

The New Testament in Seven Sentences

Overview of the NT Themes

1. FULFILMENT

Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” MATTHEW 16:16

The gospels told a divisive story told by Jesus and about Jesus that only made sense after the resurrection.

It was the story of a long hope nurtured by the Jewish people. They had lived through world empires of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Romans and longed to be free. Longed to come ‘home’ safely and finally.

They prayed for a righteous ruler, a prophet-like ruler who would bring God close to them, a priest-like ruler who would make it possible for them to go to God and a king-like ruler who would subdue the enemies:

Behold, O Lord, and raise up for them their king, the Son of David, at the appointed time which you, O God, did choose, that he may reign over Israel your servant. And equip him with strength, that he may shatter unrighteous rulers, and may cleanse Jerusalem from the gentiles that trample her down in destruction. . . . He will be one taught by God—a righteous king over them. And there will be no unrighteousness in their midst in his days, because they are all a holy people, and their king is the Lord’s anointed [Christos or Messiah]. May God cleanse Israel against the day when he shows mercy in blessedness, against the day he chooses to lead his anointed one [Christos]. Happy are they who are born in those days—to see the Lord’s goodness which he shall bring upon a generation to come. (Psalms of Solomon 17:21-24, 32-34; 18:5-7) (1st century BC)

But who were the real enemies and how would liberation happen? Luke 4: 1-13

See Romans 5:12-21 Sin, Death, Law

2. KINGDOM

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel. MARK 1:15

The term ‘kingdom’ appears 126 times in the Gospels (Matthew 55 times; Mark 20 times; Luke 46 times; John 5 times). Jesus refers to the kingdom of God or kingdom of heaven 84 times. If we allow for duplicate sayings among the Gospels, we can find about 75 separate sayings from Jesus about this kingdom.

The new reality which would only have been heard politically (cf ‘*a new United Kingdom*’) and so was an invitation to change and a threat to kings:

Hasmonean Kingdom c140-37BC Greeks appointed Kings until 63BC when Romans took over

Herod the Great appointed ‘king’ by Romans until 4AD

On death his 3 sons were given oversight of ‘provinces’

Is this a revival of the old? Or the beginning of something new? Matthew 10:7; Matthew 13

Cf Threat of Magi (Matthew 2); Hosanna to Kingdom of David on Palm Sunday entry to Jerusalem, Trial – ‘are you the King of the Jews?; Superscription on the cross: ‘This is the King of the Jews’ in 3 world languages.

3. CROSS

Jesus said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” LUKE 9:22

None of his followers expected that this was central to his purpose. He explains it to disciples on 3 separate occasions, but it all makes sense only after resurrection.

He is not a martyr – he gives his life as a ransom for many. Mark 10:45. It’s a Passover event – ultimate freedom. Seeds are in Isaiah 40-55.

4. GRACE

It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. EPHESIANS 2:8-9

Abraham was given a promise of a future of a home and a family on the basis that he trusted God alone. So he becomes the example par excellence of grace.

So Law, circumcision, sabbath-keeping are no longer the means of ensuring God’s favour. It’s trusting in the work that Jesus did for us.

5. COVENANT

You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 1 PETER 2:9

Who belongs to God? Who can access the grace of God? What do they need to do? A new covenant was made in the upper room – with the world. The idea of covenant

There is now a new covenant community. 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

6. SPIRIT

If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ROMANS 8:9

The Spirit that anoints Jesus in Luke 4, to the coming of the Spirit in Acts 2, to the mutually gifted church in Rome and Corinth, the Spirit is the one leading us, empowering us, enabling us to follow Jesus.

Galatians 5:13-26

7. COMPLETION

Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. REVELATION 21:1

Jesus begins the end. The last days have come upon us all. We live in the light of the future kingdom that will be when Jesus hands all things over to the Father.

1 Corinthians 15 & Revelation 21-22

The Whole Bible Story in 500 words (roughly!)

God created the world in love. By his Spirit and his word, he made all kinds of plants and creatures, the stars in the sky, but as the pinnacle of all he created human beings—male and female in his likeness, as companion to one another, to share his rule.

But the people he had made turned from him and refused to follow his pattern of life. Yet God continued to provide for them—even as their rebellion destroyed their relationships, God’s world, and even each other.

God called Abraham to trust him and know him. Through him God would make a nation who would be a blessing to the whole world. Even as Abraham, and his children, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, struggled to trust God, he provided and protected them, and fulfilled his promise.

The nation sold themselves into debt slavery in Egypt. Oppressed, they cried out to God for deliverance, and he raised up Moses as their leader. Through him, God led them from slavery to freedom in the promised land and gave them the gift of the law to live by. Even as they questioned and complained, God continued to provide for them and protect them.

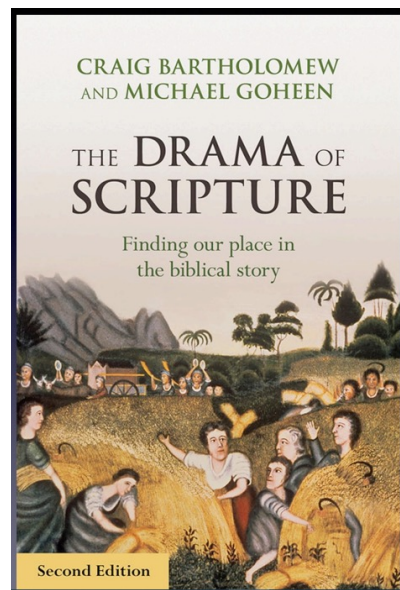
Joshua led the people to settle the land, though they did not drive out the enemy. As the people turned from God, the nations around oppressed them. They cried out, and God delivered them. Rejecting God’s rule, they asked for a king like the peoples around them—and he anointed Saul, David and Solomon to rule for him. Through them he blessed Israel with wisdom and worship, he established his presence in the temple. By his Spirit, he raised up prophets to call them back to faithfulness. Yet they continued to turn from him and worship others.

He sent empires to take his people captive again—but he could not give them up—his heart would not let him. Through leaders and prophets, he brought his people back to the land and back to the law, restoring the worship of his temple. Yet as they struggled, he sowed in their heart the desire for a new obedience, a new freedom, a new experience of his Spirit—even a new age, a new heavens and earth, through the renewed presence of God with his people.

Anointed by the Spirit, Jesus came proclaiming the longed-for reign of God as king. He healed the sick, delivered the possessed, and proclaimed good news of God’s grace to the poor. He called God’s people back to the true heart of the law, to true worship of God’s presence; he proclaimed forgiveness, freedom from living in the slavery of sin. But the leaders rejected him and had him crucified as a common criminal—just as they had rejected the prophets before him. As before, God turned rejection into redemption, and raised him to life, pouring out his Spirit and forming a renewed people from those who continued to trust and follow. This new life of the Spirit spilled over, beyond the bounds of his people the Jews, so that all the world would know God’s blessing.

Through his people, Jesus continues to heal and bless and call others to life in all its fullness. One day Jesus will return to complete the fulfilment of God's promise to his people, to renew all creation, and to make real God's presence forever.

By Ian Paul, <http://www.psephizo.com/biblical-studies/whats-the-bible-all-about/>



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The biblical drama

Act One God creates his kingdom

Act Two Rebellion in God's kingdom

Act Three Promise of restoration of God's kingdom:
Israel's mission

Act Four Kingdom restored: Jesus' mission

Act Five Kingdom tasted and displayed:
the church's mission

Scene 1 The church begins its mission to the nations

Scene 2 Our place in the story: the church continues
its mission to the nations

Act Six Consummation of God's kingdom

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Biggest Picture

Creation, Royal Task & Rebellion Genesis 1-11

God & His World

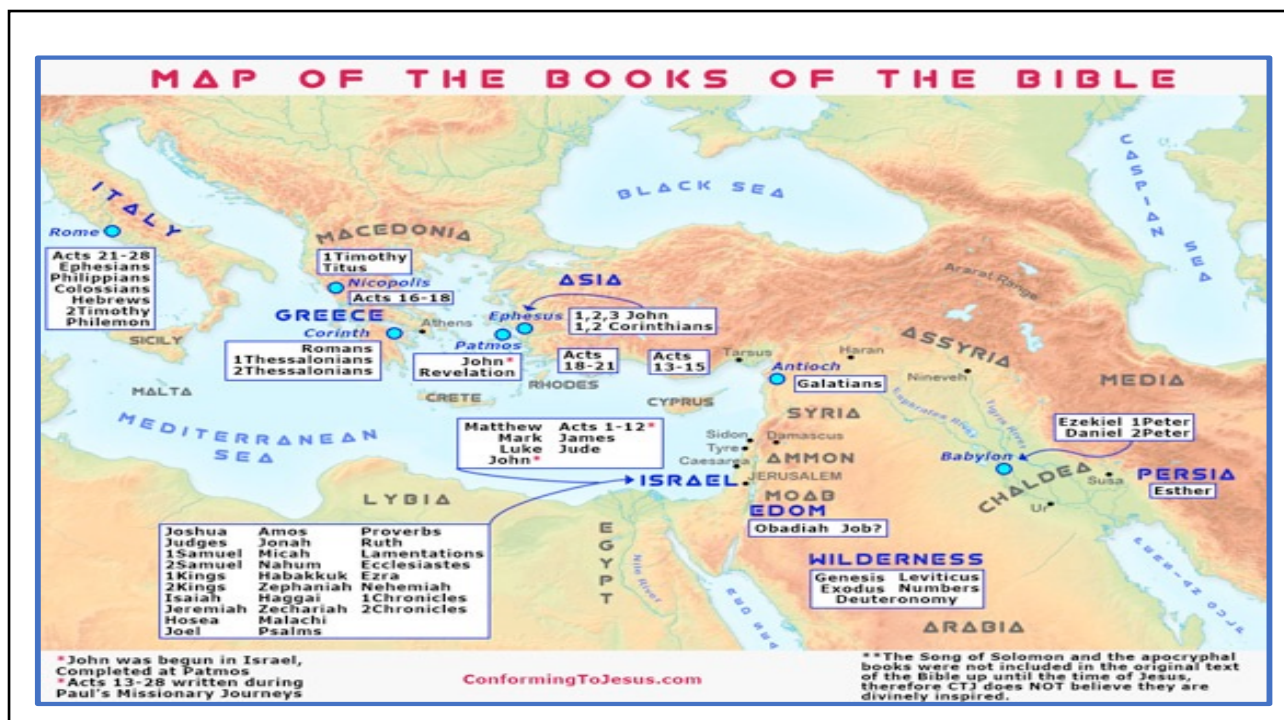
Rebellion & Consequences:

Eviction(3), Vengeance (4), Flood & New Creation (6-9), Nations (10), Defiance: Babylon (11)

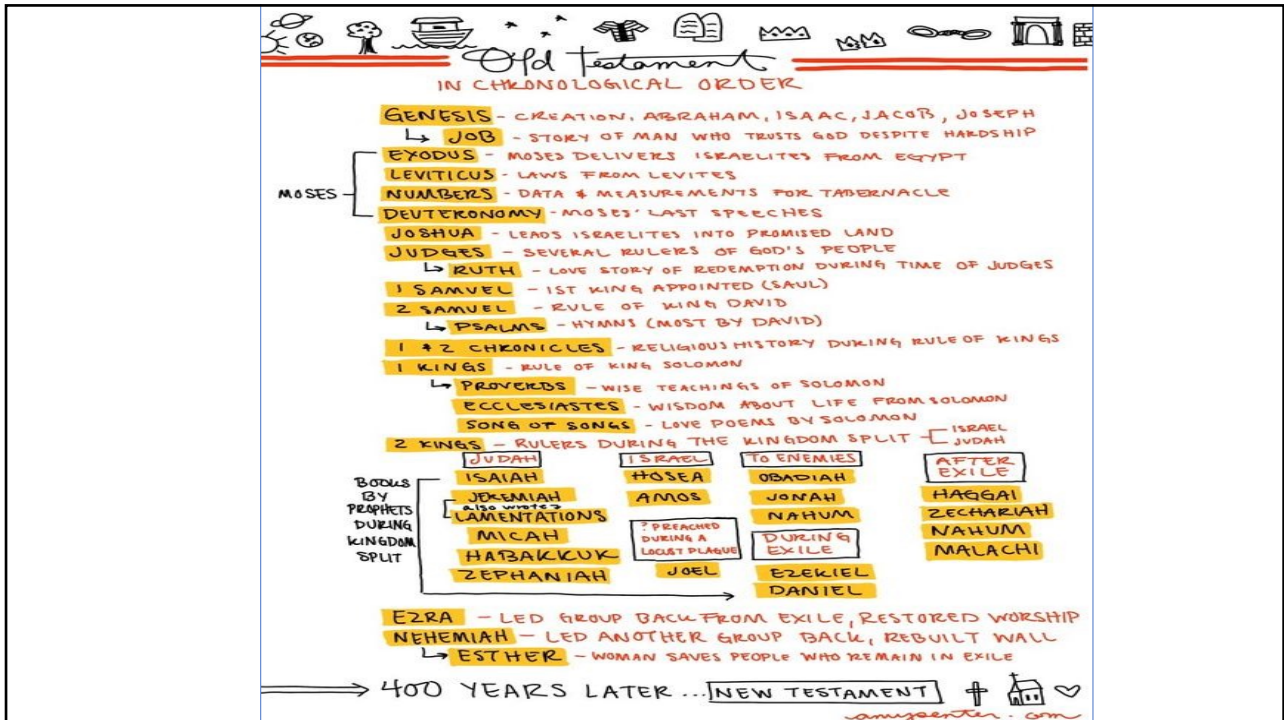
God's Rescue Plan:

- Movement One: God Chooses Israel to Bless the Nations: Genesis 12-Deuteronomy
- Movement Two: Israel's Royal Failure: Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings
- Movement Three: Israel's Exile & Prophetic Hope: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea - Malachi

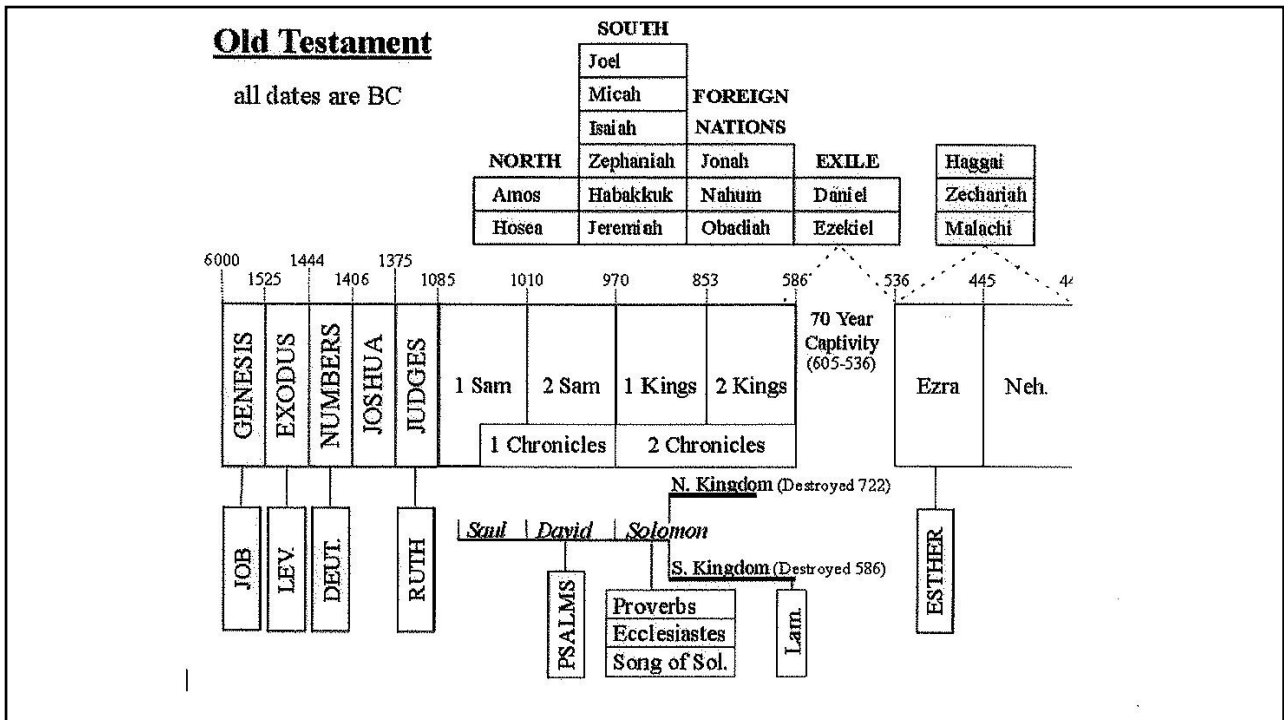
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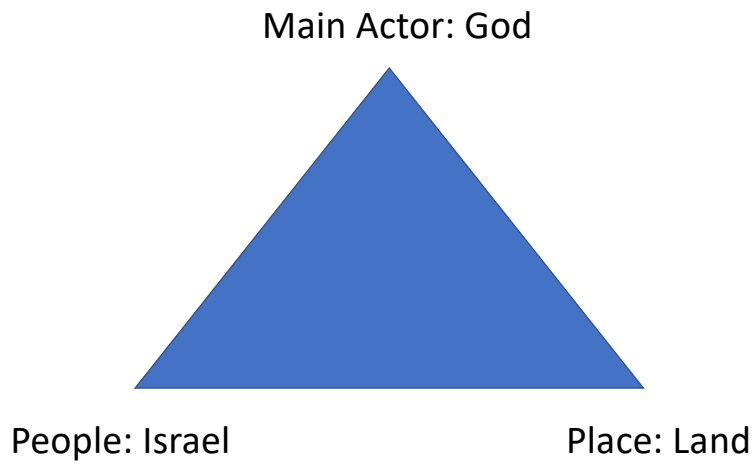


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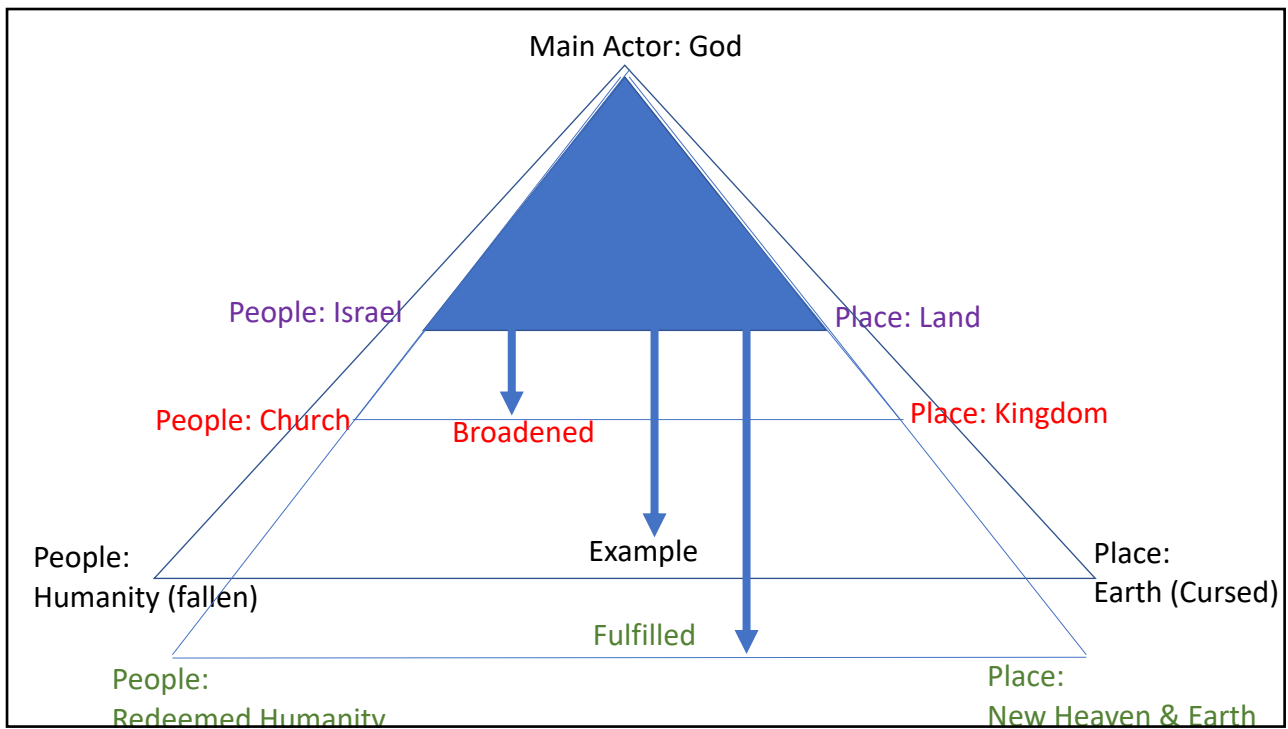


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Making Sense of the OT



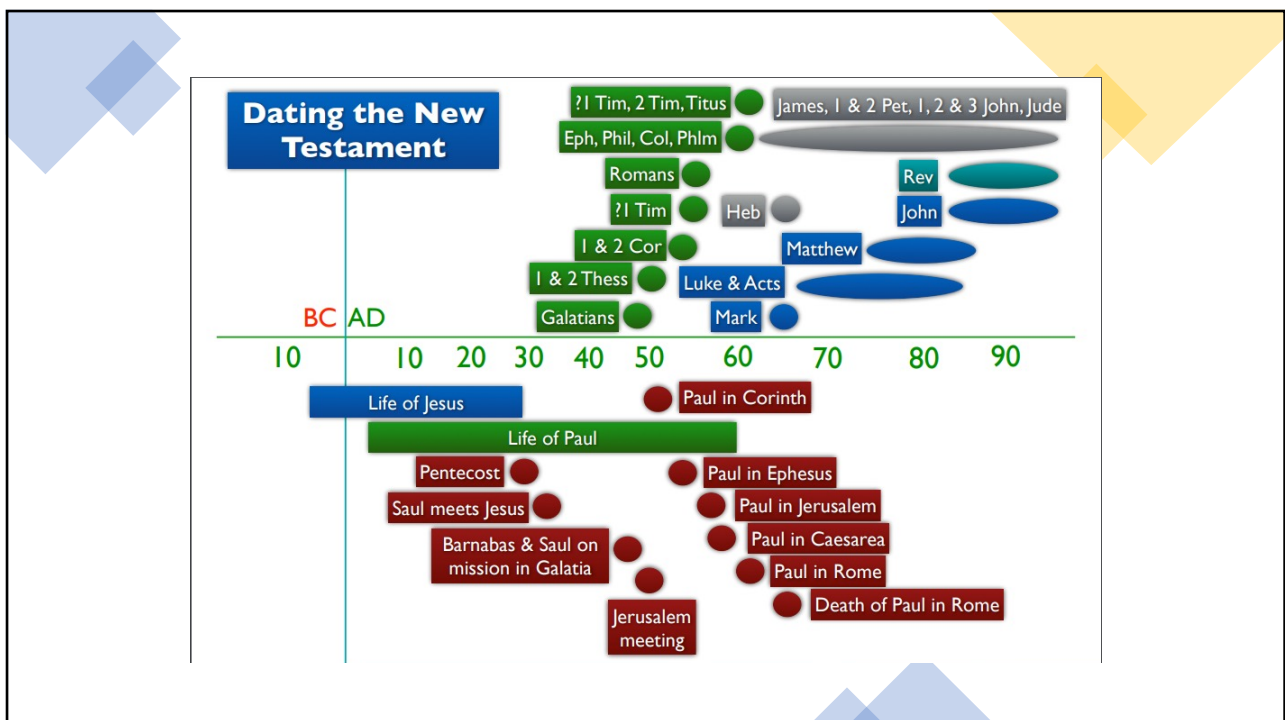
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