BIBLICAL OVERVIEW
Of God's Plan for Our SALVATION

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INTRODUCTION

Here is a□□ short description of how God has dealt with humankind in history, according to the Bible. I wish to make some points based on the most important events, whether past, present or future ones. My simple□□ effort here shall rest not on graphical charts or fancy photos. I shall not bring you through creation, the fall in Eden, the great flood, the destruction of Sodom and events like those – I only wish to focus on God's spiritual perspective, His way of actions to save the people on Earth.

THE OLD TESTAMENT TIMES

Most Christians knows very well how God raised up anointed prophets who spoke His word to those who, eventually, became the nation of Israel. We know of the Hebrews and their dramatic exodus from Egypt under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. And after that, how Joshua took the people into the promised□□ land of Canaan after Moses died. It all started by God calling out Abraham – Paul taught that the promise given to Abraham was incorporated thus□□ an important part of the Law of Moses.

Already from the time of Abraham, particularly as he was found obedient to God as he prepared to sacrifice his 'Son of Promise' Isaac (who was a prophetic image□□ *pointing forward*□□ to Christ dying on the cross), and further up through Moses and the prophets, continuously pointed to the Messiah, the Christ, Who should be the king over Israel in a future millennial kingdom. That prophesied kingdom in Israel, is still in the future, however not so far into it!

When time came for Christ to come to the world and into

time, it happened through fulfillment of prophesies. The arch-angel Gabriel was sent to Virgin Mary, thus to fulfill the Immanuel-prophesy of Isaiah of a virgin to become pregnant and give birth to a son. Gabriel said, among other things, *"…and He shall be king over Jacob's house eternally."* (Is. 7:14)

One of the strongest and clearest prophetic events found in O.T. regarding Jesus Christ, is to my mind the conflict and drama which happened to Joseph who was cast down into a well by his older brothers. They were angry and envious since God had spoken to Joseph (Gen. 37). But through the foresight of God, Joseph became their savior when the seven years of barren cornfields hit Egypt and other parts of the Middle-East. Pharaoh had made Joseph the second in power in the ruling over Egypt. That made him capable to decide to whom Egypt would sell food supply. And Potiphar thus had to take orders from Joseph! (Gen. 41-44). And just like it came to reconciliation between Joseph and his regretful brothers, under tears – so shall it come to a full reconciliation between Israel and Jesus. They will beg His forgiveness, He Whom they had nailed to a cross, and had refused to follow and to become believers of Christ.

For God to be able to take care of the world in the future, it first had to be made an *eternal sacrifice for all sin*, for all people. He chose Israel to be His nation to which He would send His Son, Messiah Jesus, so that Israel at the future kingdom on earth could help the entire world.

Before Jesus could be that millennial king in Israel, He had to die on the cross so that God could deliver all mankind from sin, by them believing on Jesus. This is God's main plan in regard to salvation. Everything has to do with Jesus when we open the Bible. I might just as well quote Paul right away, getting straight to it, Col. 1:13-20 (using Amplified Bible, except that in clambers) –

"He (God) has delivered and drawn us to Himself out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of His beloved Son. 14: In Whom we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins. 15: He is the exact likeness of the unseen God; He is the firstborn of all creation. 16: For it was in Him that all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers, or authorities; all things were created and exist through Him and in and for Him. 17: And He Himself existed before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18: He also is the Head of His body, the church; seeing He is the Beginning, the Firstborn from among the dead, so that He alone in everything and in every respect might occupy the chief place. 19: For it has pleased the Father that all the divine fullness should dwell in Him permanently. 20: And God purposed that through Him all things should be completely reconciled back to Himself, whether on earth or in heaven, as through Him the Father made ***peace by means***

of the blood of His cross.”
Please read the rest of the chapter by yourself, it is a glorious salvation given to us by faith in Christ! We also learn that Christ sent Paul to us Gentiles, with this message of a free international grace gospel.
God used the centuries from the exodus out of Egypt and up until the birth of Jesus Christ, to show to them who He was, what character He has, and to drill them and teach them holy discipline and to be humble and obedient before Him. So that they, in the end, would receive Jesus as their king and ruler. Sacrificial ordinances and the feast days and Sabbaths all pointed to the future coming of Christ and the eternal sacrifice on the cross, for His own people. The epistle to the Hebrews says that those things were just ‘Fore shadows’ of the New Covenant to them.
But the Old Testament report of Israel as an often disobedient nation, and they actually persecuted some of the prophets sent to them for correction and guidance. God had to cast punishment upon them, we learn. The last punishment which came upon them, in relation to the time when Christ came to them, was that the nation was taken by king Nebuchadnezzar in BC 586, the third raid, and brought to Babylon. It happened under the time of Jeremiah.
With this in mind, it was obvious that they would also show disobedience to God when time came for Messiah to come forth. Moses knew this, and it comes clear to us when reading Deu. 28 on the ‘Blessing’ and the ‘Curse’. Israel unfortunately chose the curse, - can you believe it.
Peter touched a bit into that fact as he reminded his audience in his second speech in Acts 3:22, 23 –
“Thus Moses said to the forefathers, The Lord God will raise up for you a Prophet from among your brethren, one like me. Him you shall listen to and understand by hearing and heed in all things whatever He tells you. - And it shall be that every soul that does not listen to and understand by hearing and heed that Prophet ***shall be utterly exterminated from among the people.”***
The rejection of Jesus by the Jewish majority, consequently was the *very same as to choose the Curse*, from when Moses first spoke of it in Deu. 28.

THE NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

Finally, God’s Messiah king, His Own Son Jesus Christ came to this world. And the four Gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, testified of that from Jesus’ birth up to His death, resurrection and ascension. John the Baptist stood forth and acted as the Lord’s Herold, but he was beheaded by Herod Antipas since John had criticized the king for his adulterous lifestyle. Jesus chose His twelve disciples and started training them. They observed and experienced the great mighty wonders and signs Jesus did, up close. They saw Him walking on the water, they saw and heard Him silence the storm and tall waves, they were shocked by His

power as they watched Jesus bringing back Lazarus who had laid dead in the grave chamber in four days…the corpse had already started to rot and smelling thereof. All of that, and much, much more.

The religious leading party was the Pharisee party. They held the ruling political and religious power in the land. The Romans let them practice this, but watched closely by the Roman Governor and his military powers at hand. The Pharisees and the Sadducees made up the persecuting opponents against Jesus and His followers. It came to quite a number of confrontations. We have the best testimony of this fact in Mat. 23, as Jesus had a show-down with them in the strictest manner; He went so far as to brand them as children of the devil, and that they practiced the devil's evil works and lust.

I cannot find room to bring in all the details from the four Gospels here. But as a 'Bottom Line' let me say this: Jesus was sent to His own people and He came as a sacrificial Lamb more than a king or a master. Jesu said straight forward: *"..I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."* (Mat. 15:24).

Many years later – around 58 AD – Paul wrote the epistle to the Romans, teaching the same as Jesus:

"For I tell you that Christ became a servant and a minister to the circumcised (the Jews) in order to show God's truthfulness and honesty by confirming the promise to our fathers." (Rom. 15:8).

This ministry of Jesus (at that time) did not concern the Gospel we now have, which is the free International Grace Gospel of Paul, of salvation by faith and no works. But it had to do with the promises given the forefathers, in other words, the millennial kingdom in Israel with Jesus on the throne according to the prophetic word. A *national Jewish Gospel* telling of the Kingdom of God on earth. The very same as that which was spoken to Maria by Gabriel of the Son she would give birth to. It is *pure crisis* to sit and listen to eager preachers who are using examples/words from the *national Gospel of the Kingdom of God on earth* to promote the free grace salvation by faith which we only find in Paul's *international grace gospel* found in Ephesians and Colossians epistles. They make references to the great miracles that Jesus made during His ministry for the proclamation of His coming kingdom as if this should have relevance in the dispensation of the Church. Jesus Himself said that He was sent *only* to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, as I mentioned above – thus we Gentiles were excluded from that which concerned the millennial kingdom. His signs, wonders and miracles were only given to the Messianic assembly in the times of the apostles, and had never been promised to the Church. The Church did not exist until 30 years after the ascension of Jesus.

In Acts 13:32 Paul pointed to the very same message of the kingdom for Israel, in the absence of Jesus, just as it was

promised to their forefathers by Israel's prophets:
"So now we are bringing you the good news (Gospel) that what God promised to our forefathers."
We find Jesus in Acts 1:8, 9 as He was taken up to heaven after first having spent 40 days together with his disciples teaching them of the Kingdom of God on earth – that is, in Israel.
The apostles continued to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, the millennial kingdom in which Jesus shall be king and ruler. They told the people that Jesus would stay in heaven with His Father, until He would return to earth at the conversion of the entire nation. Check out Peter's speech in Acts 3:12-26. The entire preaching of the apostles focused on that kingdom, and this was their hope of salvation. Not heaven up above, like it is with us, the Church. □□□□ Paul, like Peter, had the very same message of the Kingdom of God on earth for the Jews□□ (during Acts), and the last verse in Acts (28:31) says,
"(Paul) preaching to them the kingdom of God and teaching them about Jesus Christ with boldness and quite openly, and without being molested or hindered."
It was 62 AD and Paul ended his calling to the Jews/Israel as he still sat in custody awaiting his□□ appeal case to be held before Emperor Nero. The last words written by Luke on the history of the apostles'□□ ministries; the last 30 years of Israel as a nation for God, the history of the apostles' □ efforts to convert Israel so that Jesus could come back to establish that promised kingdom for them.
It went all wrong with Israel. Neither did they listen to Peter and the eleven, who preached to Jews only – except the minor episode in Acts 10 with Cornelius, - nor to Paul and his helpers, who preached outside of Israel in the Provinces and□□ the Jewish Synagogues found there. Peter, says Gal. 2:7-8, spoke exclusively to Jews only, but Paul was given to also speak to the Greek proselytes, the Gentiles. As already mentioned, Peter had a singular one-time-only meeting with Gentiles in Cornelius' house, and even reluctantly. Christ had to persuade Peter to have him meet with Gentiles at all.□□ He did not know that it was legal to have fellowship with Gentiles. His fellow brethren in Judea were shocked and astonished when they learned what Peter had done – and this was 8 years after Pentecost in Acts 2. (The Great Commission is not well translated in most Bibles, and so creating misunderstanding. □□ To you English speaking readers abroad, I can send you free of charge my booklet□□ *'Book of Acts – the story of Israel's falling Away from God'.*□□ Just send me an email, and I will send you this booklet – choose between PDF or Word format).
Paul was made the apostle to the Gentiles. Only he held Biblical faith doctrine which is□□ a free grace gospel in international setting, - unlike the former and now long time suspended kingdom gospel for the nation of Israel in the days of the apostles. Peter and the eleven held doctrine for

Jews only (and a few proselytes) and his teaching was in no manner a free grace gospel with heaven up above as hope of salvation. Peter's hope was the kingdom on earth, which Jesus should establish had only Israel converted. It would really have been meaningless if Peter and the eleven should have spoken to the gentile-world offering them a kingdom in Israel, don't you agree? And that was why he only went to Jews inside the borders of Israel. It was Israel which was offered/promised a kingdom and not the world (Dan.2:44).

As we find Acts ending its history with reporting of Paul still in Rome in 62 AD, we find that in Biblical timeline it is the epistle to the Ephesians, and to the Colossians which follows. Written in 62-63 AD.

We cannot escape the fact that Acts 28:25-31 are the *very final words* spoken in history to Israel by a prophet/apostle of God.

Paul uttered words of judgment upon the unbelieving Israel, represented by the Sanhedrin members in Rome whom Paul called to meet with him. He borrowed the well-known warnings of Isa. 6, and he pointed out that from now on the Gospel was sent to the GENTILES. And that they, as opposed to Israel, would listen (and thus believe). Paul concluded officially on God's behalf, that Israel would NOT repent to Jesus, so that He could heal them (heal: Restore the nation) Acts. 28:27.

Thereby we got to learn of Israel's tragic fall away from God, - Paul's judgmental speech was His final words to His unbelieving nation, and now destruction and doom was to overtake them shortly.

Reading Josephus and the book *'The Jewish War'*, it is reported that at the same time as Paul was in Rome, the *Roman Governor Festus* caught a serious illness and travelled to Rome for a cure. And this leads the priesthood in Jerusalem to use the opportunity to attack the Apostolic Assembly there. Led by Ananias II (he who slapped Paul in the face!) they arrested James and the elders and had them stoned to death. The assembly fled up to Pella, if I have remembered correctly. Dark clouds of doom from the wrath of God against His rebellious people ..now darkening the horizon. The revolt against Rome started in 66 AD, and in 70 AD Rome crushed the nation and burnt the temple.

Surviving prisoners of war, from the age of 17 Josephus reported, were sent by the thousands to the slave market in Alexandria, Egypt, and tried sold. But nobody would buy – and the prophesy of Moses was fulfilled,

Deu. 28:68, *"And the Lord shall bring you into Egypt again with ships by the way about which I said to you, you shall never see it again. And there you shall be sold to your enemies as bondmen and bondwomen, but no man shall buy you."*

God's plan of salvation in regard to Israel as a kingdom in which Jesus would be king on Zion, according to the prophets, is not to be found in the timeline of the Bible

after 62 AD, when Acts was ended. The New Covenant preached by the apostles before 62 AD, where the promise of such a kingdom was the main focus, cannot be found in N.T. from the epistle to the Ephesians and Colossians.
So here we have a 'Before' and an 'After'. Before Acts 28 and after Acts.

GOD'S DISPENSATIONAL BOUNDARY

That which was before, was teaching and preaching which only focused on what was their present hope of salvation: ***The kingdom of God on earth***, and Jesus as the ruler on Zion for a thousand years.
That which came *after that era* described in Acts, namely the free international grace Gospel of Paul found in Ephesians/Colossians, is that part of God's total plan of salvation, which *does not have any covenant or pact* with believers. It has no nation in particular, but the believers come from all nations on earth, eventually. The believers have the hope of salvation *up in heaven* with Christ, not on earth.
Paul points to a NEW revelation in the two epistles written after the fall of Israel. It is based upon a Mystery hid in God from before He created anything, and thus unknown to mankind. Only Paul was given this revelation and Eph. 3:1-9 is a concentrated explanation of that. Gentiles and Jews are made equal in Christ, and Israel is no longer above the nations. By faith in Christ all believers shall inherit with Christ the (Greek: Epiouranos) heaven up above the heavens. The Colossians have same message. In the kingdom-gospel preached before Acts 28, the hope of salvation was a millennial kingdom in Israel, but after Acts, the hope is now *heaven up above* where Christ sits with His Father.
Paul actually called this change of things for the dispensation of the grace of God…Eph. 3:2 Amplified Bible,
"Assuming that you have heard of ***the stewardship of God's grace (His unmerited favor) that was entrusted to me (to dispense to you) for your benefit."***
The kingdom of God on earth has been suspended since the fall of Israel in 62 AD, but it shall re-appear in the end-times – in the Great Tribulation. Jesus prophesied of this in Mat. 24:14; as this will again be preached to Israel, God must first conclude the Church dispensation. We as Christians shall be taken supernaturally into the heavens and will be appearing with Christ in glory, Col. 3:1-4.
Paul did not call that event for 'rapture' to meet the Lord in the clouds, so we must not confuse it with his teaching to the Jews in 1 Thes. 4 and 1 Cor. 15. The latter was only for the *eventual scenario* that Jesus would come down to Israel to rule with His kingdom. It has nothing to do with us, the Church. Be careful with how you read the Bible.
That Great Tribulation for Israel will end after 7 years (Jewish calendar 360 days per year) – and they will see Jesus coming down from heaven with a huge army of angels and

riding white horses (Rev. 19:11-21). It is also probable that they will see 'Chariots of Fire'□□ (Elijah was taken up in□□ such a vehicle) in this huge scenario and parade on the sky. Isa. 66:15 says,
"For behold, the Lord will come in fire, and His chariots will be like the stormy wind, to render His anger with fierceness, and His rebuke with flames of fire."
Paul taught the very same to the Thessalonians as he at that time preached the kingdom of God on earth and the coming of the Lord:
2 Thes. 1:7, "…when the Lord Jesus□□ is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in a flame of fire…"
After that the millennial kingdom is over, with Jesus having ruled for 1000 years, a rebellion is provoked by God letting lose Satan from his prison in Abyss. Satan stirs up□□ a large mob of warriors to attack Israel, but fire from heaven consumes them all (Rev. 20).
Thereafter it□□ will be a new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21).
God's plan of salvation is ongoing□□ *even after*□□ the ending of the millennial kingdom on earth. Immensely great changes by the creating hands of God and□□ Christ will re-shape and make glorious works…in so much that I cannot find it appropriate to try to describe this. The best we can do is to study God's Word, the Holy Bible.

SHORT RESUMÈ ON THE BIBLES'□□ TOPICS

<u>The Old Testament</u>
God's creation and God's judgments dominates the early chapters.
From Gen. 1 to 12 chapters□□ – and on, we find Abraham and the promises made to him.
Then much later on, Israel as a nation was about to take form as Joshua, after Moses died, took the Hebrews into the land of Canaan. God raised up judges□□ and also kings, and ultimately the□□ priesthood for the sacrificial ceremonies.
From the time of Abraham's calling and all the way up until Paul in custody in Rome 62 AD,□□ *the Bible concerns Israel and Jewry*. Gentiles are only mentioned when Israel is the case. And such people could only become proselytes, and thus be blessed□□ *with*□□ the Jews, and not on their own□□ value or initiative. They had to obey Israel and the Law of Moses and all the ordinances connected.
<u>The New Testament</u>
This was also written□□ *mainly to Israel and Jewry*, including proselytes.□□ Surprised?
All epistles written□□ *before*□□ the spiritual fall of Israel in Acts 28:25-31 are doctrine addressed to the Messianic Apostolic assemblies – they had accepted Jesus as the Messiah of God and thus sorted under the New Covenant in the blood of Jesus. Segregation of Jews in relation to Gentile world was maintained. Jews were forbidden any fellowship with Gentiles, even as they believed on Jesus.□□ It's a

fact. The incident with Peter in Acts 10, going to Gentiles, was a One-Off only and did not establish a new doctrine allowing Jews and Gentiles to fellowship in the faith.
Epistles like Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, Thessalonians, Pastorals, Hebrews, James, Peter's two, John's three, Jude and Revelation – they all were written to the Israel of God, the *Jesus-believing saints during Acts* period of 30 some years. None of the above epistles concerns the Church, the Body of Christ, the One New Man, such as found in Ephesians and Colossians. These two epistles were written by Paul after the fall away of Israel, and we do not find any New Covenant or the millennial kingdom of God in them. But we do find a brand new Gospel, the *free international Grace Gospel of Paul*, the apostle to the Gentiles. These two epistles are the only epistles presenting and explaining the free grace of God by faith in Christ, and where Israel no longer is a nation for God segregated from the Gentile world.
We do find no spiritual miracle gifts and signs and wonders, no water baptism or filling in by the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues or prophesying; no laying on of hands, no Holy Communion commanded us, nor any Sabbaths or Holy Feast Days to keep. No teachings on the New Covenant. The Church has the most precious gift imaginable, - *the free unmerited Grace of God in Christ* (Eph. 2:8).
Eph. 2:14, 15 teaches us that the Law of Moses with its commandments and ordinances are abolished, and the 'Wall of Partition' has been broken down (no more Jews first, then Gentiles). Everything that Jesus promised His apostles regarding miraculous power and healings and signs, were given only to the believing Jews as they were segregated behind that former 'Wall of Partition'. We, the Gentiles on the 'Wrong side of the Partition', had no such promises whatsoever!

HOW ABOUT THE PRESENT TIME?

Let me point out a Biblical fact that many believers really have overlooked or forgotten, even if they know about it:
What *reason* there is for the Church to still be here on earth, after so many centuries, awaiting God to bring us into heaven, is the stern fact that Israel as a nation – their measure/pile of grave sin has NOT YET reached the ripeness, the point-of-no-return.
In their *hateful rejection of Jesus Christ* and in the blasphemous ways through the centuries (see Ezek. 36:22, 23), they shall one day crash into the wall, and God hits them with the Great Tribulation, the Day of Vengeance, so He can bring them to their knees and cleanse out all iniquity in the nation so they finally will receive Jesus Christ.
Present Israel is *illegally in possession of the land*, it is but a manmade project via political conspiracy and manipulations. It is the platform for the anti-Christ – he who shall come on the scene and saying that he is the

Messiah of Israel, in Revelation known as the Beast.
But the Church, we believers of Jesus Christ according to the Gospel presented to us by Paul in Ephesians/Colossians, will be transferred into heaven in glory before God starts dealing with Israel (Col. 3:1-4).
But Israel shall have the Kingdom of God on earth, Jesus ruling from Zion in Jerusalem.