

KEY THEME

Jesus offers salvation to everyone.

Acts

KEY VERSE

⁷ And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Acts 1:8

The book of Acts in two acts

THE MINISTRY OF PETER (Chapters 1-12)

- Peter and the Jews, Acts 1—7
- Peter and the Samaritans, Acts 8
- The conversion of Paul, Acts 9
- Peter and the Gentiles, Acts 10—11
- Peter’s arrest and deliverance, Acts 12

THE MINISTRY OF PAUL (Chapter 13-28)

- Paul’s first missionary journey, Acts 13—14
- The Council of Jerusalem, Acts 15
- Paul’s second missionary journey, 16:1—18:22
- Paul’s third missionary journey, 18:23—21:25
- Paul’s arrest and trial in Caesarea, 21:26—26:31
- Paul’s voyage to Rome, Acts 27-28

The ministries of Peter and Paul

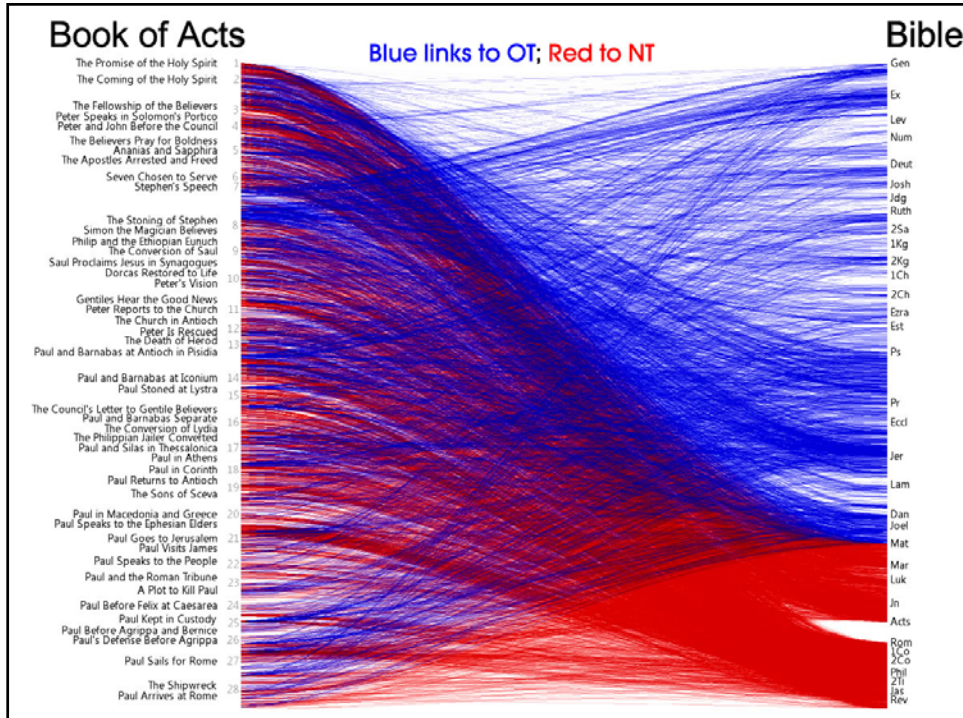


Seven Progress Reports

1. "And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47).
2. "So the Word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly" (Acts 6:7).
3. "Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria...was strengthened; and [it was] encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord" (Acts 9:31).
4. "But the Word of God continued to increase and spread" (Acts 12:24).
5. "So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers" (Acts 16:5).
6. "In this way the Word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power" (Acts 19:20).
7. "Paul...welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 28:30-31).

A central Bible tenet

The **New Testament** is in the Old Testament **concealed**,
the **Old Testament** is in the New Testament **revealed**.





The Trial of Stephen

ACTS 6:8-8:2

- ⁸ And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.
- ⁹ Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen* (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. ¹⁰ And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.
- ¹¹ Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God."

* AKA "Libertines" or "freed slaves"

¹² And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon *him*, seized him, and brought *him* to the council.

¹³ They also set up false witnesses who said, “This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; ¹⁴ for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us.”

¹⁵ And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.



Acts 7

Stephen's Address: The Call of Abraham

¹ Then the high priest said, “Are these things so?”

² And he said, “Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, ³ and said to him, ‘Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.’

⁴ Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and **dwelt in Haran**. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell.

⁵ And *God* gave him no inheritance in it, not even *enough* to set his foot on. But even when *Abraham* had no child, He promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him.

- ⁶ But God spoke in this way: that his descendants would dwell in a foreign land, and that they would bring them into bondage and oppress *them* four hundred years. ⁷ 'And the nation to whom they will be in bondage I will judge,' said God, 'and after that they shall come out and serve Me in this place.'
- ⁸ Then He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so *Abraham* begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac *begot* Jacob, and Jacob *begot* the twelve patriarchs.

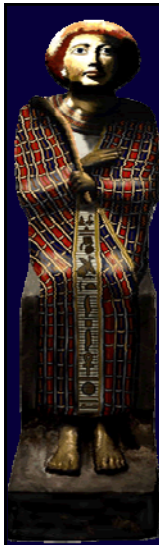
The Patriarchs in Egypt

- ⁹ "And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him
- ¹⁰ and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.



- ¹¹ Now a famine and great trouble came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers found no sustenance. ¹² But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first.





¹³ And the second *time* Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to the Pharaoh.

¹⁴ Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his relatives to *him*, seventy-five people.

¹⁵ So Jacob went down to Egypt; and he died, he and our fathers.

¹⁶ And they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham

bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor, *the father* of Shechem.



God Delivers Israel by Moses

¹⁷ "But when the time of the promise drew near which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt ¹⁸ till another king arose who did not know Joseph.

¹⁹ This man dealt treacherously with our people, and oppressed our forefathers, making them expose [*cast out, kill, abort*] their babies, so that they might not live.

²⁰ At this time Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God; and he was brought up in his father's house for three months. ²¹ But when he was set out, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and brought him up as her own son.

²² And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.

Medicine; law; war; politics; astronomy; maths; agriculture; engineering

²³ "Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel.

²⁴ And seeing one of *them* suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. ²⁵ For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand.

²⁶ And the next day he appeared to *two of them* as they were fighting, and *tried to* reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?'

²⁷ But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying,

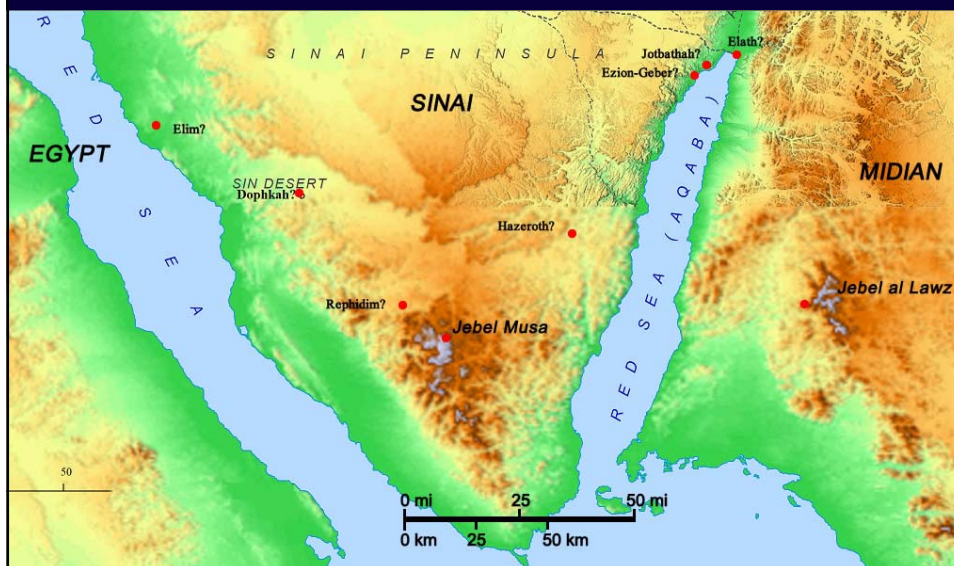
'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?

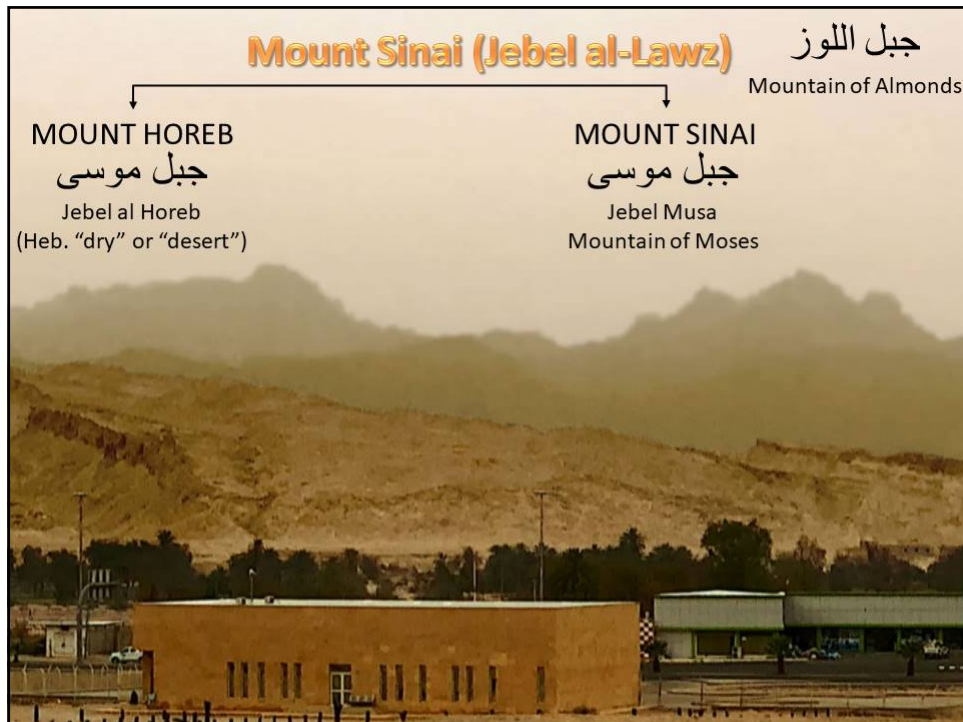
²⁸ Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?'

²⁹ Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian [*current western Saudi Arabia*], where he had two sons.

Location(s) of Mount Sinai

Many traditional Holy Land sites and relics located by Constantine I's mother Helena in 326-28 AD are considered problematic by some.





³⁰ "And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of **Mount Sinai**. ³¹ When Moses saw *it*, he marvelled at the sight; and as he drew near to observe, the voice of the Lord came to him, ³² *saying,*

‘I *am* the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’

And Moses trembled and dared not look.

³³ ‘Then the LORD said to him,

“Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. ³⁴ I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt; I have heard their groaning and have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.” ’

³⁵ “This Moses whom they rejected, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge?’ is the one God sent *to be* a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush.

³⁶ He brought them out, after he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

Israel Rebels Against God

³⁷ “This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel,

‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear.’



³⁸ “This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and *with* our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us,
³⁹ whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected.

And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, ⁴⁰ saying to Aaron, ‘Make us gods to go before us; *as for* this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ ⁴¹ And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

⁴² Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets:

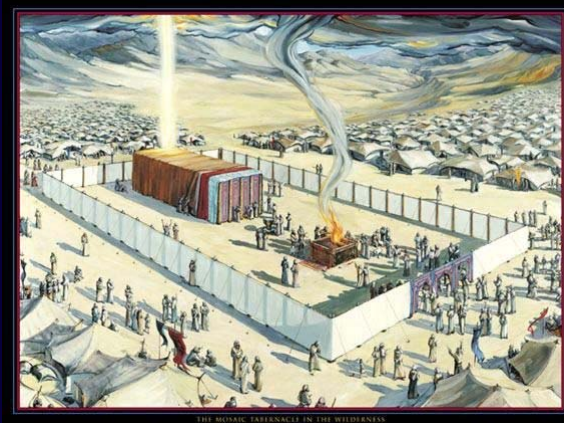
‘Did you offer Me slaughtered animals and sacrifices *during* forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?

⁴³ You also took up the tabernacle of Moloch, And the star of your god Remphan, Images which you made to worship; And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.’

God's True Tabernacle

⁴⁴ "Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen, ⁴⁵ which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers until the days of David, ⁴⁶ who found favor before God and asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob.

⁴⁷ But Solomon built Him a house.



⁴⁸ "However, **the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands**, as the prophet says:

⁴⁹ 'Heaven *is* My throne,
And earth *is* My footstool.
What house will you build for Me? says the LORD,
Or what *is* the place of My rest?

⁵⁰ Has My hand not made all these things?'

Israel Resists the Holy Spirit

⁵¹ "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! **You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.**

⁵² **Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?** And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, ⁵³ who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept *it.*"

Stephen pointedly asked,

“Was there ever a prophet your
ancestors did not persecute?”

(Acts 7:52)



Stephen the Martyr

⁵⁴ When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with *their* teeth. ⁵⁵ But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, ⁵⁶ and said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”

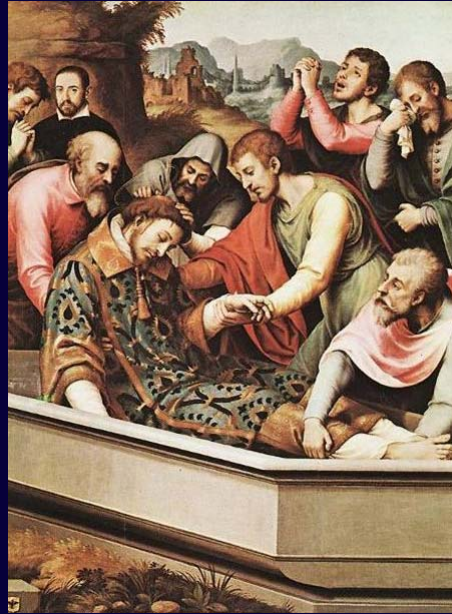
⁵⁷ Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; ⁵⁸ and they cast *him* out of the city and stoned *him*. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God* and saying, “**Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.**” ⁶⁰ Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “**Lord, do not charge them with this sin.**” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Acts 8

- 1 Now Saul was consenting to his [Stephen's] death.

At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

- 2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.
- 3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.



Christ Is Preached in Samaria

- 4 Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.
- 5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them.
- 6 And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. ⁷ For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed.
- 8 And there was great joy in that city.



Acts of Philip the Evangelist

1. Named one of 7 deacons 6:5; 21:8
2. Goes to Samaria and preaches 8:5
3. Miracles, many are healed 8:6
4. Baptizes many 8:12
5. Simon the Magician believes 8:13
6. Angel sends to Gaza Road 8:26
7. Meets Ethiopian Treasurer 8:29
8. Teaches/baptizes Treasurer 8:31-39
9. Preaches Azotus to Caesarea 8:40
10. Hosts Paul in Caesarea* 21:8
11. Lives in Hierapolis* Eusebius 3-5



* Has four daughters (with prophetic gifts)

⁹ But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, ¹⁰ to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the great power of God."

¹¹ And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time.

¹² But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.

¹³ Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.

¹⁴ Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, ¹⁵ who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

¹⁶ For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

¹⁷ Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸ And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, ¹⁹ saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."



\$imony

buying and selling position and office within the church... the purchase of spiritual things.

²⁰ But Peter said to him,

"Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! ²¹ You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. ²² **Repent therefore of this your wickedness**, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. ²³ For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity."

²⁴ Then Simon* answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me."

²⁵ So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

*This is the last we hear of Simon in the Bible. In early church writings, Simon became the first anti-Christ, opposing the Gospel from place to place.

Christ Is Preached to an Ethiopian

²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert.

²⁷ So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace* the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹ Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."

³⁰ So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

³¹ And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him.

Candace is a transliteration of "Kandake" ("great woman"), royal title for the queens of Cush (Ethiopia). Amantitere was kandake from 20–49 AD. Numbers 12:1 states that Moses married a woman from Cush (possibly the kandake).

³² The place in the Scripture which he read was this:

"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
And as a lamb before its shearer *is* silent,
So He opened not His mouth.

³³ In His humiliation His justice was taken away, and who will declare His generation?
For His life is taken from the earth."



Isaiah 53:7-8

³⁴ So the eunuch answered Philip and said,

"I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?"

³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. ³⁶ Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, *here is* water. **What hinders me from being baptized?**"

³⁷ Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.”

And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

³⁸ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

³⁹ Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.

⁴⁰ But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.



More to the Story

- Several theories about the Ark of the Covenant have the Ark and Mercy Seat being hidden in Ethiopia from evil kings.
 - Taken by Menilik I to Ethiopia during Solomon (970-931 BC)?
 - Taken to Egypt to protect from Manasseh (687-642 BC)?
- Josiah sought the Ark's return during his reforms (2 Chr 35:3).
- Josiah dies in 609 BC fighting Pharaoh Necho (2 Chr 35:20).



Tracking the Ark

- 642 BC: Elephantine Island, Egypt: archeologically confirmed.
- 470 BC: Tana Kirkos Island, Ethiopia: special access required.
- 330 AD: Ark transferred from Lake Tana to Axum, Ethiopia; currently under guard in Axum.
- The Mercy Seat is destined to be presented to the Messiah on Mt. Zion (Isa 18, Zeph 3:10).

