

Does the nation of Israel have a distinct and separate future from the church in the kingdom of God?

New Year's Day 2000 [Alan Nairne](#) (1931-2009)

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I. The definitive place of the NT in the interpretation of the OT

To answer this question I believe we must understand the *meaning* of the Covenants, God's *purpose* for "Israel, and the *nature* of an "Israelite". Whilst we can pick up some clues from the Old Testament histories, the New Testament teaching is definitive as to the true significance of the covenants and histories of the Old Testament. This I cannot enough emphasize. In fact I will go so far as to say that without the NT the OT cannot be properly understood. Why is this so? Because Christ is the whole meaning and purpose of the OT. As Paul says concerning the Jews, who had the oracles of God (Rom.3:2), "...the children of Israel...their minds were blinded: for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains untaken away; which veil is done away in Christ" (II Cor.3:14). It was this blindness that not only caused the Jews of Jesus' day to mistakenly believe in a permanent and dominant national future for Israel and all she represented, but also caused them to reject their Messiah and his saving work.

I am afraid that much of today's interpretation of the Scriptures is very reminiscent of the way the Jews of Jesus' day interpreted them. We may not merit the plagues of Rev.22:18-19, or Paul's "anathema" of Gal.1:8-9 (AV), but it is better to make sure we stand on Biblical ground!

Writers on this subject usually point out that many of the Church Fathers (i.e. during the first few centuries AD) refer to a "millennial kingdom" in which the nation of Israel features prominently. Surely, we may think, they being so close to the Apostolic age should know what the Apostles taught? It is true, *where* there is clarity of statement (some Fathers are ambiguous), that *both* views are fairly equally represented. The other view is, of course, that there is no earthly millennial kingdom to follow the Second Coming of Christ. So they are not really any great help. Anyway, we base our view on Scripture, not on the Church Fathers, however valuable their writings may be. All that those Fathers who see a millennial kingdom indicate is that they agree with the views of the Jews, and, perhaps the majority of Jewish Christians of their times. That the Apostles did not so interpret the OT Scriptures I hope to show.

If we say, "Well, this "other view" sounds like the 'Replacement Theology' I have heard spoken against - but I would like to see how they arrive at their

ideas" - fine, I hope you see that there is a credible alternative understanding of Scripture. Alternatively, you may like to critique this paper. Equally fine. But I do hope you will do two things. One is, use OT and NT Scriptures in keeping with the sense of the *whole* NT. The other is, set forth a detailed description from Scripture of the proposed millennium and Israel's place in it, in a way that is not at variance with the NT. But, failing both these responses, or "Well, I am happy to believe what I have always understood, which the majority of Christians believe, anyway, and, what does it matter?", I guess what I have to say is not for you. To those who may wish to use this paper, I hope that my use of the KJV or RV will be no stumbling block. The use of any version will yield the same results.

Perhaps we can now briefly refresh our memories concerning the early salvation-histories about which the NT draws definitive conclusions.

II. Christ - the termination of OT redemptive prophecy

Salvation-history is continuous from the first promise of redemption given to Adam and Eve following the sin which they brought into the human race. This promise decreed warfare which would take place between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent (Gen.3:15). Whilst this warfare would in each generation be played out on the stage of human history, the prophecy related primarily to *THE SEED* who is Jesus, the Son of God. Paul makes this clear in the Galatian epistle (3:16) that although Abraham received covenant promises concerning his seed, the promise was not to Abraham's "seeds", the many, but to one *SEED*, who is Christ. Prophecy largely terminates upon HIM. It is only in Christ we inherit these redemptive promises. Rev.19:10 is to a similar effect - "...the testimony of *Jesus* is the spirit of prophecy." As Paul states, "Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to everyone that believes." Rom.10:4. Even when the church was seen afar off in the OT prophecies (Eph.3:5), its purpose was that "...unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph.3:21). And to the Colossians "...he is the head of the body, the church: ...that in all things he might have the preeminence." (Col.1:18).

In postulating a millennial kingdom, with Jewish dominance, sacrifices, temple, priesthood, etc., there is a subtle shift of emphasis away from Christ's preeminence, to say nothing of it being in plain contradiction to the messages of Galatians and Hebrews, as I hope we shall see.

III. The covenant promises to Abraham were redemptive

The covenant promises concerning God's favour to the human race continued down through Abraham's descendants. But the promises were not to *all* his descendants, but only to those who specifically embraced them, and this involved the election of God. It was very personal. Hence the rejection of not only Ishmael, Abraham's son through the slave girl Hagar, but also of Esau, in favour of Jacob his twin - both sons of Isaac, with Sarah, Abraham's true wife as their grandmother..

Continuing the history of Abraham's clan, Jacob's sons went down into Egypt, their descendants remaining there in excess of four hundred years, numerically becoming a threat to the stability of Egypt, where they were made slaves; the knowledge of the God of their Fathers being all but lost.

The books of Exodus to Deuteronomy tell us of God's redeeming power to deliver his people from Egypt, and of the arrangements he made at Sinai for his people to live and worship him acceptably. These arrangements, moral, civil and religious, are broadly comprehended under the term "The Law" - the so-called Mosaic covenant.

It is important to see that the clans of Jacob received their formal constitution as a nation at Sinai. Without this "Law" with its Levitical priesthood, elaborate sacrificial and purificatory ritual, and civil and hygiene laws, there would have been no "nation". Moreover, the Lord made it clear that in the event of apostasy the nation would be judged to the point of non existence (Deut.28 and Lev.26). Yet, even in the event of apostasy God's purposes will not fail, for he will ensure that a "remnant" will be left (cf. Lev.26:42ff) through whom the covenant promises would continue until their fulfillment in the Messiah. (cf. Rom.11:1-5) This feature is the burden of the prophets. But it is important to recognise that these purposes are fulfilled, not through an apostate nation, but through the remnant *within* that nation. More of this later.

Concerning the covenant at Sinai, we need to understand that, in essence, nothing had changed. Paul tells us (Gal.3:19) that the law was added, or, came alongside, that which was already in existence - i.e. the Abrahamic promises. That is, the Abrahamic covenant "embraced" the Mosaic covenant. The way of personal salvation, revealed in the Garden of Eden, (Gen.3:21; 4:4) through faith and sacrifice, was still the same for each individual. The "Law" was given, not to procure salvation, but to provide a format within which godly Hebrews could, as a matter of love to their God, in thankfulness, and in the spirit of the law (see Deut.10:16 & 30:6) live lives that were pleasing to him. The covenant was also given so that the Lord could display his power through the nation (Ex.34:10). Conversely, in the event of rebellion, chastisement would follow, and for total apostasy, rejection and destruction.

The NT makes it quite clear that the nation, land, priesthood, tabernacle, temple, offerings, were, like Eden, and so much else, picture books of the reality that was to come, and a vehicle to ensure that God's Deliverer would be able to come in the "fulness of time". What kind of duration was envisaged for the law - and, by implication the nation? *"Until the seed should come to whom the promises were made"* (Gal.3:19).

We have seen in the first paragraphs of this section that it was through Abraham's offspring that the covenant promises were passed down through the generations. Nevertheless, it may be a shock for me to tell you that being Hebrew or Jewish is nothing to do with blood. When Abraham was told to circumcise his household (Gen.14:14; 17:10-14) he did so, and included his 318 fighting men who would not have had his blood in their veins. These multiplied down the generations, and we are told that of those that went down into Egypt 70 were from the loins of Jacob - but they were so numerous that

they needed the land of Goshen to live in, only a tiny minority of whom would have descended from Jacob.

Can we forget the Moabitess Ruth who became part of the covenant people and a forbear of the Messiah? Or Uriah the Hittite and other Gentiles in the lists of David's mighty men who were adopted into the covenant people? To become a Jew was open to any Gentile.

Nevertheless it is clear that neither the accident of birth into the chosen nation, nor even undergoing the seal of circumcision was guarantee of being part of the "remnant", for such had to have the necessary faith to receive the promises of redemption through the coming Deliverer. What does Paul say? "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (Rom.9:6ff).

In the same place he deals with the election of Abraham's progeny, already considered. In Romans 2 he says, "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly....but he is a Jew which is one inwardly." (vv.28-29). There was, therefore a nation within a nation.

To the same effect is his argument "Know therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham..." (Gal.3:7), and "..if you are Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to *the promise.*" (Gal.3:29). At the end of the chapter he blesses the church in the words "peace...and mercy...upon the *Israel of God.*" (Gal.6:16). Some, who wish to retain a permanent status for Israel constituted as of old, would have us believe that Abraham has a future "earthly" seed and a "heavenly" seed. But such an interpretation (based partly on the "stars" and "sand" of Gen.22:17) is reading things into Scripture to fit a preconceived scheme, and in doing so denies the total teaching of the NT.

The book of Hebrews makes it clear that the Mosaic provisions of the Levitical priesthood, the sacrifices and the law were only temporary - "he takes away the first [covenant], that he may establish the second." (10:9). Earlier in chapter (8:13) the writer had said "In that he said a new covenant, he has made the first old. Now that which decays and waxes old is ready to vanish away." How can we square with these Scriptures the teaching that Israel and its Old Covenant shadows are to be restored? The book of Hebrews is devoted to teaching otherwise.

IV. How about Romans chapters 9-11??

We must conclude from these Scriptures that the olive tree of Romans chapter eleven is nothing less than the totality of the promises to Abraham. The natural branches therefore will have comprised those "of faith" in Israel, since they were first in opportunity. The people of God ("the election" (Rom.11:1-12)), Jews from OT times, and now Jews and Gentiles - form the olive tree, since the Abrahamic promises in Christ must now extend to all nations as was their original intent. Paul writing to both the Ephesian Christians (Eph.2:11-22) and those at Colossae (3:10-11) makes it clear that racial and national distinctions are forever gone.

What, then, did Paul mean when he said in Romans chapter eleven that "all Israel will be saved"? (v.26). It is totally within the sense of Scripture as we have looked at it, to believe that "all Israel" will be the totality of the elect, both Jew and Gentile, that is, the completed olive tree. I find that perfectly satisfying.

Now, undoubtedly, Paul gives us to understand that there *will* be a turning to God of Jews, resulting in unprecedented blessings to mankind (Rom.11:11-12). What sort of blessings? Ethnic Jews (the Scripture implies no more), natural branches that they are, will be grafted back again into the olive tree and comprise, with the Gentiles blessed by their response, the Church of God (vv.13-21).

It appears to me that those who believe in a special future for Israel that, in the purposes of God, are distinct and separate from the Church, are seeking to build up the Old Covenant that became obsolete (Heb.10:9) was "waxing old and is ready to vanish away" (Heb.8:13)

Moreover they must also (and do!) maintain the reestablishment of the Old Covenant. They have to, for without it the nation has no religious significance.

To the contrary, as we have seen, Israel "after the flesh" was only a means to an end - which end was eternal redemption through the Christ. Israel, had she seen "the things which belong[ed] unto [her] peace" (Luke 19:42) would have been foundational for the Church because she would have received her Messiah. The old forms having fallen away, she would have constituted the Church, the true Messianic people, and would have continued to be called "an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation....the people of God" (1 Peter 2:9-10) along with the Gentiles who likewise responded. As it is, they did not. The Gentiles did receive Jesus as the Christ, and therefore became the Messianic people as described by Peter.

But one way or the other, both the falling away of the old forms, and the demise of old fleshly Israel had to be permanent. For one thing it was apostate. For another, as long as it continued in its then present form Israel posed a threat to the true church. As it was, their long history of rebellion in slaying of prophets and wise men (Matt.23:31-36) culminated in the murder of God's Son, and upon that generation was promised the final judgment - "behold your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt.23:38). In the following chapter Jesus spells out this judgment - a razing of the temple to the ground, the nation pictured as a rotting carcass to be devoured by vultures (Matt.24:15-28). Until this took place in AD70, Israel was the prime mover in the persecution of the infant church.

What was the reason for this rejection of Messiah? Because in their unbelief and rebellion they wanted a political Messiah who would deliver them from the Roman oppressor, and create a powerful nation to whom the Gentiles would be subservient. This was a carnal interpretation of the OT prophecies, and is the picture created by those who believe in a restoration of the nation in God's purposes!

To those who so teach, the question must be asked - where biblically do you fit the idea of a revived Israel, dominant among the nations?

The short answer by those who propound it is - during the Millennium. I say "the short answer" because some see Israel beginning to take her place (in their understanding of future biblical history) some seven years before the Second Coming and the commencement of the Millennium. I regard these interpretations as peripheral and cannot deal with them in this paper. I shall therefore confine myself to examining the concept of the existence of Israel in a future Millennium, upon which the whole matter stands or falls.

V. Will there be a millennial kingdom??


The idea of a Millennium - a period of 1000 years to follow Christ's Second Coming is gained from the book of Revelation chapter 20. The fact that this period is mentioned only once in Scripture may not disqualify it from consideration if it is in keeping with other Scriptures. But I do not see it as such for the following three reasons, at least.

Firstly, that it occurs in a highly symbolic portion of Scripture ought to sound a warning. The book of Revelation is full of symbolic numbers - 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 12, 24, 42, 666, 1,000, 1260, 1600, 7000, 12,000, 144,000, 200,000,000 - a little search will find more. Is it not foolhardy to base such a concept foundational to a whole prophetic programme on a figure which any consistent hermeneutic would interpret as symbolic? Nevertheless, it is this very numeral that is used as a literal basis for supporting a great superstructure of the doctrine of the Millennium, with Israel's dominant place in it

Secondly, it is argued that chapter 19 which portrays the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus, immediately precedes the one thousand years millennium verses in chapter 20 of Revelation. Again, if the book was generally interpreted with each chapter chronologically following the previous one, it could be admissible. But the chapters lends themselves, indeed, demand, and usually are, interpreted in cycles. Whilst there are many variations in exactly *how* the cycles are to be arranged, chapter twenty can be seen to commence a fresh recapitulatory cycle. Again, it is perilous to built such a comprehensive prophetic scheme on such an uncertain foundation.

Thirdly the consistent testimony of the N T is that the Second Coming of Christ is the termination of history. Consider the following Scriptures:-

For the ungodly

-  What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?.....For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Matt.16:26-27
- The Lord is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. II Pet.3:9-1-
- Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all...Jude 14-15

- Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him,...and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Rev.1:7.

For the Church

- Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God. Luke 12:18
- Every man's work shall be made manifest: for *the day* shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire. I Cor.3:19
- Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you....but rejoice...that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad with exceeding joy. I Pet.4:12-13
- Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. James 5:7
- Gird up the loins of your mind...and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. I Peter 1:13
- Let your loins be girded..and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord...when he cometh. Luke 12:35-37.
- And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. I John 2:28
- When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Col. 3:4-5.
- It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like him..I John 3:2.
- Consider also the following Scriptures to the same effect - II Tim.4:8; Phil.3:20; I Cor.1:7-8; Luke 19:13; I Thess.5:23; Phil.1:16; Phil.1:9-10; I Thess.5:9-10; I Cor.11:26.

Consider also the parables of Jesus in Matthew chapter 13 concerning the harvest, which, he explains is the *end of the age*. This is but a small selection of Scriptures from the NT. **The consistent testimony is that Christ's Second Coming is *not* the beginning of a new time of probation for the ungodly, and a new start for Israel, or anybody else, but the *termination of history* with the resurrection of both wicked and godly dead, followed by judgment, and the eternal state. This is the consistent testimony of all the historic creeds. As I said earlier, we base our understanding of Scripture upon Scripture, not tradition, however ancient. But when the tradition totally conforms to Scripture we do well to ponder seriously before departing from their testimony.**

But what are we to do with all these prophecies in the OT which speak of a glorious future for the nation of Israel? Well, first of all we need to see what the NT says about the OT prophecies. There are a number of Scriptures which set out principles of interpretation.

VI. The New Testament use of Old Testament prophecies

Consider firstly Paul's testimony to king Agrippa in Acts 26 - "...I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying *none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come*: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles." (vv.22-23).

Secondly, Peter says:- "Of which salvation [i.e. our salvation] *the prophets* have inquired and searched diligently, *who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you*: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when **it** testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, *that not unto themselves, but unto us* they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that preached the gospel unto you..." I Peter 1:9-12.

In the first Scripture the expression "none other things" is pretty restrictive! Paul would restrict the message of the OT to *redemption*. Even Peter in the second Scripture is restrictive. "*UNTO US they did minister the things...*" So the burden of the Spirit of Christ in the prophets of old was redemption and the Church. Of course, it ought not to be necessary to say it, but clearly the Apostles were referring to the prophecies concerning the "age to come", the "days of Messiah", the "New Covenant" age, etc. in which they were themselves ministering. In saying "not unto themselves" they were not, of course, denying the other main burden of the prophets for their own times which concerned the apostasy of Israel and Judah, their captivities, and restoration. But the promises of restoration in the near future often merged into pictures of glorious prospects of the true Israel under her Deliverer in the present age.

In looking forward to this coming when the significance of the Old Covenant was to cease, and with it "Israel after the flesh" (I Cor.10:18), how could the Spirit of God convey the spiritual nature of the Church other than under the forms then existing? Is it not the same with ourselves concerning "heaven" described as having streets of gold, a temple a 1500 miles high cube (or maybe a pyramid) with a wall all around only 216 feet high! And those gates of pearl (some oysters!)!!!

Other OT Scriptures when interpreted literally often yield just as ridiculous results. Consider Ezekiel's parcelling out the land of Israel - using cubits it is far too small, using rods there is not room for it in Palestine! To say nothing of the fact that the restrictive features of the natural terrain are totally ignored. Moreover, are we going to reconstitute nations long since vanished - Moab, Ammon - for them to feature in end-time drama? And as for the lion eating straw as the ox (Isa.11:7), God *could* do it, but are we to believe he will recreate the lion's digestive system to suit?

How did the Apostles understand and use the OT prophecies? Let us consider their use of a couple of representative NT Scriptures. James' words to the Jerusalem council in Acts 15 -

"...Simeon [Peter] hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called...." (vv14-17).

The Apostles saw the "tabernacle of David" as a picture of the new people of God which included Gentiles in this present age. That is its plain meaning. What more familiar picture of the Church do we have in the NT but that of a Temple?

Take Peter's message on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 -

"...[Jesus] ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death:...Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried,...Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, *he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ...*" (vv.23-31).

David, "being a prophet" recognised that God's promises to him and his offspring related to none less than the Messiah himself, and that the Davidic throne was but a picture of the heavenly throne of "great David's greater Son". I believe we need to understand that these men of God in the OT had a lot more spiritual discernment than we give them credit for. They knew that they, and the history of their nation, were but shadows of the eternal substance. They did not entertain illusions of an indefinitely continuing present state of affairs. Why do so many of us ignore the Divine interpretation of these promises, and do not accept the fulfillment that even the Patriarchs, David and the Prophets saw?

Did Abraham think that he had the land for ever? No; but he knew that what it pictured was for ever. What does the writer to Hebrews tell us?

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out unto a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; ...By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, *as in a strange country,...for he looked for THE city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker IS GOD....*these all [the heroes of faith in this chapter] died in faith, not having received the promises, but *having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.* For they that say such things declare plainly that they ...desire a better country, that is, *an HEAVENLY*:wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a *CITY*."...these all...received not *the* promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Hebrews 11:8ff.

I assume my readers will know the Scriptures which refer to Jerusalem as the New Covenant heavenly city, but, hoping that you will read the contexts of all these Scriptures, you will find them in Gal.4:21ff and Heb.12:18ff. And, best known, perhaps, that in Revelation 21, also pictured as the bride of Christ. The true biblical significance of Jerusalem, or Zion is in its prefiguring of the corporate people of God (also pictured as the Bride of Christ) in this age. This is in contrast to Babylon of old, with the whore, prefiguring the corporate manifestations of a persecuting secular and religious world as described in the book of Revelation chapters 17 and 18. In each case there are two cities and two women. It may be exciting to remember the Six Day War, and follow the career of Saddam Hussein and his visions of a new Babylon, but the Scriptures

focus upon no such things any more than that of a biblically significant end-time Jerusalem located in Palestine.

Then was the promise to Abraham and his people of possession of the land to its utmost borders (Gen.15:18) never fulfilled? We are told that this is yet awaited. But the promise *was* utterly fulfilled, for we are told by Joshua (21:43,45 and 23:14)

"So the Lord gave unto Israel *all the land* which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein...there failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass."

Solomon in his day acknowledged this in almost identical words (I Kings 8:56). The selfsame boundaries promised to Abraham are also specified (I Kings 4:21,24). To ignore this testimony and insist that Israel has still "everlasting" title to the land is to ignore the explanation given in the NT and substitute something from Judaism.

VII. General Conclusions

Throughout the whole of the NT there is not a whisper of a 1000 years earthly Millennium after the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and, without doubting the sincerity and godliness of my brothers and sisters who do so believe, nevertheless we distort the Scriptures when we insist on this. I recognise that the NT quotes only a relatively few from the mass of the OT Scriptures, and that patience and discernment is required to understand some of them - and the writer to the Hebrews had to lament that so many of his readers lacked this (5:11-14).

We need this same patience and spiritual discernment to understand these and many O T Scriptures that are not used in the NT. It is all too easy to put them wholesale into a "Millennial bin" against a future earthly, national fulfillment, but it is bad hermeneutic. Fortunately such handling does not *preclude* the teaching of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, but if to attract Jews we teach them these things as part of the Gospel, we risk diluting it and sending them into a "bypath meadow". Restoration of Jewish nationalism and Judaism was no part of the Apostolic Gospel - it was precisely the opposite.

I know that perhaps most of us were taught these things from our youth. It was so in my own case. And, as I also know, early thought patterns resist change. "Surely", we say, "the establishment of a Jewish state in 1948 was prophetically significant?" Well, I am glad for the Jews sake that they have their land. But is it any more significant than the preservation of the Arabs who also have their own lands?

Let us, as Scripture teaches evangelise the Jews both in their own land and worldwide, and believe that God's purpose is for a turning *worldwide* of Jews to Him, with its consequent worldwide blessing. Keeping things in perspective, there are far more Jews living in America than ever there are in Israel. I have read, too, (in fact, copied and distributed) the article in a 1999 Renewal magazine of the Jerusalem rabbis' reading the NT and turning to the Lord.

Praise the Lord! May *all* Israelis worldwide turn to the Lord and bring in God's promised blessing to even more Gentiles. But let us not build up a Judaism with which Paul had constant conflict, and which God destroyed in AD70. The Lord's purposes now are greater than that; they are worldwide in keeping with the original promise to Abraham.

A last word (but one!). If Jewish Christians wish to incorporate their culture into their worship and service, that is excellent. As in my worship and service my "Englishness" will be apparent - that, too, I hope, is excellent!. I trust that our cultures will liberate us and not inhibit us. But let us not say that there is anything essentially superior in Jewish culture for the Christian. (A buzz word these days, is "roots"). But I fear that the supposed importance of our "Jewish roots" *is* taught today. But there is none (Gal.3:28,29).

We have already seen that inheriting the covenant promises has nothing to do with race or blood. Nevertheless Christians and Israelis make a racial claim of descent from old Israel as title to the promised land. There are further grounds on which that can never be fulfilled. Do any Israelis claim genealogical continuity back to even NT times? Most modern Jews are of Khazaric descent. Now whilst this can be debated, the Khazari race seems to lie behind the Ashkenazik Jews of Eastern Europe, and these Khazars converted to Judaism in the Middle Ages. Judaism, both medieval and modern has nothing to do with the OT. It originated in Pharisaic/Talmudic teaching. Judaism never approaches the Bible except through the Talmud, and therefore Judaism today owes far more to Eastern Europe than ever it does to the Old Testament.

We really do need to remember that this very Judaism, and all it stood for led that generation, (because they did not understand the prophecies but interpreted them rather similarly to those of us today who teach a Jewish restoration) to reject their Messiah. (Acts 13:27ff). Celebration of the new order under OT typical figures is fine, but that is a very different thing. The modern vogue is too much like establishing the old again. *The only true Jew* has always been one who by faith has embraced the promises of God.

Whole chapters - even books - have been written on the various aspects of this subject. There is much which I cannot deal with in a short paper such as this. It is suggestive rather than exhaustive. Although I believe that what I have set forth has credible and ancient origins in the history of interpretation, neither it, nor the alternatives I have sought to displace should be made a test of fellowship or orthodoxy. *THAT* covers only the fact of the personal Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with resurrection (or "rapture") upon which we all agree.

Finally, I wish to say that I have many friends whom I esteem in the Lord, who, whether they have investigated these things or not, believe in what I sought to correct in this paper. Actually, there are very few folks with whom I have the opportunity to discuss such matters. Sadly, most Christians I know do not have a detailed interest in Scripture. So this subject is not a big deal for me . I have not sought to "convert" them, and I am not on a crusade. It is far more important that we should all learn to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbour as ourself. And I trust that

no one will interpret anything written in this paper as anti-Semitic. Israel, as always, even in rebellion, is still "beloved for the Fathers' sakes" (Rom.11:28).

But I *am* concerned with what is biblically true concerning the whole range of Scripture, and have always been willing to unlearn what I thought I knew. Moreover, I have not just discovered these things. I have seen and embraced them for probably twenty-five years at least. I am still learning, and I find that exciting.

So in closing I wish you all God's richest blessing, and trust that, as the Berean Christians, we will search the Scriptures, daily, to see whether these things are so. Acts 17:10:ff.

Maranatha! Even so, come, Lord Jesus! (I Cor.16:22, Rev.22:20).

Alan Nairne, Witney, England, New Year's Day 2000

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A refutation of "Does The Nation of Israel Have A Future Separate and Distinct From The Kingdom of God?"

By [William B. Chalfant](#)

Dear Mr. Nairne:

I read with some interest your webpage and your remarks on the lack of a destiny for the nation of Israel. Here is my refutation. I hope you will take it in the right spirit. You said that you had little correspondence about your ideas.

Alan Nairne's "[Does The Nation of Israel Have A Future Separate and Distinct From The Kingdom of God?](#)" (ref. www.apocalipsis.org/Israel.htm)

Nairne confuses "seed" (singular) and "seed" (plural) as many others do:

although Abraham received covenant promises concerning his seed, the promise was not to Abraham's "seeds"... It is only in Christ we inherit these redemptive promises.

Nairne falls into the same trap of relegating the prophecies concerning the millennial kingdom, since they pertain to God's people the Jews, into a second-class status unworthy of the Lord:

In postulating a millennial kingdom, with Jewish dominance, sacrifices, temple, priesthood, etc., there is a subtle shift of emphasis away from Christ's preeminence, to say nothing of it being in plain contradiction to the messages of Galatians and Hebrews, as I hope we shall see.

Nairne believes that it is a contradiction of Galatians and Hebrews to believe the prophecies of the Old Testament, which clearly demonstrate the coming of a millennial kingdom.

And Nairne goes to great lengths to demonstrate the expungement of Israel (when this is not the case), coupling their existence as a people with their handling of the Law, and ignoring the redemptive promises of God made to them concerning their repentance:

It is important to see that the clans of Jacob received their formal constitution as a nation at Sinai. Without this "Law" with its Levitical priesthood, elaborate sacrificial and purificatory ritual, and civil and hygiene laws, there would have been no "nation". Moreover, the Lord made it clear that in the event of apostasy the nation would be judged to the point of nonexistence (Deut.28 and Lev.26).

Nairne uses the phrase "the point of nonexistence" because he knows full well that God did not speak the obliteration of the nation of Israel ever, but such reasoning complements his "replacement theology". But Nairne is forced to recognize the continued existence of a "remnant".

Nairne uses his "replacement" idea to do away with the nation of Israel when "the seed comes":

The NT makes it quite clear that the nation, land, priesthood, tabernacle, temple, offerings, were, like Eden, and so much else, picture books of the reality that was to come, and a vehicle to ensure that God's Deliverer would be able to come in the "fullness of time". What kind of duration was envisaged for the law - and, by implication the nation? "Until the seed should come to whom the promises were made" (Gal.3:19).

Nairne rejects any teaching concerning a future for physical Jews as a nation:

Some, who wish to retain a permanent status for Israel constituted as of old, would have us believe that Abraham has a future "earthly" seed and a "heavenly" seed. But such an interpretation (based partly on the "stars" and "sand" of Gen.22:17) is reading things into Scripture to fit a preconceived scheme, and in doing so denies the total teaching of the NT.

Nairne believes the old "saw" that all dispensationalists teach that the Old Covenant and the sacrifices will be re-established in the millennium:

The book of Hebrews makes it clear that the Mosaic provisions of the Levitical priesthood, the sacrifices and the law were only temporary - "he takes away the first [covenant], that he may establish the second." (10:9). Earlier in chapter (8:13) the writer had said "In that he said a new covenant, he has made the first old. Now that which decays and waxes old is ready to vanish away." How can we square with these Scriptures the teaching that Israel and its Old Covenant shadows are to be restored? The book of Hebrews is devoted to teaching otherwise.

Nairne uses Romans 9-11 concerning the Olive Tree to do away with the promises that God made to the nation of Israel:

We must conclude from these Scriptures that the olive tree of Romans chapter eleven is nothing less than the totality of the promises to Abraham. The natural branches therefore will have comprised those "of faith" in Israel, since they were first in opportunity. The people of God ("the election" (Rom.11:1-12)), Jews from OT times, and now Jews and Gentiles - form the olive tree, since the Abrahamic promises in Christ must now extend to all nations as was their original intent. Paul writing to both the Ephesian Christians (Eph.2:11-22) and those at Colossae (3:10-11) makes it clear that racial and national distinctions are forever gone.

Now while Nairne has rejected any rights or further status of national Israel (racial and national distinctions are "forever gone", he says), his interpretation of Romans 11 compels him to conclude:

Ethnic Jews (the Scripture implies no more), natural branches that they are, will be grafted back again into the olive tree and comprise, with the Gentiles blessed by their response, the Church of God (vv.13-21).

But these Jews have no national distinction or national status, because, in his view, the nation of Israel can have no religious significance (and this in spite of the numerous prophecies pertaining to the national restoration of Israel, and in spite of the Lord's tacit acknowledgment of a future national restoration of the national kingdom in Acts 1.6,7). There is no remorse or mercy in Nairne's scheme: "the demise of old fleshly Israel had to be permanent". He quotes Matthew 23.38, "your house is left unto you desolate", but conveniently ignores the next contextual passage: "Ye shall not see me henceforth, TILL ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 23.39). Now, if verse 38 is addressed to the entire nation, then we must conclude that verse 39 is likewise addressed to the entire nation, giving a FUTURE time in which the entire nation will accept and recognize the Lord as their Messiah (in other words, a national restoration, just as the prophets foretold).

Nairne, like so many preterists (and unlike many premillennial post-tribs), applies Matthew 24.15-28 correctly to the Jews, but ignores the context of Matthew 24.29-31, which takes place "immediately" (euthus, eutheos, an adverb of time, which has the meaning of "at once", or "immediately"). The events of Matthew 24.15-28, if they are to be relegated to the first century, must also include the contextual events of Matthew 24.29-31, the cataclysmic events surrounding the return of the Lord Jesus Christ from on high. These events, following the opening of the sixth seal (well attested in such Old Testament passages also as Isaiah 13.10, Isaiah 34.4, and in other OT prophets), prophesy of the very last days. One cannot separate the events of the Great Tribulation from the return of the Lord at Armageddon, when the nations shall be judged.

Nairne believes that a spiritual interpretation of the prophets will yield his brand of prophecy, while a carnal interpretation yields dispensational teaching (that is, a literal interpretation). Unfortunately, for his cause, the apostles (e.g., Matthew), and even the Lord Himself, applied a literal interpretation to the Old

Testament prophecies. Any study of Matthew will produce such a conclusion. Isn't it odd that preterists are willing to accept the interpretation of the prophets supplied by Matthew and even Jesus until they get to Matthew 24, and then they fly willy-nilly into the realms of biblical imagery and fanciful interpretations, which far exceed even the excesses of ultra-dispensationalism?

Since the idea of a future millennium provides the repository for a future, revived national Israel, Nairne proceeds to attempt to abolish the "millennium" itself (thus, we might expect to see the rise of amillennialism among those who reject the claims of Israel in the Scriptures). The number "one thousand" must now (with this interpretation) become "symbolical" (a la Campbellism). It does not mean "1000" anymore. Indeed, the entire teaching of the "millennium" is based upon this number, which is merely "symbolical". Is this the way to a sound hermeneutic?

And so, having done away with the "thousand years", now we must consider that "history" ends with the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth. Nairne states, "The consistent testimony of the NT is that the Second Coming of Christ is the termination of history". We might well ask concerning this astounding conclusion: Why should He even come back then? Will He not sit on the throne of David and rule? Will the nations not be judged (Matthew 25)? Why intervene at all when Jerusalem is surrounded by the armies of the nations (Zechariah 14)?

What About All Of Those Prophecies In The Old Testament Which Speak Of A Glorious Future For The Nation Of Israel?

Nairne raises the proper question:

But what are we to do with all these prophecies in the OT which speak of a glorious future for the nation of Israel?

Unfortunately, he does not have an adequate answer. What is his answer? It is to selectively quote some New Testament passages, and attempt to mold an interpretation that is satisfactory to his position:

Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles. -Acts 26.22,23 .

Nairne makes a fabulous conclusion from Paul's use of the phrase "none other things". From Nairne's opinion and conclusion, we are to deduce that the apostle Paul was telling King Agrippa that everything that Moses and the prophets said "should come" pertained only to New Testament salvation. All of the promises concerning the land, the future restoration of the nation of Israel, and the promises made to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are thus forgotten and cast aside. The message of the OT, Nairne tells us, is restricted to "redemption". And redemption cannot include any other promises that God has made (even if they were unconditional and made by an oath).

But the apostle Paul is not speaking about the other promises that God made in Acts 26.22,23. Paul is merely saying to Agrippa that what Paul is preaching is solidly backed up in what Moses and the prophets have said. The phrase "none other things" pertained to the subject matter of what Paul is preaching. Paul is not saying that there are not other promises made by God in Moses and the prophets.

Nairne also quotes from 1 Peter 1.9-12, and concludes that "the burden of the Spirit of Christ in the prophets of old was redemption and the church". But this is to conclude more than the passage in Peter reveals. Peter is not doing away with the promises made through the prophets to Israel, Peter is speaking of the New Testament salvation. Peter is not speaking of the promises made to the nation of Israel, but rather of the "promise of the Father" (Acts 1.4,5), which is to the church. While the prophets prophesied of redemption and made a few references to the NT church, they also made many prophecies concerning the nation of Israel.

Unfortunately, as is the case of many preterists (and others who seemingly despise the literal things of God), Nairne takes the same attitude, as the following shows:

In looking forward to this coming when the significance of the Old Covenant was to cease, and with it "Israel after the flesh" (I Cor.10:18), how could the Spirit of God convey the spiritual nature of the Church other than under the forms then existing? Is it not the same with ourselves concerning "heaven" described as having streets of gold, a temple a 1500 miles high cube (or maybe a pyramid) with a wall all around only 216 feet high! And those gates of pearl (some oysters!)!!!

Nairne misuses 1 Corinthians 10.18, which says nothing at all about the demise of fleshly Israel, but merely shows that Paul still recognized the existence of a fleshly Israel. And he maintains that the prophets used "the forms then existing" (e.g., tabernacle, temple, other types and shadows) to portray "the spiritual nature of the church". This is not a bad comparison if one does not thereby conclude that God, by doing so, is condemning the people of the "forms then existing" to complete extinction as a nation. That goes further than the Scriptures teach. But the tone taken by Nairne in referring to the description of heaven is unfortunate, to say the least. He mocks "gates of pearl" (some oysters!), and "streets of gold", a "temple 1500 miles high"(!), and a "wall 216 feet high" (!) (the dimensions are apparently his).

And Nairne tops this assault upon the veracity of the Scriptures (at least, the "literal" veracity) with this: "Other Old Testament Scriptures when interpreted literally often yield just as ridiculous results". They are ridiculous to him. He attacks the literal interpretation of Ezekiel's millennial temple and vegetarian lions during the millennium. He is apparently unaware of Genesis 3.30, where God told Adam and Eve before the Fall:

And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every living thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat (food): and it was so".

God did not expand this vegetarian command until after the Flood, when He told Noah:

Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. -Genesis 9.3

But when you take away the literal interpretation that makes good sense, then you produce "nonsense", and place whatever interpretation that fits with your philosophy. When you throw out any idea of a "dispensation" in the Bible, then you are bound the inability to perceive anything different that God might do. This was the problem of the Jews during the waning days of the what is called "the Old Covenant" (the Mosaic covenant). Nairne doubts the possible re-creation of ancient nations such as "Moab" and "Ammon" (components, as I understand it, of the nation of Jordan today), but he ignores the fact that Israel was re-created in 1948 after centuries of dispersion (a modern miracle).

We have mentioned already that Nairne ignores the literal interpretation of prophecies by the apostle Matthew and even the Lord Jesus Christ, which would establish the validity of literal interpretation. Instead, he chooses a couple of passages that he feels will vindicate his symbolical and allegorical interpretative method (actually, a method introduced in the early centuries of the church by the gnostics and the Catholics).

One of his first choices is a passage in Acts 15.14-17, wherein the apostle James interprets a prophecy from Amos 9.11. Nairne interprets this to mean that "the apostles saw the 'tabernacle of David' as a picture of the new people of God, which included Gentiles in this present age". This is a little bit more than James actually said. James noted that Peter reported how "that God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name" (Acts 15.14). James merely adds, "And to this agree the words of the prophets". James then proceeds to quote Amos 9.11. He does not say that the "tabernacle of David was a picture of the new people of God", but rather he merely noted that the prophet Amos foresaw a day in the which God would take a people out of the Gentiles "for his name". It was the concept of Gentiles coming to the Lord that James saw in the prophecy, and not a new concept of the "tabernacle of David". Nairne has symbolized the "tabernacle of David" to be something that James did not intend, giving an explanation that James did not give. This is the problem with "spiritualizing" and "symbolizing" the plain meaning of the word of God.

Nairne takes the same liberty with the passage in Acts 2.23-31, elevating the throne of David to something that it never was: a "heavenly throne". David never understood that his earthly throne was actually a "heavenly throne", and neither did Peter. The reason why preterists must do away with the Davidic throne is that it means there is a coming millennial reign on earth. This was the understanding of the prophets, including David, who was also a prophet. Nairne thinks that to make the Davidic throne a "heavenly throne" demonstrates "spiritual discernment". Actually, it demonstrates a disregard for the clear meaning of the word of God. David's throne was not a heavenly throne, and there is no passage in Scripture which shows any ascension of David's throne into heaven. Christ has been raised from the dead, and He has ascended into heaven, but He is returning to earth one day to sit on the throne of David in

Jerusalem during the millennial reign of the Son of David. There is nothing in the passage of Acts 2.23-31 to substantiate Nairne's claim that the "throne of David", which was (and is) an earthly throne, has become a "heavenly throne". This interpretation is, in effect, to deny the humanity of Christ through its implications.

Are Preterists "Spiritual" While Dispensationalists Are "Carnal"?

Nairne, like many preterists and those who reject the simple, literal interpretation of the word of God, ignore large portions of the Scriptures, when it suits their purposes. They assume that because they glorify heavenly things at the expense of earthly promises and earthly things which God loves that they do God a service and therefore possess more spirituality than those who take the word of God literally. They are "spiritual" and their dispensational brethren are "carnal".

Nairne uses two passages in Joshua 21.43,45, and also Joshua 23.14, as follows:

And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. There failed not aught of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.

And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.

And then in 1 Kings 4.21:

And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.

And then again in 1 Kings 8.56:

Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.

And thus Nairne believes he has demonstrated that God has fulfilled His promises concerning the land and therefore no need exists to be concerned about the future restoration of the kingdom of Israel and their future occupation of the land.

However, it is a simple matter to show how inadequate this approach is. It ignores a great deal of subsequent prophecy.

While it is true that Israel went into the land of Canaan and conquered the land in the book of Joshua.

Joshua 11.23, for example, says:

So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes.

Did God Give The Land Of Canaan To The Children Of Israel Forever?

In actuality, Nairne questions the validity of the promise of the land made to Abraham. He asks, "Did Abraham think that he had the land forever? No, but he knew that what it pictured was forever". Is this what the plain word of God says? Or is this some more allegorization, which adds to the Scripture?

Genesis 17.7 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. 8 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.

The plain word of God says that God made an unconditional promise to Abraham and to his descendants (the only condition being the seal of the covenant which was circumcision) to give the land of Canaan for "an everlasting possession". This was also the seed (plural) of Abraham "in their generations". God promised not only to be Abraham's God, but also "their (Abraham's seed in their generations) God". But Nairne has attempted to negate this promise, saying that Abraham did not actually believe that he would have the land "forever". Is God then a liar? God forbid.

God renewed this unconditional promise to Jacob, as He stood at the top of the ladder:

Genesis 28.13 And behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; 14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in they seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

Carefully notice that the word "seed" here is again only to be interpreted as plural. The "seed" which shall be "as the dust of the earth".

God once again renews this promise in Genesis 35.12 to Jacob:

And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.

This is confirmed in Exodus 32.13, when Moses says to God:

Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of

heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever.

After this Moses cried out this reminder of the promise that God had made, the Lord "repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people" (Exodus 32.14). God keeps His promises.

God Promises To Bring Israel Back Into Their Own Land And Establish A New Covenant With Israel

Ezekiel 11.17 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land. 18 And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence. 19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh.

Notice the phrase: "I will give you the land". This is connected with an ingathering of Israel out of the countries where they have been scattered. The acceptance of a New Covenant could not have occurred until after Calvary, but this prophetic passage is connected with the acceptance of the Covenant and the return to the land from a worldwide dispersion. It could not have been the return from Babylon. At this point in time, the worldwide dispersion by the Romans in the first century is significantly drawing to a close. A New Covenant acceptance by the Jews could soon follow, since this passage connects the two events.

The return of Israel to the land is prophesied in Israel. The Scripture is quite clear that this is not the return from the Babylonian exile:

Isaiah 11.10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. 11 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. 12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Verse 10 of this prophecy is obviously speaking about the appearance of Jesus, and the New Testament church. Verse 11, however, speaks of a second return from a worldwide dispersion of "the remnant of his people", "the outcasts of Israel", and "the dispersed of Judah" from "the four corners of the earth". There can be little doubt that this situation shall occur "in the last days".

This is an interesting passage (chapter 11 of Isaiah), because this chapter begins with a description of Armageddon (see Revelation 19, compare to Isaiah 11.4) and the Millennium (see Revelation 20, compare to Isaiah 11.5-9, which speaks of conditions during the coming Millennium).

Jeremiah 30.10,11, which is a passage in close proximity to a passage speaking of the Great Tribulation (Jeremiah 30.5-9) states:

Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed ((plural)) from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

God promises to restore health to Israel and heal her of her wounds (Jeremiah 30.17). The restoration of Israel is to be "considered...in the latter days" (Jeremiah 30.24). If we were to posit the "latter days" as exclusively applying to the first century AD, we could not say that this prophecy would have been fulfilled.

Jeremiah 31.10 Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.

Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the LORD of hosts is his name: If these ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed ((plural)) of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed ((plural)) of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD. -Jeremiah 31.35-37

God promises that He is going to regather Israel and He is going to keep her.

Jeremiah 32.37 Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. 38 And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. 39 And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. 40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. 41 Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul.

It is evident that an "everlasting covenant" was NOT made with the children of Israel when they returned from the Babylonian exile. Nor did they "dwell safely". So there remains a future "return to the land" (which is now in progress).

Jeremiah 33.14 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. 15 In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and

righteousness in the land. 16 In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. 17 For thus saith the LORD; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; 18 Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually. 19 And the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, saying, 20 Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; 21 Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. 22 As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me. 23 Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, 24 Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the LORD hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them. 25 Thus saith the LORD; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; 26 Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.

This long passage clearly demonstrates that God has no intention of casting away His people the nation of Israel. Before God would cast away the nation of Israel, day and night would cease on the planet earth. Moreover, the role of the family of David and the role of the Levites (insofar as it pertains to the nation of Israel) is assured forever. The "burnt offerings", "the meat offerings", and the "sacrifices" will surely have a different character in the Millennium. But the promises of God, pertaining to the house of Israel and the house of Judah here, are to be accomplished in the "Branch of Righteousness" (the Lord Jesus Christ), and certainly not in the days immediately following the return from Babylonian exile.

The book of Hosea illustrates that just as the prophet Hosea brought back his unfaithful wife so will God will back Israel in the last days.

Hosea 3.4 For the children of israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. 5 Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.

Certainly, this is an embarrassment for those who claim the "latter days" expired in the first century AD. For in the first century AD the children of Israel did not return to the land, and they did not return to seek the Lord their God, and "David their king", nor did they "fear the Lord and his goodness" at that time.

Hosea 6.1 Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. 2 After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

God Promises To Defend The Land Of Canaan For The Sake Of The Children Of Israel

Joel 3.1 For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem. 2 I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.

Certainly, God did not "gather all nations" together against Jerusalem in 70 AD. In fact, if one carefully analyzes this prophecy, God does not gather the nations to judge Jerusalem (as preterists claim for 70 AD), but rather God, in this prophecy, gathers all nations to "plead with them for (on behalf of) my people and my heritage Israel". Part of God's case is they have scattered Israel "among the nations", and, this most significantly, "parted my land". In 70 AD, the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem was not "lifted" ("brought again"), but rather the Jews went into captivity. Joel 3, then, refers to a later endtime event and not a first century event, as some claim.

Joel 3, of course, refers to the Battle of Armageddon (see Revelation 19). It is in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Megiddo) that God will judge the heathen (the Gentile nations), who have gathered against Jerusalem. This event is compared to a harvest (Joel 3.13, see Revelation 14.15-20).

Joel 3.15 states, "The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining". This is the time of the "sixth seal" (see Revelation 6.12-14; Matthew 24.29; Mark 13.24; Luke 21.25; Isaiah 13.10; Isaiah 24.23; Joel 2.31, 3.15; Acts 2.19,20. All of these passages show the clear demarcating line of the sixth seal, which announces the end of the Great Tribulation period (the Wrath of the anti-christ), and the precipitate coming of the Wrath of God Almighty.

But these endtime cataclysmic events are not the judgment of Jerusalem brought about by the agency of the Roman armies. Joel 3.16 states that, at that time:

The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel..

Then can this be the Lord wreaking judgment and destruction upon the city of Jerusalem as some preterists say? On the contrary, the Lord comes to the rescue to deliver Jerusalem from the heathen nations (not just Rome). And Joel continues: "But Judah shall dwell forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation" (Joel 3.20).

It is useless to try to deprive the nation of Israel of the promises of restoration made by God Himself.

Nairne poses the question:

"Surely", we say, "the establishment of a Jewish state in 1948 was prophetically significant?" Well, I am glad for the Jews sake that they have their land. But is it any more significant than the preservation of the Arabs who also have their own lands?

But is this answer satisfactory? No, for several reasons: (1) There are scarcely any prophecies about the restoration of Arab nations; (2) there is no nation like Israel which lost its land, its capital, and its government, for centuries, and then miraculously was restored to become a powerful nation-especially in view of the prophecies which declared that one day this would happen, and (3) many of the endtime prophecies depend upon the re-establishment of this particular nation (Israel). This is more than co-incidental and cannot be so lightly dismissed.

Most importantly, Nairne completely misunderstands the desire and the purpose of many "dispensationalists" (that I know about anyway). He mentions this upon hearing about Rabbis in Jerusalem reading the New Testament with a new interest:

Praise the Lord! May all Israelis worldwide turn to the Lord and bring in God's promised blessing to even more Gentiles. But let us not build up a Judaism with which Paul had constant conflict, and which God destroyed in AD70. The Lord's purposes now are greater than that; they are worldwide in keeping with the original promise to Abraham.

Notice his "Gentilocentric" prejudice, "...bring in God's promised blessing to even more Gentiles". Is this in consonance with the apostle Paul's statements in Romans 11? Is it not rather "To the Jew first and also to the Greek"? And then the phrase "let us not build up a Judaism". This implies that dispensationalists, or premillennialists, want to re-build the worst type of Judaism ("the Judaizers"), and falsely concludes that "God destroyed (Judaism) in AD 70". The truth of the matter is that Judaism continued to exist. Judaizers in the Christian church became less of a problem not because of the destruction of Jerusalem, but rather because the church became so "Gentile" (and consequently went into Catholicism and other false teaching) that "Judaizers" no longer had any influence.

And then Nairne makes an astounding statement that the New Testament church has no Jewish "roots". To prove this far-fetched pronouncement, he quotes Galatians 3.28,29 (which has more to do with identification with Christ rather than any "roots"). The New Testament church was founded by the Son of God (who also happened to be a Jewish Rabbi, who said "Salvation is of the Jews", John 4.22), and 13 Jewish apostles (Paul and the Twelve). In fact, the apostle Paul said that we are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone". We cannot understand the total importance of the Bible without a proper context. Old Testament Scriptures were written in mostly the Hebrew tongue, while the

Gospels center around Jewish life and customs. What an astounding statement to declare that the NT church has no Jewish "roots"! Of course, the word of God rises above its Jewish culture, but, on the other hand, to say that there are no Jewish roots is not accurate either.

The racial aspect is also treated by Nairne. He says, "Most modern Jews are of Khazaric descent", and "Judaism today owes far more to Eastern Europe than ever it does to the Old Testament". This he concludes from his belief that the modern Jews (the Ashkenazic Jews) are descended from the Khazars.

But many DNA studies scientifically show that the lie about Jews Being Khazars has been exposed:

Like the other Jewish communities in the study, the Ashkenazic community of Northern and Central Europe, from which most American Jews are descended, shows less diversity than expected in its mitochondrial DNA, perhaps reflecting the maternal definition of Jewishness -Russian Jewish Genetics, Khazaria Info Center

Noting that the Y chromosome points to a Middle Eastern origin of Jewish communities and the mitochondrial DNA to a possibly local origin, Dr. Goldstein said that the composition of ordinary chromosomes, which carry most of the genes, was impossible to assess. 'My guess,' Dr. Goldstein said, 'is that the rest of the genome will be a mixture of both.'

-Ibid, Dr. David Goldstein

Max Gross. "'A Certain People': Study Confirms Deep Similarities Among Jews." Forward (August 16, 2002): B11. Excerpts:

"Professor Ariella Oppenheim of Hebrew University, a geneticist of mixed Ashkenazic and Sephardic descent and one of six scientists who authored the study, called the results surprising. 'I expected a few more admixtures,' Oppenheim told the Forward. Almost all the researchers expected to see a greater link between Ashkenazic Jews and non-Jewish Eastern Europeans. They thought they would see in the bloodlines the results of Eastern European pogroms, when many Jewish women were raped, producing offspring whose biological fathers were not Jewish.... 'It had an effect,' Oppenheim said, but it didn't significantly alter the gene pool. Ashkenazic Jews are still closer, genetically, to Sephardic and Kurdish Jews than to any other population.... 'Part of [the study] was financed by [the government of] India,' Oppenheim said.... The scientists looked at Y-chromosomes, which come from the male, 'Mostly because [they] give us a bit of a simpler picture,' Oppenheim said. Oppenheim said that a more thorough study, involving mitochondrial DNA, which comes from the female, will soon get under way."

Ivan Oransky. "Tracing Mideast Roots Back to Isaac and Ishmael: Study of Y Chromosome Suggests a Common Ancestry for Jews and Arabs." The Forward (May 19, 2000). Excerpts:

"The study also found the degree of intermarriage by the Askenazi Jewish population over the past 2000 years to be remarkably small. The study,

published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences by University of Arizona geneticist Michael Hammer and colleagues from Italy, Israel, England and America, refutes some earlier studies which suggested that modern Jews were mainly descendants of converts -- particularly the Turkish Khazars -- with high rates of intermarriage.... The director of the human genetics program at the New York University School of Medicine and a co-author of the paper, Harry Ostrer, told The Forward that... the story provides a useful allegory for the roots of Jews and Arabs. 'We're the children of a discrete number of founders who lived in the Middle East, where these Y chromosomes originated and became concentrated.', Dr. Ostrer said.... Dr. [Arno] Motulsky, who was not involved with the study, said that the results suggest that genes from non-Jewish males have not entered the Jewish population to any great extent.... The study could raise important questions about who is a Jew. For example, the results suggest that Ethiopian Jews, thought to be long separated from other Jewish groups, may be more closely related to North African non-Jews than to other Jews. Follow-up studies are already being planned. Dr. Ostrer is hoping to collect genetic information from 1000 Ashkenazi Jews to study migrational patterns across Europe. Dr. Hammer said he will study the DNA for mitochondria... This will shed light onto the rate than which women intermarried into Jewish communities, since these genes are strictly passed by the mother."

Nicholas Wade. "Y Chromosome Bears Witness to Story of the Jewish Diaspora." The New York Times (May 9, 2000). Excerpts:

"The analysis provides genetic witness that these communities have, to a remarkable extent, retained their biological identity separate from their host populations, evidence of relatively little intermarriage or conversion into Judaism over the centuries.... The results accord with Jewish history and tradition and refute theories like those holding that Jewish communities consist mostly of converts from other faiths, or that they are descended from the Khazars, a medieval Turkish tribe that adopted Judaism.... But present-day Ethiopian Jews lack some of the other lineages found in Jewish communities, and overall are more like non-Jewish Ethiopians than other Jewish populations, at least in terms of their Y chromosome lineage pattern.... Roman Jews have a pattern quite similar to that of Ashkenazis, the Jewish community of Eastern Europe. Dr. Hammer said the finding accorded with the hypothesis that Roman Jews were the ancestors of the Ashkenazis. Despite the Ashkenazi Jews' long residence in Europe, their Y signature has remained distinct from that of non-Jewish Europeans."

Joel J. Elias. "The Genetics of Modern Assyrians and their Relationship to Other People of the Middle East." Assyrian Health Network (July 20, 2000). Excerpts:

"Based on earlier studies using classical genetic methods⁷, Cavalli-Sforza et al. came to the conclusion 'that Jews have maintained considerable genetic similarity among themselves and with people from the Middle East, with whom they have common origins.' Evidence for the latter concept was very convincingly made and extended by an international team of scientists [Hammer et al.] in a very recent research article⁸, widely reported in the press, in which the genetics of different Middle Eastern populations were studied using a completely different method than the classical methods that form the great

majority of papers in the Cavalli-Sforza et al book. The research involved direct DNA analysis of the Y chromosome, which is found only in males and is passed down from father to son. Seven different Jewish groups from communities in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East were compared to various non-Jewish populations from those areas. The results showed, first of all, that 'Despite their long-term residence in different countries and isolation from one another, most Jewish populations were not significantly different from one another at the genetic level.' Furthermore, the genetic characteristics of Jews were shown to be distinctly different from (non-Jewish) Europeans, suggesting that very little admixture occurred between Jews and Europeans, even after about 80 generations of Jews in Europe.... In fact, the Palestinians and Syrians were so close to the Jews in genetic characteristics that they 'mapped within the central cluster of Jewish populations.'"

7. Carmelli, D. and Cavalli-Sforza, L.L. The genetic origin of the Jews: A multi-variate approach. Hum. Biol., 51:41-61. 1979.

8. Hammer, M.F. et al. [12 authors]. Jewish and Middle Eastern non-Jewish populations share a common pool of Y-chromosome biallelic haplotypes. Proceedings National Academy Sciences USA...

[William B. Chalfant](#)

* * * * *

Reply to [critique](#) by William B. Chalfant

By Alan Nairne (1931-2009)

Dear brother in Christ

Reply to [critique](#) by William B. Chalfant of my web article *Does the nation of Israel have a future separate and distinct from the Church in the Kingdom of God?* . (ref.apocalipsis.org/israel.htm) By [Alan Nairne](#)

Thank you for your critique of my web article. You have done me the honour of quoting me at length, and I appreciate that you have carefully studied my article.

Having been a dispensationalist at one time, I think that I am aware of where you are coming from. I assume that you are a dispensationalist from your remark that I [Nairne] "believe the old 'saw' that all dispensationalists teach that the Old Covenant and sacrifices will be re-established in the millennium." Does this mean that you do not believe this? Yet you seem elsewhere to wish to take Ezekiel's land and John's temple in Revelation (even to the streets of gold and gates of pearl!) very literally. To take Ezekiel's temple very literally, yet reject Ezekiel's (Mosaic) form of worship and sacrifices does not seem to stack up. But if I deal with your objections as you state them I shall probably be OK. You speak of the "restoration" of the nation. But if you abandon any part of Ezekiel's vision of the

temple you are restoring nothing, and you have a purely secular nation; and what has happened to your literalism? Some modern "progressive dispensational" theologians no longer merit the dispensational label, because they have abandoned so many of what they feel are indefensible traditional doctrines. I notice that you acknowledge that the OT foresaw (you refer to Isaiah 11:10) the NT church. Well, that is a big step forward. I notice, also, that in connection with Ezekiel 11:19 you speak about the Jews accepting the New Covenant. Presumably, as this is after the rapture of the Church according to your scheme(?), they can form no part of the Church. But, my mind is struggling now. They accept the New Covenant, but the Old Covenant provisions of priesthood, sacrifice (Ezekiel) etc, which the New ends, according to Hebrews, is adopted(?). Are there two New Covenants, one for us, and one for them? However, this is not part of our discussion. As I shall address features that you, yourself, raise, it should not confuse the issue for me. I am disappointed that you have not done as I requested in section II. of my paper - to set forth a detailed description from Scripture of the proposed millennium and Israel's place in it.

To my mind the best OT definition of the future kingdom is that found in Daniel. As you will know, "kingdom" is a rare word in the eschatological sense in the OT - restricted I think to Daniel. And there it is anything but a Jewish kingdom, for it is one where "all people, nations, and languages shall serve him". Moreover his dominion is an "everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Clearly, this is not a 1000 year kingdom. But it compares very well with the NT concept of the Kingdom of God.

I will seek to treat your critique seriously. Yet there are a few features which I shall not give that honour. The first is your association of my doctrine with those of "Campbellitism", "Gnosticism" and "Catholics". It is a fact that there is hardly a doctrine in the Bible that has not been attacked, but the resulting false doctrines share truths in common with the true doctrine. Whatever error there may be, either yours or mine, does not merit those kinds of associations. It is for this reason that I do not identify features of your eschatology with that of the JW's., for instance.

The other feature is that however much I believe that your hermeneutics are faulty, I recognise that your esteem for Scripture is, I believe, equal to my own. Neither of us are liberals. We are solidly conservative. It is therefore unjustified for you to think that I have a lower regard for the veracity of Scripture (even the literal!) than your own. Similarly, to suggest by inference that my doctrine of the humanity of Christ is defective, is unjustified. I think that you may have second thoughts on attributing to me these features. I can only say that if I fall into the same trap, please forgive me.

Similarly, under a bold heading you quote "Are preterists "spiritual" while dispensationalists are "carnal?" When I said that the OT prophecies were interpreted carnally it was specifically in the context of an unbelieving and

rebellious Israel, and I assure you that I was not imputing their unspiritual state to present day literalists. By consequence, I do not imply the reverse for those who interpret the Scripture along "spiritual", or "allegorical" lines. I am sure sound doctrine is important. But alas, it does not guarantee spirituality or sound morals. Neither does incorrect prophetic doctrine imply the reverse.

It is fitting that here I should refer to your repeated charge that this type of interpretation is "spiritualising", as against a "literal" interpretation. May I point out that the opposite of "spiritual" is not "literal", but "natural". I Cor.15:46 will come to mind. The fulfilment of prophecy in the realm of the spirit (where this *is so*) is the *literal* fulfilment. Things are not less literal because they are spiritual. The term "spiritualising" has a pejorative connotation, and prejudices balanced exposition before even looking at the subject, let alone accepting a "spiritual" fulfilment as the literal. I hope you follow this.

Concerning the duration of your millennial kingdom. You quote Gen.17:7-8 and because I deny that it is "for ever" (which you appropriate to mean a future 1000 year kingdom), you ask me if God is a liar. But, strictly speaking, you have your own difficulties. How can 1000 years be regarded as "everlasting", or "for ever"? It is not making God a liar if one sees from Scripture that a word is used in several senses. In Ex.21:6 "for ever" is applied to the slavery of one with his ear bored. Clearly, it cannot extend beyond death. In Ex.40:15 and Num.25:13 "everlasting" is applied to the Aaronic priesthood. Did not this finish with the once for all sacrifice of Christ? Even if you conceive this priesthood being restored in the millennium (despite *any* earthly priesthood being proscribed in the book of Hebrews) it will end in 1000 years. How, then, can the term "for ever" be applied to all these? Perhaps you will, correctly, say that the term must be understood as applying to the period for which an institution has relevance. Then I will say that there is, hermeneutically speaking, nothing wrong with concluding that the "for ever" of the land terminated in 70 AD, if not before.

Further to this question of the significance of the 1000 years of Revelation 20. You say, "'one thousand' must now (with this [amillennial] interpretation) become 'symbolical'....it does not mean '1000' anymore." Anymore? You may well, indeed, heavily interpret Revelation literally, and your "anymore" would be consistent. But the book is packed with OT imagery, and I believe that most of it requires interpreting symbolically. Certainly, my amillennial system does require a symbolic 1000 years, but there is no change. I interpret most of the book symbolically. It is the NT absence of a Jerusalem-centred reign that requires the symbolic 1000 years. You ask if this is the way to sound hermeneutics. I say, "yes, it is."

Moving now to the discussion of principles.

Your very first point is that you believe I confuse "seed" (singular) and "seed" (plural). My discussion, of course, was in the context of Galatians 3:16 -

"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." And verse 19, "...till the seed should come to whom the promise was made."

Now, whilst you object to my use of this text, you do not say why, and this is not satisfactory. But it is clear that you do not regard Paul's stance regarding "seeds" as a rejection, only an ignoring of this "alternative" background. You apply the same criteria to my use of 1 Peter 1:9-12.

I would like to share why in the interest of sound exposition your use of an "argument from silence" to support your view is dangerous and therefore inadmissible. Of course, the argument from silence would have been entirely admissible if there had been examples elsewhere of Paul dealing with the subject of a Jerusalem-centred state, or if there were other NT indications of a future separate from the Church for the natural seed of Abraham. But, as I have repeatedly said, there are none. Therefore, in the absence of any such examples, it is a faulty hermeneutic to assert that there is when the Scripture is silent.

May I illustrate? I am sure you will agree that homosexual practices are totally banned in the whole of Scripture. How do homosexuals get over this? They get over it by asserting that the Leviticus texts, for example, refer to pagan temple rituals, and not to individual acts between men. The Romans 1 verses, for example, are argued as being in the context of "the reckless, shameless, profligate, promiscuous behaviour of people whom God has judicially 'given up'; what relevance has this to committed, loving homosexual partnerships?". (Stott, *Issues facing Christians* today. pp.340ff.). Without a whisper in the Scripture in these directions it is inadmissible for the homosexual to argue from silence. It has been said that anything can be taught from the bible. That is true when arguing from silence. That is why it is so dangerous to do so. I do not confuse "seed" and "seeds". I only follow the NT example and ignore any Jerusalem-centred future for the "seeds".

Clearly, the fleshly offspring of Abraham are specifically excluded now that He has come to whom the promises were made. As I took pains to show, the earthly possessions were given, and there are no more promises left outside those given through the redemption provided by Christ.

You say that I relegate the OT prophecies concerning the millennial kingdom, since they relegate God's people, the Jews, into a second-class status, and is therefore unworthy of the Lord. But, surely, if the prophecies refer to something much more glorious than the Old Covenant, this surely is lifting the inferior prospects for God's people into something more glorious? This is very worthy of the Lord, and I find it difficult to understand how you can impute to the

amillennial interpretation lack of "remorse or mercy". I find it difficult, also, to see how the re-establishment of an inferior order of things can be worthy of God or good for His people.

You say that "I go to great lengths to demonstrate the expunction of Israel, etc etc". To this I plead guilty. But in those following paragraphs ending with my "being forced to recognise the continued existence of a 'remnant'" you seem to think that I deny the continued existence of the nation. Far from being "forced to recognise a remnant" the remnant is a backbone of my doctrine, being mentioned three times in my section IV. . But it is a remnant of Jews who become Christians, as Paul makes clear. Paul's mention of a future repentance of Jews can only mean the continued recognition of the election of individuals from this people. Whether they are constituted into a nation is, biblically, irrelevant. Obviously they are an ethnic group; and that is all the NT demands. Thank you, by the way for the genetic data on Jews. All such studies are of interest, particularly those demonstrating far distant human origins. But, as ethnicity has, according to my understanding of Scripture, little or no relevance, perhaps I should not have bothered to have included that feature in my paper.

Oh, and regarding my reference to "no Jewish roots". If you read me carefully, you will see that I do not deny our Jewish roots. What I do deny is their present cultural importance.

Now coming to some principles. One of your texts which appears to have a suggestion of the possibility of a future Jewish kingdom is Acts 1:6-8. Whether Jesus gave it His "tacit acknowledgement" (as you state), must be determined from other Scripture. "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation" (II Peter 1:20). I believe it is valid to associate the disciples' question with the phrase, "*the hope of Israel*", used frequently in Acts. I hope that you believe in the principle of allowing obscure scriptures to be interpreted by clear scriptures.

So, concerning Paul's controversy with the Jews over his teaching concerning the *hope of Israel*, "for which sake I am accused" (26:7), and "now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers" (26:6), "because for the hope of Israel am I bound with this chain" (28:20), "unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain" (26:7). What, then, was this "hope of Israel"? A Jewish dominant, Jerusalem-centred, temple-focused, millennial kingdom? That was precisely what Paul's opponents were looking for. But what did Paul see as the hope of Israel?

If he believed what they did (Jerusalem-focused national dominance etc), how easy to get off their charges! But he could not say that, as he did not believe it. What he preached was worth his captivity, and even death. Says he, "of the *hope and resurrection of the dead* I am called in question (23:6). "Believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: having hope toward God, which

these also themselves look for, that there shall be a *resurrection of the dead*" (23:6). To Agrippa he says, "why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" (26:8). The death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and all that flowed from it was, and is, *the only Gospel*. His statements are definitive, and to suggest that there is another gospel for the Jews in the future is precisely that which Paul doubly anathematized in Gal.1:6-9.

The babe in Christ will have noticed in the early chapters of Acts the emphasis that there is in the resurrection. Obviously, it was a powerful testimony to the validity of their message. And, although we know that it is a central truth of the Christian faith, and is incorporated into all the creeds, I really wonder if we fully understand the full significance of the death and resurrection of Christ. The bible student soon learns of Paul's view of the resurrection in Romans 1:1-6, its connection with baptism in chapter six, of its centrality in the gospel in chapter fifteen, his use of it in Philippians 3, and Peter's powerful use of it. He says

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living *hope* by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God unto a *salvation* yet to be revealed in the last time. (I Pet.1:3-5).

Despite this "living hope" the future salvation and inheritance seem, for us, a long way off. We evangelicals, although prizing the doctrine of resurrection, *make little of it*. No doubt its apologetic value is not so powerful today, 2000 years after the event, but its significance in respect of our redemption is crucial, and is, thank God, preached as such. But it is equally clear that today there is a dimension that we miss.

That we miss this dimension is proved by your objection to my use of two scriptures that I must first rebut and then reinforce. For, when Peter preaches on the day of Pentecost, and directly connects the resurrection and enthronement of Christ with the oath of the Lord to David, that one should sit on his throne (Acts 2:22-36), you say "he [Nairne] chooses a couple of passages that he feels will vindicate his symbolical and allegorical interpretative method." You say that "David never understood that his earthly throne was actually a 'heavenly throne', and neither did Peter." This is wrong. The Scripture says,

Therefore being a prophet, and *knowing* that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, *he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of Christ,*This Jesus hath God raised up,... Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted...*David saith...himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand....Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus...both Lord and Christ"*

Despite your denial of the fact, the Scripture says clearly that David *did* know that God's oath concerning the occupation of his throne was not to his earthly seed, primarily, but to the Christ, to be given *in resurrection*. And Peter also, knowing this, uses it accordingly.

Similarly, concerning James' use of the Amos 9:11-12 prophecy, in Acts 15:14ff., you say that my identification of the tabernacle of David as a picture of the new people of God which included Gentiles in the present age, was "a little bit more than James actually said," and that James "merely noted that the prophet Amos foresaw a day in which God would take a people out of the Gentiles 'for his name'". Let me put the Scripture in full below.

Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; And I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

James did not "merely note[d] that the prophet Amos foresaw a day in which God would take a people etc." The identification of David's tabernacle, with the Church was the whole thrust and reason for Amos quoting the Scripture. If he only wanted to acknowledge the Gentile ingathering, it would have been easy for James to use any of a score of Scriptures to note only that fact. But he did not. He used Amos 9:11-12 to specifically identify the two things, and, after acknowledging God's work among the Gentiles he says,

"...to this *agree* the words of the prophets, as it is written, 'After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, And I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, etc.'"

This is not "merely adding". To "agree" means, according to my Oxford dictionary, "hold a similar opinion", "be in harmony" and "consent to" or "approve of". James deliberately selected this Scripture.

Why did James select it? He tells us - "and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; **that the residue of men might seek after the Lord...etc.**" The rebuilding of David's tabernacle in Christ through his death and resurrection was the very basis of the ingathering of the Gentiles. In the same way that not until Christ was *in resurrection* enthroned upon the only true antitype of David's throne, so the world wide redemptive call of the Gentiles could not be accomplished until the only true antitype of David's "house" was ready to be established.

The use of the imagery of David's "tabernacle" is interesting. Why not the "tabernacle in the "wilderness", or "Solomon's temple"? The answer is, I believe,

that whilst these two institutions incorporated Aaronic priesthood and Mosaic sacrifices, David's tabernacle had neither. It was the place of God's dwelling, worship, music and praise, with Levites only. How fitting a type of the people of God under the New Covenant "in whom [Christ] all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph.2:21-22). James' selection was very appropriate.

I agree, there is no "new concept" here that you charge me with. The Scripture clearly teaches that David had no such notion with which you saddle him, that he was to have a descendant to occupy an millennial earthly throne in Jerusalem. Let me quote in full from Acts 2 where Peter has just preached concerning the resurrection of Christ,

For David speaketh *concerning him*,because thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; Thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore *being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in Hades, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up,...*" (Acts 2:25-32).

If David saw when writing Psalm 116 that Peter used, that it was in the resurrected Christ who was to occupy his promised throne, how can you say when James uses Amos 9, about the tabernacle of David being fulfilled in the then ingathering of Gentiles, that "[I] symbolised the 'tabernacle of David' to be something that James did not intend, giving an explanation that James did not give."?

Perhaps I can throw in one other scripture for good measure.

And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled same unto us their children, in the hath raised up Jesus ; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. And as *concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption*, he said on this wise, I will give you *the sure mercies of David* (Acts 13:32-34).

So, the *sure mercies of David* are equated, no less, with the resurrection of Christ, which event enabled the promises of *salvation* to be offered to Jew and Gentile alike (vv 38-39).

In the same Scripture (v. 27) we have the familiar verses which tells us that the Jews "in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled...etc "

Alas, although you know the Lord and love him, it appears that dispensationalists also as little understand the true thrust of these prophetic Scriptures.

So, despite your objection, I do not believe that anyone who accepts the authority of the NT in interpreting the OT could disagree with my words "the apostles saw the 'tabernacle of David' as a picture of the new people of God". But the source of our authority is, I guess, the nub of our difference.

Dealing with those two Scriptures (Acts 2 and Acts 15) lays the foundation of my charge that we evangelicals in viewing the resurrection only in its apologetic and redemptive aspects are missing an equally important feature to the Church of God which I have described above. As I sought to show briefly in section III. of my paper headed *Christ - the Termination of OT Redemptive Prophecy*, and is demonstrated by the two sample Scriptures referred to above, the only true significance of the "house of David", the "throne of David", in short, is that Israel's, or even David's significance, is that they were to be the vehicle from which Christ came. May I remind you of the "Servant" prophecies in Isaiah, how that sometimes it is difficult to differentiate between the "Servant" and the nation of Israel? The resolution of this problem is found in the "suffering Servant" of Isaiah 53. May I remind you also that the only true significance of the "manna", the "water", the "light" was in their antitypical fulfilment in Christ? I am sure you do not need reminding that Peter in his first epistle tells his readers that they are an "holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices", that we are

an elect race, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy (vv.9-10).

All these designations, lifted out of the OT, were Israel's. In the light of the testimony of these Scriptures from Acts and Peter, to teach the re-emergence of Israel to give substance again to what are described as "shadows" (Col.2:17, Heb.8:5, 10:1) is *indefensible*. I know that you would see the OT prophecies you have quoted as ground for defence, but, although I shall look at them later, I believe that this dispensational use of the OT *against* the NT is inadmissible.

But to round off this section. What are we overlooking? We overlook the understanding that all things, and Israel's purpose in particular, centres down upon Christ and which gives content to Eph.1:10, which, though familiar to evangelicals, we find difficult to fill out.

That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might *gather together in one all things in Christ*, both which are in heaven and on earth...

The concept that the whole of Israel in its ordinances, temple system, and very existence, all pointed to, and found its total fulfilment in Christ and the new Israel

combining Jew and Gentile in one body, so clearly taught in the NT, is surely Christ exalting. As I said in my paper, though not explaining it in such detail, "In postulating a millennial kingdom, with Jewish dominance, sacrifices, temple, priesthood, etc., there is a subtle shift of emphasis away from Christ's pre-eminence...."

As the Scripture says,

"...unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph.3:21). And to the Colossians "...he is the head of the body, the church:that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." (Col.1:18).

I believe we are now in a position to understand what Jesus may have meant in response to the disciples question about restoring the kingdom to Israel. He clearly cannot be understood to mean what would be a contradiction of the NT. But we can parallel his reply with that of rebuilding the fallen down tabernacle of David (Acts 15:16) by the ingathering of the Gentiles. In that way the kingdom *was* restored to the true "Israel of God" (Gal.6:16). Jesus did not give "tacit encouragement" to the faulty understanding of the disciples - he approved what they would eventually understand to be true. If you ask why he avoided precision as to when this was to take place, may I suggest that "times and seasons, in the sense of precise dating, are an incorrect focus. Jesus directed them to *wait* for God manifesting himself to them in a way that would change their whole experience. I Thess.5:1 is to similar effect.

You refer to my use of Matthew 23:38 "your house is left unto you desolate" as spoken to the nation, and then say that I ignore the following verse "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, blessed is he which cometh in the name of the Lord," which, you say, must also be spoken to the nation, thus proving a national return and restoration. Certainly, the invitation is to the whole nation. But what is the response? Surely the OT is full of God's appeal to Israel to repent and return with associated promises? Yet what was the invariable result? If any repented and returned, it was only a remnant. The same with the Gospel. So, as a principle, the idea that a national invitation secures a national response and therefore statehood, does not follow. If the bulk of the nation had responded, they would have constituted the Church of God, anyway.

While we are in Matthew's gospel, you say, "The events of Matthew 24:15-28, if they are to be relegated to the first century, must also include the contextual events of Matthew 24:29-31, the cataclysmic events surrounding the return of the Lord Jesus Christ from on high." because of the connecting "immediately".

I agree that the whole section vv. 15-31 is contiguous in time with the later section. But do we not have a case here of "the pot calling the kettle 'black'"? For you, yourself separate vv.1-14 from the rest of the chapter. Verse fifteen begins "When you therefore see.etc". "Therefore" clearly has reference to what has gone

before - it is a conjunction - "a word used to connect". If the first fourteen verses apply to events up to and including the destruction of the temple (vv.1-2), then vv.15ff. are also in the same time period. If you compare the gospels you will see that Matthew's "abomination of desolation" is parallel with and identical to Luke's "when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (21:20). You cannot siphon this off to the end times.

What then do I make of the "immediately" of verse 15, which, you say, "must include the cataclysmic events surrounding the return of the Lord Jesus Christ from on high." And here I note that you quote Isa.13:10 [Babylon] and Isa.34.4 [Edom] which also give us imagery of cataclysmic events in the heavens. I can quote some more - Amos 8:9 (Samaria) and Ezek.32:7-8 (Egypt). But in NONE of these instances did any events take place in the heavens, cataclysmic or otherwise. If it had, there would have been evidence, and there is none. This is not an argument from silence, for, if there had been these events in the heavens, history *would have recorded it*. Your slavery to a literal interpretation causes you to quote the verses as if to prove that these events in the heavens have to take place literally at the second coming of Christ! And, of course, since apparently you similarly interpret the book of Revelation, does not this, along with all the literally interpreted language which is figurative, create the nonsense with which you charge me? For, from Gen.1:14-16 we are told that the heavenly bodies are spoken of as "signs" which "govern" the world, and throughout Scripture, we are to understand this imagery as depicting the fall of nations. Matt.24:25-26 is not an exception. It is therefore totally appropriate to use it for the demise of Israel in 70 AD. This is not "spiritualising". It is recognising language that is figurative.

How about the "coming on clouds" of Matt.24:27? It also is *prophetic* imagery. We read repeatedly in the OT of the "coming of the Lord". It signified the coming of the Lord either for the salvation of his people, or the judgement of his foes. Reference to Ps.104:3, Isa.19:1, Nah.1:3, will show that in no case did the Lord appear personally on a cloud for either of these purposes. That Jesus, in saying to his enemies in Matt.26:64 that they personally would see the Son of Man coming on the clouds indicated as clearly as any words can that he was referring to events within that generation - "this generation" (24:32). Matthew 24 concerns events mainly up to and including the destruction of Jerusalem. We could also equate it with the picture given in Daniel 7:13-14, of Jesus' ascension (Acts 1:9, Mark 16:19). In either event, these pictures are nothing to do with events thousands of years in the future.

Despite dispensational teaching that "generation" means "race" (i.e. Jesus is referring to the Jews of the end-times), it does not. It is used in the sense of "race" in secular literature, but in every gospel use of the term it meant that present generation, and its biblical setting is our yardstick of interpretation. Why should Matthew 24:30 be an exception to this rule? Read correctly, the Great Tribulation to which you refer, is past, and relates to the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem in

70 AD. I find the understanding of the chapter as a whole, set in the first century, is cohesive and honours the time constraints set by our Lord. Understood so, the preterist interpretation does not produce, as you say, "fly[ing] off into the realms of biblical imagery and fanciful interpretations..." This is simply a case of recognising a literary genre in the Scriptures. To fail to do so is the way into fanciful interpretation; doubly so when the Book of Revelation is so interpreted.

On a theme similar to that of the last paragraph - the second coming, one may ask, "what about verse 30 of Matthew 24"? For generations we have been habituated into thinking of this as referring to the second coming of Christ. Influenced by such thinking the translators of modern versions (e.g. NASB and NIV) put it, "and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky. This is a poor translation; the KJV is better " ...then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven." Notice two things. Firstly, the realm of the sign is not the "sky", it is "heaven". Secondly, it is not the sign that is in heaven, but the *Son of Man* who is in heaven. The meaning is simply that the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and the dispersion of Israel, was to be the sign that, as prophesied, Christ is now enthroned in heaven, ruling universally, and taking vengeance upon his inveterately rebellious enemies, that he had removed from them the Kingdom, and given it to those who would produce the expected fruits.

To remove one last thing, I trust, which would be a stumbling block to you, I refer to the gathering of the elect in verse 31. This has nothing to do with the Rapture. The Greek term translated "angels" often means "messengers" (cf. James 2:25). Often the word means "preachers of the gospel" (see Matt.10:10; Luke 7:24, 9:52; Rev.1-3). So, in the context of Matthew 24 there is every reason to believe that reference is being made to world-wide evangelism. The word "gather" is significant. It means literally "to synagogue". The sense is that with the destruction of the Temple and the old Covenant system, the Lord sends out his messengers to gather his elect into his *new synagogue*.

I find this unified understanding satisfyingly cohesive, and Christ exalting. I do not so find the arbitrary dividing up Matthew 24. And to teach an end time drama based on the literal interpretation of certain OT prophetic chapters, whilst either not understanding, or rejecting well accredited principles of interpreting prophetic imagery is, I believe, a by-path meadow to say the least.

The time has come for me to demonstrate what, I believe, is the biblical way to understand the prophetic scriptures you quote at length under the heading "**God promises to bring Israel back into their own land and establish a New Covenant with Israel.**"

Ezekiel 11:17-19. You quote these verses and say, "...this prophetic passage is connected with the acceptance of the Covenant, and the return to the land from a world-wide dispersion. It could not have been the return from Babylon. At this point in time, the world-wide dispersion by the Romans in the first century is

significantly drawing to a close. A New Covenant acceptance by the Jews could soon follow, since this passage connects the two events."

You infer that the majority of the nation should be in the land, and accept the New Covenant. But have you not read on from verse 21? The verses say,

But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their heads, saith the Lord God.

So the return is not total. Does it not suggest that here we have the familiar OT (and NT) theme of the "remnant" returning? It is your scheme, not this Scripture that requires them as a majority in the land, to accept the New Covenant 2000 years and more later. The immediately preceding context (v.16ff) relates to their Babylonian captivity, and their partial return under Ezra, Nehemiah, Joshua, and Zerubbabel. Followed by, in due course, their (likewise partial) acceptance of the New Covenant at Pentecost, and the punishment, 40 years or so later, of the rebellious nation. Your prior denial of any reference to a return from Babylon, and suggesting that the occupation of Israel by the Jews in Roman times does not fulfil the requirements of the prophecy, appears to be an attempt to paint a background to aid acceptance of the requirement of your end-time scheme.

Isaiah 11:10-12. You rightly say that verse 10, "in that day there shall be a root of Jesse" refers to Jesus and the NT church. Verse 1 of this chapter is to the same effect. And, interestingly, verses 6-9, which you elsewhere claim to be millennial changes of animal nature, are sandwiched between verses 1 and 10, that is, surely, during this gospel age. Do you not think that there is the *slightest* probability that verses 6-9 are figurative? You then refer to the very next verse 11 concerning the "second" return from dispersion, that "there can be little doubt that this situation shall occur 'in the last days' i.e. just prior to the second coming of Christ.

I am happy enough with the "first" return from dispersion being the return from Babylon. Incidentally, you said earlier in your paper that since the whole nation was spoken to in a certain scripture, then it must be assumed that the response would be from the whole nation. But, will you allow in this case, that since the first return was partial, the second can be also? But rather than accept a total national restoration of Israel which involves a hybrid Old/New Covenant, in a millennium based on one symbolic verse of scripture, I would prefer to accept a NT situation which, I believe, meets the requirements of these verses. The fulfilment of this prophecy began to be fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, when, "Jews, devout men *out of every nation under heaven*" who had come up to Jerusalem responded in large numbers to the preaching of the Gospel. Peter's first epistle was addressed to "the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion..." (I Peter 1:1 RV), He sees them as returning home to the "Shepherd and Bishop of [their] souls" (2:25), to a heavenly inheritance that is described as a "*salvation*". John confirms the spiritual interpretation of these prophecies when he speaks of the death of Christ as "gathering together into one the children of

God that were scattered abroad" (John 11:52). Moreover, Isaiah 11:12 is quoted by Paul in Romans 15:12. Why did he quote it? To demonstrate the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy,

Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to *confirm the promises made to the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God* for his mercy.

For those who can accept the authority of the NT this totally satisfies the terms of the prophecy. I do not believe that any argument to the contrary from silence is admissible - for the reasons I have given earlier.

Hosea 3:4-5. These verses give a glowing picture of Israel's return in the "latter days" - the days of Messiah, (his birth, death, burial, resurrection and destruction of Jerusalem, present enthronement down to his second coming). But, context, context, context. You will know that Hosea's chapter 2 is unremitting judgement upon Israel. How does the chapter close?

...and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

This verse is quoted in Romans 9:25-26 *as the very fulfilment of these Hosea verses! Fulfilled in the grafting back of a remnant of Israel into the olive stock, with Gentiles also included! On what grounds do you excise from this fulfilment the restoration you quote in the next chapter? It will be upon the principle of discontinuity.*

It is in dealing with the OT prophecies that the chief feature of the dispensational method of interpretation is seen, that is, *discontinuity* with the NT. Covenantal theology's chief feature is to see *continuity* between the two. You can, therefore, quote scriptures relating to Israel's regathering in isolation from their context, and consign it to a millennial fulfilment, of which, to repeat myself, the NT not only knows nothing, but which I believe totally contradicts.

In seeking to show the true continuity between the Old and New Testaments I have had to explain in considerable detail the context and connection with the NT. Hence the lengthiness of this reply. I am sure that if you wished to follow up the covenantal method, you are able to do so, and, therefore, to conserve time and energy, I will seek to address the remainder of your scriptures in greater brevity.

Jeremiah 30 - 34. The many verses which you quote from these chapters are the *piece de resistance* of your critique, but, as I noted in the last but one paragraph, you isolate them from the context. As with Hosea, the context is one of unremitting judgement (see 22:1-5, 21,24-30, 36:30-31, 21:1-7). The nation *will not* repent. And this is characteristic of its history even until today, and was the burden of Stephen's defence. The question must be asked, "How can God fulfil his promises to a continually rebelling, unbelieving people"? The answer can only be

"through a New Covenant", which, in writing God's laws within the heart of the individual, is precisely what Jeremiah prophesied. Also it must be remembered that repeatedly the prophets speak of only a remnant being restored, which is what happened following Pentecost.

I am sorry that you dismiss the testimony of scripture that I gave to the effect that all God's promises to the Fathers concerning the land were fulfilled in the days of Joshua through to Solomon. But that is what the Scriptures say. Not only so, but the rest of the promise that "all the nations shall be blessed", (unconditional as you point out), was fulfilled at the time of the inauguration of the New Covenant at Calvary. Ezekiel gives us the promise of a New Covenant in chapter 36 verses 22ff., and embedded within this is clear indication that the covenants to Abraham, Moses and David would all be fulfilled in that covenant about which the Lord said, "This is the New Covenant in my blood...",

I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgements, and do them [Moses]; and ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers [Abraham]; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God [David].

I can only say that I feel the testimony of these scriptures, in their contexts, is conclusive, and, in the words of another, "here I stand, I can do no other." It seems to me that your twin principles of discontinuity and a gross literalism, gives you license to concoct almost anything. You have felt that the "spiritualisers" have produced error as bad as the ultra-dispensationalists. You illustrate this from a the preterist's moving from the mostly "literal" fulfilment of prophecy in Matthew's gospel to biblical imagery in Matthew 24, suggesting that because one section is to be seen as "literal" then the rest must be also. But I trust that you have now seen in connection with that scripture that it not only need not follow, but the literalism is unbiblical and gross in the latter sections of the chapter. And, may I remind you, the (logical?) excesses of ultra-dispensationalism have come out of the dispensational camp, not from that of the preterists. I acknowledge that there is such a thing as hyper-preterism, but, by and large, the limitations of the NT have restricted the production of freaks of exegesis from among the anti-millennialists. Yes, I acknowledge that the a/post-mill method of interpretation does impose restrictions, but they are only those, I trust, imposed by the NT.

You seem to have moved away a little from the traditional dispensational interpretation, at least in seeing that the Church was seen in the OT, and I trust that you will pursue this line of study. I appreciate that my position must raise massive implications concerning, say, the interpretation of the book of Revelation, and maybe Thessalonians. I will not attempt an explanation of the former(!), but I trust that you will understand that I do not accept exegesis unless it is what I believe is soundly based. And, although I believe the millennial scheme is not in the least biblical, I am not so naive as to think that the a/post-millennial systems are without their difficulties. Not, of course, from the millennial challenge. But simply because of the vast chasm of difference that

exists between our 21st century thought patterns, and those of Hebrew and middle eastern peoples dating from centuries before and up to the time of the NT. To say nothing of any special styles adopted by the Divine inspiration of the scriptures.

But, and I say this to myself also, wherever your studies lead, if we always make it our aim to "love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength", and always to seek "unfeigned love of the brethren" (1 Peter 1:22), we shall do well. I think we understand each other's positions reasonably well. But, if I can clarify anything that perplexes you, I shall be happy to do my best, and I shall take it for granted that you will do the same for me. Thank you, again, for taking the time to read my paper and comment upon it, and I have enjoyed examining our mutual positions.

In our Lord Jesus Christ, yours, Alan Nairne

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"Refutation 2" of "Does The Nation Of Israel Have A Future Separate And Distinct From The Kingdom of God"?

By [William B. Chalfant](#)

Dear Alan:

I appreciate the time and the effort that you have made to [answer](#) my proposed "[Refutation](#)" of your article, "[Does The Nation Of Israel Have A Future Separate And Distinct From The Kingdom of God](#)"?

Please let me note that I would prefer as a title, "Does The Nation of Israel Have A Future Separate And Distinct From The New Testament Church?" I believe that, after her repentance, the nation of Israel will be a part of the kingdom of God.

I have made a few comments on your [reply](#): (a) for clarification, and (b) in response to some of your comments in your reply. I particularly want to thank you for your kind attitude in disagreeing with me. I realize, of course, that we are poles apart, and opposing positions that we take necessarily include negative comments concerning the respective views concerning the different methods of allegorical interpretation and literal interpretation. I am also aware that neither the allegorical interpretive method nor the literal interpretative method can be exercised without glaring exceptions to the rule on either side. For how can the allegorists not be "literal" at times, and how can the literalists not be "allegorical" (Gal. 4) at times?

I do not think, however, that such exceptions can necessarily be seen as inconsistencies, since both methods are insufficient to totally explicate the whole body of prophetic scripture. In short, it is obvious that partial preterists use literal interpretations when they feel such are required, and dispensationalists use the allegorical method of interpretation when a literal interpretation seems impossible in making sense of the passage.

I have placed your reply below, and will attempt to insert some comments that I think will help clarify my position, or which might disagree with your statements. I am sending a courtesy copy to Mr. Ross, the webmaster:

Dear William, At last I am able to let you have my reply. It is rather long to appDear brother in Christ This only demonstrates to me that you are a serious student of the Word.

Reply to critique by William B. Chalfant of my web article Does the nation of Israel have a future separate and distinct from the Church in the Kingdom of God? (ref. apocalipsis.org).

Thank you for your critique of my web article. You have done me the honour of quoting me at length, and I appreciate that you have carefully studied my article.

Having been a dispensationalist at one time, I think that I am aware of where you are coming from. I assume that you are a dispensationalist from your remark that I [Nairne] "believe the old 'saw' that all dispensationalists teach that the Old Covenant and sacrifices will be re-established in the millennium." Does this mean that you do not believe this? Yet you seem elsewhere to wish to take Ezekiel's land and John's temple in Revelation (even to the streets of gold and gates of pearl!) very literally. To take Ezekiel's temple very literally, yet reject Ezekiel's (Mosaic) form of worship and sacrifices does not seem to stack up.

Please allow me to respond to the above remarks. Yes, I am a "modified dispensationalist", insofar as I myself understand the term, and give any allegiance to it. I do believe that God is progressive in the covenants and periods of time in which He deals with His people and the human race. Although, I believe that this "progressiveness" has to be understood in the context of His promises and His relationship with His people. I do not consider "restoration" to mean "regression". For God to restore the kingdom to Israel, for example, would not be regressive because of His wisdom.

Concerning the re-establishment of the Old (Mosaic) Covenant and the animal sacrifices (insofar as they pertain to salvation in a covenantal relationship), I certainly do not believe that the Mosaic Covenant will be re-established in the Millennium. However, I do believe that prophecies show that a type of memorial or commemorative "animal sacrifice" will be permitted in the millennium for at least a certain period of time (see Ezekiel 20.33-43; Zechariah 14.16-21, etc.). It is

useless to argue that God has "matured" beyond this, since we see from many Old Testament passages that God required and even "smelled the sweet savor" of offerings, although He stated that He would not accept the hypocrisy in the later history of Israel during the Mosaic Covenant, and the book of Hebrews clearly shows the superiority of the Blood sacrifice of Calvary over all animal sacrifices. Certainly, animal sacrifices have been done away with in the covenant which we are a part of today. To say that they were never a part of the economy of God, or that God never ever approved of them would be folly, since He Himself instituted animal sacrifices in Genesis, and required them for centuries. Their role in the Millennium is not clear, but it is certainly not a matter of salvation.

Please look at my remarks above a little more closely. I did not deprecate the "literal interpretation" aspects of the accusation, but rather I reject the implication that I believe in the re-establishment of the Mosaic Covenant itself, and in the necessity of animal sacrifices in any sense of a salvific function in the Millennium (that is, as being necessary in seeking God's forgiveness for sin, as we see in the Mosaic Covenant). But to say that Old Testament prophecies do not foresee a future use of any such animal sacrifices at all is to deny the clear message of the prophets concerning Israel. All scriptures pointing to the future establishment of animal sacrifices must be explained away.

"Animal sacrifices", as you seem to indicate, are not, in and of themselves, specifically or only a "Mosaic form of worship". Ezekiel's Temple is a prophesied future temple and is not necessarily associated only with the Mosaic Covenant. It is rather a Millennial Temple that has not yet been built, but is prophesied to be built. It would be a masterpiece of allegorical "smoke and mirrors", wouldn't you think, to allegorize Ezekiel's Temple, since so much detail is prophesied? Since a number of chapters (7) are expended by the prophet in describing this Temple, I would be interested in your explication of these various descriptions of the Temple. Is this all just biblical imagery?

But if I deal with your objections as you state them I shall probably be OK. You speak of the "restoration" of the nation. But if you abandon any part of Ezekiel's vision of the temple you are restoring nothing, and you have a purely secular nation;

I would agree with you concerning abandoning "any part of Ezekiel's vision of the temple", which would tamper with God's vision of a restoration, although I do not know that we would have merely a "purely secular nation". But I am not "abandoning anything", when I reject a re-establishment of the Mosaic covenant. A temple can exist under the aegis of another covenant. Why should a temple be restricted to the Mosaic Covenant? Is There not a archetypal temple in Heaven? Was the blood sacrifice of Jesus taken into Heaven to be presented to the Father? (Hebrews 9.11-24).

The Levitical offerings are indeed mentioned, but they obviously will have a different meaning in the Millennium (Ezek. 42.13), and we know there has been a change in the priesthood (Hebrews 7.11,12) during this current dispensation or covenant period. We do not know what role the lesser priesthood will have in Israel during the Millennium, but we do know that when the future Millennial Temple of Ezekiel is built, there will be a future lesser priesthood to serve in some fashion. Certainly, they will not have the exact same role of the Levitical priesthood in the Mosaic Covenant. Ezekiel 43.19, 44.15 proscribes any of the Levitical priesthood from serving other than "the seed of Zadok". This is certainly a "change" in the priesthood. It is interesting to compare Ezekiel 47.12 with Rev. 22.2. Both of these two passages indicate the prophetic nature of the Millennial Temple.

and what has happened to your literalism?

I don't think it would be proper to assume that I thought in such iconoclastic terms anymore than those who embrace preterism. Not every scripture can be interpreted in a literal way.

For example, you might be surprised to read the following quotation from the noted dispensationalist, C.I. Scofield, in his *Rightly Dividing The Word Of Truth*:

It may safely be 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 from the world and following the Lord in her heavenly calling, she has used Jewish Scriptures to justify herself in lowering her purpose to the civilization of the world, the acquisition of wealth, the use of an 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". -p.17.

I do not know about you, but I heartily concur with the spirit and the intent of this passage from Mr. Scofield.

Some modern "progressive dispensational" theologians no longer merit the dispensational label, because they have abandoned so many of what they feel are indefensible traditional doctrines.

You speak of the Dallas Theological Seminary theologians, do you not? But that of course could also be said of the full preterists and the partial preterists, and the various shades of preterism, couldn't it? There will always be differences like that. To say that preterism has not gone (and is not presently going) through some refinement and re-shaping of theological views would be incorrect. Is this a criticism or a strength? Craig Blessing and Darrell Bock are progressive

dispensationalists, but I do not see that they have "abandoned so many...indefensible traditional doctrines".

I notice that you acknowledge that the OT foresaw (you refer to Isaiah 11:10) the NT church. Well, that is a big step forward.

Yes, it is a step forward over some of the classical dispensationalists, but it is not an acknowledgment of "replacement theology". Paul's statements in Ephesians 3:3-9 make it clear that the mystery of Christ (and the church by implication) was "not made known" in "other ages" (was Paul in using the phrase "in other ages" a dispensationalist after all?), "as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit".

I notice, also, that in connection with Ezekiel 11:19 you speak about the Jews accepting the New Covenant. Presumably, as this is after the rapture of the Church according to your scheme(?), they can form no part of the Church.

On the contrary, the NT church came in under a "new covenant" established on the Day of Pentecost, and accepted by Jews only. Gentiles had no part in it at all, until the Jews began to turn away from the covenant and God granted repentance to Gentiles (these circumstances are clearly outlined for us by Luke and Paul). The NT church is headed by a Jew, 12 Jewish apostles, and a 13th Jewish apostle to the Gentiles by the name of Paul. But they are only a "remnant" of the nation of Israel, as Paul says in Romans 11. A time is coming when "all Israel" (speaking of the Jewish nation basically as a whole) shall be saved", and the Deliverer shall turn ungodliness away from Jacob (a term which never stands for the church) (Romans 11:26-30). This won't happen until the "fulness of the gentiles" is come in (something that the NT church is working on), and so it is subsequent to the church age ("the fulness of the gentiles" being equated the gospel being preached to "the nations", a point at which the end of the church age comes).

But, my mind is struggling now. They accept the New Covenant, but the Old Covenant provisions of priesthood, sacrifice (Ezekiel) etc, which the New ends, according to Hebrews, is adopted(?). Are there two New Covenants, one for us, and one for them? However, this is not part of our discussion.

When you accept that God has two destinies: one for the NT church and another for the nation of Israel, that is not a problem. Of course, the destinies are intertwined, since in the resurrection, the Lord Himself shall sit upon the throne of David in Jerusalem, but a separate, distinct destiny for the nation of Israel is required so that the promises made to the Jewish fathers (Romans 9:4, 1 Cor. 15:8) might be fulfilled. Right now, Jesus has given the Promise (singular) of the Father (the baptism of the Holy Ghost) to the NT church, but the promises (plural) made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the nation of Israel (the Jews) are still to be fulfilled during the Millennium (the coming reign of Jesus Christ upon the earth) through Jesus Christ. Obviously, the promises to the fathers, although they were

confirmed in Jesus Christ, are to be fulfilled in the Millennium to come, since they are not being fulfilled in the church age. If these particular promises have been specifically fulfilled in the NT church age, then someone should so demonstrate that they have been.

But you ask valid questions here. Actually, my exact words were in reference to Ezekiel 11.17-19: "God promises to bring Israel back into their own land and establish a new covenant with Israel". Obviously, God did not bring Israel back into their land in 33 AD. This is a future fulfillment.

It is clear from the prophecy of Ezekiel (quoted) that Israel is to be gathered in from a worldwide dispersion (not the Babylonian dispersion, since we know from history that the prophecy was not fulfilled in this manner when the Babylonian dispersion basically ended) and that they will enter into a new covenant with the Lord. It my belief that God has made a number of covenants with His people down through the ages. I really do not see any place in Scripture where the NT church age covenant is titled by God precisely as "the New Covenant" per se (and I do not see that there can never be any other succeeding covenants, or addendum's to a covenant, for any reason whatsoever). That is static thinking and not in harmony with what we know that God has done in the past. Think about it in this way. The Law (Mosaic covenant) was "added" to the Abrahamic covenant because of transgressions (Galatians 3.19). Why is it so shocking to think that God can not do something like this in the future? Is God restrained by our understanding and pre-conceived notions? Do you see anywhere that the covenant made with the Jews of the Upper Room is the final and concluding covenant made with man? No doubt this is what the Pharisees thought concerning the Mosaic Covenant! But prophecy said otherwise.

As I shall address features that you, yourself, raise, it should not confuse the issue for me. I am disappointed that you have not done as I requested in section II. of my paper - to set forth a detailed description from Scripture of the propos

I do not understand this objection, since I had hoped to have sent a detailed "Refutation" (my comments). Perhaps you might want to clarify this.

To my mind the best OT definition of the future kingdom is that found in Daniel. As you will know, "kingdom" is a rare word in the eschatological sense in the OT - restricted I think to Daniel.

Speaking of the word "kingdom" only, I think you are probably fairly correct. I note some references to a kingdom in Psalms 2, although the word itself is not used.

And there it is anything but a Jewish kingdom, for it is one where "all people, nations, and languages shall serve him". Moreover his dominion is an "everlasting

dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

Clearly, this is not a 1000 year kingdom. But it compares very well with the NT concept of the Kingdom of God.

I would disagree that it has lost a sense of a heavenly kingdom imposed through an earthly kingdom. Daniel is clearly talking of Jewish saints who shall possess the kingdom, and so to state that it "is anything but a Jewish kingdom" seems somewhat "gentilocentric", since "salvation is of the Jews" (John 4.22). Do you deny that God chose Jacob? Has Jacob been "unchosen"? Jacob is not the NT church.

I will seek to treat your critique seriously. Yet there are a few features which I shall not give that honour. The first is your association of my doctrine with those of "Campbellitism", "Gnosticism" and "Catholics".

Some association with the above elements exist in your scheme of prophecy, but perhaps that was somewhat unfair, and I withdraw it.

It is a fact that there is hardly a doctrine in the Bible that has not been attacked, but the resulting false doctrines share truths in common with the true doctrine. Whatever error there may be, either yours or mine, does not merit those kinds of associations. It is for this reason that I do not identify features of your eschatology with that of the JW's., for instance.

I gratefully acknowledge this deference, since I am not a "date-setter" (first century or 21st century), and do not consider myself to be a part of the 144,000 Jews of Revelation. The 144,000 Jews will be virgins also. Such a phenomenon has not yet existed.

The other feature is that however much I believe that your hermeneutics are faulty, I recognise that your esteem for Scripture is, I believe, equal to my own. Neither of us are liberals. We are solidly conservative. It is therefore unjustified for you to think that I have a lower regard for the veracity of Scripture (even the literal!) than your own. Similarly, to suggest by inference that my doctrine of the humanity of Christ is defective, is unjustified.

I do not recall that I implied this, but there are many, of course, who scoff at the coming reign of the Man Jesus as "the second man" (1 Cor. 15.47, who is God manifest in the flesh) on the throne of David in the city of Jerusalem. This requires His humanity to continue to be acknowledged, even in the Millennium. But I did not mean to impugn your view of His genuine humanity in and of itself. I think if we take away the humanity of the King who will sit upon the throne of David, then we reject the prophecies.

I think that you may have second thoughts on attributing to me these features. I can only say that if I fall into the same trap, please forgive me.

Similarly, under a bold heading you quote "Are preterists "spiritual" while dispensationalists are "carnal?" When I said that the OT prophecies were interpreted carnally it was specifically in the context of an unbelieving and rebellious Israel, and I assure you that I was not imputing their unspiritual state to present day literalists. By consequence, I do not imply the reverse for those who interpret the Scripture along "spiritual", or "allegorical" lines. I am sure sound doctrine is important.

But alas, it does not guarantee spirituality or sound morals. Neither does incorrect prophetic doctrine imply the reverse.

I definitely must agree with this. I was merely reacting to the general "tenor" of interpretation. Your conclusion is obviously correct.

It is fitting that here I should refer to your repeated charge that this type of interpretation is "spiritualising", as against a "literal" interpretation. May I point out that the opposite of "spiritual" is not "literal", but "natural".

Perhaps the term "allegorizing" might be more suitable as opposed to "spiritualizing". Paul used the term "allegory" only once in the NT (Gal. 4). As I noted, Jesus and the apostle Matthew, used a literal interpretive method.

I Cor.15:46 will come to mind. The fulfilment of prophecy in the realm of the spirit (where this is so) is the literal fulfilment. Things are not less literal because they are spiritual. The term "spiritualising" has a pejorative connotation, and prejudices balanced exposition before even looking at the subject, let alone accepting a "spiritual" fulfilment as the literal. I hope you follow this.

I understand what you are saying and agree with this.

Concerning the duration of your millennial kingdom. You quote Gen.17:7-8 and because I deny that it is "for ever" (which you appropriate to mean a future 1000 year kingdom), you ask me if God is a liar. But, strictly speaking, you have your own difficulties. How can 1000 years be regarded as "everlasting", or "for ever"?

Remember that you determined that I was a "dispensationalist". The earth abides forever. Why would we wish to stop at the 1000 year reign? There will be "new heavens and a new earth" (2 Peter 3.13), wherein dwelleth righteousness. Please see below.

It is not making God a liar if one sees from Scripture that a word is used in several senses. In Ex.21:6 "for ever" is applied to the slavery of one with his ear bored. Clearly, it cannot extend beyond death. In Ex.40:15 and Num.25:13 "everlasting"

is applied to the Aaronic priesthood. Did not this finish with the once for all sacrifice of Christ? Even if you conceive this priesthood being restored in the millennium (despite any earthly priesthood being proscribed in the book of Hebrews) it will end in 1000 years. How, then, can the term "for ever" be applied to all these? Perhaps you will, correctly, say that the term must be understood as applying to the period for which an institution has relevance. Then I will say that there is, hermeneutically speaking, nothing wrong with concluding that the "for ever" of the land terminated in 70 AD, if not before.

I understand what you are saying about the word *olam*, since its meaning runs the gamut from "forever" to "the lifetime of the individual"; however, when you study the prophecies concerning the possession of the land, you have to go over all the prophecies pertaining to this, and you will find that an interpretation of *olam*, in this particular case, as being a temporary period just will not do. For example:

Ezek. 37.25 "And they ((the Jews)) shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children forever (*olam*): and my servant David shall be their prince forever".

If we understand "my servant David" to apply to the resurrected Christ, are we then to understand that He will someday only be their prince "during their lifetime"? Moreover, the sense of "children's children" is much stronger than just during one's lifetime (evoking the idea of many lifetimes). But I would be happy if you conceded a thousand years in the future (the duration of the Millennium). When you use the resurrected Christ in connection with "David's throne", you make the throne a heavenly throne. But when you couple the resurrected Christ with the Jews in the land, can you make the occupation of the land merely a lifetime or temporary period? The "throne" has been translated from an earthly throne to a heavenly throne through your exegesis, while the "land" must remain "earthly" and of "temporary possession". Is this consistent?

Further to this question of the significance of the 1000 years of Revelation 20. You say, "'one thousand' must now (with this [amillennial] interpretation) become 'symbolical'....it does not mean '1000' anymore." Anymore? You may well, indeed, heavily interpret Revelation literally, and your "anymore" would be consistent. But the book is packed with OT imagery, and I believe that most of it requires interpreting symbolically. Certainly, my amillennial system does require a symbolic 1000 years, but there is no change. I interpret most of the book symbolically. It is the NT absence of a Jerusalem-centred reign that requires the symbolic 1000 years. You ask if this is the way to sound hermeneutics. I say, "yes, it is."

In the sense of an internal (allegorizing) consistency you might call your system of amillennialism "sound" (as you construct it), but in a sense of binding with the reality of creation, and the rest of scriptures, it is not. All of the human characters

of the Bible were flesh and blood people, who lived on terra firma. It is interesting that no man in the Old Testament is said to have lived over 1000 years (Methusaleh made it to 969 years). Almost all of the numbers of the Bible that I know about are real numbers. Twelve tribes of Israel, 70 elders, about 120 in the Upper Room, 40 years in the wilderness, the reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel, etc. But the 1000 year reign must perforce be "symbolical"? The seven churches of Asia minor-are they symbolical? Or were there actually seven churches so named? I find it rather "convenient" to dismiss the Millennium as only symbolical. One of the very early followers of the apostles, Papias-present during the teaching of the apostle John- did not consider the "millennium" to be only symbolical.

The problem with casting adrift upon the sea of allegory is that it can come to mean whatsoever anyone wants it to mean.

The seven churches of Asia minor were real churches. Jezebel, Antipas, the Jews. The protagonists of Revelation are real individuals: Christ, the apostle John, the angels, etc.

Heaven is a real place. The four living creatures give us no reason to suspect that they are not real individuals. The 24 elders are real individuals. The 144,000 Jews are real individuals, the 12 tribes have a verified history. Wars, famines, plagues, are a real part of human history. Cosmic calamities (I would suggest reading Immanuel Velikovsky, who was a scientist who found real, literal truth in the Scriptures, at least in the sense that it helped him to develop a history of cosmic calamities and how it affected our planet in the past) exist and meteorites and comets threaten our planet in a real way.

Yes, there is symbolism in the book of Revelation, but not to the degree that one discards the literal truth of the apocalyptic predictions of the prophet. Much of Revelation comes from previous books of the Bible. It was not written in a vacuum. It relies heavily upon the book of Daniel, the book of Isaiah and other prophets, as well as the prophecies of Jesus in Matthew 24, etc. There is nothing hermeneutically unsound about a basically literal interpretation of the book of Revelation, as long as the symbolical portions are properly seen in their relation to a literal view. The presentation of the events may be based upon a degree of symbolism, but the events themselves are quite real (as real as the events that took place in Egypt during the time of the Exodus). It is common for man to place in the realm of the "imaginary" or "symbolic" that which he cannot fully understand.

Moving now to the discussion of principles.

Your very first point is that you believe I confuse "seed" (singular) and "seed" (plural). My discussion, of course, was in the context of Galatians 3:16 -

"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." And verse 19, "...till the seed should come to whom the promise was made."

Now, whilst you object to my use of this text, you do not say why, and this is not satisfactory. But it is clear that you do not regard Paul's stance regarding "seeds" as a rejection, only an ignoring of this "alternative" background. You apply the same criteria to my use of 1 Peter 1:9-12.

Paul's characterization of Jesus Christ as the singular "seed" of Abraham in Gal. 3.16 was useful in his argument in Galatians 3 that Jesus Christ is the Messiah through whom the promises made to the fathers have been confirmed (Romans 15.8), but elsewhere, in the writings of Paul, you will find that Paul did not deny the destiny of the Jews nor deny that the promises made to the fathers pertain to the Jews (plural) (see Romans 9.4, for example). Therefore, I don't see that we are concerned with an "argument from silence". Galatians 3.16 cannot negate the entire teaching of the apostle Paul. Therefore the charge of an "argument from silence" falls to the ground.

I would like to share why in the interest of sound exposition your use of an "argument from silence" to support your view is dangerous and therefore inadmissible. Of course, the argument from silence would have been entirely admissible if there had been examples elsewhere of Paul dealing with the subject of a Jerusalem-centred state, or if there were other NT indications of a future separate from the Church for the natural seed of Abraham. But, as I have repeatedly said, there are none. (*italics mine*).

In addition to my contention above that Paul mentions the continued future of the Jewish nation in his writings, Paul is not the only writer of the books of the Bible. One cannot rightly divide the word of truth by ignoring the Old Testament witness. The Old Testament was the only scripture that the apostles had for their Bible. They quoted from the Old Testament at least 269 times, if I am not mistaken. The NT church is founded upon the foundation of the prophets and the apostles (Eph. 2.20). One cannot ignore the words of the prophets and the scores of prophecies relating to the restoration of a national Israel with a return to the land and the prominence of Jerusalem. Paul nowhere denies the future restoration of the kingdom to Israel. This is my problem with most preterists I have encountered: they attempt to explain away a great number of prophecies pertaining to the nation of Israel simply by quoting from a few passages in the Gospels that pertain to the rejection by that generation of Jewish leaders of the Messiah, and by pointing out the integration of the Gentiles with the Jews in the NT church, which has little or nothing to do with the future of the nation of Israel.

I did not make use of the comparison of "seeds" and "seed" as an "argument from silence". I pointed out that while the apostle Paul used the example of "seed" in the singular, and applied it to Christ, that Genesis, however, in referring to

Abraham's "seed" (in the very words of God Himself, Genesis 17.7, clearly identifies the "seed" as plural, "in their generations"). The point being that the apostle Paul could not have meant to exclude the generations of Abraham's children from the specific promises made (except for those individual Jews who reject the Lord and exclude themselves in the future). There will be, in other words, a future nation of Israel which will (collectively and individually) receive the promises made to the fathers (obviously, through the graces of the one "seed", Jesus Christ, but not just through the NT church only, since the NT church will be caught up before the Great Tribulation of the Jews begins, and a national revival occurs).

Therefore, in the absence of any such examples, it is a faulty hermeneutic to assert that there is when the Scripture is silent.

May I illustrate? I am sure you will agree that homosexual practices are totally banned in the whole of Scripture. How do homosexuals get over this? They get over it by asserting that the Leviticus texts, for example, refer to pagan temple rituals, and not to individual acts between men. The Romans 1 verses, for example, are argued as being in the context of "the reckless, shameless, profligate, promiscuous behaviour of people whom God has judicially 'given up'; what relevance has this to committed, loving homosexual partnerships?". (Stott, *Issues facing Christians today*. pp.340ff.). Without a whisper in the Scripture in these directions it is inadmissible for the homosexual to argue from silence.

I understand what you are saying here about homosexual theologians attempting to justify their behavior; however, I am not sure that this is a good comparison with the prophecies pertaining to the future of the nation of Israel. There is not that much scripture pertaining to the unacceptable behavior of homosexuals (admittedly enough to show that it is condemned), but the prophecies pertaining to the future restoration of Israel to its prominence, to its land, with the glory of the house of David, etc., are seen throughout the Old Testament. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the minor prophets, etc. Where does one stop? In view of the books in the OT filled with prophecies concerning the future glory of Jacob and the Jews, I guess I might be excused for wanting some more concrete evidence that the apostle Paul has negated all of these prophecies by deeding everything to the NT church through the Jewish Messiah Jesus Christ, the Son of David. In fact, I am perplexed that such a contention (that the nation of Israel will still inherit the promises made to the fathers, as you put it, "a Jerusalem-centered future for the 'seeds' ") is considered "an argument from silence". One would almost think that Jesus Christ is returning to London, England, or to Washington DC, rather than the city of Jerusalem! The voices of the prophets cry out against such a charge. The Jewish apostles would not understand it. Scripture does not demonstrate it.

It has been said that anything can be taught from the bible. That is true when arguing from silence. That is why it is so dangerous to do so. I do not confuse

"seed" and "seeds". I only follow the NT example and ignore any Jerusalem-centred future for the "seeds".

There is no NT example of ignoring "any Jerusalem-centered future for the "seed" (plural)". This, in my opinion, as I indicated above, is completely ignoring the thrust of the Old Testament, which the Lord and the apostles did not do.

The resurrected Jesus told His disciples:

"And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me" (Luke 24.44).

One cannot leave out the prophecies in Moses, the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Jesus, because He said that "all things must be fulfilled". He will one day sit on the throne of David ruling over Jerusalem and the world. Israel will one day be safely lodged in their land, and the peace of the Millennium will come about.

Clearly, the fleshly offspring of Abraham are specifically excluded now that He has come to whom the promises were made.

He came to confirm the promises made to Israel (Romans 15.8). It would be a strange way to "confirm the promises made to the fathers" concerning the descendants of Abraham by excluding the descendants of Abraham (I do not speak of those of the first century and later who have rejected their Messiah, but rather I speak of a future revival in the nation of Israel and a restoration of the kingdom which has been promised). Zechariah 12-14, for example, gives a much different future for Israel than that. Paul teaches us that only a "remnant of Israel" received Him (and the rest were blinded), but that in the future "all Israel shall be saved" (Romans 11.26), and this mean that He will in the future turn away "ungodliness from Jacob" (q.v.). "Jacob" never refers to individual Jews but only to the person Jacob or the nation "Jacob". Paul did not say, "Hath God cast away ("the individuals") which He foreknew?" (Romans 11.1). But he uses the expression "His people (Israel)". Replacement theology is nothing more than inordinate Gentile pride. We Gentiles are warned by our apostle, Paul, "Be not highminded, but fear" (Romans 11.20). "For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee" (Romans 11.21).

As I took pains to show, the earthly possessions were given, and there are no more promises left outside those given through the redemption provided by Christ

But who is claiming that the promises will come outside of the redemption provided by Christ? No one that I know about. The redemption provided by Christ (a Jew, who said that "salvation was of the Jews", John 4.22), the Son of God, has already confirmed the promises made to the fathers (Romans 15.8). And the

"promises made to the fathers" pertain to the Jewish nation (Romans 9.4,5). We should not think that God made all of the promises that He made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the nation of Israel, and then was not able to bring the promises about. The NT church has only received the Promise of the Father (the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Acts 1.4,5), but not the promises made to the fathers concerning the land, the kingdom of Israel, Jerusalem, etc. Surely, with your statement above "the earthly possessions were given", you are not claiming that Israel has already received the promises made to the fathers? How, then, could Christ have "confirmed" them (Romans 15.8)? Are claiming that the promises made to the nation of Israel (and to the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) have been given to the NT church? Where do you see in the Scriptures that the NT church has received these promises already? Did God take the NT church back into Jerusalem and set up His kingdom there? Spiritually speaking, He has poured out His Spirit and the kingdom of God is here within us (through the baptism of the Holy Spirit). We are ambassadors for Christ, pleading with the world to be reconciled to God. We are an advance element of the coming kingdom of God. We are to pray: thy kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven. But we have not inherited the promises made to fathers pertaining to the people of Israel, the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. We are not Jacob.

You say that I relegate the OT prophecies concerning the millennial kingdom, since they relegate God's people, the Jews, into a second-class status, and is therefore unworthy of the Lord. But, surely, if the prophecies refer to something much more glorious than the Old Covenant, this surely is lifting the inferior prospects for God's people into something more glorious? This is very worthy of the Lord, and I find it difficult to understand how you can impute to the amillennial interpretation lack of "remorse or mercy". I find it difficult, also, to see how the re-establishment of an inferior order of things can be worthy of God or good for His people.

But your definition of "an inferior order of things" must not be correct concerning the prophecies concerning the Millennial reign. It is perhaps because you leave out the spiritual aspects of the natural things spoken about. What about the nation of Israel (when it was established according to God's commandments and when it followed after the Lord)? Do you not consider it to be "spiritual"? Was Moses spiritual? Was Elijah spiritual? Was David spiritual? On the other hand, perhaps you should consider the natural things of the NT church today (I speak of its fleshly side). Would you consider that to be spiritual? Do you consider the arguments over the Grecian widows in the book of Acts to be spiritual? Do you consider the contention between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark to be spiritual? Do you consider Peter's hypocrisy concerning eating with the Gentiles to be spiritual? You seem to consider every thing to do with the NT church to be "spiritual", while the saints of the Old Testament were all part of "an inferior order of things", which was unworthy of God. Is this not so? Or do I misunderstand you? Of course, we have something much better than they did

(Hebrews 11.40), but that is not to say that they had nothing spiritual. I guess I am thinking of those who consider the NT church age alone to be "spiritual", while ignoring the glory of the presence of God in the OT times. I think of the Spirit of God upon the 70 elders in the day of Moses. I think of Saul prophesying under the anointing of the Spirit. I think of God dividing the Red sea. I think of water from the rock, manna from heaven. I think of the fire falling from heaven upon the sacrifice, when it was ordered right. I think of Isaiah's vision, of iron swimming, the dead being raised, healings, and other miraculous events in OT times. I find it rather myopic that members of the NT church think that they alone possess something spiritual, while others all possessed things "of an inferior order" (translated: "not spiritual but carnal"). Do you get my point? God can use any scenario or system He likes. We may not understand what He is doing, but if He is in it, it will be "spiritual" in some way.

You say that "I go to great lengths to demonstrate the expunction of Israel, etc etc". To this I plead guilty.

But in those following paragraphs ending with my "being forced to recognise the continued existence of a 'remnant'" you seem to think that I deny the continued existence of the nation. Far from being "forced to recognise a remnant" the remnant is a backbone of my doctrine, being mentioned three times in my section IV. . But it is a remnant of Jews who become Christians, as Paul makes clear. Paul's mention of a future repentance of Jews can only mean the continued recognition of the election of individuals from this people. Whether they are constituted into a nation is, biblically, irrelevant.

Please refer to my remarks concerning Paul's idea of a future repentance for "Jacob" (Romans 11.25-27). Certainly, a remnant of the Jews has been given grace to become a part (actually leaders) of the NT church. Paul said that the covenants pertain to the Jews or the Israelites (Romans 9.4). But the NT church members are an advance element of "priests and kings" (1 Peter 2.9) under Jewish remnant leadership, who are under the Lord. This was something that God desired of the nation of Israel (Exodus 19.6), but they could not obey Him in the Mosaic Covenant. Certainly, the resurrected NT church will lead the way in the Millennium, ruling and reigning with Jesus Christ (the 12 apostles sitting upon 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel, and no doubt the apostle Paul sitting upon a throne judging the Gentile nations under Christ, who Himself is seated on the throne of David in Jerusalem, as well as on the throne of God in the New Jerusalem).

A Jewish nation can only be "biblically irrelevant" if the prophecies of the Old Testament are discarded en masse. All that Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, etc. have prophesied concerning a future restoration of the nation of Israel to their land, and to victory, etc. must be unceremoniously thrown out. The NT church has a role in that the NT church will return with the Lord Jesus Christ to rule and to reign during the Millennium with Him following the victory at

Armageddon over the kingdom of the beast. There will also still be an unregenerate people living in the Millennium. The NT church will consist of a resurrected, glorified people in positions of leadership under Christ. Is it your contention that no unregenerate people will survive the coming of the Lord at Armageddon?

You say, "Paul's mention of a future repentance of Jews can only mean the continued recognition of the election of individuals (*italics mine*) from this people". This is not the thrust of Romans 11.26, as I stated, which speaks of "Jacob". "Jacob" does not mean individual Jews, but rather refers to the nation of Israel. I re-emphasize that this is why Paul uses the phrase "all Israel" in the same verse. He is speaking collectively of the "people", the "nation" (see Ezekiel 20.33-42; Revelation 12, Zechariah 12-14, and many other prophecies).

Obviously they are an ethnic group; and that is all the NT demands. Thank you, by the way for the genetic data on Jews. All such studies are of interest, particularly those demonstrating far distant human origins. But, as ethnicity has, according to my understanding of Scripture, little or no relevance, perhaps I should not have bothered to have included that feature in my paper.

To my way of thinking, it is important today because of those who attack the credentials of the Jews in modern Israel (which in itself is a fulfillment of prophecy in action). It is my understanding that DNA evidence shows that they (the present populace of Israel) are indeed mainly of Middle Eastern background. This does not include their lengthy genealogical records (representatives of all twelve tribes are accounted for and inhabit Israel today). Naturally, there has been intermarriage and a dilution of the gene pool, but, as you so correctly said, ethnicity is not all there is to being a Jew. We think of Rahab the harlot, Ruth the Moabitess, etc. But it is important in a prophetic sense because they are descendants of Abraham. While descent from Abraham is not so important in reference to the NT church, since the NT church acknowledges a spiritual descent through faith from Abraham, it is important in other areas of prophecy. This dual acknowledgment of descent from Abraham is what I believe preterists fail to recognize.

Oh, and regarding my reference to "Jewish roots". If you read me carefully, you will see that I do not deny our Jewish roots. What I do deny is their present cultural importance.

I certainly understand "cultural importance" in reference to the NT church, which is a separate entity in 1 Corinthians 10.32 (Jews, Gentiles, the church of God). However, no one who has studied Paul can honestly say that Paul did not put a difference (even after what he said about the irrelevance of race, gender, and ethnicity) in being an "Israelite" (although he knew that God was no respecter of persons), he never forgot the separate destiny of Israel (see, for example, Romans 9.1-5; Romans 11.1,2). I remember that Paul also said there was "neither male nor

female" in Christ, but turned right around and taught separate roles for man and woman even in the church. Paul has to be careful in these matters. He taught "no male or female in Christ", and then said that a wife could not speak out with questions in the assembly, and a woman could not teach or usurp authority over the man. Paul taught also neither Jew nor Gentile, but carefully continued to refer to Israelites as his brethren after the flesh, and continued to acknowledge their special destiny with God.

The separate destiny of Israel had no "coinage" in the NT church itself (the New Birth was no respecter of persons), where all were equal in God's eyes in the matter of salvation and common destiny (of the NT church). But Paul never lost sight of the identity of Israel and he never confused it with the NT church (see Gal. 6.16, which is misinterpreted, notwithstanding). We see three groups: Israel, Gentiles, and the NT church.

Now coming to some principles. One of your texts which appears to have a suggestion of the possibility of a future Jewish kingdom is Acts 1:6-8. Whether Jesus gave it His "tacit acknowledgement" (as you state), must be determined from other Scripture.

"No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation" (II Peter 1:20). I believe it is valid to associate the disciples' question with the phrase, "the hope of Israel", used frequently in Acts. I hope that you believe in the principle of allowing obscure scriptures to be interpreted by clear scriptures.

Obviously, I do not see Acts 1.6,7 as an "obscure scripture", as you do. It is a relevant and a crucial passage at the beginning of the NT church, in concert with many passages concerning the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, and the promises made to the fathers. Jesus did not put forth the premise that you are championing, because He did not teach or believe it. He merely replied to the direct question of the apostles by stating that the times and seasons were "in the Father's power". It would have been a perfect time for Him to have enlightened His apostles that would indeed be no future kingdom restored to Israel, as they thought. They asked the question simply because that is what He had taught them.

So, concerning Paul's controversy with the Jews over his teaching concerning the hope of Israel, "for which sake I am accused" (26:7), and "now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers" (26:6), "because for the hope of Israel am I bound with this chain" (28:20), "unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain" (26:7). What, then, was this "hope of Israel"? A Jewish dominant, Jerusalem-centred, temple-focused, millennial kingdom? That was precisely what Paul's opponents were looking for. But what did Paul see as the hope of Israel?

If he believed what they did (Jerusalem-focused national dominance etc), how easy to get off their charges! But he could not say that, as he did not believe it.

What he preached was worth his captivity, and even death. Says he, "of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question (23:6). "Believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: having hope toward God, which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead" (23:6). To Agrippa he says, "why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" (26:8). The death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and all that flowed from it was, and is, the only Gospel. His statements are definitive, and to suggest that there is another gospel for the Jews in the future is precisely that which Paul doubly anathematised in Gal.1:6-9.

Paul did not shy away from the promise of a restored kingdom with the glory of a Davidic throne. He said, "Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come" (Acts 26.7). The twelve tribes did not share your idea of "replacement theology". Nor did the apostle Paul for that matter. Would Paul lie concerning the hope of the twelve tribes? Would Paul tell Agrippa something that was not true? You are trying to tell me that the "twelve tribes of Israel" were hoping for a replacement theology, wherein their own hopes of a future kingdom of Israel (exactly what the apostles had asked Jesus in Acts 1.6,7) would be gone forever? Not likely.

In fact, Paul told Felix:

"...after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets" (Acts 24.14).

Does this sound like Paul has rejected the Millennial prophecies and the future restoration of the kingdom of Israel, along with the land, the throne of David, etc.? "All things which are written in the law and the prophets" (that would include the Millennial Temple in Ezekiel 40-47 even).

The babe in Christ will have noticed in the early chapters of Acts the emphasis that there is in the resurrection. Obviously, it was a powerful testimony to the validity of their message.

But the emphasis in the resurrection does not do away with the promises made to Israel, but rather facilitates it, since now there is a Son of David who can sit on the throne of David forever, and who can restore the kingdom to David, as was promised. Remember the Messiah was sent to the Jews. It was the Jews (not the Gentiles) who hoped for a Messiah.

And, although we know that it is a central truth of the Christian faith, and is incorporated into all the creeds, I really wonder if we fully understand the full significance of the death and resurrection of Christ. The bible student soon learns of Paul's view of the resurrection in Romans 1:1-6, its connection with baptism in

chapter six, of its centrality in the gospel in chapter fifteen, his use of it in Philippians 3, and Peter's powerful use of it. He says

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God unto a salvation yet to be revealed in the last time. (I Pet.1:3-5).

Despite this "living hope" the future salvation and inheritance seem, for us, a long way off. We evangelicals, although prizing the doctrine of resurrection, make little of it.

I agree. But the resurrection of Christ is also a great comfort to the 12 tribes of Israel as Paul was trying to point out to king Agrippa. This cannot be denied either.

No doubt its apologetic value is not so powerful today, 2000 years after the event, but its significance in respect of our redemption is crucial, and is, thank God, preached as such. But it is equally clear that today there is a dimension that we miss.

That we miss this dimension is proved by your objection to my use of two scriptures that I must first rebut and then reinforce. For, when Peter preaches on the day of Pentecost, and directly connects the resurrection and enthronement of Christ with the oath of the Lord to David, that one should sit on his throne (Acts 2:22-36), you say "he [Nairne] chooses a couple of passages that he feels will vindicate his symbolical and allegorical interpretative method." You say that "David never understood that his earthly throne was actually a 'heavenly throne', and neither did Peter." This is wrong. The Scripture says,

Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of Christ, ...This Jesus hath God raised up,... Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted...David saith...himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand....Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus...both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:30-36)

Despite your denial of the fact, the Scripture says clearly that David did know that God's oath concerning the occupation of his throne was not to his earthly seed, primarily, but to the Christ, to be given in resurrection. And Peter also, knowing this, uses it accordingly.

In the above remarks you are missing a critical point. The scripture says, "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him,

that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his ((David's)) throne".

Christ (the glorified Man Jesus) will sit on David's throne (this is not speaking about a heavenly throne at all). Peter is quoting from Psalms. David is not talking about an earthly throne, but rather the throne of David (an earthly throne). The Jews were not looking for the Messiah to sit on an heavenly throne (although we know He indeed does in heaven), but the Jews were looking for Messiah to sit on the earthly throne of David. The fact that the Man to sit on the throne was resurrected and glorified has nothing to do with the fact that the throne of David is an earthly throne and occupied by king David at one time. It is God's throne in the sense that David was a servant of the throne and God gave him the kingdom and the throne.

Similarly, concerning James' use of the Amos 9:11-12 prophecy, in Acts 15:14ff., you say that my identification of the tabernacle of David as a picture of the new people of God which included Gentiles in the present age, was "a little bit more than James actually said," and that James "merely noted that the prophet Amos foresaw a day in which God would take a people out of the Gentiles 'for his name'". Let me put the Scripture in full below.

Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; And I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. (Acts 15:14-18)

James did not "merely note[d] that the prophet Amos foresaw a day in which God would take a people etc." The identification of David's tabernacle, with the Church was the whole thrust and reason for Amos quoting the Scripture. If he only wanted to acknowledge the Gentile ingathering, it would have been easy for James to use any of a score of Scriptures to note only that fact. But he did not.

You are, in effect, inadvertently putting words into James' mouth, and unwittingly delving into his thoughts and intents. James' purpose was to show the assembled Christian Jews that God predicted that one day He would take out of the Gentiles a people for His Name. Anymore more than that is speculation, I would think. Acts 15.14 gives the context, "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name". That is the purpose of quoting from Amos 9.11,12. To take out of the Gentiles, "a people for his name". The most that one could grant as being appropriate to this thought would be to identify "the tabernacle of David" with the resurrected human body of the Son of David, but certainly not with the NT church, which was only founded on the Day of Pentecost and was not "rebuilt"! But the central idea is the salvation of the

Gentiles and not the NT church itself. James is addressing the issue of Gentiles being saved and not identifying the Tabernacle of David with the NT church.

He used Amos 9:11-12 to specifically identify the two things, and, after acknowledging God's work among the Gentiles he says,

"...to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written, 'After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, And I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, etc.'"

This is not "merely adding". To "agree" means, according to my Oxford dictionary, "hold a similar opinion", "be in harmony" and "consent to" or "approve of". James deliberately selected this Scripture.

Why did James select it? He tells us - "and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord...etc." The rebuilding of David's tabernacle in Christ through his death and resurrection was the very basis of the ingathering of the Gentiles.

Here, concerning the human body of Christ, the Son of David, we might find some agreement, but I nevertheless find it a little awkward in the use of such phrases as "fallen down", being "built again", and "set up". This type of transference is a little crude and untoward. The Tabernacle of David was well known among the Jews. It could have been that James saw the influx of Gentiles as being itself a harbinger of a re-establishment of the kingdom of David.

In the same way that not until Christ was in resurrection enthroned upon the only true antitype of David's throne, so the world wide redemptive call of the Gentiles could not be accomplished until the only true antitype of David's "house" was ready to be established.

There was no Jew present at Jerusalem who would understand "David's throne" to be an "anti-type". The throne of David has specific meanings for them. God's promises to David concerning David's throne were literal. Jesus was a literal Son of David (His genealogy is given in the Gospels), and in Luke 1.32, Jesus was promised "the throne of his father David" (not a heavenly throne), and that He would "reign over the house of Jacob forever". It is not the "throne of God the Father", but rather "the throne of David" (His earthly forefather).

The use of the imagery of David's "tabernacle" is interesting. Why not the "tabernacle in the wilderness", or "Solomon's temple"? The answer is, I believe, that whilst these two institutions incorporated Aaronic priesthood and Mosaic sacrifices, David's tabernacle had neither. It was the place of God's dwelling, worship, music and praise, with Levites only.

The differentiation you point out may be correct. Animal sacrifices, however, were made before the ark, while it temporarily resided in "the Tabernacle or Tent of David":

1 Chron. 16.1 "So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it: and they offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before God".

1 Chron. 16.4 "And he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, and to record, and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel".

How fitting a type of the people of God under the New Covenant "in whom [Christ] all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph.2:21-22). James' selection was very appropriate.

But it is not good to fail to consider the context of Amos 9.11,12. It concerns a restoration of the kingdom to Israel. Look at Amos 9.14, "And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them". Amos 9.15 "And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God".

This goes back to the promise of the land, which is to be possessed "forever" by the people of Israel. And here we get another confirmation that "forever" means "forever". God says that He will lift the captivity of His people Israel, and that they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them, plant vineyards, and make gardens. God will plant them upon their land, and "they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them". The phrase "no more" is fairly conclusive.

I agree, there is no "new concept" here that you charge me with. The Scripture clearly teaches that David had no such notion with which you saddle him, that he was to have a descendant to occupy an millennial earthly throne in Jerusalem. I find it strange that you would even think otherwise. David may not have understood the particular term "millennial", but obviously he did not think that his earthly throne would one day be glorified and changed into a heavenly throne.

On the contrary, that is exactly what David believed and understood the Lord to be saying.

In God's promises He made to David, He included a promise concerning the people of Israel:

2 Sam. 7.10 "Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime." Again, the land is to be a possession of Israel so that they will not have to move anymore.

2 Sam. 7.16 "And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever".

Psalms 89.29 "His (David's) seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven".

Psalms 89.34 "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips".

Psalms 89.35 "Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David".

Psalms 89.36 "His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me."

Psalms 89.37 "It shall be established forever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah".

The NIV lets us know that Psalms 89.37 is not elevating the throne of David up into Heaven. It reads: "It will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky".

As I mentioned, the apostles, who had sat under the teaching of Jesus for at least three years or better, understood that a kingdom would be established for Israel (Acts 1.6,7). They would not have understood "the throne of David" to be anything other than the earthly throne of their great ancestor.

Let me quote in full from Acts 2 where Peter has just preached concerning the resurrection of Christ,

For David speaketh concerning him,because thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; Thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in Hades, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up,..." (Acts 2:25-32).

Here you make a fatal error of not making proper comparisons. You want to also resurrect and glorify the earthly throne of David, when all the passage shows is

that the descendant of David was resurrected and glorified-not the throne. The throne was not "resurrected and glorified". How, then, will the resurrected Jesus sit on the "throne of David"? Obviously, by returning to earth as He promised.

If David saw when writing Psalm 116 I think you mean a different Psalm here. Probably Psalms 132.11, Psalms 89.3,4, but I understand your argument here. that Peter used, that it was in the resurrected Christ who was to occupy his promised throne, (Editors comment: Alan meant Psalm 16:8ff)

I think we need to understand that David did not understand what was revealed to Peter and consequently to us today. Psalms 132.11 merely says, "The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne". There is nothing in this passage alone to indicate to David at the time that there would be a resurrection, but simply that God would set "of the fruit of thy body upon thy throne".

In Psalms 89.3,4 God affirms that He has made a covenant with David:

"Thy seed will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah". This says nothing of a resurrection of the dead, but rather is an assurance of a continuing earthly throne and seed of David (established to be a ruler forever).

It is in Acts 2.31 that Peter ties in the resurrection by quoting from Psalms 16.9,10 "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope". "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption". It is this passage that Peter says attests to the prophesied resurrection of Christ. It is Peter who has the revelation that these prophetic passages refer to the resurrection of Christ.

None of this, however, means that Peter was saying that Christ was currently (at that time) sitting on the throne of David. He was raised up, Peter said, "to (in order to) sit on his (David's) throne" Acts 2.30). Peter is merely demonstrating to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah), who would sit on the throne of David. He was not told by Jesus that He (Jesus) was on the throne of David at that time (or any time soon), but, in answer to the apostles' question concerning the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, Jesus merely answered (as stated) that the times and the seasons were in the Father's power.

how can you say when James uses Amos 9, about the tabernacle of David being fulfilled in the then ingathering of Gentiles, that "[I] symbolised the 'tabernacle of David' to be something that James did not intend, giving an explanation that James did not give."?

I have pointed out why I did not consider the "Tabernacle of David" to refer to the NT church as you opined.

Perhaps I can throw in one other scripture for good measure.

And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled same unto us their children, in the hath raised up Jesus ; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David (Acts 13:32-34).

So, the sure mercies of David are equated, no less, with the resurrection of Christ, which event enabled the promises of salvation to be offered to Jew and Gentile alike (vv 38-39).

There seems to be a vast gulf of difference in understanding and interpretation in this. It seems that you consider the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the gift of salvation to "Jew and Gentile alike" to sweep aside all of the prophecies made through the Holy Ghost concerning the promises made to the fathers concerning the future glory of the kingdom of Israel, the possession of the land, and everything that pertains to the nation of Israel. You do not give much in the way of scripture to substantiate this. It seems that you cannot discriminate between salvation and specific promises made to the fathers and the Jews concerning the future destiny of Jacob (the 12 twelve tribes). I also glory in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the establishment of the NT church and the grace and the glory that is granted to us Gentiles through the forbearance and mercy of God.

In the same Scripture (v. 27) we have the familiar verses which tells us that the Jews "in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled...etc " Alas, although you know the Lord and love him, it appears that dispensationalists also as little understand the true thrust of these prophetic Scriptures.

I certainly understand the thrust of salvation through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the establishment of the NT church and what that means to both Jew and Gentile, but prophecies concerning salvation do not automatically thrust out, or cancel out, the prophecies made concerning the nation of Israel and the coming millennial reign of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth. This is the critical issue that you either have not been able to see or to explain. Unless you can show that the numerous prophecies concerning the destiny of Israel (which is, after all, the subject that was decided upon), then you have not established your thesis.

So, despite your objection, I do not believe that anyone who accepts the authority of the NT in interpreting the OT could disagree with my words "the apostles saw the 'tabernacle of David' as a picture of the new people of God".

The very heart of James' interpretation of Amos 9.11,12 prohibits this interpretation that you have made. James was not trying to give a "picture of the new people of God", but rather he was attempting to explain to the Jews that prophetic scripture foresaw the inclusion of Gentiles among God's people (the people of Israel, the Jews). Those being saved were Jews, but God also surprisingly allowed Gentiles to be saved. It is certainly not "replacement theology" at all.

But the source of our authority is, I guess, the nub of our difference.

Dealing with those two Scriptures (Acts 2 and Acts 15) lays the foundation of my charge that we evangelicals in viewing the resurrection only in its apologetic and redemptive aspects are missing an equally important feature to the Church of God which I have described above. As I sought to show briefly in section III. of my paper headed Christ - the Termination of OT Redemptive Prophecy, and is demonstrated by the two sample Scriptures referred to above, the only true significance of the "house of David", the "throne of David", in short, is that Israel's, or even David's significance, is that they were to be the vehicle from which Christ came.

My good friend, it is this idea of the first coming of Christ being so conclusive in the sense of "fulfilling all prophecy" and everything culminating in the idea of the establishment of the NT church, which I find to be so shortsighted and neglectful of much of OT prophecy and not indicative at all of the understanding revealed to us by Jesus Christ and the apostles in the NT. I see that much was fulfilled in the first coming of Christ, but I do not see the destruction of the other promises made to the fathers (excluding the Promise of the Father, the descent of the Holy Spirit), the end of the nation of Israel's destiny, and the final endtime (worldwide cataclysmic events) preceding the glorious return of Jesus Christ. To my way of thinking, preterists, and those who embrace this interpretation, have confused the judgment of Jerusalem in 70 AD with the final apocalyptic events of Armageddon, preceding the glorious Day of The Lord, the Millennium, wherein the returned Christ will rule and reign from the throne of David in Jerusalem over the nations with a rod of iron.

This is not to say that I do not recognize the superiority of the NT church to anything else that has come before it (as you so ably demonstrate below).

May I remind you of the "Servant" prophecies in Isaiah, how that sometimes it is difficult to differentiate between the "Servant" and the nation of Israel? The resolution of this problem is found in the "suffering Servant" of Isaiah 53. May I remind you also that the only true significance of the "manna", the "water", the

"light" was in their antitypical fulfilment in Christ? I am sure you do not need reminding that Peter in his first epistle tells his readers that they are an "holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices", that we are an elect race, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy (vv.9-10).

All these designations, lifted out of the OT, were Israel's. In the light of the testimony of these Scriptures from Acts and Peter, to teach the re-emergence of Israel to give substance again to what are described as "shadows" (Col.2:17, Heb.8:5, 10:1) is indefensible.

I would certainly agree with you that if Israel were, as a nation, were to just "re-emerge" to "give substance again to what are described as 'shadows'," that this would not be good. It is difficult for me to imagine, however, that if Christ returns at Armageddon, as prophesied in the prophets and through the apostles, and sets up His kingdom on earth at Jerusalem, as Daniel 2 shows, that it would simply be a "re-emergence" of the substance of the "shadows". That may be a "characterization" of it that is unworthy and ill-informed.

When we, for example, partake of holy communion (the bread and the wine), have we gone beyond the "shadow"? We are to continue to do this until the Lord returns, showing His death. When we are immersed in water (as the scriptures teach), is not the water a "shadow"? And, if per chance, we should wash one another's feet in a ritual encouraged to us by the Lord Himself, is that not a "shadow"?

That there will be another "age" to come, the Lord Himself makes quite clear. When the Lord returns to earth, we expect that He shall indeed reign over the earth (especially since the first Adam forfeited his assigned dominion and failed in the task). Surely, we do not subscribe to the "kingdom now" teaching, or "dominion theology", which holds that the NT church will conquer the world for Christ and then He will return to claim the prize. Every period of time in which man has been given commandments by God has resulted in the failure of the majority of mankind to obey God. Why should we believe that mankind, as a whole, will accept the ministry of the NT church, so that all is "conquered" and the Lord returns to an already conquered planet? That is not the teaching of apocalyptic prophecy.

I know that you would see the OT prophecies you have quoted as ground for defence, but, although I shall look at them later, I believe that this dispensational use of the OT against the NT is inadmissible.

Of course, I do not see it as a "dispensational use of the OT against the NT". I have always been taught by my dispensational elders that the NT is a fulfillment

of the OT, but I never dreamed that one day I would have to defend against those who taught that the NT did away with the prophecies of the OT (I realize that those who feel this way also use the term "fulfilled", but they actually mean "did away with"). Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5.17,18).

It is possible to "destroy" the meaning of passages through the overuse of allegorization. Jesus said, "I am come to...fulfill (the law and the prophets)". He literally fulfilled all of the passages pertaining to His first coming (but not all of the passages pertaining to His first coming). He came the first time to suffer as a servant, but He is coming back the second time to rule and to reign. There are many passages in the law and in the prophets, and in the psalms, that await fulfilling when He comes again. One has to rightly divide the word of truth. Preterists, for example, attempt to place the fulfillment of much prophecy in the first century, that has not yet been fulfilled with His second Advent. The Bible has much to say about His second coming and His millennial reign upon the earth.

But to round off this section. What are we overlooking? We overlook the understanding that all things, and Israel's purpose in particular, centres down upon Christ and which gives content to Eph.1:10, which, though familiar to evangelicals, we find difficult to fill out.

That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and on earth...

The concept that the whole of Israel in its ordinances, temple system, and very existence, all pointed to, and found its total fulfillment

This phrase "total fulfillment" I find to not satisfy the numerous prophecies concerning the future destiny of Israel during the millennial reign. Of course, Christ grants total fulfillment in the area of salvation to us in the NT church age (an age which has followed the time and period of the Law), but in the age to come, in the millennial reign, there are many things that Christ will do when He returns to earth.

in Christ and the new Israel combining Jew and Gentile in one body

Of course, there is no such biblical phrase as "the new Israel". The only reference in the NT which might even seem to confuse the nation of Israel and the NT church is Galatians 6.16, a remark by our beloved Paul, "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, AND upon the Israel of God". The conjunctive at the end of the sentence separates the phrase "Israel of God" from the church. In many other places, Paul makes it clear that Israel continued to exist even after the inauguration of the NT church (see Rom. 9.3,4;

Rom. 10.32; Rom. 11.1-7; 25-30). The denial of the existence of Israel as a nation, and the replacement of Israel with the NT church, is simply unscriptural.

, so clearly taught in the NT, is surely Christ exalting. As I said in my paper, though not explaining it in such detail, "In postulating a millennial kingdom, with Jewish dominance, sacrifices, temple, priesthood, etc., there is a subtle shift of emphasis away from Christ's pre-eminence....."

This is a strange conclusion, in my opinion. Is Christ more "pre-eminent" among the Gentiles (as opposed to the Jews)? Did the establishment of the NT church do away with the entire history of God's attention, love, promises, and prophetic statements, concerning "Jacob"? I actually see in this (although I do not wish to imply that you personally are "anti-semitic", since I do not perceive that in your attitude or writing) an "anti-semitic" stance. Why do we have this polarization? I do not understand it. On the one hand, we see the hyper-Jewish stand of the "messianic Jewish" Christians, while on the other hand, those who wish to simply see Israel disappear and all of the promises made to Jacob and the twelve tribes appropriated by the NT church (or discarded if they do not fit).

As the Scripture says,

"...unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph.3:21). And to the Colossians "...he is the head of the body, the church:that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." (Col.1:18).

I believe we are now in a position to understand what Jesus may have meant in response to the disciples question about restoring the kingdom to Israel. He clearly cannot be understood to mean what would be a contradiction of the NT. But we can parallel his reply with that of rebuilding the fallen down tabernacle of David (Acts 15:16) by the ingathering of the Gentiles. In that way the kingdom was restored to the true "Israel of God" (Gal.6:16). Jesus did not give "tacit encouragement" to the faulty understanding of the disciples - he approved what they would eventually understand to be true. If you ask why he avoided precision as to when this was to take place, may I suggest that "times and seasons, in the sense of precise dating, are an incorrect focus. Jesus directed them to wait for God manifesting himself to them in a way that would change their whole experience. I Thess.5:1 is to similar effect.

You refer to my use of Matthew 23:38 "your house is left unto you desolate" as spoken to the nation, and then say that I ignore the following verse "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, blessed is he which cometh in the name of the Lord," which, you say, must also be spoken to the nation, thus proving a national return and restoration. Certainly, the invitation is to the whole nation. But what is the response? Surely the OT is full of God's appeal to Israel to repent and return with associated promises? Yet what was the invariable result? If any repented and

returned, it was only a remnant. The same with the Gospel. So, as a principle, the idea that a national invitation secures a national response and therefore statehood, does not follow. If the bulk of the nation had responded, they would have constituted the Church of God, anyway.

The only problem with this "solution" (in attempting to avoid any future national revival or restoration of the kingdom of Israel) is one small word: UNTIL. Jesus did not say in Matthew 23.39 that Jerusalem would never ever cease to be desolation, but He said, "Ye shall not see me henceforth, TILL (UNTIL) ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord".

Zechariah 12-14, properly interpreted, demonstrates that Israel shall return to the Lord in the day that the Lord comes again. Zechariah 12 teaches that Jerusalem will become "a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem". Jerusalem shall become "a burdensome stone for all people" (not just the Roman armies of 70 AD), "though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it" (vs. 3).

And, contrary to the prophetic interpretation of the preterists, there is a revival among the Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem in that day.

The LORD "shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah" (vs. 7). This did not happen in 66-70 AD.

"In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem ((unlike 70 AD)); he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them" (vs. 8). "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" (vs. 9). This did not happen in 70 AD! This is a future prophecy to be fulfilled!

"And ((subsequently, not dropping back to 33 AD!)) I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (vs. 10). A great national day of repentance and acceptance of the Messiah.

Zechariah 13 goes on to describe this future turning of Jacob to God (just as Paul has prophesied in Romans 11, when God turns back to Jacob and "all Israel" shall be saved).

There will be a "fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (vs. 1). This cannot be speaking of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, since we have seen that it is associated

with a battle for Jerusalem that is defended by the Lord Himself ((and this did not happen in 33 AD or even in 70 AD)).

With the exception of a passage in Zechariah 13.7, which is used by Christ to demonstrate His betrayal, this entire section of Zech. 12-14 demonstrates an endtime crisis against Jerusalem, which results in a national revival and the return of the Lord my God with all the saints (at Armageddon). What is significant in millennial prophecy is that it is following the return of the Lord that we see the events of Zechariah 14.9-21 described. This is what amillennialists and preterists reject because it does not fit their scheme.

While we are in Matthew's gospel, you say, "The events of Matthew 24:15-28, if they are to be relegated to the first century, must also include the contextual events of Matthew 24:29-31, the cataclysmic events surrounding the return of the Lord Jesus Christ from on high." because of the connecting "immediately".

I agree that the whole section vv. 15-31 is contiguous in time with the later section. But do we not have a case here of "the pot calling the kettle 'black'"? For you, yourself separate vv.1-14 from the rest of the chapter. I agree with you that this chapter of Matthew is very amenable to interpretative contention (since I see that you struggle with it as everyone does it seems).

Obviously, none of us have all of the keys. But from a dispensational, pre-millennial viewpoint, let me give my understanding and then make a few remarks about what you have said:

The disciples asked Jesus three questions in Matthew 24.3: (1) When shall all these things be? (2) What shall be the sign of thy coming? (3) (What shall be the sign) of the end of the age?

The "end of the age" is, of course, the end of age which was to follow the Mosaic age, the age in which the Lord would come back to earth.

The first question was a general question concerning a time frame, and had reference to His remarks about the destruction of the Temple, but did not specifically address that. We know from Acts 1.6,7 that Jesus would not give a specific answer concerning "when shall these things be", because "the times and the seasons" are in the Father's power.

The rest of the chapter, then, in answer to their questions, addresses the coming of the Lord and the end of the age (which was to be initiated with the Day of Pentecost, and would run from the Day of Pentecost roughly to the return of the Lord).

I believe that Matthew 24.4-14 covers the period of the church age (that is from Pentecost to the Rapture or catching up of the church). During this period, the

Gospel is to be preached to the whole world, to every nation. The persecution and tribulation given the NT church is an ongoing thing and not the special time of three and one-half years prophesied by Daniel and later in this chapter by Jesus. It is my own belief that the first four seals of Rev. 6 can be matched to the period in Matt. 24.4-14.

The church age ends with the completion of the mission of the church seen in Matthew 24.14. This is what Jesus means when He says "a witness unto all nations ((not just the ancient world)); and then the end shall come. This "end" is the "end of the church age". That is why He says so here in verse 14.

With the NT church lifted out of the world, having accomplished its mission (the "fulness of the Gentiles", Romans 11.25), God will turn His attention once again to Israel and Jerusalem.

After all, Jesus is speaking to Jews when He makes this speech. The church had not yet been established at the point of His speech to His Jewish disciples. Of course, He includes the NT church in vs. 4-14 (since it will be established on the Day of Pentecost, although it does not yet exist at that time).

Matt. 24.15-28 speaks of the Time of Jacob's Trouble (Jer. 30.7, Dan. 9-12, Rev. 11,13), the Great Tribulation period of three and one-half years (1260 days or 42 months). It opens up with the placement of the Abomination of Desolation in the holy place in Jerusalem. Jesus points His remarks to those who live in Jerusalem and Judea. They are the victims of the Great Tribulation. Jews are not come take time to get anything out of their houses but to immediately flee when they learn that the Abomination stands in the holy place. They are to leave houses, places of work in the fields immediately, and pray that they do not have to flee in the winter or on a sabbath day. This will be an unparalleled period of horror and devastation, not since in the entire history of the world. It is not Antiochus Epiphanes. Jesus makes that clear. It cannot be the Roman assault of 66-70 AD, since even the Holocaust of WW II (6 million dead) was far worse than that. Furthermore, the Lord Jesus Christ did not immediately return after that war.

Matt. 24.28 does not pertain to Roman "eagles". The word in the Greek mean "vultures"

Jesus makes it clear that (vs. 29) "immediately after" the tribulation of those days, cosmic calamities and signs shall be evident: the sun darkened, the moon not giving her light, and the stars (meteors or comets apparently) falling from heaven, and "the powers of the heavens shall be shaken". AND THEN "shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven". This is the coming of the Lord back to earth. At this point, "all the tribes of the earth shall mourn", and "they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory". This did not happen in 70 AD. There is absolutely no historical confirmation that any of these

great things happened. If the Lord did not come back in 70 AD, then the Great Tribulation did not occur between the years of 66-70 AD either.

And so the chronological grouping of Matthew 24 should be: vs 4-14, the church age; vs 15-28 the subsequent Great Tribulation of three and one-half years; vs.29-31, the end of the age, with the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus has given the NT church nearly 19 centuries to reach the entire nations of the world with the Gospel. When the mission of the church is finished, there will be no further need for the Bride to remain on earth, and her Bridegroom will come for her. Her harvest will be "the fulness of the gentiles" (Rom. 11.25). She will not then turn to Jacob, but she will be lifted out of here. It is the Lord Himself who will turn to Jacob and deal with the nation of Israel.

Daniel 7-12, Matthew 24.15-28, Revelation 11,12 make it abundantly clear that the victims or the participants in the Great Tribulation will be Jews. Daniel 12.1 identifies them as "thy people", Daniel's people (Jews), Jesus identifies them as inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea (Jews), and Revelation 12 identifies the "Woman", who is persecuted by the dragon in the Great Tribulation, as "the Woman who brought forth the Man child (Jesus)". Since the NT church did not bring forth Jesus (but rather He founded the NT church), the "Woman" in Revelation 12 who undergoes the Great Tribulation is the Jewish nation (represented by the true Israel, or those Jews who are spiritual and love the Lord). Salvation in the Great Tribulation is not like it is in the church age. Moreover, the spirit of the Two Witnesses (two prophets) in the Great Tribulation are very much unlike apostles and disciples of the NT church. Apostles do not call fire down from heaven, do not bring plagues upon people, and routinely turn water into blood. Those are characteristics that belong to Jewish prophets and not NT apostles (Luke 9.55).

One thing for sure. When the Great Tribulation is completed (the sixth seal in Rev. 6 is opened, the fifth seal referring to the Great Tribulation, and, as I said, the first four seals of Rev. 6 referring to the church age), then the way is open for the final events leading up to the actual return of the Lord (the unmixed wrath of God, the gathering together of the nations to Armageddon, and then the glorious Advent).

Verse fifteen begins "When you therefore see.etc". "Therefore" clearly has reference to what has gone before - it is a conjunction - "a word used to connect". If the first fourteen verses apply to events up to and including the destruction of the temple (vv.1-2), then vv.15ff. are also in the same time period.

But I believe we can see that in vs 4-14, Jesus does not mention the destruction of the Temple, and we also know that the church has been preaching the Gospel to all nations during the last 19 centuries. In verse 14, Jesus says the end will come

following the completion of the mission of preaching the gospel to every nation. Then comes vss 15-28, the period of the Great Tribulation.

If you compare the gospels you will see that Matthew's "abomination of desolation" is parallel with and identical to Luke's "when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (21:20). You cannot siphon this off to the end times.

There are some marked differences between the passage in Luke 21.20-24 and Matthew 24.15-28. Let me point them out: (1) Two entirely different Greek words describe the "persecution" of these times. In Matt. 24.21, Jesus describes the three and one-half year period as "tribulation" (thlipsis); while in Luke 21.20-24, in Luke 21.23, Jesus is reported as describing the assault of the armies on Jerusalem as a time of "great distress" (anangke), a different word entirely; (2) The Great Tribulation of Matthew 24.15-28 ends with the immediate coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, while the assault upon Jerusalem with armies in Luke 21.20-24 ends with the Jews falling by the edge of the sword and being led away "captive into all nations", and Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles, "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21.24). This shows two entirely different scenarios. Thus Luke, in Luke 21.20-24 has shown the 66-70 AD assault upon Jerusalem with the worldwide dispersion of the Jews. Luke completely skips the Great Tribulation period here between vss. 24 and 25 (a 2000 year "gap"), and goes to the immediate endtime events at the return of the Lord in Luke 21.25-27. The passage in Luke 21.25-27 matches Matthew 24.29-31, but Luke 21.20-24 does not match Mathew 24.15-28 for the reasons I have stated. For if it did, it would mean that Jesus came back in 70 AD immediately following the Great Tribulation. Moreover, history affirms that Luke 21.20-24 because it reports the dispersion of the Jews, who were taken captive following the triumph of the armies of Titus. They were indeed dispersed abroad and Jerusalem has been trodden down of the Gentiles, as Jesus said, until 1967, when Israel marched into the old city and raised up the star of David.

What then do I make of the "immediately" of verse 15, which, you say, "must include the cataclysmic events surrounding the return of the Lord Jesus Christ from on high." And here I note that you quote Isa.13:10 [Babylon] and Isa.34.4 [Edom] which also give us imagery of cataclysmic events in the heavens. I can quote some more - Amos 8:9 (Samaria) and Ezek.32:7-8 (Egypt). But in NONE of these instances did any events take place in the heavens, cataclysmic or otherwise. If it had, there would have been evidence, and there is none. This is not an argument from silence, for, if there had been these events in the heavens, history would have recorded it. Your slavery to a literal interpretation causes you to quote the verses as if to prove that these events in the heavens have to take place literally at the second coming of Christ!

I certainly am not ashamed to believe that, nor do I consider my adherence to the truth of the word of God to be "slavery". The "argument from silence is yours",

since for you to advocate that Isaiah 13.9,10 to have been fulfilled, you must show historically that "the day of the LORD" (which Peter still speaks of in 2 Peter 3.10-12 as not having been fulfilled in the first century) was fulfilled in Isaiah's day, and that "the sinners were destroyed out of (the land)", and "the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof" (did not) give their light, and "the sun (was) darkened", and "the moon (did not) cause her light to shine", and, in verse 11, that God (punished) "the world for their evil".

And, in Isaiah 34.4, "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree". This was the "indignation of the LORD" "upon all nations" (not just Edom) (Isaiah 34.2). This prophecy has not been fulfilled.

The apostle John saw this in his vision Rev. 6.12-15:

"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;"

"And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind."

"And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places". -Rev. 6.12-14.

Compare this with the prophecy of Isaiah 34.4. You will see that John is referring to that same prophecy in 96 AD! Hundreds of years after you interpret it to apply to Edom only. Years ago I learned a principle of prophecy that works well. Prophecies are sometimes like the headlights on a car. They have a low beam and a high beam. They may have a near application, but also have a long range application. It is obvious, however, that the apostle John used Isaiah 34.4 and saw it as applying to the future endtime judgments coming on the earth.

And, of course, since apparently you similarly interpret the book of Revelation, does not this, along with all the literally interpreted language which is figurative, create the nonsense with which you charge me? For, from Gen.1:14-16 we are told that the heavenly bodies are spoken of as "signs" which "govern" the world, and throughout Scripture, we are to understand this imagery as depicting the fall of nations. Matt.24:25-26 is not an exception. It is therefore totally appropriate to use it for the demise of Israel in 70 AD. This is not "spiritualising". It is recognising language that is figurative.

In principle, as above, I might partly agree with this, although, as I have pointed out, Matthew 24 does not accurately describe the events of 66-70 AD, while Luke 21.20-24 does.

How about the "coming on clouds" of Matt.24:27? It also is prophetic imagery. We read repeatedly in the OT of the "coming of the Lord". It signified the coming of the Lord either for the salvation of his people, or the judgement of his foes. Reference to Ps.104:3, Isa.19:1, Nah.1:3, will show that in no case did the Lord appear personally on a cloud for either of these purposes.

The problem with this line of thinking is that the scripture denies it. In Acts 1.9 says, "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight". Acts 1.10 "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel". Acts 1.11 "Which also said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven".

The manner in which He returns will be in real clouds of heaven, according to the angels and the apostles in the above passage (Acts 1.9-11). Not figurative clouds (the so-called "biblical imagery") but real clouds. His feet left the mount of Olives (terra firma) and when He comes back at Armageddon, His feet shall touch down upon the mount of Olives (terra firma) (Zechariah 14.4, and Acts 1.9-11).

That Jesus, in saying to his enemies in Matt.26:64 that they personally would see the Son of Man coming on the clouds indicated as clearly as any words can that he was referring to events within that generation - "this generation" (24:32).

The interpretation of this passage in Matthew 26.64 should follow the explanation of the angels in Acts 1.9-11. His coming in the clouds will be as they saw Him go up in the clouds (real clouds). The word "hereafter" used in Matt. 26.64 has no particular reference to the first century. It could be any century after that time in which it was spoken. Since we believe in survival of consciousness after death, we must believe that it is possible for the high priest to be able to see the Lord when He comes back. We also know that every tribe on earth shall mourn and that every eye shall see Him when He comes. That did not happen in the first century, or God would have let us know that it did. Moreover, if the Lord came in the first century and caught up the NT church (which is to happen at or near His return), then why are we even here claiming to be in a NT church that was caught up to heaven 1900 years ago? Did He found another NT church after He caught up the first NT church after only about 40 years of activity? I think the answers are self-evident. I cannot see how anyone can hold opinions which inculcate such conclusions. Perhaps I am missing something here.

Matthew 24 concerns events mainly up to and including the destruction of Jerusalem. We could also equate it with the picture given in Daniel 7:13-14, of Jesus' ascension (Acts 1:9, Mark 16:19). In either event, these pictures are nothing to do with events thousands of years in the future.

The events of Matthew 24 considered the answers to three questions (see above): (1) When shall these things be? (2) What is the sign of thy coming? (3) What is the sign of the end of the age?

Are you willing to contend that all three of these questions were successfully answered by events in the first century?

Matthew 24 actually says nothing about the destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus only predicted the destruction of the Temple in Matthew 24.2. Actually, if my history is correct, a part of the wall of the second Temple still stands (the Wailing Wall), and thus the prophecy of Jesus in Matthew 24.2 has not yet been completely fulfilled.

Despite dispensational teaching that "generation" means "race" (i.e. Jesus is referring to the Jews of the end-times), it does not. It is used in the sense of "race" in secular literature, but in every gospel use of the term it meant that present generation, and its biblical setting is our yardstick of interpretation. Why should Matthew 24:30 be an exception to this rule? Read correctly, the Great Tribulation to which you refer, is past, and relates to the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Surely, you have not inducted the traitor and Roman sychophant, Josephus and his writings, into your canon of scripture? It is well known that his writings have been interpolated by Catholic writers.

It is doubtful that Josephus' report of 1,250,000 Jews died in the Roman assault upon Jerusalem (his figures are known to be highly inflated). Even this inflated figure pales in comparison to the nearly 6,000,000 Jews who died in the Holocaust of WW II (as stated), and in the persecution of Stalin in Russia. Jesus and Gabriel the angel (in Daniel 12) stated that the Great Tribulation would be so horrible that nothing in the history of the nations of the world could compare to it, and if He would not cut it short, "no flesh should be saved" (Matt. 24.22).

I find the understanding of the chapter as a whole, set in the first century, is cohesive and honours the time constraints set by our Lord. Understood so, the preterist interpretation does not produce, as you say, "fly[ing] off into the realms of biblical imagery and fanciful interpretations..." This is simply a case of recognising a literary genre in the Scriptures.

To fail to do so is the way into fanciful interpretation; doubly so when the Book of Revelation is so interpreted.

On a theme similar to that of the last paragraph - the second coming, one may ask, "what about verse 30 of Matthew 24"? For generations we have been habituated into thinking of this as referring to the second coming of Christ. Influenced by such thinking the translators of modern versions (e.g. NASB and NIV) put it, "and

then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky. This is a poor translation; the KJV is better " ...then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven." Notice two things. Firstly, the realm of the sign is not the "sky", it is "heaven".

The problem with this interpretation of Matthew 24.30 is that it does violence to many other companion passages pertaining to the coming of the Son of man, which would not lend themselves to this unorthodox interpretation. Moreover, how do all "the tribes of the earth mourn" when they see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory"?

Secondly, it is not the sign that is in heaven, but the Son of Man who is in heaven.

This seems a bit "convoluted" to me. Where is the sign then? If it does not signify the actual coming of the Son of man, then why does Jesus say, "AND (consequential connective) then shall all tribes of the earth mourn, AND they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven ((same word as "heaven" previously used in the verse)) with power and great glory".

The meaning is simply that the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and the dispersion of Israel, was to be the sign that, as prophesied, Christ is now enthroned in heaven, ruling universally, and taking vengeance upon his inveterately rebellious enemies, that he had removed from them the Kingdom, and given it to those who would produce the expected fruits.

What kingdom did the poor enslaved Jews have under the heel of Roman domination to lose at that point? The kingdom of God came in the Spirit at the Day of Pentecost in 33 AD. Do you mean the Jews kept the kingdom for about 37 more years?

To remove one last thing, I trust, which would be a stumbling block to you, I refer to the gathering of the elect in verse 31. This has nothing to do with the Rapture. The Greek term translated "angels" often means "messengers" (cf. James 2:25).

Often the word means "preachers of the gospel" (see Matt.10:10; Luke 7:24, 9:52; Rev.1-3). So, in the context of Matthew 24 there is every reason to believe that reference is being made to world-wide evangelism. The word "gather" is significant. It means literally "to synagogue". The sense is that with the destruction of the Temple and the old Covenant system, the Lord sends out his messengers to gather his elect into his new synagogue.

One of the many problems with this allegorical interpretation is that it implies a change in the method and mode of world wide evangelism. They were gathered by angels in verse 31 "immediately after the tribulation of those days" (vs. 29)?

I understand the dual meaning of *aggelos*, and do not disagree (also, Revelation 2,3), but there is a problem in using a human angel here: the "gathering" is from

one end of heaven to the other". In verse 30, you wanted "heaven" to mean "heaven" and not "sky" (the first heaven), and I assumed you wanted to interpret "clouds of heaven" in verse 30 allegorically (but not the first "heaven" in verse 30). But in verse 31, you want the "angels" to be human beings, who gather the elect from one end of "heaven" to the other. Will this be in an allegorical sense, or will this be: the "sky" or "heaven"? I cannot see this type of allegorical interpretation as being "cohesive" at all. That is why a common rule is much better: a literal interpretation always makes good sense, unless it makes "nonsense".

I find this unified understanding satisfyingly cohesive, and Christ exalting. I do not so find the arbitrary dividing up Matthew 24.

The questions posed in Matthew 24.3 require a long chronological period: (1) the church age 33 AD-present time, (2) the Great Tribulation, a brief period of three and one-half years following the church age, and (3) the coming of the Lord, a very brief time following the end of the Great Tribulation. I do not see any lack of cohesiveness in such a sequential interpretation. It is obvious that the church age continues today, since the church still continues on earth. It follows quite simply, then, that the Great Tribulation and the coming of the Lord remain to be accomplished.

And to teach an end time drama based on the literal interpretation of certain OT prophetic chapters, whilst either not understanding, or rejecting well accredited principles of interpreting prophetic imagery is, I believe, a by-path meadow to say the least.

I believe the phrase "well accredited principle of interpreting prophetic imagery" is open to question and discussion.

The time has come for me to demonstrate what, I believe, is the biblical way to understand the prophetic scriptures you quote at length under the heading "God promises to bring Israel back into their own land and establish a New Covenant with Israel."

Ezekiel 11:17-19. You quote these verses and say, "...this prophetic passage is connected with the acceptance of the Covenant, and the return to the land from a world-wide dispersion. It could not have been the return from Babylon. At this point in time, the world-wide dispersion by the Romans in the first century is significantly drawing to a close. A New Covenant acceptance by the Jews could soon follow, since this passage connects the two events."

You infer that the majority of the nation should be in the land, and accept the New Covenant. But have you not read on from verse 21?

We might to discuss the merits of using the word "majority" in any required sense. My main concern is to show that there is a national destiny for Israel. I would wonder at what point one would make a head count and consider the people a "majority" or a "remnant"? The word "remnant" means "a small, surviving group".

Ezekiel 11.20 says, "and they shall be my people, and I will be their God".

The verses say,

But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their heads, saith the Lord God.

So the return is not total. Does it not suggest that here we have the familiar OT (and NT) theme of the "remnant" returning? It is your scheme, not this Scripture that requires them as a majority in the land, to accept the New Covenant 2000 years and more later.

I am only speaking of a national revival, and the return of Israel as a people (a cohesive nation) into the land. The words "remnant" and "majority" are relative terms, which depend upon adjustable numbers. The main point is that the nation of Israel has a national destiny (even if only a remnant make it back into the land, which has already occurred to a large degree, although the Philistines are disputing their possession, as is Ishmael).

The immediately preceding context (v.16ff) relates to their Babylonian captivity, and their partial return under Ezra, Nehemiah, Joshua, and Zerubbabel. Followed by, in due course, their (likewise partial) acceptance of the New Covenant at Pentecost, and the punishment, 40 years or so later, of the rebellious nation. Your prior denial of any reference to a return from Babylon, and suggesting that the occupation of Israel by the Jews in Roman times does not fulfil the requirements of the prophecy, appears to be an attempt to paint a background to aid acceptance of the requirement of your end-time scheme.

I cannot deny that there is a possibility that Ezekiel could be referring to a Babylonian return since he was himself in Babylon; however, I do not think for the following reasons:

But what happened to the principle of interpretational cohesiveness? Here, if I accept that Ezekiel is prophesying exclusively of a return from the Babylonian captivity, I have a 500 or 600 year gap between that time and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost in 33 AD. They returned to the land from the Babylonian dispersion in Ezek. 11.17, and in verse 19, they receive the New covenant in 33 AD. And their conversion requires them to "take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence (that is,

from the land)" (Ezek. 11.18). This did not happen in 33 AD, since the Jewish nation, as a whole, had rejected the new covenant. The remnant of the Jews who accepted Pentecost were not able to cleanse the land as required. Doesn't fit.

Isaiah 11:10-12. You rightly say that verse 10, "in that day there shall be a root of Jesse" refers to Jesus and the NT church. Verse 1 of this chapter is to the same effect. And, interestingly, verses 6-9, which you elsewhere claim to be millennial changes of animal nature, are sandwiched between verses 1 and 10, that is, surely, during this gospel age. Do you not think that there is the slightest probability that verses 6-9 are figurative? You then refer to the very next verse 11 concerning the "second" return from dispersion, that "there can be little doubt that this situation shall occur 'in the last days' i.e. just prior to the second coming of Christ.

I am happy enough with the "first" return from dispersion being the return from Babylon. Incidentally, you said earlier in your paper that since the whole nation was spoken to in a certain scripture, then it must be assumed that the response would be from the whole nation. But, will you allow in this case, that since the first return was partial, the second can be also? But rather than accept a total national restoration of Israel which involves a hybrid Old/New Covenant, in a millennium based on one symbolic verse of scripture, I would prefer to accept a NT situation which, I believe, meets the requirements of these verses. The fulfilment of this prophecy began to be fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, when, "Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven" who had come up to Jerusalem responded in large numbers to the preaching of the Gospel. Peter's first epistle was addressed to "the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion..." (I Peter 1:1 RV), He sees them as returning home to the "Shepherd and Bishop of [their] souls" (2:25), to a heavenly inheritance that is described as a "salvation". John confirms the spiritual interpretation of these prophecies when he speaks of the death of Christ as "gathering together into one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John 11:52). Moreover, Isaiah 11:12 is quoted by Paul in Romans 15:12. Why did he quote it?

Actually, my Bible, which is a Hebrew-Greek Study Bible (Zodhiates), says that Paul, in Romans 15.12 is quoting from Isaiah 11.1 and 11.10, which, you agreed referred to the church age. Isaiah 11.11,12 actually do, I believe, refer to a subsequent (that is, subsequent to the founding of the church) ingathering of Israel (such as we are seeing in our day, beginning in the 1940's in modern Israel).

I do not think you can expect the solid cohesiveness out of these prophetic passages. They may purposely be "juggled". For example, Isaiah 11.4 obviously refers to the return of the Lord at Armageddon "he shall smite the earth the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (this obviously refers to the return at Armageddon, as we see in Revelation 19, 2 Thess. 2, etc.). That being the case, Isaiah 11.5-9 are perfectly placed for millennial prophecies, indicating the taming of the animal kingdom as it was in Eden, and the millennial peace on earth. Isaiah 11.9 is a perfect summation of the

millennium: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea".

Thus, in Isaiah 11, we see prophecies concerning the church period, the coming of the Lord at Armageddon, the Millennium (in that order) (Isaiah 11.1-9); the church period, which after all is seeing the return of Israel to its homeland (Isaiah 11.10-12 concern the church period, which sees the return the "second time", which is the Roman dispersion began in Luke 21.20-24).

To demonstrate the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy,

Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.

Yes, He has "confirmed the promises made to the fathers", but now they must be delivered, and this is being worked out through the church age, and will be consummated with the return of the Lord at Armageddon.

For those who can accept the authority of the NT this totally satisfies the terms of the prophecy. I do not believe that any argument to the contrary from silence is admissible - for the reasons I have given earlier.

This is the crux of the issue. Has the NT done away with the promises made to the fathers concerning the nation of Israel, or has the NT fulfilled the promises already with the advent of the NT church? I believe that the NT church is an advance element or body of believers who will be kings and priests after the order of Melchizedek in the millennium and who will be with the Lord forever in heaven also. When Jesus returns at Armageddon, He will bring the saints with Him, and He will rule and reign on earth for a 1000 years (until the Final Judgment at the Great White Throne), and there will be a new earth and new heavens throughout eternity future.

Hosea 3:4-5. These verses give a glowing picture of Israel's return in the "latter days" - the days of Messiah, (his birth, death, burial, resurrection and destruction of Jerusalem, present enthronement down to his second coming). But, context, context, context. You will know that Hosea's chapter 2 is unremitting judgement upon Israel. How does the chapter close?

I really appreciate your not fearing to go into the prophets and actually discuss in detail the prophecies. I have a number of preterist friends who will not do this, but merely cry, "biblical imagery", "biblical imagery".

Hosea 3.4,5, I see as a prophecy in the process of being fulfilled. Don't you believe, however, that the phrase "the children of Israel" has always been used to speak of the people of Israel, that is, the nation?

...and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

This verse is quoted in Romans 9:25-26 as the very fulfilment of these Hosea verses! Fulfilled in the grafting back of a remnant of Israel into the olive stock, with Gentiles also included! On what grounds do you excise from this fulfilment the restoration you quote in the next chapter? It will be upon the principle of discontinuity.

Paul certainly uses Hosea 2.23, but I am afraid discontinuity has to prevail over cohesiveness. In Hosea 2.18-21, we read of the millennial period, where God, as in Isaiah 11, speaks of great peace upon the earth, with even the animals put back into a "covenant" with Israel (in other words, as it was in Eden once again), and no more war, with instead peace on earth, and He says to Israel, "And I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies" (Hosea 2.19). These passages are before the NT church passage concerning the inclusion of the Gentiles, which Paul picks out to describe the NT church conditions. Discontinuity? Yes, except that is the way many prophetic utterings are written down.

Hosea 6.1-3 is a passage often used by dispensationalists to describe the approximately two thousand years of the church age before the advent of the millennium and the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, with Jesus on the throne of David.

It is in dealing with the OT prophecies that the chief feature of the dispensational method of interpretation is seen, that is, discontinuity with the NT.

Since the apostles have certainly been very selective (as Jesus Himself) in lifting certain prophecies out of the writings of the prophets, I think you will be hard pressed to pin "discontinuity" upon the dispensationalists as a valid criticism.

Covenantal theology's chief feature is to see continuity between the two. You can, therefore, quote scriptures relating to Israel's regathering in isolation from their context, and consign it to a millennial fulfilment, of which, to repeat myself, the NT not only knows nothing, but which I believe totally contradicts.

The personal return of the Lord Jesus to earth makes little sense if a prolonged period of peace and harmony does not ensue. The millennial period appropriately

(in continuity) follows the return of the Lord at Armageddon (Rev. 19) and the millennial reign (Rev. 20).

In seeking to show the true continuity between the Old and New Testaments I have had to explain in considerable detail the context and connection with the NT. Hence the lengthiness of this reply. I am sure that if you wished to follow up the covenantal method, you are able to do so, and, therefore, to conserve time and energy, I will seek to address the remainder of your scriptures in greater brevity.

Although I have given you my interpretation and understanding, I am a student of the Word and I will not dismiss out of hand the things and the scheme that you have presented, but I will keep it in mind as whether it will satisfy the scriptures or no.

Jeremiah 30 - 34. The many verses which you quote from these chapters are the piece de resistance of your critique, but, as I noted in the last but one paragraph, you isolate them from the context. As with Hosea, the context is one of unremitting judgement (see 22:1-5, 21,24-30, 36:30-31, 21:1-7). The nation will not repent. And this is characteristic of its history even until today, and was the burden of Stephen's defence. The question must be asked, "How can God fulfil his promises to a continually rebelling, unbelieving people"? The answer can only be "through a New Covenant", which, in writing God's laws within the heart of the individual, is precisely what Jeremiah prophesied. Also it must be remembered that repeatedly the prophets speak of only a remnant being restored, which is what happened following Pentecost.

I cannot disagree with much of what you are saying here. The Jews consistently over a long period of time resisted the Lord. As Stephen said, As your fathers did, so do ye also resist the Holy Ghost. But, on the other hand, see the pleadings of Paul for his people and brethren, and see his promise of a future repentance granted to "Jacob" (Rom. 11.25-27), after the fullness of the gentiles is come in. I consider the fullness of the gentiles to be the mission of the church. And, as I said, when the mission of the church is complete, then the end of the church age shall come (Matt. 24.14). That has not yet happened.

I am sorry that you dismiss the testimony of scripture that I gave to the effect that all God's promises to the Fathers concerning the land were fulfilled in the days of Joshua through to Solomon. But that is what the Scriptures say.

I did not dismiss that, except to qualify it by noting that while God later cause the land to vomit His people out of the land for the sins of the Canaanites, He made promises that they would return and possess the land forever, and never have to leave it anymore. I gave scriptures showing this to be true.

Not only so, but the rest of the promise that "all the nations shall be blessed", (unconditional as you point out), was fulfilled at the time of the inauguration of the New Covenant at Calvary.

I do not deny that the blessing of Abraham came upon all nations through the church of our Lord Jesus Christ (through Him), but, on the other hand, it is my belief that He (Jesus) will bring about the promises made to the fathers concerning the land, the national destiny of the Jews. One might say that this is going to be through Jesus Christ, and that His church will play a major role in this during the millennial reign.

Ezekiel gives us the promise of a New Covenant in chapter 36 verses 22ff., and embedded within this is clear indication that the covenants to Abraham, Moses and David would all be fulfilled in that covenant about which the Lord said, "This is the New Covenant in my blood...",

I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgements, and do them [Moses]; and ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers [Abraham]; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God [David].

I can only say that I feel the testimony of these scriptures, in their contexts, is conclusive, and, in the words of another, "here I stand, I can do no other." It seems to me that your twin principles of discontinuity and a gross literalism, gives you license to concoct almost anything. You have felt that the "spiritualisers" have produced error as bad as the ultra-dispensationalists. You illustrate this from a the preterist's moving from the mostly "literal" fulfilment of prophecy in Matthew's gospel to biblical imagery in Matthew 24, suggesting that because one section is to be seen as "literal" then the rest must be also. But I trust that you have now seen in connection with that scripture that it not only need not follow, but the literalism is unbiblical and gross in the latter sections of the chapter. And, may I remind you, the (logical?) excesses of ultra-dispensationalism have come out of the dispensational camp, not from that of the preterists. I acknowledge that there is such a thing as hyper-preterism, but, by and large, the limitations of the NT have restricted the production of freaks of exegesis from among the anti-millennialists. Yes, I acknowledge that the a/post-mill method of interpretation does impose restrictions, but they are only those, I trust, imposed by the NT.

You seem to have moved away a little from the traditional dispensational interpretation, at least in seeing that the Church was seen in the OT, and I trust that you will pursue this line of study. I appreciate that my position must raise massive implications concerning, say, the interpretation of the book of Revelation, and maybe Thessalonians. I will not attempt an explanation of the former(!), but I trust that you will understand that I do not accept exegesis unless it is what I believe is soundly based. And, although I believe the millennial scheme is not in the least biblical, I am not so naive as to think that the a/post-

millennial systems are without their difficulties. Not, of course, from the millennial challenge. But simply because of the vast chasm of difference that exists between our 21st century thought patterns, and those of Hebrew and middle eastern peoples dating from centuries before and up to the time of the NT. To say nothing of any special styles adopted by the Divine inspiration of the scriptures.

But, and I say this to myself also, wherever your studies lead, if we always make it our aim to "love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength", and always to seek "unfeigned love of the brethren" (1 Peter 1:22), we shall do well.

I think we understand each other's positions reasonably well. But, if I can clarify anything that perplexes you, I shall be happy to do my best, and I shall take it for granted that you will do the same for me. Thank you, again, for taking the time to read my paper and comment upon it, and I have enjoyed examining our mutual positions. In our Lord Jesus Christ, yours, Alan Nairne

In Christ

I appreciate the time you invested in responding to my reply to your posting on the net. It is obvious that you have spent considerable time and study in the area of prophecy. I would like to make a few summary statements:

(1) I believe that a literal interpretation of the Bible is the safest interpretation, since the Word of God was written for the common understanding. There are times when biblical imagery is appropriate, in a limited sense, to explain those spiritual conceptions or ideas that are otherworldly and difficult for a natural understanding.

(2) I do not believe that the New Testament church was ever designed to replace Jacob, or the people of Israel (replacement theology), but rather to bring about the fulfillment of God's promises through Jesus Christ concerning both Jacob and the NT church, His Bride.

(3) I believe that the Old Testament prophecies pertain primarily to the future destiny of the kingdom of God, the nation of Israel, and the NT church, which has: (a) a role in the millennial reign to come, and (b) an eternal role in the new heavens and in the new earth. The kingdom of God has two aspects: heavenly and earthly. Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.

[William B. Chalfant](#)

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Reply to [critique 2](#) by William B. Chalfant of my web article on [Israel having a future separate and distinct from the Church in the Kingdom of God](#)

By Alan Nairne (1931-2009)

Subject. My reply to your [comments](#) of 17-11-2002 . 6th December 2002

Thank you again for your further interesting paper. Yes, I agree with, and thank you for your suggested change of title for my original paper to read "Does the Nation of Israel have a Future Separate and Distinct from the New Testament Church". There was no theological intent in my use of the phrase Kingdom of God; it was just an incorrect choice.

Yes, I agree with your very even-handed definition as to the use of "literal" and "allegorical" language. As you say, there is no such thing as being absolute in the use of either method of interpreting the scriptures. But I must say that I am doubtful whether the dispensationalist's use of the old dictum "literal, unless absurd" is sound. For there is language in Scripture that requires an allegorical interpretation, when it makes some sense when it is interpreted naturally. One such case is the whole concept of "Armageddon" and its battle and aftermath, with which you challenge me. Clearly, it is an important feature of your prophetic scheme.

But I do not believe that it can be interpreted naturally. There is no such place as "Armageddon". Literally, this is spelled "Har-Magedon", meaning Mount Megiddo. This cannot be taken literally for Megiddo is a city on a plain, not a mountain. The plain of Megiddo was certainly a battlefield, and is remembered best by the Jews down to the time of Ezra as the place where the unwise but much loved Josiah met his untimely death (see II Chron.35:25). In keeping with this, Zechariah uses the place to reinforce a future great mourning (12:10-11). If these factors had been borne in mind it is doubtful if Armageddon and all its dispensational connotations would have been adopted. At least us allegorisers will have a second bite, whereas the literalist is likely to adopt the natural sense if it is not absurd.

Another case is the dispensationalist's use of the picture of the Mount of Olives dividing in two at the second coming when the Lord's feet touch it as given in Zechariah 14:4. The previous verse tells us that the Lord shall "go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle". And the picture of the Lord's feet signifies his presence, which is common biblical imagery for when the Lord aids his people and discomfits his foes, see Josh.10:14, 42; 23:3; and Psalm 18:9; Isa.60:13; Nah.1:3; and Hab.3:5. I do not have a difficulty in applying it to 70 AD. The besieging force was that of the Roman Empire. Nations, not one nation. Troops from the provinces of Syria, Asia Minor, Palestine, Gaul, Egypt, Britain and elsewhere were involved. Tradition has it that no Christians were lost in the siege. Moreover, history records that, mercifully, the days were cut short. You compare those days with the holocaust of WWII, but it is not in sheer numbers that the comparison lies. Josephus tells us that a **madness** took over certain factions in Jerusalem, so much so that none were safe, and cannibalism was rife - much as threatened in the Deuteronomy scriptures. The sum of all this is that had the interweaving of

literal and figurative language been observed, the ideas so fundamental to the dispensationalist's view of the coming of Christ to Jerusalem would never have come to fruition. You have written much on Zechariah, but, for the sake of simplicity I will leave it there, having made what I feel is a significant query in relation to your interpretation of the book, so much of which you project into the distant future.

The first of your important discussions relates to the significance of Ezekiel's temple. In fact, it seems to have acquired the nature of a *cause celebre!* I appreciate your honesty in admitting your inability to explain the nature of the Millennial sacrifices, and in keeping with traditional dispensational doctrine you reject any salvific role for these. Yet in the interests of sound exegesis I find it difficult to accept your rejection as valid. One of the hallmarks of the Millennium, you say, is that it is to be a time of "great peace on the earth...as it was in Eden". I know that you do not claim this period as one of sinlessness, but in view of the repeated references to the sin offering, atonement, and purification which you have quoted, there is too much emphasis in the expiatory and cleansing nature of these sacrifices to suggest that they are for memorials. Ezek.43:27 does say that after sacrifice "I will accept you". Moreover, Zechariah (14:16-19), sees cases of many, many nations refusing to go up to worship. This is rebellion, and presages that final world wide rebellion you believe to take place at the end of the 1000 years. The juxtaposition of this sin and rebellion, with the sacrifices, not only does not suggest the memorial nature of the sacrifices, and peace, but, with David, or Christ reigning in Jerusalem closely surrounded by all sin, suggests to me a demeaning from Christ's present exaltation. I certainly does not fulfil one of the marks of the millennium that you instance; that of peace. Yet it is said in verse 9 "the LORD will become king over all the earth; on that day the Lord will be one and his name one." And verses 20-21 speak of every common utensil in Jerusalem being holiness to the Lord. This scenario focussed upon earth seems so contradictory, but fits the relationships existing between the world, the Lord, and the "heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb.12:22), the "Jerusalem above" (Gal.4:26) of today.

I respect your desire to give as much detailed fulfilment as possible to these seven chapters in Ezekiel, and you challenge me to allegorize them. But this is a "red herring". What is the significance of Ezekiel's temple in your doctrine? You admit that you cannot biblically fit a meaning to animal sacrifice, the priesthood of Zadok, or identify a covenant covering these arrangements. Even less can you, or a future generation, use the wealth of constructional detail, because it does not give a complete plan of the temple, e.g. the relationships of the chambers, stairways, etc to each other or to the whole, are unclear. So even interpreted naturally, it is only the broad idea of a millennial temple and its services that remains for you. The wealth of detail is characteristic of the wealth of detail given in scripture of previous temples, and, although the early Plymouth Brethren pioneered a detailed typology of the tabernacle in the wilderness, way beyond that of the book of Hebrews, like the parables, it is in the main details that the significance is to be found.

I don't know about my needing your humorous picture of "smoke and mirrors" to allegorize Ezekiel's temple, but you certainly do not need this when you can suggest that God could institute a further covenant with Israel to cover their

millennial position. I can only say "phew"! Of course he could. But at the risk of being dubbed a "Pharisee", and being "static" in thought, I think that I'd prefer not to walk your theological planks. I find it disconcerting that Heb.1:1 seems to have so little weight, "God has spoken to us in these last days by his Son..." This suggests that it is the climactic revelation of God to mankind - the last days. A millennium would suggest that there are further last days. But if you do not accept these boundaries, there is no reason why you should have difficulty in accepting Ezekiel's picture of a temple, with sacrifices etc., still to be set up in Jerusalem.. Ezekiel, if he is read scrupulously, will forbid taking his temple literally.

I believe that you can only assign a literal, or natural I would say, interpretation of Ezekiel's temple by flouting the clear hermeneutic principles provided by the book of Ezekiel, which should have pointed to an allegorical interpretation. These are some of the principles -

1. Chapter 40 verse 2 tells us that it was "in the visions of God he brought me into the land of Israel." The phrase "visions of God" is used to introduce the visions of chapters 1-3 and 8-11 which clearly portray things in their symbolic nature. Similarly, the actions of chapters 4 and 12 take place in the realm of symbolism. Their fulfilments expressed the character of the symbolism, but not the actuality of the form of either visions or actions. These examples should have suggested caution in determining the nature of the vision in chapters 40ff.
2. God has never given laws and ordinances to his people by vision. Moses was no exception to this. Of him the Lord said that his prophetic office was to be different because he would speak to him other than by vision. Ezekiel was not a new Moses. His vision related to an order higher than that of an earthly arrangement. This principle also is determinative that it is an allegorical picture of the spiritual fulfilment.
3. If the dimensions of the temple and city are taken literally, topographical impossibilities arise. The dimensions of the temple exceed that of Mount Moriah, and those for the city take up for the Levites half of the land promised to Abraham. Since you were not impressed, apparently, by the dimensions I gave for the heavenly Jerusalem in my discussion of your original refutation, I will leave you to work out this for yourself! This has long been recognised. In fact, to make the vision fit with actualities, some authors altered rods to cubits, but to no effect. The result was then too small. Again, the prophet is encouraging us to seek a higher solution than the natural.
4. I know that Dispensationalists speak of changes taking place to the land, but it does not help in the above case. The temple being in the centre, there is no room left in the south of the country for the five tribes allocated parallel strips in that region. Moreover, the strips for the rest of the tribes have no correspondence to the natural features of the land. Ezekiel's boundaries of the land are those originally given to Moses, and the new dimensions just cannot be made to fit.
5. The forms of history were often used in the OT to describe future events. Often the prophets threatened a return to Egypt. Ezekiel threatens a return to the wilderness, but it is to be a wilderness of the peoples, not that of Egypt (20:35). The outward form is similar because the experience is similar, though the circumstances are very different. The

monarch reigning over Tyre is pictured as back in Eden, with access to the very presence of God, from whence he he cast into the grave, which pictures from the past accentuate his future fall. This principle also guides us as to how we should regard his future temple.

6. As to the wealth of detail, is this not characteristic of Ezekiel? Isaiah deals with Tyre in one brief chapter (23). Of Tyre Ezekiel takes three long chapters (26-28) to paint his picture. Concerning the iniquities of Israel and Judah he writes four long chapters (4, 13, 16 and 24). If he writes so fully concerning these matters is it any surprise that he takes seven chapters to speak of a glorious future under the picture of a temple, so familiar to NT readers?
7. There is also the picture of the waters issuing from the threshold of the temple door. Who ever heard of a river issuing from the top of a mountain, not fed by any external sources, but, within a mile being an unfordable river!!? Are you claiming a perpetual miracle for this in the millennium?

Surely, the NT pictures of waters signify the divine life available for those who believe on Christ, who is the archetypal temple, and is a fulfilment compatible to the senses, both rational and spiritual? And is not the fact that the Church is universal, transcending Israel's national limits, a glorious fulfilment of the idea of a temple and city too big to be contained within Israel's borders? And is not the idea of the co-existence of sin and purity in Ezekiel's temple eminently suitable as a picture of the atoning work of the Cross, with the sanctifying work of the Spirit among his people today? And is not the river and city of Revelation 22 a further picture of these glories?

Do I need to further elaborate? It is not a question of agreeing that whilst these spiritual pictures are valid, there is still a natural fulfilment. The incongruities of the picture forbid it, and it can only be the pressures of the millennialist's need to clothe the idea of the millennial period with flesh that can have caused expositors to ignore such simple, yet fundamental principles, and to launch into a "fulfilment" which, not only does the NT ignore, but which seems to incorporate certain concepts which have elements of fantasy. You say that "the problem with casting adrift upon the sea of allegory is that it can come to mean whatsoever anyone wants it to mean." There have been aberrations in the allegorising camp which are easy to recognise and repudiate. But it appears to me that dispensationalists are very slow to abjure their absurdities. The trouble is that whether you adopt a "no separate and distinct future for Israel apart from the NT church", or the reverse, either principle results in absurdities to the other. I would still rather take the risk of allowing the NT to form my boundaries!

You say that whilst Christ confirmed the promises to the Fathers, they are to be fulfilled in the Millennium to come, and that, if these particular promises have been specifically fulfilled in the NT church age, then someone should so demonstrate that they have been. Well, that is what I have been trying to demonstrate both in my original paper, and in my reply to your refutation. The difficulty is that I regard the NT as definitive for the OT, but you regard it as supplementary to the OT. I charged you with arguing from silence, and I withdraw it. Actually, I now realise that you argue, not from silence, but from an authority that you give to the OT that I cannot follow. Also, you quote

Romans 9:4 to illustrate "that Paul did not deny the destiny of the Jews nor deny that the promises made to the fathers pertain to the Jews (plural)." This verse records the offer of gospel salvation to the Jewish nation. It does not guarantee them *a future separate and distinct from the New Testament Church*. You say, in connection with related matters, i.e. a New Covenant into which we enter, and a New Covenant into which the Jewish nation will enter in the millennium, that "When you accept that God has two destinies: one for the NT church and another for the nation of Israel, that is not a problem." But that is where we have our problems with each others' exegesis! We have different presuppositions. But the two destiny concept is in contradiction to that of the one olive tree of Romans eleven.

You note that "Jacob is not the NT church." Presumably because that name is not used in the same way in the NT as "Israel"? But, despite the use of the word "Israel" in the NT, neither do you accept that the true Israel is the NT church. I believe that the NT teaches that the believing followers of Messiah are the true Israel. You query my phrase "new Israel". True, it is not biblical. But it expresses exactly who spiritual Israel is, contrasted with "Israel after the flesh". How else can I differentiate the distinctions in Rom.2:28-29? I fear that the distinction between "Jacob" and "Israel" is very much akin to the distinctions that were once made by dispensationalists between "the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing" of Titus 2:13, and the "Kingdom of God" and the "Kingdom of heaven" in the Gospels, and much else which I believe has now been abandoned. Of the same ilk is your distinction between Luke's account of the Olivet discourse and that of Matthew as having different terminations. But I will address that issue later in this document.

Your reference to the word "forever" when applied to your millennial prophecies as extending to the "new heavens and a new earth" is interesting. Yes, that the heavenly throne, and an earthly millennial throne must both be eternal is certainly consistent. If I were a millennialist I would be grateful for this suggestion.

Concerning the symbolical, or otherwise, nature of the 1000 years in Revelation. You instance certain numbers in Old and New Testaments as being literal, and query why, then, should the 1000 years not be literal. Certainly, there are literal numbers in Revelation. But it is the context that is most useful in interpreting an author's meaning. And I must aver that most of the numbers in Revelation are symbolical. This does not necessarily determine that the 1000 years is, but strongly predisposes it to be. As you say, Papias did not consider the millennium to be symbolical. Neither did many of his Jewish Christian contemporaries.

Further concerning the book of Revelation. I can probably agree in principle with much of what you say about the natural/spiritual aspects of this book. But there are at least five time frames as to when these events are to be fulfilled, and these frames say that it is "shortly to come to pass" or similar. I cannot accept that this refers to the events once they begin to unfold some 2000 years plus into the future. I believe that most of the book, even as does the Olivet discourse, relates to the forthcoming destruction of Jerusalem beginning with the Wars of the Jews in 66 AD. I am a partial Preterist!

My expression, "there are no more promises left outside those given through the redemption provided by Christ" should be interpreted in the total context of my writings, and was not meant to imply that any remaining promises which you see as being fulfilled in the millennium were outside the redemption in Christ. My understanding of both the Old and New Testament scriptures is that the fulfilment of the promises is in the redemption provided for mankind in Christ, fully realised in the NT Church.

My original paper adduced a number of OT references to the effect that "there failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel, all came to pass". I therefore do not see that I imply any inability or failure on God's part concerning what was promised to the Fathers in respect to the land. You ask, "where do you see in the scriptures that the NT church has received these promises already? I understand this from the way that the descriptions given to Israel are applied to the NT church, e.g. I Peter 2:5. Rom.9:25-26 where the present church comprising Jews and Gentiles is in mind. To the same end we have the parable in Matthew 21. "Vineyard" and "kingdom" in the parable in Matthew 21 are coterminous. Christ threatened to destroy the then present keepers, and let out the vineyard to others, who would bring forth the fruits in their season. He interpreted this to mean that the kingdom was to be taken away from them, and given to a nation which would prove fruitful. The very foundation for this work was to be Christ, the chief corner stone, and it was this scripture that seems to be in Paul's mind when he writes,

"And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" Eph.2:17-22.

But, of course, as the OT for you is definitive in such matters, I understand that for you this still does not displace the nation of Israel.

You ask, "Did God take the NT church back into Jerusalem and set up His kingdom there?" Here we have further demonstration of the polarity that exists between us. The Matthew 21 parable referred to above indicates that an identifiable kingdom was in place following the raising up of the cornerstone. Despite this, you say, "Spiritually speaking, he has poured out His Spirit and the kingdom of God is here within us (through the Baptism in the Holy Spirit).....we are an advanced element of the coming kingdom of God." "Advanced element"? Is that all? Is all the "kingdom" teaching of the gospels for a future millennium? Moreover, Paul seems to have very different ideas. One has only to refer to Acts 8:12, 14:22, 19:8, 22:23, Rom.14:17, I Cor.4:20, 6:9-10, and many more. Your "advanced element" of the kingdom is a low view of the glories of the present Kingdom of God. Dispensational theology has been characterised as that of a "siege mentality", with some justification - a beleaguered church hanging on until (whether pre- or post tribulation) the Lord raptures it away, to make way for the full earthly millennial manifestation. I

must confess I do not see the present apostasy of much of the denominational churches in the West as being definitive of the church in this age. God is producing a vibrant, often persecuted, but expanding and powerful church throughout the third world, and even in the West, renewal, charismatic or otherwise, is a healthy pointer to what is possible. Let us not forget that the Christians in NT times were accused of having turned the world upside down. I do not believe that that was an aberration. I believe that it is definitive, and indicative of God's purpose for his Church, which is not identical to the Kingdom of God, but contemporary with it and its main agent.

I know that you do not deny that Christ is reigning. I Cor.15:25 says, "For He must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet." This verse, and those before and after, seem to indicate that all the action is in this present age. There is neither time nor need for any further activity upon earth. You feel that unless the prophecies of old have a natural fulfilment, *this* is making the Jewish nation "biblically irrelevant"; that they are being "unceremoniously thrown out". But as I have said before, the promises related to spiritual realities which the OT saints looked forward to. As Hebrews 11 tells us,

These all died in faith not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country of their own. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from when they came out, they might have had opportunity to return. **But now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.** (Heb 11:13-16)

All Jews Old and New Covenant (NT) who believe in their Messiah will come to this superlatively glorious company, the New Jerusalem, Zion, as the NT says. This is a present reality, not just the future. These very OT saints are those whom you adduce as spiritual. Yes, I heartily agree with your listing of the spiritual verities of the OT and its peoples. But to want to bring their offspring back to a land with a temple, priesthood, and sacrifices is to reintroduce the "weak and beggarly elements" from which they, and their believing NT descendants looked beyond. It is *this* which makes a future nation of Israel "biblically irrelevant". But it has not meant unceremoniously dumping, or discarding the prophecies en masse. It means that they have been transmuted into a higher realm for all to enter into. This is nothing to do with Gentile pride, any more than with anti-semitism. It is allowing the NT to be definitive. It is not that preterists, (or better, anti-millennialists) fail to recognise a dual descent from Abraham. We just assert that the NT teaches that fleshly descent has no validity unless accompanied by belief in Christ. What else can the words of John the Baptist in Luke 3:7-9, and the words of Jesus in Luke 13:27-30, John 8:39-41 mean? This is in keeping with the oft quoted verses in Romans 2:28-29. You acknowledge that in Gal.3:28 Paul speaks of "neither Jew, nor Greek....bond nor free...male nor female...in Christ Jesus etc." which refers to incorporation into Christ. As you correctly say, this incorporation does not dissolve our human responsibilities to each other. But this cannot be used to prove that Israel, the Gentiles and the NT church will, in the future have separate covenantal relationships.

It is difficult when discussing these matters to avoid "tit-for-tat" situations. But, if, as you say concerning Acts 1:6,7 that "It would have been a perfect time for Him to have enlightened His apostles that [there] would indeed be no future Kingdom restored to Israel", why, may I ask, was it not also the perfect time for Him to explain specifically its earthly nature and timing if it was to be so? It was for this reason I said I felt the meaning of the verse was obscure. I can only assume that you feel hard pressed for NT support if you feel otherwise. I hope that you do not have too many texts like this upon which to build your doctrine. It makes my work very hard!

Concerning the whole section of Paul's defence in Acts 23 and 26, you ask if I am "trying to tell me that the 'twelve tribes of Israel' were hoping for a 'replacement theology', wherein their own hopes of a future kingdom of Israel (exactly what the apostles had asked Jesus in Acts 1:6,7) would be gone forever?" I can only say "yes", assuming that Paul's concept of the twelve tribes was identical to that of James', "of the Dispersion" (1:1) and Peter's (I Pet.1:1-2) "elect...sojourners of the Dispersion...elect according to the foreknowledge of God etc". Of course Paul would not lie to Agrippa. That was why he specifically couched his whole discourse in terms of *salvation...resurrection of the dead*. I know you believe otherwise. But it does not come out of this discourse. As I asked you before, if he believed as you say he did, in a millennial style restoration, why did he not so say in front of Agrippa?

I see that you still insist that the "throne of David" in Acts 2:22-36 is not a heavenly throne, but an earthly one. It is clear enough to me that David's throne (and dynasty) is seen in this scripture as a type of the spiritual reality which was the throne to which Christ had been raised following his resurrection. If it is not so it seems pointless for Peter to have used these verses to cover that contemporary situation. I fear that it goes back, again, to the authority that we give to the OT or NT scriptures. It raises, also, the continuity that I see between the Old Testaments saints and those of the New. No wonder you so forcefully reject what I believe to be the simple reading of this scripture. The same applies to your discussion relating to James' use of Amos 9:11-12. Thank you for referring me to the context, verses 14 -15 of Amos 9. I say with all my heart that I wish I could find a place in scripture for a millennium, it would make life so much easier for me!

Interestingly you say that "there was no Jew present at Jerusalem who would understand "David's throne" to be an "antitype" I am sure that you are correct. But why is this true? Simply because it was not until the appearances of the Lord to the apostles after his resurrection that he was able to give them a true understanding of their scriptures, which, Paul tells us, they did not understand (Acts 13:27).. This enlightening is no doubt associated with the occasion when he "breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22), and continued as recorded in Luke 24:45 that he "opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures", climaxing in the effusion of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. As a result of this enlightening, Peter and the apostles were able to use the scriptures in ways which no unenlightened Jew could ever have conceived. Clearly, it is this very application of the scriptures to Israel that you resist, yet, interestingly, charismatics adopt the concept quite unconsciously into their hymns and choruses. Is this the result of their spiritual awakening? They certainly have a

more positive view of the church than Calvinists or dispensationalists! Please do not interpret this as a claim for spiritual elitism. It is true that charismatics have certain spiritual faculties heightened in sensitivity, but I do not gauge "spirituality" by that. Spirituality relates to the whole character and walk with the Lord. Alas, charismatics, as well as Calvinists can be ungodly.

We seem to be counter reiterating the concept whether either David did, or did not conceive of his throne pointing toward a heavenly antitype, and you quote scriptures from II Samuel and the Psalms. To the end that David did not conceive of a heavenly occupant to a heavenly throne you say that it is "here you make a fatal error of not making proper comparisons. You want to also resurrect and glorify the earthly throne of David, when all the passage shows is that the descendant of David was resurrected..." I can only quote, again, the scripture. It says,

knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would **raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ.....This Jesus hath God raised up..**therefore being by the right hand of God exalted..... (Acts 2:30-34)

You have said that Christ sits upon His Father's throne, in distinction from the throne of David. I am afraid that most of our arguments are double edged. You feel I make fatal comparisons. I fear you make fatal distinctions - I have drawn your dispensational disposition to this earlier! God's promise of an offspring to David who would sit upon his throne in perpetuity were two integral, indivisible constituents to the promise. If they were divisible then Peter could have contented himself with e.g a quotation from Psalm 16:8ff. (This incidentally was my correct reference in my last paper. Not Psalm 116. Sorry about that). The fact that he chose promises to David to include the throne would not indicate that he was careless in his choice of scripture, but through the Holy Spirit very specific. I say that it is unwarranted and arbitrary to so separate the two constituents, person and throne. David, says the scripture "**foresaw**" the resurrection and exaltation of Christ as the fulfilment of God's promise to him. Why should he separate the resurrection from occupation of his throne? He did not. Moreover, in Revelation 3:7 Christ is described as "**he that has the key of David**". This feature, along with the throne, is part of the authority of David's kingdom. He Christ has "the key of David", and on the same ground he occupies David's throne. It may have taken Divine revelation for the apostles, slow as they were to understand the antitypical nature of these events, but the scriptures indicate that Moses, Abraham and David at least, saw ahead to the days of the Christ.

I really do understand your godly desire to see realised on earth all the beautiful detail from the prophets of the forthcoming kingdom of God, but I see the kingdom of God today far surpassing in glory anything that could possibly appear again upon earth. No, these prophecies are neither "thrust out" nor "cancel[led] out" by the inclusion of salvation. They are prophecies of the present kingdom of God. You say, "surely we do not subscribe to the "kingdom now" teaching, or "dominion theology." Like yourself, I am chary of accepting labels. But I am happy to accept the former. As to the latter, I am wary, but would prefer it to believing as you say you do, "Why should we believe that

mankind, as a whole, will accept the ministry of the NT church, so that all is 'conquered' and the Lord returns to an already conquered planet? That is not the teaching of apocalyptic prophecy." No, that is correct if you ignore the time frames of Matthew and Revelation dealing with the awful events of 66-70 AD and project them to the end of the age. This gives a miserable prospect for the church. Keep them where, according to their time frames, I believe they belong, and you have the possibility that the Great Commission of Matt.28:18-20 may be fulfilled through the church, together with those so familiar words, "that the earth may be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa.11:9).

You write much on Matthew. Again, as in the case of Zechariah, for brevity's sake I will have to content myself with few remarks. As I said earlier, to claim that the periods of history described by Matthew in chapter 24 relates to the future Great Tribulation, whereas that in Luke 21 relates to the events of 66-70 AD is without foundation, for the following reasons.

1. When compared in parallel, the synoptic accounts are clearly identified as dealing with the same situation. How could it be otherwise? Chapter 24 of Matthew which you claim relates to the future is set within the context of chapter 23. Chapter 23 is devoted to the condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus tells them that they would "fill...up the measure of your fathers.....that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed...from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias...verily I say unto you, **all these things shall come upon this generation. Behold your house is left unto you desolate.** (vv.32-38). He was speaking to them, and concerning themselves.
2. Jesus then leaves the temple, and the disciples, no doubt shocked at Jesus' threat of their sacred house being left desolate, ask him the questions of chapter 24:1, to which he replies that the temple would be overthrown to the last stone, that it would be made desolate (24:15), and he reiterates his earlier statement that "this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled (24:34). It is ludicrous to suggest that while gazing at the temple buildings he was referring to an edifice to be thrown down that would not be built for practically two millennia at least.
3. Are you suggesting that there were two separate Olivet discourses? If not, did he at the same time give two discourses with these subtle distinctions? How confusing! The distinctions are no more than you would expect from two independent testimonies, to say nothing of the most important fact that Matthew wrote for Jewish readers, whereas Luke wrote for Gentiles.
4. As for the supposed distinction between Luke's *anangke* (applicable to 70 AD) and Matthew's *thlipsis* (applicable to a future Tribulation according to your proposals), the former Greek word is used in the LXX of Zeph.1:15 which Scofield sees as "an adumbration of the true Day of the Lord" yet future! The truth of the matter is that the meanings of the two words are almost synonymous.

If that is not a case of "smoke and mirrors" on your part, I do not know what is! There seems to be no limit to the contortions that you impose upon Scripture, once, as you say, you accept the presupposition of separate destinies

for the Church and Israel. Frankly, if that concept was true, such efforts would not be necessary.

Concerning my pointing out that the heavenly cataclysmic events of Matt.24:29-30 are images in line with four OT references which similarly picture judgement, but that no signs in the heavens ever occurred when these nations were judged. I find it curious that you refer me to Acts 1:9, "a cloud received him out of their sight". This was no cataclysmic heavenly sign. It simply says that "a cloud received him out of their sight." When he comes again, the reverse of this is that he will emerge from a cloud. This he did not do in 70 AD, but he did judge Israel. That was his coming in the same mode as in OT times. So, in answer to your question, yes, I can say that Matthew 24 etc., does fulfil the three questions, 1) When shall these things be? Answer, in the years up to 66-70 AD. 2) What is the sign of thy coming? Answer. The destruction of the temple and the city. 3) What is the sign of the end of the age? Answer. Strictly speaking the end of the law and the prophets, we are told, was when John had run his ministry (Luke 16:16). The establishment of the Kingdom of God went on apace throughout the ministry of our Lord, culminating in the death, burial resurrection, ascension, and outpouring of the Holy Spirit. But as long as the temple services continued, rebellious Israel could deny this. But, the sign that it was true was in the fulfilment of the prophecies of the destruction of the temple and the city, and the dispersal of the nation. After this, there could be no argument as to whether the Mosaic age had ended.

Incidentally, may I just point out that I do not think that you can say that because the Wailing Wall is still standing, the prophecy of Jesus concerning "not one stone left standing" is still to be fulfilled. The Wailing Wall was not part of the temple, but was part of the second wall on the west which enclosed the city, which was not the subject of prophecy. Actually, to be very "literal", it was not within sight of the Mount of Olives, which was to the east of the city!

What a forlorn hope it was for me to think that I could deal briefly with the wealth of detail you adduce! So, I will leave much of what you write intact, lest I appear to be nit-picking. As it is, if all this goes on to the web in its present form, with your proposals which induced this reply, it will be for only those with exceedingly strong stomachs!

But, thank you for entering into correspondence with me. You are a worthy opponent, and I have enjoyed the challenge. I would like our correspondence to continue, unless you feel that it is pointless, but confined to discussing one point at a time, and not for posting on to the web, unless we felt it to be worth so doing.

Again, may I wish you and yours a very blessed Christmas and 2003. Please feel very welcome to write.

Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus, .Alan Nairne

For Alan Nairne's reply to this article go [here](#)

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Maturer thoughts on "[All Israel will be saved](#)"

An Addendum to the [paper](#) "Does the Nation of Israel have a Distinct and Separate Future from the N.T. Church in The Kingdom of God?"

No! There is no reason for Premillennialists to get excited! I am not about to retract my earlier position on the meaning of Romans 11:26. I am not necessarily even having to modify my position on the end time saving of Israel, for, in section 5 I wrote, "Now, undoubtedly, Paul gives us to understand that there *will* be a turning to God of Jews, resulting in unprecedented blessings to mankind (Rom.11:11-12)". You will see, if you refer to these verses that my conclusion came from the contrast between Israel's "stumbling" and "transgression" with their "full inclusion"(RSV), which is, of course, correct. But I want to modify what I said concerning verse 26. I wrote, "It is totally within the sense of Scripture as we have looked at it, to believe that "all Israel" will be the totality of the elect, both Jew and Gentile, that is, the completed olive tree. I find that perfectly satisfying."

Whilst that is true, I now see that it is not the meaning of "all Israel will be saved". It is one of the traditional interpretations, but there are two more traditional explanations and I believe that the study of the context will repay us with some further useful insights, particularly into the NT use of OT Scripture, which is always rewarding.

I. THE OPTIONS

The three traditional explanations of Romans 11:26 are

- As above, **the totality of the elect, both Jew and Gentile**. This is based upon the concept of the salvation of the individual, but does not meet the requirement of the Scripture, as we shall see from our consideration of the context in the next section.
- **The totality of the whole Jewish remnant**. But neither will this do, for the salvation of a remnant (v.7), from either Jew or Gentile is no "mystery" (v.25). Paul's concern in Rom.11:2 is for the greater proportion of "[Gods] people", whom, he says, God has hardened. *This* is the mystery. His reference to the "remnant" and his own salvation is illustrative of the fact that God has not rejected them, but it is against the foreground of **Israel's** election (*in toto*) which this explanation ignores. The remnant alone is not "Israel", and while their election still stands, the "hardening" of the rest does not negate this. For was it not in a "hardened" state that Paul (Saul) himself was stopped in his tracks by the risen Christ? The relationship between "remnant" and "fullness" is that of the holy first fruits dough to the "lump", and the natural branches that were broken off to the

"root". In the same way the elect remnant is the guarantee of the eschatological salvation of Jewish Israel. Moreover their "stumbling" is not permanent – it is not a fall (v.11). The "hardening" and "stumbling" are to further God's redemptive programme both for Jew and Gentile. Interestingly, Paul's confidence in the salvation of Israel, despite his anguish over their unbelief and hardening, has the same foundation as his confidence in the salvation of his fellow believers – the electing love of God, for both Jew and Gentile. Note that. Their "fullness" (v.12) is the eschatological totality of Jews, which we will investigate in depth in the next section.

- **The eschatological fullness of ethnic Israel.** A full consideration of the context indicates that nothing less than this is meant by the Apostle. But let us not jump to the conclusion that this of necessity implies the need for a State of Israel. There will probably be a State of Israel, assuming that the present nation will continue. But is it not entirely credible that the effect of Israel's repentance and return issuing in even greater blessings throughout the Gentile world (Rom.11:12,15) will be facilitated by their continued dispersion? But whichever way, I repeat, the call will be to those Jews, upon whom God has set, and who respond to His electing love. It is because God has down the ages saved a remnant of Jews, that their "fullness" is described as eschatological. The same applies to the Gentiles. In neither case does "fullness" imply the salvation of every individual, but that of a very large number, perhaps a majority. And may I also say that, despite my use of the word "eschatological" there is nothing in the context to indicate that this Jewish "fullness" must of necessity take place at the very end of the age. Certainly, both the Gentile fullness and the resulting Jewish fullness is future – on present showings the distant future. But further blessings to the world will result from the conversion of the mass of Jews, even as the Jews themselves will respond, having been, I believe, provoked (v.11) by the blessings that are to come upon the Gentiles.

II. THE FACTORS

Clearly, what is involved is the removal by God Himself subsequent upon the "fullness of the Gentiles" having been achieved, of the "hardening" and "blindness" imposed upon Israel. This is shown by verse 26 – "**Out of Zion** will come the Deliverer..." (LXX). The change from the OT Hebrew "to Zion" is interesting insofar that the initiative is seen to come from the Lord, but also, having regard to the NT usage of Zion, the Gospel is the agency by which God will remove the hardening and blindness (cf.. II Cor.3:14-16). Futurist expositors see in this a reference to the Second Coming of Christ, but the implication would be that the basis upon which Israel is saved is different from that which operates today, and that would be totally contrary to Scripture – "another Gospel". Also, it seems that there will be an unprecedented era of gospel blessing following their fullness (vv.12, 15), all of which is part of an integrated process commencing

from the earliest days of the preaching of the Gospel. The "now" of verse 31 is generally accepted as authentic, and this adds credence to the fullness of Israel happening as part of a continuous process which we now proceed to consider.

a. a threefold continuous process

v.11 because of their transgression	salvation has come to the Gentiles	to make Israel envious
v.12 if their transgression	means riches for the world	much greater riches their fullness
v.15 their rejection	reconciliation of the world	their acceptance – life from the dead
vv.22-24 severity to the fallen	kindness to the Gentiles	natural branches grafted in
vv.25-26 partial hardening to Israel	until fullness of Gentiles comes in	so all Israel will be saved

The word "so" (*houtos*) indicates the continuous process by which all Israel will be saved. Moreover, without specific indication from the context that the time frame for this last clause is different from the previous three, it is nothing less than "wrest[ing of] the Scriptures" (II Tim.3:16) to insist that Israel's salvation is the result of the second coming of Christ. But, alas, this will have little weight for Dispensationalists, for whom separating integrated Scriptures into the far off distance future without a basis in Scripture – "discontinuity" (e.g. between Daniel's 70th "week" which is obviously contiguous with the 69th there is, for them, a gap which has lasted 2-1/2 millennia!) is, for them, "the name of the game" (a UK TV "game show" expression of some years ago). But can we prick their consciences with an examination of Paul's use of the OT "Zion" and "Jerusalem"? This I will now attempt.

[I must acknowledge my indebtedness to Keith Mathison in his *Postmillennialism – An Eschatology of Hope* (P & R Pub. St Phillipsburg NJ 1999 pp.125-126) for the thrust of this last section.]

b) Paul's use of "Zion"

My statement "having regard to the NT usage of Zion, the Gospel is the agency by which God will remove the hardening and blindness" needs further working out. It is so easy for futurists to say "Zion is rebuilt Jerusalem", and, for those who are not familiar with the way the inspired writers of the NT use the OT, to accept that statement without question.

It is significant that one of Isaiah's themes concerns Jerusalem – judged (chaps. 1-39, redeemed (40-55) and glorified (56-66) - and a study of Paul's writings shows

that one of the prophets from whom he most quotes is Isaiah. For example, Isa.22:13 (I Cor.15:32), 25:8 (I Cor.15:54), 28:16 (Rom.9:33), 29:14 (I Cor.1:19), 40:13 (I Cor.2:16), 49:8 (II Cor.6:2), and 52:11 (II Cor.6:17). Several of these oracles specifically concern Jerusalem.

Looking at the last references in II Cor.6. Isaiah is twice quoted, 49:8 "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation have I helped you..."(v.2), and 52:11 "therefore come out from them..."(v.17).

"The former of these two verses in Isaiah continues in defining 'the day of salvation' as the time when God would 'restore the land'; Zion would no longer be 'forsaken' (49:14ff), and the Gentiles would help to bring God's people to the land (49:22ff). Similarly, Paul's second quotation is from a passage where God tells His people to 'depart' from Babylon (Isa.52:11), because the exile is over and the Lord 'has redeemed Jerusalem' (52:9); as a result, 'all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God'. Paul applies these prophecies without explanation to the Corinthians!

He could only do so with integrity if he believed these prophecies *had now been fulfilled*. This universal salvation 'before the eyes of all nations' (Isa.52:10) *had* now come to pass; Jerusalem therefore had been 'redeemed' – in the sense that the exile which had *partly* ended in the time of Isaiah had now been *fully* brought to an end in the work of Jesus.

In keeping with this is the section in Romans 10 where he again quoted from Isaiah 52 (v.7 in Rom.10:15), thereby identifying the Christian 'good news' (*evangelion*) with the 'good news' proclaimed by Isaiah of the exile's end. In 10:13 he had also quoted from part of Joel 2:32 which in its entirety reads; 'then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved; for *in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem* there shall be those who escape'. In all these instances Paul was taking verses that originally had spoken of a specific work of God in and for Jerusalem and was applying them to God's work in the Gospel. He believed that God's act in Christ was a fulfillment of these Zion prophecies;..."

I am indebted to Peter Walker (*Jesus and the Holy City*) Eerdmans Grand Rapids 1996 p.139 for the content of this section.

c) the meaning of "life from the dead" (Rom.11:15)

This versed is used to suggest that the conversion of Israel takes place at the second coming of Christ, coeval with a **literal** resurrection from the dead. True, it was so taken by Origen and Chrysostom (so Iain Murray in *The Puritan Hope* Banner of Truth London 1971 p.70) but so using it is not in conformity to the Scriptural use of the term. The phrase is consistently used to mean the acquiring of spiritual life. In the OT it is so used in Hosea 6:2 "the third day he will raise us up and we shall live in his sight" and in Ezekiel 37 where we have the picture of the valley of dry bones with Israel coming out of the grave, which is clearly a picture of spiritual renewal. In the NT we have John 5:21 where the

receiving of spiritual life is likened to a raising from the dead, and concerning the prodigal son in Luke 15 we are told that his restoration was as one who "was dead and is alive again." This is totally in conformity with the sequence we saw set out in section **II (a)** which indicates that following the restoring of hardened, but elect Israel, there will continue an unprecedented level of further Gospel blessing for the world. For physical resurrection Paul consistently uses the expression "resurrection from the dead".

So I leave with my readers this brief examination of the phrase "and so all Israel will be saved". Obviously, it can only be brief within the compass of four pages. But I heartily recommend the books I have quoted above, together with *Jesus and Israel – One Covenant or Two?* By David E Holwerda (Eerdmans Grand Rapids and Apollo (IVP) Leicester England 1995). Those by Walker and Holwerda deal exhaustively, and, in my opinion definitively with their common subject.

Two final snippets. The first is that in my correspondence with Wm Chalfant (see [elsewhere](#) on this web site) he sent details of **some reports by geneticists who have examined DNA samples from ethnic Jews from the Middle East. They are interesting insofar that they indicate that there is much less dilution of the Jewish genes than one might have thought. For any who are interested, the details appear in his first letter to me. But from a biblical point of view, since national and racial distinctions are abolished in Christ, and Jews therefore have no separate and independent future from the Church, the Body of Christ, this does not have any bearing on the discussion.**

The second is that despite the fact that Lance Lambert's *The Uniqueness of Israel* has been in print for decades, it is only recently that I was loaned the book and read it. I passed on the following reflections to the person who lent me the book ...

"But, on reflection, it is not a harmless viewpoint. Firstly, the title is misleading. Israel WAS unique. Its distinction lay in its connection with the giving of the Old Covenant. With the passing of this, the NT specifically tells us that there is no separate distinction for Israel. To persist that there is, and that it awaits Christ's coming to fulfill the Messianic promises disables us from accepting the very power of the Gospel, which is that Christ NOW exercises His Messianic Kingship reigning as the Son of David on David's throne by resurrection (Acts 2 etc), and by the power of the promised Holy Spirit He is establishing His Kingdom NOW. To lose this emasculates the Gospel, and is the reason why so many evangelical churches are powerless - they think they can do little, and await the Second Coming to achieve what the Gospel could not. (Ken B says this in his forward). Lambert's doctrine is a distinct barrier to the acceptance of the Apostolic teaching that the Kingdom of God has fully come in power.

I think this shows us that the challenging of the unbiblical concept that Israel has amillennial supremacy among the nations is not just dotting i's and crossing theological t's, but is challenging a view that undermines the power of the Gospel

today. This needs to be displaced with a biblical view that will enable the Church of God to fulfil her Divine mission in this generation.

May the Lord lead us all into further biblical truth for His glory.

Alan Nairne, Easter 2004

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Part II - A Critique of the Premillennial View of Scripture and Review of its Historical Development with a consideration of Revelation 20:1-6

Alan Nairne 1931-2009

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Rev 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

Rev 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

Rev 20:3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

Rev 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Rev 20:5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

Rev 20:6 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.

I. INTRODUCTION

"A critique of the premillennial view of scripture? With special reference to the above verses? It looks to me," you say, "perfectly comprehensible plain language and hardly admits of a challenge. Surely, everyone with a little knowledge of prophecy knows that the 1000 years millennium follows the resurrection of dead believers, or rapture of the living at the Second Coming of Christ. He will then set up His Kingdom, and with the Church reign in Jerusalem for the thousand years which will be a time of peace and plenty, Satan having been bound. The rest of the chapter tells us that at the end of the 1000 years Satan will be released when there will be the final rebellion, Satan and his hordes besieging Jerusalem. These will be destroyed by fire from heaven, followed by the final resurrection and judgment. Where's your difficulty?"

Well, I must admit, it is very neat. An open and shut case, apparently. But I do have my difficulties with that interpretation. The reader who is aware of eschatological distinctions will have recognised that it is the Classic or Historic Premillennial scheme that my questioner has outlined above. It is the very barest of bones that is defined. I have not even assumed that it must include the distinctive and dominant position of Israel among the nations. Even far less have I assumed that it must include the exaggerated features of Dispensational Theology which have been superimposed upon a premillennial view of the end-times, and now dominates it. In fact, Classic, or Historic Premillennarians must be very much in the minority now.

So for simplicity's sake I shall examine the foundations of Historic Premillennialism only. If these are seriously undermined by my considerations,

the whole edifice, including "Dispensational Truth," ought to fall. However, unless any of its devotees are very objective and honest in their considerations, this will not happen. The reasons for this are because the Dispensational edifice is also very much a matter of the heart, it has largely filled out the details of the 1000 years, it is very pervasive of the whole of Scripture (see the prolific notes of the Scofield Reference Bible), and, because of all these features it is very binding upon the thought processes. As someone has said, "...it is consistent, logical and utterly fallacious." For release from the system a very diligent and impartial examination of the whole of Scripture is needed. Not only so, but, however undermined a doctrine may be, until something of substance is seen to replace it, no shift will be made - and that can hardly be achieved within the limited scope of this paper. As it is, the paper is rather long in examining the flaws in the millenarian interpretation of Revelation 20:1-6 before providing the framework, at least, of what I believe to a biblically based exposition of it. But for the reasons I have just given, please bear with me. I shall not consider Dispensationalism, also for the reason I gave above - that it stands or falls with the broader considerations, and it would need a paper to itself.

For those readers who may wish to investigate the novelties of the Dispensational interpretation of Scripture, I refer you to Reese's *The Approaching Advent of Christ* and Allis's *Prophecy and the Church*, details of which are given in the bibliography. These, though dated, are very thorough, and, in my opinion, unsurpassed. Reprints may be available. The USA market has some careful up-to-date studies, as Dispensationalists in that country have shifted ground to try to eliminate weaknesses - the publications of The Chalcedon Foundation PO Box 158 Vallecito, CA 95251 USA or <http://www.chalcedon.edu> could be consulted with profit.

I have not included any consideration of the nation of Israel's place in the millennium because I have sought to fully deal with that question in my paper entitled [*Does the nation of Israel have a distinct future apart from the church in the kingdom of God?*](#)

I use the KJV, and my readers are presumed to be reasonably familiar with the terms generally used in dealing with prophetic subjects.

II. AN OPEN AND SHUT CASE?

Assuming that you are familiar with the book of Revelation and the Scriptures, please consider the following points which comprise hermeneutical principles, and a historical overview from the Apostolic Fathers as well as Scripture.

A. Hermeneutical principles

1. Does it not strike you as a little dangerous to give the figure of 1000 years a literal meaning when almost every other figure in the book is symbolic?

Even the *seven churches* of chapters two and three is a symbolic figure, for there were more than seven churches in Asia in those days. The book of Revelation is full of symbolic numbers - 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 12, 24, 42, 666, 1,000, 1260, 1600, 7000, 12,000, 144,000, 200,000,000 - a little search will find more. Is it not foolhardy to found a prophetic programme on a figure which sound hermeneutics suggest could be, and probably are, symbolic?

2. Similarly, in a book full of symbolic pictures, is it good interpretation to take the verses so literally? The very first verse of the book indicates that its genre is symbolic - "...and he sent and *signified* it...by his angel..." Principles of interpretation are crucial in considering this book. The remarks by Albertus Pieters are very much to the point -

"The book of Revelation (after the first three chapters) is a divine picture book...of spiritual cartoons...through symbols, of certain forces which underlie the historical development of the Christian church and its unceasing conflict. Therefore, the ordinary rule of interpretation must be reversed in our study of it. Ordinarily, the words of any passage of Scripture must be understood in their plain and natural sense, unless there is reason to take them figuratively. The presumption is always in favor of the literal sense: if any man takes it otherwise, he must show cause. This is not so in the Revelation. Here, the entire book being in the realm of pictorial, i.e. symbolical presentation, we are to assume that any picture shown to us has a symbolic meaning; unless it is clear that the expression must be taken literally. Here the symbolical, not the literal, interpretation has the right of way. If two interpretations are possible, one being the literal meaning of the words and one a symbolical sense in harmony with the general nature of the book, the latter is to be preferred." [1]¹

3. Consider also that nowhere in the Old or New Testaments is there reference to any period between the resurrection of believers at the second coming and that of the unrighteous "at the end of the 1000 years".
4. Since sin will be present during the 1000 years, upon what principle will any be saved? ALL the elect will be gathered in - see B.1. below. If all the ungodly are to be judged at the second coming, as I will show, who will populate earth during the 1000 years? This is expanded in B.2, since Scripture is clear that believers and unbelievers are resurrected simultaneously. See section B.6. below.
5. In Rev.22:1-4 there is no mention of a) the second coming. It is obvious that the Book recapitulates repeatedly e.g. the seals, trumpets, the bowls - *seven* such sections are often identified. Many credible expositors see that chapter 20 is one of these sections. Hendrickson [2] and Wilcock [3] are well known authors who see a cyclical format of the Book. Is it not risky, to say the least, to build a millennial doctrine following the Second Coming

upon the presumption that chapters 19 and 20 are consecutive? **b)** any earthly thrones. **c)** There is no mention of Jerusalem in the whole chapter. **d)** There is no bodily resurrection in verse 4 - souls are referred to. If you say that "verse 5 suggests the bodily resurrection of the ungodly, and you cannot have two different resurrections in such close proximity", I answer, "you have precisely this situation in John 5 verses 25-29". I shall look at these verses later.

6. It is clear that in needing a "millennial bin" to accommodate the fulfilment of OT prophecies, to say nothing of the literal interpretation of Revelation 20:1-6 the millenarian interpretation is crassly literal, being used without adequately considering the rest of the NT. Moreover, the Book is packed with allusions to the OT. **Millenarians will not accept that *THE OT IS NOT SELF-INTERPRETIVE - IT NEEDS THE NT TO BE UNDERSTOOD***. In this way there is a failure to interpret Scripture by Scripture. It is dangerous to depart from this essential hermeneutic. In the case of the Dispensationalist, at least, the floodgates of the imagination have been opened and, alas, insofar as the modern premillennialists have incorporated so much of the Dispensationalist's ideas into the 1000 years, the same applies to them also.
7. Surely, it would be tautologous of Scripture to state that the second death has no power over those "blessed and holy" ones who have actually been resurrected? It only makes sense if it refers to those whose *character* is indicated by the phrase "take part in the first resurrection." Revelation 2:11 captures the thought exactly -

He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

The idea of a millennium is usually associated with a *futurist* interpretation of the Book of Revelation. That is, from chapter four to nineteen, everything is assigned to a period just prior to the Second Coming. This, despite the fact that three times at the beginning of his prophecy John indicates the close proximity of the events of which he will write - "things which must shortly come to pass" (v.1) and "the time is at hand" (v.3), and five times at the end of his book in similar terms, but adding "Behold I come quickly" (22:6,7,10,12 and 20) . The purpose of the book is to strengthen the resolve and comfort the Church which was beginning to suffer persecution, and would continue to suffer persecution for many years to come. Of what comfort would it have been for them if the greater part of the prophecy pointed to a remote horizon that was millennia away? Moreover, by deferring Christ's full victory until a remote period of history, his present authority in government both providentially and through the Church is negated. The Book is all about Christ's government and victory following his death and ascension. Futurism as a primary principle of interpretation is thoroughly bad hermeneutic. Prophecy is normally rooted in the present, or near future.

B. Biblical principles.

The Scriptures are clear in their indication that by the time of the second coming of Christ ALL the elect will be gathered in. *Who, therefore, is going to be saved after that event? Upon what principle are they saved? Where do the saints come from who theocratically rule the whole world until besieged at the end of the millennium?*

1. The elect are complete at the Second Coming.

- As thou hast given him [the Son] power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou has given him...Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory,...etc. John 17:2,24
- This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day John 6:39,44.
- ...every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's [the full harvest] at his coming. I Cor.15:23.

Moreover the NT consistently indicates that the Second Coming is the termination of history, not the beginning of a whole new phase. This is clear from I Cor.15:23-28 -

- ...Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. for he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet....then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

I give some further Scriptures, originally provided in my earlier paper indicating this feature - [4]

2. The ungodly are to be judged

- ...when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord...II Thess.1:7-9
- What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?.....For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Matt.16:26-27
- The Lord is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. II Pet.3:9-10.
- Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all...Jude 14-15
- Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him,...and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Rev.1:7.
- Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to **execute judgment** upon ALL, and to convince ALL that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed. Jude 14-15.

3. Believers are encouraged to persevere unto *the day*

- Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God. Luke 12:18.
- Every man's work shall be made manifest: for *the day* shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire. I Cor.3:19
- Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you....but rejoice...that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad with exceeding joy. I Pet.4:12-13
- Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. James 5:7
- Gird up the loins of your mind...and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. I Peter 1:13
- Let your loins be girded..and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord...when he cometh. Luke 12:35-37.
- And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. I John 2:28
- When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Col. 3:4-5.
- It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like him..I John 3:2.
- Consider also the following Scriptures to the same effect - II Tim.4:8; Phil.3:20; I Cor.1:7-8; Luke 19:13; I Thess.5:23; Phil.1:16; Phil.1:9-10; I Thess.5:9-10; I Cor.11:26.

"The Day" concludes earth's history.

I would consider, also, that the parables of Jesus in Matthew chapter 13 are conclusive concerning the harvest, which, he explains is the *end of the age*. This is but a small selection of Scriptures from the NT. The consistent testimony is that Christ's Second Coming is *not* the beginning of a new time of probation for the ungodly, and a new start for Israel, or anybody else, but the *termination of history* with the resurrection of both wicked and godly dead, followed by judgment, and the eternal state. This is the consistent testimony of all the historic creeds.

4. The Scriptures and other means of grace for the perfection of the church will be no longer required after the Second Coming.

- Ye do well to take heed to the sure word of prophecy, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, **UNTIL** *the day dawn, and the day star arise in our hearts*. II Peter 1:19
- Be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you **AT** the revelation of Jesus Christ I Peter 1:13
- For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death **till he come**
- All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, ...and, lo, I am with you always, even **unto the end of the world [age]**.

The "Great Commission" will have ended.

5. The Kingdom of God established between the advents.²

Again, the NT is quite clear that Jesus began to establish as part of his ministry the kingdom foretold by the prophets, and was enthroned at his ascension as the reigning sovereign who establishes his kingdom. The idea that the kingdom's full manifestation follows his second coming is also plainly contrary to I Cor. 15:23-28 quoted above.

- *Him hath God exalted* with his right hand to be **a Prince and a Saviour**, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins Acts 5:29-31
- David is not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, the Lord said unto my Lord, *sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool...* therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ Acts 2:34,36
- For he must reign, till he hath **put all enemies under his feet**. Heb.12:10,13

6. The resurrection of righteous and unrighteous is practically simultaneous.

The resurrections of godly and the ungodly both take place closely proximate to each other. There is certainly no room for the insertion of a 1000 years. It is vain for premillennial interpreters to plead that the *day* of judgment is 1000 years (plus "a little season"!) long. Vain also to plead that the "book of life" is only consulted to prove that no names are in it at that judgment! The following Scriptures are very clear.

- And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Dan.12:2.
- Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. John 5:28
- And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. Rev.20:12

These are the main points of my difficulties with the millenarian interpretation of prophecy.

In the case of the truly Historic Premillennial interpreters there is a paucity of material available with which to fill the 1000 years because such agree with those few Church Fathers who espoused millenarianism, and *they* saw the OT prophecies fulfilled in the Church! (This is dealt with in section **VI.** below). Augustine³ systematised the non-millenarian viewpoint in his *City of God* (413-426AD), and the millenarian interpretation was held chiefly by groups outside of the Catholic Church until it was revived again after the Reformation. But there

was still the paucity of millennial detail previously mentioned. It was John Nelson Darby's (c. 1830) Dispensational Theology which remedied this with its radical *futurism*, putting all OT prophecy to be fulfilled subsequent to Christ [i.e. concerning the Church) into the 1000 years, which has been adopted by Classic Premillennialism where the *historicist* method of interpretation is not retained. It is for this reason Dispensationalism has to be touched upon occasionally.

Interpreters, whether pre- post- or a-Millennial, (and especially Dispensational!) claim to base their understanding of Scripture upon Scripture.. Yet a little thought will tell us that tradition, or what our peers believe, or the international scene (e.g. the establishment of the State of Israel), and even our emotions persuade us to interpret Scripture one way or the other. And so, however cogent a given rehearsal of Scripture may be, there are many more aspects which must be addressed before we can be persuaded to shift our viewpoint.

Another strong pull toward millenarianism is that there is a whole raft of OT Scriptures which were not fulfilled at the first coming of Christ. When, then, are they to be fulfilled? Until this question is answered there will be no shift. How did the Apostles handle the OT scriptures? This question was covered in my previous paper and is reproduced here for those who have not referred to it.

III. THE NT USE OF OT PROPHECIES

1. General principles.

Consider firstly Paul's testimony to King Agrippa in Acts 26 -

- ...I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying *none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come*: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles. (vv.22-23).

Secondly, Peter says:-

- Of which salvation [i.e. our salvation] *the prophets* have inquired and searched diligently, *who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you*: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, *that not unto themselves, but unto us* they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that preached the gospel unto you... I Peter 1:9-12.

In the first Scripture the expression "none other things" is pretty restrictive! Paul would restrict the message of the OT to *redemption*. Even Peter in the second Scripture is restrictive. "*UNTO US they did minister the things...*" So the burden of the Spirit of Christ in the prophets of old was redemption and the Church. Of course, it ought not to be necessary to say it, but clearly the Apostles were

referring to the prophecies concerning the "age to come", the "days of Messiah", the "New Covenant" age, etc. in which they were themselves ministering. In saying "not unto themselves" Peter was not, of course, denying their other main burden for their own times which concerned the apostacy of Israel and Judah, their captivities, and restoration. But even the promises of restoration in the near future often merged into pictures of glorious prospects of the true Israel under her Deliverer in the present age.

In looking forward to this coming when the significance of the Old Covenant was to cease, and with it "Israel after the flesh" (I Cor.10:18), how could the Spirit of God convey the spiritual nature of the Church other than under the forms then existing? Is it not the same with ourselves concerning "heaven" described as having streets of gold, a temple a 1500 miles high cube (or maybe a pyramid) with a wall all around only 216 feet high! And those gates of pearl (some oysters)!!!

Other OT Scriptures when interpreted literally often yield just as ridiculous results. Consider Ezekiel's parcelling out the land of Israel - using cubits it is far too small, using rods there is not room for it in Palestine! To say nothing of the fact that the restrictive features of the natural terrain are totally ignored. Moreover, are we going to reconstitute nations long since vanished - Babylon, Tyre, Moab, Ammon - for them to feature in end-time drama? And as for the lion eating straw as the ox (Isa.11:7), God *could* do it, but are we to believe he will recreate the lion's digestive system to suit?

2. Specific examples.

How did the Apostles understand and use the OT prophecies? Let us consider their use of a couple of representative NT Scriptures. James' words to the Jerusalem council in Acts 15 -

- ...Simeon [Peter] hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called.... (vv14-17).

The Apostles saw the "tabernacle of David" as a picture of the new people of God which included Gentiles in this present age. That is its plain meaning. What more familiar picture of the Church do we have in the NT than that of a Temple?

Take Peter's message on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 -

- ...[Jesus] ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death:...Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried,...Therefore

being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, *he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ...* (vv.23-31).

David, "being a prophet" recognised that God's promises to him and his offspring related to none less than the Messiah himself, and that the Davidic throne was but a picture of the heavenly throne of "great David's greater Son". I believe we need to understand that these men of God in the OT had a lot more spiritual discernment than we give them credit for. They knew that they, and the history of their nation, were but shadows of the eternal substance. They did not entertain illusions of an indefinitely continuing present state of affairs. Why do so many of us ignore the Divine interpretation of these promises, and do not accept the fulfillment that even the Patriarchs, David and the Prophets saw?

3. Old Testament perspectives.

Did Abraham think that he had the land for ever? No; but he knew that what it pictured was for ever. What does the writer to Hebrews tell us?

- By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out unto a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; ...By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, *as in a strange country,...for he looked for THE city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker IS GOD....*these all [the heroes of faith in this chapter] died in faith, not having received the promises, but *having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.* For they that say such things declare plainly that they ...desire a better country, that is, *an HEAVENLY*: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a *CITY....*these all...received *not the promise*: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.Hebrews 11:8ff.

I assume my readers will know the Scriptures which refer to Jerusalem as the New Covenant heavenly city, but, hoping that you will read the contexts of all these Scriptures, you will find them in Gal.4:21ff and Heb.12:18ff. And, best known, perhaps, that in Revelation 21, also pictured as the bride of Christ. The true biblical significance of Jerusalem, or Zion is in its prefiguring of the corporate people of God (also pictured as the Bride of Christ) in this age. This is in contrast to Babylon of old, with the whore, prefiguring the corporate manifestations of a persecuting secular and religious world as described in the book of Revelation chapters 17 and 18. In each case there are two cities and two women It may be exciting to remember the Six Day War, and follow the career of Saddam Hussein and his visions of a new Babylon. They, as Hitler and Mussolini in their time featured in "end time" speculation, will also pass into history. But the Scriptures focus upon no such things any more than they do concerning an end-time Jerusalem located in Palestine.

Then was the promise to Abraham and his people of possession of the land to its utmost borders (Gen.15:18) never fulfilled? Millenarians tell us that this is yet awaited. But the promise *was* utterly fulfilled, for we are told by Joshua (21:43,45 and 23:14)

- So the Lord gave unto Israel *all the land* which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein...there failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.

Solomon in his day acknowledged this in almost identical words (I Kings 8:56). The selfsame boundaries promised to Abraham are also specified (I Kings 4:21,24). To ignore this testimony and insist that Israel has still "everlasting" title to the land is to ignore the explanation given in the NT and substitute something from Judaism.

So, in addition to considering Scripture, we must also consider what these Apostolic Fathers believed. After all, it may be that in spite of the consensus of the Scriptures used above, readers may say that they have read that the majority of the early Fathers were premillennial in view, and they were closest to the apostles to know what they thought.

IV. WERE THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS LARGELY PREMILLENARIAN?

The facts are that for the first 150 years the concept of a one thousand year earthly reign was only occasionally referred to by the Church Fathers and then largely as a rebuttal of the doctrine as a non-orthodox notion inherited from Judaism. It was never, therefore, incorporated into any of the major historic creeds. Some Dispensational authors have made exaggerated claims that their's is *the* historic faith of the early church. For instance, Grier in his *The Momentous Event* quotes Dispensationalist Dr. Charles Feinberg as asserting it as an admitted fact that "the entire early Church of the first three centuries was pre-millennial, almost to a man." Testing the accuracy of this statement Grier quotes from the Church Fathers of that period and finds that of eleven who mention eschatology only two favour the idea of an earthly millennium! The truth of this can be tested by any reader who wishes to refer to the *Library of the Ante-Nicene Fathers*. I use Grier's references to the Fathers nearest the apostles up to 150AD. [5]

Clement's first epistle (90's AD) refers to the coming again of Christ and a future resurrection, but has no hint of two resurrections or a resurrection of the righteous only, nor of a millennial kingdom on earth. His second epistle looks forward to the second coming, resurrection, judgment and the life everlasting, but says nothing of any millennial kingdom on earth. The kingdom to which he looks is not a thing of earth and time; in it the promises are fully realized, but in another dimension.

Polycarp writes (about AD110) of resurrection and judgment, but says nothing concerning a millennial kingdom on earth.

Ignatius, who wrote a number of letters is taken up with the prospect of a martyr's death, saying "These are the last times", but of end time events he says nothing.

The Didache, or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, (2nd cent.) exhorts to faithfulness amidst trial and apostacy and the rising of a world-deceiver. Grier quotes -

And then shall appear the sign of the truth: first the sign of the opening in heaven; then the voice of the trumpet; and third, the resurrection of the dead. Not, however, of all, but as was said: "The Lord shall come and all His saints with Him." Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven.

It is urged, however, that there is a distinction between the resurrection of saints and that of sinners, and premillenarians, says Grier, are quick to insert their thousand years between the two. But, they have missed the point -

a brief interval in logical conception at least must be assumed between the resurrection of believers and unbelievers; but this by no means opens the door to a rounded-off period of a thousand years. The two are practically simultaneous; they are one resurrection.

The Didache teaches concerning the Antichrist and tribulation. But no claim can be made in this literature for a thousand years existing between the resurrection of the church and that of the unrighteous.

The Epistle of Barnabus (2nd century) speaks of the day of judgment and rewards to the righteous and wicked. But he speaks in ways of these events which excludes any earthly millennium with unregenerate men being under the reign of Christ.

The Epistle to Diognetus speaks of a future kingdom, but it is in heaven and will be given to those who love Christ.

Hegesippus, a distinguished ecclesiastical writer, is referred to by Eusebius the fourth century historian. Hegesippus refers to a tradition concerning two members

of the family of our Lord, the grandchildren of Jude, the brother of our Lord. When brought before the Emperor Domitian (AD 81-96) and asked about Christ's kingdom and when and where it would appear, they said "that it was not a temporal or an earthly kingdom, but celestial and angelic; that it would appear at the end of the world, when, coming in glory, He would judge the quick and the

dead, and give to every one according to his works." They were certainly no believers in an earthly millennial kingdom.

In the first half of the second century, continues Grier, there are really only two to whom we can point with any certainty as holding a future reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years - **Papias** and **Justin Martyr**. There was, of course, the heretic Cerinthus also.

We are indebted to Irenaeus and Eusebius for some fragments from **Papias**. He pictures in extravagant language the ten thousand-fold fruitfulness of the earth during the millennium. Eusebius says that Papias passed on

certain strange parables of our Lord and of His doctrine and some other matters rather too fabulous...[concerning] a certain strange millennium after the resurrection, and that there would be a corporeal reign of Christ on this very earth; which things he appears to have imagined...not understanding correctly,...for he is very limited in his comprehension, as is evident from his discourses.

Eusebius does not think very highly of the pre-millennarian views of Papias, apparently. It was through Papias, according to Eusebius, that Irenaeus and many others "were carried away by a similar opinion."

Albertus Pieters quotes **Papias'** extravagant language as given by Irenaeus -

1. The days will come, in which vines will grow, each having 10,000 branches, and in each branch 10,000 twigs, and on each twig 10,000 shoots, and in each shoot 10,000 clusters, and on every one of the clusters 10,000 grapes, and every grape, when pressed, will give five and twenty metretres of wine. (About 225 gallons).

Pieters asks from where did Papias get his information? Irenaeus thinks it came originally from Jesus. But he points out that the source was from Jewish apocalyptic literature, quoting very similar language from both **The Apocalypse of Baruch**, and **The Book of Enoch** [6]. In addition to these, Oswald Allis points out that chiliastic (Gk.=1000) views were extensively circulated in the Early Church through such Jewish or Jewish-Christian writings such as **4 Esdras**, **Assumption of Moses**, **Ascension of Isaiah**, and **Psalms of Solomon**, writings which neither Jews nor Christians regarded as canonical. [7]

Justin (died c. AD 166) certainly says that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, and "that thereafter the general and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all men would likewise take place." Justin's millennium would have no special place at all for the Jew, for he tells us over and over that Christians "are the true Israelite race." He tells us that he and others who are right-minded Christians on all points hold to this notion of a millennium, but he admits that

"many who belong to the pure and pious faith and are true Christians think otherwise." But elsewhere, Justin's teaching seems to preclude the idea of a millennium, and to that extent he is not consistent.

These, then, are the only two of all the writers in the first half of the second century who may with any certainty be called pre-millenarians, though later, Irenaeus espoused this view and became influential in propagating it. Certainly, there have always been those who held the earthly millennial doctrine, but the majority did not accept it.

Pieters' conclusion on the source of Papias' ideas is significant.

1. It appears clearly that at least one of the sources of chiliasm in the early church must be found in Jewish imagination, which originated the 'Jewish fables' against which the apostle Paul warns Titus (1:14). By the time the first great Christian council met, at Nicaea, in 325 AD, chiliasm (Gk. for 1000) was definitely on the wane,...Whether this was because the church was losing its pristine purity, as the millenarians say; or, on the contrary, because it was being purified from Jewish accretions, is an open question.

Again, almost universally, the Fathers saw the church as the fulfillment of OT prophecy, and did not see a Jewish character to the 1000 years. Pieters, as always, gives illustrative quotations. These we will provide after the next section.

V. THE WRITER WHO LED OTHERS ASTRAY

We may well ask why, with the above evidence available for any author to research, the claim was made that millennialism was the historic view of the early church? In part at least, it was because authors quoted from an earlier writer, G N H Peters, without doing their own research. Gentry gives us details. He writes,

1. Unfortunately, serious errors have brought distortion into the understanding of the historical rise of millennial views. A recent work comments: 'the early church was solidly chiliastic until the time of Augustine.' [8] Another boldly asserts that 'the church from the beginning was premillennial in belief.' [9] Still another states that 'a premillennial belief was the *universal* belief in the church for two hundred and fifty years after the death of Christ.' [10]...Frequently the false historical data is traceable to the seriously flawed, long-discredited claims of George N H Peters [11]. Peters commented on premillennialism in history: 'Now let the student reflect: here are *two* centuries...in which positively no direct opposition whatever arises against our doctrine.' [12] His claims, though still persisting and highly regarded by some, have been shown to be quite erroneous. [13]

The errors in Peters' work, Gentry continues,

1. were powerfully analyzed and conclusively rebutted in a 1977 Dallas Theological seminary master's thesis by Dispensationalist Alan Patrick Boyd [14]. According to Boyd, he 'originally undertook the thesis to bolster the [dispensational] system by patristic research, but the evidence of the original sources simply disallowed this.'....As a consequence of his research, Boyd urges his fellow Dispensationalists to 'avoid reliance on men like Geo. N H Peters...whose historical conclusions regarding premillennialism...in the early church have been proven to be largely in error.'[15] Boyd goes on to admit that 'it would seem wise for the modern [i.e. dispensational] system to abandon the claim that it is the historical faith of the Church.' [16] Of Ryrie's bold statement that 'Premillennialism is the historic faith of the Church,' he states: 'It is the conclusion of this thesis that Dr. Ryrie's statement is historically invalid within the chronological framework of this thesis.'

Gentry concludes his quotations from Boyd's work by quoting his statement

1. 'The truth of the matter is that the adherents of this doctrine were a rather limited number.' [17]

VI. THE EARLY FATHERS - "REPLACEMENT" THEOLOGIANS!

It is quite clear that most of the Apostolic Fathers saw the Church as the inheritors of the OT prophetic promises. This is in keeping with Paul's writings in Romans chapter four and the Galatian epistle. Pieters continues [18]

1. In thus understanding the prophecies of the Old Testament, these early Fathers believed themselves to be in line with the teachings of the apostles, and in this the whole church, millenarian and antimillenarian, agreed with them until the rise of John Nelson Darby.

[JND was the founder of the modern dispensational scheme of interpretation].

I really do need to emphasise the last paragraph - **it is quite clear that most of the Apostolic Fathers saw the Church as the inheritors of the OT prophetic promises....the whole church, millenarian and antimillenarian, agreed with them...**

Pieters, as I have said, does not fail to corroborate his statements, and quotes **Justin Martyr-**

1. 'Since God announced he would send a new covenant...we will not understand this of the old law and its proselytes, but of Christ and his proselytes, namely us Gentiles.'

Quoting Irenaeus-

1. 'But...the King has actually come...and has bestowed upon men the good things which were announced beforehand...By his advent he himself fulfilled all things, and still does fulfil in the church the new covenant foretold by the law.'

Hippolytus, quoting from Isaiah says,

'For it is not of the Jews that he spake of old, nor is it of the city of Zion, but of the church.' [19]

VII. THE NON-MILLENARIAN VIEW OF REVELATION 20:1-6

It is a sound principle of interpretation to work from a more easily understood section of text towards an understanding of that which is more difficult. The 1000 years is the expression that has been most difficult to interpret because it is not anchored in Scripture. I propose, therefore, to consider first "the first resurrection", followed by the "thrones", and the "binding of Satan", because these themes are referred to throughout Scripture, We shall then be in a position better to understand the meaning of the 1000 years.

1. The First Resurrection.

We first need to ask ourselves, "what is the first *death*?" Well, surely, the first death is that which passed upon Adam, and upon all mankind because of his sin. We remember that God said to Adam concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,

- *in the day* that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen.2:17).

The immediate result was surely in his personality, his soul and spirit. Estrangement and separation took place; his body did not die until centuries later. Spiritual death is a common concept in the NT . Paul describes the Ephesian Christians before they came to the Lord as,

- dead in trespasses and sins. (2:1).

To Timothy he wrote

- ...she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. (I Tim.5:6).

Christ to the same effect -

- Let the dead bury their dead. (Matt.8:22).

This, then, of the soul and spirit, is the first death. And it is, therefore, this spiritual nature of man that must be raised first. This is a major major concept in Paul's theology, as the following verses show -

In Ephesians chapter two, to which we have just referred, verse five Paul writes,

- ...even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened [made alive] us together with Christ...and hath *raised us up* together [with him], and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus...

The soul which was dead has been made alive, resurrected. We are already beginning to understand verse four which speaks of saints living and reigning with Christ.

So we see that the first resurrection, for Christians, is their being made alive in Christ. Colossians 2:12-13 and 3:1-2 are to the same effect -

- Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised up with him through faith in the working of God,you, being dead through your trespasses.....you, I say, did he *make alive* together with him...
- If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

John, who wrote the Revelation, uses the same thought in his first letter,

- "We know that we have passed *from death unto life*, because we love the brethren." (3:14).

Passing from death unto life is resurrection. And it takes place, not in heaven, but here and now upon earth. What else can we expect John to mean, but that which he has already described in his Gospel (5:24) and Epistle? To suggest something else is flying in the face of what is obvious. Can we believe that his original readers would have thought he meant "dying, and the soul being translated into heaven?", or "the first stage of his two stage separated-by-a-thousand-years coming?"

The resurrection of the body, which takes place at Christ's second coming is clearly not the "first resurrection." The resurrection of the body takes place "in the last day" as Jesus himself taught, as John records in his Gospel, chapters 6: 39, 40, 44, 54 and 11:24. The first resurrection is the believer being "made alive", "raised from death to life" by regeneration of the Holy Spirit.

2. The Thrones.

The next feature which is reasonably easy to identify with Scripture, both in this book and throughout the NT is that found in verse 4 of our twentieth chapter. "*And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them.*"

The Dispensationalist certainly, and possibly the Historic Premillennialist will both think of these thrones as being upon earth. What? Do we expect millions of little thrones in the earthly millennium each with a believer (or maybe, for the Dispensationalist, a Jewish-ex-tribulation-saint), each ruling his little patch? To put it this way is to reveal the folly of believing that they are literal thrones. But whilst it may be in keeping with Jewish expectations, not only is it not in keeping with the NT, it is, in fact, plainly contrary to it. Did not Jesus, himself, say

- Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them;...But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister...and chiefest...servant of all.?

Did he not also say,

- My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight...but now is my kingdom not from hence. John 18: 36?

The whole concept of a material, earthly kingdom with thrones, warfare, besieging hordes (Rev.19:14-16, 20:8-9) is carnal, Jewish, and should never have gained a lodgement in the minds and hearts of New Covenant Christians.

Thrones in the NT is clearly a figure of speech suggesting rulership of the saints. We have it in Rev.3:21

- To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne.

Clearly, not a literal single throne. But it is, nevertheless a sharing of the Messianic rule of Christ. Paul wrote to Timothy (II.2:12)

- If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.

To the Romans (5:17)

- ...much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

To the Corinthians he wrote

- For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours. (I.3:21,22).

This is spiritual dominion over everything, over the world, the flesh and the devil. Sin has no dominion over the Christian.(Rom.6:14). We bruise Satan under our

feet. (Rom.16:20). We overcome the world.(I John 5:4). We share Christ's present throne and victory now. (Eph.2:6).

Whilst we share the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ, yet it is **here and now**. This is where our rulership is located. Thus we read in Revelation 5:10

- And has made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on earth.

Read again that tremendous piece of inspired revelation from the pen of Paul in Romans 8:31-39 - it concludes

- Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

3. Satan bound.

It hardly needs to be said that the "key", "chain" and "binding" of Satan, though real, are nevertheless figures of speech. What, then, is this binding? Again, for those familiar with their Bibles, there should be little difficulty in interpreting this feature. The identity of the angel does not affect the interpretation. But the use of the terms "key" and "binding" give a clue to his identity being that of the Lord Jesus Christ. After all, in Rev.1:18 Christ says that he is the one who has the keys of hell and of death, and in 3:7 that he has the key of David with power to open and shut. Keys speak of authority in Scripture, as when Christ committed to Peter the keys of the Kingdom of heaven, connected with "binding and loosing" (Matt.16:20). In Matt.18:18-20 Christ gave this authority to the Church. But, even if this personage is an angel, the authority came from the Lord of all, and the "binding" of Satan was effective.

When did this binding take place? Matthew helps us again (12:28), writing,

- But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

Clearly, had Satan not been bound by Christ, he would not have had the liberty to spoil his goods. Did not John write in his first letter (3:8)

- For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. ?

The banishing of Satan from heaven has not to await the Second Coming. Jesus tells us

- Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." (John 12:31).

When the seventy disciples returned from their tour of preaching and reported to Jesus their success in the casting out of demons he replied,

- I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Luke 10:18.

But, alas, some of us would prefer to believe what our newspapers and observations tell us rather than believe the testimony of Scripture. The trouble, really, is that such folks do not understand what the binding of Satan means. They look at the national and international scene and interpret it as getting steadily worse. Perhaps the very reason that it is getting worse is the fault of the church, because we are ignorant of Scripture and we say in our hearts "it will be like this until Jesus comes again to bring us into victory." This is why the futurist genre of premillennial interpretation of Scripture needs challenging. It deprives us of the knowledge of Christ's present powerful ministry not only in the Church, but through the Church to affect society.

So then, the fall and binding of Satan took place during the ministry of Christ through the preaching of the Gospel. That a mighty change took place in heaven and earth is indicated by the *sphere* of the binding of Satan. We are told that

- he should **deceive the nations** no more. (Rev.20:3).

Up until that time the Gentile nations and empires - Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome had been in bondage to idolatry. They were completely under the dominion of Satan. But following the ministry of Christ, culminating in his death, burial, resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God, and the pouring out of the promised Holy Spirit, the whole Roman Empire was evangelised within a generation. The effect upon society provoked reaction -

- These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also (Acts 17:6).

Paul could write to the Romans (10:18)

- Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Is it not clear, even today, that the Gospel has had a tremendous effect on every continent? The Word of God is being published every year in an ever increasing number of languages, and its effects are very powerful in many areas in the "third world" today. In fact it is sending missionaries to re-evangelise us in the West!

So we have solved our problem. **The duration of the 1000 years is this present Gospel age.** It is coeval with this binding of Satan, and extends for the duration of the Church's ministry. The chain then, surely, is the Gospel which is preached and which allows the prisoners to be released from the thralldom of their sins.

- Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you (Luke 10:19).

4. The thousand years.

Having looked at "The First Resurrection", The "Thrones" and the "Binding of Satan", all of which are clearly referred to in Scripture outside of the Book of Revelation, and having seen that it is the period between the two advents, we are now in a position to investigate the symbolism of the thousand years.

The term "thousand" is used a number of times in the OT.

- The Lord God of your Fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are (Deut.1:11).
- Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations. (Deut.7:9).
- For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. (Psalm 84:10).
- For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday... (Psalm 90:4).

It is used in a figurative way of vastness of numbers. Very familiar to us is God's statement in Psalm 50:10 that

- the cattle upon a thousand hills [is mine].

No one is foolish enough to think that the cattle upon the one thousand and first hill is not his! It is recognised as an expression of comprehensive inclusion of all cattle upon all hills.

In terms of bible numerology (in the realm of which we need to be careful) ten stands for totality, or completeness, and this is the cube of ten, signifying vastness. In the book of Revelation it is added to 144 to signify the totality of God's people, and to 12 furlongs indicating that the City occupies all significant space in God's purposes.

The trouble for many of us is that such an explanation seems rather prosaic against the pictures which have been painted of a universal glorious "Golden Age". But the trouble *really* is that the glories of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ are not believed as being applicable to *this* age, but await the "age to come".

Another of the glories of the church is that we are not only enthroned and share Christ's reign, but, we are told, "**judgment was given unto them.**"

5. The saints judging.

Perhaps we ought to think of judging in terms rather wider than that of adjudication in a court. For, certainly, it cannot be sharing in the final judgment, for it is to Christ that this is committed. We note that the function extends for the duration of the thousand years, and, is therefore continuous. This would make sense if we also bear in mind that the word "judge" is used in Scripture in the sense of, as in the book of Judges, one who rules, or delivers from oppression, or is a saviour among his people, restoring the backslidden. We are reminded of Paul's words

- "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one...bear one another's burdens..." (Gal.6:1-2).

One can think of the whole ethos of our Christian life in relation to our ministering to the people of God - all this will come under this particular aspect of "judging". But, is there not also the thought of "ruling" within the community of God? One remembers the verses in Matthew chapters sixteen and eighteen that we have already considered concerning authority to "bind and loose" demonic powers, but it was given for the exercise of authority within the Church for discipline, as well as for use in the wider sphere of the Kingdom of God. Would that the Church always obeyed the instructions of Paul to the Corinthians in cases of immorality.

- ...do not ye judge them that are within?...Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person. (I Cor.5:12-13)

Can we not also exercise authority in the realm of prayer and intercession concerning ungodly situations in our communities?

- Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world.? (I Cor.6:2)

This, surely, is possessing the kingdom

- Until the Ancient of Days came, and judgement was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. (Dan.7:22).

This section could be expanded considerably, but readers familiar with their Bibles will not find this necessary, they will readily identify with these themes.

6. The Martyrs

We have already seen that "thrones" signify the reign of those who are "in Christ". All true believers allowing the life of Christ to work in and through them are included in this reign. The fact that we now have a specific group mentioned does not negate this. We need to remember that for the majority of its existence the true body of Christ has been persecuted, often unto death, by the Papal authorities, usually in association with secular rulers. Reference to any martyrology will confirm this. And, whilst this source of persecution may have diminished, we are

thankful for the many Christian Agencies that identify and campaign for the release of prisoners, and report the destruction of churches and often deaths of many ordinary believers. This takes place frequently under fundamentalist Islamic rule, and one has only to think of East Timor (still), and the genocide of Christians in Burma and Southern Sudan. Occurring also throughout the Middle East, it is now extending to India from Hindu fundamentalists. But we need not be surprised. For Christianity was birthed in persecution from the Jews, as we read so frequently in the book of Acts.

Jesus, himself, reminded us -

- In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. (John 16:33).

Paul, to the same effect -

- we must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God. (Acts 14:22.)
- ...when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we should suffer tribulation. (I Thess.3:4).

Persecution, even unto death, must, therefore not be considered something exceptional for the Christian. But, neither can those of us who escape such tribulation be penalised - it is the commitment to the cause of Christ in our daily lives, and the intention that is to be honoured. So, both those who were beheaded (a Roman form of punishment), and those

- which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark...they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (Rev.20:4).

And so,

- To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. (Rev.3:21).

7. Satan loosed and the siege - verses 7-11.

We have already seen under #3. above, Satan being bound, is in the sphere of his ability to "deceive the nations". Certainly, God allows judicial blindness to those who wilfully do not receive the Gospel, as Paul tells the Corinthian Christians (II Cor.4:4). But it would seem, for reasons that he has chosen not explicitly to share with us, God gives the Devil liberty to deceive those who will not receive the truth. But note three things. Firstly, it is God who gives him permission. The situation is entirely within his control for the working out of his purposes, which theme is covered on page 22. Secondly, the people of God were never in any danger. We read that Satan's agents merely

- ...compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. (Rev.20:9).

Thirdly, (and, at the end of this paper I should hardly need to say this!) we are not to think of the scene in carnal physical terms. Clearly the scene is symbolic. a). The assault is a result of Satan's loosing, and he is allowed to "deceive", doubtless concerning the knowledge of the true God. b). how could hordes "the number of whom is as the sand of the sea" (v.8) be accommodated in little Palestine, to say nothing of the immediate surrounds of Jerusalem? How could that little land sustain such an army? c). The reference to Gog and Magog (v.8) and the whole picture has been taken out of the similar picture found in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39. Except that in Ezekiel the assault **precedes** the era of peace and stability, whilst in Revelation it **follows** the 1000 years. Are we to alter the text of Ezekiel? Or are we to alter that of Revelation? Surely the implication is that we are not dealing with history either in the Old or New Testaments.

Reasons for not interpreting this section literally

The whole idea of interpreting this scene literally needs to be looked at more closely. Unless one is blinded by a determined commitment to interpret everything literally, the elements shout out their need to be interpreted symbolically. Fairbairn has provided the following useful insights.[20]. where applicable they are equally valid for Rev.20.

1. "The name Magog occurs only once elsewhere in the Old Testament, at Gen.10:2, among the sons of Japheth...[and] it must be regarded as the name of a land and people...The syllable Ma, which in Coptic bears the meaning of *place*..., was probably regarded as having respect to the territory: so that Gog would naturally denote the people, or the head who represented both land and people. Gog is clearly a name formed by the prophet from Magog---a representative name, intended to designate the political head of the region. With a like freedom, Gog and Magog are in Rev.20 used as the names of two separate people...an ideal name; it is simply the root of Magog...very indefinite territory and people, as appears...from the want of any express landmarks connected with them here or elsewhere.
2. "We must note respecting the nations that are mentioned as in league with Gog,...their great distance from each other, as well as from Canaan. Not only have we the Scythian hordes, [Jerome gives it as the opinion of the Jews in his day, that Magog was a general name for the numberless Scythian tribes from the region of the Caucasus.] but the Persians also; the Ethiopians and Libyans of Africa; Gomer, or the Cimmerians of Crim Tartary; Togarmah, or the Armenians, and the multitudes beyond them that peopled the far north....The nations mentioned are all selected from the distance...from the land of Israel...and many of them far apart from one another, and consequently the most unlike naturally to act in concert for any particular purpose....The principle of assortment and union is evidently

the very reverse of the natural one-not nearness, but remoteness of position,.....this entire omission of the near, and conjunction only of the remote and distant, is so very peculiar a characteristic, and so contrary to all *real* combinations, that it is impossible to avoid thinking that here also we have but the clothing of an idea--not a literal reality, but the pictorial delineation of one."

3. "Addressing Gog (Ezekiel 38:17) 'Thus saith the Lord God; Art thou he of whom I have spoken in the days of old, by the hand of my servants the prophets of Israel, that prophesied in those days...that I would bring thee against them?' 'Gog and his warlike forces are here identified with the enemies of whom former prophets have spoken, when they spake of the conflicts and troubles of the last days...Such, for example, as those recorded in Num.24:17-24, Isa.14:28-32, 18:, etc., Joel 3., Dan.2:44-45, etc., -- and seeing now in vision this last grand gathering of the powers of evil under Gog, the prophet asks whether it was not the same that had already so often been announced. It appeared now only in a new form, but the thing itself had been many times described by God's servants."
4. Ezekiel 38:19 says, 'Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake over the land of Israel.' 'We find mention made of the earthquake also,...in the parallel prophecy of Joel 3:16, also Isa.29:6. In Rev.20:9 the external form differs; there is no earthquake, but fire is said to come down from heaven to consume the adversaries, as here also in ver.22."
5. Ezekiel 38:18-20 refers to the Lord's "sacrifice" and "feast" of the destruction of his enemies. This idea is found elsewhere: in Isa.18:6, 34:6, Zeph.1:7, Rev.19:17-18.
6. "Then the huge numbers of this combined party are to be taken into account, in connection with the object for which it was avowedly formed. According to the description, it was to be a marauding host, breaking in like a mighty inundation upon the land of Israel, and again departing after it had enriched itself with the spoil and booty there obtained (Chap.38:12-13). That is, myriads of people were to be gathered from the most distant regions of the earth, combining and acting together against all the known principles of human nature: and for what? To spoil and plunder a land which could not, had they got all it contained, have been a handful to a tithe of their number---could not have served to maintain the invaders for a single day!"
7. Consider also the fruits of the Lord's victory as to whether we are reading "pre-written history". "The wood of the adversaries' weapons was to serve for fuel to all Israel for seven years! and all Israel were to be employed for seven months in burying the dead! It would be but a very moderate allowance,...to say that a million of men would thus be engaged, and that on an average each would consign [only!] two corpses to the tomb in one day; which, for the 180 working days of the seven months, would make an aggregate of 360,000,000 of corpses! Then the putrefaction, the pestilential vapours arising from such masses of slain victims before they were all

buried! Who could live at such a time? It bids defiance to all the laws of nature, as well as the known principles of human action: and to insist on such a description being understood according to the letter, is to make it take rank with the most extravagant tales of romance, or the most absurd legends of Popery."

8. "Further, on the ground of a literal description, there is the collateral consideration of its becoming utterly impossible to make out a prophetic harmony; the prophets in that case do not mutually confirm, but, on the contrary, oppose and contradict each other." See #3. #4. and #5 above.
9. "Finally, pointing, as all these prophetic descriptions do, and the one before us in particular, to the latter ages of the world--to the times of the Messiah--the gross carnality of the representation in respect to God's dealing with the adversaries demands a non-literal interpretation. Under the old covenant, when the Church was still in its childhood, it was necessary to employ to a large extent the outward and material; carnal elements had a prominent place in the immediate service of God, and they could not fail to be much resorted to in the administration of the kingdom, so long as it had a political existence in the world...But the revelation of God in the person and work of Christ introduced an entire change in this respect. The *spirituale* element in the Divine character came thereby into fuller manifestation, and, as a necessary consequence, everything *carnal* fell into the background....therefore, in addition to all the other impossibilities standing in the way of the literal interpretation of this vision, there is that which arises from the false and degrading position in which it would put the Church, sending her back, after she has attained to the spiritual light and privileges of the Gospel, to her old fleshly weapons and worldly entanglements."

I trust that we have seen from this section, what we have seen from the other sections, that there is no "golden age" subsequent to the second advent, but, the period of 1000 years is to be located *between* the advents, when, whatever tribulation and persecution the Church of God has suffered, and may yet suffer, nevertheless even *in* this she rules and reigns, not only in the heavenlies, but also upon the earth. There are sufficient Scriptures to warrant the conviction that the Church will experience a period when her influence throughout the earth will be powerful. Perhaps this will have to form the subject of a separate paper, as it is outside the remit of this one, examining, as we have, the whole concept of Pre-millennialism. Nevertheless, as I have said earlier, although God has not chosen explicitly to reveal the reason for his release of the powers of evil immediately prior to the second coming we should be able to tentatively gather a little more than we have in Revelation from the similar account in Ezekiel.

We notice from Ezekiel 38 verses 10-13 that the people of God are enjoying a time of unparalleled prosperity -

- brought forth out of the nations...gathered out of many people...them that are at rest, that dwell safely,...without walls,...neither bars nor gates,...people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle...silver and gold and goods,...

I take this OT picture of the end time to reflect the success of the gospel of Christ throughout the world. Material prosperity is a by product of the success of the gospel in bringing people to a saving, converting, purifying knowledge of the Lord. But, as has been seen so often, peace and material wellbeing, the offspring of spiritual wellbeing, draws out the envy and malice of the enemy. One has only to think of, for example, the terrible persecutions under Simon de Montford which wiped out whole communities of those peaceful, industrious Waldensian Christians living in Southern France, at the instigation of Pope Innoent III from 1209AD which continued for twenty years. But such a picture was repeated for centuries in this, and other areas in Europe, wherever there was Papal influence. Which student Church History can forget that infamous period in Paris in 1572 starting with the massacre which began on St Bartholomews Day? The signal for the butchery to begin was the early morning ringing of the church bells. Thousands of peace-loving Huguenots men, women and children, were cruelly butchered, many in their beds at the instigation of the Pope and the Queen-Mother, Catherine de Medici? Thousand of bodies lay strewn in the streets which ran with their blood. In 1685 the Edict of Nantes was revoked, and all male Huguenots were to be sentenced to death if they would not convert to Rome. Risking such a sentence these industrious business and crafts people fled the country to the economic loss of France and the gain of those countries in Europe, including Britain, and America, which gave them sanctuary. [21]

And so it seems likely that at the end of the age will take place the last great final avaricious, covetous attempt to expropriate the heritage of believers, and wipe out the truth of the Gospel of Christ from the earth.

But, as has already been noticed, the initiative has come from the Lord himself, ch. 38

- ...the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,...set thy face against Gog..prophecy against him...Behold, I am against thee, O Gog...and I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and will bring thee forth, and all thine army...thou shalt come from thy place...thou shalt come up...I will bring thee against my land...**I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog before their eyes...**my fury shall come up in thy face...I will call for a sword against him...I will plead against him...I will rain upon him..(v.23).**Thus will I magnify myself and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord.**

God chooses not judge before evil has fully developed,

- ...thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them [Egypt], and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom

they shall serve, *will I judge*:...and in the fourth generation they shall come hither [Canaan] again,; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. (Gen.15:16-17).

So, in keeping with well defined principles revealed in Scripture it is hardly surprising if the utter irreconcilability of good and evil shall be thus revealed and utterly and finally dealt with.

- The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears, let him hear. (Matt.13:41-43).

8. The Great White Throne

We have already spent time demonstrating from the Scriptures that the resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous takes place practically simultaneously at the coming of Christ. There is a total universality that is described in this stupendous vision.

- I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God...the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and Hades delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged *every* man according to their works...And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev.20:12-15).

Clearly, two classes are described. "Whosoever was *not* found written in the book of life" and, obviously, those whose names *were* found written. It is futile for the Scofield Reference Bible to say of these verses "the 'dead ' can only be the wicked dead.". Of course, having built a whole doctrine upon the separation of the resurrections, what else can be said? But such an idea does not come from the Scripture, but rather the requirements of the system.

9. Conclusion.

And so, my dearly beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, I commend this exercise to your careful and prayerful consideration. I do not think that I can finish this paper better than by quoting what I wrote in my earlier paper.

"Finally, I wish to say that I have many friends whom I esteem in the Lord, who, whether they have investigated these things or not, believe in what I have sought to correct in this paper. Actually, there are very few folks with whom I have the opportunity to discuss such matters. Sadly, most Christians I know do not have a detailed interest in Scripture. So this subject is not a big deal for me. I have not sought to "convert" them, and I am not on a crusade. It is far more important that we should all learn to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbour as ourself

"But I *am* concerned with what is biblically true concerning the whole range of Scripture, and have always been willing to unlearn what I thought I knew. Moreover, I have not just discovered these things. I have seen and embraced them for probably twentyfive years at least. I am still learning, and I find that exciting. If you also find that exciting, and would like to share any insights with me, or discuss what I have written, I would be delighted to hear from you."

"So in closing I wish you all God's richest blessing, and trust that, as the Berean Christians, we will search the Scriptures, daily, to see whether these things are so. Acts 17:10:ff".

"Maranatha! Even so, come, Lord Jesus! (I Cor.16:22, Rev.22:20)"

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15. Ibid. p.92
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17. Ibid., p.92, n 1.
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20. Dr. Patrick Fairbairn. *An Exposition of Ezekiel* (1851) Sovereign Grace Pub. Evansville, Indiana 1960 p.414ff.
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22. S.R.B. 1917. P.1351.

Bibliography

A list of works, some of which are in the references above, is given below. These I have found to be invaluable, and are recommended to the serious student of prophecy. Some, though dated, deal in depth with principles of interpretation, and are, in the writer's opinion, unsurpassed. If they have been reprinted or can be obtained secondhand, the investment will be worth while. However, prophetic insights, as other biblical areas, move on, and judicious choice of modern works is also recommended. For some supply sources see below.

Oswald T Allis [*Prophecy and the Church*](#) - *An Examination of the Claims of Dispensationalists* James Clarke & Co Ltd London 1945 (nonmillenarian).

Lorraine Boettner *The Millennium* Presbyterian and Reformed Pub.Co. 1966. Sets out the three major viewpoints.

David Chilton [*The Days of Vengeance*](#) - *An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* Dominion Press PO Box 7999 Tyler TX 3rd printing 1990 (Preterist/Post-Millennial).

David Chilton [*Paradise Restored*](#) - *A Biblical Theology of Dominion* Reconstruction Press PO Box 7999 Tyler TX (Preterist/Post-Millennial)

Dr. Patrick Fairbairn (1805-1874), Free Church of Scotland, Professor of Divinity Aberdeen (1853-1856) and Principal of Glasgow College (1856-1874). [*Typology of Scripture*](#) (1854) 900pp. Oliphants, London 1953, [*The Interpretation of Prophecy*](#) (1856) Banner of Truth Trust London 1964, *An Exposition of Ezekiel* (1851) Sovereign Grace Pub. Evansville, Indiana 1960 [*The Revelation of Law in Scripture*](#) (1869) Zondervan Pub. House Grand Rapids Michigan. (Post-Millennial. For the serious English reader. For lifetime reference).

W. Hendricksen [*More Than Conquerors*](#) - *An Interpretation of the Book of Revelation* Baker Book House Grand Rapids Mich. 20th Printing 1975 (A-millennial In print. A popular author).

J Marcellus Kik. *Revelation Twenty*. Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co. Philadelphia, Pen. 1955. This, with *Matthew 24 P & R* 1948 was reprinted under the title *An Eschatology of Victory* (Post-Millennial)

Albertus Pieters *Studies in The Revelation of St. John* (1939) Reprinted under title *The Lamb, the Woman, and the Dragon*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. Grand Rapids. 1954. Discusses key sections of the book as Preterist/Historicist/Futurist/non-millenarian. Favours combination, but non-millenarian. Valuable.

Alexander Reese [*The Approaching Advent of Christ*](#) - *An Examination of the Teaching of J N Darby and his Followers*. Marshall Morgan & Scott London c.1937. (Pre-Millennial).

Michael Wilcock [*The Message of Revelation*](#) Inter-Varsity Press Leicester England, and Downers Grove Illinois USA (The Bible Speaks Today series) n.d. Published in 1975 as *I saw heaven opened*. (A-Millennial)

Milton S Terry [*Bible Hermeneutics*](#) - *A treatise on the Interpretation of the Old and New Testaments*. Zondervan Academic Books Grand Rapids Mich. Reprint of useful 19thC. volume.

The Chalcedon Foundation's web site is <http://www.chalcedon.edu>. Although they are Reformed/Post-millennial, their books devoted to "Reconstructionism" otherwise known as "Dominion Theology", or "Theonomy" should, in my opinion, be considered only very judiciously. But the books in their catalogue dealing with prophetic subjects (e.g. Chilton and Gentry's works) are inspirational and scholarly expositions, particularly challenging the Dispensational viewpoint. A UK source of supply is James A Dickson Books, Christian Bookshop, 25, Eldin Industrial Estate, Edgefield Road Loanhead, Edinburgh EH20 9QX. Tel. 0131-448-0701 Second hand stock also.

Fairbairn's *Typology, Prophecy and Law* are in print (they may be USA reprints and therefore available in US.) and can be obtained from [Tabernacle Bookshop](#), Metropolitan Tabernacle, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6SD. Tel. 020 7735 7076 e-mail Bookshop@MetropolitanTabernacle.org New books, heavily discounted.

Footnotes.

1. Whilst this is true, I would like to add a rider to say that what Pieters has said should not be taken as synonymous with the liberal dictum "the Bible should be interpreted the same as any other book." The Bible must be interpreted according to its own claims, and according to the *spiritual* principles which, as a Divinely inspired book, lie embedded within it. For instance when the Lord said that Moses wrote of him, and how he would suffer and enter into his glory, - we ask, "where in the Pentateuch did Moses write of these things?" The answer must be in the accounts of the sacrificing of Isaac, Joseph's betrayal and exaltation, the Paschal Lamb etc, etc. Dispensationalists, who are great *literalists*, accuse non-millennarians of being "spiritualizers" in a very pejorative sense. But they themselves are very strong on the "typology" of the Old Testament, which is allegorical in style. Within biblical limits (e.g. see Patrick Fairbairn's (1805-1874) *Typology of Scripture*) it is valuable. But, inconsistently, Dispensationalists, so strong on spiritualizing OT history, are rigid in their insistence on a literal interpretation of prophecy.

2. Strictly speaking, Classic or Historic Premillennialists who interpret the book upon a continuous historicist basis would not disagree with this proposition. But the influence of Dispensationalism has caused the majority of premillennialists to adopt a *futurist* mode of interpretation which deprives the proposition of its force.

3. The fact that the non-millenarian interpretation was espoused by Augustine (a "Catholic"!) is sufficient to condemn it in the eyes of, for instance, Paul Bailey in his *The Supreme Irony*. Pub. by Penfold Book and Bible House Bicester UK 1996. The Scofield Reference Bible (1917 edn. also draws attention to this feature. p.989.

4. 'These participants include both the martyred saints in heaven ("the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness") and the persevering saints on earth ("...And those who [*oitines*] - a second class of persons) had not worshipped the beast." Given the time frame concern of John (cf. Rev.1:3,9), his focus is particularly on those martyrs and other saints of the first century era. But it also involves all those who are martyred for Christ and those who live for Him apart from being martyred, for the blessings spread throughout the millennial era.' Gentry, Ibid, p.416 referring to H B Swete, *Commentary on Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel [1906] 1977) p.262.