Quest For The Mission: You Are Witnesses Of These Things

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Quest For The Mission:
You Are Witnesses Of These Things

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**Quest For The Mission:**
You Are Witnesses Of These Things

A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of
Perkins School of Theology
Southern Methodist University
in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for
the degree of
Doctor of Ministry

by

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Dallas, Texas

November 21, 2022
**Quest For The Mission:**  
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**ABSTRACT**

I observed that Taiwanese Christian preaching today is missing a comprehensive reading of the Biblical narrative from the perspective of God’s salvation, and the same problem was also found in the Western world. This detachment of the Old Testament context from the Great Commission in the New Testament directly impacts the teaching, preaching, proclaiming, and witnessing of ministry. For the benefit of both pastors and congregations this dissertation demonstrates the whole Bible reveals God’s missional origin through his word and good will for human creatures and creation. The story is full of God’s redemptive, universal mission through the life, death and resurrection of Christ, who fulfills the new creation. When we read the texts in light of the gospel purpose that points to Christ, every drama of the Bible renders to us this God with a coherent missional purpose from creation to a new creation with Christians as “witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:44-48).

This dissertation takes the form of a Bible study that can be used as a framework for training both pastors and lay leaders to read the texts of the Bible story in light of the gospel purpose through the following: creation, humanity, Israel, Jesus of Nazareth, and the calling of the church for the Great Commission. This study will provide a systematic basis for understanding the integrity of the Bible. Furthermore it offers a perspective that allows Christians to join in God’s mission rather than feeling guilty about their failure to do mission.

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1 “that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. (Luke 24:44-48 ESV)
Lastly it refocuses attention on God, what God does, and God’s promise rather than on human failure. All these will ultimately lead to sound doctrinal preaching, missional mindedness of the church, and commitment to the Great Commission in theology and practice.
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INTRODUCTION

Have you ever wondered how the overall story of the Bible should be read? Is it a personal choice? In reaction to this statement, some suggest the Bible should be read verse by verse, while others insist it must be read in its entirety. Dr. Christopher Wright argues that most people read the Bible messianically, but not “missionally”. In missional reading, we not only see the God of the Bible with a mission to redeem his creation within the history of God’s world, we are invited to participate in this mission as God’s people. Missional hermeneutic strengthens our biblical knowledge and theological understanding of the Bible, and no longer singles out the uniformity of God’s redemptive movement, but demonstrate his faithfulness to his covenant promise to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3) that is fulfilled in Christ.

Reading the Bible from the perspective of missional hermeneutics explores God from the beginning of Creation to the words and works of Christ, the promised Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the world. The church is the embodiment and representation of the kingdom community on earth that reflects what is to come according to the gospel of God. Through the missional reading of the Scriptures in the Bible, the plot of each story from creation, fall, redemption, the gospel of Christ, and the new creation should speak to us what Luke 24:44-43 really means. This ultimately leads to confession, repentance and worship, knowing that we are “witnesses of these things”, and given covenant obligation to live the mission for God’s glory.

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2 Wright, Christopher JH. *The mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's grand narrative*. Inter-Varsity Press, 2020., 23
3 44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. (Luke 24:44-48 ESV)
For this reason, this quest for missional hermeneutics of the Bible is to create a more effective ministry of biblical teaching and preaching, and to strengthen theological discernment of the church. This study will draw on the work of Dr. Christopher J. H. Wright, an Old Testament scholar and International Ministries Director of Langham Partnership International, in his book The Mission of God, encourages readers “to read the Bible missionally” and so that people will understand the Bible is God’s missional story. God invites us to join in partnership to his mission and testify his words and works through Christ from the beginning to the end. “The whole canon of Scripture is a missional phenomenon in the sense that it witnesses to the self-giving movement of this God toward his creation and us, human beings in God’s image,”⁴ Prior to preaching, teaching and evangelizing, it is essential to understand the Old Testament Scriptures that applied to YHWH, the holy God of Israel. In addition, it is critical to perceive how Jesus reveals the missional significance in the New Testament. In this fashion, let us begin our quest for the missional reading of the Bible.

⁴ Ibid.,48
1. **Missional hermeneutic of the Bible**

It is essential to know God’s plan and purpose for humanity and creation through a biblical and exegetical grounded framework to build a life time studying and teaching. In this chapter, we will focus on a missional hermeneutic of Scripture for God’s mission that points to His promise to Abraham for universal salvation in scope. Following this missional reading of the Bible story, the vision of God’s mission concerning Israel and the nations will begin to make sense to us. This contemplation of missional reading of the Bible will help us to find where we are in God’s big project, and in it we see our vision for biblical living to serve in God’s mission.

1.1 What is a missional hermeneutic?

The biblical term “mission” or “missional” has to do with our involvement in God’s planning and redemptive movement. Dr. Christopher Wright explains “mission, from the point of view of our human endeavor, means the committed participation of God’s people in the purposes of God for the redemption of the whole creation”⁵ The adjective “missional” is characterized something related by mission.⁶ Missional reading of the texts shapes the way we understand the Bible that God has made known to us through Jesus, who is the promised Messiah, the seed of Abraham, the son of David and the Son of God. It is a pathway from God’s creation to a new beginning and the way we are to look at the God’s mission and grasp the ultimate purpose of it. Craig Bartholomew sees that “hermeneutics is a sophisticated word for knowing better how to listen to the text so as to hear properly what God is saying to his people, at this time and in this place.”⁷

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⁶ Ibid., 24
So a missional reading intends to read Scripture in a wider and deeper sense of perception about God’s mission that enables us to read the texts in light of the story that points to Christ. Wright argues the missional hermeneutic seeks to read any part of the bible in view of gospel purpose for God’s creation, human life, Israel, Jesus of Nazareth and calling of the church.\(^8\) That means addressing the missional significance of the God of the Bible should bring us to read the Old Testament Scriptures seeing the fulfilled Messiah Jesus in theology. This understanding opens us an astonishing way to read the Scriptures in the Old and the New Testament with a missional and biblical basis about God’s doings and saying. “In short, a missional hermeneutic proceeds from the assumption that the whole Bible renders to us the story of God’s mission through God’s people in their engagement with God’s world for the sake of the whole of God’s creation.”\(^9\)

To read Scripture in this way will help us to answer some of fundamental questions such as, what do the texts tell us about God and His purpose? How does it expose human nature of sin and problems? How does it relate to different dimension of the biblical gospel? Furthermore, how does this missional reading of the Bible connect the good news of God? In a global scale, this missional reading expounds the biblical text that relates to the universal dimension of the bible story within its climax of Christ who fulfills the new creation. The necessity of reading Scripture through the lens of God’s mission, according to Wright, it is to read the bible in view of God’s purpose for human life, culture and ethic. The discernment of Jesus of Nazareth’s identity and role will relate to God’s mission. Also, it’s to read the Bible in the view of God’s

\(^8\) Wright, Christopher J. H. The Mission of God., 67
calling for the community of Jews and Gentiles together, through them to bless the nations.\footnote{Wright, Christopher JH. "Mission as a matrix for hermeneutics and biblical theology." \textit{Out of Egypt: biblical theology and biblical interpretation} 5 (2004): 136.}

With missional framework to know the God of the Bible is to know this God and what he has to say to us through the Scripture. Just to imagine as if you were a soldier placed in a battle field with a mission and you have a map to direct you toward the target, and you were commissioned to conquer. The accuracy of the map of the battle field decides how well you can control the fight and defeat the enemies. So we may take missional hermeneutic as a map for our understanding and engagement for God’s mission, and follow his movement toward the goal he predestined for us. Truly the God of the Bible through his words recorded in canonical texts confirms us who he is through his wondrous deeds and make himself known through his voice to the nations.

With this missional reading of the bible, our Christian world view is formed, shaped and undergirded by the texts that leads us to a godly living. Wright argues “Down through the centuries it would probably be fair to say that Christians have been good at their messianic reading of the Old Testament but inadequate at their missional reading of it.”\footnote{Wright, Christopher J. H. The Mission of God.,30} Missional reading must be biblical grounded and allows the Scripture itself speaking to us through the Holy Spirit, so that we may know the character of God throughout human history from the Bible story. Paul exalts God’s covenant promises and forgiveness, but he laments the idolatry of humanity in his letter to Romans, saying that “For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes namely his eternal power and divine nature have
been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.” (Rom 1:20)

Michael W Goheen argues “Mission is not just one of the many things the Bible talks about, but undergirds, shapes, and produces the text so that to read the Bible in a non-missional way is to misread it and misunderstand what God is saying.”

This methodology of missional exegeses is trying to take theological insight with sufficient support of biblical texts to reshape our Christian worldview. The goal is to consolidate our biblical knowledge with confidence in preaching and practicing, and with strengthen Biblical interpretation and theological understanding of the Bible. It helps us to read every genre of the Bible and capture God’s purposing and accomplishing mission. Regardless of all sin against God, mankind is part of God’s creation living in God’s world for his purpose to bless all the nations (Gen.12:1-3). For this God, in the beginning promised to sort it all out what Adam had failed, and the Israel’s history unlocked God’s blessing embedded in the seed of Abraham, the promised Savior Jesus of Nazareth. The dawn has come and the light shine into the world to proclaim the new beginning to the notions. That blessing is not just upon the chosen people of Israel but for all nations. Apostle Paul confirms this good news to the gentiles, “so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles,” (Gal 3:14). Paul felt in chain to share the gospel of Christ, and proclaims the vision of God with a mission to the end of earth. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (3:28)

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To this day, people are still in great debate, what is the essence of Christianity? What is truth? Instinctively some answer can be “going to heaven when I die.”, “Be a good moral person”, for the most part from what I have heard is that people normally consider religion is no difference from each other, and the Bible is just another moral teaching and ethical mandate, or divine commands and rules, laws, life lesson and promises. If Jesus said he is the truth (John 14:6), Christian churches are responsible to interpret the Word of God and tell the true story about God in Christ biblically. The Bible records a self-revelation of God and his movement in mission as he plans, executes, finishes it above measures incomprehensibly. In the collective writings, God tirelessly reveals his will and identifies himself as God of Abraham, God of Israel, God of Jacob and the God of all nations. Each historical event is a small plot within this big story, and the collective texts contribute to this grand story that God in his redemptive mission encompasses past, present and future by His intervention of human history. It is imperative for Christians and the church to be governed by the authority of the Bible. All the streams will ultimately flow into one destiny, that is God’s new creation in, for and through Jesus Christ the coming king.

How does the biblical interpretation shape a missional hermeneutic? Charles R. Taber has thought of this: “The very existence of the Bible is incontrovertible evidence of the God who refused to forsake his rebellious creation, who refused to give up, who was and is determined to redeem and restore fallen creation to his original design for it…The very existence of such a collection of writings testifies to a God who breaks through to human being, who disclosed himself to them, who will not leave them unillumined in their darkness,…who takes the initiative
in re-established broken relationship with us.”

John Carroll, an Australian sociologist, does not consider himself a professed Christian yet he argues that “waning of Christianity as practiced in the West is easy to explain. The Christian churches have comprehensively failed in their one central task-to retell their foundation story in a way that might speak to the times….the whole point of Christianity is that it offers a story which is the story of the whole world. It is public truth. And so an essential part of our theological and missional task today is to ‘tell this story as clearly as possible, and to allow it to subvert other ways of telling the story of the world.’”

The biblical story has its historical roots that readable to readers the God of Creation. We are as God’s people, but also we’ll find our identity within the entire movement of God with a mission. By this, the first commission in Genesis 12:1-3 will be consistent with the Great Commission in Matthew 28.

1.1.1 The messianic and missional reading of the Bible

At the beginning of this section that I will be arguing for a reading that is both messianic and missional. The Gospel of Luke records very critical dialogue right after Jesus’ resurrection, as the result the two disciples, on the road to Emmaus and, the rest of the disciples when they encountered the risen Lord, Scripture begins to make sense to them. They changed in the knowledge of this risen Lord Jesus, and become committed and courageous witnesses by proclaiming the gospel of Christ. Jesus who opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them in Luke 24:45-46,“ Thus it is written,” Basically, Jesus is saying to them this is how you should read the Bible about me. It was Jesus who helped them understand that he was the messiah of Israel as well as the Savior of the Gentiles. The high point of missional awareness of

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13 Ibid.,48
the disciples resides in Jesus’ teaching in Luke 24:44; 48 "that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." …You are witnesses of these things.” It is by this missional recognition, the apostolic preaching and teaching in Acts model the mission of church and of people. Being able to retell the Bible story is to read it coherently from the perspective of mission. It is a covenant language in Genesis 12:3 “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” Similar promises were also found when God appeared to Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 26:14; 28:14) Through the lens of a missional hermeneutic, the Israel’s messiah, the promised savior, the death and the resurrection of Jesus will stand out and become a focal point of the whole cannon of the Hebrew scriptures. The texts of the Old Testament are no longer perplexing but inspiring as in Job’s confession, “but now my eyes sees you.”(Job 42:5) When Thomas saw the mark of the nails in resurrected Jesus’ hand, he confessed and said “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:27-28) and he worshiped Him.

The disciples realized this Messiah in their midst enabled them to witness Christ from the Old Testament. They testified the identity and works of Christ through what he has accomplished for salvation for the nations by quoting the Old Testament Scripture. Saul, later became apostle Paul, is another giant gospel preacher and world evangelist. Like Saul, later the apostle Paul conversion experience happened when he encountered with the risen Jesus on the road of Damascus, and the Old Testament Scriptures suddenly began to make sense to Paul by the illumining power of the Spirit. He recognized this Jesus they crucified is the One who fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy. Being a Jew, Paul immediately confessed Jesus as Israel’s messiah revealed to him and the experience of encountering Lord Jesus refreshed his interpretation of all the Scriptures written about the coming Messiah. It is the risen Lord who opened Paul’s mind to
understand all Scriptures written about Christ. That experience not only shape Paul’s ministries but also established his missional mindset.

The evidence of his change is found in Acts 26:22-23 when Paul was testifying before Fetus declaring openly, “To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”  

Paul’s fearless proclamation demonstrates his preaching of Christ in line with Luke 24: 44-48, and pointed to the faithful promise of God who saves people. When Paul came to Antioch in Pisidia, Paul stood up preaching and gave a historical survey of Israel and how YHWH God delivered them out of the slavery of Egypt and “God has brought Israel a Savior, Jesus as he promised.”(Acts 13:23) Following his teaching on the death and resurrection of Jesus, Paul then begins to quote from Psalm 2:7 “‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you.’” He also quotes Isaiah 55:3 “I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.” (Psalm 89:20; 1 Sam 13:14.) This messianic interpretation allow the contemporary Christian to read the bible story as a whole from a messianic perspective for mission.

Likewise, we have seen apostles in the early church preaching Christ from the Old Testament to witness Christ. Peter is one of them. His sermon at Pentecost quoted Joel 2:28-32 and Psalms 16:8-11; 110 to proclaim God who promised to pour out the Holy Spirit on “all flesh” in Acts 2:14-34. Later he quotes Deuteronomy 18:15 where Moses said, “The Lord your

15 Ibid.,29-30
16 Greidanus, Sidney. Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A contemporary hermeneutical method. Wm. B.
God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you” (Acts 3:22-24) In his conclusion he quotes Genesis 12:3 “and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”17 This text confirms the messiahship through Jesus, the descendent of Abraham who will bless the nations for the forgiveness of their wickedness. (25-26; Isaiah 42,49,50,52.) Paul charged Timothy to be courageous in the ministry of the word by lifting up the power and authority of the Word of God. “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Tim 3:16-17) “All Scripture” is God’s breath that gives lives. That should be our approach to the Old and the New Testament as Christian cannon that points to Jesus.

F.F. Bruce writes that Jesus “used language which must have rung a loud bell, or several loud bells, in the minds of those hearers who had some consciousness of the their people’s heritage (the Old Testament). The kingship of Yahweh, the God of Israel, had been for centuries a dominant theme in the national worship….Yahweh’s mighty acts in creation and history alike prefigured that coming day when He would be obeyed as King over all the earth.”18 Jesus Christ, the coming king is what the Old Testament drama is expecting, “for your kingdom is everlasting kingdom.”(Ps 145:13) “The LORD reigns forever.”(146:10) Ordinarily Christians have been taught and trained as if the missional command only refers to the most cited scripture on Matthew 28:16-20 The Great Commission. Surely it is for our conviction to go and make disciples as Lord Jesus commands. However, there is something beyond that when we go to the resurrection lecture again in Luke 24. We should know Christ through the messianic texts in the

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18 Greidanus, Sidney. Preaching Christ from the Old Testament.,30
Old Testament is completed in the person and work of Jesus and that ushers us into the New Testament. It reaffirms Jesus is the representation of the nation of Israel, the restoration of Israel for the mission for all the nations. Knowing the messiah from all the Scriptures is the most significant prerequisite that prepares us for the mission when the power of the Holy Spirit comes.

The messianic reading is to see Jesus as representative of Israel, king and savior. The mission of Israel was found in the original promise God made with Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3;22:17-18, to be blessed and bring God’s blessing to all the nations. This eschatological redemption and restoration lies in recognizing Jesus of the Nazareth as the promised Messiah. He came with a mission to restore Israel to be the light of the nations, to bring all people to God and worship him. The person and work of Christ provides an anchor to messianic reading of the Old Testament that link Luke 24 for biblical and theological interpretation. It becomes a hermeneutical key that allows Christians to articulate the texts in both the Old and the New. The missiological approach, sheds the light of the existence of the Bible and the purpose of it also inspires us to ponder what the God of the Bible means to us and our origin. It challenges us to think about the identity and mission of people in the Bible and challenges us to share in that.\(^{19}\)

It is essential to make sense of messianic fulfilment in Jesus’ identity and works for mission in the Bible. Luke 24:13-27 highlights Jesus as the focal point of all the Scripture. In messianic focus, the suffering servant will come to represent Israel and restore the mission they were called to do. There are multiple ways that confirm Jesus’ messiahship through his works in healing, caring and suffering by giving his life for ransom for the forgiveness of sin. Again Jesus

\(^{19}\) Ibid.,31
said to the disciples that the Bible centers around him. “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” Luke 24:26. And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” (Luke 25-27) That means this is all you have to know so that you might have a full grasp of who God in Christ really is and tell the world about me, and what I have come to offer. Jesus wanted them to know the preeminence of Christ through the texts in the whole Bible. This teaching the disciples received from the resurrected Lord equipped to tell the Bible story about God with a mission.

It has been challenging for Christians to find their identity and know who we really are in relation to God’s missional purpose in the Bible story. We are called “to be” image bearers in Christ likeness, and to transform this planet into a holy dwelling place as God meant it to be. Only when we are able to understand our story that is God’s story, are we headed in the right direction. We need to go through the historical drama beginning from the Old Testament to prepare us to make it right in Jesus, the anointed One in the New Testament. Confidence in handling the Old testament texts enables believers and preachers to present and teach that God fully encompasses past, present and the future to make Him and His name known. God’s redemptive mission is international in scope, for heavens and the earth is the Lord’s. In this sense, our discernment of salvation is to explore the divine mission and what lies behind the revelation of God, from creation to new creation within the whole Bible’s context and story. The bible story encourages us to press on and live a consistent with God’s mission. As believers we are to participate in the mission of God in his enormous plan for the nations through obedience by faith.
The Cap Town Commitment is worth knowing and will give us a deeper understanding of God’s mission. “We are committed to world mission, because it is central to our understanding of God, the Bible, the Church, human history and the ultimate future. The whole Bible reveals the mission of God to bring all things in heaven and earth into unity under Christ, reconciling them through the blood of his cross. In fulfilling his mission, God will transform the creation broken by sin and evil into the new creation in which there is no more sin or curse. God will fulfil his promise to Abraham to bless all nations on the earth, through the gospel of Jesus, the Messiah, the seed of Abraham. God will transform the fractured world of nations that are scattered under the judgment of God into the new humanity that will be redeemed by the blood of Christ from every tribe, nation, people and language, and will be gathered to worship our God and Saviour. God will destroy the reign of death, corruption and violence when Christ returns to establish his eternal reign of life, justice and peace. Then God, Immanuel, will dwell with us, and the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign for ever and ever.”20 The mission of God, Israel, people and church is there within for us to explore the divine mission. That is far beyond evangelism or sending missionaries oversea, it provides us extraordinary opportunity to explore the God’s mission and messianic theology through the entire Bible story.

We all are sojourners in that story line but we are not strangers. Lesslie Newbigin asserts, “The way we understand human life depends on what conception we have of the human

20 https://lausanne.org/content/ctc/ctcommitment#capetown, @ 2011 The Lausanne Movement. Part 1, section 10.
story. Where is the real story of which my life story is part?”\textsuperscript{21} We are active participants in the different stage of the drama in the biblical story between the resurrection of Jesus and his glorious return which is a new creation.\textsuperscript{22} The creation story is always good place to begin our quest for the reason why God is doing what he has been doing through human history and His ultimate purpose for all nations.

1.2 God’s vision for mission
We can say that the whole Bible is full of God’s missional footprints. God’s chose Abraham to begin His rescue mission by blessing him and the nations blessed through Abraham and his families. That is God’s vision. In both the Old and the New Testaments, texts show us what it means to be human and why it matters to have a covenant relationship with God. All Scriptures aim to the centrality of Jesus of Nazareth, the promised Messiah for all nations. God intends us to tell the nations and their gods about him. God is a director of creation and purposely plans and executes his mission. Christian world view would have no foundation at all if Scriptures did not focus on the uniqueness, the identity and the universality of YHWH and the God of Israel, and the link to what Scriptures have to say about the life, teaching and works of Jesus. Jesus is not found in every Hebrew canon. The Old Testament Scriptures can be stepping stones to lead us to Jesus through repentance and faith. To understand the story of God’s covenant promise to Abraham’s family, the story of Israel, Exodus, the Old testament promises, the Israel messianic fulfillment in Christ’ atonement and redemption in the New enables us to preach and teach and disciple the church to engage in God’s mission.

\textsuperscript{22} Wright, Christopher JH. The Old Testament in seven sentences: a small introduction to a vast topic. InterVarsity Press, 2019.,4-7
Monotheism has been the core of Jewish belief and represents the God of Israel in the Old Testament. They believe in One and true living God whose works among the Israelites, cause them to know that “I am the Lord” (Ex. 12:2) The Lord God who appeared to Abraham and Sarah and promised them a son in Genesis 18, is the same God who appeared to Moses in a flame of a burning bush is the same God who promised to redeem Israelites out of Egypt. “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob.” (Ex 3:6) Israel was chosen to live with the same kind of faith as their forefathers, to make God known through his redemptive work to the nations around them. There is ethical dimension with privilege and responsibility to engage in the world mission that God had given them. Their existence is for a missional purpose to reflect the character of God and make this God known to the nations around them. Israel exists to be a blessing to all the nations, and that the name of YHWH shall be honored. It is God who made Israel a great nation according to his promise to Abraham, not because they are holier or wiser. There is only One God and beside Him there is no others.

Moreover, Shema Israel serves as a Jewish tradition and centerpiece of religious identity among Israelites. “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” It is Jewish confession of faith which made of the texts in Deuteronomy 6:4–9, 11:13–21; Numbers 15:37–41. The monotheistic belief establishes the rock and pillars of God’s command to his people. The voice of the Lord requires Israel to fear, walk, serve, and keep the commandments “to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it…for the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God.” (Duet
10:12-14, 17). The missional monotheism should have been at the heart of Israel as the national identity (Duet 4:32-39; Ps 24,96 Isa.43:9-12; Rom 3:29-30). And the way they will know YHWH is their God is the faith-walk experience they had gone through from exodus, mount Sinai, exile and to the prophetic prophecy of the suffering messiah. Scripture testifies to the divine truth and making known the identity of YHWH the God of Israel who is Creator, Ruler, Judge and Savior, and He has kept His promise through the son of Abraham, the root of Jesse and the Son of God Jesus who has fulfilled them all.

Jesus shares the identity of YHWH to reaffirm who Jesus is in the New Testament and does miraculous works that only YHWH God can performs in the Old. Jesus identifies himself with the title “the Son of Man” and he came down from heaven to do “the will of him who sent me.”( John 6:38) “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,” (Phi 2:9-11) And Isaiah echoes the exaltation of the Name and people’s confession, “ To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.”(Isaiah 45:23) When Paul confronted the issue of idols, he did not shy away from his Jewish inheritance of monotheism (Deut 6:4). Regardless the culture of polytheism, he argued “yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.”(1 Cor 8:5-6). The vision of God is to reveal who He is and what He has done for all peoples and creation, for the whole world is his.

1.3 God’s people
It is fair to say that first two chapters of the Bible is the best portrayal of the vision of God’s people. Adam and Eve were created as God’s image bearers (Gen.1:26) to reflect the characters of God the Creator. They were with a mission to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the
earth and subdue it, and have dominion over”(Gen.1:26-27) It is missional calling with obligation to love, care and rule over God’s creation. They were created to be God’s agent for mission to bless all creation and partner with Creator God to enjoy in His glorious dwelling place in Eden. Likewise, people of Israel are chosen with missional purpose (Gen 12:1-3) to be a blessing to the nations. They are called to be holy as God is holy, to be ethical among the nations and to be a blessing to all the families on earth. God continues this covenant promise with Noah, Abraham, Moses and David. Furthermore, the covenant language reoccurs through the journey of Israel in the Bible until apostle Paul picks it up in defending his preaching against some Jewish Christians in church Antioch (Acts 15) Wright points out the essence of Paul’s gospel preaching combines in four things; the promise of God, the faith of Abraham, the mission of God to bless all nations through the seed of Abraham and the saving implications of those who share the faith of Abraham. Paul support his argument by prioritizing Abraham’s story in a missional hermeneutic. “this dynamic narrative of God’s saving purpose for all nations through Abraham-is the heart of the gospel as announced by the Scripture.”

The vision of God’s people is to walk in the way of the Lord and reflect the character of God. Christians are to be his “treasured possession”, “a kingdom of priests”, “a holy nation” and be the light that shines among the nations. This distinctiveness makes the faith community unique from other nations. As Paul sent his beloved Timothy to be among the church body in Corinth, he said “I urge you, then, be imitators of me…to remind you of my ways in Christ.”(1 Cor 4:16:17). Furthermore, prophet Isaiah identified the true calling of Israelites is to be the people of love, compassion, righteousness to care the need of the weak and humbly waking with

23 Wright, The Mission of God.,193
God, the lights of the world. “Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily, your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.” (Isa. 58:8) Prophet Micah called Israelites to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with God. (Micah 6:8) so is Jesus who gives the same command to his disciples “you are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14) Chad Van Dixhoorn argues that “we don’t read the Bible story only as individuals; we read it as one body, experiencing significant unity as we do.” We are to live out the light that is now in us to feed the hungry, bring the homeless and cover the naked. We are a living testimony of people of faith for the blessing for all the peoples. Christians are called by God to imitate Him and participate in God’s great project toward a new creation.

To contemporary Christians may wonder how we identify ourselves with ancient Jewish Christians, Israel and being considered as the children of Abraham. Paul with his Jewish root, he argues "Just as Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"? Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. 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." So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.” (Galatians 3:6-9) The key point Paul was trying to explain is through his God extended the promise he made with Abraham to Jesus the Messiah of Israel and Savior of all nations. This once again reaffirms the identity and perform the similar function of YHWH with Jesus in the Scripture, “And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.” (Galatians 3:29)
1.4 God’s plan for all nations

The overarching story of Old Testament presents us the faithfulness of God and the wickedness of Man with blessing and curse linked together. In God’s mercy, the nations were not forsaken because of the nation Israel, they were to be witnesses of Israel’s history that YHWH is God and He saves. By this, one day the Gentile nations will become the recipients of God’s blessing. The universal outreach of the gospel will go to the nations as God’s covenant to Abraham “all the families on earth shall be blessed.”(Gen 12:3) All the Gentiles will be included in Israel’s identity and come to worship God as eschatological hope for salvation should transcend all tribes, cultures, languages and the peoples as God has kept his promise. Although people were scattered in Genesis 11 because of disobedience and human arrogance, God’s universal scope for world mission does not change.

In Christ, we have obtained his righteousness and been justified by faith apart from the work of the Law (Rom 3:21-26;5:1). According to Paul, he presents justification as the solution for God’s wrath. (Rom 1:18-3:20) The prophet Isaiah sent the message of this eschatological vision of hope for the world “be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness.” (Isa.65:17-18) The mission of God climaxes in the preeminence of Christ, as Paul wrote “For by him all things were created,…and in him all things hold together…For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.”(Eph.1:15-20)The ultimate goal of God’s mission and our mission is to all the peoples and all things shall hold together in, for and through Christ, and that we worship God the Creator. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.
Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.” (Psalm 19:1-2) This praise of Psalms renders to us the nations are part of God’s creation.

The implication of “the nations” jumps out of the texts when we read the story of Babel where the peoples on the earth was trying to make their own name great instead of exalting the name of YHWH, and it is for this reason they were scattered by God. We learned God placed judgment on the city of Sodom and Gomorrah because people’s wickedness, idolatry, evil worship and indulgence in sexual immorality. “The Table of Nations in Genesis 10 outlines where the descendants of Noah gradually settle. Of particular note are the details list of various people descended from Canaan, and concerning Canaan and his sons; 10:15-18 provides a detailed list of the various people descended from Canaan, and 10:19 describes the borders of Canaan.” The story of exodus depicts a nation that was oppressed by another nation Egypt, and their descendants continues hostility against the nation of Israel. When God promised to give Israel the Promised land, the Israelites soon had to confront the counterculture and worship in multiple gods among the Canaanites, Amorites and Hittites. The waning voice of God commanding the nation Israel against wicked religious practice of others was warning.

Joel voiced out the eschatological vision and said “I will gather all the nations” (Joel 3:1-3) Isaiah prophesied “I will make you as a light for the nations.” (Isa 49:6) Regardless human sins, the mission of God is so consistent aiming to bless “all the families on the earth.”, and ultimately “that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other.”(1 King 8:60; Duet 28:10) The vision of God’s mission is universal and his blessing is to

all the nations. When disciples was wondering about the sign for the destruction of the Temple, Jesus replied “the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations.” (Mk13:10). Another texts in John reflects the global salvation, “when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”(12:32) The nations are inclusive into God’s covenant relationship for nations are witnesses of Israel’s history.

Not only are all nations part of God’s mission, they are witnesses of Israel history observing God as redeemer, judge, ruler and king of Israel. They had seen the mighty acts of YHWH, in whom is the power, wisdom and glory over all gods. The Jews and Gentile both live in the grand narrative of the Bible and engaging the world around them. Sin and idolatry will drive the nation in despair and live in a desolate city, for God is the God of universe. All nations live under God’s sovereign rule as equally as they are granted to received mercy for their hope for the messiah Jesus, who is able to clean and purify the sin of the world. The nations will be blessed or under the judgement of God on the Day of the Lord. Paul in his letter to Romans, he declares the warning of God’s judgement “revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,”(Rom 1:18;3:9).

Paul argues God does not show favoritism for he is not the God of Jews only, but also of Gentiles. (Rom 3:29) The God of Israel has done great things for his people in the Old Testament story. He has shown mercy and compassion to his people and trampled their enemies under his feet. He is YHWH the God of Israel bring blessing to the nations and the righteous Judge over the kings of the earths. All nations have seen the God of hosts who is holy and mighty in power. They shall come with fear and trembling to receive mercy to repent and worship Him. The whole
earth and inhabitants dwelling on it should benefit from this good God, who bless all things and bring all things onto Him through the messiah, Lord Jesus. The psalters praise with these words to applaud YHWH the God of Israel, “Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. How awesome is the Lord Most Hight, the great King over all the earth!(Ps 47:1-2) The blessing is not only God’s promise to Abraham but the first great commission to all the people reaffirming the will of God for mission. Psalmists lead us to praise , “May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!”(Ps 67:1-3) There are Psalms echoing the similar praise in Psalm 66:4 we read “All the earth worships you and sings praises to you; they sing praise to your name”. “Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! 6 The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us. 7 God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him! (Psalm 67:5-7).

Praise is our response to the great God for His sovereign rule over the earth. The psalms enumerate the benefits of worshiping the Lord God. We worship him for his name, steadfast love, law, holiness, and salvation. “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!..., and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.”( Psalm 103:1-5) The Lord is worthy of our praise for his wonderous works and character of love and mercy. (Psalm 6-13) “The Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love…. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.” (103:6-13)
King David’s adoration and praise is also an increase offering for the greatness of God. Although David sinned, yet he experienced the grace of God all the days of his life. God kept his promise that a Savior and King would be out of a line of David. “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds,…They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness. The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.” (Psalm 145:3-9) What is true principle of worship? Jesus describes “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth”(John4:24) Apostle Paul shared what worship means to him from his theological perspective and application. He urges “to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship… that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2)

A missional hermeneutic of the Scripture is the key to grasp the whole picture of God’s redemptive purpose and plan. Through this biblical interpretation we see God’s story and His promise to Abraham, “and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”(Gen 12:3b) By reading and interpreting the Scripture biblically, we begin to share the faith of Abraham in contemplating God’s vision for mission, for his people and for all nations. "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"… They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the
throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." (Rev 7:9-10; 16-17; 21:24-26)²⁵

²⁵ Wright, the Mission of God., 454–456
2. The Drama of Scripture

Approaching the Bible as a human story or leaving off the Old Testament and reducing it to the stories about great people risks distorting the Bible into the image of readers, not of Christ. One of the Old Testament’s contributions is that the Bible presents all the acts of God in relation to mission. The Bible is full of action aiming at the end goal of God’s promise to Abraham to bring blessing to all the families on earth (Genesis 12:1-3). It is not just a book that is full of rules and moral teaching with an ethical mandate. On the contrary, it a great narrative of God’s mission which is an ongoing movement through the drama of the Scripture and we should read it in this regard. It is God’s mission in action. Whenever we read the biblical text, we should interpret scripture seeing God’s ultimate purpose, consistent movement and final destination. It will be helpful to find our part in the different stages of biblical narratives to discern how to react to God’s redemption as it relates to the world mission. Now we are taking this approach and journey together to know God’s missional purpose through the six dramas of Scripture: creation, fall, the O.T promise, Christ and gospel, the N.T church mission, the new heaven and new earth.

2.1 Creation

“In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.” (Gen. 1:1) This God takes the initiative to speak out, execute his project, enjoy his master work and rest. He created and put human beings into the earth with the kingly job of ruling the earth for God, and gave them the priestly role of loving and caring for His creation. Craig G. Bartholomew said “It begins with God’s creation and human rebellion and runs through the history of Israel to Jesus and on through the church, moving to the coming of the kingdom of God. At the very center of this story is the man called Jesus in whom God has revealed his fullest purpose and meaning for the world. Only in this one narrative can we discover the meaning of human history-and thus the meaning
of your life and mine.”

This is the true story we should learn so that we can tell as God meant it to be. Australian sociologist John Carroll, who does not consider himself a professing Christian, is convinced that “the reason that the church in the West is in trouble is because it has forgotten its story…The Christian churches have comprehensively failed in their one central task- -to retell their foundation story in a way that might speak to the times.” Therefore a unique interpretation of the Bible is needed for us to comprehend what it means to be human that shown in the drama of the Scripture. Scripture should not be read as implying merit or morality that emerged between the biblical story, its God’s instruction to us how to be human and live an obedient life that pleases Him. “if a history of redemption is needed, it should begin with Adam and Eve.”

The creation story reaches its climax when God creates man after his image (Gen. 1:27). Additionally, the New Testament tells us that we become new creations in Christ, looking for his returning to make all things new. There must a gap between these two poles, creation and the new creation, the Old Testament and the New. It is more than just image-bearing humanity being restored. It also speaks to us about what it means to be human, the real image of God-Jesus Christ. Wright comments on this. In Genesis there are three things confirmed: God created humanity after his image to be his representative, exercising lordship over the creation (Genesis 1:26-28). After the Garden of Eden was created, humankind was placed in it and entrusted to love and care for God’s creation (Genesis 2:15). That means all of us were created male and female with responsibilities to help one another. Humanity was created uniquely and personally in relation to God with purpose; we cannot consider ourselves as merely products of creation.

27 Ibid.,22
29 Ibid.,19

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Creaturely speaking, our whole being belongs to God and our existence with mission is to be faithful to whatever God wills. We live to reflect the character of God who created us in the beginning. As Augustine observed in his Confession, “We are made for God, and our hearts are restless until we find our rest in him.” Creation renders to us the God of the Bible in his sovereign activity and His created order that correlates to His preserving and governing according to his plan, executed at the right time for the chosen individual and place.

God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

God entrusted the task to us “to work it and keep it.” Genesis 2:15 explains the significance and missional purpose of being God’s image bearers, our relationship to one another and with God. That addresses human vocation that is under the supreme rule of the Creator. God holds human beings accountable for his good creation, not to rule over all creatures with distortion, contamination, and destruction, but to love, possess, care for, cultivate and enjoy, for all creation is God’s property. “The pattern of servant-kingship is very clear, and is modeled perfectly of course, by Jesus himself, the perfect human and the Son of God, when he deliberately demonstrated his status as Lord and Master by washing the disciples’ feet. Kingship

represents servanthood; that is Christ’s way, and it should be ours too.”

Who are we as human beings? We are like tenants living in his property with responsibility to wisely take care of it according the law of God. The Scripture says: “Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it.” (Deuteronomy 10:14) We are authorized to rule and care for every creature on the earth. That should reflect God’s characters in gentleness, faithfulness, love, generosity, righteousness, mercy, providence and protection as expressed in Psalm 145. God is the Lord of all, things in heaven above and the earth beneath.

Albert M. Wolters explains the double meaning of creation. “When we talk about “the story of creation” we are referring to God’s activity of making the world; when we speak of “the beauties of creation” we are referring to the created order as the resulting cosmos.” Nevertheless, the implication of the creation story lies in the biblical idea of the Creator God’s sovereign acts in “originating, upholding, guiding, and ruling his world.” It serves as a reminder to all Bible readers that this is how the true story of the universe unfolded as God initiated it. It implies the theocentric perspective to teach us that the whole creation including humanity is the Lord’s. Being Christians means we believe that there is only one living God, and that the whole Bible is full of his revelation through his teaching, voice, law and wondrous deeds. If God did not reveal his will through his work, the whole earth would desolate, lawless, lifeless, dark and without form “for apart from me you can do nothing.” (John15:5) God is the Creator, Sustainer and the unique source of all things in the heavens above and on the earth beneath by his powerful

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31 Wright, The Mission of God.,20
33 The term “Law” is used here, it referred to the order of creation and the governing law of creation which should be distinguished from the law of redemption.
word and Spirit. In this amazing way, he made everything in heaven and on earth. By this, we learned that the entire creation is the product of Trinitarian movement and engaging engagement as it was established. When we meditate and reflect on the glory of God’s creation, we are told and learn to see his wondrous work in the creation story and know what God will bring at the end of the Bible’s story as he planned in Revelation 4:11: “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.” We need to contemplate and see God as he is in the Bible, not how we imagine him to be or guess how he must be or probably should be. If we know this God only from a bit of fragment of the Scriptures, the God we have is fairly small and limited.

The whole point of creation as God initiated it is repeatedly described as “good” and “very good” in all dimensiones of its diversity and unity. This renders to us the world in which we live is God’s world, and there is no other space and or time that is out of his favor in the whole creation. Male and female were created in unity to produce children and to continue to care and rule the creation as the Creator intended. The whole world is God’s kingdom-creation. Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen summarized Genesis 1-2 well and said, “This bounty is part of God’s intention, suggesting a marvelous harmony of created things. Like an orchestra, it produces a symphony of praise to the Creator. There is an order to this diversity; God’s creative word gives it structure… The story of Genesis 2:4 begins with the phrase, “This is the account of the heavens and earth…,” suggesting that history is an integral part of creation. The work of Adam and Eve in the marvelous park make by God marks the beginning of a long process by which their children and their descendants are to develop the riches of the creation.
Adam and Eve’s royal stewardship of Eden is to be a small version of what God intends to happen to the whole creation as history unfolds.”34 The creation concludes on the seventh day (the Sabbath) and God blessed and made it holy, for “the Sabbath was made for man” (Mk 2:27) that is to meet the needs of mankind. The whole creation is sacred work, holy and blessed by God to reach its climax on the seventh day of rest. The resting is to enjoy God’s presence in worship.

2.2 Fall

   Everything went wrong when humankind chose to disbelieve God, and reject divine authority and disobey God’s command. The relationships between humanity and God, humanity and Creation and with each other were twisted. Therefore the human race becomes alienated from God’s presence. In the first two chapters, the story fully presented God’s purpose for creation and creatures. In Eden we learned of the freedom and blessing of Adam and Eve walking in the presence of God, and talking to each other and to God. They enjoy the providence of God to meet all their needs, only if they obey God’s rule and not to defy him. They may choose to be obedient to God’s instruction in Genesis 2:9 and listen only to his voice. Or they can decide to listen to the mysterious voice of the evil serpent (2:17; 3:1-5) Trusting and obeying grant the reward of God’s blessing, but rebellion and autonomy bring the consequence of the curse. The fall of humanity is originated by pursuing “autonomy” – to relying on yourself rather than depending on God. Genesis 3 illuminates the sin of humanity, and the consequence is death. That kind of death may not be immediate physical death, but it distorts family relationships as we see in the jealousy of Cain over Abel (Gen 4:1-16). The land was affected and it spread

rapidly as if our earthly living today, the ecology and those who habituates on it suffered socially, economically, religiously, culturally and politically. The fratricidal incident confirmed that sin is crouching expandingly. Cain murdered his brother (Gen 4:8-16), the cry of Abel from the ground was heard and human relationship was broken.

Human beings were made for relationship with creation, fellow creatures and God the Creator. Sin breaks this relationship and robs humankind’s joy from God’s presence. It drives Adam and Eve apart from God in relationship and providence. The story of the flood is considered a divine judgment and curse on the land because of human wickedness and evil doers. After Adam and Eve chose total denial of God’s goodness and provision, the consequence is to be expelled from God’s Holy presence. Sin did not end the war of destruction in just humanity but also prevailed over the whole creation. Soon, God’s judgement came upon man with the flood, and through this God will purify His creation and all people. The wrath of God was fully expressed through Scripture. In Genesis 6:12 “And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.” The judgement is also expressed in Zephaniah 1:2 “I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth,” declares the Lord. Furthermore, in Matthew’s gospel echoes the final judgement concerning the last day and the hour to come, Jesus said “For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.”
There has been a debate over the doctrine of imputed sin. What went wrong with the first man Adam and his wife is known as human’s disobedience and idolatry. The story of creation as it follows was not as God intended it to be in Genesis 3-11. Why does Paul hold such a universality of condemnation about sin in his letter, “for all have sinned and fall short of glory of God,”(Rom 3:23)? How devastating is sin for human lives and what will God do about that? Up to this point, would God ever regret his work of creation because something went wrong against his intentionality? God is righteous judge and he will surely not leave sin unpunished. John Murray proposed at least five principles found in Romans 5:15-19 concerning the idea of universal control of sin: “by the trespass of the one the many died” (v15); “the judgement was from one unto condemnation” (v16); “by the trespass of the one death reigned through the one” (v17); “through one trespass judgement came upon all men unto condemnation” (v18); “through the disobedience of the one man the many were constituted sinners” (v19).

There are four aspects that Wright in his work, The Old Testament in Seven Sentences suggests human sin in Genesis 3-11 affects mankind physically, spiritually, rationally and socially. Spiritually, the most devastating result of human sin is to no longer have a divine relationship with the Creator God, to enjoy-his creation and the world where God blesses. The sin against God’s sovereign rule, goodness, and truth in nature is more than a human misconduct or wrongdoing. It is rebellion against God’s holiness and unbelief in the Lord God who made us in his likeness and created the heavens and the earth. Physically, the harmony of God’s creation is corrupted by sin; the earth and everythings on it is under the curse. Illness and death threaten the human body and the material world decays. Mentally, people desire what they could have

enjoyed in relationship with God and his providence. By forgetting who we are and where are we from, people want to exercise dominion over creation with human intellect, reasoning and free will, yet they forgot they are living in God’s world. Eve was tempted to “be like God” and “she took of its fruit and ate” and she also shared with her husband. They began to live in shame and guilt at the moment when they realized their nakedness. Socially, wherever sin enters, it does not only separate us from God, it permeates and fractures our interpersonal relationships, our marriage, family, and community.36 Paul in Romans 1:18-32 gave an impressive analysis and exhortation on this universal sin and its consequence of the wrath of God revealed against the unrighteousness. “Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.”(v32) It is the heart of disobedience and idolatry that collapsed their unique intimate relationship with God.

2.2.1 Sin spreads and affects the earth

It is important for us to know what the curse of the ground means to human beings. Will it give us a legitimate answer to all unfortunate biblical and historical events and no turning back? Adam refers to the Hebrew word “adamah” in Genesis 3:17 and the divine curse on the ground points to the land on which we live, and the surface of the earth on which we depend. The consequence of divine judgment we learned is that the escalation of sin and evil broke the brotherhood of Cain and Abel through jealousy, hatred and anger. (Genesis 4:19-24). The Lord God saw that man’s wickedness was so great and their intention was full of evil, that He regretted making them. (Gen. 6:5-6) The story continues in Genesis 11 where we observe the

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36 Wright, Christopher JH. *The Old Testament in seven sentences: a small introduction to a vast topic.* InterVarsity Press, 2019.,23-25
arrogance of mankind as they wanted to build a city and make a name for themselves. Seeing all these things, the Lord God came down to confused their language and scatter them over the face of the earth (Gen. 11:1-9).

As we have seen, the frustration of creation and the world is not as God had intended, but the great news of the whole the gospel) is that creation as a whole is included in God’s great plan of salvation…And in that new creation, “No longer will there be any curse. (Rev. 22:3)”

God is righteous and holy but at the same time, he is a God of mercy and love. How do we know that his steadfast love is available for us even though we have sinned against him? God in Christ is the answer for salvation and the incarnation of Jesus will fulfill his redemptive mission. In Genesis chapter 3, after Eve took the forbidden fruit and shared it with Adam, sin intruded into human lives and blasphemy into God’s world-Eden. Michael D. William argues “As Adam has committed the human race to enmity toward God, God too declares war…God’s word declares his hostility, not toward man or the creation but toward Satan and the reign of sin and death. From this point forward, two opposing forces war in the world: the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness, the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.”

Adam’s fall turns God’s blessing into cursing, yet God did not give up on redeeming people. The earliest gospel message was proclaimed in Genesis 3:15. In so doing, the innocent animal’s blood must be shed to cover the shame and transgression of humanity as recorded in 3:21 “And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothes them.” They were expelled from the garden of Eden. The day of their returning is when

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37 Wright, The Old Testament In Seven Sentences, 28 there are texts references for salvation in Christ and new creation. (Psalms 96:11-13; Isaiah 65:17-25; Romans 8:18-25; Ephesians 1:9-10; Colossians 1:25-20; Revelation 21-22)

38 Williams, Michael D. Far as the curse is found: The covenant story of redemption. P&R Publ., 2005, 69
sin has been dealt with through a substitutionary atonement when the Son of God takes on flesh, assumes our burden, and bears it away on the cross as the one, true Lamb of God (cf. John 1:29). God will redeem the world through his Son Jesus Christ our Savior who is humble and lowly and in obedience “died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures.” (1 Cor 15:3). Yes, the story in Genesis 3 is the catastrophic incident that resulted in the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Shalom garden of God. Man chose the path to end the story, but God had a plan and will act accordingly. The curse because of sin will finally turn through one family Abraham and his “seed” whom God gave to extend his blessing for all nations.

2.3 The O.T Promise
Regardless of human rebellious, God determines to choose Abraham as his missionary partner, and began his rescue mission by doing something through his people and through Abraham’s families, the nations will be blessed. The Old Testament story is an ongoing journey that presents a faith of God and the promise of God for the whole earth. (for God's promise and covenant theology, please read appendix for further illustration.) All the saving actions is so consistent with the same direction toward Abrahamic promise(Gen 12:1-3) As importance as it is seen throughout Israel history in the Bible, the Scripture emphasized on God’s promise with Abraham and his wife Sarah again and again. “He remembers his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant that he made with Abraham.”(Ps. 105:8-9) It appears in chapter Genesis 15, 17 and Genesis 22. This will come to climaxing in Jesus teaching and proclaiming of the gospel of God. Wright asserts “the promise of the Old Testament rest of the Old Testament begins with God’s promise to Abraham that not only will he

39 Ibid., 76
become a great nation of Israel, but also that through them God will bring blessing to all nations on earth. And through them God will bring blessing to all nations on earth. That promise and hope drives the story forward through the history of Israel in the Old Testament era, as we shall survey.40 The Abrahamic promise “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”(Gen 12:3) serves as the first commandment for mission to the world in the Old Testament.

God made the covenant promise in Genesis 12:1-3 is the first great commission of God to Abraham. That promise did not end there in the Old Testament and it progresses in the Great Commission that fulfilled in Jesus in the New Testament. And he commands his disciples “Go, therefore and make disciples all nations.”(Mt 28:19) It is God who formed the people of Israel, promised childless Abraham and Sarah a son Isaac, and a land.(Gen 15,17) It is Jesus who came down from heaven, called disciples to follow him and promised to make them “fisher of men”(Mt 4:19) and kingdom of God. YHWH in the Old Testament referred himself as “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.”(Exodus 3:6) is not to show God’s favoritism to specific people but to reaffirm God’s blessing in covenant relationship with Abraham’s descendants and through whom all the peoples will be blessed. The twelve tribes came out of Jacob, the grandson of Abraham whom the story of exodus entails God’s redemption accomplished regardless the disturbances of Jacob’s children, especially the sweet and bitter relationship between Jacob and Joseph. The story of redemption ultimately focus on the life of Joseph who made an evangelistic proclamation that delivered the most powerful message, “As for you, you meant it for evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.” (Genesis50:20). God’s blessing is for all the

40 Wright, The Old Testament In Seven Sentences., 5
nations and many people should be kept alive even they were wicked and sinned against him. The most beloved disciple proclaims in John 3:16 which reveals God’s steadfast love for salvation is universal and he will make redemption accomplished through the messiah Jesus.

The history of Israelites’ walking with God in the Old Testament is just for the people of Israel as a nation, but all people bears a full scope of the whole creation in view, because God is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. God’s plan is to bless Abraham and his family, give him a land and bless him and through him all the nations. (Gen.12:1-3; 17:4-11) God had far bigger picture than Israel could had imagined, the blessing and redemption is to the universe. God’s blessing is always in view of global mission. He had extended his salvation to the gentile, the world shall be blessed through Abraham. However, who could be called the sons of Abraham? Is it not those who share the faith with Abraham and believe in God? Absolutely, and apostle Paul confirmed “it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. It is the kind of faith to believe God in Christ as the Scripture said: “foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preach the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying “in you shall all the nations be blessed.”( Gal 3:8) God wants to bless all the nations. God’s did not intend only to make his promise as a historical document of his chosen people Israel. He anointed a king David, promised to send a messiah and bless all the nations through him so that all nations and creation will again worship this living God, the Creator of all.

2.4 Christ and the Gospel
The central root of God’s mission lies in the Gospel of Christ. The Gospel begins with Jesus Christ, his birth, life, ministry in teaching and preaching, death, resurrection and ascension. Through Jesus, God has accomplished what he promised to Abraham to bring blessing to the rest
of the world. In the Cross, God abolishes death, sin has been dealt with and God himself is able to bring ultimate solution to bring salvation and new creation. God promised one day he will bring all the nations into him and remember their sin no more. What is the comparison of the world power and the power of God? The power is Love of God and the final victory belongs to the Lord, and the sign on the cross above his head written in Matthew 27:37, “This is Jesus, the king of the Jews” that confirms the truth of God’s victory over the world power and evil. The New Testament presents the death of Jesus through the lens of the exodus story and the Cross nailed the victory of God in redemptive mission. Luke 9:31 refers the fulfillment of exodus on the mountain of Transfiguration of Jesus who was talking with Moses and Elijah, “who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure,” Surprisingly they were not talking about fulfillment of Jesus ’death but “of his departure” which is the term parallels with the word “exodus” means “his departure” in Greek. Jesus is the good news, he is the good news and new exodus, and we all shall listen and follow him.

How do we as followers of Christ live with the understanding into our everyday lives? Jesus should be our motive as we read the Bible story through the Scriptures to find where we are and who we are in that big store. The incarnation of Jesus reveals God’s love for us to solve out all human’s sin problem against His holiness. The dramas of the Scripture we read in the four gospels constitutes our hope for Messiah Jesus through the event of Jesus birth, life, teaching, atonement, resurrection and ascension. Richard B. Gaffin concludes “ The resurrection of Christ is the resurrection of the last Adam; it is significance resides in his solidarity with those for

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41 Wright, Christopher JH. *The mission of God’s people: A biblical theology of the church's mission*. Zondervan, 2010, 103
whom he purchased redemption.” In this sense, Christians are raised with Christ through his resurrection and the whole creation will be restored. The resurrection is inauguration of something Jesus will bring and that is going to be unprecedented glorious. Jesus is the One bore the sin of the world concretely and won the victory over the principality of power. Each gospel writer may share different exodus motifs as Wright summarized “Matthew sees event in the infancy of Jesus as exodus replayed (Matt. 2:13-15). Mark uses the new exodus imagery of Isaiah 40-55 in his understanding of life and accomplishment of Jesus (Mark 1:3:4;15-5:11)Luke does the same in his gospel account with the song of Zechariah (Luke 1:67-69)” This statement linked the historical event of the Passover to the death of Jesus is a new exodus deliverer. This time is God in Christ who save not only Israel but the Gentiles from the slavery of the world.

What is the good news of God best presented? I remembered long ago when a friend of mine was in an strict and intensive military training, the massive training exercise result in physical exhaustion and thirst for water because of very limited water is allowed. During the period of time in training camp, if you would ask anything that you most desire that would be diving into an icy water and drink. The best news ever is when they heard the announcement that here comes a person who has brought them tone of icy cold drink to honor their service for the country. That person who brought them drink becomes so delighted to everyone who deadly thirst for water and of course, his coming is so well pleased because what he has done for them is the good news they are waiting for after exhausted training exercise under blazing sun. Only when we are devastatingly thirsty and hungry, shall we be fully rejoicing over and satisfying

42 GAFFIN JR, RICHARD BIRCH. RESURRECTION AND REDEMPTION (A STUDY IN PAULINE SOTERIOLOGY). Westminster Theological Seminary, 1969.,127
43 Ibid.,103
with just a cup of water and a piece of bread. Jesus is that bread of life and the cup of salvation, and that is the gospel of Christ.

2.4.1 The historical root of the Gospel

The gospel has its historical root in the Old Testament Isaiah 52:7-10 “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Who is Jesus? Although the gospel of Mark already gave us the answer “the Son of God”, “the beginning of the gospel”(Mk.1:1), there are many ways in different occasions, people questioned and even challenged Jesus’s identity and works he performed that only YHWH the God of Israel can do. In modern search for historical Jesus, there are principles of methodological. Martin Kähler holds his “historic” view and insists that “the Christ who has been so significant tin history, the Chris worshiped by the Christian church, the biblical Christ, the preached Christ-is the real Christ, and the historical Christ. If by “historical” is meant the Jesus Christ who really lived.”44 Furthermore he supports “the good news of Justification by faith alone in Christ alone. And Christ who is the object of saving faith is the preached Christ,

who is the biblical Christ, who alone is the real Christ.” Kähler’s perspective becomes one of the most quoted biblical approach to historical Jesus among modern theologians in methodology and theology of faith of Jesus. He preserved that “the bible is both our only means and a fully sufficient means of coming to the “safe harbor” of faith in the living Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of sinners.”

Jesus is Lord and the world must find answer to vindicate his kingdom mission. First of all, Christos in Greek is translated as “anointed one” and in Hebrew is “messiah”. This explanation connects us to the history events in the Old through the texts in relation to what God says and does for mission. Mark in his gospel writing wants his audience to first focus on the identity of Jesus in the beginning of the chapter (1:1), Luke tells us that Jesus disciples were amazed and wonder who is this Jesus, even winds and waters obey him!(8:25) When Jesus went to the village of Caesarea Phillipe with his disciples, he asked them “who do people said that I am?”(Mk 8:27) and they gave his the answers came out of the Twelve and answered “ John the Baptist; and others say , Elijah; and others, one of the Prophets.”(28) And Jesus continue and asked but what do you say? Finally Peter is the one who got it right and said to Jesus, “You are the Christ.”(29) Peter recognized with confession that Jesus is “christos” “the messiah”. The suffering servant and king whom God designated to fulfill his promise. The messiah will come with mission to die for forgiveness of sins. The Father-Son relationship is depicted in the four Gospels such as Matthew’s account, he added “the Son of the living God”.46 John 3:16 “he gave his only Son” and John 1:34; Lk 4:41 “You are the Son of God.” Martha worship Jesus and calls

45 Ibid., 97
him the messiah and the Son of God (John11:27) Mark claims “Jesus, Son of the Most High God.” (5:7) Psalmists confirms the identity of the Lord, “You are my Son, Today I begotten you.” (2:7) When Roman soldiers and officers came and asked who is Jesus of Nazareth, and Jesus said to them, “I am he,” the Scripture said “they drew back and fell to the ground.” (John 18:1-6) for Jesus and the Father are one according to the Scripture. (John 10:30)

Jesus is a new Davidic king (Isa. 9:6-7, Jer. 23:5-6) the promised Messiah. He is a new and better Adam (1 Cor.15:22), who is so loving and caring for his people under his just and righteous rule. Through his teaching and works, we’ll find what was lost in the life of Israel and kings of the earth. That will enable people to retrieve their focus back to the focal point of Abrahamic covenant and has now been brought forth in Jesus through his death and resurrection for redeeming the world. His second coming shall reaffirm his righteous reign forever. Paul’s summary on this gospel streaming all different dimensions of the gospel yet the very heart of this gospel is rooted in Christ and him crucified. There is only one gospel as Paul argues in Galatians 1:6-10 there shall have no other gospel other than the gospel of Christ he preaches.

The whole good news is God’s good creation after Adam and Eve’s exile from the garden of Eden, God chose to bring salvation through his son, Lord Jesus. Although the first paradise of Eden ruined by human sin, it did not discourage God’s mission to restore his creation through his people. What kind of me does God want me to be and participate in mission? The people whom God delight are the people listed in the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-11. For the gospel of Christ is counterculture and the kingdom is an upside down kingdom. The significance of the kingdom of God entering into human history is incarnation as it were when the tabernacle entered Israel
demonstrates to us what kingdom of God is look like. The world might wonder what would it be like to be a kingdom person? Well, the kingdom life embodies in life and work of Jesus in his atoning death as sin bearer. For our sake he absorbs all our iniquities and transgressions, in the cross, he has defeated all satanic evil and its power, and death has lost its word.

2.4.2 The King Jesus

“A true king will come back, slay the dragon, kiss us and wake us out of our sleep of death, rescue us from imprisonment in the tower, lead us back into the dance. A true king will come back to put everything right and renew the entire world. The good news of the kingdom is this: Jesus is that true King.”47 The earthly kings in the Old testament history may crush his people according to the Scripture, “…you shall be his salves, And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves.”(1 Sam 8;16-18). However, the good news is this true King Jesus, who did not only die for us, but also lives for us so that we might have a new and abundant life.(John 10:10) Even Pilate, the power of Roman emperor can not stop this Jesus, the king of the Jews, the Lord of lords and the king of kings. For God’s mission is to share the salvation for the poor, the meek, the mourn, the hunger and thirst for righteousness, the persecuted and the brokenhearted. The mission of God is to bless( Matt 5:3-7), so be glad and rejoice, for the kingdom of God is near. Let welcome the true king Jesus who is coming with a upside down kingdom value to announce a new era of peace. “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he.”(Zechariah 9:9)

The good news of God is he will do what he promised and revealed in the written word in the Bible, and in the Scriptures everything written about Jesus must be fulfilled (Lk24:44) “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead. And that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations.” (46-47) The death of Jesus demonstrates the real power that overcome the world and that is the power of love. It is the love of the Father who gave, love, forgive and reconcile the world with him through the death of the Son on the cross. Darrell L. Bock asserts on the cross, “this ruler would represent the nation not only in victory, but also in suffering. Before exaltation, there would be the disfigurement of the cross (cf. Isa. 52:13-15; 53:3,5,9-12).”

In Acts, we observe the change in the life of apostles who preached the most powerful message of this resurrected and exalted Christ and the benefits he brings. They preached Christ fearlessly and quoted the Old Testament Scriptures because they know who they were in the past and God has made a new creation in Christ Jesus.

2.4.3 The Cross
Which Jesus have you seen? A defeated Jesus or a triumphant Jesus? “What must I do to be saved?” Bultmann has the answer; it is the Cross and the Resurrection. He argues “every moment is the moment of eschatological decision, and to be willing to decide for God and his will.”

The only way to make sense of Jesus and the Christian faith is through the apostolic preaching of Christ through missional hermeneutics of Scripture, and the proclamation of salvation through Jesus ’death and resurrection. The Cross is the power of God that costs the life

48 Bock, Darrell L., and Benjamin I. Simpson. Jesus according to Scripture: Restoring the Portrait from the Gospels. Baker Academic, 2017., 403
of his Son who bruised the head of the serpent (Gen. 1:15) and overcame sin and death through the crucifixion. “The cross is a token of foolishness, weakness, humiliation, defeat, absurdity. Seen in another way, by those who know that Jesus is alive again from the dead, the cross is full of God’s wisdom, power, glory, victory, and purpose. In the cross, Jesus acts to accomplish his purposes for all of history-to save the creation.”

Jesus, the Lamb of God is the crucified Jesus and was raised from the dead, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.” (Mark 12:10) The accomplishment of the gospel cannot be stopped in the cross, because God sees the redemption completed by bringing the cross and the kingdom together. Jesus said: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” (John 2:19) That explains the imagery and describes the kind of temple which will again bring the heaven and earth together. It envisages a new creation which will again color the overarching Garden of Eden, the divine royal residence as it was in the beginning, where the Creator God dwells among his creation and humankind.

The heartbeat of the gospel story in the New renders to us what God has done in the cross. God is redeeming his people, not just a little group of Israelites, but to the gentiles now through his Son Jesus of Nazareth. As the Lord’s pray teaches his disciples how to pray. He will bring the kingdom come to the earth as it is in heaven and bring the righteous reign of God. The Incarnation is the evident that the living God became flesh and entered into human life to teach us how to be human. It also models for us what a true king shall be. Jesus ’life on earth teaches us what human life ought to be. He tells us “the way of the Lord” we are to live in the kingdom of God, and under the reign of God. God’s persistent mission to rescue all the nations through his

50 Bartholomew, Craig G., and Michael W. Goheen. The drama of scripture: Finding our place in the biblical story., 177
redeemed people remain unchanged regardless Israel sinned and disobedient to trust him and his voice.

In the cross, God condemns sin in the flesh of Jesus so that his atoning death will free us from the wrath of God. For God’s judgement is righteous and just, if we repent he will always have mercy on us, and confession is offered as words of grace to begin a new life. In that sense, final judgement must not be considered all negative. The final judgement gives us hope. However to those who don’t repent, the final judgement is going to be horrible and terrifying, but to the humble and meek, they will receive the word of hope, because God will do righteous. The hope for all the creation of heaven and earth is rejoicing and full of praise as Psalm 96 and 98 for “The Lord has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness I the sight of the nations.”(98:2) God is all judge of the earth for all the creation, because he is coming and he will do justice. What approach should we take as Christians to the final judgment of God? First of all, the resurrection of Christ proclaims his victory over sin, death and Satanic evil as his last word on the cross “it is finished.”(John 19:30) The final judgement is part of the gospel too, for God will put all things right. God’s judgment is not always something scary, it’s a hope for those who hungry for His righteous judge.

The worst thing that sin can do to Jesus of Nazareth is to put him on the cross, that is what the law has drawn sin together to one place-the cross. The resurrection inaugurates the new age to come and that has a double vision of God’s mission for the coming kingdom and the renewal of a whole creation. How do we put it together? Jesus is the answer and the One who can at the same time bring these two ideas together. He is “the Son of God” who is the Jewish
messiah they have anticipated to come. Also that perception corelated to “the coming kingdom of God”, and Jesus comes to fulfill both two together through his resurrection after three day of his death. That must be “according to the Scriptures”(1 Cor. 15:3-4; Isa 53:3)The resurrection of Jesus would mean so much more than bring his death to life, but his atoning sacrifice is on our behalf and of the whole creation. We are here to celebrate his resurrection for the dawn of a new day, a new hope and a new creation in Christ. He will bring heaven and earth together (Eph 1:17) “And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn form the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.”(19) Jesus resurrection is our resurrection for “the dwelling place of God is with man, He will dwell with them, and God himself will be with them as their God.”(Rev.21:3-4) This is redemption and restoration of God in mission. How do we build up this grand narrative of the gospel into our thinking, interpretation, sharing and even living out of the gospel so that we might move on? It comes to our next discussion on the mission of the early church in the New Testament.

2.5 The N.T mission of the church
The New Testament mission of the church is a story of out pouring of the Spirit of God for all nations and we find ourselves in that story too. That is an extension of Abrahamic promise (Genesis 12:1-3) and God’s blessing for the families on earth through the body of Christ (Ephesians 4). Also it presents the earliest great commission as Jesus declared: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” Go therefor and make disciple of all nations.”(Matt 28:18-20) The passage stated clearly the sovereign power has been given to Jesus and he to the church for the mission. The missional calling for he church is to accomplish the task that God entrusted for his people. The goal of redemption is to turn people from sin and gather them into the kingdom of God. Where are we placed in the stage of the bible? Are we ready to celebrate
the banquet and rejoice? The wedding feast is ready but the groom who hosts the banquet is extending his invitation to anyone who wants to join, and he said “Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.”(Matt 22:9) If church is with a mission to be the salt and light of the world, then “the church should be the place where the things God honors are honored”51

The power of the Holy Spirit creates faith of believers and unity with Christ. The transformative power enables the body of Christ to be witnesses of Christ according to the Scriptures. That mission is given to the disciples as well as churches around the world. Paul knows it very well when he talks about life in the Spirit and in Christ from Romans 8:4: “in order that the righteousness requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us.” And the whole point of God’s mission is to restore the identity and vocation that Israel failed, but God descends to restore the mess they did and make it right, “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God…The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”(8:14-16)
Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert capture the mission of the church well in this statement, “the mission of the church -as seen in the Great Commissions, the early church in Acts, and the life of the apostle Paul-is to win people to Christ and build them up in Christ. Making disciples-that’s our task.”52 For those who are in Christ, the particular and the church are witnesses of these things.( Lk 24:48)

51 Hill, Craig C. Servant to All. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2016.,175
So then, what does it mean to be “in Christ”? Does it mean believers should have certain form of ritual ceremony, speak the same language or behave in some similar patterns and dress code? “in Christ” speaks a new relation and union with Christ. It’s a spiritual inheritance given to believers that enables them to live out the Christlikeness God intended all mankind, Israel, gentiles and the all nations to be. Paul gives an answer for the meaning of “in Christ” from Romans 8:1 and said: “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” He illustrates an evident of our new identity in Christ as a light hanging high on a hill to be seen. In the dark power, people need light more than ever. Now the kingdom of God is launched, formed and focused by Lord and king Jesus after resurrection, saying “all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me, go therefore and make disciples of all nations.”(Matthew 28:18-19). The church today is commissioned to take the Old Testament story to the new, and find the messiah of mission becomes reality by sending dispels to all nations. Christ is the Lord and the holy one. The apostles like Paul, Peter, John and James take this same story as their mission to the world and proclaim this good news. This God becomes king to rescue his people to renew things in heaven and on earth.

2.6 New heaven and new earth

Lastly, when Christ returns there will be a new heaven and new earth, and all tribes, cultures, peoples and languages will be brought together in the new creation. It will be a transformative renewal in all things, and God will dwell among His people, and they will worship His as their God. New creation is the implementation of Jesus ’bringing victory, so there will be a party going on. The sin of all human race has been dealt with and God will return to the holy city of Jerusalem for the victory is won. Some address the last two chapters of Revelation 21-22 as a happy ending of God’s redemption accomplished, but it is more encouraging to move
forward into a glimpse of a new beginning. The “new heaven and new earth”, “Thy kingdom comes”, “new Jerusalem” and “God’s dwelling place” speak to us the hope for the restoration and healing of our relationship with God in Christ. The new temple will again be established on earth as it is in heaven. The image of Adam Eve will be resurrected and renewed as well as the entire creation. Sin and death, pain and tears, sickness and sadness removed, for the coming King Jesus will make all things new. (Rev.21:1-5; Matthew 6:10). “Heaven, the dwelling place of God (which had become separated from the creation because of sin), come “down to the earth in a dramatic image of restored unity and harmony between the Creator and what he has created. God himself comes to well on the new earth with humankind…because the relationship between God and humankind has been healed. God is one again as close to us as in the days when he walked with (our ancestors) Adam and Eve in the garden.”

It was God who came down from heaven to be with his people within creation, for God the Creator reigns with love and compassion, and that heals the wound of the relationship between God and human race. The threat and effects of sin and death are eliminated. Christians’ final destination is no longer to get a free pass as if we are going to heaven when we die. This is an easy take of what Christianity is all about. The new heaven and new earth bring forth the meaning of Emmanuel, God is with us. “when we grasp the salvation of the kingdom restores the creation, and all of it, we see that witness to God’s kingdom is as wide as creation.” The renewed creation is found in Revelation 21:1-3 “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy

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54Ibid.,219
city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

The Bible is indeed an overarching story of God’s mission which is consistent with his actions. The six acts or dramas dealt with commonalities that are missionally important in believing, affirming and living for God’s will. Wherever we are in the Bible story, we need to see ourselves within the light of this biblical narrative as it moves from one individuale Adam to one person Jesus, from the nation of Israel to all nations. We should read Scripture missionally and focus on its movement as well as its purpose and final fulfillment in light of Jesus of Nazareth, who is the only Lord and Savior.
3. God’s Self-revelation

The entire Bible is God’s continuous revelation of who he is and what he has done to save human race from sin. It is for this reason, the apostle Paul preached Christ and “decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor.2:2). Jesus came not to condemn and judge the world, but to redeem and recreate the world as God the Father meant it to be. God’s redemptive work is recorded in the Scriptures of the Bible as he plans, executes and consummates from the book of Genesis through Revelation. The Bible reveals who God is, what he has said and done, and what he will bring. Readers of the Bible must not treat it as a problem solving manual that is centered around human wants and desires. Instead, Scripture is a life giving interaction between God and people through the work of the Holy Spirit to make us anew in Christ. Therefore, preachers are called to preach the Word through the lens of the Bible to know God as Redeemer of the whole world.

Within the great history of the Bible story, God’s redemptive movement has been identical from Abraham to Jesus, from Israelite’s community to the nations. In this chapter, we will focus on God’s saving act in every part of biblical events contributing to the whole mission that centers around God’s doing and saying through the people of Israel and Christ by the end. Each single section of the Bible narrative is in unity of God’s redemption, and He made himself known through the events from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Knowing that redemption accomplished reaches its climax in the seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, and the coming King of the earth, through whom God will bring blessing to all peoples.

The Apostle Paul said: “Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him” (Rom. 10:2). Wright concludes this is the way “Revelation pictures the redeemed humanity in the new
creation singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb (Rev.15:3)\textsuperscript{55} "Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations!"

We can envisage the Book of Revelation as the beginning of the end of the Bible story for God’s mission for humanity and creation. Bartholomew and Goheen captured the end of the Bible story in that “The whole of human life is purified, and even the nonhuman creation shares in this liberation of God’s people from the former slavery to sin and death. The goal of biblical history is a renewed creation: healed, redeemed and restored.”\textsuperscript{56} The whole point of redemption addresses God’s purpose to restore human identity and make creation anew. In doing so, we need to trace the movement of God from the beginning to the end goal. There are some critical elements involved to make God known to Israel and all the nations. The high point of the drama of exodus affirms God always takes initiative to intervene in human history within the events that relate to the big picture of God’s mission. To redeem Israel has it biblical root and thrust when the covenant was established between God and Abraham (12:1-3; 15; 17). God wants people to know him as the God who speaks, saves, leads, provides, and dwells among his redeemed. Even in slavery and liberation, Israel exists to be God chosen race not only to survive but to fear and trust Him as God’s people. This national identity requires them to live attractively to the tribes and cultures around them and know the name of YWHW and worship Him as one true living God among all nations. God spoke all these words, “You should have no other God before me” (Exodus 20:3). “Let there be no strange god among you; Nor shall you worship any foreign god” (Psalm 81:9). “I am the LORD, and there is no other” (Isa 45:5). All these

\textsuperscript{55} Wright, Christopher JH. *The mission of God's people: A biblical theology of the church's mission*. Zondervan, 2010.,41
commands point to monotheistic faith of Israel in response to the God of Israel as their national identity.

3.1 God made himself known in Israel
   Knowing God is to experience his mighty acts and his interaction with people. The Old Testament is a classical testimony of the revelation of the living God who speaks and does for his people. First, He revealed to Moses in the midst of a burning bush, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Ex.3:6). Not only does God make himself known in the nation of Israel, but all the nations will come to know Him through His wonderous works in redemption and judgement, in correction and restoration through the Torah, Prophets, Psalms and wisdom books. The centrality of the Scripture is about God and his agenda for the redemption of humanity and creation. When Sadducees were asking Jesus about resurrection, Jesus answered them by echoing the Old Testament Scripture, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?” (Matthew 22:32), for God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. YHWH God identifies himself to Israel can be summarized on Deuteronomy 10:17: “For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of Lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe.”.

   Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the term monotheism is a doctrine or belief there is only one God. There are some beliefs that are not in line with monotheism in ancient history and that impact prevails within the cultures in modern days. Atheism shares a belief of no god exists while Polytheism promotes there is more than one god. Monolatry respects and worships the supreme god and recognizes there are other gods. Henotheism believes in one god without negating other gods. Is monotheism a religious origin of Judaism? May not be so. Judaism is one
that has gone through the words of Old Testament prophets in proclamation of the self-revelation of God in Israel’s history that gradually forms the national faith in YHWH the God, and God alone, there is no other. That statement claims transcendental and unique identity of YHWH who exercises all he has spoken and done in the Bible. That is what constitutes Israel’s monotheism in the Old Testament, and we should see that applied to Jesus if we take a missiological approach to read the texts in both the Old and the New Testament. Paul used monotheistic language to argue “there is no God but one” (1 Cor. 8:5) when contemporary Jewish came to confront his “ontological deity of Christ” against their Jewish monotheism background.

He pointed out the culture at that time was filled with such thinking of Polytheism aggregates there may be many “gods” in heaven and on earth, “yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things and through whom we exist” (5-7). Paul reaffirms the deity and function of Christ in equal sharing with the Oneness of God. The Old Testament prophet proclaims: “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14). “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Peter declares Jews and gentiles will be saved by the covenant of grace and said: “But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will” (Act 15:11). Knowing God is to relate Christian living and be committed to be Abrahamic in faith and mission.

The name and identity of YHWH to Jewish belief can be understood in Shema Israel. “The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). The oneness of YHWH shall be worshipped and his name shall be praised and extolled. The Old Testament texts captures the uniqueness of YHWH as the holy One of Israel and God of all nations who is all powerful and sovereign to save his people through his mighty wonders he has done. We read in Isaiah 45, “there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me. Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: ‘To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance” (Isaiah 45:21-24). In this passage, the texts reveal the God of holiness, righteousness and universality which is expressed in term of “there is no other…there is none”. Israel is called to reflect the character of God who creates the heaven and earth, came to rescue His people, provide, and give rest.

“Yahweh is God and there is no other,” and Deuteronomy 6:4 echoes the affirmation of monotheistic faith of Israel: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is One” (6:4). This monotheistic practice of faith is tied to Israel’s worship that centered in the promise and identity of God in his relation to the nation of Israel and all the peoples. We may want to know their theological and religious world in all realities and practice. God is not only the God of the Old Testament. He is the God of the nations in the New. For Jesus is the embodiment of the identity and mission of Yahweh, the Lord of lords and the King of kings that every knee should bow and every tongue confess. Christians are commanded to be Christ’s witnesses because our
commitment to mission is motivated by knowing God is in mission to save, a non-negotiable imperative. Christians should be submitted to his utmost authority. “‘Making God known is part of the mission of those who are called to participate in the mission of the God who wills to be known. “Knowing Yahweh” then, is among those dynamic Old Testament expression by which an Israelite might have expressed what we would call monotheism.’” 59 Their faith is shaped and formed by their experience in exodus and return from exile through the words of prophets and living experience of Israelites. The stages of exodus and exile particularly established the unshakeable truth which directs Israel to know the uniqueness, incomparability and sovereignty of YHWH.

3.2 God made himself known through exodus

The story of Exodus presents a perfect example what God’s redemption means to us. It is God who made himself known through his saving acts, words to reveal who he is, so that all the peoples shall know YHWH is God, the only Holy One of Israel. Moreover, the story entails three key elements for Israel: the living God makes his name known in Israel, the mighty acts of redemption and the law—the word of grace. As we read the Old Testament text, the repetition of God’s self-revelation as the God of the forefathers of Israel is evident (Exodus 3:6;15-16). He lifts the mountain peak of making his name known above all gods when they were about to enter and confront Canaanites’ culture and religious practices. God is speaking to the Israelites what He will be doing for liberation for the foreseeing future so that all the nation shall know the God of Israel, so the nations will know the Name of YHWH, the God of Israel who lives and saves.

59 Ibid., 74
Exodus 6:6-8 has been considered as God’s missional statement for Israel in multiple situations when the peoples run into God’s redemption, discipline, and judgment.

God’s purpose of redeeming Israel is in every possible way to strengthen their faith and to love the Lord with their whole heart, soul, and mind. Its Father’s love to teach and shape the characters in the life of his children are so that they will be formed as unique God’s image bearers in whom He is well pleased. The name of the Lord is equally vital to YHWH who claims his universal sovereignty in his redemptive mission for his people, knowing that the Lord God is our shield, rock, and Redeemer. “For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord” (Exodus 12:12; Joel 2:27). YHWH God is the true King for the oppressed, the poor, the mourning, the needy, and the hungry for righteousness. Indeed, there is no other like Him.

The missional statement of God has been so proclaiming and affirming in his saving acts. God’s promise for redemption is far beyond oath and agreement of all peoples and cultures. “Say therefore to the people of Israel, ‘I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord.” (Exodus 6:6-8)

The voice of God tells Moses to focus on the I AM God who is the One with you, not on what Moses can do in flesh and blood in mission. By this, God begins the opening declaration of
“I am the Lord” (6:6) followed by even times of saying “I will” clustered around his promise. It is to reaffirm God is a promise-keeping God within three verses. He then comes to the rescue missional task God will do: will bring them out, will deliver, and will redeem. The result of the promised will be realized in their residence in the Promised Land (6:8), and God once again closed his missional statement of this missional origin in the covenant promise with Israel’s patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.60 This is a gigantic mission of God in a short snapshot in the stage of drama of exodus. This missional statement of God can be made on top of a hermeneutic matrix that helps us to know Him more and experience his salvation without hindering. The whole Bible tells of this God with a mission to redeem and restore his creation for his Name’s sake.

There is an affirmative passage of God’s fascinating rescue mission which is incomparable among all gods and none is like him. “Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, and by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great deeds of terror, all of which the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? To you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord is God; there is no other besides him” (Deuteronomy 4:34-35). It is full of God’s promises and the evidence of his works encompassing past, present, and what he promised to bring in the future for the sake of his Name. The missional statement echoes persistently in Ezekiel 36:22-38. The text also begins with the voice of God to the house of Israel telling what he is about to act for his Name, because Israel did not honor him but profaned his Name among the nations. The Lord God promised that he will vindicate his holy name to make known of his

60 Walvoord, John F. *The Bible knowledge commentary: An exposition of the Scriptures.* David C Cook, 1985.,117
Name (23). “I will take you from the nations” (24), “will sprinkle clean water on you” (25), “will give you a new heart” (26), “will put my spirit within you” (27), ”I will deliver you”, and with all the blessing and promised cluster of “I will” as we have seen in Exodus 6:6-8, God again ends this passage by the similar declaration. “Then they will know that I am the Lord” (8:36). God’s saving act is not limited to the nation Israel, but the whole earth.

God’s redemption highlights the judgement of killing the first-born male of all the Egyptian families. The Passover becomes an occasion that the children of Israel should not forget the day God of the Lord, who rescued their ancestors from slavery of Egypt. The Passover is the most memorial and celebrated redemptive event in Israel’s history to this day. The account of the Passover in Exodus 12:1-28 speaks of God’s judgement in the land of Egypt, the sovereign King on high came down with his righteous judge and fought for his people. “It is the LORD’s Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgements: I am the LORD” (11-12). The Passover story is God’s continuous rescuing mission in the New Testament which has linked to the Crucifixion of Jesus in various ways. The Passover Lamb of God found in John 1:29, as a Passover meal recorded in Mt 26:17; Mk 14:12; Lk 22:7-8; “By linking the crucifixion of Jesus to the Passover, the NT church drew attention to the redemptive nature of Jesus’ death. Like the original Passover sacrifice, his death atoned for the sin of the people, his blood purified and cleansed, and his body sanctified those who ate it at the Lord’s supper.”61 The Passover today becomes the bread of life for all cultures who trust Christ for salvation, and the cup of salvation for assurance and fulfillment of God’s mission.

This is what God intends the children of Israel to know and how they shall be able to retell the story about God and his redemption. “When your son asks you in time to come, ‘What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the rules that the Lord our God has commanded you?’ then you shall say to your son, ‘We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt. And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. And the Lord showed signs and wonders, great and grievous, against Egypt and against Pharaoh and all his household, before our eyes. And he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in and give us the land that he swore to give to our fathers. And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as we are this day. (Deuteronomy 6:20-24)\(^{62}\)

The national identity of Israel is attached to the Law for observation and practices. Does the law of God place too much weight on God’s people and make it difficult to follow him? Wright argues that God’s law should not be viewed neither as a deadly weight, nor a legalistic rule. The psalmist claims the law with a majestic view toward holiness of God. “The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb” (Psalm 19:7-10), “and I shall walk in a wide place, for I have sought your precepts… for I find my delight in your commandments, which I love…Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day… Therefore I love your commandments above gold, above fine gold” (Psalm 119:45, 47, 97, 127)\(^{63}\). Furthermore, this

\(^{62}\) Wright, The Old Testament In Seven Sentences.,52
\(^{63}\) Ibid.,64
binding of the Law and relation to the Lord should be to them and future generations as family and national inheritance passed along to generations.

The law serves as the word of grace to live a godly living that pleases the Redeemer of Israel. It is not an alternative way to obtain or earn salvation because they are already saved by God. Israel’s failure demonstrated the law is powerless to overcome the idolatry of the people and restore them to holiness until the Messiah comes as the incarnated lamb of God to take away the sin of the world and fulfill the law. In Matthew 5:17 Jesus said: “Don’t think that I have come to abolish the Law…but to fulfill them.” The last book of Exodus exclusively focuses on the construction of Tabernacle that symbolizes a royal residence. It was designed for the holy dwelling of the divine God with those who were atoned for their sin and uncleanness separated from sinful people. The portable Tabernacle is to ensure YWHW the God and king of Israel will be with his people wherever they go.\(^6\) The incarnation confirms the work of redemption God comes to dwell with his redeemed, the tabernacle become YHWH’s personal dwelling place, a portable sanctuary where God is in their midst. The tent dwelling has mutual affection and conviction between Israelites and YHWH according to Vos, “For, since the Israelites lived in tents, the idea of God’s identifying His lot with theirs could not be strikingly expressed than by His sharing this mode of habitation.”\(^5\) Christians have come to realize the God’s eternal purpose to bring all peoples to him through the new Adam, a greater Prophet and Savior Jesus who is the gospel of God.


3.3 God made himself known through exile

God made himself known everywhere in prosperity and in suffering. The story of exile is one of theological illustration of faith, hope and love. Exile usually refers to the period of time when the southern kingdom of Judea was detained in Babylon and the deportation during Judean kings of Jehoiankim, Johoiachin and Zedekiah. The historical account recorded the cause of exile is the result of judgment on both Israel and Judah. They forsake the Lord and adopted the heathen neighbors’ culture to worship the Baal culture and Molech worship that required offering humans for sacrifice. Politically, exile was the result of anti-Babylonian policy of Judah although the word of God came to them through the prophet Jeremiah. During the exilic period of time, a people were removed under hardship, leaving their homeland to go to a foreign country, being forced to settle there. While the people of God were captured, the enemy seemingly claimed their victory over the God of Israel. The people of God were conquered by Babylon and left their homes far from exile. Regardless of possible hardship, the God of Israel was faithfully with his people during exile and cared for his people with grace abound while they were removed from their homeland. “The experience of life far away from the land, city, and house where the Lord had chosen to dwell, brought to the fore the monotheism that had always been part of the faith of the people of the Lord.” People may wonder if the exile and hardship is credited as part of God’s plan for the chosen people? If it is, how can the holy city of Jerusalem be burned and destroyed by heretic king, Nebuchadnezzar who ordered to deport God’s people to a new settled land with an unknown future. In our modern interpretation, how can bad things happen to good Christians? The hymn and songs the Israelites used to sing on Zion was silent with lament in grief. A lamentation of prayer seemingly is inclined to the angel

of the Lord pleasing him: “how long will you have no mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, against which you have been angry these seventy years?” (Zechariah 1:12). Where is YHWH the God of Israel who brough them out of Egyptian oppression? Did the Lord forget the covenant he made with their forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

Not at all. For God is a promise-keeping God who promised to be with his people. Hear this word of the Lord that went out to Israel in exile: “when I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them from their enemies’ lands, and through them have vindicated my holiness in the sight of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the Lord their God, because I sent them into exile among the nations and then assembled them into their own land. I will leave none of them remaining among the nations anymore” (Ezekiel 39:27-28). “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deuteronomy 6:4). In the midst of suffering, the prophet Isaiah delivered the word of comfort as God’s messenger, and said, “In that day you will say: "O LORD, I will praise You. Although You were angry with me, Your anger has turned away, and You have comforted me” (12:1). This is so that the world may know YHWH is God, and the nations shall know him through his mighty work and voice, his covenant of blessing and curse.

Making God’s name known flows out of the story of exodus and exile that proceeds the story line of Israel’s history in the Old Testament. The cry of the people from the desolated city Jerusalem went up to God, their groaning in a foreign land of Babylon was heard, because God of Jacob would not abandon his people. However, Israel will remain God’s chosen people who were bought into his covenant relationship. Hence, God’s presence shall never withdraw from
the nation of Israel regardless of their sin, arrogance, injustice, and idolatry. The God who brought them out of Egypt will forgive their transgressions for his name’s sake, defeat the pagan ruler and world power, and bring them back to the city of God—new Jerusalem. Right now, the people will continue in hope and prayer concerning the vision in Daniel 7, “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed” (13-14).

Prophet Jeremiah wrote a letter to the exiles, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon” (Jer 29:4). The exiles were commanded to settle there and build houses to reside in the land and marry to multiply there. Moreover, “But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare” (29:7). This text reminds us of Adamic covenant language in God’s creation and his purposed plan for first humanity. And that promise extends to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to multiply, be blessed and to bless, for the blessing is upon Israel and through them to the nations. How do people address the world today concerning social justice, human rights, caring for the poor, feeding the hungry, and fearing God? Are Christians torn between the city of God and the world theologically? How long, O Lord, will you have mercy on us and deliver us from present evil. The ministry of the Old Testament prophets is not only predicting the future, but also bringing the words of hope and comfort of the Lord, and said to all in exile, “For I know the plan I have for you, declares the
Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile” (Jeremiah 29:11-14). So, trust and obey, repent and faith will lead us to the city of God, a new Jerusalem- the Promised Land. The turn from despair to dance is that God has done a new thing for his people. When Cyrus issued the decree that permitted Jews to return to their homeland Jerusalem and rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1-4), a simultaneous restoration of monotheistic faith may start germinating among the faith community.

Singing and praise shall leap from the mouths of the captive when they read the prophet Jeremiah’s letter to the elders, priests, prophets, and people that survived in exile under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar. Wright argues the cause of YHWH’s wrath against the deliverance of Israel from exile is due to the wickedness of Israel profaning His holy name before the nations. The prophet Ezekiel takes approach upon the result of exile; it is to rescue and protect the name of YHWH. “Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Lord God, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes” (Ezk. 36:22-23). “When I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them from

67 Wright, Christopher J. H. The Mission of God.,88
their enemies' lands, and through them have vindicated my holiness in the sight of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the Lord their God, because I sent them into exile among the nations and then assembled them into their own land. I will leave none of them remaining among the nations anymore “(Ezekiel 39:27-28). “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deuteronomy 6:4). God’s name shall be praised for great is the Lord.

The people of Israel’s return from exile stands for a historical value to modern Bible readers and Christians that God is incomparable and sovereign, worthy of praise. As we continue to focus on the theme of knowing YHWH, the God of Israel is revealed as unique, sovereign and incomparable Lord over the earth. Reading through some prophetic texts, only YHWH claims to be the God of all gods and the God of Israel who is the righteous judge. This story of Israel’s return from exile is part of God’s discipline to his people, and the nations all around should also know the God through his people’s exposure under his judgement. By doing so, YHWH claims his legitimacy to be the true living God, and saying, “Let them bring them, and tell us what is to happen. Tell us the former things, what they are, that we may consider them, that we may know their outcome; or declare to us the things to come. Tell us what is to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods; do good, or do harm, that we may be dismayed and terrified” (Isaiah 41:22-23), and “remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose” (Isaiah 46:9-10).
In exilic prophecy, the sadness of the covenant people had gone through was not without purpose. That experience of returning from Babylonian power and hardship is to reestablish the faith of Israel, not only physically returning but also spiritually repenting and living as God wills to be. Even when they were in great distress, God can use any human agent to accomplish his purpose, not necessarily his covenant people but the pagan power of Babylon, for God is all sovereign and power in control of all things. “Know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other” (Deuteronomy 4:39). Even the judgement of the Lord shed the light of his righteous judge for his name’s sake, so that all nations shall know YHWH is Lord, the God of the nation Israel. “The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble” (Proverb 16:4). Even the psalmist echoes the sovereignty of God as he wills. “Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps” (Psalms 135:6).

The refresh graphic of God’s mission is very well addressed by Wright accordingly, “If YHWH alone is the one true living God who made himself known in Israel and who wills to be known to the ends of the earth, then our mission can contemplate no lesser goal. If Jesus of Nazareth is the one who embodies the identity and mission of YHWH, the one to whom the Lord God has given all authority in heaven and earth, the one to whom every knee will bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord, then the Christ-centered heartbeat and witness of all our mission is non-negotiable.”68 The excellency and holiness of God’s name lies in the language of “there is no other” in his incomparable character of love, mercy, justice and righteousness through his words and deeds. To make the living God’s name known over the creation is to reveal his

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68 Wright, Christopher J. H. The Mission of God., 71
uniqueness, sovereignty, and incomparability through humanity, Israel, and Jesus, the new creation. “There is none holy like the Lord: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God” (1 Sam 2:2). "O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart” (1 Kings 8:23). “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand” (Deuteronomy 32:39). “Behold, I am making all things new” (Rev.21:5).

The prophetic word of hope and holiness of God concerning His name states, “when I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them from their enemies' lands, and through them have vindicated my holiness in the sight of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the Lord their God, because I sent them into exile among the nations and then assembled them into their own land. I will leave none of them remaining among the nations anymore” (Ezekiel 39:27-28). The priority of God’s redemption for the people of Israel is always waiting for returning from sin and live onto Him.

3.3.1 To enter the Covenant relationship with God

God’s mission is narrated and revealed in the canon of the Old and New Testament from creation to new creation. The Bible is full of God’s mighty acts and voice concerning of His name, uniqueness, and sovereignty toward humankind and creation. It is a sequence of missional drama grounded in the messianic promise that flows out the mission of God for particular people of Israel and the nations. If we read the texts of the biblical narrative with a “Messiah-focused” lens, the very stage of the story reveals the problems of humanity and God’s rescue mission that is interwoven within the big narrative of the Bible. Within the drama, the redemption in Exodus and the voice and acts of God constitute his redemptive pattern for mission, even though Israel
was rebellious against him. That imagery presents to us God’s characteristic of faithfulness to bring them back as eagles bearing them up. The repetition of two themes, redemption and discipline, has been the vital lessons that the God of Israel wills to make his name known through the people of Israel. As Wright asserts, “God’s promise to Abraham is key to the rest of Scripture. It is the beginning of mission and at the heart of the gospel.”

3.3.2 To enter the Promised Land with faith of Abraham

There are lessons made available particularly for Israel on their way to the promised land that God had given them. It is the lesson of fear, walk, love, trust, and obey. These are the new paths in how to be human in relation to God, to the promised land-creation, and to the nations around them. They contemplate as a new way of life in response to God’s redemptive mission to walk in the way of the Lord. But the hope in the promised Messiah is never hidden as we read those ancient Hebrews texts in the Bible, for God’s mission is so identical from beginning of creation to new creation to bless the nations through the redeemed and “that [his] name might be proclaimed in all the earth” (Romans 9:17). If Israel meant to be God’s chosen people who uphold the mission of God as their national identity and vocation to be God’s reflectors in all the earth, they must wholeheartedly trust YHWH by obeying his commandments through Moses and the prophets, and that shall be nonnegotiable. To make God’s name known does not mean God will always show his favoritism to the people, and the Israelites can claim to the nations that the God of Israel is always on their side no matter what. The instrumentality of Israel would never change their national identity as God’s chosen people for His mission, even under his judgment. Regardless of overwhelming circumstances happening unprecedentedly to Israel in history, the

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greatness, holiness and glory of God remain the key characters of God who wills the nations to know him.⁷⁰

3.4 God makes himself known in Jesus Christ

Jesus asks his disciples a rhetorical question, “Who do you say that I am?” (John 16:15).

There is a missional significance for the Bible readers to percept this combination of identity and function between YHWH God and Jesus. When Moses was puzzling how to introduce this God who sent him, God told Moses “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel ‘I am has sent me to you’” (Ex 3:14). In John’s gospel, Jesus is identified and shares the deity of God in the beginning of creation to affirm his pre-existence with the Creator God. We read “the Word was with God” and “the Word was God” (1:1-3). John even echoes Exodus 3:14 “I AM WHO I AM” and asserts the seven “I AM” statements in the gospel account. Jesus answered to the Jews, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). The doctrine of Trinity has made it clear and revealed through the Scriptures in multiple ways with implication of it. It will be edifying if we are able to read the biblical texts Christologically to know how Jesus shares the identity of YHWH God and through wonderous works and word. The Greek word often uses Lord kurios to describe YHWH and Paul with his Jewish monotheistic inheritance in theology often applies the Greek word “kurios” Lord to refer to Jesus Christ. He regards Christ as Lord which is equivalent to the divine name YHWH without hesitation when he proclaims the gospel of God to the Gentiles. “In him we have redemption” (Eph 1:7). This text speaks of the centrality of Jesus Nazareth with his messianic mission through his life, teaching and works. It is Paul’s intention to establish his readers and audience’s understanding of

⁷⁰ Ibid.,103
the Lord God in Christ. Whenever the gospel of Christ is among Jews and Gentiles, Paul inherently links Jesus and Lord God through the implication of it in his gospel preaching and teaching. In Romans 9:5, he asserts “the Christ who is God over all” expressing Jesus Christ is “theos” God. Similar expression appears in Eph 4:4-6, “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” The Gospel writers also record how Jesus confronts the issue for Philip request “Show us the Father?” (John 14:10), and Jesus answered him “I am in the Father and the Father is in me”.

People are often reminded by the Gospel writers who identify Jesus’ deity in equality with God as the object of faith accordingly in John 14:1; “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.” An almost identical claim can be found in John 10:30 “I and the Father are one.” For the authority of the Son to God the Father, he said: “For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise” (John 15:19). Jesus was sent as God promised that he will raise a king from the root of Jessie, a favored Son of God (Ps 2:7), Davidic king to rule, and one with dominion over the kingdom. He should be a King with humility to care and love his people and establish a just and righteous kingdom where the meek, poor, broken hearted, and oppressed are welcome to the kingdom of God. Jesus came to restore Israel and be the agent to reach the end of the earth for mission.

Jesus came to do the Father’s will. When Jesus was indirectly identifying himself as the One who came down from heaven to do what the Father wills, he said “For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.
For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day” (John 6:38-40). The will of God is to bless all the people with the heaven and earth restored because “everything was created through him and for him” (Col 1:16). The mission of God in Christ comes to its climax in the fulfillment of his messianic mission to defeat sin, death, and evil power in the Cross. The resurrection of Jesus is the resurrection of Adam and the creation. “That is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:19). Jesus was sent by the Father to die and live for us. He sent his Spirit to transform us anew. If you are redeemed, the indwelling spirit is now in you. The Spirit is the guarantee of our salvation and empower our life in participation of God’s mission to proclaim the gospel of God and bring the nations to Christ, making disciples to share the mission.

In the New Testament Jesus most often indirectly or voluntarily identifies himself with rhetorical questions by asking his disciples, “who do you say that I am?” (Matthew 16:15). There are many answers given among them but only Peter answered it right “you are the Christ, the Son of the living God (v.16). The most classic conversation is found between Jesus and one of the Twelve, Thomas, who finally saw the mark of the nails in Jesus’s hand. He worshiped him and said, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28). Rather than recognizing Jesus’ deity, Jews and pharisees had deliberately denied the truth and tried to accuse Jesus’s face to face of blasphemy for his claim by questioning, “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Mk 2:7). By revealing Jesus’s role with God, John linked to the beginning of the creation story and declares the eternal Word was present in the beginning. The powerful Word gives life and sustains the beautiful
creation and creatures in it to set the whole universe in divine order, forming as God wills with his holy presence. The Word orchestrated the creation in the Bible, and the pre-existence of the Word was confirmed in the texts. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things were made through him” (1:1-3;14;18). Paul joined God the Father and the Lord Jesus in cooperation with the creation work together in 1 Cor 8:6. “Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.” (1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:15-17). Hebrews 1:1-4 is resounding the same purpose toward his will for creation. Darrel Bock explains the authoritative Word lighting up the whole creation as a lamp and path for guidance when the earth was without, and the Word brought forth lives/creatures according to the divine purpose as Isaiah states. “So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11). The Word is like the psalmist said, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Ps 119:105)71. There are some similar texts that can be found elsewhere in the Bible that affirms the true deity of Jesus Christ is divine and the coherence of the entire Bible. How does Jesus shares the identity of YHWH? There are certain functions of YHWH linked to Jesus’s ministry in the New Testament as Creator, King, Prophet, Priest and Messiah.

3.4.1 Jesus is the Creator
The opening chapter of the Bible begins with an astonishing introduction about God and creation. “In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. The earth was without form

and void” (Gen 1:1-2). The Creator and God alone bring all things for existence (Neh.9:6; Hebrews 1:1-2; Ex.20:11; Rev. 4:11). Instead of introducing who God is, it presents to us the work God has done by the Word that gives readers unlimited imagery of God’s omnipotence, omnipresence, wisdom, and glory. The prophet Isaiah confirms that truth stating, “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever” (40:8). The Gospel of John intentionally draw readers to God in Christ in the beginning of the biblical narrative to reaffirm the coherence of the Bible and the faithfulness and truthfulness of him. God is all powerful, “It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens” (Jer. 10:2). The Proverb states that wisdom is from the LORD: “The LORD founded the earth by wisdom and established the heavens by understanding” (Proverb 3:19). The apostle Paul honors God’s glorious creation and highlights the chief end of human beings that honoring and glorifying God should be the human vocation to reflect the characters of God. “So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31; Proverb 8:22).

Jesus, the eternal Word, is “with God” in the beginning as John declares: “the Word was with God and the Word was God” (John 1:1-3). That entails the pre-existence of the Word in the beginning. That directs the deity of Jesus toward God. Similarly, Paul joins God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ in the work of creation and said, “for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist” (1 Cor. 8:6). The Scripture in Colossians 1:15-17 testifies the preeminence of Christ, “He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creations… all things were created through him and for him.”
3.4.2 Jesus is the King

The first man, Adam, was created and given authority to exercise his kingship to rule and to fill the earth in the way of expanding his governing kingdom, honoring God the Creator. Yet because he failed to defeat the evil power and overcome sin, his kingdom was corrupted and was exiled from the garden of Eden. YHWH God is meant to be the only king of Israel, and that kind of kingship is demonstrated in the narrative of exodus. In the historical narrative, YHWH demonstrates his kingship for the people of Israel as he testifies his might to all the nations around them (Exodus 19:3-6). King David was anointed as the new Adam and king of Israel (1 Sam 16) to rule the nation of Israel and rule as godly leadership. He shall reign with righteousness, compassion, and love for the nation and bring blessing to all the peoples. However, his kingship was dysfunctional because of sin. Unfortunately, after king David, his son king Solomon did not rule well and failed the nation of Israel as a divided nation, followed after by a corruptive line of kings. What kind of kingdom and king should the nations be praying for?

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, he says you shall pray this, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom comes, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:9-10). That reminds us God the Father is the King of Israel and the King of all nations. God alone is the king who will unite all tribes of Israel and draw the nations to him. He is God and King in Christ Jesus who humbling himself came and dwelt in our midst. He is the king who comes to serve and not to be served. This king is humble to serve his people by washing their feet (John 13:1-17). He calls and makes disciples to do likewise and sent them out for mission. Jesus invites his followers to be a blessing to all the peoples and unites all tribes, cultures, and languages to repent and believe this King Jesus who one day will restore this earthly kingdom into the kingdom of God. (Gen 2:1-3) Jesus acts as king of Israel who loves and
cares the land and the people. He will surely fight for his kingdom and conquer all nations for his kingdom’s sake, yet he will fight nonviolently. He will ultimately sacrifice himself for the sin of the peoples as the substitutional atoning sacrifice and suffering King. King Jesus will suffer for Israel and the Gentiles (Isaiah 53) and be resurrected as the promised Messiah for the meek, the broken hearted, the oppressed, and those that thirst for righteousness. This is the vivid picture that the Gospel of Luke records in 14:23, the parable of the banquet, that points to the messianic and eschatological hope that the king Jesus will bring (Rev. 19:13;16). As the charge over Jesus’s head states, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews” (Matthew 27:37). Jesus, the Son of Man who has been given dominion over all, and Daniel had this Christological vision in Daniel 7:14. “And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:14). By this the fulfillment of God’s promise in the Old was brought forth in King Jesus.

Concerning the saving faith of God, the Apostle Paul states, “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son” (Col. 1:13). Jesus is the new Adam and king David, he does not fight the usual way as the world comprehends. In the Synoptics, Jesus becomes more popular. He, involved in the kingly struggle, went into the temple, cleansing and overthrowing merchants and money changers to restore the temple. He confronted the earthly power Pontius Pilate and gave himself up to the Cross. This king defeats sin, corruption, hatred, unjust power, and evil. He won that battle not as Israel expected the way the Messiah would have done it with military might, strong and without suffering. Jesus is Lord “Kurios”. He is the king who won the victory by the power of love from high to be “the Lamb of
God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). That is why Paul preaches only one thing, “Christ and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). For Jesus Kuiros, Lord Jesus is the king of the world. We are called and sent to proclaim the heavenly king who is so much better and powerful than the earthly kings, which is the fulfillment of God’s promise to the patriarchs. The United States, a world dominant power today, rethinks and redefines the kind of king we ought to submit in its founding. The answer is quite simple and has been stated we are to be “one nation under God”.

3.4.2.1 Genuine role of kingship

God acts as a great king in his own kingdom (his creation), the vast kingdom that was full of glory, power, honor, and wisdom in his beginning account in Genesis. This demonstrates the manifestation of His absolute sovereign power to rule, execute, provide, love, and care. This king wanted to serve all he had made with his lowly and humble servanthood that implies the true coming king, Jesus of Nazareth. The kingship we shared is to imitate God’s model of servanthood to care and love his creation and creatures, and for the whole creation to fully depend on the Creator and king. Humanity was called and made to be the kind of king who will serve his people with humility and righteousness. Humankind is uniquely made among the creatures and each of us are created differently. Gordon Wenham has observed how the garden of Eden is portrayed in terms of the tabernacle that presents to us God’s presence in the midst of his people in exodus story ever since. That faithful promise is confirmed in the birth of Jesus “‘and they shall call his name Immanuel’ (which means, God with us)” (Matthew 1:23). In Revelation, the texts testify the fulfillment of God’s promise to be with us: "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God” (Revelation 21:3).
The true model of kingship is fully expressed as a servanthood model. It is authoritative rule through genuine care, mercy, justice, compassion, and love for God’s creation. That is the fruit of life produced by the indwelling of the Spirit, and the apostle Paul illustrates in Galatians 5:22. God holds human beings accountable to his good creation, not to rule and have dominion over all creatures with distortion, contamination, and destruction, but rather in love, possession, care, cultivation, and enjoyment, for all creation is God’s property. “The pattern of servant-kingship is very clear, and it is modeled perfectly of course by Jesus himself, the perfect human and the son of God, when he deliberately demonstrates his status as Lord and Master by washing the disciple’s feet. Kingship exercised his servanthood: that is Christ’s way, and it should be ours too.”

3.4.3 Prophets

The Old covenant prophets are the Spirit anointed and sent into the nations as God’s mouthpiece speaking to the people of Israel. Jesus indeed serves as a unique Prophet with divine authority that is identifiable from the Old, “And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord” (Isaiah 61:2). Luke 4:18 echoes the same: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he anointed me to proclaim the good news to the poor.” Although the prophets are filled with the Spirit, they often directly and openly confronted the issue of idolatry and moral failures of the people in the Old Testament events. The prophetic words pierced the hearts of the people and Jewish leaders “for God himself is judge” (Ps 50:6).

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72 Wright, The Mission of God.,20
Prophets speak up for God against the brokenness of their social system and the failure of the kingship. However, Israel failed to be God’s image bearing nation to exalt God’s name to the nations that provokes the wrath of God. In his mercy, Israel still remained a covenant people and was not forsaken by the covenant keeping God who is always at work in mission. His redemptive mission continues in Jesus teaching the truth, healing the sick, forgiving sin, proclaiming the kingdom of God and his coming to make all things new. Jesus is the God embodied Prophet and final means of God’s speaking to the world. The Scripture testifies this truth. “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world” (Heb 1:1-2).

God in various ways and means reveals himself through his voice and mighty acts to save and discipline the nation of Israel. The Old Testament prophets fulfilled the ministry of prophets who faithfully spoke on God’s behalf to the people about their present situation in relation to God and the Law requirement. None of them acted like Moses whom the Law was given through him and to him. He administers as a mediator between God and people in salvation. Moses asserts a Prophet who is far better than him will be appointed namely Jesus. “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers-it is to him you shall listen” (Deut. 18:15). Today, the Old Testament prophetic ministries have reached the climax in Jesus, the par excellent Prophet who is the Son of God in whom we shall listen for. He is the Word and the object of the prophecy. Jesus is not only the message of the Old Testament prophets declared and the Law of Moses, he is the prophetic message itself “the Word” (John 1:1-3) and the fulfillment of the law (Mt. 5:17). He is the oral authenticity of Prophet who is
doing the Father’s will, for he said, “I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me” (John 5:30).

Furthermore, when the Sarmatian woman encounters Jesus concerning her husbands, Jesus goes straight to the right answer that was shocking to her and said, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet” (4:19). A pharisee named Simon also was convinced of the identity of Jesus and recognized him as a Prophet including the crowd because they held Jesus to be a prophet (Luke 7:39; Mt 21:46). Jesus the Prophet serves not only to speak to us; he is the voice and the Word of God (John 1:1-4). The miracle of healing and echoism demonstrate the authoritative power that only God can do. He is “the mediator of a new covenant” (Heb. 9:15), the new mediator and the only Prophet who is appointed with authority to reconcile the redeemed to God through his atoning sacrifice to find peace in him. He is the objects of all prophets.

3.4.4 Priest
Adam is supposed to be ruling and representing God as loyal priesthood to serve between creation and God. Likewise, he represents the whole creation to God on their behalf of creatures and creation. Priests are anointed ones who perform sacrifice, interpret the laws, and bring reconciliation. They are called to be holy ministers to bless and purify people by sprinkling the blood of animals. Adam was a priest before the fall and walked in peaceful friendship with God. Adam and Eve were ruling and caring for creation as God’s representative. Adam and Eve in Eden were to care and keep the garden, and so are the priests who are responsible to care and keep the tabernacle. They represent the creation to God, and as God’s image bearers, priests also represent God to the creation. In exodus, the role of priests to serve in Tabernacle represents heavenly God living among the people on earth. Priesthood allows the priest to offer sacrifices
on behalf of Israel and bring God’s blessing over Israel. Priests represent God to the people and also represent people to God. They serve as a sacred agent to bring heaven and earth together as settled on the top of the mountains. In addition to the priesthood, they receive wisdom from God which is the law of creation in order and form, and priests rule the creation according to the law of God. The whole creation with the presence of God ruled under God’s representatives are called priesthood. In Exodus, the people of Israel were redeemed and YHWH the God said to them, “and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). So priests are to be holy so that they can engage in the priesthood and minister between God and his people. The identity of human is more than creatures but a holy people with specific responsibility and mission to make the Creator God and his name known and honor him. That is why apostle Paul echoes the same statement and quotes, “but you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellences of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9).

The Old Testament figure Melchizedek serves as a figure of stereotyped priest who ministered to Abraham. He was both priest and king and highly respected and revered by Abraham. The story of Melchizedek in Genesis 14:18-20 records that Abraham defeated Chedorlaomer and the kings: “Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) And he blessed [Abraham]” (14:18-19). Abraham highly revered him and “gave him a tenth of everything.” The holy priesthood renders to us as a sacred office to bring God’s blessing to those who fear the Lord God. There are other biblical figures functioning as priests in the Old Testament such as Adam, Abraham, Moses, and David, but they failed to perform in some ways to honor the holiness of God until Jesus came to restore this holy
priesthood. Jesus the high priest came down from heaven to restore the kingship and priesthood. After his baptism, a voice from heaven saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Mt 3:17), and that affirmation of the Sonship in Father-Son relationship is in Psalm 2:7, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.” Shortly after, Jesus began his ministry in preaching and proclaiming the kingdom of God, performing miracles, caring for the needy, and forgiving sins of people. His high priest status came to its climax on the theme of his transfiguration on a mountain top where he was transfigured before Peter, James, and John. “And behold, there appeared to them, there were Moses, Elijah talking with him” (Mt 17:3). Jesus indeed served as priest, not only to reveal grace and truth of God to all the peoples, but also to offer himself as a holy and living sacrifice, blameless for the sin of all the peoples. The authority of heaven and earth have been given to Jesus as king who rules over Pontius Pilate, kings, and creation in heaven above and the earth beneath. Today, Jesus’s priesthood continues through the power of the Holy Spirit in preaching and witnessing Christ. The disciples are priests with mission to preach repentance and faith and bring the blessings through Jesus Christ our king and priest.

3.4.5 Jesus is the Judge

In the Old Testament, the covenant blessing and cures are interwoven through the historical events of exodus and exile in the Bible. God will judge the righteous and the wicked with blessing and curse, “but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth” (Isa 11:4). Psalmists praise the Lord as righteous God, “for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he” (Ps.32:4). And Deuteronomy declares the same. Then prophet Isaiah proclaims the foreseeing future, the promised Messiah will come to be for us our Lord, lawgiver, judge, and king (Isa. 33:22). “Then
a throne will be established in steadfast love, and on it will sit in faithfulness in the tent of David
one who judges and seeks justice and is swift to do righteousness” (Isaiah 16:5). There is no one
righteous and all sin, for “God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for
every matter and for every work” (Eccl. 3:17). The characteristics of God the judge is found in
Duet. 32:4. “The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and
without iniquity, just and upright.” That judgement to those who reject God in Jesus will gnash
of their teeth when the Son of Man returns with glory. To the broken hearted, the meek, and
those that thirst for righteousness, the kingdom of God and the day of judgement is a time to
rejoice and worship. The apostle Paul insists his hope “on that day when, according to my
gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus” (Rom 2:16). John had his vision in the
final judgement before the great white throne where according to the name written in the book of
life (Rev. 20:11-15).

In John’s gospel, Jesus is identified as the judge of the world, not acting on his own
authority but uniting with the will of God the Father and the Son of Man. He said, “The Father
judges no one, but has given all judgement to the Son” (John 5:22). In Matthew 25:31-46, the
Son of Man will judge all the nations, “and these will go away into eternal punishment, but the
righteous into eternal life.” The apostles are chosen for mission not to be moral and ethical
teachers, but “to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be
judge of the living and the dead” (Acts 10:42; 17:30ff). Paul is emphatic that all the peoples
must appear before the judgement seat of Christ “so that each one may receive what is due for
what he has done in the body, whether good or evil” (2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim 4:1). The righteous
judge will come to restore the corruption of the world system and re-establish the holy Eden
where the heaven and the earth will come together again when Christ enthroned as king and judge, for “Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgements are true and just” (Rev.19:1-2).

3.4.6 Jesus is Messiah

The word Messiah is “the anointed one”, “the chosen one” in Hebrew that is a prophetic hope in life, prayer, and worship of the nation of Israel during the time of exile. The Jews in the New Testament still hold out this hope for a mighty deliverer, the promised Messiah, who will come to conquer the Roman emperor and restore Israel. The cry for another exile seems uncertain because Judea is still under Roman authority, the world power, although their anticipation of messianic power is different from God’s plan. Distinctively God shall redefine the real power that will one day re-establishes his kingdom and bring peace to new creation. The messianic promise can be stretched back to Genesis 3:15 when Adam and Eve were deceived by the evil serpent. YHWH God declares, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” The prophet Micah spoke of the little town of Bethlehem that will be the location of the birth of the coming Messiah. “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days” (Micah 5:2). The birth of Jesus was in Bethlehem of Judea as written by the prophet, and the wise men from the east came and worship him, “the king of the Jews” (Matthew 2:1-2).

Jesus does not openly identify himself as the Messiah, but the title he uses are “the Son of Man” and “the Son of God” indirectly linked to the Old Testament Scriptures written about his
vocation and purpose for mission. The Messiah was sent to die for human sin and iniquities. Mission to suffer and die? Exactly. The mission to suffer is God’s will revealed in the word of prophet where the suffering servant will be wounded and crushed for our transgressions and iniquities (Isaiah 53), “Yet is was the will of the Lord to crush him he has put him to grief,…the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand” (53:10). All peoples shall be healed of their sins with the wounds of the promised Messiah, namely for the forgiveness of sin. The death of the suffering servant vindicates the victory of the Messiah and is also God’s victory over sin, death and evil of the world power. And Jesus, the Messiah of Israel and all the nations will transform us into new creation where God will make the renewed creation on earth as it is in heavenly dwelling among all peoples. The works of Jesus performed reveal his authority to perform his messiahship and proclaim the kingdom of God. With his authority, he called the Twelve to participate in his kingdom mission and they left behind families, possessions, and jobs to follow him (Mk 1:16-20). The Messiah of Israel is with mission to unite twelve tribe of Israel as one nation, so does in the name of Jesus Christ. When Jesus entered a synagogue in Capernaum, people were astonished “for he taught them as one who had authority” and not like other teachers of the law (1:22; Lk 5:17-26).

Sometimes people are still wondering with the same doubt John the Baptist had concerning Jesus if he is indeed the promised Messiah? When he was in prison, he sent words to Jesus by his disciples to confirm, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” (Matthew 11:2-3). Jesus did not rebuke this silly question they brought up. Instead Jesus quotes Isaiah 61:1 and affirms the signs and wonders that indicates that Jesus is the Messiah (Matthew 11:4-6; Isa 35:5-6). Jesus’s acts of authority reveal in the gospel accounts
through various means in teaching, healing, forgiving and proclaiming. He calms a storm proves his dominion over creation (Mk 4:35-41). Even a demon recognized who Jesus of Nazareth is and said, “I know who you are -the Holy One of God” (1:24; Lk 4:31-37), and the demon was cast out under Jesus command. The crowd seeing this were amazed. “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits” (1:27). The identity of Jesus’s messiahship reaches its climax to forgive sins. Apostle Paul counts spiritual blessing in Christ by saying, “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph 1:7). All the scribes and pharisees were accusing Jesus of blasphemy to forgive sins, but Jesus sees their hearts questioning his deed. He claims, “the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” (Lk 5:24; Mt 9:1-8; Mk 2:1-12). These texts once again reinforce all the prophets and Scripture written about Jesus, the anointed one must be fulfilled. “Since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him” (John17:2). The four gospel writers corporately record Jesus’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem as the fulfillment of Zachariah and that discloses Jesus’s messiahship (Mk.11:1-10;Mt 21:1-11; Lk 19:28-40; John 12:12-19).

The apostle Paul insists God made himself know to us through his glorious creation and historical events of the Bible in the Old and the New Testament. For God’s invisible attributes, eternal power, and divine nature “have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20). It is clear that in the past, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son (James 1), for “No one has ever seen God”; the only Son Jesus who has made Him known (John 1:18). Christ came to us with a mission to do the Father’s will. “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word
of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:1-3). “God made himself known in Christ who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new" (Revelation 21:5). God’s mission is to redeem people from sin, bring us His kingdom, and for all nations to worship Him.
4. New Creation

4.1 Jesus with a mission
The gospel of Matthew begins with the genealogy of Jesus Christ, “the son of David, the son of Abraham.” The gospel of Mark reports him to be “the Son of God.” Both accounts point to Jesus as he was anticipated in the Old Testament and who he authenticates himself to be in the New Testament. These texts affirm Jesus’ fulfillment of God’s covenantal promises with Abraham and David; the incarnation of the Messiah of Israel, the King of the Jews and LORD over all nations. In Psalm 2:7-8 we read, “You are my Son;…and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.” In this sense, Jesus the Messiah comes to effectuate God’s vows with His chosen patriarchs: to restore the people of Israel and to extend His sovereign blessing to all nations.

The Israelite camp responded with one voice to God’s promises, “All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do.” (Exodus 24:3) However, the obligation of obedience to all God’s will proved too much for the sons and daughters of the first Adam. Only the Son of God and Son of Man could fulfill the obligation of perfect obedience to and perfect reflection of His Father’s character. “The mission of the Servant was both to restore Israel to YHWH and also to be the agent of God’s salvation reaching to the ends of the earth(Isa 49:6).” The mission of the Servant of the LORD was to become God’s agent of salvation “reaching to the ends of the earth” (Isaiah 49:6) by (1.) restoring Israel to its proper covenantal relationship with YHWH and (2.) making God the Father known to all nations through His humble and comprehensive compliance with God’s Law by teaching, giving signs, wonders and “becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:8.)

73 Wright, The Mission of God”,65
Jesus reveals God the Father (John 1:18) to his Jewish disciples and Gentiles alike. To those who come to Christ in repentance and faith, Jesus provides a pure and holy eternal life in His presence in which one’s sins are remembered no more. Jesus is the full knowledge of the gospel of God for those who are blind and, to this day, walk in darkness. “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” (Heb 2:14) Just as God rescued the Children of Israel from Egyptian slavery and dwelt with them through the wilderness, Jesus devoted his earthly missionary efforts to walking with his disciples among the populace in towns, villages and cities of the Levant, speaking and teaching, caring for the needy and in every way identifying Himself as “the way, the truth and the life.” (John 14:6) "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. (Revelation 21:1-3) From creation to the end of earthly time, our intimate relationship with the holy and sovereign God of the universe echoes the truth, “I will be your God and you are my people.” (Genesis 1:27-28; Exodus 6:7; Rev. 21:3.) It dramatically demonstrates the reunion of heaven and earth, new creation, new humanity, the temple of the whole earth. It’s a new creation not by means of destruction but the LORD’s redemption and transformation. There shall be no more tears, pain and death. (Rev. 21:4.) The old age of sin, death and evil has gone and the new has come: God’s pure and righteous kingdom.

74 Ibid.,122-123
Today we ask, “your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10)” Tomorrow we shall see our King returning to earth, bringing a holy city of Jerusalem to unite divinity and creation in perfect unity, harmony, peace, love and righteousness.

4.2 Jesus reveals the Father

Jesus preaches the gospel of God to unlock the mystery of the gospel knowledge of God’s will to the nations. His mission is dependent upon God the Father’s mission. Through his life and works, Jesus revealed the Father, so that the light of the Gospel can be seen and the good news can be heard in the dark and silent places of this world. The Apostle Paul understood his missional task well: to preach this gospel of the true and living God to the families of all nations around the world. Paul was invited to participate by the God of Israel and chosen to enter into covenant relationship with him. He also shares the covenant obligations as Abraham received to bless the nations through God’s words and works.

Paul’s apostleship is grounded in his universal commission by sharing the light of Christ through the knowledge of the gospel of God to the Gentile world, and said “In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:4-6)” Paul perceives the essence of the

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76 Wright, Christopher JH. The mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's grand narrative. Inter-Varsity Press, 2020.,123
gospel is to let the light of Jesus shine through the darkness, so that people may see the way out and live unto Him.

Jesus was sent by the Father to do His will. The word “mission” has to do with sending and the “goal” of mission implies an accomplishment. The will of God the Father is to bless all nations through Israel. As in the past, God called Abraham on mission into new lands, so in the New Testament, Jesus sent his disciples on mission to share the news of the kingdom of heaven and after his resurrection, all believers are commissioned to go and make disciples of all nations. (Matthew 28:19-20) God’s mission is to bless all peoples and creation and he does so through his Son, Jesus who embodies and imputes that blessing to all who believe. “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom He has chosen as His heritage!” (Psalm 33:12) “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places…making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” (Eph. 1:3, 9-10)

In sum, “Christ is all and in all.” (Col. 3:11) The Father God’s mission determined the mission of the Son, Jesus. This dynamic is explicitly expressed in Jesus’ prayer in John 17. “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you…to give eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent, I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do…I have manifested your name to the people you have given me out of the world.” (John 17:1-6)
4.2.1 Jesus is the reconciler between mankind and God. 
If we are in Christ, we are a new creation. (II Cor. 5:17) Old Testament believers had God’s covenantal promises, miracles and prophecies but the challenge of obedience always proved overwhelming as the outpoured Spirit of the Lord upon individuals was an uncommon gift. Indeed, the sins of our Old Testament siblings underscore the impossibility of perfectly pleasing God out of merely human resources; every man, woman and child needs God’s saving grace. New Testament believers are enabled to live a life of humble obedience to God because we have been given that salvation in Christ Jesus and in addition, we receive two other gifts: the example of our Lord’s obedience and humility - even to death on the cross - and the indwelling Spirit which conforms our hearts and minds in devotion to His truth and the will to do as He directs. (II Chronicles 28:9) This new life does not guarantee a “smooth” life but the company of the Holy Spirit and the grace of Christ gives us the ability to walk with endurance through affliction and suffering for the sake of our Lord and Savior. The Apostle Paul confirms this truth: “But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.” (II Cor. 4:7-10) To be a Christian is to recognize our flesh and blood vulnerabilities, and yet understand and trust in the surpassing power of our Heavenly Father, who through Jesus is reconciling “all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.” (Col. 1:20)

4.2.2 Jesus came to preach and proclaim the kingdom of God
Jesus vividly identifies his mission when he says that “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God…; for I was sent for this purpose.” (Luke 4:43) He was sent to preach the gospel of God’s kingdom and urges people to “repent and believe.” (Mark 1:15)
What is the good news of which Jesus is speaking? The prophet Isaiah proclaimed the anointed One shall not only bring good news of the kingdom but also freedom, justice and comfort to all peoples. “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.” (Isaiah 61:1-2, Luke 4:18-19) This Jesus, the Son of God who came to tell us there is another world where we really belong, it is the kingdom of God where we can find true “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” (Gal. 5:22)

4.2.3 Jesus came to find the lost
“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” (Luke 19:10) The prophet Isaiah pointed out the problem facing the people of Israel - and us: “We all like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6) Paul repeats Isaiah’s truth when he addresses both Jews and Greeks: “None is righteous, no, not one; no now understands; no one seeks for God.” (Romans 3:11) The only way the lost will return home is to be prompted by the Holy Spirit to seek Him and to be found by Him. (I Chronicles 28:9, Matthew 7:7-8, II Timothy 1:9) Jesus, though in the form of God, set aside his glory and made himself nothing; was born in the most humble of circumstances and walked as a man among us. He poured himself out as an offering for our sins and gives believers the gift of abundant life everlasting. (Phil. 2: 6-8) He emptied himself for the fullness of our eternal joy in right relationship with God. He came to provide for all our needs: identity, forgiveness, reconciliation, new life, new faith and a new world which is the coming new heaven and new earth which in Him and through Him will exist and under His reign will flourish.
In addition, Jesus came to find “those who are sick” (Luke 5:31), to assure them that God’s kingdom is available to them. Jesus’ list of those who will enter the kingdom of heaven recorded by Matthew (5:1-12) includes those who are poor in spirit, those who mourn, who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, peacemakers and the persecuted. Clearly, one aspect of the good news is bad news for the world: those whose ambitions are set on geopolitical power, wealth and selfish lust will not see heaven. But those who repent and place their faith in Christ are no longer held captive by depravity and slavery to sin. Just as our Lord redeemed His people from the house of bondage and led them out of Egypt through the wilderness and into the Promised Land, Christ is our redeemer and the One we follow until He brings us to the home He has prepared for us; the land where we will be blessed eternally and have the privilege of enjoying His presence, as in the Garden. Jesus came with a mission to free us and our privilege will be the eternal worship of our One and true living God.

4.2.4 Jesus came with a mission to die and live for us

The sovereign rule and power of God was manifested through God’s words and activities in the Old and extended to the New in the Son of God who came to die according to the Scriptures. Again, Jesus’ perfect obedient even to death is according to God’s will. The Apostle Paul reaffirms it; Christ’s death and resurrection was essential to God’s plan to rescue and bless all peoples who place their trust in Him. “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.” (I Corinthians 15:3-4) In another text, we read, “saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.” (Acts 26:22-23) “Thus it is written, that the Christ
should sugar and on the third day rise from the dead.” (Luke 24:26) As noted in the preceding section concerning God’s mission to bless the nations through a descendant of Abraham, Jesus’ death and resurrection from the dead, the Scripture tells us that “God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.” (Acts 3:26) “For the promised messiah was sent to suffer on our behalf.” (Isaiah 53:3-7)

4.2.5 Jesus will bring a new heaven and earth together

Jesus came with a mission to renew the covenant, to redeem the whole creation and its peoples, and reestablish God’s kingdom. God’s mission is to bless the nations through his chosen people and in accordance with God’s will - despite the idolatry and rebellious actions of the Israelites - our messiah became incarnate and was born of a virgin, a descendant of David, of Abraham, of Adam. John saw that vision “and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, …and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Revelation 7:9-10) Through Jesus, the son of Abraham “ all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen 12:3; 17:5) We may envisage the imagery of the peoples holding palm branches shouting “hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”(Mt 21:9) Men and women, elderly and children will come out of the cities dancing and singing as if King David stork down Philistine and returned the city of Israel. People praised God for salvation, wisdom and victory belong to the Lord.77 For the Lord reigns and the new Jerusalem that is full of righteousness, joy and peace. “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.

But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. (Isaiah 65:17-19)

Some Bible readers may wonder what is this paradise look like and how do we get there? The answer not we are going up but the new heaven and earth will be coming down to us “in heaven as it is on earth.” It is a garden of Eden theme reappears again to us as John saw “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”(Revelation 22:1-2) That will present to us comprehensively as we have gone through the survey of different stages in the biblical narrative. In the vision, John wrote, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." (Revelation 21:1-5) “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”(22:12-13)
4.3 People with a mission

God’s creation climaxed in creating male and female after God’s image (Gen 1:17) and that is what distinct mankind from rest of the species and animals on earth. That means humanity is to reflect the characteristic of God in every way and be identical with Him. Just like the products out of the same company should represent certain quality that is recognized by the market. From missional and theological perspective, to be human is defined in God’s purpose for human life with the missional mandate within the God’s creation. Wright offers a great insight concerning the mission of humanity and said: “The human race exists on the planet with a purpose that flows from the creative purpose of God himself. Out of his understanding of our humanity flows our ecological responsibility, our economic activity involving work, productivity, exchange and trade, and the whole cultural mandate.”

The purposeful role of humanity is stated precisely in Genesis 1:28, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over..." (Genesis 1:28) and was authorized with the obligation to work and keep the God’s creation.(2:15) Obviously we can easily observe that most of the biblical history involves the people of Israel in God’s law, faith, worship, ethical dimension, and relation with the nations around them. Identically the chosen race of Israel is to fulfill the covenant obligation of Abraham, go therefore be a blessing to all the nations.(Gen 12:3) That is the missional purpose of God for Israel and the people of God for the nations. Concerning God’s creation and blessing Richard Bauckham said “Blessing is the way God enables his creation to be fertile and fruitful, to grow and to flourish. It is in the most comprehensive sense God’s purpose for his creation….Salvation too is God’s blessing, since salvation is the fulfillment of God’s good purposes for creatin, purposes already expressed in creation. But salvation is the fulfillment of God’s purposes in spite of the damage evil does to God’s creation….The ultimate

78 Wright, The Mission of God., 65
goal of God’s promise to Abraham is that blessing will prevail over curse. It does so when the seed of Abraham, the singled-out descendant of Abraham, the Messiah, becomes “a curse for us…so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles” (Galatians 3:13-14). …The gospel is that in Christ Jesus the curse has been set aside and God’s creative purpose for the blessing of his creation is established beyond any possibility of reversal.”

4.3.1 To trust and obey

The mission of people can be interpreted as repentance and faith, obey and trust the voice of God. That allows us to overcome the temptation of the serpent and restore what was lost as authorized representative of the Creator in the knowledge and worship YHWH, the one true God of Israel and be his witnesses to all the peoples. Abrahamic blessing becomes ours and that must be established in the foundation of that kind of faith with obedience. In the New Testament, Paul’s theology argues that sinners are justified by faith that is from the kind of faith he found in the Hebrew Scripture of the Bible saying “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” (Rom 4:3) Who are we as God’s people? To be a blessing to the nations is the obligation of those who are in covenant relationship with God, and our mission is totally derived from and depend on God’s mission, which is covenantal and ethical. People’s obedience and faith is before God and testifies to the nations. What we have to do with Abraham and the blessing? Well, we might find answer from Paul’s letter to the Galatians concerning the gospel. “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." (Galatians 3:8) Just as Abraham was justified by faith, those who now claim to spiritual sons of Abraham also justified

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by faith in Christ and received the blessing. That confirmation of a blessing to all the nations is in harmony with the covenant of blessing that “all nations shall be blessed.” through Abraham. (Gen 12:3)  

4.3.2 To be a blessing to all the nations

God’s blessing is both veridical and horizontal and it lies in right relationship with God and with other human beings within God’s good creation. This command is summed up in Deuteronomy 6:4-7 and Matthew 22:37-40 to love God and love others with the whole being. Knowing the source of blessing comes from God who created heaven and the earth. Jacob knew this well even when he was blessing Joseph at so aged and said, “And he blessed Joseph and said, "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day, …and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." (Genesis 48:15-16) Moreover, the vertical blessing shall reach to those whom around the people of God as confirmed by the Scriptures in the Old Testament such as the blessing of Laban was brough by Jacob, of Potiphar and Pharaoh by Joseph. Those who share faith in Christ were brought into Abrahamic commission to be blessed and bring a blessing to the nations as Paul emphasized in Galatians. Furthermore, the covenant language will reoccur through the journey of Israel’ history in the Bible until apostle Paul picks it up in defending his preaching against some Jewish Christians in church Antioch (Acts 15).

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80 Walvoord, John F. *The Bible knowledge commentary: An exposition of the Scriptures.* David C Cook, 1985., 597
81 Wright, Christopher JH. *The mission of God’s people: A biblical theology of the church’s mission.* Zondervan, 2010. 67-68
Wright points out the essence of Paul’s gospel preaching combines in four things; the promise of God, the faith of Abraham, the mission of God to bless all nations through the seed of Abraham and the saving implications of those who share the faith of Abraham. Paul support his argument by prioritizing Abraham’s story in a missional hermeneutic. “And this, says Paul-this dynamic narrative of God’s saving purpose for all nations through Abraham-is the heart of the gospel as announced by the Scripture.” To the contemporary Christians, we may possibly wonder how are we identify ourselves with far ancient Jewish Christians, Israel and being considered as the children of Abraham? Paul has his Jewish root of Torah and a renewed understanding of the priority of Abraham narrative in the mission of God, he argues “Just as Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. 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." So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.” (Galatians 3:6-9) The key point Paul was trying to explain is the saving grace of God purposely extended through the promise he made with Abraham that all nations will be blessed/saved through the seed of Abraham, the line of Jesse, Jesus the Messiah of Israel and Savior of all nations. This once again reaffirms the identity and works of YHWH that Jesus shares in the Scripture. “And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.” (Galatians 3:29)

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82 Wright, The Mission of God.,193
4.3.3 To keep the way of the Lord

The world as it is today may not be much different as it was in Sodom and Gomorrah. The community of the wicked deserved only the judgement of God upon the land and the people, because the contamination of God’s holiness and the purification of the soil and the people inside out are necessary. So God sent the righteous Abraham to the city that was corrupt, full of evil and arrogance so that the light of God might shine into that darkness and be transformed. Abrahamic model of mission requires obedience and ethics, holiness and trust. When we talk about “the way of the Lord”, we focus on the way of righteousness which is the way of Christ saying "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." (John 14:6) Moses commands his people, to live is to obey God’s voice. “You shall walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land that you shall possess. (Deuteronomy 5:33) What is requirement of God’s people according to the Scripture? “to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8) Christians are called to be witnesses of Christ and make God known to the world. Psalmists urge the significance of it and said, “May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. (Psalm 67:1-2) The goal of the gospel is to reach all peoples and places to the end of the earth.

4.3.4 To live as redeemed people, a new creation in Christ

The word “redeemed” is to be understood comprehensively from the story of exodus. Redemption requires “God’s merciful and costly action on behalf of his people. The basic meaning of the word is release or freedom on payment of a price, deliverance by a costly
Redemption is God’s saving grace for his people and the ransom must be paid by God for the powerless of sinful men. The Redeemer who saves people whom God liberated from the bondage of slavery in the land of Egypt, that is recorded in the Bible where we get to know God and people, faithfulness and idolatry, blessing and curse, judgement and redemption, the servant of the Lord and Lord Jesus.

We are the people who live under the oppression of modern world today as if we were still living in the land of Egypt under the world power of Pharaoh. In this sense, we continue struggling with identity, fear, sickness and death. Humanness has been under dominion of this world system by the oppression of the powerful, the rich, the strong and the Satanic evil that have enslaved the people and creation. The weak, marginalized, mourned, despised and hungry for righteousness are crying out for God’s mercy and redemption. They need to be delivered from domain of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of God, Jesus. They need to be touched by the gospel of Christ and the forgiveness of sin. They need the crucified Christ to bring healing and reconciliation with God. What the nations need is the blessing that God’s people share and witness so that they might experience the true living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the messiah of Israel and the Savior of the world Jesus Christ. The people of God are redeemed to share and unfold the exodus story of redemption in the Bible theologically, missionally and eschatologically.

4.3.5 To be the image and faith renewed people of God

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If the mirror is too blurred, it cannot reflect the original appearance. Diamonds cannot shine without light. “Israel was a people of hope, she focused on the future, not the past.”84 We are newly created in Christlikeness and Christians should put on the righteousness of Christ, not only believe the gospel of God but also live out the gospel as renewed people that represent God. The importance of human race was created in God’s “image” and “likeness” that means all people represent God to the world and this perception should link directly to Abrahamic covenant (Gen12:3). The honor and splendor as human in nature is so unique that “the whole person is the image of the whole, that is the triune, God. The human soul, all the human faculties, the virtues of knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, and even the human body images God….From the beginning creation was arranges, and human nature was immediately so created that is was amenable to, and fit for, the highest degree of conformity to God and for the most intimate indwelling of God.”85 Israel experienced God’s saving grace through exodus, for this, they should know who they are and their existence as God’s chosen people in God’s world for God’s mission. “ you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”(Exodus 19:4-6)

4.3.6 To be holy for godly priesthood

Priestly role is to bring people to God and be mediator between God and people by teaching them the law of God (Lev. 10:11; Deut. 33:10; Jer.18:18) and bringing sacrifices of the people to God. More importantly, Priests must aware of their holy duty to bless God’s people, praise and worship in response to God’s mercy for redemption and forgiveness of sin in the name

84 Bavinck, Herman. "Reformed Dogmatics: Volume Two–God and Creation, trans." John Vriend. Epub version.,531
85 Bavinck, Herman.,530
of YHWH. (Num. 6:22-27)\(^{86}\) Peter in the New Testament echoes the same calling from Ex 19:4-6 and applied it to early Christians and said “you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9-10) The key point of this passage to know God’s chosen is not without purpose, people are made for God’s mission to “proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”

4.3.7 To witness the gospel of Christ

What is distinct us from others outside of faith? Wright said it well, “ ‘we are gospel people’”(pm p.179) and Paul tell us the gospel we proclaim is “in accordance with the Scripture.’ ” (1Cor 15:1-4)\(^{87}\) And Jesus told his disciple all the Scriptures was written concerning him must be fulfilled and the disciples are all witnesses of these things, and so do we modern Christians. What is the good news in the Old Testament story? Bosch wittily states: “If there is a missionary in the Old Testament, it is God Himself who will, as his eschatological deed par excellence, bring the nations to Jerusalem to worship him there together with his covenant.” …McIntosh defines God’s mission as doing everything possible to communicate salvation to the world.”\(^{88}\) Sending and leaving is stereotype of partnership in God’s missional task. God sent Abraham, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.(Gen 12:1). To Moses, God commanded him, “Go in to Pharaoh and say to him,”(Ex 9:1) To Joseph, he said “ God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth.”(Gen 45:7-9). Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me,

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\(^{86}\) Wright, The Mission of God’s People.,120-121
\(^{87}\) Wright, The Mission of God’s People., 179
even so I am sending you.”(John 20:21) So it’ll be nonnegotiable for the people of God today to be sent by Lord Jesus for the Great Commission to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.”(Mt 28:19ff) What is the good news in the New? Mark in the beginning of his gospel account proclaims it straightforward “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”(Mk1:1) The gospel is graciously accepted by God and obey in response to his saving grace and love. The gospel is what God has already done through Jesus Christ to make all things in right relationship with God. J. I Packer puts it in a very concise statement that “God saves sinners”. Keller asserts “The gospel is new that creates a life of love, but the life of love is not itself the gospel.” And Francis Schaeffer argues “so Christian community is the ‘final apologetic’ ”

4.3.8 To be redeemed to worship God
The ultimate purpose of Redemption is to worship God, the Creator of heaven and earth. As the Lord commanded Moses to go to Pharaoh and say to him “Let my people go, so that they may worship me.”(Ex. 8:1) Humanity is created to enjoy God’s blessing within this good creation and enjoy his holy dwelling with the whole creation. The redeemed are to worship the Creator God instead of creation, for God is righteous Judge. Paul condemns the false worship, “because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! (Romans 1:25) God’s people know God through his words and works through the texts in the Old Testament and believe the messiah Jesus Christ for salvation and new creation. We worship Triune God through praise and prayer because he

made himself known in and through Jesus as we read the Scriptures concerning him encompass past, present and the future. (Isa 55:3,11; Ps.148)

4.3.9 All the nations will be drawn to the God of Israel

The nations shall witness the God of Israel who is “the mighty in acts of God.” All nations will come to know God and be beneficiaries of Israel and worship Him. Why? Because they saw what God had done for his people. They heard the voice of God from Israel’s prophets and kings. Even the Egyptians, Pharaoh, the Canaanites, Assyrians and Babylonians were trembled because of mighty acts of God in judgement of the wicked. All the peoples on earth shall fear and worship God who rule over the universe. God is worth of our out pouring praise and worship, he is the God of gods and Lord of lords. Psalmist praise him with fear and in awe of him, "How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies come cringing to you. 4 All the earth worships you and sings praises to you; they sing praises to your name.” (Psalm 66:3-4) “There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours. All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God.” (Psalm 86:8-10)90

There are some texts have clarification of national praise to YHWH’s redemptive work for the nation of Israel. The nations were attracted to the Lord and all creation praising him, “Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are

90 Wright, Christopher JH. The mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's grand narrative. Inter-Varsity Press, 2020.,478-479
exalted as head above all. (1 Chronicles 29:11) “All the earth worships you and sings praises to you; they sing praises to your name.” (Psalm 66:4) Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! (Psalm 95:6) When the Day of the Lord comes all the nations will join together and worship the King and praising him, "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created." (Revelation 4:11)

4.4 Church with a mission
In Luke 24:45-47 clearly paints a graphic of mission Jesus entrusted to his church with missional imperative: “you are witnesses” and “you will be my witnesses” Isa 43:10-12 Christians are called to be the witnesses of Christ because the Bible story affirms a theological truth that Israel knew and experienced the identity of the true and living God. So they are entrusted to bear his witness to the nations and their gods around them. David Bosch observes: “What is decisive for the Church today is not the formal agreement between what she is doing and what some isolated biblical texts seem to be saying but rather her relationship with the essence of the message of Scripture.”91

4.4.1 “Repent” first and then “Go”
Jesus’ first command is “repent”, only when the whole church body repent can they return to be faithful Israel and renewed their relationship with God, so then the mission of God will be theirs and all the Great Commission begins to make sense to the faithful.92 It is time for the church to do the evangelistic work that Jesus, the greatest evangelist models for us and put it

91 Wright, The Mission of God., 36
92 Wright, The Mission of God’s People., 282
into practice. “The church is out there reporting a divine summons from the throne. The gospel massagers are announcing that the Lord of the harvest is on His way, and now is the our to surrender to His salvation in faith and repentance.”93 The God who claims the whole earth is his. He is sovereign and rules over the whole universe. From creation to new creation, all things were created for God the Creator’s glory, all the nations should come and worship for the ultimate excellency of God. Lesslie Newbigin comments “The church must be seen as the company of pilgrims on the way to the end of the word and the ends of the earth.”94 The psalmist declares the sovereignty of the Lord in Psalm 24:1, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,” The whole creation is God’s property and we are tenants living in his world as individual and the church community, our mission is dependent on God’s mission from the beginning.

The gospel of Jesus the Nazareth and the inauguration of the kingdom of God must be proclaimed, and the church of God is the mission of God for all the nations.95 John Piper has an inspiring thought on mission and the church, he said “Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not mission, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, mission will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever. Worship is, therefore, the fuel and the goal of missions.”96 The model of Abraham can be the mission of every believer and of the church, because the missional origin derives from the faith of God and active obedience of the faithful. The centrality

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93 Miller, Christopher J. *Powerful evangelism for the powerless*. P & R Publ., 1997.,22
94 Wright, *The Mission of God’s People.*, 28
95 Wright, *The Mission of God.*, 501
96 Wright, *The Mission of God’s People.*, 224
of mission is about believing and obeying, sending and going, disciple making and blessing, witnessing and worship.

Our discernment of Abrahamic covenant will be a safe guard of our understanding of God’s universal scope for mission, to Go and be a blessing (Gen 12:2). Jesus the Son of Abraham and Son of God whom God loves and sent for the Great Commission (Mt 28) that is commissioned to his disciples and the universal church of Christ. What it has to do with us as lay people who were considered just a regular church goers and worshiper? Those who are baptized into Christ shares the same faith of Abraham and are counted as righteousness, and have been brought into the covenant relationship with him. “As it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations” (Rom 6:16-17) In this hope, we are indeed the descendants of Abraham with the covenant obligation to bless the nations for the mission of God, of Jesus the messiah and of the church. So, here it is again, what is the mission of the church? Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert have it “as seen in the Great Commission, the early church in Acts, and the life of the apostle Paul-is to win people to Christ and build them up in Christ. Making disciples—that’s our task.”97 Tim Keller claims “A missional church will affirm that all Christians are people in mission in every area of their lives….must understand itself as a servant community….should practice Christian unity on the local level as much as possible.”98 The first great commission was given to Abraham and his descendants, and the son of Abraham Jesus gives to the church, the whole body of Christ. Therefore every believer and the church on earth cannot compromise this missional task, which is the mission of the church.

98 Ibid.,272-274
Concerning the mission of the church’s mission, Richard Bauckham states “the church’s mission is inseparable from continual repentance and constant heeding of God call to God-given holiness, faithfulness and discernment.”\(^9^9\) Unfortunately, we often see that the church has become the biggest obstruction of mission, and feel like the Great Commission is not attractive to church leaders and they desire something greater than Lord Jesus can give. Are we not renewed Adam and Eve through the new Adam Jesus who has overcome the worldly temptation (Mt. 4) It is in Christ, we inherit all spiritual blessings (Eph.1:3) for he is the ultimate good, knowledge and life eternal. In the Cross sin, death and evil power of Satan have been defeated by the crucified Christ and the resurrection inaugurates the new kingdom is to come.

Which Bible story are we the church living in? Are we representing Christ for creation care and show mercy and justice toward the poor, mourn, fatherless, despised and sojourners. The voice of calling for repentance and faith seems still ring in our ears. Since history, the corruption of church leadership and worship, the obsession and temptation of money, sex and power, and the church repeat over and over again. Sometimes the world is like the church and the church is like the world. Church community is a community with a mission to seek the peace and welfare of the city around her. We are called to confront social discrimination, unjust, lawless, immorality and oppression by proclaiming the gospel of Christ and live out of it. God sent the righteous to the city of evil and corruption to transform the place and people, to preach the gospel truth and teach them to walk in way of the Lord. Wright urges us “A divided, split and fighting church has nothing to say or to give to a divided, broken and violent world. An immoral

church has nothing to say to an immoral world.” Four Gospel writers recognize the centre of the mission for the early church and disciples (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 13:10; Lk. 24:44-49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8) with different versions. Yet, Jesus entrusts his church for this mission is rooted in his identity, passion, and victory as crucified and risen Messiah in Lk 24:45-47, and said “you are witnesses” (echoes the same word from Isaiah 43:10-12). One way to be witnesses of Christ and fulfill his command from particularity to universality for God’s mission is to evangelizing.

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100 Wright, The Mission of God’s People., 94
5. Evangelism & Preaching

What is evangelism?

Every professing Christian is called to proclaim the gospel and make God known to all nations. In the post-modern world, people can get a lot of teaching and share knowledge of Jesus, the Bible and the Gospel through various technologies, media and books. They are different in presentation and forms of evangelization that people have known of. “how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news! ….So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” (Romans 10:15) But what evangelism is all about? What is the message and motive for evangelism? What are the means of evangelism? The theological understanding of Jesus through messianic and eschatological reading of the Bible will help as we illustration evangelism. In 1980 the Archbishop’s committee gave a very insightful definition of evangelistic work of the church, “To evangelize is to present Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, that men shall come to put their trust in God through him, to accept him as their Savior, and serve him as their king in the fellowship of his church.”

Evangelization is not only to seek new converts through gospel preaching, but also to ask hearers to live in Christ's likeness and be his witnesses to the world.

An official Anglican committee declares evangelism is: “So to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, that men shall come to put their trust in God through Him, to accept Him as their Savior, and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His church.” This explanation sets a solid ground that evangelizing is to know Christ by presenting Christ who is the gospel (Mk.1:1) through the Holy Spirit to convict sin and reveal the truth to us. We are

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101 J.I Packer, “Evangelism And The Sovereignty of God.”, 42
enlightened by the power of the Holy Spirit to know Christ, not a moral teacher or miracle performer, but instead to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophet. Our Christian life is in participation in Jesus’ death and resurrection, and the union with Christ.

Evangelism is to present the person and work of Christ with joy and Thanksgiving; “the Word becomes flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14), the hope for the coming King and Savior who will reign forever. It is to be inviting to the great feast of Lord Jesus in Luke 14:15-24 “Blessed is everyone who will eat in kingdom of God, a man once gave a great banquet and invited many. And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited…” In English “gospel” literally means good news or good message as the biblical term evangelion that in Christine world today usually is used to express the good news of salvation in Christ Jesus. We are called to proclaim the good and joyful message of the Beatitudes for those who are the poor in spirit, the mourned and the meek, the hungry and the pure in heart, the peace maker and the persecuted. (Mt. 5:3-12)

The Archbishop’s Committee in 1981 well defined the term “To evangelize” declaring “is so to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, that men shall come to put their trust in God through him, to accept him as their Savior, and serve him as their King in the fellowship of his church”103 John Stott wrote on the Nature of Evangelism insisted “evangelism…is the proclamation of historical, biblical Christ as Savior and Lord.”104 To John

104 Stott, John RW. *The Lausanne Covenant: An Exposition and Commentary*. World Wide Publications, 1975. During the International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland, 1974, John Stott served as the chairman of the Drafting Committee for The Lausanne Covenant, and he wrote on the Nature of Evangelism.
Stott, it is equally significant to preach salvation of Jesus Christ and proclaim his lordship according to 1 Cor.1:23 “We preach Christ crucified” and (2 Cor.4:5) we preach…Jesus Christ as Lord”. He echoes the most-quoted term evangelism from 1974 Lausanne Covenant and defined evangelism as an compassionate act of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit to bring the lost to Christ and carrying out evangelism. In Puritan evangelism defined, it is “a Word-centered task of the church”. Although Puritans don’t use the term evangelism often, they were driven to be “fishers of men” and so committed not only to teach the Bible but to live in the Bible. Today, the contemporary world may seem so alleged to the biblical doctrine concerning moral laws and Christian ethics and miss the opportunity to emerge themselves in the love of God, feeding on Christ Jesus who is the bread of life and living water. That’s why one of the most searched topics online is the “meaning” and “purpose” of life?

The essence of Evangelism is our understanding of who Jesus is and to proclaim the good news of what he has accomplished for us, all that means “to bear witness to the truth.” (John 18:37), truth in theology and in practice, in words and deeds. “The heart of Apostolic preaching is Jesus Christ.” In early church history, we observed the legacy of the Apostles; giving to the church is the doctrine and the model of their evangelistic preaching. And that will direct us to confession and rejoice over salvation through Jesus Christ, our Lord and redeemer in worship and in praise. True followers of Christ are called to proclaim the message of hope to the world. “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has

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said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”(John 7:37-38) Evangelizers ought to present Jesus as high priest “Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, the Son of God,”(Hebrews 4:14), as judge “ for Father judges no one, but has given all judgement to the son.”(John 5:22) The Pauline epistles confirmed that “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,”(2 Corinthians 5:10) According to the definition in clarity that will bring us to trust in the Lord God for Jesus said: “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6) We bear witness to Christ who was sent by God by self-emptying, a suffered servant who came to become a curse of the law (Galatians 3:13), Redeemer is for the forgiveness of our sin through the historical events of his birth, ministry, death, resurrection. “For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living”(Romans 14:9).108

5.1 What is the message?
There are two types of evangelistic preaching, the message of salvation and biblical teaching for those who have already believed. The message is Christ, the author of life. A new way of being a human who obeys and trusts God with repentance and faith. The gospel message can never apart from the person and work of Christ, for salvation is “justification by faith” in Christ. “The people evangelize when they have been evangelized.”109 It’s a joyful and beautiful message as Pop Francis illustrated in “New Evangelization” that all God’s people are called to share the joy, goodness and love of God in Christ Jesus, the perfect and only Son of God came to be with all people without exclusion to deliver us from domain of darkness and transfer us into the Kingdom.(Colossians 1:13) He repeatedly invites Christians and bishops to rejoice for the

108 Ibid., 42-43
109 Miller, Christopher J. Powerful evangelism for the powerless. P & R Publ., 1997.,83
good news of Jesus Christ. His incarnation ministry is an inauguration in words and deeds that “God saves people.” Evangelizers should share their supreme beauty with the culture as the angel proclaimed “I bring you good news of a greater joy which will come to people.” (Lk2:10) The good news came at the perfect timing, so appealing, like a confident skater when she leaps up and turns excellently to the ground 360 degrees in a row, so the moment when the applause around the stadium is fascinating. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones has a perfect summary of the evangelistic message from Paul’s Epistle to the Thessalonians, where he reminds them how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.” (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10) This evangelistic preaching is proclaiming God and his being. Also, by declaring God’s salvation concerning his power and glory in and through his Son Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath of God. This is a good evangelistic message for gospel preaching.110

Furthermore, the message of human sin against God must not be negated and watered down. That is why “repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations; (Luke 24:47) for the Son of Man comes to call sinners to repent and have faith in Christ. It’s welcoming and inviting hearers to come to Christ to be healed, restored and resume a new life spiritually, mentally and physically. The mission of Christ is “not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”(Luke 5:32) “Those who are well have no need of a physician.”(Mark 2:17) Evangelists are making a clear point, that Jesus is not calling good and perfect people for there is none in the temporal sphere. The message is so inviting that the divine master is hosting a feast to openly welcome sinners to come and feast together with Christ, who is the Word.

As the psalmist who praises “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Psalm 119:103). Come, come to Christ, the ultimate promised land that is filled with honey and milk. That is the voice of the messenger.

5.2 Biblical theology, the foundation of evangelizing and preaching.

Evangelism, teaching and preaching are essential parts of our mission, and they are indispensable. Paul told Timothy to “Preach the Word” (2 Tim. 4:2) and “do the work of an evangelist.” (1 Tim. 4:5)\(^{111}\) Evangelistic preaching is to preach the message of salvation, the kerygma, and the teaching part, “the didach” will carry the work on the heart, spirit and soul of those who believed and sanctify them. “Evangelistic preaching worthy of the name starts with God and with a declaration concerning His being and power and glory.”\(^{112}\) Evangelization is to preach the centrality of Christ, and with the help of good biblical exposition will broaden our preaching ministry and reinforce the ministry of the Word and church discipline. The gospel centered evangelization should be grounded in the theology of God, sin, people, Christ and the new heaven and new earth. Thus, there is no room for false gospel presentation and wrong expectations from the followers of Jesus. The wrath of God on human sin and broken relationship with Him must be dealt with through the only way, the Lord Jesus.

It is the imputation of sin into humankind that separates people from God’s presence, and human disobedience and idolatry that sink the world into darkness without the true light of Christ. We the church are to witness the truth, as Paul reminds Christians in Ephesus. “remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.” (Eph.

\(^{111}\) Wright, The Mission of God’s People., 284

\(^{112}\) Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn. Preaching and preachers. Zondervan, 2012.,72
(2:12) His exhortation is to put our focus on God, who is a righteous judge and a covenant
keeping God. For sinners and the fallen world deserve only the wrath and judgment of God. The
beauty of evangelism is to bring the message of hope, which is God’s mercy and his righteous
judge. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to clean us from
all unrighteousness.”(1 John 1:9) It is God who wills his Son “to take away the sin of the world”
(John 1:29) and it is “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we
might become the righteousness of God.”(2 Corinthians 5:21)

The joyful message we ought to deliver is that because of one man’s trespass, death
reigned through that one man; much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and
the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:17) Christ is
indeed the heart of the gospel message. He is the gift of God who is made available to everyone
who is repenting and believing in Christ as Lord and Savior “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven
is at hand.”(Matthew 3:2) “Christ and him crucified”(1 Corinthians 2:2). We rejoice the victory,
for the sin; debt was paid off and death was defeated and no more. Jesus is the way to the Father.
The significance of forgiveness of sin signifies that believers are free from condemnation and be
judged no more. The freedom and mercy we enjoy in Christ is new every morning.

If anyone who truly experiences the goodness, freedom and love of Christ, he will be so
passionate about sharing what he has tasted and experienced the true joy, peace and love of
Christ with others. The message of Evangelization is to proclaim the saving death of the risen
Lord as Paul insists “I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ
died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the
third day I accordance with the Scripture.”(1 Corinthians 12:3-4), and that requires hearers to
respond by repenting and believing. The gospel of Jesus Christ is indeed good news that has been done for all people to bring joy to all nations. So are the messengers who are the missional church and evangelizers go forth to share the Gospel with joy, enthusiasm and zealous heart. “For the love of Christ controls us. (2 Corinthians 5:14)\textsuperscript{113}

In addition, the message is about God the Creator, Judge and Savior.\textsuperscript{114} God is mighty and sovereign over all things. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1) He made known to the universe through his creation as well as the power of the gospel to save. It’s God’s Lordship over all things “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him, be glory forever. Amen.” (Romans 11:36) God the Judge “is a righteous judge”( Psalm 7:11) “to judge the living and the dead.” (2 Timothy. 4:2) The wrath of God is very biblical in description of God’s attribute against sin, the godly and unrighteous.(Romans 1:18) God is both merciful and just, “on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.” (Romans 2:16) “The Messiah”, the Passover lamp and “The lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”(John 1:29) The gospel message is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (Mark 1:1), He is both the message and messenger and his name is Emmanuel (which means, God with us). (Mt.1:23) His atoning sacrifice is not only for our sins but also for all nations’ because God is love. For his death on the cross satisfied God’s wrath, and his resurrection manifested death and sin are no more and are under his feet. Christ is the resurrection and the believers now have joined in the life of Christ for eternality. Jesus is the only way to the Father and through him we are reconciled to God “for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

\textsuperscript{113} Francis, Pope. \textit{The joy of the gospel: Evangelii gaudium.} Image, 2014., 8
\textsuperscript{114} Jensen, Peter. \textit{The revelation of God.} InterVarsity Press, 2002., 46.
The purpose of the evangelistic message as it is written in John’s Gospel “so that you may believe that Jesus is Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:31) “there is only one means of evangelism: namely, the gospel of Christ, explained and applied. Faith and repentance, the two complementary elements of which conversion consists, occur as a response to the gospel.”115 We are to present Christ, the High Priest who ascended into heaven sitting at the right hand of God, continuing interceding for all people whom the Father gave them eternal life through Christ. Through the High Priest’s prayer, we learned that we have union with Christ as God is in Christ and Christ is in him. The evangelical message serves as the word of comfort “and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.” (John 17:13)

5.3 The motives and the power of evangelization

Evangelism is Charles Surgeon’s noblest pursuit in all he did and he said, “Soul-winning is the chief business of the Christian is the chief business of the Christian minister; indeed, it should be the main pursuit of every true believers.”116 The motive of evangelism is God’s love. “So now faith, hope and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” (1 Corinthians 13:13) Love appears and expressed in various forms and matters yet differs from self-centered love of Man which is according to flesh. God’s love is faithful and unconditional that is ever ready for all people who are invited to come to his presence. “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”(1 John 15:13) The deep and great love manifests in the person and works of Jesus Christ with humble obedience to love the world as God, the Father who loves.(John 3:16)

The power that drives Christians to evangelizing is grounded in the biblical commandment of loving God and loving others. The unity of discipleship of Christ is empowered by the love of Christ. “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” (John 14:15) The greatest and first commandment in the Bible is “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all our soul and with all your mind…and a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39-37) “For love is from God” and “because God is love. In this the love of God was made known among us.” (1 John 4:9) Apostle Paul’s ministry motive is “for the love of Christ controls us,” (2 Cor. 5:14) so he is able to press on toward the goal that Christ laid before him regardless hardship and persecution. (Phi.3:14)

5.3.1 Evangelization is also a practice of love
The love of God speaks and moves among the church body, and by sharing this love we make Christ known through the texts “God so love the world”, “you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35) The promise of “God with us” is an encouraging message for us to live out the gospel and let the love of God flourishing in our relationship with God and with the unconverted as well as each other’s. The highest love is demonstrated through Jesus’ sacrifice and finished work on the cross. In addition, love is not only in human intellects but also in practices. “if I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love…I am nothing.” (1 Corinthians 13:1-13) The Spirit of love and joy will strengthen our faith and empower us to model Jesus’ incarnation in ministry with humility and his presence among whom he served. Evangelistic focus is not primarily aiming the quantity of the new converts, it’s our faithful to our call and submission to the Great Commission to glorify God and enjoy him. To share the divine saving act for all
nations is like Angels’ trumpet sounds and the horn blown to proclaim the good news of coming King with joy. It begins with information and ends with invitation to all people, languages, cultures and tribes.

For example, our church provides free English classes, and there are more and more international friends who come to us regardless of race, language, culture, color and tradition. There is an interesting phenomenon between breaks; people would unconsciously divide into groups because of the same languages, cultures, interests and traditions. The church became a place where they came not only to take English class, but to seek help for the interpretation of documents, while others came to meet new friends, share laughter and tears and share life together for they found this church home. This weekly gathering at the church has now become the place where sojourners far from their home land can come and share life together.

What impressed me most in all the conversations was a mother from Asia. She was 70 years old with a cheerful and optimistic personality in public. She was a student in our English class, so we were meeting often and chatting with each other. One day, I had a one on one conversation with her after class, and she shared a real life situation about her and her family that she never told other friends. She had a long-term paralyzed husband who was in bed and had cancer in her homeland. She hired a nurse to take care of him. Meanwhile, she had an only middle-aged son who was currently receiving medical treatment in a residential care home for mental illness. It was summer 2015. I was able to meet her because she came to Dallas to take care of her granddaughter and her daughter for six months. And then she will be going back to her country looking over her husband at home and her only son at a nursing home every day.
As I look up and saw tears streaming in her face, and pictured her as a burdened lady who found no rest physically and spiritually as Scripture described “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Mathew 11:28) I shared with her the Holy Word of God and invited her to come to Jesus and rest, and on that day, at that moment, she made a profession of faith, and three months later, I was able to baptize her and praise the Lord for his mercy on her. Why is Catherine’s story important? What made her conversion so unique from a mission perspective? For Evangelism is Evangelizing to the culture through engaging in the communal living, friendships, loving and caring companion that motivated by the love of Christ. We joyfully introduce Jesus Christ who is so loving for the forgiveness of our sin. At the same time, we eager to see her new beginning of walking with indwelling Spirit that transforms lives. “The key consequence of accepting the gospel is, therefore, that Jesus Christ becomes our Lord, experiencing the authority of his kingdom in our lives.” Everyone who come to him will have a new beginning in this life and life eternality. We are messengers to share the good news that Christ is willing and able to set us free and deliver those who are burden and weary from guilt and condemnation. Christ is a refuge and rock for rest and a life giver to all who trust in him for salvation.

The incarnate Christ is our motivation for evangelization. Everyone who has come to Jesus tasting the bread of life and drinking living water would humbly follow his way of evangelizing the world. Lord Jesus “but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming

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obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:7) The essence of a missional church and evangelists are to serve the communities in humility, to empty ourselves and to be filled by the knowledge and the Spirit of Christ to present this true Christ as the Savior who came to be with us regardless of who we were, just come as you are and he will give you rest.

Evangelism involves gospel communication to increase the knowledge of God’s redemptive mission in his words and deeds through Israel his servants, Moses, prophets, kings in the Old, and Jesus the Messiah, the disciples and his church in the New. That’s why it is so important that Jesus explained to his disciples the fulfillment of all Scriptures concerning him and he “opened their minds to understand the scriptures.” (Lk 24:44-46) Preaching is the force of evangelism and Christ is always at the heart of the message. Preaching is as important as Paul transformative experience when the risen Lord confronted him on the road of Damascus and he changed. So preaching Christ becomes the focal point of apostolic preaching and teaching. No wonder Paul claims so passionately “we preach Christ crucified” (1 Cor. 1:23) What really shapes the identity of Paul and makes him the evangelist and preacher of the Gospel is because he considers himself “ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.” (2 Cor. 5:20) It is the love of Christ controls him, “In his evangelism, then, Paul consciously acted as the save and steward, the mouthpiece and herald, the spokesman and ambassador, of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

So who are we? Which story are we living in? Why we are here for? These are good questions we should ask ourselves whenever we read the Bible story and preach the Word.

5.3.2 The means of evangelism

The gospel of Christ is the only means of evangelism through preaching and teaching of the Word. The only agent of evangelism is Jesus Christ, through his Spirit, the minds of disciples
are awaken (Lk.24:25) and the hearts of many are changed (Acts 16:14). There are evangelistic models described in the Bible, such as Lydia who seemly is a successful businesswoman listening the gospel preaching and “The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul” (Acts 16:13-15). A slave girl who was enslaved and demon possessed by an owner using her as a fortune teller to make money. Paul turned to her and to the evil spirit to come out “in the name of Jesus Christ”. (16:18). The story of the Philippian jailer’s conversion is another example of evangelism. Paul reached the jailer and talked to him “the word of the Lord” and said to him “believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household. (Acts 16:22-34)”

The gospel of Christ must be preached to the heart of the people, through the Holy Spirit who regenerates the faith of the convert with repentance and faith in Christ. Paul is the instrument of God, through him, the salvation of God through Christ made known to all who believe. Proclaiming and preaching of Christ through the Spirit and in his name are the methods to evangelism in particular situation to a specific person. Evangelists are soul winners whom God sent into the world to call people out of the darkness into the light of Christ. They partner with the Spirit of the Lord to lead the lost sheep to Christ, the Good Shepherd where there is repentance, where there is faith in Christ. Evangelists are not and must not be judged by the number of new converts, for the wind blows where it wishes.” (John3:8) It is the enablement of the Holy Spirit to work upon particular people and places effectively.

5.4 Preaching

*The supremacy of preaching*

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118 J.I Packer, “Evangelism And The Sovereignty of God,”, 85
One of the church’s legacy is preaching conducted by ministers who are called and sent to serve. They are reverend as the servants of the Lord and they are called to preach just as Lord Jesus has done. Although people might argue Jesus performed a lot of “healing”, yet in John’s gospel, it is described as “sings and wonders”. However, the deepest healing is through the preaching of the Word knowing that people sinned against God, and God graciously offers the only remedy to forgive and reconcile Jews and the Gentiles. “The one who desires to be able to identify counterfeit money should make himself thoroughly familiar with the genuine article.”

Today, the church with a mission exclusively is to tell the true story of the Bible about God, his words and works for the whole world through the Son of God, Jesus. Whoever knows Christ, knows the truth about him. “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty. (Hebrews 1:1-3)

Christ is the fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 61 and Heb.1:1-3 so specifically, and that came to realize in Jesus’ mission in the New Testament as he claims “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God, for I was sent for this purpose.”(Luke4:43). Jesus was sent to preach and he sent disciples to the world to preach. The world class, one of Titanic figure and most distinctive expository preacher Dr. Martyn Lloyed -Jones has a very high view on preaching, he said “that to me the work of preaching is the highest and the greatest and the most

glorious calling to which anyone can ever be called.”

Even Paul made emphatical statement of his mission, “For Christ didn’t send me to baptize, but to preach the Good News.” (1 Cor. 1:17)

Jesus was sent by the Father to preach and proclaim the gospel of God. (Mk.1:14; Mt. 4:17) He “went through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.” (Matthew 9:35) His teaching shines like lightening at darkness cuts through the silence of the night and makes people inner desires like rain falls after a long time.

When the true gospel was preached, we see obvious opposition and confrontation between the world worlds, the sin of the world and the righteous and just reign of the Kingdom. The resurrected Jesus on the road of Emmaus reiterated with clarity teaching them the necessity of his suffering and entering into his glory. (Lk. 24:26) When Jesus was questioned by Pilate, the world power and authority, Jesus answered “you say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth.” (John 18:37)

One way to witness Christ to all peoples and cultures is to preach the true gospel of God, and we learned from the evangelistic preaching of the apostles in Acts. Apostles were appointed and sent to preach just as the Father sent his Son Jesus. “and he might send them out to preach” (Mk. 3:14) Jesus charged his disciples with the mission to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,…teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19-20) “go and bear fruit” (John 15:16) “and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.” (Luke 24:46-48)

There is no denying the fact that the true committed followers of Jesus must observe
and imitate Jesus’ doing and teaching, not only recognize him as a Rabbi yet knowing him as the Lord and Savior.

The book of Acts can be a textbook of powerful preaching and effective evangelizing that testified to the power of the Holy Spirit working freely through fearless preachers who were obedient to the ministry of the word. As John Stott addressed, “preaching was God’s appointed way by which sinners would hear of the Savior and so call on him for salvation,”[121] We need the spirit filled preachers whom God called and sent at a specific time and space to carry out the mission God entrusted them with. We need evangelists who stand for faith and courageously defend the faith, as Peter were teaching and preaching Christ and his resurrection from the dead (Acts 4:2), preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ.(10:36) “Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord.(15:35) The end of chapter recorded Paul “welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ. This Apostolic preaching that is penetrating and soul-wining and that makes a difference should be.

5.4.1 The apostolic preaching

What does make Apostolic evangelism so powerful, convicted and contagious? Is it a preacher’s responsibility; make better preaching? That changes in the hearts, souls and minds of men and women, children and elderly? What defines a good sermon and a great sermon? Dr. Tim Keller shares his insight that “the difference between good preaching and great preaching likes mainly in the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the listener as well as the preacher. The message in Philippi came from Paul, but the effect of the sermon on hearts came from the

Someone describes preaching an “Art”, and if it is, that art must be in the hand of God and it God who speaks. Peter states preaching of the Word “as one who speaks the very words of God.” (1 Pet.4:11) They are the Spirit filled men who preach the mystery of the gospel of “this Jesus” who is Christ. The apostles were charged by Lord Jesus who entrusted them with the Great Commission, and today all believers and the church of God should pick up the torch of God’s mission through the obedience of faith to proclaim the gospel of Christ How precious of the apostolic legacy God persevered for his church and people throughout the ages. The dynamic preaching and content of the sermon in the book of Acts serve as a mirror that reflects on the characteristic of the apostolic preaching that has been missing of evangelism in preachers and preaching. Dr. Martyn argues that “Preaching is theology coming through a man who is on fire. A true understanding and experience of the Truth must lead to this.” It would be beneficial to direct our attention on the first sermon that Peter preached on the day of Pentecost in the Book of Acts.

Only by looking at the beginning gesture of his proclamation as recorded “Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.”(Acts 2:14) and the following passage “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst as you yourselves know-this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, losing the pangs of death,

because it was not possible for him to be held by it. ” (22-25) The gospel is God’s gospel, he is the author who architects and executes the foreordained plan on the life and work of Jesus, and his resurrection. It is God’s work, God’s plan and God’s mighty power. All the message is delivered straightforward to “you”, all the hearers. Let “this Jesus” and God be made known to “you”. It feels like there is nothing else important other than to hear what the apostles are about to address. They seemly lifted up their voice announcing life-and-death message concerning all people. They are preachers who preach in a sense of urgency with the Spirit filled with confidence, authority and compassion declaring something essential to dying men. It’s a dying man declares a living hope and final opportunity to the dying men about how they are to live and be saved from. They are not merely lecturers, moral & ethical teachers, philosophers, life trainers, religious fanatics. These men are apostles and evangelists who identified themselves not from men, “but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Jesus from the dead.”(Gal. 1:1) “a servant of Christ Jesus,… set apart for the gospel of God.”(Rom 1:1) “called by the will of God”( 1 Cor.1:1) They are apostles “by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope.”(1 Tim 1:1) “a prisoner for Christ Jesus, ”(Philemon) In sum, they are disciples and witnesses to everything written about Christ.(Lk 24:44). What a imagery of fearless evangelists preaching with missional minded on the mission field to declare the fullness of Christ. In another word, the apostles know how to get the gospel right for evangelism. There are some remarkable characters of apostolic preaching in the book of Acts.

5.4.2 Preaching the sovereignty of God
When Paul and Barnabas came to Antioch and went into the synagogue, Paul was asked to preach to Men of Israel. The entirety of his sermon in Acts 13 was God centered. He made a point that it was God who chose the people of Israel, made them a nation, and delivered them
with his might (Acts 13:17-18). It was God who led them with passion in the wilderness and fought for the people and gave them their land (13:19). God raised up judges and prophets and people asked for a king, and it was God who raised David and said “I have found in David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who will do all my will. Of this man’s offspring, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus as he promised.” (Acts 13:20-23) Apostle. Paul’s sermon is so dynamic to make this God known to the people of Israel and demonstrate that human history is God’s history through the Old Testament. There should be no excuse for not knowing, for it was God’s sovereignty to be and choose, to love and have mercy upon his people. It was God’s mighty act to fight for his people and give them rest. It was God who promised his beforehand “her offspring” the “seed” (Gen 3:15) and “to Israel a Savior Jesus”. Paul continues to lay out the foundation of the Old Testament prophecy and ushers in what is to come and the fulfillment of the messianic prophecy in the person, work of Jesus and the resurrection in the New Testament.

The apostles are witnesses to all these things that God has done according to God’s will for his own glory. (Acts 13:23-31) In the end of the sermon, Paul confirmed and proclaimed “the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus,” (Acts 13:32-33). His preaching was absolutely glorious and soul penetrating and soul piercing. The Apostolic preaching of the gospel is God’s gospel. The heart of the gospel message is all about God who promised, worked and saved. They witnessed who God was, what he had been and what he would bring. As the psalmist praised, “The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad.” (Ps.97:1)

5.4.3 Preaching Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament
Early Church were so distinctive in evangelistic movement particularly to reach the gentile world. They needed teaching tools and sources about Jesus so that they can share and
preach what they heard, believed and obey to do. Apostle Paul charged young Timothy to “preach the word; be ready in season and out of season;” (2 Tim.4:2) That brings all missional focus on the ministry of the word. “The primary task of the Church and of the Christian minister is the preaching of the Word of God.”\textsuperscript{124} And Christ is the Word incarnates. He is the beginning and the end, the creation and new creation. The law, Prophet, Priest, Judge, King and the Ruler of all as revealed in all Scriptures both the Old and New concerning him.(Lk.24:44) Apostle Paul continues lifts up high that torch that light up the gentile world with hope for the gospel of Christ. We find the apostolic proclamation of the good news of God directs Abrahamic covenant to Paul’s epistle in Galatians 3:8 affirms the truth that “Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “all nations will be blessed through you.”\textsuperscript{125}

The most intensive theological meeting and teaching the disciples had from the risen Lord Jesus was the preparation for the missional task they were about to “go”. The guarantee of their missionary mandate is that they will be enclothed by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of truth can illuminate the texts and ignite the fire of their preaching, and we have learned the most powerful preaching in the early church from the book of Acts. When we examine the content of sermons, that is “Beginning with the Moses and all the prophets.”(Lk.24:27) Concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit, Peter preached his first sermon (Acts 2:14-41) that won three thousand souls by quoted Joel 2:28-32, Psalm 16 and 110, and pointed to the name of Lord that is given to whoever calls upon.

\textsuperscript{124} Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn. Preaching and preachers. Zondervan, 2012.,27
\textsuperscript{125} Wright, The Mission of God.,58-59
Peter and John urged men and women in Judea to repent and live onto God for Christ is the Messiah, “what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled.” (3:18) referring to Isaiah 53. Stephen’s sermon preached in Acts 7:32 that is a quote from self-declaration of YHWH from Exodus 3:6, “I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob.” Paul preached in Antioch in Acts 13:33-35 concerning David and the promised Messiah quoted from Isaiah 55:3 and Psalms 2:7. And still there are some others; evidence can be found within the sermons in the book of Acts. These Apostles were eyewitneses who testified to the scriptures and Jesus as Rabbi, Lord and Savior. They heard and saw the work of Jesus and his teaching (quoted from the Old Testament too), signs and wonders he performed. There is no other religion or philosophical writing that would record anything so specifically in detail as time, space, names of people and places that laid out the movement of God, people and creation.

Is it because they are Apostles, so they can write an accurate report publicly to testify to the risen Lord with boldness and confidence? Unless they are fully convinced through factual finding, comprehensive discerning and complete mastery of what they are about to witness. Biblical speaking, it must be a divine intervention to make the disciples of Jesus become fishers of men. (Matthew 4:19) It is God who foreordained the salvation in Christ, orchestrated this redemptive mission through the people of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. Spurgeon said, “From the Word of God I gather that damnation is all of man, from top to bottom, and salvation is all of grace.”

126 Although they may be alienated from the presence of God, by grace, through Jesus, the Son of God, he will unite those who were exiled and return to the city

126 Lawson, Steven J. The gospel focus of Charles Spurgeon. Reformation Trust Pub., 2012.,46
on the hill, a new Jerusalem, in Christ Jesus. This eschatological hope is indicated in Galatians 3:28; “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” The resurrection of Jesus is the inauguration of the fulfillment of Messianic promise, through whom the wisdom, power and glory of God should be demonstrated and made known to the universe.

5.4.4 Preaching the gospel and no other

The apostles preach the gospel right. For them to evangelize is to preach the gospel of Christ in acts. They are evangelists who have the full discernment of the entire component of the gospel. J.I Packer argued “there is only one means of evangelism: namely, the gospel of Christ, explained and applied. Faith and repentance, the two complementary elements of which conversion consists, occur as a response to the gospel.”127 If we want to learn evangelization by sharing the gospel from the apostolic preaching, we must get the gospel right first. It’s like a diamond in a black flannelette pad shining brightly, no matter what angel you look at it shines. As long as you keep your eyes on that diamond, you will see its brilliant, splendor and magnificent of the light. Theologically speaking, unless we come to know Jesus and learn why and what he has come to do for us, we cannot understand the whole Bible and the Scripture written about him. That means our blind spot of reading and interpreting the texts remains our barriers to know the faithfulness of God and the good news of Christ for the nations.

The biggest issue of humankind is sin against God and the world needs to be saved from his holy wrath. It is through preaching and teaching of the Word so that mankind will know how to do right and live right in relation with God. In God’s mercy, the good news of salvation is

revealed and spoken in the Scriptures to the fathers by the prophets in the Old, and the apostles and Jesus in the New Testament. To make God known to the whole earth is through the proclamation of the Word. “the Word was God.”(John 1:1) The essence of apostolic preaching is to show the genuine need of all humankind before the face of God and long for the only cure for the judgment of God. In the modern world, gospel preaching is watered down that emphasize on creative preaching rather than effective, man-centered driven rather than God-centered. It is easy for us to put human needs above God’s sovereign will. The structure of the apostolic sermons are teaching, proclaiming and exhorting.

Preachers and the church are facing challenges today, some seem not esteem preaching ministry highly and have ignored what they are obligated to be faithful to “preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.”(2 Tim 4:2) The uniqueness of the gospel is not based on our moral quality and the level of good we have performed. Although good tree should produce good fruit, our righteousness is totally depend on Christ because that’s how God sees us in Christ. In Paul’s letter to Romans, he pointed out a universal issue that no one is righteous and not even one who seeks God. This anti-God and alienated from God’s perfect law and holiness are the greatest issue of human today, and by grace, God sent Son Jesus “came to seek and save the lost.”(Lk.19:10) The gospel of Christ is life, life internal, external and eternal. The satisfaction of humanity only comes from the author of life Jesus, who is the Great I AM.(Exodus 3:13-14), and the New Testament reaffirms his claim in the gospel of John. Jesus is the bread of life (John6:35), the light of the world (8:12), the door of the sheep(10:7-9), the good shepherd(10:11), the resurrection and the life(14:6), and the true vine(15:1-5). Why it matters that we should preach
the gospel of Christ “every time”? Keller commands “you want to show listeners Jesus himself an dal that he came to do for us. To preach the gospel every time is to preach Christ every time, from every passage.”

5.4.5 To Preach Christ from all Scripture
The heart of the apostolic preaching is to preach Jesus Christ, Paul declares “This Jesus I proclaim to you is Christ.”(Acts 17:3) Who is this Jesus and what he can bring? Is it still relevant to preach Christ from both the Old and the New testament in our days? It is important not only to preach Christ from all Scripture but also to know him in the context of the Old Testament in very theme, figure, redemptive story and image. This is pivotal for contemporary churches and preachers to think about it:“ if the Old Testament indeed witnesses to Christ; then we are faithful preachers only when we do justice to this dimension in our interpretation and preaching of the Old Testament.”

The four Gospel writers coherently link the person and work of Jesus via the fore prophecy from the prophet Isaiah concerning the anointed One to come (Mark 1:1-4;14-15). In Matthew, the genealogy of Jesus is recorded in the begging of the chapter and linked through the son of Abraham and the son of David. It confirms God’s faithfulness to keep his covenant promise with Abraham that all the nations shall be blessed through him and his descendants(Gen 12:1-3). And that is now fulfilled in Jesus, the Son of God.(Matthew 2) Luke goes even farther by tracing all the way back to the son of God, Adam (3:38) and continues his gospel account in Acts. The human history is summarized in Jesus who ushers in the new era through the proclamation of disciples in preaching and proclaiming the gospel of Christ and the coming kingdom. Jack Kingsbury states that “Luke distinguishes between the ‘time of Israel’(1:54-

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55,68) which is the ‘time of prophecy’(1:70;24:25,44-45) and the time ‘time of fulfillment’(1:1;24:44) the link between two ages is Jesus”\(^{130}\) John connects Jesus with the Word in the beginning of creation, and shares the identity of YHWH with seven Great I Am statement and linked through Moses in the Old Testament (5:16) and aiming at the glorious consummation and new creation in eschatological mission completed in Revelation 21-22.

Keller provides very insightful interpretation in preaching from every theme, figure and deliverance story of the bible. That allows us to preach Christ in its fulness from the beginning to the end, from creation to new creation. Concerning Kingdom, king should be powerful enough to protect and fight for his people, to love and care for them. Jesus is the King who demonstrates the real power that overcomes the world power of evil, sin and death through his death and resurrection. The theme of covenant renders to us that Jesus is the covenant promise, and through him, all the families on earth shall be blessed. He is the fulfillment of the law and perfect servant on our behalf. We should preach Christ through the story of exile, the world was meant to be made for our home, but due to human sin and rebellion against God we are in exile. Jesus was exile from heaven to earth for our sake and was abandoned. Yet he is the way bringing us back home with peace and will make all things new.(Rev.7:9-10)\(^{131}\)

Every figure of the Bible reminds us the resurrected Lord Jesus, who transforms the identities of the Old Testament figures when redemption applied. Jesus is the new creation and renew all things through, for and by him. He is better Adam who passed the temptation with the

\(^{130}\) Ibid., 60  
obedience that we now share and live. (1 Cor.15) Jesus is better Isaac and he offers up himself for us (Gen 22), that better sacrifice that pleases God the Father. Jesus is God’s beloved Son and died and lives for all the peoples. Jesus is indeed greater than Moses, because of him, people can overpass the sea of sin (Ex.14:19-31) and death and transferred into the final promised Land, where divine and the earth joined together again. Jesus is better Joseph to bring reconciliation, and unite all things and grants us peace. (Gen.50:19) We preach Christ linked the image of bronze snake that heals Israel in the wilderness, and that linked to the Cross of Jesus when it is lifted up (John 12:32), the transgressions and iniquities and wounded relationship shall be healed through his atoning sacrifice, so that we are justified by faith. Tabernacle, is portable tent where God’s dwelling resides among his redeem Israel, and we preach Christ who is promised Emmanuel, means “God with us” (Mt.1:21; Isa.7:14) and he promised to be with us until the end of the world. (28:20) We preach Christ the genuine Israel, who is obedient and faithful to God in covenant relationship, gentle and lowly, the seed of Abraham, the son of David and the Son of God. Jesus is the light of Israel and of the world, and the nations shall be blessed through him. Christ is all in all, “When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15:28) There are good portion of biblical imageries, figures and themes that are associated with the Jesus of Nazareth concerning his teaching and works in the New Testament, and that envisages the new heaven and new earth through, for and in Christ.

5.5 Social justice & compassion
Social justice asks and decides what is right things to do, what people should believe, value things and human relationships with each other. It involves moral conscience and instinct to judge between right and wrong, good and evil. It is a social norm that people orbit around in
everyday life. Compassion is a deep sense of feeling of sorry and sympathy for a person who is in suffering and agony. Compassion is often associated with grace. Compassion is a move towards someone and sympathy to alleviate the suffering of others. Social justice and compassion advocate human care and social responsibility with equality and integrity. Justice is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary. it is the “Maintenance of what is just or right by the exercise of authority or power; assignment of deserved reward or punishment; giving of due deserts.”

In general, there is a difference between social justice and biblical justice. One is depend on social norm, moral and ethics seeking the best interests of mankind, and the other is originated from the character of God who created all the heaven and the earth, and they are good because of God is good and dwelling in their midst. Social justice is valued by the people and the culture, but Biblical justice is judged by God, who loves and cares for creation. The former judgment comes from people’s conscience, intuition or morality, which is the embodiment of social values. What is a common good? They hold the banner of moralism and ask if it is fair to do things, and what is the consequence? The latter comes from the holiness and righteousness of God who created men and women in his likeness. Therefore, biblical justice and compassion value human equality, identity and dignity as an individual, family, and society. It is theocentric and should be made known to the nations and the church is where the hope for social justice and compassion shines.

132 https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/102198
5.5.1 Justice and compassion of God

The beginning of Creation is ruled and formed according to God’s will, and the harmony, peace and blessing among the whole creation and humanity is a typological world without Sin. Justice and compassion reflect the character of God as "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness; (Exodus 34:6) The attributes of God revealed to Moses that YHWH is the name that renders to us his relationship with his people. God revealed His name “the Lord” and the character to Moses. That means he is a God of compassion, grace, love and faithfulness. For YHWH is the “I AM” and the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and that is His name forever to be remembered.(Ex.3:15) If all the creation is to reflect the glory of God, the church and the people should be able to shade the light of God’s characters and keep the way of the Lord as his witnesses to the nations. The characters of God are cited in the Old Testament texts in Num.14:18;Neh.9:17;Ps.86:15; 103:8;145:8;Joel2:13;Jonah 4:2.\textsuperscript{133} The greatest crises that the whole world is facing today is the issue of poverty, wars, human rights, ecology, human trafficking, hunger and crime and violence. These are unprecedented confrontations that are crushing our hopes for the better in the future. What are the principles, laws and values that will result in these chaotic situations and turn humans to be righteous in making all things right? How can we make this world a better place to live? “the fruit of the Spirit” that is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” (Galatians 5:22-23) Being Christians are “ to do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.”(Proverb 21:3) and the church is a faith community where the world testifies the peace and blessing of God in their midst.

\textsuperscript{133} Walvoord, John F. \textit{The Bible knowledge commentary: An exposition of the Scriptures}. David C Cook, 1985.,158
5.5.2 Justice and compassion In the OT prophets

The prophet Jeremiah was commanded to go to the king’s palace and send the message to the officials and people there, “Thus says the Lord: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place. (Jeremiah 22:3) This is God’s most direct voice and reminder what they had lost to disgrace God’s character, and mistreated and ignored the vulnerable, the needy and poor. They had no mercy and compassion for those people who are the same image bearers as they are. The God of the Bible speaks to us only if the nation whose God is the Lord YHWH, the social justice, they shall find compassion, grace, love and righteousness. The psalmist reminds us “who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin. (Psalm 146:7-9) The prophet Micha commands Israel what is good that the people should value and live and said “ to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.”(6:8)

5.5.3 Justice and compassion in redemptive story

In Genesis 18:20-21 The Lord said, “Because of outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave. I will go down… according the outcry.” That echoes what God saw and heard Israel’s groaning from the land of Egypt, it was “Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God remember his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”(Exodus 2:23-24) It was the outcry Yahweh called Moses and sent him for mission. It was the hopeless and suffering outcry from the wick city of Sodom that God sent Abraham into that city for
mission to rescue Lot. The word “outcry” graphically expresses someone is struggling out of
great pain that is unbearable, crying and dying for rescue. The city became a world place of
sexual immorality. It is a place full of arrogant, cruel, evil and lawless that dominated by evil
ruler and doers. (Genesis 19) Even the prophet Isaiah compared the city of Jerusalem to “you
rulers of Sodom…you people of Gomorrah.” The wicked as the city, Ezekiel denotes the guilt of
Sodom saying “had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and
needy. They were haughty and did an abomination before me.’(Ezk 16:49-50) Is it not so crystal
clear to us like a mirror that reflects vividly of our world today? But God wills to recue this
world as well as he did send Abraham into that wicked and sinful city of Sodom and Gomorrah
participating in God’s mission. For God is the God of compassion and just, he will not let the
evil and wicked unpunished. God is so moved by those who are in suffering, out of compassion
he reacts in action to save. On the cross, Jesus experienced “the outcry”, “My God, my God, why
have you forsaken me”(Mt.27:46), but that abandonment is for the sin of the world, it God’s
mercy for us. God did not just to protect Abraham’s family and bless them to live a prosperous
life forever regardless the groaning of the peoples. On the contrary, he is with a missional scop in
universality, that is grounded in his promise to Abraham which is the heart of the gospel, to love
and bless the nations.

“Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of
her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.’( Isa.49:15) The story of exodus is
another example of God who acted justly against the nation Egypt with compassion, because
YHWH heard “the cry “of the people of Israel and had seen the oppressions. God made himself
known not only to the people of Israel but the nations around them through the redemption. “You
yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, … Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my
voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the
earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Exodus 19:4-6)
For Israel has seen and experienced the justice, might and love of God, and he reaffirms their
identity and responsibility to be God’s chosen people. Although Israel did not follow what God
wills them to do in response to God’s saving grace, God’s response is to give us Jesus the
Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the World. Equally importance, the church’s mission in
twenty-first century is to be God’s servant showing compassion and do justice, and keep the
way of the Lord to bless the peoples of the world. (Gen.12:3)

5.5.4 The justice and the poor in the Bible
One of the books that best represents social justice is found in Leviticus 18:9-18. The
most inspiring and edifying verse that sums up biblical social justice is the last verse 18 “you
shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.” It seems our every move, breath and
thought is present with God because God is love. In the New Testament, Jesus teaches his
disciples the second commandment is likewise(Mt.22:39; Mk 12:3), Paul and James refer to the
similar teaching(Rom.13:9; Gal.5:14; James 2:8)¹³⁴ The gospel of God is the love of God in Jesus,
the greatest power and authoritative governing and ruling of the whole universe is made
manifestation in the cross of love, that ultimately overcome the principality of the world.
Adversely, Jesus speaks anguish to scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites that “For you tithe mint
and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and
faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. (Matthew 23:23) The

¹³⁴ DeYoung, Kevin, and Greg Gilbert. *What is the mission of the church?: Making sense of social justice, shalom,
and the great commission.* Crossway, 2011., 142
love of Christ controls the church to serve and care the fatherless, widows, the poor, the oppressed, the mourn, the sick and hungry for the righteousness and justice.

Prophet Isaiah spoke to Israel to show mercy and compassion toward the needy, "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard” (Isaiah 58:6-8) We are the descendants of Abraham with a missional obligation to bless this post-modern and skeptical world where we are now in exile. As the prophet Jeremiah’s message for us, “But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.” (Jer. 29:7) The light of the church shines through the good work so that the world may see the light of Christ, the head of the church.

5.5.5 Seeking shelaom of the world and glorify God.
James Davison Hunter regards Jeremiah 29:7 “as a good example of God’s people having a “faithful presence within” a fallen culture.” 135 God’s people are Abraham’s people whom God called and sent to behave as God’s representative and bring blessing to all the people. We are sharing the highest good and the riches with the world by urging them “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”(Mt.6:33) We

135 DeYoung, Kevin, and Greg Gilbert. What is the mission of the church?,203
are called to “let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (5:16) The Son of God Jesus reveals the love of the Father through his good works, so do we the followers of him should confirm the love of God with our lips only, but in words and deeds. James reapproaches “Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” (2:18)

5.5.6 Jesus reveals God’s compassion and justice

We as believers of Christ and the church, “who are elect exiles” (1 Pet. 1:1) ought to discern and reflect who we are and what our existence is for. God sent Jesus to deliver us from suffering sin, death and evil power of the world through his death and resurrection. He is God’s love in action, through the shading of his blood the sin of the world is atoned and sinners are justified by faith. Sin and death are judged in the Cross and the redemption accomplished. As Peter urges “as sojourners and exiles of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see our good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.” (2:11-12) Jesus commands his disciples to be his witnesses and more importantly “to observe what I commanded you”(Mt. 28:20). For the Lord God is countercultural God, showing compassion and mercy. Paul insists our redemption is through the blood of Christ, in him we have been redeemed, “the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.” (Eph. 1:7) Even more so, “He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.” (Deuteronomy 10:18-19) So the mission of the church is to do justice and show mercy and walk humbly with the Lord, “whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Cor. 10:31)
5.6 Creation Care

We say that all thing were made in, for and through Jesus Christ the messiah, this Jesus we must know how he worked out of creation and new creation through the truth and power. If the creation and new creation come through the kingdom of Jesus, and “all things were created through him and for him.”(Col.1:16) This is Jesus we must not only know, talk and share about him, we shall worship him in spirit and truth, for there is no other. Jesus is the vision of the kingdom and the lens we want to see so that we might understand creation itself. We must care about creation because it is God’s glory and the heaven and the earth belong to the Lord.

5.6.1 We are called to serve not to abuse God’s creation

Tragically, God’s glorious and good creation has been abused. The lust of human desire for more has consequences in wild fire, climate change, the flood, spices are on the verge of extinction, Covid, air pollution, burning fossil fuel, hurricane and tornado, global weirding, carbon emissions, agriculture and food shortage. There are many other problems, if you name it. We need sustainable solutions, new rules and laws to result the problems. The planet is now a place of fear instead of peace, anthropocentric rather than theocentric. Humanity is created to rule, care, enjoy the creation (Gen 1:26-28) this our mission and responsibility. Are we Christians called to environmental stewardship first and share the gospel second? Does creation care contradict the mission of the church? Why does creation care and how we should talk about it? Why the Bible even tells us even the wild flowers, why God cares so much and dresses them in beauty(Mt.6:28-30) because creation belongs to the Lord. “Thus says the LORD: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool”(Isa.66:1)
5.6.2 Jesus is the Lord of creation

Jesus declares that “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” (Mt.28:18) That is creation language of the Jews for the whole earth is mine (1 Cor.10:26; Ps.29:11;24:1) “know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.” (Duet.4:39) The all creation belongs to the Lord, he rules and owns creation. (Col. 1:1-20) Paul said God made peace through the Cross. (1)

We care creation for it reveals God’s glory, things in heaven and on earth he created them. The creation is made through, in and for Jesus the Messiah. We should not confused the redeeming work of Christ with the meaning of the cross. there is no denying the fact that our mission flows from the work of Christ, yet he came to die and live not only to save sinners, but also to reconcile all things “by Christ, for Christ and through Christ “by the Cross”.136

It involves wisdom and the word of God the Father. Jesus who is the Word became flesh dwelling among us. God created the universe out of nothing by the Word in the mission of creation in which heaven and earth were brought together. The garden of Eden is a micro cosmic and a little model of a holy temple according to Jewish view concerning God’s dwelling place. The real royal Priest, Jesus in the New Testament, is a new Adam who serves, loves, multiplies, cares and rules over creation with humility and obedience. In Pauline passage, 1 Cor 8:6, echoing Jewish shema,“ for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. (1 Corinthians 8:6; Col.1:15-20; Prov. 8:22) It is through whom God made the world. In John’s gospel, only Jesus reveals the Father God(5:19). That renders to us if we need exegesis of God and interpret the texts about who God is and what he would do things and treat people, we need

the full knowledge of Jesus in his fullness. Although God is invisible but the Son of God Jesus is visible to us (Heb. 1:1-2). The more we discover who Jesus is and his relation to creation, the more we know the significant meaning of creation care.

5.6.3 Jesus’s redemption in Creation

“Say among the nations, “The Lord reigns! Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equality.” (Ps. 96:10) All the people should praise the Lord for “the Lord reigns” with righteous judge. “So the Seed has come; his heel oozed blood from being crushed. But the Serpent’s head has been crushed in the process. Jesus reigns, and we will be more than conquerors through him who loved us!” 137 Jesus is redemption and new creation, the fulfillment of transformative humanness in relationship with God, family, society, work place and with all peoples. We can almost hear the resounding message of the prophet Isaiah, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. (Isaiah 65:17-18) The Lord reigns.

Redemption is God’s judgement upon the evil and wicked, and his saving grace toward the righteous. Christ is our righteousness, we proclaim the gospel and live out the gospel of truth to rescue people from bondage of sin, oppression, mourn, fear, poverty and death just as Jesus has done for us. We are to proclaim the sovereignty and the salvation of God through Christ, in and by Christ to bring peace of God to individual life, family life, communal life into the life of Christ. When God finally redeems the world, all creation rejoices because God is coming to put all things right and judge the world with justice. (PS 96:10, Isaiah 35,65:17-25) Paul reclaims that

137 Begg, Alistair, and Sinclair B. Ferguson. Name Above All Names. Crossway, 2013.,35
our identity is in the Spirit of Christ and we are now anticipating for the future glory in Romans 8. Also, the whole creation is looking forward to a renewed and risen body, and the liberation of creation. Reconciliation of all things is only through the blood of Jesus. The new creation where sin is redeemed and death are removed, then we shall see the new heave and new earth, the New Jerusalem in Rev.21:9-27.

5.6.4 Creation care flows from the love and obedience of the Creator
Christians are committed to love the Lord God with all our hearts, souls and minds but we abuse and trash his beautiful creation. Into the Lordship of Christ, he is the Lord of the earth. We learn the biblical definition of love, “love bears all things, believes all things, hope all things, endures all things. Love never ends.” (1Cor.13:4-8) John is known “the” beloved disciple of Jesus. He has experienced and seen the love of God in the life of Jesus, so he speaks the source of love and active obedience of love is to “love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God…because God is love.” (1John4:7-8) In deed, humans are God’s beloved because they were created by God in his likeness, therefore he gave the whole creation which is his property for them to enjoy, keep and care, and to rule over it. Both creatures and creation are God’s delight and God bless them out of his love. In religious definition, English Oxford dictionary defines the word Love is that “the benevolence and affection of God towards an individual or towards creation;… regard and consideration of one human being towards another prompted by a sense of a common relationship to God.”

“Benevolence and affection” implies compassion and good will of God for all he has made for his glory.

138 https://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/110566
The ultimate goal of the church is to be obedient to God and live with him. That means followers of Christ must be submissive to God and his will for creation. As Paul summarized in his letter to Romans in the opening chapter, that is “to about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nation.”(1:5) All the blessing is constituted by faith in him and through obedient living. In this sense, Christians are to be faithful ecological stewardship of God’s creation as well as to treat all image bearers with love and compassion as God’s beloved. To love God is to “keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.”(1 John5:3) Although Adam and Eve sinned by trusting Serpent’ word instead of God’s voice(Gen.3) and were exiled from God’s blessing in Eden, God’s love never ends. We know God’s final application of his love toward sinners is to send his beloved Son Jesus for the world for salvation.(John 3:16) as he promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. His way of loving God and caring creation is through his obedience to the will of God the Father.(Lk.22:42;Mt.6:10).When we are buried with Christ and raised, his righteousness and obedience become ours. That shapes our view not only on the creation care and the Creator, but also the mission of the people because human life and creation bound together. When the earth is fills with wickedness and evil, the whole creation suffered with us, for human lives is depend on the provision of God through the riches of his creation.

What is the implication of a church with a mission? The church exists for God’s mission. Through the church, all nations shall be blessed. In this sense, whatever church does and is for God’s mission must be intentional for the fulfillment of God’s purpose of creation and anticipation of the new creation (Rev.21-22). That missional calling and commitment is rooted in the faith of Christ, union with Christ, and death and resurrection of Christ, because he is the beginning and the end, and all things are created by him, through him, and for him. Christ will
unite all things together in heaven above and the earth beneath. (Rev. 21:24-26) with ethical dimension. To bring the mission of God the mission of this world with intentionality. Christ is the head of the church, Integration of our mission as church and individuals, we imitate the ministry of Christ through with love, compassion and justice to serve the society. Christ is the light of the world and so is the church and the followers of Christ, so that the light may be shown to the whole creation. “Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily;” (Isa. 58:8) “Therefore I command you, ‘You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.’ ” (Duet. 15:11)

5.6.5 The church body is the embodiment of creation care
People might say, well I can’t do all things, evangelism, cross-culture missionary, teaching and preaching, charity, discipleship, mercy ministry to care the poor, the sick and homeless. That’s very true and Apostle Paul probably was asked the same question before, so he told us how the church body should function as Christ is the head of the church body (Col. 1:18; Eph. 4:15) There are multiplicity of gifted people and calling to fill different roles. Paul urges us “to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift... And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,” (Ephesians 4:1-2; 11-14) And the way to labor together within the church body is not to boast or proud of
what we can do according to the flesh “ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in
every way into him who is the head, into Christ, (Ephesians 4:1-2)

That is why church with a mission to do care the society and the needy for social justice
and generosity, to be kind to others and seeking justice in economic, political and social
dimension according to the truth, love and righteousness of Christ. Who are we here for this kind
of calling for mission? We are God’s people and we are part of his creation and live in it. So we
are committed to all the God’s mission integrated to the mission of Christ. All Christians are
missional by calling and witnesses by truly living the mission. For the purpose of personal
understanding of the meaning of humanness and a renewal life, we need to realize scared and
world are God’s world. Even every day, whenever and wherever Christians work are in the
gospel field. Our life and work can be offered as a living sacrifice to the glory of God. The whole
Christian life is discipleship and worship, that means continues to be shaped and renewed by the
gospel and the mission of God, exclusively it should not exempt us from Christ.

5.6.6 The hope of Eschatological vision for a New Creation
The good news for the groaning of creation is the hope that God will justify all things and
make right in, for and through Christ according to his good purpose. “that the creation itself will
be set free from its bondage to corruption an obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of
God.”(Rom 8:19-23) “according to his promise we are waiting for new heaven and a new earth
in which righteousness dwells.”(2 Pet. 3:13) John have this new creation in vision in Rev.21:3,
“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with
man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as
their God. (Revelation 21:3) The true light, Jesus Christ renders to us the eschatological vision
for our future hope as John witnesses. If God is intentionally making the mystery of his will to us in Christ, and for the fullness of time to bring all things together in him, then all things are to be seen through the perspective of universal lordship of Christ. For the problem of sin is not result only in personal immorality but also the careless for Christ’s creation. That is the way and the only way Christians should look at phenomenon and things happening in the world today, any other views distort the glory and wisdom of God.\textsuperscript{139}

“And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Revelation 21:22-27) “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.” (Revelation 22:16) Indeed, the angel of the Lord came to testify all things concerning the salvation of Christ for the church, for “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”(Heb.13:8) And risen Lord commanded his disciples “everything” written about him both in the Old and the New Testament “must be fulfilled” and we the people of God, the followers Christ and churches are with a mission to be his witnesses.(Lk.24:46-48) And we all are invited to participate in this mission and rejoice in union with Christ.

So, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price (Revelation 22:17). Let us come and store up the word of the Lord in our heart (Ps.119:11) and run in the way of the Lord’s commandments, and pray the prayer of the psalmist, “Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end. Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart. Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it. Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain! Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways. Confirm to your servant your promise, that you may be feared” (Psalm 119:33-38). "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." …"Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. (Luke 24:44-48) “Go therefore”…Be witnesses of Christ & live the mission.
Conclusion

I have shown in this chapter to help preachers having comprehensive understanding of the Bible and knowing the necessity of redemption because of sin. And the remedy of sin is God offers himself in Christ as he promised from beginning to the end of the Bible. Therefore preaching of the Word must be biblical grounded and God centered that reveal who God is, what he said and what he will do to this broken world. We preach Christ biblically through a lens of God’s self-revelation so that the families of the earth will know him and love, obey him and proclaim him. God is God with a mission to love, forgive and redeem the world and he sent his Son Jesus to take away the sin of the world and have eternal life. The missional preaching and reading of the Bible will enable us to grasp entirety of God’s mission and the mission of God will begin to make sense to us. By this missional reading and preaching, God’s mission becomes our mission, church’s mission and we are participating in this God’s ordained mission with gladness. If the preacher can look at the bible in this way, Christ is presented, the name of the Lord is exalted and the truth will set us free.
The repeatedly motif of these covenant expressions, format and structure of the covenant promises is crucial to working out God’s redemption for Israel and the Gentile world. Here we will try to give a snapshot of the covenant language used to reinforce our understanding of the grand narrative of the Bible from a missional perspective. Although the Old Testament story continues to remind us the nation of Israel has struggled between faith and rebellion throughout history, God remains faithful by keeping his covenant promise with Abraham, blessing all other nations through him. John Murry argues, “covenant theology not only recognized the organic unity and progressiveness of redemptive revelation but also the fact the redemptive revelation was covenant revelation and that the religion or piety which was the fruit and goal of this covenant revelation was covenant religion or piety.” It is this covenant promise followed by the subsequent development recorded in Genesis 15 and 17. This God made himself known through redemption, words and action. This his covenant promise established between God and Abraham must be fulfilled. In the fullness of time, God will send His Son Jesus to redeem those who were under the law; Jews and the gentiles without distinction might receive sonship through adoption.\textsuperscript{140}

The definition of the term ‘covenant’ varies. Generally, it is understood as a mutual promise and agreement between God and man. Some view the Covenant conditional on man’s side by being holy and obeying the law, while others see it as the covenant of grace on God’s side. William Perkins asserts that “the covenant of grace is nothing more than a compact made between God and man touching reconciliation and life everlasting by Christ.”\textsuperscript{141} Herman Witsius

\textsuperscript{140} Murray, John. \textit{The covenant of grace}. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1953.,4
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.,3
says that “the covenant of grace is an agreement between God and the elect sinner; God declaring his free goodwill concerning eternal salvation, and everything relative thereto, freely given to those in covenant by and for the sake of the Mediator Christ; and man consenting to that goodwill by a sincere faith.”\(^\text{142}\) Particularly John Preston defines the term covenant “as a compact, agreement mutual engagement.”\(^\text{143}\) Similarly, Peter Van Mastricht further explains covenant “an agreement (consent) between God and His people in which God promises beatitude and stipulates obedience.”\(^\text{144}\) The whole mission of God is originated and rooted in this covenant promised between God and Abrahamic to redeem people from sin and renew God’s creation. Ultimately, God will bring blessing to all nations through the redeemed and establish His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

1.1 Adamic covenant.

In the creation story, we find our identity and existence as human beings to participate in God’s mission. God the Creator charged Adam to subdue and dominion over…to love and wisely care the creation.(Genesis 1:26-28) That is to fulfill our role that God intends in his creation and be responsible to rule the creation. To be human is to enjoy God’s creation with a heart of obedience to this God-given vocation and be the spiritual image bearing creatures to the cosmic. Active obedience is the affirmation of God’s sovereignty, righteousness and blessing. To those who wonder around the meaning of human existence on the planet in the twenty-first century will find its root in the mission of the bible story that flows out God’s purpose for the

\(^\text{142}\) Ibid., 4
\(^\text{143}\) Ibid., 3
\(^\text{144}\) Ibid., 3
entire world. That purposeful role is to be responsible for the ecological responsibility and social mandate in culture, economic and communal living in peace and blessing.

It is good to give a snapshot of the covenant language used to reinforce our understanding of the grand narrative of the Bible from a missional perspective that helps us to know how God’s redemptive mission continues and the backbone of the whole bible story sustains it. The beginning of God’s creation story, where we found an Adamic covenant. Although the word “covenant” was not used yet, the language of covenant was expressed by God for it is the responsibility of humanity to rule and care for the whole creation. Humanity was uniquely made to bear the image of God and be his representative in the garden of Eden by obeying God’s law. Psalmist say: “what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?...You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;”(Ps.8:4;6) God the Creator promised to bring blessing to His creation through the human race. As long as they obey and trust what God has commanded them, they shall enjoy the beauty of God’s handiwork and His presence. And human responsibility is to care, love and maintain creation because it is the glory of God.

1.2 Noahic covenant

The story of Noah presents a catastrophic consequence of sin entering the earth and the heart of human beings. The divine judgement is depicted by the steady rain for forty days due to the wicked and evil thoughts of humankind before the eye of the Lord. What humanity and the whole creation suffered and deserve is the judgement against sin. Creation experienced the storm of God’s righteous judge with the steady rain for forty days, “but Noah found favor in the eyes of
the Lord.” (6:8) and God saved his family and living animals on earth. The story of the flood reveals the judgement of God, the redeemer of all creation. However, human sin increased and violence escalated on the earth that provokes God’s holy wrath trying to wipe out the living things on the ground he created, and God regretted what he had done.

By God’s mercy, he preserved Noah’s family and living animals; pair by pair; God again made “covenant” with Noah in Genesis 9:1 and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” This is understood as Edenic covenant language, echoing 1:22; the same statement, instead of the former negative covenant he made in 6:7, was about to eliminate all he has created. Dumbrell argues, God is renewing his covenant in creation and making anew with Noah.

“The evidence for this relates to the way in which Genesis 9 depicts Noah as a second Adam.” 145 The covenant relationship between God and his people is a close bond established by the sovereign and jealous God. The monotheism in covenant and ritual biding is well expressed. “And you shall be my people, and I will be your God. (Jer. 30:22) through worship and sacrifice which involved shedding of blood. The story of the flood and Noah confirms the nature of God and his judgment is often accompanied by his mercy.

1.3 Abrahamic covenant

The redemptive hope begins with the Abrahamic covenant. It is God who called him into a covenant relationship and with an obligation to restore the spirit of humankind—all nations through Abraham’s family and the descendants. The centrality of the Abrahamic covenant focuses on people, land and blessing. The faith of Abraham drives the rest of the story of Israel

145 Bartholomew, Craig G., and Michael W. Goheen, The Drama of The Scripture, 49
to know the reality of the faithfulness of God and the rebellion of man. The repetition of the motif of a covenant promise made by God with Abraham was recorded in Genesis 12:1-4; 15:5-8; 17-18. In particular, in 17:1-8 the full language of the covenant promise demonstrated the faithfulness of Yahweh God, who made the treaty with his people and that covenant requires human responsibility. “I am God almighty, walk before me and be blameless.”(17:1) and end by “I will be their God”. It is identical that God had universal salvation in view not just showing favoritism toward the Israelites as treasure possession, but through them, all nations shall be blessed.

The recovery of spiritual blessing and obedience in 1:28, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue.” The blessing can only be made possible through “the seed” and “the offspring”, and the descendent of David, whom God anointed and the final victory over sin and evil. God guarantees victory in the battle between the righteous and Satanic evil, and the offspring of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent. Wright insists the verse 3:5 is often considered as “pro-evangelium” which is referred to the meaning “first gospel” that God announced the good news of the victory over Satan through human race.146 Particularly, “and in your offspring shall all nations be blessed.”(22:18) This sets the stage of hope for redemption, restoration of God’s blessing and reconciliation with God. Calling Abraham to God's mission is the beginning of the Israelites' history, as well as that of the world, and the Lord God is again dwelling with his people and his creation. The climaxing theme after Genesis chapter 11 was God’s call to Abraham and Sarah, an elderly couple to join God’s super dramatic plan. It is God's wisdom and sovereignty that God would invite and put his hope on an old couple who were

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146 Wright, The Old Testament in Seven Sentence.,31
physically exhausted and over the age of their child bearing. Blessing means prosperity, abundance and fullness in number of family or wealth blessings. It also has a spiritual relationship with God and others. there is a relational and ethical dimension to blessing As Paul asserts in Ephesians 1:3.

“Blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.” Christ is the covenant of grace, in him we have peace with God and life eternal. For the first man Adam is created as a “living being”, “natural”, “of the dust of the earth”, and the Son of Man Jesus Christ is “life-giving”, “spiritual” and “from heaven”.147 A great nation, a land and blessing are the three factors that the Abrahamic Covenant is all about. (Gen.12:1-3;15:18-21). These are completely subject to God for his sovereign rule, for with God all things are possible. Abrham believes God's promise by faith and the seed of Abrham, that Jesus is the beginning of the new creation and our hope. That should reverse the failure of the first couple, Adam and Eve, who did not pass the test. But God is able to deal with sin and make people right in relation with Him.

William Perkins asserts, “the covenant of grace is nothing more than a compact made between God and man torching reconciliation and life everlasting by Christ.”148 The Abrahamic Covenant is a vivid example of the children of light as God wills. The people of Israel were called to be God's chosen people, a loyal priesthood and a blessing to all the people. That is God’s intent for the chosen for missional purpose, and that requires the Israelites to live the mission and make God known to the surrounding nations. It is a dramatic turn in the story of

148 Murray, John. The covenant of grace.,6
Israel and the blessing to all families of the world through Abraham’s descendants. In the story, the remarkable family line of twelve tribes from Jacob formed the nation of Israel. Although sin and evil prevailed, like famine particularly, Genesis 25-36 presents a narrating the family of Issac and his sons Jacob and Esau. It is a dramatic turn in the story of Israel and the blessing to all families of the world through Abraham’s descendants. The remarkable family line of twelve tribes from Jacob formed the nation of Israel. Although sin and evil prevailed like famine threatened seventy family members of Jacob, God’s presence and protection of Joseph preserved early on the seed for salvation. And that ultimately became a blessing to save not only the entire households of Jacob but also the nation of Israel. In the end, the reunion of the sons of Jacob (the twelve tribes) is as important as it brought reconciliation to the nation. Reconciliation might be bitter and sweet, but the story renders us to the faithfulness and grace of God for the forgiveness of sin.

In the life and work of Joseph, the nation of Israel experienced the wisdom, power and salvation of God, through Joseph, the nation was blessed for they had peace with God. “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive.” (Genesis 50:20) The story ended there with emotions, tears and rejoice, and the Israelites just began to enter the school of discipline and learn to journey with God. Then another stage of the narrative, Scripture, leads us into another story of Israel's history where the population increases greatly in the land of Egypt. For the greater multitude and fruitful of the Israelites, and they indeed filled the land and multiplied. When a new king enthroned, and he did not know Joseph, the increasing number of Israelites became a threat, and he began to oppress
and afflict them. It is in such an unfavorable stage of life that God is with his people as he promised.

1.4 Mosaic covenant

The Mosaic Covenant is the covenant God made with the people of Israel at Mount Sinai, and that also refers to the Sinai Covenant. There are three distinctive representations. First it is “drawn to the holiness of God’s nature”, theophany with fire, thunder and lightning(19:16-19), thirdly God spoke and declared the covenant obligation(20:1-17).\(^{149}\) Spiritual covenant relationship is the heart of God’s covenant with Abraham and also applies to people under Moses’ leadership in Sinai. This covenant relationship with God is constituted in “obeying” and “keeping” God’s voices, which are his laws.\(^{150}\) The Lord is omnipresent and has compassion for his people’s suffering. All the mighty acts God performed for his people must be traced back to the covenantal promises he made with the forefathers Abraham, Issacs and Jacob. The nature of God demonstrates to us his faithfulness and unchangeable mission and the purpose of creation. God heard Israel’s groaning (2:24), called Moses (3:4-6) and promised to be with him(3:12) “For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth,“(2 Chronicles 16:9).

It is not hard for us to relate theological implications; recognizing God is the ultimate power behind the battle between Moses and pharaoh as well as that of David and Goliath. As the plagues continued, the heart of the pharaoh got harder, and the level of plagues got increasing catastrophically. When the battle came to the tenth plague that overwhelmed the pharaohs and


\(^{150}\) Ibid.,22
the Egyptians, they surrendered before the God of Israel and willingly let go of the Israelites, because they knew the power belongs to the Lord. God’s promise to redeem his people reaches to a climax in 12:12 “For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast. The Exodus presents us with the holy God’s redemption, law giving and promise. It is worth noticing that God is a covenant keeping God, before his redemptive mission is brought forth, he commissioned Moses to assure his servant who he is and what he will bring. “Say therefore to the people of Israel, ‘I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord.’” (Exodus 6:6-8)

The calling to Moses from the burning bush is echoing the theme of theocracy by thunder and lightning on the mountain Sinai where God calls the Israelites for one purpose, to know who Yahweh is and what he has done for them. The people were told, if they obey God's commands and observe the Law, he has given them through the servant Moses, that they would be His treasure possession, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. The passage begins with the name of the Lord and ends with who God is. This is God’s missional statement and promises he made to Moses before any miraculous and mighty deeds performed in public. It is sometimes as if believers are reading God’s words, and they are surely the word of hope and encouragement, yet
on daily basis, and in reality, how do we relate to God’s redemptive work is by knowing Him through His words.

The Scripture explains to us in 19:4-6 God delivered the Israelites from the oppression of pharaoh in Egypt three months later, saying “You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” At this moment, they have already been saved by God, and now they need to respond with moral imperative to this gracious salvation through obedience and faith. It is challenging to Israel as a nation, are to be faithful to this missional commandment God gave at mount Sinai. That is to fulfill the role of kingdom priesthood, and to be mediator between God and man, to interpret the laws and offer sacrifice and to bless the people. Israel is to serve as a light to the world, where the name of Yahweh, the Lord God, is honored.

It is essential to know God’s saving grace comes first and the Law giving follows. Israelites received Comandment after God's rescue mission delivered his people out of the land of slavery in Egypt. “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”(20:2) The Law well-spoken God intends his people to live a holy life. The Israelites from that moment of deliverance should live under the control of the glorious divine king who loves, dwells among his people, cares and rules by the principle of the Ten Commandments. The story of Exodus provides a temple of God’s redemption through the Old
Testament to the New that presents to all believers a vivid picture of what God’s redemption means to us and the whole world.

Knowing the God who speaks, lives, fights, protects, leads, provides and disciples Israel as a nation before him, so that they may trust “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”(20:1) It is a greater honor to be proud of being chosen as God's people. They have a privilege and obligation to the nations, and God orchestrates the entire mission to save and bless the whole world through Israel according to his will. God’s promises are grounded in the covenant God made to Abraham, Issacs and Jacob. The Decalogue is at the very heart of a nation of Israel, not merely serves as a ritual and religious function, they are required to have a holy living accordingly so that they’ll be fidelity to be a holy nation by living out every aspect of lives economically, culturally, socially, politically and religiously. They are witness of this holy God to the nations.

The Covenant at Sinai is recorded and said in 24:3-8. “Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, “All the words that the Lord has spoken we will do.” Moses rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.” And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, “Behold the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.” (Exodus
Thus, Moses read the book of the Covenant to the Israelites, and they all promised to obey. The covenant is sealed by sprinkling the blood on the people by Moses.

Herman Witsius states that “the covenant of grace is an agreement between God and the elect sinner; God declaring his free goodwill concerning eternal salvation…freely to be given to those in covenant by and for the sake of the Mediator Christ; and man consenting to that goodwill by a sincere faith.”

Furthermore, this binding of the law and relation to the Lord should be to them and future generations as family and national inheritance passed along to generations. The story of the nation of Israel is to show the faithfulness of God who saves people. In this story, not only did Israel experience God’s saving grace, but all the nations know the God of Israel through his vice and works. This redemptive narrative of Israel is written in Deuteronomy 6:20-24, “When your son asks you in time to come, ‘What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the rules that the Lord our God has commanded you?’ then you shall say to your son, ‘We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt. And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. And the Lord showed signs and wonders, great and grievous, against Egypt and against Pharaoh and all his household, before our eyes. And he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in and give us the land that he swore to give to our fathers. And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as we are this day. (Deuteronomy 6:20-24)"
The national identity of Israel is attached to the Law for observation and practice. Does the law of God place too much weight on God’s people and make following his path too difficult? Wright argues the law should not be viewed neither as a deadly weight nor a legalistic rule, and he supports his view from (Psalm 19:7-10) and read: “The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.”; “and I shall walk in a wide place, for I have sought your precepts… for I find my delight in your commandments, which I love…Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day… Therefore I love your commandments above gold, above fine gold. (Psalm 119:45, 47, 97, 127) The law serves as the word of grace to live a godly life that pleases the Redeemer of Israel, but it is not an alternative way to obtain or earn salvation because they are already saved by God. Israel’s failure demonstrated that the law is powerless to overcome the idolatry of the people and restore them to holiness until the messiah comes as incarnated lamb of God to take away the sin of the world and fulfill the law, in Matthew 5:17 Jesus said: “Don’t think that I have come to abolish the Law…but to fulfill them.” The future hope for the unfaithful Israel is the coming king who takes a human form of servanthood, once again dwelling among people, and will ultimately be the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of all through his death and resurrection.

153 Ibid., 64
1.5 Davidic covenant

The oath and promise of God best described in His covenant relationship with David (2 Sam 7:12-17 and Psalm 89:37. The nigh when the word of the Lord came to David through Nathan, “I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. …And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.” (2 Samuel 7:12-16) More promising word from Psalm 89:3-4 said: “I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: ‘I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.’” The prophet Isaiah proclaimed messianic fulfillment, that a child will be born for us, the line of Jessy, son of David, Jesus who is the king of kings and the Lord of lords.

The Covenant promise God made with Israel, Abraham, Moses and David provides the sequence and trajectory of YHWH the God’s redemptive movement throughout the history of the Old, and it is illumining to Jesus of Nazareth in the New Testament. All these trajectories with only one aspect of God’s purpose, that is from the particular to the universal for salvation. As Richard Bauckham called “the thematic trajectory of narrative” although each has its own distinctive, they are aiming to one purpose-the world mission of God. “The trajectory that moves from Abraham to all the families of the earth is the trajectory of blessing. The trajectory that moves from Israel to all the nations is the trajectory of God’s revelation of himself to the world. The trajectory that moves from God’s enthronement of David in Zion to the ends of the earth is the trajectory of rule, of God’s kingdom coming in all creation.”

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Historical facts did not change the heart of Israel to be faithful to the voice/Torah of the Lord. Experiencing God’s mighty act through many wondrous deeds did not restore Israel from the heart of idolatry, and they worshiped the golden calf instead. The divine power that led and protected them walking over the separated Red Sea does not build up their faith to trust YHWH God alone. They have forgotten the battle of plagues with the world power pharaoh, and what was replaced was their desire asking for a king like other nations to rule over them, not the divine King Yahweh who fought for his people, brought them out of slavery and provide all their needs in the wilderness. This disappointing history of the nation of Israel constitutes the biblical teaching for us. This is not only their story, but also ours, for we belong to these people too.

Apostle Paul emphasizes the importance of this historical example to fellow Christians in 1 Cor. 10:11, and Luke’s account recorded of it in the following passage: “The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. And for about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance. All this took about 450 years. And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, ‘I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.’ Of this man’s offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised.” (Acts 13:17-23)
Biblical narratives and events often serve as evidence for our knowledge of knowing God, the people and the nations, and how they respond to God’s law and judgment. Wright observed the sequence from Abraham to exodus, wilderness to the promised land, judges to monarchy-David, and he explained the importance of God’s covenant promise that fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus, who is the promised son of David referred to Psalm 2:2-7. The apostle Paul claims that all scripture, including historical, Psalms and wisdom books in the Old is God’s breath and that shall witness the truth, the messiah Jesus, whom God raised him from the dead, and had a glorious resurrection. Not like other earthly kings in the Old Testament who will surely die at the end and are buried. The necessity of direct link from David to Christ Jesus the anointed One. Jesus is the son of Abraham, the son of David and the Son of God. He is God’s covenant promise, in Christ, the Jews and the Gentiles are brought together for the forgiveness of sin.

1.6 New Covenant

There is a sequence of covenant God made with Noah, Abraham, Moses and David. Prophetic prophecy revealed that God promised to come in the Messiah of Israel. Jeremiah declares that days are coming when the Lord “will make a new covenant with the Israel and the house of Judah…for they all know me” (Jeremiah 31:31-34) The essence of God’s promise is calling people to repent and believe the true and living God, who comes to rescue, restore and bless all people. And all these transformative tasks must begin with a new faith and obedience in Him. The Prophet Ezekiel sent a message of hope to the exiles in 34-37 which really directs our

155 Ibid., 74
thoughts to the covenants God made with the Israelite patriarchs. As we know God’s covenant promises has universal salvation in a scope, we read his words

“All the families of the earth”, “the nations”, all the people. But Ezekiel 34:23-31 shows a different focus with the phrase “then you will know that I am YHWH,” Wright noted the knowing is first for the people of Israel to know the judgement and future restoration of God. Second, it is for all nations to witness YHWH the God of Israel who acts through their judgment. All people need is a saving faith in God through repentance, so that Israel and the nations will be blessed and come to be true worshipers.156 YHWH is the God of Abraham, of Israel and of all the nations. Another prophetic message that comes from a Davidic covenant promise envisages salvation in universality in Isaiah 55:3-5. We have surveyed God’s promises through the Scriptures in the Old Testament, although there were many, God made them all “YES” in Christ. (2 Cor. 1:20) The covenant of YHWH will be proceeded and become the Covenant promise of Jesus Christ. The story of Jesus in his words and work will sum up the main core of covenants and fulfill the end of the grand narrative of the Bible story in awe and worship. Christ is the cup of the new Covenant.

"This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." (1 Corinthians 11:25; Mt 26:28; Mk 14:24; Lk 22:20) The cup Jesus would like to share with us as a new covenant for purification, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my

156 Ibid., 350-351
Father's kingdom." (Matthew 26:27-29) The cup is God’s command for all of you and is poured out for many, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. (Luke 22:20)"This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you." (Hebrews 9:20) The covenant of works with Adam and Eve, and the covenant of grace Noah, Abraham, Moses and David have come to realize in Christ. The fallen trust and obey, call and vocation, identity and ethical demand, ruling and caring for creation, as king, priest, Judge, prophet, savior of all have fulfilled in Christ, the representative of Israel and the messiah. All the promises and missions accomplished in his life and works that have reached their climax in the Great Commission(Matthew 28).

The Covenant promise is fulfilled in the work of Christ, and through him, through him all nations shall be blessed. Christians are the citizens of God's kingdom residing in the world. For "All authority in heaven and on earth” has been given to Jesus, that affirms he is the Lord of lords, Lord of Roman Emperor and the God of all gods. He feeds the hungry, heals the ill, casts out demons and forgives sins. Jesus commands and authorizes his disciples and contemporary Christians to do the same, and he identifies himself is the one who possesses all authority from the divine. Lord Jesus asked his disciples to be obedient to this new covenant mandate and promised to be with them as YHWH’s dwelling with Israelites. “The Great Commission is nothing less than a universalized covenant proclamation.”157 So whatever we do and serve in participation of the mission of God we must keep our focus on being in all things concerning God in Christ in words and deeds in past, present a future according to the Scriptures.

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157 Ibid.,355
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