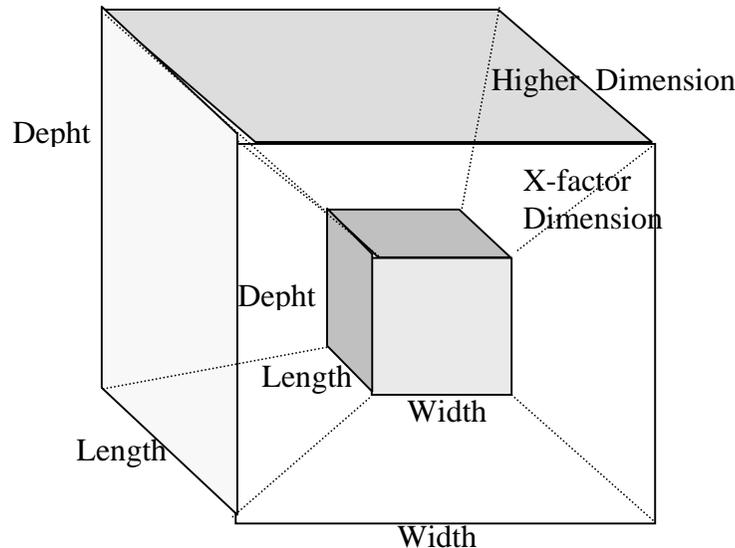




Finding Paradise in the Bible

“I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the *paradise* of God”
(Rev 2:7)

The Apostle Paul authored an interesting passage in the Book of Ephesians; however, his usage of words seems at least to be somewhat incorrect. Notice Paul’s specific statement, “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that *ye*, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 ***May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height***” (Eph 3: 16-18). Notice that Paul describes four dimensions in this passage: ***breadth, length, depth, and height***. Paul was educated at the feet of Gamaliel, “a teacher of the law ***held in respect by all the people***” (Acts 5:34 NKJV). Gamaliel would certainly have made sure that Paul understood that we live in a world composed of three dimensions.



We have learned that the Bible is supposed to be taken literally; therefore, the most wide-ranging deduction that we can draw from this passage is that Paul was certainly fully aware of the three dimensional world in which we live. This means that since he included a fourth dimension, he clearly must have wanted Christians to expand our minds into that higher dimension of thinking. Notice also that the passage specifically addresses the idea of “understanding,” “that ye . . . ***May be able to comprehend with all saints.***” So why was Paul wanting to stretch our imaginations into a higher dimension of understanding? Is there some indiscernible X-factor or 4th dimension that we are missing?



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Perhaps we should look to Paul’s Hebrew background. Gamaliel and indeed all Hebrew sages share an awareness of the concept that God’s people have the ability discover “paradise” through an ever deepening understanding the Scriptures.

Perhaps we should start out with the insight that the original Hebrew language as used in the scripture is composed only of consonants. The vowels are implied and are understood mainly through use. Therefore, the Hebrew word for Paradise (*Paradeisos in the Greek*) is made up of only four Hebrew letters as follows:

P_aRD_eS; (remember that the vowels are only implied.) We also need to understand that the Hebrew characters are read from right to left and therefore appear as follows: **←XSRP**;

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| P – P (Pshat) meaning literal, simple – | Breadth |
| ר – R (Remez) meaning hint – | Length |
| S – D (Derush) meaning search, investigation – | Depth |
| X – S (Sod) meaning inner, secret, mystical – | Height |

Jewish mysticism teaches us that the four levels of Biblical understanding are actually dimensions of meaning and interpretation. Paul implies that these four levels associate with the four dimensions: *breadth, length, depth, and height*. Paul’s statement in Ephesians is evermore intriguing when we really grasp that Paul wants us to “comprehend” a deeper dimension. That Greek word for “comprehend” can imply that we must seek, or diligently search out in order to obtain an understanding of what lies beneath the surface of the text (*in much the same fashion as the tip of an iceberg does not reveal the total mass.*) The subtext imbedded in this passage encourages the Christian to seek comprehension on what is the *breadth, length, depth, and height*. Essentially, he was encouraging us to take the journey into **P_aRD_eS**! Jewish sages say, “When we labor in the study of Torah (*the first five books of the Bible*) it is like a man who labors in an orchard (**P_aRD_eS**).” Among Jewish sages the four levels of Scriptural interpretation - pshat, remez, derush and sod are widely known.

In this Bible Study we are going to venture into understanding the four specific aspects of **P_aRD_eS**; especially as relates to the understanding Scripture. Jesus Himself told the Jews, “You search and investigate and pore over the Scriptures diligently, because you suppose and trust that you have eternal life through them. And these [very Scriptures] testify about Me!” (John 5:39 AMP). Here Jesus clearly said that the scriptures relate specifically to HIM! We will learn later that indeed EVERY passage of Scripture points to Jesus if one only knows how to find Him! Indeed Jesus said to His disciples on the road to Emmaus, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: 26 *Ought not Christ to have suffered* these things, and to enter into his glory? 27 And *beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself*” (Luke 24:25-27). We will discover that every passage of scripture ultimately speaks about Jesus. Every letter, every space, every crown, every word, and every verse



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tells His story in some fashion! We must get to the point where we recognize and search-for this aspect of the Scripture. We will see one of these examples soon.

Jesus praised the Father and said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because ***thou hast hid these things*** from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matt 11:25). Jesus understood and here revealed that many of the things of God were simply hidden, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, ***I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret*** from the foundation of the world" (Matt 13:35). Jesus literally experienced the fact that the Scripture was hidden even from His disciples. He told them that the Jews, "shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. 34 And ***they understood none of these things***: and ***this saying was hid from them***, neither knew they the things which were spoken" (Luke 18:33-34).

The Apostle Paul would later write, "if ***our gospel be hid***, it is ***hid*** to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor 4:3-4). Even though the Scriptures are written in plain language their underlying meaning is often hidden (*especially to the unsaved*). Nothing was hidden from Jesus; He understood exactly what the Scripture said. How is it that He knew? When we comprehend the four levels of understanding scripture we will gain more insight. Let's begin with the four levels.

P – P (Pshat) is the simplest meaning. It is based purely on the text and context. **Pshat** level of understanding is merely the "simple" or plain meaning of each Scriptural passage. **Pshat** is the level of interpretation of Scripture that everybody first comes to understand. We learn the literal history of the scriptures and we learn about the Biblical heroes. The purpose of this level is to: **bold, shape, form, or fabricate** which is the definition of the Greek root word for BREADTH.

We introduce our children in Sunday school to the Scriptures in the **Pshat** level. This is where we begin as we come to Christ as a "little child." This level is a very important level because this is where our beliefs are first formed! Even though we all start at this level one must not remain at this level forever. The Biblical student must move to the higher levels of understanding. Scripture teaches that we are to come to Jesus Christ as a little child, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God ***as a little child***, he shall not enter therein" (Mark 10:15), nevertheless, we certainly are not to remain at the child level of Biblical understanding. Notice this exact concept in 1st Corinthians 13:11-12 "When I was a child, I spake as a child, ***I understood as a child***, I thought as a child: but ***when I became a man, I put away childish things***. 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: ***now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known!***"

℣ – R (Remez) meaning hint is the second level of Biblical interpretation. After one has achieved basic understanding of Bible history, stories, and characters, they are able to move on to the next level of biblical understanding. **Remez** is the level of the parable and the allegory. The purpose of this level is to make larger (*grow up in age*), to expand or make bigger, to make strong which is the definition of the Greek word for LENGTH. The parable is to be used as a comparison. The purpose of speaking in parables, or symbols,



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was to get the people to think. However, the major reason for parables was also to obscure or to hide the meaning.

Remez is the first step into the journey beneath the literal text. Comparisons exercise our minds because they force deeper thinking as they take something spiritual and frame it into a literal story. The student must think about the literal and convert it into a deeper spiritual context. This type of comparison thinking opens up the mind to allegory, which is an integral part of this level of Biblical understanding. Allegory is certainly different from a parable; however, both cause the student to project. Parables usually take what is spiritual and makes it literal; on the other hand the allegory takes what is literal and makes it spiritual! Notice Paul’s use of an allegory in Galatians 4:22-26, “For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. 24 **Which things are an allegory**: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. 25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. 26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all” (Gal 4:22-26). In this allegory the Holy Spirit caused Paul to take literal events and characters such as Abraham and Hagar (*Agar*), and used those literal people and literal events as a representation of a deeper spiritual understanding. When we comprehend the allegory, we come to the conclusion that Isaac and Ishmael actually represent the two covenants, and that Jerusalem represents the mother of us all. Can this be true? Do we view the story as literal or as allegorical? Which understanding is correct? The simple answer is that both methods of understanding are correct, the allegorical does not cancel out the literal, instead, it merely expands our understanding of the literal events! When you think about it, this conveys the concept that the truths learned in each higher level does not diminish our understanding of a lower level truth. In fact, allegorical concepts must never diminish from the literal text!

S – D (Derush) meaning search, investigation is the third level of Biblical understanding. This level is characterized by the word “depth.” It means to investigate or seek, to search, to explore. A student at the **Derush** level of Biblical understanding has matured and expanded his mind during the **Remez** level and is comfortable with the principles of parable and allegory. This student has certainly become adept at the ability to discern and even project from the literal into the spiritual. This student knows how to spot parables and allegories and is mature enough to advance to new horizons.

The purpose of the **Derush** level is to seek and search out the deep and profound mysteries. Indeed this is the very definition of the Greek word for DEPTH. This level of understanding of the scriptures is where people often start to get a little apprehensive. This **Derush** level ventures into realms that are not literal, not parable, and not allegory and goes even deeper. **Derush** level is peering into the very core and nature of the individual words of the Bible by going back into the original languages, and other texts for the purpose of discovering and understanding intent and ideas.

Most Bible students do not realize that there is a **Derush** level of understanding in the Genesis five account of the generations of Noah. Specifically, the Gospel message is preached in this particular passage. Notice the passage as follows: “This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man . . . And Adam lived an hundred and



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thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth . . . 6 And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos . . . 9 And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan . . . 12 And Cainan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel . . . 15 And Mahalaleel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared . . . 18 And Jared lived an hundred sixty and two years, and he begat Enoch . . . 21 And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah . . . 25 And Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech . . . 28 And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son: 29 And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us” (Gen 5:1-29). Now, how could this passage possibly teach the Gospel message?

The solution to the question, “Exactly how can the Gospel message be embedded in the genealogy passage listed in Genesis Chapter five?” lies in the fact that the names of each individual has a meaning as noted in the following table. When those meanings are combined they reveal a hidden message that lies well below the text:

Genesis Name	Meaning	Scripture or Root Word
Adam	Man	“the LORD God formed <i>man</i> of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen 2:7)
Seth	Appointed	“she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath <i>appointed</i> me another seed instead of Abel” (Gen 4:25)
Enosh	Mortal,	Comes from the Hebrew root <i>Anash</i> “to be incurable” often used of a wound, grief, or sickness that leads to death
Kenan	sorrow	Comes from the Hebrew root word meaning “sorrow”
Mahalaleel	the blessed God	Comes from the Hebrew roots which when combined mean “the Blessed God”
Jared	shall come down	Comes from the Hebrew root <i>yaradh</i> meaning “shall come down”
Enoch	teaching	Comes from the Hebrew root word for “teaching”
Methuselah	his death shall bring	Comes from the Hebrew root <i>muth</i> meaning “to die;” and from the Hebrew root <i>shalak</i> meaning “to send forth.” The year that Methuselah died the flood came upon the earth.
Lamech	the despairing	Seems to come from the same origin as the English word “lamentation” which means to despair.
Noah	Comfort	“And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall <i>comfort</i> us” (Gen 5:29)

Now put all of those meanings in to a simple sentence and notice that these names reveal the Gospel in an hidden message in the fifth chapter of Genesis. The following message is



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encoded in a *Derush* fashion: “Man (is) appointed mortal sorrow; (but) the Blessed God shall come down teaching (that) His death shall bring the despairing comfort.”

This meaning-made sentence that arises out of the names of the patriarchs up through Noah pretty much sums up what Paul wrote concerning the Gospel, “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Rom 5:8-9).

Other linguistic applications exist at the *Derush* level of Biblical understanding. One of the paths of *Derush* is that of Gematria which is the search for meaning by evaluating the numerical equivalents of Hebrew words and verses by using the number values of the letters of the Aleph Bet (Aleph = 1, Bet = 2, ...etc.) Notice the following table:

Hebrew Letter	Letter Name	Value of Number	Meaning
A	Alef	1	Father
b	Bet	2	House
d	Dalet	4	Door
y	Yod	10	Hand
l	Lamed	30	Staff
M	Mem	40	Mother

Now the Hebrew word for father is AB as we recognize in **AB**raham therefore AB or $1+2=3$, which is the value of the letters alef and bet when combined. Next the Hebrew word for mother is AM therefore mother or AM $1+40=41$, which is the value of the letters alef and mem when combined. Therefore, the sum of father and mother is $41+3=44$. Now notice the amazing concept in action. The Hebrew word for child is YLD (pronounced Yaled); the value of the letters yod, lamed, and dalet when combined $10+30+4=44$ which is “coincidentally” also the sum of father and mother.

Gematria formed meaning is also valid in the Greek language; notice the following: The Greek word for DOVE adds up to 801. The value for Alpha is 1 and the value for Omega is 800. Therefore, the dove (801) is the epitome of the Alpha and the Omega. We have learned in a recent *Rivkah Ministries* Bible Study entitled, “*The Light of the World*” that eight is the number of new beginnings and that Jesus is associated with that number. When we spell out His name in Greek, the numerical value of the (**l**) = 10, the numerical value of the (**h**) = 8, the numerical value of the (**s**) = 200, the numerical value of the (**o**) = 70, the numerical value of the (**u**) = 400, and the numerical value of the (**j**) = 200. Therefore $10+8+200+70+400+200=888$; Jesus is the epitome of new beginnings! This level is certainly awesome; however, there is an even deeper fourth level of Biblical understanding!

S – **S** (*Sod*) meaning hidden or secret. The purpose of this level is to lift up or to elevate to the highest level. This is exactly the definition of the Greek word for HEIGHT. Jesus chose Peter, James, and John from among His disciples, and took them to the Mount (symbol of Sod - height), and there they witnessed His Transfiguration! The apostles did



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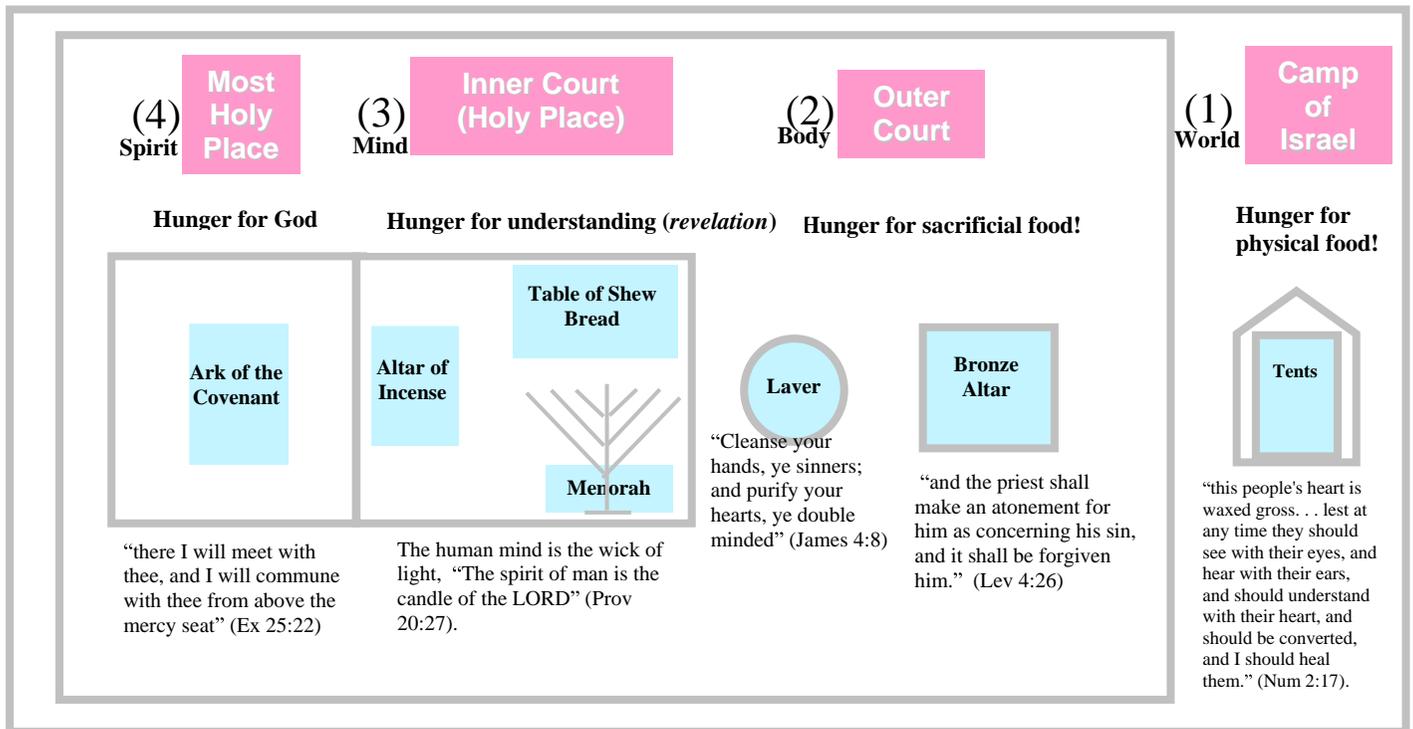
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not understand what they saw. Jesus introduced His closest disciples with this level; it is not so much a level of knowledge and understanding as it is a relationship with

the Messiah!

Since this level is the least understood, it remains the most difficult to describe. Perhaps we can best understand the fourth level of Biblical understanding by carefully observing the Camp of Israel while they were in the wilderness. The picture and tables that follow are designed to convey 4th dimension concepts. Notice the juxtaposition of dwelling in tents to God dwelling in man. The Apostle John explains in the Book of Revelation that God will dwell with His people, “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, ***the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them***” (Rev 21:3). The glory of God will actually illuminate New Jerusalem, “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for ***the glory of God did lighten it***, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Rev 21:23).

In order to begin to grasp the 4th dimension of Biblical understanding you must first establish the following picture in your mind. We will use the concepts of this picture to explore the secrets of the 4th and highest level of Biblical understanding. Notice the text below each group as it describes the people’s relationship with God. This relationship corresponds to their relative location to the tabernacle in the wilderness. Study the picture like Hebrew going from right to left. Keep in mind that the closer they get to God the holier they become.





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Relative Location	Description of Location?	What is the source of light?
<p>World</p> <p>These know that God exists; perhaps not yet believers or committed to the LORD.</p>	<p>Camp of Israel</p> <p>Live in Tents Dwell temporary on the earth, “behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die” (Isa 22:13)</p>	<p>Light of Human Understanding</p> <p>These people live in the desert and spiritually are encamped in the Camp of Israel (<i>know Jesus</i>). However, they have not yet realized that they are in the midst of wilderness wandering! Once they commit to the LORD as their master they can become priests and enter into the Outer Court! The physical sun is their only source of light</p>
<p>Body</p> <p>These believe in God and know that He answers prayer.</p>	<p>Outer Court</p> <p>Brazen Altar (Blood Sacrifice) or at the Bronze Laver (Washing of Water). <i>Brass implies Trials! Bronze=Fire</i></p>	<p>Natural Sun Light</p> <p>In the Outer Court the physical sun is the only source of light. Here, vision is limited to those things that are sacred. These must learn that there is more intense and meaningful light available from God.</p>
<p>Soul (Mind)</p> <p>These know that God is Good!</p>	<p>Inner Court (The Holy Place)</p> <p>These must realize that they still need to advance to the next level! These know that they are hungry. They have advanced beyond milk and they are continually eating shew bread but not yet ready for spiritual meat!</p>	<p>Menorah Light</p> <p>This level is merely a transition to the next. We must move from the Holy to the Divine! Priests would maintain and light the Menorah. Oil and fire correspond to spirit filled Christianity! However, in the Holy Place, it takes both flesh and spirit to produce light! Often, when light comes, flesh gets confused about who produced the light!</p>
<p>Spirit</p> <p>These know God!</p>	<p>Sanctuary (Most Holy Place)</p> <p>These have penetrated beyond the veil! They have arrived at the very Mercy Seat – Ark of God! These operate in the Love of God, “keep yourselves in the love of God,” (Jude 21)</p>	<p>Shekina Glory</p> <p>These get their light from God in the Most Holy Place, There is no physical light in this section of the Temple. All light in the Most Holy Place comes directly from God! “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). Jesus said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12)</p>

Notice this PRDS stamp in the Gospels as identified in the following table:

Gospel	Mark	Luke	Matthew	John
PaRDs	Pshat	Remez	Drush	Sod
Literary level	Grammatical	Allegory	Research	Mystical
Message	Simple	Hint	Explore - Ask	Secret
Written to:	Roman	Greek	Jew	Church
Audience level	Common People	Lawyers, Doctors	Kingly	Mystic
Style	Snapshots	Narrative	Groupings	Supernatural
Presentation of Jesus as:	Servant	Son of Man	Messiah	Son of God
Principle Concern:	What must we do?	What is the meaning behind what we must do?	How do we go about establishing the Kingdom of God?	What is spiritual meaning behind the literal word of God?
Genealogy	None	From Adam	From Abraham	From God
What Jesus:	Did	Felt	Said	Was
Relationship with to Camp of Israel	Whole Camp	Outer Court	Holy Place	Holy of Holies
Aspect	Human	Human	Human	Divine
Ends With:	Ascension	Promise: the Spirit (Book of Acts)	Resurrection	Promise: His Return (Revelation)

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