There is nothing that God can’t reclaim

I have been reading a book called the Unseen Realm by Michael Heiser. IT is an amazing book that has opened my eyes to so many things I had been missing while reading the scriptures. So many connections between the Old and New Testament and I want to share some of this with you. Because it has strengthened my faith in the Lord and my dependency on God and I pray that it will for you too.

First if you are unfamiliar, the New Testament is written in Koine Greek, the language spoken at the time. And the writer of the book of Acts, Luke, is writing to a Greek man named Theophilus and so he is going to write in a language Theophilus can understand. And another thing to know is that there is a Greek version of the Old Testament called the Septuagint and most of the time when a New Testament writer is quoting from the Old Testament, or mentioning something in the Old Testament, they are using the Septuagint.

And what I want to share is that New Testament writers, are writing what they are doing, intelligently and they will assume a certain level of knowledge of other texts, specifically the Septuagint. And they like to create these hyperlinks between one passage and another.

They do not have a cross reference system, and so they assume that you are familiar enough with the vocabulary that if they drop a reference you are going to be able to pick up on things and you will notice the breadcrumbs and follow it.

So lets go to Acts 2 “ When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. **2**And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. **3**Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them”

Divided is a hyperlink, it is a breadcrumb because the Greek term behind divided is a word that appears in one place in the Septuagint in Deuteronomy 32:8 “When the Most High[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2032&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-5767b)] apportioned the nations,
when he divided humankind, he fixed the boundaries of the peoples  according to the number of the gods. This is a reference to the tower of Babel story.

Lets go to the other breadcrumb. Verse 5 “ow there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. **6**And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.”

Bewildered is the next breadcrumb. The word is also used in Genesis 11 verse 7. These are two words that are breadcrumbs that lead you to the Babel story. Its amazing, but you cant see it right away in the English. And you may be wondering to yourself. Okay pastor this seems like it may be interesting to you, but its pretty boring to me. And to that I say, give me a little lee way. I know this is a little academic, but I promise you it is worth it.

Because Luke is connecting the events of Pentecost, with the events of the Tower of Babel. And the message that is going to come across is that what happened at Babel, is going to be reclaimed, or rectified as a result of Pentecost.

In case you need a reminder on Babel. The people of the earth, they all speak one language and they are of one mind and they begin to build a tower, or Ziggarat that is supposed to be the place where a God would come down to you and interact with you. It was God on your own terms. And so what God does according to Deuteronomy is when Gods sends out the people to all the earth, God does so to specific places. Remember Babel is in essence a the third fall in the Bible. And so this has to be made whole again. This was a problem and God is going to fix it.

And so we hear all these lands that are mentioned on Pentecost and more often than not, we just think about it as another list we don’t want to read, kind of like the lists in Numbers and the genealogies. And what I have been teaching you is that nothing is a throw away in the Bible. This list of nations is not throw away.

Heres the list,Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, **10**Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, **11**Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” If you would see this on a map they go from far East to West.

And when broken down, we have the notion that because of the exile, there are Jewish people all over the Mediterranean. And every year they come back to Jerusalem for the feast of Weeks and on this particular year, the people run into these crazy men called the apostles who just had an encounter with the Spirit who enabled them to speak these other languages. And the Jews who have come from all over now gonna hear the Gospel and thousands of people come to faith.

And so look at the beauty. I don’t want you to miss in the detail. God has taken this tragedy in Israel, the exile of the whole nation, and God has used it to plant believers throughout the nations, because the Jewish people come back hear the message about the messiah and they go home like the woman at the well and tell everyone they know about Jesus. And so God has installed kingdom of God cell groups in the nations and has jumpstarted the great commission.

It is starting with the Jews, and then the rest of the book of acts is all about how God is going to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles. If you think about the book of Acts. Chapters 2-8 are all about Jerusalem and then as Luke goes through the account, he hits certain places. And you must ask yourself why is this in here. In chapter 8 we are told about the Gospel going to Samaria, and Samaria is important because it is the capital of the northern 10 apostate tribes, God is redeeming and reclaiming the northern kingdom.

They are not only allowed to come back, God wants them back. The Ethiopian eunuch story. Historically there is a large concentration of Jews in Ethiopia. And so Luke wants us to know, hey those Jewish people that went down to Ethiopia, they got the Gospel too. We got all the tribes and even the outlier. There is a pattern in the book.

Then we get to chapter 9 and Paul is converted and he is in Damascus and what is special about Damascus? It is the capital of Syria, and also it is in the Abraham story. God promised the land to Abraham and it is the northern benchmark of the land of Abraham. And now after this reaching of all the Jewish people, the book transitions to Gentile inclusion with the ministry of Paul.

One last thing about Paul. Paul ultimately wanted to go to Spain. When writing to the Romans he informs them he is going to visit them on his way to Spain. I think he believes he wont die until he goes to Spain because he is the prophet to the Gentiles.

If you read through the table of nations in Genesis 10 about the known world where people are sent out to. They are all accounted for, except one nation, tarsus, which is Spain. And in essence the story of Pentecost and the book of Acts is how God is reclaiming what is His. Israel is Gods portion, and the nations although they were scattered because of what they did, they now belong back to God.

This is the unfolding of the plan from eternity to counter all the bad from Genesis 1-11. God is in the reclaiming business, and this is most certainly good news.

Why is it good news, because it means that no matter where we have gone astray, no matter where we have messed up, no matter what we have done wrong, no matter how many times we mess up, no matter how many times we zig when God wants us to Zag, God can always reclaim what we have messed up.

I mean, look at what God has done. Look at the message that is coming from Luke, through Jesus, God is reclaiming the world, Every single fall in the history of existence is being reclaimed and undone. God is bringing all people to himself. And the nations in Pentecost and in the rest of the book of Acts is a testimony to that fact, that God’s plan is unfolding.

There is nothing in our lives, that God cannot reclaim. If God can reclaim the world and redeem or buyback souls, what can God do in your life. It doesn’t matter how big or how small God can reclaim it. Any area that you need to work on, God can reclaim it, we just have to offer it and turn it over.

When The Lord redeems our past that does not mean he takes away the past, he does not undo the past, he does not ignore the past, but he redeems.  In turning our lives over to him, we need to give him our past with all its losses and shame.  We must hand over to the Lord every moment of disgrace, every word we wish we could take back, all the broken promises, the loneliness, the dreams that died, the dashed hopes, the broken relationships, our successes and failures, and all the scars of yesterday. The Lord gives us peace with the past and leads us forward into a better future.  Don’t ignore the harsh parts of the past, they are part of your story, but don’t dwell on them, either. Because God has reclaimed it.

God promises you a better life of peace and salvation, not by undoing your past, not by giving you a perfect stress free life with everyone getting along at all times, but by focusing on that which was right, by opening your eyes to see his presence during the good and the bad, by giving you the gift of forgiveness as you repent of your past sins, attitudes and patterns and use the past to grow in your faith.  There is no statute of limitations on repentance. Redeeming your past does not mean the past changes, but rather, when you look at your past with the eyes of faith, the power of God emerges. Repentance sets you on a path right of living (i.e. righteousness), and a joy emerges because of what the Lord has done for you.   Let God redeem your past.  You will emerge a stronger person of faith!  Amen.