

**PANORAMA**  
**PLUS** 11

*The Church Age*

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# OUTLINE

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## **NOTE TO THE STUDENT!**

This material is structured in outline form, yet it is complete enough that the student can gain maximum benefit from the lectures if the material is read beforehand. There is much to cover; the best learning experience combines the student's reading(s) and the lecture overview.

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The Training Center

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## PREFACE

Panorama of the Bible is a twelve-session broad overview of the flow of Biblical history from Genesis to Revelation. The unifying thread is the Panorama Timeline which links key people, places, events, and dates chronologically in 12 movements.

The Panorama Plus series is built upon the 12 movements of Panorama. Each distinct movement is expanded in six additional sessions to take the student deeper into the flow of the Bible.

This study, Panorama Plus 11: The Church Age

... is more than a narrative.

... is broadly comprehensive, that is, it includes the Book of Acts, the Epistles written during the Book of Acts, and the Epistles after the Book of Acts.

... completes the Panorama Timeline to the present day.

May the study be helpful to the student and honoring to the Lord.

Robert V. Cupp  
The Training Center  
Fall 2019

<b>PANORAMA: TWELVE MOVEMENTS</b>	
<u>Movement</u>	<u>Biblical Books</u>
#1 Prologue	Genesis 1-11
#2 Patriarchs	Genesis 12-50; Job
#3 Redemption and Wanderings	Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
#4 Conquest	Joshua
#5 Apostasy	Judges, Ruth
#6 Kingship: United Monarchy	1-2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1-11 (Pss, Prov, Eccl, Song of Solomon)
#7 Kingship: Divided Monarchy	1 Kings 12-22; 2 Kings (Prophets - selected)
#8 Exile	Daniel, Ezekiel (Jeremiah)
#9 Return from Exile and 400 Silent Years	Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther (Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)
#10 Life of Christ	Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
<b>#11 Church Age</b>	<b>Acts and Epistles</b>
#12 Final Consummation	Revelation (Daniel)

# SESSION 1

## Witnessing in Jerusalem

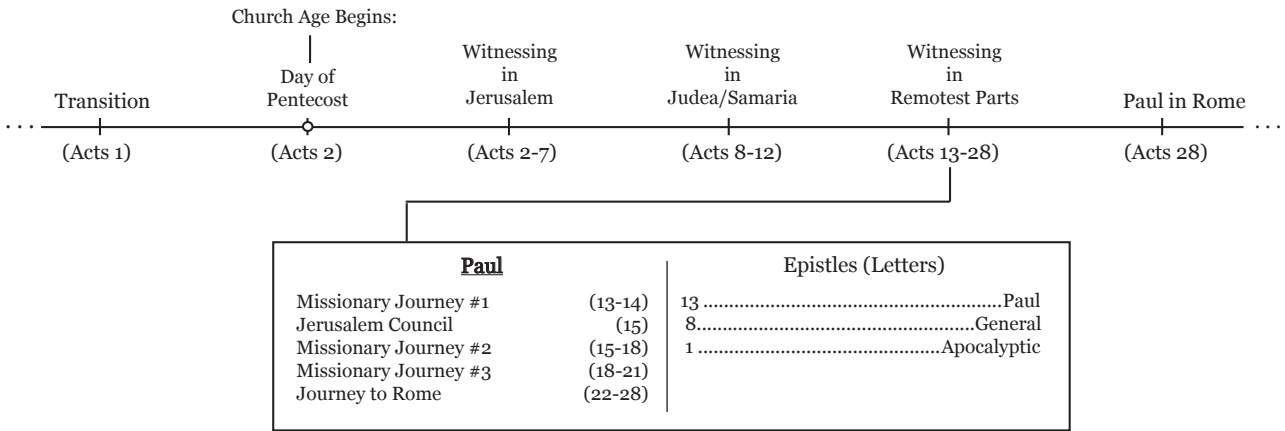
### I. PRAYER/PURPOSE

### II. PANORAMA OVERVIEW

PANORAMA OVERVIEW	
MOVEMENTS	DIVINE ECONOMIES
1. Prologue 2. Patriarchs	Pre-Law
3. Redemption/Wandering 4. Conquest 5. Apostasy 6. Kingship: United 7. Kingship: Divided 8. Exile 9. Return from Exile ----- 10. Life of Christ	Law
11. Church Age	Present Kingdom
12. Final Consummation	Future Kingdom

### III. MOVEMENT 11: CHURCH AGE TIMELINE

#### #11 CHURCH AGE (Acts, Epistles)



## IV. CHURCH AGE (ACTS AND EPISTLES)

### A. Book of Acts

BOOK OF ACTS			
<b>Author:</b> Luke <b>Theme:</b> Beginnings of the Church <b>Key Verse:</b> Acts 1:8			
Chapter 1	Chapters 2-7	Chapters 8-12	Chapters 13-28
Introduction	Witnessing in Jerusalem	Witnessing in Judea/Samaria	Witnessing to the Ends of the Earth
Focus: Jews		Jews + ½ Jews	Gentiles

### B. Transitional Phase

1. From "Law" to "Present Kingdom"
  - a. Refer again to chart, Panorama Overview, page 4.
  - b. End of Law (as a Jewish Code of Conduct)
 

Matthew 27:50-51

*And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. <sup>51</sup>At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split...*

    - (1) The death of Christ completes the "atoning sacrifice" (accomplishing expiation, propitiation, redemption, reconciliation).
    - (2) The renting of the veil was likely between the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place. No longer did the covenant people approach God through Mosaic legislation, but now free access to God was available through the work of the Cross (by our High Priest, Jesus). A new day in God's greater program was dawning.

Hebrews 10:11-14

*Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.<sup>12</sup> But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,<sup>13</sup> and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool.<sup>14</sup> For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.*

## 2. Present Kingdom and Future Kingdom

### a. Acts 1: An Instructive Question

Acts 1:3-6

*After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.<sup>4</sup> On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.<sup>5</sup> For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."<sup>6</sup> Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"*

Recall:

- (1) Jesus was the Messiah-King.
- (2) Jesus as King brought the long-awaited Kingdom.
- (3) Jesus as King (of this Kingdom) was rejected.
- (4) Now what? (Jesus is "speaking about the Kingdom", v.3).

Additionally:

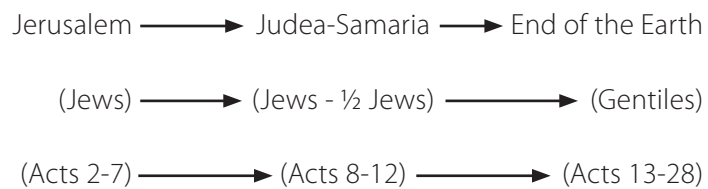
- (5) The Holy Spirit would usher in a new aspect of God's Kingdom program (Present Kingdom).
- (6) The Disciples were promised to one-day sit on the twelve thrones of the tribes of Israel (Matt 19:27-30; Future Kingdom).
- (7) The Disciples wanted to know if this was the time (Future Kingdom).

b. Acts 1—An Illuminating Reply

Acts 1:7-8

*He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> **But** you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

- (1) The timing of the "Future Kingdom" (or Davidic Kingdom, Messianic Kingdom, Millennial Kingdom) is not for the Disciples to know.
- (2) The timing of the "Present Kingdom" is soon; first the coming of the Holy Spirit, then the missiological task of being witnesses to Christ and His accomplished work.
- (3) The missiological task would begin in Jerusalem, then Judea-Samaria, then the ends of the earth.



3. The Kingdom summarized: "now" (Present Kingdom)/ "not yet" (Future Kingdom).



## V. BOOK OF ACTS: WITNESSING IN JERUSALEM (CHAPTERS 2-7)

### A. Day of Pentecost (Acts 2)

1. Theological Significance
  - a. It marks the end of the “transition period” between the renting of the veil (end of Mosaic legislation/ access to God) and the beginning of the “times of the Gentiles” (a new aspect of God’s program).
  - b. It marks the beginning (birthday) of the Church.
  - c. It marks the beginning of the baptism of the Spirit promised by Jesus (1:4-5), a new era of the Holy Spirit’s work in the believer. (Note: 1 Cor 12:12-13 where the baptism of the Holy Spirit places believers into the universal Body of Christ).

2. Description

Acts 2:1-4

*When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.<sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.<sup>3</sup> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.<sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

3. Preaching: Peter (2:14-36)

- a. Explaining Pentecost (14-21)
- b. Proclaiming the Gospel (22-35)
- c. Applying the message (36)

Acts 2:36

*“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”*

## **B. Snapshot of the Early Church (Acts 2)**

Acts 2:42-47

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup>Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. <sup>44</sup>All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup>They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. <sup>46</sup>Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup>praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

1. Activities (functions) of the early church:
  - a. Apostolic teaching
  - b. Fellowship (lit. koinōnia)
  - c. Breaking of bread (Communion)
  - d. Prayer
  - e. Sharing
  - f. Frequent meetings (temple/homes)
  - g. Praising
2. Result
  - a. Awe
  - b. Miraculous wonders and signs
  - c. Favor of the people
  - d. Growing (numerically)

## **C. Difficulties in the Early Church (Acts 3-5)**

The opening chapters of the Book of Acts presents a positive outlook for the infant church. *"And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (2:47<sup>b</sup>).* The Holy Spirit was empowering believers to testify (witness) concerning Jesus as was their commission. *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (1:8).*

And yet, when the Holy Spirit moves in power, the Enemy moves to block and subvert the movement of God.

Acts 3-5 chronicles early difficulties that soon arise. Some are external (conflict with the religious authorities); some are internal (conflicts within the believing community).

1. External: conflict with Jewish authorities (Acts 3-4)

a. Miracle: lame man healed (3:1-10)

Acts 3:6-8

*Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." <sup>7</sup>Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. <sup>8</sup>He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.*

b. Message: power of Christ revealed (3:11-26)

Acts 3:11-12

*While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade. <sup>12</sup>When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"*

Acts 3:16

*By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.*

c. Meeting: religious leaders challenge the healing (4:1-22)

(1) Peter and John are jailed (1-3).

(2) Yet, many observers believe (4).

(3) Religious leaders question their (Peter and John's) power (5-7).

Acts 4:7

*They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"*

(4) Peter replies (8-12).

- "It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth..." (10)
- "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." (12)

(5) Religious leaders forbid further teaching (13-22).

(6) Peter and John reply (19-20).

Acts 4:19-20

*But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges!  
<sup>20</sup>As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."*

**Insight:**

Opposition to duly constituted authority was a serious matter. The emerging Christian faith was not opposed to appropriate civil or religious law. Later, the Apostle Paul would underscore this:

*Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.  
<sup>3</sup> For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. (Romans 13:1-3)*

But whenever man's laws contradict God's laws, civil disobedience is permitted (though the resister may be punished). If religious law contradicts God's laws, the same resistance is permitted (from God's eternal perspective).

2. Internal: conflict with Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5)

a. Prelude (Acts 4:23-26)

Peter and John have boldly testified of Jesus even before indignant religious leaders. The watching Christian community rallies in prayer for continued Holy Spirit—boldness to testify of Jesus Christ.

Acts 4:31

*After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*

Further, this cemented the sense of oneness, openness, and responsibility between believers (cf. 2:44 “All the believers were together and had everything in common”).

Acts 4:32-34

*All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.<sup>33</sup> With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all<sup>34</sup> that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales...*

b. Problem: unity-destroying duplicity (5:1-11)

The transforming power of the Holy Spirit had captured the hearts of the believers. Sacrificial generosity was the norm (cf. Barnabas; 4:36-37). And then came Ananias and Sapphira.

(1) The deed: hypocritical giving (1-2)

(2) The discovery: open rebuke by Peter (3-4)

(3) The discipline: divine judgment: death (5-11)

Acts 5:11

*Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.*

**Insight:**

When God begins a new thing (e.g. the Church), it is not uncommon that He deals harshly and starkly with sinful actions that oppose His work. The deceptive sin of Ananias and Sapphira was harshly judged more for the benefit of the observant church than the punitive effect upon the sinning couple. Further, there are truly sins that believers commit that can be judged with physical death (also, see Joshua 7 and Achan's sin).

1 John 5:16-17

*If you see any brother or sister commit a sin that does not lead to death, you should pray and God will give them life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that you should pray about that.<sup>17</sup> All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.*

The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was against the Holy Spirit, against the unity of the Spirit, and against the community of faith (1 Cor 8:12—"When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.").

3. Internal: conflict among believers (Acts 6)

a. Prelude: "when the number of disciples was increasing" (1)

b. Problem: dissension and partiality

Acts 6:1-4

*In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.<sup>2</sup> So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.<sup>3</sup> Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them<sup>4</sup> and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."*

c. Problem solved

Acts 6:7

*So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.*

4. External: conflict outside the church (Acts 6-7)

a. Stephen's person (6:8, 15)

Acts 6:8, 15

*Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people.*

*<sup>15</sup>All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.*

b. Stephen's problem (6:9-14)

Acts 6:9-14

*Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen.*

*<sup>10</sup>But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke. <sup>11</sup>Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God." <sup>12</sup>So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. <sup>13</sup>They produced false witnesses, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law.*

*<sup>14</sup>For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us."*

c. Stephen's speech (7:1-53)

(1) Positive: Jewish history from Abraham to Solomon (1-50)

(2) Negative: charge against religious leaders  
Acts 7:51-53

*"You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors:*

*You always resist the Holy Spirit! <sup>52</sup> Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him—<sup>53</sup> you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it."*

d. Response to the speech (7:54-58)

- (1) The leaders are furiously outraged.
- (2) Stephen announces that he sees the Son of Man at the right hand of God.
- (3) The mob takes Stephen by force.
- (4) The mob stones Stephen.

e. Aftermath (7:59-8:3)

(1) Stephen's prayer

Acts 7:59-60

*While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." <sup>60</sup> Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.*

(2) Saul's part

Acts 8:1<sup>a</sup>, 3

*On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem... <sup>3</sup> But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.*

(3) Persecution outbreak

Acts 8:1<sup>b</sup>

*...and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.*



## **VI. BOOK OF ACTS: WITNESSING IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA (CHAPTERS 8-12)**

Session 2 will cover this continuing development (cf. Acts 1:8).

## **VII. BOOK OF ACTS: WITNESSING TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH (CHAPTERS 13-28)**

Sessions 3-5 will cover this development (cf. Acts 1:8).

## **VIII. TAKEAWAYS**

### **A. A New Day**

The Day of Pentecost inaugurates a new day with the birth of the Church. The "Kingdom" can now be seen as "now" (present spiritual Kingdom) and "not yet" (future Millennial Kingdom).

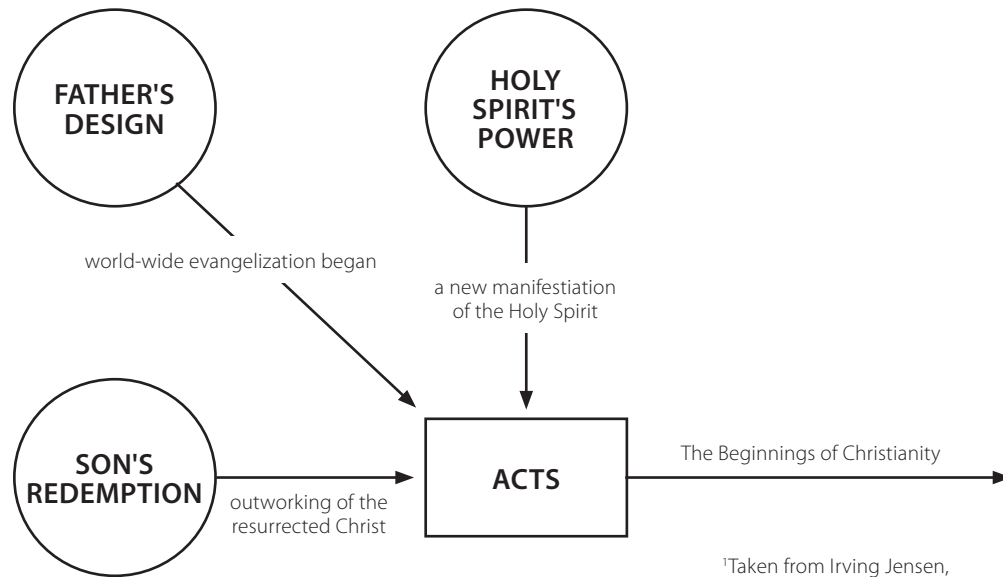
### **B. Church Growth and Development**

The Book of Acts records the early days of the growing church. The outline can be discerned from Acts 1:8:  
*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

### **C. Trinitarian Emphasis**

Note the following chart that summarizes the activity of the Tri-unity in the Book of Acts:

## THE ROLE OF THREE PERSONS OF THE GODHEAD<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Taken from Irving Jensen,  
*Acts: A Self-Study Guide*, 9.  
Chicago: Moody, 1969.

### D. The Book of Acts is a Distinctive Book of "Firsts"

Note the summary of Robert Gromacki  
(*New Testament Survey*, Baker, 1974, p.154):

"Acts is a book of firsts. It narrates the first election of a church officer (1:23-26), the first sermon of the new era (2:14-40), the first conversions (2:41), the first miracle (3:1-11), the first persecution (4:1-4), the first chastisement (5:1-11), the first deacons (6:1-7), the first sermon by a layman (7:2-53), the first Christian martyr (7:54-60), the first Gentile converts (10:44-48), the first time the name "Christian" is mentioned (11:26), the first apostolic martyr (12:2), the first call to missionary service (13:1-2), the first church debate or council (15:1-30), and the first preaching in Europe (16:12-13)."

### **E. The Book of Acts has Distinctive Characteristics:**

1. Acts is a transitional book (from life of Christ to the Epistles).
2. Acts mentions the Holy Spirit more than any other New Testament book (over 50 times).
3. Acts highlights prayers, either by specific prayers, results of prayers, or general references to prayer.
4. Acts chronicles the growth of the Church, the direct result of the missionary nature of Acts.
5. Acts records the continuing, authenticating signs and miracles of the Apostles.
6. Acts contains four unusual receptions of the Holy Spirit.
  - a. Acts 2: Day of Pentecost
  - b. Acts 8: Conversion of "Samaritans" (Philip's ministry)
  - c. Acts 10: Conversion of a "Gentile" (Peter and Cornelius)
  - d. Acts 19: Conversion of John the Baptist's converts (OT Saints to NT believers)
7. Acts provides the backdrop for the New Testament Epistles.

