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APPENDIX - A: EPISTEMOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Each of us has a filter through which we understand life, or as it relates to this discussion - theology. That filter is a framework of accepted ideas (presuppositions) that serves as an organizer, an interpretive grid. It is automatically superimposed upon whatever we are looking at, whether current events or the scriptures. Most people interpret through this filter unconsciously, that is, they are either unaware that they have one or they are unclear as to what suppositions they are beginning with and depending upon. It is only those people who are aware of their reliance upon the filter and the particular suppositions which form it that are capable of thinking outside the box. Such people may even be able to approach real objectivity.

The framework forms and changes within us as we go through life. Some people catch it from the surrounding consensus, whether secular or religious, as one catches measles. Others are deliberate in its formation. Everyone develops one as a matter of course and not all frameworks are internally consistent (logically coherent). Of course major changes occur when one becomes a Christian and continue changing as he matures. The power of the grid over our approach to understanding is to color the way we think about things. It is as controlling as colored glasses are to determining what the wearer sees. It holds us to the degree we have loved seeing through it. In other words the more we indulge our imaginations through it (enjoy looking at things that way) or believe that our understanding is right, the more we are committed to it and bound by it.

2. Following upon this notion of a filter which predisposes our viewpoint and determines how we take a given passage, is the fact that **each of us believes he is correct** (also honest and objective) in what he has come to believe. In other words, **no one thinks the things he believes are untrue**.

3. Following upon the fact that each of us believes he is correct in the way he understands Scripture is **the necessity of regarding opposing views as inconsistent**. Internal consistency and antithesis (rationality) demand this. [It is helpful and encouraging to note that probably all of us have radically changed our frameworks, especially since we have come to God through faith in Christ. I expect that everyone has changed his mind in a theological way as he has progressed in life as a Christian. It means we have identified some things that are not as cut and dried as we once thought.]

4. During his journey through life, **one may become sensitized to particular issues** [ie, A Return to Modesty by Wendy Shalit], either rightly or wrongly. He becomes able to see them and pick them out of the general ebb and flow of occurrences or ideas. It is as if that portion of his filter grid becomes a magnifying lens. Often this produces a strong desire/motivation to do something about it depending upon what it is. Others not sensitized to the same things are unaware or at least unmoved by their expression. It doesn't appear as relevant or important to them.

APPENDIX - B: THE COSMIC VIEW OF MANKIND'S REBELLION AND REDEMPTION: a theological overview within which the events of history are couched.

PART 1: When Adam sinned, a rift developed and spread through every part of mans world.

The separation between man and God resulted in a separation of man from himself (psychological disorders). In other words, when the very purpose for mans existence (to love and commune with God) was smashed, the psychosis of that separation from God carried into mans own personality. **The separation divided man from man** (sociological disintegration, sexual and marital problems) **and man from nature** (cruelty, disease and environmental crises). The whole being of man is torn apart. As he is cut off from God he loses the source of life, and all of creation with him (**Rom.8:19-23**). Everything is contaminated and corrupted by sin. The creation is divided, broken, falling apart, dying, and moving in the direction total dissolution. [see **GENESIS IN SPACE AND TIME** by Francis Schaeffer, **ch.4-5**] The death and resurrection of Christ is the pivotal point (**Eph.1:19-21**).

PART 2: When a person turns to God through Christ, healing begins in all the other relationships as well. Finally, in heaven, the healing will be complete, though there is the real possibility for substantial healing now, in this life. God's redemption spreads new life that will finally engulf the universe as everything remaining is cleansed (dedicated to God) and restored. **The direction of these changes is toward reunion and union, the great reconstitution and reconstruction of all things** (**Eph.1:10, 22-23; Col.1:20**). In other words, the final outcome is that all people who are Gods will stand together as brothers, one people under God. There will be no ethnic, national, linguistic or cultural divisions. The law has been fulfilled and taken out of the way. All the types and figures that pointed to Christ have been realized in Him. Christ will be all and in all (**Col.3:11**).

APPENDIX - C: THE FORCE AND FLOW OF THE PASSAGE

Fundamentalists believe in literal, plenary inspiration of Scripture. I too believe this, but I understand it differently than I used to. The things written in the Bible have a force that flows beyond their literal

translation. One doesn't need expertise in the original languages to see this. In the parable of the wicked tenants (**Mt.21:33-43**), Jesus asks the chief priests and elders of the Jewish people, *What will the owner of the vineyard do to those wicked vine dressers when he comes?* (**v.40**) The force of this question here is more than merely the translation of the words, grammar and syntax. The question comes in the flow of events leading to the moment. **These leaders have not approached Jesus in a forthright manner or with honest questions.** Their intentions were to discredit Jesus. They were not seeing what He was doing or hearing what He was saying.

The Bible often requires us to fill in the obvious words to complete the thought and clarify its meaning. The force of what Jesus is asking is *What will the owner be justified in doing? What do these vine dressers deserve? What does the owner have every right to do to these men?* [These words aren't there, spelled out in so many letters, but the force of what Jesus is saying is being carried by the flow of occurrences in the passage.] **Jesus has brought them to the place where they inadvertently render moral judgment upon themselves.** They understood the question, and answered, *He will destroy them and rightly so, for they deserve nothing less.* (**v.41**) [They didn't exactly say this either, but they did mean it this way.] It is parallel to the approach Nathan the prophet used when confronting King David with his sins of adultery and murder (**2 Sam.12**).

*Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart [each one was personally convicted by the Gospel message, **v.36**], and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brothers, what shall we do?* ³⁸*And Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized * every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (as in **Acts 2:38-40**).* ³⁹*For the promise is for [applies to, belongs to] (1) you [unconverted but convicted sinners who repent and believe] and for (2) your children [if they repent and believe] and for (3) all who are far off [Gentiles, if they also repent and believe the same gospel], everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself [the whole class of people who repent and believe].* ⁴⁰*And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. So those who received his word [ie, believed] were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*

The **you** in the phrase *the promise is for you* (**v.39**) are unbelievers asking what they must do to be **saved**. In the very next verse (**v.40**) Peter exhorted these unsaved people, *save yourselves from this crooked generation.* [Cf. **Rom.10:13** where Paul also quotes **Joel 2:32** and shows that the promise spoken of in Joel and quoted by Peter is the promise of salvation through the Gospel to all unbelievers whether they are Gentiles or Jews.] Peter understood the gospel promise of *whoever* in Joel to include everyone and labors the point by naming three distinct groups. The Jews (to whom he was speaking) would not have thought of their children as a separate category from themselves, and would not have thought to include Gentiles at all. [see **Exposition of Acts 2:39**]

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* **Baptism is deemphasized** here because it is understood as a formal public expression of the inner change involved in repenting and believing in Christ. **Joel** uses the imagery of judgment (**2:30-31**) at *the coming of the great the dreadful day of the Lord* (**v.31**) tempered with mercy for those who

call upon the name of the Lord.

Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21	Acts 2:38-40
<i>And it shall come to pass</i>	<i>The promise is unto</i>
<i>that <u>whosoever</u> shall call upon the Lord</i>	<i>You, and to your children, and to all that are afar off,</i>
<i>shall be delivered there will be deliverance</i>	<i>shall receive Spirit (v.38) shall be saved (v.40)</i>
<i>among the remnant whom the lord shall call.</i>	<i>even <u>as many as</u> the Lord our God shall call.</i>

Notice how clearly Peter interprets the words *everyone* and *among the survivors (v.32)*. Peter is declaring that just as all people without exception are guilty lost sinners who need to be saved, so all men without exception are freely invited to believe in the one Gospel of grace and be saved. **To whom does the summary statement, *everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself* apply?** All three categories mentioned in the text. Peter is referring to *everyone God calls from among you, from among your children, and from among the heathen*. The sovereign effectual call of God in all three categories identifies the true objects of the promise. The one and only thing that determines whether a person is in Christ is the eternal election of God, and the only thing that proves it in time is the effectual call of the Holy Spirit.

APPENDIX – D: Excerpted from Dispensationalism: **A Return to Biblical Theology or Pseudo Christian Cult Part II** <http://www.graceonlinelibrary.org/articles/full.asp?id=9|21|650>

... it is to the house of Israel that the fulfillment [of the New Covenant, Jer.31] came ... **the Christian church in its origin was an Israelitish body, fully qualified to claim the promises made to Israel** ... The Christian church once having been established many Gentiles came into it, but that did not make it a church from among the Gentiles, any more than the naturalization of many Italians in our country makes it a nation from among the Italians ... they were all Israelite members of the OC people of God, to whom the promise had been made. Strictly in line with the promise and with the prevailing principle of the covenant history, to them, the believing remnant, the promise of the NC was fulfilled. **That promise was,** To the House of Israel and the House of Judah, and to the designated parties the fulfillment came; to all who were, in the sight of God and according to a just interpretation of history, still worthy of the name: Israel and Judah ... In all this, are we spiritualizing the prophecy as some allege? Not at all. **We are stating a historical fact, clearly contained in the sacred records, that in or about the spring of the year 30 AD,** the mass of **those who then called themselves Israelites ceased to be such** for prophetic and covenant purpose, having forfeited their citizenship in the commonwealth of Israel by refusing to accept the Messiah, and that after this event all the privileges of the Abrahamic Covenant and all the promises of God belonged to the believing remnant, and to them only; which remnant was therefore and thereafter the true Israel and

Judah, the Seed of Abraham, the Christian church. Thus the promise was fulfilled strictly and definitely to the designated parties. [Albertus Pieters, *The Seed of Abraham*, p.71-76]

Promises to Israel in the OT connected with the NC are being fulfilled by the church.

Promise to Israel	Fulfillment in the church
Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered ... where it was said to them, <u>You are not My people</u> , there it shall be said to them, <u>You are sons of the living God</u> . (Hos.1:10)	What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering <u>the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction</u> , and that He might make known the riches of His glory on <u>the vessels of mercy</u> , which He had prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles ? As He says also in Hosea : I will call them My people, who were not My. people, And her beloved, who was not beloved ... where it was said to them, You are not My people, there they shall be called sons of the living God. (Rom.9: 22-26)
Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth, and <u>I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy</u> ; then <u>I will say to those who were not My people</u> , You are My people, And they shall say, You are my God! (Hos.2:23)	But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy . (1 Pt.2:9-10)
On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David , which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old. (Amos 9:11)	Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name . And with this the words of the prophets agree ... After this <u>I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David</u> , which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; so that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the LORD who does all these things. Known to God from eternity are all His works. (Acts 15:14-18)

Likewise there are many OT passages referring to Israel that are applied directly to the church in the NT.

Spoken to Israel	Applied to the church
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<p>... afterward I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. and also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, <u>before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD</u> ... whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the LORD has said, Among the remnant whom the LORD calls. (Joel 2:28-32)</p>	<p>When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place ... But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ... in the last days, says God, I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD [Judgment] ... <u>whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved</u>. (Acts 2:1,16-21)</p>
<p>you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel. (Ex.19:6)</p>	<p>But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (1 Pt.2:9)</p>
<p>My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (Eze.37:27)</p>	<p>And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (2 Cor.6:16)</p>
<p>Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: <u>You shall be holy</u>, for I the LORD your God am holy. (Lev.19:2)</p>	<p>But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, Be holy, for I am holy. (1 Pt.1:15-16)</p>
<p>Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a NC with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. (Jer.31:31)</p>	<p>... This cup is the NC in My blood, which is shed for you. (Lk.22:20)</p>

APPENDIX - E: The Bible on the Unity of God's People in Christ

[excerpts from Dispensationalism, the Westminster Standards and the Unity of the People of God by Grover Gunn III] http://contra-mundum.org/cm/features/05_dispensationalism.pdf

Admittedly the issue of **how the people of God were saved before Christ's historic accomplishment of the atonement is difficult**. To fully understand this, we would have to fully understand the relationship between time and eternity, and we cannot ... The Holy Spirit was poured out in NC fullness only after Christ completed His work of atonement in history ... there is also a sense in which the atoning work of Christ is not totally limited by time in its application. He is, after all, *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev.13:8)*. *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb.13:8)*. When **the atoning work of Christ** was accomplished in history, its **ripples reached back in time as well as forward**. **The atonement was applied provisionally before its accomplishment, and applied in NC fullness after its accomplishment when the *fullness of the time had come (Gal.4:4)***. **The full doctrine of covenant union with Christ is not revealed until the New Testament**. The term in Christ is first and primarily used to speak of this covenant union in Paul's epistles. Paul used the term *in Christ* in terms of his own chronological position in redemptive history ... This does not mean, however, that OT salvation was somehow accomplished totally apart from covenant union with Christ. **We rather conclude that covenant union before the Acts 2 Pentecost had not yet reached NC fullness in the progression of redemptive history.**

To begin with, the atonement will not be completely applied to anyone, OT saint or NT saint, until the second coming of Christ. Those advances in spiritual benefits that were historically realized at the inauguration of the NT era will be applied in glorification to those who died before the era began in fullness. This is implied by *Heb.11:39-40*, *And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us*. **The subjects of these verses are the believing OT saints, the great cloud of witnesses who now surround us**. These saints will not be *made perfect apart from us* so they can take full advantage of the better provisions of the new covenant era at the time of glorification.

Second, **the NT speaks of NC salvation in Christ as a participation in the OT covenants of promise (Eph.2:12-13)**. Those Gentiles who were once far off in that they were *strangers from the covenants of promise* are *now in Christ Jesus ... made near by the blood of Christ*. The blessings of the Abrahamic covenant today come upon Gentiles who are in Christ Jesus (**Gal.3:14**). There are many NT verses which imply that **the Christian church is the spiritual Israel of the NC**. There is continuity in the NC blessings as well as newness. *The kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure not only things new but also things old (Mt.13:52)*.

Third, **the NT teaches that all the people of God are saved in covenant union with Christ: For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive (1 Cor.15:22)**. Covenant union with Christ is the basis for justification and sanctification. Through covenant union with Christ, Christ's finished sacrifice becomes the Christians payment for his sins (**Rom.8:1**) ... Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believers account before God (**2 Cor.5:21; Phil.3:9**) ... the Christian becomes a new creation (2 Cor.5:17; Gal.6:15). **The very idea of any sort of salvation accomplished apart from this covenant union with Christ is unthinkable. The people of God will be made alive in Christ or not at all.**

Fourth, **the NT teaches the unity of the people of God in all ages**. There is one floc (Jn.10:16), one good olive tree (Rom.11:24), one house (Heb.3:5-6), one bride (Eph.5:25-27; Rev.21:9-12), and one holy nation (1 Pt.2:9).

APPENDIX - F: Excerpts from **REALIZED MILLENNIALISM**:

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE AMILLENNIAL POSITION by William Kilgore

<http://www.flash.net/~thinkman/articles/amill.htm>

Amillennialism ... no millennium ... is a deceptive term, as we do believe **Revelation 20**. Some prefer **Gospel Age Millennialism** or ... **Realized Millennialism**. The basic idea here is that **the thousand years described in Revelation 20 is figurative of Christs spiritual reign in this Gospel Age** - i.e., now. All the OT promises were fulfilled in Christ ... there is now only one Israel - the Church made up of both Jews and Gentiles.

THE INTERPRETATION OF BIBLE PROPHECY

... The inspired prophecies of both Old and NT's are written in signs and symbols. Consider the following: *I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets. – Hos.12:10 The prophets spoke in parables (Ps.78:2; Eze.17:2; 20:49; 24:3) and used dark speech (Num.12:6-8).* Jesus Himself, the Prophet like Moses (*Dt.18:15, 18-19 - see Jn.1:45; Acts 3:22*), did the same (*Mt.13; Mk.4; Lk.8:10*). The Revelation to John is no different. **The Book of Revelation is a series of visions given to John to signify the events of the end-time (Rev.1:1); it is a summary of all that the prophets have foretold** -- John bears record of the Word of God - **there is nothing new here. Revelation is the clarified summation** and corresponds to the OT Prophets. **Further, the focal point of all prophecy is Jesus Christ Himself (Rev.1:2). The OT is fulfilled in the New (Mt.13:17; Lk.1:70; 24:25-27, 44-45; Acts 3:24; 13:32; 26:22-23; Rom.16:26; Heb.1:1-3; 1 Pt.1:10-12) -- that is, in the Person of Jesus Christ.** It is His testimony that is the spirit of prophecy (*Rev.19:10*).

Finally, **when we look at how OT prophecy was fulfilled as recorded in the NT, the literalistic hermeneutic just does not stand up.** Almost all OT prophecies were given as pertaining to our **natural realm** -- but are these prophecies fulfilled in the natural? Certainly not! **Some are fulfilled in the natural realm just as given** (Gen.15:13-16 = Ex.; Num.14:34 = Dt.8:2; etc.), but **most are not** (e.g., Gen.17:5 = Rom.4:17; Gen.22:17 = Mt.16:18; Ex.19:5-6 = 1 Pt.2:9; Dt.32:21 = Rom.10:19; 2 Sam.22:50 = Rom.15:9; Ps.22:22 = Heb.2:12; Ps.68:18 = Eph.4:8; Ps.118:22-23 = Mt. 21:42; Isa. 8:17-18 = Heb.2:13; Isa.29:10 = Rom.11:8; Isa.54:1 = Gal.4:27; Isa.65:1 = Rom.10:20; Jer.31:33ff. = Heb. 8:8-13; Ez.37:26-27 = 2 Cor.6:16; Joel 2:28 = Acts 2:16-21; Amos 9:11-12 = Acts 15:15-16; Hab.2:4 = Rom.1:17; Hag.2:6 = Heb.12:26-29; Zech.6:12 = Acts 4:11/Eph.2:20/ Heb. 3:3; Mal.4:5 = Mt.11:13-15; etc.; etc.) ... look at each prophecy (= fulfillment) that I have listed -- **none of them were fulfilled in a strict literal sense.** Furthermore, these equal but a small percentage of the total number!

Revelation uses symbols from the OT in great abundance. To interpret many of these symbols literally leads to ridiculous and fanciful interpretations (souls under the altar; hell following death; the woman riding the beast; etc.; etc.). This is further proven by the fact that some of the symbols are actually interpreted in the text itself and so identified as such (e.g., seven lamps = seven spirits; etc.). Thus, the Biblical evidence suggests that we **look for a spiritual interpretation of both the OT prophets and Revelation**, allowing the plain teaching of the rest of Scripture to guide us.

The precise nature of the Kingdom of God ...

Is it a natural Kingdom, or is it a spiritual Kingdom? **The premillennial scheme proposes a natural Kingdom** which precedes the eternal state. **Postmillennialism proposes a natural Kingdom** where Jesus rules from heaven via the Church taking dominion over the earth ... whenever Scripture speaks of the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven, or the Kingdom of Christ, it is the same Kingdom ... not different kingdoms, but synonyms for the same reality. A comparison of the synoptic Gospels reveals quite clearly that whether referred to as of heaven or as of God, one Kingdom is in view (e.g., **Mt.4:17/Mk.1:14-15; Mt.5:3/Lk.6:20**) ... it is this same Kingdom that is given to the Messiah in **Dan.7:13-14** (cf. **Mt.12:28; cp. Lk.22:16 with 22:30**) -- the kingdom of Christ (**Eph. 5:5**). Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great statue in **Dan.2**. The statue represents his own kingdom and some that would follow. Then, in **verse 44**, we read: *And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.* (NKJV) The kingdom spoken of by Daniel is set up before the Second Coming of Christ (in the days of these kings) - that is, during [the era that he initiated at] His first coming ... this kingdom will plainly last far longer than a mere 1,000 years.

Ps.110:1-2 is the foundational passage for the NT picture of the Kingdom. The Messiah sits at Gods right hand - this was fulfilled in Christs resurrection, exaltation, and ascension (**Acts 2:29-36**). This is to be *until I (the Father) make Thine enemies Thy footstool* - this is Christ's present reign (**1 Cor.15:24-28**). Note that Christ's reign is parallel with His priesthood - i.e., He reigns as Priest (**Ps.110:4**); this is further proof for a present reign of Christ (cf. **Heb.7-9**). Note especially **Ps.110:2** - **Christ's reign is described as being in the midst of (His) enemies**. This is true because Christ's Kingdom is a spiritual reality. **The NT expressly teaches that this Kingdom is not a natural Kingdom, but a spiritual one ...** **Lk.17:20-21; Jn.3:3, 5-7; 18:36; Rom.14:17; 1 Cor.4:20; 15:50; Col.1:13; 1 Thes.2:12; 2 Tim.4:18; Heb.12:28; 2 Pt.1:11 ...** **these passages teach that the Kingdom:**

1. does not come with observation (is unseen, lit., without outward display).
2. is within believers.
3. cannot be entered, nor even seen, apart from spiritual rebirth.
4. is not of this world.
5. has nothing to do with substances like food and drink, but rather is manifested in the changed character of individual Christians.
6. is not simply a message, but a demonstration of spiritual power.
7. is an incorruptible Kingdom that cannot be inherited by corruption - our mere flesh and blood.
8. is the present reality where we are translated when we are delivered from the powers of darkness.
9. is where God has called us in saving us.
10. is not earthly, but heavenly.

11. cannot be moved - i.e., is of a spiritual nature.

12. is everlasting even in its final manifestation ... the Kingdom of God and of His Christ is a present spiritual reality that is being extended in this age. This is the Kingdom that is the focus of the faith of Abraham – **Heb.11:8-10.**

THE MILLENNIUM

When the word millennium is used, the reference is to the thousand years of **Rev.20**. Are we to take this literally -- i.e., **does Rev.20 describe a literal, natural kingdom that lasts for a literal duration of 1,000 years?** As a premillennialist, I saw the millennium all over the Scriptures as I read and studied. However, as my eschatological views began to change, I realized that all those passages from the OT prophets that I took as descriptions of the millennium were arbitrarily jammed together. I had never stepped back and taken a look at this jigsaw puzzle that I had put together in my mind. Rather than presenting a clear picture, premillennialism had put together a jumbled mess!

Some hard questions that must be asked if the thousand years are literal. Why is **Rev.20** the only passage in all of Scripture that specifically mentions a millennial kingdom? Its not as if the OT prophets and the NT apostles simply didn't mention the millennial kingdom, but rather in several places it is positively excluded from the entire end-times scenario ...

1. All of the OT passages normally linked with the thousand years of **Rev.20** to produce the millennium are interpreted for us under inspiration within the NT itself! These passages are - **Isa.2; 9:6-7; 11; 25-27; 49; 65; Jer.23; 30-31; Eze.34-37; Joel 2-3; Amos 9; Zech.12-14; and Mal.3-4** ... none of the imagery used in these passages (lambs w/lions, beating swords into plowshares, etc.) is even mentioned in **Rev.20**, the only passage speaking of the thousand years! The nation of Israel is not in view, nor is an earthly reign or a rebuilt temple! To cram all these passages together and then arbitrarily interpret them within the context of **Rev.20** is nothing short of textual masochism.

2. **2 Pt.3** without question mentions absolutely nothing about a millennial kingdom ... such a notion is ruled out by placing the destruction of this earth and the creation of the new earth within the same time-frame as the Second Coming. This reforming of the planet occurs just before the eternal state per **Rev.6-7.**

3. **Paul sets forth one coming, one resurrection, and then the end** -- **1 Cor.15**. The only reign of Christ mentioned is the present one.

4. **Scripture teaches one resurrection of both saved and unsaved at the last day** (**Jn.5:29; 11:24; Heb.9:27 w/ Rev.20:11-12**).

5. The "**rapture**" (i.e., our gathering together to Him) **occurs at His coming** per **Jn.6:39,54; 1 Cor. 15:23; Col.3:4; 1 Thes.4:14-17; 2 Thes.2:1; 1 Pt.1:13; 5:4**. Further, **there is nothing "secret" about it** (cf. **Mt.24:27 and Lk.17:24**)!

6. **The righteous and the wicked are separated at His coming** per **Mt.13; 24:37-40; 25:31-46; Lk. 17:29-35**. Note especially the word "**then**" in **Mt.25:31**. It is **at this time** that saint and sinner alike are judged -- **not** after 1,000 years! See **Ecc.12:14; Dan.12:2; Mt.16:27; 24:41-46; Rom.2:5-6; 1 Cor.3:13; Col.3:4; 1 Thes.5:1-10; 2 Thes.1:1-10; 2 Tim.2:4; 4:1; Heb.9:28; 1 Pt.5:4; 1 Jn.2:28;**

3:2. Thus **the Second Coming is the same day as "the day of judgment" (2 Pt.2:9) -- the same day that this earth is destroyed** per 2 Pt.3:7-12! Where is this "thousand year" earthly kingdom in all of this? It is this day that is pictured in **Rev.6:16-17** and **11:15-18**. Note the parallel between **Rev.11:15** and **1 Cor.15:24-28**, where Paul describes "the end" **immediately following** His coming. This is why the **next** conscious moment after death is the Judgment (**not** the millennium) -- **Heb.9:27**.

7. If God's people are reigning with Christ **on the earth** during a literal 1,000 year kingdom, then how can the Kingdom be **descending from heaven** in **Rev.21:2**?

Looking at **Rev.20** itself we find more problems for the idea of a literal millennial kingdom ... although earthly events are mentioned (**v.3 & 9**), **no earthly reign is mentioned**. Christ is not here pictured on a literal throne reigning in a literal earthly kingdom ... we see **nothing** about national Israel, a rebuilt temple, restored sacrifices, etc., etc ... Further, the Judgment occurs in **verses 11-15**, **after** the *thousand years* ... the passages above clearly show that the Judgment occurs **at His coming** with no mention of an intervening 1,000 year kingdom.

Now it is not enough to prove that others' conception of a literal millennium is false; there is still the matter of the "thousand years" in **Rev.20**. **Is it possible that this is not meant to signify a literal length of time, but is figurative?** Most certainly. Revelation uses many numbers in its text, and I seriously doubt that **any** of them are to be taken literally. The number of the angels in **Rev.5:11** is *ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands*. Are we to do the math and literally expect that this is the literal sum of angels? No, the number is symbolic; for we know that the number of angels is actually innumerable (**Heb.12:22**). Other symbolic numerical representations include "ten days" of tribulation (**2:10**), "144,000" (**7:4**), "200,000,000" (**9:16**), and the time scale of **Rev.9:15**.

... we see "thousand" and "thousands" used symbolically all over Scripture -- **Gen.24:60; Ex.20:6; 34:7; Lev.26:8; Dt.1:11; 5:10; 7:9; 32:30; 33:2; Josh.23:10; 1 Sam.18:7-8; 1 Chron.16:15; Job 9:3; 33:23; Ps.3:6; 50:10; 68:17; 84:10; 90:4; 91:7; 105:8; Ecc.6:6; 7:28; Song 5:10; Isa.30:17; 60:22; Jer.32:18; Eze.48; Dan.7:10; 11:12; Mic.6:7; 1 Cor.4:15; 14:19; 2 Pt.3:8; Jude 14.**

So then, what exactly **does** the "thousand years" of **Rev.20** refer to? **ANSWER: the present reign of Jesus Christ at the right hand of God!** The Apostle John certainly believed in a present kingdom (**Rev.1:9**). Revelation 20 has believers reigning as *kings and priests* (**v.6**) - a **future** reality? Not according to the same book! John clearly sees this reality coming to be in the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ (**Rev.5:10**). Being "kings" and "priests" to God is something that is comprehended in our redemption in Jesus Christ, which is why John speaks of this very thing as a **present** reality, **Rev.1:6**

Paul clearly taught the same in **1 Cor.15:24-28**. In fact, **Paul teaches that Christ's second coming will signal the end, not the beginning, of His reign as Messiah** ... Jesus stated that He **now** possesses "all power" in heaven **and on earth** (**Mt.28:18**) ... What can be added to "all"? Does our Lord have "all power" **now**, or doesn't He?

APPENDIX - G: Summary of chapter 13 CHRIST: THE COVENANT OF CONSUMMATION
from THE CHRIST OF THE COVENANTS by O. Palmer Robertson

The expulsion of the Jews from the land of promise at the time of the exile dramatizes their **failure** under the OC. The prophets of Israel's later history delivered messages of both the inevitability of God's judgment on covenant breakers and His intention to redeem a people to Himself. **Several motifs are incorporated in the NC relationship** expressed by *I shall be your God and you shall be My people (Jer.31:31-34)*:

1. the return of exiled Israel to the land of promise;
2. full restoration of God's blessing on the land of promise;
3. divine fulfillment of previous covenantal commitments;
4. internal renewal by the work of God's Holy Spirit; the full forgiveness of sins;
5. the union of Israel and Judah.

Three points of tension in the bringing together of these motifs are resolved in the NT church:

1. continuity v. newness;
2. corporateness v. individuality;
3. internal reality v. external substance. The NC people of God are the actualized realization of God's chosen people typologically represented by Israel.

APPENDIX - H: THE OLD AND THE NEW, a Bible study

A question comes to Jesus from the scribes and Pharisees, *Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?* (Lk.5:33) Jesus gives a two-part response (Lk.5:34-35 & 36-39).

1. What does He mean by replying that it depends upon the presence of the bridegroom? Who is He referring to and what is He talking about? - He is referring to Himself as the bridegroom of the church which is His bride. What is the OT parallel for this? - God as the husband of Israel.

Why is fasting inappropriate while He is with His disciples? - The presence of Jesus with His friends is cause for celebration as He is the groom preparing to receive His bride. When He is crucified (taken away) there will be cause for mourning.^a

2. How does Luke characterize the next part of Jesus reply? - Luke calls it a parable [see last paragraph ch.1 RPCD - Chapters]. How does that affect our interpretation of it? Jesus is both hiding and revealing further information relating to what?^b - His coming, which is new, and how it relates to the way things were before. What new thing does Christ bring about that may be contrasted with a previous thing? - He inaugurates a NC in His blood (Mt.26:27-28) which replaces the former covenant with Israel (Heb.8:13). The two cannot be combined or integrated (Lk.5:36-38) and it will not be easy for those used to the OC to embrace the new (Lk.5:39).

From now on, apply the interpretive principles: write down the narrow words and phrases that are being used to refer to the whole class and identify the class; write a phrase that describes the context in which the passages are found; [see 1st paragraph ch.1 RPCD - Chapters].

3. Where does this idea of a NC come from? Is it completely novel or is it rooted in history? **Isaiah 42** begins with a discussion to the Lords true servant (v.1) in contrast to Israel who was disobedient. Notice the second line, *My elect one in whom My soul delights!* What does this remind you of in the NT? - The Fathers words to Jesus after He was baptized, *You are My beloved son in whom I am well pleased* (Mk.1:11). The servant is the son. *I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles ...* (Isa.42:6). There is this contrast between the *former things* (judgments of God that have already occurred against Damascus, Samaria, Nineveh, etc, as well as His abandonment of Israel and Judah, Isa.41:22; 42:9; 43:18; 48:3; etc) and the *new things* I declare (Isa.42:9; 43:19; 48:6-7; etc). Read through these whole passages and identify repeated themes and connections to the NT.

4. What does the declaration of *new things* (Isa.42:9) give rise to? - Praise in the form of a new song because the Lord goes forth in conquest (v.10-13). Is this the same song referred to in **Revelation 5:9-10** and **14:3**? Read through **Isaiah 40-66** and see what common themes can you find. What kind of *new things* can you identify that can be characterized as the Lords triumph worthy of a *new song*? Bear in mind that *all new things are not necessarily identified as such*. [restate the previous sentence in different words] Do you see salvation and judgment, creation and redemption, false gods and the true God, former things and things yet to be? What images are referring to the coming of Christ and carried over into the NT? How are these images to be understood? - *Metaphorically*. Is not the new song parallel to the old song (which was new at the time)? **Exodus 15** is the song of deliverance, judgment, and redemption. It is the great portrayal of the deliverance from God's wrath and His judgment upon sin in Christ in whom we have redemption.

5. In **Isaiah 62:1-5**, there is a discussion of Zions new name (v.2, see **Isa.49:14**; **54:6-7** for the old name). What is the function of these names? - The name is a description of the reality. Why is a new name appropriate for the one who overcomes in **Revelation 2:17**? Could it be because you have been born again and are a new creation in Christ, unique (**2 Cor.5:17**) yet joined to others in one unified body (**Gal.6:15**)?

6. What is the new heavens and the new earth (Isa.65:17; 66:22; Rom.8:19-23; 2 Pt.3:13; Rev.21:1-5)? What are its defining features? - Everything is once again good as it was created and characterized by righteousness.

7. What is the new heart and new spirit (Ezek.11:17-20; 36:24-30)? What do these have to do with the NC (Jer.31:31-34; Mk.14:23; 1 Cor.11:25; Heb.9:15; 12:24)? Notice that as the making of the OC (Ex.19-24) followed Israels physical deliverance from slavery in Egypt, so the making of the NC follows deliverance from sin (Jer.31:34).

8. List the contrasts between the old and new covenants in **Hebrews 7:11-10:22** [see ch.2].

9. Jesus came to fulfill the law and prophets (Mt.5:17-18), that is, the whole OT [1st interpretive principle]. He does not alter, replace or nullify the Gods word, but establishes its true intent and purpose. Faith in Christ is the goal and purpose of the law (Lk.16:16-17; Rom.10:4). Note the comparison between the old and new covenants (2 Cor.3:2-16). How are all things brought to a conclusion in Christ (Eph.1:7-10)?

10. Now ask yourself, really, **what is the worship that is acceptable to God?** Who can approach God and what is the appropriate way to come to Him? What sacrifices please Him. What service is acceptable to Him? Where does God dwell? Who are His priests? Who are His people (**Rom.11:19-20**)?

a. It appears that fasting is being used to depict the contrast between joy and sorrow rather than abstinence from eating. **INTERPRETIVE PRINCIPLE** – especially in the OT, narrow terms such as Jerusalem are used to refer to a whole class or category, ie. all the people of Israel. **The specific stands for (represents) the category.** In English we commonly use the more general word or phrase to designate the broad class or category. [See **chap.1** RPCD **footnote 1-A**]

b. **INTERPRETIVE PRINCIPLE** – comments and questions standing alone are virtually useless, even if they are complete sentences. They require a context because they are part of a story or line of reasoning. **Parts have meaning only in their relation to the whole.** The subject, theme or topic of the discussion determines how the individual statements are to be understood. There is the broad or general context of the Gospel and the immediate passage in which the statements are found.

APPENDIX - I: PROGRESSIVE REVELATION

(READING BACK and INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE)

Development of doctrine depends upon progressive revelation. **Progressive revelation is the study of God's plan for history as it gradually unfolds** throughout scripture. It involves systematically tracing Bible events and teachings to determine God's program, just as God progressively corrects Abram's ideas of Him and His promises. Does progressive revelation reveal a plan that is changing, or clarify an original plan in its working out? Jesus exposes error about marriage and divorce by going back to God's original intent in the creation man and woman [see War ... Reading & Discussing]. In other words, He elaborates by logical inference how it was always meant to be understood.

But, **doesn't the apostle's very act of commenting on, interpreting, or explaining OT passages in the light of Messiah's advent constitute reading back into the OT?** No! Reading back cannot refer to later realization of original meaning. It means plugging in (incorporating) concepts **foreign** to the earlier disclosure as the US Supreme Court has done with the US Constitution on separation of church and state issues. When the NT writers explain the meaning of OT passages, they are not reinterpreting to accommodate and adapt the OT to explain events current to their times. They are seeing with the veil lifted what God was speaking of all along. This is the case when Paul explains true Israel and the church (**Rom.16:24-25**). So, **the essence of progressive revelation is continued clarification and elaboration of original intent and meaning culminating in a revealing or discovery of the previously hidden realities** [see **Chap.2** RPCD]. It is largely a process of correcting misunderstandings, of steering back to the path laid out.

APPENDIX - J: HEBREWS - PEERING THROUGH THE SHADOWS

The book of **Hebrews takes us on a journey through the mists and shadows of history to peer at those images behind the veil that we might catch a glimpse of reality.** What are the

shadows but images of reality clouded by the fog of ignorance and hardness of heart? What are the various ways the prophets (servants, messengers) spoke? Did they not bring to men their visions and dreams? There was the law and a covenant with promises. So, men built a tabernacle and offered gifts and sacrifices according to the law. They became priests, but **their offerings and service was no more than a parable pointing to true and the real, which could only be seen by faith**. The people failed to reach that goal which was to enter Gods rest.

Now **the living God has pierced the vale of shadows and visited mankind**. Christ was a messenger, servant, and prophet, superior to every other minister of God. He was the message, and in his offering of Himself was actual redemption accomplished. By faith in Christ, **through the NC** with its better promises, we can draw near to God and enter His rest. **With this in mind, let us look through Abraham's faith as he peered through the fog and let us see reality as he saw it.**

*By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go to the place where he would receive as an inheritance ... By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise [which promise?], for he waited for the city which has foundations [a permanent dwelling] crafted and made by God [the promise of a different kind of dwelling place than those men make, perfect and everlasting] ... These all died in faith, not having received the promises [which promises?], but having seen them afar off [envisioned what God had in mind] were assured of them, embraced them [set their heart on them] and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth [not native to this world, they denied and rejected a solely earthly fulfillment]. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland [native home]. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out [the pagan land of Ur], they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country [to dwell with God]. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, [take them as His own, He is not the God of the dead, but of the living] for He has prepared a city for them [an inheritance for all time] ... And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise [but the promise is from God, so they will receive it], God having provided something better for us [as well as for them], that they should not be made perfect apart from us [we will all be changed, live again, and together dwell with God] **Heb.11:8-10, 13-16, 39-40)***

What are the promises referred to in the NT about?

*For I tell you that **Christ became a servant to the circumcised** to show God's truthfulness, in order **to confirm the promises** given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name ... Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people ... Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him [Ps.117:1] ... The root of Jesse [David's father, Isa.11:1] will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope. Rom.15:8-12*

Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God. (2 Cor.7:1)

APPENDIX - K: DISPENSATIONALISM AND REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY

>>heavily edited excerpts from websites<<
Answering the Replacement Theology Critics by Gary DeMar
http://www.americanvision.org/articlearchive/10-07-05.asp#_ftn3

Replacement theology has become dispensationalism's latest prophetic boogeyman. If you want to end a debate over eschatology, just charge your opponent with holding to replacement theology. **Here's a typical dispensational definition:**

Replacement Theology: a theological perspective that teaches that the Jews have been rejected by God and are no longer God's Chosen People. Those who hold to this view disavow any ethnic future for the Jewish people in connection with the biblical covenants, believing that their spiritual destiny is either to perish or become a part of the new religion that superseded Judaism (whether Christianity or Islam).

Replacement theology is d's trump card in any debate over eschatology because it implies anti-Semitism. Hal Lindsey attempted to use this card in his poorly researched and argued *The Road to Holocaust*. He wove an innovative tale implying that anyone who is not a d carries the seeds of anti-Semitism within his or her prophetic system. This would mean that every Christian prior to 1830 would have been theologically **[though not personally]** anti-Semitic.

As Peter Leithart and I point out in *The Legacy of Hatred Continues*, **it's dispensationalists who hold to a form of replacement theology since they believe that Israel does not have any prophetic significance this side of the rapture!** Prior to the rapture **[d-logic]**, the Church has replaced Israel - God's prophetic plan for Israel has been postponed until the prophetic time clock starts ticking again at the beginning of Daniel's 70th week which starts only after the Church is taken to heaven in the so-called rapture. Until then, God is dealing redemptively with the Church. Consider the following by d-E. Schuyler English: An intercalary period of history, after Christ's death and resurrection and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.70, has intervened. This is the present age, the Church age ... During this time God has not been dealing with Israel nationally, for they have been blinded concerning God's mercy in Christ ... However, God will again deal with Israel as a nation. This will be in Daniel's seventieth week, a seven-year period yet to come.

According to English and every other dispensationalist, the unfulfilled promises made to Israel are not fulfilled until after the Church is taken off the earth. Thomas Ice, one of d's rising stars, admits that the Church replaces Israel this side of the rapture: We ds believe that the church has superseded Israel during the current church age, but God has a future time in which He will restore national Israel as the institution for the administration of divine blessings to the world.

Ds claim that their particular brand of eschatology is the only prophetic system that gives Israel her proper place in redemptive history. This is an odd thing to argue since they believe that two-thirds of the Jews will be slaughtered during the post-rapture tribulation, and the world will be nearly destroyed. Charles Ryrie writes in his book *The Best is Yet to Come* that during this post-rapture period Israel will undergo the worst bloodbath in Jewish history. The book's title doesn't seem to very appropriate considering that during this period of time most of the Jews will die! John Walvoord follows a similar line of argument: Israel is destined to have a particular time of suffering which

will eclipse any thing that it has known in the past ... The people of Israel ... are placing themselves within the vortex of this future whirlwind which will destroy the majority of those living in the land of Palestine. Arnold Fruchtenbaum states that during the Great Tribulation Israel will suffer tremendous persecution (**Mt.24:15–28; Rev.12:1–17**) and two-thirds are going to be killed as a result.

D-teaches that during the time when Israel seems to be at peace with the world, she is really under the domination of the Antichrist who will turn on her at the midpoint in the seven-year period. Israel waits more than 2000 years for the promises finally to be fulfilled, and before it happens, two-thirds of them are wiped out. Those who are charged with holding a replacement theology viewpoint believe in no inevitable future Jewish bloodbath. In fact, we believe that [many] Jews will inevitably embrace Jesus as the Messiah this side of the Second Coming.

The pre-tribulational rapture is a necessary doctrine in d-theology in order to maintain the Israel-Church distinction, in effect for nearly two millennia, a thousand years longer than the premillennialist's earthly millennium. Ds begin with the claim that Gods redemptive program to Israel failed at Jesus first coming. Because of this failure, so the argument goes, God turned His attention to a new redemptive people, the Church, and a new redemptive era, the Church Age. Like the pre-trib rapture doctrine - no verse that actually describes such a distinction. **Nowhere do we find a verse or series of verses that describe how God has postponed His covenant promises to deal with an unknown entity called the Church.**

As I and others have pointed out, **the biblical arguments for a pre-trib rapture are not only spurious, they are non-existent.** Tim LaHaye's answer to this is that there's no single verse that can be found that teaches any of the other four rapture positions. Well, if there is no verse supporting any of the five rapture positions, doesn't it suggest that there is no rapture [as portrayed by these positions] and thus no Israel-Church distinction?

Ds maintain that the doctrine is developed from a series of verses that when put together infer the pre-trib rapture. They say that the 7-year tribulation period is clearly taught in Scripture at **Dan.9:24–27**, but to get it, they must prove: that there is a gap of nearly 2000 years between the 69th and 70th weeks; that the Antichrist will make a covenant with the Jews during a post-rapture tribulation; that second rebuilt temple existed that skips over the first rebuilt temple that stood in Jesus day. They argue that the he of **9:27** is the Antichrist. Does the text say he is the Antichrist? It does not. One would expect the Antichrist of Revelation to make a covenant with the Jews during the so-called seven-year tribulation period since [according to ds] Revelation is an expansion of Daniels 70th week. There is no mention of the Antichrist making a covenant with anyone, either in **Dan.9:27** or in Revelation. In fact, there is not a single biblical example of Antichrist making a covenant with anyone. Its Jesus who makes a covenant with the many: this is My blood of the covenant, which is to be shed on behalf of the many for the forgiveness of sins (**Mt.26:28**). There is no mention of Antichrist or seven years, let alone a seven-year tribulation period in Revelation. [see **Second Coming of Christ & Beth Moore on Daniel** <http://pop.eradman.com/>]

Ds insist that the land promises made to Abraham have never been fulfilled despite what **Josh.21:43–45** clearly teaches: So the LORD gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to their

fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it (**v.43**). They claim that this verse does not really say what it seems to say. Then how could God have said it if his purpose was not to tell us that He had fulfilled his promise to their fathers?

On the one hand, ds cannot find one verse that explicitly teaches the pre-trib rapture, and yet they teach it as biblical truth. On the other hand, when the Bible does tell us that the land promises have been fulfilled, they won't believe it. **Ds are the real replacement theology advocates - they replace God's Word with a system that has no biblical support.**

What is the truth behind the charge that non-dispensationalists believe in replacement theology, that the Church replaces ethnic Israel and her promises and that God is through with Israel forever? The Gospels and Acts demonstrate that the first New Covenant believers were Jews who were defined as the Church by Jesus and Stephen. The use of the word Church in a Jewish context demonstrates the truth that the Church is not a mystery parenthesis.

One of the arguments that ds use to prove the pre-trib rapture is that after **Rev.3**, the word church no longer appears.¹ This must mean, according to a basic tenet of d, that the church will be raptured so God once again can deal covenantally with ethnic Israel. So, the age of the church parenthesis is over when the rapture occurs. In d-logic, the presence of the word church means the church is a present reality, while the absence of the word church means the church is absent from the earth.

Ds believe the church is a parenthesis² in God's plan with Israel because she rejected Jesus' offer of the kingdom. All the d-systems claim the Church does not begin until after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. Any mention of the church prior to Pentecost would destroy the entire parenthesis argument. If the Church is a mystery, and the supposed parenthesis does not begin until at least **Acts 2**, then why is there this mention of the Church when Jesus is dealing almost exclusively with the house of Israel (**Mt.15:24**)? Jesus tells His disciples that He will build His church on this rock (**Mt.16:18**). They argue that Jesus is describing the future: I will build My church. But if the Church is a mystery that does not come into being until Pentecost, then why didn't Peter ask, What is the church?

The Church is mentioned again in Matthew's gospel: *And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer (**18:18**).* **This church discipline discussion takes place within a Jewish context.** Jesus quotes **Dt.19:15** and the requirement of two witnesses (**Mt.18:16**). **Tell it to the church is the Greek way of saying tell it to the congregation, that is, the assembly of Israelites.** If the person in this context is to be treated as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer, it's obvious that he is being treated as a non-Jew, excommunicated from the Jewish assembly. These two references in the most Jewish of the gospels are a clear refutation of the claim that the Church does not begin until **Acts 2** or later.

The Church is as old as covenantal believers. This is why Stephen could describe Israel as the church in the wilderness (**Acts 7:38**). The NASV obscures this fact by translating the Greek word *ekklesia* as congregation instead of church [with marginal note, Or, church (Gr., *ekklesia*)]. The Septuagint uses the word *ekklesia* 73 times (e.g., **Dt.9:10; 18:16**). To say that the church is a post-Pentecost mystery unknown by the writers of the OT is a myth that ignores the NT evidence found in

Matthew and Acts based on word usage alone. If for the dispensationalist the absence of the word church in Revelation means the church has been raptured, then the presence of the word church in the gospels means the church is a Jewish reality. The first NT believers were Jews. They continued the legacy of the OC assembly of believers, what the NT defines as the church. Nothing was postponed. All was fulfilled. Gentiles were grafted into an already existing Jewish church.

Non-ds like me would say that all the promises made to Israel have been fulfilled, and the redemption of Israel according to those promises made it possible for Gentiles to be grafted into an already existing Jewish assembly of believers that the Bible calls the Church. Soon after Jesus' ascension, the gospel is preached to Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven (**Acts 2:5**). If this is not God dealing specifically and solely with Israel, then I don't know what is. To say that the Church is a mystery unknown to the OT prophets contradicts what Peter states in **Acts 2:16**: this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel. This is a reference to the events of Pentecost. If Joel predicted what was happening, and the d-claim that Pentecost is the beginning of the Church Age, then the Church is not a mystery; it is the fulfillment of Bible prophecies made first and foremost to Israel.

D-Thomas Ice understands the implications of this logic, so he adds a word to **Acts 2:16** to make it fit his parenthesis eschatology. He rewrites the verse to read, *But this is [like] that which was spoken by the prophet Joel*. He tries to explain the addition of like this way: The unique statement of Peter (this is that) is in the language of comparison and similarity, not fulfillment. **He's begging the question, assuming what he must prove.** **D-author Stanley D. Toussaint** writes, contradicting Ice on his point, This clause does not mean, This is like that; it means Pentecost fulfilled what Joel had described. After saying this, he goes on to argue: However, the prophecies of Joel quoted in **Acts 2:19–20** were not fulfilled. So which is it? He says the fulfillment will come if Israel would repent. But Israel did repent: Now having heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said to them, Repent ... (**2:37–38**). The result? So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls (**2:41**).

Ds will argue that all Israel must be saved (**Rom.11:26**), and all Israel was not saved in the first century. **In the Romans context, all Israel is the believing elect remnant (11:5)**. Ds don't interpret all Israel to mean every Israelite who has ever lived. They don't even understand all Israel to mean every Jew alive during the post-rapture great tribulation since they believe that two-thirds of them will be slaughtered. By all Israel, they mean the remnant! If all Israel can mean a remnant in a post-rapture scenario, then it certainly can mean a remnant in a pre-destruction of Jerusalem scenario.

Peter addresses the crowd at Pentecost as *the men of Israel (Acts 2:22)*. He expands his message to include *all the house of Israel (2:36)*. The brethren—Jewish brethren—want to know what they, as Jews, must do to be saved. Peter tells them, *For the promise is for you and your children ... (2:39)*. There is nothing in this chapter that indicates that the Abrahamic promises are not being fulfilled right then and there. Peter continues to preach to his countrymen by informing them that *Jesus the Christ was appointed for you (3:20)*. **The restoration of all things (v.21)** is the pre-ordained redemptive work of Jesus to fulfill what all the prophets have written. *The prophets announ-*

ced these days (3:24). It is you who are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed (v.25). There is no mention of a postponement of the promises—an intercalary period of history—made to Abraham. These Jewish believers, *the recipients of the promises spoken by the prophets (3:24)*, made up the church (5:11). We learn later that Gentiles became a part of this existing Jewish Church *to take part in the promises given to Israel (10:34-48)*. Notice the conclusion: *And all the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also (v.45). To the Jew first (Rom.1:16; 2:9-10)*, Paul writes, *because now, in Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, for we are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal.3:28)*. Paul makes the same point when he describes that the Gentiles were grafted into an existing Jewish body of believers that Acts describes as *the church (Rom.11:12-21)*.

1. The church as a universal body of earthly believers does not appear anywhere in Revelation, not even in chapters 2 and 3. It's always the church in (2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14). These are seven local churches that existed in the first century. The word churches is used in the same way (1:4, 11, 20; 2:7, 11, 17, 23, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 22:16).

2. see Chap.4, Israel Under the Law was a Parenthesis

How could the Church have replaced Israel, since the scriptures clearly teach that we, the believing gentiles, are a branch grafted into Israel, and that not all of those that are born into Israel are truly Israel, but those who have faith are the true Israel of God? Some branches are cut away for unbelief and some grafted in through faith but the people of God continue. The mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs [with Israel], members of the same body, and partakers of the same promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel (Eph.3:6). I have become a member of the family of God's holy people by my union with Christ. **Rom.11:1** raises the question. **Has God rejected his people [Israel as a nation]?** Ans., No, but a partial hardening, limited in duration and extent, yes.² He has preserved a remnant (v.5). *Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it but the rest were hardened (v.7)*. The hardening was neither total nor final. God is going to exercise mercy upon Israel in the future (v.25-27). *In this way all Israel [not each individual, but the nation as a whole] will be saved (v.26). For God has consigned all to disobedience [Jews and Gentiles are in same condition], that he might have mercy on all [both categories = all people, Jn.3:14-17] (v.32)*.

http://www.davidmacd.com/catholic/replacement_theology.htm

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. (Rom.2:28-29)

The true Israel is not Israel in the flesh (ethnic Judaism) but Israel in the spirit because the kingdom of God is spiritual in nature. [A constant theme in the Bible is Gods sovereign change of the natural or societal order: the younger son takes precedent over the elder son as the true heir of Gods promises

- Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau. Saul was not succeeded by his son, Jonathan, but by David. The gentiles were grafted into the root against nature.] The New Israel [true people of God] are and will always be those who come to Jesus. Jesus is the END of the Mosaic law - both its goal and its terminus. The Christian economy, since it is the new and definitive Covenant, will never pass away; and no new revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

From **Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture**, 2000 by **Graeme Goldsworthy**

Dispensationalism, along with some other forms of premillennialism, is a system of Biblical theology that is flawed because it does not draw its interpretive presuppositions from the Bible. For example, it stresses that all prophecy is fulfilled in a literal sense. This is not according to the evidence of the NT, which interprets prophecy in the light of Christ. [see **Determining How Bible Passages May Be Used**]

<http://kimriddlebarger.squarespace.com/a-reply-to-john-macarthur/>

Critique of John MacArthur's passionate tirade, Why Every Self-Respecting Calvinist Is a Premillennialist, given at the Shepherds Conference at Grace Community Church, Mar.7, 07

MacArthur's Calvinism would probably not be recognized by Calvin himself. He has attempted to co-opt the term "Reformed". He uses the fallacy of generalization to argue that amillennialism (based upon his faulty understanding of the amil position on Israel) is more consistent with Arminianism, process theology, and the semi-Pelagianism of much of the Charismatic movement. Calvin was very clear where he stood on chiliasm (millennialism).

This fiction is too puerile to need or to deserve refutation. Nor do they receive any countenance from the Apocalypse, from which it is known that they extracted a gloss for their error (**Rev.20:4**), since the thousand years there mentioned refer not to the eternal blessedness of the Church, but only to the various troubles which await the Church militant in this world (Institutes **3.25.5**).

MacArthur on Israel and Hermeneutics

The irony is that those who most celebrate the sovereign grace of election regarding the church and its inviolable place in God's purpose from predestination to glorification, and those who most aggressively and militantly defend the truth of promise and fulfillment - those who are the advocates of election being divine, unilateral, unconditional, and irrevocable by nature for the church, unashamedly deny the same for elect Israel ... As it does the perpetuity of the elect church to salvation glory, so the Scripture in similar language and by promises from the same God, affirms the perpetuity of ethnic Israel to a future salvation of a generation of Jews that will fulfill all divine promises given to them by God. In both cases this is the work of, and the result of, divine sovereign election.

Now all that leads us to this: if you get Israel right you will get eschatology right... You get Israel right when you get the OT covenants and promises right. You get the OT covenants and promises right when you get the interpretation of Scripture right. You get interpretation of Scripture right when you're faithful to a legitimate hermeneutic and God's integrity is upheld. Get your hermeneutics right, you'll get the OT promises right. Get promises right, you'll get Israel right. Get Israel right, you'll get eschatology right. The Bible calls God the God of Israel over 200 times... There are over 2,000 references to Israel in Scripture, not one of them means anything but Israel. Not one of them, including **Rom.9:6**

and **Gal.6:16** which are the only two passages that amils go to ... to cancel out the other 2,000. There is no difficulty in interpreting those as simply meaning Jews who were believers; the Israel of God. **Israel always means Israel**, never means anything but Israel. Seventy three NT uses of Israel always mean Israel.

MacArthur is correct - Get your hermeneutics right and you will get your eschatology right. But here's precisely where we part ways with MacArthur and **his dispensational presupposition that because national Israel lies at the heart of all biblical eschatology and covenants, the OT promises made to national Israel are the hermeneutical center of Scripture**. As an amil, I assign that place to Jesus Christ, who is the true Israel according to the NT.

Understanding the difference between the amil hermeneutic and the d-hermeneutic is the key to understanding the essence of this debate. Every major dispensational theologian from Walvoord to Pentecost to Ryrie to MacArthur, insists that God has two distinct redemptive programs—one for national Israel and one for the Gentiles.

Reformed amils reject this understanding of Gods redemptive purposes. Gods purpose is not to save two distinct peoples (divided by ethnicity), but to save his people (the elect), *a multitude which no man can number (Rev.7:9)*, and which includes each and every one of those whom God has chosen, whether they be Jew or Gentile.

In **Eph.2:11-22**, Paul addresses this point when discussing Gods redemptive purpose for Gentiles and national Israel. **Here, Paul flat-out contradicts the d-assertion that God has distinct redemptive purposes for national Israel and for the church.** According Paul, Gods purpose in the New Covenant is to remove the ethnic distinctions between Jew and Gentile (Israel and the church) which had been dividing them. Jesus came to tear down the barrier wall which formerly divided the two, in order to make the two peoples into one so as to form Jew and Gentile together into the one living temple of the Lord—the church. **In this spiritual temple, Christ is the chief cornerstone, and the foundation is the prophets and apostles.**

While ds will concede that this is God's purpose for the present age, they say Israel's distinct role resurfaces again after the Rapture when the Gentile church is removed from the earth. This dual redemptive purpose then carries on throughout the millennial age after Christ comes back. **If true, this means that it is Christ's purpose to make the two peoples one is only temporary, that God intends to divide Israel (ethnic Jews) again from the Gentiles after the resurrection (1 Thes.4:13-5:11).**

This makes no sense. Such a view forces us to see the future millennial age as something completely distinct from Christs redemptive purpose under the NC. **On these terms, the yet future millennium marks a return to OT types and shadows and ignores the fact that the reality is Christ.** This not only means that redemptive history takes a giant U-turn after Christ comes back, amounting to a return to the types and shadows which preceded the coming of the Messiah, but it completely ignores the very thing Christ came to do—make the two peoples one by removing all ethnic divisions which previously divided believers! **The progress of redemption takes us from promise (types and shadows) to fulfillment (anti-types),** not from promise, to temporary (or transitional) fulfillment, and then finally back to the types and shadows.

This is why a Christ-centered hermeneutic changes everything and why this hermeneutic lies at the heart of the differences between Refamil and d. As Bob Strimple points out, **there are a number of reasons Israel's role in the OT was preparatory to the coming Christ, and can therefore cannot serve as the hermeneutical center of Scripture**. The fact is that Christ comes to fulfill (literally) all of the OT promises, not to temporarily put them aside, only to return to them in a future millennium. Strimple bases his view that Christ is the true Israel on the following biblical arguments:

- 1) **Isaiah's servant songs** have a double referent that has long baffled Jewish commentators. On the one hand, they refer to Israel, God's chosen one and servant (**41:8-9; 44:1-2, 21; 45:4; 49:3**). On the other, they seem also to refer to some individual (**42:1-4**). These prophecies are interpreted by the NT as referring to Christ (**Mt.8:17; Acts 8:30-35**)
- 2) Matthew sees a double referent in **Hos.11:1**, (*Out of Egypt I called my son*)
- 3) Paul identifies Christ, not physical Israel, as Abraham's seed (**Gal.3:16**). **Gal.3:7 and Rom.4:11, 16**, moreover, identify the church as Abraham's offspring.
- 4) Henceforth, we are in Christ the true Israel: **Gal.3:26-29, Rom.2:28-29, and Phil.3:3**.
- 5) **The OC is obsolete, having been superseded by the New**: **Heb.8:8-12** identifies the NC with Israel (**Jer.31:33-34**) with the covenant instituted by Christ with the church. Most importantly, **Heb.8:13 declares the OC obsolete and passing away**. This makes impossible the dispensational view of **Ezek.40-48** as a reinstitution of temple sacrifice.
- 6) The upshot is that **the OT did not see how its own prophecies were to be fulfilled** - indeed, it could not prior to Christ. The NT authors were able to interpret the OT in the light of His coming of the NC that He instituted.

Strimple points out that this means **Jesus is the true Israel, and that all Scripture—especially its prophetic sections—must be read through a Christ-centered hermeneutic**, not a d-one which centers upon national Israel.

MacArthur makes the point that since God elects Israel, and since Israel means Israel, any other approach to eschatology destroys the perspicuity of the OT. Yes, Israel does always mean Israel, but that's not the point. When **the writers of the NT see Israel in the light of the coming of Jesus Christ, they now see that the nation of Israel and the Sinaitic covenant which established it, were intended by God to point ahead to the coming of Jesus**. That's what Paul is getting at in **Gal.3:19-25**, when he speaks of the law as intended by God to prepare the way for the coming of Christ. This is because the law exposes our sin and like a school-master drives us to Christ.

But this truth was largely hidden in the types and shadows of the OT era in redemptive history because Christ had not yet come and the ultimate purpose of the law could not yet be seen. But this same truth is impossible to escape after Jesus steps out of type and shadow onto the center stage of redemption (**Gal.4:4-5**). **It is Jesus who now tells us the true purpose of the OC—You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me (Jn.5:39)**. This is not amil spiritualizing of Scripture, it is the method of biblical interpretation taught by Jesus and his apostles!

Is the OT Amillennial? It is not legitimate to interpret the OT as secondary to the NT as primary ... in which case the OT was literally darkness not light. If you say that the OT cannot be rightly interpreted apart from the NT then you have denied the perspicuity of the OT.

The basic hermeneutical question is, Does the OT tell us what the NT means (even though Christ has not yet come during the time of OT revelation), **or does the NT interpret the OT?** MacArthur argues for the former and Ref amils the latter. [see [Necessary Inference](#)]

Ref amils have never argued that the OT is amil per se. We have argued that **the promise of a land given to Israel is itself typological of a heavenly kingdom** which was inconceivable in the days of the patriarchs and Moses. But we only know this because the author of Hebrews tells us as much. In other words, **the NT tells us what the things promised in the OT truly mean**. The true glories of what God promised cannot be seen until the coming of Christ—although when the NT looks back, we learn that Abraham got it because although he was promised a land in Palestine (**Gen.12:1-3**), by faith he knew that the reality for the people of God (Jew or Gentile) was not found in any earthly promise, including the promised land.

*By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God (**Heb.11:8-10**).*

The point is that we could never possibly understand the promise in its fullness if we regarded the original promise in **Gen.12:1-3** as the hermeneutical key to determine how we understand such things even in the light of future (and greater) revelatory light.

Ds have this completely backwards. They say the OT tells us what the promise is—a land in Palestine, so we must take this literally (even if the NT tells us otherwise) or else we undermine the authority of Scripture. We say **the NT clarifies and amplifies the OT promises in light of Christ**. It is not the amil, but the apostle Paul who spiritualizes the land promise by extending the land promised to Abraham to the whole world after the coming of Christ (**Rom.4:13**). The author of Hebrews who tells us that the promise of a land in Palestine was typological of the heavenly city which Abraham desired because that land pointed him to something even greater. Now that Christ has come, we can see why redemptive history unfolds in the manner that it does. **Promise gives way to fulfillment, types and shadows to biblical reality**. Besides, didn't Joshua tell us that the typological promise of the land had already been fulfilled (**Josh.21:43**), leading us to expect the NT to universalize the land promise in light of the coming of Christ?

Why did national Israel reject Jesus' messianic kingship and thereby come under the covenant curse? **Jesus was rejected because the kingdom he came to bring Israel was not an earthly kingdom** (**Jn.18:36**; **Rom.14:17**, *the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*). **Israel rejected Jesus because they were seeking a national/political kingdom tied to the land** promised to Abraham and to the typological kingship of David. **They were not looking for that spiritual kingdom** defined in the parables of **Mt.13** which

spreads into the whole world (cf. **13:32**). No, they wanted to be a great nation with a king as they had been in the past, and this meant a defeat of Rome. In other words, **the Jews wanted a geopolitical kingdom** much like that described by the ds as characteristic of the future millennial age. Blinded by a zeal without knowledge (**Rom.10:2**), a trust in personal righteousness instead of that provided by God through faith (cf. **Phil.3:3-11**) and because of the national embarrassment and harsh realities of Roman occupation, when Jesus didn't offer or promise the Jews such a kingdom, they rejected him. In this we see why the Reformed Confessions condemned the proto-dispensationalism of the Reformation era in the harshest of terms.

We further condemn Jewish dreams that there will be a golden age on earth before the Day of Judgment, and that the pious, having subdued all their godless enemies, will possess all the kingdoms of the earth. For evangelical truth in **Mt.24; 25; Lk.18**, and apostolic teaching in **2 Thes.2; 2 Tim.3; 4**, present something quite different (Second Helvetic Confession **11.10**). This condemnation is not a racial and therefore an anti-Semitic issue—these people are wrong because they are Jews. Rather it is a hermeneutical matter. Those who hold to Jewish dreams are condemned for the error of allowing the typological kingdom found in the OT to serve as the hermeneutical fulcrum of the NT. **Such people cannot make sense of Scripture because they do not see Christ as the sum and substance of all biblical Revelation**. The whole point of the biblical proof texts cited in the confession, along with the **parables in Mt.13**, is that the gospel is preached throughout this age until the harvest, which is the second coming of Christ (**Mt.13:49-50**). The kingdom is clearly consummated at that time, but not before. It is also clear that the kingdom is not postponed until the millennium, after Jesus returns. Until that day, the kingdom remains a present reality tied to word and sacrament, and is the very foundation for the Great Commission (**Mt.28:18-20**).

It is just plain wrong to assert that Ref amils somehow believe that the NT is primary and the OT is secondary. We believe that both are equally the word of God. But it is clear that the OT is the story of Christ hidden in type, shadow and promise. We know this is because the NT repeatedly tells us that's the case—that's the whole point of fulfilled prophecy and passages like **Eph.2:11-12; Heb.11:8-10 cited above!** The OT repeatedly promises a redeemer and exhorts Israel to look for him (**Dt.18:18; 2 Sam.7:11-16**), while the NT shows us who that redeemer is and how he fulfills these OT expectations. **The pattern we see in the two testaments of Scripture is the movement from promise (OT) to fulfillment (NT), from shadow and type to reality. This is the hermeneutic given us in Scripture itself, yet this is the very thing ds tell us to ignore.**

While **MacArthur believes the OT remains darkness if we don't see Israel as the hermeneutical crux, we believe** that is only through the light of Christ that the OT truly comes into proper focus. Furthermore, to describe the matter in terms of **primary and secondary** as though Ref amils depreciate the OT and downplay the role of Israel in the NT (and therefore in our eschatology) **is grossly inaccurate**. I am unashamedly a Christian and not a Jew. Jesus and the apostles tell me what the OT said (in type and shadow) about the coming of Christ and his kingdom [[see excerpt, Hope of Israel](#)]. To view the OT in this way does not in the slightest deny the perspicuity of the OT. Rather we affirm that **the essence of the OT is the revelation of Jesus Christ hidden in type and shadow**. It was Jesus who said that the OT bore witness to him and taught us to read the OT in light

of his coming (**Lk.24:27**).

At first glance, it's rather impressive that the Bible mentions Israel some 2000 times and each time the word appears, Israel always means Israel. But **MacArthur's argument very quickly unravels** and **this actually becomes a strong argument for the amil interpretation** of redemptive history.

Israel is mentioned some 1927 times in the OT, and only 73 times in the NT, precisely what you would expect if Jesus Christ fulfills the promises made by God to Israel because he is the true Israel -

The focus upon national Israel very naturally gives way to a focus upon Christ and his church, exactly

what happens in the NT. Most of these NT references to Israel occur in the Gospels when Jesus is confronting the Pharisees and others who are in the process of rejecting Jesus messianic kingship.

Luke mentions Israel a number of times in Acts, almost always in reference to Jewish opposition to the preaching of Christ. Israel is rarely mentioned in the epistles—most often in **Rom.9-11**, which is the only place in the NT where Paul specifically speaks of the future of Israel in redemptive history.

In **Rom.9-11**, Paul describes in big-picture terms the role of Israel in redemptive history, now that Christ has come. The presence of **a believing remnant** enables Paul to argue that God is not yet finished with Israel. In fact, Paul speaks of a time when *all Israel will be saved (11:25-26)*, but only because Israel is grafted back into the righteous root, who is Christ. **There is not a word here about** a millennial kingdom, two distinct redemptive plans for Jew and Gentile, Israel returning to the land promised to Abraham, nor a seven-year tribulation. In fact, **none of the key dispensational distinctives are mentioned** in the very text where you'd think they would be mentioned, if these things were part of NT eschatology. God will once again show mercy on Israel so they come to Christ in faith. Therefore, whatever the salvation of all Israel entails in **Rom.9-11**, Paul is referring to Jews becoming Christians! Not a hint here of dispensational notions of two redemptive purposes, even though Jews and Gentiles are treated as distinct ethnic groups.

Israel and Replacement Theology

...I rarely hear somebody preach on the OT and interpret it the way a person living at the time it was written would have interpreted it ... But it has to have its own meaning to its own people; it must have clarity and perspicuity. And if you say all those promises to Israel really were to the Church they were meaningless and unintelligible to them. **Replacement theology is called ... supersessionism**

because it demands that the OT promises be viewed through the lens of the NT. It also strikes a strange dichotomy since all the curses promised Israel came to Israel — literally — and they're still coming. If you wonder whether the curses and the OT were literal, they're going on right now. Israel right now is ... under the promise of God that they will be perpetuated as an ethnic people, but this current group of Jews that live in the world today and in the nation Israel are not now under divine protection. They're apostate. They've rejected their Messiah. They are under divine chastening. But they are still a people and will be to the end. What a staggering apologetic that is for the truthfulness of scripture. You can't abandon that without a huge loss of confidence in Scripture.

So **why is it such a gross error** to insist that all the OT promises be seen through the lens of the NT? Isn't that what the NT tells us to do? And how does seeing God keep and fulfill every one of his promises in Christ made to national Israel, bring about a huge loss of confidence in the authority of

Scripture? To make these points stick and give them some rhetorical flourish, at this point MacArthur resorts to pulling the d-trump card. This is to accuse the Reformed of embracing replacement theology, wherein the church supposedly replaces national Israel in the purposes of God. According to ds, this opens the door to **the two great amil evils**--a non-literal interpretation of the Bible and anti-Semitism ... **racism in any form is a sin** and must be repented of. The Reformed (especially the Dutch Reformed) have a rather illustrious history when it comes to rescuing Jews from the clutches of the Nazis during WWII. I know of at least three families in Dutch Reformed Churches now living in Southern California who risked everything to rescue numerous Jews from certain death. Such people are common in these circles. So, on a practical level, the anecdotal charge that Reformed Christianity leads to anti-Semitism seems laughable. How is preaching Christ to Jews and showing them from their own Scriptures that Christ was the promised one anti-Semitic and undercuts biblical authority? How does preaching that Jesus Christ fulfills all the promises made to Gods people weaken biblical authority and our witness to Jews? Is Christ not the light of the world, and the one in whom is found all the riches and treasures of heaven? How does preaching that God keeps his promises in Christ, undermine Jewish evangelism?

Is this not precisely what Peter did on Pentecost Sunday when he showed the Jews how the Davidic kingship in the OT (**2 Sam.7**) pointed ahead to Christs Ascension to Gods right hand? So much for Jesus returning to the types of the OT and sitting on a throne in Jerusalem in an earthly millennium-- Peter sees the events of Pentecost as the fulfillment of a number of OT promises. There is no hint here of a return to types and shadows in a future millennium ... this is Peter's answer to the question the disciples themselves asked Jesus in **Acts 1:8** about a hoped-for future restoration of the kingdom to Israel. Once the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon all flesh at Pentecost, **Christs kingship** can now be seen for what it is--not bound to one land or nation and which spreads to the very ends of the earth through the preaching of the gospel. Before Pentecost, the disciples could not possibly understand what a true restoration of Israels kingdom would entail. Now they see that their expectations of a national kingdom grossly underestimated what God had actually promised. Christs kingship and his ascension to Gods right hand, is what God promised to Israel. Jesus now rules and reigns over all, since his is the name which is above every other name.

As for **the accusation that we Ref amils hold to replacement theology**, I don't know of a single Ref amil who identifies themselves as a replacement theologian. Now, that doesn't mean that there aren't any, but it does indicate that this is a label slapped on us by those who disagree with our eschatology. This is not (and never has been) how we identify ourselves. Ref amils do not believe that the church replaces Israel. Rather, we do believe that there is one people of God, the elect. Thus under the New Covenant believers are now called out from among all nations (including Israel) to belong to Christs church, which is the visible manifestation of the New Covenant people of God. Therefore, Israel is not replaced by the church. Rather, the people of God (believing Jews and Gentiles) in the OC era are vastly supplemented by believers from every nation tribe and tongue in the New Covenant. **This is not replacement theology**. It should be called expansion theology since the people of God become so numerous after the coming of Christ that the multitude encompasses people from the ends of the earth, including many ethnic Jews who are among the elect and believe

in Jesus, because Jesus Christ has been revealed to them by a gracious God.

Conclusion: MacArthur set up and repeatedly attacked a straw man - a pyrrhic victory over a phantom foe.

In his book, **MacArthur's Millennial Manifesto: A Friendly Response**, Dr. Sam Waldron addresses the assertions of MacArthur in his controversial sermon, Why Every Self-Respecting Calvinist Is a Premillennialist. Although his arguments are rigorous, the entire tenor of the book is level-headed and irenic. With charity, **this book exposes the fallacies--historical, exegetical, and theological**--inherent in Dr. MacArthur's presentation ... with grace and kindness ... James M. Renihan, Ph.D.

Waldron's response to MacArthur is a gem. In a gentle spirit, and with an awareness of what is at stake, Waldron makes a persuasive case against MacArthur's unlikely claim that true Calvinists must subscribe to the tenets of dispensational premillennialism ... Cornelis Venema, Ph.D.