

The Biblical Covenants

Insights and Applications for the Christian

A Four-Part Series
Prepared for the JOY Class
By Pat McRight
February - March, 2021

SESSION 2

The Relationship Between The Old and New Covenants

Part 1

February 24, 2021



Types of Ancient Covenants

Type	Pledge(s)	Ritual
Kinship (Parity)	Equal parties swear mutual oath	Typically includes a family meal
Grant	Only superior party swears the oath	Sacrifice???
Suzerain-Vassal	Superior party imposes oath on the subordinate	Self-malediction

Elements of Ancient S-V Treaties

1. Preamble
2. Historical Prologue
3. The Stipulations
4. Provision for deposit in the temple and period public reading
5. The list of gods as witnesses
6. The curses and blessings formula
7. The formal oath
8. Solemn Ceremony
9. Procedure against rebellious vassal

Mosaic Covenant as S-V Treaty



Preamble

Historical Prologue

The Stipulations

**Deposit, Periodic
Reading**

Witnesses

Curses and blessings

The formal oath

Solemn Ceremony

**Procedure against
Rebellion**

I am the Lord your God... (Exodus
20:2a)

Mosaic Covenant as S-V Treaty

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 **Historical Prologue**

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...who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."
(Exodus 20:2b)

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You shall...

You shall not...

"Apodictic" laws as opposed to "casuistic" (case) law. Unique to treaties in the Ancient Near East (ANE).

ANE Law Codes were casuistic.

Mosaic Covenant as S-V Treaty

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Procedure against Rebellion

Tablets deposited in the Ark of the Covenant. Scrolls placed beside the Ark as a "witness against the people."

Law was to be read every Sabbath year at Feast of Tabernacles (Deut 31:9-13)

Israel was to teach their children the Law. Bind it, wear it, post it, recite it.

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Israel's copy of the covenant was a witness (Deut 31:26), reminding them of obligations and rebuking violations.

Heaven and Earth are called as witnesses when the Covenant is renewed. (Deut 31:28)

Mosaic Covenant as S-V Treaty

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Curses and blessings are interspersed in Exodus 20:5, 6, 7, 11, 12.

Explicit curses and blessings are stated in Deut 27 and repeated by Joshua at Shechem (Josh 8:30-35).

Mosaic Covenant as S-V Treaty

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Solemn Ceremony

Procedure against Rebellion

“All that the Lord has spoken we will do.” (Deut 19:8; 24:3,7. cf Deut 5:27).

The people said “Amen” to each of the blessings and curses of the covenant (Deut 27; Josh 8)

Mosaic Covenant as S-V Treaty

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 **Solemn Ceremony**

Procedure against Rebellion

The ceremony occurs in Exodus 24.

- Burnt offerings
- Peace offerings
- Sprinkled blood on the altar
- Covenant read aloud
- People agree to obey
- Sprinkled blood on the people
- Moses, Aaron, and 70 elders saw God and ate and drank with Him.

Mosaic Covenant as S-V Treaty

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Solemn Ceremony

 **Procedure against Rebellion**

Consequences of Disobedience
Deut 28:15-68.

Includes:

- Curses, confusion, rebuke
- Destruction, Pestilence, Plague
- Drought, Defeat, Bewilderment
- Loss of possessions
- Slavery, Oppression, Humiliation
- Famine, Invasion, Captivity,
Scattering among the nations

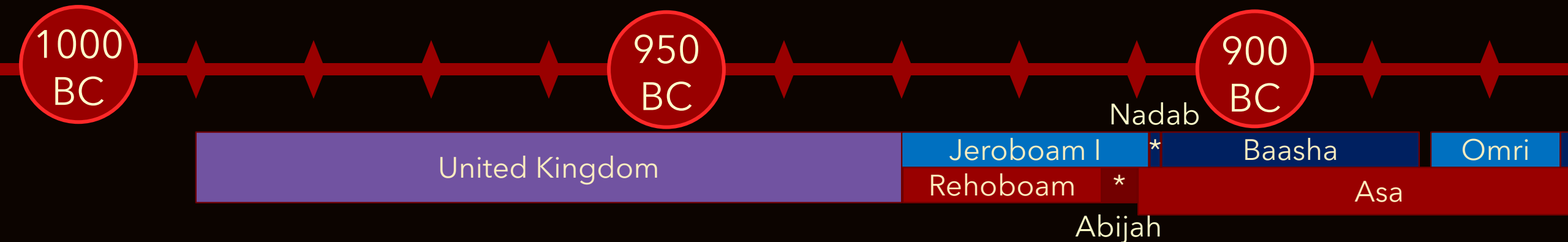
The Story of Salvation: Covenants

God's Unfolding Plan for His People



Mediator or Recipient	Adam	Noah	Abraham	Moses	David	Jesus
Form	A Promise	Grant	Grant	Suzerain-Vassal	Grant	Echoes of Suzerain-Vassal
Sign		Rainbow	Circumcision	Passover	Throne	Baptism, Lord's Supper

The New Covenant and the Church in OT Prophecy

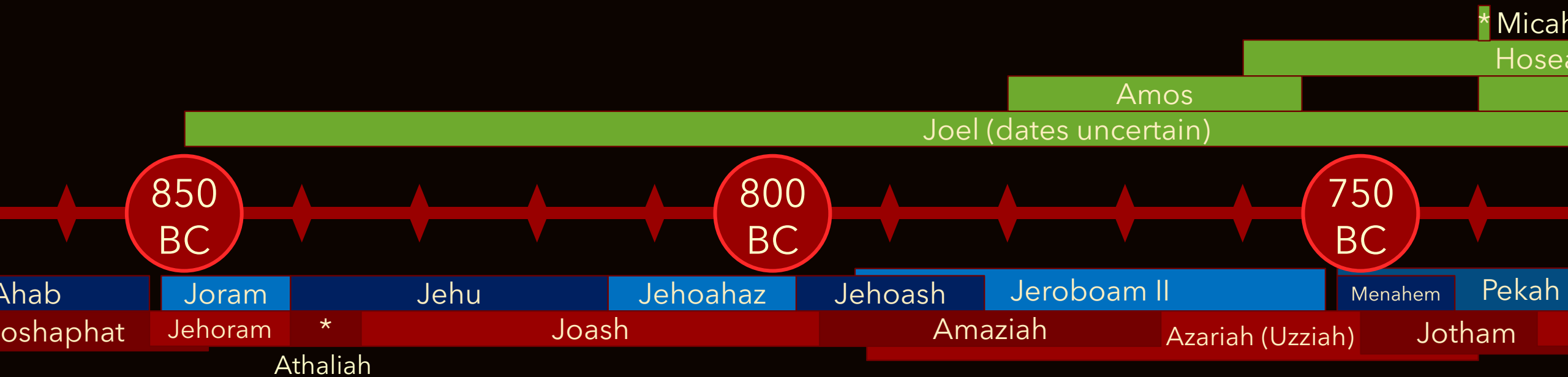


Joel saw a great outpouring

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.

Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

Joel 2:28–29 (ESV)

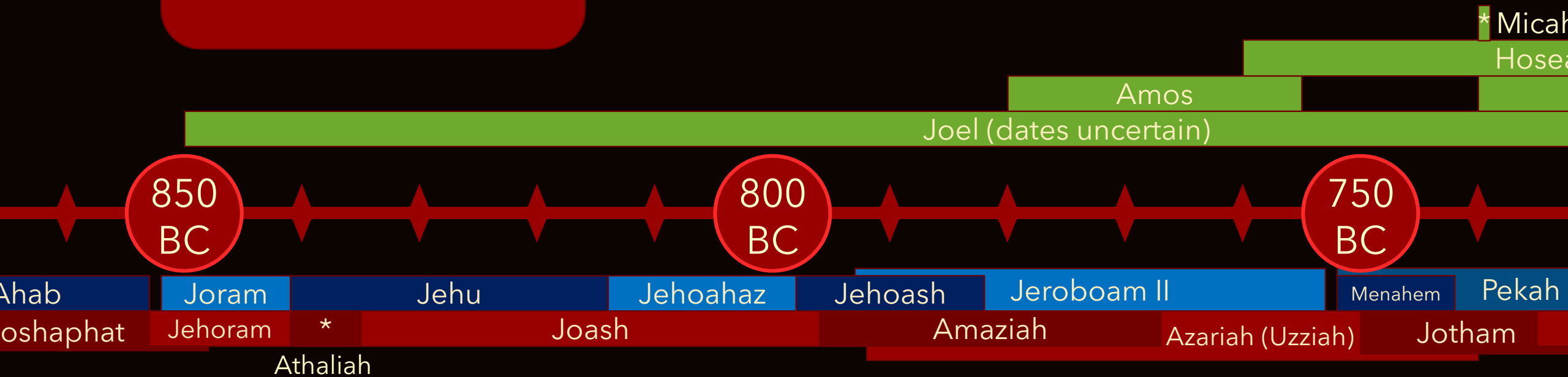


Joel saw a great outpouring

Peter Announced It in Acts 2

But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:
“ ‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;

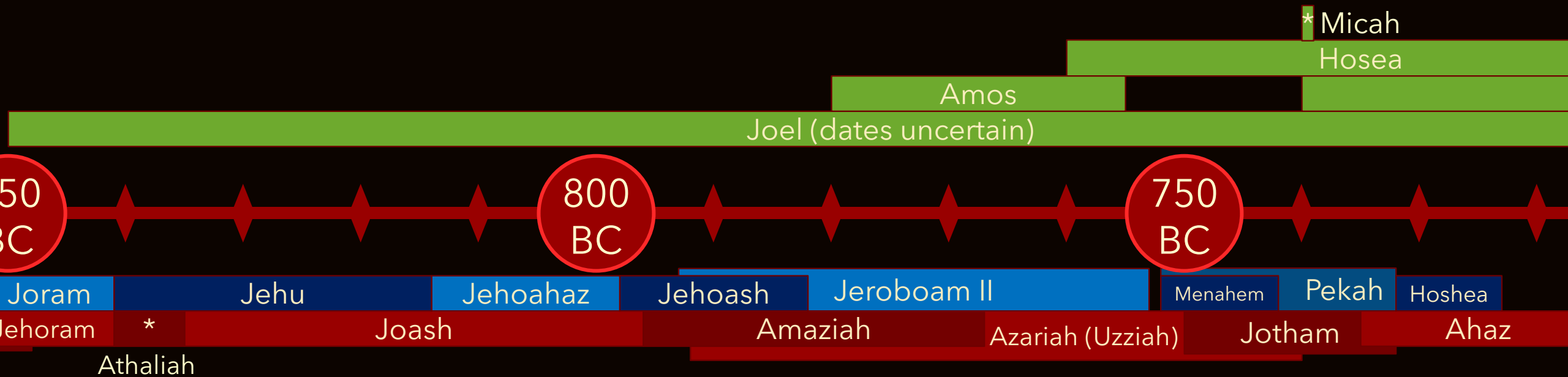
Acts 2:16–17 (ESV)



Amos saw a restored tent or booth

“In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old, that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name,” declares the LORD who does this.

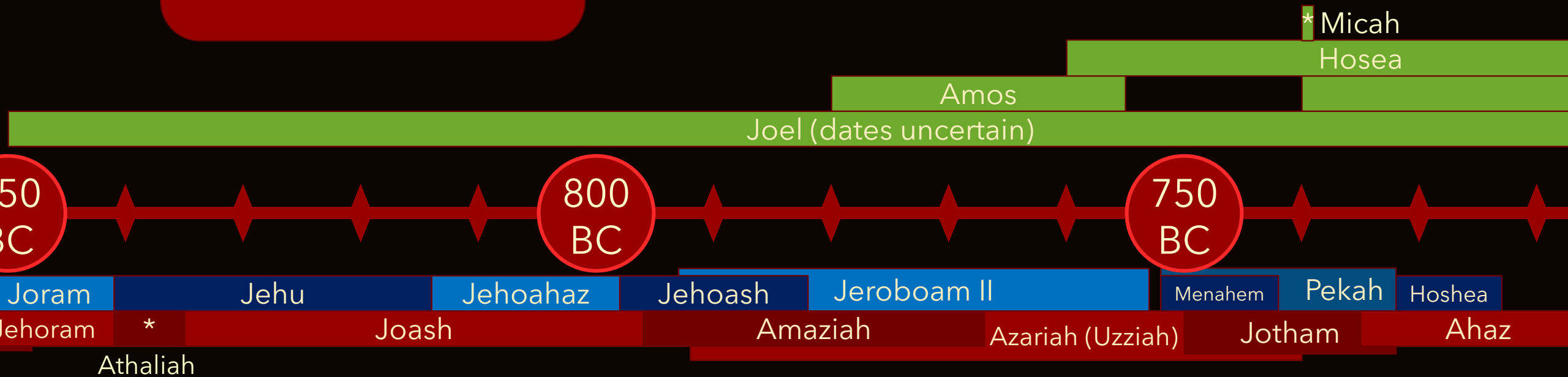
Amos 9:11–12 (ESV)



Amos saw a restored tent or booth

James saw this happening in Acts 15

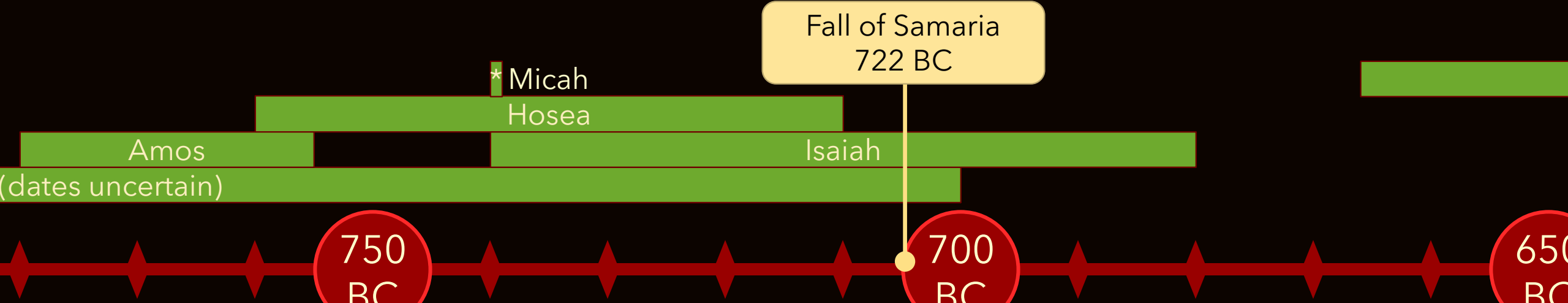
Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written, “ ‘After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it,
Acts 15:14–16 (ESV)



Isaiah & Micah
saw a house on a
high mountain

It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains...and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Isaiah 2:2–3; Micah 4:1-2 (ESV)

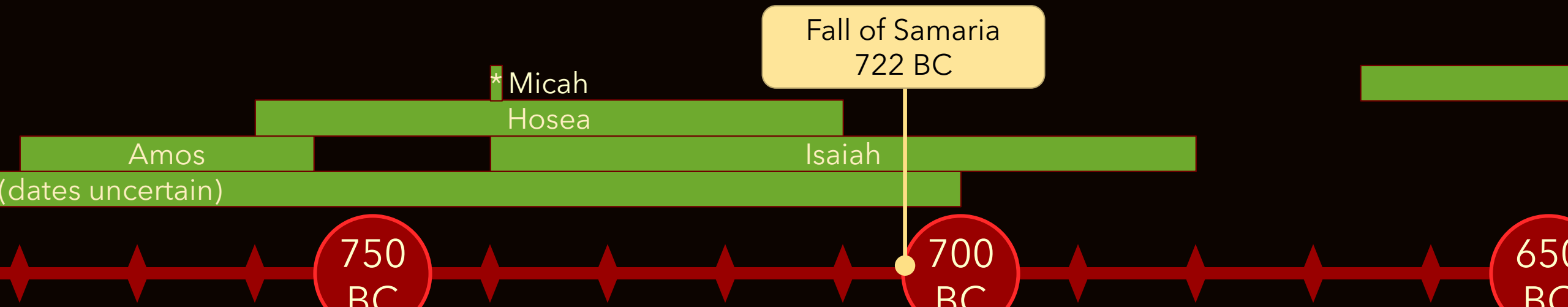


Isaiah & Micah
saw a house on a
high mountain

The Church
Began in
Jerusalem, Acts 2

...you may know how one ought to behave in
the **household** [literally, house] of God, which
is the **church of the living God**, a pillar and
buttress of the truth.

1 Timothy 3:15 (ESV)



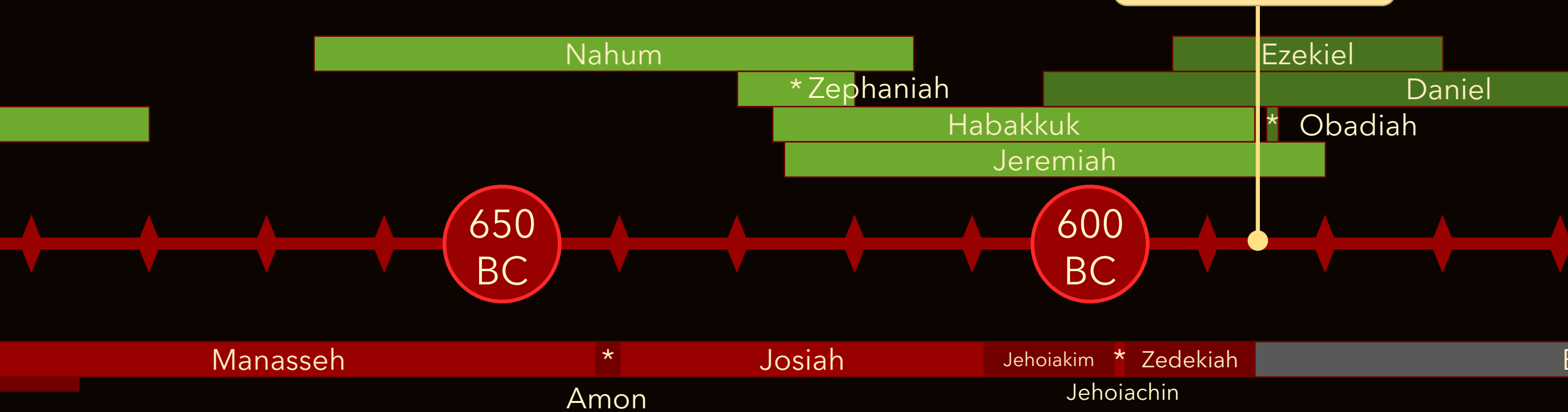
Jeremiah saw a covenant written on man's heart

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ...

I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Jeremiah 31:31, 33 (ESV)

Fall of Jerusalem
586 BC



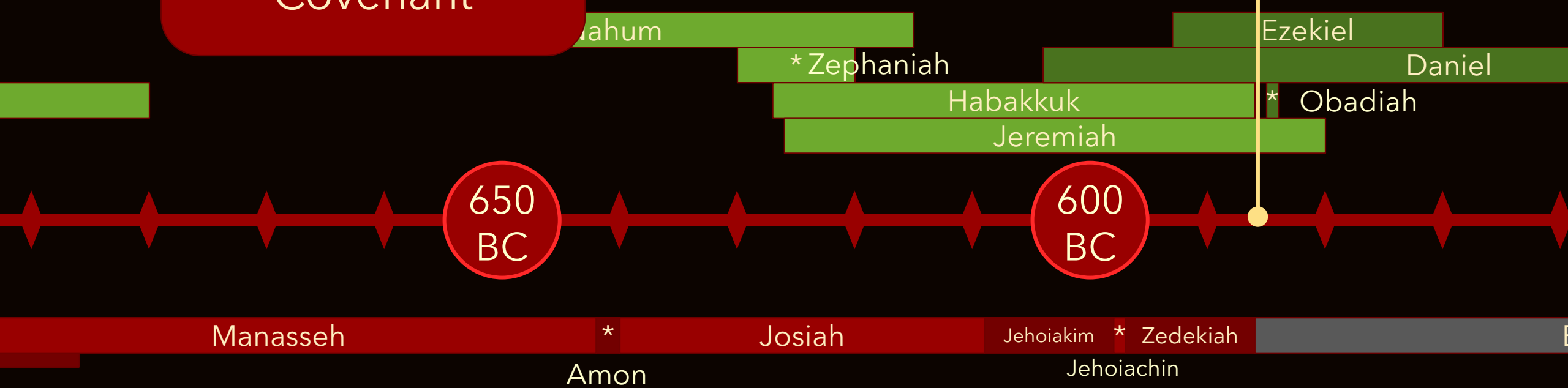
Jeremiah saw a covenant written on man's heart

Jesus Mediates the New Covenant

...The covenant he [Christ] mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.... He [God] finds fault with them when he says: [Quoting Jer. 31:31ff] "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah..."

Hebrews 8:6, 8 (ESV)

Fall of Jerusalem 586 BC



Daniel saw a stone that grew

...A stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.... But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Daniel 2:34–35 (ESV)



Fall of Jerusalem
586 BC



650 BC

600 BC

550 BC

Daniel saw a
stone that grew

Jesus and His
Church keep
going...



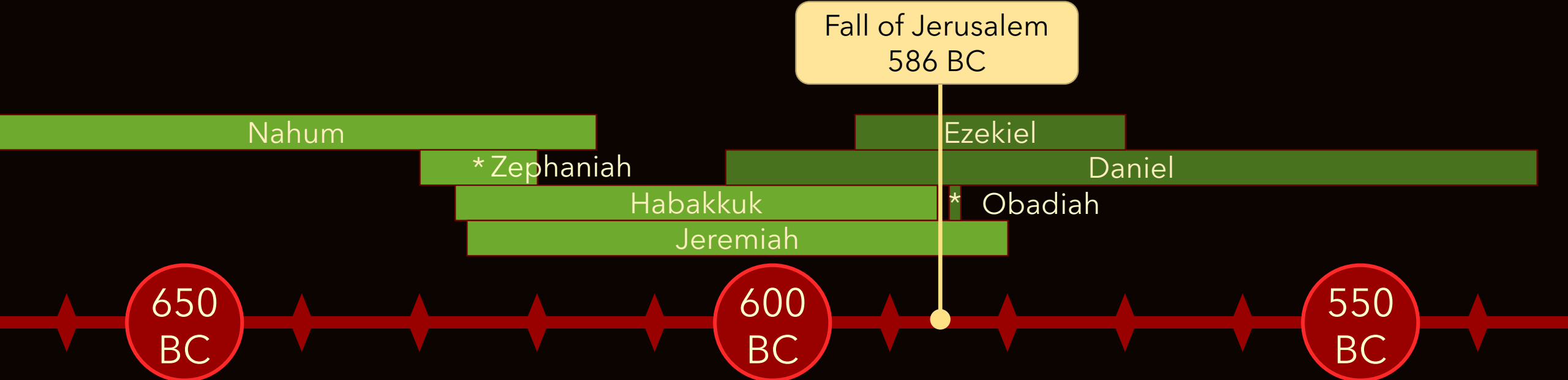
global
Christianity

The logo consists of the word "global" in a stylized, lowercase font where the letter 'o' is replaced by a yellow globe with black grid lines. Below "global" is the word "Christianity" in a similar, slightly larger font. The entire logo is set against a dark, textured background.

Ezekiel saw a
Sheep-fold and
David as the One
Shepherd

I [God] will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd.

Ezekiel 34:22–23 (ESV)

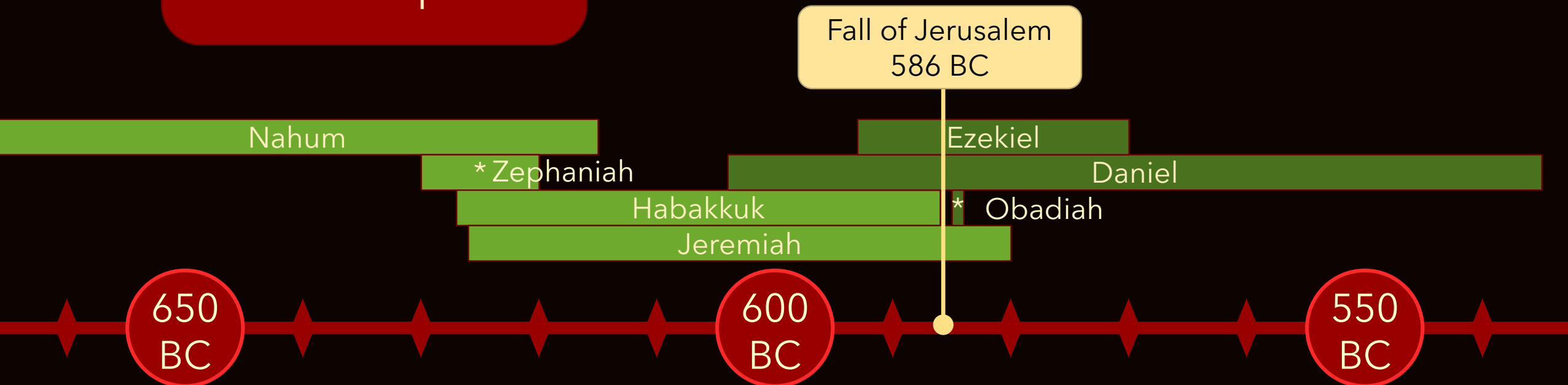


Ezekiel saw a
Sheep-fold and
David as the One
Shepherd

Jesus, son of
David, is the One
Good Shepherd

I [Jesus] am **the good shepherd**. I know my own
and my own know me....And I have other sheep
that are not of this fold. I must bring them also,
and they will listen to my voice. So **there will be
one flock, one shepherd**.

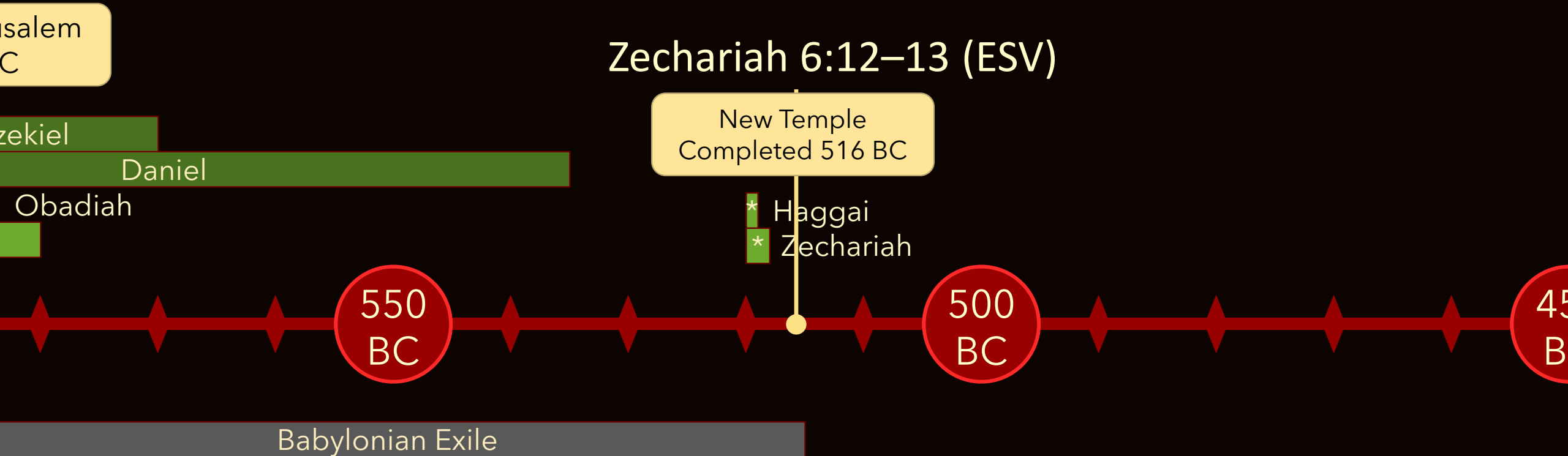
John 10:14, 16 (ESV)



Zechariah Saw a New Priestly King

...“Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD. It is he who ... shall sit and rule on his throne. And there shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.” ’

Zechariah 6:12–13 (ESV)



Zechariah Saw a
New Priestly King

... Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf,
having become a high priest forever after the
order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 6:20 (ESV)

Jesus is both King
and Priest, like
Melchizedek

Jerusalem
C

Ezekiel

Daniel

Obadiah

New Temple
Completed 516 BC

* Haggai
* Zechariah

550
BC

500
BC

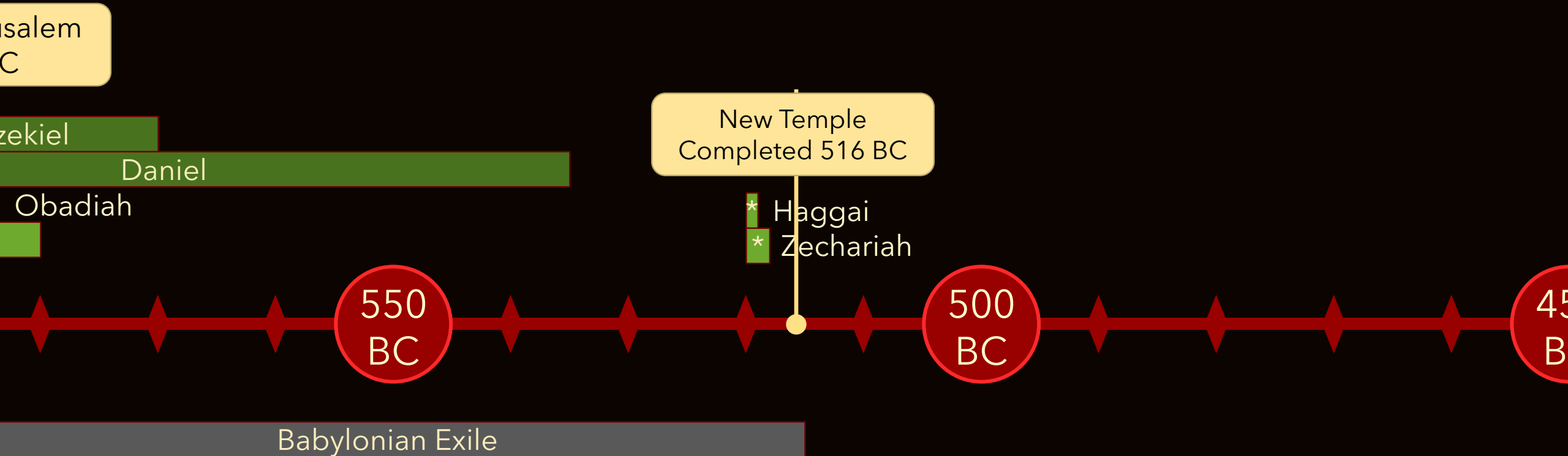
450
BC

Babylonian Exile

Zechariah Saw a Cleansing Fountain

“On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.

Zechariah 13:1 (ESV)



Zechariah Saw a
Cleansing
Fountain

The fountain
opened when
Jesus' side was
pierced

Jerusalem
C

Zechariah

Daniel

Obadiah

550
BC

Babylonian Exile

450
BC



Did Jesus Repeal the Old Law?

Matthew 5

ESV

17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; **I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.**

18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, **not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.**



Does the Law Ever “Pass Away”?

For truly, I say to you,



Does “until heaven and earth pass away” modify “say” or “will pass”?

until heaven and earth pass away,



not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law

until all is accomplished.

All of Jesus' Mission? Till the end of the world?

Let's look beyond grammar to context to get a clearer sense of this verse!

Matthew 5

ESV

¹⁹ Therefore **whoever relaxes** [breaks, annuls, sets aside] **one of the least of these commandments** and teaches others to do the same will be called **least in the kingdom of heaven**, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called **great in the kingdom of heaven.** →→→



Matthew 5

ESV

¹⁹ Therefore **whoever relaxes** [breaks, annuls, sets aside] **one of the least of these commandments** and teaches others to do the same will be called **least in the kingdom of heaven**, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you, **unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees**, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.



The Pharisees

- Set aside the Fifth Commandment, using "Corban" as a loophole (Matt 15:1-3)
- Tithed their herbs but neglected justice, mercy, and faithfulness (Matt 23:23)



Righteousness that Exceeds...

- Jesus: "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven."
 - He continues, explaining His "greater righteousness"

Heart vs. External
Lawgiver's Heart vs. Legalism
Godlikeness vs. Loopholes

The Sermon on the Mount



Old Law

Source

Jesus' Teaching

You shall not commit murder

Ten Commandments
Ex 20:13; Deut 5:17

Don't be angry, don't insult, reconcile before sacrificing, make friends

You shall not commit adultery

Ten Commandments
Ex 20:14; Deut 5:18

Don't lust. Do whatever it takes to stop lusting.

If you divorce, give your ex-wife a certificate

Law of Moses
Deut 24:1-3

Divorce is only for infidelity

You shall not make false vows.
Fulfill your vows to the Lord.

Law of Moses
Lev 19:12; Num 30:2; Deut 23:21-23

Don't use oaths. Say only yes or no.

Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth.

Law of Moses
Exodus 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21

Turn the other cheek, give more than demanded, go the second mile, lend to those who ask

Love your Neighbor (and hate your enemy)

Law of Moses
Lev 19:18 (Love your neighbor)

Love your enemies, pray for your persecutors

The Sermon on the Mount



Old Law

Source

Jesus' Teaching

You shall not commit murder

Ten Commandments
Ex 20:7

Don't be angry, don't insult, reconcile before sacrificing, make friends

Jesus surpasses the Pharisaical standard...

- **Submit your HEART to God.**
- **Bear His image.**
- **Live with God's Rescue Mission in mind!**

Don't lust. Do whatever it takes to stop lusting.

Divorce is only for infidelity

Don't use oaths. Say only yes or no.

Turn the other cheek, give more than demanded, go the second mile, lend to those who ask

Love your Neighbor (and hate your enemy)

Exodus 24:20; Deut 19:21
Law of Moses (Love your neighbor)

Love your enemies, pray for your persecutors

The New Commandment

ESV

John 13:34–35

³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you **love one another: just as I have loved you**, you also are to love one another.

³⁵ **By this** all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”



What is “the Law of Christ?”

Note that Matthew depicts Jesus delivering His keynote sermon on a “mountain”, echoing Moses announcement of the Old Covenant at Sinai. Jesus reinterprets the Law...

1. Obeying God's will *from the heart* as Jesus taught us.
2. Pure, self-sacrificial love for God and others.
3. Living the mission (Matt 28:18-19)

Also, in John 13:34-35, Jesus gives His “New Commandment”, also part of the Law of Christ.

“...love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Jesus Fulfilled the Law

- The Law has not passed away, but it stands fulfilled.
 - It stands a witness to God's faithfulness in His covenants.
 - The OT is written for our learning (1 Cor 15:4)
 - Jesus completes its types and shadows
 - Jesus brings the Kingdom of God
- The Sinai Covenant is now "obsolete"

Hebrews 8:13

ESV

13 In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete [old, aged out]. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.



Next Week

- More on Jesus' fulfillment of the Law
- The New Covenant as a Suzerain-Vassal Treaty
- The 10 Commandments: Are they in force under the New Covenant?
 - Are the 10 Commandments distinct from the Law of Moses?
 - What was nailed to the cross? (Col 2:14-16)
- Various Perspectives on OT/NT Continuity & Discontinuity
 - Presuppositions
 - Ramifications

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Part 1

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