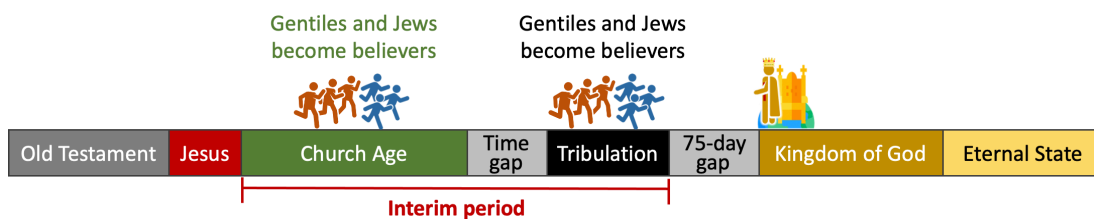


Lesson 41: The Arrival of the Church

Previously...

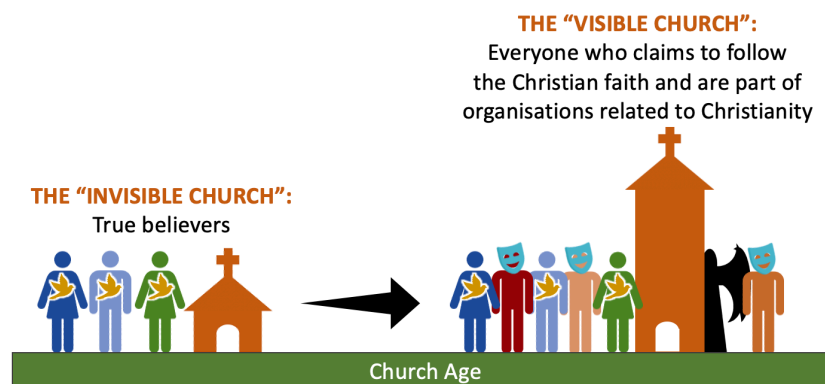
At Jesus' first coming, He was going to restart the Kingdom of God for the nation of Israel. But first, the Jews had to repent and put their trust in Him, their Messiah. While some Jews trusted Him, the nation as a whole rejected Him. And so, Jesus postponed the Kingdom.

Instead, He taught His disciples in parables about a new interim period that would include both the church age and the Tribulation. During this interim period, He would gather citizens for the coming Kingdom.

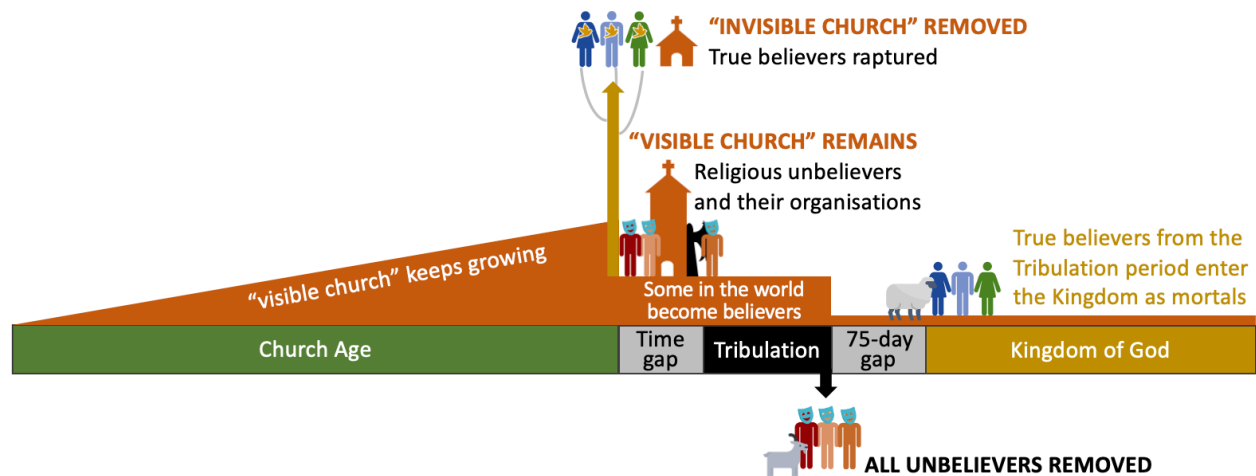


The church age was a mystery that God had not told earlier prophets about. The church would not be a nation, people group or an organisation. Instead, it would be made up of both individual Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus.

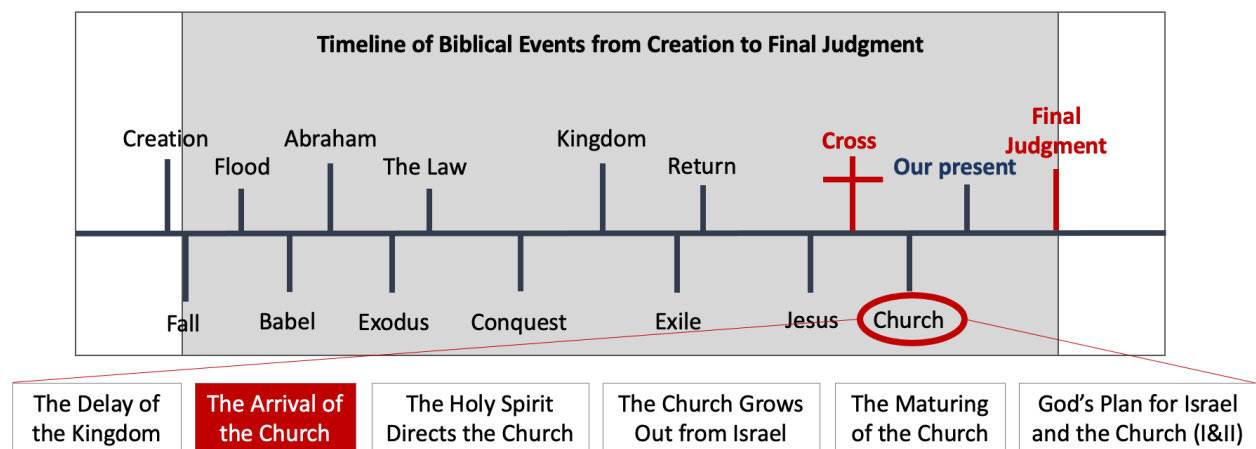
But Satan attacks the church by planting religious unbelievers into it. This mix of true believers and religious unbelievers is the "visible church" that Jesus will allow for a time.



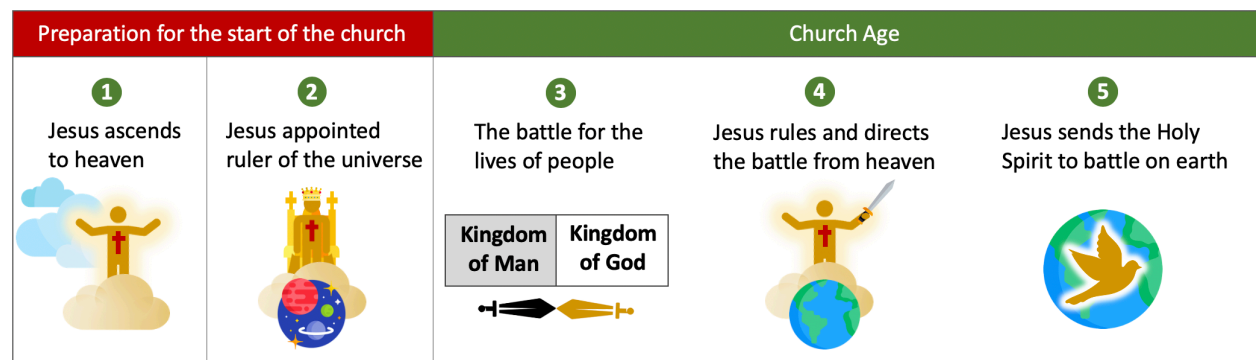
Jesus will end the church age at the rapture, by removing the "invisible church", that is, the true believers in Christ. He will leave behind the mere "shell" of Christianity made up of religious unbelievers and their organisations. Then He will put the world through the seven-year Tribulation. At the end of the Tribulation, He will come to remove unbelievers in judgment. Those who are saved will remain on earth and enter His Kingdom.



But exactly how did the church age begin?



And where is Jesus during the church age?





1. Preparation for the start of the church: Jesus ascended to heaven

Jesus first told His disciples about the interim period through the Matthew 13 parables, but He knew that they did not completely understand. So before He went to the cross, He told them more.

John 14:22–29

²² Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but the other disciple with that name) said to him, “Lord, why are you going to reveal yourself only to us and not to the world at large?” ²³ Jesus replied, “All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. ²⁴ Anyone who doesn’t love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me. ²⁵ I am telling you these things now while I am still with you.

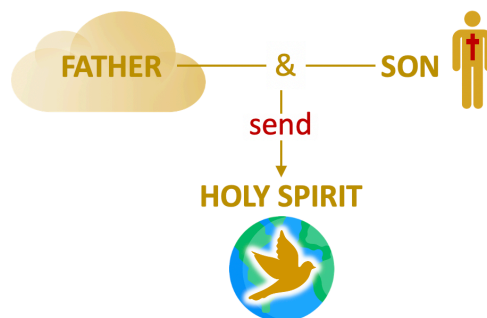
²⁶ But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you. ²⁷ “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.

²⁸ Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really loved me, you would be happy that I am going to the Father, who is greater than I am. ²⁹ I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you will believe.

John 16:5–7

⁵ “But now I am going away to the one who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going. ⁶ Instead, you grieve because of what I’ve told you. ⁷ But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate won’t come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you.

Jesus said that it was very important for believers to understand that when He returned to God the Father, together, they would send the Holy Spirit to believers.



The Holy Spirit would:

- teach the disciples more about God’s plan for the church
- help them truly understand what Jesus had told them
- guide them on what to do.

Holy Spirit will teach and remind the disciples of what Jesus taught them.



Disciples will reveal the truths and record them in the New Testament so others will also know God's truths.

Jesus told them what was going to happen beforehand so that they would not be afraid when it occurred and they would believe Him. Jesus said He must ascend first before the Holy Spirit would come.

After Jesus' death and resurrection, He spent 40 days on earth showing Himself to different groups of believers to prove He had risen from the dead with a new resurrection body.

Over a period of 40 days, Jesus appeared to:						
Mary Magdalene, Mary, Joanna, Salome				James		
Peter	10 disciples	2 disciples on the road to Emmaus	11 disciples		7 disciples	11 disciples
						500 followers

But because Jesus had come back to life, His disciples were confused. They thought that maybe He would now restart the Kingdom of God.

Acts 1:6

So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, "Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?"

What the disciples thought



Interestingly, Jesus didn't say no Kingdom was coming. He knew the Jews were concerned about when and how the Kingdom would return.

But instead of telling them the timing, He told them what to expect next—the Holy Spirit would come to help them tell the world about Him.

Acts 1:7–11

⁷ He replied, “The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know.”

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

⁹ After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. ¹⁰ As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. ¹¹ “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!”

What Jesus said instead

In His resurrection body, Jesus rose into the sky. He rose through the clouds, travelled through the atmosphere and into space in His physical resurrection body! Wherever heaven is, real, physical bodies can live there!

Hebrews 4:14 (ESV)

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

Ephesians 4:10

And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself.

Jesus' return to earth at His second coming will also be in this physical way in His resurrection body. He will be seen, touched and heard with our senses. This means that clearly, at this current time, He has not returned yet.

But what happened after Jesus ascended into heaven? Does the Bible tell us? Yes.

**2. In Heaven: Jesus appointed Ruler of the universe**

After Jesus ascended into heaven, God the Father appointed Him ruler over the whole universe. Why?

When Yahweh first created the world, He made mankind under-lords. They were supposed to rule all creation as His representatives. They were to rule righteously as “small boss” under their “big boss”.

But when they listened to Satan and rebelled against God, the devil illegally took over their jobs as under-lords. Satan took control of the world! The Bible now calls Satan the “god of this world” and the “ruler of this world”!

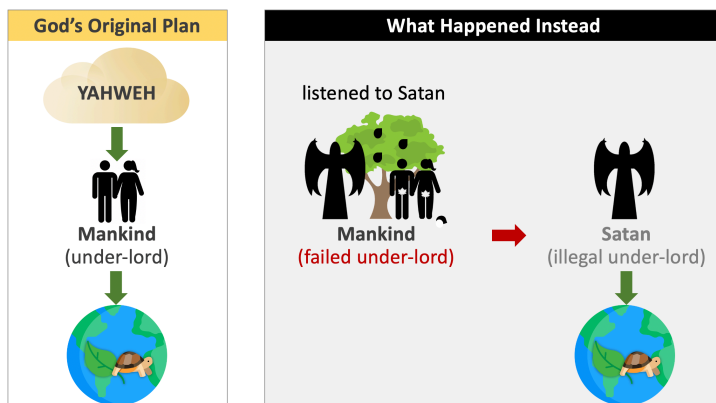
2 Corinthians 4:4a

Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe.

John 12:31

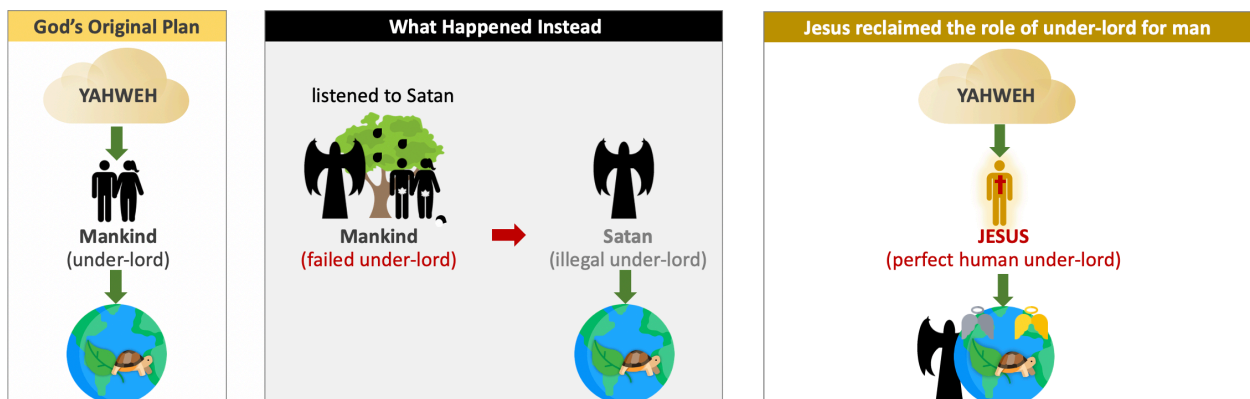
The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out.

But why do we call Satan the “illegal” under-lord? Because the job of under-lord was meant for humans, not spirits!



Then, Jesus came as a man, lived a perfectly righteous life and later died and resurrected, conquering sin and death.

With that, Jesus, the Second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45), the fully righteous human became the first fully qualified under-lord of all creation!



So God the Father appointed Jesus as the rightful ruler of the universe!

Jesus reclaimed the role of under-lord from Satan, the illegal ruler!

Jesus will carry out responsible dominion over all creation perfectly, in the way Yahweh originally intended. He now rules over all creation and all angels, both good and rebellious.

1 Peter 3:22

Now Christ has gone to heaven. He is seated in the place of honor next to God, and all the angels and authorities and powers accept his authority.

Ephesians 1:19–23

¹⁹ I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power ²⁰ that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms.

²¹ Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come.

²² God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. ²³ And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.

However, some people wonder:

- if Jesus has already defeated Satan and
- has been given rulership of the whole universe...

...then why does the world we live in now, look as if Jesus is not ruling?

This is because Jesus is not yet directly and personally ruling over all the nations of mankind **from His earthly throne in Jerusalem.**

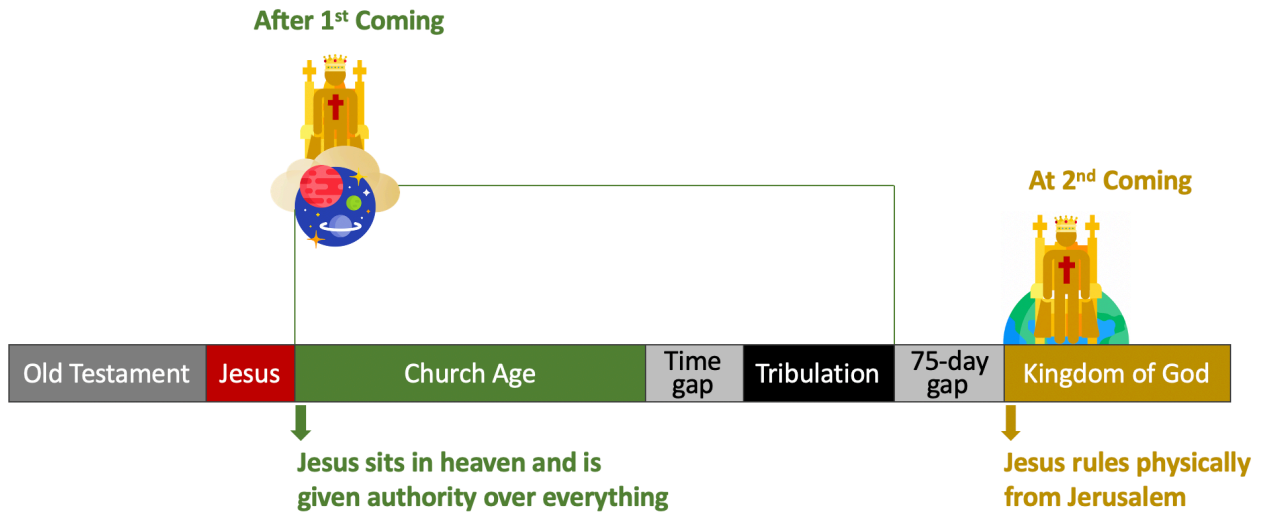
Jesus has different jobs to do in both His first and second coming. For example:

- **In His first coming**, He was to be the **Suffering Messiah**, dying for the sins of mankind.
- **But at His second coming**, He will be the **Conquering Messiah**, ruling all creation.



Similarly:

1. **After the first coming:** Jesus Christ ascended to **heaven** to the throne of God the Father and was given authority over all the universe.
2. **At the second coming:** In this future time, Jesus will directly and personally rule over the whole world from **Jerusalem**.

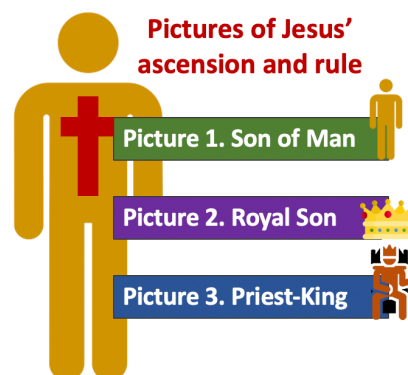


This means that currently, Jesus' job is not yet fully done.

At His first coming, He achieved part of His job. But He will only finish it completely at His second coming.

How do we know this?

God put several pictures in the Old Testament that explain this. We will look at three.



They show:

- what happens immediately after Jesus ascends and
- what will happen later.



Picture 1: Son of Man (Daniel 7)

In the book of Daniel, Daniel was given a vision. He first saw the “Son of Man” coming face-to-face with “the Ancient One”. And the Son of Man was given authority to rule the nations.

Daniel 7:13–14

¹³ As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation and language would obey him. His rule is eternal—it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed.



What happened when Jesus ascended

Jesus later told His disciples that He is the “Son of Man” and this event would happen when He ascended to heaven.

Matthew 26:63–64

⁶³ ...Then the high priest said to him, “I demand in the name of the living God—tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.”

⁶⁴ Jesus replied, “You have said it. And in the future you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God’s right hand...”



Then Daniel was shown more visions, but he did not understand them, so he went to ask an “interpreting angel”.

The angel explained that the four beasts Daniel saw, represented four earthly ruling kingdoms (they match the kingdoms from Nebuchadnezzar’s statue in Daniel 2:31–45).

	Daniel 2:31-45	Daniel 7:1-28
<p>Nebuchadnezzar’s dream</p>	612 BC Babylon	Lion
	539 BC Medo-Persia	Bear
	330 BC Greek	Leopard
	63 BC Rome	Beast
	AD Future Revived Rome	Antichrist
	Kingdom of God	Son of Man
		Daniel’s vision

Daniel 7:15–18, 21–22, 27

¹⁵ I, Daniel, was troubled by all I had seen, and my visions terrified me. ¹⁶ So I approached one of those standing beside the throne and asked him what it all meant. He explained it to me like this:

¹⁷ “These four huge beasts represent four kingdoms that will arise from the earth.

¹⁸ But in the end, the holy people of the Most High will be given the kingdom, and they will rule forever and ever.”

²¹ As I watched, this horn was waging war against God’s holy people and was defeating them, ²² until the Ancient One—the Most High—came and judged in favor of his holy people. Then the time arrived for the holy people to take over the kingdom.

²⁷ Then the sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be given to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will last forever, and all rulers will serve and obey him.”

(Note: Verses highlighted in colour have not yet been fulfilled.)



God used beasts to represent the four earthly kingdoms to show that these are non-human creatures and therefore, are not worthy to take the throne of the Kingdom.

- The job of under-lord belongs only to humans.
- So these kingdoms will be removed.



Antichrist

Following these four kingdoms:

- the Antichrist (the “horn”) will come.



But in the end:

- the Son of Man and His believers, the “holy people of the Most High” will be given the Kingdom.
- the Son of Man, Jesus, will be the worthy King because He is fully man.

Yet to happen

From Daniel’s vision, we see that the following have not yet happened.

- a. Jesus has not yet received all the citizens of His coming Kingdom, the “holy people of the Most High”. In order to be King, He needs citizens!
- b. The horn, who is the satanic beast (the Antichrist) of the revived fourth kingdom, has not yet arrived nor been judged.
- c. King Jesus and believers are not yet ruling the earthly Kingdom from Jerusalem.

So we know that Jesus, the “Son of Man”, still has things to accomplish at His second coming.



Picture 2: Royal Son (Psalm 2)

The second picture that explains what happens when Jesus ascends and what happens later is the picture of the Royal Son.

At Mount Sinai, Yahweh formed Israel into a nation. Yahweh was supposed to be Israel's King, but after He led them into the Promised Land, they demanded a human king instead. As a whole, the human kings led Israel into rebellion against Yahweh. But God told them that one day, He would provide an ideal King for Israel.

King David described this ideal king in Psalm 2. This psalm was known as a Messianic Psalm because it was about God's King and Messiah.

Psalm 2:6–9

⁶ For the Lord declares, "I have placed my chosen king on the throne in Jerusalem, on my holy mountain."

⁷ The king proclaims the LORD's decree:

"The LORD said to me, 'You are my son. Today I have become your Father.

⁸ Only ask, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, the whole earth as your possession.

⁹ You will break them with an iron rod and smash them like clay pots."

God the Father formally announced that the Messiah was His Royal Son. We also saw this in the New Testament, after Jesus was baptised by John. God the Father spoke audibly from heaven and He quoted from Psalm 2, calling Jesus His dearly loved Son (Luke 3:21–22)!

However, the rest of the psalm has not yet happened.

Yet to happen

- a. Jesus is not yet ruling from Jerusalem (verses 6–8).
- b. Yahweh said Jesus will "break" the world with "an iron rod", meaning He will rule with full control, so there will be no rebellion when He is King (verse 9). This will only happen in the events of Revelation. This is what Jesus said will happen when He and believers rule together:

Revelation 2:26–27

²⁶ To all who are victorious, who obey me to the very end, To them I will give authority over all the nations.

²⁷ They will rule the nations with an iron rod and smash them like clay pots.



- c. Interestingly, before Jesus rules the coming Kingdom from Jerusalem, Yahweh will give all earthly rulers one last chance to submit to Jesus as their global King. If they refuse, they will be destroyed.

Psalm 2:10–12

¹⁰ Now then, you kings, act wisely!

Be warned, you rulers of the earth!

¹¹ Serve the LORD with reverent fear,
and rejoice with trembling.

¹² Submit to God's royal son, or he will become angry,
and you will be destroyed in the midst of all your activities—
for his anger flares up in an instant.

But what joy for all who take refuge in him!

These things have not happened yet. Jesus, God's Royal Son, still has a lot to do.



Picture 3: Priest-King (Psalm 110)

The third picture of Jesus in the Old Testament is of a Priest-King.

The very first Priest-King mentioned in the Bible was the Gentile Priest-King Melchizedek, ruler of Salem, later known as Jerusalem (Genesis 14:17–20).

In Psalm 110, David prophesied that the Messiah would be like Melchizedek.

- He would be King and High Priest not only of the Jews but Gentiles too.
- The Levite priests were only in charge of Israel, but the Messiah's priesthood was universal. Jesus as Priest-King was therefore greater than the Levitical priests.



David started the psalm by saying that Yahweh ("The LORD") said to his "Lord" (the Messiah).

Psalm 110:1–7

¹ The LORD said to my Lord,

"Sit in the place of honor at my right hand
until I humble your enemies,

making them a footstool under your feet."

² The LORD will extend your powerful kingdom from Jerusalem;
you will rule over your enemies.

³ When you go to war,
your people will serve you willingly.
You are arrayed in holy garments,
and your strength will be renewed each day like the morning dew.

⁴ The LORD has taken an oath and will not break his vow:
“You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.”

⁵ The LORD stands at your right hand to protect you.
He will strike down many kings when his anger erupts.

⁶ He will punish the nations
and fill their lands with corpses;
he will shatter heads over the whole earth.

⁷ But he himself will be refreshed from brooks along the way.
He will be victorious.

Psalm 110 is the most-quoted psalm in the New Testament. We see it when the New Testament:

- uses the phrase “sit at my right hand” or “at the Father’s right hand” or
- talks about Jesus as priest in the order of Melchizedek.

(For example, see Acts 2:33–35, 5:31, 7:55–56; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3, 6:19–20, 10:12.)

What happened when Jesus ascended

The New Testament writers keep pointing out that Jesus is currently at the side of God the Father. And He is already our High Priest.

But as our High Priest, what is Jesus doing in heaven now?

Jesus is not idle! The Bible tells us that as the great High Priest:

- Jesus is busy speaking to God the Father on our behalf. He is fully God and fully man, so He is the perfect mediator, or go-between, between God the Father and us.
- Jesus understands us completely and ensures that we receive the mercy and grace we so desperately need!
- Jesus is waiting for the Father to defeat all His enemies and give Him the Kingdom.

Hebrews 4:14–16

¹⁴ So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. ¹⁵ This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

Hebrews 8:6

But now Jesus, our High Priest, has been given a ministry that is far superior to the old priesthood, for he is the one who mediates for us a far better covenant with God, based on better promises.

Hebrews 10:11–13

¹¹ Under the old covenant, the priest stands and ministers before the altar day after day, offering the same sacrifices again and again, which can never take away sins. ¹² But our High Priest offered himself to God as a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down in the place of honor at God’s right hand. ¹³ There he waits until his enemies are humbled and made a footstool under his feet.

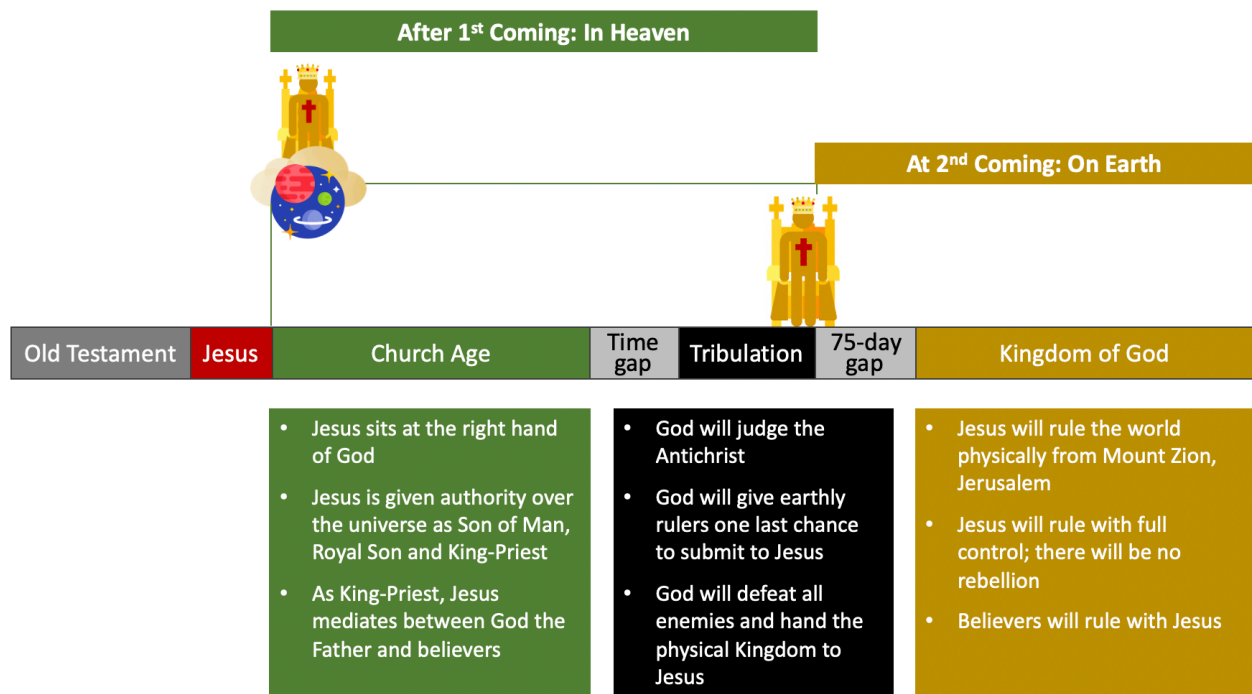
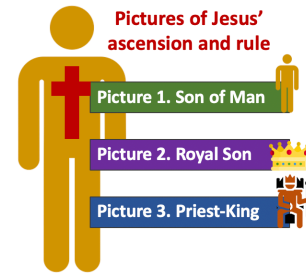
Yet to happen

God the Father will defeat all enemies and hand the Kingdom over to Jesus.

These three Old Testament pictures tell us that while Jesus has already been given authority over the universe, His job is not finished. He is not yet physically ruling from Jerusalem as the perfect under-lord.

This explains why there is still so much evil in the world we live in today.

However, Jesus will complete His job at His second coming. At that point, Jesus and believers will rule physically in the coming Kingdom.





3. The battle for the lives of people

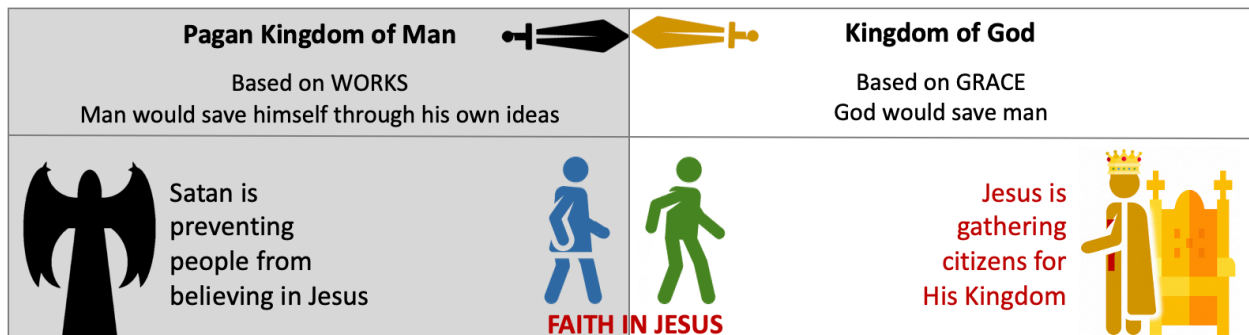
We are now in the waiting period between the two comings of Christ. We are in the “last days” of the church (Hebrews 1:2; 1 Peter 1:20; 1 John 2:18).

But this isn’t a time of peace. It’s a time of battle. Battle over what? The lives of people.

While God the Father has declared Jesus the King, the King is currently without a kingdom. So during these last days, Jesus is gathering citizens for His kingdom. How? One by one.

- Jesus is sending His gospel out to all people.
- Every person that comes to put their trust in Him is made righteous and taken out of the Kingdom of Man and transferred to become a citizen of the future Kingdom of God!
- This is like hand-to-hand combat, one soul at a time.

But Satan, the illegal king, is not letting people go without a fight.



Where in Scripture is there a king without a kingdom, who had to wait for his time to come? And while waiting, he took people, one at a time, away from the current king on the throne?

King David! His life is a picture of this current battle on earth.

After Samuel anointed him as king, David didn’t become king immediately. Although God had declared that Saul’s kingdom was over, David had to wait many years for the complete fall of King Saul.

During that time, David gathered men out of Saul’s kingdom to train and become part of his own army.

1 Samuel 22:2

Then others began coming—men who were in trouble or in debt or who were just discontented—until David was the captain of about 400 men.



In the same way, Satan has already lost control of the world, but he is still fighting hard to keep people within the pagan Kingdom of Man.

But what exactly is Satan doing now and what does this war look like? The war is both spiritual and physical.

The Global War for the Lives of People	
<p>SPIRITUAL BATTLE</p> 	<p>Satan and the demons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • block evangelism (Matthew 13:19) • persecute believers on earth (1 Peter 5:8) • accuse believers before God the Father (Job 1-2; Zechariah 3:1; Revelation 12:10) • weaken the nations (Isaiah 14:12) • still rule the cultural and spiritual environment of civilisation (John 12:31; Ephesians 2:2; 2 Corinthians 4:4).
<p>PHYSICAL BATTLE</p> 	<p>Satan's influence on mankind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nations continue to rebel against the appointed King Jesus. • People continue to reject Jesus as their Saviour even though they have access to God's history and truth.

And how is God fighting this battle?

Yahweh is directing world events to fight all His enemies, both human and spiritual, until all are defeated and placed under the feet of Jesus.

There is a two-part strategy:

- Jesus is operating this battle from heaven.
- Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to battle on earth.

Church Age

4

Jesus rules and directs the battle from heaven



5

Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to battle on earth



4. Church Age: Jesus rules and directs the battle from heaven

Directing from heaven, Jesus has already started gathering believers out of the Kingdom of Man and preparing them for the coming Kingdom of God.

Those who trust in Him were once prisoners in Satan's kingdom but now have been freed by Jesus. Paul explained what Jesus is doing by quoting Psalm 68:18.

Ephesians 4:8

That is why the Scriptures say,
 "When he ascended to the heights,
 he led a crowd of captives
 and gave gifts to his people."

"Crowd of captives"

Paul is saying that Jesus won the battle by dying on the cross, and then He ascended to heaven. The "crowd of captives" are people that Jesus took from Satan when they became believers.



Crowd of captives taken from Satan's Kingdom of Man

"Gifts"

And then Jesus gave gifts to His people. The one who wins a military battle has every right to give gifts to those on his side. So, here, Jesus gives believers spiritual gifts for the battle on earth.

(In using Psalm 68, note how Paul takes Yahweh's actions in the Old Testament and applies them to Jesus. This is just one of many examples that shows Jesus is Yahweh.)

But how does Jesus give spiritual gifts to believers?

Through the Holy Spirit.





5. Church Age: Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to battle on earth

Earlier, when John the Baptist was alive, he told people about the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 3:11

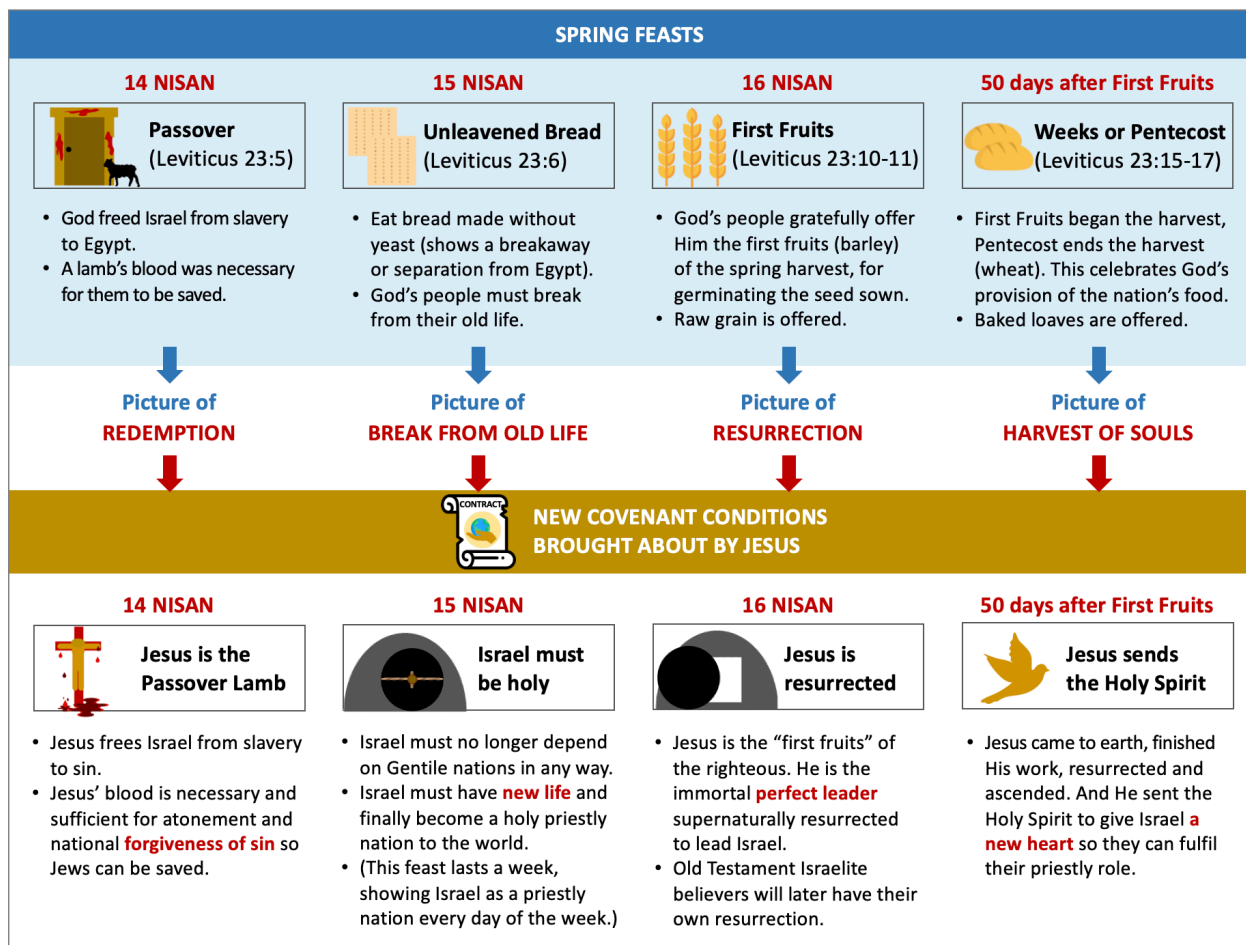
“I baptize with water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I’m not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”



John said Jesus would give the Holy Spirit to believers.

And as John had prophesied, the Holy Spirit did arrive. He came on a very specific day in the Jewish calendar: the day of the Feast of Weeks, also known as Pentecost (from the Greek word for 50).

This was exactly 50 days after the Feast of the First Fruits, 50 days after Jesus’ resurrection.



Acts 2:1–13

¹ On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. ² Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. ³ Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. ⁴ And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.




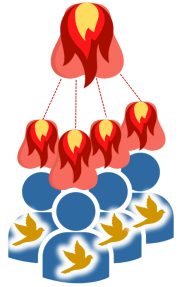

⁵ At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. ⁶ When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers.

⁷ They were completely amazed. “How can this be?” they exclaimed. “These people are all from Galilee, ⁸ and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages! ⁹ Here we are — Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the areas of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans, and Arabs. And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!” ¹² They stood there amazed and perplexed. “What can this mean?” they asked each other.

¹³ But others in the crowd ridiculed them, saying, “They’re just drunk, that’s all!”



What was going on? Three miracles happened one after another.

<p>1. Where the disciples were gathered privately, suddenly there was a noise similar to a hurricane or tornado.</p> 	<p>2. Then something that had the brightness and movement of fire appeared. It was described as glowing “pieces” shaped like human tongues that spilt apart and settled on each one of them.</p> 	<p>3. When this happened, the disciples instantly received the ability to speak a human language that they did not know.</p> 
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Two different groups of people saw and heard this third miracle of language.

1. The first group was **Jews from all over the world**. These spoke in many different languages. At least 12 cultural regions were mentioned in the passage.
2. The second group was **Jews who lived in Jerusalem**. They did not understand the foreign languages and thought the disciples were drunk.

Note that each disciple was speaking in a human language. Someone in the crowd of Jews understood what each disciple was saying. God’s Word was going out in many different languages. God was showing that He wanted all people to know His history and truth. It was as if God were reversing the effects of Babel!



This event tells us that God wants His Word to go out in a way that anyone can understand in their own language!

God’s truth, although originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, was meant for everyone and should be made clear in whatever language necessary!



Peter's Speech

It was very important for the people present to understand what they just saw and heard. So Peter explained it to them.

In this, his first major speech to the Jews, Peter used three separate passages of Old Testament Scripture. Here he was, just an uneducated fisherman, but now he was empowered by the Holy Spirit to explain what God was doing!

These are the sections of Old Testament Scripture where Peter quoted from.

Red: Joel 2:28–32	Green: Psalm 16:8–11	Blue: Psalm 110:1
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Acts 2:14–40

¹⁴ Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd, “Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem! Make no mistake about this. ¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as some of you are assuming. Nine o’clock in the morning is much too early for that. ¹⁶ No, what you see was predicted long ago by the prophet Joel:

Peter is saying what they just saw is not drunkenness but the work of the Holy Spirit.



¹⁷ ‘In the last days,’ God says, ‘I will pour out my Spirit upon all people.’
Your sons and daughters will prophesy.

Peter’s focus: The Holy Spirit.



Your young men will see visions,
and your old men will dream dreams.

¹⁸ In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on my servants—men and women alike—
and they will prophesy.

Peter’s focus: Signs and wonders.



¹⁹ And I will cause wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below—
blood and fire and clouds of smoke.

²⁰ The sun will become dark,
and the moon will turn blood red
before that great and glorious day of the LORD arrives.

²¹ But everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.’

Peter is saying the God who does signs and wonders, worked in Jesus to prove that Jesus is God.



²² “People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus the Nazarene by doing powerful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know.

²³ But God knew what would happen, and his prearranged plan was carried out when Jesus was betrayed. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed him to a cross and killed him. ²⁴ But God released him from the horrors of death and raised him back to life, for death could not keep him in its grip.

25 King David said this about him:
 'I see that the LORD is always with me.
 I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me.
 26 No wonder my heart is glad,
 and my tongue shouts his praises!
 My body rests in hope.
 27 For you will not leave my soul among the dead
 or allow your Holy One to rot in the grave.
 28 You have shown me the way of life,
 and you will fill me with the joy of your presence.'



Peter's focus:
 Jesus' resurrection.

29 "Dear brothers, think about this! You can be sure that the patriarch David wasn't referring to himself, for he died and was buried, and his tomb is still here among us.

30 But he was a prophet, and he knew God had promised with an oath that one of David's own descendants would sit on his throne. ³¹ David was looking into the future and speaking of the Messiah's resurrection. He was saying that God would not leave him among the dead or allow his body to rot in the grave.



Peter is saying that even though Jesus was killed, God raised Him. This psalm was written prophetically by David about the Messiah and the Davidic dynasty ending with the Messiah.

32 "God raised Jesus from the dead, and we are all witnesses of this. ³³ Now he is exalted to the place of highest honor in heaven, at God's right hand. And the Father, as he had promised, gave him the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today. ³⁴ For David himself never ascended into heaven, yet he said,



Peter is saying that the supernatural occurrences are proof that Jesus ascended to the throne and now reigns!

'The LORD said to my Lord,
 "Sit in the place of honor at my right hand
 35 until I humble your enemies,
 making them a footstool under your feet.'"



Peter's focus:
 Jesus' ascension.

36 "So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!"

37 Peter's words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"

38 Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy





The main point of Peter's speech: nation of Israel, repent!

Spirit. ³⁹ This promise is to you, to your children, and to those far away—all who have been called by the Lord our God.” ⁴⁰ Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation!”



Peter chose to quote these Old Testament passages because he was making some very important points.

A. Peter was calling the nation of Israel to repent.

 <p>O.T. Joel 2:28–32a</p>	 <p>Acts 2:17–21</p>
<p>Written to the people of Judah.</p> <p>In the future, God would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pour out His Spirit on the Jews and • show wonders in the geophysical world <p>Why?</p>	<p>Peter speaks to the Jews.</p> <p>Peter is saying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the disciples are not drunk; what the people just saw is the work of the same Holy Spirit that Joel spoke about (v15) • the God who does geophysical wonders in Joel had proven that Jesus is God: Jesus publicly did signs and wonders (v22). <p>Why did Peter quote Joel?</p>
<p>To call the nation to repent. He wants to save Jews so they would believe and enter the returning Kingdom (Joel 2:32).</p>	<p>Like Joel, Peter is calling the people to repent. Peter invites them to be saved by Jesus (v21–24, 33, 36, 38–39).</p>

In Joel, Yahweh said to Judah that when the Messiah returns to restart the Kingdom of God on earth, He would pour out His Spirit upon all Jews—young and old, men and women, from highest-ranked to the lowest. Along with that, there would be many geophysical events. There would be signs in the heavens, as well as blood, fire and smoke everywhere. The sun would darken and the moon would turn red.

But none of these things happened on the day of Pentecost. So why did Peter quote Joel?

Peter was focusing on **the outpouring of the Holy Spirit**. The disciples spoke in different languages not because they were drunk but because the Holy Spirit had come upon them.

Just as the prophet Joel had foretold that there would be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit before the Messiah returns, what the people were seeing that Pentecost morning was also an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

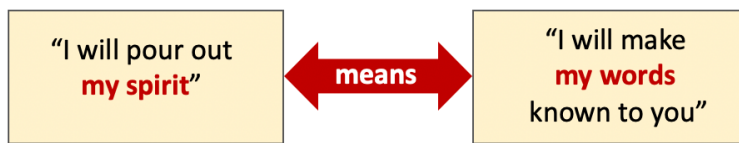
The pouring out of God’s Spirit meant that God would make ordinary people understand His truth and message.

How do we know this? The Bible explains this in Proverbs.

Proverbs 1:23 (ESV)

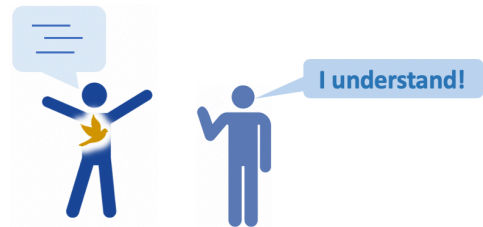
If you turn at my reproof,
 behold, I will pour out my spirit to you;
I will make my words known to you.

In Hebrew writing, a single thought is often written in two ways but mean the same thing. In other words, the second phrase restates or explains the first. So:



Peter was saying that the Holy Spirit had come upon Jesus’ disciples that morning, enabling them to explain all that Jesus had done (that is, the “wonderful things God has done” [Acts 2:11]).

Instead of just working through prophets as He did in the past, God the Holy Spirit was beginning to work in ordinary men and women as described by Joel! (We will study this more in the next lesson).




With what the people heard about the wonderful things that God has done, Peter went on to tell them how to be saved: trust in Jesus is the only way. When they believe, God will give them the gift of the Holy Spirit.



Through his speech, Peter was telling the Jews that as a nation, they had to make a decision. If they wanted to enter the Kingdom of God that they so longed for, they had to trust Jesus, whom they had killed.

B. Peter was saying that the Holy Spirit coming down on Pentecost was proof that Jesus had resurrected, ascended and was now seated and reigning in heaven.

 Psalm 16:8–11 Psalm 110:1	 Acts 2:25–28, 34–35
<p>King David wrote Psalm 16 and Psalm 110 prophetically (Acts 2:30).</p> <p>He was referring to the whole Davidic dynasty line of kings that would end with Jesus.</p> <p>He was prophesying that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messiah would be resurrected (Psalm 16). • Messiah would ascend and sit at the Father's right hand (Psalm 110). 	<p>Why did Peter quote Psalm 16 and Psalm 110?</p> <p>Peter is telling the Jews how to interpret what they just saw and heard at Pentecost.</p> <p>The supernatural occurrence is proof that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus resurrected Psalm 16 is about Jesus. God did not leave Him in the grave. See v29–31. • Jesus ascended into heaven Psalm 110 is about Jesus. Jesus made it to the throne! The Holy Spirit coming down at Pentecost is proof that Jesus is now seated with the Father. Only then could Jesus and the Father together send the Holy Spirit to earth! See v33–36.

Peter made it clear that Jesus, now seated in heaven at the Father's right hand, was sending the Holy Spirit. But he also gave a summary of what Jesus did.

- Jesus came from heaven to earth.
- He did miracles only Yahweh could do. (In Joel, Yahweh was the One pouring out the Holy Spirit. Now Peter was saying Jesus was doing it. In other words, Peter was saying Jesus was Yahweh. This was another example where an act of Yahweh was applied to Jesus.)
- He died and rose again from the dead (**Psalm 16**).
- He then ascended physically and went back to heaven.

Importantly, Peter told the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah from **Psalm 110**.

The response to Peter's speech

How did the people respond? That day, 3,000 individual Jews believed! They were justified by God and became citizens of the coming Kingdom.

Acts 2:41

Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.



However, the nation of Israel as a whole rejected Messiah Jesus.

The Nation of Jews Confirmed Its Rejection of the Messiah

At a later time, Peter again said that the nation of Israel must accept Jesus as their Messiah in order to enjoy the Messiah in all His glory in the Kingdom.

(In the passage below, Peter referred to enjoying the Kingdom as “times of refreshment” and “the final restoration of all things”.)



Acts 3:17–26

¹⁷ “Friends, I realize that what you and your leaders did to Jesus was done in ignorance.

¹⁸ But God was fulfilling what all the prophets had foretold about the Messiah—that he must suffer these things.

¹⁹ Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away. ²⁰ Then times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord, and he will again send you Jesus, your appointed Messiah. ²¹ For he must remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things, as God promised long ago through his holy prophets.

²² Moses said, ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among your own people. Listen carefully to everything he tells you.’ ²³ Then Moses said, ‘Anyone who will not listen to that Prophet will be completely cut off from God’s people.’

²⁴ “Starting with Samuel, every prophet spoke about what is happening today. ²⁵ You are the children of those prophets, and you are included in the covenant God promised to your ancestors. For God said to Abraham, ‘Through your descendants all the families on earth will be blessed.’

²⁶ When God raised up his servant, Jesus, he sent him first to you people of Israel, to bless you by turning each of you back from your sinful ways.”

Peter was declaring that the Jews’ rejection of Jesus fulfilled the prophecies about the “Suffering Messiah”.

Then he quoted Moses saying that Israel’s rejection of their Messiah (the Prophet) had set off a national judgment. God would cut off and destroy all who rejected His Messiah.

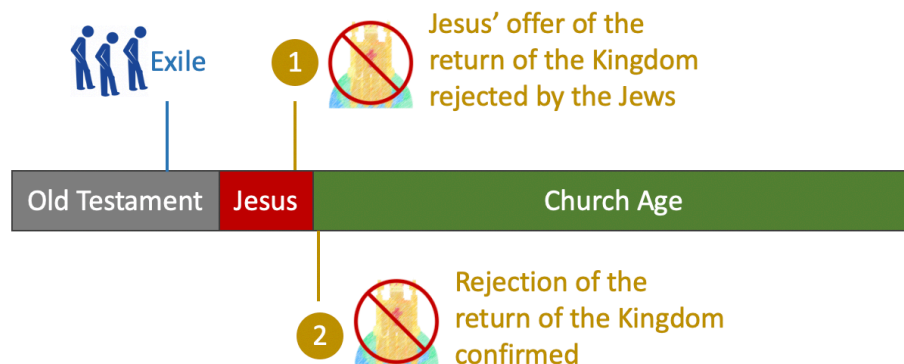
Now Jesus would remain in heaven until it was time to return to the earth and restart the Kingdom of God.

Then Peter referred to the Abrahamic Covenant to remind the Jews that through their nation, God intended to bless the world. That specific blessing was the Messiah and God had sent Him first to the Jews because of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Now as Jews, they could each receive the Messiah’s salvation first. Then God would offer it to the rest of the world.

Question: Did the Jews accept Jesus and therefore the Kingdom?


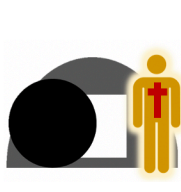


Answer: No.




The majority of them confirmed their rejection of the Messiah. They turned violent and killed one of the disciples, Stephen. He was the first martyr (Acts 6–7).



Actually, Jesus already knew that despite Him dying, resurrecting, appearing to many people and ascending to heaven, both the Jewish leaders and the people would still reject Him.

				Both Jewish leaders and the people reject Jesus
Jesus died	Jesus resurrected	Jesus appeared	Jesus ascended	



Before Jesus went to the cross, He prophesied about their rejection using three parables in Matthew 21 and 22. We will look at two of them here.

Jesus told the parable of the tenants to show how **the Jewish leaders** would respond to Him.



The Parable of the Tenants

Matthew 21:33–45 (NIV)

³³ ‘Listen to another parable: there was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall round it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. ³⁴ When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.

³⁵ ‘The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third.

³⁶ Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them in the same way. ³⁷ Last of all, he sent his son to them. “They will respect my son,” he said.

³⁸ ‘But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, “This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.” ³⁹ So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

⁴⁰ ‘Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?’

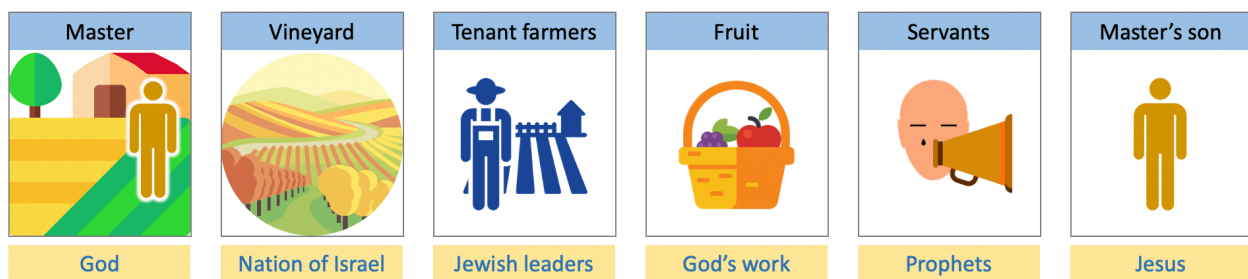
⁴¹ ‘He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,’ they replied, ‘and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.’

⁴² Jesus said to them, ‘Have you never read in the Scriptures:

“The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
the Lord has done this,
and it is marvellous in our eyes”?

⁴³ ‘Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. ⁴⁴ Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.’

⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew he was talking about them.



Jesus was saying that God had carefully built and prepared the vineyard, which was the nation of Israel.

We know He was referring to Israel because He was taking that picture from the prophet Isaiah who had described Israel as a vineyard that Yahweh had planted.

Isaiah 5:1–7

¹ Now I will sing for the one I love
a song about his vineyard:

My beloved had a vineyard
on a rich and fertile hill.

² He plowed the land, cleared its stones,
and planted it with the best vines.

In the middle he built a watchtower
and carved a winepress in the nearby rocks.
Then he waited for a harvest of sweet grapes,
but the grapes that grew were bitter.

³ Now, you people of Jerusalem and Judah,
you judge between me and my vineyard.

⁴ What more could I have done for my vineyard
that I have not already done?

When I expected sweet grapes,
why did my vineyard give me bitter grapes?

⁵ Now let me tell you
what I will do to my vineyard:

I will tear down its hedges
and let it be destroyed.

I will break down its walls
and let the animals trample it.

⁶ I will make it a wild place
where the vines are not pruned and the ground is not hoed,
a place overgrown with briars and thorns.

I will command the clouds
to drop no rain on it.

⁷ The nation of Israel is the vineyard of the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

The people of Judah are his pleasant garden.

He expected a crop of justice,
but instead he found oppression.

He expected to find righteousness,
but instead he heard cries of violence.

Jesus took that picture of Israel as God's vineyard and said He had handed Israel over to the tenant farmers, meaning the Jewish leaders, and they were to care for the nation.




But the Jewish leaders refused to acknowledge their Master. Instead, they abused the Master's messengers and prophets and eventually killed the Master's Son.

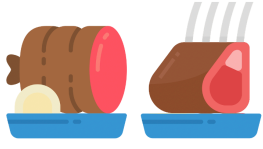





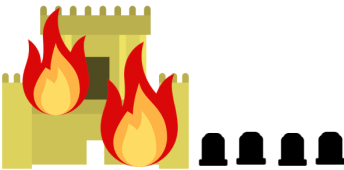
Jesus then went on to quote from Psalm 118:22–23 which prophesied that they would reject Him, the cornerstone. So God would take the Kingdom away from the unbelieving Jewish leaders and give it to others who would believe in Him.

Then in His next parable, Jesus prophesied how **the Jewish people themselves** would react to Him.



The Parable of the Wedding Feast

Matthew 22:1–10	Commentary
<p>¹ Jesus also told them other parables. He said, ² “The Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a king who prepared a great wedding feast for his son. ³ When the banquet was ready, <u>he sent his servants to notify those who were invited.</u> But they all refused to come!</p> 	<p>In this parable, Jesus compared the coming Kingdom of God to a wedding feast.</p> <p>First invitation: While Jesus was on earth, He sent His disciples (“servants”) to the Jews (“those invited”) to tell them the Kingdom was ready (“the banquet was ready”).</p>  <p>Although they refused to come, none of His disciples was killed by the Jews (Matthew 10).</p> <p>Matthew 10:5–8</p> <p>⁵ Jesus sent out the twelve apostles with these instructions: “<u>Don’t go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans,</u> ⁶ <u>but only to the people of Israel—God’s lost sheep.</u> ⁷ <u>Go and announce to them that the Kingdom of Heaven is near.</u> ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure those with leprosy, and cast out demons. Give as freely as you have received!</p> <p>Notice how at the first invitation, Jesus told His disciples to only go to Israel. Why? Because the Kingdom offer was only for the Jews!</p> 

Matthew 22:1–10	Commentary
<p>4 “So he <u>sent other servants to tell them</u>, ‘The feast has been prepared. <u>The bulls and fattened cattle have been killed</u>, and everything is ready. Come to the banquet!’</p> <p>5 But the guests he had invited ignored them and went their own way, one to his farm, another to his business. 6 <u>Others seized his messengers and insulted them and killed them.</u></p> 	<p>Second invitation: Jesus said, “The bulls and fattened cattle have been killed, and everything is ready.” Jesus Himself was the sacrifice that was killed. It really was time for the Kingdom to come.</p>   <p>But this time, the Jews not only ignored the offer, some of them seized the Messiah’s servants and killed them!</p> <p>Stephen was just the first death. There would be more.</p>   <p>This confirmed the people’s rejection of the Messiah. Because of their rebellion, they would not be offered the Kingdom any longer.</p>
<p>7 “The king was furious, and he sent out his army to destroy the murderers and <u>burn their town</u>. 8 And he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, and the guests I invited aren’t worthy of the honor.’</p> 	<p>The king’s reaction: Because they rejected Him and killed His servants, the king destroyed the people and their town.</p> <p>This prophecy was fulfilled when the Romans came to kill the Jews and completely destroy Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70. God used the pagan army of Rome to punish His people.</p> 

Matthew 22:1–10	Commentary
<p>⁹ Now go out to the street corners and invite everyone you see.’ ¹⁰ So the servants brought in everyone they could find, good and bad alike, and the banquet hall was filled with guests.</p> 	<p>Invitation goes out to others: Then the king told his servants to invite “everyone you see”. These people were not official guests (Jews).</p> <p>Jesus was telling His disciples that they would have to go out into the world and share the gospel message with Gentiles, inviting them to be part of the Kingdom.</p> 

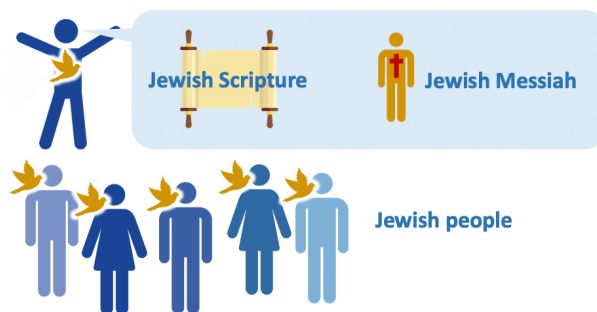


The Church Age Begins

With the coming of the Holy Spirit into the lives of the disciples, the church age had begun.



When Peter made his first big speech, he used Jewish Scripture to explain the Jewish Messiah to the Jewish people. The church began with only Jewish people.



However, in a later lesson, we will see how even though the church began with a Jewish identity, it transforms and grows to have a Gentile identity.

Are believers in the Old Testament part of the church?

No. There are many believers in the Old Testament. But the church, which is called the body of Christ, didn't exist until Pentecost. How do we know this?

1. While Jesus was on earth, He said the church was future to His time.

Matthew 16:18

Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means 'rock'), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.

2. The church depends on an ascended and seated Lord Jesus Christ.

The church needs a leader, and that is Jesus Christ.

It was only after Jesus' work at His first coming, that He ascended to heaven and started the church. This is why Jesus is called the head of the body.

Ephesians 1:22–23

²² God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. ²³ And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.



Now, from heaven, Jesus directs the growth and operations of His body, the church. On earth, the Holy Spirit carries out Jesus' instructions.

Only at this time in history is Jesus sitting at God's right hand and has sent the Holy Spirit to earth.

(Interestingly, He is not called the King of the church but the head. It is another indication that the Kingdom of God has not yet returned. We will discuss this more in a later lesson.)

3. The permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit on all believers, which is the event that started the church, happened for the first time at Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit coming upon all believers and permanently indwelling them is what created the church. It did not exist before that.

Through the work of the Holy Spirit, believers today are:

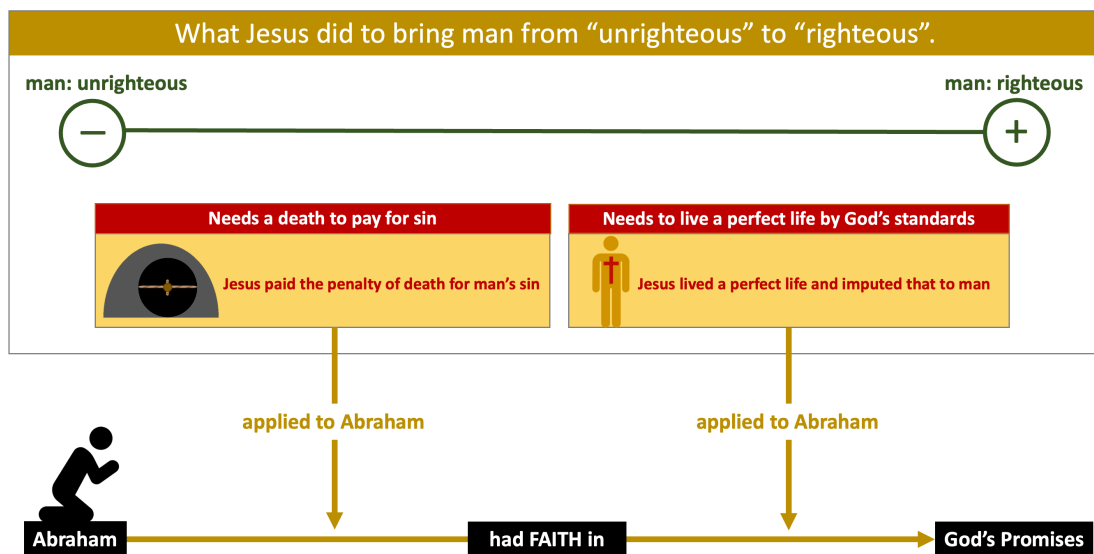
- joined to Christ’s death, resurrection and eternal life (Romans 6:1–10) and
- joined to other believers to form the church (1 Corinthians 12:12–13).

This permanent indwelling could only happen after Christ died and resurrected.



So Old Testament believers could not be joined to Christ as His body because Jesus had not yet taken on a human body, lived on earth and then died for mankind’s sin.

To be clear, Yahweh applies Jesus’ work on the cross to believers in the Old Testament so they are saved by the cross.



However, because Old Testament believers are not joined to Christ like how New Testament believers are, they are not part of the universal church. They are still children of God, but they are not part of Christ's body.



Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions as a group or use them for personal reflection.

1. Understanding that a spiritual battle is going on for the lives of people, how does that influence how you see evangelism?
2. The description of the church age is of a period of delay before Christ returns to usher in the Kingdom of God. How then should the church behave? What is your role in the church and how can you help the church fulfil its mission?
3. We have seen how Jesus has fulfilled many prophecies and promises of God. Yet, there are many more prophecies and promises that have not been fulfilled. How then should we study Scripture to recognise what Jesus has accomplished in His first coming and what He will accomplish at His second coming?



Pre-reading for next lesson: Matthew 3; Romans 6; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 3–4