

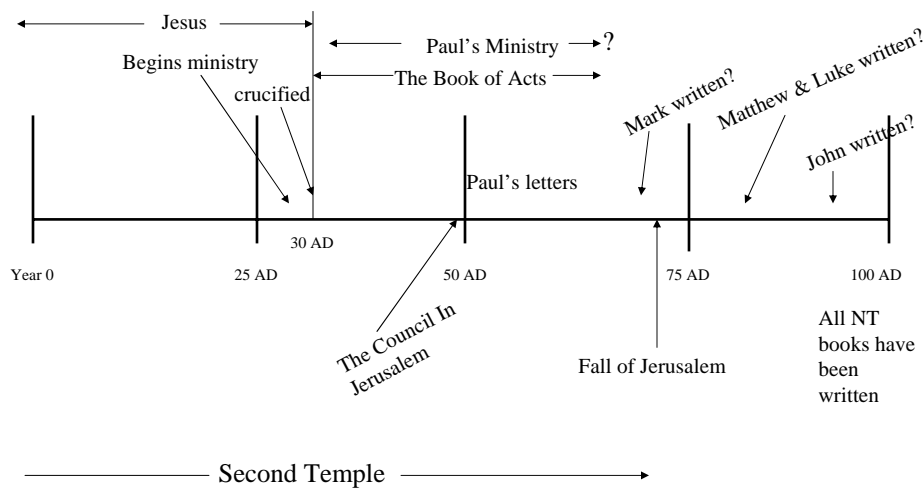


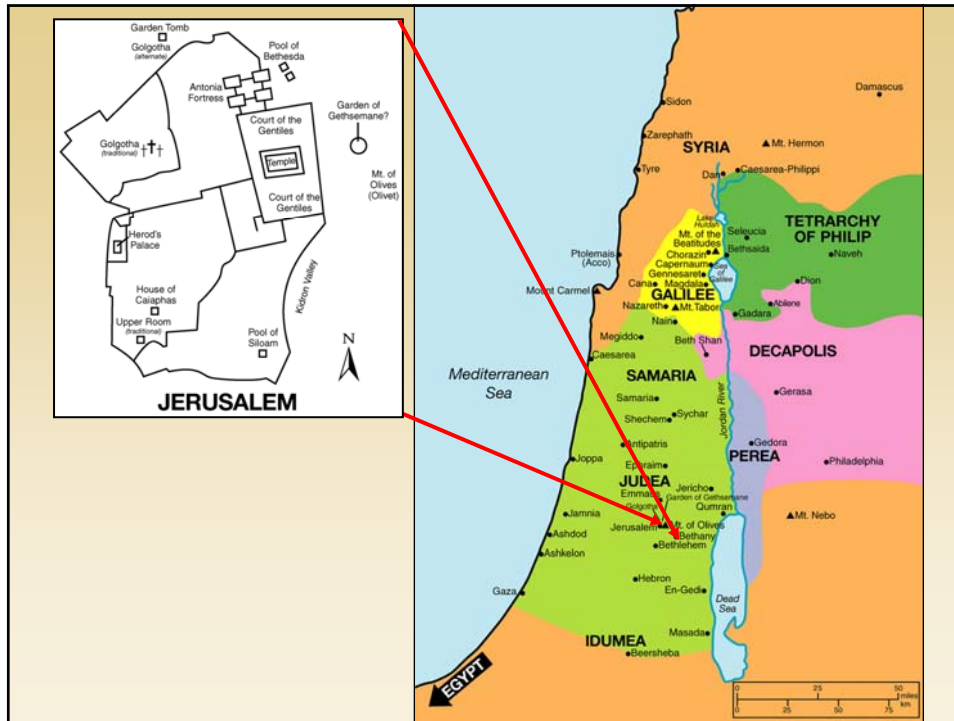
Power of the Prophets: from Moses to Jesus

Week 8
*Prophecy in the Life of the Church
Then and Now*



New Testament Timeline





Jesus' resurrection & the divine "time warp!"

- ❖ We are those "on whom the ends of the ages have come." (see 1 Corinthians 10:11)
- ❖ For a 1st century Jew like Paul, the resurrection of the dead would mark the coming of God's kingdom.
 - As Jesus died, we have all died (2 Cor 5:14-15).
 - "For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; *therefore all have died.*"
 - Thus, in Jesus, we have *already* been raised (see Romans 6:4-5; 8:10-11). But we have *not yet* been raised in our glorified, transformed, spirit-filled bodies (1 Cor 15).
- ❖ We are new creations! (2 Cor 5:17).
 - "If anyone is in Christ – new creation! The old has passed away, the new has come."
- ❖ We have been "born from above" (John 3).
 - In this sense, all Christians are born-again Christians!



Jewish Expectations of the End

THE PRESENT AGE

**THE COMING AGE
(= THE KINGDOM OF GOD)**

Satan's time
sin
sickness
death
no Spirit

God's time
righteousness
wholeness
resurrection
the Spirit

from *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, by Gordon Fee, 1996

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5



Christians' New Perspective ("already/not yet")

THE END

BEGUN

CONSUMMATED

The Present Age

The time of "the flesh"

BETWEEN THE TIMES

The Coming Age

The time of the Spirit

from *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, by Gordon Fee, 1996

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6



Our five-act play

Act One Act Two Act Three Act Four Act Five

Creation → Fall → Israel → Jesus → The church & renewal of creation

The Holy Spirit as God's Empowering Presence

Follow the story!

Where are you in the story!

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7



God's Holy Spirit Arrives

- ❖ After Jesus' resurrection and ascension, his disciples gather in Jerusalem for the festival of Pentecost. There, God's Spirit comes with great and unmistakable power.
 - *Acts 2*
- ❖ The Apostles are able to do miracles. Prophets worked.
 - *Acts 3:1-10* Peter heals a beggar
 - *Acts 11:27-29* The prophet Agabus
 - *Acts 13:1-3* Prophets in Antioch
- ❖ The Book of Acts is the story of God's Holy Spirit at work in the forming of the church. The Spirit is the 'driver' and key player in this story.

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8



Spiritual gifts in these first years

- ❖ 1 Corinthians is a letter Paul wrote to the church he founded in Corinth, Greece. This was a deeply troubled “over-spiritualized” church, even going so far as to deny the resurrection of the body (too physical/not spiritual!). The letter was written in the early 50’s.
- ❖ What is the proper function of spiritual gifts? Paul’s key points:
 - There is one Spirit. But many varieties of gifts. The diverse members and gifts are all part of one body. *1 Cor 12:12-27*
 - The gifts are given for the common good. The variety makes for strength.
 - It is a fool’s game to believe that some gifts are spiritually superior to others. What is greater than them all? LOVE. Hence, we get Paul’s great chapter on love here.
- ❖ Paul does urge the people to “prophecy.”



Prophecy in the church

- ❖ In all his work, Paul focuses on the building up of the church.
 - So he urges the Corinthians to pursue prophecy, not tongues. “To prophecy” is to proclaim God’s word, which can be understood by all and helps to strengthen the community. Prophecy is “plain truth-speaking” not predictions of the future.
 - The one prophesying speaks *edification (building up), encouragement, and comfort*. *1 Cor 14:1-5*
- ❖ But . . . as time goes on, false teachers and false prophets become a big problem.
 - 2 Peter 2:1-3
 - 1 John 4:1-7



Post-New Testament

- ❖ As the first century AD came to a close, most of the Christian community came to believe that the church had passed into a new phase, that the work of God's Holy Spirit was changing.
- ❖ Thus, when the Montanists arose in the mid-100's, claiming that the Spirit had been poured on them in the same way he had been poured out on the apostles . . . in anticipation of Jesus' second coming . . . they were seen as simply wrong.



Prophecy today

- ❖ **This is really a question of revelation and authority.**
 - **What does it mean to bring God's Word today?**
- ❖ It is one thing to bring God's word of encouragement and comfort. It is another to claim to speak for God with the authority of the OT prophets or Jesus or Peter.
 - Nonetheless, in some parts of Pentecostalism, there are those who claim to bring "fresh truth" akin to the 'prophets of old.'
- ❖ ALL the NT writings were finished by 100AD. Since that time, the Christian community has never held any other writings to be inspired in the same way as the NT.
 - Underlying this is the Reformation slogan: *Sola Scripture* (Scripture Alone).