

Jesus Is the Center of It All

After the fall of Adam and Eve, God judged the world for mankind's rebellion (i.e. "the curse"), and He made it clear to Satan—the one who tempted Adam and Eve—that his days were numbered because God was bringing a "Seed" of the woman to "crush" his head. He said:

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her **Seed**; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15).

This is the first (proto) promise of Good News – *protoevangelium*. It is the "Seed" of woman Who is the Promised One of God. This "Son of Man" and "Son of God" would "reverse the curse" and redeem that which is lost. When Eve gave birth to her first child she named Him Cain. Very few parents have had higher hopes for their children than Adam and Eve when they gave birth to Cain. James Boice points out in his commentary on Genesis: "In view of the promise of a deliverer, the name Cain means **"Here he is"** or **"I've gotten him"** Eve called her son "Here he is" because she believed the deliverer had been sent."

Throughout the Scriptures, God's promise of a "Coming Seed" of man was repeated over and over again. Even when the entire world was evil (Genesis 6), God insured that He would preserve Noah's family, for through Shem (Noah's son), the Seed of Man would come. Fast forward more than a millennium after the Flood and you find a descendant of Shem (Abraham) who receives the same promise that Adam and Eve, Noah, and Shem received before him. This is when we begin our dating of the Old Testament.

Date #1
1877 B.C.

Abraham's Call

In **1877 B.C.** God called Abram ***his home to leave*** to come to Canaan where ***he was to believe***, that through him God would bring ***His eternal Seed***, in Whom God would meet ***mankind's need***.

"Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring (Seed). It does not say, 'And to offsprings,' referring to many, but referring to one, 'And to your offspring,' who is Christ. This is what I mean: the Law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God (the promise God made to Abraham that all nations will be blessed through His Seed), so as to make the promise void" (Galatians 3:16–17).

God's promise to bless all the nations through Abraham in Genesis 12:1-4 is a promise that ***"Abram believed."*** An amazing thing happened because of Abraham's faith. ***"God credited Abraham's faith to him as righteousness"*** (see Genesis 15:6 and Romans 4:3). The good news of Abraham coming into "right standing before God" (i.e. righteousness) because of his faith in *God's Promised Seed* is the same good news we share today with people in need of right standing before God. When one trusts God's promises that are in Jesus Christ, God will take that "faith" and credit it to the believer as ***personal righteousness!***

The Apostle Paul argues in Galatians 3:16-17 that God's plan to bless those who trust Christ was ***"not made void"*** by the introduction of the Law **430 years** after the promise was made. Rather, the Law

entered in order "that sin may abound" (Romans 5:20a), or in plain English, "that people might know the depths of their problem with sin." God gave the Mosaic Law to expose man's sin, but where sin abounds, "grace much more abounds" (Romans 5:20b). In the Law we see mankind's need (forgiveness of sin), but we also see God's grace to sinners in Jesus Christ, the Seed of Abraham. Jesus is the subject and theme of all the Law and the prophets. "And beginning with the Law of Moses and all the Prophets, Jesus explained to them what was said in the Scriptures concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27).

As an aside, Abraham was seventy-five years old when God called him to leave his home in Ur (Genesis 12:4). Twenty-five years later, when Abraham was 100, Sarah gave birth to Abraham's "*son of promise*" (Isaac). Isaac is the son through whom the *Promised Seed* would come. Unfortunately, before Sarah gave birth to this "son of promise," Abraham had taken for himself an Egyptian woman named Hagar and she bore for him a "son of the flesh" they named Ishmael. When Isaac was five and "being weaned," and his half-brother Ishmael was twenty years old (in **1847 B.C.**), Ishmael "mocked" Isaac. That mocking began "four hundred years of Israel's affliction" (**1847 B.C. to 1447 B.C.**) by the Egyptians, for Ishmael was the son of an Egyptian handmaid. God had told Abraham, "*Know for certain...that your offspring will be afflicted for four hundred years.*" (Genesis 15:13).

The important number to remember is **430 years**. The 430 years began when God calls Abraham and makes to him the promise of a Promised Seed that would bless the world. Abraham's miracle son was born when Abram was 100 and is named Isaac. Abraham's son **Isaac** then has twin sons named **Jacob** and Esau (Genesis 25:19-34). **Jacob**, not Esau, continues Abraham's line through whom God's Promised One would come. Jacob wrestles with God and his name is changed by God to **Israel** (Genesis 32:28). Israel has 12 sons who become the 12 Tribes (Families) of Israel. There are **430 years** from the giving of "The Promise" to the giving of "The Law." God gives the Promise in 1877 B.C.), and God delivers Israel (the nation) out of Egyptian bondage and gives them "The Law" (1447 B.C.) and enters into a covenant with this chosen nation. God says to Moses at Mt. Sinai when He gave the Covenant of Law to Israel, "I am the God of **Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**" (Exodus 3:6). In other words, He is the God of the Promised Seed.

Date #2
1447 B.C.

The Exodus and The Law

In **1447 B.C.** by God's powerful **hand**, Moses led his people out of Egypt **to their own land**, giving to the nation of Israel **the Law**, designed by God to expose **mankind's flaw**.

God said, "*Now therefore Israel, if you will obey My voice indeed and keep My covenant (the Law) then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you will be to Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation*" (Exodus 19:5, 6a) Israel responded "*all this we will do!*" (Exodus 24:7).

The Promised Seed of Abraham who would bless the world was coming, but before He came, God made a conditional agreement (covenant) called "The Law" with *the nation of Israel*. This covenant of Law is deemed "obsolete" by New Testament writers, and that's why believers in Christ now call it "The **Old** Covenant" (see Hebrews 8:13). The Old Covenant ("The Law") was an agreement whereby God

promised the nation of Israel "*blessings for obedience, and curses for disobedience*" (see Deuteronomy 28). It was a *conditional* covenant. If Israel kept the Law perfectly, then Israel would be perfectly blessed by God. But if Israel broke the Law, God would allow foreign nations to come into the Promise Land to destroy Israel's cities, to impoverish God's people, and take captive the Jews.

The entire narrative of the Old Testament is one of Israel "breaking covenant" and forsaking the Law, thereby experiencing the righteous judgment of God. The Law typifies in "shadow form" both the need for – and the work of – **Abraham's Seed**, Jesus the Messiah, the Promised One. Through Him – through Him alone – all the nations of the world would be blessed.

Date #3
1051 B.C.

The Kingdom of Israel

In **1051 B.C.** Israel sought to be like *other nations around*, and chose **Saul their first king to be crowned**, so Israel changed from a unique **theocracy** into a nation like others ruled by a **monarchy**.

*"Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, 'No, but **there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.**' Now after Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the LORD's hearing. The LORD said to Samuel, 'Listen to their voice and appoint them a king'" (I Samuel 8:19-22).*

When Israel became a nation during their "bondage" in Egypt, God raised up a leader for Israel named Moses. Moses lived for 120 years (Deuteronomy 34:7). The 120 years of Moses can be broken into three forty year time spans.

The first 40 years – Moses is born and raised in Egypt in Pharaoh's court.

The second 40 years – Moses kills an Egyptian in defense of fellow Hebrews and flees to Midian.

The third 40 years – Moses leads Israel out of the bondage of Egypt and to *the border of Canaan*.

But God told Moses that he would die and not be able to enter the Promised Land "**Because you have not believed Me...therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them**" (Numbers 20:12). God told Moses to "speak to the Rock" for life giving water, but Moses "struck the Rock" rather than speak (Numbers 20:11). Of course, Jesus is the Rock from whom life-giving water comes, and you are called to "speak to Him." The consequences for not *trusting* Abraham's Seed are severe – just ask Moses. The number 120 years is significant in Scripture, representing God's judgment for unbelief.

When Israel became a monarchy, they had a United Kingdom (12 united tribes of Israel) for the same duration of time that Moses lived on earth (120 years). The length of the United Kingdom of Israel can also be broken down into three time periods of forty years.

Birth of the Kingdom and King Saul (1051 -1011 B.C.) – Saul reigns 40 years (Acts13:21).

Saul dies and David is King (1011 - 971 B.C.) – David reigns 40 years (I Kings 2:11).

David dies, Solomon is King (971 to 931 B.C.) – Solomon reigns 40 years (I Kings 11:42).

Why did the United Kingdom of Israel come to an end?

"**And the Lord was angry with Solomon**, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the Lord commanded. Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and **thou hast not kept My covenant** and My statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David My servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen" (I Kings 11:9-13).

Just like Moses, the Israel's kings (Saul, David, Solomon) struggled with *trusting* God. As a result, the Kingdom of Israel would last only 120 years, the same duration as Moses' life. Israel would split in two Kingdoms (North and South) after the death of Solomon (931 B.C.). But before Solomon dies, he builds for God a permanent Temple where all the ceremonies of the Law (sacrifices, feasts and festivals, and all the Law rituals) could be observed.

Date #4

967 B.C.

The Building of the Temple in Jerusalem

In **967 B.C.** Solomon began building for God a permanent ***dwelling place***, but Israel would never be permitted to see ***His Face***, for God's glory was hidden ***behind a veil***, and only the High Priest could approach and ***live to tell***.

"In the **four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites came out of Egypt**, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the Temple of the LORD" (I Kings 6:1).

In **967 B.C.** – the fourth year of Solomon's reign as King over Israel, Solomon began building for God a Temple. The Temple – a building designed by God (II Samuel 7, I Chronicles 17) – represents in every function, form, feast and festival, sacrifice and ritual, the Person and work of Jesus Christ. The Temple was simply "*the dwelling place of God*" where sinners dared not approach without a proper understanding of the demands for sacrifice, priestly intercession, and a healthy respect for the One who dwelt inside. Remember, 120 years was the time period representing God's judgment on Moses and God's judgment on the Kingdom of Israel. **480 years is 120 four times over**, and the Temple is built **480 years AFTER God entered into covenant with the nation of Israel**. Like Moses, like Israel's kings, *the entire nation of Israel had fallen into severe disbelief*.

When you read the history of Israel from the Exodus (**1447 B.C.**) to the construction of the Temple (**967 B.C.**), you get the sense that Israel completely failed in living up to their end of the Covenant. The Temple in Jerusalem becomes the place where the "Shekinah" Glory of God descends, and where the High Priest, once a year on "The Day of Atonement," petitions God on behalf of Israel. Through the

sacrifices that foreshadowed the coming of the Promised One, the Seed of Abraham, God would refrain from executing judgment on His people.

Date # 5

722 B.C.

The Northern Kingdom of Israel Falls to Assyria

The Law demanded ***obedience or a curse***, and a curse of the Northern Kingdom could ***never reverse***. Israel rebelled against God ***time after time***, and in **722 B.C.** Assyria brought Israel to the ***end of their line***.

After the Kingdom of Israel split into the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah) in 931 B.C., the Northern Kingdom of Ten Tribes (all but Judah and Benjamin), established the city of Samaria as their capital, and built for themselves Temples at Dan and Bethel (I Kings 12:26-33). Of the nineteen kings of the northern Kingdom, every one of them "did evil in the sight of the Lord" (II Kings 17:2).

Hosea, a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel, was told by God in a very visual way that Israel had become "Lo-Ammi," which means "no longer My people" (Hosea 1:9). Because of Israel's disobedience to the Law, God divorced Israel. He told Hosea, "I will soon punish (Israel) and put an end to the Kingdom of Israel" (Hosea 1:4).

In fulfillment of the judgments outlined in the Mosaic Covenant for disobedience (Deuteronomy 28), God raised up the Assyrians, the world's first empire, to desolate northern Israel's cities, take captive Israel's fighting men, and bring in pagan men to "intermarry with the Hebrew women who remained." "The descendants of these mixed marriages were called "Samaritans" and they were despised by the Jews (short for "Judah"), the people of the Southern Kingdom for being "half-breeds." The 10 Israeli tribes of the north were "lost."

However, when Abraham's Seed, the Promised One from Jehovah, came to earth to redeem mankind, "He must needs go through Samaria," and it was there that He met a "half-breed" Samaritan woman at the well and gave her "the Water of Life" (John 4:4-10). The Promised One is for all peoples in all nations.

Date #6

586 B.C.

The Southern Kingdom of Israel (Judah) Falls to the Babylonians and the Temple Is Destroyed

The Jews of the Southern Kingdom resisted the prophets' call, and finally they themselves suffered a terrible fall. In **586 B.C.** King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came, and Jerusalem and the Temple never again would be the same.

The world's first empire (Assyria) could never conquer the Southern Kingdom. But after Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon defeated the Assyrians and Egypt (609 B.C.), and he turned his sights on Jerusalem and the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

There were 20 Kings of Judah from the time Israel's United Kingdom divided in **931 B.C.** to the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Only seven or eight of these kings of Judah were good kings. Like their brothers in the north, the Jews (i.e. Judites) of the Southern Kingdom of Israel disobeyed the Laws of the Covenant. God raised up prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel to urge the Jews "to repent" and return to the LORD, but the kings and the people imprisoned the prophets and sometimes even killed them. The history of the Southern Kingdom, with its capital of Jerusalem, is one of rebellion and sin.

God took the prophet Ezekiel into the "basement of the Temple" in Jerusalem shortly before the Babylonians destroyed the Temple and took Jews into captivity. God showed Ezekiel all kinds of profanities scrawled on the walls, a picture of Judah's rebellion to the Law. Ezekiel saw in a vision "the glory of God" depart from the Temple (Ezekiel 10). From that moment until the coming of the Promised One (Jesus Christ), the glory of God was never seen again by the Jews. Worship still continued, but rituals without the Spirit always leads to legalism or liberalism. During the time "between the Testaments," that is the close of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament, the Jews would see the rise of Jewish religious sects called the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Babylon attacked Jerusalem in **three phases:**

609 B.C. the first attack – The Babylonians carried off young men like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Most people date "The 70 Years of Babylonian Captivity" from this date to 539 B.C. when Cyrus, King of Persia, defeats the Babylonians and issues a decree that the Jews could be released to return to their land and rebuild Jerusalem and the city (Daniel 5 and Daniel 9).

597 B.C. the second attack – Nebuchadnezzar took more Jewish artisans to Babylon (Iraq) to help build the walls of the city, the ammunition for the army, and the famous "Hanging Gardens" of Babylon. It was during this second attack that Nebuchadnezzar deposed the Jewish king Jehoiachin and replaced him with the puppet king Zedekiah (2 Kings 24).

586 B.C. the third and final attack – After an 18 month siege by the Babylonians, Jerusalem's walls are finally breached. The Jews run into the desert, but King Zedekiah is captured and taken to Nebuchadnezzar where Zedekiah's boys (all under age ten) were killed in front of him and then King Zedekiah's eyes were gouged out (see Jeremiah 39).

So, the Law came 430 years after the Promise to Abraham, and stayed in effect for **1517** years (1447 B.C. to A.D. 70), until the destruction of the rebuilt Temple in AD 70 by the Romans. On October 31, **1517**, Martin Luther nailed on the Door of Wittenberg Castle the 95 Theses Against the Sale of Indulgences, and the great truth of "justification by faith" was rediscovered.

The truth Martin Luther rediscovered is the same truth Abraham knew 3034 years earlier. It's the same truth the Apostle Paul knew and taught. It's the same truth we know and teach today.

God justifies sinners by grace through faith in the Person and work of Jesus Christ, the Promised Seed of Abraham.

Date #7

4. B.C. to A.D. 30

The Birth, Life, Death and Resurrection of *Abraham's Seed*

From heaven **the Promised One** came and sought us to be **His bride**; He took our place in **His Name**, and for our life **He died**.

While in Babylonian Captivity, Daniel is given by God a precise time in which the Messiah (the Seed of Abraham's Promise in Genesis 12) would come (see Daniel 9 and Daniel 11). The reason the "Wise Men" from the East (Babylon and Persia) came to Jerusalem looking for the Messiah (Matthew 2) was because these Magi were very familiar with Daniel and his scroll (the book of Daniel). Daniel is buried in Iran (old Persia) and was revered by the Persian Magi as the greatest wise man of all time.

Jesus Christ came "*to fulfill **the Law**, every smallest letter and stroke of it*" (Matthew 5:18) on behalf of His People. Once He fulfilled the Law in our place, those who "trust Him" receive the eternal blessings that come with perfect obedience to God (i.e. "righteousness"). Never forget: *The Law foreshadowed everything about the Person and work of Jesus Christ*. He is the Lamb of God. He is the High Priest chosen by God. He is the Temple of the living God. He is the "all in all." In Him "all the fullness of the Deity dwells" (Colossians 2:9), and through faith in Him, sinners who fail God are able to be treated by God "just as if they never sinned." As an example of the Law foreshadowing Christ, the Law demanded Israel celebrate seven major holy days or festivals. Jesus Christ **fulfills** them all:

1. Jesus was born during the **Feast of Tabernacles**, coming to earth as Emmanuel, God with us.
2. Jesus died during the **Feast of Passover** for judgment to "pass over" those who trust Him.
3. Jesus was buried during the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**, sweeping away your sins.
4. Jesus rose on the **Feast of First Fruits**, the first fruits of resurrection, guaranteeing our own.
5. Jesus sent His Spirit on the **Feast of Pentecost**, and we are now the Temple of the Living God.
6. Jesus serves as the High Priest of the **Feast of Atonement**, forever making intercession for us.
7. Jesus is coming for us during the **Feast of Trumpets**, raising us from death to eternal life.

In essence, Jesus is the "true Israel." He is the Seed of Abraham. He is Emmanuel, God with us.

Everything national Israel did foreshadowed everything the Seed of Abraham would do. In infancy, a flight to Egypt, a crossing of water into the Promised Land (Jesus was baptized at the very spot Old Covenant Israel crossed the Jordan into Canaan), a Wilderness journey measured by forty (in Israel's case, 40 years, in Jesus' case, 40 days), a Law given on a Mountain (Sinai and "The Sermon on the Mount"), and the observance of all the Festivals.

There is one huge difference between national Israel and the true Israel – Jesus fulfilled where Israel failed. "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17) said the Father, and when you embrace the Son, the pleasure of the Father abides on you too (see Psalm 2:12).

The first message Jesus ever preached was an amazing message of deliverance to those who knew themselves in trouble because of their failures before God. Remember the curses of the Law? Jesus said He came "TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, TO RECOVER SIGHT TO THE BLIND, AND TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE DOWNTRODDEN" (Luke 4:18-19).

One of the most famous stories among the Jews was how Jewish King Zedekiah's eyes were "gouged out" by Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar after Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Babylonians as a direct result of Israel breaking covenant with God (II Kings 25:7). The poor, the captives, the blind, and the downtrodden were people in trouble with God because of their sin.

Jesus came to reverse the curse. You will never understand the beautiful salvation and deliverance of Jesus the Messiah until you fully comprehend the purpose of national Israel and the Old Covenant Law.

The Old Covenant is abrogated, abolished and absolutely abandoned because now all the promises associated with perfect obedience to the Law (e.g. to be to God a special people among all the peoples of the earth, to be kingdom of priests for the world, and to be a royal nation in the world) are all fulfilled *by trusting Jesus Christ*. Further, these blessings are for "all races, all families, and all language groups" (Revelation 7:9), not just the Jews. Peter says *all who believe on Christ*, "are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that we may declare the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His wonderful light" (I Peter 2:9).

In this New Covenant that Christ inaugurated through His blood, I am blessed not because I "have a righteousness of my own that comes from the Law, *but because of a righteousness I have which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.*" (Philippians 3:9).

Until you see Jesus Christ as the emphasis and theme of the Old Testament you will never come to grips with the end of the Old Covenant Law or that God's purpose for *the nation of Israel* is finished. The Law separated Israel from all other nations (Ephesians 2:12-14). The Mosaic Covenant created a barrier between the Jews and everyone else, but Jesus tore that wall down. *Salvation is for any sinner*, whether Jew or Gentile, and has come to us *through Abraham's Promised Seed*, so we respect the Jews, but we no longer believe Israel holds "favored nation status" (John 4:22; Romans 9:4; Ephesians 2:12-14). Those who "Kiss the Son" are God's royal nation (I Peter 2:9-10).

The ministry of Christ ***both abolished the Mosaic economy and fulfilled the central covenant promise to Abraham***, "*in you shall all nations be blessed*" (Galatians 3:8). The abolishment of the Law took place in the form of a fulfillment of it all – every jot and tittle – and not in terms of the Law's irrelevance or disregard.

Date #8

A.D. 70

God's Final Judgment on the Nation of Israel

Just as God did with the Assyrians in 722 B.C., and as He did with the Babylonians in 586 B.C., God sent the Romans in A.D. 70 to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple, to forever end the Jewish religious economy.

Jesus foretold to His disciples that the Temple and the Jewish ceremonial rituals of the Law would be destroyed (Matthew 24). Many who try to interpret these verses as a prophecy regarding the end of the world have never understood the importance of God bringing to an end the Old Covenant way of worship. The Law had been fulfilled by His Son. Christ obtained for us all what we could never obtain by ourselves.

We are redeemed by the performance of the Promised One of Abraham, who has obtained for all who will trust Him the blessings of God through His perfect obedience in His life, and He has borne upon Himself the curses of the Law for those who will trust Him through his passive obedience on the cross. We come to enjoy all the Promises of God in Christ (which are always "yes and amen") when we trust Christ for our right standing with God.

As long as you continue to make the Bible all about Israel and not Jesus Christ, you will miss the glory and beauty of the Promised One of Abraham. The Law was inserted between the Promise to Abraham and the Coming of the Promised One to convince mankind of sin, and to show the glory of the Son. The Law and the Prophets show Christ Himself, and the gospel we have to share today is simply, "trust Christ for your righteousness before God."

The New Covenant

As a person who has come to faith in Jesus Christ under the New Covenant, there are some things true of you that were not true of the Jews under the Law:

1. You have a new Lawgiver - Jesus Christ ([Luke 9:35](#)).
2. You ARE the Temple of the living God ([1 Corinthians 3:16](#)).
3. Everywhere you go God is, for "the life of God is in your soul" ([Colossians 1:27](#)).
4. By your love for people, you are identified as Christ's ([John 13:35](#))
5. You know the Truth, and the Truth sets you free ([John 8:32](#)).

The Bible is all about Jesus Christ. Don't get lost in anything but Him.