Exod 12:40-41; cf. Gen 15:13)
3. 600,000 men, plus women and children, and a mixed multitude came out with them (Exod 12:37-38)
4. with many possessions; they plundered the Egyptians

B. In the Wilderness

God did not bring his people directly into the land. Instead he brought them to Mt Sinai, to himself, where he stated his purpose for them:

You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” (Exod 19:4-6)

1. treasured possession (סְגֻלָּה *segullah*): out of all the peoples, God had chosen the Israelites to be especially his.
2. a kingdom of priests and a holy nation: sanctified (set apart for God) from the other nations, but also for the other nations.

Condition: Israel was to keep God’s covenant:

1. the Mosaic or Sinaitic covenant, added on top of and after the Abrahamic covenant.
2. a covenant specifically with Israel (i.e. today it has no validity for the church!)
3. a treaty between God and his people. The heart of the treaty is the Ten Commandments (Ten Words = Decalogue). Two copies of the treaty (i.e. all ten commandments on each stone tablet) were kept in the ark of the covenant; one copy for God, one for Israel.
4. Sealed with blood and a fellowship meal (Exod 24:1-11).

Format of the Treaty

- Preamble: what God had done for his people
- Commands:
- Blessings and Curses: for obedience/disobedience

The Law (תּוֹרָה Torah = instruction) instructed Israel how to live in the presence of a holy God. At its heart lay the command, “Be holy as I am holy, says the LORD.”

Only after the covenant had been sealed, the tabernacle made and filled with God’s glory (Exod 35-40), the priests consecrated (Lev 8), and the sacrificial offerings commenced (Lev 9), was Israel ready to move on from Sinai into the land.

C. Failed Entrance into the Land

After a census of adult (20+) males who came out of Egypt (Num 1) and celebration of Passover, the people left Sinai on Y2 M2 D20 (Num 10:11). They quickly came to Kadesh-Barnea in the wilderness of Paran (Num 12:16), from where Moses sent 12 spies into the land for 40 days:

1. Report: ten brought back a negative report, while Joshua and Caleb brought back a positive report (13:25-33)
2. Rebellion: the people rejected Moses’ leadership and sought a new leader to take them back to Egypt (Num 14:1-4)
3. Judgment: God condemned the people to 40 years of wandering (one year for each day of the exploration) until the entire generation of adults (20+) who came out of Egypt died.
4. Rebellion 2: the people tried to enter the land without permission and were defeated (14:39-45)

1. Passage through Trans-Jordan

The period of wandering ended when the Israelites crossed the Zered River, 38 years after leaving Kadesh-barnea (Deut 2:14; cf. Num 21:12). Israel faced opposition from nations on the e. side of the Jordan rift valley:

1. Edom: refused Israel permission to pass through along King’s Highway (Num 20:14-21). Israel made a big detour down to the Red Sea to skirt to the east of Edom.
2. Sihon king of the Amorites (capital: Heshbon): refused Israel’s request to pass through, he attacked and was defeated (Num 21:21-30).
3. Og king of Bashan attacked at Edrei; also defeated (Num 21:31-35). Israel took possession of the lands of Sihon and Og.
4. Balak king of Moab: hired Balaam to curse the Israelites.

By this time the first generation had died out and a second census was taken (Num 26).

Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh requested permission to settle in trans-Jordan, so they were given the lands of Sihon and Og. This was not really part of the land. Moses ordered the men to accompany the other 9½ tribes across the Jordan.

This second generation camped on the plains of Moab opposite Jericho. Here Moses gave a second telling of the law (Deuteronomy = second law). Much of this concerned the land.

D. The Land

The land God promised to Abraham and his descendants is called simply The Land (אֶרֶץ *ha-aretz*). “The Promised Land” is not a Biblical phrase. The land is described in 3 ways:

1. geographically: the borders or the regions.
2. ethnographically: the inhabitants
3. characteristically: the nature of the land

2. Israel

1. Geographically

The land is described in two ways: expansively and minimally:

expansive: from the river of Egypt (נַהַר מִצְרַיִם) either e. branch of the Nile or Wadi el-Arish) to the Euphrates (נַהַר) (תְּגִדֵּל נַהַר-פָּרַת) (Gen 15:18; cf Josh 1:4).

minimal: 7 regions, encompassing an area similar to Biblical Israel (Dan to Beersheba).

- a. The Hill Country הַהָר
- b. The Shephelah הַשְּׁפֵלָה
- c. The sea coast חוֹף הַיָּם
- d. The slopes הַאֲשֵׁרוֹת
- e. The Arabah הַעֲרָבָה
- f. The desert הַמִּדְבָּר
- g. The Negev הַנֶּגֶב

2. Ethnographically

The land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites (Gen 15:19-21). The list varies: 6 peoples (10×), 7 peoples (3×), 10 peoples (1×).

These peoples have defiled the land through their abominations, thereby forfeiting their right to the land which is vomiting them out (Lev 18:24-25). Their sins are complete (cf. Gen 15:16). Israel is warned not to repeat these abominations lest it too be vomited out (Lev 18; 20).

There are also giant people in the land: Anakim, Rephaim, Nephilim, Emim. But Israel need not fear these.

3. Characteristically

1. a good and broad land (אֶרֶץ טוֹבָה וְרַחְבָּה).
2. a land flowing with milk and honey (אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֵלֶב וְדבֶשׁ). A land of great fertility (Deut 8:7-10; 11:9-12).
3. a land sensitive to the spiritual condition of the Israelites (Deut 11:13-17). Obedience would bring fertility; disobedience would bring drought, famine, and ultimately expulsion.

E. Entrance into the Land

Joshua led Israel across the Jordan to take possession of the land.

Canaanite genocide: God ordered his people to completely destroy the inhabitants = the *herem* (חֵרֶם), devoting to complete destruction.

1. Israel couldn't do this to any people it liked; only the inhabitants of Canaan, at God's express command.
2. Fulfillment of the curse on Canaan
3. Always a way of escape: contrast Rahab the Canaanite prostitute and Achan, who traded places (Josh 2, 6-7).

After completing the conquest (taking possession of the land, which involved dispossessing the inhabitants), Joshua allocated the land by lot to the tribes as their inheritance. Each tribe was to complete taking possession of its inheritance.

Failure again: Israel failed to fully take possession of the land.

3. The Kingdom of Israel

I. The Need for a King

Joshua's last act prior to his death was to gather all the tribes to Shechem and lead them in a renewal of their covenant with the Lord (Josh 24). The people acknowledged that it was the Lord their God who had brought them up out of Egypt, preserved them on the way, and driven out (גָּרַשׁ) the inhabitants of the land before them; therefore they would not forsake him to serve other gods (24:16-18). But Israel's resolve did not last into the next generation.

A. The Book of Judges

After Joshua's death there arose another generation who did not know the Lord or what he had done for Israel (Judg 2:10). The tribes were unable to fully drive out the inhabitants of the allotted territory, so that the Canaanites lived among them or vice versa (Judg 1).

Israel lived a recurring cycle of sin, judgment and grace (Judg 2:10-19):

1. sin
2. foreign aggression: God's punishment
3. call for help
4. God provided a deliverer (judge), who rescued then ruled
5. this judge maintained peace and prosperity throughout his lifetime
6. return to sin after death of the judge

God provided Israel with a series of twelve judges of declining quality (3:7-16:31).

Judges ends with two epilogues about two tribes:

- Dan (17-18): unable to take possession of its allotted territory (Judg 1:34-36), Dan was looking for an inheritance in which to dwell. It relocated to the far north of Israelite territory, voluntarily placing itself on the periphery.
- Benjamin (19-21): because of the abomination and outrage (20:6, cf. Sodom Gen 19) committed by the Benjamites of Gibeah, the tribe of Benjamin was nearly eliminated in civil war.

Common theme: In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25).

B. Israel's Nadir

Israel reached its lowest point at the end of Eli's life (1 Sam 2-4), ca. 1075 BC:

1. the word of God was rare (3:1)
2. Eli's sons, the priests Hophni and Phinehas, were corrupt and wicked (3:12-17; 22-25)
3. the ark of the covenant was captured by the Philistines (4:11). The Lord went into voluntary exile: Ichabod: The glory has departed from Israel! (4:21)
4. the tabernacle at Shiloh was destroyed

C. The People's King

Israel asked Samuel, "appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations" (1 Sam 8:5). But God had called Israel to be unlike all the other nations (Lev 20:26; Num 23:9)! God gave them the sort of king they wanted, a man head-and-shoulders taller than anyone else (1 Sam 9:3). His name was Saul (שָׂאֵל Shaul, "asked"). But he did not heed the Lord (1 Sam 15:11,19,26), so the Lord changed his mind (נָחַם) and rejected him (15:26,35).

II. King David

The Lord guided Samuel in selecting the man of his choice to be king: “I have provided for myself a king” (16:1), a man after his own heart (13:14).

After years being pursued by Saul, and 7 years as king over Judah in Hebron following Saul’s death, David became king over all Israel. Immediately David does several things in quick succession:

- Completion of the Conquest: David captured Jerusalem (2 Sam 5:6-10, henceforth the City of David) and defeated the Philistines (5:17-25; 8:1), completing the Conquest of the Land. The Lord gave him rest from all surrounding enemies (7:1). David built his palace.
- Entrance of ark into Jerusalem (2 Sam 6). Saul had left the ark on the periphery for 20 years. David put the Lord back at the center. The entrance of the ark symbolized the Lord’s entrance as the Great King and his endorsement of Jerusalem as his city (the city of God). The Lord had promised he would choose a place for his Name (Deut 12), where Israel was to go on pilgrimage. Jerusalem was now that place.
- Wanted to build God a permanent dwelling, signifying the end of the journey (2 Sam 7).
- Establishment of David’s rule (2 Sam 7): only after the Lord’s rule had been established.

A. The Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7)

With his own palace (house) and at God-given rest, David wanted to build God a house (temple). But God had other plans (7:8-14):

1. a great name for David
2. a place for Israel
3. rest for the nation
4. a house for David: a son who would be in a son-Father relationship with God. This son would be a temple-builder.

Though not called a covenant here, it is referred to as such elsewhere: the covenant with David.

III. Solomon and the Temple

Although David is regarded as the ideal ruler, Israel reached its zenith early in the reign of Solomon (c. 970-931 BC).

The Abrahamic promises seemed fulfilled (1 Kgs 4:20-34):

1. seed: as numerous as the sand on the seashore (4:20)
2. land: Solomon was king (מֶלֶךְ) over all Israel (4:1), ruler (מוֹשֵׁל) over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the border of Egypt (4:21), and ruler (רֹדֵן) even beyond the Euphrates (4:24); he had peace (*shalom*) on all sides. Israel dwelt in safety, from Dan to Beersheba, and plenty, each under his own vine and fig tree (4:20,25).
3. blessing to the nations: men from all nations came to listen to Solomon’s wisdom (4:34), cf. Queen of Sheba (10:1-13).

A. Temple

David desired to build the temple for the Lord’s permanent presence. But the Lord denied that request, for he had blood on his hands. David provided the land and the money for his son Solomon to build the temple. Like the tabernacle, it was according to a heavenly pattern.

The temple was a permanent and larger version of the tabernacle. The tabernacle was the center of ordered space, a new creation. Even more so the temple.

Solomon’s great prayer of dedication (1 Kgs 8) shows that he understood the purpose of the temple. It was a conduit between Israel and its God, between earth and heaven. Israel would find itself in various predicaments. It would pray

towards the temple, and God in heaven would see and hear: his eyes, ears and heart would be open to that house of prayer and to his people who directed their prayers towards him there.

B. Zion

Jerusalem usually refers to the physical city. Zion, while initially referring to a particular hill, is usually used metaphorically. Zion is the seat of three inter-related things:

- God: present in the temple
- Kingdom of God: rule over God's people exercised by the king in his palace next door to the temple.
- People: gathered around God and the king (temple and palace), living in the city.

Jerusalem and the Temple were the focal point for Israel's liturgical life:

- Worship: when the ark entered Jerusalem the Levites job of transporting the ark was over. David gave them a new assignment: liturgical worship in the ark's permanent location (1 Chr 16).
- Pilgrimage: it was to Jerusalem that the Israelites were to go on their thrice-yearly pilgrimage: Passover, Shavuot (Weeks/Pentecost), Sukkot (Tabernacles/Booths).

Jerusalem and the Temple were the center of the world, the axis between heaven and earth (*axis mundi*).



Heinrich Bünting, Hanover, 1581



4. The Decline & Fall of Israel

I. Solomon

“King Solomon loved many foreign women” (1 Kgs 11:1)

- 700 wives, princesses: political alliances with surrounding nations; 300 concubines
- broke God’s commandment against intermarriage
- they turned his heart away after other gods to which he clung (עֲבָדָה) in love
- he built shrines to these abominations (gods).

A. Divine judgment

- God raised up adversaries against Solomon
- Told Solomon he would tear from him all the kingdom, leaving only one tribe “for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen”
- Ahijah the Lord’s prophet commissioned Jeroboam to receive ten tribes. Solomon’s son would be left one tribe “that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen to put my name” (11:37).

II. The Divided Kingdom (1031-587)

A. Israel

God, through Ahijah, offered Jeroboam a secure dynasty if he heeded his commandment (11:38).

But Jeroboam, out of fear, established a man-made religion: “the sin of Jeroboam” (12:26-33):

- golden calves at Bethel and Dan; cf. golden calf at Sinai (Exod 32)
- appointed non-Levitical priests
- designated festival days of his own choosing
- offered sacrifices himself

Subsequent kings repeated the sin of Jeroboam until Ahab who thought it trivial to do that; he did more, instituting Baal-worship as the religion of the northern kingdom (16:31).

The northern kingdom was unstable:

209 years, 19 kings, 9 dynasties, 3 capital cities; kings all evil, following sins of Jeroboam.

Table 4-1: Contrast between Israel & Judah

	Israel	Judah
Duration of kingdom (years)	209	344
No. of kings	19	20
No. of dynasties	9	1
Moral character of kings	all evil	good/evil
Standard for evaluation	Jeroboam	David
Sites of worship	Dan, Bethel	Jerusalem
Festivals	man-made	God-appointed
Priests	non-Levitical	Levitical

B. Judah

Exile & Return

Exile

Return

5. Jesus and Second-Temple Judaism

The Second Temple Period runs from the end of the Babylonian Captivity (539 BC) to the destruction of the Second Temple (AD 70).

I. Political Situation

A. The Persian Empire

In 539 BC Cyrus, king of Persia, captured Babylon, ending the Babylonian Empire.

1. Return from Exile

In 538 Cyrus issued a royal decree permitting the return of Jews to Jerusalem. This was part of a general policy of allowing captive peoples to return home:

I returned to these sacred cities..., the sanctuaries of which have been in ruins for a long time, the images which (used) to live therein and established for them permanent sanctuaries. I (also) gathered all their former inhabitants and returned (to them) their habitations... (Cyrus Cylinder, British Museum; *ANET*)

In 537 a small group returned with Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest. They started rebuilding the temple, but quickly gave up. In 520 Haggai and Zechariah encouraged them to resume, and the Second Temple was completed in 515. But it was a disappointment for those who knew the glory of the First Temple (Solomon's) or who were expecting a temple like that described by Ezekiel. There is no mention of God's glory filling this temple.

In 458 Ezra came to Jerusalem where he served as a priest and scribe. In 446 Nehemiah came to serve as governor.

The Jews viewed the return to Jerusalem as a miraculous demonstration of God's faithfulness to his people; it was a second exodus. But something wasn't quite right: the second temple lacked the glory of the first, Judah remained a minor district (Yehud) of the Persian empire. This was not the great return the Jews had expected.

B. Hellenistic Rule

In an amazing campaign in 334-323, Alexander (the Great) of Macedonia (356-323) swept through Asia as far as India, overrunning Judea (332) and the remnants of the Persian empire (331). He died in Babylon in 323, aged 32.

Leaving only an inept brother and an unborn son, Alexander's vast empire quickly fell into the hands of his generals (the Diadochi, Gk Διάδοχοι, "successors"), who fought among themselves for 20 years (The Wars of the Diadochi, 323-301) before four of them reached a stable disposition of power, including Ptolemy ruling Egypt and Judea from Alexandria, and Seleucus ruling Syria from Antioch.

1. Seleucid rule of Palestine (198-143 BC)

In 198 the Seleucid king Antiochus III the Great captured Judea from Ptolemy IV.

Faced with the growing power of Rome and an unstable kingdom, Antiochus IV Epiphanes (r. 175-164) tried to unite his kingdom around Greek culture and religion. He turned the temple into a temple of Zeus. When the Jews resisted he responded harshly: he set out to eradicate Judaism by forbidding sabbath observance, feasts, circumcision and

sacrifices; by destroying copies of the Torah; by requiring Jews to eat pork and offer unclean sacrifices; and by sacrificing a pig on the altar in the temple (167).

Mattathias, an old priest in the village of Modein, refused to offer a sacrifice to Zeus. He and his five sons sparked a rebellion—the Maccabean Revolt. His third son Judah (nicknamed **הַמַּכַּבִּי** ha-Maccabee “the hammer”; Gk Judas Maccabeus) assumed leadership when Mattathias died in 166. Judas captured Judah, Jerusalem and the temple. In 164, exactly three years after its desecration, the temple and altar were rededicated, a miraculous deliverance commemorated ever since in Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication or Lights (**חֲנֻכָּה** “dedication”). The Jews now had religious freedom under the political rule of Syria. The story of this revolt is told in 1 & 2 Maccabees (in the Apocrypha).

C. Hasmonean Rule (142–63 BC)

Judas continued the struggle for political independence, succeeded by his brothers Jonathan (160) and Simon (143). In 150 Jonathan was appointed high priest and governor of Judea (under Syrian rule). In 142 Simon won independence from Syria to make a dream come true: Israel was independent, free of Gentile rule, for the first time since 587. In 140 the Jews made Simon’s position as ruler and high priest a hereditary office, though he was descended from neither David nor Zadok. For the next 77 years Judea was ruled by the Hasmonean line of high priests (Josephus traces the name Hasmonean to Mattathias’ great grandfather). Under Simon “each man sat under his vine and his fig tree, and there was none to make them afraid” (1 Macc 14:12).

John Hyrcanus I, Aristobulus I and Alexander Janneus conquered new territory so that Janneus’ kingdom was equal in size to that of David and Solomon, i.e., from the Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt.

In 67, the Hasmonean rule degenerated into a civil war between Aristobulus II backed by the Sadducees, and Hyrcanus II backed by the Pharisees. Both brothers appealed to Roman general Pompey. In response to rebellion by Aristobulus II, Pompey attacked Jerusalem; Hyrcanus’ followers opened the gates but Aristobulus’ followers held the temple for 3 months. Finally Pompey captured the temple and entered the Holy of Holies, where he found nothing.

D. The Roman Empire

Rome rose to power in the Third Century BC, uniting Italy, defeating Carthage in the Second Punic Wars (218-201), defeating Macedonia in 197. By the first century BC, both aristocratic rule and democratic rule had failed to maintain good government and the republic was headed for authoritarian rule. In 49 BC Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon, declaring war on Rome. Emerging victorious from the civil war with Pompey he was appointed dictator, acclaimed as a demi-god, and had temples dedicated to himself. He was assassinated in 44 BC. In 27 BC Octavian emerged victorious from a second civil war; a grateful Senate awarded him the title Augustus, and proclaimed him emperor. The Roman empire was born.

1. Herodian Rule

Pompey made Judea a Roman province in 63 BC. Hyrcanus II was reappointed high priest, but, behind the scenes, the strings were pulled by Antipater whom Alexander Janneus had appointed governor of Idumea (Edom). Julius Caesar made Antipater II procurator of Judea, and gave Hyrcanus the title of ethnarch of the Jews, but Antipater II was the effective ruler. Antipater II appointed his son Herod as governor of Galilee in 47.

Herod the Great

Seeking greater power, Herod married into the Hasmonean line, becoming betrothed to Mariamne, the granddaughter of both archrivals Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II! This paid off when Caesar appointed him king of

5. Jesus and Second-Temple Judaism

Judea in 40. In 37 he recovered Jerusalem from the Parthians who had invaded in 40. During his 33-year reign Herod had the Romans kill Antigonus, then he killed Mariamne's brother Aristobulus III, her grandfather Hyrcanus II, Mariamne herself, her mother Alexandra, his sister Salome's husband Costobarus, his own sons Alexander and Aristobulus, and his son Antipater by his first marriage. It is therefore not surprising that when strangers from the east came looking for one "born king of the Jews" (Matt 2:2), he should respond by killing all baby boys under the age of 2 in Bethlehem. Caesar Augustus remarked, "I would rather be Herod's pig than his son!" Besides Mariamne, Herod had nine other wives.

Herod was a capable but ruthless ruler, upholding the interests of Rome, but very unpopular among the Jews, despite attempts to win their favor and prove himself a Jew. In an attempt to curry favor with the Jews, Herod began to enlarge the temple in 19 BC. It was mostly complete by Herod's death (4 BC), but not completed until AD 63 (cf. John 2:20, had been under construction for 46 years). By the end of the project nothing was left of Zerubbabel's temple, but because the work was done piecemeal, it remained the Second Temple. Again, there is no record of God's glory filling Herod's temple.

When Herod died in 4 BC his kingdom was divided among three sons Archelaus, Antipas and Herod Philip (all different mothers). Herod's line continued Hasmonean rule in Palestine for another 100 years after his death. Herod Agrippa I was king of the Jews AD 37–44; his son Agrippa II was king of the Jews AD 50–100.

- Archelaus: governor of Idumea, Judea and Samaria 4 BC–AD 6. He was a tyrannical ruler (Matt 2:22). Augustus deposed him in AD 6.
- Antipas: tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (4 BC–AD 39). He imprisoned John the Baptist when John protested his taking Herodias, his brother's wife (Matt 14). This was the Herod who tried Jesus at Pilate's request (Luke 23:6–12)—Herod was visiting Jerusalem for Passover. In AD 39, Caligula exiled Antipas.
- Agrippa I (10 BC–AD 44). King of the Jews AD 37–44: in AD 37 Caligula gave him the territory of Philip the Tetrarch, in 39 the territory of Antipas; in 41 Claudius added Judea and Samaria to give him control of the whole territory of Herod the Great. He killed James, and put Peter in prison (Acts 12).
- Agrippa II: king of the Jews (AD 50–100). Paul made a defense before Agrippa and his sister Bernice with whom he had an incestuous relationship (Acts 25–26).

2. Direct Roman Rule

When Archelaus was deposed in AD 6, Judea was made a minor Roman province, governed by a prefect, later a procurator, appointed by the emperor, and responsible to the governor of Syria; he ruled from Caesarea. He was given the right to appoint and depose the high priest. Rulers included prefect Pontius Pilate (26–36), and procurators Felix (52–60), Festus (59–62).

E. Effect of Events on the Jewish Mindset

1. Acceptance of punishment: The Jews accepted that God was using the nations to punish Israel for her sins. This punishment was deserved, but they were surprised it was lasting so long. Surely the time must soon be coming when God would judge they had suffered enough.
2. Expectation of vindication: God had vindicated himself and his people against Haman and against Antiochus Epiphanes when they tried to defy him and obliterate his people. On both occasions the underdog won against seemingly impossible odds. In 63 BC Pompey strode into the Holy of Holies, an act of defiance that had gone unpunished. Surely God would soon do what he did to the Persians and the Syrians, as he had done earlier to the Egyptians: overthrow the oppressor and vindicate himself and his people.
3. Expectation of restoration: for 600 years there had been a tension between what God had promised and what had come to pass.
 - a. Return from exile: Although some Jews had returned from Babylon and had rebuilt the temple, the return did not look like what the prophets had foretold: Judea was not independent; the temple was small; many Jews stayed in Babylon, and many more Jews were scattered elsewhere in the Diaspora.
 - b. Overthrow of Seleucid oppression: most Jews supported the struggle for religious freedom but many did not support the continued struggle for political freedom. When the Hasmoneans gained

- independence they quickly became corrupt.
- c. Herod's temple. A magnificent temple had been built by one claiming to be king, but Herod was an imposter.

II. Second-Temple Judaism

In the later second-temple period there were several major strands in Judaism.

A. The Sadducees

οἱ Σαδδουκαῖοι, probably from Zadok (the priest).

The first mention of the Sadducees is after the Maccabean Revolt (167-164 BC). They were closely associated with most of the Hasmonean priest-kings. Herod reduced their power and manipulated the office of high priest for his own ends, but they regained power when the Roman governors allowed the high priest and the Sanhedrin greater autonomy.

The Sadducees were the aristocracy: wealthy landowners and the religious leaders. The high priest, chief priests (leading priestly families) and elders (leading lay families) were all Sadducees. In order to retain their power and maintain the status quo they collaborated with the Romans, for which the people despised them.

1. Distinctive beliefs

1. rejected the oral law of the Pharisees, accepting as inspired only the written Torah (first five books, the Pentateuch).
2. emphasized the freedom of human will over against the sovereignty of God; their focus on this world and concern for political power led them to grab and maintain political power for themselves.
3. did not believe in the resurrection (Matt 22:23; Acts 23:6-8). Their emphasis on power, position and wealth in this world left no room for eschatological hope of a coming kingdom of God.

Interaction with Jesus: Jesus had little to do with the Sadducees until his final week in Jerusalem, where the Sadducees were concentrated.

B. The Pharisees

οἱ Φαρισαῖοι, probably from פְּרֻשִׁים *perushim*, “separated ones”

Like the Sadducees, the Pharisees are known to have been in existence shortly after the Maccabean Revolt, but their origins probably go further back. Some Pharisees were scribes—professional Torah scholars—but many were just laymen. While the Sadducees were unpopular with the people, the Pharisees enjoyed great public support.

1. Distinctive beliefs

1. Oral law: They believed that in addition to the written Torah, God had given Moses oral law (הֲלָכָה *halakah*, from *halak* to walk) which had been handed down through the generations (ἡ παράδοσις τῶν πρεσβυτέρων the tradition of the elders, Matt 15:1-9; par. Mark 7:1-13). This tradition was received (παραλαμβάνω) from the previous generation and handed on (παραδίδωμι) to the next. This *halakah* guided the Pharisees in living daily life. They considered this oral law a fence around the Torah. Keeping the law was not a matter of salvation but of sanctification: God had called Israel to be holy.
2. Emphasis on purity: though only a few Pharisees were priests, they all tried to keep the purity laws required of the priests in the temple. They formed brotherhoods (חֲבֻרוֹת *haburot*; members חֲבֵרִים *haberim*), eating only with those who had a similar level of purity.
3. On God's sovereignty vs. man's free will, Josephus says the Pharisees took a middle position between the Essenes (all was fate, determined by God) and the Sadducees (all was up to man). God will intervene to

5. Jesus and Second-Temple Judaism

restore Israel but faithful Jews should be ready to help. On this, as on several other issues, the Pharisees split into two groups: the school of Shammai (ca. 50 BC–AD 30) and the school of Hillel (ca. 60 BC–AD 20).

- a. Active opposition: promoted by the school of Shammai. They were politically active and favored revolution.
 - b. Passive acceptance: promoted by Hillel and his followers (see the speech of Hillel's son/grandson Gamaliel in Acts 5:33-39). Although Saul of Tarsus studied under Gamaliel, he favored active opposition.
4. Belief in resurrection. By this they understood that God would vindicate himself and his people, creating a reconstituted and restored Israel.

2. Interaction with Jesus

Jesus interacted a lot with the Pharisees. They showed much interest in him, and in many ways accepted him as an equal. In many respects he was another rabbi with disciples, another scribe expounding the Scriptures. The interaction centered upon the issues of paramount concern to the Pharisees: ritual purity—Sabbath observance, table fellowship, ceremonial cleanness, etc. The Pharisees objected that Jesus did not walk according to the oral law, the tradition of the elders. Jesus countered that they had displaced God's word with the traditions of men.

C. The Essenes

The Essenes perhaps came into existence after the Hasmoneans gained political independence. Viewing the Hasmonean priest-kings as unlawful, the Essenes retreated to the wilderness where they saw themselves as the true, uncompromised Israel waiting for God to vindicate them. They kept very strict purity laws, had communal property, many were celibate. The Qumran community (located next to the caves of the Dead Sea Scrolls) was probably an Essene community.

1. Distinctive beliefs

1. Emphasis on God's providence. Although the Essenes longed for the restoration of Israel, they were waiting for God to perform it in his own time. However, many of them believed that God had already started to act by calling them out as the true Israel.
2. Exclusive claims. Calling themselves the Sons of Light they saw all other Jews as Sons of Darkness, no longer part of true Israel. The Sadducee high priests were false, the temple corrupt, the Pharisees loose in following the purity laws.
3. Strict purity laws: frequent immersion in a *mikvah* (מִקְוָה), a pool for ritual cleansing.
4. Messianic expectation: they expected two Messiahs—a true Davidic king, and a true Zadokite priest.

2. Interaction with Jesus

The NT makes no mention of the Essenes. In many ways John the Baptist lived and behaved like an Essene, as did the early Church.

D. The Zealots

Although many Jews tolerated the Romans, waiting for God to vindicate himself and them against the oppressor, some turned to violence to overthrow the enemy. In the period 4 BC (death of Herod) – AD 70, Judea was like a simmering pot, threatening to boil over. Often the pot boiled over due to provocation by the Roman rulers. Although there were a few organized groups of rebels (the Zealots, the Sicarii), much of the rebellion is better seen as the response of ordinary Jews to Roman provocation, i.e., Pharisees and the ordinary “people of the land” joined in. The NT mentions two of these rebellions: Judas who rebelled against the census of AD 6 (Acts 5:37); an Egyptian of the Sicarii “Assassins” (σικάριος dagger-man, Acts 21:38). Josephus describes many more. After the Fall of Jerusalem the Zealots retreated to Masada. The Romans besieged the fortress, used captured Jews to build a ramp, and captured the citadel in 73.

The Zealots had no distinctive theological beliefs.

1. Interaction with Jesus

One of Jesus' disciples, Simon, was named a Zealot (Cananaean Καναναῖος from **זקן** to be jealous/zealous, Matt 10:4; Mark 3:18; Zealot ζηλωτής from ζηλόω to be jealous/zealous, Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13).

Jesus' response to rebellion or provocation is usually to tell the Jews they are fighting the wrong enemy (e.g., Matt 22:15-22; Luke 13:1-5).

III. Jesus

A. Jesus and Israel's History

Matthew introduces his gospel with the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. He tailors the genealogy into three sets of fourteen generations to show Jesus fulfilling three important stages of Jewish history:

1. Abraham: Jesus is the one through whom the promises to Abraham will be fulfilled.
2. David: great David's greater son, the Son of God, the Messiah, has been born.
3. Exile: though there had been a partial return of the exiled Jews to their homeland, many remained scattered throughout the nations (the Diaspora) and the land was under the control of an alien power. The Jews of Jesus' day awaited the day of redemption and restoration when God would deliver his people and bring them home. The true Israelite, true Messiah has now come to bring an end to the exile.

B. Jesus and Faithfulness

C. Jesus and Torah

Jesus functioned as a rabbi with his disciples to whom he passed on instruction: "I tell you..." He called twelve disciples to be with him, to be representative founders of a reconstituted Israel.

But Jesus taught a new Torah:

1. Matthew's five blocks of teaching: Matthew collects Jesus' teaching into five blocks, corresponding to the five books of the Torah. Each block ends with the phrase "When Jesus had finished..." (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). The first of these blocks is the sermon on the mount, which Jesus delivered after going up on a mountain (as a new Moses) and sitting down (as a rabbi).
2. Intensified Torah: six rounds of "You have heard that it was said...but I say to you" (5:21-48). Jesus addressed murder, adultery, divorce, oaths, vengeance (*lex talionis*), and treatment of enemies. He intensified the Torah, building a fence around it.
3. Contrasted his teaching with human tradition: Jesus contrasted two sets of teaching (Matt 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13):
 - a. "the tradition of the elders/of men": the oral law
 - b. the word/commandment of God.
4. Replaced Torah: Jesus told the rich young ruler seeking eternal life to keep the Torah, the commandments (Matt 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-22; Luke 18:18-23). This was standard rabbinic teaching: God gave Israel the Torah to enable her to "be holy as I am holy." But, Jesus added that there is something beyond this: "If you want to be perfect (τέλειος)," leave everything, then "come, follow me." Beyond the Torah lies Jesus! Jesus came not so much to abolish the Torah as to fulfill it (Matt 5:17). The Torah and the Prophets pointed to him.
5. Come, follow me: Jesus replaced the Torah with himself, and called all to come to him and follow him. He redefined the identity of God's people: no longer the children of Abraham but now the followers of Jesus.

D. Jesus and the Identity of the People of God

Jesus told the Jewish leaders that the children of Abraham are characterized by faith, the faith of Abraham (John 8:31-59). He looked for faith among Israel's leaders but did not find it. Instead he found faith in unlikely places:

- the little people: the sick, lepers, etc.
- foreigners: Syro-phoenician/Canaanite woman; Roman.

He redefined Israel around himself, as those who followed him.

E. Jesus and Jerusalem

Luke begins and ends his gospel in the temple in Jerusalem (1:5-23; 24:52-53). The central portion is a long journey up to Jerusalem, the Travel Narrative (9:51-19:48). As he approached Jerusalem he wept over it, knowing it would be destroyed (19:41-44).

F. Jesus and the Temple

Jesus' final destination was the temple which he cleansed: the "house of prayer" had been made "a den of robbers (*leistēs*, brigands)" (19:46, quoting Isa 56:7; Jer 7:11).

If the Temple is where God is present with his people, Jesus was the temple.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory (John 1:14).

Jesus referred to himself as the temple (John 2:20).

Jesus dispensed healing and forgiveness.

6. The New Testament Church

I. Acts

After his resurrection Jesus told his disciples to stay in Jerusalem and await baptism with the Holy Spirit. The disciples assumed the Messianic age had arrived:

Q: “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

A: “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:6-8)

This three-fold expansion as witness to Jesus outlines the book:

1. Jerusalem (chs. 1–7)
2. Judea and Samaria (8–12)
3. ends of the earth (13–28)

A. Jerusalem (Acts 1–7)

1. Pentecost

The day of Pentecost (Gk. *pentēkostē* “fiftieth”) = the Feast of Weeks (שבועות Shavuot, “weeks,” Lev 23:15-21), 50 days after Passover, is celebrated on the 6th day of the 3rd month (Sivan). It became associated with the giving of the Torah on Mt Sinai (also in the 3rd month, Exod 19:1). It was also known as the Feast of the Harvest (Exod 23:16) and the day of the firstfruits (Num 28:26) to celebrate the Lord’s provision of the harvest.

With Passover and Tabernacles it was one of the three annual festivals in the Jewish calendar (Exod 23:14-17; Lev 23), when Jews would go up to Jerusalem to appear before the Lord. Jerusalem was filled with Jewish pilgrims from the diaspora: Parthia, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia; Judea; Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia; Egypt, Cyrene; Rome, Crete, Arabia (Acts 2:8-11).

Peter’s sermon:

- the last days: what was happening was what Joel said would happen “in the last days” (2:16-21, quoting Joel 2:28-32 [3:1-5]); “this is that” (2:16 KJV). The last days and the day of the Lord had arrived, marked by the gift of the Spirit. Note the apocalyptic language.
- David’s throne: God exalted Jesus, son of David to his right hand, enthroning him as Lord, in fulfillment of Ps 110:1.
- call to repentance: “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself” (2:38-39).

The church was born that day: 3000 people. A new fellowship of Jews who had been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, centered in Jerusalem and the temple.

B. Judea and Samaria (Acts 8–12)

After the stoning of Stephen a great persecution arose against the church (*ekklēsia*, first use of term 8:1) in Jerusalem, so that all except the apostles were scattered (διασπείρω) throughout Judea and Samaria, where they went about preaching the word (8:1-4).

6. The New Testament Church

1. Philip (8:5-40)

1. to Samaria (8:5-13). After hearing, the apostles in Jerusalem sent Peter and John to check (8:14-25).
2. sent by an angel to meet an Ethiopian eunuch on the Jerusalem–Gaza road (8:26-39). The Ethiopian was presumably a Gentile God-fearer; as a eunuch, excluded from the inner courts of the temple. Philip found him reading Isa 53:7-8; beginning with this Scripture told him the gospel about Jesus. The eunuch was baptized; cf. Isa 56:3-5, the foreigner and eunuch was now included.
3. carried by Spirit to Azotus (Ashdod), preaching in all the towns from there to Caesarea where he settled.

2. Interlude: Saul (9:1-31)

God converted the most ardent instrument of the great persecution, to be his own instrument.

The Lord's purpose for Saul: "he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel" (9:15).

Saul immediately proclaimed Jesus in the Damascus synagogues, proving Jesus was the Christ. Learning of a plot to kill him he was lowered over the city wall in a basket, escaping to Jerusalem. Here, too, he preached boldly and disputed with the Hellenists who sought to kill him. So the Jerusalem church sent him home to Tarsus, and peace came to the church

3. Peter

1. Lydda: healed Aeneas (9:32-35). Preached in Lydda and the Sharon plain.
2. Joppa: raised Tabitha/Dorcas, a disciple, stayed with Simon the tanner (9:36-43).
3. Caesarea: Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian Cohort, a God-fearer, after a vision summoned Peter from Joppa. Meanwhile Peter, too, had seen a vision of animals let down in a sheet; he refused to eat anything common (κοινός) or unclean (ἀκάθαρτος **כִּזְזִי**). Peter told Cornelius and those he had gathered in his house, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean" (10:28). The Holy Spirit came, even on the Gentiles to the amazement of the Jews (10:45). Peter stayed several days with Cornelius, implying he ate with him. When Peter returned to Jerusalem the circumcision party criticized him for eating with uncircumcised men (11:3). After Peter's explanation they concluded, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life" (11:18).

4. Antioch (11:19-29)

Other believers scattered from Jerusalem had preached to Jews in Phoenicia, Cyprus, Antioch. Some from Cyprus and Cyrene who had come to Antioch preached the Lord Jesus also to Hellenistic Gentiles, and a great number believed (11:20-21). On hearing, the Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to investigate; he fetched Saul from Tarsus. In Antioch the disciples were first called Christians (Χριστιανοί), Christ-ones.

Conclusion:

- in the OT the scattering of God's people was judgment. But in Acts God scattered his people to preach Jesus, bringing blessing.
- This witness throughout Judea and Samaria was a haphazard ministry led by the Spirit. The apostles were not expecting the community of faith to expand to God-fearers and Gentiles.

C. The ends of the earth (Acts 13-28)

The church in Antioch became the base of outreach to the Gentiles beyond the Levant.

Prompted by the Spirit the leaders sent out Barnabas and Saul, assisted by John. They preached in synagogues:

- a. Cyprus: Salamis, Paphos. Saul (Hebrew name) becomes Paul (Roman name, 13:9), signifying start of Gentile ministry.
- b. Pisidian Antioch: initial enthusiasm on two sabbaths, but opposition arose. Paul announces that in face of Jewish rejection they are turning to the Gentiles in fulfillment of Isa 49:6. The Gentiles rejoice on

- hearing this.
- c. Iconium: many Jews and Greeks believe; more Jewish opposition.
- d. Lystra: Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and stirred up trouble.
- e. Derbe

1. The Jerusalem Council (15)

Paul and Barnabas reported back to the Antioch church how God “had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles” (14:27). But some of the circumcision party in Judea came to Antioch, teaching, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved” (15:1). The Antioch church sent Paul, Barnabas and some others to discuss the matter with the apostles and elders in Jerusalem.

The issue: do Gentiles who have come to faith in Christ have to become Jewish (circumcision etc.) to be saved?

Peter and Barnabas & Paul reported on God’s work through them among the Gentiles. James (Jesus’ brother), though himself scrupulous about keeping Torah (Josephus, Eusebius), declared the Gentiles did not have to become Jews. Their coming to faith was in accord with OT prophecy, Amos 9:11-12. God had started to rebuild David’s fallen tent. But, out of sensitivity to Jewish residents of their cities they should avoid four things: food offered to idols, blood (meat with blood in it), strangled meat (blood still in it), sexual immorality (*porneia*).

The Jerusalem leadership wrote this in a letter, sending it to Antioch with Silas when Paul, Barnabas returned. They read the letter to the Antioch church. Then Paul and Silas set off on the second missionary journey to read the letter to the churches established on the first journey: Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Pisidian Antioch.

II. The Epistles

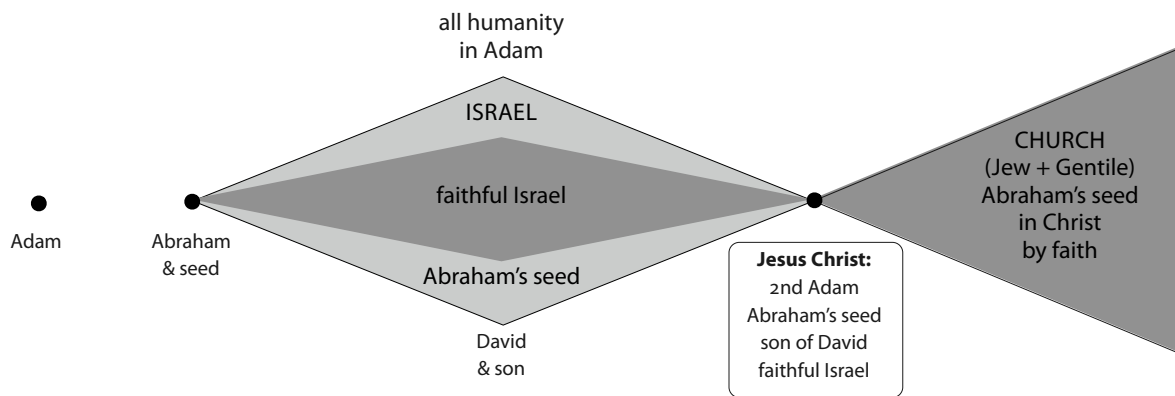
A. The Seed of Abraham

1. The Seed and the seed

God promised Abraham a seed (זֶרַע *zera* sing. or collective): a son and descendants as numerous as the dust of the earth, the stars in the sky. The seed singular was Isaac though whom was birthed the seed (collective), Israel (the sons of Israel).

Paul’s argument in Gal 3:15-29. The promises were made to Abraham and his seed (singular), referring to Christ (3:16, 19). The seed is Jesus Christ, the son of Abraham. But through him is birthed the seed (collective): those who belong to Christ, marked by faith: “if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (3:29)

6. The New Testament Church



2. Faith in the Faithful One

It is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham, the man of faith (Gal 3:7, 9).

3. Jew-Gentile distinction abolished

The Gentiles were “alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise” (Eph 2:12). But in Christ God has broken down the dividing wall (μεσότοιχον middle wall, Eph 2:14), making two peoples into one new one. Two ways of considering this:

1. a new humanity, a third human race (after Jew, Gentile)
2. Gentile believers absorbed into believing Israel

B. The Torah

Torah came 430 years after the promise (Gal 3:17). The promise is of faith (it required faith to believe it), but the law is not of faith (Gal 3:12).

Torah brings curse (Gal 3:10).

Nevertheless the Torah had a good purpose as a tutor, guardian (παιδαγωγός pedagogue) for Israel:

1. guide for Israel's life
2. lead to Christ

C. The Temple

The church is God's temple (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21), a dwelling place for God by the Spirit (Eph 2:22).

D. The Land

7. Israel and the Church

I. Dispensationalism

Founder: J. N. Darby (1800-1882), founder of the Plymouth Brethren.

Cyrus I. Scofield (1843-1921)

popularized Darby's ideas.

pamphlet *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* (1888).

The Scriptures divide time...into seven unequal periods, usually called dispensations (Eph. 3:2), although these periods are also called ages (Eph. 2:7) and days, as in "day of the Lord." (Ch 2, The Seven Dispensations)

- Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Tim 2:15 KJV).
- the stewardship (dispensation KJV, Gk *oikonomia*) of God's grace given to me for you (Eph 3:2).

"These periods are marked off in Scripture by some change in God's method of dealing with mankind, or a portion of mankind, in respect of the two questions: of sin, and of man's responsibility. Each of the dispensations may be regarded as a new test of the natural man, and each ends in judgment, marking his utter failure in every dispensation."

	Dispensation	Period	Judgment
1	Innocence	Garden	expulsion
2	Conscience	to Flood	Flood
3	Human government	Noah-Babel	confusion of tongues
4	Promise	Abraham-Egypt	bondage in Egypt
5	Law	Sinai-Christ	exile
6	Grace	Church age	Great Tribulation
7	Messianic	Millennium	great white throne

Scofield's dispensationalism became widespread through *The Scofield Study Bible* (OUP, 1909; rev. 1917); *The New Scofield Reference Bible* (1967).

Dallas Theological Seminary

Founded 1924 as Evangelical Theological College (renamed 1936) by Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871-1952), who served as first president (1924-52). Chafer's *Systematic Theology* (8 vols., 1947) laid out a comprehensive premillennial dispensationalism.

Distinctive Features of Dispensationalism

1. progressive revelation: dispensations, often with associated covenants.
2. "literal" interpretation: claim to historical-grammatical method.
3. distinction between Israel and church.

"just as distinctly as Israel stands connected with temporal and earthly things, so distinctly does the church stand

7. Israel and the Church

connected with heavenly things” (Scofield, *Rightly Dividing*, 1. The Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God).

Abraham has two seeds:

- a. as numerous as the sand on the seashore = physical seed
- b. as numerous as the stars in the sky = spiritual seed

The Components of Premillennial Dispensationalism

The Prophetic Clock

In the first year of Darius the Mede, conqueror of Babylon, Daniel perceived from reading Jeremiah (25:11-12) how many years must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem: 70 years (Dan 9:1-2). This prompted a prayer of confession and petition for forgiveness. Gabriel brought a reply:

“Seventy weeks (‘seventy sevens’) are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place” (9:24).

These 70 sevens are assumed to be 70 weeks = 70×7 years = 490 years.

Gabriel divides them into 3 periods: $7 + 62 + 1$, with the final week in turn divided in half.

The Rapture

Based on 1 Thess 4:17,

at the coming (*parousia*) of the Lord, “we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up (Gk *harpazō*, L. *rapio*) together with them in the clouds to meet (*eis apantēsin*) the Lord in the air. (ESV)

eis apantēsin is a technical term used 3×: Matt 25:6; Acts 28:15.

Millennium

Progressive Dispensationalism

II. Covenant Theology

The main alternative to dispensationalism is covenant theology.

Three covenants:

1. eternal covenant between Father and Son
2. covenant of works: Adam in garden
3. covenant of grace: Gen 3:15 onwards.

New Covenant Theology

8. The Parting of the Ways

Jesus was Jewish! So how did we end up with an Aryan Jesus (Sallman Head, *The Head of Christ* (1940))?

The early church was entirely Jewish.

Jews initially considered Jewish Christians to be a sect (*haeresis*): the sect of the Nazarenes (Acts 24:5; cf. sects of Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes). But Jews and Christians quickly parted ways.

I. The Death of Old Israel

A. Jewish Rebellion against Rome

During the 1st cent. the Jews frequently revolted against their Roman rulers:

1. when Herod the Great died (4 BC) the residents of Zippori (Sepphoris) revolted. Varus, governor of Syria, destroyed the city. Herod Antipas rebuilt it as his new capital of Galilee.
2. Judas the Galilean led a tax revolt in AD 6 (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.23; Gamaliel's speech, Acts 5:37)
3. An Egyptian who led a revolt of Assassins (Roman tribune's question to Paul, Acts 21:38)
4. when Caligula (37-41) tried to erect statues in the temple.

1. First Jewish Revolt (AD 66-73)

Full scale revolt broke out in 66 in Galilee, spreading south to Jerusalem. Nero appointed the general Vespasian was appointed to suppress the revolt; on becoming emperor in 69 his son Titus took over. In 70, after a siege, Jerusalem was captured, the temple destroyed, and the temple treasure carried off to Rome, as depicted on the triumphal Arch of Titus. The surviving rebels retreated to Masada where they held out until 73.

The destruction of Qumran (68), the Temple (70), and Masada (73) by Vespasian and Titus ended most sects of Judaism: Essenes, Sadducees, Zealots. Only the Pharisees survived.

Most of the (Jewish) Christians in Jerusalem fled to Pella, one of the Decapolis cities across the Jordan.

The flight of the Jewish Christians of Jerusalem to Pella was proof to the Jews that they were not really Jewish. An additional item (*birkat ha-minim*, curse on the heretics) was added to the Eighteen Benedictions (*Shemoneh Esreh*; the Amidah, recited 3× daily):

For the apostates let there be no hope. And let the arrogant government be speedily uprooted in our days. Let (the *nozerim* and) the *minim* be destroyed in a moment. And let them be blotted out of the Book of Life and not be inscribed together with the righteous. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who humblest the arrogant.

2. Second Jewish Revolt (132-135)

In 130 Hadrian (emperor 117-138) decided to rebuild Jerusalem as a Roman city. This provoked a second full-scale Jewish revolt, led by Bar Kochba (Ben Kosiba) whom Rabbi Akiva proclaimed Messiah.

After the revolt was suppressed, Hadrian rebuilt Jerusalem as a pagan city, Aelia Capitolina, with a pagan temple where the temple had stood. Jews were forbidden, but were allowed to continue in the Land. Only a small Jewish community remained in Jerusalem.

B. Reinvention of Judaism

The Pharisees were the only Jewish sect to survive the destruction of the temple (AD 70). They left Jerusalem, probably moving to Jamnia (Yavneh) near Joppa, where a council was held. Rabbinic Judaism emerged, built upon the oral law (*halakah*) of the Pharisees.

After the defeat of the second revolt, the rabbinic court moved to Galilee, first Sepphoris then Tiberias.

8. The Parting of the Ways

This oral law was codified as the Mishnah by Yehuda ha-Nasi (Judah the Prince) in Sepphoris in the mid-2nd century.

- **Tanakh** (TaNaKh): the Hebrew scriptures, comprising Torah, Nevi'im (Prophets), Ketuvim (Writings), hence TaNaKh.
- **Mishnah**: codification of the oral law, compiled in Sepphoris.
- **Gemara**: commentary on the Mishnah; 2 versions
- **Talmud**: = Mishnah + Gemara. 2 versions: Bavli (Babylonian Talmud), Yerushalmi (Jerusalem Talmud, actually compiled in Tiberias).

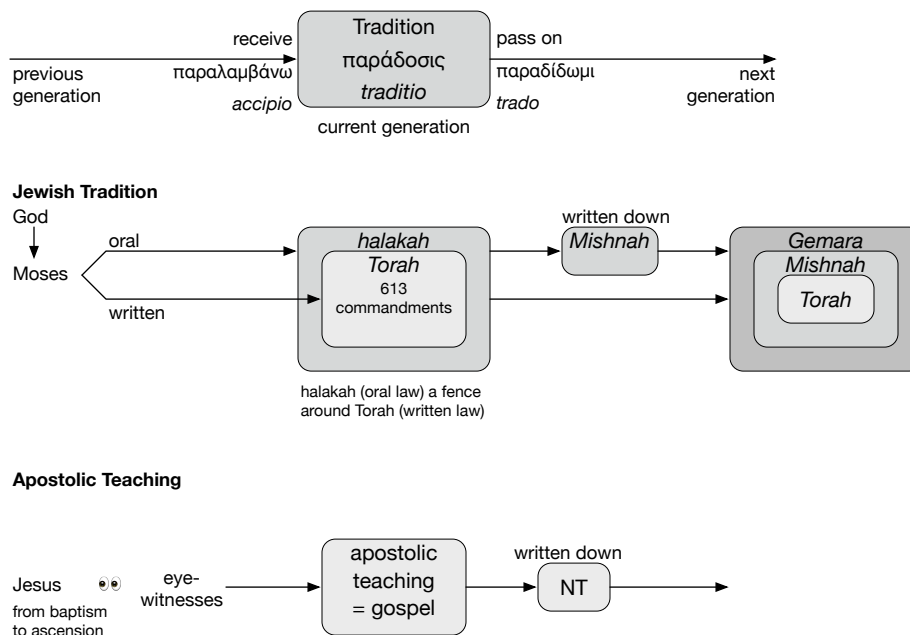


Fig. 8-1: Jewish and Christian Tradition

“Tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living” (Jaroslav Pelikan).

1. The Ebionites

A Jewish-Christian sect that survived many centuries in the East. Accepted Jesus as Messiah but rejected his divinity; insisted on necessity of following Torah; rejected Paul as apostate from Torah; revered James the Just.

II. The Jews in Exile

1. Roman Rule

After the revolt Hadrian did rebuild Jerusalem as a Aelia Capitolina (Aelia after family name Aelius; Capitolina after the 3 Capitoline gods: Jupiter, Juno, Minerva).

The Jews were expelled from Jerusalem; allowed to enter only once per year on 9th Av, anniversary of destruction of the Temple (587 BC, AD 70, 135). Judea was largely depopulated of Jews. A Jewish community did survive in the Galilee. The province of Judaea was renamed Syria Palestina—the origin of the term Palestine.

Though the Romans brutally suppressed both revolts, they continued to recognize Judaism as a legal religion (*religio licita*), with certain special “privileges”: exemption from emperor worship, military service.

9. Christendom, Islam & Judaism

I. Constantine & Christendom

A. Triumph of Constantine

In 285, 293 Diocletian subdivided the Empire between two rulers, The Tetrarchy: an Augustus in East and West, with a Caesar under each.

Christians were severely persecuted by Diocletian and his fellow rulers (the Great Persecution, 302-311).

306 Constantius (Western Caesar) died in York, designating his son Constantine as Augustus. He set about consolidating power and rule.

311 Galerius (Eastern Caesar), on his death bed, gave amnesty to Christians, asking for their prayers.

312 Battle of the Milvian Bridge, outside Rome. Constantine defeated Maxentius (W. Augustus), claiming that in a vision the previous night he had seen in the sky the Chi-Rho symbol plus the words: *in hoc signo vince*, in this sign conquer. Arch of Constantine, Rome (315) commemorates this victory.

313 Constantine and Licinius (Augustus 311-324) met in Milan, agreed on religious liberty. Later issued "Edict of Milan": religious toleration of Christians, cessation of persecution, restoration of property. Christianity was now a *religio licita*, a legal religion.

324 Constantine defeated Licinius to become sole ruler, the emperor.

Constantine chose to build a new capital atop Byzantium, an old Greek colony. This would be New Rome, dedicated in 330. No temples, but several churches, notably Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom), Hagia Eirene (Holy Peace), the Holy Apostles (Constantine's burial place). Christianity was not yet the official religion, but Christendom was born.

In 323 Constantine's mother visited Jerusalem and other places, identifying many holy sites associated with the life of Jesus. This led to the construction of Christian churches.

Julian the Apostate (361-63) revoked Hadrian's ban on Jews in Jerusalem, gave them permission to rebuild Temple, but died before they could do so.

380 Christianity declared the official religion of the Roman empire.

1. The Ecumenical Church Councils

1. Nicea (325): first version of the Nicene Creed; declared the Son of God to be of one substance with the Father (*homoousios*).
2. Constantinople (381): final version of the Nicene Creed; full deity of Holy Spirit. Preceded by Emperor Theodosius' edict that Christianity be the official religion of the empire.
3. Ephesus (431): declared Mary theotokos (God-bearer); Nestorius heretical.
4. Chalcedon (451): Chalcedonian Definition; declared monophysites heretical (Egypt; Syria).
5. Constantinople (553)
6. Constantinople (680-81)
7. Nicea (787): defeated iconoclasm (started 726).

After Ephesus (431), the Byzantine empire persecuted Nestorian Christians (Syria, Mesopotamia; the Church of the East). After Chalcedon (451), it also persecuted monophysites (Egypt [Copts], Syria [Jacobites]; the Oriental Orthodox Church).

9. Christendom, Islam & Judaism

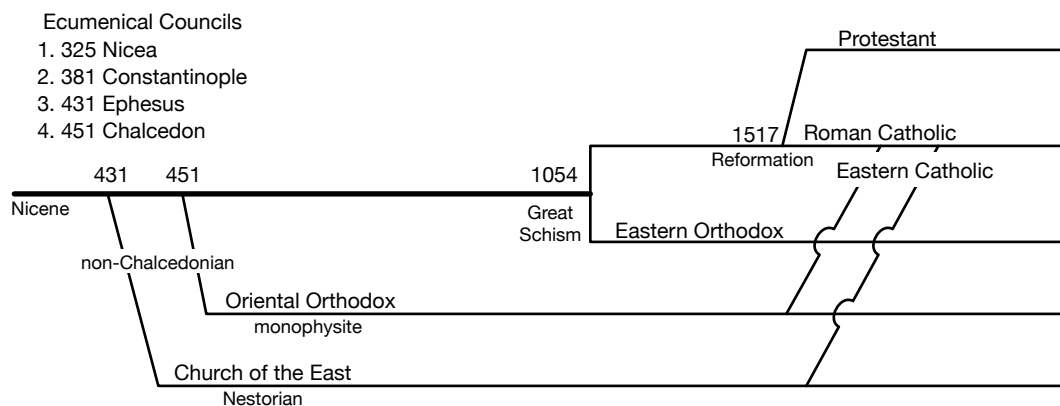


Fig. 9-1: Christendom: the five major churches

B. Persian rule (614-642)

In 614 the Sassanid Dynasty (226-642) of Persia conquered Palestine including Jerusalem.

628 Emperor Heraclius (601-640) defeated the Persians, entered Jerusalem in triumph.

In 642 the Persian empire fell to Arab Muslims.

II. Islam

A. Muhammad (570-632)

570 born in Mecca into the Banu-Hashim clan of the Quraysh tribe, which had taken control of Mecca in the early 6th century. The Quraysh tribe claimed descent from Ishmael's second son Kedar (Gen 25:12-18).

610 in the month of Ramadan, the angel Gabriel started giving him revelations from God. In 613 Muhammad began proclaiming these revelations in Mecca, calling people to abandon their idolatry.

620 he took a miraculous night journey with Gabriel. Two parts:

- *isra*: on the winged horse Buraq from Mecca to *masjid al-aqsa*, "the farthest mosque," traditionally identified with the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem.
- *mi'raj*: tour of heaven and hell, during which he spoke with earlier prophets.

622 rejected by people of Mecca, he moved to Medina (Yathrib) = the *Hijra*, the start of the Islamic calendar (Hijri Calendar, AH = *anno hegirae*). Medina accepted his leadership and became the first Islamic state. The large Jewish population in Medina refused to convert.

630 conquered Mecca. Destroyed all the pagan statues of Arabian gods in and around the Kabaa (the central shrine).

632 died.

Muhammad's successors

Rashidun Caliphate (632-661)

capital Medina (632-656), Kufa (656-661).

Medina: the Four Rightly Guided or Righteous (*rashidun*) Caliphs; *khalifa* caliph = successor: Mohammed succeeded by:

1. Abu Bakr (632-634)
2. Umar ([Omar I] 634-644)
3. Uthman (644-656)

4. Ali (656-661).

All 4 associated by marriage with Mohammed: daughters of Abu Bakr, Umar married to Mohammed; Mohammed's daughters married to Uthman, Ali.

Non-hereditary; chosen by deliberation.

Sunni Muslims recognize all 4; Shia only the 4th, Ali (leadership should have passed directly to Ali then to his sons).

2. Umar (634-644): on accession in 634, united Arab tribes, conquered Iraq from Sassanid Persians, Captured Damascus (634), Palestine (635, except Caesarea & Jerusalem) Aleppo & Antioch (637), Jerusalem (638), Caesarea (640), Alexandria (641).

The Pact of Umar (2d caliph, 634-44), attributed to Umar.

A *dhimmi* (coll. *ahl al-dhimmah*, the people of the *dhimma*) = non-Muslim citizens of an Islamic state.

dhimmi, protected persons: peoples of the Book = Jews, Christians. Pay extra tax (*jizyah* poll tax). Nearly all rights and protections under Islamic law. No forced conversion to Islam, as for pagans. But second class.

Muslim could marry Christian and Jewish women; *dhimmi* men could marry only their own kind.

Under *shari'a*, *dhimmi* have freedom to remain in Muslim countries, but not to recruit. Conversions only to Islam, not vice versa.

3. Uthman (Osman 644-656): conquered Iran, much of North Africa, Cyprus, Caucasus. Assassinated. From Umayyad clan.

4. Ali (656-661): assassinated. moved capital to Kufa, on Euphrates 170 km s of Baghdad, to better manage military frontier.

B. Umayyad Caliphate (661-750)

Umayyad family originally from Mecca, but made Damascus their capital.

Rivalry between Umayyad and Hashmite clans of Quraish tribe, esp after Battle of Badr 624 between Muhammad and Mecca.

Uthman (3rd Rashidun caliph) was an Umayyad, Ali (4th caliph) was Hashemite.

On Ali's assassination 661 Umayyads moved to Damascus. Akko was the port for Damascus.

Abd al-Malik (685-705) consolidated rule.

Continued to call Jerusalem Aelia; in the 10th century began to use el-Quds (the Holy).

Abd al-Malik built two important structures on *Haram esh-Sharif* the Noble Sanctuary:

1. Dome of the Rock: 689-691. intended from beginning as shrine not mosque. Dome to rival Church of Holy Sepulcher. Much later Suleiman the Magnificent covered exterior with Iznik tiles. Dome is over the Foundation Stone (Heb **אֶבֶן הַשִּׁטִּיחַ** *Even haShetiya*) or Rock (Arab *Sakhrah*).

2. al-Aqsa Mosque: replacing a small prayer house built by Umar. Destroyed by earthquakes 746, 1033; rebuilt several times. Present structure built (1034-1036) by Fatimid caliph Ali az-Zahir. Crusaders used al-Aqsa, Dome of the Rock as churches.

As part of the Umayyad Empire, Moors conquered Iberian Peninsula (711-718), called *al-Andalus*.

712 Battle of Toledo, defeated Spanish, killed king.

732 Battle of Tours (Poitiers); Charles of Herstal (Charlemagne's grandfather) defeated Muslims. Became known as Charles Martel (Charles the Hammer).

Majority of people in Umayyad empire were non-Moslem; allowed to practice religion but had to pay a tax.

10. The Rebirth of Israel

I. Jewish Return

A. Zionism

Zionism is the movement to provide the Jews with a homeland.

In the 18th and 19th centuries Jews in Germany, Austro-Hungary, France etc. tried to assimilate into society.

Dreyfus Affair, 1894. Alfred Dreyfus, a captain in the French army, was sentenced to life imprisonment on false charges of espionage, and sent to Devil's Island, French Guyana. 1899 re-tried, sentenced to 10 years. 1906 exonerated, reinstated in army.

Theodor Herzl, Paris correspondent for *Neue Freie Presse* (Vienna), covered the trial. He concluded that no matter how hard the Jews tried to assimilate there would always be antisemitism.

- Wrote *Der Judenstaat* (*The Jewish State*, 1896).
- Founded the World Zionist Organization (Now the World Zionist Organization), calling for the creation of a Jewish homeland.
- Convened and chaired the First Zionist Congress, Basel, 1897. "Zionism aims to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law."

B. Settlement in Palestine

Aliyah (עֲלִיָּה "ascent"): immigration from the diaspora to the Land of Israel (אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל); immigrants are *olim* (עֲלִיִּים); Jews immigrating to Israel "make *aliyah*." Conversely, emigration from the Land is *Yerida* (יְרִידָה "descent"); emigrants are *yordim* (יְרִידִים).

1878 Petah Tiqva פֶּתַח תִּיקְוָה founded, first Jewish agricultural settlement.

1882 First Aliyah (עֲלִיָּה ascent > immigration), mainly from Russia, Poland, Yemen.

1904-1914 Second Aliyah

1909 Tel Aviv founded.

Third Aliyah (1919-1923). Fourth Aliyah (1924-1929). Fifth Aliyah (-1939).

II. Western Designs

A. Britain & France

1903 British government offered to facilitate Jewish settlement in Uganda.

During World War 1, Britain made 3 mutually contradictory agreements:

1. 1915 McMahon-Hussein Correspondence: between the Sharif of Mecca, Hussein bin Ali, and Sir Henry McMahon, British High Commissioner in Egypt, promising an Arab state in Arabic-speaking provinces of the Ottoman Empire if it fell, in return for launching an Arab revolt.
2. 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement: a secret agreement drawn up by François Georges-Picot and Sir Mark Sykes, carving up the Arab portion of the Ottoman Empire between France and Britain, assuming Ottoman defeat in World War 1. Sykes also designed the Arab flag.
3. 1917 Balfour Declaration: in a letter to Lord Rothschild, British Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour stated that the government
"view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or

the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”

An Arab Revolt was launched. In Dec 1917 General Allenby entered Jerusalem.

B. Mandate Territories

San Remo Conference (1920) ended in a Resolution, awarding three Mandate territories under the League of Nations: the British Mandates of Palestine, Mesopotamia; and the French Mandate of Syria, without specifying boundaries.

1. British Mandate of Palestine

1920 Treaty of San Remo. Britain given League of Nations mandate to administer Palestine.

1921 Mandate extended to include Trans-Jordan.

confirmed by League of Nations 1922.07.24; took effect 1923.09.26.

mandate included “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people”

Britain divided Mandate territory into two parts:

1. Palestine under direct British rule
2. Transjordan: autonomous under rule of Hashemite family from kingdom of Hejaz, per the McMahon Correspondence (1915). Abdullah made Emir of Transjordan (1921-1946 [independence]); capital Amman. Britain excluded this territory from Jewish homeland provision. Granted independence 5/25/1946 as the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan; shortened to Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 1949.

III. The Birth of Modern Israel

Depleted of resources by World War II, Britain announced it could no longer afford to run Palestine, and turned the matter over to the newly-formed United Nations.

A. UN Partition Plan 1947

Nov 1947 UN General Assembly voted to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem a separate entity (*corpus separatum*) under UN administration; called for economic union between the two states, and protection of religious and minority rights. Plan accepted by the Jewish Agency; rejected by the Arab community (supported by Arab League).

- Jewish state: 33% of total population but given 56% of land for 45% of the population, with 45% Arab minority
- Arab State: would include 1% Jewish minority.
- Jerusalem: 51% Arab, 49% Jewish.

B. Independence, 1948

May 14, 1948. British left. At midnight David Ben-Gurion declared the state of Israel.

Parliamentary democracy. Head of government: Prime Minister. Head of state: President (largely ceremonial). Single chamber: 120-member Knesset. Still no constitution (2018); instead a series of Basic Laws.

All the symbols of Israel are Jewish:

- Flag: white background (cf. prayer shawl); star of David (*magen David*), blue for blue tassels etc.
- Emblem: menorah (7-branched lampstand)
- National Anthem: *ha-Tikva* (the Hope), the Zionist anthem. Unofficial 1948; official 2004.
- Official languages: Hebrew, Arabic.

C. War of Independence

War broke out immediately on May 15, 1948. The surrounding Arab nations fought to prevent the establishment of the state of Israel. Jewish forces fought to expand their territory beyond the UN plan and to drive out Arabs, thus reducing their percentage of the population (Plan Dalet).

Israel placed its Arab population (20%) under military rule (until 1966).

Arabs call this *al-Nakba*, The Catastrophe. c. 700,000 Palestinians fled or were expelled, 400+ Arab villages destroyed.

1949: Israel signed a series of armistice agreements with Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, establishing borders. The line with Jordan was drawn in green on the map, hence became known as the Green Line).

Israel got 78% of Palestine vs 55% in UN partition plan, including West Jerusalem. Jordan had the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including the Old City. Egypt had the Gaza Strip.

These armistice lines were intended to be temporary pending permanent peace treaties, but became de facto borders.

D. Six Day War, June 1967

Israel captured Golan Heights from Syria, Gaza Strip and Sinai from Egypt, West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan. Quickly annexed East Jerusalem; declared united Jerusalem its capital in 1980; annexed Golan Heights in 1981. The rest of the world does not recognize these moves; considers these Occupied Territories subject to Geneva Conventions. Israel has at times expressed a willingness to trade land for peace, to return these territories in exchange for peace treaties. But Israel has increasingly been incorporating them into the nation (see “settlements” below). The Arabs call this war *al-Naqsa* (the Setback).

E. Yom Kippur War, 1973

IV. The Peace Process

A. With Arab Neighbors

- 1977 Egyptian President Sadat visited Jerusalem, addressed the Knesset.
- 1978 Camp David Accords: Menachem Begin (Israeli prime minister), Anwar Sadat (Egyptian president), Jimmy Carter. Peace treaty signed 9/17 after 13 days of secret negotiations. Sadat and Begin awarded 1978 Nobel peace prize.
- 1979 Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty signed 3/26. Egypt expelled from Arab League. Sadat assassinated 1981. Israel withdrew from Sinai in 1980.
- 1994 Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty.

B. Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process

- 1991 Madrid Conference.
- 1993 Oslo Accords: first direct face-to-face negotiations between Israeli government and PLO. PLO recognized Israel, Israel recognized PLO as the official Palestinian authority.
- 1995 Interim Agreement signed in Taba (Sinai) then in DC by Rabin and Arafat: creation of Palestinian National Authority (or Palestinian Authority PA). Divided West Bank into Areas A (full PA control), B (PA civil, Israeli military control), C (Israeli control). Rabin assassinated 1995 by a Jewish fundamentalist.
- 1998 Wye River Memorandum
- 2002 Road map for peace, stewarded by the International Quartet: USA, EU, Russia, UN.

The Palestinians have twice risen up against Israeli occupation (*intifada*, “shaking off”):

1. First Intifada (1987-1993): provoked by a collision between an IDF truck and a Palestinian car in Gaza, killing 4 Palestinians.
2. Second (Al-Aqsa) Intifada (2000-2005): provoked by Ariel Sharon’s visit to the Temple Mount, Sept 28, 2000.

Israel responded to Second Intifada by building a separation barrier around the West Bank. 90% is fence, 10% is 8m concrete wall. Includes 12% of West Bank on Israeli side of barrier. Has nearly eliminated suicide bombing, but made life very difficult for Palestinians, appropriated much Palestinian land.

V. Greater Israel

Israel’s right wing wants to establish a Greater Israel, incorporating at least the West Bank, which they refer to as Judea and Samaria. This is the position of the Likud Party, headed by current PM Binyamin Netanyahu.

The maximalists also want territory east of the Jordan River.

A. Settlers and Settlements

Since 1967 Israel has been settling its civilian population in the occupied territories, in contravention of the Geneva Convention. There are 121 official settlements in the West Bank and many illegal settlement outposts. Israel has established no new settlements since the Oslo Accords but continues to aggressively expand existing settlements. 2015: 389,000 Israelis (mostly Jewish) in 121 settlements in West Bank; 375,000 in East Jerusalem, 20,000 in Golan Heights. Separation barrier is routed to include most settlements on Israeli side of the barrier. Much Palestinian land has been appropriated. Separate roads have been built for settlers, on which Palestinians are not allowed to travel.

11. The Current Situation

Definitions

Palestinians:

1. pre-1948: the people who lived within the borders of Palestine under the Ottomans or the British: Palestinian Jews, Palestinian Christian Arabs, Palestinian Moslem Arabs. Before Jewish immigration started c. 1880, Palestine was c. 80% Moslem, 10% Christian Arab, 5-7% Jewish; total c. 600k; all spoke Arabic; the Jews lived in the 4 holy cities. Post-1880 the Jews began to call themselves *ha-Yishuv* (הַיִּשׁוּב, the settlement).
2. 1948-1967 two groups of people: Palestinian refugees in other Arab nations, mostly in refugee camps; population of the West Bank, under Jordanian control, who moved freely back and forth between the West Bank and Jordan. Israel defined its Arab citizens as Arab Israelis.
3. 1967-2000: in 1968 PLO defined Palestinians as Arabs who lived in pre-1947 Palestine, all subsequently born to an Palestinian father, and pre-1880 Jews who lived in Palestine. With the second intifada (2000) Arab Israelis began to identify themselves as Palestinian.

Jews:

1. By birth: The Mishnah refined a Jew matrilineally, through the mother. Orthodox and Conservative Judaism follow this. Reform Judaism accepts patrilineal descent if raised as a Jew; Karaite Jews are also patrilineal.
2. Conversion: Orthodox Judaism recognized only conversions administered by Orthodox principles (*halakah*).
3. Israeli citizenship: the Law of Return grants Israeli citizenship to anyone with one Jewish grandparent who make *aliyah* (immigrate). But converts to Messianic Judaism are now excluded.

I. Zionism

The movement to establish a homeland for the Jews in the Land of Israel.

- 1947 UN Partition Plan: a Jewish state in 56% of the land (45% Arab minority); an Arab state (1% Jewish minority); Jerusalem international.
- 1949 after War of Independence/*Nakba* (Catasrophe): Israel had 78% of land (20% Arab minority); Egypt had Gaza, Jordan had West Bank.
- 1967 Israel captured Gaza, West Bank, East Jerusalem.
- 1993 Oslo Accords. Interim Agreement 1995 (Oslo II) divided West Bank into three areas:
 - A 18% full control of Palestinian Authority (PA)
 - B 22% Palestinian civil control, Israeli military control
 - C 60% full Israeli control
- current status:
 - areas A+B form 169 Palestinian enclaves in a sea of area C (mostly Jewish).
 - settlements: 389,000 Israelis (mostly Jewish) in 121 settlements in West Bank (area C); 375,000 in East Jerusalem.
 - Separation barrier: includes most WB settlements on Israeli side of barrier: 11%.
 - The Green Line (1949 Israel-Jordan armistice line) has disappeared from maps; Israel refers to WB as Judea and Samaria.

A. Greater Israel

Israel's right wing wants to establish a Greater Israel, incorporating at least the West Bank, which they refer to as Judea and Samaria. This is the position of the Likud Party, headed by current PM Binyamin Netanyahu:

Likud Party Charter:

- “The Jewish communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza are the realization of Zionist values. Settlement of the land is a clear expression of the unassailable right of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel and constitutes an important asset in the defense of the vital interests of the State of Israel. The Likud will continue to strengthen and develop these communities and will prevent their uprooting.”
- “Jerusalem is the eternal, united capital of the State of Israel and only of Israel. The government will flatly reject Palestinian proposals to divide Jerusalem, including the plan to divide the city presented to the Knesset by the Arab factions and supported by many members of Labor and Meretz.”
- “The Government of Israel flatly rejects the establishment of a Palestinian Arab state west of the Jordan river. The Palestinians can run their lives freely in the framework of self-rule, but not as an independent and sovereign state. Thus, for example, in matters of foreign affairs, security, immigration and ecology, their activity shall be limited in accordance with imperatives of Israel’s existence, security and national needs.”

(Likud Party Charter and Party Platform, 1999)

The maximalists also want territory east of the Jordan River.

B. Solutions to Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

1. Two-state solution: still the official position of most.
 - a. Oslo II 1995: Palestinian state in Gaza and West Bank; WB border following Green Line (i.e. all of areas A,B,C).
 - b. Land swaps: WB settlements to Israel in exchange for land on w. side of Green Line to Palestinians.
2. Annexation: of Area C, leaving Areas A+B to Palestinians (169 enclaves). Increasing calls for this option, including by current cabinet members.
3. One state solution: unacceptable to most, except staunch peace advocates on both sides.
4. Pay Palestinians to leave:

II. Christian Zionism

Supports Israel’s return to, and expanding presence in, the land as the fulfilment of Biblical prophecy. The land (including Judea and Samaria, i.e. the West Bank) belongs to Israel: it was promised to Abraham, taken possession of by Joshua. Operates from a dispensationalist theology.

Major Christian Zionist organizations:

- Friends of Israel (foi.org).
- Christians United for Israel (CUFI, cufi.org; 2006): John Hagee, Sr. Pastor, Cornerstone Church, San Antonio, TX.
- International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem (icej.org; 1980).
- Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC Heartland, cfoic.com; 1995). Founded in response to Oslo Accords. “Judea and Samaria are not occupied territory” (homepage).

A. Friends of Israel Statement of Faith (foi.org)**X. Church**

We believe that the Church began on the day of Pentecost... [comment: this sounds innocuous, but the sub-text is an assertion that the Church has nothing to do with Abraham]

XI. Israel

We believe that Israel is God’s chosen national people (Gen. 28:13). In God’s sovereign will, Israel serves as a channel of His blessing to the entire world (Gen. 12:3) for His glory (Isa. 43:7), and His witness to the nations (Isa. 43:10). God’s election of Israel for this unique relationship is irrevocable (Ro. 11:28-29).

11. The Current Situation

We believe Israel is distinct from the church and central to God's plan, past, present, and future. The unfulfilled prophecies given to Israel in the Old Testament will find their literal fulfillment in Israel at a future time (Ps. 105:6-10).

XII. Eschatology

We believe in the premillennial and pretribulational return of Jesus Christ. This means that Christ's return for His Bride (the Church) is imminent and therefore can happen at any moment (1 Th. 4:13-17; 5:6).

We believe that, following the Rapture of the Church; the seven-year Tribulation Period (Daniel's 70th week, or the Time of Jacob's Trouble) will take place (Dan. 9:24-27; 2 Th. 2:3-4).

We believe that following the Tribulation, the Millennium will begin. It will be brought about by the literal, physical, visible, bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth to rule and to reign for one thousand years (Zech. 14:1-4; Rev. 19:20).

"Dispensationalists believe God has two distinct programs for history: one for Israel and one for the church" (from FOI website).

B. Issues with Dispensational Christian Zionism

1. God blesses those who bless Israel (Gen 12:3)
2. The Jews are God's chosen people
3. The Promised Land was given to Israel as an eternal inheritance
4. Jerusalem is the exclusive, undivided, eternal capital of the Jewish people
5. The Temple must be rebuilt before Jesus returns
6. Christians will be raptured before the end-time battle of Armageddon
7. God has separate plans for Israel and the Church

III. New Christian Zionism

Gerald R. McDermott, ed. *The New Christian Zionism" Fresh Perspectives on Israel and the Land* (IVP, 2016).

- The people and the land of Israel are central to the story of the Bible.
- God saves the world through Israel and the perfect Israelite; thus the Bible is incoherent and salvation impossible without Israel.
- The people of Israel and their land continue to have theological significance.
- the return of Jews...to their land...is part of the fulfillment of biblical prophecy.
- do not mean that the state of Israel is perfect, or should not be criticized for its failures.

IV. Messianic Judaism