

Israel and the Church

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These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall be have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.” (John 3:16–18). “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If we acknowledge our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1John 1:9). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

Taken from lessons #009–010 in the Luke series.

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Preface: One area of doctrine which has remained a point of deep controversy is the relationship between Israel and the church. These are two completely separate entities. There is some continuity between the two institutions, but they are not the same; nor is the church some sort of re-invention or re-shaping of nation Israel.

There will be two technical theological terms used in this lesson: *dispensationalism* and *covenant theology*. *Dispensation* is originally the translation of the word *oikonomia* (οἰκονομία) [pronounced *oy-koh-nohm-EE-uh*], which means: 1) *the management of a household or of household affairs*; 1a) *specifically, the management, oversight, administration, of other's property*; 1b) *the office of a manager or overseer, stewardship*; 1c) *administration, dispensation*. Strong's #3622. The word *dispensation* is brought over into theology in this way: a dispensation is a period of time in which God oversees His people by functioning through a specific entity—it is how God *manages and oversees His*

household, if you will. We have taken the word dispensation and have applied it to periods of time—epochs—during which God deals with His people in a specific way. If we wanted to strictly stay with the original use of *dispensation*, then we would speak of the Age or the Epoch of the Jews rather than the *Jewish dispensation*. However, in common usage today, *dispensation* can refer to the epoch itself or to how God oversees and interacts with His people (during a specific period of time).

Personally, I was introduced to dispensational theology at a very young spiritual age while purchasing small booklets in a Pentecostal-type bookstore during my first year as a Christian. Even though I rejected the whole second blessing movement; I to this day remember getting this very small and inexpensive booklet which explained the dispensations of God, and it made complete and perfect sense to me.

Covenant Theology versus Dispensationalism:

Covenant theology—which is in opposition to dispensationalism—actually include two very different points of view: (1) the first view is where the differences between Israel and the church are so blurred that, they believe that the first church started in Abraham’s tent. Because of the radical differences between Israel and the church, this is a very difficult position to justify. (2) The second view sees Israel as a specific national entity; but believes that God transferred His promises from an unfaithful nation Israel to those who have believed in Jesus, regardless of their national identity. The more that you push on this second view, following their thinking out to logical conclusions, the closer you move towards dispensationalism.

The umbrella term applied to these two theological positions is covenant theology; but there is no real consistency among groups today who see themselves as churches of the covenant (so to speak). At one end of the spectrum, there are those who believe the first church began in Abraham’s tent and somehow, that is the same thing as the local churches that we have today; and at the other end of the spectrum, we have those who believe that God began with an actual nation Israel, but that they rejected Jesus so strongly, that God took all of His promises for Israel and gave them to people who believed in His Son.

Dispensationalism views nation Israel as a national entity with an important relationship with God up to the birth and ministry of Jesus Christ. However, the church was established after the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Israel and the church are logically two very different entities. God worked through Israel for a time (about 2000 years) and now God is working through the church, which, so far, has been a period of about 2000 years.

This point in human history that we live in is known as the Church Age. *Church* in the Greek is the word *ekklesia* (ἐκκλησία) [pronounced *ehk-klay-SEE-ah*] which means *an assembly, a gathering, church*. Strong’s #1577. It is used in several different ways: (1) for any public gathering of people; (2) for what is often called the *church universal*, which refers to all believers (sometimes, we are speaking of all believers on the earth at any given time; and sometimes, all believers who have lived during the Church Age); (3) for the local church, such as, the First Grace Church of Podunk Falls (generally speaking, some members will be believers and some will not be believers; ideally speaking, all who attend are or will become believers). The designation Church Age is all about the universal church—the body of believers—and their responsibilities in this epoch.

One of the reasons that God introduced the concept of Jews and Gentiles is so that He could get across the idea that there are two kinds of people in this world: Jews and Gentiles; saved and unsaved; those

who have a relationship with God and those who do not. This does not mean that all Jews were saved; but, that was true when they left Egypt. Interestingly enough, the Exodus generation constantly rebelled against God, despite being saved. But, the larger point is, God differentiates. The Jews, generally speaking, have a relationship with God; and the gentiles, generally speaking, did not. There were certain exceptions to this; and it will become clear in the book of Luke that many Jews did not believe in Jesus. They did not believe Him to be the Jewish Messiah or the promised Jewish King.

God began the Hebrew race with Abraham and his wife Sarah, who went for a very long time without having children. God promised Abraham a child, but, up to this point, they had had none. Sarah finally insisted that Abraham have relations with her personal servant girl, Hagar, and Hagar gave birth to Ishmael. That was not God's directive will; that was all on Sarah. Ishmael was not the son God had promised to Abraham.

Regardless, 13 years later, Sarah gave birth to a son, Isaac. God only accepted the son Isaac, but not Ishmael, because Isaac believed in Jehovah Elohim. Actually, it was more complicated than that¹, but we will stay with the simplified version to begin with.

Isaac later had twin sons, Esau and Jacob; and God called Jacob a Hebrew and Esau was a Gentile (God said, "[Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.](#)"). This is because Jacob believed in Jehovah Elohim and developed a relationship with God; but Esau did not (Esau probably believed in God, but he too willingly set his birthright aside). In their lifetimes, Jacob eventually followed the guidance of God; but Esau did not. I say *eventually*, because Jacob fought against God most of his life (illustrated by his wrestling match with God); but he appeared to finally accept God's will when living in Egypt.

For about 2000 years, God worked through the Jews; and primarily through the nation Israel. This we call the Age of Israel. However, after the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, things changed. The Jews, as a whole, outright rejected their Savior-Messiah. Therefore, God set the Hebrew people aside—temporarily—and began a new program known as the church. The Church began at the Day of Pentecost, sometime around 30–34 A.D., when God poured out His Spirit upon all believers who were assembled in one place with one accord on that day (Acts 2:1–4). Some of the converts of the early church were Jewish and some were gentile. There was no difference between them, because they had all believed in the Risen Christ and they had all been give the Holy Spirit.

However, in between the temporary halt of the Age of Israel and the beginning of the Church Age, we have what has been coined by R. B. Thieme, III (and perhaps others) as the Age of the Hypostatic Union (a term which we will later define). If it is easier to understand this as the Epoch of Jesus, that is just as good of a designation.

During at least the public portion of Jesus' ministry, God became flesh and lived among us (John 1:1–3, 14). During that time, Jesus Christ first offered the Kingdom of God to the Jews of Judah. However, as a nation, they rejected their King and therefore, they rejected the Kingdom that He offered to them.

Near the end of His ministry, Jesus began to proclaim the Kingdom of God to the Samaritans (half-Jews) and then also to those who were Gentiles. Jesus came to His people, but His people rejected Him; and He would then make Himself available to those who were not His people (compare Hosea 2:23 Romans 9:25). At the very beginning of the book of John, the author John warns us about this: [He came to His Own, and His Own people did not receive Him.](#) (John 1:11; ESV; capitalized)

¹ Ishmael appears to have believed in the Revealed God, but he did not fully follow God's guidance. His harassment of the child Isaac indicates that he was not willing to accept what God was doing.

The reason that dispensations are important to the study of the book of Luke is, to understand what Jesus was teaching. He was teaching the Law of God; He lived in the Epoch of Israel and was teaching them the Old Testament as they should have learned it. However, Jesus will also teach some Church Age doctrines; and, therefore, it is important to understand that both dynamics are occurring during the Age of the Hypostatic Union.

Many people do not understand that most of what Jesus teaches in the gospels, during His 3–4 year ministry is primarily the Law of God. He taught the Old Testament. He taught the Law and the Prophets. There is this nonsense generalization that the God of the Old Testament was a God of vengeance; but Jesus reveals a God of Love. Both of those characteristics can be found in the Old and New Testaments; and, interestingly enough, some would argue that both of those character traits of God are anthropopathisms.

When quoting Scripture to make a point, Jesus quoted from the Old Testament—the only Scripture which existed at that time. We should understand the vast majority of the gospels are all about the Jewish Age—and the great failure of the religious class to preserve and accurately teach the Old Testament teachings.

Consequently, Jesus had to prepare His disciples for a change in programs (or a change in *household management*, if you will). So, Jesus taught His disciples a little about the Church Age (most prominently in the Garden of Gethsemane and during the Last Supper). John presents this teaching in detail; but the other gospels do not. This information was brand new; it did not come out of the Old Testament. These are some of the doctrines that we adhere to today.

Luke, the man, was originally a physician. While associated with Paul, he was an evangelist and probably could be called an *apostle* (small *a*). There are the original 11 Apostles, whom we will meet in the Book of Luke; there is Paul, called by Jesus on the Damascus Road; and then there are a half dozen or more people who are called apostles (in the epistles), who had, presumably, several communication gifts and extended authority over more than one local church. These men evangelized (which means to tell groups of people Who and What Jesus Christ is), and they also taught the Word of God, including Church Age doctrines. Some of them founded and stayed with one church, but most traveled around and had authority over more than one local church.

Before the Day of Pentecost, when Jesus gave the Spirit to those who believed in Him, there was no such thing as a local church. After the Day of Pentecost, churches began to be established by the Apostles all over the Roman empire and beyond.

This gift of apostleship died out (it allows for a person to have authority over more than one local church). All of the sign gifts died out. What replaces these gifts is the complete Word of God, which we know as the Old and New Testaments. There are still gifts given by God the Holy Spirit in the post-canon Church Age, but they do not include healing, tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles or apostleship. These gifts were instrumental in establishing the authority of the men who had them; and through them, local churches were established. However, once these local churches had been established and once the authority of these men had also been established, there became less and less reason for the *sign* gifts. Once the New Testament had been fully written (prior to A.D. 100) and circulated, there was no longer a need for these early gifts. In fact, most of those gifts died out long before the New Testament had been completed, because the authority of the men with those gifts had been established. The second time that Paul went to a church, he did not have to reestablish his authority there. When Paul's

reputation preceded him or when other established Apostles, like Peter, vouched for his teaching abilities (which Peter did), then Paul did not have to establish his authority.

And regarding the most important gift of the early Church Age—Apostleship—John was the last living Apostle.

For about 2000 years, God worked through the national entity Israel. He sent them prophets and priests; He interacted with Israel; and the Old Testament Scriptures were written by Hebrew people (Job and the first 10 or so chapters of Genesis may be exceptions to this). After Jesus, God works through the church—the body of believers who have believed in Him. There are a set of protocols established for nation Israel; there are a separate set of protocols established for the local church.

The church and nation Israel are two very different entities with great differences between them. There are some things which they have in common; and many places where they diverge. However, make no mistake about this fact: the church is not a reworking of Israel, it is not a new and somewhat improved incarnation of Israel, it is not a replacement for Israel. The covenants which God made to Israel have not been taken away from the Hebrew people and given to or applied to the church, either as they stand in Scriptures or in some modified, spiritualized way. The church is not a permanent replacement for or new version of Israel. The promises that God made to Israel are not somehow spiritualized and then applied to this new entity, the church. In today's computer-driven parlance, the Church is *not* Israel 2.0. Those are a variety of incorrect notions, most of which are known today as covenant theology.

You may have noticed that I kept using the word *spiritualized*, regarding the reworking of the original promises (covenants). This is somewhat of a nonsensical term, because Israel was not reworked in some spiritual way and out comes the church. And how exactly do you take the very specific promises of Israel and give them to those who have believed in Jesus? Does this mean that God has given you an apartment in downtown Jerusalem that you only need claim?

Even worse is the theology which somehow puts on blinders and sees the church as being basically the same thing as Israel. The blinders keep such a person from seeing the stark differences between the two.

Covenant theology claims that (1) God made a variety of covenants (contracts, agreements, promises) with Israel (most of which are one-sided agreements); (2) Israel did a really lousy job holding up her end of these contracts; and so (3) God sets Israel aside for good and develops a similar relationship with believers after the time of Christ, who then take the place of Israel, and are, in a sense, spiritualized Israel. Many of this theological position go so far as to claim that the church actually began in Abraham's tent, and that what we have today is just some normal outgrowth of that tent-church. As R. B. Thieme, Jr. so succinctly put it, *balderdash!*

Hopefully, you can see that these are very different beliefs, but they fall under the classification of covenant theology. The problem with taking this position is, just how much credence do you give to ancient nation Israel? The more than you distinguish between ancient Israel and the modern church, the closer you come to dispensationalism (which is the correct way to view the history of man through God's eyes).

Recall that Covenant Theology teaches that (1) Israel was set aside because of her failure to believe in Jesus and all promises to Israel were spiritualized and transferred to Christians; or (2) Israel always was the same thing as the church; it began in Abraham's tent (that was the first meeting of the church).

Let's begin this second section with the problems of covenant theology.

What are some of the problems with covenant theology?

1. God gave Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob a very specific set of covenants. He promised Abraham a blessed seed; a partial piece of property, a peculiar people, and a number of nations. All of this was related very carefully to Abraham's genealogical line. Abraham was not in charge of convincing others of his teaching or of evangelizing or converting others; he was in charge of raising one son, who would then raise one particular son, who would then have 12 sons, who would make up the 12 tribes of Israel (actually, 13).
2. How exactly are those promises applied to me? What is my plot of ground? How about my promised seed? Who are they exactly? Now, certainly, we can take the very specific promises of God and *spiritualize* them; that is, make them sound similar to God's original promise, but is that really God's plan? Are God's promises to me that I will have a plot of ground in heaven and that people who hear me evangelize will be my spiritual seed in heaven? The problem is, we take some very specific promises—promises that never had some odd connotation for 2000 years, and suddenly, they are changed to fit me and my life? That is absurd.
3. No one can doubt the connection of Israel to the land of Canaan. This is one of the big themes of the Old Testament. In Covenant Theology, this has somehow disappeared?
4. Although Jesus was rejected by the people of Israel as a whole and by the religious class, He was not rejected by all Jews. His 12 disciples (later Apostles) are all Jews. Paul came from the religious class.
5. There are a great many prophecies in the Old Testament still to be fulfilled. Most of these are related to Jesus and to Israel. Have they been set aside?
6. There is a future for Israel taught by Jesus and taught in the book of Revelation and in some passages in the Old Testament. There are many prophecies to be fulfilled, and those prophecies appear to be closely related to Jesus, not to the church.
7. The book of Revelation has the church in it (first 3 chapters) and the tribes of Israel. If the book of Revelation can distinguish between these two groups, why can't we?
8. It makes little sense for the relationship between God and Israel to be so specific and so literal; and then to suddenly change all of that, to the point where, everything that took place over 2000 years is completely and totally gone, even though, that is the first $\frac{3}{4}$ ths of the Bible.
- 9.

The concept and function of nation Israel is so tremendously different from the church; that it is hard to believe that someone could see them as being, somehow, the same things.

It is also rather self-centered to only see things in the light of your reality. Obviously, my reality is not the Jewish people, being raised Jewish, or having the affinity for the land of Canaan. However, that does not mean that I can simply dismiss them as not really existing any more.

In reality, the church and Israel are two separate and distinct entities. To construct the people and later, the nation, of Israel, God began with a people who were descended genetically from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (named *Israel* by God). God preserved this people and He isolated them, so that there was no intermixture with other peoples. The books of Genesis and Exodus are very careful about presenting the protection and preservation of this genetic identity.

This people were cultivated, you might say, by God, in the land of Canaan in Genesis 12–45. God then brought all of them in Gen. 46 to Egypt, where they remained isolated from the Egyptians, in whose

nation they lived. They lived in Egypt for 400 years and then God removed them, taking them back to the land of Canaan.

At this point in time, after Israel had been 400 years in Egypt, the inhabitants of Canaan had reached a point of terrible degeneracy. At this point in time, the people of Israel were large enough to defeat the peoples of Canaan and to end their perverted religious practices (which included child sacrifice). God brought them into Canaan and gave that land to them. However, they had to take this land militarily, which is the story of the book of Joshua. It ought to be clear that none of this has anything at all to do with the modern church. Israel was called upon on many occasions to use her military might. This is not part of what is required of the church. We don't have a church military force. We don't meet with other churches and go on military maneuvers or to combat retreats (this does not mean that some believers of the same church cannot share this sort of enthusiasm with each other—I am simply saying that this is not a church-wide experience).

God's relationship with Israel was defined by a series of covenants (or contracts or agreements), given successively to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and later to Moses and the people as a whole. Finally, God gave a covenant specifically to King David.

When God sent the promised King/Messiah to Israel, they rejected Him. Had Israel, as a whole, accepted Jesus as their King/Messiah/Savior, then that nation would have gone right into the Millennium and God's ultimate promises would have been fulfilled to them. Most of the covenants of God were one-sided, meaning, God made promises of what He would do for Israel—it would have been very hard for Israel to *break* their half of the covenant, because the covenant never really depended upon them. However, the people of Israel rejected their Messiah Whom God sent—they crucified Him (actually, set Him up to be crucified by the Romans). Obviously, because God cannot fulfill His covenants with people who have rejected their Savior and Messiah; He had to set this people aside *temporarily*. The people of Israel *will return* to their God.

There will be a literal nation Israel in the future ruled over by Jesus Christ. After the church is raptured, the Age of Israel will be concluded. There are 7 more years remaining on Israel's clock. When Jesus rules over nation Israel, that will be a new dispensation known as the Millennium.

On a temporary (or interim) basis, God has raised up the church, the body of believers who believe in Him. The church is the entity through which God works on earth today. We are not confined to a particular nation; we do not continue to write Scripture; and who we are descended from is never an issue. We do not observe any of the rituals which the people of Israel engaged in. We do not keep the Sabbath.

The fact that God is working through a different entity in no way supports or encourages antisemitism. We do not refer to the sons of Jacob as *Christ-killers*; we would be foolish to think that they no longer have any part in the plan of God. It would be wrong to see ourselves as superior or better than them, in any way. A child of Jacob can, today, believe in Jesus Christ, and many do. That person is eternally saved and he becomes a part of the church (the body of believers). When we encounter recalcitrant Jews—those who continue to reject Jesus Christ—then we bear them no animus and we pray for them. God wants all people to come to the knowledge of repentance (= a change of mind), regardless of their racial or ethnic background (this promise extends to Arabs and Muslims, the drug addicted, and gays and even transgenders; there is no one for whom Christ did not die—no matter how repugnant they might be to us; no matter how much they have screwed up their own lives).

Essentially, everyone is on a level-playing field now, but it would be evil on our part to treat nation Israel or people descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as wrong, bad, or inferior. God wants to see every person saved, which includes every Jew. God’s promises concerning Israel have not been retracted. Those who bless Israel will still be blessed by God. Those who disparage the sons of Jacob will they themselves be cursed. That promise of God still stands and it means what it says it means.

When I use the term *Israel*, I will primarily be referring to the institution through which God worked between the very approximate dates of 2000 B.C. to the birth of Christ.

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What Israel would be was prophetically revealed by God to Abraham.	What the church would be is prophetically revealed by Jesus to His disciples at the Last Supper and later in the Garden of Gethsemene. There is no Old Testament prophecy about the church.
Israel began inauspiciously with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their descendants.	Begun with the Apostles on the day of Pentecost; at which time, they added many souls to the church.
It is quite amazing that we know anything about Abraham at all, as he was a simple shepherd. What is key is, he was a shepherd who followed God’s calling.	The church had an amazing ride into the consciousness and history of Rome. The church (the body of people who believed in Jesus Christ) grew at a phenomenal rate.
Whereas, most of mankind had no idea who Abraham was during his life, he is the most well-known person of his era, eclipsing the history and reputation of all kings and warriors contemporary to him.	Whereas, the murder of Jesus was thought to destroy this movement, the growth of believers after Him was remarkable. The literature written by His disciples in the first century is the best selling literature of all time—even today.
Attacks on Abraham and the Abrahamic line were quite subtle. Abraham seemed to try to live at peace with all men, if possible.	Persecution of the church was also remarkable. Thousands, if not millions, of people were killed by Rome for the crime of being Christian.
Israel was and is a very specific people in a very specific genetic line (although others were able to join them, beginning in the Exodus era). Those outsiders who willingly became a part of Israel worshiped their God.	Becoming a member of the church is related directly to choosing to place your faith in Jesus Christ, Who is the Living God and not a dead martyr.

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Israel	The Church
<p>Israel was clearly associated with a specific piece of land. God told Abraham to move to that piece of land. God later told Jacob (Abraham's grandson) to leave this land—but with the knowledge that his people would return to it.</p> <p>Even today, Israel is associated with that same specific plot of ground.</p>	<p>The church, a body of believers, is not associated with any specific piece of land. Rome was first nation associated with the church. However, more recently, Spain, Ireland, Scotland, and England were associated with the church; and today, the United States is. In the Middle East today, the United States is synonymous with Christianity in their perception.</p>
<p>Israel was originally associated with specific rituals, like circumcision, festival days, and animal sacrifice. The people of Israel today are associated primarily with circumcision and the Passover (known today as the Seder), although they celebrate other holidays as well.</p>	<p>The church is associated with only one specific ritual, which is the Lord's Supper.</p> <p>Although many churches practice baptism, this ritual is less universal in how it is observed (and a few churches do not observe this ritual at all).</p>
<p>Abraham was given the Abrahamic covenant; which is repeated by God to Isaac and Jacob. Then God gave them the Mosaic Law; and then God gave David the Davidic Covenant.</p>	<p>The church is given the Holy Spirit and the epistles of the Apostles to guide them. Although we study the entire Bible, our specific Church Age practices come out of the epistles.</p>
<p>The covenants of God to Israel are promises which God made to Israel. These promises have not been completely fulfilled, either in the past or in today's world.</p>	<p>The doctrines and practices of the church are found almost entirely in the epistles (letters written by Paul, John, Peter and others);</p>
<p>Israel is given judges, kings, prophets and priests as their authorities. These men have different functions, and each represents the Messiah in one way or another.</p>	<p>The early church was first given the Apostles, who had absolute and ultimate authority. There are no Apostles today. Every believer in the Church Age is a priest, having authority over his own life.</p>
<p>Judges, kings, prophets and priests are all related to nation Israel. Judges and kings led nation Israel; but prophets had God's authority and they had authority over judges and kings.</p>	<p>The early spiritual gifts were designed for the building up of the church. The current spiritual gifts are given to local churches. Although some men with the gift of evangelism or pastor-teacher have had close relationships with presidents; this is never their primary function.</p>
<p>These authorities were only for ancient Israel. The modern nation Israel has a different set of authorities. The sons of Jacob (Israel), scattered throughout the world, are subject to the governmental authorities where they live. Even nation Israel today is essentially a secular government.</p>	<p>Properly and doctrinally, the authority in post-Apostolic church is the Bible. The authority in a local church is the pastor-teacher. In modern practice, there are other authorities, but these are not found in the Bible.</p>

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Israel

The Church

Israel is associated with the Law of Moses and the writings of the prophets.

The church is associated with the gospel of Jesus Christ and the epistles of the New Testament.

During the era or dispensation of Israel, people were saved by believing in the Revealed God (that is, God, as He revealed Himself to Israel). Today, we know Him as Jesus.

People are saved by believing in Jesus. Every person who believes in Jesus has very limited information about Him at the point of faith in Him

It makes very little sense to try to jumble together ancient Israel with the church begun at Pentecost, and try to make them into the same entity. What they have in common is, God worked (and works) through these two separate entities.

Jesus lived during the time of the Mosaic Law; He lived in the Age of Israel. However, there are some unique aspects to the time during which He lived. Probably the two things which stand out are (1) Jesus test-drove the Christian way of life for us; that is, He lived by the guidance and power of God the Holy Spirit (which required Jesus to know the Old Testament); and (2) Jesus' disciples could have, at any time, asked for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

What makes the time of Jesus separate from the Age of Israel and the Church Age is, God was on earth as a Person. Jesus was the only authority at that time. The Bible was the Old Testament, but Jesus was able to properly interpret them, apart from the wrong-headed religious views of His day.

During the life of Jesus, the priests of Israel had totally corrupted their authority; the church did not exist; and the future Apostles were, at this time, under the training and teaching of Jesus. This period of time is sometimes called the Age (or dispensation) of the Hypostatic Union.

The term *hypostatic union* refers to the two natures of Christ (divine and human) being united in One Person. This was not to original meaning or use of the word hypostasis (ὑπόστασις) [pronounced *hoop-OSS-tas-is*]. Hypostasis was Greek term later taken and used to represent the two natures of Christ in the 4th or 5th centuries. Originally, hypostasis meant (concretely) *essence*, (or abstractly) *assurance*. Strong's #5287. At some point in the future, we will cover this doctrine; but it can be found [here](#). One of the first times this term is used in this technical sense is by Athanasius (298–373 A.D.), a bishop of Alexandria (Egypt), in the fourth century.

It is key to understand that, in the Church Age, the Holy Spirit alone is not very helpful. The Holy Spirit requires some of the believer: Bible doctrine in their soul. Think of the Holy Spirit as the gas for your car. If you don't have a car, the gas is not going to get you anywhere. The better vehicle that you have, the more bang that you will get for your buck, so to speak, regarding the gas. Think of our vehicle as being the Bible doctrine in our souls. A person with no Bible doctrine is like a man with a 5 gallon pail of gas who expects to go somewhere. You can't go anywhere without a car.

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