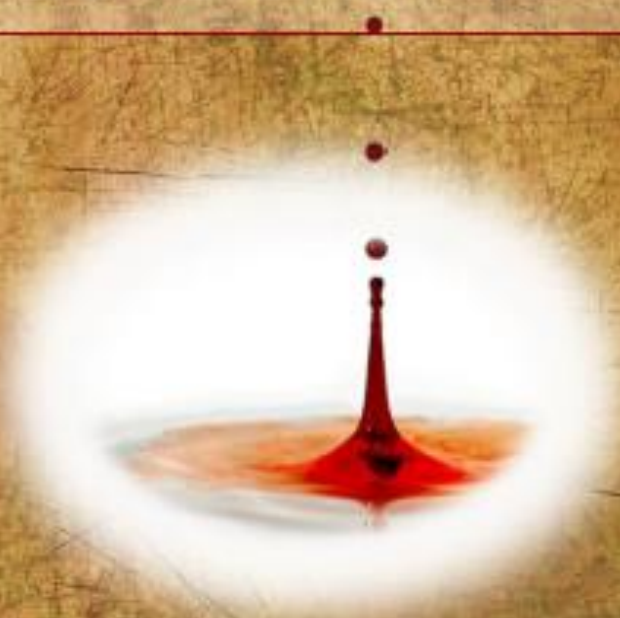


The Story of the Crimson River

Tracing the '*Bloodline of Redemption*' from
Genesis to Revelation



Dr. Tony L. Crisp, PhD

Study Download3 : Intertestamental Period

The Story of the **Crimson** River

Tracing the 'Bloodline of Redemption' from Genesis to Revelation
Revised

Dr. Tony L. Crisp, PhD



True Life Publications
A Division of True Life Concepts Ministry

Study Download 3: Intertestamental Period

The Story of the Crimson River



A DIVISION OF TRUE LIFE CONCEPTS MINISTRY

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Additional resources for the live presentation will be at Crimsonriver.org.

Forward

The notes contained in this book have been compiled from years of study and travel to God's Holy Land, Israel. Some of the contents are professor's notes taken while in seminary classes at the Criswell College of Dallas, Texas and during years of Graduate and Postgraduate studies. Many of these notes later became parts of the Criswell Study Bible, Believers Study Bible and were most recently published as the Baptist Study Bible by Thomas Nelson Publishing Company.

God has led Tony Crisp to assist evangelical Christians all over the world in their walk with God by providing a historical, geographical and cultural context to the study of the Bible. He has been studying in and about the Holy Land for more than 40 years and is considered to be a leading authority on Israel and its history. He is currently expanding his Leadership Institute into developing curriculum for pastors and lay leaders that will give them the tools they need to understand the Bible the way its inspired Bible writers intended – through the lens of the Hebrew way of life, language, culture and history.

He teaches that every inspired author from Moses to the Apostle John believed that the people to whom they were writing understood the language, culture, idioms, illustrations and overall context of the writer. Bible students in western culture have primarily read everything through the lens of their own experience, not that of the Bible writers; hence the need for a different approach to study.

Tony Crisp is a native Tennessean and has served as an advisor to both public and private educational institutions across America in areas of curriculum, public relations and institutional advancement. He has served on various committees and boards at every level of denominational life among Southern Baptists and is recognized by his peers for his down-home humor and his Biblical approach to leadership. He is known across the nation for his clear Bible exposition and ability to teach complex Biblical concepts and make those more understandable to the common man. Dr. Crisp serves on the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, Nashville, Tennessee. Dr. Crisp also serves our national interests as a member of the National Council of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee in Washington, D.C. and is the Strategic Initiatives Director of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem - USA, Inc. He is a founding partner of the Jerusalem Media Partners and serves as President of True Life Concepts Ministry, Knoxville, Tennessee.

Introduction

What you hold in your hand is a compilation of years of study. This is a work in progress. This work is gathered from classroom notes as a student at the Criswell College in Dallas, completing Graduate studies at the University, in Postgraduate work, and completing a terminal degree. These have been compiled from materials written over the years to help the churches served by the author and the people who have been ministered to in America and on trips to the Middle East to better understand God's Word. Notes on the people, places, events, dates and timelines are all materials used while touring and studying in Israel and other Biblical lands.

I am privileged to have sat under the teaching of W.A. Criswell, my first mentor, who was the Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas. He founded what is now the Criswell College. Criswell says this of redemption:

“The Bible is a book of redemption. It is that or nothing at all. It is not a book of history, science, anthropology or cosmogony. It is a book of salvation and deliverance for lost mankind. The idea in the word ‘redemption’ is two-fold: it refers to deliverance; and it refers to the price paid for that deliverance, a ransom. We are redeemed from the penalty of sin and from the power of Satan and evil by the price Jesus paid on the cross for us; and we are redeemed to a new life of love by the appropriation of that atonement for our sins.

The whole of the Bible – whether the Old Testament or the New Testament – looks to the mighty redemptive atonement of Christ. His blood sacrifice is the ransom paid for our deliverance. He took our sinful nature upon Himself in order that He might satisfy the demands of the Law. His sacrifice is accepted as the payment for the debt the sinning man owes to God, and His death is accepted as the full payment for man's deliverance.”

The material is designed to be *assimilated by the learner* and ***then taught***. PowerPoint presentations are available and may be used to aid the teacher and the student in teaching and comprehension. My prayer is that this will be of inestimable value to you as you study *The Story of the Crimson River*.

Dr. Tony Crisp
President, True Life Concepts Ministry
Knoxville, Tennessee

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my dear friends, Donald “Jabo” and Tammy Francis, who over the years have enabled me to minister as I have. They have supported me prayerfully and financially. I could not have done what I have been able to do in the United States and around the world in preaching the gospel and teaching the truth of God’s Word to thousands without their support and help.

Thank you and I love you from the depths of my heart.

Restoration to 70 AD:
“Restoration to Augustus and the Birth of Jesus”
Luke 2

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During the difficult days after the kingdom split and years of captives taken away in waves, hope of the coming of the Messiah was always present in the hearts of the Jews. The promises and assurances from God that He had not forgotten His people were scattered throughout the words of the prophets. The Redeemer would come and save them from their sin *and* bring everlasting righteousness.

As the centuries passed and God silently prepared for that time, many of His people were still living outside the Land of Promise. Though many had returned from captivity centuries earlier, just as many had chosen to remain where they had been taken; many were “settled in the land of their captivity” and built a new life. For many Jews born during the captivity, it was the only “home” they had ever known. But where they lived did not matter, they all had hope of the Messiah and watched for His coming.

In the days of the Roman Empire under the rule of Augustus Caesar, the time of fulfillment arrived and the promised Seed was born. The opening verses of Matthew trace the legal descent of Jesus from David to Joseph. Matthew includes or refers to five women in his list, four of whom were notable in the Old Testament. While it was unheard of to include women in any genealogy, Matthew’s inclusion traces how the hand of God included not just Jews, but Gentiles, too. He came for all.

Matthew divided his ancestral listing in order to reflect the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham – it’s fulfillment through David – and from the exile to the birth of Jesus, which began the final period of world events. Luke’s genealogy in Luke 3:23ff gives the descent of the Christ child through Mary through whom “all the families of the earth would be blessed,”

The Christ was born just as God promised.

Between the Testaments (Political Developments and Glossary of Terms)

The term “silent years“ frequently employed to describe the period between the Old Testament and the New Testament writings is a misnomer. Although no inspired prophet arose in Israel during these centuries, and the Old Testament regarded as complete, events took place that gave to later Judaism its distinct ideology, and providentially prepared the way for the coming of Christ and the proclamation of His gospel.

Persian Supremacy

For about a century after Nehemiah’s time, the Persian Empire exercised control over Judea. The period was relatively uneventful, for the Jews were permitted to observe their religious institutions without molestation. Judea was ruled by high priests, who were responsible to the Persian government, a fact which both insured the Jews a large measure of autonomy and degraded the priesthood into a political office. Jealousy, intrigue and even murder played their part in the contests for the distinction of being high priest. Johanan, son of Jehoiada (Neh.12:22), is reported to have slain his brother Joshua in the Temple itself.

Persia and Egypt were engaged in constant struggles during this period, and Judea, situated between the two nations, could not escape involvement. During the reign of Artaxerxes III (Ochaz) many Jews were implicated in a revolt against Persia. They were deported to Babylonia and the shores of the Caspian Sea.

The Rise of the Hellenists / Greeks

After crossing the Hellespont and defeating the Persian armies in Asia Minor (333 BC), Alexander moved quickly into Syria and Palestine. After stiff resistance, Tyre was taken, and Alexander moved to the south and into Egypt. Legend states that as Alexander neared Jerusalem, he was met by Jaddua, the Jewish high priest, who told him of Daniel’s prophecies that the Greek army would be victorious (Dan. 8). The story is not taken seriously by historians, but it is true that Alexander dealt kindly with the Jewish population. He permitted them to observe their laws, he granted them exemption from tribute during Sabbatical years and when he built Alexandria in Egypt (331 BC), he encouraged the Jews to settle there and gave them privileges comparable to those of his Greek subjects.

The Aftermath of Alexander's Death and Judea under the Ptolemies

After the untimely death of Alexander (323 BC), Judea was first subject for a time to Antigonos, one of Alexander's generals who controlled part of Asia Minor, modern Turkey. It subsequently fell to another general, Ptolemy I (by now ruler of Egypt), surnamed Soter, or *Deliverer*, who seized Jerusalem on a Sabbath day in 320 BC. Like Alexander, Ptolemy dealt kindly with the Jews. Many Jews settled in Alexandria, which continued as an important center of Jewish thinking for many centuries. Under the reign of Ptolemy II (Philadelphus), the Jews of Alexandria translated their Law, i.e., the Pentateuch, into Greek. This translation was subsequently known as the Septuagint, from the legend that it's seventy (more correctly 72 - six from each of the twelve tribes) translators were supernaturally inspired to produce an infallible translation. In later years the entire Old Testament was included in the Septuagint. Present day English Bible divisions and book order are based upon this translation.

Judea under the Seleucids / Syrian Domination

About a century later, during which time the Jews were subjected to the Ptolemies, Antiochus III (the Great) of Syria wrested Syria and Palestine from Egyptian control (198 BC). The Syrian rulers were known as Seleucids because of the fact that their kingdom, built on the ruins of Alexander's empire, was founded by Seleucus I (Nicator).

During the early years of Syrian rule, the Seleucids allowed the high priest to continue to govern the Jews in accord with their law. Status quo did not last however, between the Hellenistic party and the orthodox Jews. Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) allied himself with the Hellenistic group and appointed to the priesthood a man who changed his name from Joshua to Jason and who encouraged the worship of the Tyrian Hercules. Jason (Greek name) was displaced in two years, however, by another Hellenist, a rebel named Menahem (Greek, *Menelaus*). When the partisans of Jason contended with those of Menelaus, Antiochus marched on Jerusalem, plundered the Temple, and killed many of the Jews (170 BC). Civil and religious liberties were suspended, the daily sacrifices prohibited, and an altar to Jupiter was erected on the old

altar of burnt offering. Copies of the Scriptures were burned, and the Jews were forced to eat swine's flesh contrary to their law. A sow was offered on the altar of burnt offering in contempt for the Jewish conscience. Daniel the prophet called this the "Abomination of Desolation" previewing the antichrist.

The Maccabean Period

After a period of oppression, the Jews rebelled. When the emissaries of Antiochus arrived at the small town of Modi'in, about fifteen miles west of Jerusalem, they commanded the aged priest Mattathias, to set a good example to his people by offering a pagan sacrifice. He refused, and killed the apostate Jew emissary at the heathen altar, along with a Syrian officer who was presiding at the ceremony. Mathias and family fled to the Judean highlands and with his sons waged guerrilla warfare on the Syrians. At the death of the aged priest, he commissioned his sons to complete the task. Judas, surnamed "the Maccabee," took the leadership. By the year 164 BC, Judas had gained possession of Jerusalem. He purified and rededicated the Temple (Chanukah) and reinstituted the daily offerings. Antiochus died in Persia soon after the victories of the Jews. However, struggles continued between the Maccabees and the Seleucid rulers for two decades.

Aristobulus I was the first of the Maccabean rulers to take the title, "King of the Jews". After a short reign he was succeeded by the tyrannical Alexander Jannaeus (who minted the Lepton, later known as the "mite" in N.T.), who in turn left the kingdom to his mother, Alexandra. Alexandra's reign was a relatively quiet one. At Alexandra's death, a younger son, Aristobulus (II), dispossessed his brother. Thereupon, the governor of Idumea, Antipater, espoused the cause of Hyrcanus, and civil war threatened. Consequently Pompey marched into Judea with his Roman legions to settle matters and conquer for Rome. Aristobulus defended Jerusalem against Pompey, but the Romans took the city and the temple precincts. Pompey did not, however, touch the Temple treasures.

Rome

Mark Anthony, a Roman general, took the side of Hyrcanus. Julius Caesar was soon murdered, and the Antipater (father of Herod), who for twenty years had been virtual ruler of Judea, Antigonus, the

second son of Antipater, returned to Rome and after much cunning, was appointed King of Judea. His marriage to Miriamne, granddaughter of Hyrcanus, provided a link with the Maccabean rulers.

Herod was one of the most brutal rulers of all times. He murdered the venerable Hyrcanus (31 BC), and put to death his own wife, Miriamne and their two sons. While dying, Herod ordered the execution of Antipater, a son by another wife. In Scripture, Herod is known as the king who ordered the death of the innocents of Bethlehem because of the visit of the Magi who sought, “the One who was born to be the King of the Jews.”

The Greeks/Hellenism challenged the thinking of the Near East; some Jews clung more tenaciously than ever to the faith of their fathers, while others were willing to adapt their thinking to the newer ideas brought by the Greeks. Ultimately the clash between Hellenism and Judaism gave rise to a number of Jewish sects and even trouble within the New Testament Church (see Acts 6).

The Origin of the Pharisees

The Pharisees were the spiritual descendants of the pious Jews who had fought the Hellenists in the days of the Maccabees. The name *Pharisee*, “separatist,” was probably given by their enemies, to indicate that they were nonconformists. However, it may have been in derision because their strictness separated them from their fellow Jews. Loyalty to truth sometimes produces pride and even hypocrisy, and it is this perversion of the earlier Pharisaic ideal that was denounced by Jesus. Paul reckoned himself a member of this orthodox religious group within the Judaism of his day (Phil. 3:5).

The Origin of the Sadducees

The Sadducees, probably named for Zadok, the high priest, appointed by Solomon (1 Kings 2:35), denied the authority of tradition and looked with suspicion on all revelation later than the Mosaic Law. The Sadducees deteriorated to nothing more than a liberal political party. They denied the doctrine of the resurrection, and they did not believe in the existence of angels or spirits (Acts 23:3). They were largely people of wealth and position, and they cooperated gladly with the Hellenism of the day. In New

Testament times they controlled the priesthood and the Temple ritual. The synagogue was the stronghold of the Pharisees.

The Origin of the Essenes

The Essenes arose as an ascetic reaction from the externalism of the Pharisees and the secularism of the Sadducees. The Essenes withdrew from Jerusalem and lived lives of asceticism and celibacy. They gave attention to the reading and study of Scripture, prayer and ceremonial cleansings. They held their possessions in common and were known for their piety and industrious lives. They were pacifists and did not believe in slavery.

In Qumran, near the caves in which the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, is thought by most scholars to have been an Essene center in the Judean wilderness. The scrolls told how the members of the community had left the corrupt influences of the Judean cities to prepare, in the wilderness, “the way of the Lord.” They had faith in the coming Messiah and thought of themselves as the true Israel to whom He would come.

The Scribes

The Scribes were not, strictly speaking, a sect, but rather members of a profession. They were the copyists of the Law. Because they dealt with copying the Law, they were regarded as the authorities on the Scriptures and exercised a teaching function. Their thoughts were more aligned to those of the Pharisees, with whom they were frequently associated in the New Testament.

The Herodian

The Herodians believed that the best interests of Judaism lay in cooperation with the Romans. Their name was taken from Herod the Great, who sought to Romanize the Palestine of the day. Herod symbolized Rome to the Jews of Jesus’ day, and the religious reactions expressed in the sectarian reactions within pre-Christian Judaism provided the historical framework into which Jesus came. Frustrations and conflicts prepared Israel for the advent of God’s Messiah, who appeared “when the fullness of the time was come.” (Gal. 4:4)

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Revised and expanded by Tony Crisp, 2010*

In the Fullness of Time

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”
(Galatians 4:4-5)

The birth of Jesus the Christ was no accident. God had planned for the birth of Jesus before time began and many prophets in the Old Testament had made prophecies concerning this great event. The first prophesy of the coming savior was given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden after they had sinned. God said to Satan, *“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, *author’s emphasis*). When God referred to *“her seed”* He was talking about the Messiah/Christ who would be raised up from her descendants to bring deliverance to the human race. The human race now having been plunged into sin and therefore condemned through their sin. This prophecy is called the “Proto Evangelion” by theologians down through the centuries.

The Apostle Paul reminds the Galatians that this same language of the “seed” was used in reference to Abraham the father of the Jewish people and of all who are people of the true faith. Paul said to the churches in Galatia, *“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘and to his seeds’ as of many, but as of one, ‘and to your Seed.’ Who is Christ?”* (Galatians 3:15, *author’s emphasis*)

Many types, figures and foreshadows of the coming Christ were given in the Old Testament. Many prophets foretold the birth of Jesus so specifically that one wonders how the people of Jesus’ day could have mistaken who He was. The following are only selected prophecies concerning the Savior’s birth. Please note the Old Testament prophecy and the New Testament fulfillment of the prophecy.

Prophecy: Distant Rulers/Kings will bring gifts to the Messiah
“The kings of Tarshish and of the isles will bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts.” (Psalm 72:10)

Fulfillment of the Prophecy in the New Testament

“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.’ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: “But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.” ‘

Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, ‘Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me that I may come and worship Him also’ When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” (Matthew 2:1-11)

Prophecy: The Miraculous Virgin Birth of the Messiah

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14)

Fulfillment of the Prophecy in the New Testament

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”

“Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.” (Matthew 1:23-25)

"And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2:7)

Prophecy: One of the Names of the Messiah will be "God with us"

*"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name **Immanuel**." (Isaiah 7:14, **author's emphasis**)*

Fulfillment of the Prophecy in the New Testament

*"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "**God with us**." (Matthew 1:23, **emphasis author's**)*

Prophecy: "Rachel" a symbolic name given to the environs of "Bethlehem" where Rachel, one of Jacob's wives was buried. Rachel is the symbolic mother of the tribes of Israel.

"Thus says the LORD: 'A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted for her children, Because they are no more'. " (Jeremiah 31:15)

Fulfillment of the Prophecy in the New Testament

"Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: 'A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more'." (Matthew 2:16-18)

Prophecy: The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem, which is the region called "Ephrathah"

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting." (Micah 5:2)

Fulfillment of the Prophecy in the New Testament

“Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered, and she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” (Luke 2:4-7)

“The fullness of time” references these ancient Old Testament prophecies. “The fullness of time” is also the phrase used in relation to the coming of the Messiah/Christ; encompassing all various components that God readied for His people Israel and ultimately the rest of the world to hear the message of His Son, Jesus Christ. This preparing Israel and the world for His Son were many; several have been selected to show the sovereignty of God in preparing the way for the Messiah/Christ.

The Synagogue System

The fullness of time involved preparing the world religiously. Israel, since coming out of the bondage of Egyptian slavery, had a place of worship. God gave the schematic for this worship center to Moses on Mt. Sinai when He gave him the Ten Commandments (see Exodus 25-40). This was an elaborate portable worship center that could be assembled and disassembled in a relatively short span of time, due to the moving of the “pillar of fire” or the “cloud” of God’s presence that guided Israel from Mt. Sinai, the wanderings in the wilderness and even into battles in the “Promised Land.” From the Exodus through the period of the Judges who ruled Israel, this “tabernacle” served as the “place of worship” for all of God’s people.

At the close of the period of the judges God raised up the last judge, Samuel, who was also a mighty prophet. Samuel anointed Saul of the tribe of Benjamin to be the first king of Israel. Israel was now a “United Kingdom,” not just scattered tribes among the peoples of Canaan. Saul sinned before God in such a fashion that God gave the Kingdom of Israel to David, son of Jesse of the largest tribe, Judah. David served as king of Israel for seven years in the southernmost part of the land in the tribal capital of Hebron, the ancient city of Abraham. King David, desiring to truly unite the people of God, captured the

ancient Jebusite city of Jerusalem, and made it the capital of Israel. Jerusalem lay in the “no man’s land” or border, between the tribes of Benjamin to the North and Judah to the South. David, realizing that Saul was still the pride of the tribe of Benjamin moved quickly to make Jerusalem the “religious” as well as the political center of the kingdom. Through a series of events, King David moved the “Ark of the Covenant,” the centerpiece of Israel’s worship tabernacle, to Jerusalem. His dream was to build a great permanent worship center that would unite the kingdom of Israel forever in worship of the true and living God. Although this was his desire, God forbid him from carrying forth his dream. Instead, God told David that his son, Solomon, would build this great “temple.” From the days of Solomon, the temple on Mount Moriah in the ancient capital of Israel has been the place of worship for God’s people, Israel.

The temple that Solomon built in approximately seven years, was completed in the year 949 BC (1 Kings 6:37-38; cf. 2 Chronicles 3:1-2). This remained the central place of worship until 586 BC when the Babylonians, under Nebuchadnezzar, destroyed “Solomon’s temple” commonly called the “first temple.” Israel as a nation would go into exile for a period of seventy years without a central place of worship. During this time and more commonly during the Persian Period, the people of God began to gather themselves together for assembly within their communities in places which would later be called “*synagogues*.” These synagogues sprang up in every community where God’s people had been scattered and exiled. When the Jews were allowed to go back to their ancestral homeland under the decree of Cyrus the Persian, they went back, and under the leadership of Zerubbabel, built the “second temple” which remained as the centerpiece of worship until it was destroyed by the Roman Legions in 70 AD. By the time of Jesus’ birth, there were synagogues in every city around the world where Jews lived. The local synagogue had by now become the gathering place for Jewish people who were geographically separated from the temple to receive instruction and teaching from the Torah (Law), Prophets (Nebi’im) and the Writings (Kethuvi’im); the Old Testament.

The Language

God also prepared the world for the Savior and the message of salvation through the growth of a language that would be understood across the world. In 333 BC, King Phillip of Macedonia’s son,

Alexander, began a conquest of historic proportions. After conquering much of what is modern Western Europe, he crossed over the Dardanelles and stepped a conquering foot on the continent of Asia. He swept across the known world of his day and within three years had taken his armies on a swift series of victorious battles ending at the Ganges of modern India. Although Alexander the Great is known primarily to the world as a military genius, the legacy he left behind far exceeds his military accomplishments. Alexander believed the Greek culture, language and general way of life was superior to any on earth and so to his conquests he took that way of life. Greek became the common language of the world. Regardless of where you went as a trader in the ancient world from the time of Alexander forward, you would be understood if you spoke Koine (common) Greek, which was the “common man, everyday” Greek. Most peoples of this ancient period in history spoke their own dialect and at the least “Greek”. For example, the disciples of Jesus would have been at least tri-lingual (spoken three languages). They would have spoken Aramaic, which was the common language of the Jews of Palestine of the Roman Period (63 BC – 325 AD). They would have also studied and spoken Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament and the official language of the temple and synagogues. Finally, they would also have known Greek as the “trade language” of the day.

The Roads

God prepared the world for the Savior and the message of salvation by preparing the “roads” that connected the world of the Romans. The Romans, while taking many of their basic philosophies and adopting much of the culture of the Greeks, had their great strengths and achievements to add to the mix of the “fullness of time.” The Romans conquered through the might of the great Roman armies. Everywhere the Legions of Rome went, they built roads as they traveled to make it easier for their weapons of war and their Great War machine of infantry soldiers to travel. Today one can travel the great Ignatian Way and Appian Ways of Rome across the modern countries of Rome, Greece and Turkey. In Israel to this day, a pilgrim can see roads built by the Romans still in use and ancient roads alongside modern roads because the ancient roads are too narrow to carry modern machines.

Pax Romana and Roman Administration

Julius Caesar became ruler of the Republic and the Empire and began to consolidate the military gains of Rome. After Caesar was

assassinated by his own colleagues, Octavian locked into an ever increasing struggle with his one-time friend, Mark Antony, and Antony's lover Cleopatra, the last of the Greek Dynasty ruling Egypt. At a decisive battle off the Greek coast near the city of Actium, he defeated the combined armies of Antony and Cleopatra. Octavian, or Augustus Caesar, moved to consolidate and make the most of conquered nations. This time of consolidation and its aftermath are commonly referred to as the PAX ROMANA, or peace of Rome. He set up a provincial form of government that would maximize allegiance to Rome and minimize the chance for a local administrator to break away from the Roman Caesar and rebel. This ultimately took shape by forming two kinds of "provinces." One would be a Senatorial Province and the other an Imperial Province. "Proconsuls" were appointed by the Roman Senate over Senatorial Provinces and they served one year terms and were accountable to the Senate. The Emperor appointed "Procurators" and served alongside the Proconsuls. The Procurators were responsible for the financial matters of the Empire in the particular province and exercised authority over the civil and military units in the province.

How it Fits Together

God is not just the God of Israel. God is the God over all the earth. Israel was chosen as His special people to magnify His grace and be a "Kingdom of Priests" representing the true and living God before the world. Simply put, Israel was to be a shining beacon to the world of the love and grace of God and to be the means of bringing salvation to the world. Instead, Israel became engrossed in their ways and began to stray from the purpose of their choosing. In rejecting God they turned to idols and as a consequence, God brought about their scattering throughout the earth. This scattering that started with the Assyrian and later the Babylonian captivity and extended exile, resulted in God's people being scattered throughout the earth, especially in what would become major commercial centers of the ancient world. These gathering places, **synagogues**, became teaching centers and places where Jews met weekly. After the captivity, Jews were never again known as agrarians, but as merchants. With the conquests of Alexander came a worldwide language; with Rome came roads, peace, laws and taxation on a systematic scale worldwide.

After the decisive battle of Actium, the Senate of Rome proclaimed Octavian the "August" one, and he became known as "**Augustus**"

Caesar.” As Augustus consolidated his power throughout the empire, he also built the city of Rome itself, the great capital. In order to sustain his extravagant lifestyle and maintain the great military might of Rome, he knew he would have to tax the conquered lands and so he did. So we read:

“And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. This taxing first took place when Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be taxed everyone to his own city (the city of ancestry for registration). And Joseph went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David...”

It was under the laws of Rome, under **Procurator Pontius Pilate**, loyal to the emperor, that the Lord Jesus was **crucified**, which was the infamous method of killing criminals by Rome. After the resurrection and ascension of Christ, the Apostles were free to scatter across the earth traveling on **Roman roads**, now connecting the empire. When they reached any city they had a **common language** in which to present the claims of Christ to both Jew and Gentile. They had a place to preach the message of God's salvation in the **synagogues** of the Jews. They were free to do this under the **Pax Romana**, so free that the Apostle Paul, a **Roman citizen** by birth, used the courts to even present the Gospel to the **Caesar** himself.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

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