

ISRAELOLOGY
Fundamentals Regarding God's Dealing with Israel in the Old Testament
Daniel E. Woodhead Ph.D

I. Covenant Theology Fundamentals

Covenant Theology is by definition a system of theology whereby the entire system rests upon two or sometimes three "covenants." These are the fundamentals of this system. Dr. Showers expands this definition to embrace the view of theological systems in general as developing a Biblical philosophy of history. Covenant Theology is included in this attempt to provide a philosophy of history.

The "covenants" are described as:

1. The Covenant of Redemption
2. The Covenant of Works
3. The Covenant of Grace

Some Bible expositors such as Fruchtenbaum do not cite the covenant of redemption when defining Covenant Theology. He sees the covenant of grace including redemption. Others see enough distinction in the two, grace and redemption so as to include both when providing a working definition.

There is one significant fundamental problem with this system of theology. *The covenants cited are not explicitly found in Scripture.* When you don't have the covenants in Scripture to provide some assurance that God intended these, you rely on human deduction and conjecture to establish them as God's covenants. Dr. Chafer provides us with a succinct statement to codify the central issue:

"Since the days of Johannes Cocceius (1603-1699) who, more than any other, introduced a one-covenant-of-grace idea, many theologians have promoted the notion that God is undertaking but one objective through human history. Scripture must be ignored or greatly misinterpreted to the end that such idealism may be advanced. The one-covenant idea could not avoid being a means by which to close the Scriptures from human understanding."

Therefore the premise upon which this system is build has fatal faults. These supposed covenants are not to be found explicitly stated in Scripture.

II. Covenant Theology's Goal of History is Limited

Covenant theology sees only one goal of God in the outworking of all history, and that is the glory of God through the redemption of the elect. It is important to note that the redemption of the elect in all dispensations is a very important goal when considering the Whole Council of God. However, this ignores God's other programs, which He has stated explicitly in Scripture. God does have a program for those that are not included within the elect. (Rom 9: 10-23) See verse seventeen where He states one of His programs, using Pharaoh (one of the non-elect) to advance the declaration of His name in all the earth.

He has a different program for Satan described in John 12:31, Rom 16:20, Rev 12:17 etc. He has a different program for nature. (Matt 19:28, Acts 3: 19-21 etc.) And a program for the nations. (Job 12:23, Isa 14:24-27, Jeremiah 10:7 etc.) All of these programs will make a contribution to the total goal of God in managing His creation. So it is insufficient to focus on one program and call that God's goal. Suffice it to say that the idea that God is only concerned with the redemption of mankind is flattering to the human but also rather pride inducing as well.

III. Covenant Theology Denies a Distinction between Israel & The Church

Covenant theology denies the distinction between the nation Israel and the Church. Covenant theologians believe that the Church existed in the Old Testament. Reading the Bible in a "normative" manner impels the reader realize that the word church does not appear in the entire Bible before Christ announced that he *will* build His church upon Himself, The Rock. So the beginning of the Church was yet future to the time when Christ was walking the land of Israel during His first advent. (Matt 16:18) The Church had its beginnings on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2) Peter declared it to be "the beginning." (Acts 11:15)

Scripture speaks of the name Israel in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. The Church is only mentioned in the New Testament. The apostle Paul declares in Romans 11:25-28:

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.

And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

For this [is] my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

As concerning the gospel, [they are] enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, [they are] beloved for the fathers' sakes."

Paul declares that one who is ignorant of the mystery of Israel and God's plan for them is conceited. Those who deny the distinction between Israel and the Church are not only conceited, as Paul states but are also engaging in Spiritual pridefulness.

IV. Covenant Theology's Double Hermeneutic

When one reads the Bible in a "normative" manner as we would with any other publication we take into account the writer, message, grammar, idiomatic phrases etc. We consistently apply normal word usage as the context demands to produce understandable syntax.

There is a flaw in the hermeneutics, which Covenant Theologians utilize to develop their eschatology. For fulfilled prophecy they use words in their normal meaning. For future or unfulfilled prophecy they adopt a new and arbitrary meaning to adapt to their overall understanding of God's plan. This is called the allegorical method of interpreting Scripture. The fundamental problem with this method is that the understanding of Scripture and especially the prophetic portions become a "private interpretation" (2 Pet 1: 20) and it is no longer God speaking to man but man telling God what He is saying. It is not clear what rules of grammar or word usage they appeal to for their eschatological exposition. So the allegorical method is so arbitrary that it is outside of the ability of man's God given logic and reason to accept as valid. In short it does not make sense. Only the unthinking, lazy and undiscerning will accept illogic. It is simply sloppy thinking to do so.

V. Amillennialism

This means that there is no millennium. This system of theology rejects any idea of a period of a thousand years either before or after the return of Christ to the earth. Allis further clarifies:

This is the teaching that the only visible coming of Christ to the earth, which the Church is to expect, will be for judgment and will be followed by the final state. It is.... a-millennial because it rejects the doctrine.... of a thousand years.

Today a major segment of Covenant Theology is amillennial. This concept, which states that there is no millennium, is difficult to advance with Scripture. Chapter nineteen of the Book of Revelation clearly describes Christ's return to earth following the Great Tribulation. Revelation chapter 20 states on six occasions the length of this period following Christ's second advent. It is a thousand years. Hence it is referred to as the Millennium. Much of the development and propagation of the Amillennial concept can be attributed to Origen. This brilliant man tried to integrate the Christian doctrine with Greek philosophy. The Alexandrian theology which flowed from this rejected an earthly kingdom. Further, he can be called the father of the allegorical method of interpreting

Scripture. He believed that there were three levels of Scriptural understanding. 1. The meaning derived from the plain words, 2. Application of the text; and 3. The Allegorical meaning.

Scripture does not support Amillennialism. Because of early church father support it seems that this system of theology has persevered. Concepts, which have been known for a lengthy period, take on an aura of authenticity. The length of time a concept has been known *does not* validate it as truth. The concept itself has to be measured against the truth to determine if it is true.

VI. Continuation of the Law of Moses

All Covenant Theologians believe that the Law of Moses is still in effect. They support this by claiming that when Israel refused the offer of the Kingdom, Christ gave it to His disciples whom Covenant theologians refer to as the true people of God. This bypasses all the Old Testament covenants, which provide promises to the nation Israel that, have yet to be fulfilled.

Covenant Theologians such as Ladd arbitrarily reduce the Law by removing the dietary laws and the ceremonial law. It is not clear how this is justified from a Scriptural basis since the New Covenant entirely replaces the conditional Mosaic Covenant. Paul makes this abundantly clear in Galatians that the Law is completely fulfilled by Christ, and the New Covenant is now in effect. Without a sound Scriptural basis it is difficult to understand how one could assert an arbitrary partial deletion to the Law and claim validity while other portions of the Law still hold true. This is interesting mental gymnastics but lacking in cohesive logic and biblical exegesis. How does one know which parts of the Law to discard and which parts to keep? This falls into the general claim of "permanent validity" of the Law. Clearly the Law does not pass through to the Church. Christ's law is embodied within the New Covenant and provided in the pages of Scripture from the date of the birth of the Church onward. So from Acts two to the end of the epistles we are given the operative nature of the New Covenant. The Law is completely finished. It was fulfilled by Christ and replaced in its entirety with the New Covenant.

VII. Blurring of the Meaning of the Olive Tree in Romans Eleven

The Apostle Paul uses an image of an olive tree in the eleventh chapter of the Book of Romans. The olive tree is meant to represent God's blessings and the natural branches are a representation of the nation Israel. They were chosen *first* to receive God's blessings so they are referred to as the "natural branches." Some Covenant theologians imply that the olive tree is the Church today. In Paul's imagery the Gentiles are grafted into the tree to receive God's blessings (or His goodness) too. Gentiles are also told not to be high-minded but to fear God over this. We have not replaced Israel. We can't be proud over

this; it is God's choice and His plan. Further if Israel "abides not in unbelief" they will be grafted into their own olive tree! Ladd when speaking of the "natural branches" defines this as Jewish believers that came into the church.

So clearly there is a distinction between Israel and the Gentiles (Church) in these passages, which render the olive tree as *not* being the Church. The Covenant theologians are here trying to make their case for only "one people of God." This they claim from their belief that the church is in the Old Testament and God just used the name Israel to refer to them during those dispensations. This is simply a diseased idea, which has as its goal to cause harm to the Jews.

VIII. Postmillennialism

Postmillennialist hold to a symbolic interpretation of Scripture. They believe that since there are symbols in Scripture and Scripture contains allegories *all* Scripture can be interpreted in the manner of symbols and allegories. They further take any figurative language in Scripture as license to make other passages figurative as well. They cloud God's message with a spiritual understand of Old Testament prophecies in the New Testament. This arbitrary manner of assigning inappropriate grammatical properties to Scripture passages that do not warrant it, results in an inaccurate exposition of passages. Hence, the true meaning is lost or at least severely obscured and the result is the reader is no longer getting God's Word. Faulty hermeneutics and inappropriate grammatical usage destroys the meaning that written language is intended to convey. This faulty extrapolation of one concept used in one instance in the Bible to the whole of Scripture is unjustified.

The Postmillienists believes that Christ will return after a period of peace and righteousness, which is not necessarily a thousand years. The peace and righteousness according to this theology is brought about through world evangelism. They believe that the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom and not a world condition. They believe very narrowly that Christ in John 18:36 said His kingdom was not of this world. They neglect many other passages regarding the kingdom, which make it very clear that the kingdom would be accomplished on earth, in the future, as it is in heaven. (Matt 6:10)

There are many other characteristics of this unbiblical doctrine but they too are grounded in faulty hermeneutics, which will always produce a message that is outside of orthodoxy.

IX. The Nation Israel Today in the Land

Typically covenant theologians do not believe that Israel is viewed as an independent entity in the Bible and assume that the Church replaced them in God's plan. Therefore they must with great difficulty devise an explanation for the reestablishment of the State

of Israel in contradiction to Bible prophecy. Fruchtenbaum notes that this was not a problem for Charles Hodge since his life span did not coincide with the rebirth of the Nation Israel (May 14, 1948). However, Fruchtenbaum does note the feeble attempts of Lorraine Boettner to wrestle with the issue.

Boettner denounces that a restoration of the Jews to their Land is part of God's divine program. He claims that the Jews do not belong in the land or anywhere for that matter. Unfortunately Dr. Boettner ignores Bible prophecy and that the Jews are still the recipients of God's Covenants. For some reason this man seems to violate his own teaching of God's Sovereignty and assume that the Jews came back on their own accord. One wonders about this contradiction of the theology he taught. God is indeed sovereign and brought the Jews back just as He said He would. The Reformers did not spend much time in the prophetic portions of Scripture and neither do those today espousing so-called Reformed Theology.

X. The Abrahamic Covenant

The Covenant Amillennialists does not see the Abrahamic Covenant as being distinct or separate from the Church. They simply see it as part of the development of the covenant of grace. Suffice it to say that the Abrahamic Covenant is clearly communicated in Scripture and the covenant of grace is *nowhere* to be found.

It is very difficult to deal with this issue when the Covenant Amillennialists simply has no foundation upon which to rest his thesis. There is no covenant of grace. There is an Abrahamic Covenant. This should be the end of the story but this poorly conceived and communicated theology persist in defiance to our God given logic, reason and actual Scriptural text. This persistence is due to the Covenant Amillennialists placing his theology above his Bible in authoritativeness. He subordinates the Scripture to a theology by finding a covenant that does not exist and elevating its authority. Further in continuation of their idea that the Church exists in the Old Testament they see the Abrahamic Covenant as another epoch of the "institutional church."

As to circumcision within the Abrahamic Covenant, they see it as a "seal of righteousness of faith, a sealing ordinance or a badge of membership." This sounds appropriate except upon closer evaluation they claim that the "membership" ordinance is the Church not the people of Israel. Abraham was the first to be called a Hebrew. This should be clear. But again, in this mindset the theology is superior to the actual biblical text.

Covenant Amillennialists do not consider the Abrahamic Covenant to be unconditional. Allis for example in an attempt to defend his position of non-unconditional admits that his position is not found in the covenant. He looks to Psalm 68:6 as evidence that obedience is the precondition of blessing to all of God's promises. The central issue that Fruchtenbaum makes very concisely is "it is not whether obedience is a precondition to

blessing but, whether God's promises to fulfill the covenants are within themselves conditional."

One frequently sees the Covenant adherents moving away from pertinent sections of scripture under discussion or inventing Scripture to advance their theologies.

Dispensationalism:

In order to understand Dispensationalism one must have a working definition to begin a competent defense.

The term Dispensationalism is a system of theology, which seeks to unfold the absolute truth of Scripture. Several prominent theologians have provided us with concise definitions that can help us in reaching our definition. Theologians such as Arnold Fruchtenbaum, C.I. Scofield, Lewis Sperry Chafer and Charles Ryrie will be quoted. Fruchtenbaum provides us with a definition that closely parallels the Ryrie definition. Therefore one definition will suffice for both men. He says, "Dispensationalism is a system of theology which views the world as a household run by God. In this household-world God is dispensing or administering its affairs according to His own will and in various stage of revelation in the process of time. These various stages mark off the distinguishably different economies in the outworking of His total purpose, and these economies are the dispensations. In this system there are usually, but not always, seven such dispensations."

Scofield simply defined a dispensation as a period of time during which man is tested in respect to his obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God.

Chafer speaks of a dispensation "as a specific divine economy, a commitment from God to man of a responsibility to discharge that which God has appointed him." Therefore, we can conclude with another classic definition from Clarence Mason a former dean of the Philadelphia College of the Bible. He states: "A dispensation is God's distinctive method of governing mankind or a group of men during a period of human history, marked by a crucial event, test, failure and judgment. From the divine standpoint, it is a stewardship, a rule of life, or a responsibility for managing God's affairs in His house. From the historical standpoint it is a stage in the progress of revelation."

Several other characteristics of Dispensationalism are essential for a fundamental understanding of this theological system. First is the method regarding elucidation of Scripture called the consistent literal or plain approach throughout the whole of Scripture. This approach applies the proper rules of grammatical usage of the text with appropriate deference given to the historical and contextual position of the text within the entire Scripture. In short you read Scripture as you would any other piece of literature where the author seeks to communicate with the reader. The second essential characteristic is a

clear distinction between the purposes and promises of Israel and the Church throughout Scripture. Finally this system realizes that God's main purpose in this world is to bring Himself glory.

Therefore, one may define Dispensationalism as: A system of theological interpretation, which seeks to unfold the absolute truth of Scripture. In it the world is viewed as a household over which God dispenses or manages His affairs and man has accountability to respond to God according to the degree of revelation that God has provided during each progressive dispensation. In this system Scripture text is taken literally within appropriate grammatical rules and governance of usage. The promises to Israel and the Church are consistently distinct throughout Scripture and all the while God's glory is paramount.

Recently, scholars in dispensational seminaries have developed variations of Dispensationalism, which need to be addressed. These variations make necessary additional definitions for the now "two categories." With the addition of a second form of Dispensationalism one must define each variety individually. Formerly Dispensationalism proper is now called classical Dispensationalism.

Within the realm of Biblical interpretation the word Dispensationalism means, a Biblical theological interpretive schema that during the various ages of time from creation to the New Jerusalem and eternity future whereby mankind has responsibility to respond to God according to the degree of revelation that He has provided about Himself and His requirements for mankind. That is, mankind has a degree of responsibility to respond to God according to the level of revelation He has given him. This revelation progresses throughout time. Ryrie states that, "Progressive revelation views the Bible not as a textbook on theology but, the continually unfolding revelation of God given by various means throughout the successive ages. In this unfolding there are distinguishable stages of revelation when God introduces new things for which man becomes responsible. These stages are the economies, stewardships, or dispensations in the unfolding of His purpose. Dispensationalism therefore, recognizes the unity of His purpose and the diversity in the unfolding of it."

One very important aspect of the Classical Dispensationalism theological schema is recognition of the element of time. Time and space were created according to Gen 1:1 and man lives in time and space on this planet. The failure to recognize this realism can afford much distress to sound Biblical interpretation. Some interpreters view the bible as "all spiritual." They refer to Jesus' words to Pilate in John 18:36 where He says, "My kingdom is not of this world." According to this verse some think they have hermeneutical license to evaluate each verse in the Bible as being "Spiritual" and not literal. That is, since Christ says His kingdom is not of this world then Biblical interpretation should not have to adhere to the normative rules of recognition of time and space. So they view all scripture as timeless or spiritual and there are no real eras or times to concern themselves with. This "spiritualizing" the text leads to a plethora of private

interpretations and God's communication to us is fractured and confused because the text can mean anything the reader decides it means. Peter warns us about this in 2 Pet 1:20. This leads to the next important aspect of Classic Dispensationalism. That is, the Bible must be interpreted literally.

The literal interpretation of the Bible is the only way God can communicate to mankind and have a common understandable communication medium. God has given us logic and reason for understanding and He is not the author of confusion, 1 Cor 14:33, He wants to convey His message to us. Literally means using the normal contextual and grammatical rules that we would normally adhere to while reading any other form of literature. In this method words are given the same ordinary meaning that they had in the historical time period that they were originally used.

This subject word, Dispensationalism, means the acting out or administering, the concept of managing and the act of dispensing something to someone such as a responsibility to fulfill. The Greek word for dispensing is Oikonomia, from which we get our English work economy, means to manage something, to regulate to administer or plan something out. The central idea of dispensing is to manage the affairs of a household as a steward. Chafer in his epochal work, Systematic Theology, defines a dispensation as, "A specific divine economy, a commitment from God to man of a responsibility to discharge that which God has appointed him." We see God dispensing grace for example with the present dispensation of grace and the responsibility that He has given us to respond to him through belief and walking with Him (Eph 3:2). This is of course a different level of responsibility to God that man has than the period of the dispensation of Mosaic Law. Some such as Scofield refer to this responsibility as a test. So therefore, we can say that man is required to respond to God as a type of test according the revelation He has provided of Himself and his requirements.

For each dispensation there are 7 aspects. Since brevity is the soul of wit they will be simply listed here. 1) Each dispensation has a "Chief Person" 2) Each dispensation has a "Name" 3) Each dispensation has been provided a responsibility to God. 4) Each dispensation has been given a "Test" from God. 5) In each dispensation man has "Failed" the test. 6) For each dispensation God has provided a "judgment". 7) God has provided a measure of "grace" for each dispensation. Further, a new covenant is often the basis for a new dispensation.

Finally we can conclude with another salient aspect of Classical Dispensationalism that requires introduction. That is the distinction between, Israel and the Church. Prior to the incarnation there were two types of people on earth in God's economy, the nation Israel and the gentiles (nations). Since the incarnation there are now three, Israel, the gentiles and the Church (Ecclesia). Through normative reading of the Bible we see that it clearly distinguishing the difference between Israel and the Church. They are separate entities and the Church is not Israel and Israel is not the Church.

Therefore, one may define Classical Dispensationalism as: A system of theological interpretation, which seeks to unfold the absolute truth of Scripture. In it the world is viewed as a household over which God dispenses or manages His affairs and man has accountability to respond to God according to the degree of revelation that God has provided during each progressive dispensation. In this system Scripture text is taken literally within appropriate grammatical rules and governance of usage. The promises to Israel and the Church are consistently distinct throughout Scripture and all the while God's glory is paramount. Finally, in Classical Dispensationalism there are usually seven dispensations. They have at various times had different names. One set of titles is: 1) Innocence 2) Conscience 3) Human Government 4) Promises 5) Law 6) Grace & 7) Kingdom.

The new version of Dispensationalism is called Progressive Dispensationalism. It is difficult to concisely define.

According to the various descriptions its adherents and proponents have provided, little clarity is provided to convey a succinct definition to their readers. They describe a dispensation as a "particular arrangement in which God regulates the way human beings relate to Him". They also describe the dispensations as successive arrangements in the progressive revelation and accomplishment of redemption. One wonders what the difficulty is in clearly defining a system that seems to be attracting adherents in previously dispensational seminaries. Pate asserts that the "Hermeneutical key to Revelation and for that matter the New Testament in general is the "already/not yet" eschatological tension" Pate further describes one aspect of the attraction to Progressive Dispensationalism is the PDer's are "growing weary over sensationalist treatment of prophecy". Perhaps the PDer's will define the movement as: they eschew the clear presentation of prophecy. Perhaps this is one motivation to formulate a different theological schema. Some of the key aspects appear to be: 1) The kingdom of God is the unifying theme of biblical history, 2) There are four dispensations 3) Christ is already on the Davidic throne 4) There is a blurring of the distinction between Israel and the Church 5) The new covenant has already been inaugurated but, the blessings are not realized until the millennium, 6) The hermeneutic moves away from a literal to a "complimentary" 7) The one divine plan of holistic redemption encompasses all people and all areas of human life.

There are several strong concerns that are apparent within Progressive Dispensationalism. 1) Any system of Biblical interpretation that does not hold to a literal, grammatical, historical hermeneutic is in danger of private interpretation. 2) One must be suspect of a system if its adherents and proponents cannot with great clarity describe the system. 3) Finally, any system that seeks to blur the distinction between Israel and the Church must be viewed with suspicion. Israel is the apple of Gods eye and His elect. We have seen the persecution they have suffered through the marginalization of their position with God through other replacement theological systems. It therefore is incumbent on scholars to be suspect of any new theology, which seeks to marginalize the Jew.

Dispensational theology is born out of a "right" reading of the biblical text. It is not a contrived theology wherein the adherents developed the theology and then sought to impress it upon the text to *make* it fit. If this were the case the meaning of the text would of necessity be adjusted to comply with the theology. Since this theology comes from correctly reading the text, we can look to the text to explain the theology.

4. The unifying factor in Dispensational theology is that to God alone is the glory demonstrating the fact that He alone is the sovereign God. (Acts 7:2; Eph 1:17; Ps 24:7-10; Rom 11:36 etc.)
5. The Bible shows that God is glorified with His sovereign dealings with nations (Ezekiel 39:17-21) rulers (Rom 9:17; Dan 4:17; 34-37), Israel (Isa 43:1,7; 46:13; 60:1-3; Jeremiah 13:11), the Church (Eph 3:20-21), and the nonelect (Rom 9:17-18;21),. God is glorified by His sovereign acts of creation (Ps 19:1; Rev 4:11), His sovereign judgments (Isa 2:19; 21; 59:18-19; Ezekiel 39:17-21; Rev 11:13; 19:1-2) and His sovereign act of hiding knowledge from humans. (Proverbs 25:2; Matt 24:36) etc. etc. etc.
6. The successive dispensations glorify God in several ways. They demonstrate that God is the ruler in spite of Satan's attempt to overthrow His rule and man's rebellion against God's rule.
7. God holds man responsible for the different ways He administers His sovereign creation though each successive dispensation.
8. The dispensations show how desperately man needs to submit to God in order for the events of earth to be right. They show the tragedy and disorder that occurs as a result of man's failure to accept God's rule.
9. The dispensations progressively move all human history toward the God intended climax of all civilization and restoration of the eternal order.
10. In the final dispensation of the fullness of times (Eph 1:9-10) God will fully glorify Himself by crushing Satan and Satan's kingdom (Rom 16:20; Rev 20:1-3), restoring His own Kingdom rule on earth with Jesus Christ on the Davidic Throne in Jerusalem (Rev. 11:15; 20:4-6) and reversing the consequences of man's rebellion. (Matt 19:28; Acts 3:19-21)
11. Dispensational theology takes in to account the way the Bible provides distinction in God's actions in ruling His creation in different periods of history. The Bible is chronological starting with creation of time space and matter in Genesis 1 moving to the restoration of the eternal order in Rev 22. Through each of these dispensations God works in different ways with His creation.
12. Dispensational theology clearly shows that the Bible demonstrates that God progressively reveals Himself through the different dispensations.

Premillennialism:

Since dispensationalists and covenant theologians both adhere to Premillennialism both must be defined before defending the theology.

Within the realm of theology this is an eschatological position that states that Jesus Christ returns to the earth to establish His 1,000 year kingdom at the beginning of the kingdom. This interpretation of Scripture comes to us by a literal reading of Revelation 19:11 – 20:4. Namely, Christ returns and He sets up His Kingdom. The term millennium is of Latin origin meaning thousand years. This term is not found in our Bibles but the Greek equivalent appears six times in the 20th chapter of the Revelation. So with the prefix "Pre" the term describes the belief that Jesus Christ returns to the earth and establishes the millennium when He returns to the earth. The believers that hold to this end time's position believe that it is the historic faith of the church and hold to a literal scriptural interpretation. Further, their belief system holds that the literal covenants that God made with Abraham and David are unconditional and have literal fulfillment. In no sense has the church replaced Israel and abrogated or received these covenants in place of Israel. Most premillennialists also believe that the Lord will "Rapture" His church out of the world prior to the Great Tribulation. The final battle of the Tribulation will result in the Second Coming followed by the millennium and then the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel. This view prevailed in the early church until the allegorical method of interpretation of Scripture was developed by Origen (Cir. 210).

There are several differences within the Premillennial system of end times understanding. These mostly pertain to the timing of the rapture. Some view that rapture as occurring prior to the Great Tribulation. Some view the rapture as occurring at the end of the Tribulation. Still others view it as occurring in the middle of the tribulation, with at least two timings during this period. One system even views a partial rapture of only those who are ready for the Lord to return. Those not living spiritual lives will have to go through the tribulation.

Finally, premillennialists all agree that Christ returns prior to the Millennium, Old Testament promises to Israel will then be fulfilled and the covenants God made with David and Abraham will be fulfilled. They also agree that there will be a literal seven-year period called the Great Tribulation, The Time of Jacob's Trouble or "That Day". The fundamental text supporting Premillennialism are chapters 19 and 20 of the Book of Revelation.

Finally, it is important to emphasize the text in Revelation chapters 19 and 20. With a "normal consistent" reading of these two chapters one can only come to a single conclusion regarding the timing of the second coming in relation to the Great Tribulation and the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on earth. The book of Revelation has emphasized the duration of the Great Tribulation as seven years. The Lord Jesus arrives from heaven at the culmination of the Great Tribulation and just prior to the millennium.

Rev 19:11-14 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him [was] called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes [were] as a flame of fire, and on his head [were] many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he [was] clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies [which were] in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

This demonstrates the arrival of Jesus to complete the battle of Armageddon and take control of the earth. From the sixth chapter until this nineteenth chapter we follow the chronology of the Great Tribulation. It concludes with Jesus' arrival. The next stage in the chronology of all world events is the establishment of the long awaited Kingdom. Chapter twenty tells us of the duration of the Kingdom. In fact it clearly states the duration six times. It is a thousand years. Some theological constructs, which are not based upon normal word usage and traditional grammar, see some period other than a thousand years. This writer sees a thousand years as written. He is not in possession of enough imagination to devise alternate meanings for the word thousand. A thousand seems to be a thousand here and there is no compelling reason to change the normal meaning of this word for these six instances. We know much about the character and nature of the Kingdom for the Old Testament. We learn here in Revelation chapter 20 its duration.

Covenant Premillennialism

Largely, the adherents of this position believe that Christ will return after a long period of time. Since they hold to a symbolic interpretation of Scripture in many areas they treat the one thousand year period known as the Millennium as symbolic too. They think that the entire age since the beginning of the world is the Millennium and that gradually during this period of all ages on the planet where the will of God is done in the hearts of born again believers. They think that the kingdom is spiritual and that entrance to is by being born again. This kingdom is a state of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

They make no distinction between the kingdom of heaven, kingdom of Christ, and the body of Christ. There is a general blurring of spiritual (eternal) activities and those taking place in time and space. The kingdom of God has been in existence since the beginning of the world, is extended by preaching the Gospel and will continue until the entire has been for the most part Christianized.

There will be mixed growth characterized by, great crisis, and a long period with great continuity. At the end of this long kingdom there will be the Great Tribulation, which will be followed by a general resurrection. Finally the earth and heaven will be dissolved by fire, leading to a new heaven and earth, which will have no evil.

Biblical Interpretation:

Some final words must be said on the methodology one utilizes when reading the Biblical text since various methodologies employed have produced different outcomes. One should read the Bible, as one would approach any other piece of written literature.

While reading the reader should employ the same normal word meaning that is used in other forms of written material unless the context demands a different meaning. It is also mandatory to consistently apply normal grammatical usages to the text. In other words the reader is not to create word meanings or develop independent grammatical techniques to provide personal meaning to the Biblical passage under observation. The net result will be someone else speaking instead of God.

The International Inductive Study Bible teaches some aspects of this method with the following excerpted text:

Although the Bible is to be interpreted literally, it is important to remember that, as with other writings, it contains figures of speech, which must be interpreted for what they are and in the light of their intended purpose. As you seek to handle the Word of God accurately, you will find it helpful to understand the definitions of the different types of figures of speech.

A *figure of speech* is a word, phrase, or an expression used in an imaginative rather than a literal sense.

Discerning the use of figures of speech is important in biblical interpretation. For example, there has been much controversy in the church over Jesus' statement regarding the bread at the Last Supper: "When He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you" (Luke 22:19). Some believe that the bread actually becomes His body (the doctrine of transubstantiation); others believe that Jesus was simply using a metaphor and that the bread is representative of His body.

Three principles for dealing with figurative language are:

- Identify the fact that the author is using figurative language.
- Identify the type of figurative language in use: simile, metaphor, hyperbole, and so on.
- Follow guidelines for interpreting what the author meant by his use of that particular figure of speech

You will be aided in your study of Scripture if you are able to identify when the author is using a figure of speech. The following are brief definitions of the types of figurative language used in the Bible.

A *metaphor* is an implied comparison between two things, which are different. In a metaphor the words of comparison-*like, as, as....so is, and such as*-are *not* used. An example is John 6:48, where Jesus says, "I am the bread of life."

A *simile* is an expressed comparison of two different things or ideas that uses the words *like, as, as....so is, and /or such as*. An example is Revelation 1:14b, "His eyes were like a flame of fire."

Hyperbole is a deliberate exaggeration for effect or emphasis. Hyperboles are found in all languages, and they are frequently used among Semitic peoples. For example, "My soul is crushed with longing" (Psalm 119:20).

Metonymy is used when the name of one object or concept is used for that of another to which it is related. This is a figure of association. An example of metonymy is found in the statement, "All the country of Judea was going out to Him." The metonymy is country, which refers to the people rather than the region itself. Note also the hyperbole, *all* the country.

Synecdoche is another figure of association where the whole can refer to the part or the part to the whole. This is often found in the use of the term the law, which can refer to the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament), the Ten Commandments, or the whole Old Testament.

A synecdoche can also be a singular for a plural or a plural for a singular. An example is in Jeremiah 25:29. God says He is going to summon "a sword against all the inhabitants of the earth." The singular sword represents many swords.

h In *personification* and object is given characteristics of attributes that belong to people- for example, when the trees clap their hands and the mountains sing for joy (Isaiah 55:12).

h *Irony* is a statement which says the opposite of what is meant. Irony is used for emphasis or effect. When it is not easy to discern if a statement is ironic, then examine it first as a true statement. As such does it make sense in its context? Second, examine it as a figurative irony. If this makes sense and fits with the context, then accept it as irony. Otherwise, treat it as a truth.

The Study Bible goes on to add various other grammatical elements and explain them. Items such as parables, allegory, types, and symbols. Other techniques of composition need to be understood in order to elucidate the Scriptures. What follows is a list of these and their description.

A literary composition is an arrangement of thoughts, which conveys meaning to a reader. An understanding of the laws of composition can help you discern what the author is saying.

The following laws of composition can help in the study of the Word of God.

1. **Comparison** – to compare in order to show similarities. A comparison is the association of like things.
2. **Contrast** – to compare in order to show differences. A contrast is the association of opposites.
3. **Repetition** – to use the same word or phrase a number of times.
4. **Progression** – to extend a specific theme throughout a portion of Scripture. Many times the author will amplify what he is saying as he progresses in his writing or adds to what he has said.
5. **Climax** – a high point built by a progression from the lesser to the greater. A climax is simply an extension of the law of progression until it reaches a peak of intensity.
6. **Pivotal Point** – a changing or a turning so that the elements on each side of the point differ in some way, In the Gospel of John the pivotal point comes in 11:54, when Jesus turns from ministering mainly to the public to ministering to His disciples. (Read John 11:54). In Genesis the pivotal point of the book comes in chapter 12, where Moses turns from recording major events to tell us of major characters.
7. **Radiation** – the central or single point from on to which other truths point. An illustration of this is 1 Corinthians 15, where the truths of that chapter radiate to resurrection.
8. **Interchange** – to alternate, in sequence, at least two main thoughts, subjects, or characteristics. This is most apparent in the Gospel of Luke. Luke opens with the announcement of the birth of John the Baptist, and then moves to the announcement of Jesus' birth. He then returns to John the Baptist's birth, then to the birth of Christ. This is interchange.
9. **General to particular (or vice versa)** - to move from the extensive or general to the specific or particular. This is beautifully seen in Genesis 1 and 2. Genesis 1 gives the general overview of creation, including the creation of man, male and female, on the sixth day. Genesis 2 moves from the general to the particular, giving more details of the

creation of woman.

10. **Cause and effect (or vice versa)** – to move from the source to the consequence of it. An example of this is found in John 11. Verse 4 states that the cause of the death of Lazarus, the beloved friend of Christ, was to glorify the Son. The effect is seen in verse 45, where the people believed on Christ after seeing His power in raising Lazarus. The effect is also seen in John 12:17, 18, where once again the Son is glorified.

11. **Explanation or analysis** – the presentation of an idea or event followed by its explanation. This is expertly done by our Lord in John 6, where He multiplies the loaves and the fishes and then brings forth His discourse stating that He is the bread who gives us life.

12. **Interrogation** – the presentation of a question, usually followed by its answer. Paul masterfully uses this technique in writing Romans. Paul anticipates his readers' questions or objections, states them usually in the form of a question, and then proceeds to answer the very questions he has raised. Romans 6 beautifully demonstrates this technique.

13. **Preparation of introduction** – the presentation of background information to prepare the reader for that which follows. The purpose of the Gospel of John is to prepare the reader to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. In John 1:1-18 the writer thoroughly introduces his subject and prepares his readers for what is to come.

14. **Summarization** – to restate the main points, to sum up, or to briefly restate particular truths. Moses does this in chapters 1 to 4 of the book of Deuteronomy as he rehearses before the children of Israel those things that took place following the exodus from Egypt. Acts 7 provides a masterful summarization by Stephen of Israel's history.

Finally, it is imperative to adhere to the issue of verbs.

Tense

(Shows the Kind of Action)

Greek verb tenses differ from English verb tenses in that the kind of action portrayed is the most significant element, and time is a relatively minor consideration.

Action as continuous

Present tense-continuous action. It is primarily progressive or linear; it shows action that is continuing.

Examples:

Jeff *is studying* the Bible

John 15:4b—"As the branch *cannot* bear fruit of itself, unless it *abides* in the vine, so neither can you, unless you *abide* in Me."

John 15:6—"If anyone *does not abide* in Me."

Imperfect tense—continuous action, usually in the past

Examples:

Jeff *was* studying the Bible.

John 15:19a—"If you were of the world, the world *would love* its own," (Literally, "would have been loving" its own.)

Action as completed

Perfect tense—punctiliar action in the past with results continuing into the present.

Examples:

Jeff is being transformed by *having studied* the Bible

John 15:3—"you are already clean because of the word which I *have spoken* to you."

John 15:10b—"Just as I *have kept* My Father's commandments, and abide in His love."

Pluperfect tense—punctiliar action in the past with the results continuing in the past

Examples:

Jeff was transformed because he *had studied* the Bible.

John 9:22—"For the Jews *had* already *agreed*."

Action as occurring

Aorist tense—punctiliar action. The aorist tense states an action as completed without regard to its duration; that is, it denotes the fact of an action without any reference to the length of that action. Compared to the present tense, the aorist tense expresses the action like a snapshot while the present tense action is like a moving picture, continuing on.

Examples:

Jeff *studied* the Bible.

John 15:4a—"Abide in Me, and I in you."

Future tense—indefinite action to occur in the future. Indicates continuing or punctiliar action in the future. This is the only tense that reflects the time of the action.

Examples:

Jeff *will be studying* his Bible

John 15:7—"It *shall be done* for you."

John 15:8—"So prove to *be* my disciples."

Voice

(Shows How the Subject Is Related to the Action)

Active voice—indicates that the subject produces the action.

Examples:

Jeff *hit* the ball

John 15:2b—"And every branch that bears fruit, He *prunes* it."

Passive voice—indicates that the subject is acted upon.

Examples:

Jeff *was hit* by the ball.

John 15:6—"And they *are burned*."

Middle voice—indicates that the subject initiates the action and also participates in the results of the action. (This voice is unique to Greek construction.)

Examples:

Jeff *hit* himself with the ball

John 15:26—"That is the Spirit of truth, who *proceeds* from the Father; He will bear witness of Me."

One note of interest when looking up a verb in a Greek study tool: The middle and passive voices will have identical forms, but the context will show you if the subject is receiving the action (passive voice) or if the subject initiated the action and participated in it (middle voice). Also, some verbs are deponent verbs. This means that their form in a Greek study tool may be listed as a passive or middle voice verb but their function or action is active. Usually your Greek study helps will list these as deponent verbs.

Mood

(Shows How the Action Is Related to Reality from the Speakers Point of View)

Indicative mood—the declarative mood or mood of certainty. It is a statement of fact, which assumes reality from the speaker's point of view. This mood simple states a thing as being a fact.

Examples:

Bible study *has changed* Jeff's life.

John 15:6—"He *is thrown* away as a branch and *dries* up; and they *gather* them, and *cast* them into the fire, and they *are burned*."

Imperative mood—usually a command or entreaty. It is the mood of volition or will. The imperative mood in the Greek makes a demand on the will of the reader to obey the command; it is used to indicate prohibition and authority.

Examples;

Jeff, *study* your homework.

John 15:4—"Abide in Me."

John 15:7—"Ask whatever you wish."

John 15:9—"Abide in My love."

John 15:20—"Remember the word that I said to you."

One aspect which will help your study of God's Word is the understanding of the combination of the present tense and the imperative mood that is stating a negative command (a prohibition). The *present imperative prohibition* demands cessation of some act already in progress.

Example:

John 20:17—"Jesus said to her, "*Stop clinging* to Me." In other words, Mary was already clinging to Jesus, and Jesus was telling her to stop clinging and to go on refusing to cling to Him.

Subjunctive mood—the mood of probability. It implies some doubt regarding the reality of the action from the speaker's point of view. It expresses and uncertainty or an action which may or should happen. This is the mood used for conditional clauses, strong suggestions, or "polite" commands.

Examples:

Jeff *may have done* his homework. Jeff, if you do not do your homework, you cannot participate in the class discussion

John 15:2—"That it *may bear* more fruit."

John 15:4b—"As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it *abides* in the vine, so neither can you, unless you *abide* in Me."

John 15:6—"If anyone *does not abide* in Me."

John 15:7—"If you *abide* in Me and My words *abide* in you."

Something else, which may help you in your study of God's Word, is an understanding of the combination of the aorist tense and the subjective mood that is stating a negative command (a prohibition). The *aorist subjunctive prohibition* is a warning or an exhortation against doing a thing not yet begun.

Example:

John 13:8a—"Peter said to Him, "*Never shall* You wash my feet!" In other words, Peter was telling Jesus that He was not to wash his feet and Jesus was not even to start washing his feet.

Optative mood—the mood of possibility.

This mood presents no definite anticipation of realization but merely presents the action as conceivable from the speaker's point of view. (Used less frequently than the other moods)

Examples:

I *wish* my neighbor, Jeff, would take the Bible Studies.

2 Thessalonians 3:5—"And may the Lord *direct* your hearts."

Clearly there is a way to understand any literature and the Bible particularly. It is through normative word and grammar usage. Any other way will produce results that the author did not intend. God has spoken and it is up to us to listen. This proper reading of the Bible is the *hallmark* of Dispensationalism.

Abraham:

Approximately 4500 years ago God initiated a covenant with mankind. In Genesis 12 we

find God calling one man, Abram (whose name was changed later to Abraham), to relocate with his family from his home of Ur, in Mesopotamia (between the rivers) and to go to a land that He would show him. In Abraham's day, [Ur](#) was a wealthy advanced city in Mesopotamia, with a complex system of government and a well-developed system of commerce. It had trade routes that joined Ur with other great towns to the north and the south. Ur is modern day Tell al-Muqayyar, which is located in southern Iraq, about 220 miles southeast of Baghdad, halfway to the Persian Gulf. The ruins of Ur were discovered and first excavated in 1854-55 by British consul J.E. Taylor. British archaeologist Sir Leonard Woolley directed extensive excavations at Ur from 1922 to 1934 for the University of Pennsylvania and the British Museum. He found that writing was in common use (e.g., issuing of receipts, and making contracts). Schools were found to have trained people for religious, commercial, and governmental work. The curriculum included mathematics, language, geography, botany, and drawing. The city had streets, a drain system, two-story houses, a great ziggurat (which is a temple tower), and other evidences which support the thesis that this was a highly developed civilization.

Abraham was an idol-worshipping gentile in Babylon (Joshua 24:2) when God called him to become the founder of the Jewish nation. He was called Abram (which means father is exalted) until God changed his name to Abraham (father of a great nation). He married his sister Sarai (My princess) who became Sarah (Princess). This change was in accord for God's plan for her, namely that she would become *Nations*. Abraham comprised the truth on several occasions to protect himself. Some say he might have been the wealthiest man on the earth at that time. He was able to muster an army for the Battle of the Kings of 318 men from his own household (Gen 14:14). (Cir. 2500 B.C.)

Abrahamic Covenant

God has made some irrevocable, unilateral commitments - formal covenants or promises - and one of His most essential characteristics is that He delights in making and keeping His promises. Most churches do not realize the seriousness of these covenants as well as God's love for the Jews. The Bible records six occasions on which God appeared to Abraham to make, restate, or enhance the promises (Genesis 12:1-3, 7; 3:14-18; 15:4, 5, 13-18; 17:1-8; 18:17-19; 22:15-18).

The provisions of this covenant, which ultimately would result in bringing blessing to all the families of the earth (Genesis 12:3), were extended to Abraham's descendants after him. In a group of predictions found in Genesis 12-28, God clearly defined the chosen line through which Messianic blessing would come into the world: Abraham, Isaac (son of Abraham and Sarah), and Jacob (Isaac and Rebekah's son). Toward the end of the Patriarchal period Jacob (whose name was changed by God to "Israel") singled out Judah while granting blessings, as the chosen one among his twelve sons. Judah's line would produce the Messiah symbolized by receiving the scepter (symbol of rulership) as stated in Genesis 49:10.

In the culture of that day, if the contract being made was a conditional covenant, there were certain actions that the parties to the agreement would do in order to certify the agreement. In a situation where a conditional covenant was being made, both parties making the contract would walk together between cut pieces of an animal (e.g., Jeremiah 34:18-19). This action meant that both parties to the agreement would carry out the terms of the covenant. If one party became guilty of violating any single term of the covenant, it would free the other party from the necessity of fulfilling his own promises contained in the covenant. Similar actions are found in modern contract law. If one party violates their promises to the other party, the offended party is free from keeping the terms of the contract.

But in Genesis 15, Abraham and God did not walk together between the pieces of the animals. God put Abraham in a deep sleep and only God - in the form of a smoking oven and a flaming torch (Genesis 15:17) - walked between the pieces of the animals. This meant that the fulfillment of the covenant was based purely upon God's grace (unconditional), in spite of how often Abraham or his descendants would fail to keep their side of the agreement. Abraham could not be a participant in the covenant, but could only be a recipient of the covenant. This covenant was *entirely* one-sided.

Abraham was a Gentile when this covenant was first made. It first occurs in Genesis Chapter 12, and includes fourteen aspects.

1. A **great nation** was to come out of Abraham, namely, the nation of Israel (Genesis 12:2; 13:16; 15:5; 17:1-2, 7; 22:17b)
 - a.
2. Abraham was promised **a land** -- specifically, the Land of Canaan (Genesis 12:1, 7; 13:14-15, 17; 15:17-21; 17:8). Later in Scripture God explains that the privilege of Abraham's descendants, the Jewish people, for living in their land under God's blessing is conditioned upon their obedience (see, for example, Deuteronomy 28-29). Regardless of whether the Jews are in or out of the land they still hold title to it by divine right.
3. Abraham himself was to be **greatly blessed** (12:2b; 15:6; 22:15-17a)
4. Abraham's **name would be great** (12:2c)
 - i.
5. Abraham will be **a blessing to others** (12:2d)
 - i.

6. **Those who bless will be blessed** (12:3a)
7. **The one who curses will be cursed** (12:3b) -- again and again this principle is operative in the prophets as they pronounce judgment on the nations surrounding Israel for the treatment of His chosen people.
 - i.
8. In Abraham **all the earth will ultimately be blessed**, a promise of Gentile blessing (12:3c; 22:18)
 - i.
9. Abraham would receive **a son** through his wife Sarah (15:1-4; 17:16-21)
10. His descendants would undergo the **Egyptian bondage** (15:13-14)
 - i.
11. **Other nations** as well as Israel would come forth from Abraham (17:3-4, 6; the Arab states are some of these nations)
 - i.
12. His **name** was to be **changed** from Abram to Abraham (17:5)
13. **Sarai's name** was to be **changed** to Sarah (17:15)
14. There was to be a token/sign of the covenant -- **circumcision** (17:9-14).

From these fourteen promises flows God's entire plan for all of mankind. All other covenants build on this one. Items 6 & 7 are the basis for the "Sheep and Goat Judgment" of the nations in Matthew 25:31-46, which closes the "times of the Gentiles." God foreknew Satan's anti-Jewish efforts. All history is patterned and destined after this reality (cf. Zech 2:8). This also gives us a primary inference that the Church will not be in the Tribulation, as this judgment emphasizes the distinction between Jew and Gentile.

Christ alludes to item 8 when He was talking with the woman at the well in Samaria, when He declared, "Salvation is of the Jews." There is no other such promise to any other people!

The Covenant was confirmed to the next two generations of Abraham.

Gen 17:19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, [and] with his seed after him.

Gen 17:21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee

at this set time in the next year.

Gen 26:2-4 And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;

It was given to Jacob (Israel) and his descendants not Essau Genesis 28:13-15

Gen 28:12-15 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. 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; 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 thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I [am] with thee, and will keep thee in all [places] whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done [that] which I have spoken to thee of.

The Covenant is Eternal

God made universal promises, which would affect all peoples of the world. God vowed that all families of the earth would be blessed through Abraham's physical line of descent (Genesis 12:3; 22:18; 28:14). This great spiritual blessing has been made available to all peoples through Jesus Christ and the Jews.

Jesus' statements in Matthew 25:31-46 (especially verses 40 and 45) indicate that, when God promised to bless those who blessed Abraham and to curse those who cursed him, He intended this to be applicable, not only to Abraham, but also to Israel. In other words, God's blessing or cursing of the peoples of the world would be determined to a large extent by their blessing or cursing of Israel. Jesus' statements in Matthew 25 promise blessing to saved Gentiles (sheep) who will aid persecuted Jews of the future Tribulation period and judgment to unsaved Gentiles (goats) who will not aid them.

The Land Allocation of the Abrahamic Covenant

The Land Covenant promised that Israel would become the prime nation of the world if

the Jews were obedient to God (Deuteronomy 28:1,13). But the covenant warned that many curses would befall the people if they were disobedient (Deuteronomy 28:15-37), including exile from the land (Deuteronomy 28:38-57). The covenant warned further that if exile did not restore the Jews to obedience, they would suffer worldwide dispersion and persecution (Deuteronomy 28:58-68). But nowhere are they told that their disobedience would lead to a loss of their *title* to the land.

In fact, the Land Covenant ends in chapter 30 with a prophecy and a promise that a day will come - after the Jews have experienced the curses of the covenant - when the Lord will restore them to their land once again:

Deuteronomy 30:3-5 That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. If [any] of thine be driven out unto the outmost [parts] of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.

For almost 1900 years the Jews wandered among the nations and suffered severe persecution, just as prophesied in Deuteronomy 28. During that time, their land became desolate as prophesied in Deuteronomy 29. But in the 20th century, God has regathered them from the four corners of the earth, re-established them in their land, and reclaimed their land from wilderness to milk and honey — as prophesied in Deuteronomy 30.

The only prophecy left to be fulfilled in the Land Covenant is the spiritual salvation of the gathered remnant (Deuteronomy 30:6-8). That will occur soon when they repent and accept Jesus as their Messiah.

The Abrahamic and Land Covenants make it clear that the Jewish people have both the right to the land of Israel and the right to be back in it today.

The Blessings and Cursings:

The blessings have been confirmed many times in Scripture including Balaam's observation of God's relationship to Israel.

Numbers 24:9 He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed [is] he that blesseth thee, and cursed [is] he that curseth thee.

From secular history we have many examples of the blessings and cursings of which God

spoke. Spain was one of the world's mightiest powers and most developed cultures in the 15th century. In 1492 it reached its highest point of accomplishment when it sent Christopher Columbus on a voyage to discover the Americas. But the same year, it also expelled all its Jews and intensified the Spanish Inquisition against the Jews and forced them to convert to Catholicism. Spain then descended into a 500-year status as a non-entity.

Germany and Austria were the cultural and intellectual centers of Europe before World War I. Then Germany (with Austrians' help) murdered nearly every Jew in Europe. Germany lost over seven million people, was divided for a generation, and while it now thrives materially, culturally Germany has become irrelevant.

It is interesting to note that After Germany killed the Jews, they were divided up by the allies and Berlin was divided further. Any German attempting to climb over the Berlin wall was killed. Within a few years after the last Nazi, Rulolph Hess, died in Spandau Prison the Berlin wall was removed. Is this a Coincidence?

When one examines the nations in today's world it is apparent who blesses the Jews and who curses them. Do this then consider the promises of God in the Abrahamic Covenant.

It is interesting to consider the contributions to society of both the Jews and the Arabs. There have been 43 Jewish Nobel Laureates in Physics, 48 in Biomedical, 19 in Economics, 26 in Chemistry and 11 in Literature. These are just the Nobel Prize winners. This does not count the many significant contributions the Jews have made to the world in business and science that don't get Nobel recognition.

The United States of America has blessed the Jews beyond what any other country has done and does so almost alone. It provides much support to the Jewish state against those who wish to exterminate it. By almost any reckoning, America has been, and remains, the most blessed of countries.

And it is the Arab world that curses the Jews. It rivals Nazi Germany for the universality and intensity to its hatred toward the Jews. When considering these concepts it is interesting to then look at the extent of world Arab accomplishments. According to Arab scholars appointed by the United Nations to report on the state of Arab society, they lag behind the rest of humanity, including in most instances sub-Saharan Africa, in virtually every social, moral and intellectual indicator. And there is no question but that its half-century long preoccupation with destroying Israel has only increased the Arab world's problems. Their chief accomplishments are what: suicide bombing and terrorism?

It is God alone who actively blesses those who bless the Jews and curses those who curse them. The evidence historically and at this very moment demonstrates that there is indeed a real connection between the state of a society and its treatment of the Jews.

Most, if not all, of the nations in the West, are under God's judgment. Judgment comes as a result of a nation's relationship with Israel. One can trace the rise of Great Britain from Jewish toleration in the late 1500's through Lord Balfour's declaration to the fall of the great British Empire when Winston Churchill divided modern day Jordan from the Palestinian mandate that was supposed to be given to the Jewish people. After World War II the Great British Commonwealth of which it was said; "The Sun never sets on The British Empire," disaggregated quickly when it refused to allow the Jews to come home to Israel.

One can trace the events of America's fall from 1956 when President Eisenhower forced Israel out of the Sinai. Soon after that, prayer and eventually also the Bible were taken out of schools. In his autobiography, Eisenhower recognized that this was the worst mistake he ever made in office. You can probably trace the downfall of any nation from when it touched the apple of God's eye, because God is in the process of restoring Israel, not just for the Jews' sake, but also for His glory.

One hundred years ago, 1 million Jews fled from Tsarist Russia to the United States after a wave of pogrom atrocities. Russia's loss was the United States' gain. The Russian Empire had violently collapsed in just a decade and the United States, which entered the 20th century as a third-rate power, emerged from it as the world's unchallenged superpower.

When we consider the fate of all once-powerful enemies of the Jewish people: the Pharaohs of Egypt, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the Inquisitor Spain, the Russian Tsarist Empire, the Nazi Reich we see that they all suffered a brutal end.

In the Abrahamic covenant God said He would curse those who curse the Jewish people and world history seems to confirm it. Not one nation that persecuted Jews had escaped very bad consequences. This law has no exception for the Arabs or any other Muslims.

The Muslims will also be judged through their individual nations according to Scripture. (Isa 13-27)

2 Sam 7:21-24 NKJV For Your word's sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all these great things, to make Your servant know them. 22 Therefore You are great, O Lord God. For there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears. 23 And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a name-and to do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land-before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods? 24 For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people

forever; and You, Lord, have become their God.

One must ask the following questions:

- Why are 1.2 billion Muslims obsessed with the idea of "erasing this small group of Jews from the face of the earth" syndrome?
- Why is David Duke's website and virtually all of his writings about the Jews?
- Why is the KKK obsessed with Jewish thoughts?
- Why is the former Malaysian prime minister virtually addicted to blaming Jews, in a country that is Judenrein (the term "Judenrein" was used by the Nazis to designate areas that had been 'cleansed' of Jews) and where 95% of Malaysians never even saw a real live Jew?
- Secular society seems to have an obsession with seeing everything from politics to business to deciding on the next war to the reason that the Arab/Muslim world has failed to produce significant world achievements as the fault of the Jews. Within the past 60 years, this has spread from Nazi Germany to The Middle East into Europe to most recently, college campuses and other leftist organizations worldwide.
- The ultimate question is, "Why haven't anti-Jewish people become obsessed with other competing religions which are much larger and more direct competition?"

The answer is simply the text from the Bible. It is God's promises to Abraham and the Jews. He will bless those who bless the Jews and curse those who curse the Jews. The world is no longer interested in hearing the message of God from His Word. This is the Laodicean, lukewarm, apostasy generation of these last days.

The real cause of Islamic Fundamentalist terrorism is that its adherents have major doubts about the validity of their own religion. That is why there is so much hatred toward Jews and Christians coming from Imams and Ayatollahs in mosques. They see a system of Christianity in America for which God blessed a great country with everything, including incredible power, strength and influence. Even worse, they see a system in their own back yard, The Middle East, where a country with no natural resources and just a few million Jews has surpassed every single Arab and Muslim nation in any measurable achievement. Here is God acting in our world and they are not receiving their fair share.

Religious figures in the Islamic world cannot announce to followers, "Look at the success of Islam in our world. Pray to Allah for thanks." Instead, they say that, "Judaism and Christianity have stolen our successes. So let's destroy the infidels." When one is looking for a Scapegoat, any old Jew will do.....

With over 50% of UN General Assembly resolutions condemning Israel, not North Korea, Syria, Cuba, Iran, Libya or Iraq, one cannot say that this is simply blame Israel for all these crimes. When people hate or feel threatened about a belief system, it can only mean one thing. It threatens their own system and in all likelihood, renders it somewhat invalid.

The idea of Jewish "Election" has always been looked upon as arrogant and conceited by the biblically ignorant. The truth is that America has taken on the role of sharing "Election" from God with the Jews. It is no wonder there are protests in Great Britain today. No wonder President Bush's effigy has been burned in almost every Arab and Muslim country. No wonder a large part of Europe has criticized America for bringing down another evil dictator, Saddam Hussein.

What Does This Mean To Us?

The day of Israel's full restoration is near. Messiah will make it possible and we shall all live in peace. Until He comes, we, who believe the Bible to be God's Word and that every promise of God will come to pass, must stand and support Israel's right to its land. It is a Divine right. We should be patient with those who do not believe the Bible, and do not accept Israel's right to the land. Yet, with love for all, we must strongly support Israel's right. We cannot do otherwise and have clear consciences. We cannot say on the one hand that we believe there is a God Who has revealed His perfect will in His Holy Scriptures, and on the other hand, deny Israel its right to the land God promised to her.

We cannot be like the many so-called Christian denominations that have taught "Replacement Theology" and joined the world in its war against the Jews.

Rom 11:25-28 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: this [is] my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, [they are] enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, [they are] beloved for the fathers' sakes.

Our commitment to Israel was penned by the Psalmist so long ago in ;

Psalm 102:13 Thou shalt arise, [and] have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come. This is that day.

Again the Psalmist exhorts us:

Psalm 122:6-9 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, [and] prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace [be] within thee. Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good.