

Session 1 | Israel, Law, and the Transition to the Gentiles

Scripture | Acts 1:1: **The former treatise.** The Gospel of Luke 1:1-4.

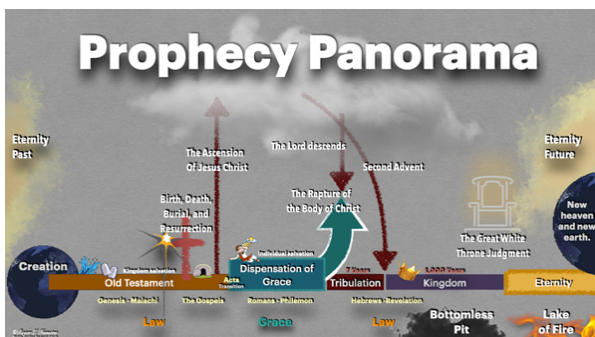
I. Acts | Background and Context

When we speak of The Law in Scripture, the written Mosaic Law. It is also called, The Law of Moses, The Torah (usually in scroll form), the Chumash (Hebrew for five books), and the Pentateuch (Greek for five books, *Penta = five, Teuchos = books*). The five books are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. It is rare, but occasionally “the law” seems to refer to the entire Old Testament.



II. Why Was the Law Given? | It was not given to show us how bad we are.

- Galatians 3:19 | “It was added because of transgressions.” That is, to keep the line of the Seed (Christ) intact. Satan’s goal has always been to destroy the Seed. Without the Law the Jews would have gone the way of the Canaanites or Hittites. Nations cease to exist because they transgress, they forget their morality. The Law was given to keep a People group together for 2,000 years until the Seed should come. The Law has now served its purpose. It kept a nation together.
 - Before the Law was given man sinned, but his sin was not put on his account.
 - Romans 5:13.
 - Before the Law God’s primary dealings with sinners was his promise made to Abraham. God made a promise with Abraham 430 years before the Law was given:
 - To make him into a great nation.
 - He would be given the Land (to his Seed, ultimately Christ).
 - All the nations of the earth would be blessed by his “Seed.”
 - The “Seed” in which the promises were made was Christ and they will find their complete fulfillment in His Millennial rule and reign on earth.
- Hebrews 9:10



Israel had a religious program added to their promises in the form of The Law, and The Law was imposed on them until *the time of reformation*. These laws included food regulations, drink regulations, various baptisms, other rites and ceremonies, and they would be in effect until Christ’s Millennial reign in his earthly kingdom. *

Nevertheless, when Jesus Christ died on the cross, God blotted out the handwriting of ordinances. He took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross (Colossians 2:13).

*Our proposition for the book of Acts is that for a period of time (during the dispensation of grace) The Law has been set aside, but will resume during the *Time of Jacob’s Trouble* or, as we know it, *The Great Tribulation*. Currently, so long as the dispensation of grace remains in force, all men are under grace and have the opportunity to believe in Jesus Christ, “*by grace through faith and not of yourselves, it is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast*” (Ephesians 2:8,9).

Our assumption, as we study through the book of Acts will be that the dispensation of The Law is fading, and the individual Gospel of Grace or the dispensation of grace is being ushered in.

III. Jesus Was Born Under the Law and Came for the Nation of Israel.

We should keep in mind several important truths about Jesus Christ and His first coming¹:

- He was made under The Law (Galatians 4:4).
- He was born as *David's Seed* to be Israel's Savior (Acts 13:23).
- He was sent *only* to Israel (Matthew 15:24; also, Matthew 10:5-8; 10:23).
- He was a minister of the circumcision (The Jews, Romans 15:8).
- He performed miracles in the midst of Israel (Acts 2:22; 10:39).
- He came not to destroy The Law, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17).
- He recognized those who sat in Moses' seat, i.e., those who taught The Law (Matthew 23:1-3).
- He took His place as a *worshipping Jew* (John 4:22). Jesus is speaking here, perhaps, of the worship in Jerusalem, but of his Kingdom in Jerusalem.
- He regularly attended the Jewish synagogue on the Jewish Sabbath (Luke 4:16).
- He instructed the Jews to obey the Law of Moses (Matthew 8:4).
- He observed the feast of the Jews (John 7:10; Luke 22:15).

Jesus was fully Jewish and did not direct His ministry to the Gentiles. However, while "He came unto his own, his own received him not." (John 1:11). He was rejected (Matthew 21:42). His own put him to death (Acts 5:29-31).

IV. What About the Gentiles?

At one time Gentiles had "No hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). However, with the rejection of Jesus by his own people:

- Romans 11:30.
 - The Gentiles have obtained mercy through Israel's unbelief.
- Romans 11:15.
 - The result of Israel being *cast away* is that the entire world has been reconciled. Israel's **casting away** is temporary. Prophetically, one day Israel will be received by God when they believe and will receive everlasting life.

V. The Ministry of Reconciliation Was Given to the Apostle Paul.

Jesus Christ gave to the apostle Paul the ministry to the Gentiles:

- Romans 15:16.
- Ephesians 3:8.

A reason for God selecting the Gentiles for salvation is to provoke jealousy among the Jews (Romans 11:11). The jealousy may not be evident now, but during the Tribulation, the Jews will certainly realize that they were the ones who rejected their Messiah and long to have been a part of the Body of Christ, where there is neither Jew nor Gentile. And by the way, that is the only reason the church exists. We need to ditch the "It's all about me philosophy" and waken to the fact that it is all about Israel, and we, through grace, get to have a part in God's Plan. We will see that plan unfold as we study the books of Acts.

¹ O'Hair J.C. *How to Understand and Enjoy the Bible. Bible Doctrines to Live By.* Comstock, WI. 2020