Introduction

Today's population is about 7 billion. In Abraham's time it was about 27 million and at today's growth rate would be 6 billion in 326 years. What happened? Disease and war destroyed humans or more clearly life destroying evil. Is it the Old Testament Torah (first five books of the Bible), which clearly describes this history. The first eleven chapters of Genesis describe the entire problem. The Creation in Genesis 1 and 2 was good. Then the arrival of rebellion and destructive evil by a demonic person led to rebellion brought under the power of that person. This is the summation of the first 11 chapters of Genesis. The rest of the Bible is not a bunch of unrelated Sunday School stories. Rather it is a single drama: the entrance of a Kingdom, the power and glory of the living God into this enemy territory to recover it. Thus Genesis 1-11 is an introduction to the whole Bible and the rest of the Bible is Kingdom of the eternal God and King recovering that lost territory through the redemption of human lives eventually through Jesus Christ. That redemption goes from Abraham in Genesis 12 (12.1-3) through Revelations (7.9). So from 2,000BC to 2011AD that story of redeeming the lost to a new Kingdom continues unabated (see 2 Peter 3.8 for a perspective on time).

The Bible gives this some pithy summaries. Note, ‘He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work’ (I John 3.8). The key theme that links the ten epochs (five before Jesus comes and five from the time of Jesus to now) is the grace of God intervening into a ‘world, which lies in the power of the Evil One’ (I John 5.19), contesting any enemy who temporarily ‘is the god of this world’ (2 Cor. 4.4). The blessings God gave to and through Abraham of a nation and nations being blessing through him is not like a box of chocolates you receive but is something you/we/us become in relationship to the living God. Not only this but it is not individuals who
form this relationship, but it is families and nations whom God is 
redeeming to himself. Thus a theme of the Bible could be *God redeeming 
the nations to Himself*. Those who become subjects of this new Kingdom 
also have inherent responsibilities to become a part of the advancement 
of this new kingdom, this last point we will so ever clearly as we march 
through these ten epochs of time. History of course cannot be place so 
easily into neat packages but there are times and its epochs, which help 
us grasp hold of a larger picture and these epochs do this. This brings us 
to the ten epochs of redemptive history.

**Ten Epochs**

**First Half (2,000 years from Abraham, 2000BC to Jesus AD 30)**

1. **Patriarchs- 2000-1600BC-** Genesis 12-50  
   This time period goes from Abraham, Isaac to Jacob and then 
   Joseph’s (son of Jacob) into Egypt and rescuing his family from 
   famine. This though missional was not intentional but a result of 
   God’s plan for the nations, which he carried out (Genesis 45.5-8; 
   46.1-3).

2. **Captivity- 1600-1200BC-** Exodus- Joshua

3. **Judges- 1200-1000BC –** Judges, Ruth

   Chronicles, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea-Zephaniah

5. **Post-Exile- 586BC to AD 0-1-** Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Daniel, 
   Haggai- Malachi.

**Missional Mechanisms to Bless the Peoples in the Old Testament**  
(these will also be seen in the ‘Second Half’ Epochs):

1. Involuntarily going-Joseph to Egypt, Jonah to Nineveh and the 
   Judeans to Babylon.

2. Voluntarily going – Moses to Egypt and the new nation of Israel 
   leaving Egypt, David taking Jerusalem.

3. Voluntarily coming (to Israel)- Ruth with Naomi

4. Involuntarily coming (to Israel)- Gentiles forcibly settled in Israel 
   (2 Kings 17).

**Second Half (33AD to 2011AD)**
This period is different in that the advance is the taking of human lives through the Spirit of the living God bringing people to himself through his Son Jesus Christ and thus not territorial in the sense of land being the territory and thus its inhabitants thus included in salvation as well. Thus it is spiritual and based solely on the name of Jesus going forth (Acts 1.8, Matthew 28.19-20).

1. **Romans- 0AD- 400AD**
   The Roman Empire was spiritually overcome in a period of 20-30 decades. But they did not evangelize the Goths and Celts and it was the former who eventually overcame them. The beginning of this was the mission of the Apostle Paul in Acts and also seen in the rest of the epistles. Through the Revelation of John we have written information in the Bible up to 100AD. The early Christians saw that the evangelization of the Nations important. However, this came to a halt or slowed down significantly when Constantine (272-337AD) made Christianity part of the Roman Empire. At that time Christianity came to be associated with the cultural tradition and political power of Rome. This made it a challenge to go to the pagan Celts and Visigoths north of them as the latter hated Rome and would eventually overthrow them in about a hundred years later or so from the time of Constantine.

2. **Barbarians- 400-800AD**
   a. **Fall of Rome**- The conquering of Rome on August 14 410AD by Alaric the Goth, changed in a significant way the flow of Christianity. Why? It moved it from being a national religion as it was with the Jews before Jesus and within the Roman Empire to being seen as truly an International faith. Once the Goths (they moved south partly out of fear of the Huns from the north) had conquered Rome their fear of Rome and all that it represented, i.e. faith, culture, etc abated.
   b. **Augustine**- It was at this time that Augustine wrote 'The City of God' (actually the letter's written are a part of this book but this book comes forth in its totality in time to answer broader questions) to answer his friend and a city official, i.e. Marcellinus’ question about the fall of Rome. Did it fall because of the Christian influence, which made too weak because of the Christian’s tolerance.
c. **Orders** - It was during this time that the faith spread to the Goths. This came through Mission compounds lead by people like Benedict (480-547AD) and the monastic orders. The later has been called ‘the most beneficial institutional event in the history of Christianity.’ Benedict’s main achievement is his "Rule", containing precepts for his monks. It is heavily influenced by the writings of John Cassian, and shows strong affinity with the Rule of the Master. But it also has a unique spirit of balance, moderation and reasonableness (ἐπιείκεια, epieikeia), and this persuaded most religious communities founded throughout the Middle Ages to adopt it. As a result, the Rule of Benedict became one of the most influential religious rules in Western Christendom. For this reason, Benedict is often called the founder of western Christian monasticism.’ With these orders the gospel literally spread across what is now mainland Europe and the United Kingdom. Enter Charlemagne who used his leadership of the political process to allow for schools to be developed so people could read and also learn music. He was similar to Constantine though probably had a more sincere faith. He was very focused on sharing the gospel with his own Germanic people but not with the Vikings to the north.

3. **Vikings** - 800-1200AD

The Vikings were Christianized more as the invading Vikings coming to faith through those communities they captured and then taking that faith back to Scandinavia. Unlike the Goths who sacked Rome, they were totally brutal and destroyed the churches. In one sense they destroyed a lot manuscripts and history, but in another they purified the churches, which had become lazy and opulent. This period ends with Innocent III (1161-1216) being the strongest man in Europe (as Constantine and Charlemagne were at the end of the 1st and 2nd periods respectively). But again storm clouds loomed.

4. **Crusades and Friars** - 1200-1600AD

‘There was very little the Church could do to attack the underlying problems that had given rise to the popular heresies of the twelfth century. Innocent III and his immediate successors attacked the symptoms of these problems, and used the weapons of the Inquisition and the crusade (1095-1290) to crush anti-clericalism
and heresy wherever possible. Although the Inquisition was in many ways hypocritical and unjust, it was an effective tool against heretical movements. In the long run, however, it was an admission of moral failure and buttressed the Church's position by instilling fear rather than promoting faith. It was a negative solution. The rise of the mendicant friars provided the positive answer to the challenge presented by the popular heresies. Two groups surface, the Dominicans and the Franciscans. They became the missionary arm of the church in many ways. We need to realize that by the time of the Reformation (again yet another wave to purify the church) it was these two groups, which provided the greatest missionary advance in the world at that time. Yet the church, especially through the Roman Catholic Church was mired in a very centralized bureaucracy. It was the next Reformation, which would change this. The concept of local churches, the priesthood of the believer and that the church and not the government was the primary tool for the advancement of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ was too have profound effects for the advancement of this Kingdom.

5. **To the Ends of the Earth- 1600-2000AD**

In one sense this was the period in which the European powers dominated the world politically. By 1945 the European powers had control at some level of 99.5% of the non-Western world. While this would not last we see several points unfold. First the accomplishment of the advance of the spiritual kingdom is not tied to the physical advance of political nations. That was seen in the Crusades as well. Second, this period is like the others, politics and spiritual are not totally severed either. We saw this with Constantine, Charlemagne and the Catholic popes. We also see this in the Old Testament when God uses the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians and other empires to accomplish His (God's) purposes. It was though William Cary the British Particular Baptist and his helping to start the British Missionary Society and then going to India, which started the opening of the modern missionary movement as we know it today. 'In 1785 During this time he read Jonathan Edwards' *Account of the Life of the Late Rev. David Brainerd* and the journals of the explorer James Cook, and became deeply concerned with propagating the Christian Gospel throughout the world. His friend Andrew Fuller had previously
written an influential pamphlet in 1781 titled "The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation". In 1789 Carey became the full-time pastor of a small Baptist church in Leicester. Three years later in 1792 he published his groundbreaking missionary manifesto, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*. This short book consists of five parts. The first part is a theological justification for missionary activity, arguing that the command of Jesus to make disciples of all the world (Matthew 28:18-20) remains binding on Christians. The second part outlines a history of missionary activity, beginning with the early Church and ending with David Brainerd and John Wesley. Part 3 comprises 26 pages of tables, listing area, population, and religion statistics for every country in the world. Carey had compiled these figures during his years as a schoolteacher. The fourth part answers objections to sending missionaries, such as difficulty learning the language or danger to life. Finally, the fifth part calls for the formation by the Baptist denomination of a missionary society and describes the practical means by which it could be supported. Carey's seminal pamphlet outlines his basis for missions: Christian obligation, wise use of available resources, and accurate information. ‘It is amazing that these last three points are still used today in the missionary advance of the gospel. What happens after this is a very steady and continued advance of the gospel where today there are scores of mission societies and every continent of the world is now sending their own missionaries.'