

## SHOULD WE SUPPORT ISRAEL

### *Part Three*

Tonight I'm going to talk about the relationship between Israel (ie: the Jewish nation) and the Church. The Church's relationship to the Jewish people was clearly defined and explained by the apostle Paul in the New Testament. Yet the Church has been *divided* and totally *confused* about what he taught since the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century. The question is, why? Why can't people understand the simplest and clearest statements of Scripture?

There are several reasons. The first reason is *spiritual* blindness. People who walk under the influence of wrong spirits, or wrong doctrinal views, are often incapable of understanding or accepting the obvious meaning of any passage which conflicts with those views. We all have *theological* views about salvation and the Church. These views may have come to us directly, through a personal study of the Scripture, or they may have come indirectly, through listening to the views of others (particularly the teaching of religious leaders). But the fact is, each one of us has been influenced by some kind of theology. Indeed, each one of us is presently living under the influence of a theology because every doctrine that the Church teaches is part of some kind of theology.

Another reason there is so much confusion is because from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century till the late 1800's, the primary "theology" of the Church System has been Covenant Theology—which contains many serious errors, especially regarding the issue of Israel and the Church. In the late 1800's a new theology, which was a *reaction against* Covenant Theology, was invented. That theology is called Dispensation Theology and it too contains many serious errors, especially regarding the issue of Israel and the Church. So, since the late 1800's there have been only *two* theologies (or teachings) in the Church System regarding this issue and both of them are wrong.

Covenant Theology takes Paul's statements about Gentile Christians being *included* in the promises God made to Abraham and his physical seed (the Jews), and twists them so that his physical seed are now *excluded* from those promises. They don't try to exclude the Jews from their own promises because the Jews are presently in unbelief. They try to exclude the Jews from their own promises because they reject the idea that God originally gave those promises to the Jewish race (or to any *specific* race of people).

In their minds, God didn't give the promises to Abraham's literal, biological seed. He gave the promises to a predestined group of people called "the elect" and this group has nothing to do with any specific race, nation, or blood line. Such a view forces people who subscribe to Covenant Theology to treat many prophetic passages in the Old Testament which speak of a last days restoration of a specific race of people to a specific geographical land, spiritually or metaphorically. These predictions must be "spiritualized" and applied in an ad hoc manner to "the elect". Covenantalists refuse to take many of these prophecies at face value and they accuse those who do of indulging in "carnal" interpretation of the Scripture.

Dispensation Theology was a reaction (actually an over-reaction) against this kind of Gentile arrogance and Scripture twisting. The people who invented Dispensationalism were trying to protect the *unique place* the Jewish people still hold in the plan of God. In order to keep Gentile Christians from excluding Jews from their own promises, the inventors of Dispensationalism came up with the "two Israel" concept. They said there are two separate chosen peoples with two separate sets of promises and two completely different destinies in God. The Jews are an *earthly* people with earthly promises of land and an earthly (ie: Millennial) kingdom. But the Church is a *heavenly* people with heavenly promises of eternal life in heaven. The idea was that if the Gentiles could also be a "chosen" people with their own promises and their own destiny, they would stop trying to exclude the Jews from the promises God made to them—especially of our promises are better than their promises.

This view forces Dispensationalists to teach that none of the promises or prophecies given to National Israel have anything to do with the New Testament Church. God has two different chosen peoples—one Jewish (National Israel) and one mostly Gentile (the Church)—and National Israel shall forever remain a distinctly ethnic, geo-political group of people comprised only of the physical seed of Abraham. Thus, Gentile believers are *excluded* from most of the promises God made to Abraham’s seed. The only promises God gave to Abraham which can be applied to the Church, are those promises which are *spiritual* in nature, such as salvation and the receiving of the Holy Spirit. All *literal* promises regarding “nation” and “land” apply to the Jewish people alone.

Whenever the issue of Israel and the Church comes up, we’re always faced with these *two* choices. We must either interpret the statements of God concerning National Israel literally, or we must interpret them spiritually. If we interpret them literally, we will be aligning ourselves with those who propagate the errors of Dispensational Theology. If we interpret them spiritually or metaphorically, we will be aligning ourselves with the errors of Covenant Theology. But the fact is, there is a third option, and that option is the *gospel* interpretation. The Old Testament is a *partial* revelation of God’s eternal plan. The New Testament is the *full* revelation of that plan. Therefore, the Old Testament must be interpreted by the gospel, by the full revelation of the New Testament.

Because today’s Christians are only given two choices, those who believe what Paul so plainly stated in Romans chapter eleven about God not permanently rejecting the Jewish nation, and how a remnant of them will be saved in the last days, gravitate towards Dispensational Theology because this is the only theology (as far as they know) that seeks to protect the *unique place* the Jewish people still hold in the plan of God—even though that place is totally misunderstood by Dispensationalism.

When I look at Church history and I see all the *theological anti-Semitism* that has been unleashed by accepting the lie of “Replacement Theology”—which is an integral part of Covenant Theology—I have no problem thinking that the *intentions* of the creators of Dispensationalism were good. However, the theological system they created, which comes from a consistently literal/historical/grammatical interpretation of the promises and prophecies concerning National Israel, contains many serious errors.

First of all, this theology forever separates the Jewish Nation and the Church. Secondly, it exalts the Jewish nation above the Church in the next age. So regardless of their intentions, what the inventors of Dispensationalism have actually done is create a kind of *reverse* Replacement Theology which replaces the centrality of Jesus Christ and the New Creation Man, with the centrality of National Israel and its restoration.

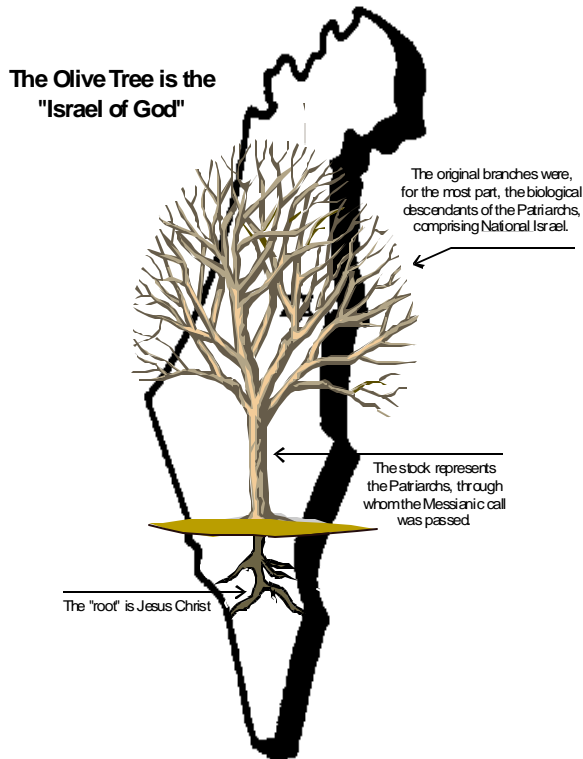
Since neither Covenant Theology or Dispensational Theology agree with Paul’s theology regarding Israel and the Church, we must reject both these theologies as false teaching and start from scratch. The best place to start is with Paul’s illustration of the Olive Tree.

*And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if*

*thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.*

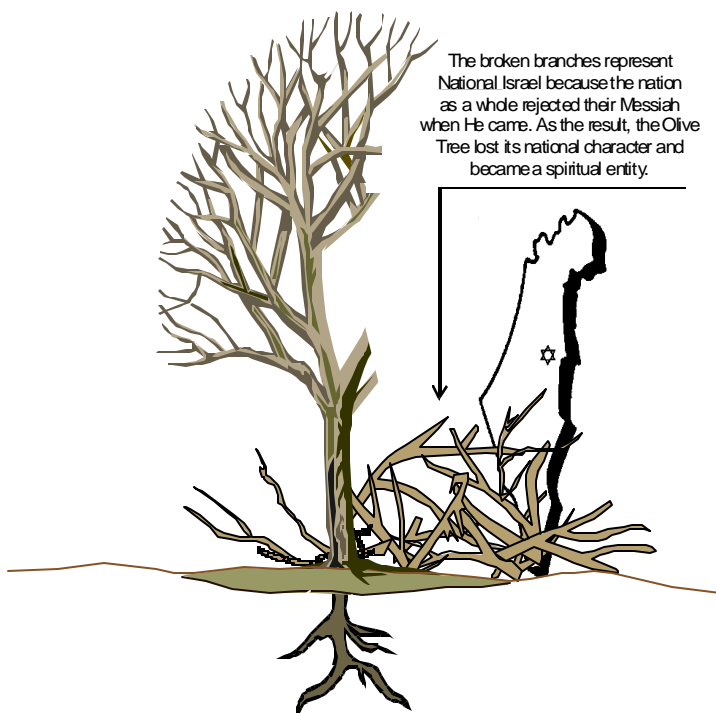
Romans 11:17-23

Here Paul speaks of Gentiles (wild branches) being joined to the Olive Tree. Once we understand what the Olive Tree represents, we can understand what it is we have been joined to. To that end, I have added some illustrations to help us understand what Paul is saying.



To the left is a graphic of Paul's Olive Tree. The tree was originally comprised *solely* of biological Jews, the seed of Abraham. The Olive Tree was a Jewish tree, comprised of the Jewish nation. The *root* is Jesus Christ. The *trunk* of the Tree represents the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, through whom the promises and the original call to be a holy nation was passed. The *branches* are the biological offspring of those Patriarchs, to whom the promises and the inheritance pertained and to whom it was originally given.

The Messianic call and destiny of the Olive Tree was intended for the original branches and those branches were a *nation* of Jews. God brought the *physical* seed of Abraham to Himself at Mt. Sinai and gave them the Messianic call to the priesthood. He made them His own peculiar treasure, informing them that they were to be His representative people on earth.



In this illustration, branches have been broken off the tree, and these branches represent *National* Israel. It's not just that many individual branches were cut out of their own nation. Rather, the *nation itself* was severed from its own Messianic call and destiny (the tree). Even though the tree was originally comprised of the whole nation, the nation was severed from the tree when it rejected it's Messiah.

We want to take a moment and establish this fact because it is very important. If we don't understand *this* point, then the rest of our view regarding what the Olive Tree represents will be wrong. So consider the natural branches for a minute. What exactly were the *natural* branches broken off of? What exactly were they separated from?

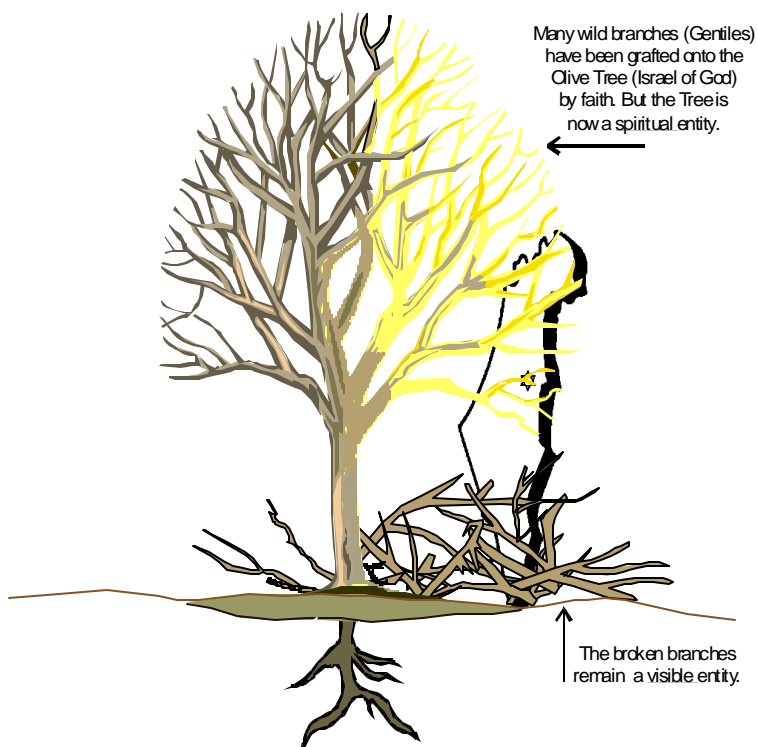
Were the Jews separated from their biological lineage? No.

Were the Jews separated from their Jewish heritage and culture? No.

Were the Jews separated from their religion (Judaism)? No.

There are millions of identifiable, biological Hebrews alive today who have kept their Jewish lineage, identity, customs and religion intact, and they are recognized as part of the current nation of Israel. Yet they have been severed, and they *remain* severed, from the Olive Tree. So the tree cannot represent any of these things. The tree cannot represent Jewish culture because that culture is no longer part of the tree. The tree cannot represent the Jewish race because the Jewish race is no longer part of the tree. The tree cannot represent the Jewish Commonwealth (or State) because the Jewish Commonwealth (including the present State of Israel) is no longer part of the tree.

What then does the tree represent? The tree represents the Messianic call and destiny of God's Israel, of God's *New Creation Man*. That call was given first to the Jewish race and nation (under the Old Covenant). Then, it was offered to "whosoever will" (under the New Covenant). When it was offered to "whosoever will" under the New Covenant, it did not cease to be offered to the Jewish race. Whosoever will *includes* the Jews.

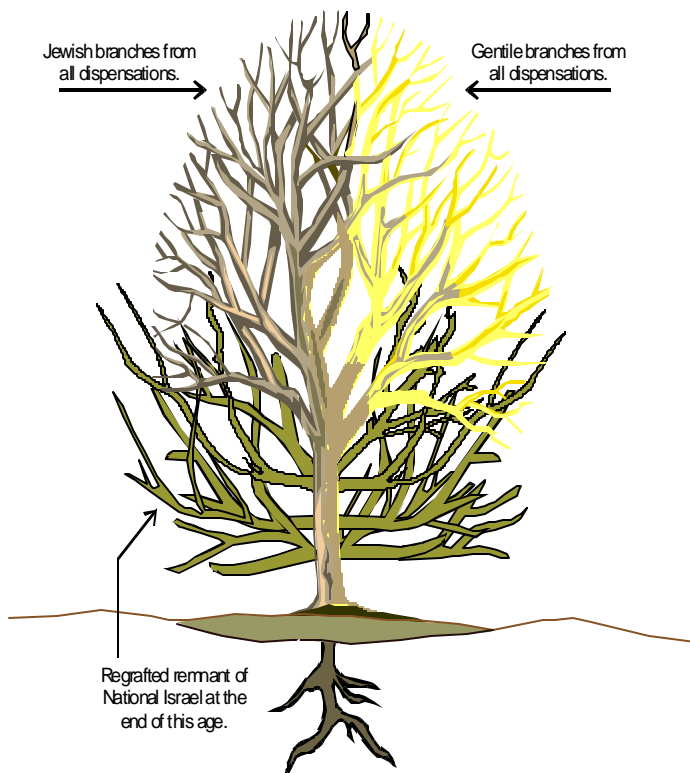


In this illustration, Gentile branches (the yellow ones) have been grafted onto the Olive Tree. These grafted-in branches are full partakers of the root and fatness of the tree, along with the natural (Jewish) branches. Everything that applies to the natural branches applies to the grafted-in branches. How could it be otherwise?

The whole point Paul is trying to make is that there is only *one* Messianic call and only *one* Royal Priesthood that will fulfill that call. That call is the call of the tree and either we are part of that call or we aren't part of it. If we are, then we partake of both the history and the future of the tree. We partake of all the promises that pertain to the tree. We partake of the tree's root and fatness. There can be no difference between the two kinds of branches for we are all connected to the same tree and partake of the same root!

Exactly what belongs to the *natural* branches? Paul told us, did he not? He said the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law, the service of God, the promises, and the fathers belong to his kinsman according to the flesh. (*Rom. 9:4-5*)

What then belongs to the "grafted-in" branches? The adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law, the service of God, the promises and the fathers! Everything that applies to the natural branches applies to the grafted-in branches. This includes all the promises that apply to Abraham's "seed"!



In this last illustration, a remnant of the severed branches, representing National Israel at the end of this age, have been grafted back into the tree. Now the question that must be answered is this:

*What will the tree be after National Israel has been re-grafted?*

The tree started off as a visible nation of Jews. After the Crucifixion, the tree became an invisible body of both Gentile and Jewish believers. What will the tree *be* once a Jewish nation—not just a bunch of individual Jews—but the Jewish nation is grafted back in?

Will it continue on as an invisible Church? Will it become a Jewish geo-political nation again? Quite frankly, we have yet to meet anyone who has any idea what the tree will be once it is completed.

The Olive Tree, as described by Paul, will not fit into anybody’s “prophetic” view. So in order to understand what the Olive Tree will be, we must first understand what it will not be. It *cannot remain* an invisible spiritual entity (Gentile Church) because a visible Jewish nation will be part of it again. It *cannot become* the Old Testament Jewish nation it once was because the Gentile branches will still be connected to it and God does not ask (or require) Gentile branches to become Jewish branches (in culture and life style).

What then will it be? It will be *both* a spiritual and a national entity. It will be a spiritual people (a new human race), made one in Messiah, who comprise a literal kingdom or commonwealth. Just as *individual* Jews and Gentiles are made one in Christ by being made a “new creation”—so National Israel and the Church will be made one in Christ by being made a “new creation nation”.

*But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, **having slain the enmity thereby:***

*Ephesians 2:13-16*

When God separated the Nation of Israel from all the other nations, a hostility began between Jews and Gentiles that has endured to this very day. When Jesus died on the Cross, he removed all the *causes* of that hostility. First, He abolished in Himself the “law of commandments”—which is a clear reference to the Law of Moses. The Law is what separated the Jews from the Gentiles culturally and religiously.

Also, He made of the twain “one new man”. That is, He makes biological Jews and biological Gentiles a brand new race of people which is *neither* Jewish or Gentile—a race which is *superior* to both Jews and Gentiles. Becoming part of this new race does away with the blood line barrier that separated Jews and Gentiles.

Unfortunately, neither believing Jews or believing Gentiles really understand this truth. Most believing Jews, for example, refuse to let go of their Adamic (ie: Jewish) identity. They want the new creation man to be a *Jewish* new creation. The Gentiles do the same thing. They refuse to let go of their Adamic (ie: Gentile) identity. They want the new creation man to be a *Gentile* new creation.

Jewishness can be easily defined in concrete terms because the Jewish culture was created through the Law of Moses. Without the Law, there would be no difference, culturally or religiously, between Jews and Gentiles. Technically speaking, the Jewish race is really just another Gentile race, like the Germans, or the Italians, or the French. The thing that made the Jewish race a different kind of race (ie: non-Gentile) was their relationship with God and the Law of Moses.

However, this is not the case with Gentile culture. Gentileness is very hard to define because God didn't create Gentile culture. Indeed, Gentileness can only be defined in terms of the absence of all things Jewish. Gentileness is anything and everything that is not Jewish. Even so, the “new creation” is neither Jewish or Gentile—though it is certainly rooted in Jewish history. It's a completely new creation. It's a spiritual race of Christ-filled humans which are neither Jew or Gentile, male or female, bond or free.

*For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female:** for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

*Galatians 3:27-29*

*Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where **there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free:** but Christ is all, and in all.*

*Colossians 3:9-11*

Jewish and Gentile culture, Jewish and Gentile religion, Jewish and Gentile bloodline are all inferior to kingdom culture, kingdom religion and kingdom spirit-life. Therefore, neither believing Jews or believing Gentiles have any reason to boast against each other any more. In Christ, nobody is any better or worse than anyone else because of their blood line, their former religion, their gender, or their social status because none of these distinctions matter. The only thing that can be measured, which would *differentiate* one person from another, is the level of actual righteousness a person is walking in.

So then, how do we explain the (apparent) contradiction between what Paul said about those who are in Christ, and the realities we must live with on a daily basis? After all, we *are* still male and female. We *are* still Jew and Gentile. Paul even admits these distinctions. For instance, when speaking of the Gentiles who had become believers, he continues to call them “Gentiles” (See: *Acts 15:23; 21:25*). He also continues to recognize a distinction between men and women (See: *1. Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23*). Was Paul double-talking or what?

The apparent contradiction is solved when we understand that right now we are stuck in the old creation—or at least part of us is stuck there because our *bodies* have not yet been redeemed. Since the body is still part of the old creation, we can't just chuck off all our old creation distinctions. However, our spirits *have* been changed. They *are* part of the new creation. So we must train ourselves to live in two worlds at once. We must live in two opposing realities—that which is true of us in *the spirit* and that which is true of us in *the physical*. Although this may be the current situation, it will not remain that way forever. At some point our bodies will be redeemed and then, what was true of us spiritually all along will be true of us *physically* as well.

The full transformation from the old to the new creation, from the old to the new man, from the old to the new identity, does not happen overnight. It is a process because the *soul* has to choose which “man” it is going to identify with and have union with. This is what the process of sanctification is all about. In the realm of the soul, God has to move us from one identity to the other, from one man to the other, from one creation to the other, so that in the end we are a new creation in spirit, *soul* and body. Once that work has been accomplished, there will no longer be any more male or female believers. There will no longer be any *Irish* believers or *German* believers or *Italian* believers or *African* believers. Neither will there be any more Jewish and Gentile believers.

*I say then, Have they [the Jews] stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; **how much more their fulness?** For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them [the Jewish nation] be the reconciling of the world, **what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?** . . . For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, **until** the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:*

*Romans 11:11-15 & 25-26*

Paul's theology regarding National Israel in the plan of God is very clear—unless you want to hold the truth in unrighteousness. He said it was the Jewish nation that stumbled, that fell, that was diminished, that was partially blinded, and cast away. Likewise, it will be the Jewish nation that will be received again, that will be saved, that will have their partial blindness removed, and that will experiences a fulness.

So we have these two realities existing side by side and at the same time. The “new creation” is neither Jewish or Gentile—even though at present, we must still identify ourselves *physically* as either Jews or Gentiles. Also, there is a Jewish nation in existence right now which is in unbelief, but which will soon be saved. The question the Dispensationalist has been trying to answer is how these two realities will play out in the end. How will a redeemed National Israel relate to the New Testament Church?

Covenantalists don't even try to answer this question because they refuse to accept what Paul so plainly stated in the above portion of Scripture. They refuse to accept that he is talking about the restoration of the Jewish *nation*. Instead, they maintain that he is talking about a group of predestined people called “the elect” which has

nothing to do with any specific race, nation or blood line. Paul stated in no uncertain terms that the promises “pertain to” his kinsmen according to the flesh. That means, the promises don’t just pertain to “elect” Jews (the ones who end up saved); they pertain to every Jew. Yet, Covenantalists continue to insist that the promises pertain only to those Jews who *end up saved*. By denying Paul’s theology of Israel and the Church, Covenantalists make themselves and their doctrines irrelevant.

Most of today’s anti-Israel Christians are Covenantalists—and for most of these people, theology is just another weapon of *war*. Theology is just one of many avenues through which they can express their Jew hatred. But that hatred not only blinds them spiritually, it removes the fear of God from their lives. This is why they aren’t afraid to mangle and distort the Scripture whenever it suits their purpose. They call this kind of Scripture twisting, “spiritual interpretation”. One of their favorite tactics is to distort the meaning of the term “seed”.

For instance, the guy from who’s article I quoted last week (Robert Begnaud) says that if the promise to Abraham is all about the blood line, then what’s wrong with the blood of Esau? Why don’t the promises God made to Abraham pertain to Esau as well? After all, Esau is just as much the physical seed of Abraham as Jacob is—they were twins! As a matter of fact, says Mr. Begnaud, considering the fact that the Jewish race has been so intermingled with converted Gentiles over the centuries, but the Arabs (the descendants of Esau) have never intermingled with Gentiles like that, the Arabs probably qualify more as the physical seed of Abraham than the Jews of today do because their blood line is *more pure* than the blood line of today’s Jews! But once again, Paul’s theology shows just how ignorant people like Mr. Begnaud really are.

*Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. **For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:** Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but **the children of the promise are counted for the seed.***

*Romans 9:6-8*

Here Paul establishes the fact that not every child or grand child born to Abraham qualifies as his physical seed (with regards to the promises). It is God who chooses which child and grand child will be counted as the seed. Thus, you find God choosing Isaac (not Ishmael) and Jacob (not Esau) to be Abraham’s legitimate seed. This is why Paul went on to quote what God said to Abraham:

*And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for **in Isaac shall thy seed be called.***

*Genesis 21:12*

You see, if God would not have made the choice between Isaac and Ishmael (and Jacob and Esau) crystal clear, then *all* the physical descendants of Ishmael and Esau could rightly claim to be the “seed” of Abraham because technically speaking, they *are* his seed. However, they are not the seed to whom the promises apply. God chose Isaac to be Abraham’s seed; then He chose Jacob to be Isaac’s seed. Whenever there was a question of *which* offspring should be “counted as the seed”, God is the one who made the choice and He made His choice crystal clear to everyone.



*For **this is the word of promise**, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son [supernaturally]. And not only this; but **when Rebecca also had conceived** [supernaturally] by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that **the purpose of God according to election** might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*

*Romans 9:9-13*

God's choice was always the offspring that came by "promise". This is what Paul is saying when he talks about both Sarah and Rebecca having sons. Both of them had their sons supernaturally, by promise. And even though Rebecca had twins, God made His choice of Jacob clear. So the answer to such an asinine question like: "What's wrong with Esau's blood?" is very simple—Esau's blood was not "counted as the seed" by Jehovah. Jacob's blood was counted as the seed. Jew haters who have a problem with God's choice of Jacob over Esau will just have take the matter up with Him.

*Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, **which is Christ**.*

*Galatians 3:16*

This is another statement those who propagate Covenant Theology love to use in order to delegitimize and exclude the Jewish people from their own promises. Covenantalists spin this passage to mean that Christ is the only one who is to be counted as Abraham's seed. "See", they say: "Paul clearly says that the seed of Abraham is not the Jews; the seed of Abraham is Christ. So whatever the passages in the Old Testament say about who Abraham's seed is makes no difference because Paul is interpreting those statements by the full revelation of the New Testament and his interpretation is the only valid interpretation".

*For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh [the Jews]: Who are Israelites; **to whom pertaineth** the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises. . .Neither, because they are the seed [physical offspring] of Abraham, are they all children [of promise]: but, In Isaac **shall thy seed be called**. That is, They which are the children of the flesh [Ishmael & Esau], these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise [Isaac & Jacob] **are counted for the seed**.*

*Romans 9:3-4 & 7-9*

Covenantalists refuse to view the Jewish people as the *legitimate* seed of Abraham and in order to convince people that they are correct, they twist what Paul said in Galatians to mean that Christ is Abraham's *only* seed. It may seem like this is what Paul was saying but if it was, then he was very confused because he clearly says in Romans chapter 9 (that's in the New Testament!) that both Isaac and Jacob were "counted for the seed". What Paul meant in Galatians is that Christ is the *ultimate* seed. He is the seed in which all the promises are fulfilled and terminated. However, the fact that Christ is the ultimate seed of Abraham does not mean that Isaac and Jacob (and their physical offspring) can no longer rightfully be viewed as Abraham's seed.

The Dispensational answer to this kind of error and Scripture twisting is no better because their strictly literal/historical/grammatical interpretation of Old Testament prophecies—which ignores the light provided in the New Testament—results in just as much (though a different kind of) error. In order to really understand the kind of confusion that results from the Dispensational approach to the promises, we need to see how those promises work out when they are interpreted in their literal/historical/grammatical context:

*And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, **all the land of Canaan**, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.*

*Genesis 17:7-8*

God promised Abraham that *both* he and his seed would possess the Land of Canaan forever. We have already seen that when talking about Abraham's seed, God is the one who chose which of Abraham's descendants would be "counted for the seed". Not everyone who sprung from the loins of Abraham was to be counted as the seed. First, the Hebrew blood line was narrowed down to *one* son (Isaac) and *one* grandson (Jacob). Then that blood line was expanded to include all of Jacobs children (ie: the Twelve Tribes).

God promised to give Abraham "all" the land of Canaan for an "everlasting" possession. But the fact is, Abraham never possessed any of that land, except for a burial plot, and his offspring only possessed portions of that land for short periods of time. The actual, literal fulfillment of this promise has yet to be realized. It will be fulfilled when the Lord returns and Abraham and his "seed" are released from death. When that day comes, which group of saints will Abraham and his "seed" go to live with? Will they go to Heaven and live with the Gentile Church; or will they dwell in the land (Canaan) that God promised to give them?

You see, if people want to stay true to their literal/historical/grammatical interpretation of the Scripture they must take the promise in Genesis in it's most literal sense and accept that it will be *literally* fulfilled. That means, it must be fulfilled regarding *all* (not just some) of Abraham's physical offspring that are counted for the seed. The Lord said very plainly, "...unto thee and to thy seed after thee will I give *this* land" (Canaan).

Now, a strictly literal/historical/grammatical *interpretation* of this promise may not present much of a problem for Abraham's physical offspring from the Old Testament. But what about his offspring from the *New* Testament? The Twelve (apostles) were Abraham's biological seed. The Seventy (disciples) were his seed. The 120 in the Upper Room, as well as the apostle Paul, were Abraham's seed. Indeed, the whole Early Church in and around Jerusalem was composed of Abraham's seed.

Where will *these* Jews go? What about Jewish believers over the past 2000 years? Where will *they* go? Well, according to the promise, if we are going to interpret it in a literal/historical/grammatical sense, every faithful Jew who has ever lived must go to be with Abraham and the restored remnant of National Israel in the land of Canaan because that land was promised to *them*! That's the way a literal fulfillment works out! If we also maintain the Dispensational position regarding the Church—which is that the Church is destined to live and reign in heaven—then we must also be willing to submit to *the outcome* of these two lines of thought; which is that on the Day of Resurrection, God will separate out from the Church all those who are the physical offspring of Abraham and place them on earth with Abraham.

The only two choices we are continually presented with, when it comes to the land-promise God made to Abraham and his seed are: (1) Covenant Theology—which interprets the promises spiritually so that they now apply only to Christians and the “land” represents heaven; or (2) Dispensation Theology—which interprets the promises literally so that they apply only to Jews and the “land” is an earthly Jewish kingdom (ie: the Millennium). But when we add the light that is provided in the New Testament to the things that are said about these promises in the Old Testament, a different picture begins to emerge:

*For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through **the righteousness of faith**. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end **the promise might be sure to all the seed**; not to that only which is of the law [faithful Jews], but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham [faithful Gentiles]; who is the father of us all.*

*Romans 4:13,14,16*

Paul makes it clear who is eligible to receive the promise God made to Abraham—and please notice *which* promise Paul is referring to here. He’s not talking primarily about the promise of salvation (ie: justification). Nor is he talking primarily about the promise of receiving the Holy Spirit—though both of these promises are certainly included in what Paul is saying. He’s talking primarily about the land-promise, which has been greatly *expanded* under the New Covenant. Instead of simply being the heir of the Land of Canaan, Abraham is now said to be the “heir of the world”.

Regarding this promise, Paul said it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law (Jewish believers) but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham (Gentile believers). Paul is not contrasting Jews who live by faith with Jews who live by Law here. He is contrasting believing Jews who were zealous for the Law and the traditions of the fathers, with believing Gentiles who had no affection for or attachment to the Law. He is saying the actual obtaining of the promise is by faith, not by heredity. God has made faith available to Gentiles as well as to Jews. He has made certain that those who are “of the law” will never be able to exclude those who are *not* of the law from the promise.

*Know ye therefore that **they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham**...Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but **as of one**, And to thy seed, **which is Christ**...Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, **till the seed should come to whom the promise was made**; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator...And if ye be **Christ's**, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

*Galatians 3:7, 16, 19 & 29*

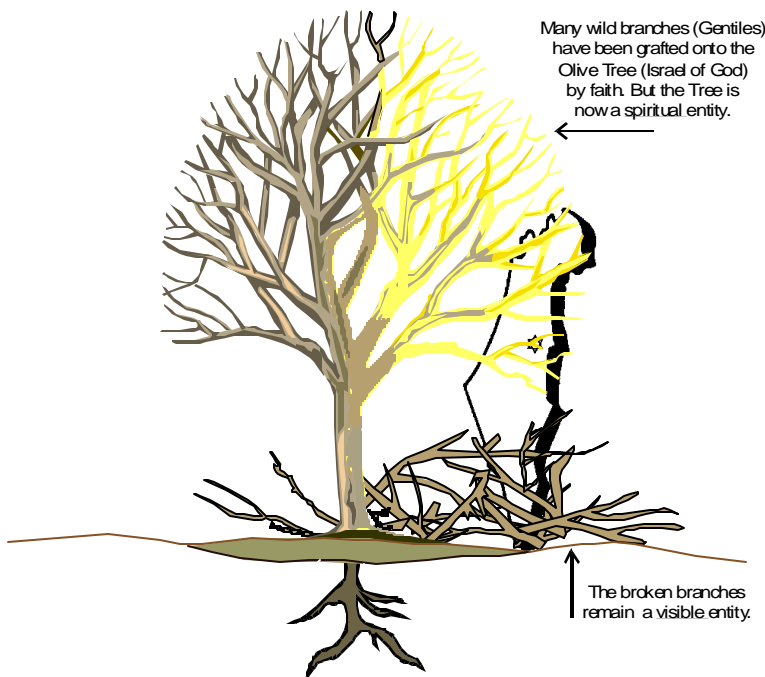
Again, Paul removes all doubt as to whether or not Gentile believers can be “counted as the seed” of Abraham. He said: “...*they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham*”. He also said: “*And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise*”. Though the opportunity to receive the promise was given first to the Jews, and though the call to receive the promise is still theirs by physical birth,

the promise is only obtained through the righteousness of faith—and God has made faith available to Gentiles as well as to Jews. Could Paul have possibly stated it any clearer? If we belong to Messiah we *are* the seed of Abraham, just like those in his physical line who were “counted as the seed”.

We are heirs to the same promises that were made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Did God promise Abraham’s seed (the Jewish people) that they would receive a kingdom on earth? We are partakers of *that* promise! Did He promise the Jewish people that they would be a kingdom of priests? We are partakers of *that* promise! Did He promise the Jewish people that one day they would bless and rule the nations of the earth *from* the earth? We are partakers of *that* promise! Did the Lord promise the Jews that they would possess a literal chunk of real estate in the Middle East? We are partakers of *that* promise!

Neither the “spiritualized” interpretation of Covenant Theology or the “literalist” interpretation of Dispensational Theology agrees with the “gospel” interpretation of Paul’s Theology when it comes to the promises God made to Abraham and his seed. What Paul said is clear and very simple to understand (if our minds have not already been poisoned by one of these two false theologies). The promises God made to Abraham and his seed APPLY to all biological Jews through the blood line of Isaac and Jacob. However, those promises are only APPREHENDED through faith—and God has made faith available to Gentiles as well as to Jews.

In other words, everyone who walks by faith and obeys God—whether they be Jew or Gentile, whether they lived under the Old Covenant or they now live under the New Covenant—is “counted for the seed”! Today’s Jews *still* qualify as the “seed” of Abraham with regards to the promises. But like everyone else, if they want to apprehend or experience the fulfillment of those promises, they must walk by faith and obey God.



Now, let’s go back and look again at the Olive Tree as it is *today*. At present, the tree is an invisible body of mostly Gentile believers. Therefore, the tree is not yet complete and it will not be completed until National Israel is grafted back in at the end of this age. Until then, *neither* Jews or Christians can say they are “the Israel of God”. Christians can say they are *part of* the Israel of God because we are. But we are not the totality of it.

Jews can say that a remnant of them will *soon become* part of the Israel of God because they will. However, they cannot claim to be “the Israel of God” either because they are still in unbelief. They are still cut off from the tree.

At present, National Israel is a *visible* entity which remains cut off from the tree. It cannot partake of its own *spiritual* inheritance. On the other hand, the tree remains an *invisible* entity which cannot partake of its own *natural* inheritance because it derives its material substance from the commonwealth (which is still cut off). But just because this is the current situation, that does not mean it will remain that way forever. The Scripture teaches that when the full number of elect Gentiles have been brought into the Olive Tree, God will complete the final

purging of National Israel “by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning” (*Isa. 4:4*), and that purged remnant will be re-joined to the Olive Tree. When this takes place, restored National Israel will not remain a separate, racial entity whose destiny is *limited* to an earthly kingdom. Nor will it be exalted above the rest of the (Gentile) branches of the tree. It will become part of Messiah’s body, which is neither Jew or Gentile. It will become part of God’s New Creation.

You see, the plan of God, while not doing away with the specialness of the Jewish people or the restoration of National Israel, is *much bigger* than the specialness of the Jewish people or the restoration of Israel! This is why it’s so important to interpret the things the Old Testament prophets said about “Israel” in the light of what the New Testament apostles taught. The revelation the apostles received under the New Covenant sheds additional light on the things the prophets said under the Old Covenant. It enables us to understand that when the prophets referred to “Israel” they were talking about *both* National Israel and Completed Israel.

When they spoke about Israel being cast out of the land, or of Israel’s long years of affliction and punishment, or of Israel’s restoration to that same land in the last days, they were talking about National Israel. But when they speak of the *glory* of Israel in the kingdom age, or of the priestly work of Israel to the nations in that age, they are talking about Completed Israel. They are talking about the *whole* Olive Tree.

*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to **this rule**, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon **the Israel of God**.*

*Galatians 6:15-16*

Paul tells us very clearly in Galatians who the “Israel of God” is. The only reason the vast majority of Christians down through the centuries haven’t been able to comprehend his words is because they are not willing to give up their old Adamic life and identities. When Paul says that neither circumcision (the Jews) nor uncircumcision (the Gentiles) have any meaning “in Christ” anymore, he’s telling us that the “old man” (whether Jew or Gentile) availeth nothing. He’s saying the only thing that matters in Christ is the “new man”—and the new man is neither Jew or Gentile. Then he prays for peace and mercy on all those who “walk according th this rule”.

What is he talking about? According to *what* rule?

According to the “rule” that in Christ, neither circumcision (being Jewish) availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision (being Gentile), but a new creature. A new creature! Paul is blessing those who will understand and accept the reality that the “Israel of God” is not a *Jewish* Israel or a *Gentile* Israel but a NEW Israel! The “Israel of God” is the whole (ie: completed) Olive Tree. It is Completed Israel. It is a new creation nation which is comprised of new creatures—not Jewish creatures or Gentile creatures but *new* creatures!

This is the key to understanding what Paul meant when he said “all Israel” will be saved in Romans 11:26. The phrase “all Israel” is a double reference. It’s a reference to a remnant of the current Jewish nation, which will be saved in our time. But it’s also a reference to the whole Olive Tree. It’s also a reference to Completed Israel. Since “the Israel of God” is the completed Olive Tree, and since that tree will not be completed until National Israel is grafted back in, “all Israel” has not yet been saved. All Israel includes the remnant of National Israel but it is not limited to the remnant of National Israel. When National Israel is saved, then *all* Israel (ie: Completed Israel, the whole Olive Tree) will be saved.

As I've already said, Covenantalists spiritualize the references in the prophets that speak of a restoration of National Israel in the last days. They don't spiritualize prophecies about the coming Messiah or the events regarding National Israel which have clearly been fulfilled in history (up to 70 AD). They *only* spiritualize the prophecies that refer to a restoration of National Israel in the last days.

I'm going to give you clear example of this. But first, consider that if the prophecies regarding the coming of Messiah were fulfilled literally (not just symbolically or metaphorically); and if many of the prophecies regarding National Israel have been fulfilled literally (not just symbolically or metaphorically); why on earth would people say the *rest* of what the prophets said about National Israel will be fulfilled spiritually and not literally? The answer is Gentile racist pride. Now, let's look at what the prophet Isaiah said about God setting His hand a "second time" to recover the children of Israel out of the all the countries where He has scattered them:

*And it shall come to pass in that day, that **the Lord shall set his hand again the second time** to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And **he shall set up an ensign** [banner] for the nations, and **shall assemble the outcasts of Israel**, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from **the four corners of the earth**. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.*

*Isaiah 11:11-13*

The first time the Lord set His hand to recover a remnant of His people was from the Babylonian captivity. Here, Isaiah talks about a second re-gathering, which would necessitate a second scattering after the return of the Jews from Babylon. The notes from the 1599 Geneva Bible say this verse: "...is chiefly meant of Christ, who calls his people being dispersed through all the world" This is the kind of spiritualization the Reformers indulged in. I wonder who they thought "Ephraim" and "Judah" are in this prophesy? Different Protestant denominations, perhaps? The notes in the New Geneva Study Bible are a little different but they still refuse to admit the re-gathering referred to in this prophesy is a last-days re-gathering of National Israel.

**"The Second Time:** The first time God reclaimed a people **was from Egypt** through the Exodus; the second time is from **the Exile**. The remnant will come from all the known world, described as the four corners of the world. This era of restoration will witness the reconciliation of the disunited tribes. When the remnant returned to the land after the Exile, they offered sacrifices on behalf of the twelve tribes."

*New Geneva Study Bible  
pp. 1043-1044*

"The Exile" in these notes is a reference to the Babylonian captivity. So the people who created these notes think that the "first" re-gathering is a reference to the Exodus from Egypt, and the "second" re-gathering is the return from Babylon. This is supposed to be a *spiritual* interpretation. The first problem with this interpretation is that neither the deliverance of Israel from Egypt or the return of the exiles from Babylon included Jews from the countries listed in this prophesy. Except for Babylonia, no Jews in "the Exile" returned from the places like Assyria (now mainly Iraq); Lower and Upper Egypt (that is, the whole of modern Egypt); Cush (sometimes identified as Ethiopia); Elam (now Iran, or Persia); Hamath (Syria); and the islands of the sea (ie: continents).

Secondly, the prophecy points out an important difference between re-gathered Israel and the condition of the nation before it was carried off: “*Ephraim’s jealousy will vanish and Judah’s enemies will be cut off; Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, nor Judah hostile toward Ephraim*” (v. 3). In Isaiah’s day, Israel had been split into two kingdoms. The Northern kingdom was called Israel or Ephraim. The Southern kingdom was called Judah. These two kingdoms were at war with one another, producing a condition of disunity and instability that made them prey to invading empires. First, the Northern kingdom was taken into exile by Assyria; then, a little more than one hundred years later, the Southern kingdom was taken into exile by Babylon.

The notes in the New Geneva Study Bible say this prophecy was fulfilled when the Jews returned from Babylon because the Jews “offered sacrifices on behalf of the twelve tribes”. But the problem is, the Jews in that return did not come from all the countries listed in the prophesy. They came *only* from Babylon. This part of Isaiah’s prophesy was not fulfilled until 1948, when they came back from *all* the countries listed in that prophesy.

Also, what Isaiah said about Judah and Ephraim no longer being jealous of each other was not fulfilled until 1948 because it was only in 1948 that the Jews came back as *one* nation. Until just a short while before Israel was reborn, no official name had been chosen for the new state. In fact, choosing a name became something of a crisis. One name that was proposed and almost accepted was “Judea”. But at the last moment the choice was made to name the new state Israel. Had the founders chosen Judea, an *implied* continuation of the division between the two kingdoms would have been established. On the other hand, the name “Israel” is the correct Biblical name for the entire nation descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

In that same prophesy, Isaiah also said: “*He [the Lord] will raise a banner for the nations*”. The truth is, the re-gathering of Israel to their own land in our time *is* the banner God has raised for the nations. A banner is something displayed publicly and is often lifted above the level of surrounding objects in order to attract attention. It usually conveys some kind of brief message. The re-gathering of National Israel in our time has certainly attracted the attention of the nations and this is no accident. God has raised the banner of the State of Israel for all the nations to see. He has gained their attention and is now speaking to them *through* that banner.

What is the message of the banner? God is saying: “The Bible is my Word and it is true. It is as relevant as today’s news headlines. Its predictions are not merely symbolic! They are being fulfilled before your very eyes.” God is also saying: “I am a God who keeps my promises! Thousands of years ago I made a promise to Abraham regarding his biological seed and today I am bringing that promise to pass.”

In the midst of cultures and societies where words have become virtually meaningless, where compromise is the order of the day, where people lie with no remorse or shame and promises are *expected* to be broken, we are being reminded by God that He has given promises in the Scripture that He will *never* forget. The banner of the State of Israel has been raised to serve the nations notice that Jehovah is alive and He keeps His word!

Of course, the nations aren’t getting the message but this is to be expected. The nations have hated *both* God and His chosen people for thousands of years, so why should they suddenly stop hating them now? Indeed, raising the banner of National Israel in our day has only served to provoke the nations even more!

However, the sad part is that many of those who call themselves “Christians” aren’t getting the message either! Multitudes of those who name the name of Christ *refuse* to acknowledge that it is God who has raised the banner of the Jewish State in our day. They not only refuse to pay any attention to that banner or its message, they claim Satan is the one who has raised it!

This is what happens when people interpret prophesy the Roman Catholic way or the Reformation way. They must *deliberately* turn a deaf ear to what the Holy Spirit is saying in this hour. Also, as I said already, they end up losing the fear of God because they have no fear of twisting various passages of His Word, or denying their obvious meaning, in order to advance their own personal theological agendas.

Before closing this part of the message, let me give you one more example of the wrong choices we are given when it comes to interpreting prophesy (with regards to Israel and the Church). The Scripture prophesies that the next age will be an age where God's faithful saints from all generations will rule and reign with Christ over the saved nations for a thousand years.

Those who subscribe to Covenant Theology deny this because they either believe that we are already in the Millennium (as St Augustine taught), or they believe we will go straight from this present Church age into the New World. Covenantalists reject the whole idea of a literal 1000 year Kingdom age. Those who subscribe to Dispensation Theology believe that there will be a literal 1000 year reign of Christ but they reject what the Scripture plainly states about that reign. This is what the Scripture says:

[Speaking to Christians in the Church of Thyatira] *But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And **he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.***

*Revelation 2:25-27*

*And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.*

*Revelation 5:9-10*

*But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. **This is the first resurrection.** Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but **they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.***

*Revelation 20:5-6*

Could anything be clearer than the following statements?

~ We [those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb] shall reign on the earth.

~ He [in the churches] that overcometh...to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron

~ They [who are raised at the First Resurrection] shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years



Yet, in spite of these clear statements, Dispensationalists claim Gentile believers (the Church) will *not* be ruling the nations of the earth from the earth during the next age because their strictly literal/historical/grammatical interpretation of the Bible requires them to believe the Millennial Kingdom will be a strictly “Jewish” thing. Their system of interpretation forces them to think the “Church” will be residing in heaven while “Israel” (the Jews) rules and reigns over the nations of the earth, *from* the earth.

This idea is one of the most unscriptural positions a person can possibly take! In order to maintain it, you have to indulge in the same kind of intellectual dishonesty and intentional blindness Covenantalists indulge in, in order to promote *their* false views. It takes quite a bit of audacity to say Gentile believers will not be ruling and reigning with Christ on earth in the next age, and then turn around and say you believe the literal/historical/grammatical interpretation of Scripture! That’s the height of hypocrisy! In the end, Dispensationalists are no better than Covenantalists. They *all* pick and choose which passages they will interpret literally and which passages they will spiritualize, according to their own theological desires.

I don't care how many Old Testament prophecies a preacher or prophet claims to understand, or how many of those prophecies he can quote to support his views; the *New Testament* says we who are raised at the first resurrection will be functioning as God’s “priests” during the next age and that we will be carrying out that function “on the earth”. Any idea, any concept, any teaching that contradicts this is a lie.

*Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, **Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.** Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*

*Psalm 2:6-9*

Although the promises God gave to Abraham and his seed still pertain to the Jewish race, and although God has promised that a remnant of the Jewish race will partake of those promises in the last days, the fact is, those promises find their *ultimate* fulfilment in the *ultimate* seed of Abraham, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is Jesus Christ, not the Jewish race, that is the focus and center of everything—especially in the next age! God never promised to exalt the Jews (as a separate ethnic group) over the saved nations in the next age. He never promised that He would give the nations to the Jews in the next age. The promise about inheriting the nations and ruling over them was given to the Son. If you want to partake of *that* promise, then you must be found *in* Him.

The whole purpose of the Old Covenant was to give Historical Israel a chance to be found in the Son through faith in Jehovah, as He revealed Himself in the Old Testament. Since then, individuals from every tribe and tongue have been given the same opportunity to be found in the Son through faith in Jehovah, as He has revealed Himself in the New Testament—which was through person of the Lord Jesus. In the next age, the saved nations will also be given a chance to be found in the Son through faith in Jehovah, as He reveals Himself during that age—which will be through Messiah *and* His body.

No Jew or Gentile will be exalted over the nations or function as a priest of God to those nations in the next age unless they become part of the body of Messiah—and the body of Messiah is a “new creation”. The body of Messiah is neither Jew or Gentile.

For 60 years now, God has been moving to soften the hearts of Gentile believers towards the Jewish people and the Jewish State because the time for their redemption is drawing close. God has been focusing our attention on this whole area of understanding because it is an important part of His eternal plan and it will be realized in our time. However, as glorious as this event will be, the restoration of the Jewish people is only *one part* of a much larger end-time saga. Right now our attention is being drawn to them and our hearts are being opened to them because the time for this particular phase of God’s plan to be fulfilled is near. But once that restoration has been complete, that remnant will no longer be the focus of God’s plan. They will become part of a much larger entity, which is God’s new creation nation and *that nation* will be the focus of the next age.

Regarding the promises God made to Abraham, we are constantly being presented with only two choices on how to interpret them. We can choose Covenant Theology, which denies that the promises apply to the Jewish race *at all*. Or we can choose Dispensational Theology, which says the promises apply to the Jewish race *alone*. Those who have chosen Covenant Theology don’t even expect God to bring a remnant of National Israel back into the Olive Tree and they certainly aren’t looking for a literal 1000 year reign on this earth. Those who have chosen Dispensation Theology believe that in the end, God will fulfill the promises He made to Abraham and his seed, but the Church won’t be part of that fulfillment because the promises belong to the Jews *alone*.

The fact is, both these theologies are wrong. Covenant Theology *ignores* (or tries to explain away) what the New Testament says about the Jewish people, while Dispensational Theology *perverts* what the New Testament says about the Jewish people. Just as Covenantalists refuse to accept that the promises God made to Abraham and his seed still *apply* to the Jewish race (even in their unbelief), so Dispensationalists refuse to accept that the Jewish people can fulfill their original call and destiny *by* becoming part of the completed Olive Tree. They insist that the Jews must fulfill their call as a separate, biological race of people.

Paul’s theology is the only theology that is correct, and his theology states very clearly that “in Christ” every Adamic race is replaced! The Jewish race and all the Gentile races are replaced by the “new man”—if you are in Christ, that is. Therefore, if we want to be a part of what happens in the *next* age, we must become a “new creature” because only that new creature will be given authority over the nations during the Millennium.