

# **Right Division 101: Introduction to Dispensational Bible Study**

**When did the But Now Begin?**

# Three Principles of Bible Study

- **Literal Reading**--the Bible must be interpreted literally. The words on the page say what they mean and mean what they say.
- **Comparative Principle**--the Bible must be studied by comparing scripture with scripture. The Bible is self interpreting and no portion of scripture is unrelated to the whole.
- **Dispensational Method**--the Bible can only be properly understood through dispensational Bible study.

# Dispensational Method

- II Timothy 2:15—We are instructed in this verse to study God's Word, but we are also told how to conduct our study, rightly dividing the Word of truth.
- The dispensational method seeks to answer the following questions:
  - 1) Who wrote it?
  - 2) When did they write?
  - 3) To whom was it written?

# What is a Dispensation?

- “A distinguishable economy in the out working of God’s plan.” Charles C. Ryrie
- Our English word dispensation comes from the Greek word *oikonomia* which means house management.
- God has managed his house differently with different people during different times.
- A dispensation is not a period of time, but the act of dealing out or that which is dealt out.

# Does the Bible Contradict Itself?

- Genesis 17:10--Must be circumcised.
- Leviticus 11:1-8--Some foods is unclean.
- Matthew 5:20—Must keep the law.
- Psalm 51:11—Could loose the Holy Spirit.
- Matthew 26:28—Ransom for many.
- Acts 3:20—Prophecy made known since the world began.
- Galatians 5:6, 6:15-Don't need to be circumcised.
- I Timothy 4:4--No food unclean.
- Romans 6:14—Not under the law.
- Ephesians 4:30—Can't loose the Holy Spirit.
- I Timothy 2:4-7—Ransom for all.
- Romans 16:25—Mystery kept secret since the world began.

# Why Rightly Divide?

- II Timothy 2:15—is the only verse in the entire Bible that tells the believer to study the Bible.
- Luckily the verse also tells us how Bible study should be conducted.
- The approved of God study to show themselves approved by rightly dividing the word of truth.

# How to Rightly Divide?

- Who wrote II Timothy 2:15?
- The apostle Paul wrote the verse.
- So if Paul instructs us to rightly divide the word of truth, it would make sense that Paul would tell us how to do so.
- In Ephesians chapter 2 Paul lays out a three-fold division of time by which the Scripture can be rightly divided.

# Time Past, But Now, Ages to Come

- Ephesians 2:11-12—Speaks of a time that Paul calls “time past.”
- Ephesians 2:13—Speaks of a time that Paul calls “but now.”
- Ephesians 2:7—Speaks of a time that Paul called the “ages to come.”
- According to the Apostle Paul the Bible can be divided into the way God worked in the past, the way He is working in the present, and the way He will work in the future.



# Characteristics of Time Past

God

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**Jewish Nation of Israel**

- Nigh unto God
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**Gentile Nations**

- aliens from the common wealth of Israel
- strangers from the covenants of promise.
- without hope and without God in the world.

# Genesis 1-11

Genesis 1:1--Creation

Genesis 3--Fall

Genesis 6-8--Flood

Genesis 11--Tower of Babel

God deals with the world without distinction.

Nation of Israel not yet formed.

# Genesis 12—Rest of the O.T.

Davidic Covenant added confirming to promise of a king and kingdom to Israel

- Abe. Covenant confirmed with Isaac, and Jacob
- Law added under Moses.

Israel

Genesis 17  
Circumcision  
required for Abe's  
seed

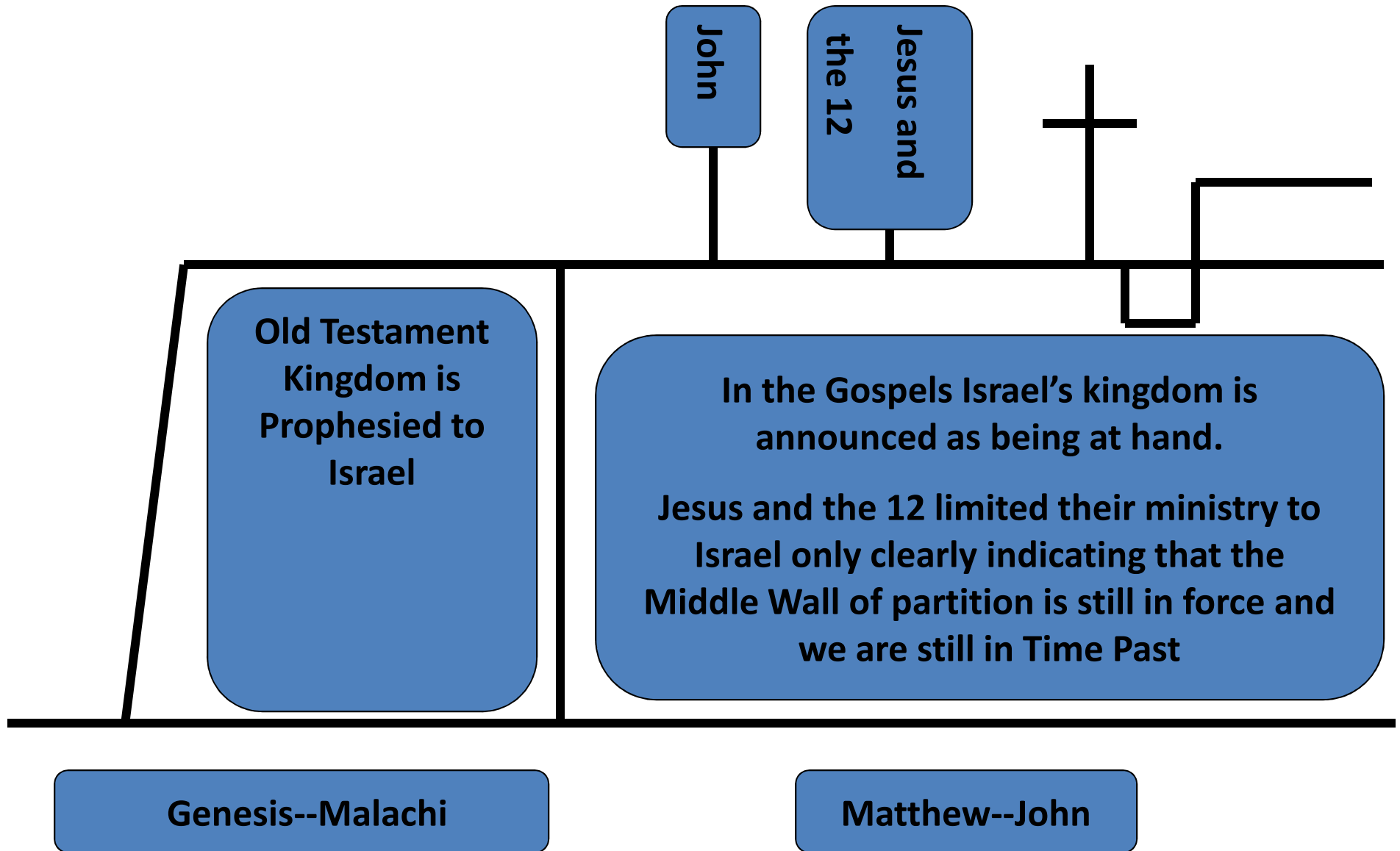
Rite of Circumcision/Law of Moses forms  
Middle Wall of Partition between Jews and  
Gentiles

Genesis 12 Abraham  
called

Gentiles

Genesis 1-11  
World Without  
Distinction

# What About the Gospels?



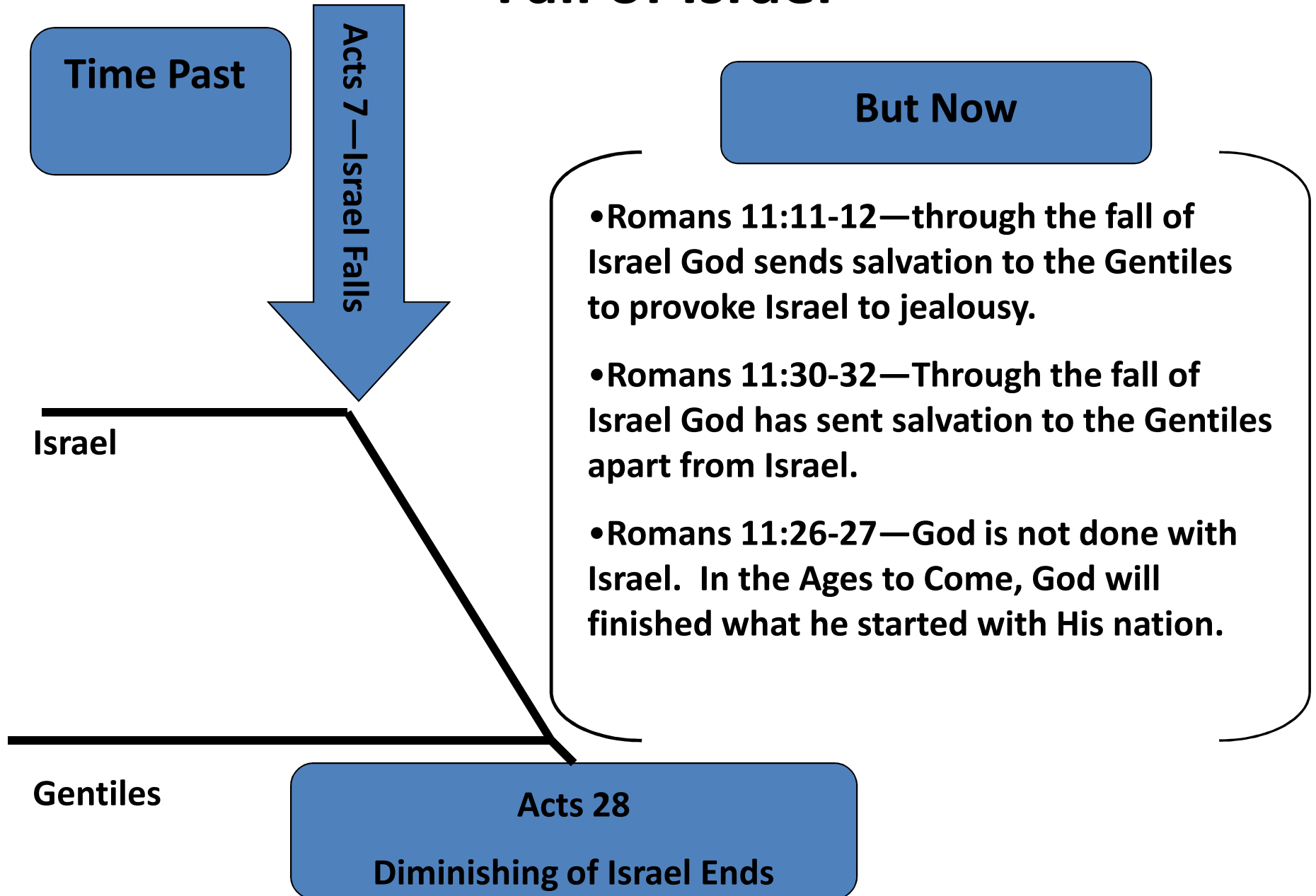
## Characteristics of the But Now

- Ephesians 2:13—the gentiles who used to be far off during “time past” are made nigh by the blood of Christ.
- Ephesians 2:14—peace has been made between Jews and Gentiles and the Middle Wall of Partition has been broken down.
- Ephesians 2:15—Jews and Gentiles are now being formed into a New Man by God himself.
- Ephesians 2:16—on the basis of the cross work of Christ; God is now reconciling both Jews and Gentiles in one body. The time past enmity has been done away in Christ.

# Characteristics of the But Now

- Ephesians 2:17—peace is now preached and offered to those who used to be far off (Gentiles) and those that were nigh (Israel).
- Ephesians 2:18—Gentiles no longer need to go through Israel to have access to God as they did in Time Past.
- **The Body of Christ = Jew and Gentile Equality**
- Summary: During the “But Now” time period all of the Time Past distinctions have been removed based upon the cross work of Jesus Christ. Israel no longer possesses an advantage and is concluded in unbelief with the Gentiles. Therefore, the Body of Christ cannot be formed until Israel has been reckoned in unbelief along with the Gentiles.

# Fall of Israel



## When did the But Now Begin?

- The following is a list of eleven reasons why the Body of Christ did not begin in Acts 2.
- Acts 2:16—the events of Acts 2 are the fulfillment of prophecy made to the nation of Israel.
- Acts 2:8-11--Pentecost was a Jewish feast day, attended by Jews and Proselytes from across the ancient world.
- Acts 2:5, 14, 22, 36—Peter is specially addressing Israel on one of her sacred feast days.



## When did the But Now Begin?

- Acts 2:41—there was already a church in existence at Pentecost. A thing must first exist before anything can be added to it.
- Acts 2:17—Peter’s preaching proclaimed that Israel’s last days according to prophecy had arrived, not the first days of the Body of Christ.
- Acts 2:30-39, 3:19-21—the kingdom was not even offered to Israel until Pentecost; It was when Israel refused this offer that the nation was set aside and the Body of Christ was formed.

# When did the But Now Begin?

- Acts 1:8—at Pentecost the disciples were baptized with, or in the Spirit for power. This is quite different from baptism by the Spirit into the Body of Christ.
- Mark 1:7-8—At Pentecost the Lord Jesus Christ was the Baptizer, baptizing His people with or in, the Holy Spirit. Today the Holy Spirit is the Baptizer, baptizing believers into the Body of Christ.
- The title, “the Church which is His body,” is distinct in Paul’s letters. This expression is not used at Pentecost or in other New Testament writings.
- Acts 5:31—if the Body of Christ started in Acts 2 why are Peter and the 12 still preaching repentance to Israel?

# When did the But Now Begin?

- Acts 5:31—if the Body of Christ started in Acts 2 why are Peter and the 12 still preaching repentance to Israel?
- **Remember: you cannot have the Body of Christ until Israel falls from her favored Time Past status. This clearly did not occur in Acts 2.**
- **The critical question then is when does Israel fall?**
- Acts 7:51-60—Israel commits the unpardonable sin (Matthew 12:31-32) and is rendered in unbelief thus paving the way for the formation of the Body of Christ.

# Israel's Three-Fold Rejection of the God Head

## Old Testament

Israel rejects the witness of God the Father through the prophets.

Forgiven

Nation is forgiven  
God the Son is sent  
in the Gospels

## The Gospels

Israel rejects the witness of God the Son during Jesus earthly ministry.

Forgiven

Nation is forgiven  
God the Holy Spirit is sent in  
Acts 2

## Acts 1-7

Israel rejects the witness of God the Holy Spirit during the early Acts period.

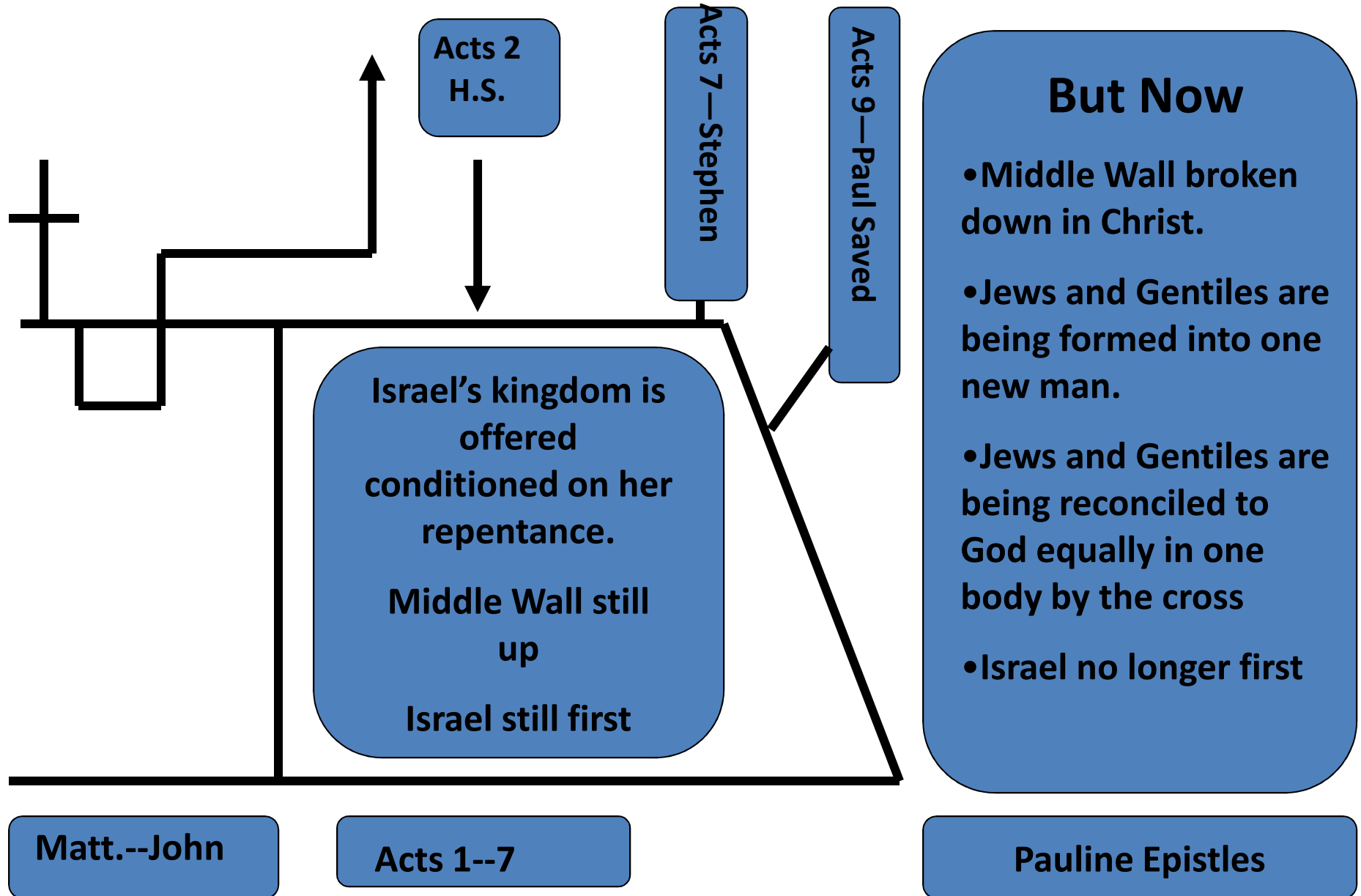
Falls

Nation is not forgiven, cut off  
and rendered in unbelief.

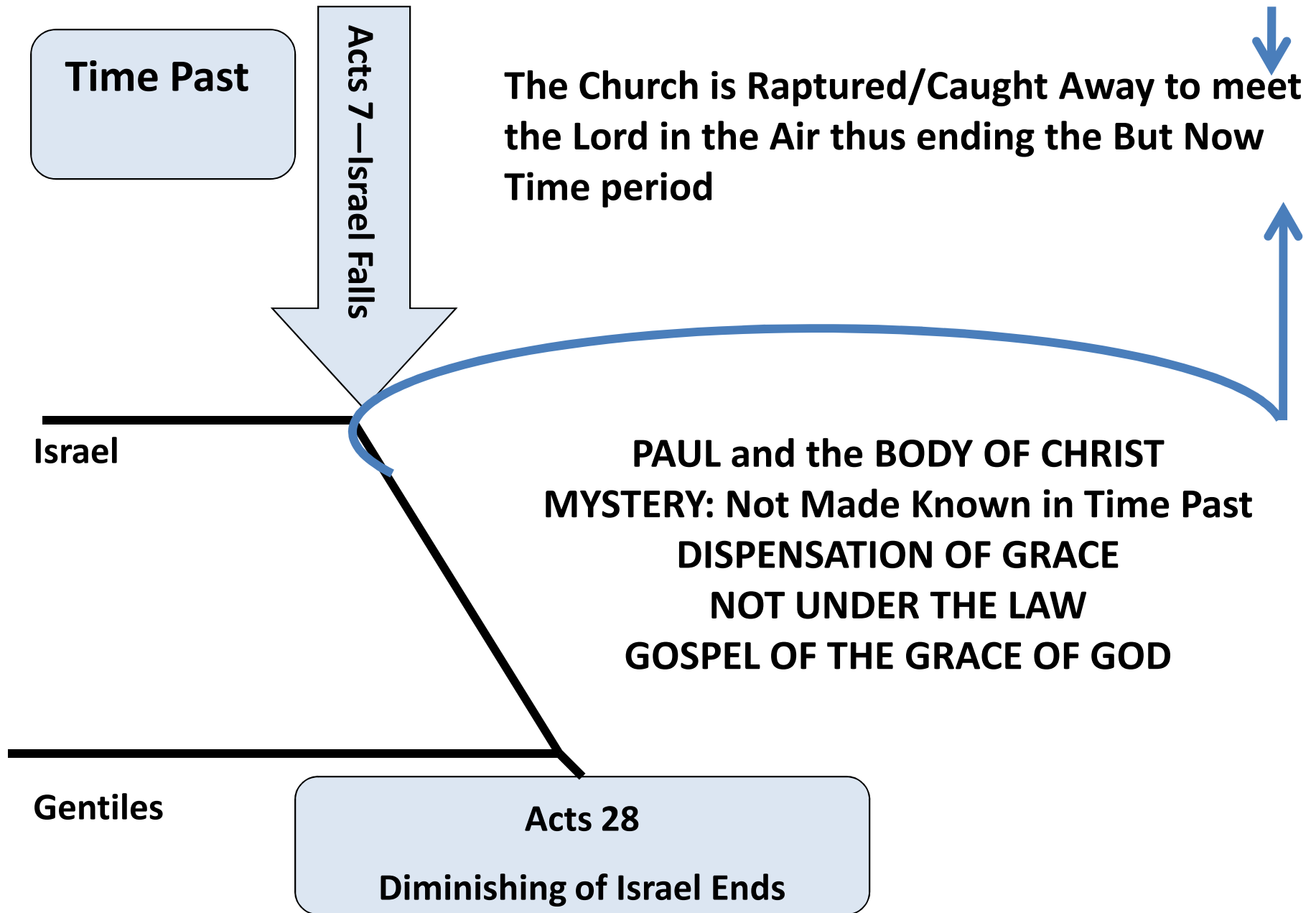
# Paul the First Member of the Body of Christ

- Paul is the perfect type of the Body of Christ. He was both a Roman Citizen and member of the nation of Israel in one person.
- I Timothy 1:16—the Holy Spirit through the pen of Paul tells us that he was the first one and that in him God set a pattern. We are saved after the pattern that God set in Paul.

# The But Now Time Period Begins



# Nature and End of the But Now Time Period



# Characteristics of the Ages to Come

- The Time Past distinction between Israel and the gentiles will once again be in force.
- Prophecy will once again be fulfilled.
- The 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel or Tribulation Period will arrive.
- Christ will return bodily back to earth to destroy his enemies and establish his kingdom on earth.
- All of the covenants of promise that God made with Israel will be fulfilled.
- The New Heavens and New Earth will be instituted and the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times ushered in.



**Time Past**

**But Now**

**Ages to Come**

**Rapture**

**2<sup>nd</sup>.  
Coming**

**Trib.**



**Jews**

**Kingdom  
Prophesied**

**Kingdom  
Postponed**

**Jews**

**Kingdom  
Established**

**Dispensation of  
the Fulness of  
Times**

**Gentiles**

**Body of Christ  
No Difference  
between Jew  
Gentile**

**Gentiles**

**Genesis—Acts 7**

**Romans—Philemon**

**Hebrews—Revelation**

