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World History is Jewish from Eternity to Eternity

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The Introduction

1. The Overall Plan of God

In a significant advancement for biblical study, Charlie Clough's Framework series emphasizes and clarifies the unified message of all Scripture. He shows that proper exegesis ties every scriptural detail into coherent themes that together present the biblical worldview.

The Bible is not a recounting of random stories and historical events that somehow found their way into the biblical text. Rather, major recurring themes bind these individual narratives together. These enduring truths illuminate the plan the Creator has always had for all history. In fact, our sovereign God designed every event in human history to achieve His plan and purpose, the revelation of His glory.

In this paper, I will use the events described from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21 to summarize key aspects of that unified message and the biblical worldview it presents. I hope to prove to you that world history is Jewish from eternity to eternity. All in the next hour. Don't start looking for men in white jackets just yet because you and I both know it can't be done exhaustively in an hour, not even in a lifetime. This will be an overview, one that I hope you'll find a bit different from anything you've considered before.

2. The Biblical Worldview on History

We'll begin by taking a look at world history, not from the secular perspective you gained in school but from the biblical worldview developed through a study of Scripture. I will attempt to show that real, accurate, inspired world history is contained only in Scripture. Why is secular history inaccurate? Secular historians (which means most historians) exclude the supernatural from their study of historical events. Accurate, illuminating history—as opposed to secular history—includes the events God recounts in His Word as well as His reasons for them. Real history is that which God reveals from the omniscient perspective.

Secular history deals solely with man's actions in past events. It doesn't reveal the purpose behind those events, that is, why they happened, their cosmic significance. Were they simply random events as secular history suggests, or did they reveal a pattern, an underlying purpose, a plan? I propose to you that the pattern is obvious. In the end, I hope you will agree.

History by its very nature is interpretive. Since no one can go back in time, we must determine history through the traces left from past events. From those traces, including, if possible, eyewitness written

accounts, historians draw their interpretations. Every interpretation of past events is influenced by that historian's perspective, by his opinion of the important and, equally, the inconsequential. Because he can't re-create the past or go back and relive it, he is forced to speculate. He alone must decide which of his speculations are valid and which are not.

To be in tune with current vernacular, we could call secular history 'fake' history. Some are man's idea of what must have happened because that interpretation fits the data he has chosen to include and coincides with his preconceived beliefs.

Biblical history is the opposite of speculation and guesswork. The biblical worldview presents not only man's actions but also God's, and you know which have greater value. God has always had a plan, one He has been unfolding since eternity past. Because He is omniscient as well as omnipotent, that plan is guaranteed to happen exactly as He ordained. Biblical history is not just a recounting of past events but includes future ones, which, when combined, achieve His pre-ordained, perfection-driven purpose.

Scripture gives God's view of events, His perspective on all that is important and His reason for their importance. Ancient and future events are not speculative because God's Word is inspired and inerrant. We could say Scripture is real, accurate, guaranteed world history.

All history, whether about individuals, countries, or the world, fits within that inspired text, within all God chose to reveal in His Word. God has given us the parameters for world history in His Word, and if we look at it from His perspective, we can understand His purpose for the events man records in a typical history book. We can understand the events unfolding during our time as well.

From that divine perspective and that eternal contrast, we will work our way through world history, starting in eternity past and going to eternity future. We can be certain this scriptural timeline encompasses all real, world history, leaving out nothing of eternal importance.

3. The Major Themes of the Biblical Worldview

Because Scripture records thousands of years of history, we can watch as God reveals His plan over the centuries, a plan dependent on the following three elements:

1. Through the events of history, God slowly and progressively reveals something of His mind and plan.
2. Every event in world history serves a purpose in His plan, to reveal His glory.
3. Major spiritual themes permeate world history.

Modern man might call God's plan multifaceted because He binds events together through the major truths elucidated by them.

Theme One: GOD'S GLORY. The first major and most important theme contained in Scripture is God's revelation of His glory through His works. Scriptures' historical records as well as the text itself reveal His nature and personhood. In fact, every passage, every verse reveals something marvelous about the great I Am.

Theme Two: MAN'S RULERSHIP. Another major theme that begins in the beginning of the book of Genesis is God's intention that man rule the earth both now and in the future. Adam was the first man and the first to be given that command. He failed and now we wait for the last Adam, Jesus Christ, to fulfill the mission postponed through the first sin.

Theme Three: MESSIAH'S LINE, His unveiling, revelation, and future plans. We are introduced to the Messiah in Genesis 3 as the Seed of the woman. We see His culmination as the Messiah, Jesus Christ, whose birth was recorded in the beginning of the New Testament. The messianic line brings together events surrounding Israel's Messiah. While the church has a small part in the overall bigger perspective of God's plan, the Jewish Messiah and the events of His life fill the entire canon of Scripture.

Theme Four: EVIL'S RESOLUTION. After sin entered the perfect world God created, He had to resolve the problem of evil, a problem that will remain until the last event of world history. The resolution included not only God's creatures but His Creation.

Theme Five: GOD'S SALVATION. Part of that resolution is to save some, so salvation-deliverance is another major theme of the Scriptural history. In fact, most theologians believe salvation is a much higher priority than I have on my list. I'm not suggesting that the theme of salvation is unimportant, but I am giving you the sequence as God unfurled it in His Word.

Theme Six: MAN'S DEPRAVITY. Another theme revealed by man's fall into sin is his total depravity. Though not ultimately and totally revealed until the book of Revelation, this theme recurs over and over throughout the historical narrative of Scripture.

Theme Seven: GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY. God is sovereign over everything He created, particularly over the natural realm. He is ever working out His plan and revealing His glory. Without doubt, He always has been and always will be God, the Author and Coordinator of world history.

These themes bind together all the events of world history.

The Major Foundational Events of World History

1. The Creation of All Things

Scriptural history began unveiling these themes in Genesis 1:1. *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* This verse is one of the most important (if that can be stated) in the whole Bible. Let's just say Genesis 1:1 is foundational. We'd all agree on that.

This passage is one of the most scientifically profound and important statements in all history. It is foundational for all of science. While most focus on its theological import, we must remember it is as much a scientific statement as those found in any chemistry, physics, or biology text.

Science is an exploration of and discourse about creation. While the Bible is not a science textbook *per se*, its statements have scientific relevance, especially in its descriptions of the natural realm. Genesis 1:1 is one of the most comprehensive statements on the creation because it describes God creating the entire natural realm, including every proton, neutron, and electron in it.

Is Genesis 1:1 a statement of scientific fact? I'll let you decide.

1. Science deals with matter. Do we have 'matter' in Genesis 1.1? This pivotal verse introduces every particle of matter in the whole universe.
2. Science deals with energy. With protons, neutrons, etc, God built energy into the material realm at its creation.
3. Science deals with processes. The act of creation is the ultimate process. God created everything. Every other process in the natural realm depends on and flows from this critical, initial process.
4. Science deals with agency, with cause and effect. God is the one who acted in the creation of the universe. He alone was the first cause of all things. He has affected everything that has happened since then.
5. Science deals with processes over time. The very first word in the Hebrew text, *In the beginning* (בְּרֵאשִׁית), reveals the ultimate beginning of all things, including time.

Even a secular scientist would be forced to agree that Genesis 1:1 is a profound, scientific statement, one that they must disprove to hold onto their anti-God theology.

Genesis 1:1 is also a foundational historical statement about the first major event ever recorded. If you have a handle on the events recorded in Scripture, beginning with Genesis 1:1, you will not only have a handle on world history but on theology itself because most of these events were as supernatural as the original creation event itself. The unique unfolding of these events as well as their historical and theological significance reveal much about the perfection of the One orchestrating them.

Genesis 1:1 is a historical as well as scientific statement, as historical as anything you will find in a world history textbook.

1. History deals with time. Genesis 1:1 records the beginning of time.
2. History deals with places. Genesis 1:1 recounts the origin of every location in the universe as a comprehensive whole.
3. History deals with characters. Genesis 1:1 introduces us to God, the main character of world history.
4. History deals with events. Everyone would agree that the creation of the universe, however they may believe it happened, is the preeminent event in human history, without which history couldn't have continued.

When we emphasize God's historical framework, we are able to grasp the eternal significance of all human history. God used the unfolding of events to heighten anticipation for the coming of Israel's Messiah—remember, world history is Jewish even to its foundation. The entire Old Testament historical chronology anticipated Israel's Messiah, so all the Old Testament is obviously Jewish. The book of Genesis recounts the origin of Israel, so world history was, indeed, Jewish from the beginning.

Through world history, God works out His desire because He is sovereign over every single event. He is not only sovereign over every electron in the universe but also over every individual and nation as well. As a spectacular addendum: His plan works everything together for good for those who are called according to His purpose, for those who rest in Him.¹

¹ Romans 8:28

Genesis 1:1 is also and obviously a theological statement. Theology deals with God Himself, with all He has done—His work and His plan. Genesis 1:1 introduces God to the world while the rest of Scripture furnishes details of His perfect being and plan.

The bottom line: Genesis 1:1 is a comprehensive scientific, historical, and theological statement. Henry Morris called it the most profound statement ever made. I suspect you'd agree.

God's six days of creation culminated in His creating man and woman in His image (Genesis 1:26-27). God did not have to create mankind. He was not lonely. The Trinity is eternal, so they have always enjoyed fellowship. God didn't need us any more than He needed angels, but He created us in grace so we could share in all He has, including His peace, joy, and family.

Theme One: GOD'S GLORY

Everything except God's Himself finds its existence in God. Later, Scripture will make clear that God has built into the creation a revelation of His glory.

Theme Two: MAN'S RULERSHIP

In Genesis 1:28, God blessed Adam and Eve and said to them, "*Be fruitful and multiply.*" God's first stated purpose for humanity was to reproduce, to produce abundant families. The family is a foundational unit of God's overall plan for the universe. God then expanded His command further, adding that mankind "*fill the earth*", that is, fill the earth with an abundance of image bearers.

God's next commands were equally illuminating, "*and subdue it; and rule ...*" that is, care for the earth, maintain it. In the beginning, God gave the first man Adam sovereignty over the earth, the right to rule every part of His creation as His surrogate. Mankind was to imitate God and rule it with justice and righteousness.

Theme Seven: GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

The creation event revealed God's glory not just as the sovereign Creator but as the transcendent and eternal Savior. He is in total control of every electron in the universe but is separate and distinct from them. He is God. We are not. He is the Creator. We are His creation. He can save us. We cannot save ourselves.

In the creation week recorded in Genesis 1 and 2, God laid the foundation for everything, including science, world history, and theology. Note particularly that subsequent events developed His plan for a Jewish world history from eternity to eternity.

2. The Fall of Mankind

Genesis 3 records the next major historical event, the fall of man into sin. Though Scripture doesn't reveal many details, God emphasized the pivotal role this event played in the rest of human history.

These events, both the first sin and its judgments, are not only historical but foundational for the rest of world history. Like foundation stones, they are the basis for everything that follows. We still live in the universe that God created in those first six days, but our now fallen creation awaits a future restoration.

Referring back to the Fall of man, Romans 18:29-22 catalogues the evil effects of the Fall that we still endure today but also anticipates God's reversal of those effects at a glorious future time.

That first sin radically and disastrously affected not only all mankind but also the entire original creation. The world today is certainly not *very good*, God's evaluation when He finished creating on Day Six.

Genesis 3 summarizes the physical effects of the fall of mankind. I can state emphatically that every area of science felt the curse of that first sin. Because God obviously knew that man would sin, and the entire universe would be affected, He had probably already built into every DNA of every part of creation all the information needed to develop the new but problematic characteristics we experience in creation today.

Biologically, zoologically, God cursed the serpent more than the beasts of the field, indicating that every creature suffered degradations. The woman experienced biological, physiological, and anthropological changes. Her sin-induced suffering is expressed most profoundly in the agony of childbirth. The man also suffered physiologically, "by the sweat of your face you will eat bread ..."

God cursed the entire universe, including, maybe especially, planet earth, so all geophysics and astrophysics were altered. Botany suffered as well, including through the thorns and thistles emphasized in Scripture. Nothing in the creation was left unblemished by sin.

Theme Two: MAN'S RULERSHIP

That first sin also changed physics. Because of sin, we have sweat, toil and death, an allusion to the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which describes the ongoing decay and inefficiency of every part of creation.

I propose that even many of science's supposedly unchanging scientific constants radically changed through the curse of that first sin. Modern environmentalists would be shocked to know that one act of sin caused every environmental atrocity, real and imagined, that they say they so despise.

Theme Three: MESSIAH'S LINE

In Genesis 3:15, as part of God's curse/judgment of all creation, He declared, "*I will put enmity between you [Satan] and the woman.*" With these words, God foreshadowed the constant battle that still exists between two realms, the natural and the supernatural. The book of Revelation further revealed the combatants in this world war that has waged throughout the ages. The serpent who confronted Eve in the Garden of Eden was none other than an agent of Satan himself.

Notice the phrase *between your seed and her seed* (Genesis 3:15). The battle that defines world history is between the realm of Satan and the realm of the woman, between the descendants (those who come out of) Satan himself, not necessarily biologically, and those who would come out from the woman, definitely biologically. As we realize every day, we are part of that continuing battle between good and evil.

Themes Four and Six: EVIL'S RESOLUTION and MAN'S DEPRAVITY

Only the Bible gives a viewpoint of evil that is unique and different from the world's historical

perspective. The world views evil as always existent and forever unending. So, too, they see the laws of nature as forever unchanging. In a preview of all world history, Genesis 3:15 declares evil is bound by a beginning and an eventual, prophesied end. History recounts God's method of dealing with evil. He will use all six-thousand-plus years of world history to resolve the problem of evil initiated by that first sin. In fact, the last event of world history will include His destruction of evil. Rest assured; evil will not follow us into eternity.

Theme Five: GOD'S SALVATION

In His account of the beginning of history, God made His first announcement of the Gospel, called by theologians the protoevangelium. Genesis 3:15 is the revelation of His timeline for human history from eternity to eternity, a summary in one verse of the rest of world history!

The next words of Genesis 3:15 are especially interesting and prescient. A particular seed, an individual seed, "*shall bruise your [the serpent's] head [a fatal wound], and you shall bruise his heel [a superficial, non-fatal wound].*" Almost from the beginning, God put in place His plan for the coming of Messiah, the Savior of mankind and the world.

On the cross, Christ did in fact crush Satan once and for all. While history will continue until the God-chosen time for Satan's complete destruction, his destiny in the Lake of Fire was sealed on the cross. It was a fatal blow, a blow to the head that cost Jesus His life but was not truly fatal because God raised Him from the dead. On the cross, the Jewish Messiah triumphed over Satan, the instigator of evil!

In that same third chapter of Genesis in verse 21, God began revealing the specifics of His salvation plan to deal with the evil that man's first sin initiated. He would provide a way of escape, so that those of us caught in evil can be delivered from it. *And the LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.* This implies the granting of God's imputed righteousness.

Immediately after the fall, God gave us hope when He encapsulated every element of His salvation plan in that one sentence.

1. God warned us that the penalty of sin is death.
2. He introduced us to the concept of an innocent substitute, an animal whose skins covered Adam and Eve's shame, their sin rebellion against God.
3. He showed us that the sin penalty demands the death of an innocent. God Himself killed the first innocent sacrifice so that no future human could say he didn't understand that the death penalty could be paid only by the death of an innocent victim. In the Old Testament, an unblemished animal was a temporary substitute, a symbol of the true and only substitute who would eventually pay the ultimate price. On the cross, Messiah was the final, all-sufficient, innocent, and unblemished sacrifice, after which no other will ever be needed.
4. God Himself provided a covering to hide that first sin, graphically showing that we need a perfect righteousness to cover our unrighteousness. On the cross, Christ made the gift of His perfect righteousness available to those who accept His salvation gift by faith.
5. God Himself clothed Adam and Eve, an analogy to His imputation of Christ's righteousness to all who believe in the sacrificial death of the Messiah, the Savior of all mankind.

We know Adam believed God's message of faith because he gave the woman the name Eve, which

means life. He understood that life would come from her, an eternal life that began with their trusting in God's provision of salvation through the death of an innocent animal.

Theme Seven: GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

God displayed His glory to Adam and Eve in many ways. They saw it first in the glorious revelations in the creation, then, finally, in His righteous and just penalty for sin. God is gracious to us, too, in providing for our every need, both the physical and the spiritual. Because of sin, that physical provision is now hindered and will continue to be throughout world history until God, after the Millennium, restores the physical realm to its pre-sin *very good* condition.

Throughout history, the gradual revelation of the Messianic line from the *seed of the woman* marched alongside the proliferation of evil. Through historic events, God protected the line of the Seed even as He judged evil. The ultimate and most important judgment came on the cross as He judged sin once and for all through our Substitute and the ultimate Seed, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Son of man in one person forever.

Theme One: GOD'S GLORY

The glory of God revealed by the Fall of mankind event includes God's holiness and separateness. He used historical events to reveal that He must separate Himself from and deal with sin and sinners through judgment.

3. The Universal Flood and Noahic Covenant

Fifteen hundred years after Adam's sin and twenty-five hundred years before the cross, once again God took steps to deal with evil in a major historic event. Though modern secular geology loudly denies any evidence of a worldwide Flood, overwhelming physical evidence fills every continent in every strata of rock and on all the surface as well.

Theme Two: MAN'S RULERSHIP

The main character of the Flood narrative is Noah. He was now the new head of all mankind, God's new theocratic ruler of a new post-Flood world.

Again, God didn't reveal many details about the events leading up to the Genesis Flood, though He did give us an extensive genealogy. Why include a genealogy in the midst of historical narratives? Genealogies trace mankind's willingness to be fruitful, multiply, and fill and rule the earth. They confirm the historicity of the events. Each showed man's willingness to obey his Creator—or disobey Him!—and God's faithfulness in blessing His faithful ones with fruitfulness and control over His creation.

Theme Three: MESSIAH'S LINE

More importantly, genealogies trace the line that culminated in the birth, death, and resurrection of the Jewish Messiah.

Theme Six: MAN'S DEPRAVITY

During the period of time between the Fall of mankind into sin and the Flood, we see the cycles of sin. These cycles of sin have been evident throughout all world history since Adam's first sin. Those same

sin cycles will be present until evil is completely eliminated at the Great White Throne judgment.

1. God does a work of grace.
2. Sin begins its corrupting effects.
3. God patiently endures mankind's slide into sin.
4. Sin reaches its full corruption.
5. God intervenes to judge sin and in grace saves those who love Him.

God patiently endured mankind's slide into maximum corruption. His patience is a trait revealed often in history. Eventually, though, evil became so rampant that He intervened to judge and save mankind through the Flood.

Genesis 6:5-8 describes that time of lawlessness. *Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of mankind was great on the earth [degeneracy affected all mankind] and that every intent of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually [a dark picture of mankind's unrepentant depravity]. Then the LORD said, "I will wipe out [deal with evil through judgment] mankind whom I have created from the face of the land; mankind, and animals as well, and crawling things, and the birds of the sky. [God's judgment would include all creation, not just mankind, the first sinners.] For I am sorry that I have made them [an anthropomorphism]."*

We saw that sin cycle in the early chapters of Genesis. The original Garden was perfect. Then, man sinned. Immediately, that first sin began its corrupting effects, first in Adam and Eve. Already, by the second generation, the first murderer, Cain, walked the earth. After fifteen hundred years, by the time of the Flood, all humanity was so fully corrupted by evil that God expressed His sorrow at having created the universe.

Theme Four: EVIL'S RESOLUTION

Through the Genesis Flood, God separated out the unrepentant, those who never would turn to Him in faith, from the few who did. This saving of Noah, his family, and the animals was the act of grace that initiated the next cycle of sin.

Mankind innately hates the suffering brought on the faithful by unrepentant sin. We want God to deal with sin; we yearn for fairness and justice. We see that desire for fairness even in children. Give one child a piece of candy but don't give a piece to another, and what do you have? Even children know that's not fair or right. God promises His children that, at the right time in human history, He will deal with evil. He will make things right. He continues to move toward that end through the events of history. That work will not end until the Seed of the woman incarcerates the serpent Satan forever.

God doesn't promise that dealing with evil will not include suffering and pain. Sin makes that an impossible promise to keep. While He will never allow sin to destroy the world, sin makes suffering inevitable. The Flood illustrates that point. At the Flood, God separated out and protected those whom He loved, those who loved Him—sadly, only one family of eight members—before He destroyed the rest of His creation.

What happened immediately after the Flood? The corrupting effects of sin wormed their way back into history almost immediately. Noah's slip into sin was one of the last mentions of him in Scripture. One of

his sons Ham joined him in blatant sin as well (Genesis 9:20-28).

History records this cycle of sin over and over. Grace leads to complacency, leads to corruption, leads to judgment and back to grace. Mankind never wakes up long enough to break the sin cycle through dependence on God.

The apostle Peter explained this cycle in 2 Peter 3:3-13. Even at this time immediately after Messiah's first coming, skeptics were saying that life had always been the same so only an idiot (my paraphrase) would expect Christ to return as He promised. Are you surprised to realize that evolution's claim about uniformitarianism, that everything has always been the same and never will change, has been around since even after Christ's resurrection and promise to return? Unbelievers continue making this claim as they spread a proliferation of lies to try to destroy our confidence in God's promises.

Peter refuted the skeptics' unproven assertion by pointing to radical events that had already transformed history and creation. No, he said, creation has not always been the same. At one time no creation existed. God formed our earth out of water, a dramatic change indeed.

Peter then alluded to the Fall, when he referred to "the world at that time" (3:6). The world cursed by mankind's fall into sin changed radically when God again cursed it through the Flood judgment. Though Peter didn't mention the Noahic Covenant, we know God's promises in it established the new environment we enjoy today. We live in a post-Flood world and so prosper under God's blessings through the Noahic Covenant that brought stability to the physical realm, making scientific advances possible.

Even today, we live in the world God created, a world damaged by the fall of mankind but nonetheless filled with creativity and promise. That world is radically different from the one before the Flood and the one before Adam's original sin. We are living proof that the idea of uniformitarianism is hogwash, a lie straight from Satan, the originator of lies. We, still today, live in the post-flood world, a stable creation where science is possible. We anticipate a future transformed, better world.

God always leaves His loved ones a message of hope. Peter concluded this section in 2Peter 3 by mentioning a future radical change, a New Heaven and New Earth Christ will establish when He returns at the Second Advent. This return to a perfect environment will be a glorious change indeed! After the destruction of all things in the creation curse and the Flood judgment, God will establish peace and joy with Him forever in the still future New Heavens and New Earth. We can anticipate that change with joy, knowing history proves God always keeps His promises.

The universal flood judgment recorded in Genesis brought a new beginning for mankind, a new era, you might say, a new environment even. All creation is different now. For example, before the Flood, many lived over nine hundred years. Today, anyone who reaches one hundred is considered really, really old, definitely decrepit. We can expect that the curses brought on by the Fall and accentuated at the Flood will continue throughout time until the radical but glorious changes Christ will initiate at His return.

Theme Seven: GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

The miracles recorded throughout Scripture, including the Flood, picture God saying, "I can do with the creation whatever I want whenever I want. If I want to change H₂O into one of the most complex

molecules that we know, the carbon-based molecule of wine, I can do that. If I want to raise the dead, I can do that. You can count on me to keep my promise about the future Kingdom, too. I can do everything I desire and everything I promise.”

Theme Five: GOD’S SALVATION.

The Flood event revealed God’s glory not just through His grace to Noah and his family but by His judgmental wrath. Through the Flood judgment, God dealt with sin and sinners so that humanity would not destroy itself. He held off judgment until only one righteous (believing) family remained. He always treats us with grace and mercy.

One family found favor in God’s eyes. Favor is the first word in the Bible used to describe *grace*. *But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD* [or *favor*, as it is translated]. God displayed His grace dramatically. Noah had no righteousness in himself. His righteousness was just as much filthy rags as our own, but he *found* grace. God granted grace to him and all his family. God promised to preserve them and so He did. They were saved through no merit of their own but through God’s grace.

Theme One: GOD’S GLORY

God displayed His glory through grace even through many miracles. His judgments displayed His glory as well. So does His salvation of those who trust Him to keep His promises. Even in the horror of the Flood, God produced a work of grace, just as He did at creation. He is the God of grace.

4. The Scattering of the Nations

Themes Two and Six: MAN’S RULERSHIP and MAN’S DEPRAVITY

Again, God recorded few details about the events between the Flood and the next major event of world history, the scattering of mankind around the world. From the historical patterns we have already seen, we can conclude that the cycle of sin repeated itself during that time, probably many times. Evil eventually culminated in unregenerate mankind rising up in organized rebellion against God’s rule. Mankind attempted to rule in rebellion to God. The tower at Babel was their attempt to create a one-world system of government powerful enough to reach into heaven and usurp God’s authority. The Lord intervened to bring another judgment and new grace that would save those who trusted Him.

In an almost humorous response to man’s stupid arrogance, God reached down to confuse the languages of those who rebelled against Him at Babel. Suddenly, those who thought themselves all-powerful couldn’t even understand each other! Through one mighty judgment, God created both languages and nations.

In Acts 17:26, Paul described God’s absolute sovereignty over nations. *God made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation.* Only God can raise leaders up and bring them down, always at His appointed times. Historical events, even current ones, prove the truth of that promise. No man is immortal. No nation is too great to fall. Every believer is precious in the sight of the Lord.

Ever since the scattering of mankind around the world into nations separated by unique languages, world history has progressed through individual nations. Over four thousand years later, we continue the Babel legacy of living in autonomous nations among many other such nations. The difference today is that

artificial intelligence has erased the language differences that have separated nations since Babel. Satan's goal of a one-world government under one language is once again within reach. We live in exciting times, don't we?

Today, we still live in the world God created although it is still fallen. We also not only live in the post-Flood world but among the many nations of the world with their different languages.

Theme One: GOD'S GLORY

The scattering of the people at Babel into nations reinforced the truth of God's sovereignty over all people. Though we often rebel against Him, we remain under His control. He who created us always does the best for us even when that includes judgment.

5. Abraham and the Abrahamic Covenant

Themes Two: MAN'S RULERSHIP

As we have seen, history is the record of events that build upon one another. At Babel, all humanity collectively rejected God. In response, God abandoned the world system of that time and called out of it one individual whom He would use to create His own nation. That nation was intended to rule the earth. Therefore, that individual would be the most important forefather of any nation. Obviously, that nation is Israel, and that forefather is Abraham. We could consider Genesis 1-11 as introductory to the nation of Israel. All world history is indeed Jewish, isn't it?

Theme Seven: GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

Genesis 12:2-3 records God's promise to Abraham to create a nation from him. From out of all the multitude of nations, "*I will make you [Abraham] a great nation.*" This nation would be separate from and distinct to every nation of that time as listed in the Table of Nations in Genesis 10. God promised to do the impossible, to make a great nation, the greatest one ever, from Abraham and his wife, who were biologically unable to produce children. He would create a nation out of nothing just as He had earlier created a world out of nothing.

God's nation would have characteristics of other nations but would be distinct and separate from them. They would have a dual relationship with the Creator of both the earthly and spiritual realms.

Further, God promised Abraham, "*I will bless you; I will make your name great.*" Interestingly, at Babel, mankind aspired to make a name for themselves, to make their own name great. The contrast is deliberate. God judged and scattered those who desired to glorify themselves. He Himself blessed Abraham and made his name great. Only God can bless and curse.

Theme Two: MAN'S RULERSHIP

In Genesis 15:3, God entered into a blessing covenant with Abraham. "*I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.*" This comprehensive statement in promise form sets the parameters for the rest of world history. From that time onward throughout history, God would deal with every nation according to its treatment of His nation Israel. A review of secular world history shows that the nations, the peoples, the empires that persecuted the Jews down through history inevitably fell. In contrast, America has prospered—at least so far—in large part, because of its kindness to Israel.

Genesis 12 records that Abraham lived in Shechem, an area between Mount Gerazim on the south and Mount Ebal on the north. I mention these details to emphasize that these places and people are real. Scripture records real historical events and real personages.

God based His relationship with Israel on a covenant, a legally binding contract. Since the Flood, men have often entered into contracts. The Bible describes marriage as a contract between a man and a woman, his family and hers (Malachi 2:14). Joshua 9:7 tells us that tribes entered into contracts with each other. God even warned nations not to enter into covenants (Deuteronomy 7:2).

The Hebrew word for a covenant, כְּרִית (beréet), is important in Scripture because God Himself entered into covenants with mankind that determined the course of history. A covenant is more than a promise. It is a legally binding contract. God does not need to enter into contracts or make promises to anyone. He has no obligation to mankind. Every covenant He made was an act of complete grace. He went the extra mile with those He created in His image. His first covenant was with Noah. Later, when He determined to create His own nation, He entered into a covenant with Abraham.

A covenant (כְּרִית), specifies behaviors that the parties to the covenant must obey. Today, for example, a mortgage specifies payments and fees for the borrower as well as the bank's responsibilities. God is God, the Creator and Owner of everything. He does not need to bind Himself in a contract to those He created, but He has done so in the Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Palestinian/Land, Davidic, and the New Covenant. History is a record of God fulfilling those covenants. When world history is finished, we will find that He has been faithful to fulfill every covenant in every detail exactly as and when promised.

William Albright wrote, "Only the Hebrews, so far as we know, made covenants with their gods." That statement sounds profound but is not totally accurate because men did not make covenants with God. God made His covenants with men. Albright is correct, though, in stating that God's covenants with Israel are unique in all world history amongst all the peoples, another indication that all world history is Jewish.

Who were the two parties to the Abrahamic Covenant? God plus Abraham and his descendants. What were its stipulations? God would provide a seed (descendants), a land for them, and blessings as described in Genesis 15. Even though this covenant was unconditional, being a legal document, the stipulations of the Abrahamic Covenant were specific. God Himself specified the details of the land He gave to Israel to own forever. Israel has never occupied the full extent of the promised land, but we know it will in the future because God always keeps His promises literally and completely.

Theme Six: MAN'S DEPRAVITY

The Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional, meaning only God is required to fulfill His part of the contract. Abraham and his descendant received God's grace but continued to show evidence of having a sin nature. But God will still abide by every promise.

Theme Three: MESSIAH'S LINE

All the following genealogies show Abraham as not only the father of the nation Israel but in the line of Messiah. This is how Matthew begins his gospel (Matthew 1:1).

Themes Four and Five: EVIL'S RESOLUTION and GOD'S SALVATION

In Galatians 3, Paul took the last phrase of the covenant, “*And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed*” and applied it to Jesus Christ. In Him, all the families of the earth are blessed through the promise of salvation through faith in Him. Other aspects of the Abrahamic Covenant have not yet been fulfilled but will be in the future. God will continue to work to fulfill this legal document that He bound himself to with Abraham so many centuries ago.

God brought about a nation from Abraham, just as He promised. That nation, Israel, became a building block, a focus, a center of world history. The Israelites are a special people, a unique nation, the apple of God’s eye. They are not the church though we are special in other ways even in terms of world history. Descendants of Abraham continue to exist even to our day and God is continuing to enforce the Abrahamic Covenant.

Theme One: GOD’S GLORY

God revealed His glory through His faithfulness to Abraham and the covenant He made with Him. He continues to faithfully fulfill His responsibilities to the man He called to Himself and to that man’s descendants. He is a faithful God.

6. The Exodus and the Birth of Israel

The Abrahamic Covenant set the parameters for the rest of world history. God would now evaluate all nations on the basis of the Abrahamic Covenant, on their treatment of Israel.

The book of Exodus records God moving in a more immediate timeframe to deal with Egypt and with the children of Israel, the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. Exodus 2.23-24 says, *Now it came about in the course of those many days that the King of Egypt died and the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage. And they cried out and their cry for help because of their bondage ascended to God. So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant.*

Don’t miss those last two words. God made His covenant with Abraham and repeated it to him more than once. He reiterated that covenant to both Isaac and Jacob. In Egypt, God moved in history to fulfill the promises He had already committed legally, by contract, to Israel’s patriarchs.

The Exodus could be considered the birth of the nation Israel, which at that time, finally, became a unified and unique people, God’s newest creation. They awaited their Constitution (the Mosaic Covenant) and a specific land (Canaan) for full national status.

Theme Six: MAN’S DEPRAVITY

You know the story. Israel was disobedient after their exodus from Egypt. They wandered for forty years in the wilderness until the generation that left Egypt died out. Deuteronomy recounts the events of that story, a reminder to the second generation of exodus Israelites of their sinful, unfaithful, idolatrous past. Again, we see the cycles of sin: degeneration, God’s patience (this time for forty years), His judgment, and, eventually, His deliverance of the entire nation.

Themes Two and Seven: MAN’S RULERSHIP and GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY

Before they entered the land, God gave the Israelites another reminder. “*See, I have placed the land before you; go in and possess the land*” (Deuteronomy 1:8a). Remembering their history prepared the

children of Israel to possess the land *which the Lord swore* [through the Abrahamic Covenant] *to give to your fathers to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, to them and their descendants after them* (Deuteronomy 1:8b). Once again, God repeated his promises in the Abrahamic Covenant and intervened in history to fulfill all He had covenanted to accomplish.

At the end of Deuteronomy, we read that God prevented Moses, His beloved Israelite leader, from entering the land, reminding him of the same covenant. Remember that history is Jewish, and so God laid out their entire history before they even entered the land. In fact, in Leviticus 26, He recounted that history to the first generation of Israelites that left Egypt. They didn't have faith in His promises, but the second generation did.

In Deuteronomy, God laid out all Jewish eschatology, in other words, the rest of Jewish history. He spoke of blessings if they remained faithful (28:1-2). *“Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I am commanding you today, that the LORD your God will put you high above all the nations of the earth.”*

This recounted God's plan as revealed in the Abrahamic Covenant. Israel would be the preeminent nation of all nations. God reiterated His promise to set them above all the nations of the earth, a promise that still awaits fulfillment. We can rest assured He will keep His promise.

Deuteronomy 28:3-14 lists blessings the Jews would enjoy in the land, most of them material, contingent on their obedience to God. This aspect of the Mosaic Covenant was conditional, unlike the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant. God's fulfillment of the Land Covenant depended on Israel's response to Him in belief.

God promised not only blessings for obedience but also judgment for failure. He even predicted eventual exile from the land if their disobedience escalated.

In Deuteronomy 4:25-27, written while they were still in the wilderness, He warned, *“When you father children and have grandchildren, and you act corruptly and make an idol in the form of anything [a historical fact prophesied years before the event], and do what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God to provoke Him to anger, I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you today that you will certainly perish quickly from the land. You will not live long on it but will be utterly destroyed. [Later, He clearly stated they would not be wiped out as a people but would lose their nation (Deuteronomy 30:1-5).] Their utter destruction would be their removal from the land of Israel.] The LORD will scatter you among the peoples [So far, they have been scattered at least for the second time.] and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD drives you.”*

In Deuteronomy 4:30-31, God prophesied not only failure, discipline, and exile for Israel but also tribulation. *“When you are in distress [tribulation], and all these things happen to you, in the latter days [which remains future even today, the current latter days] you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice [leading to a future restoration, future even to today]. For the LORD your God is a compassionate God. [Do you see the elements of restoration?] He will not abandon you nor destroy you [He promised to utterly destroy them, but as a nation, not as His people.], nor forget the covenant [Which covenant? the Abrahamic Covenant.] with your fathers which He swore to them.”*

When we look at eschatology from our modern perspective, we can fully believe His promises because He gave Israel their eschatology early, even before they were a nation, and He has already fulfilled many parts of it. Israel's history shows consistent blessing for obedience and discipline for disobedience.

Themes Three and Five: MESSIAH'S LINE and GOD'S SALVATION

Deuteronomy 30:7-10 predicted a coming Messiah who will set up a New Kingdom. *"The Lord your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies [a future judgment on the enemies of Israel] and on those who hate you, who persecuted you [partial fulfilment of the Abrahamic Covenant re-iterated in Deuteronomy]. And you will again obey the LORD [leading to restoration] and follow all His commandments which I am commanding you today. Then the LORD your God will prosper you abundantly in every work of your hand, in the children of your womb, the offspring of your cattle [which won't be fulfilled until the millennial Kingdom], and in the produce of your ground, for the LORD will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers [an allusion to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob]."*

In Deuteronomy 34:4, as the Jews were about to enter the land, *Then the LORD said to him [Moses], "This is the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob [in the Abrahamic Covenant], saying, 'I will give it to your descendants'; I have let you see it with your eyes [from the opposite side of Jordan River], but you will not go over there."*

Moses would be part of that first generation that did not get to enter into the land. God would allow only Joshua and Caleb the privilege of proceeding into the promised land. Deuteronomy gave history in advance! And it all happened exactly as God promised.

Theme One: GOD'S GLORY

God revealed His glory during the Exodus events through His sovereignty over all things. Centuries after He gave Israel, His beloved nation, His promises/covenants, He controlled the natural realm for their benefit. The plagues of Egypt and the miracles of the Exodus were two of the most astounding of His many supernatural blessings throughout their history.

7. The Mosaic Covenant

So far, we've looked at history detailing foundational events. Now, we are going to examine the big picture, God's plan in technicolor so to speak. This will involve a look mainly at broader concepts or eras. He announced His plans so we can anticipate His glory.

Before Israel became a nation, even before the Jews entered the promised land, God gave them the Mosaic Covenant, their constitution. What was necessary for His chosen people to become His nation?

1. They needed to have a common ancestry through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (all three). They had grown to over two million men with those genes by the time they left Egypt. Even more amazing, all those who left Egypt were believers in God.
2. They needed to have a constitution, which they received from God at Mount Sinai in the form of the Mosaic Covenant.

3. They needed to have a land, which they conquered for the most part under Joshua's leadership.

The Jews were probably in slavery when God inspired Moses to write Genesis and record their common ancestry through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. After reading their history, they would have understood the cause of their bondage as well as God's purpose and destiny for them as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's heirs.

They also would have understood that God had driven Jacob and his family to Egypt to preserve them from the pagans who surrounded them in Canaan. They needed to remain a distinct people, devoted to Him. Egypt had a compartmentalized culture that allowed the Jews to remain separate from their pagan overlords. Through Moses' writing, they would have realized that if they had remained in Canaan, they would have assimilated with its anti-God culture, not remained distinctly set apart to God.

Theme Four: EVIL'S RESOLUTION

The Book of Exodus is the record of God's preserving and uniting them through a common salvation/deliverance experience. Because of sin, the Jews needed to spend forty years in the wilderness, receiving the law, part of the Mosaic Covenant, and learning to trust God's promises.

In the Book of Deuteronomy, God allowed the second generation to enjoy a re-giving of the Law, a renewing of the Mosaic Covenant.

Theme One: GOD'S GLORY

The revelation of the Mosaic Law illumines that God is truth. He alone can reveal truth to those who love Him.

8. The Conquest of the Land

Themes Two and Seven: MAN'S RULERSHIP and GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

Under Joshua's leadership, Israel attained control of the land God had promised them. In Joshua 1:7, the Lord said to Joshua, "*Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the Law [the Mosaic Covenant] which Moses My servant commanded you.*" Can you see now that the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants drive all history? One is unconditional; one is conditional. Both describe God's control of history through His fulfillment of them.

Theme Six: MAN'S DEPRAVITY

In the Book of Judges, which records Israel's decisions after Joshua's death, what do we see? The corrupting effects of sin again. The early verses in the book reveal the pattern, Judges 2:11-12 *Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals, 12 and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the LORD to anger.*

The period of the Judges ended in failure but anticipated the next phase in the out working of God's plan.

Theme One: GOD'S GLORY

God revealed His glory during the conquest events through His sovereignty over nature, nations, and His covenant people, Israel. He revealed His discipline during the period of the Judges.

9. The Kingdom of Israel

Theme Two: MAN'S RULERSHIP

How did the rule of the Judges end? *In those days there was no king* (Judges 21:25). God intended to have kings rule the earth. After much disobedience in Israel, finally, by 1 Samuel, the last judge finished his rule, and God began working to raise up kings. Having kings would allow Israel to be the prominent nation above all nations and ultimately to rule the world. His plan for a man to rule the world was gradually developing and progressing—in spite of mankind's cycles of sin.

All the way back in Genesis 1:28, God promised mankind in the person of Adam that he would “*rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.*” God intended that man rule the earth as His representative. In the Abrahamic Covenant, He promised that kings/rulers would come from Sarah's lineage. He will fulfill those promises ultimately and completely when He places the kingdom of God on earth during the millennial Kingdom Age of Jesus Christ, who will rule on the throne of David. David and Jesus are both descended from Sarah. Again, history shows that God is faithful to fulfill every promise exactly.

The second king of Israel, King David, brought security to the nation by conquering their enemies and establishing a kingdom. God entered into another covenant with him, the Davidic Covenant in which He made long-range promises that expanded on His plans for Israel's future.

The rule of David's son, King Solomon, was the high point of the nation Israel. 1 Kings 10:23 reads, *So King Solomon became greater than all the kings of the earth in wealth and wisdom.* Israel was now preeminent in world history, as powerful and wealthy as any empire that existed before or has existed since.

Notice verse 24. *And all the earth was seeking the attention of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.* Every nation began fulfilling God's purpose for using a distinct people, Israel, to reflect something of His character and be a missionary nation to the rest of the nations.

Theme Six: MAN'S DEPRAVITY

God had promised that Israel's king would rule over all the nations. Of all Israel's kings, Solomon came the closest to fulfilling that prophecy. You know the sad story. Solomon had too many wives and enjoyed too much wine, too much wealth, too much worldliness, and failed to apply the wisdom given to him. The kings of Israel were as frail and depraved as were the people they ruled, as are all of us still today.

Solomon was positioned to fulfill God's command to Adam that he rule the world. He was the greatest king so far in the history of the world. God continued to control the material realm, distributing it as He wished, giving more to Solomon than to anyone before or since. Note Scripture's emphasis on Solomon's wealth, on his ships and gold. His wealth was too massive for us to imagine. Israel was at the pinnacle of success.

Themes Three and Five: MESSIAH'S LINE and GOD'S SALVATION

God promised that Messiah's line would go through David, Solomon, and a series of later kings who were their descendants. Perhaps if Israel had been obedient, the son of Solomon might have been Messiah. That's speculation, but possible. God judged Solomon's evil that infected his people, anticipating the cross.

God gave continued salvation in different forms, including Israel's deliverance from its enemies under the Judges and King David (both examples of justification/salvation and sanctification).

The corrupting effects of sin were evident even in David, a man after God's own heart who committed adultery and murder. He was precious to God, not because he didn't sin but because when he did, he acknowledged his sinfulness to God. He responded the way God intends us to deal with our own sins—with humble acknowledgement to our Father God.

Theme One: GOD'S GLORY

The glory of God revealed during the height of the kingdom of Israel is God's grace, forgiveness, and wisdom. God expressed grace and forgiveness by fulfilling His covenants and promises in spite of the severe sin of the kings and people. He expressed His wisdom through the wisdom literature composed by David and Solomon.

10. The Decline and Destruction of the Nation Israel

Major themes continued to progress throughout world history with Israel still the focus of God's attention.

Themes Two and Six: MAN'S RULERSHIP and MAN'S DEPRAVITY

Because of Solomon's sin, the kingdom of Israel divided. The rest of 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, and the Chronicles record the corrupting effects of sin in the nations. For the most part, Israel's kings were evil. Every king of the northern kingdom defied the Lord as did most of the kings of the south. But God patiently endured their rebellions against Him.

In 2Kings 24:1-3, we read, *In his [King Jehoiakim's] days, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up... And the LORD sent against him [as divine judgment against Israel] bands of Chaldeans, bands of Arameans, bands of Moabites, and bands of Ammonites [all the enemies that David had destroyed]. He sent them against Judah to destroy it in accordance with the word of the LORD which He had spoken through His servants the prophets.* The Babylonians fulfilled prophecy by totally destroying the Jewish temple, the Jewish city, and the Jewish nation but not the Jewish people themselves.

It indeed came upon Judah [the Southern Kingdom, the surviving kingdom] at the command of the LORD, to remove them from His sight. Finally, God sent the disobedient Southern Kingdom into Babylonian captivity, and Israel was essentially destroyed as a nation.

Israel remains the promised kingdom of Genesis, but through disobedience to God, their kingdom collapsed. Even during this period of decline, God worked to fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant as He precipitated events that prepared for the arrival of the Jewish Messiah. He sent prophets to announce the Messiah's coming, preparing faithful Jews to receive Him.

Israel's cycles of sin were filled with God's works of grace. He established the nation by grace, saved them from bondage by grace, and continued to work with them in spite of their idolatry.

Theme Four: EVIL'S RESOLUTION

Sin continued its corrupting effects on Israel. While Moses was up with God at Mount Sinai, Israel practiced idolatry down in the valley. While God blessed Solomon with great wealth and wisdom, he practiced idolatry with his hundreds of wives. God patiently endured Israel's sinfulness for hundreds of years until they reached their full corruption at the time of Nebuchadnezzar. Even then, He preserved a remnant because He was not finished with Israel or His great plan for all things.

The Babylonian captivity began a period of Jewish exile. Ezekiel was one of the exilic prophets. During those four-hundred years, Israel enjoyed a partial restoration to the land in preparation for the coming of the Messiah. It wasn't a full restoration, but they were restored to the land in part. Some Jews were restored spiritually as well.

You may be tempted to say the early events of Genesis didn't have much to do with Israel. Consider that Israel needed to know their origin and unique history, that God was the One bringing them to the promised land in fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. The period of time from the Exodus through Judges details their emergence as a nation. Many books in Scripture describe God's establishment of the kingdom, followed by its collapse. Jesus called the ensuing four hundred years when Israel was no longer prominent on the world scene as *the times of the Gentiles* (Luke 21:24). That time period will continue until the Lord returns to set up His Kingdom. World history is still Jewish, but Israel is no longer the prominent nation. Their resurgence awaits a future age.

The collapse of Israel led to the emergence of Babylon as the preeminent nation, a historical occurrence prophesied in the book of Daniel. That prophecy included the four empires that would consecutively rule until the end of world history. Babylon was followed by the Medo-Persians, the Greek Empire, and finally the Romans and a future revived Roman Empire (Daniel 2, 7). Each of these empires fell because they treated Israel badly. God continues to abide by the Abrahamic Covenant.

Daniel predicted the rest of Jewish history: Seventy weeks (שְׁבִיעִים, *shabua*), a period of sevens with seven of them. In this context, the שְׁבִיעִים are years. 70 x 70 would be 490 years of Israel's history as a nation. Through Daniel, God declared this time period was *decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the wrongdoing, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for guilt, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy Place* (Daniel 9:24).

Theme Three: MESSIAH'S LINE

Four-hundred-and eighty-three of these prophesied years were fulfilled on Palm Sunday before Jesus' crucifixion. There appears to be a gap between verses 26 and 27 from the disciples' perspective. They thought the timeframe could be months, perhaps years. From our perspective after the fact of the Messiah's first coming, two thousand years have passed, and Messiah still hasn't returned. One week of seven years remains to be fulfilled in the future. That week could begin any day now. Be prepared!

11. The Arrival of the Promised Messiah

Theme Three: MESSIAH'S LINE

Galatians 4:4-5 says of the time of the Messiah's coming, *When the fullness of the time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman* [the seed of another woman, alluding to the virgin birth. The seed of the woman in Genesis 3:15 anticipated this eventual and ultimate Seed.] *born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, [History is Jewish!] that we might receive the adoption as sons.*

Paul wrote these words to a Gentile culture about a Jewish Messiah who was born of a woman under the Jewish Law for those who are under the Law. God's grace gift of the Messiah extends to us as well.

Messiah is the focus of all world history. We could summarize the Old Testament as anticipation of the Messiah and the New Testament as the ministry or Age of the Messiah. The kingdom of Israel was under Roman dominion in Jesus' time, but God's prophecies promised One who would deliver Israel from its problems.

Theme Five: GOD'S SALVATION

The coming of Messiah required His death as the ultimate sacrifice for sin. The sacrifice was not only for Israel but for the sins of the whole world. Other major events were the resurrection and ascension of Messiah. These would set the stage for the second coming of the Messiah and the establishment of the ultimate kingdom.

We'd all agree Jesus is the Messiah, so why didn't He set up the Kingdom while on earth? We'll look at more history for the answer. What did Messiah do in His early ministry? Matthew 4.17 says that *from that time Jesus began to preach [in Capernaum] and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."* Was He talking about the church? No! He was talking about the kingdom that the Old Testament prophesied and that He was offering the Jews at that very moment. Sadly, Israel rejected His offer to begin His kingdom, and it still awaits future fulfillment.

Israel under David and Solomon had all of the elements of that prophesied kingdom, a secure and prominent nation in the land, God in its midst in a temple, and a nation fulfilling its missionary purpose. That was the kingdom Jesus was promising. He wasn't promising an amillennium, which isn't a kingdom at all. He wasn't predicting the church. As Messiah, He was offering the kingdom, His Kingdom, to Israel. Prophecy said that when the King came, He would offer the kingdom to Israel, and Messiah was doing exactly that.

Theme Six: MAN'S DEPRAVITY

Israel was too depraved, too corrupted by sin to even recognize their Messiah. The Book of Matthew, which was written to a Jewish audience, explains that Jesus is the Messiah, but when He offered the Kingdom to Israel, they rejected His offer. Matthew 12:14 says, *But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.* The events described from chapter 12 to the end of Matthew culminated in the crucifixion of Israel's Messiah. The official position of the Jewish leaders, the Pharisees, was that Jesus performed His miracles and good works as a son of Beelzebub. Has a more blasphemous statement ever been uttered?

Though Isaiah 53 predicted that the Messiah would die, the Jews didn't have to be the ones to put Him on the cross. They could have accepted Him as Messiah. The Romans then would have crucified Him.

Instead, the Jews rejected their blessed hope.

Theme Four: EVIL'S RESOLUTION

Obviously, evil abounded in Israel at that time. God began dealing with evil after the fall of mankind. He will continue His judgment work throughout all world history. Romans 3:21-26 talks about God passing over sin until the coming of Jesus to die on the cross. In fact, that's a central passage dealing with redemption. Jesus went to the cross as judgment for sin. On the cross, God judged sin. He will continue dealing with sin until a final judgment, which will be the last event of world history, the Great White Throne judgment.

God will use every event from Genesis 3:15 all the way to the end of history to complete His work of dealing with evil. In the end, evil will be confined. We say evil is bounded because it had a beginning and will have an end. In the final act of world history, God will confine evil in the Lake of Fire forever.

We marveled as we saw all events of world history move in the direction of the cross. Since the cross, they have moved toward the Millennial Kingdom and the culminating appearance of God's glory to man. Christ defeated Satan on the cross but won't finish His destruction of evil until His Second Advent to establish His Kingdom. After the thousand year kingdom, He will judge evil finally, once for all.

Themes One and Three: GOD'S GLORY and MESSIAH'S LINE

The major theme of the Messianic line was fulfilled through Christ in His incarnation. God totally revealed His glory on the cross. Even so, sin will keep man from ruling the world until Christ, the penultimate Man, sets up His kingdom on earth.

12. The Church Age

Every event of human history was dependent on the preceding ones. At the Fall of man, God intervened and imposed a curse the effects of which we still experience today. In other words, we live in a cursed world, not the *very good* world of creation. We also live in the post-Flood world, in the world with various nations and languages, in a world where Israelites still exist and even are a nation, and in a world where Messiah's salvation includes both Jew and Gentile. We await the consummation of history.

Theme One: GOD'S GLORY

God did not have to create. He created in order to reveal His glory to His creatures. Every event in history displays His glory. We've seen Him as Creator, as Judge, as the patiently enduring One. The judgments in the Old Testament, the curse at the Fall of mankind and at the Flood especially, showed that we can trust Him to destroy evil in the end. At the same time, we can trust Him to save those He loves. He will preserve them just as He did Noah's family.

Because Israel rejected her Messiah, God introduced a new entity, the Church. Even in the Church Age, history remains Jewish because Jew and Gentile are both part of the Church. All Jew and Gentile believers are spiritual descendants of Abraham by faith (Galatians 3:6-9). During the Church Age, God continues preparing and preserving His chosen people as He puts in place the final events that will fulfill all His covenant promises.

We Christians tend to think we are most important. Everything is about us. Never forget that world history is Jewish. We have a part, and from our perspective that part is huge. While our part is important, in terms of God's bigger plan, our part is just a stepping stone to the fulfillment of His promises to Abraham and his descendants.

The church is the smallest building block on the chart (see end of paper) in history, one that prepares for the culmination of world history. Through the Church, God is doing a special work by bringing Jews and Gentiles together through faith, even as He continues to preserve His ethnic people, Israel.

God will restore Israel. Why, you might well ask, will He restore those who turned against Him so completely? God always keeps His promises. Though Israel rejected their promised Messiah, God is God and can't break His promise to them. He is faithful. The Abrahamic Covenant was unconditional, and so He will fulfill it completely and literally. After an interim period, the time of the church, Israel will rule in the land just as God promised. World history truly is Jewish from eternity to eternity.

In Matthew 16:15-18, Jesus predicted the part the Church would play in history. He asked His disciples, "*Who do you say that I am?*" Simon Peter answered, "*You are the Christ.*" Christ is a messianic title that means the anointed one, the Messiah. Literally, Simon Peter said to His Savior, "You are the Messiah, the anointed One, *the Son of the living God*. You are deity." His was a tremendous statement of faith.

And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, [Πέτρος = a pebble, a little stone] and upon this [πέτρα - the giant rock outcropping that stands beside you] I will build My church (ἐκκλησία)"

Jesus promised to build upon this rock, Himself, a church so strong that "*the gates of Hades will not overpower it.*" Peter had no clue what Jesus meant. The rest of the disciples were equally puzzled. They certainly did not envision a building with a steeple and a cross on top. In fact, until the end of the Book of Acts, most of those in the church had not yet begun to put together the truth of the power and purpose of this entity, this assembly, this ἐκκλησία we call the church.

Jesus made this statement about the church while standing by a huge outcropping of rocks at the foot of Mount Herman, near Caesarea Philippi in the northern part of the land of Israel. The next chapter in Matthew recounts Jesus' transfiguration at that same location, an indication to the disciples that God would fulfill all He promised through the Rock, Jesus Christ. His transfiguration pictured Jesus in glory, the way He will appear when He returns. He Himself is the Rock, the Messiah, the foundation of the Jewish/Gentile Church.

In Matthew 21:43, part of the Olivet Discourse, Jesus explained in part the reason the Kingdom had to be postponed. "*Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruit.*" The first century nation of Israel, not Israel as God's nation, lost immediate fulfillment of the Kingdom promise through disobedience to God. Not many years later, in 70 AD, they would be destroyed. Much as had the Babylonians generations earlier, so, after the beginning of the church, the Romans would destroy the Jewish temple and the city of Jerusalem and scatter the Jewish people throughout the ancient world. Until recently, Israel had no nation, and the Jews remained

scattered among Gentile nations.

Once again, we see Jewish eschatology in the events of end-time history: Blessing for obedience. Discipline, exile, and tribulation for failure.

Israel's restoration to the land will occur just as God specified to Daniel in Daniel 9:27. "*And he [the antichrist] will confirm a covenant with the many [Israel] for one week [the remaining shabua or 7-year period of time], but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice [The covenant between the antichrist and Israel will allow Israel to worship on Temple Mount once again, along with probably some other stipulations as well. The antichrist will stop that worship in the middle of the seven-year tribulational period, that is, after three-and-a-half years.] and on the wing of abominations will come the one who makes desolate [Jesus described that time in verse 15 of the Olivet Discourse. The antichrist will proclaim himself god in the Jewish Temple and will offer a swine on the altar as did Antiochus Epiphanies many centuries earlier, even before Messiah's birth.] until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, gushes forth on the one who makes desolate.*"

The Church Age had a beginning, that first Pentecost after the Messiah's resurrection. It will have an end at the Rapture, a glorious event that will kick off God's dealings with Israel during the last week predicted by Daniel. That week of Jewish history hangs out in the future, awaiting fulfillment. Those seven years will begin after the Rapture, probably after a short interval. The antichrist will make a covenant with Israel, marking the start of the seven-year tribulation predicted first all the way back in Deuteronomy and amplified by Old Testament prophets (all Jewish) and then by Jesus, Himself a Jew, in the New Testament.

13. The Millennial Kingdom of Israel

Jesus will return one last time at the end of that seven-year tribulation during which a temple will be built. A model of the first century temple, Herod's temple, was already constructed in Israel. Maybe the tribulational temple will resemble it.

The bulk of the Book of Revelation deals with Israel during the seven-year Tribulation. After chapter four, the church is not mentioned again until the description of the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of His Kingdom. Jesus calls all of us in the Church to prepare ourselves to reign with Him in the Millennium. Even so, Israel will be the focus of the Millennium. World History truly is Jewish from eternity to eternity.

Ezekiel's vision of the dry-bones pictures Israel's current hopeless condition in this Valley of Dry Bones and her subsequent restoration as a Kingdom. The fact that God has preserved the Jews for thousands of years in preparation for the Kingdom is a miracle. In another miracle, the Jewish blood line has remained pure because most Jews haven't assimilated into the surrounding cultures. God used persecution to preserve their line, so they have kept their heritage, their Hebrew language, their unique culture, and even, unfortunately, their corrupted religion. God preserved His people to preserve the line of Messiah but also to prepare for the culminating event of world history, Christ's Kingdom.

This regathering of the Jews to enter the Kingdom will come in two phases, one physical and the other political. Then, and only then, will Jesus establish the promised Kingdom as prophesied: in the same

city, Jerusalem, the exact same location promised to Abraham. Jewish tradition based on Zechariah 14 states that Jesus will return in triumph to the Mount of Olives and then enter Jerusalem through its Golden Gate, also called the East Gate.

How close is His return? Though God says we can't know for sure, on May 14, 1948, Israel declared its independence as a nation, a necessary step in preparing for the coming Kingdom. Recently, Jews celebrated the seventieth anniversary of their return to the land of Israel, a partial fulfillment of the Ezekiel passage. One element is not yet fulfilled and won't be until that seven-year period in the future when God stirs amongst them once again. Israel has not yet returned to God in belief. They haven't yet received their Messiah.

Theme Seven: GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

Scripture describes Christ's resurrection as the first fruits that anticipated a future time when He will return to establish a Kingdom radically different from the world we live in today. In fact, in Acts 3, Peter described this future time as *times of refreshing* (3:19) and a *period of restoration* (3:21). Isaiah recorded God's promise that at that time, the wolf will lie down with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and children will play near the holes of formerly poisonous snakes. Crops will be abundant, and, once again, lives will be long (Isaiah 11:6-8, 65:20-25). At its conclusion, when world history is complete, we will live in the eternal state, commonly called heaven.

Theme Two: MAN'S RULERSHIP

In 1Corinthians 15, starting in verse 24, God describes the end of world history. *Then comes the end when He hands over the kingdom [at the end of the millennial Kingdom] to our God and Father, when He has abolished all rule [that is, all usurpers ruling the world, all other dynasties and kingdoms, because He, the second Adam, the Messiah, will rule forever] when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power [all His enemies]. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.*

Jesus defeated His enemies historically on the cross and continues to work amongst the nations to ultimately effect this future plan. He will rule completely during the Millennial Kingdom.

Theme Four and Six: EVIL'S RESOLUTION and MAN'S DEPRAVITY

The last enemy that will be abolished is death. [Revelation 20:27 says Hades will also be thrown into the Lake of Fire.] For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is clear that this excludes the Father who put all things in subjection to Him. When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subjected to the One [the Father, indicating an order of authority even in the Godhead] who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.

Theme One: GOD'S GLORY

World history will come to an end, having fulfilled every one of God's purposes for it.

The Conclusion

How do the major themes begun in the early chapters of Genesis play out at the end of human history? Here's a final summary.

Themes Two and Three: MAN'S RULERSHIP and MESSIAH'S LINE

Finally, the Messianic line will be complete with Messiah as both King and Judge during that one-thousand-year period of history when the Last Adam rules the earth. God gave the first Adam that responsibility, but he failed when he chose to disobey his Creator. The Last Adam, the sinless One, will rule with a rod of iron for a thousand years and then with the Father on into eternity.

Themes Four through Six: EVIL'S RESOLUTION, GOD'S SALVATION and MAN'S DEPRAVITY

God will eradicate evil at the Great White Throne judgment when He consigns all unbelievers, all sin, Satan, and all enemies of God into the Lake of Fire forever. God will finish judging evil, including man's depravity. The sin nature will be abolished, and the full image of God will be restored in glorified bodies. His salvation plan will then be complete because He will have glorified all believers so we can spend eternity with Him.

Theme Seven: GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

God will be revealed as the all in all. We believers will have a fuller understanding of His perfection as we see a more complete display of His glory for all eternity. Though we will have the privilege of spending eternity discovering more about our great God, we will never exhaust our understanding of Him because He is perfect and we, obviously, are not.

Theme One: GOD'S GLORY

God has displayed His glory through all the major events of world history and in His Word. At the end, God will restore all the creation, the natural realm, to its pre-sin perfection. The New Heavens and the New Earth will be similar to but even more glorious than the Garden of Eden as described in Genesis 2. We will spend eternity in that eternal state discovering more and more of God's glory.

Because God will reveal Himself in all His perfection and glory, we will be compelled to bow down and worship Him. Even now, may He be the all in all in our present-day experiences. From eternity to eternity, let us praise and worship Him.

We are compelled to conclude this study with a word of worship from Philippians 4:20. *Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.*

