

# **Applying the Touchstone and Lodestar of *Scripture* To The Morassy Foundation and Principles of *Preterism***

## **Chapter 3**

### **The "Mysticalizing" Method of Interpretation**

#### **Preterism's Anti-Literal Approach to Interpreting the Bible**

### **Preterism's "Mysticalizing" Method of Interpretation**

**“Not to maintain the distinctively earthly glory to Israel, as their future hope under Messiah and the new covenant, *invariably undermines Christianity and the church, which flourish only in proportion to firmly holding Christ and union with Him in heavenly places.* The danger of the Gentiles thus becoming wise in their own conceit, and forgetting that the natural branches are only broken off in part for a season from their own olive tree, is strongly laid down in Rom. 11. **Hold fast the new and heavenly glory for us with Christ dead, risen, and glorified, and you keep the promised earthly supremacy for Israel, who will (not reign *with Him on high*, but) be *reigned over* by Him when He appears again in glory, the undisputed Head of all things, heavenly and earthly.**”**

“The consequence [of the church losing sight, early on, of our heavenly relations to Christ, and of the capital truth of the Spirit’s presence and action in the church here below] was that then was consummated **the fatal scheme of treating the church systematically as Israel improved.** Maintain simply and firmly **the literal restoration of Israel as wholly distinct from Christianity,** and you have a bulwark against pseudo-spiritualism, and a groundwork, if rightly used, for seeing our special and heavenly privileges.”—William Kelly (*Malachi*)

The “mysticalizing”/spiritualizing method of interpretation used in 70ADism (actually, in all anti-dispensational systems, to varying extents) is not to be confounded with the recognition of genuine figures of speech and symbols, as is true of the literal (plain, normal) method of interpretation.

**The mystical method of interpretation entails obliterating the original, primary meaning of a passage (especially as found in the OT prophetic Word) and replacing it with an entirely new, foreign, substitute meaning—a practice which is completely alien to, and without the least sanction of the Scriptures (or the NT in particular).**

**“[It is] the vague spiritualising which fritters all away, forgets the glory and relationship of Christ, blots out Israel as such from God’s mercy in the future, and lowers the church from heaven to earth.”—William Kelly (*Isaiah*)**

Under this mystical approach of Preterism, if any (of the myriad of) blessings and promises to Israel appear clearly unconditional and everlasting in nature, then "Israel" is made to mean the "Church," and all the blessings and promises are transmuted . . . the details of God's Word mean nothing. If, on the other hand, any blessings to Israel appear conditional and temporal, or if any judgments are predicted for Israel, then "Israel" retains its meaning as "Israel," and normal, plain, literal interpretation may be followed, down to every jot and tittle of God's Word. Anti-dispensationalists use spiritual alchemy toward all Jewish promises of an everlasting, unconditional, sovereign-

grace nature—taking them away in one form from earthly Israel, and transferring them in another form to the heavenly Church. *Leaving Israel with nothing but curses and judgments; and rendering the Church worldly and earthly-minded.*

**“[But] if the divine word can fail as to Israel's restoration and pre-eminent glory in their land and the universal joy of the nations as such, how can we trust it for the eternal life of the believer, and for the heavenly privileges of the Christian and the church at this present time?** The symmetry of the dispensations of God is also destroyed by the error to any mind capable of a comprehensive grasp of their course as a whole.”—William Kelly (*Amos*)

Literal interpretation involves taking words in their normal, natural, plain sense. This does not rule out the use of figurative language and symbols; rather literal interpretation recognizes genuine figures of speech and symbols, and interprets *what or whom* they symbolize normally, naturally, plainly—in accordance with scripture, in accordance with the vast connected whole of God's prophetic truth (2 Pet. 1:20).

**“[T]his adoption of some well-known figure startles by the very fact that it is a figure, by no means obscures; for this is never the object of figures in Scripture, or in any honest writing.** The true object is rather to compress into one word the truth which might otherwise need to be expanded into many words; so that a word becomes what may be called an image-word of truth, **and therefore bright with the light of God.**”—William Kelly (*The New Testament Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*)

And merely because the Holy Spirit properly and perfectly uses figures of speech or symbols in a particular passage of scripture, this does not grant Preterists a license to subjectively *impute* supposed figures of speech or symbols to *any* passage where *spiritual alchemy or transmutation* is required by their *mysticalizing* system (and such is required *ad nauseam*, throughout the Old and New Testament prophetic Word).

The burden of proof is on those who claim that a passage of scripture cannot be interpreted literally, but must be taken mystically. The burden is on them to prove, *passage by individual passage*, that each *is* mystical . . . that it **can only be and must be** interpreted mystically . . . and to prove from other scriptures what that mystical interpretation **definitely** means in any given passage. Preterists cannot merely point to a couple of NT passages (e.g., Acts 2\* and Acts 15\*\*), which their fancy imagines are examples of mysticalization, and then run headlong into mysticalizing any and all of God's prophetic truth that is not to their liking—on the sole authority of their own sovereign and arbitrary whims. (After all, there is no blanket statement in scripture which declares or even remotely suggests that *all* . . . that *every single* OT prophetic passage, e.g., of Israel's everlasting kingdom blessings, must be *mysticalized*. In point of fact, there is *no* such scripture that states *any* such thing of *any* OT prophetic passage.)

"Israel," "Judah," "Zion," etc., are never used in the OT (or in the NT for that matter) to mystically signify that the heavenly Church, rather than earthly Israel, is actually meant. In order for "Israel" to be made to refer to the "Church" in a specific OT passage, one would have to prove that, e.g., "Israel" in a specific OT passage can only be, and must be, interpreted mystically as signifying nothing other than the Church in that specific passage. *Passage by individual passage*, it must be shown that the unconditional and everlasting kingdom blessings and promises to earthly Israel must refer to the heavenly Church, and that those earthly kingdom blessings and promises must themselves be taken mystically as referring to spiritual or non-earthly things (or whatever). But above and beyond that, one would have to completely ignore and flatly contradict the NT revelation of the Church as being a "mystery," a secret, kept silent in OT times! Such is the pathetic condition of any theological system built on a mystical method of interpretation.

"The restoration of Israel is so plainly intimated in the very scriptures which declare their ruin and scattering. . . . His gracious purpose of restoring, in the latter day, Israel for blessing in their land under the Messiah and the new covenant. Taken in their plain and uniform meaning, the prophets are full of that blessed expectation for Israel in divine mercy, but not without hints here and there of grace toward the Gentile, sometimes during their eclipse, as in Isa. 65:1, 2, and Hosea 1:10. Yet these texts afford no pretence for the identification, but the contrary."

"It is only Gentile pride and delusion that Israel are gone for ever to make themselves 'the Israel of God,' and abide till time melts into eternity. Not so! Assuredly if the Gentile abide not in God's goodness (and who will dare to affirm this?) he will be cut off, and the Jews will be grafted into their own olive tree. Then the apostle [in Rom. 11] drops argument and figure, declaring in plain terms that a hardening in part (it has never been complete) has befallen Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in; 'and so all Israel shall be saved,' according to the prophet (Isa. 59:20). This will be the true restoration of Israel in the day of Jehovah, when the Gentiles meet with condign judgment at His hand. It is only fleshly Israel that can be said to be 'enemies for your sake as touching the gospel.' It is only they who are 'beloved for the fathers' sake, as touching the election.' What theologians call 'the spiritual people,' 'the Israel of God,' or believers,

cannot answer to this language. It is the same people, enemies as regards the gospel yet beloved as regards election, who shall be saved. For, adds the apostle, the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance — they are subject to no change of mind on His part. God will assuredly restore His people yet."

"These absurdities disappear **when we believe the word as the Spirit wrote it**; and, while holding fast the hope of Christ for the heavens, we can all the better rejoice in the ancient people blessed under the new covenant in Immanuel's land, and made a blessing to all nations of the earth: the grand, constant, and universal prospect, which is found in all the prophets. The special Christian relationship, our calling, inheritance, and hope, are unfolded only in the New Testament. It is 'the mystery concerning Christ and concerning the church,' founded on redemption, and formed by the Spirit sent from heaven to baptise us into the one body of the ascended Head."—William Kelly (*Isaiah*)

"Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to **believe all** that the [OT] prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:25-26)

"In Rom. 11 the apostle lays down the true and only sound principle: the ultimate blessing of all Israel nationally. It is the more remarkable because in the first half of the Epistle he treats of the gospel which effaces the distinction between Jew and Greek, alike guilty, alike justified by faith in the indiscriminate grace of God. There is no distinction on the one hand, for all sinned and come short of the glory of God; as, on the other there is no distinction between either, for the same Lord of all is rich toward all that call upon Him. The rejection and death of the Messiah left the Jews justly rejected, and gave the occasion for God to proclaim His grace to every creature under heaven, that all who believe in Christ should be saved. When this work of the gospel is done according to God's purpose, He will take up that government of the world of which Israel has the foremost place according to promise and prophecy, but on the ground of sovereign mercy in which He will also bless all the nations, and this by His Son returning in power and glory to reign in Zion, and possess the uttermost parts of the earth — indeed to be the Head of the universe in that day, as the New Testament clearly proves.

"For the apostle in that chapter furnishes the most conclusive evidence that God has not cut off His people, as it might have appeared from the freeness of the gospel. **First, there is a remnant of Israel (vv. 1-6) at this present time also, of which the apostle himself was an instance, the remnant according to the election of grace. Of no other people is this true. Its attaching to Jews only is the witness that God has not absolutely cast them off.** Next, though the Jews have as a people stumbled at the stumbling-stone of Messiah's humiliation, it is not in order that they might fall, but by their trespass, salvation is to the Gentiles (or nations) to provoke Israel to jealousy, and not therefore to cast them off. Again, the figure of the olive-tree teaches the same lesson. For theirs is that line of promise and testimony; and the Gentile, only a wild olive, was but grafted in, on the breaking off some of the branches; and he is called not to be high-minded but fear, lest, failing to abide in God's goodness, he be also cut off (vv. 7-12). As it is certain that the Gentile has not so abode but dishonoured the grace and truth of God in the gospel, at least as much as the Jew failed in his previous responsibility, the natural branches shall no less certainly be grafted in, when the Gentile is cut off (vv. 13-24). Lastly, direct and absolute proof is adduced from Isa. 59 to expose the fond delusion of conceited philosophy that the Gentiles have a lease of favoured place for ever. For when that complement or fullness of the Gentiles is come in, which God is taking, "All Israel shall be saved; even as it is written, the Deliverer shall come out of Zion; he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is the covenant from me to them when I shall take away their sins" (vv. 26, 27).

"Not a word of this could apply to the so-called spiritual Israel, but only to the ancient people of Jehovah; nor could the language consist with Gentiles either. Taken in their ordinary import of the terms the reasoning is as sound as the meaning is important. For we are thereby taught to read Israel in its literal force throughout the prophets as the apostle did; and so Zion, Jerusalem, Judah, Ephraim, and all other names. Figurative language there is abundantly in both the Old Testament and the New. It is so in everyday life, and yet more on occasions when we are more than ordinarily concerned. But the names designate facts, even the well-known objects as they occur, and are never themselves figures. Symbols also are employed, which differ from figures as being a composite of ideas which the prophet saw and describes for the more graphic delineation of the object. There is no uncertainty in the employment of either symbol or figurative expression, but rather to give objects all the more force. The objects are real, not ideal, in every case. As plain language is constantly intermingled with figures, there need never be any great difficulty. So when symbols are employed, there is often an interpretation added: only we have to bear in mind that divine interpretations may and do frequently give more than the statement under explanation. The Holy Spirit gives all requisite guidance in comparing scripture with scripture; and He is needed for profitable understanding of Genesis and John as truly as He is for using Ezekiel and the Revelation aright."—William Kelly (*Isaiah*)

Further, NT authors making a valid *application* of an OT passage or principle to the Church has nothing in common with what Preterism does in its mysticizing method of interpretation (which *empties* the original, primary meaning of the OT prophetic Word and *replaces* it with a new, foreign, *substitute* meaning).

Preterists and other anti-dispensationalists also seem to argue that, as the NT sometimes makes an *application* to the Church of OT phraseology or language used of Israel (e.g., 1 Pet. 2:9-10), therefore: (1) OT prophecies of Israel's earthly Kingdom glory must not be taken literally, but should be interpreted mystically; (2) the Church *is* Israel; and (3) the Church *displaces* Israel and spiritually *fulfills* Israel's OT prophecies of earthly Kingdom glory.

In this connection, it should be also observed that the NT sometimes makes an *application* to the Church (or to individual heavenly saints in Christ) of OT prophetic truth *concerning Christ Himself* (e.g., Rev. 2:26-27; Acts 13:47). Thus, by the same logic, should we conclude, therefore, that: (1) OT prophecies of Christ must not be taken literally, but should be interpreted mystically; (2) the Church *is* Christ; and (3) the Church *displaces* Christ and spiritually *fulfills* His OT prophecies?!

The OT speaks of **Jewish supremacy over Gentiles** within the future earthly kingdom; cf. Isa. 2:2-3; 14:2; 45:14; 49:22-23; 54:3; 60:5, 9-10, 12, 14; 61:5; Zech. 8:23; Deut. 7:6; 10:15; 26:19; 28:1, 13. Is this literal or mystical? If mystical, **what is its mystical import?** What specific scriptures **prove precisely** its mystical meaning? Or are we cast upon the whims of unmitigated **subjectivism**?

“With the numerous seed God connects the possessing the gate of their enemies [Gen. 22:17]—that is, **Jewish supremacy**. But this is not what one acquires as a Christian. . . [T]he Jews, as such, will have not only blessing through Christ by-and-by, but their enemies put down. **Israel will be exalted in the earth, which God never promised to the Gentiles**. . . [I]t is in Christ risen from the dead that our blessing comes. Christ dead and risen again is perfectly free to bless the Gentiles. As long as He was merely living on the earth, He said, ‘I am not sent save to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,’ but, when risen, all is changed. Accordingly, He commissions His disciples, ‘Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations.’ And so He predicted the gospel must be published among all nations. . . The importance of this [Christ dead and risen] is immense; because, while Christ was upon the earth, He was under law Himself. Risen from the dead, what had He to do with law? The law does not touch a man when he is dead. The apostle [Paul] argues that the Christian belongs to Christ in resurrection. When any one is baptized into Christ, this is what He confesses:—**I belong to Christ dead and risen, taken out of my old place of Jew or Gentile. The Jews had to do with a Messiah who was to reign over them on the earth; the Gentiles in that day shall be the tail and not the head, and kings shall be the nursing fathers of Zion, and queens the nursing mothers, bowing down to the earth and licking up the dust of Israel's feet; but we, Christians, begin with Christ's death and resurrection. All our blessing is in Christ raised from the dead.**”—William Kelly (*Galatians*)

“The kingdom of Messiah introduced by solemn judgments shall see the peaceful sway of good inseparable from the manifestation of the divine glory. That, and not at all Christianity or the church, is what is referred to here [in Habakkuk 2:14, ‘For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.']. It is the millennial age which will be the true time for the public establishment of all authority to the glory of Jehovah. . . . All will be unrest among the nations **till then**, however truly grace may give souls far and wide to know a portion **in Christ above and apart from the world**. But there is no hope for the earth to be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah's glory till that day: on the contrary the apostacy must come before it and be judged by the righteous power of the Lord. **What is called ‘the gospel dispensation’ has another object and character, is inconsistent with the special pre-eminence of Israel, and stands aloof from the execution of judgments on the Gentiles.**”—William Kelly (*Habakkuk*)

“**In the future kingdom** the Lord will take the earth as well as the heavens under His manifest sway, and **the Jews and the Gentiles will be owned and blessed in their respective place on the earth, Israel having the position of special nearness but the nations rejoicing and worshipping everywhere**; for Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Jehovah, and His name one. . . . Jehovah going out in His goodness to all the Gentiles, **while the mountain of His house is established in the top of the mountains and exalted above the hills, and the nations flow to it**. . . . Universal profession of Jehovah's name, not testimony only, will be the specific character of the millennial age. **There may be gradation in the results; as it is plain there will be the highest manifestation as far as earth is concerned in Jerusalem. Israel will compose the inner circle for the earth**, but not to the exclusion of divine and acceptable worship everywhere among the Gentiles; ‘for my name,’ says He, ‘shall be great among the heathen, saith Jehovah of hosts.’”—William Kelly (*Malachi*)

OT revelation concerning earthly Jew and Gentile distinctions, with their *unequal* positions and standings, within the future earthly kingdom **cannot** be alchemized to refer to heavenly members of the Body and Bride of Christ (the Church) today, who, before God, are positionally neither earthly Jew nor Gentile—there being no distinctions in regard to our position and blessings **in Christ**; rather we are *equal, new creation and heavenly in Him*. (Cf. 1 Cor. 5:1; 9:20; 10:32; 12:2, 13; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:28; 5:6; 6:15; Eph. 2:11, 14-16; 4:17; Col. 3:9-11; 1 Thess. 4:5; John 15:19; 17:14; Acts 26:17.)

Outside the intercalary period of the Church, *no such unsurpassable, and hitherto unknown, heavenly position, identification, union, oneness in and with the hidden Christ in heavenly glory is ever uttered*, with respect to the redeemed *earthly* Israel and Gentiles as such (who *remain* forever as Jews and Gentiles), redeemed as *subjects* for the coming glorious earthly kingdom, *under* the Messiah-King (with Gentiles, the tail, being willingly and joyously *subordinate* to Israel, the head).

"Between the humiliation of the cross and the coming again is the place of the Son known in the Father, as of us in Him and of Him in us. No Old Testament saint knew or could speak thus; nor did an expectation of it ever dawn on a single heart of old. No millennial saint will ever know of such a relationship of Christ or of those then on earth."

"In that day, when Israel is restored, and spiritually as well as literally in their land under Messiah and the new covenant, the nations shall be blessed, and bow before the Son of man."

"She [the Church], in the heavenly places, will reign **with** Christ over the earth; Israel will be reigned **over**, but the inner circle on earth, as the Gentiles also more distantly but blessed indeed."—William Kelly (*The Gospel of John*)

**"He shall be great, and shall be called Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give Him the throne of David His father; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for the ages, and of his kingdom there shall not be an end."** (Luke 1:32-33)

"[T]he reign of Christ over the converted Jewish people in the millennium is a **very different thing** from the secret counsels of **grace which, through faith, have saved souls from the beginning**. So far there is a step, and an important step, in the true direction. **But here is a stopping short**. It is not seen that **the rejection of Christ by Jew and Gentile on the cross, and His consequent exaltation at the right hand of God, and the intermediate mission of the Holy Ghost here below till the Lord returns again, have made way for the accomplishment and revelation of an unique work of God**, which had been kept secret from previous ages and generations {Col. 1:26}. **This work is the church, Christ's body.**"

"It is not merely an increase of light as to the counsels of salvation, on which the entire line of the faithful, from Abel downward, had reposed, **but there was a hitherto unknown and hidden mystery respecting a body destined to be the consort of Christ in heavenly glory at His coming, and meanwhile called into manifestation and enjoyment of its privileges by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, who was to commence, sustain, and guide it here below, while waiting for the Bridegroom.**"

"There was one body [brought into existence by the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost], wherein Jewish and Gentile distinctions were absolutely gone, the church on earth, and one Spirit who resided there. **It is not a mere continuation of a believing people who looked to promise, but established on accomplished redemption, an entirely new body appears, brought into union with Christ in His heavenly honours, between the first and second advent, while He is absent above.**"

"[T]he church is the bride, the Eve of the second Adam . . . [while the OT saved people and] the millennial saved people, though just as much saints, as truly redeemed by the blood of Christ, as we are, nevertheless . . . [are] not of his wife. . . . The true, the scriptural, limits of the church are the cross and the coming of the Lord Jesus {at the pretribulation rapture}; founded upon the one, and waiting for the other, is **that body, one with its Head on high, in which God dwells by the Holy Ghost; a new and unearthly body**, having a path here below traced out for it, in many and important respects, **quite distinct from what characterized the Old Testament saints, or what will characterize the millennial saints.**"

**"Thus is shown the peculiarity of our position, upon whom the ends of the ages are met. It is a novel, unprecedented and heavenly place**, in no way interfering with the vast scheme of God's earthly government: on the contrary, in this latter, room is purposely left for another field, **which was entirely hidden of old, namely, for the development of the glory of Christ as the exalted Man. It is with a Christ on high the church is associated**. Of course I do not speak of His incommunicable divinity, as the Son, but of a **peculiar heavenly glory shared with His bride, and unknown to the Old Testament**

writers, who dwell so largely upon His Messianic rights. The church then began after the cutting off of Messiah, and goes up to meet the Lord in the air before the seventieth week commences with the Roman prince and his covenant. With the cross the earthly people fell under judgment, how long soever it might linger, while God was gathering a remnant to the Saviour. That same cross becomes the foundation of Christ's heavenly body, the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. When this work is concluded, the church will be borne away to join the Lord in the air, and renewed dealings will begin with the earthly people once more. The church has, no doubt, committed to her the more complete revelation of these judgments on the Gentiles which precede the good things in store for Israel, but the strictly prophetic part of the Apocalypse is not therefore about herself. On the contrary it reveals, throughout the chief contents of it, the glorified worshipping in heaven, and the blows of divine judgment falling with a deepening intensity, till Christ and the saints come out of heaven and appear together for the destruction of the beast and the false prophet with their armies."—William Kelly (*Elements of Prophecy*)

### Note on Millennial Temple and Sacrifices

Those who say, e.g., that the truth of Millennial Jews and Gentiles worshipping in connection with the Millennial Temple and offering animal sacrifices is an abomination and a denial of the Cross—these folk seem to harbor a (perhaps, unconscious) notion that OT sacrifices were, in some sense, in themselves, **actually efficacious to remove sin**.

The fact of the matter is, the Mosaic sacrifices themselves "perfected" or "purified" no Jew so that they had "no more conscience of sins"—these sacrifices, by their very nature, were incapable of doing anything of the kind; likewise with the Millennial sacrifices. Only the precious blood of the God-Man avails to such an end. The Spirit of God, by Paul, in Heb. 10, is not implying (even indirectly) that perfected and purified *earthly* saints of the *future* Millennial Kingdom will not or cannot offer animal sacrifices at that time; but simply that such sacrifices themselves can never perfect or purify anyone, or take away their sins. For if the animal sacrifices themselves had done such, they would not have been offered continuously, but rather, would have ceased being offered upon accomplishing their once-for-all perfection and purification. But, of course, as evidenced by the never-ending repetition of the sacrifices, such was not and could not be their nature, purpose or effect. (The continual offering of sacrifices, both in the OT and under the future earthly Millennial system, point—either prospectively or retrospectively—to the once-for-all Sacrifice of Christ, to the alone-efficacious blood of Christ, which alone can take away sin, perfect those who approach, and purify the believing sinner so that he has no more conscience of sins.)

God was not and could not be pleased or satisfied with animal sacrifices; they were not what His infinitely holy being required as a result of the infinite outrage of sin against His nature; they could not vindicate, satisfy, glorify His infinitely moral being. Only the precious blood of the incarnate eternal Son, only His infinite sufferings and death on the Cross, could do so, once-for-all. "God's righteousness and love, and majesty and truth, all that He is, were perfectly glorified" through the once-for-all Sacrifice of Christ, in which He bore "that which was most hateful, not only to God, but to Himself the Holy one of God. . . . He gave Himself up for His glory, and so passed under, not merely death, but also divine judgment" against sin.

"For the **[Mosaic]** law, having a shadow of the coming good things, not the image itself of the things, **can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually yearly, perfect those who approach [as explained in the next verse]**. Since, would they not indeed have ceased being offered, on account of the worshippers once purged having no longer any conscience of sins **[i.e., if the worshippers were thus "perfected" by virtue of the animal sacrifices]**? But in these **[in these Mosaic sacrifices]** there is a calling to mind of sins yearly **[by virtue of the fact that true, divine atonement was not yet completed; and note that such "calling to mind of sins" will not be the case in, or the function of, the Millennial sacrifices which will be performed from the vantage of true, divine atonement having been completed]**. For blood of bulls and goats is **[intrinsically, and ever and always]** incapable of taking away sins **[whether in OT times or in the coming Millennial times, sacrifices can never be in themselves actually efficacious to remove sins]**. Wherefore [on] coming into the world he **[Jehovah-Jesus, the God-Man]** says, Sacrifice and offering thou willedst not; but thou hast prepared me a body. Thou tookest no pleasure in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin **[God was not and could not be pleased or satisfied with animal sacrifices; they were not what His infinitely holy being required as a result of the infinite outrage of sin against His nature; they could not vindicate, satisfy, glorify His infinitely moral being. Only the precious blood of the incarnate eternal Son, only His infinite sufferings and death on the Cross, could do so, once-for-all]**. *Then* I said, Lo, I [am] come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do, O God, ***thy will***. Above, saying Sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin ***thou willedst not***, neither tookest pleasure in **(which are offered according to the [Mosaic] law)**; then he said, Lo, I [am] come to do ***thy will*** **["God's righteousness and love, and majesty and truth, all that He is, were perfectly glorified" through the**



once-for-all Sacrifice of Christ, in which He bore "that which was most hateful, not only to God, but to Himself the Holy one of God. . . . He gave Himself up for His glory, and so passed under, not merely death, but also divine judgment" against sin.]. He takes away *the first* [the requirement to offer sacrifices according to the Mosaic Law, in which "there is a calling to mind of sins yearly"] that he may establish *the second* [i.e., "Thy will," which is "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," as explained in the next verse, but which in no way precludes earthly Millennial Jews and Gentiles from offering memorial sacrifices during that age to come]; by which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands daily ministering, and offering often the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins [whether in OT times or in the coming Millennial times, sacrifices can never be in themselves actually efficacious to remove sins]. But he, having offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down in perpetuity at the right hand of God, waiting from henceforth until his enemies be set for the footstool of his feet. For by one offering he has perfected in perpetuity the sanctified." (Heb. 10:1-14)

"In the last section of the Book of Ezekiel [chapters 40-48] the orderly arrangement of the restored nation of Israel is foretold along with a view of the sanctuary of Jehovah in the midst of the holy city, Jerusalem, then to be seen in all its millennial beauty and holiness. . . . As to these closing chapters of Ezekiel, I am convinced that there is no possible way in which they can be applied to the spiritual blessings that by faith we have found to be embodied in the church, that is, found to be in Christ Jesus for the possession of the church [the Body of Christ]. . . . Now I take it the language [here] . . . is not merely figurative in meaning. There will be literal priests of Aaronic descent who will offer literal sacrifices as stated. Whether people understand it or not, the word of God on this matter is perfectly plain. **Difficulties only arise because so many reason solely from the Christian thoughts and Christian truths. But is God to have none but Christians in His purposes and future dealings? Further, is not God to be allowed the liberty of acting according to His own counsels and plans for His own people, whether earthly or heavenly? Is it not possible for Him in the future to accept sacrifices and offerings in an appointed place?** I am convinced that it would be rank apostasy for a Christian to offer sacrifices and burn incense. On this ground, many feel that those chapters in Ezekiel ought not to be taken literally for the church, the Christian body. This is true; but why should they not be for the nation of Israel when converted and settled in the holy land? When the nation repents and receives the Messiah Whom they crucified, but Whom God has glorified, they will no longer pervert but obey what God has established by His word. **The sacrifices to them will be memorials of Christ's one sacrifice, the burnt-offering from one point of view, the meal-offering from another, the sin-offering another, and so on. I take it, therefore, that these scriptures in their strict literal import apply not to the Christian assembly, but to Israel in the future, and indeed to the Gentile nations of that day also.** The New Testament scriptures that are often used to deny this interpretation are those addressed exclusively to present day Christians. They say that the Bible says, There is no more offering for sin (Heb. 10: 18, 26). But this scripture applies to Christians not to the Jews. **The Jews will have the remission of their sins, but they will have also sacrifices appointed as reminders of the one effectual sacrifice, of Christ, offered and accepted once for all. I know it has been said that the offering of millennial sacrifices would be a going back in the ways of God. But this is not true. The sacrifices of Israel in the future will differ fundamentally from those in the past. Those of old were types of what Christ was coming to do sacrificially, but in those future days they will be the appointed types of what Christ has accomplished by His single sacrificial offering and death. Thus, the establishment of sacrificial testimony to the atonement made by Christ through His crucifixion and death will ensure a continual tribute of praise to the Messiah of Israel throughout His millennial reign.** The revival of sacrifices and feasts in Jerusalem will **not be a retrograde step** in the divine dispensations for this earth, but will rather **mark the climax of His dealings with the present heavens and earth**, when 'all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto Jehovah' (Ps. 22:27)."—William Kelly (*Elements of Prophecy*)

" 'In every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering,' [Mal. 1:11] — in contrast with the polluted one which the priests of Israel presented then. I see no reason to conclude that the sacrificial terms are transferred from their original ceremonial objects and acts to such as are strictly spiritual, as we know now. (Heb. 13, 1 Peter 2) The later chapters of Ezekiel, which clearly bear on the future, not on our time and position, are **too explicit to be thus explained away, if indeed we prefer scripture authority to the thoughts and wishes of men.** There is the strongest possible proof that the offerings will then be material, though no doubt **used with intelligence and as memorials of the great sacrifice**, when the blessing of the Gentiles will not be as now a reproach to Israel, but these will be as life from the dead to all the world. We must leave room for both these things, which are distinctly revealed and contrasted by the Holy Ghost in Romans 11. It is not therefore a question merely of interpreting the Old Testament, but of believing the interpretation authoritatively supplied to us by the great apostle of the Gentiles."

“Thus it appears to me certain that, beside **the great centre of earthly worship for all in Jerusalem**, literal offerings (and from Ezekiel we can add more) are here predicated of **all the Gentiles in every place**. **Compare also Zeph. 2:11 for the latter truth, and Isa. 56:6-8 for the former. But both are for the future exclusively in the world or age to come:** and the more we reflect upon it, the less need we wonder, and the more its importance will be felt by unprejudiced minds which tremble at God's word. Universal profession of Jehovah's name, not testimony only, will be the specific character of the millennial age. There may be gradation in the results; as it is plain **there will be the highest manifestation as far as earth is concerned in Jerusalem. Israel will compose the inner circle for the earth, but not to the exclusion of divine and acceptable worship everywhere among the Gentiles;** ‘for my name,’ says He, ‘shall be great among the heathen, saith Jehovah of hosts.’ [Mal. 1:11]”

“As to the re-appearance of a vast central temple on earth, a human priesthood, sacrifices, and every other peculiarity of a ritual religion, it appears to my mind indisputable in the end of Ezekiel. . . **Nor is it a question of a single, however considerable, portion of scripture. The Psalms and Prophets abound in anticipations of the new age,** when the temple and its services and priesthood should be to Jehovah's praise, **on a new ground indeed, but otherwise substantially similar.** And as to Ezekiel 40 - 48 the evidence is so strong . . . the vision is homogeneous. The city, the distribution of the tribes, the healing waters, the return of the cherubic glory, all go together and point, not to an imperfect copy of certain points of the temple in the post-captivity state, but to the glorious renovation, the times of restitution of all things, spoken of by all the holy prophets since the world began.”

“Let it be noticed further that in Ezekiel we see a temple as well as a city for the earthly people. It is remarkable, on the contrary, that in what is **expressly said** to be the bride, the Lamb's wife (that is, the church or heavenly city of which John speaks) [in Rev. 21-22], **no temple is seen.** Thus the distinction is maintained even in glory. Where a temple is on earth, a priesthood accompanies it; and if there be a priesthood, it is hard to see the use of it without sacrifices. With us spiritual priesthood and spiritual sacrifices go together. (Compare Heb. 10 - 13; and 1 Peter 2:5.) **Nor does scripture leave it to inferential reasoning** whether there be Aaronic priests, offerings, and sacrifices or not; **for this is affirmed and even minutely described.** (Compare Psalms 96:8; Ps. 115:10; Ps. 118:26, 27; Ps. 132:13-18; Ps. 135:19-21; Isaiah 60:6, 7, 13; Isa. 66:21; Jer. 33:18; Ezek. 43 - 46; Zech. 14:16-21)

“**The chief source of difficulty and hindrance is the system which assumes that Christianity is a final condition for the earth, and that the testimony will be as now until all the earth is converted, the Jews being at length brought in among the rest.** It is another thing with those who believe that **there is another age to follow the present,** characterized by the salvation of all Israel as such, with the Gentiles largely blessed also, but not brought into the one body as we know now, but the Jews in their own land with the temple and its ritual and all the nations not only coming up there year by year, but having worship each in his own place also by the will of God. When the national restoration of the ancient people is seen, it is hard after this to deny their priests and sanctuary, their incense, and sacrifices.”

“**Nobody need be afraid that all this will interfere with the value due to the sacrifice of Christ: we may trust God and His word that no dishonour shall be done to that only efficacious atonement. I presume that the sacrifices will be of a purely memorial character and nothing more. In that day no Israelite will ever again use the form to slight the substance. All will know that there is nothing efficacious in such sacrifices, any more than we acknowledge in baptism or the Lord's Supper.** So with the Israel of that day. That they are to have sacrifices is a revealed fact; so they are to have priests over again on earth. It is well to see that this will not for them interfere with their resting on Christ; **but, understanding it or not, we should believe, and not seek to explain it away.** . . . [o]n the earth will be the converted Israel of that day in their unchanged bodies, and the spared Gentiles, not possessed of exactly the same privileges, for Israel will then have the better place, but all blessed richly under Jehovah Messiah. **As it is quite a different state of things from Christianity, so there will then be two distinct positions, heavenly** [for the completed, glorified Church, the Body and Bride of Christ] **and earthly** [for Israel and the Gentiles], **instead of one and the same as now.**”—William Kelly (*Malachi*)



## \*Note on the Interpretation of Acts 2

“There are two general ways in which OT Scriptures are quoted in the NT.

1. They are quoted to show a fulfillment, as often in Matthew’s gospel; and Acts 1:16 is an example.
2. They are quoted to:
  - a) *illustrate a point;*
  - b) *make an application;*
  - c) *show that something is not inconsistent with the ways of God.*

“Therefore, something may fall within the use of a prophecy but not be its fulfillment. Acts 2:17-21 and Acts 15:14-18 are examples of #2 [actually as to all three to some extent]. **Sometimes such quotations are very full and contain more than what refers to the point under consideration, thus showing [unmistakably] that the fulfillment has not occurred** [as is precisely the case with Acts 2:17-21 and Acts 15:14-18]. The *fulfillment* is millennial, but something in #2 is applicable meanwhile.”—R.A. Huebner (*Elements of Dispensational Truth*, Vol. 1)

The fact is, *none* of Joel’s prophecy (Joel 2:28-32) was “fulfilled” on the day of Pentecost; nor was it *mysticalized* to make it so.

"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke forth to them, Men of Judaea, and all ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, let this [*or, 'the following,' Gr. totou*] be known to you, and give heed to my words: for these are not full of wine, as ye suppose, for it is the third hour of the day; but this [*or, 'the following,' Gr. totou*] is that which was spoken through the prophet Joel [*not, 'this is the fulfillment of' Joel's prophecy in 2:28-32*]: And it shall be in the last days [*for in 'the end of days' spoken of in the OT (Gen. 49:1; Num. 24:14; Deut. 31:29; Isa. 2:2; Jer. 23:20; 48:47; 49:39; Ezek. 38:16; Dan. 2:28; 10:14; Hos. 3:4-5; Micah 4:1) pertaining to Israel with the coming Tribulation and following Kingdom in view. NOT the beginning or 'first day' of the Church, the Body of Christ, as newly formed by the baptism of the Spirit*], saith God, that I will pour out of my Spirit upon **all** flesh [*all redeemed flesh, all Jews and Gentiles (which in no way occurred or was 'fulfilled' on the day of Pentecost) who will populate the Millennial earth upon its establishment*]; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy [*which did not occur on the day of Pentecost*], and your young men shall see visions [*which did not occur on the day of Pentecost*], and your elders shall dream with dreams [*which did not occur on the day of Pentecost*]; yea, even upon my bondmen and upon my bondwomen in those days will I pour out of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy [*which did not occur on the Day of Pentecost*]. And I will give wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: the sun shall be changed to darkness and the moon to blood [*NONE of which occurred on the day of Pentecost*], before the great and gloriously appearing day of the Lord come [*i.e., that phase of the Day of the LORD which marks the actual point of the personal Appearing of Jehovah-Jesus, the Manifestation of His Coming, in great power and glory to establish His Millennial Reign over this earth*]. **And it shall be that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.** " (Acts 2:14-21)

"It was not intoxication, Peter said; it was the ministry of the Spirit that caused the spectacle. *To prove that the Spirit can produce such things*, Peter quoted from Joel 2:28-32. This is a prophecy which will be fulfilled during the millennium when Israel is reestablished in her own land. Peter was *not* saying that the prophecy was *fulfilled* at Pentecost or even that it was *partially fulfilled*; knowing from Joel what the Spirit could do, he was simply reminding the Jews that they should have recognized what they were then seeing as a work of the Spirit also. He continued to quote from Joel at length only in order to be able to include the salvation invitation recorded in verse 21."—Charles C. Ryrie (*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 20-21)

"From this categorical denial of the charge of drunkenness Peter passed easily and naturally to the explanation of what the phenomenon was. It was not wine but the Holy Spirit who was causing these things, and *to prove this Peter quoted Joel 2:28-32*. This Old Testament passage presents a definite prophecy of the Holy Spirit’s being poured out when Israel will again be established her own land. The problem here is not one of interpretation but of usage only. Clearly Joel’s prophecy was *not fulfilled at Pentecost*, for (a) *Peter did not use the usual scriptural formula for fulfilled prophecy as he did in Acts 1:16* (cf. Matt. 1:22; 2:17; 4:14); (b) the prophecy of Joel will clearly not be fulfilled *until* Israel is restored to her land, converted, and enjoying the presence of the Lord in her midst (Joel 2:26-28); and (c) *the events prophesied by Joel simply did not come to pass. If language means anything Pentecost did not fulfill this prophecy nor did Peter say it did*. Peter’s quotation of this passage in Joel need not raise theological questions at all, for the matter is primarily homiletical and any problems should be solved in that light. Peter’s point was that the Holy Spirit and not wine was responsible for what these Jews had seen. He quoted Joel to point out that as Jews who knew the Old Testament Scriptures they should have recognized this as the Spirit’s work. *In other words, their own Scriptures should have reminded them that the Spirit was able to do what they had just seen. Why*

then, someone may ask, did Peter include the words from Joel recorded in Acts 2:19-20? Why did he not stop with verse 18? The answer is simple. Peter not only wanted to show his audience that they should have known from the Scriptures that the Spirit could do what they had seen, but *[to also unmistakably show that the actual fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32 in no way has occurred but in fact await a coming Millennial day; and]* he also wanted to invite them [through repentance and faith] to accept Jesus as their Messiah by using Joel's invitation, 'whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved' (v. 21). Thus what is recorded in Acts 2:19-20 is simply a connecting link between the two key points in his argument."—Charles C. Ryrie (*"The Significance of Pentecost," in Vital New Testament Issues, pp. 39-40*)

"[Joel 2:28-29] 'And it shall come to pass afterward *[after the inauguration of Millennial Kingdom blessings as stipulated in Joel 2:18-27 upon restored Israel]*, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit.' It is the very scripture, as we know, which the apostle Peter quotes on the day of Pentecost **to show that the immense blessing of that day was in accordance with the highest favour promised for the kingdom, not that human excitement or moral folly which mistaken or deluded men were quick to impute to those who surpassed others in spiritual power. But, observe, the apostle did not affirm that this scripture was fulfilled.** He says, 'It is that thing which was spoken by the prophet Joel;' and so it is. What was promised was the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. Without saying that the present fact was the fulfilment of the prophecy (which men have assumed, to the great misunderstanding of scripture and lowering of Christianity), he showed that it was of that nature, and such therefore as to be vindicated by the prophecy before their conscience; but the apostle's language is guarded, while commentators are not. They go too far. We do well always to hold fast to scripture. **As to the promise that the Spirit should be poured upon 'all flesh,' we must bear in mind that 'all flesh' is in contrast with restriction to the Jew. This is another feature which made the Pentecostal gift so admirably illustrate the scripture. For the patent fact that God caused those who received the Holy Ghost to speak in the different tongues distributed over the Gentile world, not causing all the converts to speak the Jewish language . . . but causing the Jews gathered from their dispersion among all nations to speak the tongues of the Gentiles was a magnificent witness of the grace that was going out to the Gentiles to meet them where they were.** The judgment of God had inflicted these various tongues upon them, and completely broken up the ambitious project of joining together to establish an unity of their own through the tower of Babel. But the grace of God went out exactly where His judgment had placed them. If a crushing blow laid their pride in ever so many separate ditches, the grace of God went out to these ditches, and blessed them where they lay, raising them out of their fallen estate . . . But then we must remember that when the day comes for the Holy Spirit to be poured out afresh, not for the gathering out of a people for heaven, but for the earthly purposes of God's grace (for that is the difference), it will be manifest that the Holy Spirit will be given to men altogether apart from their being Jews. So on the day of Pentecost, when they were exclusively Jews, it was yet shown by the miracle of Gentile tongues that God did not mean to stop there, but to go out towards all the nations."—William Kelly (*Joel*)

"There are anti-dispensationalists who assert that this phrase ['this is that'] means that Pentecost *fulfilled Joel's prophecy*. This leads to quite a working of the theological imagination. **The truth is that the Spirit came at Pentecost in fulfillment of the promise of the Father (Luke 24:49; John 14:26). The Spirit was not given until the Lord Jesus was glorified (John 7:39). And so, having been exalted, Christ received from the Father the Spirit and then Christ poured Him out (Acts 2:32, 33). Thus the Spirit we have received is not called the Holy Spirit of Joel's prophecy, but the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1:13). He is the promise of the Father and of the Son (not of Jehovah) in connection with the place that we have before the Father, in the Son.**"—R.A. Huebner (*Elements of Dispensational Truth, Vol. 1*)

### **\*\*Note on the Interpretation of Acts 15**

*Nothing* in Acts 15 suggests that the rebuilding of the fallen "tabernacle of David," or the rebuilding of "its ruins" is identified with the Church which is His Body, or that Amos 9 has been *mysticalized* to make it so.

Rather, the apostle James, in his inspired paraphrase of Amos 9, is simply *making a fitting application of a principle* evident in OT prophecy of what Jehovah-Jesus will bring about upon His return to this earth, which in no way means that James was in any manner, shape or form *mysticalizing* the OT prophecy or making the least equation between the Church and the tabernacle of David or its ruins. James, by the Spirit, cited OT prophecy, and Amos 9 in particular, to demonstrate from Scripture the undeniable fact that there will be such a thing in a coming day (in Millennial times) as God receiving and blessing Gentiles as His own—as *Gentiles*, apart from imposition of

circumcision, apart from being placed under the Mosaic Law, *apart from essentially becoming Jews* (as per Acts 15:7, 9, 10, 11, 14, 17, 19, 24, contra Acts 15:1, 5), and that, as such, there is no basis for any objection as to the manner in which God is dealing with Gentiles *in the present period*. Fort “that which God can do at one time [in the future Millennial economy] cannot be in itself inconsistent for Him to do at another [in the present period of the heavenly calling].”

“Many quotations of the OT in the NT are used as this one from Amos 9 is used. It is in the gospels that we principally find a different use of quotations from the OT; namely, to show a fulfillment. A few examples are Matt. 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 8:17; etc. Acts 1:16 is one of the latest. However, subsequently **OT passages are cited for a principle, or for something analogous**. Thus, Acts 15:14-18 is not said to be a fulfillment. Such passages show that **what has transpired is not inconsistent with the OT; or that the OT leaves room for what God is now doing, though the OT prophets did not foresee this**. The [OT] passages themselves are *millennial* in fulfillment. See Rom. 15:8-12, for example.”—R.A. Huebner (*Elements of Dispensational Truth*, Vol. 1)

Let us hear the passage in question, accompanied by some interspersed commentary:

“And much discussion having taken place, Peter [*the great apostle of the circumcision*], standing up, said to them, Brethren, ye know that from the earliest days **God amongst you [sovereignly] chose that the nations by my mouth should hear the word of the glad tidings and believe** [*apart from circumcision, the law or principle of law*]. **And the heart-knowing God bore them witness** [*i.e., uncircumcised Cornelius and his relatives and friends (Acts 10-11)*], **giving them the Holy Spirit as to us also, and put no difference between us and them, having purified their hearts by faith** [*apart from circumcision or coming under the rule of the law*]. Now therefore why tempt ye God, by putting a yoke [*the law or any principle of legalism*] upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? **But we believe that we [Jews] shall be saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same manner as they [Gentiles] also**. [*Thus the Gentile salvation by grace (apart from any requirement of circumcision or law observance) is, in fact, made the very pattern of those who should be saved among the Jews, not the other way around.*] And all the multitude kept silence and listened to Barnabas and Paul relating all the signs and wonders which God had wrought among the nations by them [*all apart from Jewish rights or being put under law*]. [*Peter, Barnabas and Paul having thus cut the ground entirely out from under the Judaizers, showing that God was undeniably working by pure grace among Gentiles, James now proceeds to bring Scripture to bear on the matter, casting its blessed light on the subject at hand, by way of illustration and application:*]

“And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Brethren, listen to me: Simon has related how **God first visited** [*the original Greek is: ‘how first God visited’*] **to take out of the nations [the Gentiles] a people for His name**. [*‘Take out of’ them a people (a heavenly people) for His name, for in this present period unbelieving Gentiles (and Jews) thus continue throughout its course; while at the establishment of the Millennial Reign ALL unbelieving Gentiles (and Jews) will be entirely and completely rooted out—with only believers left to enter therein. ‘How first God visited to take out of the Gentiles a people for His name,’ without their having become Jews in standing or position.*] And with this [*with this truth and with this order*] **agree** [*‘is in harmony with,’ not ‘is in fulfillment of’*] the words of the prophets [*and as ‘prophets’ is plural, this indicates that James is about to give us a divinely inspired paraphrase of Amos in a manner that sums up the OT prophets as a whole on this matter; that is, the OT is in perfect harmony with the NT—and this without the least suggestion that the OT prophets provided any revelation regarding His mystery purpose involving the Church, the Body of Christ, as if it were the subject of OT prophecy (in contradiction of Rom. 16:25-27; Eph. 3:1-12; Col. 1:24-27; 1 Cor. 2:6-10); as it is written [in Amos 9:11-12]: **After these things** [after these ‘first’ Gentile things, wherein Gentiles are on equal footing with Jews but do not become, as it were, Jews (Acts.15:7-11); ‘after these things’ being a divinely inspired interpolation into the Amos paraphrase, replacing the phrase ‘in that day’ of Amos 9:11] **I will return** [this too is a divinely inspired interpolation into the Amos paraphrase, giving the general drift of the OT prophets; the King, Jehovah-Jesus, will return to this earth to establish His Millennial Kingdom in glory and power, in righteousness and peace], **and will rebuild the tabernacle of David which is fallen, and will rebuild its ruins, and will set it up** [*cf. for example, Mic. 4:8 and Isa. 1:26 (and also cp. Acts 1:6; 3:21; Matt. 19:28); it is at that time, not now, that Jewish ascendancy on the earth will thus be fulfilled and established*], **so that the residue of men may seek out the Lord, and all the nations** [*Gentiles as Gentiles owned of God, without becoming practical Jews by being circumcised (albeit not on equal footing with Jews as is the case today, which is thus further proof that Amos 9 was not ‘fulfilled’ or cited as being fulfilled regarding the character of God’s work now as to Gentiles)] **on whom my name is invoked, saith the Lord, who does these things known from eternity** [*this last phrase being an allusion to such statements as found, e.g., in Isa 45:21.*]” (Acts 15:7-18)**

“Amillennialists and postmillennialists believe that the ‘tabernacle of David’ is set up now and that Christ is on His throne now. But the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David will occur in the millennium. **In Acts 15,**

**James cited the passage against Jewish bias; to show that God intended to bless the nations.** And, of course, He will do so according to many [Millennial] prophecies. **But James saw that this prophecy had a bearing meanwhile on the Jewish prejudice against Gentile blessing. What was happening in James' day was not inconsistent with God's purpose, which included Gentile blessing. He cited the passage in order to show this. He did not cite it as if it was fulfilled, or fulfilling, in his day. Note that this is a general character of many citations from the prophets in Acts and the Epistles. What is cited is millennial in fulfillment, but has a bearing on some matter meanwhile."**

"God's present taking out from the Gentiles a people for His name [Acts 15:14] **cannot** be the fulfillment of what Amos prophesied. No, it cannot even be a partial fulfillment **because the character of the two works are different** . . . Observe carefully that the quotation says, 'and **all** the nations on whom my name is invoked' [Acts 15:17]. This shows that in the future the work is different than now. [The fact is that the {OT} prophets nowhere said that God would do a work of *calling out from* the Gentiles a people for His name and thereby *leave all other Gentiles where they were.*] God will not at that [Millennial] time take **out of** the nations a people for His name. The Gentiles will generally receive blessing, but Israel will then be Ammi (my people) in the special sense, not so the Gentiles."—R.A. Huebner (*Elements of Dispensational Truth*, Vol. 1)

"[Amos 9:12] 'that they may inherit the remnant of Edom, and of all the Gentiles which are called by my name, says Jehovah that does this.' *Here is the well-known principle which was applied by James at the council of Jerusalem to the divine right of recognising under the gospel the Gentiles without being circumcised.* His argument is that they do not require to become virtual Jews in order to get the blessing of God and to bear His name. For to be circumcised is practically to be no longer a Gentile, but to become a Jew. Whereas now God is really making not Jews but Christians. Therefore to force circumcision on such Gentiles as believed was a total mistake.

"On the other hand Jehovah has not yet raised up the tabernacle of David; nor is this at all intimated by James's quotation of the passage [in Amos 9]. Neither he nor any other apostle ever says that the church of God is the same thing as the booth of David. The whole system which identifies them is foreign and opposed to scripture. It is only the allegorical habit of the fathers which invented the fiction that Zion or Jerusalem, that Judah or Israel, mean the church. But this error lowers our own dignity, and deprives the ancient people of that hope for which God's providence reserves them spite of their actual unbelief. **Assuredly God will bless the Jews by and by [in the Millennial Day], and His name will be called upon the Gentiles. Even the most obstinate of Pharisees could not gainsay James's proof of this. If then God were pleased to call His name on Gentiles now by the gospel, who can deny the principle if he believe the [OT] prophets? Their own scriptures agree to this, and oppose the narrow-mindedness which would convert them practically into Jews in order to be called by His name. No Israelite could have conceived that God had then raised the fallen hut of David; but he could not gainsay that God spoke of all the nations on which His name should be called when that [Millennial] day comes. It was not inconsistent but in keeping with this, if as Gentiles they were called by His name now. James does not speak of this or any other prophetic citation being fulfilled at present.** He simply quotes the broad fact from the Septuagint version, as agreeing with **the principle** generally laid down by the prophets that all the nations should be called by Jehovah's name. **This is indeed the characteristic of the millennial day, when all Israel shall be saved, and shall inherit the remnant even of their bitterest foe as well as of all the Gentiles.** Undoubtedly, when it is [actually] fulfilled, the *subjection* of the nations will be for ever, and the kingdom of Jehovah over all the earth . . . **The apostle cites this then only for present use in sanctioning the reception of Gentiles without circumcision, which it did unanswerably.**"—William Kelly (*Amos*)

"[*How God first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.*] This is a most important proposition in its way; **it gives a separate character to the present work of God.** It in no way denies that God had a line of saints in Israel, and before Israel, and what is more, outside Israel; but **it asserts a special gathering 'out' at this present time, and it leaves no room for the vain [amillennial or postmillennial] thought, that even one nation, as a whole, shall be brought by the gospel to confess the Lord, still less that all nations shall be so changed.** The truth is that God only proposes while Jesus is at His right hand to *take out of* all a people for His name. **This is the church of God and it is as distinct from the ways of God before the cross as from those which are to follow the Lord's appearing and reign by-and-by.**"—William Kelly (*Acts*)

"During the interval of Christ's absence the work of God is predominantly among the Gentiles, forming a people for His name (Acts 15:14). While James stated the truth concerning that fact, there were *aspects* to that work concerning which he likely was unaware *at the time* he so spoke. The work of the Spirit was the

formation of the body of Christ at Pentecost and then the on-going incorporation of believing Jew and Gentile in that body (once-for-all formed at Pentecost), being members one of another, and united to the Head in heaven. **The Gentile Christian was not elevated to the level of a Jew, saved or unsaved, nor made an Israelite, nor made a spiritual Jew. No, both Jew and Gentile were lifted up to ‘sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus’ (Eph. 2:16). God formed the two, in Christ, into “one new man” (Eph. 2:15). It was new, for it never existed before.** Indeed, silence had been maintained regarding such things (Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3). Though not recognized by so many Christians . . . **God is doing a heavenly work now, forming a heavenly people (1 Cor. 15:48), who, as strangers and pilgrims here (1 Pet. 2:11), have a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1).** Covenants are for the earth; this present work of God [*this unique, heavenly work of God*] is outside of the covenants of promise – which covenants belong to Paul’s kinsmen according to flesh (Rom. 9:3-5), i.e., to ethnic Jews, not Gentiles. **We know from such Scriptures as Rom. 11:26ff, that eventually God will have a saved nation of Israel composed of ethnic Jews to whom He will make good the covenants of promise (Abrahamic, to Phineas (priesthood), Davidic (kingship), and the New Covenant).**”—R.A. Huebner (*Elements of Dispensational Truth*, Vol. 3)

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