

PTB 37: The Salvation of God.

“For in the fulness of time, God sent forth His Son, born of a virgin...”

Introduction:

1. The homiletics and hermeneutics of continuing to preach thru the Bible in one year which depends on some teaching background of Ephesians and the abbreviated LCC. (Each remaining message of the 12 last sermons will be provided at the end of the post for you two free downloads from Ephesians and the abbrLCC.)

Only 12 weeks of 12 messages are left in order to do justice to the Preaching thru the Bible in one year, which some in the Facebook Southern Baptist group still call impossible; forgetting as they do that besides the outline of the Bible under 12 major topics, two major supplements to the sermons for more inclusive All Scripture method and movement have been and will more heavily be added in these last twelve sermons, those supplements being “The Abbreviation LCC” (a short version of all 8 volumes of the Learn Christ Commentaries) and the book of Ephesians (which is actually volume 8 of the LCCs). It is easier to do it than to explain it, so that instead of dividing each of the 12 topic topics into four parts, we will for the completion of Preaching the Bible in one year, follow the pattern of (1) a chapter from abbr LCC which is sort of like a textbook for the Bible outline, (2) one half of top topic, 10-12 of the remaining 12 top topics of the Bible, and (3) Ephesians commentary. Sounds a little complicated, but it will become simpler with the doing of the Preaching thru and the Preaching the Bible rather than theology and the wisdom of the world.

NOTE: Well, yes, I am in a way admitted to the critics of preaching thru the Bible in one year as impossible unless the preaching is supplemented with the teaching of LCC and Ephesians.

2. Something of the Salvation of God, tenth of the 12 top topics of the Bible with an emphasis on God chose the time.

PTB 37-40: THE SALVATION OF GOD.



3. The body of the message today comes from Chapter 3 of aLCC (short for abbreviated LCC), The Old Testament according to the New Testament. The outline of Chapter 3 is as follows.

4. God chose the time and place of His own Salvation Plan. (an intro to the Great Maker of History).

1. First, there was John the Baptist saying in effect THIS IS THE TIME : Isaiah 40:3-5, Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:2,3, John 1:23, and Luke 3:4-6.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

“Prepare the way of the Lord;

Make straight in the desert

A highway for our God.

Every valley shall be exalted

And every mountain and hill brought low;

The crooked places shall be made straight

And the rough places smooth;

The glory of the Lord shall be revealed,

And all flesh shall see *it* together;

For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

2. It was inevitable since these things were already recorded in the Word of God that they would happen: Isaiah 40:8 and Luke 21:32,33.

(1). Most to happen during Christ's generation.

(2). The rest on the final One Day of the LORD as the old earth and old heavens pass away.

3. The Mind of the LORD became the incarnated Mind of Christ: Isaiah 40:13 and I Corinthians 2:16.

I. The Old Testament According to the New Testament.

I like to call this the NEW BIBLE. Not only were 27 books added to the Old Testament to make it a Bible of 66 books, but also the Old Testament books were made “new” by the proper interpretation recorded in the New Testament. Also it was a New Bible especially for the Gentiles—at least a New Bible for the New Israel of Jews and Gentiles.

It goes without saying that to look at THE GREAT MAKER OF HISTORY requires a look at “history”, in particular the history of the Old Testament. And even as “Quicksweep by Quotes”, the sequencing of the Old Testament quotes in the New Testament according to Old Testament history, is the primary tool for viewing the Old Testament according to the New, so several condensed versions of Old Testament history in the New Testament provide a guideline for “Quicksweep by Quotes”. Two in particular that we will look at in this chapter are Stephen's speech in Acts 7 and the very condensed summary of Old Testament history as given in Matthew 1:17.

“So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.”

Now, you would have to admit that if ever you saw one this is a balanced outline of the Old Testament, even including the inter-biblical period all the way to the life of Jesus Christ. This outline of the Old Testament is a balance of 4-14's: that is there are 14 generations in each of the major divisions marked by some of the most outstanding names and events of Hebrew history.

- Abraham, the beginning of the Hebrews as the chosen nation of God.
- David, the second King of Israel in the land of Canaan and the first that truly made the nation of Israel a world power.
- The Captivity under Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon with the destruction of Jerusalem--the temple and the city--and the carrying away of all the "desireables" to Babylon.
- The Period that ended with Christ and that started with the Captivity, including part of the biblical and inter-biblical periods.

NOTE: Jeremiah 29:10 forecasted the length of Captivity as 70 years. This would mean that the approximate date for the destruction of Jerusalem is 586 B.C. (also the time the last exiles were taken into Captivity), and the time of the restoration of the temple under Ezra and Nehemiah would be 516 B.C. We can make a mathematical approximation for the length in years of a generation, although we will recall that the Apostle Matthew in Matthew 1 is giving a genealogy of Jesus; and that he is specifically naming by name the people of each generation--which lived, of course, different longevities.

The most sensible would be to choose the destruction of Jerusalem as the real Captivity beginning, or 586, and dividing by 14 would give us an average generational age of 42.

II. Stephen's Outline of Old Testament History in Acts 7.

Stephen's last words of Acts 7, prior to the stoning to death, is a historical summary in short form of Old Testament history. The picture that Stephen present, philosophically, is of Israel's continuous rebellion against God. About the only truly positive aspect of the short history is of the time from Abraham to the youth of Joseph (Acts 7:2-9).

Stephen starts his history of the nation of Israel with how God called Abraham out of Mesopotamia to go to the Promised Land, the land of Canaan. When Abraham came to "this land" (Acts 7:4), which was after the death of his father, he didn't have a piece of the land big enough to put his foot on (7:5)--that was poor; but he had the promise of God "that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child".

You see how obviously the Great Maker of History is laboriously working over a period of approximately 4 times 586 years, or 2,344 years to prepare a nation and a world for the birth of His Son!

According to Stephen's short history, and of course in reading such we are also reading Word of God, God told Abraham how that his seed would go under Egyptian bondage for 400 years. This forecast is recorded in Genesis 15:13.

"And he (God) said unto Abram, know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years." (Genesis 15:13)

NOTE: It would be well to point out here, even before our look at some of the quotes about "seed" that the Apostle Paul and other Apostles make, that the "seed" has a double or full spectrum meaning, applying to the nation of Israel coming out of Egypt and to the little babe Christ coming of Egypt after fleeing from the fierceness of Herod.

Abraham is called "Abram" because the everlasting covenant as yet has not been given at this point in history. But on with Stephen's history: God promised that indeed the children of Israel would come back to the promised land of Canaan (Acts 7:7), and God gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision (Acts 7:8 and Genesis 17:10). Quickly then Stephen speeds up his history (no doubt he noticed that the mob was picked up stones to stone him), going from Abraham to Jacob to the 12 sons of Jacob which became the twelve tribes of Israel with a minor modification which we will discuss later. A giant step forward in the establishment of Israel as a nation was when God changed Jacob's name to "Israel", and blessed Jacob (Genesis 32:28).

In his history, Stephen then stopped preaching and went to meddling as he told the historical truth of how the "founding fathers", the "patriarchs" or 11 of the 12 sons of Israel (Jacob) sold Joseph into slavery out of envy. However, we know that this was the plan of The Great Maker of History Who intended to use Joseph as the means whereby the little growing

nation of Israel might be saved from starvation. Also incidentally as Paul makes clear in Romans, might be a mean whereby the name of God might be known throughout the world as a rescuer of His own people.

Stephen told of God's blessings on Joseph that brought him into favor with Pharaoh and in charge of the king's treasury; and how finally during the drought throughout the land, how Jacob went into Egypt to join his son Joseph, taking 75 relatives with him. (You see, how the little nation of Israel is starting to grow--from the 12 sons to 75.) Then, you remember the story, but Stephen tells it quickly how Jacob dies, then Joseph dies, and finally a Pharaoh came into rule that did not know Joseph. This Pharaoh was one that treated the nation of Israel unjustly, now grown much larger and more prosperous; and Moses came to the rescue after his preparation for 40 years in the wilderness, the same wilderness through which he would lead over 600,000 men not including the children (Exodus 12:37) out of Egyptian bondage.

The same people who had rejected Moses at age 40, accepted him at age 80; and he led them out of Egyptian bondage (Acts 7:35,36). At this point in his speech Stephen quotes the Old Testament to show how God would some day in the future send another Prophet like Moses.

“A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me (this is Moses talking, of course); him shall ye hear.” (Acts 7:37 and Deuteronomy 18:15)

Stephen at this point in the speech did not say exactly who the Prophet was, but the religious leaders must have known that he was referring to Elijah, or Jesus, or both; and no doubt, they gripped tightly the stones in hand for the obliteration of the blasphemy to come! Stephen obliged them by continuing on the Prophet Moses.

“This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: to whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt...” (Acts 7:38,39)

Wow, the tension among the crowd of religious leaders must have been felt. The hair was standing up on back of their heads. You just do not talk bad of the deceased forefathers!

The new nation of Israeli, now large in number but yet without a land, immediately after their rescue from bondage, and at the very moment when Moses was up on Mount Sinai getting the 10 commandments, made an idol to a false “god” to take the place of the God Who had rescued them. True, some of the Egyptians that came out of Egypt instigated it, but this was not excuse.

“And they make a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands....God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven...” (Acts 7:41,42a)

Then Stephen gives another direct quote from the Old Testament, introducing it with the words “as it is written in the book of the prophets...” (Acts 7:42b) The quote is from Amos 5:25-27. It is either more a paraphrase or a rendering from the Greek Septuagint while what we have in the book of Amos of most of our Bibles is from Hebrew, or vice-versa. In either case, the meaning is the same. Let us just read it from Acts 7:42b-43.

“O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye make to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.” (Acts 7:42b-43 and Amos 5:25-27)

III. Amos, the Prophet.

Amos is one of the Old Testament Prophets that is quoted in the New Testament: Amos 5:25-27 is quoted by Stephen in Acts 7:42,43 and Amos 9:11,12 is quoted by the Apostle James in Acts 15:15-17. In fact, it is here in the second quote from the Apostle James that we get our theme and title for this volume, THE GREAT MAKER OF HISTORY.

“And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, ‘Men and brethren, listen to me: Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: ‘After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen down. I will rebuild it ruins, and I will set it up, so that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the LORD who does all these things.’ Known to God from eternity are all His works.” (Acts 15:13-18 and Amos 9:11,12)

This volume could be named “KNOWN TO GOD FROM ETERNITY” instead of THE GREAT MAKER OF HISTORY. Please remember during the ensuing chapters of Bible study that the “tabernacle” here has the double or full spectrum meaning of the Temple restored under Ezra and Nehemiah and also the larger temple of the body of Christ. Remember, it was this temple Jesus referred to when He told the religious leaders, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.”

Of Amos, Sampey writes in THE HEART OF THE OLD TESTAMENT:

“The ministry of Amos probably came in the latter part of the reign of Jeroboam II. (about 760 B.C. so that you see with the Captivity at 586 B. C. when we discuss Amos, we are about 180 years before the Captivity) He was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees. He was not educated for a prophet; but Jehovah called him from his humble employment to bear His message to the Northern Kingdom. He was a keen observer of men and things, burning with righteous indignation at the wrongs heaped upon the poor and helpless. He was a fearless prophet of God, who would not be turned aside by threats of violence.”

And Sampey further writes on the message of the book of Amos.

“The text from which Amos preached was a trumpet call to repentance: ‘Jehovah will roar from Zion’ (Amos 1:2). The God of Israel will come to judgment. Amos makes his appeal to conscience and reason. Taking his stand at Bethel, perhaps on a feast day, Amos begins by announcing the overthrow of Israel’s neighbors on account of their crimes. The heathen nations are to be punished for cruelty or inhumanity in some form. God holds them to a strict account for doing what they knew to be wrong. Judah and Israel, He judges by a higher standard; for they had the Law of Moses and the teaching of the prophets to guide them in their moral and social life. The prophet arraigns Israel for

covetousness, injustice, lasciviousness, and sacrilege; also for having forgotten Jehovah's kindness, and for having rejected His messengers (Amos 1,2)"

For a further historical perspective this approximate dating of Amos would place possibly Obadiah, Joel, and Jonah in front of him; and along with Hosea, among the pre-Isaiah prophets. At least, it is obvious that Amos is a prophet from before the Captivity, approximately 160 years before or approximately four generations. In our broad outline of the Old Testament from Matthew, that would place Amos in the second period of--

- From David to Captivity.
- Obadiah.
- Jonah.
- Joel.
- Amos
- Hosea.
- Isaiah.
- Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah.

IV. Wrap-up of History from Stephen.

Thus Amos was a prophet before the Babylonian Captivity, forecasting the Captivity and telling the people that it was because of the judgment of God on their idolatrous ways--ways that were in the wilderness wanderings of 40 years, ways that were in the Promised Land, and ways that we still see in the book of Malachi, the last of the Old Testament, which was approximately four hundred years before Christ. If you have studied the Old Testament extensively, you know of the repetitive cycle of the nation of Israel in the Promised Land: God shows a miracle or work among them and the people draw near to Him; next the people go horing after other "gods" which are not really gods and therefore are more a worship of Satan who does exist, "gods" which are the works of their own hands; God then brings immediate judgment on the whole nation; they then repent and return to God. This happened over and over for at least two thousand years!

Stephen then moves rapidly with history.

1. Moses built a tabernacle according to the specified fashion which God dictated (Acts 7:44 and Exodus 25:40).
2. Joshua brought the tabernacle into the Promised Land (Acts 7:45 and Joshua 1-24). Remember, because of his disobedience in striking the rock Moses was not allowed to enter the

Promised Land, rather Joshua lead them in. And only Joshua and Caleb of the 12 spies was allowed to enter, all over the age of 21 who sinned at Mount Sinai also fell in the wilderness.

3. The Tabernacle thus went into the lands of the Gentiles (Acts 7:45) which was really the land that had initially been promised to Abraham.

4. God drove out the Gentiles before the children of Israel, and Stephen comes to the time of the United Kingdom under David and Solomon.

5. Solomon built the temple which David desired to build (Acts 7:46,47).

And then we come back to the permanent tabernacle or temple theme that the Prophet Amos and the Apostle James introduced, the greatest of all makings of history. Stephen quotes from Isaiah 66:1 and Psalm 102:25.

“But Solomon built Him a house. However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: “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? Has My hand not made all these things?” (Acts 7:47-50, Isaiah 66:1 and Psalm 102:25)

6. You, the betrayers and murderers killed the Just One, the Lord Jesus Christ, even as all your forefathers persecuted and killed the prophets. (Acts 7:52)

V. David to Christ.

Perhaps the greatest king of all Israel, indeed in terms of the extent of the influence throughout the known world and of continuing influence through the writing of the book of Psalms was David. Even when not allowed to build the temple, which was left to his son Solomon, God still rewarded David and gave the supreme testimony to David as “a man after His own heart”.

The reign of David as King of Israel in the period of Hebrew history called the United Kingdom (it was split into Judah and Israel later). This history is recorded in, of course, some of the historical books: I Samuel 19-33, II Samuel 1-24, I Kings 1-2, and I Chronicles 10-20. We should mention here the category of books in the Old Testament called the books of Wisdom and Praise: the Psalms written primarily by David, being the most quoted book of the Old Testament in the New Testament, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes--all three written by David’s son, Solomon.

During the 14 generations after David, the Kingdom was divided between Judah on the south (which included Jerusalem) and Israel on the nether. The Divided Kingdoms almost steadily went down, except for a slight golden age during the time of King Uzziah and the Prophet Isaiah, until the fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian Captivity of 587-586 B.C. The Captivity continued in one form or another under Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome through the 14 generations from David to Christ. The Old Testament closed approximately 400 B.C. with the writing of Malachi. That four hundred years is generally called the inter-biblical period.

H. I. Hester in THE HEART OF HEBREW HISTORY writes of the survival of the remnants of the nation of Israel during these periods of Captivity away from their homeland of Canaan.

“This seemingly crushed and hopeless little group was to go on living. The great Babylonian empire which now wielded such power will ultimately fail. The proud Persians who will soon crush Babylon will flourish for awhile and then pass into oblivion. The kingdoms of Greece and Rome, too, will pass off the scene. But the little remnant of Jewish people shall not be destroyed.”

The main reason we know they survived is because God had long ago, during the life of Abraham where He made it known, but probably sooner in the a eons of pre-creation eternity as the Great Maker of History to Whom all His works from the beginning of time are known, had chosen Israel as the nation in which His own Son would be born!

After the Captivity, of course, was the Restoration, the time when a remnant of the Captivity trickled back to Jerusalem. This remnant should not be confused with the remnant of Romans that always existed among God’s people, the saved remnant; and we will discuss that further in Malachi where we find only a remnant of the remnant that are saved. (Times were still extremely bad in Israel!) The historical books and Prophets of the Captivity and Restoration would be as listed below.

Captivity and Restoration to Christ.

1. Historical Books. (1). Ezra.

(2). Nehemiah. (3). Esther.

2. Prophets.

(1). Jeremiah and Lamentations. (2). Ezekiel.

(3). Daniel. (4). Haggai.

(5). Zechariah.

(6). Malachi.

VI. The 16 Prophets.

It is somewhat confusing to us the sequence in which the major (4) and the minor (12) Prophets are given in the Old Testament. All the major Prophets are grouped together--Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations (another book written by Jeremiah), Ezekiel, and Daniel; and all the minor Prophets are grouped together--Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. And although approximate in these groupings historically, the effort has not been made at historical sequencing. If one were to use the dating of Bishop Ussher, which sometimes has been suspect but still has value for approximation purpose, the outline of the 16 prophets with dates would be as follows.

1. Prophets before the Captivity.

a. To the 10 tribes of Israel, the Divided Northern Kingdom (and Nineveh, a Gentile City, where Jonah was sent).

[1]. Obadiah	887 B.C. [2]. Jonah	862
[3]. Joel	800	

[4]. Amos

787 [5]. Hosea

785

b. To the 2 tribes of Judah, the Divided Southern Kingdom.

[1]. Isaiah 760

[2]. Micah 750

[3]. Hashem 713

[4]. Zephaniah 630

[5]. Habakkuk 626

[6]. Jeremiah 629

II. Prophets During the Captivity.

[1]. Daniel 607

[2]. Ezekiel 595

III. Prophets After

[1]. Haggai 520

[2]. Zechariah 520

[3]. Malachi 397

VI. The Prophet Isaiah.

Second to Psalms, the book of Isaiah is the most quoted in the New Testament of the Old Testament books. The Prophet Isaiah is considered the top of the prophets both in the size of the book and in the magnitude of the message. As far as size if we split our Bible in the middle while we are thumbing through the pages, we will generally automatically turn to either the Psalms or Isaiah. As far as the centrality of the message, we can note what some authors have to say about Isaiah, first the Scofield Reference Bible notes.

“Isaiah is justly accounted the chief of the writing prophets. He has the more comprehensive testimony and is distinctively the prophet of redemption. Nowhere else in the Scriptures written under the law have we so clear a view of grace. The New Testament church does not appear (Ephesians 3:3-10), but Messiah in His Person and sufferings, and the blessing of the Gentiles through Him, are in full *vision*.”

NOTE: You see how Scofield not only distorts the doctrine of the Bible, making it rather theology and philosophy rather than literal Bible, and making additions to the Bible like with the words and concepts never found once in literal Bible – rapture, millennium, and dispensationalism; but he tries to eliminate Christian Jews from the church and with the salvation of the whole physical nation of Jews taking place to usher in a fictitious never taught once in Isaiah of the literal Bible.

H. I. Hester in THE HEART OF HEBREW HISTORY has similar but more accurate statements to make about the place of Isaiah among the prophets.

“Isaiah belongs at the head of all lists of the prophets. In him prophecy reaches its perfection. He has come to be the standard by which all the others are measured. As one enthusiastic critic has put it-- Isaiah has all the great qualities of all the prophets. In the length of his service, in the crucial issues he

faced, in the content of his messages, in the effectiveness of his work and in the quality of his written messages he excels them all."

From the last chapter, "Quicksweep by Quotes, we have a convenient for size and content

outline and sequence of the prophets as pre-Isaiah prophet and post Isaiah Prophets

Pre-Isaiah Prophets	Approximate Date of	Post Isaiah Prophets	Approximate Date of

NOTE: The emphasis is on writing Prophets. Many Prophets like Elijah and Elisha did not write Old Testament books. And post-Isaiah prophets.

*** Moses wrote the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.**

**** David wrote most of the Psalms.**

***** Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and Proverbs.**

VII. A Short Message from Amos, Joel, and the Great Maker of History.

There are two quotes in the New Testament from Amos, one from Stephen as recorded in Acts 7:42,43 (Amos 5:25-27) and one from the Apostle James at the great Jerusalem Gentile alarm, Acts 15:15-17 (Amos 9:11,12). From these two quotes from respectively Amos 5:25-27 and Amos 9:11,12, we will take the five-point outline for a short message on “Amos, Joel, and the Great Maker of History”: (1). Being a chosen nation of God is not synonymous with salvation for all the inhabitants; (2) The announcement of Captivity for Israel and the reasons why that nation destroyed itself; (3) God is the Great Maker of History, (4) The Tabernacle of David was re-established as a means for all the Gentiles to seek God.

I. The point that Stephen, Amos, and Paul in Hebrews is that the chosen nation of Israel always turned their back on God; and because of these sins, primarily the sin of unbelief, though they were a chosen nation must of the individual in the nation were rejected for eternal salvation Stephen makes this point in his conclusion of his last address before martyrdom with the words of Acts 7:51-53 and based quotes from Amos, Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Isaiah.

“You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets have your fathers not persecuted? And they have killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.” (Acts 7:51-53)

Joel as one of the very first of the writing Prophets and Peter quoting from Joel (Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2:16-21) gives us this first Day of Pentecost after the Ascension of Christ as the beginning of the last days. I am sure that Joel and Peter are talking in terms of the conclusion of the ministry of Christ on earth and then this sending of the Promised Spirit of Christ from Christ to continue His ministry. We therefore have the exact time of the beginning of the last days. We do not have the exact time of the end of the last days; but the end of this quote from Peter does tell us in general terms that it is the “great and notable day of the LORD” which will end the last days; indeed, end all time. The inevitable self destruction of the earth which started when sin placed a curse on man and the earth in the Garden of Eden gradually escalates with signs of destruction in the earth and in the heavens until finally the sun, moon, and stars stop giving their light. But Joel and Peter have the good news first.

Amos makes this point in Amos 5:25-27, and it is a primary message of the whole book of Amos. **“Have you offered to Me slaughtered animals and sacrifices during forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? Yes, you took up the tabernacle of Moloch, Nd the star of your god Remphan, images which you made to worship; and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.”**

(Amos 5:25-27)

I guess we know when from God’s perspective you pass from the young man category to the old man category when what were previously visions for you become dreams. Since I sleep too hard to dream, I am still in the vision category. (I guess Ann is older than me: she dreams dreams all the time, and has for years!) But more seriously if you look at the book of Joel itself who starts his address to the elders, then to all the people of the country, and then to the priests; you will see a good introduction to the democratic nature of the Holy Spirit’s blessings which started on this historical Day of Pentecost. Whereas primarily in the Old Testament days, the Spirit would move on and through an exclusive few Judges like Samson, or Prophets like Elijah, or would-be kings like David, or priests like Samuel; this would all change as the blessings of the Holy Spirit would become more widespread and democratic after this period of history. Young men, old men, servants and those of status; and implied in this but not spoken is that it would also come upon the Jews and Gentiles.

Paul in referencing the same wilderness events as Stephen also comes to the same conclusion with more elaboration in Hebrews.

“Wherefore (as the Holy Spirit saith, To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when you fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said,

They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swore in my wrath. They shall not enter into my rest." (Hebrews 3:7-11)

2. Amos (and Joel) fearlessly announces the impending Captivity for the nation of Israel and tells the reasons from God for that punishment.

Note what I mean about Joel addressing all categories of people to repent because of the curse that is on the land.

Amos fearlessly announces the impending Captivity for Israel. Amos announces the Captivity.

3. Amos like Joel preaches the words from God in spite of ridicule and threats.

"Hear this, you elders, and give ear, all you inhabitants of the land! Has anything like this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?" (Joel 1:2)

This is the equivalent of saying: WE HAVE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT!

"Tell your children about it, let your children tell their children, and their children another generation." (Joel 1:3)

The good and implied news here for the nation of Judah, the southern kingdom and to a certain extent Israel, the northern kingdom is that these generations will be around in spite of the introduction in Joel of much devastation: a. Besides the plague of locusts that has destroyed all the crops and the pasture land; (b) There is an introduction to a min-Day of the Lord when God will send a vicious army from the north to destroy Judah; and (c) After the introduction of the Coming of the Holy Spirit with salvation for all that will believe, there is the laying out of the great and notable Day of the LORD with complete destruction of the whole earth.

2. Joel even addresses the drunkards and the social drinkers of wine in Joel 1:5.

"Awake, you drunkards, and weep; and wail, all you drinkers of wine..." (Joel 1:5)

3. Joel address the farmers and vinedressers in Joel 1:11.

"Be ashamed, you farmers, wail, you vinedressers, for the wheat and the barley; because the harvest of the field has perished. The vine has dried up, and the fig tree has withered; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree – all the trees of the field are withered.

4. Joel and God through Joel are addressing the chosen people of God here, not the heathen in

Joel 1:12 (the heathen come later). They are called the "sons of men". "Surely joy has withered away from the sons of men." (Joel 1:12)

NOTE: There comes times in the life of a whole nation when real joy and happiness disappear from the land, and this destruction from the plague of locusts was one of those times!

5. Finally Joel and God give a waking up call to the ministers and priests to in turn call all the people to fasting, prayer, worship, and repentance in Joel 1:13,14.

“Gird yourselves and lament, you priests; wail, you who minister before the altar; come, lie all night in sackcloth, you who minister to my God; for the grain offering are withheld from the house of God (the people of the land were in such trouble as to not be able to bring tithes and offerings to the

house of God). Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry out to the Lord.” (Joel 1:13,14)

III. God is the Great Maker of History.

1. Amos declares that God has been the Great Maker of History in the past.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)

When man and woman first sinned in the Garden of Eden, God placed curses on man, woman, and on the earth. I am sure that before that time animals did not devour and live off each other as they do now. Life was perfect without tiresome labor and thorns and the toil and pain of childbirth. There was no curse on the earth and heavens, and man, without sin, could have lived forever eating the tree of life.

Some do not realize that at the same time man was cursed by sin, also the earth was cursed by

sin; but many scriptures tell us about this.

(1). Paul writes of how the whole creation of man, animals, and nature has groaned since from

Creation in Romans 8:22.

“For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.” (Romans 8:22)

(2). Even the second law of thermodynamics of physics tells us that the earth is inevitably

running downn. It is called the law of entropy; and in simple terms states that disorder is increasing in the universe.

(3). Finally the United Nations admitted form a research study that the universe it is heating up. It is going to get too hot for man and for crops and for nature. Of course you know about the tremendous burst of heat and the melting of the very elements that happens on the great and notable day of the LORD at the end of the last days in II Peter 3:10.

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.” (II Peter 3:10)

I’m sorry but according to Amos and God through Amos, these acts of nature and of God are judgments from God to get the people of the nation to return to God.

“I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places, yet you did

not return to me, says the LORD. And I also withheld the rain from you when there were yet three months to the harvest; I would send rain upon one city, and send no rain upon another city; one field would be rained upon, and the field on which it did not rain withered; so two or three cities wandered to one city to drink water, and were not satisfied; yet you did not return to me," says the LORD. I smote you with blight and mildew; I laid waste your gardens and your vineyards; your fig trees and your olive trees the locust devoured; yet you did not return to me, says the LORD. I sent among you a pestilence after the manner of Egypt; I slew your young men with the sword; I carried away your horses; and I made the stench of your camp go up into your nostrils; yet you did not return to me, says

the LORD. I overthrew some of you, as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were as a brand plucked out of the burning; yet you did not return to me, says the LORD. Therefore thus I will do to you, O Israel; because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel!" (Amos 4:6-12

RSV)

Amos announces that God will be the Great Maker of History in the future with Captivity, Restoration, the rebuilding of the Temple, and the building of the new body of Christ, and extensive salvation for the Gentiles.

3. The Apostle James as he and other first century Christians witness these foretold events from the Prophet Amos recognize that God is the Great Maker of History.

(1). Acts 2:19,20.

"I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and notable day of the LORD." (Acts 2:19,20)

You will not read about it in the history books. You will not read about it in the science book for

the most parts although there are hints of it there. You will not hear it for the most part on television although some of the programs increasingly talk of prophecies about final destruction; and more and more, fiction and movies speak of final destruction. The war in the Persian Gulf and the recent events in Israel cause people to think also of the end times. It is inevitable: complete destruction of the heavens, the earth, and all people left on the earth is inevitable. From the beginning after the curse of sin, God placed a curse on man of death and placed a curse on the earth of destruction to go with it that will happen. It will build up over a period of time. It will happen and inevitable. And little acts of nature like locusts and plagues and earthquakes and falling comets are given as little warnings to the people that eventually all this law and order in the universe, entropy, if you please will decrease and complete disorder will set in as the sun, moon, and stars stop shining and the very elements of the earth melt with fervent heat.

(2). Man will not be immune to this destruction with it being so bad that men will cry for the

rocks of the mountains to fall on them as a means of rescue in Revelation 6:16.

"I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commandos, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks,

'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!

For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?' (Revelation 6:12-17)

3. The summary of this as I stated is a contrast between the "wage of sin which is death" and the "gift of God which is eternal life."

(1). In Acts 2:21 you see the good news of the gift of God mentioned after the total destruction of the universe.

“And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”

(Acts

2:21)

(2). It was also good news in the book of Joel for the nation of Judah that after the plague of

locusts and after the Captivity of the army from the north, they would be restored to their land; then they would have a period of peace during which Christ would minister and the Holy Spirit with the blessings of salvation and Holy Spirit.

IV. The Temple (Tabernacle) of David and Solomon was re-established in order for all the

Gentiles to seek God.

1. The Temple was rebuilt when Judah was restored to their homeland after Captivity in Babylon. “‘Now, therefore,’ says the LORD, Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and

with mourning.’ So rend your heart, and not your garments.” (Joel 2:12-17)

The Temple was there during the life of Christ as a staging point to establish a new temple and a new kingdom.

“Return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm. Who know if He will urn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him – a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD your God?”

3. Here is a good subject for your music: blow a trumpet that calls for fast, assembly, and the

dedication of the people to God.

“Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and nursing babes...” (Joel 2:15,16a)

4. Let the people of God concentrate more on make a life in God than making a living like Jesus

said that His second coming people would be marrying, giving in marriage, as if all things would remain the same forever!

“Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, and the bride from her dressing room. Let the priests, who minister to the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar; let

them say, 'Spare Your people, O LORD, and do not give Your heritage to reproach, that the nations should rule over them. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'" (Joel 2:16b-17)

Conclusion: The record of the children in the wilderness and the nation of Israel were given to us for examples, let us beware that we might also practice a heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end..." (Hebrews 3:12-14)

We have the example of the chosen people of God in the wilderness immediately after their rescue from Egyptian bondage which saw personally far more works of God than we have seen.

We also have the example of the chosen nation of Israel which was rejected because of their rebellion of God; and knowing that the United States is also a chosen nation to bear the Gospel of all nations, we should be fearful lest also a evil spirit of unbelief and sinfulness fall over this nation! (What makes you think it could happen to Israel and not to our nation?)

I conclude this short message with a few words from Amos:

“You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?” (Amos 3:2,3)

Many, I’m afraid, you think they are children of God and families of God ignore and snub God’s

doctrines, live constantly in rebellion against God’s laws, thinking that they also can call themselves a child of God while they are living and acting in disagreement with God Himself.

VIII. A Harmony of History

A harmony of history is a harmony of the Bible, and a harmony of the Bible is a harmony of history. The Bible is history, the most reliable history we have since it is also the Word of God. Werner Keller has done a wonderful job of harmonizing secular history and archaeology with Bible history in his book *The Bible as History*.

However in particular what is meant in the title of “A Harmony of History” is primarily what the

Apostle James meant when during the first century he said:

“Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.” (Acts 15:18)

It is significant that this is a quote from the Apostle James and from the book of Acts as both Apostles and the history of Acts will be key factors in illustrating the harmony of history. The Apostle James spoke these words above during the Council at Jerusalem, approximately 46 A.D. where Paul and Barnabas made a report of the work among the Gentiles. James was the pastor of the church in Jerusalem, and he arose to speak the last words. First, he rehearsed how Peter spoke of the work of God among the Gentiles; then James quoted from an Old Testament prophet (Amos 9:11,12) to the extent that this day would come when the Gentiles would seek after the Lord. It is then that James reinforces how God predicted this work among the Gentiles by making the harmony of history statement of how God knows all His own works from the beginning to the end. The inherent implication is also that God makes those works known ahead of time.

God harmonizes history more than through the Bible as we will look at more closely in the next chapter. God is the Great Maker of History. As the Apostle Paul lets us know

in Romans 9:17, God made secular history by raising up Pharaoh to set on the throne of Egypt in order to take care of the children of Israel.

CONCLUSION:

1. The Prophets, the Apostles, and the Spirit of Christ.

The method of clarifying the harmony of the Bible (which in turn will also reinforce the harmony of history) is with a focus on the:

Apostles;

the Prophets; and the Spirit of Christ

In the recorded history of Acts 15, the Jerusalem Conference, we have information about 3 apostles—Paul, Peter, and James; and with the words from James--"And to this agree the words of the prophets..." (Acts 15:15) we have the inclusion with Apostles of the Prophets; and then further though not specifically stated in Acts 15 although implied we have the assumption of the work of the Spirit of Christ (better known as the Holy Spirit) in the acknowledgement that not only does God know all His works but that through the Spirit of Christ He made them known.

Indeed, Prophets, Apostles, and the Spirit of Christ tell the whole story of the Bible. In the 39

books of the Old Testament, it is the words of the Prophets through the Spirit of Christ. (Peter makes that clear in I Peter 1:11 which we will shortly look at more closely.) In the 27 books of the New Testament is from the Apostles with the majority, 14 books coming from the Apostle Paul, one from the Apostle Matthew, two from the Apostle Peter, one from the Apostle James, and so on. And the Spirit of Christ, well, at first in the events of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John the Spirit of Christ was at work on earth in the Life of Christ; and then in Acts as Jesus promised the Holy Spirit, the other Christ or "alter ego" would come and do the work of Jesus on earth.

NOTE: In the third volume of this commentary set, "Remember My Bonds, the Life and 14 New

Testament Letters of the Apostle Paul," we will discuss the influence of the Apostle Paul in the writing of Acts, Luke, Mark, and perhaps even some on the Apostle John in the writing of "The New Pentateuch of the Apostle John."

1. The author of the Bible is the Spirit of Christ or the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Peter made this

clear. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the

grace that come unto you (grace and salvation for the Gentiles and Jews): searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven: which things the angels desire to look into. (I Peter 1:10-12)

The Prophets of the Old Testament sought diligently after the salvation and grace of God.

These same Prophets “prophesied” with a predictive element ahead of their own historical time in order to tell of the grace and salvation that would come to Gentiles and Jews.

These Prophets searched for the manner and the time that this salvation and grace would come.

The time is historical time and the manner is part of the events of history.

It was really the Spirit of Christ which was in these Prophets that was signifying the manner and the time of this great salvation.

Primarily the Prophets testified ahead of historical time about the sufferings of Christ, His life and death on earth.

The Prophets also foretold the history of the glorification of Christ in His resurrection from the dead and the Ascension back to the right hand of God in heaven.

2. The Apostle Peter in his second epistle (II Peter) also makes it clear that this Spirit of Christ is the Holy Spirit working through the Prophets to make known prophesy, the Word of God. (II Peter

1:20,21) In this same passage, Peter also firmly establishes a fundamental principle of Biblical interpretation, that is, that there is no "private interpretation" which exists apart from the single interpretation from the Holy Spirit.

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the

prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the

Holy Spirit." (II Peter 1:20,21)

3. The Apostle Peter also firmly establishes the Scriptures as including the Prophets and the epistles of the Apostle Paul.

"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation: even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you, as also in all his epistles speaking in them of these things in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." (II Peter 3:15-

17)

NOTE: Peter knew that the epistles of Paul were Scriptures, did Paul also know that he was writing Scriptures; and where did he consider that in his ministry. This we will discuss in the third volume, "Remember My Bonds".

2 Acts, the Old Testament according to the New Testament, and the Gospels and the Prophets.

Obviously, the harmony of the Bible and history could not include all about the Apostle and the Prophets in a single volume commentary. We must be selective on what portions of the Bible best support the theme of a harmony of history and of the Bible. Of course, first of all will be the book of Acts. At one point in early Christian history it was considered the book of the Apostles. Then with that much of Christian history and Word of God behind us, we will look at a Quicksweep of the Old Testament in the New Testament. This will be done by a Quicksweep of all the Old Testament quotations in the New Testament.

For example, you noted one of those in the words from the Apostle James at the Jerusalem Conference. James quoted from the Prophet Amos about the work of

salvation that God would do among the Gentiles. Well, Acts is full of such quotations from the Old Testament Prophets; as well as Matthew, the writings of Paul like Hebrews and Romans, as well as almost all 27 books of the New Testament.

The third and final selective manner in which we will look at the harmony of the Bible and history is with a look at “The Gospels and the Prophets”. This is somewhat related to the Quicksweep of the Old Testament in the New Testament. However, first we will sweep only the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as A. T. Robertson has led the way on, noting the Old Testament quotes from the Prophets. This will have a special twist different from the previous sweep in that the focus on both the Gospels and the Prophets will come from Mark. This last of the three sections of this commentary could also be called the “Apostles and Prophets” even as the first from Acts and the second from the Old Testament in the New Testament.

NOTE: To fully appreciate and understand Preaching thru the Bible in one year, you will need to read two supplement books that are available from SunGrist as free downloads.

1. Supplement 1:
<http://sungrist.org/TextbookSupp1forPTB.pdf>

2. Supplement 2:
<http://sungrist.org/TextbookSupp2forPTB.pdf>