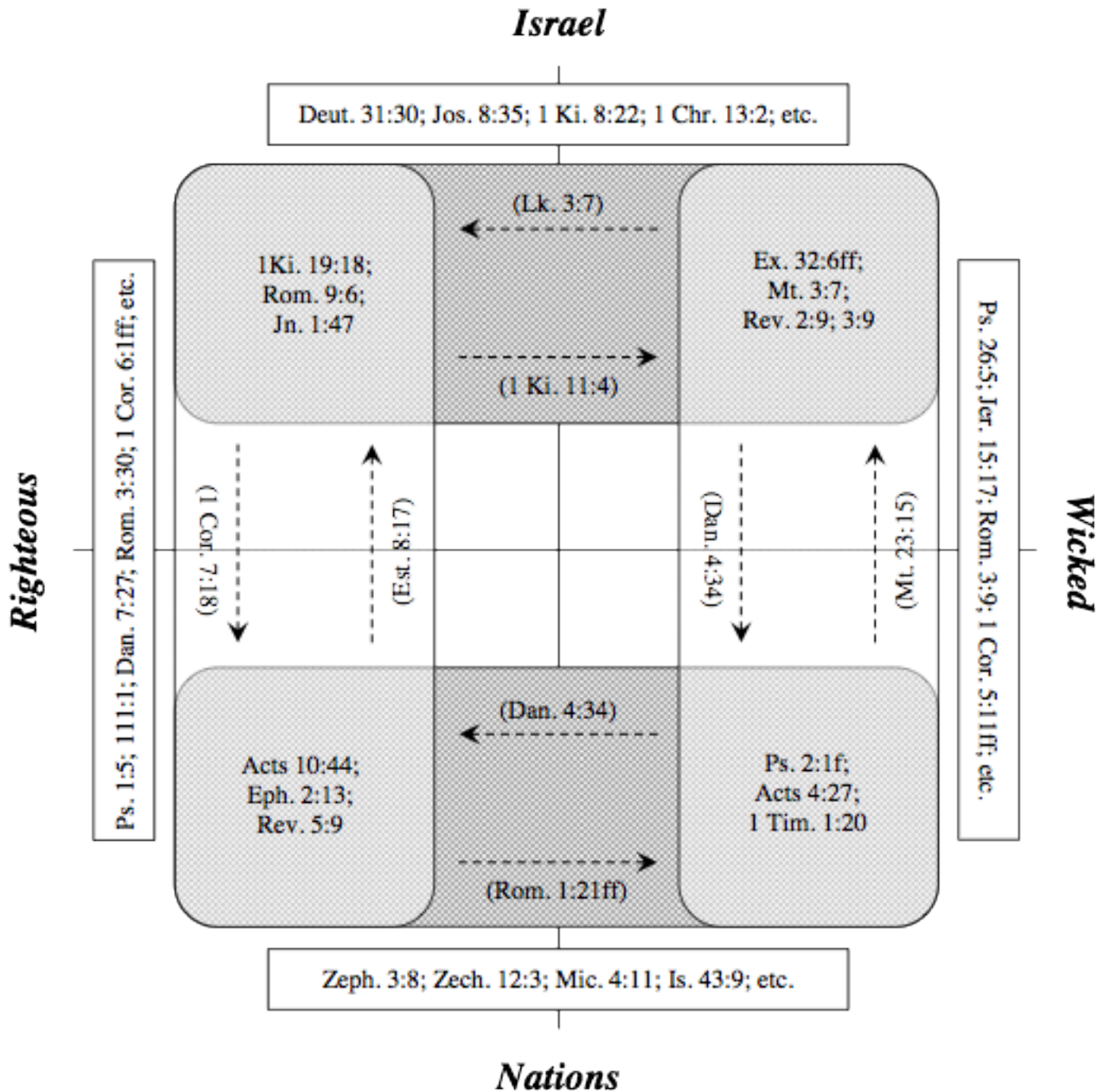


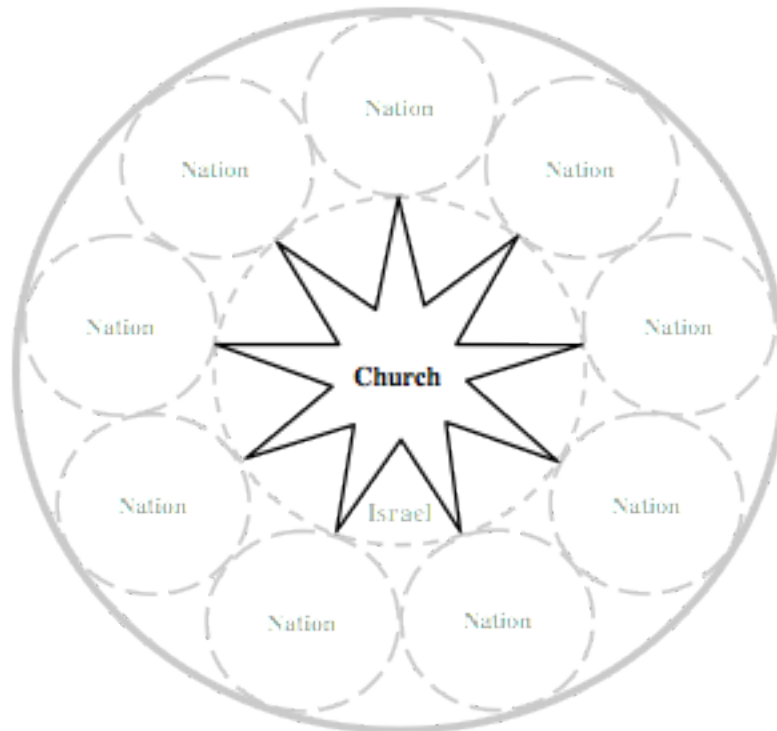
BIBLICAL PRAXIS OF MISSION

Assembly Quadrilateral

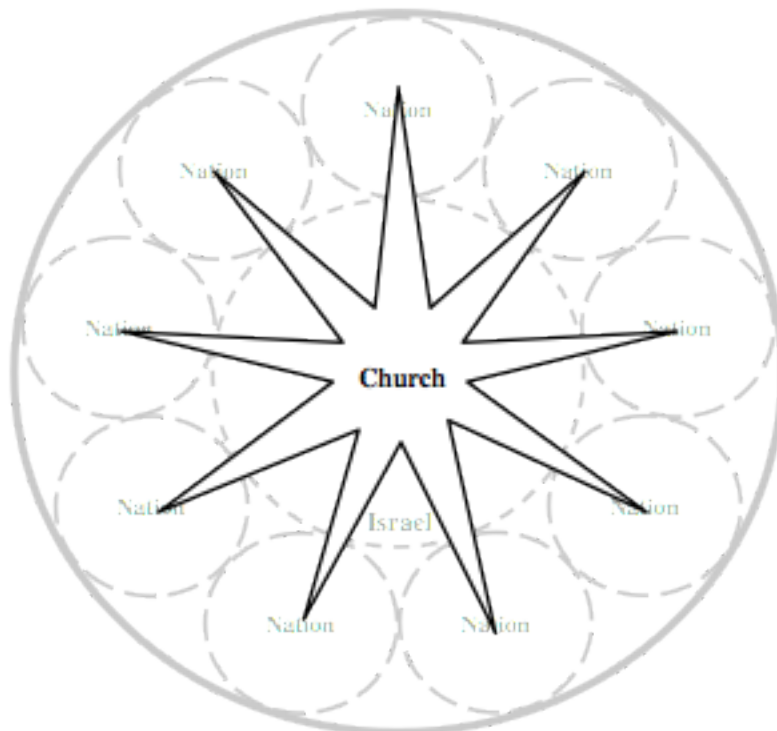


Assembly of the Righteous

Pre-Acts 10:



Post-Acts 10:



I. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW

- A. In light of the age to come, the church is called to walk in the light and reflect the glory of God. And to this end, we pray unceasingly, asking God for mercy and grace to walk before him with perseverance as faithful witnesses, as Christ's ambassadors.

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. ⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. ⁸ We are hard pressed on every side... ¹³ It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." (cf. Ps. 116:10) With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. ¹⁵ All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. (NIV 2 Corinthians 4:3-15)

- B. This sojourner calling is lived out in a house church context, which best facilitates a faithful witness and the growth of spiritual families. Moreover, it encourages shrewdness toward power and wealth for the sake of loving the poor, honoring eldership, and sending out apostolic teams.

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. ³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. ³⁴ There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need. (NIV Acts 4:32-35)

- C. All of this is in context to the gospel of the kingdom, which is inherently "Israelocentric". Therefore, the ministry of the church in this age is also Israelocentric, "to the Jew first, then the Gentile" (cf. Rom. 1:16; 2:9f). One's missiological approach is mirrored by one's understanding of the gospel, which has developed historically.

1. Eschatology

- a) Covenantal "Replacement" Eschatology – according to the Platonic split in reality, Covenantalists assume the replacement of the Jewish plan of salvation (restoration of creation) with the Hellenistic plan of salvation (immaterial heavenly destiny).
- b) Dispensational "Dualistic" Eschatology – similarly, the Dispensationalists assume the addition of the Hellenistic plan of salvation at the First Coming, resulting in two plans of salvation and two distinct eschatologies, one heavenly and one earthly.
- c) Messianic "Redemptive" Eschatology – without the Platonic lens, the apostolic church held to a simple eschatology involving the restoration of creation. God will heal

everything he created in the resurrection, and he will resolve the alienation of the nations in the kingdom, restoring the Jewish calling to be the “head of the nations” under the Messianic Head.

In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it... ³ The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ⁴ He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. (NIV Isaiah 2:2-4)

He carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God... ¹² It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel... ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it... ²⁶ The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. (NIV Revelation 21:10-26)

You have delivered me from the attacks of the people; you have made me the head of nations; people I did not know are subject to me... ⁴⁹ Therefore I will praise you among the nations, O LORD; I will sing praises to your name. (cf. Rom. 15:9) ⁵⁰ He gives his king great victories; he shows unfailing kindness to his anointed, to David and his descendants forever. (NIV Psalm 18:43-50)

2. Missiology

- a) Covenantal “Replacement” Missiology (Jew Or Gentile) – since the Jewish plan of salvation has been discarded or superseded, so also has the mandate in the offer of salvation been discarded. As there is homogeneity in the heavenly destiny, so also is there homogeneity in the missiological preference between Jew and Gentile.
- b) Dispensational “Dualistic” Missiology (Jew And Gentile) – since there is the addition and *equality* of the Hellenistic plan of salvation, so also is there the equality in the missiological approach of the church. The church divides its mission to saving Gentile souls for their immaterial heavenly destiny, while providing material support for Israel to take over the world.
- c) Messianic “Redemptive” Missiology (Jew Then Gentile) – as the “firstborn nation” (cf. Ex. 4:22; Jer. 31:9; Hos. 11:1), God is committed to the salvation and redemption of the descendants of Abraham. The church thus seeks the redemption of Jew first, then the Gentile. Moreover, as a firstfruits of the harmony and peace that the Messiah will establish between the nations in the age to come, the church seeks to exemplify and model that between Jew and Gentile in this age.

Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. ¹² But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring! ¹³ I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry ¹⁴ in the hope that I may somehow arouse

my own people to envy and save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? ... ²⁵ I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. ²⁷ And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins." ²⁸ As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs. ²⁹ for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. (NIV Romans 11:11-29)

The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us behave decently, as in the daytime... ^{14:1} Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. ² One man's faith allows him to eat everything... ⁵ One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike... ¹⁰ You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat... ¹⁵ Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, ¹⁸ because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. ¹⁹ Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification... ²² Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. ²³ But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin. ^{15:1} We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves... ⁵ May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus... ⁸ For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs ⁹ so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written... (NIV Romans 13:12-15:9)

II. THE ISRAELOCENTRIC GOSPEL

- A. The Scriptures were given by God to reveal himself to fallen humanity. The core of this self-disclosure resides in the "names" that God gives himself. These names reveal his nature and

character, which in turn informs how he governs over creation and thus how redemptive history unfolds.¹ Generally these names are not in a vacuum, but rather they are “Israelocentric”.²

***Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At that time men began to call on the name of the LORD.* (NIV Genesis 4:26)**

***There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.* (NIV Genesis 12:8)**

***David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.”* (NIV 1 Samuel 17:45)**

***My father David had it in his heart to build a temple for the Name of the LORD, the God of Israel.* (NIV 1 Kings 8:17)**

***The nations will fear the name of the LORD, all the kings of the earth will revere your glory. ¹⁶ For the LORD will rebuild Zion and appear in his glory... ²¹ So the name of the LORD will be declared in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem ²² when the peoples and the kingdoms assemble to worship the LORD.* (NIV Psalm 102:15-22)**

***The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; ²³ the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. ²⁴ This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. ²⁵ O LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success. ²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you (cf. Mt. 21:9; Mk. 11:9; Lk. 19:38; Jn. 12:13).* (NIV Psalm 118:22-26)**

***So will it be on the earth and among the nations, as when an olive tree is beaten, or as when gleanings are left after the grape harvest. ¹⁴ They raise their voices, they shout for joy; from the west they acclaim the LORD's majesty. ¹⁵ Therefore in the east give glory to the LORD; exalt the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, in the islands of the sea. ¹⁶ From the ends of the earth we hear singing: “Glory to the Righteous One.”* (NIV Isaiah 24:13-16)**

***At that time they will call Jerusalem The Throne of the LORD, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the LORD. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts.* (NIV Jeremiah 3:17)**

¹ “Unfortunately, to many the names *God* or *Lord* convey little more than designations of a supreme being. It says little to them about God’s character, His ways, and what God means to each of us as human beings. But in Scripture, the names of God are like miniature portraits and promises. In Scripture, a person’s name identified them and stood for something specific. This is especially true of God. Naming carried special significance. It was a sign of authority and power. This is evident in the fact that God revealed His names to His people rather than allowing them to choose their names for Him... Consequently, from this we can conclude that such phrases as “the name of the LORD” or “the name of God” refer to God’s whole character. It was a summary statement embodying the entire person of God.” (J. Hampton Keathley, III, “The Names of God,” *Bible.org*; available from <http://bible.org/article/names-god>.)

² Though there may be a general reference to “the name of the Lord”, it is assumed in context of the rest of Scripture (cf. Gen. 4:26; 12:8; 13:4; 16:13; 21:33; 26:25; Exod. 20:7; 34:5; Lev. 24:16; Deut. 5:11; 18:5, 7, 22; 21:5; 28:10; 32:3; Jos. 9:9; 1 Sam. 17:45; 20:42; 2 Sam. 6:2, 18; 1 Ki. 3:2; 5:3, 5; 8:17, 20; 10:1; 18:24, 32; 22:16; 2 Ki. 2:24; 5:11; 1 Chr. 13:6; 16:2; 21:19; 22:7, 19; 2 Chr. 2:1, 4; 6:7, 10; 18:15; 33:18; Job 1:21; Ps. 7:17; 20:7; 102:15, 21; 113:1ff; 116:4, 13, 17; 118:10ff, 26; 122:4; 124:8; 129:8; 135:1; 148:5, 13; Prov. 18:10; Isa. 18:7; 24:15; 30:27; 48:1; 50:10; 56:6; 59:19; 60:9; Jer. 11:21; 26:9, 16, 20; 44:16; Joel 2:26, 32; Amos 6:10; Mic. 4:5; 5:4; Zeph. 3:9, 12; Zech. 13:3; Matt. 21:9; 23:39; Mk. 11:9; Lk. 13:35; 19:38; Jn. 12:13; Acts 2:21; 8:16; 9:28; 19:5, 13, 17; 21:13; Rom. 10:13; 1 Co. 5:4; 6:11; Col. 3:17; 2 Tim. 2:19; Jas. 5:10, 14).

The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. ³² And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls. (NIV Joel 2:31-32)

1. The names of God are *traditionally* divided into three etymological categories:
 - a) *YHVH* – derivative of verb “to exist, be” (occurs 6,519 times in the OT).³
 - (1) *YHVH Tsabaot* – “Lord-Hosts/Armies” (cf. 1 Sa. 1:11; Ps. 24:10; 80:4; Is. 1:24; 6:5; Jer. 9:15; 48:1; Hos. 12:5; Am. 3:13; Mic. 4:4; Hag. 2:6; Zec. 1:3).
 - (2) *YHVH Roah* – “Lord-Shepherd” (cf. Gen. 49:24; Ps. 23:1; 80:1; Ez. 34:2).
 - (3) *YHVH Rapha* – “Lord-Heals” (cf. Ex. 15:26; Jer. 3:22; Is. 30:26; Ps. 103:3).
 - (4) *YHVH Qanna* – “Lord-Jealous” (cf. Ex. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 4:24; Jos. 24:19).
 - b) *Elohim* – plural form of *El*, meaning “strong one” (occurs 2,570 times in OT), also used in conjunction with *YHVH*.⁴
 - (1) *El Shaddai* – “God-Almighty” (cf. Ge. 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 49:25; Ex. 6:3; Num. 24:6; Ruth 1:20; Job; Ps. 22:10; 68:15; 91:1; Is. 13:6; Ez. 1:24; 10:5; Joel 1:15).
 - (2) *El Elyon* – “God-Supreme” (cf. Gen. 14:18ff; Ps. 7:17; 47:2; 57:2; Dan. 7:18ff).
 - (3) *El Olam* – “God-Everlasting” (cf. Gen. 21:33; Ps. 90:1ff; Jer. 10:10; Is. 26:4).
 - (4) *El Chay* – “God-Living” (cf. Deut. 5:26; Jos. 3:10; Ps. 42:2; 84:2; Jer. 10:10)
 - (5) *El Yesha* – “God-Salvation”, (cf. 1 Chr. 16:35; Ps. 65:5; 79:9; 85:4).
 - c) *Adonai* – plural form of *Adon*, meaning “master, owner” (occurs 434 times in OT—e.g. Gen. 18:2; 40:1; Deut. 10:17; Ex. 21:1-6; Josh. 5:14; 1 Sam. 1:15; Ps. 110:1; 136:3), also used in conjunction with and substitution for *YHVH* and *Elohim*.
2. Unfortunately, in discussions on the names of God, associations with individuals and nation(s) are almost never discussed. This is the result of the Hellenization of redemptive history and even of God Himself. Thus, the nature of God has become etherealized (e.g. immutable, impassible, transcendent, omniscient, omnipresent, etc.) and detached from the redemptive history *of the earth*.⁵

³ Other infrequent *YHVH* names include: *YHVH Shalom* (“Lord-Peace”, Jdg. 6:24), *YHVH Yireh* (“Lord-Provide”, Gen. 22:14), *YHVH Nissi* (“Lord-Banner/Miracle”, Ex. 17:15), *YHVH Shammah* (“Lord-There”, Ez. 48:35), *YHVH Tsidkenu* (“Lord-Righteousness”, Jer. 23:6; 33:16), and *YHVH Maccaddeshcem* (“Lord-Sanctifier”, Ex. 31:13; Lev. 20:8).

⁴ Other infrequent *Elohim* derivatives include: *El Emeth* (“True God”, 2 Chr. 15:3; Jer. 10:10), *El Gibbor* (“Mighty God”, Is. 9:6; Deut. 10:17), *El Kedem* (“Eternal God”, Deut. 33:27), *El Deot* (“Knowing God”, 1 Sam. 2:3), *El Rachum* (“Compassionate God”, Deut. 4:31), *El Roi* (“Seeing God”, Gen. 16:13), *El Chasdi* (“Faithful God”, Ps. 59:17), *El Tsaddik* (“Righteous God”, Is. 45:21), Immanu-el (“With-us God”, Is. 7:14).

⁵ Note the initial declaration of the nature of God in the Westminster Confession (1647): “There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible...” (Westminster Confession, “Of God, and of the Holy Trinity,” Chapter 2; available at <http://www.carm.org/westminster-confession>.)

3. Thus, the names of God are used to communicate two things: 1) God's quality of character, and 2) God's redemptive purpose. The former is generally expressed through the latter, which is expressed through covenant with the agents of the restoration of creation. In other words, God proves the quality of his character by remaining faithful to his creation in redemptive history, which plays out in the context of covenant with people(s).

a) *YHVH Elohei Avraham Yitschaq Yaaqob* – "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob"⁶

"I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (Hb. Elohei Avraham Elohei Yitschaq Elohei Yaaqob)." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. (ESV Exodus 3:6)

O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel (Hb. YHVH Elohei Avraham Yitschaq Yisrael), let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant... (NIV 1 Kings 18:36)

O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (Hb. YHVH Elohei Avraham Yitschaq Yisrael), our fathers, keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of your people, and direct their hearts toward you. (ESV 1 Chronicles 29:18)

• ***But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' (NIV Luke 20:37)***

• ***The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus... (ESV Acts 3:13)***

Then we cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers (Hb. YHVH Elohei abotenu), and the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. (ESV Deuteronomy 26:7)

The LORD, the God of their fathers (Hb. YHVH Elohei abotenu), sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. (NIV 2 Chronicles 36:15)

• ***The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. (ESV Acts 5:30-31)***

• ***But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets... (ESV Acts 24:14)***

⁶ Cf. Gen. 24:12, 27; 26:24; 28:13; 31:29, 42, 53; 32:9; 43:23; 46:3; 49:25; 50:17; Ex. 3:6, 15f; 4:5; 1 Ki. 18:36; 1 Chr. 28:9; 29:18; 2 Chr. 30:6; Ps. 47:9; Mt. 22:32; Mk. 12:26; Lk. 20:37; Acts 3:13; 7:32.

Likewise, note the repetition of the phrase "God of our/their/your fathers" (Ex. 3:13, 15f; 4:5; Deut. 1:11, 21; 4:1; 6:3; 12:1; 26:7; 27:3; 29:25; Jos. 18:3; Jdg. 2:12; 1 Chr. 5:25; 12:17; 29:20; 2 Chr. 7:22; 11:16; 13:12ff; 14:4; 15:12; 19:4; 20:6, 33; 24:18, 24; 28:6ff; 29:5; 30:7, 22; 34:32f; 36:15; Ezr. 7:27; 8:28; 10:11; Acts 3:13; 5:30; 7:32; 22:14; 24:14.)

b) *YHVH Elohei Yisrael* – “LORD God of Israel”⁷

Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel (Hb. *YHVH Elohei Yisrael*), “Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.” (ESV Exodus 5:1)

Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, ¹⁰ and they saw the God of Israel (Hb. *Elohei Yisrael*). (ESV Exodus 24:9-10)

And now, LORD God... do as you promised, ²⁶ so that your name will be great forever. Then men will say, “The LORD Almighty is God over Israel!” (Hb. *YHVH Sabaoth Elohim al-Yisrael*)” And the house of your servant David will be established before you. ²⁷ O LORD Almighty, God of Israel (Hb. *YHVH Sabaoth Elohei Yisrael*), you have revealed this to your servant, saying, “I will build a house for you.” So your servant has found courage to offer you this prayer. (NIV 2 Samuel 7:25-27)

Yet the LORD, the God of Israel (Hb. *YHVH Elohei Yisrael*), chose me from my whole family to be king over Israel forever... ⁵ he has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. (NIV 1 Chronicles 28:4-5)

Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness... ⁸ He will rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth... ¹⁷ May his name endure forever; may it continue as long as the sun. All nations will be blessed through him, and they will call him blessed. ¹⁸ Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel (Hb. *YHVH Elohim Elohei Yisrael*), who alone does marvelous deeds. ¹⁹ Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen. (NIV Psalm 72:1-19)

- **The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel. (NIV Matthew 15:31)**
- **Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people. ⁶⁹ He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David ⁷⁰ (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), ⁷¹ salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us-- ⁷² to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, ⁷³ the oath he swore to our father Abraham... (NIV Luke 1:68-73)**

⁷ Cf. Exod. 5:1; 24:10; 32:27; 34:23; Num. 16:9; Jos. 7:13, 19f; 8:30; 9:18f; 10:40, 42; 13:14, 33; 14:14; 22:16, 24; 24:2, 23; Jdg. 4:6; 5:3, 5; 6:8; 11:21, 23; 21:3; Ruth 2:12; 1 Sam. 1:17; 2:30; 5:7f, 10f; 6:3, 5; 10:18; 14:41; 20:12; 23:10f; 25:32, 34; 2 Sam. 7:27; 12:7; 23:3; 1 Ki. 1:30, 48; 8:15, 17, 20, 23, 25f; 11:9, 31; 14:7, 13; 15:30; 16:13, 26, 33; 17:1, 14; 22:53; 2 Ki. 9:6; 10:31; 14:25; 18:5; 19:15, 20; 21:12; 22:15, 18; 1 Chr. 4:10; 5:26; 15:12, 14; 16:4, 36; 17:24; 22:6; 23:25; 24:19; 28:4; 29:10; 2 Chr. 2:12; 6:4, 7, 10, 14, 16f; 11:16; 13:5; 15:4, 13; 20:19; 29:7, 10; 30:1, 5; 32:17; 33:16, 18; 34:23, 26; 36:13; Ezr. 1:3; 3:2; 4:1, 3; 5:1; 6:14, 21f; 7:6, 15; 8:35; 9:4, 15; Ps. 41:13; 59:5; 68:8, 35; 69:6; 72:18; 106:48; Isa. 17:6; 21:10, 17; 24:15; 29:23; 37:16, 21; 41:17; 45:3, 15; 48:1f; 52:12; Jer. 7:3, 21; 9:15; 11:3; 13:12; 16:9; 19:3, 15; 21:4; 23:2; 24:5; 25:15, 27; 27:4, 21; 28:2, 14; 29:4, 8, 21, 25; 30:2; 31:23; 32:14f, 36; 33:4; 34:2, 13; 35:13, 17f; 37:7; 38:17; 39:16; 42:9, 15, 18; 43:10; 44:2, 7, 11, 25; 45:2; 46:25; 48:1; 50:18; 51:33; Ezek. 8:4; 9:3; 10:19f; 11:22; 43:2; 44:2; Zeph. 2:9; Mal. 2:16; Matt. 15:31; Lk. 1:68.

c) YHVH Adon kol-haerets – “LORD Lord of All the Earth”⁸

This is how you will know that the living God (Hb. El Chay) is among you...¹¹ See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth (Hb. Adon kol-haerets) will go into the Jordan ahead of you...¹³ And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the LORD-- the Lord of all the earth (Hb. YHVH Adon kol-haerets)-- set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap.” (NIV Joshua 3:10-13)

The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth (Hb. Adon kol-haerets).⁶ The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the peoples have seen His glory...⁸ Zion heard this and was glad, and the daughters of Judah have rejoiced because of Your judgments, O LORD.⁹ For You are the LORD Most High (Hb. YHVH Elyon) over all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods. (NASB Psalm 97:5-9)

Rise and thresh, O Daughter of Zion, for I will give you horns of iron; I will give you hoofs of bronze and you will break to pieces many nations. You will devote their ill-gotten gains to the LORD, their wealth to the Lord of all the earth (Hb. Adon kol-haerets).^{5:1} Marshal your troops, O city of troops, for a siege is laid against us. They will strike Israel's ruler on the cheek with a rod.² But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times. (NIV Micah 4:13-5:2)

Sing, O barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband, says the LORD (cf. Gal. 4)...⁵ For your Maker is your husband-- the LORD Almighty (Hb. YHVH Tsabaot) is his name-- the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth (Hb. Elohei kol-haerets)...¹¹ O afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted, I will build you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with sapphires.¹² I will make your battlements of rubies, your gates of sparkling jewels, and all your walls of precious stones. (cf. Rev. 21:2-21) (NIV Isaiah 54:1-12)

Again I asked him, "What are these two olive branches beside the two gold pipes that pour out golden oil?" ...¹⁴ So he said, "These are the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth (Hb. Adon kol-haerets)." (cf. Rev. 11:4) (NIV Zechariah 4:12-14)

• The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands...²⁶ He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth...³⁰ God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,³¹ because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed... (NASB Acts 17:24-31)

⁸ Cf. Jos. 3:11, 13; Ps. 97:5; Is. 54:5; Mic. 4:13; Zech. 4:14; 6:5.

• ***But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify (cf. Is. 45:24f; 54:17; 61:10; Jer. 23:6; 33:16; Dan. 9:24; etc.). ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe (cf. Jew and Gentile, v.9). There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... ²⁹ Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, ³⁰ since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. (NIV Romans 3:22-30)***

4. God is proven as Almighty, Supreme, Lord, Mighty, Faithful, Shepherd, Savior, Healer, etc. in the context of fulfilling his covenants as the God of Abraham, Israel, David, Jesus, and the nations. In this way, God's nature could be spoken of as "Israelocentric", as the nature of redemptive history and the Day of the Lord are "Israelocentric".

B. The gospel of the kingdom and resurrection was thus understood as "Israelocentric". The Messiah will return to Jerusalem (cf. Ps. 2:6; 48:2; 110:2; Is. 59:20; Rom. 11:26), establish his throne in the Temple (Is. 2:2; Ez. 43:7; Zech. 6:12; Mal. 3:1; Mt. 21:23), restore the Davidic kingdom to Israel (Is. 9:7; 11:10; Jer. 23:5; Ez. 37:24; Acts 1:6), and bless all the nations of the earth (cf. Ps. 72:17; Is. 25:7; Zech. 9:10; Rom. 15:9ff) by cleansing and rewarding the righteous while judging and destroying the wicked (cf. Is. 40:10; 59:18; 62:11; Mt. 16:27; Rev. 11:18).

From the west, men will fear the name of the LORD, and from the rising of the sun, they will revere his glory. For he will come like a pent-up flood that the breath of the LORD drives along. ²⁰ The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins... ^{60:1} Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you... ³ Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn... ¹¹ Your gates will always stand open, they will never be shut, day or night, so that men may bring you the wealth of the nations-- their kings led in triumphal procession... ¹⁹ The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory... ²¹ Then will all your people be righteous and they will possess the land forever... ²² The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. I am the LORD; in its time I will do this swiftly. (NIV Isaiah 59:16-60:22)

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹ It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹² It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates (cf. Is. 54:11-12). On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel... ²² I did not see a temple (Gk. naos) in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple (cf. Jer. 3:16). ²³ The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ²⁵ On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶ The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷ Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. (NIV Revelation 21:10-27)

- <3485> nao,j naos {nah-os'}

Meaning: 1) used of the temple at Jerusalem, but only of the sacred edifice (or sanctuary) itself, consisting of the Holy place and the Holy of Holies (in classical Greek it is used of the sanctuary or cell of the temple, where the image of gold was placed which is distinguished from the whole enclosure)⁹

Origin: from a primary naio (to dwell); TDNT - 4:880,625; n m

Usage: AV - temple 45, a shrine 1; 46¹⁰

1. Jesus assumes this understanding of the gospel by referring to himself as the "King of Israel" (Jn. 1:49; 12:13; Mt. 27:42; Mk. 15:32); moreover, Jesus is consistently referred to in the narratives as "King of the Jews" (Mt. 2:2; 27:11, 29, 37; Mk. 15:2, 9, 12, 18, 26; Lk. 23:3, 37f; Jn. 18:33, 39; 19:3, 19, 21).

Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." ⁵⁰ Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that." (NIV John 1:49-50)

They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel!" ¹⁴ Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written... (NIV John 12:13-14)

2. Jesus also promised his Jewish disciples that they would sit on twelve thrones ruling over the twelve tribes of Israel in the resurrection (cf. Mt. 19:28; Mt. 20:21; Lk. 22:30).

I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel... ²⁹ and will inherit eternal life. (NIV Matthew 19:28-29)

And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, ³⁰ so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (NIV Luke 22:29-30)

3. Before and after the Ascension, the apostles reflect an Israelocentric posture of expectation, waiting for the return of Jesus to the Temple to restore the kingdom to Israel (cf. Lk. 24:53; Acts 1:8ff; 2:46; 5:42; etc.).

While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. ⁵² Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³ And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God. (NIV Luke 24:51-53)

- ***He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God... ⁶ So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" (NIV Acts 1:3-6)***

⁹ The Gk. *hieron* is used to refer to the Temple complex as a whole (cf. Matt. 4:5; 12:5f; 21:12, 14f, 23; 24:1; 26:55; Mk. 11:11, 15f, 27; 12:35; 13:1, 3; 14:49; Lk. 2:27, 37, 46; 4:9; 18:10; 19:45, 47; 20:1; 21:5, 37f; 22:52f; 24:53; Jn. 2:14f; 5:14; 7:14, 28; 8:2, 20, 59; 10:23; 11:56; 18:20; Acts 2:46; 3:1ff, 8, 10; 4:1; 5:20f, 24f, 42; 19:27; 21:26ff; 22:17; 24:6, 12, 18; 25:8; 26:21; 1 Co. 9:13).

¹⁰ Matt. 23:16f, 21, 35; 26:61; 27:5, 40, 51; Mk. 14:58; 15:29, 38; Lk. 1:9, 21f; 23:45; Jn. 2:19ff; Acts 17:24; 19:24; 1 Co. 3:16f; 6:19; 2 Co. 6:16; Eph. 2:21; 2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 3:12; 7:15; 11:1f, 19; 14:15, 17; 15:5f, 8; 16:1, 17; 21:22.

• ***Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. (NIV Acts 2:46-47)***

4. Before the baptism of the Gentiles in the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 10:44; 11:21), the apostles universally assumed the resurrection and the kingdom to be reserved only for the Jews and those Gentiles who were proselytes.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven... ¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you... ²² Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles... ³⁶ Therefore let all Israel be assured of this..." (NIV Acts 2:5-36)

Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this... ¹³ The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus... ¹⁹ Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, ²⁰ that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus. (ESV Acts 3:12-20)

Rulers and elders of the people... ¹⁰ know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed... ¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. (NIV Acts 4:8-12)

We must obey God rather than men! ³⁰ The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead-- whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. ³² We are witnesses of these things... (NIV Acts 5:29-32)

5. The inclusion of Gentiles in the resurrection without Jewish conversion was startling and initially confusing. However, it was gradually understood that this was the means by which the Gentiles would be blessed by Abraham and his Seed in the resurrection. The Gentiles would be justified through faith in the Cross and be resurrected along with the descendants of Abraham.¹¹

"You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all..." ⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. (NIV Acts 10:36-45)

The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ² So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised

¹¹ The urgency of Pauline literature concerning the salvation of the Gentiles must be understood in context to the dominant understanding that the Gentiles had been shut out from inclusion in the kingdom and resurrection. The prominence of the Jewish people in the Scriptures was never questioned, only added to and expounded upon.

believers criticized him... ¹⁷ "So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?" ¹⁸ When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life." ¹⁹ Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. ²⁰ Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. (NIV Acts 11:1-20)

On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down... ¹⁶ "Men of Israel and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! ¹⁷ The God of the people of Israel chose our fathers... ²⁶ Brothers, children of Abraham, and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent... ³² We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers ³³ he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus." ... ⁴³ When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas... ⁴⁶ Then Paul and Barnabas answered them (abusive Jews) boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles." (NIV Acts 13:14-46)

- **Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." ⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. (ESV Galatians 3:7-9)**
- **Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, ³⁰ since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith... ^{4:1} What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? ... ⁹ Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? ... ¹¹ So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. ¹² And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised... ¹⁶ Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring-- not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. ¹⁷ As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed-- the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were. (NIV Romans 3:29-4:17)**

6. This led to an immediate confusion concerning how to disciple these newly converted Gentiles. The Council of Jerusalem reveals the perceived relationship between Gentile believers and Jewish believers. Everyone would be discipled in the righteousness of the age to come, while Gentiles would be spared discipleship in *the signs* of the righteousness of the age to come (e.g. circumcision, dietary law, calendar, etc.).

On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.²⁸ And they stayed there a long time with the disciples.^{15:1} Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved."² This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question...⁵ Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses."⁶ The apostles and elders met to consider this question...¹³ When they finished, James spoke up: "Brothers, listen to me.¹⁴ Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself.¹⁵ The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written: ¹⁶ 'After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it,¹⁷ that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things'¹⁸ that have been known for ages.¹⁹ It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.²⁰ Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.²¹ For Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath."²² Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas...²³ With them they sent the following letter: The apostles and elders, your brothers, To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia: Greetings...²⁸ It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements:²⁹ You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell...³⁵ Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord. (NIV Acts 14:27-15:35)

III. THE THREE-FOLD ISRAELOCENTRIC MISSIOLOGY OF THE CHURCH

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. (NIV Acts 2:42)

A. Worship

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. (NIV Acts 2:46-47)

1. In light of the Day of the Lord, the apostles lived out their hope in the return of Jesus by continually meeting together in the temple courts. This is because they held to the Scriptures and believed nothing beyond what was written in the Law and Prophets, faithfully holding to the Israelocentric hope of the age to come.

I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets,¹⁵ and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. (NIV Acts 24:14-15)

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,⁹ for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care,¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. (NIV 1 Peter 1:8-11)

Because of that, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets. Pay close attention to what they wrote, for their words are like a light shining in a dark place-- until the day Christ appears and his brilliant light shines in your hearts.²⁰ Above all, you must understand that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophets themselves... (NLT 2 Peter 1:19-21)

2. Moreover, they continually broke bread in their homes in expectation of the return of the Jesus and the Day of the Lord. This symbolic act was at the heart of their worship and messianic hope.

I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.¹⁶ For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God...¹⁸ I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes...¹⁹ This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me...²⁹ And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me,³⁰ so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (NIV Luke 22:15-30)

In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good...²⁰ When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat...²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.²⁷ Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.²⁸ A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup...³¹ But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.³² When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world. (NIV 1 Corinthians 11:17-32)

B. Discipleship

1. New believers were discipled in the apostles' teachings, which were simply expositions of the Law and Prophets, which in turn were inherently Israelocentric.

From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets...³⁰ For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and

welcomed all who came to see him. ³¹ Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ. (NIV Acts 28:23-31)

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (NIV 2 Timothy 3:14-17)

2. Jew and Gentile alike were called to conformity to the light of the age to come.

For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (ESV Romans 13:11-14)

For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person-- such a man is an idolater-- has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God... ⁷ Therefore do not be partners with them. ⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. (NIV Ephesians 5:5-11)

But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵ You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶ So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled... ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹ For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. (NIV 1 Thessalonians 5:4-9)

C. Evangelism

1. As the gospel was seen to be Israelocentric, so also was its proclamation in the ministry of the church understood as Israelocentric. It was not just good "missiological strategy" to preach first to the Jews; it was *right procedure* in light of the gospel.

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹⁷ For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." (NIV Romans 1:16-17)

God "will give to each person according to what he has done." ⁷ To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life... ⁹ There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first

for the Jew, then for the Gentile; ¹⁰ but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. (NIV Romans 2:6-10)

- a) Jesus and the apostles preached the good news only to Jews.

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. ⁶ Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. ⁷ As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.'" (NIV Matthew 10:5-7)

A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! ... ²³ Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us." ²⁴ He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." ²⁵ The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. ²⁶ He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs." ²⁷ "Yes, Lord," she said, "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸ Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." (NIV Matthew 15:22-28)

- b) Likewise, the apostles always went to the Jewish synagogues first, even after God showed that he was making a people for himself from among the Gentiles.

When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues... ¹⁴ From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue... ^{14:1} At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue... ^{17:1} they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. ² As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue... ¹⁰ On arriving there (Berea), they went to the Jewish synagogue... ¹⁶ While Paul was waiting for them in Athens... he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks... ^{18:1} After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth... ⁴ Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks... ¹⁹ They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul... went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews... ^{28:17} Three days later he called together the leaders of the Jews (in Rome)... ²⁴ Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. (NIV Acts 13:5, 14; 14:1; 17:1f, 10, 16f; 18:1, 4, 19; 28:17, 24)

2. The apostles refer to this Jewish priority in evangelism as "necessary" (Acts 13:46) and a "responsibility" (Acts 18:6), revealing the covenantal obligation to the Jews in light of their destiny and responsibility in the age to come.

And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. (ESV Acts 13:46)

Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue... testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. ⁶ But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." (NIV Acts 18:4-6)

3. The apostolic ministry maintained the burden of Jewish evangelism, which was progressively lost as the church became Hellenized. As in Ancient Near Eastern culture, the father of a house longs for all of his children to be reconciled, but concerning the inheritance of his estate, it is imperative/burdensome that the eldest son be restored, since he will ultimately be responsible for managing the household.

I speak the truth in Christ-- I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit-- ² I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race. ⁴ the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. ⁵ Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen. (NIV Romans 9:1-5)

***I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry ¹⁴ in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?* (NIV Romans 11:1-15)**