American Christian Zionism History, Theology and Implications – James Japan

About James Arendt

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Note from James: I got the text from a PDF file, and edited out all the footnotes from Mr. Newkirk's thesis to make it easier to read as a web article. The bold and the italics are from the author, not me. If you wish to read all the footnotes as well, you can download and read them from the PDF file.

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I. Introduction

"What do you mean,' he corrected him, 'helped create? I am Cyrus, I am Cyrus.'"
President Harry S. Truman

Our modern world faces many challenges that are complex, threatening and give us anxiety about the future. However, one conflict surpasses them all in its current expression and potential escalation, a conflict that seems intractable and unsolvable. Its hostility and scale of violence have escalated exponentially for six decades. Since May 15, 1948, the day after David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the modern State of Israel and the day that modern Israel was recognized by U.S. President Harry S. Truman, the region has been engulfed in a non-stop war only briefly interrupted by occasional periods of uneasy, hostile "peace," punctuated by suicide bombers and tank-led incursions.

More than 50 years earlier, in 1891, American Christian Zionist William Blackstone had urged President Benjamin Harrison to support the establishment of a modern state of Israel, but Harrison declined. Although Truman's 1948 State Department argued against supporting modern Israel and Truman initially agreed, he ended up accommodating the political momentum of his time and went against his Secretary of State, George C. Marshall. Later on, he would declare himself the modern-day Cyrus; the new restorer of Israel.

Since then, through 2005, the United States has given a cumulative total of $154 billion in direct economic and military aid to Israel. The amount raised by American Christian Zionists in indirect aid is difficult to estimate, but could be imagined by considering just one Christian

Zionist organization, the Chicago-based International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, which has raised over $250 million from 1995 to 2005 with a 500,000-member donor base.

But what if the Christian Zionists are wrong about their beliefs concerning what the Bible says about the land of Israel, the Jews in history and the events during the end of modern history? Should we not seriously question the underlying Biblical arguments before we lobby secular governments for support of modern Israel? When John Hagee states that pastors are “America’s spiritual generals” and calls for the President of the United States to bomb Iran because his reading of the Old Testament tells him that the Bible predicts a conflagration of immense proportions, should we not investigate the Biblical interpretations underlying his message?

It would be an abdication of responsibility by American Christians to trust silently in President Obama to defuse Middle East tensions, who recently boasted that America is “one of the largest Muslim countries in the world”. Recently, Egyptian novelist Ahdaf Souief delivered a speech about how American support for Israel and American Christian attitudes seems to Arabs, Muslims and non-Westerners in general:

So here’s the scene: in Israel, a stalled Zionist project, in the United States, a neo-con administration around a born-again president and a mobilized and growing Christian Zionist population – courted assiduously for years by Binyamin Netanyahu…. It is clear to many people that the influence of the Zionist project on the ideology, the attitude and the modus operandi of the United States is doing major harm to the entire world. This can be seen in its most flagrant form in the actions and preaching of the Christian Zionists in the United States, this very active population of some 30 million who actually yearn for and work towards promoting Armageddon and the end of the world.

The present work seeks to explain how Christians, especially in the past 40 years, have contributed to the dangerous and frustrating situation the global community finds itself facing in the Palestinian conflict. Victoria Clark sums up the downward acceleration we find ourselves tumbling through as "mounting Muslim loathing of Christian Zionism nourishes Jewish fear of Israel's Arab neighbors … the more inflamed the Muslim world becomes, the more terrified Israelis become and the more comfort they seek in Christian Zionist support, and so on."

Based on faulty exegesis leading to a flawed prophetical viewpoint, premillennial

dispensational eschatology has been a catalytic engine driving wedges between people groups rather than proclaiming the Gospel of grace. Rather than seeking to become peacemakers, many evangelicals have become enablers of and even contributors to the conflict. Premillennial dispensational eschatology is so pervasive in American culture that many secularists and non- Westerners assume it to be universally accepted by all evangelicals.

In this paper, we will examine the history, politics, and theological and Biblical issues concerning American Christian Zionism. If our conclusion concerning the errors of this position is correct, then the Christians who have tended to pay little attention to this situation should engage this issue and examine the evidence. Additionally, we would challenge our Christian brethren who hold to the Zionist viewpoint to reconsider the grounds of their commitment.

First, we will survey the European history of Christian Zionism and then move to a more in-depth look at the development of the movement in the United States. Then we will examine the core theological and biblical principles of Christian Zionism, comparing these teachings with opposing views and the text of Scripture. From these analyses we will

conclude that Christian Zionism is in error.

It needs to be said that many fine Christian men and women who love God deeply and revere God's word also hold to Christian Zionism. We do not doubt their faith in the God of the Bible or their trust in His word. We trust that their God-given reason, their love of truth and the Holy Spirit working through them will lead them to an accurate conclusion. We also recognize that the proponents of Christian Zionism, who are mentioned and cited in this present work, also love God and respect His word and we harbor no disrespect for them. "As iron sharpens iron" we hope to shed some light on Zionism and its implications and start a constructive dialogue. We seek the truth as revealed in God's word, and the Supremacy of Christ in all things. Return Contents

II. The History of Christian Zionism

A. Reformation and Puritan Roots

In an interesting way, the Protestant Reformation was the beginning point for Christian Zionism. In European Protestant churches people were hearing the Bible preached in their native languages. Protestant ministers like John Calvin in Geneva advocated for the common person to be educated enough to read the Scriptures for themselves and to teach the catechism to their children. Charles Dunahoo summarizes the agreement between Farel and Calvin:

When Calvin agreed to Guillaume Farel's insistence that he come to Geneva to teach and preach, Calvin agreed but to do so in the following way. First, he would establish the Reformed faith among the people of Geneva to enable them to be people of the Word. This of course required their being able to read and then understand the Scriptures.

The Reformation ushered in a new period in which the Bible was now taught not from a moralistic or allegorical perspective, but from a literal and historical perspective. The Reformation

principle of “Scripture interpreting Scripture” meant that their expositional preaching taught the whole counsel of God, including the history of the Jewish people and the covenantal aspects of blessings and curses for loyalty and obedience. This renewed interest in ancient Israel eventually led to a change in how of Romans 11 was understood.

Whereas for centuries the Roman Catholic Church had interpreted Israel in Romans 11:25-26 to mean the Church, including Jewish and Gentile believers, the Reformers that followed Luther and Calvin tended to see this passage as referring to unconverted Jews. We see evidence of this view in later editions of the Geneva Study Bible, wherein a note on Romans 11 defines Israel as “the nation of the Jews” and later it was strengthened to mean the future conversion of the Jewish nation to Christ. This significantly changed the interpretation of Romans 9-11 and laid the groundwork for a view of Israel quite unlike that taught in the Western church in preceding centuries. It wasn’t long after this that some of the Puritans, led by Thomas Brightman, started to advocate the rebirth of a Christian Israelite Nation.

By the early 1600s this sentiment gained favor within the political class of England. In 1621 an influential member of Parliament and Cambridge contemporary of Brightman, Sir Henry Finch, wrote a book entitled The World’s Great Restoration or the Calling of the Jews, and of All the Nations and Kingdoms of the Earth, to the Faith of Christ. Finch called for the restoration of the Jews to the Promised Land and urged them to re-establish their claim to the Land and to convert to Christianity. At the time, Finch and others did not contemplate any re-construction of the Temple, the re-establishment of the sacrificial system or a theocratic kingdom. They wanted them to come to Christ, and then return to the Land.

Not all Englishmen shared Finch’s enthusiasm for the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, including King James,

who forced him to disavow much of what he had written. Nonetheless, the idea grew significantly with the rise of postmillennialism16 in Puritan circles, and since American Puritanism was largely drawn from England, this idea also made its way to America.

One American Puritan father, Increase Mather, father of Cotton Mather, was a prolific author and a key proponent of the return of the Jews to Palestine. His support of the national restoration of Israel to her land in the future was typical of American Colonial Puritans. Ehle notes that,

The first salient school of thought in American history that advocated a national restoration of the Jews to Palestine was resident in the first native-born generation at the close of the seventeenth century in which Increase Mather played a dominant role. The men who held this view were Puritans…. From that time on the doctrine of restoration may be said to have become endemic to American culture.

While Increase Mather wrote and taught that the Jews needed to return to their ancient homeland, his historian son Cotton later departed from the views of his father. In a small work entitled Triparadisus he presented a cogent argument for Romans 11 that comes to the conclusion that the end of the Jewish age was fulfilled in A.D. 70 with the fall of Jerusalem. Cotton's difficulty with his father's view of the re-establishment of ancient Israel was its favoritism of a nation and race that contradicted the New Testament expansion of the gospel to "all nations, tribes and tongues". To Cotton, elevating any nation over another was "very derogatory to the Glory of our God, very contradictory to the language of the Gospel."

Despite Cotton's change of mind on the matter, the clearly popular view in America was that of his father. As we shall see later in the 19th and 20th centuries, this emerging view of the conversion of the Jews as a nation gave way to a much

different view of Israel and the Church.

B. The Beginning of the End of Optimism

Postmillennialism declined in favor after the late 18th century American and French revolutions and the Napoleonic wars in the early part of the 19th century. The world didn't seem to be improving. Quite the contrary, the affairs of men seemed to be getting worse. It is not surprising that as pessimism grew, an eschatological viewpoint other than postmillennialism would soon expand its influence to fill the vacuum.

As early as 1808, tracts and printed sermons began to appear heralding Napoleon as the Antichrist, the "man-of-lawlessness," the "Beast," or all three. Later, in 1866, a tract appeared that announced that Louis Napoleon, the nephew of Napoleon I, was the Antichrist and the Beast, and urged clergy to warn their flocks to prepare for Armageddon and the coming of the Lord:

The coming of Jesus draws near, the day of the Lord hasteth greatly. To possess a correct apprehension of the import of events infallibly indicative of the great proximity of Messiah's advent, candor, vigilance, prayerfulness, are incontrovertibly requisite, neither is there a month, or a week, or a day to be lost! The current period yet allotted for the acquisition of most important prophetic knowledge, is rapidly passing, and time is precious!

Christians are supposed to proclaim the Good News, but as the titles of tracts and books became more dramatic, increasing attention was drawn to this "new" bad news. Victoria Clark documents the excitement of the times:

No fewer than fifty books on the subject of the Jews' return to Palestine were published between 1796 and the end of the century. The flood of words had become a raging torrent with the Pope's exile from Rome by Napoleon in 1797 which, for

those with eyes to see it, was a prophetic Rosetta stone and a sure sign of the approaching End Times. In 1800, when Napoleon's foray into the middle east remained unchecked, a Scottish magazine reported on prophetically raised expectations: "It is rumored that he proposes to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem and re-establish the Jewish hierarchy and government in all their ancient splendor in the Holy Land, to which he will invite that people [Jews] from all the nations of the world among whom they are scattered.

Of course, there have been consistent speculations concerning the identity of the Antichrist and the Beast through the centuries, but the widespread use of the printing press and a population sufficiently educated to read, combined with the relative speed of communication and international trade, prompted large numbers of people to engage in prophetic speculations. But in the early part of the 19th century, one idealistic and wealthy young man decided to devote his life to converting the Jews to Christianity and moving them back to Palestine.

Lewis Way was a young lawyer and graduate of Oxford who happened to inherit £300,000, not a small amount of money in 1811. He studied ancient Hebrew and also the unfortunate history of the Jews since their expulsion from England in 1290 (although Cromwell allowed them to return). Way began to seek out Jews in London, encouraging them to read the Christian Bible in Hebrew and even instructing them in how to ride a donkey and other preparatory skills for repatriation to the Holy Land. Way was convinced that it was a Christian duty to help fulfill prophecy about the Jews coming to faith in Christ and returning to Palestine. Since he was a man of means he funded these efforts largely by himself.

In 1817 he identified an influential ally in his cause, Tsar Alexander of Russia, who himself had a keen interest in Bible prophecy. While attending the International Congress at AixLa-Chapelle in 1818 at Alexander's request, Way compromised his

ideal of the Jews' being converted to Christ and then resettled in Palestine, to being resettled as soon as possible with the hope of converting them afterwards. The position that developed at this time was more to relieve the Jews of their social and political oppression rather than the need for them to come to Christ. Way never entirely gave up his desire to see the Jews converted and resettled, but he died in Paris in 1840 never seeing much success in his efforts.

In the late 1820s, when Lewis Way was busily shuttling around Europe and Palestine in his attempt to gather political momentum for a return of the Jews, a dynamic Scottish minister was enthralling crowds in his London church with sermons on the "End Times." Edward Irving, like the Puritan Brightman, held a premillennial futurist30 view of end times, but, unlike Brightman's, his was a largely pessimistic view. His theatrical sermons and dramatic writings were drawing large crowds, more for his style than substance, much like some popular prophecy preachers today. Indeed, the thrill for many was his emphasis on how bad things were getting and how this meant the end times were near. Irving was one of a number of prophecy advocates who held an annual Albury Park Conference on prophecy until 1830.

After this period, most of the participants of the Albury Park conferences started to attend a conference hosted by Lady Theodosia Powerscourt. It is during the Powerscourt conferences that we see the intersection of Dispensationalism and Zionism; one of the participants was John Nelson Darby.

C. The Father of Modern Dispensationalism

Darby was ordained as a deacon in the Church of Ireland in 1825 and as a priest in 1826. He spent a good deal of his early ministry with the poor, especially with the Roman Catholic inhabitants of the area near his parish of Calary. This has led some of his biographers to suggest that his message was far more appealing for them than working within

the higher levels of Irish society who typically saw high status and prosperity as a sign of God's blessing.

Although Darby shared Irving's pessimistic premillennial views, he was very different in style and even appearance. Irving was dashing, handsome and erudite. Darby was shabbily dressed and dour. Irving was a soaring preacher who attracted large crowds. Darby was more inclined to small Bible studies and writing tracts and papers.

After laboring as a curate for the Irish Church, Darby became disillusioned and sought to find the "true Church." The Roman Catholic Church seemed just as devoid of life to him. While he kept a keen heart for the Roman Catholic peasants, he had little use for the Roman Church, calling the papacy "Satan's fiction." After rejecting the Anglican Church as "a modification of popery," and dismissing the other dissenting churches that had emerged from the 18th century revival as well, Darby seemed to view Christian people as having no organized, constituted place on this earth:

What is the Church of Christ in its purpose and perfection? And our Lord has taught us to ascribe whatever is inconsistent with this to the hand of an enemy. It is a congregation of souls redeemed out of 'this naughty world' by God manifest in the flesh, a people purified to Himself by Christ, purified in the heart by faith, knit together, by the bond of this common faith in Him, to Him their Head sitting at the right hand of the Father, having consequently their conversation (commonwealth) in heaven, from whence they look for the Saviour, the Lord of glory; Philippians 3:20. As a body, therefore, they belong to heaven; there is their portion in the restitution of all things, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. On earth they are, as a people, necessarily subordinate; they are nothing and nobody; their King is in heaven, their interests and constitution heavenly.

While Darby was discouraged with all the denominations, he did find hope in the groups of other disillusioned believers who began to meet in homes around Dublin for Bible study and fellowship. These groups became known as the Plymouth Brethren, and Darby was a key figure, if not the primary factor, in their formation. His view, that an ordained priesthood manifests a denial of Christianity, was evident in their organizational principles and in his distinction between denominational churches and the Brethren groups:

For a denominational body there is no room in the scriptural account of the Church or assembly, unless it be "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas," I of Luther, I of John Knox or Calvin. Churches are historic or ancestral (that is, not of God or scriptural). There is a great body which teaches beyond this—that of Rome, the abiding witness of the corruption and ruin of the Church or house of God placed in responsibility on earth, keeping its name and form, but in the hands of Satan and the seat of his power.

Darby not only savages the Roman Church but also spares no one in his assessments, as evidenced in this critique of Presbyterianism:

One system is, I believe, little better than another, and the Presbyterian is dislocated and broken to pieces like the rest. Reunion has been attempted in the Colonies, with, at any rate, partial success; and the same is attempted between the Old and New Schools in the States (that is, between the Colonial and American branches of the Presbyterian body). But the general history of Presbyterianism has been failure, at least as much as that of other Protestant bodies.

It was under this ardor that Darby, Irving and the Powerscourt conference attendees came to be associated. By the second conference held in 1832, Darby persuaded most of the delegates to the conference, including Lady Powerscourt, to leave the "established church" and associate with the Brethren. At the

annual conferences, as well as in between with letters and meetings, the topics of discussion and correspondence surrounded questions concerning “the return of the Jews to the land” and by “what covenant did this warrant come from.”

While intellectual questions of doctrine were of primary interest, other questions involved emotional and practical issues. How would the faithful remnant of believers, adrift in a world of increasingly corrupted churches, declining kingdoms, increasing social depravity and revolutions, live on as the chaos increased? It was at this point that Darby introduced the doctrine of the rapture.

Far from being accepted, this doctrine caused a split in the Brethren community that lasted nearly a hundred years. But for those fearful of increasing wars, famines, social unrest and earthquakes it brought some relief. It should be noted that some have promoted the notion that Darby acquired his doctrine of the rapture about the time of 1830 from an entranced woman. While it is true he did have contact with Mrs. MacDonald, the Scotswoman who had prophetic utterances about the living saints meeting the Lord Jesus in the sky, Darby claimed his understanding of this important dispensational doctrine came from his own study. Hanegraff summarizes Darby’s writings on the matter:

According to Darby himself, however, his dispensational doctrines originated neither from an ecstatic utterance in Edward Irving’s congregation nor from the vision of a Scottish lassie named Margaret MacDonald. Rather, they evolved from the hypothesis that Scripture is replete with two distinct stories concerning two distinct people for whom God has two distinct plans.

One might wonder why Darby would want to introduce such a divisive doctrine of the rapture into the newly formed and generally harmonious Brethren movement. It makes one speculate that he was sincere in his attempt to understand the

Scriptural text. Some Darby defenders believe he came to accept the rapture doctrine through his own study. Paul Wilkinson illustrates this by giving a compelling argument citing no less than Brethren scholar F. F. Bruce and Historian Timothy Weber: “Bruce also distanced Darby from Irving and MacDonald and acknowledged that the doctrine of the pretribulation Rapture was ‘in the air in the 1820s and 1830s among eager students of unfulfilled prophecy’”. Weber concedes that those who have criticized Darby “may have to settle for Darby’s own explanation.” Whether he discovered this doctrine in Scripture on his own or “borrowed” it from Mrs. MacDonald or someone else may still be in question, but it remains his and his followers’ doctrine to defend regardless of the origin.

Lord Shaftesbury, the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, was a key figure about the time of Darby. He would play a pivotal role in the political classes in Great Britain for the promotion of the return of the Jews to Palestine. Shaftesbury was a postmillennialist and fully expected that, with God’s help, men like him could move history towards the millennial period of the Kingdom of God on earth.

In the late 1830s and early 1840s, the Middle East was in turmoil because European governments were engaged in propping up a declining Ottoman Empire and maneuvering for power. Shaftesbury played a key role in elevating the vision of a Jewish return and saw an opportunity in connecting Jewish repatriation with Britain’s political interests. Premillennial dispensationalism was still very much a minority view, but now there was a practical and political reason to advance the ideology. Clark comments on how Shaftesbury connected the political with the theological, “Shaftesbury can take the credit for briefly making ‘the English madness’ of Restorationism part and parcel of England’s answer to the endlessly plaguing Eastern Question.”

Lord Shaftesbury managed to persuade Lord Palmerston, then the

British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to a secular rationale for the re-settlement of Jews under a British auspice. This strategy would give the British the needed hegemony over Russia in the region. Shaftesbury shrewdly avoided any Biblical warrant for he knew the key point for Palmerston was the political advantage this move would bring.

The attempts to instill Anglican dominion and British influence, as well as lure European Jewry to Palestine, did not go well in the decade of the 1850s. Nonetheless, Shaftesbury did not give up and persisted for years in promoting his idea. During this time, he is largely credited in coining an important phrase that was used by other Zionists to elicit support. In a letter, he wrote that the area of Palestine was a "country without a nation crying out to be populated by a nation without a country".

The trouble with this statement was that the area did have a population who considered themselves to be a nation. In 1880 there were about 480,000 people living in Palestine under the government of the Ottoman Turks. Of these, 456,000 were Arab Muslims and Christians and 24,000 were Jewish. To this day the non-Jewish Palestinians resent this "battle cry" of Zionists and use it to rally their own people to resist the enlargement of the modern Israeli state through the settlements on the West Bank.

By 1866 the Zionist movement had entered the American scene at several points. One relatively small story of early American Christian Zionism may serve to illustrate the American get-it-done work ethic applied to Zionism. We eventually see the same kind of practicality in modern Christian Zionists like John Hagee. Long on energy and short on Biblical warrant, American Zionism took a turn.

Whereas the early European Zionists held to a more historic premillennial view of Israel, thinking they would convert the Jews to Christianity and then they would want to return to the

Land, American Zionism started to take a more pragmatic position of getting them to the land and concerning themselves about their conversion afterwards. Stephen Sizer records that "[t]he consensus, prior to 1880, was that restoration to the Lord, and that Israel would be a Christian nation." However, Scofield interpreting Deuteronomy, following Darby, would change that to restoration to the land first and then conversion; and not individual conversion but national:

The Palestinian Covenant gives the conditions under which Israel entered the land of promise. It is important to see that the nation has never as yet taken the land under the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant, nor has it ever possessed the whole land (cf. Genesis 15:18 with Numbers 34:1-12). The Palestinian Covenant is in seven parts:

(1) Dispersion for disobedience, v.1
(2) The future repentance of Israel while in dispersion v.2.
(3) The return of the Lord, v.3.
(4) Restoration to the land, v.5
(5) **National conversion.** V. 6
(6) The judgment of Israel's oppressors, v. 7
(7) National prosperity, v. 9.

Several decades before Scofield would publish this reference, in 1866, a small congregation from the Church of the Messiah rented a 567-ton vessel to relocate from Maine to Palestine. Whereas British restorationism focused on converting the Jews so that they would go to Palestine to re-settle the land, the American intention was to improve the land through their superior agricultural husbandry so that the Jews would want to go and re-settle the land. Led by Pastor George J. Adams, they thought they would hasten the second coming of Christ by preparing the land for the influx of the Jews, and of course, who better knew modern and large- scale farming then Americans, or so they thought.

The whole episode was a disaster from the first moment they

set foot upon Palestine until the mission unraveled in the summer of 1867, when several fatalities and scandals ensued. Of the 156 families that originally went to Palestine, most returned within that year and Pastor Adams was revealed as a drunken despot who later ended up in Philadelphia, where he died in 1880. Mark Twain chronicled the event and even traveled there at one point to see the exact state of their condition. He ultimately labeled the affair “a complete fiasco.”

Part of the American interest in Zionism was no doubt fueled by the seven long touring visits that John Nelson Darby made to Canada and the United States between 1862 and 1877. Darby found the American evangelical experience to be bereft of theological interest in his dispensationalism but heavy on the practical aspects of Zionism. The American evangelical community was still largely postmillennial and optimistic especially concerning the view that American ingenuity, grit and energy would show the world to a better place, thus preparing the way for the millennial reign of Christ. This American paradigm annoyed Darby, but he persisted.

He eventually met with four American preachers and Bible teachers who understood the American penchant for large, noisy, and celebratory “revivals,” in contrast to the more cerebral small-group Bible lectures that Darby favored. James H. Brookes, Dwight L. Moody, William Eugene Blackstone and Cyrus. I. Scofield would come to advance Darby’s premillennial cause in America and change its course both theologically and politically.

James H. Brookes was a Missouri Presbyterian minister, and unusual as he held to a premillennial view. He often lamented that he was isolated in his eschatology. Presbyterians typically held to an amillennial position, which was the predominant eschatological position from the Reformers forward, with some allowance for a period of postmillennialism among the Puritans and post-Puritans such as Jonathan Edwards.

Riddlebarger cites no less than John Walvoord, an important dispensationalist theologian, in making this case:

Because amillennialism was adopted by the Reformers, it achieved a quality of orthodoxy to which its modern adherents can point with pride. They can rightly claim many worthy scholars in the succession from the Reformation to modern times such as Calvin, Luther, Melancthon, and in modern times, Warfield, Vos, Kuyper, Machen and Berkhof. If one follows traditional Reformed theology in many other aspects, it is natural to accept its amillennialism. The weight of organized Christianity has largely been on the side of amillennialism.

Darby visited St. Louis five times, and although no firm account is recorded, it is most likely that Brookes and Darby met during one of his visits. Some think they must have met since Brookes published a book in 1870 entitled Maranatha (Aramaic for "Lord, come!" in 1 Corinthians 16:22). In this book, Brookes lays out a rapture doctrine that is identical to Darby's viewpoint, and contained most of the usual Christian Zionist themes. Brookes' is one of the first works that overtly mentions the curse of Genesis 12:3 (in not supporting Israel) and goes on to list the Biblical offenders, Egypt, Persia, Rome, Assyria, and Babylon. More recent Christian Zionists have expanded that list to include Russia, Nazi Germany and Great Britain. Interestingly, Brookes went against the current of anti-Semitic tide concerning the Jews increasing influence over banking, academia and councils in Europe. He saw their emerging predominance as a harbinger of the coming conversion of the Jews to Christianity. Entirely optimistic, he did not live to see the horror of this rising anti-Semitism reach its zenith just a few decades later in Nazi Europe.

Brookes organized two-week long Bible Conferences at Niagara on Lake Ontario. These were similar to the Albury Park and Powerscourt conferences but were more for Bible-believing Christians as a refuge from the European theological

liberalism that was seeping over into American evangelicalism than for anything else. However, these conferences found the "new" thought concerning "end times" in the form of premillennial dispensationalism, a reassuring part of their new "fundamentalism". Eventually, this new paradigm dominated the conferences and they became almost solely dedicated to the promulgation of this theological system.

After Brooke's death, the fragile truce between the minority postmillennialists and the majority premillennialists broke down, and the last one was held in 1900. Brookes had managed to hold the coalition together due to his sweet nature, combined with the foresight to draw up a confession of faith to which there was official agreement. This confession kept the peace for many years. Interestingly, this document, which was solidly fundamental in its affirmation of the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, the depravity of man, the Deity of Christ, and the person, work and Deity of the Holy Spirit, also included a return of the Jews to Palestine.

Dwight L. Moody, a friend of Brookes and Darby, was in large part responsible for the early spread of the premillennial dispensational message in America. He took Darby's theology and "stripped Darby's message down to its urgent basics." Stanley Gundry wrote in his biography of Moody that "his evangelistic message sought for the lowest common denominator."

Born in New England and trained as a cobbler and shoe salesman, Moody ended up in Chicago to work for an uncle. Although he came to faith in Christ as a teenager, it would take a few years before Moody would wind up in full-time ministry. He came to Chicago to make money and he was a very successful salesman. Energetic and personable, Moody loved his work. Like everything he did, he did it with enthusiasm. He started a Sunday school in late 1858 or early 1859, on the north side of Chicago in a deserted saloon. Sunday schools were not common in that day and it was located in a rough and

poor area with mostly German and Scandinavian immigrants. He was a hard worker and visited people wherever he could, even in saloons and back alleys. Although he had no formal training himself, he conducted most of the classes. In 1860 he decided to quit his lucrative sales job and devote himself full-time to his Sunday school and evangelism. It would not be until 1870 that he reached much farther than the poor sections of North Chicago, but the world would soon meet this indefatigable man.

Before he gained much notoriety in America, Moody intersected with British Christian Zionism and Dispensationalism, including Lord Shaftesbury, during his several tours of Great Britain beginning in 1867. The polished Shaftesbury was astounded with the cheerful and energetic Moody, considering him quite "ill-managed" but successful in evangelizing a crowd.

Moody, having met a virtual who's-who in British evangelicalism during his tours, also developed relationships with the Plymouth Brethren. A particularly effective influence on Moody's preaching occurred after he met Brethern member Henry Moorhouse in England. Moorhouse soon visited Moody in Chicago and they developed a close relationship. He urged Moody to "stop preaching your words and preach the Word of God". After his return to America upon completing his third trip to Great Britain in 1873, Moody filled venue after venue in the United States until he died in 1899.

His Bible Institute became very successful in training men (and some women) and focused on the "practical" as opposed to the "academic". This meant the classical training of Greek, Hebrew and systematic theology that normally would be found in a theological education were not utilized. More time was spent in memorizing and systematizing the sensational topics of premillennial dispensationalism, including the rapture, the Antichrist, the Great Tribulation and the millennial reign. It was apparent that the Plymouth Brethren's dispensational

motifs impacted Moody's theology although he rejected their separatist ecclesiology. Gundry notes that "he was the first American evangelist of note to follow the premillennial scheme of eschatology."

For Moody, evangelism was imperative and time was of the essence; thus he wanted practical and active "gap-men." Historian Timothy Weber documented the Moody adherents' successful methodology in spreading premillennial dispensationalism, which included their ability to "out-Bible" others, especially theological liberals.

Perhaps the greatest impact that Moody had on the establishment of the premillennial dispensational position in North America, was the founding of the Bible Institute for Home and Foreign Missions of the Chicago Evangelization Society, later named Moody Bible Institute (MBI) after his death. Sizer thinks that no other theological institution in America was more responsible for spreading Darby's theology as MBI "became the 'West Point' of the fundamentalist movement giving respectability to dispensationalism and training many of its future leaders".

By 1956 over 40 such institutes and colleges largely modeled after MBI were established in the United States and all were teaching dispensationalism and training some 10,000 pastors and missionaries every year. These included the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA), Northwestern Bible Training School in Minneapolis, National Bible Institute of New York City, Nyack Missionary Training Institute and the Bible Institute of Philadelphia. Joel Carpenter, who has studied fundamentalism extensively, summarizes what these institutions meant at the time for "fundamentalist pastors and parishioners who were weary of the theological tensions they felt with their denominational neighbors and wary of the perspectives emanating from their denominational agencies, Bible schools often became denominational surrogates." There was a kind of siege mentality that is evident in the writings of Darby that

preceded the rise of these Bible colleges. Darby was openly hostile and suspicious of all Christian institutions and this included the Christian academies.

Regardless of whether this new theological movement was theologically correct or not, the rapidity of the adoption of premillennial dispensationalism into the Christian Church and the American culture was astoundingly fast. The full weight of modern mass communication and the increasing mobility of societies no doubt gave rise to this ascent. Tracts and printed articles accessible to laymen promoted this new theological system.

This growth was occurring while conservative and orthodox theologians were busy fighting off the inroads of European liberalism, especially that of German Higher Criticism which, along with Darwinism, was killing the European orthodox faith. It takes time for the intellectual developments in the academies and seminaries to move down into the pulpits of the churches. Thus, the minimal attention from American theologians during this time assisted the explosion of the sensational topics of “end times” prophecy theology.

In this same era, renowned seminaries, like Princeton, were graduating men who were apt to deny the resurrection of Jesus, miracles in general or the inspiration of Scripture. This combination of events and circumstances was combustible and provided the fuel for the growth of fundamentalism alongside premillennial dispensationalism.

What Dwight L. Moody was to the power of public revivalism and the spread of premillennial dispensational preaching, William Eugene Blackstone was to the power of the written word. James Brookes advised Blackstone, an eager, self-educated disciple of Darby, to write a book concerning the return of Christ, which he did in 1887. The book, entitled Jesus is Coming, was hugely popular, eventually translated into 36 languages by 1927. Until Hal Lindsey’s The Late Great Planet Earth (1970)

and Tim LaHaye's Left Behind (1990), Blackstone's Jesus is Coming was easily the most widely read book on the second coming of Jesus. Thus, in written form, the dispensational message was widely disseminated to masses of people.

What Lord Shaftesbury was to European Zionist political activism, William Blackstone was to its counterpart in the United States. Blackstone was very actively engaged on all fronts; from the theological to the convocational and, particular, the political aspects of Zionism. His book fame gave him a platform on which he was able to reach quite high into American political circles. Almost simultaneous to the writing of his book, he founded the Chicago Hebrew Mission, later to become the American Messianic Fellowship International (AMFI).

Blackstone became a frequent traveler and organizer of conferences that sought to bring Christian Zionists and Jewish leaders together. The goal was to organize more effectively in order to rally Jews to return to Palestine and to lobby governments to help that effort. He was shocked when Jewish leaders, both in America and Europe, did not welcome the idea of resettling in Palestine. Rabbi Emil Hirsh told him, "We modern Jews do not wish to be restored to Palestine … the country wherein we live is our Palestine … we will not go back … to form a nationality of our own."

Blackstone was undeterred and he made several attempts to influence U.S. Presidents to consider the restoration of the Jews to Palestine. He influenced Benjamin Harrison in 1891 with the signatures of 400 prominent Americans. In 1916 he appealed to Woodrow Wilson. President Wilson did not express public support for the idea, but privately he told others he was favorably disposed to it. Wilson was a member of a Presbyterian church that supported restorationism and certainly his own biblically based faith played a part.90 These two major efforts to position the premillennial dispensational view of Israel with the political class marked

a milestone for the emergence of American Christian Zionism and for Zionism as a whole.

While Theodor Herzl in Europe has been widely credited as the Father of Zionism91, Blackstone preceded Herzl's main body of political work by several years and thus must rightly be considered at least the lesser co-father of the movement. Nevertheless, until the close of World War II, American Christian Zionists were not particularly involved in trying to lobby the U.S. Federal Government on behalf of the re-settlement of the Jews to Palestine. As we shall see, that changed in very big ways. American Christian Zionism would become the largest and most politically powerful voice for the support of the new state of Israel after 1948. Stephen Sizer sums up the impact of Blackstone's work:

Blackstone's appeal reveals, perhaps more clearly than any other statement made by a contemporary dispensationalist, the logical consequences of the distinction made between God's separate purposes for Israel and the Church, and the way in which this affected their approach to Jewish 'mission'. To Blackstone, evangelism and restoration were not mutually exclusive but equal means to fulfilling God's purpose among the Jews. **In Blackstone's mind, to choose Jesus might be the Christian answer and was acknowledged, albeit half-heartedly; but to choose Zionism was to be a 'true Jew' and certainly preferable to their assimilation into western society.**

The organization that Blackstone started, The Chicago Hebrew Mission, changed its name to American Messianic Fellowship International in 1953. More recently, in September 2008, they changed their name once again to Life in Messiah International. Based on the current content of its Web site, the organization seems to be more focused on evangelizing the Jewish people to become Christians and not so much on re-settling Jews to Israel. It still holds to a creed of beliefs very similar to Brookes' Niagara Conference, having a creedal statement that caused conflict among the premillennial

majority during the period 1877-1895. The postmillennial minority complained that this creed should be modified or removed since the premillennial majority could not even agree among themselves concerning the timing (pre-tribulation or post- tribulation) of this new idea of a secret return of Christ to “rapture” His Church. When Brookes died, the tenuous peace evaporated, yet this creedal statement is typical of many fundamentalist denominations and independent churches to this day. This is the statement that held the Niagara conference together for over 20 years, “We believe that the blessed hope is the Lord Jesus’ personal, imminent return to rapture the Church and then introduce the millennial age, when Israel shall be restored to their own land and the earth will then be full of the knowledge of the Lord.”

It would not be difficult to prove that the single most influential publication to vault premillennial dispensationalism into mass adoption was the Scofield Reference Bible, first published in 1909. The man responsible for this work was a student of Darby, a disciple of Brookes and a close friend of D. L. Moody.

Cyrus Ingerson Scofield was born in 1843 in Northern Michigan and reared there in his earliest years and later, in Tennessee, where he enlisted to fight in the Civil War in the Confederate Army. In 1866, Scofield married Leontine Cerré in St. Louis, Missouri. Cyrus and Leontine had three children, Abigail, Helene, and Guy. Guy died when he was still a child. Scofield’s wife obtained a legal separation in 1877, and they were eventually divorced in 1883. He married Hettie van Wark three months after the divorce was final.

Scofield ended up working in St. Louis in his brother-in-law’s legal practice and he was admitted to the Kansas Bar in 1869. Elected to the Kansas legislature in 1871, he was eventually appointed as the U.S. Attorney in the District of St. Louis under the administration of Ulysses S. Grant. Scofield drank heavily during his law career and ran up large gambling debts.

Due to a charge of forgery, he was forced to resign and spent six months in jail in 1879 while the tangled finances were unraveled. It remains unclear to this day as to whether he was formally convicted or not.

He was converted in that same year having been led to Christ by a friend and son of a Presbyterian Minister, Thomas McPheeters. That same year, he worked in the 1879-1880 evangelistic campaign of D. L. Moody in St. Louis. Scofield was discipled by James H. Brookes. He deeply admired Dr. Brookes and wrote about his hermeneutical philosophy:

Dr. Brookes was an amazing blessing to me, but never more than in telling me this: "There is no such thing in the Bible as an abstract proposition. Everything in the Bible is meant to be turned into life. It must first of all be grounded in doctrine. There is such a thing as experience which is real but which is not founded on Scripture; then it becomes either fanatical or a discouragement. Therefore, we are always to interpret experience by Scripture—never Scripture by experience. There is always in Scripture a doctrinal basis, and there is always in Scripture an account of an experience based on that doctrine; and this account is perfectly accurate because it is inspired.

Scofield was licensed to preach in 1880 by the Congregational Church and encouraged by Brookes and Scofield's pastor, a Congregational minister, to become an ordained minister in 1883, in order to accept a call from a church in Texas. Scofield accepted a call to pastor a small Dallas mission, First Congregational Church, and was ordained by the North Texas Congregational Association in 1883. His biographer, long-time disciple and friend, Charles Trumbull, recorded a letter that Scofield sent to him describing his conversion:

It was a Bible conversion. From a worn pocket Testament McPheeters read to me the great Gospel passages, the great deliverance passages, John 3:16; 6:47; 10:28; Acts 13:38, 39,

and the like. And when I asked, like the Philippian jailer of old, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ he just read them again, and we knelt, and I received Jesus Christ as my Saviour. And—oh! Trumbull, put it into the story, put it big and plain: instantly the chains were broken never to be forged again—the passion for drink was taken away. Put it ‘Instantly,’ dear Trumbull. Make it plain. Don’t say: ‘He strove with his drink-sin and came off victo’r.’ He did nothing of the kind. Divine power did it, wholly of grace. To Christ be all the glory.

Scofield has often been attacked on the grounds of his failed first marriage (of which there is little documentation as to its cause), and for his drinking and jail time. All these events were prior to his conversion. To be sure, he had a scandalous history, but the many who knew him after his conversion have consistently attested to his Christian character. Indeed, he often mentioned his deliverance from strong drink when he preached, which evidences that there was no attempt to hide that part of his history. For careful thinkers, there are substantial grounds for examining his published theology rather than his unregenerate past.

Scofield was at the church in Dallas for a number of years and it grew under his care from 14 members in 1883 to 551 in 1895 when he left to become an associate pastor at Moody’s church in Northfield, Massachusetts. He stayed there until 1902 when he returned to his previous pulpit in Dallas, where he remained until 1907. With Lewis Sperry Chafer, who was later to found Dallas Theological Seminary, Scofield started the Philadelphia Bible College in 1914 and he served as its first president.

In 1888, Scofield published a 60-page tract, Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth: Being Ten Outline Studies of the more Important Divisions of Scripture. This tract was completed after he attended for the second time the 1888 Niagara Bible Conference, which he had first attended in 1887. During both conferences, Scofield interviewed and collaborated with the

many Plymouth Brethren in attendance and, out of these discussions, the idea for his Reference Bible came about. It would not be completed and published until 1909.

By the 1950s James Barr estimates over 50% of evangelical groups were using his Reference Bible in small group studies and that it was "the most important single document of all Fundamentalism." Although it went through several revisions since the first publication, it remained a singular influence on the 20th-century American evangelical scene.

L. Contemporary Dispensationalist Prophecy Teachers and Writers

Having described the early establishment of dispensationalism in America and the emerging Zionistic interest that naturally flows from this theological system, we now turn our attention to more recent leaders that have had the most impact on the further development and promotion of this theology.

1. Academic Foundations of Christian Zionism

While the names of Hal Lindsey, Tim LaHaye and John Hagee are well known in general American culture today and in the evangelical sub-culture in particular, there are four men whose names are not so well known, but who have had a significant impact on the growth of premillennial dispensationalism and Christian Zionism. These men are Lewis Sperry Chafer, John Walvoord, J. Dwight Pentecost and Charles C. Ryrie. The first two were the first and second presidents of Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS). J. Dwight Pentecost has taught at DTS since 1955 and is currently a scholar emeritus. Ryrie taught at Philadelphia College of the Bible and DTS, where he is a professor emeritus. He wrote 28 books that have sold over 2 million copies, including the Ryrie Study Bible.

DTS was originally founded as Evangelical Theological College in 1924 by Chafer and has been the primary academic institution for dispensationalism ever since. Since Christian

Zionism depends on dispensationalism as a theological foundation, this institution is central to any examination of the movement. As we examine the theological and biblical issues of dispensationalism and Christian Zionism, we will reference these four men and their works extensively, as they have had a profound effect upon the current popular prophecy authors Hal Lindsey, Tim LaHaye and John Hagee.

2. The Book of the Decade

Hal Lindsey published The Late Great Planet Earth in 1970, three years after the Israelis captured the West Bank and Jerusalem. Sales of this little book went ballistic. The New York Times called it the "#1 Non-Fiction Bestseller of the Decade". It is still available in bookstores today, had sales of over 18 million by 1993 and estimated sales of another 18 million in 54 other languages. Lindsey alluded to the date for the return of Jesus, but it failed to happen. But that did not deter him from simply writing a new book with some new predictions that corresponded with the return of Christ. The Late Great Planet Earth had significant impact on the political class in the United States and other countries as well. Future President of the United States Ronald Reagan read the book in 1971 and reportedly told a California politician over dinner:

Everything is falling into place. It can't be that long now….Ezekiel says that fire and brimstone will be rained upon the enemies of God's people [Jews]. That must mean they will be destroyed by nuclear weapons…Ezekiel tells us that Gog, the nation that will lead all other powers of darkness against Israel, will come out of the north. Biblical scholars have been saying for generations that Gog must be Russia. What other powerful nation is to the north of Israel? None.

Twelve years later, when he was President, Reagan delivered his famous "Evil Empire" speech concerning the former Soviet Union. The audience was the National Religious Broadcasters

convention.

Menachem Begin, the sixth Prime Minister of Israel and a contemporary with Reagan and President Jimmy Carter, had a copy of Lindsey's book on his night reading stand.

Harold Lee (Hal) Lindsey was born and reared in Houston, Texas and attended the University of Houston until he dropped out and served in the Coast Guard during the Korean War. After the war he worked on a tugboat on the Mississippi River. After his first marriage broke up, he considered committing suicide but instead he found a Bible and began reading it. Following his conversion, he was admitted to Dallas Theological Seminary in 1958 with the help of Robert Thieme, his pastor from Berachah Church in Houston. Although he did not have the prerequisite Bachelors degree, this requirement was waived by DTS.

He studied under John Walvoord and graduated with a Masters in Theology. Hal met second wife Jan at DTS and after graduation they moved to Southern California to work for Campus Crusade for Christ. During the 1960s he accumulated notes that would be eventually turned into his first book, The Late Great Planet Earth. In the decades to follow, Lindsey would write a number of best-sellers including:

- Satan is Alive and Well On Planet Earth
- The Liberation of Planet Earth
- There's a New World Coming (1975)
- The 1980s: Countdown to Armageddon
- The Final Battle
- The Terminal Generation
- Planet Earth: The Final Chapter
- Rapture
- Planet Earth: 2000 A.D.
- Apocalypse Code
- Blood Moon
- Vanished into Thin Air: The Hope of Every Believer

- The Everlasting Hatred: The Roots of Jihad

During this period Hal and Jan divorced (he had dedicated his book *There is a New World Coming* to Jan), then he married Kim, to whom his book *The Rapture* is dedicated, and now he is married to fourth wife JoLyn. He is one of the few authors to have had more than two books at one time on The New York Times best-seller list. Easily he was the most successful dispensational author of the 20th century by a great measure, until Tim LaHaye in 1995.

3. Non-Fiction is Left Behind

Whereas Lindsey wrote non-fiction popular literature on dispensational eschatology, LaHaye along with writer Jerry Jenkins wrote fictional stories with premillennial dispensational and apocalyptic themes. Overall, the Left Behind series has 13 novels released from 1995 through 2007. While they are partners for this series of books, LaHaye and Jenkins also write books on their own. In fact, LaHaye was a successful author long before this mega-series hit in the 1990s. The series has also produced a stream of Bible studies, children's versions and even movies based on the novels.

Timothy F. LaHaye was born in 1926 and reared in Detroit, Michigan. He graduated with a B.A. from Bob Jones University after he served in the Army Air Force during the last year of World War II. He also earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from Western Seminary.

In 1958, Tim and his wife Beverly moved to San Diego where he served as Pastor of Scott Memorial Church, which later changed its name to Shadow Mountain Community Church. During LaHaye's 25 years, the church grew into one of the largest congregations in Southern California. In 1971 he started Christian Heritage College on the grounds of the church. Both Tim and Beverly have been very active politically over the years and have four children and nine grandchildren.

While best known for his fictional writing, LaHaye has written over 50 books on a variety of subjects. He has written several books of a theological tone with the intent of defending the biblical and theological content of his novels. He also donated $4.5 million to Jerry Falwell's Liberty University to establish the Pre-Trib Research Center under the direction of Dr. Thomas Ice. Dr. Ice is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary and served LaHaye as a debater defending the premillennial dispensational eschatological position against critics like Gary DeMar of American Vision. While critics often challenge LaHaye to defend his position, he prefers Ice and others to defend the positions he promotes.

Tim LaHaye is not only a writer but a serious political activist and organizer as well. In 1979 LaHaye was more concerned with secular humanism in America than Christian Zionism. He wrote a book entitled The Battle for the Mind and dedicated it to Francis Schaeffer. He saw secular humanism, to which he attributed the push to accept homosexuality, abortion, sexual promiscuity, drugs and crime, as the greatest evil mankind faced.

Jerry Falwell became impressed with LaHaye's ideas and his organizational impact on Southern California pastors and leaders. He also credited LaHaye with developing the political strategy for the Moral Majority. Along with Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, LaHaye was often invited to the White House by Reagan during 1981-1989 for regular "prophecy" briefings.

Along with LaHaye in 1981, a co-founder of the Moral Majority, Republican activist Paul Weyrich, founded the Council for National Policy (CNP). This is a group of well- connected, often very wealthy members numbering about 600 with the intent to influence political officials. They meet three times a year to strategize and plan tactical methods.

4. Israel's Best Friend in America

What Lindsey and LaHaye have done in the world of books for premillennial dispensationalism, John Hagee has done in the world of speaking and action. He has also written 21 books. Although his writings have not had the wider cultural distribution that the books of Lindsey and LaHaye enjoy, they are popular among fundamentalist Christians. He is the pastor of Cornerstone Baptist in San Antonio, Texas. In 1975, he founded the church that now is one of the largest in America, with a membership of 19,000.

John was born in 1940 in Baytown, Texas in the Gulf region near Houston. His father was a minister; Hagee writes in his 2007 book, In Defense of Israel, that "dispensational theology was drilled into me from an early age." He writes about his father crying while listening on the radio to the report that the State of Israel had been proclaimed by David Ben- Gurion and that the United States recognized this provisional state government.

Hagee attended Trinity University in San Antonio on a football scholarship where he earned a bachelor of science in Mechanical Engineering. He went on to complete a master's degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1966 at the University of North Texas. Later he completed a diploma course from the Southwestern Assemblies of God University. His biography on the organization he founded, Christians United for Israel (CUFI), states that Hagee is "a fifth generation pastor and the 47th descendent of his family to preach the gospel since they immigrated to America from Germany." John is married to the former Diana Castro and they have 5 children. Hagee also founded John Hagee Ministries, a broadcasting operation, which occupies a 50,000 square-foot production center housing radio and television studios, 100 telephone "prayer partners," and a distribution center. Currently, Hagee telecasts on eight major networks, 162 independent television stations, and 51 radio stations broadcasting in over 190 nations.

In Defense of Israel is a dispensational polemic for Christian

support of the modern state of Israel, and a kind of autobiography. In this book, Hagee describes a turning point for himself and his wife Diana when they first toured Israel in 1978. He says, “We went as tourists and came home as Zionists.” For several pages he describes his emotional experiences culminating in the purchase of $150 worth of books on the history of the Jewish people at a Jewish bookstore. He describes the days after purchasing the books:

I began reading as soon as we got back on the tour bus, and I continued reading on the flight home. I was a graduate of two secular universities and a Bible college and had been raised in a Christian home all my life, but I had never learned anything close to the truth about what the Jewish people had gone through historically. I read about the Crusades, the Spanish inquisitions, and the Holocaust, probing into the dark abyss of a history I had never been taught.

Somewhere over the Atlantic I began jotting down notes on what I could do to bring Christians and Jews together—without starting a riot. We have not exactly had a cordial relationship over the centuries. What made me think I could possibly change something that had been ingrained in the hearts and minds of these two vastly different groups for two thousand years?

I couldn’t of course. At least not on my own. The important thing was that I recognized it was God who had placed that desire on my heart on the day I had prayed at the Western Wall. The books I had purchased in Jerusalem became the intellectual foundation of my life’s work.

Three years later, in 1981, Hagee organized the event called “A night to Honor Israel” which has subsequently grown to over 95 cities in the United States. Since 2006, Hagee has turned over this event to the organization he founded called (CUFI). On its Web site, the organization describes its rationale for holding this event. It seems to imply that to reject CUFI’s

position on the support of Israel is sinful:

A Night To Honor Israel is a **non-conversionary tribute** to the nation of Israel and the Jewish people of the world. Its purpose is to promote esteem and understanding between Christians and Jews and to emphasis the things that we hold in common, not dramatize our religious differences. A Night to Honor Israel is an evening packed with outstanding speakers and music with all of the focus being on support for Israel and the Jewish people. In the Bible, God says, "I will bless those that bless you and curse those that curse you." Christians in America and around the world should support Israel and the Jewish People. Israel is the only nation on the face of the earth where God created the boundaries and gave it to His people, the Jews, for all time. The choice is very clear; **Christians can either choose to be a friend and supporter of Israel and please the Lord or be an enemy of Israel and offend God.** God has protected Israel in the past and will continue that protection forever.

This is largely where we are today. The litmus test for orthodoxy for many evangelicals is whether you subscribe to unconditional support of Israel, as Christian Zionists see it, or not. Whole categories of Christians are dismissed as unbiblical or even worse, enemies of God if the tenets of Christian Zionism are questioned. Their theology has not escaped many careful thinking non-Christians.

American-Israeli author Gershom Gorenberg, has written about the modern prophecy teachers and concludes: "They don't love real Jewish people. They love us as characters in their story, in their play, and that's not who we are, and we never auditioned for that part, and the play is not one that ends up good for us." It seems that Gorenberg understands that it is harmful and unloving to exhort Jews to return to Palestine, the supposed locus of a great conflict involving every nation on earth, in order to endure horrible persecution at the hands of a Satanic dictator of cosmic proportions and a monstrous

war, leaving two-thirds of them perishing.

However it may seem to non-Christians, the promoters of premillennial dispensationalism seem like earnest men who want to base their theology squarely on the word of God. Perhaps their earnestness has outrun their theological accuracy. In the next section we will examine and critique their Biblical grounds and reasoning. Return Contents

III. The Biblical and Theological Core of Christian Zionism

A. Introduction

"I believe in the pre-tribulation rapture and in dispensationalism because all of the famous prophecy scholars teach it."

It didn't happen overnight. Christians didn't wake up one day and think that they must get all the Jews in the world back to Israel so the Temple would be rebuilt, the rapture would come, the Great Tribulation would occur with the Antichrist running the world, Armageddon would start, then Jesus would return to defeat the Antichrist and would reign for 1,000 years when yet another rebellion would occur in which, finally, Jesus would crush all his enemies and He would reign over His Kingdom on earth as it is in Heaven. This is a pretty complicated theology, as the drawings in Appendix D depicting this paradigm demonstrate.

Yet millions of American evangelicals subscribe to this very system of thinking about God's redemptive plan. Few understand the Biblical arguments that are offered to support this theology, much less the history behind the arguments. Many have snippets and verses they can recite that they think support various aspects, but few seem capable of giving a cogent and holistic argument based on consistent hermeneutical principles.

For example, when asked why we should support the state of

Israel when they continue building settlements on Palestinian land in violation of multiple United Nations resolutions, one will typically get an answer based on Genesis 12:3, "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." If a follow up question is, "What about Deuteronomy 28 or Leviticus 18; didn't God make it clear that the Covenant had stipulations and consequences, such as being 'vomited out of the land' for disobedience?" typically no response is offered, or worse, the response is "that is just Old Covenant stuff." Zionists often simply dismiss the problem. Didn't the writer of Hebrews explain that the Old Covenant was just a type and shadow of a better covenant that has come? Didn't he point to the ineffectiveness of the old sacrificial system? Did the writer of Hebrews state that a Third Temple should be built for the Jews, and ask for donations? Or was he telling the Jews of his time (it is a letter to Hebrews after all) that Jesus brought a new and better covenant that replaces the inferior old one that merely (but importantly) pointed to Him?

The scope of this paper is too limited to address every theological aspect of premillennial dispensationalism, thus the focus is on two key areas of study. We will examine the premillennial dispensational positions on the nature and extent of the Land Promises and the relationship between Israel and the Church. If these core doctrines are unsupported, then the whole system is suspect or even fails as a framework to undergird the Zionists' eschatological and theological positions. The dramatic topics of dispensationalism, such as the Antichrist, the rapture, the battle of Armageddon and a one-world government, are built upon the foundation that these core doctrines supply. As we examine these two primary doctrines, references to secondary doctrines will occur. If the reader is unfamiliar with the theological terminology employed, many of the definitions can be found in Appendix A.

B. The Land Promises

1. A Brief Historical Recapitulation of the Promised Land in Modern Times

Theodor Herzl is widely regarded as the father of modern Zionism in Europe. He published a little booklet in 1896 entitled *Der Judenstaat* that laid out a case for a Jewish homeland, based on the historic persecution of European Jews, to solve this centuries-old problem. This publication coincided with the ambitions of a German premillennial Anglican, William Hechler, who saw Herzl as a Jewish ally who would help further his cause of converting and restoring the Jews to Palestine. Herzl was not driven by Biblical convictions. Whether the homeland to be created was in Palestine or Argentina did not matter to him. He sensed that Jews would never fit in anywhere and their persecution would only intensify in Europe.

The persistent Hechler convinced the practical Herzl to push for Palestine. Modern Israeli historians record this as the beginning of what would result in the creation of the modern state of Israel and they see it as a "colonizing and expansionist ideology and movement" rather than a religious quest. Much of Hechler and Herzl's work, along with Lord Shaftesbury and his friends, led to the British promises made during World War I. These promises were captured in two competing and unrealistic documents; one to the Jews (the Balfour Declaration) and one to the Arabs (the Hussein-McMahon correspondence). Upon reflection, the British were idealistic, perhaps even deceitful, in making these contrary and incompatible promises to the Jews and the Arabs.

By 1919, the Arabs had realized the contradistinction of the promises and had rejected the emerging plan of the Western nations to partition Palestine. At this time, Britain gave the whole issue over to the United Nations, whose delegation recommended a partition of the land into a Jewish state and a

Palestinian state comprising 55 percent for the former, and 45 percent for the latter.

From 1917 through World War II, the Jews prepared for this partition, while the Arab leadership did not. When the partition was made in 1947, violence broke out and many of the Arabs left the region. They viewed the division of the land as unfairly dictated from the West. Although they could have created their own state at that time, they failed to organize sufficiently. Currently, 3 million Palestinians (non-Jews) live in the West Bank and Gaza, one million in Israel (20 percent of the population) and over 3.5 million are listed as refugees outside of Palestine, making them the largest national group of refugees in the world.

Viewed by Christian Zionists, the founding of the modern state of Israel in 1948 is vindication of their theological positions regarding Israel's divine right to the land in perpetuity. Additionally, the Israeli success in maintaining and growing their original land mandate (see Appendix C for maps), through their victories in subsequent wars in 1956, 1967 and 1973, is viewed as evidence of God's favor on Israel and a direct validation of the dispensational interpretation of the land Promises of God.

2. An Exegesis of the Land Promises

We first hear of "the Land" in Genesis 12:1-3: "The LORD had said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.'" As the historical narrative continues in Genesis, more specificity is added to the original command and promise, "'To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates'" (Genesis 15:8). And further

expanded and reinforced in Genesis 17:

"I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."

This covenant was codified further in chapter 17 with the covenant sign of circumcision, in which God said that His covenant "in your flesh" was "to be an everlasting covenant" (verse 13). Christian Zionists point to this four-part promise of land, nation, everlasting covenant and being a blessing to the world as a clear Biblical mandate to restore the Jews to the land today. Zionists view the covenant promise of the land and nationhood as unconditional and eternal, and they stand on these unswervingly as the foundation of Biblical warrant for restoration and support.

This statement by John Hagee, referring to Genesis 12 and Genesis 15, is typical of what might be preached any given Sunday in many dispensational churches: "This covenant established Israel as a nation and is everlasting and unconditional. Unconditional means this covenant is contingent upon God's faithfulness to Israel, not Israel's faithfulness to God. God says five times in this covenant, "I will, I will, I will." He never says to Abraham, "You must … you must!"

The dispensational position on the eternal nature of the Abrahamic covenant is widely viewed as correct in the sense that it is different from the Mosaic with regard to conditionality. Many scholars agree that the Abrahamic, as well as the Noahic and Davidic covenants are "grants". The Mosaic by contrast is seen as an obligatory suzerain-vassal treaty. Both are in evidence as common to the Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) political landscape. Michael Grisanti presents a table that summarizes the differences between these two types

of ANE agreements:

Grant	Treaty
1. The giver of the covenant makes a commitment to the vassal	1. The giver of the covenant imposes an obligation on the vassal
2. Represents an obligation of the master to his vassal	2. Represents an obligation of the vassal to his master
3. Primarily protects the rights of the vassal	3. Primarily protects the rights of the master
4. No demands made by the superior party	4. The master promises to reward or punish the vassal for obeying or dis-obeying the imposed obligations

Moshe Weinfield says that both types of agreements "preserve the same elements: historical introduction, border delineations, stipulations, witnesses, blessings and curses." However, he points out they are very different "functionally"; the grant serving to reward loyalty and the treaty acting as "an inducement for future loyalty." Both Abraham and David are examples of outstanding loyalty and faithfulness to God and were given wonderful promises; the grant of land to Abraham and the grant of royal dynasty to David are unconditional grants according to Weinfield.

Some scholars in the reformed tradition have somewhat departed from the sharp distinctions of conditional versus unconditional, or at least see some conditions in both types of ANE agreements. Richard Pratt teaches that the Abrahamic covenant should be seen as "a covenant of promise" and the intent is not that the Jews would have some piece of land in the Middle East forever, but that the Israelites would be "God's special instruments in bringing his heavenly kingdom to the whole earth". Pratt sees continuity between the covenants, one building on the other, "The national covenant with Moses built upon and was in harmony with the national covenant that

God had previously made under Abraham." Pratt's fellow scholar, Ra McLaughlin agrees and states "all the covenants were conditional" and he appeals this position to the Reformed teaching of "the one covenant of grace under various administrations." McLaughlin points out that if there is only one covenant (grace) then "it does not make sense to say that this covenant switches back and forth between being conditional and unconditional. Since subsequent administrations assume and build on the terms of preceding administrations, the conditions of the earlier covenants also apply to the latter covenants." John P. Davis agrees with this kingdom expansion idea in the continuity of the covenants and the theological nature of the use of the term "land", he states that:

Land in the Old Testament is both a physical reality and a theological symbol. The 2,504 uses of 'land' in the Old Testament speak of its importance to theology. Though God promised to Abraham a specific piece of geography, Abraham apparently understood it as more than geography (Hebrews 11:16 & Hebrews11:39-40). Theologically, land is the gift of God. Land is the place of blessing. Land is the fulfillment of promise. Land is that sphere of life where one lives out one's allegiance to Yahweh. Land is that place where Yahweh uniquely chooses to dwell and to reveal himself. Land is the sphere of God's kingdom activity. **This land promise retains a fulfilled, yet not consummated aspect.** There are indications within Scripture that the land promise is fulfilled (Joshua 1:13; Joshua 11:23; Joshua 21:43-45), not yet consummated (Joshua 13:1-7; Psalm 95; Hebrews 4:6-11), and yet to be consummated in a new cosmos (Hebrews 11:39-40). The conquest under Joshua was more than just a military invasion, it was a theological event wherein the pious in Israel had their faith confirmed in God's promise to Abraham. Joshua 21:44-45 indicates that to a measure the promise was fulfilled in Joshua's day, in Solomon's day (1 Kings 8:56) and in Nehemiah's day (Neh. 9:7-8). However, since the land promise is eternally

operative, **each and every successive generation looks for the promise of rest in 'land'**. Concerning the land promise, some of the poetic material (ca. Proverbs 2:21) demonstrates the vital principle that although the promise is irrevocable in nature, **its benefits are only enjoyed by those who maintain a proper relationship to God through the obedience of faith.** Ultimately the realization of the land promise awaits the time of the resurrection, the removal of the curse, and the restoration of all things (Revelation 21-22) under the rule of Christ.

In this sense, we are living in the already-not-yet phase of redemptive history awaiting the consummation of the land promise in Christ when the whole earth will be filled with God's glory. Therefore the consummation of the irrevocable land promise is not in Israel but in Christ.

Before the Fall, man had the entire 'land' as the whole earth to take dominion as God's vice-regent. This status was forfeited in Adam and has been restored in Christ as the second Adam who has fulfilled all the stipulations of the covenant and is subduing the earth under His dominion. As we are 'in Christ' by faith, as co-heirs with the "Seed", Paul says Jesus "..redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit." (Galatians 3:14). Further, in Romans 4 Paul argues that faith not circumcision defines who is linked to Abraham. In this context Paul equates the Roman Christians with the 'many nations' of Abraham's covenant and quotes Genesis 17:3 as Abraham being the "father of us all." Davis points out that both "Genesis 17 and Romans 4 make no distinction between the 'many nations' and the 'seed of Abraham'."

Interestingly, Abraham did not end up owning any part of the Promised Land until he purchased a burial plot for Sarah as recorded in Genesis 23. In this account, Abraham refuses to receive the land offer from the inhabitants for free but

insists on paying for it. He did not see conquest as a means of gaining the Land and tried to live as a peaceful immigrant and neighbor.

At this point, a contradiction arises in the dispensational appeal to Abraham over Moses. In order to escape the reality of the Mosaic covenant containing limitations on the Land promises, dispensationalists argue that the unconditional nature of the promise is under Abraham not Moses. To bypass the Mosaic covenant and appeal to the Abrahamic covenant as a way to avoid the land fulfillment covenantal stipulations and consequences is problematic, unless they are willing to say that Abraham was wrong in his understanding of how he was to inherit the land. However, this presents dispensationalists with a conundrum: If the manner in which the land would be acquired would be given greater clarity under Moses and Joshua (i.e., by conquest), then why would not the conditions for retaining the land (i.e., stipulations and consequences for covenant obedience and disobedience) be acknowledged as a clarification likewise? They cannot have it both ways, picking from one dispensation to support their claims on the other. If they accept the Mosaic dispensation concerning how the land was to be acquired (i.e., holy war), it is then rational and fair to accept the stipulations and consequences that God so clearly laid out in the Mosaic law regarding how they were to retain the right to stay in the land. The current position of Christian Zionists to appeal to the Mosaic covenant in urging Israel to take the land from the Arabs by military force and then deny the Mosaic requirements of how they are to live and how they must treat their neighbors in favor of the unconditional promise to Abraham seems disingenuous.

Some dispensationalists recognize the problems that covenant conditionality presents to their system. Barrick acknowledges that “the Mosaic covenant was the most conditional of all the biblical covenants.” But he avoids the consequences of covenantal disobedience by asserting that these consequences

are only for each individual or generation:

The fulfillment of the promises and blessings of any of the covenants for any particular individual or generation was dependent upon their obedience to God's revelation. Disobedience annulled the blessings of God for that individual or generation in his/her/its own time, but disobedience did not invalidate the unconditional terms of the covenant.

Apparently, under Barrick's schema, each generation has a covenant reset button wherein the "sin of the fathers" is not visited on the following generations. How he derives this principle is unexplained. Perhaps what ought to be explained is the misappropriation of the term "unconditional". It is widely used but, it would seem misapplied as we often associate the term with regard to God's grace or God's love. Perhaps a better term to describe the promise of the royal grant treaty is "irrevocable". This is a much more precise term and allows for the fact that Scripture does speak of blessings for merit (Genesis 26:2-5) and Abraham's merit being tested in the formation of the covenant (Genesis 12:1-2a; Genesis 17:1-2a; Genesis 22:15-18).

Covenant rewards of obedience seem to begin, or at least alluded to, in Genesis. Isaac and Jacob received further confirmation from God concerning the promise of the Land, and the principle of covenant faithfulness clearly appears in the passage concerning Isaac:

The LORD appeared to Isaac and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live. **Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you.** For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, **because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws**"

(Genesis 26:2-4, emphasis added).

"I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you" (Genesis 28:13-15).

In Genesis 26:4 we see the idea of covenantal blessings of reward; "stay" and God "will be with you and bless you", "because" Abraham "obeyed" and "kept" God's laws, the Land, descendants, and world blessings will be in effect. Clearly God is making a connection between the promises and Abraham's and Isaac's obedience. In Chapter 28, only the positive reiteration of the covenant promises is made, but this in no way means the formula of continued obedience follows blessings is negated. If they existed for Abraham and for Isaac, it would be normal to expect they were in effect for Jacob. This is how the original hearers and readers would have understood the passage. Weinfield admits that there are aspects of Scripture that point to conditionality in the Davidic covenant, a grant treaty like the Abrahamic, as he states:

It was the Deuteronomist, the redactor of the Book of Kings, who put the promise of David under condition (I Kings II, 4, VIII, 25, IX, 4f) and so did Deuteronomy with the promise to the patriarchs. The exile of Northern Israel and the destruction of Jerusalem and disrupting of the dynasty refuted, of course, the claim of the eternity of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants and therefore a reinterpretation of the covenants was necessary which was done by putting in the condition, i.e., the **covenant is eternal only if the donee keeps his loyalty to the donor**…….. In regard to the Davidic covenant, it should be admitted that **the conception of**

conditionality is implied in Ps. CXXXII (v.

12) which seems to be an ancient Psalm. It is indeed possible that alongside the conception of unconditional promise of the dynasty there was also in existence **the concept of a conditional promise.**[Emphasis mine]

Could it be then that Weinfield is correct to say that in extra-Biblical evidence of ANE agreements there are royal grants that are irrevocable and thus eternal, but in the Biblical evidence this motif is modified? Or might there be other ANE grant treaties that might be found that demonstrate conditionality? In any event, he seems to acknowledge that some aspect of conditionality accompanied grant treaties in the sense that the benefits of the grant could only continue with the grantees continued loyalty to the grantor.

Further, in the address to Jacob, we see the statement, "I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." (Verse 15). This statement is an important one as it features a core tenant of Zionism; God's promise of restoration and fulfillment. Zionists claim that the promise has not been fulfilled; therefore Israel must be restored to the land. Those opposed say the promises in the Old Testament are fulfilled in the New Testament in Christ. Chapman cites N.T. Wright on this point. Wright claims that,

[T]he real true intended fulfillment of the Kingdom in Israel and the land was not what Jesus had in mind, " [Jesus] had not come to rehabilitate the symbol of holy land, but to subsume it within a different fulfillment of the kingdom, which would embrace the whole creation….Jesus spent his whole ministry redefining what the kingdom meant. He refused to give up the symbolic language of the kingdom, but filled it with such new content that he powerfully subverted Jewish expectations.

As already stated, part of the promise that Abraham heard from

God was that he would be made into a great nation. This incredible promise made to such an old man with an old, childless wife was a key point of Abraham's journey of faith. One that was certainly dramatic in both its making and fulfillment:

Then the word of the LORD came to him: 'This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir.' He took him outside and said, 'Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your offspring be.' Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness' (Genesis 15:4-6).

The promised heir did come in Isaac. God continued to test Abraham in his faith with the commanding of the sacrifice of Isaac in one of the most poignant and dramatic narratives in the Bible. While it was a test of faith in God for Abraham, it also provides a typological marker for what would come many centuries later in the sacrifice of another heir, namely the Son of God, Jesus. This event on Mount Moriah, where God called Abraham to sacrifice the promised son Isaac, provided yet another opportunity to reconfirm the divine covenant God had made with Abraham:

I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that **because you have done** this and have not withheld your son, your only son, **I will surely bless** you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. **Your descendants will take possession** of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me (Genesis 22:16-18, emphasis added).

Here we see confirmation of the covenant promises and the causal relationship of obedience and blessing. The pattern in this text is repeated throughout the life of Israel in taking the land and while they lived in it; with obedience, blessing

and with disobedience, punishment including captivity and loss of the land.

In summary, the Abrahamic royal grant covenant was irrevocable in its fulfillment by God but conditional in regard to enjoyment by Abraham and his descendants. The Mosaic covenant was an obligatory suzerain-vassal treaty that had well defined stipulations of which both dispensational and reformed theologians agree disqualified Israel from the land. While the dispensationalists appeal to the Abrahamic promises for the justification of the current state of Israel and her actions to expand her boundaries, the covenantalists see the land promise as ultimately fulfilled in Christ Jesus and all who trust in Him who then become the descendants of Abraham. The New Covenant has a modified land promise in that Christ is redeeming the whole earth so that all will say, "the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever" (Revelation 11:15b). The New Covenant is more than one nation it is now 'many nations' and will be at the consummation, all nations. It is more than one part of the earth, Israel, it is the whole earth.

C. The Extent of the Land

One of the key issues in this debate is just what are the boundaries of the Land that God promised to Abraham and his descendants? This is of paramount concern to Christian Zionists as they are quite focused on modern Israel being restored to the whole of the land that they have in view as a part of God's promise.

In God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 15 we see the first indication of what the extent of the land promise entails: "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates." God promised to Isaac, as we have seen in Genesis 26:3, to give him "all these lands." We have to look to the books of Exodus, Deuteronomy and Joshua to

learn the referent for “all these lands”:

I will establish your borders from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the desert to the River. I will hand over to you the people who live in the land and you will drive them out before you (Exodus 23:31).

Every place where you set your foot will be yours: Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the Euphrates River to the western sea (Deuteronomy 11:24).

Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Great Sea on the west (Joshua 1:4).

These are helpful in our determination of the boundaries of the land but a most interesting description comes from God as he shows Moses the Land just before he dies:

Then Moses climbed Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab to the top of Pisgah, across from Jericho. There the LORD showed him the whole land – from Gilead to Dan, all of Naphtali, the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the western sea, the Negev and the whole region from the Valley of Jericho, the City of Palms, as far as Zoar. Then the LORD said to him, ‘This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when I said, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I have let you see it with your eyes, but you will not cross over into it’ (Deuteronomy 34:1-4)

All of these descriptions seem to indicate a much larger expanse of Land than modern Israel is today, hence the Christian Zionist is expecting that Israel must be given or must take these lands. This is why so many are quite vocally and financially supportive of the settlement projects that have been underway since 1973.

To Christian Zionists, the land that modern Israel occupies, including the occupied territories of the Golan Heights, the

West Bank and Gaza is not the totality of the land that Israel was promised. Their reading of Scripture indicates that the land from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates means to include most of what is now Jordan, Syria and most of Iraq as well as parts of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. John Nelson Darby was insistent on the boundaries of the Land as well as a view of conflict to acquire it and ethnic cleansing to "purify" it:

The first thing, then, which the Lord will do will be to purify His land (the land which belongs to the Jews) of the Tyrians, the Philistines, the Sidonians; of Edom and Moab and Amon – of all the wicked, in short from the Nile to the Euphrates. It will be done by the power of Christ in favour of His people re-established by His goodness.

Scofield, in his Reference Bible, has a footnote for Deuteronomy 30:5 that says, "The Palestinian Covenant gives the conditions under which Israel entered the land of promise. It is important to see that the nation has never as yet taken the land under the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant, nor has it ever possessed the whole land."

Arnold Fruchtenbaum more recently argues that the land promise has never been fulfilled and must be completed or we make God out to be a covenant liar:

So, then, according to the Scriptures, three promises are made with regard to the land: first, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all promised the possession of the land; second, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were promised the possession of the land; and third, the boundaries of the promised land extended from the Euphrates River in the north to the River of Egypt in the south. However, in light of all the above passages and promises by a God who cannot lie, two other things should be noted: first, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all died, and the most they ever possessed of the promised land was one burial cave and several wells, and second, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, although they had

possessed portions of the promised land, have never possessed all of the land in keeping with the boundaries given in the Scriptures. At no point in Jewish history have the Jews ever possessed all of the land from the Euphrates in the north to the River of Egypt in the south. Since God cannot lie, these things must yet come to pass. Somehow or other, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must possess all the land, and second, the descendants of Abraham must settle in all of the promised land."

D. Was the Land Promise Fulfilled?

We have seen that premillennial dispensationalists are insistent on the size extent of the land promise and that fulfillment has not occurred as a part of the total land promise. The boundaries established in 1948 combined with the occupied territories of today do not fulfill their requirements. Let us examine some of the Biblical passages that might dispute this claim.

Since the first entrance into the Land was made by Joshua, the successor to Moses, two key verses from that historical account are helpful. "**So Joshua took the entire land**, just as the LORD had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions. Then the land had rest from war." In the very next chapter (12), a detailed listing of the conquered kingdoms is given. Chapters 13 through 22 are detailed accounts of the division of the land among the tribes of Israel. At the end of Joshua 21, Joshua records a more emphatic reiteration of Joshua11:23:

Thus **the LORD gave to Israel all the land that he swore to give to their fathers.** And they took possession of it, and they settled there. And the LORD gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the LORD had given all their enemies into their hands. **Not one word of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had**

failed; all came to pass. (emphasis added, Joshua 21:43-45)

In Joshua 24 we see an important final speech from Joshua:

And you have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations for your sake, for it is the LORD your God who has fought for you. Behold, I have allotted to you as an inheritance for your tribes those nations that remain, along with all the nations that I have already cut off, from the Jordan to the Great Sea in the west. The LORD your God will push them back before you and drive them out of your sight. And you shall possess their land, just as the LORD your God promised you. Therefore, **be very strong to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses**, turning aside from it neither to the right hand nor to the left, that **you may not mix with these nations** remaining among you or make mention of the names of their gods or swear by them or serve them or bow down to them, but you **shall cling to the LORD your God** just as you have done to this day. For the LORD has driven out before you great and strong nations. And as for you, no man has been able to stand before you to this day. One man of you puts to flight a thousand, since it is the LORD your God who fights for you, just as he promised you. **Be very careful, therefore, to love the LORD your God**. For **if you turn back** and cling to the remnant of these nations remaining among you and make marriages with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you, but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until **you perish from off this good ground that the LORD your God has given you.** (Emphasis added) Joshua 23:3-13.

In this passage, Joshua is making two key points to the Israelites: one, you have an obligation to move against the people that still reside in the remaining land areas and subdue the peoples living in them, and two, God will be with you and you will be successful if you keep the covenant. Of particular note is the warning of mixing with the pagan

nations even after conquering them. Of course, we know they did mix with the pagan nations and they did not drive out the remaining peoples and take the lands; they did not love and obey God and God exiled them in response to this disobedience in 586 B.C. with the Babylonian captivity and destruction of the first temple. This is a clear example of the dynamic covenant principles of divine benevolence, human loyalty, and blessings and curses. Scripture continues to impress this covenant fulfillment and sustainment in the very next section of Joshua's address:

And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, **that not one word has failed of all the good things that the LORD your God promised concerning you**. All have come to pass for you; not one of them has failed. But just as all the good things that the LORD your God promised concerning you have been fulfilled for you, so the LORD will bring upon you all the evil things, **until he has destroyed you from off this good land that the LORD your God has given you, if you transgress the covenant of the LORD your God**, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them. Then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and **you shall perish quickly from off the good land that he has given to you**. (Emphasis added) Joshua 23:14-16.

Through Joshua, God reinforces the covenantal requirements as well as confirms the completion of the land promise. It is important to remember that Israel is a tenant of the land not the owner. God owns the cattle on a thousand hills and the thousand hills themselves. He owns everything (Psalm 24:1).

To speak in terms of an unconditional land promise to justify any kind of use of the land, is to deny God his sovereign authority and His clear covenantal stipulations, blessings and curses laid out in Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28 and many references and allusions to these throughout Scripture. God is the Suzerain King and Israel is the Vassal. The Vassal does

not and cannot demand anything of the Suzerain King. Vern Poythress identifies this motif as emblematic in an eschatological view in that "Israel is the people of the King, and the Holy Land is the land of the king's rule. Both pass from symbol to reality in the time of the coming of God's reign." Poythress suggests that it is God's intention to rule over all the earth; all nations and tribes will be under him as the Great King. God intends to rule the whole earth and re-establish His image bearers all over the earth as His vice-regents ruling and reigning with Him. In this sense, Israel and the Land and her kings were just symbolic of a future much grander reality. The book of Hebrews has a parallel argument with regard to the sacrificial system and the temple. They were mere shadows of the reality that points to Christ. He is the sacrifice, he is the temple. In this sense, the land of Israel is shadow of the reality that Christ is taking dominion of the creation; he will have dominion over all the earth.

The land was a conditional gift, and this gift was not one to which Israel might do as it pleased. In Leviticus 25:23, God tells the Israelites that they do not own the land: "The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants." Neither was it a reward, as God tells them in Deuteronomy 9:5, "It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land." God again tells them they are not being given the land for their special goodness but speaks of the Israelites in disparaging terms as "stiff-necked" (verse 6). Dillard and Longman frame this important question in light of redemptive history. The people are finally in the land and prepare to enjoy their inheritance, but will do what both Moses and Joshua warn them against:

Is the gift of the land unconditional? Or will the punishment consequent on the nation's failure to keep God's commands override the promises? Moses in Deuteronomy had already described the national penchant for backsliding and the

disaster that would eventually befall them (Deuteronomy 31:27-29)…. Israel would begin to emulate the Canaanites who remained in the land, and she would be driven from the land for the same reasons they were (Deuteronomy 18:9-12; 2 Kings 17:8-18; 2 Kings 21:3-15). The dynamics that would eventually lead to exile are already in place in Joshua; the book cannot be understood apart from this larger context.

The book of Kings gives us further understanding of the boundaries and fulfillment. We see in 1 Kings 4:20-21 that the borders of Israel extended from Egypt to the Euphrates and an allusion to the promises of Genesis 22:17 concerning "sand" is made; the "great nation" part of the promise to Abraham, "Judah and Israel were as many as **the sand by the sea**. They ate and drank and were happy. Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms **from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt**" (emphasis added). This allusion to two of the four Abrahamic promises, progeny and land, demonstrates continuity through the covenants and suggests fulfillment of these promises.

So we have a variable description of what the Land boundaries were meant to encompass and yet, we also have Scriptures that indicate God fulfilled the land promises. What are we to make of this? Part of our understanding concerning the extent of the land needs to be conformed to the Biblical time it was written in and what the original audience expected. We are quite exacting in our modern notion of how a boundary is determined. Were the ancient peoples the same way? Colin Chapman points out that "there always was a considerable flexibility and fluidity in their understanding of the boundaries of the land." It is important we not import our modern notion of measurement into a culture that may have a less rigid standard.

In summary, we have four main points to assert:

1. Various Scriptures clearly indicate God fulfilled the land promises to ancient Israel; one in Joshua’s time and one in Solomon’s time.
2. The Israelites as a nation, under a Suzerain-vassal type treaty that contained the typical elements of an ancient Near Eastern covenant, meant that they could lose the right to be in the land.
3. They did not own the land, nor were they promised the use of the land in perpetuity without regard to their faithfulness to God.
4. There was at least one allusion to the Abrahamic land descendents promises within the administration of the Mosaic covenant in the time of the Davidic covenant thus connecting all three.

E. Two Peoples of God?

In the opening section of C.I. Scofield’s little booklet, Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth, first published in 1888, he states a position advocating that Israel and the Church have different missions, each clearly distinct from the other, and that espousing a connection between the two is not only unbiblical but extremely harmful. He concludes his argument by making a scathing assertion concerning the Church, claiming that:

It may be safely said that the Judaizing of the Church has done more to hinder her progress, pervert her mission, and destroy her spirituality, than all other causes combined. Instead of pursuing her appointed path of separation, persecution, world-hatred, poverty, and non-resistance, she has used Jewish scripture to justify her lowering her purpose to the civilization of the world, the acquisition of wealth, the use of imposing ritual, the erection of magnificent churches, the invocation of God’s blessing upon the conflicts of armies, and the division of an equal brotherhood into ‘clergy’ and ‘laity’.

Scofield defines two different programs for God's redemptive purposes through history with two different peoples; the Jews and the Gentiles. Scofield's use of the term "Judaizing of the Church" is taken to mean his rejection (in very strong terms) of the connection between the people of God throughout time, or what orthodox theologians have seen as the continuity of the evkklhsi,a from Old Testament believers into the New Testament Christian Church. More modern dispensationalists use the term "replacement theology". All of the classic dispensationalists reject any continuity of God's people as their demand for a separation of Israel and the Church requires this position.

John Walvoord says, "Dispensational ecclesiology defines the church as a distinct body of saints in the present age having its own divine purpose and destiny and differing from the saints of the past or future ages." Dwight Pentecost agrees and states:

The church and Israel are two distinct groups with whom God has a divine plan. The church is a mystery, unrevealed in the Old Testament. This present mystery age intervenes within the program of God for Israel because of Israel's rejection of the Messiah at His first advent. This mystery program must be completed before God can resume His program with Israel and bring it to completion."

Pentecost is saying, after the Jews rejected Jesus, God made the church a kind of in-between age, a parenthesis, until God restores Israel and completes the program he started with them. He presses this point as to what he calls a "mystery program,"

The church is manifestly an interruption of God's program for Israel, which was not brought into being until Israel's rejection of the offer of the Kingdom. It must logically follow that this mystery program must itself be brought to a conclusion before God can resume His dealing with the nation

Israel, as has been shown He will do. The mystery program, which was so distinct in its inception, will certainly be separate at its conclusion.

Charles Ryrie calls this distinction of Israel and the Church the primary one of the three essentials which are the *sine qua non* of the theological system of dispensationalism. He cites the first president of Dallas Theological Seminary and disciple of Scofield, Lewis Sperry Chafer who says that "the dispensationalist believes that throughout the ages God is pursuing two distinct purposes: one related to the earth with earthly people and earthly objectives involved, which is Judaism; while the other is related to heaven with heavenly people and heavenly objectives involved, which is Christianity."

The second essential for Ryrie is the use of a literal hermeneutic upon which the doctrine of distinction is borne and the third essential is recognition that the underlying purpose of God in the world is not strictly soteriological but God's Glory. Ryrie explains, "to the normative dispensationalist, the soteriological, or saving program of God is not the only program but one of the means God is using in the total program of glorifying Himself."177 To his last point, few would argue that God glorifies himself through many things. Psalm 19 says that Creation, in its mere presence, shows God's Glory. His attributes, such as justice, mercy, longsuffering, etc. also point to his glory. But to say this provides evidence of the dispensationalist view is neither clear nor effective, and such is not an issue of controversy. Historic orthodox faith would not disagree that God brings himself glory in His redemptive plans. Mathison summarizes the heart of the matter:

The real point of disagreement centers on the relationship between believers in the church and believers in other ages. Dispensationalism teaches that they are two distinct bodies. According to dispensationalism, believers who died prior to

Pentecost are not part of the body of Christ, the church. Reformed theology teaches that the believers of all ages are part of the one body of Christ. This is the heart of the debate between dispensationalists and non-dispensationalists. Is there one body of believers or are there two?

John Hagee, Pastor of Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, agrees with the two peoples of God but departs from his agreement with a literal hermeneutic by seeing this two-peoples distinctive in Scripture; he exegetes Genesis 22:17, which refers to Abraham's descendants as being as numerous as "the stars of the sky and the sand of the seashore" as proof of God's having two Israel's, one physical and one spiritual: "Stars are heavenly, not earthly. They represent the church, spiritual Israel. The 'sand of the seashore,' on the other hand, is earthly and represents an earthly kingdom with a literal Jerusalem as the capital city." Hagee is so certain of this "two peoples, two programs," "one earthly, one heavenly" theology that he advocates not trying to convert the Jews to belief in Jesus. He says that "it is time for Christians everywhere to recognize that the nation of Israel will never convert to Christianity and join the Baptist church in their town … the idea that the Jews of the world are going to convert and storm the doors of Christian churches is a myth." Hagee takes this point further than any other, to the extent of asserting that Jesus never offered to be the Messiah to the Jews. He asks, "If God intended for Jesus to be Messiah of Israel, why didn't he authorize Jesus to use supernatural signs to prove he was God's messiah, just as Moses had done?"

In the next section we will look at the arguments against the "two peoples, two programs" idea and examine the Biblical warrant for seeing continuity in the covenant purposes of God throughout history.

F. One People: The Israel of God

Commenting on Romans 11, O. Palmer Robertson completely

contradicts the position of premillennial dispensationalists concerning Restoration and Israel and the Church:

Nothing in this chapter says anything about the restoration of an earthly Davidic kingdom, or of a return to the land of the Bible, or of the restoration of a national state of Israel, or of a church of Jewish Christians separated from Gentile Christians. On the contrary, the redefined Israel of God includes both Jews and Gentiles in one body….. [I]t is the wisdom of God's mystery that Jews will be converted as they are moved to jealousy when they see the blessings of their God on the Gentiles.

Romans 11 is a critical part of Scripture in this dispute. The view of covenant theology promotes the idea of a continuous people of God, comprised of the elect saints prior to the cross trusting in God for the coming of redemption, and those after the cross, looking back at Calvary and trusting in God in Christ. Premillennial dispensational theology sees a two-peoples-of-God approach: an earthly people, the Jews, and a heavenly people, the Church. Romans 11 is the crux of the debate and discerning what Paul meant in this passage is where we turn our attention.

John Walvoord summarizes the widely held view of premillennial dispensationalists in his view of Romans 11, when he asserts that "Romans 11 paints a picture that Israel has a glorious future which will fulfill their expectation based on Old Testament prophecy." He sees Romans 11 as teaching of Israel's return to being blessed, but now they are temporarily cut off as a nation. They are caught in the parenthesis that is the Church age, which was a result of national Israel's rejection of Jesus as Messiah, and is the current age in which God calls both Jew and Gentile into the body of Christ—an age that was "not anticipated in the Old Testament."

Thus, in his view, some Jews will be saved within the Church, but Paul in Romans 11 is speaking of "national Israel" as

having a special role in which the "hardening" that Paul speaks of, is taken away after the Rapture of the Church and thus "all Israel will be saved." Walvoord's interpretation assumes that Paul is speaking of some distant age of national Israel and fails to note a critical timeframe that the Apostle lays out in the beginning of the chapter in this discussion of his kinsmen.

Robertson points out that Paul, from the outset of the epistle, "discusses God's purpose for the Jew in the present age" and carries the theme throughout the book (Romans 1:16; Romans 9:1-5; Romans 9:24; Romans 10:1) to Romans 11:5 where he says in "the present time" or literally, in the "now" time (tw/| nu/n kairw/|). He is not speaking of some distant, reconstituted national Israel but he is referring to God's intention toward ethnic Israel in that time. Robertson recognizes the persistent timeframe usage, "most commentators are well aware of the references in Romans 11 to God's current saving activity among the Jews. However, the pervasiveness of these references, as well as their significance for the total thrust of the chapter, is generally overlooked."

The significance of the timeframe that Paul has in view is critical to how the chapter is interpreted. Take verse Romans 11:1 for example. Paul asked the question, Has God rejected His people? and if Paul had in view national Israel, he could have answered, "No, He has not rejected His people". Instead, he points to himself. He is the proof, in that present time, that God loves the Jews. This connects with how he started the epistle in Romans 1:16, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile." Robertson notes that combined with Romans 11:5, "So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace," these two verses "orient the first paragraph", Romans 11:1-10, to a present-age timeframe, not to some distant, after-the-Rapture time. Paul is not anguishing for Jews he does not know 2,000

years in the future or the ones lost in between; his tears are for his family, friends and acquaintances he knows and loves in the present. This is not a cold academic exercise for Paul. It is real to him, right at that moment.

John Stott agrees that Paul understood the contemporary nature of God's remnant as evidenced by his reference to Elijah. He writes, "[J]ust as in Elijah's day there was a remnant of 7,000, so too, at present time, namely in Paul's day, there is a remnant. It was probably sizable, James was to soon tell Paul in Jerusalem that there were 'many thousands' of believing Jews."

Paul adds that this remnant exists as chosen by grace, literally "according to grace" (Romans 11:5b: katV evklogh.n ca,ritoj), the same phrase as in Romans 9:11 when he discussed Jacob and Esau. It is God's sovereign grace that determines the elect of God, as a gift of mercy, not according to works of the law, otherwise "grace would no longer be grace" (Romans 11:6). Hendriksen, in connection to the remnant theme from Romans 11:5, comments that Scripture speaks of a remnant throughout, from Noah (Genesis 6:1-8; Luke 17:26; I Peter 3:20) to Lot (Genesis 19:29; Luke 17:28-29) to Elijah. He notes that Paul had mentioned the remnant in Isaiah's day in 9:27 (c.f. Isaiah 10:22 f.). He writes, "[I]t does not surprise us therefore that also 'at the present time,' that is, in the apostle's own day, there was a saved remnant and that Paul belonged to it. In Romans the remnant doctrine is also either taught or implied in the following passages: Romans 9:6 f.; Romans 9:18a; Romans 10:4, Romans 10:11, Romans 10:16; Romans 11:14, Romans11:24, Roomas 11:25."

Based on Paul's laboring of the remnant theme and the clarity of God's choosing a remnant throughout redemptive history, it would seem strange to insist that the phrase "and all Israel shall be saved" (Romans 11:26) means national ethnic Israel as a whole in the distant future rather than an elect remnant just as in Paul's "present time." Hendriksen asks if those who

hold this opinion might be guilty of reading their interpretation of Romans 11:26 ("And so all Israel shall be saved") back into Romans 11:5 thus violating the remnant theme that is seen throughout Scripture.

Paul connects the "present time" of the remnant/election/grace thematic discussion (Romans 11:2-10) to the present time of his ministry and its intentions in Romans 11:13-14, "I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them." This must be understood in light of Paul's lead-up discussion of God's historic purposes in electing and calling a remnant. While recognizing his primary mission to the Gentiles, in this context the apostle also recognizes his ministry to the Jews dispersed from the first exile in 586 B.C. His hope is that the elect remnant sees the blessings of the gospel on the Gentiles and is frustrated. Perhaps then they will soften and seek God by investigating the gospel that this "Hebrew of Hebrews" preaches.

Finally, we see in the conclusion of this discussion, in Romans 11:30-31, further evidence of Paul's focus on the "present time": "Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you" (emphasis added). Paul's threefold use of "now" (nu/n) continues to focus the reader on Paul's current ministry and intention not some distant time. Robertson sees this section of Romans as yet another explanation of the Gospel, "[t]he Argument of Romans 9-11 is essentially no different from the argument of Romans 1, Romans 2 & Romans 3. The gospel is the power of God for salvation, first for the Jew and also for the Gentile." From the beginning of Romans, to the middle and to the end, Paul is referencing the "present time." Of course this does not mean we don't apply the doctrines throughout the

book in our time. But it cannot be assumed that Romans 9, Romans 10 & Romans 11 is only dealing with national Israel, as the prophecy teachers insist.

191 Philippians 3:5 192 Robertson, Israel of God, 171.

What many dispensationalists do is read Paul's question "Has God rejected his people?" to mean "Has God rejected ethnic national Israel and his special plan for their future?" They eisegete their theological commitments into this text and point to it as proof of their construct, not considering Paul's original purpose and audience nor the grammar and syntax of the passage. As we have already discussed, Paul answers by pointing to himself as evidence that God has not rejected the Jews and in fact, God is saving Jews.

Another aspect of reading into this chapter is found in Romans 11:12 and Romans 11:15, "But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring! … For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?" Often the position of dispensationalists is rather black-and-white. The Jews rejected Jesus, so now, during the Church Age, Gentiles are coming to faith, not Jews. They don't view Messianic Jews as Jews any longer but members of the Church. They insist the Jews will come back to the land and this "remnant" will be shown the gospel during the Tribulation and they will believe, and come to faith until they reach their "fullness," then rule for 1,000 years with Christ until the final rebellion.

However, Paul gives a sequential line of thought, citing their transgression of rejecting the Messiah leading to riches (in Christ) for the world and the Gentiles (first the Jew, then the Gentile). Then the Jews become envious and some come to faith, and so on. Paul is seeing continuous interaction between Jews and Christians. This brings "greater riches" as

the world sees conversions of Jews and Gentiles in the present time of his ministry. Paul lived this sequence during his ministry. He is not speaking hypothetically or futuristically.

All throughout the Diaspora, Paul made his way to the synagogues to preach and debate with the Jews, winning some and occasionally receiving much persecution. In all the churches of the apostolic age there were believing Jews and Gentiles together. There is nothing in the entire text of Romans 9, Romans 10 & Romans 11 to assume this was other than the present age. Pentecost and others have to import their theological construct from other Old (such as Jeremiah 30:7) and New Testament passages (such as Matthew 24:14) to make this section of Romans work for them.

From an orthodox view, Israel's "fullness" in Romans 11:12 is the same kind of "fullness of the nations" in Romans 11:25 in reference to the Gentiles. There will be a "full" number of elect Jews and a full number of elect Gentiles (from every tribe, tongue and nation). There was in Paul's time, has been since and remains today, interplay between the Jews and Christians. Each and every time we met a "full" (completed) Jew, we are joyful. They have been grafted back in. It strengthens our faith and makes us more zealous for more Jewish conversions. In this sense "all Israel" means the same as "all the Gentiles" but how wonderful it is to see a convert from the Jewish tribe. God has an elect number from all tribes, tongues and nations. In this sense there is no difference in the nations, "there is no difference between Jew and Gentile– the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him"; God's elect will call on him and he will save them.

However, Paul makes a distinction about the Jews. The conversion of a Jew is a special blessing as they are a people that was privileged to be special in God's redemptive plan, "Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and

the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen." Paul recognized the special place of honor in God's redemptive plan that the Jews played. However, he is not elevating them as a nation over all other nations other than to recognize their contribution in God's historical redemptive outworking.

Paul understood that this New Covenant was radically different from the Old Covenant; even a "Hebrew of Hebrews" as he described himself, would dine with Gentiles and eat what were considered unclean foods because he was now in a better covenant. Returning to the types and shadows of the Old was not only unwise it was foolish as he told the Galatians. It was foolish because now there was no distinction between Jew and Gentile. The Israel of God comprises all the elect of God over all time, one people; the evkklhsi,a (ecclesia), "the called out ones." Paul tells the Galatians, "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to **the Israel of God**." Here Paul confirms the true Israel; the Israel not of the Old Testament, not ethnic national Israel, not modern Israel, but the Israel of God, all believers from all tribes, tongues and nations in all epochs. Being circumcised in the flesh does not make one a Jew, it is a matter of the heart and done by Christ in His grace to us (Colossians 2:11-14). Paul says, "A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God" (Romans 2:28-29). Abraham is the father of the circumcised and the uncircumcised and they are believers like him through faith (Romans 4:1-15). Those who insist on keeping circumcision he tells the Galatians are denying the finished work of Christ (Galatians 5:1-6). How much more would one deny the work of Christ by rebuilding the temple and reinstituting

the sacrificial system? Return Contents

IV. Conclusion

We have seen that the origin of Christian Zionism is fairly new on the scene. Being new doesn't make it wrong but the history of its development reveals some important issues. Throughout Zionist history, a constant theme to this day is the political manifestation of Biblical Promises. Whether it was the encroachment of Turks during the Reformation or the British move to countervail the regional power of Russia or the Ottomans, Christian theology has been in the mix. From Brightman and Finch to Hagee and Lindsay, Christians have been promoting ideas about Israel that have had and continue to have profound consequences. Stephen Sizer notes, "Just as Shaftesbury and Hechler used the Bible to help underwrite the Zionist ambitions of a secular nation in the nineteenth century, so the American religious right of Falwell and Robertson has helped galvanize the expansionist Zionist agenda of secular Israel in the twentieth century." Victoria Clark well understands the influence of the modern American Christian Zionist lobby on the U.S. and Israeli governments. Soberly she warns that "[i]f the influence of Christian Zionism on western policy continues to exert the hold it does today, there is a chance we may all become allies for Armageddon."

This does not mean we should not seek to influence the culture. We are called to be "salt and light" in our worldly pursuits. We are called to positively impact the culture with the Gospel so that lives and nations are transformed. This is a serious responsibility. It requires serious thought and attention to the details of what our holy religion requires and properly representing that to the culture. If we are wrong, we must seek to correct the error. Otherwise we risk compromising or even neutralizing the Great Commission of our Lord. As Christians, we should be building bridges to the Muslims of the world not reinforcing their idea that

Christianity is aligned against them or reinforcing the stereotype of Christianity as just a “Western” religion, or worse, the religion of “crusaders”.

There are also significant though dwindling numbers of Palestinian Christians that are all but forgotten and drowned out with the noise of Zionism. Clark notes that “the most strident anti- Zionists Christians in Israel today are the Palestinian leaders of the older Protestant churches in Jerusalem”. The “prophecy tours” don’t include visits to these indigenous Christians but they do visit the Knesset. But the Christians who actually live in Palestine have rejected Christian Zionism. In 2006 the leaders of the Lutheran, Episcopal, Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches issued a joint communiqué denouncing Christian Zionism saying “The Christian Zionist programme provides a worldview where the Gospel is identified with the ideology of empire, colonialism and militarism. In its extreme form, it places an emphasis on apocalyptic events leading to the end of history rather than living Christ’s love and justice today.”

We also see through history that the development of dispensational eschatology has largely occurred apart from the rigors of academic scholarship. To be sure, there is now growing body of academic attention given to the subject but that is a recent phenomenon. The promotion and rapid growth of Christian Zionism was fueled by widely read tracts, the Scofield Reference Bible, popular non-fiction and fiction books and even movies based on these books. Within the origin and growth of American fundamentalism that grew alongside dispensationalism, there was a growth of anti-intellectualism largely fueled by the exportation of European theological liberalism to America, particularly German Higher Criticism. This invasion infected American seminaries. Bible-believing, but largely less-educated Christians reacted with horror; they may have not been highly educated, but they could tell when Biblical truth was being cast overboard. Darby’s own

experiences with the Churches of Ireland and England soured him on any denomination. He and the Plymouth Brethren he co-founded rejected formal training and traditional church leadership models. The Plymouth Brethren strongly influenced Moody, Scofield, Brookes and others and fundamentalism in general was impacted by this anti- intellectualism and anti-denominationalism. Inspired by the Sunday school model Moody established in Chicago, Bible schools and training centers sprang up in America and tended to be staffed with largely uneducated personnel teaching and leading. Their ability to seriously evaluate and assess the very doctrines they promoted and taught was hampered as they had no point of reference to do so, not having been trained in church history and orthodox doctrines and disciplines.

We examined the critical questions of what "all Israel" means and what Paul says about the Jews in Romans 9-11. Combined with the importance of the land promises, these two issues form the foundation for premillennial dispensationalism. Christian Zionism depends upon this theological system and it is fair to say that without these interpretations, the rest of their theological construct is in doubt. "All Israel" is all the believing "seed" of Abraham (Galatians 3:29) so that we are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26). The dispensationalists have failed to understand this distinction. Reformed and covenant theology understands that the apostle is teaching that the "Seed" spoken of in the Abrahamic promises is Christ, and we, who are "in Christ" are His co-heirs and therefore the believing seed of verse Galatians 3:29, "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." With their two- peoples construct they are forced to see two lines of seeds. In this sense they deny the clear instruction of Paul. It is not difficult to see that if the Davidic promise of a Kingly heir forever is fulfilled in Christ then the promises of progeny, land, a mighty name and blessings to all nations are also fulfilled in Christ.

Part of the wonder of Scripture is its consistent threads that weave the tapestry of God's redemption through history. The story of the failures of Israel to obey God and be blessed as a result points through history to their need of a Redeemer. The ancient Israelites failed not only to keep the Mosaic covenant, but failed to see the covenant-keeping King who eventually came to save them. Jesus did what Adam failed to accomplish. He kept the Law, all of it. It was at that point of their failure to understand who He was, that Jesus utters these chilling words in Matthew 23:37-38, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate."

The first exile of the Jews and corresponding destruction of the city and temple was a direct result of their covenant failure. In His mercy, God brought them back to the land for a second attempt. Through the prophets, God encouraged the Israelites to rebuild the temple and keep covenant but they failed. They also largely failed to see the Great Prophet, Priest and King who came to rescue them and also rescue remnants from all tribes, tongues and nations (the promise of blessing to all nations).

The failure of dispensationalism to see the whole counsel of Scripture as to the nature and dynamics of the covenant with Israel is a critical problem. Its dogmatic insistence that God is bound to an unconditional promise fixed to some idea of latitude and longitude misses the larger contours of Scripture as the Bible points to the establishment of a Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven. God intends to rule over all things in Heaven and on Earth in His cosmos, which he is making "new." Premillennial dispensationalism lays down a foundation for error that leads them to argue such things as the necessity of rebuilding the temple, the reconstitution of the sacrificial system and a horrific world-wide war causing hundreds of

millions of deaths. To maintain sanity in the face of this horrific future, they need an escape hatch called the rapture that floats them away from all these troubles.

Jesus was successful in His mission to lay His life down for His sheep. And a remnant of Jews did recognize Him. Since then, the gospel has grown exponentially from continent to continent, as more elect are coming to faith from all corners of the globe. One wonders how much more effective this Gospel-driven growth would be if we did not have the significant distraction of a popular theological system that advocates a world of despair rather than a focus on the mercy and hope of Christ for a needy world. It is a system that seems transfixed by news of wars in the world rather than being zealous for bringing mercy and hope in Christ to the world; a system that prefers not to evangelize the Jews but would gather them together so that two-thirds of them can be slaughtered in the final great battle and the other third suffer through horrific persecution and violence.

If other Christians challenge the premillennial dispensational eschatology, they are often labeled anti-Semitic or even anti-Judaic. One has to wonder, who is the anti-Semite? Why are Christian Zionists encouraging Jews to move to Israel in order that they might be part of this awful, devastating war? Didn't Jesus say to flee when the "signs" take place (Matthew 24:16)? These signs are all around us, we are constantly being told by the dispensational prophecy teachers, so why aren't we telling them to flee?

But Jesus was warning the disciples, the people standing right in front of Him, that they must see the signs of the pending destruction of the temple that he was addressing. Signs as recorded in the parallel passage in Luke 21:5-22 of armies surrounding Jerusalem such as happened in A.D. 70 when Titus besieged Jerusalem for three long years. Jesus knew that in just forty years the final curtain must fall on the Old Covenant; the end of the Jewish Age. In a few days from his

discussion about the Temple, He would tear the curtain apart that separated men from God through His finished work on the cross (Matthew 27:51). But the temple was a reminder that Jews were separate from Gentiles. There was a wall of separation. The Apostle Paul tells us that wall of separation has been removed (Ephesians 2:11-22). There is no Gentile or Jew (Colossians 3:11) and no need for a new temple or sacrificial system of bulls and goats (Hebrews 10:4; Hebrews 9:1-28) for Christ has died once for all who call on His name and put their trust in Him.

The way forward must be one of recognizing the core of the Gospel and pursuing that in "the Land." These people-groups lived side-by-side for hundreds of years before the Balfour Declaration and the U.N. attempt at nation-building in Palestine. Our battle is not with secular governments; as the Apostle said, we wrestle not with flesh and blood (Ephesians 6:12). Perhaps it would be best for the last word to come from the Palestinian Christians who oppose Christian Zionism. This was written in 2006:

This is where we take our stand. We stand for justice. We can do no other. Justice alone guarantees a peace that will lead to reconciliation with a life of security and prosperity for all the peoples of our Land. By standing on the side of justice, we open ourselves to the work of peace – and working for peace makes us children of God.

"God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:19).

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VI. Appendix A: Glossary of Eschatological and Theological Terms

Aliyah
A Hebrew term literally meaning "going up" used in a general

sense to going up to Jerusalem as in a pilgrimage. In the context of Zionism it means a return to Israel wherein one "makes aliyah" as returning to modern Israel.

Allegorical
A method of Bible interpretation (hermeneutic) that assumes the text has a meaning other than what the literal wording says.

Amillennialism
Also known as Realized Millennialism. The teaching that there is no literal 1000 year reign of Christ as referenced in Revelation 20. It sees the 1000 year period spoken of in Revelation 20 as figurative. It teaches that we are in the millennium now, and that at the return of Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:16 – 5:2) there will be the final judgment and the heavens and the earth will then be destroyed and remade (2 Peter 3:10). The Amillennial view is as old as the Premillennial view which says there is a future 1000 years reign of Christ and Postmillennialism which states that in the future, the world will be converted and we will usher in the kingdom of God.

Armageddon
Seen as a literal, great final battle by Premillennial Dispensationalists. It is mentioned in Revelation 16:16 and is taken from the Hebrew for "mountain of Megiddo", a site of many great battles in ancient Israel. Orthodox Christianity has long viewed it as symbolic of the final destruction of evil in the world by God.

Antichrist
Someone or some spirit who opposes God as used in 1 John 4:3 or anyone who denies Jesus and the Trinity (1 John 2:22); also, any who deny that Jesus has come in the flesh (2 John 1:7). In premillennial dispensationalism, this term is used to identity one particular person who sets himself up as a world leader and brings on the battle of Armageddon in his harsh

treatment of the Jews. They also associate this term with the "man of lawlessness" mentioned by Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:7-8). Many have been identified over history as this character from the Pope to Napoleon to Mussolini to Hitler and, more recently, Obama. For Historic Premillennialism, they also largely have seen one individual although some see this as a spirit of anti-Christian manifested in the world. For postmillennialism and amillennialism, they typically see the spiritual effect on the world of men and not one singular person who embodies evil; that is anyone or even worldview or philosophy that opposes Jesus as the Savior and Son of God come in the flesh to save sinners is anti-Christ.

Apocalypse
Literally an unveiling, that is, a revealing of a person or thing in its true character. Synonymous to revelation, and an alternate title for the book of Revelation. Because of its association with the "end of the world," apocalypse is sometimes used to denote a radical destruction or purge.

Apocalyptic
Pertaining to the end of the world, or to some awesome destruction.

Armageddon
The word "Armageddon" only occurs in Revelation 16:16. It is the location of the final great battle between good and evil called the Great Day of God Almighty.

Church
For dispensationalists, the church was introduced by God as a kind of parenthesis as the rejection of Jesus by the Jews postponed his plan. For them, the church are all true believers from the day of Pentecost until the Rapture. For Reformed theology, the word is used in two senses: the visible and the invisible church. The visible church consists of all the people that claim to be Christians and go to church. The invisible church is the actual body of Christians; those who

are truly saved. The true church of God is not an organization on earth consisting of people and buildings, but is really a supernatural entity comprised of those who are saved by Jesus. It spans the entire time of man's existence on earth as well as all people who are called into it. We become members of the church (body of Christ) by faith (Acts 2:41). We are edified by the Word (Ephesians 4:15-16), disciplined by God (Matthew 18:15-17), unified in Christ (Galatians 3:28), and sanctified by the Spirit (Ephesians 5:26-27). The invisible church comprises all the Old Testament believers who believed God would send a Redeemer and trusted God in that promise and though they did not live to see the Savior, they are saved through his atoning sacrifice.

Classic Dispensationalism
The original dispensational position of Darby, Scofield, and Chafer wherein God has two peoples, eternally separate; an earthly people, the Jews, and a heavenly people, the Church which is defined as all believers from the day the Pentecost until the Rapture. In the Scofield Reference Bible a dispensation is "a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God" Dispensationalism says that God uses different means of administering His will and grace to His people. These different means coincide with different periods of time. Scofield says there are seven dispensations: of innocence, of conscience, of civil government, of promise, of law, of grace, and of the kingdom. Dispensationalists interpret the scriptures in light of these (or other perceived) dispensations. Compare to Covenant Theology and Progressive Dispensationalism.

Christian Fundamentalism
This refers to the movement that arose in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, led by conservative evangelical Christians in reaction to modernism and liberalism in the mainline denominations. This movement included not only

denominational evangelicals (such as the Princeton theologians B. B. Warfield and J. Gresham Machen), but a growing breed of premillennial and dispensational independents such as D. L. Moody, R. A. Torrey, and the independent Bible college and Bible church movement.

Covenant
An agreement between two parties. The agreement, according to Ancient Near East custom, consists of five parts: 1) Identification of parties, 2) Historical prologue where the deeds establishing the worthiness of the dominant party is established, 3) Conditions of the agreement, 4) Rewards and punishments in regard to keeping the conditions, and 5) Disposition of the documents where each party receives a copy of the agreement (e.g. the two tablets of stone of the 10 Commandments). Ultimately, the covenants God has made with man result in our benefit. We receive eternal blessings from the covenant of grace. (see Genesis 2:16-17; Genesis 9:1-17; Genesis 15:18; Genesis 26:3-5; Galatians 3:16-18; Luke 1:68-79; Hebrews 13:20).

Covenant Theology
A system of theology that views God's dealings with man in respect of covenants rather than dispensations (periods of time). It represents the whole of scripture as covenantal in structure and theme. Some believe there is one Covenant and others believe two and still others believe in more. The two main covenants are the Covenant of Works in the O.T. made between God and Adam, and the Covenant of Grace between the Father, and the Son where the Father promised to give the Son the elect and the Son must redeem them. The Covenant of Redemption has been recognized by some theologians as a Divine Covenant between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit whereas the Father elects, the son Redeems and the Spirit applies the saving power of the Redemption to the elect. The covenants have been made since before the world was made (Hebrews 13:20).

Dispensation
Literally an administration, a period or process of management. To Dispensationalists, the term has come to mean an era in which God administers a redemptive plan in a fashion different from the way He administered redemption in other eras. Orthodox theologians have also seen dispensations but do not make the sharp distinctions dispensationalists make particularly regarding the Church versus Israel.

Dispensationalism
A form of biblical interpretation derived from the teachings of John Nelson Darby (1800-82) of Dublin, Ireland, a leader of the Plymouth Brethren, and popularized by C. I. Scofield (18431921) in his Scofield Reference Bible (1909 and revised in 1917). It emphasizes the idea that God dispenses redemption differently in different eras, and maintains a rigid discontinuity between the different dispensations. Seven periods of time during which humanity has been or will be tested according to some specific revelation of God. Israel and the church are separate. The millennium will be the culmination of God's purposes for Israel.

End Time, The (or End Times)
The epoch in which some of God's people will be refined by tribulation (Daniel 11:33-35), as a rebel king affronts Messiah (Daniel 8:17-25), and invades Israel (Daniel 11:40-45). It is the apocalyptic time leading up to the resurrection and judgment (Daniel 12:1-2). Not to be confused with, but included in, the Last Days.

Eschatology
The study of the teachings in the Bible concerning the end times, or of the period of time dealing with the return of Christ and the events that follow. Eschatological subjects include the Resurrection, the Rapture, the Great Tribulation, the Millennium, the Binding of Satan, the Three witnesses, the Final Judgment, Armageddon, and The New Heavens and the New Earth. In one form or another most of the books of the Bible

deal with end-times subjects. But some that are more prominently eschatological are Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Joel, Zechariah, Matthew, Mark, Luke, 2 Thessalonians, and Revelation. (See Amillennialism and Premillennialism for more information on views on the millennium.).

Eschaton
The climax of history at which Christ returns to reestablish His reign over the earth.

Futurism
The view that the prophecies of the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21) and Revelation focus upon the end of the age (world), and that therefore most has yet to be fulfilled. Biblical prophecies of the Old Testament are viewed as incomplete and yet to be fulfilled for the Jewish people such as their restoration to the Land and the rebuilding of the Temple.

Hermeneutics
Refers to the principles of interpretation, explicit and implicit, that are used to understand what a text means. Historically, there have been three major systems: Allegorical (Roman Catholic), typological (Reformed) and literalist (fundamentalist). These are not rigid categories but indicate a predominant guiding principle.

Historic Premillennialism
A system of eschatological belief emphasizing the literal, premillennial coming of Christ and a literal 1,000 year reign on earth, but not holding to a rigid Dispensationalism nor to belief in a pretribulational rapture. The Jewish people have a place of prominence but as a part of the Church universal. (Sometimes called Covenantal Premillennialism)

Historicism
Historicists see the Book of Revelation as describing major events and persons in history from the beginning of the Church

until the return of Christ and not as a future, literal prophecy.

Idealism
The view that the prophecies of Revelation are to be taken metaphorically of the sure triumph of God over evil in the world, and not as predictions of literal cataclysms and conflicts. The Idealist does not see the book as either historical nor future events.

Liberalism
In Christianity, the movement away from traditional orthodoxy often in an attempt to harmonize biblical teachings with science, humanism, or other secular fields. The result is often a denial of essential biblical doctrines such as the Trinity, the deity of Christ, His virgin birth, His resurrection, all miracles and salvation by grace.

Millennium
Literally, this word means 1000 years. In the study of end time doctrines (eschatology) the millennium is the period of time of Christ's rule. The debate has been over when the millennium will take place and what form will it actually be. The terms that have arisen out of this debate are premillennialism, amillennialism, and postmillennialism. Premillennialism teaches that the millennium is yet future and that upon Christ's return He will set up His earthly kingdom. Amillennialism teaches that the millennium is a figurative period and that Christ's rule began when He first became man. Postmillennialism teaches that through the preaching of the Word of God, the world will be converted and will then usher in Christ and the kingdom of God.

Postmillennialism
The belief that through the preaching of the word of God, the entire world will be converted to Christianity and this will usher in the kingdom of Christ. This is when Christ will return. This view was widely held by Puritans and Post-

Puritans from about 1550 to 1850. Postmillennialism is an interpretation of chapter 20 of the Book of Revelation which sees Christ's second coming as occurring after the "Millennium"; a Golden Age or era of Christian prosperity and dominance. Although some postmillennialists hold to a literal millennium of 1,000 years, most postmillennialists see the thousand years more as a figurative term for a long period of time (similar in that respect to amillennialism).

Premillennialism
This is a teaching concerning the end times (eschatology). It says that there is a future millennium (1000 years) where Christ will rule and reign over the earth. At the beginning of the millennium Satan and his angels will be bound and peace will exist on the entire earth. At the end of the 1000 years Satan will be released in order to raise an army against Jesus. Jesus will destroy them and then the final judgment will take place with the new heavens and the new earth being made. (Also see Historic Premillennialism)

Rapture
When living believers will be reunited with Christ upon his second advent. Dispensationalists divide the event into two parts; a secret rapture will remove believers during a seven year tribulation after which they will appear with Christ. No one scripture passage clearly points to this doctrine but the one it is most drawn from is 1 Thessalonians 4:17. The term is from the Latin word "rapture" or "caught up" from verse 17. Some dispensationalists believe in a pretribulational Rapture, that is, the rapture occurs just before the Tribulation begins. Others believe it happens during the middle of the seven year period. (See Tribulation)

Restorationism
The conviction that the Bible predicts and mandates a final and complete restoration of the Jewish people to Israel. This Christian movement preceded the rise of Jewish Zionism and facilitates Jews to make aliyah (return to Israel). Early

British Restorationists concentrated their efforts on converting the Jews to Christianity then encouraging them to re-settle in Palestine. Over time, this changed into first moving them to Palestine then converting them. Eventually, with Dispensationalism, the effort to evangelize was played down or even discouraged in favor of the" two peoples of God" idea.

Tribulation, The (Great)
According to Premillennialism, this is a seven year period that immediately precedes the return of Christ and the millennial kingdom of His rule which lasts for 1000 years. It will be a time of great peace (the first 3.5 years) and great war (the second 3.5 years) when the Antichrist rules over many nations. At the midpoint of the tribulation (at the end of the first 3.5 years) the Antichrist will proclaim himself worthy of worship. Many will bow down and worship the Antichrist and many will refuse. Those who refuse to worship the Antichrist will be killed. The second half of the tribulation is called the Great Tribulation. It will involve the whole world (Revelation 3:10). There will be catastrophes all over the world. (See Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 17; Luke 21)

Typology
A method of interpretation in which Old Testament 'types' are seen as fulfilled in the New Testament. These include people (Moses as a type of Christ), places (Temple as a type of heaven) and events (Animal Sacrifices as a type of Christ's bloody atonement) which are types or shadows of New Testament realities.

Zionism
The national movement for the return of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland and the resumption of Jewish political sovereignty in the land of Israel centered on Jerusalem as their eternal and undivided capital. Jewish and Christian Zionists largely share the same Biblical position as a warrant for why the modern state of Israel has a Divine right to

exist. Secular Zionists often point to the history of having the land and being driven out by the Romans in the first Century combined with the centuries of persecution culminating in the Holocaust as a non- Biblical warrant for the possession of the land. Return Contents

VII. Appendix B: Maps and Documents

Map of Israel after the conquest of Joshua

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Map of Israel during reign of David and Solomon; from Haran to Sinai

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Source: Institute for Palestine Studies. Return Contents

UN History of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

FOLLOWING IS TAKEN DIRECTLY FROM UNITED NATIONS WEBSITE AS THEIR HISTORY OF THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT:

1917-1947

The Palestine problem became an international issue towards the end of the First World War with the disintegration of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. Palestine was among the several former Ottoman Arab territories which were placed under the

administration of Great Britain under the Mandates System adopted by the League of Nations pursuant to the League's Covenant (Article 22). All but one of these Mandated Territories became fully independent States, as anticipated. The exception was Palestine where, instead of being limited to "the rendering of administrative assistance and advice" the Mandate had as a primary objective the implementation of the "Balfour Declaration" issued by the British Government in 1917, expressing support for "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people".

During the years of the Palestine Mandate, from 1922 to 1947, large-scale Jewish immigration from abroad, mainly from Eastern Europe took place, the numbers swelling in the 1930s with the notorious Nazi persecution of Jewish populations. Palestinian demands for independence and resistance to Jewish immigration led to a rebellion in 1937, followed by continuing terrorism and violence from both sides during and immediately after World War II. Great Britain tried to implement various formulas to bring independence to a land ravaged by violence. In 1947, Great Britain turned the problem over to the United Nations.

1947-1977

After looking at various alternatives, the UN proposed the partitioning of Palestine into two independent States, one Palestinian Arab and the other Jewish, with Jerusalem internationalized (Resolution 181 (II) of 1947). One of the two States envisaged in the partition plan proclaimed its independence as Israel and in the 1948 war expanded to occupy 77 per cent of the territory of Palestine. Israel also occupied the larger part of Jerusalem. Over half of the indigenous Palestinian population fled or were expelled. Jordan and Egypt occupied the other parts of the territory assigned by the partition resolution to the Palestinian Arab State which did not come into being.

In the 1967 war, Israel occupied the remaining territory of Palestine, until then under Jordanian and Egyptian control (the West Bank and Gaza Strip). This included the remaining part of Jerusalem, which was subsequently annexed by Israel. The war brought about a second exodus of Palestinians, estimated at half a million. Security Council resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 called on Israel to withdraw from territories it had occupied in the 1967 conflict.

In 1974, the General Assembly reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, and to return. The following year, the General Assembly established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The General Assembly conferred on the PLO the status of observer in the Assembly and in other international conferences held under United Nations auspices.

1977-1990

Events on the ground, however, remained on a negative course. In June 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon with the declared intention to eliminate the PLO. A cease-fire was arranged. PLO troops withdrew from Beirut and were transferred to neighboring countries after guarantees of safety were provided for thousands of Palestinian refugees left behind. Subsequently, a large- scale massacre of refugees took place in the camps of Sabra and Shatila.

In September 1983, the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, which was widely attended, adopted inter alia the Geneva Declaration containing the following principles: the need to oppose and reject the establishment of settlements in the occupied territory and actions taken by Israel to change the status of Jerusalem, the right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, with justice and security for all the people, and the attainment of the

legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

In December 1987, a mass uprising against the Israeli occupation began in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (the intifada). Methods used by the Israeli forces during the uprising resulted in mass injuries and heavy loss of life among the civilian Palestinian population.

The Peace Process

A Peace Conference on the Middle East was convened in Madrid on 30 October 1991, with the aim of achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement through direct negotiations along 2 tracks: between Israel and the Arab States, and between Israel and the Palestinians, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) (the “land for peace” formula). A series of subsequent negotiations culminated in the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian People, and the signing by the two parties of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements in Washington on 13 September 1993, as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, which led to several other positive developments, such as the partial withdrawal of Israeli forces, the elections to the Palestinian Council and the Presidency of the Palestinian Authority, the partial release of prisoners and the establishment of a functioning administration in the areas under Palestinian self-rule. The involvement of the United Nations has been essential to the peace process, both as the guardian of international legitimacy and in the mobilization and provision of international assistance. In 2000 and 2001, Israelis and Palestinians held talks on a final status agreement, which proved inconclusive.

2000 –

The controversial visit by Ariel Sharon of the Likud to Al-

Haram Al-Sharif (Temple Mount) in 2000 was followed by the outbreak of the second intifada. A massive loss of life, the reoccupation of territories under Palestinian self-rule, military incursions, extrajudicial killings of suspected Palestinian militants, suicide attacks, rocket and mortar fire, and the destruction of property characterized the situation on the ground. Israel began the construction of a West Bank separation wall, located within the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which was ruled illegal by the International Court of Justice in 2004. In 2002, the Security Council adopted resolution 1397 affirming a vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders. In 2003, the Middle East Quartet (US, EU, Russia, and the UN) released a detailed Road Map to a two-State solution, endorsed by Security Council resolution 1515. In 2005, Israel withdrew its settlers and troops from the Gaza Strip as part of its "Disengagement Plan," while retaining effective control over its borders, seashore, and airspace. Following the Palestinian Legislative Council elections of 2006, the Quartet concluded that future assistance to the Palestinian Authority would be reviewed by donors against the new Government's commitment to non-violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements. 210 Return Contents

VIII. Appendix C : The UN Partition Plan

UN Resolution 181 November 29, 1947

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The United Nations General Assembly decided in 1947 on the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem to be an internationalized city.

Jewish representatives in Palestine accepted the plan tactically because it implied international recognition for their aims. Some Jewish leaders, such as David Ben-Gurion, the first Israeli prime minister, opposed the plan because their ambition was a Jewish state on the entire territory of Mandate Palestine.

The Palestinians and Arabs felt that it was a deep injustice

to ignore the rights of the majority of the population of Palestine. The Arab League and Palestinian institutions rejected the partition plan, and formed volunteer armies that infiltrated into Palestine beginning in December of 1947.
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Summary of UN General Assembly Resolution 181

November 29, 1947

The territory of Palestine should be divided as follows:

- A Jewish State covering 56.47% of Mandatory Palestine (excluding Jerusalem) with a population of 498,000 Jews and 325,000 Arabs;
- An Arab State covering 43.53% of Mandatory Palestine (excluding Jerusalem), with 807,000 Arab inhabitants and 10,000 Jewish inhabitants;
- An international trusteeship regime in Jerusalem, where the population was 100,000 Jews and 105,000 Arabs.

The partition plan also laid down:

- A guarantee of the rights of minorities and religious rights, including free access to and the preservation of Holy Places;
- A constitution of an Economic Union between the two states: custom union, joint monetary system, joint administration of main services, equal access to water and energy resources.

The General Assembly also proposed:

- A two-month interim period beginning 1 August 1948, date of expiry of the mandate when the British troops were to be evacuated, with a zone including a port to be

evacuated in the territory of the Jewish State by 1 February;

- A five-country Commission (Bolivia, Denmark, Panama, Philippines, Czechoslovakia) in charge of the administration of the regions evacuated by Great Britain, of establishing the frontiers of the two states and of setting up in each of them a Provisional Council of Government;
- The gradual take-over of the administration by the Provisional Council of Government in both States, and the organization of democratic elections for a Constituent Assembly within two months.

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The Jerusalem Declaration on Christian Zionism

Statement by the Patriarch and Local Heads of Churches In Jerusalem

"Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God." (Matthew 5:9)

Christian Zionism is a modern theological and political movement that embraces the most extreme ideological positions of Zionism, thereby becoming detrimental to a just peace within Palestine and Israel. The Christian Zionist programme provides a worldview where the Gospel is identified with the ideology of empire, colonialism and militarism. In its extreme form, it laces an emphasis on apocalyptic events leading to the end of history rather than living Christ's love and justice today.

We categorically reject Christian Zionist doctrines as false teaching that corrupts the biblical message of love, justice and reconciliation. We further reject the contemporary alliance of Christian Zionist leaders and organizations with elements in the governments of Israel and the United States

that are presently imposing their unilateral pre-emptive borders and domination over Palestine. This inevitably leads to unending cycles of violence that undermine the security of all peoples of the Middle East and the rest of the world.

We reject the teachings of Christian Zionism that facilitate and support these policies as they advance racial exclusivity and perpetual war rather than the gospel of universal love, redemption and reconciliation taught by Jesus Christ. Rather than condemn the world to the doom of Armageddon we call upon everyone to liberate themselves from the ideologies of militarism and occupation. Instead, let them pursue the healing of the nations!

We call upon Christians in Churches on every continent to pray for the Palestinian and Israeli people, both of whom are suffering as victims of occupation and militarism. These discriminative actions are turning Palestine into impoverished ghettos surrounded by exclusive Israeli settlements. The establishment of the illegal settlements and the construction of the Separation Wall on confiscated Palestinian land undermines the viability of a Palestinian state as well as peace and security in the entire region.

We call upon all Churches that remain silent, to break their silence and speak for reconciliation with justice in the Holy Land. Therefore, we commit ourselves to the following principles as an alternative way: We affirm that all people are created in the image of God. In turn they are called to honor the dignity of every human being and to respect their inalienable rights. We affirm that Israelis and Palestinians are capable of living together within peace, justice and security.

We affirm that Palestinians are one people, both Muslim and Christian. We reject all attempts to subvert and fragment their unity. We call upon all people to reject the narrow world view of Christian Zionism and other ideologies that

privilege one people at the expense of others. We are committed to non-violent resistance as the most effective means to end the illegal occupation in order to attain a just and lasting peace. With urgency we warn that Christian Zionism and its alliances are justifying colonization, apartheid and empire-building. God demands that justice be done. No enduring peace, security or reconciliation is possible without the foundation of justice. The demands of justice will not disappear. The struggle for justice must be pursued diligently and persistently but non-violently.

"What does the Lord require of you, to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)

This is where we take our stand. We stand for justice. We can do no other. Justice alone guarantees a peace that will lead to reconciliation with a life of security and prosperity for all the peoples of our Land. By standing on the side of justice, we open ourselves to the work of peace – and working for peace makes us children of God.

"God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:19)

His Beattitude Patriarch Michel Sabbah
Latin Patriarchate, Jerusalem
Archbishop Swerios Malki Mourad,
Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate, Jerusalem
Bishop Riah Abu El-Assal,
Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East
Bishop Munib Younan,
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land

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