

HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY OF: "Election/Remnant".....Elliott #1213

*The narrowing-down God: Noah, Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Jesus.

Only one spot on earth is land-bridge to three continents, and the Bible centers in that spot (with eastern periphery in the Tigres-Euphrates, southern in Egypt, and western in Greece and Rome). That will of course be the bloodiest, least stable spot on earth--and has been. On the model of promise/threat, it's the land of threat and is called "the Land of Promise"! Beneath both, it's the land of hope, the hope of total prosperity (Heb., shalom), which helps us see why it's the Land of Blood yesterday, today, and till kingdom come. A consequence is that stability is sought in (1) the inner world and (2) the future, since it's such an evanescent reality in the past and present outer world. Among the peoples of the area, the Jews have done the best job of creating a way of seeing that geography-history-reality and living with it in situ and in diaspora (the precariousness-with-"prophecy" as transportable) ["the Jews" including Jesus and his followers]....The Bible sees this on a three-level stage:

1	2	3	4	5
DIVINE election* (group call)	providence	"call" (individual "election")	judgment	grace
SACRED promise covenant	shalom	"prophecy" as threat or false promise	purification consolation	remnant restoration
SECULAR expansion	hegemony	discontent	disaster**	survival

**There, frequent enough to stimulate vigorous sense-making efforts ("prophecy," "revelation").

We Jews and Christians need three language-levels for our biblical way of viewing history, the here-and-now, and hope. The secular, public-domain language is level "C," the lowest stage. Abraham's family expands in Canaan, Jacob's in Egypt, David's from Jerusalem (as also, a millenium later, Jesus'). After a holding period of hegemony, disaster --anticipated by various forms of discontent--sets in; but it's not terminal: there are survivors....On stage "A," God in these five periods chooses a people, "blesses" them ("providence"), then "calls" certain individuals to instruct them to "return" (Heb. for repentance) when they wander away from God, then damns them for not returning ("judgment"), but is eager to give them another chance ("grace")....On the middle stage, the people understand that God has promised them total prosperity (Heb., shalom) if they keep "covenant" with God--which they don't, so true prophets threaten judgment and false prophets preach shalom in spite of the people's betrayal of God in covenant-breaking. Before, during, and after the effectuation of the threat ("judgment"), true prophets console with the promise-vision of future shalom (=the messianic theme: here today ["remnant" as mere survivors or, elatively, as faithful martyr-witnesses], more here tomorrow ["restoration," "renewal," "the Kingdom of God," "messianic banquet," "Lamb's weddingfeast"]).